

Page eight. "Then rose in the mind of the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Maitreya this thought: Oh, how great a wonder does the Tathāgata display! What maybe the cause, what the reason of the Lord producing so great a wonder as this? And such astonishing, prodigious, inconceivable, powerful miracles now appear, although the Lord is absorbed in meditation! Why, let me inquire about this matter; who would be able here to explain it to me? He then thought: Here is Manjushri, the royal prince, who has plied his office under former Ginas and planted the roots of goodness, while worshipping many Buddhas."

Ginas is another ... one of the names for Buddha. And here ... "worshipping." Worshipping it is not just worship, this is ... it means, in Sanskrit, *pradikara*. It means alms-giving and offer of business [?] care. To prepare food for him; or to make a robe for him; or to mend his roof or room; and to take care of the people who may come; or to prepare medicine for him, or bed or [sounds like dress or breath]. Those are, you know, not just worshipping, but to take complete care of. So original meaning is some ... to take some authority. Not authority but to take care of him. Or to take care of business or service. And those words are important ones. Here, there is some ...

"Then rose in the mind of the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya this thought: Oh, how great a wonder does the Tathagata displays! What maybe the cause, what the reason of the Lord producing so great a wonder as this?"

You know here is sitting meditation. And those descriptions describe his self-rejoicing meditation. In his meditation ... his meditation has this kind of quality. Even though he is ... he may not be aware of it, he is absorbed in ... even though he is absorbed in deep meditation, his meditation has various quality as this. And Maitreya and some Buddhas who has six powers or five powers. When we attain arhatship we have six ... we are supposed to have six powers. Every morning we recite, we say *Samyo-rokuso*. *Samyo-rokuso* is arhat's various powers. The power of thinking and remembering the former state of existence. This is ... you may think rather mysterious but mysteriously speaking, it is [laughing] former being exists, former being. But moment after moment, we reincarnate from one state to the other. Sometimes you will be demon [laughing so much as to unable to speak clearly] exists with horn on your head. Sometimes you will be *asura*, in anger. Or sometimes you will be *garuda*, with big

wings, you know, covering whole world. Beautiful golden wing. Sometimes we will be hungry ghosts. If I do not have not much ... not much food we will be hungry ghosts. We reincarnate one state to the other, always.

A man of, you know, powerful ... power of sitting will realize our nature through and through. Then it means thinking and remembering former state of existence, not former but actual state of existence, which transform one state to the other. And capable of seeing everything. Capable of seeing everything. And capable of hearing everything. And insight to the others. And to attain perfect enlightenment ... this is supposed to be Arhat. To attain arhatship. And the power of free activity. It is ... sometimes understood as supernatural ... or mostly maybe. Arhats, for Arhats this is supernatural activity. But for Mahāyāna Buddhists or Zen Buddhists as you must have studied by various kōan or *Shōbōgenzō*, those are, you know, our usual ... these kinds of powers of free activity should be always within our life. If your friend wants water, you give him water. "Do you want this?" You know, that is that kind of free activity. That kind of more natural activities. If you have ... if your mind is rigid and stubborn, you cannot have this kind of freedom. You cannot see what is happening around you. Anyway, those are the powers.

And Maitreya see through ... had perfect in Buddha's mediation. "What maybe the cause, what the reason of the Lord producing so great a wonder as this? And such astonishing, prodigious, inconceivable, powerful miracles now appear, although the Lord is absorbed in meditation!" He could see it, but he couldn't figure out what it was . Why such a magnificent event happens.

"Why, let me inquire about this matter; who would be able here to explain it to me? He then thought: Here is Mañjushrī, the royal prince, who has plied his office under former Ginas and planted the roots of goodness ... Mañjushrī who has plied his office." This is a kind of, you know, not worship, but kind of, we say "*kuyo*." "To make office." To give him some office work. And under various, not only Shākyamuni Buddha but various Buddhas, Ginas, "... and planted the roots of goodness, while worshipping many Buddhas. This Mañjushrī, the royal prince, must have witnessed before such signs of the former Tathāgatas." Such omens, you know; good omens of the Tathāgatas. "Those Arhats, those perfectly enlightened Buddhas; must have enjoyed the grand conversations on the law. Therefore will I inquire about this matter with Mañjushrī, the royal prince." And in this, and in this place, important words maybe "the perfectly enlightened Buddhas," *Samya sam Buddhas* ... perfectly enlightened Buddhas. Those who attained under *Samya sam Bodhi*. Supreme enlightenment. And "Arhats," you know Arhats. Here it says "grand conversations on the Law." "On the Law," means on the first principle or on the

teaching. And the "grand conversations." Grand ... not only just conversations, it means also, it means sermons, you know. Not, in its ... I don't know Sanskrit so well, but "conversations" in its widest sense, the original word means conversations. But it means sermons. Here it maybe better to say sermons. Grand sermons. He must have listened to or enjoyed the grand "sermons" on the Law. Those are the important words. Perfectly enlightened one. Supremely enlightened one. *Sambhodi. Samya sam bhodi.*

Now, this Mañjushrī, the royal prince. Royal prince means, Buddha's, you know, maybe Buddha's successor. He passed away, not ... this is not Mañjushrī but Shāriputra passed away before Buddha. And most likely this Mañjushrī Bodhisattva is characterized by Shāriputra. "This Mañjushrī, the royal prince, must have witnessed before such signs of the former Tathāgatas." You see, here, this sutra was told by, supposed to be told or written as if this sutra was told by Buddha himself but actually there is no doubt that this sutra was not told by him. But if we understand Buddha ... if we understand Buddha, not only as Nirmanakaya Buddha, or one Buddha based on the idea on the three bodies of Buddha, then, you know, this sutra again and again was taught by many Buddhas before. So Mañjushrī Bodhisattva must have been it when he attended so many Buddhas in his former life. Do you understand this kind of idea of describing the truth. Truth is truth because it exists forever whether Buddha tells about it or not. It exists. But someone must have seen or realized Buddha. So someone like Mañjushrī. I don't know why, exactly; who exactly; we don't know who, but someone must have, some unknown person before Buddha must have seen those things. Must have attended real Buddha. And Mañjushrī must be one of them. And he must have seen it before. And he must have, actually, you know, not only seen those six good omens, but also must have listened to, must have heard of those teachings which existed, which appeared before Buddha. And in this way, after those miraculous mysterious omens, Buddha will start his sermon called *Lotus Sutra*.

So Manjsuri, you know, Bodhisattva Maitreya, inquired about this with Mañjushrī. And next paragraph is the last paragraph, page eight.

"And the four classes of the audience; monks, nuns, male and female lay devotees, numerous gods, *nagas*, goblins, *gandharvas*, demons, *garudas*, *kinnaras*, great serpents, men, and beings not human, on seeing the magnificence of this great miracle of the Lord, were struck with astonishment, amazement and curiosity, and thought: Let us inquire why this magnificent miracle has been produced by the great power of the Lord."

The four classes of the audience, namely: monks, nuns, and male and female lay devotees; numerous gods; numerous *devas*, you know,

*devas*—various, they have various *devas* since of old. *Nagas*, dragons —like eight kinds of dragons. Goblins, as I said, goblins means *yakshas*. There will be evil natured ones and good nature ones. Anyway, they are various spirits. And Ghandarvas. Demons. Demons is asuras. To fight like Asura, you know, with many hands. And mostly painted in his body. Whole his body, red. And his eyes is maybe blue. Mostly Buddha ... Indian gods and Buddhas are blue-eyed. So in all his hands he has arms ... bows and arrows and many arms. And, not arms but he has many arms. He is mostly naked. Asuras. And Ghandarvas are a group of deities since of old. Since the time of the Rig Veda, maybe one thousand years or more before the Lord Buddha. And gandarvas is big, big winged bird which is Nagas. Nagas, dragons. Kinnaras as you know, whether he is a man or animal is Kinnara. Man or animal. Great serpents. This is Mangora. Mahora. We say Mangora, but Mahora ... great serpent. This is mystified ... mythological being, of serpent. Men include, to our great astonishment include, hell and celestial beings. Men includes the six states of ... all the beings which exist in six states of world. We will be incarnated in those states. Men includes the six worlds, heaven, and mankind, and Asura. Asura is, you know, Asura here we name Asura, but Asura is included in the men. And some demons too. We will be sometimes demons, like Asura. And animals. Animals is not men you say, but so far as we are, we will be incarnated into men, we count them as men. And those Hungry Ghosts and those who live in hell, too. But this is one interpretation of the six worlds. But there are many interpretations for, about, what is men, and what is not human. But I think it maybe proper to understand men as human being, includes this kind of six states. Which is supposed to be our various states of human existence.

"Men, and beings not human, on seeing the magnificence of this great miracle of the Lord, were struck with astonishment, amazement and curiosity, and thought." This is, you know, why we repeat those words, "were struck with astonishment, amazement and curiosity." This is, you know, gives you some rhythm and make you remember better. And this is the purpose of repeating various synonymous words, one after another. As you will find in the part of verse or poem about this description. In Sanskrit there are, you know, their literature is very rhythmical and a half of it maybe poem style. This sutra also, by the way, has two parts: the *gatha* parts and what you call ordinary description. Prose. Prose parts and *gatha* parts. And *gatha* parts and prose parts do not accord with—there is some difference. And which is first and which was prose part was first, is older or *gatha* parts is older. No one knows maybe. Maybe they are studying very hard which is older, or they are written at the same time. But it doesn't--they say it does not look like written in the same person at the same time. Because sometimes the content is no the same.

"At the same time," page nine, the second paragraph. "At the same

moment, at that very instant, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya knew in his mind the thoughts arising in the minds of the four classes of hearers and he spoke to Manjushri, the royal prince: "What. Oh Manjushri, is the cause, what is the reason of this wonderful, prodigious, miraculous shine having being produced by the Lord? Look, how these eighteen thousand Buddha-fields appear variegated, extremely beautiful, directed by Tathagatas and superintended by Tathagatas."

Here I must point out some points. Here it says, "... the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Maitreya knew in his mind the thoughts arising in the minds of the four classes of hearers and he spoke to Mañjushrī." Here, he knew, but this is also one of the six powers of Arhat or maybe Bodhisattva. And in some version, those names are repeated twice, you know. Those names like "four classes of hearers, and hearers." Not only "four classes of hearers," but also the names of goblins, gods and devas and Nagas and Yakshas ... those various spiritual beings, names of eight spiritual beings again are repeated here. But in this translation, or in the original text, maybe, there is no ... those names are not repeated here. And here again, the third line or second ... third and second from the end of this paragraph:

"Look, how these eighteen thousand Buddha-fields appear variegated and variegated, beautiful ...." One more word is here, was here, but translator skipped one word here. And the translator translated this sutra from, of course, from Sanskrit, it says here. Original text was the text written on, I don't know where, but old text which is in some museum, you know, in London. So in ... that ... there must be the word "beautiful" here. Why we ... they repeat same word like this, as I said, to give some rhythm to the sentence. But in English it maybe not be so good to repeat so many times. "Variegated, beautiful, extremely beautiful" ... same thing ... same thing happen already six, the earth, whole earth shake in six ways.

Six ways: this way, stronger, this way and more stronger, this way. And this way, trembling, it maybe this way. Don't you think? This way "shake" maybe. This way is to tremble or toss. Toss and toss more harder. [Laughing.] This is a repetition of same thing. And here it again ... appeared again--translator skipped. "Beautiful and extremely beautiful, directed by Tathagatas and superintended by Tathagatas. This is also repetition. "Directed by Tathagatas" maybe enough, you know.

This is the end of the prose part of the first introduction chapter. Do you have some question? About those names, you know; hopefully, Louise will, you know, make you some copy of those names. Not all of them but important ones.

**Student A:** In the book we hear again and again about different spiritual beings such as devas, nagas, goblins, gandharvas, demons, garudas, kinnaras, and great serpents. And in Milaropa almost half of the book is talks about the subjugation and conversion of these different kinds of beings. And I really don't have any idea of what, you know, they are talking about. If they are talking about something that has, an actual existence which we are able to perceive at a certain point. Or whether these are some type of ... something within our consciousness? Or what it means when it says later on in the sutra that the earth opens up and out of the cracks in the earth come all of these different types of beings. It is very difficult for me to imagine what they are.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Well. You are still turned by sūtra, maybe. This is our way of understanding. The difference between people stick to the sūtra and people understand the meaning of the sutra. And for the people who understand the meaning of the sūtra, this description is not good enough, even. Must be more fancy. Should be endlessly fancy! One group or two group is not good enough. We understand in that way. Whatever you say, whatever you think, it is already understood by us. Before we understand it. Before we know it, we know it. If you say something, "Yeah. It may be so." [Laughter] It ... some miracles... "Don't you know something? Don't ... could you tell me something more miracles?" [Laughing.] Maybe. We understand in that way. That is rather ... Dogen Zenji's way. He did not say ... he did not ridicule those sutras. He is very serious. Maybe he respected this sutra best. Most. But it is very serious matter. That point is very serious matter.

**Student:** Rōshi, why does the sūtra say—describe the horrible things that will happen to you if you don't listen to the sutra and you know, it talks about how your body will be covered with thorns and all kinds of horrible things? It sounded to me like hellfire and brimstone Christianity when we are condemned to eternal hell. Is that what it is supposed to be or does it have some other meaning?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Maybe. [Everyone laughing.] We say, result is—will result immediately, not later punishment. To do something is already punishment. That you do something is already punishment. Not later. Do you understand?

**Student:** No.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Good! [Laughter.]

**Student:** Why does the sūtra say so many awful things about women? About why if you are lucky you will be born a man? [Everyone laughing.]

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Why do you think? There are some great difference between nature of man and woman. If you take it ... it is up to the viewpoint, not ... there is no need to stick to the criticism or evaluation, but ... there is some truth, you know. Not in term of it is good or bad. But sometimes, when we talk about buddha-mind. We say ... kind mind ... we say ... "old lady's mind." We do not say "old man's mind." When we say Buddha mind is parent's mind, but we say parent's but ... "father" and "mother" we say, but "father" is suffix. It means actually "mother." So in this sense, when you acquire ...

But quality you have is, maybe deeper, and wider, and heavier. Heavy material. So sometimes it maybe difficult to sew, because material is so thick. But after you make your wear, your wearing, it is very warm and strong. So before you make it, it maybe criticized. But after you have made it, we will appreciate the quality. But when we are involved in the practice to attain something; in other words, to make wearing, you know, we tend to be critical with the thickness of the material. But like Mahāyāna teaching, when we put more emphasis on our practice as a man ... as a being who has buddha-nature; we put emphasis more on the equality of the material. So that is why Mahāyāna Buddhism ... when we talk about mercy or buddha mercy, we refer to mercy of parents, especially mother's mind. Some more time? One more question.

**Student:** I have two questions. First of all from what you just said about repetition ... then this sutra was probably memorized in its originality. And that accounts for part of the form of it--repetitious, rhythmic form. Is that true?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Yeah. It is said so. That to memorize sometime when memorize it is convenient to put it in some for we can recite it easily. We can ... the sentence comes one after another. And sometimes they memorized by number: Number one, number two, number three; or various simple statements.

**Student:** My second question is from yesterday's or day before yesterday's lecture. It seemed to me that there is a connection between Buddha fields and Sambhogakāya Buddha.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Yeah. Buddha fields ... Buddha fields, yeah. Yeah. Sambhogakāya Buddha include all the Buddha field.

**Student:** Is more than that ...

**Suzuki-rōshi:** More than one Buddha field ...

**Student:** No but more than all Buddha fields. Can we think of ...

well, can I think in this way? If I think of reincarnation past and future of all beings. Some. There must be some connecting something. This is what we were talking about last time ... between ... that makes it reincarnation, my past lives, my future life. The fact that I can say "my" means that there must be some connection between the past, present, and the future. It is not a physical thing but there is some connection. No if I take the past back infinitely, if I can just say that ... and the future forward infinitely, then I have a Buddha field. If you apply this to everyone then you have some vast number of Buddha fields. And then we have the body of Sambhogakāya Buddha.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Yeah. Buddha fields. There are many Buddha fields, you know. We say. But many Buddha fields maybe actually one Buddha field.

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This transcript is a retyping of the existing City Center transcript. It is not verbatim. The City Center transcript was entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. It was reformatted by Bill Redican (7/17/01).