

68-02-00.L1 [68-02-00-A]

During Sesshin the *Lotus Sutra* will not be appropriate for the lecture, but I want to [begin] the introduction to the Sutra during training period.

*"And the other sons of the Sugata who, striving after superior knowledge, have constantly accomplished their various tasks, them also they admonish to enlightenment."*

Maitreya continues, in the form of a verse stanza, his address to Manjusri. This is the eleventh one. The "Son of Sugata" means a Bodhisattva. And this is also one of the ten names of Buddha, but here it means Bodhisattva. "The son of the Sugata." Son of the Buddha.

And twelve is, *"From this place, O Mangughosha, I see and hear such things and thousands of kotis of other particulars besides; I will only describe some of them."* Mangughosha is Manjusri. And he saw many things, and he is going to describe them. The thirteenth:

*"I see in many fields Bodhisattvas by many thousands of kotis, like sands of Ganges, who are producing enlightenment according to the different degree of their power,"--many fields of Bodhisattvas, many worlds. "I see in many fields Bodhisattvas by many thousands of kotis, like sands of Ganges."* We say, if it is many, "like sands of Ganges."

*"Who are producing enlightenment according to the different degree of their power."* According to their power, they will attain enlightenment. "Attainment"--the attainment will not be exactly the same, but, according to their power, people will have various attainments, big and small, respectively.

In the *Lotus Sutra*, perfect knowledge is like a cloud or rain. Once it comes down, various plants, big and small, and trees, will gain the mercy of the rain, according to their forms and nature. But what they gain is the same. This is an important thought.

For instance, men and woman are different, but we Buddhists understand them to have the same virtue. Or, we say, because we are not the same, we have the same virtue. If it is the same--nothing is the same, but even though they are same--if they are the same, they have no virtue, because each is different. Each one has its own special value which you cannot compare with some other value. So what we talk about is not some exchanged value or comparative value. What we talk about is absolute value for each being. So, because we are different, we have absolute value. This is important an point.

And, and next one:

*"There are some who charitably bestow wealth, gold, silver, gold money, pearls, jewels,*

*conch shells, stones, coral, male and female slaves, horses, and sheep."*

This is one of the Bodhisattvas practices, *dana prajna paramita*. The slaves are also a kind of fortune or wealth.

*"Horses and sheep, as well as litters adorned with jewels. They are sending gifts with glad hearts, developing themselves for superior enlightenment, in the hope of gaining the vehicle."*

This is also *dana prajna paramita*. "In the hope of gaining the vehicle": I don't know how to say this, but, because there is a door for Supreme Knowledge, they practice alms-giving, or *dana prajna paramita*. The next verse is:

*"(Thus they think): 'The best and most excellent vehicle in the whole of the threefold world is the Buddha-vehicle magnified by the Sugatas. May I, forsooth, soon gain it after my spending such gifts.'"*

"The best and most excellent vehicle in the whole of the threefold world": this threefold world is the desire world, form world, and no non-form world.

"Some give carriages yoked with four horses and furnished with benches, flowers, banners, and flags; others give objects made of precious substances.

Some, again, give their children and wives; others their own flesh; (or) offer, when bidden, their hands and feet, striving to gain supreme enlightenment."

This may sound very funny, but at that time it was...for me it looks very funny because I feel as though I cannot understand it, you know. "Some, again, give their children and wives; others their own flesh." This is understandable, more understandable.

*"Some give their heads, others their eyes, others their dear own body, and after cheerfully bestowing their gifts they aspire to the knowledge of the Tathagatas."*

In this case, you know, we put emphasis on practice, rather than on what we will gain by it. We should understand the value of practice, rather than what we will gain by this kind of almsgiving practice.

*"Here and there, O Manjusri, I behold beings who have abandoned their flourishing kingdoms, harems, and continents, left all their counsellors and kinsmen." "Counsellors and kinsmen," like Shakyamuni Buddha. "Here and there, O Manjusri, I behold beings who have abandoned their flourishing kingdoms, harems, and continents, left all their counsellors and kinsmen, and betaken themselves to the guides of the world to ask for the most excellent law, for the sake of bliss; they put on reddish-yellow robes, and shave hair and beard."*

"Betaken themselves to the guides of the world..." The "guide of the world" is of course

Shakyamuni Buddha. "Betaken themselves to the guides of the world to ask for the most excellent law, for the sake of bliss; they put on reddish-yellow robes." "Kesa"--we call this robe *o-kesa*, *okesa*, and this is *koromo*. And "reddish-yellow robes," means "law." *Kesa* is a transliteration of the Sanskrit *kesa*. It means "subdued color." By "subdued color," mostly we mean black. You know, a black and bluish color, something like navy blue. At *Eiheiji* some monks wear a bluish-green or blue-like color, or black, or what we call a "red leaf color," or like a yellowish-brown color--like this. Those colors are called subdued colors. Our robes should be those colors. And there are many other colors which we are allowed to use. Anyway, those colors are the "subdued colors" according to the scriptures or precepts.

As you know, the *okesa* is made of material which people are not using any more. And Buddha collected that material and purified it, and sewed it together, like this. The most important robe for us is the *okesa*, not the Chinese or Japanese dress. And there are traditional, strict rules about how to make it. Joyce, you know, is studying how, is actually making her *okesa* by hand, stitch after stitch, reciting the Sutra in Japan. That is how we do it. You are laughing, but you will do it, you know. Now you are laughing.

*"I see also many Bodhisattvas like monks, living in the forest, and others inhabiting the empty wilderness, engaged in reciting and reading."* "Living in the forest": this kind of practice is called "practice in the forest." And the next one:

*"And some Bodhisattvas I see, who, full of wisdom (or constancy), betake themselves to mountain caves, where by cultivating and meditating the Buddha knowledge they arrive at its perception."*

As Govinde said, the Tibetan translation is said to be very accurate, and here it says "mountain caves," but according to the Tibetan translation it is "mountain valley." A mountain valley like Tassajara. Of course there are two meanings, but here the Chinese translation and Tibetan translation translate it the "valley." We have two translations, but both Chinese translations translate it as "valley." But, as it has two meanings, some people translate it as this translation does: cave. And next:

*"Others who have renounced all sensual desires, by purifying their own self, have cleared their sphere and obtained the five transcendent faculties, live in the wilderness, as (true) sons of the Sugata."*

"...sensual desires, by purifying their own self, have cleared their sphere and obtained the five transcendent faculties." This is so-called "Arhat practice." To attain Arhatship they have to purify their own self and they have to extinguish their sensual desires.

First of all we have to stop thinking. Thinking--we should not stop, but we should be free from thinking. Thinking desires and mental joy and physical joy. In this way we should purify our own self. To purify our own self is to purify our surrounding. In this way we are supposed to obtain the five transcendent faculties. One is mystic power, and next is clairvoyance, or the ability to see through things; next is the ability to know others'

minds; and then the power to know one's own past lives, and one's own karma. And Arhats have six faculties. The last one is the perfect knowledge faculty. After extinguishing all the physical and mental feelings, they will have perfect wisdom. That is the last one. But for Bodhisattvas they have five. So here we may count five faculties.

*"Some are standing firm, the feet put together and the hands joined in token of respect towards the leaders, and are praising joyfully the king of the leading Ginas in thousands of stanzas."*

King of the Ginas means Buddha.

*"Some thoughtful, meek, and tranquil, who have mastered the niceties of the course of duty, question the highest of men about the law, and retain in their memory what they have learnt."*

*And I see here and there some sons of the principal Gina, after completely developing their own self, are preaching the law to many kotis of living beings with myriads of illustrations and reasons."*

"Completely developing their own self," means to control their life, and completely develop their own self. *"Are preaching the law to many kotis of living beings with many myriads of illustrations and reasons."* Like Buddha.

*"Joyfully they proclaim the law, rousing many Bodhisattvas; after conquering the Evil One with his hosts and vehicles, they strike the drum of the law."*

*"I see some sons of the Sugata, humble, calm, and quiet in conduct, living under the command of the Sugatas, and honored by men, gods, goblins, and Titans."* This was the Buddhist idea character: humbleness, calmness, and quiet in conduct. "Living under the command of the Sugatas, and honored by men, gods, goblins, and Titans."

*"Others, again, who have retired to woody thickets, are saving the creatures in the hells by emitting radiance from their body, and rouse them to enlightenment."*

*There are some sons of the Gina who dwell in the forest, abiding in vigour, completely renouncing sloth, and actively engaged in walking; it is by energy that they are striving for supreme enlightenment."*

This is *Shojin prajna paramita*. The bodhisattva has six *prajna paramitas*. *Dana prajna paramita*, and precepts...*prajna paramita*. Alms-giving and precepts observation, and vigorous practice, and patience, and zazen practice, and wisdom, *prajna paramita*. Those are the six. Here, this is the vigorous practice *prajna paramita*. And the next one:

*"Others complete their course by keeping a constant purity and an unbroken morality like precious stones and jewels; by morality do these strive for supreme*

*enlightenment.*

*Some sons of the Gina, whose strength consists in forbearance, patiently endure abuse, censure, and threats from proud monks. They try to attain enlightenment by dint of forbearance."*

This is the third *prajna paramita*. *Prajna paramita* of endurance.

"Some sons of the Gina, whose strength consists in forbearance, patiently endure abuse, censure, and threats from proud monks": Proud monks will give various critical words, and sometimes blame their conduct. But the bodhisattvas should not be disturbed by those words or treatment. They try to attain enlightenment by dint of forbearance. This is the third *prajna paramita*.

*"Further, I see Bodhisattvas, who have forsaken all wanton pleasures, shun unwise companions and delight in having intercourse with genteel men (Aryas)."*

This is supposed to be a very important practice: to choose your friends and to live in a suitable place for practice. It doesn't say zazen practice, but actually it means zazen practice.

"Further, I see Bodhisattvas." This zazen practice was not included in the prose part of this Sutra, but here we have it...this 34th and 35th verse (line?) is about zazen Practice.

"Further, I see Bodhisattvas, who have forsaken all wanton pleasures, shun unwise companions and delight in having intercourse with genteel men": if you want to practice zazen, it is necessary to choose your friends, to have good friends. To be in good contact with your friends, good friends. Then naturally you will have good practice. Dogen Zenji says zazen practice is like going through the mist. If you go through the mist, your robes will be wet; even though you don't notice it, your robe will be naturally wet. When you go out in a sudden shower, even though you feel your robe is wet, it doesn't get through your robe. But when you get wet in the mist, even though you don't feel it, the moisture will penetrate into your body, even. That is how we should practice zazen. And next verse, the 35th:

*"Who, with avoidance of any distraction of thoughts and with attentive mind, during thousands of kotis of years have meditated in the caves of the wilderness; these strive for enlightenment by dint of meditation."* Attentive mind is very important. From the beginning it always has been important point for our practice. Attentive mind: as a practice counting breathing is a very old and traditional way to always have an attentive mind.

Does someone know what "meditation" means? "To meditate" looks like "contemplate on something," but I don't know what "meditate" means. But someone said it can be translated as "to be attentive to something." So if we understand meditation, and if we use the word "meditate" in that sense, I think it is a good translation, but usually by

"meditate" we mean to "dwell on something," or to "concentrate on" something.  
"Contemplation" is also meditation, but the more fundamental attitude or practice, is attentiveness.

Thank you very much.

EZT – early SFZC transcript – 68-02-00-A

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