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(transcription checked, edited by Brian Fikes)

"The monks and nuns at the time being, who strove after supreme, highest enlightenment, numerous as sand of the Ganges, applied themselves to the commandment of the Sugata.

"And the monk who then was the preacher of the law and the keeper of the law, Varaprabha, expounded for fully eighty intermediate kalpas the highest laws according to the commandment (of the Sugata)."

In other words, Buddha's teaching is eternal truth, beginningless and endless. And the Bodhisattva Varaprabha expounded it for fully eighty intermediate *kalpas*, in other words, for a limitlessly long time.

"He had eight hundred pupils, who all of them were by him brought to full development. They saw many kotis of Buddhas, great sages, whom they worshipped."

"He had eight hundred pupils." This is different from the prose part, which says:

"Now it so happened, Ajita, that the eight sons of the Lord Kandraśuryapradīpa, Mātī and the rest, were pupils to that very Bodhisattva Varaprabha. They were by him made ripe for supreme, perfect enlightenment, and in after times they saw and worshipped many hundred thousand myriads of kotis of Buddhas, all of whom had attained supreme, perfect enlightenment, the last of them being Dipankara, the Tathagata, the perfectly enlightened one."

Gatha 88: *"By following the regular course they became Buddhas in several spheres, and as they followed one another in immediate succession they successively foretold each other's future destiny to Buddhahip."*

"The last of these Buddhas following one another was Dipankara. He, the supreme god of gods, honoured by crowds of sages, educated thousands of kotis of living beings."

Dipankara Buddha is supposed to be the Buddha who gave *juki* to Shakyamuni Buddha. I explained *juki* already [see previous lecture]. In Sanskrit it is *vyakarana*, to tell one's future attainment. "You will be born in such and such a place, and will attain enlightenment, and your name will be such and such." This is *juki*.

Shakyamuni Buddha in his former life studied under this Dipankara Bodhisattva. When

this bodhisattva came to a muddy place, Shakyamuni Buddha spread many things over the mud. But the mud was so wide that the rugs he gathered could not cover it, so he spread his hair over the muddy place and let Dipankara Bodhisattva pass over the muddy place. This is why we bow, you know, with the feeling of Buddha's feet on our hands three times. This is the Buddha.

Another story is also told. Dipankara Buddha is the Buddha who gave *juki* to Buddha and may be the last buddha Shakyamuni Buddha served. In ancient times there were great kings whose ministers were very wise. One minister was so wise that his king gave him half of the whole world, which he ruled. And he had a bright boy whom he sent to his brother, who was a great scholar. He studied under him and became a great teacher or bodhisattva. His father was very proud of him and brought him to his home and listened to his sermon. Then he brought him to his former king at the border between their two countries, and the son gave the king a great sermon. After that, for many hundreds of *kotis* of *kalpas* of time, the king sent various offerings to that teacher. Later that teacher became Dipankara Bodhisattva, and that king who helped him was the Buddha himself. So when Dipankara Bodhisattva became enlightened and became a true teacher of the whole world, Buddha became his disciple, studied, and received his *juki* from him.

All of those stories are about the eternal teaching which is always with every being, from beginningless beginning to endless end. That is what they mean.

"Among the pupils of Varaprabha, the son of Jina, at the time of his teaching the law, was one slothful, covetous, greedy of gain and cleverness."

I explained this already. Here it says "cleverness", but the prose part says "praise". And the original words may not be the same. According to the result of the studies of many scholars, this sutra was held in India by some group like Zen Center. Zen Center had a special scripture, which was called the *Lotus Sutra*. And we had many branches. At Tassajara we made a translation, and at San Francisco and Los Altos and Berkeley they made translations. At Tassajara we might change our version, so originally the scriptures they used were not the same. That is why we have so many original texts and so many kinds of translations. And various people from various countries translated the texts, so naturally there must be many kinds of translations. It is quite natural.

Student: The Chinese and Japanese translations are not identical word for word. Isn't that just because the symbolism is different?

S.R.: The words are also nearly the same, not so different.

Student: This translation here tries to make it word for word. It's difficult, but the British scholar who translated it didn't try to change the symbolism to fit British symbolism. I was wondering if they changed the words to fit the Japanese symbolism.

S.R.: No, they don't. They try to be faithful to the original words, word for word, when they translate. They say Kumaragiva's translation is not very literal, but you may say even his is a very literal translation. If they had the original text, the Chinese and the Tibetan and the Nepalese scholars were very faithful to the translation, word by word.

And they discussed the words: "This word should be translated as this word. No, that word." This kind of discussion is still going on so that we will be faithful to the original. Student: And Dogen did this too?

S.R.: Dogen Zenji did not translate, he commented. He expressed his way of understanding this sutra. Almost every time he wrote something he referred to this sutra. At least two fascicles of the *Shobogenzo*, "*Juki*" and "*Hokke Ten Hokke*", are his own special understanding of this sutra. "We should understand the sutra this way," he said.

Kumaragiva's contribution was, for instance, that he sometimes put two *gathas* together so that they could be understood better. As you must have seen, [in the Sanskrit,] one long sentence was sometimes divided into two to put them into the gatha style. But Kumaragiva put more emphasis on the meaning of the sutra; so for the Chinese people, Kumaragiva's translation was easy to understand. That was a big reason why this sutra was appreciated so much by the Chinese people.

"He was also excessively desirous of glory, but very fickle, so that the lessons dictated to him and his own reading faded from his memory as soon as learnt."

I explained this already. Dogen Zenji was very faithful to this sutra and very impressed by those gathas. He was very strict about Buddhists having worldly desires. As a Buddhist we should not have even the desire to expect enlightenment. You may say that was a strict observation of this sutra. Of course, that was his character. His character was so pure and lofty. And he didn't care about anything but truth. He would give his whole body and mind to the truth. That was his way.

"*His name was Yasaskama, by which he was known everywhere.*" "Yasaskama" means "desirous of glory".

"By the accumulated merit of that good action, spotted as it was,"--
he helped people very much, so with this merit he attained enlightenment--*"he propitiated thousands of kotis of Buddhas, whom he rendered ample honour. He went through the regular course of duties and saw the present Buddha Sakyasimha.*

"He shall be the last to reach superior enlightenment and become a Lord known by the family name of Maitreya, who shall educate thousands of kotis of creatures."

Maitreya was actually a historical character and a disciple of Buddha. Many stories are told about him. You know, Buddha's aunt who raised him when he was young, gave a *kesa* of gold embroidery to him. [A portion of the tape is completely or nearly silent here, where he tells the story of the gold *kesa*.] Student 1: Who wore it? Student 2: Tell us where. S.R.: No one wore the gold embroidered *kesa* except Jita Maitreya, who was supposed to be the last disciple to attain enlightenment. He was something like this bodhisattva in his former life. He was called "desirous of glory". And Buddha was very glad that he wore the *kesa*, but maybe because of that, he received that kind of *juki*, that he would be the last buddha.

This is interesting, you know. Buddha was glad that he was not so good. If I were Shakyamuni Buddha, I would have been very angry, maybe. I would not be happy to see that one of the disciples was not so good, treading the wrong path. But Buddha was very patient, and he was very glad. He thought, "eventually he will attain enlightenment."

I think this is why Dogen Zenji says all of us will eventually attain enlightenment. It is no use expecting attainment. Sooner or later everyone will attain enlightenment because we have Buddha nature. As a buddhist, we must have this kind of big mind and big scale of practice. It is not a matter of today or tomorrow, or this year or next year.

"He who then, under the rule of the extinct Sugata, was so slothful, was thyself, and it was I who then was the preacher of the law."

Manjusri was the preacher, and the slothful one was Maitreya.

"As on seeing a foretoken of this kind I recognize a sign such as I have seen manifested of yore," (some translations have "at that place manifested of yore") "therefore and on that account I know," "That decidedly the chief of Jinas, the supreme king of the Sakyas, the All-seeing, who knows the highest truth, is about to pronounce the excellent Sutra which I have heard before."

He will proclaim the same sutra. The highest truth is *dajji*, translated as *dai jiki* in Chinese scriptures. This is the subject of the question the emperor asked Bodhidharma: "What is the First Principle?" Bodhidharma said, "I don't know." "I don't know" is the First Principle. Do you understand? The first Principle cannot be known in terms of good or bad, right or wrong, because it is both right and wrong.

"That very sign displayed at present is a proof of the skillfulness of the leaders; the Lion of the Sakyas is to make an exhortation, to declare the fixed nature of the law."

"Fixed nature" means the true nature or ultimate nature of the law.

"Be well prepared and well minded; join your hands: he who is affectionate and merciful to the world is going to speak, is going to pour the endless rain of the law and refresh those that are waiting for enlightenment."

"And if some should feel doubt, uncertainty, or misgiving in any respect, then the Wise One shall remove it for his children, the Bodhisattvas here striving after enlightenment."

This is the last *gatha* of the first chapter. I think you must have understood the nature of our teaching. This is the Oriental tree, you know. It is rather difficult for you to figure out which way its root is going. If you know which way the root of Buddhism is going, it may be easier to understand how the trunk of the tree of Buddhism is supported by the root.

There is a characteristic in the way we make our effort. The direction in which we make our effort might be very interesting for you to know. If our human effort is pointed in the same direction by all human beings, that is a dreadful destiny. Everyone should strive in his own way, and everyone should find out his own way to develop himself. Even though each one of us is making a different effort, as long as we have Buddha Nature, as long as all the effort is supported by Buddha Nature, there is no problem. When we don't know that everyone's effort is supported by the same ground and are attached to our own way, rejecting or ignoring the others' ways and insisting on our own way, that is confusion. So we Buddhists put emphasis on each one's own way. This sutra, especially, puts emphasis on each one's own way, and on the meaning of each one's own being. At the same time, as you must have understood already, this sutra provides every one of us with a big, common ground where we can enjoy each one's own way.

This is possible if you understand this truth. But most people think it is not possible. "If we become friendly with each other, we will be lost. The only way is to have hard competition. If it is necessary, we should even fight or reject others' opinions. And we should stick to our own way." That is what we are doing, actually. Before you actually practice our way, you have this fear, but if you practice our way, there is no such problem at all, as you must have seen. If you have even the faintest idea of this truth, then it will be a great help for you, I think. Because you don't have this kind of idea, because you have never made this kind of effort, we are so unhappy. For a bodhisattva, to be unhappy is also good. For the usual person, to be unhappy is a terrible thing.

I think we have already finished the most difficult part of this sutra. The next chapter will be the interesting one, maybe. So if you read it, you will be very interested in it, because it has this kind of understanding. It is called the chapter of "Good Devices" or "Skillful devices". In this sutra devices are more important than the First Principle. Usually people respect the First Principle rather than skillful devices. But in this Sutra, Buddha put emphasis on skillful devices instead. This means that Buddha put emphasis on mercy. The way to help people with skillful devices is the most important point. And to find each one's own position, responsibility, and meaning of life, and to find the joy of life in the activity near at hand, or the previous attainment, is the most important point.

Thank you very much for listening to my tedious lecture. If you have questions, please ask me. *Hai*.

Q: You were talking about Dogen Zenji's saying that eventually everyone will attain enlightenment. We hear the word "attain" often, but in chanting the *Shingyo* we say, "No attainment because of no attainment". I find myself clinging constantly to the idea of attaining something, or imagining that something is going to happen. It seems that what the sutra is saying, "no attainment", and what Dogen is saying, "Don't worry, because you will all attain enlightenment," are very different understandings.

SR: Yeah, very different. But when we say "attainment", the meaning is actually very different from the usual connotation of the word. By attainment we mean not even the

result of practice, but that everything is attainment. What we see is attainment of something. If you say this is the result, that is the result. If you say this is the cause, that is the cause, you know. So even though I call it attainment, it may be the practice. We understand in that way. So we say "tongueless tongue, wordless word". Words beyond words. Somehow, we must say something. So, sometimes "attainment", sometimes "practice". That is our way. That is how you should listen to or read our scriptures.

When we describe something, we should follow the logical sequence. That is one side of the practice. But Dogen Zenji says, "When one side is described, the other side is dark." We cannot describe both ways [at once]. That is why we describe just one side of the Truth. But if you have ears to listen to it, eyes to read it, you should be satisfied with one description, because you know there is the other side.

[Tape ends here.]

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