

No. 16 (July, 2010)

SACRED WORDS

This World-Voice-Perceiver Bodhisattva does these meritorious deeds. He takes various shapes, walks about many worlds, and save the living beings of those worlds.

The Lotus Sutra Chapter 25

World-Voice-Perceiver Bodhisattva

By Rev. Shokai Kanai

The picture here is the Eleven Face Kannon Bodhisattva (World Voice Perceiver Bodhisattva, or *Avalokitesvara* in Sanskrit) enshrined at the Nichiren Buddhist Kannon Temple of Nevada. The statue has eleven different faces that represent different people who appear to help us. His right hand is ready to help. His left hand holding a flower vase with a lotus flower symbolizes compassion and source of life. His right leg positions a half step forward and its thumb pointing up symbolize that he is already in an action.

The statue is sculptured from *Yakusugi* cedar wood which is over 1,000 years old from the Yakushima Island in southern Japan. Many giant trees are still surviving for thousands years on the island. The most famous one is a 7,000 years old cedar, named 'Jomon-sugi.' Traditionally, giant trees have been believed to be homes for gods and revered as sacred. So our statue has energy of many centuries and also with the mercy and compassion of the Bodhisattva, will continue to be alive for another 1,000 years.

Ryun Yamataka, a famous Buddhist sculptor, carved this Kannon statue from a 3,500 years old tree. Mrs. Jimyo Takahashi who was one of his students donated the statue to me on November 29, 2002. She remembered my words that I wished to enshrine a statue of Kannon Bodhisattva someday when I established a temple because the Bodhisattva was very popular among many people in Asia and some Americans.

The reason why the World Voice Perceiver Bodhisattva is so popular is because he has promised to save all people in trouble if they think of him. In Chapter 25 of the Lotus Sutra, "World Voice Perceiver," Buddha Sakyamuni says, "can save us from all kinds of calamities of fire, water, demons, swords, clubs, chains, shackles, and bandits." This chapter also says that if someone calls the name of this Bodhisattva, he or she will be able to avoid these calamities and obtain happiness.

The Lotus Sutra was revealed during the first century and early second century along the Silk Road. Many traders traveled from east, west, south and north to different

destinations. They traveled the long unmarked trails of deserts and wilderness, and also through many countries in a state of anarchy. So they prayed to the Bodhisattva to save them. Today we are living in the 21st Century. When we punch the numbers on our cell phone, we can ask for any kind of assistance such as police, firemen, rescuer, rangers, coast guards, lawyers, medical doctors, and a priest. But those who live in primitive countries without telephone needed such faith to the Bodhisattva.

For us who live in modern civilized countries, the salvation of the Bodhisattva means that each one of us needs to realize that we are the World Voice Perceiver Bodhisattvas. Everyone has his or her occupation. Through these jobs we help each other, and others save us.

In the last six chapters of the Lotus Sutra, Sakyamuni Buddha entrusts us in the Latter Age of the Dharma to expound the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. It is the way of Bodhisattva, to seek salvation of us but also others.

Through *Shakyo* (tracing Chapter 25) campaign that I mailed to you last month, I wish you to realize the Buddha's trust in you and also to awaken the existence of the Bodhisattva in the spiritual realm. If you have not received it yet or you need more, please call me at (702)396-6276.

Serenity

By Rev. Shoda Douglas Kanai

A few weeks ago, I visited Japan on a quick trip. I had the opportunity to visit Shinyo-ji outside of Kyoto. While staying there, outside the room I was staying there was this little garden and I began to think of the beauty and calmness that it presented. I also stayed at my uncle/aunt's place in Chiba Prefecture. They had a small yard, but were filled with neatly trimmed trees and bushes.

Living in the desert, it is rare to see green gardens and trees. This made me realize that living in the city, our lives are hectic, commuting to and from work, the stresses of daily workload and the stresses of providing and taking care of the family. We are wrapped up in our daily lives that we do not stop to enjoy what we have, who we are with and where we live. To maintain a balance, we must slow down and appreciate what we have, just like taking time out of the busy day to enjoy a garden, or a stroll through a park or in my case, head to the hills and find a quiet spot amongst the boulders, overlooking the city.

Having balance is important, but being calm is just as important, if not better. By being calm, you can control your mind. You become more serene and others will notice. Wisdom comes from being calm and answers to your questions will appear. It is difficult to break away from our daily routine of running around. Just remember, to slow down and find a quiet place to rest your mind. This will do wonders for your health and sanity.

July/August, 2010