

Minwa-Fu Hokekyo Dowa

(Volume 21 of 30 Volumes)

by Rev. Kōge Matsumoto

Gassho to All Living Beings

(I Deeply Respect You.)

Chapter 1

The Eight Volumes of the Lotus Sutra Are the Universal Truth

Are you in good health? You have studied well, haven't you? "You are great!" Sakyamuni Buddha would say it to you for sure!

The *Lotus Sutra* has 28 chapters and almost 70,000 words contained in 8 scrolls (in the original Chinese version). The most important true teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha are revealed within the 70,000 characters divided into the eight scrolls. The Buddha's teachings of the sutra are divided into these eight volumes that correlate to the eight years He spent expounding them.

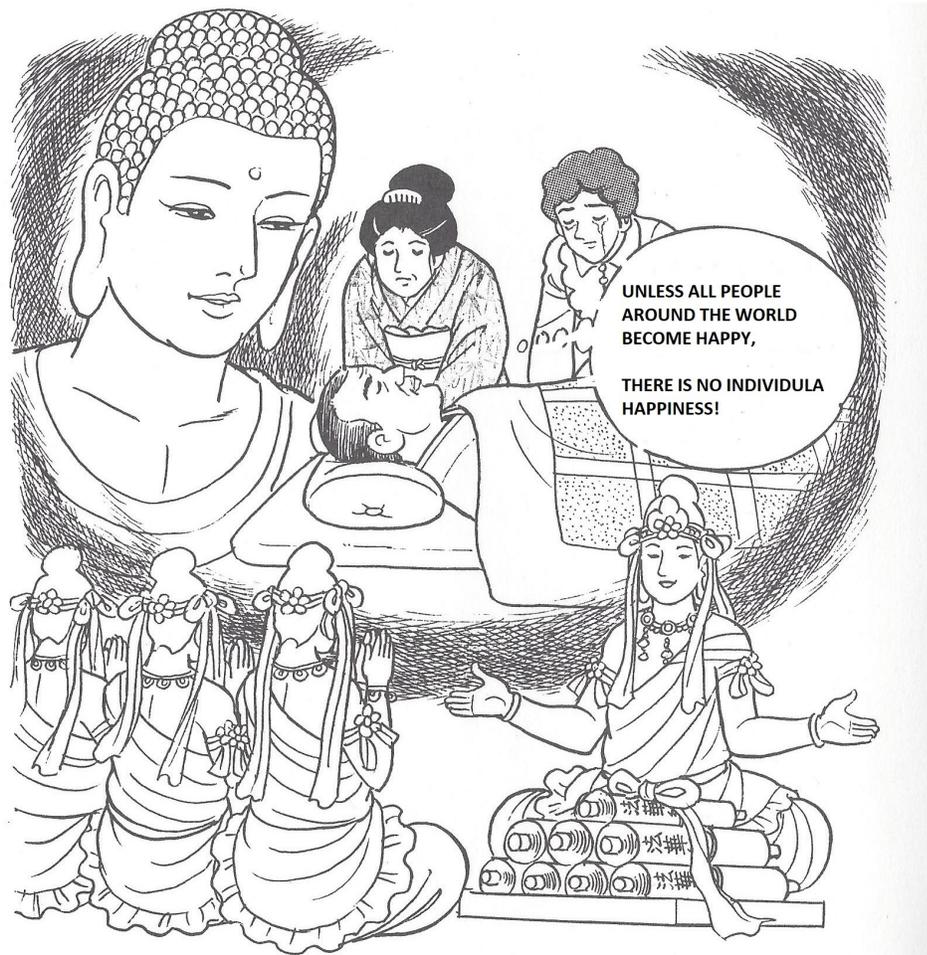
The first place where the Buddha revealed the sutra was at the top of Mt. Sacred Eagle. When the great treasure stupa sprung up from underground in Chapter 11 of the *Lotus Sutra* (Volume 12), the assembly place was moved up in the sky and spread out to the boundless universe.

I have spent six years so far writing this story on the *Lotus Sutra* for children. It is now time for the seventh scroll (volume) entitled Chapter 20, Never-Despising Bodhisattva (volume 21 of this story).

A) Kenji Miyazawa, the Poet for the *Lotus Sutra*

You may know the famous Japanese poet, Kenji Miyazawa who wrote The Night of Galactic Railroad and Kaze no Matasarubo. Among them, his most famous poem is Ame ni mo Makezu. This poet, Kenji Miyazawa, was very fond of the *Lotus Sutra*.

He was an author of children's literature and wrote many stories and poems. On his deathbed, he asked his father to print 1,000 copies of the *Lotus Sutra* for distribution. He said to print the following words, "My life time work was to give this *Lotus Sutra* to you. With the Buddha's compassion, I wish you will enter the most righteous way of the Buddha." He also said, "Unless all people around the world become happy, there is no individual happiness!" He always prayed for world peace and happiness for all people around the world.



B) To Those Who Like the *Lotus Sutra*

I wish you will also be fond of the *Lotus Sutra*, and you think about other people such as your parents and siblings. You must help them to follow the right way.

When more people begin to love the sutra, they will be more obedient and gentle. Then there should be no more fighting among people and no more war among countries. World peace and happiness for all people will be a reality, not just a dream.

C) Happiness Around the World

The story in this volume is just right for this, the most important teaching! Nichiren Dai'Shonin says clearly in a letter, to Emperor Shushun: "The essence of Buddhism is in the *Lotus Sutra* and the gist of practicing the *Lotus Sutra* is shown in the Never-Despising Bodhisattva chapter. It is because Never-Despising Bodhisattva stood in the streets and respected and bowed to any passersby. The true purpose of Sakyamuni Buddha appearing in this world was to teach us how to behave ourselves on a daily basis. Consider this well! The wise are called human beings while the foolish are called beasts."

Unless you respect others and bow to them, doing so repeatedly, you are not really practicing the *Lotus Sutra*. If something came up that you did not like, or if someone said something that you did not like, you might make a sulky face. If so, you will not be a real practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra*.

As Nichiren Dai'Shonin said, "The true purpose of Sakyamuni Buddha appearing in this world was to teach us how to behave daily." You should live bravely with pride as a son or daughter of the Buddha and behave yourself.

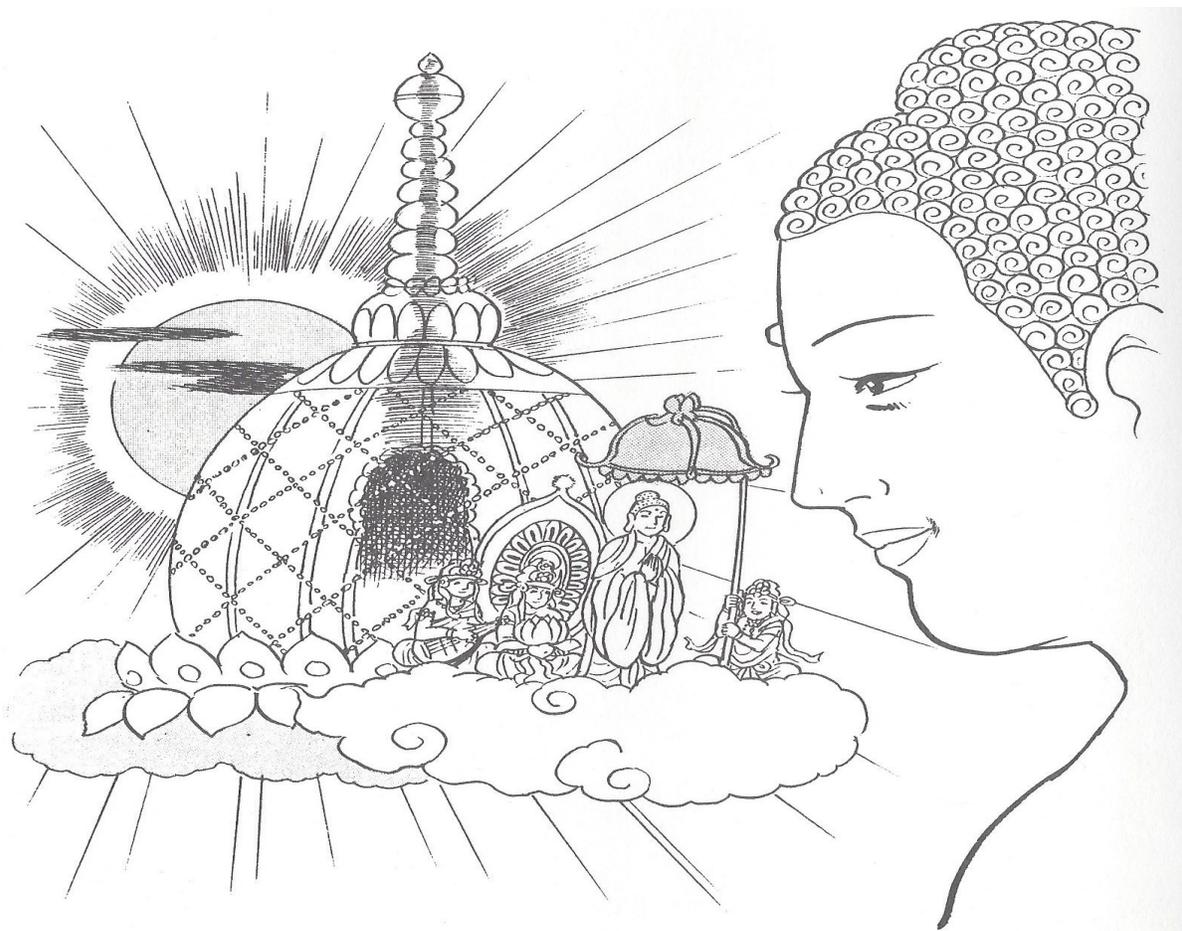
Shall we go back to the main subject:

D) Amida Buddha And His Attendant Bodhisattva

Sakyamuni Buddha talked to Great-Power-Obtainer Bodhisattva in this volume. This Bodhisattva's original Buddha-Land was the Pure-Land in the West where Amida Buddha dwelt. Do you remember when Sakyamuni Buddha was expounding the *Lotus Sutra* in this moment? A stupa of the seven treasures sprang up from under-

ground and hung in the sky before Sakyamuni Buddha. A loud voice of praise was heard from within the stupa, "Excellent, excellent! You, Sakyamuni, have expounded to this great multitude the *Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma*. So, it is so. What you have expounded is all true." Hearing the words of the Many-Treasures Buddha inside the stupa, the great multitude requested of Sakyamuni Buddha that they wished to see the Buddha inside the stupa. Then Sakyamuni Buddha illuminated the ten directions of the universe and purified the universe three times to accommodate all Buddhas and their attendants from the ten directions of the universe. Among these Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, there were Amida Buddha and his attendant, Great-Power-Obtainer Bodhisattva who came from the far west.

Therefore, you understand not only that Buddha and that Bodhisattva from the Western Buddha-Land were present but also there were countless numbers of other Buddhas and their attendants from the ten directions of the universe.



Chapter 2

The Proof to Attain Buddhahood

Thereupon the Buddha said to the Great-Power Obtainer Bodhisattva:

“Know this! Anyone who speaks ill of, abuses or slanders the monks and the nuns, the male and female devotees who keep the *Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma*, will incur the retribution previously stated. Anyone who keeps this sutra will be able to have his eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind purified, that is to say, to obtain the merits as stated in the previous chapter.”

Then the Buddha told us the story of Never-Despising Bodhisattva to prove his attainment of Buddhahood.

A) Don't Need Logic for Attaining Buddhahood

Sakyamuni Buddha wanted to say that you did not need special education or training to attain Buddhahood. He wished to say that anyone who was gentle and obedient and prayed for world peace and happiness of all people, anyone can expound the *Lotus Sutra*.

“Every person is a Buddha's child. There is no racial discrimination such as black or white, the wise or the dull, the good or the bad. Since we are all Buddha's children, we can live together happily!” Believe in these word from the bottom of your heart. When you can act like that, you are already expounding the Dharma of the *Lotus Sutra*.



Shall I begin the story of Never-Despising Bodhisattva:

Innumerable, limitless, inconceivable kalpas ago, there lived a Buddha called Powerful-Voice-King Buddha. The *kalpa* in which he lived was called Free-From-Decay and his world, Great-Achievement.

B) Sufferings Caused by Attachment

“Powerful-Voice-King Buddha expounded the Dharma to all kinds of people and tried to save them all from sufferings. To those who were seeking Enlightenment by listening to the Dharma, the Buddha expounded the Four Noble Truths and the Eight-Fold Path.” He explained the way to get away from sufferings was to destroy attachment and to follow the eight right ways like Right Thought, Right View, Right Speech, and so on.

All living beings go through the process of birth, aging, sickness and death. Once you are born, death is inevitable sooner or later. When one gets old, strength of body naturally weakens and one gets sick easily. Even though some people think that they are still young and can move around, when their conducts go too far, they will shorten their life. When we get old, we easily get sick. We will all die for sure. But it is important how to die peacefully. We must aim for it!

C) Survive Because of Others

Those people who were called Sravakas who listened attentively to Powerful-Voice-King Buddha saved themselves from sufferings of birth, old age, disease, and death.

Those who were called Pratyekabuddhas wished to attain Buddhahood by observing the phenomena in the universe and who realized the universal truth of inter-dependence – all living beings live depending on others. The Buddha taught them the Twelve Causes, that is, the teaching of not to be selfish and arrogant but to appreciate others, nature and the universe.



D) Sacrifice One-Self, Then Brighten Yourself

Then, the Buddha expounded the teaching of the Six Paramitas to the Bodhisattvas who were seeking Enlightenment with gentle minds and volunteer work. They were also supposed to expound the Dharma with easily understandable words, help suffering beings and keep the precepts (not to kill, not to steal, not to have immoral behavior, not to take drink or food to hurt one's body.)

Powerful-Voice-King Buddha continued to expound the Dharma to be patient, even though they were persecuted, to repent wrong conducts, to keep calm minds, and not to betray others. Thus, the Buddha caused them to obtain the wisdom of the Buddha.

Chapter 3 Twenty Thousand Powerful-Voice-King Tathagatas

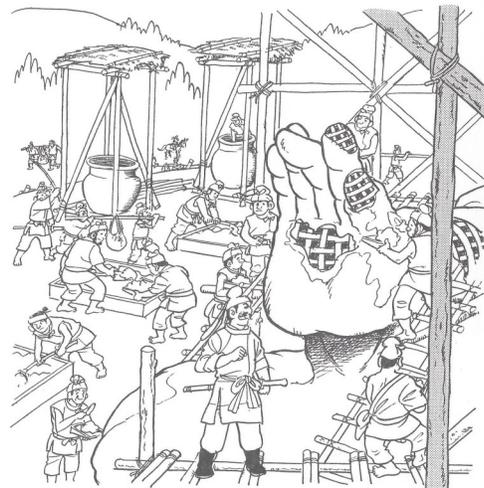
“Great-Power-Obtainer! The duration of the life of Powerful-Voice-King Buddha was forty billion nayuta kalpas, that is, as many grains of sand in the River Ganges. His Right Teachings were preserved for as many kalpas as the particles of dust in the Saha-world, the earth. The counterfeit of his right teachings was four times longer than the duration of the Right Teaching.”

“During that much unimaginable kalpas length of time, the Powerful-Voice-King Buddha benefited all living beings and then passed away. After the eras of his Right Teaching and Counterfeit teaching, the *mappo* era came. In that *mappo* era there appeared in that world another Buddha also called Powerful-Voice-King Buddha.”

“The second Powerful-Voice-King Buddha's duration of life was exactly the same as the first one. When the second Powerful-Voice-King Buddha passed away, the third Buddha with the same name, Powerful-Voice-King Buddha, appeared. After him, the Buddhas of the same name appeared one after another, two billion altogether in the same world called Great-Achievement.”

A) The Bodhisattva's Name Was Never-Despising

It was during the middle of the Counterfeit era, the first Powerful-Voice-King Buddha's Right teaching, that there lived too many arrogant and powerful people. However, there was one Bodhisattva who behaved very gently and compassionately just like a Buddha who wished to save all people to obtain Buddhahood even at the cost of his life. He was called Never-Despising Bodhisattva."



B) Respect, Bow and Repeat Bow

"Why was this Bodhisattva called Never-Despising? It was because, every time he saw monks and nuns and male and female laypeople, he bowed to them and praised them loudly, 'I respect you deeply. I do not despise you. Why is that? It is because you will be able to practice the way of Bodhisattvas and become Buddhas."

What would you do if a strange priest approached you, put his palms together, bowed deeply to you and said, 'I respect you. ... You will be able to become a Buddha?' If the priest was someone you knew and he was a respectable person, you might be glad to hear the words. But in a case of a priest who was not worthy of respect and a playful person, you might not be comfortable.

This priest did not read or recite any sutra. The only thing he did was to bow and said to others that they would be able to become Buddhas. When he saw someone else far away, he hurried to approach them and did the same thing, smiled and said, "I do not despise you. Why is that? It is because you will be able to practice the way of Bodhisattvas and become Buddhas."

C) Behavior rather than Empty Lip Service

I told you before that Nichiren Dai'Shonin said, "What is the significance of the act of Never-Despising Bodhisattva? The true purpose of Sakyamuni Buddha appearing in this world was to teach us how to behave ourselves on a daily basis."

Never-Despising Bodhisattva was quite different from any other people and other priests. He respected everyone; adults and children, men and women, priests and lay people. He respected all people, put his palms together, bowed and repeated the bows. He always said the same thing.

This priest did not read or recite any sutra. The only thing he did was to bow and say to others that they would be able to become Buddhas. When he saw someone else far away, he hurried to approach them and did the same thing - smiled and said, "I do not despise you. Why is that? It is because you will be able to practice the way of Bodhisattvas and become Buddhas."



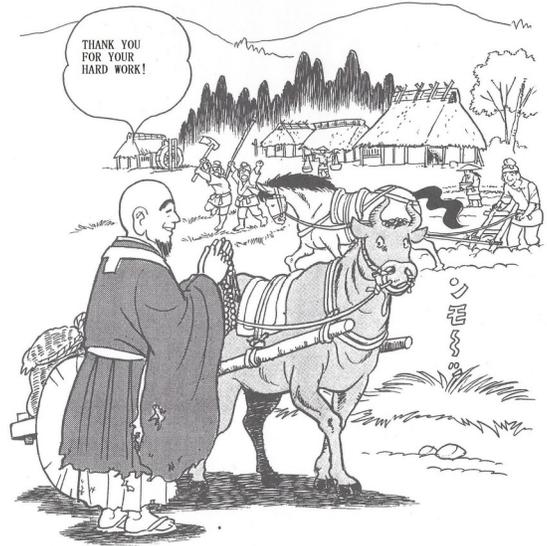
D) Uncooperative People in Any Place

Somehow, there were many people who were uncooperative toward him. They felt uncomfortable and felt that he was very bothersome. Some of them pretended not to see him or scowled at him, while others despised him, saying, "Where did you come from? You said that you do not despise us, and assured us that we would become Buddhas. We do not need such a false assurance of our future Buddhahood! Get away from here!" They chased him away.

E) Until His Prayers Reaches Their Minds

Although he was abused like this for many years, he did not get angry at all. He always said to them, “You will become Buddhas” from morning to night every day. Not only did he say this to people but he said the same phrases to cows, horses, any animals, grasses, trees, flowers and insects. He stopped and bowed to them. At a road side when he saw a flower, he stopped by and bowed to the flower and said, “Oh, how beautiful and cute! Thank you very much.” When he wanted to rest on a rock, he said, “Let me sit on you! Thank you very much!” and bowed.

When he saw an ox or a horse working hard, he talked to them as if he talked to a person, “Thank you for your hard work always,” and he bowed. “Because you work hard, we human beings have wonderful and blessed lives! Thank you very much!”



F) All Living Beings Are Dependent on Others to Live

We should follow the Never-Despising Bodhisattva’s way. In our grace, we say, “Even a drop of water and a grain of rice are the result of our fellow’s hard work.” Then we eat food or have a drink.

A human being cannot do anything by himself alone. If the sun does not shine; grains, fruits and vegetables do not grow. If rain does not fall, the land will dry up and nothing grows. But if too much rain falls or there are too many long sunny days, it may prevent the plants from growing. The sun and the rain cloud talk to each other harmoniously, so we have just enough sunny and rainy days. When they argue sometimes, typhoons and hurricanes come.

Even though compassionate rain falls, if there are not enough green trees, rain water does not stay in the soils under the trees. The green vegetation soak up dirty air and produce oxygen. Without the oxygen, we cannot live for a second. Thus, all living beings are dependent on others to live. We must appreciate everything around us and bow to them.

G) When You Forget to Appreciate...

Wars occur when people have forgotten to appreciate others. If the wars continue, the green trees will be burned down, vegetable fields will be destroyed, and human beings cannot live. The lands will be almost dead. Therefore, you can say that the people who have forgotten to appreciate others, they will eventually destroy the lands.

Any place and any country is considered to be a part of the body of the Buddha, so to destroy the land means to hurt Buddha's physical body. The Buddha is always watching us even if we fight. He prays for us to stop the fighting, "Hurry, stop the fighting! Think about others! Please put your hands together and bow!" Before we bow to the statues of the Buddha, the statue of the Buddha bows to us always.



H) His Robe Ripped Off and His Body Injured

Going back to the story, keeping the above-mentioned matters in your mind, the Bodhisattva bowed and said, "I respect you deeply, I do not despise you. Why is that? It is because you will be able to practice the Way of Bodhisattvas and become Buddhas!" He respected others, bowed and repeated the bow.

However, in the *mappo* era the defiled minded people could not understand how wonderful action he was performing. They disliked and hated him, "The dirty robed monk is coming this way again! He may think that he is a Buddha. We do not need such a false assurance of our future Buddhahood." They were irritated and started to strike him with a stick, a piece of wood, a piece of tile or a stone. His robes were snagged, injured, bloodied and there were bruises on his body here and there. It looked so painful.

1) The Arrogant People Lost Their Energy

However, Never-Despising Bodhisattva ran away in a hurry to a distance, and bowed and said in a loud voice from afar, "I respect you deeply. I do not despise you. It is because you will be able to practice the Way of Bodhisattvas and become Buddhas." He continued to do that for many years. It may be easy to do that for a day or two, but to do that for many years is very hard. Without his firm belief and determination, he could not have done that. So, the arrogant people gave up.

Little by little, they changed their hateful behaviors toward him and did not throw tiles or stones. If he did not show up for a few days, they started to worry about him. "What's happened to him? Is he sick or something?" Some people began to wait for him to appear. They talked to each other, "Is he sick? He did not show up!"



J) The Winner Is the Person Who acted with Righteousness

It is amazing! Without any hard study or practices, if one believed in the Dharma, “All human beings are Buddha’s children, so they will become Buddhas sooner or later.” To respect others and bow to them from the bottom of one’s heart is the same as expounding the *Lotus Sutra*.

After many years, those arrogant people became friendly toward him. Because he always said these phrases, he was called “Never-Despising” by the arrogant people. He practiced never despising others all his life until one day he was about to pass away ...



Chapter 4

Never-Despising Became a Bodhisattva

When he was about to pass away, he heard the voice of Powerful-Voice-King Buddha who expounded the *Lotus Sutra* in the sky, and surprisingly he could understand the sutra although he had not read or recited the sutra but just respected others and bowed toward others in this life. Not only that, he was able to have his eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind purified. So, he became a Bodhisattva.

Having his six sense-organs purified, he was able to prolong his life for two hundred billion *nayuta* more years. He expounded this *Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma* to many people in his prolonged life. Seeing he had obtained great supernatural powers, the people became cleansed in their minds and become obedient and learned the teachings of the sutra.

By that time, the arrogant people who had abused him realized his great compassion, and they also respected the Never-Despising Bodhisattva.

A) Help Others by Preaching Joyfully

Understanding everything that Powerful-Voice-King Buddha expounded about the *Lotus Sutra* in the sky, Never-Despising Bodhisattva obtained the power of eloquence that is not to be afraid of any persecutions and the great power of good tranquility that is to cause the people to enter the path of the real right way of the Dharma and happiness.



Seeing the majestic appearance of the Buddha obtaining the powers of eloquence and the great power of good tranquility, the arrogant people repented their wrong doings and respected the Bodhisattva more deeply.

“This Bodhisattva also taught thousands of billions of living beings, and led them into the way to enlightenment.” He taught that everyone had Buddha nature; therefore, if they followed the right ways, they would be able to become Buddhas.

“After the end of his prolonged life, he was able to meet two hundred thousand million Buddhas, all of them being called Sun-Moon-Light Tathagata. These Buddhas also expounded the *Lotus Sutra*.”

B) Protected by Many Tathagatas

Listening to the sutra under these many Buddhas together with the repentant arrogant people during many rebirths, they practiced the Dharma and expounded it. Because of these causes, he was able to meet another two hundred thousand million Buddhas, this time, all of them being called Cloud-Freedom-Light-King Tathagata.

Under these new Buddhas he also kept, read and recited this sutra, and expounded it to many people so that he was able to have his natural six sense-organs purified and to become fearless in expounding the Dharma.

Thus, he could see all happenings in the past and the future and all things near and far, in the sky or underground. Because he could see through everything, he had nothing to be afraid of.

Chapter 5

The Bodhisattva Became A Buddha

Sakyamuni Buddha said to Great-Power-Obtainer Bodhisattva:

“Great-Power-Obtainer! This Never-Despising Bodhisattva made offerings to those Buddhas, respected them, honored them, praised them and planted the roots of good. After that, he was able to meet thousands of billions of Buddhas, Sun-Moon-Light Tathagatas and Cloud-Freedom-Light Tathagatas. He also expounded this sutra under those Buddhas and caused those arrogant people to awake in them the true teaching of the Eternal Buddha. By accumulating these merits, he was able to become a Buddha.”

In order to make peace on earth, we must throw away prejudice and selfishness and instead respect the Buddha nature of each one of us and cause everyone to seek enlightenment.

Now Sakyamuni’s Buddha declared:

A) The Ways of Bodhisattva by the Eternal Buddha

“Great-Power-Obtainer Bodhisattva! What do you think of this? The Never-Despising Bodhisattva at that time was no one, but Myself.”

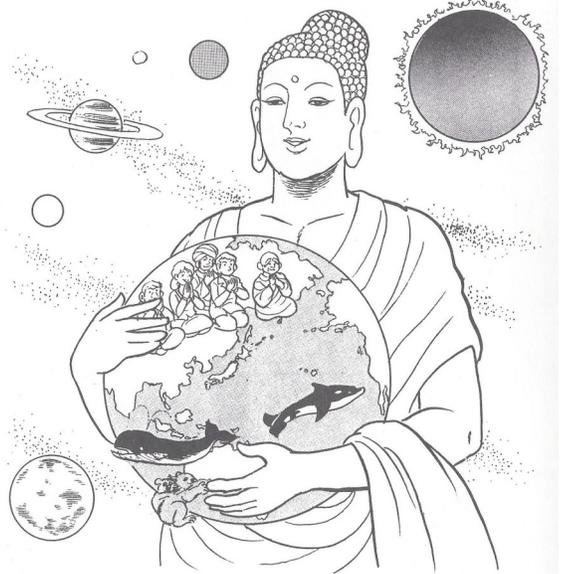
What a surprise! Countless kalpas ago, Sakyamuni Buddha was a plain monk. Although He was attacked with pieces of wood, tile and stone, he put his hands together in *gassho* and respected them and bowed to them saying the phrase! “I respect you deeply. Because you will become Buddhas.” With these actions, he caused those arrogant people to enter the way of Bodhisattvas and tried to have them attain Buddhahood.

Because of that, he was able to meet so many Buddhas and he also expounded the *Lotus Sutra*. As the result of these merits, He was able to become the Buddha five hundred dust particle kalpas ago. (See Volume 8)

Sakyamuni Buddha continued:

“If I had not kept, read or recited this sutra or expounded it to others in My previous existence, I should not have been able to attain Buddhahood so quickly by these accumulated merits.”

Now, Sakyamuni Buddha had appeared as a physical human being on this Saha-world about 2,500 years ago to show us that we will be able to become Buddhas. Thus, the Buddha declared the starting point of The Duration of the Life of the Tathagata in Chapter 16 of the *Lotus Sutra* was Never-Despising Bodhisattva. (See Volume 17)



B) What Does It Mean to Become a Buddha?

What does it mean to become a Buddha?

I think it is to respect others, put our palms together, bow and repeat bowing even if pieces of tile or stone are thrown at you until the person realizes his wrong doing and repents it. This is the only way to bring peace on earth.

If you talk back to someone who speaks ill of you, it will become a big argument. Because someone beat you, if you beat him back, it will turn into a bloody fight.

It is the same with an argument between you and someone else and a fight between countries. You fight back because the other country attacked, and then, there will be no end of the wars on this earth.

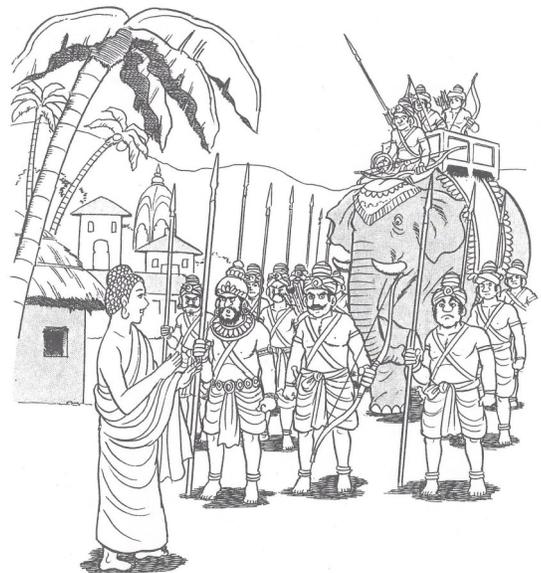
C) The Lord, the Master and the Parent of Compassionate Mind

For example, this was a real story that happened in the Kingdom of Kapilavastu where the Sakya Clan lived and a neighboring country. Their relationships were more like relatives in a royal family's marriage.

A few years before Buddha Sakyamuni passed away, His native kingdom Kapilavastu was almost attacked by the troops of a neighboring kingdom. Sakyamuni stood at the border and blocked the way, twice saying, “Hatred is never overcome by hatred. Hatred produces more hatred, and another hatred starts. Hatred is overcome by forgiveness!” Listening to the Buddha, King Virudhaka stopped the invasions twice.

The king could not forget the humiliation he had received from a retainer of the Kapilavastu, so he tried to invade the Buddha’s father’s kingdom twice; however, he turned back the way he had come. The strong hatred in his mind during the first and second invasions was able to be controlled for a while, but the seed of hatred stayed deep in his mind. One year before the Buddha passed away, King Virudhaka decided not to listen to the Buddha and invaded a third time.

Sakyamuni Buddha could read the King’s mind, and He knew that the original cause of his hatred was a Kapilavastu retainer’s fault. Therefore, the Buddha gave up but prayed for the king’s Buddha nature to awaken.



D) Sakyamuni at the Age of 80

I felt sorry for Sakyamuni Buddha that at the age of 80 the kingdom where He was born and raised was invaded by the closely related neighbor country, Kosala. The Buddha was already at the age of 80. He was thinking of visiting His homeland, Kapilavastu one more time before His Great Nirvana.

If Sakyamuni had been an ordinary sage, the fate of King Virudhaka and Sakyamuni might have been different. Sakyamuni was not just a saint from the Sakya Clan, He was the Eternal Buddha who obtained the three virtues of the lord, the master and the parent.

He was born as an ordinary human being as the Manifestation Buddha who appeared on this earth for the benefit of unenlightened sentient beings, the Reward Buddha who became a Buddha as a result of six years of self-denial practices, and the Dharma Buddha who transcended personality and was identical with the Universal Truth. Sakyamuni Buddha as the Eternal Buddha might have felt sad for the destruction of Kapilavastu but He also felt sorry and gave compassion to King Virudhaka who was inflamed with illusion and hatred.

E) Seeing with Great Compassion

It is surprising to know the law of cause, condition and effect. The Kingdom of King Virudhaka who invaded and destroyed Kapilavastu was in the hand of King Ajatasatru of Kingdom Magada in later years. (See Volume 2.)

Sakyamuni Buddha said on many occasions in the *Lotus Sutra*, “The triple world is not peaceful. It is like the burning house. It is full of sufferings. It is dreadful.” “The triple world is my property. All living beings therein are my children.” “The triple world is full of suffering. I will cause them to attain Buddhahood.” These words are expressions of the Eternal Buddha’s great compassion! I hope you will be blessed with His great compassion soon!

Throw away the idea of an eye for an eye.
If all people around the world deeply respected each other and took good care of this beautiful earth, world peace will come!

Shall we try to do that?



Chapter 6

How to Keep Up This Beautiful Earth

I wish all leaders in the world understood the great compassion of the Eternal Buddha. Then, they would realize not to have any wars and any kind of exploitation that could shorten the life of this beautiful blue planet, the earth, for any reason.

Thinking of one's own immediate profit only, some people cut so many trees in the forest or for a comfortable living style, we use air conditioners, refrigerators and spray cans, and the chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) destroys the ozone layer.

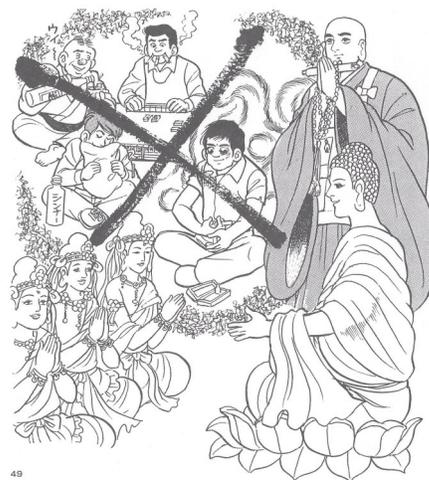
The ozone layer is very important for all living beings on earth. Although we may be a little less comfortable, why we do not have a slower living style. Let us have more spare time like not driving too fast, listening to comfortable music to relax, and talking with family more leisurely. Then I think we will be able to see and to think about more important things and matters. What do you think about that?

A) Don't Cut Your Relationship with the Dharma

Sakyamuni Buddha told Great-Power-Obtainer Bodhisattva:

“Great-Power-Obtainer Bodhisattva! When I was the Bodhisattva and respected everyone; the monks, the nuns, the male and female lay people who abused me at that time and failed to meet the Buddhas, failed to hear the Dharma, and failed to see the Sangha for twenty thousand million kalpas because they abused Me with anger. They suffered much in hell for one thousand kalpas. Having expiated their sins in this way, they met Me who was Never-Despising Bodhisattva again, and later they were led into the way to enlightenment in this present life.” (This means at the assembly in the sky.)

“Great-Power-Obtainer Bodhisattva! What do you think of this? The four kinds of devotees who abused Me, who was that Bodhisattva at that time, are now here in this congregation of the five hundred Bodhisattvas including Bhadrakala, the five hundred nuns including Lion-Moon, and the five hundred male lay people including Thinking-Of-Buddha. Now they do not falter in seeking enlightenment.”



B) Things You Can Take with You at Your Death

Nichiren Dai'Shonin says in Sushun Tenno Gosho, "It is not easy to be born as a human being in this world. The chance of this happening is as small as the amount of dirt on a fingernail though there are immeasurable amounts of soil on the earth and other planets. Life as a human is as unstable as a drop of dew on grass."

He also says in the same writing, "The value of a healthy body is more precious than treasures in the storehouse. At the same time; however, a healthy body means nothing if your mind is not pure. This is why we can say that our most precious treasure is our mind (heart) itself."

It is said that there is an intermediate existence after death and before rebirth in another world. To be born as a human being in our next existence is as rare and small as the amount of dirt on a fingernail though there is an immeasurable amount of soil on the earth and other planets. Therefore, you must appreciate deeply to be born as a human being on this earth. That is the main reason why we must appreciate our parents and ancestors.

Please do not abuse your own body by indulging in smoking and drinking, which may cause you to get sick. Even worse is to be involved in drugs. Then you will waste your precious life. Your life will end just like the morning dews on grass. Nichiren Dai'Shonin warned you not to be like that.

How to keep up your life? Even if you save a lot of money and treasures in a storehouse, you cannot take them to the spiritual realm when you die. Therefore, take good care of yourself not to get sick, have good friends and live together with other people in harmony. More important is to be obedient and gentle to all people. Have thoughtfulness in regards o them and let them chant the sacred title of the *Lotus Sutra*, "Namu Myo-ho Ren-ge Kyo."

That is what Nichiren Dai'Shonin tried to convey in his message.

C) No Doubt and No Perplex

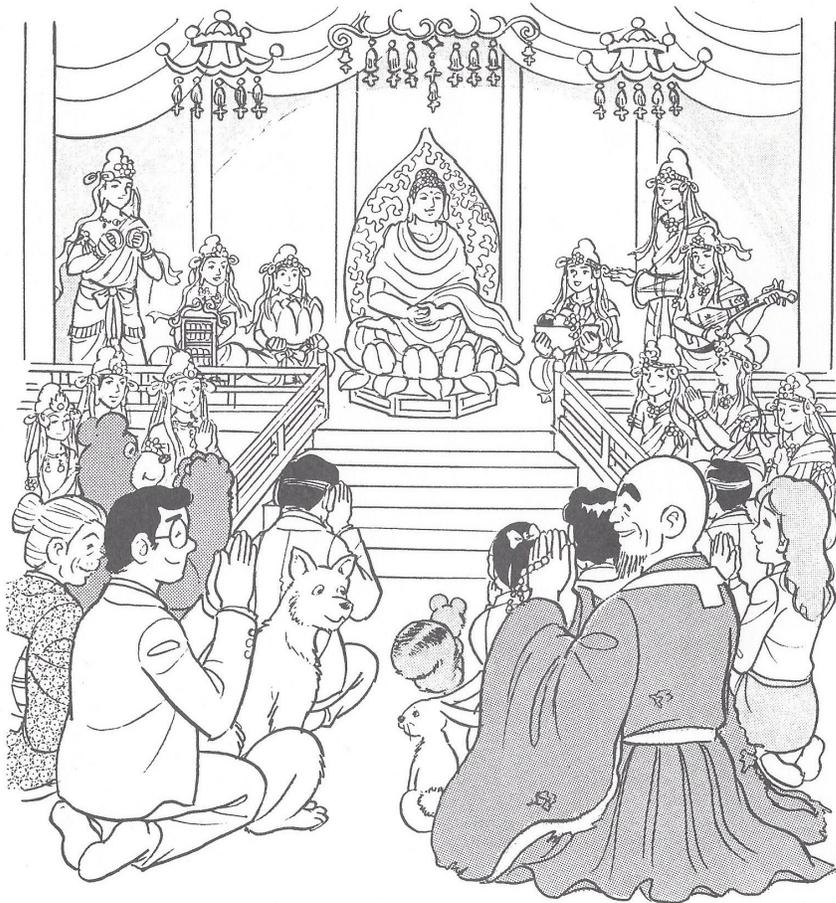
Sakyamuni Buddha said at the end of this chapter in the sutra:

"Therefore, anyone who hears this sutra and practices the way after my extinction,

should have no doubts about this sutra. He should expound this sutra with all his heart even if someone threatens him. Then he will be able to meet Buddhas throughout all his existences and quickly attain the enlightenment of the Buddhas.” Thus, the Buddha promised us.

The four kinds of devotees who had always abused Never-Despising Bodhisattva at that time were present at the assembly in the sky. They were the five hundred Bodhisattvas including Bhadrpada, the five hundred nuns including Lion-Moon, and the five hundred laymen including Thinking-Of-Buddha. Now all of them were able to seek Buddhahood with appreciation to the Buddha and with their faces full of tears.

Their joyfulness can be understood because even if they repented their wrong doing toward the Bodhisattva who would become the Buddha, they may have injured the manifestation of the Eternal Buddha while He appeared in the form of Never-Despising Bodhisattva. Those great sinful arrogant people were pardoned, they were able to become Bodhisattvas and finally allowed to attend the assembly of the *Lotus Sutra* by Sakyamuni Buddha at Mt. Sacred Eagle. They must be “Such very lucky people.” That was why they were so joyful!



D) The Person to Become Never-Despising Bodhisattva

Everyone, please keep that in mind!
In the defiled world of the *mappo* era,
If you can find a person
Who always smiles to everyone,
Who always devotes himself to others,
At the cost of his life
He must be Never-Despising Bodhisattva.
He respects others deeply, bows and repeats bowing.
He is the messenger of the Buddha.
He will save all people.

