

Buddhist Terms in Chapter 28 of the Lotus Sutra

Jambudvīpa (閻浮提) (P.338, L.21): It is the name of a great island to the south of Mt. Sumeru and is the world in which we are living according to the traditional cosmologic view.

Trayastrimsa (忉利天) (P.338, L.29): The heaven of the Thirty-two gods. It is located on the top of Mt. Sumeru. There is a place in center, in which Sakra lives. On each of the four corners of the plateau on the mountain, there is a small peak on which eight gods live. Therefore, altogether thirty-two gods live on the top of the mountain.

Tusita Heaven (兜率天) (P.338, L.21): The fourth of the six heavens in the world of desire. Maitreya-bodhisattva is said to live in this heave.

Later five hundred years after my extinction (如来の滅後、後の五百歳) (P.340, L.15): The fifth five-hundred-year period of the five groups of five hundred years after the Buddha's decease. This fifth period is said to be one of struggle. It is the same with Latter Age of Degeneration or *mappō*. It is the period when we are alive. Nichiren Shonin emphasized that we are living in the period of the later five hundred years after Buddha's death and that the Lotus Sutra was revealed for the sake of the people in this period especially Chapter 23 to 28. These chapters explain how to expound the sutra, how to practice it, how the heavenly beings protect those who practice the sutra, and how much they will be rewarded. However, those who blame the practioner will be punished.

Note the Three Periods after Buddha's Decease:

Buddha's right teachings 正法 (shōbō) (p.115): *The first of the three periods after the Buddha's decease. It lasts for 1,000 years (2 x 500). During this period, it is when Buddha's doctrines, practices, and enlightenment all exist.*

The counterfeit of his right teachings 像法 (zōbō) (p.115): *The second of the three periods after the Buddha's decease. It lasts for 1,000 year (2 x 500) after the first period. It is the period when both doctrine and practices still exist, but there is no longer any enlightenment. That is why it is called counterfeit of the right teachings or imitation of the law.*

The last period is called Latter Age of Degeneration 末法 (mappō). It lasts ten thousand years after the first two periods have ended. It is the fifth five-hundred-years after Buddha's death. It is when doctrine alone is still alive, but here is neither practice nor enlightenment. After these three periods, the doctrine itself vanishes.