

Minwa-Fu Hokekyo Dowa

(Volume 16 of 30 Volumes)

by Rev. Kōge Matsumotos

Translated by Rev. Shokai Kana

**The Original Vow Is to Be a Great
Missionary to Expound the Lotus Sutra
In the *Mappo* Era
(Just as the Lotus-flower Blooms in the Muddy Water)**

Chapter 1

**The Original Wish of Buddha's Appearance Is to Ex-
pound the Lotus Sutra**

The real purpose of the appearance of Sakyamuni Buddha on this Saha-World was to expound the Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law to save all living beings equally on this world. He wished to expound the Lotus Sutra to everyone, regardless of their skin color, whether they were good or bad, as if they were His own children to make them happy and peaceful by listening to the teachings of the Lotus Sutra.

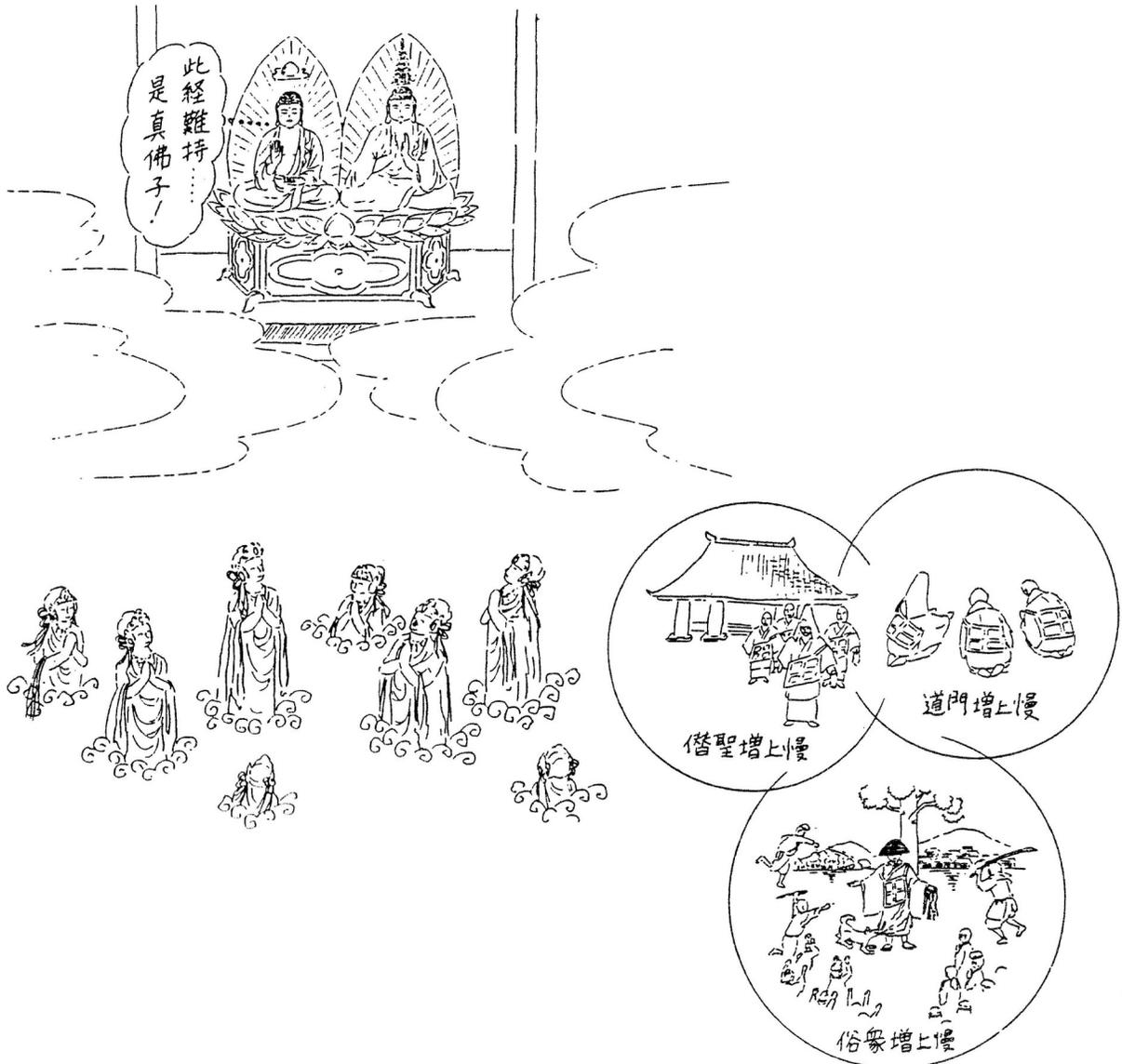
A) Provisional Teachings Taught in the Form of Words

In the first half of the Lotus Sutra, Sakyamuni Buddha taught that only the Lotus Sutra can remove all people's sufferings. He taught various parables trying to teach that the Lotus Sutra is the one and only teaching that saves all living beings from their sufferings and eliminates their attachment. This sutra is the one and only true teaching that creates happiness. The ultimate happiness is to meet this sutra and to chant the spirit of the sutra, "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo."

In Volume 11 (The Teacher of the Dharma) the Buddha said that the sutra is hard to understand unless you are obedient to the teachings, and you must have a pure and compassionate mind to understand the Lotus Sutra. If you want to be an expounder of the sutra, you should practice the Buddha Dharma compassionately and must overcome any ordeal. Unless you have a strong determination, you cannot be "the Messenger of the Buddha."

In Volume 12 (Many Treasures Stupa) the Buddha declared the "Three Divine Messages" that surprised everyone. He said, "Is there anyone who is willing to expound the Lotus Sutra after My extinction in the Declining Latter Age of the Dharma?" He also revealed "the Six Hard things to do and Nine Easy things to do" that are the conditions for the messenger of the Buddha to deal with. Thus, it is not an easy task to do it without the strong determination of the expounder, but He would wish to transmit this sutra directly to the person who will expound the sutra.

Besides that, in Volume 14, “Sacrifice One’s Life” (Encouragement for Keeping This Sutra) the Buddha revealed “the Three Kinds of Strong Enemies” (the self-conceit by ordinary people, by priests, and by saintly behaving priests) that will cause various problems for the expounder of the Lotus Sutra, such as chasing them away from a hut, burning down this house, exiling him, and throwing pieces of tiles and rocks at him and even trying to behead him.



B) Who Will Claim to Be the Expounder?

Who on earth is the expounder? The congregation included not only the people there but also all living beings around the world who attentively listened to the Buddha revealing the great universal truth. Sakyamuni Buddha cleaned the assembly place three times to accommodate all those Buddhas and their attendant Bodhisattvas from the ten directions of the universe. There were more of them than the number of sand particles of the River Ganges. Among them, who will claim to be the expounder of the Lotus Sutra in the *Mappo* Era?

C) The Original Teachings to Sense by One's Heart

Now it is time for Sakyamuni Buddha to lead us to the real spiritual world called “*hon-mon*” or the Buddha’s original teachings rather than the teachings of the parables and stories in this material world. I suggest you rein in your mind toward the new teaching and imagine the scene that the Buddha is talking about.

Thereupon countless number of Bodhisattvas, more than the number of sand particles of the River Ganges, who had come from the other worlds, stood up and put their palms together in a respectable pose with a very strong resolution said to the Buddha:

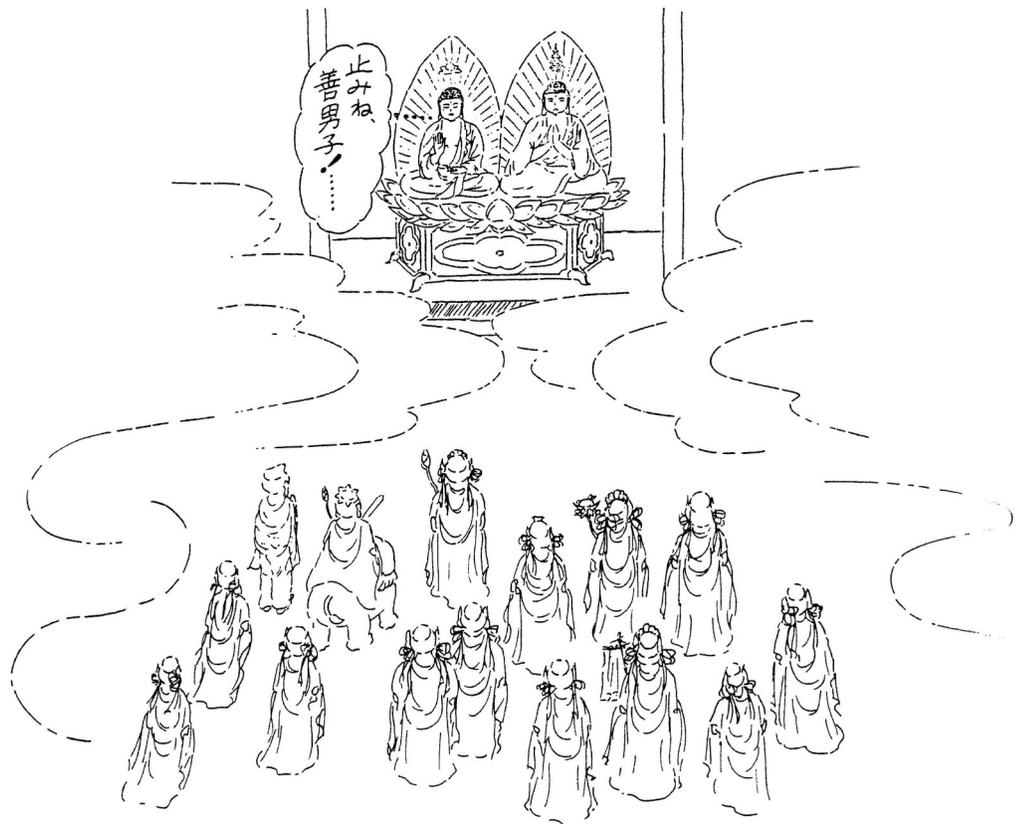
“The World Honored One! After your extinction, we will be born again on this earth and if you permit us to protect, keep, read, memorize, copy and expound the Lotus Sutra to this world, we will do so.”

Remember! Sakyamuni Buddha had asked many times, “Is there anyone who wishes to expound the Lotus Sutra after my extinction?” Therefore, the congregation thought how the Buddha might be glad to hear the proposal by these countless number of Bodhisattvas.

D) No Need to do That!

The congregation watched the Buddha to see how He would react as they thought He would be glad to hear that! They were shocked again to hear what the Buddha said!

“No, good men! You do not need to do that! I shall not accept you to expound the sutra!” How dare the Buddha say that to these Bodhisattvas with their sincere resolution! Sometimes we can barely understand what the Buddha says. We may go and pout. But I often tell you that every spoken word of the Buddha always has supreme meanings; therefore, we should not pout just because we could not understand what He said.



Chapter 2

The Great Bodhisattvas from Underground

Shall we look at the supreme meaning deep in the Buddha's mind?

Sakyamuni Buddha continued to say, "The reason why I said 'No' is because there are Great Bodhisattvas sixty thousand times as many as the sand particles of the River Ganges in this Saha-World after My extinction. They have been waiting to fulfill this great task since a long time ago. They have great powers of leading the people and of educating them. They are each accompanied by attendants also numbering sixty thousand times as many as the sand particles of the River Ganges. They will protect, keep, recite and expound this sutra after My extinction."

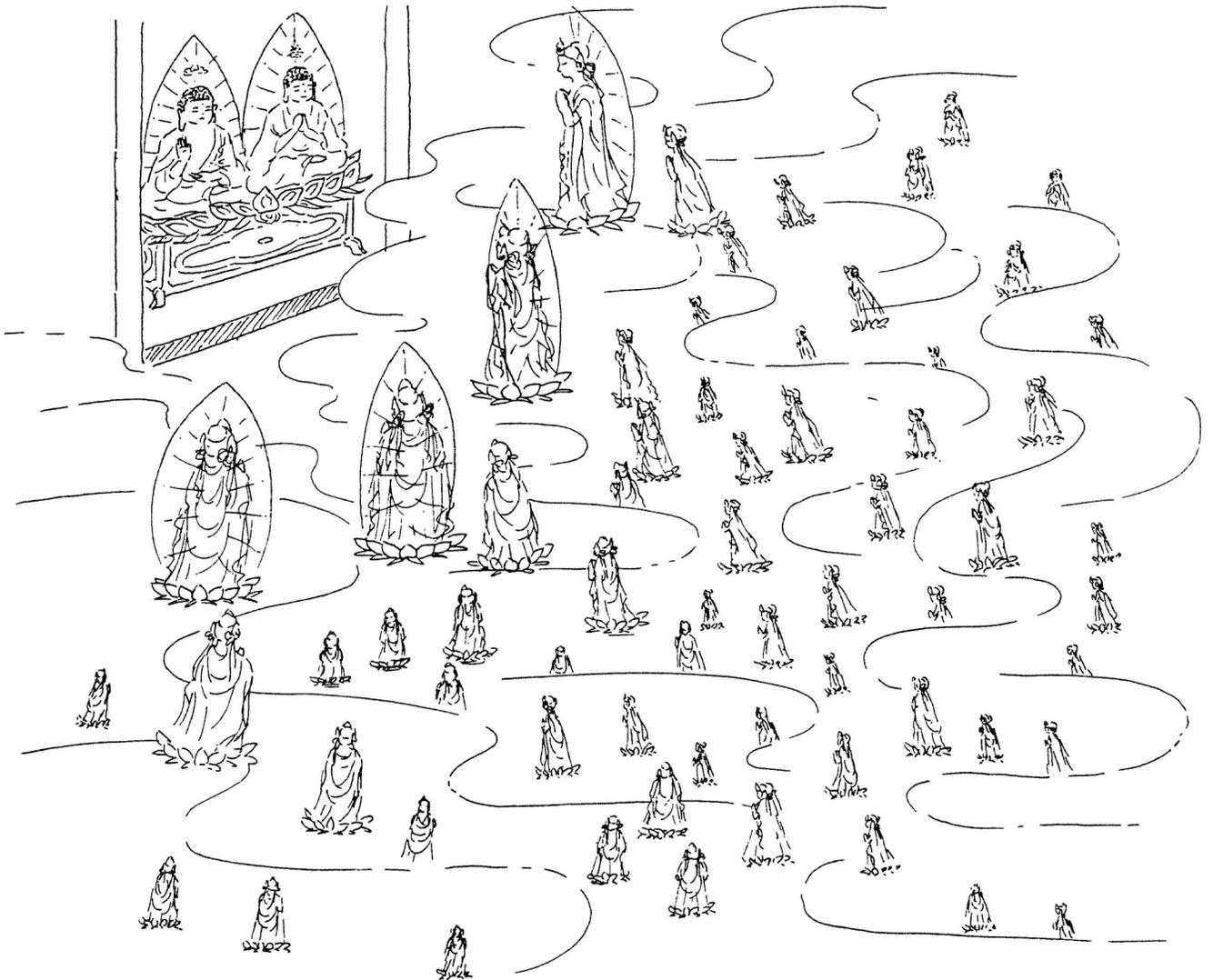
A) Their Original Wishes Were to Appear in the *Mappo* Era

Thus, He said that the great number of the Bodhisattvas have been waiting to appear for us in the *Mappo* Era! They have been waiting for quite a long time for the Buddha's call. That was the reason why Sakyamuni Buddha did not give attention to the proposal to propagate by the countless number of Bodhisattvas from the ten directions of the universe. It is now understandable just as we cannot rely on outsiders taking care of our family's trouble. The members of a family must take care of their own family members first.

Listening to the Buddha's declaration, "They have been waiting to fulfill this great task since a long time ago. There are sixty thousand times as many Bodhisattvas as the sand particles of the River Ganges in this Saha-World after My extinc-

tion.” The countless number of the great Bodhisattvas thought, “It is now time for us to appear from underground.”

At that time the ground of the Saha-World quaked and cracked. Then, many thousands of billions of golden shining Bodhisattvas sprang up from the underground simultaneously. It looked like the explosion of many volcanos or fog coming out of a valley after heavy rain, these great Bodhisattvas sprang up with high speed one after another.



B) Golden-colored Great Bodhisattvas

“They had lived in the sky below this Saha-World.” They possessed innate virtue and authority to expound the Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma in the Declining Latter Age of the Dharma. There are as many of them as sand particles of the River Ganges. Each one of them were accompanied by their master Bodhisattvas who educated them.

“The Bodhisattvas were each accompanied by attendants, as many as sixty thousand times the number of the sand particles of the River Ganges. They included those who were each accompanied by lesser attendants, for instance, fifty thousand times, forty thousand times, thirty thousand times, twenty thousand times or ten thousand times the number of sand particles, ... or a billion, ten million, a million, ten thousand, a thousand, a hundred, ten, five, four, three, or two attendants, or only by one attendant. The Bodhisattvas who preferred a solitary life came alone.”

The sky was filled with these countless number of the Bodhisattvas and their attendants from underground.

C) Greetings to Sakyamuni Buddha

Not only that, “Those Bodhisattvas who appeared from underground, came to Many-Treasures Tathagata and Sakyamuni Buddha, both of whom were in the wonderful stupa of the seven treasures hanging in the sky. They joined their hands together towards the two Buddhas and worshipped their feet with their heads. They then descended on the lion-like seats under the jeweled trees, bowed to them, walked around them from left to right three times, joined their hands together respectfully, and praised them by the various ways by which Bodhisattvas should praise Buddhas. All this while Sakyamuni Buddha sat in silence. However, by His supernatural powers, the Buddha caused the great multitude to think that they kept silent for only half a day.”

Chapter 3

The Four Great Leaders

After the greetings by these countless number of Bodhisattvas and their attendants were finally completed, the devotees gathered at the assembly could see that the skies of many hundreds of thousands of billions of worlds were filled with those Bodhisattvas by the supernatural powers of Sakyamuni Buddha. They saw four divine and virtuous great Bodhisattvas who were the leaders. Their bodies were golden-colored, and adorned with the thirty-two marks and with innumerable rays of light.

The name of the top leader is Superior-Practice Bodhisattva, the second is Limitless-Practice Bodhisattva, the third is Pure-Practice Bodhisattva, and the last is Steadily-Established-Practice Bodhisattva. Each one of them has the functions of soil, water, fire, and wind. With these functions, they have lived and practiced in the sky below this Saha-World.

These four great Bodhisattvas were the highest leaders of those Bodhisattvas from underground. They were born on this earth in the Declining Latter Age of the Dharma with the great mission to spread the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. They have a great responsibility.

In the presence of their countless attendants, the four great Bodhisattvas joined their hands together towards Sakyamuni Buddha in the many treasures-stupa, looked up at Him, and inquired after Him saying:

“World-Honored one! Are You in good health? Are You peaceful or not? Are the living beings, whom You are to save, ready to receive Your teachings or not? Do they not fatigue You?” Thus, they asked the Buddha with deep consideration.

A) Behaving Just Like the Relationship between Master and Disciples or Father and Children

Then Sakyamuni Buddha smiled joyfully as if He had missed them for a long time. He was finally able to see His lovely children and said to them in the presence of the great multitude of Bodhisattvas:

“Truly, truly good men! I am peaceful. I am in good health. The living beings are ready to be saved. They do not fatigue me because I already taught them in their consecutive previous existences, and because they have already honored the past Buddhas respectfully and planted the roots of goodness. They have received the teaching of the Lotus Sutra birth after birth. To those who had previously studied and practiced the teachings of the Lesser Vehicle, I am now causing them to hear this sutra and to enter into the wisdom of the Buddha!” He also mentioned that they have just received the assurance to become Buddhas.



Hearing the Buddha's joyful response, the four great Bodhisattvas sang in *gathas*. When you finally get something that you wanted for a long time, you may say, "I finally got it!" or "I did it!" That was the reactions of the four Bodhisattvas:

“Excellent, excellent, Great Hero!
World-Honored One!
The living beings are ready to be saved.
Because in their previous existence,
They already asked the past Buddhas
About their profound wisdom,
And having heard about it, understood it by faith.
We rejoice seeing You!”

They sang with beautiful voices in unison.

Sakyamuni Buddha was so glad that the Bodhisattvas from underground rejoiced to see Him again!

B) Joyful Sakyamuni Buddha

Their reactions were very natural! You will be the same! You will be rejoicing when your lovely younger sister or younger brother or your junior students praise you respectfully. Your resourcefulness may be hard to explain with words. It will be the same with your parents. When children praise their parents, the parents will be glad. It is real filial piety! Therefore, Sakyamuni Buddha must be glad after the inquiring by those Bodhisattvas from underground, so the Buddha said with satisfaction:

“Thank you very much for inquiring from the bottom of your hearts. I can sense your thoughtfulness. You have expressed your appreciation that you could practice my teachings for a long time and to accumulate such virtue that your bodies became shining with a golden color. You have waited to appear for a long time, heard my voice, and then you have appeared now!”

The appearance of the Bodhisattvas is as if the children praised their parents’ good virtue. The Buddha was a little bashful just like a parent praised by their children.

C) Other Bodhisattvas Not Satisfied

However, there were countless number of people among the congregation who were not satisfied and wondered what was going on between the Buddha and the great Bodhisattvas from underground.

They were the Bodhisattvas who had already been present in the congregation before the arrival of these Bodhisattvas from underground and the Buddha’s disciples since the time of His enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. They were the ones who listened to all teachings of the Buddha over the last forty years.



Not only them but also the replica Buddhas and Bodhisattvas from the ten directions thought that they knew everything about Sakyamuni Buddha and the Lotus Sutra. But all of them wondered why the golden-colored Bodhisattvas and Sakyamuni Buddha were exchanging their greetings so closely and joyfully just like the relationship of a parent and children or the master and his disciples.

“What is going on!” “Where did they come from?” You may also wonder and cannot believe!

The Lotus Sutra is the true teaching that Sakyamuni Buddha wished to expound to save all living beings on this earth. It is ultimately the one and only Universal Truth. Each word contains the right teaching of the Buddha and the spirit of the Buddha.

Chapter 4

The Buddha's Eyes and Human Beings' Eyes

The viewpoints are different between the Buddha's and ours. Although we cannot believe it, the Buddha sees it as a fact.

How can we have Buddha's eyes?

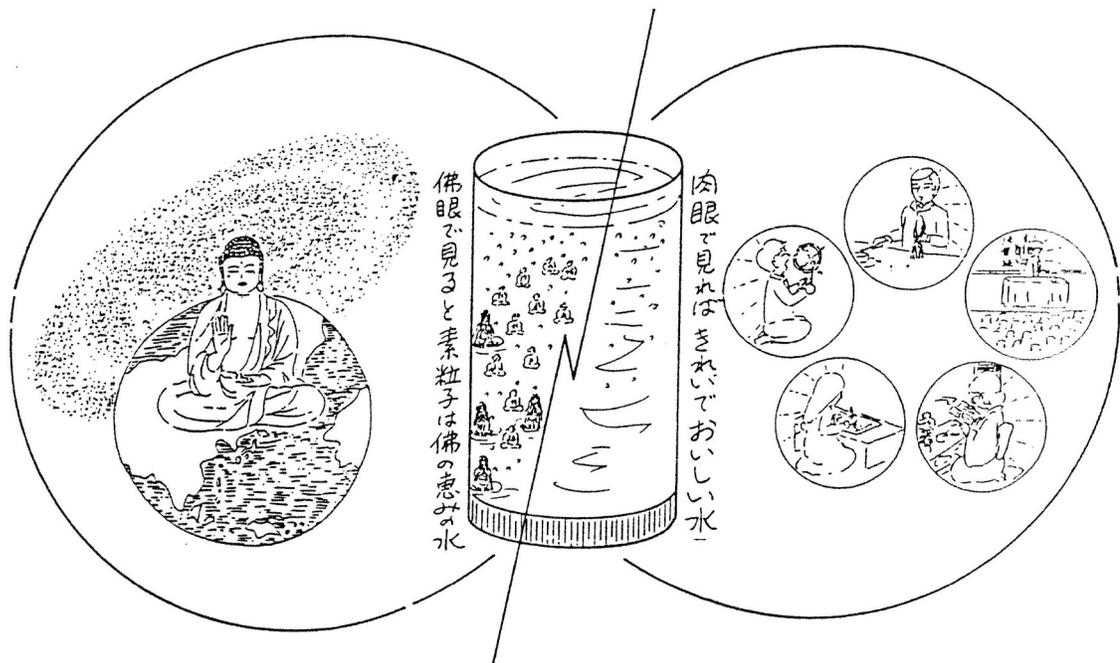
A) A Cup of Water

Can you guess how many elementary particles (atoms) are in a cup of water? The elementary particle means the smallest and most basic components of matter. You may have not thought about it, but all physical beings can be divided into particles. When these atoms get together and create a molecule which then can form into something. Water can fit perfectly in a cylinder shape or a square shape cup. Water never goes against whatever shape it is in because of its elementary particles. There must be countless numbers of elementary particles as water in a cup. Water you drink once will have countless particles. I wonder what kinds of work these particles do in your body?

Even if science advanced more, human wisdom still has its limits. I believe it is almost impossible to create the glorious water.

B) Each one of the Elementary Particles Is Each One of the Great Bodhisattva.

When you see these elementary particles of water through an electron microscope, the particles line up systematically and move up and down and side to side slowly, but if the water is frozen, the movement stops while the particles are jumping around in boiling water. It is very hard to detect the movement even with an electron microscope when it is boiling. Please imagine how many particles are jumping around in the steam from boiling water in a kettle. It may be very hard to count the number of atoms even through the electron microscope.

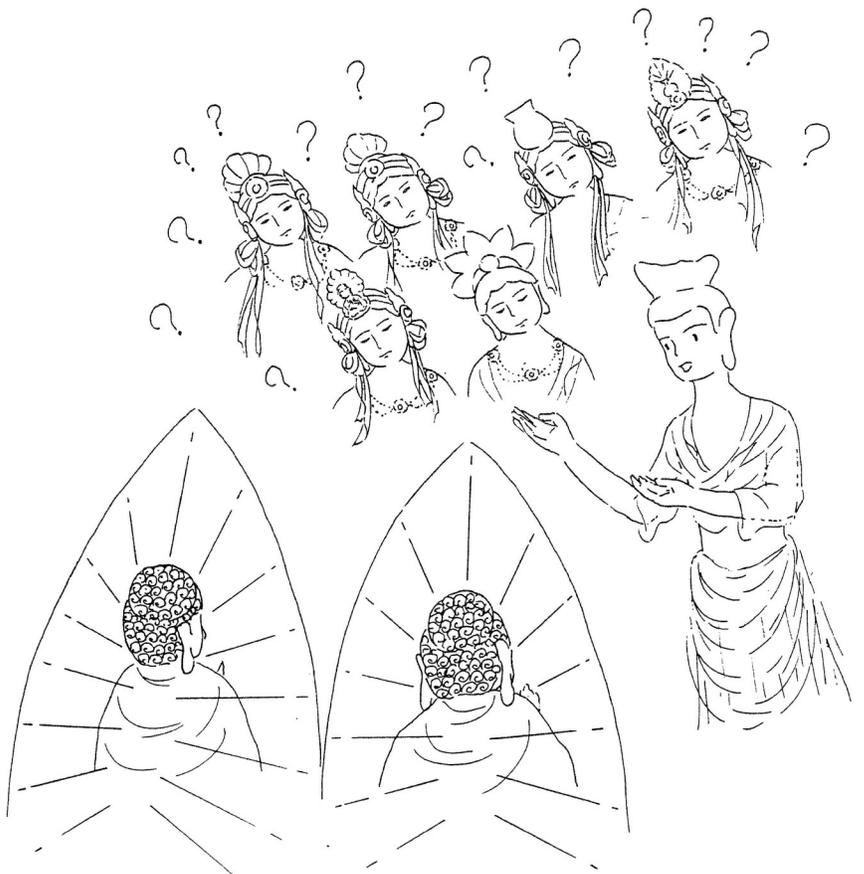


The number of great golden-colored Bodhisattvas that sprung up from underground is just like the number of particles in the steam coming out of boiling water. The Bodhisattvas came out of the ground one after another without a break and with very high speed, because they have waited underground for a long time saying, “Not yet, not yet?”

C) To Clear the minds of the Congregation

Thereupon Maitreya Bodhisattva, seeing what the Bodhisattvas numbering eight thousand times as many as the sand particles of the River Ganges had in their minds, and wishing to remove his own doubt, joined his hands together towards the Buddha and asked Him a question. It is very important, please listen to what he asked attentively:

“World-Honored One! We have never seen or heard of these many thousands of billions of Bodhisattvas. They have great supernatural powers, and inconceivable wisdom. They are resolute in mind. Where did they come from? What is the reason for them to appear? Who expounded the Dharma to them? Who are their masters? What are the names of their teachers? Under whom did they begin to aspire for enlightenment? What kinds of practices did they do? These Bodhisattvas have great powers, virtues, patience, and energy. Who expounded the Dharma to them? We wish to see their Buddhas? There must be some reason for their appearance. World-Honored One! Remove our doubt!”



Chapter 5

Open the Eyes of Your Mind

At that time, listening to Maitreya Bodhisattva's questions to Sakyamuni Buddha, the attendants of each replica of Sakyamuni Buddha who had come from many thousands of billions worlds outside this Saha-World asked the same question to each of their replica-Buddhas: "Where did these innumerable Bodhisattvas come from?"

Those Buddhas said to their attendants: "Good Men! Wait for a while! Sakyamuni Buddha assured Maitreya Bodhisattva of his future attainment of Buddhahood, saying, 'You will become a Buddha immediately after Me.' Maitreya had already asked Sakyamuni Buddha about this matter. He will answer him. You will be able to hear the answer."

Thereupon Sakyamuni Buddha said to Maitreya Bodhisattva:

"Excellent, excellent, Ajita (the common name of Maitreya)! You asked Me a very important question. All of you should concentrate your minds, wear the armor of endeavor, and be resolute. Listen to Me obediently and open the eyes of your minds."

"Now I will reveal, I will show, all the wisdom of all Buddhas in the past, the present and the future; their supernatural powers without hindrance, their dauntless powers like a lion's, and their great power of bravery."

A) Extraordinary Determination

Sakyamuni Buddha might make His extraordinary determination! I wonder what the Buddha is trying to say?

He said that

He gathered the wisdom of all Buddhas,
Obtained their supernatural powers,
Braced up their dauntless powers like a lion's,
Showed their great power of bravery and
Revealed the unhindered teachings with firm determination.
What kind of teaching will He reveal?

Thereupon the World-Honored One, wishing to repeat what he said, sang in *gathas*:

“Exert yourselves and concentrate your minds!
Now I will tell you about this matter.
Listen attentively all of you,
Including all the Buddhas and
The Bodhisattvas from the ten directions.

The highest Dharma that I attained
Is profound and difficult to understand.
It is the teaching you have never heard!
There is no lie.

Do not doubt me! Do not be afraid!

Now I will expound it.

Listen to me with all your hearts!”

Thus, the Buddha said and started to reveal the immeasurable and highest Dharma that He attained under the Bodhi tree.

“Ajita! I know that you have never seen these great, innumerable golden-colored Bodhisattvas who sprang up from underground. I taught these Bodhisattvas, led them, trained them, and caused them to aspire for enlightenment. All of them are my beloved children without exception. These sons of Mine have lived in the sky below this Saha-World since the Three Thousand Particle Eons ago. They read many sutras, recited them, and remembered them correctly. These good men wished to live in a quiet place. They practiced the way of the Lotus Sutra strenuously day and night.



In order to attain enlightenment, they always sought wisdom and expounded various wonderful teachings without fear. They accumulated their virtue. They watched Me attain Buddha-hood under the Bodhi tree Three Thousand Dust Particles Ago. Then I taught them and caused them to aspire for enlightenment. They were always with Me expounding the sutras. They always sought unsurpassed wisdom of the Buddha. As the result, they were able to attain Buddha-hood; therefore, their bodies are already golden-colored. I taught these Bodhisattvas, led them, trained them, and caused them to aspire for enlightenment.”

“My words are true. Believe Me with all your hearts! I have been teaching them since the remotest past.”

B) Three Questions by Maitreya Bodhisattva

Maitreya Bodhisattva representing the congregation doubted the Buddha's words and asked the following three questions:

1. Where do they come from?
2. Who is their Buddha?
3. What kind teachings did they practice in order to receive their golden-color and become the great Bodhisattvas?

According to Sakyamuni Buddha's explanation, ① "I will tell all of you the teachings that you have never heard. I gathered the wisdom of all Buddhas, obtained their supernatural powers, braced up their dauntless powers like a lion's, and showed their great power of bravery." ② "All of them are my beloved children without exception. These sons of Mine have lived in the quiet place in the sky below this Saha-World since Three Thousand Particle Eons Ago. They are the great Bodhisattvas of this Saha-World." ③ "They practiced the way of the Lotus Sutra strenuously day and night. Thus, they have accumulated great virtues.

Chapter 6

Showing the Near and Revealing the Far

The term, “Showing the Near and Revealing the Far” or “*Kai-gon Ken-non*” in Japanese is one of the doctrines in the Lotus Sutra. It sounds hard to understand, but you will understand if you are obedient.

The people in the world think that Sakyamuni Buddha sat at the place of enlightenment and attained Buddha-hood under the Bodhi tree forty and odd years ago. To tell the truth, it is many hundreds of thousands of billions of *nayutas* of *kalpas* ago He attained Enlightenment and became the Buddha.

The Buddha intends to reveal this teaching.

A) Showing an Example of Enlightenment

The doctrine of “Showing the Near” is very important for us to understand the essence of the Lotus Sutra because Sakyamuni Buddha showed His historical enlightenment as it really happened. He was raised as a prince without any obstructions. But He sought freedom from the cycle of birth and death. He practiced various ways of self-denial for salvation from His mental struggles. Then, He attained real enlightenment, that is that birth and death repeats because our souls exist forever. Nirvana is the exception.

What the Buddha is trying to reveal starts from this point.

Sakyamuni Buddha cast all belongings away and wished to save all living beings. Not only human beings but also the trees, grass, water, wind, ground and tried to bring peace around the world. However, people were still fighting in wars, some people contaminated the water, water of the streams became dirty, green trees are cut, air is polluted and oil spills contaminate the ocean. Some people think only of their present profits and not for the future! It is very dreadful!

If we continue these things, this earth may catch on fire around the world as the Buddha predicts in the sutra. Our planet earth may be destroyed. Therefore, we must avoid these mishaps and study the right teachings and practice the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. That was why the Buddha “showed the near,” what happened historically.

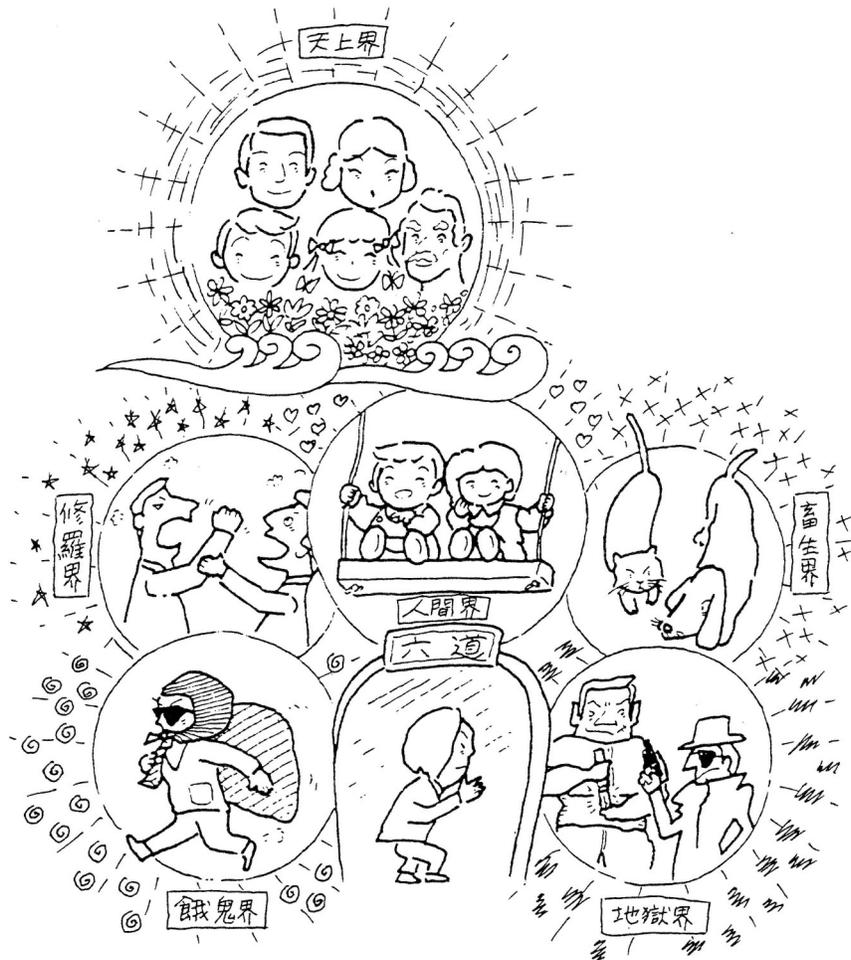
Over forty and odd years have passed after Sakyamuni’s First Sermon. The minds of the congregation became much more obedient. They can understand the Universal Truth revealed by the Eternal Buddha, so He tries to reveal further more.



B) Everyone Has the Light

Do you know that every person has his halo? The shining bodies are not only for Buddhas and gods. Everyone has his own aura depending on how he behaves and what he thinks.

The Buddhas who are working for the people always shines with golden-color. The peaceful and gentle people shine with beautiful colors while the people who always fight show dull and irritable colors. Those who indulge in instant pleasure have dirty colors. The color of the greedy are oppressive or heavy colors. Of course, those people who are involved in killing living beings also have auras. It is said that they carry the colors as if burning one's body like the flaming colors of hell.



Therefore, even if you can deceive people's eyes, you cannot deceive the Buddha's eyes. Even if you think that you can deceive the Buddha's eyes because He cannot see you, you cannot. Even if you think nobody is watching, you are watching; so, the Buddha knows everything you are watching.

The Buddha knows everything, even if you did a small, wrong thing or a tiny good thing, the Buddha knows. Do you understand? Therefore, those great Bodhisattvas with a golden-colored aura have accumulated a lot of good deeds, and their golden color is proof of their tasks that will take place after the Buddha's extinction.

C) The Children Is His Father and the Father Is His children?

Maitreya Bodhisattva whom the Buddha praised by saying, "You asked me a very important question," asked another question with wonder:

"You said, 'These sons of Mine have practiced the way of the Lotus Sutra strenuously day and night.' How did You teach them to attain Enlightenment in such a short time? When You were a crown prince, you left the palace of the Sakyas, sat at the place of enlightenment not far from the City of Gaya, and became the Buddha. It is only forty and odd years since then."

“World Honored One! How did you do these great deeds of the Buddha in a short time? Did You teach these great innumerable Bodhisattvas, and qualify them to attain Buddha-hood by Your power or by Your merits?”

“No one can count the number of these great Bodhisattvas even if he goes on counting them for thousands of billions of *kalpas*. They have already planted roots of good. We have never seen these divine golden shining great Bodhisattvas.”

“It is difficult for anyone in the world to believe this. You said that they are your sons! How can we believe it? It is as difficult to believe as a handsome, black-haired twenty-five year old man who points to men a hundred years old and say, ‘They are my sons,’ or as to believe men a hundred years old who point to a young

man and say, ‘This is our father. He brought us up. We owe Him a lot.’ You are like the young man. It is not long since you attained enlightenment.

How can we believe this?” Maitreya honestly asked.



D) The Reverse May Happen

It is very natural that they cannot believe the Buddha. What would you do if someone says, "You are a father and your father is your son!" you cannot believe him, do you? But let us think this way. Suppose we had past existences. Suppose in the previous existence, your father was a child while your mother was his father. Or you were a mother. Or your father, mother and you were all good friends. Because you were all good friends, so all of you were born as one family in this life time. This family might have strong attraction to each other's causes and effects. How should we know about our past lives? But the Buddha knows everything.

But Sakyamuni Buddha said that He has been teaching these great Bodhisattvas from underground not only in his previous existence but also during many past lives. So Maitreya Bodhisattva could not understand.

Maitreya was confused because he knew only the Buddha who was born as a crown prince, who later became the Buddha and expounded Buddha Dharma for the last forty odd years. But He said that He has been teaching these great Bodhisattvas since a long time and many past lives ago. How can that be possible? The confusion and doubt were not only Maitreya's but also the innumerable Bodhisattvas in the congregation. They doubted the Buddha's words which they had never heard before.

E) Maitreya Tathagata, Truly!

It is Maitreya Bodhisattvas who always asks important questions at the right time. He is a marvelous Bodhisattva pumping up what Sakyamuni Buddha wishes to leave as the important teaching at each occasion. That is why he was given the name of Maitreya Tathagata to assure his Buddha-hood.

Maitreya Bodhisattva continued his questions:

“World-Honored One! I beg you to tell us why You said something like the father is the son while the son is his father. We cannot believe such a reverse relation. It is not long since you attained Buddha-hood, but You have lead these numerous number of the great Bodhisattvas to the One Vehicle. You said that all of them are your disciples. I have never seen and heard such countless number of the Bodhisattvas. I know Your words are never at fault. I believe there must be some very important hidden reasons of cause and effect. We have never seen nor heard of the great Bodhisattvas in golden-color as the result of their long-time practices and good deeds.”

The congregation gathered at the assembly in the sky had the same questions.

F) For the Sake of the People in the Defiled World of the *Mappo* Era

“Just as the lotus flower blooms in the dirty muddy water, these great Bodhisattvas kept clean, pure, and beautiful in the defiled world of the *Mappo* Era. There must be a supreme meaning!”

“We believe in Your golden words! But the people in the Defining Latter Age of the Dharma or two thousand years after Your extinction will not be able to believe these important words and doubt the teaching, so they may fall into hell. I beg You, the Buddha, please tell us more details about the cause and effect of the relationship between Sakyamuni Buddha and these countless number of great Bodhisattvas.”

“World-Honored One! Please explain all this so that we may be able to remove our doubts and that the good men in the future may have no doubts when they learn these words of Yours.”

Thus, Maitreya Bodhisattva sincerely requested.



末法悪世の人の為
本末の因縁を
お説き下さい！

G) Hidden Core of the Dharma Opens the Curtain

If there was no Maitreya Bodhisattva, the most important doctrine among all sutras might not be revealed. The hidden core of all Buddha Dharma is revealed in the Chapter 16 of the Lotus Sutra, the Duration of the Life of the Tathagata.

Finally, the hidden core of all Buddha Dharma will be revealed in the next volume. It is the original intension of Buddha's appearance on this Saha-World.

I feel like my body is going to tremble! What will be the hidden core of all Buddha Dharma?

By the way, why do these countless number of great bodhisattvas who appeared from underground like the explosion of many volcanos or the fog coming out of a valley after a heavy rain?

There are countless number of elementary particles called an atom in a cup of water. So there must be countless number of atoms in a cloud. With the Buddha's view point, these countless number of atoms shining golden-color in the clouds looks like the numerous number of the great Bodhisattvas.

H) The Four Great Bodhisattvas of this Beautiful Blue Earth

To prove that, the four great Bodhisattvas representing these countless number of the Bodhisattvas are the elements of the universe. This earth is floating carrying the mountains, the rivers, the oceans and fields. It contains the water in its body. The water supports all living beings to exist. The air that wraps around the earth is a source of all living beings to be alive. The wind blows sometimes comfortably for us while at other times blows wild. The earth produces energy from itself and gives vitality to all living beings. The earth has existed since the Big-bang. It prevented distractions several times in the past.

The Four Leaders of the Great Bodhisattvas are:

1. Superior-Practice Bodhisattva who has the function of the soil or ground,
2. Limitless-Practice Bodhisattva who has the function of fire,
3. Pure-Practice Bodhisattva who has the function of water,
4. Steadily-Established-Practice who has the function of wind.

These four functions harmonize each other and help each other to exist. The function of the soil or ground symbolizes the planet earth. Therefore, the top leader of the four of them is Superior-Practice Bodhisattva.

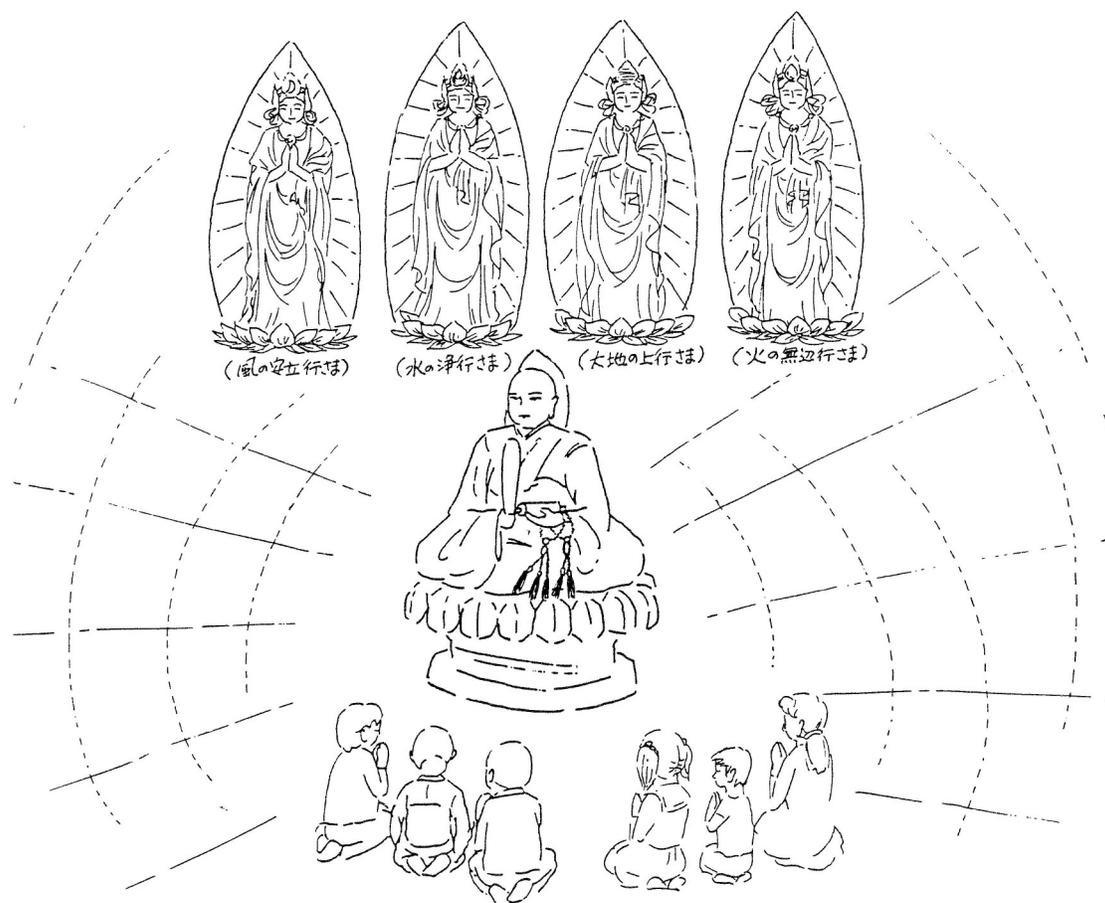
These four leaders take care of the functions of the soil, the fire, the water, and the wind. (Buddhism considers the universe consists of the five elements of soil, fire, water, wind, and the void.) Therefore, the Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha functions as the void, or the universe.

We must realize that we exist because of harmonious existence of these five elements or the Eternal Buddha and the Four Leaders of the Great Bodhisattvas.

To protect our beautiful blue earth, Sakyamuni Buddha called the appearance of these four leaders of the great Bodhisattvas together with the countless number of their attendants in *Mappo* Era. They are the ones who expound the Lotus Sutra after the Buddha's extinction.

I) Nichiren Shonin Is Superior-Practice Bodhisattva.

Nichiren Dai'Shonin realized that he was the rebirth of Superior-Practice Bodhisattva's soul whose mission was to expound the Lotus Sutra, that is, Sakyamuni Buddha's original vow to be a great missionary in the *Mappo* Era.



Therefore, he is called the Great Leader Superior-Practice Bodhisattva Nichiren in the *Mappo* Era.

Nichiren Dai'Shonin clearly mentioned that those souls who were reborn in the era of *Mappo* are the great Bodhisattvas from underground. He also encourages us, "It is hard to chant the sacred title of the Lotus Sutra unless you are the Bodhisattvas from underground.

How lucky we are! You are one of the Bodhisattvas from underground. So, practice hard to make yourself shine in golden-color. Your soul was reborn here and now to accomplish this important destiny.

You are one of the members of the great Bodhisattvas to fulfill Buddha's original vow for protecting the blue beautiful earth!

J) Everyone Is the Bodhisattvas from Underground

The original vow is to expound the Lotus Sutra in the *Mappo* era!

The body is shining in golden-color!

With pride, patience, and confidence,

Even if in the defiled world,

I shall be never stained,

Like the lotus flower in muddy water.

I shall live pure and righteous!

Everyone is a Bodhisattva from underground.