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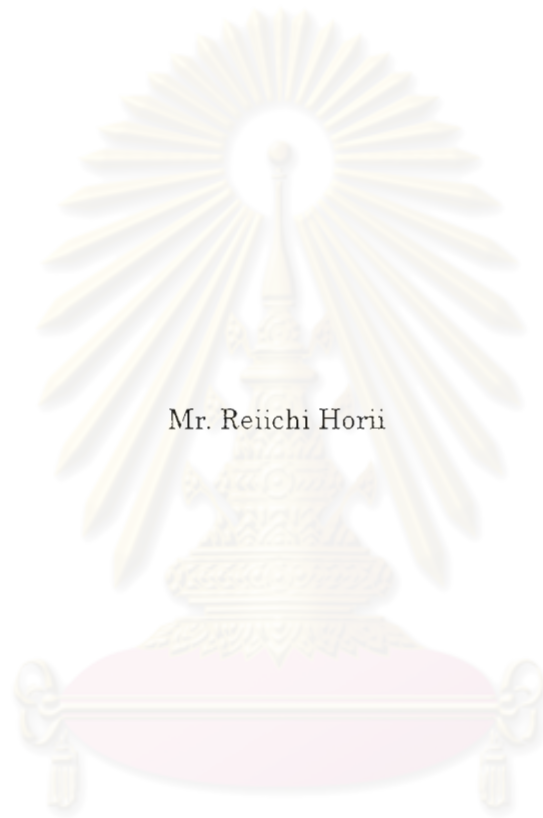
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Comparative Study of the Sutta Nipata and the Lotus Sutra



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หีนยาน ตามตัวอักษร มีความหมายว่า ยานที่เล็กหรือด้อยกว่า ซึ่งเป็นคำที่นิกายมหายานใช้
ชี้แสดงจุดอ่อนของคำสอนก่อนหน้า จุดสำคัญที่มหายานวิพากษ์วิจารณ์หีนยานคือ เรื่องที่เอาแต่เน้น
ถึงผลบุญส่วนตัวเท่านั้น ตามเป้าหมายของการทำตัวเองให้สมบูรณ์ และหลุดพ้นจากพันธนาการของ
การดำรงอยู่

ในอีกด้านหนึ่ง พุทธศาสนานิกายต่าง ๆ (หรือนิกายอภิธรรม) ก็ได้กล่าวอย่างชัดเจนว่า
พระสูตรของมหายานใหม่เป็นคำสอนของมาร ไม่ใช่คำสอนของพระพุทธองค์ ซึ่งคำกล่าวนี้มีการพูด
กันขึ้นมาใหม่ในประเทศญี่ปุ่น ตอนช่วงปลายศตวรรษที่ 19 เมื่อมีการนำเอาวิธีการวิจัยทาง
ประวัติศาสตร์ของซีกโลกตะวันตกมาใช้ในพุทธวิทยาเป็นครั้งแรก ผลปรากฏว่า นักวิชาการบาง
คนถือว่า มหายานไม่ใช่คำสอนโดยตรงของพระพุทธองค์ในทางประวัติศาสตร์ แต่ถ้าคำสอนของ
พระพุทธองค์ถูกนิยามอย่างเคร่งครัดว่า เป็นคำพูดที่แท้จริงของพระศากยมุนีพุทธะแล้ว แม้แต่คำสอน
ที่ได้รับการบันทึกไว้ในอาคมสูตร ก็จะไม่ใช่คำสอนดั้งเดิม ทั้งนี้ก็เพราะว่า อาคมสูตรไม่ได้มี
ลักษณะดังเช่นปัจจุบัน จนกระทั่งเมื่อหลายร้อยปีภายหลังการเสด็จปรินิพพานของพระพุทธองค์ และ
ในระหว่างการสืบทอดก็ได้มีการเปลี่ยนแปลงต่าง ๆ เกิดขึ้นทั้งทางตรงและทางอ้อม

ผมได้ขียนมาว่า นักวิชาการสมัยใหม่เห็นพ้องว่า การพิจารณาว่าคำสอนของพระพุทธองค์ ไม่
ว่าจะเป็นการเทศนาธรรมอย่างถูกต้องและการสืบทอดทางจิตวิญญาณนั้นเป็นเรื่องที่สมเหตุสมผล

จากจุดทรรศนะนี้ พระสูตรมหายานจึงเป็นคำสอนที่ต้องได้รับการยอมรับในฐานะส่วนหนึ่ง
ของคำสอนของพระพุทธองค์

สาขาวิชาพุทธศาสนศึกษา.....

ลายมือชื่อนิสิต

Reichi Horii

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ลายมือชื่อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก

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Literally, the small or inferior vehicle, Hinayana was designation used by the Mahayana schools to denote the perceived shortcomings of their predecessors. Mahayana criticized Hinayana principally for stressing benefits to the individual alone through its goal of self-perfection and release from the bonds of existence.

The other hand, Sectarian Buddhism (Nikaya Buddhism or the Abhidharma schools) apparently claimed that the new Mahayana sutras were the teachings of devils, not the Buddha. This assertion was revived in Japan in the latter part of the nineteenth century, when Western historical research methods were first applied to Buddhism. As a result, some scholars considered that Mahayana was not the direct teaching of the historical Buddha. If the Buddha's teaching is defined strictly as the actual word of Shakyamuni, however, then even the teachings recorded in the Agamas are not original: the Agama did not take their present form until several hundred years after the Buddha's death, and in the course of their transmission both conscious and unconscious changes were introduced.

I have heard that modern scholars agree that it is justifiable to regard as the Buddha's teaching whatever expounds the Law accurately and transmits its spirit.

From this point of view, Mahayana scriptures must be accepted as part of the Buddha's teaching.

In the thesis, I try to search for underlying both the Sutta Nipata and the Lotus Sutra.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Thesis

Today Buddhism consists of two main schools which are *Theravada* and Mahayana. It is widely understood that *Theravada* represents the earliest form of Buddhism and *Mahayana* is considered as a new form of Buddhism. Sometimes, it is believed as well that what the *Mahayana* school teaches may not be what the Buddha teaches; and this kind of problem does not occur to the *Theravada* school as it is the earliest form of Buddhism.

In terms of history, *Mahayana* Buddhism has its own long tradition that can be traced back to the Buddha. Some *Mahayana* Buddhist schools claim that their earliest masters are *Mahakassapa*, *Ananda*, and so on. We know that these names are the great disciples of the Buddha and the *Theravada* school highly esteems these names. At the outset, we see that *Mahayana* and *Theravada* share something important.

However, the understanding that *Mahayana* may be a Buddhist school that does not teach what the Buddha teaches persists. This thesis has been undertaken to explore the truth about this understanding. As there are a lot of texts in Mahayana and *Theravada*, it is not possible to explore all of them in terms of comparison. So, the specific texts are chosen for that purpose. For the *Theravada* school, the text named the *Sutta Nipata* has been chosen; and for the Mahayana school, the text named the Lotus Sutra has been chosen—to comparatively study for the purpose to find out underlying both the *Sutta Nipata* and the Lotus Sutra.

Objectives of the Thesis

- (1) To study the *Sutta Nipata* and the Lotus Sutra.
- (2) To compare these texts.
- (3) To state that finally both *Sutta Nipata* and the Lotus Sutra represent the teachings of the same Buddha.

The Texts Used in the Thesis

- (1) The *Sutta Nipata*: an English translation by K. R. Norman, published by the *Pali* Text Society, London, (2001)

- (2) The Lotus Sutra: an English translation by Burton Watson, published by Columbia University Press. (1993)

Expectations

This thesis is hoped to provide a new understanding, for those who believe that Mahayana may teach what the Buddha does not teach, that at least there are two important texts in Theravada and Mahayana representing the teachings of the same Buddha. However, this does not mean that there is no difference in them. There are some differences in these texts. But they are just minor differences, happening from different traditions adopted by both schools. These differences are not at the level of idea; they are just at the level of culture or external form.



CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPT OF BUDDHA

In this chapter, the comparison between the *Sutta Nipata* and the Lotus Sutra will be made on the subject of the concept of the Buddha to see how *Theravada* Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism think about the Buddha

The Concept of Buddhas in the Past in the *Sutta Nipata*

II .2. Tainted fare of II .The Small Chapter is named *Amagandha-sutta*. The reason is that, according to *Paramattha-jotika (Sutta-nipata-atthakatha)*, *Amagandha* is the name of a Brahman, who asked the Buddha on “tainted fare.”

Paramattha-jotika gives the commentary as follows:

Firstly, the commentary describes on *Uppatti* of the present life on this sutra, and, secondly, *Uppatti* of the past life.

The outline of first part is the meeting of Shakyamuni Buddha and *Amagandha* who practice asceticism, and questions from *Amagandha* and answers by the Buddha. These are not so long Q and A. The last answer by the Buddha is that not only *Amagandha* asked the “tainted fare”, but also in the past of a *Brahman* named *Tissa*, he asked *Kassapa* Buddha the same question.

The second part is the dialogue between *Kassapa* Buddha and *Tissa*.

The text of “II .2. Tainted fare” describes *Tissa*’s question and *Kassapa*’s teaching. Shakyamuni Buddha quotes *Kassapa*’s teaching, and gives *Amagandha* a clear grasp.

The name of *Kassapa* is described is the verse of #240 and #241 on II .2. Tainted fare of II .The Small Chapter.

Kassapa is the sixth of the seven Buddhas in the past. Concerning the seven Buddha in the past, it is preached in the 14th chapter “*Mahapadana Suttanta*” of Dialogues of The Buddha (*Digha-nikaya*).

The introduction of the beginning in this sutra is as follows:

1. Thus have I heard. The Exalted One was once staying at *Savatthi*, in *Anatha Pindika*’s pleasaunce in the *Jeta* Wood, at the *Karei*-tree cottage. Now among many *bhikkhus* who had returned from their alms-tour and were assembled, sitting together after their meal, in the pavilion in the *karei* grounds, a religious conversation bearing on previous births arose, to the effect that thus and thus were previous births.

2. And the Exalted One, with clear and Heavenly Ear surpassing the hearing of men, overheard this conversation among the *bhikkhus*. And arising from his seat he came to the pavilion in the *Kareri* grounds, and took his seat on the mat spread out for him. And when he had sat down he said to the brethren:-----‘What is the talk on which you are engaged sitting here, and what is the subject of conversation between you?’

3. Then he said: ---‘Do you not wish, brethren, to hear some religious talk on the subject of former lives?’

‘Now is the time, O Exalted One, now is the time, O Welcome One, for the Exalted One to give us a religious discourse on the subject of former lives. When the brethren have heard it from the Exalted One they will bear it in mind.’

‘Wherefore then, brethren, hearken well to me, and I will speak.’

‘So be it, lord,’ replied the brethren. And the Exalted One said :—

4. ‘It is now ninety-one aeons ago, brethren, since *Vipassi*, the Exalted One, *Arahant*, Buddha Supreme, arose in the world. It is now thirty-one aeons ago, brethren, since *Sikhi*, the Exalted One, *Arahant*, Buddha aeon a Supreme, arose in the world. It was in that same thirty-first aeon, brethren, that *Vessabhu*, the Exalted One, *Arahant*, Buddha Supreme, arose in the world. It was in this present auspicious aeon, brethren, that *Kakusandha*, the Exalted One, *Arahant*, Buddha Supreme, arose in the world. It was in this auspicious aeon, that *Konagamana*, the Exalted One, *Arahant*, Buddha Supreme, arose in the world. It was in this auspicious aeon, brethren, that *Kassapa*, the Exalted One, *Arahant*, Buddha Supreme, arose in the world. It is in this auspicious aeon, brethren, that now I, an *Arahant*, Buddha Supreme, has arisen in the world.¹

This *Suttanta* [the 14th chapter] become the bases of the life-stories of Buddhas matured in later time as the pioneer of precursor in literature of Buddha stories. More, in the Lineage of the Buddhas (*Buddhavamsa*), the fourteenth section of Collection of Minor Works [*Khuddaka-nikaya*], mentions twenty-five Buddhas of the Past [with eighteen Buddhas preceding the above mentioned seven Buddhas of

¹ *Mahapadana-suttanta* became the foundation for the biographical stories of Buddha in after age.

the Past] as well as twenty-eight Buddhas of the Past.

The names of them are 1. *Dipankara* 2. *Kondanna* 3. *Mangala* 4. *Sumana*
5. *Revata* 6. *Sobhita* 7. *Anomadassin* 8. *Paduma* 9. *Narada* 10. *Padumuttara*
11. *Sumedha* 12. *Sujata* 13. *Piyadassin* 14. *Atthadasin* 15. *Dhammadassin*
16. *Siddhattha* 17. *Tissa* 18. *Phussa* 19. [1. *Vipassi*] 20. [2. *Sikhi*] 21. [3. *Vessabhu*]
22. [4. *Kakusandha*] 23. [5. *Konagamana*] 24. [6. *Kassapa*] 25. [7. *Gotama*]. In the case of
28 Buddhas, 3 Buddhas are added in front of 25 Buddhas. Moreover, *Maitreya* will
be predicted as a future Buddha.

Kassapa Buddha is the just before Shakyamuni Buddha. A remarkable method for the teaching is the quotation of the past Buddha's teaching in order to give a clear grasp to people. In the Buddha's time, ascetics did not eat flesh. *Tissa* praises ascetics who live on vegetables by the verse 239 and abuses *Kassapa* Buddha to his face far from attitude of question to *Kassapa* Buddha by the verses 240, 241 as the following:

239. '[Those] eating millet seed, plant, beans, green leaves, roots and creeper-fruits, obtained in accordance with the doctrine of the good, do not tell lies from desire for sensual pleasure.

240. Eating what is well-prepared, given by others, pure, outstanding, enjoying food [made] of rice, one partakes, *Kassapa*, of tainted fare.

241. "Tainted fare does not apply to me", thus you speak, you relative of Brahma, [although] enjoying food [made] of rice, together with well-dressed flesh of birds. I ask you this, *Kassapa*: What form does your tainted fare have?

In the verses 242-248, *Kassapa* Buddha gave the teaching of true meaning on "Tainted fare".

242.— ' Hurting living creatures, killing, cutting, and binding, stealing, telling lies, fraud and deceptions, useless studies, intercourse with other men's wives --- this is tainted fare, not the eating of flesh.

243.— If any persons here are completely unrestrained in respect of sensual pleasures, are greedy for flavors, associated with impurity, having the view that nothing exists, wrong, hard to fathom --- this is tainted fare, not the eating of flesh.

244.— If any persons are rough, pitiless, back-biting, harming their friends, heartless, arrogant, ungenerous, and do not

give to anyone --- this is tainted fare, not the eating of flesh.

245.— Anger arrogance, obstinacy, and hostility, delusion, envy, and grandiloquence, and conceit acquaintance with the bad --- this is tainted fare, not eating of flesh.

246.—If any persons are of evil moral conduct, debt-repudiators, informers, cheats in their business dealings here, dissemblers, vile men who commit sin here --- this is tainted fare, not the eating of flesh.

247.— If any persons here are completely unrestrained in respect of living creatures, taking others' property, intent on injury, of bad moral conduct and cruel, harsh, disrespectful --- this is tainted fare, not the eating of flesh.

248.— Those beings [who are] very greedy, hostile, hurtful constantly intent [on evil], who having passed away go to darkness, [and] fall headlong into hell --- this is tainted fare, not the eating of flesh.

Just as that moment when *Tissa* heard '*Kassapa* Buddha eats flesh', doubt to the Buddha arose in *Tissa's* heart. *Kassapa* Buddha, here, teaches that the path to purification (*visuddhi-magga*) is to cross beyond doubt. It is the verse 249.

249.— Not the flesh of fish, nor fasting, nor nakedness, nor shaven head, matted hair, dirt, nor rough animal skin, nor observance of the fire ceremony, nor even the many penances there are in the world for [gaining] immortality, nor hymns nor oblations, nor the performance of sacrifices at the proper season, purify a mortal who has not crossed beyond doubt.

After *Kassapa* Buddha gave the teaching that ascetic practices not to eat flesh cannot purify an ascetic, then, *Kassapa Buddha* preached *Tissa* for giving the method to be able to purify the man. It is the verse 250.

250.— Guarded in the apertures [of the sense-organs], one should wander with one's sense-faculties conquered, standing firm in the doctrine, delighting in uprightness and mildness. Gone beyond attachment, with all miseries eliminated, a wise man does not cling to things seen or heard.'

Kassapa Buddha gives individual instruction by devoting himself wholeheartedly to *Tissa* who abuses to *Kassapa* to his face. Even for us, whatever our unique purpose or mission may be, by devoting ourselves wholeheartedly to it, we are creating something that will shine with eternal brilliance. How much more growing brilliance will the teaching of *Kassapa* Buddha be for people in later age, too. Probably there may be many valuable teachings for lay people handed over as the teachings of *Kassapa* Buddha. It have been passed down that there had been the stupa of *Kassapa* Buddha in *Kosala* country. It gives an example that the Buddhas in the past attracted people's piety in those days.

The verses 251 and 252 were mentioned by the compilers of Buddhist teaching (*sangitikara*).

251.— Thus Blessed One proclaimed this matter again and again, and the [*Brahman*] who had reached the far shore of the [*vedic*] hymns understood it. With variegated verses the sage without taint, unfettered, hard to fathom, declared it.

252.— Having heard the Buddha's well-spoken word, without taint, thrusting away all miseries, with humble mind he praised the *Tathagata's* [feet]. On that very spot he chose to go forth.

In this way, *Tissa* became to be most able disciple of *Kassapa* Buddha, and *Bharad-vaja*, one of a group, became to be second able disciple. pursuing this course, *Kassapa* had two chief disciples, *Tissa* and *Bharadvaja*.

Now then, Shakyamuni Buddha adopted the total of fourteen verses of the beginning three verses by *Tissa*, the nine verses at the middle that the *Kassapa* Buddha preached, and last two verses by the compilers of Buddhist teaching (*sangitikara*) and gave the sermon to *Amagandha* of the instructor and five hundred followers (*manavaka*) of him.

They with humble mind praised the Shakyamuni Buddha's feet and on that very spot they chose to go forth same as *Tissa* and his followers. According to *Paramattha-jotika*, they got to the rank of "*ehi-bhikkhu-bhava*", several days later, they firmly established the stage of *arhat* (*arahatta*), that is supreme fruit (*agga-phala*). In *Amagandha-sutta* of *Sutta-Nipata*, Shakyamuni takes the same process as *Kassapa* Buddha.

The Concept of Buddhas in the Past in the Lotus Sutra

In the Lotus Sutra, the five categories of Buddhas are all Buddhas, past Buddhas, present Buddhas, future Buddhas, and Shakyamuni Buddha.

According to the “Expedient Means” (second) chapter of the Sutra, all these Buddhas preach in a uniform manner. It is called “the five categories of Buddhas all employ a similar process” (五仏道同). That is, the Buddhas all employ a similar process by which to lead people to the one Buddha vehicle. (In the “Expedient Means” chapter, the disciple, who is addressed by the Buddha during sermons, is *Shariputra*.)

Quoting on all Buddhas’ preaching in a uniform manner from this chapter is as follows.

(1. All Buddhas) “The Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, simply teach and convert the bodhisattvas. All the things they do are at all times done for this one purpose. They simply wish to show the Buddha wisdom to living being and enlighten them to it. *Shariputra*, the Thus Come Ones have only a single Buddha vehicle which they employ in order to preach the Law to living beings. They do not have any other vehicle, a second one or a third one. *Shariputra*, the Law preached by all the Buddhas of the ten directions is the same as this.”

(2. Past Buddhas) “*Shariputra*, the Buddhas of the past used countless numbers of expedient means, various causes and conditions, and words of simile and parable in order to expound the doctrines for the sake of living beings. These doctrines are all for the sake of the one Buddha vehicle. These living beings, by listening to the doctrines of the Buddhas, are all eventually able to attain wisdom embracing all species.

(3. Future Buddhas) “*Shariputra*, when the Buddhas of the future make their appearance in the world, they too will use countless numbers of expedient means, various cause and conditions, and words of simile and parable in order to expound the doctrines for the sake of living beings. These doctrines will all be for the sake of one Buddha vehicle.

(4. Present Buddhas in the ten directions) “*Shariputra*, the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, who exist at present in the countless hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, and millions of Buddha-lands in the ten directions, benefit and bring peace and happiness to living beings in large measure. These Buddhas too use countless numbers of expedient means, various causes and conditions, and words of simile and parable in order to expound the doctrines for the sake of

living beings. These doctrines are all for the sake of the one Buddha vehicle.”

(5. Shakyamuni Buddha) “*Shariputra*, I too will now do the same. I know that living beings have various desires, attachments that are deeply implanted in their minds. Taking cognizance of this basic nature of theirs, I will therefore use various causes and conditions, words of simile and parable, and the power of expedient means and expound the Law for them. *Shariputra*, I do this so that all of them may attain the one Buddha vehicle and wisdom embracing all species.”

Here, The reason to quote the passage of “the five categories of Buddhas all employ a similar process” (五仏道同) from the “Expedient Means” (second) chapter is to point out that Buddhas always employ the similar means for the salvation of the people, such as in II.2. Tainted fare of II. The Small Chapter is named *Amagandha-sutta*.

The most important concept of the Buddha in the Lotus Sutra is the Buddha preached in the ‘Life Span of the Thus Come One’ (sixteenth) Chapter. The Buddha in the Chapter is quite different from the Buddha of all the other scriptures.

The chapter title ‘The Life Span of the Thus Come One’ means the duration of Shakyamuni’s life as a Buddha, that is, how much time has passed since he originally attained Buddhahood.

In the beginning of the chapter, Shakyamuni Buddha reveals that he originally attained enlightenment in the far distant past rather than in his present life in India as his listeners generally thought.

The chapter opens with three exhortations and four entreaties, in which the Buddha three times admonishes the multitude to believe and understand words, and the assembly four times begs him to preach.

The first address from Shakyamuni Buddha to the assembly is ‘Good men.’

The scriptures of Mahayana Buddhism, including the Lotus Sutra, make frequent use of the form address ‘good men and good women.’ It originally referred to men and women of good families and came to indicate men and women of the laity. However it can be said that it is used in the Lotus Sutra not make a distinction between lay practitioners and priests but instead to transcend that division. These men and women are referred to as ‘good’ because they have made commitment to follow the path set forth by Shakyamuni Buddha. ‘Good’ here refers to goodness of intent.

Shakyamuni Buddha proceeds to explain that, he first attained enlightenment in his present lifetime under the *bodhi* tree not far from the city of *Gaya*, it has been an immeasurable, boundless hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of *nayutas* of *kalpas* since I in fact attained Buddhahood.

More, he explains that during that time he has spoken about the Buddha Burning Torch (*Dipankara*) and others, and described how they entered nirvana. All this he employed as an expedient means to make distinctions.

Shakyamuni Buddha, further, continues that good men, if there are living beings who come to him, he employs his Buddha eye to observe their faith and to see if their other faculties are keen or dull, and then depending upon how receptive they are to salvation, he appears in different places and preach to them under different names, and describe the length of time during which his teachings will be effective. Sometimes when he makes appearance he says that he is about to enter nirvana, and also employ different expedient means to preach the subtle and wonderful Law, thus causing living beings to awaken joyful minds.

The Lotus Sutra reveals that the Shakyamuni Buddha in the remote past is a single Buddha who possesses all three Bodies. Three Bodies are the dharma body (*dhamma kaya*), the reward body (*sambhoga kaya*), and the manifested body (*nimmana kaya*). *Dhamma kaya* is the essential property of a Buddha, similar with *buddhanam dhammata* described in *Sanyutta-nikaya*. *Sambhoga kaya* is the wisdom, or the spiritual property of a Buddha. *Nimmana kaya* is compassionate actions, or the physical property of a Buddha, namely, the historical Shakyamuni Buddha and all Buddhas. General Buddhist scholar treats Shakyamuni of the 'Life Span' chapter as a kind of deity. But this interpretation is a mistake. *Dhamma* is the *dhamma kaya* of eternal Buddha. That is, it indicates that the eternal Buddha (the Shakyamuni Buddha in the remote past) is one with the eternal Dhamma. In this chapter, Shakyamuni displays the eternal *Dhamma* while never for a moment departing from this status as a human being. It is as *Sanyutta-nikaya* teaches, 'those who see the Law see me, those who see me see the Law.'

Compared to the text of *Abhidharma* Buddhism, many of the Mahayana scriptures are extremely poetic and express symbolically the Law of life which Shakyamuni realized. All of these scriptures took the form of the Buddha's discourse to bodhisattvas and monks. Whereas the traditional schools compiled the tenets and regulations which the historical Gautama Buddha had expounded, the Mahayana scriptures attempted to express the eternal truth or Law of life permeating the entire being of *Goutama* Buddha. This sought to do in ways that people of the day could easily understand. For this reason, the Buddha who appears in the Mahayana scriptures is

often depicted as a transcendent or ideal being, not to describe the historical person Shakyamuni.

Returning to the first chapter (Introduction) of the Lotus Sutra, like a great many Buddhist sutras, begins with of the sentence “This is what I heard.” It then goes on to identify the setting Eagle Peak in *Rajagriha* and names representatives of the countless *arahants*, bodhisattvas, heavenly gods, *asuras*, *garudas*, and other beings, human and nonhuman, who have gathered there to hear Shakyamuni Buddha preach.

According to this chapter, the Buddha has finished preaching the Immeasurable Meaning Sutra and enters into profound meditation. At that time, four kinds of flowers rain down from the heavens, and the earth trembles in six different ways. The members of the whole assembly gain what they never had before, are filled with joy, and, pressing their palms together, gaze at the Buddha with a single mind. Then the Buddha emits a beam of light from the tuft of white hair between his eyebrows, illuminating eighteen thousands worlds to the east. All the living beings in the six paths of existence as well as the Buddha and their disciples in all these worlds are clearly visible, and the entire assembly is astonished at these fabulous portents. (to be continued)

As mentioned above, there are divided two categories of six auspicious happenings in the “Introduction” chapter: the six auspicious happenings occurring in this world and those occurring in other worlds.

The six auspicious happenings in this world are as follows:

1. The Buddha preaches the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra, an introductory teaching to the Lotus Sutra.
2. He enters a profound meditation called the Samadhi of the origin of immeasurable meanings.
3. Four kinds of exquisite flowers rain down from the heavens.
4. The earth trembles in six different ways.
5. Seeing these portents, the whole assembly rejoice and, placing their palms together, single-mindedly behold the Buddha
6. The Buddha emits a beam of light from the tuft of white hair between His eye-brows, illuminating eighteen thousand worlds to the east.

The “Introduction” chapter goes on to describe the six auspicious happenings occurring in other worlds the Buddha has just illuminated, which differ from the six events listed above. They are;

1. The light emitted by the Buddha reaches as high as the *Akanishtha* Heaven and as deep as the *Avichi* hell, so that the living beings of the six paths in all the illuminated worlds are clearly visible to those at the assembly of the sutra.

2. The Buddhas present in the other worlds can be seen.
3. The preaching of these Buddhas can be heard.
4. The four kinds of believers --- monks, nuns, layman, and laywoman --- who have carried out Buddhist practices and attained the way can be seen.
5. Bodhisattva practicing the bodhisattva way can be seen.
6. It can be seen that, after the Buddhas have entered nirvana, towers adorned with the seven kinds of treasures are built to house the Buddhas' relics.

It is for giving evidence to the veracity, eternality and universality of the Law beyond time and place to quote the previous instances of the past Buddha in the sutra. (It is like *Kassapa* Buddha in the "Tainted fare" of *Sutta-Nipata* and the Buddha Sun Moon Bright [Skt *Chandra-surya-pradipa*] in the Introduction chapter of the Lotus Sutra). Countless *Kalpas* ago, *Manjushri* says, there once appeared twenty thousand Buddhas in succession, each with the same name, Sun Moon Bright. The last and twenty-thousandth Sun Moon Bright Buddha had once preached a scripture known as the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra, after which he entered into deep meditation and the very same portents appeared. Then this Buddha immediately expounded a sutra called the Lotus Sutra of the assembly named Wonderful Law.

At that time, *Manjushri* says, there was a bodhisattva in the assembly named wonderfully Bright, accompanied by his eight hundred disciples, among whom was one named Seeker of Fame. Bodhisattva Wonderfully Bright, says *Manjushri* is now himself, and Bodhisattva Seeker of Fame is the present Bodhisattva *Maitreya*. The portents they are now witnessing are identical with those they saw in the past. Bodhisattva *Manjushri* concludes that Shakyamuni Buddha is about to expound the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law.

Comparison and Comment

Here is the comparison and comment about what is given above, with only the essence.

First, compared the text of *Abhidharma* Buddhism with many of the *Mahayana* scriptures, another views are as follows.

(1) *Abhidharma* Buddhism teaches that the highest enlightenment for a *savaka* is that of the *arahant*, not buddhahood. During the *Abhidharma* period, Shakyamuni was, in effect, deified. Shakyamuni's attainment of buddhahood was considered to be the result of eons of accumulated practice as a bodhisattva. His disciple, by contrast, had merely heard his teachings and begun to practice in response to them.

Mahayana scriptures teach that all sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature (*buddhagotta*), the disposition and capacity to attain buddhahood, and thus are capable first of becoming bodhisattvas by means of four universal vows.

(2) A- The final goal is the escape from the bonds existence, release from the suffering inherent in existence of Karmic retribution, or from the cycle of birth and death and attainment of the tranquil. (Good karmic requital thought).

M- The primary goal of Mahayana bodhisattvas was to fulfill the bodhisattvas' first vow to bring all sentient beings to enlightenment. They, voluntarily, embrace the adverse destinations of rebirth to share the distress of their inhabitants. (Vows and practice thought).

(3) A- *Savakas* seek their enlightenment through perfecting themselves as an exclusive focus in the fundamental doctrine of the Four Noble Truth and the Eightfold Path. This implication is inherent in the literal meaning of *arahant*, 'worthy of respect.' After they have perfected themselves, they as individuals teach others and guide them to enlightenment.

M- As a corollary of this goal, they emphasized altruistic practice. The practices of Six Perfections (*paramita*) are characteristic of their concern for altruistic practice. The concept of altruistic practice was further clarified with the formalization of the four means by which bodhisattva leads sentient beings to release. Four means are donation, kind words, acting to benefit others, and sharing others' hardships and cooperating with them.

(4) A- Developed within Buddhism, concern turned increasingly to theoretical rather than practical matters, ontological subjects, particularly the idea of existence.

M- In an endeavor to revive Shakamuni's teachings, they emphasized the actual state to existence and what it should be in light of the emptiness of wisdom. In doing so, they restored the original doctrine of dependent origination.

(5) A- The convoluted academic studies are very specialized for general comprehension, did nothing to furthered the faith and religious practice of believers as a whole.

M- The six perfections provide an easily understood way of faith and practice. Furthermore, they taught that the ultimate truth of Buddhism lies in the day-to-day actions of the lay believer, so that everyday life itself is the place of enlightenment (*bodhi-manda*), the place of the bodhisattva practice of attaining enlightenment and helping others do so.

Returning to the Lotus Sutra:—

In ancient India, it seems to have been customary not to write down important teachings but to memorize and transmit them orally. The great Buddhist scholar

Nagarjuna writes in his ‘Treatise on the Great perfection of Wisdom’: “The Buddha’s disciples recited the Buddha’s teaching and recorded them as scriptures.”

We can only praise the genius of the Lotus Sutra’s compilers, for they could extract the essence of Shakyamuni’s thought from the teachings handed down both orally and in writing and magnificently restore that essence to life. We cannot help thinking that among the compilers, some brilliant individuals pursued and grasped Shakyamuni’s enlightenment and demonstrated superlative leadership in setting down the sutra in writing. There existed the Lotus Sutra’s compilers, such as touching upon that the verses 251 and 252 were mentioned by the compilers of Buddhist teaching (*sangitikara*), according to *Paramattha-jotika (Sutta-nipata-atthakatha)*.

As research on Buddhist texts proceeds, scholars have discovered the seedlings of later Mahayana teachings in the earliest Theravada texts and have come to emphasize that indeed the Mahayana resulted from developing the Buddha’s ideas in a correct and orthodox fashion. Clearly, then, the assertion that only the Theravada scriptures are the Buddha’s teachings and the Mahayana scriptures are not is no longer tenable. Both Theravada and Mahayana scriptures derive from a single source: Shakyamuni.

Of all the Mahayana scriptures, the Lotus Sutra is unparalleled in its faith and wisdom to seek Shakyamuni. In some respects, it might even be called a first-century treatise on Shakyamuni.

Now, concerning about ‘Introduction’ (first) chapter:—

According to the sutra, the vast number of beings gathered at the assembly of eagle’s peak. We know that such number of beings could not have assembled at once.

Those who gathered for the ceremony of the Lotus Sutra were the *savakas* and the bodhisattvas and so on, who dwelled within Shakyamuni’s own life. Hence, there is nothing to hinder even tens of millions of such *savakas* and bodhisattvas. As he indicates, the Lotus Sutra is an expression of the realm of the Buddha’s own life, the world of enlightenment. In that sense, we can interpret all the different beings gathered to hear the sutra as symbolizing the different functions and working inherent in life itself.

Six auspicious happenings in this world and six auspicious happenings in other world might be able to be said to bear the same kind of function as III.11. *Nalaka* of *Sutta-nipata* and II *Avidurenidana* of *Nidanakatha*, that the good omens and the wonderful occurrence on this world and on the world of heavenly world before and after the Buddha was born in the world of men, are described.

In the 'Introduction' chapter of the Lotus Sutra, *Manjushri* said that six auspicious happenings in this world indicate that the Buddha wishes now to expound the great Law, to rain down the rain of the great Law, to blow the conch of the great Law, to beat the drum of the great Law, to elucidate the meaning of the great Law. Also, six auspicious happenings in other world shined by a beam of light indicate that the Buddha wishes to cause all living beings to hear and understand the Law, which is difficult for all the world to believe. And as to the Buddha Sun Moon Bright, *Manjushri* speaks of experiences in previous lives. He describes how in the past a Buddha named Sun Moon Bright manifested the same kind of wondrous phenomena when he preached the Lotus Sutra. On that basis, *Manjushri* says, Shakyamuni must also be about to preach the Lotus Sutra. It is the same as principle of the five categories of Buddhas all employ a similar process.

The wondrous phenomena before and after Shakyamuni birth and before the Shakyamuni Buddha's preach of the Lotus Sutra indicate that the Buddha wishes to expound the great Law and cause all living beings to hear and understand the Law, as *Manjushri* said in the 'Introduction' chapter.

In order to respond the Buddha intention, we should believe in the Buddha's teaching, practice the Buddha's teaching, and learn the Buddha's teaching.



ศูนย์วิทยพัชกร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF BODHISATTA

In Buddhism, before a person would become the Buddha, he has to practice as a *Bodhisatta*. In this chapter the comparison between the *Sutta Nipata* and the Lotus Sutra will be made on the concept of the *Bodhisatta*

Bodhisatta in the Sutta Nipata

Bodhi of *Bodhisatta* means enlightenment, and *satta*, a living being. In *Theravada* Buddhism, the term indicates Shakyamuni practicing before his enlightenment, or before his appearance in this world, namely, in his previous lifetime. The *Jataka*, or “birth story” (which recount his past existence), often refer to him as “the *bodhisatta*.” In *Sutta Nipata*, there are the verses including the both meanings of this life and past life of Shakyamuni, namely, introductory verses of *Nalaka*. The Introductory Verses are a talk about the seer *Asita*’s experiences when Shakyamuni has been born in this world. It is as follows.

679: The seer *Asita* saw in their daytime resting place the joyful group of the Thirty gods, [who were] glad, having honored *Inda*, and [he saw] the *devas* in their clean clothes, holding up their garments, praising exceedingly.

680: Having seen the *devas* [who were] delighted in mind [and] glad, he, having paid his respect, said this there: ‘Why is the group of *devas* exceedingly happy? Why do they hold up their garments and wave them about?’

681: Even when there was a battle with the *asuras*, and [there was victory for the *suras* [and] the *asuras* were defeated, even then there was not such excitement. Having seen what marvel are the gods delighted?

The verse 682: They shout, and sing, and play [instruments]; they slap their arms, and dance. I ask you inhabitants of *Meru*’s crest. Dispel my doubt quickly, sirs.’

The word “*Bodhisatta*” is used in the reply by the *devas* to *Asita* of the verse 683.

683: ‘That *Bodhisatta*, excellent jewel, incomparable, has been born in the world of men for [their] benefit and happiness, in the village

of the *Sakyas*, in the *Lumbini* country. Therefore we are exultant exceedingly happy.

Bodhisatta is one seeks enlightenment not only for himself but for others. This concept is included by saying “for [their] benefit and happiness” in the verse #683.

In the verse 684, *devas* look ahead for the first “Turning the Wheel of the *Dhamma* (preaching the Law) at *Sarnath*.

684: He is the best of all beings, the preeminent individual, bull among men, supreme among all people. Roaring like a lion, possessing strength, overlord of animals, He will cause the wheel to turn in the grove named after the seers.’

Shakyamuni, after attaining enlightenment, looks back on the sensitive nature of His early years by a passage in the scripture, as follows:

‘Although brought up in wealth, I was by nature very sensitive, and it caused me to wonder why, when all men are destined to suffer old age, sickness, and death, and none can escape these things, they yet look upon the old age, sickness, and death of other men with fear, loathing, and scorn. This is not right, I thought, and at that time all the joy of youth and the pride and courage I felt in my own good health deserted me.’²

In addition, Shakyamuni states that his underwear and other garments were all made of silk, and that a parasol was held over his head all day long. He had three palaces, one for winter, one for summer, and one for the rainy season, where he lived surrounded by ladies-in-waiting, dancers, and musicians to serve and entertain him. It gives some indication of the care and lavishness with which the young prince was brought up.

There is another episode which suggests that there was something striking about Shakyamuni’s appearance. After entering the religious life, He visited the state of Magadha and had an interview with King *Bimbisara*.

The undermentioned verses “III. 1. going-forth” of “III. The Great Chapter” in *Sutta-nipata*, according to *Paramatta jotika*, were described by *Ananda* who was the Buddha’s disciple and attendant.

² The passage as anguish of young man of Shakyamuni in *Anguttara-nikaya*. The same kind of passages are in *Majjhima-nikaya* and *Nidana-katha* as motive of Shakyamuni’s going-forth (renounce, *pabbajja*). Birth, aging, sickness and death are the four fundamental sufferings common to all people.

#405 I shall praise going-forth, as the one with vision went forth, as He, examining, found pleasure in going-forth.

#406 Seeing that this dwelling in a house is a constriction, the sphere of pollution, and that going-forth is an open air life, He went forth.

#407 Having gone-forth, He avoided evil deed[s] with the body; having abandoned bad conduct in word, He purified his mode of living.

#408 The Buddha went to *Rajagaha*, He betook Himself to *Giribbaja* of the *Magadhans* for alms, being endower with the excellent marks.

#409 Standing in his place *Bimbisara* saw him; seeing him endowed with the marks he said this:

#410 ‘Look at this one, sirs; he is handsome, large, pure, and endowed with [good] demeanour, and he looks ahead a yoke’s length only.

#411 With down-turned eyes, possessing mindfulness, this one is not as though from a lowly family. Let the royal messengers run out [to find] where the *bhikkhu* will go.’

#412 Those royal messengers, sent out, followed behind Him [wondering], ‘Where will the *bhikkhu* go / Where will [His] dwelling be?’

#413 Going on an uninterrupted begging round, with sense-doors guarded, well-restrained, He quickly filled His bowl, [being] attentive and mindful.

#414 That sage, having wandered on his alms-round, having gone out of the city, betook Himself to *Pandava*, [thinking] ‘Here [my] dwelling will be.’

#415 Having seen him go to his dwelling, the messengers then sat down, but one messenger came back and informed the king.

#416 ‘That *bhikkhu*, great king, is seated on the Eastern side of *Pandava*, like a tiger or bull, like a lion in a mountain cave.’

#417 Hearing the messenger’s report, the *khattiya* [king] went hurrying in the state vehicle out to Mt *Pandava*.

#418 That *Khattiya* [king] going [by vehicle] as far as the ground was suitable for vehicle, then descended from the vehicle and went up to him on foot. Reaching him, he sat down.

#419 Having sat down, the king then exchanged the customary friendly greeting; having exchanged greetings, he said this:

#420 'You are young and tender, in your first youth, a stripling, endowed with [good] complexion and stature, like a *Khattiya* of good birth,

#421 Making beautiful the van of the army, at the head of a group of elephants. I shall give you objects of enjoyment; enjoy them. But tell me your birth, when asked.'

#422 'Straight on [in that direction] there is a people, king, [living] on the flank of *Himavat*, endowed with wealth and energy, [belonging to] one who is indigenous among the *Kosalans*.

#423 They are *Adicca* by clan, *Sakiya* by birth. From that family I went forth, king, not desiring sensuous pleasures.

#424 Having seen the peril in sensual pleasures, having seen going-forth as safety, I shall go in order to strive. In that my mind delights.

King *Bimbisara* begged Shakyamuni to become the leader of the army of Magadha. As mentioned above, Shakyamuni refused this request. It is clear that, in order to have inspired the king to make such a request, there must have been something in his appearance and bearing that marked Him as a natural leader of men.

Shakyamuni, convinced that He could not attain the enlightenment He was seeking under the two yoga masters, decided to devote Himself to the practice of austerities. The practice of austerities, like yogic meditation, was regarded in Indian philosophy as a method of attaining spiritual advancement and was widely resorted to. Underlying it were the same concepts of the duality of mind and matter and the search for emancipation. By subjecting the body to various painful processes and learning to endure the pain and suffering that resulted, it was believed, one could acquire spiritual freedom.

It was traditionally believed that any person who had left his family and entered the religious life must necessarily at some point devote himself to such practices before he could hope to reach the heart of the ultimate truth.

Shakyamuni practiced various types of austerities in an earnest and thorough going manner. The scriptures record that those around Him were astonished by the severity of the practices that he undertook, and believed that he had died as a consequence of ascetic practices.

Latter, recalling this period of his life, He says in a scripture that no *Brahman* or *samana* ascetic past, present, or future had ever undergone or would ever undergo the kind of severe self-torture that he himself had endured, although he had not been able thereby to gain enlightenment.

The note of self-assurance in this statement is important, for it indicates that he was convinced that He had entered into these ascetic practices determinedly and had persisted until penetrated into the very essence of such practices. When he later abandoned such practices, he did so not out of frustration or a failure of willpower that led Him to give up along the way but it of no use to him.

Shakyamuni studied yoga, especially the art of meditation, under two teachers, but after mastering their techniques, he left them. Then, after practicing the most severe mortifications of the flesh, he gave up those practices as well, and went his own way in the quest for supreme wisdom.

These two acts of rejection clearly indicate that Buddhism is not a teaching that advocates the practice of extreme asceticism, nor is it merely a meditative and idealistic philosophy. It is, rather, a religion that is based upon the assumption that fundamental truths can be explained in a commonsensical manner to each and every individual. It is the religion of the so-called Middle Way.

The verses “III.2. Striving” of “III. The Great chapter” in the *Sutta-nipata* saying:

425: While I was meditating for the attainment of rest-from-exertion, with my self intent upon striving, near the river *Neranjara*, having made a great effort.

426: *Namuchi* approached me, uttering compassionate word[s]: ‘You are thin, of bad complexion; death is near you.

427: [There are] one thousand parts of death; [only] one part of you is life. Live, sir, life is better. If you live, you will perform merits.

428: Much merit will be heaped up by you practicing the holy life and sacrificing the *aggihutta* [sacrifice]. What do you want with striving?

429: The road to striving is hard to travel, hard to perform, hard to achieve.’ Saying these verses *Mara* stood near the Buddha.

430: The blessed One said this to that *Mara*, who had spoken thus: ‘Kinsman of the negligent, evil one, you have come here for your own purpose.

431: I do not have even the slightest need of merit, but *Mara* ought to speak to those who have need of merits.

432: There is faith, and energy, and wisdom is found in me. Why do you ask me about life even though my self is intent [upon striving]?

433: This wind would dry up even the streams of the rivers; and why should my blood not be dried up when myself is intent [upon striving]?

434: When my blood is being dried up, [then] the bile and phlegm are dried up. When the flesh wastes away, the mind becomes clearer, and all the more my mindfulness and wisdom and concentration stand [firm].

435: While I dwell thus, having reached the highest sensation, my mind has no regard for sensual pleasure. See a being's pure state.

436: Sensual pleasures are your first army; discontent is called your second; your third is hunger and thirst; the fourth is called craving.

437: Sloth and torpor are your fifth; the sixth is called fear; your seventh is doubt; hypocrisy and obstinacy are your eighth.

438: Gain, renown, honour, and whatever fame is falsely received, and whoever both extols himself and disparages others,

439: that is your army, *Namuchi*, [that is] the striking force of *Kanha*. One who is not a hero cannot conquer it, but having conquered it one obtains happiness.

440: Should I wear *munja* grass? Woe upon life here. Death in battle is better for me than I should be conquered and live.

441: Plunged into this [battle] some ascetics and *brahmins* are not seen, and they do not know the road by which those with good vows go.

442: Seeing the army arrayed all round, and Mara with his elephant, I shall go forth to battle. May he not move me from my place.

443: That army of yours which the world together with the *devas* cannot overcome, that [army] of yours I shall break with wisdom, as if [breaking] an unfired pot with a stone.

444: Having brought my thought[s] under control, and [making] my mindfulness well-established, I shall wander from kingdom to kingdom, training many disciples.

445: They, vigilant, and with selves intent, performers of my teaching, will go despite you, where having gone they will grieve.'

446: 'For seven years I have followed the Blessed one step by step. I have not obtained an opportunity against the fully-awakened one who possesses mindfulness.

447: A bird circled a stone which looked like fat, [thinking] “Perhaps we shall find something soft here; perhaps there may be [something] sweet.”

448: Not obtaining [anything] sweet, the bird went away from there. Like a crow attacking a rock and becoming despondent, we attacking *Gotama* and becoming despondent, will go away.’

449: The *vina* fell from the armpit of that one overcome by grief. Then that discourage *yakkha* disappeared on that very spot.

After defeating Mara, Sakyamuni attained enlightenment. Scriptural account of the enlightenment of Sakyamuni is “*Paticcasamuppada*” (Dependent Origination). Nothing can exist independently of other things or arise if its own accord. For this reason this theory often referred to as “the essential interdependence of things.” The progression of causes and conditions is the reality which applies to all things, from the natural environment, which is an external, physical condition, to the events of human society, ethical principles, life events and the happiness and suffering which manifest in our own mind. This web of causation that binds all things is temporal as well as spatial, so that not only are all things in existence at the present moment dependent upon one another, but all things existing in the past and future as well.

The story of Sakyamuni as a *bodhisatta* starts from the prophecy by *Dipamkara* (Fixed Light Buddha, also known as Burning Torch Buddha) to Him. In the case, He is called Sakyamni *bodhisatta* at the time when he is said to have practiced in His previous life as a *bodhisatta*.

According to the Sutra of the Buddha’s Marvelous Deeds in previous lifetime, Learned Youth (*Manavaka*) happened to hear that a Buddha named Fixed Light Buddha (*Dipamkara*, Burning Torch Buddha) was in the world. Rejoicing, and Learner Youth (Sakyamuni *bodhisatta*) set out for the country Where the Buddha lived. At length He reached a village where Burning Torch Buddha met five hundred religious practitioners and He expounded a teaching to them. They were delighted to receive this teaching, and each gave the Buddha one silver coin when the Buddha left the village. Then Learned Youth (*Manavaka*) went to a city that was decorated as though for festival, and was told that the Buddha would soon arrive there.

In the street, Learned Youth (*Manavaka*) passed a woman named *Gopi* who was carrying seven lotus blossoms. So eager was Learned Youth to make an offering to the Buddha that Learned Youth (*Manavaka*) offered her five hundred silver coins in exchange for just five blossoms. On learning Learned Youth wanted five blossoms as an offering to the Buddha, she was deeply moved and asked Learned Youth (*Manavaka*) to make her Learned Youth’s wife in their next existence. She also gave

Learned Youth her remaining two lotus blossoms. When Burning Torch Buddha reached the city, the king and his ministers all bowed and reverently threw flowers before the Buddha as an offering. The flowers fell down to the ground. The five lotus blossoms offered by Learned Youth reminded floating in the air, however, and the other two lotus flowers given to Learned Youth by *Gopi* came to rest on the Buddha's shoulders.

Learned Youth spread his deerskin cloak and his own hair over marshy ground for the Buddha to walk upon. Burning Torch Buddha then perceived the sincere faith (A vow of Seeking enlightenment above and Transforming sentient beings below) of Learned Youth and *Gopi*, and predicted that Learned Youth would in the distant future attain enlightenment as Sakyamuni Buddha. *Gopi* were reborn as *Yasodhara* who was the wife of Sakyamuni before He renounced secular life, and also is mother of *Rahula*. *Yasodhara* converted to Sakyamuni Buddha's teaching and became a Buddhist nun. The "Encouraging Devotion" (thirteenth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra states that she will become a Buddha named Endowed with a Thousand Glowing marks Thus Come One.

Sakyamuni *Bodhisatta* is said to have practiced as a *bodhisatta*, lifetime after lifetime for countless *kalpas* to attain Buddha. As for countless *kalpas* practice of Sakyamuni *Bodhisatta*, there are two kinds of texts.

General traditions except *Pali* Buddhism held that it takes a bodhisattva three *asamkhyeyas* and one hundred great *kalpas* to perfect the practice, the other, *Pali* Buddhism held that a *bodhisatta* needs four *asamkhyeyas* and one hundred thousand *kalpas* to perfect the practice.

Kalpa is an extremely long period of time in ancient Indian cosmology. There are various views on the length of a *kalpa*. According to The Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom, a *kalpa* is longer than the time required to wear away a cube of rock forty *Ri* (one *Ri* being about 450 meters) on each side, by brushing it with a piece of cloth once every hundred years. Great Perfection of Wisdom also defines a *kalpa* as being longer than the time needed to remove all the mustard seeds filling a city forty *Ri* square, if one takes away one seed every hundred years. The word *kalpa* is also used in describing the formation and disintegration of the world. According to Buddhist cosmology, a world perpetually repeats a four-stage cycle of formation, continuance, decline, and disintegration. The periods corresponding to these four stages are called the four *kalpas*. Each of these four *kalpas*—the *kalpa* of formation, the *kalpa* of continuance, the *kalpa* of decline, and the *kalpa* of disintegration—lasts for twenty small *kalpas*. A small *kalpa* is defined in terms of cyclical changes said to occur repeatedly in the human life span the *kalpa* of continuance. Over the course of a small *kalpa*, the human life span increases from 10 to 80,000 years and then decreases from

80,000 to 10 years. The increase of life span also occurs at the rate of one year every hundred years, and the decrease of life span also occurs in the way. During the *kalpa* of continuance, a world and its inhabitants continue to exist for twenty small *kalpa*, that is, while the human life span repeats its increase and decrease in this way. The time required for the life span to increase from 10 to 80,000 years is 79,990 years multiplied by 100, which equals 7,999,000 years. Exactly the same number of years is necessary for the decrease in life from 80,000 to 10 years; that is, 7,999,000 is multiplied by two, equaling 15,998,000 years, or about 16,000,000 years, is described simply as a *kalpa*, 15,998,000 years, or about 16,000,000 years, is often given as the definition of the length of a small *kalpa*.

A medium *kalpa* can refer to either of two different periods of time. One is any of the twenty *kalpas* that constitute each of the four *kalpas* of formation, continuance, decline, and disintegration. (According to one account, a medium *kalpa* is 15,598,000 years) The other is a total of those twenty *kalpas* or the period of any of the four *kalpas* mentioned above.

As for a major *kalpa* (*maha-kalpa*), the four *kalpas*, from formation through disintegration together constitute a major *kalpa*. Each of these four *kalpas* lasts for twenty small *kalpas*, and so a *major kalpa* consists of eighty small *kalpas*. One small *kalpa* equals 15,998,000 years, which makes a major *kalpa* approximately 1,280 million years. *Asamkhyeya* is a numerical unit of ancient India used to indicate an exceedingly large number. One source has it equal to 10 to the power of 59, while another describes it as 10 to the power of 51, or as 10 to the power of 140, and another text says that one hundred major *kalpas* multiplied by an *asamkhyeya* are an *asamkhyeya kalpa*.

The period that Sakyamuni *bodhisatta* had practiced to become a Buddha is described three *asamkhyeya kalpas* (*tri kalpa asamkhyeya*) and a hundred major *kalpas* (*kalpa-sata*). The some sutras are described, not a hundred major *kalpas*, but ninety *kalpas* or ninety-one *kalpas*. More, *Jataka Nidana* is described four *asamkhyeya* one hundred thousand *kalpas*. During these periods, Sakyamuni *Bodhisattva* served very many Buddhas and practiced *bodhisattva* austerities. The number and the names of the Buddhas whom Sakyamuni *Bodhisattva* served in these periods are as follows.

According to *Maha-vastu* of *Lokottaravada* in *Mahasamghika*, sakyamuni *Bodhisattva* served over four billion Buddhas who just seventeen different names (for example, served three billion *Sakya*-Buddhas, eight hundred million Burning Torch Buddhas and so on), and the text of *sabbatthivada* in Theravada says that while Sakyamuni practiced as a *bodhisattva*, He served seventy-five thousand Buddhas in the first *asamkhyeya kalpa* of practice, seventy-six thousand Buddhas in the second,

seventy-seven thousand Buddhas in the third, and six Buddhas (*Vipassin, Sikhin, Vessabhu, kakusandha, Kona-gamana, kassapa*) in the final major *kalpas*.

The six practices are required for bodhisattvas to become Buddha, called Six-Perfection (*cha-parami, sat-paramita*). *Paramita* is interpreted as “perfection” or “having reached the opposite shore,” i.e. to cross from the delusion to the shore of enlightenment.

Six-Perfection are (1) almsgiving (*dana*), which includes material almsgiving, almsgiving of the Law, and almsgiving of fearlessness (meaning to remove fear and give relief), (2) keeping the precepts (*sila*), (3) forbearance (*ksanti*), or bear up patiently and continue one’s Buddhist practice under all opposition and hardships, (4) assiduousness (*virya*), to practice the other five paramita ceaselessly, with utmost physical and spiritual effort, (5) meditation (*dhyana*), to focus the mind and contemplate the truth with a tranquil mind; and (6) the obtaining of wisdom (*prajna*), which enable one to perceive the true nature of all things.

To add, *Pali* Buddhism compiled its own list of ten perfections (*dasa-parami*). It consists of almsgiving (*dana*), keeping precept [morality] (*sila*), release from the world of delusion (*nekkhamma*), wisdom (*panna*), assiduousness (*viriya*), forbearance (*khanti*), truth (*sacca*), determination (*adhitthana*), benevolence (*metta*), and equanimity (*upekkha*). Around one hundred years after Sakyamuni Buddha’s death, the Buddhist community was divided by controversies over the interpretation of doctrines and monastic regulations. Ancient *Pali* Buddhist histories and commentaries offer two interpretations of the initial schism. They are a progressive group, the *Mahasamghika* (Great Assembly), and a group to support the teaching of the elders, the Theravada (Elders). Two or three hundred years later, Buddhism was divided into eighteen or twenty schools. It is the sectarianism following the first schism that is called *Abhidharma* Buddhism.

Primitive Buddhism cites seven Buddhas of the past (*Mahapadana-suttanta* of *Digha-nikaya*, the sutra of the Story of the Great Ones twenty-five Buddhas of the past (Buddha-vamsa of *Khuddaka nikaya*, the Lineage of the Buddhas) as well as twenty-eight Buddhas of the past (the same *sutta*). Moreover, *Cakkavattisihanada-suttanta* (the *Digha-nikaya*), the Sutra of on the Preaching of the Wheel-rolling King), describes a Buddha of the future, *Metteyya* (*Maitreya*). Many *Abhidharma* schools postulated innumerable Buddhas of the present and future besides the past. Moreover, the *Lokottaravada* of *Mahasamghika* asserted existence of Buddhas in the ten directions at the same time. The ten directions are the eight directions of the compass—north, south, east, west, northwest, northeast, southeast, and southwest—plus up and down. And *Mahasamghika* allowed for the existence of many *bodhisattas*, accompanying the innumerable Buddhas, that is, because many *bodhisattas* existed for aspiring to

enlightenment and attaining Buddhahood, so many Buddhas are able to appear. The bodhisattva concept was broadened to include any being (*sattva*), monk (nun) or layperson, aspiring to enlightenment (*bodhi*). A *bodhisatta* is a Buddha-to-be, one who walks the path of enlightenment.

Mahayana expanded this new theory to accommodate innumerable buddhas of the three period of the past, present, and future in ten directions excepting that several buddhas exist in one world simultaneously same as the *Lokottaravada*. Further, Mahayana asserted that all sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature (*buddhagatra*), and are firstly capable of becoming bodhisattva through seeking enlightenment above and transforming sentient beings below, and then attaining Buddhahood. One becomes a bodhisattva as a result of awakening within oneself the aspiration to enlightenment (*bodhicitta*) and embracing the four universal vows.

The four universal vows are also four great vows. They are the vows that every *bodhisatta* makes when he or she first resolves to embark upon the Buddhist practice. They are (1) to save innumerable living beings, (2) to eradicate countless earthly desires, (3) to master immeasurable Buddhist teachings, and (4) to attain supreme enlightenment. That is, the designation *bodhisatta* presupposes that one is seeking to bring all others, not just oneself, to enlightenment. Any being, man or woman, monk or layman, can become a *bodhisatta*.

Bodhisattva in the Lotus Sutra

The bodhisattvas are varied in the Lotus Sutra. The following are ones being of great importance.

Manjushri:

The Bodhisattva appears in the sutra as the leader of the bodhisattva and is regarded as symbolic of the perfection of wisdom.

In the Lotus Sutra, at the Introduction (first) chapter, *Manjushuri* answered Bodhisattva *Maitreya*'s question why two categories of six auspicious happenings occurred, during the Buddha entered into the Samadhi. These are the six auspicious happenings occurring in this world and those occurring in other worlds.

The six auspicious happenings in this world are as follows: (1) the Buddha preaches the Immeasurable Meaning Sutra, an introductory teaching to the Lotus Sutra; (2) He enters a profound meditation called the *samadhi* of the origin of immeasurable meanings; (3) four kinds of exquisite flowers rain down from the heavens; (4) the earth trembles in six different ways; (5) seeing these portents, the whole assembly rejoice and, placing their palms together, single-mindedly behold the Buddha; and (6) the Buddha emits a beam of light from the tuft of white hair between

His eye brows, illuminating eighteen thousand worlds to the east. Those occurring in other worlds are: (1) the light emitted by the Buddha reaches as high as the *Akanishtha* Heaven and as deep as the *Avichi* hell, so that the living beings of the six paths in all the illuminated worlds are clearly visible to those at the assembly of the sutra; (2) the Buddhas present in other worlds can be seen; (3) the preaching of these Buddhas can be heard; (4) the four kinds of believers – monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen – who have carried out Buddhist practices and attained the way can be seen; (5) bodhisattva practicing the bodhisattva way can be seen; and (6) it can be seen that, after the Buddha has entered nirvana, towers adorned with the seven kinds of treasures are built to house the Buddhas' relics.

Manjushri said that after Sakyamuni arise from His *samadhi* He would preach “the Lotus of the Wonderful Law” by *Manjushri* own's experiences of the past, which is that (1) the last Sun Moon Bright Buddha among twenty thousand same named Buddhas in the past preached the Lotus of the Wonderful Law after the same auspicious portent as this, and (2) at that time *Manjushri* heard the Lotus Sutra as a bodhisattva named Wonderfully Bright who had eight hundred disciples, and (3) after the Buddha entered nirvana of no reminder and had passed away, the Bodhisattva Wonderfully Bright taught the eight sons of the Buddha Sun Moon Bright, whose father had not yet left family life, had eight princely sons, and dignity and virtue came easily to eight sons, and each presided over a four continent realm. When these princes heard that their father had left family life and had gained *anuttara-samyaku-sambodhi*, they all cast aside their princely positions and followed their father by leaving family life. (4) The eight sons all were able to achieve the Buddha way. The last to become was a Buddha was named Burning Torch. (5) Among the eight hundred disciples of wonderfully Bright was one named Seeker of Fame. He was greedy for gain and support, and though he read and recited numerous sutras, he could not understand them, but for the most part forgot them. Bodhisattva Seeker of Fame was you, *Maitreya*. In addition, the Burning Torch Buddha is the first Buddha of twenty-five Buddhas of the past, and is very famous as the Buddha who predicted enlightenment in the future (the prophecy of future) to the Sakyamuni Buddha.

In the “*Devadatta*” (twelfth) chapter, the dragon king daughter, the eight-year-old daughter of Sagara –one of the eight great dragon kings– conceived the desire for enlightenment when she heard *Bodhisattva Manjushri* preach the Lotus Sutra in the dragon king's palace. When *Manjushri* asserted that she is capable of quickly attaining the Buddha wisdom, Bodhisattva Widom Accumlated challenges him, saying that even Sakyamuni attained enlightenment only after fulfilling the *bodhisatta* practice for many Kalpas, and that she cannot become a Buddha so easily.

Before Wisdom Accumulated has even finished stating his disbelief, the dragon girl herself suddenly appears in front of the assembly and praises Sakyamuni Buddha by reciting these verses of praise. Last two verses of these verses are as follows:

And having heard His teachings, I have attained *bodhi*—the
Buddha alone can bear witness to this. / I unfold the doctrines of the
Great Vehicle to rescue living beings from suffering.

Shariputra voices doubt after hearing the dragon girl's determination (last two verses). There are two reasons for *Shariputra*'s disbelief. In the first place, *Shariputra*, like Wisdom Accumulated, has the fixed notion that the Buddha's enlightenment can only be attained by carrying out painful practices over an extremely long period of time. The second reason relates to the "five obstacles"; the view that a woman cannot become a Brahma, a *Shakra*, a devil king, a wheel-turning king, or a Buddha. At that moment, she offers a jewel to the Buddha. The Buddha immediately accepted it. The dragon girl said to Wisdom Accumulated and *Shariputra*, "I presented the precious jewel and the World Honored One accepted it—was that not quickly done?" They reply, "very quickly!" The girl said, "Employ your supernatural powers and watch me attain Buddhahood. It will be even quicker than that!" At that time she transforms herself into a male, and instantaneously perfects the *bodhisatta* practice. She then appears in a land to the south called Spotless World and manifests the state of Buddhahood without changing her dragon form. With the thirty-two features and eighty characteristics of a Buddha, she preaches the Lotus Sutra to all living there. The dragon girl's enlightenment has important implications.

First, it refutes the idea of the time that women could never attain enlightenment, including the commonly held view the doctrine of the five obstacles. Second, it reveals that the power of the Lotus Sutra enables all people equally to attain Buddhahood in their present form, without undergoing *Kalpas* of austere practices. Furthermore, in this chapter, the attainment of Buddhahood by evil persons, that is, the principle that even evil persons have the potential for enlightenment, is expounded through the story between Sakyamuni and *Devadatta*. Sakyamuni reveals that He, in some past existence, learned the Lotus Sutra from a seer named *Asita*, and that this seer was present *Devadatta*.

In the "Peaceful Practice" (fourteen) chapter, *Manjushri* asks Sakyamuni Buddha that how *bodhisatta* should practice Buddhism in the evil age after Sakyamuni Buddha's death. The Buddha expounds four rules or peaceful practices to be observed.

In “The *Bodhisattva* Wonderful Sound” (twenty-fourth) chapter, making appearance lastly in the Lotus Sutra for *Manjushri* and being called Bodhisattva *Manjushri* prince of Dharma with superb title, *Manjushri* said to the Buddha: “What good roots has this bodhisattva planted, what benefits has he cultivated, that he can exercise such great transcendental powers as this? What Samadhi does he carry out? I beg you to explain for us the name of this Samadhi, for we too would like to apply ourselves diligently to its practice.” *Manjushri* burns with inquiring mind, in spite of, as above mentioned, splendid works in Introduction (first) chapter (here called *Manjushri*, son of Dharma King) and in *Devadatta* (twelfth) chapter and so on. The sincere attitude of *Manjushri* may be able to be one of classic example.

Sutras depict *Manjushri* as one of the two bodhisattva who attend Sakyamuni Buddha, the other being *Samantabhadra* (Universal Worthy). *Manjushri* is generally shown Buddhist art riding a lion at the Buddha’s left, and presents the virtue of wisdom and enlightenment. In *Suramgama-Samadhi Sutra* (The *Heroic Valour Samadhi Sutra*), *Manjushri* appears as a Buddha of the past.

Samantabhadra (Bodhisattva Universal Worthy):

This Bodhisattva is regarded as symbolic of the virtue of truth and practice. In various sutras, he is depicted as one of the two leading bodhisattva who attend Sakyamuni Buddha, the other being *Manjushri*. He is usually shown on the Buddha’s right, riding a white elephant with six tusks, as mentioned above. In the “Universal Worthy” (twenty-eighth) chapter, he vows to protect the Lotus Sutra and its votaries, saying to the Buddha. “In the evil and corrupt age of the last five-hundred-year period, if there is someone who accepts and upholds this sutra, I will guard and protect him, free him from decline and harm, see that he attains peace and tranquility that no one can spy out and take advantage of his shortcomings. In this chapter, he also takes a vow before the Buddha, saying: “I now therefore employ my transcendental powers to guard and protect this sutra. And after the Thus Come One has entered extinction, I will cause it to be widely propagated throughout *Jambudvipa* and will see that it never comes to an end.”

Bodhisattva Universal Worthy is also the protagonist of the Universal Worthy Sutra, which describes his beneficent power, how to mediate on him, and the benefit accruing from doing so. In the Flower Garland Sutra, Bodhisattva Universal Worthy makes ten great vows concerning his Buddhist practice, such as a vow to bestow all blessings upon all living beings and lead them to Buddhahood. This sutra relates the story of the boy Good Treasures who visits fifty-three teachers in search of the Law. Good Teacher finally meets the fifty-third teacher, *Bodhisattava* Universal Worthy, and on hearing his ten great vows attains enlightenment.

Bodhisattva Maitreya:

This bodhisattva is predicted to succeed Sakyamuni as a future Buddha. Also he is known as *Ajita*, meaning invincible. The Sanskrit word *Maitreya* means friendly, benevolent, affectionate, or amicable. He is said to have been reborn in the *Tusita* Heaven and to reside in the inner court of this heaven, where he now teaches the heavenly beings. According to the advent of *Maitreya Sutra*, he is to reappear in the world 5,670 million years after Sakyamuni death, attain Buddhahood, and save the people in Sakyamuni's stead. For this reason, he is also sometimes called *Maitreya* Buddha. In the "Emerging from the Earth" (fifteen) chapter of the Lotus Sutra, the each of Buddhas, who were emanations of Sakyamuni Buddha and had arrived from immeasurable thousands, ten thousands, million of lands in the directions, spoke to his attendants, saying: "There is a bodhisattva and *mahasattva* named *Maitreya* who has received a prophecy from Sakyamuni Buddha that he will be the next hereafter to become a Buddha." In the Lotus Sutra, *Maitreya* is a person who asks the question to *Shariputra* at the Introduction (first) chapter, and asks the important questions to the Buddha and is addressed by the Buddha at the "Emerging from the Earth" (fifteen) chapter. In this chapter, the Buddha praises the question of *Maitreya*, saying "Excellent, excellent, *Ajita*, that you should question the Buddha about the great affair.

In the "Emerging from the Earth" (fifteen) chapter, *Maitreya* and the other bodhisattvas all thought to themselves: Never in the past have we seen or heard of such emerged from the earth and now stand before the World-Honored One pressing their palms together, offering alms, and inquiring about Thus Come One.

And *Maitreya* made the inquiry, the Buddha said to *Maitreya*: "With regard to this great multitude I now say this to you. *Ajita*, these bodhisattvas and mahasattvas who in immeasurable and countless *asamkhyas* have emerged from the earth and whom you have never seen before in the past—when I had attained *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* in this *saha* world, I converted and guided these bodhisattvas, trained their minds and caused them to develop a longing for the way. These bodhisattvas have all been dwelling in the world of empty space underneath the *saha* world."

At that time the World-Honored One, wishing to state His meaning once more, spoke in verse form, saying:

Ajita, you should understand this. / (last verse) Ever since the long distant past / I have been teaching and converting this multitude.

This revelation of last verse is called "opening the near and revealing the distant in concise form."

In “The Life Span of Thus Come One” (sixteen) chapter, the bodhisattvas together with Maitreya repeated their request of the Buddha’s preach three times and more (meaning is four times).

The Buddha teaches “opening the near and revealing the distant.” This term describes a revelation made in the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra. In this chapter, Sakyamuni Buddha says:

“In all the worlds the heavenly and human beings and *asura* all believe that the present Sakyamuni Buddha, after leaving the palace of the *Skayayas*, seated himself in the place of practice no far from the city of Gaya and there attained *anuttra-samyak-sambodhi*. (This paragraph is “opening the near”).

But good men, it has been immeasurable, boundless, thousands, ten thousands, millions of *nayutas* of *kalpas* since I in fact attained Buddhahood. (This paragraph is “revealing the distant.”)

This revelation in the “Life Span” chapter of the Buddha’s original attainment of enlightenment in the remote past is called “opening the near and revealing the distant in expanded form.”

In the “Distinctions in Benefits” (seventeen) chapter, Sakyamuni Buddha said to *Maitreya* that those, who had heard the preaching of Sakyamuni Buddha’s life span having lasted such a very long number of *kalpas* in the preceding “Life Span” chapter, received benefit of different kinds according to their states of life. This benefit is distinguished into twelve different levels. That is the reason why this chapter is called “Distinctions in Benefit.” That is, this chapter describes the benefit that occurs to those who understand the importance of the long duration of the Buddha’s life span, and it is able to say that this chapter describes the benefit of awakening to the eternity of life.

The revelation section of the Lotus Sutra finishes at the passage meaning that *Maitreya* said “that is definitely true” in the verse form (regarded as the first half of this chapter). When the entire Lotus Sutra is analyzed according to the three sections known as preparation, revelation, and transmission, the teaching of revelation constitutes the main part, beginning with the “Expedient Means” (second) chapter and ending at this passage, the verses by *Maitreya*, of this “Distinctions in Benefits” (seventeen chapter).

In addition, preparation section of the Lotus sutra is the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra (regarded as the introductory teaching to the Lotus Sutra) and the “introduction” (first) chapter, and transmission section of it is from second half of “Distinction in Benefit” (seventeen) chapter to the “Encouragements of the Bodhisattva Universal Worthy” (twenty-eight) chapter and the Universal Worthy Sutra (regarded as an epilogue to the Lotus Sutra.)

In this latter half of the chapter too, Sakyamuni Buddha expounds *Maitreya* the benefit of four stage of faith for those who embrace the Lotus Sutra during Sakyamuni Buddha's life time, and of five stages of practice for believers the sutra after Sakyamuni Buddha.

The "Benefits of Responding with Joy" (nineteen) chapter explains the first of the five stages of practice, i.e., rejoicing on hearing the Lotus Sutra. This chapter begins with *Maitreya's* question to Sakyamuni Buddha. To reply, the Sakyamuni Buddha relates the principle of continual propagation to the fiftieth person. The Buddha says, a person responds with joy upon hearing the Lotus Sutra after Sakyamuni death and preaches it to a second person, who in turn preaches it to a third and so on, until a fiftieth person hears the sutra. The Buddha explains that the benefit this fifties person receives by rejoicing upon hearing the sutra is immeasurable, all the more so is that obtained by the first to hear it.

Bodhisatta Bhaishajyaraja (Medicine King):

In "The Teacher of the Law" (ten) chapter, Sakyamuni Buddha addressed Bodhisattva Medicine King, and through him the eighty thousand bodhisattva. Bodhisattva Medicine King was in attendance of the great Assembly of the Lotus Sutra of Wonderful Law since the "introduction" (first) chapter. The teachings indicate the characteristic of the bodhisattva in the Lotus Sutra. They are as follows:

"If (after the thus Come One has passed into extinction) there are persons who embrace, read recite, expound and copy the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law, even only one verse, and look upon this sutra with the same reverence as they would the Buddha, presenting various offering of flowers, and pressing their palms together in reverence, then, Medicine King, you should understand that such persons have already offered alms to a hundred thousand million Buddhas and in the place of the Buddhas have fulfilled their great vow, and because they take pity on living beings they have been born in this human world."

"Because these persons (who read and recite the Lotus Sutra) delight in expounding the Law. And if one listens to them for even a moment, he will immediately attain the ultimate *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*.

"Medicine King, if someone should ask what living beings will be able to attain Buddha-hood in a latter-day existence, then you should show him that all these people in a latter-day existence are

certain to attain Buddhahood. Why? Because if good men and good women embrace, read, recite, expound and copy the Lotus Sutra, even one phrase of it, offer various kinds of alms to the sutra, and press their palms together in reverence, then these person will be looked up to and honored by all the world. Alms will be offered to them such as would be offered to the Thus Come One.”

“You should understand that these persons are great bodhisattvas who have succeeded in attaining *anuttara-samyaku-sambodhi*. Pitying living beings, they have vowed to be born among them where they may broadly expound and make distinctions regarding the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law.”

“Medicine King, you should understand that these persons voluntarily relinquish the reward due them for their pure deeds and, in the time after I have passed into extinction, because they pity living beings, they are born in this evil world so they may broadly expound the sutra.”

“And if one listens to them for even a moment, he will immediately attain the ultimate *anuttra-samyaku-sambodhi*.”

“If one of these good man or good women in the time after I have passed into extinction is able to secretly expound the Lotus Sutra to one person, even one phrase of it, then you (Bodhisattva Medicine King) should know that he or she is the envoy of the Thus Come One. He has been dispatched by the Thus Come One and carries out the Thus Come One’s work. And how much more so those who in the midst of the great assembly broadly expound the sutra for others!”

“Medicine King, if there should be an evil person who, his mind destitute of goodness, should for the space of a *kalpa* appear in the presence of the Buddha and constantly curse and revile the Buddha, that person’s offence would still be rather light. But if there were a person who spoke only one evil word to curse or defame the lay persons or monks or nuns who read and recite the Lotus Sutra, then his offence would be very grave”

“At that the Buddha spoke once more to the *bodhisattva* and *mahasattva* Medicine King, saying: “the sutras I have preached number immeasurable thousand, ten thousands, millions. Among the sutra I have preached, now preach, and will preach, this Lotus Sutra is the most difficult believe and the most difficult to understand. Medicine King, this sutra And since hatred and jealousy toward this sutra

abound even when the Thus Come One is in the world, How much more will this be so after his passing?”

“Medicine King, if there are good men and good women who, after the Thus Come One has entered extinction, wish to expound this Lotus Sutra for the four kinds of believers, how should they expound it? These good men and good women should enter the Thus come One’s room, put on the Thus Come One’s robe, sit in the Thus Come One’s seat, and then for the sake of the four kinds of believers broadly expound this sutra.”

“The ‘Thus Come One’s room’ is the state of mind that shows great pity and compassion toward all living beings. The ‘Thus Come One’s robe’ is the mind that is gentle and sobering. The ‘Thus Come One’s seat’ is the emptiness of all phenomena.”

Bodhisattvas of the Earth

An innumerable host of bodhisattvas emerge from beneath the earth and to whom Sakyamuni Buddha entrusts the propagation of the Mystic law, or the essence of the Lotus Sutra, in the Latter Day of the Law. They are described in the “Emerging from the Earth” (fifteen) chapter of the Lotus Sutra. In this chapter countless bodhisattvas from other worlds ask for permission to propagate the sutra in the *saha* world after the Buddha’s death, but Sakyamuni refuses, saying that bodhisattvas who will carry out that task already exist in the *saha* world. At this point the earth splits open, and from within it emerge a host of bodhisattvas equal in number to the sands of sixty thousand Ganges River, each with his own retinue of followers. Their bodies are golden and they possess the thirty-two features that characterize a Buddha. They are led by four bodhisattvas—Superior Practices, Boundless Practices, Pure Practices, Firmly Established Practices—and Superior Practices is the leader of them all. In the “Supernatural Powers” (twenty-first) chapter, Shakyamuni transfers the essence of the Lotus Sutra to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, entrusting them with the mission of propagating it after his death, specifically, in the Latter Day of the Law.

Never Disparaging (*Sadaparibhuta*)

The *bodhisattva* is described in the “Never Disparaging” (twentieth) chapter of the Sutra. He lived after the death of a Buddha named Awesome Sound King, in the Middle Day of that Buddha’s teachings. Buddhism was then in decline. This bodhisattva deeply respected every one, and his practice consisted of addressing all he met in the following manner: “I have profound reverence for you, I would never dare

treat you with disparagement or arrogance. Why? Because you are all practicing the *bodhisattva* way and are certain to attain Buddhahood.”

The sutra describes his practice as follows: This monk did not devote his time to reading or reciting the scriptures, but simply went about bowing to people.” Although people ridiculed him and attacked him with staves and stones, he regarded all people with utmost respect because of their innate potential to become Buddhas. Therefore he was dubbed Never Disparaging. Toward the end of his life he heard the Lotus Sutra that had been preached by the Buddha Awesome Sound ling, and embraced it fully. As a result, he purified his six sense organs and extended his life span by “two hundred ten thousand million *nayutas* of years,” preaching the Lotus Sutra to countless millions of people. Those people who had slandered Bodhisattva Never Disparaging now followed him and took faith in the sutra, but due to their past offences of harboring anger and grudges against him, for two hundred million *kalpas* the never encountered a Buddha, heard of the Law, or saw the community of monks. They languished in the hell of incessant suffering for one thousand *kalpas*. Eventually, however, after they had finished expiating their offenses, they once more encountered Never Disparaging who instructed them in supreme enlightenment.

In the “Never Disparaging” chapter, Sakyamuni identifies Bodhisattva Never Disparaging as himself in a previous lifetime.

Nichiren Great Sage (1222-1282, Japan) states: “the heart of the practice of the Lotus Sutra is found in the ‘Never Disparaging’ chapter. What does Bodhisattva Never Disparaging’s profound respect for people signify? The purpose of the appearance in this world of Sakyamuni Buddha, the lord teachings, lies in his behavior as a human being.”

According to Mahayana tradition, the bodhisattvas make four universal vows: They are (1) to save innumerable living beings, (2) to eradicate countless conducts earthly desires, (3) to master immeasurable Buddhist teachings, and (4) to attain supreme enlightenment. The ideal of the bodhisattvas is to seek enlightenment both for self and others, even postponing one’s entry into nirvana in order to lead others to that goal. Bodhisattvas find satisfaction in devoting themselves to relieving the suffering of others and leading them to happiness, even if it costs them their life. The predominant characteristic of a bodhisattva, therefore, is compassion.

Comparison and Comment

The objects of a comparison are Sakyamuni *bodhisatta* in this life in the *Sutta Nipata*, and Bodhisattvas of the Earth and Never Disparaging (*Sadapari-bhuta*) in the Lotus Sutra who appear only in the Lotus Sutra.

The reasons why bodhisattvas of the Earth and Never Disparaging are selected in very many bodhisattvas are that, both of two kind *bodhisattvas* appear only in the Lotus Sutra, moreover, Bodhisattvas of the Earth take the most important and central figures in the sutra, and Never Disparaging is the model in practice for all bodhisattva.

First comparison is similar points.

Similar point (1):—

Both Sakyamuni *bodhisatta* and *Bodhisattvas* of the Earth of physical figures in form and behavior are noble, splendid and dazzling.

(1)-A Sakyamuni *bodhisatta* and *Bodhisattvas* of the Earth has been bodhisattva for three *asamkhyeyas* and one hundred great *kalpas*, in *Pali* Buddhism, four *asamkhyeyas* and one hundred thousand *kalpas* since *Dipamkara* had predicted Sakyamuni (Learned Youth, name at that time) would become a Buddha in the future. From his birth in this world, his form and behavior was extraordinary.

Sakyamuni bodhisattva has already been bodhisattva at the time of birth, because he was already bodhisattva in the previous life.

The verses from # 686 to # 696 of □.11. *Nalaka* are lavish of praise on the *bodhisatta* just born in the world.

—The young prince, [who was] like burning gold burnished by a very skilful [smith] in the very mouth of the furnace, resplendent with glory, with perfect colour. / The young prince blazing like fire, purified like the lord of stars going in the sky, like the gleaming sun released from clouds in autumn. / like a golden ornament on a pale red blanket, and the white umbrella being carried above his head.—

A passage in the scriptures indicated on young Sakyamuni in which, after entering the religious life and attaining enlightenment, he looks back on his early years and says, ‘Although brought up in wealth, I was by nature very sensitive, and it caused me to wonder why, when all men are destined to suffer old age, sickness, and death, and none can escape these things, they yet look upon the old age, sickness, and death of other men with fear, loathing, and scorn. This is not right, I thought, and at that time all the joy of youth and the pride and courage I felt in my own good health deserted me.’ The problems of the old age, sickness, and death are the key questions and the fundamental matters in people’s life. Since young, he pondered it.

Regarding his physical appearance, he was described in later times as being endowed with ‘thirty-two distinguishing features and eighty physical characteristics.’ The thirty-two distinguishing features include very long fingers, arms that reach to the knees, and other abnormal characteristics that, if he actually possessed them,

would have made him some kind of monster. However, we don't need take such descriptions literally. Brahmanism, the dominant religion in India in Sakyamuni's time, contains a similar concept of thirty-two unusual features that distinguish the *Chakravarti-raja* (Wheel-turning King) the ideal ruler. It is probable that disciples of Sakyamuni, in their desire of exalt their great master and indicate what a perfect person he was, simply borrowed the thirty-two distinguishing physical features from Brahmanism and applied them to the Buddha.

(1)-B The bodhisattvas of the Earth appear at the start of the "Emerging from the Earth" (fifteenth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra. Until here, from "the Teacher of the Law" (tenth) chapter through the "peaceful Practices" (fourteenth) chapter, main theme of the sutra has been the question of whom Sakyamuni entrust with the task of propagating the teaching after his death. In the "Encouraging Devotion" (thirteenth) chapter, the bodhisattvas, Medicine King and so on, vow to spread the teaching in the *saha* world.

Then, at the beginning of the "Emerging from the Earth" chapter, the *Bodhisattvas* Medicine King and so on, vow again to spread the Mystic Law in the *saha* world after Sakyamuni's passing. Sakyamuni's first statement is "Leave off, good men." He tells them: "There is no need for you to protect this sutra." He then says: "Why? Because in this *saha* world of mine there are bodhisattvas...who are as numerous as the sands of sixty thousand *Ganges*." Next, the earth trembles and splits open and countless bodhisattvas of the earth come forth. They are described as "golden in hue, with the thirty-two features and an immeasurable brightness." The sutra explains how noble the bodhisattvas of the Earth are:

Firm in the power of will and concentration, / with constant diligence seeking wisdom,/they expound various wonderful doctrines / and their minds are without fear.

"Skillfully learning the bodhisattva way, / unsoiled by worldly things / like the Lotus flower in the water."

They are clever at difficult questions and answers, / their minds know no fear. / They have firmly cultivated a persevering minds, / upright in dignity and virtue.

The first thing 'the Bodhisattvas of the Earth' do is bow to the two Buddhas, Sakyamuni and Many Treasures, who are seated within the treasure tower. Then they go around to the innumerable Buddhs gathered from the worlds in the ten directions and praise them in various ways. Sakyamuni's disciples who have been at the assembly of the Lotus Sutra all along are quite surprised by this exchange.

Bodhisattva *Maitreya* asks Sakyamuni Buddha:

Immeasurable thousands, ten thousands, millions, / a great host of *bodhi-sattvas* / such as was never seen in the past — / I beg the most honored of two-legged

beings to explain / where they have come from, / what causes and conditions bring them together!

This is the famous question of *Maitreya* that prompts Sakyamuni to expound the 'life Span' (sixteenth) chapter. *Maitreya's* question raises an important issue not resolved in the theoretical teaching (first half) of the Lotus Sutra. Even though they understand that all people possess the Buddha nature and have received specific prophecies that they will attain enlightenment in the future, this alone is insufficient. *Maitreya* knew of Sakyamuni's practice in his previous lives. He wondered the appearance of countless Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

Truth to say, The Bodhisattvas of the Earth has been bodhisattvas ever since the long distant time. Sakyamuni Buddha said in the chapter, "Ever since the long distant past / I have been teaching and converting this multitude.

The description of the chapter explains that since Sakyamuni in fact attained Buddhahood immeasurable, boundless hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, million of *nayuta of kalpas*." In substance it seems that sakyamuni Buddha is trying to describe an infinite period. He is trying to express the idea of the eternal.

Bodhisattvas of the Earth, who Sakyamuni Buddha have been teaching and converting ever since the long time past, were described as golden in hue, with the thirty-two features and an immeasurable brightness. (As to thirty-two features, it is as the explanation mentioned in Sakyamuni *bodhisatta* above.)

The chapter explains that Bodhisattvas of the Earth are in high-minded manner. Repeating a verse of the chapter:—

'Already for a long time they have practiced the Buddha way, / dwelling in transcendental powers and the powers and the power of wisdom, / skillfully learning the *bodhisattva* way, unsoiled by worldly things / like the Lotus flower in the water'.

Here, the Lotus flower's simile that lotus flower blossoms from muddy water and the flowers are not stained by the muddy water. Therefore, the lotus represents purity. It means that *Bodhisattvas* of the Earth are pure.

Similar point (2):—

Both Sakyamuni *bodhisatta* and *Bodhisattvas* of the Earth are exceedingly noble in compassion to all people.

(2)-A Concerning the mind of youth Sakyamuni, it was no doubt the fate of his own people that weighed most heavily on his mind. His keen sensibility and devotion to justice must have kept him pondering some way to lead people to safety. He was given to meditation and introspection, and this was because he was deeply concerned about the future role of leader that he was destined play. The youthful Sakyamuni can best be described as a humanist and seeker after truth.

For Sakyamuni himself, the daily living, no matter how glittering and sumptuous, could not dispel the questions of old age, sickness, and death, the root of various distress to all people. His mind, even in his youth, was overflowing with affection to people. What was Sakyamuni's deep desire? His desire described in the verse of □. 1.8. Loving-kindness of *Sutta Nipata* is 'Let all creatures indeed be happy [and] secure; let happy-minded.'

(2)-B As to the Bodhisattva of the Earth, after the bow to all Buddhas, representing all the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, the four leaders began conversing with Sakyamuni about the great objective of leading all people to enlightenment.

In the 'Supernatural Powers of the Thus Come One' (twentieth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha entrusts the Bodhisattvas of the Earth to spread the Law for all people's happiness at the *saha* world in the Latter Day.

This is called the ceremony of transmission. To live at the *saha* world requires tremendous forbearance; it is a place where one must steadfastly persevere. It is a land inhabited with people of poor capacity, people who cannot accept something true at face value. Instead, they are inclined to persecute those of justice. To put up with such persecution and insult, persist in spreading the Law call for endurance.

As to the Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, he is the exemplar for practice of endurance. (The explanation given below)

Similar point (3):—

Both Sakyamuni bodhisattva and Never Disparaging (also Bodhisattvas of the Earth), no matter how difficult and in the face of abuse, accomplish their purpose.

(3)-A According to scriptural accounts Sakyamuni, after his meeting with King *Bimbisara* at the foot of Mount *Pandava*, selected two hermit-sages from among the large number of ascetics in the area and began his religious practices under them named *Alara Kalama* and *Uddaka Ramaputta*. *Alara Kalama* was said to have reached the stage known as "the place where nothing exists" through meditation, while *Uddaka Ramaputta* had attained the realm known as "the place where there is neither thought nor no thought." It is quite natural that Sakyamuni, who had set out to solve the great problems posed by human sickness, suffering, and death, should have been attracted to the hermits and their methods of yogic meditation. But Sakyamuni practiced himself this meditation, and realized at once that these states of *samadhi* were not his ultimate goal. It is recorded in the sutra that Sakyamuni astonished his teacher *Alara Kalama* by the rapidity with which he attained the realm "where nothing exists." Much the same thing happened, when Sakyamuni went to

study under the hermit *Uddaka Ramaputta*. Sakyamuni very soon reached the same level of *samadhi* as his teacher.

Realizing that such methods would not lead him to the goal he was striving for, however, he abandoned them and turned to the practice of various austerities. According to some accounts he pursued this type of life for six years. He conducted these practices in a forest near the village of *Sena* to have been situated on the *Nairanjana*, a tributary stream of the Ganges.

The term for *tapa*, austerity literally mean 'heat.' This word referred originally to a practice in which one sat or stood naked in the heat of the burning sun until one's flesh was scorched and seared. As stated earlier, the body was believed to be defiled while the spirit was basically pure, and it was therefore only one had subjected the flesh to mortification that the spirit could attain the kind of peace that represented final emancipation. Such austerities, therefore, were regarded as an important method to be used in the search for enlightenment, and it was traditionally believed that any person who had his family and entered the religious life must necessarily at some point devote himself to such practice before he could hope to reach the heart of the ultimate truth.

Sakyamuni, in order to attain the enlightenment that he could not find through yoga meditation, felt he had no alternative to devoting himself to the practice of austerities. No man can step out of his own age, and Sakyamuni, like others of his time, believed that unless he tasted the pain and bitterness of such practices, there was no hope of true spiritual advancement.

The kind of philosophy or wisdom that allows one to become a leader of the masses or that commands the attention of an entire age is never born from practice that are simple and easy. Sakyamuni too, it is believable, thought that only by undergoing the experience of suffering involved in such disciplines and by confronting them face to face could he achieve any unique discovery of his own.

Even the modern time accustomed to the scientific spirit, which has a strong tendency to apply objective standards of measurement and to view things from the outside, the search for true enlightenment in most cases can only be achieved by the process of direct, firsthand experience. The scriptures record that those around him were astonished by the severity of the practices that he undertook, and at one point even believed that he had died as a result.

In this later years, when he was recalling this periods of his life, he is quoted in one of the texts as saying that no *Brahman* or *sharamana* ascetic past, present, or future, had ever undergone or would ever undergo the kind of severe self-torture that he had endured, although he had not been able thereby to gain enlightenment.

The note of self-assurance in this statement is important, for it indicates that he was convinced that he had entered into these ascetic practices determinedly and wholeheartedly and had persisted until he had penetrated into the very essence of such practice. When, not to attain the goal that he sought, he later abandoned such practices, he did so not out of frustration or a failure of willpower that led him to give up along the way, but only after he had grasped the quintessence of asceticism and found it of no use to him.

Though the five *bhikkhus* had earlier been convinced that Sakyamuni would surely attain enlightenment through the practice of austerities, they lost all faith in him when he abandoned such practices and, declaring that Sakyamuni had “grown luxurious in his ways and given up the struggle,” left him in disgust. This anecdote serves to illustrate the degree to which ascetic practices were respected among people devoting themselves to the religious life, and the great courage that Sakyamuni *bodhisatta* displayed in giving them up. But, possessing unwavering conviction and confidence, he ignored the accusations and slanders of those about him and proceeded calmly on his way to ward the Great Awakening.

This is an important point, for it indicates that enlightenment in Buddhism is attained only by those passionate seekers who have gone through the most severe ordeals.

Sakyamuni studied yoga, especially the art of meditation, under two teachers, but after mastering their techniques he left them. Then after practicing the most severe mortifications of the flesh, he gave up those practices as well and went his own way in the quest for supreme wisdom. These two acts of rejection are important, for they clearly indicate that Buddhism is not a teaching that advocates and idealistic philosophy. It is a religion that is based upon the assumption that fundamental truths can be explained in a commonsensical manner to each and every individual. It is the religion of the so-called Middle Way.

In the *Dhamma-chaka-pavattati Sutta*, Sakyamuni rejects both asceticism and hedonism as one-sided extremes. In the scripture, Sakyamuni says:—

“There is a middle way, O *Bhikkhus*, discovered by the *Tathagata*, which avoid these two extremes. It brings clear vision and insight, it makes for wisdom and leads to tranquility, awakening, enlightenment, and Nirvana...”

(3)-B According to ‘the Bodhisattva Never Disparaging’ (twentieth) chapter, a bodhisattva monk, named Never Disparaging, deeply respected everyone, and his practice consisted of addressing all he met in the following manner: Describing his address (the text as above) in today’s standard, it means: “You can definitely become happy by cultivating the world of Buddhahood within your own lives.” Although people

ridiculed him and attacked him with staves and stones, he regarded all people with utmost respect. Even when arrogant people derided him and struck with sticks, tiles and rocks, he was not the least take aback. No matter how he might be mocked, without becoming angry he would simply repeat, “You will surely become a Buddha.”

This is the practice of forbearance. He continues struggling through all, having determined that this is how will live regardless of other people’s reaction.

As a result, when the time of his death has come, he heard up in the sky the Lotus Sutra that had previously been preached by the Buddha Awesome Sound King, he accepted and uphold them all. He gained the purification of the six sense organs, and his life span was increased. As a result, those around him come to view him in a new light. The wretched person whom everyone had laughed at becomes splendid and dignified. When hearing his preaching, they all took faith in him and willingly became his followers. He went about widely preaching the Lotus Sutra for people.

Never Disparaging, lifetime after lifetime, continues to serve various Buddhas and dauntlessly strives to widely propagate the Lotus Sutra. And finally he becomes a Buddha. When Sakyamuni reached this point in his discourse, he suddenly declares, “In fact, Never disparaging was none other than I myself!”

When one propagates the Buddhism, the spirit of Never Disparaging is very important, no matter what kind of adversity lies ahead.

In addition, according to the “Emerging from the Earth (fifteenth) chapter, as a characteristic of Bodhisattvas of the Earth, it is expressed, “They have firmly cultivated a persevering mind, upright in dignity and virtue.” In the “Supernatural Powers of the Thus Come One” (twenty-first) chapter, Sakyamuni Buddha transfers the essence of the sutra to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth in the Latter Day of the Law.

In the “Entrustment” (twenty-second) chapter, Sakyamuni Buddha makes a ‘general transfer’ of the Lotus Sutra to all the bodhisattvas. The bodhisattvas *Manjushri*, Universal Worthy, Perceiver of the World’s Sound, and Medicine King and so on, who called bodhisattvas of the theoretical teaching, are said to appear in the Former Day and Middle Day of the Law and spread provisional Mahayana or the theoretical of the Lotus Sutra.

The second comparison is different point.

The practices of Sakyamuni bodhisattva are meditation and insight to find a solution to the problem of human suffering, birth, aging, sickness, and death. In adding to them, the other is mendicancy (*pindacara*).

In old India, members of the upper class, appear to have divided their life into four distinct periods: (1) the period of *brahmacharin*, or studenthood began at the age of seven or eight; (2) the period of *grihastha*, or family life when one returns to one’s

family, marries, raise his family and takes an active part in society as the head of family for some thirty years, from age of twenty to the age of fifty; (3) the period of *vanaprastha*, or life in the forest, attaining full philosophical maturity; (4) the period of *sannyasin*, or seclusion and wandering. After completed asceticism and religious practice, he emerged from the forest and spent the last period of life wandering about from place to place in penniless state, depending upon alms for a livelihood.

However, he actually left home at a earlier age than was prescribed by convention, an indication of how intense was his desire to set out in search of the truth. His entry upon the religious life was motivated by much deeper impulses than those that governed the ordinary follower convention.

After his religious practice two sages and all the most severe austerities, Sakyamuni seated himself and determined to win enlightenment. It was said to have achieved enlightenment only after he had overcome the power of the demon leader and his army of followers. These parts dealing with Mara seemed to be the actual state of mind of Sakyamuni. After defeating Mara, Sakyamuni attained enlightenment. Mara at times appeared to Sakyamuni after the latter had attained enlightenment. When Sakyamuni was considering whether he should preach this new truth to the world. At that point Mara appeared, to assail him with doubts. In the end the deity Brahma pleaded with Sakyamuni to preach the *Dhamma* for the sake of mankind, and Sakyamuni gave his assent. All of them went on in Sakyamuni 's mind. His practice was his struggle in his mind.

The practice of the Bodhisattva Never Disparaging is 'bowing to people'. He did not devote his time to reading or reciting the scriptures, but simply went about bowing people, And if he happened to see any of the four believers, he would purposely go to where they were, bow to them and speak words of praise, saying, 'I would never dare disparage you, because you are all certain to attain Buddhahood!'

Among the four kinds of believers there were those who gave way to anger, and they spoke ill of him and to anger. Many years passed in this way, during which this monk was constantly subjected to curse and abuse. He did not give way to anger, but each time spoke the same words, 'You are certain to attain Buddhahood.' Some among the group would take sticks of wood or tiles and stones and best and pelt him. But even as he ran away and took up his stance at a distance, he continued to call out same words in a loud voice. He is a dauntless practitioner. Life time after life time, he continues to serve various Buddhas and dauntlessly strives to widely propagate the Lotus Sutra. And finally he becomes a Buddha. Sakyamuni declares, "In fact he was none other than I myself! ... In the presence of those earlier Buddhas I accepted,

upheld, read, and recited this sutra and preached it for others, I was able quickly to attain *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*.”

All living beings have the Buddha nature, the world of Buddhahood. It is this world of Buddhahood that Never Disparaging reveres. The twenty-eight-chapter Lotus Sutra does not explicitly state that all people have the Buddha nature, but this is without doubt what it affirms. The Lotus Sutra teaches that all people are noble children of the Buddha, that they are equal as entities of the world of Buddhahood.



ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER IV

THE CONCEPT OF ONE VEHICLE

In one religion, it is usually stated that there must be one single way to salvation which is true. When Buddhism has been divided to Theravada and Mahayana, the adherents of both schools sometimes say that the way taught in their school is such 'the only way.' In this chapter, the content will be dedicated to explore the understanding of the concept of 'one vehicle' in the *Sutta Nipata* and the Lotus Sutra.

The Concept of One Vehicle in the Sutta Nipata

One Buddha's vehicle is the teaching that leads all people to Buddhahood (Enlightenment). As this concept is not found directly from the *Sutta Nipata*, other sources in the *Theravada Tipitaka* will be used. In the *Pali Canon*, the word "one Vehicle" or "*eka-yana*" is found in the "Setting-up of Mindfulness" (*Mahasatipatthana-suttanta*), the Dialogues of the Buddha 22 (the *Digha Nikaya* 22). This *sutta* was preached at *Kammassadhamma*, a city of the *Kuru* country (one of sixteen large countries in India at the age of Sakyamuni Buddha).

The passage (at the beginning part of the *sutta*) is as follows:

"The one and only path (*eka-yana*), *Bhikkhus* leading to the purification of beings, to passing far beyond grief and lamentation, to the dying-out of ill and misery, to the attainment of right method, to the realization of Nirvana, is that of the Fourfold Setting up of Mindfulness."

And, another passage (at the last part of the *sutta*), it was on account of this that was said which was said (at the beginning).

"The one and only path (*eka-yana*), *bhikkhus*, leading to the purification of beings, to passing for beyond grief and lamentation, to the dying out of ill and misery, to the attainment of right method, to the realization of Nirvana, is that of the Four-fold Setting-up of Starting."

The Four fold Setting up of Starting are contemplation of the "body" (*kaya*), to be mindful that it is impurity; contemplation of "feeling" (*vedana*), to be mindful that is

suffering; contemplation of the thought (the expression of the text)-here meaning “mind” (*citta*), to be mindful that it is impermanent; contemplation of ideas (the expression of the text here meaning “phenomena”) (*dhamma*), to be mindful that it is that they are devoid of self. The doctrine here expounded is the most important after that of the Aryan Path. This is the oldest authoritative statement of the doctrine, and is still in frequent and popular use among for the Buddhist who holds fast to the ancient faith.

In the Kindred Sayings on the Stations of Mindfulness, (The book called *Mahavagga*) of *Samyutta-nikaya*, the following is noteworthy.

The Exalted one said:

‘This, monks, is the sole way (*ekayano*) that leads to the purification of beings, to the utter passing beyond sorrow and grief, to the description of woe and lamentation, to the winning of the Method, to realizing *Nibbana*, to wit: the four stations of mindfulness (*cattaro satipattana*).’³

“*Eka-yana*” is translated to leading to the one goal, direct way, or leading to the goal as the one & only way (*Magga*). In the stanza 15 of the “Treasure- store Discourse” (*Nidhikhandasuttama*), the one goal is described as “*buddha-bhumi*” (the plane of enlightenment). The purpose of this *sutta* is showing its means (*vidhana*) to the success (excellence, *sampatti*).

The source of this *sutta* is described as followings.

At *Savatthi*, it seems, there was a certain land-owner rich in much money and property. He lived the household life in faith and confidence uncognizant. One day he gave an almsgiving to the community of *Bhikkus* headed by the Enlightened One. It so happened that occasion the king was in need of money, so he sent a man, telling him ‘Go and fetch the land-owner named so-and-so’. The man went to the land-owner and told him ‘Householder, the king summons you’. The land owner was actually serving the Community of *Bhikkhs* headed by the Enlightened One, his mind being graced by the special qualities of faith and so on. He replied ‘Go now, good man, I shall come later. Just now I am engaged in laying up a treasure (*nidhi*)’. Then, when the Blessed One had eaten and had shown that he had had enough, he

³ This passage is the part of the conclusion for (i) Ambapali of Chapter 1. Ambapali.

uttered these stanzas, namely ‘A man lays by a treasure store’, as a blessing in order to show to the land-owner how that same excellence in merit is in the ultimate sense a treasure store.⁴

A treasure store, according to “The Illustrator of Ultimate Meaning” (*Paramatthajotika*) is of four kinds, namely, (1) a fixture (fixed property---any bullion, of gold [stored away] underground or in attics, or any field or land, anything else of the sort any [alternation of] posture), (2) the ambulant (movable property---bondswomen and bondsmen, elephant, cattle, horse and mares, fowls and pigs, or anything else of the sort that is associated with [alternation of] the postures), (3) a pseudo-limb (any sphere of work, sphere of craft, branch of science, ample learning [erudition] or anything else of the sort acquired by training and bound up with one’s own selfhood if it were a limb: this is a treasure store as a pseudo-limb), (4) a follower (merit consisting in giving, consisting virtue, consisting in maintenance [of concentration and insight] in being, hearing the True Ideas, and consisting in teaching the True idea, or any other merit of the sort gives desirable fruit here and there as if it had followed one).

The Blessed One said in ‘Stanza 5 second half’, “*Yada punnakkhayo hoti sabbam etam vinassati*” (And when his merit is consumed, / The whole will vanish utterly”, showing the one and only reason which is the root of all those aforesaid reasons, namely, exhaustion of merit.) In ‘the Illustrator of Ultimate Meaning’ of ‘Stanza 6’, ‘the Blessed One have stated, the kind of treasure store recognized in the world, which, although laid by with such and such intension, yet fails to serve as intended and is in various ways inseparable from the idea of vanishing away.’ The blessed one, now, showed that excellence of merit as a treasure store in the ultimate sense, in order to show which he began this Treasure-Store Discourse when giving the landowner His blessing.

From above, it is seen that the concept of ‘one vehicle’ given in the *Pali* Canon consists of two main meanings. The first one is: one vehicle as the final aim in one’s life. It is enlightenment. The second one is: one vehicle as the means to that end. It is the practice of mindfulness.

The Concept of One Vehicle in the Lotus Sutra

The Buddha’s teaching is compared to a vehicle (*yana*) that carries one to a particular state of enlightenment. In accordance with people’s capacities, the voice-hearer vehicle (*savaka-yana*) leads one to the state of *arahant*; cause-awaken one

⁴ This passage is the explanation of the background for the “Treasure-Store Discourse”.

vehicle or self-awakened one (*paccekabuddha-yana*) leads one to the state of *paccekabuddha*; and the *bodhisatta* vehicle (*bodhisatta-yana*), after many *kalpas* of practice leads one to Buddhahood. The voice-hearer vehicle (*savaka-yana*) and the cause awakened one vehicle (*paccekabuddha-yana*) are together termed the two vehicle, and with the addition of the *bodhisatta* vehicle (*bodhisatta-yana*) the three vehicles.

The Flower garland Sutra and other Mahayana *suttas* teach that the Buddha's teaching leads all people including the voice-hearer and self awakened one to one vehicle (*eka-yana*) of Buddhahood, and especially the Lotus Sutra places the greatest emphasis on it. The Lotus Sutra teaches that these three vehicles (*ti-yana*) are not ends in themselves but means to lead people to the one vehicle (*eka-yana*), which unifies and refines the three vehicle (*ti-yana*) teachings. The "Expedient Means" (second) chapter of the Lotus Sutra says that the Buddha employ only single vehicle to preach the Law to living beings. It also says that the Buddha, utilizing the power of expedient means, divide the one vehicle (*eka-yana*) and preach as though it were three. The chapter again says that there is only one vehicle in all the Buddha lands throughout the universe, and the Buddha's sole purpose is to lead all being to Buddhahood. The *T'ien-t'ai* school called this the "replacement of the three vehicles with the one vehicle." In the Lotus sutra, the term one vehicle (*eka-yana*) is synonymous with the Buddha's true teaching.

The passages in the "Expedient Means" chapter of the Lotus Sutra say:

"The Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, wish to open the door of Buddha wisdom to all living beings, to allow them to attain purity. That is why they appear in the world. They wish to show the Buddha wisdom to living beings, and therefore they appear in the world. They wish to cause living beings to awaken to the Buddha wisdom, and therefore they appear in the world. They wish to induce living beings to enter the path of Buddha wisdom, and therefore they appear in the world. *Shariputra*, this is the one great reason for which the Buddhas appear in the World."

The Buddha said to *Shariputra*, "The Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, simply reach and convert the bodhisattvas. All the things they do are all times done for this one purpose. They simply wish to show the Buddha wisdom to living beings and enlighten them to it.

"*Shariputra*, the Thus Come Ones have only a single Buddha vehicle which they employ in order to preach the Law to living beings.

They do not have any other vehicle, a second one or a third one.

Shariputra, the Law preached by all the Buddhas of the ten directions is the same as this.

Shariputra, the Buddhas of the past used countless numbers of expedient means, various causes and conditions, and words of simile and parable in order to expound the doctrines for the sake of living beings. These doctrines are all for the sake of the Buddha vehicle. These living beings, by listening to the doctrines of the Buddhas, are all eventually able to attain wisdom embracing all species.

Shariputra, when the Buddhas of the future make their appearance in the world, they too will use countless numbers of expedient means, various causes and conditions, and words of simile and parable in order to expound the doctrines for the sake of living beings. These doctrines will all be for the sake of the Buddha vehicle. And these living beings, by listening to the doctrines of the Buddhas, will all eventually be able to attain wisdom embracing all species.

Shariputra, the Buddhas, the World-Honored ones, who exist at present in the countless hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, and millions of Buddha lands in the ten directions, benefit and bring peace and happiness to living beings in large measure. These Buddhas too use countless numbers of expedient means, various causes and conditions, and words of simile and parable in order to expound the doctrines for the sake of living beings. These doctrines are all for the sake of the one Buddha vehicle. And these living beings, by listening to the doctrines of the Buddhas, are all eventually able to attain wisdom embracing all species.

Shariputra, these Buddhas simply teach and convert the bodhisattvas. They do it because they wish to show the Buddha wisdom to living beings. They do it because they wish to use the Buddha wisdom to enlighten living beings. They do it because they wish to cause living beings to enter the path of Buddha wisdom.

Shariputra, I too will now do the same. I know that living beings have various desires, attachments that are deeply implanted in their minds. Taking cognizance of this basic nature of theirs, I will therefore use various causes and conditions, word of simile and parable, and the power of expedient means and expound the Law for them. *Shariputra*, I do this so that all of them may attain the one Buddha vehicle and wisdom embracing all species.

Shariputra, in the worlds of the ten directions, there are not two vehicles, much less three! *Shariputra*, the Buddha appears in evil worlds of five impurities. These are the so-called impurity of the age, impurity of desire, impurity of living beings, impurity of view, and impurity of life span.

Shariputra, when the age is impure and the times are chaotic, then the defilements of living beings are grave, they are greedy and jealous and put down roots that are not good. Because of this, the Buddhas, utilizing the power of expedient means, apply distinctions to the one Buddha vehicle and preach as though it were three.”

From above, it is seen that the concept of one vehicle as given in the Lotus Sutra consists of two main meanings. First, one vehicle as the essence of all teachings of the Buddha. According to this meaning, it does not matter the teachings of the Buddha are given in the texts of Theravada or Mahayana school. All of them are the teachings of the same Buddha. Their essence is the same. It is the essence that leads to enlightenment alike. Second, one vehicle as the shared form of the different practices adopted by the adherents of different Buddhist schools. According to this meaning, the different ways of practicing the Buddha’s dharma are naturally given when the teachings of the Buddha come to different lands—for example, to Thailand and Japan. The way Thai Buddhists practice the dharma is naturally different from Japanese Buddhists. Their ways are not the same in their forms. But as both of them share the way of the same Buddha, so they belong to one vehicle.

Comparison and Comment

The first comparison is the similar point between one vehicle ‘*eka-ana*’ of the the ‘Setting-up of Mindfulness’ (*Mahasatipatthana Suttanta*) above quoted, and one Buddha vehicle of the Lotus Sutra.

The concept of ‘*eka-yana*’ is very similar between two.

One vehicle (*eka-yana*) is also defined ‘a road leading to one place’, that is, *nibbana*; in short, this practice (the fourfold field mindfulness) is considered a complete system of practice, suitable from the earliest stages through the highest enlightenment. This *Suttanta* is regarded one of most important *suttas* on the practice of Theravada Buddhism. The *sutta* says, as quoted, ‘The one and only path, to the realization of Nirvana.’

In the ‘Greater Discourse at *assapura*’ (*Mahaassapura-sutta*) of *Ma-jjhima-Nikaya* lists seventeen stages of practice, from the beginning of religious practice to enlightenment. They are ①Feeling shame (*hirottappa-samannagata*) ②Purity of

bodily conduct (*parisuddha-kayasamacara*) ③Purity of speech ④Purity of thought (*parisuddha-manosamacara*) ⑤Purity of living (*parisuddha-ajiva*) ⑥Protecting the doors of senses organs (*indriyesuguttadvara*) ⑦Knowing what is sufficient for nourishment(*bhojane-mattannnu*) ⑧Intent on vigilance (*jagariyam anuyutta*) ⑨Mindfulness and clear consciousness (*sati-sampajannena samannagata*) ⑩remote lodging and abandoning the five hindrances (*vivitta-senasana, pancaniva-rana-pahana*) ⑪Attaining the first *jhana* stage (*pathamajjhana*) ⑫Attaining the second *jhana* stage (*dutiyaajjhana*) ⑬Attaining the third *jhana* stage (*tatiyaajjhana*) ⑭Attaining the fourth *jhana* stage(*catutthajjhana*) ⑮Insight into the past lives (*pubbenivasanussati-nana*) ⑯Insight into the future lives (*sattanam cutupapata-nana*) ⑰Having *nibbana* insight into suffering so as to be able to overcome all defilements and temptations in the present.

Stages ①—⑧ are concerned with morality, stages ⑨—⑭ with concentration, and stages ⑮—⑰ with wisdom. With enlightenment, the three insight (⑮—⑰ *te-vijja*) are attained.

The noticeable point in the *sutta* is to be stated ‘while you are aiming at recluseship, fall not short of the goal if there is something further to be done’, on the tail of each stage. It means to go forward, without stopover, to the final attainment. The same spirit on practice is taken in the verse 68 of the *Sutta Nipatta* as follows: ‘Resolute for the attainment of the supreme goal, with intrepid mind, not indolent, or firm exertion, furnished with strength and power, one should wander solitary as a rhinoceros horn.’

Now, One vehicle in the Lotus Sutra:—

In the ‘Belief and Understanding’ (forth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra, ‘*Subhuti, Mahakatyana, Mahakashyapa, and Mahamaudgalyayana*, the four senior leaders said. They said, “we were old and decrepit”, and admit, “believed that we had already attained nirvana and that we were incapable of doing more, and so we never sought to attain *anuttara-samyaku-sambodhi*”. But then the prediction of *Shariputra*’s enlightenment broke through complacency of these leaders.

They say; “Now in the presence of the Buddha we have heard this voice-hearer receive a prophecy that he (*Shariputra*) will attain *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* and our minds are greatly delighted.” And then Sakyamuni tells them they still have much to achieve and urges them to keep trying. They, in their rapturous, employ a parable to describe the teaching they have just grasped. They regain youthful vigor and once again begin to lead energetic lives of self-improvement. Namely, it means that they began to set out on the path of “one Buddha vehicle”.

Sakyamuni Buddha discourses in the last verse of next chapter, ‘the Parable of the Medical Herbs’ (fifth) chapter, as follows.

Now for you and the others / I preach the utmost truth: / none in the multitude of voice-hearers / has entered the stage of extinction. / What you are practicing / is the bodhisattva way, / and as you gradually advance in practice and learning / you are all certain to attain Buddhahood.

And, in ‘Bestowal of Prophecy’ (sixth) chapter, Sakyamuni Buddha predicts that the four senior leaders, *Subhuti*, *Mahakatyana*, *Mahakashyapa*, and *Mahamaudgalyayana*, will attain the enlightenment of Buddhahood in the future.

Both the *Sutta Nipata* and the Lotus Sutra form the similar concepts on one vehicle. It is that ‘while you are aiming at, fall not short of the goal if there is something further to be done’.

The different point is that the final goal is dissimilar. The final goal in the *Mahaassapura-sutta* (Greater Discourse at *Assapura*) plainly indicates to become *Arahant*. (In the expression, this is called a monk who, and who is a perfected one.)

In the Lotus Sutra, the final goal is to attain the enlightenment of Buddhahood.



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CHAPTER V

THE CONCEPT OF INNATE PURITY

The purification of one's mind is one of the core teachings in Buddhism. This chapter is dedicated to study this concept in the *Sutta Nipata* and the Lotus Sutra, to find what and how Theravada and Mahayana speak of this concept.

The Concept of Innate Purity in the *Sutta Nipata*

In the *Anguttara-Nikaya*, it is stated that:

“Thus have I heard: on a certain occasion the Exalted One was staying near *Savatthi*, at *Jeta* Grove, in *Anathapindika's* Park. Then the Exalted One addressed the monks...

‘This mind, monks, is luminous (*pubhassara*), but it is defiled by taints that come from without (*agantukehiupakkilesehi*). But this the uneducated manyfolk understands not as it really is. Wherefore for the uneducated manyfolk there is cultivation of the mind, I declare.

‘That mind, monks, is luminous, but it is cleansed (*vippamutta*) of taints that come from without. This the educated *Ariyan* disciple understands as it really is. Wherefore for the educated *Ariyan* disciple there is cultivation of the mind, I declare.’⁵

And in another text, it is said as well that:

At *Savatthi*. ... Then the Exalted One said:—

‘Incalculable, brethren, is this round of rebirth. No beginning is made known of being wrapt in ignorance, fettered by craving, who run on, who fare on the round rebirth.

Just like a dog, brethren, tied up by a leash to a strong stake or pillar—if he goes up, he goes up to that stake or pillar; if he stands still, he stands close to that stake or pillar; if he squats down, he squats close to that stake or pillar; if he lies down, he lies close to that stake or pillar.

⁵ In the beginning of § 1-10 The finger-snap of Chapter VI on Part I.—The Ones

Even so, brethren, the untaught many folk regard body (thus): “This is mine; this is am I; this is the self of me.” They regard feeling, perception, the activities and consciousness thus: “This is mine; this am I; this is the self of me.”

If they go, it is towards this fivefold grasping-group that they go. If they stand still, it is close to this fivefold grasping-group that they stand still. If they sit, it is close to that they sit. If they lie down, it is close to that they lie down.

Wherefore, brethren, again and again must one regard one’s own mind thus: “For a long, long time this mind has been tainted by lust, by hatred, by illusion.” By a tainted mind (*cittasamkilesa*), brethren, beings are tainted. By purity of mind (*cittavodana*) beings are made pure.

Brethren, have ye ever seen a picture which they call “a show-piece?”’

‘Yes, Lord.’

“well, brethren, this so-called show-piece is thought out by mind. Wherefore, brethren, mind is even more diverse than that show-piece.

Wherefore, brethren, again and again must one regard one’s own mind thus: “For a long time this mind must has been tainted by lust, by hatred, by illusion.” By a tainted mind (*cittasamkilesa*), brethren, beings are tainted. By purity of mind (*cittavodana*) beings are made pure.⁶

Two passages from *Anguttara-Nikaya* and *Sanyutta-Nikaya* are quoted as the source of which the aspiration to enlightenment (*bodhicitta*) and the buddha-nature (*buddhatta*) or *tathagata* embryo (*tathagta-gabbha*, *ththagata-garbha*)—that is, the potential for attaining buddhahood inherent in all sentient beings—as the source of this aspiration in *Mahayana*-Buddhism. Back to purity of mind, the teachings say that this mind has been tainted by lust, by hatred, by illusion. The reason why is that no beginning is made known of beings wrapped in ignorance, fettered by craving, who run on, who fare on the round of rebirth incalculable, and that the untaught many folk regard body, feeling, perception, the activities, and consciousness thus: “This is mine; this am I; this is the self of me.” And that If they go, it is towards this fivefold grasping-group that they go.

⁶ At the first half of § 100 (8). The Leash (II). Sanyutta Nikaya, Part III.

Therefore, again and again must one regard one's mind thus: "For a long, long time this mind has been tainted by lust, by hatred, by illusion."

"This mind is luminous, but it is defiled by taints that come from without, but the uneducated many folk understands this, not as it really is. Therefore for the uneducated many folk there is no cultivation of the mind." the Buddha declares.

Furthermore, "that mind is luminous, but it is cleansed of taints that come from without. The educated *Ariyan* disciples understand this as it really is. Therefore, for the educated *Ariyan* disciple there is cultivation of the mind." The Buddha adds.

This principle is given concrete details everywhere in *Sutta Nipata*. Buddhism concerns itself with both the actual state of people's spiritual development and the ideal state they can attain. Buddhism's ultimate purpose is religious practice that helps people attain the ideal state of development. Much of the contents of *suttas* concern methods of practice, since Sakyamuni taught many courses of practice, according to what best suited the environment and personality of each listener in terms of both faith and practice.

Regarding this, there is the famous sermon titled 'Lesser Discourse to *Malunkya* where it is stated as follows:

Thus have I heard: At one time the staying near *Savatthi* in the Jeta Grove in *Anathapindika* monastery. Then a reasoning of mind arose to the venerable *Malunkya* as he was meditating in solitary seclusion, thus: "Those (speculative) views that are not explained, set aside and ignored by the Lord: The world is eternal, the world is not eternal, the world is an ending thing, the world is not an ending thing; the life-principle is the same as the body, the life-principle is one thing, the body another; the *Tathagata* is after dying, the *Tathagata* neither is nor is not after dying—the Lord does not explain these to me... If the Lord will not explain to me... then will I, disavowing the training, revert to secular life.

The following is the outline of this *sutta*.

Malunkya asked the Lord these questions. The Lord did not answer these questions and preached the purpose of the Lord's teachings by 'the simile of poisoned arrow.' That is, 'if a man were pierced by an arrow that was thickly smeared with poison and his friends and relations, his kith and kin, were to procure a physician and surgeon. But he have declined the treatment and drawing out this arrow, and sought for what kind of man who pierced him, what kind of the bow which pierced him,

what kind of arrow which he was pierced, this man might pass away, or ever this was known to him.

‘In the same way, whoever seek for the question whether the world is eternal or not, this man might pass away, or ever it was explained to him by the *Tathagata*.

‘Whether the world is eternal or not eternal, there is birth, there is ageing, there is dying, there are grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation and despair, the suppression of which I lay down here and now.’

After the Buddha taught thus, He said, ‘what has been explained by me are that “this is anguish,” “this is the arising of anguish,” “this is the stopping of anguish,” and “this is the stopping course leading to the stopping of anguish me.” And why has this been explained by me? It is because it is connected with the goal, is fundamental to the Brahma-faring, and conduces to turning away from, to dispassion, stopping calming, super-knowledge, awakening and *nibbana*.’

The Buddha said to *Malunkyaputta*, ‘wherefore understand as not explained what has not been explained by me, and understand as explained what has been explained by me.’⁷

Buddhism teaches useful things for enlightenment and does not teach useless for it. Purity of mind is very useful for enlightenment. Cleansing a tainted mind is given concrete details everywhere in *Sutta-Nipata*, for example, in I .1 The Snake of I . The Snake Chapter’ as follows:

1. That *bhikhu* who subdues his anger when it has arisen, as [one subdues] with herbs snake-poison when it has soared [through the body], leaves this shore and the far shore as a snake leaves its old worn-out skin.
2. That *bhikkhu* who has cut off passion in its entirety, like one picking a lotus, both flower and stalk [together], (and so forth).
3. That *bhikku* who has cut off craving in its entirety, like one drying up a fast-flowing stream, (and so forth).
4. That *bhikkhu* who has plucked out conceit in its entirety as a great flood [plucks away] a very weak bridge of reeds, (and so forth).
5. That *bikkhu* who has not found any essence in existences, as one searching among fig-trees [does not find] a flower, (and so forth).

⁷ At 63. Chula-Malunkyasutta of Majjhima Nikaya.

6. That bhikkhu in whom there are no angers inwardly and [who] has gone beyond the state of [being reborn in] such and such an existence, (and so forth).

7. That *Bhikkhu* whose [wrong] thoughts are burnt up! Well cut-off internally, (and so forth).

8. That *bhikkhu* who has not transgressed nor even caused [another] to transgress, [and] has gone beyond all this diversified world, (and so forth).

9. That *bhikkhu* who has not transgressed nor even caused [another] to transgress, knowing in respect of the world that all this is unreal, (and so forth).

10. That *Bhikkhu* who has not transgressed nor even caused [another] to transgress, [knowing that] all this is unreal, with greed gone (and so forth).

11. That *bhikkhu* who has not transgressed nor even caused [another to transgress], [knowing that] all this is unreal with passion gone (and so forth).

12. That *bhikkhu* who has not transgressed nor even used [another] to transgress, [knowing that] all this is unreal, with hatred gone (and so forth).

13. That *bhikkhu* who has not transgressed nor even caused [another] to transgress, [knowing that] all this is unreal, with delusion gone (and so forth).

14. That *bhikkhu* in whom there are no latent tendencies, in whom evil roots are destroyed, (and so forth).

15. That *bhikkhu* in whom there is nothing born of distress, [which is] cause for return to this shore, (and so forth).

16. That *bhikkhu* in whom there is nothing born of desire, acting as a cause of bondage to existence, (and so forth).

17. That *bhikkhu* who having left behind the five hindrances [is] without affliction, has crossed over doubt, [and is] without barb, leaves this shore and the far shore as a snake leaves its old worn-out skin.

1.-16. are the individual explanations on impurity, stain, affliction, or lust (*kilesa*) of every kind. Concerning 17., the first three words of barb, that is, greed, passion or lust, hatred or anger, and folly or ignorance, above mentioned, is explained in “The *Pali* Text Society’s *Pali* English Dictionary” that ‘these three are again appear in manifold comb with similar terms, all giving various shades of the “craving for

existence” or “lust of life” (*tanha* etc.) or all that which is an obstacle to *nibbana*. Therefore the giving up of raga is one of the steps towards attaining the desired goal of emancipation (*vimutti*).’

The Concept of Innate Purity in the Lotus Sutra

In the Lotus Sutra, it is stated that:

‘*Shariputra*, the Buddhas preach the Law in accordance with what is appropriate, but the meaning is difficult to understand. Why is this? Because we employ countless expedient means, discussing causes and conditions and using words of simile and parable to expound the teaching. This law is not something that can be understood through pondering or analysis. Only those who are Buddhas can understand it. Why is this? Because the Buddhas, the world-Honored Ones, appear in the world for one great reason alone. *Shariputra*, what does it mean to say that the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, appear in the world for one great reason alone. *Shariputra*, what does it mean to say that the Buddhas, the world-honored Ones, appear in the world for one great reason alone? / The Buddhas, the world-Honored ones, wish to open the door of Buddha wisdom to all living beings, to allow them to attain purity. That is why they appear in the world. They wish to show the Buddha wisdom to living beings, and therefore they appear in the world. They wish to cause living beings to awaken to the Buddha wisdom, and therefore they appear in the world. They wish to induce living beings to enter the path of Buddha wisdom, and therefore they appear in the world. *Shariputra*, this is the one great reason for which the Buddhas appear in the World.⁸

This is the paragraph of revealing that the Buddhas make their advent for “one great reason,” namely, to enable all people to attain the same enlightenment they have. Concerning this “one great reason,” he goes on to say that the Buddhas appear in the world in order to open the door of the Buddha wisdom to all beings, to show it to them, to cause them to awaken to it, and induce them to enter into it.

‘To allow them to attain purity’ is the same meaning as ‘to open the door Buddha wisdom to all living beings.’

⁸ At the ‘Expedient Means’ (second) chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

‘Shariputra, in the worlds of the ten directions, there are not two vehicles, much less three! *Shariputra*, the Buddhas appear in evil worlds of five impurities. These are the so-called impurity of the age, impurity of desire, impurity of living beings, impurity of view, and impurity of life span. / *Shariputra*, when the age is impure and the times are chaotic, then the defilement of living beings are grave, they are greedy and jealous and put down roots that are not good. Because of this, the Buddhas, utilizing the power of expedient means, apply distinctions to the one Buddha vehicle and preach as though it were three.’⁹

‘Five impurities’ is the same meaning as ‘five defilements.’ (1) ‘Impurity of the age’ includes repeated disruptions of the social or natural environment. (2) ‘Impurity of desire’ is tendency to be ruled by the five delusive inclinations, i.e., greed, anger, foolishness, arrogance, and doubt. (3) ‘Impurity of living beings’ is the physical and spiritual decline of human beings. (4) ‘Impurity of view’, or impurity of thought, is the prevalence of wrong views such as the five false views. According to ‘The Treatises on the Establishment of the Consciousness-Only Doctrine, the five false views that along with the five delusive incriminations, constitute the ten fundamental earthly desires. *T’ien-t’ai* (538-597) included these ten in the illusion of desire and view, the first of the three categories of illusion.

As a conclusion, the Buddha tell *Shariputra*, “if I described all the characteristics of those who seek the Buddha way, I could exhaust a *kalpa* and never be done. Persons of this type are capable of believing and understanding. Therefore for them you should preach the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law.”

As the Book of the Gradual Saying (*Anguttara-Nikaya*) defines it to be luminous (*Pubhassara*), and to be cleansed (*Vippamutta*) of taints that come from without, we can understand that the mind of all sentient beings is inherently pure and free from defilement. Concentrating on the point to be cleansed of taints that come from without, not to be luminous, innately pure mind is the mind that has emerged from bonds of illusion and earthly desire by all the various practices.

The Mahayana Buddhism deepened this principle, and have called it (the innately pure mind) the Matrix of the Thus Come One (*Tathagata-garbha*). The Commentaries (Treatises) about the Buddhism in India were structured only after the development on the relevant doctrine has reached a certain phase of high degree. The theory of the Matrix of the Thus Come One (*Tathagata-garbha*) is, also, the same. The

⁹ At the ‘Expedient Means’ (second) chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

text of commentary called generally the Treatise on the Treasure Vehicle of Buddhahood (*Ratnagotravibhaga-mahayanottaratantra-shastra*) is said to treat, systematically, of the Matrix of the Thus Come One most, and make it to develop most logically. Today, it is said to become the tacit consent that we have to learn this Treatise as a basis in order to master the theory of the Matrix of the Thus Come One (*Tathagata-garbha*).

What is called “the matrix of the Thus Come One” finds the possibility of enlightenment in the mind of living beings with innate purity of one’s essential nature, and has been understood as the name referring to the cause (Matrix) of the Thus Come One inner the living beings. Mahayana people say, “It can be thought that the Buddhism was the teaching which was expected the same enlightenment as Shakyamuni in the starting point or at that time of Shakyamuni’s attainment of Buddhahood and turning the wheel of the Dharma.” And they say that Mahayana Buddhism opened to generally living beings the word “Bodhisattva” which had been the name given Shakyamuni before attainment of Buddhahood in conformity with the signification of the concept calling a sentient being who seeks *Bodhi* a bodhisattva.

We can understand that the Matrix of the Thus Come One is inside living beings, and is the cause to make them attain Buddhahood. When this cause has attained Buddhahood, it gains the name of “the Absolute free from all the stains, *nirmala tathata*”. This is called supreme enlightenment.

Comparison and Comment

Similar point:—

The concept of purities is very important matter for the practice in *Sutta Nipata* and the Lotus Sutra.

In *Sutta Nipata*, there are the verses titled ‘The Purified’.

In the one verse, it is described, ‘one, who has perfected the practice, does not say that purity comes from something else, [or is] in, what is seen [and] heard, in virtuous conduct and vows, or in what is thought. Not clinging to merit or evil, he abandons what has been taken up, and does not fashion [anything more] here.

It means; purity does not come from something else wisdom of *ariya-magga*. One, who has perfected the practice, is not attained by attachment of clinging to merit or evil.

Another verse says; ‘those, who has perfected the practice, do not form [view], they do not prefer, they do not say, “This is the highest purity.” Releasing the knot of grasping which has been tied, they do not form a desire for anything in the world

In short, ‘purity’ means no attachment to anything.

In one more verse, one who has perfected practice has gone beyond boundaries. Knowing or seeing anything, he has not grasped it. He is not impassioned by passion; he is not attached to the passionless. Nothing else is grasped by him here.

In briefly, purity is freedom from defilement of all kind of earthly desires.

By these discourses in *Sutta Nipata*, we can understand deeply the meaning of ‘24. Discourse on the Relays of Chariots’ (*Rathavinitasutta*) of *Majjhima Nikaya*, ‘purity of mind’ (*citta-visuddhi*). This Discourse describes stage of practice from the level of the ordinary person to that of the *arahant*.

The sutra is questions and answers between Punna and *Sariputa*. Extracting the parts of their conversations:—

The venerable *Sariputa* spoke thus to the venerable *Punna*:

“Your reverence, is the Brahma-faring lived under our Lord?”

“Yes, your reverence.”

“Your reverence, is the *brahma*-faring lived under the Lord for purity of moral habit (1)?”

“Not for this, your reverence.”

And more, *Punna* answers *Sariputa*’s questions, not for purity of mind (2), not for purity of view (3), not for purity through crossing over doubt (4), not for purity of knowledge and insight into the Way and what is not the Way (5), not for purity of knowledge and insight into the course (6), not for purity arising from knowledge and insight (7), lastly *Punna* answers *Sariputa*, “The Brahma-faring under the Lord, your reverence, is lived for utter *nibbana* without attachment.”

After that, *Sariputa* asks *Punna*, ‘utter *nibbana* without attachment’ is purity of moral habit (1), purity of mind (2), purity of view (3), purity through crossing over doubt (4), purity of knowledge and insight into the Way and what is not the Way (5), purity of knowledge and insight into the course (6), purity arising from knowledge and insight (7) or not? *Punna* denies every.

Toward *Sariputa* who cannot understand the meaning, *Punna* tries to express the meaning by a parable. It is as though when King *Pasenadi* of *Kosala* goes urgently from *Savatthi* to *Saketa*, seven relays of chariots are arranged for him between *Savatthi* and *Saketa*. The king, having left *Savvati* by the palace-gate, might mount the first chariot in the relay, and by means of the first chariot in the relay he would reach the second chariot in the relay. In the same way, he would reach the palace-gate in *Saketa*.

Punna explains *Sariputa*, 'In same manner, it starts from purity of moral habit (1), and relay purity of mind (2), purity of view (3), purity through crossing over doubt (4), purity of knowledge and insight into the Way and what is not the Way (5), purity of knowledge and insight into the course (6), purity arising from knowledge and insight (7) reaches the purpose of utter *nibbana* without attachment.'

Sariputa known as a foremost in wisdom made good question, *Punna* as a foremost in preaching the Law explained appropriately. Afterwards, in the fifth century, *Buddhagosa* described on detail of the seven purities in the Path of Purity (*visuddhimagga*), the most important *Pali* Buddhist work on the philosophy of practice.

In the Lotus Sutra, one great reason is the ultimate reason for a Buddha appearance in the world.

The ultimate reason for a buddha is to open the door of Buddha wisdom to all living beings, to allow them to attain purity; to show the Buddha wisdom to living beings; to cause living beings to awaken to the Buddha wisdom; and to enter the path of Buddha wisdom.

More, the Buddha's preaching continues that the Buddhas simply wish to enlighten living beings to the Buddha wisdom.

Purity of 'to attain purity' above mentioned means Buddha wisdom, 'Buddha wisdom' means the state of Buddhahood. Namely, 'to open the door of Buddha wisdom to all living beings' means that living beings already inherently possess the Buddha wisdom. The reason living beings possess the Buddha wisdom is that they are essentially Buddha. Sakyamuni's words are in fact a great declaration that all living beings are worthy if supreme respect.

The paragraph of 'in the worlds of the ten directions, there are not two vehicles, much less three!' and 'the Buddhas, utilizing the power of expedient means, apply distinctions to the one Buddha vehicle and preach as though it were three'.¹⁰ reveals that the three vehicles—Learning, Realization and Bodhisattva—are no more than expedient means, while the one supreme vehicle of a Buddhahood offers the only true way to enlightenment.

To Sakyamuni's followers, it seemed as if Sakyamuni had set forth three separate teachings, but to the Buddhas there is only one Buddha vehicle and no other, The one Buddha vehicle is a teaching that enables all people to attain Buddhahood; it is endowed with the function of opening and revealing the Buddha wisdom and awakening and guiding people to the realm of Buddhahood.

¹⁰ The 'Expedient Means' (second) chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

Treatise on the Treasure Vehicle of Buddhahood (*Ratnagotravibhaga-mahayanottaratantra-shastra*) describes, ‘With regard to the Absolute (Innate Purity) mingled with defilement (= the Essence of Buddhahood in the living beings) it has been said:— All living beings are endowed with the Essence of the Buddha.—

About the meaning of this, The treatise places one verse:—

The Body of the supreme Buddha is all-pervading,
The Absolute is (one) undifferentiated (Whole)
And the Germ (of Buddhahood) exists (in every living being).
Therefore, for ever and anon, all that lives
Is endowed with the essence of the Buddha.

In short, the verse means all livings are possessed of the Essence of Buddhahood. The treatise takes three senses; (1) the sense that the Buddha’s Cosmical Body manifests itself in all living beings, (2) the sense that the Absolute (innate purity, the true essence) of the Buddha represent an undifferentiated whole, and (3) the sense that the germs of the Buddha exists in everything that lives. In meaning that each of 3 senses is the three points composing the true nature of the Buddhahood, the treatise calls the three senses as ‘three kind of self-nature’ (*trividhah svabhavah*).

The essence of ‘Matrix of Thus Come One’ made clear by the treatise is the framework that these three points of (1) Dharma body (*dharmakaya*), (2) True nature (*tathata*), and (3) Thus Come One’s nature (*tathagatagotra*) are undifferentiated.

For the attainment of Absolute Purity, the four virtuous qualities are required.

The treatise says, ‘It arises to life (1) through faith and the Doctrine, (2) through Highest Wisdom, (2) through concentrated trance, and (4) Great Commiseration’.

The two sources of the thought of the Matrix of the Thus Come One are regarded two sutras of Wisdom Sutra and the Lotus Sutra. In the Lotus Sutra, however, no word such Buddha nature, Buddhahood, or the Matrix of the Thus come One is not described. More, nevertheless there is no passage quoted from the Lotus Sutra in the treatise, only titles of the Lotus Sutra and the Wisdom Sutra are mentioned among the several sutras that the treaty quotes.

Some scholar says, “Rather, it may be a remarkable matter to be mentioned the title of the Lotus Sutra. He explains this matter by the contents of ‘the Treatise on the Lotus Sutra’ (*saddharma-pundarika-upasesha*) by *Vasubandhu* (around the fourth or fifth century, India). One of the four points is the prophecies of future enlightenment. The passage for the prophecy of the future enlightenment is as follows. “*Sariputra*, in ages to come, after a countless, boundless, inconceivable number of *kalpas* have passed, you will make offerings to some thousands, ten thousands, millions of

Buddhas, and will honor and uphold the correct Law, You will fulfill every aspect of the way of the bodhisattva and will be able to become a Buddha.”

Here, ‘Honor and uphold the correct Law’ means ‘Faith’. ‘The way of the *Bodhisattva*’ means ‘Six Perfections (*sat-paramita*)’. That is, in the practice of the Lotus Sutra, the strong willpower to keep ‘Faith’ and the practice of ‘Six Perfections’ are required for the manifestation of ‘Purity.’

The different point between the *Sutta Nipata* and the Lotus Sutra is in final purpose by purity. To reaches the purpose of utter *nibbana* without attachment, namely highest stage in the *Sutta Nipata* is to become *arahant*. Ultimate goal in the Lotus Sutra is attainment of Buddhahood.



ศูนย์วิทยพัทยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER VI

THE CONCEPT OF FAITH

It seems that faith is one of necessary conditions adopted in every religion. In the case of Buddhism, sometimes it is widely understood that one of major differences between Theravada and *Mahayan* lies in the former does not see the necessity of faith while faith is extremely required in the latter. In this chapter we will explore the concept of faith in the *Sutta Nipata* and the Lotus Sutra.

The Concept of Faith in the *Sutta Nipata*

Parayana (on Going to the Far Shore), that is the last chapter of the *Sutta Nipata*, includes one hundred seventy-four verses. It consists of “Introductory verses” (fifty-six verses), the ninety-two verses of the dialogue between the Buddha and each one of sixteen disciples of *Bavari* Brahman, and *Nigamana* (concluding remarks) made up of short prose and twenty-six verses.

“Introductory verses” mentions the origin that sixteen disciples of *Bavari* Brahman visited the Buddha, in the dialogue between the Buddha, the subject, that what kind of person the Buddha is or how it is to go over the matter of life and death, underlies, and here the words of praise to the Buddha are repeated. Concluding remarks are the latter developments. There is composed the praises and longing for the Buddha. Furthermore, here it is taught to rise the faith (*saddha*), in regard to this teaching is concluded with declaration of faith to the Buddha and the Law of nirvana preached by the Buddha.

Culla-Niddesa gives the commentary for *Parayana* (on Going to the Far shore) and the *Phinoceros*. *Parayana* have been considered the oldest scripture. At the beginning, making a start from the verses of *Pingiya*'s Questions (and the answer from the Buddha). *Paramattha-jotika* says, “*Pingiya* was one hundred and twenty years old.” He asks the question on “the doctrine for abandonment of birth and old age.

The verse 1120.... ‘I am old, weak with my complexion gone’, said the venerable *Pingiya*. ‘My eyes are not clear; my hearing is not good. May I not perish meanwhile, [still] ignorant. Teach me the doctrine, so that I may know the abandonment of birth and old age here.’ The verse 1121.... ‘Seeing [people] being smitten in the midst of forms, *Pingiya*’, said the Blessed one, ‘[for] negligent people do suffer in the midst of forms, therefore you, *Pingiya*, [being] vigilant, abandon form for the sake of non-renewed existence.’

Pingiya said “I do not like to perish (*ma anassim*) as an ignorant (*momuha*) person slipshoddily (*antara eva*) without comprehension (*asacchikatva*) of Your Law.” Because *Pingiya* reflected his body (*kaya*) and said that he was old, his eyes were not clear, and his hearing was not clear. The Buddha preached to abandon attachment to form (your body, *kaya*). It means that the Buddha preached *Pingiya* the practice (*patipada*) leading him to the state of *arahat*.

The verse 1122.... ‘Four directions, four intermediate directions, above, [and] below, these [are] the ten directions. There is nothing in the world which has not been seen [or] heard or thought or perceived by you. Teach me the doctrine, so that I may know the abandonment of birth and old age here.’

The verse 1123.... ‘Seeing men afflicted by craving, *Pingiya*,’ said the Blessed One, ‘tormented, overcome by old age, therefore, you, *Pingiya*, [being] vigilant, abandon craving for the sake of non-renewed existence.’ In spite of hearing the Buddha’s preach, *Pingiya* did not attain excellent state (*visesa*) for reason of ineffectuality by old age. So, he praised the Buddha by the verse of “four directions” and, he begged again the Buddha’s instructions. The Buddha preached to abandon craving (*tanhadhipanna*). After that, *Pingiya* firmly established at the stage of the non-returner (*anagami-phala*). *Paramattha-jotika* says, ‘According to what I have heard, *Pingiya* thought that my uncle (*matula*), *Bavari* could not hear the instruction of various oratorical (*vicitra-patibhana*). Because of *Pingiya*’s distraction (*sineha-vikkhepa*) by his affection to *Bavari*, *Pingiya* could not attain the stage of *arahat* (*arahatta*).’

Next, the prose of *Parayana* is as follows:

This the Blessed One said while staying among the *Magadhas* at the *Pasanaka* Shrine. Asked and questioned in turn by the sixteen attendant *brahmins*, He answered their questions. If, knowing the meaning of each question, [and] knowing the doctrine, anyone were to enter upon the doctrine and what conforms with the doctrine, he would go to the far shore of old age and death. These doctrine go to the far shore, therefore the name of this exposition about the doctrine is “Going to the far shore”.¹¹

Then, the verses concerning *Pingiya* of *Nigamana* (concluding remarks) in *Parayana* are: *Pingiya*, who had been *Bavari*’s disciple, went back to the bank of the river *Godhavari* for telling to *Bavari*, that the Buddha had appeared, with permission of

¹¹ This prose is the conclusion of the Chapter on Going to the Far Shore. *Paramattha-jotika* says, “this prose is the passage by *Sangiti-kara* (editor of reduction for the sutta).”

the Buddha after the questions and answers between the Buddha and sixteen *Bavari's* disciples.

Pingiya starts to recite “the going to the far shore” in front of *Bavari* in the verse 1131. The verse 1131.... ‘I shall recite the going to the far shore’, said the venerable *Pingiya*, ‘As he saw it, so the stainless one of great intelligent taught it. For what reason would the *naga*, without sensual pleasure [and] without desire, speak falsely?’

Paramattha-jotika says: ‘Naga’ means Buddha. ‘Without sensual pleasure (*nikkama*)’ means same as *akamakamin* (state of not being gratifying one’s own desire) or *pahinakama* (abandonment of sense-desire). More it includes meaning of viriyavant (diligent one) or egress evil (*akusala-pakkha nikkhamati*). ‘Without desire’ means ‘without forest of desires (*kilesa-vana-virahita*)’ or without craving (tanha-virahita) ‘For what reason would the *naga* speak falsely?’ proves that ‘the Buddha abandons these craving, because anybody speaks falsely by reason of craving.

At first, *Pingiya* praise the Buddha in the verses 1132 to 1137. The verse 1132.... Well then, I shall expound the beautiful utterance of the one who has left stain and delusion behind, who has given up pride and hypocrisy. The verse 1133.... The Buddha, thruster away of darkness, the one of all-round vision, gone to the end of the world, gone beyond all existence, without *asavas*, with all misery eliminated, named in accordance with truth, is served by me, *brahman*. The verse 1134.... As a bird leaving a small wood might inhabit a forest with much fruit, so I too leaving those of little vision have arrived [at one of great vision], like a goose [arriving] at a great lake.

The verse 1135.... If any persons explained to me previously, before [hearing] *Gotama's* teaching, [saying] “Thus it was; thus it will be”, all that was hearsay, all that increased my speculation. The verse 1136.... The darkness thruster is seated, alone, brilliant, that light-maker *Gotama* of great understanding, of great intelligence. The verse 1137.... Who taught me the doctrine which is visible, not concerned with time, the destruction of craving, without distress, the likeness of which does not exist anywhere.

Paramattha-jotika says: ‘The beautiful utterance’ of the verse 1132 is ‘the utterance on the Buddha’s virtue (*guna-upasamhit*)’. ‘One... named in accordance with truth, is served by me, *brahman*’ of the verse 1133 links to the common name of truth (*sacca*) only that *Gotama* is the Buddha. ‘Brahman’ is ‘to address (*alapati*) to Bavali. ‘Those of little vision (*appadassa*)’ of the verse 1134 means ‘those little wisdom, including *bavariya*’. ‘*Gotama* of great understanding’ (*bhuri-pannyana*) of the verse 1136 means ‘one who raise the flag of wisdom’. ‘Of great intelligent (*bhuri-medhasa*)’ means ‘one of extensive wisdom (*vipula-panna*)’.

Pingiya, in the reply *Bavari's* asking of the verses 1138 and 1139, talks the deep and burning faith of *Pingiya* himself to the Buddha, The verse 1138.... ‘Can you stay away from him even for a moment, *Piginya*, from *Gotama* of great understanding, from

Gotama of great intelligence, The verse 1139.... who taught you the doctrine which is visible, not concerned with time, the destruction of craving, without distress, the likeness of which does not exist anywhere?

The verse 1140.... 'I cannot stay away from him even for a moment, *brahman*, from *Gotama* of great understanding, from *Gotama* of great intelligence. The verse 1141.... Who taught me the doctrine which is visible, not concerned with time, the destruction of craving, without distress, the likeness of which does not exist anywhere. The verse 1142.... I see him with my mind as if with my eye, being vigilant day and night, *brahman*. I pass the night revering him. For that very reason I think there is no staying away from him. The verse 1143.... My faith and rapture, [and] mind, and mindfulness do not go away from the teaching of *Gotama*. In whatever direction the one of great wisdom goes, in that very direction bow down. The verse 1144.... I am old and of feeble strength. For that very reason my body does not go away to there. I go constantly on a mental journey, for my mind, *brahman*, is joined to him. The verse 1145.... Lying floundering in the mud, I swam from island to island. Then I saw the fully-awakened one, the flood-crosser, without *asava*.'

Paramattha-jotika says: 'Lying floundering in the mud, I swam from island to island' in the verse 1145 means 'Lying floundering in the mud of craving, I approached (*abhiganchim*) from a teacher to a teacher.' 'Then I saw the fully-awakened one, the flood-crosser, without *asava*' in the same verse means 'When I wandered (*anvahindati*) with such bad view (*duddhitti*) I met the Buddha at the *Pasanaka* shrine.'

The whole of verses 1140 to 1145, *Pingiya* utterance, are very moving. I think that it is the prototype of faith in primitive Buddhism to the Buddha and the teachings that the Buddha preached. Concerning the faith to the Buddha, in the verse 1142, *Pingiya* says, 'I see him (the Buddha) with my mind as if with my eye... For that very reason I think there is no staying away from him. Concerning the faith to the Buddha's teaching, in the verse 1143, *Pingiya* obviously says, 'My faith and rapture, [and] mind, and mindfulness do not go away from the teaching of *Gotama*.'

As his determination from this time on, in the verse 1144, *Pingiya* says, 'I am old and of feeble strength. For that very reason my body does not go away to there. I go constantly on a mental journey, for my mind, *brahman*, is joined him (the Buddha).'

Pingiya's conviction, that he is joined the Buddha, is very splendid. When the verses 1147 ended (*avasane*), knowing "ripeness of the capacity to understand the teachings of Buddha" (*indriya-paripaka*) of *Pingiya* and *Bavali*, the World-honored One emitted golden light, still staying at *Shravasti*. *Pingiya* saw the light and thought 'what is this light', then, feeling the Buddha standing in front of himself, he told *Bavali*, 'the Buddha has come.' *Bavali brahman* put his hands together in prayer with his standing up.

Knowing the both of them to be suitable, The Buddha preached the verse 1146 to *Pingiya* only, with talking to *Pingiya*. The verse is as follows.

The verse 1146. ‘As *Vakkali* has declared his faith, and *Bhadravudha* and *Alavi-Gotama*, in just the same way you too declare your faith. You, *Pingiya*, will go to the far shore of the realm of death.’

Paramattha-jotika says about meaning of this verse: ‘As, becoming intent upon faith (*saddha-adhimutta*), *Vakkali* got *arahatta* by embracing of faith-responsibility (*saddha-dhura*), or *Bhadravudha* and *Alavi-Gotama*, in just same way You utter faith (*pamuncassu saddham*), then being intent upon faith, strive to observe ”All phenomena are without permanence (*sabbe sankhara anicca*)” and you go to Nirvana (the far shore of the realm of death, *maccu-dheyya para*), said the Buddha and finished the instruction. When the Buddha finished the instruction (*desana-pariyosana*), *Pingiya* firmly established the stage of *arhat (arahatta)* and *Vabali* the stage of the non-returner (*anagami-phala*). The five-hundred disciples of *Vabali* became the stage of the stream-winner (*sotapanna*).’ Liking to tell his own pure faith (*pasada*), *Pingiya* expressed the verses 1147 and 1148 as bellow.

The verse 1147.... ‘Hearing the sage’s word[s], I believe all the more. The fully-awakened one, with deceit removed, without [mental] barrenness, possessing ready wit. The verse 1148.... Knowing the super-*devas*, knows everything, high and low. [He is] the teacher who puts an end to the questions of those who are in doubt, [and] admit it. The verse 1149.... Assuredly I shall go to the immovable, the unshakable, the likeness of which does not exist anywhere. I have no doubt about this. Thus consider me to be one whose mind is so disposed.’

Paramattha-jotika says: ‘(One) with possessing ready wit’ (*patibhanavat*) of the verse 1147 means ‘One with analytic insight’ (*patisambhida*). ‘Knowing the super-*devas*’ (*achideva*) of the verse 1148 means knowing the various laws of the super-*devas* (*adhideva-kara*). That is that ‘knowing the super-*devas*, knows everything, high and low’ means ‘the Buddha knew all kinds of laws which make self and others exceed *deva*.’ Both of ‘the immovable’ and ‘unshakable’ of the verse 1149 means annihilation (*nibbana*). ‘Assuredly I shall go to’ means ‘I shall just certainly (*ekamsen’eva*) go to the stage of the *nibbana* without residue (*anupadisesa nibbana-dhatu*). ‘I have no doubt about this’ means ‘I have no doubt to annihilation (*nibbana*). ‘Thus consider me to be one whose mind is so disposed’ means ‘by the Buddha’s instruction (*ovada*) that in just the same way you too declare your faith, I make myself rise (*uppadetva*) faith (*saddha*), and emancipate (*vimuccitva*) only through embracement of faith (*saddha-dhura*) and declare intention upon faith (*saddhadhi-mutata*), then *Pingiya* mentions the Buddha, ‘ Thus consider me to be one whose mind is so disposed.’

The Concept of Faith in the Lotus Sutra

Hearing the Buddha's preaching of "Expedient Means" chapter in the foregoing chapter, *Shariputra* at the beginning part in the "Simile and Parable" chapter says:

'So when we first heard the Law of the Buddha, we immediately believed and accepted it, supposing that we had gained understanding.'

'My body and mind are at ease and I have gained a wonderful feeling of peace and security.'

'Today at last I understand that truly I am the Buddha's son, born from the Buddha's mouth, born through conversion to the Law, gaining my share of the Buddha' Law.'

At that time *Shariputra*, wishing to state his meaning once more, spoke in verse form, saying:

'When I heard the sound of this Law, / I gained what I had never had before. / My mind was filled with great joy, / I was released from all bonds of the net of doubt. / / I am certain I will become a Buddha, / to be revered by heavenly and human being, / turning the wheel of the unsurpassed law / and teaching and converting the bodhisattvas. /

Shariputra declared himself more clearly to be absolutely confident that he would become a Buddha, than the disciples in the *Therigatha* and *Theragatha* of *Khuddaka-nikaya*. Just after this verse, the Buddha grants *Shariputra* the venerable prophecy, says:

'*Shariputra*, in ages to come, after a countless, boundless, inconceivable number of *kalpas* have passed, you will make offerings to some thousands, ten thousands, millions of Buddhas, and will honor and uphold the correct Law. You will fulfill every aspect of the way of the bodhisattva and will be able to become a Buddha with the name Flower Glow Thus Come One, worthy of offerings, of right and universal knowledge, perfect clarity and conduct, well gone, understanding the world, unexcelled worthy, trainer of people, teacher of heavenly and human beings, Buddha, World-Honored One.'

Seeing that *Shariputra* have received the prophecy, the four kinds of believers, namely, monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, and the heavenly being, dragons, *yakushas*,

gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kinnaras, mahorages, and others in the great assembly saw how *Shariputra* received from the Buddha this prophecy that he would attain *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*, their hearts were filled with great joy and danced without end.

More, heavenly beings spoke these words: ‘In the past at Varanasi the Buddha first turned the wheel of the Law. Now He turns the wheel again, the wheel of the unsurpassed, the greatest Law of all!’ These words are related to the first turning the wheel of the Law (*Dhamma*). It is the Buddha’s preaching His first sermon of the Law after enlightenment and converted His five former companions (ascetics) at *Mrgadava* (Deer Park) in Varanasi (near present-day Benares) of Central India (*Bahrat*).

‘The first turning the wheel of the Law (*Dhamma*)’ means the first presentation of the Buddhism in this world by the Buddha, who granted the entreating from Brahma three times. At that place the Buddha preached the doctrine of the Four Noble Truth and the Noble Eightfold Path. Heavenly beings’ words in the “simile and Parable” chapter of the Lotus Sutra ranked the Lotus Sutra as the second turning the wheel of the Law (*Dhamma*), the greatest of all Law.

After heavenly beings spoke, the sons of heavenly beings, wishing to state the meanings of heavenly beings’ these words once more, spoke in verse form. It is as follows:

In the past at Varanasi / You (the Buddha) turned the wheel of
the Law of the four noble truths, / making distinctions, preaching that
all things / are born and become extinct, being made up of the five
components. / Now you turn the wheel of the most wonderful, / the
unsurpassed great Law. / This law is very profound and abstruse; /
there are few who can believe it. Since times past often we have heard /
the World-Honored One preaching, / but we have never heard / this
kind of profound, wonderful and superior Law. / Since the World-
Honored One preaches this Law, / we all welcome it with joy. /
Shariputra with his great wisdom / has now received this venerable
prophecy. / We too in the same way / will surely be able to attain
Buddhahood, / throughout all the many worlds / the most venerable, the
unsurpassed goal. / The Buddha way is difficult to fathom, / but you will
preach with expedient means, according to what is appropriate. / the
meritorious deeds we have done / in this existence or past existences, /
and the blessings gained from seeing the Buddha— / all these we will
apply to the Buddha way.

Up until this point in the sutra, only *Shariputra* has grasped what Shakyamuni Buddha is expounding. *Shariputra* said to the Buddha that now from the World-honored One the others hear what they had never heard before, and all have fallen into doubt and perplexity. *Shariputra* begs that for the sake of the four kinds of believers the Buddha will explain the causes and conditions and make it possible for them to shed their doubts and regrets.

So that others might understand, the Buddha relates the parable of the three carts and the burning house. This parable illustrates the Buddha's statement in the "Expedient Means" (second) chapter that the sole purpose of the Buddha's advent is to enable all people to attain Buddhahood, and that the three vehicles of voice-hearers, cause-awakened ones, and bodhisattvas are simply means to lead people to the one Buddha vehicle.

The summary of this parable is as follows:

Suppose, the Buddha says, there is a very rich man who has many children. One day a fire suddenly breaks out in his spacious but decaying house, and his children, totally absorbed in playing games, do not know that the house is in flames and ignore His cries of warning. He therefore resorts to an expedient means to induce them to come out of the burning house. He shouts to them that outside he has three kinds of carts they have long wanted: a cart pulled by a goat, another by a deer, and a third by an ox. Immediately they race outside. Having coaxed them to safety in this way, the rich man gives each of his children a cart—not one of the three kinds he had promised, but a much finer carriage, adorned with numerous jewels and drawn by a white ox. The Buddha compares the burning house in the parable to the threefold world, and the flames to the sufferings of birth and death. The rich man is the Buddha, who appears in this troubled world to save the people, the children are all living beings, and the games in which they are so absorbed are worldly pleasures. The three kinds of carts originally promised represent the three vehicles, or the provisional teachings, and the great white ox carriage symbolizes vehicle of Buddhahood, that is, the Lotus Sutra.

This parable is one of the seven parables in the Lotus Sutra.

After the Buddha expounded the parable of "the three carts and the burning house", the later part of this chapter emphasizes the importance of faith, pointing out that even *Shariputra*, known as foremost in wisdom, could "gain entrance through faith alone" and not through his own wisdom or understanding. The verses of this part are as follows: 'Even you, *Shariputra*, / in the case of this sutra / were able to gain entrance through faith alone /

The Lotus Sutra is the sutra that emphasizes "faith".

On the other hand, many people are brought up to think that "believing" is equal to blind obedience. Blind obedience is dangerous because it means subordinating

one's own will to that of another. Moreover, belief in a transcendental being can cause one to ignore or try to escape the world he lives in. As long as the object to be worshiped is a transcendental existence, followers tend to attach greater importance to obedience rather than to understanding. They tend to become more concerned with a world other than this one. Such belief simply means giving up one's will and yielding himself completely to the will of a prophet or a transcendental, and possibly nonexistent, being. It is nothing but blind faith.

In Buddhism, the object of faith should be the universal Law immanent in life. Shakyamuni Buddha admonished people to believe in the Law. One of the underlying assumptions of Buddhist thinking is that every person can and must strive to be united with the truth (the Law of life), not through an intermediary, but directly, by attainment of Buddhahood. Wisdom, with which one grasps the Law of life, comes forth from the depths of one's own life. In the "Expedient Means" (second) chapter of the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha declared that the Buddha wisdom is beyond the reach of analysis. The Buddha then revealed that only through faith can one fully attain the Buddha wisdom. Our faith, or ultimate intuitive wisdom, will lead us to Buddhahood, but to lead others to the law of life, we must often utilize analytic reasoning.

Comparison and Comment

Faith is a basic attitude emphasized in both early Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism. The early Buddhism teaches much of the religious practices so that people can attain both the actual state of people's spiritual development and the ideal state. The *Abhidharma* scholastics classified thirty-seven practices, in seven groups, as being most representative of the numerous practices set forth in primitive sutras, calling them the thirty-seven practices conducive to enlightenment. The seven groups comprising the thirty-seven practices gave rise to independent systems, each of which was believed to lead to enlightenment.

The seven groups and thirty-seven practices are as follows:

- 1, the four field of mindfulness (*cattari sati-patthanani*)
- 2, the four right efforts (*cattari sammap-adhanani*)
- 3, the four psychic powers (*cattaro iddhipada*)
- 4, the five roots of emancipation (*pancindriyani*)
- 5, the five excellent powers (*panca balani*)
- 6, the seven factors of enlightenment (*satta bojjhanga*)
- 7, the noble eightfold path (*ariya atthangika magga*)

Other practices preached in primitive sutra are practice of “the five treasures”, practice of “the seven treasures”, “the eight qualities of *mahapurisa vittaka*”, “ten *asekha-dhamma*” and so on.

Among them, practices that contain “faith” are as follows:

“The five roots of emancipation” (*pancindriyani*) are faith (*saddha*), endeavor (*viriya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samadhi*), and wisdom (*panna*). “Root” of “the five roots of emancipation” means “potential” or “ability.” Faith is cited first because it is the starting point for practice.

“The five excellent powers” (*panca balani*) correspond to the roots: faith, endeavor, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. These powers mean greater advancement of practice than the roots.

“The five treasures” are faith (*saddha*), morality (*sila*), obedient hearing (*suta*), generosity (*caga*), and wisdom (*panna*). “The seven treasures” are faith (*saddha*), morality (*sila*), obedient hearing (*suta*), generosity (*caga*), wisdom (*panna*), conscience (*ottappa*) and shame (*hina*). Faith is cited first. In the early Buddhism, it is the starting point for all Buddhist practice. So, it is considered that this practice is for beginners.

Buddhism, “the religion of wisdom,” is the rational religion. The tendency toward rationalism seems especially strong in early Buddhism. In Mahayana Buddhism there is strong emphasis on faith. I consider faith the basis of religious practice. The basis in faith made possible a kind of intellectual quest involving one’s entire being, including intuitive powers of perception and the deepest level of awareness, rather than merely analytical intelligence.

The belief on the level of daily life is different from religious faith, but neither are the belief on the level of daily life and religious faith entirely severed from each other. They are part of a shared continuum. No society can exist without bonds of mutual trust among its members. Even when we think, we still base our thought on beliefs we hold. Beliefs are the vessel of life. We can see that the conflict between knowledge and belief now commonly thought to exist is by no means self-evident. Belief is the foundation of life. In that respect, religion is an indispensable part of the life of every individual, and it plays a crucial part in each day of our lives. More people are simply not well aware of the beliefs upon which they base their lives. Awareness of our beliefs occurs when we find ourselves in a desperate situation that forces us to reevaluate. Especially, reading “*Theri Gatha*”, we can find that most of those who gathered around Shakyamuni came to Him seeking a new realm of belief after they had experienced such frustration and suffering. It should be said that the presumption of a sharp division and opposition between belief on the one hand, and understanding or knowledge on the other, which has been a hallmark of contemporary thought, is being reexamined. In its place, a new fusion of belief and knowledge is being sought.

In the scriptures of *Sutta Nipata* in *Pali*, it is found three kinds of words meaning “faith” They are: (1) *Saddha*, (2) *Adhimucca*, (3) *Pasaddha*. *Saddha* is usually translated as faith. The verses using the word “*saddha*” in *Sutta Nipata* are as follows: ‘Faith is the seed, penance is the rain, wisdom is my yoke and plough; modesty is the pole, mind is the [yoke-] tie, mindfulness is my ploughshare and goad.

Faith is often expounded by skillful simile or parable. In this verse of #77, the virtues of practice are compared to farming. #90. If any householder, a learned wise disciple of the noble ones, has understood these [four], [then] knowing [and] seeing them all not to be like this, his faith does not disappear. For how could he equate the corrupt with the uncorrupted, the pure with the impure?’ This verse is the Buddha’s answer to the question by a layman (named *Cunda*).

According to *Paramattha jotika*, the layman, *Cunda*, in the morning, handed vessels made of gold and offered foods to the Buddha and the monk’s group. An evil monk threw the golden vessel into his case for key. *Cunda* knew it, but said nothing because of respect for the Buddha and senior priests. In the evening, he wanted to know whether the only men who observe precepts (*samvara-yutta*) are monk (*samana*), or even the monk who has violated precepts (*bhinna-samvara*) (the monk who threw the golden vessel into his case) also is monk (*samana*), and ask the questions (the verses #83 and 85) to the Buddha. This is the last of the Buddha’s answers (the verses #84, 86, 87, 88, 89, and 90).

In this case, the faith of a leaned wise and noble layperson is established on the assumption of knowledge and information. Though a general view says, “Faith is cited first. In the early Buddhism, it is the starting point for all Buddhist practice. So, it is considered that this practice is for beginners.” the general view can not be applied in this case. It might be said that even if laypersons have judged the good or evil of monks, layperson’s faith does not disappear as the Buddha instructed. #182. ‘Faith is the best wealth for a man in this world. Righteousness when well practiced brings happiness. Truth is the sweetest of flavours. They say the life of one living by wisdom is best.’ #184. ‘By faith one crosses the flood, by vigilance the ocean. By energy one goes beyond misery. By wisdom one is purified. This verse of #184 was esteemed highly on the commentaries of sutra, *Abidharma*. This verse gives the composition in the virtues of practice, beginning from “faith” and ending “wisdom”. In the expression of saying only “one crosses the flood by faith,” when one complete to cross the flood by faith, one could reach the emancipation, nirvana. But, in this verse, following faith, after vigilance and energy are mentioned, the verse is closed with the sentence of that “By wisdom one is purified.” Namely, faith, vigilance and energy are the process to wisdom. Showing In schema, this verse preaches faith→vigilance→energy→wisdom. For that reason, generally as mentioned above in exposition of “the five roots of emancipation”, “the

five treasures”, and “the seven treasures”, it is generally said that “Faith is cited first. In the early Buddhism, it is the starting point for all Buddhist practice. So, it is considered that this practice is for beginners.”

#188. Whatever faithful house-seeker has these four things: truth, righteousness, firmness, generosity, he indeed does not grieve when he has passed away. This verse answers the question of that “Having passed away from this world to the next world, how does not grieve?” (the verse 185). And this verse is for layman (house-seeker). He, in addition to acquiring faith, should go toward, not only generosity, but also truth, righteousness, firmness. The virtues of practice for layman take the same line as that for monk. #337. ‘Having abandoned the five strands of sensual pleasures, delightful in form, pleasing the mind, having gone forth from the house in faith, put an end to misery. This verse expresses that leaving house is due to faith. This verse was given to *Rahula* who is the son of the Buddha born before His renunciation of the world.

Sutta Nipata says, “In this way with these verses (#337 to #342) the Blessed One constantly instructed the venerable *Rahula*.” After the Buddha’s enlightenment, *Rahula* joined the Buddhist order and was ordained at the age of 20. He strictly observed the precepts and diligently practiced the Way, becoming well known as ‘the foremost in the observance of the precepts’ and he was one of His ten great disciples. #371. The believer, learned, seeing the way [to salvation], not following any faction among the factious, wise, having dispelled covetousness, hatred [and] repugnance, he would wander properly in the world. This verse is for monk. Faith is expounded together with “learned” (finished duty “listening” to sermons, *sutavant*.) *Paramattha jotika* says, ‘Faith of this verse means perfectly pure faith (*aveccappasada*) that possesses the quality of all kind of faith.’

The Sutta of Correct Views of No. 9 in *Majjhima-nikaya* starts from the question by *Shariputra* to *Bikkhus*. In this first question by *Shariputra*, it is considered that the perfectly pure faith (*aveccappasada*) as correct views (*samma-ditthi*) of the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya-attangika-magga*). As a result, these three words of “faith” (*saddha*) in this verse, “perfectly pure faith” (*aveccappasada*), and “correct view” (*samma-ditthi*) are synonymous.

Next, the word “*pasada*” is examined. In English, it is translated “faith” or “believe”. It is appeared as *pasadana* of a neuter noun, as *pasidati* (*pasidami*, *pasideyya*) of a verb, as *pasanno* of a past participle. #563. Having seen him, become Brahma, unequalled crusher of Mara’s armies, who would not have faith, even one who is base-born? (“him” means the Buddha) #698. Hearing the word[s] at the [time of the] turning of the wheel by the excellent Conqueror, going, seeing the bull among seers, believing he asked the excellent sage about the best of sage-hoods, when the

prognostication of the one called *Asita* had come to pass. (“the bull among seers” means the Buddha)

#1147. “Hearing the sage’s word[s], I believe all the more. The fully-awakened one, with deceit removed, without [mental] barrenness, possessing ready wit. Verse #563 and #698 says, “Having seen (*disva*) directly the Buddha”, and then “having pure faith (*pasideyya*)” or “believing purely (*pasanno*).” Also verse of #1147 says, “Hearing directly the sage’s word”, and then “believe purely (*pasidami*) all the more.” The original meaning of “pasada” is purity. The fact that expresses “faith” of “believe” by the word “*pasada*” seems to show the result that is fully conscious of comprehending the basic character of “faith” as serene and pure mind.

Then, as for the words “*adhimutti*” or “*adhimucca*” they can be said as mind function that decide clearly for object. It was “belief and understanding” in old translation. More, it is considered as “mutual identity” of “faith and wisdom.” As the title of fourth chapter in the Lotus Sutra is “Faith and Understanding”, here, the translation of “faith and understanding” is contextually used as the translation of the words “*adhimutti*” or “*adhimucca*”.

The verse 559 says, Dispel your doubt in me. Have faith, *brahman*. It is difficult to obtain a sight of the fully-awakened ones repeatedly. The Buddha in the verse 558 for the question from *brahman Sela* say as follows: The verse 558: what is to be known [by me]; what is to be developed is developed [by me]; what is to be eliminated is eliminated by me; therefore I am a Buddha, *brahman*. In this verse, “What is to be known (*abhinneyya*) is known [by me]” means “*vijja*” (higher knowledge) and “*vimutti*” (emancipation). “What is to be developed is developed [by me] means “*magga-sacca*” (eightfold noble path). “What is to be eliminated is eliminated by me” means elimination of “*samudaya sacca*” (the truth that the cause of suffering, that is, illusion and desire). “*Nirodha dukkha sacca*” (the truth that all existence is suffering) is included in the word elimination of “*samudaya*” (the cause is suffering).

The Buddha proved that what is to be awakened is awakened and became to be Buddha, then encouraged *brahman Sela* by the verse 559, 560, 561. After *Sela* heard the instruction by the Buddha and understood, *Sela* in the verse #566 says; The verse 566: “These three hundred *brahmans*, with cupped hand, ask: ‘May we practice the holy life in your presence, Blessed One? *Sela* and his group understood the Buddha and the Buddha’s teaching. Then they converted. In this conversation, “belief and understanding” and also “faith and wisdom” are included. From this instance, the words of “*adhimutti*” or “*adhimuccati*” means “belief and understanding”, moreover it is considered as “mutual identity” of “faith and wisdom.”

Up to here, as for the words “*adhimutti*” or “*adhimucca*”, their usage has been examined by the example sentences. “*Adhimutti*” means “faith and understanding” in

the old translation, “intention” in the new translation. The Sanskrit Corresponding to word of “*adhimutti*” in *Pali* is “*adhimukti*”. The title of the Lotus Sutra the fourth chapter is “*Adhimukti*” in original text of Sanskrit. Therefore, the title is “Belief and Understanding” in English version. The summary of “Belief and Understanding” (forth) chapter is as follows:

The four great voice-hearers, having heard the parable of the three cars and the burning house that Shakyamuni’s related in the “Simile and Parable” (third) chapter, now rejoice in their understanding of its meaning. They understand that Shakyamuni’s true intention is to reveal the one Buddha vehicle that leads all people to Buddhahood. The four great voice-hearers are *Mahakashyapa*, *Katyayana*, *Maudgalyayana*, and *Subhuti*. To display their understanding of the meaning of the parable, they relate a parable of their own creation, the parable of the wealthy man and his poor son.

Briefly, it tells of a wealthy man’s son who runs away from his father in childhood. For some fifty years he wanders from one place to another in abject poverty, hiring himself out as a menial labour. One day in his wanderings he chances upon his father’s mansion. The rich old man is overjoyed to see his son again, as he wants to bequeath to him all his wealth and possessions. The son, however, does not recognize his father and run away, overwhelmed by the splendor of the rich man’s estate. The rich man sends a messenger to bring him back, but the son thinks the messenger has come to arrest him back and faints in terror. Hearing this, the father tells the messenger to release him and instead sends two of his servants dressed in dirty clothes to offer the son the work of clearing away excrement. The impoverished son happily accepts this employment on his father’s estate. After a while, his father disguises himself in dirty clothes so he can approach his son. He tells him that he can always work there, and that he will treat him like his own son. For twenty years the son works at clearing away excrement and gradually gains self-confidence. The rich man then promotes him, charging him with the administration of his property, and gradually he comes to understand all the rich man’s affairs. Eventually the rich man senses death approaching. He invites his relative, the king of the country, the high ministers, and others, and declares to them that his servant is actually his true son. He then transfers to his son the whole of his estate.

The rich man in this parable represents the Buddha, whose sole desire is to let all people enjoy the same sublime state as his own, just as the rich man wishes to bequeath all his wealth to his son. The poor son represents ordinary people, who “wander about transmigrating in the threefold without encountering the one Buddha vehicle. To lead them to enlightenment, the Buddha first employs expedient means and preaches what is appropriate to their capacities, just as the rich man trains his

son gradually. Thus the Buddha leads them gradually to higher teachings and ultimately reveals the one Buddha vehicle of the Lotus Sutra.

After the four voice-hearers' relating the parable, *Mahakashyapa*, wishing to state once more that they have received the greatest treasure of Buddhahood without earnestly seeking it, spoke in verse form. At the beginning part of the verse, saying: The Buddha declares that the voice-hearers / will be able to attain Buddhahood. / This cluster of unsurpassed jewels / has come to us unsought. /

After "Belief and Understanding" (forth) chapter, Shakyamuni preaches "the Parable of the Medical Herbs" (fifth) chapter. In this chapter, Shakyamuni relates the Buddha's impartial compassion. At the beginning of the chapter, Shakyamuni affirms His disciples have grasped the earlier teaching in the previous three chapters ("Expedient Means," "Simile and Parable," and "Belief and Understanding") that the Buddha's true purpose is the revelation of the one vehicle of Buddhahood, but that, because of the Differences in people's capacity, he first expounds the three vehicles and the five vehicles as provisional teachings.

In the parable of "wealthy man and his poor son" related by the four great voice-hearers, it is not fully clear that though the Law of preached by Thus Come One is of one form, and one flavor, because of the differences in people's capacity, the three vehicles and the five vehicles are separate.

In the next chapter, though Shakyamuni praise *Mahakashyapa* and the other major disciples understanding His preaching, He further saying, "The Thus Come One indeed has immeasurable boundless, *asamkhyas* of blessings, and though you and others were to spend immeasurable millions of *kalpas* in the effort, you could never finish describing them." Then, Shakyamuni expounds "parable of the three kinds of medical herbs and two kinds of trees" in the "The parable of the Medicinal herbs" (fifth) chapter.

Putting it shortly, in this parable, a great cloud envelops the world and sends down life-giving rain equally upon all the grasses, flowers, trees, and medicinal herbs. Though the rain is the same, the plants, trees, and medicinal herbs absorb the moisture differently and grow to varying heights according to their individual natures. Similarly, the Buddha impartially expounds only the one vehicle of Buddhahood for all people, but they understand and benefit from it differently according to their respective capacity.

The last verse of this sixth chapter, Shakyamuni saying, What you are practicing / is the bodhisattva ways, / and as you gradually advance in practice and learning / you are all certain to attain Buddhahood. This last verse makes clear it for four great voice-hearers to have unfailingly entered the path to enlightenment by believing and understanding distinctly the one Buddha vehicle of the Lotus Sutra

through the parable in “Medicinal Herbs” of the three kinds of medicinal herbs and two kinds of trees. Therefore, in “Bestowal of Prophecy” (sixth) chapter, each of the four great voice-hearers is given a prophecy that he is certain to become a Buddha. Shakyamuni specifically indicates when, where and under what name each will attain enlightenment.



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CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

It is said the *Sutta Nipata* is one of very old *sutta* among the early Buddhist canons. Especially, 'IV. The Chapter of Eights' and 'V. The Chapter on Going to the Far Shore' is the most old and said that the 'Golden words,' i.e. 'the word of the Buddha,' are included.

'IV. The Chapter of Eights' depicts the background of the age of Sakyamuni.

This chapter's subject is finding fault and criticizing the vehement controversies and battle that the desire of the depths and self-consciousness work in the roots of the vehement controversies. From this standing point, 'IV. 15. Embraced Violence' is viewed to discourse the fundamental idea of 'IV. The Chapter of Eights'.

According to *Paramattha-jotica*, when the battle over water for irrigation happened between *Shakiya* and *Koliya*, Sakyamuni discoursed this teaching for quieting down the battle.

At first, he began to describe his agitation that he experienced when he was bodhsatta.

Sakyamuni Buddha recollects his own experience and says by a way of expression in the first person.

He says, 'Fear comes from the [one who has] embraced violence. Look at people quarrelling. I shall describe my agitation, how it was experienced by me (#935)'. The fare, which came upon him, was 'Seeing people floundering, like fish [floundering] in little water, seeing them opposed to one another (#936)'. And, as 'The world was without substance all around; all the quarters were tossed about, wanting a dwelling-place for my self, I did not see [anywhere] unoccupied (#937)'.

Repeated again, this recollection was Sakyamuni own experience in that time when he was *bodhisatta*. At that time, the communal Veda society founded on the culture of festival community got gradually confused.

What is the root cause that people quarreled and used violence each other? Sakyamuni Buddha says:

#938. But seeing [people] opposed [to one another] at the end, I was dissatisfied. Then I saw a barb here. hard to see, nestling in the heart.

#939. Affected by this barb, one runs in all directions. Having pulled that barb out, one does not run, nor sink.

'The barb nestling in the heart' that Sakyamuni says here, is greed, the desire

of the depths, in the verse 945: 'I call greed "the great flood". I can desire "the current". The objects of sense are the movement [on the tide]. Sensual pleasure is the mud which is hard to cross over.'

Here, Sakyamuni brought in a new practice to penetration into the bottom of things in *samadhi* from ascetic. Only practice of the highest *Samadhi* is described.

#949. Make what [existed] previously wither away, May there be nothing for you after wards. If you do not grasp anything in between, you will wander calmed.

#950. Of whom there is no cherishing at all in respect of name-and-form, and [who] does not grieve because of what does not exist, he truly does not suffer any loss in the world.

Greed of the depths and self-consciousness of "this is mine" worked in the bottom of people's mind. In the ultimate of the practice, when greed and the self-consciousness of "this is mine" become extinct, People will be delivered to the collaboration existence equal among all living beings and all people.

How will people be delivered to the cooperation existence equal?

#954. The sage does not speak of himself [as being] among equals, inferior, or superiors. He, calmed, with avarice gone, neither takes up nor lays down, said the Blessed One.

The extinction of individual existence does not mean that he does not himself existent. It means that he lives freely as the collaboration existence equal by no speaking of himself as being among equals, inferior, or superiors.

Upasiva asked the questions to the Buddha (V.7. *Upasiva's* Questions), though it seems that he knew the Buddha's teaching above.

Upasiva asks, 'Alone [and] without a support, 'I am not able to cross over the great flood. One with all-round vision, tell me an object [of meditation], supported by which I may cross over this flood' (#1069).

The Buddha answered followings:

#1070. 'Having regard for [the state of] nothingness, possessing mindfulness, ... 'supported by [the belief] "it does not exist", cross over the flood. Abandoning sensual pleasure, abstaining from [wrong], conversations, look for the destruction of craving day and night.'

Upasiva asks again whether if he should remain there for a vast number of years, (the current of) consciousness would disappear for him in such state. The Buddha answers:

#1074. Just as a flame tossed about by the force of the wind, ...goes out and no longer counts [as a flame], so a sage released from his mental body goes out and no longer counts [as a sage].

More, *Upasiva's* question follows whether he who has gone out, does he not exist, or [does he remain] unimpaired for ever. It may be natural question. The Buddha says:

#1076. 'There is no measuring of one who has gone out, ... 'That no longer exists for him by which they might speak of him. When all phenomena have removed, then all ways of speaking are also removed.'

This verse is difficult to understand the meaning. But, here, we might say that the followers of the Buddha practiced, extinguished individual existences and mastered collaboration existence, that all phenomena have removed, through the practices as prescribed.

In '*Theragatha*' (the Elders' Verse I), the disciples declare their states of mind on attaining deliverance from the world of *asava* by using the Buddha's words. The road of their practices is the same road between teacher (the Buddha) and students (disciples).

Sariputta comes on the 'Groups of Thirty Verses' of '*Theragatha*',

If we know six transcendental powers and can select one of them, What will be selected? Six transcendental powers are (1) the power to be anywhere at will. (2) the power to see anything anywhere, (3) the power to hear any sound anywhere, (4) the power to know the thought of all other minds, (5) power to know past lives, and (6) the power to eradicate illusion. I guess that almost people select some power among (1) to (5).

Sariputta, as foremost in wisdom, selected (6). In the verse 996 and 997, he says:

#996, 997. My listening was not in vain; I am released without *asavas*. Not for knowledge of former habitation, nor even for the *deva-eye*, nor for supernatural power of knowledge of passing away and rebirth, nor for purity of the ear-element was there any resolve of mine.

The six categories above mentioned are common in (2), (3), (4), and (5) with six transcendental powers. At that time, it is regarded not to form system of the six transcendental powers yet.

Any way, by above verse, we can understand *Sariputta* grasped exactly the Buddha's intention and teaching.

The other disciples also declare their states of mind on their attaining by using same words with the Buddha.

In the 'Expedient Means' (second) chapter of the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha expresses the followings

Shariputra, you should know / that at the start I took vow, / hoping to make all persons / equal to me, without any distinction between us (如我等無異) / and what I long ago hoped for / has now been fulfilled.

This verse means that the Buddha's vow is to lead all living beings to the same state with the Buddha.

The Lotus Sutra illustrates the profound doctrine by using the many parables in order to make people to understand them. Through many parables as well as his teaching, people feel the compassion of the Buddha.

After Shakyamuni Buddha preached 'one Buddha vehicle' in 'Expedient Mean' (second) chapter, in order to illustrate his statement, he relates the 'parable of the burning house' to illustrate his statement.

Suppose, he says, there is a very rich man who has many children. One day a fire suddenly breaks out in his spacious house, and his children, totally absorbed in playing games, do not know that the house is inflame and ignore his cries of warning. He, therefore, resorts to an expedient means to induce them to come out of the burning house. He shouts to them that outside he has three kinds of carts they have long wanted: a cart pulled by a goat, another by a deer, and third by an ox. Immediately they race outside. Having coaxed them to safety in this way, the rich man gives each of his children a cart—not one of the three kinds he had promised, but a much finer carriage, adorned with numerous jewels and drawn by a white ox.

Shakyamuni compares the burning house in the parable to the threefold world, and the flame to the sufferings of birth and death. The rich man is the Buddha, who appears in troubled world to save the people, the children are all living beings, and the games in which they are so absorbed are worldly pleasures.

The following is the 'parable of the skilled physician and his sick children' in the 'Life Span' (sixteenth) chapter that has preached with the appearance of Bodhisattvas of the Earth as the catalyst.

Shakyamuni relates it to explain that the Buddha uses his own death as a means to awaken in people a desire to seek his teaching. The parable describes a skilled physician who has a great many children.

One day while he is away from home, the children mistakenly drink poison. Returning to find them writhing on the ground in agony, he quickly prepares for them a medicine that possesses excellent color, fragrance, and flavor. Some of the children take the medicine and are cured instantly, but others, their reasoning distorted by the

working of the poison, refuse it despite their great agony. The father therefore devises an expedient to induce them to take medicine. Telling them, “I will leave this good medicine here,” he sets off for another land. From there he dispatches a messenger, who informs the children that their father has died. Grief-stricken, they finally come to their senses, take the medicine their father has left them, and are immediately cured. Thereupon their father returns.

Shakyamuni explains that the Buddha is like this physician: If he were always present in the world, people would begin to take him for granted and would no longer seek his teaching. Therefore, although the Buddha’s life is eternal, he uses his death as a means to arouse in people an aspiration for enlightenment.

People grasp the great compassion of the Buddha from this parable, too.

Both the *Sutta Nipata* and the Lotus Sutra are filled with the Buddha’s compassion in the every part as well as aforementioned subjects. This is the similar point of two *suttas* (*sutras*). The different point is in the manners of expression.



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- Foreign Correspondent of the same News Paper at Hong Kong 23 February 1973
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- The International Coordinator of Thailand for Culture, Education and Peace 1 April 1986
- The Exhibition of "Nuclear Arms": Threat to Our World"
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Promoter: Rector, Prof. Dr. Kasem Suwanagul and Vice Rector, Prof. Amphon Namatra of
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The Joint Sponsors: The United Nations, Chulalongkorn University, U.N. Associations of
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- Book Donation of 1,100 Books to Chulalongkorn University 2 February 1988
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- "The Land of Gentle Smiles: Special Exhibition of Photographs
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- The same as above at University of South California, U.S.A. 16-22 March 1990
- The same as above at Taplow Court, U.K. 6-21 July 1991
- Thailand Commemorating the Thirtieth Anniversary of Their Majesty the King and Queen's
State Visit to Japan. (I coordinated) at Tokyo, Japan 15 November 1993
- The Special Exhibition in Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of His Majesty King
Bhumibol Adhlyadej's Accession to the Throne (I coordinated) at Tokyo 4May-10 July 1996
- The same as above at Nagoya City Museum, Nagoya, Japan 16-28 July 1996
- The same as above at OMM Exhibition Hall, Osaka, Japan 7-20 August 1996
- The president of Samakhom Sang Khunkha Nai Prathet Thai 20 February 1997
- The Honorary President of Samakhom as above 31 December 2002
- Taking Lesson for Pali Language at Chulalongkorn University 2 January 2003
- The Admission for Postgraduate school of Chulalongkorn University after the Examination
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