

Minwa Fu Hokekyo Dowo

(Volume 2 of 30 Volumes)

by Rev. Kōge Matsumoto

Translated by Rev. Shokai Kanai

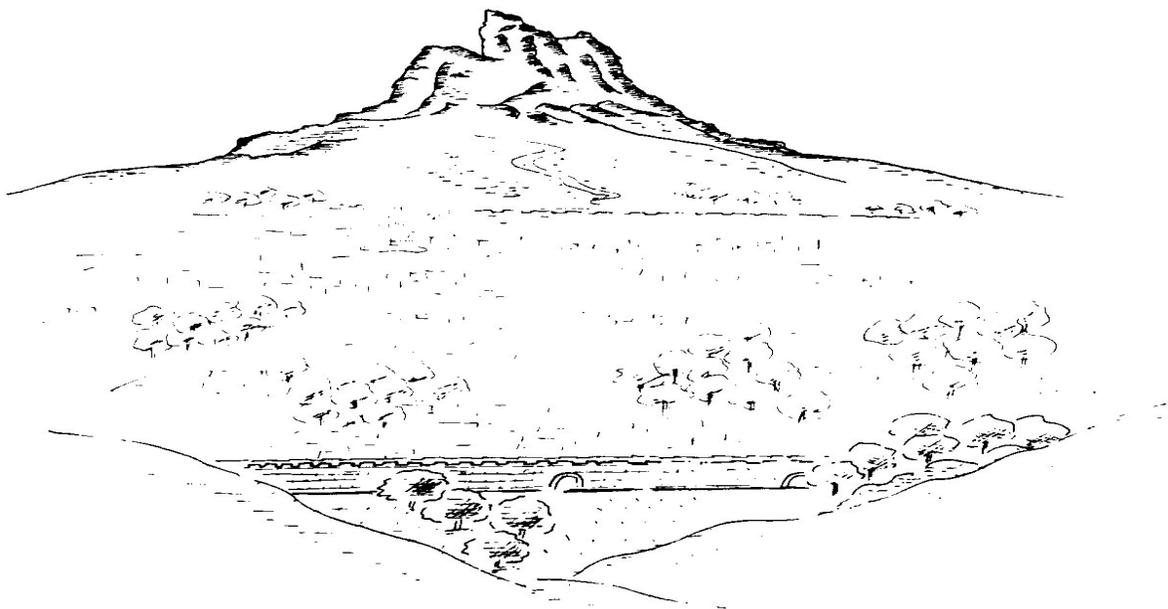
The Place is Mount Sacred Eagle in India

Chapter 1

The Place is Mount Sacred Eagle in India

There is a high, rocky mountain in the city of Rahagriha, India. The mountain is shaped like an eagle perking up its shoulders while looking down at the city, so people called it Mount Sacred Eagle. The people of the city commune with the mountain.

After Buddha Sakyamuni attained Enlightenment, He traveled all over India. He expounded various teachings to many people in different places. He had once taught teachings of the *Agon* or *Agamas Sutra* and saved the people from sadness and worries. Sometimes He taught the teachings of the *Amidha*



Sutra to save the people from sufferings. Later He taught the *Heart Sutra* for the people to understand the concept of “No-Self” or “Emptiness.” With these teachings, He led the people with their meek minds to awaken to the concept of “the Buddha always watches over us.”

The Buddha was already 72 years old. Forty-two years had passed since He became enlightened. It is said that He taught about 84,000 teachings throughout the years. As he traveled throughout India, he taught teachings that were appropriate to the people’s level of understanding. He chose Mt. Sacred Eagle in the City of King-House for his final teaching place.

It was exciting. The Buddha would speak some very important teachings! My goodness! Not only human beings, but gods, bodhisattvas, animals and all kinds of living beings gathered at the mountain from around the world. It was natural for them to come there because the Buddha, the most honorable one in the universe, was going to expound some very important teachings.

During the past 42 years, so many people were saved by listening to the Buddha. Animals and plants in the forests and the woods sensed the Buddha’s words. There were deities in the heavens who rejoiced listening to the one and only Reality of the Universe. There were Bodhisattvas who practiced the Buddha’s teachings. None of them could sit still in their homes and instead came swarming the mountain. The Buddha was going to give them his last and most important teaching! It was the *Lotus Sutra*.

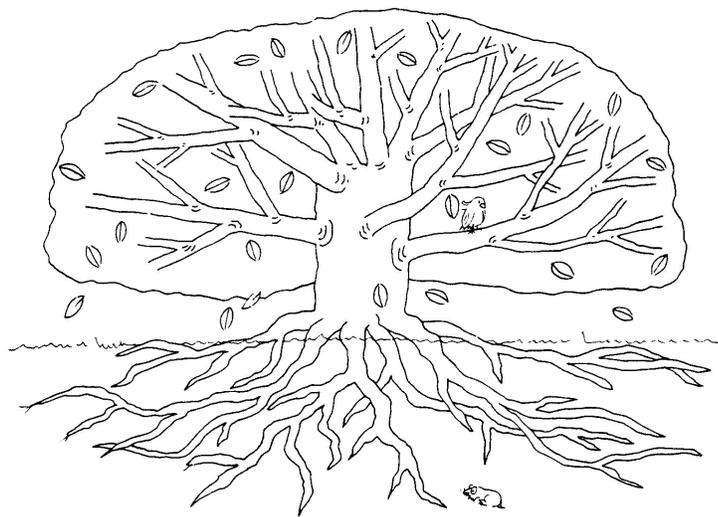
Chapter 2

The Truth Is Not Yet Revealed

The Buddha Sakyamuni was quietly sitting and meditating at the highest peak of Mt. Sacred Eagle. Before that, He had expounded the teachings of the *Sutra of Innumerable Teachings* as the prelude to the *Lotus Sutra*.

In this sutra, the Buddha revealed the following teachings: “Innumerable teachings.” I expounded in the past are like the leaves, branches and trunk of a huge tree. A tree never grows without its roots. I have taught innumerable teachings for 42 years; however, I have not yet revealed the true teachings that are the roots of the tree.”

Everybody was surprised! They said with astonishment, “He has not taught us the truth even after 42 years!” The truth is the roots of a tree. The most important part of the root has not been taught yet. After His great declaration, the Buddha kept his silence and closed his eyes and remained in meditation. He kept quiet as if nothing had happened. This was the beginning of the Lotus Sutra.



Chapter 3

The Buddha's Disciples

The most surprised people were the five monks, including Kaunidinya. They were the ones who requested to become disciples of the Buddha when He preached His First Sermon at Deer Park. Now there were over 12,000 disciples, including the five original disciples.



五人の比丘
Five Monks



「ちえ第一」の
舍利弗さん
Sariputra

One of the other disciples was Sariputra, who understood all of the Buddha's teachings no matter how difficult. He was "The Number One Wisdom Disciple."

Maudgalyana, Sariputra's best friend, was "The Number One Possessor of Supernatural Power." He was able to see through anything and was able to look into the past and the future. With his power, he searched for his mother who raised him with her deep love. How is she doing after her death? He was shocked to see her suffering terribly in the realm of the hungry spirits. He felt so sad and sorry for her great suffering. He went to the Buddha for help and asked, "Buddha, why is my mother in such a terrible state of suffering? How can I save her?"



「神通力第一」の目連さん
Maudgalyana

The Buddha answered, "She was much too proud of you, a wise son. Being proud became vanity, which made her strongly attach herself to you even after you renounced the world and became my disciple. Her strong attachment made her fall into the realm of the hungry spirits. If

you wish to save her, you must ease her attachment by asking as many of my disciples as possible to hold a memorial service for all the hungry spirits. The merits of the memorial service will lead her to repent her wrong conduct and to have a pure mind. This incident is the origin of today's *segaki* memorial service for hungry spirits.



「弁説第一」の
マカクチラ
Maka-Kuchira

Another great disciple was Maka-Kasyapa, who was “The Number One Leader Of All.” He could solve all kinds of troubles and lead others to satisfaction.

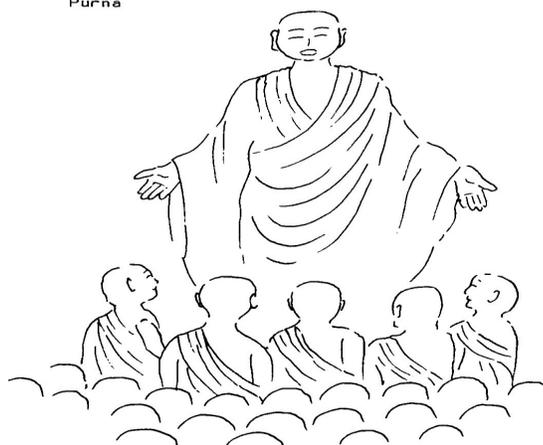


「指導力第一」の
大迦葉
Maka-Kasyapa

Other great disciples were Maha-Kausthila and Subhuti. They were “The Number One Speakers.” Purna gave “The Best Sermon for All People to Easily Understand.”



須菩提
Subhuti



「説法第一」の
フルナ
Purna

One day Aniruddha, another important disciple, was so comfortable that he fell asleep while listening to the Buddha talk. He felt deeply ashamed and vowed never to fall asleep while listening to the Buddha. Later, he became blind but was able to have divine eyes of celestial beings. Therefore, he was called “The Possessor of The Number One Divine Eyes.”



Ananda, a younger brother of Devadatta, felt very sorry that Devadatta had harmed Sakyamuni Buddha and tried to kill him. Ananda instead served the Buddha all his life. He was called “The Number One Servant.”



Two other great disciples were Nanda and Rahula. Nanda was Siddhartha’s half brother who was born to Siddhartha’s father and His stepmother. Rahula was the only child of Buddha Sakyamuni. When Rahula was young, he always showed off. After joining the Buddha’s Sangha, he tried not to show off and practiced quietly behind everyone. He was called “The Number One Secret Practitioner.”

Ubhari was a slave and another great disciple of Buddha Sakyamuni. Slaves were not treated equally. They were not treated as human beings. However, the Buddha accepted Ubhari and treated him as equal with the other disciples. Since he kept Buddhist precepts very honestly and sincerely, he was called “The Number One Keeper of the Precepts.” He was later chosen from among 12,000 as one of the Ten Great Disciples of the Buddha.



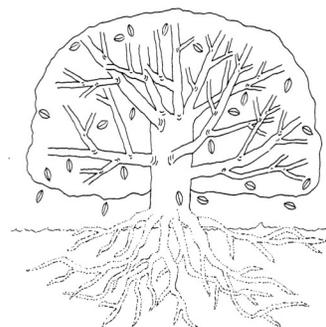
Buddha Sakyamuni always treated everyone equally.

Chapter 4

All Human Beings Are Buddha's Children

The baby of a lion never becomes an ox but always becomes a lion. All children of human beings become either men or women. All people are Buddha's children. They are able to become Buddhas if they uphold Buddha's teachings and keep their minds in the right way.

However, the sutras that were revealed before the Lotus Sutra did not teach that everyone is able to become a Buddha. As you learned in Chapter 2 of this volume, the Buddha didn't reveal the true teachings that are like the roots of a tree until 42 years after His Enlightenment.



For instance, according to a doctrine of some Buddhist schools, certain people are able to become Buddhas while others cannot. Those who are able to become Buddhas will be able to do so even though they have made some mistakes. Those who are not able to become Buddhas, however, will never become Buddhas, even if they practice hard.

According to this doctrine, women are not able to become Buddhas since women are filthy in their bodies and minds. I guess the Buddha personally taught this doctrine to a wife who oppressed her husband and was fascinated by many other men. In order to give a warning to her, the Buddha might have taught her that she could not become a Buddha.

The Buddha taught different teachings sincerely to different people, depending on individual situations. The various teachings revealed before the Lotus Sutra were not the real teachings.

He could not teach the truth even though He wished to do so. Why? It was because women and slaves were not treated as human beings at that time in



India. The society was based on a strong caste system that was an unchangeable class distinction based on birth. For instance, it was said that when a husband passed away, his surviving wife must be cremated together with the dead husband in order to show her faithfulness. Wasn't that cruel?

Another example was that slaves were treated just like animals. When a rich man killed one or two slaves, he was not accused of murder. Killing slaves was not a crime during the time when Buddha Sakyamuni lived.



Therefore, the Buddha taught the Five Precepts for all human beings to practice at a minimum. The precepts are not to kill any human beings but also all living beings, not to steal, not to tell a lie that causes suffering to others, not to be unfaithful to one's spouse, and not to take any harmful substances that injure one's body.

Since the Buddha let the slave Ubhari join in the Sangha and later chose him as one of the Ten Senior Disciples, He kept the equality of all human beings deeply in his mind. From the moment of his enlightenment, He has been thinking that everyone is Buddha's child and has the seed to become a Buddha. Therefore, He kept the Equality of All Mankind in His mind, but He was not able to tell anyone for 42 years.

Chapter 5

The Time to Reveal The Truth

How were the people in the caste system at that time in India able to understand “Equality of All Human Beings”? How many people would understand the Buddha’s teachings if He talked as He wanted to? Therefore, the Buddha decided not to talk about the truth, represented by the root of a tree, but instead gave teachings that were like the trunk, branches and leaves of a tree in order to purify people’s minds little by little.

Buddha Sakyamuni was now seventy-two years old. He knew he didn’t have many years left to his life. He thought it was about time for Him to reveal the Lotus Sutra, the real reason He was born on this earth.

For 42 years Buddha taught that there are two types of people: those who can become Buddhas and those who cannot become Buddhas based on their birth. He must now reveal the teaching that would contradict what he had said before. Since He was going to reveal the truth, it could not be the teachings that the people preferred to hear. He must speak the truth! This is the teaching that men and women, landlords and slaves, ordained people and lay -people, and kings and servants are all equal and are all Buddha’s children.



Chapter 6

Promise at His Birth

Do you remember the following sentences? “From heaven to the earth I alone am the most honored one! The triple worlds are full of suffering, but I alone am able to be free from these sufferings.” When Prince Siddhartha was born in the Lumbini Garden, He stood up and walked seven steps to the north, raised his right hand to point towards Heaven, lowered his left hand at the Earth, and declared those words.



Now was the time for Him to translate those words with his actions. “The triple worlds are full of suffering, but I alone am able to be free from these sufferings.” This means that although there are many sufferings in this world, the Buddha will save all people equally and lead them to the heart of the Buddha. That is the sole reason why Buddha Sakyamuni was born in this world. He was about to act to fulfill his purpose.

The Buddha Sakyamuni said in *The Sutra of Innumerable Teachings* that all teachings He had taught are similar to the trunk, branches, and leaves that grow from their roots, but that he has not yet revealed the true teaching that is the roots of a tree. After saying that, the Buddha closed His mouth and eyes for His deep meditation.

The countless numbers of the congregation gathered at Mt. Sacred Eagle were quietly watching Him with great expectation.

Note: The Triple World: 1) the realm of desire, 2) the realm of form, 3) the realm of no-form.

Chapter 7

Bodhisattvas, Gods, and Kings Are Present

What was He going to talk about? What was the One and Only Truth that He had not taught yet? The entire congregation held their breath, without blinking and coughing, and watched the Buddha's face and worshipped Him in palms together or *gassho*.

Among the Buddha's disciples, there was Manjusri Bodhisattva who rides on the back of a lion. He was well known not only around the world but also in the universe. Compassionate World-Voice-Perceiver Bodhisattva (Kannon Bodhisattva), wise Great-Power-Obtainer Bodhisattva who wears a crown on his

head, and Medicine-King Bodhisattva who was standing with a flag in his left hand were also in attendance. Brave-In-Giving Bodhisattva and Moon-Light Bodhisattva were standing while straining to hear. Maitreya Bodhisattva was sitting on a rock in deep thought and waiting for the Buddha's talk. In addition, there were eighty-thousand Bodhisattvas present.

BODHISATTVAS:

Medicine-King
藥王菩薩



Great-Power-Obtainer
得大勢菩薩



World-Voice-Perceiver
觀音菩薩



Manjusri
文殊菩薩



彌勒菩薩
Maitreya



月光菩薩
Moon-Light



勇施菩薩
Brave-In-Giving

Sakra-Devanam-Indra was present with twenty thousand gods. The four great Heavenly-King gods were present with ten thousand gods, Freedom God with thirty thousand gods, and Brahman Heavenly-King who is the lord of the *Saha* World (the earth). Two thousand gods were attending to Brahman Heavenly-King. Also, there were eight Dragon-Kings accompanied by hundreds of thousands of attendants. Finally, there were four kinnara-kings, four gandharva-kings, four asura-kings, and four garuda-kings, who are half animal and half human being.



帝釈天の釈提桓因
Sakra-Devanam-Indra

FOUR GREAT HEAVENLY-KINGS:

大広目天王

West



大持国天王

East

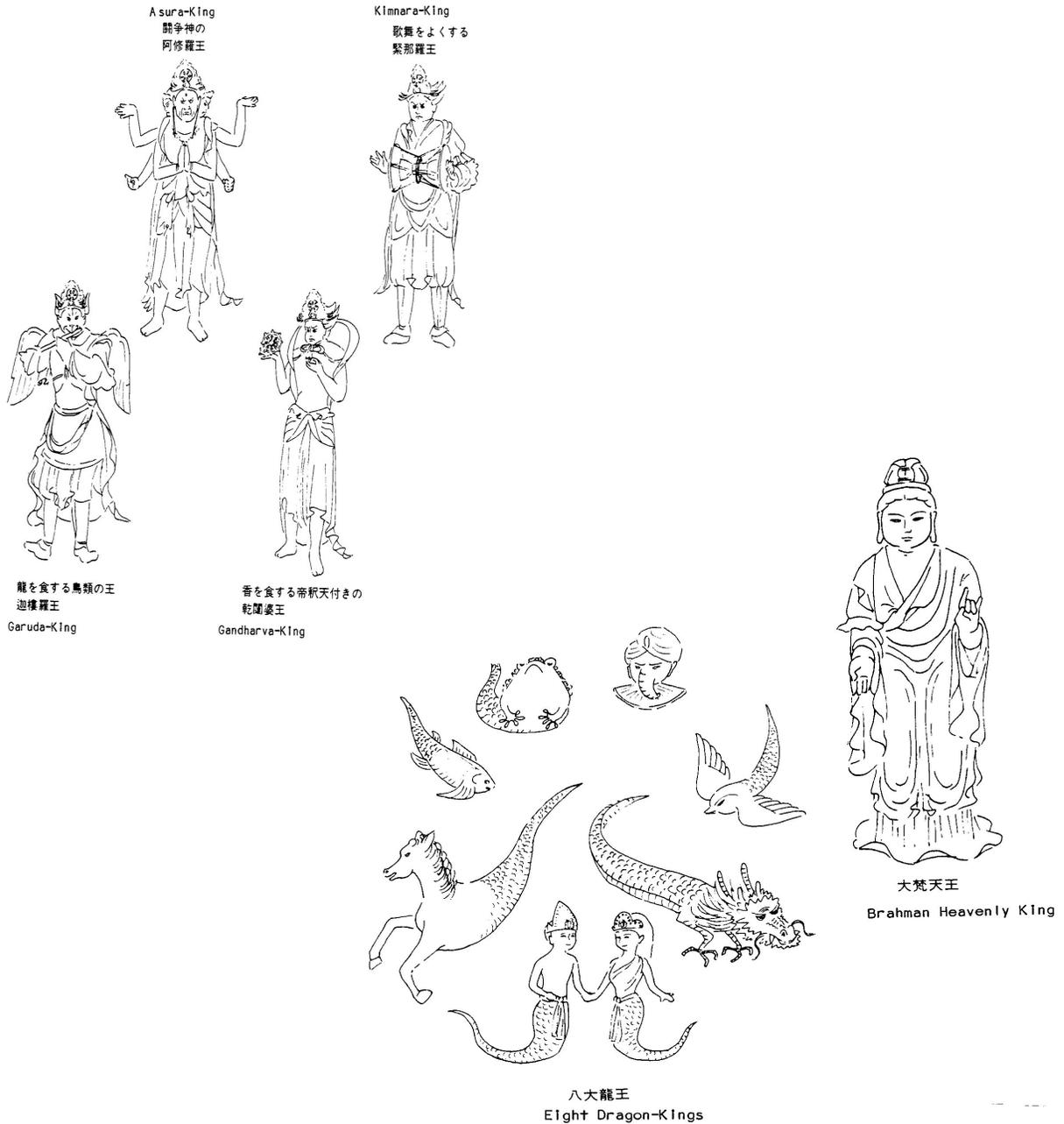


大增長天王
South



大比婆門天王
North





All of these people, gods, bodhisattvas, animals and non-human beings were surrounding the Buddha. King Ajatasatru of far away Magadha Kingdom was also present with his hundreds of thousands of attendants. They each worshipped the feet of the Buddha while holding their hands together in *Gassho* and waiting for the World Honored One to speak.

Chapter 8

After Repenting, Devotion to Buddha Sakyamuni

Many years ago King Ajatasatru deceived by Devadatta, tried to assassinate Buddha Sakyamuni. Not only did the king try to assassinate the Buddha, but he also tried to kill his father. After listening to the teachings of the Buddha, he repented his wrong doings. He realized his actions were ignorant. He felt an obligation toward his parents and the Buddha. He began serving Buddha Sakyamuni. The king was strong and powerful. He defeated King Virudhaka, who had destroyed Kapilavastu (Sakyamuni Buddha's father's kingdom), and ruled most of the kingdoms in India.



King Ajatasatru and his Vassals

Chapter 9

Strange Occurrence

At the center of Mount Sacred Eagle in India, Buddha Sakyamuni sat quietly in meditation. His eyes were closed and his mouth was shut. He was motionless for a long time.

After some time, as rain began to fall, red and white lotus flower petals in varying sizes showered upon the Buddha and the congregation that gathered on the mountain. Everyone shouted, “What is going to happen?” Suddenly the earth shook in six different ways. It was not an earthquake. It was one of the expressions the gods in the universe made to show rejoicing. The earth shook up and down, side to side, and round and round. The congregation felt joyful.

Something important must be about to happen that might not ever happen again. It must be something the gods and deities of heaven and the earth could not help but express as joyfulness. Everyone present was astonished and rejoiced. They put their hands together in *gassho* and watched the Buddha. “What is He going to say?” “What teachings will He expound?”



Thereupon the congregation was shocked to see more strange occurrences. The Buddha emitted a ray of light from the white curls between His eye-brows. The light brightened the countries in the east. Listen well! The Buddha was at Sacred Mountain in India. Can you guess what is to the East of India? The ray of Buddha Wisdom illuminated the east and even further!



Chapter 10

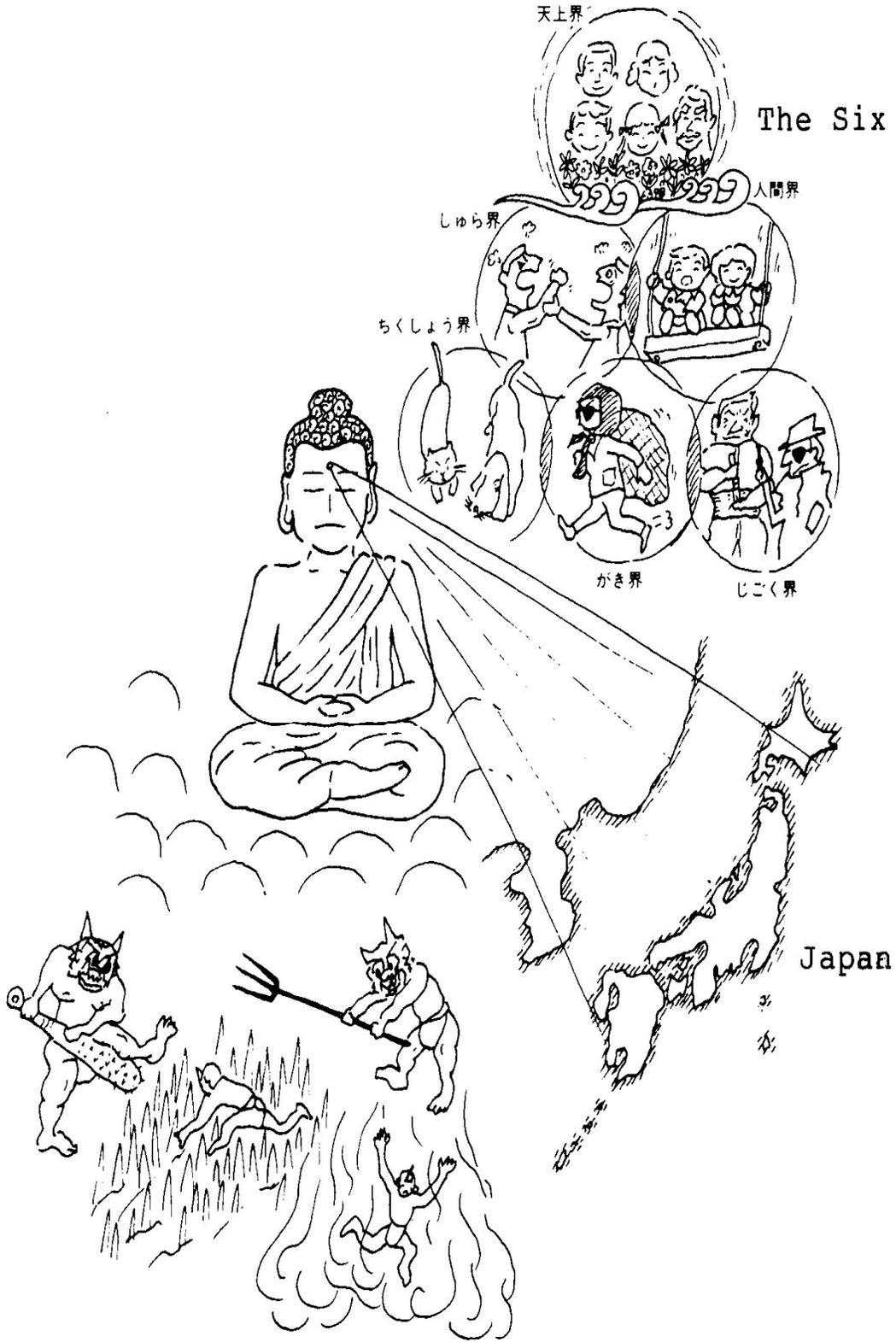
The Ray Illuminated the East

Why did the ray illuminate the east? How far east did the ray travel? Surprisingly, the furthest east the ray reached was Japan! The Buddha illuminated the ray of light from his forehead toward Japan together with other countries! It is said that the ray of light illuminated all the corners of eighteen thousand worlds in the east.

The ray of light reached down to the Avici Hell and up to the Akanistha Heaven, the highest heaven of each world. It illuminated all happy and sad people in the six realms of hell, hungry spirits, animals, *asuras* (evil and fearsome spirits), ordinary human beings and heaven. It showed both the good and bad people in the cycle of birth and death in these six realms. Those who behaved badly had ugly faces and were disliked by others. Those who had good behavior were cute, wise, and liked by many people.

Not only were people illuminated by the ray of light, but also the past Buddhas, who taught many Bodhisattvas in these worlds. These Buddhas were saving people who were suffering. The people who were saved looked peaceful and happy. The ray of light also illuminated these saved people erecting pagodas to give offerings to the past Buddhas in Pari-nirvana (final death). Thus, the congregation at Mount Sacred Eagle watched all these people: bodhisattvas, Buddhas and gods in all the corners of the eighteen thousand worlds in the east.

The Six Realms



Chapter 11

Question of Maitreya Bodhisattva

The countless living beings who gathered to listen to the last spoken words of Buddha Sakyamuni were staring at these strange occurrences in the eighteen thousand worlds illuminated by the ray of the Buddha Wisdom. They all trembled with surprise and rejoicing.

What is going to happen?” All living beings were excited but quietly stared at the worlds illuminated by the Light of Wisdom.

Then Maitreya Bodhisattva, wishing his doubts be removed while understanding the minds of the congregation, asked Manjusri, the wisest among the entire congregation:

“Manjusri Bodhisattva! Why does the Buddha keep quiet at such an important moment? Why is He displaying these omens? Why does He emit the ray of Wisdom Light and brighten both the suffering and joyful people in the eighteen thousand worlds? Why are red and white petals of the lotus flower in varying sizes raining down upon the Buddha and the congregation? Why are we embraced with joyfulness?”



Maitreya continued, “You have already met innumerable Buddhas and made offerings to those Buddhas in your previous existence. Don’t you know the reason for these strange occurrences? Please tell us and remove the doubts of all who are gathered here at Mount Sacred Eagle.”

Chapter 12

Answer of Manjusri Bodhisattva



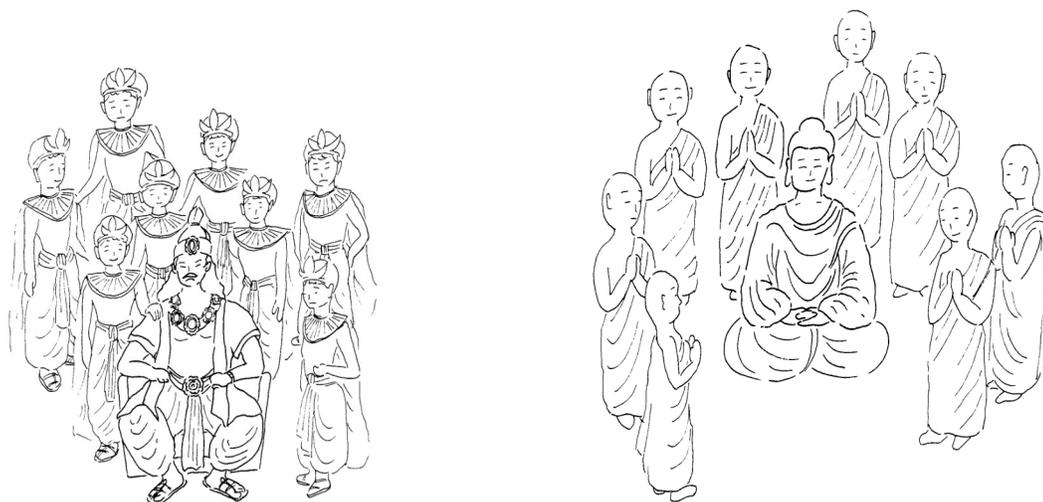
Manjusri answered by saying, “Maitreya Bodhisattva and other people! Please listen to me closely! You met with these omens in your many previous existences, but you have forgotten. The present phenomena, such as the lotus flower petals raining from the heaven, the shaking of the earth, and the ray of Wisdom Light illuminating the eighteen thousand worlds in the east, happened before.”

I think the ray of Wisdom Light means that the Buddha Sakyamuni decided to expound the truth, the One and Only Truth in the Universe, which He has never revealed before.”

A very long time ago, there lived a Buddha called Sun-Moon-Light. He expounded the teachings of the Fourfold Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path to his disciples of Sravakahood, and made them feel at ease. He expounded the Twelve Causes to another group of his disciples, Pratyeka-buddhahood, who had practiced more than Sravakahood, and made all of his disciples understand the relations between causes, conditions and effects. He also expounded the Six *Paramita* to cause Bodhisattvas to help others and to attain Enlightenment.”

“After that, Sun-Moon-Light Buddha entered *Pari-nirvana* (final death), and another new Buddha appeared and was called by the same name, Sun-Moon-Light. Thus, two thousand Buddhas with the same name appeared and entered into *Nirvana* one after another.”

The last Sun-Moon-Light Buddha was once a king. He had eight princes born to him before He renounced the world. Having heard that their father had renounced the world and attained Enlightenment to become a Buddha, his sons also renounced their thrones and became ordained priests. They performed practices under many Buddhas.”



出家の前国王の時、八人の王子たちと共に

“Then their father, Sun-Moon-Light Buddha, expounded a sutra of the Great Vehicle called the *Innumerable Teachings, the Dharma for Bodhisattvas, the Dharma Upheld by the Buddhas*. Afterward, He entered into deep meditation. His hands were on His lap making an oval shape with His fingers.”

“The gods rained lotus flowers. The earth shook in six ways. Then the Buddha emitted a ray of light, the Wisdom Light, from the white curls between His eyebrows and illuminated all the corners of the eighteen thousand Buddha-worlds. There were two thousand million Bodhisattvas in that congregation. They were astonished at seeing these strange occurrences and asked the same questions as you.”



“At that time, there was a Bodhisattva called Wonderful-Light among the two thousand million Bodhisattvas. He was accompanied by eight hundred disciples. To this Wonderful-Light Bodhisattva and others, Sun-Moon-Light Buddha emerged from meditation and expounded a sutra of the Great Vehicle called the *Innumerable Teachings, the Dharma for Bodhisattvas, the Dharma Upheld by the Buddhas*, or the *Lotus Sutra* for short. After the Sun-Moon-Light Buddha entered *Pari-nirvana*, Wonderful-Light Bodhisattva expounded the *Lotus Sutra* for a very long period of time called eighty small *kalpas*. The eight princes of Sun-Moon-Light Buddha became disciples of Wonderful-Light Bodhisattva. One of the eight princes who became a Buddha last was called Burning-Light.”

“One of the eight hundred disciples of Wonderful-Light was called by a funny name, Fame-Seeking. He would forget many things and was easily flattered. Sometimes he practiced the Dharma and therefore planted the good roots of Buddhahood. He repeated birth and death many times, becoming able to see many Buddhas and practicing Buddhism. Because of his good behavior, he is here as one of the Bodhisattvas now. Maitreya, know this! Fame-Seeking Bodhisattva at that time was no one but you, while Wonderful-Light Bodhisattva at that time was me.”



“Therefore, you know who Buddha Sun-Moon-Light is today. And you know what the Buddha is going to expound. Buddha Sakyamuni is just about to expound a sutra of the Great Vehicle called the *Innumerable Teachings, the Dharma for Bodhisattvas, the Dharma Upheld by the Buddhas*, in short, the *Lotus Sutra*.”

Thus, Manjusri explained the stories of his and Maitreya’s previous existences.

Chapter 13

Reunion of the Eternal Souls

Listening about his previous lives, Maitreya recalled events in his past lives and felt a yearning for them, saying joyfully, “That was right! That was it!” Listening to the conversation between Maitreya and Manjusri, the congregation on Mount Sacred Eagle also recalled their past lives. A long time ago in their past lives, they surrounded the Buddha and listened to His teachings. They were so joyful to hear the Dharma, and their eyes were filled with tears.

“How happy we were that we were able to hear directly from the Buddha. Our minds were cleansed, and there was no more suffering. We were able to be so peaceful! If it is possible, we wish to be born again to listen to the Buddha directly.” Thus, they remembered their wishes in the past.

That was the reason the innumerable living beings were here on Mount Sacred Eagle now. Their wishes were answered. They realized the relationship from the past to the present.

At last, Buddha Sakya-muni is going to expound the sutra of the Great Vehicle called the *Innumerable Teachings, the Dharma for Bodhisattvas, the Dharma Upheld by the Buddhas*, in short the *Lotus Sutra*.



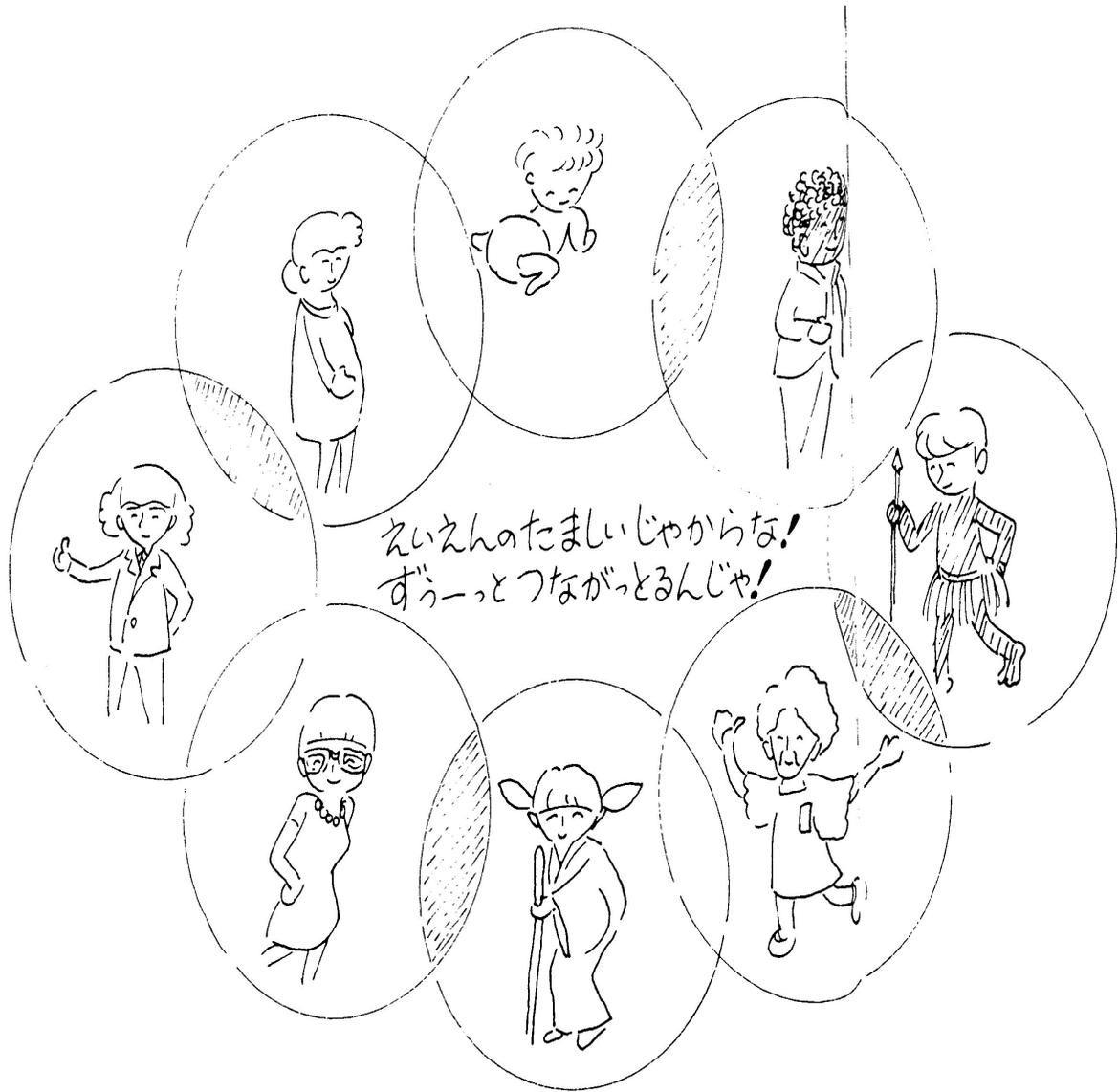
Your heart is full of feeling, isn't it! Soon it is going to start! But not till the next volume.

By the way, have you ever thought that you have met your mother and father a long, long time ago in the past? Have you ever seen your good friends, teachers, relatives and people around you from long ago? You might have seen them before. Therefore, the greeting words when you meet someone for the first time should be "Glad to see you again!" instead of "How do you do?"

It is said that human beings have lived on earth for three million years. Such a long duration! People on the earth who lived during a particular time are somehow related with us. Everyone has a relationship with certain people and places in the past. We are friends from long ago. Therefore, if we help each other and work hard in harmony, Peace on Earth must become a reality. No war will happen on earth if we work hard together.

This is the end of Volume 2, "Introductory" of the *Lotus Sutra*. I will see you in the next volume, "Expedients."

Be healthy and live in harmony!



**Because of the eternal soul, I have appeared
on this earth as many types of persons.**