

## ***Minwa-Fu Hokekyo Dowa Volume 29***

Chapter 28 of the *Lotus Sutra*

**The Encouragement of Universal-Sage Bodhisattva**

by Rev. Kōge Matsumoto

**Adore the Buddha and the Dharma,**

**Want Little and Know Contentment**

**(Four Dharma Practices and the Five Self-Examinations)**

## **Chapter 1**

### **Eight Calendar Years**

Are you practicing having a gentle mind, and living happily together with other people? It has already been eight calendar years since I started this story on the *Minwa-Fu Hokekyo Dowa (Lotus Sutra for Children)*. This is the twenty-ninth volume now.

It was also the same eight years that Sakyamuni Buddha took to reveal the *Lotus Sutra* on Mt. Sacred Eagle.

I hope gentle minds have sprouted in your minds by now. Have you regained gentleness and charm?

## A) The Most Honored Matter on This World

No matter how advanced science becomes and how comfortable our lives become, science does not help in the matter of human minds.

The most honored virtue is to have an obedient and gentle mind and not to have a defiled mind. If this gentle mind is missing, even a person who sees beautiful scenery will not appreciate it or draw inspiration from it. This type of person may be expressionless or cold-blooded. Family and community will not be made better by this type of person.

Sakyamuni Buddha revealed His Original Enlightenment for the people in the Latter Age after His extinction for the betterment of human minds and in order to give them the priceless treasures of the *Lotus Sutra* that have the same value now as for the people who listened to Him directly during His physical existence in India.

The first sutra expounded on Mt. Sacred Eagle, the *Sutra of Innumerable Meanings* was the prelude to the *Lotus Sutra*. In that sutra, the Buddha declared, “Although I have preached many teachings in the last forty-two years, the truth has not yet been revealed. These teachings were like the water in a spring, a well, a stream, a pond, a lake, a river, or an ocean. There was no difference with the water itself, but the meaning, function and merits of each teaching were quite different.”

Thus, the Buddha declared in the *Sutra of Innumerable Meanings*, “I have not yet revealed the true teachings!”

## B) Innumerable Teachings Came out of the One True Dharma

Sakyamuni Buddha said, “Innumerable teachings came out of the One and Only Truth of the One Vehicle.”

Making it easy for us to understand, the Buddha revealed the Simile of the Herbs in the *Lotus Sutra*. The Buddha’s compassionate rain falls in equal amounts on the mountains, rivers, lakes, ponds and oceans. But the herbs and the trees take different amounts of rain water depending on the size of these trees and herbs. He pre-



dicted the unforeseeable various merits hidden in the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*, the One and Only Truth of the Universe.

The Buddha taught us with many parables and similes. He advised us to realize our own abilities, to know our own situation and not become arrogant or cowardly. Only then would we receive the immeasurable merits of the sutra. Thus, He revealed many parables.



### **C) Entrusted Parables**

The great compassion of the Buddha was revealed in the parables of the Large White Ox Cart of the same size, the Treasures the Poor Son Inherited from his father, the Priceless Gem Fastened Inside the Garment of the poor old friend and the Gem Offered by the Eight Year Old Daughter of the Dragon-King to the Buddha.

Not only did He reveal those parables, He revealed many stories such as Sariputra, who was asked to offer his eyes by a Brahman monk, Maudgalyayana's mother, who was saved from suffering hunger and thirst in hell, the lonesome Rahula, who realized his father's great compassion, Devadatta's sinful conducts trying to supplant Sakyamuni Buddha, and the brilliant Purna and his unintelligent brother, Syagata, who were given the same Buddha-name. All these parables and stories were given to us in the *Mappo* Era to understand *the Lotus Sutra* easily.

Why was that? It was because the Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha was the Lord, the Master and the Father. Thus, Sakyamuni Buddha revealed the *Lotus Sutra* during the last stage of His fifty year missionary work.

### **D) The Eternity while He Was Alive, after His Extinction and to the Future Eternity**

I am sure that Sakyamuni Buddha expounded the *Lotus Sutra* to the congregation on Mt. Sacred Eagle, but He also aimed for us to hear it in the *Mappo* Era. Therefore, His original Great Bodhisattvas from underground had been sent back

from the sky to the underground to appear 2,000 years after His extinction. The Great Bodhisattvas were waiting for the time to come out in the *Mappo* Era.

The Originally Enlightened Buddha, as the Lord of the Universe, the Master and the Father of all living beings, would have thought to save all living beings of the *Mappo* Era; therefore, He transmitted the Dharma one after another to His original disciples in the Righteous Law Period, the Copy Law Period and the De-filed Law Period (the *Mappo* Era) after His extinction.

At first, the people's minds were desolate like a ruined plantation. He removed rocks and stones from the plantation one by one, cultivated it, gave fertilizer to the field, and made the soil rich; otherwise people's minds were frozen like ice. The Buddha revived their minds and their Buddha natures with warm-hearted easy teachings. Their icy cold minds were melted little by little and became gentle.

Such teachings are in this last chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. It is sometimes called the summarization of the *Lotus Sutra*. Chapter 28, The Encouragement of Universal-Sage Bodhisattva, is the grand finale.

## Chapter 2

### The Repetition of the *Lotus Sutra*

Let us brace ourselves and read it!

After Sakyamuni Buddha had finished in the preceding volume explaining the relationships of the souls of the members of King Wonderful-Adornment's family, Universal-Sage Bodhisattva came to Mount Sacred Eagle from a world many worlds to the east of this Saha-World. This Bodhisattva was famous for his virtues and supernatural powers which answered any wish. With



that supernatural power and virtue, he was accompanied by innumerable great Bodhisattvas.

The sutra says that Universal-Sage Bodhisattva heard the *Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma*, which Sakyamuni Buddha expounded in this Saha-World, from a remote world called Treasure-Power-Virtue-Superior-King Buddha-Land.

Listening to Sakyamuni Buddha talk about the law of the fatal relationships of the cause, condition and effect in the past and the present lives in the preceding chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, Universal-Sage Bodhisattva sensed that Sakyamuni Buddha was approaching his final moment of Pari-Nirvana. The Bodhisattva was eager to meet Sakyamuni Buddha to express his gratitude, so he rushed to come to the Saha-World.

### **A) Only Wish Is World Peace**

On the way to this Saha-World, Universal-Sage Bodhisattva passed through countless worlds that quaked, the gods rained down jeweled lotus-flowers and made many hundreds of thousands of billions of different kinds of music to express their ecstasy.

Universal-Sage Bodhisattva walked around the Buddha from left to right seven times and said to the Buddha:

“World-Honored One! I heard the *Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma*, which you expounded in this Saha-World, from the remote world in which lives Treasure-Power-Virtue-Superior-King Buddha. I came here to express my appreciation to You. I was so impressed with Your thoughtfulness in saving all living beings on this earth and wishing for world peace! I was so impressed at Your prayers for world peace that my eyes filled with tears.”

“Guessing You are just about to close this assembly, I came to see You with many hundreds of thousands of billions of great Bodhisattvas in order to hear and receive this sutra,” Universal-Sage Bodhisattva said as he greeted the Buddha.

## B) Universal-Sage Bodhisattva's Compassion

It is said that two attendants of Sakyamuni Buddha were Manjusri, the Bodhisattva of intelligence and wisdom, and Universal-Sage, the Bodhisattva of compassion. The people honored them together with Sakyamuni Buddha. The compassion of Universal-Sage Bodhisattva and World-Voice-Perceiver Bodhisattva is a little different: World-Voice-Perceiver Bodhisattva specialized in saving suffering people while Universal-Sage Bodhisattva emphasized spreading the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* and bringing about World Peace. Universal-Sage Bodhisattva helped the Eternal Buddha establish the Tranquil Eternal Buddha-Land on earth.

This compassionate Bodhisattva came to Mount Sacred Eagle in the Saha-World from a world many worlds to the east of our world. He wanted to review the *Lotus Sutra* that was the original wish of the Eternal Buddha's appearance on this world. The Bodhisattva's wish and the Buddha's wish were to save all living beings in this defiled world in the *Mappo* Era with the teachings of the One and Only Truth in the Universe, the *Lotus Sutra*.

Universal-Sage Bodhisattva asked:

“World-Honored One! Please tell me how the good men or women who live and practice the *Lotus Sutra* after your extinction, especially for the people who live in the defiled world in the *Mappo* Era, will be able to obtain this *Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma*?”

## C) Achieve the Four Things

Sakyamuni Buddha thought, “You read my mind!” and answered him:

“Universal-Sage Bodhisattva! You asked me a very good question. The good men or women will be able to obtain this *Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma* after my extinction. They have to 1. Secure the protection of the Buddha, 2. Plant the roots



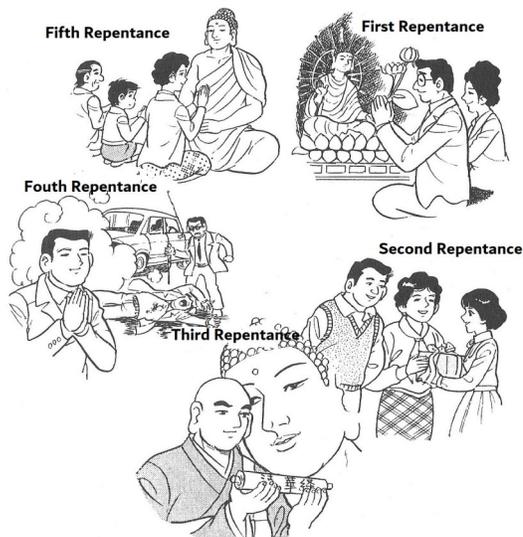
of virtue, 3. Reach the stage of steadiness in proceeding to enlightenment. This meant always checking your conduct and mingling among good people. After you did these three things for your own sake and with the merits you accumulated with these three practices, you could do these things for others now. Lastly, you must 4. Resolve to save all living beings. These four things are necessary for all people to obtain the spirit of the *Lotus Sutra* and to attain Buddha-hood.”

“After My extinction those who wish to live and practice the sutra should do these Four Things. Then you will be able to obtain the same enlightenment with the people existing in My period.”

## D) The Five Repentances or Check Points

Sakyamuni Buddha simply said to do the Four Things. It sounds very easy for Him. The conditions to accomplish the Four Things were revealed in the conclusion sutra of the *Lotus Sutra*.

The conclusion sutra of the *Lotus Sutra* is the *Sutra of Practice of the Dharma of Universal-Sage Bodhisattva*. It teaches that without the five repentances, the Buddhas will not protect you. Without these reflections, even a wise man will not be protected.



What are those five reflections?

- 1) Do I adore the Buddha and the Dharma and keep the Dharma enthusiastically?
- 2) Am I obedient to my parents? Do I respect my master? Do I keep the Buddha’s teachings?
- 3) Do I pray for world peace and happiness for all human beings like the spirit of Nichiren Dai’Shonin’s “Establish Righteousness and Bring Peace to the Nation”?
- 4) Have I ever contaminated this Saha-World by killing other people, victimizing others or countries, or destroying nature for any reason?

5) Do I deeply understand the eternal life of Sakyamuni Buddha?

These five reflections are fundamental conditions for fulfilling the Four Things.

### **E) Just like Adoring Your Lover**

How about you?

Are you fond of the Buddha and the *Lotus Sutra* in the same manner that you love your sweetheart? Or when you are sad, lonesome or dealing with some hardship, do you read the *Lotus Sutra* to get energy through reciting or chanting it?

Do you appreciate your parents?

Do you respect your teachers and benefactors?

Do you pray for happiness for other people and peace for the community, society, country and the world? Just as Kenji Miyazawa said, "Happiness will never be realized for us individually until the whole world becomes happy." Keep that same spirit in your mind!

Do not forget that the Buddha is always with us. It is not good to call on the Buddha only when you are in trouble or during hardships.

What do you think?

Although Sakyamuni Buddha said simply, "Do the following four things!" It is not that simple! You must check your conduct according to the five repentances.

However, if you are obedient and gentle according to the Dharma, it is not that hard; because all repentance is necessary for everyone to follow in our society.

Everyone! Please check your conduct according to the Five Repentances and fulfill the Four Things. Then, the Buddha will place His hand on your head and praise you!

## Chapter 3

### Great Vow

Even if Universal-Sage Bodhisattva had great virtues, his supernatural powers affected all people around the world. He made all people do good. He was greatly impressed with the *Lotus Sutra* and said to the Buddha as follows:

#### A) The Latter Five Hundred Years

“World-Honored One! If anyone keeps this sutra in the defiled world in the latter five hundred years after Your extinction (the *Mappo* Era), I will protect him so that he may be free from any troubles, that he may be peaceful, and that no one may take advantage of his weak points. *Mara*, his sons, his daughters, his subjects, his attendants, evil beings or *yaksas* who are like devils, *raksasas* who eat human flesh, *kumbhandas* who seek human blood, *piscakas* who hunt dead human bodies or other living beings who trouble men, shall not take advantage of his weak points and will be protected for sure.” Thus, this Bodhisattva vowed in front of the Buddha to protect the Teacher of the Dharma and any lay person who believed in the Dharma and practiced the teachings.



The beginning and the ending are important in any matter. Manjusri, the Bodhisattva of wisdom, appeared in the first chapter and also in a few other chapters of the *Lotus Sutra*. On the other hand, Universal-Sage Bodhisattva appeared only once in the last chapter of the sutra like the *yokozuna* champion of sumo wrestling. He expressed gratitude to Sakyamuni Buddha and made a great vow to protect the practitioners of the *Lotus Sutra* in the *Mappo* Era.

#### B) Do Not Forget the Limit of Protections

Therefore, everyone! Keep it in your mind! It does not matter if you are one of the Dharma Teachers or a lay-person, Universal-Sage Bodhisattva will protect you as long as you keep the Five Reflections. However, on the contrary, if you were very obedient

and intended to expound the Dharma with an adoring mind to the Buddha from the beginning, but later on, a *Mara* entered into your mind, and your attitude changed and you slandered the Buddha and the Dharma, disrespected your master or looked down upon your fellow practitioners, Universal-Sage Bodhisattva and Kishimo-jin would not protect you.

Keep deep in your mind that you are not alive only by yourself. You are always dependent on others. Don't forget that you are living as a Buddha's child in this Saha-World, the blue beautiful planet floating in the eternal universe.

Think by yourself as a Buddha's child on how to live to fulfill serving the Eternal Buddha, the Lord, the Master and the Parent.



### C) Mounting on a Kingly White Elephant with Six Tusks

Universal-Sage Bodhisattva continued to say:

“World-Honored One! If a Dharma-Teacher who has a pure mind adoring the Buddha and the Dharma and keeps, reads, and recites this sutra, I will mount a kingly white elephant with six tusks, go to him together with great Bodhisattvas, show myself to him, make offerings to him, protect him, comfort him and make him rejoice.”

“Why is that? It is because making offerings to the *Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma* and Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha is the same as making offerings to You in person. In the *Mappo* Era if anyone sits, reads, recites and thinks over the *Lotus Sutra* while sitting solemnly and praying, I also will mount a kingly white elephant and appear in front of them. If they forget a phrase or a gatha of the sutra, I will remind them of it and read and recite it with them so that they may be able to understand it. For anyone who keeps, reads and recites the sutra, they will be able to see me with such joy that they will increase their efforts. Because they see me, they will be able to obtain the *samadhys* of the *Lotus Sutra* and a set of dharanis.”

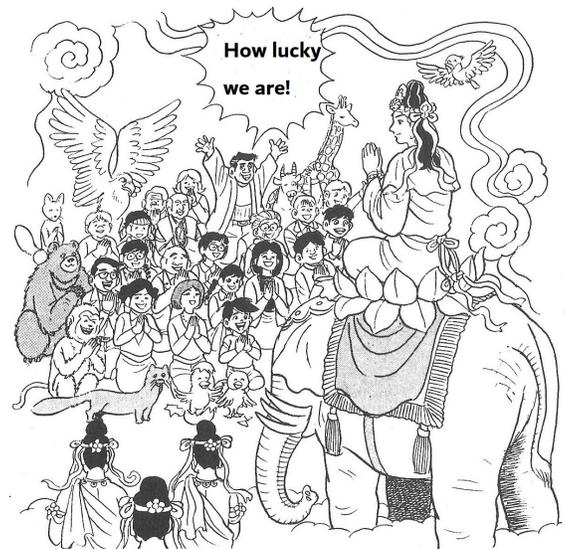
I wonder what the Buddha was thinking and feeling while He listened to Universal-Sage Bodhisattva.

## D) My Lovely Disciples' Futures

Although Sakyamuni Buddha was glad to hear Universal-Sage Bodhisattva's brave vow to protect the practitioners of the *Lotus Sutra* in the *Mappo* Era even at the cost of his life, He might still have been worried about His lovely disciples in the future.

Universal-Sage Bodhisattva continued to say:

"World-Honored One! Anyone who sees me mount an elephant with six tusks will be able to defeat countless numbers of illusions and obtain a set of dharanis. When they obtain the dharanis, they will always live righteously. When they expound the Dharma, the listeners will clear their dark minds and be delighted to hear the Dharma. They will receive the merits of the *Lotus Sutra* and be able to obtain a supernatural power called the Dharma-Sound-Expedient Dharanis.



## E) On the Last Day of the Third Week

"World-Honored One! In the latter five hundred years after Your extinction (*Mappo* Era), suppose the male or female monks, lay men, and lay women who seek, keep, read, recite and copy this sutra with obedient minds, study, practice, and concentrate their minds strenuously for three weeks. When they complete the study and practice for twenty-one days, on the last day I will mount a white elephant with six tusks and appear before them together with innumerable Bodhisattvas surrounding me. I will expound the Dharma for them, show the Way, teach them, benefit them, and cause them to rejoice."

"I will also give them dharani-spells, and they will not be killed by nonhuman be-

ings or captivated by a woman's beauty and smell. They will not ruin themselves. I myself will always protect them."

## F) Illusion Will Produce Enlightenment.

"Oh, the Buddha! Allow me to utter these dharani-spells! It is my sincere prayer and vow from the bottom of my heart. Please listen to the dharanis!"

I hope you will be able to memorize them. I am sure that your courage will spring up and your mind will sit still. Why is it so? It is because "Illusion produces enlightenment."

Thereupon he uttered spells before the Buddha:

"Atandai (1), tandahatai (2), tandahatei (3), tandakusharei (4), tandashudarei (5), shudarei (6), shudarahachi (7), botsudahasennei (8), sarubadarani-abatani (9), sarubabasha-abatani (10), shuabatni (11), sogyahabishani (12), sogyane-kyadani (13), asogi (14), sogyahagyadai (15), teirei-ada-sogyatorya-aratei-haratei(16), sarubasogya-sammaji-kyarandai (17), sarubadaruma-shuharisettei (18), sarubasatta-rodakyosharya-atogyadai (19), shin-abikiridaitei (20)."

Thus, Universal-Sage Bodhisattva recited.

Sakyamuni Buddha watched him with trust and was glad to hear the spells.



## Chapter 4

### The Buddha-Eyes Were Granted to the Bodhisattva Priests

Universal-Sage Bodhisattva with his firm determination said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! I deeply appreciate that you have listened to my special Dharani spells. I will again make a vow here”:

#### A) By the Supernatural Power of Universal-Sage Bodhisattva

“World-Honored One know this! It is by my supernatural powers, that a Bodhisattva can hear these dharanis in the latter five hundred years after Your extinction. If there is a Bodhisattva who feels motivated in missionary work to expound the *Lotus Sutra* around the world and goes out of his country, he is the one whom I have chosen. I have given him my supernatural powers and the Dharanis. Therefore, he should be considered to have already planted deeply roots of good under innumerable Buddhas in his previous existences. So, he will be able to propagate the *Lotus Sutra* to the people in the defiled world and make them rejoice and aspire to learn and practice more. He is the Bodhisattva who practices the Way of Universal-Sage Bodhisattva and who contributes to society.”

“All Buddhas see what he is doing because he has been bestowed with Buddha wisdom in his mind. He will be caressed on his head by the hands of many Tathagatas.”

Universal-Sage Bodhisattva read great compassionate Sakyamuni Buddha’s mind for expounding the *Lotus Sutra* in the *Mappo* Era. Therefore, the Bodhisattva has chosen with his own wish anyone who made up his mind to endure any hardship and enemy for the sake of the Dharma. The chosen person is very lucky because he is the one who practices the Way of Universal-Sage Bodhisattva. Therefore, the expounder of the *Lotus Sutra* in the *Mappo* Era must believe that the Buddhas always caress his head and keeps his firm determination to take up the mission to lead all people to happiness and peace.



## B) All Gods around the World Made their Vows to Protect

Wishing to transmit the true teaching of Sakyamuni Buddha and establish world peace for all people around the world after the Buddha's extinction, all Buddhas, their disciples, Bodhisattvas and also all gods around the world gathered at the assembly on Mount Sacred Eagle and vowed to protect the expounders of the *Lotus Sutra*. Among them were Tensho Daiji or the Sun God and Great Bodhisattva Hachiman of Japan.

Therefore, the *Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma* was transmitted to the four great masters in India, China and Japan, then to the real expounder of the sutra, Nichiren Dai'Shonin in the *Mappo* Era.

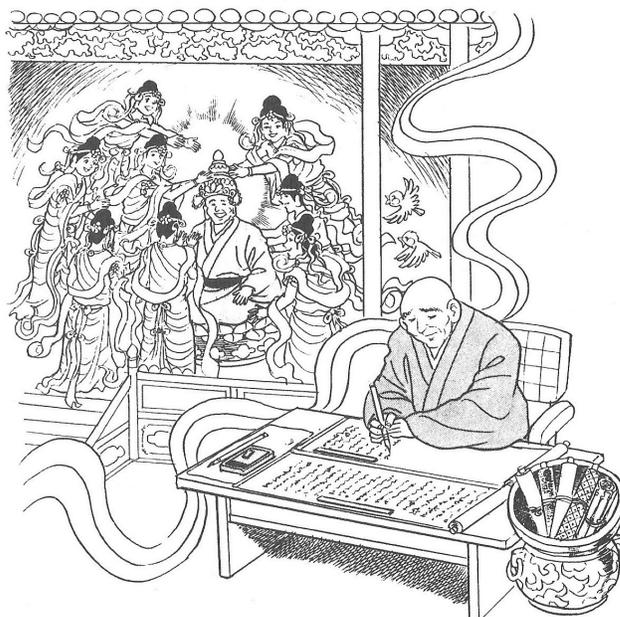
The four great masters were Sakyamuni Buddha in India, Chih-i of China, Saicho and Nichiren of Japan. The sutra was directly transmitted to them by Sakyamuni Buddha. Not only were these masters involved, but also King Asoka and Nagarjuna of India, Kumarajiva of China and Prince Shotoku of Japan as well as countless numbers of people who were involved in the transmission of the true Dharma for over two thousand years. They all prayed for the happiness of all human beings and world peace.

Therefore, everyone of you! You have met this *Lotus Sutra*. Do not only pray for the sake of just yourself but you must pray for all people and world peace!

## C) Accumulated Merits without Knowing

Universal-Sage Bodhisattva's vow still continued. His devotion to and adoration of the Buddha were that firm. So he said:

"World-Honored One, do not worry! After Your extinction, anyone who has a good relationship with the *Lotus Sutra*, who copies the sutra without knowing



the meaning of it, will be considered to have expounded the sutra. As the result of it, they plant the roots of virtue, that is, one of the Four Things after the Buddha's extinction. They will be given helping hands by one thousand heavenly beings immediately after their present life. They will be reborn in the Tusita Heaven. There they will go to Maitreya Bodhisattva who is adorned with thirty-two marks, be surrounded by great Bodhisattvas, and be attended on by hundreds of thousands of billions of goddesses. They will be given the benefit of these merits. Therefore, anyone who has wisdom should copy this sutra with all their heart and cause others to copy it."

Only by copying the sutra, will anyone obtain these wonderful merits! Universal-Sage Bodhisattva made such a promise.

Everyone! In your spare time why don't you copy or write, "Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo 南無妙法蓮華經" ten thousand times wholeheartedly. When you repeat it so many times and pray for yourself and others, you will see things differently, and troubles will disappear without your knowing.

Then the Bodhisattva said to the Buddha:

#### **D) The Teacher of the Dharma Practices the Five Kinds of Repentances.**

"World-Honored One! After Your extinction, anyone who happens to meet this *Lotus Sutra* and gets excited with the great compassion of the Buddha, keeps it as if his life depended on the sutra like toward his loved one, reads it every day, recites it as if sacrificing his life, and understands it correctly, he will be given helping hands by one thousand Buddhas immediately after his present life. He will be fearlessly led to a better place in the Tusita Heaven. There he will go to Maitreya Bodhisattva, and he will be surrounded by great Bodhisattvas, and be attended on by hundreds of thousands of billions of goddesses."

"Oh, thou, the Buddha! Even if he does these five repentances of keeping, reading, reciting from memory, understanding, and copying just for himself, he will receive the benefit of these wonderful merits. If anyone does these five repentances for others as well, the Buddha's great compassion, his mind and conducts are the same as the Buddha. So, his benefits will be beyond expression. He will be a very lucky person

praised by the Buddha, patted on his head by the Buddha and wrapped with the Buddha's robes."

## E) In the Small Country of the Far East

Universal-Sage Bodhisattva still continued to say:

"After Your pari-nirvana, I will continue to dispatch the Teachers of the Dharma who can perform the supernatural powers of Universal-Sage and the Way one after another until the great Bodhisattvas from underground appear in the small country of the far east in the latter five hundred years after Buddha's extinction. I will promise that the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* will continue to be transmitted generation to generation without any interruption!"

These were great vows made by Universal-Sage Bodhisattva.

As he promised, at the beginning of the *Mappo* Era, the *Lotus Sutra* was carried on to Nichiren Dai'Shonin. He expounded the spirit of the *Lotus Sutra*, the seven characters of "Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo!"

It will be the Original Buddha's disciple's best scene from now on!



## Chapter 5

### Unfathomably Deep Inside Mind

I wonder how Sakyamuni Buddha felt while Universal-Sage Bodhisattva was making these vows and promises. He might be recalling His physical existence as Prince Siddhartha Gautama who lost his mother seven days after his birth. At that time, He had never thought about the existence of the Original Eternal Buddha. He grew up to adulthood, married and had a son. But the prince renounced the luxurious life of the kingdom and became a monk.

After he had attained Enlightenment, it is said that the Buddha expounded eighty-four thousand teachings. At His final stage on Mount Sacred Eagle, the assembly of the *Lotus Sutra* had begun. At the end of the first assembly on the mountain, the Stupa of Many-Treasures Buddha appeared from under ground and stayed in the sky. He offered proof that the *Lotus Sutra* was true.

The second stage of the *Lotus Sutra* began in the sky. Sakyamuni Buddha and the congregation at the assembly were raised up to the sky. This time, with the supernatural powers of Sakyamuni Buddha, countless numbers of Replica Buddhas from the ten directions of the universe assembled around the stupa. The assembly in the sky became the One Buddha-Land throughout the Universe. At the end of the assembly in the sky, all replica Buddhas and their attendant Bodhisattvas returned to their original Buddha Worlds.

The third assembly of the *Lotus Sutra* started on Mount Sacred Eagle again. Before concluding the assembly, Universal-Sage Bodhisattva appeared before Sakyamuni Buddha. This Bodhisattva came from a world many worlds to the east of this earth planet. He made a great vow, "I will protect this *Lotus Sutra* with my supernatural powers so that it may be propagated, not be destroyed in the world where human beings live and be transmitted to the Original Great Bodhisattva from underground who would appear in the latter five hundred years after the Buddha's extinction (*Mappo* Era)."

Listening to this vow and promise of Universal-Sage Bodhisattva, I think Sakyamuni Buddha was delighted. He must have felt relieved about the expounding of the Dharma in the *Mappo* Era.

## A) Transmission through Many Cycles of Birth and Death

Sakyamuni Buddha's disciples and many Bodhisattvas transmitted the Dharma through many peoples' cycles of birth and death during the 2,500 years after Buddha's extinction. They changed their forms to various human beings such as a great king, a prince, a great Bodhisattva (who was well-versed in the Dharma, kept strict precepts and wrote many commentaries), a heavenly being, a scholar, a well-known priest, and many other people.



In this way, the *Lotus Sutra* was transmitted to the Great Bodhisattva from underground in Japan where the deepest relationship with the sutra in the *Mappo* Era was held as Sakyamuni Buddha predicted. The sutra is the One and Only sutra and the most compassionate teaching just as the compassionate rain that falls equally on all plants in the mountains, valleys and fields.

## B) The Merits of the Lotus Sutra Are like a Mother's Breast Milk

After Universal-Sage Bodhisattva transmitted the *Lotus Sutra* to the Great Bodhisattva from underground as he had promised Sakyamuni Buddha, he must have felt relieved that the responsibility was now off his shoulders.

Nichiren Dai'Shonin simplified the teachings of the sutra to the seven characters and gave this wonderful medicine to all people just as a mother gives her milk to her baby. As one of the original disciples, he had a firm determination to prove the teachings of the sutra and he willingly accepted many persecutions throughout his sixty year life.

I wonder what Nichiren Dai'Shonin is discussing now in the spiritual realm with the Original Eternal Buddha who has the virtue of being the Lord, the Master and the Parent. They may be worried that the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* may not have reached all people around the world yet and that the beautiful blue earth is

being contaminated with acid rain and CFC gases and that the people are killing each other.

### **C) Why not do more?**

Why is this wonderful medicine not expounded more?

Why can't people live together in harmony?

Why has World Peace not been established yet?

Everyone! Can you think hard about the reasons why?

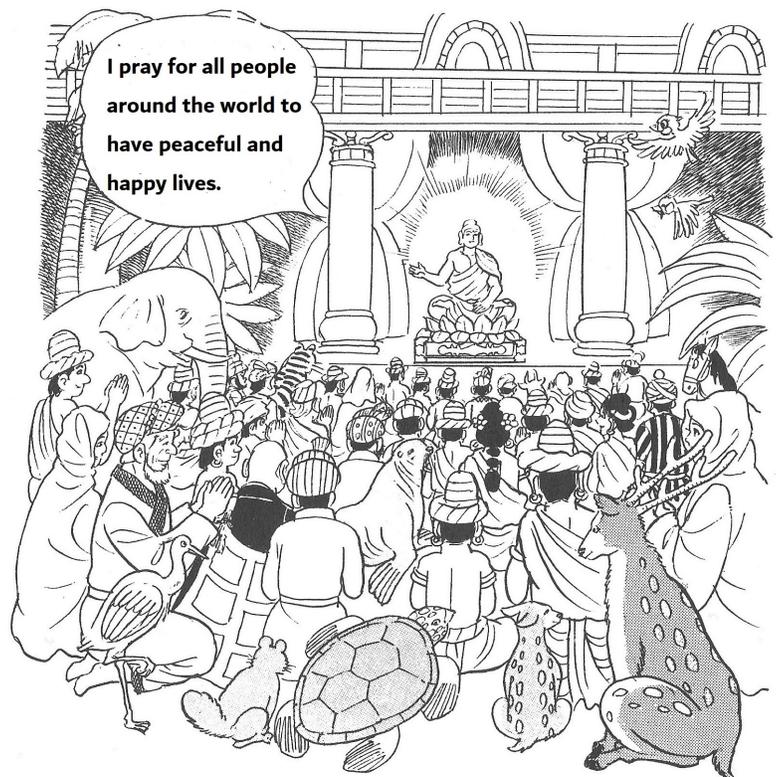
If you have a good idea, please start from there.

## **Chapter 6**

### **The Final Words on Mount Sacred Eagle**

Well! We are approaching the final stage of the *Lotus Sutra* on Mount Sacred Eagle. It is the final message from the Buddha! Please listen attentively! Do not forget what he is going to say!

It is the final words of the eight-year-preaching. It is the teaching that came out of Sakyamuni Buddha's deepest thoughts and inner feelings of what He wanted to leave us with before His death.



## A) Full of Heart-felt Feeling and Moved to Tears

Don't you feel a heavy heart or are moved to tears when you think about the Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha's feelings as He closed the final stage of the *Lotus Sutra*?

After He concluded the preaching of the *Lotus Sutra* on Mount Sacred Eagle, he would go down the hill and make the final trip to the teaching of The Great Nirvana Sutra. On the way, He stopped at a monastery in the country called Vaisali and stayed there for a while. He expounded *The Sutra of the Practice Dharma of Universal-Sage Bodhisattva*. At the beginning of the sutra He declared, "I shall enter Pari-Nirvana three months later." So, the Buddha knew when He would pass away.

Until the last moment of death, the Buddha admonished all people around the world to have peaceful and happy lives. When we think about that we feel sorry that we are indulging ourselves and would like to apologize to Him.

He looked around at all the people gathered in the assembly and then praised Universal-Sage Bodhisattva.

## B) Observe Buddha's Body and Listen to the Golden Words

"Excellent, excellent, Universal-Sage! You have perceived My inner thoughts well and made a great vow to protect this sutra. You have already accumulated inconceivable merits and great compassion. You have made many people obtain peace and benefits. I am grateful for your work. You have aspired for enlightenment and vowed to protect this sutra by your supernatural powers since the remotest past and have been protecting this sutra and



supported Me to expound the *Lotus Sutra*. By My supernatural powers, I will protect anyone who keeps the name of Universal-Sage!”

“Universal-Sage! Anyone who keeps, reads and recites this *Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma*, memorizes it correctly, studies it, practices it, and copies it, should be considered to see Me, and hear this sutra from My mouth directly.”

### **C) ‘Want Little and Know Contentment’**

“Universal-Sage! People who practice the sutra as it is taught, take the remedy of the sutra and make others take the remedy of the wonderful medicine, should be considered to be praised by Me with the word ‘Excellent!’ They should be considered to be caressed by Me on their head. They should be covered with My robe. They will not be attached to worldly pleasures. They will not like to read heretical scriptures or any other writings of heretics. They will not be intimate with heretics, slaughterers, boar-breeders, sheep-breeders, fowl-breeders, dog breeders, hunters, or other evil people. They will be upright. They will have correct memory and powers of merits and virtues. They will not be troubled by the three poisons. They will not be troubled by jealousy, arrogance from selfishness, arrogance from self-assumed attainment of enlightenment, or arrogance from self-assumed acquisition of virtues. They will ‘want little and know contentment’, and practice just as you do.”

### **D) No Room for the *Mara* to Come In**

“If anyone wants little, is satisfied with what they have, repeats the Five Repentances, and prays for the accomplishment of the Four Things, their prayers will be surely answered. If they are born in the *Mappo* Era as a rebirth of the practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra*, they will be able to defeat the *Mara* who tries to seduce them with false love, money and pleasure, so that they will be able to become the Teacher of the Dharma in the *Mappo* Era.”

“Universal-Sage! Anyone who keeps, reads and recites this sutra in the latter five hundred years after my extinction, will not be attached to clothing, bedding, food

or drink, or any other thing. What they wish will not remain unfulfilled. They will be able to obtain the rewards of their merits in their present life. Those who abuse them will not be able to cross the river of this world to the other world.”

Thus, Sakyamuni Buddha explained the virtues and benefits of the practitioners of the sutra and encouraged the congregation on Mount Sacred Eagle. The Buddha concluded the assembly with the Law of Cause, Condition and Effect.

He said that there were many evils and wrong conducts. The worst of them was to abuse, to be jealous of and to mistreat the practitioners of the *Lotus Sutra* because the sutra is the teaching of world peace and happiness for all living beings.

### **E) The Teacher of the Dharma in the *Mappo* Era Should be Considered as the Buddha.**

“Universal-Sage! If there is anyone who has a distorted mind and abuses the Teacher of the Dharma justly or unjustly, saying, ‘You are perverted. You are doing this for nothing,’ will receive worse retribution. Such a person will be disliked by many people, have no friends, be lonely, be short-tempered and easy to fight with. His irritated mind will bring sickness, and eventually make it hard to walk or sleep.”

“Therefore, Universal-Sage! When you see the keeper of this sutra in the distance, you should rise from your seat, go to them, receive them, and respect them just as you respect me.”

Thus, after eight years Sakyamuni Buddha concluded His message on Mount Sacred Eagle.

This is it!

Finally finished!

When the Buddha expounded this chapter of the Encouragement of Universal-Sage Bodhisattva, as many Bodhisattvas as particles of sand in the River Ganges obtained the dharanis by which they could memorize hundreds of thousands of billions of repetitions of teachings. Thus, they received the supernatural powers to

teach others. And as many Bodhisattvas as the particles of dust of one thousand worlds understood how to practice the Way of Universal-Sage Bodhisattva, so that they made their vows.

## **F) Assembly of the *Lotus Sutra* Concluded**

When the Buddha expounded this sutra, the great congregation including the Bodhisattvas headed by Universal-Sage, Sakyamuni Buddha's disciples headed by Sariputra and the other living beings such as gods, dragons, men and nonhuman beings, had great joy, kept the words of the Buddha, bowed to the Buddha, and retired.

Here, we are almost at the end, in Volume 29 out of 30 volumes of "Minwa-Fu Hokekyo Dowa." The last volume will be the story of Nichiren Dai'Shonin whom I have talked about many times in the past. He had a firm determination to expound the *Lotus Sutra* as the original disciple of the Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha.

I hope you will practice the Five Repentances and accomplish the Four Things, so that you will be able to attain the enlightenment of the *Lotus Sutra*.

See the Buddha, listen to the Buddha's beautiful voice like the sound of the legendary bird, *karyo-bin-ga*.

You will be covered with the robe of the Tathagata.

You will be caressed by the Buddha on the head.

To receive these merits, you should want little and know contentment.

Practice the Five Repentances and do the Four Things:

1. Secure the protection of the Buddha,
2. Plant the roots of virtue,
3. Reach the stage of steadiness in proceeding to enlightenment, and
4. Resolve to save all living beings.

