

## 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 in 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 pleasure 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.

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

*Bodhisatta* is one who 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.’<sup>2</sup>

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.

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<sup>2</sup> 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 *bhikhu* 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 practioners and He expounded a teaching to them. They wer 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 *kalpa* 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-samyak-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 property 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.