

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF BODHISATTA

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

Bodhisatta in the Sutta Nipata

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bodhisattva Maitreya:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bodhisatta Bhaishajyaraja (Medicine King):

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Bodhisattvas of the Earth

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

Never Disparaging (*Sadaparibhuta*)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Comparison and Comment

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

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

First comparison is similar points.

Similar point (1):—

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

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

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

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

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

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

Regarding his physical appearance, he was described in later times as being endowed with 'thirty-two distinguishing features and eighty physical characteristics.' The thirty-two distinguishing features include very long fingers, arms that reach to the knees, and other abnormal characteristics that, if he actually possessed them, would have made him some kind of monster. However, we don't need take such

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bodhisattva *Maitreya* asks Sakyamuni Buddha:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Similar point (2):—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Similar point (3):—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The second comparison is different point.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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