

Minwa Fu Hokekyo Dowo

(Volume 4 of the 30 Volumes)

by Rev. Kōge Matsumoto

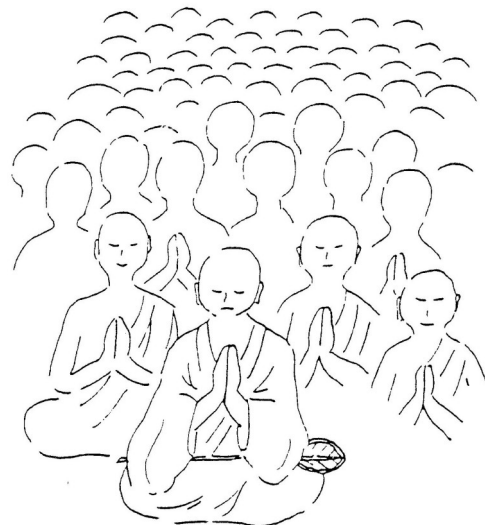
Translated by Rev. Shokai Kanai

Who Owns the Great White Ox Carts? (Chapter 3 A Parable of the Lotus Sutra)

Chapter 1

Sariputra who Understood the Lotus Sutra

In the previous volumes, Buddha Sakyamuni said that over the last 40 or so odd years before revealing the *Lotus Sutra*, he had not yet disclosed the most important teaching. Do you remember that? Please recall what he talked about. He said, “Everyone is able to become a Buddha,” didn’t he? Sariputra, “The Number One Wisdom Disciple,” had at first determined that he could not become a Buddha because according to the teachings before the *Lotus Sutra*, those in the “Two Vehicles” are not able to become Buddhas, and he was the leader of that group.



“Nevertheless we can be Buddhas. But why does Buddha Sakyamuni continually provide assurance of Buddhahood to the Bodhisattvas who work for others by giving them names of future Buddhas after proof of completion of their practices, but not to those of us who practice to attain Buddhahood for our own sake?” Sariputra was so sad and lonesome; therefore, he practiced alone, meditating harder on a deep mountain and walked around in the forests and woods to attain Buddhahood.

Surprisingly enough, Sakyamuni Buddha told me, “Sariputra! Have confidence! You will be a Buddha for sure if you practice and work a little harder for others. Not only you, but also all the people in the Two Vehicles, as well as others will be Buddhas if they obediently practice and keep the teachings of the Buddha!” Thus, Sariputra was very glad to hear this.



Chapter 2

Sariputra's Words of Appreciation

Sariputra felt like dancing with joy and stood up, put his palms together, stared at the Buddha's face and said, "Sakyamuni Buddha! Thank you very much! Hearing this truthful and beautiful voice of yours, I feel as if my mind were cleansed now. Up until now, I thought I was not able to become a Buddha and only Bodhisattvas could! I did not even pray to become a Buddha. I gave up and I felt lonesome and sad. I was preoccupied with forcing myself to practice in the mountains, forests and woods. Listening to your precious words just now, I realized that I misunderstood."



Chapter 3

I Doubted My Ears, “A Devil Takes Over the Buddha?”

When I heard, “Everyone is able to become a Buddha,” I doubted my ears and Buddha’s words. I awfully thought, “I cannot become a Buddha! A devil may be trying to deceive me and prevent my wish to become a Buddha and took over the Buddha, and a devil is trying to make me conceited and make me go to hell.” But I soon realized that it was my mistake, because the Buddha told us, “All Buddhas in the past, present and future teach that the sole reason for the Buddhas’ appearance in this world is to reveal the One Truth, the *Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma* and have all living beings attain Buddhahood.”

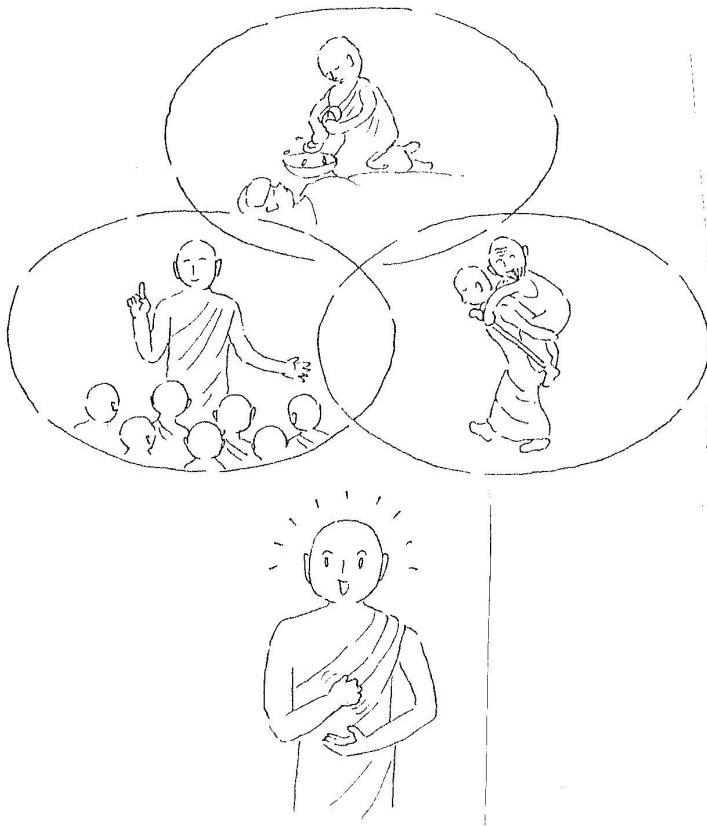
I had practiced hard to obtain enlightenment just for myself and never thought about helping others. I was full of energy to gain wisdom, and to understand everything just for my own sake.



Chapter 4

Much More Practice to Do

I once thought that I had almost accomplished my practice in the mountains and woods by myself. I also realized that I reached a peak in my practice, and I could not accomplish more than that. However, I appreciated the Buddha thinking about me and who taught me, “There are more practices for me to do.” He also said, “The practice is not for me but also for others. Do something for other people.”



He taught us, “The most important practice is to do something for others, and that is the way to become a Buddha.” I will keep that in my mind and dedicate myself to working hard for other people. The Buddha was almost tearful and expressed appreciation of Sariputra’s excitement over his words.

Chapter 5

Sariputra Receives a Buddhist Name

Sakyamuni was very delighted with Sariputra's comment and said, "You understood my profound teaching very well! If you continue to practice without forgetting your understanding, you will become a Buddha called "Flower-Light, the Tathagata, and your world will be called Free-From-Taint where many Bodhisattvas live. The people there are obedient and have a strong purpose in life. Not only that, but they are also very happy and have many virtues. The Bodhisattvas have great supernatural powers. The land is pure without dust and dirt and full of beautiful flowers and fruits."



Thus, the Buddha gave the name of the Buddha to Sariputra who was the leader of the people in the "Two Vehicles". Giving a Buddha name to those in the "Two Vehicles" had never happened before. The Buddha names had previously been given only to Bodhisattvas before, but it was given to Sariputra as proof of him becoming a Buddha. All the countless living beings gathered at Mt. Sacred Eagle were very inspired and no words could describe their feelings.

Chapter 6

Gods in Heavenly Realm Also Delighted

Watching and admiring what was going on at the mountain, Sakra-Devanam-Indra and The Brahman Heavenly-King took off their garments and offered them to the Buddha. The heavenly garments and a lot of lotus flower petals whirled in the sky. The gods simultaneously made many thousands of kinds of music in the sky. Along with the rhythm of the music, the flower petals fluttered in a circle for a while in the sky. Then words from the heavenly beings like Sakra-Devanam-Indra were heard out of nowhere.



Chapter 7

All Heavenly Beings Are Guardians for Buddhism

The words said were, “Some forty years ago at Deer Park, Sakyamuni Buddha revealed the Four Noble Truths and the Eight Fold Path at first. Then he began to reveal many other teachings later.”

“Now the Buddha is trying to reveal the Only One Teaching in the world at Mt. Sacred Eagle, the teaching of the *Lotus Sutra* and for all living beings to try to attain Buddha-hood. We are very grateful! We vow to protect and guard the *Lotus Sutra* that the Buddha is revealing with all of our wisdom and power,” said all the heavenly beings vigorously.

Before the Buddha appeared, Sakra-Devanam-Indra and The Brahman Heavenly-King were the most honorable deities in India. They now vow to protect the teaching of the *Lotus Sutra* after listening to the spoken words of Sakyamuni Buddha. The Buddha must be delighted to hear their words!



Chapter 8

Sariputra's Request

At that time Sariputra said to Sakyamuni, “With the virtue of your words my doubts are gone and my mind cleared; I do not know how to explain my gratitude. Thank you very much! However, these 1200 leaders of your disciples are excited about what you have said but do not seem to understand your profound teaching quite yet, so I beg you to tell them a parable, or something for them to understand the true teachings much more easily.”

Chapter 9

Sakyamuni Buddha's Response

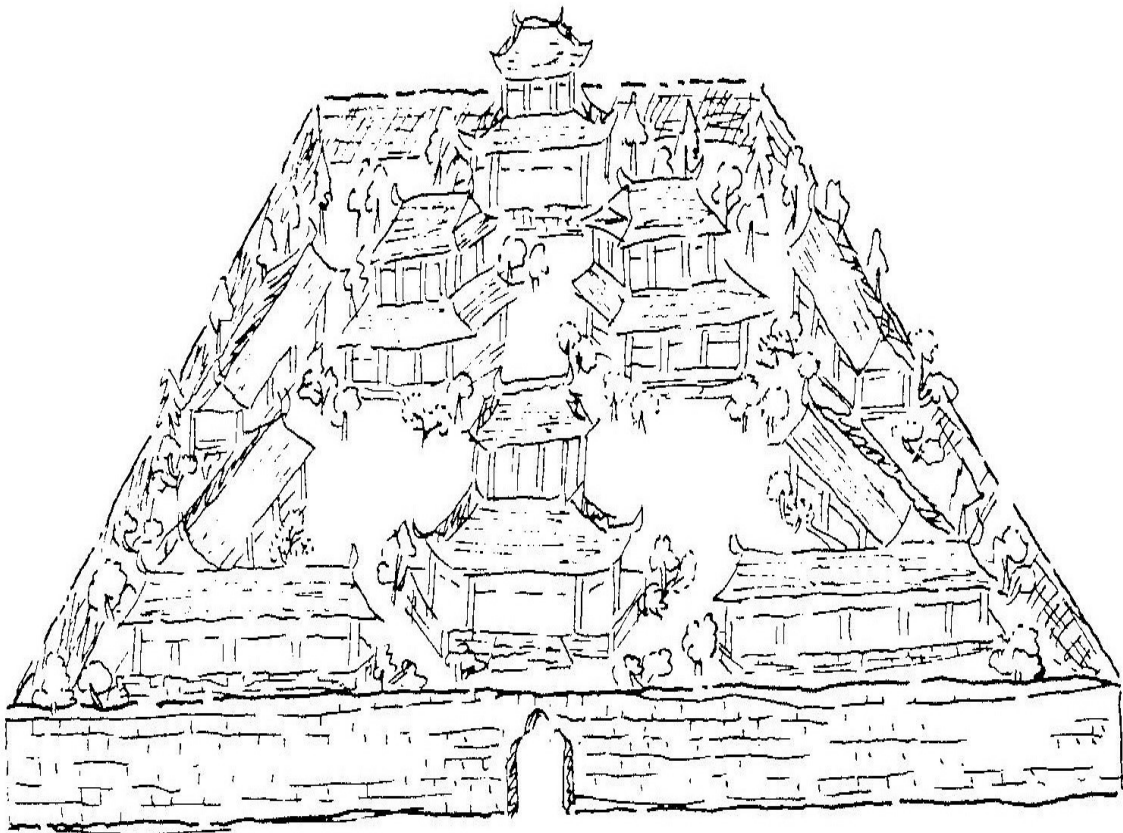
So Sakyamuni revealed a parable called “The Three Carts and a Burning House.” It is a story about a wealthy father who saved his children from a burning house. The story is very strange and terrible, but it was told by the Buddha for sure, so you must listen well. I shall tell you the story now.

Chapter 10

A Parable,

The Three Carts and A Burning House

“There once was a huge estate. The owner of the house was the wealthiest man in the world. He owned a lot of treasures such as gold, silver and other jewels that could not all be used. The manor house was like an old castle, built with many blocks. They were surrounded by tall walls. Even though it was like a huge castle, there was only one gate that people could go in and out of.

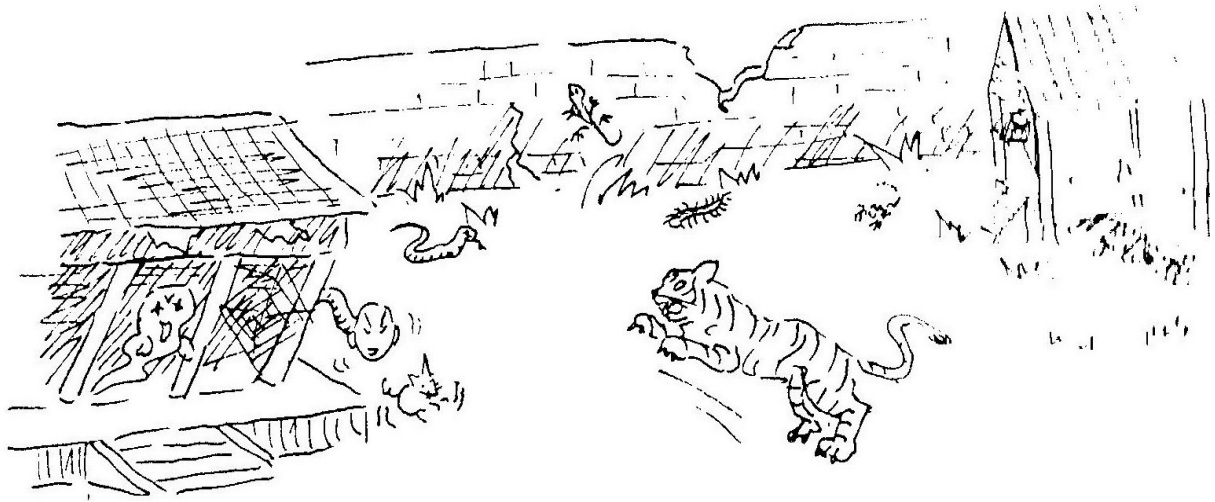


Chapter 11

A Strange, Huge House

Many people lived in the estate. There were probably 500 people who lived in the manor. They lived in a variety of ways; some people killed animals without hesitation, some lived in the hell stage, while some others lived being captivated by fame, status, money or food. Some people also were utterly obsessed with joyful games and play that provided only temporary happiness. Still some people kept fighting with others over tiny matters. Others lived as ordinary human beings who know and do both good and bad. They all lived together in the estate.

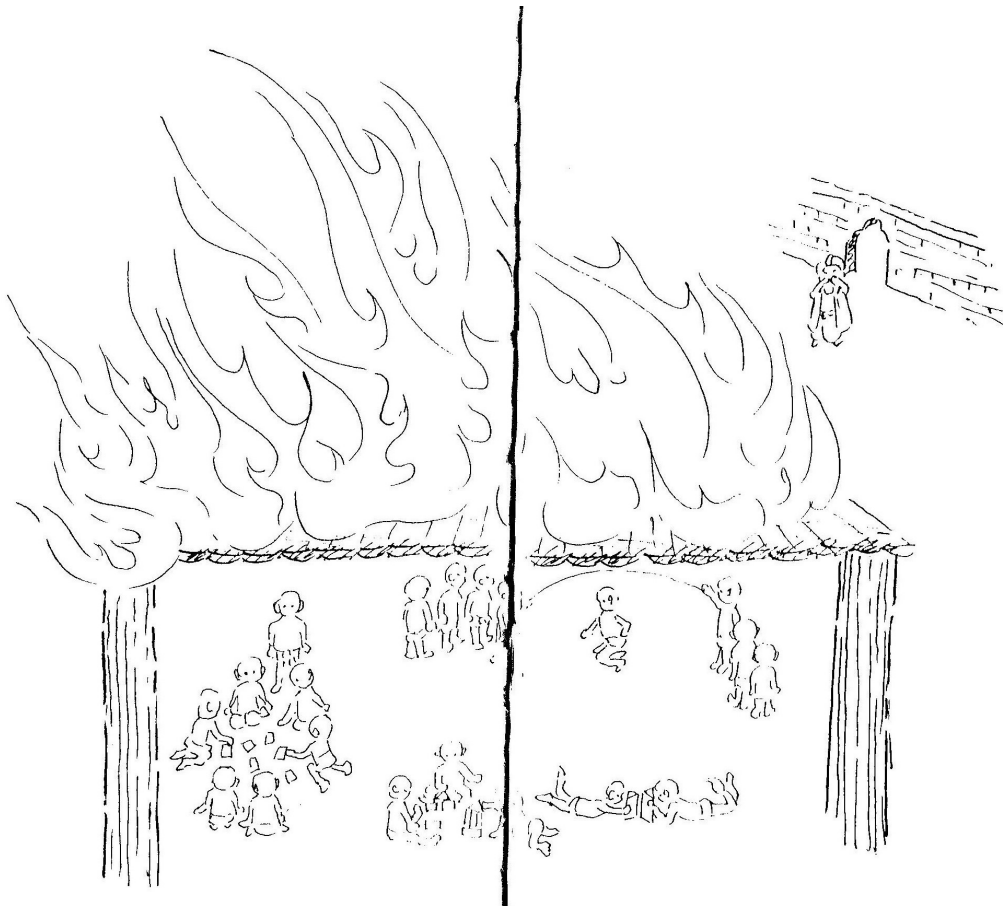
Besides that, the buildings were quite old and just about to collapse, with the pillars and ridges ready to fall apart. There were also all kinds of awful animals such as kites, owls, crested eagles, eagles, crows, magpies, doves, pigeons, lizards, snakes, vipers, scorpions, millipedes, wall lizards, centipedes, weasels, badgers, mice, rats, and poisonous vermin. They were all very creepy. The rest rooms were full of stool, stinky and crawling with maggots. Wolves and foxes ate the meats of the dead animals and left the bones and remains all over the place. Hungry beasts barked at each other loudly. The strong were proudly killing the weak. It is hard to describe the state of the strange huge house.



Chapter 12

Thirty Children

Nobody except the owner could understand the current situation of the estate. Only he could see the true nature of the strange estate, but others who were greedy saw the strange condition of the estate as natural with nothing wrong with it. The thirty children of the wealthy man lived in the estate together with the other 500 people. The children were all obedient but were hooked on joyful games and played innocently.



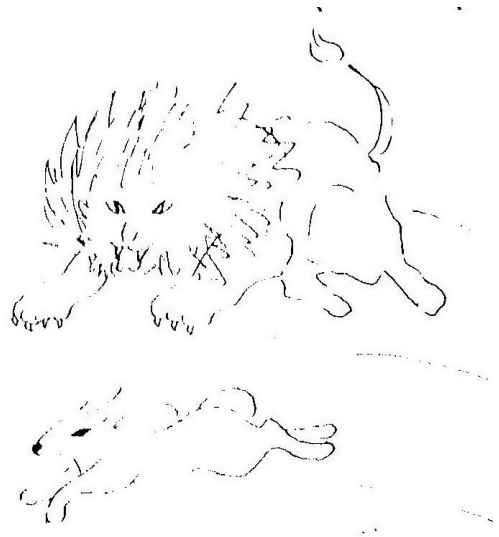
Chapter 13

Huge Estate under Fire

However, at that time a fire started from the four corners of the estate and the houses. Because they were old, close to collapse and easy to burn, the fire quickly spread all over the estate. Red flames and huge, black smoke surrounded the houses.

The fire started soon after the rich man left his home for his business. The owner of the estate returned home right away. He was so surprised and almost stumbled seeing the huge house of the richest man in the world burning. The pillars and beams were big and massive. However, the pillars, beams and rafters were all wrapped by the fire, burning with a roaring sound and eventually fell down.

The beasts, poisonous insects and animals all screamed as if they became crazy. Some of them burned to death because they failed to get out in time. Some of the beasts, even though they were surrounded by fire, were busy hungrily eating those dead animals, while others were trying to attack the weaker animals who were afraid of the fire or too tired to run away. It was awful and fierce.



Chapter 14

The Wealthy Man Saved His Children from the Fire

The rich man thought about his children in the burning house and dashed inside. He was a strong man, so he tried to forcibly carry the children under his arms out of the burning house. But there was no time to do so because of the strong force of the fire approaching the place where his children were playing. In addition, beasts were nearby trying to catch them. He screamed and shouted as loud as possible, “Fire! Fire! The house is burning! Hurry and get out, or you will burn to death! In addition, the horrible beasts are hiding all around you and trying to catch you! Get out right away!” He screamed desperately.

But the children did not know what to be scared of and what to avoid. They knew that their father was supposed to be out of the house for business, but he was here with them. So the children felt secure and did not listen to their father. The thirty children also felt safe together with their father and were captivated with playing joyfully.

Chapter 15

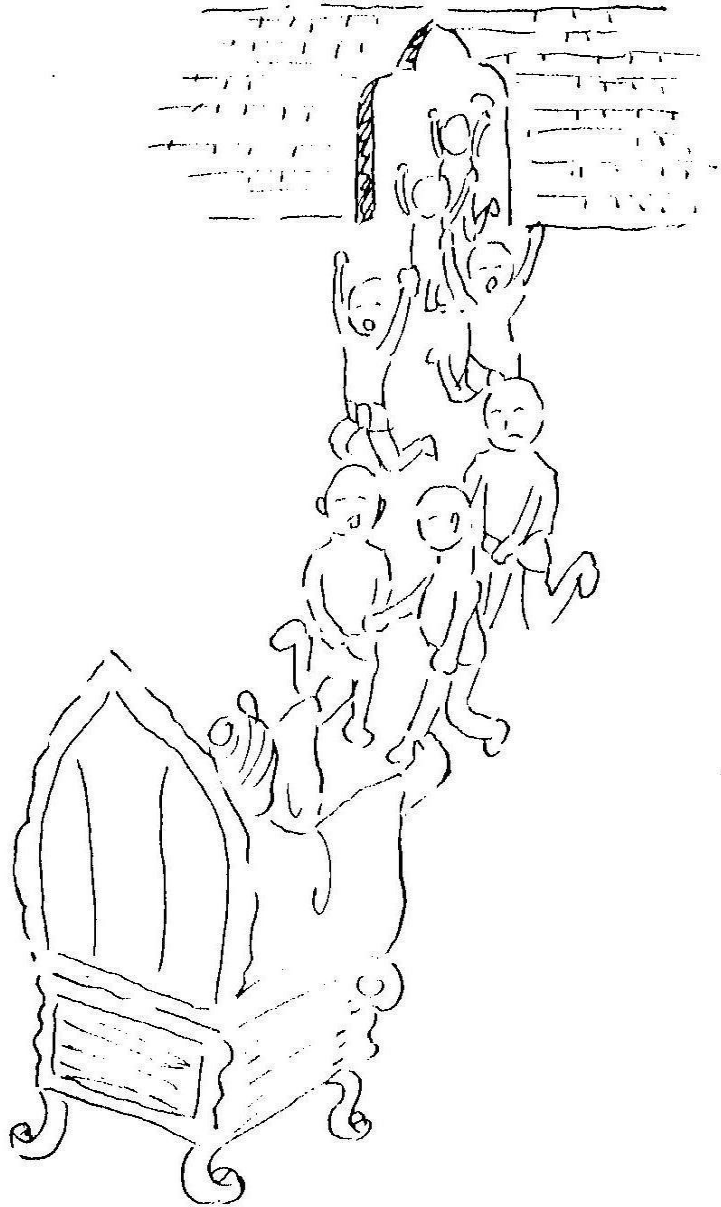
Save the Children with a Parable of Three Carts

An idea flushed into the rich man's mind that his children would be attracted to the various toys which they wished to have. This time he approached them closely and said in a gentle voice in order for his voice to soak into their minds, despite being in a great rush, "Say, I brought the carts that you wanted for a long time. They are carts pulled by a sheep, a deer, and an ox outside the gate. I will give you any one of them. Hurry, get out of the gate and take them! First come first serve! Hurry or you cannot get them." Hearing about the toy carts from their father, the thirty children dashed quickly out of the burning house, pushing one another, and striving to be the first, because they thought that they could get what they each wished to have.

Seeing all his children safely out of the burning house, the father felt relief and sat in a couch outside of the gate and thought, "Finally



they are safe. It is really hard to raise children safely and wholesomely, especially kids who do not have fear. They are safe first and foremost. They are at a safer place now. I am really relieved.”



Chapter 16

The Rich Man Gave a Great Large Cart Pulled by a Large White Ox to Every Child

The children who did not understand their father's feelings approached their father and said, "Father! Give us the toys! Give us the sheep-carts, the deer-carts, and the ox-carts. You promised us!" Where are they? We cannot find them. Please give us the carts!"

Then the rich man thought to himself, "I am the richest man in the world. I have countless amounts of gold, silver, and jewels. My treasures are limitless. These ignorant children are all my lovely children. Therefore, I love them all equally without favoritism. On the contrary, I am getting old and do not know how many years I can live with them. I should not give them temporary toys that may not be useful later on. Instead, I shall give each of them just one item, the only true treasure-cart in the world. The cart will never break even if they use it over and over again. It is decorated with various kinds of treasures. It is a mysterious vehicle because its value increases as they use it. These treasure carts are large carts of the same size pulled by a large white ox. He gave all his children one cart each. (It is better than a Lamborghini, Porsche, Lincoln, or Cadillac. Why is that? It does not need gasoline, it runs faster than the wind and it goes wherever you wish to go. It even flies.)



Chapter 17

Large White Ox, Number One in the World

The carts were beautifully adorned with a lot of small bells playing beautiful sounds. Railings were put around the carts. Bigger bells were hanging on the four sides with ropes of gold and made a beautiful sound. The four pillars of the cart were beautifully decorated with flower petals and rubies. The carts were roofed with seven color silk cloths, flapping in the wind. Inside the cart, there were soft fabric cushions and other ornaments. The cart's beauty was beyond expression.

The children danced with joy. They of course did not expect to each receive such beautiful, large, and identical white ox carts. They drove these jeweled carts in all directions; east, west, south, and north. They flew freely around the world. They were happy and delighted.

つたり西へ行つ
南へ行つたり北
たりして、自由
世界中を飛び
んじやと...。



一人に、もらえ
考えたこともな
やから、無理も
や！そこでさっ
大白牛車に乗っ
うに早く、心の

Chapter 18

From the Parable to the Truth

Thereupon, the Buddha faced Sariputra after telling the story and said, “Do you think the father told a lie to his children? At first he told them they were going to get sheep-carts, deer-carts, and ox-carts, but he gave each of them the large white ox carts. Did he tell a lie?”

Sariputra answered hastily, “No, No, Sakyamuni Buddha! He did not tell a lie. The rich man used an expedient in order to rescue all his children from the burning house as soon as possible; therefore, he mentioned that he would give them the three carts as an expedient. Because of that, he saved all the children. The father is not a liar. Not only that, he gave them a large white ox cart to each one of them. How can you blame him from any wrong doing?”



Chapter 19

This World Is the Burning House and The Buddha Is the Father, the Great Rich Man

The Buddha was delighted with his answer, “Sariputra! That is right! You understood well. I am just like the father of this story. I am the only father of all living beings. All living beings, the good or the bad, are all my children. However, people on this earth can only see things right in front of them, just like the ignorant children in the burning house. They expect to take only the easy way and do not try to understand the reality of all things. This world is more awful than the burning house. Human beings are killing each other and insist on their own viewpoints. Countries fight among themselves and start wars. Some countries have too much food and cannot consume it all and end up throwing it away in the valleys and oceans. On the other hand, other countries don’t have enough food and people are dying. It is just like the burning house wrapped with the fire of desire.



This world is full of poisonous insects, awful animals and beasts. Besides that, no matter if people are rich or poor, once people are born, they will get older. They will often get sick when they get older, and they will die for sure when they get old. People are afraid of the fire of suffering.

I am the Buddha who is free from birth and death. I extinguished all sufferings and became the Buddha. So I am the father of all people, the only father of all people. I am praying for all people to be saved, sincerely praying. All beings on this earth belong to me. All people on this earth are my beloved children.”



Chapter 20

Faith Helps to Understand the Lotus Sutra

“I am always thinking how to save all these people suffering in the world. Sariputra! Those people in the Two Vehicles who can trust and obey the Lotus Sutra will be able to attain the way of Buddhahood and become Buddhas. Sariputra and those who sincerely understand the Lotus Sutra should teach the wisdom to others for the sake of everyone’s happiness in the world. Those who are able to understand and obey the Lotus Sutra are the people who had met the Buddhas in their past existences and had listened to the teachings of the sutra. They had also met me in their past existences.

Only those who have a clear and obedient mind, who have wisdom and who have some relation with the Buddha in the past are able to understand the teachings of the sutra. It does not matter if one is wise or a fool. Only those who are obedient and who can trust the teachings are able to understand the Lotus Sutra. Therefore, Sariputra, only when you could trust my words, were you able to understand the deep meaning of the sutra,” said the Buddha.



Chapter 21

How to Be Buddha's Children

Sakyamuni Buddha does not like those who make a fool of others, tell lies, fight with others, hurt animals, and are egotistic even if they are wise. The Buddha is the father of all living beings in this world, so behave yourself so you are not disliked by the Buddha. Isn't it wonderful and grateful that the Buddha is your father? Therefore, you should believe in the Lotus Sutra and behave as Buddha's children and not act shamefully. Do not make your parents unhappy or cause them to worry. Do not bother others. If you don't follow these rules, the Buddha will not like you. Remember that!



Chapter 22

Slandering the Lotus Sutra Is A Great Sin!

The Buddha says, “Do not teach this Lotus Sutra to those who are arrogant and greedy, or have a dirty mind.” What is the reason? It is because these people cannot believe the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and commit the sin of slandering the righteousness. What will happen to these sinful people?

Let us listen to the words of Sakyamuni Buddha on the sin of slandering the sutra: “If you have doubt, criticize and speak ill of the sutra, you destroy your seeds to become a Buddha, and the seeds are dead. Those who scorched their seeds will fall into the great hell when they die. The sufferings of hell continue life after life. When they get out of hell, they will be born in the realm of animals. In the animal realm, they will become weak and emaciated, their hairs will fall out, their skin will have boils, they will be disliked by human beings, and they will be beaten with sticks and stones. They will walk around seeking food and devouring food. These are all the results of committing this sin.”

“Born as donkeys or camels, they have to carry heavy loads on their backs. They will be beaten with a whip to walk. They have to walk around searching for food. These are all the result of slandering the sutra. Born as foxes they have to seek food coming to villages but are caught and beaten to death. Born as snakes they have no legs and ears but crawl circuitously with their long bodies on the ground. Small insects suck their blood. They are not allowed to rest day and



night. These are also the result of slandering the *Lotus Sutra* and destroying the Buddha seeds.”

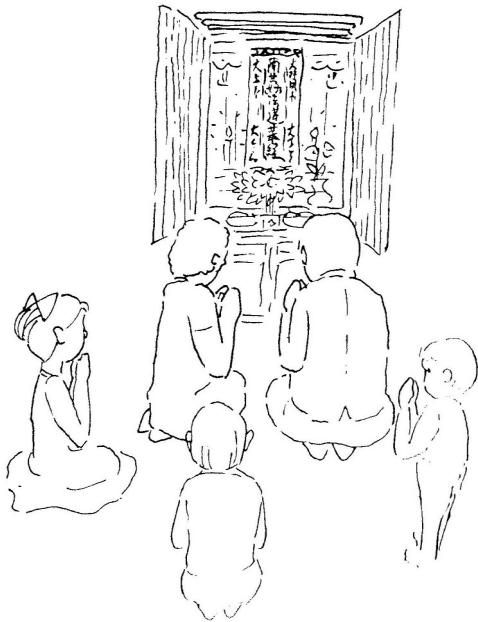
“Even if they were born as human beings, and they will have fits and cramps. Their bodies stink, and their mouths smell very bad. They look shabby. People dislike them. People will boss them around even when they are sick. So they become lonesome and are forgotten. They will live crying. If they become medical doctors, they will mistreat their patients and kill them. Or evil men will threaten them, and their belongings will be stolen. Or they will be born with jealousy and unclean minds, so they are lusty. They become satyrs and live to enjoy sex so much that they destroy their lives. These are all result of slandering the *Lotus Sutra*.” The Buddha told these awful, horrible stories.



Chapter 23

Cherish the Buddha, Your Ancestors, and Parents

Do you understand that the greatest sin is to slander the Lotus Sutra? Therefore, obediently trust the teaching of the Only One Truth, the Lotus Sutra, the teaching for all living beings to become Buddhas. Please realize you are Buddha's children. If you make light of the Buddha, if you speak ill of your priests, if you make a fool of others, if you make light of your ancestors by not offering food and water, you will probably not be able to eat food in the future.



If you committed these sins, you will suffer in hell, life after life after being born as snakes, donkeys, or camels. If you were born as a human being, you will suffer with sickness and have to start to learn the lessons of a human being all over again. You are fortunate to read this *Lotus Sutra* now, so you better behave nicely as Buddha's children and believe in the teachings obediently like Sariputra so you may receive the name of a Buddha, and the assurance to become a Buddha.

Chapter 24

Who Does the Buddha Like?

To what kinds of people does the Buddha tell us to teach the Lotus Sutra?
What kinds of people does the Buddha like?

The Buddha says to Sariputra: “Sariputra! It is hard to explain the sins of slandering the *Lotus Sutra*. If one sold the teachings short, even the Buddha cannot save them because they roasted and killed their seeds to become a Buddha even though I teach them equally to plant the seed and to take care of the seeds. They destroyed the seeds with the fire of their selfish desire and dirty minds.

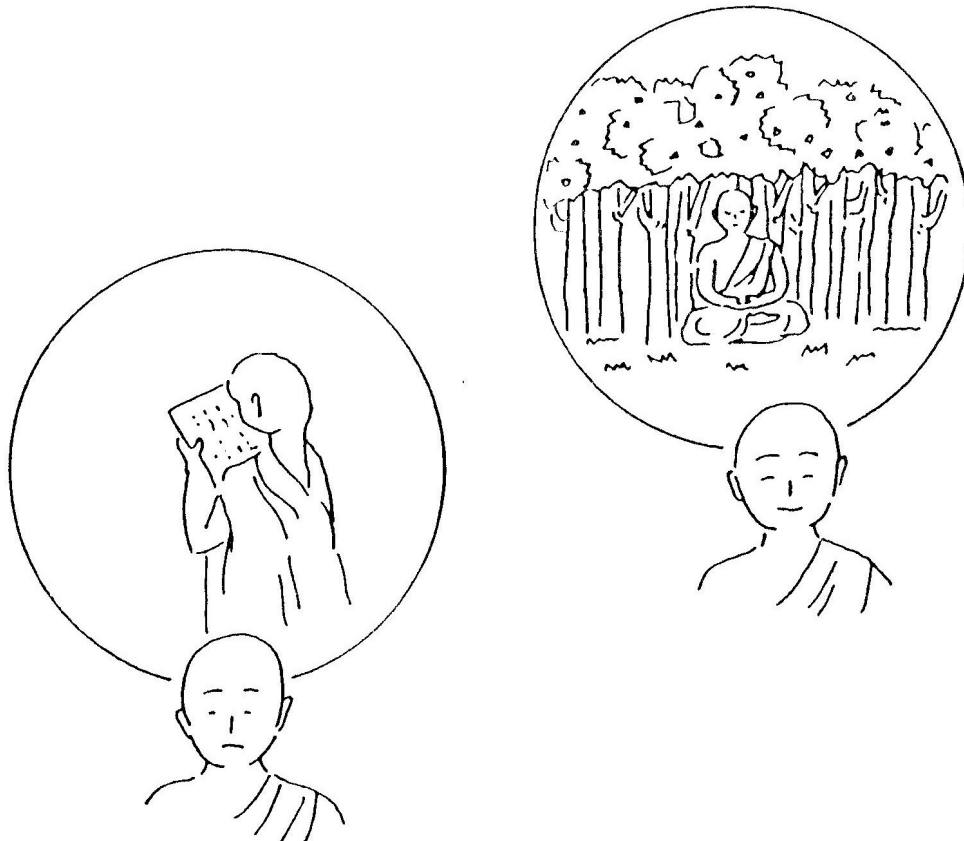
Even if I made rain to sprout the seeds and give nutrition with my compassion, their seeds are dead and do not sprout. There are no sprouts, flowers, or fruits. Thus, I tell you, Sariputra! Do not teach the *Lotus Sutra* to arrogant, haughty, crooked and dirty minded people.



Chapter 25

Be Gentle, Obedient, and Modest

Let's have those listen to the *Lotus Sutra* who are gentle, obedient, and modest. Teach the sutra to those who wish to hear the teachings, who reflect on their behavior, who practice in a remote place in a mountain, and who seek Buddha Dharma. It is because they had met the Buddhas in previous lives long ago and heard the teachings from the Buddhas. They were born to this world to study the *Lotus Sutra* more.

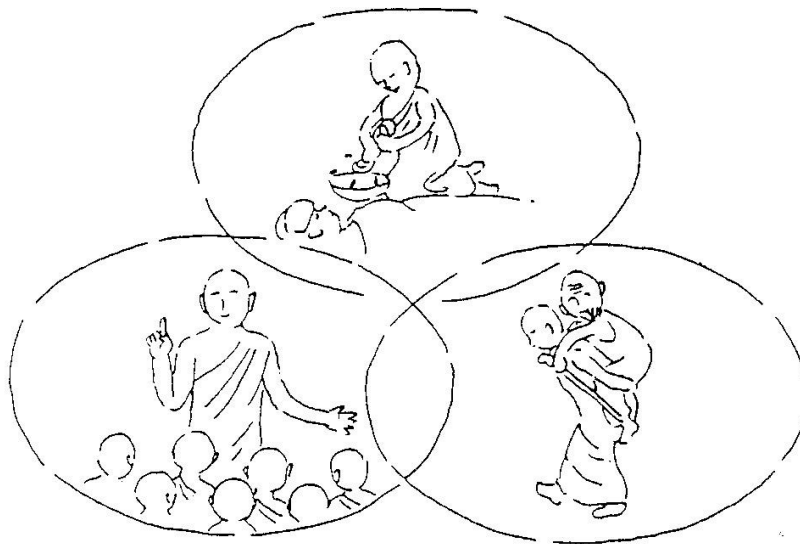


Chapter 26

Be Cheerful, Helpful, and Compassionate

Please teach this *Lotus Sutra* to those who are cheerful, helpful, and compassionate. To the people who work hard without complaining, who are kind to their parents and others, who help others compassionately, and who strive for improvement, make them listen to the teaching and make them practice the principles.

Sariputra! If there was a person who mistakenly changed the course of justice and almost connected with evil friends, encourage the person to communicate with good friends and to live righteously; and then courageously teach this sutra to this person.

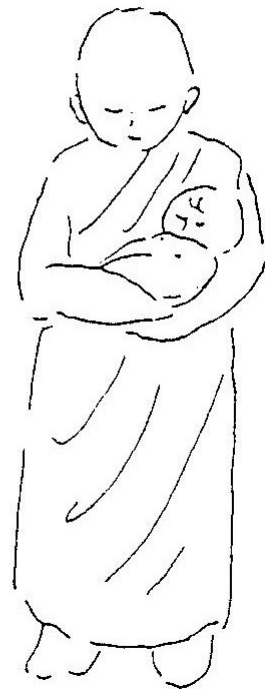


Chapter 27

Keep the Precepts and Be Pure like a Flower Petal

If there were people who practice Buddhist precepts and keep their minds pure like a flower petal, then teach this sutra to them! If there was a person who is retired in a deep mountain, who practices in an isolated temple, or who adores the Buddha and respects others, then teach this sutra to that person.

If you met someone who is modest and honest, or who speaks politely, or who does not envy or hold grudges, or who offers chanting to the Buddhas, or who is kind; then teach this *Lotus Sutra* to them.



Chapter 28

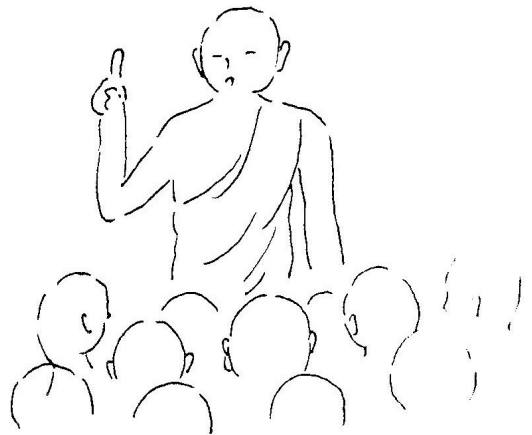
To Those Who Seeks

Buddha Dharma Courageously and Sincerely

“If there was a person who preaches Buddha Dharma without fear and bravely in public, then teach this sutra to this person. If there was a Hinayana Buddhist who does not know Mahayana Buddhism, who puts his palms together in respect, and who bows his head to the ground and prays; then teach this Lotus Sutra to him.”

“If there was a person who keeps only Mahayana Buddhism, who is wandering around looking for the remains of Sakyamuni Buddha, who places the remains on top of his head, who is searching for the real teaching of the Buddha, who is walking without looking aside for the sake of the true Buddha Dharma, then teach this sutra to such a person.”

“Sariputra, Listen well! You must know the real intention of the people who are obedient and seeking the Buddha Dharma sincerely, then let them listen to the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra!*”



Chapter 29

Can Everyone Be Buddhas Before Long?

How about you?

Are you obedient? Do you speak politely? Do you always respect your ancestors with a kindhearted mind? Do you treasure your parents?

Sakyamuni Buddha is always watching you and foreseeing you. He is compassionately watching your Buddha seeds planted within you to sprout sooner.

If you kept the Buddha's teachings obediently and do not forget kindness towards others, the Buddha seeds will sprout for sure in the future! You will receive a Buddha name like Sariputra!

I wonder what kind of a Buddha you will be! It is exciting and I am looking forward to it! See you soon in the next chapter of "Understanding by Faith."

Respect your parents and your ancestors! Remember to "Be obedient," and "Be Kind to others." Don't forget them!

