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The Loka pitru (*World Father*) concept as depicted in Saddharamapundarika Sutta

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An enormous authority has been imposed on the Buddha and the Bodhisathva in Mahayana Buddhism. Theravada Buddhism has followed a different principle without highlighting Eshwara Creativity and Lokapitru concepts. This is one of the major demarcations between Mahayana and Theravada. However, the Buddha has been identified as a supreme Eshwara or with a supreme power as a universal Father. A study of *Prangnga paramita*, *Sadharamapundika*, *Lalitha wistharaya*, *Bodhicharyawatharaya* and *Arya Lankawatharaya* known as “Nawarathna Grantha” in Mahayana suttas and Mahayana sources evidence how the Buddha and the Bodhisathva have been ascribed with Lokapitru qualities. Out of the above sources, the Buddha has been depicted beyond a human condition in Saddharamapundarika Sutta. Further, the sutta depicts the Bodhisathva’s life from the beginning in a lurid manner that cannot be regarded as second to Lokapitru depiction. In the attempt of highlighting the Bodhisathva into the level of Lokapitru in Sadharamapundika sutta, the Bodhisathvas like Avalokithewara, Akashagarbha, Wajragarbha, Shathijagarbha, Sarva Nirvana Wishkambhi, Maithree Natha, Santhrabhadra, Manjja Sri also have been upgraded to the level of Lokapitru. Sometimes as a result of the prominent place given to the Bodhisatvas in Mahayana Buddhism, an attempt to highlight the qualities of the Bodhisatvas in contrast to the Buddha can also be seen. Accordingly, this study tries to compare how the Buddha and the Bodhisathvas has been portrayed in Saddharamapundarika Sutta. This concept has been depicted in the sutta using similes and metaphors. Here in confirmation of the concept, the similes like a lotus, a palace of samsara, Bhesviraj widdyaguru, etc. have been used in the sutra. Further, The Buddhas as well as the Bodhisathvas have been identified not only as Sarvavyaji state but also as having almighty powers to relieve people from the suffering of the world. And also the Buddha has been portrayed as an eternal Loka Pitru of the sky having three types of bodies and supreme power to relieve creatures.

Keywords: *Lokapitru Concept, Lotus sutra, Buddha, Nawabosathwaru*