

Chapter 18 of the Lotus Sutra

The Merit of a Person Who Rejoices at Hearing This Sutra

Minwa-Fu Hokekyo Dowa

(Volume 19 of 30 Volumes)

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Give Rejoice at Hearing the Dharma from One Person to Another

(The Merits of the Fiftieth Person Who Rejoices at Hearing the Sutra)

Chapter 1

An Important Matter in the *Mappo* Era

Sakyamuni Buddha said in the preceding chapter, The Variety of Merits, that if you have firm faith in the *Lotus Sutra* and adore it, you will receive more merits, not less than the person who had studied hard or who trained hard for a long time.

The Bodhisattvas in the sky who understood the real meaning of the sutra were so delighted, they put their palms together toward the Buddha and watched Him.

A) If no Faith ...

Do you remember the Five Stages after the Buddha's Death in the precious volume? The first stage of Rejoicing at Hearing the Sutra is the most important for us in the *Mappo* era. Therefore, the Buddha explains in more detail in this volume separately.

Sakyamuni Buddha's compassion is so profound that we cannot understand it and only the Buddhas can understand Sakyamuni Buddha. It is difficult to understand the insight of the compassionate mind of Sakyamuni Buddha. So, it is very important to have obedient faith.

Let me talk about the merits of a person who rejoices at hearing this Sutra in more detail!

B) No Argument on the Happiness at Hearing the Dharma

I will explain about the happiness to hear the Dharma. Suppose a baby is taking a nap on a bed. The busy mother has to move away from the baby for a moment. But before she leaves, she puts a soft blanket on the floor beside the bed in a case the baby falls. She also keeps a door wide open to hear if the baby starts crying. The mother works hard while giving her mind full attention to the sleeping baby. Soon after the baby awakes, he or she looks for the mother and starts crying, feeling lonesome and sad when the mother is not there.

The mother stops whatever she was doing and rushes to the baby as soon as she hears the cry. "Sorry! Sorry, my dear baby! You've just woken up, haven't you?" She holds the baby up and embraces him or her. At that moment, the baby stops crying immediately and hugs the mother joyfully. The baby was so delighted by seeing the mother and hearing the voice of the mother. The baby's lonesomeness and sadness instantly disappears! That is the same as the happiness at hearing the Dharma.

The *Lotus Sutra* is the most supreme teaching among all sutras revealed by Sakyamuni Buddha since His attainment of Buddhahood. The sutra is the king of kings.



C) Obedient Mind just like a Baby

If you can have a pure and obedient mind just like a baby and if you are delighted to hear a phrase or a verse of the *Lotus Sutra*, you will be able to enter the way to enlightenment for sure. Even though one studied difficult scholastic doctrines or practiced difficult asceticism, if he or she does not believe a phrase of the *Lotus Sutra* or does not feel joyfulness to hear its teaching, it is a waste of time and accumulates no merits at all.

On the other hand, if one is delighted to hear the *Lotus Sutra* just like an obedient baby and have faith in its teachings, his or her mind will be matched to the Buddha's mind, so he or she will be able to be embraced by the Buddha, to hear His voice and to see a Buddha's figure.

Therefore, you'd better to be like a baby, and let the teaching in this volume of the *Lotus Sutra* embrace you as your mother embraces you.



Chapter 2

What Sakyamuni Buddha Tries to Say

Maitreya Bodhisattva guessed that the Buddha did not reveal something more important in the previous volume, so he asked Sakyamuni Buddha about it. This volume talks in more detail about the merits of rejoicing at hearing the sutra.

Truly, Maitreya Bodhisattva can penetrate the mind of Sakyamuni, so he can guess what He tries to say the most! You, too, can try to be like Maitreya Bodhisattva. You will be great if you can see what your parents want of you or what they are thinking about you.

Thereupon Maitreya Bodhisattva said to the Buddha:

“World-Honored One! How many merits will be given to a good man or woman in the *Mappo* era who rejoices at hearing this *Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma* after Your extinction?”

Sakyamuni Buddha answered him as if He was expecting to be asked:

A) When You Meet with a Real Practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra* in the *mappo* Era ...

“Ajita! I most welcome your question! Listen attentively! Suppose any of my disciples, whether ordained or not-ordained, wise or unwise, whether young or old, rejoices at hearing this sutra in a congregation after My extinction in the *Mappo* era. Rejoicing to hear the Dharma, he or she wishes to share what they have learned and goes to other places, for instance, to a monastery, a retired place, a city, a street, a town, a village, or a quiet place deep in a mountain. There he or she expounds this sutra, as he or she has heard it, to his or her father, mother, relative, friends, acquaintance as far as he or she can.”

“Another person who has heard this sutra from him or her rejoices, goes to some other place and expounds it to a third person. The third person also rejoices at hearing it and preaches it to a fourth person. In this way this sutra is heard by a fiftieth person. Ajita! Now I will tell you the merit of the fiftieth good man or woman who rejoices at hearing this sutra.”

The Buddha explained the joyful excitement in hearing the sutra is important just as a baby has complete trust in his or her mother. When you have a wonderful impression upon hearing the sutra, you wish to share it with others. Thus, the Buddha said it is important for us to expound the Dharma to others.

B) A Greedy Person Is Not Accepted

Do you know anyone who is greedy and does not want to share his knowledge or a thing with any other person? Sakyamuni Buddha does not like such a person who is greedy and arrogant as I mentioned before.

It does not matter whether you are smart or not, have good grades or not, have a good educational background or not, or you have a high status or not. Nothing matters except how you are obedient like an innocent baby. That is the value of faith! That is what Sakyamuni Buddha is thinking about you!

Now, let us find out the merit of the fiftieth person who rejoices at hearing the *Lotus Sutra*. The teaching of the sutra is transmitted from Sakyamuni to his disciples to another person one after another. All of them were delighted at hearing its teaching and wish to share it with others.



C) Offering by A Wealthy Man to People in the Six Realms and the Four Different Ways of Birth

Thereupon the Buddha said to Maitreya Bodhisattva:

“Ajita! Listen well! Suppose a wealthy man who was seeking merits possessed a country filled with wonderful treasures such as gold, silver, lapis lazuli, shell, agates, coral and amber; elephant-carts and horse-carts; and palaces and stately buildings made of the seven treasures. Suppose he was seeking merits and gave all those pleasing things to all kinds of living beings according to their wishes in a world. The world consists of the six regions (the hell, the hungry spirits, animals, fighting spirits, human beings and heavenly beings). These living beings are one of the four kinds of birth: oviparous, viviparous, from moistures or dust, or without any medium. Some of them have forms while others do not. Some have desires while others do not. Some have no feet while others have two feet or four feet or more. Since then, eighty years have passed.”

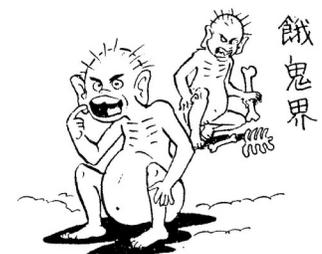
D) Becoming Peaceful by Teaching the Dharma to Them

“The wealthy man thought back about his last eighty years of life, ‘I gave those pleasing things to them according to their wishes for the last eighty years. Now they are old and decrepit. They are more than eighty years old. Their hair is grey and their faces are wrinkled. They will die before long. I will lead them to the Buddha Dharma.’”

“Then he collected them. He propagated the Dharma to them. You seem to be afraid of getting sick and dying. Your fear is caused by your selfish desire that is caused by attachment. All sufferings are caused by attachment. Therefore, if you quench all desire, you will have nothing to be afraid of. In order to quench desire, you just realize that everything is constantly changing and that everything relies on others. Then your mind becomes peaceful! Thus, he caused them to attain a moment of enlightenment. Depending on the level of enlightenment, some of them decided to listen to the Dharma more; while some others decided to practice the Dharma to remove their worldly desires; while some others tried to practice harder to become saints and not to be born again; and some of them practiced deep meditation without hindrance, and obtained the eight emancipations.”

“Ajita! What do you think of this great wealthy man? Do you think that the merit obtained by this great donor were many or not compared to the merit of the fiftieth person who rejoiced at hearing the *Lotus Sutra*?”

Thus, the Buddha asked Maitreya Bodhisattva.



E) Maitreya' s Confidence

Maitreya said to the Buddha confidently:

“World-Honored One! Of course, the wealthy man’s merits were many, immeasurable and limitless. His merits were already immeasurable when he gave all those pleasing things to them. Needless to say, so were his merits when he caused them to attain no rebirth on this worldly desired region, especially those who obtained the eight emancipations.” Thus, Maitreya proudly answered the Buddha.

However, his answer did not make the Buddha satisfied. Why is that? The wealthy man gave everything that they wanted and made them satisfied. Not only that, he taught them the Buddha Dharma and caused them to give up attachment. Some of them became saints. Is there any person who receives more merits than him?

Let us listen to Sakyamuni Buddha carefully:



F) Even Maitreya Makes a Mistake

The Buddha said to Maitreya in a clear and beautiful voice.

“Now I will tell you clearly. The merits of the person who gave all those pleasing things to the living beings of the six regions of the four kinds of births and caused them to attain enlightenment are less than the merits of the fiftieth person who rejoices at hearing even a gatha or a phrase of this Sutra of the *Lotus Flower of the*

Wonderful Dharma. The merits of the wealthy person are less than a hundredth or a thousandth of the merits of the person who rejoices at hearing the sutra or less than the merits of the latter person divided by a hundred thousand billion. The reason for the superiority in the merit is because the truth, wisdom and compassion revealed in the *Lotus Sutra* is just like the mother's milk for the baby to drink and to grow without realizing it. This sutra is the king of all sutras. You just trust and be obedient. The merits cannot be explained by other ways."

After all this, I finally understand! The Buddha is saying that if you chant the sacred title of the *Lotus Sutra* in a studious effort just as a baby adores his or her mother obediently, the merits of the chanting are happiness and fortune obtained without notice.

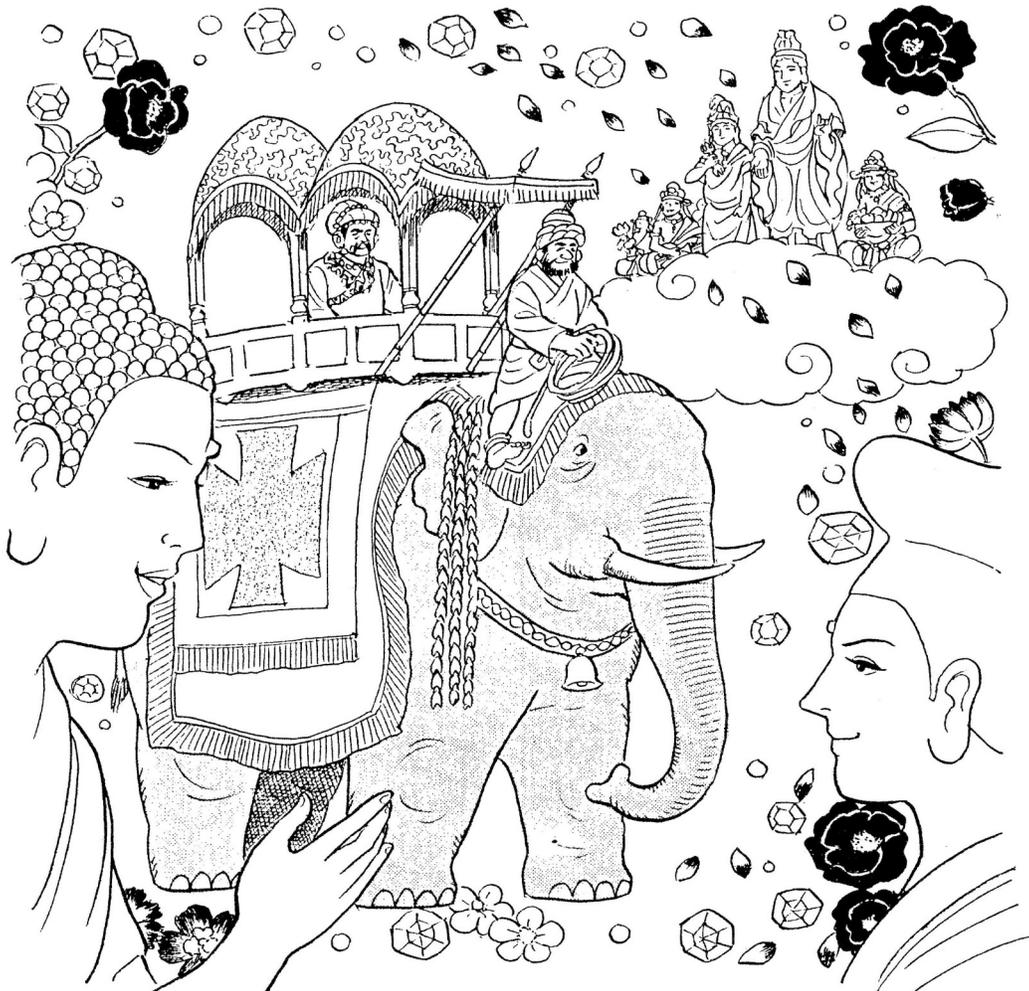


Chapter 3

Wise and Good Looking

What kinds of happiness and fortune are we talking about? Let us read the *Lotus Sutra*:

“Ajita! Suppose anyone in the *mappo* era who goes to a monastery to hear this sutra and hears it even for a moment while he is sitting or standing outside of the room willingly to listen to the Dharma, in their next life they will be born in a good family, riding in a beautiful and wonderful elephant-cart or horse-cart of treasures and will be able to obtain the seat of a heavenly being later on. Anyone who willingly listens to the Dharma and who says to another person, ‘Let us go and hear the sutra and causes him to hear it even for a moment, in his next life his merits will be able to live with King Sakra of the Brahman Heavenly-King or a wheel-turning-holy-king.’”



“Ajita! Anyone who says to another person, ‘Let us go and hear the sutra called the *Lotus Flower of Wonderful Dharma* being expounded, and causes him to hear it even for a moment, in his next life by his merits, will be able to live with the Bodhisattvas who obtained *dharani* spells. He will be clever and wise throughout thousands of millions of years in his future existences. His breath will not be foul. He will have no disease of the tongue or the mouth. His teeth will not be defiled, black, yellow, missing, uneven or crooked. His lips will not be dropping, shrunk, chapped, cracked, broken, distorted, thick, large, yellow-black or loathsome. Everyone will like his appearance.”

“His face will not be distorted or displeasing. His lips, tongue and teeth will be well-shaped; his nose, long, high and straight. His face will be full; his eyebrows, thick and long; and his forehead, broad and even. In a word, he will have all the good features of a Bodhisattva. He will be able to see the Buddhas, hear the Dharma from them, and receive their teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* by faith throughout his future existences. Thus, those who hear the sutra will be rejoiced and will have faith from the bottom of their hearts.”

The Buddha explained how important it is to listen to the *Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma* and to rejoice at hearing it.

A) How to Save Souls of Human Beings?

At the end, Sakyamuni Buddha mentioned to Maitreya Bodhisattva:

“Ajita, Look! You must understand more clearly. The great donor gave all his treasures, estates, elephants, and houses to everyone who wanted them for eighty years, then expounded the Dharma to them. They were able to become saints who do not have any attachment. However, their freedom from attachment is only in the realms of moral and ethics; that is just salvation only for themselves. It is not the salvation of their souls. Why is that? It is because that their salvation is just reasoning or theory, but not the salvation of the souls expressed in the *Lotus Sutra*. The universal truth is only expressed in the *Lotus Sutra*. The sutra is the most supreme teaching among all Buddha Dharma for all people to attain Buddha-hood. Even if a person who cannot read or write a word, he will be able to attain Buddha-hood.”

B) Even If You Lead Only One person

Therefore, the merit of a person who rejoiced to hear only one phrase or verse of the sutra has earned much greater merits than that of the great donor.

“The merits of the person who causes even a single man to go and hear the Dharma are so much. It is needless to speak of the merits of the person who hears this sutra with all his heart, reads it, recites it, expounds it to the great multitude, and acts according to its teachings.”

Truly, Maitreya Bodhisattva lost his words with surprise to hear the wonderful merits of the sutra.

Even if a person received all the treasures in the world and was satisfied or even if he listened to the Buddha Dharma and was saved from sufferings, it benefited only him. It does not help any other living beings and also not help for other souls.

We were born as human beings now; however, it was not sure we were human beings in the previous existence.

C) The Four Kinds of Births and the Six Realms

The Four kinds of Births are oviparous (birth from the womb), viviparous (birth from the egg), birth from moisture, and birth from one’s own karma.

A good example of oviparous is a human being, but also an elephant, a lion, an ox, a horse, a deer, a sheep, a dog, and a cat. All these animals were born from their mothers’ wombs. It is not necessary for a human being to be a human being in a past life, and it does not guarantee that he will be born as a person again.

Buddhism teaches that all living beings are born in one of the six realms:

1. If you kill a living being, you may be killed in return and born in the realm of hell.
2. If you are attached to an object, money, status or fame and want to possess them, you are surrounded by a flame of evil passion; then, you will be born in

the realm of hungry spirits such that you are always thirsty but cannot drink water, or you are always hungry but cannot eat any food.

3. If you indulged just for fun without thinking of the cause and effect, you may be born in the realm of unscrupulous animals.
4. If you get angry easily, fight often and live fiercely; you may be born in the realm of fighting spirits.
5. If you act righteously, judging right and wrong, or overcome hardship and live with strong determination, you will be born in the realm of human beings.
6. If you live positively even while facing hardship and sadness, and you give cheer and hope to others; you will be born in the realm of heaven.



D) You Will Be a Buddha Because You are a Buddha's child

You were born in the realm of the human being just like Sakyamuni Buddha. You are also a Buddha's child. It means that you had behaved well in the preceding life and also behaved well not to be born in the lower four realms. So you can be proud of yourself. However, you must remember that the Buddha does not like a person who is conceited and arrogant. When you forget that, you may fall into one of the lower four realms.

There is a saying in Japan, "When the ears of rice grow more, they bend down lower." Those who are conceited and arrogant try to look great or pretend to be great, but they are not fully grown yet. You had better look at others carefully in such matters.



Chapter 4

Get Rid of Soil and Stain Sooner

When you reconsider yourself, if you think, “Oh no! I was wrong!” about something, you had better get rid of the stain or soil. You can get rid of any stain or soil right away if your mind is clear. Keep your record clean!

To get rid of a stain is easy when your mind becomes clear. Sakyamuni Buddha told a story of a tiny fire that burned five hundred wagons. It means that even if you have five hundred fully loaded wagons of sin and bad conduct, you just need a tiny matchstick to burn all sins and bad conducts. So if you really meant to repent wrong conducts and believe in the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* with a clear mind, you had better hang on to the Eternal Buddha Sakyamuni.

Since you are a Buddha’s child, you have a seed to become a Buddha. The Buddha seed will burn all soil and stains within you. The fire slowly burns dark clouds above your head, cloudy minds of wrong conducts, sins you have committed; and then your record will be cleared without any soil or stain. Isn’t it great?

The teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* will save all souls, not only human beings but also all living beings in the four kinds of births and in the six realms. That is called “The Great Universal Truth.” Thus, gods, men, animals and vegetation are equal in the *Lotus Sutra*.

A) Rejoice A Phrase and A Verse

Therefore, people rejoice to hear the sutra and wish to hear more obediently. Their minds and souls will approach the mind and soul of the Buddha. Then, they will obtain various merits to help other living beings.

When your soul levels up to this stage, you will wish to expound the teaching of the *Lotus Sutra* to others and you wish to level up their souls, too. This kind of merit is much greater than the great donor of material things for eighty years.

If one does not have an obedient mind, he or she not be able to have rejoice, even if he or she has a lot of knowledge about the Buddha Dharma. Without rejoice, his or her Dharma voice will not reach the realm of the souls. This knowledge has no merit, as it is only for his or her own satisfaction.



B) The Merits of the Fiftieth Person Who Rejoices at Hearing the Sutra

Sakyamuni Buddha, wishing to repeat the merits of the fiftieth person to rejoice at hearing the *Lotus Sutra*, sang in gathas:

Suppose a man rejoices at hearing this sutra
Or at hearing even a gatha of it in a congregation,
And expounds it to a second person.

The second person expounds it to a third person.
In this way it is heard by a fiftieth person.
Now I will tell you of the merit of the fiftieth person.

Suppose there was a great almsgiver.
He continued giving alms to innumerable living beings
For eighty years according to their wishes.

Those living beings became old and decrepit.
Their hair became grey; their faces, wrinkled;
And their teeth, fewer and deformed.

Seeing this, he thought:

“I will teach them because they will die before long.

I will cause them to obtain the fruit of enlightenment.”

Then he expounded Nirvana to them as an expedient, saying:

“This world is as unstable as a spray of water,

Or as foam, or as a filament of air.

Hate it, and leave it quickly!”

Hearing this teaching, they became saints.

The superiority of the merits of the fiftieth person

Who rejoices at hearing even a gatha of this sutra

To the merits of this great almsgiver

Cannot be explained by any parable or simile.

The merits of the fiftieth person

Who hears this sutra are immeasurable.

Needless to say, so are the merits of the first person

Who rejoices at hearing it in the congregation.

In the *mappo* Era, anyone who persuades even a single person

To hear the Lotus Sutra, saying:

“This sutra is profound and wonderful.

It is difficult to meet it even during ten million kalpas,”

And causes him to go and hear it even for a moment,

Will be able to obtain the following merits:

In his future lives, he will have no disease of the mouth.

His teeth will not be few, yellow or black.

His lips will not be thick, shrunk or broken.

There will be nothing loathsome on his lips.

His tongue will not be dry, black or short.

His nose will be high, long and straight.

His forehead will be broad and even.

His face will be handsome.

All people will wish to see him.

His breath will not be foul.

The fragrance of the *utpala*-flowers

Will always be emitted from his mouth.

Anyone who visits a monastery to hear

The Lotus Sutra and rejoices at hearing it even for a moment,

Will be able to obtain the following merits:



He will be reborn among gods and men.
 He will be able to go up to the palace of heaven.
 Riding in a wonderful elephant-cart or horse-cart,
 Or in a palanquin* of wonderful treasures.

Anyone who persuades others to sit and hear this sutra
 In the place where the Dharma is expounded,
 Will be able to obtain the seat of Sakra or of Brahman
 Or of a wheel-turning-holy-king by his merits.

Needless to say, boundless will be the merits
 Of the person who hears this sutra with all his heart
 And expounds its meanings
 And act according to its teachings in *mappo* Era.

**A palanquin is a covered litter for one passenger, carried by other people*

C) Strong Enemy among the Group

It is really hard to meet with the priest who expounds correctly the *Lotus Sutra* in the *mappo* Era. As we studied in the Encouragement for Keeping This Sutra, if one speaks of righteousness, he will be spoken ill and be punished in this defiled world. Surprisingly these enemies are among his group. They are arrogant people. If you flatter them, the Buddha will dislike you!

We will die sooner or later. It will be a great challenge when we go back in front of the Eternal Buddha after our death. Tell yourself to live in the Buddha's wishes. The adoration toward the sutra will level up your soul, you will rejoice at hearing the sutra and wish to expound the sutra to others. Then, you will feel for the sutra and when you will grade up your soul, you will rejoice at hearing the *Lotus Sutra* more often and wish to expound the sutra to others as many as possible.

Please try to explain about the *Lotus Sutra* to others!

Chapter 5

Disciples who followed the Buddha with Joyfulness

Do you know any disciples of Sakyamuni Buddha and Nichiren Dai'Shonin who expounded the *Lotus Sutra* unselfishly and even sacrificed their lives?

There were Sariputra and Maudgalyayana among Sakyamuni Buddha's disciples. Both of them knew what their master wished them to expound the sutra to as many people as possible. Therefore, they went anywhere, even if they would be killed if they went there. They tried to plant the seeds of the Buddha Dharma. "Having no attachment to their physical bodies, they were satisfied!" Because of that they were killed. But the seed started to sprout. About one hundred years after the Buddha's death, King Ashoka ruled all of India and expounded the Buddha Dharma to all people in India.



It is the same with the disciples of Nichiren Dai'Shonin. At the time he was preaching the sutra, the authority of the Kamakura feudal government and high level priests of other Buddhist denominations attempted to kill Nichiren! He was exiled to an island and a peninsula; his hut was set on fire and he was almost beheaded. It was terrible!

In these awful times, his disciples spoke up, "I am one of the disciples of Nichiren Dai'Shonin!" They must be very brave to do that! They could do it because they rejoiced at hearing his message and expounded the O'Daimoku at the cost of their bodies.

Without rejoicing and the adoration toward Nichiren, they could not become his disciples. I mentioned about this before, didn't I?

It is called the doctrine of the Far and the Near Relationship between the Master and his Disciples. It is spiritually understood in the realm of the souls. To become Nichiren's disciples with inspiration and rejoice in the defiled world of the *mappo* Era means that they were one of the great Bodhisattvas from underground. They had already been promised Buddhahood from a long time ago.



A) The Mind of Rejoice Springs Up

You must be one of the great Bodhisattvas from underground if you rejoiced even for a moment's thought at reading the stories in this book!

If you are one of them from underground, you had been a pupil of the Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha and educated directly by Him for a long time. You may realize that your mission on this earth will be to teach the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* to other people. It does not mean you have to become a priest.

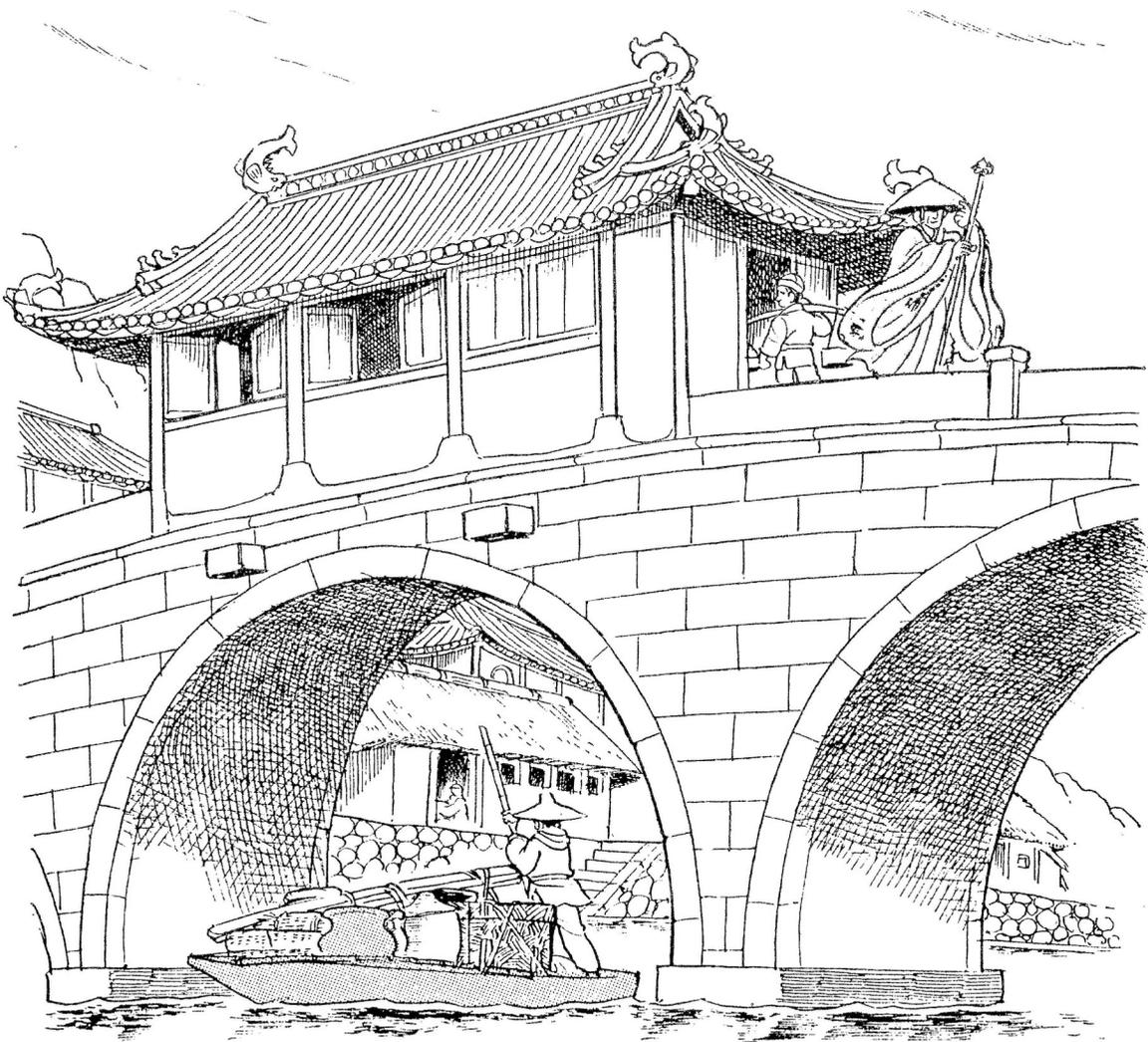
It is all right for you to be as you are now, because each individual is different in the way they live. The way not to be shameful is to act in accordance with *the Lotus Sutra*. If you can make someone think that they want to be like you, it is an excellent way of preaching.

Nichiren Dai'Shonin says, "Sakyamuni Buddha's long-cherished object is to teach one's behavior." Let us follow the right way as our master Nichiren and Sakyamuni Buddha showed.

B) St. Nichiro and St. Nichiji

St. Nichiro was the number one devoted disciple for Nichiren Dai'Shonin. He always stayed with his master and served him from the bottom of his heart day and night. He was just like Ananda who served Sakyamuni Buddha day and night. Nichiren Dai'Shonin loved him and was an admirer of the beloved young man. Nichiren once sent a letter to Nichiro, "Tomorrow, I will be exiled to Sado Island. This cold evening, I am thinking of you in the cold dungeon. My thoughts are that you have read and practiced the *Lotus Sutra* with your heart and action, which would save your parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, ancestors, and everyone around you. Other people read the sutra vocally without feeling in their hearts. Even though they might read it with their hearts, they do not experience it as the sutra teaches. Compared with them, you are very precious since you are practicing the sutra in your actions, voice, and spirit." Nichiren Dai'Shonin is saying that those who do lip service or conditionally behave and talk theory but provide no action are not a match to Buddha's mind.

Another disciple, St. Nichiji followed his master's words in *Kangyo Hachiman Sho*. It says, "The moon moves from west to east. It is an omen of Buddhism in India spreading to the east. The sun orbits from the east to the west. This is a lucky omen of Buddhism in Japan returning to India." St. Nichiji left Japan for China alone with only the clothes on his back and with a strong determination not to come back to Japan. He propagated the Odaimoku (Nichiren Dai'Shonin says, "It is the heart of the Lotus Sutra") or the sacred title of the Lotus Sutra in the foreign country. Nichiji Shonin did not speak Chinese and while they do not understand Japanese at all, he expounded the sacred title of the sutra just as a mother gives her milk to her baby. He did not know anything or where to go but he planted the seed of the *Lotus Sutra*. Recently we finally found out that he traveled to a place called SENKA near the south border of Mongolia. In the seventh year, he made a poem:



C) Adoring His Master and Thinking of His Mother Land

*“If I have wings
I wish to fly back to Minobu.”*

And in the twentieth year,
*“I dreamed of meeting with my parents
In the native place of pine fields.*

How he wished to live together with his master at Minobu. How he missed his mother-land where he spent his childhood at the pine forest with his lovely mother and father!

He must be one of the great Bodhisattvas from underground because it was he who acted to fulfill his master’s words, “The sun orbits from the east to west. This is a lucky omen of Buddhism in Japan returning to India” without any logic but at the cost of his life.

Today, Nichiren Buddhism has been spread around the world. Many Nichiren Shu priests are expounding the O’Daimoku and the *Lotus Sutra* in order for all people around the world to live in peace and happiness. Saint Nichiji was the pioneer of the overseas missionary in Nichiren Shu.

D) Search Your Mission to Find What to Do

We, human beings, were supposed to be born with a certain mission on this earth. You were born to your parents because of your wish. Your soul in the spiritual realm might determine what to do on this earth before you chose your parents.

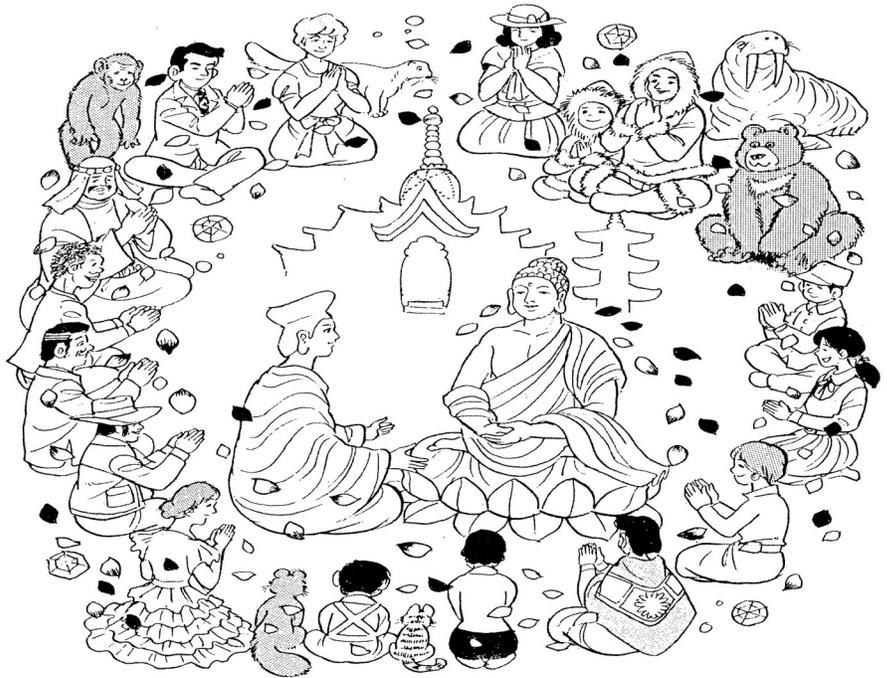
However, once you were born and have a physical body, your body interrupts your mission and you have forgotten the mission. So you’d better have an obedient mind and ask the Buddha:

“Oh, Sakyamuni Buddha! What am I supposed to do? Please teach me the way to do my mission!” If you ask the question sincerely, you will see a way that you have not

thought about. When you say, “I want to do this and that, you attach to physical matters in front of you; therefore, leave everything up to the Buddha. Live daily in righteousness and do not leave a source of trouble for the future. Someday the Buddha will teach you the most suitable right way. Whether you can realize His message or not depends on your eager mind toward your own mission.

If your mind is cloudy, you will complain often and miss the Buddha’s message. Keep in your mind that every decision is your responsibility. Good or bad is created by you!

Do not be afraid of the words, “Everything is God’s will.” Or you should not be caught by another honey tongue such as “Whatever you do, if you chant the name of a certain Buddha, you will be taken to the Buddha-land.” After death, it is not that easy for some people. Should you think, “I am a Buddha?” This kind of arrogant thought is very bad!



E) At the Last Stage

When your last stage on this earth comes, Nichiren Dai’Shonin will lead you in front of the Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha, then He will look at all your records. It will be great when He says with a smiling face, “You did well!” How wonderful it will be! Hold on every day!

Therefore, to die after you accomplish your mission will be joyful like the last stage of a show. Those who had accomplished their mission like Sakyamuni Buddha, Nichiren Dai’Shonin, and his disciples, their souls will live forever even after their physical extinction.

It will be nice if we can live like that!

All right? Please be obedient, walk the right way and find out your mission to accomplish, then there is nothing to be afraid of!

F) A Celebration at the Last Stage

At the end of one's last stage,
 The Buddha will bring a bouquet to you accompanied by many Bodhisattvas.
 To make the last stage as a celebration,
 Respect the Buddha obediently,
 Believe in the *Lotus Sutra*.
 Rejoice at hearing a phrase and a verse of the sutra,
 Expound the phrase and the verse
 One to another to others,
 And pray for their happiness and world peace!
 As a result you can see the right way
 And accomplish your mission.
 At the end of the final stage,
 The Buddha will appear
 With a bouquet as the merit for rejoicing.

