

Minwa Fu Hokekyo Dowa

(Volume 5 of the 30 Volumes)

by Rev. Kōge Matsumoto

Translated by Rev. Shokai Kanai

Never Dreamed of Being a Billionaire (Chapter 4 of the Lotus Sutra)

Chapter 1

Refreshing Priest

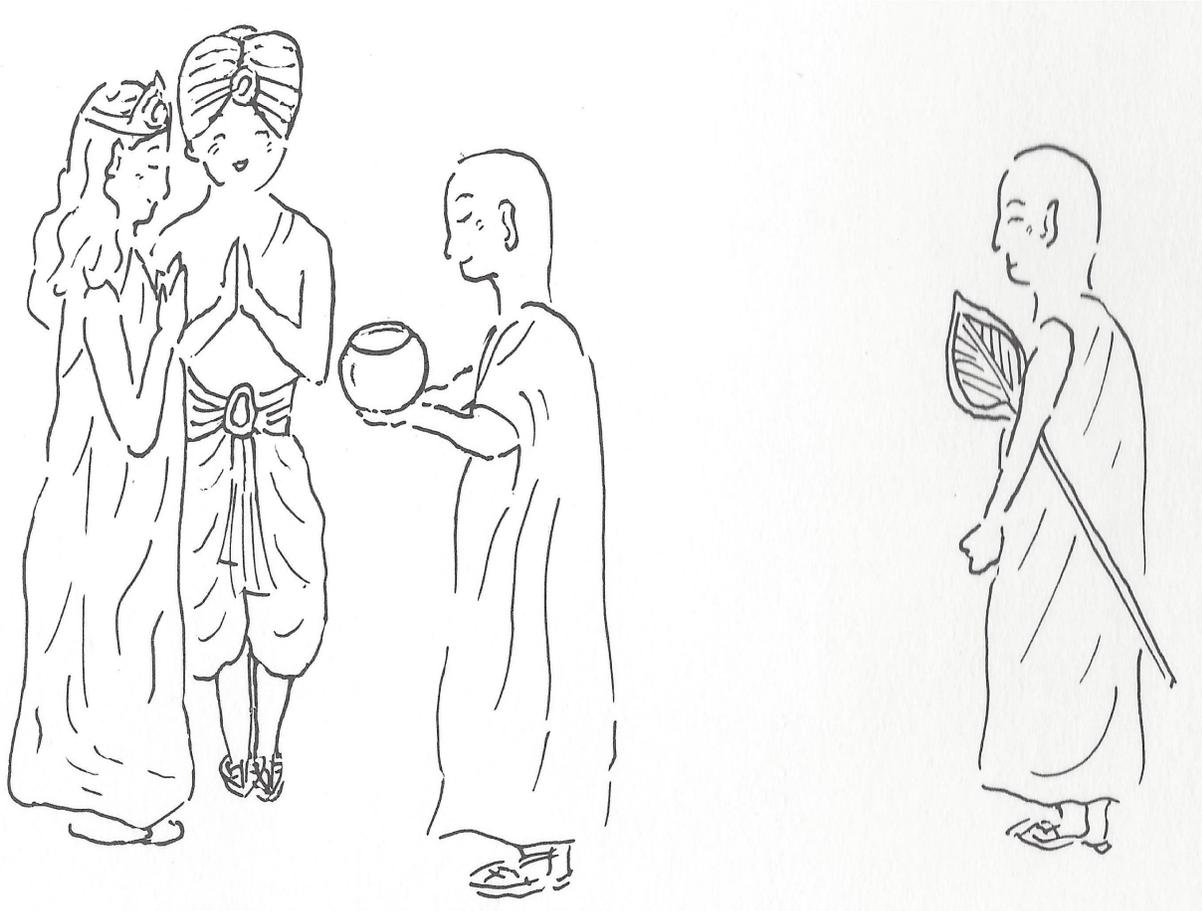
Please recall in the preceding chapter, the Buddha said, “Sariputra! You will become a Buddha called Flower-Light Tathagata in your future existence.” He assured Sariputra, the Wisest One among the Buddha’s many disciples that he will become a Buddha.

To provide proof of his assurance, the Buddha testified that “You will be a Buddha in a future life, so I will give you a Buddha’s name.”

It is said that Sariputra was originally not Buddha’s disciple at first. Sariputra used to be a monk and practiced another religion, Brahmanism. During this time he had a good friend named Maudgalyayana.

One day when Sariputra, who practiced Brahmanism, was walking in the city of King-House, he saw a monk begging who looked very refreshing.

Sariputra was so impressed with his pure appearance that he followed after him instinctively. He did not know how long he was following the monk, but he could not help himself and stopped the monk to ask him some questions.



Chapter 2

Sariputra as a Brahman Monk

“Excuse me, but I am a Brahman monk named Sariputra. I was so impressed and fascinated with you, I followed after you for miles. Please excuse me, but I would like to ask you some questions. Why do you look so pure and not dirty looking? Your eyes are so beautiful and refreshed. Who is your master and what does he teach?”



“I have just joined this group recently,” answered the young man very politely and continued, “I am still an inexperienced person and do not understand difficult teachings yet. But our master always taught us that everything that happens has a cause and an effect - regardless if it is good or bad. In order to understand this teaching, I am practicing it every day. My teacher is a sacred person from the Sakya Clan called Sakyamuni Buddha.”

Chapter 3

Cause and Effect Is the Buddha's Teaching

Hearing the teaching of Cause and Effect - whether it is good or bad, everything has a cause and an effect, Sariputra's heart pulsed with joy.

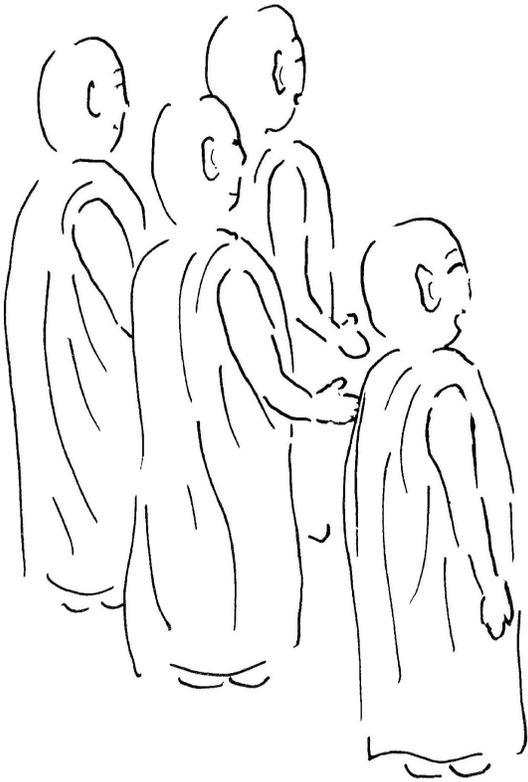
He bowed deeply and respectfully to the young man. He ran to his close friend, Maudgalyayana. Do you remember him? He has the best supernatural power among the Buddha's disciples. Sariputra came back to this Number One supernatural person, Maudgalyayana, and told him about his meeting with the monk, after catching his breath.

Chapter 4

Sariputra Was Able to meet with His Original Master

“Hi, Maudgalyayana, I found a master to serve.” He told the story about how he met a young monk with pure eyes and a refreshed appearance.

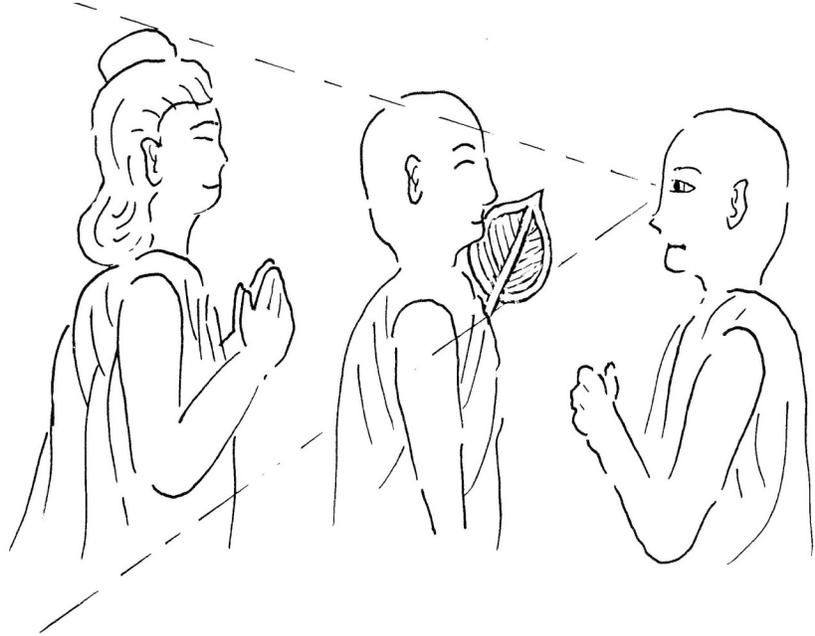
Then he asked Maudgalyayana, “According to him, Sakyamuni Buddha says that everything has ‘Cause and Effect,’ if so, there must be some reason that we are Brahman monks. Can you foresee the reasons with your supernatural power?”



Chapter 5

Sariputra Was a Bodhisattva in His Previous Life

Maudgalyayana foresaw Sariputra's past life. There it was! He saw the cause of why he became a Brahman monk who was unsatisfied with what he was doing. A long, long time ago, he was already a Bodhisattva practicing



Buddha Dharma as a Buddhist monk. He used to listen to a Buddha and performed ascetic practices in the mountains and woods in nature. He thoroughly completed all practices of *shomon* (*Listeners of the Buddha's teachings*) and *en'gaku* (*Self-practicer of the Buddha's teachings*), the Two Vehicles, and then became a Bodhisattva. He almost reached the stage where he would receive a Buddhist name.

However, one day, a jealous monk said to him, "Give me your eyeballs!" He continued, "If you are a real Bodhisattva who has no attachment to anything and who can do anything for others, you can give me your eyeballs!"

Chapter 6

The Bodhisattva Who Gave His Eyeball

The Bodhisattva was indeed in trouble. But he thought about it deeply, “Even though I have no eyes I can see things with the eyes of my mind.”

Then he hollowed out his eyeballs and gave them to the Brahman.

Receiving the eyeballs with blood dripping on his palm, the Brahman brought them to his nose, sniffed with a scowl on his face and said, “How stinky! I don’t want these filthy eyeballs!” He dropped them on the ground and smashed them with his foot.



Chapter 7

Sariputra Was Born as a Brahman Because He Hated a Brahman

Even though Sariputra was a Bodhisattva, he could not stand the Brahman monk. “How selfish and shameful! I do not want to be involved with this type of person. I won’t stand being treated like this!” So he went deep into a forest on a mountain and never showed himself to anyone.



Since Sariputra hated the Brahman monk so much, he was reborn as a Brahman monk.

Please remember this! Because he hated the Brahman, Sariputra was reborn as the person, a Brahman, he hated.

Chapter 8

Sariputra Became a Disciple of the Buddha Again

Surprise! In reality, Sariputra was a Bodhisattva who had almost reached the stage to attain Buddha-hood in his previous existence. The Buddha knew him with his compassionate insight. Therefore, the Buddha gave him a chance to attain Buddhahood in this lifetime.

Thus, Sariputra and Maudgalyayana requested to join the Sangha along with their 250 disciples. No wonder Sariputra is the wisest among the Buddha's disciples.



Chapter 9

The Title of Flower-Light Tathagata, the First Among the Disciples

The people in the realm of the “Two-Vehicles” had never thought about becoming Buddhas before. Therefore, Maudgalyayana, the best friend of Sariputra who represented all people of the Two Vehicles, must have been very happy to witness Sariputra receive an assurance to be a Buddha named Flower-Light Tathagata.

Then in this chapter of the Lotus Sutra, the four senior disciples, or Sravakas, expressed their joyful feeling. They are Maudgalyayana who is number one in super natural powers; Purana and Subhuti the best preachers, and Kasyapa who is the number one leader among the Buddha’s disciples.

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Not only were these four disciples delighted, but also all the congregation gathered at Mt. Sacred Eagle were very much delighted by the Buddha's spoken words, "Sariputra! You will become a Buddha named Flower-Light Tathagata and your world will be called Free-From-Taint!"

The reason for their joyful reaction was because they had never thought that they were able to become Buddhas even in their dreams. It is not an easy task for them to understand that their fellow disciple was assured to become a Buddha named Flower-Light by the Buddha.

Chapter 10

The Four Sravakas Joyfulness and Reflection

In order to express their honest feeling the four sravakas representing the other people of the “Two Vehicleless” stood, fixed their robes, showed their right shoulders respectfully, bowed deeply to the Buddha and said together as follows:

“Sakyamuni! Although we are senior disciples of yours, we thought about practicing only for our own sake but not for others. Besides that, we did not practice as hard as we used to in our young age. We had followed your words and what you said many years ago: “Do not attach to matters in order to obtain a peaceful mind.” We thought that we had attained enlightenment, and therefore did not practice harder to save other people as we thought it was not necessary. It was not our task to save others as that was none of our business. That is what we had thought.



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Chapter 11

We Misunderstood

“Such things are Bodhisattvas’ job to save others, and we should not do that. We assumed that we should just live in the right livelihood and never make trouble for others. We never thought about working for others. We are unbelievable but very delighted to see Sariputra, our superior, receive the Tathagata’s name, an assurance to become a Buddha.”

“It was as if we obtained a priceless, very rare treasure even though we never wished to have it to begin with. We feel like we are dreaming.” Thus they repent their misunderstanding and told the following story to express their feeling:

Chapter 12

A Parable of A Wealthy Father and His Poor Son

1) A Son Separated from His Father:

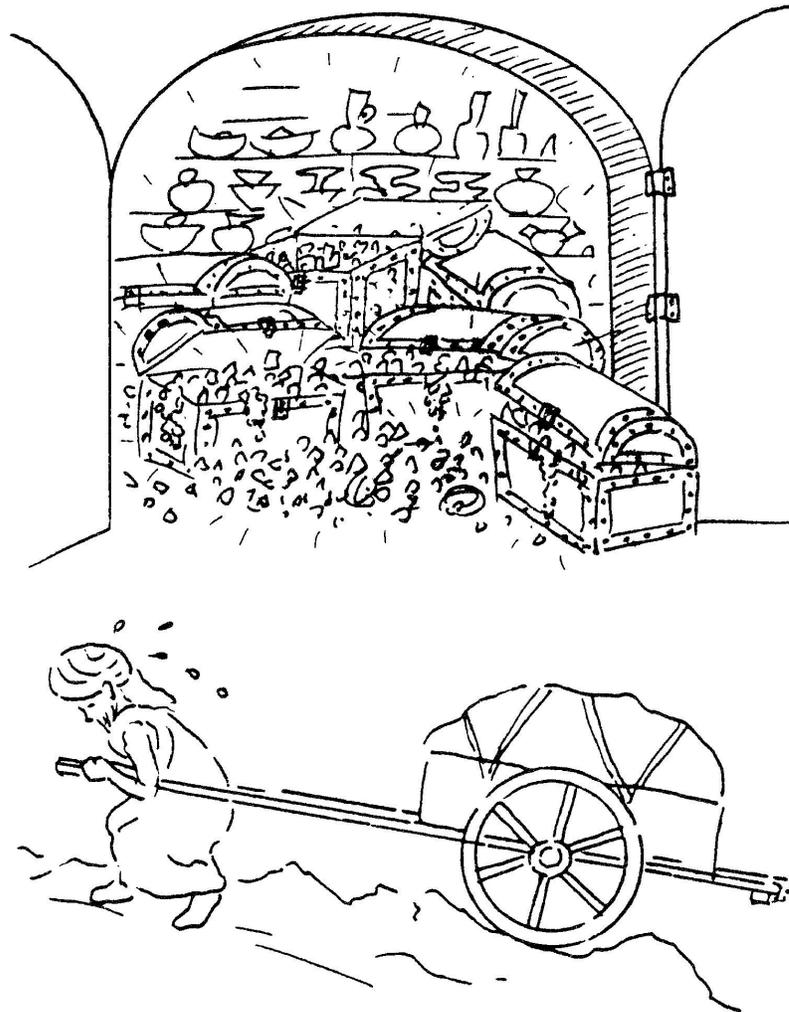
A long time ago there was a middle aged man who looked poor and shabby. When he was very young, he was separated from his father for an unknown reason. He could not find his house and wandered from one country to another, without any goals for his future. He just played around dully day after day. He never thought to work earnestly in his adulthood. His mind became corrupt little by little. He could not judge right from wrong. He had no sympathy for others but lived to receive sympathy from others. He carried himself on just like a beggar.

On the contrary, his father searched for his beloved son all over from one country to another but could not find him anywhere. He gave up searching and settled in a town and started a trading business.



2) Father Who Became Wealthy:

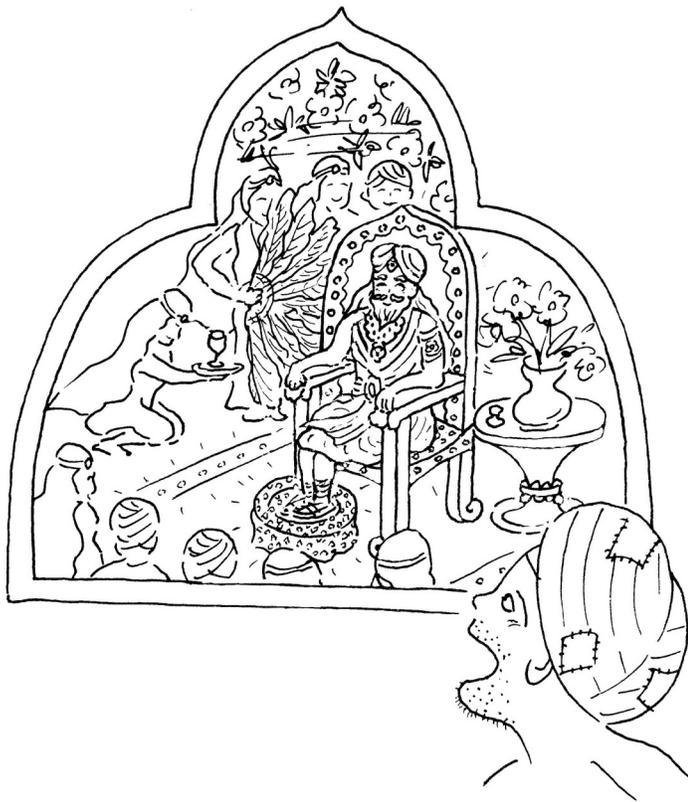
He worked so hard and saved various treasures and money for his son to inherit them someday. Through his trading business in many faraway countries he tried to gather some information about his son, but it was all in vain. He advanced in age to his 70s. He thought his son would be in his 20s by now. He worried about the son often. However, one day his prayers came to reality.



3) Father and Son Meet After Fifty Years of Separation:

The poor man continued to be shabby and poor, but one day he happened to walk the road in front of his father's estate. Looking for an odd job and food here and there, he happened to pass by a main street of a town where his father lived. On the main street, he saw a big store of the wealthy trader, so he peeked inside the store.

He was surprised to see a haughty looking old man sitting in a big couch way back in the store. He wore expensive garments and placed his legs on a leg rest that was decorated with various jewels. He was surrounded by many people, some of them who looked like of a high rank while others who wore beautiful clothing and some others who looked just like employees. A few people were using big feather fans to send cool air to him along with a good fragrance. He looked very different from the other people.



So the poor shabby man thought as follows:

4) The Poor Man Could Not Recognize His Father:

“Oh, no! This is not the place where a poor looking man like me should come! If I stay here any longer, I will be mistaken as a bad guy.” Having thought this, the poor man tried to run away! On the contrary, the rich man, who had never forgotten about his son, recognized him at first sight as his son who had run away decades ago. He immediately dispatched a man beside him to quickly bring back the poor man standing at the gate.

5) Great Wealthy Man Who Cannot Tell His Son That He is the Poor Man’s Father:

The messenger ran up to the poor son and brought him forcefully inside the store because of his master’s order. The wealthy man had never told anyone about his lost son; therefore, the servant had no way of knowing who the poor man was. Of course, the poor son had no way of knowing why he was forcefully brought in. He assumed for sure that he was mistaken with an evil man and caught.



6) Some Day He Can Proclaim that He Is the Poor Man's Father:

He thought, "I was caught though I didn't do anything wrong. I shall be killed. More and more frightened, he fainted and fell to the ground. Seeing all this in the distance, the father felt pity upon him who was too base and mean to meet a noble man but he was still his son. He decided to let him go away.



Soon after that, the father dispatched two men who looked worn-out and powerless as secret messengers. He told the men, "Go and gently tell the poor man that he will be employed here for a double day's pay."

7) Father Camouflages His Identity:

"Hey, you! There is an easy and well-paid job! Do you want to work with us?" said the servants. "Sounds good, but what kind of work is it?" said the poor man. They answered as their master told them to, "It is dirty but easy! It is to draw stools out of the sewages. It is double day's pay! Moreover, the man who hires you is a very gentle person," tempted the servants wisely. The poor man agreed and started work the next day.

8) The Day Will Come for the Wealthy Man to Tell his Son He is His Father:

The wealthy man's estate was very big and wide with warehouses full of gold, silvers, corals, lapis lazuli, and pearls. There were countless cows, oxen, horses, elephants, and their carts. The poor son gave no attention to those things because they do not belong to him and had nothing to do with him.

However, the father wished to give all these treasures and estates to his son. The father was disappointed with his son who was satisfied with the double pay and the dirty job.

He was weak, thin, worn-out, and defiled with dirt and dust. The rich man wondered, "How can I tell him that I am his father? I must prepare him." He decided not to hurry but took a lot of time to educate him little by little.



9) Pretending to Be a Poor Man:

Seeing his poor son in the distance, although he was so base and mean, the son did have guts. Regardless of whether someone was watching or not, he worked hard and honestly.

One day the father took off his necklace, his garments of thin and soft cloth, and other ornaments. He put on tattered and dirty clothing, smeared himself with dust, and carried a dirty utensil in his hand. He came to the workers and said, “Work hard! Do not be lazy!” With this expedient the father approached his son and said, “Man! Stay here and work! Do not go anywhere else! I was always watching you. I like the way you work hard! Do not hesitate to take trays of rice, flours, salt, vinegar or whatever you want. I will tell your manager that you can do that.”



10) The Wealthy Man Feels like the Poor Man's Father:

The rich man said, "Because I like the way you work hard, I feel as if I am your father. Do not worry anymore, and come to me for any advice. From now on, I will treat you as my son, and in return you must work harder and not be lazy. Don't deceive the other workers and do not get angry with other workers who perform evil deeds. Do not speak ill of others and do not resent them." Thus, the rich man encouraged the poor man to work harder.

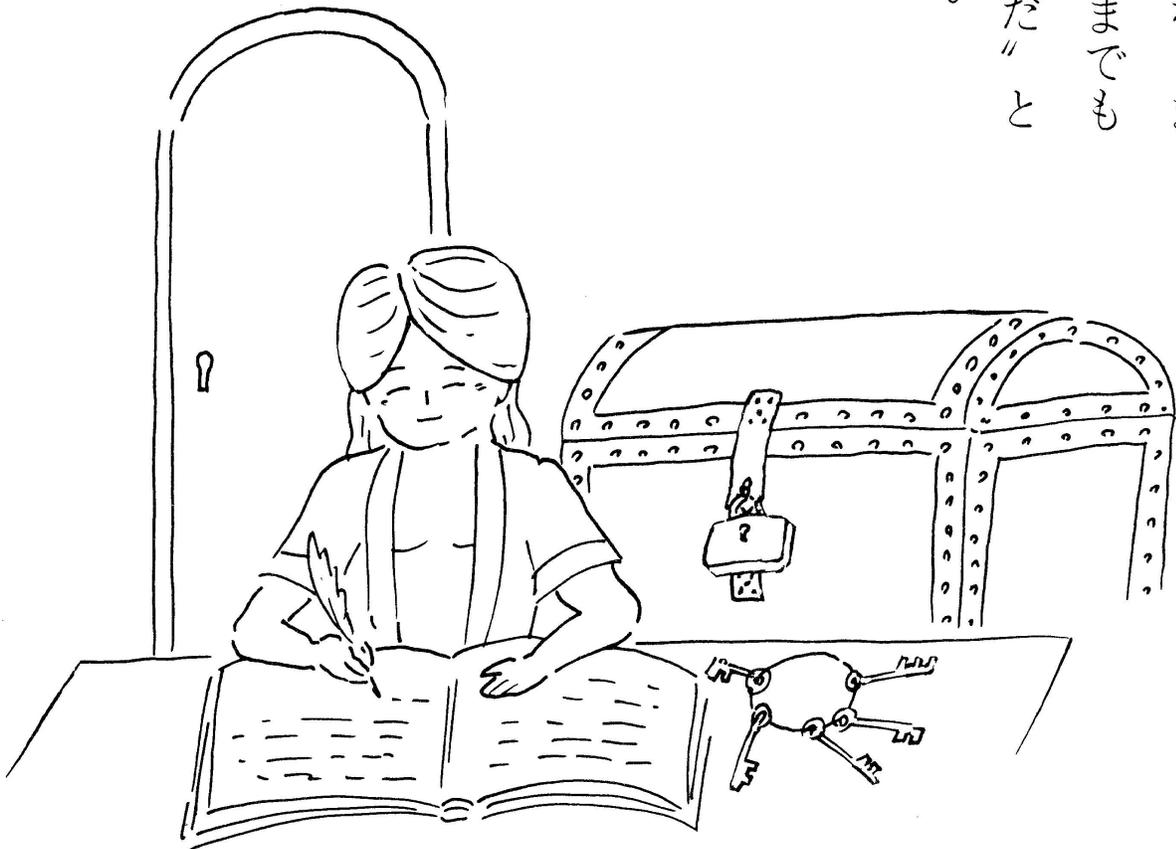


The poor son was glad to be treated kindly but still thought that he was a humble employee and kept living outside of the estate. He continued to work harder out of gratitude to the rich man's thoughtful compassion.

11) Taking the Responsibility of the Wealthy Man's Love:

After many years, the poor man cleared his base and mean attitude. His face looked better and his mind became gentle, he spoke politely, and his attitude changed for the better. The father and son trusted each other. Now the son felt no hesitation in entering the house of his father but still lodged in his old place. The son started to take book-keeping requests and understood everything about the estate. But he still thought "I am just a humble employee."

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12) The Rich Man Became Sick:

One day the rich man was very sick. The poor son took care of the sick person from the bottom of his heart to repay his kindness. The wealthy father knew his son had cleared his base, mean and dirty mind after many years. The son awoke in Buddha nature to take care of this sick man unselfishly without knowing he is his real father. He never stole a penny, took care of others and wished happiness for others.

As the time of the father's death drew near, the father told his son to call in his relatives, the king, ministers, household and neighbors.



13) Declaration of the Father and the Son:

The son followed the order without knowing what would happen. When they all assembled, the wealthy man said to them, “Gentlemen, know this! This is my son, my real son. He ran away from me when I lived in a certain city, and wandered with hardships for more than fifty years. When I was in that city, I anxiously looked for him. I happened to find him years ago.

He has been cleared from the many years of living a squalid, poor, mean, and dirt-filled life and became a compassionate, gentle and wise man now. This is my precious son. I am his father. All my treasures are his. He knows what has been taken in and what has been paid out. Thus, the rich man declared all of this.



14) Doubt What He Heard:

Listening to his father's words, the son was so surprised and almost fainted. He had never thought about inheriting the wealth of his father. He kept thinking that he was just a poor employee until now. The homeless beggar living day by day was picked up by the wealthy man. He thought that the wealthy man was the great benefactor who educated and raised him starting with a dirty and sticky job to eventually being the book-keeper for many years. He could not believe the same man was his own father, but he appreciated that the man had taken care of him publicly and in private since his first day because of the blood relation between the real father and the real son. He was so glad of his thoughtfulness; a joyful tear almost came out.



15) Never Dreamed of Being A Billionaire

The poor son was very glad to hear these words of his father. He had the greatest joy that he had ever had. He thought, “I never dreamed of having these treasures for myself. It has come to me unexpectedly.” He deeply expressed his appreciation many times.

Chapter 13

Sakyamuni Buddha Is the Wealthy Man

“World-Honored One! The great rich man is you. We are like his son because you always told us, ‘All living beings are my children.’ Even though you said that, we have not understood Buddha’s compassion and we behaved just as the poor son had lived day to day with only a day’s pay. We lived from hand to mouth. We were so ignorant that we clung to the teachings of the Lesser Vehicle that Nirvana is for our own salvation only.”

“You always taught Bodhisattvas, ‘Help others! Work for others for their happiness even at the cost of your own life and build the Buddha Land on this earth. We always heard the message, but we thought the teaching was only for the Bodhisattvas and not for us to do. We assumed carelessly that the teaching does not relate to us but only a task for Bodhisattvas to do. Now you have expounded the only One Vehicle in this sutra. You taught expediently the Three Vehicles in

order to let us ride on the One Vehicle, the Only Truth in the universe. We felt like awaking from a dream and feeling clear in our minds. We finally realized that if we wish to attain real Nirvana, we must first pray for everyone's happiness and try to establish a peaceful Buddha Land on this earth. This should be deeply engraved in our minds.



Chapter 14

If You Can Understand by Faith, You Are Fortunate:

In order to prove that everyone is able to become a Buddha, Sakyamuni Buddha gave the Buddha Name, “Flower-Light” to Sariputra who is our great senior disciple.

When people understand Buddha’s teachings by faith, when they wish everyone’s happiness, and when they try to build the peaceful Buddha Land, the Buddha gives us a Buddha Name. It is wonderful! It is very courageous for us!”

All Buddha’s disciples were so delighted and impressed with Sariputra receiving the Buddha name. They also apologized for their misunderstanding and ignorance, and appreciated the compassion of the Buddha.



Chapter 15

Concede the Feelings of Others

By the way, suppose you let your friend borrow a precious toy, and suppose he or she took it without asking you, and he or she does not return it back to you or breaks it! What do you do? You want to scold him or her, don't you? It is all right to scold if you think that by telling him or her, "if you do such a thing again, nobody will trust you, and you will lose all your friends, and you will be very lonely!"

However, remember Sariputra in his previous life as a Bodhisattva? If you scold someone saying, "You are an idiot!" or "I hate you!" or "I will not talk to you anymore!" If you scorned or hated someone, something bad will happen to you sooner or later. Open your mind and think compassionately, "I feel sorry for him or her! How can he or she be obedient and kind?" Please think about him or her.



Even if your toy or item was lost or broken, it will not come back. If he or she becomes a nice person, you acted just like a Bodhisattva.

Chapter 16

Thank You for Scolding Me

Therefore, you should appreciate it when your father, mother or a teacher scolds you. Say, “Thank you for scolding me!” The reason they scold you is because they are thinking about you as an important person and because they love you.

If they do not care what happens to you, they will not scold you. It is real love and compassion by your teacher, father, mother, or someone to scold you when you are selfish, waste money, demand more allowance, or act mischievously.



Chapter 17

Great Transformation of the Buddha

If they scold you with love and compassion, they are the Buddhas who transformed into your teacher, father, or mother, and they are protecting you. You are lucky, so appreciate them.

I shall see you in the next volume, “The Similes of Herbs.” You will see more important teachings of the Buddha. Anticipate it!

Do not forget to appreciate and say, “Thank you for scolding me!”

