

HIDDEN TEMPLE

I enjoy watching the History Channel especially when they have shows on archeology. There is a certain fascination about the past and how ancient people lived and were able to build fabulous monuments with simple tools. I am sure that there are lost technologies out there forgotten over time. Even now we cannot re-create the concrete the Romans used since we do not have the formula and computer analysis only shows chemical composition. Wouldn't it be cool to go on a journey of discovery like Indiana Jones or Lara Croft, raveling all over the world, looking for clues, hacking your way through the thick jungle to find that long lost temple? Treasures await. Let me tell you about one journey a group of people had.

One day a group of people were walking through a thick forest. They were all talking and discussing various topics, each supporting their own beliefs. They even debated the size of the forest they were in. Some got angry since they could not all agree. Meanwhile, they did not notice their surrounds, the tall trees, the sound of the birds and other animals and the scent of the flowers. They all wandered deeper and deeper into the forest.

There was one person in the back who did not partake in the various discussions. He remained quiet and just observed the intricacies of the forest. His focus was on the beautiful trees and flowers surrounding him. Gradually he drifted apart from the group, going deeper into the forest. Eventually he found an old pathway, which was made many, many years ago. Curious to as where this path leads, he followed it.

This path was hidden by the bushes and vegetation after many years of neglect. It is interesting to note how fast the forest will reclaim land that is unhindered by humans.

When the forest takes over, it becomes difficult to see and the pathway disappears. In order to continue down the path, he had to clear out the branches and weeds to get through. This was a tough job! It took awhile to go a few hundred feet.

It was getting dark, so he made himself a little campsite with the cleared vegetation. Again in the morning, he continued to clear the path to see where it would end up. Eventually after a few weeks, the path led to an ancient garden. Now he was getting somewhere. How beautiful this place was! No one has been around in hundreds of thousands of years. This garden led to a palace that had withstood the test of time. This was a fine palace. He meandered through the many rooms, searching and observing the intricacies the ancient people put into their architecture and carvings in the wall.

In the center of the palace, there was a great temple. Curious, he went in to see if any treasures still remained. Lo and behold nothing was touched. It still contained all the beautiful ornaments, decorations, the fabulous jewels strewn in the walls and ceiling. The room glistened magically just as it did many, many years ago. In shock of this wonderful sight, many moments passed before he remembered his friends.

“Oh, how I must go back at once to find my friends in the forest so that I can tell them what I have found,” he thought. So, quickly leaving the temple, the palace and garden, he went back through the path he laboriously created just a few weeks ago to find his friends.

He found the group still debating various topics roaming through the forest. He told them of his discovery. You would think that everyone would try and see the wonderful temple. Some people did not listen and would not believe his story. There is

no hidden temple. This is only a farce which would only be a waste of time, so these people went back to their lively discussions.

Those who were greatly interested began looking for the path that would lead them to the wonderful treasures. Once on the path, it was not easy. They still had to maneuver around fallen trees and wiggle through thick vegetation. This was too tough for some so they quit and turned around. This made the man feel sad for his friends since they would be missing out on the wonderful treasures at the temple. He could not force them all to join him and appreciate the sights he saw.

This man is the Buddha. He found the path that leads towards the truth which is the dharma. This dharma is eternal and will always be there, just like the temple was there with all its jewels and treasures. The path does get covered and hidden over the years because we forget the true teachings, thus the Buddha returns to expound his teachings again. Good thing is that all of you have found this path. But the journey ahead is still difficult. Do not be discouraged and quit like what some of the people did. Know that the journey will lead to something wonderful. Nothing is easy in this world. Only through perseverance and patience will we be able to see things as they really are.

As for the people who chose not to partake in the search for the path, well, they are still in the forest, the forest of darkness and sorrow. This forest is the ignorance that dwells in our minds. Many choose to stay within this ignorance and will never find the path. It is our duty to finally reach the temple of enlightenment so that we too can return down the path and convince the naysayers how truly wonderful this path is. We cannot force them, but we can convince them.

So remember that you are special since you have already taken the step down the path towards the dharma. This path will be difficult, trying to navigate through the dense vegetation of ignorance. As Nichiren Buddhists, know that we have the power of the Odaimoku which when chanted sincerely, is like a machete hacking through the vegetation, clearing the path ahead of us. We are protected as we go along our journey to the truth.