

Jogyo

Auxiliary Practice



Lexington Nichiren Buddhist Community
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Lexington
Nichiren Buddhist
Community

Place of Enlightenment

This is the place of enlightenment, as radiant as gems.

All the Three Treasures of the worlds of the ten directions are present here. Now we are before them. We bow to the Buddhas and worship (at) their feet with our heads.

Bowing to the Three Treasures

With our whole heart, we bow to the eternal Buddhas of the worlds of the ten directions.

With our whole heart, we bow to the eternal Dharmas of the worlds of the ten directions.

With our whole heart, we bow to the eternal Sanghas of the worlds of the ten directions.

Invocation

Honor be to the great Mandala, the perfect circle of all honorable ones, the ground of being revealed by our founder Nichiren.

Honor be to the Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni, our Original Teacher, the Lord of the Dharma, our Great Benefactor who attained enlightenment in the remotest past.

Honor be to the protective deities of the Dharma who have vowed to defend those who keep and practice the Lotus Sutra.

Honor be to our Founder, the Great Bodhisattva Nichiren.

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Lexington Nichiren Buddhist Community



We now honor all of you. May we know your presence in this hall of enlightenment out of your compassion for us. Look at us with the light of your wisdom, and accept our offering of chanting the Sutra!

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo!

Opening the Sutra

The most profound and wonderful teaching is presented in this sutra.

This sutra is difficult to meet even once in thousands and millions of aeons. Now we have been able to see, hear, receive, and keep this sutra. May we understand the most excellent teaching of the Buddha.

The most excellent teaching of the Great Vehicle is very difficult for us to understand. We shall be able to approach enlightenment when we see, hear or touch this sutra. Expounded is the Buddha's truth. Expounding is the Buddha's essence. The letters composing this sutra are the Buddha's manifestation.

Just as perfume is caught by something put nearby, so shall we be richly benefited by this sutra, even when we are not aware of it; so many merits are accumulated in this sutra!

Anyone can expiate their sin, do good deeds, and attain Buddhahood by the merits of this sutra. It does not matter whether they are wise or not, or whether they believe the sutra or reject it.

This sutra is the most wonderful and most excellent taught by the Buddhas of the past, present and future. May we meet and receive it, birth after birth, world after world!

The Sutra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Dharma

Chapter 2 - Expedients

Thereupon the World-Honored-One¹

Quietly emerged

From his samadhi²

And said to Shariputra³

The wisdom of the Buddhas

Is profound and immeasurable

Its gate is difficult to understand

And difficult to enter

No Sravaka⁴ disciple

Or self-taught Pratyekabuddha⁵

Can understand it

Why is that? Because

The present Buddhas attended on many

Hundreds of thousands of billions

Of past Buddhas

And practiced the innumerable teachings

Of those Buddhas bravely and strenuously

To their far flung fame till they attained

The profound Dharma

Which you have never heard before,

And also because they are expounding

Notes

¹ World-Honored-One is one of the ten titles given to the Buddha.

² Samadhi is a deep meditation or concentration.

³ Shariputra was known as the wisest among the Buddha's disciples.

⁴ A Sravaka is one who hears the teachings of the Buddha.

⁵ The Pratyekabuddhas, or "private Buddhas" are those who strive for enlightenment without observing teachings.

⁶ This is another title of the Buddha. It means roughly "thus gone one." (It is pronounced Ta-tha'-ga-ta.)

⁷ In ceremonies, we normally repeat the text enclosed in brackets three times.

⁸ Anuttara-samyak-sambhodi is the perfect enlightenment reached by the Buddha. The Lotus Sutra contrasts this with the imperfect enlightenment taught by the Buddha in earlier Sutras

⁹ The World-Voice-Perceiver Bhodisattva is known as Avalokitesvara in Sanskrit, Kannon in Chinese and Kanzeon in Japanese. There are various depictions of this Bodhisattva as either male or female. We choose to represent her as female.

¹⁰ The Dhuta is the discipline to release one from ties to clothing, food and shelter.

The Dharma according to the capacities
Of all living beings in such ways
That the true purpose of their teachings
Is difficult to understand.

Shariputra!

Since I became Buddha, I also
Have been expounding various teachings
With different stories of previous lives,
Various parables, and various similes.

I have been leading all living beings
With innumerable expedients
In order to save them from attachments,
Because I have the power
To employ expedients
And the power to perform
The paramita of insight

Shariputra!

The insight of the Tathagatas⁶
Is wide and deep.
They have all the states of mind
Towards innumerable living beings,
Unhindered eloquence, powers,
Fearlessness, dhyana-concentrations,
Emancipations and samadhis. They entered
Deep into boundlessness and attained
The Dharma which you have never heard before.

Shariputra!

The Tathagatas divide the Dharma
Into various teachings and expound
Those teachings so gently and skilfully
That living beings are delighted.

Shariputra!

In short, the Buddhas attained
The innumerable teachings
Which you have never heard before.
No more
Will I say,
Shariputra
Because the Dharma
Attained by the Buddhas
Is the highest truth
Rare to hear and difficult
To understand.
Only the Buddhas attained
The highest truth, that is
The reality of all things
[In regard to
Their appearances as such
Their natures as such
Their embodiments as such
Their powers as such
Their activities as such
Their primary causes as such
Their environmental causes as such
Their effects as such
Their requital as such
And the equality of these nine factors
As such.]⁷

Seeing Off

World-Honored Ones!

Keep us in your minds! Be where you like! Come
again out of your compassion for us!

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo!

The Coming of the Buddhas

From Chapter 2 - Expedients

The Buddhas, the World-Honored-Ones
Appear in the worlds
In order to cause all living beings

The Four Great Vows

Sentient beings are innumerable,
we vow to save each other.
Our harmful desires are inexhaustable,
we vow to quench them all
The Buddha's teachings are immeasurable,
we vow to study them all
The Way of the Buddha is unexcelled,
we vow to attain the path sublime.

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo

The Three Refuges

With deepest reverence, we take refuge in the Buddha.

May all living beings understand the Great Way and aspire to supreme Enlightenment.

With deepest reverence, we take refuge in the Dharma.

May all living beings enter into the storehouse of the sutras! May their wisdom be as vast as the sea.

With deepest reverence, we take refuge in the Sangha.

May all living beings become of one mind and live without hindrance.

To open the gate to the insight of the Buddha,
And to cause them to purify themselves.
They appear in the worlds
In order to show the insight of the Buddha
To all living beings.
They appear in the worlds
In order to cause all living beings
To obtain the insight of the Buddha.
They appear in the worlds
In order to cause all living beings
To enter the way to the insight of the Buddha.

The Triple World

From Chapter 3 - A Parable

The Triple World is not peaceful
It is like a burning house.
It is full of sufferings.
It is dreadful.

There are always the sufferings
Of birth, old age, disease and death.
They are like flames
Raging endlessly.

I have already left
The burning house of the Triple World.
I am tranquil and peaceful
In a bower in a forest.

This triple world
Is my domain.
All living beings in it
Are my children.

There are many sufferings
In this world.
Only I can save
All living beings.

Dispatch of Monks and Nuns

From Chapter 10 - The Teacher of the Dharma

If a teacher of the Dharma expounds this sutra
After my extinction,
I will manifest the four kinds of devotees:
Monks, nuns and men and women of pure faith,
And dispatch them
So that they may make offerings,
And lead many living beings,
Collecting them to hear the Dharma.
If the teacher is hated and threatened
With swords, sticks, tile-pieces or stones,
I will manifest guards and dispatch them
In order to protect.

The Appearance of a Stupa

From Chapter 11 - Beholding the Stupa of Treasures

Thereupon a loud voice of praise was heard
From within the stupa of treasures:
"Excellent, excellent! You, Shakyamuni,
The World-Honored One,
Have expounded to this great multitude

Memorial Prayer

We respectfully dedicate the merits of chanting the *Dharma Flower* and reciting the Sacred Title in the presence of the Buddha, our Founder Nichiren, and the Three Treasures to the soul(s) of ___, for whom we observe memorial service today. May the soul(s) of the deceased permeate throughout the spiritual world! May the heart of our prayer permeate throughout the spiritual world! May all our merits go to the deceased and increase the happiness of the deceased!

It is said in the *Dharma Flower*, "Good men or women in the future who hear the Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma with faithful respect caused by their pure minds, and have no doubts, will not fall into hell, the region of hungry spirits, or the region of animals. They will be reborn before the Buddhas of the worlds of the ten directions. They will always hear this sutra at the places of their rebirth. Even when they are reborn among people or gods, they will be given wonderful pleasures. When they are reborn before the Buddhas, they will appear in lotus-flowers."

May all sentient beings be blessed with these merits, and may we all together attain Buddhahood!

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo!

General Prayer

We respectfully dedicate all our merits gathered up till now
To the Great Mandala, the perfect circle of all honorable ones;
To the Eternal and True Teacher, Shakyamuni Buddha;
To the Supreme Teaching, the Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma;
To the leader of the Age of Degeneration, Our Founder, the Great Bodhisattva Nichiren;
And to the protective deities of the Dharma.

May the sacred title, Namu Myoho Renge Kyo And the Lotus Sutra spread throughout the world!

May all beings under the heavens and within the four seas Awaken to the true nature of reality Which is the Wonderful Dharma.
And by the merits of following the teachings of the Lotus Sutra,
May all beings be helped equally, overcome suffering,
And gain the happiness of blissful liberation.
With this prayer We strive to increase our understanding and appreciation
Of what others have given and contributed to us, And to develop constant, mindful consideration Of how our thoughts and actions Will beneficially contribute to others
Namu Myoho Renge Kyo!

The Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma,
The Teaching of Equality, the Great Wisdom, The Dharma for Bodhisattvas,
The Dharma protected by all the Buddhas.
So it is, so it is.
Shakyamuni, the World-Honored One,
What you have expounded is all true."

The Sutra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Dharma

Chapter 16 - Duration of the Life of the Tathagata

Since I became Buddha
It is many hundreds of thousands
Of billions of trillions
Of asankhyas of aeons.
For the past innumerable aeons
I have been expounding the Dharma
To hundreds of millions of beings
To lead them into the way to Buddhahood.
In order to save perverted people
I expediently show my Nirvana to them.
In reality I never pass away.
I always live here and expound the Law.
Although I always live here
With perverted people,
I disappear from their eyes
By my supernatural powers.
When they see me seemingly pass away,
Make offerings to my relics,

Adore and admire me,
Become devout, upright and gentle,
And wish to see me
With all their hearts
At the cost of their lives,
I reappear on Mount Sacred Eagle
With all my Sangha
And say to them:
"I always live here
I shall never be extinct.
I show my extinction to you expediently
Although I never pass away."
I also expound the unsurpassed Dharma
To the living beings of other worlds
If they respect me, believe me,
And wish to see me.
You have never heard this;
Therefore you thought that I pass away.
I see perverted people sinking
In an ocean of sufferings
Therefore I disappear from their eyes
And cause them to admire me.
When they adore me,
I reappear and expound the Law to them.
I can do this by my supernatural powers.
For innumerable aeons
I live on Mount Sacred Eagle
And in all other abodes.
Perverted people think:
"This world is in a great fire.
The end of the aeon is coming."
Really this world of mine is peaceful.
It is filled with gods and people.

The Difficulty of Keeping the Sutra

From Chapter 11 - Beholding the Stupa of Treasures

It is difficult to keep this sutra
I shall be glad to see anyone
Keeping it even for a moment;
So will all the other Buddhas.
They will be praised by all the Buddhas.
They will be full of valor,
And full of endeavour.
They should be considered
To have already observed the precepts,
And practiced the dhuta¹⁰.
They will quickly attain
The unsurpassed Buddha-way.
Anyone who reads and recites this sutra
Will be a child of mine.
They will be considered to live
On the stage of purity and good.
Anyone after my extinction
Who understands the meaning of this sutra
Will be the eye of the world
Of gods and people.
Anyone who expounds this sutra
Even for a moment in the dreadful world
Should be honored with offerings
By all gods and people.

Tranquil Light shall be made manifest in our sight;
our Buddha nature shall be identified with the
Buddha of Three Bodies in One; and together with
all other beings, we shall enjoy living in the Land of
Truth.

May the sound of our chanting the Sacred Title
permeate the whole world, be offered to the Three
Treasures, and bestowed on all beings! May all
beings enter the world of the One Reality, the Great
Vehicle; may the Buddha-land be adorned and all
beings favored with the merits of our chanting!

Odaimoku Chanting

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo

Its gardens, forests and palaces
Are adorned with treasures;
Gem trees have fruits and flowers;
Living beings are enjoying themselves;
And the gods are beating heavenly drums.
Pouring music and mandarava blossoms
On the Buddha and all assembled beings.
My pure realm is indestructable.
But perverted people think:
"It is full of sorrow, fear and pain,
And will soon burn away."
Because of their evil karmas,
Sinful people cannot hear even the names
Of the Three Treasures
For innumerable aeons.
To those who have accumulated merits,
Who are gentle and upright,
And see me living here,
Expounding the Dharma,
I say, "The duration
Of my life is immeasurable."
To those who see me after a long time,
I say: "Hard it is to see a Buddha."
This I can do by the power of my wisdom.
The light of my wisdom knows no bounds.
The duration of my life is forever.
I obtained this by ages of practices.
All of you, wise people!
Have no doubts about this!
Remove your doubts, have no more!
The Buddha's words are true, not false.
The physician who sent a messenger expediently
To tell his perverted children

Of his death in order to cure them
Was not accused of falsehood though living.
Likewise I am the father of this world.
I save all living beings from suffering.
Because they are perverted, I say
That I pass away even though I do not.
If they always see me,
They will become arrogant and licentious
And cling to the five desires
Till they fall into evil paths.
I know all living beings,
Who practice the way and who do not.
Therefore I expound various teachings
According to the capabilities of all.
I am always thinking:
"How can I cause all living beings
To enter into the unsurpassed way
And quickly become Buddhas themselves?"

The Merits of the Lotus Sutra

From Chapter 21—The Supernatural Powers of the Tathagatas⁶

Thereupon the Buddha
Said to the great Bodhisattvas
Headed by Superior-Practice
The supernatural powers of the Buddhas
Are as immeasurable, limitless and inconceivable
As I have already told you.
But I shall not be able to tell
All the merits of this sutra
To those to whom this sutra is to be transmitted
Even if I continue telling them

From the Itai-Doshin-Ji

All things are possible if people are united in one mind. Nothing can be accomplished if they are not united. If a person has two thoughts, nothing can be accomplished. Even if there are hundreds or thousands of people, if they are united in one, they are surely able to accomplish their aim.

From the letter to Myomitsu Shonin

I, Nichiren, sincerely keep the most profound Lotus Sutra among other sutras which have been preached, are being preached, and will be preached. I also chant the Sacred Title, the heart of the Sutra, by myself and teach others to chant it. Mugwort grass grows straight amidst the hemp field. Trees do not grow straight, but by cutting them straight, they become useful. If you chant the Sutra as it instructs, your mind will be straightened. Be aware that it is hard for us to chant the Sacred Title unless the spirit of the Eternal Buddha enters into our bodies.

Devotion

The Wonderful Truth expounded in the Sutra whose Sacred Title we now chant is what the past Buddhas taught, the present Buddhas are teaching, and the future Buddhas shall teach. It is the Great Law, true and pure, the propagation of which was entrusted primarily to Superior-Practice Bodhisattva by the Buddha on the Vulture Peak. Once we chant the sacred title, *Namu Myoho Renge Kyo*, we shall attain the right view that the three thousand things exist in our minds just as they are; the Pure Land of

From the Hokke-Shuyo-Sho

Since time immemorial all people on the earth have been the Buddha Shakyamuni's beloved children. We had not realized the relationship, because we had been undutiful children. It is a unique relationship. As the moon reflects on calm water, the Buddha appears in our mind.

From the Letter to Myoichi Ama

Those who put their faith in the Lotus Sutra are like winter, for many hardships come incessantly. Winter is surely followed by spring. We have never heard or seen that winter returns to fall. We have never heard that those whose faith is in the Lotus Sutra return to become ordinary people. The Lotus Sutra says, "All people who listen to this sutra will attain Buddhahood."

From the Kaimoku-Sho

To be filial(*ko*) means to be high(*ko*); heaven is high but not any higher than being filial. To be filial(*ko*) also means to be deep(*ko*); the earth is deep but not any deeper than being filial. Both sages and the wise come from filial families. How much more should students of Buddhism realize the favors they receive and show gratitude for them? Disciples of the Buddha should not fail to feel grateful for the four favors received from parents, people, nation, and Buddhism. Show gratitude to them.

By my supernatural powers
For many hundreds of thousands of billions of
asamkhyas of kalpas.
To sum up, all the teachings of the Tathagata,
All the unhindered, supernatural powers of the
Tathagata,
All the treasury of the hidden core of the Tathagata,
And all the profound achievements of the Tathagata
Are revealed and expounded explicitly in this sutra.
Therefore, keep, read, recite, expound and copy this
sutra,
And act according to the teachings of it
With all your hearts after my extinction!
In any world where anyone keeps, reads, recites,
expounds or copies this sutra,
Or acts according to its teachings,
Or in any place where a copy of this sutra is put,
Be it in a garden, in a forest, under a tree,
In a monastery, in the house of a lay believer,
In a hall, in a mountain, in a valley, or in the
wilderness,
There should a stupa be erected
And offerings be made to it
Because, know this,
The place where the stupa is erected
Is the place of enlightenment.
Here the Buddhas attained Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. ⁸
Here the Buddhas turned the wheel of the Dharma.
Here the Buddhas entered into Parinirvana.

The Sutra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Dharma

Chapter 25 – The Universal Gate of World-Voice-Perceiver Bodhisattva⁹

World-Honored One with the wonderful marks!
I ask you about this again.

Why is this child of the Buddha
Called World-Voice-Perceiver?

The Honorable One with the wonderful marks
Answered Endless-Intent in gathas:
Listen! World-Voice-Perceiver practiced
According to the conditions of the places of salvation
Her vow to save beings is as deep as the sea
You cannot fathom it even for kalpas.

On many hundreds of thousands of millions of
Buddhas
She attended and made a great and pure vow.
I will tell you about her vow in brief.
If you hear her name, and see her, and think of her
constantly,
You will be able to eliminate all sufferings.

Suppose you are thrown into a large pit of fire
By someone who has an intention of killing you.
If you think of the power of World-Voice-Perceiver,
The pit of fire will change into a pond of water.

Suppose you are in a ship drifting on a great ocean
Where dragons fish and devils are rampant.

From the Kanzin-Honzon-sho

When the sun shines brightly in the sky, everything is visible on the earth. In the same manner, those who understand the *Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma* will be able to know why calamities take place. The compassion of the Buddha is great. To save those who live in the Age of Degeneration, and who are too ignorant to know the truth of the Three-thousand-existences-in-one-mind, the Buddha wraps this gem in a bag of the five characters: *Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo*, and hangs the bag around their necks. Those who are given this bag will be protected by the four great Bodhisattvas.

From the Shoho-Jisso-Sho

Have faith in the Great Mandala Gohonzon, the most superlative in the world. Endeavor! Endeavor to strengthen your faith, so that you may be blessed with the protective powers of all Buddhas. Learn and practice to strengthen your faith. Without learning and practicing there is no Buddhism. To learn and to practice are a part of faith. Follow these yourself and influence others to do the same. Even if only a word or phrase, spread it to others.

From the Sado-Gokanki-Sho

I, Nichiren, vowed to learn and to master Buddhism and to attain Buddhahood so that I would be able to save the people from whom I had received favors. To attain Buddhahood, one must not think selfishly, even at the cost of his life.

Do not doubt her at a moment's thought!
The Pure Saint World-Voice-Perceiver is reliable
When you suffer and when you are confronted
With the calamity of death

By all these merits, she sees
All living beings with her compassionate eyes.
The ocean of her accumulated merits is boundless.
Therefore, bow before her!

Nichiren's Instructions

From the Ho-on-sho

If my compassion is great, the chanting of *Namu Myoho Renge Kyo* will be transmitted for all posterity, generation after generation, even to the age after the expiration of the ten-thousand year age of Degeneration. This chanting has the merit of liberating all people from blindness. It blocks the way to hell. To perform the Bodhisattva practices in the Western Paradise for one hundred years is much easier than to do the same in the defiled world just for one day. The propagations of the Lotus Sutra during the two thousand years from the beginning of the Age of the Right Teachings of the Buddha to the end of the Age of the Counterfeit of the Right Teachings of the Buddha were much easier than the propagation of the Sacred Title during the Age of Degeneration even for a moment. I am not wiser than the others. It is only the needs of the time that have established this merit.

If you think of the power of World-Voice-Perceiver,
The ship will not be sunk by the waves.

Suppose you are pushed
Off the top of Mount Sumeru by someone.
If you think of the power of World-Voice-Perceiver,
You will be able to stay in the air like the sun.

Suppose you are chased by someone evil,
And pushed off a mountain made of diamond.
If you think of the power of World-Voice-Perceiver,
You will not lose even a hair.

Suppose bandits are surrounding you,
And attempting to kill you with sharp swords.
If you think of the power of World-Voice-Perceiver,
The bandits will become compassionate towards
you.

Suppose you are sentenced to death,
And the sword is drawn to behead you.
If you think of the power of World-Voice-Perceiver,
The sword will suddenly break asunder.

Suppose you are bound up
In pillories, chains, manacles or fetters.
If you think of the power of World-Voice-Perceiver,
You will be released from them.

Suppose someone curses you to death,
Or attempts to kill you through various poisons.
If you think of the power of World-Voice-Perceiver,
Death will be brought to that person instead.

Suppose you meet raksasas
Or poisonous dragons or other devils.
If you think of the power of World-Voice-Perceiver,
They will not kill you.

Suppose you are surrounded by wild animals
Which have sharp, fearful tusks and claws.
If you think of the power of World-Voice-Perceiver,
They will flee away to distant places.

Suppose you meet lizards, snakes, vipers or
scorpions
Emitting poisonous vapor like flames.
If you think of the power of World-Voice-Perceiver,
They will go away as you call her name.

Suppose clouds arise, lightning flashes, thunder
peals,
Hail falls and a heavy rain comes down.
If you think of the power of World-Voice-Perceiver,
The thunderstorm will stop at once.

World-Voice-Perceiver will save
All living beings from misfortunes
And from innumerable sufferings of the world
By the wonderful power of her wisdom.

She has these supernatural powers.
She employs various expedients with her wisdom
In the ten quarters, there is no ksetra
In which she does not appear at all.

Hell, the region of hungry spirits, and the region of
animals,
That is, the three evil regions will be eliminated.
The sufferings of birth, old age, disease and death
Will gradually be eliminated.

She sees the truth of all things and their purity.
She sees all things with her great wisdom.
She sees all things with loving kindness and
compassion.

Think of her constantly! Look up at her constantly!

Her precepts out of her loving-kindness brace us up
as thunderbolts.
Her wishes out of her compassion are as wonderful
as large clouds.
She pours the rain of the Dharma as sweet as nectar,
And extinguishes the fire of illusions.

Suppose you are in a law court for a suit,
Or are on a battlefield, and are seized with fear.
If you think of the power of World-Voice-Perceiver,
All your enemies will flee away.

Her wonderful voice comes from perceiving the
voice of the world.
It is like the voice of Brahman, like the sound of a
tidal wave.
It excels all the other voices of the world.
Therefore, think of her constantly!