

**Many Treasures, the Verifier — Part 2**  
**On the Gohonzon: This Tower of Mine Will Rise**  
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*(This completes a two-part article explaining the character on the Gohonzon representing the Buddha Many Treasures Thus Come One. Part 1 appears in the March 27 World Tribune.)*

So what truth does the story of Many Treasures' emergence along with the Treasure Tower express? In "On the Treasure Tower," Nichiren Daishonin writes: "The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai explained the appearance of the Treasure Tower. He stated that it had two distinct functions: to lend credence to the preceding chapters and to pave the way for the revelation to come. Thus, the Treasure Tower appeared in order to verify the theoretical teaching and to introduce the essential teaching. To put it another way, the closed Tower symbolizes the theoretical teaching and the open Tower, the essential teaching. This represents the two principles of object (*kyo*) and subject (*chi*), or reality and wisdom.... In essence, the appearance of the Treasure Tower indicates that the three groups of Shakyamuni's disciples attained enlightenment only when they heard the Lotus Sutra and perceived the Treasure Tower within their own lives" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pp. 29–30)

*A Dictionary of Buddhist Terms and Concepts* also explains that T'ien-t'ai, a great Buddhist scholar in China, interpreted Many Treasures and Shakyamuni seated side by side in the Treasure Tower as the fusion of reality and wisdom (Jpn *kyochi myogo*), with Many Treasures representing the objective truth or ultimate reality and Shakyamuni the subjective wisdom to realize that truth.

T'ien-t'ai also concluded that Many Treasures Buddha represents the property of the Law, Shakyamuni the property of wisdom, and the Buddhas from throughout the universe the property of action. Taken together they represent the three properties of the Buddha.

In "Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life," the Daishonin reveals another aspect of Many Treasures that is important to our understanding of the Ceremony in the Air as not a parable but an event that actually took place in Shakyamuni's life (and, by extension, what happens in our lives as we practice to the Gohonzon):

No phenomena — heaven or earth, Yin or Yang, the sun or the moon, the five planets, or any life-condition from Hell to Buddhahood — are free from birth and death. Thus the life and death of all phenomena are simply the two phases of Myoho-enge-kyo.... Shakyamuni and [Many Treasures] Buddhas, too, are the two phases of life and death. (MW-1, 21–22)

Shakyamuni taught the Lotus Sutra during the final phase of his life: by accounts, during his last eight years. Up until that point, he had been teaching his disciples using "expedient means" rather than referring directly to the Law by which all Buddhas attain enlightenment.

His followers were in awe of his compassionate and wise life-condition, but they believed it was beyond their ability to also be Buddhas. As Shakyamuni approached death, he realized it was time to reveal the source of his wisdom and compassion.

It's interesting that after Shakyamuni's death, his followers built towers called stupas in which to house his relics and honor his memory — just as Many Treasures had originally called on his followers to build a funerary tower after his death, in which he would appear, wherever the Law was taught.

But, as Shakyamuni predicted in the Lotus Sutra, it would be left up only to the

Bodhisattvas of the Earth — those who would appear in the future — to reveal the essential Treasure Tower for the enlightenment of all people.

When we chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the Gohonzon, we can reveal from within our bodies the eternal Buddha, symbolized in theory by Many Treasures in the Treasure Tower. We then manifest the actual — the Treasure Tower itself.

And as the Daishonin says: “You may think you offered gifts to the Treasure Tower of [Many Treasures] Buddha, but that is not so. You offered them to yourself. You, yourself, are a true Buddha who possesses the three enlightened properties. You should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with this conviction. Then, the place wherein you dwell and chant daimoku is the place of the Treasure Tower. The sutra reads: ‘Wherever one teaches the Lotus Sutra, this Treasure Tower of mine will rise and appear before him.’ Faith like yours is so extremely rare that I will inscribe the Treasure Tower especially for you” (MW-1, 30).

In another sense, whenever we share experiences of faith, this is a function of Many Treasures, the verifier — our experiences verify the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. And when friends who don’t practice Buddhism acknowledge the greatness of Buddhism that they see in us, they also function as Many Treasures Buddha to support us and protect Buddhism.

*Four in a series*