

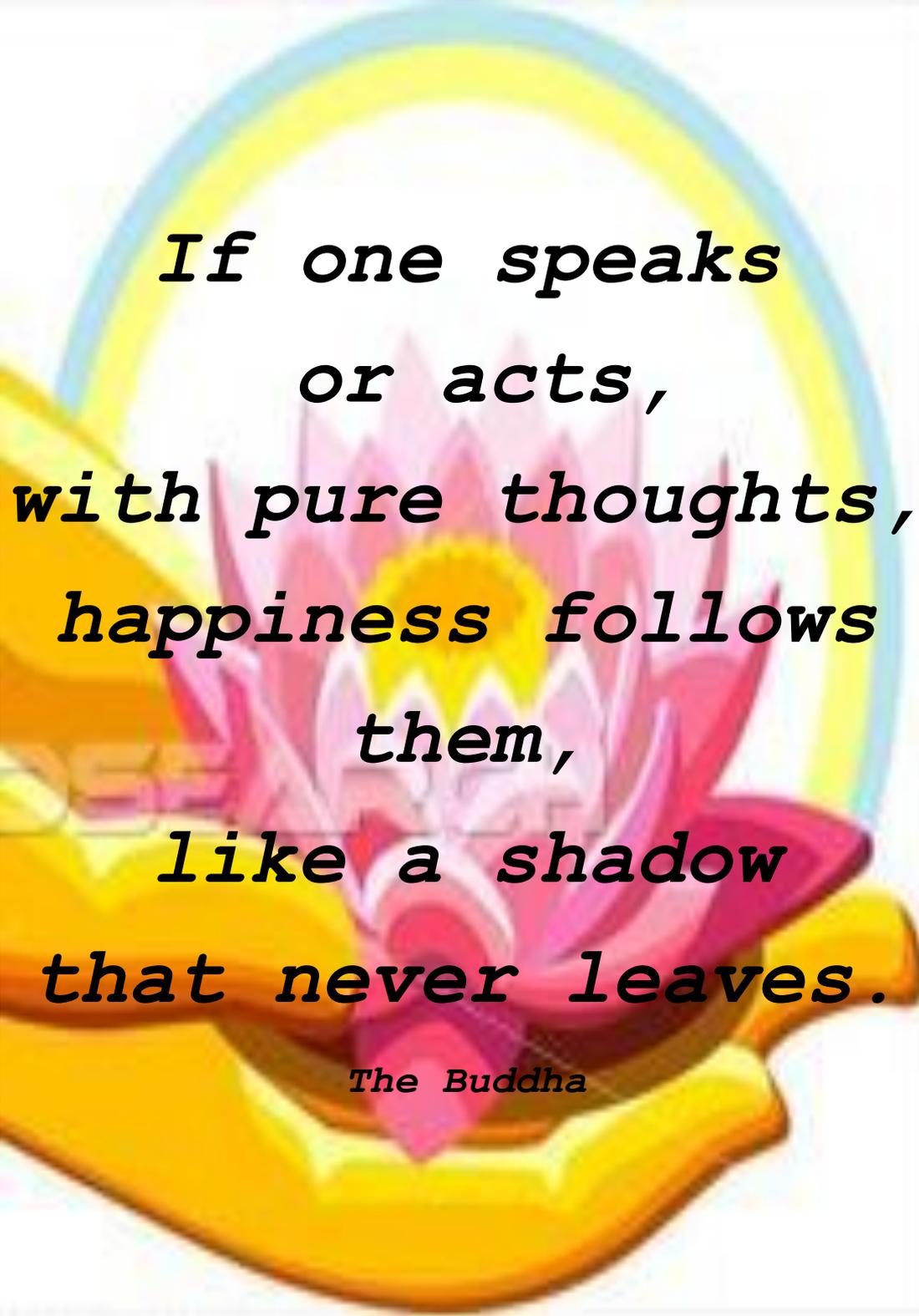


Hiru no Hoshi

No. 246

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A vibrant pink lotus flower is the central focus, resting in a golden bowl. Above the flower, a multi-colored rainbow arches across the scene. The background is a soft, light blue gradient. The text is overlaid on the image in a black, monospace-style font.

*If one speaks
or acts,
with pure thoughts,
happiness follows
them,
like a shadow
that never leaves.*

The Buddha

It was a beautiful Spring day, not too hot, not too cold. The five little children were on a picnic with their parents. Father picked up an onigiri (rice ball) and said,

“Do you know why this is a special day?”

Mother smiled, while the children all looked at each other.

“It’s Sunday, no school! Duh!” shouted Riaz.

Everyone laughed at that. Father said patiently,

“Today is April 8th, the day we celebrate the Birth of Buddha. Do you all know who Buddha is?” Father asked suspiciously.

All the kids laughed. Mother asked Anisa the youngest,

“Anisa tell Daddy what you know about Buddha.”

“Buddha was a great teacher from God, a Man....i....fes....ta...tion...of God.” She said carefully.

“Good job, Anisa!” everyone said encouragingly.

Then, Asma tilted his head and asked,

“Did Buddha come before or after Christ?” The children all looked at each other, and then at Mother. Mother smiled and said,

“About 2,500 years ago Buddha was born in Nepal, a country north of India.”

“So that would be before Christ, wouldn’t it?” asserted Mona.

“Yes,” continued Mother. “He was born in a beautiful garden. He grew up as a prince, and lived in a great palace. As a child he was called Siddhartha. His father wanted to protect Him from all the suffering of the world, so he kept Siddhartha inside of the walls of the palace. When Siddhartha was a young man, He left the palace in the middle of the night, and went out to discover what the world was really like. He was so sad to see all the suffering in the world, and He meditated to find the answer to everyone’s suffering. He then spent the rest of His life teaching those around Him how to escape the suffering of their life. That is how Siddhartha became known as ‘The Buddha’, ‘The Enlightened One’.”

“Just like all of the Manifestations of God, He taught the people that by strengthening their spiritual side, the physical problems of the world would not affect them. He taught them how to become happy by helping others around them. Buddha taught the people by using stories. These stories were first written down 550 years after Buddha died. One of the first printed books was the Buddhist Sutras. The scroll had a picture made from wood-blocks. It and the text were of gold ink, on deep indigo rice paper. The

stories that the Buddha told His followers to teach them, still remain today, they are called the Jataka Tales. Often the Jataka Tales are about animals acting like humans.”

Riaz interrupted.

“Maybe it is really about humans acting like animals!” Everyone laughed, “Maybe you’re right,” agreed Mother.

“Would you like to hear some Jataka Tales?” asked Mother.

“Yeah!” shouted the children. Then the children laughed when Father shouted “Yeah” with them.

Mother began. “And while the Buddha sat and all those around Him listened, these are the stories He told.....”

“When one person tells a falsehood, one hundred repeat it as true.

Once there was a rabbit that went to sleep under a coconut tree. While he was asleep, a large coconut fell from the tree, ‘BANG’! The rabbit jumped up and yelled ‘The earth is breaking up!’ All the rabbits in the area that heard him started yelling ‘The earth is breaking up!’ until there were 100 rabbits yelling this. A deer heard them and asked what was wrong, and all the rabbits shouted ‘The earth is breaking up’. The deer in a panic told all her friends and family and they all began shouting the same thing. ‘The earth is breaking up!’ A buffalo heard them and he and his friends started yelling. This caused the rhino to hear about it and then all the rhino started frantically yelling ‘The earth is breaking up!’ Even the tiger, started roaring it, and that started all the elephants on a stampede with the whole jungle screaming ‘The earth is breaking up!’ They were all stampeding towards a great cliff and were all about to fall to their death, when the Lion King ran in front of them roaring his fierce roar. All of the animals stopped and listened to the Lion. He asked who first started the story, and finally the silly rabbit was discovered. The rabbit took the Lion, and all the other animals back to the place where he had been sleeping, and they all saw the coconut.

The Lion King explained to all the animals what had happened and they all went about their business.”



Shahla jumped up and said,

“I heard that story before, only with different animals.” The other children nodded.

“Tell us another one, Mom”, asked Mona.

“Ok”, said Mother. “Here is a good one for Riaz.” She said with a twinkle in her eye.

“Disaster can come from opening your mouth at the wrong time.”

Once there was a turtle who became good friends with a couple of geese.”

“Is Riaz the turtle or the geese?” asked Asma.

Mother just smiled and continued. “They had stayed friends all summer, but it was time to go south for the winter. The geese told the turtle

how wonderful their new home was. The turtle really wanted to go, so the geese figured out a way to take him. They brought a stick and told the turtle to hold on to the middle of the stick with his mouth, while each goose took one of the ends so they could fly him to their new home. The geese

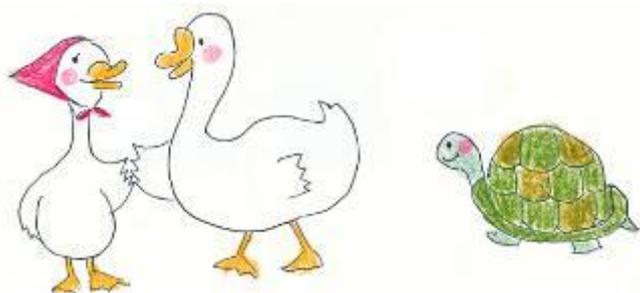
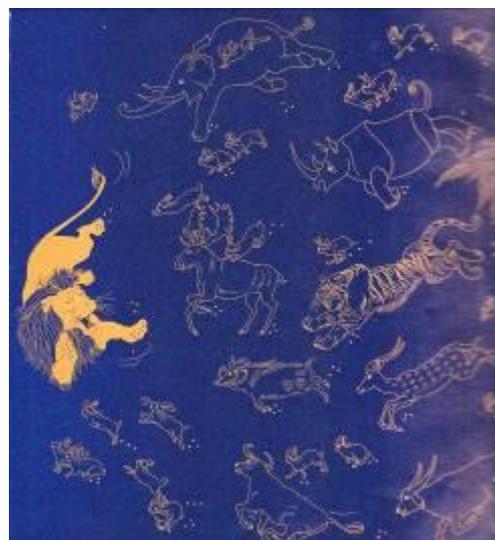
warned the turtle not to open his mouth or he would fall to his death. The turtle assured them he could do that. So off they flew with the turtle hanging on the stick between the two strong geese. The problem came when they flew over a nearby pond

some children playing looked up and started laughing at the turtle flying with two geese. ‘Did you ever see anything so silly in your whole life’ they laughed. The turtle got his feeling hurt, and wanted to tell them he was not silly, but very wise to be able to fly like this. Of course when he opened his mouth to say that.....you know what happened.”

“Disaster came from opening his mouth at the wrong time!” put in Mona as she nodded to Riaz, with that all the children laughed.

“Another one, another one!” shouted the children.

This time it was Father who started, while Mother poured everyone some



orange juice, and uncovered the cookies.

“If a family lives in harmony, all their affairs will prosper.”

“Once there was a Monkey King who ruled over 8,000 monkeys. In his kingdom was a mango tree as big as the moon. The monkeys lived in the tree and ate the large delicious mangos. One of the branches of the mango tree went across the river. If one of the mangos fell into the river the Monkey King yelled ‘Danger will come if a mango floats downstream.’ So the monkeys were very careful to catch all the mangos that fell into the river. One night, though, while all the monkeys were asleep, a big fat mango fell off the tree and floated away. In the morning a Human King found the huge delicious mango. After tasting it he sent his men upstream to get the mangos. The men found the huge mango tree that evening, but were too tired, so they lay down to sleep near the tree. While the men slept, the Monkey King ordered the monkeys to quickly eat up every single mango in the tree before the men woke up.



Unfortunately, the men woke up and saw the monkeys eating the last of the mangos, and started shooting arrows at the monkeys. The Monkey King quickly made a bridge with his body, from the Mango tree branch hanging across the river, to a banyan tree on the other side of the river. He made all the monkeys go across his body to the safety of the banyan tree on the far side of the river. The Human King was amazed at what the Monkey King had done. ‘All I am doing is saving fruit, while the Monkey King has just saved his whole tribe. I have learned a great lesson today!’ The Human King went back to his kingdom forgetting the fruit and began doing great deeds in service to all his people.”

Father finished the story and all the children sat thinking about what they had heard.

“So what was the moral of this story?” asked Father.

“If everyone works together, it will be good for everyone,” said Shahla.

“Close enough,” laughed Father.

“One more, one more!” shouted the children.



Father looked at mother and shrugged his shoulders.

“OK,” said Mother. “I like this one.”

“Heaven remembers those whose hearts are true.”

“An old woman found two pigs. She named them Big Snout and Little Snout, and treated them as her own children. One day some drunken men came to her door saying they were hungry and wanted to buy her pigs. She said, no, the pigs were like her own children and she would not sell them. The men came back with weapons and were ready to take the pigs by force.

Little Snout was very afraid, but Big Snout said, “Don’t be afraid,” and he started chanting ‘The Perfections of Love’, a great prayer that disperses all evil. Magically his voice began to sound louder and louder and filled the old woman’s house, then, the sounds of love traveled outside to pierce the ears of the men, so that they lay down their weapons.”

“Oh, that reminds me of what ‘Abdul-Baha said: ‘When a thought of war comes oppose it by a stronger thought of peace. A thought of hatred must be destroyed by a more powerful thought of love’,” Asma said excitedly.

Mother nodded and then continued, “The sounds of love traveled all the way to the palace and the king heard it and said, “Who is making that lovely sound?” The king followed the sound until he came to the woman’s house and found the pig. The King was so happy he gave the woman a palace to live in and she and the pigs lived there. The pigs were clothed in jewels and perfumed. Five hundred guards protected them at all times. On Holy Days Big Snout would chant ‘The Perfections of Love’, so that Peace, Truth, and Love reigned throughout the Kingdom.”

Riaz clapped and laughed at the end of the story.

“A jeweled and perfumed pig that should be a sight to see!” he teased.

Shahla was very indignant and said,

“So what if it was a pig! Maybe the point of the story is that you shouldn’t pay so much attention to the outside of the person, but listen to what they are saying!”



“I think it means that good things happen to people that have a kindly tongue!” suggested Mona.

“Anyone else have any ideas?” Mother asked.

“We shouldn’t eat pigs!” said Asma. Everyone laughed at this because they knew that Asma hated when anyone ate meat, because he felt sorry for the animals.

The sun was just starting to set. Mother began packing up the picnic and told the children, “We have to go, school tomorrow, and you all need baths!”

“Ahhh,” sighed the children.

But everyone helped put the things in the car.

They were all happy with their picnic that turned out to be a celebration of the Birth of The Buddha.

The paintings of the Jataka Tales were from a book by DEMI. Some of the fine lines were painted with gold by using a mouse’s whisker.



Quiz

1. When is the Birthday of the Buddha celebrated?

2. Where and when was the Buddha born?

3. What name was the Buddha given when He was born?

4. Who was the Buddha?

5. How did the Buddha teach His followers?

6. What was the moral of the Lion King story?

7. What was the moral of the Turtle and the Geese story?

8. What was the moral of the Monkey King story?

9. What was the moral of the Magical Pig story?

How did you do? Did you get them all right?



The answers are on the Parents' Page.



Japanese Fan

Materials

- * Paper
- * Paint and Paint brushes, or Crayons
- * 2 Popsicle sticks or 1 Waribashi (disposable chopstick)
- * Tape

Method

- * With the paper lengthwise, paint or color the top half.
- * Turn the paper upside down, and put the same design or picture on that side.
- * Fold the paper from the short side, back and forth to make a fan.
- * Fold the folded paper in half and tape the 2 end in the middle to make a wide short fan. 2 sided tape works best.
- * Seal the folded end shut by circling it with tape, so there is about an inch of tape.
- * Tape on the 2 Popsicle Sticks or break a Waribashi in half and tape each piece to a side.

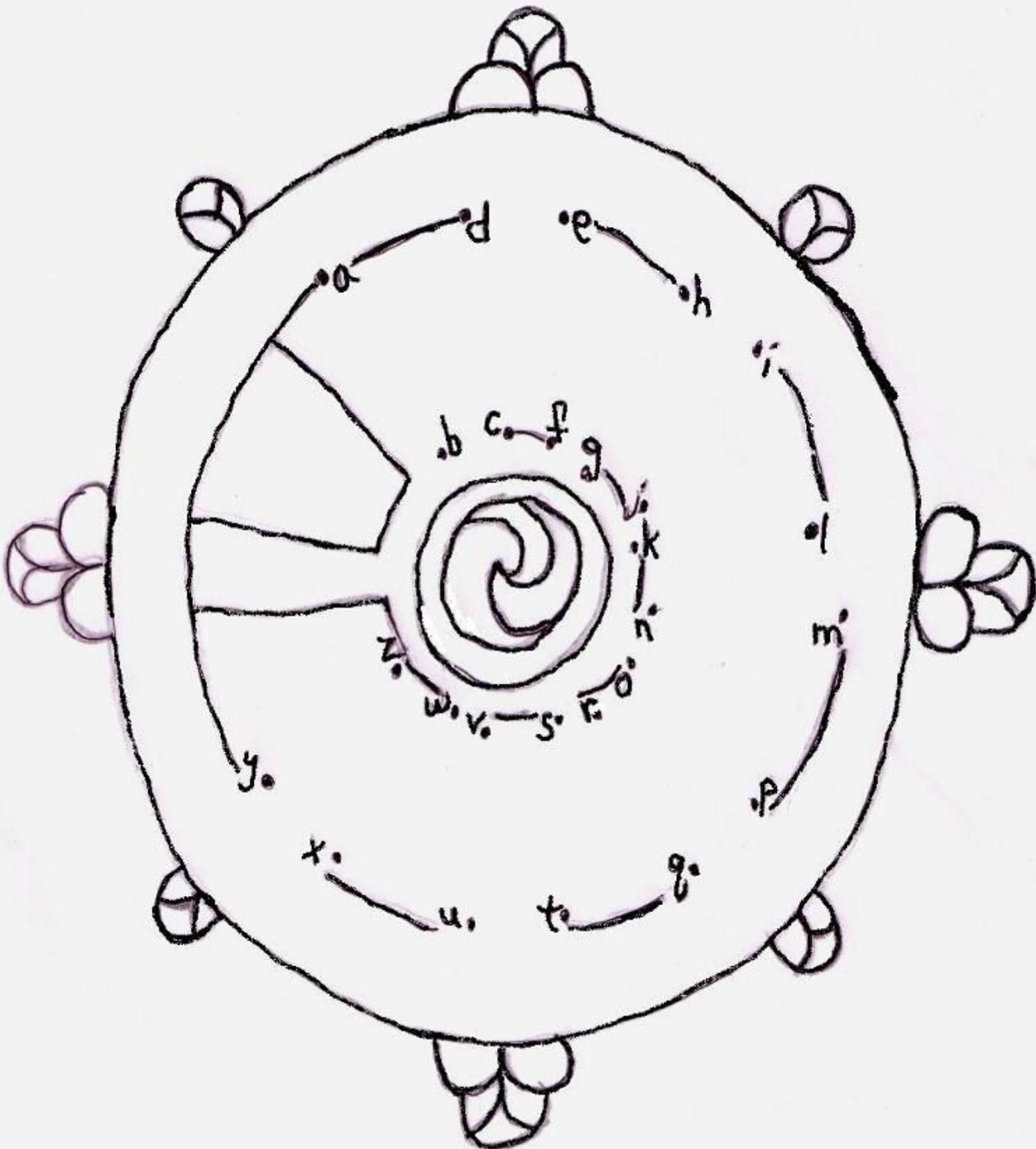


From a to b....

From b to c....

Follow the dots... and what do you see?

One of the Buddhism symbols.





Everyone's Photos



To our friends in Japan,

We live in a small, island community next to the sea, called Wrangell, Alaska.

The children who attend our regular classes for spiritual education feel deeply about the tragedies in Japan after the earthquake and tsunami. We wanted to do something to lift your spirits. We don't know how to read or write Japanese. We are using an online translator to share our thoughts with you. Perhaps some of the translations will bring a little bit of humor into your life! (Translations do not always come across exactly as intended). We send love, prayers and all good wishes in your recovery and further development as a people and nation.



Children and youth of Wrangell

I hope you can fix your land.

First let me introduce myself.

My name is Sophie O'Brien, age 7.

I was born in China and adopted.

I hope the tsunami wasn't too bad for you.

Daniel

I hope things are OK in Japan and I hope you are having a good time in Japan. Kira

God is the Power of the Light.

He shines the whole world.

I hope He shines your world, too.

And I hope He shines your heart.

I hope you have determination to fix your land.

I hope all of you are okay, because of the tsunami.



The house is a symbol of shelter.

(The design is from a video that we watched of a house being built in Japan, on YouTube).

It (the house) stands for the rebuilding of Japan.

The forest and trees show the re-growth of Japan.

The crane is your symbol of hope and peace.

Quinn Wright - Age 11



We wish you luck. Everyone in the USA does. Stand strong, stay high, you will last and so will I. May your hearts be filled with hope and fellowship. Love and best wishes from America!



HAIKU

Hope, love and friendship,
Which may sprout from anywhere,
I wish upon you.
Haley Reed

We hope for brighter days ahead.



(If any children from Japan want to respond to these letters, please send them to us at Hiru no Hoshi)



Parents Page

"The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established." Baha'u'llah

In this age when the world has shrunk to a neighborhood, it is important to help our children see the truth in the religious beliefs of all of the peoples of the world. The basic principles and values of all the world's great religions come from the same Unknowable Essence.

We should teach our children of the world's Great Teachers, Abraham, Moses, Krishna, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ, Muhammad, and of Their teachings.

We can also examine the truth in the ancient indigence religions of all the countries, such as those of the Native Americans, the Japanese Shinto, The South American, the African indigenous religions, and the Australian Aboriginal religion. God has never left man alone, and has always taught us in ways that we could understand.

As we study with our children we will be surprised at how similar all these teaching are. The Baha'i Writings teach us that the purpose of religion is to unite all mankind and to bring together all God's children.

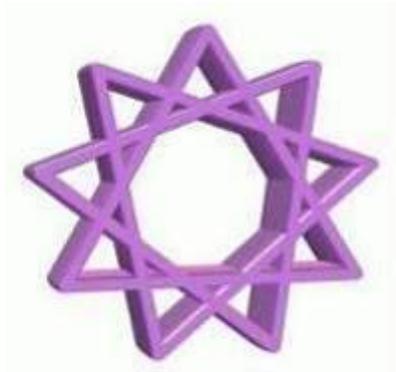
"These principles and laws, these firmly-established and mighty systems, have proceeded from one Source and are the rays of one Light. That they differ one from another is to be attributed to the varying requirements of the ages in which they were promulgated." (Baha'u'llah)

Shoghi Effendi explained further:

"The fundamental principle enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh, the followers of His Faith firmly believe, is that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is a continuous and progressive process, that all the great religions of the world are divine in origin, that their basic principles are in complete harmony, that their aims and purposes are one and the same, that their teachings are but facets of one truth, that their functions are complementary, that they differ only in the nonessential aspects of their doctrines, and that their missions represent successive stages in the spiritual evolution of human society."

Answers to the Quiz:

- 1) April 8th.
- 2) 2,500years ago in Nepal.
- 3) Siddhartha.
- 4) A Manifestation of God, (Great Teacher from God).
- 5) Through stories call Jataka Tales.
- 6) When one person tells a falsehood 100 repeat it as true.
- 7) Disaster can come from opening your mouth at the wrong time.
- 8) If a family lives in harmony all their affairs will prosper.
- 9) Heaven remembers those whose hearts are true.



If you have stories of your children learning a virtue or anything connected to the Faith, please send them to us, so we can have stories of “A little boy in Yamaguchi” or “A little girl in Akita”. You can either write the story yourself or send the details and we will write the story. Either English or Japanese is fine. We also are waiting for pictures of Children’s Classes from your community; or drawings from your children. Please send all stories and pictures to hirunohoshi@gmail.com or vb7mb7@bma.biglobe.ne.jp

Hiru no Hoshi

Published: / June 2011

No. 246

To print out Issues in color of Hiru no Hoshi see our site

<http://www.bahaijpn.com/daystar.htm>

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