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Learning the Basics

The Ten Worlds

By Michael Petkov

You're asleep having a wonderful dream. You've just won the famous Nobel Prize for science. Everyone is clapping for you and telling you how brilliant you are. You've never felt happier. Suddenly you hear this loud buzzing and you realize it's your alarm clock and you have to get up for school. You jump up because you want to tell your friends about your prize. You're so excited. Then, you realize it was just a dream and you're disappointed. You get out of bed and suddenly remember that you were supposed to study last night for a big science test. "Oh no!" you scream, and you run downstairs. You've never felt worse.

You run to your backpack and get your science book and start reading, trying to learn what you need to know. After 10 minutes of this, you decide it's impossible and throw the book across the room in anger. Panicked, you chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo. Then you realize you never should have waited until the last minute. *At least I've learned something from this experience*, you think. You look out the window and see that it snowed last night. You turn on the radio and hear that your school is closed because of the snow. You sigh a deep, happy sigh. You start to go back upstairs to sleep. You think again and sit down to study, but first... a snowball fight!

In the first half-hour of your day, you have been through so many different conditions. Buddhism talks about 10 different conditions that exist in people's lives. These are called

the Ten Worlds. These worlds are not places far away. They are conditions within our own lives. Understanding the world we might be in at any moment can help us understand why we behave the way we do and show other ways we could behave that might be better. Also, each world contains within it all the other worlds, too. So, for example, in the story above, when you threw the book, you were in the world of anger; you chanted because you were angry and you brought out the world of realization. Then you understood that the problem happened because you waited until the last minute. Through chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo we can bring out our higher worlds, even when we're in one of the lower worlds. We practice Nichiren Buddhism in order to bring out our highest world: Buddhahood. Then, we have the power to change any situation into something valuable and help others do the same. ☸

Name That World

By Chrys Ruybal

Choose one of the 10 worlds from the definitions on the right and fill in the blanks. You may use each word more than once. *HINT: There may be more than one answer.*

You chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo and feel great.

You go into a candy store and your mom says, "Pick out anything you want."

Your friend's sad face makes you understand that your words hurt his feelings.

You help your friend find a missing toy.

Your teacher gives you 100 percent on your test.

You see a toy in the store and it is all you can think about.

You are reading.

You are arguing with your friend. She thinks she is right. You know you are right.

You see a puzzle and figure out how to solve it.

You set the table before you are asked to.

You are afraid of a bully at school.

Definitions

Hell: *We feel awful, and it seems that we will never be happy again.*

Hunger: *We always want something. We are never satisfied with what we get or have.*

Animality: *We bully people who are weaker than us. We are afraid of people who are stronger than us.*

Anger: *We think that we are better than everyone else.*

Humanity (also called Tranquility): *We aren't happy or sad, just OK, which can change if anything around us changes.*

Heaven (or Rapture): *We are really happy about fulfilling a wish.*

Learning: *We learn from what others have said or written.*

Realization: *We learn by thinking about things and figuring out stuff for ourselves.*

Bodhisattva: *Our happiness comes from helping other people.*

Buddhahood: *Wisdom, joy, compassion and strong life force. We realize our purpose in life is to be happy and help other people become happy, too.*

