

Mr. Ryokan 1384

Hello, my name is Kaneko, your navigator.

The other day, we talked about Ryokan, so today I would like to continue talking about him.

Even those who do not know Buddhism may have heard of Ryokan, who is often associated with the genius of "Play".

In the "Kannon Sutra," which is written as the sutra of the Goddess of Kannon, there is a description of the Bodhisattva Kannon playing in the world of the Sal tree where we live.

From the perspective of an enlightened Buddha or Bodhisattva, living in this world is like playing.

It is said that Ryokan was a genius in this field.

By the way, a person who seeks enlightenment and practices many Buddhist practices is called a bodhisattva, so you can say that you are a bodhisattva if you follow the Buddha's path. When you say so, doesn't it make you kind of happy?

Ryokan, born in 1758 and died at the age of 77, was a Soto Zen priest in the late Edo period.

He was also famous as a poet, a Chinese poetry, and a calligrapher.

Although he was the eldest son of a feudal lord of Izumozaki in Echigo, today's Niigata Prefecture, Ryokan himself became a monk.

At the age of 22, he moved to Entsu-ji Temple, where he began his formal training and became a full-fledged Zen monk at the age of 33.

At the age of 33, he became a full-fledged Zen monk. He gave up an important post

to live a life of poverty and solitude in a tiny, wind-swept hut called Gogo-an on Kugamiyama.

Ryokan often played with his children. They played ball, hide-and-seek, and OHASHIKI.

One day, after the sun went down, the children went home without finding Ryokan. The next morning, a farmer came to the rice field and found Ryokan. When he called out to him in surprise, he said, "Quiet! If you shout so loud, the children will find him".

This story has been introduced as a fairy tale, and the familiar impression of Ryokan has been handed down to the present day.

The story is told in the following way: Under the trees in the forest of this palace, children and I are playing with our balls and living on this day.

"Children and I will play in this village while playing with Temari, even if the spring sun never comes".

Ryokan must have been in such a state of mind, seeing Buddha in the innocent hearts of children.

The poverty in the area where Ryokan lived during this period was truly miserable. One by one, the children who used to play with Ryokan were sold to merchant families or brothels to reduce their income. However, Ryokan could not save them from this miserable reality.

The only thing he could do was to play with the children who would eventually be sold and leave the village. Through this play, Ryokan must have wished that the children and villagers would hear him say this.

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“Listen, this world is a play, life is a play”.

On the stage of this world, there are lords and there are evil magistrates, on the other hand, there are poor common people.

There are also those who are forced to send their children off to serve their lord, and those who are forced to sell their children for a living. That is the world.

But when the world's theatrical performances are over, everyone will return to the Pure Land where the Buddha resides.

The Buddha will welcome you. They will tell you how hard it has been for them.

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This is what Ryokan meant by "play" and how Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara of the Kannon Sutra is playing in our present world.

I believe that this is how the Bodhisattva Kannon of the Kannon Sutra plays in our worldly life.

If you follow the path of Buddha, you are also a Bodhisattva.

Like a Bodhisattva, like Ryokan, we should look at our desires, limit and purify them, and think about how to utilize them for the benefit of others.

The Buddhist sermon series was given by Hirokazu Kaneko . Translation and voice in English by Hirokazu Kosaka.