

WND-2: **THEMATIC QUOTES**

Edited by

Simon Robert Matrovers PhD

**Dedicated with Eternal Gratitude to my Mentor
Pres. Daisaku Ikeda**

Contents

Foreword.....	1
Action.....	3
Actual Proof.....	4
Anger	5
Appreciation and Gratitude.....	6
Arrogance.....	8
Behavior.....	10
Benefit.....	11
Bodhissatvas	15
Buddhahood.....	16
Care for Others.....	19
Cause & Effect.....	21
Character	24
Common Sense	25
Compassion.....	26
Conviction, Determination, Perseverance & Resolve.....	28
Courage.....	31
Daimoku.....	32
Darkness.....	34
Death.....	35
Delusion & Illusion.....	37
Devotion.....	39
Dialogue.....	40
Difficulty and Hardship	41
Doubt	42
Earthy Desires are Enlightenment.....	45
Enlightenment.....	46
Equality.....	50
Eternity of life.....	51
Evil.....	53
Faith	56
Friendship	59
Gohonzon.....	60
Gongyo.....	61
Good Fortune	62
Grudge	63
Hardship.....	64

Heart.....	65
Hope.....	66
Illness	67
Incorrect teachings	68
Joy/Happiness	71
Karma.....	73
Kindness.....	76
Knowledge and Faith	78
Leadership.....	79
Life.....	80
Loss of a loved one	81
Lotus Sutra	84
Marriage/Partnership.....	89
Mentor and Disciple.....	90
Mind of faith	94
Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo	96
Nam.....	99
Myo.....	99
Myoho	100
Renge	100
Nichiren	100
Obstacles	104
Offerings	105
Ordinary People	108
Parents.....	111
Peace	113
Persecution.....	114
Practice.....	117
Prayer	119
Protection	121
Qualities of the Buddha	123
Rarity of encountering the Lotus Sutra	124
Regret.....	125
Seeking Spirit.....	126
Self and Environment (<i>Esho Funi</i>)	128
Sharing Buddhism.....	129
Sincerity	131
Speaking out.....	132
Strength.....	135

Study	136
Three Powerful Enemies	138
Time of Propagation	139
Truth	141
Unity (<i>itai doshin</i>)	143
Victory	144
Violence	145
Vow	146
Weaknesses	147
Wealth	148
Wisdom	149
Women	151
Work	153
Worldview	154
Youth and Children	156

Foreword

It is a joy to present this volume of ‘WND-2: Thematic Quotes’ to mark and celebrate in 2016 the tenth anniversary of the publication by Soka Gakkai of ‘The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin Vol.2’ (WND-2).¹

The complete Japanese edition of the Gosho comprises both WND-1 and WND-2 in one volume. Therefore, the material from WND-2 has been integrated and been part of SGI-Japan for longer. I hope this volume will serve as a **guide** in providing a **panoramic view**, a general flavor, to WND-2 as a whole. My project provides a useful way to familiarize oneself with WND-2, which is almost entirely unknown, in a way that does not feel too heavy, but which identifies important aspects of one’s Buddhist practice, via its different themes. The end goal for this project is to **encourage the user to consult the WND-2 volume more, in the context of the individual goshos**.

I used the same methodology as ‘The Quotable Nichiren’ for WND-2 as a **means to an end**.² The singling out of the quotes is a valuable way to bring out – in an organized, orderly and eye-catching manner – great passages from the gosho; to let the quotes **breathe**. Therefore, should you disagree with any of my selections (i.e. why I included a particular quote under a certain theme), please look beyond that and may I encourage you to focus more on the actual quotes, instead. The quotes *per se* are the **heart** of the project, not their categorization.

I categorized some quotes under more than one topic. This repetition will benefit the reader in two ways. First, it helps one in getting to know the quotes themselves. Second, re-reading a quote under multiple themes shows the reader different perspectives for each quote, thus bringing out certain aspects to a gosho passage which might have been overlooked previously.

The practical use of ‘WND-2: Thematic Quotes’ in a member’s practice is the same as that of ‘The Quotable Nichiren’ and should not become a distraction from the set SGI study material in each country. Nor is it meant for intensive or too focused a ‘study’, since the quotes do not give any context of the gosho.

The aim for ‘WND-2: Thematic Quotes’ is threefold:

- To encourage, inspire and create value out of these lesser known (or even completely unknown) goshos.
- To be used in conjunction with, complement, ‘The Quotable Nichiren’, as it builds on the same themes, topics, thus expanding the material at our disposal from the gosho.
- To strengthen our mentor-disciple relationship with the Daishonin through these additional writings.

¹<http://www.nichirenlibrary.org/en/wnd-2/toc/>

<http://www.sgi-uk.org/shop/shop/book/writings-nichiren-daishonin-vol-2>

<https://bookstore.sgi-usa.org/p-4588-writings-of-nd-v2.aspx>

² <http://www.sgi-uk.org/shop/shop/book/quotable-nichiren-words-daily-living>

<https://bookstore.sgi-usa.org/p-4944-quotable-nichiren.aspx>

A note on the criterion I have used to select the quotes:

- By the actual word of the topic itself.
- By keywords, that is, other words found in the quotes for each topic in 'The Quotable Nichiren' that relate to a topic. Thus I have been able to draw in additional passages for each topic that do not contain the main word of the topic itself.
- Only the Daishonin's words themselves, that is, I have excluded all of the Daishonin's references to other Buddhist Sutras and teachings. The latter has been for me an essential part of the work, that the quotes should all constitute only the Daishonin's own words.

Ways in which 'WND-2: Thematic Quotes' differs from 'The Quotable Nichiren':

- I have added the following themes: Daimoku, Delusion & Illusion, Dialogue, Good Fortune, Earthly Desires are Enlightenment, Kindness, Strength.
- I turned the theme on Family Relationships into the more specific category of Parents; Fundamental Darkness into Darkness; Good and Evil into Evil.
- I merged the following themes:
 - Children and Youth (under Youth).
 - Conviction, Determination, Perseverance & Resolve (under Conviction).
 - Appreciation and Gratitude (under Appreciation).
 - Joy and Happiness (under Joy).
 - Misguided Teachers and Incorrect Teachings (under Incorrect Teachings).

The project also aims to help initiate dialogue on WND-2 in SGI, as we start to build a more solid relationship with it. This can be easily achieved, thus:

- One can incorporate the reading of the WND-2 quotes with one's chanting, reading one or two quotes before and/or after each time one chants. In fact, Pres. Ikeda always encourages us to read the gosho every day, even if a little.
- This project is not meant for publication but it is intended to be shared among members free of charge, and can be attached in emails as a pdf attachment.

My daimoku has imbued and constantly refreshed this project from start to finish - and beyond, as I continue to engage in dialogue with increasingly more leaders in SGI.

For feedback and comments feel free to contact me at simonmatravers@hotmail.com

Let's explore more of the gosho together!

S. R. Matravers.

Hampstead, London. 3rd May 2017.

Action

If one is born in a country where the Lotus Sutra is propagated and, on hearing the daimoku of the sutra, one is moved to take faith in it, this is because one has accumulated a rich store of good actions in the past. Thus, even though one may be an evil person lacking in wisdom in one's present existence, when one hears the name of the sutra, one will take faith in it and hence will not fall into the evil paths. (141-2)

Among the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime, the Lotus Sutra is not only a bright mirror but a divine mirror. A bronze mirror will reflect the form of a person but it will not reflect that person's mind. The Lotus Sutra, however, reveals not only the person's form but that person's mind as well. And it reveals not only the mind; it reflects, without the least concealment, that person's past actions and future as well. (619)

Their own actions create the destiny that awaits them. (632)

These Three Great Secret Laws were unquestionably received by me, Nichiren, some two thousand and more years ago, when I was the leader of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth; they were passed on to me by oral transmission from the lord of teachings, the World-Honoured One of Great Enlightenment. And these actions that I now take embody what I received in transmission on Eagle Peak, without the slightest deviation or alteration in form, the three great matters of the Law of the "Life Span" chapter. (987)

Actual Proof

At that time, I thought, we will see whether Brahmā, Shakra, the gods of the sun and moon, and the four heavenly kings will fulfil the oath they took in the presence of the Buddha. They vowed that the enemies of the votary of the Lotus Sutra would not escape punishment for even a moment. I would test them with my own person. Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions who are emanations of Shakyamuni, have earnestly declared that they will share their lodging with the votary of the Lotus Sutra, will cover him with their robes, and will guard and protect him. I was determined to test whether these words were true or false so that I might increase my faith. Therefore I did not slacken my efforts. (701)

Anger

The person who does not believe has hatred and anger in his heart, he will deny the existence of the Buddha, the Law, and the Buddhist Order. (268)

I stated my opinion that such ceremonies would be unsuccessful, which so angered the participants that they threatened me, but of course all their efforts proved fruitless. If they cannot even get an answer to prayers concerning some petty matter in this present existence, how can they hope to do so concerning the all-important existence to come? (343)

Look at what is happening, my disciples, and then put your faith in the Lotus Sutra! When you stare at a mirror with angry eyes it reflects your anger. Heaven itself is angry, because people are at fault. (491)

[...] all testified to the principle that women can attain Buddhahood. If a woman relies upon this sutra, the Lotus, and never slanders the Law, then though she may commit the ten evil acts and the five cardinal sins and be guilty of greed and stinginess, jealousy, and anger enough to fill the whole sky in the ten directions, all these faults will blow away like dew on the grass and trees before a great wind, will melt like the three-month-long winter's ice on a summer day. (633)

If they truly believe these sutra passages, then let them call forth the [three types of] powerful enemies described in them and show proof that they do indeed read these passages and believe them. Unless they do so, then to be angry at Nichiren, who reads and recites these passages as they are intended to be read, is to be angry at the passages themselves, is it not? And to do so is to look with contempt on the envoy of the Buddha! (694-5)

When they hear these pronouncements of mine, they count their prayer beads and grind their teeth in rage, ring their little bells while shaking their heads in anger. Though outwardly they observe the precepts, they harbour hearts of evil. (777)

You should understand that anger can be either a good or a bad thing. (931)

Appreciation and Gratitude

I, Nichiren, have to some small degree acted as an ally of the Lotus Sutra, and as a result I have met with these great difficulties. How immense, then, must be our gratitude toward Shakyamuni Buddha who, in lifetime after lifetime, has championed the cause of the Lotus Sutra! It is beyond the power of reckoning. Therefore the task set forth in the “Encouraging Devotion” chapter must never for a moment be neglected. More than ever, I look on it as a truly worthy one! (459-460)

And now a kind mother, ninety years of age, has fashioned this garment for her beloved son, straining her eyes, putting into it every bit of strength she has. Perhaps you, her son, thinking you can scarcely repay the debt you owe her for the making of this unlined robe, offered it to me. But I, too, can scarcely, repay the kindness of such a gift. (532)

If you and he can assist me in fulfilling this wish, it will be as if the bright gems of the K'un-lun Mountains, though you had not even sought for them, were to fill your storehouses, or the wonderful jewels of the great ocean, though you had not sent for them, were to appear in the palm of your hand. (560)

If a woman has the good fortune to encounter this sutra, though she might strip off her skin to use as paper, draw her blood for ink, break her bones for a pen, and shed tears of blood to wet the ink stone, and with these transcribe the words of the sutra, she could never repay the debt she owes it. How much less could she hope to do so, then, through donations of clothing, gold and silver, cows and horses, or fields and farmlands, however numerous these might be? (633)

When you come of age and take faith in Buddhism, you must first of all think of paying the debt you owe to your father and mother. Mount Sumeru is paltry in comparison to the towering debt you owe your father; the great ocean is shallow compared to the profoundness of the debt you owe your mother. You must bear in mind these debts you owe to your father and mother. (637)

Third is the debt of gratitude to be paid to all living beings. If you stop to consider, you will realize that, at one time or another in the past, all men have been your father and all women, your mother. Thus, in the course of all the many lifetimes and existences you have lived through, you have come to owe a debt of gratitude to all living beings. And since this is so, you should help all of them to attain Buddhahood. (637)

A person who upholds the Lotus Sutra is repaying the debt of gratitude owed to father and mother. Even if one does not feel in one's own heart that one can do so, one can repay it through the power of this sutra. (638)

How thankful we must be that, in a world such as this, there are those who, because of some good karma accumulated in the past, are willing to support the votaries of the Lotus Sutra! How thankful we must be! (802)

Since I am already sixty years old now, I feel that I would like to repay my debt of gratitude to the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai. So I have used your offering money for the repair and reconstruction of our shabby temple building. When you go to the pure land of Eagle Peak you can say that your four thousand coins built the foremost Lotus hall in the entire land of Jambudvīpa. (969)

Arrogance

It is like the case of Sunakshatra and his reading of the twelve divisions of the scriptures, or like Devadatta, who had committed to memory sixty thousand sacred texts. They called themselves wise men, but their wisdom served only to puff them up and to abet their evil teachings. (134)

Moreover, the “Expedient Means” chapter describes how the five thousand persons of overbearing arrogance withdrew from the assembly. They did so after hearing the Buddha make the concise replacement of the three vehicles with the one vehicle, and when the Buddha was about to begin making the expanded replacement of the three vehicles with the one vehicle. At that time, the Buddha used his power to influence them in such a way that they rose from their seats and withdrew. Later, through the Nirvana Sutra and the four ranks of bodhisattvas, the Buddha made it possible for these persons to achieve enlightenment in their present existence. (231)

So you have gone to the capital, and before much time has passed you are changing your name, a piece of utter nonsense. No doubt you have also changed your way of speaking and acquired the accent of the capital. Like a mouse that has changed into a bat but in fact is neither bird nor mouse, you are now neither a country priest nor a priest of the capital. You are behaving just like Shō-bō. You should just go on speaking like a country person—otherwise you will only sound ridiculous. And as for changing your name to Sonjō, the characters of which are the same as those of the personal name of the Retired Emperor of Ōki—it is all too absurd! (343)

But now you take exception to them and expound what is merely your own personal opinion, causing others to be confused and misled, startling the eyes and ears of everyone throughout the world! You are acting like a person of overbearing arrogance, are you not? (524)

But the votaries of the Lotus Sutra are like Mount Sumeru, the sun and moon, or the great ocean. And yet the world today despises and makes light of the Lotus Sutra, treating it like dirt or like a lowly subject of the ruler, while it respects and honours the erroneous men of the True Word teaching, awarding them the title of Teacher of the Nation and treating them like gold or like kings. So the country has become full of persons of overbearing arrogance, causing the blue heavens to blaze with anger and the yellow earth to bring forth strange calamities. As small streams come together until they break down the walls and moats, so the sorrow and distress of the common people will pile up until it destroys the nation. (525-6)

The four great bodhisattvas were similar to these men. They appeared at the Lotus Sutra assembly and added their dignity to the three kinds of Buddhas who were gathered there. They overturned the arrogance of the slanderers of the Law the way a great wind tosses about the branches of little trees, and inspired respect and awe in the members of the assembly the way the deity Shakra commands obedience from the other heavenly beings. (548-9)

You must not allow the towering pride of your present lifetime to plant the seeds of deluded wandering for endless kalpas to come. (610)

Even though the rulers may look with scorn and contempt on Nichiren, they cannot invalidate the golden words of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, or the affirmations of those words by Many Treasures and the Buddhas of the ten directions. (702)

Because they look with contempt on Nichiren and pay honour to the priests of the other teachings, they are automatically acting as the mortal enemies of the Lotus Sutra, yet they fail to understand this. (710)

Behavior

Treating one's friends with courtesy means that, although one may encounter them ten or twenty times in the course of a single day, one greets them courteously as though they had travelled a thousand or two thousand miles to see one, never showing them indifference. (636)

What is more, these men in their self-conceit go so far as to insult the observers of the Mahayana precepts by calling them breakers of the precepts or men of no precepts. Such behaviour is comparable to a dog barking at a lion or a monkey railing at the god Shakra. (689)

Therefore you should in future be even more careful of your conduct. (730)

Turning to Buddhist literature, we find that the Buddha has warned that, if a person sees an enemy of the Lotus Sutra but fails to speak out against him because of fear of the world, then he is a foe of Shakyamuni Buddha. No matter how wise or good he may be, he will assuredly fall into the hell of incessant suffering. Such a person is like a son who sees someone about to kill his parents but fails to warn them, or a minister who sees someone bringing ruin on his sovereign but, fearful of the world, does not speak out in reprimand. Such behaviour the Buddha prohibits. (772)

Even if your opponents in the case should happen to utter abuse, and even if it is something that concerns yourselves, the first and second time this happens I believe you should act as if you have heard nothing. If they continue yet a third time, without either changing your expression or using rude language, you must answer with gentle words. (1008)

Benefit

The Buddha, having weighed these benefits carefully, kindly explains for us that all the benefits gained by practicing the provisional teachings over numerous kalpas, or the benefits of a great sage, cannot compare to the benefits gained by even an ignorant person who for a moment hears of the Lotus Sutra, responds with joy, and thus forms a bond with it. As we see in the sutra itself, the latter benefits are a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a million times greater. The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai in his commentary is making this fact perfectly clear through his analogies. The tree known as the nyagrodha in one day spreads out a hundred spans in all directions and towers on high, and the bird known as a kalavinka, even while a mere chick, has a voice superior to that of all other kinds of birds large or small. The long time required in the practice of the provisional teachings is compared to the slow rate at which many kinds of plants and trees grow to maturity, while the swiftness with which one attains Buddhahood by practicing the Lotus Sutra is compared to the way in which the tree mentioned above spreads a hundred spans in a single day. And the sages great and small of the provisional teachings are being compared to the other types of birds, while the ordinary person who has barely begun practice of the Lotus Sutra is compared to the kalavinka, which, while still in the shell, has a voice superior to that of all other birds. (55)

Though one may possess medicine blended from hundreds and thousands of ingredients, if one does not drink it, one's illness will never be cured. Though one may have riches in one's storehouse, if one does not know enough to open the storehouse, one may go hungry; and though one may have medicine in the breast of one's robe, if one does not know enough to drink it, one may die. And this is also true of the benefits of this Lotus Sutra, which are like those of the wish-granting jewel described in the "Five Hundred Disciples" chapter. If, along with contemplation of the mind, one recites the sutra, then of course one will gain these benefits. (89)

The practice of fixing the mind on the words of the Lotus Sutra is not like fixing the mind on the words of the other sutras. Though one may chant only one word of the Lotus Sutra, within this one word are contained all the words of the eighty thousand precious doctrines of Shakyamuni, and it holds within it the blessings or benefits of all the Buddhas. (121)

But if one is numbered among those who have faith in the Lotus Sutra, then unless one abandons faith in the Lotus and follows those who advocate the provisional teachings, one will never fall into the three evil paths, for the evil actions of ordinary worldly life have no power to counteract the blessings bestowed by the Lotus Sutra. (142-3)

But when we come to the precepts of the Lotus Sutra, we find that they may be administered to persons of the two vehicles and to those who have committed the seven cardinal sins. Moreover, through them even persons in the lowest category of ordinary mortals will enter the stage of Buddhahood within the space of a single lifetime and achieve perfect enlightenment. Thus one may acquire both the merit of practice and the benefit of Buddhahood. (208)

With regard to persons who carry out the five practices mentioned in the "Teacher of the Law" chapter of the Lotus Sutra, those who carry out four of them, namely, to embrace, read, recite, and copy the Lotus Sutra, refers to those who practice for their own benefit. [...] Those who carry out the fifth of the five practices listed in the "Teacher of the Law" chapter, that is, those who expound the Lotus Sutra, are persons who practice for the benefit of others. (216)

The benefits to be gained by reciting the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo are great indeed. All the Buddhas, all the daimoku of the various sutras, are opened up and merged in the Lotus Sutra. One understands that it is *myōhō* that makes this opening up possible, and therefore one should recite the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra. (229)

Because all of you are reading the entire Lotus Sutra with your lives, this will bring benefit to you as well as to your parents and your brothers and sisters, both living and dead. (394)

The great difficulties I encounter in these three existences are evidence that in these three existences I am a recipient of the blessing and benefits of the Lotus Sutra. From far distant kalpas in the past until numberless kalpas in the future, these blessings of the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law will be with me over the three existences, never to be exhausted. (459)

Because of the profound influence of the benefits bestowed by the Lotus Sutra and the golden words of Shakyamuni Buddha, I have managed to survive until today. Thus you should understand that so long as a practitioner of the Lotus Sutra remains unwavering in faith, free of all false alliances, entrusting himself wholeheartedly to the Lotus Sutra and practicing in accordance with the Buddha's golden words, he will without fail be able to prevent disaster and prolong his life in this present existence, to say nothing of in the life to come. Splendid recompense will be his, and he will fulfil his great vow to broadly proclaim and propagate the Lotus Sutra. (460)

Many of the practitioners from Sado Province have made the long journey all the way to this place, and that is why I have expounded for them the teaching that I am propagating now, which will become the seed of Buddhahood in their future lives as well. All of this is due to the blessings of the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha. How marvellous! (534)

The blessings that you, the Honorable Jōren, acquire through your faith in the Lotus Sutra will lend strength to your kind father. [...] How could the fact that you embrace the Lotus Sutra fail to bring blessing to the departed spirit of your late father? (572)

In the same way that a bird cares for its eggs, that one pours oil into a lamp, that rain falls on withered grasses, or that one offers milk to a starving child, you are extending the life of the Lotus Sutra, and thus making offerings to the Buddhas of the three existences. This means, I think, that your benefit is that of opening the eyes of all the living beings in the ten directions. No words can express how sublime this is. It is wonderful indeed! (590)

And the sutra passage is saying that the blessings one gains by giving alms to a votary of the Lotus Sutra in this muddy age are greater than those gained by giving countless treasures to the Buddha over a period of time as long as that just described. (653)

The benefit to be gained from supporting one's mother or father surpasses that to be gained from supporting all the people in Japan. (756)

It will happen then that those who have faith in the sutra will be cursed and attacked, driven from one place to another, and perhaps even killed. At that time, those who stand in the vanguard will win benefit as great as though they had given offerings to the Buddhas of the three existences and the ten directions. And the Buddha has also promised that he will transfer to such persons the benefits resulting from his own trials and ascetic practices. (775)

A man who offered a mud pie to the Buddha was reborn as a king. Because the Lotus Sutra is a teaching superior to the Buddha, having made offerings to it, how could you possibly fail to both enjoy benefit in this lifetime and attain Buddhahood in the next? (805)

The blessings that adorn the living beings and the environment in the pure lands of the ten directions are present within one's own mind and never depart from it for an instant. This is the Thus Come One of original enlightenment, the three bodies that are a single unity, and outside of this there is no Law. This single Law exists within the pure lands of the ten directions, and no other Law exists. Hence it is called a Law without distinctions. (840)

Can we count the number of raindrops that fall in a major world system in the space of seven days? Or does anyone know the number of dust particles in the vast lands that make up the worlds of the ten directions? But the benefits one gains by making offerings even to one word of the Lotus Sutra—these, the Buddha says, are truly hard to measure. This you must keep ever in mind! (871)

This character *myō* is the moon, it is the sun, it is the stars, it is a mirror, it is garments, it is food, it is flowers, it is the great earth, it is the great sea. All benefits clustered together make up the character *myō*. Also, it is the wish-granting jewel. You should understand things in this way. (879-880)

At first one may seem to have faith in the Lotus Sutra, but it is hard to maintain that faith to the last. Water, for example, may be stirred by the wind, or blossoms may lose their hue with the fading of the morning dew. How, then, have you been able to persist in your faith up until today? It must be thanks entirely to the blessings you have acquired in previous existences, and to the care bestowed on you by Shakyamuni Buddha. How heartening is that thought, how heartening indeed! (885)

The Buddha took no measures to correct those who slander the teachings of the Lotus Sutra, because while he was in the world there were no such persons. But in the Latter Day of the Law the formidable enemies of the single vehicle are everywhere in sight. Now is the time to benefit the world in the same manner as Bodhisattva Never Disparaging. You who are my disciples, each of you should work diligently at this, work diligently at this! (936)

Could the sun and moon ever fall to the earth? Could Mount Sumeru ever crumble? Could the tide ever cease its ebb and flow? Could the earth ever overturn? The benefits arising from the offering of these robes are described in the Lotus Sutra. Simply consider this with your faith, for it is difficult to express in words. (945)

A single drop from a river is like a single piece of gold, but a single drop of the great ocean is like the wish-granting jewel. A single drop from a river has only a single flavor. But one drop of the great ocean contains all the five flavors. One drop of a river or a stream has only one healing agent, but one drop of the great ocean is like a pill made up of ten thousand ingredients. Namu Amida Butsu is one drop of a single river, but Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is one drop of the great ocean. The Amida Sutra is one drop of a single river, but the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra is one drop of the great ocean. The faults committed by the late Gorō in his sixteen years of life are one drop of a river or stream, but his chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo for a short time is like a drop of the great ocean. (946)

Bodhisattvas

It is simply said that, when bodhisattvas arouse an aspiration to achieve enlightenment, this is the Buddha nature. (58)

Nor is there any realm of the bodhisattva that exists separate from the realm of human beings. (62)

Unless one is a bodhisattva of the Dharma body, one cannot endure the pains involved in entering the three evil paths, and the same is true of these heavenly and earthly gods. The sufferings in the world today are too great for them to endure. But the great bodhisattvas as numerous as the dust particles of a thousand worlds who emerged from the earth have first of all lived in this sahā world for an incalculably long period of time; second, they have been disciples of Shakyamuni Buddha since the far distant past, when he first set his mind on and attained enlightenment; and third, these bodhisattvas were the first persons in the sahā world to receive the seed of Buddhahood from the Buddha. Therefore, in terms of the bonds of karma from the past that tie them to the sahā world, they surpass the other great bodhisattvas. (550)

These great bodhisattvas [who emerged from the earth] are particularly suited to bring benefit to people in the Latter Day of the Law, like fish who are at home in the water or birds that move freely through the sky. When people in that corrupt and evil age encounter these great bodhisattvas, the seed of Buddhahood will be implanted in them, just as when a piece of crystal is exposed to the light of the moon, it produces water, or when a peacock hears the sound of thunder, it conceives. (551)

Shakyamuni, sun of wisdom, great sage and venerable one, looking forth with his Buddha eye, had from past times understood all this. Therefore he rejected the offer of the other great sages, and instead summoned forth these four great bodhisattvas, entrusting to them the essential Law and thus ensuring that they would propagate it in the Latter Day of the Law. (551)

Buddhahood

Persons who put faith in this sutra are able not only to see the Buddha innate in their own being, but to see all the Buddhas of the three existences of past, present and future. It is as though one were looking into the pure crystal mirror of King Yama, in which all forms and shapes are seen. Thus the sutra says, “And it will be like a pure bright mirror in which forms and shapes are all reflected.” (5)

Since the beginningless past, we living beings have never for an instant been separated from this wish-granting jewel of Myoho-renge-kyo. But, befuddled by the wine of ignorance, we fail to realize that it is hidden in the lining of our robes, and we are content with merely a little gain. (36)

To offer an analogy, if in spring and summer one plows the field and plants it with seed, then in autumn and winter one may reap and store away the harvest, and all will proceed as one wishes it to. It may seem like a long wait from spring to autumn, and yet within the space of a single year one’s wishes will be fulfilled. And in like manner, it may seem a long time to wait in order to enter the state of enlightenment and manifest our Buddhahood. And yet such a manifestation may be accomplished within the space of a single lifetime, and we ourselves can become Buddhas who possess the three bodies within a single body. (79)

But when, through the Lotus Sutra, we meditate moment by moment on the meaning of threefold contemplation in a single mind and the principle of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, then we come to realize that we ourselves are Thus Come Ones of original enlightenment. Then the clouds of ignorance part and the moon of the essential nature of phenomena shines forth. We wake from dreams of delusion and the round moon of original enlightenment is seen in all its brilliance. We see that this fleshly form received in birth from our parents, this body bound by earthly desires, is none other than the Thus Come One who has existed always and is ever-abiding. This is what is called the attainment of Buddhahood in one’s present form, the realization that earthly desires are none other than enlightenment and that the sufferings of birth and death are none other than nirvana. At this time when we gaze at the phenomenal world, we see that all things conform to the single principle of the Middle Way, and that the Buddha and living beings are one. (85)

When we chant Myoho-renge-kyo, the Thus Come One of the essential nature of our minds becomes manifest, and the sounds that reach the ears of others wipe out their offenses accumulated over countless asamkhya kalpas. When they respond with joy even for a moment, they attain Buddhahood in their present form. Even though they may not believe this, the seed has been planted, it is maturing, and through it they will invariably attain Buddhahood. (87)

From time without beginning until the present, these bodies of ours have transmigrated through the realm of birth and death, in a state of delusion as to the essential nature of the mind that is within these bodies. But now that we have encountered the Lotus Sutra and chant the daimoku that represents the Thus Come One of original enlightenment, who possesses the three bodies in a single body, the Thus Come One becomes manifest. In our present existence we achieve the inner realization and attainment of Buddhahood that is known as the attainment of Buddhahood in our present form. And when we die, our bodies will emit a glow. This is what is known as the outward-directed activity associated with the attainment of Buddhahood. (87)

But once the principle of three thousand realms in a single moment of life had been expounded, then the way was opened for all to attain Buddhahood, so what more could be lacking? (279- 280)

All of you should prepare yourselves mentally for what may come. Do not let concern for wife and children or other family members deter you. Do not fear those in authority. Now is the time to break free from the bonds of this realm of birth and death and to obtain the fruit of Buddhahood! (333)

Suppose, for example, that a father and a mother have nine children. If two of the children are judged to be of low social rank, then all the other seven children must likewise be regarded as of low social rank. The Buddha and the sutra are comparable to the father and mother, and the living beings in the nine worlds are comparable to their offspring. If two of the children, those that represent the voice-hearer and the cause-awakened one, are judged to be incapable of ever attaining Buddhahood, then how can the seven other children who represent bodhisattvas and persons in the six lower worlds ever be permitted to achieve the way? (471)

For example, a ruler called King Golden Grains turned sand into gold. A man named Mahānāma turned rocks into gems. Wood immersed in the Spring of Jewels changes into lapis lazuli. Waters that enter the sea all become salty. Birds that approach Mount Sumeru turn golden-hued. Agada medicine changes poison into medicine. And the wonder of the Lotus Sutra is also like that; it changes ordinary people into Buddhas. (671)

On Mount Takatori, Mount Minobu, Mount Shichimen, in Iidani, under the trees, among the grass roots, on the peaks, down in the dirt, search where you may, nowhere will you find it growing—only in the sea does the seaweed grow. And only on the mountains are the mushrooms found. In like manner, the way to Buddhahood is found nowhere outside the Lotus Sutra. (730)

When I spoke out in this way, people felt hatred and rejected it, but the late Ueno believed and thus attained Buddhahood. You are all his kin and therefore I am certain you will be able to carry out this resolve. Is this not what is meant by the sayings that a mite clinging to a fleet horse flies a thousand miles, and that the ivy winding around the pine tree soars a thousand feet? Each of you possesses the same heart as the late Ueno. (804-5)

Hence we come to realize that there is no difference between one's own mind and the mind of the Buddha, and accordingly wake from the dream realm of birth and death and return to the waking state of original enlightenment. This is known as attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form. To attain Buddhahood in one's present form means at this moment to realize one's inborn, original nature, to know that it is one's unaffected and unobstructed destiny as a living being, one's reward, and the unseen protection [of the Buddhas]. If we consider the matter, we see then that the mind when it is dreaming is comparable to the state of delusion, and when it is awake is comparable to enlightenment. Thus if we fully understand the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime, we see that we have been viewing empty dreams, groundless and ephemeral, troubling our minds with them, pouring out sweat; but when we wake from them we find that our bodies, our homes, our resting places are just as they have always been. The empty world of dreams and the real world of the waking state appeared to our eyes and seemed in our thoughts to be two different matters, yet all along there was only one place and only one person involved. Thus we come to understand these two matters of false or empty, and true or real. From this one should also understand that one's own mind that views the dream realm of birth and death in the nine worlds is no different from the waking mind of the world of Buddhahood, the world that is eternal and unchanging. The place in which one views the dream realm of birth and death in the nine worlds is no different from the place in which one experiences the waking state of the world of Buddhahood, eternal and unchanging. There is no difference in the mind itself, and no difference in the place where all this occurs. But the dreams are all false or empty, while what is experienced in the waking state is all true. (845-6)

While one believes that one is an ordinary person in the realm of birth and death, this is comparable to dreaming that one is a butterfly, a state of distorted views and distorted thoughts. And when one realizes that one is the Thus Come One of original enlightenment, this state is comparable to the original Chuang Chou, or the attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form. This is not to say that one attains Buddhahood while in the form of a butterfly. The belief that one is a butterfly is empty or false. One could never speak of attaining Buddhahood in such a form—that would be out of the question. Once we realize that ignorance is like dreaming that one is a butterfly, then our distorted thoughts are seen to be like yesterday's dreams, things lacking in an intrinsic nature or entity, mere delusions. Who would ever put faith in the empty dream of the realm of birth and death and harbor doubts about the Buddha nature, or nirvana, that is eternal and unchanging? (846-7)

But now if one will only cast aside such thinking, correct one's outlook, and return to a state of enlightenment, then one will realize that the attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form is to be found nowhere outside one's own body. The mirror that is one's own mind is none other than the same mirror that is the mirror of the Buddha's mind. But we are looking at the back side of the mirror, and therefore we cannot see the truth or principle that underlies our nature, and so we are said to be in a state of ignorance. The Thus Come One, however, looks at the front side of the mirror and can see and understand the principle underlying our nature. For this reason, enlightenment and ignorance may be said to constitute a single entity. (852-3)

The moon of your mind is without shadow and all stain has vanished from your body. You are a Buddha in your present body—how wonderful, how wonderful! (1068)

Care for Others

When one addresses the ordinary people of this latter age, one must take their innate capacities into careful consideration. For if one fails to do so and goes recklessly ahead, one may cause them to speak slander, which one must not do. (230)

Concerning the cold this evening, there is no way I can tell you how painful it is to me as I keep thinking, not about myself, but about all of you. If you have been released from prison, you must be sure to come to Sado in the spring of next year. Let us meet again! (394)

I was worried about how you were doing since I had had no word from you, so I was delighted to see your messenger. I am overjoyed to hear that you have recovered from your illness. (498)

I have heard nothing recently from those four persons, the lay priest of Kawanobe and the others and I am quite worried. I wonder what has happened to them. Write and tell me details concerning each of them. The fate of these individuals is a very important matter, and from time to time I exhort the heavenly gods to take particular care of them. Please impress upon them strongly that they are certain to obtain some sign of benefit in their present life, not to mention in future existences. They must have faith in this. (661)

I am as concerned about the illness of your wife, the lay nun Toki, as though it were I myself who is ailing, and day and night I pray to the heavenly gods that she will recover. She has supported the votary of the Lotus Sutra just as she has supplied oil to the lamps, or piled earth around the roots of the trees. I am beseeching the gods of the sun and moon that they will guard her life even at the cost of their own! If there are other matters I have forgotten to mention here, I will send word of them by way of Iyo-bō. Rest assured that I will do all I can. (666)

I was most delighted to hear that your lord, who in the past has treated you with enmity, has once more admitted you to the company of those in his service, and that you are called upon to serve him not for a mere day or two but without interruption. I cannot tell you how this pleases me. (730)

Remember that these brothers and sisters of yours are dear to your mother, and she will be concerned for them until the moment of her death. If you pardon their faults and treat them with kindness, you will be easing your mother's mind and exercising proper filial regard. Reflect deeply on this! If you treat others with kindness, how much more so should you treat your own siblings. For if you should encounter trouble, they would be the ones to share your fate with you. And if you should die before they do, they would be the ones left behind to mourn you. With that thought in mind, you should be particularly kind to them. The reason I am saying these things is none other than this. In the game called *sugoroku*, you cannot knock over a pair of stones with only one from a pair of dice. A bird cannot fly on a single wing. Even brave warriors such as Masakado and Sadatō could not accomplish their aims all by themselves. If you think of your siblings as your own children or followers and depend upon them, and if the Lotus Sutra spreads widely and you remain alive, they will become devoted allies of the sutra. (731)

How can I thank you enough for sending me such a variety of things, especially now, at the busiest time of year for farmers, when no one has a spare moment? I think this is wholly because it is hard for you to bear being separated from your late husband, the lay priest, and you are eager to do something for the sake of his next existence. How delighted he must be with your warm concern for his future existence. In that dew-dampened grassy place bereft of visitors, he is probably longing to ask what has become of the small children he left behind in the sahā world. (879)

And when I see people praying for their departed mother, I feel as though it is my own concern and seeing you do so makes me very happy. (898)

Since I lost my father and mother, I have known no such kindness as this! When I think of the depth of your concern for me, I can barely hold back my tears. (978)

But be that as it may, for no less than nine years you have put your trust in a man who is seen throughout Japan as more than a bit of an embarrassment. I am more grateful than I can express in words for your sincerity. That is why, no matter where I should breathe my last, I would like my grave to be in the valley of Minobu. (994)

You have been so kind in the past that I did not believe there was anything more that you could do, and yet you proceed to show even greater kindness—it really exceeds what is reasonable. My greatest concern, however, is whether or not you are getting along well with your lord. If there is no trouble between the two of you, that will be the best news possible. (1028)

When someone reported to me, however, that you had been taken with this illness, day and night, morning and evening I addressed the Lotus Sutra on the matter, morning and evening I implored the gods of the blue heavens. And now today I have received word that you have recovered from illness. Could any tidings be more joyful than these? (1034)

Cause & Effect

But this chapter, the “Devadatta” chapter, tells us that, while there are the different realms of human beings and of animals, if even the dragon king’s daughter, who belongs to the realm of animals, can become a Buddha, then we, who as a result of past deeds have been fortunate enough to be born in human form, a form superior to that of the dragon girl, cannot fail to become Buddhas. (39)

This is nothing other than what is taught in the Lotus Sutra. The cause and effect of the Ten Worlds were clarified in the sutras preached prior to the Lotus. But now [with the Lotus Sutra] the fact that the cause and effect of the Ten Worlds are mutually possessed is set forth. (58)

And daimoku represents the cause and condition that permits not only us but all living beings to proceed directly to the place of enlightenment. (86)

When we chant Myoho-renge-kyo, the Thus Come One of the essential nature of our minds becomes manifest, and the sounds that reach the ears of others wipe out their offenses accumulated over countless asamkha kalpas. When they respond with joy even for a moment, they attain Buddhahood in their present form. Even though they may not believe this, the seed has been planted, it is maturing, and through it they will invariably attain Buddhahood. (87)

If we go by what these passages tell us, then although one does not at first have an understanding mind, the fact that one can listen to this Lotus Sutra and never slander it is a result of the great good acts done in the past. (142)

Question: If one merely hears the daimoku, or title, of the Lotus Sutra but lacks an understanding mind, how can one escape the three evil paths? Answer: If one is born in a country where the Lotus Sutra is propagated and, on hearing the daimoku of the sutra, one is moved to take faith in it, this is because one has accumulated a rich store of good actions in the past. Thus, even though one may be an evil person lacking in wisdom in one’s present existence, when one hears the name of the sutra, one will take faith in it and hence will not fall into the evil paths. (141-2)

That which enables all living beings to gain enlightenment for the first time is what is known as the perfect cause set forth in the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra. And the original enlightenment of all living beings is what is known as the perfect effect set forth in the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra. (170)

Generally speaking, those who are ignorant of the law of cause and effect may be described as holding erroneous views. In terms of worldly conduct, persons of erroneous views may be defined as those who are lacking in compassion. There are many persons in the world today who will find it hard to escape this hell. (249)

Thus, reading one sentence or one phrase of this sutra, or writing out one character or one stroke of it, can become the cause that enables one to escape from the sufferings of birth and death and attain great enlightenment. So it was that a certain person, because he formed a relationship with the words of this sutra, was able to return to life from the hall of Yama, the judge of the dead. And because another person wrote out the sixty-four characters that make up the titles of the eight volumes of the Lotus Sutra, his deceased father was let to the realm of heaven. (309)

The departed one in particular, while alive, gave evidence of an extraordinary faith in the Lotus Sutra. And now, through the power of these lectures on the sutra, that person will be reborn in the presence of the Buddha and will gain wonderful causes leading to the attainment of the Buddha's enlightenment. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (310)

Its doctrine does not take into consideration the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds, so how can it explain that even insentient beings possess the cause and effect [of Buddhahood] in both the material and spiritual aspects? (448)

But the effect is already present in the cause, and the cause is present in the effect. One is thus contemplating the wonderful Law in which both cause and effect are present simultaneously, and that is why this method can achieve the results that it does. (517)

I see in such actions the causes and conditions that bring about the ruin of the nation, the beginnings of what may be called slander of the Law. Therefore, heedless of how the world may speak ill of me, or whether it will listen to what I say or not, I risk my life to speak out on this matter. (524)

The "poison" in the above passage means the first two of the four noble truths, the truth that all existence is suffering and the truth that suffering is caused by selfish craving as well as the karmic cause and effect that confine living beings to the sufferings of birth and death. These are truly the poison to outdo all poisons. But through the extraordinary power of the character *myō*, or "wonderful," this poison is changed into the understanding that the sufferings of birth and death are nirvana, that earthly desires are enlightenment. This is the good medicine that can change poison into medicine, hence it is called good medicine. (585-6)

You, however, are a member of the laity, and I am wondering, when I am hated by all others and when you and I have yet to meet in person, why you have been able to put faith in my teachings. This must be entirely because the roots of goodness were planted in you in some past existence, and because the time has now come for you to work to attain Buddhahood in the existence to come. (652)

And regarding the causes that made such an offering possible, it is stated that the person making the offering made offerings in the past to a hundred thousand million Buddhas, and therefore is now able to draw close to the Lotus Sutra. (734)

Water does not come from fire, and grass does not grow from a stone. Evil causes produce evil effects, good causes call forth good responses—such is the fixed principle in the Buddhist teaching. (742)

White face powder has the power to make black lacquer as white as snow. Any colour approaching Mount Sumeru takes on a golden hue. One who upholds the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra transforms the black lacquer of the evil deeds of a lifetime, and of countless kalpas of lifetimes in the past, into the great merit of good deeds. All the more so is this true of one's good roots from the beginningless past, which all take on a golden hue. (760)

When the mind encounters good or bad causes, it creates and puts forth the aspects of good and bad. (844)

To “experience to the full the realm of Buddhahood” refers to the doctrine of the ten factors. One comes to fully realize and understand that these ten factors and the Ten Worlds are mutually inclusive, that the causes and effects of the Ten Worlds and the ten factors, the two types of wisdom, provisional and true, and the two kinds of realms are all contained within one's own life, within everyone's life without exception, and hence one can fully comprehend the Buddha's words. (854)

Moreover, now when everyone else in Japan has abandoned Shakyamuni Buddha, what roots of goodness from the past, I wonder, account for your believing in the Lotus Sutra and Shakyamuni Buddha, and for all of you not only gathering on the eighth day and making offerings, but sending flowers and incense to Nichiren deep in the mountains? How truly praiseworthy! (980)

The true cause that allows one to leave this land of impurity and gain rebirth in the Pure Land is none other than the Lotus Sutra. (999)

If one enters a grove of sandalwood trees, though one may not even touch the trees, one's whole person becomes imbued with their scent. And similarly, if one draws near to those who slander the Law, the good roots that one has gained through religious practice will be totally destroyed and one will fall with the slanderers into hell. (1025)

Character

In Japan, however, I, Nichiren, alone may be called an upright person both in terms of secular society and among those who have withdrawn from the secular world. This is because I informed the late lay priest of Saimyō-ji that the Zen school is the invention of the heavenly devil, and later wrote a treatise apprising him of the situation. “All the people of Japan are destined to fall into the hell of incessant suffering,” I told him. In past ages, has there ever been an example of anyone who spoke out in such an upright manner? And from this you can judge how things stand. If I spoke out in this case, would I be likely to speak deceptively in matters of lesser importance? (348-9)

Common Sense

One who sets aside error and accepts what is reasonable is the real wise man. (482)

Persons of discernment ought to believe my words, particularly now, when enemy soldiers have already launched their attack and seized two of our provinces. Even a tree or stone, or a bird or beast would be moved and alarmed in such circumstances. This is no ordinary matter! (506)

It seems they fail to realize that, when it is only reasonable to expect prayers to be answered and yet they are not, one may rightly reproach the object of worship.³ (930)

³ Here, the Daishonin is referring to other religions and schools of Buddhism.

Compassion

All the Buddhas and bodhisattvas are our compassionate fathers and mothers. And you should understand that the greatest expression of compassion with which they teach and convert living beings is to be found in the Lotus Sutra alone. (223)

Generally speaking, those who are ignorant of the law of cause and effect may be described as holding erroneous views. In terms of worldly conduct, persons of erroneous views may be defined as those who are lacking in compassion. There are many persons in the world today who will find it hard to escape this hell. (249)

Moreover, I am a votary of the Lotus Sutra, hated by all, from the supreme ruler down to the masses of common people, and forced to face starvation and death here in these mountains. And because you pity me, out of your kindness you have sent this offering, conveying it over mountains and rivers, this wheat that is not wheat but gold, not gold but the words and letters of the Lotus Sutra. In our eyes it is wheat, but to the ten demon daughters this wheat appears as the seeds of Buddhahood! (575)

Ever since I became aware of the reason for this situation, moved by feelings of pity and compassion, I have explained the matter in no uncertain terms to all my followers who are qualified to receive such information, so that knowledge of it has gradually spread until it has even reached the ears of the ruler of the nation. (622)

Moreover, one must respect the admonitions of the Buddha and exercise a measure of compassion for others, and therefore for the sake of the country I risk my body and life by speaking out on the matter. (692)

Could your having taken pity on and made offerings to such a strange person be because you were my parent in a past existence, or could it be due to karma from a past lifetime? It is certainly no ordinary thing. Moreover, it is when the rain pours, the wind rages, and people try to hold one back that one's resolve comes to the fore. This is also true in your case. (757)

But whatever may happen to Jirō Hyōe, I cannot help feeling pity when I think of the grief his wife must be suffering. She must feel like a wisteria vine in full bloom that has twined itself around a pine tree, but finds to her consternation that the pine has suddenly toppled over, or like ivy on a fence when the fence has collapsed. (779)

Thus I can only feel pity for the ruler and for the country of Japan. Just as the insects protected by a tree's shade eat away at the tree and topple it, and the worms in a lion's body eat away at and kill it, those who make their ways in the world protected by the lord of Sagami, under cover of his authority, threaten everyone, causing them suffering and distress. (877)

I, Nichiren, have done nothing else, but have laboured solely to put the five or seven characters of Myoho-renge-kyo into the mouths of all the living beings of the country of Japan. In doing so, I have shown the kind of compassion that a mother does when she labours to put milk into the mouth of her infant child. (931)

Up until now I have kept this doctrine secret within my heart. But if I do not leave behind me a written record of it, the future followers of my teachings will perhaps slander me by saying that I was without pity or compassion. (988)

Conviction, Determination, Perseverance & Resolve

I have become of one mind with the boy Snow Mountains and Bodhisattva Ever Wailing, determined to give up my life for the propagation of the great vehicle. (130)

With regard to my doctrine, my great desire is to enable each person in this country of Japan to take faith in it, and I believe that my wish is about to be realized. (352)

But my life from the beginning has been based upon firm conviction. I have no intention now of reversing my course, nor will I ever reproach [those who persecuted me]. (432)

It has been twenty or more years now since I found myself in that situation and began the great battle. Not once have I thought of retreat. Among my disciples and followers, however, those who are cowards have for the most part either given in or retreated at heart. I am at a loss to say how moved I am that though you, the lay nun, have little knowledge of Buddhist doctrines and are fainthearted, until now you have never retreated. (465)

Only when one has succeeded in overcoming a powerful enemy can we say that one has displayed real strength. (483)

It is nothing special. Now that you have offered your prayer, be resolved that in the end, things will turn out exactly that way. (497)

Unless one is a bodhisattva of the Dharma body, one cannot endure the pains involved in entering the three evil paths, and the same is true of these heavenly and earthly gods. The sufferings in the world today are too great for them to endure. But the great bodhisattvas as numerous as the dust particles of a thousand worlds who emerged from the earth have first of all lived in this sahā world for an incalculably long period of time; second, they have been disciples of Shakyamuni Buddha since the far distant past, when he first set his mind on and attained enlightenment; and third, these bodhisattvas were the first persons in the sahā world to receive the seed of Buddhahood from the Buddha. Therefore, in terms of the bonds of karma from the past that tie them to the sahā world, they surpass the other great bodhisattvas. (550)

When those who are vital to your interests try to prevent you from upholding your faith, or you are faced with great obstacles, you must believe that the king Brahmā and the others will without fail fulfil their vow, and strengthen your faith more than ever. (566)

The blessings that you, the Honorable Jōren, acquire through your faith in the Lotus Sutra will lend strength to your kind father. (572)

When things are going smoothly in this world of ours, we suppose there is nothing to worry about, but these days the situation seems very threatening indeed. Whatever happens, however, you must not despair. Be firm in your approach. (576)

People have regarded the two of you as surely having already yielded, but you have acted in an admirable manner. You probably think this is solely due to the power of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Lotus Sutra. I believe this also. No words can express the promise of your next existence. From now on too, no matter what may happen, you must not slacken in the least. You must raise your voice all the more and admonish [those who slander]. Even if your life should be threatened, you must not falter in the least. (597)

Having seen the general trend of events from some time past, I determined to risk my personal safety in order to repay the debt I owe the nation. (609)

Thus we know that Shakyamuni, Many Treasures [...] will, as a shadow follows a form, guard anyone who has firm faith in this Lotus Sutra and who remains at all times stalwart and unwavering in that faith. Think of this, think of this, never let your mind stray, be firm in faith at all times, and you will “enjoy peace and security in your present existence and good circumstances in future existences.” (638)

With regard to the faith that you hold in your heart, you must be as unchanging as snow or lacquer. (675)

Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions who are emanations of Shakyamuni, have earnestly declared that they will share their lodging with the votary of the Lotus Sutra, will cover him with their robes, and will guard and protect him. I was determined to test whether these words were true or false so that I might increase my faith. Therefore I did not slacken my efforts. (701)

Where strong winds cause the grasses to bend and flashes of lightning fill people with alarm— in a world such as ours, how wonderful it is that to this day you remain unshaken in your faith! They say that when roots are deep, the leaves will not wither; when there is a jewel in the heart of the fountain, its waters will never cease to flow. And how deep are the roots of your faith, how pure the jewel in your heart. How admirable, how admirable! (755)

Moreover, it is when the rain pours, the wind rages, and people try to hold one back that one’s resolve comes to the fore. This is also true in your case. (757)

I was born in Japan in the province of Awa. The son of commoner parents, I left my family, shaved my head, and put on clerical robes. At that time I was determined to make use of this present lifetime to plant the seeds of Buddhahood. (766)

I earnestly pray that the blessings deriving from such activities may be transferred to my parents, my teacher, and to all living beings. (798)

Moreover, since you are poor, you have no servants. There are obstacles at mountains and rivers. Even if you have a firm resolve, it may be difficult to act upon. But judging from the resolve you are displaying now, I see that yours is hardly ordinary. There can be no doubt that the ten demon daughters of the Lotus Sutra will protect you. How reassuring it is to think so! It is impossible to say all that I wish. (805)

But the rest of you should not be afraid. So long as you remain firm in heart, I am sure that the whole truth of the matter will become clear in the end. (831)

Because we have put our trust in the Lotus Sutra, it will be as if fish living in a shallow pool were to rejoice when the heavens cloud over and rain falls. Though we may suffer for a while, ultimately delight awaits us. (882)

At first one may seem to have faith in the Lotus Sutra, but it is hard to maintain that faith to the last. Water, for example, may be stirred by the wind, or blossoms may lose their hue with the fading of the morning dew. How, then, have you been able to persist in your faith up until today? It must be thanks entirely to the blessings you have acquired in previous existences, and to the care bestowed on you by Shakyamuni Buddha. How heartening is that thought, how heartening indeed! (885)

It would appear that opposition to the Lotus Sutra has by no means come to an end, and in the future as well, there is no telling what may occur. Under these circumstances it is incredible that you have endured until now. The Buddha tells us that though there may be those who enter fire without becoming burned or enter a great body of water without getting wet; though huge mountains may fly through the air or the great ocean rise up to the heavens, when once we enter the evil world of the latter age, it will be difficult to believe in the Lotus Sutra for even the space of a moment. (947)

It is said that one who seeks for great renown has no concern for minor disgrace, and I cherish a great desire to spread the seven characters of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo not only throughout Japan, but also to China and Koryō. Could it be a sign that my desire will be fulfilled? (1032)

I could see that things would become difficult for me, and I thought that I would do well to make haste and withdraw from worldly affairs. I did not do so, however, but continued in a vigorous manner to champion the Lotus Sutra, determined that, if the worst should come, I would sacrifice my life for that cause. (1052)

When a person who is ailing gives alms to the Lotus Sutra, that person's illness will be lightened, that person's complexion will brighten, that person's strength will improve. (1066)

Courage

Do not fear those in authority. Now is the time to break free from the bonds of this realm of birth and death and to obtain the fruit of Buddhahood! (333)

Unless one climbs Mount T'ai, one cannot know the heights of the sky; unless one descends into the deep valleys, one cannot understand the depth of the earth. (392)

Not once have I thought of retreat. Among my disciples and followers, however, those who are cowards have for the most part either given in or retreated at heart. I am at a loss to say how moved I am that though you, the lay nun, have little knowledge of Buddhist doctrines and are fainthearted, until now you have never retreated. (465)

Because I can see what will happen, I do not hesitate for fear of the great evil that may be done to me by Ryōkan's patrons, but speak out strongly against him. (691)

Nichiren, however, has now made his appearance in the world, he who fears no person whatsoever and who is prepared to cast aside body and life in order to point out the truth. (703)

My wish is that my disciples will be cubs of the lion king, never to be laughed at by the pack of foxes. It is hard to encounter a master like Nichiren, who since distant kalpas in the past down to the present day has never begrudged his body or life in order to expose the faults of his powerful enemies! (1062)

The Buddha was a single individual, while the leaders of the non-Buddhist teachings were many in number. But the non-Buddhist teachers were like so many ants, while the Buddha was like a dragon or like a lion. Therefore he was able to confront them and prevail. (1076)

Daimoku

And daimoku represents the cause and condition that permits not only us but all living beings to proceed directly to the place of enlightenment. (86)

But of course the daimoku is simply Myoho-renge-kyo, and so there is no need for any further discussion. (86)

But now that we have encountered the Lotus Sutra and chant the daimoku that represents the Thus Come One of original enlightenment, who possesses the three bodies in a single body, the Thus Come One becomes manifest. (87)

“When for the sake of brevity one mentions only the daimoku, or title, the entire sutra is by implication included therein.” This means that one recitation of the daimoku is equivalent to one recitation of the whole sutra. (87)

Though there may be persons who are unaware of the principle involved, if they chant the daimoku, they will experience the joy that can only be shared between Buddhas. (89)

[...] I will show that, by merely chanting the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra, one may escape being born in the three evil paths. (141)

If one is born in a country where the Lotus Sutra is propagated and, on hearing the daimoku of the sutra, one is moved to take faith in it, this is because one has accumulated a rich store of good actions in the past. Thus, even though one may be an evil person lacking in wisdom in one’s present existence, when one hears the name of the sutra, one will take faith in it and hence will not fall into the evil paths. (141-2)

As a daily religious practice, one should recite the daimoku, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (228)

[...] the two characters of *myōhō* of the daimoku contain within them the heart of the Lotus Sutra, namely, the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life set forth in the “Expedient Means” chapter, and the doctrine of the Buddha’s attainment of enlightenment in the far distant past set forth in the “Life Span” chapter. (228)

[...] when you encountered the instruction of the Sage Nichiren, and heard that one should propagate only the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra, you resolved to become one of my disciples. (374)

White face powder has the power to make black lacquer as white as snow. Any colour approaching Mount Sumeru takes on a golden hue. One who upholds the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra transforms the black lacquer of the evil deeds of a lifetime, and of countless kalpas of lifetimes in the past, into the great merit of good deeds. All the more so is this true of one's good roots from the beginningless past, which all take on a golden hue. (760)

They should make the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra their object of devotion. (787)

The object of devotion that I have mentioned earlier, the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra, is the object of devotion for Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions. It represents the true intent of the votary of the Lotus Sutra. (788)

Nichiren, who propagates the daimoku, the heart and core of the Lotus Sutra, throughout the country of Japan—is he not the “eyes of the world for heavenly and human beings”? (927)

Now, however, we have entered the Latter Day of the Law, and the daimoku that I, Nichiren, chant is different from that of earlier ages. This Nam-myoho-renge-kyo encompasses both practice for oneself and the teaching of others. (986)

Likewise, in comparison to the daimoku of Myoho-renge-kyo, the names of the various Buddhas are mere shards and rubble, while the daimoku is comparable to the wish-granting jewel. (997)

Darkness

The ruler of the nation is better able to help others than are the officials who serve under him; a father and mother show greater love and compassion for their children than do mere outsiders. The sun and the moon light up the darkness better than do the host of stars. And if the Lotus Sutra is not suited to the capacities of living beings of this latter age, then how could the other sutras possibly save them? (223)

The mirror is a single mirror, but depending upon whether one is looking at the front or the back of it, the distinction between enlightenment and darkness arises. The fact that the mirror has a back side does not constitute any interference to the front side, but, depending upon which side of the mirror one is viewing, the distinction between enlightenment and darkness is produced. This is known as the identity or the fusing and penetrating of two aspects of a single phenomenon. (853)

The words set forth in all the other sutras are words in a dream and are comparable to a round fan or a tree, while the words that reveal the waking mind in the Lotus Sutra are comparable to the moon or the wind. Thus the waking mind of original enlightenment is a round moon whose rays shine on and drive away the darkness of ignorance. And the wisdom that perceives the true aspect of all phenomena is a wind that blows away the dust of delusion. Thus, through the dream words that are like a fan or a tree, we come to understand the waking mind that is like the moon and wind, and in this way we can dispel the last remnants of the dream realm and return to the waking state of the original mind. (841-2)

For example, it is similar to an elderly person whose eyesight is dim and therefore fails to see that the lotus flowers in the pond have produced seeds. And at night, because of the darkness, one fails to see the forms of things. Nonetheless, this character *myō* is itself a Buddha. Furthermore, this character *myō* is the moon, it is the sun, it is the stars, it is a mirror, it is garments, it is food, it is flowers, it is the great earth, it is the great sea. All benefits clustered together make up the character *myō*. Also, it is the wish-granting jewel. You should understand things in this way. I will write in detail another time. (879-880)

The light of the moon is not very bright, for the Buddha taught [the Lotus Sutra in India] for only eight years of his life. But the light of the sun is brilliant, outshining the moon, an auspicious sign of how the Buddhism of Japan is destined to illuminate the long darkness of [the Latter Day of the Law, which begins with] the fifth five-hundred-year period. (936)

The gentle light of the Buddhas, their moonbeams that benefit living beings, illuminate the darkness of the nine worlds, but their beams are not reflected in the muddy water of slanderers of the Law and icchantikas, persons of incorrigible disbelief. (985)

Death

[...] you have not gone beyond the stage of the two opposing views of a self that ends with death and a self that is eternally unchanging [...] (17)

And when we die, our bodies will emit a glow. This is what is known as the outward-directed activity associated with the attainment of Buddhahood. (87)

The departed one in particular, while alive, gave evidence of an extraordinary faith in the Lotus Sutra. And now, through the power of these lectures on the sutra, that person will be reborn in the presence of the Buddha and will gain wonderful causes leading to the attainment of the Buddha's enlightenment. (310)

The one who was ailing had correct faith at the time of death. Without doubt she has gone to the pure land of Eagle Peak. There can be no doubt about it. (753)

Looking back, I have been studying the Buddha's teachings since I was a boy. And I found myself thinking, "The life of a human being is fleeting. The exhaled breath never waits for the inhaled one. Even dew before the wind is hardly a sufficient metaphor. It is the way of the world that whether one is wise or foolish, old or young, one never knows what will happen to one from one moment to the next. Therefore I should first of all learn about death, and then about other things." (759)

And when your deceased husband chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo at the end on his deathbed, the evil deeds of a lifetime, and from the beginningless past, changed into the seeds of Buddhahood. This is what is meant by the teachings called "earthly desires are enlightenment," "the sufferings of birth and death are nirvana," and "attaining Buddhahood in one's present form." (760)

The two principles of birth and death are principles that pertain to the dream realm of birth and death, delusions, examples of topsy-turvy thinking. When we employ the waking state of original enlightenment to gain a correct understanding of the nature of our minds, we see that it has no birth that can be called a beginning, so it could never have a death that would be an ending. Is this not what it means to grasp the mind that is removed from birth and death? This mind is not burned in the fires at the end of a kalpa, is not destroyed by the disaster of floods, cannot be severed with a sword or pierced with an arrow. One may put it inside a mustard seed and the mustard seed will not be stretched nor will the mind be cramped thereby. One may put it in the vast heavens and the heavens will not be too broad for it nor the mind too narrow to fill them. (843)

When one truly awakens to the fact that one's own mind and the Buddha mind are in fact one mind, then no evil karma can obstruct one when one's life comes to a close, and there will be no more deluded thoughts to detain one in the realm of birth and death. (852)

With regard to the news of the demise of Nanjō Shichirō Gorō: Once a person is born that person must die—wise men and foolish, eminent and lowly alike all know this to be a fact. Therefore one should not be grieved and alarmed by a person's death; I know it to be so and teach others to do likewise. (887)

Nevertheless, he had devoted himself to Shakyamuni Buddha and the Lotus Sutra, and he died in a fitting manner. I know that in heart he has gone to join his father in the pure land of Eagle Peak, where they will clasp hands and face one another in joy. How splendid, how splendid! (887)

Delusion & Illusion

And once we have come to understand that Myoho-Renge-Kyo is not the name of the sutra but is the entity of our own lives [...] Once we have become enlightened to this, then all the delusions and mistaken habits of thought that we have entertained from the beginningless past until the present will be swept away like yesterday's dreams and will vanish without a trace. (80)

These three bodies of the Thus Come One are in no way something that is extraneous to us. Rather we should understand that we ourselves are none other than ultimate entities endowed with the three virtues, Buddhas of original enlightenment, who possess the three bodies within a single one. When we understand this, we may be called Thus Come Ones, sages, enlightened ones. While we do not understand this, we are called ordinary mortals, ordinary living beings, or people in a state of delusion. (83)

From time without beginning until the present, these bodies of ours have transmigrated through the realm of birth and death, in a state of delusion as to the essential nature of the mind that is within these bodies. But now that we have encountered the Lotus Sutra and chant the daimoku that represents the Thus Come One of original enlightenment, who possesses the three bodies in a single body, the Thus Come One becomes manifest. (87)

And when one recites the words "This reality consists of *sōnyoze* (appearance is thus) . . . ," this is the principle of the Middle Way. Accordingly, the appearance, nature, and so forth acquired by one's life through karma, as all the illusions about the true nature of life inherent in them are swept away, are opened up as none other than the Thus Come One of the Dharma body. (89)

When we ordinary mortals, persons of incorrigible disbelief who are constantly drowned in delusion and suffering, desire to take faith in the Lotus Sutra, this is a sign that the Buddha nature within us is beginning to manifest itself. (137)

The root and origin of illusions is a failure to understand the Buddha who has been enlightened since the far distant past. (167)

The sutras preached before the Lotus Sutra vary in countless ways. But taken as a whole, we may say that they were preached in such a way as to accord with the minds of others [rather than the Buddha's own mind] and speak in terms of the listeners' hearts. Therefore there is nothing in them to rouse the opposition of the listeners. It is like the case of stones thrown into water—the water offers no resistance to them. Moreover, though there are many different doctrines put forward in these sutras, they do not lead the minds of the people out of the nine worlds. The minds of the people continue to reside in the realm of delusion, now following good, now following evil, and therefore they can never attain the realm of Buddhahood. (256)

You must not allow the towering pride of your present lifetime to plant the seeds of deluded wandering for endless kalpas to come. (610)

To fail to practice this wonderful Law of the one vehicle, but instead to seize on the expedient means teachings, which do not exist in any form in the pure lands, and hope thereby to attain Buddhahood is the most deluded of delusions. (840)

Thus the waking mind of original enlightenment is a round moon whose rays shine on and drive away the darkness of ignorance. And the wisdom that perceives the true aspect of all phenomena is a wind that blows away the dust of delusion. (841)

Once one has waked to and understood this mind, then the Ten Worlds become one's own self, one's own mind, one's own form, for the Thus Come One of original enlightenment becomes one's own body and mind. While one fails to understand this, one is in a state of ignorance. Ignorance means to be without clear understanding. One has not yet become clearly enlightened as to the nature of one's own mind. When one wakes to and understands this mind, this is called awakening to the essential nature of phenomena. Thus ignorance and awakening are simply different names for this single mind. Although there are two different words or terms used, there is only the one mind. Therefore one must not cut off or do away with ignorance. For if one cuts off the dreaming mind that is ignorance, then one will also lose the waking mind, the mind of enlightenment. The whole point of the perfect teaching is to show that one must not cut off the tiniest bit of delusion. For all phenomena that exist are manifestations of the Buddhist Law. (844)

Although living beings are made up of the ten factors of original enlightenment, even a single instant of ignorance can cloud their minds, as though in a state of sleep. They have then entered the dream realm of birth and death and forgotten the principle or truth of original enlightenment. This tiny hair's breadth of ignorance sets them to dreaming empty dreams of the three existences of past, present, and future. (845)

While one believes that one is an ordinary person in the realm of birth and death, this is comparable to dreaming that one is a butterfly, a state of distorted views and distorted thoughts. And when one realizes that one is the Thus Come One of original enlightenment, this state is comparable to the original Chuang Chou, or the attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form. This is not to say that one attains Buddhahood while in the form of a butterfly. The belief that one is a butterfly is empty or false. One could never speak of attaining Buddhahood in such a form—that would be out of the question. Once we realize that ignorance is like dreaming that one is a butterfly, then our distorted thoughts are seen to be like yesterday's dreams, things lacking in an intrinsic nature or entity, mere delusions. Who would ever put faith in the empty dream of the realm of birth and death and harbour doubts about the Buddha nature, or nirvana, that is eternal and unchanging? (846-7)

To "cut off all fundamental delusions" means to open one's eyes that have from instant to instant been in the sleep of ignorance, and to return to the awakening of original enlightenment, so that both the sufferings of birth and death and nirvana become like yesterday's dreams, not a trace of them remaining. (854)

Devotion

And when ordinary people in the latter age hear this doctrine, not only will they themselves attain Buddhahood, but also their fathers and mothers will attain Buddhahood in their present forms. This is the highest expression of filial devotion. (744)

And because your daughter exercises filial devotion, the gods will surely protect her, and the Buddhas will look on her with favour. For among all the good roots or meritorious acts, the foremost is filial service to one's father and mother. And your daughter does all this out of faith in the Lotus Sutra. Such faith is like pure water poured into a golden vessel – not a drop of it will be wasted. How wonderful, how wonderful! (816)

Persons who are intent upon exercising filial devotion toward their parents should therefore send them the gift of the Lotus Sutra. Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, sent this sutra to his parents as an act of filial devotion toward them. (898)

What impresses me most is that, though you are a woman, you made the journey all the way here. There are reasons why I have been exiled to this distant place. But in view of the great devotion you have shown in journeying here, I can only express my gratitude. (1030)

Namu is a word of the language of India, and in this country it means “to dedicate one's life.” Explaining the term “to dedicate one's life,” T'ien-t'ai says it means “to single-mindedly dedicate one's life.” By offering their lives to the Lotus Sutra, they became Buddhas. And now I, Nichiren, offering my life to the Lotus Sutra. (1073)

Dialogue

Their words and their hearts fail to match—how could they be other than followers of the heavenly devil, disciples of a non-Buddhist way? It is through the use of words and letters that the Buddha saves living beings. (6)

Even when encountering the problems of everyday life, one must consult with others, and how much more is this true when attempting to understand the profound principles of Buddhism. How can one hope to grasp them easily by oneself? (7)

Difficulty and Hardship

Though calamities may come, they can be changed into good fortune. And how much more is this so when the ten demon daughters have foreknowledge of the situation! This is what is meant when it says [in *Great Concentration and Insight*] that logs make the fire burn brighter, and the wind swells the body of the kālakula insect. (669)

The Lotus Sutra says that there is a turtle living at the bottom of the ocean. Once every three thousand years the turtle rises to the surface of the sea, and if he can encounter a floating piece of sandalwood with a hollow in it, he can rest himself there. But this turtle has only one eye, and the vision in that eye is distorted, so that things to the west of him appear to be in the east, and things to the east of him to be in the west. This simile indicates how difficult it is for men and women born in this evil world of the latter age to fit themselves into the “hollow” that is the Lotus Sutra and Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. In view of these difficulties, I wonder what bond of karma from the past has inspired in your heart the determination to communicate with a person like me? (778)

It would appear that opposition to the Lotus Sutra has by no means come to an end, and in the future as well, there is no telling what may occur. Under these circumstances it is incredible that you have endured until now. The Buddha tells us that though there may be those who enter fire without becoming burned or enter a great body of water without getting wet; though huge mountains may fly through the air or the great ocean rise up to the heavens, when once we enter the evil world of the latter age, it will be difficult to believe in the Lotus Sutra for even the space of a moment. (947)

If one does not touch the sleeping lion, one will suffer no anger. If one does not plant the pole in the stream, one will raise no waves. And if one does not reproach those who slander the Law, one will undergo no hardship. (1025)

Our enemies are many, our enemies are strong, and our allies are stern and difficult to follow. If we give way to evil inclinations, we may lose our faith in the Lotus Sutra and fall into the evil paths of existence. For people always try to run away from what is difficult. (1079)

Doubt

You are in doubt because you take every clever person to be a wise man. (222)

Can there be any doubt that devils will concentrate their envy on this one spot? And that the followers of Hinayana and the provisional teachings are also jealous of it? (304)

At that time Bodhisattva Wisdom Accumulated and Shāriputra, their doubts resolved, came to realize that a woman can in fact attain Buddhahood. Hence this has come to be looked on as a model of how women can attain Buddhahood. (309)

Who could doubt a fact that is so plain before the eyes? And yet, because so many have turned their backs on the correct path and insist upon following the road of erroneous doctrines, the sages have abandoned the nation, the benevolent deities seethe with anger, the seven disasters occur one after another, and the area within the four seas knows no peace. (391)

You must not lament the fact that I have not speedily been granted pardon from my sentence of exile. Undoubtedly the heavenly gods are delaying such a pardon. You will understand this if you consider the case of the lay priest Fujikawa. If he had been exiled last year, this year he would not have met with an untimely death. Use his case to understand mine, though ignorant persons may not be able to see the parallel. (434)

The sun and moon are bright mirrors that reflect all that happens in the four quarters of the sky, and therefore the heavenly gods must surely know and understand me! The sun and moon are bright mirrors that reflect all that happens in the worlds in the ten directions, and therefore the Buddhas must surely know and understand me! There should be no particle of doubt [as to whether they will guard me]. It is just that some of my karma from previous existences has yet to be expiated. But when I was condemned to exile, did not Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, cover me with his robe? And last year, on the night of the twelfth day of the ninth month, did I not escape when I was on the very point of losing my life? This is what is meant by the passage "If one's mind is strong, the protection of the gods also is sure to be firm." You must never doubt this for a moment. Under no circumstances must you give way to doubt! (437)

And likewise lay believers who follow the correct teaching, though they may break the precepts, are without doubt certain to attain Buddhahood. (460)

Though it may be uncertain whether I, Nichiren, will live or die, there can be no doubt about the spread of the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo. (463)

And when, as these signs portend, the nation has been plunged into disorder, then Bodhisattva Superior Practices and the other sages will come forward, establish the three secret Laws of the essential teaching, and spread Myoho-enge-kyo widely throughout the four continents and the region within the four seas! Could anyone doubt it? (491)

The point of this passage is that one will gain greater blessings by giving alms to the votary of the Lotus Sutra, who in the evil world of the latter age is so intensely hated, than by giving alms to the Buddha for a whole medium kalpa. And if you should wonder who is making such a wild statement, it is none other than Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, himself. Whether you doubt or believe him is up to you. (499)

Your inquiry concerns a matter that for some years now has caused me great distress, and therefore I have hastened to write a reply in hopes that I may clear up the doubts that you and others have regarding it. (608)

Little waves and a slight wind can hardly do harm to a large ship, but high waves and strong winds can easily overturn a small ship. Similarly, slight irregularities in the secular rule of the sovereign are like little waves and a slight wind and can do little harm to a great nation or a great man. But errors in the application of the Buddhist teachings, like high waves and strong winds that overturn a small ship, can without doubt bring about the destruction of the nation. (618)

When we stop to consider, we realize that if we speak out in accordance with these passages of the sutra, we will raise a storm of protest and will have difficulty persuading others. But if we fail to have faith in such passages, we will be doubting the golden words of the Thus Come One, a fault that, as the Lotus Sutra itself makes clear, will destine us to fall into the Avīchi hell. We find ourselves perplexed, uncertain whether to proceed or not. (651-2)

Although the sun and moon should fall to the ground and Mount Sumeru crumble, there can be no doubt that this woman will attain Buddhahood. It is certain, absolutely certain! [...] No one who offers the flowers of the field or the incense of tree bark to the Buddha can fail to reach Eagle Peak. And how much truer is this of someone who offers white rice grown with bone-breaking labour by the people, or aged sake, which is like blood wrung from those who brew it. Could there be the slightest doubt that a woman who offers these things to the Buddha and the Lotus Sutra will gain Buddhahood and attain the way? (752)

The one who was ailing had correct faith at the time of death. Without doubt she has gone to the pure land of Eagle Peak. There can be no doubt about it. (753)

There can be no doubt that the ten demon daughters of the Lotus Sutra will protect you. How reassuring it is to think so! (805)

As a result, your late husband, the lay priest, has no doubt attained Buddhahood. And your only daughter will enjoy a long and happy life, and will be known as a child worthy of her father. Though she is still young, she knows how to treat her mother with filial devotion, and will no doubt aid her father as well in his next existence. (816)

Once we realize that ignorance is like dreaming that one is a butterfly, then our distorted thoughts are seen to be like yesterday's dreams, things lacking in an intrinsic nature or entity, mere delusions. Who would ever put faith in the empty dream of the realm of birth and death and harbour doubts about the Buddha nature, or nirvana, that is eternal and unchanging? (847)

These similes just mentioned are all expounded by the Buddha himself and are not mixed in with comments from others. If we correctly understand their meaning, then we will have before us a clear and unclouded mirror reflecting the true nature of the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime. Who can read these passages of the sutra and its commentary and still remain in doubt and confusion? (856)

I have not the slightest doubt that the spirit of your late mother will immediately leave the defilements of the six paths and that she will make her way to the pure land of Eagle Peak. (898)

Thus what karmic bond is responsible for the lay nun Kōnichi believing in the Lotus Sutra? Could it be because your son, the deceased Yashirō, who believed in it, recommended it to you? Since the good fortune gained from this will no doubt bear fruit, it is certain that you will meet and be together with your son in the pure land of Eagle Peak. (964)

And if the words of the Lotus Sutra are true, then because of the merit [you have gained by your gifts], there can be no doubt that your deceased father has already achieved Buddhahood. (982)

But whatever may become of the country, I have no doubt that the Lotus Sutra will spread throughout the land. (1028)

In view of all this, even if the late Yashirō had been guilty of some major offense, it could certainly not surpass the offenses committed by Devadatta. In comparison to those, it must have been a very minor offense. And because he had faith in the Lotus Sutra, there can be no doubt that "then not a one will fail to attain Buddhahood." (1047)

Earthy Desires are Enlightenment

When we come to the Lotus Sutra, however, we find that earthly desires, karma, and sufferings [...] can in fact be drawn forth and utilized as a means to attain Buddhahood in one's present form [...] But through the extraordinary power of the character *myō*, or "wonderful", this poison is changed into the understanding that the sufferings of birth and death are nirvana, that earthly desires are enlightenment. This is the good medicine that can change poison into medicine, hence it is called good medicine. (585)

White face powder has the power to make black lacquer as white as snow. Any colour approaching Mount Sumeru takes on a golden hue. One who upholds the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra transforms the black lacquer of the evil deeds of a lifetime, and of countless kalpas of lifetimes in the past, into the great merit of good deeds. All the more so is this true of one's good roots from the beginningless past, which all take on a golden hue. And when your deceased husband chanted Nam-Myōhō-Renge-Kyo at the end on his deathbed, the evil deeds of a lifetime, and from the beginningless past, changed into the seeds of Buddhahood. This is what is meant by the teachings called "earthly desires are enlightenment", "the sufferings of birth and death are nirvana", and "attaining Buddhahood in one's present form". And because you are the beloved wife of such a man, the teaching of women attaining Buddhahood without doubt also applies to you. (760)

Enlightenment

And once we have come to understand that Myoho-Renge-Kyo is not the name of the sutra but is the entity of our own lives [...] Once we have become enlightened to this, then all the delusions and mistaken habits of thought that we have entertained from the beginningless past until the present will be swept away like yesterday's dreams and will vanish without a trace. (80)

[...] then we come to realize that we ourselves are Thus Come Ones of original enlightenment. Then the clouds of ignorance part and the moon of the essential nature of phenomena shines forth. We wake from dreams of delusion and the round moon of original enlightenment is seen in all its brilliance. We see that this fleshly form received in birth from our parents, this body bound by earthly desires, is none other than the Thus Come One who has existed always and is ever-abiding. (85)

And daimoku represents the cause and condition that permits not only us but all living beings to proceed directly to the place of enlightenment. (86)

Thus, reading one sentence or one phrase of this sutra, or writing out one character or one stroke of it, can become the cause that enables one to escape from the sufferings of birth and death and attain great enlightenment (309)

The proof is in the words Myoho-*renge*-kyo. The word *myōhō* represents the attainment of enlightenment by sentient beings; the word *renge* represents the attainment of enlightenment by insentient beings. Sentient beings attain enlightenment in life, insentient beings attain enlightenment in death. The attainment of enlightenment in life and death refers to the attainment of enlightenment by sentient and insentient beings. Hence, when we living beings die, wooden *tōba* memorial tablets are set up, and eye-opening ceremonies are conducted to consecrate them. This is an example of attainment of enlightenment in death, or the enlightenment of plants. (429)

In effect, (there is not one colour or one fragrance) that does not contain the Ten Worlds, the three thousand realms, life and its environment, and so forth. These colours and fragrances constitute the enlightenment of plants, that is, the enlightenment of *renge*, or the lotus. The term “colour and fragrance” and the term *renge* differ in wording, but both refer to the enlightenment of plants. (429)

These two revelations—that the Buddha gained enlightenment in the far distant past, and that persons of the two vehicles can attain Buddhahood—constitute the very heart and marrow of the Buddha's teachings, the bones and sinews of their meanings. (445)

But through the extraordinary power of the character *myō*, or “wonderful,” this poison is changed into the understanding that the sufferings of birth and death are nirvana, that earthly desires are enlightenment. This is the good medicine that can change poison into medicine, hence it is called good medicine. (585-6)

This is because in the “Life Span” chapter Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, reveals the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, which he has come to understand and which is equal to the inner enlightenment of all the Buddhas of the three existences. This doctrine thus represents not only the personal enlightenment attained by a single Buddha, Shakyamuni, but the enlightenment of all other Buddhas as well. (748)

Living beings in the nine worlds sleep in an ignorance that accompanies them each moment of their lives, drowned in dreams of the realm of birth and death, forgetful of the waking state of original enlightenment, clinging to dreamlike rights and wrongs, moving from darkness into darkness. (838)

Next we come to the teaching that pertains to the Buddha’s enlightenment, namely, the Lotus Sutra preached in the last eight years of the Buddha’s life. (840)

The Buddha is like a person awake and living beings are like persons dreaming. Therefore when the latter wake from their empty dreams of birth and death and return to their waking state of original enlightenment, they are said to attain Buddhahood in their present form, to gain the great wisdom of equality, the Law that is without distinctions, and to understand that all are able to achieve the Buddha way, for there is only this one doctrine. [...] all without a single exception instantly cast off the distorted vision and distorted thoughts of delusion, returned to the waking state of original enlightenment, and thus attained the Buddha way. (841)

The words set forth in all the other sutras are words in a dream and are comparable to a round fan or a tree, while the words that reveal the waking mind in the Lotus Sutra are comparable to the moon or the wind. Thus the waking mind of original enlightenment is a round moon whose rays shine on and drive away the darkness of ignorance. And the wisdom that perceives the true aspect of all phenomena is a wind that blows away the dust of delusion. Thus, through the dream words that are like a fan or a tree, we come to understand the waking mind that is like the moon and wind, and in this way we can dispel the last remnants of the dream realm and return to the waking state of the original mind. (841-2)

Therefore one must not cut off or do away with ignorance. For if one cuts off the dreaming mind that is ignorance, then one will also lose the waking mind, the mind of enlightenment. The whole point of the perfect teaching is to show that one must not cut off the tiniest bit of delusion. For all phenomena that exist are manifestations of the Buddhist Law. (844)

Although living beings are made up of the ten factors of original enlightenment, even a single instant of ignorance can cloud their minds, as though in a state of sleep. They have then entered the dream realm of birth and death and forgotten the principle or truth of original enlightenment. This tiny hair’s breadth of ignorance sets them to dreaming empty dreams of the three existences of past, present, and future. (845)

Thus in the teaching of perfect and immediate enlightenment there are no successive stages of practice. (848)

But the Lotus Sutra represents [...] a type of immediate enlightenment to be quickly achieved. (848)

They are thus equivalent to the five characters Myoho-renge-kyo. These five characters are what make up the entity of the individual, and hence that entity exists eternally in its original state, it is the Thus Come One of original enlightenment. (849-850)

But now if one will only cast aside such thinking, correct one's outlook, and return to a state of enlightenment, then one will realize that the attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form is to be found nowhere outside one's own body. The mirror that is one's own mind is none other than the same mirror that is the mirror of the Buddha's mind. But we are looking at the back side of the mirror, and therefore we cannot see the truth or principle that underlies our nature, and so we are said to be in a state of ignorance. The Thus Come One, however, looks at the front side of the mirror and can see and understand the principle underlying our nature. For this reason, enlightenment and ignorance may be said to constitute a single entity. The mirror is a single mirror, but depending upon whether one is looking at the front or the back of it, the distinction between enlightenment and darkness arises. The fact that the mirror has a back side does not constitute any interference to the front side, but, depending upon which side of the mirror one is viewing, the distinction between enlightenment and darkness is produced. This is known as the identity or the fusing and penetrating of two aspects of a single phenomenon. (852-853)

To "cut off all fundamental delusions" means to open one's eyes that have from instant to instant been in the sleep of ignorance, and to return to the awakening of original enlightenment, so that both the sufferings of birth and death and nirvana become like yesterday's dreams, not a trace of them remaining. (854)

Heaven, earth, water, fire, and wind are the five wisdom Thus Come Ones. They reside within the body and mind of all living beings and are never separated from them even for an instant. Therefore worldly affairs and affairs relating to enlightenment blend together in harmony within the mind of the individual; outside of the mind, there is absolutely no other thing that exists. Therefore, when one hears this truth, one can at that point immediately attain the goal of Buddhahood without a moment's delay, for it is a principle of the utmost profundity. The three truths that form a unity may be compared to a jewel, its brilliance, and its precious nature. Because it has these three virtues, it is called a wish-granting jewel, and it can serve as a symbol for the unity of the three truths. But if these three virtues were taken apart and treated as separate entities, then the jewel would be of no use. It would then be comparable to the various schools that expound expedient teachings in which the three truths are regarded as separate from one another. (859)

This time, without fail, without fail, we must wake from this dream realm of birth and death, return to the waking state of original enlightenment, and sever the cords that bind us to birth and death. And from that time on, we will no longer entertain in our minds the Buddhist doctrines that pertain to that realm of dreams. We will join in harmony with the single mind of the Buddhas of the three existences, carry out the practice of Myoho-renge-kyo, and, without any obstruction, attain enlightenment. (861)

Unless one is a Buddha who has reached the stage of ultimate enlightenment, one cannot recognize these enemies of the Lotus Sutra. But I have come to discern the foes of the one vehicle as though they were revealed to me in a dream. (874)

The essential teaching's doctrine of attaining Buddhahood in one's present form concludes that one can attain supreme enlightenment in one's present status as an ordinary person, without changing individual characteristics. That is why one's physical form, just as it is, is the Thus Come One who in his original state is eternally endowed with the three bodies. (891)

Equality

How much worse is it, then, to cling to the evil or mistaken doctrines, which are defective because they do not recognize that all beings in the Ten Worlds are equally capable of attaining Buddhahood, morning and evening to accept and uphold, read, recite, expound, and transcribe them! (14)

Ignorant persons in the latter age admit that the principles of the Lotus Sutra are very profound, but assert that they are not suited to our inferior capacities. This passage of commentary is describing such persons, who, while paying great respect to the teachings of the sutra, underrate people's capacity to understand them and hence turn away from the sutra. (56)

The term "consistency" indicates that the Thus Come One of the ultimate stage of perfect enlightenment and we ordinary mortals in the stage of being a Buddha in theory are without any distinction. This is called consistency, or the great wisdom of the Lotus Sutra that sees the equality of all beings. (84)

[...] the Buddha, we ourselves, and all other living beings are in our essential nature identical and without distinctions; this is the great wisdom of equality. The term "equality" may be taken to mean "universal" or "all-inclusive." (85)

In this sutra, the Lotus, evil persons, women, persons of the two vehicles, and icchantikas are not discriminated against. Thus, as the sutra says, "all attain the Buddha way." This is also known as the great wisdom of equality. Once one has heard the sutra teaching that good and evil are not two, that correct and erroneous are as one, then one gains inner enlightenment and attains Buddhahood. (88-89)

The Buddha is like a person awake and living beings are like persons dreaming. Therefore when the latter wake from their empty dreams of birth and death and return to their waking state of original enlightenment, they are said to attain Buddhahood in their present form, to gain the great wisdom of equality, the Law that is without distinctions, and to understand that all are able to achieve the Buddha way, for there is only this one doctrine. (841)

These Ten Worlds are born from the mind of the individual and constitute the eighty-four thousand teachings. Here a single individual has been used as an example, but the same thing applies equally to all living beings. (844)

Because the Ten Worlds are mutually inclusive, the living beings of the Ten Worlds equally possess all of the ten within their lives. Thus the real moon up in the sky and the moons reflected in the bodies of water are all part of the entity of the individual, without a single exception. Hence the ten factors are marked by consistency from beginning to end, with no distinction setting off one from another. (845)

But now if we who are ordinary mortals in this land of defilement practice the Lotus Sutra, then, because of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds and the equality of all in the phenomenal realm, we will be able to free ourselves from the necessity of transmigration marked by change and advance, through which bodhisattvas in the pure lands [advance toward the far-off goal of Buddhahood]. (855)

Eternity of life

[...] you have not gone beyond the stage of the two opposing views of a self that ends with death and a self that is eternally unchanging [...] (17)

The root and origin of illusions is a failure to understand the Buddha who has been enlightened since the far distant past. (167)

The meaning of this passage is that, if one cares about the next life, one should fear all kinds of causes that lead to rebirth in the evil paths. But even more than such causes, one should fear evil friends or teachers. (258)

Entering into the relation of teacher and lay supporter is the result of a bond that bridges the three existences. Never seek the three benefits of sowing, maturing, and harvesting from anyone else. These golden words cannot possibly be wrong: “Those persons who had heard the Law dwelled here and there in various Buddha lands, constantly reborn in company with their teachers,” (375)

The great difficulties I encounter in these three existences are evidence that in these three existences I am a recipient of the blessing and benefits of the Lotus Sutra. From far distant kalpas in the past until numberless kalpas in the future, these blessings of the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law will be with me over the three existences, never to be exhausted. (459)

I hope that you will set aside all other practices and will address yourself to this object of devotion, praying wholeheartedly for your next life. (798)

The two principles of birth and death are principles that pertain to the dream realm of birth and death, delusions, examples of topsy-turvy thinking. When we employ the waking state of original enlightenment to gain a correct understanding of the nature of our minds, we see that it has no birth that can be called a beginning, so it could never have a death that would be an ending. Is this not what it means to grasp the mind that is removed from birth and death? This mind is not burned in the fires at the end of a kalpa, is not destroyed by the disaster of floods, cannot be severed with a sword or pierced with an arrow. One may put it inside a mustard seed and the mustard seed will not be stretched nor will the mind be cramped thereby. One may put it in the vast heavens and the heavens will not be too broad for it nor the mind too narrow to fill them. (843)

Hence it is perfectly clear that if heaven itself crumbles, then the body of the individual likewise will crumble; if the earth breaks asunder, the body of the individual too will break asunder; if the elements of earth, water, fire, wind, [and space] perish, the body of the individual too will perish. But though the three existences of past, present, and future may give way to one another, these five elements will never change or pass away. And though the three periods of time, the Former Day, the Middle Day, and the Latter Day of the Law, may differ one from another, these five elements are one in nature, not subject to rise or fall, to change of any kind. (850)

The person who practices the teaching of perfect and immediate enlightenment embodies the teachings for the instruction and conversion of others and the teachings pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment in each moment of life, without lacking any of them. Thus on a horizontal plane the effects of the practice spread throughout the phenomenal realm of the ten directions. Therefore the effects of this practice are described as "widespread." And on a vertical plane, these effects extend over the three existences of past, present, and future, reaching to the utmost depth of the essential nature of phenomena, and therefore they are described as "profound." (855-6)

Evil

[...] if even a person as evil as Devadatta can become a Buddha, then how could persons of this latter age who, even if they are guilty of grave offenses, have in most cases not committed anything worse than the ten evil acts, fail to attain Buddhahood? And all the more so if they are deeply loyal in their faith. (39)

When the Lotus Sutra addresses evil persons, it speaks of the evil that is a part of the Ten Worlds, and assures them that, since evil persons too are endowed with the five types of vision, even the most evil of all persons are capable of being saved. (64)

Outside of our own minds and bodies, there does not exist the tiniest trace of anything pertaining either to good or evil. (79)

Once one has heard the sutra teaching that good and evil are not two [...] then one gains inner enlightenment and attains Buddhahood. Therefore this is called the attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form. And because one gains enlightenment in a single lifetime, it is called perfect enlightenment in one lifetime. (88)

[...] even though one may be an evil person lacking in wisdom in one's present existence, when one hears the name of the sutra, one will take faith in it and hence will not fall into the evil paths. (141-2)

But if, as a result of encountering an evil friend, they should be persuaded to cease feeling joy on hearing the Lotus Sutra, then the Lotus Sutra can have no power to save them. (214)

But if you feel any remorse whatsoever for your past evil deeds, you will come and put your faith in Nichiren. (324)

But my life from the beginning has been based upon firm conviction. I have no intention now of reversing my course, nor will I ever reproach [those who persecuted me]. Evil persons too will be good friends to me. (432)

If the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life is not propounded, then there is no way to account for the principle of inherent evil in the nature of the Buddha. And if the principle of inherent evil is not accepted, this means that the Buddhas and bodhisattvas who universally manifest material bodies, as well as the five hundred and seven hundred honored ones depicted in the mandalas of the two realms of the True Word teaching, are temporary beings existing only in the present, their original state unknown. (452-3)

[...] if the Buddha did not preach the "Life Span" chapter, then ordinary people born in the latter age would all fall into the evil paths of existence. (487)

Do not let fear of others in your present existence lead you to do something that will invite evil consequences in an existence to come. (527)

Snow is the ultimate in whiteness; no dyeing will make it any other colour. Lacquer is the ultimate in blackness; it will never become white. But how different is the human heart in its fickleness! It can be dyed by either good or evil. (675)

Because I can see what will happen, I do not hesitate for fear of the great evil that may be done to me by Ryōkan's patrons, but speak out strongly against him. (691)

Thus we see that two evils have appeared side by side, the grave error of giving heed to men of great evil, and the grave crime of heaping shame on men of great goodness who uphold the correct teaching. It is as though one were to pay honor and respect to the asuras and shoot arrows at the god of the sun! This is why grave disorders occur now in this country such as have never been known in the past. (703)

When the cold weather piles up, water turns to ice. When snow accumulates year after year, it turns to crystal. When evil piles up, one is destined for hell; when good piles up, one becomes a Buddha. In the case of a woman, if jealousy piles up, she will turn into a poisonous snake. But if she gains repeated merit through offerings to the Lotus Sutra, then how can she fail to follow in the wake of the dragon king's daughter? (753)

White face powder has the power to make black lacquer as white as snow. Any colour approaching Mount Sumeru takes on a golden hue. One who upholds the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra transforms the black lacquer of the evil deeds of a lifetime, and of countless kalpas of lifetimes in the past, into the great merit of good deeds. All the more so is this true of one's good roots from the beginningless past, which all take on a golden hue. And when your deceased husband chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo at the end on his deathbed, the evil deeds of a lifetime, and from the beginningless past, changed into the seeds of Buddhahood. This is what is meant by the teachings called "earthly desires are enlightenment," "the sufferings of birth and death are nirvana," and "attaining Buddhahood in one's present form." (760)

The Law that is without distinctions is the wonderful Law of the one vehicle. It is the Law that makes no distinctions between good or evil, the Law that preaches that grass and trees, forests, mountains and rivers, the great earth or even one particle of dust all possess within themselves the full Ten Worlds. (840)

When the mind encounters good or bad causes, it creates and puts forth the aspects of good and bad. (844)

When one truly awakens to the fact that one's own mind and the Buddha mind are in fact one mind, then no evil karma can obstruct one when one's life comes to a close, and there will be no more deluded thoughts to detain one in the realm of birth and death. (852)

If we apply the mirror analogy to the process of attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form, then looking at the front of the mirror is comparable to attaining Buddhahood, while looking at the back of the mirror is comparable to being an ordinary living being. The fact that the mirror has a back side illustrates the point that there is no cutting off or elimination of the element of evil that is inherent in the nature of the individual. (853)

I, Nichiren, may be an evil man, but how can the Lotus Sutra be anything but perfect? Though the bag may be smelly, the gold in it is pure; though the lake may be muddy, the lotuses that grow there are unsullied. I, Nichiren, may be the most perverse person in all Japan, but the Lotus Sutra is still the greatest of all the sutras. If sensible people wish to avail themselves of the gold, they will not discard its bag; if they care for the lotuses, they will not despise the lake. If I were evil and yet were to attain Buddhahood, the power of the Lotus Sutra would be revealed without fail. Therefore, if I were to come to an evil end, that would perhaps bring disgrace upon the Lotus Sutra. As such is the case, though I may be seen as evil, let me be evil, let me be evil! (978)

If one enters a grove of sandalwood trees, though one may not even touch the trees, one's whole person becomes imbued with their scent. And similarly, if one draws near to those who slander the Law, the good roots that one has gained through religious practice will be totally destroyed and one will fall with the slanderers into hell. (1025)

The ruler, heeding the evil words of slanderous officials, has persecuted me, but because they are only ordinary mortals, I know that this is simply to be expected. I had no intention of ceasing my efforts, and have suffered further persecution from time to time since then. (1062)

Our enemies are many, our enemies are strong, and our allies are stern and difficult to follow. If we give way to evil inclinations, we may lose our faith in the Lotus Sutra and fall into the evil paths of existence. For people always try to run away from what is difficult. Shakyamuni Buddha had all the thirty-two auspicious features, his body a golden colour, his face like the full moon. And yet when evil persons looked at him, some saw his colour as ashen, some saw him as sooty, and some saw him as an enemy. (1079)

Faith

Persons who put faith in this sutra are able not only to see the Buddha innate in their own being, but to see all the Buddhas of the three existences of past, present, and future. It is as though one were looking into the pure crystal mirror of King Yama, in which all forms and shapes are seen. Thus the sutra says, “And it will be like a pure bright mirror in which forms and shapes are all reflected.” (5)

You should abandon these mistaken beliefs and instead put your faith in the Lotus Sutra. If you fail to do so, it means you lack any true aspiration for enlightenment, does it not? (8)

Though over two thousand years have already gone by since the Buddha passed into extinction, where there is a person who has faith in the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha’s voice still lingers there, and hour by hour, minute by minute, instant by instant that person hears the Buddha assuring him that he, the Buddha, has never died. Even though that person may not in his mind be meditating upon the principle of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, he will everywhere illumine the entire realm of phenomena in ten directions. (121)

When we ordinary mortals, persons of incorrigible disbelief who are constantly drowned in delusion and suffering, desire to take faith in the Lotus Sutra, this is a sign that the Buddha nature within us is beginning to manifest itself. (137)

If one is born in a country where the Lotus Sutra is propagated and, on hearing the daimoku of the sutra, one is moved to take faith in it, this is because one has accumulated a rich store of good actions in the past. Thus, even though one may be an evil person lacking in wisdom in one’s present existence, when one hears the name of the sutra, one will take faith in it and hence will not fall into the evil paths. (141-2)

The departed one in particular, while alive, gave evidence of an extraordinary faith in the Lotus Sutra. And now, through the power of these lectures on the sutra, that person will be reborn in the presence of the Buddha and will gain wonderful causes leading to the attainment of the Buddha’s enlightenment. (310)

With regard to my doctrine, my great desire is to enable each person in this country of Japan to take faith in it, and I believe that my wish is about to be realized. (352)

How could the person mentioned in the “Devadatta” chapter where it says, “In the place where they are born they will constantly hear this sutra,” refer to anyone but you? The reason is that the passage just before that says, “In future ages if there are good men or good women . . .” “Good men” means the laymen who uphold the Lotus Sutra. You should exert yourself in faith all the more! (375)

Thus you should understand that so long as a practitioner of the Lotus Sutra remains unwavering in faith, free of all false alliances, entrusting himself wholeheartedly to the Lotus Sutra and practicing in accordance with the Buddha's golden words, he will without fail be able to prevent disaster and prolong his life in this present existence, to say nothing of in the life to come. Splendid recompense will be his, and he will fulfil his great vow to broadly proclaim and propagate the Lotus Sutra. (460)

What is more, although your late father was a warrior, he had an abiding faith in the Lotus Sutra, and thus—you were only a child at the time—I know that he ended his life in the frame of mind of a true believer. And now you have succeeded him and likewise are firm in your faith in this sutra. Though his spirit is hidden now in the grasses, I am sure he must be very pleased. And how happy he would be if only he were still alive! (499-500)

If people try to hinder your faith, I urge you strongly to feel joy. (566)

The blessings that you, the Honourable Joren, acquire through your faith in the Lotus Sutra will lend strength to your kind father. (572)

Thus we know that Shakyamuni, Many Treasures [...] will, as a shadow follows a form, guard anyone who has firm faith in this Lotus Sutra and who remains at all times stalwart and unwavering in that faith. Think of this, think of this, never let your mind stray, be firm in faith at all times, and you will “enjoy peace and security in your present existence and good circumstances in future existences.” (638)

With regard to the faith that you hold in your heart, you must be as unchanging as snow or lacquer. (675)

And now I have written out and am sending you [chapters from] this sutra that, as I have explained, embodies doctrinal principles of the greatest importance. You must have ever greater faith in it! (749)

Where strong winds cause the grasses to bend and flashes of lightning fill people with alarm— in a world such as ours, how wonderful it is that to this day you remain unshaken in your faith! They say that when roots are deep, the leaves will not wither; when there is a jewel in the heart of the fountain, its waters will never cease to flow. And how deep are the roots of your faith, how pure the jewel in your heart. How admirable, how admirable! (755)

And your daughter does all this out of faith in the Lotus Sutra. Such faith is like pure water poured into a golden vessel – not a drop of it will be wasted. How wonderful, how wonderful! (816)

Because we have put our trust in the Lotus Sutra, it will be as if fish living in a shallow pool were to rejoice when the heavens cloud over and rain falls. Though we may suffer for a while, ultimately delight awaits us. It is like the case of a crown prince, the only son of the king. Consider this: How can he possibly fail to ascend the throne? (882)

When in one's heart one takes faith in Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the heart becomes a dwelling and Shakyamuni Buddha takes up residence there. At first one is not aware of this, but gradually, as the months go by, the Buddha in the heart begins to appear as in a dream, and one's heart becomes bit by bit ever more joyful. (885)

At first one may seem to have faith in the Lotus Sutra, but it is hard to maintain that faith to the last. Water, for example, may be stirred by the wind, or blossoms may lose their hue with the fading of the morning dew. How, then, have you been able to persist in your faith up until today? It must be thanks entirely to the blessings you have acquired in previous existences, and to the care bestowed on you by Shakyamuni Buddha. How heartening is that thought, how heartening indeed! (885)

And because he had faith in the Lotus Sutra, there can be no doubt that "then not a one will fail to attain Buddhahood." (1047)

If we give way to evil inclinations, we may lose our faith in the Lotus Sutra and fall into the evil paths of existence. For people always try to run away from what is difficult. (1079)

Friendship

But my life from the beginning has been based upon firm conviction. I have no intention now of reversing my course, nor will I ever reproach [those who persecuted me]. Evil persons too will be good friends to me. (432)

Treating one's friends with courtesy means that, although one may encounter them ten or twenty times in the course of a single day, one greets them courteously as though they had travelled a thousand or two thousand miles to see one, never showing them indifference. (636)

If such beings do not encounter the right conditions by meeting a "good friend" or teacher, then they will not become awakened, they will not understand, their Buddha nature will not manifest itself. If they encounter the necessary conditions by meeting a good friend, however, then their Buddha nature will invariably become manifest. (861)

You have been born as a woman in countless existences since the far distant past, but it is this husband who was your last good friend in the saḥā world. (867)

Though the New Year has arrived, the cry of birds comes my way, but no visitors. Just when I was feeling forlorn, thinking that if not a friend, then who would visit me here, during the first three celebratory days of the New Year your ninety steamed rice cakes appeared, looking like the full moon. My mind has brightened and the darkness of life and death will lift, I am sure. How admirable of you, how admirable! It is said that Ueno, your deceased father, was a man of feeling. Since you are his son, perhaps you have inherited the outstanding qualities of his character. Blue dye is bluer even than indigo itself, and ice is colder than water. How wonderful it is, how wonderful! (809)

Gohonzon

With regard to the object of devotion, one should inscribe the eight volumes of the Lotus Sutra, or one volume, or one chapter, or simply the daimoku, or title, of the sutra, and make that the object of devotion, as is indicated in the “Teacher of the Law” and “Supernatural Powers” chapters of the sutra. (228)

The doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life I have revealed in all its purity in the great mandala. It is a doctrine that the scholars of the present age, lacking comprehension in such matters, cannot fathom even in their dreams. (430)

Question: In the evil world of the latter age, what should ordinary men and women take as their object of devotion? Answer: They should make the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra their object of devotion. (787)

As for the statement in the Tripitaka Master Pu-k’ung’s *Rules of Rituals*, it is based on the text of the “Treasure Tower” chapter. It asserts that the lord of teachings of the Lotus Sutra [Shakyamuni] should be the object of devotion. But this does not accord with the true intent of the Lotus Sutra. The object of devotion that I have mentioned earlier, the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra, is the object of devotion for Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions. It represents the true intent of the votary of the Lotus Sutra. (788)

I earnestly pray that the blessings deriving from such activities may be transferred to my parents, my teacher, and to all living beings. I am writing you to inform you of this and to answer the questions that you have raised. I hope that you will set aside all other practices and will address yourself to this object of devotion, praying wholeheartedly for your next life. I will be writing you again later about this matter. Please give my greetings to the other priests. (798)

I have inscribed the Gohonzon for your protection (811)

Gongyo

[The important parts of] the Lotus Sutra are the two chapters, chapter two, or “Expedient Means,” and chapter sixteen, or the “Life Span.” (144)

The two characters of *myōhō* of the daimoku contain within them the heart of the Lotus Sutra, namely, the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life set forth in the “Expedient Means” chapter, and the doctrine of the Buddha’s attainment of enlightenment in the far distant past set forth in the “Life Span” chapter. (228)

I am copying out and sending you two chapters in particular, the “Expedient Means” chapter and the “Life Span” chapter, to act as protection for you. I could in fact copy out the whole sutra, but at the moment I am tied up with other affairs, so I am limiting myself to these two chapters. Treat them with the utmost care, the utmost care – never let them be apart from your person. Wrap them up carefully and make them your constant possession. (747)

Good Fortune

This time, please believe that your good fortune will increase, as the sea tide swells and as the moon waxes full, and that your life will lengthen and you will be reborn on Eagle Peak. (354)

My best wishes for the New Year season. May you and all the others enjoy the greatest happiness and good fortune! (523)

Though calamities may come, they can be changed into good fortune. [...] This is what is meant when it says [in *Great Concentration and Insight*] that logs make the fire burn brighter, and the wind swells the body of the kālakula insect. (669)

Because of the offerings you have made, you will enjoy good fortune in your present life, and in your next existence will proceed to the pure land of Eagle Peak. (785)

Thus what karmic bond is responsible for the lay nun Kōnichi believing in the Lotus Sutra? Could it be because your son, the deceased Yashirō, who believed in it, recommended it to you? Since the good fortune gained from this will no doubt bear fruit, it is certain that you will meet and be together with your son in the pure land of Eagle Peak. (964)

How is your daughter, Oto, these days? I am certain that her devoted service to the Lotus Sutra will bring her long life and good fortune. (1030)

Grudge

If this teaching were true, how would I be any different from one who is trying to fling aside Mount Sumeru? Should my disciples accept it? I say this because it is the last time. You must bear me no grudge. (504)

If they truly believe these sutra passages, then let them call forth the [three types of] powerful enemies described in them and show proof that they do indeed read these passages and believe them. Unless they do so, then to be angry at Nichiren, who reads and recites these passages as they are intended to be read, is to be angry at the passages themselves, is it not? And to do so is to look with contempt on the envoy of the Buddha! (694-5)

I strongly urge you to adopt a genial attitude and avoid any appearance of ill will or resentment. Dress inconspicuously and leave your retinue behind. Don't ride fine horses either. Be sure to carry your saw and hammer in your hands or hook them at your waist, and always wear a smile. Should you fail to follow through with even one of these points, you may not only meet with ruin in this existence, but fall into the evil paths in your next one. Never, ever, hold a grudge against the Lotus Sutra. (950-1)

Even if your opponents in the case should happen to utter abuse, and even if it is something that concerns yourselves, the first and second time this happens I believe you should act as if you have heard nothing. If they continue yet a third time, without either changing your expression or using rude language, you must answer with gentle words. You must make sure to say something like "All of us are colleagues at the same place. We bear you absolutely no personal grudges." And I think you should carefully warn those in your retinue and your servants to avoid provoking fights. It is difficult to explain things such as these adequately in a letter, so I hope that you will give the matter the utmost consideration. (1008)

Hardship

You speak of your desire to retire to the mountains. Although to do so would in general be to forsake the task of carrying out shakubuku, the practice essential to this, the Latter Day of the Law, still I know that you are suffering from illness. Moreover, when we are beset by so many natural disasters and problems of state, and when, no matter how often I warn the ruler, because he fails to understand how he himself is responsible, he refuses to believe my words, even I long for a life of retirement. How much more so must that be true in your case! But if you should for a time retire to a dwelling in the mountain valleys, once your illness is mended and conditions are favourable again, you should set aside thoughts of personal well-being and devote yourself to the propagation of the teachings. (460)

As you know, here at Mount Minobu in winter the storm winds blow fiercely and the heaped up snow never melts. Because of the extreme cold, it is difficult and painful to carry out Buddhist practice day and night when one is not adequately clothed. But with this quilted robe to wear, I know I will not feel the cold at all. (604)

All the lands you passed through were beset by famine, and the mountains and plains were full of bandits. Where you put up each night, there was little food to be had; you were weak in body, all but without attendants, and never knew where you could obtain fresh horses or oxen. Steep mountains towered before you and the wide rolling rivers you confronted were many. Climbing a tall peak, your head seemed to brush the heavens; descending into a deep valley, your feet tread upon clouds. Not being a bird, you could scarcely make your way over such places; not being a deer, there were barriers you could barely cross, your eyes dazed, your feet half frozen. (658)

Though calamities may come, they can be changed into good fortune. And how much more is this so when the ten demon daughters have foreknowledge of the situation! This is what is meant when it says [in *Great Concentration and Insight*] that logs make the fire burn brighter, and the wind swells the body of the kālakula insect. (669)

On the mountain peaks monkeys like those of the Pa Gorges in China chatter away, while in the valleys the sound of the river waves is like the pounding of drums. The ground is strewn with countless large stones, and the mountains are made of nothing but rocks and gravel. I am hated by the rulers of the country, and none of the common people come to visit me. In winter the trails are clogged with snow, and in summer they are overgrown with grass. Far off I hear the sad crying of the deer, and the cicadas make a din in my ears. No one comes to visit me, and it is hard for me to sustain life. I have no robes in which to clothe myself, and therefore you can imagine how welcome was the gift of the robe that you sent. (774)

Thus I have not only been forced to endure thousands of hardships, but have twice been condemned to exile and at one point very nearly had my head cut off. These great trials I have been subjected to surpass the sticks and staves that Bodhisattva Never Disparaging had to endure, and are more fearful than the swords and staves described in the “Encouraging Devotion” chapter. (957)

If one does not touch the sleeping lion, one will suffer no anger. If one does not plant the pole in the stream, one will raise no waves. And if one does not reproach those who slander the Law, one will undergo no hardship. (1025)

Heart

Their words and their hearts fail to match—how could they be other than followers of the heavenly devil, disciples of a non-Buddhist way? It is through the use of words and letters that the Buddha saves living beings. (6)

Snow is the ultimate in whiteness; no dyeing will make it any other colour. Lacquer is the ultimate in blackness; it will never become white. But how different is the human heart in its fickleness! It can be dyed by either good or evil. [...] Those who are imbued with the Lotus Sutra will invariably become Buddhas. [...] With regard to the faith that you hold in your heart, you must be as unchanging as snow or lacquer (675)

They say that when roots are deep, the leaves will not wither; when there is a jewel in the heart of the fountain, its waters will never cease to flow. And how deep are the roots of your faith, how pure the jewel in your heart. How admirable, how admirable! (755)

If we examine the Lotus Sutra, we find it stated that, in cases like these, Shakyamuni Buddha enters into a person and inspires such determination in that person's heart. It is like someone who, with no particular thought in mind, drinks sake and becomes intoxicated. After he is intoxicated, a quite unexpected desire arises in his heart and he is inspired to give away his belongings to other people. Although the person has all his life been stingy and greedy and is destined for rebirth in the realm of hungry spirits, because of the effect of the sake, he is able to enter the realm of a bodhisattva. If a jewel is placed in muddy water, the water will become clear, and if a person gazes at the moon, his heart will be filled with nostalgia. A picture of a demon can be frightening even though we know it is not alive, and a picture of a beautiful woman can make a wife jealous even though she knows the picture cannot steal her husband away from her. If a brocade bed mat is woven with a pattern of snakes, no one will want to lie down on it, and if one's body is overheated, one will find a warm breeze distasteful. Such is the nature of the human heart. So when a person like yourself feels drawn in your heart toward the Lotus Sutra, I suppose it must be that, since you are a woman, the dragon king's daughter has taken possession of you. (778)

When I spoke out in this way, people felt hatred and rejected it, but the late Ueno believed and thus attained Buddhahood. You are all his kin and therefore I am certain you will be able to carry out this resolve. Is this not what is meant by the sayings that a mite clinging to a fleet horse flies a thousand miles, and that the ivy winding around the pine tree soars a thousand feet? Each of you possesses the same heart as the late Ueno. (804-5)

The moon's reflection will not dwell in muddy water; no birds are to be found in the limbs of a dead tree. The Buddha will not inhabit the body of a heartless woman. But a woman who upholds the Lotus Sutra is like pure water; the moon of Shakyamuni Buddha will reside there. (885)

When in one's heart one takes faith in Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the heart becomes a dwelling and Shakyamuni Buddha takes up residence there. At first one is not aware of this, but gradually, as the months go by, the Buddha in the heart begins to appear as in a dream, and one's heart becomes bit by bit ever more joyful. (885)

Hope

To offer an analogy, if in spring and summer one plows the field and plants it with seed, then in autumn and winter one may reap and store away the harvest, and all will proceed as one wishes it to. It may seem like a long wait from spring to autumn, and yet within the space of a single year one's wishes will be fulfilled. And in like manner, it may seem a long time to wait in order to enter the state of enlightenment and manifest our Buddhahood. And yet such a manifestation may be accomplished within the space of a single lifetime, and we ourselves can become Buddhas who possess the three bodies within a single body. (79)

As a matter of fact, the sutras other than the Lotus Sutra do not admit that men can attain Buddhahood either, but we will assume for the moment that they do. In any event, all the sutras other than the Lotus state that women can never hope to do so. And even if women were promised the attainment of Buddhahood by a thousand or ten thousand other sutras, if the Lotus Sutra denied that they could do so, then where could they turn in hopes of attaining it? (632)

[...] never let your mind stray, be firm in faith at all times, and you will "enjoy peace and security in your present existence and good circumstances in future existences." (638)

Wood immersed in the Spring of Jewels changes into lapis lazuli. Waters that enter the sea all become salty. Birds that approach Mount Sumeru turn golden-hued. Agada medicine changes poison into medicine. And the wonder of the Lotus Sutra is also like that; it changes ordinary people into Buddhas. A turnip turns into a quail, and a taro growing in the mountains into an eel. Since such are the wonders of the secular world, how much truer must it be of the power of the Lotus Sutra? If one were to strap a rhinoceros horn onto one's body and enter the sea, the water would part to a distance of five feet around. If one were to rub one's body with the fragrance of sandalwood and enter a great blaze, one would never be burned (671)

Now, Nichigen-nyo, though you have fashioned this image of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, because you wish to pray for [peace and security in] your present existence, you are without doubt assuring the same in your next existence as well. Among all the 2,994,830 women of Japan, you should think of yourself as number one. (813)

That is, he taught that of those who so much as one time pronounce the words Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, not one will fail to become a Buddha. (1081)

Illness

Though one may possess medicine blended from hundreds and thousands of ingredients, if one does not drink it, one's illness will never be cured. Though one may have riches in one's storehouse, if one does not know enough to open the storehouse, one may go hungry; and though one may have medicine in the breast of one's robe, if one does not know enough to drink it, one may die. And this is also true of the benefits of this Lotus Sutra, which are like those of the wish-granting jewel described in the "Five Hundred Disciples" chapter. (88-89)

For among all illnesses, the gravest illness is that of slandering the Lotus Sutra. And among all medicines, the finest medicine is Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. (487)

I was worried about how you were doing since I had had no word from you, so I was delighted to see your messenger. I am overjoyed to hear that you have recovered from your illness. I look forward to receiving further news from you. (498)

It seems to me that, just as one searches out some potent medicine when one is attempting to cure a critical illness, so there is nothing as effective as the essential Law in rescuing those who have committed the cardinal sins or have slandered the Law. (540)

I am as concerned about the illness of your wife, the lay nun Toki, as though it were I myself who is ailing, and day and night I pray to the heavenly gods that she will recover. She has supported the votary of the Lotus Sutra just as she has supplied oil to the lamps, or piled earth around the roots of the trees. I am beseeching the gods of the sun and moon that they will guard her life even at the cost of their own! (666)

[...] the sutra known as the Lotus Sutra is good medicine for the various ills of body and mind. Thus it states: "This sutra provides good medicine for the ills of the people of Jambudvīpa. If a person who has an illness is able to hear this sutra, then his illness will be wiped out and he will know neither old age nor death." (747)

When someone reported to me, however, that you had been taken with this illness, day and night, morning and evening I addressed the Lotus Sutra on the matter, morning and evening I implored the gods of the blue heavens. And now today I have received word that you have recovered from illness. Could any tidings be more joyful than these? (1034)

When a person who is ailing gives alms to the Lotus Sutra, that person's illness will be lightened, that person's complexion will brighten, that person's strength will improve. (1066)

Incorrect teachings

The Buddha, having weighed these benefits carefully, kindly explains for us that all the benefits gained by practicing the provisional teachings over numerous kalpas, or the benefits of a great sage, cannot compare to the benefits gained by even an ignorant person who for a moment hears of the Lotus Sutra, responds with joy, and thus forms a bond with it. As we see in the sutra itself, the latter benefits are a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a million times greater. The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai in his commentary is making this fact perfectly clear through his analogies. The tree known as the nyagrodha in one day spreads out a hundred spans in all directions and towers on high, and the bird known as a kalavinka, even while a mere chick, has a voice superior to that of all other kinds of birds large or small. The long time required in the practice of the provisional teachings is compared to the slow rate at which many kinds of plants and trees grow to maturity, while the swiftness with which one attains Buddhahood by practicing the Lotus Sutra is compared to the way in which the tree mentioned above spreads a hundred spans in a single day. And the sages great and small of the provisional teachings are being compared to the other types of birds, while the ordinary person who has barely begun practice of the Lotus Sutra is compared to the kalavinka, which, while still in the shell, has a voice superior to that of all other birds. (55)

Thus if we inquire into the truth of the matter, we will find that the sutras prior to the Lotus show us only a provisional type of Buddha and do not reveal any way in which ordinary people can attain Buddhahood. They declare that one should strive to attain Buddhahood by cutting off earthly desires and rejecting the nine lower realms. But in fact there is no Buddha who exists separate from the nine realms, and therefore there cannot in fact be any ordinary person who attains salvation in this manner. Nor is there any realm of the bodhisattva that exists separate from the realm of human beings. (62)

To suppose that one can eliminate the permanently abiding body and mind associated with the nine worlds is to be confused and misled as to the true nature of these nine worlds. (160)

[...] when something has been handed down over a long period of time, it will become replete with false assertions and the truth in it will be small. And how much more is this so in the case of something as profound in principle as the Buddha's teachings? During the two thousand and more years since the Thus Come One entered extinction, so many erroneous ideas have crept into the Buddha's teachings that hardly one assertion in ten thousand is sound in principle. (195)

Generally speaking, those who are ignorant of the law of cause and effect may be described as holding erroneous views. In terms of worldly conduct, persons of erroneous views may be defined as those who are lacking in compassion. There are many persons in the world today who will find it hard to escape this hell. (249)

The Indian word "icchantika" is translated as "unbeliever." An unbeliever is someone who does not believe that "all living beings alike possess the Buddha nature," and that is what an icchantika is. One who is an unbeliever is a slanderer of the Law. Of the seven types of living beings in the Ganges River, the first is the icchantika, or person of incorrigible disbelief, who slanders the Law and hence is constantly sunk in the river, and the second is the person who commits the five cardinal sins or slanders the Law and hence is constantly sunk. How then can one not be fearful of slandering the Law? (262)

I have been fortunate enough to be born as a human being and have avoided becoming a teacher of misleading doctrines. (335)

According to these [provisional Mahayana] sutras, however, ordinary people, unlike persons of the two vehicles, continue to have earthly desires and to be affected by karma. Their present bodily forms are temporary manifestations of the bitter effects of these forces. But so long as they retain their bodily forms, they can use their earthly desires and karma as seeds with which to produce the reward body and the manifested body of a Buddha. And, since in their present form they suffer from the bitter effects of earthly desires and karma, then, because the sufferings of birth and death are nirvana, they can become a Thus Come One of the Dharma body. This is the argument used [by these provisional Mahayana sutras] to scold and berate the persons of the two vehicles. The fact is, however, that through these sutras, earthly desires, karma, and suffering can never become the seeds that produce the three bodies of a Buddha, the Dharma body, the reward body, and the manifested body. When we come to the Lotus Sutra, however, we find that earthly desires, karma, and suffering, which the persons of the two vehicles had supposedly shed when they entered the nirvana of remainder and the nirvana of no remainder, can in fact be drawn forth and utilized as a means to attain Buddhahood in one's present form. Thus the persons of the two vehicles are assured of attaining Buddhahood in their present form, and ordinary people are likewise assured of attaining Buddhahood in their present form. (584-5)

Even though one might practice the sutra teaching just as T'ien-t'ai and Dengyō taught, now that we have entered the Latter Day of the Law, to do so is as useless as following last year's calendar. And this is even more so when we consider that, beginning with Jikaku, the doctrines [propounded on Mount Hiei] have confused the distinction between Mahayana and Hinayana and between provisional and true teachings, and are comparable to a major slander of the Law. (604)

What is more, these men, in their self-conceit, go so far as to insult the observers of the Mahayana precepts by calling them breakers of the precepts or men of no precepts. Such behaviour is comparable to a dog barking at a lion or a monkey railing at the god Shakra. (689)

As for the situation at Shijūku-in temple, such men as its superintendent are persons of no understanding who are fearful of me, and Odaichi-bō and the others also do us harm. This is a sign that the erroneous teachings of these parties will before long be wiped out. When the roots are laid bare, the branches will wither, and when the spring dries up, the river will cease to flow. (728)

But I, Nichiren, employing the little wisdom I possess, can perceive the cause for all this. It is to be found in the erroneous rites of the True Word school. Mistaken activities carried out by one person can call down calamity on ten thousand states. Even one person performing them can bring about the destruction of one or two countries. How much more so, then, if three hundred or more priests join with the ruler of the nation to act as archenemies of the Lotus Sutra! How could the nation fail to be destroyed? (797)

The sutras intended for the instruction and conversion of others do not include this teaching pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment, and hence may be likened to a bird that cannot fly through the sky because it has only one wing. Thus no one has ever attained Buddhahood through these sutras. (856)

The fact that you have set aside the teachings of the provisional schools you have been practicing for some years and have become a disciple of Nichiren shows that you are a wise man who is able to understand what doctrine is truly suitable to this time and this country. Nichiren's disciples, like Nichiren himself, should invariably practice the correct principles. Even though one may be a wise man or a scholar, if he falls into hell, he will amount to nothing and can be of no assistance. The essential thing, therefore, is that at each hour, at each moment, one should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (909)

And how much more at fault are those who, after the Lotus Sutra has been preached, cling to the sutras that preceded it and refuse to embrace the Lotus Sutra! Such persons are like subjects who refuse to obey their ruler, or children who fail to come when their parents call them. Even if one does not reject the Lotus Sutra, if one praises the sutras that preceded it, one is in effect slandering the Lotus Sutra. (933)

These teachings of the Pure Land are like sowing sand in the spring fields and expecting to harvest rice in the autumn, like turning away from the moon in the sky and instead fixing upon the reflection of the moon in water. These arguments are no more than a grand scheme designed to win over people's hearts and lure them away from the Lotus Sutra. (999)

The Three Treatises school too is founded on texts that are lacking in reason. If persons who are blind encounter its teachings, they are led into error. But if wise persons of clear vision do so, then the falsity of its doctrines becomes apparent. When the roots are exposed, the branches wither; when the springs dry up, the current ceases to flow—such is the natural principle. The Nembutsu school, the Zen school, and the True Word school have roots that are founded in error and their springs lead to deception. But if their roots and their springs are exposed to view, though this may be done by so lowly a person as I, Nichiren, then, so long as Heaven's design is to bring about a time when the great Law will spread abroad, those evil teachings will be defeated and the true Law will be established—there can be no doubt of this. (1065)

Joy/Happiness

Or at times we are born as human beings, becoming rulers of various countries, high ministers, court nobles, or other court officials, and we think ourselves incomparably happy. Thus we content ourselves with such little gains and are delighted with them. However, the Buddha has taught that these accomplishments are mere prosperity in a dream, a phantom joy, and that we should simply accept and uphold the Lotus Sutra and quickly become Buddhas. (36)

The Buddha, having weighed these benefits carefully, kindly explains for us that all the benefits gained by practicing the provisional teachings over numerous kalpas, or the benefits of a great sage, cannot compare to the benefits gained by even an ignorant person who for a moment hears of the Lotus Sutra, responds with joy, and thus forms a bond with it. As we see in the sutra itself, the latter benefits are a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a million times greater. The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai in his commentary is making this fact perfectly clear through his analogies. The tree known as the nyagrodha in one day spreads out a hundred spans in all directions and towers on high, and the bird known as a kalavinka, even while a mere chick, has a voice superior to that of all other kinds of birds large or small. (55)

When we chant Myoho-enge-kyo, the Thus Come One of the essential nature of our minds becomes manifest, and the sounds that reach the ears of others wipe out their offenses accumulated over countless asamkhyā kalpas. When they respond with joy even for a moment, they attain Buddhahood in their present form. Even though they may not believe this, the seed has been planted, it is maturing, and through it they will invariably attain Buddhahood. (87)

Once one has heard the sutra teaching that good and evil are not two, that correct and erroneous are as one, then one gains inner enlightenment and attains Buddhahood. Therefore this is called the attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form. And because one gains enlightenment in a single lifetime, it is called perfect enlightenment in one lifetime. Though there may be persons who are unaware of the principle involved, if they chant the daimoku, they will experience the joy that can only be shared between Buddhas. This is what the sutra means when it says, "I will surely rejoice and so will the other Buddhas." (88-89)

Though they have formed some slight bond with the Lotus Sutra, they turn their minds elsewhere, and when they see others practicing the teachings of the Lotus Sutra, because they respond with no feeling of joy, they proceed, both the teachers and their disciples, to slander the Law. (221)

It is indeed a matter of joy that my situation perfectly fits the sutra passage that reads, "Again and again we will be banished." How delightful! How gratifying! (463)

My best wishes for the New Year season. May you and all the others enjoy the greatest happiness and good fortune! (523)

If people try to hinder your faith, I urge you strongly to feel joy. (566)

This is not the first time you have shown such kindness and I do not know how to thank you. Not only am I, Nichiren, delighted, but I am sure that Shakyamuni Buddha is delighted as well. As the Lotus Sutra says, “I will surely rejoice and so will the other Buddhas.” (680)

In any event you must pray to the Lotus Sutra so that you may become as long-lived as the crane or the tortoise and that your happiness be like the full moon or the tide at its highest. (869)

And of all the many sights the eyes behold from the age of one to the age of sixty, the most joyful of all is that of the sutra passages that demonstrate the supremacy of the Lotus Sutra. (874)

Because we have put our trust in the Lotus Sutra, it will be as if fish living in a shallow pool were to rejoice when the heavens cloud over and rain falls. Though we may suffer for a while, ultimately delight awaits us. It is like the case of a crown prince, the only son of the king. Consider this: How can he possibly fail to ascend the throne? (882)

When in one’s heart one takes faith in Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the heart becomes a dwelling and Shakyamuni Buddha takes up residence there. At first one is not aware of this, but gradually, as the months go by, the Buddha in the heart begins to appear as in a dream, and one’s heart becomes bit by bit ever more joyful. (885)

You should think of your joy at the start of spring as if it were the waxing of the moon, the rising of the tide, the grasses growing lush, or the rain falling. (980)

The joy we feel at the beginning of spring is like the blossoms that open on the trees or the plants that spring up in the mountains. I, as well as others, am filled with joy. (982)

I have received word that both sides in the case are to be summoned for questioning today. Since this seems to be what each of you has longed for, it must be as if you had encountered the udumbara flower, which blossoms and bears fruit only once every three thousand years. And your state of mind must be similar to that of Tung-fang Shuo, who obtained peaches from the garden of the Queen Mother of the West three times in nine thousand years. What other happiness can you experience in life that could compare to this? Setting aside for the moment the question of outcome, should you not, above all, take this as an opportunity to dispel your worry and gloom? (1008)

Karma

So long as one, through the Lotus Sutra, sets one's mind on the attainment of perfect and true enlightenment, one can never be dragged back into the nine realms of unenlightened existence by the power of karma. (64)

And when one recites the words "This reality consists of *sōnyoze* (appearance is thus) . . .," this is the principle of the Middle Way. Accordingly, the appearance, nature, and so forth acquired by one's life through karma, as all the illusions about the true nature of life inherent in them are swept away, are opened up as none other than the Thus Come One of the Dharma body. (89)

The sutra texts tell us that a single person in the course of a single day has eight million four thousand thoughts. And all of these various thoughts produce karma that will lead to rebirth in the three evil paths. We living beings in this threefold world with its twenty-five realms keep repeating a cycle of transmigration; like birds flitting from tree to tree in a forest, we die and are born again, are born again and then die. Revolving like cartwheels, we go round and round in a process of birth and death that has no beginning and no end, creatures under the heavy burden of evil karma. (307)

It is just that some of my karma from previous existences has yet to be expiated. But when I was condemned to exile, did not Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, cover me with his robe? And last year, on the night of the twelfth day of the ninth month, did I not escape when I was on the very point of losing my life? This is what is meant by the passage "If one's mind is strong, the protection of the gods also is sure to be firm." (437)

Unless one is a bodhisattva of the Dharma body, one cannot endure the pains involved in entering the three evil paths, and the same is true of these heavenly and earthly gods. The sufferings in the world today are too great for them to endure. But the great bodhisattvas as numerous as the dust particles of a thousand worlds who emerged from the earth have first of all lived in this *sahā* world for an incalculably long period of time; second, they have been disciples of Shakyamuni Buddha since the far distant past, when he first set his mind on and attained enlightenment; and third, these bodhisattvas were the first persons in the *sahā* world to receive the seed of Buddhahood from the Buddha. Therefore, in terms of the bonds of karma from the past that tie them to the *sahā* world, they surpass the other great bodhisattvas. (550)

According to these [provisional Mahayana] sutras, however, ordinary people, unlike persons of the two vehicles, continue to have earthly desires and to be affected by karma. Their present bodily forms are temporary manifestations of the bitter effects of these forces. But so long as they retain their bodily forms, they can use their earthly desires and karma as seeds with which to produce the reward body and the manifested body of a Buddha. And, since in their present form they suffer from the bitter effects of earthly desires and karma, then, because the sufferings of birth and death are nirvana, they can become a Thus Come One of the Dharma body. This is the argument used [by these provisional Mahayana sutras] to scold and berate the persons of the two vehicles. The fact is, however, that through these sutras, earthly desires, karma, and suffering can never become the seeds that produce the three bodies of a Buddha, the Dharma body, the reward body, and the manifested body. When we come to the Lotus Sutra, however, we find that earthly desires, karma, and suffering, which the persons of the two vehicles had supposedly shed when they entered the nirvana of remainder and the nirvana of no remainder, can in fact be drawn forth and utilized as a means to attain Buddhahood in one's present form. Thus the persons of the two vehicles are assured of attaining Buddhahood in their present form, and ordinary people are likewise assured of attaining Buddhahood in their present form. (584-5)

When you consider these examples, you know that your mother too will quickly be absolved of the karmic impediments that have been accumulated from time without beginning, and the wonderful lotus that is the inner nature of her mind will quickly open its petals. (659)

What is the poison? It is the three paths of earthly desires, karma, and suffering that are our lot. What is the medicine? It is the Dharma body, wisdom, and emancipation. And what does it mean to change poison into medicine? It means to transform the three paths into the three virtues: the Dharma body, wisdom, and emancipation. T'ien-t'ai says, "The character *myō* is defined as being beyond ordinary comprehension." And he also says, "Life at each moment . . . This is what we mean when we speak of the 'region of the unfathomable.'" This is what the attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form means. (743)

Because we created karma in a previous existence, we become subject to various sufferings in this life; the earthly desires accumulated in a previous existence call forth the sufferings of the present. The two causes or links in the chain of causation [ignorance and action] that pertain to one's past existence; the five links in one's present existence [consciousness, name and form, the six sense organs, contact, and sensation] that are the results of these; the three links [desire, attachment, and existence] that act as causes in one's present existence; and the two links [birth and aging and death] that are the result of these in one's future existence, cause one to experience all the sufferings that span the three successive existences of past, present, and future. (746)

Could your having taken pity on and made offerings to such a strange person be because you were my parent in a past existence, or could it be due to karma from a past lifetime? It is certainly no ordinary thing. (757)

But leaving that aside, I wonder what karma from a previous existence has led you to send this gift of a robe to me. (777)

In view of these difficulties, I wonder what bond of karma from the past has inspired in your heart the determination to communicate with a person like me? (778)

How thankful we must be that, in a world such as this, there are those who, because of some good karma accumulated in the past, are willing to support the votaries of the Lotus Sutra! How thankful we must be! (802)

When one truly awakens to the fact that one's own mind and the Buddha mind are in fact one mind, then no evil karma can obstruct one when one's life comes to a close, and there will be no more deluded thoughts to detain one in the realm of birth and death. (852)

Because of karma accumulated in the past, we have been born in a land where the Buddhist Law is propagated. (861)

The great distances these persons travelled are indicative of their devotion. But these were all men, and those are the deeds of ones who were manifestations of Buddhas or bodhisattvas. You, however, are a woman, though it is hard to tell whether you are such a manifestation or an ordinary mortal. How great must be the good karma you accumulated in past lives! There are, to be sure, tales of women in past times who, pursuing a man they loved, journeyed a thousand miles, or changed into a stone, a tree, a bird, or a serpent. (1030)

Kindness

And now a kind mother, ninety years of age, has fashioned this garment for her beloved son, straining her eyes, putting into it every bit of strength she has. Perhaps you, her son, thinking you can scarcely repay the debt you owe her for the making of this unlined robe, offered it to me. But I, too, can scarcely, repay the kindness of such a gift. On the other hand, it would hardly be right to return it. So I shall don the robe, and in the presence of the god of the sun relate in detail how I came to possess it. Then assuredly Shakra, Brahmā, and the other heavenly deities will learn of the matter. Though it is only a single unlined robe, all the gods of the ten directions will come to know of it as well. Like the dew merging with the great ocean or soil added to the great earth, [the benefit from this robe] will remain in lifetime after lifetime, and never abate for existence after existence. (532)

This is not the first time you have shown such kindness and I do not know how to thank you. Not only am I, Nichiren, delighted, but I am sure that Shakyamuni Buddha is delighted as well. As the Lotus Sutra says, “I will surely rejoice and so will the other Buddhas.” (680)

Remember that these brothers and sisters of yours are dear to your mother, and she will be concerned for them until the moment of her death. If you pardon their faults and treat them with kindness, you will be easing your mother’s mind and exercising proper filial regard. Reflect deeply on this! If you treat others with kindness, how much more so should you treat your own siblings. (731)

I do not know how to thank you for your repeated gestures of kindness. When the cold weather piles up, water turns to ice. When snow accumulates year after year, it turns to crystal. When evil piles up, one is destined for hell; when good piles up, one becomes a Buddha. In the case of a woman, if jealousy piles up, she will turn into a poisonous snake. But if she gains repeated merit through offerings to the Lotus Sutra, then how can she fail to follow in the wake of the dragon king’s daughter? There are the mountains, the rivers, the horses, the men to attend them—the difficulties are so many, yet again and again you show your kindness by these gifts—how can I thank you? The one who was ailing had correct faith at the time of death. Without doubt she has gone to the pure land of Eagle Peak. There can be no doubt about it. (753)

Even those who have known me or heard of me in the past no longer take pity on me, and the disciples and hired hands that have been with me up to now have all deserted me. How amazing it is, therefore, that someone like you, whom I have never even heard of or seen, should display such kindness! I cannot help wondering if you are not a reincarnation of my departed parents, or perhaps a manifestation of the ten demon daughters! (774)

You are far away, we cannot meet, and I wonder how you are getting along. Even now things are not easy for me, but I recall, when times were really bad, how you gave me support. I am truly grateful for all your kindness. In any event, you must pray to the Lotus Sutra so that you may become as long-lived as the crane or the tortoise and that your happiness be like the full moon or the tide at its highest. (869)

I have written you so many times in the past to thank you for your kindness that my writing brush is worn out and my fingers will no longer move. Can we count the number of raindrops that fall in a major world system in the space of seven days? Or does anyone know the number of dust particles in the vast lands that make up the worlds of the ten directions? But the benefits one gains by making offerings even to one word of the Lotus Sutra—these, the Buddha says, are truly hard to measure. This you must keep ever in mind! (871)

Since I lost my father and mother, I have known no such kindness as this! When I think of the depth of your concern for me, I can barely hold back my tears. (978)

No one comes pushing his way [through the snow] to where I am, and yet you have shown such kindness in thinking of me! It is as wonderful as fire from a stone or a lotus blossom in the flames—something extremely rare, rare indeed! (1089)

Knowledge and Faith

I am at a loss to say how moved I am that though you, the lay nun, have little knowledge of Buddhist doctrines and are fainthearted, until now you have never retreated. Not only that, but you have sent one of your servants, whom you could well employ for yourself, to assist me. Surely Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and all the emanation Buddhas in the ten directions must be aware of this. (465)

Now in this latter age if a man who is lacking in knowledge such as I should try to decide who is right and who is wrong in the matter, no one would believe him. On the other hand, it would surely be regrettable if one were to ascend a mountain of treasures and yet pick up only worthless stones and shards, or walk through a grove of fragrant sandalwood and gather only foul eranda. Therefore I have decided to ignore the slanders of the multitude and venture to declare what is to be accepted and what rejected. I hope that my disciples will give very careful attention to the matter. (482)

Leadership

The dragon king's daughter was a woman and she had experienced and understood the sufferings of women. Therefore she was not concerned about other matters, but vowed that she would be a guide and leader for other women. (40)

Because I hope to be counted among the Buddha's disciples, I am writing this work in order to circulate it in the world today and expose the errors of those who slander the Law. (132)

Are you sure to know the secret Law that will overcome and subdue the Mongol nation? I, Nichiren, am the foremost votary of the Lotus Sutra in all of Japan, a great general who can defeat the forces of the Mongol nation, for, as the Lotus Sutra says, "A person who can accept and uphold this sutra is likewise foremost among all living beings." (324)

I, Nichiren, am the only guide and teacher who has exposed the errors of these schools. (435)

You and he are major figures among my lay supporters and therefore I pray you will help fulfil my wish in this regard. (559)

Now I hope that the two of you will exert yourselves to the best of your ability to help achieve my wish and test the golden words of the Buddha. (560)

These Three Great Secret Laws were unquestionably received by me, Nichiren, some two thousand and more years ago, when I was the leader of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth; they were passed on to me by oral transmission from the lord of teachings, the World-Honored One of Great Enlightenment. And these actions that I now take embody what I received in transmission on Eagle Peak, without the slightest deviation or alteration in form, the three great matters of the Law of the "Life Span" chapter. (987).

I, Nichiren, entrust all of the teachings I have propagated throughout my life to Nikkō, Āchārya Byakuren. He should be the great guide and teacher in the spread of the essential teaching.

Life

Even when encountering the problems of everyday life, one must consult with others, and how much more is this true when attempting to understand the profound principles of Buddhism. How can one hope to grasp them easily by oneself? (7)

The entity of Myoho-renge-kyo in all its splendor – just what is this entity? If we hope to answer this, we must say that it is the eight-petaled white lotus that is the true nature of our own lives. Since this is so, then the essential nature of our lives is Myoho-renge-kyo. (80)

When we chant this Myoho-renge-kyo, the Buddha of original enlightenment present in our lives becomes manifest. (85)

If you allow your present life to go by in vain, it will be too late to regret it later. (326)

This time, please believe that your good fortune will increase, as the sea tide swells and as the moon waxes full, and that your life will lengthen and you will be reborn on Eagle Peak. (354)

Is there a person alive in the world today who does not wonder what his or her next existence will be like? The sole reason for the Buddha's advent in this world was to bring salvation to living beings. (391)

The words and sounds uttered by us living beings, which pertain to life, are manifestations of *myōhō* as it is embodied in sentient beings. (430)

Because of the offerings you have made, you will enjoy good fortune in your present life, and in your next existence will proceed to the pure land of Eagle Peak. (785)

When spring comes and conditions of wind and rain prevail, then even the mindless plants and trees will all put forth buds, blossom in glory, and make their presence known to the world. And when autumn arrives with its conditions of autumn moonlight, then plants and trees will all ripen and bear fruit. Then they will nourish all sentient beings, sustain their lives, bring them to maturity, and in the end manifest both the virtue and the functions of Buddhahood. Can anyone doubt this? If even the mindless plants and trees can do so, how much truer should this be of human beings? (861)

How is your daughter, Oto, these days? I am certain that her devoted service to the Lotus Sutra will bring her long life and good fortune. (1030)

I am praying [...] that the life of your wife, the lay nun, will be prolonged well into the future. Please be sure to tell her about this. (1082)

Loss of a loved one

I had been lamenting that if the late Ueno, your husband, were alive, I could at any moment tell him things, or listen to what he had to say, and now I wonder if he did not make himself young again and stay behind in the form of his precious, beloved son. Words fail me when I see that not only is there a perfect resemblance, but even his heart is the same. I was told that your husband had attained Buddhahood through the Lotus Sutra, so I went to pay my respects at his grave. (495)

Others may live to fifty or sixty and still have their fathers with them to share the gray-haired years. But in your case you lost your father at a very early age, and hence were deprived of his instruction and guidance. When I think of what this must have meant for you, I cannot restrain my tears. (500)

In order to fulfil my wish, I have sent my disciple with the intention that he visit you during the first month and recite the verse portion of the “Life Span” chapter in one scroll at the grave. I have lamented that I possessed not even a memento of your father, but it is a comfort to me that he has left you behind. Your late father rests beneath the trees and below the grasses, where not a soul passes by, nor can he listen to the Buddha’s teachings. How lonesome he must be! Thinking on this, I cannot restrain my tears. When you go together with the practitioner of the Lotus Sutra to visit his grave, how happy he will be. How happy he will be! (530)

But now you, Jōnin, are an ignorant person of the latter age, an ordinary mortal who has yet to cut off the illusions of thought and desire. In body neither layman nor priest, but a shave-pated believer; in mind neither good nor bad, but a mere half-grown he-goat. Nevertheless, you have a loving mother. In the morning you venture forth to wait on your lord, and in the evening you return to your home, where you do all that can be done for your loving mother, where all your thoughts are of the duties of a filial son. But in the latter part of last month your mother, obeying the principle of birth and death, set out on her journey to the Yellow Springs. However much you may lament, she was already in her nineties, and it is only natural for such a parent to depart and leave her son behind. And yet you keep dwelling on the fact that, once gone, she will never come again, no matter how the days and months may pass. You have no other mother in this land. From now on, whom will you wait on? (658)

In this way the three calamities and the seven disasters have continued for several decades on end, and half the people have been wiped out. Those who remain are parted from their parents, their brothers and sisters, or their wives and children, and cry out in voices no less pitiful than those of autumn insects. Family after family has been scattered and destroyed like plants and trees broken down by the snow of winter. (768-9)

But whatever may happen to Jirō Hyōe, I cannot help feeling pity when I think of the grief his wife must be suffering. She must feel like a wisteria vine in full bloom that has twined itself around a pine tree, but finds to her consternation that the pine has suddenly toppled over, or like ivy on a fence when the fence has collapsed. She enters her home, but there is no husband there; it is as though the house were destroyed and had lost its pillar. Visitors appear, but there is no one to step forward and greet them. In the dark of night her bedroom is bleak and lonely. When she visits the grave, she sees the marker on it but hears no familiar voice. Again, when she imagines her departed husband, she wonders who is accompanying him as he travels past the mountains of death and over the river of three crossings, or whether he is weeping as he makes the journey all alone. Is he wondering why his wife and children who have remained behind have sent him all alone on this journey, is he protesting in his grief that this is not in accord with the promises they made? As the autumn night wanes away and the sound of a winter storm comes to her ears, the wife's sorrow must grow heavier than ever. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (779)

How can I thank you enough for sending me such a variety of things, especially now, at the busiest time of year for farmers, when no one has a spare moment? I think this is wholly because it is hard for you to bear being separated from your late husband, the lay priest, and you are eager to do something for the sake of his next existence. How delighted he must be with your warm concern for his future existence. In that dew-dampened grassy place bereft of visitors, he is probably longing to ask what has become of the small children he left behind in the sahā world. (879)

With regard to the news of the demise of Nanjō Shichirō Gorō: Once a person is born that person must die—wise men and foolish, eminent and lowly alike all know this to be a fact. Therefore one should not be grieved and alarmed by a person's death; I know it to be so and teach others to do likewise. And yet when something like this actually happens, I wonder if it is not a dream or an illusion. And how much greater must be the grief of the mother! She had lost her parents, her siblings, and even her beloved husband had preceded her in death, but still she had her many children to comfort her heart. Yet now her youngest child, her darling, a son, surpassing others in features and form, devoted in heart, in whom his associates took such delight—now all at once he has been taken away, like a budding flower that withers in the wind or a full moon that is suddenly lost from sight. I can scarcely believe that such a thing has happened, and cannot even think of what words to write, though there is much more that I would say. POSTSCRIPT: When I met him on the fifteenth day of the sixth month, I thought what a fine and spirited lad he was. How it grieves me to think I will never see him again! Nevertheless, he had devoted himself to Shakyamuni Buddha and the Lotus Sutra, and he died in a fitting manner. I know that in heart he has gone to join his father in the pure land of Eagle Peak, where they will clasp hands and face one another in joy. How splendid, how splendid! (887)

When my own mother was still living, I went too much against her words. Now that she has preceded me in death, I cannot help but feel deep regret. That is why I have reviewed the sacred teachings put forward by the Buddha in the course of his lifetime in order to determine what actions are most appropriate to show filial devotion to my mother. And when I see people praying for their departed mother, I feel as though it is my own concern and seeing you do so makes me very happy. (898)

Thus what karmic bond is responsible for the lay nun Kōnichi believing in the Lotus Sutra? Could it be because your son, the deceased Yashirō, who believed in it, recommended it to you? Since the good fortune gained from this will no doubt bear fruit, it is certain that you will meet and be together with your son in the pure land of Eagle Peak. (964)

Even insentient plants and trees share as one a friend's joys and sorrows. How much truer must this be of the bond between parent and child? You carried your child in your womb for nine months, then gave birth and devoted years to nourishing him. You thought that in your old age you would be supported by him and then be mourned by him. But what in heaven's name is to be done about the inconsolable sorrow you feel when instead you must mourn him, about your anguished heart when you wonder what has become of your child? Out of its love for its child, the pheasant plunged into flames to save it. Out of her love for her child, the poor woman drowned in the Ganges River. The pheasant is now Bodhisattva Maitreya. The woman who drowned in the Ganges has been reborn as the great heavenly king Brahmā. How much more will this be so of the present-day Honorable Kōnichi, who out of her great affection for her son became a practitioner of the Lotus Sutra? Without fail both mother and child will go to the pure land of Eagle Peak. At that time, how joyful your meeting will be! How joyful it will be! (964)

Indeed, indeed, it was the ninth month of last year, the fifth day, that your son, the late Gorō, passed away. In consternation I count on my fingers and find that already a year and more have passed, sixteen months, over four hundred days! You are his mother—perhaps you have had some word of him. Could you let me know if you have? The fallen snow will fall another time, the blossoms, scattered, will bloom again. Why is it that people alone, once gone, never come back again? How hateful, how hateful! Mere onlooker though I am, I know he was a splendid young man, a splendid young man, a jewel of a son—how happy you must have been to have such a son. But, like the full moon that clouds cover and goes behind the mountain, like the shining blossoms that are heartlessly scattered by the wind—ah, how grievous is his loss! Because of my illness, I do not ordinarily write answers myself to the letters I receive from others. But in your case the events are so sad that I have taken up my brush to write this. I do not feel that I will be in this world much longer. If that is the case, I will no doubt soon be meeting with Gorō. If I should meet him before you do, I will tell him how much you grieve for him. I will write more at another time. (973-4)

Lotus Sutra

Though over two thousand years have already gone by since the Buddha passed into extinction, where there is a person who has faith in the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha's voice still lingers there, and hour by hour, minute by minute, instant by instant that person hears the Buddha assuring him that he, the Buddha, has never died. (121)

When we ordinary mortals, persons of incorrigible disbelief who are constantly drowned in delusion and suffering, desire to take faith in the Lotus Sutra, this is a sign that the Buddha nature within us is beginning to manifest itself. (137)

But when we come to the Lotus Sutra, we find that the Buddha world that exists within the nine worlds is now revealed, and hence the bodhisattvas, persons of the two vehicles, and ordinary people in the six paths of existence can for the first time after the forty and more years see the Buddhahood that is within themselves. (138)

[...] for all beings who live when the Buddha is in the world and after he has passed into extinction, the Lotus Sutra is truly a good friend. (138)

As I have stated earlier, persons who put their faith in the Lotus Sutra, though they may have no very clear understanding of the sutra, will nevertheless escape falling into the three evil paths of existence. (214)

For in the end, though one may destroy the text of the Lotus Sutra, cut it up, or tear it apart, one can never destroy its message. (223)

The Thus Come One Shakyamuni made his appearance in the world because he wished to preach the Lotus Sutra. But during the first forty and more years of his preaching life he kept the title of the Lotus Sutra secret. From around the age of thirty until he was seventy or more, he set forth teachings that would act as an expedient means leading to the Lotus Sutra; only when he was seventy-two did he for the first time reveal the daimoku, or title, of the Lotus Sutra. The daimoku of the Lotus Sutra thus far surpasses the titles of all the other sutras. In addition, the two characters of *myōhō* of the daimoku contain within them the heart of the Lotus Sutra, namely, the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life set forth in the "Expedient Means" chapter, and the doctrine of the Buddha's attainment of enlightenment in the far distant past set forth in the "Life Span" chapter. (228)

The various Buddhas of past and present could not attain Buddhahood without the Lotus Sutra. It is through the Lotus Sutra that one gains correct enlightenment. If these Buddhas then cast aside the votary of the Lotus Sutra, they will revert to the status of common mortals, for they will be guilty of failing to understand the debt of gratitude they owe to the Lotus Sutra. Furthermore, those persons of the two vehicles who are destined to become Buddhas in the future, if they separate themselves from the Lotus Sutra, will become like withered trees or rotten seeds. But now, so long as they have the Lotus Sutra, they can come to life again and bear blossoms and fruit. (280)

The wonderful words of the Lotus Sutra increase the brilliance of the pure land of Eagle Peak; the sixty-nine thousand characters in which it is written add to the glitter of the purple-tinged purest gold. The departed one in particular, while alive, gave evidence of an extraordinary faith in the Lotus Sutra. And now, through the power of these lectures on the sutra, that person will be reborn in the presence of the Buddha and will gain wonderful causes leading to the attainment of the Buddha's enlightenment. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (310)

Reading one sentence or one phrase of this sutra, or writing out one character or one stroke of it, can become the cause that enables one to escape from the sufferings of birth and death and attain great enlightenment. So it was that a certain person, because he formed a relationship with the words of this sutra, was able to return to life from the hall of Yama, the judge of the dead. And because another person wrote out the sixty-four characters that make up the titles of the eight volumes of the Lotus Sutra, his deceased father was let to the realm of heaven. (309)

When a single drop of water is brought to the sea, it never evaporates, even in the face of the three calamities. When a single blossom is placed in the five heavens of purity, it never wilts, even in the fire at the end of the kalpa of decline. When a single soybean is brought to the Lotus Sutra, the entire realm of phenomena becomes the lotus realm. (356)

I have come to understand the true intention of the Buddhas, and from early in my studies have realized the great key to release from the sufferings of birth and death. That key is the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law. (391)

Because all of you are reading the entire Lotus Sutra with your lives, this will bring benefit to you as well as to your parents and your brothers and sisters, both living and dead. (394)

The Lotus Sutra represents the original purpose for which Shakyamuni and the other Buddhas made their appearance in the world. (513)

When we come to the Lotus Sutra, however, we find that earthly desires, karma, and suffering [...] can in fact be drawn forth and utilized as a means to attain Buddhahood in one's present form. (585)

[...] the true attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form is limited to the Lotus Sutra. My disciples and the followers of my teachings should keep this fact constantly in mind. (585)

To tell the truth, it is the teaching found in the Lotus Sutra, which assures the attainment of Buddhahood by persons of the two vehicles and reveals Shakyamuni's attainment of Buddhahood in the remote past. (588)

When I don this robe, take my place before the Buddha, and recite the Lotus Sutra, then all the 69,384 characters that make up the sacred text, each individual character one by one, becomes a golden Buddha. Though the robe is only one, it clothes each and every one of the 69,384 Buddhas. (600)

Even one seed, when planted, multiplies. The dragon turns a little water into great rains, and human beings make a few sparks into a great blaze. Though there is only one unlined robe, when it is presented in offering to the Lotus Sutra, it is offered to all 69,384 characters of the sutra, each of which is a Buddha. These Buddhas have the renewal of life in the decayed seeds as their hearts, the revelation of original enlightenment and the immeasurable life span as their lives, the constantly abiding Buddha nature as their throats, and the wonderful practice of the single vehicle as their eyes. (602)

I will have this robe made from your cloth, will wear the unlined robe as well, and will recite the Lotus Sutra. When I do so, though I am a monk without precepts, because the Lotus Sutra is a work of honest and upright golden words, it will be as if a poisonous snake were to spit up a gem, or sandalwood trees were to grow up among the eranda. (602)

Among the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime, the Lotus Sutra is not only a bright mirror but a divine mirror. A bronze mirror will reflect the form of a person but it will not reflect that person's mind. The Lotus Sutra, however, reveals not only the person's form but that person's mind as well. And it reveals not only the mind; it reflects, without the least concealment, that person's past actions and future as well. (619)

The Lotus Sutra is made up of 69,384 characters. Though in our eyes each individual character may appear to be no more than a character in black ink, in the Buddha's eyes, each one is a Buddha. For example, a ruler called King Golden Grains turned sand into gold. A man named Mahānāma turned rocks into gems. Wood immersed in the Spring of Jewels changes into lapis lazuli. Waters that enter the sea all become salty. Birds that approach Mount Sumeru turn golden-hued. Agada medicine changes poison into medicine. And the wonder of the Lotus Sutra is also like that; it changes ordinary people into Buddhas. A turnip turns into a quail, and a taro growing in the mountains into an eel. Since such are the wonders of the secular world, how much truer must it be of the power of the Lotus Sutra? If one were to strap a rhinoceros horn onto one's body and enter the sea, the water would part to a distance of five feet around. If one were to rub one's body with the fragrance of sandalwood and enter a great blaze, one would never be burned. When one upholds the Lotus Sutra one will neither be dampened by the waters of the eight cold hells, nor burned by the raging fires of the eight hot hells. The seventh volume of the Lotus Sutra says that such a person "cannot be burned by fire or washed away by water." (671)

The truth lies in what Shakyamuni Buddha has preached now [in the Lotus Sutra]. One should have faith in the five characters of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, the crux of the "Life Span" chapter. (705)

On Mount Takatori, Mount Minobu, Mount Shichimen, in Iidani, under the trees, among the grass roots, on the peaks, down in the dirt, search where you may, nowhere will you find it growing—only in the sea does the seaweed grow. And only on the mountains are the mushrooms found. In like manner, the way to Buddhahood is found nowhere outside the Lotus Sutra. (730)

[...] the sutra known as the Lotus Sutra is good medicine for the various ills of body and mind (747)

Not only have you speedily repudiated your earlier beliefs and embraced those of the Lotus Sutra, but in fact you now look on this sutra as dearer to you than life and limb. This is the most wonderful of wonders! Such an occurrence cannot be adequately explained in terms of your present existence alone, but must have its origin in your relationship with the sutra in past existences—only thus can it be understood. Marvellous, truly marvellous! (748)

Speaking next of the “Life Span” chapter, it constitutes the heart of the essential teaching, and in fact the heart of the entire Lotus Sutra. Not only is it the heart of all the sacred teachings of the Buddha’s lifetime, but it embodies the most important message conveyed in all the ceremonies on the preaching of the Law conducted by the Buddhas of the three existences of past, present, and future. This is because in the “Life Span” chapter Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, reveals the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, which he has come to understand and which is equal to the inner enlightenment of all the Buddhas of the three existences. This doctrine thus represents not only the personal enlightenment attained by a single Buddha, Shakyamuni, but the enlightenment of all other Buddhas as well. We living beings, who from time immemorial have floundered in the waves of the six paths of birth and death, now encounter the Lotus Sutra preached by Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, because in a past existence we listened to the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life that is found in this “Life Span” chapter, the doctrine the Buddha realized when he originally attained enlightenment in the far remote past. It is a most wonderful doctrine! (748)

What secret teaching could surpass the Lotus Sutra in dispelling all the perils and disasters that may face one in a dangerous year? You can count on it, count on it! (750)

Among these, the Lotus Sutra is the truest of true words, and the truest of truths. (760)

If we examine the Lotus Sutra, we find it stated that, in cases like these, Shakyamuni Buddha enters into a person and inspires such determination in that person’s heart. It is like someone who, with no particular thought in mind, drinks sake and becomes intoxicated. After he is intoxicated, a quite unexpected desire arises in his heart and he is inspired to give away his belongings to other people. Although the person has all his life been stingy and greedy and is destined for rebirth in the realm of hungry spirits, because of the effect of the sake, he is able to enter the realm of a bodhisattva. If a jewel is placed in muddy water, the water will become clear, and if a person gazes at the moon, his heart will be filled with nostalgia. A picture of a demon can be frightening even though we know it is not alive, and a picture of a beautiful woman can make a wife jealous even though she knows the picture cannot steal her husband away from her. If a brocade bed mat is woven with a pattern of snakes, no one will want to lie down on it, and if one’s body is overheated, one will find a warm breeze distasteful. Such is the nature of the human heart. So when a person like yourself feels drawn in your heart toward the Lotus Sutra, I suppose it must be that, since you are a woman, the dragon king’s daughter has taken possession of you. (778)

I do so because the Lotus Sutra is the father and mother of Shakyamuni Buddha, the eye of the Buddhas. Shakyamuni, Mahāvairocana, and all the other Buddhas of the ten directions were born from the Lotus Sutra. Therefore, as the object of devotion I now take that which is capable of bringing forth such life force. (788-9)

Among the heavenly bodies [at night], the Lotus Sutra is comparable to the moon; among persons it is comparable to the king. Among mountains it is Mount Sumeru, among waters, the great ocean. And if so wonderful a sutra as this declares that women may attain Buddhahood, then what does it matter whether all the other sutras look down on them? Though thieves, housebreakers, burglars, beggars, or lepers may despise you, if the ruler of the nation praises you, you should rather rejoice, should you not? (812)

The Lotus Sutra turns people of the two vehicles, who have scorched their seeds of Buddhahood, into Buddhas. How much truer, then, must this be of people whose seeds are alive? The Lotus Sutra turns icchantikas, or people of incorrigible disbelief, into Buddhas. How much truer, then, must this be of those who believe? (818)

Next we come to the teaching that pertains to the Buddha's enlightenment, namely, the Lotus Sutra preached in the last eight years of the Buddha's life. (840)

But the Lotus Sutra represents [...] a type of immediate enlightenment to be quickly achieved. (848)

After that, he thrust aside the various sutra teachings that he had used as an expedient means and preached the correct and straightforward doctrine of the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law, revealing the truth of the seeds of the five wisdom Thus Come Ones. He included within it the various sutras preached as an expedient means in the preceding forty-two years, rolling them all together and fashioning the one Buddha vehicle, calling it the Law that embraces all people in one, the Law that embodies the enlightenment of the individual. He created an honest and truthful document that others could not tamper with, and affixed to it his own seal of verification. (851)

But now the Lotus Sutra has opened up and merged the two types of teachings, one for the instruction and conversion of others and the other pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment, so that it is lacking in nothing. It is like a bird with two wings that flies without hindrance. That is to say, through this sutra Buddhahood can be attained without delay. (856)

Because we have put our trust in the Lotus Sutra, it will be as if fish living in a shallow pool were to rejoice when the heavens cloud over and rain falls. Though we may suffer for a while, ultimately delight awaits us. It is like the case of a crown prince, the only son of the king. Consider this: How can he possibly fail to ascend the throne? (882)

Persons who are intent upon exercising filial devotion toward their parents should therefore send them the gift of the Lotus Sutra. (898)

The Lotus Sutra, however, is not only the king among all the sutras preached by the Buddha in the course of his lifetime. It is the great king among all the sutras expounded by all the Buddhas of the three existences of past, present, and future, and of the ten directions. (1048)

When a person who is ailing gives alms to the Lotus Sutra, that person's illness will be lightened, that person's complexion will brighten, that person's strength will improve (1066)

Marriage/Partnership

[...] the husband and wife who presented me with this robe will be visited by these Buddhas, who will regard the couple as their supporters and watch over and protect them. For this husband and wife in their present existence they will be a prayer, a treasure; and when the husband and wife are on the point of death, they will be a moon, a sun, a path, a bridge, a father, a mother, an ox or a horse, a palanquin, a carriage, a lotus, a mountain, coming to greet and convey them to the pure land of Eagle Peak. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo! (600)

You have been born as a woman in countless existences since the far distant past, but it is this husband who was your last good friend in the sahā world. (867)

Mentor and Disciple (*shitei funi*)

Because I hope to be counted among the Buddha's disciples, I am writing this work in order to circulate it in the world today and expose the errors of those who slander the Law. (132)

One also owes a profound debt to one's teachers for preventing one from following erroneous doctrines and leading one to the correct way. And the debt one owes to the Buddha goes without saying. In this manner, then, one owes an incalculable debt of gratitude to others. (204)

Because ours has become a nation where lay supporters turn against their teachers, it seems to me that it will, in all probability, be conquered. I have been fortunate enough to be born as a human being and have avoided becoming a teacher of misleading doctrines. (335)

The lay nun is particularly devoted in her faith in the Lotus Sutra, and I wish her to know that this gratifies me greatly. (352)

At present, because of the letter of demands that has arrived from the Mongols, the criticisms against me have somewhat abated, and there is good reason for this to be so. Those people who have believed in my teaching all along seem to be particularly delighted. (352)

You also say that you became my disciple when you were told that the Lotus Sutra would surely spread in the first five hundred years of the Latter Day of the Law. Entering into the relation of teacher and lay supporter is the result of a bond that bridges the three existences. Never seek the three benefits of sowing, maturing, and harvesting from anyone else. These golden words cannot possibly be wrong: "Those persons who had heard the Law dwelled here and there in various Buddha lands, constantly reborn in company with their teachers," and "If one stays close to the teachers of the Law, one will speedily gain the way of enlightenment. By following and learning from these teachers one will see Buddhas as numerous as Ganges sands." (375)

If there are things you do not understand, do not argue among yourselves, but write to me about them. The enclosed treatise is a secret work of great importance. I have written in outline form concerning matters that were not dealt with in my earlier teachings. I want you to understand these doctrines before they are passed on to others. As a rule, you should learn of such doctrinal matters from those who have received instruction in them directly from me. That way my disciples can learn to instruct one another. (440)

It has been twenty or more years now since I found myself in that situation and began the great battle. Not once have I thought of retreat. Among my disciples and followers, however, those who are cowards have for the most part either given in or retreated at heart. I am at a loss to say how moved I am that though you, the lay nun, have little knowledge of Buddhist doctrines and are fainthearted, until now you have never retreated. Not only that, but you have sent one of your servants, whom you could well employ for yourself, to assist me. Surely Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and all the emanation Buddhas in the ten directions must be aware of this. (465)

On the other hand, it would surely be regrettable if one were to ascend a mountain of treasures and yet pick up only worthless stones and shards, or walk through a grove of fragrant sandalwood and gather only foul eranda. Therefore I have decided to ignore the slanders of the multitude and venture to declare what is to be accepted and what rejected. I hope that my disciples will give very careful attention to the matter. (482)

[...] the “Life Span” chapter and the halves of the two chapters that precede and follow it, was from beginning to end preached entirely for the people who live in the world after the passing of the Buddha. And among such people, it was preached for Nichiren and his followers, who are living today in the Latter Day of the Law. (487)

Only my disciples are now the ones who openly accept the Lotus Sutra, and the people of Japan are the ones who oppose it and thereby form a reverse relationship with it. (489)

Though others may slander us, we are teachers of the Law who take no heed of such a thing. (501)

But this “wonderful Law” that I have been speaking of is the teacher of the Buddhas. If we go by the passages from the Lotus Sutra I have just quoted, it represents the state of life or understanding of the Buddha who attained the highest stage of perfect enlightenment, the ultimate fruits of Buddhahood, in the inconceivably remote past. (515)

[...] the Lotus Sutra [...] reveals the original relationship between master and disciple. (552)

Those who are born with understanding will understand it of themselves. Worthy men will take faith in it when they encounter a teacher who has the proper understanding. Those persons whose roots of guilt are deep and manifold will employ erroneous assumptions to make light of others and will not take faith in it. However, if they are willing to lend an ear and attend to the true meaning of the sutra, I will attempt to enlighten them. (556)

In the past I possessed many copies of the sacred teachings. But in the course of undergoing two exiles and encountering various major persecutions, I have lost a scroll here and a scroll there, there are places where a word or two have dropped out or copyists’ errors are found, or a sutra or more have been severely damaged. If I remain silent and do nothing about the situation, then when my lifetime is over, I will almost certainly lead my disciples into error and confusion. Therefore, before I become too old to know what I am doing, I am attempting to put my papers into order. I have heard that within the province of Etchū where you and Ōta Kingo have your fiefs, and in the various temples in the nearby regions, there are many copies of the sacred teachings. You and he are major figures among my lay supporters and therefore I pray you will help fulfil my wish in this regard. (559)

Nevertheless, Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions, the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna, and the Great Teachers T’ien-t’ai, Miao-lo, and Dengyō all understood that the true attainment of Buddhahood in one’s present form is limited to the Lotus Sutra. My disciples and the followers of my teachings should keep this fact constantly in mind. (585)

Because I knew that presently the forces from a foreign power would attack our nation, I offered my life before the altars of the Buddha and the gods, fearless of any attacks I might suffer from the swords of the warrior class; daily I submitted petitions to the rulers of the nation, and each evening I instructed my disciples in what should be done. (609)

The sutra is the teacher and the Buddha is the disciple. (681)

The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai was a disciple of the Buddha in his transient status. But I, Nichiren, am a disciple of the Buddha in his true identity, and thus I am able to expound in full these matters that pertain to the essential teaching. (749)

Even those who have known me or heard of me in the past no longer take pity on me, and the disciples and hired hands that have been with me up to now have all deserted me. How amazing it is, therefore, that someone like you, whom I have never even heard of or seen, should display such kindness! I cannot help wondering if you are not a reincarnation of my departed parents, or perhaps a manifestation of the ten demon daughters! (774)

In view of these difficulties, I wonder what bond of karma from the past has inspired in your heart the determination to communicate with a person like me? (778)

The late priest Dōzen-bō was my teacher. In his heart he felt kindly toward me. But he was afraid that some trouble might arise between himself and the steward of the region because of the Lotus Sutra, and therefore he acted outwardly as though he were my enemy. I heard later that he seemed to manifest a certain degree of faith in the Lotus Sutra. (798)

I earnestly pray that the blessings deriving from such activities may be transferred to my parents, my teacher, and to all living beings. (798)

[...] if such beings do not encounter the right conditions by meeting a “good friend” or teacher, then they will not become awakened, they will not understand, their Buddha nature will not manifest itself. If they encounter the necessary conditions by meeting a good friend, however, then their Buddha nature will invariably become manifest. (861)

[...] all the well-known scholars in society recognize the vital importance of the doctrine of attaining Buddhahood in one's present form. My disciples and followers in particular, then, should set everything else aside and give their attention to this single doctrine. (890)

The fact that you have set aside the teachings of the provisional schools you have been practicing for some years and have become a disciple of Nichiren shows that you are a wise man who is able to understand what doctrine is truly suitable to this time and this country. Nichiren's disciples, like Nichiren himself, should invariably practice the correct principles. Even though one may be a wise man or a scholar, if he falls into hell, he will amount to nothing and can be of no assistance. The essential thing, therefore, is that at each hour, at each moment, one should chant Nam-myōhō-rengyō. (909)

The Buddha took no measures to correct those who slander the teachings of the Lotus Sutra, because while he was in the world there were no such persons. But in the Latter Day of the Law the formidable enemies of the single vehicle are everywhere in sight. Now is the time to benefit the world in the same manner as Bodhisattva Never Disparaging. You who are my disciples, each of you should work diligently at this, work diligently at this! (936)

Now you and I are joined together as teacher and lay supporter. (958-9)

Thus these large carriages drawn by white oxen are able to fly at will through the sky of the essential nature of phenomena. Those persons who come after me will ride in these carriages and journey to Eagle Peak. And I, Nichiren, riding in the same kind of carriage, will come out to greet them. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (976)

I, Nichiren, conscious of the age we live in, now wish to give wide propagation to this doctrine [of the Three Great Secret Laws]. Up until now I have kept this doctrine secret within my heart. But if I do not leave behind me a written record of it, the future followers of my teachings will perhaps slander me by saying that I was without pity or compassion. And at that time, no matter how I might regret it, I would have no way to refute their charges. (988)

I, Nichiren, entrust all of the teachings I have propagated throughout my life to Nikkō, Āchārya Byakuren. He should be the great guide and teacher in the spread of the essential teaching. When the head of the nation accepts this Law, the ordination platform, or sanctuary, of Hommon-ji temple should be established at Mount Fuji. We must wait for the proper time for this. This is what is meant by the specified ordination. My followers should abide by this document. (993)

My wish is that my disciples will be cubs of the lion king, never to be laughed at by the pack of foxes. It is hard to encounter a master like Nichiren, who since distant kalpas in the past down to the present day has never begrudged his body or life in order to expose the faults of his powerful enemies! (1062)

Write to me of what is truly in your heart and I will heed your words. Then I will pray on your behalf, racking my brains and taxing my body to the fullest. (1069)

Mind of faith

It is just that some of my karma from previous existences has yet to be expiated. But when I was condemned to exile, did not Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, cover me with his robe? And last year, on the night of the twelfth day of the ninth month, did I not escape when I was on the very point of losing my life? This is what is meant by the passage “If one’s mind is strong, the protection of the gods also is sure to be firm.” You must never doubt this for a moment. Under no circumstances must you give way to doubt! (437)

What is more, although your late father was a warrior, he had an abiding faith in the Lotus Sutra, and thus—you were only a child at the time—I know that he ended his life in the frame of mind of a true believer. And now you have succeeded him and likewise are firm in your faith in this sutra. Though his spirit is hidden now in the grasses, I am sure he must be very pleased. And how happy he would be if only he were still alive! (499-500)

The body that the father and mother leave behind is none other than the physical form and mind of the child. The blessings that you, the Honorable Jōren, acquire through your faith in the Lotus Sutra will lend strength to your kind father. (572)

When you consider these examples, you know that your mother too will quickly be absolved of the karmic impediments that have been accumulated from time without beginning, and the wonderful lotus that is the inner nature of her mind will quickly open its petals. (659)

But although I have prayed on their behalf so hard that my head was about to split, so far there has been no indication of my prayers being answered. It would seem that someone among them is wavering in faith. If one prays for a person who is not properly responsive in mind, it is like trying to light a fire on top of water, or to build a house in the empty air. (661)

Though calamities may come, they can be changed into good fortune. And how much more is this so when the ten demon daughters have foreknowledge of the situation! This is what is meant when it says [in *Great Concentration and Insight*] that logs make the fire burn brighter, and the wind swells the body of the kālakula insect. It is hard to put on paper all that I would like to say—you must use your mind to judge my meaning. (669)

Again, this carriage I have been describing has the two doctrines, the theoretical teaching and the essential teaching, as its wheels, and it is hitched to the ox of Myōhō-enge-kyō. It is a carriage that goes round and round in the cycle of birth and death, birth and death, in the burning house that is the threefold world. But with the linchpin of a believing mind [to keep the wheels in place] and the oil of determination applied to them, it can carry one to the pure land of Eagle Peak. Or again, we might say that the mind king acts as the ox, while birth and death are like the wheels. (723)

And because your daughter exercises filial devotion, the gods will surely protect her, and the Buddhas will look on her with favour. For among all the good roots or meritorious acts, the foremost is filial service to one's father and mother. And your daughter does all this out of faith in the Lotus Sutra. Such faith is like pure water poured into a golden vessel – not a drop of it will be wasted. How wonderful, how wonderful! (816)

The “Life Span” chapter of the Lotus Sutra says, “At all times I have this thought in mind: How can I cause living beings to gain entry into the unsurpassed way and quickly acquire the body of a Buddha?” “This thought” of “at all times I have this thought in mind” is one instant of thought or a single moment of life comprising three thousand realms that is originally inherent in Buddhas and all living beings. (909)

In what future existence shall we meet again? I urge you to single-mindedly aspire to be reborn in the pure land of Eagle Peak [where we will meet]. Though your body must face the perils of the present crisis, your mind is one with the mind of the Buddha. (958-9)

Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo

The entity of Myoho-enge-kyo in all its splendor—just what is this entity? If we hope to answer this, we must say that it is the eight-petaled white lotus that is the true nature of our own lives. Since this is so, then the essential nature of our lives is Myoho-enge-kyo. And once we have come to understand that Myoho-enge-kyo is not the name of a sutra but is the entity of our own lives, then we will see that our own lives are in fact the Lotus Sutra, and the Lotus Sutra is none other than the sacred word preached by the Buddha in order to make manifest the entities that are our lives. And seeing that, we will know that we ourselves are Thus Come Ones of original enlightenment, who possess the three bodies within a single body. Once we have become enlightened to this, then all the delusions and mistaken habits of thought that we have entertained from the beginningless past until the present will be swept away like yesterday's dreams and will vanish without a trace. When we have faith such as this, then it is taught that one chanting of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is equivalent to one recitation of the entire Lotus Sutra, carried out just as the sutra prescribes and with the correct understanding of its meaning, that ten chantings are equivalent to ten recitations of the sutra, a hundred chantings are equivalent to a hundred recitations, a thousand chantings are equivalent to a thousand recitations, all carried out just as the sutra prescribes. And one who has such faith may be said to be a person who carries out religious practice just as the sutra prescribes. Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. (80)

This Myoho-enge-kyo is a term designating the essential nature of our minds, or, more generally speaking, the essential nature of the minds of all living beings, the eight-petaled white lotus blossom. The words of the Buddha himself teach us this. From time without beginning until the present, these bodies of ours have transmigrated through the realm of birth and death, in a state of delusion as to the essential nature of the mind that is within these bodies. But now that we have encountered the Lotus Sutra and chant the daimoku that represents the Thus Come One of original enlightenment, who possesses the three bodies in a single body, the Thus Come One becomes manifest. In our present existence we achieve the inner realization and attainment of Buddhahood that is known as the attainment of Buddhahood in our present form. (87)

When we chant Myoho-enge-kyo, the Thus Come One of the essential nature of our minds becomes manifest, and the sounds that reach the ears of others wipe out their offenses accumulated over countless asamkha kalpas. (87)

The true perfect teaching practice is to keep the mouth constantly reciting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, whatever the occasion, and to keep the mind fixed on the meditation on the three thousand realms in a single moment of life. This is the practice and understanding of persons of wisdom. For the ordinary lay believers of Japan, however, it is sufficient if they concentrate solely on the recitation of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. The name will invariably invoke all the blessings of the thing itself. It has been said that there are seventeen names for the Lotus Sutra, but these are names that are common to other writings as well. The particular name of the sutra, that by which all the Buddhas of the three existences of past, present, and future invoke it, is Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. (379)

But though this age may meet with destruction, I know that in Japan every person will in time come to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Though you may think that there is no more use in trying to persuade others, to those who would oppose the correct teaching you must speak with even greater fervour. And while life remains in you, you will surely see the results of your efforts. But no matter how others may chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, if they are persons who show enmity toward Nichiren, then without fail they will fall into the hell of incessant suffering. And then, after countless kalpas have passed, they will become Nichiren's disciples and will succeed in attaining Buddhahood. (457)

Though it may be uncertain whether I, Nichiren, will live or die, there can be no doubt about the spread of the five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo. (463)

And among all medicines, the finest medicine is Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (487)

Therefore, before the Bodhisattvas of the Earth have made their appearance, I take the lead in briefly introducing these five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo. I am like the bluebird that presages the appearance of the Queen Mother of the West, or the magpie that signals the arrival of a visitor. (558)

There are of course some persons who recite the Lotus Sutra, but throughout the whole land of Japan there was not one person who chanted the words Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. I, Nichiren, at the beginning of summer in the fifth year of the Kenchō era [1253] began chanting them. And for the following twenty and more years, I alone have continued to chant them as the great majority of people of our time recite the Nembutsu. (652)

One should have faith in the five characters of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the crux of the "Life Span" chapter. (705)

This priceless gem, the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, was then placed in a bag diamond-like in its indestructibility, the five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo, and left behind for the sake of us, the troubled and impoverished living beings of this latter age. (749)

And when your deceased husband chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo at the end on his deathbed, the evil deeds of a lifetime, and from the beginningless past, changed into the seeds of Buddhahood. (760)

Though there are multitudes of stars, they fail to illuminate the great sea. Though there are myriads of grasses, they never become pillars in the imperial palace. In the same manner, even if one chants the Nembutsu many times, it can never be the path to attaining Buddhahood. And even if one upholds the precepts, it can never be the seed for rebirth in a pure land. Only the seven characters of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo are the seed for attaining Buddhahood. (804)

We, Nisshū and the others of our group, have now abandoned these lesser sutras and read and recite only the Lotus Sutra, recommending this practice to all the world and chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (825)

The only primary practice to be employed is [the chanting of] Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (908)

Now I, Nichiren, have inherited the seven characters Nam-myoho-renge-kyo within the treasure tower and in this era of the Latter Day of the Law I work to disseminate them throughout Japan. This is the Buddhist Law that is appropriate to this time and this country, is it not? (908-9)

I, Nichiren, have done nothing else, but have labored solely to put the five or seven characters of Myoho-renge-kyo into the mouths of all the living beings of the country of Japan. In doing so, I have shown the kind of compassion that a mother does when she labors to put milk into the mouth of her infant child. (931)

A single drop from a river is like a single piece of gold, but a single drop of the great ocean is like the wish-granting jewel. A single drop from a river has only a single flavor. But one drop of the great ocean contains all the five flavors. One drop of a river or a stream has only one healing agent, but one drop of the great ocean is like a pill made up of ten thousand ingredients. Namu Amida Butsu is one drop of a single river, but Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is one drop of the great ocean. The Amida Sutra is one drop of a single river, but the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra is one drop of the great ocean. The faults committed by the late Gorō in his sixteen years of life are one drop of a river or stream, but his chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo for a short time is like a drop of the great ocean. (946)

This Nam-myoho-renge-kyo encompasses both practice for oneself and the teaching of others. (986)

In comparison to the daimoku of Myoho-renge-kyo, the names of the various Buddhas are mere shards and rubble, while the daimoku is comparable to the wish-granting jewel. (997)

Nam

The Buddhas of the three existences of past, present, and future, when they were still ordinary mortals, all offered their lives to the Lotus Sutra and thus were able to become Buddhas. For this reason, the names of all the various Buddhas are prefixed by the word *namu*. *Namu* is a word of the language of India, and in this country it means “to dedicate one’s life.” [...] By offering their lives to the Lotus Sutra, they became Buddhas. And now I, Nichiren, offering my life to the Lotus Sutra ... (1073)

Myo

When we chant this Myoho-renge-kyo, the Buddha of original enlightenment present in our lives becomes manifest. Our bodies and minds are comparable to the storehouse of the teachings, and the word *myō* is comparable to the seal [that permits the opening of the storehouse]. (85)

Regarding the character *myō* in the five characters Myoho-renge-kyo, the scholars and teachers have offered a variety of interpretations, but none of them go beyond the ideas presented in the sutras other than the Lotus Sutra. The only exception is Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna, who in his *Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* states, “[The Lotus Sutra is] like a great physician who can change poison into medicine.” This interpretation of his seems to get at the very heart of this character *myō*. The “poison” in the above passage means the first two of the four noble truths, the truth that all existence is suffering and the truth that suffering is caused by selfish craving as well as the karmic cause and effect that confine living beings to the sufferings of birth and death. These are truly the poison to outdo all poisons. But through the extraordinary power of the character *myō*, or “wonderful,” this poison is changed into the understanding that the sufferings of birth and death are nirvana, that earthly desires are enlightenment. This is the good medicine that can change poison into medicine, hence it is called good medicine. (585-6)

If the word *myō*, or wonderful, is not completely powerless, I know it will without fail deal out reward and punishment where they belong. (831)

But because you are always chanting the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra, the character *myō* will change into an emissary to your husband, or become Bodhisattva Manjushrī, Bodhisattva Universal Worthy, Bodhisattva Superior Practices, or Bodhisattva Never Disparaging. It will probably report all the affairs of the saḥā world to the other world, just as the mirror of [the wife of] the man of Ch’en kept up a continual report by flying off like a bird, or as the sound of Su Wu’s wife beating cloth reached his ears. Moreover, the character *myō*, like flowers that become fruit and the half moon that waxes full, is one that changes into a Buddha. Thus it says in the sutra, “If one can uphold this sutra, one will be upholding the Buddha’s body.” The Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai says, “[The Lotus Sutra . . .] is in each and every one of its characters the true Buddha.” The character *myō* is the Thus Come One Shakyamuni perfectly endowed with the thirty-two features and eighty characteristics, but because our vision is poor we see only a character. For example, it is similar to an elderly person whose eyesight is dim and therefore fails to see that the lotus flowers in the pond have produced seeds. And at night, because of the darkness, one fails to see the forms of things. Nonetheless, this character *myō* is itself a Buddha. Furthermore, this character *myō* is the moon, it is the sun, it is the stars, it is a mirror, it is garments, it is food, it is flowers, it is the great earth, it is the great sea. All benefits clustered together make up the character *myō*. Also, it is the wish-granting jewel. You should understand things in this way. I will write in detail another time. (879-880)

Myoho

In addition, the two characters of *myōhō* of the daimoku contain within them the heart of the Lotus Sutra, namely, the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life set forth in the “Expedient Means” chapter, and the doctrine of the Buddha’s attainment of enlightenment in the far distant past set forth in the “Life Span” chapter. (228)

For this reason, the benefits to be gained by reciting the five characters of Myoho-*renge-kyo* are great indeed. All the Buddhas, all the daimoku of the various sutras, are opened up and merged in the Lotus Sutra. One understands that it is *myōhō* that makes this opening up possible, and therefore one should recite the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra. (229)

The words and sounds uttered by us living beings, which pertain to life, are manifestations of *myōhō* as it is embodied in sentient beings. (430)

These two types of essential truth are to be found only in the wonderful Law expressed in a single word. When one chants the word *myōhō*, the wonderful Law, one is thereby encompassing all phenomena; all the sutras preached by the Buddha in the course of his lifetime are contained therein. (519)

Renge

The word *myōhō* represents the attainment of enlightenment by sentient beings; the word *renge* represents the attainment of enlightenment by insentient beings. (429)

The word “one” in the statement regarding “one colour” or “one fragrance” is not to be taken as “one” in contrast to “two” or “three.” Rather it is saying that “one” refers to the Middle Way, or the essential nature of phenomena. In effect, [there is not one colour or one fragrance] that does not contain the Ten Worlds, the three thousand realms, life and its environment, and so forth. These colours and fragrances constitute the enlightenment of plants, that is, the enlightenment of *renge*, or the lotus. The term “colour and fragrance” and the term *renge* differ in wording, but both refer to the enlightenment of plants. (429)

The actual fact of the Buddha manifesting his original state represents life; it represents *renge*, or the lotus. The principle of the dormant Buddha nature, representing death, presides over sentient beings. The actual fact of the Buddha manifesting his original state, representing life, presides over insentient beings. What we living beings rely on, are dependent upon, are the insentient beings of *renge*. The words and sounds uttered by us living beings, which pertain to life, are manifestations of *myōhō* as it is embodied in sentient beings. Our bodies are endowed with both sentient and insentient elements. (430)

Thus the enlightenment of plants refers to the attainment of Buddhahood by those that are dead. (430)

Nichiren

Are you sure to know the secret Law that will overcome and subdue the Mongol nation? I, Nichiren, am the foremost votary of the Lotus Sutra in all of Japan, a great general who can defeat the forces of the Mongol nation, for, as the Lotus Sutra says, “A person who can accept and uphold this sutra is likewise foremost among all living beings.” (324)

If it were not for Nichiren, then these prophecies for the future made by Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions would be nothing but great lies! (436)

Though it may be uncertain whether I, Nichiren, will live or die, there can be no doubt about the spread of the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo. (463)

The Latter Day of the Law is the crucial period, and within the Latter Day of the Law, Nichiren is the crucial person [for whom the eight chapters were expounded]. (485)

Therefore, before the Bodhisattvas of the Earth have made their appearance, I take the lead in briefly introducing these five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo. I am like the bluebird that presages the appearance of the Queen Mother of the West, or the magpie that signals the arrival of a visitor. (558)

Nichiren, however, has now made his appearance in the world, he who fears no person whatsoever and who is prepared to cast aside body and life in order to point out the truth. (703)

Though I fear I speak too boldly, may I urge you once more to consider the matter. This priest Nichiren we are speaking about—there is no one else like him! If events should take a certain course, I fear you may later have cause for regret. Just because the people of our present age do not heed his teachings, it would be foolish for you to do likewise. If in the future the persons in authority decide to heed him, then who among all the rest will fail to do so? But at that late date, what use will it be for you to join them? You will merely be putting your faith in persons rather than in the Law. (712)

The Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai was a disciple of the Buddha in his transient status. But I, Nichiren, am a disciple of the Buddha in his true identity, and thus I am able to expound in full these matters that pertain to the essential teaching. (749)

Already two hundred and more years have passed since the time for the spread of the theoretical teaching ended. T’ien-t’ai and Dengyō were the very persons who could propagate the theoretical teaching, and both have passed away. Nichiren has truly been given this time. How could I possibly not spread the essential teaching, which perfectly suits the age? There is a vast difference between the essential teaching and the theoretical teaching in terms of the capacity of the people, the doctrine, and the time of its spread. (892)

I, Nichiren, am leading the way in propagating the secret Law that Bodhisattva Superior Practices has been entrusted to disseminate. Does this not mean that the transmission concerns myself? I am acting as one of the local deputies for Bodhisattva Superior Practices. (908)

Now I, Nichiren, have inherited the seven characters Nam-myoho-renge-kyo within the treasure tower and in this era of the Latter Day of the Law I work to disseminate them throughout Japan. This is the Buddhist Law that is appropriate to this time and this country, is it not? (908-9)

The doctrine of the lotus of the entity of the Law, which was handed down to me and represents Nichiren's own enlightenment, is just as I have described it on various occasions in the past. (910)

Though I may seem presumptuous in saying so, you should join together in paying honor to Nichiren. (914)

The fourth volume of the Lotus Sutra says, "If after the Buddha has passed into extinction one can understand the meaning of this sutra, one will be the eyes of the world for heavenly and human beings." Nichiren, who propagates the daimoku, the heart and core of the Lotus Sutra, throughout the country of Japan—is he not the "eyes of the world for heavenly and human beings"? (927)

I, Nichiren, have done nothing else, but have labored solely to put the five or seven characters of Myoho-renge-kyo into the mouths of all the living beings of the country of Japan. In doing so, I have shown the kind of compassion that a mother does when she labors to put milk into the mouth of her infant child. (931)

And Nichiren declares that the sufferings that all living beings undergo, all springing from this one cause—all these are Nichiren's own sufferings. (934)

And then, because I, Nichiren, reprove such persons for relying on sutras that will not lead them to enlightenment, they become more and more enraged and, without looking into the truth of the matter, invent great lies and thereby deceive and mislead the ruler and the people of the land, hoping to do me harm. Thus I have not only been forced to endure thousands of hardships, but have twice been condemned to exile and at one point very nearly had my head cut off. These great trials I have been subjected to surpass the sticks and staves that Bodhisattva Never Disparaging had to endure, and are more fearful than the swords and staves described in the "Encouraging Devotion" chapter. (957)

I, Nichiren, may be an evil man, but how can the Lotus Sutra be anything but perfect? Though the bag may be smelly, the gold in it is pure; though the lake may be muddy, the lotuses that grow there are unsullied. I, Nichiren, may be the most perverse person in all Japan, but the Lotus Sutra is still the greatest of all the sutras. If sensible people wish to avail themselves of the gold, they will not discard its bag; if they care for the lotuses, they will not despise the lake. If I were evil and yet were to attain Buddhahood, the power of the Lotus Sutra would be revealed without fail. Therefore, if I were to come to an evil end, that would perhaps bring disgrace upon the Lotus Sutra. (978)

Now, however, we have entered the Latter Day of the Law, and the daimoku that I, Nichiren, chant is different from that of earlier ages. This Nam-myoho-renge-kyo encompasses both practice for oneself and the teaching of others. Its five characters are the five major principles of name, essence, quality, function, and teaching. (986)

These Three Great Secret Laws were unquestionably received by me, Nichiren, some two thousand and more years ago, when I was the leader of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth; they were passed on to me by oral transmission from the lord of teachings, the World-Honored One of Great Enlightenment. And these actions that I now take embody what I received in transmission on Eagle Peak, without the slightest deviation or alteration in form, the three great matters of the Law of the “Life Span” chapter. (987)

Obstacles

Though one does not cut off earthly desires, this presents no obstacle to the attainment of Buddhahood. (52)

There are obstacles at mountains and rivers. Even if you have a firm resolve, it may be difficult to act upon. But judging from the resolve you are displaying now, I see that yours is hardly ordinary. There can be no doubt that the ten demon daughters of the Lotus Sutra will protect you. How reassuring it is to think so! It is impossible to say all that I wish. (805)

[...] without fail the clouds of the five obstacles will lift from you in an instant and you will gaze on the tranquil light of the moon of awakening. (892)

[...] already you have freed yourself from the hindrance of the five obstacles. The moon of your mind is without shadow and all stain has vanished from your body. You are a Buddha in your present body—how wonderful, how wonderful! (1068)

Offerings

If you and he can assist me in fulfilling this wish, it will be as if the bright gems of the K'un-lun Mountains, though you had not even sought for them, were to fill your storehouses, or the wonderful jewels of the great ocean, though you had not sent for them, were to appear in the palm of your hand. (560)

And because you pity me, out of your kindness you have sent this offering, conveying it over mountains and rivers, this wheat that is not wheat but gold, not gold but the words and letters of the Lotus Sutra. In our eyes it is wheat, but to the ten demon daughters this wheat appears as the seeds of Buddhahood! (575)

When a man named Mahānāma picked up stones, they turned to gold, and King Golden Grains could turn grains of sand into gold. And now this wheat of yours has become the words and letters of the Lotus Sutra. Or again it may become a mirror for a woman to use to adorn herself, and for a man it may become armor and a helmet, or it may become a guardian deity who will make you foremost among the wielders of bow and arrow. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo! (576)

In the same way that a bird cares for its eggs, that one pours oil into a lamp, that rain falls on withered grasses, or that one offers milk to a starving child, you are extending the life of the Lotus Sutra, and thus making offerings to the Buddhas of the three existences. This means, I think, that your benefit is that of opening the eyes of all the living beings in the ten directions. No words can express how sublime this is. It is wonderful indeed! (590)

Even one seed, when planted, multiplies. The dragon turns a little water into great rains, and human beings make a few sparks into a great blaze. Though there is only one unlined robe, when it is presented in offering to the Lotus Sutra, it is offered to all 69,384 characters of the sutra, each of which is a Buddha. (602)

Long ago, the boy called Virtue Victorious fashioned a mud pie and offered it as alms to Shakyamuni Buddha, and later he was reborn as King Ashoka, ruler of Jambudvīpa, and in the end became a Buddha. And now you, the donor, have sent these fruits and other items as an offering to the Lotus Sutra. How great must be the joy of the ten demon daughters! (653)

Thus though one may neither recite nor copy the sutra oneself, if one makes offerings to a person who does, one will without fail attain Buddhahood. The sutra reads, "Such a person assuredly and without doubt will attain the Buddha way." Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (655)

I have presented your gift to the Lotus Sutra and Shakyamuni Buddha. I know that the Buddha will be delighted to accept your kind offering. You may ask him yourself when you go to meet him in the pure land of Eagle Peak (664)

As you know, I am now living deep in the mountains, far from any village, where food and clothing are scarce. [If it were not for offerings such as yours], it would be difficult for me to continue my recitations of the sutra and I could hardly go on discussing doctrines. (668)

And now here is a woman who donates a robe to the Lotus Sutra. In future lives she will not only escape the sufferings of the eight cold hells, but in her present life she will be spared major calamities. Her benefits will be such that they extend to her sons and daughters, so that they are dressed in robe upon robe, of color upon color! (722)

No one who offers the flowers of the field or the incense of tree bark to the Buddha can fail to reach Eagle Peak. And how much truer is this of someone who offers white rice grown with bone-breaking labour by the people, or aged sake, which is like blood wrung from those who brew it. Could there be the slightest doubt that a woman who offers these things to the Buddha and the Lotus Sutra will gain Buddhahood and attain the way? (752)

Because of the offerings you have made, you will enjoy good fortune in your present life, and in your next existence will proceed to the pure land of Eagle Peak. (785)

A man who offered a mud pie to the Buddha was reborn as a king. Because the Lotus Sutra is a teaching superior to the Buddha, having made offerings to it, how could you possibly fail to both enjoy benefit in this lifetime and attain Buddhahood in the next? (805)

The great monarch named King Ashoka ruled over nearly the whole continent of Jambudvīpa, where the sun shines down. In a past existence, when the king was a boy of five named Virtue Victorious, he presented a mud pie to Shakyamuni Buddha as an offering. Because of this, he was reborn as a great king. This little boy had no profound motive in what he did but acted in a spirit of play. But because the Buddha is so venerable a being, from this one trifling act the boy was able to receive such a splendid reward. The Lotus Sutra is superior to the Buddha in venerability, as the moon in its light surpasses the stars or the sun surpasses a lamp. Your motive in sending these gifts far surpasses that of the boy Virtue Victorious. (816)

And now you, a lay nun, have sent millet from the first harvest here to the depths of the mountain and offered it to the Lotus Sutra. How could you fail to attain Buddhahood? (881)

I have written you so many times in the past to thank you for your kindness that my writing brush is worn out and my fingers will no longer move. Can we count the number of raindrops that fall in a major world system in the space of seven days? Or does anyone know the number of dust particles in the vast lands that make up the worlds of the ten directions? But the benefits one gains by making offerings even to one word of the Lotus Sutra—these, the Buddha says, are truly hard to measure. This you must keep ever in mind! (871)

Because I am a priest of no precepts who holds perverse views, the heavenly gods hate me and I am poor in both food and clothing. Nevertheless, I recite the Lotus Sutra and from time to time preach it. It is exactly as if a huge snake were clasping a jewel in its mouth or sandalwood trees were growing amid the eranda groves. I throw away the eranda and offer the sandalwood, or cover the body of the snake and bestow the jewel. (944)

A man named Wu-lung slandered the Lotus Sutra and fell into hell. But because his son, who was named I-lung, copied the Lotus Sutra as an offering, his father became a Buddha (964)

Since I am already sixty years old now, I feel that I would like to repay my debt of gratitude to the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai. So I have used your offering money for the repair and reconstruction of our shabby temple building. When you go to the pure land of Eagle Peak you can say that your four thousand coins built the foremost Lotus hall in the entire land of Jambudvīpa. (969)

What a cause for rejoicing!—that in this country of Japan, a remote land some hundred thousand miles or more from India, and what is more, in islands inhabited by barbarians who have little understanding of the principle of cause and effect, and in the Latter Day of the Law too, that in this country that appears to put faith in the teaching of the Buddha but in fact slanders it, you not only win fame for the way in which you honor the Lotus Sutra, but donate seating mats to the Lotus Sutra as well! (991)

I do not build Buddhist halls or pagodas, I do not carry out almsgiving. The only thing I hold precious is my life, and this I have offered to the Lotus Sutra. The Buddhas of the three existences of past, present, and future, when they were still ordinary mortals, all offered their lives to the Lotus Sutra and thus were able to become Buddhas. For this reason, the names of all the various Buddhas are prefixed by the word *namu*. *Namu* is a word of the language of India, and in this country it means “to dedicate one’s life.” Explaining the term “to dedicate one’s life,” [...] By offering their lives to the Lotus Sutra, they became Buddhas. And now I, Nichiren, offering my life to the Lotus Sutra (1073)

Ordinary People

[...] the ordinary person who has barely begun practice of the Lotus Sutra is compared to the kalavinka, which, while still in the shell, has a voice superior to that of all other birds. (55)

The Buddhas, who are considered separate from us, are actually contained within our own selves, or the lives of us ordinary people. (62)

[...] these sutras [...] do not recognize that the ordinary person is part of the makeup of the Buddha. (62)

Thus if we inquire into the truth of the matter, we will find that the sutras prior to the Lotus show us only a provisional type of Buddha and do not reveal any way in which ordinary people can attain Buddhahood. They declare that one should strive to attain Buddhahood by cutting off earthly desires and rejecting the nine lower realms. But in fact there is no Buddha who exists separate from the nine realms, and therefore there cannot in fact be any ordinary person who attains salvation in this manner. Nor is there any realm of the bodhisattva that exists separate from the realm of human beings. (62)

One should understand, therefore, that the basis of the Dharma body is the entity of the ordinary living being. The religious practices and vows of the Buddhas of the ten directions are in fact meant to enable one to acquire this Dharma body. (76)

These three bodies of the Thus Come One are in no way something that is extraneous to us. Rather we should understand that we ourselves are none other than ultimate entities endowed with the three virtues, Buddhas of original enlightenment, who possess the three bodies within a single one. When we understand this, we may be called Thus Come Ones, sages, enlightened ones. While we do not understand this, we are called ordinary mortals, ordinary living beings, or people in a state of delusion. (83)

The term “consistency” indicates that the Thus Come One of the ultimate stage of perfect enlightenment and we ordinary mortals in the stage of being a Buddha in theory are without any distinction. This is called consistency, or the great wisdom of the Lotus Sutra that sees the equality of all beings. (83)

The term “whole mind” does not mean the mind that is concentrated in meditation, nor does it mean the mind that observes the truth. It is the mind that is found within the ordinary distracted mind of daily life. (121)

When we ordinary mortals, persons of incorrigible disbelief who are constantly drowned in delusion and suffering, desire to take faith in the Lotus Sutra, this is a sign that the Buddha nature within us is beginning to manifest itself. (137)

Ordinary people likewise fail to understand the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds and thus are unable to manifest the Buddhahood that is within them. (138)

For the ordinary lay believers of Japan, however, it is sufficient if they concentrate solely on the recitation of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (379)

The principle of the dormant Buddha nature to be manifested by ordinary people represents [...] *myōhō*, or the wonderful Law. (430)

For whom was the Lotus Sutra preached? [...] it appears that the people who live in the period after the passing of the Buddha are the true listeners for whom the Buddha preached the above eight chapters. The people living in his own lifetime were only an incidental audience. (485)

Wood immersed in the Spring of Jewels changes into lapis lazuli. Waters that enter the sea all become salty. Birds that approach Mount Sumeru turn golden-hued. Agada medicine changes poison into medicine. And the wonder of the Lotus Sutra is also like that; it changes ordinary people into Buddhas. (671)

And when ordinary people in the latter age hear this doctrine, not only will they themselves attain Buddhahood, but also their fathers and mothers will attain Buddhahood in their present forms. This is the highest expression of filial devotion. (744)

Question: In the evil world of the latter age, what should ordinary men and women take as their object of devotion? Answer: They should make the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra their object of devotion. (787)

Words echo the thoughts of the mind and find expression through the voice. The ordinary mortal is confused about the nature of his own mind, and remains unenlightened. The Buddha is enlightened to that nature, and manifests it as what are called transcendental powers. Transcendental power means the power of the spirit to penetrate all phenomena without hindrance. Such freely exercised transcendental powers are present in the minds of all sentient beings. (843)

While one believes that one is an ordinary person in the realm of birth and death, this is comparable to dreaming that one is a butterfly, a state of distorted views and distorted thoughts. And when one realizes that one is the Thus Come One of original enlightenment, this state is comparable to the original Chuang Chou, or the attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form. (846)

The “Peaceful Practices” chapter of the Lotus Sutra has described how, after the world has entered the Latter Day of the Law, ordinary people who have just set their minds on the attainment of the way can, by practicing the Lotus Sutra, gain Buddhahood. (851)

The essential teaching’s doctrine of attaining Buddhahood in one’s present form concludes that one can attain supreme enlightenment in one’s present status as an ordinary person, without changing individual characteristics. That is why one’s physical form, just as it is, is the Thus Come One who in his original state is eternally endowed with the three bodies. (891)

Parents

Because all of you are reading the entire Lotus Sutra with your lives, this will bring benefit to you as well as to your parents and your brothers and sisters, both living and dead. (394)

What is more, although your late father was a warrior, he had an abiding faith in the Lotus Sutra, and thus—you were only a child at the time—I know that he ended his life in the frame of mind of a true believer. And now you have succeeded him and likewise are firm in your faith in this sutra. Though his spirit is hidden now in the grasses, I am sure he must be very pleased. And how happy he would be if only he were still alive! Persons who uphold this sutra, though they may be strangers to one another, will meet on Eagle Peak. And how much more certain is it that you and your late father, because you both have faith in the Lotus Sutra, will be reborn there together! Others may live to fifty or sixty and still have their fathers with them to share the gray-haired years. But in your case you lost your father at a very early age, and hence were deprived of his instruction and guidance. When I think of what this must have meant for you, I cannot restrain my tears. (499-500)

Persons who uphold this sutra, though they may be strangers to one another, will meet on Eagle Peak. And how much more certain is it that you and your late father, because you both have faith in the Lotus Sutra, will be reborn there together! (500)

The body that the father and mother leave behind is none other than the physical form and mind of the child. The blessings that you, the Honourable Joren, acquire through your faith in the Lotus Sutra will lend strength to your kind father. Though Devadatta fell into the Avichi hell, the Buddha predicted that he would in the future become a Buddha named Heavenly King Thus Come One. This was because he belonged to the same extended family as the Buddha. In your case, the relationship is one of father and son. How could the fact that you embrace the Lotus Sutra fail to bring blessing to the departed spirit of your late father? (572)

So, when you come of age and take faith in Buddhism, you must first of all think of paying the debt you owe to your father and mother. Mount Sumeru is paltry in comparison to the towering debt you owe your father; the great ocean is shallow compared to the profoundness of the debt you owe your mother. You must bear in mind these debts you owe to your father and mother. (637)

If you stop to consider, you will realize that, at one time or another in the past, all men have been your father and all women, your mother. Thus, in the course of all the many lifetimes and existences you have lived through, you have come to owe a debt of gratitude to all living beings. And since this is so, you should help all of them to attain Buddhahood. (637)

A person who upholds the Lotus Sutra is repaying the debt of gratitude owed to father and mother. Even if one does not feel in one's heart that one can do so, one can repay it through the power of this sutra. (638)

And when ordinary people in the latter age hear this doctrine, not only will they themselves attain Buddhahood, but also their fathers and mothers will attain Buddhahood in their present forms. This is the highest expression of filial devotion. (744)

And having carried through with the filial resolve you had made before, how could you be anything other than filial sons? The heavenly gods will surely bring you joy, and the Lotus Sutra and the ten demon daughters must also approve. Moreover, there is something I sense deep in my heart about you. If this teaching spreads exactly as the sutra says, then I will express my joy. You brothers must make sure to keep on good terms with one another. I have written in detail in my letter to Tayū no Sakan, so please ask him about it. (815)

As a result, your late husband, the lay priest, has no doubt attained Buddhahood. And your only daughter will enjoy a long and happy life, and will be known as a child worthy of her father. Though she is still young, she knows how to treat her mother with filial devotion, and will no doubt aid her father as well in his next existence. [...] And because your daughter exercises filial devotion, the gods will surely protect her, and the Buddhas will look on her with favour. For among all the good roots or meritorious acts, the foremost is filial service to one's father and mother. And your daughter does all this out of faith in the Lotus Sutra. Such faith is like pure water poured into a golden vessel – not a drop of it will be wasted. How wonderful, how wonderful! (816)

When we observe how even the birds on the wing nourish their young, how even the beasts that range the fields take thought for their offspring, our eyes turn aside in amazement and we are lost in wonder. In particular, we should recall the debt of gratitude we owe our mother [...] (895)

The flesh of the child is the flesh of the mother; and the bones of the mother are the bones of the child. When the pine flourishes, the cypress is overjoyed; when grasses wither, orchids weep. Even insentient plants and trees share as one a friend's joys and sorrows. How much truer must this be of the bond between parent and child? (964)

Peace

Examining this sutra passage, we realize that, though one may pray for the peace and safety of the times, the three calamities may occur in the nation, and this will be because evil teachings are propagated there. (128)

The “Life Span” chapter, which is the heart and core of the twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra, states: “I have been constantly in this saḥā world.” And it says: “I am always here.” And again: “This, my land, remains safe and tranquil.” If we go by these passages, then the Buddha of the perfect teaching, who in his original state attained enlightenment in the inconceivably remote past, is here in this world. Why would we wish to abandon this land and seek to go elsewhere? Therefore practitioners of the Lotus Sutra should think of the place where they are as the pure land. Why worry about trying to go somewhere else? (143)

This matter is of particular concern to you, since you are of the same surname as the regent, the lord of Sagami. If the main branch of the family should face destruction, how could the lesser branches hope to prosper? You must take steps as quickly as possible to overcome and subdue the Mongol nation and bring peace and security to our land. Those persons who slander the Lotus Sutra are the archenemies of the Buddhas of the three existences of past, present, and future. (320)

You should all gather together in one place as soon as possible to discuss the matter and debate what is to be done. This is my wish, and I trust that in your reply you will indicate your assent. I would never venture merely to heap scorn on the other schools of Buddhism. My sole aim is to insure the peace and safety of our country. (332)

Starting on the first day of the New Year, I will [...] offer prayers for the people’s “peace and security in their present existence and good circumstances in future existences.” (335)

One who understands the Law and shows oneself concerned for the welfare of the nation should by rights be most warmly welcomed. [...] Moreover, as a result of the displeasure you manifested at our recent meeting, I am now most distressed to think that my aims may be all the more difficult to accomplish. If I may presume to state my thoughts, unless one climbs Mount T’ai, one cannot know the height of the sky; unless one descends into the deep valleys, one cannot understand the depth of the earth. That you may understand my own intentions, I have submitted to you a copy of my work *On Establishing the Correct Teaching*. The ideas expressed therein are but one hair from the hides of nine oxen, and I have by no means fulfilled my humble aims. At present, you, sir, are the veritable pillar and crossbeam of the realm. How, then, can you fail to make use of true talent when it exists in the nation? You must as soon as possible put into motion wise strategies to fend off these foreign enemies. You must insure the safety of the nation, for in doing so you will be fulfilling your obligations of loyalty and those of filial piety. I do not offer these words simply for my own sake, but for the sake of the ruler, for the sake of the Buddhas, for the sake of the gods, and for the sake of all living beings. (392)

Having seen the general trend of events from some time past, I determined to risk my personal safety in order to repay the debt I owe the nation. (609)

Persecution

But my life from the beginning has been based upon firm conviction. I have no intention now of reversing my course, nor will I ever reproach [those who persecuted me]. Evil persons too will be good friends to me. (432)

The Buddha prophesied that after his passing, in the last five-hundred-year period, the votaries of the Lotus Sutra would invariably be cursed and spoken ill of by many ignorant people, and that they would be attacked with swords and staves, tiles and stones, and would be condemned to exile or death. If it were not for Nichiren, then these prophecies for the future made by Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions would be nothing but great lies! (436)

It is just that some of my karma from previous existences has yet to be expiated. But when I was condemned to exile, did not Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, cover me with his robe? And last year, on the night of the twelfth day of the ninth month, did I not escape when I was on the very point of losing my life? This is what is meant by the passage “If one’s mind is strong, the protection of the gods also is sure to be firm.” You must never doubt this for a moment. Under no circumstances must you give way to doubt! (437)

Hence, for a period of more than twenty years, from the time I was thirty-two up to the present, when I am fifty-four, I have been expelled from temples or driven out of various places, have had my relatives harassed, have been subject to night attack, confronted in battle, and countless times showered with abuse. I have been beaten, wounded in the hand, and my disciples have been killed. I have nearly been beheaded and twice have been condemned to exile. In these twenty and more years I have known not an hour, not an instant of peace or safety. (599)

Though calamities may come, they can be changed into good fortune. [...] This is what is meant when it says [in *Great Concentration and Insight*] that logs make the fire burn brighter, and the wind swells the body of the *kālakula* insect. (669)

Because I can see what will happen, I do not hesitate for fear of the great evil that may be done to me by Ryōkan’s patrons, but speak out strongly against him. (691)

When the authorities discovered to their surprise that I was still alive, they exiled me to the province of Izu. When people are too blinded by hatred, it seems they will not hesitate even to commit crimes that bring about their own downfall (700)

Once the situation had settled down, they were apparently ashamed of having inflicted punishment upon an innocent man, and therefore they soon recalled me from exile. (701)

Sometime thereafter, I was summoned back from exile. Once more I spoke out as the sutra dictates, this time with more force than ever, and once more, on the twelfth day of the ninth month in the eighth year of Bun'ei [1271], I was exiled, this time to the island province of Sado. As I predicted at the time I incurred official displeasure, the members of the ruling clan who condemned me to exile then fell to quarrelling among themselves. Perhaps because of fear of this situation, I was recalled from exile once again. However, my counsels were not heeded and the common people more and more gave themselves up to ill will. (773)

On the twelfth day of the ninth month, at the hour of the ox [1:00 to 3:00 A.M.], I was led to Tatsunokuchi in Kamakura to be executed. Then for some reason or other an object like a moon came flying up from the direction of Enoshima and hung over the executioner's head. He was too terrified to carry out his task, and meanwhile various circumstances developed, so that that night I escaped being put to death. Later, after I had been exiled to the province of Sado, there was another attempt to behead me, but as I have stated earlier, contention broke out among the parties in Kamakura and a messenger was hurriedly sent to Sado, so I escaped beheading. (773)

In the cause of the Lotus Sutra, I have repeatedly been driven from my dwelling and faced armed attack, and I have suffered wounds on my hand. My disciples have been killed, I have twice been exiled to distant regions, and once I was almost beheaded. All this I bore solely for the sake of the Lotus Sutra. In the Lotus Sutra the Buddha states that some two thousand, two hundred and more years after his passing, in the last five-hundred-year period, when efforts are made to propagate this sutra throughout the land of Jambudvīpa, the heavenly devil will take possession of people and attempt to prevent the dissemination of the sutra. It will happen then that those who have faith in the sutra will be cursed and attacked, driven from one place to another, and perhaps even killed. At that time, those who stand in the vanguard will win benefit as great as though they had given offerings to the Buddhas of the three existences and the ten directions. And the Buddha has also promised that he will transfer to such persons the benefits resulting from his own trials and ascetic practices. (775)

The ruler, the lord of Sagami, who went along with people's slander without asking for details and sent this priest into exile, regretted it and pardoned me. After that, how could he possibly punish us again without a clear offense? Though at heart retainers of the ruler are enemies of the Lotus Sutra, they are concerned about slandering us to their lord. Thus when they actually used the situation in Atsuhara as a pretext to persecute us, their own earlier lies came to light instead. I guessed that this matter was based on a falsified official document without even seeing it. Even when I was in exile on Sado Island they forged official documents no less than three times. Thus I can only feel pity for the ruler and for the country of Japan. Just as the insects protected by a tree's shade eat away at the tree and topple it, and the worms in a lion's body eat away at and kill it, those who make their ways in the world protected by the lord of Sagami, under cover of his authority, threaten everyone, causing them suffering and distress. In addition, claiming that it is at the order of the ruler, they attempt to wipe out the teachings of the Lotus Sutra, causing the downfall of the nation and inviting the ruin of their lord. How foolish that, in the end, they destroy their own lives. (877)

If they [sic. Emperor Hui-tsung and The Retired Emperor of Oki] had undergone these trials for the sake of the Lotus Sutra, they would surely have attained Buddhahood in their present existences. Though many endanger themselves and throw away their lives for petty reasons, no one would dare to suffer an unjust fate in the service of the Lotus Sutra. But when I think of what you yourself have suffered [because of the sutra], I find it most worthy of admiration, most worthy of admiration indeed! (947)

Thus I have not only been forced to endure thousands of hardships, but have twice been condemned to exile and at one point very nearly had my head cut off. These great trials I have been subjected to surpass the sticks and staves that Bodhisattva Never Disparaging had to endure, and are more fearful than the swords and staves described in the “Encouraging Devotion” chapter. (957)

The ruler, heeding the evil words of slanderous officials, has persecuted me, but because they are only ordinary mortals, I know that this is simply to be expected. I had no intention of ceasing my efforts, and have suffered further persecution from time to time since then. (1062)

Practice

The Buddha, having weighed these benefits carefully, kindly explains for us that all the benefits gained by practicing the provisional teachings over numerous kalpas, or the benefits of a great sage, cannot compare to the benefits gained by even an ignorant person who for a moment hears of the Lotus Sutra, responds with joy, and thus forms a bond with it. (55)

The long time required in the practice of the provisional teachings is compared to the slow rate at which many kinds of plants and trees grow to maturity, while the swiftness with which one attains Buddhahood by practicing the Lotus Sutra is compared to the way in which the tree mentioned above spreads a hundred spans in a single day. And the sages great and small of the provisional teachings are being compared to the other types of birds, while the ordinary person who has barely begun practice of the Lotus Sutra is compared to the kalavinka, which, while still in the shell, has a voice superior to that of all other birds. (55)

Still others object that the Lotus Sutra represents a type of self-empowered religious practice and hence is very difficult to carry out. (64)

One should understand, therefore, that the basis of the Dharma body is the entity of the ordinary living being. The religious practices and vows of the Buddhas of the ten directions are in fact meant to enable one to acquire this Dharma body. (76)

If votaries of the Lotus Sutra carry out religious practice as the sutra directs, then every one of them without exception will surely attain Buddhahood within his or her present lifetime. To cite an analogy, if one plants the fields in spring and summer, then, whether it be early or late, one is certain to reap a harvest within the year. (88)

The practice of fixing the mind on the words of the Lotus Sutra is not like fixing the mind on the words of the other sutras. Though one may chant only one word of the Lotus Sutra, within this one word are contained all the words of the eighty thousand precious doctrines of Shakyamuni, and it holds within it the blessings or benefits of all the Buddhas. (121)

As a daily religious practice, one should recite the daimoku, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (228)

The true perfect teaching practice is to keep the mouth constantly reciting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, whatever the occasion, and to keep the mind fixed on the meditation on the three thousand realms in a single moment of life. (379)

Even though one might practice the sutra teaching just as T'ien-t'ai and Dengyō taught, now that we have entered the Latter Day of the Law, to do so is as useless as following last year's calendar. And this is even more so when we consider that, beginning with Jikaku, the doctrines [propounded on Mount Hiei] have confused the distinction between Mahayana and Hinayana and between provisional and true teachings, and are comparable to a major slander of the Law. (604)

We, Nisshū and the others of our group, have now abandoned these lesser sutras and read and recite only the Lotus Sutra, recommending this practice to all the world and chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (825)

To fail to practice this wonderful Law of the one vehicle, but instead to seize on the expedient means teachings, which do not exist in any form in the pure lands, and hope thereby to attain Buddhahood is the most deluded of delusions. (840)

But ordinary people who follow the teachings of perfect and immediate enlightenment understand this even when only beginners in religious practice, and therefore they are able to attain Buddhahood in their present form, to enjoy the entity that is diamond-hard and indestructible. (850)

The only primary practice to be employed is [the chanting of] Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (908)

Now, however, we have entered the Latter Day of the Law, and the daimoku that I, Nichiren, chant is different from that of earlier ages. This Nam-myoho-renge-kyo encompasses both practice for oneself and the teaching of others. (986)

Prayer

I stated my opinion that such ceremonies would be unsuccessful, which so angered the participants that they threatened me, but of course all their efforts proved fruitless. If they cannot even get an answer to prayers concerning some petty matter in this present existence, how can they hope to do so concerning the all-important existence to come? (343)

Also, from now on recite the scroll of prayer I have written out for you, make your vow and pray to the Buddhas and gods, and work to propagate the teachings. (461)

It is nothing special. Now that you have offered your prayer, be resolved that in the end, things will turn out exactly that way. (497)

Itō Hachirō Saemon is at present the constable of Shinano. At one time he was on the point of death, but my prayers restored him to life. (661)

Those people [the lay priest of Kawanobe and the others] are very important supporters of mine. But although I have prayed on their behalf so hard that my head was about to split, so far there has been no indication of my prayers being answered. It would seem that someone among them is wavering in faith. If one prays for a person who is not properly responsive in mind, it is like trying to light a fire on top of water, or to build a house in the empty air. Please convey these thoughts of mine to the four men. They should keep in mind that my prediction regarding the actions of the Mongol kingdom has come true. It will be no fault of Nichiren [if the prayer is not answered]. (661)

I earnestly pray that the blessings deriving from such activities may be transferred to my parents, my teacher, and to all living beings. I am writing you to inform you of this and to answer the questions that you have raised. I hope that you will set aside all other practices and will address yourself to this object of devotion, praying wholeheartedly for your next life. (798)

When you shake your head, your hair sways; when your mind begins to work, your body moves. When a strong wind blows, the grass and trees can no longer remain still; when the earth shakes, the seas are atremble. Thus if one can move Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, can the grass and trees fail to respond, can the waters remain calm? (811)

In any event, you must pray to the Lotus Sutra so that you may become as long-lived as the crane or the tortoise and that your happiness be like the full moon or the tide at its highest. (869)

And when I see people praying for their departed mother, I feel as though it is my own concern and seeing you do so makes me very happy. (898)

It seems they fail to realize that, when it is only reasonable to expect prayers to be answered and yet they are not, one may rightly reproach the object of worship.⁴ (930)

In any event, I fear that perhaps as long as your prayer goes unanswered, it is as if it were words without substance or blooming flowers with no fruit. Watch now what happens! If your prayer goes unanswered, you will probably think that if you rely upon the Lotus Sutra you may be unable to attain Buddhahood. If your prayer is answered, let the two of us together carry out the ceremony for paying reverence to the Lotus Sutra. [...] If your prayer goes unanswered, of what use is your faith in the Lotus Sutra? (971-2)

As you are well aware, from the time I was young I have had my heart set on learning, and in addition I prayed before the statue of Bodhisattva Space Treasury that I might become the wisest person in Japan. I was twelve then, and had various reasons for offering such a prayer, but I will not go into them here. (1050)

Write to me of what is truly in your heart and I will heed your words. Then I will pray on your behalf, racking my brains and taxing my body to the fullest. (1069)

I am praying [...] that the life of your wife, the lay nun, will be prolonged well into the future. Please be sure to tell her about this. (1082)

⁴ Here, the Daishonin is referring to other religions and schools of Buddhism.

Protection

Ordinary people likewise fail to understand the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds and thus are unable to manifest the Buddhahood that is within them. Therefore [...] the other Buddhas and Thus Come Ones do not favour them with protection. They are like blind persons who cannot see their own shadows. (138)

Sutra passages make it perfectly clear that all the heavenly beings are bound to diligently protect practitioners of the Lotus Sutra. The fifth volume of the Lotus Sutra says, “The heavenly beings day and night will for the sake of the Law constantly guard and protect them.” Again, it says, “The young sons of heavenly beings will wait on him and serve him. Swords and staves will not touch him and poison will have no power to harm him.” The “heavenly beings” refer to Brahmā, Shakra, the gods of the sun and moon, the four great heavenly kings, and others like them. The “Law” refers to the Lotus Sutra. The “young sons” refer to the seven luminaries, the twenty-eight constellations, Marīchi, and the like. The words “Those who join the battle are all in the front lines” correspond to the passage “Swords and staves will not touch him.” These things are exceedingly important transmissions. Please be sure to think them over carefully. The sixth volume of the Lotus Sutra reads, “No worldly affairs of life or work are ever contrary to the true reality.” (374-5)

It is just that some of my karma from previous existences has yet to be expiated. But when I was condemned to exile, did not Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, cover me with his robe? And last year, on the night of the twelfth day of the ninth month, did I not escape when I was on the very point of losing my life? This is what is meant by the passage “If one’s mind is strong, the protection of the gods also is sure to be firm.” You must never doubt this for a moment. Under no circumstances must you give way to doubt! (437)

From the time of the passing of the Buddha on down to the present latter day, people have written out this sutra passage to prevent fires. In your case too, you will surely enjoy the same protection. It is a sutra passage that you must put firm faith in. It is found in the “Parable of the Phantom City” chapter in the third volume of the Lotus Sutra. (595)

A turnip turns into a quail, and a taro growing in the mountains into an eel. Since such are the wonders of the secular world, how much truer must it be of the power of the Lotus Sutra? If one were to strap a rhinoceros horn onto one’s body and enter the sea, the water would part to a distance of five feet around. If one were to rub one’s body with the fragrance of sandalwood and enter a great blaze, one would never be burned. When one upholds the Lotus Sutra one will neither be dampened by the waters of the eight cold hells, nor burned by the raging fires of the eight hot hells. The seventh volume of the Lotus Sutra says that such a person “cannot be burned by fire or washed away by water.” (671)

I am copying out and sending you two chapters in particular, the “Expedient Means” chapter and the “Life Span” chapter, to act as protection for you. I could in fact copy out the whole sutra, but at the moment I am tied up with other affairs, so I am limiting myself to these two chapters. Treat them with the utmost care, the utmost care – never let them be apart from your person. Wrap them up carefully and make them your constant possession. (747)

I have inscribed the Gohonzon for your protection (811)

I learned that when the accused were subjected to the wrath of the officials, they chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. This was no ordinary matter! I am sure that the ten demon daughters must have taken possession of Hei no Saemon and induced him to test the faith of these votaries of the Lotus Sutra. It was similar to the way in which the boy Snow Mountains and King Shibi were tested. And even if an evil demon had taken possession of Hei no Saemon, Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and the other Buddhas of the ten directions, Brahmā and Shakra have vowed to guard and protect the votaries of the Lotus Sutra in the fifth five-hundred-year period. (831)

To attain Buddhahood in one's present form means at this moment to realize one's inborn, original nature, to know that it is one's unaffected and unobstructed destiny as a living being, one's reward, and the unseen protection [of the Buddhas]. (846)

If the two of you should fail to act in harmony, then you may be sure that you will cease to enjoy the protection of the Lotus Sutra. Beware, beware, for there are persons who clearly would like to do harm to you both! Should you fail to act in harmony, you will be like the snipe and the shellfish who, because they were locked in combat with one another, fell prey to the fisherman. Recite Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and take care how you behave! Take care how you behave! (914)

The Lotus Sutra says in its fifth volume, "The heavenly beings day and night will for the sake of the Law constantly guard and protect them." If we go by this passage of the sutra, then it would seem that Brahmā, Shakra, the gods of the sun and moon, and the four heavenly kings ought day and night to guard and protect those persons who chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (936)

Qualities of the Buddha

Rather than the Buddha with thirty-two features and eighty characteristics, it is the characters of the Lotus Sutra that are the true Buddhas. Thus during the Buddha's lifetime there were people who believed in the Buddha, but never became Buddhas themselves. After the Buddha's passing, of those who believe in the Lotus Sutra "not a one will fail to attain Buddhahood." These are the golden words of the Thus Come One. I will have this robe made from your cloth, will wear the unlined robe as well, and will recite the Lotus Sutra. When I do so, though I am a monk without precepts, because the Lotus Sutra is a work of honest and upright golden words, it will be as if a poisonous snake were to spit up a gem, or sandalwood trees were to grow up among the eranda (602)

A man named Mahānāma changed rocks into gems simply by taking them up in his hands. King Golden Grains turned sand into gold. The Lotus Sutra turns plants and trees into Buddhas, so how much truer must this be of human beings with minds? The Lotus Sutra turns people of the two vehicles, who have scorched their seeds of Buddhahood, into Buddhas. How much truer, then, must this be of people whose seeds are alive? The Lotus Sutra turns icchantikas, or people of incorrigible disbelief, into Buddhas. How much truer, then, must this be of those who believe? It is impossible to say all that I wish. I will definitely write again. (818)

The character *myō* is the Thus Come One Shakyamuni perfectly endowed with the thirty-two features and eighty characteristics, but because our vision is poor we see only a character. For example, it is similar to an elderly person whose eyesight is dim and therefore fails to see that the lotus flowers in the pond have produced seeds. And at night, because of the darkness, one fails to see the forms of things. Nonetheless, this character *myō* is itself a Buddha. Furthermore, this character *myō* is the moon, it is the sun, it is the stars, it is a mirror, it is garments, it is food, it is flowers, it is the great earth, it is the great sea. All benefits clustered together make up the character *myō*. Also, it is the wish-granting jewel. You should understand things in this way. (879-780)

The essential teaching's doctrine of attaining Buddhahood in one's present form concludes that one can attain supreme enlightenment in one's present status as an ordinary person, without changing individual characteristics. That is why one's physical form, just as it is, is the Thus Come One who in his original state is eternally endowed with the three bodies. (891)

Rarity of encountering the Lotus Sutra

Again, the Lotus Sutra says that there is a turtle living at the bottom of the ocean. Once every three thousand years the turtle rises to the surface of the sea, and if he can encounter a floating piece of sandalwood with a hollow in it, he can rest himself there. But this turtle has only one eye, and the vision in that eye is distorted, so that things to the west of him appear to be in the east, and things to the east of him to be in the west. This simile indicates how difficult it is for men and women born in this evil world of the latter age to fit themselves into the “hollow” that is the Lotus Sutra and Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. In view of these difficulties, I wonder what bond of karma from the past has inspired in your heart the determination to communicate with a person like me? (778)

It is most rare for one to be born in a human body, and rare to encounter the Buddhist teaching. In this five-foot body, the face occupies one foot, and three inches of the face are taken up by the two eyes. And of all the many sights the eyes behold from the age of one to the age of sixty, the most joyful of all is that of the sutra passages that demonstrate the supremacy of the Lotus Sutra. (874)

Regret

And now that I have dispelled the ignorance that beset me in this present existence, I may die anytime without feelings of regret! (119)

Nevertheless, I have yet to receive any communication from the regent regarding this matter, and I am therefore respectfully submitting a second letter of warning. It is to be hoped that he will cease giving support to the temples and priests he has supported in the past and will put his faith in the Lotus Sutra. If he does not do so, it will be too late to regret the consequences later on. (317)

If you allow your present life to go by in vain, it will be too late to regret it later. (326)

On the other hand, it would surely be regrettable if one were to ascend a mountain of treasures and yet pick up only worthless stones and shards, or walk through a grove of fragrant sandalwood and gather only foul eranda. Therefore I have decided to ignore the slanders of the multitude and venture to declare what is to be accepted and what rejected. I hope that my disciples will give very careful attention to the matter. (482)

Trying, however, to determine what is correct and what is not correct in matters relating to Buddhist doctrine when one is living in the countryside is, regrettably, like wearing fine brocade garments and wandering about in the dark [where no one can see them], or like a fine pine growing in the depths of the valley where no woodcutter can judge its true worth. (608)

If events should take a certain course, I fear you may later have cause for regret. Just because the people of our present age do not heed his teachings, it would be foolish for you to do likewise. If in the future the persons in authority decide to heed him, then who among all the rest will fail to do so? But at that late date, what use will it be for you to join them? You will merely be putting your faith in persons rather than in the Law. (712)

You may well look on me as a person of no importance, but if you fail to heed my advice, humble priest though I am, I fear you will regret it in both your present and future existences. (712)

The ruler, the lord of Sagami, who went along with people's slander without asking for details and sent this priest into exile, regretted it and pardoned me. (877)

Seeking Spirit

When we ordinary mortals, persons of incorrigible disbelief who are constantly drowned in delusion and suffering, desire to take faith in the Lotus Sutra, this is a sign that the Buddha nature within us is beginning to manifest itself. (137)

The aim of this memorial is to inquire into the causes that bring about such disasters to the nation as major earthquakes, strong winds that blow out of season, serious famines, great outbreaks of epidemics, or major military uprisings, and the steps to be taken in dealing with them. (179)

With regard to my doctrine, my great desire is to enable each person in this country of Japan to take faith in it, and I believe that my wish is about to be realized. (352)

How could the person mentioned in the “Devadatta” chapter where it says, “In the place where they are born they will constantly hear this sutra,” refer to anyone but you? The reason is that the passage just before that says, “In future ages if there are good men or good women . . .” “Good men” means the laymen who uphold the Lotus Sutra. You should exert yourself in faith all the more! (375)

Now I hope that the two of you will exert yourselves to the best of your ability to help achieve my wish and test the golden words of the Buddha. (560)

Fish desiring to become dragons are like common persons wishing to be admitted to the palace of the emperor, or like poor persons seeking treasure. And becoming a Buddha also is similar to these things. (673)

Moreover, in spite of the fact that even such men of past ages as these puzzled over the doctrine of attaining Buddhahood in one’s present form, your having inquired about this doctrine again and again in this way in your situation as a woman is surely no ordinary thing. Has Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, taken possession of you? Or are you following in the footsteps of the dragon king’s daughter? Or perhaps Gautamī has appeared again. I do not know, but without fail the clouds of the five obstacles will lift from you in an instant and you will gaze on the tranquil light of the moon of awakening. I will write again in detail another time. (892)

In what future existence shall we meet again? I urge you to single-mindedly aspire to be reborn in the pure land of Eagle Peak [where we will meet]. Though your body must face the perils of the present crisis, your mind is one with the mind of the Buddha. And though in your present existence you must enter the realm of asuras, in your future existence you will without doubt dwell in the Buddha land. (958-9)

It is said that one who seeks for great renown has no concern for minor disgrace, and I cherish a great desire to spread the seven characters of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo not only throughout Japan, but also to China and Koryō. Could it be a sign that my desire will be fulfilled? (1032)

For some time now, thinking of your next existence, you have been very sincere in your search for the way, and accordingly I have instructed you in the terminology alone. With regard to such terminology, you should seek further explanation from your fellow practitioners. (1090)

Self and Environment (*Esho Funi*)

The errors committed by those persons are weightier than the earth itself. Therefore the earth quakes and trembles as though it were a boat on the ocean being tossed by a great wind. The eighty-four thousand stars in the sky blaze forth their anger, and day and night the heavens show strange manifestations. In addition, the sun and moon show numerous peculiarities in their behavior. (776)

This one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law present in one's mind pervades all the pure lands of the ten directions without exception. The blessings that adorn the living beings and the environment in the pure lands of the ten directions are present within one's own mind and never depart from it for an instant. This is the Thus Come One of original enlightenment, the three bodies that are a single unity, and outside of this there is no Law. This single Law exists within the pure lands of the ten directions, and no other Law exists. Hence it is called a Law without distinctions. (840)

This "perfect delight" represents the harmonious unity of the sentient beings, who dwell in the phenomenal realm of the ten directions, and the lands, which support and surround them in the phenomenal realm of the ten directions. Thus the living beings and their environments are one, and the three bodies of the Buddha are a single body. The four kinds of lands are not differentiated but come together in the one Buddha of the Dharma body (842)

The sentient beings and the environment of the Ten Worlds are the Buddha of the Dharma body, one who possesses the virtue of the three bodies in a single entity. Once one has understood this, one will fully realize that all phenomena are the Buddhist Law. (847-8)

Sharing Buddhism

It is my hope that the members of the clergy and lay believers in Japan will cast aside *Nembutsu Chosen above All*, which they have followed for so long, and will rely on these clear passages of proof from the Lotus and Nirvana sutras so that, in accordance with the predictions for Japan made by Seng-chao and Eshin, they may find peace of mind in the practice of the Lotus Sutra. (143)

With regard to my doctrine, my great desire is to enable each person in this country of Japan to take faith in it, and I believe that my wish is about to be realized. (352)

But though this age may meet with destruction, I know that in Japan every person will in time come to chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo. Though you may think that there is no more use in trying to persuade others, to those who would oppose the correct teaching you must speak with even greater fervour. And while life remains in you, you will surely see the results of your efforts. (457)

And when, as these signs portend, the nation has been plunged into disorder, then Bodhisattva Superior Practices and the other sages will come forward, establish the three secret Laws of the essential teaching, and spread Myoho-rence-kyo widely throughout the four continents and the region within the four seas! Could anyone doubt it? (491)

Therefore, before the Bodhisattvas of the Earth have made their appearance, I take the lead in briefly introducing these five characters of Myoho-rence-kyo. I am like the bluebird that presages the appearance of the Queen Mother of the West, or the magpie that signals the arrival of a visitor. (558)

Therefore, even if one does not understand that now, at the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law, is the time to propagate the teaching of the single truth that is pure and perfect, one has only to trust in the sutra passage that says: "After I have passed into extinction, in the last five-hundred-year period you must spread it abroad widely throughout Jambudvīpa and never allow it to be cut off." This makes the matter perfectly clear. (647)

In the game called *sugoroku*, you cannot knock over a pair of stones with only one from a pair of dice. A bird cannot fly on a single wing. Even brave warriors such as Masakado and Sadatō could not accomplish their aims all by themselves. If you think of your siblings as your own children or followers and depend upon them, and if the Lotus Sutra spreads widely and you remain alive, they will become devoted allies of the sutra. (731)

The Land of the Moon is another name for India, the place where the Buddha made his appearance in the world. The Land of the Sun is another name for Japan. Is there any reason why a sage should not appear here? The moon moves from the west eastward, a sign of how the Buddhism of India spread in an easterly direction. The sun rises in the east, an auspicious sign of how the Buddhism of Japan is destined to return to the Land of the Moon. The light of the moon is not very bright, for the Buddha taught [the Lotus Sutra in India] for only eight years of his life. But the light of the sun is brilliant, outshining the moon, an auspicious sign of how the Buddhism of Japan is destined to illuminate the long darkness of [the Latter Day of the Law, which begins with] the fifth five-hundred-year period. (936)

I, Nichiren, conscious of the age we live in, now wish to give wide propagation to this doctrine [of the Three Great Secret Laws]. Up until now I have kept this doctrine secret within my heart. But if I do not leave behind me a written record of it, the future followers of my teachings will perhaps slander me by saying that I was without pity or compassion. (988)

Sincerity

I have received the taros, river nori, and wasabi, each one of which shows the sincerity of each of you. It is as if a bird were cherishing its eggs, or a cow licking its calf. Clothing enfolds one's body and food sustains one's life. Thus, is not your warmly cherishing one who recites the Lotus Sutra deep in the mountains actually cherishing Shakyamuni Buddha and sustaining the life of the Lotus Sutra? (655)

The sincerity you have shown in sending one horseload of this salt to such a place in these circumstances is firmer than the earth and broader than the sky. My words hardly do it justice. (783)

Moreover, as soon as you heard of my illness, you dispatched a messenger to deliver these items without a moment's delay. Your kind intentions are deeper than the ocean, your acts of merit more substantial than the earth. (975)

But be that as it may, for no less than nine years you have put your trust in a man who is seen throughout Japan as more than a bit of an embarrassment. I am more grateful than I can express in words for your sincerity. That is why, no matter where I should breathe my last, I would like my grave to be in the valley of Minobu. (994)

I can hardly express my thanks enough, not only for the one *to* and six *shō* of rice, the two *shō* of millet, and the sack of parched rice, but also for the sincerity that all of you have shown. I am very much obliged to you. From now on, you mustn't worry about me. (1032)

Speaking out

I have written letters dealing with this matter and sent them to various persons. I do not speak out of merely private or prejudiced motives, and I trust that your answer will afford me an opportunity to explain the situation in detail. Words do not fully express what is in the heart, and writing does not fully express what is in words. Therefore I will omit further discussion here. (331)

In Japan, however, I, Nichiren, alone may be called an upright person both in terms of secular society and among those who have withdrawn from the secular world. This is because I informed the late lay priest of Saimyō-ji that the Zen school is the invention of the heavenly devil, and later wrote a treatise apprising him of the situation. “All the people of Japan are destined to fall into the hell of incessant suffering,” I told him. In past ages, has there ever been an example of anyone who spoke out in such an upright manner? And from this you can judge how things stand. If I spoke out in this case, would I be likely to speak deceptively in matters of lesser importance? (348-9)

But if I do not speak out against these things, then how can I escape being charged with the grave error that Chang-an described in these words “If one befriends another person but lacks the mercy to correct him, one is in fact his enemy”? (435)

I see in such actions the causes and conditions that bring about the ruin of the nation, the beginnings of what may be called slander of the Law. Therefore, heedless of how the world may speak ill of me, or whether it will listen to what I say or not, I risk my life to speak out on this matter. (524)

Therefore if I, Nichiren, fearful of the world, should fail to speak out, I would be the enemy of the Buddha. Hence the Great Teacher Chang-an has delivered his warning to students of the latter age, saying: “One who destroys or brings confusion to the Buddha’s teachings is betraying them. If one befriends another person but lacks the mercy to correct him, one is in fact his enemy. But one who reprimands and corrects an offender . . . is acting as his parent.” I have taken these words of Chang-an’s commentary thoroughly to heart, and therefore I risk my life to speak out in reprimand. (524-5)

In truth, the wording of your letter shows that it is founded upon error. If you continue to remain silent and pass your whole life in this vain manner, it is most certain that you and your lay supporters will both suffer the great pains of hell in your next existence. You must not allow the towering pride of your present lifetime to plant the seeds of deluded wandering for endless kalpas to come. Let us make all haste to appeal to the authorities, make haste to meet face-to-face before them, and to put an end to these erroneous views! (610)

When we stop to consider, we realize that if we speak out in accordance with these passages of the sutra, we will raise a storm of protest and will have difficulty persuading others. But if we fail to have faith in such passages, we will be doubting the golden words of the Thus Come One, a fault that, as the Lotus Sutra itself makes clear, will destine us to fall into the Avīchi hell. We find ourselves perplexed, uncertain whether to proceed or not. (651-2)

Moreover, one must respect the admonitions of the Buddha and exercise a measure of compassion for others, and therefore for the sake of the country I risk my body and life by speaking out on the matter. But the rulers of the nation are so deceived by these men that not one of them heeds my warnings. I am like someone who throws cold water on molten iron, or who tweaks the leg of a sleeping lion. (692)

If, as suggested by the passage that reads, “There is someone who . . . attacks him with swords and staves, tiles and stones,” or that that says, “Again and again we will be banished,” one is condemned to exile or set upon with swords, I realized that this is one’s way of reading the entire text of the Lotus Sutra. And like Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, the monk Realization of Virtue, Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna, Bodhisattva Āryadeva, or Buddhāmitra and the Venerable Āryasimha, I spoke out even more strongly in support of the Lotus Sutra. (701)

Not even one person in Japan today understands this teaching. Only Nichiren understands it. And if I knew it and nevertheless failed to speak out, I would fall into the hell of incessant suffering and could never hope to be released. If knowing of a traitor one failed to report the person to the ruler of the country, one would be guilty of wrongdoing. When I speak up, my enemies lash at me like the rain and rush at me like the wind. I am treated as if I am the traitor, or as if I am a pirate or a mountain bandit. In any case, it is hard to bear. I am like, for instance, Bodhisattva Never Disparaging at the end of [the Middle Day of] the Law of the Buddha Awesome Sound King, or like the monk Realization of Virtue at the end of [the Middle Day of] the Law of the Buddha Joy Increasing. I am like T’ien-t’ai or Dengyō. And my enemies exceed those of such men. (757)

My knowing about these things and time and again speaking out about the offenses of the priests and lay believers in Japan has invited calamity in this lifetime, but it means good fortune in my next. (763)

Unless I had some astute plan in mind, it seemed best to remain silent and not to speak out. And yet in the classics of non-Buddhist literature it is said that if a worthy man knows that the world faces destruction and fails to speak out, then he is a mere toady, a sycophant, a person with no sense of obligation. [...] Turning to Buddhist literature, we find that the Buddha has warned that, if a person sees an enemy of the Lotus Sutra but fails to speak out against him because of fear of the world, then he is a foe of Shakyamuni Buddha. No matter how wise or good he may be, he will assuredly fall into the hell of incessant suffering. Such a person is like a son who sees someone about to kill his parents but fails to warn them, or a minister who sees someone bringing ruin on his sovereign but, fearful of the world, does not speak out in reprimand. Such behavior the Buddha prohibits. (772)

Japan has by now become a country in which slanders of the correct teaching are taking place to a large degree, and it would appear that it is ripe for invasion by foreign lands. If one is aware of this fact but fails to speak out about it, then although one may enjoy peace and security in one’s present existence, one will surely fall into the great citadel of the hell of incessant suffering in the existence to come. On the other hand, if, out of fear of that fate, one does speak out, one must be prepared to suffer exile or the death penalty. (772)

I, Nichiren, have done likewise. I spoke out because I thought I could help my native country of Japan. (775)

When I spoke out in this way, people felt hatred and rejected it, but the late Ueno believed and thus attained Buddhahood. (804)

Thus we see that the persons who have been caused to fall into hell are more numerous than the dust particles of the land, and all because of the faults committed by these three great teachers. And if I, Nichiren, were to observe this situation with my own eyes and yet pretend ignorance and refrain from speaking out, then I too ought to join those who have fallen into hell. Though guilty of no such fault myself, I should be condemned to journey through all the great Avīchi hells of the worlds of the ten directions. Such being the case, how then can I fail to speak out, even though it may cost me life and limb? (934)

Moreover, in matters pertaining to the teachings, I would not be swayed even if the ruler of the nation should bring pressure to bear on me, much less if lesser persons should do so. I would not heed the pronouncements of parents or teachers or elder brothers, would take no notice of whether others believe me or not, but would speak out as the words of the sutras dictate—such was the vow I made. (1050-1)

Strength

For this reason, the heavenly beings, unable to hear the wonderful teachings of the Lotus Sutra, deprived of all opportunity to savor the taste of the Law, have lost the majesty and strength they once possessed. (129-130)

Only when one has succeeded in overcoming a powerful enemy can we say that one has displayed real strength. (483)

And if this is indeed the case, when those who are vital to your interests try to prevent you from upholding your faith, or you are faced with great obstacles, you must [...] strengthen your faith more than ever. (566)

The blessings that you, the Honorable Jōren, acquire through your faith in the Lotus Sutra will lend strength to your kind father. (572)

Therefore your ever-strengthening faith is admirable, admirable indeed! (877)

I refuted them as Kātyāyana did the non-Buddhist believers, as Bodhisattva Gunamati bested Mādhava; they had no strength to stand up before my arguments. (1052)

When one gives things to others, one livens people's complexions, gives them strength, and enables them to prolong life. When one lights a torch for someone at night, one brings light not only to another person but to oneself as well. (1066)

The Lotus Sutra sustains the complexion of Shakyamuni Buddha, the strength of the World-Honoured One, the life of the Thus Come One. When a person who is ailing gives alms to the Lotus Sutra, that person's illness will be lightened, that person's complexion will brighten, that person's strength will improve. (1066)

Study

Ever since I, Nichiren, became a priest, I have studied the various doctrines of Buddhism. I have come to understand the true intention of the Buddhas, and from early in my studies have realized the great key to release from the sufferings of birth and death. That key is the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law. (391)

Looking back, I have been studying the Buddha's teachings since I was a boy. And I found myself thinking, "The life of a human being is fleeting. The exhaled breath never waits for the inhaled one. Even dew before the wind is hardly a sufficient metaphor. It is the way of the world that whether one is wise or foolish, old or young, one never knows what will happen to one from one moment to the next. Therefore I should first of all learn about death, and then about other things." (759)

Therefore, for a period of some twenty years, from the time I was twelve or sixteen until I was thirty-two, I travelled from province to province, from temple to temple, visiting Kamakura, Kyoto, Mount Hiei, Onjō-ji, Mount Kōya, and Shitennō-ji and studying their doctrines. At that time I became aware of one very strange thing. When we approach the subject with our limited mental powers, we tend to feel that the Buddhist teachings represent a single truth. We believe that from whatever angle one may approach that truth, if one applies one's mind to the matter, studies it, and truly desires to achieve success, one will be able to break away from the realm of birth and death. But in fact if one approaches the Buddhist teachings and practices them incorrectly, then one is likely to fall into the great pit known as slander of the Law. (766-7)

But though it was called a temple, since it was located in such a distant and outlying province, there was no one there who was capable of giving me proper instruction. I thereupon took it upon myself to go about to various other provinces, studying as I went along. Being a person of limited abilities, however, and having no one to teach me, I found it difficult to determine the exact origin of the ten schools of Buddhism and their relative worth. As it happened, I prayed to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas that I would gain an understanding of these matters and made a thorough study of all the sutras and treatises, and on that basis examined the doctrines of the ten schools. (794)

That day, between the hours of the dog and the boar [around 9:00 P.M.], thirty some persons gathered before the object of devotion and engaged in copying the Lotus Sutra within a day. Also, before that, between the hours of the monkey and the cock [around 5:00 P.M.], the completion ceremony was brought to a close without the slightest problem. (971)

To suppose that one can come to understand the Lotus Sutra, which is the true cause for rebirth in the Pure Land, by studying and practicing it after one reaches the World of Perfect Bliss, and to suppose that recitation of the Nembutsu, which is not the direct cause for rebirth in the World of Perfect Bliss, is in fact the true cause for rebirth in the Pure Land, is to be guilty of gross error. (999)

After that, I lent my ear first of all to the teachings of the Pure Land and Zen schools, and later I travelled to Mount Hiei, Onjō-ji, Mount Kōya, and various other places in the capital and the countryside, carrying out religious practice and studying the doctrines of the various schools of Buddhism. But I found it difficult to resolve my doubts. When I offered up my original prayer, I vowed that I would approach the various schools of Buddhism without prejudice or partiality regarding any particular one, but would judge them on the basis of proofs to be found in the Buddha's own words and the light of reason. I would rely not upon the writings of the scholars, the translators, or the teachers of doctrine, but solely upon the sutra texts themselves. (1050)

I have stated many times before, the scholars in the world today assert that they have studied the Buddhist doctrines and acquired wisdom. But their whole lifetime is wasted, passed in a dream, as it were, simply because they fail to understand "this one great reason." You should be absolutely clear on this point, absolutely clear! Take care, take care. (1086)

Three Powerful Enemies

This country is the domain of the Thus Come One Shakyamuni, and he has no doubt given orders to his chief ministers of the left and right, the great heavenly king Brahmā and the devil king of the sixth heaven. Just as the sea refuses to be the repository of dead bodies, and as a mountain rich in treasure hates the presence of warped trees, so the Buddha has commanded that these slanderers of the Law in this country be dealt with. (341)

As I have stated before, now that the world has entered the Latter Day of the Law, those who uphold the Lotus Sutra will encounter the three powerful enemies. I explained this to you in general terms at the time we met. Since all this is based upon the golden words of the Buddha, there can hardly be any doubt about it. Such being the case, I, Nichiren, because I put my faith in the Lotus Sutra, have been wounded in the head, beaten, driven away, led to the place of decapitation, and condemned to exile. And in the end I have been exiled to this island of Sado. (459)

The devil king of the sixth heaven has roused the ten kinds of troops and, in the midst of the sea of the sufferings of birth and death, is at war with the votary of the Lotus Sutra to stop him from taking possession of and to wrest away from him this impure land where both ordinary people and sages dwell. It has been twenty or more years now since I found myself in that situation and began the great battle. Not once have I thought of retreat. Among my disciples and followers, however, those who are cowards have for the most part either given in or retreated at heart. (465)

Only when one has succeeded in overcoming a powerful enemy can we say that one has displayed real strength. (483)

What persons now can say, “I read these sutra passages, I believe in them!” and yet direct all their hatred at Nichiren alone? If they truly believe these sutra passages, then let them call forth the [three types of] powerful enemies described in them and show proof that they do indeed read these passages and believe them. Unless they do so, then to be angry at Nichiren, who reads and recites these passages as they are intended to be read, is to be angry at the passages themselves, is it not? And to do so is to look with contempt on the envoy of the Buddha! (694-5)

It is hard to encounter a master like Nichiren, who since distant kalpas in the past down to the present day has never begrudged his body or life in order to expose the faults of his powerful enemies! (1062)

Time of Propagation

One who hopes to propagate the Buddha's teachings must be aware of the five guides and propagate the correct teaching in accordance with these. These five guides are (1) the teaching, (2) the people's capacity, (3) the time, (4) the country, and (5) the sequence in which the Buddhist teachings are to be propagated. (259)

When the Thus Come One was in the world, although he expounded various Mahayana and Hinayana doctrines during the first forty and more years of his preaching life, he did not reveal his true intentions, because the time to do so had not yet arrived. Even had the people possessed the capacity to receive it, it was not the proper time, and therefore he did not expound the great Law. But during the eight-year period at Eagle Peak [when the Lotus Sutra was expounded], although the capacity of the people was not yet perfect, the time to do so had come, and so he revealed his true intentions, and in doing so, he changed the people's capacity from a capacity to receive the provisional teachings to a capacity to receive the true teaching. (297)

Now is the time for Bodhisattva Never Disparaging to appear in the world in this latter age and to sound his poison-coated drum. And yet, in spite of this fact, the scholars of today, because they are confused about the categories of time and capacity, in some cases propagate Hinayana doctrines, or in others transmit the teachings of provisional Mahayana or preach the one vehicle. But none of them realize that they should be utilizing the five characters of the daimoku, since this is the means for implanting the seed of Buddhahood. (543)

In studying the teachings of Buddhism, one must by all means understand the time. (647)

Again, though a person may seem to have a very sound grasp of the Buddhist teachings, if he does not understand how the factors of time, capacity, country, and the proper sequence of propagation relate to the teachings, then although he may labour in mind and body to put the teachings into practice, he will achieve no success. (685)

All affairs whatsoever depend on the time. We speak of "blossoms in the spring, the moon in autumn" because those are the things that are appropriate to the time. In the case of the Buddha, he appeared in the world for the sake of the Lotus Sutra, but for the first forty and more years of his teaching life he did not expound it. The reason, as explained in the sutra itself, was that "the time to preach so had not yet come." In summer we may be pleased to receive a heavily padded jacket, and in winter to receive a sheer summer robe, but how much more delightful to receive a padded jacket in winter, or a sheer robe in summer! Money may be welcome when we are hungry, and an imperial gift when we are thirsty, but can never compare to food in time of hunger or drink in time of thirst. The boy who gave the Buddha a pie made of mud and attained Buddhahood thereby, and the person who offered a jewel but fell into hell instead, are illustrations of this principle. (872)

Already two hundred and more years have passed since the time for the spread of the theoretical teaching ended. T'ien-t'ai and Dengyō were the very persons who could propagate the theoretical teaching, and both have passed away. Nichiren has truly been given this time. How could I possibly not spread the essential teaching, which perfectly suits the age? There is a vast difference between the essential teaching and the theoretical teaching in terms of the capacity of the people, the doctrine, and the time of its spread. (892)

The fact that you have set aside the teachings of the provisional schools you have been practicing for some years and have become a disciple of Nichiren shows that you are a wise man who is able to understand what doctrine is truly suitable to this time and this country. Nichiren's disciples, like Nichiren himself, should invariably practice the correct principles. (909)

Now I, Nichiren, have inherited the seven characters Nam-myoho-renge-kyo within the treasure tower and in this era of the Latter Day of the Law I work to disseminate them throughout Japan. This is the Buddhist Law that is appropriate to this time and this country, is it not? (908-9)

Moreover, this is the very time for such efforts, for we have already entered the fifth five-hundred-year period, the time in which the Buddha predicted the Lotus Sutra would be propagated. At the time when T'ien-t'ai and Dengyō lived, the fifth period had not yet begun, but because a certain number of persons already possessed the requisite capacity, these men to some extent propagated the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. But now that the fifth period has begun, it is even more appropriate that such teachings be propagated. Even though there are those who have no capacity to receive them, but who oppose them as water opposes fire, how can one fail to propagate them? Now, although one should meet with the kind of persecution experienced by Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, they must be propagated; there can be no doubt of that. (931)

The Land of the Moon is another name for India, the place where the Buddha made his appearance in the world. The Land of the Sun is another name for Japan. Is there any reason why a sage should not appear here? The moon moves from the west eastward, a sign of how the Buddhism of India spread in an easterly direction. The sun rises in the east, an auspicious sign of how the Buddhism of Japan is destined to return to the Land of the Moon. The light of the moon is not very bright, for the Buddha taught [the Lotus Sutra in India] for only eight years of his life. But the light of the sun is brilliant, outshining the moon, an auspicious sign of how the Buddhism of Japan is destined to illuminate the long darkness of [the Latter Day of the Law, which begins with] the fifth five-hundred-year period. (936)

Truth

The Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law, the single vehicle, embodies the ultimate truth of the correct enlightenment of the Buddhas; it is the food that sustains the majesty of the heavenly gods and benevolent deities. How could one who embraces and has faith in it ever be visited by the seven disasters and the three calamities? (318)

In the 2,220 and more years since the passing of the Buddha, no one in the lands of India, China, or Japan has experienced the truth of the words that the Lotus Sutra “will face much hostility in the world and be difficult to believe” as I have. If I had not appeared, these words of the Buddha would have been spoken in vain. (600)

Nichiren, however, has now made his appearance in the world, he who fears no person whatsoever and who is prepared to cast aside body and life in order to point out the truth. (703)

The truth lies in what Shakyamuni Buddha has preached now [in the Lotus Sutra]. One should have faith in the five characters of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the crux of the “Life Span” chapter. (705)

Among these, the Lotus Sutra is the truest of true words, and the truest of truths. (760)

So long as you remain firm in heart, I am sure that the whole truth of the matter will become clear in the end. (831)

Thus the various sutras preached in the forty-two years prior to the Lotus Sutra are provisional teachings in which the Buddha has “not yet revealed the truth,” an expedient means. They are an expedient means designed to lead one to the Lotus Sutra and hence do not represent the truth itself. (836)

After that, he thrust aside the various sutra teachings that he had used as an expedient means and preached the correct and straightforward doctrine of the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law, revealing the truth of the seeds of the five wisdom Thus Come Ones. [...] He created an honest and truthful document that others could not tamper with, and affixed to it his own seal of verification. (851)

The mirror that is one’s own mind is none other than the same mirror that is the mirror of the Buddha’s mind. But we are looking at the back side of the mirror, and therefore we cannot see the truth or principle that underlies our nature, and so we are said to be in a state of ignorance. The Thus Come One, however, looks at the front side of the mirror and can see and understand the principle underlying our nature. For this reason, enlightenment and ignorance may be said to constitute a single entity. (853)

The statement that he “now must reveal the truth” is the golden words of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings. The statement that “all that you have expounded is the truth” is the testimony of Many Treasures Buddha. “Their tongues reach to the Brahma heaven” is the solemn pledge of all the various Buddhas. Could the sun and moon ever fall to the earth? Could Mount Sumeru ever crumble? Could the tide ever cease its ebb and flow? Could the earth ever overturn? (944-5)

And then, because I, Nichiren, reprove such persons for relying on sutras that will not lead them to enlightenment, they become more and more enraged and, without looking into the truth of the matter, invent great lies and thereby deceive and mislead the ruler and the people of the land, hoping to do me harm. (957)

Unity (itai doshin)

Be sure to urge all those in Suruga to remain united in their faith! (572)

In the game called *sugoroku*, you cannot knock over a pair of stones with only one from a pair of dice. A bird cannot fly on a single wing. Even brave warriors such as Masakado and Sadatō could not accomplish their aims all by themselves. If you think of your siblings as your own children or followers and depend upon them, and if the Lotus Sutra spreads widely and you remain alive, they will become devoted allies of the sutra. (731)

Regarding this Lotus Sutra of ours, the essential teaching and the theoretical teaching combine to bring forth benefits boundless in number. And you two brothers should be the same. If the two of you are one in mind and succeed in constructing the Great Palace, the governor's residence, the Lotus Hall, Hachiman Shrine, and other buildings, you should regard this as due to the beneficent power of the Lotus Sutra. The fact that the two of you are one in mind may be likened to the two wheels of a carriage, or the two wings of a bird. Though your wives and children may have their disagreements, there should never be any disharmony between the two of you. Though I may seem presumptuous in saying so, you should join together in paying honor to Nichiren. If the two of you should fail to act in harmony, then you may be sure that you will cease to enjoy the protection of the Lotus Sutra. Beware, beware, for there are persons who clearly would like to do harm to you both! Should you fail to act in harmony, you will be like the snipe and the shellfish who, because they were locked in combat with one another, fell prey to the fisherman. Recite Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and take care how you behave! Take care how you behave! (914)

Though I was hesitant to speak out about such things, I offer these humble words in order that the three elements of the Buddha's sutra, its votary, and the lay supporters may work together to attain one thing. (1008)

Victory

But when they engage in controversy with the votary of the Lotus Sutra, it is like a tiger fighting with a dragon, or a rabbit with a lion—they cannot possibly win the debate. (280)

Those who stand in the vanguard will win benefit as great as though they had given offerings to the Buddhas of the three existences and the ten directions. (775)

Violence

Question: How does the precept against the taking of life observed by persons of the two vehicles differ from the precept against the taking of life observed by bodhisattvas? [...] Answer: When persons of the two vehicles observe the precept against the taking of life, they have no thought of ever being reborn again in the six paths, and therefore they pay no mind to the converting and guiding of others. Likewise they have no thought of becoming a Buddha or a bodhisattva. Their thoughts are simply upon how to annihilate consciousness and reduce the body to ashes, which is like burning a piece of wood and turning it to ashes, after which not a single particle of it remains. (202)

The action that causes one to be reborn in this hell is the taking of life. [...] if one does not repent of the crime, one will invariably fall into this hell, as surely as a needle, no matter how small, will sink if it is placed on the surface of water. (246)

I have been wounded, condemned to exile, and threatened with beheading. My disciples have been deprived of their fiefs or thrown into prison, exiled to distant places, driven from their hometowns, or stripped of their fields. They have been treated more severely than one would treat night raiders, thieves, pirates, mountain bandits, or plotters of rebellion. And all this has come about because of the accusations of the eminent priests of the True Word, Nembutsu, and Zen schools. The errors committed by those persons are weightier than the earth itself. Therefore the earth quakes and trembles as though it were a boat on the ocean being tossed by a great wind. The eighty-four thousand stars in the sky blaze forth their anger, and day and night the heavens show strange manifestations. In addition, the sun and moon show numerous peculiarities in their behaviour. (776)

Vow

The dragon king's daughter was a woman and she had experienced and understood the sufferings of women. Therefore she was not concerned about other matters, but vowed that she would be a guide and leader for other women. (40)

I myself, since the day I first took faith [in the Lotus Sutra], have recited these passages every day, making a vow and praying to the Buddhas and the gods, and although I have encountered great difficulties of various kinds, because of the profound influence of the benefits bestowed by the Lotus Sutra and the golden words of Shakyamuni Buddha, I have managed to survive until today. Thus you should understand that so long as a practitioner of the Lotus Sutra remains unwavering in faith, free of all false alliances, entrusting himself wholeheartedly to the Lotus Sutra and practicing in accordance with the Buddha's golden words, he will without fail be able to prevent disaster and prolong his life in this present existence, to say nothing of in the life to come. Splendid recompense will be his, and he will fulfil his great vow to broadly proclaim and propagate the Lotus Sutra. (460)

Also, from now on recite the scroll of prayer I have written out for you, make your vow and pray to the Buddhas and gods, and work to propagate the teachings. (461)

Moreover, in matters pertaining to the teachings, I would not be swayed even if the ruler of the nation should bring pressure to bear on me, much less if lesser persons should do so. I would not heed the pronouncements of parents or teachers or elder brothers, would take no notice of whether others believe me or not, but would speak out as the words of the sutras dictate—such was the vow I made. (1050-1)

Weaknesses

However, since they lack all learning, they will not listen to reason. They cannot understand the reasoning of others, nor do they understand the flaws in their own reasoning; they are persons of benighted comprehension. And since they refuse to bow to reason, addressing them is like trying to paint a picture on flowing water. (17)

One might wonder who could hate the Buddha, and yet there were many who viewed him with hatred and jealousy. How much greater, then, in the period after the Buddha's passing, is the number of persons who look with hatred and jealousy on the votary of the Lotus Sutra, who has not rid himself of even one particle of earthly desire and is unable to distinguish even the smallest of evil deeds. They flock around him like clouds and mist. (37)

My wish is that the Buddhas of the ten directions will assist this work of mine with their power and help me to put an end to the great evil teachings that are being spread abroad, so that I may rescue all living beings from the fault of slandering the Law. (132)

As these passages demonstrate, those who slander the Law fail to realize in full how their acts affect others and proceed to commit grave faults, bringing about the destruction of the nation and the destruction of the Buddhist Law. (184)

If a woman relies upon this sutra, the Lotus, and never slanders the Law, then though she may commit the ten evil acts and the five cardinal sins and be guilty of greed and stinginess, jealousy, and anger enough to fill the whole sky in the ten directions, all these faults will blow away like dew on the grass and trees before a great wind, will melt like the three-month-long winter's ice on a summer day. (633)

If we consider this story and apply it to the present, we see that, although a person may be guilty of certain faults, if that person has faith in the three treasures of Buddhism, he may escape major difficulties. (669)

But people like this Āchārya Owari fail to recognize their own faults, and in their jealousy of others they believe that the huge mountain is turning around when it is only their own eyes that are spinning. (727)

Remember that these brothers and sisters of yours are dear to your mother, and she will be concerned for them until the moment of her death. If you pardon their faults and treat them with kindness, you will be easing your mother's mind and exercising proper filial regard. (731)

Wealth

Or at times we are born as human beings, becoming rulers of various countries, high ministers, court nobles, or other court officials, and we think ourselves incomparably happy. Thus we content ourselves with such little gains and are delighted with them. However, the Buddha has taught that these accomplishments are mere prosperity in a dream, a phantom joy, and that we should simply accept and uphold the Lotus Sutra and quickly become Buddhas. (36)

Even though one were to offer all the gold and silver and other forms of wealth contained in the entire major world system, one could never exchange them for the wish-granting jewel. (380)

I have come to understand the true intention of the Buddhas, and from early in my studies have realized the great key to release from the sufferings of birth and death. That key is the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law. Reverence for this one vehicle teaching has brought prosperity to the three lands [of India, China, and Japan]. Who could doubt a fact that is so plain before the eyes? (391)

Wisdom

The passage in the Lotus Sutra on how the Buddhas “open, show, cause [living beings] to awaken to, and induce them to enter” the Buddha wisdom; the passage on how “all have attained the Buddha way”; or the word *myō*, or wonderful, that is implicit in each one of the 69,384 characters, the eight volumes and twenty-eight chapters of the entire Lotus Sutra—these are representative of the *myō* of the aspect that is capable of opening up. (63)

The term “consistency” indicates that the Thus Come One of the ultimate stage of perfect enlightenment and we ordinary mortals in the stage of being a Buddha in theory are without any distinction. This is called consistency, or the great wisdom of the Lotus Sutra that sees the equality of all beings. (84)

If one is born in a country where the Lotus Sutra is propagated and, on hearing the daimoku of the sutra, one is moved to take faith in it, this is because one has accumulated a rich store of good actions in the past. Thus, even though one may be an evil person lacking in wisdom in one’s present existence, when one hears the name of the sutra, one will take faith in it and hence will not fall into the evil paths. (141-2)

You are in doubt because you take every clever person to be a wise man. (222)

The true perfect teaching practice is to keep the mouth constantly reciting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, whatever the occasion, and to keep the mind fixed on the meditation on the three thousand realms in a single moment of life. This is the practice and understanding of persons of wisdom. For the ordinary lay believers of Japan, however, it is sufficient if they concentrate solely on the recitation of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (379)

One who sets aside error and accepts what is reasonable is the real wise man. (482)

But the wonderful Law, the Law that the Buddha in his original state attained as a result of the fusion of reality and wisdom, is something that the Buddha in his transient status and the other Buddhas could never encompass in their thought. Much less, then, could bodhisattvas or ordinary mortals! (516)

In the past you always mistakenly adhered to these same doctrines, but now you have listened to my doctrines and become wise. Not only have you speedily repudiated your earlier beliefs and embraced those of the Lotus Sutra, but in fact you now look on this sutra as dearer to you than life and limb. This is the most wonderful of wonders! Such an occurrence cannot be adequately explained in terms of your present existence alone, but must have its origin in your relationship with the sutra in past existences—only thus can it be understood. Marvellous, truly marvellous! (748)

The Buddha is like a person awake and living beings are like persons dreaming. Therefore when the latter wake from their empty dreams of birth and death and return to their waking state of original enlightenment, they are said to attain Buddhahood in their present form, to gain the great wisdom of equality, the Law that is without distinctions, and to understand that all are able to achieve the Buddha way, for there is only this one doctrine. (841)

The words set forth in all the other sutras are words in a dream and are comparable to a round fan or a tree, while the words that reveal the waking mind in the Lotus Sutra are comparable to the moon or the wind. Thus the waking mind of original enlightenment is a round moon whose rays shine on and drive away the darkness of ignorance. And the wisdom that perceives the true aspect of all phenomena is a wind that blows away the dust of delusion. Thus, through the dream words that are like a fan or a tree, we come to understand the waking mind that is like the moon and wind, and in this way we can dispel the last remnants of the dream realm and return to the waking state of the original mind. (841-2)

The fact that you have set aside the teachings of the provisional schools you have been practicing for some years and have become a disciple of Nichiren shows that you are a wise man who is able to understand what doctrine is truly suitable to this time and this country. Nichiren's disciples, like Nichiren himself, should invariably practice the correct principles. Even though one may be a wise man or a scholar, if he falls into hell, he will amount to nothing and can be of no assistance. The essential thing, therefore, is that at each hour, at each moment, one should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (909)

For some time now, thinking of your next existence, you have been very sincere in your search for the way, and accordingly I have instructed you in the terminology alone. With regard to such terminology, you should seek further explanation from your fellow practitioners. Since it is easy to understand, such a course requires no great expenditure of wisdom, no great expenditure of wisdom. (1089-1090)

Women

The dragon king's daughter was a woman and she had experienced and understood the sufferings of women. Therefore she was not concerned about other matters, but vowed that she would be a guide and leader for other women. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (40)

When it [the Lotus Sutra] addresses women, it assures them that women are endowed with the Ten Worlds and that women in any of the Ten Worlds can attain Buddhahood. (64)

With the exception of this Lotus Sutra, the attainment of Buddhahood is not regarded as a possibility. Nowhere outside of this one sutra is there any indication that women can attain Buddhahood. (308)

But Shāriputra, foremost in wisdom, without criticizing what Manjushrī had said directly, pointed out many reasons why it was difficult to believe that a dragon girl could attain Buddhahood. He observed that a woman's body is soiled and defiled, not a vessel for the Law, as is made clear in the Hinayana and provisional teachings. But Manjushrī said that, to demonstrate whether or not she could attain Buddhahood, the dragon girl would now appear in the presence of the Buddha. True to these words, the eight-year-old daughter of the dragon king, without changing out of her dragon body, appeared in the presence of the Buddha and presented a wish-granting jewel said to be worth as much as the major world system to the Buddha. The Buddha, pleased, accepted the jewel. At that time Bodhisattva Wisdom Accumulated and Shāriputra, their doubts resolved, came to realize that a woman can in fact attain Buddhahood. Hence this has come to be looked on as a model of how women can attain Buddhahood. If you wish to know more of the matter in detail, you may read of it in the fifth volume of the Lotus Sutra (308-9)

If a woman relies upon this sutra, the Lotus, and never slanders the Law, then though she may commit the ten evil acts and the five cardinal sins and be guilty of greed and stinginess, jealousy, and anger enough to fill the whole sky in the ten directions, all these faults will blow away like dew on the grass and trees before a great wind, will melt like the three-month-long winter's ice on a summer day. (633)

If one asks, then, what sutra enables one to repay the four debts of gratitude, I would reply that it is none other than the Lotus Sutra, which reveals that women can attain Buddhahood. The eight-year-old daughter of the dragon king [in her reptile form] attained Buddhahood, and the Buddha's aunt, Gautamī, and the nun Yashodharā are given prophecies of the attainment of Buddhahood. Our mothers are human women; they do not belong to the realm of animals, nor have they the bodies of reptiles. If the eight-year-old dragon king's daughter can become a Buddha, then what reason is there to believe that our mothers, through the power of this sutra, cannot become Buddhas? (638)

And now here is a woman who donates a robe to the Lotus Sutra. In future lives she will not only escape the sufferings of the eight cold hells, but in her present life she will be spared major calamities. Her benefits will be such that they extend to her sons and daughters, so that they are dressed in robe upon robe, of colour upon colour! (722)

Although the sun and moon should fall to the ground and Mount Sumeru crumble, there can be no doubt that this woman will attain Buddhahood. It is certain, absolutely certain! (752)

No one who offers the flowers of the field or the incense of tree bark to the Buddha can fail to reach Eagle Peak. And how much truer is this of someone who offers white rice grown with bone-breaking labour by the people, or aged sake, which is like blood wrung from those who brew it. Could there be the slightest doubt that a woman who offers these things to the Buddha and the Lotus Sutra will gain Buddhahood and attain the way? (752)

In the case of a woman, if jealousy piles up, she will turn into a poisonous snake. But if she gains repeated merit through offerings to the Lotus Sutra, then how can she fail to follow in the wake of the dragon king's daughter? (753)

In the five thousand or seven thousand volumes of sutras expounded by the Buddha in the course of his preaching life, it is nowhere stated that a woman can attain Buddhahood. Only in the Lotus Sutra did he say that women could become Buddhas. (812)

Among the heavenly bodies [at night], the Lotus Sutra is comparable to the moon; among persons it is comparable to the king. Among mountains it is Mount Sumeru, among waters, the great ocean. And if so wonderful a sutra as this declares that women may attain Buddhahood, then what does it matter whether all the other sutras look down on them? Though thieves, housebreakers, burglars, beggars, or lepers may despise you, if the ruler of the nation praises you, you should rather rejoice, should you not? (812)

Now, Nichigen-nyo [...] because you wish to pray for [peace and security in] your present existence, you are without doubt assuring the same in your next existence as well. Among all the 2,994,830 women of Japan, you should think of yourself as number one. (813)

The Buddha will not inhabit the body of a heartless woman. But a woman who upholds the Lotus Sutra is like pure water; the moon of Shakyamuni Buddha will reside there. (885)

Now here is a woman who, longing for the Lotus Sutra, will surely become a Buddha. As I have explained many times, I am, alas, very lax in writing. And you have been most kind to the priests in my following. I do not know how to thank you. What impresses me most is that, though you are a woman, you made the journey all the way here. There are reasons why I have been exiled to this distant place. But in view of the great devotion you have shown in journeying here, I can only express my gratitude. (1030)

The great distances these persons travelled are indicative of their devotion. But these were all men, and those are the deeds of ones who were manifestations of Buddhas or bodhisattvas. You, however, are a woman, though it is hard to tell whether you are such a manifestation or an ordinary mortal. How great must be the good karma you accumulated in past lives! There are, to be sure, tales of women in past times who, pursuing a man they loved, journeyed a thousand miles, or changed into a stone, a tree, a bird, or a serpent. (1030)

Work

I was most delighted to hear that your lord, who in the past has treated you with enmity, has once more admitted you to the company of those in his service, and that you are called upon to serve him not for a mere day or two but without interruption. I cannot tell you how this pleases me. Uemon no Tayū went against his father's wishes, but as a result of a single word from above, he was pardoned and taken back into favour. You, on the other hand, have been viewed with enmity for a number of years now, and I heard that the situation last winter was very serious. Yet now you are called into the service of your lord day after day. What are we to make of this? Surely it is all due to the designs of the heavenly gods and the power of the Lotus Sutra, is it not? (730)

It is like the case of those who take service in the palace of the ruler and labour diligently there. Some are rewarded by the ruler's favour and some are not. But if any of them commits the slightest error, it is quite certain that that person will be punished. It is the same way with the Lotus Sutra. No matter how fervently a person may appear to put faith in it, if, knowingly or unknowingly, he has dealings with the enemies of the Lotus Sutra, he will undoubtedly end up in the hell of incessant suffering. (778-9)

My greatest concern, however, is whether or not you are getting along well with your lord. If there is no trouble between the two of you, that will be the best news possible. (1028)

Worldview

Though over two thousand years have already gone by since the Buddha passed into extinction, where there is a person who has faith in the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha's voice still lingers there, and hour by hour, minute by minute, instant by instant that person hears the Buddha assuring him that he, the Buddha, has never died. Even though that person may not in his mind be meditating upon the principle of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, he will everywhere illumine the entire realm of phenomena in ten directions. All these virtues pertain solely to the persons who practice the Lotus Sutra. (121)

With regard to my doctrine, my great desire is to enable each person in this country of Japan to take faith in it, and I believe that my wish is about to be realized. (352)

Not only is society in general restless, but also, whether it is the farmers or residents of your estate required because the shrine is under construction, or whether it is the scarcity of food or your farming duties, I fear you have no time to spare, and yet you worry about what it must be like for me in my dwelling in the mountains. In the same way that a bird cares for its eggs, that one pours oil into a lamp, that rain falls on withered grasses, or that one offers milk to a starving child, you are extending the life of the Lotus Sutra, and thus making offerings to the Buddhas of the three existences. This means, I think, that your benefit is that of opening the eyes of all the living beings in the ten directions. No words can express how sublime this is. It is wonderful indeed! (590)

Having seen the general trend of events from some time past, I determined to risk my personal safety in order to repay the debt I owe the nation. (609)

Ever since I became aware of the reason for this situation, moved by feelings of pity and compassion, I have explained the matter in no uncertain terms to all my followers who are qualified to receive such information, so that knowledge of it has gradually spread until it has even reached the ears of the ruler of the nation. (622)

I, Nichiren, have done likewise. I spoke out because I thought I could help my native country of Japan. (775)

We, Nisshū and the others of our group, have now abandoned these lesser sutras and read and recite only the Lotus Sutra, recommending this practice to all the world and chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (825)

The fourth volume of the Lotus Sutra says, "If after the Buddha has passed into extinction one can understand the meaning of this sutra, one will be the eyes of the world for heavenly and human beings." Nichiren, who propagates the daimoku, the heart and core of the Lotus Sutra, throughout the country of Japan—is he not the "eyes of the world for heavenly and human beings"? (927)

I, Nichiren, have done nothing else, but have laboured solely to put the five or seven characters of Myoho-rengo-kyo into the mouths of all the living beings of the country of Japan. In doing so, I have shown the kind of compassion that a mother does when she labours to put milk into the mouth of her infant child. (931)

The Land of the Moon is another name for India, the place where the Buddha made his appearance in the world. The Land of the Sun is another name for Japan. Is there any reason why a sage should not appear here? The moon moves from the west eastward, a sign of how the Buddhism of India spread in an easterly direction. The sun rises in the east, an auspicious sign of how the Buddhism of Japan is destined to return to the Land of the Moon. The light of the moon is not very bright, for the Buddha taught [the Lotus Sutra in India] for only eight years of his life. But the light of the sun is brilliant, outshining the moon, an auspicious sign of how the Buddhism of Japan is destined to illuminate the long darkness of [the Latter Day of the Law, which begins with] the fifth five-hundred-year period. (936)

But whatever may become of the country, I have no doubt that the Lotus Sutra will spread throughout the land. (1028)

Youth and Children

In the eighth volume of the Lotus Sutra, in the “King Wonderful Adornment” chapter, we are told how King Wonderful Adornment and his consort, Queen Pure Virtue, were guided to the correct teaching by their two sons, Pure Storehouse and Pure Eye. Now you have been blessed with this daughter, Lady Kyō’ō, who can act as a filial child, carrying on your line in this present existence, and in your next existence guiding you to the attainment of Buddhahood. (457)

I was unable to restrain my tears, thinking how important it is that people have fine children. King Wonderful Adornment was led to the way of the Buddha by his two sons. (495)

The two little boys Virtue Victorious and Invincible presented an offering of a mud pie to the Buddha, and as a result they were reborn as the great king Ashoka, ruler of one third of the continent of Jambudvīpa [and as his consort]. Bodhisattva Learned Youth presented five lotus blossoms as an offering to Fixed Light Buddha and thereby attained Buddhahood, becoming Shakyamuni, our present lord of teachings. (499)

Long ago, the boy called Virtue Victorious fashioned a mud pie and offered it as alms to Shakyamuni Buddha, and later he was reborn as King Ashoka, ruler of Jambudvīpa, and in the end became a Buddha. (653)

Therefore, for a period of some twenty years, from the time I was twelve or sixteen until I was thirty-two, I travelled from province to province, from temple to temple, visiting Kamakura, Kyoto, Mount Hiei, Onjō-ji, Mount Kōya, and Shitennō-ji and studying their doctrines. (766-7)

The great monarch named King Ashoka ruled over nearly the whole continent of Jambudvīpa, where the sun shines down. In a past existence, when the king was a boy of five named Virtue Victorious, he presented a mud pie to Shakyamuni Buddha as an offering. Because of this, he was reborn as a great king. This little boy had no profound motive in what he did but acted in a spirit of play. But because the Buddha is so venerable a being, from this one trifling act the boy was able to receive such a splendid reward. The Lotus Sutra is superior to the Buddha in venerability, as the moon in its light surpasses the stars or the sun surpasses a lamp. Your motive in sending these gifts far surpasses that of the boy Virtue Victorious. As a result, your late husband, the lay priest, has no doubt attained Buddhahood. And your only daughter will enjoy a long and happy life, and will be known as a child worthy of her father. Though she is still young, she knows how to treat her mother with filial devotion, and will no doubt aid her father as well in his next existence. (816)

As you are well aware, from the time I was young I have had my heart set on learning, and in addition I prayed before the statue of Bodhisattva Space Treasury that I might become the wisest person in Japan. I was twelve then, and had various reasons for offering such a prayer, but I will not go into them here. (1050)