

The True Object of Worship
- *Kanjin no Honzon Sho* -

Lecture 1 of 3 from [Selected Lectures on the Goshō](#), vol. 1.

Prime Point of Faith

Throughout the world, members of the Soka Gakkai observe 1978 as the second "Year of Study." It seems especially suitable to begin the year by studying together a passage from *Kanjin no Honzon Sho* (The True Object of Worship). As he made clear in this treatise, Nichiren Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon (the object of worship) to save all people in the Latter Day of the Law. This is an article of faith for us, and a doctrinal pillar of our belief I give this lecture in the light of guidance received from High Priest Nittatsu, who alone carries the heritage of Nichiren Shoshu.

By way of introduction, let me expand upon the meaning of kanjin no honzon, which might be literally rendered as "the object of worship for the observation of one's mind." In this, or any, discussion we must never lose sight of our single most important truth: the ultimate principle of Buddhism is Nam-myoho-rence-kyo of the Three Great Secret Laws, and Nichiren Daishonin embodied it as the object of worship so that all succeeding generations could attain Buddhahood. The prime point of our faith and practice is that object of worship, and throughout the Latter Day of the Law, no other principle can lead us to Buddhahood.

Honzon, or object of worship, means something which one reveres above all, something to which one devotes one's life. The Daishonin expounded in the Ongi Kuden (his oral teachings of the Lotus Sutra, compiled by Nikko Shonin): "Nam derives from Sanskrit and signifies devotion. There are two objects of devotion: the Person, which is Shakyamuni, and the Law, which is the Lotus Sutra." The Daishonin used "Shakyamuni" and "Buddha" to mean exactly the same thing whenever he talked about the Lotus Sutra from the viewpoint of his own enlightenment. In the above quotation "Shakyamuni" indicates not Gautama Buddha of India, but the original Buddha who revealed the supreme teaching of Nam-myoho-rence-kyo as hidden within the Juryo chapter of the Lotus Sutra. If the original Buddha appeared in the Latter Day of the Law as Nichiren Daishonin, then what is the Lotus Sutra referred to in the passage above? It is not the twenty-eight-chapter Lotus Sutra expounded by Gautama Buddha, for the Daishonin wrote in Reply to Lord Ueno, "Now in the Latter Day of the Law neither the Lotus Sutra nor the other sutras are valid. Nam-myoho-rence-kyo alone is valid." Whenever the Daishonin speaks of spreading the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Day, he means the essence of the sutra, Nam-myoho-rence-kyo. Thus, "devotion to Shakyamuni and the Lotus Sutra" means "devotion to Nichiren Daishonin and Nam-myoho-rence-kyo."

As you read through the Goshō you will find that, depending on the situation, the Daishonin sometimes explains the object of worship in terms of the Person and at other times in terms of the Law. The following passages speak of the object of worship in terms of the Person: "The object of worship in the Juryo chapter is Shakyamuni, the Buddha appearing in this world who has possessed the three enlightened properties of life* since time without beginning" (from On the Three Great Secret Laws); "Throughout the world as well as in Japan all people should revere Shakyamuni of true Buddhism as the object of worship" (from Requital for the Buddha's Favor).

*The property of the Law (hosshin), the property of wisdom (hoshin) and the property of action (ojin). Hosshin is the truth of a Buddha's life; hoshin is the wisdom to perceive the truth; while ojin is the merciful actions of a Buddha to save the people and the physical body which manifests the Buddha's life in this world for that purpose.

On the other hand, Debates on the Object of Worship discusses the object of worship in terms of the Law. It reads, "Question: What should common mortals in the evil-filled Latter Day of the Law take as their object of worship? Answer: They should make the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra their object of worship." By "the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra" the Daishonin means the Law of Nam-myoho-rence-kyo.

The Daishonin describes the object of worship alternately as the Person and the Law in order to clearly establish that the Person and the Law are united in the Gohonzon; or, the Person is the Law, and the Law is the Person. Nam-myoho-rence-kyo is the life of Nichiren Daishonin,

and he embodied it in the form of a mandala. That is the Gohonzon. The Ongi Kuden passage quoted above assumes the oneness of the Person and the Law, as the Daishonin declares elsewhere in the same Goshō: "The supreme title of the Buddha who is originally endowed with the three enlightened properties of life is Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō."

With regard to the unity of the Person and the Law embodied in the Gohonzon, the Daishonin states in *The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon*: "The Great Teacher Dengyō wrote, 'The entity of ichinen sanzen is the Buddha who obtained enlightenment for himself, and that Buddha assumes no august attributes.' Therefore this Gohonzon is the supreme mandala never before known, for it has not appeared until more than twenty-two hundred and twenty years after the Buddha's death." "Ichinen sanzen" represents the Law, and the "Buddha," enlightened to the Law, Buddha to save people and the physical body which manifests the Buddha's represents the Person --- the Buddha is one with the Law.

Here we can conclude that Nichiren Daishonin realized that he himself was the Buddha who embodied the Mystic Law. He was also the Buddha endowed with the three enlightened properties of life. In the Ongi Kuden, he identified that Buddha, as the votary of the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Day of the Law, to be himself. The Daishonin embodied his enlightened life in the form of the Gohonzon.

Reply to Kyo'o, which was sent to Shijo Kingo and his wife, reads: "I, Nichiren, have inscribed my life in sumi, so believe in the Gohonzon with your whole heart. The Buddha's will is the Lotus Sutra, but the soul of Nichiren is nothing other than Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō."

Believing wholeheartedly in the teaching contained in these passages, we worship the Gohonzon as the manifestation of Nichiren Daishonin's life. With this conviction, it is possible to say that Nichiren Daishonin resides even today within the Grand Main Temple at Taiseki-ji -- as the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary. The successive high priests of the Head Temple are entitled to transcribe the Dai-Gohonzon so that the Gohonzon is enshrined at temples, community centers and individual homes throughout the world. There is no need to lament not being alive during the lifetime of Nichiren Daishonin, nor should anyone regret not living near the place where the Daishonin made his advent and where the Dai-Gohonzon exists. More importantly, I would like you to be assured that no matter the place or age in which you live, so long as you embrace the Gohonzon and pray to it, you are in the eternal land of the Buddha. Be convinced that you rise with the Buddha every morning and you spend all day, every day, together with the Buddha.

If the Gohonzon is Nichiren Daishonin's life, and if the Gohonzon embodies the oneness of Person and Law, then the Daishonin embodied the same fusion within himself. Hence, the Gohonzon is the entity of ichinen sanzen. As Dengyō stated, "The entity of ichinen sanzen is the Buddha who obtained enlightenment for himself," and Nichiren Daishonin is that Buddha.

It is extremely difficult for an ordinary person to try and fathom the Daishonin's spirit and behavior, but I would venture to guess that the life-or-death struggle he fought- and won-over twenty years, from the time of his declaration of true Buddhism until the Tatsunokuchi Persecution and the Sado Exile, confirmed to himself his identity as the object of worship in the form of the Person. By confronting and overcoming terrible, continuing persecutions, the Daishonin lived out all the predictions in the Lotus Sutra of the trials that those who propagate the Mystic Law in the Latter Day are destined to meet.

In the Hosshi (10th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra we read, "Since hatred and jealousy abound even during the lifetime of the Buddha, how much worse will it be in the world after his passing?" The Hoto (11th) chapter mentions "the six difficult and nine easy acts," and the Kanji (13th) chapter contains a twenty-line verse which describes the three powerful enemies. To have actually lived the sutra's words during his activities as its votary reconfirmed the Daishonin's realization that both the originally enlightened Buddha indicated in the sutra and the entity of ichinen sanzen revealed during the ceremony in the air are his own life.

A passage in *The Opening of the Eyes* says, "Although Nichiren's knowledge of the Lotus Sutra is ten million times less than that of either T'ien-t'ai or Dengyō, his perseverance and supreme compassion are awe-inspiring." Because of his supreme compassion to save all people from their suffering, the Daishonin endured the worst sort of adversity for more than twenty years. Persecutions began from the moment he engaged in the propagation of the Mystic Law. In

Buddhism, opposition by those in power is traditionally considered the most severe and unpredictable of the "three powerful enemies." The Daishonin incurred the wrath of that enemy when he first remonstrated with the government, submitting his treatise, *Rissho Ankoku Ron* (The Security of the Land through the Propagation of True Buddhism). Problems might never have arisen had the Daishonin not translated his boundless compassion into action. As he later wrote in the *Gosho*, "My present exile is not because of any crime." He did not incur the anger of the government for breach of law or custom, but because he expressed his compassion through his actions. The government's fear of him only reflected the magnitude of the actions he took.

Observing One's Mind

We, his disciples who live true Buddhism throughout the world, are heir to his great compassion, and so we, too, will inevitably encounter some opposition. We must encourage each other to grow strong with the conviction that the validity of our Buddhist faith and practice will be borne out only when we unflinchingly persevere through all circumstances.

By surviving the Tatsunokuchi Persecution and the Sado Exile, Nichiren Daishonin fulfilled all the predictions of the Lotus Sutra as Bodhisattva Jogyo, and then he revealed his identity as the original Buddha. It was after Tatsunokuchi and before Sado that he inscribed the first Gohonzon.

The invincible life-condition of the original Buddha was already within the depths of his being. The late president Josei Toda, in a lecture on a passage of *To the People of Seicho-ji Temple*, stated that when the Daishonin, as an acolyte at that temple, prayed to Bodhisattva Kokuzo to become the wisest man in Japan, he already realized that he was the original Buddha.

Actually, the Daishonin could not have declared the beginning of true Buddhism at the age of thirty-two had he not attained the necessary life-condition. He knew all too well that the age of the Latter Day of the Law had already come, when prophecy foretold a decline in the power of Shakyamuni's Buddhism; he knew it would have been entirely inappropriate to bring back Shakyamuni's Buddhism as a new set of beliefs. He was able to bring to the people a totally new kind of Buddhism because he was convinced of his identity and his mission to save all people of the Latter Day of the Law. Still, the Daishonin manifested himself as the original Buddha only after living to the letter the predictions in the Lotus Sutra for a period of some twenty years. After the incident at Tatsunokuchi and banishment to Sado, he cast off the transient identity as an envoy of the Buddha and actually declared his true identity as the original Buddha.

Nichiren Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon so that all generations born in the Latter Day could attain Buddhahood. His own contemporaries were personally able to experience his greatness, and because he was naturally bound to die, he inscribed his own life in the form of the Gohonzon for posterity. We often think of the Gohonzon as a physical representation of the Law, but it is actually the embodiment of both the Person and the Law. "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, Nichiren" is boldly inscribed down the center of the Gohonzon; "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo" is the Law, and "Nichiren" is the Person.

The Daishonin considered the fundamental quality of the Gohonzon to be the oneness of Person and Law. But how should we, who worship the Gohonzon, consider it? According to the Daishonin we should take the viewpoint of *kanjin*, literally, to see one's mind; hence the title of this work on the Gohonzon, *Kanjin no Honzon Sho*.

What is the meaning of *kanjin*? A passage from this *Gosho* says, "*Kanjin* means to observe one's own mind and to find the Ten Worlds within it." The Daishonin added that just as a person cannot see his own face without a mirror, one cannot see the Ten Worlds in his own mind without the mirror of Buddhism. Another passage in the same *Gosho* reads, ". . . various sutras make reference here and there to the six paths and the four noble worlds [that constitute the Ten Worlds], but only in the clear mirror of the Lotus Sutra and T'ien-t'ai's *Maha Shikan* (Great Concentration and Insight) can one see his own three thousand conditions --- the Ten Worlds, their mutual possession, and the thousand factors."

As is clear from this passage, *kanjin* means to see *ichinen sanzen*, three thousand potential states, in a momentary existence of life. Yet, *ichinen sanzen* is the truth of one's life, confined to the realm of theory. The Daishonin concludes that *Nam-myoho-enge-kyo* is the concrete

entity of ichinen sanzen, the ultimate reality containing three thousand potential states of life. Therefore, "to observe one's own mind and to find the Ten Worlds within it" means perceiving one's life to be the entity of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

A human being in any one of the Ten Worlds has the ultimate entity, Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, in the depths of his life. The theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra tells us, in fact, that each individual human being is originally an entity of the Mystic Law. In the core of the theoretical teaching, the Hoben chapter, is the phrase, "all phenomena reveal the true entity." Nichiren Daishonin construes that phrase as expressing the ultimate truth. That is why he brings it into The True Entity of Life, in the following way: "All beings and their environments in any of the Ten Worlds, from Hell at the lowest to Buddhahood at the highest, are, without exception, the manifestations of Myoho-enge-kyo.... All phenomena are themselves manifestations of Myoho-enge-kyo. This is the meaning of 'all phenomena reveal the true entity.'"

The existing fact that every individual person is inherently the entity of the Mystic Law is not the same as the actual attainment of Buddhahood. If it meant Buddhahood, then there would be no difference between the Buddha and the common man, nor would there be any need for Buddhist faith and practice. The question is whether or not each individual awakens to the realization that he or she is an entity of the Mystic Law. The Kanjin no Honzon Sho describes the attainment of the supreme state of Buddhahood in one's own life. When people awaken to their true entity, they attain Buddhahood; one who does not remains an ordinary mortal. This is, as you know, what the Daishonin means in The True Entity of Life: "There is a clear distinction between a Buddha and a common mortal, in that a common mortal is deluded while a Buddha is enlightened. The common mortal fails to realize that he himself possesses both the entity and the function of the Buddha's three properties."

A passage occurs in On Attaining Buddhahood: "If you wish to free yourself from the sufferings of birth and death you have endured through eternity and attain supreme enlightenment in this lifetime, you must awaken to the mystic truth which has always been within your life. This truth is Myoho-enge-kyo. Chanting Myoho-enge-kyo will therefore enable you to grasp the mystic truth within you."

To "awaken to the mystic truth which has always been within your life," and to realize that you have always been Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, is to attain supreme enlightenment. Awakening to the fact that you are the entity of the Mystic Law is to observe your own mind (kanjin). Kanjin, then, ultimately means attaining Buddhahood.

Thus, the object of worship "for the observation of one's mind" exists so that the people in any of the Ten Worlds can see themselves as the entity of the Mystic Law and attain Buddhahood. No matter what one's life-condition is, the Gohonzon enables anyone and everyone to equally attain Buddhahood, or enlightenment. This became possible for the first time when Nichiren Daishonin established the object of worship.

Faith Means Embracing

You may perhaps know that when the twenty-sixth High Priest, Nichikan Shonin, explained how to read the title, he said, "Consider the word for your inheritance from me." His definition was, of course, intended to refute misinterpretations, such as "observing the object of worship in one's mind" or "observing one's mind through the treatise on the object of worship."

More important, he declared that the Gohonzon is "the object of worship 'for' observing one's mind," not "the object of worship as a theoretical truth." The latter title relates to theoretical revelation of ichinen sanzen, the surface realization gleaned from the Lotus Sutra, or "Buddhism of the harvest." Shakyamuni's Buddhism of the harvest means that he expounded his enlightenment as an effect, while the Daishonin's philosophy, Buddhism of the seed, teaches the cause of enlightenment and instructs the common mortal in his quest for the ultimate state of life. In contrast, Shakyamuni's object of worship is expounded in the literal interpretation of the Lotus Sutra. "The object of worship for observing one's mind" is the actual embodiment of ichinen sanzen, or Buddhism of the seed, which was revealed in the depths of the Lotus Sutra.

The vital point here is that the inscription by Nichiren Daishonin of the object of worship is the embodiment of ichinen sanzen, as he himself revealed in order to sow the seeds of

enlightenment. Shakyamuni Buddha's object of worship is theoretical ichinen sanzen, expounded so that others might reap the harvest of enlightenment.

This is a vast subject, actually. All religions have objects of worship that are usually expressions or symbols of some supernatural or external power governing life and human destiny. People have a subservient attitude in prayer when asking for salvation, forgiveness and compassion, or in some cases, try by subservience to satisfy those powers and avoid their wrath. Such attitudes have contributed to creating the special position of the clergy as intermediaries between man and his object of worship. The pursuit of external objects symbolizing the supernatural inevitably leads to the formation of a strict hierarchy in the religious world. This extended to the secular world, where the aristocracy, especially chieftains and kings, were often said to be sanctioned by the divine grace, which led to rigid social stratification as well. That is why so many religious groups developed negative, inhumane ideas about human dignity and equality.

The "theoretical ichinen sanzen" revealed in Shakyamuni's Buddhism of the harvest is completely different from those established religions. However, since Shakyamuni expounded his enlightenment as an effect, his object of worship became separated from common mortals still suffering in delusion. The enlightened were inevitably regarded as special and ideal, much removed from the lives of ordinary people. Consequently, this type of view drives people into the same pitfalls encountered in other religions. T'ien-t'ai's Buddhism provides a good example of this. It was based on the Buddhism of the harvest and became a religion of the privileged class. It was inevitable that it would appeal only to emperors, nobles and distinguished individuals, and alienate the common people.

In contrast, "the object of worship for observing one's mind" is the life of ichinen sanzen, the source of enlightenment. According to Nichikan Shonin, the "observation of one's mind" in this context is the kanjin of the ordinary people. "The object of worship for observing one's mind," therefore, does not exist outside our lives; it is identical to the Mystic Law which has always dwelt in the lives of all people. That is why the Daishonin declares that there is no distance between the object of worship and people. A person need only chant daimoku to the Gohonzon morning and evening to awaken in his being the entity of the Mystic Law.

Such awakening needs sufficient wisdom, however. The Lotus Sutra tells us that "faith is the key to wisdom." One must "use faith instead of one's limited understanding" and "gain entrance through faith." Nichiren Daishonin redefines "faith" in concrete terms as "embracing" the Gohonzon. To "embrace" the Gohonzon is to observe one's own mind, that is, to awaken to the fact that you yourself embody the Mystic Law. This is what we call juji soku kanjin, embracing the Gohonzon is in itself enlightenment.

Finally, I want to discuss kanjin no honzon in relation to the Three Great Secret Laws. Three comprise the Gohonzon which is the object of worship of the supreme teaching; chanting daimoku with firm faith in the Gohonzon; and kaidan, the sanctuary of the supreme teaching, which is the place where the Gohonzon resides. In essence, however, all three are contained in the One Great Secret Law: the Gohonzon-the object of worship for observing one's mind. The object of worship of the supreme teaching is the life of the Buddha of absolute freedom who is in perfect harmony with the universe. The daimoku of the supreme teaching is Nam-myoho-renge-kyo --- the name of the original Buddha enlightened in the three properties of life. That is why Nichiren Daishonin stated in the Debates on the Object of Worship: "They should make the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra the object of worship."

Similarly, dan of kaidan (literally, sanctuary for ordination) is the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit mandala, and essentially it means that the Gohonzon is the "sanctuary." The idea of sanctuary has its origin in ancient India, from the altar that was set up as a place where priests received precepts. It is said that the Four Heavenly Kings* were positioned at the four corners of the sanctuary to ward off demons, and a statue of the Buddha was enshrined in the center to dignify the ceremony for priests taking vows.

*Jikokuten (Skt., Dhritarashtra), Komokuten (Virupaksha), Bishamonten (Vaishravana) and Zochoten (Virudhaka), lords of the four heavens, said to live halfway down the four slopes of Mt. Sumeru. Their respective functions are to protect the world, to see through evil and punish those who commit evil, to listen to the sutras and protect the place of practice, and to relieve

people of their sufferings. In the Darani (26th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra, they pledged to protect those who embrace the sutra.

Various people flanked the Buddha to indicate his status. As the Daishonin stated in *The True Object of Worship*, the Buddha who preached the Hinayana sutras was flanked by Mahakashyapa and Ananda; when expounding provisional Mahayana and the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutras he was flanked by Bodhisattva Monju and Bodhisattva Fugen.

The object of worship, to which the original Buddha is central, is flanked by Shakyamuni Buddha and Taho Buddha, who are again flanked by the Four Great Bodhisattvas, Unknown in the Former and Middle Days of the Law, this object of worship is the Gohonzon which Nichiren Daishonin established to enable all people to see the truth of their lives. As High Priest Nittatsu has declared, this Gohonzon is the High Sanctuary. Therefore the Dai-Gohonzon is called "the Gohonzon of the Three Great Secret Laws" and, again, that is why all three can be identified with the One Great Secret Law.

Clearly, then, the Gohonzon of the Three Great Secret Laws is the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary that Nichiren Daishonin inscribed on October 12, 1279. As he revealed in *Persecutions Befalling the Buddha*, that was the purpose of the Daishonin's advent. With the inscription of the Dai-Gohonzon, the great law was established to save all mankind throughout all time.

Nichikan Shonin made the following statement about the greatness of the Dai-Gohonzon:

This is the origin of all Buddhas and sutras and the place to which they return. The blessings of the myriad of Buddhas and sutras throughout space and time, without a single exception, all return to this Gohonzon, which provides the seed of Buddhahood and is hidden in the sutra, just as the tree's hundreds and thousands of branches and leaves all return to the same root. This Gohonzon provides great and boundless benefits. Its mystic functions are vast and profound. so if you take faith in this Gohonzon and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo even for a while, no prayer will go unanswered, no sin will remain unforgiven, all good fortune will be bestowed, and all righteousness proven.

Let us all know only the greatest joy in being able to see the Dai-Gohonzon, and never faltering, let us practice our faith all the more intensely until we realize with invincible conviction that to embrace the Gohonzon is to attain Buddhahood. Let us strive to propagate the great law wherever it is in our power to do so, and thus achieve utmost fulfillment in our lives. Deepening our faith this year, let us study harder than ever before and work courageously in our activities for shakubuku so that this year will be one of pride and confidence.

Attitude toward Study

This is one of the most important passages of this treatise, centering on the principle that "embracing the Gohonzon is attaining Buddhahood." First, I urge you to learn the attitude you should take toward reading and studying this writing. Nichiren Daishonin himself discussed this in his cover letter dated April 26, 1273-one day after he wrote *The True Object of Worship*. I would like to look especially at those passages which relate to this subject.

In the beginning of his letter the Daishonin expressed his thanks for gifts --- summer kimono, sumi inksticks, writing brushes --- and stated: "I have written down some of my thoughts concerning the true object of worship and I am sending the treatise to you (Toki), Ota, Soya and the others." Because he deliberately said "some of my thoughts," one may get the impression that this treatise is relatively insignificant. It is his modesty, however, that made him speak so casually of one of his most vitally important teachings, into which he poured his heart and soul. "It concerns a very important matter, the purpose of my advent. Only those who are strong in faith and open-minded should be allowed to read it." He warns that the content of the treatise demands serious reading, because it is a statement of his own enlightened life-condition.

He knew that Toki, Ota, Soya and the others mentioned in the letter were strong in faith, and therefore he allowed them to read the treatise. Nichiren Daishonin strictly warned them to allow "only those who are strong in faith and open-minded" to share it --- those who

thoroughly believe in the Daishonin and persist in faith throughout their lives without faltering, no matter what happens to them.

Let me stress two relevant points in your study: (1) Strengthen your faith so that you can carry it out throughout your life, and (2) sharing the great life force and compassion of the original Buddha, Nichiren Daishonin, develop an unquenchable passion for propagation in this age.

The cover letter also states, "The treatise contains much criticism and few answers. What it reveals, however, has never been heard of before, and it is bound to startle those who read or hear of it. Even if you show it to others, never let three or four persons read it together at a time."

In the history of Buddhism the ultimate truth, the ultimate order, was considered to "beggar all description and defy all imagination," lying beyond the reach of human words and intellect. Even less conceivable was the possibility that it might materialize in a tangible form. But Nichiren Daishonin embodied it as the Gohonzon so that all people could comprehend the truth by chanting daimoku to it. That the Gohonzon actually did become a material reality is so difficult to believe or understand that neither existing knowledge nor human reasoning can explain it. Nichiren Daishonin knew that something so incredible would only create suspicion, and that might develop into disbelief and slander, eventually dooming many to the pit of hell. That is why he warns: "Never let three or four persons read it together at a time."

Saying, "Only those who are strong in faith and open minded should be allowed to read it," the Daishonin stressed that only believers who can discuss it together frankly should be allowed to do so. When Nichikan Shonin lectured on The True Object of Worship, he began by confirming the real meaning of the Daishonin's strict warning. Then he said, sensing the bond among his listeners that united them in the same goal and strong, seeking faith, "I feel as if all of you, more than forty people, were one person.

The same is true of ourselves. We are a body of believers who have single-minded faith in the Gohonzon, and united we are working to achieve the noble goal of kosen-rufu. Moreover, I am convinced that Nichiren Daishonin would feel tremendous joy in knowing that such a great number of people, who have pure faith and unity, read and study a work that reveals his innermost enlightenment.

Nichiren Daishonin closed the letter by saying: "In the twenty-two hundred and twenty odd years since the Buddha's passing, the ideas contained in the heart of this treatise have never been revealed before. Despite all the official persecutions befalling me, I expound it now at the beginning of the fifth half-millennium, when the time is ripe for its propagation. I hope those who read it will remain firm in their faith so that both master and disciples can climb Eagle Peak together to pay their respects to Shakyamuni, Taho, and all the other Buddhas in the universe."

The great compassion in this work, the Daishonin's indomitable efforts to leave this letter to posterity even in the face of such severe trials as a government exile to Sado Island, never fails to move me when I read it. He wrote it even while day and night he was hounded by followers of heretical sects, such as Nembutsu, trying to take his life. The quality of the paper of the original text, which consists of seventeen pages, differs between the first and second halves, and the Daishonin had to use both sides of the paper, testifying to destitution so severe he could not even obtain the necessary brushes and paper. No difficulty was too much, however; he encouraged anyone who read the letter to carry out his faith and attain Buddhahood no matter what, since he was emerging into the very core of Buddhism.

The so-called "three Buddhas" --- Shakyamuni Buddha, Taho Buddha and all the other Buddhas in the universe --- also stand for the three properties of the Buddha --- the property of the Law, the property of wisdom, and the property of action. They also represent the Buddha with the three enlightened properties of life. "To pay their respects to the three Buddhas" means to awaken to the truth that you are the Buddha with the three enlightened properties, that is, to attain Buddhahood. To "climb Eagle Peak" means that by attaining Buddhahood, our environment also becomes the Buddha's land, clearly signifying the oneness between human life and its environment.

The text we are studying now is just a part of the whole treatise, Kanjin no Honzon Sho, or The True Object of Worship, but because it is the most essential, we can discover the essence of the entire writing by studying it. It is important to be aware that Nichiren Daishonin wrote this treatise during his exile to Sado Island. The Daishonin revealed the object of worship amidst great persecution, and in so doing he taught us the principle of Buddhism: difficulties or obstacles lead us to enlightenment. To me, the profound meaning contained in the treatise comes through powerfully when I consider the period in his life from the time of this writing to the inscription of the Dai-Gohonzon.

The Gohonzon we revere embodies the original Buddha's life-condition, exalted far above any persecution resulting from the devilish nature hidden in the government authority. When we pray to the Gohonzon, therefore, we are taking our difficulties and making them the cause for human revolution. Studying The True Object of Worship has taught me how inexorably true that is, and that is why I urge you to study it also, and preserve your faith and keep it always strong, no matter what the circumstances, so that you can fill the pages of your life with satisfaction and meaning.

The Seed of Wisdom

Question: You have not yet fully answered my question about the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds.

"Embracing the Gohonzon is attaining Buddhahood" is the central principle of true Buddhism, as well as the most important teaching in The True Object of Worship. Nichiren Daishonin uses questions and answers to bring out the meaning of this teaching. In the section that precedes the question quoted above, he posed another question: it is difficult to believe and understand that the sacred life of a Buddha exists within all ordinary people. In summary, the Buddha's benefit, power, wisdom and dignity are so magnificent, vast and profound that it is inconceivable for us, ordinary mortals, to possess the same supreme condition of life.

In answer to this question, Nichiren Daishonin quotes passages from sutras. A passage from the Muryogi Sutra, which opens the Lotus Sutra, states that the king of all Buddhas and the queen of the Lotus Sutra join together to give birth to a bodhisattva. The Fugen Sutra, which closes the Lotus Sutra, states: "This Mahayana sutra is the treasure, the eye and the seed of life for all Buddhas in the universe throughout the past, present and future." They are saying that the fortune and virtue of the Buddha are boundless, his wisdom fathomless, and his power vast, but there is some seed, or cause, which has given birth to them all.

According to the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings, attaining each of the Buddha's attributes- fortune, virtue, power, wisdom- requires its own corresponding Buddhist austerity. One had to be born over and over again for an unimaginably long period of time to carry out these austerities. This process is like the growth of a tree. Whereas the provisional sutras attempt to analyze each leaf and branch, the Lotus Sutra looks at the seed, the origin of the branches and the leaves. The statement in the Muryogi Sutra, "Infinite meaning derives from the one Law," is the declaration that the one Law produces infinite fortune and wisdom. The Fugen Sutra states that the fortune, virtue and wisdom of all Buddhas are derived from the one original law, but it is the Lotus Sutra that makes the definitive statement. Furthermore, what the sutra has revealed as the Law, that is, the original seed, is the title of the sutra --- Myoho-rence-kyo, or ultimately Nam-myoho-rence-kyo.

To embrace Myoho-rence-kyo is to embrace the seed of all Buddhas. If Nam-myoho-rence-kyo is planted in the life of a common mortal, he will be endowed with all the fortune, virtue and wisdom of the Buddha; and when it is nurtured with care he will eventually reap the fruit of the benefits and wisdom of Buddhahood. This is the meaning of juji soku kanjin: embracing the Gohonzon, the embodiment of Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, is attaining Buddhahood. In any case, the above quoted passage, "Question: You have not yet . . . ," seeks a definitive answer to the preceding doubt about the possibility of Buddhahood inherent in all people. The questioner demands a full explanation, so that he can dispel all his doubts about the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds.

Human Attributes

Answer: The Muryogi Sutra states: "[If you embrace this sutra,] you will naturally receive the benefits of the six paramitas without having to practice them."

The sentence quoted in the answer appears in the explanation of the seventh of the ten "mystic powers of benefit contained in this sutra" mentioned in the Muryogi Sutra. Needless to say, because the Muryogi Sutra is an introduction to the Lotus Sutra, "this sutra" means the Lotus Sutra, specifically its title, Myoho-enge-kyo. The passage that includes the quoted sentence reads as follows:

If good people, men and women alike, hearing this sutra either during the Buddha's lifetime or after his departure, rejoice, believe and develop a seeking spirit; if they embrace, read, recite, copy, preach and practice its teaching; if they aspire to Buddhahood, manifest all the good properties of life and foster a spirit of great compassion; and if they wish to save all people from suffering, they will naturally receive the benefits of the six paramitas without having to practice them; they will awaken to the law of eternity in themselves; all their delusions of life and death and earthly desires will be immediately destroyed, and they will rise to the seventh stage of bodhisattva practice.

If you carry out faith for others as well as for yourself with joy, seeking spirit and gratitude, you will naturally develop and manifest the benefits of the six paramitas, even though you do not practice all those that are essential to the bodhisattva austerities. This is because "this sutra" or Myoho-enge-kyo contains the treasures of all the Buddhas.

Let me elaborate on the six paramitas. They are six different kinds of practice which the bodhisattvas of Mahayana Buddhism were required to carry out in order to attain Buddhahood. There is even a whole sutra that specifically deals with them alone, and they have been the essential practice in Mahayana Buddhism since ancient times. Paramita is a transliteration of the Sanskrit and stands for "salvation" or "reaching the other shore." "This shore" is the human life-condition, ridden by suffering and illusion, whereas the other shore is nirvana, or the life-condition of enlightenment. Each of the six paramitas must be practiced in order to cross over to the other shore of enlightenment. Do not overlook this point: this passage of the Muryogi Sutra teaches us that those who embrace the Mystic Law do not have to practice the six paramitas as austerities, but that they will naturally acquire all the benefits which would follow from their practice.

Then, what do the six paramitas stand for? Frankly, I think we can say that they represent the attributes which make human beings truly "human." Throughout the ages men have pondered human attributes, and the pursuit of the truth of humanity has spurred men to think, to probe, to write, and countless minds have groped for answers. I think the six paramitas are, in a sense, a systematic answer to their vital quest. They are also the sure guideline for our movement toward human revolution, toward the reformation and completion of an individual self. In short, they provide us with the goals of our human revolution.

The first of the six paramitas is almsgiving. There are three kinds of almsgiving: the almsgiving of treasure, which means material offerings; the almsgiving of the Law, which means preaching and teaching of the Law; and the almsgiving of fearlessness, which means to remove fear and give peace of mind. I will not go into detail, but let me simply remind you that material offerings are not the only means of giving alms. Buddhists place greater emphasis on preaching and teaching of the Law, or removing fear and giving peace of mind.

Material offerings limit salvation to a short period of time. Since material things are limited, they cannot offer complete salvation. Take a famished person, for example. If you give him bread, he can survive only another day. Instead, if you teach him practical skills, he can work and survive throughout his life without being hungry. This is, in a general sense, the almsgiving of the Law. For those who sink into despair so deep that they lose the will to live even when they can earn a living, it is necessary to give alms in the form of fearlessness, since it removes fear and anxiety and gives them hope and peace of mind.

In Beethoven's talks about "joy through suffering," we can be uplifted. His words become, in effect, the almsgiving of fearlessness. The almsgiving of treasure causes a person to rely on another and tends to deprive him of his spirit of independence, whereas the almsgiving of the Law and of fearlessness brings the spirit and ability of independence. Remember that in Buddhism the almsgiving of the Law and of fearlessness is of utmost importance. As we practice our faith, shakubuku, lectures and guidance to introduce and explain Buddhism to others are the almsgiving of the Law, which includes the almsgiving of fearlessness.

Once you embrace the Mystic Law, the practice of almsgiving requires courage. Of course, the spirit of Buddhism is basically compassion, but the late president Toda used to say, "We are common mortals. Even though you talk about practicing compassion, it is easier said than done. Courage goes hand in hand with compassion. Courage leads to compassion." Your courageous and imperturbable work for propagation, in the face of the rough waves which may assail you, is itself the practice of compassion. Keep in your mind the Daishonin's words, "You cannot be cowards and still be Nichiren's disciples," and advance fearlessly in propagation.

The second of the six paramitas is the keeping of precepts. In Buddhism "precept" is construed as "to stem injustice and to stop evil," meaning to extirpate evil karma created by thought, word and deed, and to interdict Buddhists from all vices. Precepts were originally laid down as norms for those who practiced Buddhism. But since priests who renounced the secular life represented those who practiced Buddhism in its early days, precepts were actually laid down as rules to regulate their collective life. That is why they are generally complicated and cover all aspects of life. As the ages passed and situations changed, people began to find it impossible to carry out the precepts. In fact, they gradually became more harmful to human nature than beneficial. This is why Hinayana Buddhism, which is mainly predicated on precepts, passed into oblivion in the Middle and Latter Days of the Law in China and Japan.

This simply explains the fallacy in thinking that precepts postulated under certain circumstances in a certain society can be applied without revision to people in different circumstances. According to the original purpose of precepts, on the contrary, different precepts should be laid down to fit new circumstances.

As the principle of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds shows, the human mind contains both vice and virtue. A passage of Treatment of Illness reads:

Good and evil have coexisted in human life since time immemorial. According to the provisional teachings and the sects based on them, both good and evil remain in one's life through all the grades of the bodhisattva practice up to the stage of togaku, the one just below Buddhahood. Then only the people at and below togaku have some faults or other. In contrast, the Hokke sect based on the Lotus sutra reveals the principle of ichinen sanzen and shows that both good and evil are inherent even in those at the highest stage of myokaku, or enlightenment. The fundamental nature of enlightenment manifests itself as Bonten and Taishaku, whereas the fundamental darkness manifests itself as the Devil of the Sixth Heaven.*

*Most powerful of the devils, who dwells in the highest of the six realms of the world of desire. He works to prevent believers from practicing Buddhism and delights in dominating people at his will.

The Daishonin says that even a Buddha has all of the Ten Worlds and is the entity of ichinen sanzen. The Buddha possesses the life-conditions of Hell, Hunger, Animality and Anger. Much more so in the case of ordinary people. These evil natures are always trying to manifest themselves. They are linked with the basic instincts of material existence, the fundamental motivation for human survival, and therefore their workings are most likely to dominate. Learning, Realization and Bodhisattva, on the contrary, which represent the good side of life, work to transcend ugly characteristics deeply embedded in our life, and thus they have to work against the instinctive human tendency toward evil. It is like trying to counteract the law of gravitation.

Constant effort and precaution are necessary therefore to prevent yourself from gravitating toward your evil nature, like walking on the edge of a cliff. To keep the precepts is like steering a car safely through on a dangerous road.

Generally speaking, duties which one imposes on himself of his own will can be considered precepts. The French writer Romain Rolland wrote in his *Vie de Beethoven*: "Often he spoke of the duty which he imposed on himself to act by means of his art 'for poor humanity, for humanity to come,' to help humanity, to restore human courage, and to shake people off from their sleep and cowardice. He wrote to his nephew, 'Our time needs mighty spirits to lash into action these wretched, beggarly human souls.' "*The duty Beethoven imposed on himself was

a precept for his own life. In modern terms, a precept is self-restraint or self-control, and in that sense it is a vital requisite of man.

*Translated from *Vie de Beethoven* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1920), p. 72.

The third of the six paramitas is perseverance. If you try to scale the highest summit of the human life-condition called Buddhahood, you should naturally be prepared for thorny roads on the way. A proverb says, "It is easy to overcome a robber in the mountains, but difficult to subdue one in the heart." Indeed, the sutras contain innumerable stories about how those who practiced Buddhism had to persevere through great hardships and overcome huge obstacles. The difficulty in perseverance comes out sharply in the story of Shariputra. In his past existence he gave up practicing his faith when he could not bear seeing one of his eyes being thrown away after he had given it to a Brahman as alms.

Shakyamuni Buddha faced and persevered through horrendous persecutions, which are known as "the Nine Great Persecutions." A passage of *On Zenmui Sanzo* states: "The Buddha, as he made his advent in this world, was named Shakyamuni, which means perseverance. He did not censure but forbore the slanders of all the people." In the *Gosho, On Four Kinds of Gratitude*, is the passage: "This world is called saha which means 'enduring.' This is why the Buddha [born in this world] is named Shakyamuni (perseverance)." Nichiren Daishonin stressed forbearance as one of Shakyamuni's most important characteristics.

Nichiren Daishonin, the Buddha of the Latter Day Of the Law, more than anyone else truly and completely epitomized perseverance as he lived through persecutions even greater than anything that befell Shakyamuni Buddha. He made his advent in this evil Latter Day to save the people who slander true Buddhism. Hence the prediction of the Lotus Sutra, "Since hatred and jealousy abound even during the lifetime of the Buddha, how much worse will it be in the world after his passing?"

What I have been talking about so far is the discussion of perseverance in relation to the Buddhist austerities and practice. Broadly speaking, life in this world as a human being is always accompanied by experiences which are undesirable, laborious and painful. But how pitiful are those who take their own lives when they find life unbearable!

We must work together to remove the sources of pain and suffering from our society so that people can be happy in life, and much more, we must try to eliminate the stupidity of fighting and abusing each other. Nonetheless, you must realize that despite your efforts, unavoidable suffering will follow you throughout life. It is vital that man persevere through his suffering, and to bear all hardship and pain in order to live the justice he espouses. This vital requirement is what the third of the six paramitas teaches us.

The fourth of the six paramitas is assiduity. It means to give utmost effort, both physical and spiritual, in practicing ceaselessly the five paramitas, including the following two, meditation and wisdom. Assiduity here means to practice ceaselessly.

I would like to expand on this subject in terms of the way we live. Since we are heir to joy, anger, sorrow and pleasure, all of us are naturally imperfect. A true religion does not suppress and mold these subtle human emotions into a fixed pattern, but cherishes each emotion as it sends the courage and vitality to live directly into the heart, the mother of emotions. Imperfection can even be a positive attribute. Since the human being is imperfect, he needs a progressive spirit, and progress gives meaning to existence. If human beings do not make efforts to advance, human society will be plagued by Animality and Anger. That is why assiduity is so crucial. A top can stand on its tip because it spins rapidly; a bicycle maintains balance when it moves ahead. The same is true of human beings. Have you ever noticed the vibrant voice and fresh, glowing complexion of those who are trying to advance and progress?

The fifth of the six paramitas is meditation, implying concentration on the contemplation of truth. Shakyamuni Buddha gives us a typical example of this paramita of meditation or mental concentration. Abandoning severe ascetic practices, bathing in the Nairanjana River and having gruel offered by Sujata, Shakyamuni was purified both physically and spiritually and entered meditation under the Bodhi tree. Later on, the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai of China established the idea of *isshin sangan* (the wisdom to see the Three Truths in views of the momentary existence of life) and *ichinen sanzen* (three thousand conditions in a momentary

existence of life), stressing specifically the practice of meditation. That is why his teachings are generally referred to as "the Buddhism of the meditation of the mind and the Law."

As has been stated so far, meditation is a vital form of practice which is the final stage of Buddhist austerities. It is also one of the vital requirements for human existence. What is meditation? In a broad sense it is having goals and ideals to achieve, something fundamental to use as a guide for life. Without clear goals and a secure foundation, both the "perseverance" and "assiduity" will eventually be frustrated. Even if "perseverance" survives frustration, a person will eventually end up feeling a sense of aimlessness and futility. First President Tsunesaburo Makiguchi maintained imperturbable mental and spiritual calm even when he was in prison. His exalted life-condition shines through a passage in a letter he sent to his family from prison:

Unlike the time when I was in the custody of the Metropolitan Police Department, I now live alone in a three-tatami-mat room, and as long as I can read, I feel comfortable and satisfied. Please keep our home secure without worrying about me.... In this solitary prison cell, which I feel is for the better, I am able to dedicate myself to contemplation. I strictly observe morning and evening gongyo, and I never neglect making a special prayer.... Faith is first and foremost for both you and me. Even though this is an ordeal it pales into insignificance before Nichiren Daishonin's. Forge your faith all the more strongly. I think it totally inappropriate to lament the present hardship, for we live bathed in vast and boundless blessings. As the sutras and the Goshu teach us, we will certainly see later on through experience that "poison never fails to turn into medicine."

President Makiguchi's clear mind and sublime attitude are a good example of the meditative spirit that comes of living the cause of Buddhism, despite persecution.

People's minds are unstable, and vulnerable to changing situations and groundless rumors, because of their lack of the fundamental guidelines --- the composure of "meditation." As a result, entire societies lose sight of the humanistic way of life and end up hurting and killing one another. The history of humankind has demonstrated the deplorable propensities of man, confirming my belief that we can best contribute to lasting peace through propagation of true Buddhism, the only faith that gives human beings a fundamental support from within.

The last of the six paramitas is wisdom, wisdom which enables one to master all the laws, remove deluded views and perceive truth as it is. The ultimate goal of Buddhist practice is to achieve Buddhahood. Buddha means an awakened or enlightened one, that is, a person who has awakened and attained wisdom. This is made clear by the original Sanskrit word Buddha which derives from budh, meaning enlightenment or perfect wisdom. Hence, another title of the Buddha is the Enlightened One.

Enlightenment or wisdom in contemporary language is often used to mean specific knowledge in physics, economics, mathematics, or any other field. In contrast to that kind of wisdom, which differs according to the field, the ultimate wisdom that is the source of and embraces them all, is the wisdom the Buddha possesses. That is why the Buddha's wisdom is called anuttara-samyak-sambodhi in Sanskrit. Anuttara means to be supreme, the highest; samyak stands for equity and impartiality as well as purity and all-inclusiveness, and sambodhi connotes full awakening or unsurpassed wisdom. The Sanskrit phrase as a whole means "the supreme and all-inclusive wisdom and the supreme and impartial awakening."

Wisdom, as the last of the six paramitas, means then the ultimate awakening or wisdom in Buddhism. Generally applied to ways of living, however, wisdom has also been considered a fundamental attribute for man in all times and places. In the contemporary Western world, human beings are categorized as Homo Sapiens, to distinguish them from the earlier Pithecanthropus and Homo erectus. While Homo Sapiens means one who has sagacity, intelligence and wisdom, in ancient India people called human beings manusha or "thinking human," for they regarded wisdom as the characteristic of man.

By means of wisdom human beings have been able to grasp myriad's of phenomena and have understood the law of causality which governs them. This understanding has enabled them to foresee what will ensue from a given phenomenon and how to prepare for it. Thus, wisdom has enabled human beings to gain the power necessary to protect themselves from the menaces of nature and to harness those forces for constructive purposes. In fact, biologically

speaking, human beings, feeble and fragile as they are, have continued to survive until the present age by virtue of their wisdom.

On the other hand, man, who has conquered all other living beings with his powerful intellect, now sets about to destroy nature and even jeopardize his own existence. At this crucial point our lives depend on controlling and reorienting the destructive power of knowledge by the wisdom of the internal self, which springs from the depths of life. It is Buddhism which gives us the wisdom of the innermost self. That is why I cannot overstate the need to recognize that Buddhist wisdom is the highest requirement for contemporary mankind.

The True Object of Worship

- *Kanjin no Honzon Sho* -

Lecture 2 of 3 from [Selected Lectures on the Goshō](#), vol. 1.

To Embrace Is to Attain

We have seen so far that the six paramitas deal specifically with the requirements necessary for human beings to live as "humans." Other philosophies and religions have merely preached them separately, but the six paramitas must be expounded as a whole. Stressing only one or two of them will lead to an impasse, or to partiality and dogmatism. Following only the paramita of almsgiving or altruism, most people, since they live in the realities of life, will give in to resignation. The practice of keeping precepts alone will kill a progressive spirit, lead to stagnation and spiritual distortion. The attachment to forbearance alone will open the way to evil and vice, and assiduity alone will lead one to trample on others. Meditation alone will remove one from the realities of life and might lead to self-righteousness. Similarly, wisdom independent of the other paramitas will allow a person to grow crafty and sly.

In order for human beings to live as "humans," therefore, these requirements must be fulfilled at the right time and in the right place. In this sense, the fact that the six paramitas were given together is truly significant; but what is vitally important is the phrase of the Muryōgi Sutra, ". . . you will naturally receive the benefits of the six paramitas." To paraphrase that, when you embrace the Mystic Law, you will naturally receive the benefits of the six paramitas in their entirety. And Myōhō-rensō-kyō is the entity which harmoniously manifests all the requirements revealed in the six paramitas.

The six paramitas as taught in this context originally mean the practice of bodhisattvas who aspire for Buddhahood, but more fundamentally, they mean that the Ten Worlds and the three thousand conditions are all contained in the single law of Myōhō-rensō-kyō, and that each of them manifests itself in the right place and time. Anyone can experience all of the Ten Worlds and the three thousand conditions, and in order for human beings to live in the ideal human condition, every one of them is necessary. When the integration of the Ten Worlds breaks down, one's existence becomes restrictive and discordant, giving rise to sorrow and pain.

Nam-myōhō-rensō-kyō is the power that contains and integrates all things. A passage of this True Object of Worship states:

The true object of worship is described in the ceremony of the transmission as follows: "In the air above the saha world [which the Buddha of the essential teaching identified as the pure and eternal land], Nam-myōhō-rensō-kyō appears in the center of the Treasure Tower with Shakyamuni and Tathāgatas seated to the right and left, and the Four Bodhisattvas of the Earth, led by Jogyō, flank them...."

Without Nam-myōhō-rensō-kyō, every one of the Ten Worlds, which originally possesses the Ten Worlds within itself, becomes disintegrated from the others, causing people to suffer from pain and solitude. As described above, however, once it is predicated on the Law of Nam-myōhō-rensō-kyō, all the workings of human life, from Hell to Buddhahood, are oriented so they can manifest their original qualities and naturally work for the well-being of humanity. That is why Nam-myōhō-rensō-kyō is called "the perfect and full teaching."

When you base your life on the Gohonzon, your life will be neither frustrated nor led into an impasse, and you will naturally receive all the benefits which would ensue from the practice of the six paramitas. A human life which becomes one with the Mystic Law through chanting also

simultaneously comes into perfect harmony with the great cosmic life, and this invigorated life will turn all obstacles into springboards for growth and dynamically change negative situations into positive ones.

All our behaviors are oriented in the right direction so that they can manifest themselves as the intrinsic workings of our essential life --- Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. A passage of the Goshō reads: "Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is like the roar of a lion. What sickness can therefore be an obstacle? . . . Wherever your daughter may frolic or play, no harm will come to her; she will be free from fear like the lion king." This passage implies the life-condition of the original Buddha, but even we ordinary people will eventually be able to attain the same state of mind if we continue to practice faith on the basis of the Gohonzon. This is what is meant by "you will naturally receive the benefits of the six paramitas."

The late president Josei Toda said, "In order to help people achieve the unrestricted state of mind that will allow them to live as they wish in the great ocean of benefits, I will fight, donning the robe of forbearance and wielding the sword of compassion." I pray that you will all construct your lives so that you can derive great benefits and deep satisfaction.

The Teaching of Perfect Endowment

The Hoben chapter of the Lotus Sutra says: "They wish to hear the teaching of perfect endowment." The Nirvana Sutra states: "Sad indicates perfect endowment." Bodhisattva Nagarjuna comments: "Sad signifies six." The Daijō Shiron Gengi Ki (Annotation of the Four Mahayana Theses) states: "Sad connotes six. In India the number six implies perfect endowment." In his annotation of the Lotus Sutra, Chia-hsiang writes, "Sad means perfect endowment." The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai remarks: "Sad is a Sanskrit word, which is translated as myo."

In this passage Nichiren Daishonin expands on the preceding sentence quoted from the Muryōgi Sutra. Here he refers to sentences from sutras, treatises and annotations to demonstrate how the Gohonzon, the embodiment of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, possesses in itself all practices and their resulting virtuous effects.

The quotation from the Lotus Sutra refers to the question which Shariputra, representing the audience, asked the Buddha. In answer, the Buddha explained the purpose of a Buddha's advent in this world --- to open and reveal the Buddha-wisdom, for the sake of all people, and then to let them realize that wisdom and enter the state of Buddhahood. This means precisely to let people attain the law of the supreme vehicle. The Lotus Sutra in its entirety reveals this law, which is Myoho-renge-kyo. The entity of "the teaching of perfect endowment" Shariputra asked about is, therefore, Myoho-renge-kyo.

The Daishonin devotes the rest of the passage to the Sanskrit word sad, translated as myo of Myoho-renge-kyo, meaning endowment and the number six. The title of the Lotus Sutra reads Saddharma-pundarika-sutra in Sanskrit, and Kumārajīva translated it as Myoho-renge-kyo. Nichiren Daishonin interprets Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in his Ongi Kuden: "In Sanskrit it reads Saddharma-pundarika-sutra, which is translated here as Myoho-renge-kyo. Sad is myo, dharma ho, pundarika rengo, and sutra kyo."

The annotation, rendered by the Chinese Buddhist scholar Hui-chun, explains why the same Sanskrit word sad assumes the dual meaning of "endowment" in the Nirvana Sutra, and "six" by Bodhisattva Nagarjuna. In ancient India the number six was considered synonymous with perfect endowment. This was probably because the people in ancient India used the number six as the basis of their numerical notation. Even now many numerical systems throughout the world are based on the senary system, including the duodecimal demarcation of the day, the twenty-four hours of the day, the twelve months of the year, the three hundred and sixty degrees of the circle, the zodiac, the dozen and so forth. The enduring prevalence of these traditions testifies to the profound significance of the number six.

The Mystic Law is inherent in all things because it embodies the law of life present in all phenomena of the universe. The Goshō, On the Mongol Emissary, reads: "The texts of non-Buddhist philosophies and the Hinayana or provisional Mahayana scriptures of Buddhism explain but parts of the law of life. They do not elucidate it as does the Lotus Sutra." The Lotus Sutra brings out "life" in its totality, while the other sutras and non-Buddhist scriptures explain life only in its individual aspects. All philosophies, whatever their sources may be, are

explanations of some part of the Mystic Law, and they are therefore infused with new life when their practice is based on the Mystic Law. The six paramitas symbolize the causes and the beneficial effects of Shakyamuni's Buddhism. They are incorporated into Myoho-rence-kyo, which establishes the totality of life, of which nothing is independent.

Boundless Benefits of the Gohonzon

An arbitrary interpretation of these quotations may distort their meaning, but in essence they mean that Shakyamuni's practices and the virtues he consequently attained are all contained within the single phrase, Myoho-rence-kyo. If we believe in that phrase, we shall naturally be granted the same benefits as he was.

Here the Daishonin concludes that embracing Myoho-rence-kyo is attaining Buddhahood. This is by far the most important part of this treatise. He was reserved in his personal interpretation and gave priority to sutras, treatises and annotations. This passage tells us the ultimate truth of Buddhism, the way by which all human beings can attain Buddhahood in this lifetime. Thus he lets us see the vast powers and virtues of the Gohonzon which we worship every morning and evening. That is why Nichikan Shonin, the twenty-sixth High Priest, explains the Gohonzon in *The Exegesis of The True Object of Worship*:

This Gohonzon provides great and boundless benefits. Its mystic functions are vast and profound. so if you take faith in this Gohonzon and chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo even for a while, no prayer will go unanswered, no sin will remain unforgiven, all good fortune will be bestowed, and all righteousness proven.

President Josei Toda quoted this passage at every opportunity to give encouragement to those who struggled with sickness and poverty.

"An arbitrary interpretation of these quotations may distort their meaning" applies, more than anyone else, to me, for I am lecturing on the treatise. If I ineptly interpret it, I might incur the Daishonin's rebuke. I sincerely hope you will burn this passage into your hearts and that you will repay Nichiren Daishonin for his great compassion in embodying Myoho-rence-kyo as the Gohonzon for us to worship.

This passage has profound significance, but first let me explain it literally. It means that all the virtues Shakyamuni Buddha attained through practices in past existences and all the benefits he acquired through his efforts to save people after attaining Buddhahood in this life are contained in Myoho-rence-kyo. By embracing this Mystic Law, therefore, we will naturally receive all his virtues and benefits.

"Shakyamuni" and "his practices and the virtues he consequently attained" in the above-quoted passage can both be interpreted in many ways and contain various meanings, however. Nichikan Shonin classifies them into six categories in *The Exegesis of The True Object of Worship*. "Shakyamuni" here refers to the six types of the Buddha. Shakyamuni Buddha revealed himself in different ways according to the depth of his teachings, as he expounded zokyo (Hinayana teachings), tsugyo (lower provisional Mahayana teachings), bekkyo (higher provisional Mahayana teachings) and engyo (true Mahayana). Engyo indicates the Lotus Sutra which consists of the theoretical and the essential teachings. The Buddha's five appearances in the zokyo, tsugyo, bekkyo and the two halves of the Lotus Sutra fall under the category of Shakyamuni's Buddhism, while Nichiren Daishonin reveals his identity as the Buddha of the Latter Day who expounds Nam-myoho-rence-kyo- the ultimate law of life hidden in the depths of the Juryo (sixteenth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra. In this connection, the Daishonin is also called "Shakyamuni," expounded in the in-depth interpretation of the Lotus Sutra.

"Shakyamuni's practices and the virtues he consequently attained" in the Goshō text not only refers to the aspects of Shakyamuni mentioned above, but also any other Buddha. That is why Nichikan Shonin states in his *Exegesis of The True Object of Worship*:

The practices of all Buddhas and all their resultant virtues are contained in the five characters of the Mystic Law. The benefits of the Gohonzon are therefore vast and boundless. Its mystic functions are vast and profound. Any mention of Shakyamuni in the passage therefore represents all Buddhas and the virtues they attained.

The Gohonzon, then, is the treasure into which the practices and virtues of all Buddhas throughout space and time are condensed. Its mystic function envelops the universe.

How Shakyamuni Buddha practiced Buddhism and how he attained Buddhahood is explained in the question posed in the passage preceding the text. Though Shakyamuni is thought to have attained enlightenment in India at the age of thirty, his practice of Buddhism spanned the period of sanzen-jintengo, during which he practiced Buddhism as Prince Nose, Bodhisattva Judo, King Shibi and Prince Satta, and made offerings to many other Buddhas. The joy he felt after he attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree defies description.

In the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha said that his enlightenment occurred during the time of gohyaku-jintengo, proving that he practiced the bodhisattva austerities before that time. The virtues he attained are incomparably greater than those he enjoyed after attaining Buddhahood in his life in India, as he describes: "Appearing in the worlds throughout space, I expounded all of the sacred teachings and enlightened myriad's of people." Even in the capacity of the Buddha who attained Buddhahood in this life, his past practices were extremely severe, as are shown in the examples of Sessen Doji and Gyobo Bonji.

I would like to say something about Makasatta (Prince Satta), who is mentioned elsewhere in this Goshō. An unimaginably long time ago there lived a king named Makarada, who had three princes, Makahanara, Makadaiba and Makasatta. One day the king took them to the countryside, and while walking in a great bamboo grove they met an injured tigress. She seemed seriously hurt and unable to hunt, though famished. Seven baby tigers, about a week old, surrounded her. Makahanara said, "The tigress bore seven babies and is now so hungry that she will probably even devour her babies before long." Whereupon Makadaiba grew sad, saying, "The poor tigress will die. I wonder if we could do anything to save her." Listening to his elders, Makasatta thought, "My flesh and blood is destined to perish, even though it is reborn a hundred and thousand times. It will simply perish without benefiting anything. Therefore I will discard my life this moment."

After his father and elder brothers left, he took off his clothes and threw himself before the famished tigress. Undoubtedly frightened by his bold attitude, the tigress did nothing but growl. Then, he climbed up to the top of a nearby cliff and again he threw himself down before the tigress. But the tigress was too emaciated to prey upon him. Finally he used his last ounce of energy to stab a decayed bamboo stalk into his carotid artery. Sucking the fresh blood which gushed out, the famished tigress quickly regained her vitality and devoured the prince, leaving nothing but his bones.

Telling the story to his disciple Ananda, Shakyamuni Buddha identified the prince as himself in a past existence dedicated to the Buddhist practice of almsgiving. The story is known as "Discarding Life for the Tiger." The Konkomyo Sutra describes the scene as the prince gave up his life at that moment:

All of a sudden the earth jolted in six different ways, rising and falling like waters fanned by a gale; the sun lost its brilliance as if in a total eclipse; the heaven showered all kinds of flowers and fragrances, which, falling in mixture filled the forest, and the heavenly beings all extolled him in chorus.

This is one of the stories which testify to the extreme severity of practice Shakyamuni carried out before he attained enlightenment. All these practices, however, constitute only a part of the vast and boundless benefit of the Mystic Law.

The benefit Shakyamuni attained through his practices shows clearly the working of the law of cause and effect expounded in his Buddhism, and how the present effect is always the result of a past cause. President Toda often drew an analogy to the Johari Mirror when he talked about this subject. The mirror hung in the palace of King Enma, and was also called the Mirror of Karma. When King Enma interviewed the deceased he said, "You have done this much wrong while you were alive, haven't you?" But the deceased tried to deny it, "I have done nothing of the sort, I can assure you, sir." The king retorted, saying, "Take a look in the Mirror of Karma over there!" Much to his surprise, the deceased could see all the evils he committed when he was alive in the mirror.

This story is not a mere moral; by drawing an analogy it teaches us that the law of cause and effect which governs life is totally immutable. The last president said: "In this saha world it is our physical existences and situations which constitute the Mirror of Karma. The karma we created in our past existences causes us to feel karmic retribution, both physically and spiritually, in this world."

This is the real nature of human life, from which no one can escape. Any attempt to avoid it is fruitless. That is why Shakyamuni Buddha preached the importance of dedicating ourselves to Buddhist practice, lifetime after lifetime, in order to expiate all the sins and vices we committed.

So far, our discussion has been focused on the literal meaning of the passage of the Goshō text. Let us take the same passage and apply it to Nichiren Daishonin. We know from The One Hundred and Six Comparisons that he is the eternal Buddha who originally possesses boundless benefits including all the virtues which result from the practices of all Buddhas as "the master of the True Cause and True Effect." When Nichikan Shonin explains that Shakyamuni, as he appears in the Goshō text, stands for all Buddhas and the virtues they attained, he is telling us that Nichiren Daishonin possesses the endowments of all Buddhas. The Daishonin combined all the benefits of his virtuous deeds into the Gohonzon of the Three Great Secret Laws. He declares in the Goshō, "I, Nichiren, have inscribed my life in sumi, so believe in the Gohonzon with your whole heart. The Buddha's will is the Lotus Sutra, but the soul of Nichiren is nothing other than Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō." The declaration substantiates the Gohonzon, identifying it with his life itself. As he ushered in the rising sun of a new Buddhism, the moonlight of Shakyamuni's Buddhism faded, giving way to an epoch-making event in both the history of Buddhism and the history of mankind.

I would like to talk about the law of causality working within life, in terms of the True Cause and the True Effect, which, as I pointed out in my lecture on The One Hundred and Six Comparisons, provides a valuable vantage point from which to expand on the profound significance of the Gohonzon. I will not go into the original meaning of the True Cause and the True Effect now, but elaborate on them as two different ways to view human life.

Life exists in a moment. The moment flashes by like an arrow and becomes the past. The future becomes the present in the same moment. Thus, life exists only in succession of moments, and even eternity is no more than the continuation of moments. In any given moment we can feel happiness, misery, hope or despair.

The law of cause and effect governs life at each moment, and the karma created by all deeds up to the present is the total accumulation of the past; it defines the present which is manifested in a single moment. The workings of life in that moment form a cause for the future effect. Neither past nor future can exist apart from the present.

Past-oriented Attitude

Life at present contains life which has continued since time without beginning. It also defines life which continues from the present moment on to eternity. The major difference between the Buddhism of the True Cause and that of the True Effect hinges upon the interpretation of the true nature of the moment, which, endlessly succeeding itself, is the manifestation of what we call life. Buddhism of the True Effect refers to the past-oriented attitude which defines the present only as the result of the past, adhering to the results, whereas Buddhism of the True Cause is the belief that the present changes into a cause for the future.

The law of cause and effect governs life, and one's present existence is always the effect of the past. Nichiren Daishonin says in the [Letter from Sado](#):

One who climbs a high mountain must eventually descend. One who slights another will in turn be despised. One who deprecates those of handsome appearance will be born ugly. One who robs another of food and clothing is sure to fall into the world of Hunger. One who mocks noble men or anyone who observes the precepts will be born to a poor family. One who slanders a family that embraces the True Law will be born to a heretical family. One who laughs at those who cherish the precepts will be born a commoner and meet with persecution from his sovereign. This is the general law of cause and effect.

The original passage quoted appears in the Hatsunaion Sutra, but the Daishonin expressed it in his own words to exemplify the continual transmigration of cause and effect. As he says, "the general law of cause and effect" is always actually working in the realities of life. That is why we must live now, embodying karmic retribution both physically and spiritually. As long as we remain chained by this cycle of cause and effect, we have only a slim possibility of rechanneling our present karma-bound life into a bright new path.

Think of someone in the world of Hunger. Even if he traces the cause of his present agony to his past life and discovers that he robbed others of clothing and food, he can only feel a deep sense of regret. He will not know why he did such a thing, nor will he be able to recover his past life to change the cause. To fulfill his dream for a happy life in the future he must sever the chains of his karma one by one in this life, and the next, and the next. Even though he tries to make good causes, he will find it very difficult to do so because his past is such a heavy burden. Out of despair some people live a life of self-abandonment or even commit suicide in despair.

To illustrate the past-oriented attitude, let me quote from a famous Japanese novel written by Soseki Natsume (1867 - 1916). Entitled *Kokoro* (Heart), the story centers around a man called "Sensei" who struggles with egoism as he regrets what he has done to his friend K when they were both university students in the same boarding house. Quietly, Sensei came to love the pretty girl in the family. Much to his surprise, his friend K suddenly confides his own agonized love for the girl. Sensei is startled, since K seemed to have been completely immersed in study, and to have no time for love. From that time on Sensei has mixed emotions, but he deceives his friend and continues to court the girl until he secures informal consent for marriage. When K learns of this development he is so desperate that he commits suicide. All he leaves behind is a simple note to Sensei saying that he was too weak a person to have any hope for the future, and there was no other way out.

Soseki describes how Sensei felt that night when he discovered that his friend K had committed suicide:

I experienced almost the same sensation then as I did when K first told me of his love for Ojosan (the daughter). I stood still, transfixed by the scene I beheld. My eyes stared unbelievably, as though they were made of glass. But the initial shock was like a sudden gust of wind, and was gone in a moment. My first thought was, "It's too late !" It was then that the great shadow that would for ever darken the course of my life spread before my mind's eye. And from somewhere in the shadow a voice seemed to be whispering: "It's too late. . . It's too late . . ." My whole body began to tremble. [Soseki Natsume, *Kokoro* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc., 1969), p. 229.]

From that moment on Sensei's mind became slave to guilt. Shortly after graduation Sensei married the daughter, but even in their newly married life he could not drive "the dark shadow" away from him. His attempt to mitigate his guilt with liquor failed and the shadow loomed larger than ever. Finally, Sensei decided to live as if he were dead. He described his state of mind as follows:

Though I had resolved to live as if I were dead, my heart would at times respond to the activity of the outside world, and seem almost to dance with pent-up energy. But as soon as I tried to break my way through the cloud that surrounded me, a frighteningly powerful force would rush upon me from I know not where, and grip my heart tight, until I could not move. A voice would say to me: "You have no right to do anything. stay where you are." Whatever desire I might have had for action would suddenly leave me. After a moment, the desire would come back, and I would once more try to break through. Again, I would be restrained. In fury and grief I would cry out: "Why do you stop me?" With a cruel laugh, the voice would answer: "You know very well why." Then I would bow in hopeless surrender.* [Ibid., p. 243]

Sensei finally takes his own life, leaving his wife to live on alone. The story vividly depicts how heavy a burden it is for a human being to go on living with a sense of sinfulness. Though Soseki makes no mention of Buddhism in the story, the life Sensei had to live is reminiscent of the life of True Effect. In his case, however, he was bound by the chain of causality which he himself could clearly perceive. Even causality in this life is grave enough to drive man into death. The burden of karma we have accumulated from time without beginning is heavy

beyond imagination. If people have to obliterate such karmic retributions one by one, they will mostly be driven into despair.

This type of action, centering on True Effect, underlies the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha. The law of cause and effect in this case defines the present life-condition only as the result of the past karmic cause. Naturally, belief based on that kind of Buddhism fails to inspire hope and joy for the future. Though Shakyamuni's Buddhism gives ideas on how life has transmigrated so far and how it continues on into the future, it never clarifies the source of power for developing life in the future. In other words, it preaches what will become of life but never defines the self-motivating, positive force capable of reforming life. That is why Shakyamuni's Buddhism is called the Buddhism of the True Effect.

Breaking the Chain of Karma

Only through the Buddhism of the True Cause, which probes the depths of the momentary existence of life and discovers the Mystic Law there --- the origin of everything --- can people find the means of lightening their troubled lives. This is because the Buddhism of the True Cause is rooted in the depths of life, whereas the Buddhism of the True Effect is based on the ever-changing phenomena of life. The difference between the two is directly stated in the following quote referring to the law of cause and effect from the same Letter from Sado: "Nichiren's sufferings, however, are not ascribable to this causal law."

Nichiren Daishonin breaks through the realm of immediate cause and effect and enters into the depths of the life-moment, the entity of the fundamental causality which penetrates eternity. This entity is Nam-myoho-enge-kyo which has neither beginning nor end. It is the entity of life which flows on, interweaving with the causality of the Ten Worlds, and it is also the fundamental force that governs the entire universe. That is what "Shakyamuni's practices and the virtues he consequently attained" means according to Buddhism of the seed inherent in the Juryo chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

Putting his own life as the Buddha who embodies Nam-myoho-enge-kyo into the inscription of the Mystic Law, he endows it upon the people of the Latter Day, just as he said in the Goshō: "If we believe in that phrase, we shall naturally be granted the same benefits as he was." I can see unequalled compassion in his words "be granted." Life without beginning is more than ordinary people can fathom because it is the ultimate state of life, most difficult to believe and most difficult to understand. Even then, the advent of Nichiren Daishonin seven centuries ago made it possible for us to perceive it. He himself assumed the appearance of an ordinary person as he said in the Goshō, "Nichiren, who in this life was born poor and lowly to a chandala* family," and through his behavior showed us the meaning of "Shakyamuni's practices and the virtues." What is more, he has left us the great power and boundless benefits in the form of the Gohonzon so that all future generations can prosper.

*The lowest class, lower than the caste system, in India, comprised of those whose profession required them to kill living creatures. The Daishonin was born to a family of fishermen.

President Toda said about the Gohonzon's beneficial power in his lecture, "The Causality throughout Three Existences":

Devoting oneself to the Gohonzon and chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is the way to change one's destiny for the better. All the causes and effects in between disappear, and a common mortal since time without beginning emerges.

These words convey his profound insight. Awe-inspiring as it may sound, the life of Nichiren Daishonin, who is the absolutely free, eternal Buddha, dwells within our strong spirit to dedicate ourselves to the Gohonzon. When we sit upright facing the Gohonzon, a common mortal since time without beginning and the Buddha since time without beginning sit facing one another. That moment of relation provides a sublime seat where you join your palms together to become one with the true entity of all phenomena. It contains the overflowing power to embrace, integrate and motivate all existences. This is what is meant by "all the causes and effects in between disappear, and a common mortal since time without beginning emerges." The emergence of the common mortal in itself forms the cause to produce the effect of benefits for all eternity.

Shakyamuni Buddha preached concepts of unimaginably long spans of time --- sanzen-jintengo and gokyaku-jintengo. In contrast, Nichiren Daishonin expounds the most profound concept of time called kuon ganjo, with neither beginning nor end. He has established the original law of the universe which breaks all the chains of causality in Shakyamuni's Buddhism, probing into life so deeply as to identify man with the universe. "All the causes and effects in between disappear" is like the stars and the moon illuminating in the heavens which disappear once the sun rises. But the heavenly bodies have not actually disappeared; they are simply outshone by the radiant beams of the sun. In like manner, the Buddhism of the True Cause, which embraces all the lights of the Buddhas throughout space and time, including Shakyamuni, casts its glorious light universally. The advent of true Buddhism lets people think of Shakyamuni's Buddhism in a totally new perspective.

"A common mortal since time without beginning emerges" is a monumental idea in the life philosophy --- the present moment is all that counts. If we try to interpret Shakyamuni's Buddhism in terms of the Daishonin's Buddhism, we may be able to redefine it as the culmination of wisdom great enough to approach the original law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. At the very moment we chant to the Gohonzon, however, we manifest the original law, and by so doing we manifest the power of Myoho-renge-kyo in society, embodying it both physically and spiritually in ourselves. Shakyamuni's Buddhism exhorts us to strenuous practices to reach the Mystic Law, just as hundreds and thousands of leaves and branches are traced to one root. In contrast, Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism reveals the Mystic Law itself, which enables one who embraces it to expand it through our activities onto hundreds and thousands of leaves and branches of society. The bright light of the Mystic Law has now begun to illuminate the world.

All kinds of institutions, ideologies and religions tower before us as an inevitable result, and they continue to bind people tight with their chains. Mankind is forced into subservience to heavy pressures he himself has created, suffocating under their weight. The Buddhism of the True Cause corrects the distorted relation between master and subject and gives direction to what it should be. This philosophy sends its hopeful light into the century to come as it restores supremacy to the dignity of life --- the idea that a single life-entity is heavier than the earth. Our movement for fundamental reformation will encounter hardships, and rough waves are certain to rise against it. No matter what may happen to you in the course of your life and on the way to worldwide propagation, I ask all of you to endure the trials and proudly live up to the words of the Daishonin: "Indubitably, as the three obstacles and four devils* arise, the wise will rejoice, yet the foolish will cower."

Every person has his own troubles and dreams for the future. The sick wish to be in good health; one who has no house to live in wants to have a home and peaceful family life; one tries desperately to subdue the instinctive urge toward anger and greed which can take over and dominate, both physically and spiritually. Having hopes but knowing no way or means to attain them, people often end up in frustration. Once he embraces the Buddhism of the True Cause, however, any individual can create a bright future, for the very moment the individual's desire becomes one with his eternal being, the desire is simultaneously achieved in the depths of his life. At that very moment karma changes and an immeasurable eternal treasure gathers to become manifest in the future, just as a totally dark room is illuminated the moment you turn on the light.

This is solely because the Gohonzon contains the practices of all Buddhas throughout space and time and their resulting virtues, and because the power of the Buddha and the power of the Law within the Gohonzon are vast and boundless. Then you no longer have to continue your practice lifetime after lifetime to eliminate your past evil karma, as is thought in the Buddhism of the True Effect. Even if you have accumulated tattle good fortune in the past, all the Buddha's practices are contained in devoted faith in the Gohonzon and the resulting virtues flow naturally into a bright course for the future.

That is why the Daishonin said on Sado Island where he was an exile: "At this moment I, Nichiren, am the richest man in all of Japan," and "I feel immeasurable delight even though I am now an exile."

All in all, the inscription of the Gohonzon gives all people in the Latter Day a direct link with the life of the original Buddha and a way to become one with it. The purpose of the original Buddha, Nichiren Daishonin, was to allow all people to become as exalted as the Buddha of

the "beginningless time." He said in his oral teachings, the Ongi Kuden, "The Juryo chapter states that we common mortals are endowed with the three enlightened properties of the Buddha. This indicates Nichiren and his disciples who chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo." Elsewhere in the same Gosho he also said, "The Nam-myoho-renge-kyo I, Nichiren, now chant enables people to attain Buddhahood for as long as the ten thousand years of the Latter Day. This is what is meant by 'I have now fulfilled the pledge I made in the past.' "

Indisputably, what matters is faith in the Gohonzon. What is more, the key to enlightenment is how long you will continue your faith and how much you will deepen your faith. As the Daishonin says, "To accept is easy; to continue is difficult. But continuing faith will lead to Buddhahood." He also urges us to sustain our faith, saying, "Arouse deep faith and polish your mirror night and day. How should you polish it? Only by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo." I ask you to do gongyo in the morning and evening regularly so that you can carry your faith onward like the never ending flow of a stream.

Supreme Jewel beyond Imagination

With full understanding of Shakyamuni's teachings, the four great men of Learning said: "We have gained the supreme cluster of jewels when we least expected it." They represent the world of Learning that is within ourselves.

The sentence quoted occurs in the fourth chapter of the Lotus Sutra. Here four great men of Learning --- Mahakashyapa, Katyayana, Subhuti and Maudgalyayana --- express their joy at having understood the Buddha's intent after hearing the Parable of the Three Carts and the Burning House. They have gained something they least expected --- the all-embracing Mystic Law, the core of the Buddha's teachings that contains all the deeds and resulting virtues of Shakyamuni Buddha. Here they are thanking the Buddha for preaching the Mystic Law to them. Usually one attains the Law only when he sincerely seeks it. The Buddha's profound compassion, however, enabled the men of Learning to attain the Law without seeking it. That is why they rejoiced with such profound gratitude.

It was not that these disciples of Learning did not seek after anything. As the Parable of the Three Carts and the Burning House explains, they had been seeking something. The parable goes like this. There was once a millionaire who had dozens of children. They had always wanted three kinds of carts: carts pulled by sheep, by deer and by oxen. One day the millionaire's mansion caught fire, and he desperately shouted for his children to come out of the house, but to no avail. Then, remembering their wish, he called to them, saying that the carts they wanted so badly were right outside the gate. The children raced out of the house to get the carts. When they ran out of the mansion, however, the millionaire instead gave each of them a huge cart pulled by a magnificent white ox, which was far better than the carts they had desired.

The three carts indicate the teachings of the three vehicles --- Learning, Realization and Bodhisattva --- and the children's desire for them was so strong that they immediately came out of the house. The white ox cart the father actually gave his children means the supreme vehicle of the Mystic Law.

The teaching of the supreme vehicle concerns the state of Buddhahood, a state too lofty for the disciples of Learning to imagine. It is therefore no wonder that they did not actively seek it. The disciples pursued far less valuable jewels --- the teachings of the three vehicles. But the Buddha gave them the supreme treasure of the Mystic Law by finally preaching the Lotus Sutra, something far greater than they had ever expected to obtain.

The parable can also be applied to those who believe in the Gohonzon now, in the Latter Day of the Law. The immediate motives which led us to receive the Gohonzon were, in most cases, probably minor, trifling desires arising out of daily life. There are very few of us who took faith in the Gohonzon because we envisioned and yearned for the ideal state of Buddhahood. But as we take faith in the Gohonzon and study Buddhism more and more deeply, we come to understand that a Buddha means an entity of human life filled with wisdom, good fortune and vital force. Further we finally realize that the Gohonzon is not something merely to fulfill our trifling desires, but that it embodies the life of the Buddha. It is a priceless treasure that enables common individuals to become as noble as the Buddha. The jubilant life force the four

great men of Learning manifested when they gained the supreme vehicle also dwells within the lives of us who embrace the Gohonzon.

Let me expand on jitoku (self attained). The verse portion of the Juryo chapter begins with ji ga toku butsu rai (since I attained Buddhahood), which refers to Shakyamuni's attainment of Buddhahood at gohyaku-jintengo. According to the Daishonin's Buddhism, there is an even deeper meaning here. The Daishonin explains that Buddhahood is not attained at a certain point in time, like gokyaku-jintengo, but is indwelling for all eternity. According to the Daishonin's Buddhism, the sentence quoted above is shown to mean, "Obtaining ga butsu rai by oneself." Nichiren Daishonin explains this in the Ongi Kuden: "Ga (self) indicates the property of the Law, butsu (the Buddha) the property of wisdom, and rai (becoming) means the property of action. These three properties of the Buddha, who has neither beginning nor end, become one's own. From this, consider the meaning of gaining the supreme cluster of jewels without seeking it."

Ga is the Buddha's life existing throughout past, present and future, which is the enlightened property of the Law. Butsu signifies the wisdom that develops out of the great life force of the original Buddha, and enables one to fathom past, present and future existences, and to expound Buddhism freely among all people to save them and to create value at every moment. This is the function of the enlightened property of wisdom. Rai indicates the totally unrestricted activities of the original Buddha to save troubled people. It is therefore the enlightened property of action. Nichiren Daishonin is the original Buddha who holds all three enlightened properties of life, and the Gohonzon embodies his life. Ji ga toku butsu rai means that the three enlightened properties are obtained from oneself; they are not given by anyone or anything else.

The ultimate teaching of Shakyamuni's Buddhism was the revelation of the unimaginably long span of the Buddha's life, called gohyaku-jintengo. But even that is not infinite. It has a particular referent in the past. As long as the concept of Buddhahood remains within a finite, temporal framework, it is something to be attained, and that leads to a fundamental distinction between the Buddha and people. Actually, Shakyamuni himself attained Buddhahood in gohyaku-jintengo only after he had practiced bodhisattva austerities in an even more distant past.

In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, however, kuon --- which is often interpreted to mean the infinite past --- actually does not mean the past at all. It means eternity, or the aggregate of every single moment of time. Once you realize that kuon exists in every moment, it is no longer correct to say that one becomes a Buddha, but that one awakens to the fact of being a Buddha to begin with. Because it means to manifest what is inherent in human life, it is called jitoku or "self-attained." Nichiren Daishonin is the completely unrestricted, original Buddha with the three enlightened properties of life. In general, however, believers in the Mystic Law also naturally possess the three enlightened properties of life. "Obtaining the supreme cluster of jewels without seeking it" applies not only to the men of Learning but to everyone else as well. That is why Nichiren Daishonin said in the Ongi Kuden: "Nichiren and his disciples who now chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo are the votaries of self attained Buddhahood."

Treasure Too Close to See

The quote says, "We have gained the supreme cluster of jewels when we least expected it." Let us think about the idea of "something coming into one's possession unsought" in context of our daily life. "Unsought" means that ordinary people can hardly know something as sublime as the Mystic Law. We possess the Gohonzon before we know that it is the supreme cluster of jewels. Some people receive the Gohonzon without prior knowledge of faith, and others accept faith in the Gohonzon at the encouragement of their friends or upon being awakened by their bad karma, even though they may have scorned religious faith. Once you embrace the Gohonzon, however, you honestly realize that it is the very thing you have been most wanting to find. Many priceless things exist around us, but they are usually hard to recognize. The air around us, for example, goes unnoticed; it is often used as a metaphor for amorphousness or insignificance, as in the phrase, "vanishing into thin air." Though we rarely think about it, when traveling in a spaceship or submarine nothing is more vital than air.

In the same way, we are so accustomed to life and living that we rarely contemplate its deep meaning. Since one can live without ever having to think about it, he may get lost in daily

routine. Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, however, teaches us that an incomparably valuable jewel is hidden in our daily life. We are shown the supreme value in human life --- something which we are in intimate contact with every day. Therefore, when people come to know true Buddhism, they finally understand how far they neglected this supreme jewel, and they find invaluable joy in their discovery.

Let me go over jitoku once again. It means to realize something in oneself, by oneself and to do so according to one's own will. The great life force of Buddhahood becomes manifest only in the strenuous, dedicated efforts to fuse oneself with the Gohonzon, and therefore jitoku, in a word, means faith. Ga butsu rai means the Buddha of the three enlightened properties of life or the Gohonzon, whereas jitoku equals kanjin (to observe one's own mind and find the three enlightened properties in it). Ji ga toku butsu rai as a unified concept means that to embrace the Gohonzon is to attain enlightenment. The Gohonzon is an absolute objective reality, without which there can be neither enlightenment nor human revolution. Simultaneously, the Gohonzon's power does not become manifest unless one carries out the assiduous practice of one's faith.

Since the jewel one seeks is the Buddhahood within one's life, it is impossible to manifest it without achieving oneness with the Gohonzon. Were Buddhahood a jewel existing outside oneself, one could simply receive it from someone. But because Buddhahood exists within oneself, only the courageous practice of faith can call it forth. Essentially, man acquires power through his own training. Machines, facilities and advice from others are all only external aids, which help him develop his potential. A world record in sports is made with the help of excellent facilities, scientific research and well-trained, experienced coaches. But the athlete himself has to achieve the record. This is much more true in faith. One can never gain the great life force of Buddhahood from the outside, and science and technology are no help at all. In this sense Buddhism teaches the strictness of a cause-and-effect relationship and lets us understand the three thousand conditions in every entity of life.

Conversely, when one develops his life from within, he opens up a brand-new world. Unless we lay the foundation by developing our life, any castle we make will be built upon sand. If a tree has shallow roots, it will topple over in a gale. The treasure tower of life rooted in the ground of eternity stands in all its nobility, unperturbed by the winds and waves of life. An environment, no matter how nice, can only grow worse unless it is built with one's own strenuous efforts. Even people in the world of Rapture are subject to the five types of decay.* On the other hand, the world we construct with our own efforts to achieve our human revolution is indestructible. Living in this way, we can perceive a vast, promising future stretching before us.

*The five signs of decline which appear when the life of a heavenly being comes to an end. (1) His clothes become dirty. (2) The flowers on his head wither. (This implies that he gradually loses his mental faculties.) (3) His body becomes dirty. (4) He sweats under the arms. (This implies that he worries, fears or suffers.) (5) He cannot feel happy anywhere. (This means that he loses his conviction.) These five indicate that pleasure in the state of Rapture fades away very easily.

When we establish a firm inner self by courageously challenging ourselves and changing our earthly desires into the great wish to save mankind, we can develop a truly humanistic civilization and usher in the "century of life." Incidentally, shomon (men of Learning) can literally be translated as "those who hear," i.e., those with seeking minds to hear the Buddha's teachings, for a seeking mind always pushes on to development and growth, and never allows satisfaction with the present situation. Only when you actively strive to grow and progress can you truly comprehend the greatness of Buddhism.

Strive among the People

Concerning the people of Learning, the fourth chapter of the Lotus Sutra reads, "We have gained the supreme cluster of jewels when we least expected it." The shomon, understanding what the Buddha meant, changed themselves into true shomon by breaking through their inherent egoism. The chapter describes the scene: "We now are true shomon, listening to the voice of the Buddha's Way and causing all to hear it. We now are true arhats, and are entitled to receive offerings from the heavens, men, demons, and deities in every world."

The men of Learning, who had listened to Shakyamuni Buddha only for their own enlightenment, changed radically into people who led others to listen to the Buddha's teachings. In other words, shomon here means not only to hear the (Buddha's) voice, but to let all others hear it. Yet these people, who so reformed their lives, are the same who were refuted by the Buddha in the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings, as the Daishonin describes in The Opening of the Eyes: "The men of Learning and Realization, who thought that they had understood Buddhism and attained Buddhahood . . . were instead ingrates since they guided their fathers and mothers to a path which would never lead to Buddhahood."

Trapped in a world of solitude and encrusted with arrogance and egocentricity, the men of Learning were not only severely refuted by the Buddha in the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings, they were even despised by the commoners they themselves had looked down on. The Buddha rebuked the shomon with the intention of training them as the true disciples who would propagate Buddhism unrestrictedly, and in order to propagate Buddhism they could not be arrogant and egocentric. In the Lotus Sutra, however, they unexpectedly gained the supreme jewel of Buddhahood, and from then on struck out bravely among the common people to let them hear the Buddha's teachings. That is why they were finally able to attain Buddhahood.

The men of Learning had endured the Buddha's rebukes for a long period, so they were more than overjoyed when they heard the Lotus Sutra which allowed them to attain Buddhahood, and they pledged to devote themselves to its propagation. The fourth chapter describes how they "danced for joy !" The true mission of the men of Learning was revealed for the first time, and without it, their aeons long austerities would have been to no avail. Indeed, their attainment of Buddhahood in the Lotus Sutra is the supreme principle. Talking about those who became true shomon, Nichiren Daishonin said, "They represent the world of Learning that is within ourselves." He urges us also to develop the same benevolence so that we can lead others to listen to the Buddha's teachings, just as they did.

In the Ongi Kuden, Nichiren Daishonin amplifies the above-quoted chapter of the Lotus Sutra, "... listening to the voice of the Buddha's Way and causing all to hear it":

Thus, Shariputra expressed his understanding of the Law by saying in this [third] chapter, "listening to this voice." "Listening" means to take faith in the Lotus Sutra, and "the voice" indicates the voice and sound (i.e., the rhythm) of all phenomena, which signifies the Mystic Law.... Regarding this voice, the fourth chapter says, "listening to the voice of the Buddha's way and causing all to hear it." "All" means human beings living in the phenomenal world, and "the voice" means Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

"The voice of the Buddha's Way," therefore, means Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, and "all" indicates all human beings. The Mystic Law is the force which causes Buddhahood to become manifest from within the lives of all people. Elsewhere in the Ongi Kuden Nichiren Daishonin says, ". . . voices do the Buddha's work." Indeed, the voice derived from the Mystic Law penetrates human hearts.

You become true disciples and men of Learning when, while you yourself listen to Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and live it, you cause people wandering through the three evil paths or the six lower worlds to hear Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. The Bodhisattvas of the Earth who devotedly propagate the Mystic Law as common mortals in this polluted world are the true men of Learning.

A Japanese scholar once made a profound statement: "Voice is life. It is emitted from the depths of life. It resonates throughout the universe." The sonorous voice we utter while doing gongyo and chanting daimoku is just such a voice, and it causes the universe and the life within it to resonate more profoundly than any great music. Sent with a spirit of altruism to all fields of human endeavor, the voice of profound sincerity can break through the shells of greed, anger and stupidity that smother human hearts. That is the meaning of the statement of the Nirvana Sutra, "If he takes the slanderer severely to task, drives him off or punishes him, then he is my disciple and one who truly understands my teachings."

The Buddha's Life Is Our Own Body

The Hoben chapter states: "At the start I pledged to make all people perfectly equal to me, without any distinction between us. By now the original vows that I made have already been fulfilled. I have led all the people on the path to Buddhahood." The enlightened life of Shakyamuni Buddha is our own flesh and blood. His practices and resulting virtues are our bones and marrow.

The subject in this passage from the Lotus Sutra is Shakyamuni, who attained Buddhahood in this life. In terms of his in-depth interpretation, however, Nichiren Daishonin uses the quote to indicate the original Buddha. Nichikan Shonin therefore takes this passage to imply the Buddha of absolute freedom since time without beginning. Nichiren Daishonin himself explains this passage from the Hoben chapter in the Ongi Kuden: " 'I' means Shakyamuni who is the Buddha since time without beginning. He is the teacher of true Buddhism, which is actually we, common mortals.... The Juryo chapter says that we are the Buddha with the three enlightened properties of life."

In a nutshell, the subject of the sentence is Nichiren Daishonin, the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law. He states that when an ordinary person embraces the Gohonzon and sincerely chants daimoku, he becomes the Buddha with the three enlightened properties of life just like Nichiren Daishonin. That is also why he wrote, "The enlightened life of Shakyamuni Buddha is our own flesh and blood." This means that the enlightened life of the Buddha, the three properties inherent in it, exists within the lives of common mortals. Thus, the Daishonin shows again that anyone can become a Buddha just as he is.

The last sentence in the passage relates to something I have discussed many times --- that the practices and resulting virtues of the Buddha are all contained in our lives. Let me expand on the "practices and resulting virtues" in terms of cause and effect. The practices are the cause --- the nine worlds of life in which common people enjoy all kinds of happiness. However, the happiness of the nine worlds is all relative happiness. The resulting virtues are the effect --- Buddhahood. That is the world of absolute happiness in the depths of enlightened life.

When we embrace the Gohonzon of the Three Great Secret Laws, we see that "the enlightened life of Shakyamuni Buddha is our own flesh and blood." In his own words, Nichikan Shonin says, "If we believe and embrace this Gohonzon and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, our flesh and blood is the Gohonzon of ichinen sanzen, the life of the original Buddha, Nichiren Daishonin." Since the Gohonzon embodies the life of Nichiren Daishonin who is the original Buddha, we manifest the same entity when we believe and embrace the Gohonzon and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

Then, Nichiren Daishonin as our master is the Buddha, and as his disciples we are also Buddhas-that is, we realize the oneness of master and disciple. That is why Nichikan Shonin interprets this passage as a statement of the oneness of master and disciple.

Religions in all ages have systematized theologies that center on some kind of absolute being transcending human existence. The Judeo-Christian religions create such a gap between God and human beings that all their believers can do is to throw themselves up to God's grace. Buddhism, however, assures us that all people are essentially Buddhas, and as such, the most sublime possible existence. The Daishonin's egalitarian declaration, therefore, completely departs from religions that place human beings in a position inferior to the deity. At the same time, his lofty, humanistic declaration fundamentally supports modern declarations of human rights which have tried to restore human dignity and take absolute power out of the hands of authorities supposedly representing the absolute being.

There is profound significance in the fact that Nichiren Daishonin compares "the enlightened life of Shakyamuni Buddha" to "flesh and blood," and "practices and resulting virtues" to "bones and marrow." Talking about himself, the Daishonin said in the Letter from Sado:

In my heart I cherish some faith in the Lotus Sutra, but my body, while outwardly human, is fundamentally that of an animal, which once subsisted on fish and fowl and was conceived of

the male and female fluids. My spirit dwells in this body like the moon reflected in a muddy pond or gold wrapped in a filthy bag.

The physical and spiritual entity of a human being is more elevated than any other existence -- it reflects the "moon" of Buddhahood and encloses the "gold" of Buddhahood. It is easy to think of the deep compassion Nichiren Daishonin gave each individual desperately struggling to survive through the three calamities and seven disasters.* My heart resounds to his voice in The True Entity of Life, "I, Nichiren, do not cry, but my tears flow ceaselessly," as if I were actually hearing it.

*Calamities described in various sutras. There are two categories of three calamities --- minor and major. The minor ones are inflation (especially when caused by famine), war, and pestilence. The major ones are disasters caused by fire, wind and water. The seven disasters differ according to the sutras. The Yakushi Sutra defines them as pestilence, foreign invasion, internal strife, extraordinary changes in the heavens, solar and lunar eclipses, unseasonable storms and typhoons, and unseasonable droughts.

All in all, the significance of our activities lies in how well we can attune ourselves to the vibrant life of the original Buddha. One person opens the treasure tower of another, who, in turn, opens the treasure tower of a third, thus extending the reach of our activities. Our steady work to bring human life in tune with the vibrant chords of the Gohonzon will extend to more and more people as it continues. The Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) once said:

The meaning of the living words that come out of the experiences of great hearts can never be exhausted by any one system of logical interpretation. They have to be endlessly explained by the commentaries of individual lives, and they gain an added mystery in each new revelation.*

*Rabindranath Tagore, *Sadhana* (Madras: The Macmillan Co. of India Limited, 1972), p. viii.

We do not study the Goshō merely to understand its literal meaning. Rather, we etch each word into our lives. Buddhism actually exists in the heart of each individual, just as Nichiren Daishonin teaches, "The eighty-four thousand teachings are the diary of my own being." The teachings of the Goshō draw from the depths of our own being an indestructible will to live, as opposed to the use of the power of authority to teach and instruct human beings from above. This is why those teachings vibrate in our daily actions and why they are called the Buddhism for real life, not just theorizing.

One human heart moves another. Nichiren Daishonin teaches us this as a living principle. In order to save all ordinary people, he himself was born as one of us and shared our human joys and sorrows. He united himself indivisibly with our hearts. His life-condition is that of absolute happiness, which is described in the Goshō as the "treasures of the heart." Because it contains an indomitable sense of fulfillment, it far surpasses any "treasures of the coffer" or "treasures of the body," which fall into the category of relative happiness. In this regard, President Toda once said, "Belief in this great faith keeps the rhythm of life in tune with the universe, so that one can feel the joy of living to his heart's content. A life force filled with joy is the very source of happiness." To take the goal of attaining Buddhahood in this life means to attain the joy of living. Be firmly convinced that this is the only way we can become enveloped by the great compassion of the original Buddha, who "pledged to make all people perfectly equal to me, without any distinction," and advance together unperturbed by any obstacles.

The Spirit to Protect

Chapter Eleven of the Lotus Sutra says: "Those who choose to protect this sutra serve Taho Buddha and me.... They also serve all the other Buddhas present who dignify and glorify all the worlds." Shakyamuni, Taho, and all the other Buddhas in the ten directions represent the world of Buddhahood within ourselves. By searching them out within us, we can receive the benefits of Shakyamuni, Taho, and all the other Buddhas. This is what is meant by the following passage in Chapter Ten: "If one hears the Law for even a single moment, he will be able to attain perfect enlightenment."

This passage discusses the oneness of parent and child in terms of the three enlightened properties of life. "Me" in the quotation refers to Shakyamuni and means the enlightened

property of wisdom. "Taho" stands for the enlightened property of the Law, and "all the other Buddhas" are the Buddhas who came to participate in the ceremony of the Lotus Sutra from the worlds in the ten directions of the universe. Since they appeared in those worlds as emanations of Shakyamuni Buddha, they collectively mean the enlightened property of action. Shakyamuni, Taho and all the other Buddhas symbolize the three enlightened properties of life. "Those who choose to protect this sutra (the Gohonzon)" succeed those Buddhas and manifest the three enlightened properties of life, just as children succeed their parents. By protecting the Gohonzon they receive the same benefits as they would receive for serving the Buddha with the three enlightened properties of life. That is why Shakyamuni, Taho and other Buddhas represent the world of Buddhahood within ourselves.

The point I would like to make here is the meaning of "protect." In various sutras, the Buddha urged people to protect his teachings. "Protect" may sound conservative, but it is not a passive act. In order to let the flow of Buddhism continue, one must positively transmit it to others and make it prosper. The true spirit of Buddhism flows within the actions of propagation to save those who are unhappy. Let me also draw your attention to the word "choose" in the above quotation. Clearly, it suggests not a passive but a positive attitude; it means to practice Buddhism with your thoughts, words and actions.

Protection is to maintain one's faith in the Gohonzon from beginning to end. By doing so, one guards the supreme life-condition of Buddhahood within oneself. To protect the Gohonzon is to protect one's own life, as the Daishonin teaches us in the Gosho, On the Treasure Tower: "You may think you offered gifts to the Treasure Tower of Taho Buddha, but that is not so. You offered them to yourself" As is inscribed on the Gohonzon, the condition of Buddhahood within us exists in the midst of the three thousand constantly shifting conditions of life. Such life-conditions as Hell, Hunger, Animality and Anger are all inherent in practical life, as are Learning, Realization and Bodhisattva, and all the other life-conditions.

If you slacken in your efforts even a moment, the life-condition of Buddhahood goes behind the thick clouds of the nine worlds. We must always embrace and protect the Gohonzon to the limits of our power so that the Mystic Law within us, which always shines brilliantly, may not be covered by the cloud of obstacles and devils. Water becomes foul unless it flows ceaselessly, and so does human life. Carry out your morning and evening gongyo and challenge a new goal every day, as Nichiren Daishonin urges us in the Gosho: "Strengthen your faith day by day and month after month. Should you slacken even a bit, demons will take advantage."

Next, I ask you to protect the children of the Buddha just as you protect the Gohonzon. To protect the children of the Buddha is to protect the sutra and teachings. The Daishonin stresses in On the Buddha's Prophecy, ". . . there was no one there to whom these sutras could be taught. Their efforts were as meaningless as trying to teach Buddhism to wooden or stone statues garbed in priests' robes and carrying mendicants' bowls." He also said in On Taking Faith in the Lotus Sutra, "If the Law is supreme, so is the person who embraces it. To slander that person, therefore, is to slander the Law. To disrespect the child is to disrespect the parents." Therefore we must protect the children of the Buddha. They are your brothers and sisters unified in the profound bond of Buddhism. They are Bodhisattvas of the Earth, endowed with an irreplaceable mission. I ask you to "arise and greet him from afar, and respect him in the same way as you do the Buddha," just as the Lotus Sutra describes.

Thirdly, it is important to firmly protect the precious organization of Buddhists wherein you encourage and teach each other. Nichiren Daishonin states in The Three Priests' Prayers for Rain: "There is no better way to attain Buddhahood than to have good friends (zenchishiki). What good will one's own wisdom do? If one has sense enough to distinguish between hot and cold, he should treasure his good friends. However, the most difficult thing of all is to meet a good friend." In order for us common mortals to attain Buddhahood, there is no way but to meet good friends, and the Daishonin therefore urges us to seek them out.

I want you to understand that each one of you is a good friend to everyone else. The Nichiren Shoshu Soka Gakkai consists of individuals gathered to encourage and polish each other under the common goal of attaining Buddhahood and kosen-rufu. We must treasure and respect our Buddhist association and our Buddhist friends, for they are part of the most valuable treasure we have. To protect them is to protect the sutra.

Our association still has a long way to go toward worldwide propagation. But the dignity of the original Buddha running deeply within it will brighten the future of mankind in the decades to come. My conviction comes from an unshakable belief in the Daishonin's words in *The True Entity of Life*: "Only I, Nichiren, at first chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, but then two, three and a hundred followed, chanting and teaching others. Likewise, propagation will unfold this way in the future. Doesn't this signify 'emerging from the earth'?" To protect yourself and your Buddhist organization dedicated to justice is to protect the future of all mankind.

To Hear the Sutra Is to Live It

To "hear" in the quote from Chapter Ten means to embrace the Gohonzon. In the Ongi Kuden, Nichiren Daishonin interprets "hearing" in terms of faith and practice. The section concerning "Thus I heard" reads, ". . . according to T'ien-t'ai, 'I heard' symbolizes those who strongly embrace the sutra.... People who do not believe in the sutra never hear the sutra in this sense. Those who practice the Lotus Sutra hear the essence of this phrase."

"To hear the Law for even a single moment" means that even if you only embrace the Gohonzon and practice for a moment, you are able to manifest the supreme enlightenment of the Buddha at that moment. Every moment that we believe in the Gohonzon and chant daimoku, the life-condition of Buddhahood wells up from within us. If you begin the day with a sincere recitation of gongyo, praying to achieve your goals, and conclude it with evening gongyo, chanting daimoku with gratitude to the Gohonzon, you will attain Buddhahood in this lifetime, and in all future existences.

Let me quote a relevant passage from T'ien-t'ai's *Hokke Mongu* (Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra) which clarifies the meaning of "Thus I heard." "Question: You should say, 'My ears hear., Why do you instead say, 'I hear,? Answer: 'I, indicates the master of the ears. It receives all perceptions. This is how the world is understood." The true meaning of "hearing" is not merely the auditory function but perception with all the power of one's life itself. In other words, all human perceptions, including consciousness, work collectively at the same time. "I" thus signifies life in its totality.

Elsewhere in the same work, T'ien-t'ai quotes Bodhisattva Nagarjuna's *Treatise on the Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra* which reads, "There are three kinds of self in common mortals: the deluded self, the arrogant self and the original self." "Self" can be interpreted in many ways, but it is vital to grasp the nature of self. If it is a deluded or arrogant self, then the true spirit of Buddhism cannot enter into one's life. To be exact, "I" of "Thus I heard" is Ananda, one of the ten major disciples of Shakyamuni Buddha, and the treatise says about him, "Ananda is a man of pursuing spirit who, free from his deluded self, firmly subdued his arrogant self. Thus he well deserves to be called a man of the original self." When you eliminate arrogance and illusion and seek Buddhism with a pure seeking spirit, you can, like him, say that you "hear" Buddhism in the deepest sense of the word.

T'ien-t'ai also says, "To expand on the meaning of 'hearing' Ananda was born the very night the Buddha attained enlightenment. He served the Buddha for more than twenty years, but he did not 'hear' the Buddha's teachings before he served the Buddha." T'ien-t'ai meant that to "serve" the Buddha is to "hear" the teachings. "Hearing" in this context is not merely listening to words; it means a life-to-life interchange. Onshitsu (hatred and jealousy) critically impedes this life-to-life contact of faith. To define onshitsu, Nichiren Daishonin quotes Miao-lo in the *Gosho*: "On indicates having ill feelings, and shitsu means unwillingness to listen [to the Buddha's teaching]."

Think hard about what he means by "unwillingness to listen." "Good advice sounds harsh to ears" and "Good medicine tastes bitter" are common proverbs. Common mortals remain common mortals exactly because they do not like hearing what is disagreeable and painful. On the contrary, they are all too easily swayed by flattery and adulation. As long as you take the line of least resistance, you cannot expect to grow. Worse, you are creating the cause for your own ruin, since you surround yourself with people who do not help build inner strength, but rather, serve to tear it down.

In a story from *Taikoki* (*The Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi*) by Eiji Yoshikawa, a character named Menju Iyeteru appears. He was mentor to the attendants of Shibata Katsuiye, one of the powerful feudal lords of sixteenth century Japan. He was also a man of considerable insight, in

spite of his youth. He felt that Shibata was behaving wildly, so one day he turned down a page in a book his lord wanted to borrow so he would notice it. Seeing the corner folded over, Shibata looked at that page and what he read there was an implicit remonstrance against his behavior. Reading on, he felt displeasure sweep through him. From that time on the lord always kept Menju away from him.

Who was a faithful subject? Later on, when Shibata's troops were almost wiped out by Toyotomi Hideyoshi at the battle of Shizuga-take, it was Menju who saved Shibata's life. As their forces began to retreat, Menju repeatedly implored Shibata to hand over the banner that would identify him as the leader. Shibata gave in, and no sooner had Menju taken it than he turned his horse around and, together with a small number of soldiers, rode straight back into the enemy's ranks, dying a heroic death. At that, Shibata realized immediately Menju's deep loyalty. He was pierced by remorse that he had given the banner to him, but it was too late. The victor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, is said to have reverently buried Menju's severed head and then sought out his mother to give her his personal condolences. This episode was originally written down to illustrate the loyalty of a subject to his lord, vaunting the values of the age of warring lords, but I think that we can glean another precious lesson from it. Shibata Katsuiye was unwilling to listen to Menju Iyeteru. His arrogance and negligence led him to take the line of least resistance, which caused his defeat at the battle, and ultimately, his death.

We must plunge in among our fellow members, speaking and carefully listening to everything they have to say. The horrible aspect about onshitsu is that it creates a wall between the hearts of members, destroying the unity. Once fenced off by these walls, our hearts become victim to the three poisons of greed, anger and stupidity. Then we unconsciously destroy all of our own good fortune. This is why individual guidance and sincere person-to-person encouragement are so significant. In the long run, an organization can live up to its purpose only when it can nourish each individual member. True, it requires tremendous life force to listen to your troubled and grieved friends and it also takes tremendous courage to open your hearts to those who are hard to get along with. But the very difficulty involved is a valuable thing in attaining your own human revolution and awakening souls that have long lain dormant in the lives of those friends. I urge you to muster up your courage, to move, listen and speak to them all. The Daishonin says in the Goshō, "When you split one joint in the bamboo, all the others follow." So, no matter how harsh your situation may be, when you face it directly and break through it, like splitting one joint in the bamboo, you can create a new, much better situation. Above all, pray to the Gohonzon with this conviction in your heart, for every prayer allows your inner, true self to shine.

All Buddhas and Bodhisattvas Within

The Juryo chapter reads: "The time is limitless and boundless a hundred, thousand, ten thousand, hundred thousand nayuta aeons* since I in fact attained Buddhahood." Present within our lives is the Lord Shakyamuni who obtained the three enlightened properties of life before gohyaku-jintengo, the original Buddha since time without beginning. The Juryo chapter states: "Once I also practiced the bodhisattva austerities, and the life which I then acquired has yet to be exhausted. My life will last yet twice as many aeons from now." He was speaking of the world of Bodhisattva within ourselves. The Bodhisattvas of the Earth are the followers of Lord Shakyamuni in our lives. They follow the Buddha just as T'ai-kung and Tan, the Duke of Chou, served as ministers to King Wu of the Chou dynasty and later assisted his son and successor, the infant King Ch'eng; or just as Takeshinchi served Empress Jingu and later her grandson Crown Prince Nintoku as a highly valued minister. Bodhisattvas Jogyo, Muhengyo, Jyogyo and Anryugyo represent the world of Bodhisattva within our lives.

Nichikan Shonin states that this passage establishes the oneness of subject and lord in terms of kuon ganjo* time without beginning or end. In other words, the Buddha (lord) and bodhisattvas (subjects) are one in our single entity of life. Both the Buddha of kuon ganjo and the Bodhisattvas of the Earth exist within ourselves when we develop the inner life of kuon ganjo.

The first quote in the passage reveals the time of gokyaku-jintengo when Shakyamuni attained Buddhahood. The Daishonin refers to the Buddha of beginningless time who attained Buddhahood "before gohyaku-jintengo." The word "before" indicates that he is shifting time reference from the temporal framework of gohyaku-jintengo to that of kuon ganjo, time

without beginning or end. Nichiren Daishonin said in *The Entity of the Mystic Law*, "Before gohyaku-jintengo Shakyamuni attained the entity of the Lotus Flower of the Mystic Law and then appeared in various worlds to show how to attain Buddhahood, revealing the ultimate principle to which the people are yet to be enlightened." This passage and the text given above point to the same frame* that of kuon ganjo or "before gohyaku-jintengo." According to *The Exegesis of The True Object of Worship* by Nichikan Shonin, ga jitsu jobutsu irai (since I attained Buddhahood) refers to the three enlightened properties of life as an entirety: ga (self) signifies the enlightened property of the Law, jobutsu (attaining enlightenment) the enlightened property of wisdom, and irai (the time since enlightenment) the enlightened property of action.

The second quote in the text reveals the practice through which Shakyamuni attained Buddhahood. The practice represents the True Cause, the nine worlds that have existed in our lives since time without beginning --- kuon ganjo. The first quote refers to the True Effect which symbolizes the Buddhahood of kuon ganjo. The two quotes reveal that both the True Cause and the True Effect exist in our own lives.

Nichikan Shonin interprets the second quote in the text as "a natural flow," and as he puts it, "just as all rivers flow into the ocean," so all your activities based on true Buddhism will always lead to the ocean of resulting virtues (Buddhahood). This principle bears profound significance to our practice. In the ordinary world, in spite of all your efforts and pains you do not necessarily attain your objectives. In many cases you may end up a miserable failure. In real life the same causes do not necessarily bring about the same results, and efforts often turn out to be futile, or even become tragedies.

In Buddhism, however, no cause ever fails to produce its effect; all causes lead toward a greater effect. Dedication to the Gohonzon and efforts to teach it to others are never wasted, becoming the source of blessings. It is a stream which begins in the recesses of the mountain and at first is too small to notice, but it eventually finds its way onto the plains and finally reaches the ocean. Similarly, efforts in the world of Buddhism, no matter how inconspicuous, will inexorably flow into the great ocean of nirvana. This is what "a natural flow" means. Never forget that your painstaking efforts to propagate the Mystic Law will secure you benefits which last forever.

"The Bodhisattvas of the Earth are the followers of Lord Shakyamuni in our lives." The life-conditions of the nine worlds are represented by the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, who maintain support of the life-condition of Buddhahood and help to manifest it. They are the followers of the Buddha within ourselves. Thus, the Daishonin assures us that both the Buddha of kuon ganjo and the Bodhisattvas of the Earth exist within our lives. To make the relationship between these two life-conditions easier for his contemporaries to grasp, Nichiren Daishonin used the example of subjects and lords. Ordinarily, one thinks first of feudalistic customs when mention of subjects and lords comes up, but what the Daishonin is stressing is the function of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth to help manifest the life of Buddhahood. He spoke of the oneness of subject and lord in terms of the internal development of human life.

Another important point is implied by the analogy drawn in the text. T'ai-kung was a historical figure in ancient China who was met and singled out by King Wen of the Chou dynasty as an indispensable minister. After the king's death he served his successor, King Wu. After King Wu passed away, T'ai-kung even served his successor, the infant King Ch'eng. Tan, the Duke of Chou, was one of King Wu's younger brothers and therefore an uncle of the infant king. He handled state affairs as regent until the young king reached adulthood. Similarly, in Japan Takeshiuchi no Sukune served the infant Crown Prince Nintoku. These mature and experienced ministers all served infant kings. The analogy is meant to show that though the life-condition of Buddhahood emerges when we first embrace the Gohonzon, it is still weak and underdeveloped. So what is necessary to make the Buddha's life-condition unshakable? The essential factor is the workings of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. They are the single factor that can activate the life-condition of Buddhahood.

The Mission of Propagation

The Bodhisattvas of the Earth represent the life-condition that works to propagate the Mystic Law. They are all bodhisattvas who emerged from the ground in the ceremony of the Lotus Sutra to take on the mission to spread the True Law in the evil Latter Day of the Law. In other

words, the Bodhisattvas of the Earth find their raison d'être in single-minded devotion to the propagation of true Buddhism. They attain their original life-condition when they carry out their mission. Nichiren Daishonin teaches us through this analogy that vigorous practice based on a profound awakening to our mission of kosen-rufu is necessary, for without it we cannot support, protect and foster the life-condition of Buddhahood which exists in the depths of our lives.

In retrospect, the Soka Gakkai owes what it is today to the life-or-death struggle President Makiguchi and President Toda waged in prison to protect true Buddhism. President Josei Toda often told young men's division members: "A man should struggle with the harsh realities of life which confront him, no matter who or where he is, and no matter what task he may shoulder. When I was in prison I made the firm vow: 'Now I am in prison. So long as I am in prison, I will wage my battle right here.' " It was there that President Toda one day suddenly realized his profound mission and attained the supreme life-condition. Later on he said, "On the eve of the day I was released from prison I was able to pledge to the late president, Mr. Makiguchi, 'Our lives are eternal; they have neither beginning nor end. I have realized that we were born with the great mission to propagate the seven characters of the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Day of the Law. Judging our capacity from what I now understand, we are the Bodhisattvas of the Earth.' "

We can find our own original pledge and mission in the declaration of our revered teacher Toda, and his ceaseless efforts, supported by this conviction and carried out because of his realization, have brought about the unprecedented prosperity of true Buddhism we enjoy today. I ask you, therefore, to understand deeply that as a Bodhisattva of the Earth you can protect, develop and display the vigorous life force as the Daishonin teaches us, when you dedicate yourself to the activities for propagation and work courageously for your own growth.

The Daishonin said, "Bodhisattvas Jogyo, Muhengyo, Jyogyo and Anryugyo represent the world of Bodhisattva within our lives." The Four Great Bodhisattvas appear in the Yujutsu (15th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra. As numerous as the sands of sixty thousand Ganges Rivers, bodhisattvas emerged rank after rank from the ground led by these four. Our lives contain all of their functions. The innumerable Bodhisattvas of the Earth, the Buddhas and bodhisattvas preached in other sutras, and the living beings in the Ten Worlds all exist within our own lives. That is why Change an wrote in his preface: "The Maka Shikan reveals the teaching that T'ien-t'ai himself practiced in the depths of his being." The Gohonzon, the object of worship for observing one's own mind, is the objective entity that allows the great life-condition existing in one's life to become manifest. "To observe one's own mind" (kanjin) means that embracing the Gohonzon makes that life-condition manifest.

Society fluctuates, and so do human minds. But the great pulsing rhythm that throbs between the universe and the innermost self remains steady with our firm faith in the Gohonzon. For this reason nothing can bolster your existence more strongly than unshakable faith in the Gohonzon, which is that ultimate reality. Those who live up to their belief at times face slander and criticism. As they go forward unperturbed, they may seem obtuse, but their spirit of forbearance is forged all the more strongly in the process. As Goethe said, "The hammer probably seems more active and devoted than an anvil. But it is the quiet anvil that endures endless pounding."

Who will eventually win the victory, a man of belief or those who drift along with the times like flotsam on the waves? Time will answer the question. Having faith provides the greatest and most enduring strength. I ask you to proudly advance in your mission and, as you do, to cherish the words of President Toda: "There are countless successes and failures in life, but for the final victory we must pray to the Buddha."

The oneness of master and disciple, the oneness of parent and child and the oneness of lord and subject, so deeply and clearly shown to us by Nichikan Shonin through the Goshō, also indicate the vital import of The Opening of the Eyes. This text reveals the object of worship in terms of the Person who embodies the three virtues of sovereign, teacher and parent. The life of Nichiren Daishonin, the original Buddha --- the object of worship in terms of the Person in the Latter Day --- is manifest in its entirety in the Gohonzon. Nichiren Daishonin is the Gohonzon, and the Gohonzon is the original Buddha with the virtues of sovereign, teacher and

parent; to know this fact is to feel all the more profound gratitude for being able to worship the Gohonzon.

Life Pervades the Universe

The Great Teacher Miao-lo declares: "You should realize that our life and its environment are the entity of ichinen sanzen. When we attain Buddhahood, according to this principle, our life pervades the entire universe, physically and spiritually."

This is an excerpt from the Guketsu (Annotation of the Maka Shikan) by Miao-lo. I will conclude my lecture with some thoughts about this quote, for, while it is extremely difficult to understand, it is indispensable for understanding the life-condition of Buddhahood. I will, therefore, discuss it in considerable detail according to Nichikan Shonin's Exegesis.

First of all, "our life and its environment" means the life and environment of the original Buddha. The entity of ichinen sanzen, therefore, is the Gohonzon, which embodies the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds and the three thousand conditions of life. But ichinen of ichinen sanzen means single-minded faith, and so, when we take faith in the Gohonzon, our life and its environment both become the entity of ichinen sanzen.

The last sentence in the quote, "When we attain Buddhahood . . ." describes the life-condition we manifest when we attain Buddhahood. "This principle" indicates the Mystic Law of kuon ganjo, the most difficult to comprehend. "Physically" here means the physical aspect of our life, the combination of the five elements—earth, water, fire, wind and ku. It is an objective truth to be realized. "Spiritually" refers to the subjective wisdom to realize that truth, the wisdom that comes from strong faith in the Gohonzon.

As a whole the above-quoted passage tells us that when we embrace the Gohonzon, our life manifests itself as the Buddha of kuon ganjo --- that perfect union of objective reality and subjective wisdom. In other words, because the Gohonzon is the entity of ichinen sanzen embodying the oneness of life and its environment, when we take faith in it, our life becomes the same entity of ichinen sanzen. This is what is meant by juji soku kanjin (to embrace the Gohonzon is to attain Buddhahood).

The pervasiveness of life, both physical and spiritual, throughout the entire universe is a sign of the boundlessly vast life of Buddhahood and of the common people as well. It not only confirms that the world of humanity contains all the Ten Worlds, but also demonstrates how vast and sublime is the life of ordinary people. To me, this particular sentence also reveals true freedom.

To say that life pervades the entire universe may sound groundless and utterly inconceivable, but even natural science has come to recognize the potential of life through the gradual discovery of just what a highly complicated structure human life has. Take just the physical body. Each organ has its own highly sophisticated mechanism. The liver works to detoxify the body, and so far, over two hundred specific functions have been identified. According to some estimates, the liver may perform as many as a thousand functions in all. The chemical reactions the liver carries out, moreover, are highly complex, and not one so far has ever been successfully simulated in a laboratory. The liver is actually an enormous chemical plant. Not even a huge complex of factories would be sufficient to artificially duplicate all the chemical functions of the liver. Therefore, when the liver starts to malfunction, wide-ranging effects are experienced. One becomes spiritually disturbed, sometimes suddenly waking at night, or walking in his sleep.

Then again, look at the lungs. The total area of all the alveoli (air sacs) of the lungs is roughly the same as that of four large rooms. The lungs work to purify blood. The total length of all blood vessels in the body is 96,000 kilometers --- enough to circle the earth twice. Our brain weighs just a little over one kilogram, yet it contains some twenty billion brain cells. Each of its nerve cells has an axon and branches, and intelligence develops as the axons interweave. Personality is determined by the particular pattern in which they interweave, but the total possible combinations of nerve axons are almost incalculable --- they outnumber even the atoms in the island universe that surrounds our planet. That is why it is virtually inconceivable that any two personalities would be exactly alike.

A small calculator often works faster and more accurately than we do in simple calculations, and a large computer makes short work of even massive figures. But even the largest computer is no match for the tiny cells in our brain when it comes to such sophisticated functions as making judgments or creating something. At the present state of the art, an artificial brain built with a capacity even approaching that of the cerebrum would cover the entire surface of the earth. And even if the labor, technology and sheer space needed were available, it is doubtful that it would approximate the human brain. Not just the brain, but every organ in this diminutive body of ours, performs operations which, if artificially reproduced, would be global, or even cosmic, in their magnitude. Seen in this perspective, a person uses only a fraction of his naturally-endowed abilities in the course of his life.

Deeper Energies of the Mind

When it comes to human spiritual functions, the scale expands hyperbolically. Our conscious spiritual activities alone are infinitely complicated and diverse, expressing themselves in the achievements of human civilization --- in the arts, humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. The world of the unconscious, however, is another matter altogether. It remains an almost untapped, vast reservoir of power and ability whose dimensions we can only begin to quantify through the work of psychoanalysts and, in the past, the a posteriori testimony of mystics. The conscious mind is the tip of the iceberg peeking above the waves, while the huge bulk below is the unconscious. It is difficult to counter the idea that in the long run, even though we think we act from conscious motives, the unconscious is universally dominant in man.

In *Seishin Bunseki Nyamon* (Introduction to Psychoanalysis), the Japanese psychologist Otoyama Miyagi gives several examples of how the force of the unconscious dictates the workings of the conscious mind, and in turn controls our physical actions. Even an action that appears to be mere chance is, according to Miyagi, influenced by something in the unconscious, of which we know next to nothing. A person living in Zurich, for instance, is reported to have pondered over whether to spend his holiday at home or make a promised, but unsavored, visit to a friend who lived in Lucerne. He dallied over the matter, but finally decided to go on the trip and left home. On the way, he mechanically changed trains at a station while reading the morning paper. Only when the conductor came up to him a while later did he realize that he had changed to a train headed back to Zurich. Psychologists explain this as a case where the unconscious wish to spend the holiday at home was stronger than his sense of responsibility and conscious judgment, and that unconscious desire controlled his actions.

We sometimes quite casually forget a promise to do something or meet someone; but psychologically this is called "the oblivion of intention." In an interesting example of this type, a person was forced to invite one of his acquaintances to a particular function when he did not want to at all. He called and invited his acquaintance, but said that since he did not remember the exact date and time, he would send him a written invitation. Then he completely forgot, until the day after the function. In this case, too, the particular actions are explained by a dominant, unconscious urge. For most of us, actually, we are more likely to lose a letter with a bill in it than one containing a check, and will forget a dental appointment before we forget a party.

Experience and psychosomatic research have shown that the force of the unconscious always influences the body --- the physical aspect of life. Professor Torijiro Ikemi at Kyushu University cites several cases in his book *Shinryo Naika* (Internal Medical Examination and Treatment), to testify that the force of the unconscious causes many illnesses in the human body. The first is the story of a middle-aged widow who is president of her own company. At some point, both legs became numb from the waist down, and she was unable to stand or walk without holding on to something. Ever since her husband was killed in the war shortly after their marriage, she had toiled to care for their child by herself. Some four years ago she was finally able to establish her own firm. Two years later, however, the company suffered a huge deficit when an assistant, whom she had deeply trusted, cheated on the accounts. Profoundly shocked, she lost all trust in other people. About the same time she noticed her legs becoming numb. She began a series of various treatments but her legs did not get any better. The cause of her affliction was the shock she suffered two years before and the unconscious dimension of her

distrust in others, but she has never connected the two. Only by restoring her trust in other people will she get better. The profound spiritual shock also disabled her physically.

In another case, a white-collar worker suffered from hives and nausea for several months. The doctor made him keep a daily diary of his condition. It soon became clear that every Saturday he felt nothing wrong, but by Sunday afternoon hives began to appear, and he felt nausea on Wednesdays. Asked about the situation in his company, he answered that he was on bad terms with his boss. In addition, he could not do the kind of work he wanted to on his job. The situation had continued unchanged since he first entered the firm. Professor Ikemi indicated that his unconscious resistance and resentment had built up since he began to work there, and they brought on the illness. Mixed emotions deep down inside, frustrated hopes for the future and distrust of his own ability combined to cause his body to react with hives and nausea. The diary testified to the unconscious force; he was free from worry on Saturday and so there was nothing wrong with him, but on Sunday afternoon he became gloomy and restless, and he would break out all over again.

These phenomena offer impressive testimony to the power of the unconscious to disturb the physical property of life and eventually cause sickness, but they occur in a relatively shallow realm of human life. Human life extends to a stratum of the unconscious far deeper than we can imagine. Professor Hayao Kawai at Kyoto University, a Jungian psychologist, discusses the mind in *Muishiki no Kozo* (The Structure of the Unconscious) : "Judging from these examples, Jung considered that the stratum of the human unconscious could be divided into two, the personal unconscious related to the individual life, and the collective unconscious common to all human beings. They lie in such a deep stratum, however, that we are hardly ever aware of them in our daily lives." He also said about the collective unconscious, "It is not personally acquired but inherently endowed, and universal among all mankind."

The collective unconscious, which forms the deepest stratum of each human life, also forms a foundation common to all mankind. It is said that the entire spiritual heritage of man, gathered over two million years, flows within this deepest stratum. One of Jung's followers, C. S. Hall, analyzed man's fear of snakes and darkness, and concluded that such fears could not be fully explained by the experiences of a single lifetime. Personal experiences only seem to strengthen and reaffirm the inborn fear. We have inherited a fear of snakes and darkness from ancestors back in the unknown past. This is, then, a hereditary fear, according to Hall, which proves that ancestral experience is an engrained memory living in the deepest stratum of human life.

The unconscious contains not only all the experiences of our human ancestors; it also contains the experiences of our pre-human predecessors as well. The footprints of each change in the course of our development are etched into the deepest stratum of each human life, reflecting in some way the vicissitudes of the universe. I suspect that Jung conceived of some four billion human beings on the earth living as one being, and the great universe as a huge living existence. Each human being perhaps seemed like a cell which absorbs vital energy from the original force --- universal life itself. This, I think, is the reality that Jung tried to articulate by his concept of the collective unconscious.

As Vast as the Universe

"Our life pervades the entire universe, physically and spiritually." This is the Buddhist intuitive conception of the vast expanse of one's life on a cosmic scale, which modern natural science has only just begun to recognize. Penetrating insights that arose out of Buddhist truths were thus able to uncover the boundless potential of human beings well before anyone could identify or quantify them scientifically. By now, natural science, too, has begun to find ways to identify the cosmic reach of the human potential, but the Buddhist approach to man allows for a still vaster expanse of life, reaching through the universe.

Jijuyushin, the Buddha of unrestricted freedom, means the full manifestation of this cosmic potential in a single human life. It is the state one can obtain for himself. Nichiren Daishonin redefines it in the *Ongi Kuden*: ". . . the entity of life which one receives to do as he wishes." The Buddha of unrestricted freedom is the life force which manifests itself freely and moves even the macrocosm. Therefore, the principle of "the macrocosm is identical with the individual microcosm" is not some abstract idea but a solid reality for those who devote

themselves to the salvation of the unhappy with Buddhahood established as the basis of their lives.

This principle makes it clear that our individual life is completely fused with the cosmic life and it has the same power as the life of the Buddha. How, then, can we bring forth the same life force as that of the original Buddha of kuon ganjo? For that purpose, Nichiren Daishonin inscribed his own life in the form of the true object of worship. "To embrace" is "to observe one's mind" and it is possible solely because the Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon, the only power that enables us "to observe one's mind" and "to manifest the Buddha's enlightenment." Nichiren Daishonin waged a lifelong battle for the single purpose of inscribing the Gohonzon of the Three Great Secret Laws. That is why he declared that he had fulfilled the purpose of his advent when he inscribed the Dai-Gohonzon on October 12, 1279.

The persecutions which he confronted to fulfill his mission were of terrible magnitude. He did not inscribe the Dai-Gohonzon until exactly the right time. The peasants of Atsuhara, who represented all those with pure faith in the Latter Day, inspired Nichiren Daishonin to inscribe the Dai-Gohonzon when they persisted in their faith in the face of severe persecutions. The Dai-Gohonzon inscribed that October, seven hundred years ago, is the priceless entity joining the ultimate principle of Buddhism with the original Buddha's boundless compassion. It is the source of unified light which illuminates the darkness of mankind throughout the entire Latter Day.

Hundreds of years have passed since he inscribed it, and the compassionate light of the Dai-Gohonzon has brightened the lives of more than ten million in this country alone. It is now spreading on into the world, just as the Daishonin wrote, "If Nichiren's mercy is truly great, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo will spread for ten thousand years and more, for all eternity." Now, in the second "Year of Study," we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Soka Gakkai (1980) and the seven hundredth memorial service for Nichiren Daishonin (1981).* I will close now, in the deep hope that you dedicate yourselves and your lives to the two ways of practice and study. I hope you will strengthen your faith to achieve your own enlightenment in this life and work for the happiness and prosperity of all mankind.

*Since Nichiren Daishonin died on October 13, 1282,, it may seem like the memorial service in 1981 should be called the 699th and not the 700th. According to Japanese tradition, however, the date of one's death is actually the first anniversary. In this light, it might be assumed that Nichiren Daishonin's second memorial was observed on October 13, 1283. Tradition confuses the issue, however, by calling this first-year service the "first anniversary" rather than the second, as would be expected. On the second anniversary (for instance, on October 13, 1784, for Nichiren Daishonin) the service becomes the "third anniversary" and it adheres to strict numerical computation from there on. (There is no second anniversary.) So 1981 is the 700th anniversary, using this system.