

## WORDS TO THE WISE OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

**Many hear about and accept this sutra, but few continue their faith in the face of great obstacles. To accept is easy; to continue is difficult. But Buddhahood lies in continuing faith. Those who embrace this sutra should be prepared to meet difficulties. ("The Difficulty of Sustaining Faith," The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 127)**

*From SGI President Daisaku Ikeda:*

As long as we live, we will experience problems and sufferings. They are proof that we are alive. We encounter obstacles precisely because we are making progress. When we fearlessly forge ahead and overcome them, our life becomes brighter and richer and our horizons broaden. True happiness is, after all, the feeling that one's inner world has been enriched. The problems we face become our teachers, pointing out life's treasures to us. (July 1997 Living Buddhism, p. 53)



On the level of the individual, practicing the Lotus Sutra means confronting the fundamental darkness in one's own life. In terms of society, it means confronting corrupt power and authority. Practicing the Lotus Sutra, therefore, necessarily entails challenging great difficulties. Someone who does not confront great hardship is not a true votary of the Lotus Sutra. (August 1997 Living Buddhism, pp. 42–43)



It could be said that the human revolution is a great struggle with the self.... By undergoing difficulties and struggling to overcome them, we can eradicate the fundamental darkness in our lives. Apart from this, there is no true attainment of Buddhahood. (August 1997 Living Buddhism, p. 46)



[Peace and security is] not a matter of leading a timid and weak existence, seeking to avoid obstacles and difficulties. Rather, we should have the spirit: "Come what may, I will survive!" "I will climb another mountain! And the more I climb, the more I can enjoy my life, and the more people I can help become happy." Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is the teaching for leading the ultimate "active life." (September 1997 Living Buddhism, p. 38)



In our practice of the Daishonin's teachings, we may sometimes encounter unpleasantness from others; we may also exert ourselves twice as hard as others. But this is all part of our Buddhist practice. The Daishonin teaches that we can attain Buddhahood in this lifetime. To do so, we have to pass through the trials of the three obstacles and four devils. Yet that's all we need to do to attain enlightenment in this lifetime and enjoy boundless Buddhahood over eternity. So no matter what happens, it's essential that we keep advancing joyfully and courageously, never succumbing to fear. (Sept. 5, 1997, World Tribune, p. 8)



Since the days of my youth my motto has been "The greater the resistance waves meet,

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the stronger they become.” This conviction resonates at a fundamental level with the idea of challenge and response, the theory of history espoused by the great historian Arnold Toynbee. He maintained that a civilization would continue to develop as long as people had the energy and vitality to accept life’s inevitable problems and obstacles as challenges and respond to them by growing stronger. Conversely, when people lose the energy and vitality to respond positively to challenges, a civilization will begin to decline. (Dec. 19, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 13)



Those who have experienced great suffering must win in life and become happy. If you’re always losing and miserable, then you are not practicing the Daishonin’s Buddhism correctly. You are not following life’s true path. Buddhism teaches the means by which the sad become happy and the happy become happier still. That is the reason for our practice. And isn’t becoming happy one of life’s most important goals? (Aug. 15, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 13)



Just as one cannot graduate from school without passing a test, one cannot become a Buddha without defeating devilish functions. To the extent that we struggle against and defeat such obstacles, we approach Buddhahood. (Aug. 15, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 15)



One remark of Goethe’s in particular struck me: “One can bear most things in life, / Except for a monotonous run of prosperity.” These are golden words. If our days are always tranquil and uneventful from the time we are young, we will soon tire of life — the boredom of such an existence becoming unbearable. In other words, adversity give birth to greatness. The greater challenges and difficulties we face, the greater opportunity we have to grow. A life with adversity, a life of ease and comfort, produces nothing and leaves us with nothing. This is one of the indisputable facts of life. (July 18, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 17)



There is a saying that “While a block of marble is an obstacle to the weak, it becomes a steppingstone to the strong.” Strong people make the most of obstacles. The stronger we are, the more joyful our lives. It all comes down to life force, spiritual energy. And these fundamentally derive from the power of faith and practice. (Lectures on the “Expedient Means” and “Life Span” Chapters of the Lotus Sutra, vol. 1, pp. 128–29)



President Toda said: “Faith is a never-ending battle against impasse. It is a struggle between the Buddha and devilish functions — between negative and positive forces. This is the meaning of ‘Buddhism is concerned with winning.’ Everyone encounters an impasse at some point in life. However, the power of the Gohonzon is immeasurable, as vast as the universe itself. Our lives, too, have infinite potential. Everything hinges, therefore, on whether we allow our inner determination to become deadlocked. When we truly grasp this point, the path to victory is already open.” (Sept. 19, 1994, *World Tribune*, p. 13)



Just as a river courses over rocks and stones, life is full of problems and sufferings. If the river flows strongly, the rocks and stones will not only be submerged but will eventually be eroded and washed away. The profound inner joy and dynamic vitality of a life dedicated to achieving the mission of peace known as kosen-rufu resembles the powerful flow of a river. With the joy of faith, one can calmly sweep away and triumph over all suf-

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ferings, no matter how numerous they may be. (The New Human Revolution, vol. 1, p. 160)



You cannot truly grow if you are always flattered and spoiled by those around you. You must resolve never to avoid hardship. If anything, you should have the spirit to go out of your way to find and challenge difficulties. The ultimate victors in life are those who have undergone and triumphed over hardships. Life is long. There is no need to be impatient. The important thing is to steadily and surely build a solid self. Since you uphold faith in the Mystic Law, whatever may happen, you can propel yourself in the best possible direction. I hope you will advance with that conviction. (April 11, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 13)

