

**WORDS TO WIN BY
RIDING THE GREAT VEHICLE TO HAPPINESS
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From "The Selection of the Time," The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 538–94.

Thus a single word of this Lotus Sutra is as precious as a wish-granting jewel, and a single phrase is the seed of all Buddhas. We may leave aside the question of whether Shakyamuni's listeners at that point possessed the capacity to understand such doctrines or not. The fact is that the time had come for him to preach them. As the sutra says, "Now is the very time when I must decisively preach the great vehicle" (WND, 539).

Nichiren Daishonin asserts that "a single word of the Lotus Sutra is as precious as a wish-granting jewel" because the Lotus Sutra contains the teaching of the eternally inherent equality of Buddhahood, which is a life-condition we awaken to through faith in the Mystic Law. "The infinite and unbounded state of Buddhahood can be described as a state in which the freedom, openness and harmony of life are maximally realized," SGI President Ikeda explains (*The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, volume 1, p. 24).

The most profound teaching for the happiness of all humankind remained "hidden" in the depths of the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra — no one before the Daishonin was able to bring this teaching to light. He brought forth the great vehicle for the attainment of Buddhahood that was implicit in the depths of the "Life Span" chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

And he embodied this realization in the form of the Gohonzon, the object of devotion for attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime, in one's present form, thereby establishing a practice fully accessible to all people. Because all people are inherently Buddhas, the Daishonin taught the true Law in a form that corresponds to the time and the capacity of all people.

Reciting the sutra and chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo to the Gohonzon is the "great vehicle" that takes us on the journey along the limitless path of Buddhahood.

President Ikeda further explains: "The dynamic of Shakyamuni's Buddhism is 'from the cause to the effect,' while that of the Daishonin's Buddhism is 'from the effect to the cause.'...The principle 'from the cause to the effect' refers to people of the nine worlds (the cause) practicing in order to attain Buddhahood (the effect). In contrast, the principle 'from the effect to the cause' indicates people who, based on the state of Buddhahood (the effect) they have attained instantly through chanting daimoku to the Gohonzon, pursue and challenge the reality of the nine worlds (the cause) in daily life. You might say Shakyamuni's Buddhism is like climbing a mountain, starting at the foot and heading toward the summit. During the ascent, we are given explanations of how wonderful the peak is, but we ourselves cannot appreciate or comprehend it. Nor is there any guarantee we will eventually reach the top. We may get lost or meet with an accident on the way. In contrast, the Daishonin's Buddhism reveals the way to the direct and immediate attainment of enlightenment, so in an instant we find ourselves standing on the mountain peak" (*The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, volume 1, pp. 99–100).

Therefore, the key to correct practice for the times we are living in is reciting the sutra, chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo and going from the "mountain peak" out into society armed with the wisdom to perform a great transformation of ourselves and the world for the sake of all suffering beings.