

**WORDS TO WIN BY
THE GREAT LAW IS FOR EVERYONE
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From "The Selection of the Time," The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 538–94.

Question: If one preaches the great Law to people who do not have the capacity to understand it, then the foolish ones among them will surely slander it and will fall into the evil paths of existence. Is the person who does the preaching not to blame for this? Answer: If a man builds a road for others and someone loses his way on it, is that the fault of the road-builder? If a skilled physician gives medicine to a sick person but the sick person repelled by the medicine, refuses to take it and dies, should one blame the physician? (WND, 539)

We have learned from Nichiren Daishonin in this letter that now is indeed the time to propagate the one great Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Here, employing a Q-and-A format to fully clarify his reasoning, the Daishonin raises a doubt and questions if the people's capacity to understand the Law should be a concern. After all, if people lack the capacity to understand the Law and wind up slandering it instead, aren't both they and whoever taught it to them destined for suffering?

The Daishonin's answer is quite clear that this is *not* the case.

In the Latter Day of the Law, the era in which we live, one should teach the correct Law regardless of people's differing capacities, the Daishonin says. Later in this letter, the Daishonin cites the Great Teacher Dengyo: "The Former and Middle Days are almost over, and the Latter day is near at hand. Now indeed is the time when the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra will prove how perfectly it fits the capacities of all people..." (WND, 543).

This means we should never withhold teaching the Law because we think someone is not ready for it. We should teach it to everyone, whether we think they will understand it or not. This is not to say that we should not carefully consider each person's uniqueness—the point is that we should chant abundant daimoku for everyone with a resolute determination to find the wisdom and courage to teach them in a way that they can understand.

Because of their differing karmic tendencies, people will react in different ways to our shakubuku efforts. Some will understand and accept the teaching, while others may reject it or perhaps even give us a hard time for our efforts. However, it would certainly defeat the whole purpose of our efforts if we were to view this passage as license to be insensitive, overly aggressive or abusive in sharing the Law with others. Based on our respect for the person we are introducing to Buddhism, we should bring forth genuine sincerity and warmth from our lives. At the same time, if we have done our best with a compassionate spirit to help the other person, there is no reason to worry or blame ourselves if their reaction is unfavorable.

With absolute confidence, we should communicate the joy and benefit of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo without hesitation, whenever we can do so in an appropriate way. Their reaction is their responsibility. Taking compassionate action is ours.