

**WORDS TO WIN BY
PROTECTIVE FORCES COME FROM WITHIN
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From "The Supremacy of the Law," The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 612–17.

The Great Teacher Miao-lo stated, "The stronger one's faith, the greater the protection of the gods." So long as one maintains firm faith, one is certain to receive the great protection of the gods. I say this for your sake. I know your faith has always been admirable, but now you must strengthen it more than ever. (WND, 614)

Nichiren Daishonin's main point here is that "the protection of the gods" results from maintaining and strengthening our faith in Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. The gods he mentions are the various forces inherent in life and the universe that manifest in nature, the environment and human beings.

It is our strong life-force that invokes the protection of these universal forces. And the stronger one's faith, the greater the protection.

SGI President Ikeda explains: "Interestingly, gods that were worshiped in different localities of ancient India before the birth of Buddhism are described as assembling on Eagle Peak to hear the Lotus Sutra being preached. This is because the new teaching of Buddhism viewed such gods not as external existences governing human lives, as the non-Buddhist teachings had regarded them, but as functions inherent in human life and the life of the universe" (*The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, vol. 1, p. 91).

Strengthening our faith is the key to bringing forth this inherent power in our lives. By ceaselessly challenging ourselves to live vibrant lives through practice for oneself and others, we can tap our inexhaustible potential and learn to treasure each moment of life. At the same time, we can eliminate all negative forces, such as self-destructiveness, from our lives. We can push negativity away from us and from those we care about. President Ikeda puts it this way: "The more we challenge and triumph over our problems, the stronger Buddhahood grows within us. In that sense, if our faith is strong, negative factors immediately transform into positive factors [protection], and loss transforms into merit. To a person of faith, everything that happens in life becomes a benefit" (*The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, vol. 1, p. 127).

Ours is a constant pursuit of firm faith and true reason: always reaching beyond our present stage of development, always improving, always seeking, always surpassing our current level, always following our own path—not comparing ourselves with others. When we say that Buddhism is true reason, what we really mean is that through our continuous chanting of the ultimate Law of the universe, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we can continue to develop our lives and surroundings. Betterment of our lives, betterment of society, betterment of the world. Believing that we as individuals can cause everything to improve is what firm faith is all about. President Ikeda thus says: "Faith purifies reason, strengthens it, and elevates it. 'Pure faith' is at once thoroughly polished faith and rigorously tested reason" (*The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, vol. 2, p. 52).

The essence of faith in the Mystic Law is to awaken the protective forces in our lives and express them in our surroundings, in whatever situations we find ourselves in. This is exactly what Nichiren Daishonin did. Whatever happened to him, he turned it into something positive. When we practice Buddhism with firm faith, there is nothing that can defeat us. There is nothing that can stop us from becoming completely happy.