

**WORDS TO WIN BY
DIMINISHING OUR SUFFERING, AMPLIFYING OUR JOY
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From "Earthly Desires Are Enlightenment," The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 317–20.

Because I once disparaged the Lotus Sutra, the highest of all sutras, I am now looked down on, and my words go unheeded. The "Simile and Parable" chapter states that other people will neither concern themselves with one nor have sympathy for one, even though one sincerely tries to be friendly with them. (WND, 318)

As a result of his unyielding propagation efforts, day in and day out, month after month, year after year, for more than 20 years, Nichiren Daishonin was subjected to verbal and physical abuse. Yet he says in "Earthly Desires Are Enlightenment" that he had no regrets—he found profound meaning and value in everything that he went through.

From the viewpoint expressed in the "Encouraging Devotion" chapter of the Lotus Sutra, the Daishonin knew that by meeting the three types of enemies, each difficulty he experienced validated his purpose and proved the righteousness of his teachings. This gave him immense joy and satisfaction while undergoing the tremendous hardships he faced.

The quote above represents this standpoint in regards to lessening karmic retribution. The Daishonin teaches that in experiencing opposition, he could lessen the karmic retribution for his own negative causes in the past, eventually completely eradicating it.

In "The Opening of the Eyes" the Daishonin quotes the Parinirvana Sutra: "Good man, because people committed countless offenses and accumulated much evil karma in the past, they must expect to suffer retribution for everything they have done. ... It is due to the blessings obtained by protecting the Law that they can diminish in this lifetime their sufferings and retribution" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 281).

The Daishonin then applies the passage to his own life: "This sutra passage and my own experience tally exactly. By now all the doubts I have raised earlier should be dispelled, and thousands of difficulties are nothing to me" (WND, 281).

Cause and effect are evident in the Daishonin's life, just as they are in our lives. However, the Daishonin focused on a deeper causality, and so should we. He revealed that it is our fundamental attitude toward the Mystic Law that is the single most important factor in determining our happiness or unhappiness in this lifetime. He taught faith in the Lotus Sutra as the highest good and slander of the Lotus Sutra as the greatest evil. The Lotus Sutra's essence, Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, is the Law or truth that leads directly to enlightenment, enabling all people to attain Buddhahood just as they are. As SGI President Ikeda puts it, "Our mind of faith instantaneously becomes the cause, the effect—and the power—of eternal happiness" (*Learning From the Gosho*, p. 93).

In the same way that the Daishonin overcame every hardship he faced, we can overcome any obstacle through faith and practice based on the Gohonzon. Upholding and protecting the Mystic Law brings great benefit and diminishes our suffering. The greatest cause we can make right now is to share Nam-myoho-enge-kyo with another person. Whether that person chooses to begin practicing at this time or not, the benefit of sharing faith in the Gohonzon with another person is itself the cause to create a life of irrepressible joy.