

**Key Passages from *The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings***

**[11] “The Life Span of the Thus Come One” Chapter—  
Part 1 [of 3]**

**Sowing the Seeds of Buddhahood—The Sacred Work of the Buddha  
to Bring Happiness to All People**

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Hello everyone and welcome to April’s study podcast! This month, we will learn that the Buddhism of sowing, or the practice of sowing the seeds of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, is crucially important in the Latter Day of the Law.

April is a significant month as Nichiren Daishonin first chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo publicly on April 28, 1253, declaring it to be the path to enlightenment for humankind. With this significance in mind, let’s begin today’s podcast.

In the opening section Sensei discusses a youth training course he attended in 2002. There, he emphasizes that the best way to share Nichiren Buddhism is by sharing one’s conviction and personal experiences in faith. By doing so, we can plant seeds of happiness and hope in others’ lives.

The method for spreading Nichiren Buddhism is sowing the seeds of Buddhahood. Through sincere dialogue and continuous prayer, we connect with others forming a bond with Nichiren Buddhism, a source of happiness.

In this and the next two installments, we will study Ikeda Sensei’s lectures on the key passages from *The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings* regarding “The Life Span of the Thus Come One” (16th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra, which is “the heart of the essential teaching.” This chapter reveals the Buddha’s original enlightenment in the remote past, affirming that this struggle for the happiness of all living beings continues eternally.

The term “Thus Come One” is an honourable title of a Buddha. It means “having come

from the realm of truth,” and the Buddha actively engages with living beings, leading them to enlightenment.

The first selected passage is about the title of the “Life Span of the Thus Come One” chapter. Here, the Daishonin prefaces the title with “Nam-myoho-renge-kyo,” expressing it as the “Life Span of the Thus Come One Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.” The Daishonin regards “Thus Come One Nam-myoho-renge-kyo” as the ultimate title of a Buddha. Shakyamuni and all Buddhas attained enlightenment through Nam-myoho-renge-kyo which Nichiren revealed as the fundamental Law for all living beings. Now let’s read the first Gosho selection.

### **Chapter Sixteen: The Life Span of the Thus Come One**

#### ***Twenty-seven important points***

#### **Point One, concerning Chapter Sixteen, The Life Span of the Thus Come One Nam-myoho-renge-kyo**

. . . The Thus Come One is Shakyamuni Buddha or, more generally speaking, all the Buddhas of the ten directions and the three existences. Or, more specifically, it refers to the Buddha of the original state who is eternally endowed with the three bodies.

Now it is the understanding of Nichiren and his followers that, generally speaking, the term “Thus Come One” refers to all living beings. More specifically, it refers to the disciples and lay supporters of Nichiren.

This being the case, the term “eternally endowed with the three bodies” refers to the votaries [or practitioners] of the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Day of the Law.

The title of honor for one who is eternally endowed with the three bodies is Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (OTT, 123–24)

The Daishonin teaches that all people eternally possess the noble life state of the Buddha, However, those who chant, embrace, and spread Nam-myoho-renge-kyo manifesting the life state of Buddhahood are Buddhas or Thus Come Ones in reality. Nichiren Buddhism is to awaken ordinary people with the same vow as the Buddha, striving for eternal happiness of all humanity.

Sensei teaches that the Mystic Law is the teaching transcending of all differences. Practising and sharing the Mystic Law spreads the light of life's innate dignity, human harmony, and lasting peace. This is the heart of our kosen-rufu movement.

Next, in the study material, Sensei discusses the phrase “the Thus Come One's secret and his transcendental powers” that appears in the “Life Span” chapter.

The “Life Span” chapter opens with Shakyamuni expounding on “the Thus Come One's secret and his transcendental powers.” The Daishonin comments that the realization of Buddhahood in one's present form is what is meant by “the Thus Come One's secret and his transcendental powers.” Outside of attaining Buddhahood, there is no “secret” or “transcendental powers.” Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the “secret” teaching for attaining Buddhahood in our present form, and strong faith in the Mystic Law is the way to manifest Buddhahood.

Now let's move onto the second Gosho selection.

There, the Daishonin discusses the section of the “Life Span” chapter where Shakyamuni “casts off the transient and reveals the true.” He discloses his true identity as the Buddha who attained enlightenment in the distant past. The true significance of the “Life Span” chapter lies not only in this revelation but in implication that all living beings are Buddhas from the infinite past. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the ultimate teaching that opens the path to enlightenment for all.

**Point Three, regarding the words “But good men, it has been immeasurable, boundless hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of nayutas of kalpas since I in fact attained Buddhahood” [LSOC16, 265–66].**

Now Nichiren and his followers, those who chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, are the original lords of teachings of the “Life Span” chapter. Generally speaking, the bodhisattvas of the theoretical teaching are not the sort of persons who are qualified to handle this chapter. For they employ an approach in which the theoretical teaching is on the surface and the essential teaching is in the background, while Nichiren and his followers employ an approach in which the essential teaching is in the forefront and

the theoretical teaching is in the background.

Be that as it may, this chapter does not represent the teaching that is essential for the Latter Day of the Law. The reason is that this chapter embodies the Buddhism of the harvest suitable for the time when the Buddha was in the world. But only the five characters of the daimoku [Nam-myoho-renge-kyo] constitute the Buddhism of sowing that is suitable for the present time. Thus, the Buddhism of the harvest is for the time when the Buddha was in the world, and the Buddhism of sowing is for the time after his passing. Hence it is the Buddhism of sowing that is needed in the Latter Day of the Law. (OTT, 125–27)

The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings states that Nichiren and his followers who chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo are “the original lords of teachings of the ‘Life Span’ chapter”. It is because the essential teaching for the present age of the Latter Day of the Law is Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the heart of the Lotus Sutra, which is the Buddhism of sowing. In the Lotus Sutra, Bodhisattvas of the Earth are entrusted by the Buddha with propagation of his teachings after the Buddha’s passing.

Then the Daishonin discusses the Buddhism of harvest and the Buddhism of sowing. The Daishonin stresses that “only the five characters of the daimoku [Nam-myoho-renge-kyo],” spread after Shakyamuni’s death by the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, constitute the teaching of the Buddhism of sowing.

The Buddha’s process of leading people to enlightenment consists of sowing, maturing, and harvesting.

Sowing refers to teaching living beings that they possess the seed of Buddhahood inherent within them and encouraging them to have faith in it. Maturing refers to offering various teachings that gradually foster their capacities and understanding of Buddhism. Harvesting is harvesting the fruit of enlightenment of those who received the seed of Buddhahood in the past lifetimes and liberate them from suffering and attain enlightenment. The people of the Latter Day of the Law, however, have no connection with the Buddha in past lifetimes and require sowing.

The Bodhisattvas of the Earth who are the “original lords of teachings of the ‘Life Span’ chapter” are the protagonists who directly sow the seed of Buddhahood, Nam-myoho-

renge-kyo, in people's hearts in this latter age. The Daishonin, who "took the lead in carrying out the task of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth", underwent numerous selfless struggles to spread the Mystic Law. Nichiren Buddhism is the Buddhism of sowing which activate people's Buddha nature.

In the Gosho passage, the Daishonin declares that his disciples have the mission of spreading the Mystic Law as "original lords of the teachings of the 'Life Span' chapter." The Soka Gakkai is a gathering of Bodhisattvas of the Earth who have vowed to enable all people to become truly happy, sowing the seeds of Buddhahood and contributing to a dialogue movement for peace. Sensei teaches that the significance of this movement lies in:

First, sowing the seeds of Buddhahood creates connections with the Mystic Law; opening the path to happiness for all.

Second, sowing the seeds of Buddhahood transcends differences of race, nationality, and gender, fostering harmony and cooperation.

Third, sowing the seeds of Buddhahood cultivates faith, promoting a life rooted in respect for others.

Our efforts to sow the seeds of the Mystic Law are an endless journey of respecting others' humanity. By believing in people's inherent goodness, we can dispel doubt and suspicion in our world.

As disciples of Nichiren Daishonin, we know that the key to unlocking the boundless power of value creation lies in Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. By chanting daimoku and teaching others to do the same, we manifest the power of the Buddha in our own and other's lives.

As Soka Gakkai members, we are directly connected to Nichiren Daishonin, the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law, who devoted his life to sowing the seeds of Buddhahood.

This is the end of the podcast. I would like to remind everyone of our 2025 daily activities aiming toward Soka Gakkai centennial in 2030. The objectives are the "three D's": Daimoku, Dialogue and District. This is the road to personal growth and SGI Canada. Thank you very much for your long attention.