

**Commentaries on passages in this chapter from
‘The Oral Transmission of the Meaning’**

J. Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳

Said to be given by Nichiren to his disciples and recorded by Nikkō

Interpretations of passages in this chapter from The Oral Transmission of the Meaning⁶³ (J. Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳)

The Passages Interpreted

- #1 Devotion to The Sūtra on the Lotus Blossom of Sublime Purpose,
Measuring the Lifespan of The One That Has Come - Chapter Sixteen
(Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō', Nyo Rai Ju Ryo Hon. Dai Ju Roku.
南無妙法蓮華經, 如來壽量品第十六)
- #2 The secret mystery of The One Who Has Descended Into This World and the pervading
power of its grace.
(nyorai himitsu, jinzū shi riki, 如來祕密, 神通之力)
- #3 In fact I have already attained enlightenment and descended into this world for
countless hundreds, thousands, millions and billions of ages.
(gajitsu jōbutsu irai muryō muhen hyaku zen man oku nayuta asōgi kō,
我實成佛已來無量無邊百千萬億那由他劫)
- #4 This is because The One Who Has Descended Into This World has knowledge and vision
of the transcendental meaning found in the mutually dependent aspects of the three-fold
sphere of sentient existence. Beyond the existence of life and death ...
(sho i shaga? nyorai nyo jit-chiken sangai shi sō, mu u shōji ...,
所以者何? 如來如實知見三界之相, 無有生死 ...)
- #5 Through such ways & means, The One Who Has Descended Into This World instructs and
spiritually transforms sentient beings. Why is this? When the Buddha remains too long in
this world, people who are weak in virtue will be without seeds for the development of
virtuous spiritual capacities. Being poor in merit, they will become greedily attached to the
five kinds of sensory desire and enter into a network of mental distinctions and associations
that are based on false beliefs."
(nyorai i ze hōben kyōke shujō. sho i shaga? nyaku buk- ku jū o se. haku toku shinen
fushu zengon. bingu gesen. tonjaku go yoku, nyū o oku sō mō ken mō chū,
如來以是方便, 教化眾生。所以者何? 若佛久住於世, 薄德之人, 不種善根, 貧窮下賤,
貪著五欲, 入於憶想妄見網中)
- #6 Later on, his children swallowed someone else's poisonous medicine, which brought on
agony, disorder and writhing on the ground."
(shoshi o go, on ta doku yaku, yaku hotsu monran, enden u ji,
諸子於後, 飲他毒藥, 藥發悶亂, 宛轉于地)
- #7 Some had forgotten the purpose for their own lives while others had not.
(waku shitsu hon shin, waku fu shits- sha, 或失本心、或不失者)

#8 He sought out the most effective medicinal herbs that were endowed with a beautiful color, a fine fragrance, a pleasing taste and were perfect in every way. Upon pounding, sifting and blending them, he gave this medicine to his children and directed them to take it.

(gukō yakusō, shiki kō mimi. kai shitsu gu soku. tō shi wa gō. yo shi ryō buku,
求好藥草，色香美味皆悉具足，搗篩和合與子令服)

#9 The poison's vapors had deeply entered into their minds and they had lost their way.

(dok- ke jin nyū. ship- pon shin ko, 毒氣深入，失本心故)

#10 I will now leave this good and pleasing medicine here in this world. You may keep it and take it and you need not fear that it will not work.

(konru zai shi. nyo ka shu buku. mots- u fusai, 今留在此，汝可取服，勿憂不差)

#11 Since I have attained enlightenment and descended into this world

(ji ga toku bur- rai, 自我得佛來)

#12 In order to deliver sentient beings, there have been the ways & means of teaching about freedom (nirvāṇa)

(i do shujō ko. hōben gen nehan, 為度眾生故，方便現涅槃)

#13 Always remaining here to teach of life's true purpose,

(jōjū shi sep- pō, 常住此說法)

#14 At this time all of community of believers is with me,
Appearing together on Vulture's Peak.

(ji ga gyū shu sō. ku shutsu ryōjusan, 時我及眾僧，俱出靈鷲山)

#15 Sentient beings will see the ends of ages, times when great fires rage ... to ...

My pure land will not be defiled, yet many will see burning and destruction, ...

(shujō ken kō jin, daika sho shōji ... ga jōdo fu ki, nishu ken shō jin.,

眾生見劫盡， 大火所燒時，
我此土安隱， 天人常充滿。
園林諸堂閣， 種種寶莊嚴，
寶樹多花菓， 眾生所遊樂。
諸天擊天鼓， 常作眾伎樂，
雨曼陀羅花， 散佛及大眾。
我淨土不毀， 而眾見燒盡，)

#16 I am also the father of the world

(ga yaku i se bu, 我亦為世父)

#17 Idle and attached to the five sensory desires

(hō itsu jaku go yoku, 放逸著五欲)

#18 Whether or not they are cultivating the noble path

(gyō dō fu gyō dō, 行道不行道)

- #19 Always making this thought to myself
(**mai ji sa ze nen**, 每自作是念)
- #20 Attain entry into the supreme path, and quickly realize the life of enlightenment
(**toku nyū mu jō dō. soku jō ju buts- shin**, 得入無上道, 速成就佛身)
- #21 The stanzas of verse beginning with the words ‘Since I’
(**ji ga ge**, 自我偈)
- #22 The stanzas of verse beginning with the words ‘Since I’ (**jiga ge**, 自我偈) being about this
(spiritual) life from beginning to end
- #23 Eternity (**ku on**, 久遠)
- #24 This Chapter on Measuring the Life spiritually transforms the nation so that its people
cultivate the practice
- #25 The Establishment of The Original Object of Worship (gohonzon, 御本尊)
- #26 The Chapter on Measuring the Life addresses the multitude.
- #27 The three-fold spiritual life of enlightenment (S. tri kāya, J. sanshin, 三身) of the Buddha
that is perfectly blended, innately spontaneous and beyond any self-consciously driven
motivation (S. anabhisamkāra, J. musa, 無作)

Interpretations of passages in this chapter from The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳) The text

#1 Devotion to The Sūtra on the Lotus Blossom of Sublime Purpose,
Measuring the Lifespan of The One Who Has Descended Into This World - Chapter 16
(Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō, Nyo Rai Ju Ryō Hon. Dai Ju Roku.
南無妙法蓮華經, 如來壽量品第十六)

Volume nine of The Words & Passages of The Lotus Sūtra says:

- * **The One Who Has Descended Into This World** is a general title for (the spiritual life of) all the Buddhas throughout space (the ten directions) and time (the past, present & future); of the two Buddhas, the three Buddhas, and the source & manifestation of all the Buddhas.
- * **Measuring the Lifespan** is an assessment of the blessings of merit and virtue (the grace) descending from all the Buddhas throughout space (the ten directions) and time (the past, present & future); of the two Buddhas, the three Buddhas, and the source & manifestation of all the Buddhas.

Now, the name of this chapter's title is more precisely a measuring of the blessings of merit and virtue (the grace) descending from the original (timeless & eternal) ground (本地)²³ of the three-fold spiritual life of enlightenment (三佛).⁴ Because of this, it is called 'The Chapter On Measuring the Lifespan of The One Who Has Descended Into This World' (Nyorai Juryō Hon, 如來壽量品).

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

The title of this chapter refers to the great work in the life of Nichiren. The fulfillment of this mission was the work that was transmitted to the Bodhisattva 'With The Most Distinguished Conduct'⁷ (S. Viśiṣṭa Cāritra, J. Jōgyō 上行) in chapter twenty-one 'On The Spiritual Power of The One Who Has Descended Into This World'. **The One Who Has Descended Into This World (nyorai, 如來)** is a special title for the Blessed One Śākyamuni as well as a general title for all of the Buddhas throughout space (the ten directions) and time (the past, present and future.) More specifically, it is a reference to the three-fold spiritual life (S. tri kāya, J. sanshin, 三身), the source of enlightenment (the Buddha) that descends from the original (timeless & eternal) ground.²³ (Neither arising nor perishing), it is perfectly blended, innately spontaneous and beyond any self-consciously driven motivation (S. anabhisaṃskāra, J. musa, 無作).

Now Nichiren and those like him recognize that:

- * Generally speaking, The One Who Has Descended Into This World is a reference to this Buddha nature that is found within all sentient beings.
- * More specifically, it refers to the nature of enlightenment found in the ordained disciples (S. śaikṣya, 弟子) and lay benefactors (S. dānapati, 檀那鉢底) of Nichiren. This nature descends from the innate, timeless three-fold spiritual life of the Buddha that is accepted (through faith) and kept in mind (through practice) by votaries of The Lotus Sūtra in the latter days, after the demise of the dispensation that arose from the Buddha's Śākyamuni's purpose in this world (S. saddharma vipralopa, J. mappō, 末法).
- * The precious title of this timeless and innately spontaneous three-fold life of enlightenment is 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō'.

These are the three very important matters conveyed in this chapter on measuring this lifespan.

There are six levels of identity (六即) with this spiritual life that are established in this chapter:⁶⁶

1. The One Who Has Descended Into This World is found within all ordinary mortal beings. This is identity with this three-fold spiritual life in principle (理即).
2. When they don the crown of 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' (by reciting it),⁶⁷ there is identity with it in name (名字即). This causes them to first hear the title of this sūtra.
3. Upon hearing it with faith, they cultivate its practice. This is identity with it in terms of the practice of meditation (觀行即). Through the practice of meditation (with introspection & stillness of mind) on this original (timeless & eternal) object of worship, there is the work of its three thousand mutually dependent aspects in a single moment of thought (一念三千).
4. With afflictions and obstacles being subdued, there is identity with this spiritual life in terms of a resemblance to it (相似即), its simulation as it is expressed through the 'virtual' nature of consciousness found in an individual life that has been purified of affliction.
5. Through the spiritual transformation of others, there is identity with it in (ever greater) increments (分眞即), as this spiritual life is divided up and multiplied into its many different emanations (of other individual lives) over space & time (ātma bhāva vigraha, 分身).¹⁶
6. Through the eternal, never-dying grace descending from this three-fold spiritual life (tri kāya, 三身) that is perfectly blended, innately spontaneous and beyond self-consciously driven motivation (anabhisamkāra, 無作), there is the ultimate identity (究竟即) with this entire, intact spiritual life as a whole (ātma bhāva stīṣṭhātī ekaghanāḥ, 全身).

Generally speaking, this chapter On Measuring the Lifespan is about the ultimate purpose for the subduing of afflictions. Only ordinary mortal beings truly embody the essential meaning of this chapter, which is the ultimate (dialectical) principle that can be grasped by the mind. What is this three-fold life of enlightenment that is perfectly blended, innately spontaneous and beyond any self-consciously driven motivation? I now tell you it is 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō'.

#2 The secret mystery of The One Who Has Descended Into This World and the pervading power of its grace (nyorai himitsu, jinzū shi riki, 如來祕密, 神通之力)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

There is something very important conferred in these words about this innately spontaneous three-fold life of enlightenment beyond any afflicted ulterior motive (musa sanjin, 無作三身).

In speaking of **the pervading power of its grace (nyorai himitsu, jinzū shi riki, 神通之力)**:¹¹

- * The places where we as sentient beings conduct ourselves and have spiritual influence - we speak of our spirit pervading them.
- * The sounds of tormented and sin-bound people is also a reference to this pervading power.
- * In being born in this world, living (establishing an identity in it), maturing (being spiritually transformed) and perishing, there is the existential nature of the three thousand mutually dependent spiritual aspects⁸² that are ever changing before us. This is our pervading power.

Now Nichiren and those like him open up their eyes and awaken to the realization of this enlightenment in their very lives (J. sokushin jōbutsu, 即身成佛). This is **the secret mystery of The One Who Has Descended Into This World and the pervading power of its grace (nyorai himitsu, jinzū shi riki, 如來祕密, 神通之力)**. The secret mystery of this pervading power of grace (S. adhiṣṭhāna, 神通之力)¹¹ is nothing other than becoming enlightened (to the very nature of our existence and its true purpose). The key to realizing this three-fold spiritual life of the Buddha can be found in a single word. That single word is 'faith'.

Because of this, the sūtra says:

“Those of us with proper faith will accept the Buddha’s words.”

(gatō tō shinju butsugo, 我等當信受佛語)

We can leave the idea of this in the two words **faith (shin, 信)** and **acceptance (ju, 受)**.

#3 In fact I have already attained enlightenment and descended into this world for countless hundreds, thousands, millions and billions of ages.

(gajitsu jōbutsu irai muryō muhen hyaku zen man oku nayuta asōgi kō,

我實成佛已來無量無邊百千萬億那由他劫)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

- * **I (ga, 我)** here is a reference to the Blessed One who has forever realized enlightenment. Although this is the correct idea of this chapter, ‘I’ here also refers to all sentient beings found in the sphere of life’s purpose (dharma dhātu, 法界). That is, it refers to ten spiritual realms that are found in each and every one of us.
- * **In fact (jitsu, 實):** This refers to the certainty of the three-fold life of enlightenment.
- * **Attained (jō, 成):** With transcendental knowledge and its object (life’s true purpose) being combined, there is the unfolding of this purpose. This is the unfolding of the three-fold spiritual life (S. tri kāya, 三身) in the sphere of enlightenment (S. buddha dhātu, 佛界).
- * **Enlightenment (butsu, 佛):** This is an awakened understanding of life’s true purpose.
- * **Already (i, 已):** This is coming from the past.
- * **Descending (rai, 已):** This is going into the future.
- * **Already descended (irai, 已來):** This is being in the present.

In fact I have already attained enlightenment and descended into this world for countless ...

(gajitsu jōbutsu irai muryō muhen, 我實成佛已來無量無邊 ...):

- * **Hundreds (hyaku, 百):** This is a reference to the one hundred-fold sphere of life’s purpose.
- * **Thousands (zen, 千):** This refers to its one thousand mutually dependent aspects. The two terms ‘hundreds’ and ‘thousands’ therefore refers to the work of the three thousand mutually dependent aspects of life’s purpose found in a single moment of thought (J. ichinen sanzen, 一念三千).⁸²

Now Nichiren and those like him chant ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’, and master this chapter On Measuring the Lifespan. All of the bodhisattvas in the teaching of the gateway to the manifestation of enlightenment (found in the first half of the sūtra) did not fully deal with this meaning of this chapter. These bodhisattvas revealed the manifestation on the outside but its source remained (hidden) on the inside. In this sixteenth chapter, this source is faced while the manifestation is (remains hidden) inside. Is not the correct chapter to propagate after the demise of the dispensation that arose from the Buddha’s Śākyamuni’s teaching in this world the one about the very essence of its purpose? This is why this chapter reaps such a harvest of benefits in this world. Now the seeds from the five characters found in this sūtra’s title must be sown. In sowing them, I declare that there will be such a harvest of benefits reaped in this world after my life. And so the method called for in the age after the demise of Śākyamuni’s dispensation in this world is that of ‘sowing the seed’.

#4 This is because The One Who Has Descended Into This World has knowledge and vision of the transcendental meaning found in the mutually dependent aspects of the three-fold sphere of sentient existence. Beyond the existence of life and death ...
(sho i shaga? nyorai nyo jit-chiken sangai shi sō, mu u shōji ...,
所以者何？如來如實知見三界之相，無有生死 ...)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

- * **The One Who Has Descended Into This World (nyorai, 如來)** is found within all sentient beings in the three-fold sphere of sentient existence.⁶⁰ Those who open their eyes to this chapter On Measuring the Lifespan will know and see the transcendental meaning of its originally existing (timeless & eternal) ten-fold sphere of purpose,⁸² just as-it-is.
 - * **The mutually dependent aspects in the three-fold sphere of sentient existence (sangai shisō, 三界之相)** include birth, old age, sickness and death.
 - * The original (timeless, eternal) existence of life & death **goes beyond (the duality found in) the existence of life & death (mu u shōji, 無有生死)**. However, in going beyond the existence of life & death, **whether retreating from it or approaching it (nyaku tai nyaku shutsu, 若退若出)**, one is not without life & death.
 - * Those who see life & death as something disagreeable and to be detached from are confused and speak of first attaining (a manifestation of) enlightenment (始覺).
 - * Those who have knowledge and vision²⁵ of the original existence of life & death are awakened and speak of the source of enlightenment (本覺) that is timeless and eternal.
- Now Nichiren and those like him chant ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’, opening up their eyes and awakening to the original existence of life & death as well as the original (timeless & eternal nature of) descending into existence or arising above it. Because of this, the sūtra says:
- “Beyond the existence of life & death (mu u shōji, 無有生死)**
Whether retreating from it or approaching it (nyakutai nyakushutsu, 若退若出).
- Whether one is still in this world or one has already perished from it, that which is originally existent is always remaining and conducting itself everywhere.

In further interpreting the words of this passage:

- * **That beyond (mu, 無):** There is nothing that is beyond the conduct of ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’, which is simultaneous with the transcendental sphere of life’s purpose.
- * **Existence (u, 有):** In the very reality of life’s sublime purpose, everywhere there is the original existence of the ten-fold spiritual realm⁸² just as-it-is, even in the hells.
- * **Life (shō, 生):** In being born, life’s sublime purpose adapts to the conditions before it.
- * **Death (ji, 死):** Upon the death of a measure of life, the transcendental nature of life is simultaneous with the sphere of life’s purpose as a whole (S. dharma dhātu, 法界).
- * **When retreating from it (nyaku tai, 若退),** there is extinction.
- * **When approaching it (nyaku shutsu, 若出),** there is being in this world.
- * **That beyond, death, retreat & extinction** all refer to the nature of emptiness.
- * **Existence, life, approach & being here in this world** all refer to the temporary mental constructs of virtual reality (with all of its identities & purposes).
- * **The transcendental meaning of The One Who Has Descended Into This World (nyorai nyojitsu, 如來如實)** is a reference to the dialectical principle of the middle way.
- * **That beyond, death, retreat & extinction** all refer to the innately spontaneous response of a manifestation descending from the Buddha’s spiritual life (nirmāṇa kāya, 無作應身).

- * **Existence, life, approach & being here in this world** all refer to the innately spontaneous reward of grace descending from the spiritual life (saṃbhoga kāya, 無作報身).
- * **The existential meaning of The One Who Has Descended Into This World** is the innately spontaneous purpose that is the very existential nature of this spiritual life (dharma kāya, 無作法身).
- * With there being this three-fold life of enlightenment,⁶⁰ so there is our single life.
- * With this one life being three-fold, there is the secret.
- * With this three-fold life being one, there is the mystery.

In fact, this innately spontaneous three-fold life of enlightenment is the existential reality of the lotus blossom found in the lives of Nichiren's ordained disciples and lay benefactors. This is because they reverently keep the precious title of 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' in mind.

#5 Through such ways & means, The One Who Has Descended Into This World instructs and spiritually transforms sentient beings. Why is this? When the Buddha remains too long in this world, people who are weak in virtue will be without seeds for the development of virtuous spiritual capacities. Being poor in merit, they will become greedily attached to the five kinds of sensory desire and enter into a network of mental distinctions and associations that are based on false beliefs."

(nyorai i ze hōben kyōke shujō. sho i shaga? nyaku buk- ku jū o se. haku toku shinen fushu zengon. bingu gesen. tonjaku go yoku nyū o oku sō mō ken mō chū.,

如來以是方便，教化眾生。所以者何？若佛久住於世，薄德之人，不種善根，貧窮下賤，貪著五欲，入於憶想妄見網中)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

The sūtra's words here state that if a Buddha remained in the world for too long, people of weak virtue would be unable to increase their virtuous spiritual capacities. With this being so, a network of false beliefs would be taught to them. This describes the weak virtues of those afflicted sentient beings now living in Japan after the demise of the dispensation of the Buddha Śākyamuni's true purpose in this world. Those who malign the Buddha's true intent now include members of the Nembutsu, Zen, Shingon and other schools.

Without seeds for the development of virtuous spiritual capacities (fushu zengon, 不種善根):

- * **Virtuous spiritual capacity (zengon, 善根)** here is a reference to the sūtra's title.
- * **Without seeds (fushu, 不種)** refers to those that do not keep it in mind.
- * **Mental distinctions and associations (okusō, 憶想):** This is a reference to the indifference of the closed temple, regarding The Lotus Sūtra as inferior or third rate, ideas such as these.⁸¹
- * **False (mō, 妄)** here refers to the words found in the provisional doctrines and sūtras not having the full resonance of truth.
- * **False beliefs (mōken, 邪見):** The Lotus Sūtra is the very highest teaching. Regarding the highest as 'third rate' is a false belief.
- * **In a network (mōchū, 網中):** This is a reference to faithless sectarians who malign the Buddha's true purpose.

Now Nichiren and those like him chant 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' and are free from this network of false beliefs.

#6 Later on, his children swallowed someone else's poisonous medicine, which brought on agony, disorder and writhing on the ground."

(shoshi o go, on ta doku yaku, yaku hotsu monran, enden u ji.,

諸子於後，飲他毒藥，藥發悶亂，宛轉于地)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

- * **Someone else's (ta, 他):** This now refers to all the monks from the Nembutsu, Zen and Shingon sects who have maligned the Buddha's true purpose (in The Lotus Sūtra).
- * **Poisonous medicine (doku yaku, 毒藥)** refers to attachments to the ways & means of the provisional doctrines (without a faithful understanding of their transcendental purpose).
- * In not taking the good medicine of The Lotus Sūtra, they are in **agony and disorder (monran, 悶亂)**. **Agony (mon, 悶)** here is a reference to a cutting off of the breath. When the livelihood that springs forth from the chapter On Measuring the Lifespan is choked off, there is said to be this agony and disorder.
- * **Writhing on the ground (enden uji, 宛轉于地)** refers to entry into the hell of incessant suffering (S. avici naraka, 阿鼻地獄).
- * **All the children later swallowed someone else's poisonous medicine (shoshi ogo, onta doku yaku, 諸子於後，飲他毒藥):** In his explanation of this passage, Zhìyǐ, the Great Master of Tiāntái, said that faithfully accepting the beliefs of false teachers is called 'swallowing poison'.
 - * **All the children (shoshi, 諸子)** here refers to those who have maligned the Buddha's true purpose.
 - * **Swallowed someone else's poisonous medicine (onta doku yaku, 飲他毒藥)** now refers to swallowing provisional teachings such as those now being propagated in Japan about the Buddhas Amida and Dainichi (as somehow superior to and replacing the teaching of The Lotus Sūtra about life's most sublime purpose). Now Nichiren and those like him chant 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' and do not swallow this.

#7 Some had forgotten the purpose for their own lives while others had not.

(waku shitsu hon shin. waku fu shits- sha, 或失本心、或不失者)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

- * **Forgotten the purpose for their own lives (shitsu honshin, 失本心):** This is a reference to maligning life's most sublime purpose.
- * **The purpose for their own lives (honshin, 本心)** is a reference to the seed of enlightenment.
- * **Those who had not forgotten (fu shits-sha, 不失者)** is a reference to the practitioners of The Lotus Sūtra (who sow this seed).
- * **Forgetting (shitsu, 失)** refers to forgetting the original purpose for everything in this world. Now Nichiren and those like him chant 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' and have not forgotten the purpose for their own lives.

#8 He sought out the most effective medicinal herbs that were endowed with a beautiful color, a fine fragrance, a pleasing taste and were perfect in every way. Upon pounding,

sifting and blending them, he gave this medicine to his children and directed them to take it. (gukō yakusō, shiki kō mimi. kai shitsu gu soku. tō shi wa gō. yo shi ryō buku., 求好藥草，色香美味皆悉具足，擣篩和合與子令服)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

The sūtra's words here are on the three fold-training & seamless integration of the three truths:

- * **The most effective medicinal herbs that were endowed with a beautiful color, a fine fragrance, a pleasing taste (yakusō, shiki kō mimi. kai shitsu gu soku, 藥草，色香美味，皆悉具足):** This is a reference to the three-fold training of moral commitment, mental resolve and transcendental discernment of life's purpose.
- * **Pounding, sifting and blending them** is a reference to the three truths:³²
 - * **Pounding (tō, 擣)** refers to the truth found in the nature of their emptiness (śūnyatā, 空).
 - * **Sifting (shi, 篩)** refers to the truth found in their nature as (virtual, mutually dependent) mental constructs (prajñapti, 假).
 - * **Blending (wagō, 和合)** refers to the truth found in their seamless integration through the dialectical principle of the middle way (madhyamā pratipat, 中道義).
- * **Gave it (yo, 與)** refers to the entrustment with the mission,
- * **The children (shi, 子)** is a reference to the practitioners of The Lotus Sūtra
- * **Taking it (buku, 服)** refers to swallowing it, faithfully accepting it and keeping it in mind.

The Buddha then spoke about **this very effective medicine with a beautiful color, a fine fragrance, a pleasing taste being perfect in every way (rōyaku, shiki kō mimi, kai shitsu gusoku, 良藥色香美味皆悉具足).**

- * **In every way (kai shitsu, 皆悉)** here is a reference to all of the myriad practices, good works and different kinds of deliverance (pāramitās, 波羅密) that are all **perfected (gusoku, 具足)** through the very effective medicine of 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō'.
- * **A beautiful color, a fine fragrance (and) a pleasing taste (shiki kō mimi, 色香美味):** Each color and fragrance is not without the dialectical principle of the middle way. Even the grass and trees will ultimately realize enlightenment (to their true purpose). There is nothing that will not be perfected through the five characters of this sūtra's title.

You who are willing to take it will quickly eliminate all suffering and distress, and there will be no more sickness (nyotō kabuku sokujo kunō mubu shugen, 汝等可服,速除苦惱,無復眾患): Upon taking the medicine of life's most sublime purpose, the three poisons of greed, hatred and delusion and all the sicknesses arising from emotional disturbances (S. kleśa, J. bonnō, 煩惱)⁵¹ will be cured.

- * The practitioners of The Lotus Sūtra do not accept offerings from those who malign the Buddha's sublime purpose, and so they cure the sicknesses caused by greed.
- * The practitioners of The Lotus Sūtra are abused and reviled by others, but in practicing endurance, they cure the sicknesses caused by hatred.
- * The practitioners of The Lotus Sūtra are people who are determined and without any doubts about being on the path to enlightenment. Knowing that they will realize enlightenment, they cure the sicknesses caused by the delusions of ignorance.

This very effective medicine is the ambrosia of realizing enlightenment after the demise in the dispensation of the Buddha Śākyamuni's purpose in this world. Now Nichiren and those like him chant 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō', which is the original intent for taking this most effective medicine that is spoken about in the chapter On Measuring the Lifespan.

#9 The poison's vapors had deeply entered into their minds and they had lost their way.
(dok- ke jin nyū, ship- pon shin ko, 毒氣深入, 失本心故)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

- * **The poison's vapors had deeply entered into their minds (dokke jinnyū, 毒氣深入):** Deeply entering into feelings of attachment to provisional teachings, they malign their greater, transcendental purpose.
- * Only depending upon them, they do not faithfully accept the **very effective medicine (dai rōyaku, 大良藥)** of The Lotus Sūtra.
- * Although they are directed to take it, **they reasoned that ... it did not taste good (ni i fumi, 而謂不美)** and spit it out.

Now Nichiren and those like him chant 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' and do not reason that it does not taste good.

#10 I will now leave this good and pleasing medicine here in this world. You may keep it and take it, and you need not fear that you will not be cured.
(ze kō rōyaku konru zai shi. nyo ka shu buku. mots- u fusai,
是好良藥, 今留在此, 汝可取服, 勿憂不差)

The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

- * **This good and pleasing medicine (ze kō rōyaku, 是好良藥):** Some have said this refers to the teachings found in the sūtras. Others have said that this refers to the sacred relics (S. śarīra, 舍利)¹⁴ that the Buddha left in this world after he passed from it and are now worshipped by the faithful. In the age after the demise in the dispensation of the Buddha's Śākyamuni's purpose in this world, this is a reference to 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' and the five levels of its profound meaning (五重玄義) (that have been bequeathed to us, as explained in the twenty-first chapter of this sūtra, On The Spiritual Power of The One Who Has Descended Into This World).⁶⁵
- * **Pleasing (kō, 好):** The five characters of the sūtra's title (Myō Hō Ren Ge Kyō, 妙法蓮華經) please all of the Buddhas of the past, present and future.
- * **Now leave it (kon fu, 今留):** 'Now' refers to the time, the age after the demise in the dispensation of the Buddha's Śākyamuni's purpose in this world (S. saddharma vipralopa, J. mappō, 末法).
- * **Here in this world (zaishi, 在此)** is a reference to the place, the jungle (wilderness) of this world (S. Jambudvīpa, 一閻浮提)¹⁰ generally & (in our case) the nation of Japan specifically.
- * **You (nyo, 汝)** is a reference to all sentient beings living in the age after the demise in the dispensation of the Buddha's Śākyamuni's purpose in this world
- * **Keep it (shu, 取):** This is refers to the time during which there is the ceremony for faithfully accepting and keeping The Lotus Sūtra in mind.
- * **Take it (buku, 服):** This is the swallowing of the medicine, a reference to the actual practice of recitation.⁶⁷ It is the taking the medicine of the Buddha's original three-fold spiritual life that is perfectly spontaneous and beyond any afflicted motivation (J. musa sanjin, 無作三身), which cures the disease of believing that one must first attain enlightenment (through one's own self-consciously driven efforts). Now Nichiren and those like him chant 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' and this is what happens.

#11 Since I have attained enlightenment and descended into this world

(ji ga toku bur- rai, 自我得佛來)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

In this single line of verse, one learns about the three-fold spiritual life of the Buddha.

* **Since (ji, 自)** refers to the nine lower spheres of life's purpose.

* **I (ga, 我)** refers to the sphere of enlightenment.

With there being the originally existing (timeless & eternal) ten-fold spiritual realm,⁸² so there is the original three-fold spiritual life of enlightenment that is beyond any afflicted ulterior motivation (J. musa sanjin, 無作三身).

* **Since I (ji ga, 自我)** together refers to the attainment of enlightenment through the spiritual life of the Buddha descending into this world.

This originally existing ten-fold sphere of life's purpose⁸² is described in the sūtra's words.

* **I (ga, 我)** is a reference to the existential nature of the spiritual life (S. dharma kāya, 法身).

* **Enlightenment (butsu, 佛)** refers to the reward of grace descending from this spiritual life (S. saṃbhoga kāya, 報身).

* **Descended into this world (rai, 來)** refers to the response from this spiritual life (S. nirmāṇa kāya, 應身) to sentient beings in this world in accordance with their capacities.

* This three-fold spiritual life is without any beginning or end and **enlightenment (butsu, 佛)** to it has been **attained (toku, 得)** **since (ji, 自)** long ago.

This can be deemed as attaining the most precious of treasures without consciously seeking it. In fact, in revealing the source of eternal life, this goes far beyond all the other teachings found in the sūtras. Now Nichiren and those like him reverently chant 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' and are the practitioners of **Since I have attained enlightenment and descended into this world (ji ga toku bur- rai, 自我得佛來)**.

#12 In order to deliver sentient beings, there have been the ways & means of teaching about nirvāṇa (i do shujō ko, hōben gen nehan, 為度眾生故, 方便現涅槃)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

The teaching found in The Nirvāṇa Sūtra is revealed here to be derived from the words of The Lotus Sūtra. Nirvāṇa (spiritual freedom) is taught here to be a skillful means of teaching about life's true purpose.

#13 Always remaining here to teach of life's true purpose

(joju shi sep- po, 常住此說法)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

* **Always remaining (jōjū, 常住):** This is a reference to the place where the practitioners of The Lotus Sūtra live, with **here (shi, 此)** referring to this world we must all endure together (S. sahā loka, 娑婆世界).⁹ This is about teaching of life's true purpose on the mountaintops,

where the streams descend from them, the plains and the river valleys (as taught in chapter five of this sūtra ‘On the Parable of the Medicinal Plants (Oṣadhī, 藥草喻).

- * **Teaching of life’s true purpose (seppō, 說法):** This refers to the original existing (timeless & eternal) sound that is found in the voices of all sentient beings. This timeless sound comes from faithfully accepting and employing the knowledge attained from this teaching about life’s most sublime purpose. Upon entering into the age after the demise of the Buddha Śākyamuni’s purpose in this world, teaching of life’s true purpose refers to ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’. Now Nichiren and those like him are teaching of this purpose.

**#14 At this time the whole community of believers is with me,
Appearing together on Vulture’s Peak.**

(ji ga gyū shu sō, ku shutsu ryōjusan, 時我及眾僧，俱出靈鷲山)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

These words describe the solemn assembly on the Holy Peak before the dispersal.

- * **At this time (ji, 時):** This is a reference to the time when there is a seamless integration of the potential capacities (receptivities, 感) of sentient beings with the response (應) of the Buddha’s three-fold spiritual life, after the demise of the dispensation from Śākyamuni’s purpose in this world.
- * **Me (ga, 我)** refers to The Blessed One, the Buddha Śākyamuni.
- * **With (gyū, 及)** refers to the noble assembly of bodhisattvas.
- * **The whole community (shusō, 眾僧)** refers to all of those who are taught (S. saṅgha).
- * **Together (ku, 俱)** here is a reference to refers to the ten-fold spiritual realm.⁸²
- * **Vulture’s Peak (ryōjusan, 靈鷲山)**¹⁹ is a reference to the land of the serene illumination.¹⁰
“At this time the whole community of believers is with me,
Appearing together on Vulture’s Peak.”

There is a secret in these words that must be kept. They refer to the original (timeless & eternal) work of the three thousand mutually dependent aspects of life’s purpose found in a single moment of thought, revealing the original object of worship (J. gohonzon, 御本尊).⁸³

- * **Together (ku, 俱)** here is a reference to the unchanging dialectical principle underlying the transcendental nature of life’s purpose, just as-it-is (J. fuhen shinnyo ri, 不變眞如理).
- * **Appearing (shutsu, 出)** refers to knowledge of this transcendental principle that adapts to all conditions, just as-they-are (J. zuien shinnyo chi, 隨緣眞如智).
- * **Together (ku, 俱)** refers to the single moment of thought (J. ichinen 一念).
- * **Appearing (shutsu, 出)** refers to the three thousand (J. sanzen, 三千) mutually dependent aspects found in the tapestry of life’s purpose.⁸²

And further:

- * **At this time (ji, 時)** here refers to the original time (本時) when they appeared together in this world we must all endure together (S. sahā loka, 娑婆世界) from the remote past. These words reveal the descending (sowing) of the maṇḍala (曼荼羅) of the ten-fold sphere of life’s purpose into this world,⁸² just as-it-is. And so the **time (ji, 時)** here refers to the fifth five-hundred year period after the Buddha Śākyamuni has passed from this world when the dispensation of his purpose has ended.

- * **Me (ga, 我)** here refers to the Blessed One among the Śākyas.
- * **With (gyū, 及)** refers to the bodhisattvas.
- * **The community of believers (shusō, 衆僧)** here refers to those on the two lesser vehicles.
- * **Together (ku, 俱)** refers to those of the six spiritual realms in the sphere of desire.
- * **Appearing (shutsu, 出)** refers to their appearance in the pure land.⁹
- * **Vulture's Peak (ryōjusan, 靈鷲山)¹⁹** refers to the original (timeless & eternal) object of worship (J. gohonzon, 御本尊)

Now Nichiren and those like him chant 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' and remain in this world to teach of this.

#15 Sentient beings will see the ends of ages, times when great fires rage ... to ...

My pure land will not be defiled, yet many will see burning and destruction.

(shujō ken kō jin, daika sho shōji ... ga jōdo fu ki, nishu ken shō jin,

眾生見劫盡， 大火所燒時， //12

我此土安隱， 天人常充滿。

園林諸堂閣， 種種寶莊嚴， //13

寶樹多花菓， 眾生所遊樂。

諸天擊天鼓， 常作眾伎樂， //14

雨曼陀羅花， 散佛及大眾。

我淨土不毀， 而眾見燒盡，) //15

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

These words reiterate the three thousand mutually dependent aspects of life's purpose in a single moment of thought, which is the gateway to penetrating the source (J. honmon, 本門) of enlightenment taught in this chapter On Measuring the Lifespan.

- * **Times when great fires rage (daika sho shō ji, 大火所燒時):** The real meaning of this is the great fires of emotional disturbance (S. kleśa, J. bonnō, 煩惱).⁵¹
- * **My land will be a sanctuary of peace (ga shido annon, 我此土安穩):** This is a reference to the level of the nation and land (S. kṣetra loka, 國土世間).
- * **Sentient beings will always be content (shujō sho yūraku, 眾生所遊樂):** This refers to the level of society (S. sattva loka, 衆生世間).
- * **There will be precious trees with blossoms and fruits (hōju ta keka, 寶樹多華菓):** This refers to the level of the individual and (the cause & effect found in) its five (afflicted) projections of purpose (S. pañca skandha loka, 五陰世間).⁶²

These are among the distinctions explained in the three thousand mutually dependent aspects of life's purpose in a single moment of thought (J. ichinen sanzen, 一念三千).

And this passage of verse also speaks about the ten spheres of life's purpose:

- * **Great fires (daika, 大火)** refers to the sphere of hell (S. naraka dhātu, J. jigoku kai, 地獄界).
- * **Divine drums (tenku, 天鼓)** refers to the realm of brutality (S. tiryagyonī dhātu, J. chikushō kai, 畜生界).
- * **Those of heaven & humanity (tennin, 天人)** refers to the spheres where there are the destinies of divine beings in the heavens of meditation (S. deva dhātu, J. tenkai, 天界) and human beings in the arenas of social interaction (S. manuṣya dhātu, J. ninkai, 人界).

This is the meaning of the words **where those of heaven & humanity are always fulfilled** (**tennin jo juman**, 天人常充滿).

- * **Mandārava blossoms will rain down (u mandara ke**, 雨曼陀羅華): This is a reference to the sphere where students of the noble path (S. śrāvakas, J. shōmon, 聲聞界)⁵² are found.
- * **Gardens and forests (onrin**, 園林) refers to the sphere of those awakening to the afflicted nature of sentient existence in their own lives (S. pratyeka buddhas, J. engaku, 緣覺界).⁵²
- * The single word **with (gyū**, 及) is a reference to the sphere of bodhisattvas (菩薩界).⁵²
- * **Scattering on the ... Buddha (san butsu**, 散佛) is a reference to the sphere of enlightenment.
- * The spheres of proud beings (S. ashura kai, 阿修羅界) & hungry demons (J. gaki kai, 餓鬼界) are referenced by the passage:

**“Grieving, fearful and suffering in distress,
Like this, they will be completely fulfilled.”**

(ufu sho kunō, nyoze shitsu jūman, 憂怖諸苦惱, 如是悉充滿)

This is about **sentient beings who are immoral (zeshi zai shujō**, 是諸罪衆生).

With this being so, the teaching of this chapter On Measuring the Lifespan everywhere reveals our lives and all the three thousand mutually dependent aspects of their purposes in a single moment of thought. Now Nichiren and those like him reverently chant ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’ and these lives are revealed.

#16 I am also the father of this world

(ga yaku i se bu, 我亦為世父)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

I (ga, 我) here is a reference to the Blessed One Śākyamuni, the spiritual father of all sentient beings. According to the sūtras, the Buddha serves the roles of lord, teacher and parent.

- * In the teaching on the gateway to the manifestation of enlightenment (J. shakumon, 迹門) in the first half of the sūtra, there are words in the verse of chapter three on these three roles of the Buddha²² that say “Now this three-fold sphere of sentient existence is my property.”
- * In this chapter’s teaching on the gateway to the source of enlightenment (J. honmon, 本門), there are words on these three roles of lord, teacher and parent as follows:
 - a. The role of lord (sovereign) is described by the words **My land will be a sanctuary of peace (gashi do annon**, 我此土安穩).
 - b. The role of teacher is described by the words **Ever teaching about life’s purpose and spiritually transforming (jō seppō kyōke**, 常說法教化).
 - c. The role of parent is described by the words **I am also the father of this world (gayaku i sebu**, 我亦為世父).

On this, Zhànrán, the Great Master from Miàolè² said:

“Those who do not understand the words of the chapter On Measuring the Lifespan are like brutes in that they do not understand the blessings for which they should be thankful.”

In terms of this sūtra:

- a. In being “the king of the sūtras” there is its role as a lord.
- b. In being “able to save all sentient beings” there is its role as a teacher.
- c. In being “like Brahma the great heavenly king over creation, the father of all sentient beings”, there is its role as a parent.

Now Nichiren and those like him chant ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’ and they are the fathers of this world because they save those who suffer in the hell of incessant suffering.

On this, The Nirvāṇa Sūtra said:

“All the sufferings of sentient beings are the sufferings of a single person: The One Who Has Descended Into This World.”

Now Nichiren says:

“All of the sufferings of sentient beings are the sufferings of a single person: Nichiren.”

#17 Idle and attached to the five sensory desires

(hō itsu jaku go yoku, 放逸著五欲)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

- * **Idle (hō itsu, 放逸)** here is another name for the maligning of the Buddha’s true purpose. Those who malign this will enter into the hell of incessant suffering (S. avici naraka, 阿鼻地獄) without any doubt. Now Nichiren and those like him chant ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’ and are safe from what these words speak about.

#18 Whether or not they are on the path to enlightenment

(gyō dō fu gyō dō, 行道不行道)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

This explains the conduct of sentient beings in the ten-fold sphere of life’s purpose.⁸²

- * **On the path to enlightenment (gyōdō, 行道)** is a reference to the four paths in the noble sphere of life’s purpose.
- * **Not on it (fu gyōdō, 不行道)** refers to the six ordinary paths in the sphere of desire
- * In speaking generally about those who are **on the path to enlightenment (gyōdō, 行道)**, it includes prideful beings (S. asuras, 修羅), human beings in the social realm (S. manusya, 人) and divine beings in the heavens of meditation (S. devas, 天).
- * Those who are **not on it (fu gyōdō, 不行道)** include those on the three roads of evil.

Upon entering the age during which there is the demise of the Buddha Śākyamuni’s purpose in this world (S. saddharma vipralopa, C. mò fǎ, J. mappō, 末法):

- * **On the path to enlightenment (gyōdō, 行道)** is a reference to being a practitioner of The Lotus Sūtra.
- * **Not on it (fu gyōdō, 不行道)** refers to those who malign its purpose.
- * **The path to enlightenment (dō, 道)** is a reference to The Lotus Sūtra.

Zhìyǐ, the Great Master of Tiāntāi said:

“The path to enlightenment specifically refers to the teaching found in this sūtra.”

Now, Nichiren and those like him reverently chant ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’ and are **on the path to enlightenment (gyōdō, 行道)**. Those not chanting it are **not on it (fu gyōdō, 不行道)**.

#19 Always making this thought to myself
(mai ji sa ze nen, 每自作是念)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

- * **Always (mai, 每)** here is a reference to the duration of time over the past, present & future.
- * **Myself (ji, 自)** specifically refers to the Blessed Buddha Śākyamuni and more generally to all of those in the ten spheres of life's purpose.
- * **This thought (ze nen, 是念)** refers to 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō', the single moment of thought (J. ichinen, 一念) that is naturally endowed with the unconditional purpose of enlightenment that is originally existing (timeless & eternal).
- * **Making (sa, 作):** This does not refer to that which is conditionally produced (through the ulterior motives found in cultivation). Rather, it is innate, originally existing and beyond any need for further self-consciously driven motivation (S. anabhisamkāra, J. musa, 無作). In speaking broadly about the originally existing (timeless & eternal) ten-fold spiritual realm:⁸²
- * **Myself (ji, 自)** refers to the innumerable aspects of life's purpose that are found in the existential nature of each and every one of us.
- * **This thought (ze nen, 是念)** refers to remembrance (S. smṛti, J. nen, 念) of all the tortured sounds of hell and all of the other outer thoughts expressed by sentient beings. There is a transcendental knowledge of all of these through acceptance and employment of the reward of grace descending from the spiritual life (S. saṃbhoga kāya, 自受用報身). This is what is meant by 'this thought'. Now Nichiren and those like him reverently chant 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' and always keep this thought in mind with greatness of mercy and compassion.

#20 Attain entry into the supreme path, and quickly realize the life of enlightenment
(toku nyū mu jō dō, soku jō ju butsu- shin, 得入無上道, 速成就佛身)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

- * **The supreme path (mujō dō, 無上道)** refers to innate endowment with the three-fold life of enlightenment that is explained in this chapter On Measuring the Lifespan.
- * This is nothing outside of **realizing the life of enlightenment (jōju busshin, 成就佛身)**. Now Nichiren and those like him reverently chant 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' and are without doubt that they will realize this (three-fold spiritual) **life of enlightenment (busshin, 佛身)**.

#21 The stanzas of verse beginning with the words 'Since I'
(ji ga ge, 自我偈)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

- * **Since (ji, 自)** is a reference to the nine spheres of life's purpose.
- * **I (ga, 我)** is a reference to the sphere of enlightenment.
- * The verse (J. ge, 偈) is a reiteration of the principle that all ten of these spheres are originally existent (timeless & eternal) states of life's most sublime purpose. This must be deeply considered. This most sublime purpose is expressed through 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō'.

#22 The stanzas of verse beginning with the words ‘Since I’ (jiga ge, 自我偈) is about this (spiritual) life from beginning to end:

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

- * **Since (ji, 自)** (or ‘from’) refers to the beginning (of this life).
- * **Quickly realizing the life of enlightenment (soku jōju busshin, 速成就佛身)** refers to its end (purpose).
- * **Since (there has been) ... this life (ji ... shin, 自 ... 身)** therefore means from the beginning to the end.

In the meantime,³⁷ there have been all the words & letters (in this teaching about life’s true purpose) that have been accepted & employed.

- * Therefore, this verse (S. gātha, J. ge, 偈) beginning with the words **since I (jiga, 自我)** is about ‘accepting and employing the reward of grace descending from the life of the Buddha’ (自受用身).⁴
- * (In accepting these stanzas of verse from beginning to end by reciting them from) **Since ... to ... the life of enlightenment (ji ... busshin, 自 ... 佛身)**, there is the opening up of the whole sphere of life’s purpose (dharma dhātu, 法界).
- * Is this not the subject of this verse that begins with the words **since I**?

In accepting (through faith) and applying (through practice) this life of enlightenment, there is opening up and revealing the three thousand mutually dependent aspects of life’s purpose in a single moment of thought.

On this, the Great Master Saichō (Dengyō Daishi, 伝教大師)² said:

“With the three thousand mutually dependent aspects of life’s purpose being in a single moment of thought, there is acceptance and employment of the life of enlightenment and, through this, there is the summoning of a blessed image of the Buddha.”

The summoning of this blessed image of the Buddha is the work of the three-fold spiritual life of enlightenment. Now, with Nichiren and those like him chanting ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’, this blessed image is opened up and revealed.

#23 Eternity (ku on, 久遠)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

This chapter discusses the true realization of eternity and not just the superficial or ineffectual meaning of it. Innate endowment with the three-fold spiritual life of enlightenment has not just been attained for the first time, as it is unchanging (timeless & eternal). The thirty-two auspicious signs (S. dvātriṃśan mahā puruṣa lakṣaṇāni, 三十二相) & eighty excellent refinements (S. aṣṭī anuvyañjanāni, 八十種好) found in the greatness of humanity (S. mahā puruṣa, 大人)¹³ cannot be improved upon. With the originally existing enlightenment of the Buddha always remaining and never ending, there is said to be the nature of its **eternity (kuon, 久遠)**. Through this eternal nature being expressed as ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’, its transcendental reality is innately and spontaneously opened up.

#24 Because this Chapter on Measuring the Life spiritually transforms the nation, there is the cultivation of its practice.

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

This is the proper chapter to propagate to those Japan as well as all the other sentient beings found in the jungle of humanity (S. Jambudvīpa, 南閻浮提).¹⁰ Those now being spiritually transformed (in the time of Nichiren) are those in Japan. The cultivation of this practice is without any doubt the work of faithful minds. The people to whom it is bestowed and entrusted are the timeless bodhisattvas who are forever sprouting forth from the earth.

#25 The Establishment of The Original Object of Worship (J. gohonzon, 御本尊)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

The original, timeless object of worship is based on the words in this chapter that speak of “the secret mystery of The One Who Has Descended Into This World and the pervading power of its grace” (nyorai himitsu, jinzū shi riki, 如來祕密, 神通之力). The three-fold training of moral commitment, mental resolve and transcendental discernment of life’s purpose is the work of the three great secrets⁸³ in this chapter On Measuring the Lifespan. Nichiren certainly gave his mouth’s resolve at the Holy Peak.^{19c} The original, timeless object of worship for the practitioners of The Lotus Sūtra is the very spiritual life of the Buddha that is before us.

#26 The Chapter on Measuring the Life addresses the multitude

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

The words of this sūtra were addressed to the Bodhisattva Maitreya,⁷ although in fact after the passing of the Buddha Śākyamuni from this world they are now addressed to all sentient beings in Japan. Among them, Nichiren and those like him who chant ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’ are like Maitreya, in that they are the votaries of The Lotus Sūtra in the age after the demise in the dispensation of this Buddha’s purpose in the world (S. saddharma vipralopa, J. mappō, 末法). The name Maitreya refers to ‘the intimate bond of love only known among family members’, (just as, through their commonality of purpose, practitioners of The Lotus Sūtra are all members of the same family). On this, Guàndǐng (灌頂), the Great Master of Zhāng’ān (章安大師)² said: “To abolish any special kind of evil, there must be a special kind of parent.” Is this not also a reference to the Bodhisattva Maitreya?

#27 The three-fold spiritual life of enlightenment (S. tri kāya, J. sanjin, 三身) that is perfectly blended, innately spontaneous and beyond any self-consciously driven motivation (S. anabhisamskāra, J. musa, 無作)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

* The blessed image of the Buddha’s spiritual life is the originally existing (timeless & eternal) ten-fold spiritual realm.⁸²

- * Through the meeting place (S. samaya, 三摩耶)⁸⁴ between the timeless and the temporal, there is the site where this ten-fold sphere of life's purpose is kept in mind.
- * The expression of faith is the seed, the unchanging utterance of 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō'.
- * With there being this sacred meeting place between the timeless and the temporal, there is the joining together of the palms.

There is a secret in these words that must be kept!

#28 On a passage from this Chapter On Measuring the Life of The One Who Has Descended Into This World and how it encapsulates the meaning of the entire chapter:

"The One Who Has Descended Into This World has knowledge and vision of the transcendental meaning found in the mutually dependent aspects of the three-fold sphere of sentient existence. Beyond the existence of life & death ..."
(sho i shaga? nyorai nyo jit-chiken sangai shi so, mu u shoji,
 如來如實知見三界之相，無有生死 ...)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

This passage speaks about a vision of the originally existing three-fold spiritual life of enlightenment and how it is said to know and see the transcendental meaning of all the mutually dependent aspects found in the myriad purposes of life.³ If the existential reality of this enlightenment is unconditional, how can it said to be subject to birth and death?

#29 On how The Chapter On Measuring the Lifespan of The One Who Has Descended Into This World (Nyorai Juryō Hon, 壽量品) is connected with the meaning of devotion to the sūtra's title (Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō, 南無妙法蓮華經)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

This Chapter On Measuring the Lifespan is about the original (timeless & eternal) livelihood of sentient beings in the ten spheres of life's purpose. It is said to be the gateway for penetrating the source of enlightenment (J. honmon, 本門), the teaching in which the originally existing bodies and minds, the very flesh and blood of ordinary beings is what is timeless and eternal. This supplements the teaching in the first half of the sūtra that is said to be the gateway to penetrating the manifestation or 'footprint' of enlightenment (J. shakumon, 迹門), on how to first realize this through the skillful cultivation of the noble path. By contrast, this second half of the sūtra is said to be about awakening to the original (timeless & eternal) enlightenment (that is beyond this cause & effect of cultivation & realization). This is 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō', a place found to be originally existing within all sentient beings.

And so the words of the sūtra say **"I have already attained enlightenment and descended into this world"** (ga jitsu jōbutsu irai, 我實成佛已來)".