

One Drop of the Great Ocean



A HUNDRED, a thousand, ten thousand characters come together to form the Lotus Sutra, and thus it may be likened to the great ocean.

Moreover, if we compare a single drop of the great ocean with a drop from a single river or stream, we see that they are both small in size, but are entirely different in meaning. A single drop from a river or stream is no more than one kind of water or one kind of rain. But a single drop of the great ocean is a single drop made up of all the waters from the four quarters of the world.

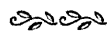
A single drop from a river is like a single piece of gold, but a single drop of the great ocean is like the wish-granting jewel. A single drop from a river has only a single flavor. But one drop of the great ocean contains all the five flavors. One drop of a river or

a stream has only one healing agent, but one drop of the great ocean is like a pill made up of ten thousand ingredients.

Namu Amida Butsu is one drop of a single river, but Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is one drop of the great ocean. The Amida Sutra is one drop of a single river, but the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra is one drop of the great ocean.

The faults committed by the late Gorō in his sixteen years of life are one drop of a river or stream, but his chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo for a short time is like a drop of the great ocean.

When we stop to think of it, the flower comes when the bud opens, and then comes the fruit. The parent dies first and the son carries the parent to the grave. That is the natural order of things.



Background

This text is a fragment of a letter thought to have been addressed to Nanjō Tokimitsu or his mother. One view suggests it was written in 1280. Nichiren Daishonin uses the image of the ocean to illustrate the universal and all-inclu-

sive power of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Though Gorō, Tokimitsu's younger brother, lived only a short time, the benefit deriving from his practice of chanting daimoku far outweighs any negative causes he may have made.