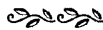


## On Losing Faith and Falling into Evil



**O**UR enemies are many, our enemies are strong, and our allies are stern and difficult to follow. If we give way to evil inclinations, we may lose our faith in the Lotus Sutra and fall into the evil paths of existence. For people always try to run away from what is difficult.

Shakyamuni Buddha had all the thirty-two auspicious features,<sup>1</sup> his body a golden color, his face like the full moon. And yet when evil persons looked at him, some saw his color as ashen, some saw him as sooty, and some saw him as an enemy.



### Background

Neither the year nor the recipient of this letter is known. Only a fragment remains.

Nichiren Daishonin and his followers were confronted by enemies who wielded great power and authority in the secular and religious realms. He makes clear that pursuing the correct Buddhist practice in the face of such

fierce opposition is not for the faint of heart. They should not give in to inner weakness and try to avoid difficulty, lest they suffer in the evil paths of existence.

Evil people saw Shakyamuni Buddha, who possessed many auspicious features, as ashen or sooty, or even as an enemy.

### Note

1. See thirty-two features in Glossary.