The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra Volume IV
PART II: “The Life Span of the Thus Come One” Chapter: The Ten Worlds
Section 4: The Pursuit of Happiness

Key terms & concepts in this section:

- Shakyamuni’s attaining enlightenment for the first time (WLS-4, 91-94)
- Life condition and one’s perception of time and space (WLS-4, 97-98)
- Urashima Taro effect (WLS-4, 99-102)
- The three poisons (WLS-4, 104)
- The life state of Hell (WLS-4, pp. 102-08)
- The life state of Hunger (WLS-4, pp. 108-10)
- The life state of Animality (WLS-4, pp. 111-16)

Discussion Questions:

1. The word “meditation” often connotes tranquility and peace of mind. In contrast, what did Shakyamuni encounter on his spiritual journey? (WLS-4, pp. 93-94)

2. “Life-time” is usually understood in terms of length of time. In what context do the study leaders discuss “life-time”? How does our life-state affect the way we experience life? (WLS-4, pp. 97-101)

3. What are some important concepts to keep in mind when discussing the doctrine of the Ten Worlds? (WLS-4, p. 102)

4. What are some characteristics of the life state of Hell? (WLS-4, pp. 104-08)

5. What are some characteristics of the life state of Hunger? (WLS-4, pp. 108-10)

6. What are some characteristics of the life state of Animality? (WLS-4, pp. 111-14)

Highlighted in this section from The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin:

The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra vol. IV, p. 99 and 111

“‘It is the nature of beasts to threaten the weak and fear the strong.’ (“Letter from Sado,” WND-1, 302)
The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra vol. IV, p. 100

“Even these creatures understood how to repay a debt of gratitude” (“The Opening of the Eyes,” WND-1, 244)

The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra vol. IV, p. 101

“The fact that all things in this world are transient is perfectly clear to us. Is this not because the worlds of the two vehicles are present in the human world?” (“The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind,” WND-1, 358)

The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra vol. IV, p. 104

“Rage is the world of hell” (“The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind,” WND-1, 358)

The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra vol. IV, p. 108

“First of all, as to the question of where exactly hell and the Buddha exist, one sutra states that hell exists underground, and another sutra says that the Buddha is in the west. Closer examination, however, reveals that both exist in our five-foot body. This must be true because hell is in the heart of a person who inwardly despises his father and disregards his mother . . . ” (“New Year’s Gosho,” WND-1, 1137)

The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra vol. IV, p. 65

“When we come to the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra, then the belief that Shakyamuni first obtained Buddhahood during his present lifetime is demolished, and the effects of the four teachings are likewise demolished. When the effects of the four teachings are demolished, the causes of the four teachings are likewise demolished. Thus the cause and effect of the Ten Worlds as expounded in the earlier sutras and the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra are wiped out, and the cause and effect of the Ten Worlds in the essential teaching are revealed. This is the doctrine of original cause and original effect.” (“The Opening of the Eyes,” WND-1, 235)

The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra vol. IV, p. 110

“Persons who, because they are greedy for fame and profit, preach from such impure motives, will suffer retribution in this realm.” (“Explaining the Causation of the Ten Worlds,” WND-2, 196)
Those who in the past cut down trees that had been planted to give shade and coolness, or who had cut down trees in the gardens and groves used by the company of monks, will suffer retribution here.” (“Explaining the Causation of the Ten Worlds,” WND-2, p. 197)

“The people of these schools who are ignorant of the teachings of the ‘Life Span’ chapter are similarly like beasts . . . Therefore, Miao-lo states: ‘Among all the teachings of the Buddha’s lifetime, there is no place . . . where the true longevity of the Buddha is revealed . . . If a son does not even know how old his father is, he will also be in doubt as to what lands his father presides over’” (“The Opening of the Eyes,” WND-1, 258)

“Foolishness is that of animals.” (“The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind,” WND-1, 358)

“Fish want to survive; they deplore their pond’s shallowness and dig holes in the bottom to hide in, yet tricked by bait, they take the hook. Birds in a tree fear that they are too low and perch in the top branches, yet bewitched by bait, they too are caught in snares.” (“The Opening of the Eyes,” WND-1, 301)

“Those who are stupid and shameless, who simply accept alms from believers and do nothing by way of return will suffer retribution by being born in this realm.” (“Explaining the Causation of the Ten Worlds,” WND-2, 197)

“Warfare [occurs] as a result of anger.” (“King Rinda,” WND-1, 989)