

## **Special Words to Transfer Merit for the Ceremony Marking the [*Spring/Autumn*] Equinox**

Today, at this ceremony marking the [*spring/ autumn*] equinox, we reverently address these words to the Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni—Great Benevolent Teacher, World-Honored One, all buddhas, bodhisattvas, and heavenly spirits.

*Paramita* is “the other shore,” that is, the wondrous realm of nirvana. We will depart this shore of suffering, and through perseverance in the bodhisattva practice of the Six Paramitas, reach the other shore of permanence, bliss, self, and purity, and enter the buddha land where we will attain buddhahood by accomplishing the Way. The practice of the Six Paramitas, which comprises generosity, precept keeping, forbearance, diligence, meditation and wisdom, is the essence of Namu Myoho Renge Kyo, that is, the act of taking refuge in the Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wondrous Dharma. For this reason, the Lotus Sutra is the great ship that departs this shore of delusion and crosses the great ocean of birth and death to reach the other shore of awakening. Followers of the Lotus Sutra are just like people who obtain a boat to cross the waters. The Lotus Sutra is the only ship that is certain to convey its practitioners across the great ocean of birth and death.

Chapter 10 of the Lotus Sutra, “Teachers of the Dharma,” states,  
“I bestow the assurance of Supreme Perfect Awakening upon those people who hear even a single verse or a single phrase of the Wondrous Dharma Flower Sutra and thereby experience even a moment of rejoicing.”

It also states,

“Such people have already paid homage to ten thousand million buddhas and have completed a great vow in the presence of those buddhas. Out of compassion for living beings, they will be born in this human realm.”

Courageous perseverance and great joy well up like a spring in the mind of whoever hears the sutra’s passages and Dharma guidance and attains faith in and understanding of its meaning.

All the members of pure heart attending this [*spring/ autumn*] equinox ceremony vow to practice the bodhisattva way through accumulating merits and cultivating virtues. To our ancestors, we transfer all the merits of the good deeds we have performed since the beginningless past and will perform for all eternity.

We respectfully pray that through the merits of embracing the Three Treasures of Buddhism, all buddhas and all honored ones extend their hands of compassion and protection to all the ancestors of the families for whom we conduct this ceremony today, and all those who have passed beyond, known and unknown to us, wherever they be.

May all of them cross the great ocean of birth and death, so that they may reach the other shore of great parinirvana and quickly accomplish the great fruit of Supreme Perfect Awakening in the radiant land of tranquil light.

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo (*Strike the gong once.*)

### **Notes**

1. As for the quotes from the Threefold Lotus Sutra in the third and fourth paragraphs, you can replace them with appropriate passages from the sutra.
2. After the fourth paragraph, you can insert a quote from the Dharma guidance of Founder Niwano or President Niwano as appropriate. See the examples 1 to 5 below.

### **Example 1**

Placed inside the statue of the Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni in the Great Sacred Hall is a dedicatory inscription appended to the ten scrolls of the Threefold Lotus Sutra. The inscription, which the Founder wrote, says:

“The Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni, Great Benevolent Teacher, World-Honored One, is our great focus of devotion, which merits veneration, respect, praise, and devotion from us followers of Buddhism and even the esteem of all human beings of every faith. Practice that upholds the actions of the three vehicles through body, speech, and mind is itself the great and direct way to the wondrous abode of nirvana.”

### **Example 2**

In his Dharma guidance, the Founder told us,

“Shakyamuni awakened to the Dharma of the three vehicles: the Four Noble Truths, the Twelve Causes and Conditions, and the Six Perfections. Practicing these teachings is the one and only way of practice that enables us to eliminate the sufferings of life and attain nirvana—the state of absolute peace.”

### **Example 3**

In his Dharma guidance, the Founder told us,

“Future generations will need a spirituality that seeks the true wisdom and the other shore of awakening. The other shore may appear far away, but we can actually find it in the place closest to us—our own hearts and minds.”

#### **Example 4**

In his Dharma guidance, the President told us,

“We are given the gift of life and sustained by the eternal life of the Original Buddha. We are living the life of the Original Buddha in every moment.”

#### **Example 5**

In his Dharma guidance, the President told us,

“Immediately upon receiving the Buddha’s wisdom, one enters eternal life since we human beings are gifted with the ability to recognize the truth. We who have encountered the teachings of the Buddha must be fully conscious that we possess this gift. The moment we experience an awakening of gratitude for being born human and recognize the truth, we receive the Buddha’s eternal life.”