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## The Daishonin's Path: Applying Nichiren's Buddhist Principles to American Legal Education

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# **The Daishonin's Path: Applying Nichiren's Buddhist Principles to American Legal Education**

John W. Teeter, Jr.\*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Nichiren Daishonin was a Buddhist priest in thirteenth-century Japan.<sup>1</sup> He was a radical figure whose unceasing attack on the official Buddhist practices of the day incurred the wrath of both secular and religious officials.<sup>2</sup> Twice he was sent into exile and once he was nearly beheaded for his refusal to remain silent in the face of what he considered the corruption of true Buddhist principles.<sup>3</sup>

The Daishonin emphasized the primacy of *The Lotus Sutra*<sup>4</sup> as the foundation of Buddhist beliefs. This Sutra, which embodies the highest teaching<sup>5</sup> of Shakyamuni Buddha,<sup>6</sup> declares that all living beings inherently possess the Buddha nature with its accompanying virtues of wisdom, courage, compassion, and life force.<sup>7</sup> Regardless of gender, social class, or previous life condition, all of us have an equal opportunity to attain enlightenment.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, it is possible to manifest our Buddha nature in this lifetime<sup>9</sup> instead of having to practice austerities for kalpas<sup>10</sup> or yearning to be reborn in some heavenly land. Throughout his life, Nichiren Daishonin exhorted his followers to adhere to *The Lotus Sutra* and pursue

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1. For a concise biography, see NICHIREN SHOSHU INTERNATIONAL CENTER, *THE LIFE OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN* (rev. ed. 1993) [hereinafter *THE LIFE OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN*]. The term "Daishonin" is a title of honor that may be translated as "great sage." See 2 NICHIREN, *Glossary, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN* 311, 317 (Gosho Translation Committee ed. & trans., 2d ed. 1995).

2. *THE LIFE OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN*, *supra* note 1, at ix.

3. *Id.* at 28-36, 46-55, 60-78.

4. For a beautiful modern translation, see *THE LOTUS SUTRA* (Burton Watson trans., 1993).

5. As Shakyamuni explained, "I have preached various sutras, /and among those sutras/ the Lotus is the foremost!" *Id.* at 164.

6. Also known as Siddharta Gautama, Shakyamuni is the first recorded Buddha and the founder of Buddhism. See *Glossary, LIVING BUDDHISM*, Mar. 1998, at 3. For an excellent analysis of Shakyamuni's life and philosophy, see DAISAKU IKEDA, *THE LIVING BUDDHA* (Burton Watson trans., 1976).

7. See RICHARD CAUSTON, *THE BUDDHA IN DAILY LIFE* 11 (1995) (describing the qualities of the Buddha inherent in everyone); *THE LOTUS SUTRA*, *supra* note 4, at xix (discussing the "joyous revelations concerning the universal accessibility of Buddhahood" and explaining that "the Lotus Sutra reveals that its revolutionary doctrines operate in a realm transcending all petty distinctions of sex or species, instant or eon"); NICHIREN SHOSHU INTERNATIONAL CENTER, *FUNDAMENTALS OF BUDDHISM* 83 (3d ed. 1993) [hereinafter *FUNDAMENTALS OF BUDDHISM*] (reasoning that "The Lotus Sutra's preeminence among all the sutras lies in its assertion that all people can become Buddhas as Shakyamuni did, and in its philosophy which provides the theoretical explanation for this possibility"); NICHIREN SHOSHU INTERNATIONAL CENTER, *OUTLINE OF BUDDHISM* 83 (Yasuji Kirimura ed., 1981) [hereinafter *OUTLINE OF BUDDHISM*] (declaring that "all human beings have equal potential to become Buddhas").

8. Defining enlightenment is no facile feat. The clearest explanation I have encountered relates that "[e]nlightenment is not a mystical or transcendental state, as many might assume. Rather it is a condition of the highest wisdom, vitality and good fortune wherein we can shape our own destiny, find fulfillment in daily activities and come to understand and appreciate our purpose in being alive." SGI-USA, *SGI-USA STUDY PROGRAM ENTRANCE-LEVEL TEXTBOOK* 56 (1993).

9. See, e.g., *FUNDAMENTALS OF BUDDHISM*, *supra* note 7, at 22 (stating: "Unique to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is the possibility of attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime.").

10. Roughly the time it takes us to grade exams. See *id.* at 23-24 ("A kalpa is an unimaginably large period of time, which equals approximately sixteen million years.").

enlightenment regardless of the persecution and other temporal hardships they endured.<sup>11</sup>

These lessons are inspiring, but their relevance to American legal education may be less than obvious. Upon reflection, however, I find that fundamental aspects of Nichiren Daishonin's teachings merit our attention. The Daishonin was a tireless mentor for his disciples, and his call for compassion, critique, courage, and wisdom are essential for law students and teachers alike.

The purpose of this Essay is not to convert readers to my faith or to purport to decide how Nichiren Daishonin would reform legal education. Moreover, I trust I am not trying to load my homespun ideas with artificial import by appropriating the garb of an esoteric philosophy. Instead, I offer my thoughts in the spirit of sharing a remarkable man's perceptions and how they might inform the way we teach and advise our students. By doing so, I hope to encourage others to reflect on their own sources of spiritual sustenance and examine the contributions they can make toward deepening the relevance, meaning, and joy of legal education.

## II. A LOOK IN THE MIRROR

*"[A]n animal dressed in priestly robes."*<sup>12</sup>

Before pondering how we can help students we must first examine ourselves. Professors are the high priests of the academy, enjoying enviable prestige, power, and financial remuneration. It is apparent, however, that so many of us are fallen priests, going through the motions of performing sacraments in which we no longer believe. As Roberto Unger illustrates, professors can resemble "a priesthood that had lost their faith and kept their jobs" while standing "in tedious embarrassment before cold altars."<sup>13</sup>

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11. Paraphrasing Shakyamuni Buddha, the Daishonin directed that a believer "should never hold back any of the teachings, even though it may cost him his life." 4 NICHIREN, *Repaying Debts of Gratitude*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN 171, 182 (Gosho Translation Committee ed. & trans., 1986) [hereinafter NICHIREN, *Repaying Debts of Gratitude*].

12. 3 NICHIREN, *The Fourteen Slanders*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN 205, 215 (Gosho Translation Committee ed. & trans., 1985) [hereinafter NICHIREN, *The Fourteen Slanders*].

13. ROBERTO MANGABEIRA UNGER, THE CRITICAL LEGAL STUDIES MOVEMENT 119 (1986). Such corruption transcends time, nationality, and area of specialization. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, a courageous reformer of Japanese education, was disheartened by his fellow teachers' lack of altruism. As he stated, "[o]n the basis of more than thirty years spent in the field of education, I would be hard-pressed to think of any single group of people who are more concerned with their own self-preservation and less concerned with service to others than teachers." TSUNESABURO MAKIGUCHI, EDUCATION FOR CREATIVE LIVING 105 (Dayle M. Bethel ed. & Alfred Birnbaum trans., 1989) [hereinafter MAKIGUCHI, EDUCATION FOR CREATIVE LIVING]. The story of Mr. Makiguchi's life and conversion to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism may be found in DAYLE M. BETHEL, MAKIGUCHI THE VALUE CREATOR (1973).

Nichiren Daishonin's verdict is even harsher. As he charged:

Though one may have been fortunate enough to be born as a human being and may perhaps have even renounced the world in order to seek the truth, if he fails to study Buddhism and to refute its slanderers but simply spends his time in idleness and chatter, then he is no better than an animal dressed in priestly robes. He may call himself a priest and earn his livelihood as such, but in no way does he deserve to be regarded as a true priest. He is nothing but a thief who has stolen the name of a priest. How shameful and frightening!<sup>14</sup>

This is an urgent call to those who profess to profess, a call to a self-criticism more piercing and painful than any critique we could rightfully levy toward students. The Daishonin well understood the temptations of tenure, the penchant to jabber rather than sing. A recurrent theme throughout Nichiren's Buddhism is the need for humility in priests, and by extension, all others who purport to guide or instruct. Professorial posturing is merely "thunder that rolls but brings no rain,"<sup>15</sup> and "the braying of a donkey cannot cause the winds to blow."<sup>16</sup>

Most professors lead enviable lives. Our congenital pouting and "unearned unhappiness"<sup>17</sup> are therefore difficult to fathom. Take your three most serious grievances and relate them to a real "worker," whether she be the managing partner of a law firm or a dishwasher at the local delicatessen. Your wails of woe will be met with either bitter snickering or stunned silence. We are remarkably well paid for what we do and precious few jobs offer the personal liberty and intellectual satisfaction we take as our birthright.

A price for this is inevitable. We can pay it either by becoming the jaded priests of little faith or by striving, pushing, and demanding of ourselves that we mentor our students and pursue pedagogical excellence—however subjectively defined—with the loving tenacity of a relentless pilgrim. Our profession does not permit complacent goodness; we must strive to excel or else lapse into fraudulence. This is simply the choice we embrace through our audacity in purporting to teach others.

Is such effort necessary to make it as a teacher? No. At least not in any material sense. Any high-bright carnival barker can entertain students, and there is always *some* journal that will publish the dreck we spew. Generations of mediocrities have attained tenure, and "[t]he banners of their pride were lifted up higher than the

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14. NICHIREN, *The Fourteen Slanders*, *supra* note 12, at 215.

15. NICHIREN, *Repaying Debts of Gratitude*, *supra* note 11, at 264.

16. NICHIREN, *Rebuking Slander of the Law and Eradicating Sins*, in *LETTERS OF NICHIREN* 283, 290 (Philip B. Yampolsky ed. & Burton Watson et al. trans., 1996) [hereinafter NICHIREN, *Rebuking Slander*].

17. This phrase is borrowed from WILLIAM STYRON, *SOPHIE'S CHOICE* 130 (1979) (describing a fictional heroine's term for the malaise of young bourgeois intellectuals).

heaven where there is neither thought nor no thought, and their dogmatic rigidity was harder than metal or stone.”<sup>18</sup>

All actions have consequences, however, and a glorified fossil is nonetheless petrified. Professional security is of little consequence when one knows he is merely a competent showman. “To be praised by fools—that is the greatest shame,”<sup>19</sup> even when the applause emanates from tenure committees.

As professors, we must traverse the double helix of both being teachers and being taught. We must also recognize our dual obligations to transform our perceptions of the law while empowering our students to do the same. This requires toil, which can seem so unrequited, and a sustaining belief that we have something worth developing for ourselves and our students. As the Daishonin enjoined a follower, “[y]ou must not only persevere yourself; you must also teach others. Both practice and study arise from faith. Teach others to the best of your ability, even if only a single sentence or phrase.”<sup>20</sup>

### III. THE PROFESSOR AS MENTOR

Mentoring is a special form of teaching, a one-to-one journey for the enrichment of both. Nichiren Daishonin understood the importance of relating to his followers on a personal, mentor-disciple basis. Although he wrote major doctrinal treatises on Buddhism, he also penned hundreds of letters to followers, counseling them on a myriad of spiritual and practical issues.<sup>21</sup> This empathy undoubtedly has contributed to the faith his teachings have engendered over the past seven centuries.

To be candid, few professors serve as mentors in any meaningful sense. The nuances of empathy seldom arise among us because we are seldom available to our students in the first place. This widespread lack of accessibility is as puzzling as it is detrimental. Why, one wonders, do people go into teaching when they are so loath to spend time with students?<sup>22</sup> How can they justify their bloated salaries based on only a few hours’ teaching per week? The quick retort is that we are paid to publish, and that our ceaseless efforts to enlighten the professoriat with our scholarship excuses our refusal to grace students with our time.

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18. 2 NICHIREN, *The Opening of the Eyes*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN, *supra* note 1, at 59, 63 [hereinafter NICHIREN, *The Opening of the Eyes*] (footnote omitted).

19. *Id.* at 188.

20. NICHIREN, *The True Entity of Life*, in LETTERS OF NICHIREN, *supra* note 16, at 358, 362-63.

21. *See, e.g.*, THE LIFE OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN, *supra* note 1, at ix (discussing Nichiren’s “remarkable warmth and concern” for his disciples as expressed in “an extraordinary number of letters”).

22. There are, of course, exceptions. *See, e.g.*, Philip C. Kissam, *Conferring With Students*, 65 UMKC L. REV. 917 (1997) (discussing the value of student-faculty conferences).

A trade-off inevitably exists between accessibility to students and time for scholarship.<sup>23</sup> It is disheartening, however, that so many of us use the “research defense” to shirk our obligations to students. First, it seems that the most prolific professors are often quite generous with their time. Based on my observations as both a student and a teacher, I would conclude that the drive-to-publish defense is more commonly employed by tenured rascals with skimpy output. Second, we need to undertake an unblinking assessment of whether we will actually reach and help more people through grinding out yet another article or by giving our students the time and attention they deserve.<sup>24</sup> Before reaching any firm conclusions, type your name into the “TP-ALL” library on Westlaw and see what you harvest. Is your work commonly cited in leading reviews? Or, like me, are you stabbing at peas with a fork? (When “Teeter” comes up on Westlaw, it is usually as a verb.) We must continually push ourselves to be productive scholars, for it is part of our professional duty to participate in a collective discussion of the law. In all frankness, however, the vast majority of us cannot pretend that our contributions to legal literature will excuse a snotty disregard for our apprentices. Like Nichiren Daishonin, our entire bearing toward students should radiate the words, “I am always ready to clear up any further questions you may have.”<sup>25</sup>

Does this mean we should endeavor to be our students’ friends? Yes, with the explicit recognition discussed below that a true friend should unflinchingly offer sincerely felt criticisms. From Buddhas to barristers, no one reaches her potential alone. There is always the need for a *zenchishiki*, a good friend.<sup>26</sup> As Nichiren Daishonin pondered, “How far can one’s own wisdom take him? If one has even enough wisdom to distinguish hot from cold, he should seek out a good friend.”<sup>27</sup>

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23. As one legendary pedagogue observes: “Maintaining an ‘open door’ policy, encouraging students to consult their professors undoubtedly contributes to a desirable sense of self-worth on the part of students. But there are costs. Time spent consulting with students cannot be time spent on research.” Clark Byse, *Fifty Years of Legal Education*, 71 IOWA L. REV. 1063, 1071 (1986).

24. For a sobering perspective, see John S. Elson, *The Case Against Legal Scholarship or, If the Professor Must Publish, Must the Profession Perish?*, 39 J. LEGAL EDUC. 343 (1989). Elson concludes that “law schools cannot adequately justify the priority they give to the production of scholarship on the basis of its contribution either to social policy making or to law students’ moral and intellectual development.” *Id.* at 375.

25. NICHIREN, *Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life*, in LETTERS OF NICHIREN, *supra* note 16, at 350, 353. I do not mean for any of this to sound too pious, especially since I’m writing this at home while hiding from my students. Then again, I *am* on sabbatical! Seriously, accessible professors would not feel overwhelmed if their colleagues simply refrained from treating students like string warts.

26. NICHIREN, *Three Tripitaka Masters Pray for Rain*, in LETTERS OF NICHIREN, *supra* note 16, at 432, 433 [hereinafter NICHIREN, *Three Tripitaka Masters*]; see SATORU IZUMI, GUIDELINES OF FAITH 36 (1980) (describing *zenchishiki* as “an external influence which helps us manifest our Buddha nature”).

27. NICHIREN, *Three Tripitaka Masters*, *supra* note 26, at 433.

The concept of the professor as “friend” may appear sappy and even pernicious. Students must learn to be independent,<sup>28</sup> and true friendship may prove problematic amidst the hierarchical distance between professor and student. As Unger warns:

People who stand in a relationship of inalterable superiority and subordination can hardly deal with each other as joint participants in community. Their affection for each other across hierarchical lines will be marred by condescension or pity on the part of the superior and self-abasement or shameful yearning on the part of the underling. It can escape these flaws only by an extraordinary effort of transcendence over loveless circumstance.<sup>29</sup>

Unger’s point is provocative but seems hardly apropos to the student-teacher relationship. Simply put, the interaction between law professors and their students cannot fairly be described as one of “inalterable superiority and subordination.” Students need to be reminded that they are not without a voice and that their judgments of professors carry some undeniable impact. Students “grade” us in numerous ways: by deciding whether to take our elective courses, by their level of class participation, through their evaluations of our teaching, and, in the law review context, by deciding whether our scholarship is worthy of publication. Finally, as graduates, their feedback from the world of practice offers rich and occasionally biting analyses of whether we prepared them for life in the law. Pretending that students are helpless serfs corrupts teachers, infantilizes students, and obscures the potential for mutually rewarding mentor-disciple relationships.

Mentoring is greatly needed, highly feasible, and carries tremendous potential for both teacher and taught. Students undergo considerable stress as they struggle to adjust to the demands of law school. As demonstrated in one recent study, some forty percent of law students rank extremely high “on symptoms relating to obsessive-compulsiveness, anxiety, social alienation and isolation, and interpersonal sensitivity.”<sup>30</sup> There is a deep need for what Beck and Burns have

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28. As the leading expounder of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism cautions, “Buddhism is a philosophy for helping people become self-sufficient . . . . We cannot develop a truly profound state of life if we have a spirit of dependence on the mentor.” 3 DAIKAI IKEDA, LECTURES ON THE “EXPEDIENT MEANS” AND “LIFE SPAN” CHAPTERS OF THE LOTUS SUTRA 29 (1996).

29. ROBERTO MANGABEIRA UNGER, PASSION: AN ESSAY ON PERSONALITY 132 (1984); see also Robert J. Condlin, “Tastes Great, Less Filling”: *The Law School Clinic and Political Critique*, 36 J. LEGAL EDUC. 45, 55 (1986) (arguing that professors and students “have different levels of experience, status, perspective, and formal authority, and in each of these categories teachers have the upper hand, and often use it to suppress nonconforming views”).

30. Connie J. A. Beck et al., *Lawyer Distress: Alcohol-Related Problems and Other Psychological Concerns Among a Sample of Practicing Lawyers*, 10 J.L. & HEALTH 1, 4 (1996); see also Stephen B. Shanfield & G. Andrew H. Benjamin, *Psychiatric Distress in Law Students*, 35 J. LEGAL EDUC. 65, 69 (1985) (finding that “law students have higher rates of psychiatric distress than either a contrasting normative population or a medical student population”).



termed the "faculty-friend," someone the student can turn to in confidence for counseling and encouragement.<sup>31</sup>

Transforming oneself into a faculty-friend has its obstacles and limitations. Many of us feel more at home with "intellectual puzzles" than with "emotional problems."<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the professor must recognize her finite capacity to help students cope with serious emotional or psychological problems. Indeed, in some cases it is critical for her to refer the student to a medical professional rather than attempt "treatment" herself.<sup>33</sup>

In many other instances, however, the faculty-friend is the ideal counselor for the beleaguered student. As Beck and Burns assert:

In truth, the faculty-friend may be better qualified than the professional counselor to deal with the student. He knows the law school environment better and may be able to target remedial action more effectively. Furthermore, the student may refuse to accept professional help, and the faculty-friend may be confronted with a situation in which he either helps or the student will receive no guidance at all.<sup>34</sup>

Even the student who cannot be described as "distressed" can certainly benefit from the guidance and encouragement of a faculty-friend. The sharing of hopes and fears with a trusted teacher both enlivens and personalizes the academic experience for all. This interaction should not imitate the doctor-patient relationship but instead should resemble the synergy of two rowers pulling equally hard toward some promising yet ever-shifting shore. As Lani Guinier reflects, "[m]entors see learning as a dynamic process that builds on students' emotional engagement and emphasizes the mutuality of their role in the educational conversation."<sup>35</sup>

#### IV. TRAVERSING THE OBSTACLES

The complexity of teaching and mentoring deepens when one realizes that pedagogy is not a one-size-fits-all affair. To propagate Buddhism, explore proximate causation, or explicate the Rule in Shelley's case, one "must understand

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31. Phyllis W. Beck & David Burns, *Anxiety and Depression in Law Students: Cognitive Intervention*, 30 J. LEGAL EDUC. 270, 270 (1979).

32. *Id.*; see *id.* (explaining how the faculty-friend "may feel inadequate when confronted by the individual student struggling to find his psychological balance in the law school environment").

33. See *id.* at 278-81 (examining how the faculty-friend should determine whether the student should be referred for professional counseling).

34. *Id.* at 272.

35. LANI GUINIER ET AL., *BECOMING GENTLEMEN: WOMEN, LAW SCHOOL, AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE* 95 (1997). As she also explains, "finding a mentoring relationship positively correlates with institutional success." *Id.* at 63; see Andrew S. Watson, *The Quest for Professional Competence: Psychological Aspects of Legal Education*, 37 U. CIN. L. REV. 93, 159 (1968) (advocating "[m]ore intimate faculty-student contact" to overcome feelings of isolation).

the capacity and basic nature of the persons he is addressing.<sup>36</sup> Teaching should not be a study in onanism; in addition to teaching oneself, one must undergo a rigorous process of translation to provide useful insights for others.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, our students are not all mayonnaise-scented spawn of the elite, but a remarkably diverse population with varying strengths, vulnerabilities, and means of learning.

This diversity underscores the need for law schools to offer a range of pedagogical methods to reach, teach, and mentor as many students as we can. Only by having aggressively diverse and diversely talented professors can we aspire to further the intellectual growth of all of our students.<sup>38</sup> As stated in *The Lotus Sutra*:

With regard to the Law, the Buddhas  
are able to exercise complete freedom.  
They understand the various desires and joys  
of living beings,  
as well as their aims and abilities,  
and can adjust to what they are capable of,  
employing innumerable similes  
to expound the Law for them.<sup>39</sup>

Nichiren Daishonin realized this centrality of matching methodology with the student. He related how one of Shakyamuni's disciples tried to instruct a washerman by telling him to count his breaths in meditation, while he endeavored to teach a blacksmith by having him focus on the vileness of the body. This merely led both pupils into the chasm of incorrigible disbelief. In contrast, Shakyamuni realized that the washerman should meditate on the vileness of the body while the blacksmith undertook count-of-breath meditation. Under the new approaches, both disciples rapidly gained an understanding of the Buddha's law.<sup>40</sup> While students must claim responsibility for their own development, we too must recognize that

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36. 4 NICHIREN, *The Teaching, Capacity, Time and Country*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN, *supra* note 11, at 7, 8 [hereinafter NICHIREN, *The Teaching*].

37. As one professional counsels, "Forget yourself; think of them." Douglas J. Whaley, *Teaching Law: Advice for the New Professor*, 43 OHIO ST. L.J. 125, 131 (1982).

38. Our role models should be the bodhisattvas, "beings who are dedicated not only to attaining enlightenment for themselves but, out of their immense compassion, to helping others to do likewise." THE LOTUS SUTRA, *supra* note 4, at xii. As the linguist Burton Watson relates:

In order to make his teaching and aid most readily acceptable to all kinds of beings, the bodhisattva is prepared to take on thirty-three different forms, matching his form to that of the being who calls upon him, whether that being be man or woman, exalted or humble, human or nonhuman in nature.

*Id.* at xxii. Similarly, as one professor reasons, "it is important to offer a range of roles and learning environments to reflect the richness and diversity of the profession. The current one-size-fits-all approach to legal education is not sufficient." Susan P. Sturm, *From Gladiators to Problem-Solvers: Connecting Conversations About Women, the Academy, and the Legal Profession*, 4 DUKE J. GENDER L. & POL. 119, 143 (1997).

39. THE LOTUS SUTRA, *supra* note 4, at 96.

40. NICHIREN, *The Teaching*, *supra* note 36, at 8-9.

often the fault might lie less in our students' capacities than in our methodological assumptions.

A. *"At the start I pledged to make all people perfectly equal to me, without any distinction between us."*<sup>41</sup>

Here Nichiren Daishonin quotes Shakyamuni to emphasize the mission of Buddhas and more prosaic teachers to eliminate distinctions based on status in a mutual quest for enlightenment. Indeed, "[i]n Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism the relation between mentor and disciple is based on the principle of perfect equality."<sup>42</sup> Law professors, however, are endowed with undeniable emotional and hierarchical leverage over our students, a power some find all too intoxicating. We must therefore focus on the ultimate essence of our calling, to enable our students to equal or surpass us in whatever lawyerly attributes we possess.<sup>43</sup> It should be with joy, not discomfort, that we embrace those instances where our students out-think us in the classroom or eclipse us in their careers. As Nichiren Daishonin emphasized, *The Lotus Sutra* teaches that the role of the Buddha is "to awaken in all beings the Buddha wisdom, to reveal it, to let all beings know it and enter into it."<sup>44</sup> Similarly, our role as teachers must be to arouse in our students a love of the law, with a full recognition of the joys and challenges it presents. Any goal short of that reduces us to bureaucratic gatekeepers.

B. *"There should be no discrimination . . . ."*<sup>45</sup>

Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism emphasizes the absolute equality of all people. As he explained, "the heart of the Lotus Sutra is the teaching that all people equally possess the Buddha nature."<sup>46</sup> As a consequence, "faith in the Lotus Sutra will enable anyone, man or woman, to attain Buddhahood in his or her present form as a common mortal."<sup>47</sup> This bears particular emphasis with regard to the

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41. NICHIREN, *Letter to Niike*, in LETTERS OF NICHIREN, *supra* note 16, at 492, 497 [hereinafter NICHIREN, *Letter to Niike*].

42. FUNDAMENTALS OF BUDDHISM, *supra* note 7, at 173.

43. *See id.* at 192 (explaining that "[t]he goal of education is to help students attain the same understanding as and even surpass their teacher").

44. NICHIREN, *Repaying Debts of Gratitude*, *supra* note 11, at 262.

45. NICHIREN, *The True Entity of Life*, in LETTERS OF NICHIREN, *supra* note 16, at 358, 361.

46. 4 NICHIREN, *The Universal Salty Taste*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN, *supra* note 11, at 3, 5.

47. 3 NICHIREN, *The Daimoku of the Lotus Sutra*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN, *supra* note 12, at 3, 23 n.64.

subordination of females. The Daishonin emphatically taught that “the Lotus Sutra places the highest importance on women attaining Buddhahood.”<sup>48</sup>

So? Is this not merely a spiritual precursor to the equality we can take for granted in the post-civil rights law school? Unfortunately not. Legal education continues to be beset by racial and sexual disparities in power, representation, and respect.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, even the “best” of professors may unknowingly mirror and reinforce such illegitimate hierarchies in the classroom. This is not a call for political piety in legal education. Diversity of thought is just as important as diversity of gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background in coagulating the life blood of academic excellence. Professors should therefore practice the preaching of individual autonomy by insisting on their right to determine their own pedagogical rhythms. Such diversity of approaches must share the same foundation, however, for the house to stand. That foundation must be one based on the innate and emphatic recognition of our students’ equality as human beings.

C. “I believe I can understand something of your feelings.”<sup>50</sup>

The art of teaching—and most especially the art of mentoring—cannot thrive without a heartfelt empathy for our students. Empathy is central to our humanity, and without some ability to perceive life through our students’ eyes we cannot hope to offer them insights of any value. And yet we must avoid emotional chauvinism, where we presume to understand the pain and aspirations of others based on the limited capital of our own existence. This danger is particularly prevalent when we presume to transmit empathy to students across ethnic, gender, or economic frontiers.

Dangers lie on either side, and the well-intentioned teacher can bemoan a certain fatalism. If you try to empathize, you can be castigated for attempting to appropriate the pain of others (whether these alleged “others” are students of color,

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48. NICHIREN, *The Sutra of True Requitel*, in LETTERS OF NICHIREN, *supra* note 16, at 380, 380. This focus on women’s rights continues apace with Nichiren’s followers. See, e.g., Anne Perusek, *The March Continues*, WORLD TRIB., Mar. 20, 1998, at 3 (discussing feminism within Buddhism).

49. See, e.g., GUINIER ET AL., *supra* note 35, at 41 (finding in their study of the University of Pennsylvania that “women law students are underrepresented in the law school’s prestigious positions and extracurricular activities”); Cecil J. Hunt, II, *Guests in Another’s House: An Analysis of Racially Disparate Bar Performance*, 23 FLA. ST. U. L. REV. 721, 771 (1996) (stating that “all too many law school professors tend to have low academic expectations for students of color and tend to communicate those expectations to both minority and white students in a myriad of subtle, and not so subtle, ways”) (footnote omitted); Jennifer M. Russell, *On Being a Gorilla in Your Midst, or, The Life of One Blackwoman in the Legal Academy*, 28 HARV. C.R.-C.L. L. REV. 259, 261 (1993) (expressing “the reality is that blackwomen can only expect to have dysfunctional relationships in the legal academy”); Shanfield & Benjamin, *supra* note 30, at 72 (observing “higher levels of distress in women law students” compared to their male peers); Sturm, *supra* note 38, at 130 (asserting that “[m]any law schools operate within a culture that tolerates or condones students’ behavior that actively excludes, harasses, and devalues their female colleagues”) (footnote omitted).

50. 7 NICHIREN, *Reply to the Mother of Lord Ueno*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN 239, 247 (Gosho Translation Committee ed. & trans., 1994).

angry white males, or first years crushed by their fall-semester grades). And yet to abandon the effort at empathy would surrender your individual right to human revolution<sup>51</sup> as well as all dreams of societal transformation.

Nichiren Daishonin recognized the appropriate response. In comforting a heartsick widow, he neither presumed to “feel her pain” in its undiluted state nor refrained from attempting to bridge the existential chasm. He chose, instead, an intermediate route, the only one consistent with respect for both the autonomy and interconnectedness of oneself and others. Trying to assuage her grief, he acknowledged both the extent of his sorrow and the limits of his perceptual prowess. Even if he could not share the full depth of the widow’s grief, he could recognize her agony, tap into the universality of human emotions, and move in good faith toward words of comfort and inspiration.

This, I believe, is a product of putting the other person’s needs before our own. We must resist the urge to dominate others with smothering avowals of our “understanding,” yet eschew ostentatious self-flagellation over our gilded ghetto of privileged ignorance. We can elide this Hobson’s choice of emetics by proceeding with the Daishonin’s blend of compassion and humility. One need not suffer a particular pain to sense its presence in others, and one can render insights and encouragement without being the student’s clone. Some degree of detachment will exist whenever two people meet, but there is no a priori necessity that this should trump our interconnectedness as humans equally endowed with the Buddha nature.

## V. PREPARING FOR PRACTICE

*“Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself.”<sup>52</sup>*

In Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism, the *Gohonzon* is a cherished mandala that we focus upon while chanting and that serves to reflect and embody our Buddha nature.<sup>53</sup> This Buddha nature must be found within ourselves, and the true *Gohonzon* exists in our hearts rather than our altars. Enlightenment, therefore, is a

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51. Human revolution may be defined as “conquering the negative aspects of our character and developing wisdom, courage, compassion and joy.” CAUSTON, *supra* note 7, at 256. This concept is discussed further in FUNDAMENTALS OF BUDDHISM, *supra* note 7, at 201-03.

52. NICHIREN, *The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon*, in LETTERS OF NICHIREN, *supra* note 16, at 326, 328.

53. The *Gohonzon* “embodies at once the ultimate Law permeating all life and the life of Nichiren Daishonin who has been enlightened to it.” FUNDAMENTALS OF BUDDHISM, *supra* note 7, at 164. Stated differently, the *Gohonzon* “is also a graphic representation of the reality of life when it is in the state of Buddhahood and in total harmony with the Law of universal life.” CAUSTON, *supra* note 7, at 234. As Causton explains, it is “vital to understand that it is not a god, nor any form of external force which grants wishes like a genie, but is simply an object which draws out from deep within us qualities—namely the Buddha nature—that we already inherently possess.” *Id.* at 229.

process of self-discovery as opposed to acceptance or salvation by an external deity.<sup>54</sup>

Nichiren Daishonin emphasized this throughout his life. As he warned, "If you seek enlightenment outside yourself, any discipline or good deed you do will be meaningless, just as a poor man cannot earn a penny just by counting his neighbor's wealth . . . ."<sup>55</sup> The same is true of law students. Especially as first years, their anxiety propels them to seek moral and intellectual sustenance from a tawdry range of external sources. From professors to hornbooks, from study groups to outlines, they seek the mirage of certainty and miasma of meaning from sources outside themselves. It is a primal, infantilizing time for most, with a screeching abandonment of autonomy in favor of some illusionary totem.

This is where the basic underpinnings of the Daishonin's philosophy can come into play. At some point, most law students figure out that the best way to "learn the law" is to sit back, close their eyes, and *think* about the material they cover.<sup>56</sup> They resist this, however, because it seems simultaneously too easy and too complex. It sounds deceptively simple that a first-year student can abandon her crutches and sprint further alone in the recesses of her own mind. Conversely, actually thinking one's way through the doctrine, probing its strengths, flaws, and lacunae, is infinitely more painful than highlighting Emanuel's, clinging to professors, or melting into the "me too" chorus of the study group.

This is where the law is learned and doubt gives way to passion—in the wilderness of the student's own skull. The solitary journey gives rise to insights and inspiration that permit her to rejoin the tribe as a potential leader rather than a mendicant. This process could be hastened and humanized, however, by the Daishonin's message of self-reliance. As he realized, "to see one's own mind is to see the Buddha."<sup>57</sup> Ideally, the student enters *samadhi*, a state of supreme concentration that engenders a sense of inner peace.<sup>58</sup>

The liberty of self-discovery, of course, entails the freedom to fail. Both are a corollary to taking responsibility for one's life. That, too, is a message for students to ponder. As a student, I was shocked by the entrenched *bitterness* so many peers felt after the first semester or so.<sup>59</sup> Never before had I witnessed such a sense by

54. Indeed, "Buddhism is perhaps unique among the major religions in that it makes no claim to divine revelation. Rather, it is the teaching of a human being who, through his own efforts, awoke to the Law of life within himself." OUTLINE OF BUDDHISM, *supra* note 7, at 17.

55. NICHIREN, *On Attaining Buddhahood*, in LETTERS OF NICHIREN, *supra* note 16, at 158, 159.

56. As one practitioner advises new lawyers, "[d]raw that deep breath and think your problem through . . . from the beginning. Carefully. Dispassionately. Legally. *Visteme despacio que estoy de prisa*. Dress me slowly, for I am in a hurry." THANE JOSEF MESSINGER, THE YOUNG LAWYER'S JUNGLE BOOK 46 (1996).

57. 2 NICHIREN, *Letter to Gijō-bō*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN, *supra* note 1, at 204-05 [hereinafter NICHIREN, *Letter to Gijō-bō*].

58. THE LOTUS SUTRA, *supra* note 4, at 336.

59. For a 238-page helping of such privileged wretchedness, see RICHARD D. KAHLBERG, BROKEN CONTRACT: A MEMOIR OF HARVARD LAW SCHOOL (1992).

bright, upwardly mobile young adults that they had been wronged and limited by forces beyond their control.

The truth is that nothing stopped them but themselves. The only effective way to show compassion for such students—whose pain is undeniably real—is by urging them to take undivided responsibility for their own happiness. This stems from the Buddhist principle of *eshō funi*, the oneness of life and its environment.<sup>60</sup> Our environment should be understood as a reflection of our inner state.<sup>61</sup> No one forced such students to compete for grades, study like fiends, or peddle themselves to corporate mavens. These were their choices, and blaming moot court, the cafeteria, or the dean only obfuscates the true source of responsibility.<sup>62</sup>

In other words, it is our internal state that dictates the quality of our surroundings. As Nichiren Daishonin explained:

Neither the pure land nor hell exists outside ourselves; both lie within our own hearts. Awakened to this truth, one is called a Buddha; deluded about it, one is called a common mortal. The Lotus Sutra reveals this truth, and one who embraces the Lotus Sutra will realize that hell is itself the Land of Tranquil Light.<sup>63</sup>

This insight prompts the obvious rejoinder that not everyone is enlightened, not everyone will make law review, and that even the maws of Wall Street can encompass only so many fresh spirits. That, of course, is precisely the point. Given the uncertainty of life, it is disastrous to predicate one's self-esteem on the judgments of professors, hiring committees, and the like. The human revolution is an inherently personal one, and appeals to external forces will only drain students of their innate vitality. From spiritual development to academic growth, "the strength of your own faith will be the decisive thing."<sup>64</sup>

Professors, of course, must perceive this as clearly as our students. New teachers, in particular, are prone to lose sight of their students' autonomy and may excessively personalize the quality of their mentees' performances. The late Dean Prosser, for example, wickedly depicted the dismay of a rookie professor

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60. See FUNDAMENTALS OF BUDDHISM, *supra* note 7, at 70 (defining the term "*eshō funi*").

61. See *id.* at 71 (explaining that "[a]n environment is a reflection of the inner life of the individual living within it; it takes on characteristics which accord with the life-condition of the individual in question"). Furthermore, "[t]he subjective world of the self and the objective world of its environment are not in opposition nor are they a duality. Instead, their relationship is characterized by inseparability and indivisibility." DAISAKU IKEDA, *The Age of Soft Power*, in A NEW HUMANISM 203, 211 (1996).

62. As Buddhists remind ourselves, "our natural tendency as human beings is always to find reasons outside ourselves, in our environment, to excuse what are really our own shortcomings." CAUSTON, *supra* note 7, at 15.

63. 2 NICHIREN, *Hell is the Land of Tranquil Light*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN, *supra* note 1, at 207, 207-08.

64. 6 NICHIREN, *The Story of Ōhashi no Tarō*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN 147, 155 (Gosho Translation Committee ed. & trans., 1990).

encountering his first set of examination bluebooks. The depression can border on the apocalyptic.<sup>65</sup>

It is out of respect for students, and not indifference, that we must recognize the limits of our responsibility for their development. "The moon is not selfish with its reflection, but if there is no water, then its reflection will not be seen."<sup>66</sup> However diligently the teacher labors, her students bear the ultimate responsibility for responding to her efforts and applying themselves wholeheartedly to materials that can be agonizingly complex. This is part and parcel of coaching students to take responsibility for their lives. As the Daishonin analogizes:

If a man builds a road for others and someone loses his way on it, is that the fault of the road-builder? If a skilled physician gives medicine to a sick person but the sick person, repelled by the medicine, refuses to take it and dies, should one blame the physician?<sup>67</sup>

While serving as our students' mentors, we must also encourage them to develop an ingrained concept of individual accountability. The professor should endeavor to show the way, but the students must do the walking.<sup>68</sup> Addressing a disciple who seemed likely to abandon his faith, Nichiren Daishonin wrote, "If you do, I have not the slightest intention of reproaching you for it. Likewise, neither should you blame me, Nichiren, when you have fallen into hell. It is in no way my responsibility."<sup>69</sup>

Such words bear reflection by professors confronting students who are frequently tardy, absent, or ill prepared.<sup>70</sup> Such negligence detracts from the academic mission, but professors must avoid the temptation to personalize these defalcations by responding with punitive or humiliating measures. Instead, she must keep shining with all she's got for those students who take their education seriously.

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65. William L. Prosser, *Lighthouse No Good*, 1 J. LEGAL EDUC. 257, 262-63 (1948). Prosser describes the grading process as a time of "horror" that renders the new teacher "a quivering wreck, a tumbling ruin of a castle of pride." *Id.*

66. NICHIREN, *The Opening of the Eyes*, *supra* note 18, at 129.

67. 3 NICHIREN, *The Selection of the Time*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN 79, 82 (Gosho Translation Committee ed. & trans., 1985).

68. An analogy I find useful is that we are mechanics from AAA who get the students' engines started and who stand ready to assist them in times of crisis. We are not, however, their chauffeurs on the intellectual odyssey. Students must take responsibility for driving themselves and selecting their destinations.

69. NICHIREN, *The Three Obstacles and Four Devils*, in LETTERS OF NICHIREN, *supra* note 16, at 243, 244 [hereinafter NICHIREN, *The Three Obstacles*].

70. If such problems are widespread, you may need to ponder why students find so little value in your efforts. Again, our environment is a reflection of ourselves.



VI. TOUGH LOVE

A. "[W]ords of good advice often grate on the ears."<sup>71</sup>

Here we get to the sticky part. One wishes we could simply be our students' cheerleaders, rooting them on to courthouse triumphs and social justice. And from a purely selfish viewpoint, it is so seductive never to call an "F" an "F," to refrain from flooding bluebooks with red ink, and to conclude that "all our students are above average."<sup>72</sup> When we take that route, however, we are neutering rather than nurturing and failing to earn our keep. If we conscientiously conclude that a student's examination is inadequate, the worse disservice would be to ignore the flaws and pass him along. It is a disservice to the student, who will discover when the stakes are far more serious that the practice of law permits precious few second chances.<sup>73</sup> It is a graver disservice to his future clients, who will pay an unconscionably high price for their lawyer's failures. And ultimately, it is a disservice to ourselves to demean our profession by lacking the heart to call attention to a student's perceived deficiencies when there is still ample time to address them.

Part of being a friend to our students is caring enough to give them our exhaustive and unsparing critique. Chang-an cautioned, "If one befriends another person but lacks the mercy to correct him, he is in fact his enemy."<sup>74</sup> Expanding on this theme, Nichiren Daishonin asserted:

Even though one may resort to harsh words, if such words help the person to whom they are addressed, then they are worthy to be regarded as truthful words and gentle words. Similarly, though one may use gentle words, if they harm the person to whom they are addressed, they are in fact deceptive words, harsh words.<sup>75</sup>

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71. 4 NICHIREN, *The Learned Doctor Shan-wu-wei*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN, *supra* note 11, at 55, 82 [hereinafter NICHIREN, *The Learned Doctor*].

72. See Robert C. Downs & Nancy Levit, *If It Can't Be Lake Wobegone . . . A Nationwide Survey of Law School Grading and Grade Normalization Practices*, 65 UMKC L. REV. 821, 857 (1997) (explaining that "grade normalization inhibits us from believing that all of our students are from Lake Wobegone, where all of the law students are above average"); see also STEPHEN L. CARTER, INTEGRITY 79 (1996) (arguing that grade inflation may be attributable to a "refusal by faculty members to behave like adults, that is, like people with enough integrity to disappoint other people").

73. As Carter reasons, "grade inflation is bad for the students who receive inflated grades, because the meaningless grades leave them incapable of judging *their own* performances." CARTER, *supra* note 72, at 80-81. My only quibble with Carter is that it is not so much the grades that are troublesome but the utter lack of analytical feedback that might accompany them. In fact, the former may be a function of the latter; professors awarding high grades face less pressure from students to provide substantive critiques, justifications, and suggestions. For competing perspectives on grading, see Symposium, *Academic Evaluations Focus*, 65 UMKC L. REV. 643 (1997).

74. NICHIREN, *Rebuking Slander*, *supra* note 16, at 292-93.

75. NICHIREN, *The Learned Doctor*, *supra* note 71, at 82.

This naturally requires delicate balancing. It is crucial to avoid demeaning statements, yet remaining neutral in the face of incompetence merely sets the student up for deeper disasters. Deconstructing hierarchy is a two-way street: students should critique professors without trepidation, and professors should critique students without false pity or condescension. Ideally, a frank dialectic emerges that is mutually rewarding.

Some modicum of common sense and interpersonal skills should guide us through most situations. There is a sharp difference—and one that most students readily perceive—between a probing critique of their examinations and a blistering assault on their sense of self. Students are paying, in large measure, for our constructive professional appraisal of their developing skills. It is either cowardice or an admission of deceptive advertising to pretend that we cannot help students hone their craft as lawyers through our evaluation of their work.

This is all a far cry from any mean-spirited attack on the student's character, intelligence, or motivation. Shakyamuni implored us not to sneer "you will never become a Buddha!"<sup>76</sup> By the same token, we should desist from advising a student to apprise his mother that he will never be a lawyer. We so easily forget our students' vulnerability and must strive to recall our days on their side of the podium. In essence, two rules should be observed. First, reflect on the Confucian proverb, "Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you."<sup>77</sup> Second, when you *enjoy* giving low grades, you need to peer into the mirror.<sup>78</sup>

B. "A sword will be useless in the hands of a coward."<sup>79</sup>

To seek enlightenment requires tremendous courage, and so does life as a lawyer. The law is without question an extraordinarily demanding profession, and few students are prepared for the endless stress and repeated assaults on their self-esteem. As one lawyer cautions, "*Law students cannot imagine the meat grinder that awaits them in the adversary process.* Many young lawyers are shocked, offended, and profoundly bruised by it. The deterioration of professional courtesy, professional integrity, and professional competence generated by today's 'Rambo' adversary process is causing wide-spread alarm."<sup>80</sup> Stated even more graphically,

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76. THE LOTUS SUTRA, *supra* note 4, at 205.

77. MAKIGUCHI, EDUCATION FOR CREATIVE LIVING, *supra* note 13, at 79.

78. As one psychiatrist has remarked, "I have often been dismayed . . . to hear teachers of freshman [law] classes speak with great glee about how they are busy 'destroying the preconceptions' of freshman students . . . [T]he light in their eye as they describe it suggests that they get too much pleasure from this process." Watson, *supra* note 35, at 109. As Shakyamuni counseled, the teacher "should not delight in speaking of the faults of other people or scriptures." THE LOTUS SUTRA, *supra* note 4, at 201.

79. NICHIREN, *Reply to Kyōō*, in LETTERS OF NICHIREN, *supra* note 16, at 281.

80. GERALD LE VAN, LAWYERS' LIVES OUT OF CONTROL 24 (1992). Such trauma may be particularly severe in the first year of practice. See, e.g., WILLIAM R. KEATES, PROCEED WITH CAUTION: A DIARY OF THE FIRST YEAR AT ONE OF AMERICA'S LARGEST, MOST PRESTIGIOUS LAW FIRMS 13 (1997) ("I wasn't prepared for either the work or the psychological stress which made that period the most arduous and demanding year of my life."); MESSINGER,

Deborah L. Arron opines that “[n]o amount of money can adequately compensate lawyers for all the time they spend worrying about cases and clients, or for the night terror and anxiety attacks that haunt so many of them.”<sup>81</sup> As a consequence, an alarming number of attorneys suffer from depression and related emotional and behavioral problems.<sup>82</sup>

This verges on the pathological and raises perturbing questions. How can we continue to take thousands of promising young adults, waste three years of their lives, plunge them horrendously into debt, and then spit them into a profession that terrifies and demoralizes them? And then repeat this process every year until we retire? There are good reasons for the current decline in law school applications,<sup>83</sup> and the misery of young attorneys is no small factor.

There is no silver bullet cure for the angst of so many new lawyers. Significant changes, undoubtedly, will have to come from within the practicing bar itself. I believe, however, that we deceive our students when we turn classes into chimeras of stress-free coasting. We grow complacent in the academy and lose sight of the perils confronting our students when they step from our midst. Whereas some feel discomfort over “training the Hessians,”<sup>84</sup> our more serious failing is that we send forth innocents lacking self-confidence and fundamental survival skills.

This growing recognition is one of the catalysts in the rise of clinical programs. The value of law school clinics cannot be overstated. In addition to helping students develop sorely needed practical skills, they can also engender a robust “can do” spirit and a sense of empathy for clients as students grapple with the immediate human problems of the poor, the elderly, the disabled, and others in dire need of

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*supra* note 56, at vii (predicting that “[y]our first year as a lawyer will be *the* most stressful you will ever face.”).

81. DEBORAH L. ARRON, *RUNNING FROM THE LAW: WHY GOOD LAWYERS ARE GETTING OUT OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION* 9 (1991). This theme that the money isn't worth the stress is oft-repeated in the literature. *See, e.g.*, Lawrence J. Fox, *Money Didn't Buy Happiness*, OR. ST. BAR BULL., Apr. 1997, at 9 (noting that “lawyers are an unhappy lot, leaving the profession in droves, or languishing in jobs they no longer enjoy, refusing to recommend law as a worthwhile calling for their children”); Mike France, *Can Law Practice Be Fun? No*, 21 *STUDENT LAW* 21, 23 (1993) (finding the financial rewards of practice “increasingly stark” compared to the accompanying sacrifices); Ruth Marcus, *Gloom at the Top: Why Young Lawyers Bail Out*, WASH. POST, May 31, 1987, at C1 (“Despite the big bucks, many young lawyers are turning down offers from large firms—or leaving after a few years—because the money isn't enough to keep them working at a job they hate.”).

82. For a discussion of the emotional toll paid by lawyers, see Arian Campo-Flores, *An Ambivalent Profession*, AM. LAW., Apr. 1998, at 26 (citing a survey which found that 49 percent of law firm partners responded that they were not satisfied with their lives); Beck, *supra* note 30, at 2 (finding that “a significant percentage of practicing lawyers are experiencing a variety of significant psychological distress symptoms well beyond that expected of the general population”); AMIRAMELWORK, *STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR LAWYERS* 3, 15-17, 85-89, 114-16 (2d ed. 1997) (discussing mental health problems among attorneys); LE VAN, *supra* note 80, at 11-17 (commenting on lawyers' emotional difficulties); Nora C. Porter, *Keeping Your Balance: Addressing the Link Between Stress and Professionalism*, PA. LAW., Nov.-Dec. 1997, at 15 (stating that “[s]ome 30,000 attorneys a year are deciding there's a better life in some other career path or early retirement”).

83. *See, e.g.*, LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION COUNCIL, *BIENNIAL REPORT 29* (1995) (detailing the drop in law school applicants during the 1990s).

84. Duncan Kennedy, *Rebels from Principle: Changing the Corporate Law Firm from Within*, HARV. L. SCH. BULL., Fall 1981, at 36, 37.

legal services. Ideally, clinical students develop the pragmatic skills, self-confidence, and compassion that should be the hallmarks of all our graduates.<sup>85</sup>

There is no reason, however, for clinics to bear this responsibility alone. In every course we should endeavor to develop our students' fighting spirits and empathic insights as well as their doctrinal wealth and analytical prowess. The fear inherent in practicing law will never fade<sup>86</sup> and it is normal even for seasoned trial lawyers to experience apprehension. As Nichiren Daishonin observed, "though many warriors don armor, few go without fear into battle."<sup>87</sup>

The point is not to deny the fear's existence, but to use it as a spur rather than a shackle as we summon our resources as lawyers. "It is lack of courage that prevents one from attaining Buddhahood,"<sup>88</sup> so you must "[n]ever allow yourself to be intimidated."<sup>89</sup> This holds especially true for a counselor of any stripe. As Shakyamuni and Nichiren Daishonin exhorted, "He should never hold back any of the teachings, even though it may cost him his life."<sup>90</sup>

Once again, the trick is to find a healthy balance. Professors who delight in humiliating students cannot pretend that this "prepares" them for practice. Such assaults merely drive the student into a neurotic shell of self-doubt or, alternatively, beget a demon who will disparage subordinates throughout his legal career. There is simply no excuse for questioning a student's intelligence or encouraging his peers to delight in his confusion.<sup>91</sup>

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85. For provocative discussions of how such programs may contribute to the professional and emotional growth of students, see Steven H. Leleiko, *Love, Professional Responsibility, the Rule of Law, and Clinical Legal Education*, 29 CLEV. ST. L. REV. 641 (1980); Joan L. O'Sullivan et al., *Ethical Decisionmaking and Ethics Instruction in Clinical Law Practice*, 3 CLIN. L. REV. 109 (1996); Fran Quigley, *Seizing the Disorienting Moment: Adult Learning Theory and the Teaching of Social Justice in Law School Clinics*, 2 CLIN. L. REV. 37 (1995).

86. For a disturbing discussion of fear among lawyers, see ELWORK, *supra* note 82, at 85-86.

87. NICHIREN, *The Fourteen Slanders*, *supra* note 12, at 212.

88. NICHIREN, *The Three Obstacles*, *supra* note 69, at 245.

89. NICHIREN, *The Proof of the Lotus Sutra*, in LETTERS OF NICHIREN, *supra* note 16, at 504, 505. In a similar vein, Mahatma Gandhi emphasized the importance of courage. He cautioned, "if you want to follow the vow of Truth in any shape or form, you must be fearless." In fact, "true non-violence is an impossibility without the possession of unadulterated fearlessness." 6 MAHATMA GANDHI, THE SELECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI (THE VOICE OF TRUTH) 138-39, 177 (Shriman Narayan gen. ed., 1968).

90. NICHIREN, *Repaying Debts of Gratitude*, *supra* note 11, at 182.

91. For a particularly grotesque account of the Socratic method at its worst, see Lon L. Fuller, *On Teaching Law*, 3 STAN. L. REV. 35, 40 (1950) (recounting professor's *Schadenfreude* as students "close in for the kill" after one of their peers stumbles in class). No wonder so many students have come to view us as faculty-fiends. See, e.g., Alan A. Stone, *Legal Education on the Couch*, 85 HARV. L. REV. 392, 416 (1971) (observing that "many students now perceive their professor as not only authoritarian, but destructively aggressive"); Watson, *supra* note 35, at 123 (discussing how students may view the professor as "an enemy who is feared and avoided if possible").

As Douglas J. Whaley appreciates, “[o]ne can challenge students without browbeating them.”<sup>92</sup> We should demand excellence but modulate our intensity in a manner sensitive to the individual student’s needs. Whaley explains:

[H]ow hard I push depends on the student and the situation. The student who is so rattled by his or her first day of law school and the limelight you have just shined on his or her seat and who has just forgotten his or her name is a poor choice for rigorous cross-examination. Push hard here and this student will hate you for the rest of his or her life; push too hard and he or she will drop out of law school, depriving society of whatever legal talents might have flowered with gentler gardening. But the brass, brash, eager-beaver, whose hand is forever in the air and whose fine intellect is on permanent display, can be chased up the socratic tree and off the limbs, only to survive the fall better for the experience.<sup>93</sup>

As Lani Guinier realizes, the professor’s mission is to establish “an atmosphere of respect in which the students can safely challenge each other.”<sup>94</sup> For what it’s worth, I believe the classroom should percolate with intensity, challenges, and yes, an undeniable level of stress. We must strategically coach our students to cope with the intellectual demands and emotional pressures of lawyering. I adhere to the Socratic method and my students understand that they may be asked at any time to participate in class. One of the toughest adjustments new attorneys must make is to the “exploding telephone” where at any hour a client, colleague, or adversary may call demanding one’s best intellectual efforts.<sup>95</sup> Students must learn to field such sudden challenges with grace and professional competence. To the extent we permit students to slumber through class, we are ignoring the importance of the diligence and consistency their profession will demand of them and that their clients may so desperately need.

The compassion to teach must include the conviction not to send one’s students unprepared into battle. The goal is not to produce mercenaries, but to graduate self-respecting, self-confident lawyers who can hold their own in the field. To pretend that this reinforces a conservative, testosterone-fueled corporate mind-set is simple

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92. Whaley, *supra* note 37, at 132 (footnote omitted). This sentiment was shared by the late Professor Areeda, who declared:

There is no excuse for the insults hurled by fictional socratic instructors—for example, the one who tells the flustered student he will never be a lawyer and tosses him a dime to telephone for a ticket home. Though we can abbreviate the Socratic Method SM, it should not be sadistic for instructors or masochistic for students.

Phillip E. Areeda, *The Socratic Method*, 109 HARV. L. REV. 911, 918 (1996).

93. Whaley, *supra* note 37, at 133.

94. GUINIER ET AL., *supra* note 35, at 92.

95. See, e.g., ARRON, *supra* note 81, at 12 (recounting an attorney’s analogy that “when the phone rings for lawyers, it’s like a time bomb going off. You can never tell what kind of crisis or attitude is going to come at you through the receiver.”).

nonsense. To the contrary, it is women, people of color, and those of any hue committed to fighting for their visions of social justice who must be particularly well schooled in the arts of legal confrontation. This was driven home to me at a recent dinner with two former students. One is a Hispanic female attorney for MALDEF,<sup>96</sup> the other is an Asian female attorney for legal aid. Both confront tremendous odds as they seek to vindicate the rights of society's most vulnerable members deep in the bowels of Texas. They routinely confront powerful adversaries, monstrous work loads, frightfully complex legal issues, and judges that a less-than-enlightened commentator might be tempted to term "peckerwoods." These tough and compassionate women of color fight the good fight every day of their lives, and both urge me to keep pushing students to their limits in class. The more lawyers seek to overthrow centuries of racism, sexism, and other forms of exploitation, the more law schools must prepare them for a life of hard work, responsibility, and the never-say-die spirit.

Our reliance on the Socratic method should be propelled by a profound appreciation of our students' professional potential and future perils rather than a pathetic effort to ape Kingsfield. Our compassion must be rooted in a genuine concern for our charges and their future clients. Some graduates may be privileged (as I certainly was) to park their fannies in cushy law firm libraries for a year or so while the partners slowly lead them into litigation. Most of our students—especially at non-elite schools—will enjoy no such period of grace. All students should be urged to read books such as *My First Year as a Lawyer*,<sup>97</sup> where neophyte attorneys relate the travails of protecting a single immigrant woman with ten children from being evicted,<sup>98</sup> representing the lender in a multimillion dollar corporate transaction,<sup>99</sup> defending a country boy accused of a felony,<sup>100</sup> counseling a grief-stricken family after the death of a daughter,<sup>101</sup> panicking in court before the client's eyes,<sup>102</sup> suffering an emotional meltdown during a deposition,<sup>103</sup> and being ridiculed by a crude and arrogant judge.<sup>104</sup> The point is not to spook students with campfire tales of goblins, but to impress upon them the awesome responsibility of holding a client's future in their clammy palms. Ultimately, we hope they can achieve the same level of courage and self-reliance as Nichiren Daishonin, who declared: "Let

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96. The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund.

97. *MY FIRST YEAR AS A LAWYER* (Mark Simenhoff ed., 1994).

98. Virginia Martinez, *Law and the Latina*, in *MY FIRST YEAR AS A LAWYER*, *supra* note 97, at 1-6.

99. Robert Zochowski, *The Glamour of Corporate Law—Sleeping on the Floor*, in *MY FIRST YEAR AS A LAWYER*, *supra* note 97, at 13-18.

100. Sue Kessler, *Justice for a Guilty Country Boy*, in *MY FIRST YEAR AS A LAWYER*, *supra* note 97, at 19-24.

101. Ji-Zhou Zhou, *The Imperfection of Law and the Death of Lilly*, in *MY FIRST YEAR AS A LAWYER*, *supra* note 97, at 32-38.

102. Merle Raph, *Lambing and Lawyering*, in *MY FIRST YEAR AS A LAWYER*, *supra* note 97, at 51-57.

103. Marlon A. Primes, *When Honey is Better than Vinegar*, in *MY FIRST YEAR AS A LAWYER*, *supra* note 97, at 73-78.

104. William Dillof, *My First Judicial Conference*, in *MY FIRST YEAR AS A LAWYER*, *supra* note 97, at 92-98.

the gods forsake me. Let all persecutions assail me. Still I will give my life for the sake of the Law."<sup>105</sup>

## VII. FINE TOUCHES

*"[T]he gods will not protect a short-tempered person, no matter how important they may think he is."*<sup>106</sup>

Rhetoric regarding "preparing students for battle" can be easily overblown, especially when it is our graduates rather than ourselves who will do the actual sparring. The pseudo-Rambo is not only aesthetically appalling, he is frequently ineffective to boot. As one veteran relates, "your client's interests are not best served by unthinking attack-dog tactics."<sup>107</sup> Civility matters, both as a matter of common decency and as a professional tool in promoting the client's ends without undue expense and turmoil.<sup>108</sup>

Nichiren Daishonin consistently exhorted his disciples to temper boldness with courtesy, and to recognize that courage entails the ability to show equanimity under fire. The Daishonin and his disciples frequently engaged priests from other sects in open debate, and Nichiren's advice could be well used by attorneys:

When in public debate, although the teachings that you advocate are perfectly consistent with the truth, you should never on that account be impolite or abusive, or display a conceited attitude. Such conduct would be disgraceful. Order your thoughts, words and actions carefully and be prudent when you meet with others in debate.<sup>109</sup>

Just so. It adds arrogance upon folly to assume that your "truth" is so self-evident and unquestionably correct that your adversaries should be met with rage or derision. Just as each of us has a Buddha nature, we are equally endowed with the lower nine worlds<sup>110</sup> and must constantly battle our internal demons of greed, anger, and stupidity. If we cannot articulate our reasoning with calm logic, that is a likely signal of our own conceptual weaknesses.

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105. NICHIREN, *The Opening of the Eyes*, *supra* note 18, at 174.

106. 2 NICHIREN, *The Three Kinds of Treasure*, in *THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN*, *supra* note 1, at 233, 235 [hereinafter NICHIREN, *The Three Kinds of Treasure*].

107. MESSINGER, *supra* note 56, at 123. As Messinger perceives, you must fight for your clients, but "[y]ou can be assertive, without being rude. You can be effective, without being conniving. You can be successful, without being Machiavellian. You can be good, without being an [expletive deleted]." *Id.* at 117.

108. For an interesting testimonial on the lawyerly value of decency, see Primes, *supra* note 103.

109. 4 NICHIREN, *Teaching, Practice and Proof*, in *THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN*, *supra* note 11, at 111, 132 [hereinafter NICHIREN, *Teaching*].

110. The lower nine worlds may be conceptualized as hell, hunger, animality, anger, tranquility, rapture, learning, realization, and Bodhisattva. See, e.g., CAUSTON, *supra* note 7, at 35-95; *OUTLINE OF BUDDHISM*, *supra* note 7, at 103-15.

Similarly, we should urge our students not to accept abuse from others. The best way to avoid ad hominem attacks is consistently to refuse to play that game. Lawyers must have a thick mental hide, but there is no reason to withstand threats and other verbal assaults on one's identity. The Daishonin's approach was straightforward: "If you simply speak rudely and adopt an abusive attitude, I will not discuss the matter with you."<sup>111</sup>

There are obviously some limitations of practicality. Such limits, however, are often less tangible than we imagine. Derrick Bell advises:

Few, if any, of us could survive in modern society by challenging every slight, every unfairness we experience or witness. I do believe, though, that most people are too ready to accept unwarranted and even outrageous treatment as part of the price of working, of getting along, even of living. I also believe people are being hurt in very real ways, not only as a result of what others do to them, but also by what they do to their self-esteem when they submit to maltreatment. When considering how to respond to abuse in the workplace, it is all too easy to magnify the risks of confronting the abuser while diminishing the possibility that a strong response will either end the abuse or provide the satisfaction of having made clear that abusive treatment is unacceptable.<sup>112</sup>

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111. 7 NICHIREN, *The Doctrine of Attaining Buddhahood in One's Present Form*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN, *supra* note 50, at 215, 219.

112. CONFRONTING AUTHORITY: REFLECTIONS OF AN ARDENT PROTESTER x-xi (1994). In a similar vein, Robert Bly muses:

I have been thinking about the man who gives in.  
Have you heard about him? In this story  
A twenty-eight-foot pine meets a small wind  
And the pine bends all the way over to the ground.

"I was persuaded," the pine says. "It was convincing."  
A mouse visits a cat, and the cat agrees  
To drown all her children. "What could I do?"  
The cat said. "The mouse *needed* that."

It's strange. I've heard that some people conspire  
In their own ruin. A fool says, "You don't  
Deserve to live." The man says, "I'll string this rope  
Over that branch, maybe you can find a box."

The Great One with her necklace of skulls says,  
"I need twenty thousand corpses." "Tell you what,"  
The General says, "we have an extra battalion  
Over there on the hill. We don't need all these men."

Robert Bly, *It Is So Easy To Give In*, in MORNING POEMS 37 (1997).



Of course, many of us have been reamed by judges in open court without the option of telling Your Honor to mind his manners. Even then, however, we should share with our students that there is no professional incentive to grovel before the bench. Judges are less likely to abuse them—and harm their clients—if they can maintain some semblance of serenity before even the worst of black-robed barbarians. Perhaps reasoning of this nature contributed to the Daishonin's directive that “[y]ou must in no way behave in a servile fashion toward the magistrate.”<sup>113</sup>

In addition to being civil and steadfast, there are also times to shut up. So much of our efforts as law professors are geared toward getting students to *speak* that we can forget to advise them of the need to *listen*. As Guinier appreciates, “[a]ll lawyers can give better advice to clients if they have listened more carefully to what the client really defines as the nature of his or her problem.”<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, silence can be strategic. This is particularly true in negotiations (whether they be transactional or in settlement of litigation); a common error by attorneys is to talk too much. Such chattering usually discloses tactics, confidences, and vulnerabilities best left unspoken. The Daishonin reminded us of Confucius's advice to think nine times before speaking<sup>115</sup> and added his own warning that “the merit one has formed over a hundred years can be destroyed with a single careless word.”<sup>116</sup>

The message, in toto, is this: we should advise our students to listen carefully, think before they speak, rely on logic and courtesy rather than bombast, and refuse to be verbally abused. The hot-tempered “will certainly be deceived by others,”<sup>117</sup> while the effective advocate will speak “mildly but firmly in a quiet voice with a calm gaze and an even expression.”<sup>118</sup> Few adversaries can trick or demean you if you remain the keeper of your conduct. For such reasons, “[t]he Buddha admonishes that one should by all means become the master of one's mind rather than let one's mind master oneself.”<sup>119</sup>

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113. 4 NICHIREN, *A Warning Against Begrudging One's Fief*, in *THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN*, *supra* note 36, at 281, 285.

114. GUINIER ET AL., *supra* note 35, at 17 (footnote omitted); *see also* Naomi R. Cahn, *Defining Feminist Litigation*, 14 HARV. WOMEN'S L.J. 1, 15-20 (1991) (emphasizing listening to the client's story as an integral component of working with, teaching, and learning from the client).

115. NICHIREN, *The Three Kinds of Treasure*, *supra* note 106, at 240.

116. NICHIREN, *The Three Obstacles*, *supra* note 69, at 244. For an instructive little tale of an associate's termination for blathering, *see* KEATES, *supra* note 80, at 20-21.

117. 3 NICHIREN, *The Supreme Leader of the World*, in *THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN*, *supra* note 12, at 229, 238 [hereinafter NICHIREN, *The Supreme Leader*]. Furthermore, as Unger notes, “hatred clouds the individual's ability to define clearly the aims of his action and thus corrupts his capacity to understand himself.” UNGER, *supra* note 13, at 195.

118. NICHIREN, *Teaching*, *supra* note 109, at 122. As one lawyer puts it, “power needn't shout, it need only whisper.” MESSINGER, *supra* note 56, at 71.

119. NICHIREN, *Letter to Gijō-bō*, *supra* note 57, at 205.

VIII. THE SYNERGY OF TEACHER AND STUDENT

*"Three things are required."*<sup>120</sup>

The Daishonin realized that "[t]hree things are required—a good teacher, a good believer and a good doctrine—before the prayers can be effective and disasters banished from the land."<sup>121</sup> This explicitly acknowledges the synergy of students and teachers.

Student and teacher are different—and such differences must be candidly recognized if the professor is to maximize her ability to guide the student. On another level, however, they form inseparable parts of a transcendent entity. As the Daishonin declared:

He who was once the teacher is now the disciple, and he who is now the disciple was formerly the teacher. On pondering this . . . I, Nichiren, realized that it reveals the profound meaning of the Lotus Sutra through the oneness of past and present and the inseparability of the one who teaches and the one who learns.<sup>122</sup>

This recognition of the ultimate unity between teacher and student carries the artful potential to unlock myriad shades of separateness. Status melts and roles fade as the search for truth overshadows the titles of the searchers. Nichiren Daishonin stressed:

No matter how learned a person may appear, if his ideas are warped you should not listen to him. Nor should you follow priests merely because they are venerable or of high rank. But if a person has the wisdom to know the spirit of the Lotus Sutra, no matter how lowly he may appear, pay respect to him and serve him as though he were a living Buddha.<sup>123</sup>

There is thus no sinecure in the search; whether one is followed depends solely on the merits of one's teachings. In fact, it is the student's duty to spurn the mentor if she concludes the mentor is in error. "A disciple should abandon even his teacher

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120. 6 NICHIREN, *How Those Initially Aspiring to the Way Can Attain Buddhahood Through the Lotus Sutra*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN, *supra* note 64, at 175, 193 [hereinafter NICHIREN, *Buddhahood Through the Lotus Sutra*].

121. *Id.*

122. 2 NICHIREN, *Persecution by Sword and Staff*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN, *supra* note 1, at 252, 255.

123. NICHIREN, *Letter to Niike*, *supra* note 41, at 495.

if the teacher is misguided,"<sup>124</sup> for "Buddhism is reason"<sup>125</sup> rather than an injunction to obey one's leaders.

This is our benefit rather than our burden. The feedback of students—and former students now practicing law—reinforces an appreciation of our continual need to grow as mentors and refine our pedagogical skills. By no means is every critique necessarily on point; upon due reflection we may decide to keep doing what we're doing. Even the most questionable criticisms are valuable, however, for by thinking through such objections we can plumb the intensity and wisdom of our devotion to our concepts and styles of teaching. As a consequence, we should emerge as more thoughtful mentors. When a student or former student has convinced us of our errors, we are profoundly in her debt. As the Daishonin reasoned, admonishing wayward teachers "is in fact being loyal to them."<sup>126</sup>

Such reasoning contributes to a vision of society based on reason rather than power.<sup>127</sup> The ideal "believer" is not a faithful pawn but an autonomous thinker unswayed by the winds of prestige and authority. The Daishonin explains:

A "good believer" is one who does not depend upon persons of eminence nor despise persons of humble station, who does not rely on the backing of his superiors nor look down on his inferiors, who, not relying upon the opinions of others, upholds the Lotus Sutra among all the various sutras. Such a person the Buddha has called the best of all people.<sup>128</sup>

## IX. CONCLUSION

Perhaps the biggest impediment toward developing our full potential as teachers is our fear of appearing as pretentious fools. Surely it takes *chutzpah* beyond Dershowitz<sup>129</sup> to liken ourselves to Buddhas or to believe that we are worthy of being anyone's mentor. Such fears falter, however, in light of two considerations. First, we *are* Buddhas. Simply by existing, each of us has a Buddha nature buried within his or her being. It may be buried very deep, and it may be tough to unearth, but it nonetheless exists. Rather than hide behind false modesty, we must acknowledge the Buddha within us and take all humanly steps to manifest it in ourselves and our surroundings.

Furthermore, we *are* our students' mentors regardless of whether either side is initially comfortable with that relationship. Our students pay a tremendous amount

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124. NICHIREN, *Admonitions Against Slander*, in *LETTERS OF NICHIREN*, *supra* note 16, at 204, 206.

125. NICHIREN, *The Supreme Leader*, *supra* note 117, at 238.

126. NICHIREN, *The Three Obstacles*, *supra* note 69, at 244.

127. See, e.g., 6 NICHIREN, *Preface*, in *THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN*, *supra* note 64, at vii-viii (explaining that "[t]he Daishonin's Buddhism provides the basis for a democratic society governed by reason and teaches that religion should function to make people independent").

128. NICHIREN, *Buddhahood Through the Lotus Sutra*, *supra* note 119, at 193.

129. ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ, *CHUTZPAH* (1991).

of money and devote three of the richest years of their lives toward learning the rules, customs, and mores of attorneys. We are their natural guides, and if we are unwilling to serve as their mentors, we should have the decency to quit the academy and return to the practice of law.

It takes faith reflected in a blunt recognition of our fallibility to recognize our Buddha nature and to account for our efforts to manifest it. For most of us, our efforts are fitful at best, and our offerings to students seem both timid and tiny. Through such increments, however, truth is pursued. Nichiren Daishonin himself felt trepidation concerning his “brief and clumsy attempts” to describe the beauty of the Mystic Law,<sup>130</sup> yet he realized that it would be worse to remain silent. Instead, the Daishonin cautioned, “[p]lease understand that I am merely joining my one drop to the rivers and the oceans or adding my candle to the sun and the moon, hoping in this way to increase even slightly the volume of the water or the brilliance of the light.”<sup>131</sup>

Our courage is thus rooted in humility rather than hubris. Our steps toward enlightenment are small, but it is their very slightness that enriches our understanding of life’s beauty. As lawyers, as students, and as those privileged to teach, we can do no better than to be the *zenchishiki*, the challenging teacher and nurturing friend who realizes that her enlightenment depends on heartfelt efforts to enlighten others. By following the Daishonin’s path, we can trust that both mentors and disciples will be searchers who “do not begrudge their lives.”<sup>132</sup>

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130. 6 NICHIREN, *Recitation of the Hōben and Juryō Chapters*, in THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN, *supra* note 64, at 3, 6.

131. *Id.* at 6.

132. NICHIREN, *The Fourteen Slanders*, *supra* note 12, at 215.