

You have certainly given me a challenge in asking me to talk on ‘The Opening of the Eyes’. I have never done so before. Next Thursday is my anniversary of practice for 32 years, so I thought I should accept the challenge. Fortunately, President Ikeda gave a lecture on the last part in his series of lectures entitled ‘Learning from the Gosho, the Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin’. You will find it in *UKExpress* August 1996.

**STUDY:** Firstly, just to say a little bit about study. We find it difficult to study sometimes, especially such long and difficult Goshos as this. The reason we study is to understand what we are doing. Without study, we easily change our minds and become influenced by other things.

Study is like the orbit of a planet, or the track of a railway. It keeps us on course. Otherwise, we tend to become self-centred and self-opinionated, straying from the path of faith. Also we cannot face difficulties without a strong foundation of study. This is why President Toda started study courses when he came out of prison. He realized that people had discarded their faith because they lacked study. He said:

Reason gained through study gives the basis of faith. Faith seeks reason or deeper study. Deeper understanding of study and reason also deepens faith.

In other words, faith and study are inseparable. Or faith, practice and study are inseparable. Mr Makiguchi also said, When our study declines, whatever we say will be empty and vain.

In a recent essay ‘Thoughts on the New Human Revolution’ No.36, President Ikeda encouraged young people particularly to study Buddhism. He said there are 3 basic reasons. The first one is as I just said, that study deepens faith.

Secondly, study drives the movement for *kosen-rufu*. It teaches us how to propagate, the commitment required of us, how to foster capable successors, it encourages us and gives us hope. Study has meaning when put into action for *kosen-rufu*.

Thirdly, study is the key to establishing a new philosophy based on humanism. Through understanding Buddhist teachings such as the dignity of life, the inter-connectedness of everything, compassion, the oneness of body and mind and so on, we can solve problems such as war, ethnic conflict and pollution.

He tells the story of Mr Toda who was due to give a lecture in Osaka. He was so ill he asked the study chief to do it instead. But when it came to the time, he got out of bed, saying he would do it even if he died, quoting the Juryo Chapter where it says ‘Never for a moment have I neglected the Buddha’s work’. This is reminiscent of this year’s theme from the AGM - ‘This is my constant thought: How can I cause living beings to gain entry into the unsurpassed way and quickly acquire the body of a Buddha?’

To the Gosho:

When Nichiren Daishonin was exiled to Sado, instead of wallowing in his misfortune for a while as I would do, he immediately set about writing ‘The Opening of the Eyes’. It’s 130 pages long in the English Gosho. He describes it in ‘On the Buddha’s Behaviour’:

After everyone had gone, I began to put in shape a work in two volumes, called *Kaimoku Sho*, or ‘The Opening of the Eyes’, which I had been working on since the eleventh month of the previous year. I wanted to record the wonder I had experienced, in case I should be beheaded. The essential message of this work, which I entrusted to Shijo Kingo’s messenger, is that the destiny of Japan depends solely on me. A house without pillars collapses and a person without a soul is dead. I am the soul of the people of Japan (MW1-189).

Nichiren Daishonin completed this work in February 1272. In September 1271, the authorities had tried to behead him. In November he was exiled to Sado. So he began this immediately he got there. He says in ‘The Opening of the Eyes’:

On the twelfth day of the ninth month of last year, between the hours of the Rat and Ox (11.00pm to 3.00am), this person named Nichiren was beheaded. It is his soul that has come to this island of Sado and, in the second month of the following year, snowbound, is writing this to send to his close followers (MW2-153).

When Nichiren Daishonin says he was beheaded and his soul has come to Sado, he means that he has undergone a transformation. He has left behind his transient identity as Bodhisattva Jogyo and manifested his true identity as the true and original Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law. This is because Sado was the second exile. He fulfilled the prediction of Shakyamuni that he would be exiled ‘more than once...’

He wrote this treatise to declare that he was the True Buddha. After this he wrote ‘The True Object of Worship’ which he completed in April the following year. (This was not all he wrote at that time. He also wrote ‘Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life’ in February and ‘Letter from Sado’ in March and many other important Goshos at this time). This in the worst possible conditions. We can imagine him in his hut, with the snowstorm outside, no home comforts, snow blowing in the holes and the roof. Completely impervious, though not unaware, he writes prolifically, as if his life depends on it. He was totally dependent on visitors to supply him with food and writing materials. In one letter he says ‘There is very little writing paper here in the province of Sado’. It’s no wonder! It’s as if his life just exploded with joy and he had to write down everything he could for the sake of posterity.

Anyway, he wrote this first to establish himself as the True Buddha. Then he could expound his teaching. Then he could inscribe the Gohonzon. If not, if he was only a bodhisattva, he could only propagate the teachings of others. He says in ‘Letter to Misawa’, ‘As for my teachings, regard those before my exile to Sado as equivalent to the Buddha’s pre-Lotus Sutra teachings’ Vol. 3, pp. 254-255).

‘The Opening of the Eyes’ validates the Gohonzon from the point of view of the Person and ‘The True Object of Worship’ validates it from the viewpoint of the Law. As you know, the Gohonzon embodies the Oneness of the Person and the Law. These two writings are therefore called the Two Pillars of Nichiren Daishonin’s writings.

The meaning of the title is to open people’s eyes to the fact that Nichiren Daishonin is the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law who possesses the Three Virtues of Sovereign, Teacher

and Parent and who leads us to Buddhahood. Nichikan Shonin, in his treatise on this Goshō said:

The title '*Kaimoku Sho*', means to open eyes that are blind. Because the eyes of all the people of Japan are clouded by their attachment to the provisional teachings, they cannot discern the three virtues in their true sense... 'Opening has two meanings: to remove and to see. That which is removed are attachments to provisional teachings. That which is seen are the three virtues. To illustrate, when the cataracts are removed from the eyes of a blind man, he is able to see objects, and his eyes are said to have been opened. But if the cataracts are not removed, then his eyes are not opened, and if he cannot see objects, then again, his eyes are not opened. The title of this Goshō likewise encompasses these two meanings. In the third Volume of his *Hokke Mongu Ki*, Miao-lo states, "'To reveal" means to open. [This can be interpreted in two ways, to remove and to see.] Interpreted as "to remove" it means to discard the transient aspect. Interpreted as "to see", it means to reveal the true aspect.'

A large part, in fact most of, this Goshō deals with 'remove'. That is, it thoroughly deals with the shortcomings of other teachings. This is to remove our attachment to provisional teachings. Then, 'see' is to recognize that Nichiren Daishonin is the original Buddha who possesses the Three Virtues of Sovereign, Teacher & Parent.

Nichikan Shonin divides this Goshō into 3 sections. Theme, clarification and conclusion. The theme is the first paragraph which you have here:

READ first paragraph. 'There are three categories...

Then there is clarification of 125 pages which you do not have!

Then there is the conclusion which you do have. The main sentence of the conclusion is: 'I, Nichiren, am sovereign, teacher, father and mother to all the people of Japan.'

Why are the three virtues important? VIS AID

1. Sovereign, means protection. These days we have democracy. Still the important question is to what extent does the state protect the people? It means, primarily, to establish peace and security.

2. Teacher - means to lead people to develop themselves with wisdom.

3. Parent means the power of love and compassion.

These virtues can be flawed. Government can be oppressive. Teachers can be negligent. Parents can be over possessive. The three virtues at their highest level are necessary for everyone to live a complete and fulfilling life.

These also exist at a personal level - the sovereign is the Law we base our lives on. The teacher is the wisdom of our minds and parent is the compassion of our actions. Or, as we often hear them - courage, wisdom and compassion.

So, to what extent can a philosophy, or a person guide us in these three aspects?

How much does its teaching enable us to protect ourselves from war and inflation?

How much does it enable us to develop our wisdom as to how to live?

How much does it enable us to develop our compassion for others?

After introducing the theme, Nichiren Daishonin compares these three teachings of Confucianism, Brahmanism and Buddhism.

Confucianism teaches benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom. But it shows no understanding of present and future or cause & effect. Nichiren Daishonin says, they know nothing more about the past than an ordinary person can see their own back, and they understand as little about the future as a blind man who cannot see what lies in front of him.

Hence he concludes that it is a limited teaching, but serves as good preparation for Buddhism.

Brahmanism: He mentions 6 non-Buddhist teachers from whom many different schools developed. He says,

Some of these sects taught that causes produce effects, others taught that causes do not produce effects, while still others taught that causes both do and do not produce effects.

Nichiren Daishonin says that they can only attain the world of rapture (the 6th of the Ten Worlds), and cannot remain there but fall back into the 3 evil paths (hell, hunger and animality). He says, however, it is good preparation for Buddhism.

Buddhism. He dealt with Confucianism & Brahmanism quite quickly but he deals at length with Buddhism. This analysis has five steps - called the fivefold comparison, although here it is slightly different from Buddhist Dictionary.

1) Compares non-Buddhist teachings (C & B) to Buddhist. He refers to the sages and ascetics of Confucianism & Brahmanism saying,

They are no more than common mortals who have not yet been able to eradicate the three illusions. They are referred to as wise men, but in fact they are no more than children who do not understand the principles of cause and effect. With their teachings for a ship, how could one ever cross over the great sea of birth and death? With their teachings for a bridge, could one ever escape from the maze of the lower worlds of existence?

The purpose of religion is to come to grips with death and to enable one to live a fulfilled life. That is, to escape the six lower worlds. Wise men can only lead us there if they have overcome the three illusions.

The three illusions are i. Illusions of thought & desire which cause people to suffer in the 6 lower worlds. Wrong views and greed, anger & stupidity.

ii. Illusions as innumerable as particles of dust and sand - prevent us from helping each other. Secular matters are many & various. When we try to master them we become deluded.

iii. Illusions about the true nature of existence - Stop us from realizing ultimate truth.

Fundamental darkness.

Someone who has not mastered these cannot lead us to enlightenment.

2. Comparison of true and provisional teachings. Compares Lotus Sutra with other sutras.

Here he covers the various hinayana and mahayana teachings which were taught in the forty years before the Lotus Sutra. These were taught in accordance with others' minds and were to prepare the way for the ultimate teaching.

He quotes Shakyamuni saying in the Muryogi Sutra which immediately precedes the Lotus Sutra, 'In these past more than forty years, I have not revealed the truth.' And in the second, Hoben Chapter 'The world-Honoured One has long expounded his doctrines and now must reveal the truth.'

3. The comparison of the Buddhism of the Sowing and the Buddhism of the Harvest. This is based on theoretical and actual ichinen sanzen. He says,

The Lotus Sutra contains two important teachings... The doctrine of ichinen sanzen is found only in one place, hidden in the depths of the Juryo Chapter of the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra.

Here, he says that priests of other sects claim to be able to attain enlightenment but in fact their teachings only contain the six lower worlds. You know that ichinen sanzen is 10 worlds times 10 worlds times 10 factors times 3 realms. In other words, everyone has Buddhahood. This teaching was not complete before Lotus Sutra.

Furthermore, first half of Lotus Sutra is theoretical and the second half is essential. In the second Hoben Chapter he taught the Ten Factors, which completes ichinen sanzen, but is still only theory. Ichinen sanzen is complete in Juryo chapter because Shakyamuni reveals that the cause of his enlightenment lay in distant past. He revealed that he had practised bodhisattva austerities for countless aeons. This is actual ichinen sanzen of Juryo Chapter. However, from point of view of ND's Buddhism, this is still not whole truth. He does not say HOW. Nichiren Daishonin revealed Nam-myoho-renge-kyo 'in depths of Juryo Chapter' as True Cause of enlightenment.

Shakyamuni's disciples already had relationship with him from past. They were already halfway there - they had already sowed and developed the seed of Buddhahood. Therefore his is called Buddhism of the Harvest. Now in Latter Day of the Law, we have no relationship with Shakyamuni. By definition, we are ignorant common mortals. We therefore need True Cause of Enlightenment which Nichiren Daishonin revealed. Therefore his Buddhism is called Buddhism of the Sowing.

I'm sorry I have had to explain this quite quickly, but please study it some more!

There is another point which is important to us here. Although this is not the main point in this Goshu it points out how the Buddhist doctrines have been stolen by priests of other sects.

After the appearance of the Buddha, when they had listened to and observed the Buddhist religion, they became aware of the shortcomings of their own teaching. They conceived the clever idea of appropriating the Buddhist teachings and incorporating them into the doctrines of their own sects, and as a result they fell even deeper into error than before... In the *Maka Shikan* we read, 'These days there are many devilish monks who renounce their vows and return to lay life. Fearing that they will be punished for their action, they then go over to the side of the Taoists. Hoping to gain fame and profit, they speak extravagantly of the merits of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, usurping Buddhist concepts and reading them into Taoist scriptures. They twist what is lofty and force it into a mean context, they destroy what is exalted and drag it down among the base, striving to put the two on an equal level.'

I wanted to read this, to show the importance of being able to distinguish between different teachings. It is very common for people to say 'All religions are the same'. Or that's your way, this is mine. Of course, we should not argue with other people. But it's important that we know how profound this teaching is. It's important we study over and over to understand. It's not just one teaching among many. It's a big mistake to put this teaching on a par with other things. Of course, other things can benefit us, but Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is for the ultimate enlightenment. And it's the only way for the people who live in this time period, whatever other people claim. This is because of actual ichinen sanzen as embodied in the Gohonzon.

To give an example, someone invented Aspirin. It cures aches and pains. Later on some drug company who wants to make money claims it cures cancer. It was never produced for that purpose and does not have the possibility of curing cancer. That's not to deny it's OK for curing headaches.

Or another example might be a bicycle. A bicycle is fine for going small distances. Later on, when the airplane is developed, the bicycle manufacturers realize it's superior but they say, You can fly with this bike. This bike can fly you to Australia in 20 hours. Of course, it's ridiculous. Nichiren Daishonin is saying it's just a ridiculous for those men who preach it's possible to attain enlightenment when the teaching they espouse was not taught for this purpose. It was taught for some improvement or understanding of life, but it's not the whole picture.

#### 4. Difference between the theoretical and provisional teachings.

This means the difference between the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings and the first half of the Lotus Sutra.

Here I would like to state my humble opinion that the teachings expounded by the Buddha Shakyamuni during the first forty or so years of his teaching differ markedly from those expounded during the last eight years of his life. Contemporary scholars have already expressed the opinion, and it is my conviction as well, that the chief difference lies in the fact that the Lotus Sutra teaches that persons in the two realms of shomon and engaku [that's learning and realization] can attain Buddhahood, and that the Buddha Shakyamuni in reality attained enlightenment at an inconceivably distant time in the past(p71).

Before the Lotus Sutra it was thought that people of learning and realization could not attain Buddhahood. This is because they are self-centered and not based on reality. They cut off earthly desires, but this also cuts off others and the reality of daily life. This is not liberation but isolation. In other words, it is not true happiness or Buddhahood. There is a long section dealing with what the other sutras say about shomon and engaku - not very complimentary.

However, if these 2 of 10 worlds can not attain Buddhahood then no-one can, since everyone has potential for these two worlds - it would be philosophically flawed. The LS predicts their enlightenment in chapters 3 to 9. Because this was so difficult to believe, Taho Buddha appears in Chapter 10 (Hoto) to say that Shakyamuni is right.

Nichiren Daishonin says in 'On Practising the Buddha's teachings:

The Japanese people of this age are one in their opinion of what practice accords with the Buddha's teachings. They believe that since all vehicles are incorporated

in the one supreme vehicle, no teaching is superior or inferior, shallow or profound, but that all are equal to the Lotus Sutra. Hence the belief that repeating the Nembutsu chant, embracing shingon esotericism, practising Zen meditation, or professing and chanting any sutra or the name of any Buddha or bodhisattva equals following the Lotus Sutra.

But I insist that this is wrong. The most important thing in practising Buddhism is to follow and uphold the Buddha's golden words, not the opinions of others (MW1-102).

5. The comparison of the essential and theoretical teachings. This is the difference between the last 14 chapter and the first 14 chapters of the Lotus Sutra. In the second half, in the Juryo Chapter, S taught that he had already practised bodhisattva austerities since the inconceivably distant past and attained Buddhahood. '...the time is limitless and boundless - a hundred, thousand, ten thousand, hundred thousand, nayuta aeons - since I in fact attained Buddhahood.'

Shakyamuni taught he had already attained Buddhahood in the past, but he was born in this world. Therefore there is no essential difference between Buddha and common mortal. In other words, Buddhahood contains the nine worlds - and ichinen sanzen is complete (from the point of view of his Buddhism).

The Gosho goes into a lot more detail, but I decided just to cover the five-fold comparison, to give you something to chew on. Actually, the most important one is the third. Because this is the comparison between Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and Shakyamuni's. From the viewpoint of time. Shakyamuni's enlightenment was still at a fixed point in the past, even though it was an inconceivably long time.

Nichiren Daishonin is the Buddha eternally endowed with the three properties. This is called *musa sanjin* in Japanese. *Musa* means not created or acquired, *sanjin* the three bodies. The Daishonin's life is eternally endowed with the three bodies - the Law to which he is enlightened, his wisdom and his compassion.

There is along section where ND goes into detail about the errors of the various Buddhist sects of the day. Later on in this Gosho, however, he says:

Those who seek the way however, should reject such one-sided views, transcending disputes between one's own sect and others, and should not treat others with contempt (p143).

I think this is his message to us. We really should understand ourselves, for the sake of our own faith. But there is nothing to be gained in going around refuting other teachings. We do not have enough knowledge anyway. Nichiren Daishonin could do it - he knew everything. For us, better to find points of agreement and work from a position of understanding others.

From page 94 of the Goshoo, he starts to speak about his own teachings.

Firstly, he says he is person humble status.

Secondly, speaking the truth entails persecution. He says if he does not speak out he will receive no persecution, but he would be lacking compassion. He is prepared to face the inevitable difficulties:

'I vowed to summon up a powerful and unconquerable desire for the salvation of all beings and never to falter in my efforts.'

He refers to the fact that he fulfilled the prophecies of Shakyamuni in being persecuted and refers to his 4 major persecutions.

He says:

When it comes to understanding the Lotus Sutra, I have only a minute fraction of the vast ability that T'ien-t'ai and Dengyo possessed. But in my ability to endure persecution and the wealth of my compassion for others, I believe I would put them to shame(p100).

This is the difference between theory and practice. To be the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law, Nichiren Daishonin had to face the three powerful enemies; this was part of his mission. He couldn't have one without the other. We, too when we commit ourselves to Buddhism for the sake of ourselves and others, face difficulties. This is all part of the true teaching in this time period.

In this part is his famous declaration:

Although I and my disciples may encounter various difficulties, if we do not harbour doubts in our hearts, we will as a matter of course attain Buddhahood. Do not have doubts simply because heaven does not lend you protection. Do not be discouraged because you do not enjoy an easy and secure existence in this life. This is what I have taught my disciples morning and evening, and yet they begin to harbour doubts and abandon their faith.

Foolish men are likely to forget the promises they have made when the crucial moment comes.

Would you like to repeat it altogether? We're going to have a break after.

**BREAK**

**OPENING OF THE EYES PART 2**

**Question: When you condemn... Buddhism from within**

Prior to this passage, Nichiren Daishonin speaks about the two methods of propagation - shoju and shakubuku. Shakubuku means to strongly refute a person's attachment to other teachings. Shoju means to gradually lead someone to Buddhism without refuting their wrong views of life. He says 'The method chosen should be that which accords with the time'. He also says

'In the Latter Day of the Law, both shoju and shakubuku should be used. This is because there are two kinds of countries, the country that is passively evil, and the kind that actively seeks to destroy the Law. We must consider carefully to which category Japan at the present time belongs.'

This acts as a kind of introduction to this question here. Because Nichiren Daishonin was living at a time when provisional kinds of Buddhism were practised, he had to strongly refute them, because they were destroying the true Law. These priests were people with power and influence who were misleading the people. Therefore Nichiren Daishonin was extremely outspoken. In this letter, he says that he has a dilemma. He knows that if he speaks out he will be persecuted. But if he does not, he will be lacking in compassion.

He was therefore very outspoken to people in power. But with individuals face to face he was extremely gentle. President Ikeda says:

Towards Hei no Saemon and wicked priests, the Daishonin was the severest foe. Yet, he teaches his followers that in spreading the teaching to others, they should conduct themselves courteously. For example, he advises one person that in conducting dialogue he should always speak 'mildly but firmly in a quiet voice with a calm gaze and an even expression' (Vol.4,p.122).(UKE August 1996,p.18)

So I think Nichiren Daishonin's message to us is that we should speak reasonably and gently to most people. We should teach them by persuasion and logic. But when those in power seek to wield authority and misuse people or deprive them of their rights, we should speak out against tyranny. Both are compassion, because they are for the protection of the Law which protects the people.

President Ikeda has recently been stressing the need to fight injustice. And he has said the 21st Century will be the century of justice. That is why we have to fight arrogance very strongly at this time - both in ourselves and others. In Conversations 40 where he is talking about the 'Bodhisattva' Never Disparaging' or Fukyo Chapter, he says:

Because the Buddha is dedicated to helping people become happy, the Buddha meets persecution from such arrogant forces of authority as secular leaders and priests, and is hated by the very people he is trying to help. He is subject to 'curses and abuse' and is struck with 'sticks of wood or tiles and stones' (cf LS20,267)... The Buddha is not a being in another world basking in enlightenment. A Buddha is the first to dive into the waves of society. And one who does so will absolutely encounter persecution and even be subject to physical harm. One who lives shrewdly, on the other hand, disregarding the people and looking only to protect oneself, is something other than a Buddha. Such a person is actually a 'devil' (UKE August 1999).

He goes on to talk about the oneness of good and evil. He says we should not distinguish ourselves as 'good' and arrogant people as 'bad'. He says even those people have Buddhahood. In Bodhisattva Never Disparaging's case he despised no one. Later they could all attain Buddhahood - but they had to suffer first!

He says that it is not enough to simply recognise evil as evil. We must struggle with and defeat negative forces, turning them into allies. He quotes the Lotus Sutra which says 'although the devil and the devil's people will be there, they will all protect the Law of the Buddha' (LS6,108).

He says:

'Kosen-rufu becomes a reality when we turn even enemies into allies. And the only way to do this is for those who have this awareness to stand up with fierce resolve and forge an iron unity of the people.'

This is quite difficult to understand I think. But as I understand it, it means that when we see someone being arrogant, it arouses our anger. We use this anger to chant daimoku and turn it into passion for justice. Then we speak out. Through this friction, it becomes a source of growth. We could say, for example, that SGI-UK is very disunited at this time. So, to turn this into our ally, we must forge iron unity based on the Gohonzon around us.

Anger has two sides - destructive and positive. We must use anger for justice and to move forwards. We do not need to worry about those who are negligent or arrogant. The law of cause and effect is absolute. Those people will get their come-uppance.

**If we examine... in fact his enemy.**

He says here that in the Treasure Tower Chapter of the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni, Taho and all the other Buddhas gathered to ensure the future propagation of Buddhism for the sake of all people. To censure Honen and others is part of his compassion. Even if they don't listen and persecute him, they are forming a reverse relationship with the true Law and will come to their senses eventually. In 'On the Buddha's Behaviour', Nichiren Daishonin says: 'I pray that before anything else I can guide to the truth the sovereign and those others who persecuted me'.

**I, Nichiren... sufferings of birth and death.**

In 'Repaying Debts of Gratitude', Nichiren Daishonin says:

If Nichiren's compassion is truly great and encompassing, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo will spread for ten thousand years and more, for all eternity, for it has the beneficial power to open the blind eyes of every living being in the country of Japan, and it blocks off the road that leads to the hell of incessant suffering (Vol. 4, p. 272).

The 26th High Priest, Nichikan Shonin interpreted this passage to mean the three virtues of Sovereign, Teacher and Parent. Firstly, 'Nichiren's compassion' means the compassion of virtue of the parent. 'Open the blind eyes' means the virtue of the teacher and 'blocks off the road' means to protect the people from falling into suffering - the virtue of sovereign.

In this passage Nichiren Daishonin is clearly stating that he is the person who possesses the three virtues of the Buddha. These days we might interpret these to be the necessary qualities for leaders. The virtue of sovereign lies in protecting people - that is a sense of responsibility. The virtue of teacher is to guide people with wisdom along the path of happiness. The virtue of parent is to raise capable people with love.

As President Ikeda points out in his lecture, society would be very different if our leaders were all like this! Unfortunately, he says we have leaders who lack responsibility. He says: Leaders must also have the ability to provide training, protection, guidance and instruction. When someone has a problem, they need to provide kind guidance as well as necessary instruction. By so doing, they can ensure people do not become deadlocked. A genuine leader protects people when they are tired, and nurtures them by providing training appropriate to their level of development. If people are given strict training under circumstances when they require protection, they will go under. If they are protectively coddled, when instead they need guidance, they will stop growing... In a word, the determination, prayer and strength to help people become happy without fail are the key to outstanding leadership. (UKE Aug'96,p23)

In general, our activities in SGI also correspond to the three virtues. Peace corresponds to sovereign, education to teacher and culture to parent.

**Shakyamuni Buddha... strange and shameless men.**

Nichiren Daishonin quotes how others have been persecuted. There is this famous sentence 'To be praised by fools - that is the greatest shame'. Presidents Toda and Makiguchi also used

this phrase a great deal. This sentence really helps us to face persecution for the sake of Buddhism.

### **Shakyamuni Buddha... gives me great joy.**

He gives examples here of the sacrifices that people made to uphold the Law. The practice should accord with the time. Although the practice changes, the spirit of practice does not. That is, to devote one's life to the Law and to people's happiness. That is, practice for oneself and others.

Here, Nichiren Daishonin says it gives him great joy to make such great causes for his future life. From the point of view of eternal life, our sufferings at this moment are minor. What matters is eternal happiness.

If we really understand this Goshō, it will motivate us to introduce others to this great practice. Recently, in the Feb HQ Leaders Meeting, President Ikeda said:

The essence of faith in the Latter Day, the essence of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, is propagation or introducing others to the Mystic Law. Those who do so are Buddhas; they are the proud disciples of the original Buddha, Nichiren Daishonin. Viewed from the perspective of Buddhism, all other honours cannot compare. Those who share the teachings of Buddhism with others are far more admirable than the most powerful leaders in society. I declare that those who advance kosen-rufu are the greatest people of all. Everything began with President Toda sending me, his young disciple into the 'battlefield'. If President Toda hadn't taken this step when he had, and if I had failed to realise his vision, today's Soka Gakkai would not exist. Because I fought with the spirit of mentor and disciple, I was able to open a great path towards the realisation of kosen-rufu.

To conclude, this lengthy document covers in great detail why Nichiren Daishonin is the true and original Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law. It also covers why propagating the true teaching entails hardship. All of the Goshō he wrote at this time are to substantiate his teachings of Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō and the Gohonzon. If we read and re-read this Goshō, we can really understand the spirit of propagation. To finish with, I would like to read something else about propagation which was said by Mr Toda:

There is no technique for carrying out shakubuku. There is no way to spread the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin without the solid conviction that you yourself are Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō. Knowing this is the essence of propagation in the Latter Day of the Law. This is the only way.

There are no rules for spreading Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō or for sharing Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō with others. We ourselves are Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō! Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō is all there is! We must be staunchly determined that Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō is all we have and that if that is not enough, then even if we should be killed or die, there is nothing else to do. Firmly convinced of this, we must continue to tell others about the Gohonzon.

## QUESTIONS