

### **“On Reprimanding Hachiman” - The Westward Transmission of Buddhism - Striving with a Selfless Vow for the Happiness of All Humanity**

(...) May 3 is the day that my mentor, Josei Toda, was inaugurated as second president of the Soka Gakkai in 1951. It is also the day that I, his disciple united with him in spirit and purpose, stood up as the third president in 1960.

Having successfully overcome his business problems, Mr. Toda decided to finally accept the presidency of the Soka Gakkai in the spring of 1951. I remember how, that March, he lectured me on the Daishonin's writing “On Reprimanding Hachiman” with great seriousness.

(...) In this first installment of this new series “The Buddhism of the Sun—illuminating the World,” we will study the closing section of “On Reprimanding Hachiman,” which contains the Daishonin's prediction of the westward transmission of Buddhism.<sup>1</sup>

Whenever I read this passage, it powerfully reminds me that the humanism of Nichiren Buddhism is the sun that can illuminate the entire world, and that the time has come at last for it to do so. It inspires me to renew my determination for worldwide kosen-rufu, filling me with courage to carry on my struggle.

The Land of the Moon<sup>2</sup> is another name for India, the place where the Buddha made his appearance in the world. The Land of the Sun is another name for Japan. Is there any reason why a sage should not appear here?

The moon moves from the west eastward<sup>3</sup>, a sign of how the Buddhism of India spread in an easterly direction. The sun rises in the east, an auspicious sign of how the Buddhism of Japan is destined to return to the Land of the Moon. (WND-2, 936)

### **The Arrival of the Time for Worldwide Kosen-rufu**

Nichiren Daishonin composed “On Reprimanding Hachiman” in December 1280, while residing at Minobu.<sup>4</sup> It is a deeply significant writing that he addressed to all his followers.

It was a turbulent moment in Japan's history. The country was facing the threat of a second invasion by the Mongol forces and, in the previous month, the shrine to Great Bodhisattva Hachiman, who was regarded as the protector deity of the Kamakura military government, had burned down.

In addition, as evidenced by the Atsuhara Persecution<sup>5</sup> (...), the Daishonin's followers faced

---

<sup>1</sup> Westward transmission of Buddhism: Nichiren Daishonin predicted that his Buddhism of the sun would flow from Japan toward the west, returning to the countries through which Buddhism had originally been transmitted and spreading throughout the entire world.

<sup>2</sup> The Land of the Moon (Chin. Yüeh-chih) was a name for India used in China and Japan. In the latter part of the third century B.C.E., a central Asian tribe called the Yüeh-chih ruled a part of India. Since Buddhism was brought to China via this territory, the Chinese regarded the land of the Yüeh-chih (moon tribe) as India itself.

<sup>3</sup> This refers to the direction of the moon's apparent motion. While the moon rises in the east and sets in the west like the sun, because of the direction of its orbit around the earth, each night it appears a little farther to the east of its position in the sky the previous night.

<sup>4</sup> Mount Minobu is located in present-day Yamanashi Prefecture. Nichiren Daishonin lived there during the later years of his life, from May 1274 through September 1282, just prior to his death. There, he devoted himself to educating his disciples, directing propagation efforts, and writing doctrinal treatises.

<sup>5</sup> Atsuhara Persecution: A series of threats and acts of violence against followers of Nichiren Daishonin in Atsuhara Village, in Fuji District of Suruga Province (present-day central Shizuoka Prefecture), starting in around 1275 and continuing until around 1283. In 1279, 20 farmer-believers were arrested on false charges. They were

unremitting oppression. In the midst of these adverse circumstances, the Daishonin dauntlessly continued to lead the great struggle for kosen-rufu.

In this writing, he likens the movements of the moon and the sun respectively to Buddhism's gradual spread eastward from India in the past and its transmission westward from Japan in the future. (...)

The Buddhism of Shakyamuni, which appeared in the distant western land of India, also known as the Land of the Moon, passed through Central Asia, China, and the Korean Peninsula, before finally reaching Japan, in a great tide of cultural exchange moving from west to east across Eurasia.

In terms of the three periods of the Former, Middle, and Latter Days of the Law, this transmission of the Buddhist teachings took place in the Former and Middle Days of the Law. In the Latter Day of the Law, however, just as the sun rises in the east and traverses the sky to the west, the Buddhism of the sun of Nichiren Daishonin will return westward. (...)

### **Entrusted with the Propagation of Buddhism in the Saha World**

I would like to note here, first of all, that in "On Reprimanding Hachiman," it is the Lotus Sutra being compared both to the moon when Shakyamuni was alive, and to the sun in the latter age after his passing.

No other scripture among the many Mahayana sutras focuses so intently on enabling all people of this "saha world," or "all of Jambudvīpa," the entire world, to attain enlightenment as the Lotus Sutra does.

What kind of world is the saha world? It means the "world of endurance," a place where we must endure suffering. The inhabitants of the saha world, afflicted by earthly desires, are viewed unfavorably as people "given to corruption and evil, beset by overbearing arrogance, shallow in blessings, irascible, muddled, fawning, and devious, and their hearts are not sincere" (LSOC13, 230).

Another name for the Buddha is "One Who Can Endure," because he is a person of courage who is able to forge ahead steadily, with great endurance, to help the people of this suffering-filled world attain enlightenment. The Bodhisattvas of the Earth described in the Lotus Sutra are the direct disciples of Shakyamuni. They intrepidly make their appearance to carry on his work, filled with joy to be able to spread the Lotus Sutra in this saha world.

In "On Reprimanding Hachiman," the Daishonin describes the spirit with which he has devoted himself to the struggle of propagating the Mystic Law ever since establishing his teaching for those living in the saha world:

Now for the past twenty-eight years, (...) I, Nichiren, have done nothing else, but have labored solely to put the five or seven characters of Myoho-renge-kyo<sup>6</sup> into the mouths of all the living beings of the country of Japan. In doing so, I have shown the kind of compassion that a mother does when she labors to put milk into the mouth of her infant child. (WND-2, 931)

The Soka Gakkai is the organization that has, in accord with the Buddha's intent and decree,

---

interrogated by Hei no Saemon-no-jo, the deputy chief of the Office of Military and Police Affairs, who demanded that they renounce their faith. However, not one of them yielded. Hei no Saemon-no-jo eventually had three of them executed.

<sup>6</sup> Myoho-renge-kyo is written with five Chinese characters, while Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is written with seven (*nam*, or *namu*, being comprised of two characters). The Daishonin often uses Myoho-renge-kyo synonymously with Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in his writings.

advanced kosen-rufu in the real world with a vow to carry on the Daishonin's great compassion. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the founder of our Soka movement, underlined the above passage in his personal copy of the writings of Nichiren Daishonin.

In February 1961, on my first visit to India, I visited Bodhgaya, the site where Shakyamuni attained enlightenment. At that time, I left a stone marker, symbolizing the start of the westward transmission of Buddhism, and renewed my vow to spread Nichiren Buddhism throughout Asia and the entire world.<sup>7</sup> More than half a century has passed since then, and the Mystic Law has now spread to 192 countries and territories and is enveloping people all over the globe in its compassionate light. (...)

The light of the moon is not very bright, for the Buddha taught [the Lotus Sutra in India] for only eight years of his life. But the light of the sun is brilliant, outshining the moon, an auspicious sign of how the Buddhism of Japan is destined to illuminate the long darkness of [the Latter Day of the Law, which begins with] the fifth five-hundred-year period.

The Buddha took no measures to correct those who slander the teachings of the Lotus Sutra, because while he was in the world there were no such persons. But in the Latter Day of the Law the formidable enemies of the single vehicle [the Lotus Sutra] are everywhere in sight. Now is the time to benefit the world in the same manner as Bodhisattva Never Disparaging. You who are my disciples, each of you should work diligently at this, work diligently at this! (WND-2, 936)

(...) Both the sun and moon are symbols of the Lotus Sutra, alike in intent and both embodying the wish to bring enlightenment to all living beings of the saha world.

The comparison of difference in the brightness of the sun and moon in this writing reflects the Daishonin's awareness that unfortunately Buddhism had already been lost in India, the land of Shakyamuni's appearance in the world and the home of the Lotus Sutra.

In "On the Buddha's Prophecy," he explains how, during China's Tang dynasty, Buddhism could no longer be found in India, so it had to be sought in China. He further notes that even in China, invasions by non-Chinese people from the north during the Song dynasty resulted in the extinction of both the Northern Song dynasty and Buddhism there as well.<sup>8</sup>

To people in Japan during the Daishonin's time, India, China, and Japan represented the entire world, and it was recognized that Buddhism had already disappeared from both India and China.

That's why it was crucial to return the great light of the wisdom of the Lotus Sutra once more to those lands, banishing the darkness of the suffering of all living beings like a brilliant sun. The westward transmission of Buddhism refers to a revitalization of Buddhist humanism to nourish the hearts of all people for eternity.

### **Destroying the Darkness of Lack of Trust in Humanity**

In "On Reprimanding Hachiman," the Daishonin declares that "the formidable enemies of the single vehicle" (WND-2, 936)—those who slander and reject the teachings of the Lotus Sutra—are rife in the evil age of the Latter Day of the Law.

---

<sup>7</sup> For more details, see *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 3, "Westward Transmission" chapter.

<sup>8</sup> In "On the Buddha's Prophecy," the Daishonin writes: "The Great Teacher Miao-lo [of China] says: 'Does this not mean that Buddhism has been lost in India, the country of its origin, and must now be sought in the surrounding regions?' Thus, no Buddhism is found in India anymore. During the 150 years or so since barbarians from the north invaded the Eastern Capital in the time of Emperor Kao-tsung, both Buddhism and imperial authority became extinct in China" (WND-1, 401).

The Lotus Sutra teaches that all people are infinitely respectable, possessing originally within them the Buddha nature (...). Each individual is precious and noble. The ignorance or darkness that renders people incapable of believing in the inherent brilliance and limitless potential of their lives is the essential characteristic of slander of the Lotus Sutra.

The Daishonin says that if, recognizing this truth about slander of the Law, he ignored it and failed to do anything about it, he would also be guilty of that same great offense of slander, thereby incurring extraordinary negative karma that would consign him for an eternity in the hell of incessant suffering. How, then, could he not speak out against such error, even at the risk of his own life? (cf. WND-2, 934).<sup>9</sup>

(...) Teaching others about the Mystic Law is a struggle against the fundamental disrespect for life and lack of faith in humanity that are the essence of slander of the Lotus Sutra. Doing so is the ultimate practice of compassion, arising from a commitment to eliminate the primary cause of suffering. At the same time, because it destroys the darkness or ignorance that resides in people's lives, it also provokes a reaction in the form of calling forth the three obstacles and four devils<sup>10</sup> and the three powerful enemies.<sup>11</sup>

In the Lotus Sutra, Bodhisattva Never Disparaging is the embodiment of this selfless commitment to sharing the heart of the Lotus Sutra with others. For his efforts, he is showered with curses and abuse and attacked with sticks and stones; but by helping his persecutors form a connection with Buddhism, he is able to lead all of them to enlightenment in the end. In this writing, the Daishonin calls on his disciples to "benefit the world in the same manner as Bodhisattva Never Disparaging" (WND-2, 936). Through engaging in efforts to share Buddhism with others in the same spirit as Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, we will realize kosen-rufu in the Latter Day of the Law without fail.

### **Actualizing Peace through the Power of Dialogue**

Let us learn some more from the practice of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging.

Bodhisattva Never Disparaging recognized and bowed in reverence to the supremely noble Buddha nature in every person he encountered. (...)

His practice was absolutely nonviolent and thoroughly committed to pursuing dialogue. Even though physically attacked with sticks and stones, he never responded with violence.

When it appeared that he might meet with such a physical attack, he would run off into the distance, out of harm's way, and declare: "I would never dare disparage you, for you are all certain to attain Buddhahood!" (LSOC20, 309). Wisely avoiding violence, he continued to persevere in his efforts to awaken people. (...)

In an early Buddhist text, Shakyamuni instructs that his followers should "not destroy life nor

---

<sup>9</sup> In "On Reprimanding Hachiman," the Daishonin writes: "And if I, Nichiren, were to observe this situation with my own eyes and yet pretend ignorance and refrain from speaking out, then I too ought to join those who have fallen into hell. Though guilty of no such fault myself, I should be condemned to journey through all the great Avichi hells [hells of incessant suffering] of the worlds of the ten directions. Such being the case, how then can I fail to speak out, even though it may cost me life and limb?" (WND-2, 934).

<sup>10</sup> Three obstacles and four devils: Various obstacles and hindrances to the practice of Buddhism. The three obstacles are (1) the obstacle of earthly desires, (2) the obstacle of karma, and (3) the obstacle of retribution. The four devils are (1) the hindrance of the five components, (2) the hindrance of earthly desires, (3) the hindrance of death, and (4) the hindrance of the devil king.

<sup>11</sup> Three powerful enemies: Three types of arrogant people who persecute those who propagate the Lotus Sutra in the evil age after Shakyamuni Buddha's death, described in the concluding verse section of the "Encouraging Devotion" (13th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra. The Great Teacher Miao-lo of China summarizes them as arrogant lay people, arrogant priests, and arrogant false sages.

cause others to destroy life and, also, not approve of others' killing."<sup>12</sup>

He says that we must not let ourselves, nor should we let others, accumulate the negative karma that comes from killing. I believe that the Buddhist philosophy exemplified in the practice of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging and these golden words of Shakyamuni can serve as a powerful source of illumination for movements for nonviolence and peace in our modern world. (...)

Mr. Toda said that our movement for kosen-rufu is a struggle to elevate the life state of all humankind. The practice of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging—of showing respect for each individual—lays the foundation for that grand endeavor.

### **Forging Ahead Courageously in the New Era of Worldwide Kosen-rufu**

The new era of worldwide kosen-rufu is now well and truly under way, and this has tremendous significance.

First, the awareness of being Bodhisattvas of the Earth has spread throughout our global membership. With this awareness, SGI members everywhere are standing up energetically to take responsibility for kosen-rufu in their communities and countries. (...) The youth, in particular, are standing up. (...)

Second, in every region of our planet, SGI members are building networks based on humanism, transcending differences of religious creeds and affiliations. They are forging solidarity that seeks to promote human goodness. SGI discussion meetings—gatherings of “human flowers”—are held all around the world. They are assemblies that bring into being a realm of peace and harmony imbued with respect for life and all people, just as the Lotus Sutra describes, in the 21st century. (...)

Third, our SGI movement is creating fresh hope around the world. In too many parts of the world today, misery and suffering are spreading, and signs of an evil and impure age are to be seen everywhere. As a fundamental mistrust in human beings intensifies, conditions indicative of the Latter Day are expanding on a global scale.

That's why thoughtful, concerned people are seeking a religion of hope that promotes revitalization and positive development in the face of any kind of adversity, a philosophy that enables people to reveal their inner potential. (...)

The stage is ready for SGI members to play an active role and create a new global culture. (...) As practitioners of the Buddhism of the sun, let us pledge together to strive ever harder to illuminate society, the world, and the future with the light of human revolution, and make a powerful new start on our journey of kosen-rufu, the shared struggle of mentor and disciple.

---

<sup>12</sup> “The Minor Chapter” (14. Dhammika Sutta), *The Sutta-Nipata*, translated by H. Saddhatissa (Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1994), p. 44.

