

Knowing the Causal Law

What happens to those people who harass Buddhist practitioners? In this speech, the SGI president outlines the tragic effects they must always face in the end.

Part 2 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 25th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Aug. 27.

I now want to quote some passages from the Daishonin's writings. In the well-known letter "On the Buddha's Behavior," Nichiren Daishonin writes: "The destiny of Japan depends solely upon me. A house without pillars collapses, and a person without a soul is dead. Nichiren is the soul of the people of Japan" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 919).

Citing these words in a February 1957 lecture on "On the Buddha's Behavior," President Toda declared: "Today, the Soka Gakkai is propagating the Gohonzon of the Daishonin throughout Japan. Were the Soka Gakkai to be destroyed, it would mean the end to true prosperity for the country. The Soka Gakkai is the pillar and the eyes of Japan."

It is no exaggeration to say that now, too, the destiny of Japan clearly depends on the Soka Gakkai.

Severe Retribution

There was a ruthless, powerful official, who sought to ruin and eliminate the Daishonin, the pillar and soul of Japan. This was none other than Hei no Saemon.

What was his fate? I have spoken on this many times, but I want to touch on it again today to reaffirm some key points — to provide a clear insight on the present situation in Japan and on the future.

Hei no Saemon-no-jo Yoritsuna wielded staggering power. With military, police and administrative affairs under his complete command, he was the effective ruler of the Kamakura military government.

He used terror to rule the land. But ultimately, this tyrant came to an abrupt, pitiful end.

In April 1293, 14 years after the Atsuhara Persecution, Hei no Saemon was betrayed by, of all people, his son Munetsuna, who accused him of plotting a revolt against the government. Family infighting seems to have been behind Munetsuna's actions.

Within a short time of the accusation, government forces surrounded Hei no Saemon's residence — the very compound at which the three martyrs of Atsuhara had been tortured and executed. A little while after Munetsuna's accusation, Hei no Saemon and his younger son Sukemune died wretched deaths.

Sukemune, who had at one time terrorized and harassed the Atsuhara peasants by indiscriminately firing arrows at them, experienced hellish suffering in his final moments. Furthermore, all of Hei no Saemon's relatives and retainers — his entire clan, which had once boasted such prestige and prosperity — were slaughtered at one stroke by the authorities.

Munetsuna, who had betrayed his father, was meanwhile exiled to Sado Island. Hei no Saemon's entire line was wiped out.

The causal law of life is uncompromising.

Using the destruction of Hei no Saemon's clan to discuss the strictness of the Buddhist Law, the Daishonin's successor, Nikko Shonin, in the document "List of Recipients of the Gohonzon," says: "This is not an ordinary occurrence. They have incurred the actual

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punishment of the Lotus Sutra [the Mystic Law].”

These developments took place in the 12th year after the Daishonin’s death. Nikko was 48, and his successor, Nichimoku, 34. This defeat of the Buddha’s enemies was surely the solemn fruit of that tenacious struggle for the Law by the second and third high priests, loyal disciples of the Daishonin fighting with the same spirit as their mentor.

The 26th high priest, Nichikan, wrote about the downfall of Hei no Saemon in a commentary on the letter “Selection of the Time”: “The distant cause is the offense of striking the Daishonin, while the near cause is the offense of executing the three martyrs at the time of the Atsuhara Persecution.”

How severe is the retribution befalling those who persecute the mentors and disciples of the Mystic Law!

Nichikan elucidated how the offense of attacking the Lotus Sutra’s votaries will bring inescapable retribution upon the perpetrator, in accord with the Buddhist principle that “the injury will rebound upon the originator” (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 304). In the same commentary, he writes: “Hei no Saemon’s beheading was retribution for the offense of striking the Daishonin across the face, while the beheading of his favorite son [Sukemune] was retribution for the offense of attempting to behead the Daishonin” and “The exile to Sado Island of his son [Munetsuna] was retribution for the offense of exiling the Daishonin there.”

In conclusion, Nichikan says: “[The prophecy of strict retribution in accord with the law of cause and effect] has already come true. It is impossible to escape retribution for this most serious offense [of persecuting the Lotus Sutra’s practitioners].”

I first read this commentary shortly after I joined the Soka Gakkai, at age 19. The causal workings of the Mystic Law are strict and unerring. All who have harassed, persecuted and betrayed the Soka Gakkai have incurred — and will definitely continue to incur — strict retribution.

If this were not true, the Buddhist teachings would be a lie. I have learned this through my life-and-death struggles to propagate the Daishonin’s Buddhism these 51 years. I wish to make this point clear for future generations.

In the letter “On Persecutions Befalling the Buddha,” the Daishonin writes, “In the past, and in the present Latter Day of the Law, the rulers, high ministers and people who despise the votaries of the Lotus Sutra seem to be free from punishment at first, but eventually they are all doomed to fall” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1190). It is exactly as this states: Though one may commit an offense and evade prosecution and punishment by the laws of the land, one cannot run or hide from the inexorable workings of cause and effect of the Mystic Law. Just as the Daishonin says, those who hold Buddhist practitioners in contempt might seem to be free from punishment at first, but ultimately they cannot avoid suffering the retribution due them.

The Buddhist law of cause and effect is very strict.

Hunting Down Negative Forces

Buddhism is about winning, about showing actual proof. President Makiguchi declared that this is the very life or essence of religion. He knew that clarifying right and wrong, good and evil, would upset attachments and arouse doubts and awaken people to the truth. Undertaking such efforts is genuine courage and compassion.

Mr. Makiguchi said, “The harder we fight and the stronger we become, the more swiftly actual proof of victory in our Buddhist practice appears.” I feel that, recently, the success of our efforts is beginning to happen much more quickly. What do you think?

All of you, the great Soka Gakkai members, have worked incredibly hard again this year,

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chanting and striving wholeheartedly for kosen-rufu, activating the protective forces of the universe and scoring momentous triumphs. Thanks for your tireless efforts.

In the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,” the Daishonin says on the meaning of *benefit*: “The element *ku* [in the word *kudoku* or *benefit*] means eliminating evil, while the element *doku* refers to the virtue one acquires by bringing about good” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 762). So benefit arises from erasing suffering and creating happiness. Immeasurable benefit accrues to those who fight injustice and defeat the negative forces seeking to undermine Buddhism. That is why the Daishonin urges his followers to refute the erroneous, reveal the true and teach others the Mystic Law — and to stand firm against malign forces.

My impression of Mr. Makiguchi is that, like the Daishonin, he purposefully hunted down negative forces and called forth persecution upon himself. Kosen-rufu goes hand in hand with fighting and triumphing over injustice and evil.

The Daishonin declares, “If we surmise the degree of benefit according to the degree of punishment, then there can be no doubt that my followers will enjoy ‘good fortune surpassing the ten honorable titles [of the Buddha, expressing his virtue, wisdom and compassion]’” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 342).

The Daishonin’s words here are based on the passage from Miao-lo “Those who vex or trouble [the Lotus Sutra’s practitioners] will have their heads split into seven pieces, but those who give alms to them will enjoy good fortune surpassing the ten honorable titles” (Annotations on Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra, vol. 4.)

When we realize how strict the retribution of the Mystic Law really is, we appreciate all the more the greatness of the Mystic Law and the immense benefit that results from fighting against the negative forces seeking to destroy Buddhism.

Japan suffered severe retribution for persecuting the Daishonin. Japan persecuted president Makiguchi and Toda and was subsequently destroyed.

In contrast, we of the Soka Gakkai, we who are carrying out the Buddha’s will and decree, lead lives that shine with ever-increasing benefit and good fortune. This is the Daishonin’s promise.

So let us all work even harder.

Hope, Courage, Energy

The Daishonin writes, “When the people’s despair grows, the nation declines” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1004). Today in Japan, despair is rampant. Many people have lost hope, direction and meaning. All these signs portend the nation’s decline.

In such dark times, who is striving to infuse people’s hearts with hope, courage and energy? It is us, the Soka Gakkai members. This beautiful body of human harmony, the Soka Gakkai, is the sole hope for Japan. It is a bright beacon for the entire world.

Let us advance with this pride.

To be continued in next week’s World Tribune