

**BACK TO THE BASICS  
BODHISATTVAS OF THE EARTH  
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Congratulations! You are a Bodhisattva of the Earth, according to Nichiren Daishonin. He says in “The True Aspect of All Phenomena” that “there should be no discrimination among those who propagate the five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo in the Latter Day of the Law, be they men or women. Were they not Bodhisattvas of the Earth, they could not chant the daimoku” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 385). In other words, your efforts to practice and share this Buddhism as best you can are what qualify you to be a Bodhisattva of the Earth.

Where does this name come from, though? Bodhisattvas of the Earth are what the ordinary people who appear in the “Emerging from the Earth” chapter of the Lotus Sutra — those who promise to widely propagate the Law — are called.

The Daishonin’s Buddhism is distinguished by how it completely entrusts ordinary people with the protection and perpetuation of its teachings. The Daishonin says in “The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life” that he has been “trying to awaken all the people of Japan to faith in the Lotus Sutra, so they too can share the heritage and attain Buddhahood” (WND, 217). Never does the Daishonin emphasize priests or other religious authorities being the real inheritors of the mission to spread Buddhism. We, the common people, are always in charge.

In “Questions and Answers about Embracing the Lotus Sutra,” the Daishonin makes it clear that “just as all the different kinds of plants and trees come forth from the earth, so all the various teachings of the Buddha are spread by persons” (WND, 61). The future of Buddhism, then, is all up to us.

We each have a great mission, one that we should never forget. SGI President Ikeda says in this issue that “to open the path of kosen-rufu without begrudging one’s life — this is the spirit of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, of courageous champions of faith. Let us of the SGI boldly open a path that will endure a thousand and 10,000 years, just as the Daishonin instructs. Together let us build a magnificent highway along which our noble movement for kosen-rufu can advance even more dynamically!” (see p. 9).

Praying for our friends, talking about Buddhist philosophy with them, sharing our experiences in faith, showing actual proof in our families and at our places of work — these are all the actions of Bodhisattvas of the Earth. These efforts enrich our lives and become part of the “magnificent highway” that President Ikeda is talking about.