

**BACK TO THE BASICS  
DEVIL KING OF THE SIXTH HEAVEN  
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There are natural, protective forces inherent in one's life and the universe that Buddhism explains to be functions of the Mystic Law or expressions of the Buddha's life. These are sometimes described as the Buddhist gods, as Nichiren Daishonin does in "The Treatment of Illness": "The fundamental nature of enlightenment manifests itself as Brahma and Shakra" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1113). The Daishonin's Buddhism expounds the direct way to fill our existence with this protection—and how this protection ultimately comes from within our lives.

At the same time, however, there is also a destructive force inherent in our own lives and the universe that emerges to oppose our determined efforts to manifest the power of the Mystic Law or the Buddha's life. This "fundamental darkness manifests itself as the devil king of the sixth heaven," the Daishonin teaches (WND, 1113).

The word *king* in the term devil king points to the severity of this destructiveness. In the Latter Day of the Law in which we live, the devil king is said to dominate a society where Buddhism is not yet widely upheld. The devil king is, in other words, the original egoistic desire coming from deep within human life that seeks to control other people for the sake of selfish profit—a diabolic form of desire.

Upon presenting the Mystic Law for the sake of the people's happiness, the Daishonin was thus immediately persecuted by people poisoned by the devil king's destructiveness. In the history of the SGI, the three presidents—Tsuneshaburo Makiguchi, Josei Toda and Daisaku Ikeda—all followed suit; they met with serious persecution because of their unsparing dedication to spreading the Mystic Law. Today, High Priest Nikken and his priesthood are functioning as the devil king of the sixth heaven in trying to confuse people about the SGI and the Daishonin's true teachings. It is certainly time for us in turn to follow suit as well; we have to take responsibility for protecting this Buddhism and the people from this devilish function.

In short, the devil king of the sixth heaven is that function which fiercely opposes each of us in our effort to create lasting happiness. SGI President Ikeda thus repeatedly stresses that life is a continuous struggle against evil, within and without, and that Buddhism is concerned with winning.

*Next week: Ted Morino on Buddhahood vs. the Devil King*