

**BACK TO THE BASICS**  
**BUDDHAHOOD VS. NEGATIVE FUNCTIONS**  
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Nichiren Daishonin teaches that in the Latter Day of the Law, the Buddha and the devil king oppose each other. The Daishonin states: “The devil king of the sixth heaven has raised ten armies against the votary of the Lotus Sutra, struggling to keep hold of the *saha* world where the Buddha and ordinary beings dwell together. Though I, Nichiren, in the capacity of the votary, have been embattled for twenty some years, not a single time did I think of retreating. Nonetheless, most of those who are cowardly among my disciples and lay believers have already either fallen out or renounced faith in their hearts” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1224).

And in terms of our daily practice of faith, the Daishonin quotes T’ien-t’ai’s *Great Concentration and Insight*: “As practice progresses and understanding grows, the three obstacles and four devils emerge in confusing form, vying with one another to interfere....’ ... Of the four devils, the workings of the devil king of the sixth heaven are of this last kind” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 501).

How does the devil king try to interfere with our practice? By targeting our personal weaknesses. The Daishonin explains: “When an ordinary person of the latter age is ready to attain Buddhahood..., this devil is greatly surprised. He says to himself, ‘This is most vexing. If I allow this person to remain in my domain, he not only will free himself from the sufferings of birth and death, but will lead others to enlightenment as well. Moreover, he will take over my realm and change it into a pure land. What shall I do?’ The devil king then summons all his underlings from the threefold world of desire, form, and formlessness and tells them: ‘Each of you now go and harass that votary, according to your respective skills’” (WND, 894). Nevertheless, our Buddhahood can overpower these devilish influences—the Daishonin promises that “those with the heart of a lion king are sure to attain Buddhahood” (WND, 302).

SGI President Ikeda recently put it this way: “This world is dominated by the devil king of the sixth heaven. The Soka Gakkai’s presence is like that of a sun of supreme justice bursting through the deep darkness of negativity and destruction that shrouds the planet” (Feb. 2 *World Tribune*, p. 10).