

**WORDS TO WIN BY
THE SUN OF THE GREAT PURE LAW RISES
BY RONNIE SMITH
MID-ATLANTIC ZONE LEADER**

From the "The Selection of the Time," The Writings of Nichi-ren Daishonin, pp. 538–94.

In all the seven hundred and more years from the time of Emperor Kimei to the present emperor [Go'uda], such a thing has never been seen or heard of, namely, a wise man who urges others to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and who chants it himself. When the sun rises, the stars go into hiding. When a worthy king appears, foolish kings perish. When the true sutra is spread widely, the provisional sutras will cease to circulate, and when a man of wisdom chants Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, those ignorant of it will follow after him as shadows follow a form and echoes follow a sound.

There can be no room for doubt that I, Nichiren, am the foremost votary of the Lotus Sutra in all of Japan, Indeed, from this we may assume that, even in China and India and throughout Jambudvipa, there is no one who can stand side by side with me. (WND, 575)

Nichiren Daishonin explains here that in the entire time Buddhism had existed—in India, China and Japan—no one had ever before revealed the great vehicle for the attainment of Buddhahood, the chanting of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the Gohonzon. By saying, "When the sun rises, the stars go into hiding," he expresses his conviction that the time had arrived when the light of the ultimate truth of Buddhism to which he had awakened would eclipse all other partial interpretations and teachings.

By night, the light of the stars is to be valued, for it helps us to see our way. Similarly, previous Buddhist teachings held value in the Former and Middle Days of the Law. Now that we have entered the Latter Day of the Law, however, the Daishonin is saying that this is the time when the sun of the Great Pure Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo rises, and the light of the stars can no longer be seen. The Daishonin expresses his supreme conviction that now is the time for propagation of the Mystic Law throughout the entire world to take place.

"Foolish kings" are those who persist in clinging to fragmentary, partial truths beyond the time when they cease being appropriate, and a "worthy king" is someone awakened to the true teaching that befits the time and the people. A "man of wisdom" indicates the Daishonin, who established and propagated Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, enabling all people to attain enlightenment.

We, too, would be "foolish" if we were to cling to incomplete teachings after finding the correct practice. Wise are those who can sever such attachments to the past and fully embrace the single great vehicle of the Mystic Law.

Since Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the essence of the Lotus Sutra, is the true teaching that leads directly to enlightenment, then the Daishonin, the votary of the Lotus Sutra who revealed this Law directly, with no intermediary, must be the original Buddha. The Daishonin's assertion that throughout the entire world "there is no one who can stand side by side with me" stemmed not from personal pride or arrogance but from his absolute conviction that the teaching he expounded was the supreme vehicle for the times and the people.

"If you are of the same mind as Nichiren," the Daishonin says, "you must be a Bodhi-sattva of the Earth" (WND, 385). Anyone who practices with the same intent as the Daishonin, sharing his great desire to propagate this Law in exact accord with his teachings is certainly none other than a Bodhi-sattva of the Earth. What great fortune we possess!