

## AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA THE TATSUNOKUCHI PERSECUTION: OBSTACLES BECOME OUR ENLIGHTENMENT

**In the second of two essays on the Tatsunokuchi Persecution, SGI President Ikeda writes: ‘Obstacles lead to enlighten-ment. Persecutions lead to kosen-rufu. Nichiren Daishonin teaches us this with his very being.’**

Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda often said: “Any place where the Gohonzon is enshrined is an infinitely sacred place. Any place where people have faith dedicated to kosen-rufu is a Buddha land. The spirit of Nichiren Daishonin resides there.”

The most important thing is to carry on the true spirit of the Daishonin and to act in complete accord with his writings.

SGI members around the world, determined to realize the Daishonin’s dream of kosen-rufu, are working hard to transform their respective communities into joyous lands of Tranquil Light. This is the path of a true world religion.

The SGI Study Center at Ta-tsunokuchi is a great citadel of symbolic significance in praise and appreciation of the efforts of such devoted friends in Kanagawa and everywhere else in the world.



The exact location of Ta-tsunokuchi is described in the Daishonin’s writings as “Tatsunokuchi in Kamakura” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1413), “Tatsunokuchi at Koshigoe” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 767) and “Ta-tsunokuchi in Katase” (WND, 196). In other words, it was located in the most general sense in Kamakura, near Koshigoe, at the southwestern entrance to the city, within the area known as Katase.

The site of the SGI Study Center straddles present-day Koshigoe and Katase. It thus completely matches the description in the Daishonin’s writings; our SGI Study Center is unmistakably the Study Center of “Tatsunokuchi in Kamakura.”



The Daishonin says that since he had given his life at Tatsunokuchi, it was equivalent to a Buddha land (see WND, 196). Indeed, his towering state of life as the original Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law was brilliantly revealed at the site of this great persecution.

The luminous object that streaked across the sky, frightening the Daishonin’s executioners was an acclamation from the universe celebrating and testifying to the start of his journey into the boundless future. The Tatsunokuchi Persecution was a ceremony in which the Daishonin revealed, on the level of phenomenal reality, a part of the infinite power of the Mystic Law that governs all things in the universe.

The Daishonin writes: “The Sun and Moon are the bright mirrors of the four heavens, and all the heavenly deities definitely know of Nichiren. The Sun and Moon are the bright mirrors of all the worlds of the ten directions, and all Buddhas definitely know of Nichiren. There cannot be the least doubt about this” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 141).

The great struggle for kosen-rufu is reflected in the bright mirrors of the sun and moon, and all Buddhas and heavenly deities throughout the universe are watching. That is why the Daishonin was filled with the unshakable conviction that he was resolutely protected, even as he faced execution at Tatsunokuchi.

First Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi always used to say, “The Soka Gakkai must cast off its transient status and reveal its true identity.” What did this mean? President Toda taught us that it meant having a strong awareness spread throughout the entire organization that we are the true followers of the Daishonin who strive in our activities based on an unwavering commitment toward the realization of worldwide kosen-rufu.

Ten years have passed since the treacherous and callous excommunication by Nichiren Shoshu. In that time the SGI, which has inherited the Daishonin’s true teachings, has boldly cast off its transient status and revealed its true identity. The praise and recognition of intelligent and aware people the world over bears brilliant testimony to this fact.



The Daishonin states, “Nichiren triumphed at Ta-tsunokuchi because the heavenly deities joined forces with him” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 843).

That morning, the light of daybreak brilliantly illuminated Tatsunokuchi. It was a dawn of truth and justice breaking through the darkness of conspiracy. It was the triumph of compassion for the people over the demonic aspect of power. It was the triumph of fundamental enlightenment over fundamental darkness. It was the triumph of Buddhahood, which struck fear into the devil king of the sixth heaven who reigns over the earth. It was the jubilant victory of life over the dark minions of murder, who tried to kill the votary of the Lotus Sutra.

Obstacles lead to enlightenment. Persecutions lead to kosen-rufu. The Daishonin teaches us this with his very being. No matter how extreme the threat to our lives, as long as the furnace of strong faith burns hot, we will win, he tells us.

Do not be defeated by persecution, by enemies, by sickness or by your own weakness. Only by winning will the sun of happiness rise. Only by winning will the sun of kosen-rufu rise.



Later, the Daishonin was led from the Tatsunokuchi execution grounds to the residence of Homma Rokuro Saemon of Echi, a retainer of Sado Island’s constable, Hojo Nobutoki. There, the Daishonin ordered sake for the soldiers who had accompanied him, to thank them for their services. As the time came for them to leave, some of the soldiers bowed their heads, joined their palms together in reverence and vowed to the Daishonin to discard the practice of the Pure Land school of Buddhism.

A profoundly humane act can melt the most frozen hearts, like the light of the sun, causing the mighty river of truth and justice to rise and grow in power.

Later, the military government executed five Mongol envoys at Tatsunokuchi. The Daishonin lamented this, saying how pitiful it was that the innocent Mongol envoys had been beheaded (see WND, 628). Had the government only heeded his words of warning, he says, it would never have come to this.

When I met with Mongolia’s youthful prime minister, Nambaryn Enkhbayar in February, I shared the Daishonin’s sentiments on this incident with him. Today, there is an ever-deepening understanding of the SGI’s humanistic philosophy in Mongolia.



The Kamakura military government marked the real start of military government in Japan. The structures and policies of the Kamakura military government (1192–1333), headed by a generalissimo, or *shogun*, were carried on by the Muromachi military

government (1338–1573) and the Tokugawa (Edo) military government (1603–1867). And even after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Japan effectively remained under military rule.

At the beginning of this 700-year period of military rule, the Daishonin established the foundation for peace that is the Mystic Law. Then, in the last days of that long era, stressing the validity of the Mystic Law, Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda gave their lives to fighting against the military government.

Spreading Buddhism while struggling against persecution, leading others to happiness while battling against obstacles — this is the basic formula expounded in the Lotus Sutra. This is also the eternal path of the SGI. Our fellow members in the endeavor of kosen-rufu, Bodhisattvas of the Earth, now live in 165 countries and territories. I am convinced that this proves that the SGI has inherited the triumphant legacy of justice and truth of Tatsunokuchi.

How wondrous it is that the Soka Gakkai appeared 700 years after the Daishonin, and that we are now 70 years into our great advance in the movement for worldwide kosen-rufu!



The Buddhism of the sun that rose from the depths of darkness on that day seven centuries ago has now begun to shine ever more brilliantly, illuminating the entire world. Humanity thirsts for the light of this great philosophy of hope.

It is the dawning of a new millennium. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Now is the time for us to spread with all our hearts the Mystic Law, the source of limitless vitality, and thereby adorn our lives with victory. Let us send this great light to one person after another, and transform our communities and societies into treasure lands pervaded by human harmony.

The Daishonin says to his disciples in Kamakura: “Though enemies lurk in wait for you, your resolute faith in the Lotus Sutra has forestalled great dangers before they could begin. Realizing this, you must strengthen your faith more than ever” (WND, 953). Those with resolute faith are true practitioners of the Daishonin’s Buddhism and genuine pioneers of kosen-rufu. They are eternal, unparalleled victors.

The courageous, praiseworthy members of Shonan Sub-prefecture, which includes Kamakura Zone, where the SGI Study Center is located, as well as all the Kanagawa Prefecture members, are advancing proudly and strongly in this region that is so closely connected with the life and triumph of the Daishonin.

I am eager to visit the SGI Study Center in this significant place, but my busy schedule has made this difficult so far. I hope to realize this wish at the earliest opportunity.

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