

“The Promised Man”
By Eugene Bolánde, Los Angeles

THE FOLLOWING POEM IS PRESENTED IN COMMEMORATION OF THE BIRTH OF
NICHIREN DAISHONIN, ON FEBRUARY 12, 1222.

The prince sneaked out the palace gate
Rode far as he could ride
Turned his horse and scurried back
His land he could not abide

The people were all suffering
He could hardly draw breath
For everywhere about him
Was hate and fear, sickness and death

His father the King had told him
Of a land so good and pure
Over which he was to reign
In a year or two, for sure

But what, thought Prince Siddhartha
Could the best of kings provide
To ease the life-conditions
Of a people who had nothing inside

The religions they had did not serve them well
They gave them heaven in-the-hereafter
While their lives were a living
Hell
He had to give them something
A way to ease the strain
Of this journey we all have to go on
From the pain of birth to the death of pain

He took off his royal coat
Of blue and scarlet red
He buried them with scepter crown
And put on rags instead

He gave up his royal heritage
His castles and his crown
And for fifty years he sought and taught
Yet carefully did he expound

In the land of Shakyamuni
Three thousand years ago
A sovereign became a Teacher
But could not teach all he came to know

He sat thinking beneath a mountain
He sat thinking beside the sea
But the greatest thought he ever thought
Came sitting under a Bodhi tree
So he preached the Three Vehicles
This Shakyamuni prince
And then with the Lotus Sutra
Compressed 42 years of teaching
Into eight of common sense

He said: I cannot tell the people everything I know
Cause few would understand—
But soon, he prophesied, will come along
The Original Buddha man

Time passed—a year, a century— then two
Who—where was this Buddha man?
The Lotus spread from India to China
And finally Japan

It took 2000 years or more,
Before
A fisherman's son
A lowly lad
Who became Nichiren Daishonin
Was born with the mission to give permission to the proposition
Of a mystical Law of the Universe
He faced opposition from high and low
But his mission was clear and he pursued it
without fear

At the age of 12 when most boys were playing Simon Simple
He went to the temple
To study the sutras

And so it began, and for the rest of his life
Thru war and pestilence, sorrow and strife
Thru loneliness, darkness, hunger and cold
Sold out and slandered for envy and gold
Renounced and assailed by five priests bold

Title: "The Promised Man"

Subject: Living Buddhism 02/98 v.2 n.2 p.6 LB9802p06 Los Angeles, California

Author: Eugene Bolande

Keywords: Advent Angeles Buddha California Poems Poetry Promised

Battered and bruised
Convicted, abused
Cursed and benighted by deception and lies
Left in exile, sick and despised
Abandoned, forsaken, tried and condemned,
Led to be-headed by sad little men

They tried to kill him, this Buddha man
The way they do in every land
Kill!... What you do not understand

But he persevered, endured, he followed his road
He conquered, he soared, he lived—he lived bold
He engraved his enlightenment on a paper scroll
And left it for centuries, for one and for all
It erases negative karma and wishes fulfill
He called it Gohonzon! His heritage lives still

He was Parent. He was Teacher.
He was fisherman's son.
He knew his mission, the old son of a gun
He was proud, without ego
He was staunch—he was strong
He never used words like right and wrong
He knew one day we'd be singing This song.

I didn't know what was reality
I didn't know what was a dream
But I know now where I'm going
It doesn't matter where I've been

I know when I whistle in the dark of the night
There's a song I can sing that will stay terror's plight
And although the years have taken their toll
There's a song I can sing and attain any goal

I don't know what happened lifetimes ago
But I'm still responsible for changing the flow
I know that my destiny's not written in stone
I know with Gohonzon I'm never alone

I gather up the pieces, the fragments of pain
I stand like an Oak in a winter rain
And go back to Gohonzon
Again and again. □