

## STANDS TO REASON: Unhappy Nations

By JEFF FARR

Associate Editor

**Errors in Buddhism will doubtless destroy the nation, just as a great wind and great waves destroy a small boat. (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1521)**

Nichiren Daishonin never experienced living in a stable society.

The Kamakura government of his time was always staggering toward chaos. Cliquish and contentious were the power-hungry samurai who made up that body. At the same time, the Daishonin saw Japan attacked twice by the Mongols.

Peace and stability for Japan were still far off when he died in 1282.

The Daishonin often addressed public figures, like the retired regent Hojo Tokiyori, with his view that the root of these problems was the spread of incorrect Buddhist practices throughout Japan — practices that made the people subservient to religious authority, that taught them to look for their happiness in someone else's hands and somewhere far away.

So here's another reason to do something about slander: If you don't, the Daishonin says, your country will eventually fall to pieces. Slandering teachings let loose in any country will eventually lead to this. The Daishonin's long study of Buddhist scripture, especially the Lotus Sutra, taught him this.

To the Daishonin, incorrect, erroneous teachings were like a hurricane and any country on whose shores they arrived like a small boat caught in the storm. Bigger than any country, to the Daishonin, was, for better or worse, the spiritual life of its people. Spirituality drives the nation.

I believe that he would see America today, like the Japan of his day, as caught in a great religious storm. And that he would see the temple issue as being a major part of this. Nikken's teachings are the antithesis to Buddhism; their potential spread in America would be the Daishonin's prime concern. Wouldn't he urge us, out of love for our country, to protest the "great wind and great waves" of Nikken's slander in America?

One of young Daisaku Ikeda's questions when he first meets President Toda in *The Human Revolution* is "What is a true patriot?" Toda answers that "a patriot...is one who believes in the Mystic Law. The reason is that a believer in true Buddhism can lead individual lives to happiness for eternity and be the driving force for reconstructing an unhappy nation...."

Toda adds his determination that "a society based on the Buddhism of the Mystic Law must emerge in the future."

To many of us, thinking of the future is sometimes unsettling. We're not sure how everything will turn out. We don't want to die before experiencing happy endings — not before accomplishing our missions and not before seeing our country and the world improve.

We want to do something with our lives, make something happen, leave something lasting behind — something that will positively contribute to humanity's distant future.

Toward this dream, what we believe, what we keep in our hearts, is the great determining factor. This is an important lesson of the temple issue. Spirituality drives us, spirituality drives the nation, spirituality drives the world, spirituality drives the future.

But a "spirituality" like Nikken's, a spirituality that denies the Mystic Law within each of us, can only drive our world toward destruction. A society based on revealing the Mystic Law within each of us *must* emerge, and seeing to this is our responsibility.

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Author: Jeff Farr

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