

**STANDS TO REASON, WORDS OF COMPASSION, WORDS OF REASON
LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM THE WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN
BY JEFF FARR, ASSOCIATE EDITOR**

I am fully aware that if I do not speak out, I will be lacking in compassion. (“The Opening of the Eyes,” *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 238)

I’m going to end this series with this quote from “The Opening of the Eyes,” one of Nichiren Daishonin’s five major writings. When the Daishonin says, “I am fully aware that if I do not speak out [against incorrect teachings], I will be lacking in compassion,” he shows us that his intolerance of religious injustice, the strong stance he took against the erroneous religions of his day, was actually his great compassion.

He spoke up only to save people from misery.

The Daishonin wrote “The Opening of the Eyes” in 1272 during his Sado Exile. In it, he identifies himself as the original Buddha, the Buddha who protects all people from all religious confusion — the Buddha who has more compassion for the people than anyone else.

Essentially, practicing Buddhism correctly means to practice with this same heart of the Buddha.

Members often ask me, “What can I do about the temple issue?” If I say, “Speak out,” they sometimes say that they don’t know anyone in the temple to talk to.

Coming from a compassionate place, though, it’s important that each of us find an appropriate way to discuss this topic with guests to our meetings, with people joining the organization, with fellow members, with friends, with family members — with everyone. After all, to understand the temple issue means to understand what constitutes the humanistic and courageous practice of the Dai-shonin’s Buddhism, in contrast to rigid and authoritarian formality.

Unless the temple issue is discussed, it will remain a vague theory, or a piece of old news, for many. Articles about it in the *World Tribune* and pamphlets on the issue don’t mean much if all the information doesn’t inspire conversations, real exchange.

Whether we have wholeheartedly engaged someone in a discussion of this issue may be a deciding factor in that person’s faith, practice and life in the future. And, more than that, it’s each of us. SGI President Ikeda came to trust the Dai-shonin’s teachings because he found President Toda completely trustworthy. In that sense, people’s trust of the SGI depends on each of us becoming fully trustworthy.

Whether people decide to side with the temple or the SGI depends entirely on what kind of people we are, on what kind of an organization we can create.

The basic point of “Stands To Reason” has been that the SGI’s response to the temple issue — its decision to speak out against the priesthood’s dishonest intentions, to make the temple issue an issue — has been, from beginning to end, entirely compassionate and reasonable. It has been entirely in accord with the Daishonin’s teachings and his maxim that “Buddhism is reason” (MW-3, 238).

The Daishonin calls for us to turn toward reason in all things: in how we live, in how we spend our time, in how we practice faith, in how we take responsibility for our lives and this world. And he so clearly, so painstakingly explains exactly why we must face persecution as Buddhists, exactly what the nature of this persecution is, and exactly how we

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should deal with it: with words of compassion, with words of reason. By speaking out about it.

Although the temple issue is not over yet — and although it's been going on much longer than many of us originally thought that it would — reason will win out in the temple issue; the SGI will win. The true, compassionate teachings of Buddhism will triumph over Nikken's distorted teachings, which pretend to be Buddhism.

If Buddhism is powerful, which it is, and we are practicing it correctly, then this only stands to reason..

This concludes "Stands To Reason."

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