

**EDITORIAL**  
**WHAT IS 'THE SAME MIND AS NICHIREN?'**  
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The fundamental spirit of the SGI—the Soka Spirit, as it were—can be understood in the passage from “The True Aspect of All Phenomena,” “If you are of the same mind as Nichiren, you must be a Bodhisattva of the Earth” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 385). To practice in accord with Nichiren Dai-shonin’s word and spirit, to strive together with the intent to accomplish kosen-rufu, will always be our organization’s prime point.

As SGI President Ikeda teaches us in his Feb. 27 speech: “To bring hope to those suffering the most...is the Soka Gakkai’s prime point”( March 31 *World Tribune*, p. 6). When we say that Nichiren Shoshu is teaching a practice at odds with the Daishonin’s, thus leading people to a life of endless, painful sufferings, how do we back that up? Why do we say that Nichiren Shoshu’s teachings are slanderous, even evil?

As “Confirming Our Path of Faith” explains: “The definition of evil in Buddhism can be summarized as that which causes or leads people to misery, or that which blocks the way to enlightenment and happiness. Good or evil in Buddhism is defined in terms of whether something enhances and enriches life (good), or whether it kills the spirit and leads to misery or the destruction of life itself” (p. 1).

There are those who feel that it is too much to label Nichiren Shoshu as evil. The Holocaust, slavery, environmental destruction—these are evil. But a band of misguided priests who have never killed anyone? Wrongheaded, unfair, petty... words like these better describe the actions of Nichiren Shoshu, some feel.

But the Daishonin states that “a hundred, thousand, ten thousand, million times more than mad elephants, vicious horses, fierce bulls, savage dogs, poisonous snakes, poisonous thorns, treacherous bluffs, steep cliffs, floods, evil men, evil countries, evil towns, evil dwellings, bad wives, wicked children and malicious retainers, the people of Japan today should fear those high-ranking priests who keep the precepts and yet hold distorted views!” (WND, 621).

Why is this so? Viewed from the perspective of the eternity of life, the loss of one’s present life is a relatively minor suffering compared to the sufferings one must endure in lifetime after lifetime if one destroys one’s seed for attaining Buddhahood by becoming a slanderer of the Law.

There is little doubt, as this passage attests, that the Daishonin considered slander of the Law to be the greatest evil. The conclusion that Nichiren Shoshu, which is now spreading the erroneous understanding that a priestly intermediary is necessary between believers and the Gohonzon, is not evil betrays a misunderstanding to the Daishonin’s thinking and his life—how he spent his lifetime fighting this kind of evil.

Some suggest that, if he were alive today, the Daishonin would take a much different stance toward Nichiren Shoshu than the SGI has. In today’s America, for instance, a country that enjoys much greater freedom of religious expression than Japan did in the 13th century, the Daishonin would not feel the need to direct such strong words against those in error, some have argued. The Daishonin would simply have stated his position and left it at that, they say.

The Daishonin’s intent, however, was not to establish religious freedom; it was to establish this Buddhism. This is not to say that he was against religious freedom—the

point is that his prime focus was sinking the roots of this Buddhism in his followers' hearts and in his society. An important part of this to him was differentiating correct Buddhist practice from erroneous forms of Buddhism and vigorously refuting those teachings. This is why he repeatedly called upon government officials to even outlaw those teachings. He was saying, "We need to correctly understand what Buddhism is in this country."

If we are to be of "the same mind as Nichiren," if we are to be Bodhisattvas of the Earth, we need to understand his intent and share it. At the very heart of the Daishonin's Buddhism is the refutation of erroneous teachings. To save suffering people, to make this Buddhism accessible to the people, clarifying the truth is the only way.

The Daishonin writes: "Even though one may resort to harsh words, if such words help the person to whom they are addressed, then they are worthy to be regarded as truthful words and gentle words. Similarly, though one may use gentle words, if they harm the person to whom they are addressed, they are in fact deceptive words, harsh words..." (WND, 178). Of course, we should not take this as license to be nasty or disrespectful in spreading this Buddhism. But with hearts of compassion and respect for others' lives, we should say what needs to be said. This is practicing with "the same mind as Nichiren."