

**SIGNIFICANT DATE: JULY 16—‘RISSHO ANKOKU RON’ SUBMITTED
A VISION SEEN WITH MORE THAN THE EYE
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On July 16, 1260, Nichiren Daishonin submitted a document to the ruler of Japan describing both the cause and solution to that nation’s grave misfortune.

In “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land” (Rissho Ankoku Ron), Nichiren Daishonin observes that, despite devotion to religious ritual, “Famine and epidemics rage more fiercely than ever, beggars are everywhere in sight, and scenes of death fill our eyes. Corpses pile up in mounds like observation platforms, and dead bodies lie side by side like planks on a bridge” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 6).

The Daishonin goes on to state the reason for this misery: “The people of today all turn their backs upon what is right; to a person they give their allegiance to evil” (WND, 7). By “what is right” he means the right teaching of Buddhism—the teaching that identifies the treasure within the life of every person, and gives people the power to bring forth this treasure. It is the Lotus Sutra’s teaching of the inherent value and dignity of every human life.

By “evil” he meant a teaching that offered no hope for this world, claiming that life in the real world is something to be despised. This meant an ultimate failure to recognize the supreme potential, value and dignity of human life.

The Daishonin deeply grasped the connection between the inner condition of people’s hearts and the outer world. He knew that as long as people’s hearts remained dark and hopeless, society would remain dark and hopeless.

Early on July 16, 1945, a group of scientists, politicians and military observers peered out 20 miles across a flat area in the New Mexico desert called Jordana Del Muerto, literally, “Journey of Death.” One physicist, Isador I. Rabi, describes what he observed: “Suddenly, there was an enormous flash of light, the brightest light I have ever seen or that I think anyone has ever seen. It blasted; it pounced; it bored its way right through you. It was a vision which was seen with more than the eye. It was seen to last forever. You would wish it would stop: altogether it lasted about two seconds. Finally it was over, diminishing, and we looked toward the place where the bomb had been; there was an enormous ball of fire which grew and grew and it rolled as it grew; it went up into the air, in yellow flashes and into scarlet and green. It looked menacing. It seemed to come toward one.

“A new thing had just been born...” (Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, p. 672).

None could know the real menace—the massive carnage and misery that similar devices would wreak weeks later in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

We might say that this “new thing” was the offspring of unlikely parents: of global human vices that Buddhism calls the “three poisons”—greed, anger and ignorance—coupled with great ingenuity. It’s grandchildren, each hundreds of times more destructive, have spread beyond anyone’s imagination, posing a threat that most of us forget to think about.

From the standpoint of Buddhism, belief in the justifiable use of nuclear weapons constitutes an “allegiance to evil.” The idea that nuclear weapons are necessary stems from a fundamental lack of respect for the value of human life. This conviction is the legacy of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda. SGI President Ikeda has been exerting all his

energies to realize a vision of the heart—a vision to uproot this evil by spreading and securing a fundamental respect for human life. If the history of this day moves us to ask what more we can do to “establish the correct teaching” of human dignity and to “secure peace,” then July 16 is a truly significant date.