

## New Year's Gosho

First of all, as to the question of where exactly hell and the Buddha exist, one sutra states that hell exists underground, and another sutra says that the Buddha is in the west. Closer examination, however, reveals that both exist in our five-foot body. This must be true because hell is in the heart of a person who inwardly despises his father and disregards his mother. It is like the lotus seed, which contains both blossom and fruit. In the same way, the Buddha dwells within our hearts. For example, flint has the potential to produce fire, and gems have intrinsic value. We ordinary people can see neither our own eyelashes, which are so close, nor the heavens in the distance. Likewise, we do not see that the Buddha exists in our own hearts. You may question how it is that the Buddha can reside within us when our bodies, originating from our parents' sperm and blood, are the source of the three poisons and the seat of carnal desires. But repeated consideration assures us of the truth of this matter. The pure lotus flower blooms out of the muddy pond, the fragrant sandalwood grows from the soil, the graceful cherry blossoms come forth from trees, the beautiful Yang Kuei-fei was born of a woman of low station, and the moon rises from behind the mountains to shed light on them. Misfortune comes from one's mouth and ruins one, but fortune comes from one's heart and makes one worthy of respect.

*Extract from the article  
published by SGI President  
Daisaku Ikeda, October 19,  
2007 in the Seikyo Shimbun,  
magazine of the Soka Gakkai.*

In his writings, Nichiren Dais-honin teaches the essence of Buddhist thought applied to life. It is a philosophy that allows everyone to bring out the supreme state of Buddhahood, which is the most sublime expression of the human condition. It is a tea-

ching that allows us to overcome the sufferings of birth, aging, sickness, and death and elevate our life through a path of eternity, happiness, true identity and purity, throughout all time. Those who proclaim and practise this excellent philosophy are



champions of life and people of uncountable fortune.

Nichiren Daishonin urges: **“Exert your self in the two ways of practice and study. Without practice and study, there can be no Buddhism.”**<sup>1</sup> And his successor and direct disciple, Nikko Shonin instructs his followers to **“engrave the teachings of the Goshō in their lives”** and **“inherit the ultimate principles expounded by the master.”**<sup>2</sup>

The study movement of the Soka Gakkai complies exactly with these requirements. Study is a crucial element in our Buddhist practice and its purpose is to allow everyone to achieve that absolute happiness. It is also the driving force of our spiritual struggle to firmly establish in society the principles that will ensure good and peace in the world.

Those who take Buddhist study seriously cultivate an expansive and open life condition, vibrating with infinite hope in the future. Those who, on the contrary, refuse to study Buddhism enclose themselves in a gloomy condition

of selfishness and arrogance and move away from a life of joy and true inner happiness.

Nichiren Daishonin stated: **“all the various teachings of the Buddha are spread by persons [...] if the Law that one embraces is supreme, then the person who embraces it must accordingly be foremost among all others.”**<sup>3</sup> Those who study and propagate the most profound philosophy in the world, then, are treasures of supreme value who contribute to humanity.

In “Letter from Sado” Nichiren Daishonin ends with this postscript: **“I want people with seeking minds to meet and read this letter together for encouragement”**.<sup>4</sup> Here, the Daishonin clearly expresses the desire that his disciples gather to read his writings. When new members, and even the most experienced ones, get together to read and study the Goshō, generating an expansive movement that leads to forge human values and to develop our movement, they are carrying out the noble actions indicated by the Daishonin as his express intention.

Mr. Toda often used to tell us with passionate conviction: **“as strange as it might seem, if one has a command of the Goshō, it will be much easier to read any other texts. And one can also make personal decisions with great clarity. For that reason, those who have a command of the Goshō will never feel deadlocked or trapped in dead end situations.”**

Buddhism teaches us the necessary principles to achieve absolute victory in life. It is a teaching that allows us to transform our karma and turn any kind of poison into medicine. It is a philosophy of hope based on the concept of human revolution. This is my conclusion, as a direct disciple of Mr. Toda who, throughout 60 years of practice has triumphed over countless odysseys and obstacles.

1) WND, Tokyo: Soka Gakkai, 1999, vol. 1, page 386. “The true aspect of all phenomena”  
2) Goshō Zenshu, page. 1618: article 11 from Nikko’s 26 Admonitions

3) WND, vol. 1, page 61 – “Questions and Answers about Embracing the Lotus Sutra”  
4) WND, vol. 1, page 306 – “Letter from Sado”