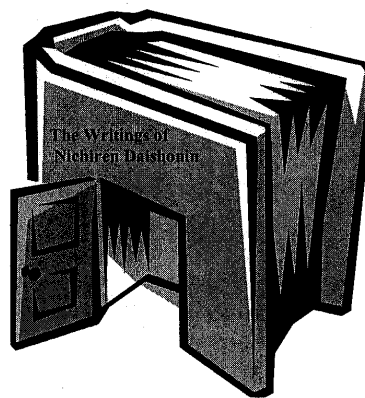
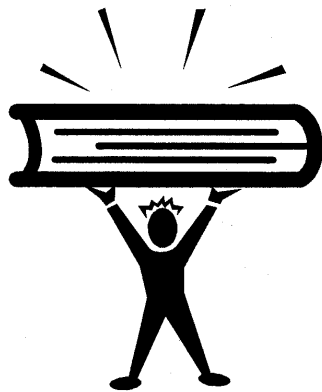


GROUP LEADERS' SUCCESS SEMINAR

LEADERSHIP BASED ON THE GOSHO

SERIES 3

JANUARY 29, 2000



From Dialogue On The Lotus Sutra
Tenth Chapter
Teacher And The Law
February 1997 LB

Ikeda: We can change even painful destiny into mission. The Lotus sutra teaches this strong and resilient way of life. The "Teacher and the Law" chapter explains when it speaks of the great bodhisattvas who, while capable of being born into pure lands if they so desired, choose instead to be born into impure worlds so that they can expound the Lotus Sutra to help those suffering.

"...you should understand that these persons voluntarily relinquish the reward due them for their pure deeds and, in the time after I have passed into extinction, because they pity living beings, they are born in this evil world so they may broadly expound this sutra. If one of these good men or good women in the time after I have passed into extinction is able to secretly expound the Lotus Sutra to one person, even one phrase of it, then you should know that he or she is the envoy of the Thus Come One. He has been dispatched by the Thus Come One and carries out the Thus Come One's work. (LS ch 10 pp.161-62)

Teacher of the Law has dual meaning (two sides to bodhisattva)

1. One who makes the Law his master (seeker of the way)
2. One who becomes teacher and spreads the Law (lead others to enlightenment)

Ikeda: Teachers of the law unite these two functions in themselves. To forget the seeking side is to become arrogant, to forget the saving side is to become self centered. Seeking the law is itself leading others to enlightenment; and leading others to enlightenment is itself seeking the law.

Saito/Suda: The Lotus Ssutra explains that the teachers of the Law are "envoys of the thus come one" who have been dispatched by the Buddha, and who carry out the Buddha's work. The Sanskrit translation of this passage is more explicit in explaining that these teachers of the Law, "should be viewed as Buddha's," and are "equal to the Thus come One."

In expounding the Law an individual is performing the action of the Buddha in uttering the "ultimate principle of compassion"

Ikeda: All Buddha's and bodhisattvas are our compassionate parents. You should understand that the ultimate principle of compassion that these Buddhas and bodhisattvas use to instruct living beings is contained nowhere but the Lotus Sutra...This is the reason why the Lotus Sutra is superior to all other sutras. (Gosho Zenshu, p. 9).

Saito: In the latter day embracing the Law is itself enlightenment. In other words the practices of embracing, reading, reciting, expounding and copying (5 practices) are included in the one practice of embracing faith in the Gohonzon.

Ikeda: Embracing faith means living with the spirit of the Buddha and dedicating one's life to the Buddha's vow to lead all people to enlightenment. Those who put that spirit into practice after the Buddha's passing are teachers of the Law.

Ikeda: Shakubuku means essentially speaking the truth. Since the Lotus Sutra explains the truth, it is called the "Sutra of Shakubuku". All efforts in the Latter Day of the Law are aimed at telling and spreading Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo and constitute shakubuku.

Josei Toda: "We should do abundant shakubuku out of sincere conviction in the Daishonin's teaching. And in so doing, we should not harbor feelings of antipathy toward others. We should not get into angry disputes. All we need to do is teach people earnestly and gently. The important thing is that we have the spirit to teach. If someone opposes or attacks us, then that person will suffer the consequence of his or her actions. It is important to share Buddhism with a spirit of compassion. It's almost like being in love".

Endo: In expounding the Sutra Shakyamuni first expounded the true entity of all phenomena (everyone can become a Buddha). At that time only Shariputra realized his enlightenment. Then through various parables the four leaders of the voice hearers understood and realized their enlightenment. Shakyamuni then explained relationship his relationship to them from past and all we able to understand the teaching. Shakyamuni racked his brain to find a way to enable all to attain enlightenment.

Three Rules of Preaching Robe, Seat and Room

"Medicine King, if there are good men and good women who, after the Thus Come One has entered extinction, wish to expound this Lotus sutra for the four kinds of believers, how should they expound it? These good men and women should enter the Thus Come One's room, put on the Thus Come One's robe, sit in the Thus Come One's seat, and then for the sake of the four kinds of believers broadly expound this sutra. The Thus Come One's room is the state of mind that shows great pity and compassion toward all living beings. The Thus Come One's robe is the mind that is gentle and forbearing. The Thus Come One's seat is the emptiness of all phenomena." (LS10, 166)

Ikeda: Shakyamuni uses images of robe, seat and room to explain the Buddha's spirit in expounding the lotus sutra.

Room of Compassion

Why is the Buddha's compassion compared to a room?

Compassion in the Buddhist sense is pity and profound affection. Compassion is also the spirit to share others sufferings.

Ikeda: In terms of our stance towards others, an attitude of compassion is not a vertical relationship (looking down on someone) but a horizontal relationship. It is a feeling of sympathy and respect towards each other as fellow human beings. That's why it is called a room of compassion. "We invite a friend into a compassionate life space and warmly embrace them; we sit down in the same room as equals and discuss life as equals. Creating such a warm and welcoming space for dialogue and exchange is in itself shakubuku.

Propagation is an act of venerating the Buddha nature in the lives of others. Therefore our efforts in shakubuku should be motivated by the greatest respect for the other person.

Pres. Toda: "The basis for doing shakubuku is a feeling of sympathy for others sufferings."

The Robe of gentleness and forbearance

The robe is a metaphor for a "mind that is gentle and forbearing".

In seeking to propagate Buddhism after the Buddha's passing, difficulties are inevitable. Therefore, it is necessary that we have a spirit of forbearance and patience.

The robe of gentleness and forbearance means that we are not shaken by hardships and difficulties. Endurance is neither retreating nor conceding defeat.

President Ikeda cites an example of forbearance in the "Selection of Time", Nichiren says. "Since I have been born in the rulers domain, I must follow him in my actions. But I need not follow him in the beliefs of my heart".

Shakyamuni and Nichiren showed a spirit of patience and forbearance in their encounters with persecution. "since hatred and jealousy toward this sutra abound even when the Thus Come One is in the world, how much more will this be after his passing?

When putting on the robe of gentleness and forbearance our hearts become impervious to negative words.

The Seat of Emptiness of All Phenomena

Ikeda: "Thus Come One's seat" indicates the Buddha's capacity to correctly perceive the true entity of all phenomena in the world, and his state of life that nothing can sway or upset.

Nichiren Daishonin says "the seat means carrying out religious practice without begrudging one's life. Sitting in the seat of emptiness of all phenomena, in other words, means taking selfless action.

President Ikeda once queried Pres Toda asking "When we do shakubuku, are we in a sense doing shakubuku to ourselves? He replied, "The point is that Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo is the very wellspring of our lives". Unless we have that realization we cannot do true shakubuku. There isn't any special technique or method for doing shakubuku. In the Latter Day shakubuku is a matter of determining: Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo is the sum and essence of my being!. He also said, " the ultimate shakubuku is to determine that one's life itself is Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo. This truly expresses the concept of emptiness of all phenomena.

Nichiren Daishonin: "Now Nichiren and his followers who chant Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo are fulfilling the three rules (of preaching represented by robe, seat and room) each moment of their lives." In other words, through the practice of chanting and propagating the daimoku of Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo, we attain the Buddha's virtues. We acquire these virtues through our practice of faith.

THE IMPORTANT POINT IS THAT OUR HEARTS BRIM WITH JOY OF CHANTING THE MYSTIC LAW AND THE JOY OF SHARING THE MYSTIC LAW WITH OTHERS.

Ikeda: A teacher of the Law is originally a person who has heard the Lotus Sutra and felt delight. Others hear that teacher of the Law expound the Lotus Sutra and they, too, delight. The eternal path of attaining Buddhahood is thus a kind of chain reaction of joy.

Nichiren Daishonin: "When, I, Nichiren first took faith in the Lotus Sutra, I was like a single drop of water or a single particle of dust in all the country of Japan. But later, when two people, three people, ten people and eventually ten thousand billion people come to recite the Lotus Sutra and transmit it to others, then they will form a Mount Sumeru of wonderful enlightenment, a great ocean of nirvana! Seek no other path by which to attain Buddhahood!

Ikeda: The important thing in propagation is sincerity.

In "The Ultimate Teaching Affirmed by all Buddhas of Past, Present and Future", Nichiren Daishonin says, "Reaching the supreme land of Tranquil light unimpeded, in the space of a moment one will return to the midst of the dream of birth and death in the nine worlds. One's body pervades the Dharma worlds in the ten directions and one's mind enters the lives of all sentient beings. Impelled from within and drawn from without, in the harmony of (internal) cause and (external) relation, one freely exercises the transcendental power of compassion and widely brings benefit to living beings without any impediment".

"Now Nichiren and his followers who chant Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo are great teachers among teachers"

Ikeda: When we understand this principle of "deliberately creating the appropriate karma" our frame of mind is transformed. What we had previously viewed as destiny, we come to see as mission. There is absolutely no way we cannot overcome sufferings that are the result of a vow that we ourselves made.

Nichiren Daishonin comments on the passage "such persons...have fulfilled their great vow, and because they take pity on living beings they have been born in this human world...where they may broadly expound...the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law" (LS10, 161). He says: The "great vow" refers to the propagation of the Lotus Sutra. "Living beings" refers to all beings in the country of Japan. The persons who "are born in the human world" are Nichiren and his followers. "Broadly" means to expound the sutra throughout the southern continent of Jambudvīpa (i.e. entire world). "This sutra", refers to the daimoku. Now it is Nichiren and his followers who chant the daimoku, Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo (GZ, 736).

Discussion questions used in lieu of the text above at an earlier presentation of this GLSS block

GLSS: JANUARY 2000
WORKSHOP POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

"IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF YOUR ENVIRONMENT OR THOSE AROUND YOU, NOR WHAT THE ORGANIZATION OR LEADERS MAY BE LIKE. TO BE SWAYED BY SUCH EXTERNALS IS POINTLESS. IT ALL COMES DOWN TO ONE PERSON: YOU. WHAT MATTERS IS THAT YOU BECOME A BRILLIANT BEACON, SHINING WITH JOY AND HAPPINESS, AND LIVE YOUR LIFE WITH CONFIDENCE AND COURAGE. IF YOU SHINE WITH A RADIANT LIGHT, THERE CAN BE NO DARKNESS IN YOUR LIFE."

Daisaku Ikeda

1. "EXERT YOURSELF IN THE TWO WAYS OF PRACTICE AND STUDY. WITHOUT PRACTICE AND STUDY, THERE CAN BE NO BUDDHISM. YOU MUST NOT ONLY PERSEVERE YOURSELF; YOU MUST ALSO TEACH OTHERS. BOTH PRACTICE AND STUDY ARISE FROM FAITH. TEACH OTHERS TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY, EVEN IF ONLY A SINGLE SENTENCE OR PHRASE.

Nichiren Daishonin "The True Entity of Life"

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND STUDYING THE GOSHO?

2. "IF YOU ARE OF THE SAME MIND AS NICHIREN, YOU MUST BE A BODHISATTVA OF THE EARTH. AND SINCE YOU ARE A BODHISATTVA OF THE EARTH, THERE IS NOT THE SLIGHTEST DOUBT THAT YOU HAVE BEEN A DISCIPLE OF THE BUDDHA FROM THE REMOTEST PAST.

Nichiren Daishonin, "The True Entity of Life"

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE THE SAME MIND AS NICHIREN DAISHONIN?

3. "THE GOSHO, THE COLLECTED WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN, ELUCIDATES THE MEANS FOR ALL PEOPLE TO ATTAIN ENLIGHTENMENT. IT IS THE ETERNAL TEACHING. THE GOSHO IS A SCRIPTURE OF BOUNDLESS HOPE. AS LONG AS WE CONTINUE TO STUDY THE GOSHO AND PUT ITS TEACHINGS INTO PRACTICE, WE DEFINITELY WILL NEVER BECOME DEADLOCKED. SOME GOSHO, OF COURSE, ARE VERY DOCTRINAL AND COMPLEX. BUT WE DO NOT NECESSARILY HAVE TO UNDERSTAND ALL OF THE DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS. THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO HAVE A KEEN DESIRE TO READ THE GOSHO AND TO EXPOSE OUR LIVES, EVEN FOR JUST A SHORT TIME EACH DAY, TO NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S SPIRIT. HAVING SUCH A SEEKING MIND ENABLES US TO SECURELY ANCHOR OUR LIVES TO THE ORBIT OF TRUE HAPPINESS, TO THE PATH OF ATTAINING BUDDHAHOOD IN THIS LIFETIME. AND IT BECOMES THE ENGINE FOR ADVANCING KOSEN-RUFU."

Daisaku Ikeda, Learning from the Gosho

HOW DO WE ANCHOR OUR LIVES AND ACTIONS IN THE GOSHO?
WHILE IN ACTIVITIES? DURING WORK? WHEN WE'RE WITH OUR FAMILIES?

4. ALL STUDY IS VALUABLE. WHY SHOULD WE SPECIFICALLY STUDY THE GOSHO?
 5. WHAT EXPERIENCES HAVE YOU HAD USING THE GOSHO TO WIN IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE AND/OR TO ENCOURAGE YOUR MEMBERS TO DO THE SAME?
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