

No. 6 (November 1, 2008)

## Sacred Word

**Never seek the Gohonzon outside yourself. When you, sentient beings, embrace the Lotus Sutra, the Gohonzon resides within your own bodies which chant “Namu Myo-ho Ren-ge Kyo.” I call this the Capital City of Absolute Reality, that is, the ninth consciousness of the King of Mind.**

Nichiren – “Nichinyo Gaozen Gohenji”

### ***Mandala Gohonzon and One Hundred Realms of the Mind***

By Rev. Shokai Kanai

*Manadala* is a diagrammatic picture which represents the cosmic nature of the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other divine beings. It is regarded as a symbol of the universe. You might have seen a colorful Tibetan or Shingo *Mandala*, which their representation of the universe. Nichiren Buddhists enshrine their *mandala* as the most honored image which is called the *Gohonzon*.

Nichiren Daishonin, wrote “Namu Myoho Renge Kyo” at the top center and wrote various names of the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, deities and other sentient beings on both sides of the sacred title of the Lotus Sutra. Each name represents one of the ten societies and the ten stages of our minds. Therefore the Mandala Gohonzon signifies how our minds and universe are related and also symbolizes the perfect balance and harmony within the rays of “Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.”

Regarding the one hundred realms of the mind and the ten states of the mind, I have already explained in Radiance No. 3 and 5. When I combine them both, it will be as follows:

#### **The Ten Societies of the Mind**

- Hell (criminals, terrorist) •
- Hungry Spirit (expecting to receive only) •
- Beast (no moral and no rational act) •
- Asura (fight, competing) •
- Ordinary Human Being (ordinal person) •
- Heaven (nobles and wealth) •
- Sravaka (church goers) •

#### **The States of the Minds**

- Hell (anger)
- Hungry Spirit (greediness and crave)
- Beast (ignorance)
- Asura (shouting and quarreling)
- Ordinary Human Being (not too good or bad)
- Heaven (happiness and joy)
- Sravaka (listening to preachers)

### **The Ten Societies of the Mind**

**Pratyekabuddha** (self seeking truth) •  
**Bodhisattva** (giving and taking) •  
**Buddha** (compassion) •

### **The States of the Minds**

• **Pratyekabuddha** (experience truth alone)  
• **Bodhisattva** (love, give and take)  
• **Buddha** (compassion)

As you see in this diagram, a person in the Society of Hell has minds of anger, greediness, ignorance, but also compassion. You may be in the Society of Ordinary Human Being but sometimes in anger, shouting, happiness, love and compassion; but still possess the possibility of becoming a Buddha someday. Even Buddha Sakyamuni has a mind of anger but is hidden; therefore, he is able to understand the mind of people in the Society of Hell. To be happy, you need to know yourself.

Our minds are always jumping around at every moment, even when you meditate or chant the Odaimoku. The way you live today is the result of how you thought in the past. Therefore it is important for you to know the state of your mind; what is your essential character when you get angry, how you can adjust your anger or whom you want or do not want to be with you. Try to be honest with yourself. And try to do something that you enjoy yourself and make others happy.

When you see your mind directly, you see yourself as selfish, self-centered and critical of others. So we ask for Buddha's compassion. Here is where your faith in the Buddha starts. Many Buddhist doctrines teach followers to make offerings to the Buddha, but he means to contribute to your society including your temple.

## **ENLIGHTENMENT**

By Rev. Shoda Douglas Kanai

At the age of 29, Siddhartha left the palace, his wife and new son to begin his journey to find answers that has been troubling him. For six long years he devoted himself to ascetic practices such as starvation, strict self-discipline and punishment of the body through various unpleasant means. Though he mastered every technique, Siddhartha was no closer in finding his answer. So one day, tattered and dirty, he bathed himself in a river to refresh himself. His body weak, he barely made it out of the river. Seeing this, Sujata, a local village woman, offered him some rice-milk which he generously accepted. Quickly, the nourishment helped revitalize Siddhartha and gave him purpose to sit under the Bodhi tree to begin his new training, inward looking meditation.

Some say that Siddhartha sat for one day, three weeks or six weeks, nonetheless the time frame does not matter. After he began to sit in mediation and find the cure to suffering, Mara, the Evil One, the Lord of the Realm of Desires, felt threaten and began

to interfere with Siddhartha's meditation. First, Mara sent maidens to seduce Siddhartha into quitting, this did not work. Their advances had no effect. If seduction did not work, Mara sent his demon warriors to physically attack and to stop the meditation. Since Siddhartha had a gentle spirit, the attack failed. The arrows and spears all turned to lotus flowers and fell at the feet of Siddhartha. Finally Mara tried to intellectually stop the meditation through reasoning. Siddhartha, with a clear and unencumbered mind, was able to win the debate. Mara defeated, left Siddhartha alone. Finally, he was able to clearly see all things as they were and found the way to salvation. This special date is commonly referred to as the day Siddhartha became the Buddha or the "Enlightened One". In Japanese Buddhism, this day is December 8<sup>th</sup>. From that day forward, the Buddha began his mission to spread his message to everyone, thus started turning the Dharma wheel.

We are all grateful that Siddhartha was able to find the true meaning of all things and the causes of suffering, so that we in turn do not have to devote many years of meditation to find our own way to enlightenment. By following the teachings of the Buddha, we ourselves will be able to find nirvana and also become Buddhas. Think of Buddha as a trailblazer. Just like the many explorers traveling west to find an easy route to California and the west coast, Buddha found a way for our salvation. There are many paths to take, some easy some hard, some over desert, some over rugged mountains. The end result though is the finally reaching the destination after many months. We too much persevere so that we too can reach our final destination.

Our daily lives are filled with many distractions that can curtail us from reaching Buddhahood. The three temptations of Mara are with us right here and now. Seduction does not necessarily have to be sensual, but of our personal attachment to various pleasures from food and drink to shopping to drugs. Violence is with us daily. We get upset when someone cuts us off; road rage. Someone bumps into us; we feel we need to fight. Intellectual sparring includes verbal abuse to put downs to being convinced to lead a path towards personal destruction.

We must follow the example set by Siddhartha and refute each temptation. If we give in to the "dark side" we will only lose and fall into the regions of hell. The only way to fight is to truly understand ourselves and not be persuaded to do the wrong thing. Follow the right path and we will all reach our destination quickly and easily.

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