

## **Rissho Ankoku-Odaimoku Kechien Undo**

Today I want to briefly discuss the poster behind you. I saw this when I recently went to Mt. Minobu, the headquarters for Nichiren Shu. This is a promotional poster regarding the current campaign, **Rissho Ankoku-Odaimoku Kechien Undo** or **Campaign for Spreading Peace throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma – Spreading the Relationship with the Odaimoku**. The big characters state: **Let's start by saying Thank You**. Let me first tell you about Rissho Ankoku Ron, the short version.

Rissho Ankoku Ron is considered to be one of the most important writings from Nichiren Daishonin. This letter was sent to the Kamakura government detailing the reasons and answers to all the calamities, disasters and pestilence afflicting Japan. Nichiren Daishonin wanted to help the government solve the country's problems.

Japan at that time was in turmoil, with famine, earthquakes and in much, much suffering. All the various Buddhist sects, try as they may, practiced their particular rituals to sway the *deities* to alleviate all the ills, but to no avail. The government had stepped in to help, but their efforts were fruitless. Why was this? Why weren't the *deities* listening?

The answer: the *deities* abandoned Japan long ago and the demons filled the void causing all the calamities. Why did the *deities* leave? The people of Japan are not practicing the True Dharma or more specifically the correct teachings of the Buddha. By straying from the right teachings has an effect of deserting all the Buddhas and destroying the Three Treasures, thus leading towards calamities. Many Japanese at that time were followers of Amida Buddha. Their practice was to put their faith in only Amida Buddha so that in their next life, they will enter the Pure Land in the West. The

path shown by Buddha Sakyamuni, our original teacher, was very difficult. With everyone following the easier path to salvation, eventually faith in Buddha Sakyamuni was forgotten. But this act of abandonment was slanderous according to Chapter 3 of the Lotus Sutra, “those who do not believe this sutra but slanders it ... will fall into the Avici Hell (the hell of Incessant Suffering – the lowest level) when their present life ends.”

Can we blame all these people for causing the calamities by their belief in the wrong sutras? No. We are in the age of the Declining Law; where there are no saints to lead the people toward Buddhahood. Thus through the blindness there is confusion. And through these many years of confusion, evil merits have accumulated causing the calamities.

How do we stop the calamities from expanding and to bring about peace? If we continue to put our faith in the wrong sutras, the progression is foreign invasion. Without a home there will be no Dharma and no one to honor the Buddha. A country can only prosper when in peace and where we all can abide by the True Dharma. To stop the calamities, we must stop the slanderers. We must help those who are ignorant see the error of their ways. We must create a prosperous country and environment to enable us to pay our respects to the Buddha. Without a home, uncertainty brews which leads to ignorance and false truths.

To bring Rissho Ankoku Ron in to the modern times, instead of thinking about just this country we must think about the world. With advances in science and technology, the world is shrinking. Our influence is great, just look at what you can do with MySpace or YouTube. The Lotus Sutra is the essence of all the teaching expounding by the Buddha over his many years. He did not preach war or discriminate against others. Everyone is

equal, everyone can attain enlightenment. We must spread this teaching to the world so that we can live in harmony. We too must increase our faith by paying homage to the Buddha by chanting the Odaimoku, keep, read, recite and hear the Lotus Sutra. We being practitioners will attain infinite merits, in order to become arhats, bodhisattvas and buddhas so that we in turn can expand the teachings across all the worlds.

There was a meeting in Japan a couple of years ago with all the foreign ministers in attendance to kick off this campaign. We first started to brain storm to find the best way to expand this message to the world and specifically North America. Through the internet we are slowly but surely expounding our message to the English speaking community. But after I saw this poster, it clicked. For North America, we are not a country of Buddhists, but dominated by Judeo-Christianity. To help everyone understand, we must show them as the poster states, **Let's start by saying Thank you.** In Chapter 20 of the Lotus Sutra, there is a Buddha called "Never Despising". Whenever he met anyone, he would say, "I do not despise you because you will practice the Way and become Buddhas." Peace starts from us, me and you and to all those you touch. I have yet to see the movie "Yes Man", where I believe the premise is Jim Carrey's character cannot say No. This phenomenon catches on with everyone around him and makes a difference. We too must say thank you and eventually by showing appreciation to your neighbor, will bring about understanding and peace. No conflict, no war, only Buddha-world. We do not have to wait to die before going to heaven; we can create it here, right now.