

BUDDHAHOOD EXISTS IN THE HEART

A BRIEF SIX POINT TREATISE

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Kokoro – Heart, Mind, Soul

I

People in this world, including the Japanese, say the three greatest men to have lived are Shakyamuni, Confucius and Christ. They also say Shakyamuni is the only Buddha, though, nowadays "Buddha" generally means one who realizes the truth and attains enlightenment.

The religion of Nichiren Daishonin also recognizes Shakyamuni as a Buddha, but he is only one of many. The Daishonin said, "Buddhas exist throughout the universe in every age of past, present, and future." Thus, the Daishonin's Buddhism does not recognize Shakyamuni as the only Buddha. In a previous letter I wrote that it is the responsibility and mission of everyone who has already awakened to the True Teachings to awaken others to the fact that they themselves and all life have the Buddha's life within them. People must come to believe this without a doubt.

Shakyamuni taught that, "People have to rid themselves of an ignoble mind." However, this does not help the common mortal who lives with desires. Shakyamuni is idealized as a great, upright and moral individual, an absolutely perfect human being. For the common mortal to be like him is impossible. Shakyamuni is different from normal people, who by definition are imperfect. This also holds true for believers in Christ: they idealize him, and in trying to adhere to commandments, aspire to be like him. But it is not possible. Take a painted picture of a cake, for example. Though, no doubt, it may look real, it is not an actual, real cake.

The teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha are temporary or provisional teachings. The era in which he lived -- some three thousand years ago -- was not the time for Nichiren Daishonin to extend his

influence for the salvation of all living things. It is now, in the Latter Day of the Law (Mappo) that people, despite their perplexities, confusion and imperfections, can realize that they have within them the same life of Namu-myoho-renge-kyo as the Buddha. But they have to make an effort to follow the life of Namu-myoho-renge-kyo -- the Buddha's life. The Buddha reveals the truth and saves all living things. This is what the Daishonin taught, and his teachings are not only suited to Japan and Japanese culture; even most Japanese don't understand them. On the contrary, these are the true teachings for all people throughout the whole world and the entire universe.

You can call the Daishonin Buddha, but it is wrong to think that the Daishonin is greater than Shakyamuni Buddha. Shakyamuni and Nichiren Daishonin are in different categories, their status and responsibilities were entirely different. Shakyamuni was the Buddha who was responsible for saving people living in India during his lifetime, and for the 1000 years of Shoho (the Former Day of the Law -- the first thousand years after his death), and the 1000 years of Zoho (the Middle Day of the Law -- the second thousand years after his death). Nichiren Daishonin is the true Buddha whose responsibility it was to save all people during the age of Mappo (the Latter Day of the Law -- which began 2000 years after Shakyamuni's death and will last for ten thousand years and more). Nichiren Daishonin did not previously reveal Namu-myoho-renge-kyo because it was not the time to do so. There was a specific time for Shakyamuni's teachings to have power and influence. That time was before the advent of the Lotus Sutra, and has now passed. Therefore Shakyamuni is not the True Buddha of Namu-myoho-renge-kyo; he is a transient Buddha, and his teachings are provisional. They saved only those people living during his lifetime and for the first two thousand years following his death.

II

A. We can only attain Buddhahood, the condition of being enlightened, through Namu-myoho-renge-kyo.

B. The difference between God and Buddha.

C. Buddha is found only within our hearts.

A. It is said that there are several ways to reach the spiritual state of awakening. One way is "Zen. Another way is Namu-myoho-renge-kyo. However, only by chanting Namu-myoho-renge-kyo can we attain Buddhahood. One cannot reach this state by any other means.

B. Christ and Jehovah said, “If you accept faith in God and confess your sins, you will completely eliminate your anxiety and apprehension and be absolved of your sins. After that, you are then able to, and need to help others who do not believe in God.” I don't believe this. Why? I will show you one example. There are germs and bacteria produced by the human body. Is it possible to wash away all the germs and dirt with just one shower? Can you remove all the grime produced during a lifetime with one shower? No, it is impossible. The human body discharges germs and dead cells every day, so we have to bathe every day. The anxiety in your life is like the germs on your body. Just as we cannot entirely remove the germs, we cannot remove our anxiety completely; life produces worries and problems as we live it. So I cannot agree with Christ and Jehovah who say that once you accept Christ, your godliness will endure for a lifetime. Enlightenment = having the Buddha's mind. Anxiety = uncleanness. Enlightenment . . . anxiety . . . enlightenment . . . anxiety . . . enlightenment . . . anxiety, and so on and so forth. Our life is a constant cycle of these two states -- enlightenment and anxiety. And this is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

C. “People alternate between enlightenment and delusion throughout their entire lives” wrote the Daishonin. He further stated, “Even though you may find a way to attain enlightenment outside your heart, it is not the correct way to attain enlightenment. If it is not the enlightenment of the Lotus Sutra, then it can only be a kind of limited enlightenment and not true enlightenment. Therefore, it is worthless. Only the Lotus Sutra teaches us how to attain supreme enlightenment.” The key point is your heart. I can say that concentrating on your heart, finding your teacher in your heart and calling it Namu-myoho-rence-kyo is the best way to attain enlightenment. So, develop sincere faith in Namu-myoho-rence-kyo. Buddhahood is not the result of study and practice, but the state or condition of studying and practicing. Buddhahood does not exist outside your heart, it can only be found within your heart.

If you find a doctrine which leads you to a spiritual realization outside your heart, it is not a true doctrine. Both the realization and the doctrine are insignificant. Only Namu-myoho-rence-kyo brings us to the true spiritual state of Buddhahood or enlightenment. To call your heart and mind Namu-myoho-rence-kyo is synonymous with Buddhahood. So, you must keep and strengthen your belief in Namu-myoho-rence-kyo. Once again, I have to say that Buddhahood is not the result of study and practice but the act of studying and practicing. Buddhahood does not exist outside your heart.

III

A. An example of a religion whose doctrine is not based on one's heart.

B. One can overcome the lusts in one's heart by believing in Namu-myoho-renge-kyo.

A. I would like to mention one example of a religion whose doctrine is not based on one's heart: Christianity. Some countries which believe in Christianity are slaves to desire, warfare and the laws of the jungle. Does Christianity encourage such behavior? No, I don't think so. The problem is that this doctrine is based outside the heart.

B. Nichiren said, "Your teacher is not outside your heart, but within your heart." It is easy for human beings to be addicted to desire. The Daishonin said that human beings have to control their addictions with Namu-myoho-renge-kyo. People have limitless desires. Some desires are not appropriate behavior for human beings, and we should put a stop to them. There are more important things than such desires, namely belief in Namu-myoho-renge-kyo. I would like you to spend your life realizing your true heart, realizing your true life, and realizing the true meaning of your life: believing in Namu-myoho-renge-kyo more deeply, and trying to live your life according to the doctrine of Namu-myoho-renge-kyo.

I am not saying that we should restrict all our desires as Muslims do. We should not restrict our dietary habits; we should not clothe ourselves according to strict regulations. We should just believe in Namu-myoho-renge-kyo. If you come to adopt certain restrictions on your own after believing in Namu-myoho-renge-kyo and realizing the True Law in your heart, those are true restrictions.

IV

A. Shintei-Nichiren-Shu Buddhism.

B. The true doctrine of Nichiren Daishonin.

A. As you know, there are a lot of Buddhist sects in the world. One of them, called Shintei Nichiren Shu (the ultimate true Nichiren teachings), is very similar to that of our sect, Nichiren Shoshu (the true teachings of Nichiren). However, their doctrine is quite different from the true doctrine of Nichiren Daishonin. Shintei Nichiren Shu (Nichiren Shu) believes in Shakyamuni as their object of worship. This means that Shakyamuni is the only Buddha. This sect's name includes the name "Nichiren", but its doctrine has nothing to do with Nichiren's true teaching. Nevertheless, they criticize us for believing the words of Nichiren and believing that he was the True Buddha. To my regret, they cannot understand what Nichiren disclosed about Buddhahood.

B. The doctrine of Nichiren is as follows:

*Keep Namu-myoho-renge-kyo in your heart

*Recite Namu-myoho-renge-kyo

*Regard Nichiren Daishonin, who devoted his entire life to Namu-myoho-renge-kyo, as the model of the Buddha.

*Practice with reverence to the Gohonzon

*Realize the enlightened life in your heart

*Live according to Namu-myoho-renge-kyo*Become the Buddha of Namu-myoho-renge-kyo.

Our whole lives begin with Namu-myoho-renge-kyo, and end with Namu-myoho-renge-kyo. This is the belief of the true Nichiren sect, Nichiren Shoshu. As soon as you see Shakyamuni, Christ, or others become the idol or object of worship of a religion -- as soon as the focal point of religious belief is directed outside the human heart -- the true doctrine of Nichiren erodes or falls apart. That is why Nichiren Daishonin insisted that we continually think about Namu-myoho-renge-kyo. And this is what the Daishonin meant when he wrote in "On Attaining Buddhahood"; "If you think the Law is outside yourself, you are embracing not the Mystic Law but some inferior teaching." "All scriptures or teachings, from whatever source, are ultimately the revelation of Buddhist truth. They are not non-Buddhist teachings," wrote the Daishonin in "The Opening of the Eyes." Therefore, if Namu-myoho-renge-kyo is the ultimate truth and its doctrine the ultimate doctrine, any religion which adds anything additional to this truth is perverting the truth, thereby, under that condition, the truth has collapsed.

V

During Shakyamuni's lifetime, it was possible that by his charisma, that is by believing in him, people could be enlightened. This is true. When we were children, we thought teachers, parents, police, doctors, statesmen, presidents and judges were all infallible, faultless and authoritative figures. However, all of them are common mortals. They are all capable of mistakes and crimes. Many people may reach positions of power and glory, but none of them have any real power. In this time period, the Latter Day of the Law, no one has the power to enlighten anyone.

Even though they are not perfect, all people have the same life as the Buddha. Nichiren Daishonin tells us that we must "be honest and upright, gentle in mind," and that we must open our minds

and find our true life. Other religions are contradictory because, while they espouse salvation, their believers cannot realize the truth and can't get any real, permanent relief from pain and suffering.

VI

In American society, when people are frightened or surprised, they exclaim, "Oh my God!" They feel that God created our lives, and that he will always help us. People take this as common knowledge. The acquisition of money, the threat or engagement in war or even higher education do not change this way of thinking. People can't change their mindset because they don't look inside themselves. Inside their lives is the life of Buddha where the entire universe -- all nature: plants, air, water and earth -- resides. Inherent in our lives is truth, salvation and relief from suffering. People have to come to realize that the true exclamation is "Oh, my myoho-rence-kyo!", not "Oh my God!"

People are becoming more savage; their desires are getting out of hand. As a result, conditions in the world are worsening. People have to realize what is important by themselves. Curing one's illness or making money isn't the purpose of life. We have to carry out the practice of attaining Buddhahood. Then we can find a truly happy life. If someone is angry or upset with us, we should tell him or her about the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin and thus establish a genuine, eternal friendship. I hope you'll do your best.