

THE FIVE IMPURITIES

With Reverend Raido Hirota

Translated and edited by Udumbara Foundation volunteers

Question: A non-Buddhist asked: How can innocent people (children like those being shot in American schools) be killed and god be considered just or fair?

Rev. Hirota: As you know, even in Japan unbelievable incidents happen, one after another. It is written in the Lotus Sutra that during The Latter Day of the Law the five impurities will be rampant. These are: 1) impurity of the age caused by war, natural disasters, etc.; 2) impurity of thought, or illusions, caused by confusion in the realm of philosophy and religion; 3) impurity of desires, or ugly tendencies such as greed, anger and stupidity; 4) impurity of the people, weakened both physically and spiritually by impurities of thought and desires; and 5) impurity of life itself.

In the sutra it says, when people have impure thoughts and desires their lives, their minds, their environments, their countries, their world, the earth, the universe and everything in the universe will be disordered and confused. As years go by unimaginable occurrences happen more and more. In the same manner as the shootings happening in America, terrible things are happening in Japan and the rest of the world. As the Daishonin says, "The mind is like the body, society like its shadow, when the body bends the shadow follows." Thus the disorder and chaos in society is a result of people's disbelief in the Law of true Buddhism. It is not only children who are dying, it is also adults. What is happening to innocent children and adults is indicative of the five impurities.

My answer to this question is that it is very important to establish the religion that teaches the correct teachings. However, it is wrong to say, as the Soka Gakkai says, that if everyone believes in this Buddhism there will be no more war, no more sickness, no more poverty and no more crime; this is just not true. What is important is that every believer must follow the Law of *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo*, and try very hard to practice and pray. If you do not practice earnestly and follow the Law of *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo*, you are not a true believer.

The *Jomyo* sutra states:

If the minds of the people are impure, their land is also impure, but if their minds are pure, so is their land. There are not two lands, pure and impure in themselves. The difference lies solely in the good or evil of our minds.