

Good Medicine

In the *Rissho-ankoku-ron*, a remonstrance against the government, Nichiren Daishonin teaches that the people's sufferings resulted not from natural disasters, but from the erroneous religions that were rampant in Japan in the 13th century. The Daishonin explained that the people's mentality, distorted by erroneous religions and teachings, was the *cause* of natural disasters, wars, or internal disturbance.

The Daishonin submitted the *Rissho-ankoku-ron* to inform the ruler at that time of his mistaken understanding concerning religion. He explained that the cause that brings unhappiness to human beings actually exists in their own minds.

I will use a parable to explain this principle. This parable is the source of the old Chinese proverb, "Every happening in one's life is like Saio's horse." "Saio" means "the old man living in the fortress in the north."

In China, there was an old man who lived in the village. He was a little strange, because he never got depressed about sad events or delighted on joyous occasions.

As it happened, one day, his horse escaped. His neighbors came to cheer him up, but he seemed indifferent, saying, "No, it's nothing to be depressed about."

After a few days, his horse came back together with a fine horse whose beauty could hardly be matched by any other in the village. His neighbors joyfully said, "We thought the loss of your horse was a cause for grief, but it turned out to be a reason for great celebration."

The old man, however, did not pay any attention to their reaction saying, "This is nothing to be overjoyed about."

Some time later, the old man's son was out riding the beautiful horse when he fell off, breaking his shoulder. The neighbors once again grieved and tried to console the old man, but again, he seemed undisturbed by the incident.

Soon thereafter, a war broke out in the land, and all the young men of the village were sent off to fight. Due to the injury to his shoulder, only the old man's son was not drafted, and he was able to survive.

In truth, it is difficult to judge what is going to be the cause of happiness or unhappiness. People decide whether something is good or evil based on their own opinion, without regard for the long-term view and the many aspects of life.

For example, science made remarkable advances in the 20th century and has been praised as the source of mankind's happiness. However, the principle of

“science as a cure-all” is concealed within this notion, even at a time when people are realizing that science has been the main cause of desolation of the human spirit, not to mention the source of environmental pollution and exhaustion of natural resources. As science advances, its harmful aspects and weak points are becoming more apparent.

Nuclear power has given great benefits to people since its discovery. However, after the powerful earthquake in Japan last year, the Fukushima nuclear power plant was damaged by the tsunami, and then the local people were forced to evacuate. They are still living under very inconvenient circumstances.

The mobile phone has given much convenience to people in daily life. About 30 years ago, we did not see people who used cellular phones. But, now, you may sometime see people who are talking on a mobile phone while driving. This is very dangerous behavior.

Because the function for good or evil is fluid, depending upon the time and circumstances, the standard to judge good or evil in our lives is very uncertain. In the Buddha’s eyes, effects are not good or evil in themselves. It depends upon our minds whether they become good or evil.

The Daishonin taught in the Goshō as follows:

Violating good is called evil. Rebelling against evil is called good. There is no good or evil apart from one’s mind. Mind apart from both good and evil is called *muki* (blank mind). There is no other mind than *muki*. There is no Law except one’s mind.

(*Goshō*, p. 1414)

As stated in the Goshō, effects become manifested in the form of good or evil as our mind judges. The term, “*muki*” indicates a condition that is transparent and colorless and is neither good nor bad. However, effects that are originally “*muki*” are judged desirable or undesirable because in the process of judgment, they go through the screen of our mind. If we evaluate effects under the influence of our earthly desires, there will be various determinations, such as good or evil, and superior or inferior.

Therefore, it is fundamental for people to seek training in making correct judgments and to develop their wisdom. This requires the existence of a correct religion.

The Daishonin concluded the *Risshō-ankoku-ron*, saying:

You must immediately renounce your erroneous belief and take faith in the supreme teaching of the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra. Then, this entire threefold world will become the Buddha land.

(*GND*, vol. 2, p. 42)

Among the numerous religions in the world, we are now able to encounter the correct teaching that truly can lead us to enlightenment. This is the Dai-Gohonzon of the Three Great Secret Laws revealed by the Daishonin through his conduct of not begrudging his life as the votary of the Lotus Sutra. We have, fortunately, encountered the good medicine of true Buddhism, which enables us to chant Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo for our own enlightenment.