Of course, it is ideal to possess both wisdom and knowledge, but everything ultimately depends on wisdom. Our goal is happiness, and happiness cannot be attained through knowledge alone. The only way to realize true human happiness and prosperity in the twenty-first century, therefore, is to make it a century of wisdom.

Though knowledge can be transmitted from one person to another, wisdom cannot. The only way to develop wisdom is to acquire it through personal experience. That is one reason the Lotus Sutra places such strong emphasis on the teacher–disciple relationship—a relationship in which both parties involve themselves wholly, with every facet of their being.

(The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra, vol. 1, p. 15)

[Nichiren] also writes, “When one knows the Lotus Sutra, one understands the meaning of all worldly affairs” (The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 376).

The wisdom of the Lotus Sutra is a wisdom that improves society and brings happiness to the people. Unless it accomplishes those things, it is not real Buddhist wisdom. From a broader perspective, I think we can say all wisdom that improves the lot of the people, that contributes to their happiness, is the wisdom of the Lotus Sutra.

(The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra, vol. 1, p. 55)

Exert yourself in the two ways of practice and study. Without practice and study, there can be no Buddhism. You must not only persevere yourself; you must also teach others. Both practice and study arise from faith. Teach others to the best of your ability, even if it is only a single sentence or phrase.

(The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 386)

Pervading the Lotus Sutra is the Buddha’s immense sense of responsibility to lead all people in every age throughout eternity to happiness. The Bodhisattvas of the Earth embody this responsibility, compassion and wisdom. They are great benefactors who work to elevate the spiritual state of humankind. And we are at the forefront. This is truly amazing. Our mission is tremendous.

(The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra, vol. 3, p. 197)
In “On Repaying Debts of Gratitude,” Nichiren Daishonin writes: “If Nichiren’s compassion is truly great and encompassing, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo will spread for ten thousand years and more, for all eternity” (WND-1, 736).

Kosen-rufu is the path to attaining universal peace and prosperity. It is our great vow from time without beginning for the enlightenment of all people. Today, a steady stream of Bodhisattvas of the Earth is vibrantly emerging and illuminating every corner of the globe with the great light of humanism of the Lotus Sutra.

It is my most heartfelt wish that all our precious members, directly linked to Nichiren Daishonin and following the lead of the three founding presidents of the Soka Gakkai, will unite in the spirit of “many in body, one in mind” to build an ever stronger groundswell for kosen-rufu, for world peace, into the eternal future.

(January 2014 Living Buddhism, p. 5)

The “Emerging from the Earth” chapter breaks through the frozen earth of resignation, the sense that “this is the way it has to be.” It is a struggle to reveal before the entire world the underlying power and towering dignity of humanity and of the people.


Where have the Bodhisattvas of the Earth come from? The Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai says that they dwell in the “utmost depth of the essential nature of phenomena and the ultimate of profound Buddhist principles.” In other words, they represent the truth that exists in the depths of life, the fundamental Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the wellspring of the universe and the fundamental power of life. It is the ultimate expression of wisdom and the foundation of all laws and principles. The Bodhisattvas of the Earth embody that fundamental energy. Moreover, they are committed to the bodhisattva ideal.

Bodhisattva is not a stage of completion (the effect of Buddhahood) but of incompleteness (the cause of Buddhahood). Bodhisattvas, while incomplete, display the state of completion (the effect of Buddhahood). Put another way, while partaking of a state of life of boundless joy and completion (the effect of Buddhahood), a bodhisattva at the same time takes action to advance, to ascend ever higher, and to lead still more people to enlightenment. In other words, it is a state of “incomplete completeness.”

The Bodhisattvas of the Earth are eternal activists who base themselves on the Mystic Law; theirs are lives of eternal progress. Our summoning forth the boundless energy of these bodhisattvas constitutes the “emergence of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth” within
our own beings. When we do this, we can break through the shell of the lesser self that has
constrained us.


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It comes down to people revolutionizing their states of life. From a broad perspective, our
efforts to cause countless Bodhisattvas of the Earth to emerge — to help many people
revolutionize their lives — amount to a struggle to change the state of life of society at
large. It is a struggle to elevate the state of all humankind. Isn’t this the transformation
that “breaking through the earth” symbolizes?

(The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra, vol. 3, p. 216)

[Reference Material #5]

The state of Buddhahood is the effect, and the practice to attain that state is the cause. The
idea that these two could coincide seems counterintuitive; the usual assumption is that by
carrying out Buddhist practice (the cause), a person later attains Buddhahood (the effect).

But when we practice Nam-myoho-renge-kyo (the true cause for attaining
Buddhahood), our practice already encompasses the world of Buddhahood (the true
effect). Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is at once the true cause and the true effect of attaining
Buddhahood.

(WLS, vol. 3, p. 227)

[Reference Material #6]

The mission of Bodhisattvas of the Earth is truly great and noble beyond measure. It
transcends all differences, including those of ethnicity, race, nationality and gender. It is a
mission that emanates from the vast creative life force that pervades the very depths of
the lives of all human beings. One who is awakened to this is called a Bodhisattva of the
Earth.

Each person is an entity endowed with the supreme Buddha nature. By encouraging
and respecting one another as fellow human beings living together on this planet, we can
bring forth the power to tap the limitless potential within ourselves and others, and to
create the values of happiness and peace. This is also our profound mission.

We of the SGI have appeared in this world, having vowed to dedicate our lives to this
mission.

(February 2014 Living Buddhism, pp. 31–32)
The “time” for the Bodhisattvas of the Earth to carry out their mission is the evil age of the Latter Day of the Law, and the “place” where they will do so is this saha world. Having chosen the most challenging circumstances, they rise into action here and now to help those experiencing the greatest suffering to attain enlightenment.

Nichiren Buddhism teaches the principle of “voluntarily assuming the appropriate karma.” This represents the transformation from a passive life to an active, self-motivated life—one based on the conviction that we have voluntarily chosen to be born into difficult and challenging circumstances to lead others to enlightenment. By making a vow for kosen-rufu based on this principle, we can transform our karma into our mission. When we awaken to our mission from the remote past, we will gain a new sense of self. We will be able to “cast off the transient and reveal the true” in our own life, and enable our real potential to shine forth.

Those who have awakened to their mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth fear nothing. When we take on the mission to help others become happy, courage and strength well up spontaneously from within us.

How wondrous are the karmic ties we share as Bodhisattvas of the Earth and how noble the vow for kosen-rufu!

(February 2014 Living Buddhism, p. 31)

[Reference Material #7]

In “Supernatural Powers of the Thus Come One,” the 21st chapter of the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni transfers the essence of the Lotus Sutra to Bodhisattva Superior Practices as the leader of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. The characteristic of Bodhisattva Superior Practices is described as follows:

As the light of the sun and moon
can banish all obscurity and gloom,
so this person as he advances through the world
can wipe out the darkness of living beings.
(The Lotus Sutra and Its Opening and Closing Sutras, p. 318)

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi heavily underlined this passage in his personal copy of the collected writings of Nichiren Daishonin.

The Bodhisattvas of the Earth are a source of great light imparting courage and strength. They warmly illuminate the way ahead for those walking through the night of loneliness and anxiety. They wipe away people’s tears of despair and give hope to them. They dispel the darkness of ignorance and brighten people’s lives with the light of compassion and wisdom.

[Reference Material #8]
This reference to “the darkness of living beings” is not something abstract. The important thing is to actually help banish the darkness of suffering shrouding the lives of individuals in our immediate environment.

Reaching out to the person in front of us, engaging with them, giving them hope and courage for living, and empowering them to attain happiness through their own efforts—this is truly the definition of a world religion. It ultimately comes down to whether the teaching has the power to revitalize the lives of individuals right in front of us. Nichiren writes: “Here a single individual has been used as an example, but the same thing applies equally to all living beings” (“The Unanimous Declaration by the Buddhas,” WND-2, 844). The SGI has been undertaking this effort all around the world.

(February 2014 Living Buddhism, pp. 32–33)

[Reference Material #9]

Our life is eternal, without beginning and without end. I am now aware that we have all appeared in this world with the great mission to propagate Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, or the seven-character Lotus Sutra, in the Latter Day of the Law. If I define our status in accord with this conviction, we are all Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

—From “The History and Conviction of the Soka Gakkai”

(February 2014 Living Buddhism, p. 29)

[Gosho Passage #2]

Now, no matter what, strive in faith and be known as a votary of the Lotus Sutra, and remain my disciple for the rest of your life. If you are of the same mind as Nichiren, you must be a Bodhisattva of the Earth. And if you are a Bodhisattva of the Earth, there is not the slightest doubt that you have been a disciple of Shakyamuni Buddha from the remote past. The [Lotus] sutra states, “Ever since the long distant past I have been teaching and converting this multitude [of bodhisattvas that has emerged from the earth]” [The Lotus Sutra and Its Opening and Closing Sutras, p. 261]. There should be no discrimination among those who propagate the five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo in the Latter Day of the Law, be they men or women. Were they not Bodhisattvas of the Earth, they could not chant the daimoku. At first only Nichiren chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, but then two, three, and a hundred followed, chanting and teaching others. Propagation will unfold this way in the future as well. Does this not signify “emerging from the earth”? At the time when the Law has spread far and wide, the entire Japanese nation will chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, as surely as an arrow aimed at the earth cannot miss the target.

But now you must build your reputation on the Lotus Sutra [Nam-myoho-renge-kyo] and give yourself up to it. (WND-1, 385)
Here, I would like to reconfirm the SGI’s mission with you as follows:

1. As an organization of Bodhisattvas of the Earth directly connected to Nichiren Daishonin, the SGI will forever be dedicated to realizing the great vow for kosen-rufu and work tirelessly for world peace and the happiness of humanity.

2. With faith based on the spirit of the oneness of mentor and disciple and the unity of “many in body, one in mind,” the SGI will forever strive to open the way to the triumph of humanity.

3. Acting with a spirit of self-initiative and respect for each individual, the SGI will forever illuminate people’s lives and society with the light of courage and hope.

4. Standing on the side of the people, the SGI will forever champion the welfare of the people and advance together with them.

5. Transcending all forms of discrimination and prejudice, the SGI will forever spread its network of human equality.

(February 2014 Living Buddhism, p. 34)