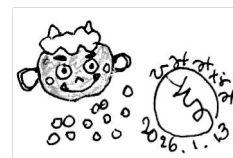


Learning from Kenji Miyazawa, Part Two: "To the West, If a Mother Is Tired"



Rev. Sono

Like Bodhisattvas Springing Up Out of the Earth

〈Kenji Miyazawa's poem, "Undeclared by the rain,"〉

〈This is his vow〉

Here, Kenji's resolve, firmly rooted in faith, is expressed so directly and honestly that I can only say "it's amazing."

In particular, I am struck by the passage in which he describes going in any direction—east, west, north, and south

to turn his practice into concrete action by rushing to the side of a sick child, taking care of a woman worn out from harvesting rice, explaining the truth about life to a man on his deathbed, and mediating to bring reconciliation to people who are fighting.

Indeed, we can see Kenji's strong determination to empathize with other people's suffering and mental anguish by going to them, wherever they are, and doing whatever he can for them—and this is the mission of people who lead their lives as bodhisattvas in this real, saha world.

〈Kenji's notebook again shows〉

a diagram of a Lotus Sutra Mandala with the *o-daimoku* (*Namu Myoho Renge Kyo*) at the center, the Tathagata Abundant Treasures and Shakyamuni Buddha on the right and left sides of the *o-daimoku*, and these flanked on either side by two of the four bodhisattvas: Superior Practice, Boundless Practice, Pure Practice, and Steadfast Practice.

〈These four Bodhisattvas,〉

the leaders of the bodhisattvas who sprang up out of the earth, embody the Buddha's wishes and actually liberate living beings from suffering.

Watch and Listen Attentively

〈We believe〉

Every time I read the lines of the poem that say "Count myself out / Of every consideration. / Watch and listen attentively / And do not forget what has been learned.

I always think that all members of Rissho Kosei-kai, especially chapter leaders and area leaders, are practicing this, as a matter of course, in their daily lives.

in other people's buddha nature and listen attentively as they pour out their troubles and worries, without interjecting our own opinions or ideas.

This is a crucial time for people to find a way out of suffering and anxiety, and this is our noble bodhisattva practice.

〈Because the speakers〉

Because the speakers are wrapped in the compassion of the listener, as they continue to express their complaints, grief, and sadness,

they naturally come to understand what their suffering really is and where its cause comes from,

and the weight lifts from their minds as they arrive at a way out of their crisis.

〈Some time ago〉

I visited a region affected by ethnic conflict from a civil war. Perhaps I was influenced by Kenji's words when I met with local religious leaders,

because I simply listened attentively, and gradually, an atmosphere conducive to dialogue began to develop among them, even though communication had previously been difficult.

〈As we look at the world,〉

so many people are suffering, and there is not much we can do about it.

Although we want to help, it seems we are just "useless nobodies.

〈Even so,〉

Kenji teaches us that while maintaining a broad perspective, we should approach others with the mind of putting our hands together reverently

and be kind and warmhearted

〈never forgetting〉

that our seemingly insignificant daily practices are fundamentally connected to solving the root causes of the world's problems

and that therefore, we should be diligent and not neglect our daily practices.

〈 Miyazaki's Poem: Undeclared by the Rain 〉

Undeclared by the rain, / Undeclared by the wind, / Undeclared by the snow, or the summer heat. / Keep the body strong / And be free from desire. / Never get angry / And always quietly smile. / Four cups of brown rice, some miso, / And a few vegetables are enough for one day. / Count myself out / Of every consideration. / Watch and listen attentively / And do not forget what has been learned. / Live in a small thatched hut in a meadow, / Shaded by a pine forest. / To the east, if a child is sick, / Go take care of her. / To the west, if a mother is tired, / Go shoulder her sheaves of rice. / To the south, if a man is near death, / Go tell him to have no fear. / To the north, if people argue or bring lawsuits, / Go tell them to stop such foolishness. / When there is drought, shed tears. / When the summer is cold, stagger about in a panic. / Everyone calls me "a useless nobody." / They do not praise me / And I give them no grief— / Such is the person / I strive to be.