

Putting Out the Fire With Human Revolution

The following article by SGI Deputy President Einosuke Akiya appears in the February 1997 *Daibyakurenge*, the Soka Gakkai study journal.

The “Simile and Parable” (3rd) chapter of the Lotus Sutra says, “There is no safety in the threefold world; / it is like a burning house...” (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 69).

This is from the parable of the three carts and the burning house. The allegory goes as follows: One day, a fire breaks out in a large mansion, engulfing it in flames. But the children inside are so absorbed in play that they fail to notice the fire. Their father calls for them to evacuate, but the children ignore his pleas, making no attempt to leave.

So the father comes up with a plan: He tells the children that outside by the front gate are numerous rare toys that they have longed to play with. Upon hearing this, the children all rush to get out of the building. The father presents each with a gift of supreme value.

According to the sutra, the burning house represents this world, which is engulfed in the flames of greed, ignorance and other earthly desires. That the children are oblivious to the approaching danger exemplifies the state of world affairs today — especially, it seems to me, in Japan.

Although there is widespread concern about Japan’s future, the country’s leaders and politicians stand by idly without any fundamental plans for warding off disaster. Their irresponsibility is appalling.

And such global problems as regional conflicts, the plight of refugees, widespread poverty and the degradation of the environment apparently fall outside their sphere of concern. They are just like the children who play in the midst of the flames.

This spiritual decline, I believe, reflects the lack of a sound philosophy. Young people ought to lead the way in breaking through the present apathy and stagnation — but we find that youth today are fettered by a sense of powerlessness. In fact, in all sectors of society, the power to actively grapple with reality is in short supply.

Many people, the strength to reflect on their inner lives having waned and lacking any spiritual compass, are pulled this way and that through life. In Japan, this lack of spiritual mettle seems even more severe at present than it was during the material and spiritual upheaval of the early postwar years.

The path of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism is the exact opposite of — and the antidote for — such a powerless and resigned way of life. True faith means making continuous efforts to revolutionize one’s life, to construct a solid identity breaking through the shell of the lesser self, to tap one’s inherent wisdom and compassion; in other words, the path of human revolution.

Human revolution, as the successive Soka Gakkai presidents have taught us, both constructs a resolute, unshakable self and provides spiritual nourishment to society.

No matter how comfortable our circumstances may be, as long as we are controlled by our environment we cannot become truly happy. Only by standing up, by waging a spiritual struggle, can we transform our destiny and humanity’s destiny.

When SGI President Ikeda was a young man, his mentor, Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, said to him: “You have to accomplish a great revolution. It is not a revolution by force of arms or power but a human revolution, in which everyone wins and there are no victims.”

The great human revolution of a single person positively changes the society, the

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country, the entire world. President Ikeda, through his 50 years of practice, has provided us with a model of tremendous human revolution.

Aurelio Peccei (1809–84), the first president and co-founder of the Club of Rome, endorsed the concept of human revolution. “Thanks to this human revolution,” he remarked, “the end of our century and of the present millennium can become the door to one of the best periods in human history” (*Before It Is Too Late*, p. 122).

As is evident from President Ikeda’s dialogues with Dr. Peccei and other leading intellectuals, many conscientious people agree that the philosophy of human revolution — the principle of people unleashing the full potential of their lives and taking control of their destinies — holds the key to solving the problems facing humankind.

Indeed, praise for our movement is heard worldwide. There are high expectations that, as countless people carry out their human revolution, the 21st century will indeed become a century of hope for humankind.

While proudly sharing Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism with friends around the world and in our communities, let’s advance with dauntless composure toward the great victory of kosen-rufu, setting our sights on the distant future.

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