

SIGN POSTS: One Basic Fault
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Rather than offering up ten thousand prayers for remedy, it would be better simply to outlaw this one evil doctrine that is the source of all the trouble! (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 20)

Recently SGI President Ikeda presented this passage from the “Rissho Ankoku Ron” to youth division members of the United States and Japan. In a message to the 4th U.S.–Japan Youth Peace General Meeting on Aug. 17, he explained that only when we fight “this one evil” can we become lion kings.

Everyone wants to be a lion king, but just what is this one evil we have to fight? The first thing that comes to mind is the enemies of the SGI, who are trying to halt the kosen-rufu movement. That’s correct, but at the same time President Ikeda said several months ago that this one evil is in our lives; it’s the one thing in us that always holds us back. “Each of us has ‘one fundamental evil’ — one basic fault — that stands in the way of our personal growth,” he said.

I’ve been thinking, then, how important it is to be sure what your basic fault is. Until you know what it is, you can’t overcome it. A story from National Public Radio comes to mind: They once interviewed an elderly podiatrist from Miami who believed that shoes cause cancer. But, of course, even if this podiatrist convinced us all that shoes were evil, and we all threw our shoes out, it wouldn’t stop cancer. I guess we all sometimes feel as confused about the root cause of our problems as this podiatrist was about the cause of cancer.

So how do we find what our one basic fault is? That’s what Buddhist practice is for. Once we find that fault, we’ll breakthrough whatever’s holding us back. “If we can overcome our fundamental fault,” President Ikeda stated, “everything will open up dramatically.” I’ve realized that an important part of becoming a lion king is knowing my fundamental fault and overcoming it.

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