

## LESSONS FROM 'THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION' 'TRIUMPH'

The following is excerpted from *The New Human Revolution*, volume 4, pp. 112–16. Shin'ichi Yamamoto discusses the spirit of making financial contributions within the Soka Gakkai organization. He clarifies that the offerings made are for the purpose of carrying out Nichiren Daishonin's will to propagate the Mystic Law and are equivalent to making offerings to the original Buddha. There is no greater fortune, or benefit as SGI members, than to have the opportunity to do so.

Shin'ichi opened the Goshō. He wanted to thoroughly study again the true meaning of Buddhist offerings in light of the Daishonin's teachings. He first read "The Gift of Rice," a letter Nichiren Daishonin had written in response to an offering of rice and other items sent to him at Mount Minobu.

Praising the person's sincerity, the Daishonin says, "Even common mortals can attain Buddhahood if they cherish one thing: earnest faith" (MW-1, 268). He thus indicates that earnest faith, a sincere seeking spirit toward Buddhism, is the key to attaining Buddhahood.

In "The Gift of Rice," Nichiren Daishonin praises the sincerity of someone who offered him food, which is needed to sustain life. He writes that the benefit of this offering is comparable to benefit received by such saints and sages of the past as Sessen Doji, Bodhisattva Yakuo or Prince Shotoku, who offered their lives for Buddhism.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto then opened to another page in the Goshō — this time to "The Wealthy Man Sudatta" (MW-5, 307), a letter sent to Nanjo Tokimitsu on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month of the lunar calendar in the year 1280 (Dec. 27).

At the time, Tokimitsu was in dire financial straits. Because he supported the Daishonin's followers during the Atsuhara Persecution, the authorities forced him to pay heavy taxes and supply workers for unpaid labor to the government. Though he could no longer maintain a horse for himself and lacked adequate food and clothing for his wife and children, he offered the Daishonin one *kan* of coins out of his sincere concern for the Daishonin's well-being in the winter cold of Mount Minobu. This was the letter the Daishonin had written in response.

Looking at the many letters addressed to Tokimitsu, we find that his offerings to the Daishonin normally consisted of food and other provisions. That on this occasion Tokimitsu had instead sent money suggests that he no longer had anything in the way of practical items to offer the Daishonin. It may well be that the string of coins he sent was money he had set aside for an emergency.

The Daishonin expressed his deep respect and praised Tokimitsu's sincerity. Although Tokimitsu was almost destitute, his spirit was lofty and heroic. Offerings must always derive from a sincere spirit of faith.

In a letter addressed to Lord Matsuno (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1380), Nichiren Daishonin describes how a child named Tokusho Doji was reborn as King Ashoka and eventually attained Buddhahood because he offered a mudpie to Shakyamuni. For little Tokusho Doji, the mudpie had been the greatest offering

he could make. Despite its humble nature, he had presented it to the Buddha with the utmost reverence. This was the cause that led to his being reborn as a great monarch in a future lifetime.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto next turned to the Goshō "The Bodies and Minds of Ordinary Beings." He stopped at a passage near the end of the letter. He read it over and over, sensing its profound meaning:

Though one may perform meritorious deeds, if they are directed toward that which is not true, then they may bring great evil but they will never result in good. On the other hand, though one may be ignorant in mind and his offerings meager, if he presents them to a person who upholds the truth, his merit will be great. How much more so in the case of persons who in all sincerity make offerings to the True Law! (MW-6 , 281 )

In short, the Daishonin's statement in "The Bodies and Minds of Ordinary Beings" indicates that offerings can bring about either good or evil, depending on to whom or for what cause they are made.

In light of this Goshō passage, Shin'ichi thought about the offerings made within the Soka Gakkai. The offerings and financial contributions the organization solicited were exclusively to accomplish the Daishonin's mandate to widely propagate the Mystic Law. Offerings made toward this end were equivalent to offerings made to the original Buddha. There was, then, no greater offering, no greater good. Certainly, nothing could bring greater benefit. This thought filled Shin'ichi with a sense of immeasurable good fortune and joy at having had the chance to make such offerings as a Soka Gakkai member.

The Daishonin concludes this writing by praising the spirit of this follower who had sent offerings to him at Mount Minobu: "Surely you are sowing good seeds in a field of fortune. My tears flow when I think of it" (MW-6, 282).

Dedicating oneself to kosen-rufu means "sowing good seeds in a field of fortune" — Shin'ichi had been strongly convinced of this since his youth. He recalled his days of earnestly striving to protect and support Josei Toda, who took leadership to widely propagate the Daishonin's teachings. Back then, Toda's business was experiencing severe difficulties, and for a long time payment of Shin'ichi's salary was in arrears.

Shin'ichi realized that to support this great lion of a man, who had arisen alone to spread the Law, was the way to protect the Soka Gakkai and to accomplish the goal of kosen-rufu.

He drastically cut his living expenses and made it his creed to use even a little of the money remaining from his pay to support Gakkai activities, to contribute to spreading the Daishonin's Buddhism. To do so was his joy and secret pride. Because of this, he even spent an entire winter without an overcoat. Whenever he received some of his back salary, he would use a sizable portion of it to support Toda's activities to promote kosen-rufu. Shin'ichi was absolutely convinced that the benefit and good fortune he had acquired as a result had enabled him to overcome his illness and today take on the Gakkai's leadership with confidence and composure.

He had not acted to support his mentor or the organization at someone else's behest. He had done so spontaneously, with a spirit of cheerfulness. It was an expression of his sincere faith, a reflection of his profound resolve to dedicate his life to spreading the Daishonin's Buddhism throughout the world.

Title: Lessons From The New Human Revolution  
Subject: World Tribune 02/19/99 n.3230 p.10 WT990219p10  
Author: Daisaku Ikeda  
Keywords: Contribution Daisaku Encouragement Guidance Human Ikeda Lessons Revolution Tribune  
Triumph World