

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MAY 1 SPEECH — PART 3 THE ARROGANCE OF ANGER

In the conclusion of this speech, SGI President Ikeda talks about the world of Anger, and how it can hinder our progress. 'The prime characteristics of people in the life-state of Anger,' he explains, 'are jealousy toward those who are superior to them in some way and a desire to win against others....'

I want to talk about the life-state of Anger that impedes the progress of kosen-rufu. In terms of the Ten Worlds, the world of Anger is fourth from the bottom. Together with the worlds of Hell, Hunger and Animality, it is one of the four evil paths.

The prime characteristics of people in the life-state of Anger are jealousy toward those who are superior to them in some way and a desire to win against others, which is accompanied by a contempt for people and the wish to hold them down.

In his *Great Concentration and Insight*, the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai of China describes the lowly nature of Anger: "Since the mind of a person who is in the world of Anger desires in every moment to be superior to everyone else and cannot bear to be inferior to anyone else, he belittles and despises others and exalts himself just as a kite flies high and looks down. Moreover, he outwardly displays benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and good faith, and develops minor goodness of the mind, yet puts into practice the way of *asura*" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 430).

People in the world of Anger arrogantly think themselves superior, though outwardly they pretend to be people of character and virtue. They are skilled in the art of disguise.

At the heart of Anger lies vanity — the desire to look good in the eyes of others — and arrogance — the tendency to scorn and denigrate people. Individuals dominated by this life-state find it impossible to believe in the Lotus Sutra, a teaching that expounds how all people can attain enlightenment.

Those in the world of Anger are not content unless they are above everyone. They even like to delude themselves that they are above the Mystic Law — that is how arrogant they are.

This is the essence of those self-serving individuals who hinder the advance of kosen-rufu. How could such people possibly understand the hearts of the votaries of the Lotus Sutra, who are earnestly striving for the happiness of themselves and others?

In "The True Object of Worship," the Daishonin writes, "Perversity is the world of Anger" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 52). "Perversity" here specifically refers to a perverse, fawning heart. Those who fawn on others are always comparing themselves to others and adjusting themselves based on how others measure up in their estimation.

They put on a pretense of obedience or goodwill, covering up what they really feel. Because the hearts of those in the world of Anger are twisted and perverse, they cannot see others correctly and fall into the deluded thinking that they are better than everyone else.

Only the power of Buddhas can win against corrupt clergy and political leaders.

The Daishonin writes: “There is a mighty Asura King, who can battle with Bonten, Taishaku and the Four Heavenly Kings. He has entered the minds of the leaders of the Zen, Nembutsu and Ritsu schools of Buddhism and from there entered the minds of the nation’s leaders and its people, driving all sages to extinction. It is extremely difficult even for Bonten and Taishaku to prevent such great evil from occurring. How much more ineffective against such evil, then, will be the tutelary gods of Japan with their puny power. Such great evil can only be prevented with the protection of the great Bodhisattvas of the Earth, who appeared in numbers as innumerable as the dust particles of a thousand worlds, Shakyamuni Thus Come One, Many Treasures (Taho) Thus Come One and all Buddhas throughout the universe” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 141).

Only the power of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth and Buddhas can win against the collusion and schemes of corrupt clergy and political leaders, who are ruled by the life-state of Anger, who manifest the behavior of *asuras*, the contentious demons of Indian mythology. In exact accord with this Gosho passage, the SGI, which is a gathering of Bodhisattvas of the Earth, has written a magnificent history of victory. This is an incredible achievement.

In his treatise “The Threefold Secret Teaching,” the 26th high priest, Nichikan, describes *asuras* as being so gargantuan that, when standing in the ocean, the water comes up only to their knees. This is also how they are portrayed in various Buddhist sutras.

That’s how puffed up with their own self-importance they are. They can’t see themselves for what they really are.

But when such arrogant individuals are reproached by someone stronger than themselves, they shrink to their true tiny size and flee. This nature of *asuras* is clearly elucidated by the Daishonin in “Letter from Sado.” When *asuras* are confronted with superior strength, they quickly reveal their base natures.

In “Letter from Sado,” the Daishonin writes, “An arrogant man will be overcome with fear when he meets a strong enemy, just like the haughty asura who shrank and hid himself in a lotus flower blossoming in Munetchi Lake when reproached by Taishaku” (MW-1, 35).

In closing, I want to introduce some great words of wisdom of humankind. Mahatma Gandhi said: “It is to be observed that all civilizations have been on their trial. That civilization which is permanent outlives it.” We of the SGI, too, have weathered constant trials.

Next, let me share a number of Philippine proverbs:

“Strength and bravery make life progress.”

“Strength lies in unity.”

“The greater the sufferings, the more brilliant the victory.”

“You will never know what success is, unless you have experienced a lot of sacrifices or sufferings.”

“The tongue is the most powerful weapon.”

“Nothing is mightier than the truthful tongue.”

“He is twice a victor who knows how to be humble in a moment of victory.”

“Wealth can be lost, but wisdom never disappears.”

“If you want to change the world, start by changing yourself.”

I am earnestly praying for your health, longevity and boundless good fortune in life and

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will continue to do so for as long as I live.

Thank you for your long attention today.

Part 3 of President Ikeda's speech at the 33rd Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, May 1. Part 1 appeared in the May 21 World Tribune, and part 2 appeared in last week's issue.

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