

WHERE BUDDHIST STUDY COMES INTO PLAY

The following is an excerpt from the "Thoughts on The New Human Revolution" essay series by SGI President Daisaku Ikeda.

First, Buddhist study deepens faith. I will never forget Mr. Toda once saying, with deep regret, that the reason the majority of his fellow members abandoned their faith when pressured by the military authorities during World War II was that they hadn't gained a solid grounding in the Daishonin's teachings.

"Without study," he declared, "the members didn't really understand faith. They became frightened and were defeated by persecution. It was very unfortunate. I'm determined that mistake will not be repeated."

Study is a torch that illuminates the path of faith. Even the most subtle, complex onslaughts of negative forces become clear when illuminated in the bright light of Buddhism. Study builds a solid framework for our faith and spurs our human revolution.

Second, study gives impetus to the advance of kosen-rufu. The Daishonin's writings set forth the validity of the Daishonin's Buddhism and the method of refuting the erroneous and revealing the true in propagation. They teach us in comprehensive detail the commitment required by those who seek to widely spread the Mystic Law, the qualities necessary of Buddhist leaders and the key to fostering capable successors. To study the Daishonin's writings is to come into contact with his spirit. It is to receive supreme encouragement and guidance directly from the original Buddha on faith and the propagation of Buddhism. Only when we take action in accord with the Daishonin's writings can we say that we have grasped the teachings of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

Study without practice is meaningless. A thorough knowledge of Buddhist principles provides us with a source of infinite courage and aids us in realizing our highest human potential.

Third, study is the key to establishing a new humanistic philosophy. Today, we face many extremely serious problems: the threat of nuclear war, ethnic conflict, environmental problems and the collapse of educational systems. People are searching for peace and happiness, but the situation grows ever darker and more confused with each passing day. This is coming from the lack of a philosophy that expounds the true nature of life and its functions.

And this is where Buddhism comes in. Only by returning to such principles as the ultimate dignity of life, compassion, the oneness of body and mind, and the indivisibility of life and its environment can we begin to open the way toward a new humanism.

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Author: Daisaku Ikeda

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