

## Human Security is an Internal Issue

LAST month in our discussion about diversity, I inquired into the source of the analogy used by Nichiren Daishonin—cherry, plum, peach and apricot (Jp. *o, bai, to, ri*)—referred to in the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings.” I am happy to inform you that we have learned from a Buddhist scholar that the phrase was indeed formulated by Nichiren Daishonin; but that the Daishonin himself might well have come across it in the “Records of a Historian,” or “Record of Ritual,” both ancient Chinese texts mentioned in a number of his writings.

I thought we might continue our discussion by examining the issue of security in our diverse society. In the sixteenth installment of his series “Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra,” SGI President Ikeda says: “In an age that has lost sight of humanity, it is no easy undertaking to campaign for a restoration of humanity” (February 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 32). Central to a restoration of humanity is a society in which people can feel secure. But first, I think we must expand our notion of security.

Traditionally, security has been confined to such concerns as security from external aggression, or protection of national interest, or from the threat of destruction by weapons of mass destruction. And as important as those concerns were and still are, what seems to have been forgotten are the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who seek security in their daily lives. In other words, “human security.”

When the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) reported on the issue of human security in 1994, they said that for ordinary people, feelings of insecurity come from worries about daily life rather than “the dread of a cataclysmic world event.” People want to know if they’ll have enough to eat; if their jobs will be secure; and will their streets and neighborhoods be safe from crime. They want to know if they’ll become a victim of violence. They ask if their ethnic origin will target them for persecution. Human security is a universal, people-centered concern.

IN looking at the issue of security, we have to examine the life-condition of the people because the issue of security is not only an external issue, but an internal one as well. It has to do with strengthening our inner resources and processes so that we replace fear and uncertainty with confidence and wisdom. With numerous secular laws, members of our society still prey upon one another. No amount of external law will reform the human heart.

Shijo Kingo, a samurai disciple of Nichiren Daishonin in the thirteenth century, became the object of bitter jealousy among his fellow samurai when he was in his late 50s. At one point he was ambushed.

In a letter to Kingo titled “The Strategy of the Lotus Sutra” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pp. 245–46), Nichiren Daishonin attributed Kingo’s survival to three points: prudence, courage and faith—all internal processes that we each have at our disposal.

TO take precautions, to be prudent is common sense. It is a mistake to think that because of our faith we can be reckless in our behavior and we will be protected. Exercising precaution is itself a function of the Buddhist gods.

His second point to Kingo is courage, which will enable us to tap our reservoir of inner strength. If we succumb to fear, we cannot expect to call upon the force of the Mystic Law to protect us.

And thirdly, most important is "firm faith in the Lotus Sutra." The Daishonin explains that "when one comes to the end of his good fortune, no strategy whatsoever will avail." Good fortune springs from our devoted faith.

The guardian deities in Buddhism represent positive influences in the environment that protect and nurture life. When we are in tune with the cosmic rhythm of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, these forces will surround us. They respond to our faith in the Law.

A commentary on "The Strategy of the Lotus Sutra" states:

The Daishonin then encourages Kingo to develop self-reliant faith ... no one else can tap our innate Buddha nature but us. Enlightenment or happiness is not given to us by someone else. Relying on others for our happiness will lead not only to our disappointment but also the loss of our freedom to whomever we depend on for our happiness. Relying on someone else to pray for our happiness is like asking others to eat for us to quell our hunger. Only through our earnest faith and practice can we enjoy true happiness...." (March 1995 *Seikyo Times*, p. 9)

But we must also help one another find confidence. If we think that "Everything is okay because I'm safe," we're being egotistic. The imperative of the Bodhisattva, on the other hand, is to "break the shell of the lesser self" and begin to replace the thought "How can I be protected" with "How can I protect others? How can I make society safer?" When we establish the life-condition of Buddhahood within us, it will naturally be reflected in our environment.

Using the "strategy of the Lotus Sutra," we can look forward to a bright future of good health, happiness, prosperity and security. This is what the Daishonin promises.

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