

THE STORY OF THE LITTLE PARROT

The following story was related by Laura Huxley in an interview with the Soka Gakkai newspaper, Seikyo Shimbun. Mrs. Huxley is an American social activist and the widow of renowned British author Aldous Huxley.

IN a former incarnation, the Buddha was a parrot, a very happy parrot. And she was living in a forest and loving all the animals in the forest very deeply. She was a very generous and kind parrot.

One sad day, lightning struck a dead tree and caused a fire. Soon the fire became immense and many animals were trapped, crying in terror and pain. The little parrot didn't know what to do, so she flew to a nearby river, plunged in getting all wet, flew back to the fire and sprinkled a few tiny drops of water, like jewels, over the flames. Of course this did not achieve anything because the fire was raging out of control.

Desperately, with all her might, she continued to fly back and forth between the river and the fire. Her hope was that she could save even one of her friends. Her eyes were red, her lungs full of smoke and she was tired. But still she flew.

Meanwhile, from high above, the gods were watching all this bemused. "What a silly little bird," they thought. But one of the gods became puzzled by this and decided to take the form of an eagle and fly down to investigate. He looked at the parrot and said, "Why don't you give up and fly where there is no fire and forget these animals crying in pain and anguish?" The parrot thought, "Just what I need, advice!" She continued her desperate flight, sprinkling little drops of water, again with no result.

Then, this god, in the shape of an eagle, became extraordinarily moved by this little bird and her good will. He became so moved that tears fell from his eyes and became a golden torrent of rain that put out the fire and fertilized the earth. New sprouts and new grass blossomed again. All the animals were astonished. And as they looked around, they saw the little parrot flying happily and freely in the sky. □

Points for Discussion

THE strong determination of the parrot was such that it moved the heavens and saved the animals in the forest. Even though the task seemed impossible, the parrot exerted all its might for the sake of the forest creatures. It was not discouraged by the impossible task nor by the gods.

In society, at work or in our homes, we are sometimes faced with unpleasant situations where we might feel discouraged—a situation that may seem impossible to change. This is the crucial moment when our own behavior can be a turning point. To do nothing is to condone the unpleasantness around us. Nichiren Daishonin writes that when a crisis appears, "the wise will rejoice and the foolish will retreat (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2, p. 288). This is because when we put forth our best effort based on the Mystic Law, we can accomplish the impossible.

When we encounter a difficult problem for which there seems no solution, we must first pray to the Gohonzon with the determination "I will overcome this problem" or "I will resolve this situation" before focusing on specific methods or tactics. This is "the strategy of the Lotus Sutra." This is faith.

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From the wisdom and courage we derive from our prayer, we will devise the best plan for victory and unleash the life force to put it into action. Another result of our prayers is that people and things in our environment will come to our aid; this is the meaning of what Buddhism calls the “protection of the Buddhist gods.” As a result, we can make the impossible come to pass.

Sometimes we may feel that our efforts for kosen-rufu are meaningless or ineffective in the world at large. Nevertheless, Buddhism teaches that nothing in the world of faith is without consequence. No action is wasted. We must continue with the confidence that “I will make a difference.” Those who develop themselves by working hard even though no one notices will triumph in the end. □