

EDITORIAL: Everywhere Be Bold

Buddhism seeks to develop people who are independent and self-reliant. Only self-sufficient practitioners can become happy and can convincingly share our philosophy with others.

One of Shakyamuni's greatest concerns was that his disciples stand on their own. In a oft-quoted episode, Shakyamuni, nearing the end of his life and fearing that his disciples had become too dependent on him, urges them to be self-reliant. "You must be a refuge unto yourself; depend on yourself," he tells them. "Do not depend on anyone else. Take the Law as your island; depend on the Law. You must not depend on anything else" (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 3, p. 201).

To constantly seek instructions from others is to abdicate responsibility for ourselves and for our mission to spread our Buddhist philosophy. Rather, based on a firm sense of purpose, we need to rack our brains to come up with fresh ideas that will spur on our movement.

As SGI President Ikeda has written: "In Buddhism, dependence on others is not sought, and help from others is not awaited. The individual must establish within himself a sound understanding, bright and clear as a mirror, and march forward with that understanding as his sole companion. The Law is the foundation upon which to build such a self" (*The Living Buddha*, p. 134).

Two episodes illustrate this point well. The first, from *The Human Revolution*, is when Shin'ichi Yamamoto and other youth division members are appointed by Josei Toda to become the first so-called General Staff, a committee charged with propelling the organization forward. Toda hopes they will devise new plans and carry them out on their own initiative. But their new role isn't completely clear, so someone in the group suggests they seek guidance from him.

Shin'ichi objects strongly. "How can we go and ask the president what to do?" he asks. "He would only become disgusted and disappointed, and he probably would scold us, saying something like, 'I didn't intend the General Staff to be manned by a bunch of cowards.' So we can't do such a foolish thing. If and when it is really necessary to seek his guidance, we must first decide on a definite course and prepare a detailed plan of our own" (*The Human Revolution*, vol. 8, pp. 96-97).

In *The New Human Revolution*, Shin'ichi, now president himself, doesn't have the luxury of asking his mentor. When the Grand Reception Hall is to be built, Shin'ichi ponders whether to allow members to contribute financially. With no one to ask what to do, Shin'ichi has to rely on himself. "After long consideration, and taking into account the Daishonin's admonitions along with his own experiences, Shin'ichi decided to make it possible for all members to participate..." Mr. Ikeda writes (vol. 4, p. 116).

This reliance on ourselves, of course, does not preclude having the seeking mind to receive correct guidance in faith. Seeking the most fulfilling way of life is what Buddhism is all about. This is how we develop the "sound understanding" President Ikeda talks about. Once we have this understanding, though, progress demands we take bold initiatives, not waiting to be told what to do.

Kosen-rufu cannot progress unless we all take the initiative based on a solid sense of self rooted in the desire to help all humankind. When we've grasped the Daishonin's spirit as our own, then it is up to us. As the poet Spenser says, "Be bold, be bold and everywhere be bold."

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