

Happiness Comes From Working for Others

SGI Deputy President Einosuke Akiya wrote the following for the August 1997 Daibyakurenge, the Soka Gakkai study journal.

How can people become truly happy? Neither material assets nor circumstances guarantee happiness. When there are problems in the home, for instance, even the wealthiest person can feel miserable. When two people face the same deadlock, one may resent the situation and become despondent while the other uses what may appear to be a setback as a springboard to advance. In fact, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, the first and second Soka Gakkai presidents, attained Buddhahood — the supreme state of happiness — while living under the harshest circumstances in prison.

Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism teaches that by embracing Nam-myoho-renge-kyo of the Three Great Secret Laws and carrying out the practice for oneself and others, one can attain a state of absolute happiness. No matter how bothersome our environment may be, we can change it into a land of pure joy. This is what it means to practice the Buddhism of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms. Through unrelenting determination we can completely transform our surroundings.

In a letter to his follower Shijo Kingo, the Daishonin says: "If you should fall into hell for some grave offense, no matter how Shakyamuni might urge me to become a Buddha, I would refuse; I would rather go to hell with you. For if you and I should fall into hell together, we would find Shakyamuni Buddha and the Lotus Sutra there" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd. ed.], pp. 237–38). This passage emphasizes that wherever Nichiren Daishonin and all the Buddhas and Buddhist deities gather, even if it is the realm of Hell, that place will immediately turn into a land of tranquil light and pure joy.

Buddhism's purpose lies in enabling us to develop the powerful spirit to challenge and overcome even the most adverse situation and to establish an unshakable state of life characterized by the Buddha's four enlightened virtues — eternity, happiness, true self and purity. This is called revolutionizing one's state of life.

By participating in SGI activities, we can make a profound and lasting impact on our state of life. By becoming involved in such activities and sparing no effort for the happiness of others, we can thoroughly polish our lives. Those members who choose not to engage in SGI activities are missing out on a golden opportunity to fundamentally change their lives.

Human revolution is accomplished by advancing and practicing with fellow members and exerting ourselves wholeheartedly for the Law and our communities. This is the great path of revolutionizing one's state of life.

Who has true faith? Those who wholeheartedly carry out activities within the organization are the most respectable; it is certainly not a matter of position or titles. In fact, the extent to which people can develop their lives and cultivate their humanity depends directly upon how joyfully they exert themselves for kosen-rufu.

What do we need to do to attain an indomitable state of life? Fight against evil. By defeating great evil, we establish within ourselves an indestructible state of life of great good. "The *ku* of *kudoku* [benefit] means to extinguish evil, and *doku* means to bring forth good" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 762). Only by actively opposing evil can we defeat the inclination to remain passive observers, the negative tendency to tolerate or even accommodate evil. Through unflinching efforts to eradicate evil, we without fail positively transform our lives

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and experience a true revolution.

“If you light a lantern for another, it will also brighten your own way” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1598). If we are to revolutionize our state of life, it is indispensable that our Buddhist practice includes working for the well-being of others. This most obviously entails spending time with friends and meeting new people. Only if we open up and engage in dialogue with individuals whose lifestyles, social status or even ways of thinking may differ from our own can we begin to forge a genuine understanding of others. This is also how we can develop bonds of mutual understanding. By conversing and empathizing with others, we can expand and revolutionize our state of life. Therefore, SGI activities are the ultimate venue for human revolution.

The Human Revolution states, “A great human revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a nation, and further, will enable a change in the destiny of all humankind.” The life of SGI President Ikeda, whose spirit is epitomized in this novel, can be regarded as an ideal model of a revolution in state of life. He has over the past 50 years been ceaselessly working to enable people to overcome their suffering, ultimately to establish world peace. While proudly advancing with President Ikeda, let us strive to dramatically revolutionize our lives while working for the happiness of others.

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