

# DON'T SLEEP THROUGH YOUR HUMAN REVOLUTION

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Has this ever happened to you: You're at a planning meeting and the leader asks, "Who would like to take charge of this activity?" You remain silent, avoid eye contact, perhaps taking a moment to study your socks. Maybe you hide behind the person in front of you, awaiting for someone else to speak up and volunteer.

This is my ongoing personal struggle, to accept responsibility. I'd much rather fight behind the scenes for the success of an activity than take responsibility for it. Ultimately, I resist taking responsibility out of fear I will fail. But when I let fear guide my decisions, I always doubt my capability. Not only that, I end up feeling miserable. As a result, my practice, and my daily life, stagnates.

As Ted Morino notes, "Self-doubt is the worst kind of doubt...self-doubt can prevent us from obtaining benefit and can even lead to us giving up our Buddhist practice" (June 25 *World Tribune*, p. 6).

The three presidents of the Soka Gakkai all struggled while taking responsibility for the organization. One could even say, struggle was the training ground for their leadership. Today SGI President Ikeda still experiences tremendous persecution because he accepts the responsibility of being president of the SGI. Imagine if, as a young man, he remained silent during planning meetings, if he gave into the fear of his own limitations, where would the Soka Gakkai be today?

To doubt myself is no benefit to anyone. Avoiding responsibility is a short-term solution that only diminishes happiness and benefit. By remaining silent, I was choosing to sleep through my human revolution.

To overcome this tendency, I set out to study the basics of our practice. I longed to recapture the wonder of my first years of chanting. Starting with gongyo, I struggled to understand the significance of the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" chapters of the Lotus Sutra. Amazingly, whenever I felt lost or confused, President Ikeda's guidance was there to gently lead the way.

During gongyo, every morning and evening, I chant *ji ga toku burrai*. This translates as "since I attained Buddhahood." President Toda noted, "From the standpoint of the Daishonin's Buddhism, *ji ga toku burrai*, means to attain, on one's own, the three enlightened properties [of the Buddha]" (*Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters of Lotus Sutra*, vol. 3, p. 98). President Ikeda continues, "Ultimately, Buddhahood is attained on one's own, not through someone else's efforts. It is something we achieve through our own efforts" (Ibid., p. 102). I now realize taking the responsibility for activities is the training I need for taking responsibility for my life, my happiness and the happiness of others.

Whether or not I manifest Buddhahood is up to me. *Ji ga toku burrai*, since I attained Buddhahood, implicitly means *me* — not someone else. Taking responsibility for the SGI, an organization dedicated to realizing kosen-rufu, is the most expedient means for raising my life-condition and accumulating benefit. Every opportunity to take responsibility for a district meeting or an activity is an opportunity to do human revolution. What's more, when I base my decisions on faith, not fear, my capacity expands to meet the new challenges. Fear melts away and wisdom emerges. Then the process of human revolution becomes a thrilling ride.

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So for those of you who sit silently at planning meetings, letting fear be your guiding force, (and you know who you are), I leave you with the words of Martin Luther King from a sermon titled, "Antidotes for Fear": "Fear knocked on the door. / Faith answered. / There was no one there" (*A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King*, p. 517).

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