

## **A Religion of Human Revolution—Part 1**

### **“The Heart of a Lion King”—Creating a Current of Victory for All People**

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Hi there. Thanks for joining us today. This month we’re studying President Ikeda’s article “The Heart of a Lion King”, which is the first installment of a series entitled “A Religion of Human Revolution”.

This month’s study is simple but very inspiring. It goes right to the core of Buddhism, clearly explaining why we practice. You’ll be able to use quotes from this article when you’re talking to friends or making presentations at meetings.

In this podcast, we’ll be looking at just a few of the main points in the study. You can find the entire article in the July 2018 edition of *New Century*. Although there’s no official district study meeting in August, we hope that you’ll have time to read the whole article this month.

President Ikeda begins by pointing to all the problems in the world today and concluding that any possible solution has to take people’s happiness into consideration. This should be the “fundamental goal” of everything. And religion in particular should have as its central guiding principles “humanism” and “human revolution”.

President Makiguchi understood that, in order to make significant change in the world, people need to fundamentally change their lives, and that religion has a key role to play in this.

President Toda built on this insight. His wish was to end people’s suffering by helping them to transform their lives and become happy. He called this transformation “human revolution”, a term borrowed from a Japanese scholar.

In his novel *The New Human Revolution*, President Ikeda summarizes the importance of this concept in one famous quote:

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.

This has always been the guiding principle of the Soka Gakkai and SGI.

President Ikeda next refers to a passage from the gosho “Letter to Niike”:

**As the [Lotus Sutra] says, “hoping to make all persons equal to me, without any distinction between us”, you can readily become as noble a Buddha as Shakyamuni. (WND-1, 1030)**

Mr. Toda explained that doing our human revolution is the same as attaining Buddhahood. And, as Nichiren Daishonin states in the gosho passage, everyone can do it -- everyone can attain Buddhahood. In fact, earlier in the same gosho, he says it’s no big deal: “Becoming a Buddha is nothing extraordinary. If you chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with your whole heart, you will naturally become [a Buddha]”.

The Lotus Sutra recounts a conversation between Shakyamuni and Shariputra, one of his disciples, in which Shakyamuni says that he has vowed to make all persons equal to him, without any distinction between them. This was particularly encouraging to his disciples, who were trying to understand and realize his vision.

President Ikeda says that we should see these words in the same light:

We take our mentor’s great vow as our own and, while courageously breaking out of our small, confined state of life, also encourage others as we advance together on the path to attaining Buddhahood. This is the way of human revolution as practiced by disciples united with their mentor. Striving to carry on the mentor’s spirit, cherishing the same vow, is the Buddhist path of mentor and disciple.

The next gosho passage is from “Letter to Horen”:

**The Lotus Sutra offers a secret means for leading all living beings to Buddhahood. It leads one person in the realm of hell, one person in the realm of hungry spirits, and thus one person in each of the nine realms of existence to Buddhahood, and thereby the way is opened for all living beings to attain**

**Buddhahood. The situation is like the joints in a piece of bamboo: if one joint is ruptured, then all the joints will split. (WND-1, 512)**

Buddhism insists upon the importance of each individual and the present moment. There is nothing more important than helping the person we are with to become happy; and if we are able to do this, it's proof that everyone can do it.

Likewise, when we see someone struggling with obstacles and still achieving victory, it encourages us to think that we can do it too. President Ikeda says that:

the drama of a single individual changing their karma or destiny demonstrates the truth of Buddhism. It opens the way to victory in life for all others burdened with the same suffering.

We can probably all think of hearing experiences that encouraged us. Perhaps at the meeting you could share your memory of an experience that particularly moved you and perhaps even changed your life.

President Ikeda sums up the promise of the Lotus Sutra in very simple terms: "Whatever our circumstances, we can all attain Buddhahood in our present form as ordinary people in the nine worlds."

This focus on the value and the power of each individual is, President Ikeda says, "the essence of a religion of human revolution". He goes on to say that:

A religion that cannot help the individual is empty of true meaning. Being concerned with the well-being of each person is the very purpose and reason for a religion's existence.

President Toda gave his full attention to everyone who came to see him. President Ikeda says that:

Mr. Toda dedicated his life to realizing the great vow for kosen-rufu. What occupied his mind most each day was that every one of his beloved disciples carry out their human revolution and transform their karma.

If we cannot help the person right in front of us achieve their human revolution, we cannot open the way to kosen-rufu, to changing the karma of all humankind.

It's that simple -- kosen-rufu means helping one person at a time to become happy.

In fact, everything begins with a change in one person. As President Ikeda says:

When we change, our environment changes. When the environment changes, the world changes. It is the human revolution of a single individual that is the starting point of this enormous, dynamic transformation.

Boddhisattva Never Disparaging is an example of standing up and taking action oneself as we see in the next gosho passage.

**Boddhisattva Never Disparaging of old said that all people have the Buddha nature and that, if they embrace the Lotus Sutra, they will never fail to attain Buddhahood. He further stated that to slight a person is to slight the Buddha himself. Thus, his practice was to revere all people. He revered even those who did not embrace the Lotus Sutra because they too had the Buddha nature and might someday believe in the sutra. (WND-1, 756; "The Fourteen Slanders")**

Boddhisattva Never Disparaging told everyone he met that he respected them, saying "I have profound reverence for you, I would never dare treat you with disparagement or arrogance."

His respect was so powerful that it influenced even those who hated him. They formed a "reverse relationship" with the Lotus Sutra and were eventually able to attain Buddhahood.

As President Ikeda points out;

Everyone, whatever their philosophy or beliefs, possesses the positive potential for awakening to the truth of the sanctity of life.

President Ikeda suggests some guidelines for a truly humanistic religion and concludes that "religion will fail unless it can help people develop and fundamentally transform themselves".

Our Buddhist practice allows us to use our sufferings and struggles to become great human beings.

Nichiren Daishonin states that “those with the heart of a lion-king are sure to attain Buddhahood”, and President Ikeda ends his lecture by encouraging us all to stand up boldly, with the heart of a lion-king.

As you can see, it’s a great article this month with a simple theme and lots of encouraging quotes. Your guests are going to love it!

You can find the entire article in the July 2018 edition of New Century. If you’re not receiving New Century right now, you can subscribe by talking to your district leaders, or by visiting the publications page on this website.

We hope that you’ll find the study interesting and useful, and we’ll see you next time. Bye for now.