

Creating a Century of Humanism in Which All Can Shine, Part 2 [of 5]

Sharing Nichiren Buddhism—The Compassionate Practice for Realizing Happiness for Ourselves and Others

Lecture presented by Mai Ogushi
SGI Canada Study Department

Hi everyone! My name is Mai. This month, we will continue studying President Ikeda's 5-part study lecture series called "Creating a Century of Humanism in Which All Can Shine". We will study Part 2 titled, "Sharing Nichiren Buddhism—The Compassionate Practice for Realizing Happiness for Ourselves and Others".

This month on the 8th is when President Toda made his historic declaration calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons in 1957 and entrusted the task of realizing his vision to young people.

Ikeda Sensei begins the lecture as follows:

That great leader of propagation [President Toda] called out to his disciples: "My fellow Bodhisattvas of the Earth, let's take on this challenge [of making kosen-rufu a reality]!" Sharing the Mystic Law with others is the proud mission of the Soka Gakkai, the organization carrying out the Buddha's intent, the gathering of Bodhisattvas of the Earth entrusted by Nichiren Daishonin with actualizing kosen-rufu in the Latter Day of the Law. That mission is the essence and lifeblood of Nichiren Buddhism that enables us to realize happiness for ourselves and help others do the same.

Advancing kosen-rufu is the best possible way to repay our debt of gratitude to our mentor. This year also marks the 750th anniversary of Nichiren Daishonin's triumph over the Tatsunokuchi Persecution, his near execution on September 12, 1271.

In this installment, we will examine the mission and conviction of the Soka Gakkai, whose members are joyfully carrying out Buddhist dialogue around the world toward

realizing happiness for all people.

The first passage is from the Lotus Sutra Opening and Closing Sutras, followed by a passage from *The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings*, which explains who the “Thus Come One” is, who the “envoy of the Thus Come One” is, and what is the “Thus Come One’s work”.

If one of these good men or good women in the time after I have passed into extinction is able to secretly expound the Lotus Sutra to one person, even one phrase of it, then you should know that he or she is the envoy of the Thus Come One. He has been dispatched by the Thus Come One and carries out the Thus Come One’s work. [LSOC 10, 200]

The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings says: The practitioner of the Lotus Sutra acts as the “envoy of the Thus Come One.” The “Thus Come One” is Shakyamuni, and “the Thus Come One’s work” is Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. “Thus Come One” also refers to the living beings of the Ten Worlds and three thousand realms. Now Nichiren and his followers, who now chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, are the true envoys. (From *The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings*, pp. 82–83)

It is incredible to think that each of us has been born at this particular time and place as an envoy of the Buddha, and that each of us has such noble mission.

One thing to note here is that the “envoy of the Thus Come One” is not some special being. Sensei explains that, “anyone who has faith in the Gohonzon, chants Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, and encourages others to do the same is carrying out the ‘Thus Come One’s work,’ which makes them a genuine envoy of the Buddha.” And the spirit of the Buddha is the spirit of sharing Buddhism.

The next passage is from the Gosho, “On the Receiving of the Three Great Secret Laws” where Nichiren Daishonin explains the two meanings of the term “daimoku”.

The term “daimoku” has two meanings: one indicates the daimoku of the Former and Middle Days of the Law, and the other indicates that of the Latter Days of the Law. During the Former Day of the Law, [the Indian Buddhist scholars] Bodhisattava Vasubandhu and Bodhisattva Nagarjuna chanted the daimoku, but they did this solely as a practice for themselves and went no further than that. In the Middle Day of the Law [the Chinese Buddhist teachers] Nan-yueh and T’ien-t’ai likewise chanted Nam-myoho-rence-kyo; they did so as a practice for their own benefit, but they did not expound it widely for others. These examples may be called the daimoku of meditative practice. Now, however, we have entered the Latter Day of the Law, and the daimoku that I, Nichiren, chant is different from that of earlier ages. This Nam-myoho-rence-kyo encompasses both practice for oneself and the teaching of others. Its five characters are the five major principles of name, essence, quality, function, and teaching. (WND-2, 986)

Here Nichiren Daishonin teaches that chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo in the Latter Day of the Law means to practice for oneself and others.

Sensei says that, “Nam-myoho-rence-kyo is the crystallization of the wisdom and compassion of the Buddha, who wishes to free all people from suffering, and further that it contains all possible benefit and good fortune.”

Sensei also discusses the importance of praying for the happiness of others, even in the face of difficulties and hardships. By doing so, we can expand our state of life and turn our problems into invaluable treasures. He says:

Our prayers infused with a vow for kosen-rufu are what enable us to break through the shell of our lesser self that is dominated by suffering and lead a life based on our greater self. They are prayers of compassion that let us develop into people who can help others become happy, people who can contribute to world peace. They are prayers of courage that summon forth the heart of the lion king within us. And they are prayers of joy that enables us to forge ahead positively on the path of our human revolution.

Next, Sensei explains the meaning of *shakubuku* and how reaching out to others and helping them become happy enables us to attain Buddhahood. *Shakubuku* refers to propagating Nichiren Buddhism through dialogue based on compassion and concern for others. Sensei says:

Sharing Nichiren Buddhism is a challenge to defeat the ignorance inherent in both our own and others' lives and together elevate our life state to reveal our innate enlightened nature. The term *shakubuku*, often used to refer to propagation in Nichiren Buddhism, originally has the meaning of "strict refutation." In essence, however, it represents the intense spiritual struggle involved in vanquishing fundamental ignorance that is the ultimate source of all misery. *Shakubuku* is another name for dialogue based on compassion and friendship.

Mr. Toda also said: "When we share Nichiren Buddhism with someone [even if they do not take faith], trust remains." Through our patient and tireless efforts to chant and tell others about Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we vanquish fundamental ignorance and attain a state of absolute happiness guided by our enlightened nature. In this way, we can sow the seeds of happiness and hope in the hearts of others.

It's amazing how helping others connect with Nichiren Buddhism enables us to do our own human revolution and it also enables them to do their human revolution. When we teach others about Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we activate their Buddha nature. It's a win-win situation ☺

Sensei concludes his lecture by sharing President Toda's words:

We are carrying out a great revolution. It is not a revolution waged by military force or political power. It is a nonviolent revolution—a human revolution. That is the true revolution.

This year, we kicked off the next 10 years toward 2030, and our goal as SGI Canada is to double our membership to 20,000 by 2030! Let's align our lives with the rhythm of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and demonstrate the greatness of Nichiren Buddhism through our own actual proof as Bodhisattvas of the Earth, so we can encourage those around us and help them forge a connection with Buddhism!!

Thank you and see you next month~