

A Religion of Human Revolution—Part 12

“It Is the Heart That Is Important”—Paving the Way to Human Revolution for All Humanity

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Hi everyone. Welcome to SGI Canada’s monthly study podcast. I’m Sadaji. This month, we’ll be studying the concluding installment of President Ikeda’s lecture subseries “A Religion of Human Revolution” subtitled as “‘It Is the Heart That Is Important’—Paving the Way to Human Revolution for All Humanity.”

In the opening paragraph, President Ikeda says:

Since its founding, the Soka Gakkai has been advancing its movement to overturn the exploitive tendency of religion and bring about an age in which religion truly serves people’s needs. One could say that the entire history of the Soka Gakkai has been dedicated to religious revolution.

In this 12 part subseries, President Ikeda has been teaching that the central guiding principles of religion in the 21st century are humanism and human revolution. Hatred and trust, war and peace—they all begin in the minds of human beings. It is the human revolution that will result in personal happiness to lasting world peace. What is in our heart and mind determines every outcome.

This concluding installment focuses on the importance of the heart from the three perspectives of the “heart of altruism, or benefiting others,” the “heart of challenge,” and the “heart of conviction.”

The first point President Ikeda discusses is the heart of benefitting others. Please listen to the first Goshō passage.

Food has three virtues. First, it sustains life. Second, it enlivens the complexion. Third, it nourishes strength.

If one gives food to others, one will improve one’s own lot, just as, for

**example, if one lights a fire for others, one will brighten one's own way.
(WND-2, 1060; "On the Three Virtues of Food")**

Here, the Daishonin appears to thank a disciple for sending him offerings of food by describing the functions of food. Then, he writes: "If one lights a fire for others, one will brighten one's own way" (WND-2, 1060). This is actually one of my favourite passages.

In this lecture, President Ikeda discusses SGI members' struggles during natural disasters. Although they themselves were affected, they exerted all their energies in helping and encouraging others who were suffering.

When we are concerned for the welfare of others and extend a helping hand, we are not only acting to benefit them but also creating good fortune for ourselves.

Now let's move on to the second point where President Ikeda teaches the "heart of challenge" through a Gosho "Letter to Horen".

It is thus difficult for ordinary people, who have no knowledge of the distant past or future, to have faith in this [Lotus Sutra]. That being the case, even if we were to carry out its practice, what meaning could it have for us?

In light of all this, it would seem that, when one who is able to show clearly visible proof in the present expounds the Lotus Sutra, there also will be persons who will believe. (WND-1, 511–12; "Letter to Horen")

President Ikeda illustrates the Daishonin's disciples who bravely followed the Daishonin's footsteps, challenging the difficulties that arose in their lives. They transformed adversity into victory, demonstrating "clearly visible proof", or actual proof. Just like those disciples in the Daishonin's day, the SGI members today share noble experiences of "clearly visible proof" at discussion meetings around the world. He says:

Actual proof of the power of our Buddhist faith and practice—is the most persuasive and convincing argument there is.

There are times when we continue to struggle with no way out. Does actual proof only mean that our prayers are answered with the achievement of our goals? Not really. President Ikeda clarifies:

Even when we don't obtain immediate, visible results from the efforts we make in our Buddhist practice, the "heart" or spirit to continue challenging ourselves,

determined not to be defeated by hardship or adversity, is a sign that we have already won. Our experience cannot fail to resonate with many others and impart courage and hope to them.

This may be a good topic to discuss at our meetings. It's really inspiring to hear such experiences.

Now, let's move onto the third Gosho passage in relation to the "heart of conviction."

Those who believe in the Lotus Sutra are as if in winter, but winter always turns to spring. Never, from ancient times on, has anyone seen or heard of winter turning back to autumn. Nor have we ever heard of a believer in the Lotus Sutra who turned into an [unenlightened] ordinary person. The sutra reads, "If there are those who hear the Law, then not a one will fail to attain Buddhahood" [LSOC2, 75]. (WND-1, 536; "Winter Always Turns to Spring")

This passage from a letter to the lay nun Myoshin is a favourite for many people. About this passage, President Ikeda says:

In these words, I can keenly sense the Daishonin's heart—his conviction that we can overcome any obstacle and attain Buddhahood in this lifetime without fail.

In the material, President Ikeda teaches two important points while describing how challenging circumstances the lay nun Moshin was in.

The first is, "to enjoy a spring time of hope means overcoming a winter of adversity". When we aim at accomplishing a goal, we inevitably encounter obstacles. Likewise, when we aim at attaining Buddhahood, we face various obstacles that try to hinder us from pursuing our Buddhist practice.

President Ikeda teaches us:

That's why it's important to persevere in faith to the very end. If we stop midcourse or succumb to doubts and quit practising, all our efforts will be in vain.

The second aspect President Ikeda discusses about this passage is that all who hear about the teaching of the Mystic Law are certain to attain enlightenment. Everyone, without exception, can savour the arrival of spring.

The heart is where all changes begin. Here, changing the heart is not a matter of doing something that will temporarily make us feel better, without changing our reality.

President Ikeda says:

A true change in our heart is more profound; genuine inner change produces actual change in our lives. Deepening our “heart”—our life state—is the essence of our religion of human revolution. When we speak of obtaining benefit through our Buddhist practice, we are ultimately referring to our inner transformation at the deepest level.

Let me repeat that.

When we speak of obtaining benefit through our Buddhist practice, we are ultimately referring to our inner transformation.

Right? Attaining enlightenment, or human revolution—this is the purpose of practising Buddhism. Then our transformation reflects our environment.

In real life, there are times when we win and times when we lose. But, President Ikeda concludes this lecture by asserting:

Indeed, when we have the “heart” to base our lives on the Mystic Law, on the way of the mentor and disciple, and to strive together with our fellow members, we can unlock boundless possibilities everywhere. What is in our heart at this moment shapes our future.

In closing, I’d like to add two things.

Firstly, if you are relatively new to our podcasts, you may not have watched Tony’s 4-minute video on our study meeting. There, he discusses the way we strive to carry out our study meeting. To watch the video, go to the podcast page on our website, and select “To watch previous Study videos”, and then go to “SPECIAL FEATURES” on the side bar.

Secondly, our study exam is approaching. President Ikeda often says that Nichiren Buddhism is the philosophy of happiness. In this regard, for those of you who are new to

this practice, the upcoming Level 1 study exam is an introduction to the philosophy of happiness. As well, for those of you who have been practising for a long time, you may have noticed in the study booklet changes in the interpretations of some Buddhist principles. Being entitled as *The Basics of Nichiren Buddhism for the New Era of Worldwide Kosen-rufu*, this booklet is compiled from the standpoint of the SGI as a world religion. It devotes a lot of pages to the history of the SGI, while some Buddhist principles are clarified, establishing a doctrinal foundation appropriate to its development as a world religion. I hope that you can make the most of this opportunity to study for the happiness of self and other.

If you have any questions, please feel free to send your questions to us, SGI Canada Study Department at [study @sgicanada.org](mailto:study@sgicanada.org). Thank you for listening. Bye for now.