

A Religion of Human Revolution—Part 8 [of 12]

Peace—Be Flag Bearers of Respect for the Dignity of Life, Uniting All Humanity

Lecture presented by Tony Meers
SGI Canada Study Department

Welcome to the March study podcast. We are continuing our study of SGI President Ikeda's lecture series titled "A Religion of Human Revolution." This lecture's title is "Peace—Be Flag Bearers of Respect for the Dignity of Life, Uniting All Humanity."

Although the Gosho passages are not read in this podcast, they should be read aloud at the study meeting.

President Ikeda begins his lecture with his own family's experience of the horror and futility of war through the loss of their home, the harrowing experiences of his four elder brothers who were called up to serve in the army, and the grief of his mother on learning of the death of her eldest son in the war. The news of his death arrived two years after the war ended, and three months before the 19-year-old Daisaku Ikeda met his mentor, Josei Toda, in August 1947.

In the ruins of war-torn Japan and spiritual devastation, young people saw the disintegration of the values they had been taught. Daisaku Ikeda met Josei Toda, and recognized in him someone he could trust because he and Mr. Makiguchi had resisted the wartime militarist government and had faced imprisonment. He therefore resolved to become Mr. Toda's disciple.

Over seven decades, mentor and disciple have shared the struggle to rid the world of suffering and misery. The foundation of the Soka Gakkai's activities for peace is the principle of transforming the land with the Mystic Law.

The first Gosho passage is from "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land." It addresses the central point of Buddhism—that the essential teaching is the means by which each individual can awaken their Buddha nature and thereby transform the world into a "Buddha land." Mr. Toda was lecturing on this writing at the discussion meeting where Daisaku Ikeda first met him.

The next section begins by stating, "A religion of peace for the 21st century must possess a philosophy of tolerance and acceptance that is an antidote to exclusion and discrimination." It speaks about a parable from the Lotus Sutra about the "life-giving rain," which falls impartially on all plants and nourishes them so that each can grow

and blossom in its own unique way. President Ikeda explains further, saying:

The life-giving rain that falls impartially on all is the Mystic Law, while the trees and other plants are living beings, each with their differing capacities to understand the Buddhist teachings. The Lotus Sutra is “the one true vehicle, the single good doctrine” (WND-1, 25) that nurtures all people equally and enables them to give full expression to their potential.

The goal of Buddhism is universal enlightenment without any form of discrimination, including differences in ethnic and cultural background as well as differences in personality. It is truly Soka Victory when we can transcend all differences by believing and trusting in the innate goodness of every person. This is how, as President Ikeda explains, we can create a culture of peace.

The next Gosho passage, from “The Unanimous Declaration by the Buddhas of the Three Existences,” makes it clear that all the teachings of the Buddha exist within ourselves, and that each of us possesses the ability to change ourselves and the world around us. This is the main point of the lecture.

It is illustrated through the principle of “the three-time purification of the lands.” The Lotus Sutra describes how Shakyamuni transforms first our real world, the saha world, and then in two more steps he changes all lands into one vast and boundless Buddha land.

There are two points here. The first point is that this transformation is achieved by eliminating illusions about the true nature of life, which are the source of all suffering—in particular, the failure to recognize and believe in the innate Buddha nature of all people.

The second point is that the purification of the lands “starts and ends with the real world.”

President Ikeda then speaks about “the significance of President Toda’s Declaration Calling for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons, the starting point of our activities for peace,” which took place on September 8, 1957. This was the date in 2018 that President Ikeda chose as the most appropriate date to publish the final instalment of *The New Human Revolution*.

The next section underlines the continuing threat posed by nuclear weapons, terrorist attacks and armed conflicts that continue around the world. President Ikeda stresses the need to be persistent in pursuing dialogue in the spirit of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging. He says:

When, in the same spirit, we engage steadfastly in dialogue with those around us, never giving up on anyone, we not only awaken our own Buddha nature but also that of the person with whom we are talking.

Such ripples of human revolution are extremely important, and they are always set in motion, first of all, by one person's inner transformation.

Bodhisattva Universal Worthy, or Universal Wisdom, is a figure who appears in the Lotus Sutra. He brings forth the wisdom of all people and leads them to happiness. This doesn't refer to a specific person, but to our own efforts to bring forth wisdom and lead people to happiness.

President Ikeda speaks about his efforts to engage in dialogue with the three superpowers involved in the Cold War, and in his further dialogues with leaders and thinkers of different faith traditions. He reached out to those whose views might be different; but he was determined to connect with the other person's life, recognizing their innate goodness and Buddha nature.

In the next section, President Ikeda reflects on the tragedy and futility of war. He states:

Mr. Toda said: "To put an end to war, it is not enough to simply transform our social or political systems. The root lies in human beings, who themselves must change. People need to become strong and wise. People around the world must connect and join together heart to heart."

Concluding his lecture, President Ikeda encourages us:

to solidify our grassroots movement for building peace and expand our network of global citizens who embrace the principle of respect for the dignity of life. The peace of the land begins with establishing the correct teaching that fosters people who value peace. It all comes down to people.... Above all, people everywhere are expressing their trust in the young people of Soka whose presence promises a bright future for humanity.

March 16, Kosen-rufu Day is commemorated in our discussion meetings this month, which will be led by the youth in each district across Canada. Let's welcome many new friends and enable every youth member to bring forth their capabilities as leaders emerging to expand worldwide kosen-rufu.

Thank you very much.

