

# SGI Australia Autumn Study Course

prepared by the SGI Australia Study Department



# Human Security

A Shared Victory of the Human Spirit



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## Session 3

### Challenging Inner Negativity and Creating a Victory of the Heart

“We need to develop the strength to engage successfully in a struggle against the forces of division and destruction within our own lives and the larger social realm. Unless empowerment for ourselves and others is our goal, we will be unable to resist and overcome the negative influences within our own lives and their environment. (SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, *Toward a Humanitarian Competition: A New Current in History, 2009 Peace Proposal*)”

#### Challenging Inner Negativity

In this session we will study how, through the act of unifying our minds with the Law and the mentor, we are able to continuously struggle against the devilish functions of life in order to express our enlightenment and achieve a victory of the heart.

“Thus the starting point for the Buddhist worldview is Shakyamuni’s insistence that real happiness – joy that springs from the very depths of life – can be experienced only when we resist the impulse to turn away from the suffering of others and instead challenge it as our own. Such happiness lives and breathes only when we take suffering as an opportunity to forge and temper our inner life, and commit to the hard yet rewarding mission of working for the happiness of ourselves and others.” (*2004 Peace Proposal*)

What is enlightenment? Very simply it is enacting the recognition that our life is infinitely capable and worthy; that there is no situation or problem that is beyond the ability of our life to transform; that every situation we are facing is a source of benefit; and that everyone and everything is inextricably linked to our happiness. It is simply the state of our minds manifested in our behaviour that will determine whether or not we lose or gain.

In the life-state of enlightenment, we can see in every situation a wonderful possibility for our life to create value. Fundamental darkness or ignorance on the other hand means being ‘in the dark’ about this ability and possibility in any given situation. Greed, anger, foolishness, animality, arrogance and doubt are all ways we lose sight of our inherent

capability. These have the ability to delude us into believing that what we think, see and do under their influence is correct, thereby throwing ourselves into further suffering.

Fundamental darkness literally separates our mind from our body and before we realise it, we stop moving forward. This is manifest when, for example, we know we need to take a certain step in order to achieve our goal, but doubts or fears set in and we lose our focus and instead get lost in the darkness of fear. It manifests whenever we blame another person for our problems or when we worry and doubt that a parent, child or partner has the ability to overcome their own problems and we attempt to control them. One way to view enlightenment and delusion is to

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liken enlightenment to sunlight and fundamental darkness to night. The Mystic Law can be likened to the sun and fundamental darkness is like the darkness of night, hiding enlightenment. Day and night are two distinct phases but they are also inseparable and, even so, they cannot manifest simultaneously. Similarly, enlightenment and fundamental darkness are two life conditions that while not manifesting at the same time, cannot exist without the other.

Life shrouded in fundamental darkness is like walking in complete darkness and because we cannot see in front of us we bump into things or fall into a hole. Once the sun rises or the light is switched on – there is no more darkness! Lo and behold we can clearly see the correct path to take. With such a clear vision we can move forward with confidence and hope. This is called the path of value-creation. So it follows that we challenge the darkness of delusion by bringing forth the light of enlightenment and we do this when we unite our minds with the Mystic Law. The Mystic Law is immediately activated when we break through fundamental darkness, and manifests as various kinds of benefit and value creating functions. However, if we hadn't bumped into the furniture or fallen down the hole – depression is one of those holes we can fall into – in the first place, we would never have realised we were wandering about in the dark! This is the reason Buddhism teaches us that our suffering or desires are

the means by which we reveal our enlightenment.

Fundamental darkness is a hard nut to crack because even in the midst of suffering it can prevent us from realising that we are coming from a position of ignorance and so we persevere in a vicious cycle based on the delusion or incorrect view, compounding our suffering.

The allegorical story of Shariputra is a case in point. A committed disciple of Shakyamuni and known for his outstanding wisdom, he had committed to 100 kalpas of bodhisattva practice. Having finished 60 *kalpas*<sup>1</sup> of bodhisattva practice, with another 40 to go, the devil king becomes concerned that he is getting closer to attaining his goal and so disguises himself as a begging Brahman. Knowing that Shariputra is at the stage of practising alms giving, this Brahman asks Shariputra for his eye. Without hesitating, Shariputra gouges out his eye and hands it over. However, on receiving it, rather than showing gratitude and respect for the gift, the Brahman proceeds to sniff the eye, throw it on the ground and step on it, declaring that it stinks! This is too much for Shariputra who consequently loses his 'bodhisattva mind' and declares that there are certain people who are beyond saving and he will give up the bodhisattva practice and henceforth concentrate on his own salvation. At that moment Shariputra is defeated by the Brahman who represents the negative functions that exist within our own life.

Not only that, by focusing on the Brahman's response, he loses his own sense of appreciation for being able to devote his life to the Law. At that moment the Buddha nature in his own life is obscured and he reacts to his delusion. Shrouded in fundamental darkness we lose sight of the other and we concentrate on our own salvation, foolishly forgetting that our enlightenment is inseparable from the causes we make towards the happiness of others. This kind of self-centredness is the cause and effect of the devilish functions of life. This can happen to us, when, for example, having spent time and energy helping and supporting a friend or relative, out of goodwill and a deep desire to help, they return our support with resentment, thanklessness and even hatred or they just stop responding to us. In turn, we might get angry or frustrated, thus obscuring our Buddhahood and we give up on them. As in Shariputra's story, everyone loses. However, when we transform our life condition through chanting and reflecting on our own expectations that may contribute to conflicts, we can see things in a way we could not before. We can see that the apparently ungrateful reactions of friends and relatives stem from their suffering and yet we persevere in our belief in their potential and at that moment we are revealing enlightenment!

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## BUDDHIST CONCEPT OF ONENESS OF BODY AND MIND

Buddhism regards life as the unity of the physical and the spiritual as these are both integral expressions of the Mystic Law. The physical and the spiritual, while manifesting as two distinct aspects, are inseparable. In the *Lotus Sutra*, the principle of the ten factors of life represents the oneness of body and mind: “The true aspect of all phenomena consists of appearance, nature, entity, power, influence, internal cause, relation, latent effect, manifest effect, and their consistency from beginning to end.” (WND1p417) When, for example, our life-state is in the world of anger, every other aspect of our life (the nine factors) is consistent with that state, at that moment: it can be read in our face, in our gait, our life force, and in the causes we make and the effects we reap. True health and security (material benefit) and genuine happiness (spiritual benefit), therefore, occurs when our hearts and minds are harmonised with the Mystic Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, through chanting to the Gohonzon.

## Victory of the Heart

Buddhism is about positively changing one’s heart – because a change of heart leads to a change in attitude and action and then the impossible becomes possible. This is the process of human revolution – the continuous polishing of our hearts to become as indestructible as a diamond. To show actual proof of faith – when battling life’s negativity – it is vital that we develop the inner strength and fortitude with which to constantly fight and win over our own inherent negativity or fundamental darkness. The will to cultivate commitment and resolve is the spirit of non-regression<sup>2</sup> and our mentor, through commitment to the vow or mission of *kosen-rufu*, has shown us the way to do this.

“The three founding presidents of the Soka Gakkai, who share the bond of mentor and disciple, have fought with the spirit of ‘Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land’ as our very heart and soul. At the core of this is the compassion to take on the sufferings of ordinary people as our own, as well as the spirit to refute and struggle against falsehood and evil, the functions that destroy the people’s happiness.” (Ikeda, *The Light of Dawn, Essays on The Light of the Century of Humanity*, p74)

Essentially, because fundamental darkness is so subtle and such a trickster, we need to seek a model. It is the person who continually fights against fundamental darkness

who is the model for faith and practice. This is the mentor. Unless we have a real life model that shows actual proof it is difficult to carry out this struggle to reform our life. The mentor wants to encourage us, as disciples, to walk along the same path as they, and engage in the spirit of never allowing ourselves to be defeated by fundamental darkness. The mentor never ‘dispenses’ the law to the disciple rather he inspires in us the desire to find the law within our own lives as the means to challenge fundamental darkness. The mentor’s constant thought is how to enable his disciples to attain the same state of enlightenment as they, that is, to have the same faith in human potential. This is

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only possible if we are challenging our own fundamental darkness. The first person who identified the four sufferings of humanity was Shakyamuni. However, it was Nichiren who made it possible for ordinary people to fight their own fundamental darkness through

challenge ourselves to overcome our own ignorance of life's potential. Since the mentor has shown proof through facing persecution and engaging in great struggles with the three powerful enemies, our ability to reveal Buddhahood is proven and that much easier to believe.

for the sake of the Law" (WND1p 280), was Nichiren's rallying cry. As disciples of Nichiren, the founding presidents of the Soka Gakkai also engraved this vow deep in their hearts. Similarly, we are encouraged to embrace this vow as our own in order to sustain the struggle against

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But a person's heart may change with the times, and the nature of a thing may alter with its surroundings. Just as the moon on the water will be tossed about by the waves, or the soldiers in the vanguard will be cowed by the swords of the enemy, so, although at this moment you may say you believe in my words, I fear that later you will forget them completely. Now if you wish first of all to bring security to the nation and to pray for our present and future lives, then we must hasten to examine and consider the situation and take measures as soon as possible to remedy it...Therefore, you must quickly reform the tenets that you hold in your heart and embrace the one true vehicle, the single good doctrine (of the *Lotus Sutra*) (WND1p25)

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inscribing the Gohonzon and this is why Nichiren is called the Buddha of the Latter Day. He is the original teacher of the Latter Day of the Law. With that understanding, the three founding presidents have burned with passion for *kosen-rufu* never allowing a single obstacle – whether it was the painful ordeal of prison; the threat of bankruptcy; terminal illness; banishment etc. to block them in their endeavour. Pouring their life into their mission, they showed actual proof through their life example, teaching us how to challenge fundamental darkness. We show the possibility of transforming fundamental darkness into enlightenment, when, based on their example, we

How did our mentors 'fight' the devilish functions? Only by concentrating on their mission or vow. Indignant that humanity should be shrouded in fundamental darkness and deprived of their right to happiness, they have made *kosen-rufu* their focus, sparing no effort, never resting on what they achieved and using each moment to encourage others and show proof to the very end. Utilising the nine worlds and Buddhahood to strive incessantly for the happiness of humanity they revealed their own potential and showed us what is possible for all people to achieve.

“This I will state. Let the gods forsake me. Let all persecutions assail me. Still I will give my life

fundamental darkness and make Buddhist humanism the foundation of society.

The Daishonin proved the power of harnessing the Law of life through his own life struggles. In order to manifest the workings of the Law we challenge to chant with the same mind and attitude as the Daishonin and the three founding presidents and develop the same spirit to battle fundamental darkness. Our lives are not separate from Shakyamuni, Nichiren, the three presidents and the Gohonzon. This oneness of mentor and disciple is Buddhist dialogue in action. When disciples stand up and challenge their own life, giving hope to others in the process, they are enacting the heart

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PHOTO: WAYNE WONG

and ensuring the legacy of the mentor.

Passing responsibility from generation to generation, while keeping the spirit of devotion to the happiness of all humanity without any prejudice, requires a profound connection with life and humanity both on a personal and collective level. The oneness of mentor and disciple relationship in Nichiren Buddhism provides just such a heritage. This relationship, chosen as it is by the disciple, offers a free

spirited encounter at the deepest level of humanistic interaction – that of the heart or vow. The shared vow of *kosen-rufu* unifies the will of mentor and disciple into a profound bond. This is a vow to strive for the happiness of all humanity by engaging directly on a one-to-one, heart-to-heart basis with an individual's sufferings, struggles and hopes. It is not an elitist relationship that excludes any individual or distances itself from humanity as a whole. Appreciation

is the underlying attitude informing this legacy of humanism. As with any great cause the physical connection of the mentor and disciple is less significant than the spirit of their bond. That is, the heart of this relationship is in the determination to share in humanity's struggle to realise human security that is founded on hope. In this way the relationship of mentor and disciple transcends time and space and becomes the timeless hope of generations.

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“On all dimensions losing to negative force spells unhappiness; it brings loss of life power, destruction, decline and schism. It results in illness, economic hardships and struggle. War is a concentration of all these sufferings.” (Ikeda & Galtung, *Choose Peace*, p74)

What makes Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism unique is that the disciple does not merely admire the mentor but rather shares the same conviction as the mentor, becoming the source of light and hope for everyone around them. Just like the mentor, the disciple dedicates their life for the sake of the Law and the sake of human happiness, repaying the mentor's contribution with dedication and commitment. Continually battling against life's negative functions for the sake of *kosen-rufu* is enacting the vow. This means determining in our heart to grow in faith; to be prepared to meet any obstacle head on as an opportunity to show actual proof and encourage people around us. In this way, we contribute to human security in its truest sense.

Dialogue with the Gohonzon, that is, sincere prayer, to actualise the infinite possibilities of one life moment, rather than succumb to the negativity and doubt that is the dark and muddy realm of devilish functions, is enlightenment itself. Fuelled by the hope of enlightenment

we can engage in consistent dialogue with everyone around us, and our human revolution is inseparable from these efforts to engage in courageous dialogue. Driven by the conviction that without genuine human interaction the ideals of humanism will remain but an idealistic dream, we become the heroes of this century and centuries to come. This is the focus of session four.

## END SESSION 3

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<sup>1</sup> *Kalpa*: in ancient Indian cosmology, an extremely long period of time eg one *kalpa* being longer than the time needed to remove all the mustard seeds in a city, if one takes away one seed every hundred years!

<sup>2</sup> Spirit of non-regression: Buddhism teaches that if we are not moving forward we are in essence going backwards. Through Buddhist practice we are challenged to see and use every experience and problem as a source of forward momentum, thus refusing to be defeated while determining to grow. This is the way we can evolve continuously, never ceasing to learn and develop ourselves.



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## **Session 4**

### Courageous Dialogue Based on Prayer



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## Our Inner Determination – The Hope for Humanity

**S**anity, love, hope: none of them are a given, even though we have always imagined they were, in the way our great-grandparents imagined the forests were. ‘Hope springs eternal’ has been our confident catchphrase, but like love and sanity, hope is a natural potential in us that can only develop and find expression if cultivated and protected – in ourselves, in others and in the culture. Love, hope and sanity can all be destroyed too, maliciously and deliberately or through arrogance, ignorance and indifference.

Yet in spite of all this, hope does spring eternal – at least, it will spring when required, but in the meantime, for most of us, it resides quietly within, waiting in reserve and doing its ordinary tasks. Resistance is its brother, and together they may well be stirring at the moment. I hope so.

If things seem increasingly hopeless in these crazy, nasty and tragic times, it may be because the time of hope is still yet to come. Hope is nocturnal, in a sense; it can be seen best in the dark, and things may need to get darker – as I’m sure they will – before we begin to discover hope’s creative genius.

And if there has been some care for the soul and soulful things, including morality, justice, mercy,

truth and beauty, then hope will be there for us like adrenaline – when it’s really needed. But if we have become too soulless, there will be little hope for us. True hope does not come in the form of some new invention to solve our problems, it’s an antibody which emerges in us when we are infected with a despair born of threat. Like resistance, hope chooses its moment to appear, and when it emerges within us we see life afresh – and from a humbler place. Then we understand what matters and then we know what we must do.” (Michael Leunig, *The Age*, 30 Dec 2006)

Our practice of Buddhism can sometimes be limited to a preconceived idea that we need only establish our own enlightenment and that this is in some way isolated from others in our environment. However, Nichiren clarifies that Buddhism teaches that humanity and its environment are one (jp. *esho funi*), as discussed in Session Two, and that all affairs of life are Buddhism.

“When the Great Teacher Miao-lo compared these passages with the one from the sixth volume of the *Lotus Sutra* that reads, “No worldly affairs of life or work are ever contrary to the true reality. he revealed their meaning and pointed out that although the first two sutras are profound, since their meaning is still shallow and

fails to approach that of the *Lotus Sutra*, they relate secular matters in terms of Buddhism, whereas the *Lotus Sutra* explains that in the end secular matters are the entirety of Buddhism.” (WND1p1126)

Given the current state of affairs it may seem attractive to try to escape into an internal ‘enlightenment’ in response to the seemingly insurmountable problems we face. However, are we displaying enlightened qualities by retreating into our own minds? How does this behaviour reflect that of the Buddha? A common myth is that the first historical Buddha, Shakyamuni of India, taught from atop a rarefied mountain with his disciples always visiting and seeking his council. The reality was that, driven by concern for the future of humanity itself, he travelled tirelessly for over 40 years to address people’s suffering where they were, constantly seeking to assist others in facing the difficult challenges of their daily life and willingly sharing their struggles. The urgency with which he approached his responsibility remains relevant to us today in a world that is definitely in need of hope and wisdom. President Ikeda, the mentor for the modern age, writes:

**“In any age it is individuals of indomitable conviction, courage and passion who have overcome the seemingly impossible to set in motion the forces of historical change.**

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**But society today is pervaded by a sense of powerlessness – “What can I, a single individual, hope to achieve?” – and hopelessness – “Whatever I do, nothing will change...” Doubts gnaw away at our hearts. Even the bravest lose hope faced with reality, and our world closes in upon us. This, surely, is the fundamental evil of our times. In my dialogue with Dr David Krieger, president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, the empowerment of the individual became one of our central themes. He suggested we need to extrapolate from Einstein’s theory of relativity to find a new theorem for peace. Just as science revealed the enormous amount of energy contained within even a single particle of matter, we must now awaken to the fact that the inner determination within each individual’s life at every moment contains the power to change the world.” (2003 Peace Proposal)**

Imagine if Shakyamuni had been defeated by the scale of the task ahead. If he had decided that, being only one person, he could not contribute to any significant change in humanity. His life would never have had the global influence that it has, nor would he have contributed so greatly to the development of humanism throughout the ages. Nichiren also challenged extraordinary difficult

circumstances to prove the great potential of humanity. Inheriting Shakyamuni’s conviction, he was a human rights activist over 700 years ago and left a legacy for humanity that has eternal relevance and power. These Buddhas both held the Mystic Law or life’s essence as their mentor. In the case of Nichiren, he stated that this law is Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and by doing so made it available as a direct opportunity for self-determination and unlimited generation of life force by any individual. For this direct revelation of the Law, Nichiren is known as the Original Buddha.

Bound as we are by the real challenges of living, humanity has a choice as to whether this drives more separation and divisions or a unified conviction based on profound prayer.

## Heartfelt Prayer to Harmonise

**“The *daimoku* that the Daishonin spread could be described as ‘fighting daimoku’. Fundamental darkness manifests in various forms- as doubt, anxiety, earthly desires and so on. The power to break through fundamental darkness is none other than faith or belief. The Dashonin says,**

**“Belief means to be without doubt” (*The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings*, p54). He also states, “The single word belief is the sharp sword with which one confronts and overcomes fundamental darkness or ignorance” (OTTp119-20). Battling devilish functions**

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and confronting the various difficulties of life must essentially be an intense struggle against our fundamental darkness. We use the sharp sword of belief against the devilish forces that obstruct *kosen-rufu*. If we should lose our faith or belief in the Mystic Law – that is to say, if we lose the

conviction that we can definitely become happy and attain Buddhahood, and if we lose the desire to accomplish *kosen-rufu* without fail – then we will also be defeated by hardships, obstacles and devilish functions on the path to *kosen-rufu*. In *The Opening of the Eyes* the Daishonin says we

must not succumb to doubt and pessimism, both of which are manifestations of fundamental darkness (SGI President Ikeda's Lecture Series on *The Opening of the Eyes*, 16).

'Fighting *daimoku*' can mean being determined not to be defeated, and showing actual proof of the

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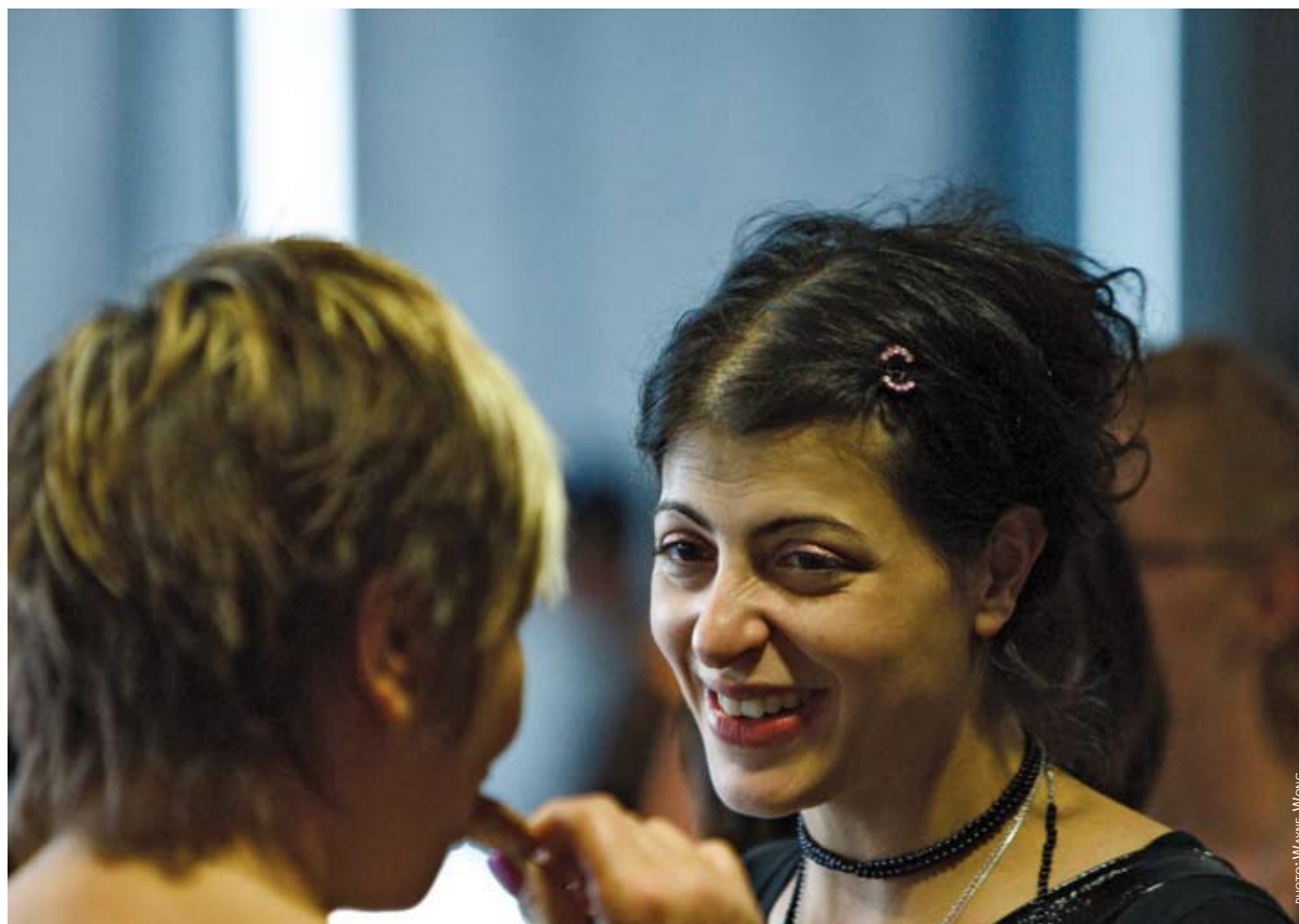


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limitless power of our Buddhahood. It can also mean intensely struggling to create value, to change loss into gain, bad into good, baseness into beauty. Above all, recognising that we need problems and obstacles in our life to fulfil our mission shows proof of the power of the Mystic Law. Instead of focusing on his or her suffering, the Buddha focuses on their potential to transform suffering into a purposeful struggle. In this way, he/she turns suffering

into mission. Instead of only seeing the current situation as an effect of a past cause, the Buddha sees the present moment as the cause for creating future effects. Harnessing the wonderful Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, which sparks constant development, the Buddha enjoys complete freedom in the present and the future. This is our capability too!

When we suffer, a positive action we can make is to chant before

the Gohonzon, seeing the devilish functions for what they are, and revealing the light of Buddhahood in our life and thereby transforming the darkness so as to shine with a sense of mission. This is the battle – the ceaseless struggle to win over our negativity. Focusing only on our own suffering makes us suffer more and, interestingly, negatively affects those around us. Necessarily, because darkness and light cannot manifest simultaneously, our suffering

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changes as we reveal our enlightened nature through challenging our negativity and consequently those around us experience hope in return. In this way we are creating value for ourselves and others.

The extraordinary growth of the Soka Gakkai across the globe in just seven decades is a significant proof of the power of dialogue based on prayer. This unprecedented growth of a philosophy and practice across cultural, ethnic, socio-economic and political divides in such a short time is a direct result of the enactment of the oneness of mentor and disciple and the shared vow with Nichiren for the happiness of all people. At this time it may help to examine what dialogue and prayer represent in terms of Nichiren Buddhism and the Soka Gakkai.

**“On this point, the words of President Seyed Mohammad Khatami of Iran, the advocate of the idea of dialogue among civilisations, are worthy of our renewed attention.**

**‘No great culture and no great civilisation has ever evolved in isolation. In other words, only those cultures and civilisations have survived that have been empowered with ‘communication,’ ‘speaking,’ and ‘listening.’ In addition to ‘speaking,’ ‘dialogue’ requires ‘listening’... Listening is not only a passive activity; it is active. An activity which enables the listener to open his being**

**to the world which the speaker creates or discovers. Without real listening, any dialogue is doomed to failure.’ I likewise believe that the value of dialogue is to be found in its processes, perhaps even more than in its concrete results. For the vibrant and mutually catalytic process of dialogue between individuals and between whole civilisations dynamically illustrates humanitarian competition, the competition in self-mastery.” (2002 *Peace Proposal*)**

Buddhism emphasises the significance of dialogue as a cause. This is premised on the nature of causality and its part in the fabric of life itself. Although business practices may form their measurement of success from outcomes, Buddhism, arising from the infinite within life, derives proof from the cause itself secure in the fact that every cause contains within it an effect (oneness of cause and effect). On this basis, what determines great value is the power or depth of the causes we make. Our victory in the course of dialogue is decided by the depth of our determination to continue engaging and interacting. This requires belief in the ‘other’ as well as the opening of our own heart to the constraints that may stem from suffering the other person may be experiencing. The art of listening depicted in the above quote springs from belief

in the boundless potential and interconnectedness of life, and in the cause that we are making to awaken that potential.

“Sir Yehudi was fond of referring to the words of the Native American leader Chief Seattle. Chief Seattle is said to have made a speech in the 1850s in response to an offer by white settlers to buy indigenous lands, which Sir Yehudi quoted as follows:

**If I decide to accept... I will make one condition: the white man must treat the beasts of this land as his brothers... I have seen a thousand rotting buffaloes on the prairie, left by the white man who shot them from a passing train. I am a savage and do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo that we kill only to live. What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, man would die from great loneliness of spirit, for whatever happens to the beast also happens to man. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. (Quoted in Daniels 187)**

Sir Yehudi stressed the relevance of Chief Seattle’s words to our time – to all time. ...In its essence, discrimination is the act of throwing up barriers of difference among the phenomena that fill the universe and establishing among them a hierarchy of value,

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thus breaking the bonds that link and connect all things. This is then used to justify oppression and exploitation; as such, it must be condemned as a desecration of the sanctity of life itself.

“All things are connected.” Buddhism echoes and extends this awareness voiced by Chief Seattle. At the same time, it takes

as its highest imperative the work of removing such barriers in the effort to approach the reality, the genuine aspect of life itself. This is expressed in the idea of a life-moment embracing both sentient and non-sentient existence. In other words, an essential life-moment (Jpn. *ichinen*) contains within it all

phenomenal realms (*sanzen*). Buddhism regards life in its most profound sense not as something that is simply conferred upon us without effort, but as a luminous and fertile realm that can be entered and experienced fully only through the most strenuous spiritual effort.” (2001 *Peace Proposal*)

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The concept of hierarchy is of human invention and consistently underpins the destructive behaviour of individuals and civilisations. Whereas, within the functions of life no hierarchy exists; the foundation of life itself is of harmony. Rather than idealising other cultures, there is much so-called advanced cultures such as our own can learn from the beautifully expressed simplicity of a culture that has successfully harmonised with its environment as Chief Seattle highlights. Perhaps we need to apply such strict examination of cultural practice and belief to our personal realm – the realm of the individual. When each of us rejects separation and works to open our hearts and minds to the reality of our existence we create another possibility – the possibility that responsibility for transforming our environment belongs to each one of us.

Prayer in Buddhism is not the simple request for the environment or abstract beings to return a favour or gift to us. Rather prayer is the self-determinate action to summon the courage to take responsibility for causes we make and by doing so directing our lives towards value-creation. It is a stand to harmonise our life with those in our environment while maintaining the courage of our own conviction. Consistently deepening our belief in the sanctity of human life and our shared responsibility to each

other and the environment is a powerful expression of our belief and confidence in the infinite and unlimited nature of life. Prayer is the mastery of the self, proven through the behaviour of the practitioner. Engaged, consistent humanistic dialogue, expressed in a myriad of ways, is the behaviour, proving the power of prayer and giving prayer meaning and purpose. This inspires courage of the individual in the environment.

**“In *Jinsei chirigaku (The Geography of Human Life)* written almost a century ago, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944), founder and first President of the Soka Gakkai, proposed the idea of “humanitarian competition”. This can be understood as anticipating the concept of competition in self-mastery. As I mentioned in my proposal of four years ago, “humanitarian competition” is not simply a shift in the mode of competition but represents a qualitative transformation in its very nature. As Makiguchi describes it:**

**“There is no simple formula for this humanitarianism. Rather, all activities, whether of a political, military, or economic nature, should be conducted in conformity with the principles of humanitarianism. What is important is to set aside egotistical motives, striving to protect and**

**improve not only one’s own life, but also the lives of others. One should do things for the sake of others, because by benefiting others, we benefit ourselves. This means to engage consciously in collective life.”**

**...Makiguchi called for a shift away from the kind of competition that is based on conflict and in which the strong feed on the weak, to a cooperative competition of coexistence and shared flourishing in all fields, including military, political and economic. He called for the construction of a global society, a global civilisation in which the happiness of self and other would be realised.” (2002 *Peace Proposal*)**

## Conclusion

The activation of the belief in life’s inherent enlightened characteristic is expressed as devotion to our own transformation. It is proven through our consistent efforts to engage fully with others by sharing their struggles and inspiring a deeper and deeper connection. This spirit lies at the heart of Buddhism. The behaviour is sustained by the practice of prayer to the Gohonzon and the shared conviction with the mentor to enact the vow of *kosen-rufu*. This interconnectedness empowers confidence that can become an infectious example for others to open belief in their own



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**“To create an age of peace, one in which life is given supreme value, it is vital for us to have a philosophy that reveals the wonder, dignity and infinite potential of life. When we base our actions on this belief and take action out of compassion for others, the result is a pure joy which in turn motivates us to further action. Empowering ourselves from within, our sphere of compassion becomes wider and wider, encompassing not only ourselves, our own families and nations, but the whole of humanity.”**

*— SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, Toward a Humanitarian Competition: A New Current in History, 2009  
Peace Proposal*

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potential. Spreading the hope of human advancement from one heart to another in this way is the most effective method of propagating Buddhist humanism and faith.

The SGI Australia group dialogue movement and the courageous dialogue target for 2009 are sustainable activities that rely on self-determinate action shared within the society while immersed in the challenges of daily life. The cause of transformation of these daily encounters to beacons of hope for self and others through dialogue is itself revealing our profound meaning as a human being, our mission in life and our happiness.

**“There is no such thing as happiness for oneself alone. You must strive both for our own happiness and the happiness of others! Aim first for the peace and security of society, for peace in the world!**

**To achieve this, you must first and foremost establish within the life of each individual an indestructible pillar of “justice”. To that end, carry out courageous dialogue; patient and persistent dialogue. Engage in a struggle of words to refute the erroneous and reveal the true! Is this not the**

**correct and ideal path to follow as a human being?**

**It is said that the Daishonin’s teachings begin and end with his treatise *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land*. As this suggests, Nichiren Daishonin waged a great struggle throughout his life for the sole purpose of realising this principle of rissho ankoku, of establishing the correct teaching to bring peace to the land.**

**The three founding presidents of the Soka Gakkai, who share the bond of mentor and disciple, have fought with the spirit of *Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land* as our very heart and soul. At the core of this is the compassion to take on the sufferings of ordinary people as our own, as well as the spirit to refute and struggle against falsehood and evil that functions to destroy the people’s happiness. Burning within *Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land* is the uncompromising flame of the spirit to refute evil.” (Ikeda Essay, *The Light of Dawn*)**

It is important, as discussed in Session Three, to consistently remind ourselves that refuting the

evil characteristics existing within us becomes an example to others. Bearing in mind always that evil in Buddhism is the rejection of belief in the potential of self and others to reveal enlightenment. This is a common characteristic of human behaviour exhibited in violence, authoritarianism, coercion, hierarchy etc. It exists within our life, as does enlightenment. Challenging ourselves based on the conviction in the enlightened potential that permeates life can be revealed through the struggle to create human security and establish peace where we are.

The above profound passage comes to life within our actions only when transformation is self-directed and expressed as compassion towards those who are suffering. In conclusion, the SGI, and our own group meeting, is the Orchid Room as described so poetically in the passage on the following page from *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land*.

# human security

## THE ORCHID ROOM – Expanding trust “to friends in the orchid room”

The host exclaimed with delight: The dove has changed into a hawk, the sparrow into a clam. How gratifying! You have associated with a friend in the orchid room and have become as straight as mugwort growing among hemp. If you will truly give consideration to the troubles I have been describing and put entire faith in these words of mine, then the winds will blow gently, the waves will be calm, and in no time at all we will enjoy beautiful harvests. (WND1p23)

“Orchid room” refers to a room where orchids are placed and which is scented with their fragrance. If one enters an orchid room, one’s person will eventually become thoroughly imbued in its scent. For this reason it is used as a metaphor of how, by associating with someone of excellent character who believes in the correct teaching, one will eventually open one’s eyes to the power of the correct teaching as well.

Concretely speaking, “associate with” means to encounter or expose oneself to that person’s words and behaviour. In *Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land*, the host endeavours to explain the teaching to the guest. Though the guest responds emotionally, and displays anger, the host is not swayed in the least. When the guest is about to storm away, the host smiles and convinces him to stay. Touched by the host’s behaviour imbued with kind compassion and reason, as well as his character that exudes a fragrance of noble virtue, the guest without realising it opens his heart. Eventually he resolves to discard mistaken attachments and seek the correct teaching. It strikes one as a genuine drama of dialogue.

The important thing is to engender trust and understanding. Because we embrace the highest teaching, the supreme Law, we are able to display the most sublime brilliance of character. This is the essence of Buddhism. While honing the brilliance of our own humanity, we have been broadening the understanding of Buddhism in society. We have been continually making the efforts necessary to become “friends in the orchid room” to the people of society. With unshakable conviction, a vision toward the future, warm care for others, rich wisdom, passion towards our mission, we have developed an expansive state of life that can embrace anything and anyone. With such humanity, which has been polished and developed through faith, we can touch and open the door to the hearts of others. (*The Collected Works of Daisaku Ikeda*, (Jp reference) vol 76)