

November Discussion Topic— The Soka-spirit

“Faith is the ultimate form of courage.”¹ In Buddhism, courage indicates the soundest and most robust spirit that derives from our inherent Buddha nature, which could be described as our most “healthy life state”. It’s the determination to win over our fundamental darkness, reveal our enlightened Buddha nature and challenging the real-life problems confronting us right where we are, with the belief that we ourselves are the embodiment of the Mystic Law.

The perseverance and forbearance to keep pressing forward without giving up comes from our conviction. It’s the courage to maintain a fighting spirit to the very end. It means that even in the face of great adversity, we determine to fight on resolutely without fear and to never give in to defeat. We keep challenging ourselves in spite of everything, refusing to retreat a single step. This indomitable fighting spirit—the true legacy of Nichiren Daishonin—is the Soka-spirit.

The Soka-spirit is crucial in our efforts to change our karma. It is important to recognise and overcome the negative functions that try to hinder our high, positive life state - which we have built up through our practice. We must confront them with the lion’s roar of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and not letting them sway or intimidate us. Otherwise, our will to fight for our own and others’ happiness weakens and our courage and wisdom disappear. When a lion roars, even from miles away, it sends the fiercest beasts running. “In the same way,” Ikeda Sensei states, “when faced with chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, no ailment can be an obstacle to one’s happiness or to kosen-rufu”²

The history of the SGI shows how valuable it is to face opposition if we are an advocate of what is explained in the Lotus Sutra, that all people are equal and that everything alive is worthy of respect. Realising kosen-rufu is not something we take on because we are told to. If we do not take the initiative ourselves, we cannot overcome our obstacles and the negative functions on our way and achieve Buddhahood. Obstacles and attaining Buddhahood are two sides of the same medal. We open our life state of Buddhahood with a strong and unwavering faith.

The resolve to make the Soka-spirit our own is challenging. We spread Nichiren Buddhism the best we can and commit ourselves to fight bravely against all adversity, so we can experience the great benefit of faith.

Ikeda Sensei says: “If you cannot find hope, be the one to create hope. Happiness lies in this way of life. Let’s create ‘hope’! No matter what desperate situation you face in your life, you can stand up where you are, and resolve to dedicate your life toward peace, hope and victory and create value with an indomitable spirit! This is what is meant by Soka.”³

- What does the Soka-spirit mean to you and how do you challenge yourself to make the Soka-spirit your own?
- How does the Soka-spirit help you recognise and overcome negative functions? Do you have an experience with that?

¹ World Tribune, 6 aug. 2021, 3.

² *The Wisdom for Creating Happiness and Peace*, Part 2, p. 115.

³ Ikeda Sensei’s ‘Encouragement of the Four Seasons’ published in the *Seikyo Shimbun* on 22 November.

