Responding to Our Mentor

SGI-USA October 2020 Discussion Meeting
Key Points

1. Responding to one’s mentor means to share their commitment for kosen-rufu.
2. The mentor and disciple relationship is the starting point for making kosen-rufu a worldwide movement.
3. The most direct way to respond to one’s mentor is to teach others about Buddhist practice.
Celebrating 60 Years of Worldwide Kosen-rufu

This month marks the 60th anniversary of worldwide kosen-rufu. On Oct. 2, 1960, Ikeda Sensei made his first visit overseas to propagate Nichiren Buddhism, establishing local Soka Gakkai districts and chapters outside Japan. On this trip, Sensei visited nine U.S. cities, Canada and Brazil in just 24 days. In that time, he established 17 districts and two chapters, providing a structure upon which members could propagate the Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo throughout their respective societies. Below is a timeline of events:

- **March 16, 1958**: Just two weeks before his passing, second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda encourages the young Daisaku Ikeda to spread Nichiren Buddhism throughout the world.
- **May 3, 1960**: Sensei is inaugurated the third Soka Gakkai president. He determines to establish an organization overseas.
- **Oct. 2, 1960**: Sensei departs for the U.S.
Who Is the Mentor in Nichiren Buddhism?

When it comes to teachers, there are both good and bad. Seek out good teachers! Shun bad teachers! Have the wisdom to tell the difference between the two. Don’t be deceived!—this is Nichiren’s stern warning. We mustn’t follow erroneous teachers; if we do, we will be negatively influenced by their erroneous ways. ...

Who, then, is the correct teacher we should seek? It is the person who chants and spreads the Mystic Law with selfless dedication while battling the three powerful enemies of Buddhism. Correct teachers of the Law can be identified by whether they have encountered hardships and obstacles just like those described in the Lotus Sutra.

- Ikeda Sensei, April 7, 2006, World Tribune, pp. 1–2
Taking On the Same Commitment as the Mentor

Once we embrace faith in the Gohonzon, it will be no problem for us to attain Buddhahood ourselves. But when I think about our families, our country and our turbulent world in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, I wish to rid the earth of all suffering and misery. This is what kosen-rufu is all about. Won’t you join me?

- Josei Toda, Ikeda Sensei’s mentor, August 2020 \textit{Living Buddhism}, p. 4
Daisaku Ikeda] would never forget the time that Toda, ill in bed at the head temple just prior to his death, told him he had dreamt he had gone to Mexico...
“[Daisaku], you must live! You must live as long as you can and travel the globe!”...
[Daisaku] had engraved these words in his heart as Toda’s will for the future. On behalf of his departed mentor, the disciple was now taking his first step toward world kosen-rufu.

Responding to Our Mentor Through Shakubuku

Because we all share the mission of Bodhisattvas of the Earth, we are able to chant Nam-myoho-RENge-kyo, the essence of the Lotus Sutra. Because we chant with our vow for kosen-rufu, we can realize happiness for both ourselves and others. Because we practice Nichiren Buddhism ourselves and teach others to do the same, we can carry out our human revolution, becoming individuals who take action for the benefit of others. Our prayers, which were originally focused on ourselves alone, naturally evolve into prayers infused with the same vow as our mentor.

- Sensei, May 2019 Living Buddhism, p. 56
Brief Experience in Faith
A Great River of Peace Begins From You

If you have solidified your resolve to achieve kosen-rufu, I can safely say that my purpose in coming to this country has been fulfilled. It’s enough for a single individual, for you, to rise up with the same spirit as me. Just as a great river begins from a single drop, a great river of peace in America will begin from you. I entrust America to you.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to share the same vision and heart as the mentor? Why is this an important part of our Buddhist practice?

2. Sensei says, “A great river of peace in America will begin from you.” Sensei has profound belief in our mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth. What do you feel is the key to fully carrying out this mission in our own lives?
October 2020 Discussion Meeting Presentation Notes

Theme: “Responding to Our Mentor”

Slide 1:

• Welcome and thank you for joining today’s meeting!!
• The topic of discussion for today is “Responding to Our Mentor”
• There will be a chance to have group discussion after my presentation, so I hope we can all share freely and openly.
• Let’s get started!

Slide 2:

• Today’s presentation can be broken down into 3 key points
• They are:
  1. Responding to one’s mentor means to share their commitment for kosen-rufu.
  2. The mentor and disciple relationship is the starting point for making kosen-rufu a worldwide movement.
  3. The most direct way to respond to one’s mentor is to teach others about Buddhist practice.

Slide 3:

• For those of us who may not know, October is a significant month in the SGI’s history.
• In fact, this year, we are celebrating 60 years of worldwide kosen-rufu!
• This month marks the 60th anniversary of worldwide kosen-rufu. On Oct. 2, 1960, Ikeda Sensei made his first visit overseas to propagate Nichiren Buddhism, establishing local Soka Gakkai districts and chapters outside Japan. On this trip, Sensei visited nine U.S. cities, Canada and Brazil in just 24 days. In that time, he established 17 districts and two chapters, providing a structure upon which members could propagate the Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo throughout their respective societies. Below is a timeline of events:
• **March 16, 1958:** Just two weeks before his passing, second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda encourages the young Daisaku Ikeda to spread Nichiren Buddhism throughout the world.

• **May 3, 1960:** Sensei is inaugurated the third Soka Gakkai president. He determines to establish an organization overseas.

• **Oct. 2, 1960:** Sensei departs for the U.S.

---

**Slide 4:**

- Touching on the impact that the mentor and disciple relationship has had on the Soka Gakkai, Ikeda Sensei says: “Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda were of one heart and mind; so were Mr. Toda and I. Our mentor-disciple bonds transcend life and death. Heir to the true spirit of Mr. Toda, I fought against the three powerful enemies and built the Soka Gakkai into the great organization that it is today” *(April 7, 2006, *World Tribune*, p. 2).*

- So who is the mentor in Nichiren Buddhism? It is someone who has fought selflessly for the sake of the happiness of all people while confronting the obstacles described in the Lotus Sutra.

- Sensei states: When it comes to teachers, there are both good and bad. Seek out good teachers! Shun bad teachers! Have the wisdom to tell the difference between the two. Don’t be deceived!—this is Nichiren’s stern warning. We mustn’t follow erroneous teachers; if we do, we will be negatively influenced by their erroneous ways. ... Who, then, is the correct teacher we should seek? It is the person who chants and spreads the Mystic Law with selfless dedication while battling the three powerful enemies of Buddhism. Correct teachers of the Law can be identified by whether they have encountered hardships and obstacles just like those described in the Lotus Sutra.

- Based on this understanding, Nichiren Daishonin and the three founding presidents are the correct teachers in Buddhism.

- While it is up to each person to decide who they take as their teacher/mentor, it is undeniable that because of Daisaku Ikeda, we are able to practice Buddhism correctly today in America and around the world. Because of Ikeda Sensei, we know about President Toda, President Makiguchi and Nichiren Daishonin.

---

**Slide 5:**

- Getting to our first key point of today: responding to one’s mentor means to take on the same commitment as one’s mentor.
• Sensei first met President Toda in August 1947 at a discussion meeting where President Toda was lecturing on the treatise, “On establishing the correct teaching for the peace of the land.”

• At that meeting President Toda said: “Once we embrace faith in the Gohonzon, it will be no problem for us to attain Buddhahood ourselves. But when I think about our families, our country and our turbulent world in the 20th century, I wish to rid the earth of all suffering and misery. This is what kosen-rufu is all about. Won’t you join me?”

• Mr. Toda was asking us to join him in ridding the earth of all suffering. He was asking us to make a vow for kosen-rufu.

• Sensei responded by joining President Toda and sharing his commitment to fight for others to rid the world of suffering. As a result of that shared commitment, Sensei has been fighting 60+ years to respond to his mentor’s call.

• This vow/commitment is what spurred him to spread Buddhism worldwide, starting with his first trip in October of 1960.

Slide 6:

• Our second key point is that the mentor and disciple relationship is the starting point for making kosen-rufu a worldwide movement.

• On October 2, 1960, Sensei was 32 years old. With a passionate resolve for peace burning in his heart, he set out on a worldwide journey...

• He recalled a time, right before President Toda passed...

• [Daisaku Ikeda] would never forget the time that Toda, ill in bed at the head temple just prior to his death, told him he had dreamt he had gone to Mexico...

“[Daisaku], you must live! You must live as long as you can and travel the globe!”...

[Daisaku] had engraved these words in his heart as Toda’s will for the future. On behalf of his departed mentor, the disciple was now taking his first step toward world kosen-rufu.


Slide 7:

• Our third and final key point today is how the most direct way for a disciple to respond to one’s mentor is through shakubuku.
Elaborating on this, Sensei says: “Because we all share the mission of Bodhisattvas of the Earth, we are able to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the essence of the Lotus Sutra. Because we chant with our vow for kosen-rufu, we can realize happiness for both ourselves and others. Because we practice Nichiren Buddhism ourselves and teach others to do the same, we can carry out our human revolution, becoming individuals who take action for the benefit of others. Our prayers, which were originally focused on ourselves alone, naturally evolve into prayers infused with the same vow as our mentor.”

Slide 8:

**optional slide: please share a brief experience related to this topic**

Slide 9:

- To conclude, I would like to read this quote from Sensei that was written in volume 10 of The New Human Revolution.

- Sensei was talking to youth division of SGI-USA in the early ‘60s, in Los Angeles, immediately after the Watts Riots had occurred.

- Sensei’s expectations for the SGI-USA members still rings true today: If you have solidified your resolve to achieve kosen-rufu, I can safely say that my purpose in coming to this country has been fulfilled. It’s enough for a single individual, for you, to rise up with the same spirit as me. Just as a great river begins from a single drop, a great river of peace in America will begin from you. I entrust America to you.

Slide 10:

- This concludes, my portion of the presentation. Thank you for listening!

- Now, let’s discuss!

(If needed, feel free to utilize the Zoom breakout rooms. Use these questions as a starting point.)