

The Basic Doctrine of *Life Force* (*seimei* 生命) in *Sōka Gakkai* *Selected Texts*

The greatness of the Buddhist teaching is that in trying to provide for the happiness of the human person, the subject of human life and society, it gets right to the root of the problem, namely *life-force*, and through scientific analysis emerges with a principle that can be practiced by ordinary people.

Nichiren...systematized the principle of life-force into a practical method to provide happiness for the masses. (*Sōka Gakkai Kyōgaku*, 1971: 77)

Faith is firm belief in the universe and the life-force...Only a person of sublime faith can live a good and vigorous life...

Buddhist doctrine is a philosophy that has human life as its ultimate object, and our Human Revolution Movement is an act of reform aimed at opening up the inner universe, the creative life-force within each individual, and leading to human freedom. The Movement sees humanity poised on the summit of a new idea of life-force, surveying the twenty-first century and ready to build the future. (*Seikyō Shinbunsha* 1980: 109, 112)

Ten years ago, absorbed in the search for who the Buddha was and whether he was real or not, I looked for help in books about Buddhism, but they were of no help. In the end, I came upon the *Muryōgikyō*, where I read: 'Body neither is nor is not...It is neither red nor purple, nor any other color.' Reflecting on these words, it dawned on me, 'The Buddha is life-force.' After agonizing over the relation of the Buddha to the *namu myōhō rengekyō* in light of the theory of the ten worlds, I realized that life-force is the name of the Buddha, and that this is the fundamental force in the universe, the *Kuon gansho*, which has the power to change the fate of every person. After that I was able to read and understand all the Buddhist scriptures.¹⁰

Just as in life nothing can come between one sadness and another, one joy and another; or just as in sleep the mind does not go anywhere, so, too, at death the life-force is taken up in the Great Life-Force of the universe. No matter where you look for it, it is not something you can find.

When you wake up in the morning you remember the activities of the day before and pick up where you left off. In the same way, new life receives the karmic causes from past existences and continues to live their effects in the present existence. (Toda Jōsei 1960: 17, 19–20)

every moment of this man Toda is the essence of life. When you stop to think about it, every moment of every single thing must be a *nyorai*. This is the meaning of the fundamental doctrine that all things in the universe are the activity of life itself.

For us, too, every second of life is true reality, and in the true reality

of this moment past life for all eternity is included, giving birth in turn to future life on into eternity...This moment is the activity of the universe itself as well as the life and essence of the individual. This moment-to-moment activity of the universe is expressed as the ever-changing phenomena that make up the totality of all things in flux. (Toda Jōsei 1960: 450–52)

The enlightenment of Nichiren, the true Buddha, and the life-force live continuously in the Great Mandala.

By embracing the life-force, everything is enjoyed, nothing is suffered. This is called liberation (*gedatsu*)...and it is attained through faith in the *gohonzon*...Therefore, when you sit before the *gohonzon* and believe that there is no distinction among the *gohonzon*, Nichiren, and you yourself, when you allow this great blessing to permeate your heart and offer thanksgiving, when you chant the *daimoku* fervently, you enter into harmony with the rhythm of the universe: the great life-force of the universe becomes your own life-force and gushes forth. (Toda Jōsei 1960: 339, 171–72)

Two laws of cleansing (*senjō nihō*) exist in our lives. A life of pure innocence (*kiyorakana seimei*) accepts everything from the outside world meekly and in harmonious rhythm with the universe; for this reason, its transmigration is completely natural. Such a life manifests a tremendous life-force, and is thus able to enjoy existence. But in the course of its many transmigrations, life becomes tainted by the mistakes of daily life and falls into vice of all sorts. This is why we speak of a cleansing (*senpō*) of life...that has fallen out of harmony with the rhythm of the universe and whose life-force has faded away. (Toda Jōsei 1960: 36)

Anger (a life of affliction): hell

Covetousness (a life of desire for things): the realm of the hungry spirits

Foolishness (a life of being attracted to what is before one's eyes and losing sight of the overall meaning): the realm of animals

Flattery (a life of anger): the realm *asuras* (demigods)

Tranquility (a human life): the realm of human beings

Joy (a life full of joy, but limited in time): the realm of heavenly beings

Impermanence (the person who has realized that nothing is permanent in this world and seeks peace of mind in contemplation): the realms *srāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* (disciples of Buddha or Hinayana sages)

Virtue (virtuous human life): the realm of bodhisattvas

Faith (a life of belief in the *Namu myōhō rengekyō* of the Three Great Esoteric Methods of Practice): the realm of buddhas. (Toda Jōsei Zenshū Shuppan inkai 1982, vol. 7: 117)