

March Discussion Topic– The meaning of kosen-rufu

Kosen-rufu is often taken to signify world peace. When we put Buddhist philosophy into practice, it affects our own lives and society. Kosen-rufu is an eternal stream. Kosen-rufu is not something that will end at some fixed point in time and never stops.

Although we can try to describe it by defining certain conditions to be met, in reality kosen-rufu has no set form. Kosen means to “widely declare.” “Widely” implies speaking out to the world. “Declare” means to proclaim one’s ideals, principles and philosophy. The ru (flow) of rufu means “a current like that of a great river,” and fu (cloth) means “to spread out like a bolt of cloth.” The Mystic Law flows out freely to all humans of the world. So rufu means to flow freely, reaching all and everyone.

Just like a cloth, too, kosen-rufu is woven from vertical and horizontal threads. The vertical threads represent the passing on of Nichiren Daishonin’s teaching from mentor to disciple, from one person to the other. The horizontal threads represent the impartial spread of this teaching, transcending national borders, social classes and all other distinctions. Simply put, kosen-rufu is the movement to create happiness and peace for all people in the world, through the philosophy and teachings of Nichiren Daishonin.

Kosen-rufu points to the ceaseless efforts SGI members engage in to awaken all people to their inherent and unlimited value and potential - Buddhahood - and help others to do the same. If the philosophy of respect for the dignity of life would be the foundation of our society, then peace, happiness and prosperity to humanity would be within reach.

We cannot live alone, isolated from others. In Japanese, the word human being (Jp. *ningen*) is written with two Chinese characters which when combined mean “between people.” It is through our interactions with others that we polish our lives and grow as human beings. Therefore, it is only natural that we want to share the philosophy with as many people as possible.

Kosen-rufu means sharing with our fellow human beings through heart-to-heart dialogue and friendship, striving together with them to find the way to become better and happier people. That alliance of individuals working for the happiness of all constitutes kosen-rufu.

Our serious efforts to realize the great wish of Shakyamuni Buddha and Nichiren Daishonin will gain immeasurable benefits. When we chant and take action with the “same mind as Nichiren” (WND-1, 385) to spread the Mystic Law, we can bring forth incredible power and strength from within our lives and illuminate the lives of those around us. Kosen-rufu is about increasing the number of people who do this, thereby spreading evermore widely the light of hope, respect and peace throughout the world.

* Do you feel we can achieve kosenrufu through our practice?

* How do you share Buddhism with others and do you have an experience with it?