

# Living the LOTUS

*Buddhism in Everyday Life*

3  
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 Founder's Essay 

## Share the Buddha's Teachings so that Everyone Can Put Them into Practice

IT'S important not to present the teachings of the Buddha as difficult theories but instead share them in ways that everyone can understand. Making the Buddha's teachings easily understood means explaining them for people so that everyone can actually put them into practice in their daily lives. People can grasp the magnificence of the teachings through personal experience only if they learn and practice them as taught.

We can't help believing what we ourselves have actually experienced, and when we wholeheartedly believe beyond a shadow of doubt, results are certain to follow. We can't stop ourselves from sharing this with others, and when this happens the people who encoun-

ter the Buddha's teachings come to experience its results, one after another.

If you talk about the things that everybody is searching for, what they really want to hear, then everyone will lean forward, giving you their undivided attention. When you speak from the heartfelt desire that everyone may receive the benefits and merits of the Buddha's teaching, people will gather one after another to listen to you.

A Dharma talk that doesn't give people anything they want—just saying what we want to say, going on and on about things that don't interest others—won't influence people, no matter how hard we try.

From *Kaisozuikan* 9 (Kosei Publishing, 1997), pp. 130–31

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Rissho Kosei-kai is a global Buddhist movement of people who strive to apply the teachings of the Threefold Lotus Sutra, one of the foremost Buddhist scriptures, in their daily lives and contribute to world peace. It was founded in 1938 by Rev. Nikkyo Niwano (1906–1999) and Rev. Myoko Naganuma (1889–1957). With the guidance of President Nichiko Niwano, Rissho Kosei-kai members actively share the Dharma widely and engage in peace activities both locally and internationally in cooperation with people from many walks of life.

The title of this newsletter, *Living the Lotus—Buddhism in Everyday Life*, conveys our hope of striving to practice the teachings of the Lotus Sutra in daily life in an imperfect world to enrich and make our lives more worthwhile, like beautiful lotus flowers blooming in a muddy pond. This newsletter aims to help people around the world apply Buddhism more easily in their daily lives.

## Becoming Happy Together with People in the Community

On the Occasion of the Eightieth Anniversary of  
the Founding of Rissho Kosei-kai

by Rev. Nichiko Niwano  
President of Rissho Kosei-kai



### A Town Where Many Bodhisattvas Live

Thanks to many people, this year, Rissho Kosei-kai is marking the eightieth anniversary of its founding. Our history is still relatively short, but thirty years ago, when our organization observed its fiftieth anniversary, Founder Nikkyo Niwano reflected on the aims and activities of the organization and told us in the pages of the monthly magazine, *Kosei*, that:

“Although our ultimate goal is to liberate all humanity, we absolutely must not neglect what is closest to us. We must first liberate the person before our eyes, harmonize with our own families, and then move forward to transforming our own community into a Pure Land. We must never forget to be sure and steady with each of these steps.”  
(March 1988)

I am deeply reflecting on the significance of the resolve demonstrated by the Founder on the fiftieth anniversary of our founding as we now welcome this milestone year and take new steps forward.

I have said before that, “If everyone (in the community) is happy, we members of Rissho Kosei-kai are also happy.” Transforming our community into a Pure Land means that all people living there are not merely satisfied with their own happiness, but direct their consciousness toward the security and happiness of the community, that is to say, the public good, and, without neglecting any element of their daily lives, build a cheerful home. Even this *saha* world that is our real world will thereby become the Land of Eternal Tranquil Light.

As the Founder often told us to “gladly do your duty to the community,” we should make our best efforts for the sake of the community we live in, draw near the people around us who have troubles, and when we hear that people are worried, listen carefully to what they have to say. Eventually, the community will become a place inhabited by a number of such bodhisattva-like people, and that is the

ideal of Rissho Kosei-kai members, who hope for the happiness of everyone, isn't it? In this sense, if you see people who are depressed and have a dark expression, light a lamp of hope in their hearts so that they can regain a smiling face and shine a bright light on the entire community. That is the diligent practice and the mission of Rissho Kosei-kai members who are living the faith.

### Sharing the Warmth of the Home with the Community

Once I watched part of a film, shot from atop a hill, of a town in the evening. As the sun went down, one house, then another, turned on its lights, and gradually, the entire town became a floating light beneath the dark mantle of night. It was like happiness spreading across the community, if such a sight could be described. This scene was of light pouring out of a window and, although the night was cold, smiles and warmth filled the homes to which everyone was eager to return—this image of such warm family life was spreading from one house to the next.

And, that first house could be your home. Everyone in the family gets along well, they are all connected to each other by respect and affection, and have peace of mind. Making your house such a home is the starting point for the happiness of the entire community.

Why is this? Because the sentiments of all of you who care about the people in your neighborhood and your community are being expressed through such actions as, for instance, when you sweep the street clean and you naturally go on to sweep in front of your neighbors' houses, or when you go out for a walk and you take the initiative in greeting the people you see, even if you do not know them, with a cheerful "good morning" or "hello." I think that by doing so, you are, little by little, harmonizing with other people and cultivating your own mind and others' minds and becoming, little by little, the like-minded people—bodhisattvas—who shine together the light in your community.

Furthermore, Rissho Kosei-kai has Dharma centers in every area. It is desirable that they serve not only as oases for all of our members, but also as places of physical and spiritual peace for everyone. However, in order to make them so, it is important that we take the lead and appeal to our communities. As indicated by *de-iri-guchi* (a Japanese composite term meaning both "exit and entrance" or literally, "way out and way in"), if we ourselves do not first step out, no one else will step in. With this in mind, I want all of you to definitely become as one with everyone in your communities and make your entire towns into oases. Making the happiness of your home the starting point, getting along well with everyone in your community is a large step forward toward peace.

From *Kosei*, March 2018







## Accepting Everything as the Buddha's Compassion and Living with a Grateful Mind



by Mr. Chung-Hou Chen  
Taipei Dharma Center

*This Dharma Sharing (Spiritual Journey) speech by Mr. Chung-Hou Chen was delivered at the end of year candlelight service held at the Taipei Dharma Center on December 25, 2017.*

GOOD morning everyone. Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to stand here to share my spiritual journey on this special day of the candlelight service.

I was born on November 5, 1950, in the countryside of Pingtung, a small town in southern Taiwan. My parents were farmers and we were really poor. I am the eldest of the five children. My parents went to work before dawn and came home after sunset to raise and support us. They worked diligently, without rest or complaint. As the oldest son in the family, I learned how to start a fire to cook rice in second grade and learned how to cook various dishes in third grade, so that I could lighten my parents' burden and have them come home to prepared meals. As I grew older, I worked part time to complete my college degree.

After graduating from college, I started to work in a travel agency. In 1976, a classmate of mine introduced me to my current wife. We dated for two years and got married in 1978. We have two sons. Part of



*Mr. Chen delivers his Dharma Sharing speech at the Taipei Dharma Center.*

my job in a travel agency was leading groups on over-sea tours. This meant all the responsibilities of educating our children fell completely on my wife's shoulders. Through my work, I got the opportunity to meet Mr. Rui-Lien Chien, the founder of the Taipei Dharma Center. At the time, Taipei Hoza belonged to the Toyoda Dharma Center in Tokyo. Therefore, every time Taipei Hoza had their Dharma training with the Toyoda Dharma Center, I was taking the group to Japan. During their training, I was really moved by how caring the members were and how thoroughly they incorporated the basic practices of faith: sutra recitation, guiding others to the faith (*michibiki*), supporting fellow members in the faith (*tedori*), attending *hoza* sessions, and the study and practice of the Dharma into their daily lives. I realized that I also adore and revere the Buddha. In 1984, I was guided to the faith by Mr. Chien and became a member of Rissho Kosei-kai. Soon after that, Mr. Chien asked me to have the installation of the *sokaimyo*, or the comprehensive posthumous name for the ancestors of both husband and wife. After discussion with my wife and family, we declined because in Taiwanese culture, ancestors of the wife are not venerated. Hence, I also stopped going to the Dharma center.

Maybe because I didn't receive the *sokaimyo* installation at my home, I became self-centered, attached to my own ways of thinking, and could not see the true aspect of things at work, which often caused me to lose good work opportunities. In 1986, I left my job at the travel agency and started my own travel agency. But our business fluctuated, and we had difficulty maintaining a stable income. Even though we tried for more than ten years, our financial

situation didn't improve. Meanwhile, we had high expenses raising our sons, and my wife frequently got frustrated and upset at our financial situation.

My wife would say she married the wrong person. I couldn't accept my wife's anger and reflected on what I've done, but in my opinion I was doing the best I could. Therefore, I came back to the Taipei Dharma Center to try to resolve my suffering. The Gohonzon and the warm smile of Founder Niwano, which I admire so much, became the support for my practice in the faith. One day, I received the guidance from Rev. Miao-Fang Chien, the minister of the Taipei Dharma Center, who said, "As all things in this universe are originally impermanent, if you take refuge in the absolute existence of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha and keep a firm faith, your life will improve without fail." I put the guidance into practice and spoke and interacted with the family with smiles and kind words. I also listened to what my family had in mind. As I changed myself and put those practices in my daily life, my wife began to complain less than before and it eased the tension in my mind as well.

One day, our minister Rev. Chien asked me to be the chairman of the Taipei Dharma Center. I was happy but concerned at the same time. I was concerned whether I deserved to take on the duty as the chairman, especially because I also had to work. I was really happy that I had been given an opportunity to be closer to the Buddha and wondered what message the Buddha was sending me through this opportunity.

After I became the chairman, I went to the Dharma center almost every morning to participate in the sutra recitation and a *hoza* session. In the afternoon, I would go back to the office to do my work. Before long, I started to see progress at work. When the business became busier, my wife's workload got heavier, especially as she also had to cover some of my work. She was overwhelmed with the heavy workload and started to complain. I could only quietly accept the complaint. Nevertheless, I continued going to the

Dharma center in the morning and working longer hours in the afternoon. I told my wife to not worry because the Buddha would look after us if we continued the practice. During this time, I was bestowed with the Gohonzon from the Taipei Dharma Center. Through the installation ceremony and the practice of paying respect to ancestors, my family and I had a deeper understanding of Rissho Kosei-kai's teachings now and no longer had any apprehension toward installing the *sokaimyo* in the family Buddhist altar to have the spirits of ancestors of both paternal and maternal sides enshrined there.

As our business grew, the number of our clients increased. Most of the clients found us on their own. During the busy times, we also encountered some difficulties. For instance, we had a group of 256 people traveling to Hokkaido, Japan, and they requested to depart together on the same flight. However, according to the airline, they could only provide 232 seats because the flight was already fully booked. A miraculous thing happened three weeks before departure. Twenty-four people cancelled the flight, and that allowed our full group to depart as planned. All other obstacles were resolved on their own, which made my wife and me feel the inconceivable power watching over us. The change in our financial situation also changed my wife's attitude toward the faith, and she started to attend the Dharma center and listen to Rev. Chien's Dharma guidance on Saturdays and Sundays. She also accepted the duty of preparing the *omorimono*, or fruits and vegetable offering, to the Gohonzon for the ceremonies. Whenever she visits the Dharma center, she participates in the sutra recitation and *hoza* to share the joy and worries with other sangha members.

For a time after I accepted the position as the chairman of the Taipei Dharma Center, I was anxious because I knew it was an important job, and I would wake up at around three o'clock every morning. Since I couldn't sleep after that, I would read *Buddhism for Today* by Founder Niwano in the Chinese translation. I continued doing so for almost two

# Spiritual Journey

months. It was stressful to my body and mind and I became too tired to continue. I wondered why I had to strain myself so much with my duties as chairman, and felt like giving up the position. However, when I was considering what kind of chairman I wanted to be, I became aware of the profound meaning of the Lotus Sutra, and my faith grew more steadfast. In 2016, I received the Gohonzon from the headquarters under the guidance of Rev. Chien. My wife and I learned the Dharma, practiced the morning and evening sutra recitation every day, and did our duties at the Dharma center. We also devoted ourselves to supporting our fellow members in the *sangha*.

On October 21, 2017, Rev. Chien recommended me to receive a certification of Dharma Teacher at the Tokyo headquarters. Before departure, an emergency situation at work occurred relating to income tax declaration that required immediate handling. I was undecided whether I should stay in Taiwan to solve the problem or go to Japan for the Dharma Teacher certification ceremony. I went to ask Rev. Chien for her guidance. She told me that as long as I kept an honest heart and attitude to accept everything as it is and held firm to the faith, the Buddha will arrange everything for me. She continued to encourage me to go to the headquarters to receive the certification. Meanwhile, inspired also



Mr. Chen (left) participates in a hoza session.

by a passage in chapter 12 of the Lotus Sutra, “Devadatta,” which reads, “if [good sons and good daughters who believe and revere the Lotus Sutra] are born into the presence of buddhas, they will be born from lotus flowers,” I made up my mind to always live in accordance with the Buddha’s teachings no matter what hardship or troubles I may come across, and I decided to receive the Dharma Teacher certification. Through this experience I learned the importance of accepting everything as the Buddha’s compassionate arrangement and freeing myself from attachment. The tax-related problem of my company was also solved after I came back from Japan.

In my spiritual journey, I learned to view both happy situations and sad, disappointing situations as opportunities that the Buddha had arranged for me to grow. That was a valuable learning opportunity that I truly cherish. If anything disappointing may happen, I would no longer get angry or complain but accept it with the heart of gratitude, as I know now everything that comes into way is an expression of the Buddha’s compassion. I am truly blessed to be able to have this awareness today. I am not wealthy, but I am grateful and satisfied.

Chapter 10 of the Lotus Sutra, “The Teachers of the Dharma,” includes the passage, “That man has adorned himself with the adornment of the Buddha.” As is described in this passage, I would like to be always gentle and kindhearted and further improve my thinking and behavior so that I can earn the trust of others and, together with people who I guided to the teachings, continue to learn the Threefold Lotus Sutra. Also, with the self-awareness as a Dharma Teacher, I will put my palms together and revere the buddha-nature inherent in all people and continue the basic practices of the Dharma in order to connect with many more people and extend good relationships, so that, under the guidance of President Niwano, I will be able to grow spiritually together with the fellow members of the *sangha*.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

**Living the**  
 **LOTUS**



# The 7 Parables of the Lotus Sutra



The Sutra of the Lotus Flower  
of the Wonderful Dharma  
Chapter 7: The Parable of the Conjured City

## The Parable of the Conjured City

There was a long and steep road in a remote region. A large group of people were walking the road, seeking some rare treasures. There was a leader among them who had extensive knowledge and superior wisdom, and he was very familiar with the road ahead.



Having traveled a long distance, the people had become tired on the way and said to the leader, “We are completely worn out and can’t go any further. We want to turn back.” The leader felt pity for them and used his power of skillful means to conjure a large city at a point just beyond the halfway point of their journey.

The exhausted people were overjoyed, and they proceeded to enter the conjured city and rest themselves. When the leader saw that all people in the party had completely recovered from their fatigue, he said, “Come on, all of you, let’s go; the location of the treasure is close at hand. This city is actually just something I created for the time being so that you could rest.” Everyone in the party was encouraged by the leader’s words and started to move forward toward the treasures.





## Commentary

The long and steep road indicates our lives, which are filled with suffering. We human beings continue our journey, seeking for true happiness in our lives—attaining the Buddha’s wisdom—which is symbolized by the rare treasures in this story. The leader who guides us symbolizes the Buddha.

Although we are seeking for happiness and practicing the Buddha’s teachings, we get tired, since our lives do not usually develop as we wish. Suffering in our lives occurs over and over again, with no end, and this makes us become weary of practicing the Way, lose courage, and feel like turning back.

It is then that the Buddha conjures a city at a point a little further than the half way. The conjured city symbolizes the teachings for the two vehicles of the *shra-vaka* and the *pratyekabuddha*, which the Buddha expounded as skillful means to remove worldly sufferings. The true happiness that we are seeking for, which is symbolized by the rare treasures in the story, is actually the wisdom of the Buddha, but many people do not realize it. They are desperate only to escape daily suffering and are dreaming of indefinite happiness. So the Buddha first explained to them the doctrine of interdependent origination, which teaches that everything that is occurring before our eyes is not a permanent existence, but only a provisional appearance that arises interdependently. That means we will be able to achieve peace of mind if we release our mind from attachment to various things and occurrences. People who practice this teaching attain spiritual freedom and peace of mind, just as the travelers in the story who rested in the conjured city.

When the party found comfort in that state of the mind and regained vigor, however, the leader made the conjured city disappear, and said, “You will be able to find the true happiness a little further ahead.” The true happiness of human beings is not found in resting in comfort for oneself but in living to make others happy. Setting aside our own happiness, we continue bodhisattva practice and use our potential to the fullest for the happiness of the whole world, and eventually obtain the Buddha’s wisdom (the truth of the One Vehicle). That is nothing other than the way that will bring us to the true happiness and make our life worth living.

As soon as we leave the conjured city, we will meet with suffering again. But it is not the type of suffering that we have tried to avoid before. The new suffering accompanies the effort that we voluntarily make for the happiness of others, and it will bring joy back to us. Just as the travelers in the story, we are walking toward the happiness together with all people. Moreover, the Buddha is always walking with us, close by each and every one of us.

Editorial supervision by the Chuo Academic Research Institute





## The Best Way to Repay Our Gratitude to Our Predecessors

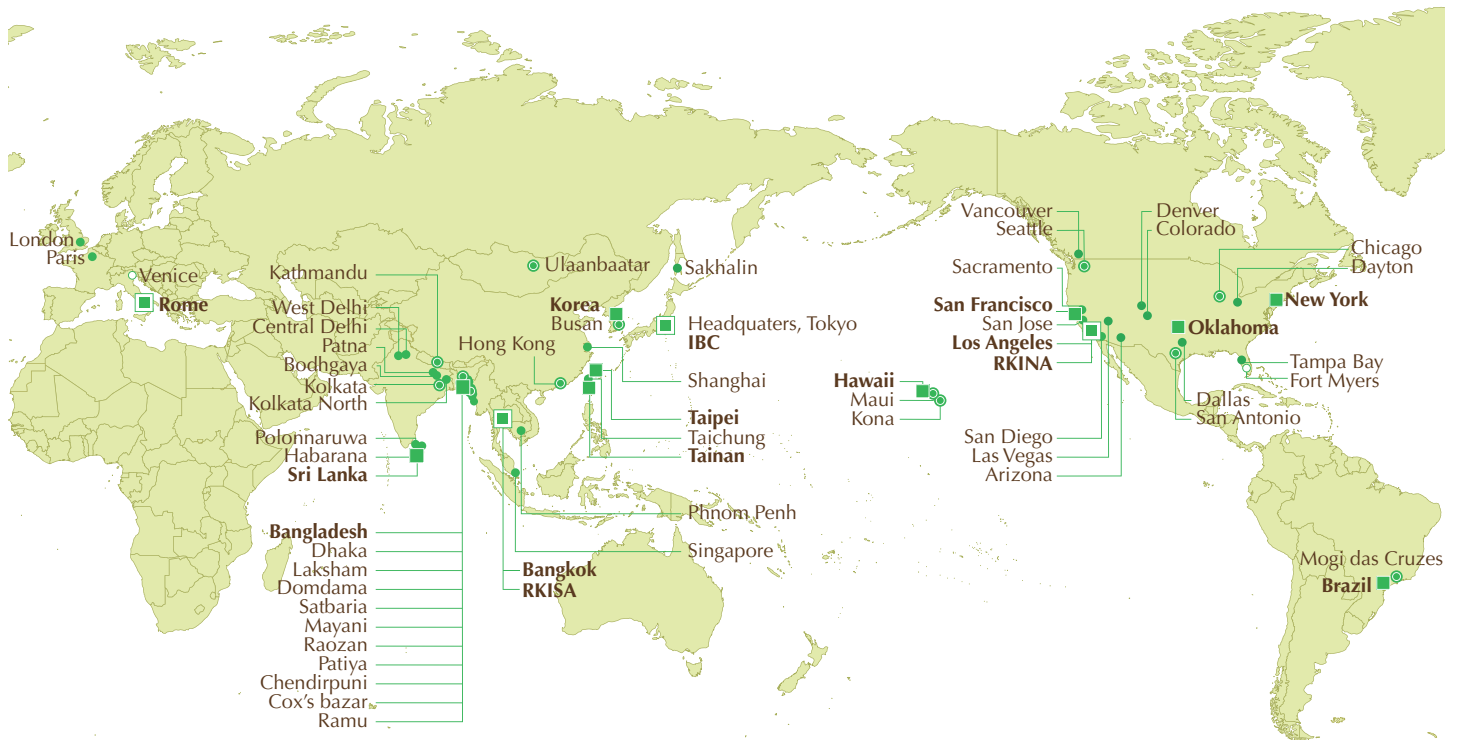
THIS month we will observe the eightieth anniversary of the founding of Rissho Kosei-kai. We will also celebrate the eightieth birthday of President Niwano. I would like to pray with all of you that the President will be ever healthier and more vigorous in continuing to guide us.

In his New Year's address, President Niwano introduced to us the word *ikan*, one of the two keywords he had written for his New Year's calligraphy, which means "being easy and simple." By explaining the word, he taught us the importance of living simply and in a natural way without complicating things, and living with an awareness of the truth that we are caused to live by the law of interdependent origination and by receiving many blessings from nature. He wrote the word *ikan* with these thoughts in mind.

On the occasion of Rissho Kosei-kai's eightieth anniversary, President Niwano also teaches us the importance of repaying our debt of gratitude to the Founder, the Cofounder, and many leaders and members preceding us. I strongly believe that Dharma dissemination is the best way to express our gratitude to our predecessors. I hope that all of us will make our best effort in guiding many more people to the faith.

Rev. Koichi Saito

Director, Rissho Kosei-kai International



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224 Site No.1, Shankar Road, New Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi,  
110060, India

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of West Delhi**

66D, Sector-6, DDA-Flats, Dwarka, New Delhi 110075, India

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Kolkata**

E-243 B. P. Township, P. O. Panchasayar, Kolkata 700094, India

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Kolkata North**

AE/D/12 Arjunpur East, Teghoria, Kolkata 700059,  
West Bengal, India

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Bodhgaya Dharma Center**

Ambedkar Nagar, West Police Line Road  
Rumpur, Gaya-823001, Bihar, India

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Kathmandu**

Ward No. 3, Jhamsilhel, Sancepa-1, Lalitpur,  
Kathmandu, Nepal

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Phnom Penh**

#201E2, St 128, Sangkat Mittapheap, Khan 7 Makara,  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Patna Dharma Center**

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Singapore**

#### **Thai Rissho Friendship Foundation**

201 Soi 15/1, Praram 9 Road, Bangkapi, Huaykhwang  
Bangkok 10310, Thailand  
*Tel:* 66-2-716-8141 *Fax:* 66-2-716-8218 *e-mail:* info.thairissho@gmail.com

#### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Bangladesh**

85/A Chanmari Road, Lalkhan Bazar, Chittagong, Bangladesh  
*Tel & Fax:* 880-31-626575

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Dhaka**

House#408/8, Road#7(West), D.O.H.S Baridhara,  
Dhaka Cant.-1206, Bangladesh  
*Tel:* 880-2-8413855

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Mayani**

Mayani(Barua Para), Post Office: Abutorab, Police Station: Mirshari,  
District: Chittagong, Bangladesh

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Patiya**

Patiya, sadar, Patiya, Chittagong, Bangladesh

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Domdama**

Domdama, Mirsarai, Chittagong, Bangladesh

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Cox's Bazar**

Ume Burmese Market, Main Road Teck Para, Cox'sbazar, Bangladesh

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Satbaria**

Satbaria, Hajirpara, Chandanish, Chittagong, Bangladesh

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Laksham**

Dupchar (West Para), Bhora Jatgat pur, Laksham, Comilla,  
Bangladesh

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Raozan**

West Raozan, Ramjan Ali Hat, Raozan, Chittagong, Bangladesh

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Chendirpuni**

Chendirpuni, Adhunagor, Lohagara, Chittagong, Bangladesh

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Ramu**

#### **Rissho Kosei Dhamma Foundation, Sri Lanka**

No. 628-A, Station Road, Hunupitiya, Wattala, Sri Lanka  
*Tel:* 94-11-2982406 *Fax:* 94-11-2982405

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Habarana**

151, Damulla Road, Habarana, Sri Lanka

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai of Polonnaruwa**

#### **Other Groups**

##### **Rissho Kosei-kai Friends in Shanghai**