

# Living the Lotus 10

*Buddhism in Everyday Life*

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**Members in the US, and from Japan, Join the 2025 Nisei Week  
Grand Parade in Los Angeles, August 10**



Photo@EricXiong

## **Living the Lotus Vol. 241 (October 2025)**

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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.





### What We Learn from Reading

Rev. Nichiko Niwano  
President of Rissho Kosei-kai



*President Niwano addresses members during the memorial ceremony for the thirtieth anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, held at the Kobe Dharma Center on January 17, 2025.*

### Make Friends with Saints and Sages

At this time of year, we often hear the phrase “autumn is the season for reading,” and since I concluded the previous issue by saying, “I will write again about deepening our learning,” I want to discuss how the important and familiar activity of reading is one key to learning.

The late Edo period intellectual Yoshida Shoin (1830–59) sent his cousin, who was about to undergo his *Genpuku* ceremony (a former coming-of-age ceremony that took place at around the age of fifteen), a letter titled “Seven Rules for Samurai.” In it he states, “As you are living as a human being, if you do not understand the truths of times past and present and do not make saints and sages your teachers, you will become a mean-spirited person who thinks only of self-interest. Therefore, it is the duty of a virtuous person to make friends with saints and sages through reading.” This emphasizes the great significance of reading in order to deepen knowledge.

Similarly, an ancient Greek philosopher wrote, “Reading books is the best way to easily absorb what people have gained through strenuous endeavors and also to develop yourself.” Therefore, coming into contact with the thinking and writings of distinguished people is a form of learning through which we come to know how to lead good lives as human beings, and this has never changed in any era.

Of course, reading need not be limited to the teachings of saints and wise people, as books of all genres can stir our hearts with depictions of great emotion and wonder as well as show us the sorrows and joys experienced by other people, and all of these are nourishment for the mind. Recently, though, as bookstores have become scarce, digital enthusiasts might laugh at us and say, “Printed books, in this day and age?” However, various studies have shown that reading has many excellent benefits for both the body and the mind, regardless of your age.

## The Positive Effects of Reading Printed Books

According to one study, people learn about themselves by reading stories, imagining the world within those stories, and empathizing with the characters. At the same time, reading seems to cultivate the empathy and sensitivity needed to understand other people's positions and feelings, and to foster the sensitivity that inspires us to be considerate of others. There is also data showing that people who read a lot of books in childhood have a vocabulary that is about three times greater than that of people who did not.

"The amount of reading a seven-year-old child does will decide England's reason for existing in twenty years' time." This is said to be a quote from former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and what he seems to be implying is that a country full of people who have fostered, through reading, a well-balanced sensitivity and intellect will have a well-educated and gentle population that is very amicable, which in itself is a mark of great national strength.

What we can get from smartphones and other such devices is "information," but mathematician Masahiko Fujiwara says, "Only by reading books do human beings organize isolated information and transform it into knowledge, and only through experience, reflection, and sensitivity does knowledge become organized and form culture" (*Honya o mamore* [Support bookstores], PHP Institute, 2020). In other words, the functioning of a cultured and enriched mind is necessary to properly evaluate "information," and much of the sensitivity and contemplative experiences that form the basis of doing so are cultivated through reading.

There are many other positive effects of reading printed books, such as relaxation, stress relief, and improvements in symptoms of dementia, but above all, we can receive the teachings of Shakyamuni and Confucius through books (scripture). The more biographies we read, the greater our joy in being able to relive the lives of others. Furthermore, it is extremely important that young children, who will become the leaders of the next generation, have opportunities to become familiar with printed books because the feel of a book and the voices of their parents reading words aloud to them will help develop their brains and foster in them knowledge and emotions that are inherently human.

I myself enjoy reading because I want to learn more about how to live as a human being and develop my mind, but when my children were young, I was the one who would often nod off while reading picture books to them at bedtime. That said, I believe that those routines also form important memories of reading that foster emotional bonding for both the parent and the child. In any case, in the spirit of refining yourself as well as the prospect of nurturing others, why not try adding reading, and therefore learning, to the pleasures of the long autumn nights and make it a part of your daily routine?

From *Kosei*, October 2025





# Spiritual Journey

## If I Change, the World Will Change

**Mr. Sor Bunthy, Rissho Kosei-kai of Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

*This Dharma Journey talk was presented at the Youth Leaders Training of the South Asia Division, held online on May 24, 2025.*

I was born into the Sor family in Cambodia in 1991. My family consisted of my parents, my older brother, my older sister, and me. My family owned a fruit store, and my parents and sister worked at the store starting early each morning. My brother currently works for a Japanese company in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, while serving as the leader of Rissho Kosei-kai of Phnom Penh.

My brother was the first in our family to become a member of Rissho Kosei-kai. He joined the organization in 2007 and studied the Lotus Sutra for two years at Gakurin Seminary in Japan. I was deeply moved by the actions of Rev. Masatoshi Shimamura, then assistant minister of Rissho Kosei-kai International of South Asia (RKISA), and my brother, who always thought of others before themselves, and I decided to become a member myself. I also joined because I was fascinated by the beautiful smile of Founder Nikkyo Niwano, whose picture I saw in the *Kosei Shimbun* newspaper when it arrived at the Dharma center. After I became a member of Rissho Kosei-kai, I participated in various activities with my brother.

I was also given the opportunity to join Gakurin Seminary in 2015. At Gakurin, I learned the teachings of Founder Niwano and President Nichiko Niwano, and I refined my mind by following the Dharma. After graduation, I returned to Cambodia in 2017 and started working for a private company.

In 2019, I got married. For some time after the wedding, my wife and I got along well. As my wife also had a job, there were no financial problems in our lives, but the situation gradually changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The government issued a stay-at-home order, and our salaries were cut in half, making it difficult to maintain our previous lifestyle.

At that time, I was giving my entire reduced salary to my wife, and I didn't buy anything I wanted for myself. My wife was also working, but she didn't tell me how she was spending her salary, so my mind



*Mr. Sor Bunthy*

became unsettled. I began to wonder if she was wasting money or spending it on luxuries for herself. These feelings turned into anger and filled our marriage with constant arguments. Due to the pandemic, there were restrictions on going out, so I couldn't talk to anyone to take my mind off things. I couldn't do anything about my anger and just took it out on my wife every day.

Despite these challenging days, there came a moment when I decided to listen to my wife calmly. Since I had some distrust regarding money, I asked her about it honestly. She then showed me her bankbook. For the first time, I realized that she had been saving all the money I had given her. She told me, "Actually, I've been using my own salary for living expenses and saving all of your money for the future." Hearing that, I realized I had been arrogant in thinking I was the only one supporting my family. I felt ashamed of myself and apologized to my wife. Being able to talk calmly with my wife helped me understand her perspective, and my view of her changed. After that, our relationship improved, and we returned to a peaceful life together.

# Spiritual Journey



*Mr. Bunthy (second from left) poses for a commemorative photo with a lecturer and classmates of Gakurin after the seminary's graduation ceremony in March 2017.*

Looking back now, if I had just talked things out calmly with my wife from the start instead of holding onto mistrust and feeling uneasy, I wouldn't have had to go through all that worry, and I wouldn't have accumulated negative thoughts in my heart.

Through this experience, I learned the importance of listening calmly to others and of not judging things based on appearances alone. By listening to others, you can understand their thoughts and circumstances, which in turn helps improve your relationships. This is something I truly came to understand through my own experience.

I also had another learning experience. In Cambodia, it is common to have children soon after marriage. However, during three years of marriage, my wife and I had not been able to have a child. Every time we met friends or relatives, they would ask us why we did not have children. We didn't know why, and we felt guilty and depressed.

One day, when my wife and I returned to my parents' home, a female relative of mine firmly addressed my wife: "Why don't you have any children yet? You should have a child as soon as possible." Hearing these words, my wife felt as if she was being blamed and was deeply hurt.

My wife and I wondered why my relative had to say such harsh things to us. At the same time, we tried not to get caught up in her words but to look deeper into her heart. Then we came to understand that behind her harsh words was a strong desire for us to have children soon and find happiness. I was able to reach this understanding because I had had a similar experience once before.

It happened when I was a student at Gakurin. When I was in charge of accounting for the Overseas Students Course study tour, there was a discrepancy in the remaining balance for the tour. As a result, I was severely reprimanded for nearly four hours by Mr. A, who was my homeroom teacher at Gakurin. It was a painful experience, and I felt deeply depressed. Then, another lecturer came over to me, listened to my story with genuine concern, and said, "What do you think was in the mind of Mr. A when he scolded you? Wasn't there a wish to help you grow? It would be nice if you could see what was really in his heart, rather than just the surface meaning of his words."

Looking back, when Mr. A was scolding me, he was completely serious. It was clear from his expression that he wasn't scolding me because he hated me or disliked me. When I realized that Mr. A had spent nearly four hours of his time for my sake, I felt that Mr. A cared about me and was concerned for me. At that moment, my view of Mr. A changed from that of a strict person to that of a warmhearted person.

I shared my experience at Gakurin with my wife, and we put into practice the idea of "looking beyond the surface of the words to see the heart behind them." Eventually, our view of my female relative changed, and our relationship with her improved. And before we knew it, the conflicts and feelings of



*In November 2023, Rishsho Kosei-kai of Phnom Penh carried out a school supplies support project as part of the Donate-a-Meal Fund for Peace project. Before departing for the support mission, Cambodian members held a ceremony at the Dharma center attended by Rev. Masatoshi Shimamura (second from right in the back row), then director of RKISA, and Rev. Hidemitsu Suzuki (third from left, back row), deputy director of Rishsho Kosei-kai International.*



# Spiritual Journey



*Mr. and Mrs. Bunthy celebrate their daughter's first birthday in 2024.*

guilt that had existed within us disappeared. Not long after, we were blessed with a daughter.

Finally, I would like to share one more experience. Since returning to Cambodia, I have worked for a Japanese company for seven years. My immediate supervisor is Japanese, and I have about thirty-five staff members. I struggled with how to manage the relationships between my supervisor and my staff. When I simply relayed instructions from my supervisor to my staff members, they would push back, saying the task was impossible to do. However, when I reported my staff members' opinions to my supervisor, I would often receive harsh guidance in return. I couldn't ignore either my supervisor's or my staff members' feelings, and I found myself caught between them. I always felt irritable and unable to relax, even after returning home, and my mind was filled with work-related stress.

One day, when I talked about my worries during *hoza*, or "Dharma circle," Rev. Shimamura, who facilitated the *hoza*, said to me, "It must be difficult to serve as a bridge between your supervisor and your staff. Try to think of yourself as a large vessel that can accept the feelings of others." Following his advice, I decided to accept both my supervisor's instructions and my staff members' opinions with an open mind as if I had become a large vessel, and I put this into practice.

Previously, when I received instructions from my supervisor, I would only think about passing them on to my staff to carry out. When my staff resisted, I would get angry. I didn't take either my supervisor's feelings or those of my staff seriously, and I was only focused on finding solutions to problems, becoming

frustrated when things didn't go smoothly. These feelings of frustration were conveyed to the people around me, negatively impacting workplace relationships and work performance. At the time, I was only thinking about making people listen to me and changing them.

However, after I received the guidance to "become like a large vessel," the way I listened to the opinions of my supervisor and staff began to change. Since we were fortunate enough to be working together, I decided to make an effort to accept everything at first and focus on changing myself rather than trying to change others. I concentrated on properly understanding my supervisor's ideas and wishes, and instead of simply instructing my staff to follow orders, I made a conscious effort to listen carefully to their ideas as well. As a result, I began to hear more people around me say "You understand how I feel," and my relationships with both my supervisor and staff improved.

Through this experience, I learned that in order to solve the various problems I encounter in my daily life, it is important to change my own perspective rather than trying to change others. I learned that by listening and changing myself, I can truly understand the circumstances and perspectives of others.

Thanks to Founder Niwano, President Niwano, and my brother, who is my Dharma parent, I encountered Rissho Kosei-kai and formed a connection with its precious teachings. And through these teachings, I overcame challenges that arose at home and at work. I sincerely express my gratitude to the teachings and to the karmic connection that brought me into contact with them.

Everyone, thank you very much for listening.



*Mr. Bunthy (second from left) with fellow members of Rissho Kosei-kai of Phnom Penh, working together on the Donate-a-Meal Fund for Peace project in June 2024.*

# Practicing the Dharma in the Here and Now



## Transmigrating in the Six Realms of Existence

Beginning this month, we are delighted to introduce a new series by Dr. Dominick Scarangelo, translator of *Buddhism for Today* (2019 edition). The series title, *Sokuze Dojo* (Practicing the Dharma in the Here and Now), is inspired by chapter 21 of the Lotus Sutra and expresses the principle of “Meditation on the Place of the Way”—the insight that any place can be a place of practice. This teaching serves as a guiding principle for lay Buddhists, encouraging us to live the Dharma wherever we may be—at home, at work, or at school.

In each installment, Dr. Scarangelo draws upon the Lotus Sutra and the teachings of Founder Niwano to illuminate a range of themes, offering fresh perspectives on how to embody Buddhist practice in everyday life.

*As long as one's heart is caught up in delusions and desires, cycling through the six realms of transmigration, the troubles and sufferings of this world will never come to an end.*

—Nikkyo Niwano, *Niwano Nikkyo howa senshu*  
(Selected Dharma talks of Nikkyo Niwano)

You may have heard that Buddhism believes in reincarnation. According to Buddhism, living beings are repeatedly born, die, and are reborn in the world, a cycle of birth and death known as “transmigration.” This cycle, from the Indian perspective, has existed since the beginning of time. When living beings enter the world, they are born into one of six different types of living beings or in six circumstances, referred to as “realms.” These six realms are as follows: hells, inhabited by beings trapped in extreme suffering due to anger and hatred; hungry spirits, afflicted with unquenchable desires; beasts, or animals, who act impulsively and disregard reason; asuras, demigods



Dr. Dominick Scarangelo is the international advisor to Rissho Kosei-kai. He obtained his PhD from the University of Virginia in 2012. Dr. Scarangelo has taught at the University of Virginia and was the Postdoctoral Scholar in Japanese Buddhism at the University of California, Berkeley, from 2013 to 2014. Within Rissho Kosei-kai, he has made significant contributions by teaching and speaking—particularly supporting members in Europe and North America—as well as coordinating the International Lotus Sutra Seminar (sponsored by RK), translating the organization's books and documents, and working with the International Buddhist Congregation, a Rissho Kosei-kai group for foreign residents of Japan.



whose self-centered way of looking at things brings them into conflict with others; humans, who experience both negative and positive emotions but can also be compassionate; and heavenly beings, sometimes called “gods,” who experience fleeting pleasure and comfort that is ultimately false because it can never last forever. Buddhism teaches that all states are realms of suffering, and even heavenly beings suffer when their pleasure and comfort come to an end.

But there's another practical meaning of the six realms of existence that's crucial to our practice. These realms can also be seen as our moment-to-moment existence in this world. Since our minds are



unstable and easily agitated by external changes, we “transmigrate” through the six realms of our minds. We suffer as our inner states constantly bounce around the different mental states of the six realms, ranging from hellish anger and hatred to the fleeting, deceptive pleasure of the heavens and all states in between. For instance, when we’re consumed by anger, we’re truly trapped in the realms of hell. Everyone around us seems to have appeared just to torment us. But when our inner state is an angry realm of hell, it’s not confined within us; it inevitably manifests in our outward behavior because our inner nature and our outward comportment tend to align. If we’re filled with anger, Buddhism teaches us that we’ll inevitably manifest that anger as action in the world—toward something or someone else, causing harm to others, and inviting painful consequences for ourselves as well. To achieve happiness and find contentment, we need to escape the “burning house”—this is the analogy that the parable of the third chapter of the Lotus Sutra uses to describe the mental states of the six realms—and enter the realms of Buddhist practitioners: the mindsets of awakening.

Of course, the primary objective of our practice is to shed the burning house, the mindsets of the six realms. Fortunately, in the Lotus Sutra we find a guaranteed path to liberation from these mindsets, particularly the three that cause us the most suffering—anger, greed, and ignorance. An important passage from the Lotus Sutra’s twelfth chapter, “Devadatta,” which Risshō Kōsei-kai members regularly recite, reveals that if we not only hear the message of this chapter but also trust in it and revere it, we will cease experiencing the mindsets of anger, greed, and ignorance. At the very least, our hearts will retain the mindsets of the human and heavenly realms, and we will also have the chance to rise to the mindset of the buddhas.

What is the message conveyed in chapter 12? According to Founder Niwano, the message is that instead of reacting to adversities with anger and hatred, we should embrace them as opportunities for self-improvement, for creating a better world, and for viewing those who make our lives challenging as our teachers. In essence, this boils down to cultivating



*A Tibetan Buddhist painting of the Six Realms of Existence*

gratitude for everything. Holding onto anger and hatred will only amplify their power and intensify our suffering. There is no benefit in anger and hatred; regardless of the situation, they only exacerbate things. However, by cultivating gratitude, we can transform the negative energy of adversity into positive forces, freeing our minds from the anguish of anger, greed, and ignorance.

To be grateful for adversity may seem absurd advice to many people. Why should we be grateful for hardships? Because they are like the heaviness of the dumbbells we use during workouts: if they provided no resistance, we could never train our muscles and maintain our health. I believe we intuitively understand this. Take any significant achievement in your life, and behind that success, there will have been countless adversities and hardships that, if not accepted, would never have led to success. Everything we encounter, as the Lotus Sutra teaches us, serves the purpose of our awakening.

When we take on the challenges of life with a mind of gratitude, not only do we escape the mindsets of the most excruciating anguish, but our hearts and minds are “born into the presence of buddhas”—we realize that the Buddha is always with us, and we are never alone.





### Field Report from the Sangha

Rev. Hidemitsu Suzuki,  
Deputy Director, Rissho Kosei-kai International

A few years ago, there was a woman close to me who never responded to me even when I greeted her. Not only would she ignore my greeting, but she would even glare at me with a sharp look. Gradually, irritation began to build up inside me, and I honestly felt, “No matter how many times I greet her, it’s meaningless,” and, “Greeting her only leaves me feeling unpleasant, so I should just stop.” Still, I continued, and eventually, once in a while, I would hear a faint reply—barely audible. And whenever I did receive a reply, it made me happy. After this happened a few times, I found myself thinking that when she responded, “Maybe something good happened for her today,” and when she didn’t respond, “Maybe something unpleasant happened.” I began to imagine what she might be feeling, and instead of being consumed by irritation, I found myself becoming more interested in her. This was a surprising discovery for me, since I had been under the sway of anger.

Looking back now, when I felt angry at the other person’s attitude and thought it was pointless to greet them, I might have been in the *hell* realm. And the mind that naturally expected a reply from them may have been a self-centered *asura* state of mind. The heart that felt joy when I received a reply could have been in the realm of *heavenly beings*. And the heart that tried to imagine her feelings may have been in the realm of *humans*. Seen in this way, I was made aware of how much I transmigrate through the six realms in my daily life. Yet, while we are caught in the middle of daily occurrences, it is hard to realize this truth. That is why those who make me aware of it are, in fact, precious.

Thanks to others, I can come to know myself. Thanks to others, I am given opportunities to grow. I want to keep these truths close to heart and continue to make diligent efforts day by day.





### Chapter 2 To Connect with Others

## Express Your Gratitude for the Buddha's Compassion

Rev. Nikkyo Niwano  
Founder of Rissho Kosei-kai



*Founder Nikkyo Niwano dining with family at home, 1982.*

### **Live as One Who Has Been Given the Gift of Life**

Since we are always blessed with the Buddha's protection, our desire to repay the Buddha's benevolence in any way we can is very important. So, what can we do to express our gratitude for the Buddha's benevolence?

The Buddha in whom we take refuge is called The Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni—Great Benevolent Teacher, World-Honored One. As shown in the Lotus Sutra's "The Life Span of the Eternal Tathagata" chapter, the Eternal Original Buddha, and Shakyamuni, who appeared in this world, are fundamentally inseparable. However, when it comes to how we could repay the Buddha's benevolence, it's probably best to consider the Eternal Original Buddha, and Shakyamuni, who expounded the teachings of Buddhism for us, separately.

The first thing we should keep in mind is that we are given the gift of life and sustained by the Eternal Original Buddha, who can also be called "the great Life of the universe," and so we can express our gratitude by living our lives conscious of having been brought to life for a purpose. Each person has their own role in this world and is imbued with life to fulfill it. By continually





being aware of, cherishing, and fulfilling that role, we cultivate ourselves. In Buddhism, this is called “diligence,” and it is precisely this diligence that is the first step in repaying the Buddha’s benevolence.

The next point is that the Eternal Original Buddha brings not only humanity but all living things to life and even brings inanimate things into existence. When this truth settles into the depths of one’s heart, a profound awareness springs forth: “I do not live under my own power but am brought to life by the Eternal Original Buddha, and by extension, my life is sustained by all people and all things in the universe.”

Then you’ll come to see that to repay the benevolence of the Eternal Original Buddha, we must feel the kind of friendship we have for brothers and sisters for all people and spare no effort in being kind to not only them—who, like us, are imbued with life—but also animals and plants and even inanimate things such as air, water, and earth. Buddhism calls this conduct “generosity.”

Putting such diligence and generosity into practice is truly the way to repay the benevolence of the Eternal Original Buddha.

*Bodai no me o okosashimu* (Kosei Publishing, 2018), pp. 84–86



# Director's Column

## Deepening Learning on Long Autumn Nights

Rev. Keiichi Akagawa  
Director, Rissho Kosei-kai International

Hello, everyone. Although the autumn equinox has passed, lingering summer heat still hangs over Japan. I hope you are all doing well.

Every year, as autumn approaches, we hear phrases such as “the season for reading,” “long autumn nights,” and “book week.” In this month’s message, before autumn deepens, President Niwano guides us on the daily habit of reading as one way to cultivate our minds. From the perspective of a devoted book lover, he shares profound words on the benefits of reading.

By the way, dear readers of this column, do you prefer reading in print or digital format? In recent years, alongside traditional printed books, many people are enjoying reading on screens in the form of ebooks. Amid this trend, our English-language magazine, *Dharma World*, which has a fifty-two-year history, will shift from print to digital distribution starting next year. I take the opportunity to announce this change and kindly ask for your continued readership and support.

Regardless of the format, reading remains an invaluable habit for nurturing the mind. Let us not be carried away by our busy daily routines or be satisfied with only simple, empty words. Taking this month’s message as my guide, I hope during these long autumn nights to savor the boundless world of compassion and wisdom revealed in the Lotus Sutra. I warmly invite you to join me.



Left: On September 6, before the Ullambana Ceremony held at Rissho Kosei-kai of Korea, Rev. Akagawa conveys proper mindset to members serving in the roles of offering candles and flowers to the Buddha. Right: Rev. Akagawa (center) facilitates a Dharma circle after the ceremony.





# Donate-a-Meal Movement



## Let Your Heart Rejoice

### What Is the Donate-a-Meal Movement?

This movement invites people to reflect on those suffering from conflicts, disasters, and poverty in the world. By donating a portion of the money you might spend on meals or personal indulgences, you contribute, in the spirit of sharing, to the movement's activities.

The movement began in Japan in 1975 with people skipping one meal several times a month and donating the equivalent amount of money. Today, this is practiced in various ways worldwide and adapted to suit individual lifestyles. Following last month's issue, we introduce more voices of sangha members around the world who are practicing this movement.



**Boudarith Un (a.k.a. Dalit)**  
**Rissho Kosei-kai of Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

*Mr. Un joins activities to support an elementary school in Cambodia as part of the Donate-a-Meal Fund for Peace project.*

“Nice to meet you! My name is Dalit, and I’m a member of Rissho Kosei-kai in Cambodia. I would like to take this opportunity to share my thoughts. I’m truly happy and always grateful to be a part of Rissho Kosei-kai. Through the membership at Rissho Kosei-kai, I’ve gained knowledge and wisdom not only in Buddhism but also many other areas. Through our monthly study sessions and community service activities, I’ve shared and experienced many things with fellow members.

I was introduced to the Donate-a-Meal Movement when I participated in our monthly study group. It was the first time I had heard of such an activity in Cambodia. At first, I wondered whether we could really practice it—but thanks to everyone’s cooperation, we actually did!

Thanks to Rissho Kosei-kai’s Donate-a-Meal

Movement, our sangha became a bridge between Cambodia and Japan, which allowed us to carry out social contribution activities in Cambodia. Together, we visited a rural elementary school in Cambodia and provided donations and support to children in need. I was very happy and grateful to be able to take part. Seeing the children’s joyful faces and sincere smiles, and the teachers’ earnest efforts, I was deeply moved. I truly hope that activities like this will continue.

I believe it is very important for Buddhists to connect with society. By helping one another and growing together, I hope we can all live healthy, harmonious lives—both physically and mentally.

Thank you very much for allowing me to take part in the Donate-a-Meal Movement. On behalf of the Cambodian people, I sincerely express my heartfelt gratitude. Thank you always, and I look forward to working with you.”



*Mr. Un (far left) participates in support activities with fellow sangha members.*



**Rahul Kumar Jha**  
Rissho Kosei-kai of Delhi

“I came to know about the Donate-a-Meal Movement through the Delhi branch of Rissho Kosei-kai. I encountered Rissho Kosei-kai eight years ago, and I learned that the members of Rissho Kosei-kai of Delhi were engaged in activities to benefit humanity. This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Donate-a-Meal Movement. Two weeks ago, on the day celebrating the Anniversary of Shakyamuni Buddha’s Birth, we held a donate-a-meal event.

The concept of a one-meal donation—skipping one meal and donating its value or equivalent food to someone in need—may seem small, but in practice, it can have a significant impact. Last year, I also had a chance to participate in a donate-a-meal activity, and the experience was both humbling and enlightening. When I define hunger in one sentence, I say, “hunger is not just the absence of food—it is a daily struggle faced by millions.”

Once, when the pandemic was going on and life was just stuck, I found many people were struggling for food. I saw that many families could not supply basic food for themselves. At that time, I understood the actual value of food. I would like to salute Founder Niwano for this worldwide initiative. However, I am a foodie! But when I heard Rev. Shimamura, former director of Rissho Kosei-kai International of South Asia, speak during a seminar, I also committed to skipping one meal each month for such a noble cause. I calculate the cost of that meal and donate the amount to our organization.

I am really blessed because I am part of Rissho Kosei-kai of Delhi. We have a good sangha, and our sangha leaders are very supportive. I am really fasci-

nated by the donation activities of Rissho Kosei-kai because we collect member donations, make a plan, receive guidance from our leader, and then receive guidance for implementation from Rissho Kosei-kai. This is the beauty of Rissho Kosei-kai. This is the power of unity.

The process taught me several valuable lessons. First, I became acutely aware of the value of food, and I never leave food on my plate. Skipping one meal does not affect me much, but for someone else, that one meal could mean not going hungry. It shifted my perspective on waste, consumption, and the true value of food.

Second, I witnessed the power of team Rissho Kosei-kai. What started as a personal act of charity grew into a collective initiative. Friends began helping us by donating too, and even our vendor started offering discounts on food. Most importantly, we brought a smile to many faces.

Lastly, the activity deepened my empathy. Interacting directly with the children we helped—sharing happiness, feeling inner peace, and watching their gratitude—made the experience personal and emotionally impactful. I no longer see this as just a donation. It is a shared act of dignity, respect, and solidarity.

Thank you so much!”







**Ludwig Burger Cavenaghi**  
**Rissho Kosei-kai of Brazil**

*Mr. Cavenaghi serves as a subleader in sutra recitation at the Dharma center.*

“I first heard about the Donate-a-Meal Movement while studying at Rissho Kosei-kai’s Gakurin Seminary. Although I didn’t fully understand the practice’s meaning at first, I made an effort to follow it.

Seeing other students engage in the practice sincerely and with respect for the Donate-a-Meal Movement inspired me to learn about the movement more deeply and challenge myself to continue practicing consistently.

To be honest, I couldn’t always skip a meal on my donate-a-meal days, but I never failed to make a monetary donation. Wanting to feel the significance of the practice as deeply as possible, I chose to skip lunch on my donate-a-meal days. I feel the hungriest at lunchtime, since I usually eat very little in the morning and tend to have a light dinner. So, I thought skipping lunch would be the most effective way to understand, even slightly, the suffering of those who live in hunger.

I continued this form of practice until I graduated from Gakurin Seminary. Even after returning to Brazil, I gave this practice much attention in my heart. Whenever I heard news or activities related to the movement in our Dharma center, I paid close attention.

Although I no longer regularly skip meals, I continue to donate, and my awareness of the movement has deepened significantly. Moreover, I’ve become more actively involved in other social initiatives and developed a deeper sense of empathy toward people facing hardship. Whether inside or

outside the Dharma center, I now take part in campaigns aimed at promoting solidarity. The sangha of the Brazil Dharma Center has also frequently supported the outreach efforts proposed by my fellow members and me.

I hope to continue practicing donating meals and to further cultivate a heart of compassion. In this world, where loneliness and self-centered behavior are on the rise, I want to do whatever I can to help improve the lives of others. The Donate-a-Meal Movement continues to remind me that there is still hope and that there are many people who care for others and act with compassion.

Thank you very much.”



**Viviane Maíra Conrado**  
**Rissho Kosei-kai of Brazil**



*Ms. Conrado applies face paint to a child at an event supporting children in an underprivileged area.*

“I learned about the Donate-a-Meal Movement when I started attending Rissho Kosei-kai of Brazil more regularly in 2010. Although I thought the initiative was very important, I could not find the discipline to do it myself the way we were taught: skipping a meal to donate the corresponding amount to someone who was starving. Skipping a meal has always been physically challenging for me due to low blood pressure and past episodes of fainting in public places due to not eating properly.

But I put my intention to donate into practice in another way by helping to hold the Children’s Day party, held every October 12th, at an NGO called Maria e Sininha, an important cultural center that promotes social inclusion in a needy community in Sao Paulo. This event is eagerly awaited by local families, as it offers free breakfast, fruit, and a



well-organized lunch for hundreds of people who attend the party not only to have some leisure time with their children but also to eat complete meals prepared with lots of love by the NGO's volunteers. Even ice cream is distributed, and the children love it!

The main goal of the party is to bring fun and joy to the children, but due to the food insecurity that many families still face in the city of Sao Paulo, the biggest attraction ends up being the free meals offered to everyone. At the end of the party, each child also takes home a new, high-quality toy, along with a bag of goodies, which are not to be missed!

Everything is done with extreme care and attention, and the preparations that precede the event months in advance are very intensive: seeking sponsors, donors, and volunteers who dedicate themselves earnestly so that the party always takes place with lots of joy and tranquility.

I've been participating in this event for over fifteen years (even before I joined Rissho Kosei-kai), helping to serve lunch to the guests, but now my main role is organizing the face painting group. It is an activity that brings a lot of joy to the little ones, who feel happy and fulfilled with a face painting of a superhero, their favorite character, or just a colorful butterfly on their cheek.

Although managing the event is tiring and physically demanding, it is deeply rewarding to see so many smiles and full bellies at an event that serves around two thousand people annually. I always take my husband Stefano and our son Samuel, who is now nine years old, to help out. I believe it's crucial to teach my son the value of giving back and bringing happiness to those in need.

Rissho Kosei-kai has also supported this cause by donating funds from the Donate-a-Meal initiative directly to Maria e Sininha on several occasions, including during the pandemic. This support has enabled the NGO to continue assisting vulnerable families. I am profoundly grateful to Rissho Kosei-kai for their donations and for inspiring me with a sense of what it is like to bring happiness to others."

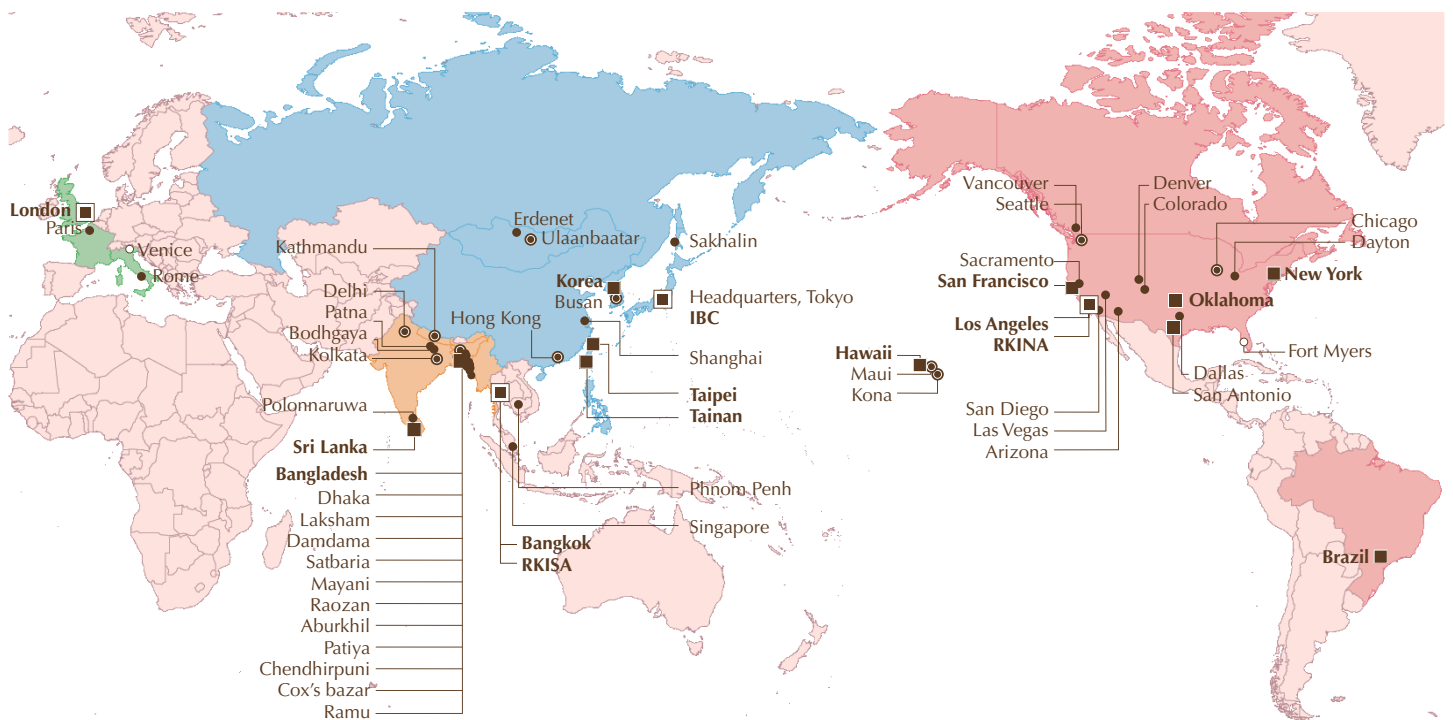


*Children participating in the Children's Day party held by Maria e Sininha.*





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