

# Living the Lotus 3

*Buddhism in Everyday Life* 2023  
VOL. 210



*International Buddhist Congregation, Tokyo*

## Living the Lotus Vol. 210 (March 2023)

Senior Editor: Keiichi Akagawa  
Editor: Sachi Mikawa  
Copy Editor: Ayshea Wild

*Living the Lotus* is published monthly by Rissho Kosei-kai International, Fumon Media Center 3F, 2-7-1 Wada, Suginami-ku, Tokyo 166-8537, Japan.  
TEL: +81-3-5341-1124 / FAX: +81-3-5341-1224  
Email: [living.the.lotus.rk-international@kosei-kai.or.jp](mailto:living.the.lotus.rk-international@kosei-kai.or.jp)

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.



# The Body and the Mind Are Deeply Connected

Rev. Nichiko Niwano  
President of Rissho Kosei-kai



## Health and Vitality Come from the Mind

In recent years, as opportunities to go out have decreased, I think that many people are staying home more often and not getting enough exercise. If you do not walk regularly, the muscles in your legs weaken so that even a short walk might make you tired, and then you become even less willing to go out.

Regarding muscles, it is reported that people with greater muscle mass live longer. We could say this is due to the relationship between muscles, immunity, blood sugar level, and so forth. However, I am also experiencing the decline of muscle strength that comes with aging, so in order to stay healthy, I continue to take an hour-long daily walk, unless it is a scorching summer's day. Considering what else is indispensable for maintaining good health though, I think there is more to it than just training the body's muscles.

The body and the mind are mutually inseparable. Indeed, the functioning of the mind affects the body, so it is important that we give our “mental muscles” a daily workout with inspiration and stimulation, always keeping them active in order to build up a constitution that is resistant to both mental and physical decline and illness. That way, we can always enjoy good health. Masahiro Yasuoka (1898–1983), whose writings have influenced me for a long time, also says that the cause of poor health and senility is more in the mind than in the body.

In particular, if you lose interest in things other than your private affairs and mundane daily routine, or become obsessed with trivial things, you will no longer experience the joy and stimulation of self-improvement but lose your mental vitality, which will, in turn, affect you physically.

What is important then for maintaining a stimulated, active mind that enjoys self-improvement, even when we are preoccupied with trivial, mundane matters? Yasuoka offers the following three principles.

### **“The Three Principles of Good Health”**

The first of these principles is to “always keep the god of happiness in your mind.” The god of happiness is the most authentic mind. In other words, this means always keeping happiness present in your mind. And doesn’t that mean always accepting each and every event that unfolds before you with joy and the feeling of receiving the teachings of the Buddha? Even when we are suffering, by positively accepting the reality before us and asking ourselves “What is the Buddha teaching me now?” we realize that beyond suffering there is the light of liberation, and our minds continue to evolve and refine themselves.

The second principle for preventing the decline of your mental muscles is to “constantly keep thoughts of gratitude in your mind.” It is certainly true that every time we think of gratitude and say the words “thank you” they bring us fresh inspiration.

The third is to “always aspire to be quietly virtuous.” In reality, this is not limited to doing good deeds unknown to other people; it also includes being considerate of the people you come in contact with in your daily life, as well as practicing putting other people first while aiming to benefit them and bring them happiness. I think Yasuoka calls these “the Three Principles of Good Health” to mean that by maintaining this frame of mind, the body will also stay healthy. However, from our point of view, those who have cultivated these three things in their minds are called bodhisattvas, aren’t they?

Incidentally, I first became interested in health in 1960, when I found, in a used bookstore in Kanda, a book titled *Nishi shiki kenko ho* (The Nishi Method of Health) by Katsuzo Nishi (1884–1959). That was the year that Founder Niwano made me president-designate. Thinking back on it now, at age twenty-two I was filled with anxiety, so perhaps it was my instinctual reaction to try to keep my body and mind in harmony and maintain my physical health in order to suppress that mental anxiety.

Thanks to all of you, this month that anxious young man will turn eighty-five years old, and Rissho Kosei-kai will also mark its eighty-fifth anniversary. Although we have not yet exited the long tunnel of the COVID-19 pandemic, let’s definitely share with the people close to us the blessings of the wondrous Dharma—which itself can be called a method of maintaining mental health—and together build healthy and dynamic families and societies.

From *Kosei*, March 2023





# An Introduction to Rissho Kosei-kai Through Comics

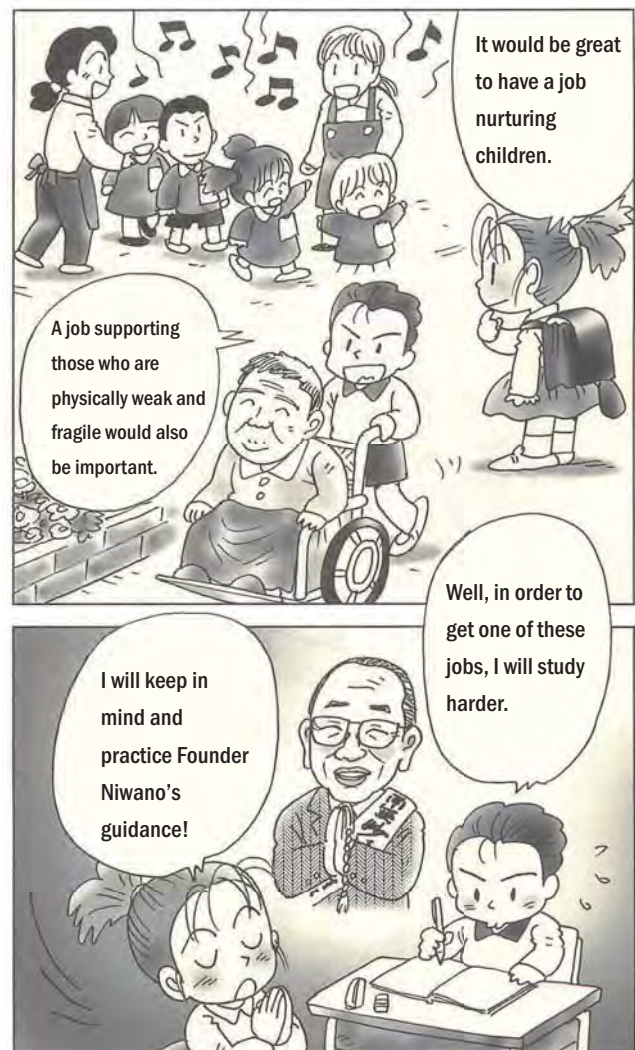
## The Lifetime of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Teachings of Buddhism

### Devoting Ourselves to Benefiting Others and Society: Right Livelihood

Right livelihood is securing such necessities of life as clothing, food, and shelter in a proper way. In other words, we should live on a justifiable income obtained through work, pursuing a career that is consistent with the teachings of the Buddha.

Also, when we engage in work, it is important to consider what we can do for others and society through our work.

Let us bear in mind that we should lead steady and well-ordered lives wherever we work: at school and at home for students and in the workplace for working adults.



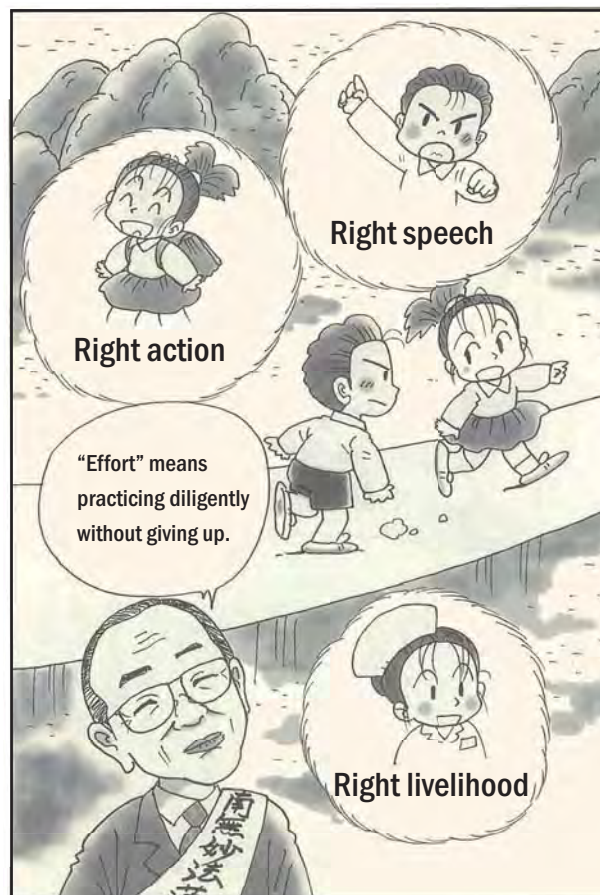
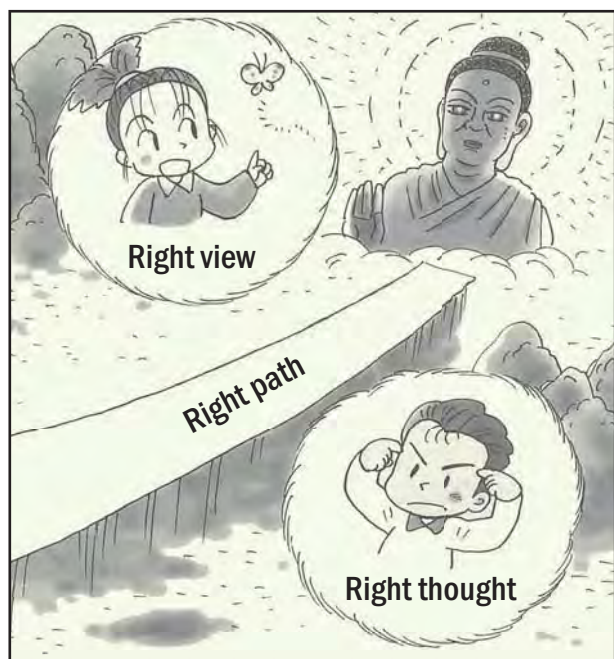


## Repeating Correct Conduct in Our Daily Lives: Right Effort

Right action means living pure daily lives in accordance with discipline and rules that morally guide our behavior. It includes getting up at a regular time in the morning, keeping promises, practicing cheerful greetings such as “Good morning!” and “See you later!” doing homework, review, and preparation for class.

It also involves acts such as not wasting money, eating meals without leaving any leftovers, helping with housework, and putting one’s palms together in reverence before the Buddhist family altar.

Are you taking right actions? Let us reflect on our daily conduct.







# Germinating the Seeds of Awakening

## Chapter 1

Living by Aspiring: Your Point of Departure

# The Buddha Is Always Right Beside Us

Rev. Nikkyo Niwano  
Founder of Rissho Kosei-kai





At Oike Elementary School, where I attended, there were wise sayings and well-known adages hanging on all the classrooms' walls.

Those words of wisdom included famous expressions such as the Japanese saying “Nothing will be accomplished unless you just do it, and if something hasn’t been accomplished, that’s because you didn’t do it” and the famous maxim “Heaven helps those who help themselves.” Those words as written in the principal’s calligraphy are still clearly visible to my mind’s eye and burned into my memory. It’s impossible to measure the impact those words have had on my life.

Hard work and perseverance are fundamental to our growth. But they are so basic that we sometimes neglect them. This happens because we don’t realize that the gods and buddhas are right beside us, and so we fudge things and slack off.

But I cannot help always feeling grateful because I believe that the gods and the buddhas are continuously watching over us. Therefore, no matter what task I take on, I always do my best and am as industrious as I can be.

It is important to improve oneself in this way for as long as one lives; to cherish the aspiration to devote oneself to the good of other people and the world at large, and to work hard and persevere toward realizing that aspiration.

The Buddha guided you into the world so that you could live your life in this way.

*Bodai no me o okosashimu* (Kosei Publishing, 2018), pp. 23–24



# Director's Column



## Keeping the Body and Mind in Harmony Is Key to Good Health

Rev. Keiichi Akagawa

Director, Rissho Kosei-kai International

I APPRECIATE your reading *Living the Lotus* every month. In Japan, the weather still remains cold although we are in spring according to the calendar. I hope all of you are doing fine in the places you live and practice the teachings.

In his message for this month, titled “The Body and the Mind Are Deeply Connected,” President Nichiko Niwano introduces “The Three Principles of Good Health” advocated by Masahiro Yasuoka (1898–1983). The President interprets these principles as ways to cultivate a mind that experiences the joy and stimulation of self-improvement.

President Niwano notes that the body and mind are mutually inseparable, and we can easily imagine from daily experience that the functioning of the mind affects the body. Reflecting on his younger days, when he was made the president-designate, he says that he began to practice a method of health learned from a book, which was his instinctual reaction to try to get over the anxiety gnawing at him. This passage makes me feel close to President Niwano as a fellow human being who has anxieties and weaknesses.

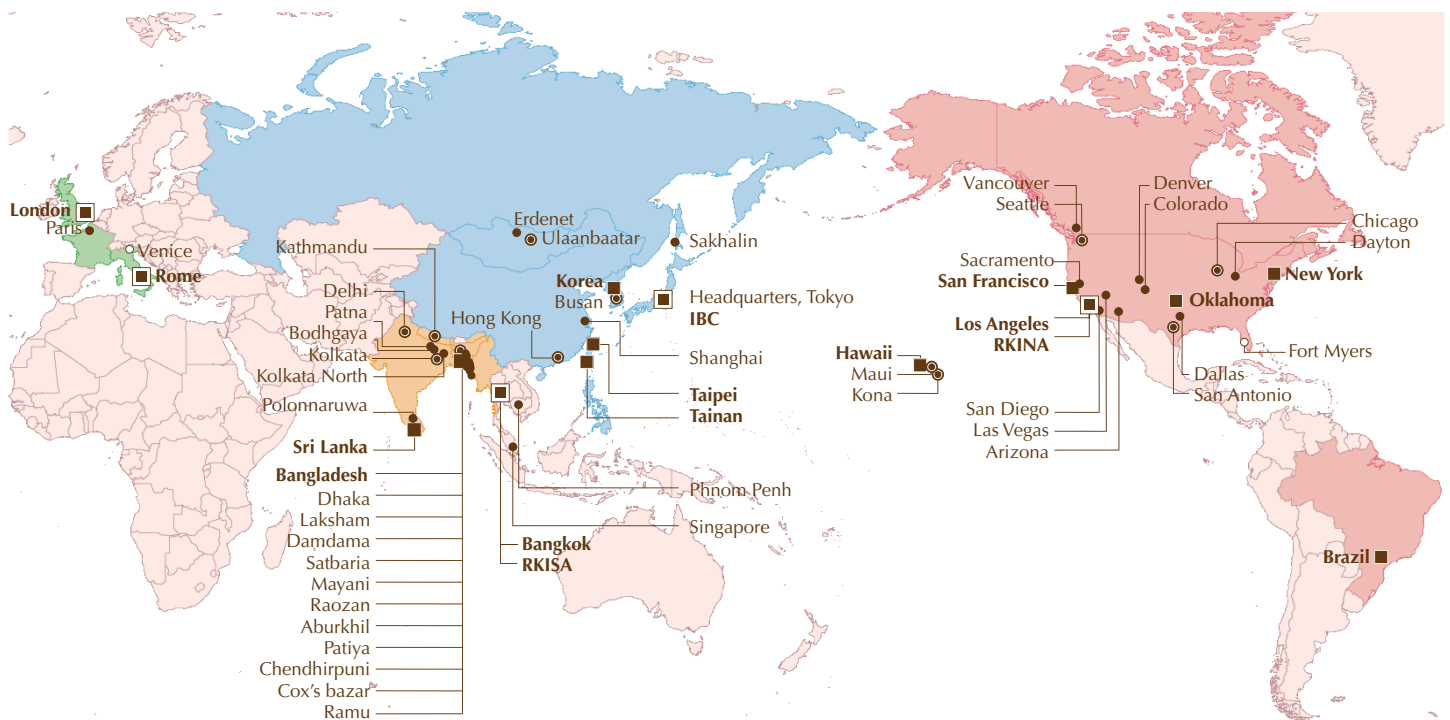
I myself have also tried a number of practices to maintain my mental and physical health. One of them is a morning walk I take every weekend while also picking up trash on the street. But, as I remain full of health anxiety, I am now hoping to try a new challenge to keep my body and mind in shape.







## 🌸 A Global Buddhist Movement 🌸



Information about  
local Dharma centers

facebook

twitter

