



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.

In this month's issue, we are pleased to share with you a message from President Nichiko Niwano on the occasion of the Donate-a-Meal Movement's fiftieth anniversary.

The Donate-a-Meal Movement on the Occasion of Its Fiftieth Anniversary

**Nichiko Niwano
President, Rissho Kosei-kai**

This year, the Donate-a-Meal Movement marks its fiftieth anniversary. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you across the world who have supported this movement over the past half century.

The total contributions received so far have exceeded \$106.7 million and have been utilized in a wide range of areas both in Japan and abroad, including poverty reduction, refugee support, and environmental protection. In recent years, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Emergency Local Community Support Project, implemented in Japan by the Donate-a-Meal Movement, provided assistance to alternative schools, free community-based tutoring programs, and children's cafeterias. The fact that timely support has been extended to those most in need is the fruit of your continuous commitment and practice.

Through this movement, we have offered donations with hearts of empathy toward those facing various hardships, learned about the realities and challenges of the world, and been guided to what we ourselves should do at this moment. It can also be said that we have been led to awaken to the compassion and kindness that dwell within our own hearts. Ultimately, this awakening embodies the principle of *Jiri Rita Enman* (the perfect harmony of benefiting oneself and benefiting others).

Jiri means one's own benefit or liberation, while *Rita* means the benefit or liberation of others. *Enman* signifies perfection or completeness. Together, *Jiri Rita Enman* refers to the oneness of both self-benefit and benefit for others. In other words, by leading others toward liberation through compassion, one simultaneously finds joy and liberation for oneself—and this is the true happiness of human life. This principle represents the spirit of the bodhisattva way of the Great Vehicle.

The Buddha himself originally entered the path of practice in an effort to resolve his own suffering. However, upon attaining enlightenment, he realized that true peace cannot be found in enlightenment for oneself alone. Unless all people are liberated, the liberation of the individual is incomplete.

A modern expression of this spirit can be found in the words of Kenji Miyazawa, a writer of children's stories and a devoted believer in the Lotus Sutra: "Unless the whole world becomes happy, individual happiness cannot exist." This means that creating a world in which all people can truly feel happiness is, in the end, the very path to one's own happiness.



Zen master Dogen used the words “self” and “other-self.” He taught that “self” and “other” cannot be thought of as separate, but rather that the “self” of oneself and the “self” of others are connected at their root as one and the same “self.” Together they form the Great Self (*Daiko*), which is nothing less than the universe itself. Whatever happens in the great universe is our very own concern; the joys and sorrows of others are to be felt just as our own. This, he taught, is the heart of the Buddha.

As we once again reflect on the profound spirit that underlies the Donate-a-Meal Movement, let us treasure each moment of joy we have experienced in being of service to others, in touching the smiles of those we have supported. May these joys become nourishment for our hearts. On this fiftieth anniversary, let us continue with renewed spirits to dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly to the practice of this movement.

Message from the General Secretary

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Donate-a-Meal Movement. In celebration of this milestone, *Living the Lotus* has featured a special series on the movement in eight installments, beginning with the January issue. I am deeply grateful for this opportunity, which allowed us to reflect on and learn more about the movement together with all of you. It has been truly meaningful to explore the spirit and practice of the Donate-a-Meal Movement in shared reflection.

The contributions you have offered through this movement are being used to support people facing hardship in regions affected by conflict, natural disasters, poverty, and climate change around the world. Your heartfelt donations are helping to sustain lives and bring hope to those in need. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for your continued dedication to this movement.

In today’s global context, where divisions and conflicts are intensifying, the spirit of the One Vehicle (*Ichijo*) that underlies this movement is more vital than ever. We firmly believe that the Donate-a-Meal Movement, as a concrete expression of this spirit, plays an important role in building world peace.

I sincerely hope that we will continue practicing this movement together with all of you, contributing to the realization of a peaceful world where all life is cherished.

Kumiko Hidemitsu
General Secretary
Donate-a-Meal Fund for Peace
Rissho Kosei-kai

