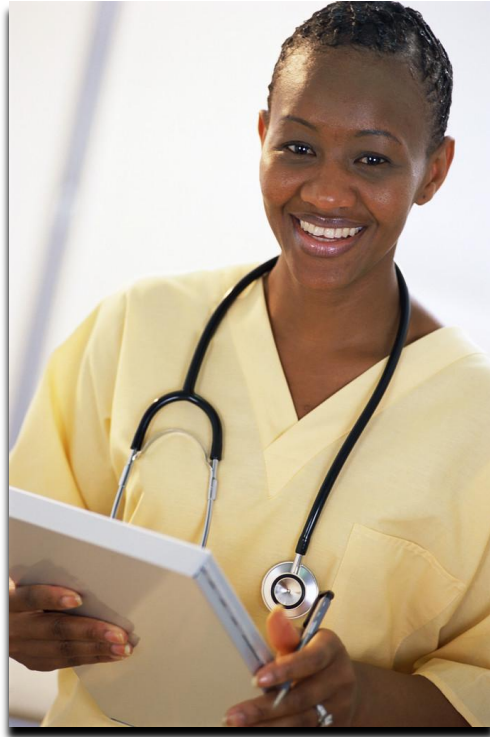


People of Culture and Wisdom
Building an Oasis of Hope, Trust and Friendship in Society
SGI-USA Culture Department

Selected Encouragement to the Healing Arts Division
from SGI President Daisaku Ikeda



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Humanism and the Art of Medicine

Excerpts from A discussion between SGI President Ikeda, Soka Gakkai Nurses' Group Leaders Reiko Inamitsu, Kazuko Matsumoto and Secretary Akiko Kojima from the book: Humanism and the Art of Medicine, (p.198 – 208)

Nursing

President Ikeda: When we fall ill and go to the hospital, it is invariably the nurses who give us the greatest care and comfort. The presence of a sympathetic nurse can give untold hope and reassurance to a patient. Florence Nightingale said, "Nursing is an art." It is the art of health. She said that a painter works with a canvas, and a sculptor, with marble, but a nurse works with the most precious vessel of all, the living body, thus making nursing the finest of fine arts. She was indeed proud of her vocation. I agree that nursing is an art. A nurse is a healing artist who combines medical expertise, wisdom and character to work wonders. Nothing could be more admirable. I believe we must value nurses and the nursing profession more than we do today. As nurses your selves, what do you feel to be especially important when it comes to nursing?

Matsumoto: First, I think, one must listen carefully to what patients have to say. Having someone listening while they explain their feelings gives patients a chance to get their own thoughts organized; it also makes it easier to clarify and specific worries or problems they may be experiencing.

President Ikeda: People who are sick always have to deal with inner turmoil of some kind. They carry on a painful inner dialogue with themselves about their illness, posing questions that they then try to answer. Just by listening to a sick person articulate this inner conflict and pain; we can relieve some of his or her suffering. This is in accord with the Buddhist teaching of relieving suffering and imparting peace of mind. And we are not talking about pretending to listen, either. No, we must listen carefully and closely, with true concern. That personal warmth can actually help a person recover from illness.

Matsumoto: After every medical step has been taken, it is the patient's life force that makes them work. And, the support of nursing staff and family members is invaluable in strengthening the patient's life force.

President Ikeda: Strengthening the patient's life force is the essence of nursing, isn't it? Florence Nightingale also felt that minimizing the expenditure or depletion of the patient's 'vital energy' is of crucial importance in nursing. It is essential to create an environment most conducive to the recovery of each patient, she said, with the thought being given to letting in a proper amount of fresh air, making sure the patient gets sufficient sunlight as well as peace and quiet, and maintaining a well-balanced diet and cleanliness. I feel that Florence Nightingale firmly believed that the key to recovery from illness lies in the patient's life force, or 'vital power', as she called it. The task of nursing is to ensure that the patient's

life force is not weakened and doing whatever possible to strengthen it. The fundamental basis for nursing, therefore, is a deep reverence for life.

Inamitsu: The little things are so important, aren't they? Florence Nightingale said, "Nursing is in general made up of little things; little things they are called, but they culminate in matters of life and death."

President Ikeda: Those are very wise words. They are very similar to the attitude that a Buddhist leader must cultivate.

Inamitsu: The first Chinese character in the Japanese word for nursing (kango) combines the ideographs for 'hand' and 'eye'. In nursing, you have to both observe the patients with your eyes and to care for them with your hands.

President Ikeda: There was once an ascetic monk who had fallen ill and lived all alone. When Shakyamuni saw how sick he was, he inquired, "Why are you suffering all alone?"

The monk replied, "Being indolent by nature, I have never been able to endure caring for others when they were ill. Consequently, now that I am ill, no one will take care of me."



"I will care for you," Shakyamuni said, and he began gently rubbing the sick monk's body. He continued in this way for some time, and the monk's suffering gradually lessened, Then Sakyamuni changed the sick

man's bedding, bathed him and dressed him in a fresh robe. And finally, when he encouraged the monk to persevere with his practice, the monk's body and mind were filled with joy.

Shakyamuni's hands stroking the body of the sick monk – that, surely, is the healing touch, the symbol of compassion. This story presents the quintessence of nursing, don't you think?

Matsumoto: Yes, I do. All of the important elements of nursing – touch, changing bedding, bathing, changing clothes, and offering encouragement – are included in the story.

Inamitsu: There is a profound relationship between Buddhism and nursing, isn't there?

President Ikeda: They are one and the same. Sakyamuni said, "If you would like to make an offering to me, make the offering to the sick instead." And he also said, "You must make offerings to all sick people with the same reverence that you would make offerings to the Buddha. Nursing the sick is the greatest of all good deeds."

Caring for and encouraging the sick are true Buddhist practice and the offering that please the Buddha more than any other.

President Ikeda: One problem is that the old image of doctors being superior to nurses has got to go. Rather, aren't doctors and nurses equal partners striving together towards a shared goal?

Inamitsu: In one respect, I think you can say that doctors provide the cure and nurses provide the care.

President Ikeda: Nursing is truly a noble profession. We must all recognize the true worth of nurses and their profession. I am sure nursing is very hard work. But nothing is so wonderful as to be able to care for and to ease the suffering of others. In Buddhism, one who does this is called bodhisattvas. Florence Nightingale declared that it is a privilege to suffer for humanity – "a privilege not reserved to the Redeemer and martyrs alone, but one enjoyed by numbers in every age." Nurses are in a position to enjoy this special privilege of saving others.

Matsumoto: Regarding nursing as a special privilege reflects a very spiritual state, I think. Why, it makes all one's complaints just fade away!

President Ikeda: Florence Nightingale also said that the kind of person one is mattered more in nursing than in any other profession. The nursing and the teaching professions rely almost entirely on the quality of the people in them.

Inamitsu: It makes one humble. As members of the SGI and practitioners of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I think we are very fortunate to be able to develop ourselves through faith and practice.

Florence Nightingale--In Tribute to the Century of Women

“Persevering with Patience and Determination,” Living Buddhism, 07/01/2002 p.34)

What was the first obstacle she faced? Arrogant military doctors and officers who were openly prejudiced against nurses and viewed them with contempt. They had opposed the dispatch of the nursing team, declaring that the women were interfering in men’s work and would be of use. To them, the nurses were nothing but a nuisance. The treatment of the nurses was abominable. For their quarters, the thirty-eight nurses were assigned a kitchen and five small rooms, one of which was a closet, which Nightingale ultimately made her quarters. The doctors patently ignored them. For days Nightingale and her nurses weren’t even allowed to enter the wards because the doctors hadn’t granted permission. “Why on earth had they come?” they asked themselves. But Nightingale was patient. She had a mission to accomplish.



“The consideration of overwhelming importance,” she wrote, “was the opportunity offered to advance the cause of nursing... . If the nurses acquitted themselves creditably, never again would they be despised!” This was the determination that kept her going. Nightingale decided not to cause unnecessary friction but to try to win the trust of the doctors and officers.

She and the nurses made pillows and bandages. They prepared meals. They actively sought out things that needed doing and set themselves diligently to them. The war took a turn for the worse, and wounded soldiers came flooding into the hospital. Some of them were Russians. The hospital was stretched beyond its capacities. Finally, the doctors approached Nightingale and asked for her assistance. She threw herself heart and soul into the task of nursing, working with utter devotion from early in the morning to far into the night, often without resting.

She never left the hospital for even a moment. She also assisted at major surgeries, and often remained on her feet for twenty hours and longer dressing wounds and sores. The more serious a patient’s condition, the more diligently she cared for him. She did everything in her power to lessen her patients’ suffering. She was always there at the bedside of the dying. One of the doctors wrote, with astonishment and praise, “I believe that there was never a severe case of any kind that escaped her notice, and sometimes it was wonderful to see her at the bedside of a patient who had been admitted perhaps an hour

before, and of whose arrival one would hardly have supposed she could be already cognizant.” She was determined that no patient who came into her sight, regardless of who they were, would feel deserted or alone. As she made her rounds of the wards, she would speak kindly to the men, smile and lay a gentle hand on them, encouraging each one. What a tremendous source of comfort this must have been for the soldiers! Whenever there was a crisis, Nightingale was there—so much so that the soldiers began to say that there must be more than one of her.

“The Angel of the Crimea”



Nightingale was always cheerful in front of the patients, no matter how busy she was or how trying her situation. She was always filled with energy. She didn't lose her sense of humor. She emanated an aura of caring and compassion. Her lively demeanor and cheerful voice was a fountain of hope to the dispirited patients. Before Nightingale arrived at the hospital, there had been an unceasing stream of complaints, curses and unpleasantness. Gradually, a new mood of peacefulness and purity filled the wards. Under

Nightingale's influence, soldiers promised to give up drinking and to send money back to their families. When one woman stands up for a cause, what a momentous impact she can have on those around her!

Thoughts on The New Human Revolution: Florence Nightingale

President Ikeda's speech to Nurses Group, Living Buddhism, 10-1-2002 p.30 and 6-1-2002 page 26.

A person with a sense of mission and appreciation can resolutely overcome all storms of karma, crowned with the laurels of imperishable good fortune and benefit. Such a person will truly be a champion of happiness throughout eternity. Nightingale gave her life to nursing. It was a life that demonstrated to future generations the incredible strength and capacity of people fully awakened to their life's mission as they fight their way valiantly through the crushing breakers of adversity to reach their goal. Let us live that kind of life, too. Say to the world: "Watch and see what I will achieve in 10 years, in 50!" "Look at this life dedicated to kosen-rufu!" It is a huge challenge to keep one's sense of mission burning brightly to the very end. How can we do this? Through unity, through solidarity with others who share our mission. It is all very well to get by on our own when everything is going our way. But life is full of setbacks and unexpected difficulties. At such times, we shouldn't shut ourselves off from others.

We should strive to encourage and support each other. "Let's challenge this together!" "Didn't we promise to win together?" "Let's have no regrets in life!" Mutual encouragement and support can be a source of great strength. In addition, many people become lazy and complacent when they are spoiled and pampered and lack proper direction or challenges to help them grow. Those who lead such self-centered, self-indulgent lives are bound to veer from the path of happiness and end in powerless self-defeat. Nightingale wisely realized this fact of human nature. Nichiren Daishonin writes: "A person of considerable strength, when alone, may fall down on an uneven path.... Therefore, the best way to attain Buddhahood is to encounter a good friend" ("Three Tripitaka Masters Pray for Rain," WND, p. 598).

Herein also lies the significance of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda founding the Soka Gakkai in order to launch their struggle for kosen-rufu. Mr. Toda even boldly proclaimed, "The Soka Gakkai organization is more precious than my own life." An American scholar who is an SGI-USA leader once asked me: "How can we advance on the right path and fulfill our mission without any wasted effort?" I replied that one crucial point is never to detach ourselves from the SGI—the organization of faith and kosen-rufu that upholds the Mystic Law of cause and effect. No matter what happens, it is important that we live and strive together with the SGI and our fellow SGI members throughout our lives. How crucial and heartening the presence of our organization is. The SGI provides us with encouragement, training, and opportunities for self improvement.

Banner of Humanism—Humanity Compassion, and Tolerance



Dr. Rene Jules Dubos1

Speech To Doctors Division Members (The dialogue serialized in The Journal of Oriental Studies. 1-1-2005) (SGI-USA pubs CD 1997-2006).

The struggle between good and evil, hope and despair continues unceasingly. Defeat in that struggle results in decline. Dr. Rene Dubos whom I met at the Seikyo Shimbun building wrote: “The earth is not a resting place. Man has elected to fight, not necessarily for him self, but for a process of emotional, intellectual, and ethical growth that goes on forever. To grow in the midst of dangers is the fate of the human race, because it is the law of the spirit.” A complete lack of exertion or stress may seem desirable, but in fact it results in boredom and stagnation. It is essential that we keep making continuous efforts amid challenging circumstances, pushing forward with dynamic creativity, and breaking through all obstacles. That is the way to develop new strength and achieve fresh growth, whether it be in the case of an individual or an organization. This is what enables us to advance along a path to fulfillment, victory, and happiness.

A Source of Light for the Medicine of the Future

Message to the Japan Doctors' Conference, October 1, 1986

I always feel the utmost respect of the doctors' division throughout the world, who, in their wide range of fields of specialization, are continually striving to realize a medical science devoted to philanthropy and to compassion. Undeniably, contemporary medicine, based on modern Western science, has taken long strides forward and has made great contributions to the happiness and prosperity of humanity.

But it is an equally undeniable fact that progress in medical science has generated many profound problems. I believe that two factors characterize these problems, which deeply influence not only humanity, but also all other living creatures on the planet.

First is a loss of concern with human beings themselves on the part of medicine. As many discerning people point out, in many instances, doctors concern themselves with illness but not with the people suffering from them.

The outstanding journalist Norman Cousins, who, in spite of collagen disease and a severe cardiac condition, had the strength of will and faith to return miraculously from the brink of death, has said, "The war against microbes has been largely won, but the struggle for equanimity is being lost." He has also made the following concrete and highly pertinent comments about contemporary medical education.: "One of the biggest needs in medical education today is to attract students who are well-rounded human beings: who will be interested in people and not just in the diseases that affect them; who can comprehend the reality of suffering and not just the symptoms; whose prescription pad will not exclude the human touch..."

Although clearly remarkable achievements have been made in physical diagnosis and therapy, in many instances physicians are less earnestly concerned with the suffering human beings as living entities, with the problems in the depths of their lives and their way of living, and with problems related to their families and the societies surrounding them. I believe that this failing is closely linked with the increase in the number of people afflicted with degenerative and stress-related diseases and with psychological problems.

The second characteristic factor pertains to the ethics of medical practices and procedures that concern life and death. Since these questions have been raised precisely because of advances in medical science, they are especially relevant to our times. Those concerning life include artificial insemination, extra uterine insemination, abortion, prebirth determination of the sex of the fetus, prenatal diagnosis, and genetic therapy and engineering. Those related to death include deciding whether to announce to patients they have possibly fatal illnesses like cancer (different cultures have different attitudes towards this

question), determining death on the basis of the functioning brain, artificial techniques for the prolongation of life, caring for people in a coma state, interpreting the experiences of people who have approached death and returned, and knowing how to assist the terminally ill.

Of course it is impossible to discuss all of these complicated matters together and at once. However, at the heart of all of these issues, far from there being a willingness to look the truth in the face and accept the fact that all living things must die, there appears to be an attitude, typically human and pathologic in nature, that, like many other things, life and death ought to be subject to our will and desire.

Shocking reports are heard in the United States and in Japan of black-market sales – at exorbitantly high prices – of human kidneys for transplantation. Such peddling of organs that are vital to life represents an inhuman aspect of contemporary civilization and can only be seen as a peculiar alliance between natural science and a commercialism eager to make a profit, even out of death.

Neither questions pertaining to life nor those relating to death may be solved by medical science alone. For instance, a mistake in orientation could destroy the relationship of trust between doctors and patients and, still worse, could aggravate and expand human psychological disorders. In addition, inherent is the unbridled desire that seeks to gain control over human life and death is the danger of destroying, not only respect for life, but life itself. As a Buddhist, I am convinced that the Buddhist view of life and death and of life force provides a basis for overcoming the problems facing modern medical science.

Since its very inception, Buddhism has consistently taught a philosophy for coming face-to-face with and triumphing over the four sufferings: birth, old age, sickness and death. For example, the Buddhist principle that delusion and enlightenment are both inherent in life, as well as the teachings, concerning the method by which karma may be transformed, provides valuable insights for conquering stress-related illnesses and psychopathological conditions. Moreover, the doctrines of the oneness of life and its environment (*esho funi*) and the oneness of body and mind (*shikishin funi*) are complete expressions of the true nature of human life. I firmly believe that the Buddhist view of birth and death as the ideal way to live, provide the religious and philosophical foundation for challenging all of today's ethical problems.

In his "Ongi Kuden" (Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings), interpreting the meaning of the Treasure Tower, Nichiren Daishonin states, "Its four sides represent birth, old age, sickness and death. With these four aspects, we adorn the Treasure Tower of our lives" He taught that in confronting and in overcoming the four sufferings of birth, old age, sickness and death – the fundamental problems of human existence - one may display the greatest glory and brilliance in life and win true victory as a human being.

Become Both Outstanding Physicians and Leaders



Message to commemorate Doctors Division Day, Sept. 15, 1996, World Tribune, Oct 26, 1996, p.12.

Buddhism has always held the field of medicine in highest esteem. Among Shakyamuni's direct disciples, there was a renowned physician named Jivaka. He was called the King of Medicine for his ability to cure a host of serious illnesses. It is even said that he performed surgery in those ancient times to clear intestinal obstructions and remove brain tumors. Jivaka's name derives from the Sanskrit for "giving life" or "enlivening". I think this name clearly expresses the function of the doctors division, whose members are striving energetically to strengthen the people's life force and vitality and to prolong life.

Jivaka, also a minister of the kingdom of Magadha, played a significant role among Shakyamuni's disciples. He engaged himself in a magnificent struggle to save lives, safeguard the people and protect the correct teaching of Lotus Sutra. In this achievement, he leaves us a message, the importance of which transcends the ages.

In this connection, basing my remarks on the Gosho, I will briefly discuss three points. First: "Face all obstacles courageously!" Nichiren Daishonin writes: Because King Ajatashatru took Devadatta and the six non-Buddhist teachers (1) as his mentors and opposed Shakyamuni, the lord of teachings, all

the people of the kingdom of Magadha became enemies of Buddhism, and the 580,000 clansmen of the king also opposed the Buddha's disciples. Among them, only Minister Jivaka was the Buddha's disciple. The great king disapproved of his minister's devotion to the Buddha... But in the end he (the king) discarded the heretical doctrines of the other six ministers (2) and took faith in the true teaching that Jivaka espoused. (*Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1 p. 810).

Jivaka single handedly bore the brunt of attacks made by literally hundreds of thousands of foes. Most important, he took resolute action to thwart the schemes of Devadatta – a base traitor who had forgotten his debt of gratitude to Shakyamuni – and win a magnificent victory. This individual of remarkable strength and outright fearlessness was truly a predecessor of the members of the doctors division.

As second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda asked, "Didn't President Makiguchi give his very life for the sake of the Mystic Law like Bodhisattva Medicine King (Jpn Yakuo), who set his own body aflame so that its bright light might illuminate the world?" A religion whose followers are unwilling to give their lives for their beliefs does not deserve to be called a religion. The unwavering dedication and commitment of its followers are the greatest and loftiest sources of pride any religion can have. In this respect, I feel that the name bodhisattva Medicine King must be another name for the doctors division members.

Many people depend on physicians. In most societies, when people find out that someone is a doctor, they automatically look up to him or her with a special trust and confidence. Physicians the world over are highly regarded for their work in saving lives. I hope you will sincerely respond to the trust and expectations that people place in you. May this become the pride of the doctors division members, the physicians who embrace the Mystic Law.

Second: "Become the standard-bearers of a 'health revolution' to protect life, so infinitely precious". How did Jivaka become a great physician of eternal renown and a person of outstanding character? It was due to the strict training he received from his mentor, Shakyamuni, and his ongoing growth and self development through practicing Buddhism together with his comrades in faith. One day, Jivaka invited Shakyamuni to his home. He also invited the Buddha's disciples, with the one exception of Suddhipanthaka (Jpn. Surihandoku) (3), known for his extremely poor memory. Shakyamuni could not condone Jivaka's arrogance in looking down on this simple, yet sincere, disciple. All who embrace Buddhism are irreplaceable and noble disciples of the Buddha. Shakyamuni rebuked Jivaka, telling him that if he failed to understand that each disciple was worthy of the highest respect and instead scorned and disparaged them, he would only be hurting himself. In this way, Jivaka came to understand the depth of his mentor's concern for his disciples and the immense compassion he had for all people. And he

expanded his state of life to become an excellent and compassionate physician who lived and worked among the people.

In the Gosho, Nichiren Daishonin urges one of his followers who has taken ill to go to Shijo Kingo, who was not only an excellent physician but a votary of the Lotus Sutra. The Daishonin pays tribute to Shijo Kingo as a person who never gives in to defeat and shows the greatest concern for friends (Gosho Zenshu, p. 986).

I hope you, the members of the doctors division, will wholeheartedly treasure those who have striven - and continue to strive with all their might - to propagate the Mystic Law, while struggling to surmount many obstacles. I ask you to make every effort to support and encourage them in their “health revolution.”

Buddhism – faith in the Daishonin’s teaching – provides us the power to cure the ills of life in its totality. And a doctor’s job is to cure illness. Therefore, as doctors of the mystic Law, you have been entrusted with a profound mission by Nichiren Daishonin.

Third: “become a beacon of trust in society.” A beacon is always bright and people look to it constantly for guidance and direction. The Daishonin characterizes Jivaka and other great physicians as “treasures of the age.” He likens them to guiding lights, beacons. They are models, he says, for doctors in all ages to come.

The Daishonin urges Shijo King, his disciple and a skilled physician: “Bring forth the great power of faith and establish your reputation among all the people of Kamakura and the rest of Japan as “Shijo Kingo of the Hokke sect.”(4) (MW-2 (2nd ed.) 231). I regard this passage as the eternal guideline for the doctors division.

I hope you will strive to be both outstanding physicians and leaders. Wherever you go and whatever you do – whether talking at an SGI seminar or discussion meeting, giving personal guidance or telling others about the Daishonin’s Buddhism – may you give joy, hope and courage to all you encounter. In your capacity as doctors, each and every one of you can truly touch the lives of countless others. With this conviction, please illuminate the lives of all around you.

In “The True Entity of Life” Nichiren Daishonin says: Exert yourself in the two ways of practice and study. Without practice and study, there can be no Buddhism. You must not only persevere yourself, you must also teach others. Both practice and study arise from faith. Teach others to the best of your ability, even if only a single sentence or phrase. (MW-I, 95). Please engrave these golden words in your hearts.

I am confident that the solid growth and progress of the doctors division will become a great driving force for the further expansion of kosen-rufu. Thank you very much.

Illuminating the World with the Life-Affirming Wisdom of the Mystic Law

SGI Newsletter No. 7654: Joint Conference (WD/YWD Doctors' Division and Nurses Group) at the Nagano Training Center, August 9th, 2008



Dr. Norman Cousins

“Norman Cousins (1915 -90), an American journalist and peace activist, who later went on to become a medical school professor dedicated to exploring the mind-body connection in health and healing, is an unforgettable friend. Dr. Cousins wrote: “The greatest force in the human body is the natural drive of the body to heal itself- but that force is not independent of the belief system [of the human being]’ which can translate expectations into physiological change. Nothing is more wondrous about the fifteen billion neurons in the human brain than their ability to convert thoughts, hopes, ideas, and attitudes into chemical substances. Everything begins, therefore, with belief. What we believe is the most powerful option of all [with regards to healing].’ Belief is the origin of all things, and the ultimate form of belief is faith in the Mystic Law.”

Sept. 3, 2008, World Tribune, 10-17-08.

[Norman Cousins] remarked, “One of the main functions of the doctor is to engage to the fullest the patient’s own ability to mobilize the forces of mind and body in turning back disease.” Dr. Cousins argued that hope, confidence and the will to live can play a crucial role in optimizing the body’s healing powers. Dr. Cousins also declared, “The good physician is not only a scientist but a philosopher.” In order to protect the lives of your patients, I hope that you, as physicians, will not only stay abreast of the latest medical research but also proudly continue to study the greatest philosophy there is, the Mystic Law.

Dr. Felix Unger is a renowned Austrian heart surgeon and the president of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts. He has stern words for doctors’ attitudes toward patients, saying “[It is] outrageous that the patient, whom [the physician] ought to serve with humility, is degraded to a mere object and that the rights of the patient as a human being with dignity should be treated as an afterthought...A true physician thinks, serves and acts for the welfare of his patients.” Good physicians humbly serve their patients, respect them as individuals and seek to communicate with them heart to heart. The members of the doctors division, who are dedicated to offering compassionate medical care,

are incredibly important. Dr. Unger also sounds a warning for the medical profession. He notes that, in placing such high priority of medical treatment, modern medicine has tended to focus only on the patient's physical condition. But since people are not merely physical beings, he says, doctors need to treat their patients as human beings and show warmth and care toward them in their speech and actions. Buddhism teaches the principle of the oneness of body and mind. The physical and mental aspects of our being are one and inseparable.

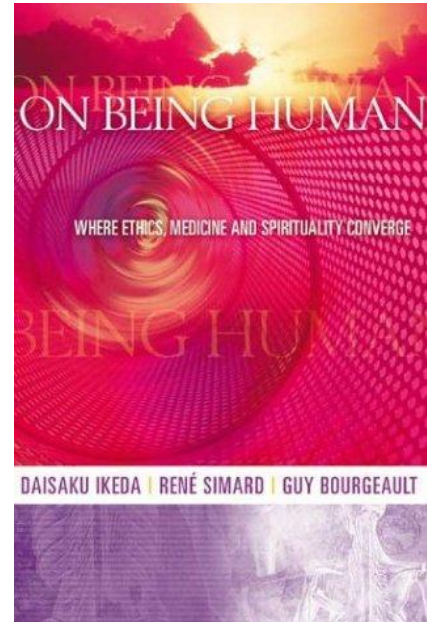
Our members in the medical and nursing professions are warmly encouraging their patients with their bright, confident voices. The hope they impart to others doubtlessly contributes immensely to the recovery of their patients' health.

The Chinese historical text *Records of the Grand Historian* by Sima Quian (also known as Ssu-ma-Ch'ien) relates the story of the renowned Chinese physician Bian Que (also known as Pien Ch'ueh). In one of his letters, Nichiren also makes mention of Bian Que, writing: "There were physicians in China named Huang Ti and Pien Chueh, and there were physicians in India named Water Holder and Jivaka. There were the treasures of their age and teachers to the physicians of later times." (WND vol. I, p. 937). Wherever he went, he strove to conform with the local needs." Bian que traveled throughout the vast land of China and went among the people to treat them. I hope that all our doctors' division members will also become respected physicians like Bian Que, committed to working for the welfare of the people.

On Being Human: Where Ethics, Medicine and Spirituality Converge

On Being Human: Where Ethics, Medicine and Spirituality Converge, *Daisaku Ikeda, molecular biologist/geneticist Renee Simard, bioethicist Guy Bourgeault dialogue (p.53) "The Nature of Health"*

Ikeda: Nichiren Daishonin taught that "the four sufferings of birth, old age sickness and death are the nature of the three fold world." In other words, since all living things must pass through birth, old age, sickness, and death, illness is a natural component of the life cycle. It does not mean the defeat of life. On the contrary, the struggle to confront illness enables us to celebrate the victory of the human experience. Efforts toward fulfillment are the dynamic of life, and this struggle is the constant equilibrium that you mentioned. Nichiren Daishonin also said, "Illness gives rise to the resolve to attain the way." Sickness helps people pioneer a more fulfilled way of living by reflecting of the meaning and dignity of life. The very process of overcoming illness tempers body and mind and enables us to create a still broader equilibrium. This is the source of the radiance of good health.



"Death with Dignity: Overcoming the Suffering of Death"

[p.121] Ikeda: My mentor, Josei Toda, died with dignity. From his sickbed, he encouraged others and answered questions about Buddhism. Until his last breath, he gave advice to people in distress. All his life, he radiated health in the true sense of the word, even after becoming ill.

Bourgeault: My mentor, Mr. Cormier, was a champion of human rights who maintained his dignity, too. "I'm not sick. It is just my body that is being attacked by cancer." He fulfilled the definition of health as something a person can deal with physically, psychologically, economically, socially and culturally. He never regarded his cancer as a "sickness" but as a condition he could continue to cope with in the above ways.

Ikeda: True health does not mean the absence of illness. Rather, it is a life-state characterized by openness to the hearts and minds of others and to the environment. It is constant readiness to exercise the creative ability to serve society. To maintain health in that sense until the last moment is to die with dignity.

Living Buddhism, July-August 2008, SGI President Ikeda's Lecture Series "On Prolonging One's Life Span," p. 74.

Life is tenacious: it is endowed with the impulse to survive and the power to heal. The "highly effective medicine" for drawing forth these innate properties is the Mystic Law. Ultimately, it is we ourselves who cure our illness, while the decision to undertake this battle to do so arises from faith. Nichiren indicates this in his reference to the "treasure of faith" (WND-1, 955).

To see illness as an opportunity to transform our karma – this strong spirit and resolve can break through all obstacles and devilish functions and open wide the path to happiness. Like a rocket blasting out of the earth's atmosphere, the passionate conviction of faith that comes from viewing illness as an opportunity to transform our karma can become a powerful engine propelling us forward not only in this existence but throughout eternity, enabling us to freely savor everlasting happiness.

Pg 77-79

In our attitude toward illness, we need to be fearless, yet at the same time we must not make light of the situation.

Becoming ill in itself is certainly not a sign of defeat. Even the Buddha, who is said to have "few ills and few worries" (LS, 214), struggles with sickness from time to time. Accordingly, there will be times when we are confronted with illness. The important point above all is not to be defeated mentally or emotionally by the prospect of being ill. Faith is the source of the fighting spirit to stand up to illness. Therefore, as we noted earlier, Nichiren Daishonin first of all talks about the "treasure of faith."

Next, it is only natural that we exert ourselves in practical and concrete ways to get well. To simply think, *I'm practicing Buddhism, so I'll be OK*, or to dismiss an illness as "nothing to worry about," reflects a mistaken understanding of faith and amounts to disrespect for one's own life. It is vital that we take action to "quickly conquer our illness." Therefore, Nichiren admonishes the lay nun Toki not to begrudge making efforts to cure her illness.

The Mystic Law is the fundamental power for defeating the hindrances of illness and death. "Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is like the roar of a lion" ("Reply to Kyo'o," WND-1, 412), Nichiren writes. Of key importance in conquering illness are a positive spirit, an effective curative treatment and a vigorous life force. And in this regard, chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is especially crucial in terms of strengthening ourselves mentally and emotionally, getting the most out of the treatment available to us and summoning forth a strong life force.

The struggle with illness becomes an opportunity for us to realize this glorious truth. As Nichiren says, "Illness gives rise to the resolve to attain the way" ("The Good Medicine for All Ills." WND-1, 937). If a practitioner who upholds faith in the Mystic Law becomes ill, it definitely has some profound meaning. It could be said that confronting illness is one route to awakening to the eternity of life.

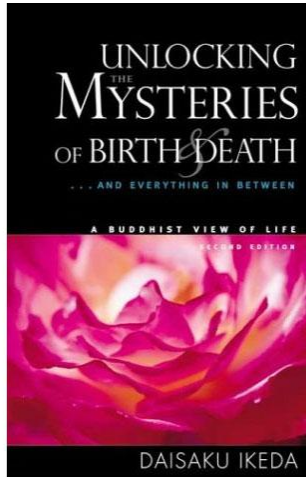
President Toda often said, “A person who has overcome a major illness knows how to deeply savor life.” Also, those who wage a struggle against illness with such confidence are champions of faith for living long and healthy lives.

A member of the doctors division remarked that people who chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in their battle against illness always brim with appreciation and smiles, an attitude that is itself a sign of their victory over their illness.

Of course, people suffer all kinds of sickness and diseases, and the severity or degree of their illness varies. In some cases, a person may become bedridden or physically incapacitated. But those who, through chanting, are battling or have battled illness, shine from the depths of their beings. They have nothing to worry about, because their lives are infused with Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. They are assured beyond a doubt of enjoying good fortune and benefit throughout eternity.

Unlocking the Mysteries of Birth and Death

Unlocking the Mysteries of Birth and Death and Everything In Between, A Buddhist View of Life, 2nd Edition, Middleway Press, Santa Monica, CA 2003.



[pp. 75-76]

No one can deny modern medicine's contributions to the curing of disease. It would be foolish to ignore it. Otherwise, faith descends into fanaticism. Yet for all its impressive technology, effective pharmaceuticals and elaborate diagnostic techniques, modern medical science is not omnipotent.

Moreover, its treatments often tend toward a materialistic or mechanistic view of the human organism, neglecting to look at life as a phenomenon involving both body and mind. Whereas modern medicine largely relies on drugs and technology,

Buddhist medicine concentrates on the patient's role incurring his or her own illness. We might say that medical science fights illness with scientific knowledge, while Buddhism develops human wisdom so that we may find our own rhythm and strengthen our life force. This assists the efficacy of medical treatment and also helps us conquer illness through our own natural healing powers. We must use medical resources wisely in fighting illness. Buddhism gives us the wisdom to use medicine properly. Wisdom is the basic ingredient to health, to long life and to happiness.

Buddhism regards disease as an external manifestation of internal disharmony. Further, Buddhist medicine maintains that the quality of human life or health is determined by the balance of an indescribably vast number of factors, each in a constant state of flux. Establishing equilibrium among these factors is little short of miraculous; so it is hardly surprising that the balance is disturbed periodically, resulting in illness. The strength of Buddhist medicine is that it focuses on activating the unlimited potentials and energies inherent in the individual human life to restore and sustain this robust, dynamic equilibrium. When we access our fundamental life force, no illness can prevent us from living a fulfilling life. (LB 10/1/2002, p. 30) Nichiren Daishonin writes, "Of all medicines, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the best medicine" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 335). From the fundamental aspect of life itself, the Mystic Law is the "wonderful medicine," the "highly efficient medicine" that heals, revitalizes, and relieves human beings of suffering.