

President's Message



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◆ What Is “Transcendent Power”?

A wondrous power that transcends human knowledge is often referred to as a “transcendent power,” which we usually think of as a special ability that we ourselves cannot attain.

It’s no wonder that we think this, since Buddhist scripture states that incredible abilities like “being able to see all things in every realm” and “emitting brilliant light from every pore of the body that illuminates the world” are due to transcendent powers. I do not think, however, that Shakyamuni expounded anything that we ourselves cannot do. In that case, what is the meaning of the “transcendent powers” referred to in the scripture?

In my understanding, the greatest transcendent power of human beings is that we have minds. In other words, the human mind is a transcendent power. Because we have minds, we understand the feelings of other people—we can understand what they are seeking. Because we have minds, we are able to comprehend the truth revealed to us by Shakyamuni.

Founder Niwano said, “If you get wisdom, in the true sense, through the Mahayana teachings, that’s the same as gaining transcendent power.” What he meant is that instead of assuming that transcendent power is some extraordinary ability, we should say that the everyday functioning of the mind exerts a power that can be called transcendent when it’s used to show consideration for others. For example, many Rissho Kosei-kai members say that thanks to the support of friends who know the Buddha’s teachings and have grown close to them, they have been born anew while living the same life. Indeed, sometimes we can only use the word “amazing” to respond to these changes of heart—they show us that our minds are capable of anything.

This is also proven by the ruthless murderer Angulimala, who, through the care and guidance of Shakyamuni, became one of Shakyamuni’s foremost disciples. So, transcendent power is also sincerity in the part of the mind that thinks of other people, and the power released through that part as it functions.



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◆Happiness Is Bringing Joy to Others

Once when I was talking about transcendent powers, someone said, “Kosei-kai is full of people who demonstrate transcendent power through their sincerity,” and I certainly believe that is true. This is because, according to chapter 21 of the Lotus Sutra (“The Transcendent Powers of the Tathagata”), transcendent powers are used to bring people joy. To quote from that chapter, the buddhas, “in order to bring joy to living beings, / Demonstrate their immeasurable transcendent powers.” Therefore, it is important to interact with others cheerfully, kindly, and warmly, and to make every effort to care for them. If you bring them even a little joy by putting into practice your consideration for them, it is none other than the demonstration of your transcendent power.

Incidentally, manga artist Takashi Yanase (1919–2013), who was best known as the creator of the *Anpanman* series, wrote in his book *Mo hitotsu no Anpanman monogatari* [Another story of Anpanman] that “the greatest / joy / is bringing others / joy.” He elaborated on this by saying that people are happiest when they make others happy, that the greatest pleasure in life is to please people, and that he became a manga artist because he wanted to give his all to making people happy. When I read this, I felt that this man was a bodhisattva who brought people joy through his manga and, at the same time, taught us that if we’re dedicated to a way of life that makes others happy, we can all become bodhisattvas right where we are.

Even someone who is bedridden can bring joy to others by smiling and offering words of gratitude—this, too, is a transcendent power and the work of a bodhisattva. As the final verse of chapter 21 states, people who share the Dharma in this way “cause countless bodhisattvas / To at last abide in the One Vehicle.” We are, each and every one of us, building a world in which everyone can live together in harmony. I hope that Rissho Kosei-kai will always be full of people who, at all times, with heartfelt sincerity, are happy to make others happy.

From Kosei, February 2021

