

The Essence of Seicho-No-Ie The Secret of the True Image and Phenomenon

As parents, we encounter many different problems in this journey we call life. These problems may be crises of health, finances, or relationships, or the gradual buildup of anxiety or stress. We seek relief from our distress for the calm of inner peace. In Seicho-No-Ie there are answers, and they all begin with the central awareness of the true nature of life. Behind all the events of our daily lives is the awareness that what we see in the everyday or phenomenal world is a construct of our mind and is just an appearance. It does not really exist. You may want to stop me right here and object. Common sense wisdom is based on the evidence of the five senses. We say something exists if we can see it with our eyes and touch it with our hands. We say that because it has the substance of matter, it is real. If not, it is always suspect: could it have really happened, if we didn't see it or touch it?

We are conditioned by a view of the world based on certain ideas that modern physics has found are no longer true. Where once we thought the world was known, predictable, solid and dependable like a clock, we are discovering that it is much more malleable than we believed and that it is influenced by our thoughts. At the smallest level of matter, atoms with their electrons and nuclei were thought to be the building blocks of everything. High-energy physics has found more than two hundred particles that make up the atom. It seems that as you delve further and further into the atom, ultimately there is nothing there. We cannot stand outside nature and observe what is happening. The very fact that we are looking is influencing the result. We are participants in all that is. There is something behind all that we see. There is an intelligence, an energy that animates all things. We can call this God.

In Seicho-No-Ie we say that the only real existence is God, or we describe this as the True Image, the real existence. This True Image cannot be seen by the eyes or touched with the hand but this does not mean it is not there. When we understand that behind all things is the True Image, our essence, our essential being which is of God, indeed, that we are children of God, then miracles can occur. This is true for all of us, even the juvenile delinquent who has committed a crime. When we see his True Image with the eyes of our mind and worship him with our soul, his inner perfection will appear. This is not a common sense explanation but it can be perceived by the spiritual sense. When the power of our spiritual sense is applied, and the delusion that he is a juvenile delinquent is pierced, the transformation occurs and the child of God emerges. This is the power of the Seicho-No-Ie teachings. When we clear our mind of the illusion of appearances, people become as they truly are, as seen from the very depths of our spiritual heart and soul.

The same may be said of disease. In our essence, our True Image, child of God self, we are perfect and harmonious beings. Disease then, too, is an appearance, a cloud that has covered the radiance of our inner being. When we realize that disease is an illusion which has appeared because we have forgotten our true selves, it, too, will disappear. Dr. Taniguchi teaches us as follows:

The real self that is the child of God, Buddha nature, or the Truth this alone is real. The false self, the self which is sick, the self with a bad personality and character is a product of delusion no matter how real it may seem to be, for it is something that has been conjured up by the mind and projected on the screen of daily life. The result is like a mirage or a projected image in the sky. It does not exist. If we wish to realize the perfect life as a true child of God, . . . we have to keep casting aside the old false self day by day . . .

Like peeling an onion layer by layer, we peel off the skin of the false self and cast it aside day after day, perhaps hour after hour. If we do this, eventually nothing remains but the True Image, which is as free as the empty sky. People can hardly be expected to reach this stage all at once. But if the skin of delusion is peeled off, and we begin to awaken so that we are at least halfway to the True Image, the frame of mind which is attained is reflected in circumstances and on the body, and our daily lives become extremely good. There may be some people who think that religion saves only our souls but does not help our daily lives. But our daily life is controlled by the mind; therefore, a religion that cannot heal our daily life cannot be called a living religion. Since the form is a shadow of the mind, a religion that is able to truly heal the mind must be able to heal the problems of daily life whether they are of disease or of circumstances.

From our experience, diseases are easy to heal even if they are fairly serious diseases, but personality and character defects are somewhat more difficult to heal. Human beings generally have the awareness that a diseased condition is not their true nature, and that they were at one time healthy persons. On top of that, people usually have a burning desire to heal their disease. This awareness and burning desire are a great aid in effecting a healing.

When we bring this awareness into our relationship with our children, we recognize that the occasional circumstance that arises that is unpleasant is just an appearance it is not the true existence. It is an opportunity to reflect upon ourselves and discover what is lacking in our relationship that has allowed this appearance to arise. When we clear our mind and see with the heart, only love, joy and harmony are truly there.

By Bruce Mallery