

Discussion Topic February - Establishing the Correct Teaching for Peace in our Hearts

Buddhism is a philosophy that affirms the preciousness of life. Nichiren Daishonin writes: "Life is the most precious of all treasures." (WND-1, 955) From this perspective, it is important to work towards a society that is based on respect for the dignity of life. At the same time, this is not always easy. In our daily lives, we do not always succeed in truly feeling, believing in, or acting upon the dignity of our own lives and that of others.

Nichiren Daishonin was convinced that the disorder in the world reflected the disorder within human beings. He wrote: "In a country where the three poisons [of greed, anger and foolishness] prevail to such a degree, how can there be peace and stability? (...) Famine occurs as a result of greed, pestilence as a result of foolishness, and warfare as a result of anger." (WND-1, 989) According to Nichiren, Buddhism can give people the strength to overcome these negative tendencies and thus contribute to a peaceful society. His important writing, 'On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land', is a passionate call to return to the original purpose of Buddhism: peace and happiness for the people.

The establishment of the correct teaching therefore begins with ourselves. It calls for a fundamental transformation of our hearts and minds - a profound inner change in how we perceive and approach life. This begins with awakening the good within ourselves and deepening our respect for the dignity of life, as taught in the Lotus Sutra. When these values form the core of our philosophy of life, they can guide our actions in our daily life.

Many people today live with a sense of confusion, emptiness and despair. They feel powerless to change themselves or society. Contempt for human life gives rise to violence and abuse. They feel powerless to change themselves or the society. Disregard for life gives rise to violence and abuse. For this reason, it is essential to have a philosophy that reveals the wonder, dignity, and boundless potential inherent in every human being. A religion or philosophy should instill courage and hope in people and help them to transform their suffering. Buddhism teaches that a profound inner transformation - what we call a "human revolution" - is the foundation for real change in the world. When our compassion becomes stronger than our selfish tendencies, the way we relate to others also changes.

Buddhism views life as a struggle between the forces of good and evil. The good is defined as the desire to become happy oneself while also helping others to do the same. Evil arises when fear, rivalry, and selfishness gain the upper hand, undermining our sense of unity and interconnectedness. By transforming ourselves and living with greater compassion, courage, and wisdom, we influence the world around us.

Sharing this Buddhism with others is therefore of great value. SGI-President Daisaku Ikeda writes: "It is an act of the highest compassion, (...) in which, with the roar of a lion, we work purposefully to awaken the good in people's hearts and enrich society with vitality and creativity. This is the most noble spiritual struggle we can undertake."¹

Whether we devote ourselves to our work, our families, our personal goals, or our communities, we can always choose anew to deepen our faith and strengthen our Buddhist practice, thereby bringing about an inner transformation. In this way, we work toward peace and happiness.

¹ Daisaku Ikeda, Living Buddhism, february 2016, 23.

- How do you challenge yourself to firmly establish the core values of this Buddhism in your heart? Do you have experience with this?
- Do you believe that a positive inner transformation can contribute to peace in your own life and in society?
- Do you have experience in sharing Buddhism with others?