

March Discussion Topic - **Fostering youth is the key to the eternal development of kosenrufu - world peace**

The road to kosen-rufu - world peace - is long. It is a grand undertaking that will take many generations. That is why it is important to encourage, support, and train our young successors.

Youth is a time filled with worries and challenges. The hearts of young people are often tossed back and forth by emotions. They worry about their future, their identity, relationships, social issues, and life in general. At times, they may feel confused and anxious. They struggle with the gap between their ideals and reality. Sometimes, they may even get caught up in self-doubt or self-criticism, feeling overwhelmed by uncertainty and fear. When young people are weighed down by worries, they cannot fully express their potential.

Ikeda Sensei says: "To help young people grow, it's important to spend time with them, talk to them, and work alongside them. Sharing experiences with them is essential. If you have the passion to support them to develop into capable individuals, then chant for them, do your best for them, and in doing so, you will plant a seed in their hearts. Even if the results aren't immediately visible, in time, that seed will bloom beautifully and powerfully."¹

"I believe we can define kosen-rufu, or peace, as firmly establishing a deep respect for the dignity of life within our own hearts. Instead of closing our hearts, it means staying true to our ideals, cultivating a seeking spirit, continuously challenging ourselves, and engaging in dialogue with others.

"It is important that we speak out for what is right and stay true to our convictions. It is also essential that we bring about profound change in society and plant the philosophy of peace and human rights in the heart of every person."²

As practitioners of Nichiren Buddhism, we learn that life is full of obstacles and negative forces that try to hold us back from moving forward. Two important things we can do to expand our lives and overcome anything, no matter what happens, are to carry out our human revolution - our inner transformation - and to help others do the same by sharing the powerful practice of Buddhism with them.

With our Buddhist practice, we can fully bring forth and activate our Buddha nature – a life state of limitless strength, wisdom, compassion, and courage. When we become aware of our inner Buddha nature, our lives overflow with an incredible sense of joy. A whole new inner world opens up, with infinite possibilities, not just for ourselves, but also for our surroundings, and in society as a whole. It is our mission to share this with others, especially the youth.

- How do you challenge yourself to encourage young people based on Nichiren Buddhism? Do you have any experience with this?
- How do you challenge yourself to establish respect for the dignity of life in your own heart?

¹ Herbie Hancock, Daisaku Ikeda, Wayne Shorter, *Reaching Beyond*, 189-190.

² *Youth and the Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, 62.