

Discussion Topic February - Peace Through Dialogue

Many people nowadays are concerned about what they regard as the steadily increasing threat of divisiveness in the world. That is why it is important to seek closer ties with one another by means of dialogue. In Buddhism, dialogue occupies a central place.

As every person is different, and everyone has their own opinions, mindset or fields of interest, conflicts will arise. Is there anyone who has no disagreements, either with a member of their family, or with a friend, partner, neighbour or colleague? The real question is: how do you deal with that? And what are the ingredients needed for a good dialogue?

President Ikeda has undertaken countless dialogues. As he explains, "Conflict and tension do not in themselves render dialogue impossible; what builds the walls between us is our willingness to remain ignorant of others. This is why it is crucial to be the one to initiate dialogue. Everything starts from there."[♦]

No matter who the person in front of you may be, it is important to be able to embrace all their emotions and feelings, to touch and to open their heart, and to create mutual understanding, respect and sympathy. Successful dialogue does not depend on the other, it depends on you. Nichiren Daishonin states, "It is like the situation when one faces a mirror and makes a bow of obeisance: the image in the mirror likewise makes a bow of obeisance to oneself." (OTT, 165) No matter how others appear to be at first sight, no matter how they react, if we address them from our Buddha nature, their innate Buddha nature will respond.

1. Why is it important during a dialogue to have faith in the Buddha nature of the person we are talking to?
2. Have you experienced using dialogue successfully to resolve a conflict that you initially imagined would be impossible to settle?

[♦] Daisaku Ikeda, *Peace Proposal 2016*, 30.