

Discussion topic June - Compassion

Human nature is the cause of our most dire global problems, but it is also the source of the fundamental solution. The countervailing force to the destructive aspect to human nature and the suffering it engenders is compassion. Compassion, a sense of solidarity with others—with all life—arising from a wish for mutual happiness and growth, is the heart and origin of Buddhism.

President Daisaku Ikeda writes: "True Buddhist compassion has nothing to do with sentimentality or mere pity. This is because sentimentality or mere pity cannot help the other person achieve victory in life; it cannot truly relieve suffering and impart joy."

The Buddhist understanding is that good and evil are innate, inseparable aspects of life. This view makes it impossible to label a particular individual. Genuine compassion is about empowering others, helping them unlock strength and courage from within their lives in order to overcome their problems. Although resolving a difficult situation for someone may seem compassionate, if this ends up making them weaker and less self-reliant, this will not contribute to their actual happiness in life.

Nichiren established the practice of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo as a practical means for people to bring forth the strength and rich potential of their humanity and live with confidence and joy.

It is easy to give up on ourselves and others in the face of our failure and foolishness; such loss of faith in humanity is characteristic of our troubled world today. The transformation of society can only occur through a transformation of people's hearts.

To continue to believe in and encourage the innate goodness and potential of our own and others' lives is the core of the philosophy of Nichiren Buddhism.

△ Have you ever been able to encourage someone with buddhist compassion?

△ How do you challenge yourself to keep believing in the innate goodness of yourself and others?