October Discussion Topic – Wisdom

The idea of wisdom is core to Buddhism, but for many it can be a vague and elusive concept. How do we become wise? Is wisdom something that we can actively develop, or must we merely wait to grow wiser as we grow older?

As modern society places more emphasis on information and acquiring knowledge, wisdom is gradually becoming less important. We certainly cannot deny that knowledge is important, but knowledge can be utilized to generate both extreme destructiveness and highest good. Wisdom is that which directs knowledge toward good—toward the creation of value.

A Buddha is a person of limitless wisdom who manifests this innate wisdom. We can bring forth the same Buddha wisdom by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, which enables us to reveal our own limitless wisdom, courage, life-force and compassion.

Buddhism regards the universe, and life itself, as the embodiment of compassion. Through our practice, our life is brought into accord with the compassionate workings of the universe. When we act with compassion - in harmony with the life-force of the universe – we manifest our inherent wisdom. When we give encouragement and hope to others, we reveal our limitless Buddha nature, transcending the narrow confines of our ego. Wisdom and compassion are thus inseparable.

Our wisdom enables us to overcome the ingrained perspectives of our habitual thinking and arrive at a fresh holistic view of any given situation. We are able to see things as they really are, and judge them objectively. We gain insight into the real nature of our problems, thus opening a sure path towards happiness. Buddhism also likens wisdom to a clear mirror that perfectly reflects reality as it is. Reflected in this mirror of wisdom is the interrelatedness and interdependence of our life with all other life. The more we strive to develop an altruistic spirit, the more the wisdom of the Buddha is aroused within us and the more powerfully we can, in turn, direct all things—our knowledge, our talents and the unique particularities of our character—to the end of creating happiness for ourselves and others.

President Ikeda says: “To be master of one’s mind means to cultivate the wisdom that resides in the inner recesses of our lives, and which wells forth in inexhaustible profusion only when we are moved by a compassionate determination to serve humankind, to serve people.”

* Do you have an experience of developing wisdom by reciting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and how did you use that wisdom to create value?

* President Ikeda explains that our wisdom wells forth in inexhaustible profusion only when we compassionately help other people. Did you ever experience this?

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1 From a speech of Daisaku Ikeda at the Tribhuvan University in Nepal in 1995.