Sep Discussion Topic – Courage leads to happiness

If we want to achieve something in our lives it’s important to muster and develop our courage. Many people live their lives locked in a paralysis of fear, seemingly unable to take a step forward to resolve the deadlock or reveal their true potential. Although we may know intellectually that we possess great potential, unless we muster the courage to act on that knowledge, our potential will remain unfulfilled.

Courageous people usually achieve their goals and realize their dreams. Courage is not only heroic action in times of danger—it is also the persistent, unglamorous effort to do what we feel is right. Often, though, our fundamental lack of courage prevents us from acting to do the right thing.

In Buddhism, courage or fearlessness is of great value. Nichiren Daishonin insists in one of his letters to his followers: “You should not have the slightest fear in your heart. It is lack of courage that prevents one from attaining Buddhahood.” (WND-I, 637)

Buddhism also teaches us that our efforts to grow and develop ourselves will inevitably trigger resistance, both inside and outside ourselves. By persevering in the face of obstacles and overcoming them, we can open up our inner treasure of possibilities and manifest our innate enlightenment. This process requires courage, of course, but also faith.

Our buddhist practice is the ongoing exercise of faith—faith, ultimately, in ourselves—in the midst of the often harsh realities of life. It is rooted in the knowledge that a positive change in our own lives will also bring about a change in the greater whole of life of which we are a part.

Being courageous is closely linked to our conviction. The conviction that we have the right and the opportunity to be happy, free and fulfilled and to help others do the same. Such a conviction is the foundation of social justice and it is the essence of Buddhist philosophy. Therefore, Buddhism considers courage to be an essential element in helping others with compassion. It is also the key to changing our own lives.

The transforming quality of courage, a characteristic of our Buddha nature, resides within us at every moment and we summon it by reciting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

President Ikeda once said, “Small things matter. What may look like a small act of courage is courage nevertheless. The important thing is to be willing to take a step forward.”

* What does courage mean to you?

* Do you have an experience achieving your goal by courageously taking action?

---