December Discussion Topic – Gratitude enriches our heart

Our lives are constantly supported by an extensive network of invisible efforts of others and our environment; from our food, the products and services we use to the support we receive from others in difficult times.

Gratitude means feeling thankful or returning the kindness or generosity received from others. In contrast, ingratitude is an outgrowth of the arrogant delusion that we are fundamentally detached and separate from each other and our surroundings. To lose sight of the reality of our mutual interdependence makes us prey to the negative impulses of envy and greed.

Feelings of appreciation are always accompanied by the elevation of one’s state of life and the broadening of one’s perspective. The more our life expands, the more profound our sense of gratitude becomes, to the point where we can feel appreciation even for the problems we face in life.

President Daisaku Ikeda frequently calls on young people to take on difficult challenges, in order to be able to grow. To be able to look back on one’s struggles with appreciation is proof of spiritual victory. To be able to greet even the most severe hardships with a sense of gratitude, rooted in a firm confidence of ultimate triumph, is an expression of the free, unfettered life condition of Buddhahood.

Second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda said: “True greatness means that, even if you forget what you’ve done for others, you never forget what others have done for you and always do your utmost to repay your debts of gratitude. Therein shines the light of Buddhism. Such people radiate integrity, depth of character, generosity, and charm.”

President Ikeda writes: “To repay one’s debts of gratitude is the highest virtue. Neglecting gratitude is a reflection of a life controlled by innate negativity.”

As we each deepen our faith in the Mystic Law, break through our fundamental darkness and live true to our greater self, we will come to feel boundless appreciation for all those around us and for all who have nurtured and helped us become who we are.

Every time we say “thank you,” our hearts sparkle and a strong life force emerges from the depths of our being.

* Do you feel more gratitude through your Buddhist practice and do you have an example of this?

* Can you feel gratitude for your problems or obstacles and do you have an experience with that?

1 Daisaku Ikeda, Learning From Nichiren’s Writings: The Teachings for Victory, volume 4, 28.
2 Daisaku Ikeda, The Hope-Filled Teachings, 222.