

Februari Discussion Topic– Each person is of immeasurable value

The heart of the Buddha's lifetime of teachings is the Lotus Sutra, and the heart of the practice of the Lotus Sutra is found in the "Never Disparaging" chapter. Bodhisattva Never Disparaging approaches each person he meets in a completely open and non-prejudicial way. He bows to them and says: "I have profound reverence for you, I would never dare treat you with disparagement or arrogance. Why? Because you are all practicing the bodhisattva way and are certain to attain Buddhahood" (LSOC20, 308) Despite being mocked and attacked, he persevered in his practice of respecting all people. As a result, he attained Buddhahood. Seeing what he had achieved, many who had once slandered him became his followers and took faith in the sutra.

Bodhisattva Never Disparaging teaches us to belief in the dignity and unlimited potential of all people. When we act with respect for the Buddha nature in others, their Buddha nature responds likewise. This is why the ultimate respectful behavior is to share Nichiren Buddhism with others and encourage them to reveal the unlimited potential they possess.

It may be easy to be respectful to some people, but it is very challenging to be respectful to every person in our environment. However it is important to strengthen our faith and conviction that all people inherently possess Buddhahood and act accordingly.

We are living in extremely challenging and complex times. It is easy for us to lose hope in the inherent potential of other people when we are constantly bombarded with negative images that seem to prove the opposite. Nichiren Daishonin explains that a fundamental change in ourselves becomes visible in our behavior. This will inevitably lead to a change in our circumstances. He also says: "The purpose of the appearance in this world of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, lies in his behavior as a human being." (WND-I, 852)

As an SGI-organisation we are committed to working alongside like-minded people from all faith traditions to create a positive transformation of our world. Above all, what we are trying to spread is the underlying message in the Lotus Sutra, which teaches that each person is equally precious and therefore worthy of the deepest respect.

President Ikeda says: "Everything begins with dialogue. Dialogue is the initial step in the creation of value. Dialogue is the starting point and unifying force in all human relationships. Dialogue is not some simplistic assertion of one's own position, nor is it necessarily about persuading others to one's point of view. Dialogue is about demonstrating respect for another's life, and being determined to learn when confronted with differences in personality and perspective."¹

It is through such compassionate and earnest actions that we gain good fortune in our lives, and establish the foundation for respect and peace in our families and our society.

* Do you succeed to treat people with respect (for their Buddha nature)?

* Do you have an experience that your respect for others was answered?

¹ www.ikedaquotes.org/dialogue/.