

June Discussion Topic – Our lives are the treasure tower

The central theme of the Lotus Sutra is Shakyamuni's awakening to the Buddha nature that exists not only within himself but in everything and everyone. It tells about how he transmitted the mission to make everyone aware of the Buddha state in their lives.

In the Lotus Sutra an enormous treasure tower suddenly rises up from the earth. It is embellished with seven kinds of treasures and jewels, which signify the beauty, grandeur and dignity of human life. President Ikeda says: "That colossal treasure tower is an expression of the state of Buddhahood that lies dormant within each of us. It teaches us the infinite nobility of life."¹ Shakyamuni Buddha and Many Treasures Buddha² are seated together within the tower and the assembly is lifted into the air as the preaching resumes.

This is called the Ceremony in the Air. The Ceremony in the Air is not a historical event or a fantastical Buddhist tale. It can be viewed as a metaphor for the emergence of our innate Buddha nature, the potential in all people to bring forth boundless life force, compassion, courage and wisdom from their lives. Nichiren Daishonin expressed the Ceremony in the Air in the form of the Gohonzon, the object of devotion for all people.

He often compared the Gohonzon to the treasure tower. He explained that the Gohonzon is not his invention, but the embodiment of the treasure tower of Shakyamuni - the Buddha state. He emphasized that the treasure tower appears in the lives of those who believe in the Mystic Law and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

In a writing to his disciple Abutsu-bo, he states: "In the Latter Day of the Law, no treasure tower exists other than the figures of the men and women who embrace the Lotus Sutra. It follows, therefore, that whether eminent or humble, high or low, those who chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo are themselves the treasure tower, and likewise, are themselves the Thus Come One Many Treasures." (WND-I, 299)

In other words, no matter where we are, by chanting to the Gohonzon and practicing for the happiness of ourselves and others, the place where we are is where the treasure tower emerges, enabling us to bring forth the greatest life state of Buddhahood.

By developing a deep respect for the dignity and value of ourselves and others, the lifestate of humanity is raised. This allows us to break through the fundamental darkness or ignorance and change our karma from conflict and discord into lasting peace.

* Have you experienced that you have become more respectful of yourself through the practice and therefore also of others?

* How can we make others aware of their enormous and valuable potential - the Buddha state - that we all possess?

¹ Daisaku Ikeda, *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, part 1, 93.

² Many Treasures: a Buddha who, seated in the treasure tower during the Ceremony in the Air, appeared to lend credibility to Shakyamuni's teachings in the Lotus Sutra.