

SEP Discussion Topic– Establishing the “peace of the land”

Buddhism is a philosophy that affirms the preciousness of life. The Daishonin writes: “Life is the most precious of all treasures. . . . One day of life is more valuable than all the treasures of the major world system” (WND-I, 955)

It is important to build a society guided first and foremost by the principle of respect for the dignity of life. The Lotus Sutra teaches that the infinitely respectable Buddha nature is present in the lives of all people.

President Ikeda says: “The peace of the land refers to social prosperity, the happiness of the people, and world peace(...) The peace of the land depends directly on the principles of reverence for life, respect for humanity, and peace. These are universal ideals sought by all people and stem from the very essence of human existence, transcending differences of religion, race, ethnicity, or ideology.”¹

Nichiren Daishonin writes: “If the minds of living beings are impure, their land is also impure, but if their minds are pure, so is their land. There are not two lands, pure or impure in themselves. The difference lies solely in the good or evil of our minds. (WND-I, 4) There is no place on earth that’s inherently good or bad. The same holds true for people. The key factor is people’s state of life. Because the land is made up of people, the people determine the purity or peace of the land.

In his treatise, “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land,” Nichiren writes at length how we, as human beings living in times of immense conflict, can win over ourselves and reach out to others in order to create a more peaceful society. Through dialogue - the format in which his remonstrations were written - he tried to convince the leaders of the country that they had to choose correct values in order to bring about a true solution to the troubles facing the country.

“Establishing the correct teaching,” first of all, depends upon the transformation of the heart and mind, an inner transformation at the individual level. It requires awakening to the good within us, establishing in our hearts the principles of respect for human dignity and life that are taught in the Lotus Sutra, and making them the core of our life philosophy.

When it comes to our hearts, President Ikeda explains that what we have faith in indicates what we hold most precious. He asks us: “Are we driven by egoism that seeks personal happiness at the exclusion and expense of others, or by compassion that is concerned with both our own and others’ welfare, refusing to build our happiness on the misfortune of others? The focus is on the transformation of our minds, our hearts, our values. It is the human revolution in a single individual.”²

As we transform ourselves to become more compassionate, courageous and wise, we impact the environment around us. We can elevate the quality of our environment. No matter the endeavor—be it work, our personal goals, families, or communities, we can always resolve to deepen our faith and strengthen our Buddhist practice to achieve that inner change.

President Ikeda also says: “I believe it can be summed up as empowering suffering individuals we encounter by encouraging them to base their lives on the Mystic Law, in order to realize peace and security for all people and the world. Both the practice of “establishing the correct teaching” and the mission of actualizing the “peace of the land” are

¹ Daisaku Ikeda, *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 14, 254.

² Daisaku Ikeda, *Living Buddhism*, januari 2016, 39.

encompassed in this spirit of Soka, or value creation—a spirit that treasures each individual and is dedicated to one-to-one dialogue.”³

The peace of the land will be realized when more individuals establish peace in their hearts and the concepts of human dignity and sanctity of life support and move society. For this to happen, we need to awaken more individuals to their innate Buddhahood—their compassion, courage and wisdom

As practitioners of Nichiren Buddhism, we learn that life is filled with obstacles and negative forces that prevent us from moving forward. The two key actions we can take to expand our lives and be victorious no matter what are engaging in our human revolution and reaching out to others and sharing the empowering practice of Buddhism with them.

- What comes to mind when you think about the peace of the land?
- What action are you taking to contribute to the peace in the land ? Do you have an experience with that?

³ibid, 40.