

## November Discussion Topic - Casting off the transient and revealing the true

Many aspects make us who we are - where we were born, the family we were born into, our childhood experiences, the people and things that influence us, our beliefs and way of life. The list is endless. Buddhism teaches about the true nature of our lives; that our lives are eternal - that inherent in each of us is the noble state of Buddhahood. We are equally respectable, no matter what we look like, our background or status in society. In order to tap from this noble life state, it is important to challenge and overcome the negative tendencies that can dominate our lives and are the cause of our suffering.

A key concept in Nichiren Buddhism is “casting off the transient and revealing the true”. This concept explains that through our Buddhist practice, we can transcend our temporary nature and reveal - our Buddha nature – our true nature: a steadfast self which enables us to challenge and overcome any painful ordeal. The greater our difficulties, the more our Buddha nature will shine. Attaining Buddhahood lies in developing such a self. Through our faith we can transcend our difficulties and weaknesses, and develop our humanity.

President Ikeda explains this process of casting off the transient and revealing the true, stating: “This means that ordinary people - ruled by selfish desires and burdened by karma and suffering - return to their inherent life state from time without beginning, sever the chains of karma and become Buddhas filled with compassion and wisdom who wish to help all humanity attain enlightenment.”<sup>1</sup>

“Revealing the true” comes down to assuming the Buddha’s “wish to help all humanity attain enlightenment.” It points to our true identity as Bodhisattvas of the Earth—those in the Lotus Sutra who emerge onto the scene with the firm desire to propagate the Mystic Law, the essence of the sutra, and awaken the people to their Buddha nature in the trouble-filled world.

Every one of us has a unique mission to not be defeated no matter how daunting the challenges. We transform our lives and reveal our Buddha state and in doing so we inspire everyone around us to do the same.

President Ikeda says: “However much we may speak of our wonderful inherent life force or limitless potential, that alone is no more than an abstraction. Rather, it is when we strive to develop ourselves in the midst of the greatest adversity that our innate power as human beings reveals itself. Our true self, of which we were not even aware, comes to the fore.”<sup>2</sup>

The concept of “casting off the transient and revealing the true” teaches that we can reveal our true self, our highest potential, just as we are.

- What does casting off the transient and revealing the true mean to you?
- The greater the difficulties we face, the more we can bring forth our Buddha state. Do you have an experience with this?

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<sup>1</sup> June 2016 *Living Buddhism*, 48

<sup>2</sup> July 2016 *Living Buddhism*, 50