

Study podcast for November

A Religion of Human Revolution—Part 4 Harmony—A Realm of Equality That Recognizes the Dignity of All People

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Hi everyone,
Welcome to the study podcast for the month of November. I am Sadaji.

At this time, we are accelerating towards November 18, the Soka Gakkai Founding Day. Although there are no study meetings scheduled this month, I hope you enjoy this podcast and read through the material.

In this instalment of Part 4 of “A Religion of Human Revolution”, President Ikeda focuses on the Buddhist philosophy of peace and harmony.

He begins this lecture by referring to Mr. Toda’s concept of global citizenship. President Ikeda explains:

[Mr. Toda’s] concept of global citizenship was infused with his fervent wish to put a stop to the seemingly unending cycle of war and spare people from misery—a desire to transcend all ethnic and ideological differences and open the way to peaceful and harmonious coexistence for humankind. It was a philosophy that recognized all human beings as fellow inhabitants of planet Earth and equally embraced people of every region—East and West, North and South. It was a philosophy of peace and harmony that stood in opposition to the violence and division that bring unhappiness and suffering to humanity.

Now, please listen to the first Gosho passage from “The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings”. This well-known passage affirms that the Lotus Sutra seeks to guide all people to enlightenment, accepting all kinds of differences and respecting diversity.

When one comes to realize and see that each thing—the cherry, the plum, the peach, the damson—in its own entity, without undergoing any change, possesses the eternally endowed three bodies [of the Buddha—the Dharma body, the reward body, and the manifested body], then this is what is meant by the word

ryo, “to include” or all-inclusive.

Now Nichiren and his followers, who chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, are the original possessors of these eternally endowed three bodies. (OTT, 200–201)

In Spring, cherry, plum, peach, and damson trees blossom with their own unique flowers. It doesn't need to be the same as others. It's like when we visit a botanical garden, we appreciate the harmony and richness of the variety of flowers and bushes. All living beings, despite all differences, possess their original life state of Buddhahood. President Ikeda says:

[The Lotus Sutra] shows the utmost respect for diversity, accepting and valuing people's differences rather than discriminating against them. This spirit is the essence of Buddhist humanism.

Does this mean that we should simply stay as we are? No, not really. There is a difference between “being who we are” and “staying as we are.” Our individuality and unique qualities start to shine when we continuously strive to ascend, challenging ourselves. For us, when we chant for the happiness of self and others, we can manifest the life state of Buddhahood, just as we are, while truly making the most of our individuality. The Daishonin states, “Now Nichiren and his followers, who chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, are the original possessors of these eternally endowed three bodies.”

Now let's move on to the second Goshō passage from “The Daimoku of the Lotus Sutra”. This passage teaches that a revitalizing force of the Mystic Law gives positive meaning to all things.

***Myo* [meaning mystic, of *myoho*, the Mystic Law] means to revive, that is, to return to life. (WND-1, 149)**

The Mystic Law has the revitalizing power to free all living beings from suffering and to lead them to enlightenment.

In this lecture, President Ikeda discusses two points in this matter. Firstly, the Mystic Law has the power to give positive meaning and value to all things. It allows us to make the most of all of our experiences and efforts made in the past, including even those made before taking faith in Nichiren Buddhism. In the future when we look back past experiences, we come to realize that “Ah, that's why I've gone through these. Nothing is wasted in our Buddhist practice.” Right?

Secondly, the Mystic Law is a teaching of integration, uniting all philosophies. The Daishonin teaches us that the Lotus Sutra is likened to the main chord of a net, while other teachings will correspond to the finer meshes of the net. So when we view these teachings from the perspective of the Lotus Sutra, we can unite these teachings, making positive use of them. President Ikeda says:

All philosophies and creeds that seek human happiness and peace are at the deepest level aligned with the teaching of the Mystic Law, which extols the dignity and worth of all people. As a result, when illuminated by the bright light of hope of the Mystic Law, they can vibrantly reveal their true value as positive forces for the good for all humanity and function for people's happiness.

Now let's move on to the third Gosho passage from "The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life," one of the passages many of us have repeatedly studied. In this passage, the teaching of harmony is expressed as practising in "the unity of many in body, one in mind."

**All disciples and lay supporters of Nichiren should chant
Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the spirit of many in body but one in mind,
transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish
and the water in which they swim. This spiritual bond is the basis for the
universal transmission of the ultimate Law of life and death. Herein lies the
true goal of Nichiren's propagation. When you are so united, even the great
desire for widespread propagation [i.e., kosen-rufu] can be fulfilled. (WND-1,
217)**

This passage discusses how "the ultimate Law of life and death" is transmitted from the Buddha to living beings and then manifested in their lives. The passage begins with the phrase, "All disciples and lay supporters of Nichiren". The heart of Nichiren Buddhism is faith based on the spirit of oneness of mentor and disciple.

Then, the passage sets forth three key points for us to receive the "heritage of the ultimate law of life and death" from the Buddha so it can be manifested in our lives. The first is "transcending all differences among ourselves". The second is "being as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim." The third is "uniting in the spirit of many in body but one in mind." As many of you know, "many in body, one in mind" is the ideal unity of different kinds of people coming together for a common goal.

And then, the Daishonin asserts, "Herein lies the true goal of Nichiren's propagation."

Being united in the spirit of “many in body, one in mind” is our ultimate goal or epitome of kosen-rufu as well as the key to achieving our great desire for kosen-rufu. Our SGI activities are the foundation for the unity of all humanity striving for a world where everyone lives compassionately and harmoniously.

Our world is filled with violence and discord. Nevertheless, we should be confident that our efforts of sharing Buddhism with others will translate into building a harmonious world that brings people together. Let’s demonstrate this by building an ideal harmonious family, district, and expand the unity to our communities and work places. That’s our kosen-rufu movement. Every day, the SGI members around the world, are planting seeds of hope and peace in their respective countries.

Let me conclude this month’s podcast by reading the closing remarks of President Ikeda.

A great current of Buddhist humanism is spreading around the world... Together with our dependable young successors, our hearts filled with courage and conviction, let us expand the solidarity among the people living on this planet. And let us help one person after another open the treasure tower in their lives, thereby revealing their inherent Buddhahood.

If you have any questions, please feel free to send them to the SGI Canada Study Department at study@sgicanada.org. When you do so, please include the background of the questions, which helps us understand what you really want to ask. Thank you everyone for joining today, and I hope you have a great district general meeting.