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NEWSLETTER OCTOBER

OCTOBER 2013

Becoming aware of our buddha nature is indeed pivotal for our Buddhist practice

The hot summer days are gone as if they never occurred. Recently, the calming signs of autumn are starting to take hold. I hope all of you are doing well.

Now, in this world, there seems to be more people than one might imagine who are suffering because they do not like themselves. Why would they dislike the most important person – themselves?

Perhaps these are some reasons:

- * They cannot draw the line when faced with things they know are wrong.
- * They cannot say “No” when they need to say “No.”
- * They have no capacity for endurance or patience
- * Although they try and give effort, they feel they lack the ability.
- * Their personal appearance does not measure up.
- * They keep running away from reality.
- * Their ideal image of themselves is quite different from reality.
- * They feel they are insignificant or because they committed a crime.

As such, there are various reasons why one may not like oneself. If we start to list them, there is probably no end.

Actually, the Buddhist teachings expound that “all living beings without exception possess buddha nature...there is buddha nature in every being that exist in this world,” and the life of every being is one and same with that of the Buddha. Therefore, we “all have the potential to become Buddha.” In other words, we all have the potential to become people who are “spiritually perfected human beings.” However, due to delusion caused by our ignorance, we human beings have for billions of years since the beginning of mankind kept this essential “buddha nature” concealed. As result, when faced with the present reality, we might think: “I am such a worthless person!” or “I am such an indecisive pitiful person!” or “What a sinful person I am!”

Furthermore, we get confused and assume all that to be our true nature, creating situations that prevent us from overcoming our delusion. At such times, people dislike themselves...and might end up suffering because of their inability to like themselves. Yes! As a matter of fact, this is all a huge misconception.

Since the Buddha taught us that all people possess buddha nature, it is important to have the conviction that “I have buddha nature,” and “I have the potential for unlimited improvement.”

All people actually think there is no one as lovable and important as his or her self.

There is a story from about 2,500 years ago during the period while Shakyamuni Buddha lived on earth. King Pasenadi of the ancient India kingdom Kosala had something he desperately wanted to ask his wife, Queen Mallika. “Who is the most important person on earth for you, Mallika? Is there anyone you love more than yourself?” Then Queen Mallika replied and asked: “Dear King, the person I love the most is myself. Who is it for you, my King?” Feeling slightly perplexed, the King replied, “The person I love the most is also myself.” However, King Pasenadi was not satisfied, perhaps because the queen’s answer was not what he had anticipated. And so, he told Shakyamuni Buddha what happened. Shakyamuni Buddha told him: “That is correct. No matter where you may look, there is no one you love more than yourself. Likewise for others, there is no one they love more than themselves. That is why anyone who loves himself or herself should never hurt others.”

Essentially in the final analysis, everyone loves himself the most – everyone likes himself. This is not only about oneself. All human beings love themselves.

Yes. We should mutually note clearly in our hearts and minds this truth. And the important point here is that those who truly think they love themselves would not hurt others. All people essentially wish to be friendly and harmonious with others, to be helpful, to accept and understand others. This must be because within such hearts and minds there is the fact that they love and value themselves...because



there is the awareness that they have received the Buddha's life (buddha nature).

When there is someone who feels he dislikes himself, that he cannot like himself, it just means there is a cloud in him that is presently covering the "Buddha's life" that all people possess. It is important to know that once he is liberated from his ignorance, the innate buddha nature in him will definitely shine forth.

Gassho
New York Church Minister
Etsuko Fujita



This month flower by Yoshi



Activities of New York Church in September 2013

9/5 For our annual Theme Seminar, James Lynch spoke on "Buddhism & Happiness – 7 Keys to Change Your Destiny," followed by concluding remarks from Rev. Yoshizawa, Director of RKINA. In our lives, pain is inevitable but suffering is an option. Depending on how we respond to pain, it can lead to suffering or it can open us up to new possibilities. When we accept pain as opportunity, it will lead us to joy and happiness.

9/8 The Anniversary Service of Cofounder Myoko's passing was held. In the English Lotus Sutra study session, James presented Chapter 15, "Bodhisattvas Springing Up from the Earth," and Chap 16, "Eternal Life of the Tathagata." Rev Kyoichi gave an overview and clarified the significance of the chapters. The notion of the Eternal Original Buddha that the Buddha has been teaching the Dharma long before his appearance on earth 2500 years ago and continues to always do so, is expounded here. He is always trying to lead us speedily to buddhahood using skillful means. We learned that Rissho Kosei-kai is the first organization to enshrine the statue of the Eternal Buddha – the fusion of Shakyamuni Buddha as historical person and the Dharma – as focus of our devotion. And that we are also in two dimensions – the visible and the essential, eternal nature. When we look at the statue, we should see it not as outside of us, but as connected to us. We are children of the Buddha – we all have his nature, the buddha nature, innately within us.

Japanese-speaking group discussed President Niwano's September Dharma Talk. Human beings intrinsically have the heart to give joy to others. We learned that when we sit upright and very still, the bodhisattva aspirations arise within us.

9/11 Service for the 911 victims was held in the morning.

Discussion in the Women's Group: In our daily lives, many things can annoy us and things often do not go as we wish. Anything unpleasant, we tend to blame others. Whether we like someone or dislike someone, the person making judgment is our own self. The moment we realize we are causing our own anguish, it will be as if the fog had lifted and we will be liberated from our suffering



9/5 Theme seminar



9/12 Religions for Peace USA meeting



9/22 Special Memorial Service for Autumn Higan-e

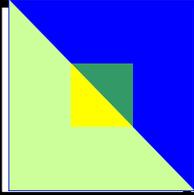
9/15 Memorial Service for Shakyamuni Buddha was held.

Japanese-speaking group held the Lotus Sutra study session. Yasuko presented Chapter 26 "Incantations" and Rev. Fujita further clarified the significance of the chapter. The merit for those who keep and practice the Lotus Sutra is expounded. Medicine King Bodhisattva and Courageous Giver Bodhisattva vow to put the lid on the evil, promote the good, and help those who keep, practice and expound the Lotus Sutra enter buddhahood. Divine King Vaisravana and Divine King Domain Holder, ten female rakshasas and Mother of Demon Sons all vow to guard and protect those who keep, practice and expound the Lotus Sutra. The significance here is the Buddha's encouragement to us. In our actual world, although reaching out and guiding others is not an easy matter for us, the Buddha is always providing such help and protecting us.

English-speaking group had a lively discussion on President Niwano's Dharma Talk for September :

"Bringing Joy to Others." When we try to be helpful sometimes it is not well received. This often occurs because we do not know what the other person truly desires or needs, or what their situation may be. We need to see things as is, at the moment. Listen more carefully, ask the right questions, and be more observant. In contrast, we also do not realize the positive impact our actions and thoughtfulness have on others' lives. The discussion tied into Rev. Fujita's Dharma Talk on Shakyamuni Buddha's words: *Make Yourself the Light; Make the Dharma the Light*. The "self" here is our greater self, one with the great life force of the universe, not our limited egocentric self. It is this greater self that is our true nature with unlimited "potential to experience joy and happiness that go far beyond the fulfillment of our own wishes and desires."

9/22 Special Memorial Service for Autumn (Ohigan-e) was held. We had a large group of participants including members from Florida as well as our members' parents and mothers visiting from Japan.



SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 First day of the month	2	3	4 Anniversary For Founder Passing Rev., Yuri, Yukiko	5 Closed Dharma Practice at home
6 1pm Anniversary For Founder Passing Testmonial Rev. Reflection Rev. Yoshi Keiko	7 6:30pm Meditation	8	9	10 Memorial Svs for Co-Founder Reach out day Rev., Yuri, Yukiko	11	12 1-4pm Tag Sale
13 1pm Sunday Service Dharma Study (Japanese)/ President Dharma Talk (English) Rose, James, Joh	14	15 The Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni Day IPM Steering Committee 6pm Ladies meeting Rev., Keiko, Yoshi	16 Education for Dharma Teacher	17	18 Chicago	19 Closed Dharma Practice at home (18-20) →
20 1pm Monthly Memorial Service Dharma Study (Eng)/President Dharma Talk (Japanese) James, Yukiko, Rose →	21 6:30pm Meditation	22	23	24	25 Rev. Japan	26 Closed Dharma Practice at home
27 Closed Ceremony for Dharma Teacher (HQ)	28	29	30	31	10/25-11/14 Rev. Japan	