

## **Nichiren Shu Buddhist Temple of UK Newsletter**

**October-December 2007**

### **Hello Everyone!**

How are you? We are Buddhist, aren't we? If so, how often do you feel "I am a Buddhist" by yourself in your daily life? - When you are chanting or meditating? When you see Buddhist items or the image of Buddhism on TV? There must be various situations. However, if you can feel it only when you see Buddhist items or images, the teaching of Buddhism does not merge into your mind or body deeply, because Buddhism is not only a religion but also a 'Way of Life'. Living every day is Buddhism. You can feel Buddhism every day. When you begin to feel Buddhism always, you are a true Buddhist. But what does feeling Buddhism mean? What do you think? - Keeping the teaching? Keeping precepts; keeping chanting every day; keeping a calm mind always; keeping peace and not fighting? These are not answers; they are actions after you get the feeling. Again, what does feeling Buddhism mean? The answer is to feel Sakyamuni Buddha (the Buddha) and Nichiren Shonin every day. We can feel the Buddha beside us always and we can feel Nichiren Shonin closely and then you can talk with the Buddha and Nichiren Shonin depending on your Faith. I know many Nichiren Shu Buddhists who are aware of the Buddha's messages or Nichiren Shonin's messages and feel the reality. Sakyamuni Buddha said in the Lotus Sutra:

"I always live in this world and expound the Dharma. I shall never be extinct. If you adore me, I appear and expound the Dharma to you. I know who is practicing the Way and who is not. I am thinking: 'How shall I cause all living beings to enter into the unsurpassed Way and quickly become Buddhas?'"

The Buddha is beside us always and watches us and guides us. We must keep these ideas in our mind and make efforts for our daily life and then we can be aware of the Buddha's salvation every day. In the Newsletter this time, I would like to introduce you to a practice for your mind. Gassho.

### **"No Anger Day"**

There are many Buddhas in Buddhism, such as Amitaba-Buddha, Dainich-Buddha and Yakusi-Buddha, but only the Buddha who people celebrate a birthday for is Shakamuni Buddha, who is the founder of Buddhism and we believe in. This denotes Shakamuni Buddha was a human being and a real person in history. Therefore, He understands our pain and suffering very well as well as our weakness or timidity. Under the teachings of Nichiren Shonin, other Buddhas are regarded as duplicates of Shakamuni Buddha. Believing in Shakamuni Buddha means including all other Buddhas.

### **Salvation of the Buddha**

Shakamuni Buddha adopted a very unique way to save people. He always expanded his teachings according to people's capacity or character and situations. This means He did not only save people but also He guided them individually using the supreme

way to be independent from delusion or attachment. There are two aspects of salvation:

1. Make people's suffering easy with valid advice and lead them into the right direction.
2. Make clear the cause of their sufferings obviously and suggest to them how to overcome such difficulties in order to be independent from the sufferings by themselves.

The first one is a healing salvation, this is a very important process for suffering people as a first-aid but some potential still remains that the sufferings may return, although the suffering was faded by the advice. The second one is an independent salvation from sufferings. By understanding the cause of sufferings, people can control and overcome the sufferings by themselves and also can prevent other unpredictable sufferings in the future.

For example, the first one is like a developed country supporting an undeveloped country with money or items, but after the money has been spent completely, the country still has a potential to end up in the same situation as before. The second one, not only supporting by money or items but also giving useful instructions, how to make a well, how to cultivate good harvests and how to repair utility machines. This is an ideal support to accelerate and develop the country so that it is economically independent. The Buddha's teachings include both as His salvation. These are the Buddha's words:

"The centre of my teachings is to control your own mind. Therefore, endeavor to overcome your ego, keep your mind from greed and keep your behaviour right, keep your mind pure and keep your words faithful. Don't forget the law 'There is no permanence in this world'. All is changing and transcends permanently, you must keep this always. By understanding the transience of your life, you will be able to overcome greed and anger, and overcome all your evils. If you found your mind was tempted and entangled in greed by an evil, you must not obey and must suppress such temptation. 'Be the master of your mind, you must not let your mind be your master'. A mind makes you a Buddha and makes you a beast. Therefore, study my teaching together, learn together, practice together, encourage each other and share the pleasure of the path together. Do not make your mind worry for petty things and spare your time for waste. Harvest the fruit on the path and trip the blossoms of enlightenment."

The Buddha knows about our well-being very well. Therefore, He guides us to stand on our own legs and to be independent from suffering by internal practices. Internal practices are: without delusions of counterfeit truth, temptations and gossip, seeing rightly, listening rightly, understanding rightly and conducting yourself rightly and keeping your mind calm always on the eightfold path. Through this practice, you will be able to obtain eyes to see the truth and think compassionately of others by being able to step into their shoes. As a result, you will be able to realize the increase in your compassion, love and become gentle-minded to others. If you cannot be gentle to others or still your mind can be deluded by others' words, you need proper practices under the instruction of a Nichiren Shu Minister.

## **The Declining Latter Age of the Dharma**

Now, we look over the world, there are many kinds of problems or sufferings in this world. Lately, people are concerned about frequent terrorism and violent crimes in public places, even schools. "Where are we going?" or " This world seems life hell! Just looks like the end of the world". Buddhism expounds an Age of Declining Buddhism. It is just about now 'the Declining Latter Age of the Dharma'. It is 2000 years since the Buddha passed away. People's minds and morals are corrupt and they have become selfish. People pay no attention to others, chasing their own merits materialistically and pursuing their own pleasures. They commit to evil teachings or cults and they hate each other and fight each other and kill each other. An example is conflict between Israel and Palestine. They cannot stop killing each other under deep hatred and hold grudges against each other. They are religious people. Why haven't they improved over time? I wonder what the purpose of religion is. It seems like they have revenge for each other for their ego and hatred by using the name of God.

## **The Law of Cause and Effect**

Revenge is basically one emotion but it became nature for them. It is impossible to stop retaliation and make peace by revenge. Human history indicates that: a country which invades another country has a fate to be invaded by another country. A country founded by a coup d'etat has a fate to fall by another coup d'etat, but a revolution without violence has a nature to reform national policy democratically. All phenomena occur according to the law of cause and effect. These are some more of the Buddha's words:

"Hatred can never be stopped by hatred; it can be stopped and healed only by love. This is everlasting truth. All phenomena are interrelated with cause and effect - rain falls, winds blow, plants bloom, leaves mature and are blown away. All arise and extinct according with the law, cause and effect."

## **Salvation of the Lotus Sutra**

In the Declining Latter Age of the Dharma, people's minds are corrupt and they act like animals and live for self pleasure and things. Their desire takes precedence over anything according to their instincts. This Age seems like a morass. For people in such an Age, the Buddha left the supreme teaching, the Lotus Sutra which has never been expounded before.

As you know, the feature of the teachings of the Lotus Sutra is compared to the nature of the lotus flower; although the lotus flower grows in a muddy pond, the flower is never coloured by the mud but keeps its colour pure. Also, if the pond becomes muddier, the flower becomes even more pure. In the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha manifests the feature of His Enlightenment: the Buddha reveals His true figure for the first time. He is the Eternal Buddha. Even if His physical body is extinguished, He is in this world always and leads us and saves us in the Declining Latter Age of the Dharma. In short, we can receive His compassion and guidance directly just like when the Buddha was still alive. Therefore, believing in the Lotus Sutra means to see the Buddha directly and receive His teaching directly. He is beside us in this real world

and leads us with a wish that all living beings can enter into Enlightenment like the Buddha.

"It is many hundreds of thousands of billions of trillions of aeons since I became the Buddha. I shall never be extinct. I show my extinction to you expediently although I never pass away. I always live here and expound the Dharma. I am the Father of the world. I am saving all living beings from suffering. I am always thinking 'How shall I cause all living beings to enter into the unsurpassed way and quickly become Buddhas?' - The Lotus Sutra, Chapter 16.

### **No Anger Day**

It is easy to deplore and complain about politics, matters or troubles. We should take action to improve our problems if we realize it seriously instead of just complaining. If we think of the negative part always, we cannot step forward, but if we can focus on the positive part, we will step forward. We have the potential and the ability to improve anything if we confront our difficulties with courage. There is a teaching about how to behave in the Declining Latter Age of the Dharma in Chapter 13 of the Lotus Sutra:

"There will be many dreadful things in the evil world of the Age of Defilements. Devils will enter the bodies and cause them to abuse and insult us. We will wear the armour of endurance because we respect and believe in the Buddha. We will endure all these difficulties."

This teaches us to have endurance and an unbroken mind. So I would like to suggest to you an essential precept of this teaching. It is a 'No Anger Day' every Friday. It is a day you must not get angry, must not argue, and must not complain about anything. Please devote your mind to relax and remain calm all day. Be patient, even though you feel anger and then chant O-daimoku 'Namu Myoho Renge Kyo' until the feeling gets better. If you think you still have a temper or a frustrating day, this will be an initiation precept to improve your nature. If you keep this, you will receive good gifts or messages from the Buddha. Let us keep this for others' happiness and for your peaceful mind too. Gassho.

### **Pilgrimage to India**

Rev. Tsukamoto will pilgrimage to India from 28th October to the 10th of November, 2007 and visit four major sites of Sakyamuni Buddha: Lumbini, Buddha-gaya, Sarnath and Kushinagar.

Thank you very much for your donations and support.