

A big heart

Can we see what we don't see?

In some places winter is very cold. Winter arrives suddenly, and, unexpectedly, rain, hail, transitory snowfall... and places are not always prepared to withstand those conditions.

The same happens with people, because the journey of one's life, and of one's friends, can also be inopportune at some stage.

Winter can arrive suddenly and without notice. What could we do for a friend in these circumstances? What would we need ourselves if the cold arrived? We could watch life from our house, a bit like someone would watch a storm from the window waiting for it to end; on the other hand, we could light a fire in our home and invite that friend to come in, and then, as if we were near a fireplace, we would warm up,

little by little. From the moment the fire is lit, with its lovely smell, to the moment it goes out, many words, reflections, shared truths can flow, awakening us to the warmth of life, thus lighting the flame of hope in our friend's heart. Because neither fire nor heat, run short when we are together, on the contrary, the whole place becomes warmer.

Checking the ground I step on

Laws have changed in accord with time, adapting to social changes. Nowadays, despite all its deficiencies, we can be satisfied when we see that equality among all people and respect for their dignity is a fact in the legislation of democratic countries. The Human Rights declaration, although it is not a law, has been a reference in the international community in solving issues concerning this subject from its enactment in 1948. Nowadays, we have more legal mechanisms of protection to make sure that our rights as human beings are being respected.

Let's accept that respect for others entails respect for their decisions,

feelings, points of view, to put it briefly, the right to be happy just being as we are. However, often in the closest relationships our deeply rooted and unconscious beliefs give us away. They hint at our prejudices, no matter how civil we are and politically correct we behave.

Law and social rules of behaviour act as a protection, putting a brake on our excesses, which is no small thing. However they can't get into the private sphere of the principles by which we lead our lives. In short, it depends on whether our life is withdrawn and full of mistrust and suspicion or whether it opens up with warmth and respect.

There is no magic formula that can suddenly modify the stereotypes that we have formed unconsciously. For this reason, we need to check consciously those points that make slip up, which is nothing other than the principles on which we build our ideas. Then we need the courage to evaluate the importance of what it is that keeps us separate from another human being.

It is time to lighten our baggage and keep only what is most important, that which unites us: you and I, members of the human family.



I can disagree with it

Respect is the Basic rule of human relationships, it is a strict principle to apply for those who preach peace, and fight for a fairer world.

The tension and conflicts that constantly appear in our life are a consequence of the incapacity to understand the different ideological, religious, cultural, sexual options.

Respect and tolerance are essential requirements to establish frank dialogues with others, overcome the prejudices and find the points in common, promoting friendship and rapprochement.

The most bloody wars and atrocities have been, paradoxically, in the name of freedom, equality or justice. Distorting everything, it is denied that others are also right, and only certain criteria are imposed.

The valuable contribution of mediation that Daisaku Ikeda carried out between China and the USSR, two nuclear and neighbouring powers, who in 1974 were about to start a war, as well as the many dialogues that he has developed with many people of different religious and cultural origins, are valid examples of how it is possible to find common points even in radically opposed opinions. On many occasions the path of dialogue has brought nations closer and has been used to move further away from intentions of war they had. The same occurs with daily relationships, where peace is founded.

We can perfectly disagree with the others, but it is necessary to have the disposition to listen to the other and show personal maturity, broad-mindedness, constraint and wisdom.

At certain moments it might be necessary to demand respect. A true humanist is not one that, claiming tolerance, impassively submits to other people's abuse. If something characterized Nichiren Daishonin it was his constant fight against the abuse of the authorities of his time, that among other things, they persecuted his teaching for being different from the others already founded.

About friendship

A fundamental aspect of the Buddhist practice is the ability to show a profound sense of solidarity towards other people.

“Originally, a Bodhisattva is a person who keeps an ardent promise: “I will not attain my personal enlightenment until I have done all I can to lead other people towards their own enlightenment”.(1)

The relationship of friendship that Nichiren encouraged among his disciples and with other human beings is based on the profound conviction that everybody possesses the state of Buddhahood.

It is a relationship in which we are sincerely concerned about people’s

happiness, because we understand that in this concern is where the basis of our own happiness lies.

For this reason we can never abandon someone to his or her own fate, regardless of how obstinate or blinded by his/her negativity they might be.

The Japanese term “Shakubuku”, used to describe the action of transmitting the teachings to another person, means to break the circle of negativity and open the heart to joy. The best thing we can do to show someone our appreciation is to show them their own potential to be happy.

Gosho

Moreover, following me, you, as a votary of the Lotus Sutra, have told others of this Law. What else could this be but the transmission of the Law? Carry through with your faith in the Lotus Sutra. You cannot strike fire from flint if you stop half-way.

(Earthly desires are enlightenment... page 317)

For the journey

I would like to be a good friend to you, but what are we going to do about it? We are not in the same current (at the moment...). I keep thinking that you have great wisdom and reproaching you because you don’t want to share it; I admit that I often forget that even in you... there are some things you could improve. On the other hand, you keep thinking that I am “the top” when it comes to altruism and I disappoint you when I am not able to be so altruistic; incidentally, I take this opportunity to let you know that, whatever happens, you can always count on my unconditional support, from my heart. You must know that on this one, I won’t let you down. Likewise, I know that you, too, won’t let me down, despite your journeys and your hurry. Because of this, please read these verses carefully and I hope that you will take at least the time to smile:

Direct your heart
 With prayer as your compass
 With Sharing, in the North
 With courage as your luggage
 With peace as your banner
 But before you take off on your flight
 Make sure your feet
 Are firmly planted on the ground