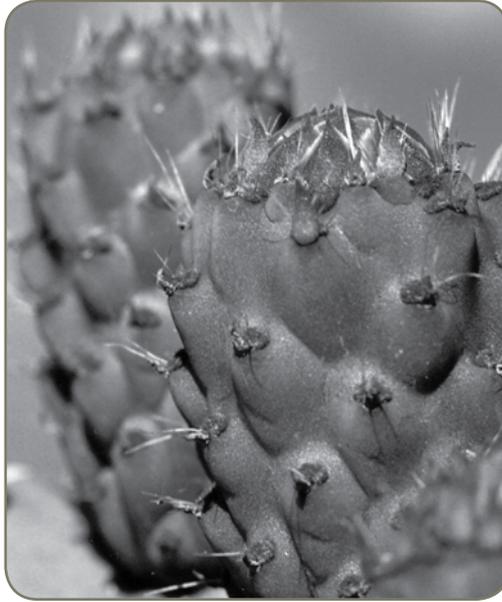


Introductory Study Course



This course is designed to be an introduction to the Buddhist concept of a single moment of life comprising three thousand realms, *ichinen sanzen*. The course will be four sessions, plus an introductory session to introduce participants, choose study partners and briefly outline the sessions of the course.

In addition to examining this fundamental teaching of Buddhism, we wish to stimulate self-reflection on how we are living and interacting in our daily life, to encourage dialogue between participants and inspire interest in further study of Nichiren's Buddhism. A more in-depth study of this principle will be published in the October and November issues of Indigo this year.

The topics for each session are:

Introductory Session: Brief outline of the history of *ichinen sanzen*

Session one: *Exploring the dynamism of life*
Three thousand realms - the whole picture
The ten worlds – the first component – 10

Session two: *Revealing the limitless potential of humanity*
The mutual possession of the ten worlds - the second component 10 x 10

Session three: *Activating our lives with dynamic determined action*
The ten factors. The third component – 10 x 10 x 10

Session four: *Transforming our environment through self-reformation*
The three realms - the fourth component 10 x 10 x 10 x 3

Sessions one and two are in the April issue of Indigo

Sessions three and four are in this issue.

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SESSION THREE

The 10 Factors

Aim:

To broaden our awareness of our ability and responsibility to positively influence our environment and manifest happiness for ourselves and others.

Guidelines for Group Facilitators:

1. Previously nominated Study partners to present 2-3 points from the material and relate it to their experience.
2. Ensure that everyone in the group gets a chance to speak in the dialogue.
3. Discuss "For Discussion" questions.
4. At the end of this session ensure that every one knows which study partners will be presenting at the next session.
5. Task for Session four - Allocate a set of study partners to share an experience or an impression based on Session four material.

Introduction

In the previous installments, we discussed the 10 Worlds and Mutual Possession of the 10 Worlds. But how do the 10 Worlds actually manifest and change from moment to moment? What shapes our most basic tendencies and how can we exert a positive influence over them? In order to be able to answer such questions about how our lives function, we will explore a concept known as the 10 Factors. This concept integrates the changing aspects of the 10 Worlds and explains how we make the best of everything - whether positive or negative - creating a life of great value.

The 10 Factors appear in the second chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, to explain the true essence of life as understood by a Buddha. We recite this phrase twice daily in our practice of

Nichiren Buddhism and it reads as follows:

The true entity of all phenomena can only be understood and shared between Buddhas. This reality consists of appearance (*nyo ze so*), nature (*nyo ze sho*), entity (*nyo ze tai*), power (*nyo ze riki*), influence (*nyo ze sa*), internal cause (*nyo ze in*), relation (*nyo ze en*), inherent cause (*nyo ze ka*), manifest effect (*nyo ze ho*) and consistency from beginning to end (*nyo ze honmak kukyoto*).

Firstly, Shakyamuni uses the 10 Factors to describe "the true entity of all phenomena"¹ – but what does this refer to? Basically, it is the wisdom to grasp the truth of life, and more specifically, it is the wisdom and ability of Buddha's to discern the true nature of all things. Therefore,

"when observing any phenomenon, the Buddha understands its true entity. When looking at people, the Buddha understands their state of life and sees their Buddha nature within. When looking at something in nature, the Buddha can sense its noble brilliance. And, considering social phenomena, the Buddha can deftly discern their underlying significance."²

The 10 factors describe the activation of life based on the wisdom of Buddhism, to never be separated from the actual world, but rather to discern the true reality, the Mystic Law, in the here and now, within all the manifestations of life. This wisdom enables us to transform all our experiences (good and bad) into the great cause for revealing our limitless potential. The magnificence of this wisdom is that we can do this transformation just as we are, and wherever we happen to be.

While anyone of the 10 Worlds can manifest or move to a state of potentiality at any given instant, the 10 factors exist and function at all times. Let's have a look at each of the 10 factors to gain a better understanding.

¹ Shakyamuni, *Lotus Sutra*, Burton Watson's translation, p24

² Ikeda, *Lectures on the Expedient Means* and *Life Span* Chapters of the *Lotus Sutra*, p137

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The Ten Factors

Activating life based on the wisdom of Buddhism

Appearance

Appearance refers to the physical and material aspect of life, that can be perceived with our senses. It refers to the external manifestation of life such as our face, with its features and expressions, as well as our body, posture and our behaviour.

In many religions, God is said to be a being without appearance or form. However, this is not the case for a Buddha. Nichiren and Shakyamuni were human beings endowed with each of the 10 Factors. A being that does not have appearance as well as the other nine factors, does not have a connection with reality and therefore is not relevant to Buddhism, which concerns itself only with life's reality.

Nature

This is the spiritual aspect of life. Nature can be described as the personality, temperament, disposition or potential of a thing or person. For example, shortness of temper, kindness, impatience are words that can be used to describe a person's character. Nature could also refer to the conscious and subconscious workings of our self. It could be said that all human emotions such as anger, grief and joy, that sometimes appear and disappear, reside in this nature. In comparison to appearance, it is not possible to measure our mood or emotions but we can only see the manifestation or symptoms of those emotions as they appear in their physical expressions.

Entity

Entity is the integrating force between the material and spiritual aspects of life and manifests as the person you are and the people and things around you. For example, appearance and nature are the seen and unseen side of the same coin, respectively, while the coin itself is the entity. The entity of our own life is the essence of our life, indivisible from

the self. While not entirely accurate, this example gives us a way to conceptually approach this difficult concept.

The three factors of appearance, nature and entity are inseparable in the sense that each does not exist in the absence of the others. We cannot judge a person's true potential just by looking at his appearance or his character; it is these two factors together with entity, which enable each life form to be viewed as an integrated whole.

The following factors describe the way life operates in its ever-changing character.

Power

Power refers to life's inherent strength or energy to achieve something. For example life in the world of Hell and Anger may use power to destroy and cause suffering; life in the state of Humanity may use the power to uphold ethical standards; and life in the state of Bodhisattva may use the power to relieve the sufferings of others. Power can vary in degree and form, according to our life condition. It increases as we reveal our Buddhahood – the physical and spiritual powerhouse of compassionate creativity.

Influence

When our latent power becomes manifest, it exerts pressure on the environment. This is what Buddhism refers to as Influence - the value, either positive or negative, that we create in our environment.

A gifted or talented person is not always able to reveal their full potential. Their dominant life condition may be in the state of hell where they are unable to take actions that can influence their environment. Conversely, a person with little obvious natural talent can still exert a positive influence in his environment, and create value, if they are full of life force and have a strong sense of purpose in life. The power and influence we can exert in our life is

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inextricably linked to Internal Cause or our basic life tendency. Examining five of the ten factors so far, it is important to remind ourselves of the way the ten factors function, that is, they are occurring simultaneously as one dynamism.



The Buddhist view of Causality

The inner workings of life itself

The following four factors of causality show life's functions.

Internal cause

The Internal cause is the factor that results from accumulated causes and effects. According to Buddhism, we create causes that affect our environment in three different ways - thoughts, words and actions. Internal cause is the fundamental cause for all our actions. A powerful internal cause activates influence and manifest effect.

Relation/external cause

The relationship of indirect causes to the internal cause. Indirect causes are various conditions, both internal and external, that help the internal cause produce an effect.³ These are the causes or conditions (external stimuli) in our environment that activate the internal cause. It is the function for the internal cause to produce its effect. External causes are like catalysts from the environment, that activate any of the 10 Worlds in our lives. The external cause functions in two ways: to influence our life from the environment, and to become part of our life tendency as it produces an effect in our life. These external causes can be a stimulus for our growth or an internal cause for despair and defeat. The dynamic aspect of the ten factors informs how we experience the external cause and how our dominant life condition and internal cause interplay to produce influence, occurring in each instant or life moment.

Latent effect

This is the result, simultaneously created in the depths of life, when an internal cause simultaneously interacts with the external cause. Together with internal cause and influence, latent effect exists as a potential within our life to create a manifest effect. There is no time gap between the two, as latent effect is created in the exact same life moment that an internal cause is created. This is known as the oneness or simultaneity of cause and effect. Providing great hope, this means we can confidently apply our life to creating value without always concerning ourselves with the manifestation of the effect. The latent effect being part of the consistency from beginning to end also acts to influence the 10 factors in each life moment.

Manifest effect

When a latent effect and internal cause, combined with influence, are expressed, they are the manifest effect. When an external cause interacts with one's internal cause, this latent effect, which was a potentiality, manifests.

An example of how the four factors of internal cause, external cause, relation, latent effect and manifest effect, work together, is as follows. Let's say as a result of a relationship breakup (relation/external cause) in your life, you develop a newly established fear and skepticism of intimate relationships (internal cause) which has the potential effect of distrusting others (latent effect - anger). Sometime later, when someone attempts to foster a close relationship with you (another external cause), you reject their advances (manifest effect - anger).

As this example shows, how we react to things in life, is often based on our deep inner tendencies, and we often react based on conditioned responses to our environment. However, because of the potentiality of Buddhahood in all life, what was once thought of as fate or destiny, is transformed into purpose or mission by chanting Nam-myō-

³ *The Soka Gakkai Dictionary of Buddhism*, p667

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ho-rence-kyo and determining to transform our lives. This action is the way to reveal the hopeful expression of the 10 factors. Rather than a focus on the past, it gives hope that in the present, we can take responsibility in our life to transform our circumstances, no longer bound by any one life tendency, negative expression in our behaviour or the environment. The key is the depth of the cause we make. This equates in Buddhist practice to our determined prayer while chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo.

The Buddhist view of causality based on the functions of the ten factors is unique, for it explains why under similar stressful circumstances, for example, one person might fall ill while another goes from strength to strength. All the ten factors operating simultaneously, with the potential to reveal Buddhahood, theoretically prove that our expression can be directed towards living creatively and with hope.

Consistency from beginning to end

This last factor is the perfect integration of these nine factors in every instant and expression of life. It is too easy to assume that the 10 factors are separate and independent of one another. The 10 factors, as the 10 worlds, are all interlinked and connected. For example, a person in the world of Hell will manifest Hell consistently, throughout all the ten factors, each reflecting the same life condition. It is inconceivable that a person tormented by the life state of Hell will manifest an appearance of joy, have a strong life force, exert positive influence on his or her environment, or take action joyfully for the sake of others etc. There are no discrepancies among the 10 Factors of life - they are consistent with one another. The 10 Worlds are potentials within us and what we experience from moment to moment differs greatly from one person to another. The Ten factors explains how this happens.

On a deeper level, 'beginning' refers to Buddhahood whereas 'end' refers to common mortals, and 'consistency' means there is no distinction between a common mortal and a Buddha. The ten factors can manifest the state of Hell in the same way as they can manifest the state of Bodhisattva. As all living beings possess the ten factors, the state of Buddhahood is readily available to us all without discrimination. The key is to build and solidify the state of Buddhahood throughout our lives. The ultimate purpose of the ten factors is to explain the life of Buddha that is expressed in the form of a common mortal. It reinforces the idea that common mortals can attain enlightenment - all we have to do is awaken to the true reality that our own lives are entities of the Mystic Law, that is, manifestations of Myoho-rence-kyo. Proving this is the aim of the practice of Nichiren Buddhism. Chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo enacts this awakening.



Determining our lives *Transforming our dominant life tendency*

Buddhism teaches that there is an internal cause and effect that operates at every single moment. How we react to things in life is often based on our deep inner tendencies and we often automatically react to things in our environment. So does that mean we always have to be at the mercy of whatever happens in our lives? Shin Yatomi of SGI-USA, explains why this does not have to be the case:

The concept of the Ten Factors, (therefore), teaches us the importance of developing good 'karmic' habits in our lives so that we may consistently form positive 'relations' with the events in our environment regardless of what they are. No matter how

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adverse our current circumstances, if our 'karmic' tendencies are firmly grounded in the states of Bodhisattva or Buddhahood, our lives can transform every hardship into personal growth. Without such grounding, we tend to react negatively to negative situations and cause further confusion and suffering for ourselves and others. Our Buddhist practice – praying to the *Gohonzon* and encouraging others to practice – is the key to solidifying within us, the states of Bodhisattva and Buddhahood, thus developing our 'inherent causes' of happiness.⁴

Therefore by determining to transform our dominant life tendency, through persistent and consistent Buddhist practice, we can respond differently to the external causes and effects that can leave us feeling powerless and at the mercy of our environment. Not only do we respond differently, we begin to believe that everything that happens to us is an opportunity to reveal our Buddhahood. Buddhist practice helps us make even those seemingly 'bad' things (negative external causes) that occur, a cause for us to reveal our brilliance.

As President Ikeda points out, "The wisdom of the true entity of all phenomena is to view everything with the eye of the Law and the eye of the Buddha."⁵ Often people experience failure or loss due to misunderstandings or misperceptions, prejudice or speculation. However, "when observing the same phenomena, the Buddha succeeds in seeing the true entity while others fail." Similarly, "the Buddha wisdom to discern the true entity of all phenomena is inestimably important for people's happiness in life, for the advancement of humanity." He ends by saying that, "the Buddha's wisdom is a state of life filled with boundless exhilaration and joy in living...For us who embrace the *Gohonzon*, the wisdom of the true entity of all phenomena means to view everything with the eye of Buddhism and the eye of faith."⁶

With the 'eye of Buddhism' and the 'eye of faith' we can believe in our own limitless potential and similarly believe in the potential of all others as well.

For Discussion

1. Do you sometimes see yourself or others reacting automatically to situations out of deep inner tendencies? Discuss the likelihood of change if these tendencies continue? What have you experienced in relation to your dominant tendency since beginning to chant?
2. If we courageously challenge everything around us, drawing on 'the eye of Buddhism' and 'the eye of faith', rather than reacting to our environment, what do you imagine is possible for yourself and for the world?
3. Discuss the idea of Buddhist mission in relation to our current circumstances.

⁴ www.sgi-usa.org/buddhism/buddhismtoday/bc014.pdf, *Buddhist Concepts for Today's Living*, Number 14

⁵ President Ikeda, *Lectures on the Hoben and Juryo Chapters of the Lotus Sutra* number 13

⁶ *Ibid.*

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SESSION FOUR

The Three Realms and Three Thousand Realms in a Single Moment of Life (ichinen sanzen)

Aim:

To explore the final component of *ichinen sanzen* - the Three Realms of the **self, living beings** and the **environment** - and to examine the overall perspective of *ichinen sanzen*, to see how “a great human revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a nation, and further, can even enable a change in the destiny of all humankind.”

Guidelines for Group Facilitators:

1. Introduce study partners who will be presenting this week's topic.
2. Ensure that everyone in the group gets a chance to speak in the dialogue.
3. Thank the participants for their contribution to the study course and the dialogue. Ensure everybody knows the time and place of the next discussion meeting and remind them that an in depth study course will appear in the October and November issues of Indigo magazine

The Three Realms of Existence

We are now ready to look at the final piece of the puzzle – namely, the Three Realms of Existence - which together with the concepts of the 10 Worlds, their Mutual Possession and the 10 Factors, make up the dynamic and powerful Buddhist concept of *ichinen sanzen* (the three thousand realms in a single moment of life). Let us first discuss the Three Realms, which explains the

relationship between the self, living beings and the environment.

To begin with, the Three Realms are (1) the realm of Self (the five components), (2) the realm of living beings and (3) the realm of the Environment. These three realms can be seen as the place in which the 10 states of life are manifested, with the study of the 10 factors helping us to understand the dynamic manifestations of life.

A living being is made up of the five components. All life manifest the 10 Worlds, and society and the environment is where living beings live their lives. Let's look at the Three Realms more closely and then we will see how they fit within the principle of *ichinen sanzen*.

The Realm of the Self

Buddhism traditionally defines living beings as made up of five components, a theory which explains how each person's idea of reality is formed and therefore how it is that each person's response to this reality is unique. The five components of life explain individual uniqueness and they are:

Form

This is our physical self - our body and the five sensory organs through which we perceive the outer world (sight, touch, smell, taste and hearing. The mind is added as the sixth organ as it integrates the five senses).

Perception

The function of organising and co-ordinating the information received from the outer world through our six sensory organs. For example if you pick up an orange, it is perception that enables you to distinguish it from an orange ball and if say the front door-bell rings while you are peeling this orange, perception enables you to realise that the 'peels' of the bell are coming from the front door and not the orange! No two people's

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perceptions are the same. Nichiren Daishonin writes: "People of hunger regard the Ganges river as fire, people of tranquillity regard it as water and people of Rapture regard it as nectar. Water is water, but it changes according to the karmic capacity of each individual." (WND1p486)

Conception

The function by which we form an idea or concept about what has been perceived. This includes value judgements - what we each perceive to be right or wrong - good or bad. With regards to the example of the orange, above, with conception you want to eat the orange, knowing it is thirst quenching and has vitamin C which is good for us!

Volition

The will to act based on the conception or judgement we have made upon what we have perceived. So, therefore, with volition you can then eat that orange! The fact is that no action we take in life can be separated from the belief we hold at the time. As President Makiguchi once said, "the entirety of daily life is a process of putting beliefs into action... therefore the question in life is what to have faith in."

Consciousness

Functions to support and integrate the other four components as well as the discerning function of life through which one can make value judgements. It is the mind as a whole including the vast realm of the unconscious. Consciousness gives rise to and integrates the other spiritual functions of perception, conception, and volition. Buddhism teaches that our deepest consciousness is identical to the life of the cosmos, itself.

In order for a human life to exist, there must be a "temporary harmonising of the five components", or in other words, "a single human life is viewed as a merging and harmonising of the physical and spiritual potentials of life."⁷ Form is very much

the physical aspect of life, whereas the other four comprise of the spiritual aspect. Buddhism holds that the physical and spiritual aspects of life are inseparable, so there is no form without perception, conception, volition and consciousness and there is no consciousness without form, perception, conception and volition. These five components must be understood as a whole and grasped in terms of their interaction.

Every person on earth differs from others by their unique expression of the five components. How the five components are expressed also depends on the life state we are in. This determines how we perceive reality and therefore how we respond at any given moment. As we separate out all these functions, manifestations and realms it is hard to believe this is all happening at once - in a life instant! The interactions of life become our experience which influences our causes at each moment. And our cause at this moment becomes our experience.

The five components differ from one individual to another. For instance, suppose John loves dogs, but his friend George dislikes them because he was bitten by one when he was younger. When John and George walk up the street and see a dog in front of them, John immediately feels compassion and wants to pat the dog, whereas George is scared and wants to run away. It is the same dog, but their perception of the dog is different because of their past experiences.

In a low life condition, the five components of the Self tend to prolong suffering and obscure the Buddha nature. When our life condition is manifesting Buddhahood these work to enable us to accumulate good fortune based on wisdom and compassion. This is the purpose of our chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to polish these five components so that we live brilliant lives. Where, then, does the individual perform their actions, derived from the five components? In the realms of Living Beings and the realm of the Environment.

⁷ 26th High Priest Nichikan, *The Three Secret Teachings*

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The Realm of Living Beings

This realm includes all living beings with whom any given individual interacts: people, animals, birds, insects etc. Living beings cannot live in complete isolation from each other. As there is a perpetual interrelation and mutual dependence with other living beings, all expressions arise from this relationship. This is the importance of practising Buddhism in the society in which one lives and why dialogue is central to the practice of Buddhism. Nichiren Buddhism, as President Ikeda often stresses, is not escapist. It is practised among the people in the realities of the society in which we live. This is why the practical application of Buddhism to the struggles in our daily lives is emphasised, rather than a focus on formality or theoretical understanding. It is a practice that allows us to thrive on challenge and experience the benefit of struggling in society. In this way, our own transformation is a cause for the transformation of humanity. It is the realm of the society where we are able to reveal our potential by challenging to encompass more and more individuals in our lives through dialogue. This is a most practical way to build happiness as we transform our relationships directly through concern for the happiness of others.

The SGI's mission in the modern age is that of establishing a network of friendship and support based on the shared belief in the creative and compassionate potential of each person. The significance of this contemporary expression of Buddhism is that each person can transform their suffering whilst working simultaneously for the happiness of others without competition or sacrifice. Every action based on this mission will reveal profound benefit for those who engage in this dynamic way of living.

By grappling with the realities of life where we are, in the midst of society, we reveal the potential of Buddhahood to give hope to others. Whereas with an escapist attitude we ignore the suffering existing in contemporary society. When we limit ourselves to seeking comfort we do not give ourselves the op-

Life State

Nichiren used the analogy of a mirror to describe people's life state. He said that through polishing this 'mirror' day and night, through the practice of chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, our lives would come to shine and reflect the true nature of life, allowing for the three qualities of courage, compassion and wisdom to be revealed through our own unique expression.

Elevating our life condition refers to giving full expression to our true self without changing who we are. Through the courage to manifest the creative expression of our tendencies, we can reveal the enlightened aspects of them. Nichiren refers to this as 'earthly desires are enlightenment'.

portunity to courageously face our inner weaknesses. However, engaging in dialogue with an open heart continuously opens up the possibility for transforming ourselves and is the surest means to work towards a more harmonious society.

The Realm of the Environment

All living beings function in some sort of environment that supports their existence and where they carry out their activities. The environment includes insentient life forms such as plants and trees, mountains, rivers and so on. Life and its environment are closely related - in fact, Buddhism expounds the concept of the oneness of life and its environment. Whichever of the 10 worlds a living being manifests will be reflected in the environment of that living being. A person in the state of hell can be in a comfortable environment and seemingly good circumstances from an objective viewpoint. However, if they are suffering, the environment is in actuality reflecting their state

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of hell. For example, we could be in a beautiful park, sharing valuable time with our family and a massive argument breaks out. Instead of a peaceful time it turns into one of stress and suffering. The purpose of practising Buddhism is that, rather than being affected by our environment, we determine to transform it. So rather than being angry ourselves and escalating the situation, we may empathise and see that despite being in a beautiful park, our partner may have something on their mind; our children are not being naughty, rather playful. From our reflection it may be possible to engage in a dialogue or determine to put more energy into ensuring everyone can have a valuable and enjoyable time. Alternatively, we could give up and a golden memory in the park is clouded by descending into the state of hell. The cause for a positive transformation arises from a deeper consciousness than the conscious mind. Nam-myoho-enge-kyo activates this deeper consciousness.

When we focus on the environment as affecting us we see a war torn area as reflecting the life state of Hell as its people are thrown into immense suffering and agony. An amusement park like Disneyland reflects the state of Rapture as people enjoy the thrills of the rides. Again, dependent on different states of life, Disneyland may conjure up hell (for parents worried about the cost or for someone who has a fear of heights!) and war may draw out qualities of compassion and courage in individuals beyond what they thought possible. Once again, the purpose of studying the concept of *ichinen sanzen* is to give us confidence that the potential always exists to transform our environment. As Nichiren Daishonin points out in *On Attaining Buddhahood in this Lifetime*,

...if the minds of the people are impure, their land is also impure, but if their minds are pure, so is their land. There are not two lands, pure or impure in themselves. The difference lies solely in the good or evil of our minds. (WND1p3)

This is why our own inner transformation is important. When we transform, we see the change reflected in our environment and our relationships, too. The Daishonin says, "It is the heart that is important" (WND1p1000). When we open our heart to belief, we tap into the limitless creative potential of our self, humanity and the environment to transform towards a positive direction. Even as we address each issue that threatens humanity, for example environmental destruction, another new challenge will always arise unless we get to the root of suffering. This is due to the failure of our race to address the fundamental crisis that effects all humanity. That is, the crisis of the spirit or the heart. From this perspective, the evolution of humanity's spirituality is the prime point for the future of humanity and its environment.

From the above examples we can see that the Three Realms are interrelated to the 10 Worlds and 10 Factors. We can see that our current life state (e.g. anger) will colour our perception of self, our society and our environment. This is manifested through our behaviour towards others. When we change our life state positively by chanting for the happiness of others this is reflected in our environment, although anger may remain our motivation or driver. Each individual is so closely related to their society and environment. This interdependence ultimately influences the world at large.

As we believe so do we act. The potential effects of our actions accumulate in the depths of our lives to find expression in daily life, when the time and conditions are right. If we think of the objective world as a screen on which the effects of our actions are reflected like a shadow cast by a body, it means we can determine how the world around us is. Blaming our surroundings for our misery is like the body blaming the shadow for its shape! The revealing of Buddhahood in our lives transforms our immediate environment for the better and as more and more people reveal their Buddha natures, the possibility of world peace, including a sustainable environment, becomes a reality.

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We will now look at the entire framework of *ichinen sanzen*.

Ichinen Sanzen

Putting together all the concepts discussed in the four instalments of this introductory study course, we find that there are three thousand life potentials that exist in a single moment of life [10 worlds (10) multiplied by their mutual possession (x10) multiplied by the 10 factors (x10) multiplied by the three realms (x3) equals 3000!]. But how is this related to changing the world in a positive way?

In previous instalments, we have discussed how upholding sincere faith in Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and maintaining a strong Buddhist practice allow the life state of enlightenment or Buddhahood to

positively influence all aspects of our lives and environment. Practising faith sincerely is a choice available to each of us. We can allow ourselves to be at the mercy of our environment and lower life conditions, or we can determine to take responsibility to effect positive changes. There are 3000 potential life states available to each of us to manifest at each moment. Buddhahood allows us freedom to express our aspirations and capabilities. In Buddhism, choice is a determined action based on a vow to contribute to our own happiness and that of others. Our causes and our expression then become profoundly valuable when we determine to manifest Buddhahood as the foundation of our life. We are able to do this through the act of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo consistently based on the belief in our own potential and that of others.



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“A great revolution of character in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a society, and further, will enable a change in the destiny of humankind.”

This is the entire theme of President Ikeda's novel *The Human Revolution* and also provides the eternal guideline and mission of Nichiren Buddhism. This concept emphasises the amazing impact and contributions that each individual is capable of making to world peace. This means that the happiness of humanity is in the hands of the common people, of people tapping into their great reser-

voir of profound wisdom and generating waves of positive change in their environment. What makes this possible? It is nothing other than possessing a great determination for the happiness of self and others.

The Human Revolution novel discusses the life of Josei Toda who was imprisoned for upholding his religious belief and was released from prison just before the end of World War II. Emerging from the prison gates emaciated and with greatly deteriorated health, he vowed to use what life force he had left in him to rebuild the Soka Gakkai and to create a force of the common people dedicated to world peace. An excerpt from the novel goes as follows:

(In order to save people from unhappiness) “what counts most is your determination to practise the Daishonin's teachings...No one can know his or her future. Tomorrow lies shrouded in darkness where the countless problems of human existence await. What counts is a person's life force....Toda's charm seemed to sparkle brighter each day. The change in the man was incomprehensible, but others could not deny it – it was right before their eyes. Toda simply said it resulted from practicing the essence of Buddhism...He proceeded to teach them about human revolution, the change of destiny achieved by practicing the correct teachings of Buddhism with sincerity and courage.... The transformation of a human being – the recognition of one's own dignity and individuality and the full flowering of his or her potential – is the shortest road to the transformation of society, education, science, government, culture and indeed, the whole of life. Toda stressed this over and over. (HRVol1p122)

In regards to this, President Ikeda states, “One's inner determination to fight now opens the way forward.” The word ‘now’ is crucial. It's not about

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what has happened in the past, nor what action will be taken in the future. The crucial moment to effect great transformation is when we pray to the *Gohonzon* and manifest determination and awareness of our mission for *kosen-rufu*.

This is what will create the future. President Ikeda goes on to say,

We have to make a determination, pray and take action. Unless we do so, our environment will not change in the least. Our single-minded determination for *kosen-rufu*, and that alone, creates the 'time.' 'That time' is when we set our lives in motion, when we stand up of our own volition and by our own will and strength.

Goethe writes, "The moment alone is deci-

sive; fixes the life of man, and his future destiny settles." 'That time' is the moment you resolve from the depths of your heart: 'Now I will stand up and fight!' From that instant your destiny changes. Your life develops. History begins. This is the spirit of the mystic principle of the True Cause (*myo*). This is the principle of *ichinen sanzen*. The moment you autonomously determine to accomplish something – not when you do it because you are told to – is 'that time', the 'time' of mission.⁸

The Daishonin says, "If you exert a hundred million aeons of effort in a single moment of life, the three enlightened properties of the Buddha will appear within you at each moment. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the practice of 'exerting oneself.'"⁹ What counts most is our inner determination and our hearts. When we take courageous action based on this, we will create immense hope not only for ourselves, but also for our family, friends, soci-



Humanity and Hope

Revealing life's creative potential

ety and the world.

The penetrating insight that Buddhism offers explains the interconnected workings of life. This study course is an attempt to clarify some of this explanation to help develop a stronger belief in life and its many expressions, in particular, humanity.

More than a mere observation of life, Buddhism provides a means to engage in life wholeheartedly and transform suffering into joy through the practice of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

The common theme throughout the course has been on the interconnectedness of life, and in particular the interconnectedness of all aspects within our own life. Each aspect of our life affects all other aspects simultaneously. Expressing Buddhahood illuminates the enlightened aspects of all our ten-

dencies, creating value from our life at this moment.

The teaching of *ichinen sanzen* reveals that when we transform one aspect of our life all other aspects are likewise transformed because our life exists and is expressed in complete interdependence. Because of this interdependence, the study course has attempted to inspire in the reader the reality that life has the potential of transformation to a positive expression in each moment. This can be seen as the universally pervasive expression of Buddhahood, a life state that can be manifested in the daily life of ordinary people.

In the vast ocean there are no separate parts that cannot be called the ocean. Examining the ocean at different locations still reveals the ocean. Likewise, any and all expressions of our life, from anger to joy are an expression of life itself and can at any time manifest the life state of Buddhahood. Just as winter contains within it the potential for the expression of spring, anger contains within it the potential for the expression of Buddhahood. ■

For Discussion

1. How have you been able to influence changes in your environment based on transforming your inner self?
2. Discuss the importance of making a great determination in order to transform our hearts, our society and the world at large.

⁸ Ikeda, *Lectures on the Expedient Means Chapter of the Lotus Sutra*, Instalment 2, p32-33

⁹ Ikeda, *Lectures on the Expedient Means and Life Span Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*, Instalment 2, p58-59