

A Fresh Look at Buddhism The Seeking Spirit To Want To Change

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First, for you to ask a question about the Lotus Sutra is a rare source of good fortune. In this age of the Latter Day of the Law, those who ask about the meaning of even one phrase or verse of the Lotus Sutra are much fewer than those who can hurl great Mount Sumeru to another land like a stone, or those who can kick the entire galaxy away like a ball. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 221)

Background

This letter was written on July 3, 1278, to the woman Myoho-ama, when Nichiren Daishonin was 57. Myoho-ama asked if one could attain enlightenment only by chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. Nichiren Daishonin praised her for asking such a question, describing how rare it is to find someone who asks about the Lotus Sutra.

Seeking Spirit

Throughout his writings, Nichiren Daishonin stresses the importance of developing our desire to learn more about Buddhism and how to practice so that we can become truly happy and help those around us to do so as well. We often refer to this desire as “seeking spirit.”

In this letter, Nichiren praises Myoho-ama for asking the question, pointing out that not only is it rare to encounter the Lotus Sutra and pose questions regarding it, but that it is also a source of immense good fortune. This seeking spirit or desire to learn—not only in Buddhism—helps us to keep a fresh outlook on life and assures our growth as human beings.

In his message to representatives attending the opening session of the SGI Spring Training Course in April, SGI President Ikeda said: “As leaders, I hope that you will always have the spirit to learn with a lively curiosity and interest. When leaders are enthusiastic to keep on learning and growing, they inspire others. New ideas emerge and spread. Fresh energy surges forth.”

It is important to not only maintain this spirit, but to manifest it in our actions and behavior. By being willing to learn from others through their suggestions and ideas, we foster unity and open-mindedness.

Sincere Prayer

When we started practicing, our desire to learn, to change our circumstances and to chant for benefits (either material or spiritual) seemed so easy. However, continuing to practice becomes difficult, for the more we practice the more we “wake up” our lives to change or improve them. Waking up our lives is often a painful process.

That is why it is so important for us to be surrounded by our friends in the organization so we can get re-energized and re-encouraged to chant sincerely to change our situations. Our seeking spirit to want to change our lives, self-reflect and move forward is the beginning of our happiness. And our sincere prayer to the Gohonzon can change everything for the better.

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