

Unleashing Our Fortune
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Could the Buddha’s decree, “He will receive his reward of good fortune in his present life,” or his edict, “Truly he will have manifest reward in his present life,” possibly be false for you, Nanjo Shichiro Jiro, alone? (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, pp. 186–87)

This passage is part of a letter written to Nanjo Tokimitsu in 1276, when Tokimitsu was 17. His father and elder brother died when Tokimitsu was very young, forcing him to take the position of responsibility in his family. Needless to say, the letter was sent to encourage someone who had already experienced tremendous hardships.

I have not been beset with the extreme conditions of Nanjo Toki-mitsu. Actually, I think I’ve been rather fortunate. Yet I have frequently felt alone in my practice.

I’m often confused as to why things haven’t changed the way I wanted. I ask myself: Why is the practice working for everyone else, but not for me? I then find myself comparing my growth with others’ growth. And when I don’t see immediate results in certain areas (relationships, career), I start to beat myself up emotionally.

But self-deprecation has nothing to do with Buddhism. To evaluate and reflect on oneself, absolutely. To bash oneself over what one is not or what one doesn’t have, I don’t think so.

As this passage demonstrates, there is no doubt in Nichiren Daishonin’s mind about the fortune we each possess. And with his belief also comes undeniable power of conviction. If I were to make this belief my own, would I not have the same power of conviction? And then would I not manifest great reward and good fortune in this lifetime? Each of us has something unique and distinctive within that only we can express. Our own fortune account, if you will. The power of faith in the Gohonzon, which is unlimited and nonjudgmental, is the key to opening this. We are the only ones who can unleash our fortune from within. We just have to practice, have patience and have faith that we are worthy of the reward.

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