

SIGN POSTS: Try Your Own Power
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Abutsu-bo is the Treasure Tower itself, and the Treasure Tower is Abutsu-bo himself. No other knowledge is purposeful. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 30)

“Assay [try] the power you have.”
“My power? Alas, I doubt.”
“Our doubts are traitors,
And makes us lose the good we oft might win,
By fearing to attempt.”
(*Measure for Measure*, 1.4.76–79)

If the worst slander in the Judeo-Christian faith is disbelief in God, the worst slander in Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism is disbelief in our innate power — the power derived from our Buddhahood. Shakespeare here echoes an internal dialogue I sometimes have when facing a difficulty. “Can I overcome this problem?” “No, I don’t think so.”

It’s easier for me to have faith in the Gohonzon (as something outside me) than in myself. I sometimes imagine myself as a meek, insignificant man kneeling before the Gohonzon up on the pedestal. Many of us, especially those with a strong Judeo-Christian background, may have difficulties believing in our own power, in switching to the Buddhist perspective.

Some people may say that they have God inside, but few, if any, claim that they *are* God. Saying so is blasphemous. But the Daishonin, in the above passage, tells Abutsu-bo, an elderly believer on Sado Island, that he *is* the Gohonzon and that he *is* the Buddha. This self-knowledge, the Daishonin says, is the single most important knowledge of all. To think of ourselves as something less than the Gohonzon or the Buddha, therefore, is slanderous to ourselves and to all others, who share the same potential. In a sense, we must elevate our view of ourselves to the level of the Gohonzon (i.e. our Buddha nature).

“What’s the good in even trying?” Whenever I overcome my internal voice of self-doubt through resolute prayer and try my own Buddhahood, I am glad that I did. In the Daishonin’s Buddhism, faith means the courage to try your own power.

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