

**What a Concept: Wisdom
The Key To Living Wisely
By LISA JONES, Staff Writer**

In most dictionaries, *wisdom* is defined as judging rightly and following the soundest course of action based on knowledge and experience. In Buddhism, though, Buddha wisdom comes from our life-condition of Buddhahood, not knowledge or experience alone. Experience is based on the past, while wisdom encompasses past, present and future. Knowledge is based on the external world and prescribed systems of logic, while wisdom comes from inside us and transcends logic. When coupled with wisdom, the value of our intellect and experience is enhanced.

According to Nichiren Daishonin, wisdom arises concurrently with compassion, and Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the source of Buddha wisdom. By chanting to the Gohonzon with compassion for ourselves and others — by devoting ourselves to faith, practice and study — we tap our wisdom. Practically speaking, wisdom is the capacity to perceive the workings of cause and effect and thus see what to do or say at any moment to create value.

In the SGI, we encourage one another to chant and take action. *To chant* means to draw forth our wisdom, and *to take action* means to apply it. We can also reverse this — we can decide on a course of action, and then chant to execute it wisely. Wisdom is similar to intuition in that it's something we tap with our entire being, not just our intellect. Even so, if our gut feelings contradict the Daishonin's teachings, those feelings should not be mistaken for wisdom. Rather, by intensifying our practice and study we can truly manifest our wisdom.

The Daishonin teaches that the key to living wisely is faith. In this respect, he states, "Faith alone is what really matters" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 246). In a sense, faith means to abandon all attempts to manipulate your circumstances and surrender without reservation to, and thus become one with, the compassionate workings of the universe. In another sense, faith means to boldly follow your heart, based on Buddhist practice and study, with the expectation that you will continue to make breakthroughs in life.

The Daishonin writes: "As you crave food when hungry, seek water when thirsty, long to see a lover, beg for medicine when ill, or as a beautiful woman desires powder and rouge, so should you put your faith in the Lotus Sutra" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 257). Even if we're not sure what to do or say to create value, as long as our faith is steadfast, we will naturally move in the best direction. In Buddhism, this is known as substituting faith for wisdom.

SGI President Ikeda said recently: "Not to doubt the Gohonzon no matter what happens, to believe earnestly — this is enlightenment in the latter day. Faith in the Gohonzon itself equals enlightenment."

In fact, Josei Toda attained enlightenment through faith. Alone in his prison cell, Toda started digging right where he was, delving into the depths of his existence until he found within himself the foundation that all people share: the eternal life of the universe. He saw that the Gohonzon exists within our lives, and that faith means to believe, in essence, that our lives and the Gohonzon are one and the same. Therefore, it could be said that faith in the Gohonzon equals trusting our innate Buddhahood. And this faith is the wellspring of our wisdom.

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Seven in a series

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