

**BACK TO THE BASICS
THE SOURCE OF WISDOM
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Have you ever been in a situation where you felt as though you were up against a wall and did not know which way to go? Or maybe you had to make a decision that would have a great impact on your life and you were unsure of what to do?

Many people spend hours and hours wondering what to do about such a situation or even suffer with anxiety when faced with difficult challenges. This is where the greatness of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism lies — as Buddhist practitioners, we awaken to the fact that under any circumstances, through our strong prayer to the Gohonzon, we are able to pull tremendous wisdom out of our lives and thereby take the correct action.

The actions that we take, after all, determine the quality of our lives. This is why it is so important to have the wisdom to do the right thing.

In order to obtain this wisdom, we must develop our faith. Nichiren Daishonin thus teaches: "When the skies are clear, the ground is illuminated. Similarly, when one knows the Lotus Sutra, one understands the meaning of all worldly affairs" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 766). In other words, unless our minds are filled with the wisdom of Buddhism, we cannot see which way to go.

Our minds often get clouded with all sorts of illusions—delusions, even. We start to think that merely implementing various strategies will solve our problems. And then, instead of solving our problems, we find ourselves in a deadlock. We might even create more problems for ourselves than we had before. It can become a vicious cycle, and we can do ourselves in.

We need, instead, to first pray sincerely to the Gohonzon and face the reality of our present situation. If we cannot see the true nature of what we are faced with, how can we resolve it? What is it that is stopping us from winning? With confident prayer and a strong determination to find this out and to win over it comes the wellspring of wisdom.

"For what purpose should we cultivate wisdom?" SGI President Ikeda recently asked. "For what purpose is our faith? The answer is to win—to win in life, in society and as human beings. It is to win without fail, so that we may secure happiness and create peace" (June 15 *World Tribune*, p. 5).

Of course, wisdom does not come without study. It is essential that we study Buddhism—reading the writings of the Daishonin and SGI President Ikeda—and develop and refine our intellect. Otherwise, we cannot derive deep wisdom from our lives. Study helps us to bring out the wisdom of the Buddha nature in our lives by reminding us again and again that it is there.

And it is important for us to remember in this respect that wisdom alone is not enough to lead us to ultimate happiness. The Daishonin's Buddhism is, above all, a religion of compassionate action.

In other words, true wisdom is the outgrowth of courageous action taken for the sake of the happiness of other people. This is the principle the Daishonin based his life on and that he encourages us to live as well. Such compassionate action for the sake of others is the *raison d'être* of Buddhism.

When we care for and sincerely pray for others' happiness, we tap into the source of limitless life force and wisdom within our lives. In such bodhisattva practice, regarding other people's sufferings and happiness as our own, we discover the surest way to bring forth the pure, dynamic life within—the wisdom that reveals our eternal selves.