

**BACK TO THE BASICS**  
**THE FUSION OF REALITY AND WISDOM**  
**BY MARK KORAL**  
**LOS ANGELES**

In “The Essentials for Attaining Buddhahood,” Nichiren Daishonin says: “Is not the meaning of the sutra and the commentary that the way to Buddhahood lies within the two elements of reality and wisdom? Reality means the true nature of all phenomena, and wisdom means the illuminating and manifesting of this true nature. Thus when the riverbed of reality is infinitely broad and deep, the water of wisdom will flow ceaselessly. When this reality and wisdom are fused, one attains Buddhahood in one’s present form” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 746).

Simply put, when Nichiren Daishonin says, “Reality means the true nature of all phenomena,” he is pointing to the Gohonzon, which as the embodiment of his enlightened life, is the wellspring of universal life. When he says that “wisdom means the illuminating and manifesting of this true nature,” he is pointing to our inherent Buddha nature, which we are able to manifest directly in our lives by chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo to the Gohonzon — thereby fusing with the ultimate reality of the universe.

The practical implication of this principle manifests itself in our everyday life. Whatever activities make up our daily lives and our own unique environment, they are a part of our individual karma. The ability to harmonize with that environment and create value and happiness there corresponds to the fusion of reality (the truth of our environment) and wisdom (our ability to create value with various circumstances). There may of course be tense and difficult situations on the job, at school or in the home, where it may seem such harmony is lacking. This is where Buddhism’s focus on growth and development is vital. If we merely make excuses or blame the environment for our unhappiness, we are missing our opportunity to grow.

According to Nichiren Daishonin’s “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,” the act of devotion has two implications: One is to devote oneself to, or fuse one’s life with, the eternal and unchanging truth; the other is that, through this fusion of one’s life with the ultimate truth, one simultaneously draws forth inexhaustible wisdom, which functions in accordance with changing circumstances. This explanation means that within our own selves, we already possess the limitless potential to create tremendous value and happiness in any environment.

The key to tapping that wisdom is continuous self-improvement based on correct Buddhist practice — faith, practice and study. This process of continuously elevating our lives expresses itself nowhere but through our own behavior and conduct, making it possible to bring forth the wisdom necessary to move our lives in any direction we choose. It is here that we find the principle of the fusion of reality and wisdom in action.