

Q&A ON FAITH
WHAT DOES ‘CORRECT PRACTICE’ MEAN?
BY TED MORINO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

What does the “correct practice of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism” mean?

Let me share six perspectives on what we can glean from *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* on practicing correctly.

First, it stems from strong faith. As Nichiren Daishonin states: “This Gohonzon...is found only in the two characters for faith. This is what the sutra means when it states that one can ‘gain entrance through faith alone’” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 832). Having strong faith means, in a sense, making the conscious effort to chant with deep trust that our own lives are the Mystic Law or the Gohonzon itself. This enables us to better appreciate the sanctity of our lives.

Second, it relates to having a determination to win with clear goals for the future. As indicated by the Buddhist principle of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, *ichinen sanzen*, the future evolves in accord with our *ichinen* or determination. A Buddhist sutra states, “The heart is like a skilled painter”—our determined practice is painting the future. SGI President Ikeda says that “the power of the heart enables us to actually execute a wonderful masterpiece” with our lives (*Learning From the Gosho*, p. 129).

Third, it finds expression in taking action—working hard for our goals. “When it comes to faith, practice it fully,” second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda taught. “And when it comes to work, work three times harder than others.” We realize the real power of the Mystic Law through the action we take, through how we live our lives. This is why one of the SGI’s eternal guidelines is “Faith equals daily life.”

Fourth, it lies in making a vow for kosen-rufu with our whole lives. Even though we embrace the Gohonzon, in which the Daishonin expresses his spirit to bring happiness to all humanity, our fundamental life-condition can still get stuck in selfishness. But Buddhism teaches that we need to devote ourselves to the bodhisattva practice—helping others become happy—to develop our own good fortune. It is in this vein that to practice correct faith we must make a vow or pledge for the happiness of others. President Ikeda has said that “prayer in the Daishonin’s Buddhism means to chant daimoku based on a pledge or vow. At its very core, this vow is to attain kosen-rufu” (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 250).

Fifth, it means to commit ourselves to stopping evil. Buddhism, after all, is the philosophy of diminishing evil and generating good. As the SGI has advanced kosen-rufu on a global scale, opposition has emerged from within the realm of Buddhism in the form of the current Nichiren Shoshu priesthood. In the Daishonin’s days, there were many such religious groups that pretended to be spreading Buddhism but were in fact attacking its very heart. The Daishonin was relentless in trying to educate people about the consequences of adhering to these slanderous religious sects. Today, along the same line, by participating in the Soka Spirit educational movement, we can diminish evil.

Sixth, it means to practice the mentor–disciple relationship, an integral part of Buddhism. President Ikeda writes: “The path of mentor and disciple is one that leads to personal development and growth. Those without a mentor may appear free and un beholden to anyone, but without a solid standard or model on which to base themselves,

their lives become aimless and wandering” (*Faith Into Action*, p. 234).

I see in President Ikeda the greatest example of how to practice the Daishonin’s Buddhism correctly in modern times. He has shown us his compassion for the people, passion for kosen-rufu, courage to stand up for justice and wisdom to lead humanity in the right direction. From his example, we can learn more about correct faith and practice.