

The Attainment of Buddhahood

The purpose of our Buddhist practice is the attainment of Buddhahood, the highest life condition that is, to become a Buddha. Nichiren Daishonin taught us that the Gohonzon is the expression of the essence of the entire workings of the life of the true Buddha.

We face the Gohonzon to recite the prayers and to chant Daimoku in order to arouse forth the Buddha nature that is inherent in the lives of all common mortals.

The following is a passage from the Writings of the Daishonin:

To illustrate, when a caged bird sings, birds who are flying in the sky are thereby summoned and gather around, and when the birds flying in the sky gather around, the bird in the cage strives to get out. When with our mouths we chant the Mystic Law, our Buddha nature, being summoned, will invariably emerge.

(*MW-6*, p. 207; *Gosho*, p. 1320)

What is the difference between the common people and the Buddha? The Daishonin addresses this point in the following passage:

There is a clear distinction between a Buddha and a common mortal, in that a common mortal is deluded while a Buddha is enlightened. The common mortal fails to realize that he himself possesses both the entity and the function of the Buddha's three properties.

(*MW-1*, p. 91; *Gosho*, p. 665)

The Buddha's three properties are the property of the Law, the property of wisdom, and the property of compassionate action.

Even if there are times when we are deluded by superficial matters, we can overcome the distinction between the Buddha's life and ours, make the Gohonzon the sole object of worship and improve our faith and practice.

When we achieve the fusion of reality and wisdom, a perfect unity with the Gohonzon, we can attain the life condition of enlightenment, true happiness. The accomplishment of this state of fusion or unity actually represents our union with Myoho-Renge-Kyo.

The Daishonin states in the “Orally Transmitted Teachings” (*Ongi kuden*):

“Benefit” means to attain Buddhahood in one’s present form, which is the purification of the six sense organs. One must understand that to practice the teachings in accord with the Lotus Sutra is the purification of the six sense organs.

(*Gosho*, p. 1775)

The six sense organs are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. The Daishonin expounds that those who practice True Buddhism will receive the benefit of the purification of the life.

Purification means not having a defiled nature brought about by earthly desires and refers to a state of purity and serenity. In Buddhism, it is taught that one’s true nature is innately pure. If one’s six sense organs can sever their attachment to their respective objects, they have been purified. When this has been achieved, it is equal to attaining Buddhahood.

In actual practice, we must achieve the fusion with the Gohonzon by reciting the prayers and chanting Daimoku, Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo everyday. As we practice the Buddhism of the Daishonin, we will come to understand the preciousness of our faith and practice in terms of our own daily lives.

We will notice that something is having a dynamically powerful and positive effect on us. That "something" is not an external power, but the Buddha nature within us starting to emerge, endowing us with vast wisdom and fortune. “The bird of the Buddhahood” in the cage is getting out. As a result, we can discover a life filled with good fortune, strong life force, profound wisdom and tremendous mercy.