

## July Discussion Topic – A Seeking Spirit

In Buddhism, a seeking spirit is the starting point of our practice. It is the attitude with which we seek enlightenment, or Buddhahood. Through making efforts to practice correctly and deepen our faith, no matter how long we have already been practising, we bring forth our highest potential. This also reinforces our understanding of our mission to help others to do the same.

As we advance in our Buddhist practice, we develop our wisdom, courage, compassion and life force (Buddhahood). This makes us less likely to give in to weaknesses such as negativity, apathy and doubt. By cultivating a seeking spirit, we become able to recognize our negativity, challenge it, and overcome it.

The oneness of mentor and disciple is an important element in this process. It is of vital importance that we continue to seek to learn from our mentor. This will help us to advance through life with greater ease and confidence. If we just study Buddhism on our own, we can meet with difficult concepts that give rise to misunderstandings, thus causing our faith to stagnate. A good mentor helps us both to understand and to apply the teaching correctly, while motivating us to continue learning.

Buddhism gives us the strength to take our destiny in our own hands. It is based on the conviction that we possess Buddhahood. The mentor helps the disciple to gain awareness of this, and keeps reminding him or her of this highest potential. As President Ikeda writes: “A true mentor in Buddhism is one who enables us to remember the aspiration to strive for the enlightenment and happiness of both self and others.”<sup>1</sup> It’s about the balance of having the courage to squarely confront one’s own challenges, striving to grow and develop as a person, while taking action for the sake of others.

When the spirit of the oneness of mentor and disciple is lacking in our faith, we give in more easily to weaknesses such as fear, arrogance, anger and complacency, and we are content to seek only personal fulfilment. About this, President Ikeda says: “A mentor helps you perceive your own weaknesses and confront them with courage.”<sup>2</sup>

The mentor-disciple relationship is a courageous journey of self-discovery. It is certainly not our aim to imitate our mentor. The disciple chooses to know the mentor’s heart, and learn from him. The ultimate desire of a genuine mentor is to be surpassed by their disciples. Those who walk the path of mentor and disciple towards kosen-rufu will never reach an impasse.

\* What does a seeking spirit mean to you?

\* Have you been able to deepen your faith through your seeking spirit, and can you give an example of that?

---

<sup>1</sup> From *the SGI Quarterly* januari 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Idem.