

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Chant for Nikken?

I want to say thanks for your article in the Feb. 6 *World Tribune* titled “Should We Chant for Nikken’s Happiness?” I agree wholeheartedly with your points about the inseparability of prayer and action in our work for kosen-rufu. On many occasions, I have been frustrated with members and leaders who suggested that all I needed to do was “just chant” when faced with a particularly painful problem or injustice. Therefore, I welcome your article’s emphasis on recognizing evil and taking action against it and will keep this important guidance in mind as I continue my practice.

In my view, however, your article is missing a significant point. While it is so important to understand the importance of taking action to remove this serious threat to the advancement of kosen-rufu, I believe that your article should have begun with a resounding “YES!” to the question “Should we chant for Nikken’s happiness?”

Daimoku remains our strongest, surest weapon in our efforts to defeat evil, to create happiness for ourselves and others and to advance the cause of world peace. Nikken may be many things, including an enemy of kosen-rufu,... but I also believe that he must be a fundamentally unhappy person,... even if he is not consciously aware of being that unhappy....

Your article didn’t say “Don’t chant for Nikken’s happiness, just take action against him.” But I think that by not saying clearly that “Yes, chanting for his happiness is an important, though incomplete, means to stand up to the priesthood and advance kosen-rufu,” you might inadvertently discourage people from using the powerful sword that is daimoku against Nikken and his evil actions.

— AMY LUSK, Chicago

The question submitted for the “Questions and Answers” column concerning the advisability of chanting for Nikken’s happiness was excellent, one that had been on my mind for months. But the response missed the mark.

In the first place, Greg Martin and Richard Yoshimachi, who wrote the response, didn’t seem to be replying to the question as printed. The questioner asked, simply, “Should we chant for Nikken’s happiness?” Instead, the columnists seemed to be responding to a question more like “Should we chant for Nikken’s happiness in lieu of taking any other actions to combat his slander?” They implied throughout that chanting for the happiness of someone who is causing us problems naturally precludes taking concrete actions to correct the situation....

As to the original question, in my opinion, yes, we should definitely be chanting for Nikken’s happiness. Not only is it the compassionate thing to do but it is a logical measure as well. For how can Nikken ever truly be happy in this lifetime until he recants his slander...? Therefore, for Nikken to be happy implies the battle has been won. And what better ally could we possibly have in that battle than a reformed Nikken himself? We must never doubt that his own human revolution is possible.

Finally we must separate the evil from the evildoer in our minds. I agree with the columnists: “Refuting Nikken’s teaching and calling for his resignation are the ultimate in compassionate behavior....” As for Nikken himself, to paraphrase the Ghost of Hamlet, “Leave him to his karma.”

— KEVIN GARVEY, Glendale, Calif.

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Editor's note: Yes, chanting for Nikken's happiness is in the spirit of Buddhism. What should underlie such a prayer, however, is true compassion that manifests itself as righteous anger toward his behavior, that functions to destroy the Law and the happiness of humanity. Simply hating Nikken or holding a grudge does not solve the problem. The Study Department will be revisiting this question in a future issue.

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