

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON FAITH
THE KEY TO HAVING OUR WISHES FULFILLED
BY TED MORINO, EDITOR IN CHIEF**

Q: Before I began to practice this Buddhism, I was told that I can get anything I want through faith. What does this mean?

A: It is true that through Buddhist practice we can open up many great possibilities by tapping into the Buddha nature—the potential for enlightenment innate within us. Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is the name of the law that sustains one's life and the movement of the universe. A genuine awareness of the existence of this ultimate law of life within oneself and in all things in the universe is the essence of the enlightenment that was achieved by Shakyamuni Buddha in India, T'ien-t'ai in China and Nichiren Daishonin in Japan.

As is true with any societal or physical rule or principle, when one abides by a law, one will be protected by it. In contrast, when one violates it or acts counter to it, one will experience negative repercussions or be punished. According to our attitude and behavior with respect to a given rule, law or principle, we see either gain or loss. A simple example of this are traffic laws. If you cross the street on the red signal, you risk being hit by a car or at least a jaywalking fine. By abiding by the traffic signal and the law regarding it, you can secure your safety and enjoy your walk.

An orchestra creates beautiful music by bringing together all types of musical instruments. Each musician plays his or her instrument in a way that harmonizes with and supports the entire melody. Likewise, to create beautiful harmony and rhythm in our lives, we need to get in tune with the law or rhythm of life itself. In Buddhism, this dynamic attuning of ourselves with the life of the universe is the basis of benefit.

In this regard, Nichiren Daishonin says of the word *kudoku*, meaning benefit, merit or virtue: “*Ku*...means to extinguish evil, and *doku* means to bring forth good” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 762).

When people say, “You can get anything you want through this practice,” they are expressing an aspect of Buddhist truth. However, this statement is premised upon the notion that with our inherent Buddhahood fully manifested and established, we eventually find all our prayers answered over the long course of our practice.

In the final analysis, Buddhist benefit stems from the life-condition of Buddhahood. Therefore, the key to having our wishes fulfilled lies in opening and revealing our innate Buddha nature. And, of course, to do this requires consistent and ever-deepening faith, practice and study. This is very fortunate, for if we could get whatever we wanted just through chanting, without any practical effort to have our wishes fulfilled, our life-condition could end up either in the world of Hunger (insatiable frustration over not being able to get what we want) or Heaven (the temporary joy of easily getting what we want).

Whichever the end result, because both Hunger and Heaven are part of the lower six worlds, chances are that we would eventually quit practicing since we would not establish a clear sense of purpose in our Buddhist practice. The objective of Buddhist practice is not to simply get what we “want,” but to become a person of great capacity, capability, wisdom and fulfillment. Such people find their prayers and wishes realized in ways they may never previously have expected. Most important, their ultimate wish for true happiness is absolutely fulfilled.

It is so wonderful that, through chanting daimoku and encouraging others in this prac-

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tice, we can expand, strengthen, deepen, enrich, empower and purify our inner self. Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism always encourages us to become the type of people who can enjoy the immense beneficial power of the Law.

In his letter "On Prayer," Nichiren Daishonin says, "Therefore, we know that the prayers offered by a practitioner of the Lotus Sutra will be answered just as an echo answers a sound, as shadow follows a form, as the reflection of the moon appears in clear water, as a mirror collects dewdrops, as a magnet attracts iron, as amber attracts particles of dust, or as a clear mirror reflects the color of an object" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 340). In this passage, the key term is "a practitioner of the Lotus Sutra." We should strive to develop the life-condition of a "practitioner of the Lotus Sutra."

Such a life-condition is that of a bodhisattva-Buddha. This means someone who is dedicated to relieving people's suffering and leading them to happiness (a bodhisattva) while tapping into and bringing forth his/her innate Buddha wisdom (a Buddha). This is exactly the life-condition we gain through praying strongly to the Gohonzon for our own happiness and that of others, and then engaging in SGI-USA activities dedicated to the happiness of others and the peace of the world.

Also, if we need to make a major breakthrough in our lives, the first step is to determine to achieve it. Buddhism is win or lose. This means that a solid determination to win in our specific challenges and circumstances makes our daimoku more focused, which means we can tap wisdom and courage.

Next, we have to do whatever we feel is necessary to attain a vital breakthrough. When we are chanting with determined prayer and taking action consistently, we can confidently feel, "I will leave it up to the Gohonzon."

In other words, we will be actually living up to the passage from "On Rebuking Slander of the Law and Eradicating Sins" that reads, "I am praying that, no matter how troubled the times may become, the Lotus Sutra and the ten demons daughters will protect all of you, praying as earnestly as though to produce fire from damp wood, or to obtain water from parched ground" (WND, 444).

SGI President Ikeda states: "Faith in the Mystic Law is the wellspring of value creation. It enables us to turn everything in our lives—both our joys and sufferings—into causes for accumulating beauty, benefit and good in still greater measure. When we base ourselves on this kind of faith, everything that happens to us is a benefit" (*Faith into Action*, p. 91).

There are many, many SGI members in the world today who can say without doubt or hesitation that all their prayers have been answered.