

August Discussion Topic - It's important that we win

Through Nichiren Buddhism, we can confidently overcome life's problems without getting discouraged, without falling into self-pity or thinking, "I am worthless!" or "I can't do this!" With the power of the Mystic Law, we can definitely overcome the fundamental darkness or ignorance that tries to undermine our exceptionally noble lives.

SGI President Daisaku Ikeda explains: "Buddhism is primarily concerned about winning. When we face a powerful enemy, we either win or lose - there's no middle ground. It's one or the other."¹ We either win the battle between our Buddha nature and our fundamental darkness - between the Buddha and devilish functions - or we're defeated by them and end up living a life of delusion.

Our hearts can be clouded by darkness or ignorance; or shine brightly as an expression of the Mystic Law – free from that darkness and ignorance. The human heart is fickle. It can change from one moment to the next. One moment we feel ready to take on a great challenge and the next we lose courage. But if we can overcome the negative thoughts that try to hold us back and truly believe "I am a Buddha!", we can elevate our life state and change our environment.

Reciting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is a battle against the darkness or ignorance that obscures the truth that we ourselves are Buddhas. That's why it requires sincere and wholehearted dedication. If you want to realize your dreams, it means overcoming the obstacles that stand in your way. Are you afraid of failure? Do you get easily discouraged when things don't go as planned? We all have our weaknesses. But our Buddhist practice encourages us to face them - so that we can grow.

Whether we're aiming for a promotion at work or trying to encourage a friend who is feeling depressed, success requires courage, perseverance and life force to overcome difficulties and despair. The tremendous power of the Mystic law enables us to overcome any obstacle or enemy that hinders our path to Buddhahood. It helps us to resolve or break through any barrier - within ourselves or in our surroundings. By chanting daimoku, we can conquer all our doubts and break through the shell of our lesser self. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the fundamental power that enables us to transform even sadness into a source of creativity and value.

Ultimately, the purpose of our Buddhist practice is to develop an unshakable life state - one that can't be defeated or discouraged by anything. It is not easy to achieve this life state with our Buddhist practice or bring about inner change through practice. That's why it is so important that we win through our faith and practice to become truly happy, to fulfil our deepest desires and to contribute to kosenruffu - world peace. When we do that, we open a new era of hope and respect in the world.

- How does fundamental darkness manifest in your life, and do you have an experience of overcoming it?
- Do you believe that you are a buddha, and that you can overcome and achieve anything?

¹ SGI Quarterly, juli 2006.

- How do you challenge yourself to develop the habit of winning?