

## May Discussion Topic – The Power of Prayer

Prayer in Nichiren Buddhism means making a decision to win. Everything starts with prayer. Prayer, in any form, naturally expresses the desire for things to go well; a better future, the happiness of our family and friends and worldpeace. But because it can often be very challenging to realize these desires, people often seek support from a higher power outside themselves. In Nichiren Buddhism, we do not seek that power outside ourselves, but we draw a limitless power from within ourselves by reciting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. This inner power is connected to the Mystic Law; the Law of life and the universe. We believe that this Law is within our lives, and we can therefore change any situation, no matter how difficult. Our prayer expresses our belief in our own limitless power and wisdom - our Buddha nature - which we all naturally possess.

Buddhism explains that the law of cause and effect ensures that the moment we chant, we create a good cause for our victory; that we can realize our prayers. But as ordinary people, we can't see this process. This sometimes causes us to doubt and worry whether our prayer is working. Our prayer is an ongoing battle against our fundamental ignorance, the highest form of illusion. Faith means that we are fully convinced of the unchangeable law of life, even though we may not be able to see it directly.

When we turn our worries and problems into prayer, something is changing. By turning them into a determined and confident prayer to realize our goals and dreams, no matter what, we elevate our lifestate. Our difficulties then become the basis for our human revolution, and we change our karma into our mission. When we sincerely recite Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, our prayers reach every corner of the universe. A deep prayer changes how we think and feel, and this inner change transforms our lives and therefore also our environment.

It's important to have concrete prayers. A prayer that is ambiguous or irresolute will not fundamentally transform our life, just as following a map with vague instructions won't get us to our destination. Ikeda Sensei says: "It is like trying to shoot an arrow: without a clear target, we won't draw the bow with any real force or determination. In the same way, when we replace vague yearnings with concrete determinations and confident prayer, we can definitely accomplish what we hope to achieve."<sup>1</sup>

What are we wishing and praying for? What motivates us? Our inner mindset makes us who we are. Reciting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo based on the spirit of the oneness of mentor and disciple is the true lion's roar in Nichiren Buddhism. The prayers of mentor and disciple based on their shared vow for kosenrufu (world peace), are invincible.

- How do you challenge yourself to keep deepening your prayer?
- Have you ever experienced that something changed because you changed your prayer?
- Why is it that when we align our prayer with kosenrufu (world peace) it becomes more powerful and invincible?

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<sup>1</sup> Daisaku Ikeda's Lecture Series: *On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime*, 32.