

## Questions and Answers on Faith Should We Chant for Nikken's Happiness?

By GREG MARTIN & RICHARD YOSHIMACHI  
SGI-USA Vice Study Department Leaders

**Q: Should we chant for Nikken's happiness? My leaders have often told me to pray for the happiness of the people causing me trouble. Should we do that for Nikken?**

A: We have also received the same guidance many times in the past. It is very effective, as a matter of fact.

What happens when we pray for the happiness of someone who causes us trouble is that our own life-condition is raised. We begin to feel compassion for the other person.

This inner change of life is reflected in our behavior. Our action toward that person on a fundamental level thus becomes a change in our environment. It seems like the other person has changed — and he or she has, but in response to a change in our own inner realm.

What's most important to understand is that prayer without the action is insufficient. Compassionate prayer and courageous action — these are the agents of change.

This is consistent with the actions of Nichiren Daishonin, which we can read of in his letters. For example, he expressed appreciation for his enemies — including Hei no Saemon, who tried to behead him — saying that it was because of them that he could attain Buddhahood. This is consistent with not blaming one's environment and praying for our enemies' happiness, appreciating the role they play to push us to attain Buddhahood.

At the same time, though, the Daishonin was very strict with his enemies, especially heretical priests, saying that they should be feared, that they should be driven off, denounced and refuted. They were priests who twisted the Law and betrayed believers for their own sakes, the Daishonin said. The Daishonin often quoted Chang-an, T'ien-t'ai's successor, as saying that “if one befriends another person but lacks the mercy to correct him, one is in fact his enemy. But one who reprimands and corrects an offender is a voice-hearer who defends the Buddha's teachings, a true disciple of the Buddha” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 186)

So, then, what about Nikken, the man ready to do anything to stop the SGI's kosen-rufu movement? Should we pray for the happiness of a man who is fully functioning in a such a negative manner? In answering this question for ourselves, we first have to realize that the evil we are talking about in regards to Nikken's bad behavior is quite different from the evil of an ordinary person's bad behavior. While an ordinary person's behavior affects a limited number of people, Nikken's behavior, his actions to destroy the Daishonin's Buddhism, can affect the destiny of all humanity — even future generations.

Nikken's evil thus lies in a dimension different from secular evil; his is an ultimate evil that our Buddhahood alone can defeat. In this regard, the Daishonin says in “Letter From Sado,” “When an evil ruler in consort with heretical priests tries to destroy true Buddhism and banish a man of wisdom, those with the heart of a lion will surely attain Buddhahood as Nichiren did” (MW-1, 35). This is the true practice of the Lotus Sutra, the “sharp sword that can sever the fundamental darkness inherent in life” (MW-3, 305).

Awareness of this naturally leads us to ask ourselves what we can do to protect the Daishonin's Buddhism. As Buddhists, we know that we have to take rigorous action to stop any function from destroying the people's happiness — we can't just chant without doing

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anything. For instance, if a drug dealer is trying to sell to our kids, we don't merely chant for the dealer's happiness. We do what we have to; we take measures to protect our kids and stop the dealer. We may begin with prayer about the situation, but, more important, our compassion leads us to say what we need to say and do what we need to do to protect our children. Prayer alone is not enough. There must be courageous action, based on our compassion for others, as well.

It's the same with the Nikken situation. Merely praying for his happiness, without a clear understanding of his nature and function and a determination to do something about it, is missing the point.

It is clearly in the interest of the members' happiness — both now and in the future — that Nikken's misguided intent and teachings be exposed for what they are. Refuting Nikken's teachings and calling for his resignation are the ultimate in compassionate behavior and are completely consistent with the words and teachings of the Daishonin.

Put another way, pointing out what's wrong with Nikken is actually the only way for him to become happy. Just being quiet about his destructiveness serves to block him from whatever chance at happiness he has left. It lacks mercy.

All in all, only when Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism prevails, only when the Buddha's forces win, will Nikken have the opportunity to reflect on his life. And only that self-reflection can start him on the road toward his happiness. This is prayer of the deepest compassion.

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