

WOW! We Need Problems
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In this practice, obstacles equal enlightenment. Our hardships are not in vain but, in fact, are opportunities to expand our lives. This all sounds neat and succinct in concept. Why, then, is it so difficult to understand this when obstacles are happening to us?!

I was talking with a fellow member last year who said that she began to doubt this practice when another member suffered some deep misfortune after years of practice and devotion to the SGI. “How could this happen after all those good causes she made?” my friend asked. We discussed it further, and I started to realize that we still didn’t understand the meaning of obstacles very well.

I hardly want to consider myself fortunate when steeped in the difficulties of a big problem. Yet the Daishonin declares, “No life could be more fortunate than mine” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 198). It’s not as though he were looking around at a luxurious castle, surrounded by gorgeous attendants and a buffet of food when he made this statement. He was living in hellish surroundings! People everywhere hated him.

I’m amazed by how the Daishonin not only refused to bend in his practice during such times but actually delighted in them. Instead of doubting the Gohonzon every time a problem occurred, he took it as proof that he was to attain Buddhahood. That’s cool. Maybe I’ll see things that way someday.

In *The New Human Revolution*, volume 5, Shin’ichi Yamamoto tells a member: “You’ve struggled and suffered far more than others. Because of this, you stand to gain incomparable happiness. You are supremely qualified to help others become happy as well. This is the teaching of Buddhism.”

So there it is. We need our problems to initiate change within ourselves. And through this process, we become absolutely happy.