

IN MY LIFE: Don't Thank Me
By LISA JONES
SGI-USA Youth Division Study Committee

You should not presume to fathom [the blessings of the Gohonzon]. Whether or not your prayer is answered depends upon your faith; [if it is not,] the fault in no way lies with me, Nichiren. (“Reply to Nichigon-ama,” *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 305)

Most people know better than I do how I should live my life. And they don't hesitate to tell me. Sometimes what I hear, though, is faddish talk show blather masquerading as Truth. Or advice so infested with well-intentioned private agendas.... I need to be careful what I put stock in.

It's with relief, then, that I grab a random volume of Nichiren Daishonin' writings, flip to a random page, focus on a random line and find something worth taking to heart.

Of course, nothing is random in Buddhism. My game of Wisdom Roulette often brings me face to face with “Reply to Nichigon-ama.” She (Nichigon-ama) sent a letter to the Daishonin asking him to offer prayers on her behalf. In his reply, the Daishonin urges her to trust in the efficacy of *her* prayers, not his.

He leads her back to herself — her own wisdom, effort and will.

This reminds me of Ted Fujioka, a leader whose perspective I cherish. I'll often say: “Thanks for the guidance. It worked!” He always replies: “Don't thank me. Thank the Gohonzon, and thank yourself.” He won't let me hold him responsible for my life or make him into a guru.

This passage tells me, just as Ted does, that conventional wisdom can't fathom the blessings of the Gohonzon. And public opinion has nothing to do with whether or not my prayer is answered. At times when I think the answer is *no*, Ted urges me not to pass judgment, but to understand that my prayer always leads me with compassion.

I'm starting to see that my prayer to the Gohonzon is itself wonderful guidance for my life.

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