



Winter Always Turns to Spring

SGI-USA April 2020 Discussion Meetings

How Do We Remain Unbeaten By Life's Trials?

“Over the course of our lives, we are bound to face all kinds of adversity, not only natural disasters but things like bankruptcy, unemployment, illness, accidents and the deaths of loved ones . . . The question, then, is, How do we remain unbeaten by these trials and adorn our lives with victory? Buddhism teaches the concept of transforming poison into medicine. According to this principle, we can change even the worst circumstances into benefit and happiness through faith. We need to be utterly confident of this.”

-Daisaku Ikeda, *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 16, pp. 201–202

What is one way you or someone close to you is being impacted by COVID-19?

Buddhism Teaches That Winter Always Turns to Spring

“Those who believe in the Lotus Sutra are as if in winter, but winter always turns to spring. Never, from ancient times on, has anyone seen or heard of winter turning back to autumn. Nor have we ever heard of a believer in the Lotus Sutra who turned into an ordinary person.”

- Nichiren Daishonin, “Winter Always Turns to Spring,” *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 536



How do We Respond When Obstacles Appear?

“There is definitely something extraordinary in . . . the way in which summer, autumn, winter, and spring give way to each other. Something uncommon also occurs when an ordinary person attains Buddhahood. At such a time, the three obstacles and four devils will invariably appear, and the wise will rejoice while the foolish will retreat.”

- Nichiren Daishonin, “The Three Obstacles and Four Devils,” WND-1, 637



Brief Experience in Faith



“Although I and my disciples may encounter various difficulties, if we do not harbor doubts in our hearts, we will as a matter of course attain Buddhahood.”

- Nichiren Daishonin, “The Opening of the Eyes,” WND-1, 283

Maintaining Faith Through Chanting

“There may be times when we give in to self-defeat and . . . we begin to feel anxious or fearful. But the important thing is to continue chanting, no matter what. Whether our prayers are answered right away or not, we must keep chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, without harboring any doubts. Those who maintain such faith will eventually attain the supreme path and highest pinnacle of value and savor the conviction that everything unfolded in the very best and most meaningful way.”

- Daisaku Ikeda, *The Wisdom for Creating Happiness and Peace: Part 1*, p. 65

Determining to Win Right Now

“We can build anything with treasures of the heart. Adversity is a magnificent opportunity for each of us to demonstrate the greatness of our Buddhist faith and practice. Whether we win or lose is determined from now. All that matters is winning in the end. And our Buddhist practice ensures that we can win.”

- Daisaku Ikeda, *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 25, p. 74



Discussion Questions

1. What is something you are challenging to overcome right now?
2. Can you share an experience of transforming “winter into spring?”
3. How can the *A-B-C Campaign* of abundant daimoku, Buddhist study and connecting life-to-life help provide hope during trying times?

Note: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SGI-USA initiated the A-B-C Campaign. A: Abundant daimoku; B: Buddhist study; C: Connect life to life with members, guests and family (using the phone or video conferencing).

April 2020 District Discussion Meeting Presentation Notes

Theme: "Winter Always Turns to Spring"

Slide 1:

- Welcome and thank you for joining today's meeting!!
- The theme for today's discussion is "Winter Always Turns to Spring!"

Slide 2:

- To start off, I would like to read this passage from SGI President Ikeda
- "Over the course of our lives, we are bound to face all kinds of adversity, not only natural disasters but things like bankruptcy, unemployment, illness, accidents and the deaths of loved ones . . . The question, then, is, How do we remain unbeaten by these trials and adorn our lives with victory? Buddhism teaches the concept of transforming poison into medicine. According to this principle, we can change even the worst circumstances into benefit and happiness through faith. We need to be utterly confident of this."
- Buddhism teaches that no matter what poisons we may be facing, we undoubtedly have the capability to transform it into the medicine of hope and courage.

Slide 3:

- It is safe to assume that most or all of us have been affected by the recent events that have occurred due to the coronavirus pandemic we are experiencing.
- Let's use this time to share just one way this pandemic has affected our lives.

** (please allow a few minutes for people to share) **

Slide 4:

- Thank you, everyone, for sharing so honestly about how this pandemic is affecting your life.
- Buddhism teaches us that Winter Always Turns to Spring!
- Nichiren Daishonin writes: "Those who believe in the Lotus Sutra are as if in winter, but winter always turns to spring. Never, from ancient times on, has anyone seen or heard of winter turning back to autumn. Nor have we ever heard of a believer in the Lotus Sutra who turned into an ordinary person."

Slide 5:

- Nichiren writes: “There is definitely something extraordinary in . . . the way in which summer, autumn, winter, and spring give way to each other. Something uncommon also occurs when an ordinary person attains Buddhahood. At such a time, the three obstacles and four devils will invariably appear, and the wise will rejoice while the foolish will retreat.”
- All over the world, SGI organizations have been making huge strides to celebrate this historic Year of Advancement and Capable People.
- We, the SGI-USA, ourselves are creating tremendous momentum introducing many youth to this organization and encouraging those around us and ourselves to live to our fullest potential.
- Nichiren Daishonin is teaching us here that, when carrying out our Buddhist practice, we will always experience the resistance from devilish functions.
- We can interpret all the obstacles we are facing now as signs that we are on our path to attaining Buddhahood—it all depends on how we respond to our current obstacles now.

Slide 6:

- (optional slide) please give a brief, 1-2 min experience related to this topic.

Slide 7:

- Nichiren writes: “Although I and my disciples may encounter various difficulties, if we do not harbor doubts in our hearts, we will as a matter of course attain Buddhahood.”
- One way to ensure we can advance at this time, is not to harbor (in other words, keep or hold onto them – it’s natural to feel doubts throughout our lives, especially in times of difficulty, but the Daishonin urges us not to harbor them).

Slide 8:

- What can we do to combat these negative thoughts or doubts when they do arise? We can chant Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo!!
- President Ikeda says: “There may be times when we give in to self-defeat and . . . we begin to feel anxious or fearful. But the important thing is to continue chanting, no matter what. Whether our prayers are answered right away or not, we must keep chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, without harboring any doubts. Those who maintain such faith will eventually attain the supreme path and highest pinnacle of value and savor the conviction that everything unfolded in the very best and most meaningful way.”

Slide 9:

- We can decide right now that we will be victorious no matter the obstacles that lie in front of us!
- President Ikeda says: “We can build anything with treasures of the heart. Adversity is a magnificent opportunity for each of us to demonstrate the greatness of our Buddhist faith and practice. Whether we win or lose is determined from now. All that matters is winning in the end. And our Buddhist practice ensures that we can win.”

Slide 10:

- Now let’s discuss!! (Feel free to utilize the zoom breakout rooms as a tool for small group discussion)
- Please use these questions as a starting point.