



How to Have a Breakthrough Practice

SGI-USA September 2020 Discussion Meeting

Key Points

- 1. A breakthrough practice begins with a determination, then prayer and action based on a vow for kosen-rufu.**
- 2. A crucial element to having a breakthrough is practicing for the happiness of both oneself and others.**

Breaking Through an Impasse

In the long course of our lives, we may occasionally feel like giving up our faith and just having a good time, free from all responsibility. Or we may become ill or be plunged into grief by the death of a loved one. This is our struggle against the hindrances of earthly desires, illness and death.

Buddhism's greatest significance lies in overcoming such impasses by chanting daimoku, attaining a state of absolute happiness and realizing the most meaningful of lives. Therefore, whenever you encounter a difficulty, I hope you will view it as a struggle against an impasse, as a battle against obstacles and, resolving that now is the time to win, boldly forge your path in life as you challenge your destiny head on."

- Ikeda Sensei, *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 2, p. 87

Breaking Through With Prayer Based on a Vow

Prayer in Nichiren Buddhism means to chant daimoku Nam-myoho-renge-kyo based on a pledge or vow. At its very core, this vow is to attain kosen-rufu. It means chanting resolutely with the determination: “I will realize kosen-rufu in [my environment]. Therefore, I will show magnificent actual proof in my work. Please enable me to somehow bring forth my greatest potential.” This is what our prayer should be like.

- Sensei, July 21, 2017, *World Tribune*, p. 6



Breaking Through by Sharing Buddhism



Founding Soka Gakkai President Tsunesaburo Makiguchi said: “While there is no dispute about the fact that someone who believes [in the Mystic Law] will have their prayers answered and realize benefit, this alone does not constitute bodhisattva practice. There is no such thing as a self-centered Buddha who simply accumulates personal benefit and does not work for the well-being of others. Unless we carry out bodhisattva practice, we cannot attain Buddhahood. Working for the welfare of others with the heart of a parent is the mark of both the true believer and the true practitioner.”

- Sensei, June 2019 *Living Buddhism*, p. 50

Breaking Through by Sharing Buddhism

Shakubuku, an act of supreme compassion, is a lion's roar directed toward the goal of reviving the goodness in people's hearts and bringing dynamic vitality and creativity to society for the benefit of all. It is a spiritual struggle of the loftiest dimension, one that seeks to conquer devilish functions, break through darkness and delusion, and actualize true, lasting happiness for humankind. And it is powered by a fighting spirit that resembles that of a fearless lion king.

This struggle enables us to forge an indestructible, diamond-like state of life.

- Sensei, *The Opening of the Eyes: SGI President Ikeda's Lecture Series*, p. 160

Breaking Through by Sharing Our Hope-Filled Publications

The [SGI publications have] the incredibly important mission of transmitting the wisdom for changing poison into medicine and creating value. ...

The paper brings news of the courageous struggles and selfless contributions to society of members throughout Japan and across the globe, serving as an inspiration for all who are fighting their hardest against adversity. It embodies the firm resolve of dauntless world citizens who are always thinking about how to uplift and bring joy to others.

This is synonymous with the Buddha's constant wish to enable people to become wise and happy, and to live in peace.



Facing Our Obstacles Head-on With All Our Might



To avoid the kind of outwardly seeking, half-hearted prayer that leads us to deadlock, it's important to strenuously exert ourselves to chant the daimoku [Nam-myoho-renge-kyo] of a Bodhisattva of the Earth, full of responsibility, determination and mission for the sake of kosen-rufu and the happiness of others, while “praying as earnestly as though to produce fire from damp wood, or to obtain water from parched ground” (“Rebuking Slander of the Law,” WND-1, 444).

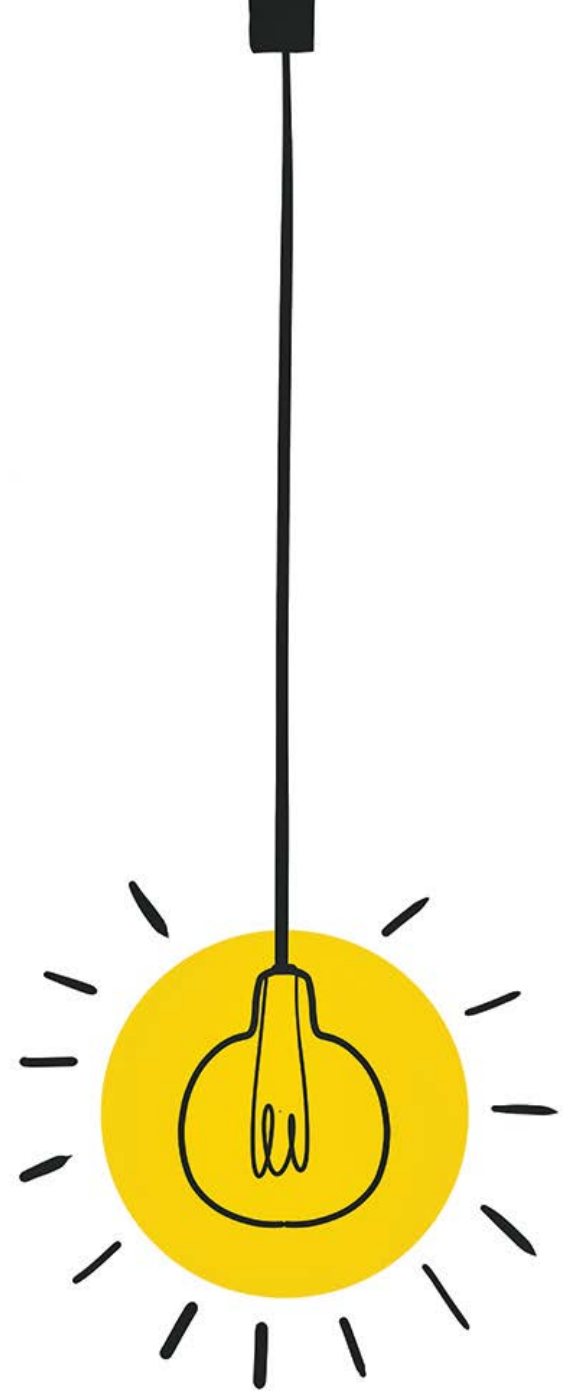
- July 21, 2017 *World Tribune*, p. 7

Brief Experience in Faith

Discussion Questions

1. Can you share a brief experience of having a breakthrough based on Buddhist practice?
2. How can you and others benefit from sharing Buddhism and our SGI-USA publications?
3. Who in your life could benefit from learning about Buddhism or through studying the SGI-USA publications?

*Note: The *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism* are the SGI-USA's publications.



September 2020 Discussion Meeting Presentation Notes

Theme: "How to Have a Breakthrough Practice"

Slide 1:

- Thank you all for joining today's discussion meeting!
- The theme for today's discussion is "How to Have a Breakthrough Practice!"
- I think it is safe to assume that all of us, whether today is our first Buddhist meeting or we have been practicing our entire lives, have experienced a deadlock in our life.
- This presentation will talk about the Buddhist perspective on how we can overcome an impasse in our life.
- Now, lets get started!

Slide 2:

- Today's presentation has 2 key points!
- They are:
 1. A breakthrough practice begins with a determination, then prayer and action based on a vow for kosen-rufu.
 2. A crucial element to having a breakthrough is practicing for the happiness of both oneself and others.

Slide 3:

- Ikeda Sensei says that every difficulty we face is a chance for us to grow, to win!
- He says: "In the long course of our lives, we may occasionally feel like giving up our faith and just having a good time, free from all responsibility. Or we may become ill or be plunged into grief by the death of a loved one. This is our struggle against the hindrances of earthly desires, illness and death.
- "Buddhism's greatest significance lies in overcoming such impasses by chanting daimoku, attaining a state of absolute happiness and realizing the most meaningful of lives. Therefore, whenever you encounter a difficulty, I hope you will view it as a struggle against an impasse, as a battle against obstacles and, resolving that now is the time to win, boldly forge your path in life as you challenge your destiny head on."

Slide 4:

- In October 1960, Sensei spoke with a Brazilian farmer whose crops had failed, putting him into debt without a solution in sight. He urged the farmer to exercise his ingenuity and make twice as much effort as anyone else, while basing his prayer on a pledge.
- “Prayer in Nichiren Buddhism means to chant daimoku Nam-myoho-renge-kyo based on a pledge or vow. At its very core, this vow is to attain kosen-rufu. It means chanting resolutely with the determination: ‘I will realize kosen-rufu in Brazil. Therefore, I will show magnificent actual proof in my work. Please enable me to somehow bring forth my greatest potential.’ This is what our prayer should be like.”
- Our vow is the same as the Buddha’s vow. The Buddha strives for the happiness of all humanity. On an individual level, to share in this same vow ultimately looks like becoming happy ourselves based on our Buddhist practice and sharing this Buddhism with others so that they can do the same.

Slide 5:

- Sharing this Buddhism with others not only allows us to overcome our lesser selves and bring forth the Buddha’s compassion in our own lives to help others, but it is the quickest way to transform our own karma.
- Sensei explains: Founding Soka Gakkai President Tsunesaburo Makiguchi said: “While there is no dispute about the fact that someone who believes [in the Mystic Law] will have their prayers answered and realize benefit, this alone does not constitute bodhisattva practice. There is no such thing as a self-centered Buddha who simply accumulates personal benefit and does not work for the well-being of others. Unless we carry out bodhisattva practice, we cannot attain Buddhahood. Working for the welfare of others with the heart of a parent is the mark of both the true believer and the true practitioner.”

Slide 6:

- Continuing on the significance of shakubuku, Sensei says: “Shakubuku, an act of supreme compassion, is a lion’s roar directed toward the goal of reviving the goodness in people’s hearts and bringing dynamic vitality and creativity to society for the benefit of all. It is a spiritual struggle of the loftiest dimension, one that seeks to conquer devilish functions, break through darkness and delusion, and actualize true, lasting happiness for humankind. And it is powered by a fighting spirit that resembles that of a fearless lion king.
- “This struggle enables us to forge an indestructible, diamond-like state of life.”

Slide 7:

- Nichiren Daishonin says: “It is through the use of words and letters that the Buddha saves living beings” (“Letter to Renjo,” WND-2, 6).

- Based on this spirit, by sharing our publications, we can connect people to encouraging messages of hope and compassion based on the heart and spirit of the Buddha. We can connect people to the pulse of kosen-rufu. This compassionate action to connect people to Buddhism in this way, is a great cause for breaking through in our own lives.
- “The [SGI publications have] the incredibly important mission of transmitting the wisdom for changing poison into medicine and creating value. ...
- “The paper brings news of the courageous struggles and selfless contributions to society of members throughout Japan and across the globe, serving as an inspiration for all who are fighting their hardest against adversity. It embodies the firm resolve of dauntless world citizens who are always thinking about how to uplift and bring joy to others.
- “This is synonymous with the Buddha’s constant wish to enable people to become wise and happy, and to live in peace.”

Slide 8:

- Ultimately, everything comes down to our own powerful determination and our all-out efforts to create victories in our lives.
- “To avoid the kind of outwardly seeking, half-hearted prayer that leads us to deadlock, it’s important to strenuously exert ourselves to chant the daimoku [Nam-myoho-renge-kyo] of a Bodhisattva of the Earth, full of responsibility, determination and mission for the sake of kosen-rufu and the happiness of others, while ‘praying as earnestly as though to produce fire from damp wood, or to obtain water from parched ground’”

Slide 9:

** (optional slide) please share a brief experience related to this topic**

Slide 10:

- Thank you all for listening to this presentation!
- Now it is time to discuss! (feel free to utilize Zoom breakout rooms)

Use these questions as a starting point