



1. REFRAIN from eating meals, as an SGI Zoom meeting constitutes a faith activity.



2. TURN CAMERA ON DURING ACTIVITIES which involve discussion and engagement.



3. MUTE WHEN NOT SPEAKING.



4. OTHER DISTRACTIVE BEHAVIORS: COOKING/CLEANING



# Changing Poison Into Medicine

SGI-USA February 2021 Discussion Meeting



# Changing Poison Into Medicine:

The principle that earthly desires and suffering can be transformed into benefit and enlightenment by virtue of the power of the Law.

- Soka Gakkai Buddhist Dictionary, [nichirenlibrary.org](http://nichirenlibrary.org)



# Key Points



1. When facing adversity, it is important to determine that your victory starts from this moment.
2. Maintaining a fighting spirit and challenging ourselves to overcome our obstacles keeps us youthful and leads to a happy life.
3. By mustering our faith and chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we can confidently change all poison into medicine.

# Striving Together Through All Adversity

The spirit that characterized [Founding Soka Gakkai President Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's] momentous struggle truly resonates with Nichiren Daishonin's words "The greater the hardships befalling him, the greater the delight he feels, because of his strong faith" ("A Ship to Cross the Sea of Suffering," *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 33).

[Mr. Makiguchi] laid down his life, leaving an example of the "vast heart" of Soka for his disciples and successors. This "vast heart" is the great, invincible spirit to keep striving together with the Mystic Law through even the bitterest adversity to transform all poison into medicine and freely create value with confidence, strength, wisdom and optimism.

- Ikeda Sensei, Nov. 20 *World Tribune*, p. 2



**What kinds of “poisons” or challenges  
are you currently experiencing?**

# Your Victory Starts From This Moment



The important thing is what you do from now. Are you going to be discouraged and allow yourselves to fall into despair? Or will you regard this as an opportunity to show actual proof of our faith and rise up again courageously, determined not to be beaten? Your inner resolve is what decides your happiness or unhappiness.

- Sensei, *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 16, p. 201

# Building a Happy Life Through Challenging Our Obstacles

A spirit of challenge enables us to tap the wellspring of vibrant life force within, causing us to feel youthful and revitalized. ... By struggling vigorously against and overcoming all kinds of difficulties, we can build a happy life.

- Sensei, NHR-18, 186





# Muster Your Faith

**Misfortune will change into fortune. Muster your faith, and pray to this Gohonzon. Then what is there that cannot be achieved?**

- Nichiren Daishonin, "Reply to Kyo'o," WND-1, 412

# **Brief Experience in Faith**

# Using Obstacles as an Impetus for Victory

Things don't always proceed smoothly—in fact, unexpected obstacles are almost certain to arise in any undertaking. That is precisely the time, however, to summon forth wisdom and strive tenaciously to find a solution. In doing so, a new, even better way forward is likely to open. This also accords with the Buddhist principle of changing poison into medicine. By challenging trials and difficulties, using them as an impetus instead of being defeated by them, we can achieve fresh growth and victory.

- Sensei, June 2015 *Living Buddhism*, p. 46

# Discussion Questions

1. Have you been able to change poison into medicine using your Buddhist practice?
2. How can changing poison into medicine provide hope for ourselves and those around us?
3. What actions can we take to face our obstacles courageously?



## SGI-USA February 2021 Discussion Meeting Notes

Theme: "Changing Poison Into Medicine"

### Slide 1:

**\*\*This slide is NOT part of the discussion meeting presentation. This slide is to outline basic Zoom etiquette. This slide can be shown at the beginning of a discussion meeting as members/guests join the meeting. The presentation starts from slide 2.**

### Slide 2:

- Welcome and thank you all for joining today's discussion meeting!
- Today's topic is "Changing Poison Into Medicine"
- Let's get started!

### Slide 3:

- Before we get into today's key points, let's define the Buddhist concept of "Changing Poison Into Medicine."
- In the Soka Gakkai Buddhist Dictionary, it is defined as: **The principle that earthly desires and suffering can be transformed into benefit and enlightenment by virtue of the power of the Law.**
- This means that through faith, we can transform any suffering or challenge into a source of value, benefit and joy.

### Slide 4:

- We have 3 key points for today!
- They are:
- **1) When facing adversity, it is important to determine that your victory starts from this moment.**
- **2) Maintaining a fighting spirit and challenging ourselves to overcome our obstacles keeps us youthful and leads to a happy life.**
- **3) By mustering our faith and chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we can confidently change all poison into medicine.**

### Slide 5:

- Our founding Soka Gakkai President Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's was an example of someone who transformed all poison into medicine.
- Ikeda Sensei says:
- **The spirit that characterized [Founding Soka Gakkai President Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's] momentous struggle truly resonates with Nichiren Daishonin's words "The greater the hardships befalling him, the greater the delight he feels, because of his strong faith" ("A Ship to Cross the Sea of Suffering," *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 33).**
- **[Mr. Makiguchi] laid down his life, leaving an example of the "vast heart" of Soka for his disciples and successors. This "vast heart" is the great, invincible spirit to keep striving together with the Mystic Law through even the bitterest adversity to transform all poison into medicine and freely create value with confidence, strength, wisdom and optimism.**

#### Slide 6:

- I'm sure we are all challenging different aspects of our lives. Please raise your hand if you are currently experiencing "poisons" or challenges in the following areas of life:
  - Family / relationships
  - Finances
  - Work / school
  - Self-confidence
  - (Presenter can add more areas in life where people may face adversity)
- Thank you for being so honest and open about the struggles we are facing now.
- Let's learn from Sensei, how we can overcome these poisons!

#### Slide 7:

- Sensei says that we should decide to be victorious. This is the first point. Your victory starts from this moment.
- Sensei says: **The important thing is what you do from now. Are you going to be discouraged and allow yourselves to fall into despair?**
- **Or will you regard this as an opportunity to show actual proof of our faith and rise up again courageously, determined not to be beaten? Your inner resolve is what decides your happiness or unhappiness.**

#### Slide 8:

- Our second key point today is that we can build a happy life through challenging our obstacles.
- Elaborating on this, Sensei says: **A spirit of challenge enables us to tap the wellspring of vibrant life force within, causing us to feel youthful and revitalized. ... By struggling vigorously against and overcoming all kinds of difficulties, we can build a happy life.**
- Without challenges, we would be unable to tap into the wellspring of potential that lies within.
- Sensei also recalled second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda's guidance to a member who was struggling with various problems: **"Rejoice when you encounter hardships. This is the time to demonstrate the power of faith. It's an opportunity to change your karma. Buddhism teaches the infallible Law of 'changing poison into medicine.' You can regain any losses tenfold or a hundred fold in the form of great benefit."** (April 9, 2010, *World Tribune*)

#### Slide 9:

- Our last key point is that through chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and mustering our faith we can transform misfortune into fortune.
- In the goshō, "Reply to Kyo'o," Nichiren Daishonin writes:
- **Misfortune will change into fortune. Muster your faith, and pray to this Gohonzon. Then what is there that cannot be achieved?**

#### Slide 10:

\*\* (Optional slide, please provide a brief experience related to this topic)

#### Slide 11:

- In conclusion, by challenging and overcoming our obstacles, a new, better way forward opens up before us.
- **Things don't always proceed smoothly—in fact, unexpected obstacles are almost certain to arise in any undertaking. That is precisely the time, however, to summon forth wisdom and strive tenaciously to find a solution. In doing so, a new, even better way forward is likely to open. This also accords with the Buddhist principle of changing poison into medicine. By challenging trials and difficulties, using them as an impetus instead of being defeated by them, we can achieve fresh growth and victory.**
- This important concept is the basis of our faith as Nichiren Buddhists. This year, let's do our best to not just get by, but open even greater paths forward toward absolute victory by transforming all poison in to medicine!

**Slide 12:**

- Now, let's discuss!!
- (Please feel free to utilize the Zoom breakout rooms)
- (Use these questions as a starting point)