

Chant Daimoku That Shakes the Universe

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Every time I open my altar to chant in front of Gohonzon, in my mind I make sure that I also open up my Buddhahood. My mind's eye sees that the door is being opened for me to enter into the world of Buddha. By consciously taking such an initiative, I put myself right in the position of being able to communicate freely with Gohonzon. My life fuses with Gohonzon and my life condition begins to correspond with Nichiren Daishonin's.

President Ikeda likens the practice of gongyo each day to a "spiritual workout". He also says:

"Gongyo and daimoku are a ceremony in which our lives commune with the universe. During gongyo, through our faith in the Gohonzon, we vigorously infuse the microcosm of our individual existence with the life force of the macrocosm, of the entire universe. If we do this regularly each morning and evening, our life force is strengthened."

-- Faith into Action, p. 120

In addition to my opening ritual, I put his guidance into action during my chanting. My mind constantly works on expanding my life to permeate the entire universe and to encompass it as well. It feels abstract but vivid. Now, with all the preparation, I am in the highest life condition armed with easy access to the world of Buddha. And I am ready to experience one more time, the exciting and rewarding fun part of my daily chanting.

"If you exert a hundred million eons of effort in a single moment of life, the three enlightened properties of the Buddha will appear within you at each moment. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo means just such diligent practice." In Gosho Zenshu p. 790, Nichiren Daishonin gave this guidance. Accordingly, I begin with exerting the combined efforts that I could possibly put forth throughout a hundred million eons of my life into every daimoku when I chant. At the same time, I perceive that each Nam-myoho-renge-kyo I chant inherently contains the result of all such tremendous efforts. Along with my earnest chanting, I keep on receiving its immeasurable power and benefits to nourish and adorn my life. When my mind works out this way, I simply don't want to stop chanting.

In his writing "The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon" (WND p. 832), Nichiren Daishonin thus introduced Gohonzon:

"Without exception, all these Buddhas, bodhisattvas, great sages, and, in general, all the various beings of the two worlds and the eight groups who appear in the 'Introduction' chapter of the Lotus Sutra dwell in this Gohonzon. Illuminated by the light of the five characters of the Mystic Law, they display the dignified attributes that they inherently possess."

Doesn't it mean that dwelling in Gohonzon are hundreds of millions of Buddhas throughout the three existences and the ten directions?

While my life condition is being elevated to the world of Buddha I cannot but feel that I am their peer. It is reasonable, therefore, that through my sincere daimoku, I could summon forth all of their protection, wisdom and strength, while working toward my goals. Besides, hadn't they all vowed to protect and help the Bodhisattvas of the Earth like myself?

Thinking of this, I can't stop my ultimate optimism and joy about the actualisation of my prayer. Thus the increasing intensity and profoundness of my daimoku just keep on accelerating.

President Ikeda says that the air around us is filled with radio waves of various frequencies. While these are invisible, a television set can collect them and turn them into visible images. Knowing this, I would send my prayer and my whole being, together with my daimoku to penetrate the three thousand worlds; throughout the three existences into all beings, sentient and insentient. I make my daimoku rain-shower the entire universe as well as the trillions of my body cells. Millions of daimoku are being chanted by the SGI members at any given moment around the world. I want to make sure that the quality of mine ranks among the top 50 percent. I inject my single-minded resolve and all my positive energy, commanding daimoku to work diligently

toward my goals, without a moment's rest.

There is no doubt that my daimoku could reach and travel everywhere. In this case, how can it miss the targets I set forth?

I tried to chant with penetrating determination (ichinen), as sharp as a mighty sword, with the force like the roar of the lion, hoping to shake, move and touch the universe. Without having encountered a real devastating problem, it is never easy for me to chant with the sense of extreme urgency of a life-and-death situation. I realize that only through such a sense of extreme urgency can I experience the kind of profound daimoku that moves heaven and earth. But I would, not in eons, ever want to exchange my comfort and health for the experience although I really need to know what it is like and how to chant like that.

Four years ago, I learned from TV news that four college students were buried under an avalanche. Three were rescued after three hours, but one died. Keeping the tragedy in mind, during my chanting, I started to simulate the accident. I imagined myself being trapped deep inside the thick snow. I was not sure whether any one had noticed where I was when avalanche occurred. I had very limited air and could keep myself from being frozen to death for only a short time. What could I do to get out of it before it was too late? It was now or never.

In thinking of this, I finally could chant daimoku that melted the snow in seconds. I was thrilled by the discovery. From then on I knew, without having to personally face the circumstance, that I could always do simulations to experiment how to derive the ideal results from any situation. How convenient!

Teachings and guidance of eternal value are bountiful in our practice of faith. Being limited by my English language ability, I can't read through the vast volume of the publications, not even a tiny portion, regarding this Buddhism. To make up for this weak point, no matter how little I come across, I focus on personifying the black ink on white paper. Namely, I give it a life through studying, understanding, absorbing and applying to obtain results. Chanting is always the perfect tool and setting for me to accomplish such a wonder:

"A mind now clouded by the illusions of the innate darkness of life is like a tarnished mirror, but when polished, it is sure to become like a clear mirror, reflecting the essential nature of phenomena and the true aspect of reality. Arouse deep faith, and diligently polish your mirror day and night. How should you polish it? Only by chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo." -- Nichiren Daishonin on his writing "On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime" (WND p. 4)

Based on this particular teaching, I look at my life as a tarnished mirror. My mind, heart and mouth continuously produce the ultimate detergent-daimoku. I would hold a soft cloth polishing the mirror untiringly along with each and every Nam-myoho-enge-kyo I chant out. Eventually, the mirror becomes so crystal clear that I can perceive from it the real aspect of all phenomena. My life also turns out to be sparkling clean as the result of changing poison into medicine. The workout of the process doesn't take long. But the reward is amazing.

According to the simultaneity of cause and effect, the moment I play the image and act it out in my mind, its effect already exists. Hence, the ever-increasing wisdom of always looking for the underlying truth to best solve any situation becomes an automatic pilot to steer my life. It works like a charm. Moreover, I am so relieved and relaxed to enjoy the feeling of having an untainted and pure life, no guilt, sorrow, shame nor filth, no matter how terrible and ugly it had been before.

In terms of chanting daimoku, I am rather scrupulous. Since my plan is to invest a big chunk of my life exercising it, I had better make sure I am on the right track. In the beginning of my practice, chanting for fifteen minutes felt like forever. Later on, due to the need to fulfill my impossible goal, I began to chant four to five hours. Gradually, I averaged to two hours daily, one twelfth of a day.

One day it occurred to me that if I chanted two hours a day, it meant that within twelve months, I would have been chanting non-stop for 24 hours a day and seven days a week for the entire month. The scale of the task was very scary. It was simply too big to fathom. Luckily, I was able to figure out a way to justify this brave behaviour of mine-- to generate from it the value equivalent or much greater than the efforts.

As a junior in this Buddhist practice, if I wish not to fall too much behind, I have to have a correct jumpstart to derive solid results without delay. Therefore, besides attending SGI discussion meetings, studying the SGI publications and seeking help from seniors in faith in the SGI organization, I heavily depend on my pure faith to lead my way. The documented teachings are one of my guideposts.

Accordingly, I chant with strong determination, patience, persistence and optimism. It was natural that chanting came first when I really wished to overcome a challenge. To this day, chanting is always my first priority no matter what. I have also learned from the Gosho what and how to chant. I chant with sincere apology, appreciation and joy. I also chant to praise the Lotus Sutra a lot. Literally, I plan to leave nothing unturned. My attitude to fathom different aspects of daimoku obviously contributes to my ever-springing benefits. Whenever I read the Gosho, those teachings just jump into my eyes to empower the way how I practice. Once I catch them, I infuse them in my life:

"As you crave food when hungry, seek water when thirsty... so should you put your faith in the Lotus Sutra." (WND p.965)

"Yet even a grave offense can be eradicated if one repents of it sincerely." (WND p. 662)

"Those who wish to repay their debt to the Buddha must first repay the debt they owe to the Law." (WND p. 44)

"Therefore, when you chant the daimoku of this sutra, you should be aware that it is a more joyful thing than for one who was born blind to gain sight and see one's father and mother." (WND p. 143)

"The more one praises the blessings of the Lotus Sutra, the more one's own blessings will increase. Bear in mind that the twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra contain only a few passages elucidating the truth, but a great many words of praise." (WND p. 673)

This essay summarizes various "spiritual workouts" that I implement into my chanting throughout my thirteen years of practice. As a common mortal, my mind wonders a lot. I can't always concentrate totally while chanting. Neither can I exercise all of the workouts at one time. I have come to notice, however that, whenever I am deadly serious, chanting about my goal of fulfilling a certain mission, that I recognize and take on, the application of any single one of them works wonders.