

Blessing of the Practice in a Life Threatening Situation

As you know, I have been experiencing some challenges getting my vlog out on the website. This is because, in the last six weeks, I have faced some life-threatening breathing challenges and hospitalizations. In this vlog today, I want to share with you how our practice has supported and helped me in dealing with this stage of life.

Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is a Cluster of Blessings

Daisaku Ikeda says in *The Ultimate Heritage of the Law of Life* that:

“The five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo are...the cluster of blessings brought by the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, disciples of the Buddha in his true identity.” P. 101

He also says:

“The essence of the compassionate workings of the universe itself are the essence of the functions of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.”

Here are some of the blessings which have shown up in my life.

Some of the Blessings

When I had an abrupt escalation of breathing problems, and I almost couldn't breathe at all, I discovered to my great surprise, that I wasn't frightened. Instead there was a relaxation and acceptance of whatever was going to come.

I know I can rely on the practice to bring me what I need, whether it is the best doctors or the information needed to rebuild my health.

One of the blessings is knowing that life is truly eternal. About three years ago I was reading the *Ultimate Heritage of the Law of Life*, when my awareness unexpectedly expanded and I experienced the eternity of my life. It established for me without doubt that leaving this life is not the end but rather the beginning of another experience in existence.

This completely changed how I viewed

the third stage of life. Rather than seeing it as a time of decline, I see it as a launching pad just as every other stage of my life has been. So, for me, the last step in this life, is the first step into the new life coming.

For the last 15 years I have used this third stage of life to bring the different parts of my life together and to bring them to completion, as I prepare for my next life in my work. I have also used this time to handle anything which might result in regrets, so there will be no regret when I leave this life. I reflect often on what an adventure this life has been and I am grateful for it.

Another blessing of the practice is that it prepares us how to die.

“For one who summons up one's faith and chants Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the profound insight that now is the last moment of one's life, the sutra proclaims; “When the lives of these

persons come to an end, they will be received into the hands of a thousand Buddhas, who will free them from all fear and keep them from falling into the evil paths of existence.” How can we possibly hold back our tears at the inexpressible joy of knowing that...as many as a thousand Buddhas will come to greet us with open arms! (The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life), WND-1, 216-17

What that means to me is that in facing death, I can give myself up to Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and relax, knowing that all is taken care of. Here are some of the statements from Nichiren to his followers.

“Be resolved to summon forth the great power of faith and change Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the prayer that your faith will be steadfast and correct at the moment of death. Never seek any other way to inherit and ultimate Law of life and death and manifest it in your life.” WND, 218

I feel confident that we are protected when we die. Nichiren promises us that we will be guided after death.

“Nam myoho-renge-kyo will be your staff to take you safely over the mountains of death. The Buddhas Shakyamuni and Many Treasures, as well as the four bodhisattvas headed by Superior Practices will lead you by the hand on your journey.....According to the Lotus Sutra, Nichiren is the guide who knows the passes and gorges along the way. Devote yourself single-mindedly to faith with the aim of reaching Eagle Peak. WND, p. 451

Our Buddhist Community

Another kind of blessing has been our Buddhist community. There are others in our age group who are having major health issues and those of us who are dealing with these things are able to discuss our feelings. We are not in denial and trying to pretend that death isn't going to happen to us. We can all share what is happening. This is so supportive and confirming and very different from being all alone, with people who don't want to discuss what is happening.

We also have the wonderful support of others who come to chant with us and for us.

IN SUMMARY:

Today we talked about some of the blessings I have found from our Buddhist practice, facing life threatening health issues. Thank you for letting me share my experience.

Now I want to hear from you. I departed from the usual kind of discussion I have been having in these vlogs. How did you feel about that? I hope you will let me know what you are thinking.

And, I 'll see you in two weeks.

