

What is Buddhist Prayer?

In western culture prayers are directed to an external being. Buddhist prayer does not rely on an external power and if you are relying on that you are not practicing Buddhism. Buddhist prayer is power residing within you in your Buddha nature.

Nichiren Buddhism says that our prayer evokes power from within ourselves (internal) and in our environment (external) which enables us to alter and direct the course of our lives.

Faith powers results. So what does having faith mean? Faith means having a belief in the invisible realm, a deep conviction and expectation that what you are chanting for will happen. Nichiren says that this is a key component for realizing desires and goals. He says “Spur yourself to muster the power of faith.” WND 1, 1001

Faith has power and the greater your conviction that your prayers will be answered, the more powerfully the Mystic Law responds to your prayers.

Because of this it's important that if you are having doubts you either get guidance or study until those doubts are resolved.

Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is a law of life. There are invisible laws like the law of electricity and Buddhism has uncovered the fundamental law of life. but we have to understand that we are one with it in the depths of our lives.

President Toda used to say

“You should resolve, ‘I am Myoho-Renge-Kyo.’ for years I was not sure what that really mean't. Until I read that it was life itself. And we are definitely one with that. Life looks out through our eyes and breathes us. It is so close to us that we can't even see it. That life created the universe and everything that we see in it our day to day

reality. We are one with that universal life that created everything, that has all the answers to any questions we might ask and the solutions to any problem. When we maintain deep faith based on the foundation that “I am Nam-myoho-renge-kyo one with that power, we can take on any problem with confidence.

Prayer allows us to fuse with that universal life. Think of it as gears meshing – when a small gear locks its cogs with a big gear, enormous force is created. When we synchronize our individual life with the macrocosm of universal life we tap unlimited power and can overcome any problem in life. That synchronization occurs when we chant and do Gongyo each day.

Jose Toda says that the important thing is to live out our lives based on and completely in sync with the Law. The Mystic Law is the source of all change. That’s why when we chant the Mystic Law, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we activate our inherent enlightened nature and align ourselves with the rhythm of the Mystic Law of the Universe. Then the universal forces come to support us.

When we pray we have opened up a dialogue with the universe. it is a struggle to expand our lives. It is not a feeble consolation but a powerful unyielding conviction.

Through prayer we set in motion a process of summoning the Buddha nature from within our lives and activating the great power of the universe . Our inner resolve, our determination, is key.

Daisaku Ikeda says “The power of inner determination is limitless. In identical circumstances people can achieve completely different results and lead different lives based upon their life state and determination.” Prayer is a vow to achieve our goals no matter what.

Prayer is also the courage to persevere. It is the struggle to overcome our own weakness and lack of confidence in ourselves. It is the act of impressing in the very depths of our being, the conviction that we can

change the situation without fail. Prayer is the way to destroy all fear. it is the way to banish sorrow, the way to light a torch of hope. It is the revolution that rewrites the scenario of our destiny. Believe in yourself and don't sell yourself short. Devaluing yourself is contrary to Buddhism, because it denigrates the Buddha state of being within you.”
Dec 3, 2004 World Tribune

Prayer is the source of our transformation. Again in the World Tribune 2006 “When our fundamental mindset changes, we ourselves change. And when we change the environment the world changes too. The source of this transformation is found nowhere but in a radical deepening of our own chanting of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. This sort of prayer to the gohonzon is completely different from that found in a dependent, supplicant faith. Prayer in Nichiren Buddhism is fundamentally a vow. It is a pledge or commitment to follow a chosen course of action; it is a declaration to challenge a clear objective.”

We are the locus of control.

Prayer leads to action

And as Daisaku Ikeda says in “Faith in to Action, “Prayer is the foundation but if we fail to make concrete efforts, no matter how much daimoku we chant, our prayers won't be answered. Prayer must lead to action.

What Doesn't work

If you aren't getting results you might want to review the following:

Are you praying with a faith that expects benefits to appear without making any personal effort?

Have you abandoned all striving and challenge out of fear?

Do you have a passive faith, waiting for results from an outside source?

Do you chant without a clear focus or determination?

Do you expect results without doing your own personal transformation?

You have opened a dialogue with the universe. Are you listening to the response, little nudges to go one way or another or that knowing that a certain direction is right?

Are you taking action when you receive ideas or nudges?

Results of Prayer

When you chant with determination and a vow

Prayers may be invisible but if you pray steadfastly your prayers will effect clear results in your lives and surroundings over time. All prayers serve to propel you in the direction of happiness. Sometimes immediate prayers are answered, sometimes not, but when you look back later you will find that everything has turned out for the best.

As Jose Toda says, The Mystic Law is the 'highly effective medicine that relieves the sufferings of all people. the Lotus Sutra, p. 269 It is also the great storehouse that brings good fortune and happiness to all.

You may have great break throughs or you might have incremental steps of progress. But when you've practice for 20 years you will be absolutely amazed that what has happened in your life

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