

# Becoming a Buddha in this Lifetime

In the dictionary the word courage is described as the ability to face difficulties without being stopped by fear. Notice that it doesn't say not to be afraid; it says not to be stopped by fear. Problems can cause us to be afraid and to want to quit trying to be happy. Today many people have problems that can be scary. There are illnesses, there is a war and there are problems about money. Maybe you know someone who is having a difficult time right now. Maybe that someone is in your family. Maybe it's you.

You may have noticed that in Friends for Peace we often talk about problems, about not being afraid of them and about using them to help us grow. In many of the letters that Nichiren Daishonin wrote to his disciples, he gives them hope that they can change their problems into benefits. He understood that it isn't an easy thing to do. He also knew that to challenge our difficulties, even though we may be afraid, is the way for us to discover the strength that is inside us: our Buddhahood. That is our best and happiest life-condition. In "Letter to Misawa" Nichiren: "I Nichiren, have long been aware of all this and therefore know how difficult it is for an ordinary person... to become a Buddha in this lifetime." (The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin,, vol.1, p.895).

It doesn't matter who you are or even how nicely you behave, problems are a part of life; everybody has them. What matters is what we do with them. Do we get scared and pretend the problem doesn't exist? Do we whine, complain or expect someone else to solve the problem? Or, do we face whatever it is, chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and decide that we will win and use it like rocket fuel to make our lives blast forward?

I sure hope you choose the last one. That is the way to tackle and win over any negativity or darkness in our lives. And that is how we "become a Buddha in this lifetime."

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