

Discussion Topic November – Changing karma into mission

We could say that “changing karma into mission” is a modern-day expression of a principle illustrated in the Lotus Sutra known as “voluntarily assuming the appropriate karma.”

Buddhism teaches the principle of karma. “Karma” is the cumulative “effects” or results of all our actions or causes, good or bad, in past existences and in this life. While these effects may likewise be good or bad, many people tend to attribute suffering or losses they experience to “bad karma”—karma from bad causes they made in the past.

Nichiren Buddhism, while recognizing the causality behind karma, encourages us not to dwell on or be hindered by the past. At each moment we can bring out our limitless potential - our Buddhature.

The Lotus sutra tells of bodhisattvas who, though having made the causes to attain enlightenment, voluntarily delay doing so. They vow instead to be born into this world filled with suffering and evil, with their unique karma. They do so out of compassion to show others the power of the Mystic Law and, through their own example, the way to overcome suffering and become happy. So rather than lament our karma or regret our past causes, this story suggests that it’s more empowering to see our problems as something we voluntarily assume as fuel to bring out our full potential and fulfill our mission.

In other words, when we change our karma into mission, we transform our destiny through creating positive causes instead of negative causes. Those who change their karma into their mission have ‘voluntarily assumed the appropriate karma.’ Therefore, those who keep advancing, while regarding everything as part of their mission, proceed toward the goal.

It is usually because of our problems—our “bad karma”— that we earnestly chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, sincerely practice Buddhism and thus change our destiny on a fundamental level. When we live and overcome our struggles with the attitude that all of our challenges are opportunities for growth, we not only inspire others with similar challenges, we also gain an expansive and powerful state of life that nothing can destroy

1. Do you believe your karma is your mission?
2. Do you have an experience with changing your karma into mission?
Were you able to encourage others by doing so?