

# What have I done to deserve this?

## Same place again....

“Again, ufffff. How much longer? It’s always the same on this subject. He/she is a pain! It looks like there is no way out, no way to change this!”

These are the typical expressions that come up to our mind when negative things appear. These negative things come back to our lives for no apparent reason, as a “punishment” for having done shameful or insignificant acts in the past, or simply for some reason that we can’t understand at this moment.

If we assume our future cannot be modified, that we cannot do anything to change it, we are falling into a negative attitude that will only lead us to resignation or waiting for a stroke of luck. It’s so much so, that when we reach a great goal that fills us with satisfaction, or when we solve a personal issue, we can think that it has nothing to do with us, but

it has just been chance. Without realizing what we reached it as consequence of our actions, we think again that it was just chance.

An old Buddhist quote says, “If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as are shown in the present. And if you want to understand what results we will have in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present”. It reminds us the need to have a great sense of responsibility in our thoughts, words and deeds. Not only on our spiritual life, but also in our daily life we recognize that even including the omission of actions, passiveness, not to act when we should, has its effects.

An example of this would be when you are legally responsible of committing negligence for not helping

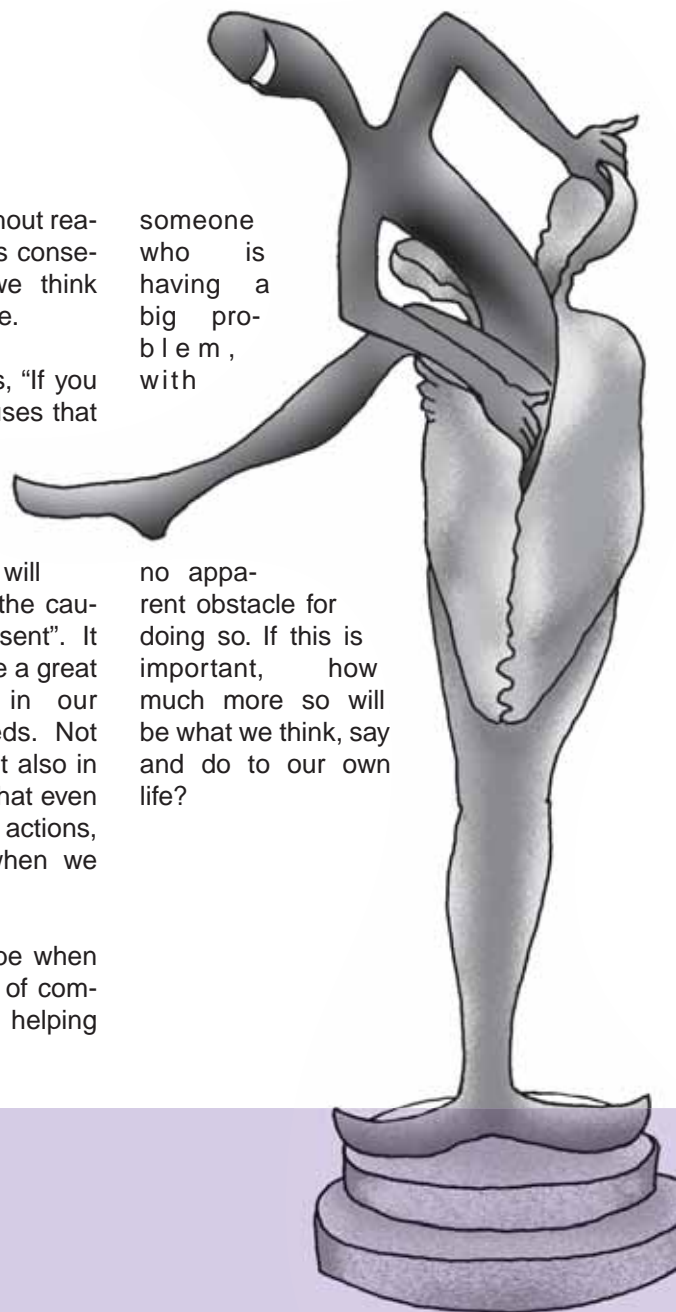
### Gosho

“What good karma you must have formed in the past, then, to have been born a person able even so much as a verse or a phrase of the Lotus Sutra!”

“The recitation of the ‘Expedient Means’ and ‘Life Span’”The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, page. 72

someone who is having a big problem, with

no apparent obstacle for doing so. If this is important, how much more so will be what we think, say and do to our own life?



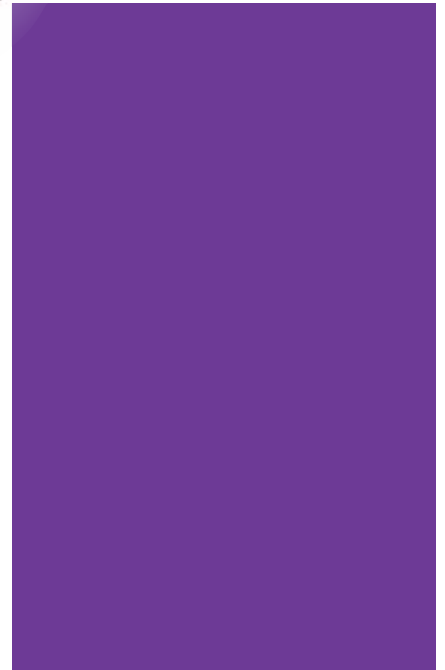
# The chrysalis of happiness



Buddhist practice shows us, through actual proof, that we can change our life by transforming those tendencies, attitudes and feelings that limit us. Intimately we know that they are somewhere inside ourselves, preventing us to be fully happy and they come up when combined with circumstances that act as a trigger.

The transformation of our negative tendencies is demonstrated when, through a constant practice, we place in our life the happiness and hope, making shine more and more the most positive aspects, our virtues, gifts, flairs, skills, vocations to get, to become, every day, better human beings.

Through the hope and strength we hold inherently, we can also give answers to those phenomenon that happen in life, and whose meaning sometimes escapes a “rational”, “objective” or “scientific” explanation. Because through the property of simultaneousness of cause and effect, we reveal what until now we had as unexplainable.



# Karma and society

The concept of karma has a long tradition in various cultures, especially Asiatic. Literally means “accomplished action” and refers to each action or cause corresponds a reaction or an effect. Often this idea has been distorted and used for people to accept his circumstances as something unavoidable. Or even making them feel guilty about their own situation, as a reprisal or result of past actions.

In this way still today, they justify that entire communities are submerged in poverty and suffer discrimination, simply for being part of a determined social group. “By considering themselves guilty for their circumstances, some people feel absolutely powerless in front of life”<sup>1</sup> Although we say it in different words, western society also has its form of fatalistic acceptance that justifies that the person gives up his self dignity and happiness.

Unfortunately, presently, there continues to be places in the world where not all people are recognized for their quality as a human being, and suffer discrimination simply for being born a woman, albino, poor, have a disability, or profess to a determined belief or doctrine.

In Buddhism, each person by definition is an individual and independent being, that exists in mutual interdependence with other people, always with the possibility to live in a harmonious for with others, in the amount that we are capable of respecting our own dignity, and that of others,



## The concept of karma

Often we associate the word Karma to the idea of destiny: the events of life are uncontrollable, they go further than our understanding, and exceed our capacity to change them, in this way leaving us resigned to the meaninglessness of life.

As much as destiny like karma is based on the idea that everything

has a cause. The difference is in that destiny implies that it is the causes that guide our luck are already written and our life is predestined. In Buddhism, the case is the opposite, it affirms that there exists a relation of cause and effect within all phenomenon; therefore we have the power to create causes that have influence in our circumstances.

The past is of little importance, that we cannot change it. What we can do is create or sow today, the causes to obtain positive effects, even if their manifestation appears today, tomorrow or within ten years.

"Everyone is subject to their own actions and reaps what they sow.

Fundamentally, we are all ethically responsible for what we do. In other words, the emphasis is in the decisions that are taken, this way they are in the nature of actions"<sup>2</sup>

"We could consider that karma constitutes in some way our personality, created by the tendencies that lie in the recesses of our life (...) The purpose of the Buddhist practice is to transform our basic life tendency to fully develop our potential in this and other existences"



## Effects in the future.

*You were not aware... , okay, but you did harm.*

*Now, cheer up, the heart, organ of the emotions, stop yelling at yourself. There was a time when you would virtually not allow yourself to sleep, Remember? Now you know the causes of pain which, without wanting to, you started: you were only capable of thinking of how to be the centre of the world; this caused you a blindness, such that you could not see your surroundings in their true perspective, You saw objects and people destined to be at your service. At least you did not do anything that society considers a crime, although your actions bought tears and humiliation. In that way, with the permission of your heart, you could say that you were free.*

*I know that you take a pilgrimage many afternoons to seek calm, the sound of the river and*

*see how the light and the shade fight to conquer each small wave.*

*Also I know that as much as the calm you seek to change the past. Don't try; the human being only has in its reach this immediate instant and the future. Also if you think about it well, it's a lot to have. It would be regrettable not to take advantage of it.*

*Neither are you very aware at the moment... but you will be capable of overcoming your past, to build your future and to help many people confront their own suffering. These will be the effects, and I don't say it because I am psychic, but because I am sure that you want and are creating the causes. Please, forget the past and do not forget the future.*