

The Power of Selfless Dedication

HOW HER PRAYER WORKED

This is a testimony by Emiko Okamoto who became a Seicho-No-Ie member after having gone through a divorce and having returned with her daughter to her parents' home to live. At that time, her brother and sister-in-law were also living there and they treated her as a nuisance and an annoyance. They told her repeatedly to leave as soon as possible, but since her daughter was still quite young, and both because she didn't know what she would do with her if she did leave and for financial reasons, she tried her best to be patient and put up with their ill treatment.

One day, since her brother had not yet returned home and her daughter was very sleepy, she thought she would go ahead and give her a bath first. But just as she had finished giving her daughter a bath, her alcohol-loving brother came home even more drunk than usual. She began to explain, "Hiroko was so sleepy so I went ahead and used the bathtub to give her a bath first." He glared at her with drunken, glazed eyes and shouted, "What? You have some nerve! You're a freeloader and you have the nerve to take a bath first? Get out of here!" Things must have been building up inside of him. He picked up a teapot and threw it at Emiko, who ran immediately upstairs, went into her own living room and quietly began to meditate.

"It's been two years since I was first introduced to these teachings. I have been carrying them out as I have been taught. Why is it then that I have to see my brother acting in this way? What am I doing wrong? Please, dear God, please show me. If there is something I need to do to polish my soul more, please show me." She prayed quietly and tearfully in this way. She then realized something. "No, that's not it. My brother is polishing my selfish soul. His throwing the teapot at me was not my brother's true state. It was the Goddess of Mercy

appearing to further polish my soul. I'm so sorry, Brother. There was still arrogance and insolence hidden in my mind. Despite the fact that I'm very indebted to you and your wife, I have taken things for granted and have not been grateful to you at all. I am so sorry. Please forgive me." She prayed in this way and also asked God:

Dear God, if there is a place where my daughter and I can live without feeling that we're being nuisances, please guide me to it. My leaving this house would be the best thing for my daughter and me and is something that would make my brother and his wife happy as well. My mother would no longer have to suffer because she is caught in the middle, so my moving would be a good thing. If this is something that will help everyone, please help me, dear God. If there is still something I need to learn by being here, I won't force the issue. But, if my training here has been completed, please provide me with a nice house.

The next day, Emiko went to the post office where she worked and asked, "Is there a house that is available to rent around here?" Someone suggested that she go and look into a house that was for sale for ¥300,000 (Editor's note: This was in 1958). She did inquire but was told, however, that the house was put on sale because the owner needed the total amount in cash and it was not available to rent.

TOTALLY ENGROSSED IN SHARING THE TEACHINGS

On her way home from work, Emiko went by the front of that house and as she looked at it thought, "Oh, so this is the ¥300,000 house. I don't even have ¥10,000, much less ¥300,000, but I really would like to live here." As she was thinking this, an elderly gentleman came up from behind her and said, "Are you looking at this house because you're interested in it?"

Emiko answered, "Yes, I am. Sir, do you know of any houses around here that are vacant and available?"

"You know, there's a barrel shop run by a Mr. Tanikawa just around that corner. His rental house has been vacant for the past month. Influential people from throughout the town, as well as close acquaintances, come to him every day asking to rent the place, but

he just can't get himself to rent it out to anyone. So it's been vacant for the past month. Try to see him. But you know, you should take someone influential to go with you," the elderly gentleman told her very earnestly.

As she thanked the gentleman, something occurred to Emiko. "I asked God yesterday. And I feel as though I have been truly and sincerely practicing the Seicho-No-Ie teachings recently. So, it shouldn't matter whether or not I take someone influential with me. There is sure to be something good waiting for me if I go there and ask. I'm going alone." She summoned up her courage and went to the house. As she stood by the front door waiting to inquire within, a lady came out. Despite the fact that it was the middle of the summer, this lady, who was in her 60's, was wearing a lined wool vest and white socks, and had some things wrapped around her waist.

"What's wrong, Ma'am?" Emiko asked.

"You know, I have a headache, my back and feet are always icy cold, and I have neuralgia as well as stomach problems. I've been bedridden for the most part of these many years. It's very rare that I can get out of bed."

"Oh, really? Have you ever heard about the Seicho-No-Ie teachings?"

"No, I haven't."

"Well, you know, when you touch upon the Seicho-No-Ie teachings, you learn that every person is a child of God, so there is no illness. I have a testimony of being healed from illness, and when I shared my testimony with others, they were healed as well." So saying, Emiko talked to the lady about Seicho-No-Ie for about an hour.

"Oh, really? Now that you mention it, someone did bring me a copy of the *Holy Sutra, Nectarean Shower of Holy Doctrines*, but I just put it on a shelf and have never read it."

"Well, if that's the case, please do read it for your ancestors beginning tonight. If you do, I'm sure, very sure, that things will improve for you."

"Well, if you say so, I will. But what exactly is it that you came to see me about?"

“Oh, that’s right! You know, Ma’am, I came because I need a house. I heard that you have a vacant house. Could you possibly rent it to me? I work at the Seto Post Office and my name is Emiko Okamoto.” It was at that moment that Emiko remembered why it was that she had come there. Until then, she had forgotten about herself entirely and had been totally focused on helping the lady get well.

The lady said, “My husband says that he just simply won’t rent the house out to anyone, even though it’s vacant, but come by at about 6:00 p.m. tonight. I’ll ask him for you.”

Our minds work in very strange ways. It only takes something small for some things to come to fruition, and, if it is not meant to be, things will not come to fruition. The element that influences this “something small” is what is important. It is whether or not God’s life appears or is expressed. God’s life always appears where there is a sense of selfless dedication and volunteerism.

Emiko’s heart and mind became one with the lady and Emiko came back at six o’clock, but the gentleman did not come out at all. Instead, the lady called to him from out front, “My dear, Ms. Okamoto who came during the day is here to ask you to rent her the house. Tell her whether or not you’re going to rent it to her.”

The lady then went inside for a while, and when she came out, she had a key and said, “Okay, I’ll show you the house. You can move in tonight or tomorrow, or whenever you want. But before you move in, you need to buy a new rug because the one we have now is very dirty.”

Emiko thought she had to be dreaming. “Oh, thank you very much. I would like to thank your husband, so please let me see him.”

The lady replied, “You know, you really must be a lucky person. My husband said he didn’t feel like renting the house out no matter who came by to ask. But today, I just asked him once to rent it to you and he agreed immediately. If you move into the house in a few days, that will be the first time for both of you to meet each other. You can thank him then. Anyway, move in as soon as you can.”

In this way, things strangely fell into place and Emiko was able to find a house. When Emiko moved in, something even stranger

happened. The headaches, neuralgia, cold feet and various illnesses and conditions that had plagued the elderly lady for years disappeared. Eventually the lady came by and told her joyfully, “I haven’t had shaved ice in years, but this year, I took off my socks and went to eat some shaved ice.” Now, she attends with Ms. Okamoto whenever there is a Seicho-No-Ie Public Lecture, reads the Seicho-No-Ie books, and was saved in this way by the teachings of the Truth. We can indeed say that those who help and save others are helped and saved themselves.

From *Motto Fukaku Aisou*, “Let’s Love More Deeply,” pp. 148-155



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Meditation Makes Life Abundant

Masaharu Taniguchi

ONE: Mental Concentration That Can Be Applied to Daily Life

Resolve to Become One With God

When we delve deep within the depths of the subconscious, we will get to the cosmic consciousness, and if we delve even further, we will get to the super-consciousness. We refer to this super consciousness as “God.”

When we connect with God, in order for us to draw from the infinite power that He has given us, we must make sure that the vibrations of our mind are attuned with Him. The first condition needed to do this is to have resolve. There is a need to get things in our daily life in order through calling forth the firm determination, “I want to become one with God.” The “I” refers to the self and the will to “want to” is the tool that makes use of the self. Using this will, we must put our daily life in order such that it allows us to become one with God in the most complete and perfect way possible. We call this mental concentration that makes the self and God one, *Shinsokan*.

Although it may seem very easy to find 30 minutes every morning and night to practice Shinsokan meditation, there are many who get caught up in the various things in their daily life and are unable to do so. The reason this happens is that they do not have things in their life arranged perfectly. If one truly puts one’s mind to it and

tries to find time to become one with God, there is no reason why one cannot find 30 minutes or an hour to focus on this. In order for us to find time to practice Shinsokan, we must not sacrifice any of our daily work or activities either. Rather, it should be that when our minds are aligned with God, are attuned with His vibrations and are guided by His wisdom, we will be able to carry out our daily work and responsibilities even more perfectly and completely and easily find time to become one with Him.

In order to practice Shinsokan, it is recommended that we get up 30 minutes earlier in the morning than we have been. Also, I suggest that we sit up on the bed and immediately begin practicing Shinsokan. Because our rational and judgmental state of mind does not fully awaken for a while and because our subconscious is active over the majority of our consciousness, the words we use in meditation at that time can, without interference or judgment of our rational, scientific mind, impress those thoughts on our subconscious. For example, our subconscious mind might even reject or question scientifically or judgmentally what is meant by the word “God,” but when the conscious mind is not yet fully awake, the idea of God is easily infused within the subconscious. The subconscious is the mind that connects cosmic consciousness and super-consciousness; it instinctively knows God, readily accepts thoughts of God, and carries on creative activities according to those divine thoughts.

Through this 30 minutes of Shinsokan meditation just after waking up, the day begins with God’s wisdom, and, therefore, the entire day is guided by His wisdom. When this happens, one’s own daily life, including work-related responsibilities, are accomplished even more perfectly, and it will be easy to find 30 minutes to practice Shinsokan again. If one falls asleep surrounded by God’s love and filled with His peace, one will be able to sleep deeper and more peacefully, and be able to quickly recover from the fatigue of the day. Thus, there will be no problem getting up the next day to practice Shinsokan. Next, one will gradually be able to find more time to carry one’s daily activities in a perfect and orderly way, and

even though one dedicates an hour or two a day concentrating on thoroughly reading and understanding the books of the Truth, there will be no adverse affects on the familial or social responsibilities that one may have. Rather, one will be able to carry out all of one's work and responsibilities even more completely and thoroughly.

TWO: Regarding Humility and Confidence

When One Is Emotionally Shaken and Unable to Focus Mentally

No matter how impatient we may be to try and quiet our minds with mental peace by practicing Shinsokan, there are times when our mind is shaken and it is impossible for us to do things because of fear and anxiety. This occurs as a result of the thought waves of fear that come from others or vibrations from the masses that surround and control our own thoughts. It also occurs particularly when the vibrations of wandering spirits try to block our mental concentration. In such cases, we are unable to meditate on words of the Truth or concentrate. When this happens, we cannot attain a peaceful state of mental concentration and will not have any signs of an improved state of mind though we may practice Shinsokan or pray.

In these instances, the first and best thing we can do is not to focus on our own mental concentration or progress, but instead offer prayers and blessings for the people who are the cause of the fear and delusion of our mind. However, we should not pray, "Please keep them from blocking my mental concentration," and try to take away their free will. We should not pray in a way that asks that the wandering spirits not harm us and thereby try to control their actions. We should pray with the following in mind, "May he be blessed and praised according to the will of God; may God guide him so that he acts correctly." When praying for others or for spirits, we need to give them complete freedom. We must not offer prayers that will prohibit or constrain them. In this way, our prayers should truly be altruistic. We should pray that God's blessings shower abundantly upon them, and that the perfect will

of God flows into them freely, without any hindrance or obstacle so that they might be truly happy.

Praying that those who disturb or upset our life be blessed may seem to be a very foolish thing to do, but it is through this that our soul will become even more peaceful and tranquil and the God-nature within shall be expressed even more clearly.

Practice Mental Concentration Resolutely

So now let us look at an actual example of praying for someone or some spirit that has been the cause of disturbance in our thoughts, and afterwards, meditating on the words, "God's infinite life is flowing into me." There are instances when we cannot get ourselves to focus mentally, even though we may be meditating and repeating the words, "God's infinite life is flowing into me." The reason for this is that we haven't trained ourselves enough in mental concentration. It is also because there is still some fear, worry, or anger remaining in our minds or we still have some worldly thoughts in our minds that are not in tune with the highest form of wisdom. However, if we were to overcome that situation, try to focus all our concentration, and firmly and repeatedly meditate on "God's infinite life flowing into me," in order to negate all undesirable worldly thoughts that may try to hinder us, our mind will finally become peaceful. Thus, our understanding of the Truth will become deeper, we will feel it permeate completely and perfectly into our subconscious, our soul will be purified and heightened at the same time, and we will be filled with the peace of the world of God within our life. When we continue with this training, we will gradually, ever gradually, be able to discern the True Image of our life standing within God who is infinite life, and we will be able to maintain that existence within that which is eternal, and we will be able to feel that God, who is all in all, is our life, our strength, and that which will save us. Soon the True Image, which is all goodness, shall appear and we will not try to control even those who try to persecute us, and as a reflection of our mind that has been able to bless them, others will not try to forcefully control us. We will be completely free and

we will be able to understand that the power that resides within us is the omnipotent power of God.

This realization is something very humble. It is not a realization that believes, “I am God,” but rather knows that we ourselves do not have any power and recognizes that the power we have within is the power of the Absolute, which is never depleted, and flows into us from the source. This realization is something very humble, and at the same time, we can receive a truly great sense of conviction from this.

This is as shown in the words of Jesus when he said, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing . . . By myself I can do nothing . . .” (John 5:19, 30, NIV). It is also illustrated in the words of David said, “The Lord is my rock, my fortress . . .” (Psalm 18:2, NIV), instead of “I am my fortress.”

Be Humble and Allow the Power of God to Flow Into You

Declaring that we ourselves have power or authority may deepen our confidence, but at the same time, it also has the tendency of assuming an incorrect understanding of where that power or authority comes from.

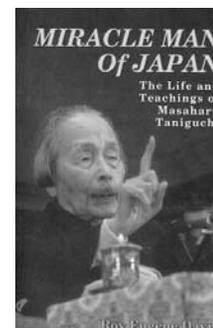
When I was at a certain Grand Seminar, a young man shared a testimony during which he confessed, “Because I knew that the world was a reflection of my own mind, I believed I could do anything with my mind. I spiraled downward into a life of drinking and women. I thought this life of drunkenness and being surrounded by beautiful women was truly a heavenly paradise, and I believed this was all a result of my mind and thoughts having become heavenly. I became exceedingly proud and overconfident and eventually fell deep into debt.” This is a testimony of one who crashed and fell because he mistook the false self to be the God-self.

Unless one’s mind becomes humble and modest, that, “By myself I can do nothing . . .” (John 5:30, NIV), the life that comes from on high, cannot flow into his self. When one climbs up high, the water of life shall not flow into him as Jesus taught in the Sermon

on the Mount, “Blessed are the poor in spirit . . . Blessed are those who mourn . . . Blessed are the meek . . . Blessed are the merciful . . .” (Matt. 5:3-7, NIV). That which connects us with the omnipotent is the humbleness of a child. In other words, we must make ourselves totally empty in order for the greatest, absolute power of the universe to flow into us. To prophesize that our physical self has infinite power, causes us to be satisfied with a lower level of elevation of our souls and locks the gate through which the infinite power flows into us. We must know and understand that the infinite power comes from one source and one source only. That is none other than the power and life which support all existence, and that is the power of God. As Jesus’ words of the Truth, “By myself I can do nothing . . .,” and David’s words, “The Lord is my rock and my fortress,” are, indeed, words of the Truth. This awareness is the string that ties us to the only power, moreover, the source of the only power. Only by doing this can we establish our life totally in the eternal and infinite being from where we are able to breathe deeply of infinite life. This is the only way we can enter into a state of spiritual awareness of the union of the humbleness and exaltation of our soul, a state which is obtainable by understanding through experience and not through mere explanation.

From *Shinpan Seikatsu to Ningen no Saiken*, “Reconstruction of Human Being and His Life,” pp. 266-269, 329-336

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