

If you plant  
**seeds of  
happiness,  
flowers of  
happiness  
will bloom**



*"How small things affect your tomorrows!"*

Kazushi Okamoto  
Translated by Paul McCarthy



**If You Plant  
Seeds of Happiness,  
Flowers of Happiness  
Will Bloom**

By Kazushi Okamoto

Translated by Paul McCarthy

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## Foreword



We say that we want to be happy. If that's what we really want, we should start planting seeds of happiness.

If you plant morning glory seeds, you get morning glories flowering.

If you plant the violet seeds, you get violets.

If you plant sunflower seeds, you get sunflowers.

The kind of flower you get depends on the seed you have planted: this is a law of nature.

In the same way, if you plant the seeds of happiness, the flowers of happiness will bloom.

Seeds of happiness, seeds of unhappiness—which are you mostly planting?

“Oh, I’m just no good . . .”

“No matter how hard I try, it leads to nothing.”

“Nobody understands!”

People who think like this may well be planting mostly seeds of unhappiness rather than happiness, even though they’d like to be happy.

In addition to my work of giving seminars throughout the country as a lecturer on Buddhism, I am often asked for advice on all sorts of personal problems, such as human relations within the family or workplace, romantic relationships, and even how to study properly. I continue to give advice through my email newsletter and my blog.

And I have received very positive messages from a great many people in the course of doing this: “I feel much better and more relaxed.” “I now have the energy to do my best and not give up the struggle.”

Buddhism teaches us the law of cause and effect that enables us to become “a happier me.” All I am doing is applying that clear law to the troubles that various people have, explaining things in a way that will be easy for them to understand.

Many people, hearing this, may think: “Buddhism? Isn’t that just for funerals and memorial services? I’ve never thought it had anything to do with me.”

In fact, though, Shakyamuni Buddha never preached Buddhism for the sake of the dead. He made it his life’s work to teach living persons how to resolve their suffering and troubles in a fundamental way, by addressing the root of the problem.

So, how can we make sure the flowers of happiness bloom for us? I’d like to help by discussing the troubles of people whom I’ve encountered over these past few years.

Kazushi Okamoto

February 2014



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## Chapter 1

You can change your destiny as  
much as you want, right now

*The law of cause and effect that enables us to  
become “a happier me”*



The first step on the road to happiness is  
not blaming things on your destiny,  
even when you feel that  
“Things just don’t work out well for me . . .”



How do we feel when unexpected things happen? When it’s something good, we think, “Gee, I’m lucky!” When, on the other hand, it’s something bad we ask, “Why me?” Or we think, “It’s not my fault—it was just a piece of bad luck.” Thus, when something unexpected happens, which is to say, when something whose cause we cannot determine happens, we use expressions like “luck,” “coincidence,” or “by chance.”

But let’s stop and think about the matter. If you look up “chance” or “coincidence” in the dictionary, the definition is, “Something that occurs without a cause.” But are there in fact things that happen without causes? Shakyamuni,

the historical founder of Buddhism in our age, stated clearly that, “There is a cause for every effect. There is no effect that does not have a cause.”

In Buddhism this is called “the law of cause and effect.” “Law” means the universal principle that applies always and everywhere. There can be no effect without a cause, and if there is a cause, an effect will necessarily result. Shakyamuni assures us that this holds true in every age and wherever one goes. To put it in simpler terms: “A seed that is not sown will never come to fruition, and a seed that is sown necessarily will.”

If you were told that in olden times a melon was produced without a seed ever having been sown, wouldn’t that be ridiculous? If someone said there were sunflowers blooming in Brazil that didn’t come from seeds, would that be credible? If a melon was produced, it was because there was a melon seed in the beginning, and if sunflowers bloomed, it was because there were sunflower seeds. In exactly the same way, there is a cause (or seed) for every effect, and there are no effects that arise without causes.

In the worlds of natural science and medicine too, the

grand premise is that there is a cause for every effect. Even with terrible infectious diseases that, if contracted, would once have meant certain death, scientists have discovered methods of treatment by locating the microorganisms that cause the diseases. Since the diseases have causes, it becomes possible to treat them. If there were a disease that had no cause, there would be no way to prevent it or to cure it.

When airplane or train accidents occur, specialists conduct thoroughgoing investigations into the causes. Human lives are at stake, so the most thorough investigations are carried out until the causes are determined. Everyone knows that accidents do not happen by chance, through sheer coincidence, and without causes.

Yet when things are not going well for us, or the result we hoped for is not forthcoming, we tend to use words like “by chance” or “coincidence,” avoiding the effort to think things through. But it is very important at such times to stop for a moment and think about what the cause (seed) of the effect really was. That process will provide us with hints that will lead you to a happier life.

It's important to  
think about what  
went wrong.

