

The Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin



"It's foolish to be obsessed with past failures. And it's just as foolish to be self-satisfied with one's small achievements. Buddhism teaches that the present and the future are what are important, not the past. It teaches us a spirit of unceasing challenge to win over the present and advance ever toward the future"

Daisaku Ikeda

Buddhism aims to awaken people to the limitless potential and value of their own lives. Buddhist philosophy and practice bring about a positive transformation in the depths of life, transforming fear into courage, deluded impulses into wisdom, and egotism to compassion.

Buddhism begins with individuals deciding to take responsibility for their own individual lives, reforming first themselves and their immediate surroundings and relations, and then gradually extending their wisdom, courage and compassion into a wider sphere.

Members of SGI practice the Buddhism taught by the 13th century Japanese sage Nichiren. At the core of Nichiren's Buddhism are the phrase Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and a mandala called the Gohonzon.

The Basics

There are three basic elements to the practice of Nichiren Buddhism, chanting the phrase Nam-myoho-renge-kyo; studying the teachings of Nichiren; and making efforts to proliferate the teachings of Buddhism, a practice to share the Buddhist perspective of life's inherent dignity and potential. SGI members perform a morning and evening practice known as Gongyo, which consists of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and reciting short portions of the Lotus Sutra.

The "Law"

Buddhism teaches that a universal Law (Dharma) underlies everything in the universe. This is the very essence of life. One could also think of it as the fundamental rhythm of life and the universe. Nichiren identified this Law or essence as Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. He taught that by carrying out the correct practice of Buddhism anyone is able to bring their individual life into harmony with greater life of the universe. The result of this is that one is able to experience greater wisdom, courage, life force and compassion (the qualities of this life-essence).

This, practically, is what it means to manifest Buddhahood, or an enlightened life condition.

Buddhahood in Daily Life

SGI members are encouraged to employ their Buddhist practice to squarely confront and overcome the very real challenges of their daily lives, in order to realize and manifest the profound potential of their life and to fulfill their unique life purpose. SGI members believe that this process of inner spiritual transformation or "human revolution," leads to not only individual empowerment but is the surest way to direct humankind's energies toward creating a peaceful and prosperous world.

Discussion Meetings

The SGI members carry out their daily practice at home and meet at regular discussion meetings to study Buddhist principles and how to apply them in everyday life. At these gatherings, members also exchange ideas, hopes, challenges and experiences of their Buddhist faith and practice. These small group meetings are a place of mutual encouragement as well as for sharing Buddhist faith with friends.

Local Contact Information (East Midlands - UK):

Web: www.chantingbuddhas.co.uk
e-mail: info@chantingbuddhas.co.uk