

**SIGN POSTS: No Guilt in Buddhism?**  
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**When it comes to the Lotus Sutra, whether one recites all eight volumes...or simply the daimoku or title, you should understand that all the blessings that result are in all cases the same. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 6)**

There is no guilt in Buddhism!" a friend reassures me as I lament that I didn't chant as much as I wanted to or only did an "A & C" gongyo that morning. If there is no guilt in Buddhism, then why do we sometimes feel so guilty?

At the community center during the May commemorative contribution, a fellow member was expressing her regret and ambivalence at what to do. She had made it her goal to increase her contribution each year, but was extremely tight financially — it looked like she wasn't going to do it this year.

I couldn't help referring to SGI President Ikeda's guidance that Buddhism is common sense. While her intentions were extremely noble and sincere, the fact remained that if she made a contribution that wouldn't allow her to take care of her financial obligations, she would suffer. I told her this and shared my feelings of guilt about chanting and gongyo.

Dealing with these feelings is an exercise in becoming masters of the middle way. Although it is true that we should consistently check ourselves so as not to become lax, we shouldn't go to the other extreme where we are unreasonably uptight about things. That's easy to say (and write!), but hard to do.

Guilty feelings often result when we become so taken with the format or structure of things that we forget the substance and heart. When Nichiren Daishonin states that "all the blessings that result are in all cases the same," it's a reminder that our sincerity is what counts most.

**WT**