

Questions and Answers on Faith: What's So Great About Buddhism?

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Q: What's so great about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism?

A: The greatness of the Daishonin's Buddhism lies in the fact that it is not mere theory. Through practicing it, we can actually change ourselves, change our destiny. Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism enables us to realize the preciousness of our lives and the lives of others, and helps us establish a solid sense of self deep within our lives.

Chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo may be the simplest of actions. But it has the most profound, positive impact. The Daishonin states, "To practice only the seven characters of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo may appear limited, yet since this Law is the master of all the Buddhas of the three existences, the teacher of all the bodhisattvas in the ten directions, and the guide that enables all living beings to attain the Buddha way, its practice is incomparably profound" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 199).

Buddhism is premised on the idea that each person inherently possesses a supreme treasure called Buddhahood. And by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the Gohonzon (a scroll that embodies the purest, grandest expression of life, and which the Daishonin inscribed for all people), we can start operating from the level of our innate Buddhahood rather than from the level of suffering, frustration, fear or anger. The fresh state of life we can unleash through heartfelt chanting can be likened to suddenly experiencing a blue sky emerging from behind a layer of dense clouds.

The benefit of chanting manifests itself in tangible results, but you don't have to take my word for it — you can try it and see for yourself. Buddhism does not require "blind belief." Rather, we deepen our faith through studying Buddhism and chanting, and by seeing actual proof of the efficacy of this practice.

On a fundamental level, Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism elucidates the true nature of life. It allows us to grasp the breadth as well as the intricacies of life's functions. Therefore, if we sincerely practice the Mystic Law, we can see definite and convincing changes in every aspect of our lives. This has been proven by millions of people throughout the world.

Through prayer to the Gohonzon, we can change our lives, expanding, enriching, strengthening, deepening, purifying and polishing the "true self" or Buddha nature within each of us. In other words, by continuing our practice of faith, we can make Buddhahood our basic state of life, in which creativity, happiness, self-identity and purity become the norm. In this way, we can develop a well-rounded, dynamic character where the Buddha's life is vibrant and eminent.

Just as our life possess an innate enlightened state, we also possess fundamental darkness, which can be characterized as inertia, destructiveness, a lack of a desire to help others or even ourselves. It's important to remember that when we develop our Buddhahood, these devilish forces emerge in the form of discouraging obstacles in our environment, as well as from within ourselves in the form of doubt. The Nichiren Daishonin says: "A sword will be useless in the hands of a coward. The mighty sword of the Lotus Sutra must be wielded by one courageous in faith" (MW-1, 120). In other words, the key element in practicing Buddhism is courageous faith.

A profound upsurge of confidence in ourselves, which constitutes the core of our happiness and inner security and freedom, becomes ours when we can truly base ourselves upon the Law within. This is the ultimate message of Buddhism.

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In “The Buddha” chapter of volume 3 of *The New Human Revolution*, President Ikeda writes, quoting Shakyamuni, “Live in accord with the Law; rely on a solid ‘self’ as unmovable as an island — this is the very heart of Shakyamuni’s lifelong teachings.” Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism elucidates this Law and makes it possible for us to reveal its splendor.

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