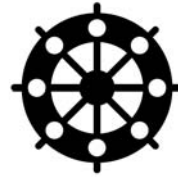


Buddhism



Buddhism is an ancient practice which has its expression in many different ways. What attracted me to it in the first place was that it is non-theistic. It does not rely on the existence or non-existence of God, a Greater Being. In fact when the historic Buddha was asked the question “Does God exist?” he replied that it didn’t have any relevance as a question to our own human happiness, and thereafter he refused to answer and just kept quiet when people asked him.

So, I was very attracted by the idea that there was a practice which did not rely on there being a Greater Being beyond ourselves as human beings. For me Buddhism is a very humanist practice rooted in a common humanity which is expressed at grass-roots level.

That appeals to me for who I am. The hierarchy is removed and we all are potentially a Buddha which simply means an enlightened person: we all potentially have Buddhahood within us.

The symbol commonly used to represent Buddhism is an eight spoked wheel which relates to the eight-fold pathway, a central teaching about the way to achieve enlightenment which we don’t deny. In our particular form of Buddhism which follows the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin we simply emphasise a slightly different concept, the one of the ten worlds; each represents a different state of life that we all have within us at any one moment in time. For example there is the state of hunger and desire which can manifest itself in positive ways such as the motivating force to achieve something, or could be manifest negatively as greed.

The highest state is Buddhahood or enlightenment.



Mike Duckett

Each morning and evening we practice an expression of gratitude for aspects of life and then we chant the words “Nam-myoho-rence-kyo” which is the title of the Lotus Sutra, a central teaching of Buddha. There are two types of Buddhists: the quiet and the noisy. We are the noisy ones who chant!

When chanting we are thinking about an awful lot of things, and thoughts come in and go out about daily life, but the way is to bring these thoughts back – polishing the mirror we call it – bringing out the best in yourself, to bring out the best of our Buddhahood in daily life through compassion, wisdom and courage to live life to its full.

As a grass-roots activity we get together in local groups to share in the practice above followed by a discussion meeting.

Mike Duckett

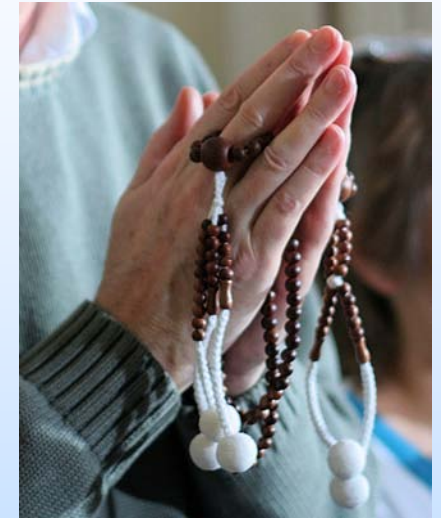
I chant ‘*Nam Myoho Renge Kyo*’ and recite key chapters from the Lotus Sutra twice daily as part of my practice with SGI - UK in the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin.

The other part of my practice is involvement in weekly religious and cultural activities and daily study of Buddhist writing.

I wish to develop myself as a capable person in my youth and work towards ‘*Kosen Rufu*’ (lasting peace established through mutual respect for all people) all my life.

Koichi Samuels





Chanting **Nam—myoho—renge—kyo**
'Devotion to the Mystic Law of the Lotus Sutra'
Nam means respect. Myoho-Renge-Kyo is the Japanese title for the Lotus Sutra.

