

THE NICHIRENSHU

日蓮宗



Nichiren Sect-an Introduction

The formal title of this sect is *Nichiren-shū*.

This sect is named after its founder, Saint Nichiren.

Nichiren-shū was established during Japan's Kamakura-Era on April 28th in the fifth year of Kenchō (1153). It was at Asahi-ga-mori on Mt. Seichō (Seichō-zan) in the Chiba Prefecture that Saint Nichiren first raised his voice to intone the sacred prayer *Namu-myōhō-renge-kyō*, thus proclaiming the establishment of this faith.

The *Gohonzon* (The mainstay of the Nichiren faith, the object of worship):

This represents the eternal Śākyamuni Buddha who realized the world of enlightenment in the distant past, and is inscribed with the sacred *Maṇḍala* symbolizing the realm of the Buddha's nirvāṇa.

The spiritual basis of *Nichiren-shū*:

Nichiren-shū is founded on the teaching expounded by the Buddha in the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra. Myōhō-renge-kyō* in Japanese), this being regarded as his ultimate doctrine. This sūtra teaches that all beings can attain enlightenment and that Śākyamuni is the holy Buddha who is working ceaselessly for all

日蓮宗とは

宗旨の名称は

日蓮宗です。

日蓮宗を開かれた人は

日蓮聖人です。お名前がそのまま宗旨の名称になっています。

立教開宗された時期は

鎌倉時代の中期、建長5年(1253)4月28日です。清澄山(千葉県)の旭ヶ森で、日蓮聖人は声高らかに「南無妙法蓮華経」とお題目を唱えて、天地に立教開宗を宣言されました。

御本尊は

久遠実成の本師釈迦牟尼仏です。御本尊のみこころ、おさとりの世界を因にあらわしたのが「お曼荼羅」本尊です。

日蓮宗のよりどころは

お釈迦さまがお説きになられた最高の教え「妙法蓮華経」です。法華経は、すべてのものが仏になることができる教えであり、お釈迦さまは、いつでも、どこでも、誰にでもわけへだてなく仏にしようとはたらきかけている尊い仏さまです。

beings everywhere, without distinction, so that we may attain Buddhahood.

The reason for the superiority of the *Lotus Sūtra* :
As Śākyamuni clearly explains, the reason why the *Lotus Sūtra* is to be regarded as the ultimate doctrine is that, of his many teachings, it is only this sūtra which reveals the truth of the enlightenment which he himself attained. In this text, it is shown clearly that not only Śākyamuni but also the many Buddhas of the three worlds—that of the past, the present and the future, came into this world to expound the *Lotus Sūtra*.

The importance of the *Lotus Sūtra* :
This sacred text, the *Myōho-rengē-kyō*, translated into Chinese by the Central-Asian priest Kumārajīva in about 400A.D., is given the abbreviated title *Hoke-kyō* (trans.*Lotus Sūtra*) in Japanese. In one copy of this text there are eight volumes consisting of 28 chapters. To summarize the contents of the *Lotus Sūtra* : in the first 14 chapters (*Shakumon* in Japanese), which Śākyamuni compiled over a period of many years, he explains the doctrine of "expedient means" (*upāya*, *hōben* in Japanese) for the guidance of sentient beings. As it is intended for those who seek righteous enlightenment (*Sambodhi*, *Shōgaku*), this section of the *Lotus Sūtra* teaches the concept of *Ichibutsujyō*—the "single Buddha-vehicle" or the only way to enlightenment, and as such is an answer to their needs. For in this it advocates that all beings are equal in

法華経が最高の教えである理由は

お釈迦さまが説き明かされた、たくさんの教えの中で、法華経のみがお釈迦さまご自身の悟りの真実を説いた教えだからです。そして、お釈迦さまはもちろん、三世の諸仏も「妙法蓮華経」を説かんがために、世に出られたのだと明かされています。

そんなに尊い法華経とは

「妙法蓮華経」(鳩摩羅什三蔵法師訳)を略して「法華経」といいます。法華経は一部8巻28章から成立っています。その内容を要約しますと前14章(迹門)には、お釈迦さまは永い年月の間、多くの人々を導くために方便の教えを説いてきたが、それは正覚(一仏乗)を得てもらいたいと念ずるが故であり、この法華経を説くことによってそれは満足されたといい、すべての人々は、教えの前では平等であり、必ず仏になれる(二乗作仏)と説かれています。後14章(本門)には、覚者となられたお釈迦さまは、実は永遠の過去から永遠の未来に至る無始無終の仏(久遠実成)であることが明かされ、地から湧き出た久遠の昔からの弟子上行菩薩をはじめとする無数の菩薩に、仏の滅後、法華経を弘めるよう付嘱されたことが説かれています。

the presence of this doctrine and that without fail all will attain Buddhahood. In the last 14 chapters (*Honmon*) Śākyamuni, the enlightened one, explains that he is truly the Buddha of the remote past and distant future, the Buddha who is without beginning and without end. And also it is explained that, Śākyamuni asked his disciples beginning with Viśiṣṭacārita Bodhisattva (Jōgyō Bosatsu) who had been a follower for countless eons appeared out of the earth, and innumerable Bodhisattvas to spread the *Lotus Sūtra* throughout the world after his passing.

Viśiṣṭacārita Bodhisattva and Saint Nichiren :
Viśiṣṭacārita is a Bodhisattva who is predicted to appear in this impure world in what was termed lawlessness (*Mappō in Japanese*) two thousand years following Buddha's passing. Here, in compliance with the spirit of the sage, Śākyamuni, this Bodhisattva is to undertake Buddhist austerities armed with the *Lotus Sūtra*. However, in this sūtra it also explains that without fail persecution will be encountered while propagating and teaching the *Lotus Sūtra* in this age of degeneration. It is in the face of this oppression that



Saint Nichiren 日蓮聖人

上行菩薩と日蓮聖人

上行菩薩は、末法といわれる濁った世に出て、お釈迦さまのご精神を体し、法華經を身をもって行じる菩薩です。ところで法華經には、末法にこの經を説き弘めようとするとは必ず迫害に遇う、その迫害に対して信念を曲げずに法華經に殉ずる覚悟でこれを布教しなければならない、と説かれています。日蓮聖人は、法華經に予言された如くに、末法に入った鎌倉時代に生れ、法華經を弘めることにより命に及ぶほどの難に何度も遇いました。法華經に説かれた道を完全にお進みに

resolution must not waver, even to the extent of martyrdom, so that teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra* can be carried out.

In compliance with this prediction of the *Lotus Sūtra*, Saint Nichiren was born at the beginning of the age of lawlessness (*Mappō*) during the Kamakura-Era (1185–1333). In preaching this text he suffered repented persecution and at one stage almost became a martyr in its cause. Finally, it was in his pursuit of the course expounded in the *Lotus Sūtra* that Saint Nichiren attained the realization that he was in fact Viśiṣṭacārita Bodhisattva.

The basis of the *Nichiren-shū* faith :

It is the morning and evening intonation of the sacred prayer, the prayer for which Saint Nichiren almost suffered martyrdom, which forms the basis of the *Nichiren-shū* faith. It is by facing the *Gohonzon* and wholeheartedly repeating the prayer *Namu-myōhō-rengē-kyō* in a firm, clear voice, that a world of serenity is manifested.

The virtue of this prayer:

The *Lotus Sūtra* is the essence of the teachings of one lifetime of Śākyamuni; the title of this text; *Myōhō-rengē-kyō* being the very soul of the Buddha. For the five characters *Myō-hō-ren-ge-kyō* contain all of the virtue of a Buddha. Through this, nurtured by the grace of *Myōhō-rengē-kyō*, living we too can attain Buddhahood by means of the prayer *Namu-myōhō-rengē-kyō*.

なられたことによって、日蓮聖人はついに上行菩薩としてのご自覚を深められたのです。

日蓮宗の信仰の基本は

日蓮聖人が命がけで弘められたお題目を朝夕に唱えることが、信仰の基本です。

ご本尊に向って一心に「南無妙法蓮華經」とお題目を高らかに唱えることによって、安らぎの心を得、又平和の世界があらわれるのです。

お題目の功德

法華經はお釈迦さまご一代の教えの中の肝心です。その法華經の題名、「妙法蓮華經」はいわば仏の魂といえましょう。

「妙法蓮華經」の五字の中に仏の功德がすべてこめられているのです。私達はこの「妙法蓮華經」の光明に照らされて、生かされ成仏できるのです。

The number of *Nichiren-shū* temples and lay followers: Beginning with the head temple Kuon-ji on Mt. Minobu, there are famous temples connected with Saint Nichiren, for example, Tanjo-ji (Birth place), Kominato; Honmon-ji (Passing place), Ikegami; and many other temples found throughout Japan from Hokkaido to Okinawa. Furthermore, temples are to be found in Hawaii, North and South America and in South Korea giving a total of more than 5,300 in all. The primary purpose of these being propagation of the faith and missionary work. The number of *Nichiren-shū* lay followers includes over five million members. The central place of their worship is Kuon-ji on Mt. Minobu, while the administration center of *Nichiren-shū* is Nichiren-shū Shūmuin.

Minobusan Kuon-ji: Minobu-3567, Minobu-chō, Minami-Koma-Gun,
Yamanashi Prefecture, *Japan* zip
code 409-25
Phone: 05566-2-1011

Nichiren-shū 1-32-15, Ikegami, Ota-ku, Tokyo,
Shūmuin: *Japan* zip code 146
Phone: 03-751-7181

The administration of our sect is carried out by the Nichiren-shū administrative offices in Ikegami, Ota-ku, Tokyo. These are the headquarters for all *Nichiren-shū* temples throughout Japan; undertaking administration,

日蓮宗のお寺と檀信徒の数は

日蓮宗のお寺は、総本山身延山久遠寺をはじめ、小湊誕生寺、池上本門寺等日本全国並びに世界各地にまで寺院があり、その数は5,300ヶ寺に及びます。これらのお寺を拠点として、布教伝道がなされています。その檀信徒の数はおよそ500万人にのぼっております。信仰の中心は身延山です。(〒409-25 山梨県南巨摩郡身延町身延 電話 05566-2-1011) 宗団の運営は日蓮宗宗務院(〒146 東京都大田区池上1-32-15 電話 03-751-7181)があり、ここでは全国日蓮宗寺院の本部として、行政、人材養成、布教伝道、社会福祉事業、その他、日蓮宗の運営発展をはかっています。



Saint Nichiren's Mausoleum 御廟塔

personnel training, propagation and missionary work, the business of social welfare, and other duties such as controlling the development of the organization of *Nichiren-shū*.

What is *Nichiren-shū* undertaking at present ?
The year 2002 will mark the 750th anniversary of Saint Nichiren's establishment of this faith. In the drive to protect and preserve *Nichiren-shū* while working towards this memorable year, and in order that the influence of the sacred prayer may spread, the movement for total propagation of this faith is now being developed. Through the sacred prayer *Namu-myōhō-renge-kyō*, this movement is for the purification not only of people's minds, but of society and of the whole world, a world of peace and mutual understanding.

Soka Gakkai is not *Nichiren-shū*:

Although many people believe that *Soka Gakkai* is the same religious sect as *Nichiren-shū*, they are in fact entirely different sects. For, although it is true that both of these faiths invoke the sacred prayer *Namu-myōhō-renge-kyō*, the *Soka Gakkai* is a splinter group professing the name of *Nichiren Shōshū* which has its head temple at Taiseki-ji. There are many reasons why this organization violates the true teaching of Saint

日蓮宗では、今どんなことが行われていますか

西暦2002年は日蓮聖人が立教開宗されてから750年に当ります。護法運動推進の中で、その記念すべき年に向って、お題目の輪をひろげるための総弘通運動を展開しています。お題目により、人の心も社会も世界全体も浄めていこうとする運動です。

創価学会は日蓮宗ではありません

創価学会を日蓮宗と同じ宗旨だと思っている人がいますが、実は全く別のものです。たしかに両宗共、お題目「南無妙法蓮華經」を唱えています。創価学会は日蓮正宗と名乗る総本山大石寺の外廓団体です。彼等が日蓮聖人にそむいている教団である理由は、たくさんありますが代表的なものをあげますと、

(1)日蓮本仏論

日蓮聖人は、久遠実成の釈迦牟尼仏を本尊とすべし、とはっきり本尊を定めているのに、日蓮正宗創価学会は釈迦は過去

Nichiren;

the two principal examples being:

1) Saint Nichiren as the Eternal Buddha:

Saint Nichiren claimed clearly that Śākyamuni Buddha's enlightenment in the remote past and attainment of eternal Buddhahood must be worshipped as the mainstay (Honzon) of our faith. But, *Soka Gakkai* regards Śākyamuni as a cast-off historical Buddha of the immediate past, Saint Nichiren being the Buddha of the enlightenment attained countless eons ago.

2) The denial of Mt. Minobu:

Saint Nichiren said to his followers: "All my disciples and lay followers must never fail to make a pilgrimage to this sanctuary as it is the supreme source of faith. My soul will reside here on Mt. Minobu forever." As a dying wish, Saint Nichiren asked that his grave be erected on Mt. Minobu no matter where he passed away. In compliance with his will, *Nichiren-shū* continues to this day to preserve Mt. Minobu. However, *Soka Gakkai* claims that neither the Saint's bones nor his grave is on Mt. Minobu. Such claim is in fact trampling on the words of Saint Nichiren.

Finally, it is only *Nichiren-shū* which faithfully advocates purely the teaching of Saint Nichiren. It is the one and only heir to the task of protecting this legacy of over 700 years.

の仏でぬけ殻だといひ、日蓮聖人こそ久遠実成の本仏だといふのです。

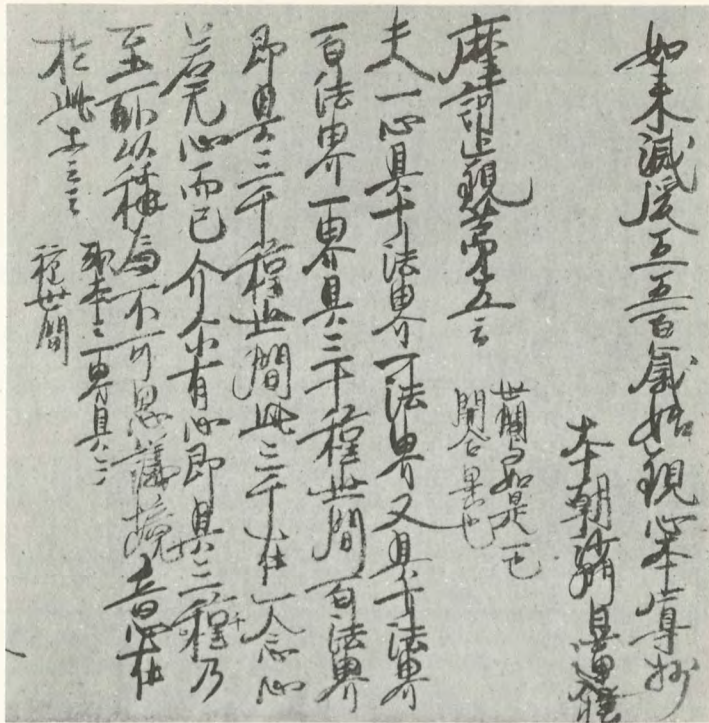
(2)身延否定論

日蓮聖人は「たとえいづくにて死に候とも墓をば身延山に建てさせ給え。未来際までも心は身延山に住むべく候。」と遺言されました。日蓮宗はこのご遺言にもとづき、今日迄身延山を守り続けております。然るに創価学会はこれを否定していますが、それは日蓮聖人の仰せにそむく言動といわねばなりません。日蓮宗は日蓮聖人のみ教えを正しく受け継ぎ、700年の伝統を守ってきた唯一無二の嫡流です。

◎日蓮聖人の略年譜

1222 (Jō 1)	He was born at Kominato in Chiba Prefecture.
1253 (Kenchō 5)	After fourteen studies of various Buddhist thought systems, he declared the establishment of the Nichiren faith. The saint was 32 at this time.
1260 (Bun-ō 1)	Composition of his <i>Risshō Ankoku-ron</i> at the age of 39.
1260 (Bun-ō 1)	At Matsubagayatsu Saint Nichiren was attacked and his hermitage burnt.
1261 (Kōchō 1)	The saint was banished to Itō on the Izu Peninsula.
1264 (Bun-ei 1)	At Komatsubara, Saint Nichiren was attacked by a group of warriors belonging to the lord of the fief, Tōjō Kagenobu.
1271 (Bun-ei 8)	It was at the Tatsu-no-kuchi execution grounds that, on the point of being beheaded, Saint Nichiren was saved by an omen. He was subsequently banished to Sado Island. And there, he compiled the <i>Kaimokusho</i> , <i>Kanjin-Honzonsho</i> , and first inscribed the great Maṇḍala : <i>Namu-myōhō-rengē-kyō</i> .
1274 (Bun-ei 11)	Pardoned from his banishment to Sado Island, Saint Nichiren returned to Kamakura, then went to Mt. Minobu.
1282 (Kōan 5)	Saint Nichiren left Mt. Minobu for Ikegami, and at the age of 61 passed away in the Ikegami Munenaka's house at Musashi-no-Kuni.

1222年(貞応1年)	千葉県小湊でご誕生。
1253年(建長5年)	比叡山等八宗兼学され立教開宗を宣言される。(32才)
1260年(文応1年)	「立正安国論」献上。松葉ヶ谷草庵焼討に遭う。(39才)
1261年(弘長1年)	伊豆伊東へ流さる。(40才)
1264年(文永1年)	小松原にて地頭東条景信一行の襲撃を受く。(43才)
1271年(文永8年)	龍ノ口刑場にて首の座に坐るも奇瑞により助かり、佐渡ヶ島へ配流され(50才)、「開目抄」(51才)「観心本尊抄」(52才)等を著わされ大曼荼羅を始めて図顕される。(52才)
1274年(文永11年)	佐渡流罪を赦され鎌倉にもどられ身延山へ入られる。(53才)
1282年(弘安5年)	身延山を出で武蔵の国、池上宗仲の館にてお亡くなりになる。(61才)



The *Kanjin-Honzon-shō* Masterpiece

The most important work of Saint Nichiren, written on April 25, 1273 at Sado Island. At this time the saint was 52. In this, he explained the observation of mind and the true mainstay of worship.

観心本尊抄

聖人佐渡配流中に著わされた畢生の書。文永十年(1273年)4月25日、御年52才の作。観心の法門は妙法蓮華經の五字の題目であり、信仰の対象は十界互具の本尊であることを明かす。

A picture on both front and back covers is one scene of Saint Nichiren's execution at Tatsu-no-kuchi, cited from *The Nichiren Shōnin Chūgasan*, a famous annotated pictorial eulogy of Saint Nichiren.

表紙の画は日蓮聖人註画讃「竜口法難図」による。

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