

Words to the Wise: DEATH

Nam-myoho-renge-kyo will be your unbreakable staff to take you safely over the mountains of death. ("The Swords of Good and Evil," The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 124)

From SGI President Ikeda:

* We need to cultivate a life where we thoroughly enjoy ourselves at all times. We should have such joy that, even at the time of death, we can declare with a happy smile: "That was wonderful! Where shall I go next?" This is the mind of a person with strong faith. Such individuals will be reborn without delay and in a form and place exactly according with their desires. (Sept. 5, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 8)

* The state of mind with which we meet death will greatly influence the course of our lives over eternity. The cornerstone of Buddhism is the solution it offers to the problems of life and death. Granted, if one is unconcerned about how one dies or dismisses any connection between this existence and the next, then there probably isn't any need to practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. But the truth is that life is eternal, that our existence continues after we die. Moreover, during the latent stage of death before rebirth, we cannot change our lives' essence; we cannot carry out Buddhist practice. Only while we are alive can we practice Buddhism. (July 11, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 13)

* Death will come to each of us some day. We can die having fought hard for our beliefs and convictions, or we can die having failed to do so. Since the reality of death is the same in either case, isn't it far better that we set out on our journey toward the next existence in high spirits and with a bright smile on our faces? Knowing that in everything we did, we did the best we could, and thrilling with the thought "That was truly an interesting life"? (Oct. 24, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 11)

* I am confident that all of our comrades who have died in this century will, based on the principle of the eternity of life, once more resume their place in our movement, ready to fulfill a new mission in a new era. (Dec. 26, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 9)

* Buddhism teaches that death is but an expedient means — that life itself continues. Our day begins with an invigorating awakening. And at night we lay our tired bodies down for their much-deserved rest. Refreshed by sleep, we wake again the next morning with renewed energy. Viewed in terms of life's eternity, death is the first step of the journey to a new existence. (Nov. 7, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 10)