

Ikeda Wisdom Academy
Fourth Class Review (2019–2021)

Congratulations on participating in the fourth class of the Ikeda Wisdom Academy!

Buddhist study is a vital part of maintaining a consistent and strong Buddhist practice and an ever-deepening faith. Ikeda Sensei reinforces this point, stating: “By strengthening our faith through Buddhist study, our prayers will be filled with gratitude and joy, enabling us to tap, freely and powerfully, the benefit of the Gohonzon” (August 2017 *Living Buddhism*, p. 47).

This open-book review consists of questions based on key passages from Nichiren Daishonin’s writings “On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime” and “The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life,” and Ikeda Sensei’s lecture series on these two writings. For each question, please read the passage given and write your answer in response to the prompt. Please complete and submit the review by 11:59pm PT on Saturday, February 6.

At the end of this session, your initial review result will appear as 0%. Please do not worry as you will receive your results in the coming weeks!

Thank you for all the efforts you are making in developing your Buddhist practice as a youth leader in the SGI-USA!

Question 1: “On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime”

“You must never think that any of the eighty thousand sacred teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha’s lifetime or any of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions and three existences are outside yourself. Your practice of the Buddhist teachings will not relieve you of the sufferings of birth and death in the least unless you perceive the true nature of your life. If you seek enlightenment outside yourself, then your performing even ten thousand practices and ten thousand good deeds will be in vain. It is like the case of a poor man who spends night and day counting his neighbor’s wealth but gains not even half a coin. That is why the T’ien-t’ai school’s commentary states, “Unless one perceives the nature of one’s life, one cannot eradicate one’s grave offenses.” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pp. 3–4)

- Regarding this passage Ikeda Sensei states, “Practicing Nichiren Buddhism means not being swayed this way and that; it means constructing a self that is solid and resolute like towering Mount Fuji. But if we neglect this task and focus our energies somewhere else, before we’re even aware of it, we can end up veering onto the path of externally seeking the Law.” Sensei’s lecture outlines five signs of externally seeking the Law. Please list one and share your own experience in challenging it. (Max: 250 words)

Question 2: “On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime”

“A mind now clouded by the illusions of the innate darkness of life is like a tarnished mirror, but when polished, it is sure to become like a clear mirror, reflecting the essential nature of phenomena [i.e., the Dharma nature] and the true aspect of reality. Arouse deep faith, and diligently polish your mirror day and night. How should you polish it? Only by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 4)

- In the above passage, Nichiren Daishonin urges us to “diligently” polish our mirror. Please explain how Ikeda Sensei defines “diligent practice” in his lecture on this passage. Can you briefly share an example of how you transformed a situation through diligent practice? (Max: 250 words)

Question 3: “The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life”

“Shakyamuni Buddha who attained enlightenment countless kalpas ago, the Lotus Sutra that leads all people to Buddhahood, and we ordinary human beings are in no way different or separate from one another. To chant Myoho-renge-kyo with this realization is to inherit the ultimate Law of life and death. This is a matter of the utmost importance for Nichiren’s disciples and lay supporters, and this is what it means to embrace the Lotus Sutra.” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 216)

- Based on Ikeda Sensei’s lecture, please explain what it means to chant Myoho-renge-kyo with the realization that we are in no way different or separate from the Buddha and the Law. What does this passage mean to you? And how are you striving to apply it in your life? (Max: 250 words)

Question 4: “The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life”

“All disciples and lay supporters of Nichiren should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the spirit of many in body but one in mind, transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim. This spiritual bond is the basis for the universal transmission of the ultimate Law of life and death. Herein lies the true goal of Nichiren’s propagation. When you are so united, even the great desire for widespread propagation [kosen-rufu] can be fulfilled. But if any of Nichiren’s disciples disrupt the unity of many in body but one in mind, they would be like warriors who destroy their own castle from within.” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 217)

- How does Ikeda Sensei explain the phrases “all differences” and “one in mind”? How can you apply this understanding of “transcending all differences” and being “one in mind” to your own life? (Max: 250 words)

Fourth Class Completion Survey

Thank you for participating in the fourth class of the Ikeda Wisdom Academy! This question is mandatory in completing the review, but your answer will not affect your grade.

- What was your biggest takeaway from participating in Ikeda Wisdom Academy activities? (Max: 250 words)
- Do you have any suggestions on how to improve Ikeda Wisdom Academy activities? (Max: 250 words)