

Buddhists

With the broadening of British culture, non-Christian denominations have begun to appear in the parish. There seems to be no local tradition of organized Judaism or Islam, but an active Buddhist group has been meeting regularly in the village since about 1989. It follows the practice of Nichiren Daishonin, a thirteenth-century priest who, on seeing his country overwhelmed with corruption, disruption and suffering, advised the return to the last essential teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha, as laid down in *The Lotus Sutra*. Through the practice of this Buddhism they believe a transformation of character may be achieved in an individual, leading ultimately to a profound inner peace and happiness. Because of the oneness of mind and body, of the self and its environment, this inner harmony will in time lead towards world peace and happiness.

The spiritual aspirations of our local Buddhists maintain a local tradition going back over 370 years of fostering religious movements that fall outside the Anglican mainstream. Nowadays some locals say they have become Buddhists because they feel that the Christian churches have acquired layers of ceremonial and hierarchy that obstruct the expression of religious truth as once expressed by Christ; these sentiments are exactly the same as those expressed by successive generations of Protestant dissenters before them.

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References:

John Pickering: "The Buddhists of Hook Norton," notes at Village Museum.