

ON FAITH

With Reverend Raido Hirota

Translated and edited by Udumbara Foundation volunteers



Reverend Hirota (RH): Before we discuss what faith is, we must first talk about what it is we believe in. We must first talk about Buddhism. People typically believe that Buddhism is what Shakyamuni Buddha taught. Everyone believes that the Buddha taught that anybody and everybody can become a Buddha if they follow the practice of Buddhism. But Buddhism is not the Buddha's teachings. Buddhism is about how to become a Buddha. The purpose of Buddhism is to awaken the Buddha-nature in all of us. This is the essential point.

Faith, therefore, is heart -- spirit. Each *kanji* character (Chinese character) carries many different meanings and many pronunciations for the same character. The *kanji* for *Namu* of *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo* carries the meaning of "the heart of the believer." Returning the life or the spirit to Buddha is what *Namu* indicates. *Namu* has a deeper meaning than faith. It means that Buddha is within you, and you return your life to the Buddha. *Namu* means returning Buddha to oneself. It is both beyond you and in you. By practicing Buddhism, we awaken or restore the Buddha-nature -- Buddha-spirit -- that has always been within us.

Faith is giving one's life to *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo*, while *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo* is one's life itself. It's a circle. Your life is *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo* and *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo* is life

itself. *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo* is using your life for *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo*, and *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo* is your life. *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo* is using your life to further yourself, while at the same time it is also using your life for *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo*. It is for *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo* that we use our lives. That is faith.