

ON THE THREE GREAT SECRET LAWS

Reverend Raidō Hirota

QUESTION: Why is it called the Three Great Secret Laws (*Sandai Hiho*)? What is the secret? Is the secret that it is hidden deep within the depths of the Lotus Sutra? Or is there some other secret?

Reverend Raidō Hirota: The Three Great Secret Laws (*Sandai Hiho*) consists of the object of devotion of the essential teaching (*honmon-no-honzon*), chanting of daimoku of the essential teaching (*honmon-no-daimoku*), and the sanctuary of the essential teaching (*honmon-no-kaidan*). At the core of the Three Great Secret Laws is the One Great Secret Law, which is the eternal Law of Namu-myoho-renge-kyo that Nichiren Daishonin embodied in the form of a mandala as the object of devotion of the essential teaching. Thus, “essential teaching” refers to the teaching of Namu-myoho-renge-kyo, which is the glory of the Lotus Sutra.

Nichiren Daishonin said in “Questions and Answers on the Object of Worship (*Honzon no Mondo Sho*), “They should make the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra their object of worship.” In “Toki Nyudo Dono Gohenji” Daishonin said, “the one great reason why all Buddhas come into this world is to teach us that every living thing has the life of Buddha within it.” The Hoben-pon (2nd chapter of the Lotus Sutra) teaches *kai ji go nyu* (open, show, reveal, and cause to enter the Buddha Way) for the enlightenment of all living beings. The Buddha admitted that the reason he came to this world was because he had a mission and a responsibility. (The word “admit” is used because the Buddha said, “I was an ordinary person like you, and then I became a Buddha. So all people can become Buddha too.”) Nichiren Daishonin created the Great Secret Laws as a way to show people how ordinary people can become aware that they and every living thing contains the Buddha spirit. Shakyamuni could not manifest the true object of worship, but Nichiren Daishonin did manifesting the One Great Secret Law in the abstract as Gohonzon.

There is no “secret” to the teaching of the Lotus Sutra, which is that every living thing has the Buddha’s life. There are no secrets about the Law. Everything is written in the teaching. However, the term *secret* is used because people usually have difficulty realizing this fact, and that is mainly because of our failure to maintain our faith in the teaching. As an example, the way a Japanese sushi chef uses a knife may seem mysterious to the human eye because the untrained cannot see or recognize the techniques that the chef is using. So people think it’s a secret. But it’s not. The chefs are demonstrating their techniques right in front of us.