

WHAT IS NAMU-MYŌHŌ-REN-GE-KYŌ

By Reverend Raido Hirota



Namu means “I am going to believe that *Myōhōrengekyō* is my life.”

Myō means mysterious—mystery. It comes from *Myōhō*. The Buddha had a mission to teach that even though we humans have doubt, have wrong thinking, or are unable to control our personality, we can still become Buddha. His mission was to teach and explain to humans that everybody—every living thing—can be a Buddha. This is what *Myōhōrengekyō* means: that all living things can become Buddha. *Myō* specifically expresses this mystery.

Hō means Law. The Law is called *Myōhō* because it is the Law that teaches this mystery that all living things can become Buddha.

Renge. To explain the mystery of *Myōhō* to human beings, the Buddha used the metaphor of the lotus flower, which is an exquisite, noble and sacred object. It is used to express that human beings, as well as all life, have the life of Buddha, and therefore every life is as honorable as the Buddha’s life.

Human beings believe that when you die your life is over—terminated—that's it. This is what most humans think. At the center of the lotus blossom are the seeds which are the next generation—the next life. The seeds and the blossom of the lotus flower exist at the same time, before the blossom withers and dies. The blossom of the exquisite lotus flower is the actual result, and its seeds are the reason it exists, or the cause of its existence. The cause and the effect are united, or exist simultaneously. This is what is so special and unique about the lotus flower. That is why this noble and sacred flower is used as a metaphor to describe the Law. In life, there is cause and result every day. Everyday life consists of cause and effect. And life will continue like this forever. Even after you die, life will continue forever. And cause and effect will continue forever. Eternal life is expressed through the lotus flower which signifies the perpetuity of reason (cause) and result (effect).

The lotus flower grows with its roots grounded in mud. Every night it sinks into the muddy water, then emerges each morning without a trace of muck, and produces a beautiful flower despite its murky conditions. Human beings are like this too. We tend to blame others—parents, siblings, society—for our conditions and hardships. We place the blame on others or on other external factors. But the message symbolized by the lotus flower is that even if you are growing or living in an impure world, full of dirt and ugliness, you should believe in *Myōhō* (the Mystic Law) so that, despite your conditions, or the condition of the world, because you have the Buddha inside you, you are not getting dirty. Instead, you can bloom as beautiful as the beautiful lotus flower, that is exquisite despite its conditions.

Every life—all living things—has at its core a beautiful lotus flower, no matter what kind of life it is. This is the basis of life. So, every living thing must believe that they have within themselves this beautiful flower that is the foundation of their life. You have to realize this. You have to realize that every life has the Buddha's life, which is what the lotus flower represents. This is the teaching of *Namumyōhōrengekyō*.