

**BACK TO THE BASICS**  
**THE ONENESS OF PERSON AND LAW**  
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When we look at the large characters down the center of the Gohonzon, we are looking at one of the most revolutionary religious statements ever made. The bold words “Nam-myoho-renge-kyo — Nichiren,” the expression of the Buddhist principle of the oneness of Person and Law, gave the world a completely new idea of what humanity should revere and devote themselves to.

In the Japan of Nichiren Daishonin’s time, the Buddhist establishment taught people to worship Shakyamuni and other Buddhas (the Person) as superhuman beings who dispensed good fortune and salvation. Such deification, however, completely contradicted the Buddha’s intent. Shakyamuni was, first and foremost, a human being who awakened to the truth that his life was the universe. All of his preaching aimed at urging everyone he met to follow their own path and discover their own true selves, so that they could enjoy the same enlightenment.

But over time, his true teachings became obscured with various dogmas of subsequent teachers, who, whether intentionally or not, started making Shakyamuni out to be not just a special human being, which he was, but a supreme being, a god of gods. While there may have been some comfort in believing that an all-compassionate Buddha looked down upon us, Shakyamuni the human being was dispensed with. People stopped believing that they could attain Buddhahood, too.

The Daishonin dared to bring Shakyamuni’s humanity back to the fore, reminding everyone that the Buddha was a person who practiced the Law. He then clarified that Law as Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, embodied in the Person, Nichiren. When he writes “I, Nichiren, have inscribed my life in sumi ink” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 412), he is indicating that the Gohonzon actualizes the oneness of Person and Law, the Buddhahood inside of us.

Just having Buddhahood as our inherent true identity, however, does not mean we have attained or manifested that life-condition. To understand intellectually that we are the Buddha is not the same as experiencing true oneness.

To help us achieve this oneness with the Law, the Daishonin gave us the Gohonzon, with his statement “Nam-myoho-renge-kyo — Nichiren” front and center. The Daishonin’s life and Nam-myoho-renge-kyo were one, which he proved with every action he took. His actions also show us the path to oneness, for if we practice as the Daishonin did, we, too, can attain oneness.

“The strength of mind to be determined to help the suffering become happy and to accomplish kosen-rufu is most respectable,” explains SGI President Ikeda. “This is what it means to be at one with the Law. ... When we focus on the widespread propagation of the Mystic Law and devote our lives to realizing this goal, we become one with the Mystic Law in both body and mind. In a broad sense, we enter the path of oneness of the Person and the Law” (December 1999 *Living Buddhism*, p. 21).

So as we chant to the Go-honzon, “Nam-myoho-renge-kyo — Nichiren” becomes for us both a challenge to bring out our best and an assurance that we can do so, thereby creating a revolution not just in religious philosophy but in our lives — a revolution that is the only sure way to peace and happiness for all.