

The Five Elements of the Universe

January 6, 2013

Happy New Year! This is the first Sunday Service of 2013. The renovation of our new temple property is still under the hand of the Planning Committee of the City of Las Vegas. The second revised floor and parking plans were turned into the city before Christmas vacation, but the city office was open only four days during the last two weeks because of holidays and Friday is the day off for city workers. Our general contractor will start to work as soon as the permit for renovation is granted. Until completion of the renovation and the use permit of the building is given to us, we have to hold our services and study class here quietly. Unfortunately, there is no Sunday service here until the first Sunday of February, but we will have Study Class on every Wednesday night. So please plan to attend.

Our life is always up and down; and happiness and unhappiness come and go. It is the reality of our lives. During the times of happiness and unhappiness, joyfulness and sadness, we chant, "NAMU MYOHO RENGE KYO." Though we know that basic meaning of the Odaimoku is, "I devote myself to the teaching of the Lotus Sutra", I would like to explain more on the reasons why we chant it.

A very devoted follower and medical advisor of Nichiren Dai'Shonin, Shijo Kingo, was laid off twice and asked his master for advice. Nichiren wrote to him: "Even if any hardship comes to you; do not worry because the wise men and the saints also faced many hardships. Accept hardship as hardship, joyfulness as joyfulness, and chant 'Namu Myoho Renge Kyo' always with your wife. Have strong faith in the Lotus Sutra, and then you will enjoy real happiness."

Nichiren also said that the universe is composed of five elements: soil, water, fire, metal, and plant. These five elements are also the five characters of Myo, Ho, Ren, Ge, and Kyo. He also teaches us that our environment and our body are composed of the same five universal elements. Though obviously our bodies are composed of blood, muscles, bones, meat/flesh, skin and hair, they are also composed of minerals and vitamins and proteins. When we inhale

and exhale, it is the element of lungs. The heart has been pumping without stop since we were born. It is element of blood. The five senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching reach our brain through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body. Each of these sensory organs can be applied to Myo, Ho, Ren, Ge, and Kyo.

Each character of the Myo-Ho-Ren-Ge-Kyo relates to the five elements of the Universe; the five locations (North, South, East, West, and the center); the five sensory organs; five elements of the body; and the five digits of our hand (the thumb and four fingers). When we chant "Namu Myo-Ho-Ren-Ge-Kyo, the five elements of the body make harmonious connection with the five elements of Universe. Therefore chanting the *Odaimoku* will make our bodies in balance and harmony. That means you will have good health and happiness. Let us appreciate the five elements of universe and chant "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo". Then, the *Odaimoku* will attract more good fortune throughout this year.

Now, I have one request of you: to share your good fortune with others. If you do not share this fortune with others, your faith is a religion of the ego-self. It is not the way of Bodhisattva. Holding the service at my home is against the rule of the city code; therefore, we have to do it quietly, not telling others. However, when we move to the new location, please tell others to visit our temple on 1600 E. Sahara Avenue and let them experience what Buddhism is. I hope that in this year after moving to the new location, you will share this Wonderful Dharma (妙法) with others.