

## Glossary: Soka Gakkai worldview traditions

This glossary is also available on our website. We also have an accompanying in-depth subject knowledge essay, available both on our website and for download.

[In-depth subject knowledge essay](#)

[Glossary](#)

### Gohonzon

**DEFINITION:** A paper scroll inscribed with the words Nam-myoho-renge-kyo nichiren. This is given during the Gojukai ceremony, which takes place after a prospective member of Soka Gakkai has been practising gongyo for a few months.

### Gojukai

**DEFINITION:** A ceremony held after a prospective member of Soka Gakkai has been practising gongyo for a few months. Gojukai means 'to take the precepts'.

During the ceremony, they receive their own Gohonzon replica, which is a paper scroll inscribed with the words Nam-myoho-renge-kyo nichiren.

### Gongyo

**ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS:** Gongyō

**DEFINITION:** The literal meaning is assiduous practice. Followers of Soka Gakkai do this each morning and evening. Gongyo refers specifically to the recitation of part of the Lotus Sutra and the chanting of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

### Karma

**DEFINITION:** The idea that our moral deeds in our present lives would determine the circumstances of our rebirth. However, in Soka Gakkai, this is slightly different to other forms of Buddhism.

The Lotus Sutra teaches that one is already enlightened, "the essential nature of our lives at any moment is that of a Buddha", a state also known as "Buddhahood" and as "awakening to the greater self" (SGI 2015). When this is realised, life can be lived full of joy and purpose, with the primary purpose being to awaken others to their Buddha nature.

### Lotus Sutra

**ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS:** Saddharma Pundarika Sutra

**DEFINITION:** A major Mahayana scripture, which is the central scripture for Soka Gakkai followers and other Nichiren Buddhists.

### **Nam-myoho-renge-kyo**

**ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS:** Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō

**DEFINITION:** A mantra that is chanted by members of the Soka Gakkai movement. The mantra is nam (to dedicate one's life), myoho (life and death, or the enlightened Buddha and the ordinary person, as a single entity), renga (lotus flower, which produces seeds and flowers together, and so represents the simultaneity of cause and effect) and kyo (sutra or teaching).

### **O daimoku**

**ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS:** Daimoku

**DEFINITION:** The daily chanting of the phrase Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. This is the main practice followers engage in with Soka Gakkai.

### **Soka Gakkai**

**ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS:** SGI, Soka Gakkai International

**DEFINITION:** A new Japanese religious movement based on Nichiren Buddhism. Soka Gakkai started as an educational reform movement, emerging in Japan between the First and Second World Wars.