

Guidance from Sixty-eighth High Priest Nichinyo Shonin
On the Occasion of the February Kōsen-rufu Shōdai Ceremony
February 5, 2017
Reception Hall, Head Temple Taisekiji

On this occasion of the February Kōsen-rufu Shōdai Ceremony, conducted here today at the Head Temple, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the large number of participants in attendance.

As you know, February is the month when our founder, Nichiren Daishonin, was born.

On February 16 in the first year of Jō'ō (1222), Nichiren Daishonin made his advent into this world, which had been prophesized in the Lotus Sutra. The Daishonin's transient status was [the reincarnation of] Bodhisattva Jōgyō (Superior Practice), while his true identity is the True Buddha from the infinite past of *kuon-ganjo*. The purpose of his advent was to lead all living beings in the Latter Day of the Law to enter the Buddhist path and enable them to attain Buddhahood in one's present form, through Myoho-Renge-Kyo of sowing the seed of the true cause.

The Daishonin teaches the following in the Goshō, *Letter to Jakunichi-bō* (Jakunichi bō-goshō):

The sutra states, “Just as the sunlight or the moonlight dispels the darkness, this person will practice [Myoho-Renge-Kyo] in the world and eliminate [the fundamental] darkness of all living beings.” Carefully ponder on the meaning of these words. “This person will practice [Myoho-Renge-Kyo] in the world” means that Bodhisattva Jōgyō makes his advent in the first five hundred years of the Latter Day of the Law, reveals the light of the five characters of Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo, and illuminates the fundamental darkness and the darkness of earthly desires. (Goshō, p. 1393)

We must correctly embrace the great aspiration of our founder Nichiren Daishonin—saving all living beings in the Latter Day of the Law. Then, we must do shakubuku—refuting heresy and revealing the truth—based on the spirit of *itai dōshin*, as we aim toward the achievement of the propagation of the Law throughout the entire world. Herein lies the most important mission for both the priesthood and laity of Nichiren Shoshu.

In the Goshō, *Reply to Soya* (Soya dono-gohenji), the Daishonin teaches the following:

If a priest and his followers become aware of an enemy of Buddhism, and let the slanderer be, without reproaching him, there is no doubt that all of them will fall into the hell of incessant suffering. (Goshō, p. 1040)

The Daishonin strictly admonishes that if a priest and his followers see someone committing a slander but do not carry out shakubuku to this person, then both the priest and his followers definitely will fall into the hell of incessant suffering.

Thus, no matter what adversity or obstacle may arise, it is important that each of us courageously do shakubuku, etching into our hearts the following golden words:

In the Latter Day of the Law, Nichiren and his followers will encounter adversity when they practice Myoho-Renge-Kyo, but they should understand that actually, it is peace and pleasure.

(*Gosho*, p. 1762)

It is essential that both the priesthood and laity make concerted efforts, in the spirit of *itai dōshin*, and advance forth, aiming toward the achievement of our goal.

Today, many people suffer the greatest misery due to the poison of slander of evil doctrines and sects, including the Soka Gakkai.

We must resolutely point out the errors of their merciless, evil deeds—deceiving the people’s minds and separating them from the correct faith. Then, we must save these many straying people.

This year is “The Year to do Shakubuku, develop your faith, and help others develop their faith and practice.”

If you achieve shakubuku, you must help the new member to engage in his or her daily practice and grow to become a full-fledged Nichiren Shoshu believer. The responsibility lies with the chapter, as well as with the person who achieved shakubuku.

If you achieve shakubuku and do nothing more for the new believer, it is like giving birth to a baby but not taking care of the child afterwards. There is no act more heartless than this. Moreover, if you neglect helping a new member develop their faith and practice, you lack a sense of responsibility.

Therefore, the sponsor who achieved shakubuku must make concerted efforts, together with the other members of the chapter, to help a new believer to be able to conduct daily Gongyo, participate in the Oko Ceremony, make a tozan pilgrimage to the Head Temple, and practice shakubuku. Herein lies the significance of “The Year to do Shakubuku, develop your faith, and help others develop their faith and practice.”

I wish that you will engrave this into your minds. Then, upholding the will of our founder Nichiren Daishonin, I hope that you will exert your utmost efforts to propagate the mystic Law and help others develop their faith, based on the noble mission of saving all living beings. I sincerely hope that you will devote yourselves to your practice more than ever, as we aim toward our goal—the establishment of a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by 2021, when we will commemorate the 800th Anniversary of the Advent of our Founder Nichiren Daishonin.