

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

On this occasion of the March 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.

The month of March already has begun in this “The Year to do shakubuku, develop your faith, and help others develop their faith and practice.”

I imagine that all of you are devoting yourselves to your practice, day and night, aiming toward the achievement of this year’s shakubuku goal.

The practice of shakubuku is our important mission, which was given to us by our Founder Nichiren Daishonin, the True Buddha in the Latter Day of the Law. Furthermore, it is the most important Buddhist practice, and essential for us to achieve the attainment of Buddhahood in this lifetime.

The Daishonin teaches the following in the Gosho, *Reply to the Wife of Abutsu-bō* (Abutsu bō ama gozen-gohenji):

Whether or not one refutes slander, will determine whether or not one will be able to free oneself from the grave karmic sins that one committed in the past. One’s own negative karma can be eradicated if one teaches true Buddhism to others. However, if one sees and hears slander and does not denounce it, then one’s two virtues of correct sight and hearing immediately will deteriorate, and one will become a merciless and heartless individual. The Great Teacher Zhangan stated, “If you associate with those [who slander the true Law] and lack the compassion to correct them, then you are, in fact, their enemy.” It is extremely difficult to eradicate a sin as grave as this. The most important thing is to have a strong mind of benefitting others. (Gosho, p. 906)

The negative cause of not conducting shakubuku toward a slanderer is extremely serious. The Daishonin strictly admonishes that even though we can lessen our own karmic retribution through doing shakubuku, if we see slanderers but do not denounce them, we will

become “merciless and heartless individuals whose two virtues of correct sight and hearing immediately will deteriorate.”

“Two virtues of correct sight and hearing” exactly means one’s ability of seeing and hearing and the knowledge and experience gained through this ability. The Daishonin indicates that if one sees and hears slanders and neglects to correct them, this person eventually will ruin the gifts of good sight and hearing.

Thus, the Great Teacher Zhangan stated that the sin of not conducting shakubuku but instead associating with a slanderer is so grave, that this offence is difficult to eradicate. If you see those who slander the true Law, it is essential that you correct their error and shakubuku them based on compassion, and lead them to receive benefits.

Taking these passages to heart, we must understand the significance of this year’s slogan: “The Year to do shakubuku, develop your faith, and help others develop their faith and practice.” Then, it is essential that the members of each chapter unite, based on the spirit of *itai dōshin*, and conduct shakubuku.

At the same time, it is extremely important on a broader basis that the members of the entire chapter make collaborative efforts to help the new members to develop their faith and practice.

“Help others develop their faith and practice” indicates encouraging and promoting other members to become full-fledged Nichiren Shoshu believers. Even though we achieve shakubuku, if we neglect helping a new member to develop his or her faith and practice, our shakubuku will become absolutely meaningless. In order to accomplish kōsen-rufu, we need a lot of human resources. Thus, it is of paramount importance that we help the new members to develop their faith and practice to become resources for kōsen-rufu in the future. And, this responsibility lies with each chapter. This is the crucial issue that the entire chapter must make all-out efforts to tackle.

I hope that each chapter will realize how important it is to help a new member to become a full-fledged believer who will shoulder kōsen-rufu in the future. Thus, I expect that the whole chapter will gather strength and undertake this work along with shakubuku.

I sincerely wish for the further growth and development of each chapter, as well as the achievement of your goals.