

**Guidance from Sixty-eighth High Priest Nichinyo Shonin
On the Occasion of the April Kōsen-rufu Shōdai Ceremony
April 2, 2017
Reception Hall, Head Temple Taisekiji**

On this occasion of the April 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 all of you know, this is the month when our Founder, Nichiren Daishonin, the True Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law, declared the establishment of true Buddhism.

The Daishonin teaches the following in the Gosho, *On Remonstrating with Hachiman* (Kangyō hachiman-shō):

For the past twenty-eight years, from the twenty-eighth day of the fourth month of the fifth year of Kenchō (1253) through the twelfth month of this current year, the third year of Kō’an (1280), I, Nichiren, have done nothing else but one thing. That is, to dedicate myself to have all the people of Japan chant the five and seven characters of Myōho-Renge-Kyo. This act of compassion is the same as a mother trying to put milk into the mouth of her infant.

(Gosho, p. 1539)

Our Founder, Nichiren Daishonin, the True Buddha of the infinite past of *kuon-ganjo*, who made his advent into this world in the Latter Day of the Law, declared and established the true Law. The purpose of his declaration of true Buddhism, based on his deep compassion, was to give the supreme medicine of Nam-Myōho-Renge-Kyo to all living beings in the Latter Day of the Law, who suffer in the three paths of earthly desires, karma and suffering. This is like a mother who looks after her baby with loving care.

Furthermore, the Daishonin teaches the following in the Gosho, *Repaying Debts of Gratitude* (Hō’on-shō):

Since Nichiren's compassion is vast, Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo will prevail for ten thousand years and beyond into the future. It possesses the beneficial power to open the blind eyes of all the people in Japan, and it blocks the path to the hell of incessant suffering. Its benefits surpass those of the teachings of Dengyō and Tiantai, and are far superior to those of Nagarjuna and Mahakashyapa.

(*Gosho*, p. 1036)

This passage reveals that the vast and boundless benefits of Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo can save all living beings, not only during the Daishonin's lifetime, but also for ten thousand years and beyond into the future.

We must understand the true intention of the compassionate act of Nichiren Daishonin's preaching. Now is the time for each of us to chant Daimoku with an indomitable spirit and do shakubuku, aiming toward our goal in the near term—to achieve a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by 2021, the 800th Anniversary of the advent of our Founder Nichiren Daishonin. Then, as a long term goal, we must aim toward the achievement of kōsen-rufu throughout the entire world. We must be aware that this is the best way to carry out the practice that accords with the Daishonin's will.

The Daishonin teaches the following in the *Gosho*, *On the Buddha's Behavior* (Shuju onfurumai-gosho):

The five characters of Myoho-Renge-Kyo are the core of the Lotus Sutra and the origin of all Buddhas throughout the entire world. Upon seeing the signs that these five characters now must be propagated, I, Nichiren, have set the precedent, today, at the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law. My disciples, you must follow one after another and become greater than Mahakashyapa or Ananda and, moreover, surpass even the Great Teacher Tiantai or Dengyō.

(*Gosho*, p. 1057)

The Daishonin himself conducted shakubuku, based on the principle of, “One’s life is insignificant while the Law is supreme. You should be willing to give your life to propagate the Law.” When we revere his act of setting the example by taking the lead in doing shakubuku, we too, as the Daishonin’s disciples and believers, must follow in his footsteps in a decisive manner and courageously challenge ourselves in the battle to do shakubuku without any hesitation, no matter what difficulties and obstacles we may encounter.

In the Gosho, *The Selection of the Time* (Senji-shō), the Daishonin teaches the following:

Single droplets of water accumulate to form the great seas. Specks of dust pile high to form Mount Sumeru. When I, Nichiren, initially took faith in the Lotus Sutra, I was like the first drop of water and the first particle of dust in the entire nation of Japan. When two, three, ten, hundreds, thousands, ten-thousands, and hundred-millions and an infinite number of people chant the Lotus Sutra and share the teaching with others, they will compose Mount Sumeru of the final stage of enlightenment and the vast sea of great nirvana.

(*Gosho*, p. 868)

As these golden words teach, we should feel certain that if each of us who join the shakubuku battle, as a disciple and lay believer, makes a vow to save all living beings and resolutely does shakubuku, based on unity in the spirit of *itai dōshin*, we will achieve our goals without fail. Then, *kōsen-rufu* can be achieved.

In the Gosho, *Letter to the Ikegami Brothers* (Kyōdai-shō), the Daishonin teaches the following:

No matter what troubles may disturb you, regard them as fleeting as a dream and always think only of the Lotus Sutra.

(*Gosho*, p. 987)

We may have feelings of discontentment, obstacles, sufferings, difficulties, and devils both within and without. When we crush all of these negative elements with Daimoku, and courageously devote ourselves to do shakubuku, the fruit will come on its own.

Today, Nichiren Shoshu is advancing powerfully, based on unity between the priesthood and laity, aiming toward our goal—to achieve a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by 2021.

At this time, both the priests and lay believers must become as one and stand up to do shakubuku, in order to achieve our goals at any cost.

The faith and spirit of the Hokkeko believers should be the determination to save those who suffer from the poison of slander through shakubuku. This is also our mission.

I sincerely pray that you will engrave this into your hearts, and further devote yourselves to the practice for oneself and for others.