

Guidance from Sixty-eighth High Priest Nichinyo Shonin
On the Occasion of the September Kōsen-rufu Shōdai Ceremony
September 3, 2017
Reception Hall, Head Temple Taisekiji

Good morning, everyone!

On this occasion of the September 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, including those who attended the chapter tozan of each temple.

The month of September already has begun in “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 goals.

In order to achieve this year’s shakubuku goals, our shakubuku challenge in the remaining four months will be extremely important.

Some chapters already have achieved this year’s shakubuku goals. And, the members have made pilgrimages to the Head Temple in good spirits and reported their achievements to the Dai-Gohonzon. The outstanding characteristic of these chapters is the unity of the entire chapter. The members constantly are on the move in their shakubuku activities, in the spirit of *itai dōshin*.

Because the members in these chapters always are active, they are full of life. Accordingly, they produce good results. Since they achieve good outcomes, the members have smiles on their faces. This again generates a synergistic effect, which invokes great joy and energy throughout the entire chapter, providing a good influence.

The key to achieve our goals is not only for some people to conduct shakubuku, but also for all believers in the entire chapter to unite, based on the spirit of *itai dōshin*, and devote themselves to their practice like an attacking lion. This exactly is taught in the Goshō, as follows:

With the spirit of many in body, one in mind, they (the Atsuwara believers) will achieve everything.

(Many in Body, One in Mind [Itai dōshin ji], Gosho, p. 1389)

The Daishonin further teaches in the Gosho, *A Comparison between the Lotus Sutra and Other Sutras* (Shokyō to hokeyō to nan-i no koto), as follows:

When Buddhism becomes corrupted, society becomes defiled and chaotic. Buddhism is like the body and society like the shadow. When the body is twisted, so is the shadow.

(Gosho, p. 1469)

When viewed in light of the Buddhist mirror, the cause for misfortunes—including natural disasters, tragic accidents and troubles, wars and famine, corruption and confusion in politics, economics, and education—is solely due to the disorder of various religions. It is because the people believe in erroneous teachings instead of the correct Law.

Therefore, the Daishonin expounds in his Gosho as follows:

If one desires peace to reign throughout the entire nation without delay, he should first and foremost put an end to the slanders that prevail throughout the country.

*(Risshō ankoku-ron, Gosho, p. 247;
The Gosho of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 2, p. 35)*

Putting these golden words into practice and saving many people who suffer adversity due to the poison of slander is undoubtedly the noble mission given to the Hokkeko believers. Our mission also is to purify the world, save one's country, and then save the entire world through it.

Today, Nichiren Shoshu is advancing forth, with unity between the priesthood and laity, toward the establishment of a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by 2021, the 800th Anniversary of the Advent of our Founder Nichiren Daishonin. We should consider it our greatest pleasure that we are able to come across this golden opportunity. The chances are one in a million. It is essential for us to single-mindedly conduct shakubuku, so that all chapters will achieve their shakubuku goals. Furthermore, following the example of those

who achieved shakubuku and initiated a new member, the new member should in turn, stand in the shoes of his or her sponsor and do shakubuku, leading the people who suffer from the poison of slander to the true teaching.

Shakubuku is the supreme Buddhist practice. It also is the utmost practice to repay our debts of gratitude to the three treasures of true Buddhism.

Thus Twenty-sixth High Priest Nichikan Shonin taught in *Exegesis on Repaying Debts of Gratitude* (Hō'on-shō mondan):

If one can renounce an incorrect religion, one is able to repay debts of gratitude....If one propagates the true Law, one is able to show gratitude for the beneficence that he or she has received....When one does not begrudge one's life in pursuit of refuting erroneous doctrines and propagating the true Law, then all the debts of gratitude can be repaid without fail.

(*Mondan*, p. 384)

Shakubuku is precisely the supreme practice to offer appreciation in repayment of the four debts of gratitude, including the debt of gratitude owed to the three treasures.

We must bear in mind that the true practice of repaying debts of gratitude, for the priesthood and laity of Nichiren Shoshu, is to follow the great compassion of the Daishonin, who established the Dai-Gohonzon of the Three Great Secret Laws, and then put shakubuku into practice—refuting heresy and revealing the truth—based on our faith of not begrudging our lives.

At the same time, thanks to those who taught us about Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism through shakubuku, we were able to encounter this Dai-Gohonzon. So, we must offer sincere appreciation and repay our debts of gratitude to them.

In the Buddhist view, we can offer our appreciation and gratitude to those who led us to Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism by conducting shakubuku ourselves, for the sake of the people who do not yet know about the great Law, and teach them about the Daishonin's Buddhism, the secret Law that will save all living beings. In other words, shakubuku is the supreme act of repaying debts of gratitude.

Today, all the priests and the members of all Hokkeko chapters of Nichiren Shoshu throughout the country are devoting themselves to their practice day and night, with unity between the priesthood and laity, as we aim toward our goal—to achieve a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by 2021. At this very time, it is most important that each of us be aware of what must be done now. Then, the members of each chapter must courageously step forward to do shakubuku with concerted efforts. With these efforts, we must achieve our shakubuku goals, which we vowed to achieve in front of the Gohonzon.

I sincerely wish that all of you will do shakubuku throughout the remaining four months of this year, so that you will have no regrets. Then, every single member will be able to repay the debt of gratitude for the vast and boundless compassion of the Dai-Gohonzon.