

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

Good morning, everyone!

On this occasion of the November 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, today, Nichiren Shoshu is powerfully moving forward with unity between the priesthood and laity, based on the spirit of *itai dōshin*, aiming toward our goal—to achieve a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by 2021, when we will be commemorating the 800th Anniversary of the advent of our Founder, Nichiren Daishonin.

We have only two months remaining this year. We are now in the crucial stage toward the achievement of our goals.

The Daishonin teaches the following in the Goshō, *Attaining Enlightenment at the Initial Stage of Faith through the Lotus Sutra* (Hokke shoshin jōbutsu-shō):

If they hear the Lotus Sutra, which enables people to attain Buddhahood, this [encounter] will sow the seed of [Buddhahood] into their lives and they eventually will attain enlightenment without fail. Therefore, Tiantai and Miaole follow this notion and expound in their commentaries that they should tirelessly teach the Lotus Sutra. It is like those who falter and fall to the ground and who are able to use that very ground to push themselves up to stand again. In the same way, even if they descend into hell, they will rise again before long and attain Buddhahood. The people in the world today have turned their backs on the Lotus Sutra and, for that offense, they will undoubtedly fall into hell. Therefore, in any case, one should strongly teach and make people listen to the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. Those who follow and take faith in it will be able to attain

enlightenment, and even those who slander it will likewise attain Buddhahood in the end through the poison-drum relationship. In any case, the seed of Buddhahood can be found nowhere other than the Lotus Sutra.

(*Gosho*, p. 1316)

As you know, this Gosho passage teaches the benefits of a reverse relationship. Those who hear the Lotus Sutra with their ears, even if they do not believe in it and turn their backs on it, will receive the same benefit of having the seed of Buddhahood sown into their lives. This seed eventually will mature and lead the people to attain Buddhahood without fail.

Thus, following this notion, both Tiantai and Miaole expounded that we should tirelessly teach the Lotus Sutra.

The people in the Latter Day of the Law are those without the seed of Buddhahood. Even though they might not directly slander the Lotus Sutra, they nevertheless are unknowingly committing the offense of slandering the Lotus Sutra, due to the poison of slander. As the passage indicates, “in any case, one should strongly teach and make people listen to the teachings of the Lotus Sutra.” Thus, it is important for us to refute slander and strongly teach the Lotus Sutra to others.

The Daishonin teaches the following in the Gosho, *On Discerning Cause and Effect in the Ten Worlds* (Jippōkai myō inga-shō):

Even good people, who are not greedy and do not commit other sins, will fall into the world of hunger if they commit slanders, or if they unknowingly come to believe in slanderous teachings by closely associating with slanderers. Only a man of wisdom understands this. We certainly must be fearful.

(*Gosho*, p. 208)

No matter how good a person may be, if he or she becomes friendly with a slanderer and does not conduct shakubuku, then before being aware of it, such an individual will become deeply influenced by the slanderer and will end up committing the same offense of slandering the Law. In order to avoid this, it is

essential that we strongly teach and make others listen to the Lotus Sutra. This is because those who take faith in it will attain enlightenment and even those who slander it will also attain Buddhahood through their poison-drum relationship. Furthermore, we ourselves also will be able to walk the Buddhist path of attaining Buddhahood without committing slander.

Here, what is referred to as the “Lotus Sutra” is Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo, of the meaning hidden in the depths of the Life Span chapter of the essential teaching, the core of the Lotus Sutra.

Thus, the Daishonin teaches the following in the Gosho, *The True Object of Worship* (Kanjin no honzon-shō):

The practices that Shakyamuni carried out and the virtues he consequently acquired are all contained in the five characters of Myoho-Renge-Kyo. If we embrace these characters, the same virtues that Shakyamuni gained will naturally be bestowed upon us.

(*Gosho*, p. 653)

The Daishonin further states the following in the Gosho, *Questions and Answers between a Sage and a Foolish man* (Shōgu mondō-shō):

This means that by the single practice of taking faith in Myoho-Renge-Kyo, there are no benefits that will not be drawn to you, and there are no benefits that will fail to come, and no good causes that will fail to be accumulated.

(*Gosho*, p. 408)

Today, all the priests and lay believers of Nichiren Shoshu are unflinchingly devoting themselves day and night to do shakubuku, with unity between the priesthood and laity, based on the spirit of *itai dōshin*, as we aim toward our goal—to achieve a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by 2021.

What is most important for us right now, is to be convinced of the vast and boundless benefits of the Dai-Gohonzon and engrave the Gosho passages we

have just read into our hearts. Then, as disciples and believers of True Buddha Nichiren Daishonin, we must uphold our great aspiration of saving all living beings, exactly following the will of the Daishonin. With indefatigable resolution, we must become united in the spirit of *itai dōshin* and devote themselves to do shakubuku, based on the spirit of “willing to give one’s life to propagate the Law.”

We have only two months remaining this year. I sincerely pray that each of you will strive in your practice more than ever, so that you will accomplish this year’s shakubuku goals without fail. Then, your efforts will be witnessed by the True Buddha and you will be assured of attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime.