

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

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

The final month of this year, “The Year to do Shakubuku, develop your faith, and help others develop their faith and practice,” already has begun. There are only a few weeks remaining this year. I imagine that the members of each chapter, based on unity between the priesthood and laity, are devoting themselves to their practice, aiming toward the achievement of their shakubuku goals.

As you already know, shakubuku is the ultimate and best way to save all living beings in the Latter Day of the Law, the age defiled by the five impurities like today. It can lead those who suffer from misfortunes, in the abyss of misery, to true happiness.

The Daishonin teaches the following in the Gosho, *On Chanting the Daimoku of the Lotus Sutra* (Shō hokke daimoku-shō):

In the Latter Day of the Law, there are many who do not possess the seed of Buddhahood. There are only a few who possess it. Thus, there is no doubt that the people [in the Latter Day of the Law] will fall into the evil paths. [Since they are going to fall into the evil paths one way or another,] we should strongly teach and make them listen to the Lotus Sutra and let them form a poison-drum relationship with it. Thus, now is certainly the time to create a reverse relationship by propagating the Lotus Sutra.

(Gosho, p. 231)

This Goshō passage teaches that we should strongly teach Myōhō-Renge-Kyō to the people in the Latter Day of the Law, who lack the seed of Buddhahood, and make them form a “poison-drum relationship” with it.

The poison-drum relationship is a metaphor expounded in the Nirvana Sutra. The poison drum is a drum smeared with poison. It is said that when this poison drum is beaten, all those who hear the sound of the drum will instantly die. When we teach the Lotus Sutra to those who slander, whether they wish to hear it or not, they will form a relationship with the Lotus Sutra. This will be the cause for the attainment of Buddhahood. Thus, even if they do not listen to the Law and oppose it, they eventually will attain Buddhahood through a reverse relationship. This is likened to a drum smeared with poison.

The Daishonin gives the following example of the attainment of Buddhahood through a reverse relationship in the Goshō, *Letter to Ueno* (Ueno dono-gohenji):

Long ago in India, there was an extremely jealous woman. She hated her husband so much that she took her anger out everywhere and went insane with rage, smashing everything in the house. Her excessive anger changed her appearance so much, that her eyes blazed oddly, like the sunlight or moonlight, and her mouth seemed to spew out flames. She looked just like a red or blue ogre. Moreover, out of hatred for her husband, she grabbed the fifth volume of the Lotus Sutra, which her husband had been reciting daily, and she mercilessly trampled on it with both of her feet. Afterward, as a matter of course, the woman fell into hell—except for her two feet. Though the tormenting devils of hell tried to force them down with staves, her feet never could be taken into hell.

(*Goshō*, p. 1358, summary)

This jealous woman did not fall into hell due to a reverse relationship that was formed when she trampled on the Lotus Sutra with both of her feet. In other words, this passage teaches how important it is to form a relationship with the Lotus Sutra, for the sake of one’s attainment of Buddhahood, even if it is a reverse relationship.

Thus, the Daishonin teaches the following in the Gosho, *The Doctrine of Ichinen sanzen* (Ichinen sanzen hōmon):

When one chants Myoho-Renge-Kyo, the Buddhahood inherent in one's life will be manifested. Those who have the opportunity to hear it will be able to eradicate their negative karma that has been accumulating for infinite *asamkhya* kalpas. Those [who hear Myoho-Renge-Kyo] and rejoice for even a single life-moment, will attain Buddhahood in their present form. Even if they hear it but do not believe in it, this constitutes the sowing of the seed of Buddhahood. Thus, the sown seed will become mature and enable one to attain Buddhahood without fail. The Great Teacher Miaole stated: Whether one listens to [Myoho-Renge-Kyo] and remembers it or whether one hears it but discards it, one's ears will nevertheless form a causal relationship. Whether one obediently takes faith in it, or whether one opposes it, in the end one will attain Buddhahood [through listening to Myoho-Renge-Kyo]...this *saha* world is the land where [people] can attain Buddhahood through their ears.

(*Gosho*, p. 109)

“Attain Buddhahood through their ears” (*Nikon tokudō*) refers to the attainment of Buddhahood by listening to the Lotus Sutra through one's ears. Likewise, in our shakubuku practice, even if those to whom we introduce the true Law refuse to listen and oppose it, we can eventually lead them to the attainment of Buddhahood through forming a relationship with Myoho-Renge-Kyo.

Thus, we should always keep in mind that it is important to sow the seed of Buddhahood into the lives of those who slander the true Law and shakubuku them, so they can form a relationship with true Buddhism.

The Daishonin teaches the following in the same Gosho:

The basis of this sutra is to [lead one to enlightenment] solely by one's listening to the Law. This teaching does not discriminate against evil people, women, people of the two vehicles, and *icchantika*. Thus, [the

Expedient Means (*Hoben*; second) chapter of the Lotus Sutra] states that all people attain Buddhahood by carrying out the Buddha way. [The Treasure Tower (*Ken hoto*; eleventh) chapter of the sutra] also expounds on the Buddha's profound wisdom, which bestows benefits equally on all living beings. When, upon hearing it, one believes that good and evil are identical, not two; and right and wrong also are not two, then one can attain enlightenment in one's present state of mind. This is attaining Buddhahood in one's present form. One can reach this state and ascend to the stage of enlightenment in this very existence. Even those who do not grasp this principle will obtain the Buddha's boundless wisdom if they chant the Daimoku. Shakyamuni and the other Buddhas will rejoice. The sutra states, "I am overjoyed, and so are the other Buddhas."

(*Gosho*, p. 110)

The Nirvana Sutra states, "All living beings naturally possess the Buddha nature." Since all living beings inherently possess the Buddha nature, they can attain enlightenment by listening to the true Law and being awakened to practice Buddhism.

Above all, the people in the Latter Day of the Law, those without the seed of Buddhahood, can reach the attainment of Buddhahood with the cause of forming a relationship with the Buddha by listening to the name of Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo of the Three Great Secret Laws.

Thus, the following is taught in the *Gosho*, *Attaining Enlightenment at the Initial Stage of Faith through the Lotus Sutra* (Hokke shoshin jōbutsu-shō):

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.

(*Gosho*, p. 1316)

As this Gosho passage teaches, it is essential that we strongly teach Myoho-Renge-Kyo to those who are slanderers and sow the seed of Buddhahood into their lives.

Today, in the Latter Day of the Law, erroneous teachings are prevalent throughout the country. Because of this, many people unknowingly are deceived by evil influences, and they cannot escape from the life condition of unhappiness due to the poison of heresy. In order to save them, we should not use the method of shōju employed for the Former and Middle Days of the Law. Rather, we must use the method of shakubuku—refuting heresy and revealing the truth—which is the sole and best method. Shakubuku is the ultimate practice of compassion that can save all living beings in the Latter Day of the Law.

When we look at the chaotic situation at home and abroad today, we must know the cause for misery is completely due to the poison of heretical teachings. Now is the time for us to do our best to resolutely do shakubuku—refuting heresy and revealing the truth—not only for our own happiness, but also for the happiness of everyone throughout the world, as we aim toward kōsen-rufu of the entire world.

Though we have only a few weeks remaining this year, I sincerely pray that the members of every chapter will strive to chant Daimoku and stand up to do shakubuku, with unity between the priesthood and laity, based on the spirit of *itai dōshin*. I pray that, believing in every possibility, you will achieve your goals at any cost. Then, I am sure that your efforts will be witnessed by the three treasures: the Buddha, the Law and the priesthood.