

IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PERSEVERE IN SHAKUBUKU ACTIVITIES

GUIDANCE FROM SIXTY-EIGHTH HIGH PRIEST NICHINYO SHONIN • ON THE OCCASION OF THE FEBRUARY KOSEN-RUFU SHODAI CEREMONY • FEBRUARY 5, 2023 • RECEPTION HALL, HEAD TEMPLE TAISEKIJI

On this occasion of the February Kosen-rufu Shodai Ceremony, conducted here today at the Head Temple, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all of you for your efforts to participate in this Shodai Ceremony at any cost, despite your busy schedules as well as the inconvenience due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you know, this is the month when our Founder, Nichiren Daishonin was born. On February 16th of the first year of Jo-o (1222), Nichiren Daishonin made his advent into this world, as Shakyamuni already had prophesized in the Lotus Sutra. The Daishonin's transient status was [the reincarnation of] Bodhisattva Jogyo (Superior Practice), while his true identity is the True Buddha from the infinite past of *kuon-ganjo*.

The purpose of his advent is indicated in the Gosho, "Orally Transmitted Teachings" ("*Ongi kuden*") as follows:

There can be no doubt that the grave illness of the fundamental darkness of all living beings will be cured by the wonderfully efficacious medicine of the mystic Law. (*Gosho*, p.1732)

"The wonderfully efficacious medicine of the mystic Law," which is stated in this passage is, in other words, the true Law of the infinite past of *kuon-ganjo*, Myoho-Renge-Kyo of the oneness of the person and the Law. In terms of the person, it is the reincarnation of the Buddha with the property of intrinsically perfect wisdom from the infinite past of *kuon-ganjo*, our Founder Nichiren Daishonin, who made his advent in the Latter Day of the Law. In terms of the Law, it is the mystic Law (*Myoho*) of the infinite past of *kuon-ganjo*. With Myoho-Renge-Kyo of the oneness of the person and the Law, the Daishonin made his advent into this world, in order to save all living beings without the seed of Buddhahood.

Nevertheless, many people in the world are suffering the direst distress due to the poison of slander, as they cannot rid themselves of affliction. Moreover, the people's minds are distorted due to slander, which brings about disorder of the land. As a result, the entire nation suffers anguish by falling into the hell of incessant suffering. This signifies the principle of the oneness of life and its environment.

According to the principle taught in the *Rissho ankoku-ron* (On Securing the Peace of the Land through the Propagation of True Buddhism), the root cause for the nation being in turmoil, and the people suffering from the agony of misfortune and confusion, is solely due to the poison of the slander of heretical teachings. Unless we eliminate these

slanders, the people's true happiness, world peace, and the security of the land will not be realized.

Herein lies the important reason for us to resolutely refute slanders and perform shakubuku.

The Daishonin teaches the following in the Gosho, "On Chanting the Daimoku of the Lotus Sutra" (*"Hokke Daimoku-sho"*):

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 evil paths. [Since they are going to fall into 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)

The "poison-drum relationship" is a metaphor expounded in the Nirvana Sutra. It is said that when a drum smeared with poison is beaten among the masses, all those who hear the sound of the drum will die. This metaphor indicates that one can attain Buddhahood by forming a relationship with the Law through their ears, whether they wish to hear it or not.

Therefore, when you perform shakubuku, it is essential that you persevere in your shakubuku activities, teaching people about the Law earnestly, even if they oppose it.

It is expounded in the Gosho, "Attaining Enlightenment at the Initial Stage of Faith through the Lotus Sutra" (*"Hokke shoshin jobutsu-sho"*) as follows:

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. (*Gosho*, p. 1316)

As it is expounded in this passage, for those without the seed of Buddhahood in the Latter Day of the Law, it is essential for us to wholeheartedly teach them the Lotus Sutra, Myoho-Renge-Kyo of sowing the seed of the true cause, "in any case," with conviction and firm determination.

Now is the critical time when the members of each chapter and organization of Nichiren Shoshu must exert their utmost efforts and move forward, based on unity between the priesthood and laity in the spirit of itai doshin, aiming toward the achievement of our shakubuku goals.

I sincerely pray that, at this very time, aiming toward the propagation of the Law throughout the entire world, all Hokkeko chapters and organizations will courageously deploy great shakubuku activities, following the golden words; "One's life is insignificant while the Law is supreme. You should be willing to give your life to propagate the Law." I hope, with these efforts, all of you will achieve this year's shakubuku goals without fail.

NICHIREN SHOSHU MONTHLY MAY 2023