

UPHOLDING ONE'S FAITH AND PERFORMING SHAKUBUKU

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

On this occasion of the March 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 during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the Gosho, "Letter to Nanjo Hoy's Shichiro" ("Nanjo hyo'e shichiro dono-gos-ho"), it is taught as follows:

No matter what great merit one gains by performing good deeds; even if one transcribes the Lotus Sutra ten million times, and achieves the observation of the mind based on the principle of ichinen sanzen (three thousand realms in a single life-moment), should he fail to denounce the enemies of the Lotus Sutra, he will not be able to attain enlightenment. (Gosho, p. 322)

In this Gosho passage, the Daishonin strictly warns us that no matter what great good causes one accumulates, such as transcribing the Lotus Sutra ten million times and mastering the doctrine of ichinen sanzen, which is the essential principle of the Lotus Sutra, if this person ignores the slander, fails to challenge the enemies of the Lotus Sutra, and does not refute the errors, he or she cannot attain Buddhahood.

There are some people who know much about Buddhism—they conduct Gongyo and study Buddhism to some extent. However, the Daishonin admonishes that even if they study Buddhism, if they let slanderers be and do not refute their errors by performing shakubuku, they will not be able to achieve enlightenment. This is exemplified in the following Gosho passage:

For example, one may loyally serve the imperial court for ten to twenty years, but if he recognizes an enemy of the emperor and neither reports it nor personally feels enmity, all the services he has thus far offered will come to naught. Rather, he will be punished. (ibid., p. 323)

It is like a person who has served the imperial court for a long time, such as ten to 20 years. If such a person knows of an enemy of the sovereign, and neither reports it to his superior nor confronts the enemy himself, his long-time service will be meaningless, and his achievement will disappear. Even worse, he will be punished for neglect of duty.

In every society, if a criminal is left alone and not detained, society will become disorganized and eventually will collapse from the inside. Turning blind eyes to rampant wickedness also is a big sin.

In our faith of Nichiren Shoshu, ignoring slander is not an appropriate act from the perspective of the tenet of strict admonishment against slander of the Law. Passing over slander in silence will certainly lead to a serious problem in the future.

The important thing for our faith is the practice for oneself and the practice for others. Only if you follow the correct path of Buddhism—practice for oneself and others—will you achieve the attainment of Buddhahood. Thus, it is essential for us to devote ourselves to the practice by strictly following the tenet of upholding one's faith and performing shakubuku.

I offer my sincere prayers that you will devote yourselves to chant Daimoku with strong faith more than ever, and that the members of each chapter and organization will unite as one, based on the spirit of *itai doshin*, and perform shakubuku. I truly hope that you will strive in your practice, aiming toward the propagation of the Law throughout the entire world.

NICHIREN SHOSHU MONTHLY JUNE 2023