

# WE MUST BE WILLING TO SPEND THE TIME TO PERFORM SHAKUBUKU

## GUIDANCE FROM SIXTY-EIGHTH HIGH PRIEST NICHINYO SHONIN • ON THE OCCASION OF THE DECEMBER KOSEN-RUFU SHODAI CEREMONY• DECEMBER 4, 2022 • RECEPTION HALL, HEAD TEMPLE TAISEKIJI

On this occasion of the December Kosen-rufu Shodai Ceremony conducted here today at the Head Temple, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to those who have participated in this Shodai Ceremony with profound faith, despite the inconvenience due to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which is still raging.

The month of December has already begun and it's almost the end of the year. I imagine that all the members are exerting themselves in their practice night and day, aiming toward the achievement of this year's shakubuku goals.

It goes without saying that the achievement of our shakubuku goals is the vow that we pledged in front of the Gohonzon. Thus, instead of abandoning the pledge, all the members in each chapter and organization must unite as one, based on the spirit of *itai doshin*, and devote every effort to achieve the goals at any cost.

The Daishonin teaches the following in the Gosho, "The Opening of the Eyes" ("*Kaimoku-sho*"):

Those with weak faith always forget what they have promised when the crucial moment comes. (*Gosho*, p. 574)

We should reaffirm that the vow that we pledged in front of the Gohonzon at the beginning of this year is the important goal that must be achieved with the concerted efforts of all the members of each chapter or organization. We must be willing to spend the time to perform shakubuku, aiming toward the achievement of our shakubuku goals, in order to avoid the stigma of "those with weak faith."

The Daishonin further teaches in the Gosho, "On Chanting the Daimoku of the Lotus Sutra" ("*Sho hokke Daimoku-sho*") as follows:

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)

As you know, the "poison-drum relationship" stated in this Gosho passage is a metaphor [expounded in the Nirvana Sutra] expressing that when a drum smeared with poison is beaten in the midst of a crowd of people, all those who hear the sound of the drum will die, whether they wish to hear it or not. Even those who do not wish to listen to the Law and oppose it will eventually sever their earthly desires and attain Buddhahood. This is likened to beating a drum smeared with poison.

As the term, "attaining Buddhahood through their ears (*nikon tokudo*)" indicates, all living beings inherently possess the Buddha nature. Even those who are not willing to listen to the Lotus Sutra eventually can attain Buddhahood through hearing the true Law. Thus, even those with a reverse relationship, to say nothing of those with a positive relationship, can be saved without fail, if they are led to listen to Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo of the Three Great Secret Laws and form a relationship with the true Law.

When we read this Gosho passage with reverence, we must know how important it is for us now to sow the seed of Buddhahood in the lives of as many people as possible and make them form a relationship with the true Law.

When I look at the current chaotic condition of the world due to the spread of COVID-19, I see that it is a manifestation of the defiled evil age of the Latter Day of the Law. In order to overcome this chaotic condition, it is essential for each of us to understand the Daishonin's true intention expounded in his *Rissho ankoku-ron* and stand up to perform the shakubuku of refuting heresy and revealing the truth, aiming toward the propagation of Myoho-Renge-Kyo throughout the entire world.

The Daishonin teaches the following in the Gosho, "Questions and Answers between a Sage and a Foolish Man" ("*Shogu mondo-sho*"):

The world today is defiled with impurities. People's minds are distorted, filled with envy, and provisional and slanderous teachings abound. This makes it difficult for the true Law to be propagated. At such a time, it is of no use to practice the reading, reciting, and transcribing of sutras, or to contemplate, meditate, or discipline oneself. You simply must perform shakubuku. You should powerfully vanquish slanderous teachings and use the doctrines to censure erroneous teachings to the best of your ability. [Zhangan] wrote, "You must understand the reasons for choosing [shoju or shakubuku], without adhering solely to either one of them." You must observe the situation at present and deeply consider whether this is a country where only the correct Law prevails or where erroneous teachings are rampant. (*Gosho*, p. 403)

I offer my sincere prayers that reading these golden words with reverence, each of us will perform shakubuku with a sense of mission and a firm determination to propagate the mystic Law (*Myoho*) based on the spirit of *itai doshin*. Let's make concerted efforts so that we will be able to repay our debt of gratitude to the three treasures.

**NICHIREN SHOSHU MONTHLY MARCH 2023**