

**Guidance from Sixty-eighth High Priest Nichinyo Shonin
On the Occasion of the January Kōsen-rufu Shōdai Ceremony
January 1, 2014
Reception Hall, Head Temple Taisekiji**

On the spring of the 762th Anniversary of the Establishment of True Buddhism, the Year of Accomplishing of our Shakubuku Goal, I wish you a Happy New Year!

I believe that both the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood and laity have welcomed “The Year of Accomplishing of our Shakubuku Goal” feeling refreshed, and have renewed their pledge to make further efforts in their practice.

Last year the major renovation of the Image Hall (*Mieidō*), which had been under operation for some time, has come to a happy completion. Accordingly, the Grand Ceremony Commemorating the Completion of the Major Renovation of the Image Hall and the Commemorative Ceremony were conducted solemnly and splendidly.

It is primarily due to the sincere Gokuyo from all the priesthood and laity of Nichiren Shoshu. I would like to express my humble gratitude to you all. Thank you very much!

Now, this year is “The Year of Accomplishing of our Shakubuku Goal.”

As you know, the priests and lay believers of each chapter of the Nichiren Shoshu temples throughout the country are striving forth in their shakubuku activities, day and night, based on the unity between priesthood and laity, in the spirit of *itaidōshin*, aiming toward our goals for the coming years of 2015 and 2021.

This year, just before the 770th Anniversary of the birth of Second High Priest Nikko Shonin in March next year, has reached the critical time for the achievement of our goal.

For this reason, despite of any difficulty and obstacle, all the chapters must firmly be united, freely conduct great shakubuku activities with concerted efforts and then fulfill this year’s shakubuku goals without fail. With this achievement, I sincerely hope that you will achieve the goal of the year 2015, to increase the membership of all Hokkeko chapters by 50 percent.

The Daisonin teaches in “Opening of the Eyes” (*“Kaimoku-shō”*)

Now that I, Nichiren, vigorously admonished the slanderers in the land, this severe persecution has occurred. This indicates that my past heavy slanders have come to the surface through protecting the Law in this lifetime. It can be compared to iron turning red when put into a fire, while it remains black if it is not. It is like a mountainous wave of water rising up when an oar is thrust into a raging river. Or it is like a lion roaring when its sleep is disturbed.

(Gosho, p. 573)

If we devote ourselves to propagate the true Law to eliminate slander of the heretical teachings and continue to conduct shakubuku, devilish functions will inevitably emerge and we will encounter great hardships. However, this great adversity actually calls forth evil karma accumulated from previous lives. It really is signaling the coming of a perfect opportunity of eradicating one’s negative karma.

It is as if iron turns red when put in a fire, while it is black as is. Furthermore, it is like waters rippling high, if a wooden board is erected in the rapids. It is also like a lion which would roar forcefully in a fit of rage, if we lay a hand on it during its sleep. Likewise, if we devote ourselves to the Buddhist practice and try hard to conduct shakubuku, latent negative karma from the past lifetimes become manifest in various ways.

In the Gosho, “Reply to Shi’iji Shirō” (“*Shi’iji shirōdono-gosho*”), the Daishonin states:

The greater the hardship one encounters, the greater the delight one should feel, with one’s faith strengthened all the more.

(*Gosho*, p. 1555)

Moreover, “On Persecutions Befalling the Buddha” (“*Shōnin gonan ji*”) reads:

Even if we encounter these great hardships in this lifetime, we will attain Buddhahood in the next. It is like moxa treatment. It hurts when applied but, it will feel painless afterward due to the effectiveness of a medicine.

(*Gosho*, p. 1397)

No matter how severely the hardship may befall us, as long as we face and accept it as a rare opportunity, and carry through our faith and practice more than ever, our negative causal relationships as well as heavy evil karma due to the causes we accumulated in the past will be eradicated. Consequently, we will achieve the attainment of Buddhahood.

Nichiren Daishonin teaches in “Reply to Utsubusa Nyōbō” (“*Utsubusa nyōbō-gohenji*”):

Let me briefly describe the virtues of Myōho-Renge-Kyo. The five characters of Myōho-Renge-Kyo can change evil into good, just like poison changing into medicine. Pristine Spring is so named because in this spring, stone can change into treasure. In the same manner, these five characters are able to change common mortals into Buddhas.

(*Gosho*, p. 1492)

If we believe in the boundless and unfathomable benefits of Myōho-Renge-Kyo and devote ourselves to our practice as taught by Nichiren Daishonin, the True Buddha in the Latter Day of the Law, we will inevitably receive the benefit of changing poison into medicine.

What is most important thing now is, instead of enjoying these benefits exclusive to yourself, teach many of those who suffer from the poisons of the evil teachings about such benefits, and sow the seeds of the Daishonin’s Buddhism in their hearts.

In order to achieve this, you must first strive to chant the Daimoku.

The Daishonin states in “Attaining Enlightenment at the Initial Stage of Faith through the Lotus Sutra” (“*Hokke shoshin jōbutsu-shō*”):

Thus, once we chant Myoho-Renge-Kyo, this sound calls forth and manifests the Buddha nature of all Buddhas; all phenomena; all bodhisattvas; all people in the world of learning; all guardian deities, such as Bonten, Taishaku, King Emma, the sun and moon, innumerable stars, deities of the heavens and earth; and all living beings—including individuals in the worlds of hell, hunger, animality, anger, humanity, and rapture. The benefit of revealing this Buddha nature is immeasurable and unfathomable.

(*Gosho*, p. 1320)

Taking a step forward to conduct shakubuku with the benefits and joy from chanting the Daimoku is of paramount importance for us now.

It is taught in “Questions and Answers on Embracing the Lotus Sutra” (“*Jimyō hokke mondō-shō*”):

I believe that embracing Myoho-Renge-Kyo, which ensures “peace and security in this lifetime and good circumstances in the next,” is the only honor to pursue in this lifetime and is the guide to maintain enlightenment in the future. Single-mindedly chant Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo and encourage others to do the same. This will remain as your only memory from this present, human life.

(*Gosho*, p. 300)

I sincerely pray that you will engrave these golden words in your hearts, and further make continuous efforts in chanting Daimoku and conducting shakubuku, and then all the chapters will attain their goals this year. This will conclude my New Year’s address.