

Guidance from Sixty-eighth High Priest Nichinyo Shonin
On the Occasion of the February Kōsen-rufu Shodai Ceremony
February 5, 2012
Reception Hall, Head Temple Taisekiji

Good morning everyone!

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

Last year, 578 Hokkeko chapters out of 584 Hokkeko chapters, which is 99 percent of all Hokkeko chapters in Japan, achieved their shakubuku goals, through unity and harmony between priesthood and laity, based on the spirit of “one’s body is insignificant while the Law is supreme” and “willing to give one’s life to propagate the Law.” We made an unprecedented, great accomplishment.

Unfortunately, we couldn’t accomplish the goals in all Hokkeko chapters. If we sum up the results of all the shakubuku achieved, however, we exceeded the number of our goal, and that is a great victory.

This is solely due to the unity between the priesthood and laity and their great will to achieve their goal. They exerted all their strength right to the very last day. I would like to congratulate you from the bottom of my heart. Congratulations to you all!

I sincerely pray for all of you to make further advancement based on this success, aiming for the achievement of the goals of all Hokkeko chapters this year.

This is the month celebrating the advent of our founder Nichiren Daishonin. As you may know, the Daishonin was born in Awa Province on February 16, 1222.

The Daishonin’s advent in the Latter Day of the Law was predicted in the Lotus Sutra by Shakyamuni Buddha 3,000 years ago. The Wondrous Powers of the Tathagata (*Jinriki*; twenty-first) chapter of the Lotus Sutra states:

Just as the sunlight or moonlight dispels the darkness, this person will practice [Myo-Ho-Ren-Ge-Kyo] in the world and eliminate [the fundamental] darkness of all living beings.

(Hokekyo, p. 516)

This passage clarifies that Bodhisattva Jōgyō (Superior Practice), who from the

standpoint of his inner realization, is the True Buddha with the property of perfect wisdom from the infinite past of *kuon-ganjo*, will make his advent in the first Five-hundred-year Period of the Latter Day of the Law. He will reveal the five characters of Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo and illuminate the fundamental darkness and earthly desires, in order to save all living beings in the Latter Day of the Law.

The mystic Law possessed by the True Buddha Nichiren Daishonin refers to the five characters of Myoho-Renge-Kyo of the essential Law from the infinite past of *kuon-ganjo*. Myoho-Renge-Kyo is characterized by the principle of the person, himself, is the Law and the Law, itself, is the person. The person is our master, the True Buddha Nichiren Daishonin, the reincarnation of the Buddha of Intrinsically Perfect Wisdom from the infinite past of *kuon-ganjo*. The Law is none other than the mystic Law from the infinite past of *kuon-ganjo*. This mystic Law of the oneness of the person and the Law represents the essential Law that will bring salvation to all living beings.

Thus, the Daishonin teaches in the “Orally Transmitted Teachings” (“*Ongi kuden*”):

The Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo that Nichiren now chants will enable all living beings of the ten thousand years of the Latter Day of the Law to attain Buddhahood....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)

At present, many people around the world don't know of the true Law, which will lead them to enlightenment in this lifetime. They have lost sight of right and wrong, due to the poison of heretical doctrines and religions. As a result, they commit slander of the Law and suffocate in their sufferings.

In the *Risshō ankoku-ron* (On Securing the Peace of the Land through the Propagation of True Buddhism), the Daishonin states:

I find that all people have gone against the correct Law and become wholly devoted to evil doctrines. This is why all the guardian deities have abandoned this country and sages have left this land, not to return. Seizing this opportunity, devils and demons rush in, bringing disasters and calamities. This is most fearful. We must speak out!

(*Gosho*, p. 234; *The Gosho of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2, p. 3)

He reveals that the root cause for unhappiness, calamities, and sufferings in the present world all can be found in the poison of slander of the Law due to erroneous teachings and religions. Therefore, unless we eliminate these evil roots of slander of the Law, we can neither establish our own happiness, nor realize world peace.

The Daishonin also teaches in the *Risshō ankoku-ron*:

If one desires peace to reign throughout the entire nation without delay, he should first and foremost put an end to the slanders that prevail throughout the country.

(*Gosho*, p. 247; *The Gosho of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2, p. 35)

Furthermore, the Daishonin teaches in “A Letter to Lord Nanjō Hyōe Shichirō” (*“Nanjō hyōe shichirō dono-Gosho”*):

No matter what great deeds one may perform, 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)

Also, in “Reply to Lord Soya” (*“Soya dono-gohenji”*) the Daishonin states:

Trying to attain enlightenment without admonishing slander of the Law is like seeking water in fire or fire in water.

(*Gosho*, p. 1040; *Basic Terminology of Nichiren Shoshu*, vol. 1, p. 128)

Furthermore, the Daishonin states in “Reply to Myōhō Bikuni” (*“Myōhō bikuni-gohenji”*):

In the Buddhist teachings, the Buddha admonished that if you find an opponent of the Lotus Sutra, you must talk to him. You must never be afraid of his power in society. Otherwise, you will become an enemy of Shakyamuni Buddha. No matter how wise or virtuous you may be, you will inevitably fall into the hell of

incessant suffering.

(*Gosho*, p. 1262)

Although these *Gosho* passages teach us very strict points regarding shakubuku, we can understand how important it is to conduct shakubuku in order to attain enlightenment. It is of utmost importance to etch these golden words into our hearts and conduct shakubuku based on these teachings.

The Daishonin teaches the following in his *Gosho*, “On Practicing According to the Buddha’s Teachings” (*“Nyosetsu shugyō-shō”*):

If you seclude yourself in the mountains and carry out the practice of shoju at a time when the Lotus Sutra and pre-Lotus Sutra teachings are confused, then you will lose the opportunity to practice the Lotus Sutra. Now, in the Latter Day of the Law, who will correctly practice the Lotus Sutra in your place, if you do not carry out shakubuku just as the sutra teaches? Whomever you may meet, conduct shakubuku and refute both the person and the Law of the other sects. Loudly proclaim that the Lotus Sutra is the only teaching that will lead the people to Buddhahood, and that the various other teachings are the root cause for obstructing one from attaining enlightenment and leading one to fall into hell.

(*Gosho*, p. 673)

In particular, we must remember the following passage, “Whomever you may meet, conduct shakubuku and refute both the person and the Law of the other sects. Loudly proclaim that the Lotus Sutra is the only teaching that will lead the people to Buddhahood, and that the various other teachings are the root cause for obstructing one from attaining enlightenment and leading one to fall into hell.”

The Nichiren Shoshu priesthood and laity are striving forth in unity, in the spirit of many in body, one in mind, to achieve our goals for 2015, and 2021.

On this occasion, I would like each of you to advance, by performing strong and ceaseless shakubuku, appropriate for “The Year of Advancing Kōsen-rufu through Shakubuku.”

In our efforts toward kōsen-rufu, there is no place for stagnation or hesitation, let alone going backwards. “Advancement” is what counts.

First and foremost, we must chant Daimoku. The Hokkeko chapters that have accomplished their shakubuku objectives for many years in a row, always have been

conducting Shodai. They made considerable achievements by conducting shakubuku in unity, based on the benefits and joy of chanting Daimoku.

Shodai and shakubuku are not two, but one.

I would like to conclude my address by asking each and every one of you to further devote yourselves in conducting Shodai and shakubuku, aiming for the achievement of our shakubuku objectives for this year.