

**Guidance from Sixty-eighth High Priest Nichinyo Shonin
On the Occasion of the January Kōsen-rufu Shōdai Ceremony
January 1, 2015
Reception Hall, Head Temple Taisekiji**

In this early spring of the 763rd anniversary of the establishment of true Buddhism, “The Year of Kick-off toward 2021 through the Achievement of the 2015 Objective,” I wish you a Happy New Year!

I believe that the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood and laity both have welcomed “The Year of Kick-off toward 2021 through the Achievement of the 2015 Objective” feeling refreshed, and have renewed their pledge to make further efforts in their practice.

At the Head Temple, we will conduct a daily Shōdai Ceremony throughout the month of January, just as we do each year. I hope that many people will participate.

Last year, in Nichiren Shoshu, momentum toward the achievement of the goal has increased further. If we tally up the achievement of all Hokkeko chapters across the nation, then as of the end of last October, we achieved our goal—to increase the membership of all Hokkeko chapters by 50 percent to commemorate the 770th anniversary of the birth of the Second High Priest Nikko Shonin.

This is solely due to the efforts that the members of all Hokkeko chapters have made in their practice of earnestly conducting shakubuku based on unity between the priesthood and laity in the spirit of *itai dōshin*. I would like to express my gratitude and respect for your dedication.

However, there are still a few chapters that have not yet achieved their goals. I sincerely hope that these chapters too, no matter what, will accomplish their goals by March 8 of this year. With these achievements, I hope that they will repay their debts of gratitude to the Second High Priest Nikko Shonin.

This year is “The Year of Kick-off toward 2021 through the Achievement of the 2015 Objective.”

“Achievement” indicates that all Hokkeko chapters will achieve their goal—to increase the membership of all Hokkeko chapters by 50 percent—before the Grand Ceremony Celebrating the 770th Anniversary of the Birth of the Second High Priest Nikko Shonin in March of this year.

As I have just mentioned, the grand total of the results of shakubuku throughout the country has already reached our goal at the end of October last year. However, we have not reached the achievement by all chapters. Therefore, the chapters that have not yet achieved their shakubuku objectives, by all means, must accomplish their goals by March 8 of this year. This is a matter of the greatest importance.

We can be praised by both the Daishonin and Nikko Shonin, the founder of True Buddhism and the founder of the Head Temple Taisekiji, only after this achievement by all chapters.

Thus, the members of the chapters that have not yet achieved their shakubuku goals should take to heart 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 earnestly wish that they will overcome their difficulties and obstacles by taking all measures to definitely achieve their goals by March 8, based on unity between the priesthood and laity in the spirit of *itai dōshin*.

Next, “kick-off” indicates that all priests and lay believers should organize and make a plan for the next challenge and kick off in high spirits, with the goal of establishing a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by the auspicious occasion of the 800th anniversary of the advent of our founder Nichiren Daishonin in 2021.

Since we have kicked off toward the challenge of achieving kōsen-rufu of the entire world, this must be accomplished without fail.

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

“The Lotus Sutra is the teaching of shakubuku, the refutation of the provisional doctrines.” Since these are the golden words [of the Buddha], eventually every person who clings to the provisional teachings will surrender [to the true Law] and become a follower of the Buddha. Then,

all the people throughout this world will discard the provisional teachings and take faith in the one vehicle of Buddhahood. When the mystic Law (*Myōhō*) alone prevails in the land and the entire nation chants Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo, the wind will blow gently without causing the branches to rustle, and the rain will fall softly without breaking a clod. The world will become like the times of Fu xi and Shennong. The people will be able to drive away disasters and misfortune and gain the ability to live long lives. The principle of the eternity and immortality of both the person and the Law will be revealed. Be assured that all of these events will occur. There is no doubt about the written evidence [in the sutra] of, “peace and security in this lifetime.”

(*Gosho*, p. 671)

This Gosho passage I have just read is from a letter the Daishonin wrote to all his disciples and followers in the fifth month of the tenth year of Bun’nei (1273), while he was living in exile on Sado Island.

The Daishonin underwent a severe persecution at the Tatsunokuchi execution site on the twelfth day of the ninth month in the eighth year of Bunnei (1271), and then he was banished to Sado Island. After these incidents, the Daishonin wrote this letter from Sado to all his followers who were standing up in their faith. They were enduring difficulties and persecutions by the Kamakura authorities and the followers of heretical teachings, including Nembutsu. In this letter, he explains that those who practice the Lotus Sutra exactly according to the Buddha’s teachings are bound to face hardships.

In this Gosho, the Daishonin first reveals that those who practice the Lotus Sutra according to the Buddha’s teachings inevitably will confront the three powerful enemies. He declares that one must continue to strive in one’s practice of Buddhism and prepare oneself for the emergence of the three powerful enemies, who may attack him.

The Daishonin cites the great persecutions that the votaries of the Lotus Sutra, including Shakyamuni and Bodhisattva Never Disparaging (Fukyō), underwent in the past. With the examples, Nichiren Daishonin, who endured life-threatening persecutions, such as the Tatsunokuchi Persecution and Sado

Exile, reveals that he is the one who practices the Lotus Sutra according to the Buddha's teachings in the Latter Day of the Law.

In the same Goshō, the Daishonin then expounds the importance of doing shakubuku—refuting those who follow the various other sects. He also emphasizes that when conducting shakubuku, one must embrace the Lotus Sutra exactly as the Buddha's golden words teach, with an understanding of the difference between the two methods of shōju and shakubuku. He states:

It is nonsense to seclude yourself in the mountains without refuting the enemies of the Lotus Sutra and carry out the practice of shōju at a time when the Lotus Sutra and pre-Lotus Sutra teachings are confused. You only will lose the opportunity to practice the Lotus Sutra. Now, in the Latter Day of the Law, who is correctly carrying out the practice of shakubuku exactly as taught in the Lotus Sutra? Whomever you may meet, conduct shakubuku to the people and refute the teachings of the other sects. Proclaim repeatedly with all your might that the Lotus Sutra is the only teaching that will lead the people to Buddhahood, and that the various other teachings obstruct them from attaining enlightenment and are the root cause for leading them to fall into hell. This will certainly provoke the appearance of the three powerful enemies.

(ibid. p. 673)

The Daishonin demonstrates that now, in the Latter Day of the Law, among the two methods of shōju and shakubuku, it is the method of shakubuku that must be used. Through conducting shakubuku and encountering the three powerful enemies, Nichiren Daishonin, as well as all of his followers, are able to become those who practice the Lotus Sutra according to the Buddha's teachings.

Furthermore, the Daishonin encourages us that despite the appearance of any powerful enemy, those who persistently strive in their practice for oneself and others and carry through their faith surely will be protected by the guardian deities.

Engraving these golden words into our hearts, we must be convinced of the vast and boundless benefits of the Dai-Gohonzon and make further efforts in

our practice for oneself and others. I sincerely wish that all members of each chapter will unite as one, based on the spirit of *itai dōshin*, and overcome every difficulty. Then, each individual must move forward with the courageous behavior that befits “The Year of Kick-off toward 2021 through the Achievement of the 2015 Objective.”

On the contrary, the Soka Gakkai has made the following insane announcement, as if their heads were broken into seven pieces:

We will not consider the Gohonzon of the second year of Kō'an to be the object of worship for us to uphold.

(*Seikyō shimbun*, November 8, 2014)

The Gakkai has committed the grave slander of renouncing faith in the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of the Essential Teaching. They are deceiving many Gakkai members, leading them to misfortune.

We must refute the errors of the Soka Gakkai and save as many Gakkai members as possible by awakening their faith.

I sincerely pray that, whatever difficulties you may encounter along the way, you will uphold the will of our founder Nichiren Daishonin and make further efforts in your practice of propagating the mystic Law, with the noble mission of saving all mankind. Then, I hope you will strive for the achievement of our goal—to increase the membership of all Hokkeko chapters by 50 percent by the 770th anniversary of the birth of the Second High Priest Nikko Shonin, as well as our next goal—to achieve a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by 2021, the 800th anniversary of the advent of our founder Nichiren Daishonin.