

**Guidance from Sixty-eighth High Priest Nichinyo Shonin
On the Occasion of the May Kōsen-rufu Shōdai Ceremony
May 3, 2015
Reception Hall, Head Temple Taisekiji**

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

As you already know, on the occasion of the 770th anniversary of the birth of the Second High Priest Nikko Shonin, the priesthood and laity of Nichiren Shoshu achieved our goal of increasing the membership of all Hokkeko chapters by 50 percent. Subsequently, a series of ceremonies were splendidly conducted. These included the Grand Ceremony to commemorate the 770th anniversary of the birth of Nikko Shonin, the commemorative ceremonies, and the commemorative general meeting. Moreover, we held the commemorative ceremony and the general meeting for the overseas believers.

This is solely due to the efforts of the members of all Hokkeko chapters, both at home and abroad. I would like to offer my sincere gratitude and respect for your dedication.

Now, the priesthood and laity of Nichiren Shoshu kicked off in high spirits toward 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.

Establishing a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers is the important objective that we must accomplish by all means. In order to achieve this goal, each of us must recognize the importance of shakubuku. Then, the members of each chapter must unite in their efforts to do shakubuku.

The Daishonin states the following in *The Doctrine of Ichinen sanzen* (Ichinen sanzen homōn):

This teaching does not discriminate against evil people, women, people of the two vehicles, and *icchāntika*. Thus, [the Expedient Means (*Hōben*;

second) chapter of the Lotus Sutra] states that all people attain Buddhahood by carrying out the Buddha way. [The Treasure Tower (*Ken hōtō*; eleventh) chapter of the sutra] also expounds on the Buddha's profound wisdom, which bestows benefits equally on all living beings. When, upon hearing it, one believes that good and evil are identical, not two; and right and wrong also are not two, then one can attain enlightenment in one's present state of mind. This is attaining Buddhahood in one's present form. One can reach this state and ascend to the stage of enlightenment in this very existence. Even those who do not grasp this principle will obtain the Buddha's boundless wisdom if they chant the Daimoku. Shakyamuni and the other Buddhas will rejoice. The sutra states, "I am overjoyed, and so are the other Buddhas."

(*Gosho*, p. 110)

This Gosho passage demonstrates the superiority of the Lotus Sutra when compared to the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings. The Daishonin explains the reason for its supremacy. Those who had been denied the possibility of attaining enlightenment in the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings—evil people, women, people of the two vehicles, and *icchantika*—all can attain Buddhahood through the teaching of the Lotus Sutra. Thus, the Lotus Sutra is said to be the teaching through which "all people attain Buddhahood by carrying out the Buddha way." It is also known as "the Buddha's profound wisdom, which bestows benefits equally on all living beings."

"All people attain Buddhahood by carrying out the Buddha way" can be restated as "those who accept and believe in the Lotus Sutra can reach enlightenment without fail." "The Buddha's profound wisdom, which bestows benefits equally on all living beings" is expounded in the Treasure Tower (*Ken hōtō*; eleventh) chapter of the sutra. It indicates that the Buddha's wisdom enables all living beings equally to attain Buddhahood.

Next, the Daishonin teaches:

When upon hearing it, one believes that good and evil are identical, not two; and right and wrong also are not two, then one can attain

enlightenment in one's present state of mind. This is attaining Buddhahood in one's present form. One can reach this state and ascend to the stage of enlightenment in this very existence.

(ibid.)

“Good and evil are identical, not two” indicates the oneness of virtue and vice. All things and events are the entities of *ichinen sanzen* (three thousand realms in a single life-moment). They all have both good and evil sides.

“Right and wrong also are not two” means that both right and wrong arise from one's single mind. As the Lotus Sutra expounds the mutual possession of the ten worlds, all living beings possess both good and evil. They are united as one. Accordingly, those whose attainment of enlightenment was denied in the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings—people of the two vehicles, evil people, and women—were permitted to attain Buddhahood in the Lotus Sutra, which elucidates the doctrine of *ichinen sanzen* and the mutual possession of the ten worlds. At this point, the principle of “the Buddha's profound wisdom, which bestows benefits equally on all living beings” was established.

“One can attain enlightenment in one's present state of mind” refers to one's inner realization. It means that a person discovers truth and achieves enlightenment within one's own heart. It is synonymous with attaining Buddhahood in one's present form.

“Stage of enlightenment in this very existence” indicates that one enters the stage of Buddhahood in this lifetime. It is used synonymously with the attainment of Buddhahood in one's lifetime. In the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin, it is expounded that everyone becomes aware of the mystic Law (*Myōhō*) expounded in the infinite past of *kuon-ganjo* and will achieve the attainment of Buddhahood. Thus, one can enter the stage of enlightenment in one's present lifetime.

Next, the passage states:

Even those who do not grasp this principle will obtain the Buddha's boundless wisdom if they chant the Daimoku. Shakyamuni and the other

Buddhas will rejoice. The sutra states, “I am overjoyed, and so are the other Buddhas.”

(ibid.)

This means that even though one does not understand the profound meaning of the Lotus Sutra, if one chants Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo, Shakyamuni, as well as all Buddhas of the three existences and the ten directions, will rejoice.

In the *Orally Transmitted Teachings* (Ongi kuden), the Daishonin expounds on the passage, “I am overjoyed, and so are the other Buddhas,” which appears in the Treasure Tower (*Ken hōtō*; eleventh) chapter:

“I” refers to one’s life itself. The “other Buddhas” indicate the workings of one’s life. When one embraces the Lotus Sutra, both one’s mind and the workings of the mind will rejoice at the same time. It also states, “I” represents a common mortal. The “other Buddhas” symbolize the Buddhas of the three existences. Now, Nichiren and his followers chant Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo and will be overjoyed...

(*Gosho*, p. 1755)

“I” of “I am overjoyed” refers to one’s mind itself. “The other Buddhas” indicate the function of one’s mind. From the perspective of the meaning hidden in the depths of [the Life Span chapter], the Lotus Sutra signifies Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo of the Three Great Secret Laws. When one upholds this Myoho-Renge-Kyo, both one’s mind and the workings of the mind will exult at the same time.

Furthermore, “I” of “I represents a common mortal” is explained in the following passage.

The Buddha in the Latter Day of the Law is a common mortal. He is a priest in the form of a common mortal.

(*Gosho*, p. 1779)

From the standpoint of the specific way of interpretation, this “common mortal” is the True Buddha, Nichiren Daishonin himself. In other words, if the Daishonin, as well as his disciples and believers, chant Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo and feel delighted, all the other Buddhas will rejoice too. The core meaning of this passage indicates that it is essential for us to uphold and chant Myoho-Renge-Kyo, in order to achieve the attainment of Buddhahood in this lifetime.

I believe that the most important thing now is that all of us embrace our founder Nichiren Daishonin as the True Buddha in the Latter Day of the Law. Then, we honestly should chant Daimoku to the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of the Essential Teaching, which is the very entity of his enlightened life, and strive in our practice for oneself and others.

Nichiren Shoshu now has courageously kicked off toward our goal—to achieve a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by 2021, the 800th anniversary of the advent of our Founder Nichiren Daishonin.

At this time, we should revere these Goshu passages we have just learnt and bear in mind that the secret Law to save all living beings is none other than Myoho-Renge-Kyo of the Three Great Secret Laws. We should sow the seeds of the mystic Law (*Myōhō*) into the lives of as many people as possible and do shakubuku. When I look at the chaotic conditions here and abroad in recent years, I cannot help but feel this way. I am sure you must feel the same way.

I sincerely wish that you will further devote yourselves to your practice and chant more and more Daimoku. I pray that, with the benefits and joy of chanting the Daimoku, you will step forward to do shakubuku and that you will achieve your goals without fail.