

Guidance from Sixty-eighth High Priest Nichinyo Shonin
On the Occasion of the November Kosen-rufu Shodai Ceremony
November 3, 2019
Reception Hall, Head Temple Taisekiji

On this occasion of the November Kosen-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.

In this year, “The Year of Courageously Advancing Forward,” the month of November already has begun, and we have only two months remaining. I imagine that all members of each chapter throughout the country are making concerted efforts, and devoting every spare moment to do shakubuku, in order to achieve this year’s shakubuku goals.

The most important point in this challenge to achieve kosen-rufu is that all members in every single chapter, no matter what difficulties or obstacles they may face, must achieve the shakubuku goal they pledged in front of the Gohonzon at any cost, overcoming every difficulty.

The well-known saying of Yozan Uesugi, the feudal lord of the Yonezawa domain, states:

Do and it will be done; don’t do and it will not be done. If something is not done, that is because no one did it.

Concerning shakubuku, someone said the following: do shakubuku and it will be achieved without fail. At any rate, we must first initiate an action to do shakubuku. No matter how hard one thinks with one’s head, if this person sits and takes no action, shakubuku cannot be achieved. We must first stand up and take action.

Nichiren Daishonin teaches the following in *Letter to Chikugo-bo in the Cave Prison* (Tsuchiro-gosho):

When all others practice the Lotus Sutra, they read it with their mouths but do not believe it in their hearts. And even if they believe it in their hearts, they do not put it into action. You are upholding the sutra with both body and mind. How admirable! (*Gosho*, p. 483)

As this passage indicates, if one earnestly chants Daimoku, then stands up to do shakubuku, with an indomitable determination based on his or her absolute faith in the Dai-Gohonzon, then one will be able to achieve shakubuku without fail.

In the Gosho, *On Practicing according to the Buddha's Teachings* (Nyosetsu shugyo-sho), the Daishonin teaches as follows:

In the present time of the Latter Day of the Law, the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings are the enemies of the Lotus Sutra. When the teaching of the one vehicle of Buddhahood is spread, all the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings become its enemies. When the Lotus Sutra and pre-Lotus Sutra teachings are confused, you first should refute the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings using the true Mahayana. Of the two practices of shoju and shakubuku, this is called shakubuku, based on the Lotus Sutra. Tiantai's statement, "The Lotus Sutra is the teaching of shakubuku, the refutation of the provisional doctrines" is indeed, based on reason. (*Gosho*, p. 672)

Furthermore, the Daishonin teaches the following in the same Gosho:

It is nonsense to seclude yourself in the mountains without refuting the enemies of the Lotus Sutra and carry out the practice of shoju 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. (*ibid.*, p. 673)

Not a single person should be censured with the declaration, "You only will lose the opportunity to practice the Lotus Sutra." In the Latter Day of the Law, of the two methods of shoju and shakubuku, shakubuku, first and foremost, must be the primary practice.

Accordingly, the Daishonin teaches the following in the Gosho, *Recorded Lectures* (Onko kikigaki):

Now is the time of the Latter Day of the Law, when one can attain Buddhahood by propagating the seven characters of Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo, and enable others to receive benefit [from the Buddha]. (*Gosho*, p. 1818)

As these golden words teach, in the Latter Day of the Law one can attain Buddhahood only by propagating the seven characters of Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo. This is extremely important. Various sins and negative karma that one committed and accumulated since the infinite past can be expiated by conducting shakubuku, the compassionate act of saving all living beings. By so doing, led by the Buddha's teachings, both oneself and others can attain Buddhahood.

Accordingly, the Gosho, *Attaining Enlightenment at the Initial Stage of Faith through the Lotus Sutra* (Hokke shoshin jobutsu-sho), states as follows:

If they hear the Lotus Sutra, which enables people to attain Buddhahood, this [encounter] will sow the seed of [Buddhahood] into their lives, and they eventually will attain enlightenment without fail. Therefore, Tiantai and

Miao follow this notion and expound in their commentaries that they should tirelessly teach the Lotus Sutra. It is like those who falter and fall to the ground and who are able to use that very ground to push themselves up to stand again. In the same way, even if they descend into hell, they will rise again before long and attain Buddhahood. The people in the world today have turned their backs on the Lotus Sutra and, for that offense, they will undoubtedly fall into hell. Therefore, in any case, one should strongly teach and make people listen to the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. Those who follow and take faith in it will be able to attain enlightenment, and even those who slander it will likewise attain Buddhahood in the end through the poison-drum relationship. In any case, the seed of Buddhahood can be found nowhere other than the Lotus Sutra. (*Gosho*, p. 1316)

The “poison-drum relationship” is a metaphor expounded in the Nirvana Sutra. It is said that when a drum smeared with poison is beaten in the midst of the people, all those who hear the sound of the drum will instantly die, whether they wish to hear it or not. Even those who neither listen to the Law nor take faith in it will eventually sever their earthly desires and attain enlightenment through a poison-drum relationship.

All living beings inherently possess the Buddha nature. Thus, they can attain Buddhahood in due course through listening to the true Law, awakening to it, and practicing it.

Now, in the Latter Day of the Law, even those with a reverse relationship, to say nothing of those with a positive relationship, can be saved in the future 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.

I sincerely pray that each of us will revere these golden words and recognize how important shakubuku is in the Latter Day of the Law. Then, I wish that the members of each chapter will unite, based on the spirit of *itai doshin*, and earnestly chant Daimoku in order to achieve the shakubuku goals that they pledged in front of the Gohonzon at any cost. With these benefits, joy, and courage, they will conduct shakubuku based on the spirit of, “one’s life is insignificant while the Law is supreme. You should be willing to give your life to propagate the Law.” With these efforts I hope that the members of all the chapters will achieve this year’s shakubuku goals and achieve the attainment of Buddhahood in this lifetime.