

Guidance from Sixty-eighth High Priest Nichinyo Shonin
On the Occasion of the August Kosen-rufu Shodai Ceremony August
4, 2019
Reception Hall, Head Temple Taisekiji

On this occasion of the August Kosen-rufu Shodai Ceremony, conducted here today at the Head Temple, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all of you for your attendance today despite your busy schedules. As you know, today, the priesthood and laity of Nichiren Shoshu are powerfully moving forward in their practice with all-out efforts, as we aim toward our goal—to achieve a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by 2021, when we will be commemorating the 800th anniversary of the advent of our Founder, Nichiren Daishonin. The establishment of a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers is the vow we pledged in front of the Gohonzon.

Thus, the members of all the chapters throughout the country, to the very last one, must devote every effort to achieve this goal, no matter what difficulties and obstacles they may face. In order to achieve this goal, it is essential that all the members of each chapter unite as one, regardless of age and gender. Then, all of them must resolutely do shakubuku with courage, and with the awareness that they are disciples and followers of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, no matter what obstacles that stand in their way.

The Twenty-sixth High Priest Nichikan Shonin stated the following in *Notes on the Goshu, On Practicing According to the Buddha's Teachings* (Nyosetsu shugyo-sho hikki):

If one constantly neglects shakubuku in his heart and removes the four dictums from his mind, one will develop a slanderous heart. If one does not speak words of shakubuku with one's mouth, then one's mouth is an accomplice to slander. If one does not hold the prayer beads in one's hands and face the Gohonzon, then one's body is complicit with slander.

Thus, when one has faith in the Gohonzon of the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra, faces the Gohonzon of the Life Span chapter of the essential teaching, and chants with one's mouth Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo of actual *ichinen sanzen* (three thousand realms in a single life-moment), the meaning hidden in the depths of the Life Span chapter of the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra, such a person is the one who practices shakubuku in one's three categories of action: thoughts, words, and deeds. That is to say, this is a person who believes in the Lotus Sutra in one's actions carried out with the body, one's words spoken with the mouth and one's thoughts that arise in the mind. (*Mondan*, p. 608)

We have resolved to achieve the attainment of Buddhahood in this lifetime. Thus, we must understand the importance of shakubuku in our faith and practice. It is essential for us to follow the instructions stated in this passage: If one constantly neglects shakubuku in his heart and removes the four dictums from his mind, one will develop a slanderous heart. If one does not speak words of shakubuku with one's mouth, then one's mouth is an accomplice to slander. If one does not hold the prayer beads in one's hands and face Gohonzon, then one's body is complicit with slander.

The Daishonin teaches the following in the Goshō, *On Practicing According to the Buddha's Teachings* (Nyosetsu shugyo-sho):

During the two thousand year-period of the Former and Middle Days of the Law, Hinayana and provisional Mahayana were to be propagated. The fifth Five-hundred-year Period, which corresponds to the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law, is the time when the pure and perfect teaching of the single truth of the Lotus Sutra is to be propagated throughout the world. This is the age of conflict, when the pure Law will become obscured and lost, and the Lotus Sutra and pre-Lotus Sutra teachings are confused. When there are enemies, you should take up a sword, stave, and bows and arrows. When there are no enemies, you do not need such weapons. 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.

(*Goshō*, p. 672)

Today, Nichiren Shoshu is powerfully moving forward, orchestrating all efforts of the priesthood and laity, as we aim toward the realization of our goal—the establishment of a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by 2021, the 800th anniversary of the advent of our Founder, Nichiren Daishonin. At this time, every last one of us must valiantly do shakubuku in order to achieve the vow we pledged in front of the Gohonzon at any cost. If one forgets to do shakubuku at this crucial time, it is inevitable that he or she will regret it for many years to come.

In the Goshō, *Letter to Nanjo Hyo'e Shichiro* (Nanjo hyo'e shichiro dono-goshō), the Daishonin teaches as follows:

No matter what great merit one gains by performing good deeds; 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)

The most important thing now for each one of us is to engrave these golden words into our hearts, and bravely and resolutely do shakubuku and devote every effort in our practice, aiming toward the achievement of our goals.

We have only one and a half years remaining until the auspicious occasion of the 800th anniversary of the advent of our Founder, Nichiren Daishonin. Now is the time for all the Hokkeko believers throughout the country to make every effort to do shakubuku. With these efforts, they must definitely achieve their vows pledged in front of the Gohonzon—the establishment of a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers, so that they can repay the vast and boundless debts of gratitude to the three treasures.

I sincerely pray that each of you will strengthen your faith and strive in your shakubuku practice all the more.