

**Guidance from Sixty-eighth High Priest Nichinyo Shonin
On the Occasion of the June Kōsen-rufu Shodai Ceremony
June 3, 2012
Reception Hall, Head Temple Taisekiji**

On this occasion of the June 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.

The month of June already has arrived, and the middle stage of our challenge for this year has now begun. I believe that you are striving for the achievement of your shakubuku goals, day and night, based on unity between priesthood and laity in the spirit of *itai-dōshin*.

As I observe the current chaotic conditions in society, including the unusual weather of recent date, political corruption, economic depression, and the frequent occurrence of tragic incidents and accidents, I can see that now is the time for each of us to move forward toward the achievement of our objectives for 2015 and 2021. We must carry out shakubuku—refuting heresy and revealing the truth, and uphold the Daishonin’s true intention, as expressed in the *Risshō ankoku-ron*, based on unity between the priesthood and laity.

The Parable (*Hiyu*; third) chapter of the Lotus Sutra states:

Yet living beings, drowned in the midst of all this, delight and amuse themselves, unaware, unknowing, without alarm or fear. They feel no sense of loathing and make no attempt to escape. In this burning house which is the threefold world, they race about to east and west, and though they encounter great pain, they are not distressed by it.

(Hokekyo, p. 151; The Lotus Sutra, Watson, p. 59)

The phrase “Yet living beings drowned in the midst of all this” in this famous passage from the parable of the “Three Carts and the Burning House,” indicates the following:

He sees living beings seared and consumed by birth, old age, sickness and death, care and suffering, sees them undergo many kinds of pain because of

the five desires and the desire for wealth and profit. Again, because of their greed and attachment and striving they undergo numerous pains in their present existence, and later they undergo the pain of being reborn in hell or as beasts or hungry spirits. Even if they are reborn in the heavenly realm or the realm of human beings, they undergo the pain of poverty and want, the pain of parting from loved ones, the pain of encountering those they detest—all these many different kinds of pain.

(*Hokekyo*, p. 151; *The Lotus Sutra*, Watson, p. 59)

In other words, these passages teach that looking at the people, we see they are unhappy and lost in melancholy. They shut their minds in the dark, and are burned by the fire of the three poisons of greed, anger, and stupidity. They can't escape their many desires, and in their suffering, they are tightly shackled by their own ego, with which they seek treasure and profit. For this reason, amidst their suffering, they may experience some pleasure, but afterward, they will experience the suffering of the three evil paths of hell, hunger, and animality. Even though they are born in the worlds of rapture or humanity, their hearts are very corrupt. Consequently, they will undergo distress, trouble, and suffering, from having to part from those that they love, and having to meet those that they hate. Yet in spite of these sufferings, they surrender themselves, fearless, indulging in transient pleasures. They do not try to escape this suffering, even though they are inside the burning house of the threefold world—the world of desire, the world of form, and the world of formlessness. They do not worry about facing great difficulty, but simply amuse themselves by scampering from east to west.

As this passage from the Lotus Sutra teaches, it is certain that many people in society today, who live with various difficulties and sufferings in their lives, first try to relieve themselves of them. Without realizing it, however, they eventually become accustomed to their surroundings and stop making such attempts.

In the *Risshō ankoku-ron*, the Daishonin states:

Those who always eat smartweed become numb to its pungent taste. Those who stay long in an outhouse are not bothered by the offensive odor.

(*Gosho*, p. 250; *The Gosho of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2, p. 242)

“Those who always eat smartweed become numb to its pungent taste,” means that even though smartweed has a fiery flavor, if one always eats it, he gradually will become desensitized. One can acquire and develop skills through learning and repetition. Thus, if someone accumulates many agonizing experiences in the condition of suffering, this person will start to feel numb to them before he even realizes it.

“Those who stay long in an outhouse are not bothered by the offensive odor,” means that although an outhouse always smells unpleasant, if one stays in it long enough, he or she will cease to notice its odor. These analogies illustrate the fact that one does not feel suffering when he is accustomed to an environment of suffering, and such a person will end his life in suffering.

These matters apply to us, both in daily life, as well as in our own faith. For instance, after being brainwashed by a heretical teaching for a long time, one becomes unaware of its incorrect teaching and its slander against the Law. Even though such an individual may hear a good thing, he thinks that it is a negative thing. He tends to follow the wrong master, believing this person is a sage or wise man. On the other hand, one will doubt the person who teaches the correct Law, and naturally will think he is an evil man.

To take our fundamental Buddhist practice of Gongyo in the morning and evening as an example, even if one properly has conducted it every morning until now, once one neglects it and then neglects it repeatedly, he or she eventually will stop conducting Gongyo anymore, due to accustomed habits. This behavior is giving in to laziness.

The same also can be said of attending the Oko Ceremony, making a tozan pilgrimage and doing shakubuku. In fact, if you behave as I have just mentioned, you will commit the slander of negligence as a result.

Therefore, in order to have a happy life, we must try to prevent ourselves from falling into corrupt habits and laziness. There is only one way to rid ourselves of these negative characteristics. The solution is to polish our own faith. We must motivate ourselves to practice.

The Daishonin states the following in, “Attaining Buddhahood in this Lifetime” (*“Isshō jōbutsu-shō”*):

While deluded, one is considered a common mortal, but once enlightened, one is understood to be a Buddha. For example, even a dark mirror will shine like a jewel when it is polished. Likewise, a mind that is presently clouded by

illusions originating from the fundamental darkness of life is like a tarnished mirror. Yet, once it is polished, it will become a clear mirror, reflecting the essential truth of the Law. Awaken deep faith and polish your mirror night and day without neglect. How should you polish it? Honestly chanting Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo is called polishing your mind.

(*Gosho*, p. 46)

“Polishing one’s faith,” means to uphold faith, based on the principle of “having no doubts is to have faith” (*mugi wasshin*), and powerfully chanting Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo. This will enable us to resolve any suffering and distress. Furthermore, we will awaken to the eternal true entity of all phenomena and the oneness of the material and spiritual. We will gain the immeasurable benefit of the Dai-Gohonzon, through the achievement of the fusion of objective reality and subjective wisdom (*kyōchi myōgō*). This is the vast benefit of faith [and practice].

When we take faith, however, it must be the absolutely correct way of faith. Worshipping the counterfeit object of worship issued by the Ikeda Soka Gakkai is not the correct practice. It cannot provide any benefit to anyone. On the contrary, it is great slander of the Law, and this transgression will increase indefinitely.

We firmly must chant Daimoku every morning and evening and conduct shakubuku with the benefit and joy of faith. Then, for the sake of those who are distressed and trapped in suffering, and for those who are deceived by incorrect teachings without knowing the huge slander of worshipping a counterfeit object of worship, we must help as many people as possible take refuge in Nichiren Shoshu, as soon as possible.

In particular, this year’s goal is for all the Hokkeko chapters to achieve all of their shakubuku goals.

I would like to conclude my address for today by praying from the bottom of my heart that each one of you will conduct shakubuku, while aiming for an early accomplishment of your goals, based on unity between priesthood and laity in the spirit of *itai-dōshin*. Let’s report to the three treasures, the splendid achievement of our shakubuku goals for all the Hokkeko chapters this year.