

**Guidance from Sixty-eighth High Priest Nichinyo Shonin
On the Occasion of the August Kōsen-rufu Shodai Ceremony
August 4, 2013
Reception Hall, Head Temple Taisekiji**

Good morning, everyone!

On this occasion of the August 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, including the Teen Group members.

The month of August already has begun. I imagine that you are striving forth toward the achievement of your shakubuku goals, day and night, based on the unity between priesthood and laity, in the spirit of *itai-dōshin*.

As I often mention, this year, the long-awaited Grand Ceremony Commemorating the Completion of the Major Renovation of the Image Hall (*Mieidō*) is planned to be conducted in November. Therefore, by the end of October, I truly hope that all the chapters will have achieved this year's shakubuku goals, so that we can formally report our achievement to the three treasures on this occasion.

Presently, the conditions are more difficult than usual concerning the attainment of our goals. However, because the situation is tough, I believe that the joy and fulfillment you will feel after exerting yourself to the utmost and overcoming the difficulties will be immeasurable. Moreover, I feel that striving to practice toward the achievement of your goals while overcoming various obstacles and devils will bring forth tremendous benefits. This is because each individual, as a disciple of the True Buddha Nichiren Daishonin, is devoting oneself to the practice for kōsen-rufu, in order to fulfill the Buddha's will.

Thus, I hope you will further strive in your practice, aiming toward the achievement of your goals.

The Daishonin teaches in "Letter to Hyōe sakan" ("*Hyōe sakan dono gosho*"):

It is the normal way of things that, when the Latter Day of the Law begins, all sages and wise men will disappear. The sutra illustrates that the country will be filled only with slanderers (*zanjin*), flatterers (*neijin*), smiling conspirators, (*wazan*) and those with distorted principles (*kyokuri*). Figuratively speaking, when the water runs low, [fish in] the pond will become restless. When the wind

blows, the ocean will be choppy, not smooth. In the age of the Latter Day of the Law, there will be an outbreak of droughts and epidemics, and heavy rains and big winds will come, one after another. Because of this, even broad-minded people will become narrow-minded. Even those who desire to seek the truth will lapse into erroneous views. Moreover, immediate family members such as father and mother, husband and wife, and brothers and sisters will come into conflict, just like a battle between a hunter and a deer, a cat and a mouse, or a hawk and a pheasant. And this will be all the more so among strangers.

(*Gosho*, p. 1270)

The Daishonin realistically shows the conditions of today's chaotic world in this defiled evil age of the Latter Day of the Law. How can we realize world peace and true happiness of the people in such an evil age? And what teaching and method can we follow in order to achieve this?

The Daishonin states in "Reply to Lord Ueno" ("*Ueno dono-gohenji*"):

Now, in this age of the Latter Day of the Law, neither the Lotus Sutra nor the other sutras have the power to save the people. Only Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo can lead all people to Buddhahood.

(*Gosho*, p. 1219)

Those without the seed of Buddhahood will not be saved by the surface meaning of the words of the Lotus Sutra, let alone by the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings. Only the mystic Law (*Myōhō*) of the sowing, hidden in the depths of the Lotus Sutra, established by Nichiren Daishonin, who made his advent as the True Buddha in the Latter Day of the Law, can lead us to the attainment of Buddhahood.

In particular, now in this age of the Latter Day of the Law, both types of people—those with positive and reverse relationships with the Buddha—are pervasive throughout the country. This is the time when the slander of the true Law will increase more than ever. Therefore, between the two methods of *shōju* and *shakubuku*, in this age we must use *shakubuku* as the primary practice, in order to refute slander and save those who suffer from the poison of slander.

The Daishonin teaches in his *Gosho*, "The Opening of the Eyes" ("*Kaimoku-shō*"):

The relationship between the methods of shōju and shakubuku are like water and fire. Fire abhors water, while water detests fire. The practitioner of shōju despises the method of shakubuku, while those who conduct shakubuku grieve over the method of shōju. When unenlightened and evil men are rampant throughout the nation, shōju comes first, as described in the Peaceful Practices (*Anrakugyō*; fourteenth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra. When cunning men and slanderers of the Law thrive, shakubuku should take precedence, as taught in the Bodhisattva Never Disparaging (*Fukkyō*; twentieth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

(*Gosho*, p. 575)

The Latter Day of the Law is the time “when cunning men and slanderers of the Law thrive.” In this age, we must practice shakubuku before anything else, refute slander, and sow the seeds of Myoho-Renge-Kyo into the lives of the people, who are struggling and suffering. We must save as many people as possible.

Thus, now is the time for both priesthood and laity to be united, based on the spirit of many in body, one in mind (*itai dōshin*), and devote ourselves to the propagation of the true Law. I pray from the bottom of my heart that each of us will chant abundant Daimoku and practice shakubuku, in order to achieve this year’s shakubuku goal—and consequently, walk on the path to the attainment of Buddhahood in this lifetime.