

Lecture in Praise of Nichiren Daishonin  
June 2011, Oko Lecture

## The Great Significance of Telling People About the Benefits of the Dai-Gohonzon

There is no safety in the threefold world; it is like a burning house, replete with a multitude of sufferings, truly to be feared.

(*Hokekyo*, p. 168; *The Lotus Sutra*, Watson, p. 69)

This is a passage from the Parable (*Hiyu*; third) chapter of the Lotus Sutra. Just as this excerpt describes, natural disasters are occurring frequently in Japan and throughout the world today. There have been various widespread civil wars and terrorist activities in many parts of the world. Furthermore, many countries are suffering from grave political and financial problems. There also is the threat from the radiation leakage accident at Nuclear Reactor Number 1 in Fukushima, as a result of the great earthquake that hit eastern Japan. Many people are living in total confusion, suffering, and unhappiness. They are experiencing tremendous anxiety, since they cannot foresee what is in store for them in the future. Most of the people are terribly saddened by these awful conditions and are grieving. They all pray for a peaceful and comfortable existence, searching for salvation from these conditions. In reality, however, they have been unable to find a true resolution through secular means.

In the following passage from the *Risshō ankokuron* (“On Securing the Peace of the Land through the Propagation of True Buddhism”), Nichiren Daishonin explains, from the standpoint of true Buddhism, the fundamental cause of disasters that bring confusion to people in society. He states:

...all people have gone against the correct Law and become wholly devoted to evil doctrines. This is why all the guardian deities have abandoned this country and sages have left this land, not to return. Seizing this opportunity, devils and demons rush in, bringing disasters and calamities. This is most fearful. We must speak out!

(*Gosho*, p. 234, *The Gosho of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2, p. 3)

The Daishonin states that not only do people resist believing in true Buddhism, they actually dare to cherish evil doctrines. He declares that there will be harmful consequences of such slander. Conditions will occur in which numerous people will suffer. The Daishonin further states in the *Risshō ankokuron*:

...first and foremost put an end to the slanders that prevail throughout the country.

(*Gosho*, p. 247, *The Gosho of Nichiren Daishonin*, Vol. 2, p. 35)

Here, the Daishonin teaches that we are able to establish true happiness in our lives only when we renounce all slander and sincerely embrace the correct teachings of true Buddhism.

The essential focus of the lifetime teachings of Nichiren Daishonin is the spirit of securing the peace of the land through the establishment of true Buddhism, which is the creation of a peaceful and safe land by upholding the true Law. In other words, we must believe in the correct teaching of true Buddhism, propagate it, and establish it throughout the world. The Daishonin explains that when we achieve this, the land will manifest stability, and the people's lives will become tranquil and comfortable. Herein lies the mission of all the priests and lay believers of Nichiren Shoshu, who must actualize these ideals upheld by the Daishonin.

What is the nature of true Buddhism that must be established in our world, after we have renounced all forms of slander, which are the essential cause of suffering? Our Twenty-sixth High Priest Nichikan Shonin stated the following in his "Commentary on the *Rissho ankoku-ron*" ("*Rissho ankoku-ron guki*"):

This represents the foremost essence of the secret hidden in the deepest depths of the sutra, the highest of all forms of mystic truth, and the most essential of all truths. Therefore, it is known to be the foremost in the entirety of the Jambudvipa world. This object of worship must be established in the nation of Japan. If this is achieved, the two Chinese characters that comprise *rissho* (the "establishment of truth") will indicate none other than the true Object of Worship of the Essential Teaching.

(*Gosho mondan*, p. 6)

In short, he explains that the true spirit of the *Risshō ankoku-ron* exists in the worldwide propagation of the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary the Essential Teaching, established by Nichiren Daishonin. Therefore, when we, as fellow priests and lay believers of Nichiren Shoshu, advance with great devotion to do shakubuku and propagate the Law, focused on the objective of achieving kosen-rufu, then disasters will be eliminated from the land, without fail, and we actually can bring about a world in which all people are able to live peacefully and comfortably.

In the *Gosho*, "On Persecutions Befalling the Buddha" ("*Shōnin gonanji*"), the Daishonin wrote:

For the Buddha, it took more than forty years; for the Great Teacher Tiantai, it was slightly over thirty years; and Dengyo took about twenty years to

fulfill the purpose of his advent into this world....As for me, I took twenty-seven years.

(*Gosho*, p. 1396)

Here, the Daishonin indicates that in the second year of Koan (1279), 27 years after he declared the establishment of true Buddhism, he fulfilled the true purpose of his advent into this world. Nichikan Shonin explains the significance of this by stating that the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of the Essential Teaching, established in the second year of Koan (1279), represents the true purpose of Nichiren Daishonin's advent into this world. This is the supreme and most reverent Gohonzon.

The benefits of believing in this Gohonzon are absolutely great. In the *Gosho*, "Reply to Kyō'ō" (*"Kyō'ō dono go-henji"*), the Daishonin presents the following instructions:

Even misfortunes can be changed into fortune. Summon up your faith and pray to this Gohonzon. What possibly can there be that cannot be attained?

(*Gosho*, p. 685)

Furthermore, he states in the *Gosho*, "On the Meaning of the True Entity of Myoho-Renge-Kyo" (*"Tōtai gi-sho"*):

Those who honestly discard the expedient teachings, put faith only in the Lotus Sutra, and chant Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo, will transform the three paths of earthly desires, karma, and suffering into the three virtues of the property of the Law, wisdom and emancipation. The threefold contemplation and the three truths will immediately manifest in their minds. The place where they dwell will become the land of eternally tranquil light.

(*Gosho*, p. 694)

Thus, the Daishonin teaches that those who believe in the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of the Essential Teaching and chant Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo will not only be able to fulfill all their prayers, but they also will receive the great benefit of attaining enlightenment in their present form (*sokushin jōbutsu*). Moreover, the place where they reside will become the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light.

Therefore, Nichikan Shonin wrote the following in his *Exegesis on the "True Object of Worship"* (*"Kanjin no honzon-shō"* mondan):

The benefits of upholding this Gohonzon are immeasurable and limitless, and they possess mystic functions that are expansive and profound. Hence, if one believes in this Gohonzon and chants Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo even for

a brief while, no prayer will go unanswered, no sin will be unforgiven, no fortune will be unbestowed, and no truth will remain unrevealed.

(*Gosho mondan*, p. 189)

Thus, Nichikan Shonin explains the absolute and tremendous nature of the benefits of practicing true Buddhism. We sincerely must uphold our faith and practice, based on the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, so that we can establish a life that is full of vast and limitless benefits and positive karma.

Nichiren Daishonin states the following in his Gosho, “On the Transmission of the Three Great Secret Laws” (“*Sandai hihō bonjō ji*”):

Now, in the age of the Latter Day of the Law, the Daimoku that I, Nichiren, chant is different from that of previous ages. It is the Nam-Myōhō-Renge-Kyō of both practice for oneself and for others.

(*Gosho*, p. 1594)

Thus, we must not be satisfied simply by gaining the vast and limitless benefits of the Dai-Gohonzon for ourselves only. It is essential for us to engage in the practice for others, telling as many people as possible about this practice—in other words, doing shakubuku. Nichiren Daishonin also teaches that, by performing this practice for others (shakubuku) we can prevent ourselves from committing the offense of being accomplices to slander.

There is a proverb that says, “An unsown seed will never grow.” As this phrase indicates, when we do shakubuku and tell others about the benefits of the Dai-Gohonzon, we will sow the cause for Buddhahood (*butsu-in*), into their lives without fail. This will promote the ultimate salvation for them from hardships and suffering. Our High Priest gave the following directions about the significance of associating with those who possess a bond with the Buddha:

Regardless of the negative causes that may have characterized our lives, we are able to attain enlightenment, without fail, by associating with positive karmic bonds. In other words, no matter what causes we may have made to amass negative karma, by encountering the Dai-Gohonzon, the supreme karmic bond, we are able to change the poisons in our lives into medicine (*hendoku iyaku*). Furthermore, based on the principles of “earthly desires are enlightenment” (*bonnō soku bodai*), “the sufferings of birth and death are nirvana” (*shōji soku nehan*), and “the *saha* world is the land of eternally tranquil light” (*shaba soku jakkō*), we are able to attain enlightenment. What is most essential is to encounter positive karmic bonds.

(*Dai Nichiren*, vol. 720, p. 14)

Today, in the Latter Day of the Law, the secret teaching for the salvation of all mankind is none other than the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of the True

Buddhism of the Essential Teaching, the foremost of the Three Great Secret Laws. We must sincerely pray that as many people as possible will embrace this Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary so that, together, we can receive the vast and limitless benefits of the mystic Law (*Myoho*) and achieve true happiness. As priests and lay believers of Nichiren Shoshu, let us uphold the will of the Daishonin and strive to achieve kosen-rufu throughout the world. We must realize that our important mission lies in putting forth our best efforts to do shakubuku, based on the principle of the practice for others (*keta*). Let us advance vigorously with great devotion and compassion, so that we can tell as many people as possible about the benefits of the Dai-Gohonzon.