

Myosetsuji News

ISSUE 226

APRIL 1, 2020

GUIDANCE FROM SIXTY-EIGHTH HIGH PRIEST NICHINYO SHONIN

On the Occasion of the February Kosen-rufu Shodai Ceremony

On this occasion of the February 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.



As you know already, this year, "The Year of Achieving Our Shakubuku Goal" is an extremely important year. In this final year of our practice to achieve our vow that we pledged in front of the Gohonzon, the establishment of a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers, the members of all

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***Due to the Coronavirus Outbreak
All Ceremonies and Meetings Have Temporarily Been Suspended***

Gosho Quote for April 2020

Reply to Nichinyo gozen

It is said that the Yellow River becomes clear once in a thousand years. It is said that a sage makes his advent only once in a thousand years. A Buddha is said to be born only once in innumerable kalpas. Even if you encounter the Buddha, it is difficult to encounter the Lotus Sutra. And even if you encounter the Lotus Sutra, it is still more difficult for common mortals like us, who were born in the Latter Day of the Law, to encounter the votary of the Lotus Sutra.

(Gosho, P.1232)

GUIDANCE FROM SIXTY-EIGHTH HIGH PRIEST NICHINYO SHONIN (*CONTINUED*)

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the chapters throughout the country must exert all their energy to fulfill their goals.

Therefore, including those of you who gathered here today to attend the Kosen-rufu Shodai Ceremony, all Hokkeko members across the nation must join the ranks of [the soldiers of] kosen-rufu, under the vow of achieving our goal of establishing a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers, and make further efforts in our practice.

Our Founder Nichiren Daishonin made his advent into this world in the Latter Day of the Law. The purpose of his advent was to equally lead all living beings in the Latter Day of the Law to attain Buddhahood. Those who correctly follow and carry on

the will of our Founder Nichiren Daishonin to this day are unquestionably the priesthood and laity of Nichiren Shoshu.

In particular, reflecting the society of the defiled age of the Latter Day of the Law, today's social conditions present chaos, bringing with it with uncertainty. The people's minds are depraved to the highest degree, ethnic conflicts never cease, and the new coronavirus (COVID-19) is currently spreading. In order to save the confused human minds and build true happiness, there is no way other than

taking faith in the teaching of our Founder Nichiren Daishonin, the True Buddha in the Latter Day of the Law. Keeping this in mind, we must make further efforts in our practice and do shakubuku.

The Daishonin teaches the following in the Goshō, *On Practicing according to the Buddha's*



Teachings (Nyosetsu shugyōsho):

In summer it gets hot, in winter it gets cold, in spring flowers bloom, and in autumn trees bear fruit. In spring, one should sow seeds to harvest in autumn. If seeds are planted in autumn, one will be unable to harvest the fruit in spring. During the freezing weather, thick clothes are necessary, while under the intense heat of summer, they are not. A cool wind is comfortable in summer, but it only intensifies the chill of winter. The same holds true for Buddhism. There was a time when Hinayana Buddhism was to be spread, and one could gain benefit. On the other hand, there was a time when provisional Mahayana was to be propagated, and one could gain benefit. There is a time when true Mahayana is to be spread, and one can gain the ben-

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GUIDANCE FROM SIXTY-EIGHTH HIGH PRIEST NICHINYO SHONIN (CONTINUED)

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efit of attaining enlightenment. 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. 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)

In this passage, the Daishonin teaches, “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” refers to the one and only perfect teaching, [the teaching of perfectly integrated truth.] The single truth refers to the one vehicle of Buddhahood, the sutra that teaches the truth, which is the Lotus Sutra.

Concerning this passage, the Twenty-sixth High Priest Nichikan Shonin taught as follows:

The surface meaning of the words is the comparison between the Lotus Sutra and the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings, while the meaning hidden in the depths is the comparison between the Buddhism of the sowing and the Buddhism of the harvest. According to *The True Object of Worship*, “Pure and perfect” means, “The

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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.” Pure and per-

GUIDANCE FROM SIXTY-EIGHTH HIGH PRIEST NICHINYO SHONIN (CONTINUED)

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essential teaching during Shakyamuni's lifetime and the teaching for the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law are equally pure and perfect." (*Mondan*, p. 605)

The pure and perfect teaching of the single truth of the Lotus Sutra refers to Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo of the Three Great Secret Laws.

In other words, the Latter Day of the Law is the time when Myoho-Renge-Kyo of the Three Great Secret Laws is to be propagated. In this period, the pre-Lotus Sutra and provisional teachings are the enemies of the true Mahayana, [which is the Lotus Sutra.] Thus, from the standpoint of the Three Great Secret Laws, the pre-Lotus Sutra and provisional teachings should be denounced.

The Daishonin expounds the following in the *Gosho*, *Questions*

and Answers between a Sage and a Foolish Man (Shogu mondo-sho):

When erroneous doctrines of various sects become rampant and compete against each other, gaining acclaim by taking the stance that their respective doctrines are superior to others; and when incorrect teachings are viewed as equal to the correct Law, and Mahayana and Hinayana followers fight with each other over what is correct—this is the time above all else, to refute these slanderers. This is the practice of shakubuku. The Lotus Sutra and Nirvana Sutra both state that if one is unaware of this principle, and is mistaken about the implementation of shoju and shakubuku, one will be far removed from receiving the

benefit of attaining Buddhahood. Rather, one will fall into hell. This is also clearly stated in the interpretations provided by Tiantai and Miaole. What I mention here is critical in conducting



Buddhist practices. (*Gosho*, p. 402)

When the defiled age of the Latter Day of the Law begins, the people's minds become confused. When human minds are confused, the surrounding world falls into chaos, and this extends into the realm of the environment, inviting unusual occurrences such as droughts, epidemics, floods, gales and so on. This becomes a vicious cycle, as human minds become even more and more disturbed, and the entire land falls into disarray, exhibiting an afflicting condition of strife among the same flesh and blood. As a result, everyone in the entire country suffers anguish by falling into the great citadel of the hell of incessant suffering.

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GUIDANCE FROM SIXTY-EIGHTH HIGH PRIEST NICHINYO SHONIN (CONTINUED)

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What is the biggest cause for such confusion of human minds? It is the poison of slandering the true Law due to erroneous ideas and mistaken views, the poison of the slander of heretical teachings.

In the Goshō, *Letter to Akimoto* (Akimoto-goshō), the Daishonin teaches as follows:

If those who slander the Law reside in this country, everyone in the entire nation will fall into the hell of incessant suffering.

(*Goshō*, p. 1450)

Exactly what we must fear is slander of the true Law. Eliminating this slander is the only way to achieve world peace. Herein lies



the significant reason for us to root out slanders and carry out shakubuku.

The Daishonin teaches the following in the Goshō, *Reply to the Wife of Abutsu-bo* (Abutsu bo ama gozen-gohenji):

Always be prepared to refute slander of the Law to the full extent of your ability. (*Goshō*, p. 907)

We must take these golden words to heart and should never forget them.

Now, in this year of achieving our goal, each one of us must engrave these golden words into our hearts, and based on great compassion, devote ourselves to do shakubuku to many people who suffer from misfortune, due to the poison of slander. With this effort, we must achieve our goal of establishing a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers.

In the Goshō, *The Doctrine of Ichinen Sanzen* (Ichinen sanzen homon), the Daishonin teaches us as follows:

Even if a medicine is compounded with one hundred or one thousand ingredients, one's illness will not be cured



unless one puts it in his mouth. Even if one owns treasures in a storehouse, he will starve unless he opens it. Even if one carries medicine in his pocket, he will die unless he takes it. (*Goshō*, p. 110)

One's act of taking faith in Buddhism is one's actual practice. In particular, February is the month when our Founder Nichiren Daishonin was born.

At this time, I sincerely wish that you will always keep these golden words in mind and devote yourselves to your practice, so that all chapters throughout the country will achieve this year's shakubuku goals without fail.

REVEREND TAKIKAWA'S LECTURE REGARDING THE CORONAVIRUS

Thank you very much everyone for joining Sunday Morning Gongyo here, on the broadcast. With the number of infections of Coronavirus-19 increasing, we'd like to do our part to help contain and stop the spread of the virus among the people in the United States. We care about the health of our members and want to make sure our members stay healthy and safe and are able to continue practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

Therefore, Nichiren Shoshu Temple decided at this time to cancel all Sunday activities held at its 6 temples in the United States. I ask for your understanding, cooperation, and patience in this matter.

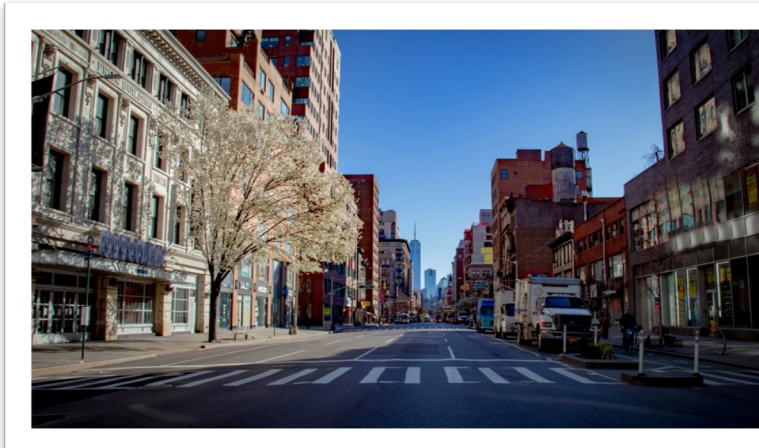
I have received a message from Overseas Department Chief Rev. Urushibata pertaining to the current worldwide crisis of the pandemic coronavirus-19 disease. Let me share his message with you.

"The Corona virus that broke out in Wuhan City in China is rapidly and widely spreading to the entire world, effortlessly crossing all borders. The speed of its proliferation is bringing chaos and uncertainty to the world. The Director General of the World Health Organization assessed on March 12th that the global Covid-19 outbreak was a pandemic. In the same statement, he remarked that this was a controllable pandemic.

Because of the Covid-19 outbreak, this year's spring Mushibarai-e Ceremony (Airing of the Sacred Scrolls) officiated by the Head Temple was not possible, nor the Gokaihi Ceremony (audience) with the Dai-Gohonzon. I can only imag-

ine the great disappointment of Hokkeko members worldwide who were planning to attend these ceremonies. I am certain you are looking forward to visiting the Head Temple in the cloud of cherry blossoms with the backdrop of majestic Mt. Fuji.

Knowing the strong seeking spirit of members worldwide who looked forward to going on Tozan (pilgrimage) yearning to see the Dai-Gohonzon, it was not an easy decision for the Overseas Department to



make, to cancel the Mushibarai-e Tozan.

I'd like to ask for your understanding and cooperation on this matter considering the seriousness of our current situation.

We will keep you informed about upcoming Tozans and Ceremonies. I'd like to let you know that personal Tozan is still open and available for all Hokkeko members worldwide.

Nichiren Daishonin states at the beginning of the *Rissho ankoku ron* (On Securing the Peace of the Land through the Propagation of True Buddhism) as follows:

"In recent years there have been unusual occurrences in the heavens and natural disasters on earth. Famine and epidemics rage in all lands

beneath the skies and in every corner of the realm." (*The Goshō of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol.2, p. 1)

He furthermore reveals the reason why disasters such as earthquakes, abnormal weather and epidemics rage as follows:

"All people have gone against the correct law and become wholly devoted to evil doctrines. This is why all the guardian deities have abandoned the country and sages have left this land, not to return. Seizing this opportunity, devils and demons have rushed in bringing disasters and calamities." (*The Goshō of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol.2, p. 3)

He teaches us that because people in the entire country commit slanders against the true law, the guardian deities leave the country and the devils take over in their stead, bringing calamities. Nichiren Daishonin

states in *Letter to the Brothers* (Kyodai-Sho) as follows:

"Without fail, devils will arise if you preach this doctrine to others. If these devils do not vie with one another to cause obstruction there is no way of knowing that this is the true doctrine." (*Goshō*, p.986)

True to these words, because we are courageously carrying out shakubuku toward the 800th anniversary of the advent of Nichiren Daishonin, "the devils are vying with one another to cause obstruction." I strongly believe that the current outbreak of Covid-19 worldwide is a temporary delay in the advancement of kosen-rufu, and is an omen that we will make a big leap to the next stage of worldwide

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REVEREND TAKIKAWA'S LECTURE REGARDING THE CORONAVIRUS (CONTINUED)

propagation. Nichiren Daishonin encourages us:

“When great evil occurs, great good will follow.”

(*On Great Evil and Great Good*, Goshō, p.796)

The 800th anniversary of the advent of Nichiren Daishonin is close at hand. When we overcome this tremendous obstacle of Covid-19; this remarkable and special commemorative occasion will be waiting for us.

Now is the time for us to overcome all difficulties and strive forth toward kosen-rufu. With this in mind, and in the spirit of *itai doshin* between priesthood and laity, let's devote ourselves to both faith and practice.

High Priest, Nichinyō Shonin gave the following guidance on the occasion of the March Kosen-rufu Shodai Ceremony:

“Now is the time when, Japan and the whole world is in total confusion due to the spread of the Coronavirus. We must once again revere Nichiren Daishonin's sacred intention of the *Rissho anko-ku-ron*. We must devote ourselves to the spread of *Myōhō-Renge-Kyō* based on the unity in the spirit of *itai doshin*.”

Dear Hokkeko members, I'm sure you are aware of Nichiren Shōshū issuing a temporary hold on hosting meetings and other events to aid in the stopping of the spread of Covid-19. I'm hoping that while abiding by the current safety precautions you look for ways to carry out shakubuku and help develop new members. I ask you to avoid activities that will put yourself and others in danger. Please take action, but be mindful of keeping yourself healthy and safe for you and your family as well as your fellow members.

Please believe in the protective powers of the Dai-Gohonzon. I pray that you will devote yourself to Shodai for the early resolution of the pandemic in your respective countries and the advancement of kosen-rufu, and for peace to prevail.”

[Rev. Takikawa's guidance:]

This is a message from Rev. Uru-shibata to all Hokkeko members worldwide. In his message he said



our current situation of global covid-19 outbreak, is a temporary delay in the advancement of kosen-rufu, and is an *omen* that we will make a big leap to the next stage of worldwide propagation. I strongly agree with his statement, and I believe that we should also believe that this is a *great omen* that we can make a big leap to the next step of worldwide propagation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

Especially for us, believers and Hokkeko members of Myosetsuji, we are now eagerly awaiting for the opening of our renovated Myosetsuji Temple. This will definitely happen after we overcome this immi-

nent threat of covid-19 here in New York. When we can open our Myosetsuji Temple, our wooden Joju-Gohonzon once again, will be enshrined in the very beautiful altar with new Buddhist accessories and decorations, that is the manifestation and crystallization of your sincere Gokuyo offering and spirit of strong Itai Doshin among Myosetsuji Hokkeko members. I'm really waiting to see this breathtaking moment when we can see the re-enshrined wooden Joju-Gohonzon again at Myosetsuji Temple when we have the Re-opening Ceremony of the Temple.

Let's make sure that we can strongly maintain our spirit if Itai Doshin in this very difficult time of the coronavirus spread. I believe our faith and practice is being tested. Actually we can use this coronavirus-spreading situation as a way and means to strengthen our unity and our power of faith and practice.

We must not use this situation as an excuse to not practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Rather, we must use this situation as a way and means to strengthen our faith and our Itai Doshin. Devils and demons are happy when they see people abandoning their faith in true Buddhism and failing to attain enlightenment. We must not show those devils and demons any signs of letting up our faith and practice. Rather, we must make sure we maintain our strong faith and practice so we can overcome the obstructions caused by these demons and devils. Let's continue our best efforts to practice this Buddhism for us and for other people's happiness. Thank you very much everyone for participating in this Sunday morning Gongyo today at the Temple's Residence. Thank you very much.

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