

Myosetsuji News

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HIGH PRIEST NICHINYO SHONIN — NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS

As we welcome the New Year, the 770th year since the establishment of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I am very pleased that all Nichiren Shoshu priests and lay believers are greeting the New Year with a spirit of renewal and resolving to further advance in their practice with a fresh determination.

The slogan for this year is, "The Year of Advancement with the Spirit to Repay Our Debt of Gratitude." It is an extremely important year. Based on the spirit of repaying our debt of gratitude owed to the three treasures of true Buddhism, we should make great strides toward the achievement of kosen-rufu by our further dedication to practice, in the unity of many in body, one in mind between the priesthood and laity.

Due to the current situation throughout world, with the novel coronavirus pandemic, I strongly feel that all of us should read the *Rissho ankoku-ron* (On Securing the

Peace of the Land through the Propagation of True Buddhism) and reaf-



firm Nichiren Daishonin's true intention once again. Then, in order to

overcome this adversity, we must resolutely do shakubuku in the spirit of "one's life is insignificant while the Law is supreme. You should be willing to give your life to propagate the Law."

Nichiren Daishonin reveals that because all people have gone against the correct teaching and believe in erroneous doctrines, the guardian deities that should protect the lands have left and instead, devils and demons now live there. This causes the three calamities and seven disasters to occur. Belief in erroneous doctrines is the root cause of natural disasters, famines, epidemics, and other calamities. Then, the Daishonin admonishes that we must sever our attachments to erroneous doctrines without delay, and take faith in "the supreme teaching of the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra" to prevent these calamities and establish the Buddha land, as stated in the following passage:

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Gosho Quote for February 2022

Repaying Debts of Gratitude **(Ho-on-sho)**

This is a matter of foremost importance concerning Buddhism. In examining the sutras, based on my humble perspective, I see that those who claim that there is a sutra superior to the Lotus Sutra, regardless of who they may be, cannot avoid the blame that they have slandered the Law. Thus, if we follow what is stated in the sutra, how can people such as these not be regarded as enemies of the Buddha? If I am fearful and fail to point out this fact, then the distinctions of superiority and inferiority among the entirety of the sutras will have been made in vain. (*Gosho*, p. 1003)

HIGH PRIEST NICHINYO SHONIN — NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS (CONTINUED)

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You must immediately renounce your erroneous belief and take faith in the supreme teaching of the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra. (*Rissho ankoku-ron, Goshō*, p. 250; *The Goshō of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2, p. 42)

Nichiren Daishonin's true intention regarding the meaning of the phrase, "the supreme teaching of the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra" does not indicate the surface meaning of the words of the Lotus Sutra. Rather, it refers to Myoho-Renge-Kyo, hidden in the depths of the Lotus Sutra—the sole essential teaching. It is the supreme Three Great Secret Laws, that is, the Dai-Gohonzon. He teaches that taking faith in the Dai-Gohonzon is the best way to secure the peace of the country.

We should know that the funda-

mental source of the novel coronavirus spreading today is indeed, in the light of Buddhism, the poison of slander due to heretical teachings. And we must exert ourselves bravely and vigorously in the practice of shakubuku with ever-stronger faith.

Nichiren Daishonin states in *On the Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life and Death* (Shoji ichidaiji kechimyaku-sho) as follows:

All disciples and believers of Nichiren should chant Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo with the spirit of many in body, one in mind, overcoming all differences among themselves, [to become united with the heart of the Buddha], just like fish being inseparable from the water in which they swim. This is called the Heritage of the ultimate Law of life and death. This is also what Nichiren is trying to propagate now in the Latter Day of the Law. When you are so united,

even the great aspiration for kosen-rufu can be fulfilled without fail. However, if there are any among Nichiren's disciples who are many in body, many in mind, they are like subjects in a castle who destroy the fortress from within. (*Goshō*, p. 514)

I wish that upholding this passage, all Nichiren Shoshu believers in every Hokkeko organization will create a solid unity of many in body, one in mind, and face up to today's difficulties. I would like to conclude my New Year's address with my heartfelt hope that all of you devotedly practice and achieve both your attainment of Buddhahood in this lifetime and the realization of kosen-rufu throughout the entire world.

OVERSEAS DEPARTMENT CHIEF MOST REV. NICHIJITSU URUSHIBATA — NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS

To all Nichiren Shoshu priests and Hokkeko members throughout the world: Happy New Year 2022, "The Year of Advancement with the Spirit to Repay Our Debt of Gratitude."

On this first day of the year, I extend my sincere New Year's greetings to all of you, and I pray wholeheartedly for the peace and advancement of kosen-rufu in each country.

The worldwide novel coronavirus epidemic last year seemed to subside in early autumn. Still, when the Omicron variant began to spread at the end of the year, the world was again surrounded by tension and fell into great confusion.

For the believers in Japan who live far from the Head Temple, it became difficult to come on tozan. And as a matter of course, overseas believers are not able to make the pilgrimage at all.

Last year, "The Year of the 800th Anniversary of the Advent of our

Founder, Nichiren Daishonin," a once-in-a-century celebration, was interrupted by a series of obstacles. Under these circumstances, High Priest Nichinyo Shonin gave the following guidance on the occasion of the November Kosen-rufu Shodai Ceremony:

When we look at the chaotic condition of the world due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), we can see that now is the time for us to exert all our energy. We must resolutely conduct shakubuku—refuting heresy and revealing the truth—not only for the individual's happiness, but also for the happiness of all mankind and for world peace, as we aim toward kosen-rufu of the entire world.

I offer my sincere prayers that you will achieve unity, based on the spirit of *itai doshin*, and devote yourselves to do shakubuku, so that your efforts will be recognized and witnessed by the three treasures. (*Dainichiren*, Vol. 909, p. 22)

Now is the time for us to firmly carry out shakubuku—refuting heresy and revealing the truth. Let's engrave the High Priest's guidance into our hearts and devote ourselves to it.

In response to the High Priest's instruction that we must have a strong will to overcome obstacles and make a valiant effort to conduct shakubuku, even under the corona disaster, Nichiren Shoshu has set its annual slogan for this year as "The Year of Advancement with the Spirit to Repay Our Debt of Gratitude."

We have the important mission to refute slander, lead people to the right path, and establish the Buddha land.

We must surmount the international crisis of the spread of the coronavirus and abnormal weather, and keep advancing toward future kosen-rufu.

Further, we have decided on the following three practical points for overseas believers in conjunction

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MOST REV. NICHIJITSU URUSHIBATA — NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS (*CONTINUED*)

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with next year's objective. The three practical points are fundamental guidelines for our faith and practice.

Take Actions with Joy through Conducting Gongyo and Shodai Earnestly

The basis of Buddhist practice is morning and evening Gongyo. It is essential to face the Gohonzon with a straight posture and earnestly recite the sutra and chant Daimoku. It is also crucial to set a time and practice every day, and increase chanting Daimoku as much as possible.

By conducting Gongyo every day without neglect, we will receive the great benefits of the Gohonzon and lead a fulfilling life.

Make Great Strides toward Kosen-rufu through Shakubuku with Unity between the Priesthood and Laity

The purpose of the faith and practice of Nichiren Shoshu is to spread Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism throughout the world and to realize a peaceful Buddha land.

It is vital that we, the followers of Nichiren Daishonin's correct teaching, strive for shakubuku with the joy of faith.

Even in the middle of the coronavirus crisis, we will be showered with the great benefits of the three treasures of true Buddhism if we strive to perform shakubuku while taking care to prevent infection.

Foster Devoted Believers in a Harmonious Hokkeko Organization

Overseas believers still have no prospects to visit the Head Temple this year.

In addition, there are restrictions on the number of people who can attend Oko Ceremonies and other activities at local temples around the world. We also need to be very care-

ful about attending home meetings.

Under these circumstances, it is important for each of us to call each other for encouragement and keep in touch as we develop steady activities.

Please wash your hands, gargle, disinfect, wear a mask, and take other measures to avoid the risk of infection. I hope you to form a firm unity of *itai doshin* between the priests and the lay believers, and make ceaseless efforts to develop faith. In particular, it is important to pay close attention to new believers and patiently guide them until they become steady in their faith.

I hope all overseas priests and lay believers will understand the significance of this year 2022, "The Year of Advancement with the Spirit to Repay Our Debt of Gratitude." And I wish that you will etch this year's three practical points into your heart and put them into practice.

Nichiren Daishonin quoted the following passage from the Teachers of the Law (*Hosshi*; tenth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra in the Goshō, *On Remonstrating with Hachiman* (Kangyo hachiman-sho):

If, after my passing, there are good men and good women, and one among them secretly preaches the Lotus Sutra, [one volume of it, a single passage] or a phrase of it to even one other person, then this good man or woman, indeed, is an envoy of the Tathagata.... The Tathagata will cover him or her with his robe. (*Hokekyo*, pp. 321 & 326; *Goshō*, p. 1534)

The person who preaches the Lotus Sutra to even one person is the envoy of the Tathagata, and this person will be protected by being covered with the Tathagata's robe.

Nichiren Daishonin also states the Goshō, *Reply to Kyo-o* (Kyo-o dono-gohenji) as follows;

Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo is com-

parable to the roar of a lion. What illness could possibly hinder you? It is said that the Demon Goddess (Skt. *Hariti*; Jpn. *Kishimojin*) and her Ten Demon Goddess Daughters (Skt. *Rakshashi*; Jpn. *Jurasetsumyo*) will protect those who uphold the Daimoku of the Lotus Sutra. One's joy and happiness are due to the power of the protection of Ragaraja (*Aizen Myo-o*). Good fortune is brought forth by the power of the protection of the Heavenly King of the North (*Bishamonten*). (*Reply to Kyo-o* [Kyo-o dono-gohenji], *Goshō*, p. 685)

We, the priests and lay believers of Nichiren Shoshu, will surely be protected by the guardian deities and be blessed with good fortune if we uphold the Gohonzon and chant Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo, no matter what obstacles may arise on our way. It is our mission as followers of the Bodhisattva of the Earth during this time of the corona disaster to strive forward to propagate the true Law courageously with strong conviction.

With the emergence of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus, the world is once again surrounded by confusion and anxiety.

However, no matter what kind of obstacle may arise, let us solemnly proceed with the propagation of the true Law.

Let us look forward to kosen-rufu in the future and continue our efforts to propagate the Daishonin's Buddhism steadily. I wish that all priests and lay believers will uphold a new determination, accomplish the unity of *itai doshin*, and devote your lives to kosen-rufu.

I would like to conclude my New Year's address by praying from the bottom of my heart for the happiness of each one of you, for peace in your nation, and the advancement of the propagation of the true Law in your country.

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