

Myosetsuji News

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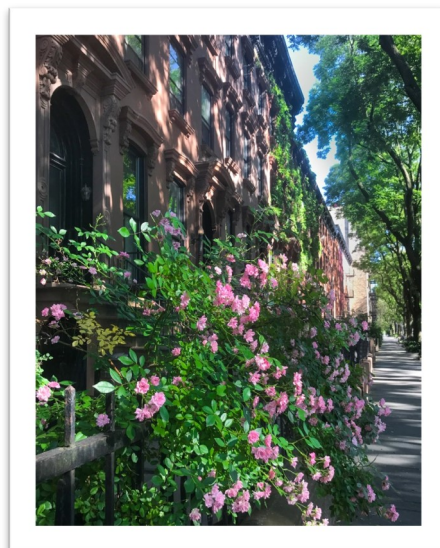
GUIDANCE FROM SIXTY-EIGHTH HIGH PRIEST NICHINYO SHONIN

On the Occasion of the May Kosen-rufu Shodai Ceremony

On this occasion of the May Kosen-rufu Shodai Ceremony, conducted here today at the Head Temple, only the priests residing on the Head Temple grounds are participating today, due to protective measures we have taken because of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Under normal conditions, many lay believers also are in attendance.

Now is the time for us to pray for the earliest resolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, reconfirm the Daishonin's intention conveyed in his *Rissho ankoku-ron* (On Securing the Peace of the Land through the Propagation of

True Buddhism), and then overcome the current difficulties.



The Rationale for the Submission of the Rissho ankoku-ron

(Ankokuron gokan-yurai) states the following:

An earthquake of a magnitude never seen before occurred on the 23rd day of the eighth month in the first year of Shoka (1257). Then, there was a huge tempest on the first day of the eighth month in the second year of the same era. And a great famine occurred in the third year of Shoka (1259), followed by epidemics raging through the country in the first year of Shogen (1259). In the second year of Shogen, throughout all four seasons, the epidemics continued relentlessly. At this juncture, more than half of the common citizens of the country had died. The ruler of the

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Gosho Quote for July 2020

On Practicing According to the Buddha's Teachings

(Nyosetsu shugyo-sho)

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. [As precisely predicted by the Buddha], 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 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 shojū and shakubuku, this is called shakubuku, based on the Lotus Sutra.

(Gosho, p. 672)

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country was tremendously distressed by these circumstances, and he looked for answers in both the Buddhist and non-Buddhist writings. Hoping for a solution, he asked that various prayers be made. These prayers, however, brought no relief at all. Rather, the famine and epidemics only grew worse. Observing this situation, I, Nichiren examined the great collection of Buddhist scriptures and discovered the reason why these prayers not only were unanswered, but also caused the circumstances to deteriorate even further. There were passages that proved this to be true. Ultimately, I had no choice other than writing a treatise showing all of my findings. I gave it the title, *Rissho ankoku-ron*. On the sixteenth day of the seventh month in the first year of Bunno (1260), I handed this treatise through Yadoya nyudo to Saimyoji nyudo who is now deceased. I did this only so that I could repay my



debt of gratitude to the country of my birth. (*Gosho*, p. 367)

In this passage the Daishonin explains the reason why he wrote the *Rissho ankoku-ron*. The *Rissho ankoku-ron* is precisely a treatise authored by the Daishonin for the purpose of remonstrating with the sovereign, in order to save all the people who were suffering in the direst distress due to the relentless disasters that were taking place. These included the great earthquake that occurred on August 23rd in the first year of Shoka (1257), and the tempest on August first in the following year (1258), followed by a major famine. Furthermore, in the first year of Shogen (1259,) great epidemics occurred and continued for two years, just like the novel coronavirus disease, which is spreading now.

Observing the horrific situation due to natural disasters—recurring unusual occurrences in the heavens and natural disasters on earth—as well as famine and epidemics, the Daishonin, [after studying the Buddhist scriptures as a whole,] revealed the cause for the disasters. He concluded that it is because people slander the true Law and take faith in erroneous doctrines. For this reason, the guardian deities, who should protect the nation, had deserted the land, and demons and devils had seized the opportunity to settle in their place. By citing the various sutras such as the Sutra of the Golden Light (*Konkomyo-kyo*), the Sutra of the Great Assembly (*Daishik-kyo*), etc. as proof, the Daishonin explained that the misfortunes, such as the three calamities and seven disasters, occur as a result of the



people not believing in the true Law and committing slander.

In order to prevent these disasters, the Daishonin strictly warns us as follows.

You must immediately renounce your erroneous belief and take faith in the supreme teaching of the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra. Then, this entire threefold world will become the Buddha land. How could the Buddha land ever decline? All the lands in the ten directions will transform into treasure realms. How could a treasure realm ever fall to ruin? If the nation never declines and the land is indestructible, you will find safety and peace of mind. These are the very words that you must believe and revere. (*Gosho*, p. 250; *The Gosho of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2, p. 42)

He admonishes that one must immediately sever one's attachment to slander and take faith in the "supreme teaching of the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra" as

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

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quickly as possible.

In this passage, “renounce your erroneous belief” signifies “refuting heresy” (*haja*). “Take faith in the supreme teaching of the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra” corresponds to the “propagation of true Buddhism” (*rissho*). “This entire threefold world will become the Buddha land” represents “peace and security of the land” (*ankoku*).

“One’s erroneous belief” contains the meaning of having small faith. The Daishonin teaches us that we must correct our small faith and “take faith in the supreme teaching of the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra.” “One vehicle” refers to the single most important virtue, which is the Lotus Sutra.

In the *Gosho, Reply to Ueno* (Ueno dono-gohenji), the Daishonin teaches as follows:

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; *The Gosho of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pp. 33-35)

As the passage states, today in the Latter Day of the Law, the supreme Law is indicated as Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo of the sowing hidden in the depths of the Life Span (*Juryo*; sixteenth chapter of the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra. In other words, taking faith in the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of the Essential Teaching equals “taking faith in the supreme teaching of the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra.”

Next, in the passage the Daishonin states: “Then, this entire threefold world will become the Buddha land. How could the Buddha land ever decline? All the lands in the ten directions will transform into treasure realms. How could a treasure realm ever fall to ruin?” “The threefold world” refers to the world of desire, the world of form, and the world of formlessness. It categorizes the realms and the life conditions of unenlightened beings, who transmigrate the six lower worlds in the continual cycle of birth and death, into three groups. It is taught that by taking faith in the supreme teaching of the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra, the world of illusions and sufferings instantly will be transformed into the Buddha land.

Subsequently the passage states, “If the nation never declines and the land is indestructible, you will find safety and peace of mind. These



are the very words that you must believe and revere.” If the nation or the land is never weakened or ruined, we can ensure peace and security in this lifetime. In addition, we can stabilize the unsettled minds of the people and deeply grasp the truth. The words *rissho ankoku*, which mean “propagating true Buddhism to secure the peace of the land,” are the golden words of the Buddha, the words of truth. Thus, we must firmly believe in and revere the Buddha’s words.

Today, when Japan and the rest of the world are facing turbulent conditions due to the coronavirus disease, I strongly feel that once again, we should confirm the Daishonin’s intention conveyed in his *Rissho ankoku-ron*. Then we must teach the vast and boundless benefits of the mystic Law (*Myoho*) to as many people as possible, and do shakubuku based on unity, in the spirit of *itai doshin*, so that we will overcome the current crisis. I sincerely hope your efforts will be witnessed by the three treasures.



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