

NICHIREN DAISHONIN TEACHES: "AFTER ALL, THE ULTIMATE VOW IS TO PROPAGATE THE DAIMOKU THROUGHOUT THE WORLD." - GOSHO P. 1862

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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, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all of you for participat-

ing in this Shodai Ceremony with profound faith, despite the inconvenience due to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19).



In the Gosho, *Questions and Answers Between a Sage and a Foolish Man* (Shogu mondo-sho), it is sated as follows:

The human mind is changeable, just like water that conforms to the shape of a vessel. The nature of things is like the reflection of the moon rippling on the surface of the waves. Though you have been assertive about upholding your faith for some time, there is no doubt that you will change your mind later. Even if devils and demons may arise, do not be distracted. Devils hate the Buddha's Law. The

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Gosho Quote for June 2022

An Offering of Polished Rice (Hakumai ippyo-gosho)

The word "Nam" is placed at the beginning of a phrase in order to venerate and worship any god or Buddha. To explain it, this word is derived from Sanskrit, and is translated as "devotion" in China and Japan. It means to offer one's life to the Buddha. Depending upon one's position in society, some people may have a wife and children, retainers, a manor, gold and silver, and so on while others may not. Whether or not one possesses these treasures, there is no treasure more precious than one's life. That is why sages and wise men in the past have offered their lives to the Buddha and thereby attained enlightenment.

(Gosho, p. 1544)

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

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ascetics of the non-Buddhist teachings detest the practitioners of the Buddhist teachings. A wild boar scrubs its body against the gold mine, all rivers run to the sea, adding logs turns a fire into a blaze, and winds enlarge the *krkalasa*. If you strive in your practice, your faith will be strengthened ever more. (*Gosho*, p. 409)

A person's heart is fickle and changeable, just like water that changes its form according to the shape of a water vessel. Thus, even if one makes a firm determination at first, one often fails to achieve one's goal, when unexpectedly disturbed by the obstacles and devils along the way.

This *Gosho* passage precisely teaches that we should not be deceived by these obstacles and devils. Instead, we must carry through our unwavering faith. By using the examples of "a wild boar and the gold mine," "rivers and the ocean," "logs and fire," and "winds and the *krkalasa*," the Daishonin admonishes us that we must strengthen our faith more than ever with firm determination, no matter what obstacles and devils may arise.

"A wild boar scrubs its body against the gold mine" signifies that a wild boar gets jealous of the gold mine, which is shining brightly, so he scrubs his body against the gold mine to remove its brilliance. However, the more he scrubs, the more brilliant it becomes. "All rivers run to the sea" means that great adversity such as many rivers befall the votaries of the Lotus Sutra, who

are like the ocean. "Adding logs turns a fire into a blaze" represents adding more pieces of firewood increases the force of fire. "Winds enlarge the *krkalasa*" signifies that an insect called *krkalasa*, though its body is minute, grows big once the wind blows. These metaphors indicate that encountering adversity signifies the perfect opportunity for one to strengthen one's faith.

The Daishonin expounds the following in the *Gosho*, *Reply to Shijo Kingo* (Shijo kingo donogohenji):

The votary of the Lotus Sutra is just like the flames and *krkalasa*, and the logs and strong winds are like great persecutions. The votary of the Lotus Sutra is the Tathagata with eternal life from the inconceivably remote past. There is no doubt that, just like the pine tree, the branches of his Buddhist practice will be bent and cut. From now on, you should always bear in mind the words, "it is difficult to maintain one's faith in this sutra." You should never forget these words, even for a single moment. (*Gosho*, p. 776)

It is inevitable that the votaries of the Lotus Sutra will encounter various hardships when their faith and practice progress. However, adversity is more of a great turning point for them to deepen their faith. In other words, even though people confirm their indomitable resolve, if the reality of obstacles and devils befall them, they often get frightened out of their wits. By using the previous four examples, the Daishonin teaches that maintaining one's unwavering faith is the only way to overcome

these difficulties.

This year, Nichiren Shoshu is advancing, based on unity between the priesthood and laity, under the slogan described in the poster from the Commemorative Committee for the 800th Anniversary of the Advent of Our Founder Nichiren Daishonin, "Let's Do Shakubuku Now!" It is inevitable that we will encounter every kind of obstacle and devil in our way. However, as the golden words indicate, when we encounter adversity, we should perceive it as an excellent opportunity to strengthen our faith. Then, each of us must be convinced of the great benefits of upholding Myoho-Renge-Kyo, and resolutely confront the devils, and overcome them.

No devil whatsoever can defeat the Buddha. I offer my sincere prayers that you will devote yourselves to increasingly chant Dai-moku with absolute faith in the Dai-Gohonzon, and perform shakubuku. With these efforts, I hope you will achieve this year's shakubuku goals, which you pledged to accomplish in front of the Gohonzon without fail.

**MYOSETSUJI
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