

New Year's Address
High Priest Nichinyo Shonin
January 1, 2019

As we welcome the New Year, the 767th year since the establishment of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I am overjoyed that Honorable Retired High Priest Nikken Shonin is in good health and high spirits.

I also am very pleased that Mr. Koichiro Hoshino, the Dai-Koto of the Hokkeko organization and chairperson of the Hokkeko Federation, along with all Nichiren Shoshu Buddhists throughout the world, are greeting the New Year in a spirit of renewal.

On welcoming the new year, named "The Year of Courageously Advancing Forward," with increased momentum of achieving their shakubuku objectives, all priests and lay believers of Nichiren Shoshu are aiming toward our goal—to achieve a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by 2021, when we will be commemorating the 800th Anniversary of the Advent of our Founder, Nichiren Daishonin. They are powerfully advancing, with unity between priesthood and laity in each chapter, based on the spirit of *itai dōshin*. Moreover, with strong faith, they are embodying the passage that states, "One's life is insignificant while the Law is supreme. You should be willing to give your life to propagate the Law."

This outcome certainly is the result of the hard work of all the believers, led by the chief priest and the Koto of each Hokkeko chapter. You courageously carried out shakubuku campaigns day and night, in solid unity between the priests and lay believers in the Hokkeko chapters. I express my deep delight for your great efforts.

The Medical Herbs (*Yakusōyu*; fifth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra states:

Once these living beings have heard the Law, they will enjoy peace and security in their present existence and good circumstances in future existences, when they will receive joy through the way and again be able to hear the Law.

(Hokekyo, p. 217; The Lotus Sutra, Watson, p. 99)

Regarding this passage, the *Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra* (Hokke mongu) states:

The passage, “they will enjoy peace and security in their present existence and good circumstances in future existences” signifies that the future effect will surely occur due to the present cause.

(*Gakurin Monguki ehon*, vol. 2, p. 409)

This passage preaches the benefit one gains in the present and future existences of life by upholding faith in the Lotus Sutra. The cause of devoting oneself to the propagation of Myoho-Renge-Kyo will surely bring the effect of being reborn in good circumstances in future existences, because of the teaching of cause and effect over the existences of life. In other words, one is able to receive the effect of “they will enjoy peace and security in their present existence and good circumstances in future existences” only by accumulating the benefit of embracing Myoho-Renge-Kyo.

Thus, Nichiren Daishonin states in *Reply to Akimoto* (Akimoto dono-gohenji) as follows:

Chant Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo! Don’t harbor any doubts about the passage [of the Lotus Sutra], “they will enjoy peace and security in their present existence and good circumstances in future existences.” The sutra clearly states that all the guardian deities will continually protect the votaries of the Lotus Sutra.

(*Gosho*, p. 334)

He gives us the guidance that the benefit of chanting Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo will surely appear as stated, “they will enjoy peace and security in their present existence and good circumstances in future existences.” Furthermore, as stated in the passage of the Lotus Sutra, this votary of the Lotus Sutra will be always guarded by all of the guardian deities.

Moreover, the Daishonin preaches in *Questions and Answers on Embracing the Lotus Sutra* (Jimyō hokke mondō-shō) as follows:

I believe that embracing Myoho-Renge-Kyo, which ensures “peace and security in this lifetime and good circumstances in the next,” is the only honor to pursue in this lifetime and is the guide to maintain enlightenment in the future. Single-mindedly chant Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo and encourage others to do the same. This will remain as your only memory from this present, human life.

(Gosho, p. 300)

When we read the passage, “Single-mindedly chant Nam- Myoho-Renge-Kyo and encourage others to do the same. This will remain as your only memory from this present, human life,” we should devote our utmost efforts to greatly carry out shakubuku day and night, aiming for the establishment of a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers.

I would like to conclude my New Year’s address by sincerely praying that by so doing, you will be able to repay the debt of gratitude due for the great and vast compassion of our founder, Nichiren Daishonin, the True Buddha in the Latter Day of the Law.