

**New Year's Address**  
**High Priest Nichinyo Shonin**  
**January 1, 2021**

As we welcome the New Year, the 769th year since the establishment of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I 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 believers throughout the world, are greeting the New Year in a spirit of renewal.

The slogan for this commemorative year is "The Year of the 800th Anniversary of the Advent of our Founder, Nichiren Daishonin."

On welcoming this auspicious occasion, all the priests and lay believers of Nichiren Shoshu made a pledge, "to establish a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers," and courageously performed the practice of shakubuku in the spirit of *itai doshin* between the priesthood and laity. As a result, the total number of Hokkeko believers who belong to the local temples in Japan now exceeds 800,000 persons, so we definitely have achieved the pledge. This is solely due to the steady activities in practice by the guiding priests and lay believers of each Hokkeko chapter in Japan. They have practiced 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," based on the solid unity of *itai doshin*. I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations.

Furthermore, internationally, shakubuku is powerfully proceeding in Taiwan, the Republic of Korea and other countries and areas. It is a great pleasure that Nichiren Shoshu believers are strongly advancing toward kosen-rufu all over the world.

Nichiren Daishonin states the following in *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. 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)

As we respectfully read these golden words, we can see that society today is extremely confused due to slander of the Law, which is the result of upholding heretical teachings. Thus, we must remember that it is most important for us to practice earnestly more than ever. As we aim for kosen-rufu of the entire world, we must devotedly do shakubuku with *itai doshin* among the members of each chapter, and refute the erroneous doctrines that slander the true Law, which are the fundamental cause of the people's misfortunes.

Thus, Nichiren Daishonin also preaches in *Questions and Answers between a Sage and a Foolish Man* (Shogu mondo-sho) as follows:

The world today is defiled with impurities. People's minds are distorted, filled with envy, and provisional and slanderous teachings abound. This makes it difficult for the true Law to be propagated. At such a time, it is of no use to practice the reading, reciting, and transcribing of sutras, or to contemplate, meditate, or discipline oneself. You simply must perform shakubuku. You should powerfully vanquish slanderous teachings and use the doctrines to censure erroneous teachings to the best of your ability.

(*Gosho*, p. 403)

I would like to conclude my New Year's address with my heartfelt hope that all of you will keep this in mind and advance in your practice all the more.