

2011 Summer Study Tozan General Lecture

The Guide on the Difficult Road to Enlightenment

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Good afternoon, everyone!

I would like to congratulate you on coming to the Head Temple for this tozan, based on your profound faith. One thousand and twenty one members from 17 countries currently are present for this Overseas Believers Summer Study Tozan. I sincerely admire your efforts.

My name is Kando Aihara. I am the chief priest of Bukkakuji Temple in Nara prefecture. I was assigned to give a general lecture for this study tozan.

As you know, Japan is at present totally committed to reconstruction after the Great East Japan Earthquake, which occurred on March 11. We have received heartfelt contributions to support the affected areas from many people around the world. I would like to express my sincere gratitude as a Japanese citizen.

In the Goshō, “Attaining Enlightenment at the Initial Stage of Faith through the Lotus Sutra” (*“Hokke shoshin jobutsu-sho”*), the Daishonin states:

The wonderfully efficacious medicine of the Lotus Sutra will provide the cure for all these grave disasters.

(*Goshō*, p.1313; *MW-6*, p. 191)

As these golden words teach, I promise sincerely that the affected areas will recover through shakubuku, and through the benefits of the Gohonzon, peace and security will reign throughout the land. Then, the overseas believers also will be able to make pilgrimages to the Head Temple, feeling free of worry or concern.

I have heard that the overseas believers have been keeping in step with the Japanese believers by making day-to-day efforts in their practice, aiming toward the goals presented by High Priest Nichinyō Shonin. These goals are: each chapter will accomplish the goal of increasing the number of Hokkeko believers by 50 percent by the 770th anniversary of the birth of Second High Priest Nikkō Shonin in 2015, and building a framework of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by the 800th anniversary of the birth of Nichiren Daishonin in 2021.

Furthermore, I have heard that for the sake of strengthening the members’ faith, there are three major objectives designated every year for overseas believers.

Efforts to propagate the Daishonin's Buddhism also are made through publications, such as the *Nichiren Shoshu Monthly* in English-speaking countries and the *Honko* in Chinese-speaking countries. Each time that propagation activities in overseas countries are reported in domestic Japanese papers, such as the *Daibyakuho* and *Dai-Nichiren*, I read the articles thoroughly with tremendous joy, respect, and gratitude. It always makes me feel that I want to offer my support as well.

Incidentally, my son has been assigned to serve at Honko-in Temple in Taiwan as of this year. He feels a sense of mission and is trying to do his very best. I appreciate all of the warm encouragement from the believers of Honko-in Temple.

Today, I would like to give a lecture, titled "The Guide on the Difficult Road to Enlightenment," which will take about 30 minutes. I hope this will help provide nourishment for your faith and shakubuku activities.

The Daishonin instructed Hojo Yagenta:

According to the Lotus Sutra, Nichiren is the guide on the difficult road to enlightenment. Devote yourself single-mindedly to faith with the aim of reaching Eagle Peak.

(*Gosho*, p. 723)

In this passage, the Daishonin teaches that he is the True Buddha in the Latter Day of the Law, as predicted in the Lotus Sutra. Thus, he is the guide who leads all people in the Latter Day of the Law to enlightenment. The Daishonin tells Yagenta to feel reassured and to single-mindedly strive in his practice, in the hope of reaching the pure land of Eagle Peak.

The Japanese equivalent for "the guide on the difficult road to enlightenment" is "*tsu-soku no an'naisha*." "*Tsu*" means to achieve one's goal of the Buddhist practice without hindrances. On the other hand, "*soku*" means that one fails to achieve the goal of the Buddhist practice due to various obstacles.

The world is a big place. Every country has its own history, language, politics, economy, climate, and so forth. We easily can anticipate the possibility that we will face unexpected obstacles upon propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism. In some countries, it is regarded as taboo to conduct shakubuku directly. However we, the followers of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth and the disciples of Nichiren Daishonin, must make collective efforts. Whatever difficulties we may face, we must play the role of "the guide on the difficult road to enlightenment" in order to lead the people around the world to peace and happiness through the Daishonin's teaching. We must teach them about the benefits of the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of the Essential Teaching. We also must follow the guidance of the High Priest Nichinyo Shonin. When doing shakubuku, we must keep in mind that shakubuku needs to be conducted in a manner suited for each country. Would you all agree with me?

For today's lecture, I would like first to provide you with a summary of the contents, and then talk about the text in three parts.

The summary is as follows:

Buddhism teaches how a human being can live a secure and fulfilling life based on the realistic principle of causality. It is neither fantasy nor idealism. The ultimate teaching of Shakyamuni, who made his advent in India, is the Lotus Sutra. The votary of the Lotus Sutra, whose appearance was predicted in the Lotus Sutra, is Nichiren Daishonin, the True Buddha in the Latter Day of the Law. When we take faith in the teaching of Nichiren Daishonin, and chant Daimoku to the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of the Essential Teaching inscribed by the Daishonin, Buddhahood, wisdom, and virtue will manifest in the lives of us common mortals. We can obtain this tremendous benefit only by following the guidance of our master of the Lifeblood Heritage, who inherits the innermost secret of Buddhism. Nichiren Shoshu correctly has inherited the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin for more than 750 years.

Next, I would like to talk about the text in three parts: the first part is “the importance of the Lotus Sutra”; the second is “the importance of tozan”; the third is “the importance of propagating the Law through shakubuku.”

First, I would like to talk about the importance of the Lotus Sutra.

The Lotus Sutra is the supreme teaching among the numerous Buddhist teachings. Currently, I live in Kashihara City in Nara prefecture, where Buddhism first arrived in Japan. It is said that Buddhism was first introduced into Japan in 538, from King Song Myong of Paekche (Korea) to Emperor Kimmei of Japan. The current Asuka region in Nara used to be called Yamato, where the imperial court was once located. Since Buddhism was a distinguished teaching, Empress Suiko issued the “Flourishing Three Treasures Edict” and devoted herself to promote Buddhism. A well-known Prince named Shotoku, also wished for the security of the country through Buddhism, especially the Lotus Sutra. The capital was moved from Asuka-kyo to Fujiwara-kyo, then to Heijo-kyo in Nara in 710.

Nichiren Daishonin teaches in “The Selection of the Time” (“*Senji-sho*”):

In the Sutra of the Great Assembly (*Daishik-kyo*) Shakyamuni addresses the Buddhas. “The first Five-hundred-year Period after his passing will be the age of enlightenment, and the next Five-hundred-year Period, the age of meditation. These two periods make 1,000 years. The next Five-hundred-year Period will be the age of reading, reciting, and listening, followed by the Five-hundred-year Period that will be the age of building temples and stupas. These four periods make 2,000 years. The next Five-hundred-year Period after that will be the age of conflict, when the pure Law is obscured and lost.”

(*Gosho*, p. 836)

In this passage the Daishonin expounds that after the first 1,000 years of the Former Day of the Law and the next 1,000 years of the Middle Day of the Law, the Latter Day of the Law, when the pure Law is obscured and lost, will arrive.

Furthermore, he teaches in “On Practicing According to the Buddha’s Teachings” (“*Nyosetsu shugyo-sho*”):

The first five-hundred-year period of the Latter Day of the Law is the time to propagate only the Lotus Sutra, the perfect and true teaching.

(*Gosho*, p. 672)

Thus, only the Lotus Sutra is to be propagated during the Latter Day of the Law.

It is said that Shakyamuni Buddha died in 949 BCE. The Latter Day of the Law, the age 2,000 years after Shakyamuni’s death, corresponds to the year 1052. The year 538, when Buddhism was introduced into Japan, coincides with the era of building temples and stupas in the Middle Day of the Law. In fact, numerous renowned temples in Japan, including Todaiji Temple in Heijo-kyo in Nara, were established. I feel that this coinciding time taught in Buddhism is very accurate.

Emperor Kammu relocated the capital from Heijo-kyo in Nara, where it had been for more than 70 years, to Heian-kyo in Kyoto in 794 (Third year of Enryaku). The Great Teacher Dengyo established Ichijo Shikan-in, which is based on the Lotus Sutra, on Mt. Hiei to the northeast of Kyoto. Nichiren Daishonin, too, devoted himself to study Buddhism at this temple in his early years. Later, it became Enryakuji Temple, where the High Sanctuary of the Mahayana Buddhism of the theoretical teaching was established. With regards to the establishment of this temple, there is a story demonstrating the importance of the Lotus Sutra.

In “The Selection of the Time” (“*Senji-sho*”), this historical fact is stated:

Emperor Kammu, startled at his declaration, summoned the leading authorities of the six sects to engage in debate. At first these scholars in their pride were similar to banners raised aloft like mountains, and their evil minds worked like poisonous snakes, but in the end they were forced to bow in defeat in the presence of the ruler, and each and every person of the six sects and the seven major temples of Nara acknowledged himself a disciple of Saicho [Dengyo].

(*Gosho*, p. 842; *MW-3*, p. 104)

We can see from this passage that in recorded history, the Lotus Sutra is regarded as the supreme teaching. Needless to say, it is the supreme teaching from a doctrinal viewpoint.

The Lotus Sutra is the teaching expounded by the Buddha according to his own mind. The reason for the supremacy of the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Day of the Law is stated in “On the Transmission of the Three Great Secret Laws” (“*Sandai hiho bonjo ji*”):

The one great purpose of all Buddhas for making their advent is to preach the Lotus Sutra. This is because the sutra contains the Three Great Secret Laws.

(*Gosho*, pp. 1595-1596)

Nichiren Daishonin teaches in this passage that the Three Great Secret Laws, suited for the age of the Latter Day of the Law, are hidden in the depths of the Lotus Sutra, and have been kept here.

In the “Orally Transmitted Teachings” (“*Ongi kuden*”), he also teaches:

The “true Law” in the Latter Day of the Law is Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo.

(*Gosho*, p. 1799)

It is taught that in the Latter Day of the Law, it is crucial to base one’s faith on Myoho-Renge-Kyo, the Three Great Secret Laws of the meaning hidden in the depths of the Lotus Sutra. In the same *Gosho*, he further states:

Understand that this Myoho-Renge-Kyo is not the mystic Law (*Myoho*) expounded by Shakyamuni Buddha. This is because at the time the teaching was expounded, the essence of the Law already had been transferred to Bodhisattva Jogyo.

(*Gosho*, p.1783)

As indicated in this passage, Shakyamuni completed his purpose of leading the people in the Former and Middle Days of the Law to enlightenment through the Buddhism of the harvest.

For those in the Latter Day of the Law, Shakyamuni expounded the following in the Wondrous Powers of the Tathagata (*Jinriki*; twenty-first) chapter of the Lotus Sutra:

At that time, the Buddha spoke to Bodhisattva Jogyo and the other bodhisattvas, saying: “...To put it briefly, all the Laws possessed by the Buddha, all the mystic powers of the Buddha of perfect freedom, the whole true entity concealed by the Buddha, and all the profound principles of cause and effect taught by the Buddha are declared and clearly elucidated in this sutra.”

(*Hokekyo*, p. 513)

Shakyamuni Buddha condensed the essence of the Lotus Sutra into four phrases, or the five characters of Myo-Ho-Ren-Ge-Kyo, which was then entrusted to Bodhisattva Jogyo, who would propagate the mystic Law (*Myoho*) in the Latter Day of the Law.

This is said to be the specific transmission, or the Law transmitted as the essence. It also is regarded as the transmission of the object of worship. Through

this transmission it was revealed that Bodhisattva Jogyo made his advent in the Latter Day of the Law, in order to propagate the great Law of Myoho-Renge-Kyo.

The Daishonin teaches in “On the Transmission of the Three Great Secret Laws” (“*Sandai hiho bonjo ji*”):

These Three Great Secret Laws are the teaching that I, Nichiren, as the leader of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, received through an oral transmission more than two thousand years ago from Shakyamuni Buddha, the Great Enlightened Honored One.

(*Gosho*, p. 1595)

The Daishonin made his advent in the Latter Day of the Law and fulfilled all the predictions, exactly as they were stated, in the Lotus Sutra. Then, at the Tatsunokuchi persecution, the Daishonin clearly indicated that his provisional identity is the reincarnation of Bodhisattva Jogyo, while his true identity is none other than the Buddha of intrinsically perfect wisdom from the infinite past of *kuon-ganjo*—the True Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law. In order to prove this, the Daishonin wrote two important Goshos during his exile to Sado Island. First, he wrote the “Opening of the Eyes” (“*Kaimoku-sho*”), which explains the object of worship in terms of the person. Then, he wrote the “True Object of Worship” (“*Kanjin no honzon-sho*”), which explains the object of worship in terms of the Law.

The “Opening of the Eyes” states:

If it were not for Nichiren, who could fulfill the Buddha’s prophecies concerning the votary of the Lotus Sutra?

(*Gosho*, p. 541, *MW-2*, p. 120)

The “True Object of Worship” states:

This is because at the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law, the land is filled with people of little capacity who slander the Law. The bodhisattvas taught by the Buddha of the theoretical teaching and the bodhisattvas from other worlds were not qualified [to receive this bequeathal], so instead, the great Bodhisattvas of the Earth were called forth. They are the ones who will bestow the five characters of Myo-Ho-Ren-Ge-Kyo, the essence of the Life Span chapter of the Lotus Sutra, to all living beings in the entire world.

(*Gosho*, p. 657)

The Daishonin teaches that he, himself, is the True Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law, “the guide on the difficult road to enlightenment,” who leads all people in the entire world to Buddhahood based on the five characters of Myo-Ho-Ren-Ge-Kyo.

There is a Gosho passage that states:

If the sutra that one embraces is superior to all other sutras, then the person who can uphold its teachings must likewise surpass other people.

(*Gosho*, p. 298)

The people in the Latter Day of the Law must take faith in the Three Great Secret Laws and aim for the achievement of kosen-rufu through propagating the Three Great Secret Laws.

In particular, the Daishonin discusses the Daimoku of the Essential Teaching [in the Gosho, “Repaying Debts of Gratitude”] as follows:

In Japan, China, India, and all the other countries of the world, every person, regardless of whether he is wise or foolish, shall set aside other practices and join in the chanting of Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo. This teaching has never been taught before.

(*Gosho*, p. 1036)

This means that everyone in the entire world, including the people of Japan, China, India, Korea, the United States of America, and Europe, regardless of whether they are wise or not, must discard all provisional religions and only chant Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo. Kosen-rufu has not yet been achieved. Though the Daishonin expounded these words in the second year of Kenji (1276) at the age of 55, I cannot help but feel that this is his message to be upheld even 750 years later.

Furthermore, in the same Gosho, he teaches:

A hundred years of practice in the Land of Perfect Bliss cannot compare to the benefit gained from one day’s practice in this *saha* world. The two thousand years of propagating Buddhism during the Former and Middle Days of the Law are inferior to an hour of propagation in this Latter Day of the Law.

(*Gosho*, p. 1036; cf. *MW-4*, p. 272)

Only if one devotes himself to do shakubuku—even during difficult times and in difficult places, and even for a single day—can one receive the tremendous benefit of the Buddha’s protection.

In the Gosho, “The Property of Rice” (*“Beikoku-gosho”*), the Daishonin states:

I entrust you with the propagation of Buddhism in your province. Because the seeds of Buddhahood sprout in response to the proper influence, one expounds the teaching of the one vehicle.

(*Gosho*, p. 1242)

Thus, one must responsibly conduct shakubuku in each country. Let us do our best.

Next, I would like to talk about the importance of tozan.

The Daishonin states the following in the Goshō, “On Prayer” (*“Kito-shō”*):

Therefore, we know that the prayers offered by a practitioner of the Lotus Sutra will be answered just as an echo answers a sound, as a shadow follows a form, as the reflection of the moon appears in clear water, as a mirror collects dewdrops, as a loadstone attracts iron, as amber attracts particles of dust, or as a clear mirror reflects the color of an object.

(*Goshō*, p. 626; *MW-7*, p. 37)

If one earnestly chants Daimoku to the Gohonzon, one’s sincere prayers will accord with the Gohonzon and will be answered through the fusion of the four powers: the power of the Buddha, the power of the Law, the power of faith, and the power of practice.

You have come on tozan to the Head Temple Taisekiji, the land of Eagle Peak, and requested to participate in the Gokaihi Ceremony before the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary. The High Priest has conducted the Gokaihi Ceremony and offered his sincere prayers for the eradication of your negative karma created by the three categories of action: thoughts, words, and deeds from the remotest past. He has prayed for your continued good health, for the protection of your families, and that you will not be swayed by obstacles or hindrances. I imagine you also have offered prayers for your wishes to be fulfilled. What great fortune this is! We should feel very grateful for this opportunity. Let us repay our debts of gratitude to our compassionate High Priest by doing shakubuku.

You need to be convinced that your prayers are based on serving the Gohonzon. Thus, the fulfillment of your wishes for yourself and your family and your good health all play a part in the achievement of kosen-rufu. It is important for you to be aware that you, yourself, have a mission to serve the Gohonzon. Furthermore, you must have the conviction that you will receive benefit from fulfilling this mission.

Your participation in Ushitora Gongyo, together with the High Priest, is your own practice to serve the Daishonin, based on our aspiration for the achievement of kosen-rufu.

The Head Temple starts the day at midnight. There are six main attendant priests and six sub-attendant priests who assist with Ushitora Gongyo. One main attendant and one sub-attendant form one pair. There are six pairs that rotate over five consecutive days for one month. At midnight, the assigned sub-attendant goes to Akado (located east of the Hoando) to draw spring water from Mt. Fuji and carry it to the Mieido (currently the Mutsubo, due to construction work). Then, the assigned main attendant delivers the offering of sacred water to the altars of the

Gohonzons in the Mieido, Kyakuden, and Mutsubo. They offer pure water and evergreens to these Buddhist altars, which have been cleaned. Then, the priests and believers in attendance wait for the arrival of the High Priest, who conducts Ushitora Gongyo. During this ceremony, the High Priest prays for the achievement of kosen-rufu throughout the entire world.

There is an ancient poem that says:

The Lotus Sutra.

All I have gained, I have gained through serving.

Gathering firewood, picking vegetables, and drawing water.

As this poem says, the essential Buddhist practice at the Head Temple is to serve the three treasures.

Novice priests who are currently residing at the Head Temple entered the priesthood at the age of 12, to serve the High Priest. They will grow up to become human resources for kosen-rufu and some eventually will set off for overseas countries.

Through this tozan pilgrimage, I hope you will understand that tozan is a short-term Buddhist practice. I hope that you will feel grateful to be able to serve at the Head Temple, where the Three Great Secret Laws of the Essential Teaching dwell. I would like to say that you will come on tozan numerous times every year. However, I am aware of the difficulties in coming on tozan from overseas countries.

At the general meeting in the Fukuoka West region, Mr. Shunta Dozono spoke about the activities of the Philippine members in wide-ranging areas. I think there are many members from the Philippines here participating in this tozan. I truly was impressed by Mr. Dozono's report. He said, "Currently, in the Philippines, the members are instructed to save ten pesos (approximately 20 Japanese yen) every day and continue saving for 4,000 days in order to accumulate 80,000 yen (40,000 pesos). The priest is encouraged when he sees a bamboo cylinder casually placed on a member's Buddhist altar, or when he sees a believer happily waving a hand-made piggy bank." They already have set their goals for tozan as well as for shakubuku. I was reminded of the importance of tozan more and more.

My final topic is the importance of propagating the Law through shakubuku.

Shakubuku is sowing the seed of Myoho-Renge-Kyo by "the guide on the difficult road to enlightenment." In order to bring forth true happiness through the benefits of the mystic Law (*Myoho*), one must base one's shakubuku efforts on chanting Daimoku. The sequence of chanting Daimoku and doing shakubuku is incredibly important.

We all must receive Gojukai in order to start practicing Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism. It is a sublime ceremony, during which one makes a vow to discard all slanderous doctrines, take faith in the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, and uphold the Gohonzon of the Three Great Secret Laws. The Gojukai Oath of Acceptance is recited by a priest, who is holding the Gohonzon in his hand. By responding, "Yes, I

do,” the new believer makes a vow before the Gohonzon to maintain his or her faith in the true Law in this lifetime and in the next. The three following points summarize the Gojukai Oath of Acceptance:

- 1) Swearing to practice the true teachings of Nichiren Daishonin throughout your life
- 2) Swearing to protect the Gohonzon of the Three Great Secret Laws throughout your life
- 3) Swearing to keep the precept of Nichiren Shoshu throughout your life.

The Gojukai oath includes the principle of the benefit of keeping the precept. Do you know the meaning of “keeping the precept” or “never telling lies”? I think that never telling lies means keeping a promise to the Buddha. When I visited Thailand and conducted the Gojukai Ceremony, there was an elderly lady who received Gojukai. Shedding tears, she pressed her palms together, clasped the lower edge of my robe in her hands, and lowered her head. I believe she made a vow to uphold the Gohonzon from the bottom of her heart.

The Daishonin teaches in “Repaying Debts of Gratitude” (*“Ho’on-sho”*):

In that case, I would berate them, saying, “Sun and moon, you dwell up in the sky rather than on the ground as we do, and yet you never fall down—this is because of the power you gain by observing most strictly the precept of never telling a lie. But now if you tell this great lie by saying there is a sutra superior to the Lotus Sutra, I am certain that, even before the Kalpa of Decline arrives, you will come plummeting down to earth....”

(*Gosho*, p. 1002; *MW-4*, p. 180)

In other words, if the guardian deities such as the god of the sun and the moon tell a lie, such as claiming there is a sutra that is superior to the Lotus Sutra, they will fall from the sky to the ground, and the entire land will break into pieces. The Daishonin teaches that the Lotus Sutra is the supreme teaching, and the benefit of receiving protection through maintaining faith in the supreme Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of the Essential Teaching is tremendous.

The Gosho, “The True Entity of All Phenomena” (*“Shoho jisso-sho”*) states:

If your mind is one with Nichiren, you must be one of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

(*Gosho*, p. 666)

As this Gosho passage teaches, those who take faith in the Gohonzon and chant Daimoku in the Latter Day of the Law can fulfill their promise to the Buddha by doing shakubuku. This is because they are the followers of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, who made the vow to propagate the Lotus Sutra.

Let us do our best to keep our promise and do shakubuku. Let us fulfill our promise to the Daishonin.

In Japanese classical literature, there is a story titled “The Spider’s Thread,” written by Ryunosuke Akutagawa. In this story, the Buddha, with his great compassion, saves the people who are in constant agony. Here is a summary.

One day, Shakyamuni was standing at the edge of a lotus pond in paradise. Located directly below this lotus pond in paradise was hell. As Shakyamuni peered below, from the edge of the lotus pond, deep down into hell, he saw that there were many, many slanderers suffering, writhing in agony. Shakyamuni noticed that a man named Kandata was among them.

Kandata had performed one good deed in his life. He had spared the life of a spider. Shakyamuni recalled this good deed that Kandata had performed and decided to guide him up to paradise from the depths of hell. He lowered a single spider’s thread down toward Kandata.

Kandata held fast to the spider’s thread and started to climb it from the bottom of hell far toward the distance above.

He had climbed quite a way when he happened to look down and was startled to see countless other slanderers from hell also climbing the thread. He feared that the thin spider’s thread would snap and break if he did nothing. He shouted, “This spider’s thread is MINE. You must all get off now. Get off!”

The next instant, the spider’s thread snapped right where Kandata was holding on, and once again, he fell into hell.

This is how the story ends. Kandata suffered punishment due to his lack of compassion, and fell right back into hell.

The Daishonin teaches:

The awakening of faith occurs when one wishes in one’s heart to remove the sufferings of others.

(Gosho, p. 1666)

When one possesses great compassion and the desire to save others, he awakens the determination to pursue the Buddha way. We should not abandon those who are suffering. We must save those who are stuck in unhappy situations. Let’s develop our faith by following the principle of seeking enlightenment by learning from those at a higher stage, while teaching and leading those who are at a lower stage. This is the true faith that will lead us to do shakubuku.

At the end of January in 1999, a training workshop was held for the leaders of Honko-in Temple in Taiwan. At this workshop, representatives from the Japanese temples Hongyoji, Hodo-in, and Myokoji participated. Speeches on the topics of shakubuku, running an organization, the attitude of the leaders, and so forth were

given and discussions were held.

Mr. Takeshi Oshima, who was Koto of Hongyoji Temple at that time, gave a speech titled, “Encouragement for Shakubuku.” He said that as long as we devote ourselves to practice in line with the Head Temple, our chapters will progress and develop without fail. Another way to state this is, “We can advance forth, if we practice in accordance with the Buddha’s mind.” When both priesthood and laity unite together based on the spirit of true *itai-dōshin* and devote themselves to their practice, an organization as a whole will achieve significant progress. In fact, rapid progress that spreads like wildfire can be made. People who stand up and do shakubuku will arise everywhere and the shakubuku momentum will increase throughout the chapter. This momentum will increase, day by day, and we will achieve results far beyond our expectations.

The Honorable Retired High Priest made a visit to Honko-in Temple in 1997. After that, the members of Honko-in held a training workshop. I cannot help but believe that such activities that are in line with the Head Temple are the foundation for the continuous shakubuku momentum in Taiwan. I hope the members in each country will keep this in mind and devote themselves to practice, following the guidance of High Priest Nichinyo Shonin. Furthermore, I hope all of you will establish a master and disciple relationship with your chief priest. By following the master and disciple relationship, one will be able to act correctly, according to the circumstances.

Those who teach others should not be strict all the time. However, they also cannot always be lenient. They must try to balance strictness and leniency. Though everyone has a different opinion, I think ten percent strictness and 90 percent leniency makes a good balance. However, this would be based on the assumption that the members regularly visit their local temple and have good communication with the priest.

Twenty-sixth High Priest Nichikan Shonin teaches the following in “Lectures on the *Juryo* Chapter” (“*Juryo hon dangi*”):

The attainment of Buddhahood results from correct practice. Persevering in correct practice comes from one’s faith. Advancement in one’s faith derives from listening to the Law. If you don’t listen (to the Law), faith will never arise. Without faith, one will neglect Buddhist practice. If you fail to carry out Buddhist practice, where do you think you will be born in the future? Therefore it is of utmost importance to listen (to the Law). Listening (to the Law) gives you faith without you realizing it. It is the moment when you attain Buddhahood.

(*Fuji shugaku yoshu*, vol.10, p. 183)

In this way, we are taught that it is important to visit your local temple and listen to the priest’s sermons.

Many members will say, “I always listen to my chief priest,” and “I

understand his intentions when he gives us guidance.” Believers must have a mutual understanding with their chief priest, so that they can comprehend ten things when they have only been told one. As the saying goes, “A word is enough to the wise.” With this kind of understanding based on faith, only one strict point has to be taught in order for ten strict points to be learned. Thus, the members can build an earnest relationship of trust.

Needless to say, now is the era of computers. We easily can view the Head Temple grounds and receive the guidance of the High Priest through the use of computers. Let us make further progress toward worldwide kosen-rufu, based on the master and disciple relationship, and keeping in line with the Head Temple.

The Second High Priest, Nikko Shonin expounded the following in his “Twenty-six Admonitions of Nikko” (*“Nikko yuikai okimon”*):

Until kosen-rufu is achieved, propagate the Law to the full extent of your ability, without begrudging your life.

(*Gosho*, p. 1884)

I truly hope that my lecture today will be helpful in your shakubuku efforts, if even with one person, somewhere in the world.

I would like to conclude my lecture with my sincere prayer for the happiness of all the overseas believers and the progress of kosen-rufu in each country.