

## *The Opening of the Eyes* (Kaimoku-shō)

The relationship between the methods of shōju and shakubuku are like water and fire. Fire abhors water, while water detests fire. The practitioner of shōju despises the method of shakubuku, while those who conduct shakubuku grieve over the method of shōju. When ignorant and impious men are rampant throughout the nation, shōju comes first, as described in the Peaceful Practices (*Anrakugyō*; fourteenth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra. When cunning, evil men and slanderers of the Law thrive, shakubuku should take precedence, as taught in the Bodhisattva Never Disparaging (*Fukyō*; twentieth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra. (*Gosho*, p. 575)

### Explanation of the Gosho Passage

The practices of shōju and shakubuku are much like water and fire. Fire despises water, and water hates fire. Those who practice shōju mock shakubuku, and those who practice shakubuku lament the method of shōju. When the land is full of people who lack wisdom and are impious, shōju should be performed to propagate the Law. This is just as it is indicated in the Peaceful Practices chapter. When there are many people of heretical beliefs and slanderous views against the Law, shakubuku should be practiced to spread the Law. This is just as it is explained in the Bodhisattva Never Disparaging chapter.

### Explanation of the Major Terms

- 1) Ignorant men: In this context, those who have no wisdom or knowledge about true Buddhism
- 2) Peaceful Practices (*Anrakugyō*; fourteenth) chapter: Bodhisattva Manjushri (Jpn. Monju) asked Shakyamuni Buddha how bodhisattvas could peacefully practice the Lotus Sutra in the evil age. In response, Shakyamuni expounded the initial Bodhisattva practice by explaining the four peaceful ways of practice, consisting of the practice by peaceful deeds; practice by peaceful words; practice by peaceful thoughts; and practice by peaceful vows.
- 3) Cunning, evil men: In this context, those who maintain heretical views and beliefs, without any consideration for the shallowness or profundity or the superiority or inferiority of Buddhist doctrine. Such views function to disrupt true Buddhism.
- 4) Bodhisattva Never Disparaging (*Fukyō*; twentieth) chapter: This chapter presents the bodhisattva practices of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging (*Fukyō*) and explains the gravity of the retribution of slandering the votaries of the Lotus Sutra and the benefits of protecting and supporting them.

### Background and Summary

This Gosho was written in the second month of the ninth year of Bunnei (1272) in the Tsukahara Sammaidō Hall in Sado, when the Daishonin was 51 years of age. It was tentatively addressed to Shijō Kingo Yorimoto, but it is actually directed to all of the Daishonin's followers. It consists of two parts, and the Daishonin, himself, created the title of this Gosho. The "opening of the eyes" in the title is a reference to opening the blind eyes of those who possess no wisdom about true Buddhism. While *The True Object of Worship* (Kanjin no honzon-shō) reveals the object of worship in terms of the Law, this Gosho, *The Opening of the Eyes* (Kaimoku-shō), reveals the object of worship in terms of the person. It is an extremely important writing that is counted among the five major writings of Nichiren Daishonin.

In part one of this Gosho, the Daishonin uses the fivefold comparison to reveal the distinctions—the superiority and inferiority and the shallowness and profundity—between the non-Buddhist doctrines and the lifetime teachings of Shakyamuni. In part two, the Daishonin reveals that he is, in fact, the

Buddha possessing the three virtues of sovereign, teacher, and parent. The quoted passage we are focusing today is in the latter section of part two.

The Daishonin sets forth the two methods of propagation—shōju and shakubuku. He then teaches us that, in the Latter Day of the Law, when there are many people who hold heretical views and slander the Law, the appropriate method to be used for the propagation of the Law is shakubuku—refuting heresy and revealing the truth.

### ***Reference from Gosho passages and High Priest guidances***

#### *Letter from Sado (Sado-gosho)*

In Buddhism, either shōju or shakubuku is to be chosen, depending on the time. (*Gosho*, p. 578)

#### The Bodhisattva Never Disparaging chapter of the Lotus Sutra

I have profound reverence for you, I would never dare treat you with disparaging and arrogance. Why? Because you are all practicing the bodhisattva way and are certain to attain Buddhahood.

(*Hokekyō*, p. 500; *Lotus Sutra*, Watson, pp. 266-267)

#### Guidance from High Priest Nichinyo Shonin

As we do shakubuku, we encounter various forms of obstacles and challenges, and we are able to expiate our karmic offenses from previous lifetimes. Such is the significance of the practice of shakubuku by Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, as expounded in the Bodhisattva Never Disparaging chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

The worst possible way to handle matters is to think, “If I say this to him, terrible things will happen,” and avoid doing shakubuku because we fear push-back and difficulties. In such a situation, our courage will surge if we sincerely chant Daimoku. This is why it is so important to sincerely chant Daimoku. As a matter of course, we must also firmly do morning and evening Gongyō. As a result, we will find that courage will come out well from within our lives without fail.

The Daishonin states the following in the *Orally Transmitted Teachings* (Ongi kuden): “In the Latter Day of the Law, Nichiren and his followers will encounter adversity when they practice Myoho-Renge-Kyo, but they should understand that actually, it is peace and pleasure.” (*Gosho*, p. 1762). Based on this, I hope that, in the struggle that we will face in the future, each and every one of you—regardless of whether you are old or young or a man or a woman—will advance with great devotion to do shakubuku. (*Selected Gosho Passages on Shakubuku* [Shakubuku yōmon], p. 160)

#### Guidance from High Priest Nichinyo Shonin

The Daishonin, in all of his writings, points out that those who see the enemies of the Lotus Sutra but do nothing to denounce them and do not shakubuku them are individuals who the Nirvana Sutra characterizes as “one who associates with those [who slander the true Law] and lack the compassion to correct them.” They are “an enemy of Buddhism.” In other words, he definitively describes them as resentful, malicious individuals within Buddhism. Conversely, the fact that the Daishonin targets such stern language on those who do not do shakubuku only indicates the tremendous magnitude of the benefits that those who do perform shakubuku will receive....What is essential at this point is to realize that it is useless to gain a cerebral understanding of how great the benefits are of doing shakubuku. It is of foremost importance for us to advance one step forward and go beyond a theoretical understanding and actually experience the benefit with our lives, through our own actual practice of doing shakubuku.

(*Dainichiren*, May 2018)