

## *Reply to the Wife of Ueno* (Ueno ama gozen-gohenji)

The Lotus Sutra teaches that the hands used to hold it immediately will enter Buddhahood, and the mouth that chants the Daimoku instantly will become Buddha. This is similar to the moon's reflection on the surface of the water as it rises above the eastern mountains, or a sound and its resonance occurring simultaneously. The sutra states, "Among those who hear this Law, there is not one who shall not attain enlightenment." This passage means that if there are a hundred or even a thousand people who embrace this sutra, all will become Buddhas without exception.

(*Gosho*, p. 1574)

### Explanation

If someone takes the Lotus Sutra in one's hand, that hand will immediately attain enlightenment. When a mouth chants it, that mouth will directly achieve Buddhahood. For example, it is like the moon in the heavens that is instantly reflected in the water, as soon as it appears at the edge of the eastern mountains, and it is like a sound and its echo that occur at the same time. This is why the Expedient Means (*Hoben*; second) chapter of the Lotus Sutra states: "Among those who hear this Law, there is not one who shall not attain enlightenment." The essential meaning of this passage is that, if there are 100 people or 1,000 people who embrace this sutra, then all of them will become Buddhas without a single exception.

### Explanation of Major Terms

- "Among those who hear this Law, there is no one who shall not attain enlightenment." (*Nyaku u mombo-sha muichi fu-jobutsu*) (*Hokekyo*, p. 118): This means that all people who are able to hear the Lotus Sutra will attain enlightenment without exception.

### Background and Summary

This Gosho was written on the 15th day of the 11th month of the third year of Ko'an (1280), the year after the inscription of the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of the

Essential Teaching. Nichiren Daishonin was 59 years old at the time, and he lived in Minobu. The letter was addressed to the wife of the former Lord Ueno, the mother of Nanjo Tokimitsu (referred to as “the wife of Ueno” as the title of this month’s Gosho).

First, the Daishonin explains to the wife of Ueno that the Lotus Sutra is likened to the lotus plant, which simultaneously produces the flower and fruit. He reveals that those who believe in the Lotus Sutra will attain enlightenment in their present form (*sokushin jobutsu*) without fail. The Daishonin also acknowledges that the wife of Ueno made a memorial offering for her deceased father Matsuno Rokuro sa’emon nyudo on the anniversary of his death.

The Daishonin then discusses the ancient story of Wu-long and Yi-long in the *Record of the Lotus Sutra* (Hokke denki). He indicates how a father and child are united as one, and that the child’s good karmic deeds will be manifested as good karmic effects for the deceased parent. Therefore, he tells the wife of Ueno that her father Matsuno nyudo definitely will attain enlightenment. He concludes the letter by instructing Nikko Shonin to be certain to clearly read her the detailed contents of the letter.

## **Essential Points of the Lecture**

### **Enlightenment in Our Present Form (*sokushin jobutsu*) is a Benefit of the Lotus Sutra**

In the paragraph prior to the one we are studying here, the Daishonin mentions how most plants produce fruit before or after the flower blooms. He states that the lotus plant, however, possesses a special characteristic. When the flower blooms—representing the cause—the plant already possesses the fruit—the effect. He explains the profound significance of the principle of simultaneous cause and effect, as taught in the Lotus Sutra.

Next, the Daishonin proceeds to the passage on which we are focused today: “The Lotus Sutra teaches that the hands used to hold it immediately will enter Buddhahood, and the mouth that chants the Daimoku instantly will become Buddha.” Here, he indicates the unwavering benefit of the Lotus Sutra, which enables the attainment of enlightenment in our present form.

Today, in the Latter Day of the Law, as a matter of course, we are able to achieve the supreme life condition of enlightenment in our present form, directly as common mortals who possess earthly desires, when we believe in and embrace the Gohonzon and chant the Daimoku of Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo, the singular mystic Law of the simultaneity of cause and effect (*inga guji*). This is likened to the lotus that simultaneously manifests the flower and the fruit.

### **The Unity of Father and Child in Enlightenment**

The Daishonin discusses an old tale in which a master calligrapher named Wu-long was a staunch believer of Taoism and vehemently detested Buddhism. In his last will on his deathbed, he forbade his son Yi-long from transcribing the Lotus Sutra. However, Yi-long could not go against the order of his king Si-ma. Finally, he wrote only sixty-four

characters—the titles of each of the eight volumes of the Lotus Sutra (that is, *Myoho-Renge-Kyo*, Volume 1 through *Myoho-Renge-Kyo*, Volume 8). Then, Yi-long's father appeared in a dream and told his son, "Each of the characters that you wrote turned into a Buddha and appeared in hell to save me, as well as all the others, who were steeped in great suffering." This story teaches us that the child created good karma through the Lotus Sutra, the supreme teaching, and as a consequence, the parent manifested the effect, through the actual proof of attaining enlightenment. In other words, this means that *Myoho-Renge-Kyo* possesses tremendous power, which is vast and boundless and transcends the three existences.

We will soon come upon the *Urabon* based on the lunar calendar. When conducting the memorial service for our deceased parents and ancestors, it is important for us to offer toba tablets at the temple, based on the practice of *Myoho-Renge-Kyo*, and to recite the sutra and chant Daimoku together with the priest. The deceased individuals are certain to be extremely pleased and full of joy to receive this supreme, unparalleled offering. If our parents have not yet embraced true Buddhism, we must take to heart that the highest form of love and devotion to them is to enable them to take faith as soon as possible. In the *Gosho*, *On the Buddha's Prophecy* (Kembutsu mirai ki), the Daishonin states:

We must lead our parents who gave birth to us to this great good while they are still alive.

(*Gosho*, p. 679)

### **Aiming For Kosen-rufu in Our Faith and Practice**

In the passage we are studying, the Daishonin states:

"Among those who hear this Law, there is not one who shall not attain enlightenment." This passage means that if there are a hundred or even a thousand people who embrace this sutra, all will become Buddhas without exception.

(*Gosho*, p. 1574)

However, in reality, people in society are oblivious to this fact or they do not even try to think about it, as they suffer tremendously in the life condition of hell, caused by the harmful poisons of their slanderous ways. Therefore, we, who know about true Buddhism, have the urgent responsibility to put into actual practice the following instruction of the Daishonin:

Proclaim repeatedly with all your might that the Lotus Sutra is the only teaching that will lead the people to Buddhahood.

(*On Practicing According to the Buddha's Teachings*  
[Nyosetsu shugyo sho], *Gosho*, p. 673)

We must explain to each person that *Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo* is, in fact, the one and only true Law, and that practicing it will enable us to receive great benefits. Furthermore,

we must courageously refute all heretical religions and doctrines. Let's take to heart the following directions from our High Priest:

We cannot say that we uphold a true practice unless our objective is to achieve the Daishonin's final will of kosen-rufu.

*(Selected Gosho Passages on Faith and Practice  
[Shingyo yomon], Vol. 8, p. 210)*

Regardless of where we are at what time, let us constantly bear in mind the "importance of a practice aimed at achieving kosen-rufu," as we do shakubuku to refute heresy and reveal the truth and advance with devotion to successfully achieve the objectives set for 2021, the 800th anniversary of the advent of our Founder, Nichiren Daishonin.

### **Guidance from High Priest Nichinyo Shonin**

The establishment of a Hokkeko organization of 800,000 believers is an important objective that we pledged to the Gohonzon to achieve. Accordingly, by all means, all the chapters must accomplish this objective. Regardless of what difficulties and obstacles may arise, we must focus our utmost efforts and successfully achieve this objective without fail. In order to accomplish this, we must develop an awareness and conviction that we, as individuals, are the followers of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. No matter what obstacles and devils may come forth before our very eyes to confront us, we must establish the solid unity of *itai doshin*—many in body, one in mind—and continue to courageously and decisively do shakubuku.

*(Dainichiren, June 2019)*

### **Conclusion**

The great occasion is only a year-and-a-half away. This moment is a critical time. You may find that your struggles in daily life have intensified. This is all the more reason that your Buddhist practice is truly significant and invaluable at this time. During the holidays of the *Urabon*, you may have occasion to meet up with people whom you have not seen in a while.

Do not miss these great opportunities to rekindle friendships and courageously do shakubuku. Furthermore, let us explain to our family members the importance of transmitting our faith in the true Law to our progeny (*hoto sozoku*) and of doing shakubuku. Let us all challenge ourselves to chant Daimoku and do shakubuku with tremendous passion to overcome and drive away the oppressive summer heat.