

Guidance from Vice-President Tsuji

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First, I would like to talk about the attitude of chanting to the Gohonzon.

The Gohonzon exists inside of a butsudan (an altar), but the life condition of Buddhahood, called Nam-myoho-enge-kyo exist within each one of us. It hasn't any shape or color. It is not in the form of a mandala or the Gohonzon. However, it definitely does exist within each of us. Feelings of happiness, suffering, agony, and joy, all emerge from within our lives.

We don't know exactly where in our bodies that this Buddhahood emerges from, but it does emerge from within our lives. This is called "Hossho-No-Entei" (Nam-myoho-enge-kyo deeply underlies life). We must chant to the Gohonzon with the strong conviction that Buddhahood, as big as the universe, will emerge from the depths of our life. The Lotus Sutra teaches that Buddhahood and hell exists within us and all the feelings including happiness and sadness also exist within ourselves. However, the teachings of non-Buddhists states that God exists outside and that you will go to a Pure Land of Perfect Bliss, upon your death. However, the Buddhahood that exists within us cannot be manifested without an external stimulus. This is why we chant to the Gohonzon, which exists outside. The Gohonzon in the Butsudan is the stimulus, while the Buddha-nature inside is a cause. This is the relationship of cause and stimulus (or dependent origination). Unless we have the cause within us, no outside stimulus will be able to manifest this Buddhahood within us. The life condition which appreciates the beauty of Mount Fuji exists within us, not on Mount Fuji. The purpose of doing Gongyo is to have the outside Gohonzon stimulate the one within.

"Neither the pure land nor hell exists outside ourselves, both lie within our hearts. Awakened to this truth, one is called a Buddha, deluded about it, one is a common mortal. The Lotus Sutra awakens us to this reality". As this Goshō passage states, the Lotus Sutra teaches Nam-myoho-enge-kyo exists within us.

Even though Buddhahood exists inside of us, if you were chanting to the Gohonzon with the attitude of a beggar, asking the Gohonzon to "give me", you are childish as far as your practice is concerned. You are still not sure that you have Buddhahood inside of you and you are still seeking something from the outside. This is why you are not receiving as much benefit as you should. You must chant to the Gohonzon with a confidence that the Gohonzon will emerge from within yourself. Chant to the Gohonzon with a joy that your heart will be filled with Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. This is what the Goshō states.

"Never seek this Gohonzon outside of yourself. The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who embrace the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo." This teaches us that it is meaningless to chant to the Gohonzon if you are seeking the Gohonzon outside of yourself. If you truly feel so gracious, happy and overwhelmed your heart will be filled with joy. This is what we call "the palace of the ninth consciousness", "enlightenment" or "attaining enlightenment as a common mortal". This is known as "Shoshin Kyokau" or "Shushin Jobutsu" in Japanese.

Once we understand this, there will be not Buddha that is sick. When you strongly believe this, you can overcome your sickness. With this type of conviction, Buddhahood emerges from within and your life magnetizes happiness. If you wish for money, money will come around. If you wish for a house, the house will come around and you will be able to find a nice house. If you are unemployed, you will be able to find a new job. You have the life condition within yourself, which when activated, magnetizes whatever you

desire. In the Goshō, the passages "within our own hearts" and "within the mortal flesh" were used. "within our own hearts" means our hearts, and "within the mortal flesh" means our bodies.

Our hearts and bodies are filled with the sins and negative karma which we made in the past. But the extent in realizing that you are able to manifest the same life condition as the Gohonzon, with the very same sinful heart and body depends on your faith. Once Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō emerges from within you, it will soak through your life. When it soaks in the head, wisdom will flourish; a slow learner will be able to learn better; a brain tumor will disappear and a nervous breakdown will be cured. When it is soaked into the eyes, eyesight will be gained back. Ear and nasal problems will vanish. When it is soaked into the chest, cardiac insufficiency will be cured. When soaked into the abdomen, tumors, uterine and rectum cancer will be cured. When the tips of the hands and toes are soaked rheumatism and arthritis will be cured. Leukemia will be cured when blood vessels are soaked. When Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō emerges from within yourself, you must soak it into yourself. This is what is meant when the Goshō says, "Arouse deep faith and polish your mirror night and day. How should you polish it? Only buy chanting Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō". When you are chanting daimoku of Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō, you are polishing your life. If you are not chanting as if you are polishing your life, your life condition won't be polished as much. When polished, it will shine. It will show outwardly; your face will look healthy and will glow. You must chant daimoku as if the daimoku were deeply soaking into your bones. If you chant to the Gohonzon and your health does not improve, there is something wrong with your attitude. You are neither soaking daimoku into yourself nor polishing yourself with it. Your attitude of Gongyō may be something like "Let's do Gongyō and get it over so we can do something else". This is definitely not the way to do Gongyō nor to receive any great benefit. You must soak yourself and thoroughly polish every part of your body with Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō from the inside of your head, to your throat, chest, abdomen, blood vessels, to the tips of your toes. The process of polishing from the inside of your life is Gongyō. There is no excuse if your attitude in front of the Gohonzon is like "Let's finish Gongyō now so that we can watch TV or go to bed early". You must do Gongyō as if savoring and appreciating the taste of a gourmet meal. This is what "Shiki-ko-mi-mi" (perfect in color, fragrance and flavor) means in the Sutra. "Even as foolish as I am, I can still become wise and gain wisdom. Thank you very much Gohonzon". "By polishing my chest, breast cancer will disappear". Simply by chanting Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō I can become a Buddha". "Thank you very much, I will polish my life condition to the best of my ability". By having feeling of overwhelming gratitude as mentioned above, tasting Gongyō and daimoku, polishing yourself from the tips of your hair down to your toes with daimoku, your whole body becomes Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō and you become a happy and joyful child of the Gohonzon.

However, we cannot realistically become Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō itself, therefore, we chant to the Gohonzon. We use a mirror because we cannot actually see our face. We use the mirror to see our face so we can clean our face. Likewise, we chant to the Gohonzon to polish ourselves from the inside. In order to polish ourselves from the inside, we enshrine the Gohonzon in an altar. Your Gongyō must be done in such a way that Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō will be soaked deeply into every corner of your life. The more sincerely you do Gongyō, the greater benefit you will receive. Your willingness to tackle your study or shakubuku will naturally increase. People who are not performing a sincere Gongyō or daimoku are unable to do shakubuku no matter how hard they try. "My friend doesn't know he has the mystic Way within himself. What a pity! Somehow, I would like to tell him about it. I want him to chant to the Gohonzon with gratitude so that he can receive 100% benefit!" Shakubuku is telling your friend about true Buddhism with such a sincere and beautiful attitude. By doing shakubuku in this manner, the Gohonzon promises that we, from the tip of our hair to our toe nails, we can become daimoku and our life condition will be as great as the Gohonzon's. The Gohonzon wants us to share the same life condition just as parents wish to give all their assets to their children. The Gohonzon's assets are as big as the universe and lasts eternally. This is what "Nyōrai Chiken Kodai Jinnō" in the Sutra means. The wisdom of the Buddha is all encompassing

and profound, meaning that this wisdom penetrates the entire universe and encompasses past, present and future. To eternally enjoy the benefit as big as the universe is called "Ichinen Sanzen".

When you manifest the highest life condition of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, it will penetrate into the 3000 worlds. This is more important and is, therefore, called "Ichidaiji" (one great thing). The word "Ichidaiji" is now commonly used when an emergency comes up, but the word originated from the Lotus Sutra. In the Lotus Sutra, "Ichidaiji" means, "Your life is Nam-myoho-renge-kyo itself. Your head represents "Myo" (mysticism); the throat is "ho" (law); the chest is "ren" (Lotus); the abdomen is "ge" (flower), and the legs are "kyo" (sutra). Your body is the five-story pagoda which consists of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo." Realizing this truth itself is enlightenment. On the contrary, not realizing it is a delusion. Even though you chant to the Gohonzon, you are deluded because you cannot realize the existence of the Buddha within yourself. The Goshō explains the meaning of "Ichidaiji" as follows: "Your head represents "Myo"; the throat is "ho", the chest is "ren"; the womb is "ge"; and the legs are "kyo." The five foot body of ours is indeed the manifestation of the five characters of the Mystic Law. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. This is most important. We must chant daimoku, keeping in mind that your head is "Myo" and chant daimoku as if you are cleaning your brain.

Because of slander created while practicing previous religions has passed down to us from our ancestors, the negative karma from the slander still exists within our lives. This is why you many suffer from nervous breakdowns, cancer or rheumatism. You are carrying karma created from within a seven-generation period. Since the karma from deceased family members remains with you, you may become ill even though you may be practicing sincerely. In the Goshō it states, "The worst sin of all will bear a suffering not only on yourself, but also on your children, grandchildren and on to the seven generations to come. So does the greatest fortune. The greatest benefit Mandgalyayama received, in believing the Lotus Sutra, was that not only he, but also his father and mother were also able to become Buddha's. All fathers and mothers of seven generations into the past, as well as seven generations still to come will be able to become a Buddha.

The worst cause is to slander True Buddhism. Slander is an offense of the law of life. When you break the federal law or violate the traffic regulations, you must pay a fine, or your driver's license may be suspended. Whether you know the law or not, you will still be charged with the offense. Likewise, whether you know it or not, if you commit a violation of the law of life, you will receive retribution. Since we all freedom of religion, we won't be punished if we choose a slanderous teaching to believe in, but we cannot avoid receiving a repercussion that effects our life negatively. What kind of retribution do we get? If you believe in God, or follow the teachings of a faith healer, you will likely have a nervous breakdown, or a problem related to the nervous system. The retribution of slandering the Lotus Sutra will appear as an illness of the internal organs, including high blood pressure, the liver, the heart, the kidneys, rheumatism, diabetes, and asthma. These illnesses are due to insulting and slandering the Lotus Sutra.

Problems involving the nervous system including depression, mania, schizophrenia, epilepsy, tinnitus as well as children who display the life condition of anger and refuse to go to school are due the effects of following the teachings of a faith healer. The Kansai area has the largest number of faith healers and has many shrines and temples of heretical sects. At Mt. Hiei and Mt. Kono snakes as well as foxes are the objects of worship. The negative karma created while practicing these slanderous teachings has been soaked into one's life and has the same effect as having a snake inside of you. However, when one chants abundant daimoku and soaks daimoku in one's self, your daimoku becomes like a lion who goes on patrol though the whole body with Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and eats all the germs, just like lion catching rabbits or sheep. The power of daimoku exterminates all germs of negative karma and enables one to become healthy.

You are bearing the effects of the worst sins created not only by yourself, but also the sins made during the seven generations of both father and mother's families, and if you are married, that of your husband or wife as well. If you were not practicing True Buddhism and had a child, the child would be full of negative karma, like a filthy rag full of germs.

However, we have daimoku to clean ourselves. We must polish ourselves and, therefore, we should chant as if we were scrubbing our lives hard with daimoku. First, we should apologize to the Gohonzon for our ancestor's slanders. Apologize to the Gohonzon in a way that says, "My ancestors believed in slanderous teachings. Please forgive them. Please forgive us." Or "My family practiced the Zen sect (or Shingon, Nembutsu, other Nichiren sects, etc.) and I am very sorry." "My current problem is due to my own karma as I was born into this slanderous family." Apologize to the Gohonzon from the bottom of your heart with this type of sincere attitude. This is what is called "Zange-Zaimetsu" (repentance and diminishing sins). You must do this first, and secondly, make a determination such as, "I will exert my best for Kosen-rufu, not only for my own sake, but also for the sake of my ancestors. Therefore, please forgive the slander that my family has made." "I'll become the best group leader in the whole country, I promise. Therefore, let me overcome my illness." Thirdly, pray for your personal wishes, (i.e. "please help my child recover from his illness." "Please let my family become harmonious." "Let us become financially secure.")

Repentance comes first, (repentance in Buddhism is making a realization and taking full responsibility for one's own circumstances without judgment of others), determination second and personal wishes third. Remember to chant sincerely (i.e. be honest and true to yourself). You must manifest the outside Gohonzon in the altar within yourself. Polish your life condition to become Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. As your head becomes "myo" and the throat becomes "ho", the great benefit of the Gohonzon will emerge.

The greatest fortune of all is to become a Buddha, and furthermore, the Gohonzon makes it possible for even your father and mother to become Buddhas as well. This great fortune will be shared with seven generations of the past and future. There is not need to be afraid of the negative karma accumulated from seven generations of the past. The slander accumulated by the 100 generations make 100 rivers. A believer of True Buddhism alone can make an ocean. You should chant to the Gohonzon as if "I'll enlighten all my deceased family. I'll work hard for Kosen-rufu and for the past of my ancestors. Therefore, please let me regain my health." If your prayer is sincere, a series of benefits like a tidal wave will reach all the way up to the first generation. You become the upper part of the river. But once you quit practicing your ancestors become the upper part of the river, and all of the negative karma will flow down to you. When your practice is strong, you will be able to enlighten your ancestors as well as future descendants. Therefore, it makes everything different depending upon whether your conviction is strong, or whether you will become the upper or lower part of the river. When your faith is strong, you can change your karma. This is what "Ichidaiji" means. Ultimately, you must ready yourself with daimoku, and you ready yourself with Gongyo. Rather than performing Gongyo morning and evening ceremoniously or obligatorily, your Gongyo must be powerful enough to ready yourself and to diminish all slander your deceased family had made.

In the Gosho, it states "This is the actual high sanctuary of true Buddhism. Not only will the people of the three countries and the entire world come here to make amends and eradicate their past misdeeds, but Bonten, Taishaku and the other gods will also be present." You must make an apology to the Gohonzon such as, "I've made slanders without realizing it. I am very sorry." The Daishonin does not mention about benefits in that Gosho passage. Once you diminish your slander by offering sincere zange every daimoku you chant will bring benefit.

The Gosho states, "When it snows, the sky is so white and cannot be dyed. When lacquered in black, it

cannot be dyed white again. But people's hearts are easily changed. Their hearts can be dyed by good and evil. If you are dyed by the slanderous teachings of Shingon, Zen and Nembutsu, you will definitely fall into hell. When you are dyed by the Lotus Sutra, you will surely become the Buddha." If you support and help temples of Zen and Shingon sects or recite the name of Amida Buddha, you will surely fall into hell. You'll suffer because you are soaked with the slander. You are dyed by the slanderous teachings. But we do have Nam-myoho-renge-kyo within us now. Just let the power of the Gohonzon flow through your bodies. First soak Nam-myoho-renge-kyo into your head. The benefits of the Gohonzon are so great it includes "Sokushin Jobutsu" (attaining enlightenment as common mortals) as well as reviving. The Sutra states, "Shin-ne-ren-bo", meaning yearning for the Buddha. We must hold a feeling of yearning for the Gohonzon within our hearts. It is as if you love the Gohonzon so much that is like seeing your sweetheart. On the other hand, it is not the way to do Gongyo if your attitude is "I don't feel like doing Gongyo, but I'll do it because I have to", or "It is troublesome to do Gongyo". If you feel troublesome you won't have a date, however, you have a date because your date makes you feel happy. Likewise, what "Shin-ne-ren-bo" means is that you chant to the Gohonzon as if seeing your lover makes you feel happy. When you do Gongyo in such a manner, you are doing a perfect Gongyo. It states in the Gosho, "As you crave food when hungry, seek water when thirsty, long to see a lover, beg for medicine when ill, or as a beautiful woman desires powder and rouge, so should you put your faith in the Lotus Sutra. If you do not you will regret it later." The Daishonin said unless you do Gongyo with such an attitude, you will regret it later. Recently, President Ikeda stated the following Gosho passage when he gave guidance that would enable us to pursue our faith without regrets. "Do not spend this life in vain and regret if for ten thousand years to come." He said that in order for us to spend our lives without any regret, we must practice our faith without any regrets.

We will still receive benefit when we do morning and evening Gongyo, but it is not perfect unless we feel joy and realize we are Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and the time we sit in front of the Gohonzon to do Gongyo should be the happiest moment of our lives. As mentioned in the Gosho, "as you crave food when hungry", means to chant to the Gohonzon as you would want food when hungry. "Seek water when thirsty," means to chant to the Gohonzon with the gratitude you would experience when a glass of water would make you happy when thirsty. "Long to see a lover," means that your life condition becomes Nam-myoho-renge-kyo when you long for the Gohonzon as you would long for your lover with the feeling of "Shin-ne-ren-bo". "Beg for medicine with ill," means that you treasure the Gohonzon as you would treasure medicine when you are sick. Faith is not some sort of supernatural power, therefore, take medicine when you have diarrhea or have a cold. "As a beautiful woman desires powder and rouge" means never to forget about the Gohonzon as a woman never forgets to carry her makeup.

Why does the Gosho say "You should put faith in the Lotus Sutra? If you don't, you will regret it later"? Because, we still have negative karma accumulated from past slanderous teachings. Once our life is purified, chanting only one daimoku will make it possible for us to attain enlightenment. Therefore, we cannot say that one daimoku or one million daimoku is enough for one to attain buddhahood. The power of 30 minutes of daimoku is greater than 10 hours of daimoku if your passion and longing for the Gohonzon is greater during the 30 minutes. This is because daimoku is being soaked through your bones. It's no good to do Gongyo and chant daimoku with an attitude of "oh, we still have 8 hours left to chant. Who decided we should chant 10 hours of daimoku anyway?"

Rather than doing 10 hours of daimoku unwillingly, I believe it has greater meaning if we chant, even if only for an hour, with appreciation that your whole body, even the bones are becoming Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and with a strong determination that you are making a cause for Kosen-rufu, not only for your own sake, but for the sake of your ancestors.

As the Gosho state, "if dyed by the slanderous teaching of Shingon, Zen and Nembutsu, you will definitely fall into hell. But dyed by the Lotus Sutra, you will definitely become a Buddha." The Buddha is the one equipped with a complete set of tools necessary for happiness. Therefore, the Buddha doesn't have financial problems, problems with children, nor illnesses. Sick people will become healthy. Poor people will become wealthy. Families will be harmonious. Having a complete set of tools to become happy is called becoming a Buddha. Everything is joyful. You are happy when awake, you are happy when asleep, even happy when you are dead. You are happy at every moment. This is what "Joraku Gajo" means and also this is what we call "Buddhahood" within us. Jo-eternity, raku-true self, jo-purity.

Appreciating that you are in the position to make positive causes for Kosen-rufu here in Nara Prefecture, where it is still filled with slanderous teachings, you will be able to change poison into medicine. The greatest misfortune will turn into the greatest fortune. I sincerely hope that each of you will do a perfect Gongyo with the most joyful attitude and establish Nara as the land of the Buddha.