

The Objective of Faith

1 The objective of our faith and practice in Nichiren Shoshu is, first and foremost, to achieve kōsen-rufu, so that all the people in the world can live in peace and harmony.

Secondly, it is for each and every one of us individually to attain enlightenment, so that we can establish true happiness for ourselves. What is necessary for the people in the world to live in peace and harmony? Most significantly, warfare must disappear. In reality, however, when we look across the globe, countries are fighting with one another.

There are constant battles and ceaseless disputes somewhere in the world at all times. Throughout history, mankind repeatedly has engaged in numerous wars, and even to this day, conflicts and warfare are ever-present. Why do they not cease?

Nichiren Daishonin states the following in the *Risshō ankoku-ron* (On Securing the Peace of the Land through the Propagation of True Buddhism):

I find that all people have gone against the correct Law and become wholly devoted to evil doctrines. This is why.... disasters and calamities [occur]. (*Gosho*, p. 234; *The Gosho of Nichiren Daishonin-2*, p. 3)

“Disasters and calamities” refer to the three calamities and seven disasters. The three calamities are famine, warfare, and pestilence. Even today, there are people in many parts of the world who suffer from hunger.

This denotes famine. Warfare signifies constant conflict among the people. Finally, there are numerous dreadful diseases that spread and cause great suffering. This is what is meant by pestilence.

The seven disasters are described in the Sutra of the Medicine Master (*Yakushi-kyō*):

1. Disease and pestilence: Many people succumb to diseases. 2. Invasion from foreign lands: The nation is attacked by foreign forces. 3. Revolt within one’s domain: Internal uprisings occur. 4. Irregularities among the stars and constellations: Changes are manifested in the movement of the celestial bodies. 5. Eclipses of the sun and moon: The sun and moon undergo eclipses and their light sometimes diminishes. 6. Unseasonable wind and rain: Stormy winds and rain occur out of season. 7. Unseasonable dry weather: Rain does not fall even after the end of the dry season.

Of these, invasion from foreign lands and revolt within one’s domain characterize wars. In other words, wars and various forms of calamities occur when people do not uphold the correct faith and practice. Furthermore, many people worldwide suffer and lose their lives from various disasters, such as high winds, heavy rains, earthquakes, and tsunamis.

These occur because true Buddhism has not spread throughout the world. Regardless of how sincerely we seek happiness, if we do not uphold faith and practice of true Buddhism, our country will encounter disasters, and we will not be able to live a life of peace and safety.

2 A passage in the *Risshō ankoku-ron* reads:

Once a nation goes to ruin and its people perish, who will venerate the Buddha, and who will take faith in the Buddhist Law? First, we must pray for the peace of the land,

and then promote Buddhism. (*Gosho*, p. 244; *The Gosho of Nichiren Daishonin-2*, p. 27)

The happiness of an individual is impossible without peace and security in the nation. Only when people throughout the world continually uphold faith and practice of true Buddhism can we establish a land that is devoid of war, starvation, and other disasters.

Then, the people of the world will be able to live a life of true happiness.

The land of peace and tranquility worldwide only can be constructed after we successfully achieve our great objective of *kōsen-rufu*.

Objective of our faith is to establish true happiness in our own lives. We must uphold our faith and practice throughout our entire lives, without ever regressing or slackening, so that we can attain enlightenment. Everyone in the world seeks a life of happiness.

In reality, however, there are people whose lives are not happy.

Some may blame their unhappiness on society, their parents, their siblings, their friends, or the people in their environment.

Buddhism teaches the principle of cause and effect. It expounds that, if people are unhappy, then there is a cause for such unhappiness, and it is the result of their own doing.

In the *Gosho*, *The Opening of the Eyes* (*Kaimoku-sho*), the Daishonin cites the following passage from the Sutra of the Foundation in Observing the Mind (*Shinjikan-gyō*):

If you wish to know the causes you have accumulated in your past existences, look at the effects that are manifested in the present. And if you wish to know the effects that will be manifested in the future, look at the causes you are accumulating in the present... (*Gosho*, p. 571)

Thus, by observing the conditions of our lives today, we can understand the causes that we made in the past, and we are able to imagine the circumstances that we can expect in the future.

3 Why, then, do people become unhappy? In explaining the unhappiness and suffering of humans, Buddhism presents the principle of the four sufferings (*shiku*). There are four types of suffering: birth, aging, sickness, and death.

Nichiren Daishonin explains the causes for sickness, the third of these four sufferings, by referring to a passage in the *Great Concentration and Insight* (*Maka shikan*):

First are illnesses caused by an imbalance of the four elements. Second are illnesses caused by one's inability to control one's appetite. Third are illnesses caused by an imperfect practice of meditation. Fourth are illnesses caused by demons entering into one's body. Fifth are illnesses caused by the work of devils. Sixth are illnesses caused by the manifestation of one's karma. (*Reply to Ōta nyūdō* [*Ōta nyūdō dono-gohenji*]; *Gosho*, p. 911; *Selected Gosho Passages of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 244)

Regarding the first cause, the four elements (*shidai*) refer to earth, water, fire, and wind. In our bodies, these are represented by the physical body, blood, body temperature, and breathing. Sickness results when these elements in our bodies become irregular.

The second type of illness is caused by neglecting to maintain good eating habits, such as excessive drinking, overeating, and nutritional imbalances.

These lifestyle-related diseases in modern times are examples of this category.

The third type of illness occurs when a person's mind is disturbed and he becomes mentally unstable. Ailments and disorders of the mind can lead to physical diseases.

The fourth type of illness refers to evil demons. If we harbor thoughts of heresy in our faith, a negative opportunity will occur. Demons will take advantage of that opportunity and enter our bodies and cause illnesses.

The fifth type of illness represents the various kinds of diseases that occur when devilish functions try to obstruct our Buddhist practice.

The sixth type of illness arises as the karmic effect of our own negative behavior in this and past lifetimes.

Thus, there are six types of causes of illness, but they are not restricted to diseases. They represent any cause that brings about suffering in the lives of the people. Of these types of illnesses, the most serious is the sixth—karmic diseases.

4 Nichiren Daishonin writes the following in the Goshō, *Reply to Ōta nyūdō* (Ōta nyūdō dono-gohenji):

Illnesses of the sixth category, caused by manifestations of one's negative karma, are the most difficult to cure....The gravest illnesses are caused by slandering the Lotus Sutra. (*Goshō*, p. 912)

In other words, the karma created by slandering the Lotus Sutra not only will result in illnesses, but also will be the fundamental source of various forms of misfortune.

There may be people who have no recollection of slandering the Lotus Sutra.

However, Buddhism expounds the principle of karmic cause and effect that permeates the three existences of the past, present, and future.

The causes for the misfortunes that we are suffering today, can be found in our current and past lives. Only when we expiate the karma created by slandering the Lotus Sutra can we experience true happiness and attain the life condition of Buddhahood.

For this reason, we must advance in our correct faith in and practice to the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of the Essential Teaching.

How, then, can we expiate our negative karma? In our faith and practice, we must repent for the slanders we have committed and uphold and honor the teaching of Nichiren Daishonin, the True Buddha. We must spread the word about the benefits of the Gohonzon and sow the seed of true Buddhism through shakubuku.

By so doing, we can eradicate the negative karma caused by the slander that we have committed thus far.

This is why we must tell as many people as possible about the benefits, joy, and experiences that we have achieved through practicing Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism. Let's lead them to the true teaching by planting the seed of the Buddhism and doing shakubuku.

5 Under the direction of Sixty-eighth High Priest Nichinyo Shonin, the priests and lay believers of Nichiren Shoshu are exerting their utmost efforts in doing shakubuku, in order to establish an organization of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by 2021, when we will celebrate the 800th anniversary of the advent of our Founder Nichiren Daishonin.

High Priest Nichinyo Shonin gave us the following guidance on the importance of doing shakubuku:

In doing shakubuku, even if people oppose us at the time, they eventually will come to embrace true Buddhism, based on the karmic bond of sowing the seed of the mystic Law (*Myōhō*) into their hearts. Therefore, we must follow the Daishonin's instructions to "by all means persist in sincerely expounding the Lotus Sutra to them." It is extremely important for us to thoroughly uphold this passage and proceed in our shakubuku activities with great courage and conviction and without ever being defeated by obstacles and devils. (*Dainichiren*, No. 842, p. 16)

As we propagate the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, we may encounter various difficulties.

However, let's continue to advance and sow the seeds of true Buddhism, as we pray for the achievement of *kōsen-rufu*.

Furthermore, let us vigorously proceed toward the establishment of peace and tranquility in our country and true happiness in our individual lives.