

# Myoshoji Sep.Oko & Gonan-e Ceremony & 4<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary

September 11,2016

Good morning everyone. Congratulations on holding 4th year anniversary of Myoshoji temple. The fact that there is a place of practicing is very big thing for faith.

I sincerely pray to the Gohonzon for your happiness and may your wishes come true. And also I hope that all of you here , keeping encourage each other to conduct shakubuku and ikusei [cultivation] basing Gongyo and shodai to accomplish kosen-rufu by serving Gohonzon with itai doshin.

To achieve this, the specific action is to centering our koto by supporting communicators to unite together with in the Hokkeko organization with itai doshin to accomplish shakubuku goal every year and at the same time to conduct ikusei to response to the High Priest's objective "to achieve a membership of 800,000 Hokkeko believers by the year 2021, when we will be celebrating the auspicious occasion of the 800th anniversary of the advent of the Founder Nichiren Daishonin."

Today, we held as September Oko and 4<sup>th</sup> year anniversary and also as Gonan-e ceremony.

## The Opening of the Eyes, Part 2

On the twelfth day of the ninth month of last year, between the hours of the Rat and the Ox (11:00 P.M. to 3:00 A.M.), this person named Nichiren was beheaded. It is his soul that has come to this island of Sado and, in the second month of the following year, snowbound, is writing this to send to his close followers. The description of the evil age in the Kanji chapter seems so terrifying, but because I have dedicated myself to the True Law, I, Nichiren, have nothing to be terrified about. Those observing me will be awestruck. This treatise is the bright mirror of Shakyamuni, Taho, and all the other Buddhas of the ten directions in which contemporary Japan is reflected. At the same time, it may be regarded as a keepsake from me.

(Gosho, p. 563; MWND-2, p. 140)

As Nichiren Daishonin stated, he encountered four major persecutions and countless minor ones. The four major persecutions were as follows: the persecution at Matsubagayatsu; the exile to Izu; the Komatsubara persecution; and the Tatsunokuchi persecution. Of these, the Tatsunokuchi persecution represented an essential turning point for Nichiren Daishonin, the True Buddha, in which he - in his very form as a common mortal - manifested his true entity as the True Buddha, characterized by the principal of "the eternal past of kuon is in itself the Latter Day of the Law." This process is known as "casting off the transient and revealing the true identity" (hosshakukempon).

After midnight on the 12th day of the 9th month of the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Bun'ei (1271), slightly past 2 a.m. on the 13th, the Daishonin was taken by samurai warriors of the Japanese

feudal government to Tatsunokuchi, the execution site. Tatsunokuchi is presently located in Fujisawa City in Kanagawa Prefecture. Although Tatsunokuchi was called an execution site, it apparently was not equipped with special facilities for its designated function. The execution site, which was in a specified area of Tatsunokuchi, consisted of a straw mat on which prisoners were beheaded.

The Daishonin was surrounded by Shijo Kingo and his brother and numerous believers who were genuinely concerned for him and chanted Daimoku aloud. The samurai warriors of the feudal government then encircled the Daishonin; and one of them raised his long sword and held it above the Daishonin's head, ready to execute him. At that very moment a ball of fire as bright as the moon suddenly appeared in the sky from the direction of Enoshima. It was so bright that the people could clearly see each others' faces. This incredible incident caused the warrior with the long sword to fall to the ground. Most of the samurai warriors fell to the ground or desperately ran in fear.

In the darkness, they were hardly able to see each other's face. But suddenly a light as bright as the moon appeared and enabled them all to see one another. There are various scientific explanations concerning this ball of light. Some say that it was a large meteorite, and others speculate that it was a thunderbolt. In fact, no one really knows the true nature of the light. Various historical documents allude to this incident and, therefore, we can be certain that the bright light appeared at the time. It has been scientifically shown that the strange phenomenon at Tatsunokuchi could actually have occurred. The most significant issue here is that a natural phenomenon that is truly rare actually occurred at the very moment when the Daishonin was about to be beheaded. As the saying goes, "a saint 'will never die a violent death.'" An individual manifesting the life condition of a Buddha would never die by execution.

In the Gosho passage that we are focusing on today, the Daishonin wrote: Between the hours of the Rat and the Ox (11 :00 P.M. to 3:00 A.M.), this person named Nichiren was beheaded.

This indicated the fact that all Buddhas achieve their ultimate enlightenment after passing the hour of the Ox, representing the end of death - the end of the darkness of ying, and reaching the hour of the Tiger, signifying the beginning of life - the beginning of yang in the interim period between darkness and light (ying and yang), life and death. Shakyamuni in India, at the age of 30, reached enlightenment on the 8th day of the 12th month at the hour of the Tiger. The Daishonin also attained enlightenment on the 12th day of the 9th month at the hour of the Tiger. Based on this, in Nichiren Shoshu, we

have performed gongyo, under the leadership of our High Priest at the time between the hours of the Ox and the Tiger, for 700 years, without missing a single day.

This sermon today is an expression of our gratitude to the Daishonin, the True Buddha, for his great compassion, At the same time, it also represents a ceremony to honor the Daishonin for withstanding the suffering caused by the many great persecutions and to pledge to him that we will uphold our faith characterized by a spirit to give our lives for the sake of True Buddhism (fuji shaku shinmyo)and that we will achieve the great objective of kosenrufu.

Again, congratulations and thank you very much for your kind attention.