

68th High Priest Nichinyo Shonin's Guidance

Gosho Passage of the Month

January 2012

“Onkō kikigaki”

May 28, 1280 (Age 59)

...the most essential of the four universal vows is the pledge to save innumerable living beings. Now, Nichiren and his disciples and followers work to save all mankind through Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo. There is no means other than this.

(Gosho p.1862 『御講聞書』)

Nichiren Shoshu Myosenji

...the first of the four universal vows within the general vows taken by all bodhisattvas, is the vow to save innumerable living beings.

The four universal vows are: the vow to save innumerable living beings, the vow to eradicate countless earthly desires, the vow to master limitless Buddhist doctrines, and the vow to attain the supreme enlightenment. All bodhisattvas make these same vows; therefore, it is called a general vow.

Among these four, the first vow is to save innumerable living beings. This means that bodhisattvas make a pledge to lead all the people, who are bound by the sufferings of life and death and are filled with distress, to the path of attaining enlightenment. The reason why the vow to save innumerable living beings is the first of the four universal vows, is that the other three vows are for the sake of one's own practice or benefit, whereas this one vow emphasizes the practice for benefiting others. The strict duty of a bodhisattva is to teach all living beings and thus, it is a key practice.

The Daishonin states the following in the “Recorded Lectures” (“Onkō kikigaki”):

After all, the most essential of the four universal vows is the pledge to save innumerable living beings. Now, Nichiren and his disciples and followers work to save all mankind through Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo. There is no means other than this.

(Gosho, p. 1862)

In general society too, it is said that when one offers service for society and the people, one feels joy and a purpose in life. One also gains maturity, and is able to have a continuously fulfilling life.

In Buddhism, this has an even deeper meaning. Doing shakubuku, to save as many people as possible and provide them with true happiness, is the most important matter for followers of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. This is their greatest joy. The act of shakubuku possesses great benefit, both for oneself, and for others (jiri rita). (On the occasion of Kōsen-rufu Shodai Ceremony at Head Temple – Nov. 6, 2011)