

**BACK TO THE BASICS**  
**THE MEANING OF 'SHAKUBUKU'**  
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In SGI-USA, the word *shakubuku* is often used to mean propagation. There is one important factor that we should keep in mind regarding this strong Buddhist term, which literally means to break and subdue. Namely, it is to remember that the real meaning of *break and subdue* is to help others break their attachments to narrow views of their lives and help them to reveal their inherent Buddhahood, thus subduing their fundamental darkness.

*Shakubuku* is part of what this Buddhism calls practice for oneself and others. Practice for oneself means the chanting of daimoku, the reciting of the sutra and the offering of prayers—in other words, gongyo. Practice for others, *shakubuku*, means helping our friends realize that they innately possess the greatest life-condition of Buddhahood.

Taken literally, *shakubuku* is a harsh word. But Nichiren Daishonin uses it because of his conviction in the supreme power of the Mystic Law and the potential of Buddhahood in each person. He encourages us, too, to “practice only the shakubuku method of propagation, and if one has the capacity, use one’s influence and authority to destroy slander of the correct teaching, and one’s knowledge of the teachings to refute erroneous doctrines” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 127).

In the end, *shakubuku* comes down to heartfelt dialogue. To “use one’s influence and authority” really means to become people who others want to discuss their sufferings with. As SGI President Ikeda says in this week’s issue: “One’s voice does the Buddha’s work” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708). How important it is that we talk with others, that we engage in dialogue! Armed with patience and wearing the ‘robe of gentleness and forbearance’ (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 971), let us make a point of always speaking to others with bright, vibrant voices. Let us hold warm dialogues, happy dialogues. Let us hold dialogues that inspire and encourage. Let us hold dialogues brimming with philosophy. Such dialogues are what pave the way to a truly humane world. And let us work hard to link those dialogues to the ongoing victory of our movement” (p. 4).