

Nichiren Shu News

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The Significance of Minobusan



Minobusan Kuonji Temple

By Rev. Eisei Ikenaga
Nichiren Mission of Hawaii

Minobusan or Mount Minobu is located in Yamanashi Prefecture on the island of Honshu in Japan. Yamanashi is landlocked by other prefectures namely Tokyo, Kanagawa, Saitama, Shizuoka, and Nagano. Famous Mt. Fuji is located on its southern border in Shizuoka Prefecture. Summers there are extremely hot and humid, while winters are very cold. Yamanashi is known for being a major fruit producer primarily pears, peaches, grapes, and plums.

Mount Minobu is approximately 100 miles from central Tokyo, that would be about a three-hour drive from Tokyo if the traffic is not heavy. This does not sound very far but one still needs to navigate through twists and turns of mountain paths before reaching Minobusan.

Nichiren Shonin left Kamakura on May 12 and arrived in Minobu on May 17 of the 11th year of the Bunnei Period (1274). Kamakura, located in Kanagawa Prefecture, was the seat of the military government at the time. Nichiren started building a small temporary cottage in Minobu on June 17

of the same year (Ajichi Shufuku-sho).

This makeshift structure apparently did not last very long as it fell apart in the winter of the third year of the Kenji Period (1277) which was only three years after its construction. He completed the construction of a more permanent structure in the fourth year of the Koan Period (1281). He named it himself by calling it "Minobusan Myohokke-in Kuonji."

The parcel of land at the discretion of the Nichiren Sect today was originally donated to Nichiren Shonin and his order by Nambu Rokuro Hakii Sanenaga who was the most prominent leader of the area, and one of Nichiren's most devout followers. Hakii Sanenaga is credited for building a cottage and inviting Nichiren to spend his last years in Minobu. Sanenaga is thought to have been born in the same year as Nichiren, the first year of the Jo-o Period (1222). In the fourth year of the Koan Period (1281), Sanenaga decided to enter priesthood as a disciple of Nichiren Shonin. Nichiren gave him the Buddhist name Nichi-en.

Nichiren was 53 years old when he went to Minobu. He had already experienced

as many as four major persecutions by competing members of the clergy as well as officials of the Kamakura military government. During Nichiren's time, natural disasters, disease, famine and the imminent threat of foreign invasion troubled people immensely. In a treatise called the Risho Ankoku Ron, Nichiren delineated the reasons for these calamities, claiming that it was because people were not following the true teaching and practices of the Buddha. He had tried to warn the Kamakura government of this, three times but without much endorsement. The Kamakura government, being a military one, was very interested in the realization of Nichiren's prediction of foreign invasions by the Mongols in 1274 and 1281. Since the government didn't heed to his warnings, Nichiren decided to lead a more quiet, reclusive life.

The main reason for Nichiren entering Minobusan was to read the Lotus Sutra in peace, further his studies, and pass on his teachings to his disciples. He resided there for nine years, teaching and writing until his health began to decline. He finally left Minobusan for Hitachi's hot springs to recuperate. However, he could not make it to his destination. He passed away at the home of Lord Ikegami Munenaka in Tokyo, on the morning of October 13, 1282, at the age of 61. (Oeshiki, held every year on October 12 and 13 is the memorial service commemorating his death.) He was cremated in Ikegami and his entourage is said to have departed Ikegami for Minobu on October 19.

Nichiren had requested that he be buried at Minobu. He wrote, "Notwithstanding where I die, let my site of burial be the slopes of Minobu." This is significant in that he did not request to be taken to his place of birth, Kominato, Chiba Prefecture, a place

much closer in proximity. That he wanted to return to Minobu over his place of birth and upbringing suggests that Minobu was the place he had the fondest memories of.

He wrote to Lord Toki about Minobu, "I have not decided whether I will live in Minobu or not; however, being in the mountains of Minobu certainly suits me well. So, I plan to stay here awhile" (Toki-dono Goshu). It is notable that this letter was one of the first that he wrote upon reaching Minobusan, suggesting that he was attracted to it immediately. We call Minobu "Sozan" or mountain of Our Founder.

Minobu is still quite modest and sequestered to this day. The mountains of Minobu are full of tall trees, thick shrubbery, clean water, and home to many wild animals and insects. The majestic beauty of the mountains still set an atmosphere where one can seek tranquility, inspiration, and awareness. The prayer halls of Kuonji are not just large, but are rich with history, making it seemingly solemn, thought-provoking and uplifting than any other prayer hall of Nichiren Shu. For these reasons, Minobu remains the spiritual center of our sect.

As such, we priests are required to complete our final studies at Minobu as a requirement towards full ordainment. Every aspect of Minobusan, from its natural surroundings to the architectural structures seems to have been touched by Nichiren Shonin's breath of consciousness.



Scroll painting of Kuonji

Oeshiki; In Memory of Nichiren Shonin

By Sandra Seki

A special service called Oeshiki is held every year during the months of October to November at Nichiren temples throughout Japan and all over the world to commemorate the passing of Nichiren Shonin. It is the most important annual event for Nichiren followers.

Our Founder passed away early in the morning of the 13th day of the tenth month in the year 1282. He was on his way to the hot springs in Mito to recuperate from his failing health but was not able to make it. He passed away at the estate of Lord Ikegami Munenaka, an ardent follower, at the age of 60. The present Daibo, Hongyoji Temple is the exact place where he gave

his final sermon to his disciples and succumbed. It is said that the earth shook and the cherry blossoms bloomed off-season at the time. This is why the Mando (thousand lanterns) used for the Oeshiki parade are adorned with paper cherry blossoms. To this day, the cherry blossoms in the garden of Hongyoji, bloom around the time of the Oeshiki.

The Oeshiki service and Mando parade at Ikegami, Hommonji Temple in Tokyo, is most famous. It is held on the night of October 12, a day before the memorial day. Thousands of people parade to the top of Hommonji with huge lighted Mando decorated with washi (Japanese paper) cherry blossoms. Members of temples

and Sanghas from all over Japan beat the uchiwa daiko (fan drums) accompanied by the flute and bells while chanting the Odaimoku. The rhythmical chant and beat stimulate the onlookers as the parade goes up to the Daido (main hall). The Mandos continue to arrive until midnight. The Oeshiki parade is more like a festival than a memorial.

On the following day, October 13, a memorial service is held at Hommonji at 8:00 A.M., the hour when Nichiren Shonin is said to have entered Nirvana. Priests from many temples participate in this most important Nichiren Shu service.

To the disciples and followers of Nichiren Shonin, Oeshiki is not just the day of his

death; it is the day that he left his mortal life and was reborn with eternal life. Rather than mourn the passing of Our Founder, we express the joy of being fortunate to be his disciples and followers. It is the time for us to renew our vows to be good followers of Nichiren and strive to spread his teachings.



Mando Lanterns highlight the Oeshiki at Ikegami

Calendar October ~ November 2011

October 1st: Ceremony of changing the robes on the Statue of Nichiren Shonin, Minobusan
October 10th: Service in memory of the Founder's exile to Sado Island
October 11th to 13th: Oeshiki (Commemorating the passing of Nichiren Shonin)
October 12th: Minobusan and Ikegami Mando Parade (for the Oeshiki)

October 13th: The 730th Memorial Service for Nichiren Shonin
October 14th ~15th: Lecture of the Lotus Sutra and Moon Festival in Hawaii
November 9th ~12th: Memorial Service for Ryuguji Temple at Nagpour, India
November 13th: Memorial Service for Nichizo Shonin

By Rev. Tsuoh Yokoi

Buddhism and International Society

By Rev. Kanshu Naito

Buddhism and America (5)

The Declaration of Independence in 1776 which proclaimed the birth of America, an experimental country, different from England and the other European countries really appealed to the world. It was clear that this declaration did not necessarily mean the psychological and economic independence of America from the Old World considering the political and economic fluidization from the end of 18th century to the beginning of 19th century. As for the Constitution of the United States which was ratified and came into effect in 1788, its establishing process showed that there were many problems betraying the high and noble ideals of the Declaration of Independence. Furthermore, a lot of the American legal structure itself was still then in conformity with the British as regards to common law and America was dependent on many economic parts of Britain which started the Industrial Revolution before others. The 13 independent colonies asserted their own right of self-government trying to protect their individual interests. In each colony there were unstable elements threatening their unification as a federation.

It is basically an indisputable fact the independence of America from Britain gave the people an upsurge of identity as a democratic nation. It was a war called the second British and American War that broke out in 1812 and that made the American spirit of independence remarkable. Although there were many people who still sympathized with Britain in the Revolutionary War, this time they defended their country definitely as a unitary state to collapse another British unjustified expansion. This war was not only a victory against the Old World but an opportunity to make oppressive nations all over the world recognize America as the leading country of liberty and democracy.

However, the controversy over the slavery issue between the North and the South which had been bringing a fierce conflict on economic interests for a long time reached a serious state which strongly refused to accept a compromise. Not only a conflict between the ideology of "The Declaration of Independence" and the expediency of "The Constitution of the United States" was called into question, but also there existed the undeniable confrontation between industrial capitalist system of the Northern States aiming at modernization and quasi-aristocratic plantation system based on the slavery of the Southern States, which became so tense that they did not mind an armed struggle. The general public cherished the illusion that they could settle in the undeveloped land in the west and realize the individual ideal. The selfish expansionism by the white people was justified, indiscriminate destruction of nature made progress, and the native Americans and Mexican habitants were driven away according to the motto; "It is the Manifest Destiny to expand this continent given by the God."

Big chaos involving politicians,



Rev.
Kanshu Naito

intellectuals and ordinary people was enhancing power of condensation steadily, and seeking its jet under the optimistic illusion of the future including all possibilities with the ground swell of two big problems; that is, settlers going into the Western undeveloped land and the Southern slavery issue.

The Civil War became the first "internecine war" in American history. Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), who had been against the expansion of slavery, was inaugurated as President on March 4, 1861. After a while the Civil War began on April 12 with the attack on Fort Sumter in South Carolina by the Confederate Army and ended on April 9, 1865 with the surrender by General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox, Virginia. This war was also the first modern warfare in world history. The fact that the enormous number of deaths approximately 260,000 on the Confederate side and 360,000 on the Union side should be evidence of a fringe of its unbridled violence. The North became the center of the American government and the defeated Southern states had to go into a hard time for their reconstruction.

This was the time called the Romantic American Renaissance, when the foundation for independence of the states was solidified and the people began to think generally that America was the most advanced democratic country in the world developing their unique and creative imagination. Various movements broke out unstrained and abundantly released their personalities oppressed by Puritanism which was influential till then. Transcendentalism, skeptical romanticism, grassroots democracy and rationalism dressed in science, etc. began to insist on their existence containing ambiguity inside. At the period of the American Renaissance, transcendentalism represented by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), etc., who best embodied the spiritual climate of this period, insisted on infinitely centrifugal possibilities of individual spirits through nature against extremely exclusive and centripetal ethical views of Puritanism which was the source of the leading stream in old America.

Transcendentalism has no definite system and is the philosophical idealism, what is more, it is a very religious thought developing from Unitarianism brought about by William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), etc. maintaining anti-Calvinism. Unitarianism rejects several orthodox Protestant doctrines besides the Trinity, including the soteriological doctrines of original sin and predestination, and thinks Jesus Christ not as savior but as a leader and that we can be saved by our own efforts if we are faithful to the teaching of Christ. Emerson himself was an Unitarian pastor. Transcendentalism basically maintains the self-reliance that we should transcend reason and the

five senses and grasp truth by intuition. It is near materialism and existentialism on the trend of thought, and characteristic of idealism, the preservation of nature, individualism, abolition of slavery on their activities. It places the highest priority on individual mentality and considers human spirits as the center of the universe and nature as the reflection of God's will. Kenji Miyazawa (1896-1933), who practiced the Lotus Sutra, a poet and author of children's literature, and Inazo Nitobe (1862-1933), an agricultural economist, diplomat, and Christian, were deeply influenced in Japan by Emerson's thought. It was Thoreau, his disciple, who deepened this thought and put it into practice.

Thoreau was born to a pencil maker in Concord, Massachusetts, and graduated from Harvard University. Although he had no regular occupation throughout his lifetime, he made his living by helping his father's business, teaching, making surveys and giving lectures. He kept company with transcendentalists and published many essays. He tried to keep away from all his personal connections and to be a free 'walker' to receive vast nature. He built a cottage on the land owned by Emerson in the woods near Walden Pond and lived almost self-sufficiently from Independence Day, 1845 to September '47 "to illustrate the spiritual benefits of a simplified lifestyle." He actually detailed his primitive life in the woods in Walden, or Life in the Woods (1854), his representative work, containing his careful nature-watching, discussions about reading and social criticism.

Walden is still now being read by a lot of Americans. It is said that high school students recite a passage from Walden beginning with; "I went to the woods..." Thoreau read quite a lot of books in his life in the woods: poems, the classics, travel books and even recent science books. Although it seems that he stayed in the cottage all the time, actually he spent his time by taking a walk for a few hours every day. Using his five senses fully, he walked trying to

understand everything thoroughly about wildlife and plants. He did not only get absorbed in nature, but also made a living by frequently going to the town to give lectures and to make surveys. He read, thought, took a walk with a keen eye in the woods and took up his pen. He asked himself how he would live, reflected on nature and got a step into the "Theory of Evolution" which was extremely advanced at that time. He watched the stream of worldwide thought out of the cottage. Walden is a compilation of his thought and depicts how human beings can get their spiritual richness by leading a life with the least of housing, food and clothing. He knew that "Simplify," was needed "to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life." This poetical record written clearly is a book depicting the individual dignity and is loved as one of the most influential books about American life.

Well known as the words of Thoreau must be the passage which explains the reason why he began to live in the cottage at Walden as follows: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary."

Thoreau, was attracted by oriental religions at the earliest time in America and published some translation and papers. When he helped Emerson edit The Dial, a magazine of transcendentalists, he dealt with a series named Ethical Scriptures. He and Emerson alternately wrote a series of the oldest ethical and religious writings of men except for the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. This plan is the first attempt in America to introduce Oriental sacred books to Western readers. "The Preaching of Buddha" appeared in the January issue of The Dial. This article is said to be the earliest introduction of Buddhism to America. (to be continued)

Rev. Kanno Preaches (14)



**World-Honored One, turn the wheel of the Dharma,
Beat the drum of the Dharma as sweet as nectar,
Save the suffering beings,
And show the Way to Nirvana!
(Lotus Sutra, Chapter VII, The Parable of a Magic City)**

Uneasiness

I would like to extend my deep sympathy to the victims of the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, and pray for the souls of those who lost their lives.

Our mind is precarious. Once uneasiness sprouts in the mind, we feel uneasy about all we see, all we hear and all we eat. Buddha Shakyamuni has conquered uneasiness and reached the state of absolute peace of mind. How has the Buddha attained the great relief of mind?

"With all of my heart, I ask the Buddha Shakyamuni to teach us the way to the great peace of mind and show the way to enlightenment so that we may reach the same state of mind as the Buddha Shakyamuni."

We need this prayer to attain the great peace of mind. This prayer can be done by chanting the Odaimoku, that Nichiren Shonin teaches us. Let us practice the Odaimoku chanting so that we can discern green leaves as green leaves.

(Rev. Kanno, head priest of Kaichoji Temple, Shizuoka)

Small Talk on Various Topics of Buddhism (8)

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph.D

The Adventure Trip of Genjo

Genjo or Hsuan-chuang (600~664) was a Chinese priest. He traveled to India via Central Asia and brought back 657 Buddhist Sanskrit texts. He translated 1347 fascicles of scriptures into Chinese, including the basic texts of the Hosso Sect.

From childhood, he enjoyed reading classic texts. When he was eleven years old, his father passed away and he entered a Buddhist temple to become a Buddhist priest after his elder brother. In those days, the Chinese Buddhist society was in confusion following the political change. He visited many temples, met many high priests and studied Buddhism. He came to be respected highly by high ranking priests.

However, realizing the limit of the study of Buddhism in China, he decided to study in India to solve the problems in his study of Buddhism. In those days, Chinese were not allowed to leave China and travel outside of the country. He



Rev. Gyokai Sekido

could not obtain the government permission for the research trip abroad. Not complying with the government prohibition of overseas trips, he set out for the trip to India in 629.

Many difficulties arose continuously.

It is said that while he was traversing a desert alone on horseback, an army of 100 soldiers appeared on the horizon. He was frightened and seized the reins of the horse firmly. The imposing army was approaching. Unexpectedly, the figures of the soldiers gradually became smaller and vanished. Was that a vision or a mirage?

At one time, he lost his way in the desert and could not reach an oasis. In the day time, he suffered from the heat wave and at night he was threatened by ogres. He grew completely weak. He chanted the name of the Kanzeon (Avalokitesvara) Bodhisattva in his heart.

Then a cool wind started blowing, and he fell asleep.

After a short while, he was awakened by a giant god. The god blamed Genjo and told him to continue the trip. His horse was surprised at this and started running. Strangely they arrived at an oasis in green fields. Overcoming these difficulties, he continued his trip. Finally, Genjo passed through Central Asia along northern India, and arrived at a temple in Nalanda, in the middle of India.

Genjo studied all the schools of Buddhism and visited the holy sites of Buddha Sakyamuni in India. After several years he returned to China in 645 and worked on the translation of many sutras with his disciples at the national translation institute.

He is known for accurate translations of original texts. A lot of sutras were translated by them including 100 fascicles of Maha-prajna-paramita Sutra. Because his achievement was so great, the translation before him was called "old translation" and his translation, "new translation."

"Daito Saiiki-ki," (Report on the West

of the Great Tang) a record of his travel, is an important historical material to know the geography, culture, and religion of Central Asia and India in the seventh century. A drama, "Saiyu-ki (Journey to the West)" was written based on Genjo's adventurous pilgrimage.



A sculpture of Buddha's head (excavated in Gandhara) preserved at Myohoji Temple, Fuji City

Shingyo Dojo

By Rev. Myoran Gifford

On May 27th of this year, I had the good fortune to enter the Shingyo Dojo with 22 other women at Minobusan Japan. Shingyo Dojo is the final training period after one studies with their Teacher for three to seven years (and sometimes longer). This final period lasts for 35 days, consisting of intense training, lectures and testing in order to receive certification to become a Nichiren Shu Priest.

Each day, we would wake up in the early morning hours to clean and practice. This continued throughout the day until bedtime. At times it was clear everyone was exhausted, but through it all, it was helpful knowing we were all in it together. It provided a sense of fellowship. Part of the morning routine each day was to attend the service at Kuonji Temple and then on to the Nichiren Shonin's gravesite. It was here where I felt most at peace. Minobusan is truly beautiful in the morning. The smell and sound of the natural surroundings created some

wonderful memories for me.

One morning as we were walking up to Kuonji Temple, I suddenly became very concerned about completing this journey, I was thinking; this is so difficult, how can I keep up with everyone I came with a knee injury and cannot speak or understand the Japanese language, what will I do? I immediately thought of Nichiren Shonin and his followers and how much they suffered and endured to be able to spread the Lotus Sutra, I felt so ashamed and selfish; my suffering is minimal, nothing in comparison, afterwards these morning treks up to Kuonji Temple became very special to me.

While at Shingyo Dojo, the use of any communication to the outside world is prohibited except for letter writing (no cell phone, telephone or internet). I thought, "Would I be able to cope without this technology for 35 days?!" As it turns out, it is quite a blessing to realize how much unnecessary noise one has in their daily life. Also difficult to accept, was being away from family and loved ones for such a long period. I tried to remind myself of their support for this special journey.

Shingyo Dojo also provided its share

of physical hardship as well. For example, the practice of sitting in Seiza is very painful and everyone must endure it; unless you are injured and if you are injured you must sit apart from the rest of the group, this is a different kind of pain, this is emotionally difficult, because of course, no one wants to sit away from the rest of the group. However, I was always moved by the sheer kindness and compassion of my peers when they would offer supporting words during these trying moments.

Shingyo Dojo is a time of transitioning from being under the direct guidance of your Teacher to becoming independent. Of course, the Teacher is always there to provide advice afterwards if needed, but it can be daunting to realize one is stepping into their own as a Nichiren Shu Priest. On the last morning, as we changed into our robes and prepared to enter Shingyo Dojo for the last ceremony, I was overwhelmed by the sense of responsibility that would come with my new role.

Overall, I valued the time I had to train and learn through this process. It has been a long journey, but it has opened spiritual opportunities for me, and that

I am truly grateful for.

I began Shingyo Dojo with 22 other women and all of us finished together. There were many tears of happiness and promises were made to ensure we always see each other in the future. I would like to thank all who have supported me through this journey, especially my Master, Reverend Tsukamoto and Enkyo-Ji Temple.

I will take my new role as a Nichiren Shu Priest very seriously and continue to spread the teachings of the Lotus Sutra in hopes of helping others to find peace in their lives.



Rev. Myoran Gifford

On Completion of Shingyo Dojo



Rev. Chisho Inoue with drum

By Rev. Chisho Inoue

First of all, I would like to announce my graduation from Shingyo Dojo. I would like to thank all the members of the Los Angeles Betsuin for taking care of the temple altar in my absence. Also thank you so much for your encouraging words and support.

This Shingyo Dojo consisted of 23 trainees of which three of us were from overseas. During the rainy season in June, many fell ill. When I caught a cold and was not feeling well, I was encouraged by the other members to strive on. All of us supported one another by saying, "We are fortunate to be able to study

near the gravesite of Nichiren Shonin. No hardships can be compared to the persecution Our Founder faced."

At the end of the training, we all gathered at the great prayer hall of Kuonji Temple, Minobusan, and participated in a memorial service for all the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

I have just come up to the starting point as a minister. Completion of the Shingyo Dojo is not an end but just the beginning of my life as a Nichiren Shu priest. I will not forget the training I have received there and will move forward to help propagate the teaching of Nichiren Shonin.

Temple Events



Mission members gathered in front of a Bhutanese school

Nichiren Mission of Hawaii

Trip to Bhutan

(A group of members of the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii led by Bishop Shingyo Imai toured Bhutan in May 2011)

By Leslie Goto

Bhutan is geographically located in the Himalayas, on the northeastern border of India and China. Except for the capital Thimpu, most of the country is very rural, with farmhouses perched on rolling steep hillsides similar to those of Switzerland. Useable land is scarce because of the mountainous nature of the country and the only road that links the west to the east side of the country snakes along the mountainsides weaving up and down the valleys. Life is not easy in Bhutan and most of the tasks are done manually. There isn't much electricity or running water, but the people are very friendly and always smiling.

The monarchy has always been concerned with the happiness and quality of life for the citizens and so King Jigme Singye Wangchuck who set the country on a path toward democracy is very much revered by his people.

Bhutan is also a very Buddhist nation. Buddhism permeates all phases of life in Bhutan. Most homes dedicate an entire room as a chapel for twice-daily worship and meditation. Monks are invited into the homes for weekly or monthly services. Most Bhutanese don't believe in killing any animal including mosquitoes or flies. Sons who enter priesthood are a source of

pride for the families.

One evening our group was invited to the home of the proprietor of Zopa Adventure Travels, Kinlay Lemo Dorji, and we were able to discuss deep Buddhist beliefs with her brother Lama Sonam, and our guide Lama Chimi. The subject of the "Five Mental Poisons" was brought up: 1) Anger and Hatred, 2) Pride, 3) Desire and Greed, 4) Envy and Jealousy, and 5) Delusion and Ignorance. How do we rid ourselves of the "Five Mental Poisons"? It was explained to me that we must try to achieve this through meditation, following the "Eight-Fold Path" and leading a Mindful Life. It is not easy but it is a process we must all follow to achieve Truth and Fulfillment in our lives.

Lama Sonam also pointed out a sentence from a quote from His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama. The quote said, "I am not going to get angry." He explained that he made that sentence a priority in his life. I was surprised to hear that even though he was a monk, he was human just like the rest of us when he wrestled with many of the same emotions that we do, only that he went about it in a more conscious and purposeful manner.

Compared to life in Bhutan, we live in a beautiful paradise with clean air, water, good food and weather and a stable government and yet we seem so unhappy. We constantly complain about the simplest things in our lives and blame others for our own failings or shortcomings. If I could mindfully strive to follow the words of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, imagine what a fuller and happier life I would live.

My experiences and lessons I have learned in Bhutan have affected me deeply and it will be a part of me for the rest of my life.

Kannonji Temple, Nevada

By Bishop Shokai Kanai

Clark County Use Permit

After stating our case to the Town Board, we were able to gain approval for a place of worship under several conditions: 1) Landscaping around the residence cannot be altered in anyway. 2) Guests cannot park in the driveway (backing out onto a road is forbidden in residential zones). 3) The permit is valid for only a year and it will have to be renewed if we continue to use the current residential space.

So for now, we have been approved as a place of worship within Clark County and can conduct services freely. We still have to be mindful and respect our neighbors and try not to intrude upon their serenity. We welcome all visitors to join us every Sunday for service.



Bishop Kanai and Rev. Shoda Kanai conduct a service before floating Toros

Floating Paper Lanterns

On the first Saturday in August, for the past six years, the Atomic Testing Museum in Las Vegas has been holding "Journey through Japan," a Japanese cultural event. Nevada was the site where the atomic bomb was tested before being dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Bishop Kanai first suggested to hold a Toronagashi (lantern floating service) for all the victims of nuclear disasters around the world for three years. The event was finally realized last year. This year the second Lantern Service was held at Sunset Park, Las Vegas on Saturday, August 6, which was the same day as when the

first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.

This was a family event and many came wearing yukatas. They took family photos and received a passport with the photos on it. A \$15.00 fee per family for the passport photo-books was collected but the actual event was free and open to the public. It began at noon with Taiko performances, Kendo, Kyudo (Japanese archery), tea ceremony demonstrations with a raffle drawing in the end. The Lantern Ceremony Toronagashi started at 7:00 p.m. at Sunset Park.



Children enjoy fishing water yo-yos

Annual Bon Dance in Hawaii

Puunene Nichiren Mission's annual Hatsu-Bon Service and Bon Dance Festival were held on Saturday, June 11, 2011. Rev. Tetsudo Takasaki, the head priest of Puunene Nichiren Mission officiated the Bon Service with the assistance of three guest priests: Rev. Yodo Takasaki, head priest of Daikyoji Temple, Tokyo, Japan, Rev. Junsei Nagayoshi of Wahiawa Nichiren Mission, and Rev. Hoshio Sugawara of Hilo Nichiren Mission.

"Hatsu-Bon" is the first Bon season for newly deceased spirits. In this year's service, we offered prayers for two newly deceased spirits and during the service, we also prayed for the victims of the East Japan Earthquake Disaster. After

the service, a Bon Dance was held from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Many people participated, dancing continuously for two straight hours. Members and followers of the Puunene Nichiren Mission spent two weeks to prepare much of the food items for sale at the food booth. The items for sale included lima-bean manju, sushi rolls, chow-fun noodles, nishime (nimono), shoyu chicken plate, roast pork plates, curry rice, cakes, pickled onions, shaved ice, and cold drinks. Almost all the food that we prepared was sold out.

Last year, we included something new in our program. We played the tune "Hokey-Pokey" for children before the start of the Bon Dance. Free tickets to play one game of "Fish Yo-Yo" were handed out to the children who danced the "Hokey-Pokey". We tried this again this year and many small children seemed to enjoy it. Dancing and trying to conquer the game booths were also very popular. Members of the Puunene Nichiren Mission and Rev. Takasaki, would like to take this opportunity to thank all our helpers and visitors. Mahalo.

The Nichiren Mission of Hawaii also held their Bon Dance on Saturday, August 27, from 5:30 in the evening. This is the Mission's major fund-raising project and the committee members put a lot of time and effort in expanding their Bon Dance. Donations of ready-to-sell home-cooked food, crafts, and other items were received. A week before the event, members and friends came to help build the yagura, set up tents, tables and chairs, audio system, string up the chochin lights, post signs and help in the kitchen.

Many people enjoyed the food and the dancing for many hours. It was another successful event for the temple.



Bon dancing around the Yagura at Puunene

Nichiren Shu News

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