

Nichiren Shu News

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1

Nichiren Shu Lay Leader Retreat for 2013



Nichiren Shu Lay Leader Retreat of 2013 participants chanting in front of Nichiren Shonin's grave



Opening Ceremony



Procession from Kuon-ji back to the dojo

By Rev. Koshi Inami
Nichiren Shu Shimbun-sha

Nichiren Shu hosted the 2013 Lay Leader Retreat at the Shingyo Kenshu Dojo training hall in Minobusan, November 2~4, led by Rev. Gikou Tabata. Twenty lay leaders from six countries including Korea, Malaysia, the U. S. and the U.K. joined six attendees from Japan. They all confirmed their determination to spread the Lotus Sutra and the Odaimoku.

The retreat began with an the opening ceremony at the Jyoshoden of the Go-byosho, Nichiren Shonin's grave. From there, the participants were given an orientation and divided into several groups, to work together and take on different responsibilities. At first, the attendees seemed uncertain. But then after Rev. Tabata explained how one should awaken the sleeping Buddha within one's soul, the looks on their faces changed to eager anticipation.

The assistant leader of the retreat, Rev. Tengen Hamajima, Dean of Minobusan University, explained how Nichiren Shonin had led the movement to spread the Lotus Sutra over 750 years ago. "Today," he declared, "it is necessary to find a leader who can carry out the duties of a Bodhisattva by helping others."

On the first day, after introducing themselves, the attendees happily exchanged their ideas and thoughts with their fellow Odaimoku believers from around the world. Discussions about the values of wealth and assets, along with questions about Buddhism and the Lotus Sutra, continued throughout the day. The evening closed by chanting the Odaimoku in unison at 10:30 p.m.

On the second day, the participants attended the morning service lead by Archbishop Nisso Uchino at Minobusan Kuonji Temple. "The steps going up to the main hall were very steep and I was exhausted," said Lia Tsu Min a

member from Singapore Daimokuji Temple. "However, after the service, I felt so refreshed. I also felt that I had achieved a goal."

After the service, all the attendees cleaned up the areas around the Go-byosho and Dojo then embarked on a pilgrimage to six temples in the vicinity and received goshuin, or special temple seals.

Later, they met with students from Minobusan University and discussed the differences between managing temples in different countries, the duties of priests and members, and how important it is to get the local people interested in Nichiren Shu. One Japanese participant said that it was very difficult to appeal to non-believers in the community. A participant from the United Kingdom mentioned how important it was for the priests to have counseling skills in order to help the local community. Another participant

from Indonesia suggested holding Japanese classes and lectures that interested the younger generation.

Rev. Tabata said, "At the temples and sanghas overseas, followers come to the temple without being coaxed by the priests. They come on their own, have tea, chat, and dance. In this way, the temple is like a community center. This way of thinking comes from the idea that the temple is not the priest's personal belonging but something that is managed and run by its members. This situation is quite different from Japan and therefore it is very important to have responsible lay leaders."

After the retreat ended successfully, an optional tour visited the site of the Komatsubara Persecution. This year, 2013, marks the 750th memorial year of the event. The tour also included pilgrimages to Tanjoji and Seichoji Temples in Chiba. (Tr. SS)



Group discussion



Closing Ceremony group photo

Calendar for December 2013 - January 2014

December 8 : Jodo-e (Enlightenment Day) commemorating the day when the Buddha attained Enlightenment.

December 31 : New Year's Eve Service; Bell ringing ceremony held throughout Japan.

January 1 : Memorial service for Nichiji Shonin, one of the six main disciples of Nichiren Shonin.

January 13 : Minobusan Opening Ceremony for the New Year at Kuonji Temple

January 21 : Memorial service for Nichiro Shonin, one of the six main disciples of Nichiren Shonin

By Rev. Kaikei Ochiai

Nichiren-ki Mono (4)

By Rev. Kanji Tamura

Visiting Scholar

Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, Harvard University

The dramatic nature of Nichiren Shonin's life (1222-1282) coupled with the faith in him as a founding leader being firmly ingrained in the commoners of Edo, the telling of Nichiren Shonin's life in kabuki was done with much frequency after the Bunka and Bunsei Eras (1804-1829). The origin of this was the work of a Ningyo Joruri playwright, Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1725), who wrote a script which was performed by the Takemoto-za of Doton-bori, Osaka, in October of 1719 (Kyoho 3). Chikamatsu was a devout believer of the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Shonin. Before the script, he had already penned scores of other plays in connection with the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Shonin (Refer to such works as Yamagami Chusen's "Seigeki: Nichiren-ki no Konjyaku," 1935: Engeki Hoso-sha). It is said that Chikamatsu even prepared himself a Buddhist name, Anoku-in Boku-i Nichi-itsu Gusoku Koji, during his lifetime.

Following this, Namiki Sosuke (1695-1751) took Chikamatsu's "Nichiren Shonin-ki," revised it, and called it "Nichiren Shonin Chigo Suzuri" (another name for Iroha Nichiren-ki). In addition, Namiki Shoza (1730-1773), Namiki Geigo, and others took Sosuke's work and revised it again, calling it "Nichiren Shonin Minori no Umi." This was a script written for Ningyo Joruri performances. Nevertheless, it was a script adopted into kabuki.

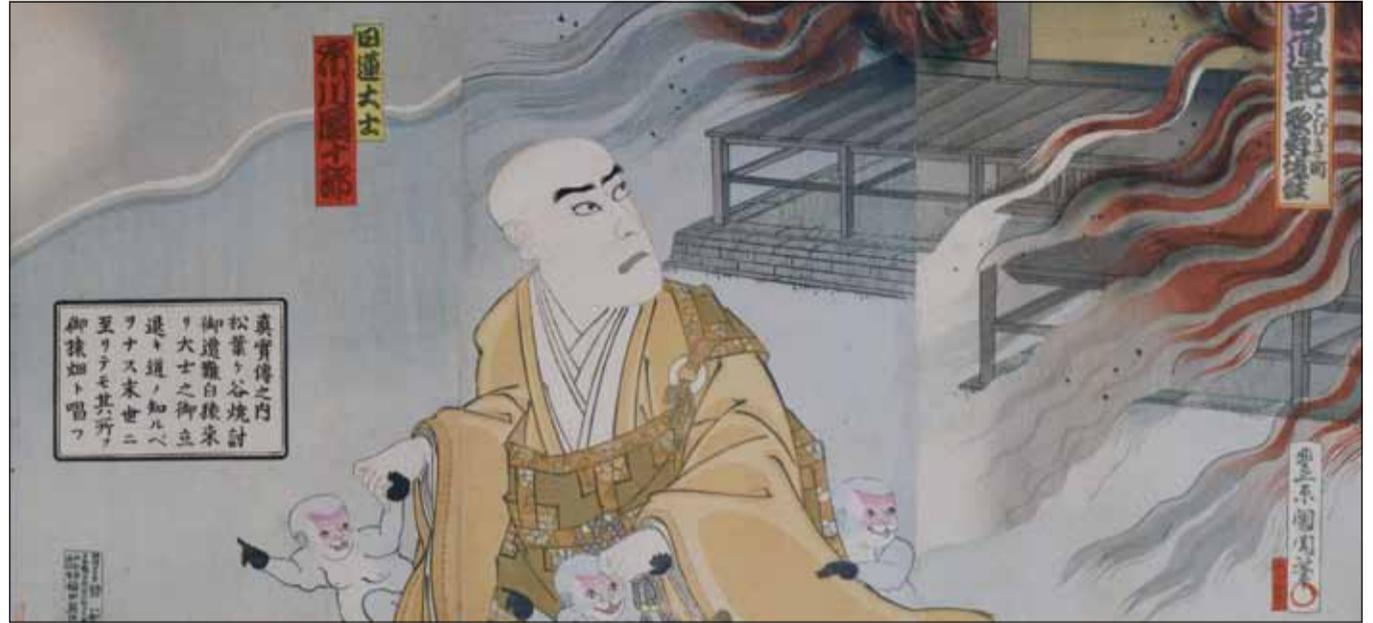
In other words, it was not until August of 1774 (Ansei 3) that a Nichiren-ki Mono was actually staged as a kabuki performance. It premiered at the Ichimura-za in Edo. After this, "Nichiren Shonin Minori no Umi" was performed in February of 1805 (Bunka 2) at Inaba Yakushi of Kyoto. Also, in September of 1816 (Bunka 13), the same work was embellished in a quasi-kabuki fashion and performed at Kawarazaki-za in Edo as "Nichiren-ki Minori no Sakura."

The Bunsei, Tenpo, and Ansei Eras saw an explosion of Nichiren-ki Mono kabuki kyogen literature and performances:

- Tsuruya Namboku IV's (1755-1829) "Kesakake-matsu Narita no Riken" which is a conglomeration of two biographies, that of Nichiren Shonin and Yuten Shonin (1637-1718), a soothsayer of the Jodo Shu who practiced at Narita-san
- Katsu Hyozo II's (1781-1831) "Mina Mini Yoriki no Mushiboshi"
- Nakamura Jusuke III's (1807-1841) "Isse Ichidai Kuriki no Daimoku"
- Segawa Jokou III's (1806-1881) "Tokini Minna Minobu no Goriyaku"
- Kawatake Mokuami's (1816-1893) "Ugai Ishi Minori no Kawa-bune"

When we enter the Meiji Period, we have the following Nichiren-ki Mono works:

- Kawatake Mokuami's "Hana Momiji Kousou Go-denki"
- Ogawa Taido (1814-1878) and Katsu Genzo III's (1844-1902) dramatization,



Nichiren-ki (Ichikawa Danjuro), Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library

- zation, "Nichiren Daiji Shinjitsuden"
 - Katsu Genzo III's "Hi-izuru Kuni Go-ji no Hata-kaze"
 - Fukuchi Ouchi's (1841-1906; also Fukuchi Genichiro) "Nichiren-ki"
 - Mori Ougai's (1862-1922) "Nichiren Shonin Tsuji Seppo"
 - Mizutani Shuyo's "Nichiren Shonin"
- Notable Nichiren-ki Mono works of the Taisho Era include the following:
- Tsubo-uchi Shoyo's (1859-1935) "Honan"
 - Tanaka Chigaku's (1861-1939) "Sei-shi-geki Sado"
 - Okamoto Kido's (1872-1939) "Izumozaki no Yujo"
 - Motoyama Tekishu's (1881-1958) "Shi-geki Nichiren Shonin"

The following Nichiren-ki Mono performances are representative of the Showa Era:

- Tanaka Enosuke's (Chigaku) "Shato Kangen"
- Fujii Masumi's (1889-1962) "Kodoku no Soko no Nichiren"
- Nakamura Kichizo's (1877-1941) "Yogen-sha Nichiren"
- Matsui Sho-o's (1870-1933) "Nichiren Shonin"
- Mushanokoji Saneatsu's (1885-1976) "Nichiren"
- Oka Kitaro's (1872-1943) "Minori no Umi Sado no Akatsuki," a partially revised version of "Nichiren Shonin Minori no Umi"

In summary, Yamagami Chusen (1880-1962) has written that, "Of all the religious plays in our country, the king of all plays is unanimously chosen to be the drama, 'Nichiren-ki.'" From ancient times, our country's sentiments concerning theater centered around the storylines of "Chushingura" and "Nichiren-ki," which always draw big audiences (See Yamagami Chusen's Seigeki: Nichiren Shonin-ki no Konjyaku, p. 1).

During and shortly after World War II, Nichiren-ki Mono was almost never performed. It was not until April of 1965 (Showa 40) that "Nichiren Shonin Minori no Umi" was performed at Toyoko Hall by Nakamura Utaemon IV (1917-2001). Here, I would like to introduce the plot of "Nichiren Shonin Minori no Umi."

(See Meisaku Kabuki Zen-shu, Vol. 6, pp. 97-113, 1971: Tokyo Sogen-sha; or Nichiren Shonin Minori no Umi: Ni-

hokoku Gikyoku-shu #10, pp. 56-69, 1985: Kokuritsu Gekijo, Geino Chosashitsu). Nichiren Shonin Minori no Umi is composed of five phases: ordination, Izu Persecution, Tatsunokuchi Persecution, entrance to Mount Minobu, and expiration at Ikegami.

Let us begin with a passage from Takemoto's preface of the work:

Takemoto: "The great leader of the period of the latter law, our Founder, the Bodhisattva Nichiren is a manifestation of the original bodhisattva, Jogyo. His father dreamt that he would be bestowed a child by Kokuzo (Akasagarbha) Bodhisattva. His mother had a dream where she stood upon the peak of Mount Fuji and was endowed with the sun, whereupon she became pregnant. He was born on February 16, of the first year of the Jo Period, a Mizu-no-e-uma year, in Kominato, of Ichikawa-mura, Nagasa-gun, Boshu. He finished his studies of various schools of thought. He was 32 years old when on the 8th day of late spring, he faced the sun and chanted, "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo" for the first time, to widely spread the teachings of the Buddha to lands afar in this age of

the emperor. This teaching is (one for which we are) so thankful" (Nichiren Shonin Minori no Umi: Nihonkoku Gikyoku-shu #10, p. 13).

Now, let us look at the third section. Here we find the tragedy of the family and ukai (cormorant fishing) fisherman, Kansaku, and the declaration of entering the priesthood by Nichizo. This program expands on the Noh (Yokyoku) version, "Ukai", by providing greater details. The Ukai is originally the work by Enami Saemon-goro, a Sarugaku (a type of entertainment originating from the Heian Period, with mimicry and telling of jokes) performer from Settsu. The Ukai would be improved upon by the accomplished Noh performer, Zeami. There is no mention of Nichiren Shonin's name in the Ukai, nevertheless it is clearly apparent that it alludes to Nichiren Shonin (refer to Shin-nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei, Vol. 57, Yokyoku No. 100, 1998: Iwanami Shoten, pp. 244-249).

In the next issue we will list instances within "Nichiren Shonin Minori no Umi" that refer to Nichiren Shonin.

(to be continued)

Rev. Kanno Preaches (27)



**"At a quiet place,
Devote to your own practice
And stay unperturbed as Mt. Sumeru."
(Lotus, Sutra, Chapter XIV: Peaceful Practices)**

Quiet Place

If you wish to attain great peace of mind like that of Buddha Sakyamuni, choose a quiet place to relax your body and heart, then regulate your body, breath, and mind.

Once you start this practice, you should continue it with a strong will, and never give it up. You should remain unshaken as Mt. Sumeru, the world's highest rocky mountain rising up in the center of the world as found in the olden Indian cosmology.

A "quiet place" to do practice is not necessarily located deep in the mountains. The place in front of your family altar can be regarded as a holy place for the practice, even if it is a small and simple altar placed on a chest.

The practice does not necessarily mean "splashing water over your head" or other austere practices. All we need to do is sit in front of the family altar relaxing the body and mind. Exhale noxious vapor and inhale the spirit of Buddha's compassion.

When we start chanting Odaimoku, we realize we are chanting Odaimoku in harmony with Buddha. This is "Odaimoku chanting Samadhi," the gateway to reach the mind of great peace. Let us forge ahead to the gateway!

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

Nichiren Shonin's Shokutaku (2) Komatsubara Persecution

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph.D.

In C.E. 1264, Nichiren Shonin received word of the ill health of his mother. Worried about her condition, he began a trip home to Kominato accompanied by his disciples. Because of the prayers he conducted for her benefit, her life was extended by four years.

In the middle of the ninth month, Nichiren Shonin arrived at Hanabusa Rengeji Temple in the present-day Kamogawa City, and contacted Dozenbo, his teacher at Seichoji Temple. The aged Dozenbo overcame difficulties and traveled from Kominato. He was overjoyed to see Nichiren Shonin. It is said that he visited on the 14th day of the eleventh month, after the Komatsubara persecution.

Tojo Kagenobu, a local steward, became enraged when he learned that Nichiren Shonin was staying nearby at Rengeji Temple. He was a strong believer of Amitabha Buddha. Since 1253, when Nichiren Shonin first promulgated his faith in the Lotus Sutra, criticizing the worship of Amitabha Buddha, Steward Tojo Kagenobu thought ill of Nichiren Shonin. Also when Nichiren Shonin's benefactor, Ryokenoama, a female follower, and Tojo Kagenobu were in a dispute over their lands, Ryokenoama prevailed and kept her property. Because of this matter, Tojo Kagenobu had even greater animosity

towards Nichiren Shonin.

At about 5 o'clock in the evening, on the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1264, Nichiren Shonin and about ten of his disciples left the Rengeji Temple for the castle of Lord Kudo Yoshitaka, one of Nichiren Shonin's leading followers. Midway through the trip, the party was ambushed by Steward Tojo Kagenobu and his one hundred or so soldiers. Nichiren Shonin's disciple, Kyoninbo, was killed immediately. Hearing of this attack, Lord Kudo Yoshitaka rushed to the scene without his armor and was killed by Tojo's soldiers. Nichiren Shonin himself was threatened, but survived Tojo's attack with a only cut on his forehead from a sword. Eventually the soldiers of Lord Kudo arrived to do battle and Tojo Kagenobu fell off his horse, Nichiren Shonin and his disciples were then able to escape.

This depiction shows the scene of the Komatsubara Persecution. This work is preserved at Kyoninji Temple in present-day Chiba Prefecture. Kyoninji Temple was built to commemorate the virtue of Kyoninbo and Lord Kudo Yoshitaka. This year, 2013, is the 750th memorial of the Komatsubara Persecution.

On the first month in 1281, Uenoama-kozen, one of Nichiren Shonin's female followers, presented one bottle of sake, ten metal vessels for sake, one hundred



Komatsubara Persecution, Nichiren Shonin Chugasan, preserved at Kyoninji Temple, Chiba Prefecture

steamed rice cakes, one water bucket of malt syrup, one basket of tangerines, and ten strings of sun-dried persimmons which were stabbed in the spit, as a memorial service for her child. Her son, Shichirogoro, died when he was only sixteen years old. Nichiren Shonin wrote of his recollection that Shichirogoro was a wonderful young man. Nichiren Shonin wept along with the mother who lost her child. The sake and the malt syrup were good medicine for digestion in the Kamakura Period. The rice cake is an important part of the New Year's celebration in Japan.
(to be continued)



Nichiren Shonin's meals in New Year
Top L-R tangerine and dried persimmons
Center: steamed mochi (rice cake)
Lower L-R mizuame (thick malt syrup) and sake (rice wine)

Nichiren Shu Buddhist Temple of UK



Revs. Tsukamoto & Kanjin Cederman with attendees

By Rev. Kanto Tsukamoto

On the 25th and 26th of August, 2013, we held a Seminar at our temple. Rev. Kanjin Cederman from Seattle, U.S.A. was our guest speaker. There were eight people in attendance and our seminar focused on the story and message of the Lotus Sutra. Upon conclusion of our seminar the attendees felt satisfied and temple's reputation grew stronger. I would like to share the messages by summarizing the lectures.

It is often said after reading the Lotus Sutra, "I don't understand what the Lotus Sutra says"; and, "I became sleepy." The reason for these facts is because the Lotus Sutra originated from ancient Indian expressions and terminology of Buddhism. However, when you continue to repeatedly read the Lotus Sutra you will be able to understand the story, meaning of each word and the messages. The Buddha said, "No question will be left unresolved." Then you will be overwhelmed

by the splendor of the teaching.

There were three unresolved matters in Buddhism before expounding the Lotus Sutra. The matters were three categorized people who could not attain Enlightenment. They were Shomon and Engaku, women and other evil people. However, in Chapter 12 in the Lotus Sutra, those matters were resolved completely and the teaching to save people became the perfect teaching. This is the Lotus Sutra.

The next concern was, who would take over such wonderful teachings in the future? The Buddha entrusted the mission to Bodhisattvas who emerged from the earth. He chose them because they came from under the earth. This means they were born in this earth and are the native to it. They are the same as us who live in the declining latter age of the Dharma. Nichiren Shonin was aware of this. He also realized he was one of the four leaders of the emerged Bodhisattvas. Nichiren Shonin said, "If I am counted as one of the

Bodhisattvas that emerged from the earth, then my disciples and followers too are among the rank of those Bodhisattvas from the earth."

In a word, people living today who believe in the Lotus Sutra were previous Bodhisattvas who emerged from the earth. We have the mission to support and help suffering people with the Lotus Sutra. Also the Sutra says, "You will see many difficulties." Actually, to help people is not so easy; it requires great patience to persevere in this mission. Finally, Bodhisattvas, Deities and Guardians vowed to protect from difficulties, us who are believers of the Lotus Sutra. So we are protected by them and we will be able to attain Enlightenment throughout a life of being a Bodhisattva.

Regarding "Enlightenment," we have a strong image of Sakyamuni Buddha meditating under the Bodhi Tree. However, the Buddha achieved Enlightenment by Himself without any help, although He met many interruptions by devils. He is a special person. We cannot achieve such Enlightenment like the Buddha. However, if we have special help and support, the situation will be different. In the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha assured to help and guide us to achieve Enlightenment. Also, Bodhisattvas, Deities, and Guardians vowed to protect us from interruptions. Our way of Enlightenment is not a way to enter into an isolated forest or mountain and meditate alone.

What is our way to achieve Enlightenment in the Lotus Sutra? Simply, by

being a Bodhisattva, We can attain Enlightenment throughout the activities of a Bodhisattva, such as helping and supporting suffering people. The initial teaching of the Buddha "Four Noble Truths and the Eight Fold Path" for Shomon, mainly teaches us to improve our mind and behavior. The Buddha's later years' teaching "Six Paramitas," the precepts for Bodhisattva, shows that "almsgiving" to others comes first. In short, Enlightenment can be achieved through association with others, offering help, support and forgiveness and entering into Enlightenment-hood together.

Moreover the idea of the Lotus Sutra shows Enlightenment not only to all living beings but also for the earth to be the pure land of this world. Please imagine filling this world with Bodhisattvas, almsgivers who expect nothing in return. We will be able to construct a "Pure Land" on this earth. Therefore, the Sutra always shows the peaceful way, so there are no words or expressions of violence. The first step of Enlightenment begins with almsgiving rather than receiving.

Finally, Chapter 28 shows that a Bodhisattva keeps in their mind the following four steps:

1. To secure the protection of the Buddha;
 2. Plant the roots of virtue;
 3. Reach the stage of steadiness (in proceeding to Enlightenment);
 4. Resolve to save all living beings.
- These are important messages in the Lotus Sutra.

Temple Events

The Babasaheb Ambedkar Culture and Research Center Inaugurated in India

By Rev. Shingyo Imai

Approximately one hundred thousand people gathered on October 13, 2013, at the Dragon Palace Temple in Kamptee, Maharashtra, India, to celebrate the 57th anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism on October 14, 1956, along with the inauguration ceremony of the Dr. Ambedkar Culture and Research Center. The Center was newly built on the site of the Dragon Palace Temple by the Ogawa Society led by Ms. Sulekha Kumbhare who is now a strong political leader in that area.

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar composed the present constitution of India on request from Mahatma Gandhi. Dr. Ambedkar, who strongly campaigned to abolish the caste system in India, believed that Buddhism was the only way for the "Untouchables" to gain equality. He converted himself into a Buddhist on October 13, 1956, at Deekshabhoomi, Nagpur. He received the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts from a Buddhist monk in the traditional manner, with six hundred

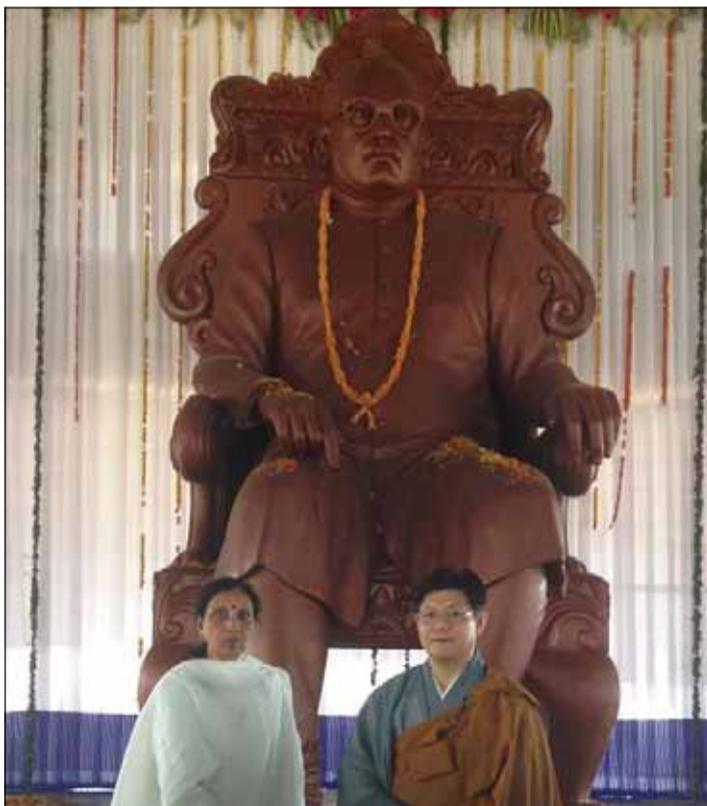
thousand people who respected him, gathered together at the conversion ceremony.

The 57th anniversary and inauguration ceremony began at around noon with the chanting of the Buddha Vandana and Odaimoku, Namu Myoho Renge Kyo, led by Ms. Kumbhare. The Dragon Palace Temple was filled with thousands of people.

It has been 57 years since Dr. Ambedkar's conversion ceremony took place. However, because Dr. Ambedkar died two months after the conversion, it now seems that Indian Buddhists have not found the right way to follow. Dr. Ambedkar did leave behind his writing entitled, "Buddha and His Dharma."

After a long time of confusion, the Dragon Palace Temple was established in 1999 and people have been chanting the Buddha Vandana and Namu Myoho Renge Kyo every day there.

It may be that Nichiren Shu has become the Savior of Indian Buddhism and that this was the mission the Eternal Buddha has given Nichiren Shu.



Ms. Kumbhare and Rev. Imai in front of Dr. Ambedkar's statue

Honolulu Myohoji

By Rev. Takamasa Yamamura



Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett

The Honolulu Myohoji's Oeshiki service was held on Sunday, October 20. It was officiated by Bishop Chishin Hirai of the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii and assisted by Rev. Takamasa Yamamura, Rev. Eiijo Ikenaga, and Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett who were invited for the service.

Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett of the Nichiren Buddhist Sangha of Texas was the guest speaker at

the service. Rev. Caine-Barrett is the first African-American woman to be ordained in the Nichiren Shu tradition. She has been engaged in spreading the Dharma behind bars at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), as well as supporting the healing of emotional issues of military service with the Vets Journey Home organization. She has also been engaged in facilitating training and dialogue

on diversity and cross-cultural conflict resolution.

Rev. Caine-Barrett talked about how she came to choose Nichiren Buddhism and shared some wonderful stories of her Buddhist practice.

The day also commemorated the 30th Anniversary of the Honolulu Myohoji Japanese Cultural Center. We had an honored guest, the Consul General of Japan, Mr. Toyoei Shigeeda, who attended this event. Approximately 100 other people came to Honolulu Myohoji to celebrate our 30th anniversary.

There was a nice luncheon in the social hall afterwards. The entertainment included a taiko concert by Kenny Endo and his drummers. Mr. Endo is one of the leading artists in contemporary percussion and rhythm and has been continuing to pave new paths in the Japanese style taiko for the past 35 years.

On Monday Oct 21st, Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett led several of us in a vigorous Shodaigyo practice.

Nichiren Buddhist Sangha of Greater New England

By Christine Tello-Lorenz

Member of the Sangha

Members of the New England Sangha enjoyed another fall season full of temples activities. We had the pleasure of having Rev. Kanjo Ueda stay with us for over a month from Kyoto, Japan, as part of the Nichiren Shu Homestay Program. Kanjo Shonin delivered services, worked on his English conversational skills, and got a taste of what it's like spreading the dharma in the US. When asked about his experience, he replied...

"Upon arriving in Boston, I found myself wrapped in the beauty of autumn's colorful foliage. I came to study temple practice in the US and found many differences from how we work in Japan. Everyone participates in Sunday service and there is much socializing after service where temple members ask questions about Buddhism and openly ask for personal consultation. I would like to see this happen in our services in Japan."

Sangha members learned much about practicing Buddhism from Kanjo Shonin and were very grateful for his time with us.

Ryuoh Shonin continues to offer weekly services and educational events to help individuals develop their practice. In November, he began weekly Japanese language practice sessions for those interested in strengthening their skills and preparing for the Level N5 Japanese Language Proficiency Test. He and sangha members also created short video tutorial of a simple home service in English for new members who need assistance practicing at home. Viewers can watch this video online at the temple website.

In October, Ryuoh Shonin flew to Myokenji in Houston, TX, for the US annual Dharma Conference where temple members deepened their knowledge of Buddhism. Sangha members also launched the first edition of our new monthly electronic newsletter. Thanks to lay leader, Elizabeth Drewello for taking this on. Contact Ryuoh Shonin if you want to be on the emailing list. Elizabeth also attended the Lay Leader program in Japan, where she and others from around the world immersed themselves in temple

practice and Japanese culture at Mt. Minobu, Seichoji, and Tanjoji in Chiba.

We also continue to look for local partnership opportunities that increase awareness of the temple throughout New England. Ryuoh Shonin co-organized the annual interfaith Thanksgiving Service and the annual genocide commemorative service in partnership with our local interfaith organization. Sangha members also attended a public lantern floating ceremony in Newburyport, MA., held by the Ovarian Cancer Society to raise awareness of this disease and raise money for cancer research. We were thrilled when Ryuoh Shonin was asked to speak at next year's ceremony, where hundreds of families are expected to attend. Sangha members also attended a public meditation in Boston hosted by the Trinity Church, and led by the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh. We hope that our presence at regional events helps to grow awareness of Nichiren Shu and increase membership at the temple.

Nichiren Shu News

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