

# Nichiren Shu News

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(1)

## Archbishop's New Year Greeting 'Work Hard to Let Our Buddha Nature Shine'

By Archbishop Nichiko Fujii

At the outset of 2004, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for sharing with you the joy of the new year. Nichiren Shonin states in Kanjinhonzon-sho (A Treatise Revealing the Spiritual Contemplation and the Most Venerable One), "It is difficult to see fire in a rock and flowers in wood. However, it is not totally impossible to believe that because rocks spark when struck together and a tree blooms in spring."

As you know, the drooping cherries of the Kuon-ji Temple on Mt. Minobu, where Nichiren Shonin's soul remains forever, are certainly old. But when spring comes, they begin to bud with color. Then, as soon as the flowers begin to bloom, they quickly are in full bloom with the branches almost reaching the ground. We are always overpowered with their beauty.

Because we are ordinary people, it seems hard to believe that each of us has the realm of Buddhas in mind. The fact is, however, we just forget that we all have the Buddha-nature that the Buddha bestowed upon us in the eternal past. We usually possess lots of filth that covers the Buddha-nature. Therefore, we have to work

hard for the Buddha-nature inside us to shine.

As the Never-Despising Bodhisattva taught us by bowing to people, our Buddha-nature comes out after receiving the seed to grow.

We are given the odaimoku, the seed for enlightenment, thanks to our Founder, Nichiren Shonin, who has experienced four major persecutions and numerous minor ones.

We, Nichiren Buddhists, are fortunate to have had a rare opportunity to celebrate the 750th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Nichiren Shu Order, to see priests and lay members together hold the commemorative services and carry out projects in many places – all to show our joy.

The General Movement for Spreading the Odaimoku, which started in 1985 through 2002, was for all Nichiren Buddhists to take the religious steps toward the 750th anniversary of the establishment of the Nichiren Shu Order. These steps, leading toward the Lotus Sutra, are, as our Founder wished, to make all living beings of all the lands enlightened.

This is the 96th new year for me. I really appreciate the opportunity to serve on Mt. Minobu. This is, I think,



Archbishop Nichiko Fujii

because the Buddha and Nichiren Shonin led me to do so, and people around me have helped me in many ways. Furthermore, everyday I am still impressed to find many new lives vividly coming up.

However, I, who have seen 4 eras of Meiji, Taisho, Showa, and Heisei, personally feel that the Japanese people have been so busy that they have lost something important for human beings – especially morals in

public and a feeling of gratitude are declining, both of which the Japanese had once taken much pride in.

It is our duty to tell the next generation through our body, mouth, and heart that we are all moved by the beauty of great nature when we feel that we are made alive. We should show appreciation and repay the obligation, knowing that all living beings are precious.

Above all, we as followers of Nichiren Shonin have to spread the odaimoku, which is the essence of the Buddha, because we are the messengers of the Sakyamuni Buddha, the True Teaching (the Lotus Sutra), and Nichiren Shonin.

At the start of the year I would like all of you to remember that the seed of Namu-Myoho-Renge-kyo that Nichiren Shonin kindly sowed in us was the beginning of his Bodhisattava practice.

By the year of the 800th anniversary since our Founder was born at Awa-Kominato, Chiba Prefecture, I wish that all over the world there will be full of wonderful people who are reborn by the teaching of the Lotus Sutra, with the concerted effort of all Nichiren Buddhists, the clergy as well as lay persons.

Namu Myoho Renge kyo

## Statement of the Nichiren Shu Order of Buddhism Praying for Peace in Iraq

By Rev. Tansei Iwama, Chief Administrator  
Nichiren Shu Order of Buddhism

On the holy day of Enlightenment of Sakyamuni Buddha, December 8, 2003



Rev. Tansei Iwama

Today, the attention of people in the world as well as in Japan is focused on Iraq. The situation in Iraq has bogged down. Weapons of mass destruction, the sole justification of the War on Iraq declared in disregard of the Charter of the United Nations

and International Laws, has not been found. In addition, precious human lives are being lost every day including two Japanese diplomats.

At the brink of the war in March, 2003, we in the name of the Nichiren Shu Order made a statement in opposition to the war declaring, "The war ruins the land, sacrifices a number of precious human lives and gives rise to endless war and terrorism in retaliation." The current situation in Iraq seems exactly as we predicted.

Reflecting on World War II, which caused the people in the whole world to suffer from massacres and destruction, we have continued to pray for world peace and developed World Peace by Establishing Righteousness Movement ever since the end of World War II. We cannot accept a war for any reason, not to speak of our deep fear and resentment toward the use of additional military pressure to deal with the situation caused by the war.

Our Founder, Nichiren Shonin, submitted the "Treatise Spreading Peace Throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma" and

showed the way to found a righteous religion and secure peace in the nation to the military government of his time. Regarding what Japan is going to do in Iraq, we cannot help but strongly doubt whether it will be for the cause of peace in the world.

The Nichiren Shu Order which adheres to its basic principle of establishing world peace based on the Lotus Sutra, proposes the way to

contribute to the world with the Buddhist value judgement inherited since the time of Prince Shotoku. Japan should take the position to respect and worship the lives of all people in all countries without using military power. Let us widen the call for sincere prayer for peaceful Iraq, so that Iraqis all will restore peace without war and life with safety and comfort as soon as possible.

## The Year of the Monkey

This year, 2004, is the year of the monkey according to the traditional Chinese calendar. From the writings of Nichiren Shonin we can imagine that many monkeys lived on Mt. Minobu. He said that he could hear the monkeys scream in the mountain and he could see where the monkeys had eaten the vegetation.

In Japan a group of three monkeys are used to tell the people not to see, say or hear except for what is really necessary. One of the three monkeys puts its hands over its eyes, another on its mouth, and the last one on its ears. The one who puts its hands over its eyes is called Mizaru, a monkey who does not see. The one who puts its hands over its mouth is called Iwazaru, a monkey who does not say. The last one who puts its hands over its ears is called Kikazaru, a monkey who



A 'koshin-to,' stone monument of folk belief, bears 'three monkeys.' The belief originated in China and spread throughout Japan during the Edo period. The monument is found all over Japan

does not hear.

A legend says that a white monkey saved the life of Nichiren when the saint was attacked by a mob at his residence in Kamakura. When he was attacked at Matsubagayatsu, a white monkey appeared before Nichiren and led him to safety so he could escape his enemies. (by Noriko Nonomura)



# 'Seeing Is Better Than Saying'

Led by Rev. Myosho Obata, 22 members of the Nichirenshu Malaysia visited Japan from October 14 to 20, 2003, for six days, visiting Minobusan and other holy sites of Nichiren Daishonin. Here is an excerpt from the report by Tan Kim Teik, Penang, Malaysia

*By Tan Kim Teik,  
Penang, Malaysia*

We arrived at Narita International Airport at around 5:30 p.m. local time after a 7-hour flight on October 11. We were met and welcomed warmly by Rev. Kanshin Mochida. My immediate feeling was like coming home although I had visited Taisekiji more than six times. When I was with Nichiren Shoshu. Surprisingly, I did not have such emotions before.

On the second day, we visited Honkyuji. We gained our first experience of beating drums and chanting Odaimoku while marching along the street to the temple.

The temple is not big but very unique. After chanting, the Lotus Sutra and Odaimoku, we had a wonderful Japanese lunch provided by Mrs. Yumiko Mochida, wife of Rev. Kanshin Mochida. Then we left for Ikegami Hommonji to attend the Oeshiki ceremony (Service on anniversary of Nichiren Shonin's death). We reached Hommonji around 4:30 p.m. and we had blessings at the temple. The continuous blessing lasted for the whole day.

The entire compound and stairway and the streets were crowded with people. The parade started at 6 p.m. I estimated there were more than 30 participating teams in the parade. Each team represented a temple. They carried pagodas, decorated with flowers and lights, beat drums, chanted Odaimoku and danced along the street to Hommonji which were enjoyed by the huge crowd on both sides of the street. I hope we will be able to have the chance to participate in the parade and represent Malaysia and perform in the Malaysian style.

On the morning of the third day, we departed for Mt. Minobu. On the way, we visited Hommonji, Fujinomiya City, at around 2 p.m. This temple was owned by Nikko Shonin who died and was buried here. He never left Nichiren Shu denomination in his entire life. We had our first open curtain ceremony here and listened to a sermon by the temple head minister. There was a very heavy shower and storm but it did not stop us paying our respect at Nikko Shonin's grave. A member

told me that she felt the shower was like Nikko Shonin's tears because he was sad as we did not pay him a visit and respect although we had been there numerous times when we visited Taisekeji. (Then, we were still attached to SGI and Nichiren Shoshu.) We reached Shimobe Hotel at 3:30 p.m. We immediately rushed to Minobusan Kuonji by coach after check in. It took about 20 minutes to Sammon of Kuonji. The Sammon is huge. Behind the Sammon is "Bodaitei." "Bodai" means enlightenment and "tei" means stair. The "Bodaitei" means the stairway to enlightenment. There are 287 steps and each step is broad and high and very slippery. This symbolizes that the enlightening is not easy. On each step, we chanted Odaimoku and finally eight of us successfully reached Kuonji by "Bodaitei" way and returned the same way for a completed round.

We woke up at 4:30 a.m. in the morning and joined the morning service at Kuonji. As usual, we beat drums, chanted Odaimoku while marching into the temple. After finishing breakfast back at the hotel, we visited Kuonji again to receive our open curtain ceremony and visited Soshido, "Founder's Memorial Hall" where some Dai-Mandara and Nichiren Shonin's articles were displayed.

On the way to the hotel, we also visited the Shishinkaku on the mountain top by cable car, Sobyō (Founder's Mausoleum), and Jotakuji.

On the fifth day, we returned to Tokyo to attend the grand banquet. On this occasion, Rev. Anjoh Asahina presented a paper on the story of "Carving a Statue of St. Nichiren for Penang Buddhist Association." The banquet lasted until 9:30 p.m. Everyone was very joyful and impressed. Some of the members shed tears. We also received a lot of encouragement and blessing from the ministers.

On the sixth day, we visited Tanjoji and Seichoji. We chose to cross the Tokyo Bay by tunnel and bridge. We were told that the undersea tunnel is nine kilometers long and the bridge 18 kilometers in length.

We reached Tanjoji at around 11 a.m. Again, we beat drums and chanted Odaimoku while marching



The Malaysian group visits the Hommonji Temple in heavy shower



Odaimoku chanting in the Main Hall of the Hommonji



Rev. Obata and the Malaysian group pose for memorial photo at Hommonji

to the temple. We had the open curtain ceremony there.

Seichoji was buried on top of the mountain. We reached the temple at around 3:30 p.m.. We repeated the drum beating and Odaimoku chanting while marching to the temple. We had an open curtain ceremony and also prayers to Koku-Zo-Bosatsu Bodhisattva to gain wisdom.

On the seventh day, we woke up at 4 a.m. We started our journey to sunrise wood with about 30 priests. They beat drums and chanted Odaimoku while marching to sunrise wood. The journey took 15 minutes. We chanted the Lotus Sutra and Odaimoku on top of the mountain similar to what Nichiren Shonin had done April 28, 1253. The sunrays broke through the heavy clouds and beamed throughout the earth and mountains. The scene was so wonderful and the weather was cold. We enjoyed the fresh air for more than an hour.

After breakfast in the canteen, we took the coach to Narita Airport. When we reached the airport at 11 a.m. Rev. Kanshin Mochida stayed back until we had checked in. We bid farewell to Rev. Mochida and thanked him. It was impossible to have such a wonderful trip without his arrangement and preparation. We also would like to extend our appreciation to our resident priest Rev. Myosho Obata. She had put in a lot of effort in looking after us and donated 15 drums and 24 wagesa, making this trip even more meaningful.

These seven days had enriched our view and knowledge of Nichiren Buddhism and how these temples are associated with Nichiren Shonin and I believe with these experiences, we are able to do better in our missionary work in Malaysia. I want to quote our member, Mr. Ong Chooi Huat, "Seeing is better than saying" in concluding my article.



The Malaysian group was served with [wonderful] Japanese lunch prepared by Mrs. Rev. Kanshin Mochida (extreme left in front) at the Honkyuji Temple



# The Legend of Nichiren Shonin (7)

The accurate biography of Nichiren can be perceived through his essays and letters and the ancient documents. But there are many dramatic legends, too. So, let us think about various legends in this paper.

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph. D

## From Kyoto to Nara and Mt. Koya

The activities of Rencho (Nichiren Shonin) in Kyoto as a student is not known clearly as a historical fact. But his action is written delicately in the legend. A legend says that a large-scale war occurred in Kamakura at about the time when Nichiren left the dormitory of the Onjoji Temple and went to Kyoto by way of Otsu.

There was actually a battle between the Hojo and Miura clans in 1247. The Miura clan was influential in Eastern Honshu and was also powerful in Kamakura through marriage relations with leading figures of the Kamakura shogunate. When the power struggle began among the Miura and other clans, Shogunal Regent Hojo Tokiyori decided to fight against the Miuras. In the battle fought in Kamakura, the Miura clan was defeated and destroyed. As a result, the authoritarian system of government by the Hojo clan was established.

Hearing the news about this war, Rencho felt that the world fell into disorder because the Buddhist dharma got confused. With such feeling of a crisis, he went around the temples in Nara studying the six schools of Buddhism as practiced in various temples of Nara. He was too busy studying in Nara to visit historical sites. While studying in Nara, Rencho one day went to Sakai (present Osaka Prefecture) to meet an acquaintance.



Rev. Gyokai Sekido

On the way he met a samurai named Egawa. Impressed by the eagerness of Rencho to study, Mr. Egawa invited him to his house. Because that day happened to be the memorial day for one of Mr. Egawa's ancestors, Rencho recited a sutra and delivered a sermon. He spoke about "a rat of days" and "a rat of months." Chased by a tiger in a wild field, a man fell over a rugged cliff. While falling, he grasped a bunch of grass to stop the plunge into a rapid stream at the bottom. Looking down, he saw crocodiles and sharks waiting for him. Looking up, he saw a terrible tiger above the cliff. Unable to climb up or down, he was in a great quandary. Then two rats appeared and began to eat the grass that he was holding on to.

In this story, the tiger stands for the evil deeds one committed in one's previous existence, and the rapid stream represents hell. A human being suffers from the evil deeds committed in his previous life, and is afraid to go to hell. Rencho preached that as days and months pass without a mistake, it is important to believe in the Buddhist dharma without spending each day uselessly.

Mr. Egawa and his family members who listened to this sermon were awakened to aspiration to Buddhahood. In 1261, when Nichiren Shonin was banished to Izu Province (present day Shizuoka Prefecture), Mr. Egawa was in Nirayama (Shizuoka Prefecture), so they met again as a priest and his disciple.



Photo shows the reverberatory furnace built by Egawa Tarozaemon (1801-55), presumably a descendant of Mr. Egawa to whom Rencho delivered a sermon of 'A rat of days, and a rat of months.' Many cannons were cast in this furnace for defense of Japan against foreign forces. It is designated a 'National Historic Site,' along with the Egawa residence, both located in Nirayama, Shizuoka Prefecture. A wooden plate, on which Nichiren Shonin wrote the Odaimoku, is said to have been installed under the roof of the residence.

# 15 New Members Receive Initiation in Jakarta

By Ang Tiang Soon  
Nichiren Shu Malaysia

Rev. Myosho Obata, minister of the Nichiren Shu Malaysia, visited Indonesia from September 25 to 28. She was accompanied by five Malaysian members, including myself.

During her three-day stay in Indonesia, she visited a small island which is an hour speed boat ride off Jakarta, where Indonesian believers plan to construct a small temple, and performed an initiation ceremony (gojukai) for 15 new members in Jakarta.



Ang Tiang Soon

The island, three acres wide, is owned by Mr. Anton and named "Sado Island" after the island where Nichiren Shonin spent two years and sixth months in exile. Indonesian believers intend to use the island as a retreat temple.

The initiation ceremony was held at Jakarta on September 27. In this ceremony 15 new members received initiation and three received the Gohonzon.

During the ceremony, Yovin Dainty, whom we deem to be a bodhisattva, dedicated two poems, one to Rev. Obata and the other to the Malaysian believers. The following are the poems.

### Peace

Disaster comes because of self-centeredness.  
People always want to dominate the world.  
World will be peaceful if we can live together  
Without distinguishing one from another,  
Live with honor and avoid self-centeredness



Gangyo at Sado Island

For the sake of world peace.

We must learn to respect people without seeing the differences among us

In order to create peace in the world, there should be no more quarrels, riots

That will bring distress for humans.  
Don't plunder people's freedom only for your own happiness.

Everyone has the right to feel freedom  
Without feeling frightened and threatened.

Learn to avoid selfishness,  
Start from now to make the world peaceful.

(dedicated to the Malaysian believers)



Temple Location

### Compassion

Friends, thanks for your friendship.  
It's really sweet and has impressed me.

Let's have compassionate hearts.  
Spread our compassionate hearts.  
Words and attitude which are full of compassion

Exceed millions of jewels.  
Actually, we could feel happiness  
If our hearts are full of compassion

Like the sun that gives warmth and light to the world.

**Correction:** the editor apologizes for mistakenly carrying the photo of Mr. Ang Tiang Soon on the Page 3 of the December 1, 2003 issue.



Gangyo at Jakarta temple



**LOS ANGELES**

**Setsubun and Hoshimatsuri**

The festival of the Planets and the Stars, and Setsubun will be held on Sunday, February 1, at 10 a.m. During the ceremony those born in the year of the monkey will throw beans at the congregation to chase away the evil spirits in our minds. They will shout, "Fukuwa uchi! Oniwa soto!," which means; Good fortune in! Devils out! Those born in the years 1908, 1920, 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, and 2004 are all monkeys. These people should arrive half an hour before the service in order to prepare for the ceremony.

Anyone who wishes to have an amulet for the New Year, please write your name and the names and birthdays of all your immediate family. A special application form will be mailed to you later.

**Buddha's Nirvana and Nichiren's Birthday**

The temple will hold Sakyamuni Buddha's Great Nirvana (death) and Nichiren's birthday services on Sunday, February 15, at 10:30 a.m. This is a commemorative service for the historical Buddha's death. Let us uphold the teachings of the Buddha.

The temple will also celebrate Nichiren Daishonin's birthday and pledge to follow his teachings of the Lotus Sutra and to chant the Odaimoku, "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo." Nichiren was born on February 16, 1222.

Refreshments and food will be served after the service. It is said that the food that will be served was Nichiren's favorite.

**Perpetual Placing of the Urns**

The construction of the Koichi and Toyo Nerio Hall will hopefully begin early this year.

In the hall will be a room for the placing of urns. The urns may be kept there forever. You may reserve a section (12"x12"x14") with a donation of \$1,500. If you cannot make a decision now, you may do so later, however the price may increase due to possible requirements



**Church Events**

By Sandra Seki

**Nichiren Mission of Hawaii**

**Memorial Service**

By Rev. Chishin Hirai

A memorial service at the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii is held for the spirit of the deceased so that the deceased may rest in peace in the land of the Buddha. Another function of this service is to enable the deceased to accumulate virtuous deeds which he or she was not able to accumulate sufficiently throughout his or her lifetime. In other words a memorial service is a ceremony by which the surviving family members accumulate and send virtuous deeds to the deceased.

When one considers holding a memorial service for someone, first one needs to make an appointment with the temple. The best day to hold this service would be on the so called "memorial day" of the deceased. The second best day would be the day before the memorial day, and the third option would be on a day after the memorial day.

The first service of the day takes place at 9 a.m. and lasts about 40 minutes. The last service of the day takes place at 6 p.m. Please try to be in the temple at least 10 minutes before the service. The main entrance doors will be opened and the lights turned on about half an hour before the appointed time. Among other things, you will need to bring the following items: oihai, flowers, offerings, juzu, and envelopes for the ofuse.

As you enter from the main entrance, bow once at the entrance before you take a seat. Take the flowers and put them into one of the vases that can be found under the sink in the flower arranging room and place the vase on the table with the oihai and other offerings. Then take a seat in the pews and with a copy of the green binder entitled "Dharma" in hand, wait for the service to start. The surviving spouse, children, and parent should sit in the first pew, with relatives in the second pew and friends in the third pew. Please be sure to turn off all cellular phones and pagers. Chant the sutra and the Odaimoku together with the minister and be sure to chant loudly!

At the appropriate time, the minister will give you the sign to begin offering incense or "shoko." The proper way to offer incense is: first approach the incense box and stand in front of it, and then bow with "gassho," then, with your thumb and index finger, take a pinch of the powder incense and raise the same hand to the front of your forehead, concentrating your prayers into the incense,

lower your hand and release the incense gently over the burning charcoal; do not dust off the incense that may be left on your fingers on the charcoal; usually, this is repeated three times, however, if there are many people at the service, it is all right to offer the incense only once. When you are done, bow again and exit through the main entrance.

What you should bring to the service is: the Oihai, which is the most important thing at the memorial service. A memorial service without an Oihai is like a birthday party without the main guest. As for flowers, you can bring any kind, especially ones which the deceased loved. However, please be sure the flowers don't have thorns. Thorns hurt the Buddha! As for the offerings to bring: please bring anything the deceased loved to eat such as sweets or fruit. If he or she loved pumpkin pie, please bring it. You need to bring a certain amount, not only one slice.

The juzu is for your use during the service. If you want to know how to use the juzu, please stop by the office and get a copy of the pamphlet "Juzu."

Followers usually bring two envelopes for the "Ofuse." One for the minister and one for the temple. During the service you will be chanting the Odaimoku together with the minister and listening to his sermon. Some of you may think that the chanting is not meaningful since you do not understand the meaning of the Lotus Sutra. Nichiren said that when we are feeling sick, we should go and see a doctor to get some medicine. The common person would not know the details of the chemistry of the medicine. The medicines are prescribed as the result of long hours of research and testing. This is the same analogy applied to chanting the Odaimoku. Although many do not understand the true meaning of each character of the Lotus Sutra, we receive the virtues of the Buddha naturally by chanting the sutra. The sutra therefore, is meaningful, even though we do not truly understand what it says. The more people who chant the sutra together at a memorial service, the greater the virtues are bestowed upon the deceased. Therefore, please ask as many people as possible to attend a memorial service.

A memorial service is a ceremony by which the surviving family members are able to accumulate and send virtues to the deceased. Holding memorial services for the deceased is also one of the most important traditions and practices of Nichiren Buddhism.

for additional funds to cover increased costs of the facility in the future.

**Toso Decoration**

Every year there are three New Year Day services at, 7:00 a.m., 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. The Rev. Kanai serves

sips of toso, which is a medicinal sake. The tradition of the toso came from China.

Long, long ago, the priest's quarters adjacent to the temples were called toso-an. On New Year's Eve, the head priests would deliver a package of medicine to drive

away evil, to each household they served. This was brought into Japan and in Emperor Saga's time (about 1,200 years ago) the Imperial Family used toso at the Imperial Palace for a special ceremony on New Year's Day. Eventually everyone in

Japan adopted this custom.

Today, stores all over Japan sell toso tea bags with seven different types of herbs in them and all we have to do is to soak them in sake and mirin (sweet rice wine) for 6 to 7 hours.

**Three Women complete Temple Retreat**

The first overnight temple retreat was held at the temple from November 7 through 9, 2003. The participants were Rev. Myoko Seo, Mrs. Seiko Horiuchi and Mrs. Tayeko Takahashi.

It started with the opening ceremony, followed by making their own wrist juzu on Friday night. The following two mornings began with the Suigyo, purification of the body by pouring water on it outdoors while chanting the Odaimoku at 6:30 a.m., followed by the morning services. Rev. Shokai Kanai and the participants fasted all day on Saturday, conducting various services, chanting sutras, beating the drums, tracing the sutra and images of Kannon Bodhisattva, and cleaning the temple. On Sunday, the participants received a certificate of completion of the first retreat, during the Sunday service. Rev. Kanai wishes to hold the next retreat for English speaking people.

**SAN JOSE**

**New Year Prayer**

The ministers had a special prayer service from January 1st to the 8th for good health and happiness throughout the new year of 2004. Donations for the prayer was \$15 and up. Those who wished to receive Omamori (amulet) contacted the temple office by providing the receiver's name.

**HONOLULU**

**Bodhi Day 2003**

Bodhi Day was celebrated on December 7, 2003, from 9 a.m. at Higashi Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. This was the day to celebrate the enlightenment of the Lord Buddha under a bodhi tree about 2,500 years ago. This community wide service was sponsored by the Hawaii Buddhist Council.

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**SANGHA**

**About Awakening**

By Bishop Kenjo Igarashi

Every December, Bodhi Day, one of the three grand events in Buddhist chronology, is celebrated.

Sakyamuni Buddha stated that the Four Noble Truths are the basic principles of Enlightenment.

- 1) The truth of suffering: the reality that life is full of suffering.
- 2) The truth regarding the cause of suffer-

ing: the reality that the cause of suffering is evil passion.

3) The truth regarding the extinction of suffering: the reality that Nirvana is the state where all suffering is extinguished.

4) The truth regarding the path to Nirvana: the reality that the Eightfold Path leads to Nirvana.

From ancient times, mankind has dealt with suffering of all sorts. Many were down hearted from self-despair. The cause of this is from being ignorant of the Four Noble Truths that offer the way to extinguish all suffering.