

# Nichiren Shu News

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## Compassion Toward All Living Things Cannot Be Hindered by Anyone

Honorable Rev. Nisso Uchino, Archbishop of Nichiren Shu, Chief Abbot of Minobusan Kuonji Temple

In this early spring of 2014, I would like to give my sincere compliments of the New Year season to all the ministers and devotees of Nichiren Shu. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude for the constant services and contributions you are rendering to Nichiren Shu and Minobusan, the Founder's mountain.

Especially, let me offer you my heartfelt thanks for your help and attendance at the ceremony commemorating the 700th anniversary of 'Sado-ajari' Niko Shonin.

Nowadays the world is fluctuating in economy and diplomacy. People are confused by politics, feeling restless toward what is going on with commodity prices, medical care, public welfare and education. The mass media seem to stir up worries. Numerous natural disasters disturb our peace of mind.

Under these difficult conditions, the words of Nichiren Shonin can be

a good guide for our life. As he says in his treatise called Open Your Eyes, "although my comprehension of the Lotus Sutra is not even one ten millionth of that of T'ien-t'ai and Dengyo, I dare say that my endurance on its behalf and compassion for the people are beyond these masters." In the second month of the ninth year of the Bun'ei Period (1272), when Nichiren Shonin was 51 years old on Sado Island, he wrote this treatise in which he meant that though his understanding of the teaching of the Lotus Sutra was far behind that of T'ien-t'ai and



Dengyo, no one could be better than himself in bearing persecution patiently and showing compassion for the people to be saved.

As he mentioned, "Small troubles are incalculable while severe ones are four in number." He had to endure the days of hardship that were coming his way.

However, the reason he put up with the hardships was not because he wanted to rise to a high status or to gain benefits, but rather because he naturally had great compassion for leading all people in the world to attain Buddhahood.

People often say that the world is full of suffering, but it is better for us to keep our faith in the Lotus Sutra as firm as Nichiren Shonin—firm enough to overcome hardships.

The Odaimoku, "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo" is filled with the merits of the Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha. By keeping faith in "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo," let us offer infinitely bright and warm-hearted compassion toward all living beings.

Having faith in the Lotus Sutra, let us make every effort to establish a society where all human beings can live a peaceful and happy life.

From Minobusan, which Nichiren Shonin perceived as a sacred mountain, I wish all of you to have a brilliantly happy year. In closing, I would like to ask all the ministers and devotees to give continuous and immense support to Nichiren Shu and the Founder's temple. Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.

## Respect and Help Each Other to Establish a Good Society Based on the Teaching of the Lotus Sutra

Yukiyasu Ikegami, President of the National Council of Nichiren Shu Devotees

In this first issue for 2014, I wish you a Happy New Year. The Council of Nichiren Shu Devotees has functioned under the guidance of the Nichiren Shu ministers who are actively involved in all parts of the country. In the official regulations, there are 13 categories of subjects of discussion, from "how we render faithful service to our Founder's temple" to "how we work together to help spread Nichiren Shu Buddhism throughout the world." The activity is based on working as "a supporters' organization for Nichiren Shu," as is often said by Mikio Emori, the former president of the National Council of Nichiren Shu Devotees.

Nichiren Shu has been carrying out the Odaimoku Kechien Campaign since 2007. This year is the last year of the second four-year phase of the Campaign, which emphasizes "Nurturing the Sown Seeds." During this phase, we suffered unprecedented natural disasters such

as the earthquake off the Pacific coast of Tohoku, hurricanes, and tornadoes. These caused many people to have a difficult life, getting worse with the lingering economic slump and unresolved nuclear problems. It gets more severe in the foreign affairs surrounding our country.

In such hard times, we have to respect and help each other to establish a good society, based on the ultimate teaching of the Lotus Sutra that Nichiren Shonin showed us. We need to realize that each of us has an important role as we support and spread the Odaimoku Kechien Campaign. As the



proverb shows, "Out of counsel of three comes wisdom," unity is strength. I sincerely hope that we all will work together to bring this campaign to fruition.

As our social systems change, people today engage in a wider range of activities than in the past. More people live in places far away from the temples they belong to. As a result, less people come to the temples to visit

their family graves. Affected by the trends toward the nuclear family and job relocation, there are more and more families living away from their home towns. Many of them don't even have

an altar in their family home. Unless they acquire a habit of putting palms together in Gassho in front of the altar in the morning and evening, they live a daily life without feeling close to the Buddha and their ancestors.

If these conditions continue, the future development of our Order is in question. It is quite an undesirable situation if people only come to temple after their parents die. To conduct a religious service relies not only on maintaining their family's grave, but also on having a right life with a right faith in which we feel we are all united with the Buddha and our ancestors. It is a good chance in the beginning of the year to talk about how each person can keep faith in the family. I believe this will lead to more support for the Odaimoku Kechien Campaign.

Let me close my New Year message with best wishes for you and your family. Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.

According to the Chinese astrology, 2014 is the Year of the Horse.

People born in the Year of the Horse make efforts to improve themselves. They are energetic, bright, warm-hearted, intelligent and capable. They have great communication skills and want to be the focus of attention in their communities. They are clever, kind to others and not afraid to venture in their careers. Although they sometimes tend to be too talkative, they are cheerful, perceptive, talented, and down-to-earth. However, they can

also be stubborn. They like entertainment and large crowds. They are popular among their friends, active at work and refuse to give in to failure, although their efforts cannot continue incessantly.

Nichiren Shonin was born in the Year of the Horse, 1222, and died in the Year of the Horse, 1282. His love for horses can be found in his letter written to Lord Hakii



Sanenaga in 1282 just before his passing. Lord Hakii had presented Nichiren Shonin with a horse to take the Shonin to the hot springs in Hitachi to treat his failing health.

On reaching the estate of Lord Ikegami Munenaka, Nichiren Shonin expressed his deepest gratitude for Lord Hakii's kindness and his horse. "I love this chestnut horse so much that I would like

to let him always be with me," wrote Nichiren Shonin. He wanted to continue his journey, but he was too weak to go on.

Not wanting the horse to be stolen or hurt, Nichiren Shonin decided to leave it in the care of Saito Kanetsune, who lived in Chiba where our founder had grown up.

People born in the following years are born in the Year of the Horse: 1906, 1918, 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, and 2014.

Compiled by Sandra Seki



# Nichiren and Kabuki (v)

By Rev. Kanji Tamura  
Visiting Scholar,  
Reischauer Institute of Japanese  
Studies, Harvard University

Here are instances within “Nichiren Shonin Minori no Umi” that refer to Nichiren Shonin.

Oden, a woman in a poor family in Isawa, the home of Hakii, in Kai no Kuni (Yamanashi Prefecture), lived with her husband, Kansaku, her son, Kyoichi, and the grandmother. When Kansaku was arrested for fishing in a prohibited area, the family fell into deep financial trouble. While Oden was away, the grandmother sold her grandson, Kyoichi, to a warrior from Kamakura, Honma Rokuro-zaemon, unable to resist his persistent solicitation. She imagined great success in Kyoichi’s future.

When Oden returned, she told the grandmother that the regent of Kamakura, Hojo Shigetoki, had contracted a rare disease. Oden reported that the Kamakura samurai were looking for young boys who were born in the Year of the Monkey (Chinese astrology) and whose birth year, month, day, and time shared the same astrological sign. It was believed that eating the raw liver of the young boys would cure the regent’s ailment. The old woman, realizing that her grandson, Kyoichi, perfectly matched what the officials were seeking, blamed herself for selling her grandson.

That night, the ghost of Kansaku appeared before Oden and the old woman. Kansaku had been executed, but neither Oden nor the old woman realized that what appeared before them was Kansaku’s ghost. The old woman admitted to Oden and Kansaku that she had sold her grandson, and she took her own life in a fit of self-reproach.

Soon Oden found out that she had also lost Kansaku, and she fell into great depression. After losing everything, Oden went to the banks of the Isawa River to lay the body of Kansaku on a plank and let it float down the river. Oden contemplated throwing herself into the river at the same time, but Nichiren Shonin and his disciple, Nichiro, happened to pass by. They stopped Oden from taking her own life.

Nichiro: “Lady, don’t be so rash.”

Oden: “No, no! The bad karma is with me, please priest, let me do as I please.”

Takemoto: “To the woman who tries again, the supreme leader of the Mappo Era, the great Nichiren Shonin said...”

Nichiren: “I was hiding in the shadows for quite a while, watching your actions from beginning to end. A woman cries out of sadness, but causation is also the karma from past lives. Considering the karma of killing, the sin of slandering the dharma...”

“I’m sure this land still does not know the true teaching.

“You, find faith in the Lotus Sutra. If you allow your son to become a priest, and pray with faith in the Lotus Sutra, then your husband along with your mother will certainly be saved.”

Oden answers sadly to Nichiren Shonin’s suggestion about allowing



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her son to become a priest saying, “We have sold the life of our son, so he is already gone.”

Nichiren Shonin replied that they had already saved her son, Kyoichi, from Honma Rokuro-zaemon.

Nichiren: “Yes, your pain is understandable. By chance we came across Honma Rokuro-zaemon, the warrior from the Hojo Clan that bought your son. Shigetoki’s ailment is caused by the sin of slandering the true law of the Buddha. Even if a great doctor such as Giba or Henjyaku were to prescribe good medicine, it would be impossible to expect a cure.”

Takemoto: “Nichiren Shonin assured: If you build a temple in Kamakura, and solicit the reading of the sutra tens of thousands of times, then you may expect a complete cure. Then he handed over a mandala of byosoku shometsu (immediate and complete cure of diseases).”

Nichiren: “Save yourself and meet with your son. Desist in your grieving.”

Takemoto: “And, from the hem of his robes, Kyoichi appeared, allowing them to meet each other.” This was how Kyoichi and his mother were reunited.

Nichiren: “That his name is Kyoichi means that he has a connection with the true teaching. The Lotus Sutra is the highest teaching. Especially when one looks at Kyoichi, one can sense that he is quite unique. He seems to possess an aura where he may one day become a great leader to spread the Lotus Sutra in my stead. From now, let us rename you Nichizo. Very soon, you shall become my disciple.”

Takemoto: “The capital is full of ignorance. The one who shall spread the teaching to the west shall be this young man.”

It is notable that Nichizo’s identity, circumstances, and change of name are completely different from the historical facts. So these features are perhaps the kind of thing that you could only find in kabuki.

They floated Kansaku’s body down the river.

Takemoto: “The chanting of the Jigage (Chapter 16 of the Lotus Sutra) a hundred times, and the Odaimoku of the wife and child can be heard loud and clear. Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.”

Nichiren: “Animals, bugs, fish, birds, and all other sentient beings. May they all find immediate Buddhahood.



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Images of Nichiren Shonin depicted in Kabuki.  
Courtesy of the Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library.

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo. Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.”

Kansaku’s corpse was being eaten by fish and birds as it floated down the river. When Nichiren Shonin saw this, he directed his disciples to write the seven characters of the Odaimoku on some small stones. He then threw the stones into the water and used his fingers to stroke the characters of the Odaimoku in the air against the backdrop of the flowing water.

The fish and birds dispersed and the strokes of the Odaimoku appeared.

Takemoto: “At once, a number of large birds flew away. Kansaku’s body was swallowed by the waves, and the seven

characters of the Odaimoku appeared upon the waves.”

Nichiren: “With this Odaimoku upon the flowing water, there is no doubt that he will gain Buddhahood.”

Nichiren: “With the merits of a child becoming a priest, nine families will be reborn in heaven. Like the clouds that come with a storm, there should be no doubt about this.”

Takemoto: “Let the clouds of the spirit be blown away by the power of the Lotus Sutra.”

Nichiren: “Whether or not there is a heart, the shrubs and trees, and the land as well.”

Nichiro: “All the fish in the river, too.”

Oden: “They will all gain enlightenment and become Buddhas.”

All: “The proof is the seven characters of the Odaimoku.”

The play ends by promising the salvation of all, to one’s kyuzoku roshin (ancestors, descendants, and present family members), whether there is a heart or not, to the shrubs and trees, and the land as well. This kind of story about Nichiren Shonin’s life was a source of uncontrollable joy for believers. It must have served as an effective mode of propagation. This form of play was performed along with the kaicho or blessing of Nichiren Shu, and their performance may be observed as having been a way to assist in the comprehension of Nichiren Shonin’s life and the spreading of the faith.

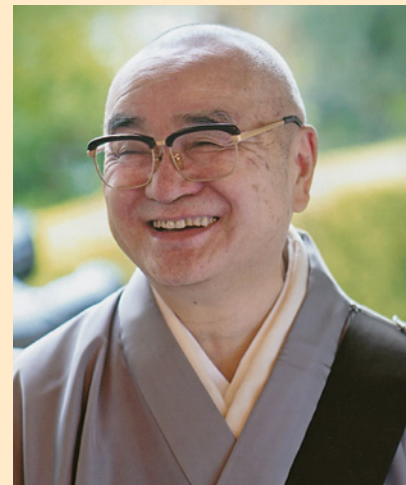
Editor’s Note: This is the final section of the “Nichiren and Kabuki” series. We will begin a new series in April.

## REVEREND KANNO PREACHES (28)

**“To those who have merits, who have already made offerings to the past Buddhas... who are performing various practices... the Buddha expounds the Pure Way.”**

—The Lotus Sutra

Chapter I: Introductory



## A Single Light

From this passage, I understand that the Buddha tells us that one who has merits is eligible for making offerings. A single light by a poor person is worthy to be called an offering since it is an offering from the heart. It is not enough at all to just make an offering.

When we wish to be shown the Pure Way, the way to attain a peaceful mind and the way to escape from suffering, we are required to do something to improve ourselves and benefit others. Prayer is hardly ever answered without doing anything.

Nichiren Shonin teaches us that “we are naturally given merits.” But the merits are realized on the condition that we chant Odaimoku in mind, in word and in deed.

When we find grasses growing in our garden, though invisible in speed, we realize that this is the function of nature. Likewise, merits are given “naturally” when we connect with the Buddha.

Rev. Nisso Kanno, Head Priest, Kaichoji Temple, Shizuoka Prefecture



## Nichiren Shonin's Shokutaku (3) The Birth of Nichiren Shonin

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph.D.

Nichiren Shonin was born on the 16th of the second month in 1222 at Kominato in Awa Province (present Chiba Prefecture). Sakyamuni Buddha passed into Nirvana on the 15th day of the second month (about the fourth century B.C.). Nichiren Shonin was born on the following day. It is said that there is a destiny in the days of the births of these two venerables.

There are many legends relating to Nichiren Shonin's birth. His mother was devoted to the faith of Buddhism and prayed to Buddha every day. One day, she dreamt that the sunlight was shining upon on her breast. It was wonderful that she became pregnant on that day.

It is said that pure water welled up on Kominato Beach. The water didn't dry up even during a time of drought, and it didn't overflow in times of heavy rain. The pure water became the baby's first bath. When he was born, it is said that spring water suddenly gushed out in the garden and lotus flowers bloomed in the sea. His priest name of "Nichiren" is a combination of "Nichi" the sun and

"Ren" the Lotus. Large shoals of fish (sea bream) were seen gathering in the water along the beach. Tanjoji Temple was constructed at his birthplace. The beach where the fish had gathered is called Tai no Ura (Sea Bream Beach) and is near that temple.

"Nichiren Shonin Chugasan" (preserved at Kyoninji Temple, Chiba Prefecture) shows the scene of Nichiren Shonin's birth. It is said that his face was solemn and dauntless when he was born. The cute baby is described in the illustration.

Nichiren Shonin wrote a letter to Lord Nanjo Tokimitsu who was devoted to the faith of the Lotus Sutra on the 20th day of the first month in 1282. Nichiren



Nichiren Shonin's food for the New Year.



Birth scene of Nichiren Shonin Chugasan, preserved at Kyoninji Temple, Chiba Prefecture.

Shonin passed into Nirvana on the 13th day of the tenth month of the same year. Lord Nanjo presented a straw bag of rice, a straw bag of salt, thirty sheets of steamed rice cakes, and a straw bag of Japanese taros (imo) to Nichiren Shonin for the celebration of the New Year.

Rice was the principal food for the Japanese. A lot of rice was presented to him by believers from many areas in Japan. The taro and the salt were very precious in the mountains of Minobu. It is thought that taro was close to the principal food when the rice crops

were poor in those days. Therefore Lord Nanjo presented taro many times. Bamboo shoots and mushrooms were harvested, but the vegetables could not be seasoned or preserved without salt. So salt was very precious in those days. It was refined from seawater or rock salt. Seawater was concentrated and boiled in iron pots. This method had been used since ancient times in Japan. The steamed rice cakes have long been an important part of New Year's celebrations in Japan. All these gifts were sent with warm feelings from Lord Nanjo.

## Pilgrimage to Japan from Southeast Asia

By Rev. Ervinna Myoufu  
South East Asia Sangha

In October 2013, a group of 34 members from Malaysia and Singapore attended the Oeshiki ceremony at Ikegami Honmonji Temple and visited several holy temples in Tokyo and Wakayama.

We departed from Southeast Asia in the evening on October 9, and arrived at Narita early in the morning on October 10. We went straight to Tanjoji Temple in Chiba prefecture where Nichiren Shonin was born. We ate lunch near the temple, and then we went to Seichoji Temple and stayed there for the night.

Seichoji Temple is the temple where Nichiren became a priest. It is also the place where he chanted the Odaimoku for the first time and established the Nichiren sect.

The next day, we wanted to see the sunrise at Asahigamori, the place

where Nichiren Shonin chanted the Odaimoku for the first time, facing the sun. Unfortunately, it was raining and cloudy, so the sun was not visible. Then we went to the morning service at Seichoji Temple. After the service and breakfast, we headed to Tokyo by bus. In Tokyo, we visited Asakusa and the famous Edo style area downtown. Then we did a little more sightseeing and some shopping before we checked into the hotel.

On October 12, we visited Ikegami Honmonji. This temple was where Nichiren Shonin passed away. We reached Ikegami in the afternoon and attended the Ho-on service. In the evening, we joined the Oeshiki Mando procession at Ikegami Honmonji. It was a wonderful experience for all of us.

On October 13, we went to a ceremony commemorating Nichiren Shonin's passing at Ikegami Honmonji, and then moved to Minobusan Kuonji Temple, in

Group in front of  
Honkoji Temple  
in Wakayama City.



Yamanashi Prefecture. We arrived at Minobu in the evening and stayed at Hinosawabo.

The following morning, we joined the service at the main hall of Kuonji.

After the service and breakfast, we visited Shishinkaku Temple.

After returning from Shishinkaku, we performed the Rinban Service (cleaning up Nichiren Shonin's grave site) led by Rev. Kangyo Noda.

On October 15, after the morning service, we left for Wakayama Prefecture to visit Hoonji Temple, Honkoji Temple, and Shoji Temple. The temples' priests and members were very nice and warm in welcoming us. Honkoji Temple is Rev. Noda's family temple.

On October 17, some of the members of our group returned to their home countries. The rest of us continued the journey visiting famous tourist spots like Nachi and Shirahama in Wakayama Prefecture, before returning to Southeast Asia.

This trip was quite hard for all the members since we had such a tight schedule and were traveling long distances. Some members had some health problems during the journey. Luckily, these were not too serious, and they soon recovered.

All the members enjoyed the trip and the pilgrimage. For some, it was their first time visiting Japan, and the trip gave them good experience in faith because they were able to visit the temples that historically related to Nichiren Shonin, like Tanjoji Temple, Seichoji Temple, Ikegami Honmonji Temple, and Minobusan Kuonji Temple. Though it was a very long journey from Southeast Asia to Japan, and traveling long distances by bus was extremely tiring, all our fatigue vanished when we reached the temples and prayed at each altar. We felt so peaceful, happy, and were fortunate to receive the joy of the Dharma when we visited the temples and met the Buddha.

I was worried about the members because of our hard schedule and distance. However, with the protection of the Buddha, we were blessed with good weather and a smooth journey. Thank you to Rev. Noda and all the members. I also felt very happy that I could join this pilgrimage. It was the first time for me to visit the temples in Japan together with the members. We now have many sweet memories, which I will never forget. All these memories have become my treasure, forever. Thank you very much. Gassho.



Chanting Odaimoku at Honkoji Temple, Reverend Noda's family temple.



TEMPLE EVENTS

Las Vegas, Kannonji Temple  
By Rev. Shokai Kanai

Bodhi Day Peace March

A peace march was held on Sunday, December 8. Participants beat Taiko drums and chanted the Odaimoku while praying for peace and security. After the march, the Bodhi Day service was held. Offerings of candle lights were placed at the homemade Bodhi altar in the Hondo. A sitting statue of the Buddha was placed under the tree representing the time when he attained enlightenment.



The candle lights represented the vast wisdom of the Buddha. Following the service, a potluck luncheon was held.

Offering Music to the Buddhas

Siedah Garrett, a singer from Hollywood, came to offer her songs to the Gohonzon. Before she sang, I read an excerpt from Chapter 24 of the Lotus

Sutra. It says, “There lived a Bodhisattva called Wonderful-Voice who offered hundreds of thousands of kinds of music and eighty-four thousand patras (bowls) of the Seven Treasures to Cloud-Thunder-Sound-King Buddha for twelve thousand years. Because of this, he was able to appear in the world of Pure-Flower-Star-King-Wisdom Buddha, and obtain supernatural power such as this.”

She sang a song that she had written for Michael Jackson, “Do not blame others for your problems or issues, start with yourself. The answers are all within you!” As she sang, her eyes seemed to get a little watery with tears of happiness and peace.

Honolulu Myohoji

By Rev. Takamasa Yamamura

On November 22, I participated in an interfaith service for world peace with His Holiness the Dalai Lama present. Representatives from Buddhist, Shinto, Shugendo, Christian, Islamic and other traditions gathered together in Shizuoka near Mt. Fuji to focus on world peace. His Holiness said, “We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace within ourselves.”

San Jose Nichiren Buddhist Temple

By Rev. Arnold Matsuda

New Year’s Service

The annual New Year’s Eve service was held on December 31. After the service, traditional Toshikoshi soba was served.

The New Year Day service was held on January 1. After the service, Otoso (spiced sake) was served.

A New Year’s Party was held on Sunday, January 12, following the New Year’s Prayer Service.

The ministers conducted special prayers from January 1-7 for people’s health and happiness in the coming year.

Los Angeles Nichiren Shu  
Beikoku Betsuin

By Rev. Join Inoue

The Jodo-e service was held at the Los Angeles Nichiren Shu Beikoku Betsuin on December 9. Ten people participated in the solemn candle light service. After the service, there was a sermon about the importance of why Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha, attained Enlightenment.

Participants chanted the Odaimoku and gave thanks to the Buddha. The spirit of Nichiren Shu propagation was strengthened through this unity.

Renkoji, Italy

By Rev. Shoryo Tarabini

For Oeshiki this year, we did not have a Mando parade. Instead, we carried a statue of Nichiren Shonin, while chanting the Odaimoku and drumming throughout Cereseto. Our special ceremony was followed by a celebration dinner at the temple. The next morning, we had a solemn Oeshiki ceremony followed by a

lunch at a nearby restaurant.

To commemorate Oeshiki, we performed the Eye Opening Ceremony for numerous statues of the Buddha and a statue of Nichiren Shonin. We also presented a Mandala Gohonzon to a new member. We also held an Eye Opening Ceremony for a new stone pillar with the Odaimoku engraved upon it, which we had placed in front of Renkoji.

We are building a new Soshido in the temple garden. It is almost finished and will be dedicated on February 16, along with the celebration of the temple’s establishment and events celebrating 800 years since the birth of Nichiren Shonin.

To commemorate this special anniversary, we are working to gather funds to donate 100 cherry trees to the village of Cereseto each year, so that by the end of the 800th year celebration, there will be 800 cherry trees throughout the village, making it a “village dedicated to Nichiren Shonin” and a town that shows the influence of Nichiren Shonin, in all its beauty, tradition and culture.



Big Plans for New England Sangha

By Rev. Ryuoh Faulconer  
Nichiren Buddhist Sangha of Greater New England

It has been a good and prosperous year for the New England Sangha. We have had many visitors to our meetings and services. Some visitors have returned and continue to visit regularly. We have been enjoying the holidays and regular services throughout the year. We participated in several interfaith services in our community and also had a booth in a couple of community fairs. Last year was our first time having a booth in the Boston Japanese Matsuri. This was only the second time for the fair. It was a big success. Many people came to our booth, asked for information, and bought Ofuda and Omamori. We expect the Matsuri to become a even bigger event in Boston this year.

Last year, we started looking for property. We currently rent. The space we rent is nice, but it has its limitations.

We would like to find a house or building that can be turned into a temple. We have collected funds for a nice down payment, but we are always working to increase the amount. We have budgeted \$250,000. That may sound high, but New England has some of the highest real estate prices in the United States. Having a temple building of our own will help with propagation and growth. We hope to make a purchase in the first half of the year.

We hosted the annual NONA week-long retreat last year. The retreat had a dozen participants with four teachers and a cook. It was very productive, and all the participants learned doctrine, practice and etiquette along with making new friends. During the retreat, the members chanted the entire Lotus Sutra in shindoku, copied hotoge as



Rev. Faulconer leading a service of the New England Sangha.

shakyo and learned to make origami peace cranes. The group included a few new people as well as a few veterans of the weeklong retreats. This year’s retreat will be hosted by the Houston Sangha.

We also participated in a program for visitors to overseas temples. Kanjo Ueda Shonin from Shinnyoji/Myokensan, stayed with us for six weeks. He partici-

pated in services and learned the ins and outs of a Buddhist temple in America.

We are striving to build a bigger sangha in 2014, the 100th anniversary of Nichiren Shu in America. We are always working hard to propagate the Odaimoku and teachings of the Eternal Buddha and Nichiren Shonin. Thanks to everyone for your prayers and help.

Calendar for February–March 2014

FEB 3	Setsubun (first day of spring in the traditional Chinese calendar)
FEB 10	Service observing the completion of the 100-day Arago (ascetic) practice

FEB 15	Nirvana Day Service
FEB 16	Service in commemoration of the birth of Nichiren Shonin
MAR 18-24	Ohigan

Compiled by Rev. Kaikei Ochiai

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# Nichiren Shu News...



Congratulations on the 200th issue of Nichiren Shu News.

This is a wonderful event not only for the editorial staff but also for Nichiren Shu.

Since the first issue was published in 1976, this newspaper has been publicizing Nichiren Shu events both within Japan and overseas to spread the teachings of Nichiren Shonin, the Hokkekyo (Dharma) and Buddhism. All around the world, believers have been able to get information from this newspaper. I would like to express my gratitude and respect to the editorial staff for making this possible for close to four decades.

My name is Junko Kobayashi. I was recently elected Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu at the 107th special Nichiren Shu Cabinet meeting held on December 20, 2013. As a member of a propagating body, I would like to do my best to help spread the teachings of Nichiren Shonin both within Japan and overseas.

As a young priest, I had the opportunity to accompany the late Archbishop Nichiko Fujii of Minobusan Kuonji Temple to many overseas inaugurations and memorial events. Through these experiences, I felt a strong conviction to participate in religious events with other religions. I also discovered the importance of overseas propagation. In recent years of war, unrest, poverty and corruption, we should all "put our palms together" (gassho) and try to cherish life. We can create a circle of Odaimoku believers.

This year, 2014, Nichiren Shu of North America will be celebrating its centennial in June. Let us join in this wonderful event and strengthen the spirit of Risho Ankoku and the Odaimoku Kechien Movement (Spreading the Odaimoku). We would like to realize the dream of world peace through the Odaimoku and ask for everyone's support and cooperation.

Gassho,

—Rev. Junko Kobayashi  
Chief Administrator, Nichiren Shu



I would like to congratulate you on the publication of the 200th issue of the Nichiren Shu News.

The first issue was published in October 1976, when Archbishop Nichiji Mochizuki was the Kancho of Nichiren Shu and Bishop Juken Matsumura was Chief Administrator. So many issues have been published since then. I give credit and thanks to the former editors, the late Rev. Senchu Murano, Rev. Keiryu Shima and the current editor, Ms. Sandra Seki, who has been working for the paper since it was first published.

Through the years, the method of relating news has changed greatly. For the readers throughout the world, this is one of the essentials in spreading the teachings of Nichiren Shonin.

I sincerely hope that this publication will continue to help all the followers of Nichiren Shu to understand what the true Dharma is. I also hope it will help spread Nichiren Shonin's teachings to the readers all over the world.

Again, let me congratulate the editorial staff and all the others involved in publishing the 200th issue of the Nichiren Shu News.

—Rev. Bungyo Yoshida

President, Nichiren Shu Overseas  
Propagation Promotion Association

Aloha to everyone throughout the world. I wish all of you can have a better year in 2014. Congratulations on the 200th issue of the Nichiren Shu News. I am thankful to the editorial board for their hard work.

Mahalo and Gassho

—Rev. Tetsudo Takasaki  
Puunene Temple, Maui

A Happy New Year. How was your 2013? When we chant the Odaimoku and Lotus Sutra, the Buddha gives his compassion and wisdom to us.

In the first chapter of the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha said, "If we lead our life by keeping compassion in mind, we are able to enter the world of Buddha's wisdom."

Let's practice this together this year, too.

—Rev. Hosho Sugawara  
Hilo Nichiren Mission

Congratulations on the 200th issue of the Nichiren Shu News!

I would like to thank the efforts and passion of the Nichiren Shu News editors of the past and present. This great achievement of the 200th issue would not have been accomplished without the passion of the editors for the propagation of Nichiren Shu.

I truly hope that the Nichiren Shu News continues to prosper and promote the oneness of humanity in the future.

—Rev. Takamasa Yamamura  
Honolulu Myohoji Temple

Congratulations on achieving the milestone of 200 issues! As a relatively new sangha, Choeizan Enkyoji is very appreciative of those who have contributed so much over the years. We look forward to making equally valued contributions. Again, we are very appreciative of those whose dedication has set such a high bar.

In gassho,

—Gregg Tralle

Seattle Cheizan Enkyoji Temple

We would like to give our sincere congratulations from Seattle Choeizan Enkyoji Temple to the Nichiren Shu News on the completion of their 200th issue. This is truly a great accomplishment and shows the wonderful efforts by Nichiren Shu and the newspaper staff in spreading the message of our founder Nichiren Shonin. Nichiren Shu News has improved and developed over the years to become a critical element in our missionary work outside Japan.

Once again, thank you to everyone who has supported our efforts over the past year, and may they continue in 2014.

With Gassho,

—Rev. Kanjin Cederman

Seattle Cheizan Enkyoji Temple



I offer my hearty congratulations on the publication of the 200th issue of Nichiren Shu News. Nichiren Shu News gives us a good opportunity to learn not only the teaching of the Lotus Sutra and our founder Nichiren Shonin but also the history of Nichiren Shu Buddhism. Especially, in June, 2013, we read the article of Arago about Rev. Shoda Kanai who had completed a very strict and austere ascetic practice of Nichiren Shu for 100 days. Although our members and supporters had known about Nichiren Shu Arago, the article made them feel admiration and respect. I believe that we, as Nichiren Shu followers, were able to share in the joy and pride of Rev. Kanai's Arago experience.

When the Jodo-e Service was held on December 8, 2013, a religion professor from Portland State University came to the service. Afterwards, the members gave the professor a copy of the June issue of Nichiren Shu News and explained Nichiren Shu Arago and what an austere practice it is. I think that Nichiren Shu News is very helpful for the members, supporters, and the public to gain more information and an understanding of Nichiren Shu Buddhism.

Sincerely with Gassho,

—Rev. Myosho Obata

Nichiren Buddhist Temple of Portland

Congratulations on the publication of the 200th issue of the Nichiren Shu News

We hope you continue sending out information and news to the Nichiren Shu followers all over the world. Again let me congratulate the editorial staff and all the others involved for your achievement.

Gassho,

—Rev. Jojin Inoue

Los Angeles Nichiren Shu Betsuin

Congratulations for the 200th issue of the Nichiren Shu News!

I could not remember when the first issue was published, but the editor informed me that it was October 13, 1976. I was still in Salt Lake City, Utah, the Rocky Mountain State, where I felt isolated not only from Japan but also from other NONA temples and churches in North America. When I received the Nichiren Shu News, I had connection with Nichiren Shu in Japan and the other sanghas in America.

During the 1970s, I believe the only overseas Nichiren Shu temples were in North America and Brazil. The articles were limited to news from Japan and tidbits from other NONA sanghas.

In the last ten years, the content of the news has expanded to include articles not only from North America but also from South America, Europe, and Asia. Therefore, readers can enjoy various perspectives. In addition, the Overseas Propagation Department has many events that include both overseas ministers and lay people. Such topics invite more people to read. Even though the readers have never met other Nichiren Shu members in other countries, they can enjoy reading about how others are doing through the Nichiren Shu News.

We deeply appreciate Shumuin, other supporting organizations, and the editorial board in continuing to publish the paper. Let us continue this success for another 200 issues.

—Bishop Shokai Kanai

Nichiren Buddhist Order  
of North America,  
Nichiren Buddhist  
Kannon Temple of Nevada

Becoming a part of the Kannon Temple of Nevada has brought about many wonderful, life altering events. One of the tools that has been helpful to me is reading Nichiren Shu News. Nichiren Shu News helps me feel connected to the other temples and people who are involved with them. It is great to meet so many wonderful people, but even more of a blessing to continue to feel connected to them by reading about everyone in Nichiren Shu News. I look forward to reading each issue when I receive it. With that in mind, congratulations on printing the 200th issue!

—Cindy S. Campbell

Kannonji Temple, Las Vegas

Congratulations on publishing the 200th issue of the Nichiren Shu News. I am fortunate to have seen some of the older issues of the publication and can attest to its continued growth and development. It is and has been an excellent vehicle for providing information and insight about Nichiren Shu, its doctrine and practices. The information is always clear and relevant.

The Nichiren Shu News has been an effective vehicle for sharing Nichiren Buddhism and the Lotus Sutra with people who are unfamiliar with this form of Buddhism. It is particularly useful in my work as a volunteer chaplain in the Texas prison system and has been a lifeline for the inmates that I serve. It is the singular connection to Buddhism for most of them.

Keep up the good work!

In gassho,

—Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett

Myoken-ji Temple, Houston, Texas

Congratulations to all the folks on staff for the 200th issue of the Nichiren Shu News! It's great to be able to follow what's going on in the world of Nichiren Shu in English. It keeps us connected and helps us realize we are part of a worldwide movement.

I really enjoy being able to read about what other temples are doing around the world. It is always good for introducing to new study information and teachings about Nichiren Shonin and Buddhism.

Again, thank you very much. Keep up the good work!

—Mike Barrett

Myoken-ji Temple, Houston, Texas

Ten years ago, I became a member of Nichiren Shu of North America. Since that time, I have read Nichiren Shu News.

Over the years, the thought provoking and informative articles featured in this paper have helped me strengthen my practice and deepen my faith. Most important, the paper is a point of connection for the thousands of members of Nichiren Shu throughout the world.

It is truly encouraging and inspiring to read about the experiences and activities of members across the globe, even as I sit in my small apartment in Houston, Texas.

I would like to thank everyone involved in making this publication happen, for their commitment of talent, time and labor. It is very much appreciated.

—Christie Carrington

Myoken-ji Temple, Houston, Texas



The first issue of Nichiren Shu News was published October 13, 1976.

Dots on the world map represent the general locations of Nichiren Shu overseas temples.



# 200 Issues and Still Going Strong

Congratulations on your 200th issue!  
You have done a wonderful job of reminding us that we are part of a global community of people bringing the Wonderful Dharma to life.

Thank you for your good work, and I look forward to 200 more issues.

With palms together,

—Rev. Shinkyō Will Warner  
Lexington Nichiren Buddhist Community

We sincerely congratulate you on your 200th issue! You have encouraged us to continue to spread the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and allowed us to feel that we are part of an extended sangha across the world. We wish you continued success from Toronto, Canada.

With Gassho,

—Hiroshi Yamamoto  
Toronto Nichiren Buddhist Church

Congratulations and very special thanks to Nichiren Shu News on the publication of its 200th issue.

With Gassho,

—Rev. Ryuoh Faulconer  
Nichiren Buddhist Sangha of Greater New England

Congratulations to Nichiren Shu News on the 200th issue! Nichiren Shu News helped me keep in touch with the people, activities and news of Nichiren Shu long before I had a sangha to practice with locally.

The doctrine and history items were a real help to me when I was just starting out, and it was nice to see the local activities of groups worldwide.

My thanks to Sandra Seki and all the people who are involved in Nichiren Shu News. It is one of our best tools for outreach.

With deepest appreciation.

—Gakubun Max Calderwood  
President, Nichiren Shu Sangha of Greater New England

Deepest gratitude to Nichiren Shu News on its 200th issue! Infinitely spreading the dharma to all whose heart yearns for a compassionate world community. Thank you!

—Angelica "Toni" Acevedo  
Nichiren Shu Sangha of Greater New England

Congratulations to the Nichiren Shu News staff for keeping us informed and inspired about Nichiren Shu around the world!

Like our sangha, you keep us close and connected, and I look forward to every new issue. Here's to many, many successes in the years to come! Namu Myōhō Renge Kyo.

With much gratitude,

—Christine Tello-Lorenz  
Nichiren Shu Sangha of Greater New England

Congratulations and greetings to the editor, Sandra Seki, and all the staff at the Nichiren Shu News which is celebrating its 200th issue this month!

We thank you all very much for spreading the Odaimoku to English-speaking societies around the world.

—Rev. Shogen Kumakura  
New York Daiseion-Ji

The New York Daiseion-Ji Sangha members would also like to extend appreciation to the Nichiren Shu News editor and staff. Congratulations and great job with Gassho! This sangha looks forward eagerly to each and every quality publication of Nichiren Shu News.

—Roy Secord

New York Daiseion-Ji

Thank you to all the staff over the years who have produced the English language Nichiren Shu News.

This publication has served as a welcome beacon of the activities as well as the teachings of the Lotus Sutra as taught by Nichiren Shonin. When the issue arrives in the mail, it is always with great anticipation that I sit down to read through the contents.

I hope that in the years to come it will continue to provide all members around the world with continued encouragement to continue in their faith and practice.

I look forward to another 100 issues, and then 200 more. I also hope that many more find the path of faith through the Lotus Sutra.

With Gassho,

—Rev. Ryusho Jeffus  
Myosho-ji, Wonderful Voice Temple  
Charlotte, North Carolina

Congratulations on the 200th issue of Nichiren Shu News. We look forward to reading every issue.

My first contribution was in 1997 after completion of my training of Kaikyoshi (Overseas Ministers) training. My article was written in Japanese because my English was not very good. When I saw my article in the newspaper after it was translated to English, I was so happy and impressed. A passion rose within me to propagate Nichiren Shu Buddhism. The Nichiren Shu News has delivered important teachings and the news of events to many people. The newspaper was always beside us. It was like a colleague for us, like News-Kaikyoshi. The purpose and need for such a newspaper will never change. It is to deliver the teaching of Nichiren Shonin all over the world, Sanzen Daisen Sekai: Three thousand great thousand worlds. Let us aim to deliver these teachings to a billion people (the third power of one thousand). This can be our next goal.

—Rev. Kanto Tsukamoto

Nichiren Shu Buddhist Temple of UK

Congratulations on the 200th issue of Nichiren Shu News.

I would like to express my gratitude to the staff for all the years of hard work during the changing times. I hope the Nichiren Shu News will continue to give hope and dreams to the readers in the years to come.

—Rev. Shokei Steffens

Daiseionji Temple, Germany

Congratulations on the publishing of the 200th issue of the Nichiren Shu News. Since its creation, this newspaper has been an enormously valuable tool to the international community in understanding the teachings of the Buddha and Nichiren Shonin, as well as the history and traditions of Nichiren Shu.

It is our sincere hope in Europe, that the Nichiren Shu News will continue to grow and expand in quality in order to accomplish these goals, as well as being translated into the various languages of the people throughout this continent and world who have great difficulty understanding the English language.

Gassho,

—Rev. Shoryo Tarabini  
Renkoji Temple, Cereseto, Italy

I deeply congratulate you on the 200th issue of Nichiren Shu News. Nichiren Shu News is a very important newsletter for all the members of the Southeast Asian temples to keep the connection with Nichiren Shu members in Japan and other countries. We are also able to see how other temples practice the Lotus Sutra in their local areas. This helps a lot to look at our own temples, to understand our situation, to develop our activities and practices, and to enrich our hearts. I truly appreciate the great work and achievement.

At the Southeast Asian temples, we will keep trying our best to spread the teaching of the Lotus Sutra more widely to the local people. We would like all mankind to hold hands and see beyond all their differences. We will work together for a better future by learning numerous things through the Nichiren Shu News.

—Rev. Kangyo Noda

Nichiren Sangha of Southeast Asia

Dear Readers,

It has been my great fortune to have played a part in Nichiren Shu News since its very first issue in 1976. I was very lucky to have worked with some great editors who helped broaden my understanding of journalism.

In 2010, Rev. Keiryu Shima was the editor and had great experience working at the Daily Mainichi News. Rev. Shima asked me to take his place. My job was just writing and gathering articles, so the responsibility of getting every issue out was a new challenge for me, which I still face now.

Through this newspaper, I want to help Nichiren Shu followers around the world exchange ideas and relate how the Lotus Sutra is being propagated in the different temples and sanghas.

With this 200th issue as a milestone, I want to continue making the newspaper an effective tool for teaching and sharing the Dharma in our growing global community.

Again, it has been my great honor to have been part of publishing Nichiren Shu News for so long. I hope to keep on making a difference through this newspaper.

Gassho,

—Sandra Seki  
Editor, Nichiren Shu News

## Congratulations

on the 200th Issue of Nichiren Shu News

and the 100th Anniversary of Nichiren Shu Propagation in North America



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