

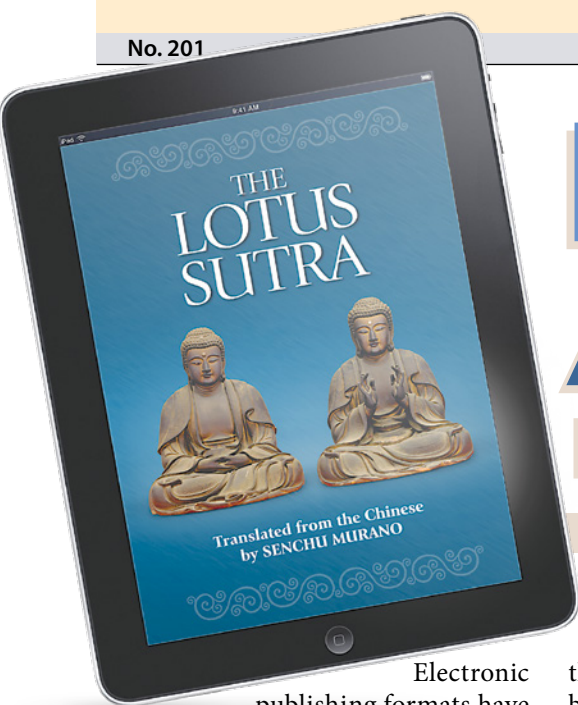
Nichiren Shu News

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RESTORING A CLASSIC FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

NICHIREN SHU'S FIRST ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION

By Rev. Shinkyō Warner

Electronic publishing formats have been evolving rapidly. Thousands of books and magazines are now available for devices such as the Kindle or iPad. So many people are using these devices that *Advertising Age* estimates that by the end of 2015 half of all newspapers and magazines will be read electronically.

This month, Nichiren Shu is releasing its first electronic publication: The Third Edition of Bishop Senchu Murano's translation of *The Lotus Sutra*. It is now available on Amazon and Apple's iBookstore. If it is successful, there may be other projects to make the writings of Nichiren Shonin available in electronic form.

This electronic version of *The Lotus Sutra* started off as a small part of a larger project. Over the past 15 years, I have worked with many people to make a third edition of Bishop Murano's translation possible.

In 1998, I went to Japan for my Docho ceremony, the first formal step towards becoming a Nichiren Shu priest. While there, I was thrilled to meet Bishop Murano and to spend a day with him at his temple in Kamakura.

I had already been reading a chapter from the sutra every day for nearly three years. Each day, I was struck not only by

the teaching of the Wonderful Dharma, but also by the literary skill Bishop Murano had brought to his translation. Not since reading Nabokov had I encountered someone whose native language was not English but wrote so beautifully in English.

In our conversations, Bishop Murano and I talked in detail about his approach to the translation. His great wish was for the Lotus Sutra to be available for the English-speaking world. This is what motivated him to spend ten years on the translation. We also talked about the many typographical errors in the second edition. This was clearly a sore point for him. I could sense that he felt both embarrassed by the errors and at a loss to know what to do about them. It was then that I realized we needed a third edition, and that I would have to get it started.

Sadly, Bishop Murano did not live to see the third edition completed. He passed away in January of 2001, three months before I entered Shingyo Dojo. This loss only increased my resolve to keep the project going, in gratitude for his important work.

At the beginning, it was a slow, tedious process, but it was always a labor of love. For several years, there were just two of us manually transcribing the second edition into an electronic format. With the advances in computers, we knew the new edition would not be laid out by hand. We even wondered back then if it would be possible to have an electronic version someday.

In 2009, I spoke with Rev. Kanjo Bassett at the Shumuin about my work on a third edition. I learned that the second edition was out of print and available copies were dwindling. Even worse, none of the production materials

from the second edition of *The Lotus Sutra* could be found. Unknown to me, there had already been discussions in the International Department of the Shumuin about creating a third edition, but there were no specific plans. Rev. Bassett proposed using the work that I had already started.

We reached out to ministers and temple members around the world, setting up a wiki site on the Internet to coordinate our collaboration. The Nichiren Shu Shimbun helped with the Chinese characters (kanji).

We also needed a designer who was a native English speaker and familiar with Japanese publishers. Rev. Bassett brought in Alan Rowe, an American designer living in Osaka, who had worked in the fast-moving world of advertising and publishing in New York.

In August of 2012, Bishop Chishin Hirai, then General Manager of NBIC, proposed the goal of having this new edition ready for the Rishso University-sponsored Seventh International Conference on the Lotus Sutra to be held in October 2012. This meant there were only ten weeks to deliver finished

books, and we were not yet finished with the proofreading and layout. But then help came from many places.

Bishop Hirai brought in the support of Professor Shinjo Hara, Dean of Buddhist Studies at Rishso University, and two other faculty members to contribute their proofreading skills and general advice.

The Honorable Nissho Uchino, Archbishop of Nichiren Shu, graciously provided his calligraphy for the title page. Honkokuji Temple in Kyoto also allowed us to use images of their statues of Shakyamuni Buddha and Taho Buddha for the cover of the book.

Rev. Bassett, Alan and I met online several times a week to iron out the innumerable details that went into the book. It seemed like we got as much done in those ten weeks as we did in the first ten years. When the books were delivered on time to Rishso University, Alan said, "I would put this tiny team up against any of the production teams I worked with back in New York."

With the print version finished, we turned to the electronic version. Since this was a relatively new publishing format, it required a different set of skills. With my background in writing software and the design being created with a digital version in mind, this phase of the project was less demanding. We did add hundreds of interactive links to the text. I believe these links expose the deep understanding Bishop Murano had of the Lotus Sutra.

As Nichiren Shonin has written, "All things are possible if people are united in one mind." Everyone who worked on this new edition was truly united in the desire to spread the Lotus Sutra and enable others to be inspired by it.

Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō.



Bishop Senchu Murano and Rev. Shinkyō Warner at the Nichiren Shu Shumuin in 1998.



The Third Edition in both print and the new electronic version are built upon Bishop Senchu Murano's original translation and scholarly work. His extensive glossaries have been re-worked to be more user-friendly.

THE BUDDHA'S BIRTH IS COMMEMORATED IN THE HANAMATSURI FLOWER FESTIVAL



In either 466 B.C. or 564 B.C., Shakyamuni Buddha was born as the first son of King Suddhodana and Queen Maya. The Queen was the daughter of King Suprabuddha who occupied the land to the east of Kapilavastu. On the way to her parents' home in preparation for delivering her child, Queen Maya is said to have given birth to the Buddha under the Ashoka (sala) tree in the Lumbini Gardens. It was on the eighth day of April.

According to tradition, Queen Maya conceived the Buddha after having a dream in which a white elephant with six tusks descended from the sky and entered her right side. It is also said that Shakyamuni Buddha was born from the Queen's right side when she raised her right hand, trying to pluck a flower from the Ashoka tree. Upon His birth, the Buddha is said to have taken seven steps and resoundingly declared, "Above and

under the heaven, I alone am revered." He pointed to the heavens with his right hand and the earth with his left. A rain of nectar showered upon Him. All over the garden, beautiful flowers sprang up to bloom and pure water emerged from the ground.

The Buddhist festival, Hanamatsuri, or Flower Festival, commemorates the birth of the Buddha. It originates from this tradition. *Compiled by Sandra Seki*

Homestay Study Program: An Eye-Opening Experience

By Rev. Kanjo Ueda, Myorinji Temple, Kyoto

Recently, I began to notice articles in magazines about funerals and cemeteries. Both these topics are associated with “death.” For me, this was a taboo subject. However, I now believe that death is a reality which everyone must face. This topic is relevant to Japanese people today, who are starting to shy away from temples and religion. It seems they believe funerals and cemeteries are services rendered by funeral homes and have little to do with faith.

I started wondering how funerals and cemeteries are handled in Christian-oriented countries like the United States. Then an overseas minister introduced me to the “Learn Language Through Overseas Experience” program sponsored by Nichiren Shu. It promised to provide an interesting experience as I thought Japanese beliefs on these topics could not possibly be accepted in the U.S. It would also be a wonderful opportunity to reexamine the essentials of Buddhism.

THE ENVIRONMENT: I chose the Nichiren Buddhist Sangha of Greater New England (GNE) in the Boston area because this sangha propagates Buddhism mainly to Americans. If there were a Japanese-speaking community nearby, propagation would be done in the Japanese style with which I was already familiar.

When I first arrived on October 25, 2013, my English was poor. I last studied English for college entrance exams about 15 years ago. For 90 days, until I left on December 10, 2013, I hardly spoke any Japanese. It saddens me to think of the burden I must have been on Rev. Faulconer, the resident minister, and the members of the sangha because of my difficulty communicating.

This sangha is in Haverhill, in the suburbs of Boston. Boston has a lot of history from when the United States began. Famous educational institutions like Harvard and M.I.T. attract students from all over the world. Other than some people from Cambodia, the area has very few Asians.

Recently, the population of the Japanese community in the U.S. has decreased. Many third or fourth generation (sansei, yonsei) Japanese-Americans don’t speak, read or write Japanese anymore. Their lifestyle is very “American.” Many have converted to Christianity or have no particular faith. In Boston, where the Japanese community has always been small, there are almost no temples or sanghas with Buddhist services. Therefore propagating the teachings of Nichiren Shu is difficult. Yet the GNE sangha has been doing well. I feel that this is due to the strength of the basics of Nichiren Shu propagation and Rev. Faulconer.

COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS: In the U.S., people customarily go to church every Sunday. Even at Buddhist temples, members gather every Sunday and attend a service. After the service at GNE, tea or lunch is served and the members stay to socialize. Rev. Faulconer always asks if there are any questions and tries to answer them as clearly as possible. I was surprised at some of the questions.



Rev. Faulconer and Rev. Ueda share a meal with members after services (above). Preparations for interfaith activities (right).

For example: “What happens when we die? What is rebirth by Karma (Rinne)? What is cause and effect (En)? What is the meaning of the sutra we read today?” I was amazed at the connection the minister had with the members!

In Japanese temples, there is little time to communicate with members. It is difficult for the minister to talk with members on a personal level.

A TEMPLE OPEN TO ALL: The GNE organizes several activities. For example, every week they hold Shodaigyo (chanting the Odaimoku) and classes on reading the sutra for beginners. There are monthly classes on the history of Buddhism and introductions to the teachings of other Buddhist sects. For more intermediate members, there are detailed explanations of more difficult sutras. Other activities include copying the sutras (shakyo) and services for children (hoyo), accompanied with music and songs.

These activities are on Sunday afternoons or weekday evenings so that members can participate more easily. They are also broadcast on the Internet so anyone living far away can easily join in. While I was there, new people were always joining services. Some came out of curiosity. For them, the sangha was something different. While not everyone joins as members, this is a productive way to make Nichiren Shu known in the U.S.

In Japan, members come to the temple only for memorial services or funerals. I feel we can adopt some of the activities of the GNE in Japan.

ADAPTING TO DIFFERENT NEEDS: All sermons at GNE are in English. This is an important aspect of propagation. The sutra book (kyobon) is in both English and Romanized Japanese (romaji) so that everyone can understand the sermons and participate in reading the sutra. Other than the introductory prayers (Shomyo) and the sutra itself (Dokkyo), everything is conducted in English. Also when explaining Buddhism, while special terms are used in the original text, the other parts are explained in English.

Some Japanese believe that a sutra book has to be in Japanese and that propagation has to be done in the traditional style. However, both the Buddha and Nichiren Shonin used “finding the most appropriate means to teach followers” (Taiki Seppo). It is important to use a means that fits the situation for each follower.

In Japan, we use different approaches for propagation. Most important is to realize the basics of spreading the Lotus Sutra and where ministers are stationed.



I realized that we need to dismiss what can be dismissed and look at the core of things. This realization blew my mind, because it is so basic!

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Rev. Faulconer participates in interfaith activities with other religions. These include not only Catholic and Protestant Christianity, but also Judaism and Islam. The sangha held a Thanksgiving interfaith event focused on religious massacres around the world. We watched a documentary about Rwanda and had a discussion afterwards. I found this to be a very educational and fruitful experience.

These interfaith activities gave me unique opportunities to visit other religious facilities and to learn more about other religions.

WHY I RECOMMEND THIS PROGRAM: I cannot include in one report the countless experiences I had at GNE. Despite my poor knowledge of English, I realized that any ability is an important tool. I used this tool to keep moving forward. The 90 days spent studying English and living in the U.S. have been a huge turning point for me. To experience a situation where propagation was carried out so naturally was wonderful. This will surely be mental nourishment for my propagation activities in the future.

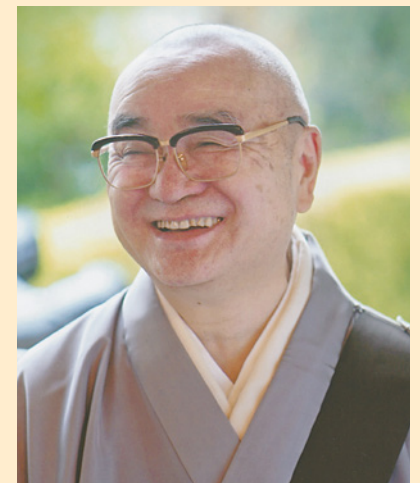
There are many other merits of this program. Before I went to the U.S., I could not greet people properly. When I could not explain something well, I became embarrassed. After going to the U.S., I realized that if one tries earnestly to explain something, even using a weak tool, like my English, one can move understanding forward.

Boston is filled with history, and I enjoyed visiting museums and historic sites. During the time that I was in the U.S., there were events, including Halloween, Thanksgiving, Black Friday, and Hanukkah, with which Japanese people are not familiar. I encourage anyone interested in the U.S. to experience this worthwhile program.

REVEREND KANNO PREACHES (29)

“Even if we have no particular understanding when we chant ‘Namu Myoho Renge Kyo,’ we will certainly quit the evil path.”

—Hokke Daimoku-sho



Particular Understanding

Some say loudly, “Shakyamuni Buddha did not perform funeral services.” Others claim, “the Buddha did not give ‘precept names’ (to people who have died),” or “the funeral service is useless.” This understanding is superficial. Let us not be deceived.

“Particular understanding” of Namu Myoho Renge Ryo also includes the understanding of the Lotus Sutra. However, we should understand Nichiren Shonin’s words to say: Even if we do not have a “particular understanding” of the Sutra, it is important to chant Odaimoku, believing Shakyamuni Buddha and Nichiren Shonin truly exist in this world and show their compassion towards us.

The teachings from Buddha’s lifetime are popularly known as the “Eighty-four thousand Dharma-gates.” Those who have attained the understanding and practice of all these teachings have the honor of being called “Tripitaka Master.” This title is for the monk who has mastered three divisions of the Buddhist scriptures: sutras, precepts and commentaries.

Nichiren Shonin read through all the scriptures of these three divisions three times. “Particular understanding” is the word which can be used to describe the attainment of such a person. For us, “faith” is the word.

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

Nichiren Shonin's Shokutaku (4) Proclaiming Nichiren Buddhism

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph.D.

Nichiren Shonin's original spiritual instructor was Dozen-bo. He was the resident priest of the hermitage of Dozen in the compound of Seicho-ji Temple. Rencho was Nichiren Shonin's name before proclaiming Nichiren Buddhism. Rencho left Seicho-ji and spent years in the centers of Buddhism in Japan: Kamakura, Kyoto and Nara. When he returned, he went to the hermitage of Dozen-bo.

Rencho visited Seicho-ji Temple to report to his former teacher about his training and what he had learned. Dozen-bo was glad to see his student again after such a long time. The priests and followers were expecting to hear the most advanced philosophy of Amitaba Buddha because the Buddhism of Amitaba Buddha was very popular in this temple at that time. But in his heart, Nichiren Shonin was determined to establish the religion of the Lotus Sutra.

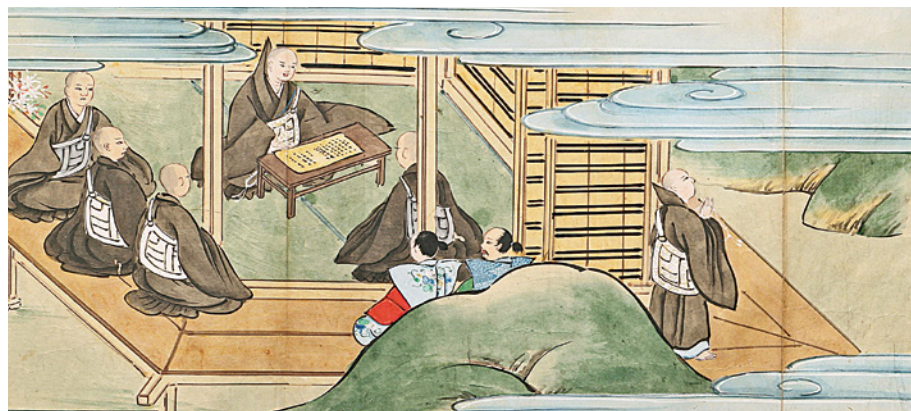
Rencho went up on a hill facing the sun, early in the morning on the 28th

day of the fourth month in 1253, chanted the Daimoku of the Lotus Sutra for the first time and declared that Nichiren Buddhism had begun. "Nichiren Shonin Chugasan" (preserved at Kyoninji Temple, Chiba Prefecture) shows the scene of the Proclamation of Nichiren Buddhism. After Rencho met Dozen-bo, he chanted the Daimoku to the rising sun. He changed his name to Nichiren. "Nichi" meaning the sun and "Ren" meaning "The Lotus Sutra."

"Ko Nyudo-dono Gohenji" is Nichiren Shonin's letter of gratitude addressed to Ko no Nyudo on Sado Island. Ko no



Nichiren Shonin's food for spring. Wakame seaweed with seasoned myoga (Japanese ginger), Mekabu seaweed, laver seaweed soup and dried octopus.



Scene of the Proclamation of Nichiren Buddhism, Nichiren Shonin Chugasan, preserved at Kyoninji Temple, Chiba Prefecture.

Nyudo, presented sweet, high-quality laver seaweed, wakame seaweed, komo seaweed, and dried octopus to Nichiren Shonin at Minobusan. The letter is dated the 12th day of the fourth month in 1275. From this letter, we understand that Ko no Nyudo and his wife presented some items to Nichiren Shonin while he was in exile on Sado Island. After Nichiren Shonin went to Minobusan, they visited him bringing many gifts. They were always considerate towards Nichiren Shonin after he moved from Sado Island to Kamakura and then to Minobusan.

It seems that this married couple did not have any children. Nichiren Shonin taught them that according to the

doctrine of the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha was their father, and Nichiren Shonin was their son. This relationship was active in Kamakura because of the connection through past lives with them. Nichiren Shonin admired their eager faith and encouraged them to continue the faith of the Lotus Sutra.

Kominato, Nichiren Shonin's birthplace in Southern Chiba, was a coastal area with an abundance of marine life. Believers who lived on Sado Island knew that, and they sent familiar seaweed and other gifts of the sea to Minobusan. The warm-hearted feelings of Ko no Nyudo and his wife towards Nichiren Shonin are depicted in the story.

KAIKYOSHI OVERSEAS TRAINEE

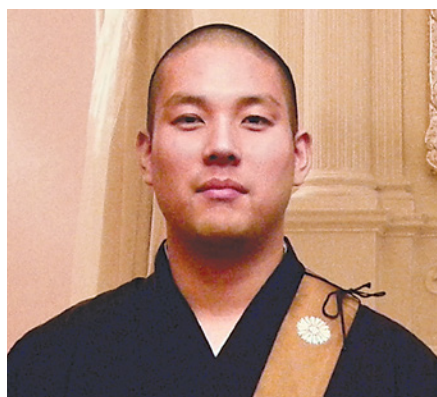
Training in Europe

In 1986, I was born in a Nichiren Shu Temple in Tokyo. From the time I was a child, my family told me to become a minister. I never questioned this path. However, I still wanted to learn about "the other world," meaning to have experiences studying and working outside the temple.

My first trip abroad was to the United Kingdom when I was 15. This motivated me to study foreign languages, and I worked hard on my English studies in high school.

In university, I studied Spanish and learned about the diversity of dialects in South America. I took a year-long trip in North and South America to investigate dialects and improve my Spanish. I was shocked to find many difficult conditions we do not find in Japan, such as poverty, child labor, illiteracy, etc.

This was the turning point for me to become a Buddhist minister. I wanted to help those suffering and make them



Rev. Keiji Oshima sees languages as tools to build relationships all over the world.

happy. I always felt I had received favors from others, and I wanted to return them in a way no other person could. This is why I made up my mind to become a Nichiren Shu minister.

Since October, I have been training to become a Kaikyoshi (overseas missionary) in Europe. I spent three months in the U.K. under Rev. Kanto

Tsukamoto and have just started another three-month training in Italy under Rev. Shoryo Tarabini. To work in a temple abroad is the best way for me to use the abilities I have. As my second language is Spanish, I would like to propagate the teaching of Nichiren Shu especially in Spanish and also to translate materials for Spanish-speaking people. I would like to learn as many languages as possible so I can build relationships throughout the world. It is like building a bridge that connects one place to another.

I would like to give sermons related to our daily lives. From whatever we have experienced in the past, are experiencing now and will experience in the future, we should be able to learn something about Buddhism. I hope that I can help people find the teachings of Buddhism and Nichiren Shu and connect these teachings with what happens in their own lives. —Rev. Keiji Oshima

KAIKYOSHI OVERSEAS TRAINEE

Heading for America

At the Shumuin, on January 27, Rev. Koshin Oshio, Director of the Nichiren Shu Missionary Department, designated Rev. Eko Murakami of Myoryu-ji Temple as a Kaikyoshi Overseas Trainee.

Rev. Murakami will start her training at the Los Angeles Betsuin, helping with their preparations for the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Nichiren Shu in North America. Then she will report to the Seattle Nichiren Buddhist Church. —Rev. Kanjo Bassett



Rev. Eko Murakami receives her designation as a Kaikyoshi Overseas Trainee from Rev. Koshin Oshio.

Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Nichiren Shu in North America

By Bishop Shokai Kanai

Near the end of the 19th century, thousands of Japanese immigrants came to North America, seeking a new life filled with hope. Among them were many Nichiren Shu devotees. In 1914, Rev. Kanjo Asahi was dispatched to California to propagate the Odaimoku and set up a place of worship for the immigrants. This year marks the centennial of the establishment of Nichiren Shu in North America.

On June 28 and 29, there will be a grand celebration commemorating the 100th anniversary of Nichiren Shu propagation in North America

at the Los Angeles Nichiren Shu Betsuin.

The events will include ceremonies expressing gratitude and appreciation towards all the deceased ministers who dedicated their lives to spreading the Odaimoku in North America.

Appreciation will also be given to the current ministers, members, the Japanese-American Society, local friends and enterprises that have helped build up Nichiren Shu in North America over the past 100 years.

The Honorable Nisso Uchino, Archbishop of Nichiren Shu and Chief Abbot of Minobusan Kuonji Temple, will lead the Grand Ceremony on Sunday.

Please make plans to join us for the celebration in Los Angeles this June.

JUNE 28 Saturday Events

- 9:30 a.m. Memorial Service for all NONA Deceased Ministers at the Los Angeles Betsuin
- 1:00 p.m. Kito Blessing by Tokyo District Priests
- 4:00 p.m. Lecture by Dr. Jacqueline Stone at the Doubletree Hilton Hotel
- 6:00 p.m. Banquet at the Doubletree Hilton Hotel

JUNE 29 Sunday Events

- 10:00 a.m. Grand Ceremony at the Los Angeles Betsuin
- 2:00 p.m. Shodai Angya and Street Preaching in the Little Tokyo Area of Los Angeles



TEMPLE EVENTS



Las Vegas, Kannonji Temple Bishop Shokai Kanai

Otakiage at Kannonji

The Kannonji Temple of Nevada held the otakiage, a ceremony to burn old religious items and tea whisks on January 26. This service is to show our appreciation towards the ofuda, o-ihai, amulets and other religious items and request the spirits to leave these items and return to the universe. Since it was the first time to hold such a service in the temple parking lot, we found out at the last minute that we needed a special fire permit. Fortunately, one of our friends who works for the Las Vegas Fire Department helped us get the permit almost overnight.

Nichiren Mission of Hawaii Bishop Chishin Hirai

Propagation in Hawaii

Last year, I was installed as Head Minister and Bishop of the Hawaii District. This is my third assignment to Hawaii.

The original Nichiren Mission in Hawaii started in 1902 to commemorate the 650th Anniversary of the establishment of Nichiren Shu. The first temple was raised deep in the sugar cane fields on the island of Hawaii. In 2003, we had five temples to celebrate the 750th Anniversary of the establishment of Nichiren Shu. Today, the main temple, Nichiren Mission of Hawaii (Betsuin), is on the island of Oahu. It has an elegant main hall and a large pond filled with lotus flowers.

In 2014, the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii is facing many challenges. The biggest challenge is the lack of a common understanding of what our problems are. When I arrived and spoke with members, everybody pointed out different issues. In some cases, people talked about the same issue from different perspectives. If we cannot see our problems clearly, we cannot sort them out. My task was first to identify the many challenges, and then to organize and prioritize them.

We called a special meeting, the "Betsuin Conference," to discuss these challenges. From the discussions at the conference, we created five categories: ministers, members, property, activities and finance. We then organized five special committees to focus on each category for a year. The committees will organize and define the problems, find their causes and draw up action plans. We will execute those plans in 2015.

All propagation in the world is precious. We are committed to realizing our founder's wish, "May all living beings under the heavens and within the four seas live in accordance with the Wonderful Dharma." 2021, seven years from now, will be the 800th Anniversary of Nichiren Shonin's birth. Ministers in Hawaii have already started discussing how to celebrate this auspicious occasion.

My long-term goal is to maintain our temple and make the Hawaii District prosperous. Our greatest challenges today are developing and maintaining the Hawaii District, and strengthening the foundation of our temples.

Southeast Asia Sangha By Rev. Kangyo Noda

Visit to Sri Lanka

We first visited Sri Lanka December 12-16, 2013, to meet with a group interested in learning the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Shonin.

On the first day, we went to the home of the group leader, Mr. Gemunu Rana-soora. About 40 members gathered there. We recited the Sutra and Odaimoku with them. After chanting, we explained the Dharma and shared information about the Omandala and Juzu.

The next morning, we visited at a member's house and held a service for about 50 members. Then we traveled to Lunuwila, to join a special kindergarten graduation ceremony at Minobusan Betsuin Temple. Rev. Yoshimura from Minobusan conducted the graduation ceremony. The members were grateful to recite the sutra and Odaimoku with priests at the temple. Rev. Dhamma, who looks after the temple and kindergarten, and Rev. Yoshimura talked with the members after the ceremony.

On the last day, we visited another member's home and conducted a prayer service with about 50 members for the souls of their ancestors and deceased friends. After the service, they shared questions about the Omandala and the teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha.

It was a great opportunity to meet many new people who sincerely pursue their



study and practice of the Lotus Sutra. Before meeting them, we had been keeping in touch and sharing the Dharma by Skype meetings. We are making efforts to spread the teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha and Nichiren Shonin and to build a strong foundation in Sri Lanka.

Myoken-ji Temple, Houston, Texas Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett

Myoken-ji Temple in Houston continues to promote interfaith exchange and dialogue. We were invited to participate in the interfaith service on February 2 at the closing ceremonies for the 26th Annual National Conference on LGBT Equality: Creating Change. Over 4,000 participants from around the United States joined a five-day program featuring nearly 400 workshops and training sessions.

We vigorously chanted the Jigage and Odaimoku to open the interfaith service and closed it with tossing the mamemaki in observance of Setsubun. It was the first time many of the participants had heard the Odaimoku or participated in the Setsubun service. Meri Eckhoff and Christopher Murillo portrayed the demons, to the delight of the audience.



Christie Carrington and I also took part in the Houston Interfaith Ministries 2014 Women's Retreat, entitled "The Ways of Women—Ways We Communicate." The retreat had many wonderful, thought-provoking workshops. We enjoyed talks from Diane Untermyer, the wife of former U.S. ambassador to Qatar, and author Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. We made new friends, connected with women of different faith traditions and discovered considerable common ground. This retreat has always been a unique platform for sharing the teachings of Nichiren Shonin and the Lotus Sutra.

Daiseionji Temple Wipperfuerth, Germany By Rev. Shokei Steffens

Myohokkezan Daiseionji Temple was established in 2000 in Wipperfuerth, a small town about an hour by car from Duesseldorf. Wipperfuerth was designated as a *Stadt* (city) in the 13th century and was a member of the *Hansebund*, a federation of states in northern Germany.

The city has a population of about 24,000. Over half of the residents are Catholic, and there are nine conservative churches with large congregations. Many followers have questions and concerns and would like to see changes made, but they are concerned about confronting the powerful Catholic Church.

In this difficult environment we have completed several projects for propagating the Lotus Sutra. We have two main goals



for Daiseionji Temple: (1) Engage in conversations and communicate with various religions; and (2) Build a Research Center for Integrated Learning Skills.

We are working day and night in order to meet our goals.

North Carolina Sangha Rev. Ryusho Jeffus

New Publications Available

Two new books I have written in English are now available on Amazon. The first, "Lecture on the Lotus Sutra," lays out major themes from the sutra and covers them in seven chapters. The book also explores how we as modern practitioners approach the Lotus Sutra.

The second book, "Lotus Path: Practicing the Lotus Sutra, Volume 1" is a collection of short essays about ordinary life experiences. It looks at things we might experience in our daily lives, such as storm drains or umbrellas, in new ways. Each essay concludes with several questions for the reader to meditate upon.



Calendar for April–May 2014

APR 8	Hanamatsuri (Buddha's Birthday)
APR 15-20	Nakayama Hokekyoji Senbu-e (1,000 Recitations of the Lotus Sutra)
APR 27-29	Ikegami Honmonji Senbu-e (1,000 Recitations of the Lotus Sutra)

APR 28	The 762 Rikkyo Kaishu-e (762nd Anniversary of the Founding of the Order)
MAY 12	The 754 Izu Honan-e (Ceremony honoring the 754th Anniversary of the Izu Persecution)
MAY 21-23	Kaikyoshi Conference

Compiled by Rev. Kaikei Ochiai

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