

Nichiren Shu News

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By Rev. Hosho Higuchi

"Hello, everyone! My name is Nisso Uchino. I am very glad to meet you all!"

With these English words, our smiling 88-year-old Archbishop greeted the members of the Los Angeles Nichiren Shu Betsuin Temple upon his arrival on Friday, June 27. So began the 100th Anniversary Celebration of the Nichiren Order in North America (NONA).

On Saturday morning, June 28, Overseas and International Ministers with NONA, led by Shomyo Master Bishop Nisshu Hayami, performed a memorial service for all ministers who had come to North America and given their lives to spreading the Wonderful Dharma. The ministers had been training since February under the guidance of Bishop Hayami, Rev. Kojun Hasumi, Rev. Ryujun Endo, Rev. Shunko Kawasaki and Rev. Bunshu Hasami in performing Shomyo and conducting themselves during the ceremony. They even took time during the Overseas Ministers Conference in May to hone their skills and make sure everything was perfect for the ceremony.

After the Kito Blessing from the Tokyo District Shuhoshi and Dr. Jacqueline Stone's lecture at the Doubletree Hotel in the Little Tokyo area of Los Angeles, there was a grand banquet to welcome Archbishop Uchino and his entourage. Several hundred dedicated Nichiren Shu members from around the world joined the festivities. Speeches of welcome and congratulations came from the Archbishop and Bishop Bungyo Yoshida, President of the Nichiren Shu Overseas Propagation Association. Throughout the dinner, there were dance, music and calligraphy performances. The evening ended with a presentation of commemorative gifts, including the book, "A Century of Nichiren Buddhism in North America," which was created to mark the milestone.

On the morning of the second day of the 100th Anniversary event, The Grand Memorial Ceremony honoring the 100th

Anniversary of Nichiren Shu Buddhism in North America, was held at the Los Angeles Temple. Not only was this the ceremony for the 100th Anniversary in North America. It was also the kick-off event as we move closer to the 800th Anniversary of our Founder Nichiren Shonin's birth in 2022, about seven years from now.

This special ceremony was conducted by Nichiren Shu and officiated by Archbishop Uchino as Doshi, or Grand Master. Assisting the Archbishop were Bishop Nichiyu Mochida and Bishop Bungyo Yoshida, both of whom are Advisors to Nichiren Shu from Japan. Rev. Shokai Kanai, Bishop of the Nichiren Order of North America and Rev. Join Inoue, Head Minister of Los Angeles Nichiren Shu Betsuin Temple, served as Fukudoshi, also supporting the Archbishop.

Rev. Shojyu Toyoda acted as Shuho Doshi, or Special Prayer Master, with Rev. Taiga Inari and Rev. Joji Yoshizuka as Shuho Fukudoshi, supporting the Prayer Master. Other officiators were representatives from the Minobu-san Kuonji Temple and the Western Tokyo Shuho Ministers Association.

Archbishop Uchino addressed the audience with his words ("Goshinkyo") to express his sincere gratitude and respect to those who have devoted themselves to Nichiren Shu over the last 100 years.

"I am greatly honored and grateful to have the opportunity to officiate at the Grand Memorial Ceremony celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Nichiren Order of North America.

"I truly pay respect to the great achievements ministers and devotees made in the past in North America,

wishing that everyone present here today will be able to keep a faith devotedly in the Lotus Sutra, and that eternal peace will come to both countries, USA and Japan, as well as the whole world."

A congratulatory message from Nichiren Shu's Chief Administrator was presented by Rev. Momi Shiozaki, Director of General Affairs at Nichiren Shu Headquarters, as a proxy for Chief Administrator Junko Kobayashi. A message from Bishop Nichiyu Mochida, Advisor to Nichiren Shu and the Head Minister of Honzan Sogenji Temple, followed. To close out the ceremony, Rev. Shokai Kanai, Bishop of the Nichiren Order of North America, expressed his gratitude to the visiting officials and guests for attending. Afterward, everyone joined in a large group photo to commemorate the event.



From the foundation Rev. Kanjo Asahi laid in Los Angeles 100 years ago, Nichiren Shu in North America has grown to spread the Wonderful Dharman across the continent.



World Peace Kito Blessings

By Rev. Shoda Kanai

As part of the centennial celebration of NONA and the Los Angeles Betsuin, I along with over 20 Shuhoshi held a special service for World Peace on Saturday, June 28. Rev. Taijun Yajima of Kokokuji Temple led the service, assisted by Rev. Taiga Inari, head of the Western Tokyo Go-kito Practitioners' Assembly, Rev. Shojyu Toyoda, head of the Northern Tokyo District of Go-kito Practitioners, and Rev. Jyoji Yoshizuka, head of the Southern Tokyo District of Go-kito Practitioners. On Sunday, June 29, Rev. Shojyu Toyoda led a Kito Blessing as part of the Grand 100th Anniversary Ceremony.

Shuhoshi, also known as Kito priests, are those who have completed Aragyō training for conducting special blessings. Most of those conducting



these wonderful services were invited from the Tokyo North, South, East, and West Districts.

The world is currently in turmoil. There are many conflicts in various regions. There is no harmony. With this special blessing, we send our prayers of peace throughout the world with the power of the Odaimoku and Kito blessing.

It is very rare to see Kito blessings in America, especially with so many Shuhoshi. For Christine Tello-Lorenz, temple member of Nichiren Shu Sangha of Greater New England, this was her

first time to experience such a moving ceremony. "The Kito blessing was a thrilling and tremendously moving experience for me. I found it to be magical, sacred, uplifting and educational all at once!"

Another first timer, Erik Ruvalcava, a temple member of the Nichiren Shu Sangha of Texas, Myokenji Temple, was up on the stage as a videographer during these Kito ceremonies. He remarked, "I felt a powerful vibration while the priests were chanting the Lotus Sutra. The cadence of the mokusho stuck with me. It gave me goosebumps."

Nichiren Buddhists since the late 1990s. Her dissertation, *Some Disputed Writings in the Nichiren Corpus: Textual, Hermeneutical and Historical Problems*, provided a window into the ongoing debates in Japan regarding the authenticity issues surrounding many of the letters and essays attributed to Nichiren Shonin.

Her book, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism* is regarded as a groundbreaking work in the field of medieval Japanese studies. It is of great interest to Nichiren Buddhists for its insightful and informative review of Nichiren's life and teachings.

Dr. Stone's dissertation and articles are accessible online at her website: <https://www.princeton.edu/~jstone/index.html>



Dr. Stone delivers her lecture at the Doubletree Hotel to help commemorate the 100th anniversary.

Dr. Jacqueline Stone Delivers Lecture on What Makes Nichiren Buddhism Unique?

By Rev. Ryuei McCormick

Dr. Jacqueline Stone, Prof. of Japanese Religions at Princeton University, gave a lecture at the Doubletree Hotel in Los Angeles on Saturday, June 28th as one of the many events commemorating the centennial anniversary of the Los Angeles Temple. The topic of her lecture was "What Makes Nichiren Buddhism Unique?" In her lecture, Dr. Stone focused on three points: (1) Nichiren's exclusive practice of the Lotus Sutra,

(2) Nichiren's teaching that the Odaimoku encompasses all benefits including the attainment of awakening, and (3) the social dimension of practice and transformation due to the teaching that this world is to be regarded as the true pure land.

This was a wonderful opportunity for those gathered to hear Dr. Stone speak about Nichiren Buddhism. Her work has been followed by many

GROUPS FROM JAPAN AND WORLDWIDE GATHER FOR THE CELEBRATION

Led by Archbishop Uchino, many groups from all over Japan came to Los Angeles for the 100th Anniversary. Archbishop Uchino's entourage from Mount Minobu included Reverends Genryu Takano, Momi Shiozaki, Genryu Takano, Hoko Nadagami, Dairyō Tomikawa, and Kenno Koizumi. Another group of twenty-four members came from Minobu led by Rev. Waen Shibata.

There were 30 members who came from the the Western, Northern, and Southern Tokyo Metropolitan Districts.

The Western District was lead by Rev. Taijun Yajima of Kokokuji Temple and included Rev. Jungaku Ikeda, Nichiren Shu congressional senator representing the Western District of Tokyo. The Northern district of Tokyo was led by Rev. Shojyu Toyoda. The Southern district of Tokyo was led by Rev. Ryuko Ishii, head priest of Ryugenji Temple.

Nagoya City was represented by Rev. Choei Yamakawa, head administrator of the Nagoya

District Office, and head priest of Joshoji Temple. He was assisted by Rev. Enshun Fujiwara of Jyotokuji Temple. There were a total of 26 people from Nagoya.

There were also 21 members of the Nichiren Shu International Peace Network (NIPN) attending the celebration, led by Rev. Shunko Kawasaki of Myosoji Temple.

We were graced by the presence of past Overseas Ministers to North America, now in Japan, who brought their congregations. Rev. Ryuken Akahoshi, head priest of Myokenji Temple of Fukuyama City, Hiroshima Prefecture, brought 14 followers, while Rev. Gakugyo Matsumoto of Rengeji Temple in Minobu brought 11 members.

The principal administrative minister of Ikegami Honmonji, Rev. Houyu Nozaka came with its principal non-clerical leader, Yukiyasu Ikegami and his wife, Mana. Rev. Eiyo Ishii, head priest of Choshoji and director of the Logistical Committee on International Propagation, also attended.

Professor Naofumi Annaka of Rissho University, who has conducted studies on foreign missions, was present. Rev. Ryushi Kiuchi of Chomyoji and Rev. Genichi Oikawa of Honryuji, former deputies of the International Division of the Head Office of Nichiren Shu, were also present.

Rev. Shouki Takeuchi of Myoken-kaku-ji, who has made generous contributions to renovate the Los Angeles Temple, attended. Rev. Shosen Seki of Jokyoji Temple and his wife, Sandra (editor of *Nichiren Shu News*), also attended.



Besides those coming from Japan, several Nichiren Shu ministers from Europe attended with their members, including Rev. Kanto Tsukamoto of London, Rev. Shoryo Tarabini of Renkoji, Italy, and Rev. Shokei Steffens of Daiseion-ji, Germany.

The celebration had great support of the International Division of the Head Office of Nichiren Shu. Rev. Kobun Sasaki, Deputy of the International Division, led this effort. He was assisted by Rev. Kosho Imada and Rev. Kanjo Bassett in the International Division.

Finally, there are countless people, many of whom are members and friends of the various temples all over the world, who have collaborated for this landmark event. Though space does not allow us to name them all, it was through each and every one of these valuable efforts that the 100th anniversary celebration of Nichiren Shu propagation in North America became such a great success.

—Rev. Eisei Ikenaga, NBIC

Leading by following Nichiren Shonin's example: Rev. Kanjin Cederman finds great inspiration in the practice of street preaching. Ten members of the Young Priest Association took to the streets of Los Angeles to perform Shodai Angya.



TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

Shodai Angya and Street Preaching at the 100-Year Celebration

By Rev. Kanjin Cederman

For the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Nichiren Order of North America and the Los Angeles Minobusan Beikoku Betsuin, many people gathered from all over the world for this truly historic event. The last activity scheduled for the weekend was a tribute to our founder's famous practice of street preaching.

Ten members of the Young Priest Association, led by Rev. Koyu Matsu-mori of Ryukoji Temple and Rev. Kitai Koizumi of Kenponji Temple, performed Shodai Angya, walking and chanting for the 2.5 miles (4 km) from the Los Angeles temple to the Japanese American National Museum in downtown Los Angeles. They were met at the Museum by a dozen celebrants, including myself

and Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett. There Rev. Caine-Barrett and I began teaching the message of our founder, Nichiren Shonin, to everyone passing through the plaza. Dozens of people took time from their busy schedules to hear the message of the Lotus Sutra, much as they must have 750 years ago on the streets of Kamakura, Japan.

"True peace can only be achieved when humanity is restored and we all awaken our true potentials of becoming a Buddha. This is guaranteed in the Lotus Sutra," I shouted to the crowd. All those who stopped to participate were very supportive and gladly interacted, asking some thoughtful questions. I wondered how different this must have been during the time of Nichiren

Shonin, when people would not just throw insults but also stones and tiles. This simple action of standing up and proclaiming the Dharma in the public arena instilled in me the emotions of our founder and the determination of his message.

The action of faith demonstrated during this event made it clear to me the amazing courage and sacrifice of all the Kaikyoshi (overseas priests), who brought the teachings of Nichiren Shonin to America during times of hostility and hatred toward foreign ideas. We in North America are working to keep alive the spirit of the many great priests who have gone before us in spreading the teaching of the Lotus Sutra to the world as requested by our

founder. This practice of street preaching also serves as an example to all practitioners of the Lotus Sutra that we must not be afraid and must have courage to save suffering people with this teaching even though it may be hard. This is indeed the spirit in which Nichiren Shonin lived his amazing and inspirational life.



GETTING EVERYTHING READY

A Lot of Hard Work Goes into Preparation

By Ms. June Ren Takahashi, Member, Los Angeles Nichiren Shu Betsuin Temple

There was a long, continuous effort preparing for the 100th Anniversary Events. We are very pleased to have been able to celebrate such an important occasion. At the same time, it was such a big undertaking for such a small group of people. It took a lot of detailed planning for hosting such a

large number of guests, while we still performed our regular duties. The Fujinkai (Women's Group) worked to give our guests a warm welcome.

Publishing the 100th Anniversary program book took a lot of preparation. We are excited about the beautiful calendars, tote bags, banners and goods, prepared especially for this occasion. We repaired the floors and doors, installed a new fence around the temple



and freshened up some of the temple's exterior walls with paint. We wanted everything to look nice for the 100th Anniversary! Even with these special activities, we still held our semi-annual Chicken Teriyaki fundraiser in May.

We had looked forward to sharing quality time and having conversations



with our fellow Nichiren Buddhists. We hope that everyone enjoyed the scheduled events and the special banquet in Little Tokyo where Rev. Kanjo Asahi started our history 100 years ago.

2014 International Ministers Conference

From May 21-23, the Nichiren Shu Shumuin (Headquarters) hosted the annual Kaikyoshi and International Ministers Conference. Most of the year, ministers outside Japan practice alone with our sanghas. These annual meetings allow us to learn how other ministers grow their sanghas. It also helps develop friendship with our peers.

This year we heard reports from the various missions about their spreading the Dharma around the world. I always enjoy hearing these reports and listen carefully for what can help my mission. The problems of creating a sangha are universal; my difficulties are not unique.

Our discussions this year focused on Lay Leaders and their importance for spreading the Dharma. We also considered ways to improve training these leaders. Lay leaders

at our sangha in New England have been effective. They are passionate about spreading the Dharma and train intensely at our temple. Becoming a lay leader in our group requires several training retreats and consistent



dedication to the temple and its mission. This training is also a path for those with aspirations of becoming a minister.

In all our discussions at the conference, we agreed that lay leaders are a important part of our mission. They enable consistent services at our local temples even when a minister is away. They also allow the minister to be focused on being Doshi rather than covering all parts of the service. We noted that formal training is necessary to ensure lay leaders understand both basic Buddhist concepts and Nichiren doctrine. We believe it necessary to develop additional training of lay leaders and to document procedures for recognizing and, if needed, disciplining them.

Obviously there is more work to do. Our three-day conference ended with individual meetings with Shumuin officials and training with the Shomyo Masters. We said our goodbyes with hopes of seeing each other next year. It was a very good and productive meeting. —Rev. Ryuoh Faulconer

My Experience at the 2014 International Ministers Conference

I am grateful for the opportunity to join the International Ministers Conference this year. It was my second time attending the meeting and my second year as an overseas minister.

We learned a lot from each other about our experiences, leadership and firm faith to do propagation at temples throughout the world. It is not easy to spread the Dharma to people of different countries, languages, and cultures.

Although we face many challenges, I believe we are all doing our mission very well. This was a very good experience for me. I pray that the Buddha will always send His blessings and give us good health and guidance to carry out our mission. Thank you. With Gassho. —Rev. Ervinna Myofu

Nichiren Shu & Women (2)

By Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett

Gassui Goshō, A Letter on Menstruation, found in the Nyonin Goshō, is a revelation both for its topic and what it reveals about Nichiren Shōnin and the Lotus Sutra. It shows how frankly women sought his counsel on intimate issues in their lives. The name of the recipient of this letter is not known, but Nichiren Shōnin's well-considered and thorough response reveals a respect for his followers that remains relevant today.

The letter addresses two primary questions. The first is what to chant. Nichiren Shōnin's response is grounded in the Lotus Sutra: "You may chant the whole twenty-eight chapters, one chapter, one paragraph, one sentence or even one character of the Lotus Sutra a day. Or you may chant the Daimoku, 'Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō,' just once in a day or once in your whole life... Or you may rejoice with others who rejoice at hearing a voice chanting the Daimoku."

This enlightened response contrasts with strict religious leaders who dictate how followers should live and practice. Nichiren Shōnin is not dogmatic. His sutra-based reasoning leaves the manner of practice to the practitioner. The practitioner can thus follow her heart and choose personally relevant passages. This empowers the practitioner and brings her closer to the

practice. This flexibility makes the Lotus Sutra truly accessible. It also engenders intimacy with the entirety of the Lotus Sutra and shows the importance of the foundations of faith.

Nichiren Shōnin later wrote: "You should know that the merit of the Lotus Sutra is the same whether you chant the whole eight scrolls or just one scroll, one chapter, one stanza, one phrase, one character, or the Daimoku... One character of the Lotus Sutra is like this one drop of ocean water or one wish-fulfilling gem... The Lotus Sutra has innumerable merits; therefore, you may freely chant any of its chapters."

He reminds her that the Lotus Sutra is "the true teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha" with innumerable merits. His references to women illustrate Nichiren Shōnin's deep awareness of the difficult nature of a woman's practice. He praises his follower's faith in the Lotus Sutra despite being "born a female bound by the 'five hindrances' and 'three bonds.'"

Nichiren Shōnin continued: "Above all, Chapter 2, 'Expedients,' and Chapter 16, 'Duration of the Life of the Buddha,' are the most worthy chapters. The other 26 chapters are like branches and leaves of these two. Therefore, you should chant all of Chapters 2 and 16 for daily services. You may also practice writing these two chapters.

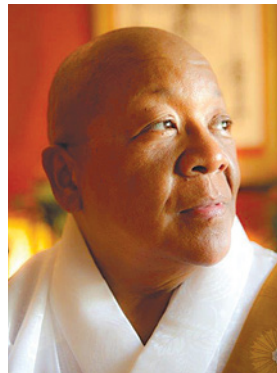
"Chapters 12 and 23...both preach the attainment of Buddhahood by women, but Chapter 12 is a branch of Chapter 2, and Chapter 23 is a branch of Chapter 16. Therefore, I recommend that you make a point of chanting Chapters 2 and 16 daily and the other chapters sometimes when you have free time."

This letter is rich with such passages on practice. His recommendation is not a doctrinal stance; it is a specific response to a particular practitioner. It also shapes our practice together as a worldwide sangha. The passage also helps us understand the choice of these chapters as a standard form.

that "we should not go against manners and customs of the country unless it means a serious breach of Buddhist precepts."

Then he declares that it would be a breach for a woman to set aside her practice during menstruation. He says those who advise against practice during a woman's cycle intend to "break your true faith" and to force "committing the sin of abandoning the true dharma by saying that practicing the Lotus Sutra during menstruation means showing disrespect to it."

Nichiren Shōnin has common-sense advice for practice. He could have said to refrain from practice and follow



Nichiren Shōnin is not dogmatic...

His sutra-based reasoning leaves the manner of practice in the hands of the practitioner. This empowers the practitioner and lets the practice serve her more closely. This flexibility makes the Lotus Sutra truly accessible.

The second question is about practice during menstruation. Nichiren Shōnin replied: "This is the anguish of every woman, which many people have tried to answer in the past...I can't think of any sutra or discourse showing dislike of menstruation...I believe menstruation isn't uncleanness coming from outside but a physiological phenomenon peculiar to women, and is indispensable for continuing the human race."

Nichiren Shōnin is candid about the prevailing social norms. He describes the doctrine of *Zuihōbini* or "adapting precepts to a locality" which specifies

local customs. Instead, Nichiren Shōnin responds with deep respect for his follower and gratitude for her faith. He honors the difficulty of practicing the Lotus Sutra, along with the specific difficulties of a woman's practice. He reminds her of the innumerable merits resulting from such practice. These are the "few words of joy" to encourage a continuing practice. They serve us today as well.

Myokei Caine-Barrett is the resident minister for the Myōken-ji Temple in Houston, Texas.

Embodiments of Compassion for Northeast Japan

Even after three years, the effects of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of March 2011 are still being felt. More than 18,000 people died. Over a million buildings were damaged, half of which were completely destroyed. Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan said in 2012, "In the 65 years since the end of World War II, this is the most difficult crisis for Japan."

Many people may believe that after three years, everything is now back to normal. Sadly, this is not true. There are still many projects helping to rebuild the area and support the survivors of this calamity.

In 2011, immediately at the beginning of the crisis, Professor Isao Yanagimoto of Minobusan University and Rev. Eishō Yoshida of Eishōji temple in Yamanashi Prefecture hurried to Northeast Japan to offer help to those in need. Like everyone who went to assist, they were initially overwhelmed by the magnitude of the catastrophe.

After they took stock of the miserable situation, they discussed how best they could address the needs of the people. They decided on a project to build a statue of the Affectionate Mother World-Voice-Perceiver Bodhisattva to comfort the souls of deceased victims and their relatives. They knew the statue would also be a spiritual symbol of reconstruction from the disaster. Since over 18,000 people had lost their precious lives, they decided to include 20,000 small crystal balls at the foot of the statue to comfort these souls: one for each victim.

In June 2011, Professor Yanagimoto and Rev. Yoshida met with members of the Department for Production and Restoration of Buddhist Statues in the Minobusan University Oriental Culture Research Center. Initially, they had no financial support.

However, as people heard about it, donations began to stream in without their asking.

The statue is now complete. It will be enshrined in Iwate Prefecture, one of the areas most devastated by the disaster. There are now plans for two more statues. One will be enshrined in Miyagi Prefecture. The destination for the other has not yet been determined. It will go somewhere in Northeast Japan.

Professor Yanagimoto and his assistants at Minobusan University are offering these statues with their sincere hearts to share hope with the souls who lost so much, and for reconstruction from this disaster.

—Rev. Shingyo Imai

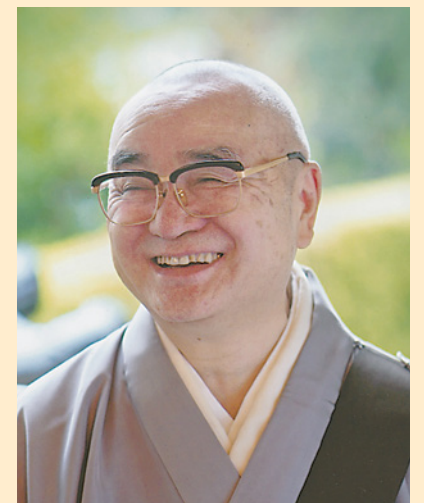


Rev. Imai stands with Rev. Tengen Hamajima, President of Minobusan University, beside the statue of Kannon destined for Iwate Prefecture.

REVEREND KANNO PREACHES (31)

"This sutra opens the gate of expedients and reveals the seal of the truth."

—The Lotus Sutra
Chapter X: The Teacher of the Dharma



The Truth

From the time the Buddha Shakyamuni started expounding until he taught the Lotus Sutra was forty and some years. In that time, He had not yet revealed the truth. Instead, he adopted various expedients, expounding His teachings in many ways according to capacities of the people. He described this process in The Sutra of Innumerable Meanings. His activities in those years were meant to prepare us for when he finally expounds the Lotus Sutra. "To open the gate" means to set aside expedient teachings and leave them behind us as we start on the path to awakening. "The seal of the truth" is the Lotus Sutra itself. This is what the Buddha means by "opens the gate of expedients and reveals the seal of the truth."

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

Nichiren Shonin's Shokutaku (6) Tatsunokuchi Persecution

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph.D.

In 1253 at the age of 31, Nichiren Shonin began propagating the Lotus Sutra in Kamakura. In 1260, after admonishing the Kamakura Shogunate in his *Rissho Ankoku Ron*, he began encountering successive persecutions. Defeated by Nichiren Shonin in the prayer contest for rain, Ninsho (1217-1303) slandered Nichiren Shonin to the key members of the Shogunate. Ninsho was the high priest of the Ritsu (Precept) School of Kamakura Buddhism. With the support of the Hojo Shogunal Regent family, Ninsho built several temples in Kamakura, including Gokurakuji Temple. Ninsho also undertook a number of social welfare projects such as building hospitals and roads. Nichiren Shonin criticized these charitable activities as hypocrisy, done only for the sake of political power.

In the afternoon on the 12th day of the ninth month in 1271, Heino

Saemon, a key member of the Kamakura Shogunate, took many soldiers, attacked Nichiren Shonin's hermitage in Kamakura City and arrested him. The judgment of the Shogunate was to exile him to Sado Island. However, later that night there was a change in plans. Nichiren Shonin was taken to the execution ground at Tatsunokuchi, outside Kamakura, to be beheaded.

Nichiren Shonin's execution was to be at midnight. Many disciples and lay



Nichiren Shonin's meals for autumn.
Soybeans with konbu (sea tangle), kaki (persimmon), and seasoned konyaku (devil's tongue).



Scene of the Tatsunokuchi Persecution. From the Nichiren Shonin Chugasan, preserved at Kyoninji Temple, Chiba Prefecture.

followers waited on the beach chanting the Daimoku in tears. Suddenly a strange object, as bright as a full moon, shone on the coastal waters. Rain clouds appeared, and strong winds blew. Heavy rain began to fall, and huge waves rose in the sea. The object moved from the southeast and flew over the sea towards the northwest. With all his might, the samurai soldier who was assigned to behead Nichiren Shonin raised his sword. Then a thunderbolt struck, breaking the sword into three pieces. Heino Saemon and his soldiers were

astonished and jumped aside. Because of these highly unusual phenomena, the Shogunate decided to exile Nichiren Shonin rather than killing him.

In "Daizu Goshō," A Letter on Soybeans, Nichiren Shonin praises the merit of offering soybeans to the Lotus Sutra. He said that a single soybean offered to the Lotus Sutra will become lotus flowers beautifying the entire eternal Buddha's Dharma world. Soybeans were an important vegetable protein, used as the main ingredient to make soy sauce and miso.

Farewell Venerable Joyo Ogawa

By Bishop Chishin Hirai
Nichiren Mission of Hawaii

Venerable Joyo Ogawa, the 12th Bishop of the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii, passed away on May 18, 2014 at the age of 77.

Bishop Ogawa was born July 28, 1936 at Choshoji Temple in Gifu Prefecture. After graduate school at Rissho University, Rev. Yukio Sakamoto, who was president of the university, encouraged him to propagate abroad.

It took eight long days of traveling by sea to reach Honolulu. Rev. Ryue Ikoma

met him at the dock and brought him to the Betsuin. This was Bishop Ogawa's first step to propagation in the U.S.

On January 2, 1962, he sailed to San Francisco. From there, he went to Los Angeles to work at the Mission there. Six months later, he became the head priest of the Salt Lake City Nichiren Buddhist Church. In 1968, he was transferred to the Sacramento Nichiren Buddhist Church. While there, he helped build the new Hondo and social



hall and became the sixth Bishop of the Nichiren Order of North America.

In 1989, after Bishop Senchu Murano retired, Venerable Ogawa became the 12th Bishop of the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii. Soon after his installation, several devoted members asked him to build a new Hondo. It was a life or death project for Bishop Ogawa. He solicited donations in Hawaii and Japan. Despite an aneurism and physical breakdown, he ignored the advice of his doctors to take a complete rest. The long awaited dream finally was realized when the new Hondo was dedicated in 2003.

Venerable Ogawa retired in 2009 after serving 20 years as Bishop in Hawaii. Though he was planning to enjoy his life after retirement, he was brought back as acting Bishop in Hawaii in 2012.

Bravely fighting cancer for many years, he left this world at 9:18 p.m. on May 18. Coincidentally, it was the same day that Bishop Gyoun Takagi founded the first temple in Hawaii.

Bishop Ogawa was loved by everyone for his calm and loving personality. He is the only minister who has built temples in both North America and Hawaii. Venerable Ogawa's deep faith, rich knowledge and experience will be remembered forever.

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.

Interviews with NONA Ministers

By Rev. Shinkyo Warner

Rev. Ryuken Akahoshi came to the San Jose, California Myokakuji Bestuin in July, 1982 after completing his training as an Overseas Minister. He was the Resident Minister of the Portland, Oregon temple from November, 1986 until becoming the first General Manager of the Nichiren Buddhist International Center in September, 2002. In January, 2007 he was again the Resident Minister of the Portland Temple until May 2012 when he became the Resident Minister of Myokenji Temple in Hiroshima.

Why did you want to come to North America?

I had known about overseas propagation since I was a boy. One of my grandfather's disciples, Rev. Ryuun Yasuda, was an Overseas Missionary at the Los Angeles temple many years ago. When I was ten years old, one of my instructors at Shami (novice priest) school, Rev. Kanyu Ohsawa, was going

to the U.S. as an Overseas Missionary. When I started my training as a young Nichiren-Shu minister at Joenji Temple in Tokyo, Bishop Shingaku Oikawa was founding a new temple in San Jose, California. He asked me to help at the San Jose Temple because it was brand new and needed new activities.

Bishop Oikawa's purpose to found the San Jose Temple was to spread the Wonderful Dharma and the Odaimoku to all people in U.S. I was so impressed by his great dream that I wanted to help accomplish his dream.

What surprised you most about North America?

About one year after I came to San Jose, one of the senior ministers in San Francisco, Bishop Nippo Shaku, started his lecture series at the San Jose Temple. He spoke every Friday night for about two months. There were about 15 to 20 people attending each lecture and most of them were Caucasians.

Bishop Shaku gave very high level lectures about fundamental Buddhism.

Due to my English skill those days I was not able to understand his lecture well, but I could tell it was high level teaching. All the attendees listened to his lecture so intensely. I realized that there were many people in U.S. who are interested in Buddhism and its teaching.

What made the greatest impression on you in North America?

I was most impressed by the great potential to spread Nichiren Buddhism in North America. In general, Buddhism has been popular in North America, so Nichiren-Shu has a great chance to spread the Odaimoku to those who have never practiced Buddhism.

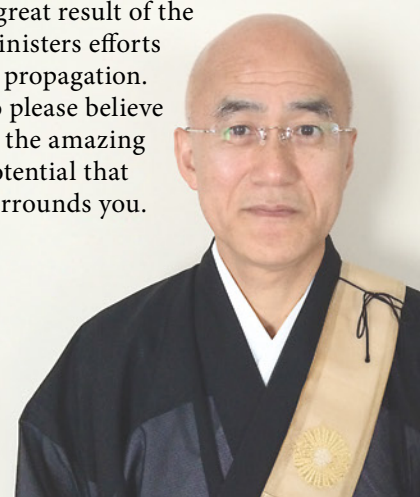
What advice do you have for people spreading the Wonderful Dharma in North America?

One of the most important teachings of Nichiren Buddhism is the principle of Jogyo Bosatsu, Never Despising Bodhisattva. We respect all beings because every being possesses Buddha nature equally. It is the most necessary teaching for countries with a diverse population. As Nichiren-Shu ministers,

we should be a role model for showing people how to respect each other.

Patience is also important. It takes time to spread the Dharma and the Odaimoku to new people. As everyone has experienced, many new people are seeking a religion that would fit in their way of thinking and life. Therefore, many people come to the temple and leave.

However, even if one out of one hundred newcomers stays and continues the Odaimoku practice in their life, it is a great result of the ministers efforts of propagation. So please believe in the amazing potential that surrounds you.



Reverend Akahoshi spent 30 years spreading the Wonderful Dharma in North America.

TEMPLE EVENTS

Hilo Tsunami Memorial Prayer Rev. Hosho Sugawara

May 23 is the Memorial Day for the 1960 Tsunami that devastated Kamehameha Avenue in Hilo, Hawaii Island. Every year since 2010, we have been holding a Shodai-Angya (holy prayer walk while chanting the Odaimoku) and a memorial service in front of the Tsunami Memorial Clock, which stopped at 1:04 a.m., the moment the tsunami struck.



Among the 60 people who lost their lives in this disaster were relatives of Hilo Nichiren Mission members. Several members of the Hilo Nichiren Mission assembled and chanted the Odaimoku this year in front of the Memorial Clock. Mr. Takayoshi Kanda, 96, who lost his father in the tsunami, has been visiting the Memorial Clock to clean and pray every morning for 54 years. He has been looking forward to joining us for the Memorial Service since last year, and he was able to join in this time. The Hilo Nichiren Mission members' sincere voices chanting the Odaimoku spread over Hilo Bay.

NONA's Third Annual Diversity Seminar

Christine Tello-Lorenz,
New England Sangha Member

Temple members from across the United States gathered at the NBIC in Hayward, California on February 28 to study diversity in Buddhism. We discussed our differences, including gender, race and age, focusing on working to appreciate



these differences. Many of us shared our experiences of discrimination. These stories opened our hearts and reminded us of the suffering in the world caused lack of respect towards others.

We covered teachings of the Lotus Sutra and its role models including the Bodhisattvas Kanzeon and Fugen. Bishop Kanai urged us to care for ourselves and to be patient in our practice. We also reviewed Ichinen Sanzen: how the ten worlds, ten factors and three realms teach diversity, equality and integration. We discussed Nichiren Shonin's model for leadership in the San Dai Hiho: the three great secret Dharmas. His key message was to appreciate our differences and encourage everyone on the path to the Buddha's enlightenment.

Roy Secord, attending from the New York Daiseion-Ji Center, commented, "The Lotus Sutra is the teaching of equality. This seminar channels our beliefs into actions. It leads to greater respect within both our sangha and the beautiful mosaic of society."

After three days of introspection and inspiration, we all humbly departed with new friendships, and a deeper commitment to the Wonderful Dharma. Thanks to Bishop Kanai, Neil Faulconer, Rev. Caine-Barrett, Rev. Kumakura and John Petry for facilitating a lively and effective seminar. Namu Myo Ho Renge Kyo

Focolare Movement Conference

Rev. Shokei Steffens,
Daiseionji Temple
Wipperfuerth, Germany

The Focolare Movement was founded in 1943 by Chiara Lubich to promote the ideals of universal brotherhood. It has over six million members including Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Jainists, and Sikhs, plus those with no religious affiliation.

From March 17-20, 2014, Rev. Nissho Takeuchi, Rev. Shohaku Kodoi, Rev. Ichiyu Shaku, resident minister of Hokoji Temple, Gifu Prefecture, and I attended a meeting for inter-religious dialogue that was hosted by the Focolare Movement.

Previous meetings have been dialogues between Buddhism and Christianity. This year, religious leaders of Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism were invited. 250 people attended from Japan, North and South America, Europe, Southeast Asia, Korea, Taiwan, Africa, and the Middle East.

Each priest briefly introduced the basic elements of their religion to the participants. Lay members then



talked about their ways of life including contributing to society, world peace, giving their love to the poor, their families, their friends, and their colleagues at work. Translators for 19 languages ensured all participants could understand the remarks.

The organizers made it look easy, but it takes an extraordinary effort to organize a session like this. Our gratitude to everyone in the Focolare Movement who made this meeting possible.

Bon Dance in Maui

Rev. Tetsudo Takasaki

The Puunene Nichiren Mission's annual Hatsu-Bon Service and Bon Dance Festival were held on Saturday, June 14, 2014. Rev. Tetsudo Takasaki, the head priest of Puunene Nichiren Mission, was assisted in the service by two guest priests: Rev. Eisei Ikenaga, manager of the Nichiren Buddhist International Center (NBIC) in Hayward, CA, and Rev. Hosho Sugawara of the Hilo Nichiren Mission.

"Hatsu-Bon" is the first Bon season for our newly deceased spirits. During the service, we offered prayers for two members who had passed away since last year's Bon season. After the service, Rev. Takasaki and Rev. Sugawara provided a Kito Blessing. This prayer was for safety during the festival and good health for all the participants.

The Bon Dance went from 8:00 to 10:00 in the evening. Over 300 people participated, dancing continuously for two hours. Members and followers of the Puunene Nichiren Mission spent several weeks preparing food items for sale and cleaning the mission building and grounds. Food this year included lima-bean manju, sushi rolls, chow-fun noodles, shoyu chicken, roast pork, curry rice, shaved ice, and cold drinks. Everyone enjoyed the dancing and the food at our Bon Dance Festival.

Wesak Festivities

Rev. Kangyo Noda

The Penang Nichiren Shu Buddhist Association, Hokkezan Ichinenji

Temple, celebrated Wesak on May 13. Wesak commemorates the birthday, Enlightenment, and Parinirvana of Shakyamuni Buddha. In most Southeast Asian countries, Wesak is a public holiday. Many Buddhists dedicate the entire day to paying respect to Shakyamuni Buddha, our Great Master.

All Buddhists, including members of the Penang Ichinenji Temple, go to temples and make offerings to the Buddha. We spent many hours decorating the main hall of our temple with flowers and the baby Buddha's statue. We worked many days preparing a beautiful floral float with colorful paper flowers to participate in the Wesak Procession organized by the Malaysian Buddhist Association.

On the morning of May 13, we conducted a Wesak ceremony at the main hall of our temple. More than 100 members attended and chanted the Lotus Sutra and Odaimoku to the Buddha. While chanting Odaimoku, each member poured sweet tea onto the baby Buddha statue and offered incense to show their appreciation to the Buddha's compassion for sentient beings in this Saha World.

In the afternoon, as we finished preparing our float, thick clouds covered the sky bringing heavy rain. However, before leaving for the Wesak Procession, the sky cleared and the rain stopped. Everyone was so happy.



This year's procession was our fifth participation since 2010. More than 150 temple members, families and friends joined the Ichinenji group. We walked for four hours, chanting Odaimoku loudly in Japanese and Mandarin while beating drums. As our float passed, many Buddhist devotees stood on the street, their hands in gassho, and joined our chanting. We deeply felt united under the Great Master of all living beings.

All Nichiren Shu temples in Southeast Asia celebrate Wesak. These include our temples in Jakarta, Singapore, Klang, and Kuala Lumpur. We all worked hard from the bottom of our hearts to commemorate the Buddha's sacred day.

Calendar for August–September 2014

AUG 13-15	Obon
AUG 15	Memorial Service at the Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery for the Unknown War Dead Sponsored by Nichiren Shu
AUG 15	Service to commemorate the Matsubagayatsu Incident
SEP 3	Memorial service for Niko Shonin

SEP 12	Service to Commemorate the Tatsunokuchi Incident
SEP 17	Memorial Service for Nisshin Shonin
SEP 18-19	Grand Service at Shichimenzan
SEP 20-26	Autumn Higan (Equinox) Week

Compiled by Rev. Kaikei Ochiai

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