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(1)

'HONMON JI ICHINEN-SANZEN' (1)

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Preface

"HONMON JI ICHINEN-SANZEN" is the principal teaching of Nichiren Shonin. "ICHINEN-SANZEN*" (three thousand existences contained in one thought) basically means that our every thought (ICHINEN) encompasses three thousand (SANZEN) worlds which constitutes the entire existences and the whole universe. It is said to be the supreme doctrine of becoming a Buddha as shown in the Lotus Sutra.

Although this teaching of ICHINEN-SANZEN was taught by Chi-i, Grand Master T'ien-t'ai* in China, Nichiren Shonin claims T'ien-t'ai's

ICHINEN-SANZEN as a theoretical principle (RI)* based on the Theoretical Section [SHAKUMON*] of the Lotus Sutra. He defines the "principle" which he himself practices as the ICHINEN-SANZEN of actuality (JI)* revealed in the Essential Section [HONMON*] of the Lotus Sutra.

Two Sections

The Theoretical Section refers to the first 14 chapters of the Lotus Sutra, and the Essential Section is the latter 14 chapters. The Theoretical Section is the realm of the historical Buddha who passed away at the age of 80, but the Essential Section is the realm of the Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha who is engaged in the activities of saving living beings eternally. The

principle (RI) means enlightenment, theory, the world of the transcendental Buddha. The teaching of actuality (JI), however, pertains to the concrete world where we discern things by seeing and hearing and the activities of our daily life.

Nichiren Shonin as a messenger of Sakyamuni Buddha tried to spread the Daimoku as the actual practice of ICHINEN-SANZEN so we could all realize the salvation of the Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha in our daily lives.



Rev. Kanji Tamura

In other words, the whole meaning of Nichiren's life can be found in the teaching of "HONMON JI ICHINEN-SANZEN," the "Actual" Three Thousand Existences Contained in One Thought of the Essential Section, and all who believe in the Daimoku are putting this teaching into practice.

In this series, we will explore the meaning of HONMON JI ICHINEN-SANZEN as the foundation of Nichiren Buddhism step by step in six installments.

'ICHINEN-SANZEN'

as described in MAKA SHIKAN* (great concentration and insight) (1)

The basic idea of "ICHINEN-SANZEN," which Nichiren Shonin practiced, was described in the "Great Concentration and Insight" (MAKA SHIKAN) authored by the Grand Master T'ien-t'ai. The "Great Concentration and Insight" is a transcript of lectures given by T'ien-t'ai on the practice of spiritual contemplation (KANJIN)* based on the Lotus Sutra. Spiritual contemplation (KANJIN) is the practice of observing one's mind. It is also called "SHIKAN." The word, "SHI" means to stop or cease. To cease the movement of the mind is "SHI." The word, "KAN" means to observe this calmed mind. "MAKA," means 'great.' So T'ien-t'ai asserts that through the great practice of observing one's mind, we can attain Buddhahood.

Sakyamuni Buddha

While meditating under the Bodhi Tree at Buddhagaya, Sakyamuni became a Buddha, defeating various devils. Those devils, according to T'ien-t'ai, represent the evil within our minds. He maintains that Sakyamuni Buddha attained enlightenment by first piercing the roots of that evil with a calm mind. T'ien-t'ai tried to follow the example of Sakyamuni Buddha by practicing meditation in order to uproot evil within himself and thereby accomplish the Way and attain enlightenment. That is the practice of SHIKAN: observing the mind by ceasing its movement.

What exactly is the state of enlightenment? In T'ien-t'ai's opinion, it was to perceive the unity of one's mind and body with all existing worlds or the whole universe. In a word, it is ICHINEN-SANZEN.

Three Major Works

He also thought that the Lotus Sutra was the scripture that purely manifested the state of that enlighten-

ment. Three books based on the transcripts of his lectures are even called 'the Three Major Works about the Lotus Sutra.' One of them is the "Great Concentration and Insight" (MAKA SHIKAN). Another is the "Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra" (HOKKE GENGI)*, which explains the significance of the title of the Lotus Sutra; Myo-Ho-Ren-Ge-Kyo, from the viewpoint of the entirety of Buddhist philosophy. The third is the "Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra" (HOKKE MONGU)*, which brings out the inner meaning of the Lotus Sutra.

In the "Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra," (HOKKE GENGI), T'ien-t'ai recognized that all the Buddhist sutras are manifestations of the personality and spirit of Sakyamuni Buddha. He evaluated the role of each sutra objectively from that perspective, and then, came to the conclusion that in the Lotus Sutra the ultimate purpose of the appearance of Sakyamuni Buddha and the final purpose of all the Buddhist sutras was definitively expressed. That purpose is to liberate all living beings from all anguish and sufferings and enable them to attain enlightenment. In the "Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra" (HOKKE MONGU), the contents of the Lotus Sutra are interpreted and divided into two parts: the Theoretical Section and the Essential Section. There T'ien-t'ai states that the Essential Section is more profound than the other; nevertheless, he devotes more space to an explanation of the Theoretical Section than he gives to an explanation of the Essential Section.

In the meantime, the "Great Concentration and Insight" (MAKA SHIKAN) prescribes the practical method for attaining enlightenment. However, it would be very challenging for us, ordinary people, to practice its whole procedure.

25 Expedients

First of all, the practices called the 25 Expedients* are required to begin the practice of observing the mind by ceasing its movement. The "Great Concentration and Insight" describes all the particulars of the 25 practices of complicated precepts, hygienic regulations and self-discipline. Finally, after mastering those preparations, one can start the practice of observing the mind by ceasing its movement. Then, while carefully upholding the specified disciplines, one must devote one's entire life to attaining the realization of ICHINEN-SANZEN.

(to be continued)

Translator's Notes

*All the italicized words are written in Sino-Japanese pronunciation.

*ICHINEN-SANZEN (一念三千)... ICHI (一): one. NEN (念): thought. SAN (三): three. ZEN (千): thousand.

*JI-RI (事理)... JI (事): incident, issue, thing. RI (理): theory, reason

*SHAKUMON-HONMON... SHAKUMON (迹門): trace gate. HONMON (本門): original gate

*KANJIN (観心)... KAN (観): to observe. JIN (心): mind, heart.

*"Great Concentration and Insight" MAKA SHIKAN (摩訶止観)

*"Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra" HOKKE GENGI (法華玄義)

*"Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra" HOKKE MONGU (法華文句)

*The 25 Expedients

Preparatory practices before engaging in the 'SHIKAN': observing the mind by ceasing its movement

1. To raise the five indirect causes: to hold precepts (the 10 advanced precepts and so on) (No.1), to eliminate concern for food and clothing (No.2), to live in a calm environment (No.3), to quit miscellaneous works (No.4), and to fraternize with good and wise persons (No.5).

2. To cut out the five desires of sight (No.6), hearing (No.7), smell (No.8), taste (No.9), and sense of touch (No.10) including art or music.

3. To throw away the five mental covers of greed (No.11), anger (No.12), desire to sleep (No.13), excitement and regret (No.14), and incredulity (No.15).

4. To coordinate the five states of life; not to make ups and downs of the mind (No.16), not to be quick or slow in mov-

ing the body (No.17), not to be rough or soft in breathing (No.18), not to sleep too much or too little (No. 19), and not to eat too much or too little (No. 20).

5. To practice the five Dharmas: Hope (No. 21): to hope for the elimination of all illusions in the world and the attainment of all kinds of meditation and wisdom; Endeavor (No. 22): to hold the precepts firmly, throw away the five covers, and make continual efforts; Contemplation (No.23): to contemplate the significance of meditation and wisdom while thinking about the vanity of the world; Skillful Wisdom (No.24): to deliberate over the pleasure in the world, which should be avoided, and cherish the joy of meditation and wisdom of the other shore; Mindfulness (No.25): to calm down the mind, clearly avoid the defiled world and know the greatness of the merits of meditation and wisdom.

After this preparation, the practice of the Tenth-power-of-ten Corrective Observation is begun.

(translated by Rev. Kanshin Mochida)
(related article on page 3)

Rev. Obata Visits Taiwan

Rev. Myosho Obata, resident priest of Hokkezan Ichinen-ji, Penang, Ang Tiang Soon, president of Penang Nichiren-shu Buddhist Association and Ooi Lee Guat visited Taiwan Nichiren Shu Buddhist Association in Taipei from February 25 to 28.

The purpose of their visit was to find out the ways of developing closer contacts with Nichiren followers in Taiwan and help them spread their activities into other areas of Taiwan.

The Taiwan Nichiren Shu Buddhist Association was organized in 1992. Some 50 people are registered as members.

The members of the association have visited Mt. Minobu several times and a Mandala signed by Archbishop Nichiko Fujii is enshrined in their temple.

Before World War II, there existed several Nichiren-shu temples in Taiwan. Those temples separated from the Nichiren Shu in Japan or vanished in the confusion of the war.

The Lotus Sutra and 'Prediction of Future Buddhahood'

By Rev. Ryugen Taga, Ph. D
Professor Emeritus, Rissho University

In the sutras of Mahayana Buddhism, the Sanskrit word, vyakarana or prediction, in most cases, means "prediction of the attainment of Buddhahood in the future." Specifically in the Lotus Sutra, "vyakarana" is of significant meaning and great gravity.

Before explaining the reason why this expression appears so often in the Lotus Sutra, let me examine how the idea of the prediction of the future Buddhahood was born and what it means.

In the lifetime of Sakyamuni Buddha, it is believed that anyone who practices in accordance with the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha will attain the same enlightenment as that of the Buddha.

Nobody doubted it in the presence of Sakyamuni Buddha. It is because Sakyamuni Buddha was born into this world like everybody else as a human being and attained enlightenment as the result of practices.

However, after the passing away of Sakyamuni Buddha, His grandness became greater and greater as time passed by, and in comparison, the achievements attained by His followers seemed smaller and smaller. Thus, Sakyamuni Buddha and His followers had become separated by far.

The followers came to believe the enlightenment of Sakyamuni Buddha was not attained in His lifetime, but as the result of practices He went through in many previous lives. Thus stories of the previous existences of Sakyamuni Buddha were born.

In these stories of His previous lives, He took various forms of man, woman, and animals. In these previous living forms, He is assured of the attainment of Buddhahood. This is natural because Sakyamuni Buddha became the Enlightened One and

these stories are the stories of His previous lives.

His previous forms of lives were bodhisattvas. And stories of his previous forms of lives are named Jataka stories. As many Jataka stories were created stories of the previous lives of His disciples were also born.

And it became necessary to show that only bodhisattvas were assured of future Buddhahood even if bodhisattvas and disciples in their previous lives conducted the same "causal practices."

Thus, Dipankara Buddha (light-causer) was created. He is a Buddha of the past who assures bodhisattvas that they would ultimately attain enlightenment. Here established was the form of "prediction of the attainment of Buddhahood" in the Mahayana sutras.

Then a story was created showing the Dipankara Buddha was given the prediction of future enlightenment when he was a bodhisattva.

Many stories of "the prediction of the attainment of Buddhahood" were created in accordance with the number of Buddhas who Sakyamuni Buddha served as told in the Jataka stories. It is because those Buddhas were bodhisattvas in their previous lives.

And in the end, "the prediction of the attainment of Buddhahood in the future" became one of the five things Tathagatha or Buddha is required to practice when He appears in this world.

The principle of "the prediction of Buddhahood" had become popular even before the Lotus Sutra was compiled. It is no wonder "the prediction" is expounded in the Lotus Sutra. However, "the prediction" occurs so often in this sutra.

Some scholars claim that "the prediction" is not a principle indispensable to the Lotus Sutra. Confusion was brought to the Lotus Sutra as chapters which took up "prediction" were added, and the sutra has

lost unification, they assert. Their view, however, is misleading, not grasping what is meant by the sutra.

The Lotus Sutra is intended to save all living beings, overcoming the antagonism which developed between Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhisms, by going back to the starting point of Buddhism. The sutra shows the way to the salvation of all living beings by clarifying the universality of the teaching, the universality of salvation of living beings and the universality and eternity of the Buddha (the true attainment of enlightenment in the remotest past by Sakyamuni Buddha).

The Lotus Sutra is often divided into two parts. The universality of the teaching and the universality of salvation of living beings are revealed in the first 14 chapters. And in the latter half, the eternity and universality of the Buddha is disclosed. "Prediction" is adopted to show the universality of salvation of living beings.

It is preached in the sutras compiled before the Lotus Sutra that those belonging to Two Vehicles (sravaka and pratyekabuddha) are not eligible for enlightenment. It was then conceived that this discrimination was against the intention of Sakyamuni Buddha, leading to the birth of the Lotus Sutra.

It is expounded in this sutra that the teaching is one and it is divided into two in accordance with the capacity of living beings, as a temporary means. The two kinds of teachings applicable to the Two Vehicles are merged into One Vehicle teaching leading to Buddhahood, thus clarifying the universality of the teaching.

The problem now was how to show the universality of salvation of living beings who practice the teaching. It was a great problem for the authors of the Lotus Sutra how to describe the universality of the salvation of living beings in the time when it was firmly believed that the Two Vehicles were not eligible for enlightenment.

To solve this problem, they utilized the idea of "the prediction of the attainment of enlightenment"

which already existed.

"Prediction" was given not only to Sariputra, typical of the sravaka disciples, but also to Four Great Sravaka Disciples: Purna, Kundinya, Ananda, and Rahula. Eventually in Chapter X, "The Teacher of the Dharma," "the prediction" was given even to gods, dragons, yaksas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kinnaras, magoragas, men, and nonhuman beings, monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen, as well as those who are seeking sravakahood, or pratyekabuddhahood, or the enlightenment of the Buddha.

Here is accomplished the universality of the teaching and the universality of salvation of the living beings which are one of the intentions of the Lotus Sutra. The eternity and universality of the Buddha who grants the "prediction" is shown in the latter half. Thus the sutra is completed.

In the Lotus Sutra, "the prediction" is directly given only to sravaka disciples even though the sutra features the attainment of Buddhahood by the Two Vehicles (sravakas and pratyekabuddhas).

In Chapter XII, "Devadatta," Devadatta is given "the prediction." By doing so, the authors of the sutra accomplished the attainment of Buddhahood by the people belonging to the Two Vehicles (Hinayanists).

In the earlier documents, "the prediction of the attainment of pratyekabuddhahood" is given to Devadatta to save the cousin of Sakyamuni Buddha who is regarded as a villain.

Assuming that Devadatta was a pratyekabuddha (hermit), the authors of the Lotus Sutra by granting the "prediction" to him accomplished "the prediction of the attainment of Buddhahood by the people belonging to the Two Vehicles."

"The prediction of the attainment of Buddhahood by women" is shown in Chapter XIII, "The Encouragement for Upholding This Sutra," when "the prediction" was given to Gautami, foster mother of Sakyamuni Buddha, and Yasodhara, His former wife. (tr. sk)



Rev. Ryugen Taga

The Legend of Nichiren Shonin (8)

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

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph. D

From Nara to Koyasan

Nichiren's letter from Mt. Minobu dated in 1278, tells us that Rencho studied at temples in Kamakura, Kyoto, Mt. Hiei, the Onjo-ji Temple, Mt. Koya, the Tennoji Temple and so on. As no record is available of his activities at these temples, however, we do not know the trend of his activities precisely. According to a legend, it is said that he went to Sakai after meeting with Mr. Egawa. Then, he returned to Nara once more before going to Mt. Koya.

At Sakai Rencho met people from his hometown, and was very happy to hear about his parents and a former teacher. Soon, he came back to Nara, where he could study at the Toshodaiji Temple through the good office of his acquaintance. The temple

was founded by Chien-chen, a Chinese high priest, who came to Japan in 749 at the invitation of Emperor Shomu, after many failed attempts. Next, Rencho went to the Yakushiji Temple, in the library of which he read "All the scriptures of Buddhism." He thus devoted himself to the study of the six schools, which were popular in the Nara Period. At this time, Rencho was 28 years old in 1249.

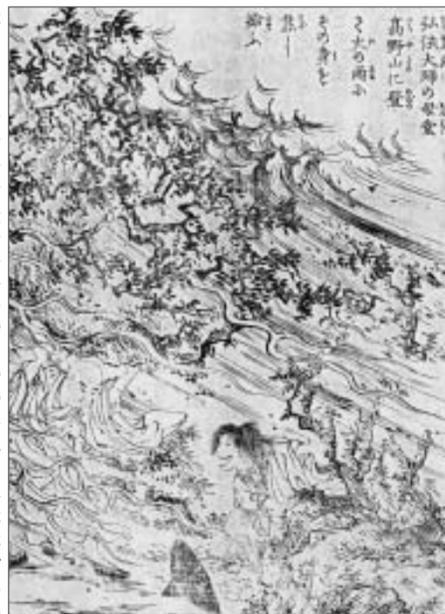
At long last, he decided to go to Mr. Koya, where the Kongobuji Temple which Kukai built was located. Kukai (774-835), a high priest of the Heian Period, is the founder of the Shingon Sect. Mt. Hiei and Mt. Koya were the centers of Buddhism in Japan in those days.

Kukai decided to build the Kongobuji Temple on Mt. Koya because of his strange experience in China. When he threw a Buddhist altar fit-

ting from China, it is said, it flew over the ocean and landed on Mt. Koya. Therefore, Kukai decided to build a temple on the mountain. His mother was glad and she wanted to climb the mountain with him, but women were not allowed on Mt. Koya in those days. "Why should I not climb the mountain where my son wants to build a temple?" said Kukai's mother and she decided to climb it anyway.

The mountain began to rumble when she began to climb. Then flames of fire attacked her. Kukai lifted a rock to shield his mother. Mother took another rock, and the mark of her hand was left on it by her intense anger at the injustice for women. Her hair was disheveled, her eyes were bloodshot and she looked as fearful as a demon.

It is said that along the approach to the temple which Rencho took there were the rock which Kukai lifted up and another one which Kukai's mother twisted. Rencho



(woodblock illustration reproduced from "Nichiren Daishi Shinjitsu-den")

wondered why a high priest like Kukai couldn't save his own mother, and came to believe that only the Lotus Sutra can save women.



Rev. Gyokai Sekido

The Three Thousand Worlds in a Single Thought-Moment In Principle and in Actuality (1)

By Rev. Ryuei McCormick
San Francisco, Calif.

Ji no ichinen sanzen, the actuality of the three thousand worlds in a single thought-moment, is the key principle of Nichiren Buddhism. Ji means "actuality" and no is a grammatical particle that means that the term or terms that follow belong to ji or concrete actuality. The word ichinen means a single moment of conscious awareness. Sanzen literally means "three thousand," in reference to the three thousand worlds. The three thousand "worlds" do not literally refer to different worlds. These worlds are actually referring to various "modes of existence" and they encompass all the different ways in which we subjectively experience our world, the objective components of life, and the workings of the law of cause and effect. All of these will be enumerated and discussed later in this series. Ji no ichinen sanzen is the teaching of the actuality of all states or modes of existence, including Buddhahood, co-existing in every moment of conscious awareness. Ji no ichinen sanzen is a phrase used by Nichiren Shonin in order to differentiate his understanding and practice of ichinen sanzen from what he saw as the more theoretical or abstract approach of the T'ien-t'ai school. Nichiren called the earlier T'ien-t'ai teaching ri no ichinen sanzen. Ri means "principle." So ri no ichinen sanzen is the teaching that in theory all modes of existence, including Buddhahood, can be discerned in every moment of conscious awareness.

It is hard to discuss the difference between ichinen sanzen in principle and in actuality without first having a clear understanding of what ichinen sanzen itself means. But one thing can be pointed out from the very beginning: a conceptual explanation of ichinen sanzen is by its very nature ichinen sanzen in principle. In other words, it is ichinen sanzen as a concept, an idea, an abstraction that awaits its application to the concrete circumstances of our daily lives. Now this is very helpful in that such an explanation can act as a kind of map showing us the highlights and landmarks that characterize our lives as interdependent transient beings. It is like going into a huge shopping mall

wherein there are many different kinds of stores and in order to find what we are looking for, say, the location of the food court, we consult a map at the mall's entrance which shows us where we are, the layout of the mall, and the location of the various stores. But if we are hungry we must leave the map and follow the directions to the food court. The actuality of ichinen sanzen, however, is what happens when we no longer are just looking for the food court based on the image from the map, it is to actually sit down and eat lunch. In terms of Buddhist practice, ichinen sanzen teaches us that in principle we can attain Buddhahood, but ichinen sanzen in actuality is when Buddhahood actually manifests in our lives.

Nichiren associated the teaching of ichinen sanzen in principle with the first 14 chapters of the Lotus Sutra, what the Grand Master Chih-i, the founder of the T'ien-t'ai school, had termed the "Theoretical Section." In the first 14 chapters of the Lotus Sutra, the historical Sakyamuni Buddha teaches that all beings will be able to attain Buddhahood through the One Vehicle. The One Vehicle is the way in which all the various methods and practices of Buddhism actually have one goal – the attainment of Buddhahood. So in theory, or in principle, all beings will be able to attain Buddhahood by following the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha. In addition, all the categories that Chih-i used to construct the concept of ichinen sanzen can be found in the first half of the Lotus Sutra. This will be seen later in this series.

The actuality of ichinen sanzen, however, is associated with the latter 14 chapters of the Lotus Sutra by Nichiren. Chih-i called this latter half of the Lotus Sutra the "Essential Teaching." In this half of the Lotus Sutra the Buddha reveals that his life as a Buddha has no quantifiable beginning or end and that, though he appears to pass away, he will in fact always be present as a guiding force leading people to their own attainment of Buddhahood. This means that not only are people theoretically capable of attaining Buddhahood, they are in fact in the process of becoming Buddhas and in fact Buddhahood is already a present reality at work in

their lives. The latter half of the Lotus Sutra teaches that even a single moment of taking faith in and rejoicing in this teaching will enable us to realize that the life of the Buddha is always present in our lives empowering us with all the merits and virtues of Buddhahood from within. Ichinen sanzen, the presence in our every moment of conscious awareness of the totality of life including Buddhahood, thus becomes a reality and not just a theory when our hearts are filled with trust and joy in this teaching and is expressed through the recitation of the great title (Odaimoku) of the Lotus Sutra: Namu Myoho Renge Kyo, "Devotion to the Wonderful Dharma of the Lotus Flower Sutra."

The goshu "Conversation Between a Sage and an Unenlightened Man" states:

Therefore, Myoho Renge Kyo enables us to obtain the present Buddha's gate of insight into a single thought-moment. [It is the realization of] the unity of mind, body, and environment throughout all the ten worlds which is the three thousand worlds. (Shogu mondo sho, Showa Teihon p. 370. Listed in the Rokuge.)

It should not be thought, however, that Chih-i himself only viewed ichinen sanzen as a theory. Rather, ichinen sanzen in his magnum opus, the Great Concentration and Insight (Jap. Maka Shikan) is the view of reality attained by someone who has undergone a rigorous practice of meditation. It was intended to be a description of what can be discerned through meditative insight into the true essence of our own mind and heart. But nobody can satisfy their hunger by merely reading the menu, so the teaching of ichinen sanzen was intended to motivate people to practice the form of meditation known as concentration and insight meditation (Jap. Shikan, Skt. Samatha Vipashyana) so they could realize the truth for themselves. Unfortunately, very few people have the ability, inclination, discipline, or freedom to practice tranquility and insight meditation properly. In the end, ichinen sanzen remained a mere theory that did not have any real impact on the lives of either the ordinary people of Nichiren's day, who needed a simple method of liberation, or even the majority of monks, who were unable to fathom its

true meaning.

It was Nichiren's conviction that the key insight of ichinen sanzen must be brought within the reach of all people – monastic or lay, male or female, educated or uneducated, good or evil. It was in order to share the reality of ichinen sanzen in an accessible and practical way that Nichiren taught it could be experienced in its fullness by taking faith in the Lotus Sutra and chanting Namu Myoho Renge Kyo. For this reason, Nichiren felt that he had surpassed the scholastic and esoteric version of T'ien-t'ai Buddhism by presenting a form of teaching and practice that was not only accessible but also potent enough to enable all people to realize the truth for themselves. As Nichiren wrote in a letter:

There are two ways of observing ichinen sanzen. One is in terms of principle, the second is in terms of the actual phenomena. At the time of T'ien-t'ai and Dengyo and so on, it was [observed in] principle. Now it is [observed in] actual phenomena. Since [the latter form of] contemplation is superior, the great difficulties [accompanying it] are also superior. The former is ichinen sanzen of the provisional teaching [of the Lotus Sutra], and the latter is ichinen sanzen of the original teaching [of the Lotus Sutra]. They are as different as Heaven and Earth, and at the time of death, you should keep this in mind. (Toki Nyudo dono gohenji also known as Jibyo daisho gonjitsu imoku, Showa Teihon p. 1522. Authenticated copy extant.)

Setting aside the detailed meaning of ichinen sanzen, the important thing to know is that it was the T'ien-t'ai concept based on the Lotus Sutra that all modes of existence including Buddhahood are present in and theoretically accessible to every moment of conscious awareness. Even more importantly, in the teaching and practice of Nichiren Buddhism we can experience the actual presence of Buddhahood in our lives through taking faith in the Lotus Sutra and the practice of chanting Namu Myoho Renge Kyo. In this way, the teaching of ichinen sanzen becomes a reality and no longer a mere theory of how things are. In future articles in this series we will explore the detailed meaning of ichinen sanzen.

(to be continued)



Rev. Bungen Kaneko and members

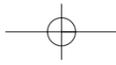
Puunene, Hawaii

Setsubun at Puunene The Setsubun service was held on February 7. At the sermon, I told the members that Oni or devil is in our mind. After the sermon, "women of the year," actually two ladies and one girl, who were born in the year of the monkey threw beans outward, shouting "evils out," three times then they threw beans inward, shouting "fortunes in" three times. The members ate beans as many as their ages. "These beans taste good," they said. (by Rev. Bungen Kaneko)



Rev. Gakugyo Matsumoto and members

Hilo, Hawaii



LOS ANGELES

Sakyamuni Buddha's Birthday Celebration

The Los Angeles Beikoku Betsuin Temple will hold its annual celebration of the birth of Siddhartha Gautama, who later became Sakyamuni Buddha. The celebration will take place on Sunday, April 11 from 10:00 a.m.

The congregation will recite the Lotus Sutra, chant "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo" and pour sweet tea over the statue of the infant Buddha. The temple encourages parents to bring their new born babies to the service. During the service Rev. Shokai Kanai will bless the babies by wetting their foreheads with the sweet tea, and each child will receive an amulet for good health and growth.

The Hanamatsuri Service of the Los Angeles Buddhist Church Federation will be held at the Nishi Hongwanji Temple in Little Tokyo at 1:00 p.m. on the same day. Other events to kick off the celebrations will include the Children's Picture Contest, Golf Tournament (April 2), followed by the Little Tokyo Cleanup (April 3). Rev. Joseph Jarman will give an English sermon at 11:00 a.m. followed by taiko, gagaku and other entertainment.

There will also be a Buddhist Jazz Night by Joseph Jarman at the Nishi Hongwanji Hall starting at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 10. Free admission tickets will be given out at the Los Angeles Betsuin.

'Three Virtues of the Original Sakyamuni Buddha'

By Rev. Shokai Kanai

Buddhism starts with the awakening thought of "Life is full of suffering." The four major sufferings are birth, old age, disease and death. Besides these four, there are four more sufferings: 1) Separation from a loved one, 2) having to stay with one you dislike 3) not getting what one wants, and 4) suffering coming from the environment, such as natural disasters and attachments to certain types of weather conditions.

The Buddha is the one who leads us to liberation from these sufferings. He has three virtues. They are: 1) virtue of the warm-hearted



Church Events

By Sandra Seki

INDIA

Rev. Nun Sasaki Receives Award

Rev. Myojo Sasaki of the Horinji Temple was awarded the 20th Nichiren Shu Sogo Zaidan Sho of 2003 for her long years of toil and motivation to return the teachings of the Buddha to its homeland.

Both Rev. Sasaki and her late husband (Rev. Hojo Sasaki who passed away in India last January) worked hard to construct the first Nichiren Shu Temple in Sarnath, India. It took them more than two decades to actually see the completion of Nichigatsuzan Horinji. With the help of many temples in Japan and the Indo-Japan Society, they were able to complete the first phase of this project. What motivated them was an excerpt from Nichiren Shonin's teachings which said that "Japanese Buddhism will return to India and spread throughout the world." The Sasaki's felt that it was their duty to carry out this task.

A party was held on March 5th by the Nichiren Shu Order to praise and congratulate Rev. Nun Sasaki's work. Several ministers from throughout Japan attended this gathering to support the 81 year old Rev. Sasaki.

"I have dedicated my life to return Bud-



Rev. Nun Sasaki (right) receives the 20th Nichiren Shu Sogo Zaidan Sho Award of 2003

dhism to India. With the help of many people I have been able to complete the first phase. Now I would like to continue the second phase of this project, in which a stupa, educational and vocational facility plus a clinic will be constructed for the people of Sarnath. After all Sarnath is the sacred place where Sakyamuni Buddha first preached. I would like to carry out His religious will and also our Founder Nichiren Shonin's will. As long as I live I will strive to make this second phase come true," declared Rev. Nun Sasaki.

LORD, 2) virtue of the dignified MASTER and 3) virtue of the compassionate FATHER.

Chapter 3 of the Lotus Sutra says, "This triple world is my property." The triple world signifies the place where we live: the world of human beings and animals who have desires, the world of plants and metal that have no desire, and the world of no-forms such as gas, air and spirit. The Buddha who realizes the reality of all existences grasps not only this earth but also the universe. Therefore, He is the LORD. "All living beings are my children" because everyone has the Buddha nature, so He is the FATHER. "There are many sufferings in this world. Only I can save all beings." The Buddha is the one who knows how to save all those who bear these sufferings. He is the MASTER.

Only Sakyamuni Buddha has these three virtues. He is the only Buddha who existed on this earth historically. As a human just like all of us, He is the one who attained Enlightenment. He is the one who preached the Lotus Sutra, the teaching of equality among all living things. Other Buddhas are merely His manifestations.

Therefore Nichiren Shon-

in honored only Sakyamuni, the Original Buddha. Because a statue of the Buddha could not express the three virtues of the LORD, the MASTER, and the FATHER, Nichiren described them in the form of the Mandala Gohonzon.

All Nichiren Shu members should have this Mandala Gohonzon in their altars.

HONOLULU

Spring Higan Services

Nichiren Mission of Hawaii held the annual Spring Higan-e Service on Sunday, March 21, from 10:00 a.m. Both the Spring Higan and the Autumn Higan together with the Obon are important annual Buddhist events.

"Higan" means yonder shore. To leave this shore (this world) for the yonder shore (the Buddha's land) means to leave this world of suffering for the world of Enlightenment by practicing the teachings of the Buddha. These two weeks during the vernal and autumnal equinoxes are especially important periods of practice for all Buddhists. This is the time for us to reflect on our daily lives, vow to follow the Buddha's path and observe memorial services for our ancestors.

General Meeting

A general meeting for the Nichiren Sect Mission was held on Sunday, February 8. The agenda included an opening speech by the President, and a financial report from the Treasurer.

One of the issues discussed was "Preserving the Faith." Through the ministers and the 100th anniversary celebration, the mission was able to chronicle the history of the Mission.

assimilate new practices. This is a process that must be seriously started now. It is necessary to start this movement before the last generation that understands and seriously practices the traditional ways of Buddhism passes on. Those who have the background are the bridges that are the only links the mission have with the many families who come to the temple only for funeral and memorial services. How members can help is very simple. Just by coming to the Mission and giving a hand is all that we ask for.

SAN JOSE

Memorial Services

The temple observed the 13th memorial service of the late Ven. Shingaku Oikawa, the founder of the temple, on March 21 from 10:00 a.m. Several stupas were offered to the late founder.

Following the service the Spring Higan-e for the ancestors of the members was held. This service is held bi-annually to recall all the wonderful memories of our deceased loved ones.

Chicken Teriyaki Bento

The annual Chicken Teriyaki Bento and Barazushi Fair will be held on Sunday, April 18th. The tickets went on sale on March 1 and are selling very well as usual. Besides these lunch boxes, there will be curry rice, noodles, and vegetarian dishes. They will also have booths for cut flowers and craft sales. The Tachibana School will have a Manju Sale. There will be a koto performance and flower arrangement displays in the Senshokan Hall. In order to build a better spiritual center in faith, the temple is asking everyone to support and help in the event. Any monetary or material donation is more than welcome.

Odaimoku Chanting

There will be an Odaimoku chanting event on April 25, from 10:00 a.m. Everyone is invited to get together and chant 'Namu Myoho Renge Kyo' in unison. Please attend this worthwhile event.

SANGHA

Buddha-Chp. VII Birth (excerpt from Osamu Tezuka's animated book)

... April of that year in the midst of a drought, in the Sakya nation, city of Kapilavastu, a miracle occurred. The river flowing along the border for that year in particular even with 104 degree dry weather the river flowed as usual. People were wondering if it might be a good sign. King Suddhodana's queen was preparing to visit her home in Korya nation for her childbirth. Before dawn of April 8, miraculous events occurred and it was felt within, "Hark, the (awaited) one is born!" At dawn, Queen Maya gave birth laying in a velvet bedding, wrapped in a silk baby wear the child seemed to be cradled on a white lotus blossom, and held aloft like an angel...

NICHIREN SHU NEWS

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