

Nichiren Shu News

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1

REVEREND KANGYO NODA, WORLDWIDE MISSIONARY



By Rev. Kanjo Bassett

Reverend Kangyo Noda was an Overseas Missionary, *Kokusai Fukuyoshi*, from 2002 to 2016.

He was posted to the Nichiren Shu temple in London from 2002 to 2008, and then to Southeast Asia. Initially, his assignment was to care for the temples in Singapore, Penang, Malaysia and Jakarta, Indonesia and to work with other Sangha groups in that part of the world. After Rev. Ervinna Myofu became a Missionary in 2014 and was posted to Jakarta, Rev. Noda focused his missionary activities on Malaysia and Singapore.

In addition to his regular mission work, Rev. Noda assisted with various Nichiren Shu activities, such as the annual South-east Asia Study Tours and the Lotus Sutra Lecture Series that was held in Cambodia from 2010 to 2012, led by Rev. Yosei Ikegami, Professor of Buddhist Studies at Minobu University.

Q: Why did you become a Nichiren Shu Missionary?

Rev. Noda: When I was just 20, I went to England on a one-year exchange program before entering Rissho University. That experience made me think seriously about Buddhism.

Q: Aren't you from a temple family?

Rev. Noda: Yes. But before I went on that exchange program, I had not thought

much about Buddhism. While I was in England, I had the opportunity to really think about Buddhism and how it relates to our lives. I also discovered that even though I was born in a temple family, I didn't know anything "real" about Buddhism at all.

Q: By the time you entered the priest training program at Shingyo Dojo, had you already made up your mind to become a missionary?

Rev. Noda: Yes. By then I had already been to exchange programs in Canada in addition to my time in England. I also knew Rev. Shoryo Tarabini and had attended some of the Sunday services that he was holding in Omori. So I was all set for missionary work after I graduated from Shingyo Dojo.

Q: Where did you do your missionary training program?

Rev. Noda: I spent three months at Sogenji Temple in Mobara under Bishop Nichiyu Mochida. Then I went to London in 2002 and finished my training there under Rev. Obata who remained in London for a few weeks to give me training before she took over the Southeast Asia mission. After that, I was assisting Rev. Tarabini.

I had not been in London very long when I was asked to go to Germany when their temple had burned down. I was there for almost a year helping prepare for the dedication, rebuilding events and

ceremony. After the ceremony, I went back to London. One year after that Rev. Tarabini established the temple in Milano. By 2004, I was taking care of the London temple by myself and continued there for the following three years.

Q: Are there any events or memories of that time that stand out?

Rev. Noda: The happiest memories for me were when I could teach something about Buddhism and see it becoming part of people's lives. Not a sudden thing but little by little.

Europe is very different from Asia, in both its culture and the way of living. But the process of Buddhism that works its way into one's life little by little, I feel that is the same.

In Asia, I think that people are a little more open to just believing, call it faith perhaps, because of the Buddhist and Chinese cultures there. Similar to Japan, there is a natural tendency to respect one another. It is a spirit of Gassho and togetherness, an attitude of "Let's all go to the temple together."

In Europe, people are a little more inclined to look at Buddhism as philosophy more than believing, because Buddhism has no history there. They also tend to believe that Buddhism is all about meditation and achieving peace of mind. This can make teaching Buddhism more rigid. People assume that if they don't understand it logically, they are not going



to believe it. But in the end I feel that the absorption and learning process is the same in both places.

Q: Did you find one mission easier than the other?

Rev. Noda: Southeast Asia was easier for me, but that was because I had the benefit of my London experience. London was a long training program. I didn't know how to do many things and learned the hard way. But it was invaluable experience that prepared me and allowed me to accomplish many things when I went to Southeast Asia in 2007.

Q: Any final thoughts?

Rev. Noda: Even though the cultures and people were different, in the end it all came down to coming to the temple, being together and practicing together, helping each other to overcome whatever troubles or problems we were facing. Buddhism gives us the ability to help each other.

If I ever have the chance, I would like to do missionary work again. It can be so much fun, the teamwork and everybody coming together in the spirit of "different bodies, one mind."

Q: Do you have any words for future missionaries?

Rev. Noda: Challenge yourself. It is the only way to grow inside. You can learn so much and that makes you and your Buddhist faith stronger.



MOUNT MINOBU TRAIL RUN

The third annual trail running event on Mt. Minobu in Yamanashi Prefecture was held on November 27, 2016. Despite a route change due to snow, 504 men and women participated. The running course requires not only physical strength and stamina but also good balance to navigate the unpaved mountain path.

It is a good opportunity for the participants to visit Mt. Minobu and to spread the word about how beautiful it is. Hearing that some people wanted to stay longer at Mt. Minobu, Rev. Yuji Komatsu invited participants to visit Mt. Shichimen for an overnight stay

before the event. The next morning, he found them awake early and putting their palms together toward the rising sun.

A first-time participant said smiling, "When I saw the big temple gate at the starting line, I stared in surprise and could not help making a sound. While running, I could feel how precious Mt. Minobu has been to Nichiren Shu followers. The trail itself was a difficult ascetic path to overcome, but I feel truly grateful for it."

To make the event successful, people of the temple town of Minobu were eager

to pitch in. 30 volunteers served miso soup with pork and vegetables to the 800 runners and spectators. Rev. Komatsu noted, "The original and true purpose of this event is to bring people the teaching of the Lotus Sutra and Odaimoku. In the future, I plan for participants to visit Kuonji Temple the day before the run. I look forward to seeing more and more people coming to Mt. Minobu."

—This article appeared previously in the *Nichiren Shu Shimbun*.
Translated by Sensho Komukai.



Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett leads a service for a group of minimum-security prisoners at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's Wallace Pack Unit in Navasota.

Overcoming Fear in Texas Prisons

Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett, NONA Bishop

My first encounter with prisoners was about 40 years ago when I participated in a program to help prepare federal inmates for release into society. The idea was to allow these lower-level felons to meet women in a controlled situation so they could learn how to relate to people in the free world. As most of these inmates were imprisoned for drug offenses, we thought there was no reason to be concerned. We couldn't have been more wrong.

Just walking into the prison was a surreal experience. We were carefully screened, and all our belongings were taken from us. The sound of the huge door slamming closed behind us struck fear into my heart. And then there was the whistling and foot stomping by hundreds of imprisoned men. We were all young women in our 20s. Even though the inmates were all locked in their cells, we felt so exposed, so vulnerable, so naked.

The group of men we met seriously challenged us. They could tell right away if we were not being straight with them. For them, any kind of evasion was a clear sign of disrespect.

This experience led me to further opportunities with the Bureau of Prisons. I worked with inmates who were about to be released to a halfway house. As the assistant to the director of the program, I was the only young woman in the organization, surrounded by men. Those just released from prison were on their best behavior. They tended to treat me as if I was their sister, wife or child. In that same way, I took care of them: cutting their hair, making appointments for them, and just being there for support. I had more problems with the men in charge of the program. They seemed hungry for power and control. Many were manipulative, and I was sexually harassed.

In 2002, I started supporting a prison sangha a friend of mine had helped to develop at a maximum-security prison in the Walls Unit in Huntsville. This is the most famous prison in Texas. It is the main point for releasing inmates and where executions are performed. I was not allowed to bring in anything, except for my driver's license, juzu and service book.

After I worked there for six months, I was invited to start a Nichiren Shu sangha in the minimum-security Wallace Pack Unit in Navasota. Later, I also began

working in another maximum-security prison unit in Estelle in Huntsville.

Over the past 15 years, I have worked with murderers, robbers, sex offenders, drug dealers, and a myriad of other prisoners. I have done this willingly as a personal and a community mission. Members of my sangha have been working with me. We held the first Buddhist retreat behind bars in the State of Texas and provided a complete altar to do services for the inmates. Now they have their own altar to practice on a regular basis. It is not easy for prisoners to practice Buddhism as inmate populations are mostly Christian or Muslim. Those who continue to practice tend to be quite dedicated. I have given refuge to more than 30 inmates, and some have continued to practice after being released.

People who work with inmates have to deal with a lot of fear because of what we have been taught about what can happen in prison. For me, this was especially true when I began my work at the Wallace Pack Unit. The first group I worked with there was made up entirely of white men. As we were all women of color, there was some discomfort. We later learned that some of the men were white supremacists.

The reasons for inmates' interest in Buddhism varied. Some were true seekers. Others were there to support their fellow inmates. Some were there just to get out of their regular routine.

I have learned that respecting inmates as fellow human beings works wonders. Many inmates have never thought of themselves as worthy or felt loved. Many have been imprisoned before they even knew who they were or what the world was like. Many of these men have been heavily influenced by more hardened criminals while behind bars. Even so, none of them are beasts.

Working with inmates, we begin by talking about fear. We understand fear as a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger or pain, whether real or imagined. We realized the only way to deal with fear was to base our efforts deeply in Buddhist principles, the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Shonin's writings.

A key Buddhist principle we examine is 'nonattachment.' We have to deal with our attachment to fear by reminding ourselves that what we focus on tends to become embedded in our lives. If we are full of

fear, our prayers become grounded in fear. And suddenly our prayers become focused on negative outcomes rather than what we really desire.

We tend to equate attachment with love, but attachment is actually based in fear and deprives us of love. Attachment is bondage, while love is freedom. Fear is the opposite of love. Attachment is always exclusive, while love is inclusive. Attachment demands, whereas love imposes no demands. Nonattachment is a state of freedom that preserves and increases love. Those who always seek to control actually fear abandonment.

When we include the principle of impermanence, we become more able to deal with losing our attachment to fear. We can clearly recognize that the situation arousing our fear is a temporary condition that can be resolved through our attention to practice and faith.

The way we think can influence our world and how we perceive it. If we have fear and project this on the world, we will likely become stuck, limited by our fear of what could be around the next corner. Our connection to the Three Treasures allows us to think of the world as a place where we can move with ease and confidence because we are so connected. The way of faith, practice and study is the greatest gift of Buddhism and the best way to eliminate our fear. If we change our way of thinking, we can completely change our lives and help others do the same.

Prisons smell terrible. It's the smell of incarceration and hopelessness. Concrete walls, no privacy, terrible food, constant noise. Temperatures swing from freezing cold to unbearably hot. Some prisoners have died from the heat. The drinking water is bad, with high levels of arsenic. As for medical care, dogs are generally treated better. Nothing is done to fix problems, both because it would be too costly and because the focus is on punishing inmates. That continues in the way the system treats people who are released from prison. People do not come out of prison hoping to go back in, but the obstacles to their developing productive lives in the free world can be overwhelming.

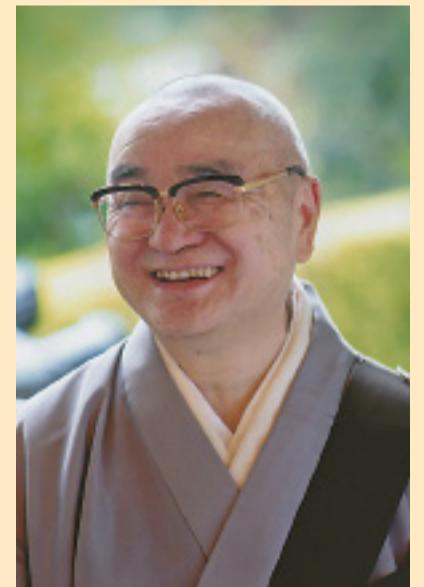
I believe that rehabilitation and education for re-entry into society are needed to reduce the cycle of people returning to prison. I have met so many bright minds behind bars. Bright but uneducated and inexperienced. I try to create a desire for excellence in each person through the Lotus Sutra. I encourage each one to use their time in prison as if they were in a monastery, even if they are in prison for life.

The Lotus Sutra has touched every person that I have worked with. That alone is incredibly powerful. The experience of working with inmates has also given me opportunities to confront my own fears and to deepen my faith as a means to overcome fear.

REVEREND KANNO PREACHES (46)

"The merits of the fiftieth person who hears this sutra are immeasurable. Needless to say, so are the merits of the first person who rejoices at hearing it in the congregation."

—The Lotus Sutra, Chapter XVIII,
The Merits of a Person Who
Rejoices at Hearing This Sutra



Immeasurable Merits

In the above phrase of the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha tells what to do if we wish to receive "the virtue of the Lotus Sutra," meaning "the virtue of the Odaimoku." We should believe that Shakyamuni Buddha's life is eternal and the Buddha's power to save us is also eternal.

"To hear the sutra" tells us we should follow the words of Nichiren Shonin, an incarnation of Superior-Practice Bodhisattva, Jogyo, whom Shakyamuni Buddha dispatched to this world where we live as a messenger of the Buddha. The phrase, "who rejoices at hearing it" means we will obtain pious joy only by chanting the Odaimoku, Namu Myoho Renge Kyo. Only those who have experienced this are able to feel the immeasurable merits with their bodies.

Let us chant the Odaimoku especially on the commemorative days of Nichiren Shonin and obtain immeasurable merits. These include his birthday, Feb. 16, 1222; the proclamation of the founding of his religion, Apr. 28, 1253; the first presentation of the Dai-mandala, July 8, 1273; and his Nirvana, Oct. 13, 1282.

Rev. Nissho Kanno, Bishop of Ikegami Honmonji Temple, Tokyo

Nichiren Shu Great Ascetic Practice: Dai-Aragyo

By Rev. Gyouko Kudo, Mompoji Temple, Prime Mentor, Dai-Aragyo. Photographs by Jan Deputy-Louy.



Rev. Gyouko Kudo speaks to the priest trainees.

Since 2013, I have been the prime mentor of the Nichiren Shu Great Ascetic Practice, *Dai-Aragyo*. My principal way to teach and guide the ascetic priest trainees is by the example of Never-Despising Bodhisattva in Chapter 20 of the Lotus Sutra. I teach them to practice with a mind of “I only pay respect,” that is, “I deeply respect you. I dare not slight or despise you.” We maintain this spirit of respect without distinction between the upper and lower ranks or between the senior and junior trainees.

At his deathbed, our founder Nichiren Shonin entrusted Ryugejuin Nichizo Shonin with propagation in Kyoto. At the age of 25, Nichizo Shonin decided to bathe himself in the sea at Yuigahama in Kamakura and recite the verse section of Chapter 16 of the Lotus Sutra, Jigage, 100 times every night to build a strong body, like stone, to avoid indolence and propagate the Dharma. In the biting cold winter of the first year of Eijin, 1293, he practiced for 100 days from October 26 through February 6. During the day, he transcribed the Lotus Sutra in gold ink on purple paper. At sunrise on the 100th day as he recited the Lotus Sutra, he saw the Odaimoku shining in gold on the sea. He took this vision as a good omen, gained confidence, and completed his practice. He then propagated the Wonderful Dharma widely in Kyoto and founded Myokenji Temple. Since this temple worked many wonders, he was designated as a Bodhisattva by Emperor Go-Kogon.

In honor of Nichizo Shonin’s great achievement, the Nichiren Shu 100-day Dai-Aragyo began 140 years ago in the ninth year of the Meiji period, 1876, and continues to the present. Nichiren Shu opens the Hall for the ascetic exercises, Dai-Aragyo-Do, at Nakayama, Shochuzan Hokkekyoji Temple in Chiba Prefecture from November 1 through February 10 every year. The head mentor is Bishop Nittan Arai, the head priest of Hokkekyoji Temple. Additionally, the prime mentor, five sub-mentors and five clerical workers organize activities and provide instruction to trainee priests. Only the prime mentor provides instructions in the esoteric practices.

Aragyo encompasses more than a single 100-day training session. It is made up of five stages. The first stage uses a wooden sword, the second a wooden wand decorated with two zigzag paper streamers, a Heisoku, the third a Household Deity, Daikoku, the fourth a Water Deity, and the fifth uses the Omandala Gohonzon. Only those who have completed the fifth stage are qualified to be mentors. Even after completing the fifth stage, those who want to continue training can participate and become masters, *Shuhoshi Shihan*.

As of 2015, 6,685 priests have completed at least one stage of Aragyo. The number of overseas priests is gradually increasing. Rev. Wu Hokken from South Korea

completed the fourth stage in 2012. Rev. Shoda Kanai from Las Vegas completed the second stage in 2014.

There are strict admission requirements for Aragyo. We must not only be healthy but also have an irreproachable character and the ability to recite the Lotus Sutra. While many trainees fail and drop out in the first few weeks, those with large bodies and powerful muscles do not necessarily overcome difficulties. Only those with excellent physical ability and mental strength can endure the harsh training. We cannot complete Aragyo without the protection of invisible Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and beneficial gods of heaven.

Water purification exercises to cleanse the body and mind are done seven times a day, at 3:00 a.m., 6:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m., noon, 3:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., and 11:00 p.m. We are never excused from water purification and recitation exercises in the Hall. We eat nothing but two meals a day of rice gruel and miso soup. We get extremely hungry and lack sleep. The cold increases day by day and chills us to the bone. We drive ourselves to the chasm of death by wearing ourselves out. We can only continue by preparing to die after the fiftieth day.

We cannot avoid the many outcries of the soul. “Why must I suffer like this? What is the purpose of this practice of hell?” Then we are naturally forced to



After 100 days, the Blissful Gate, Zuimon, opens.

know that the cause of these sufferings is our bad karma in the past, present and future. If we could wash off the dirt stuck indelibly to our body and mind, we would get a purified body and mind of our own accord. After confessing, repenting and extinguishing our past bad karma, we could master the spirit of Kishimojin and be given a new life as if reborn.

Soon, we come to think in the words of Chapter 13 of the Lotus Sutra, “We will spare not even our lives” to extinguish this karma through Aragyo. Finally, we concentrate our minds on reciting the Lotus Sutra, the Odaimoku and water training, and we devote ourselves to making our followers and others happy.

We continue Aragyo in that dauntless spirit of devotion. Around the ninetieth day, we can get amazing powers. Deities, like spirits, come to dwell within our extremely worn bodies to give us new physical strength and spiritual powers of gentle forbearance. At last, the Blissful Gate, *Zuimon*, that has been closed for 100 days, is opened. Then Aragyo is completed at daybreak on February 10.

Our aim is to train ourselves to follow Nichiren Shonin’s teachings and to place our entire faith in the Lotus Sutra. The way of Aragyo practice follows the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha without idling or behaving impiously and accomplishes our deepest wishes to propagate Nichiren Shu Buddhism widely. Our wish is to bring all people health and longevity in the present and in the future.

—Translated by Rev. Kanshu Naito



Seven times a day, the trainee priests go through water purification, dousing themselves with cold water.

Joint Ceremony for Pearl Harbor Memorial

December 8, 2016 was the 75th anniversary of Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. For the first time, under the joint auspices of the United States Navy and the Consul General of Japan in Honolulu, a memorial service for all the victims was held on Ford Island. Rev. Chishin Hirai, chief priest of the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii, participated

in the event. Rev. Hirai carried in his arms a book listing the names of the 65 Japanese soldiers who died in the attack. The book has been kept at the Nichiren Mission to pray for the repose of their souls. It is the only Buddhist temple in Hawaii where this list has been kept.

The ceremony was not open to the media. There were about 80 participants,

including Rear Admiral John Fuller, Commander of the Navy Region Hawaii, and Consul General Yasushi Misawa. American President Barack Obama and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe also attended. Admiral Fuller noted, “We are committed to preventing war by preserving peace by building cooperation and strengthening partnerships with our allies, including Japan.” Consul General Misawa called the event “a huge milestone marking just how far we have come as two nations and two peoples where once we were enemies. We hope for peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region to continue for generations to come.”

After the event, a service to console the spirits of the deceased and to pray for world peace was held at the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii. About 100 people attended, including Consul General



Rev. Hirai with Pearl Harbor in the background.

Misawa, members of the Maritime Self-Defense Force, and Buddhist ministers in Hawaii.

Rev. Hirai declared, “When we see the mutual prosperity and friendly relations between the U.S. and Japan, we must not forget that the tragedy of the attack on Pearl Harbor laid a foundation for peace today. We will continue to pray for the repose of the victims of the war, wishing for everlasting peace.”

—Rev. Ekaku Murakami, Assoc. Minister, Seattle Nichiren Buddhist Church.



U.S. President Barack Obama and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Pearl Harbor Memorial.

TEMPLE EVENTS

Puunene Nichiren Mission Rev. Chitoku Kawaguchi

Memorial Flute Solo

I was invited to play the *ryuteki*, a Japanese flute used in *Gagaku*, traditional Japanese court music, at the 75th Pearl Harbor Memorial Ceremony held last December. There were many speeches given by representatives from both the United States and Japan, and the flute piece was the only part that symbolized Japanese tradition. As I stood facing the USS Arizona Memorial, the notes from my flute seemed to reach out to both the American and Japanese servicemen who had sacrificed their lives for their countries. It was the most unforgettable experience for me while performing a *Gagaku* piece. The air was so calm and peaceful, and I hoped that the spirits of the deceased would receive my gift.



Nichiren Mission of Hawaii Rev. Chishin Hirai

Fundraising to Celebrate the 800th Anniversary of Nichiren Shonin's Birth

As you may know, we plan to have many commemorative events to celebrate the 800th anniversary of Nichiren Shonin's Birth in 2021. What will make our Founder happy on his anniversary is that many people have become happy with the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. We need a place to come together, learn together and practice together. That is what our temple is about. Our Hondo and administrative building are showing their age and need to be repaired to achieve our goal. About 90% of our budget will go to

this project. Our fundraising campaign will also include a graveyard for pets, a Grand Ceremony for the 800th Anniversary, a commemorative tour to Japan, publishing a revised Gatha Book along with other related activities. We appreciate your generous support for the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii.

San Jose Myokakuji Betsuin Rev. Arnold Matsuda

Receiving the Gift of Faith through Giving

Over the past four years or so, I have shared with you reflections on my life experiences and what I wished to focus on and achieve. My theme for the past several years has been the appreciation of life, the gifts we receive from it, and faith. I have also aspired to spread kindness to others without expecting anything in return and have tried to "pay it forward" while reminding and encouraging others to do the same.

However, as we go about our daily lives, what we experience can be deeply troubling, causing us to question our faith in religion, goodness or humanity. Sometimes it is difficult to find the will to forge ahead. We wonder whether trying to do good or believing in the goodness of people is even worth it.

In the past year, I personally had many interesting experiences. Some were good, and others were bad. Overall, I believe that through faith and my mindset, I was able to interact quite well with the people and environment around me.

One experience was with a non-profit organization called "SkateMD Healing Hearts through Skateboarding." This is a volunteer group providing free skateboarding clinics to both children with disabilities and at-risk youth. As I was teaching and just spending time with these children, I felt genuine happiness at being part of something with the pure purpose of spreading kindness to others and creating an opportunity they otherwise may not have had, while expecting nothing for myself in return.

At the end of each clinic, I found that I shared the same sentiment with other volunteers. We were genuinely proud. Not proud of ourselves, but of the courage and accomplishments of the children. This allowed us simply to enjoy being in the moment by participating in something positive within our community. The opportunity to work with these children brought me inspiration and restored my faith.

Things may never be fully normal for these children. The world we live in

may never be fully right. Terrible things continue to occur everywhere. However, spreading the seeds of compassion and loving kindness to others provides hope where there was only hopelessness, light where there was only darkness and motivation to continue to do good in this world. Things may be difficult or improbable but never impossible!

Through our common faith in Nichiren Shu Buddhism, let us continue our determination to spread kindness and compassion while building and strengthening our bond as a Sangha.

Penang Ichinenji Rev. Yuen Ito

Docho Ceremony for Gyouin

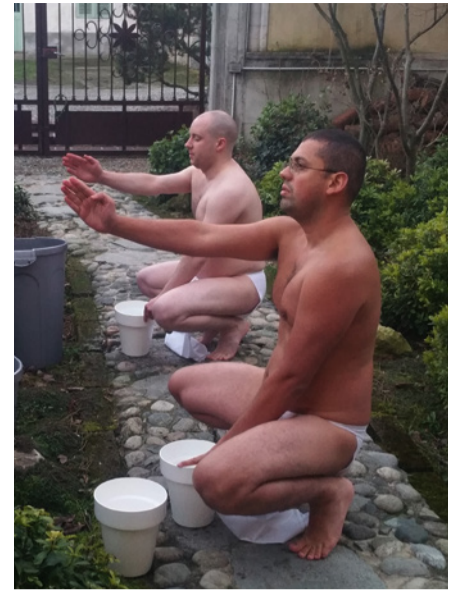
The Docho Ceremony for my brother disciple was held on February 9, at Seicho-ji Temple, Chiba Prefecture. Gyouin Ciro Miguel Ayala, originally from Argentina, lived in Taiwan for 10 years and studied Buddhism there. He became interested in Nichiren Shu Buddhism and decided to become a Nichiren Shu priest two years ago. He came to Japan and studied under his master, Rev. Shuon Ito of Hongakuji Temple. I have also helped him in his training. Now that he has formally become a Nichiren Shu Shami, he will have to study the sutras and Buddhism harder. Gyouin expressed his gratitude towards his master, members of Hongakuji Temple and all the friends and priests in Taiwan who helped make this day possible.



Renkoji Temple, Italy Rev. Shoryo Tarabini

European Shami Seminar

The Third Nichiren Shu European Seminar for Novice Priests, *Shami*, was held from February 13-18 at the Renkoji Temple in Cereseto, Italy. Three other ceremonies were held on February 19: a celebration of Nichiren Shonin's birthday, *Tanjo-e*, Nichiren Shu Conversion Ceremony,



followed by an Acceptance Ceremony for pre-Shami, *Nyudo*.

Three Shami from the U.K., Brazil and Spain along with three Nyudo from Italy participated in this seminar.

Rev. Kanto Tsukamoto from the London Nichiren Shu Temple directed *Shomyo* practice. Lectures on Buddhism, Nichiren Shu, and the procedures for the recitation of the sutras were also explained and practiced.

On Thursday, February 16, Nichiren Shonin's birthday, the three Shami performed a water purification training, *Suigyo*, clothed only in cotton loincloths in the bitter cold weather.

Shami participating were Kanse Capon from the U.K., Yodatsu Chiamulera from Brazil, and Shojun Garrido Diaz from Spain. All earnestly listened to the lectures and carried out what they had learned. This year, the conference was primarily in English with a little bit of Italian and Spanish here and there.

Sixty people from different parts of Europe and South America attended this event. It was also presented on the Internet for everyone to watch.

On the afternoon of the final day, we had a free concert of traditional Neapolitan music. Bruno Nicoli played piano, and Eva Falanga sang. Both are members of Renkoji Temple.

This was a big and challenging step for the Shami and Nyudo. This first step as Nichiren Shu propagators will be remembered forever.



Calendar for April 2017–May 2017

APRIL 8	Hanamatsuri (Buddha's Birthday)
APRIL 5-20	Nakayama Hokkekyoji Senbu-e (1,000 Recitations of the Lotus Sutra)
APRIL 27-29	Ikegami Honmonji Senbu-e (1,000 Recitations of the Lotus Sutra)
APRIL 28	The 764th Rikkyo Kaishu-e (764th Anniversary of the Founding of the Order)

MAY 10	Wesak Day in Southeast Asia (The Buddha's Birthday Observed)
MAY 12	The 756th Izu Honan-e (Ceremony commemorating the 756th Anniversary of the Izu Persecution)
MAY 20-21	The 800th Anniversary Commemorative Ceremony of Nichiren Shonin's Birth, Penang, Malaysia

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