

# Nichiren Shu News

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## 800th Anniversary Celebrations Begin in Penang, Malaysia

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We heartily congratulate all the members of the Southeast Asia Temples for their hard work in putting together this wonderful event and dedicate this issue to them. We will resume our regular coverage in the next issue.

While people in Japan and all over the world are still making preparations for celebrating the 800th Anniversary of our Founder Nichiren Shonin's birth in 2021, seven Nichiren Shu Southeast Asia Sanghas organized the first festivities at the Bay View Resort in Batu Ferringhi, Malaysia. Years of planning went into these events. Part of the planning involved a pilgrimage by representatives of the sanghas to Japan in October of 2016. During an audience with Archbishop Nisso Uchino, Chief Abbot of Minobusan Kuonji Temple, Mr. Ang Tiang Soon, Chairman of Penang Ichinenji Temple, invited the Archbishop to attend and preside over the Anniversary Ceremony.

The Archbishop accepted the invitation. On May 19 of this year, he arrived with a delegation from Nichiren Shu Headquarters, the *Shumuin*. Progress in spreading the Wonderful Dharma in Southeast Asia over the last 15 years has been tremendous, and everyone was sure that these events would highlight the enthusiasm and devotion of the members of all Nichiren Shu sanghas in the area. These included Penang Ichinenji Temple in Malaysia; Kuala Lumpur Kanonji Temple in Malaysia; Klang Nichiren Shu Sangha in Malaysia; Daimokuji Temple in Singapore; Rengeji Temple in Jakarta, Indonesia; the Sri Lanka Nichiren Shu Community; and the Taiwan Nichiren Shu Sangha in Taipei.

After a dinner was held on May 20 to welcome the Archbishop, the Anniversary



Nichiren Shu temples in Penang and Southeast Asia are so strong. We wanted to start the celebrations of the 800th Anniversary of Nichiren Shonin's Birth with a lot of strength, as these events will continue until 2021. The energy here has been key to the success of this event. We know that propagation of the Lotus Sutra and Odaimoku will continue in the region. This event in Penang has made a strong impression on everyone and will help make celebrations around the world successful. —Archbishop Nisso Uchino

Ceremony was celebrated on May 21.

About 400 people, including priests and lay members from Southeast Asia, Japan and other parts of the world, gathered to show their gratitude for the life of Nichiren Shonin. It was truly impressive and unforgettable to be with this group of people from different nations united with Odaimoku and expressing the joy of our Founder's birth.

The congregation included 20 members of *Wasan* groups from Japan who began the ceremony with their songs praising the life of Nichiren Shonin. Rev. Daiei Matsui, Director of the Nichiren Shu Missionary Department, then explained and demonstrated how to practice Shodaigyo. Next, a group of musicians performing *Gagaku*, imperial court music from ancient Japan, set the mood for the ceremony. Two

priests then performed *Shasui Sange*, a purification of the venue with blessed water and flower petals representing flowers falling from the heavens. Children of sangha members offered incense and flowers while the heads of each sangha offered light with candles. Seventeen *Shuhoshi*, priests who have completed the specialized ascetic training of *Aragyo*, blessed all gathered with *Kito*.

When Archbishop Uchino entered the hall, all the attendees waited with their hands together in *gassho*. About 40 priests assisted with the service, including Rev. Yuon Ito, resident minister of Ichinenji Temple, Rev. Ervinna Myoufu, resident minister of Rengeji Temple, and Rev. Keiji Oshima, resident minister of Daimokuji Temple, who also served as the *Chido*, ceremony

director. Archbishop Uchino addressed those gathered, saying, "We will strive to realize our Founder's wish to spread peace throughout the world by establishing the True Dharma. We also strive to help all beings live in accordance with the Wonderful Dharma with Nichiren Shonin's teaching of being united in one mind. We pray for world peace and happiness for all beings."

After the ceremony, Archbishop Uchino congratulated the audience saying that faithful lay members of Southeast Asia "are nothing other than the Bodhisattvas sprung from underground." He also described how he was deeply moved by their visit to Minobusan the previous October to show their pure heart toward our Founder's Mountain. He concluded, "The Anniversary Ceremony held today shows the teaching of being united in one mind that should be spread throughout the world beyond the boundaries of nationality and ethnicity. I will pray with you for eternal peace for Japan, Malaysia, Asia, and the world."

Rev. Matsui also shared a congratulatory message from the *Shumuin*, and Rev. Ito gave a speech of thanks: "I am happy that I can be together with you on this wonderful day. Our mission of propagation in Southeast Asia started only 15 years ago, but we have worked to remove barriers of language and culture, increasing the power of faith. This tells us that all things are possible if people are united in one mind. I am sure that the mission bases of Southeast Asia will grow more in prosperity with a spiritual bond to bring a peaceful society where everyone can live in harmony."

—From the *Nichiren Shu Shimbun*.  
Translated by Sensho Komukai.



20 women from *Wasan* groups came from Japan.



About 40 priests assisted with the celebration ceremony.



*Shuhoshi* priests performing a *Kito* blessing.



Over 400 people attended the celebration, including Archbishop Nisso Uchino, a large contingent of priests and members from Japan and the U.S., and members of all seven Southeast Asia Sanghas.

PHOTOGRAPHS IN THIS ISSUE HAVE BEEN GRACIOUSLY PROVIDED BY THE NICHIREN SHU SHIMBUN AND MEMBERS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA SANGHAS



## Southeast Asian Food and Culture at the Heart of the Celebration



Archbishop Uchino told the crowd, "Your infectious joy gives me great hope for peace in the world."

On the evening of May 21, after the Anniversary Ceremony that morning, all the participants reunited for another celebration, this time focused on the food, culture and fellowship of the Southeast Asia Sanghas. Members practiced their performances for several months before the banquet. Members of the Penang Ichinenji Temple had made painstaking preparations for their Tai Chi Chuan demonstration. Members of the Kuala Lumpur Kanonji Temple formed a chorus and sang praises to the Buddha and Nichiren Shonin. There was also a sword dancer from the Penang sangha who thrilled the crowd with his daring and precision. The banquet hall resounded with unceasing applause and cheers.

Archbishop Nisso Uchino gave a short address expressing his deep appreciation for the members of Southeast Asia: "It is our duty to declare and spread widely the teaching of the Lotus Sutra for world peace. Your infectious joy gives me great hope for peace in the world." Bishop Nichiyu Mochida, president of Nichiren Shu International Fellowship Association, gave a short talk recalling the hall-opening ceremony in Penang 15 years ago and the donation of the statue of our Founder.

Nichiren Shu presented a letter of appreciation, recognizing Ichinenji Temple for their preparation of the commemorative event. Rev. Genyu Ikegami, Director of the Administration Department of Minobusan Kuonji Temple, presented commemorative items to every mission base of Southeast Asia. Bishop Kenryu Watanabe presented donations to each temple on behalf of NOPPA and the Buddhist International Fellowship Association. Rev. Junko Kobayashi, Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu, sent a message urging everyone "to show the heart of *gassho* to the world."

At the end of the banquet, Rev. Ervinna Myoufu of Jakarta Rengeji Temple delivered a moving address of gratitude to everyone present. "It is so wonderful that people whose countries, languages, cultures and customs are different have gathered here with happy smiles today.



Bishop Watanabe, Archbishop Uchino, Bishop Mochida, and Kito Master Tajima with members of the Southeast Asia Sanghas.

800 years ago, Nichiren Shonin worked hard to spread the Lotus Sutra to save living beings from suffering despite his own adversities. We are grateful that he taught us the importance of the Lotus Sutra and Odaimoku, and the value of practicing the Buddhist way of saving others and realizing world peace. Although every individual is unique, good results can come if we respect all of

our special characters and cooperate with each other. It is our happy duty to make Buddhism known to people in Southeast Asia. Let us continue in this spirit of cooperation to fulfill our Founders wishes for our happiness and peace in the world!"

—From the *Nichiren Shu Shimbun*.  
Translated by Sensho Komukai.



## Members in Southeast Asia Strengthen Their Practice through Education



In his Treatise on All Phenomena as Ultimate Reality, *Shoho Jisso-Sho*, our Founder Nichiren Shonin wrote, "Strive to carry out the two ways of practice and learning. Without practice and learning Buddhism will cease to exist." In the spirit of carrying out the wishes of our Founder, the 800th Anniversary celebration in Penang included several opportunities for those attending to learn more about the history and practice of Nichiren Buddhism.

At the beginning of the Anniversary Service, Rev. Daiji Matsui, Director of the International Missionary Department, explained the practice of *gassho*, holding one's palms together. The goal of the

800th anniversary observance is to preach the essence of *gassho* to the world. This means that the true way of *gassho* is a practice of genuine respect: seeing the Buddha inside a person rather than merely asking a favor from them.

Prof. Shoshi Annaka, member of the Faculty of Buddhist Studies of Rissho University, gave a presentation entitled "Nichiren Shu Mission Work on the Malay Peninsula during the Taisho Period."

Prof. Annaka described a cave temple named Hokekyoji Temple built at Ipoh, the state capital of Perak, Malaysia, in

1916. There are records describing a hot spring in the cave visited by many people including Japanese, Indian, Chinese and British. Many Odaimoku inscriptions and other writings, including those written by Rev. Kanjo Asahi, were carved into walls and other rocks within the cave.

Members of Ichinenji Temple were surprised to hear that 100 years ago there was already a Nichiren Shu temple close to their town.

Prof. Zeho Miwa, member of the Faculty of Buddhist Studies of Minobusan

University, spoke about his research into the Lotus Sutra.

Prof. Miwa started by describing how to tell the difference between the Lotus Sutra as a Mahayana teaching and Theravada Buddhism. In early Buddhism, it was necessary to break off human relationships to obtain the insight of the Buddha. On the other hand, Mahayana Buddhism centers on practicing the way of Bodhisattvas by training to benefit others with the Dharma. This practice necessarily involves human relations. The Mahayana teaching is well suited for those working for social change. He continued, "The Lotus Sutra makes a great contribution to unifying all the teachings that seemed to be opposed to each other. In short, the Lotus Sutra restored the Buddha's original intention to Buddhism. I truly wish that all of you will become Buddhas by listening to the teaching of the Buddha, perceiving your own heart, and chanting Odaimoku while helping others."

—From the *Nichiren Shu Shimbun*.  
Translated by Sensho Komukai.



Guest speakers Rev. Daiji Matsui, Prof. Shoshi Annaka, and Prof. Zeho Miwa.



## We're Proud to Be a Nichiren Shu Temple and Honored to Host This Auspicious Celebration

### PENANG ICHINENJI TEMPLE

It has been a great honor to host such a big event in Penang. We were overjoyed to have the Honorable Nisso Uchino, Archbishop of Nichiren Shu, come all the way from Minobusan, Japan to officiate the service.

We originally belonged to Nichiren Shoshu. However, Shoshu did not accept Shakyamuni Buddha, and they wanted us to discard all our Buddhist statues. We wanted to learn more about the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Shonin's teachings and their connections with Shakyamuni Buddha. However, none of the Shoshu leaders could help with our questions.

In 2000, we met Rev. Shokai Kanai, who was then Bishop of the Nichiren Order of North America (NONA). He answered all our questions. He also shared his sermons and met with us over the Internet.

Even with all that help, I still wanted to find out more about Nichiren Shu, so I went to Japan and visited Minobusan Kuonji Temple and Honmonji Temple



Mr. Ang and leaders of the Southeast Asia Sanghas making candle offerings at the Anniversary Celebration.

in Ikegami. That strengthened my connection to Nichiren Shu and the true Dharma.

We started as a small group in a rented building. Since then, we have grown as Ichinenji Temple. We now have our own

five-story building with a main temple hall, a kitchen, space for accommodating guests, a library, a lecture hall and an alcove for keeping our Buddhist *Oihai*, plaques with the Buddhist names of the deceased.



I am proud of the dedication of our members. This enabled Ichinenji Temple to host this event successfully. We are grateful for the assistance of Revs. Yuon Ito, Ervinna Myoufu, and Keiji Oshima. I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to Archbishop Nisso Uchino and all the ministers and pilgrimage groups who attended from Japan and other parts of Southeast Asia.

We hope the Nichiren Shu community will continue to grow and develop in Malaysia.

—Ang Tiang Soon, Chairman,  
Penang Ichinenji Temple, Malaysia

## "A ONCE IN A LIFETIME EVENT!"

The 800th Anniversary Celebration shows the growing strength of the Nichiren Shu community in Southeast Asia. Sangha leaders discuss how it has empowered the Nichiren Shu community in the region.

### KUALA LUMPUR KANONJI TEMPLE

I feel so grateful to be able to attend such a grand service. It is truly a once in a lifetime event.

Our Sangha began as a small group in 2012, mostly with people who had left Nichiren Shoshu. Our purpose is to carry out the Odaimoku Campaign of doing charity work for society. In the future, we would like to establish our own center since we are now renting space.

We hope our membership will grow and the strength of our faith will spread throughout Asia.

—Lee Beng, Chairman,  
Kuala Lumpur Kanonji Temple,  
Malaysia



### KLANG NICHIREN SHU SANGHA

I am overjoyed to attend this grand event. Our Sangha began in 2008, but we had been chanting the Odaimoku for a long time, since most of us were former Shoshu members.

The unity of the Southeast Asian Nichiren Shu group is wonderful. I hope this experience will help our faith grow.

—Ng Chwee Cheng, Chairman,  
Klang Nichiren Shu Sangha,  
Malaysia



### SRI LANKA NICHIREN SHU COMMUNITY

This has been an unforgettable experience for all the Sri Lanka members.

Our Sangha began in 2013. We used to belong to Nichiren Shoshu, but we became discouraged since they had no respect for Shakyamuni Buddha. Sri Lanka is a Buddhist country that respects the Buddha. We were overjoyed to find a faith that cherishes the Odaimoku and respects the Buddha.

There are about 200 active members throughout Sri Lanka. We do volunteer activity for the local community and help the needy. Our strength lies in the power of the growing Sangha.

—Gemunu Ranasoora, Chairman,  
Sri Lanka Nichiren Shu  
Community



### RENGEJI TEMPLE, JAKARTA, INDONESIA

This event has united all the Nichiren Shu members in Southeast Asia, and people have gathered together in Penang as one. The spirit of the Lotus Sutra unites us all.

I was a youth leader in Nichiren Shoshu Indonesia for 11 years. However, I felt that there was something missing. The group denied belief in Shakyamuni Buddha. In 2002, I found the Nichiren Shu website and found answers to many of the questions that I had.

We are hoping to build our own temple in the near future so we can have our own place of worship and hope to spread the True Dharma in Indonesia.

—Shami Sidin Ong, Chairman,  
Rengeji Temple,  
Jakarta, Indonesia



### DAIMOKUJI TEMPLE, SINGAPORE

This has been a wonderful experience for us. I have been chanting the Odaimoku for 40 years.

Our temple began in 2004. There were only a few members at the time, but now we have about 50 members. I hope the membership will grow and we can continue to keep our faith.

Nichiren Shu is real, and this faith changes our lives!

—Foo Yang Yit, Chairwoman,  
Daimokuji Temple, Singapore



### TAIWAN NICHIREN SHU SANGHA

It is wonderful to be able to join everyone for this time of celebration.

Our group also broke off from Nichiren Shoshu. There were so many restrictions, and we had to get special permission from the headquarters to make a pilgrimage to Japan. Now we have a growing group in Taiwan and hope that our faith will spread in Taiwan.

This 800th Anniversary Service was very impressive, and we would like to keep our ties with the rest of the Southeast Asian Nichiren Shu Community.

—Lai Chi Tsun, Chairman,  
Taiwan Nichiren Shu Sangha,  
Taipei, Taiwan



SOUTHEAST ASIA SANGHA LEADERS INTERVIEWED BY SANDRA SEKI





"I felt everyone united with *Itaidoshin* to make this event a success." —Yeap Guat Khim

"It was the first time for me attending such a grand event. I felt very special and honored. Overall, it was beautifully organized." —Grace Lim



"I feel so honored to attend this event, to witness this grand ceremony, and to meet the Archbishop. I learned so much about the Lotus Sutra. This will strengthen our faith as we bow and respect each other in our daily practice." —Teh Teik Sheng



The delegation from Japan arrived on Mr. Ang's birthday, and Rev. Junsho Ota presented Mr. Ang with a bouquet of birthday flowers.



"This was a lively and joyous event. I was struck by the enthusiasm of the members all across this wide region! Everyone is eager to learn more about Buddhism. They all pulled together and did a great job. I really saw the spirit of *Itaidoshin*, Different Bodies, One Mind, at work." —Prof. Zeho Miwa



I want to thank Nichiren Shonin for bringing us the true teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Lotus Sutra. I was amazed by the energy of this celebration, particularly the Kito blessing. Having the Archbishop here made it even more special. What is important now is to keep spreading these teachings and to make more people aware of the Wonderful Dharma of the Lotus Sutra.

—Henry Goh Kian Li



The Archbishop thoroughly enjoyed his first visit to Southeast Asia. His visit to Ichinenji Temple, and especially the opportunity to personally meet the members, was a happy experience for him. He was truly touched by their sincerity and enthusiasm.

## “See You Again!”

On May 22, the day after the celebration and banquet, Archbishop Uchino honored Ichinenji Temple with a personal visit. After leading a service, he gave a short speech congratulating the Penang sangha on the success of the celebration, and showing his appreciation for all their hard work.

He described how he knew of the countless hours of faithful and dedicated service, not only from the Penang sangha,



but from all the sanghas in Southeast Asia. The Nichiren Shu campaign for celebrating the 800th Birth of Nichiren Shonin is well underway and will take a lot more work from other groups all over the world. The generosity and cooperation of the Southeast Asia Sanghas are not only a sign of the Wonderful Dharma working among them, but they also show the rest of us in Nichiren Shu what we can accomplish together.

In return, the members expressed their appreciation to Archbishop Uchino for making his journey to Penang. His



presence was an inspiration for everyone to continue their practice and bring peace into our troubled world.

As Archbishop Uchino left, members lined his path bowing and holding their hands in *gassho*. As he got into his car, he turned and smiled to the crowd, saying in English, “See you again!”

—From the *Nichiren Shu Shimbun*.  
Translated by Sensho Komukai.

### Calendar for August 2017–September 2017

<b>AUG 13-15</b>	Obon (Traditional Chinese Calendar)	<b>SEP 3</b>	Memorial for Niko Shonin
<b>AUG 15</b>	Memorial Ceremony for Victims and Unknown War Dead and Prayer for World Peace at Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery, Sponsored by Nichiren Shu	<b>SEP 12</b>	Tatsunokuchi Persecution Memorial Day
<b>AUG 27</b>	Matsubagayatsu Persecution Memorial Day	<b>SEP 17</b>	Memorial for Nisshin Shonin
		<b>SEP 18-19</b>	Grand Ceremony at Shichimenzan
		<b>SEP 20-26</b>	Autumn Higan (Equinox) Week

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