

Nichiren Shu News

Published by the Head Office of Nichiren Shu Buddhism & NOPPA

No. 226

June 1, 2018

1

NICHIREN SANGHA OF COLOMBO IN SRI LANKA CELEBRATES ITS FOURTH ANNIVERSARY, AND CLIMBING SACRED MT. SRI PADA

By Rev. Yuon Ito, Ichinenji Temple, Penang, Malaysia; Gemunu Ranasoora, Head, Nichiren Sangha of Colombo, Sri Lanka; Kalpani Apsara and Amasha Sharinidi, Members, Nichiren Sangha of Colombo, Sri Lanka



The fourth anniversary celebration of the Nichiren Sangha of Colombo in Sri Lanka was held on December 24, 2017. The ceremony was conducted by Rev. Ervinna Myoufu, assisted by Rev. Yuon Ito. Fifty members of the congregation participated and celebrated the anniversary with a special cake after the service.

This Sangha holds a Gojukai Ceremony for taking precepts every year during its anniversary, and 19 members took precepts as Nichiren Shu believers, and four families are receiving the Mandala Gohonzon to place in their homes.

During this visit, we also had the opportunity to climb Mt. Sri Pada, which is also known as Butterfly Mountain. Mt. Sri Pada is the fourth highest mountain in Sri Lanka, standing 2,243 meters above sea level. It is known as the “Sacred Mountain” because it has a footprint of Shakyamuni Buddha. Legend says that when the Buddha visited Sri Lanka for the third time, he used his power to leave his footprint in a stone at the top of the mountain. It is said that butterflies came to worship the sacred footprint. When they ended their lives, they became heavenly deities protecting Mt. Sri Pada. This is the origin of the name Butterfly Mountain.

On days of the full moon (the *Uposadha* days), between December and May, Mt. Sri Pada is open for pilgrimage.

Even though the hike to the top is not easy, children and the elderly come and try to climb it as part of their religious practice. This pilgrimage is a wonderful experience for people of all ages. Babies are carried on their parents’ backs. Small children and youths help their elderly grandparents climb this sacred mountain. People purify their bodies in Seetha Gangula, a waterfall at the base of this mountain, just as Nichiren Shu followers purify themselves before climbing Mt. Shichimen.

Before and while climbing Mt. Sri Pada, the pilgrims wish “Sumana Saman Devi Pihitai,” which means May the deity Sumana Saman protect everyone who makes this pilgrimage. Though the hike is steep, with faith in Shakyamuni Buddha, the pilgrims are protected.

It is said that when the Buddha visited Mt. Sri Pada, his robe was damaged. He needed a needle and thread to mend his damaged robe. He received these from the



Rev. Ervinna Myoufu, chanting the Odaimoku, leads the group on their way to Mt. Sri Pada.



The rising sun's rays pierced through the clouds, taken as the group was descending Mt. Sri Pada.

deities. Now, when a person climbs the mountain for the first time, a needle and thread are offered to the Buddha. Since this was Rev. Yuon Ito's first visit to Mt. Sri Pada, he offered a needle and thread to the Buddha at Indikatupana Point.

We started off at 6:00 in the evening, and it took five hours to reach the summit. We chanted the Odaimoku and recited the *Lotus Sutra* there at the top of the mountain in front of the monument of the footprint of Shakyamuni Buddha, which was decorated with gold and surrounded by many offerings. Even though it was a long climb and quite cold at the summit, we never felt tired, because of the beauty of what we were seeing. The moon was shining quietly, the night sky was filled with shimmering stars, and sunlight warmed our bodies as the morning came. We felt the sacred atmosphere engulfing us as we beat upon our fan drums and chanted the Odaimoku, and the sun's brilliant rays pierced through the clouds.

Gemunu Ranasoora, Head of the Nichiren Sangha of Colombo, commented

on the pilgrimage: “I feel that climbing Mt. Sri Pada is similar to what is written in Chapter 7 of the *Lotus Sutra*, ‘Parable of the Magic City.’ Though we practice the Dharma daily, we may face many obstacles. However, if we have faith, we can reach our goals.”

Ranasoora continued, “This was my 27th pilgrimage climbing Mt. Sri Pada. I hope that I can make it again and ring the bell at the top for the 28th time.”

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.



A group photo of climbers taken in front of the Dragon Arch at the entrance of Mt. Sri Pada.

REMEMBERING REV. MYOJO SASAKI

By Sandra Seki,
Editor, Nichiren Shu News

On August 14, 2017, Rev. Myojo Sasaki passed away peacefully at the age of 95, in Uenohara in Yamanashi Prefecture. More than half a century of her life was dedicated to spreading the Dharma throughout Japan and India.

I first met Rev. Sasaki more than 30 years ago, when she came to our temple and asked for my help. She and her husband (the late

Rev. Hojo Sasaki) wanted to purchase land in India in order to build a *dojo*, a training center for Nichiren Shu priests. She said she had been drawn to Nichiren Shu by the words of Nichiren Shonin saying, “Buddhism was born in India and came to Japan through China. It should eventually return and spread to where it originated.” Neither of the Sasaki spoke any English, but I was incredibly moved by her enthusiasm and motivation. I was drawn into their cause. There were many official papers to read, sign, and submit, and there were several trips to India to purchase the land for the temple.

To fund this building project, Rev. Sasaki went on an *angya*, chanting the Odaimoku while beating the fan drum, from Hokkaido to Kyushu asking for donations and support. Along the way, she gained the respect and admiration of everyone she met. Temples in Japan, and followers of Buddhism throughout Japan and India, made donations to help fund the project. Bishop Nichizen Matsumoto from Daibo Hongyoji Temple became the chief patron for the project on the Japanese side,

and Ven. Kushok Bakula, the Indian ambassador to Mongolia became the chief patron on the Indian side. They formed a society to support the project. Sarnath in Varanasi is the place where the Buddha first taught the Dharma after his enlightenment, and it was selected as the place where Horinji Temple would be built.

With the support and help of friends, priests and followers, the Sasaki's dream of returning Buddhism to where it had originated was realized on November 21, 1992. A pilgrimage party of more than 200 people from Japan went to India to attend the grand inauguration ceremony. Attendees from local Buddhist temples in India also joined this celebration.

I had the honor to accompany Rev. Sasaki to India several times to set up the temple. I remember how she would tell me to go to sleep. Meanwhile, she would write the Odaimoku on small sheets of paper and gently chant the sutra. This sounded like a lullaby to my ears. During the day, we would visit local temples. Rev. Sasaki would always

carry her fan drum and chant the Odaimoku as we made our way along the greeting route.

Villagers would put their palms together in *gassho* when they saw this energetic lady chanting with the fan drum. There was never a moment wasted in her daily activities. She would teach the village children how to beat the drum and chant the Odaimoku. The children quickly caught on to the rhythm and would soon be chanting away. She rewarded them with sweets from Japan. Over time, those children passed this activity along to their own children and to the present.

The seeds that Rev. Sasaki planted have grown into sturdy plants that have born fruit. Now every year at the Oeshiki in October children gather to join the parade and beat the fan drums.

Though Rev. Sasaki has left us, her spirit of propagating the Dharma remains.

Her daughter, Rev. Myojitsu Nagakubo, will continue to carry on this spirit and is working to finish the third phase of the building project by completing a vocational school and larger clinic for the local community.



Living the Dharma: What I Learned from Hot Sake at Myorenji Temple

"I'm sure that I am second to none in passion for maintaining this new *hondo*, main hall, for our temple. I want to watch over it to ensure that it will not lose its sacred dignity," says Yutaka Miki, a 90-year-old representative of devotees of Myorenji Temple in Izumo City in Shimane Prefecture.

Yutaka wakes up early each morning. First, he offers tea and water at the temple altar. Then he recites Chapter 2 and Chapter 16 of the *Lotus Sutra* and chants the Odaimoku without missing a single day. He encountered the Odaimoku in his youth. Born as the fifth child in a family of six children, he was immediately put up for adoption. He grew up observing his grandfather's faith in Nichiren Shu Buddhism. His grandfather was assigned to an official position in a support group for Myorenji Temple. The Miki family joined the Odaimoku chanting group there, and Yutaka began beating a hand drum while chanting the

Odaimoku when he was nine years old.

Years later, he entered a teachers' training college, and he went into teaching in April 1947. He still remembers that during his college days, when he and his father visited Myorenji Temple, the 21st head minister, Nichiyu, always welcomed them both.

Izumo's winters are so cold that boiling hot sake is served during big events such as Oeshiki, our Founder's



Rev. Shinsho Kawase with Yutaka Miki at Myorenji Temple.

memorial service. The hot sake deeply warms the body to the core.

"Why don't you have a drink?" he goes around welcoming people and offering hot sake to those who have come. Since serving hot sake became a tradition at Myorenji Temple, boiling hot sake and tempura, made with fried vegetables, have been offered to devotees and supporters of Myorenji Temple following the Oeshiki Services.

Yutaka was assigned as an officer in the support group for Myorenji Temple in 1969. Since then, he has had opportunities to visit Ikegami Honmonji Temple, Seichoji Temple, and Kominato Tanjoji Temple. What impressed him most is Kiyosumi Seichoji Temple where Nichiren Shonin recited the Odaimoku for the first time. He has never forgotten how excited he was to see the brilliant sun rising as he stood at the top of Asahigamori Hill at Seichoji Temple.

However, he did not get a chance to visit Mt. Minobu until more recently. After retiring from teaching in 1987, he was assigned as a representative of devotees. He finally visited Mt. Minbou

in 2003 for a *rinban* service, the practice of caring for the tomb of Nichiren Shonin in rotation.

He was also involved in a grand project to reconstruct the *hondo* of Myorenji Temple. The construction work started in 2007. It had been planned that the work would take ten years to finish. However, through the united efforts of a great number of people, the hall's reconstruction was completed in just two years. The inauguration ceremony for the new *hondo* was held for the first time in 269 years.

Yutaka is also a great calligrapher. On wooden tags hung out in the new *hondo*, he wrote the names of those who donated to the reconstruction.

Looking back, Yutaka has realized that he has seen more than half a century of historical transitions at Myorenji Temple. Even today, he makes his way to Myorenji Temple to see if there are any damaged parts or dangerous spots in the *hondo*, keeping a watchful eye on this sacred space.

This article is from Shobo Magazine. Translated by Rev. Sensho Komukai.

Buddhism Q&A (9)

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph.D.

The Title of the Lotus Sutra

The title of the *Lotus Sutra* in Sanskrit is *Saddharma-punadarika-sutra*, which means, "The Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma." The lotus flower is considered sacred in India, and there are red, white and blue varieties. A cool pond is a paradise for all creatures in the hot climate of India. So from ancient times, lotus flowers blooming on the surface of a pond have symbolized paradise.

Lotus roots are a vital and healthy food in Japan. Their stems grow up out of the mud toward the surface of the water. The leaves spread out over the whole surface of the pond. Then, the beautiful lotus flowers bloom, floating upon the water. Even though the lotuses grow out of the mud, they are not stained or muddy.

The lotus is compared to a believer of the *Lotus Sutra*. Our confusion and stress of daily life is like the mud, because of the delusions within our minds. However, if we believe in the sutra and live properly, we will escape the stains of that muddiness. The flowers of the lotus blossoms are likened to the signs of Buddha's wonderful world, which can appear in our lives.



After their flowers bloom, trees will bear fruit. Apples, oranges and cherries are the same. After flowers bloom on plants as well, those plants then grow vegetables, like cucumbers and eggplants. But, the lotus is different. When the flowers of the lotus bloom, the lotus prepares for the fine rhizomes in the base under the petals. The *Lotus Sutra* reveals that the awakening of Buddha is part of the beginner's mind even from the time of the sprouting of faith. Just as the lotus blossoms and bears fruit at the same time, so the practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra* unites within him or herself the causes and effects of Buddhahood. The *Lotus Sutra* is the most wonderful sutra of all the sutras for this reason.

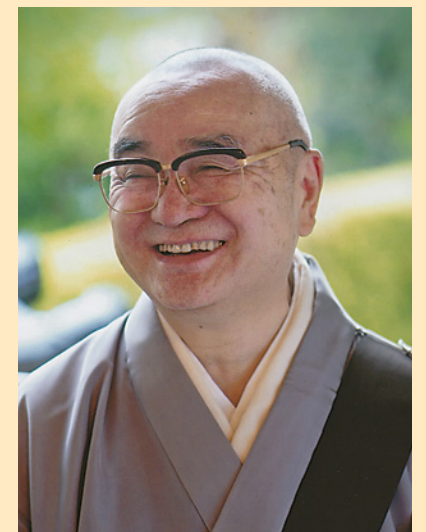
We always welcome questions about Buddhism from our readers. Please send your questions by e-mail to editor-nichirensnunews@nichiren.or.jp or contact us through your local temple.



REVEREND KANNO PREACHES (51)

"Practicing this Lotus Sutra without having firm faith is like trying to grab hold of a jewel in a mountain of treasures without hands, or walking 4,000 kilometers without feet."

—Nichiren Shonin,
Horen-sho (Letter to Horen)



"Faith"

"Even if you chant the *Lotus Sutra* or practice Odaimoku chanting, your practice will prove nothing but a mere formality, or just vain shouting, and you will not be able to reach the Buddha's great peace of mind. It can be compared to the attempt to enter a treasure mountain without hands, being unable to obtain anything."

So Nichiren Shonin teaches us about "faith." Our life is based on "faith" in all phases. Beginning from the relations of parent and child, families, schools, hospitals, enterprises, governmental offices, and so forth, all of them exist due to "faith."

However, faith is fragile. It is broken by single misstep. Recently we stated, "Hey, even the Shinkansen Bullet Train is vulnerable!" when it was reported the train had run many miles with a crack critically developing on the frame of the wheels that went undiscovered by the railmen in charge.

There is no "faith" which is not broken. We call it "conditioned faith." In Buddhism, it is taught that because it exists conditionally, we should keep it carefully.

The faith taught by the Buddha and Nichiren Shonin is "absolute faith." A past master explained, "It is the firm resolution to put faith in the Buddha and depend on him to the end. Only with this "faith," can we obtain "great peace of mind."

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

DOCHO CEREMONY IN JAPAN

By Pamela Reaville,
Enkyoji Temple Member

On February 9, 2018, three American *shami*, all students of Rev. Kanjin Cederman of the Seattle Choeizan Enkyoji Nichiren Buddhist Temple, completed the *docho* ceremony at Seichoji Temple and officially registered as novice priests with Nichiren Shu. The three *shami* are Kanyu Kroll from the Shoeizan Enkyoji Buddhist Temple of Rochester in New York, Kanjo Grohman from the Enkyoji Buddhist Temple of Buffalo in New York, and Kan-e Rosman from the Enkyoji Buddhist Sangha of Spokane in Washington.

Prior to participating in the *docho* ceremony, the *shami* spent several days doing intensive training at Chomyozan Enkyoji, our home temple in Saga, Kyushu, under the guidance of Rev. Kanto Tsukamoto. The training included chanting practice, taiko lessons, and even *angya* and *suigyo* despite the unusually cold, snowy weather.

The *shami* all expressed gratitude for the opportunity to become priests of Nichiren Shu and for the support they received from Rev. Cederman, Rev. Tsukamoto, and

countless other Nichiren Shu ministers in the U.S. and in Japan. They vowed to study hard to complete their training and to spread the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* and Nichiren Shonin throughout the U.S.

Six lay people from Europe and North America and *shami* Kanse Capon from England joined Rev. Cederman and Rev. Tsukamoto at Seichoji Temple to attend the *docho* ceremony and to give their congratulations and support to Kanyu, Kanjo, and Kan-e. After the ceremony, the group went on a short pilgrimage. We visited various temples in Kamakura and then traveled on to Mt. Minobu.

On our second day at Mt. Minobu, we did *rinban hoshi*, cleaning the gravesite of Nichiren Shonin. Archbishop Nisso Uchino of Minobusan Kuonji gave authorization for Rev. Cederman to become a surrogate chief abbot for the day, a tremendous honor. After receiving this authorization, Rev. Cederman led a service in front of the *Goshinkatsudo*, the location where most of Nichiren Shonin's ashes are kept. The service was held in the style frequently used at services at Choeizan Enkyoji in Seattle. We were then given the opportunity to visit the room where Nichiren Shonin's ashes



Archbishop Nisso Uchino welcoming the three *shami* and Rev. Cederman.

are enshrined, which was a profoundly moving experience for all of us.

After leaving Mt. Minobu, we went to Tokyo where we visited Ikegami Honmonji, the temple built on the site where Nichiren Shonin passed away.

Our trip to Japan lasted only one week, yet we did so much and experienced so much. It was sad and really hard to say goodbye to Japan and to all our new friends, but we left knowing that we are united by our great faith in the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* and Nichiren Shonin. We hope to meet again in the near future. If all goes well, we will return to Mt. Minobu when the three *shami* complete *shingyo dojo*.



The three *shami* with their certificates following the ceremony at Seichoji Temple.



Daiseionji Temple, Wipperfuerth, Germany

By Rev. Shuki Morioka

Daiseionji Temple was formally established at Wipperfuerth in June 2000. Two years after its establishment, the temple was destroyed by fire. It was rebuilt in 2003, thanks to the generous support of people from various walks of life and the sustaining power of the Three Treasures. I have been engaged in the work at Daiseionji Temple since 1999.

Daiseionji Temple is located alongside the Wupper River. Part of the area around the temple is designated as a nature preserve. When the city of Wipperfuerth asked for permission to put up a hut for bird watching for people to observe rare wild birds that inhabit the Wupper River vicinity, we readily agreed. Since then, people who watch wild birds and those who enjoy walking

or cycling have been seen around the temple every weekend.

Wipperfuerth has a long history. It has been 800 years since it became a city.

The group activity for inter-religious dialogue started a few years ago. There are a variety of religious groups involved including Catholic and Protestant churches, Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, and Daiseionji Temple. It is meaningful

for representatives of these groups to meet regularly to share ideas and learn about each other's religions. In celebration of the 800th anniversary of the establishment of the city of Wipperfuerth, representatives of these religious organizations each offered prayers in their own language and observed a period of silence to wish for world peace.

Dialogue has a deeper meaning when we pay respect to other religions with modesty and patience and search for mutual concerns that can be resolved together. I believe that inter-religious dialogue has great potential to make this a more peaceful world. I will continue to make my best efforts to create a bright future for our world.

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.



Wipperfürth recently celebrated its 800th anniversary as a city.



Along with representatives of various other religious groups in the area, we offered prayers for world peace at the celebration of the 800th anniversary of the city of Wipperfürth.

Shumuin Plans 2018 Study Tour in Wipperfuerth

The annual Study Tour sponsored by the Shumuin is going to be held from October 17-23, 2018 in Wipperfuerth, Germany. The theme of this program will be "Inter-religious Dialogue." A cultural exchange with many different religions, visiting several religious organizations and a stay at a monastery are being planned.

The program is open to the public. For additional information about this year's Study Tour, please contact the Shumuin, Nichiren Shu Headquarters at Ikegami Honmonji.



MAI YAMADA: Hello, everyone. I'm Mai Yamada. I stayed at the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii for three weeks from February 19 to March 12. Thanks to Bishop and Mrs. Hirai and all the members of the Nichiren Mission, I had a valuable experience. There were three things from my stay that were most impressive.

First was the history of Japanese-Americans. I studied it before I came to Hawaii because I wanted to know why Japanese people like Hawaii so much. I thought the main reason was because there are many Japanese-Americans in Hawaii. I learned about the history of Japanese immigrants. On February 22, Mr. Les Goto took me to the Japanese Culture Center of Hawaii. There, I learned about the history of Japanese-Americans and their experiences during the war. I wanted to study it in Japan but couldn't find any information. At the JCCH, I learned that around 120,000 Japanese-Americans on the west coast of the U.S. and 2,000 of the Japanese-American community in Hawaii were taken away to internment camps just because they were of Japanese heritage. I thought they had strong minds not to lose themselves through the severe treatment. It was impressive that they didn't forget their Japanese spirit of *gaman*, or perseverance.

Second was the visit to Pearl Harbor and the Battleship Missouri Memorial. I went there during my second week in Hawaii. I wondered why there weren't as many Japanese people there as other sightseeing spots. I read letters that were written by Japanese *kamikaze* pilots addressed to their families and girlfriends. I felt so sad after reading them. I truly realized that we all must find a way to live in comfort and peace. The damage from a hit by a *kamikaze* plane still remains on the Battleship Missouri from an attack near Okinawa toward the end of the war. The body of the *kamikaze* pilot was recovered. The U.S. Armed Forces never treated his remains poorly. He was buried at sea as a military service member who had completed his mission for his country. I was surprised to hear that, because I thought that war treated all life poorly. I want Japanese people to visit Pearl Harbor and see it from an American point of view so we will have no more wars.

Third was about culture. I learned that *kumihimo*, which is part of Japanese culture, is taught in Hawaii. *Kumihimo* are hand-knitted cords that are used for the sash of a

HOMESTAYS IN HAWAII

kimono and other accessories. I didn't expect to learn about Japanese culture in Hawaii. Mrs. Carol Nagano taught it to me, and I made it for the first time. It was complicated and interesting. There are many kinds of *kumihimo*. They are beautiful and can be designed by using different colors and ways of weaving. I felt disappointed that such a great tradition has almost been forgotten in Japan. I will try to make more and tell people how wonderful it is.

I also learned about Hawaiian culture. I was interested in the names of places in Hawaii because they are very unique. I was fortunate to have the chance to talk with Ms. Piilani Smith, a hula teacher who is familiar with Hawaiian history. I learned that names in Hawaii originate from nature. The spirit of treating nature with respect is very nice. I also learned the meaning of the name Nu'uaniu. "Nu'u" means mountain heights and cliffs, "anu" means cold and chill. In Nu'uaniu, it rains a lot. We can often see rainbows. The wind is often blowing hard, and there is good soil. Nu'uaniu is one of the sacred places of hula. I was glad to be able to stay on this blessed land surrounded by nature.

Hawaii is well known to Japanese as a resort, but I learned many new things about Hawaii through this homestay that tourists may never experience. Now I want many Japanese people to know about the history of Japanese-Americans and Hawaiian culture. I want to share what I learned in Hawaii.

The experiences and knowledge cultivated in Hawaii have been a good influence for me. I want to continue trying new things.

TOMOO TANABE: I'd like to thank Bishop and Mrs. Hirai and all of the members of the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii who hosted this International Experience in a Foreign Language program.

I was interested in so many things: the activities at a Buddhist Temple overseas and their volunteer work, the lives of Japanese-Americans in Hawaii, and working to improve my English.

Immediately on arrival in Hawaii, Bishop Hirai and his wife gave me a detailed schedule of my stay. They told me to purchase a bus pass and gave me directions to go shopping for necessary items. A beautiful rainbow welcomed me, but it continued to rain often. However, I enjoyed looking at the rainbow. It seemed so close that I could touch it with my outstretched fingers. I was very moved by this experience.

During my five-week homestay, I participated in many activities.

Open Night at Temples where I visited the Soto Mission, Honpa Hongwanji Temple, Higashi Hongwanji Temple, Jodo Mission, and Koyasan Shingon Mission. The program was open to anyone interested in Buddhism



who didn't have time to attend Sunday services. The evening programs on weekday nights were attended by about 40 people, and I was surprised at the earnest questions from people. I learned about the historical differences between Buddhist denominations and how to read the sutras and the activities carried out at the different temples.

Through research carried out by Professor Shoshi Annaka of Rissho University, many Nichiren Shu treasures, including a mandala written by the Chief Abbot of Minobusan Kuonji in the Edo period, were found at the Hawaii Mission. I was fortunate to be able to see these valuable treasures.

This was my first time participating in daily morning services. I even had a dream of my mother praying and chanting the Odaimoku repeatedly. Maybe she was telling me to practice the Dharma more intently. From now on, whenever I attend a Buddhist service, I will recite the sutra earnestly.

In addition, I had many experiences through the various tasks I was assigned each day. Every Saturday is a cleaning day, and I was assigned to clean different areas. Members also help clean and do routine office work for the temple. In Japan, the chief priest manages everything. But in Hawaii the temple is run by the board members. I realized the Bishop always thinks about the future of the temple and works closely with the directors to meet new challenges.

I also participated in various activities held in the social hall. One of them was making decorative pieces in the *kumihimo* class. I made several as souvenirs for my grandchildren. I look forward to seeing their faces when I give them these handmade gifts.

I attended a *sumi-e* class for the first time in my life and was able to draw a bamboo branch. I never imagined that I would learn traditional Japanese culture in Hawaii!

I made good use of my bus pass to visit various places like Kailua, Northshore, Ala Moana, and Waikiki. While waiting at bus stops, I spoke in English with the local people. Everyone at the temple spoke to me in English, so this was a wonderful opportunity for me to improve my English.

During my stay, I enjoyed talking with many Japanese-Americans who were as warm-hearted as the climate of Hawaii. Mrs. Midori Chiya took me to the Bishop Museum where I learned a lot about the history of Hawaii. Mrs. Jaynie instructed me to use correct English in my weekly conversation class. I also participated in yoga classes which helped me become healthier.

I made so many memories in the five weeks I was in Hawaii which I will cherish for the rest of my life. Thank you, Bishop and Mrs. Hirai for your hospitality. Thank you, members of the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii for your helping me and teaching me many new things. I love the people of Hawaii more than ever.

NANAMI OKADA: I took part in this homestay program to study English, since I want to work in the airline business. I had visited Hawaii three times before, and it is one of my favorite vacation spots, but this was my first time to travel alone. I was a bit insecure, but I was able to feel comfortable immediately, thanks to the kindness of Bishop and Mrs. Hirai and Mr. Tanabe.

My room was big enough for four people, but it took me about a week to get used to the space. At times, I would be frightened by the sounds of natural life outside, but Mrs. Hirai would come running to calm me down.

At first, the morning prayer service was hard on me, as I had trouble getting up so early. As my body clock slowly caught on to the rhythm, I was able to participate in the services without too much trouble.

At a luncheon, I wasn't able to speak up. However, as the members listened to me so intently, I found I was able to communicate with them. I felt so much warmth and happiness visiting the nursing home and talking to the elderly residents. As I shook hands with them, I could actually feel their warmth through their hands.

At the Nichiren Shu Open Night event, I was in charge of passing out leaflets. Each attendee would say "Thank you" with a big smile on their face, and this made me so happy. I was able to visit other Buddhist temples through the Open Night events and realized that there were many differences between them. Now, I am interested in visiting Buddhist temples in Japan.

Though it was only a two-week homestay, I learned so much from everyone. I noticed what I lack as an adult and hope I can make myself a better person. I express my gratitude to my parents for giving me a chance to study abroad and to Bishop and Mrs. Hirai, Mr. Tanabe and all the members of the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii.



Calendar for June 2018–July 2018

JUNE 1 Changing of Our Founder's Robes, Founder's Hall, Minobusan
JUNE 15-17 Minobusan Kaibyaku-e, Commemoration Day of Nichiren Shonin Entering Minobusan (May 15, 1274)

JUNE 25 Nitcho Shonin Memorial Day
JULY 13-16 Obon (Western Calendar)

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Nichiren Shu News was founded by the Nichiren Shu Overseas Propagation Promotion Association (NOPPA), Bungyo Yoshida, *President*.

Funding is provided by NOPPA and the Head Office of Nichiren Shu, Hosei Nakagawa, *Chief Administrator*.

Editorial Board Sandra Seki, *Editor*, Shinkyo Warner, *Assistant Editor*, Keiryu Shima, *Chief Advisor*, Hoyu Maruyama, Kanshu Naito, Gyokai Sekido, *Advisors*.

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