

Nichiren Shu News

Published by the Nichiren Shu Headquarters & Kaigai Fukyo Koenkai

No. 143

August 1, 2004

(1)

50th Anniversary of Nichiren-shu Missionary in South America Celebrated

Rev. Nun Myoho Ishimoto of the Comunidade Budhista Nitirensyu Emyoji Temple celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Nichiren-shu Missionary in South America and the establishment of Emyoji Temple in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on June 13.

The ceremony started at 9 a.m. with Rev. Kenjo Igarashi, Bishop of North America officiating. Rev. Ishimoto (former Bishop of South America) was the

emcee.

Some 300 people gathered to celebrate the anniversary with 12 Buddhist priests of Sao Paulo Buddhist Association attending. Preceding the ceremony Japanese cultural entertainments such as wadaiko, koto and others were performed.

Meanwhile, earlier in the previous day, the new congregation of the Hokekyoji Temple in Sao Paulo celebrated the acquisition of the legal status as religious organization by the temple. Rev. Igarashi officiated the "Report Service" assisted by Rev. Shoyo Tamura who was dispatched from Japan to station in the temple. (by Rev. Shingyo Imai) (related story on page 5)

Half a Century of Missionary Work in Brazil

By Rev. Myoho Ishimoto
Minobusan Betsuin in South America
Sao Paulo, Brazil

1. Encountering the Late Bishop Ishimoto

I, Susannah Toyoko Gohara, was born as the second of three sisters and a younger brother. My parents were distinguished teachers who received a decoration from Japan and 12 honors from the country of Brazil. About a year or so prior to the independence of Japan after World War II, my parents took four of us to Japan to receive a Japanese education. I was 14 years old. Japan then was still suffering from a shortage of food, the streets of Tokyo were full of street urchins and disabled war veterans. Scared by the situation, my younger sister and brother went back to Brazil together with my parents, leaving us two sisters in the Zenkeiji Temple in the Omori section of Tokyo. Meanwhile, my elder sister got married to the fourth boy of the temple, and I entered the Rissho Gakuen in Tokyo to study. Among the teachers of the school were the late Venerable Kaneko, who was teaching Japanese, and Venerable Tanaka, who was an English conversation instructor. I also attended schools to learn tea ceremony, flower arrangement, Japanese dance, koto instrument, and cooking. At the age of 18, I married my husband, who was 29 years old, through the good office of my brother-in-law.

The late Venerable Kaneko, who was then in the Nichiren Shu Headquarters, advised my husband that we should go to Brazil as missionaries for a few years. My husband was the heir apparent of the Hongyoji Temple in Takeo, Fukui Prefecture. However, his father was still healthy and agreed to the idea. We received the appointment paper from the Nichiren Shu, but we had to pay for the trip ourselves.

2. Missionary Work in Brazil

When we reached Brazil, we found only a few Nichiren Buddhists beside my parents. Whenever we heard the word that somebody somewhere seemed to be a believer of Nichiren Buddhism, Rev. Ishimoto ventured to visit him alone by all means—using whatever transportation available and by walking despite the language difficulty. In the countryside of Brazil, people would say "It's right over there," when in reality one had to walk miles and miles with-



Celebrants at the 50th anniversary of the Emyoji Temple, Sao Paulo, June 13

out seeing a person or a house. The condition 50 years ago in Brazil was not like today. There was hardly any road passable by a car. Whenever my husband returned from a missionary trip to the countryside, I had to boil his clothes stirring them with a stick. The first thing he would do after taking a shower was to scrape the blisters on the sole of his feet. Thus working hard day and night to spread Nichiren Buddhism, Rev. Ishimoto one day vomited blood. Doctors advised him to get a stomach operation, but he was able to recover his health by dietary cure.

3. Temporary Main Hall

After three years of struggle we were able to purchase the land for the temple by paying monthly installments. In the seventh year we built the temporary Main Hall of the temple with a small living quarters and kitchen. The living quarters, however, was full with one double bed and one bureau. We, parents and two children, slept together in the double bed.

In order to help make ends meet in those days, I had to stay up every night until 2 a.m. altering dresses in order to earn extra dollars. There was an open market once a week, which closed its door at 1 p.m., when damaged or lower grade vegetables were discarded. We used to get them, free

of charge, and make use of them for our side dishes. Until the third stage of our temple's construction project, we rarely saw meat in our dishes. No matter how difficult our life was, however, I never sought economic assistance from my parents.

4. Passing of Bishop Ishimoto

Due to the years of hard work, Bishop Ishimoto was finally hospitalized to operate on his ailing stomach. Complicated with pancreatitis and the physician's mistake, he was unconscious for many days. Mr. Omine, a practitioner of the Lotus Sutra, performed a special service in the temporary Main Hall to pray for the recovery of the Bishop. In the end, a miracle occurred and Bishop Ishimoto regained consciousness. He then bought a piece of land in Sorocaba and was trying to build an old folks home when he became seriously ill due to a problem caused by blood transfusion and he passed away five months later on March 2, 1984, at the age of 57. The seed of the Lotus Sutra that was sown by the Late Bishop Ishimoto continues to bloom at the Myokyokuji Temple at Parana, the Myokoji Temple at Suzano and the Emyoji Temple in Sao Paulo.

5. Emyoji Temple Today

Members of the Emyoji Temple

consist of the first, second, and third generations (parents, children, and grandchildren). I always feel sorry for my inability, but have been supported by the members. I actually feel grateful that the membership of the temple has been gradually increasing.

Upon the completion of the third stage of construction project, I started a kindergarten, Japanese language school, dressmaking and flower arrangement classes, and established a Young Buddhist Association.

My parents constructed three high-rise apartments and gave some apartments to us children. I sold one of them, which enabled me to make a trip to Japan. While staying at the Chudoin Temple in Ikegami, I entered priesthood and was granted the priest name of "Myoho" by Venerable Tanaka. I was able to finish the courses of the Shingyo Dojo (required for all Nichiren priests and priestesses) before returning to Brazil.

I have been grateful to the Buddha for having encountered my husband, a wonderful person, and was endowed with a terrific son, daughter, and two grandchildren. I am thankful to my late husband who supported me for the last 50 years. Even after his death, he appeared in my dreams showing me the path I should take when I was lost or when I did not know what to do.

The State of Ichinen Sanzen (3)

By Rev. Kanji Tamura
(translated by Rev. Kanshin Mochida)

The basic idea of the "ichinen sanzen," which Nichiren Shonin preached and practiced, is described in the "Maka Shikan" (Mo-ho Chih-kuan or Great Concentration and Insight) written by Chi-i, Grand Master T'ien-t'ai.

"Ichinen sanzen" means "the thoughts that come up in our mind moment by moment in our daily life contain 3,000 worlds. This numeral symbol of 3,000 is derived from multiplying the conceptual categories of "mutual possession of ten realms," "ten aspects of existence" and "three categories of realm." These concepts describe the state of existences.

In fact, "3,000" represents the whole existing worlds in the universe. Therefore, it does not necessarily indicate a specific number but is meant to show vastness, universality or infinity.

The practice T'ien-t'ai advocates is the practice to grasp one's mind. T'ien-t'ai believes when one could clearly observe that three thousand worlds exist in one's mind, one would reach the state of enlightenment. It is the enlightenment that the person becomes united with the whole existing worlds.

What kind of state would this "ichinen sanzen" be? In that state, one's mind is united with the minds of all beings, integrated with the whole world. In other words, entire

existences become himself. When one reaches such a state, one is liberated from one's ego which makes him withdraw into one's shell, look after the interests of his own, and resultantly produces anguish. His mind becomes liberated from all bondage, and he obtains the state of "non-self," or egolessness. Since one is united with entire existences, or since entire existences are embodied in himself, the happiness of others becomes his happiness and the sorrow of others becomes his sorrow.

Here, compassion arises in one's mind and it induces the person to start guiding others on.

The Nirvana Sutra states, "All the sufferings of entire living beings are the sufferings of the Buddha Himself." We, ordinary people, do not have broad and mental capacity to share the happiness and sorrow of hundreds of thousands of others. We could only share these feelings with some friends and one's own family. The state of mind as expounded in this sutra can be reached by Buddhas and bodhisattvas at higher levels. It is also true, however, we are able to endeavor to approach such a state of broad and compassionate mind.

Mutual Possession of Ten Realms

"Mutual Possession of Ten Realms" means that each of the ten realms of living existences contains the characteristics of the other nine realms. Ten realms are the realms of

hell, hungry spirits, beasts, asura demons, human beings, heavenly beings, sravaka (those who listen to the Buddha's teaching and attain enlightenment), pratyekabuddha (a self-enlightened Buddha), bodhisattvas and Buddhas.

From the hell to the realm of heavenly beings are called "Six Regions." Living beings in these realms transmigrate from one to another according to the karma, or deeds in the previous lives. The realms from that of sravaka to Buddhas are called the realms of "four holy ones," who transcend the transmigration.

The hell is the worst prison where the severest punishments are imposed because of the sins committed in the previous lives. In the realm of hungry spirits, the spirits suffer from incessant hunger and thirst. In the realm of beasts, ignorant animals are oppressed by desires. The realm of asura demons is the world where conflicts prevail.

The realm of human beings is located in the middle of the ten realms. There happiness and sorrow mix half and half. The realm of heavenly beings is the world of "pleasure and happiness." Those who reach this realm may often lapse into the lower realms. However, when one comes across Buddha Dharma and follow the teachings of the Buddha, he attains gradual emancipation from the world of suffering.

The realms of sravaka and

pratyekabuddha are the realms of "Hinayana Buddhists" who practice only for their own sake but not for the sake of others. The realm of bodhisattvas is the realm of the practitioners of "Mahayana Buddhism" who practice for the salvation of others. The realm of Buddhas is the world of enlightenment which is attained after accomplishing the bodhisattva practices.

These ten realms do not exist independently. Each of them contains the characteristics of the other nine realms. In the mind of us, human beings, there exist the characteristics of these ten realms, from the hell to the realm of Buddhas.

Nichiren Shonin states in his "Kanjin Honzon-sho" (a treatise revealing the spiritual contemplation and the most venerable one): "To get angry is hell; to be greedy is hungry spirits; ignorance is beasts; being wicked is asura demons; being peaceful is human beings; to get pleased is heavenly beings," and "to feel the transiency of life is sravaka and pratyekabuddha, and compassion is bodhisattva." Thus he argues that the realm of human beings contains the other nine realms.

For example, anger causes war and results in a hell. The hell is not invisible. It exists in ourselves and it emerges before us.

The duty of us Nichiren Buddhists is to let the realm of Buddhas emerge in the realm of human beings. Nichiren Shonin states, "The realm of Buddhas hardly manifests itself.

(to be continued)

The Legend of Nichiren (10)

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph. D.

Meeting Again with His Former Teacher Dozen-bo

The original priest teacher of Nichiren was called Dozen-bo because he was the resident priest of the hermitage of Dozen in the compound of the Seicho-ji Temple.

He had high expectations of Rencho who was an excellent pupil. It seems that he thought Rencho would be his successor as well as the resident priest of the hermitage. He might have hoped that Rencho would be the chief priest of the Seicho-ji Temple. However, when Rencho came back after years of study in the political and cultural centers of Japan, he had no intention to succeed his master. Dozen-bo and the people of the Seicho-ji Temple were perplexed.

According to the legend his coming home was greatly welcomed. Rencho completed many years of studying at various places such as Kamakura, Kyoto, Nara, and decided to go home. After a long journey, he finally reached home. For the first time in ten years he saw the seaside sky of the familiar Boso Peninsula. A willow in front of the house gate that he climbed as a child had grown large and thick. It was the mark of his parents' home. Father was glad with his return. Mother made him take off his sandals in a hurry and washed his dirty feet from the trip. Conversations about his trip to learn didn't come to an end, and the joy of meeting again was more than the number of leaves of grass which

show a bud in spring. Father, however, gave a strict order for Rencho to visit Dozen-bo as soon as possible to report the result of his studies. Anxious about his beloved disciple, Dozen-bo had often sent a messenger to ask Father about Rencho.

Rencho visited the Seicho-ji Temple to report to his former teacher about his returning home in accordance to his father. Dozen-bo could not wait patiently for his excellent pupil's return. He left his seat and was walking around. Then he was so glad to see his student again after a long time. With great joy he listened to Rencho talk about his training and learning. A welcome party was attended by senior disciples such as Emmitsu-bo, Joken-bo, Gijo-bo as well as young priests and children. Rencho's father was invited, too, and he climbed up the mountain to the Seicho-ji Temple. Because it was in a temple, meat was not served in the vegetable diet. It was delicious cooking of tofu, butterbur, seaweed, pasania mushroom. Sweets of rice cake with chestnuts were served after the meal. Father was very glad for the hospitality and he expressed his grati-

tude to Dozen-bo. It was a very happy occasion, but, the heart of Rencho was covered with a black cloud because the truth in his heart had to be revealed.

Rencho went to the sun early in the morning on April 28 in 1253, chanted the Daimoku and declared that the Nichiren Sect had begun. Following this Rencho gave a lecture on Buddhism to a large audience. He refuted all the doctrines of each sect of Buddhism. The teaching of the Nembutsu, practiced in the Seicho-ji Temple was not an exception, either. Steward Tojo Kagenobu, a Nembutsu believer, listened to the lecture and began to get angry violently. At any moment, he was about to kill

Rencho. Dozen-bo who was afraid for his beloved disciple, devised a plan to set Rencho free from the Seicho-ji Temple. Senior disciples, Joken-bo and Gijo-bo, showed Rencho a mountain path, and he got over the crisis somehow.

In reality, however, nothing was done by Dozen-bo, who was afraid of the power of Steward Tojo Kagenobu. It seems that the surrounding people set Rencho free. Although when Dozen-bo passed away in 1270, Nichiren Shonin wrote and sent the "Hoon-jo (Essay on Gratitude)," to the Seicho-ji Temple, the relationship between them both seems to have been completely cold.



Pleased at Rencho's return to the Seicho-ji Temple, Dozen-bo holds a banquet. The woodblock print is reproduced from "Nichiren Daishi Shinjitsu-den"



11th Nichiren-shu Mission to China

The 11th Nichiren-shu Mission to China, led by Bishop Tansei Iwama, Chief Administrator, visited China from June 22 to 29. Bishop Iwama delivered a lecture on Nichiren Buddhism at Buddhist Academy of China in Beijing on June 23. He was welcomed by Ven. Chuan Yin, vice principal. (bottom right) The delegation visited the Caotang Temple in the suburbs of Xian on June 25, and held a service

to dedicate a stone monument built in praise of the achievements of Kumarajiva. (left). The photo shows the monument on which the text of XXI chapter of the Lotus Sutra, 'Supernatural Power of the Tathagatha' and a hall enshrining the ashes of the great translator. The delegation held a special service in front of the 'Odaimoku' monument at the Guoqing Temple, located at the foot of Mt. Tiantai in Zhejiang Province (center)



The Mutual Possession of the Ten Worlds

By Rev. Ryuei McCormick
San Francisco

Previously in this series of articles we have looked at *ichinen sanzen*, the "three thousand worlds in a single thought-moment," in general as that which is to be realized through the practice of tranquility and insight meditation or as that which is actualized through the practice of *Odaimoku*. Now it is time to look at the components of *ichinen sanzen* so that we can have at least a conceptual and allegorical clue regarding what our Buddhist practice will enable us to realize is contained within our lives.

The best place to start is with the ten worlds and their mutual possession. The ten worlds enumerate ten different ways, according to Buddhism, that sentient beings experience their lives and their environments. Traditionally these are actual realms in which one can be born (or at least the lower six are such). However, they have always been understood to also represent states of mind that we all experience to a lesser or greater degree in our daily lives. Buddhists today are less prone to a literal interpretation of these ten worlds and are more likely to adhere to the more psychological or existential interpretation. But the point is that from lifetime to lifetime and even from one moment to the next we experience life with drastically different viewpoints and attitudes that arise based on our own actions and our habitual mental, verbal, and physical actions and reactions to life's vicissitudes. In reviewing the ten worlds we can hopefully become a little more self-aware and able to overcome our unthinking habitual tendencies and empower ourselves to take more responsibility for ourselves and our environment rather than blaming our "fate" on others.

The six lower worlds encompass the traditional states of transmigration: the hells, the hungry ghosts, the animals, the fighting demons, humanity, and the heavens. Each of these should already be familiar to everyone. Presumably all those reading this article are human beings so that is one realm.

Animals should also be familiar to all of us. And who has not grown up hearing ghost stories, or being told that heaven and hell await us after death depending on how we conduct ourselves in this life. As for the fighting demons, many of us have heard tales of a "war in heaven" between the loyal angels of light and the proud and arrogant demons and devils who tried to usurp the heavenly throne. In Buddhism, however, none of these states are considered permanent. Even the heavens and hells are temporary states of existence, and a sentient being is presumed to be reborn in one state after another depending on their karmic balance – the sum total of their wholesome and unwholesome deeds. Those who travel through these worlds are usually governed by ignorance of the law of cause and effect and do not realize that they will not find any permanent happiness among the transient possessions and relationships of the lower worlds. But they keep trying, and in accordance with how they go about this they find themselves sinking into states of suffering or rising, albeit temporarily, into states that are relatively pleasurable.

The four higher worlds provide an escape from all this. Actually, these are not worlds at all, nor are they states of rebirth as the former six are. The four higher worlds are states of growing insight and compassion. The first two comprise what Mahayana Buddhism calls the Two Vehicles of Hinayana Buddhism: the voice-hearers (*sravakas*) who hear the Buddha's teachings about the Four Noble Truths and strive to follow them, and the private-Buddhas (*pratyekabuddhas*) who attain insight into the workings of the causes and conditions of all phenomena on their own. While those in the Two Vehicles overcome a certain amount of ignorance and transcend the six lower worlds, they still retain a subtle egotism in that they are primarily concerned with only their own liberation and are not motivated or not capable of teaching others. The next state is that of the bodhisattvas who realize the emptiness of all phenomena and are also concerned with the libera-

tion of all beings and not just themselves. The bodhisattvas make vows to attain Buddhahood for the sake of all beings – no matter how long it takes or what sacrifices they must make for others. Finally there is the state of Buddhahood in which there is a complete awakening to the true nature of reality and a boundless compassion to use skillful means to lead all beings to liberation.

Together these comprise the ten worlds. Many Mahayana Buddhists have looked upon these ten worlds as separate states of existence crossed only by death and rebirth. In particular, achieving entrance into one of the four higher worlds is seen as the way to forever cut off the six lower worlds. Great Master T'ien-t'ai, however, did not see things as so cut and dried. He taught that these ten worlds mutually possess one another. Those in the lower worlds contain the higher ones in potential and achieve them through aspiration and purposeful cultivation of their nascent good qualities. Those in the higher worlds embrace the lower ones by virtue of their compassion and ability to continue to manifest in them out of solidarity as helpful guides. The bodhisattvas and Buddhas in particular are known to do this. The voice-hearers and private-Buddhas may be blinded to this continued link to the lower worlds, but this delusion is temporary and eventually, according to T'ien-t'ai, they will realize that their Two Vehicles are actually part of the One Vehicle leading to bodhisattva practice and Buddhahood.

Nichiren Shonin viewed the doctrine of the mutual possession of the ten worlds as revolutionary. For him it meant that every human being had the world of Buddhahood within them and that the Buddha embraced all sentient beings without exception. In the *Kanjin Honzon Sho* he shows how all six of the lower worlds manifest in ordinary human beings:

"As we often look at each other's faces, we notice our facial expression changes from time to time. It is full of delight, rage, or calm sometimes; but other times it changes to greed, ignorance, or flattery. Rage represents the

hells, greed – hungry ghosts, ignorance – animals, flattery – fighting demons, delight – heavens, and calm – humanity. Thus we see six worlds of delusion in the countenance of people, from the hells to the heavens. We cannot see the four worlds of the holy ones, which are hidden from our eyes. Nevertheless, we might be able to see them, too, if we look for them carefully."

Further on he covers the voice-hearers, private-Buddhas, and bodhisattvas:

"We see the principle of impermanence everywhere in front of our eyes. We humans understand this principle, through which two groups of Hinayana sages called voice-hearers and private-Buddhas try to obtain enlightenment. How can we say that these two worlds are not included in the world of humanity? A man, no matter how inconsiderate he may be, loves his wife and children. It shows that he is partly in the bodhisattva world."

Finally, Nichiren gets to his main point, that Buddhahood itself is within our lives:

"Ancient Chinese rulers, sages such as Yao and Shun, treated all people equally with compassion, proving the existence of the world of Buddhas, at least a portion of it, within the human world. The 20th chapter of the Lotus Sutra, "Never Despising Bodhisattva," describes how that bodhisattva pressed hands together in respect and bowed to anyone he met because he always saw a Buddha in them. Born to the human world, Prince Siddhartha grew up to become Sakyamuni Buddha. These examples should be enough to convince you to believe that the world of Buddhas exists in the human world."

Nichiren believed this part of *ichinen sanzen* was so important that many times he seems to use the term "mutual possession of the ten worlds" interchangeably with the term "*ichinen sanzen*." We can't underestimate the meaning this doctrine had for him. In Nichiren Buddhism, the *Odaimoku* is a verbal key for unlocking the treasury of Buddhahood which this teaching insists is already a part of the totality of our lives, the totality which is *ichinen sanzen* and the mutual possession of the ten worlds.

First International Youth Leaders' Retreat

By Rev. Shingyo Imai

The First International Youth Leaders' Retreat was held in Minobu and Ikegami, Japan. The Missionary Department of the Nichiren-shu Headquarters held the First International Youth Leaders' Retreat on July 22 through 24, 2004, at Minobusan and Ikegami. The chief instructor was Rev. Giko Tabata (Director of the Missionary Dept.) and other staff members were all from the department. 21 young people (10 were from U.S.A, 7 from Malaysia, 3 from Indonesia, and 1 from Korea) attended the event.

After the opening ceremony, they attended the first lecture by Rev. Tabata, who told them how they should lead young people in their respective countries as leaders. Rev. Tabata explained the basic concept of the bodhisattvas emerged from the earth described in the Lotus Sutra and that was whom the leaders should be. He also emphasized that being not only good practitioners of Buddhism but also good and respected persons in the society was important as leaders.

They learned a lot about Buddhism and Nichiren-shu through the lectures, games, practices such as Shodaigyo (a practice of chanting the daimoku) and visiting Nichiren-shu temples such as Minobusan Kuonji Temple, where Nichiren Shonin resided during his last nine years, Iwamoto Jissoji Temple in Fuji, where Nichiren Shonin studied all the Buddhist scriptures, Ikegami Hommonji Temple and Daibo Hongyoji Temple in Tokyo, where Nichiren Shonin went into the nirvana. Especially, on the night of the 2nd day, when they had a candle service at the headquarters, Rev. Tabata taught them that, even though the candle light each person had was small, it would be a great power to lead people to the right way if the lights were put together.

Before the closing ceremony, they had a discussion session in which all attendees told their experiences and expressed their determination to act as leaders after going back to their countries.

After that, they said to each other "see you again" instead of saying "good bye" and made sure to see each other again. They left the retreat with awareness as leaders and plenty of good memories with the bond of friendship.

This retreat will be held annually and the Missionary Dept. of Nichiren-shu would like more youth leaders from



Rev. Giko Tabata officiates the opening ceremony at Danshinto Kemshu Dojo, Minobusan



Get-together at Mihobu on the arrival day



Students proceed to the Founder's Mausoleum



Retreat students pose for memorial photo in front of the Main Hall of Minobusan Kuonji Temple with assisting staff



Students enjoy 'recreation' hours at Shumuin Headquarters



Students visit the Sutra Store House, Jissoji Temple, Fuji City



Students spend a pious time at Daibo Hongyoji, Ikegami



Rev. Tabata, chief instructor, hands over the certificate of completion to each student at the Shumin Headquarters

various countries throughout the world to attend.

Instructors: Rev. Giko Tabata (chief); Woo Hee Tea (Korea); Rev. Myosho Obata (Malaysia)

Assisting Staff: Revs.

Zeshin Tohyama, Shingyo Imai, Tengen Hamajima, Kanmyho Watanabe, Kanshin Mochida, Yosei Hayakawa, Kohan Oda, Chisen Izumi, Naho Sakai; Ms. Masako Ito, Akiko Iwama.

Students: (U.S.A.)

Christopher Michael Langton, Jeffrey Matsuji Chung, Daniel Robert Langton, Amber Webb, Kyomi Jane Igarashi, Takeaki Kenny Igarashi, Michelle Kinuko Huey, Megan Miyoshi Huey, Yuhei Nunome, Lorna Mary

Saxton; (Malaysia) Ong Saw Li, Leong Mun Wai, Agnes Ng Wei Wei, Lee Chen Nee; (Indonesia) Ervinna Nasib, Yunita Sandra, Sidin; (Malaysia) Ang Tsu Chien, Angel Ng Yin Yin, Kee Swee Peik; (Korea) Min Yumi

One-Year Development of Indonesia Nichiren-shu Assn.

By : Sidin Ekaputra

April 28, 2004 was a historic moment for Nichiren Shu Indonesia Association. As on this date we celebrated three important events: (1) specifically, the first year anniversary of Nichiren Shu Indonesia Buddhist Association, which was started with only 3 people but today with over 50 members; (2) 752 years establishment of Nichiren Shu; and (3) the official opening of Cetya Bodhicitta at Sado Island (Sekati Island), Kepulauan Seribu-Indonesia.

We, at Nichiren Shu Indonesia, were grateful for the visit from the

Nichiren Shu International Buddhist Fellowship Association (with 24 members led by Rev. Kaikoh Kato); Nichiren Shu Administrative Headquarters (Rev. Gikoh Tabata, Rev. Dairyo Tomikawa, and Rev. Kohan Oda of the Missionary Dept.) and Nichiren Shu Malaysia (with Rev. Myosho Obata as priest coordinator for Malaysia and Indonesia and Mr. Ang Tian Soen as the principal). The wonderful support from Nichiren Shu has created a huge and meaningful impact on Nichiren Shu Indonesia.

The IBFA group arrived on April 26, 2004 and directly checked into the hotel. We had a dinner gathering that

night at Nelayan Restaurant, Ancol-Jakarta. The spirit of unity was impressive among all 50 people who attended the gathering. The language diversity was no barrier in getting together.

The next day, IBFA group went to Borobudur Temple—Center of Java which is the biggest Buddhist temple in the world. On the same day, Rev. Gikoh Tabata, Rev. Dairyo Tomikawa, Rev. Kohan Oda, Rev. Myosho Obata and Mr. Ang arrived in Jakarta from Malaysia. We had evening services at the Temple Pundarika (Myoho San Renge Ji) – Sunter, Jakarta which was conducted by Rev. Myosho Obata. After completing the services, we all went to have dinner at the Family Restaurant, Sunter-Jakarta.



Rev. Giko Tabata, Director of Missionary Department (extreme left) officiates the eye-opening ceremony at the Kan-on-ji Temple at Klang in the suburbs of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (above) and an ordination ceremony at the Ichinen-ji Temple in Penang (bottom). He also participated in the ceremony to dedicate 'Cetya Bodhicitta' Temple in 'Sado Island' (Sekati Island), Indonesia, one hour boat ride off Jakarta in his missionary tour to Indonesia and Malaysia from April 26 to 30



Rev. Kaiko Kato (center), head priest of Myohonji Temple, Kamakura and congregation pose for memorial photography at 'Cetya Bodhicitta' Temple on Sado Island (Sekati Island) off Jakarta following the dedication ceremony officiated by Rev. Kato on April 28

On April 28, 2004, all the visitors from Japan, Malaysia and members of Nichiren Shu Indonesia reached the Sado Island (Sekati Island) in one hour by two boats.

Cetya Bodhicitta on Sado Island was built within a year with sincere dedication and sponsor from a member of Nichiren Shu Indonesia, Mr. Anton TW. The previous name of Sado Island was Sekati Island. It was changed to Sado Island to remind us of the spirit of the Great Bodhisattva Nichiren Daishonin when he was expelled to Sado Island, Japan. Cetya Bodhicitta means a place for developing 'Enlightenment' within everybody through teaching of the Great Bodhisattva Nichiren Daishonin. This peaceful place would be ideal for meditation and learning the wonderful teaching of Dharma.

The official blessing service at Cetya Bodhicitta was commenced at 10:00 am which was performed by Rev. Kaikoh Kato. The ceremony included the eye opening for Mandala Gohonzon which was made from metal plate with white writing on blue base, Buddha Sakyamuni, Nichiren Daishonin, and Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara statue.

This ceremony service was attended by 60 people, including Sangha priests from Temple Vipassana Graha (Theravada Sect) which was led by Priest Phra Wongsin Labhiko, and some guests from other religions, namely Christian and Catholic. The ceremony continued for approximately two hours. After the official ceremony was completed, Rev. Kaikoh Kato gave a lecture to the attendees and gave blessing to the Cetya. It was followed by a thank you speech from Mr. Tony Soehartono who represented Nichiren Shu Indonesia Buddhist Association. Before we left the island, we had lunch together and a photo session among the members, priests and the visitors. The moment was filled with togetherness and happiness.

The event at Sado Island (Sekati island) ended at 13 pm. When the IBFA visitors reached Jakarta, then they continued their trip to Soekarno Hatta Airport to catch the plane to Bali before going back to Japan. Meanwhile, the group of Nichiren Shu Administrative Headquarter members and visitors from Malaysia went back to the hotel to rest.

On the same night at 19:00 pm, (continued on p.6)

Jojuji Temple Becomes Legal

By Rev. Shoyo Tamura

The Jojuji Temple in Sao Paulo celebrated the acquisition of its legal status as a religious organization at a ceremony held on June 12. Braving the rain, "a record" 30 congregation attended the ceremony which was officiated by Rev. Kenjo Igarashi, Bishop of North America. After the ceremony, the attendants of the ceremony enjoyed codfish croquettes and other Brazilian dishes prepared by the members of the temple.

Rev. Shoyo Tamura, resident priest of the temple since October 2003, claimed, "The Jojuji will grow to become the center of missionary activities of Nichiren Shu in South America. I will try to do my best."

"The experience of a private tour to South America, broken Spanish and a strong will of missionary work were the factors I depended on when I came over here," Rev. Tamura said. Broken Spanish proved little helpful for him though it resembles Portuguese, the official language of the country, he confessed in an interview with the Nichiren Shu News.

"However, since the history of

Japanese immigration to Brazil is shorter than the immigration to the United States, there are a lot of Japanese Brazilians who speak Japanese. The communication problem proved not as large as I expected," he said.

After attending a language class in the morning, he reports to the temple, which does not have its own building but is accommodated in a room of a company owned by a member of the temple. There in the temple "office," he starts his daily work by cleaning up the room. His daily tasks also include the preparation of amulets and the composition of sermons.

He is also actively engaged in distributing Nichiren Shu pamphlets in the streets, visiting members at home and in hospitals. He also holds a discussion session for young people from time to time. A member of the temple assists him by serving as interpreter.

His impression of Brazilians is that they are jovial and inquisitive. "When I am distributing Nichiren Shu pamphlets in the street, clad in a black robe, many people come up to me, probably suspecting just what I



The members attended the ceremony to mark the acquisition of the legal status by the Jojuji Temple as a religious organization are: (left to right) Takashi Hashitani (vice president), Eresto Junior, Ms. Laura Morita (Roberto's wife) hugging her baby, Lazaro Rodrigues, Roberto Ohmori (president), Marcio Ochigame, advogado, and Rev. Shoyo Tamura.

am doing, and receive the pamphlets." He conducts this type of propagation in the streets three to four times a week. It lasts two to three hours, some 50 copies being distributed.

Events of the temple are also popular. Some 15 to 20 people "eagerly" attend such events as New Year Service, O-bon and O-higan services and discussion sessions.

Rev. Tamura actively visited the facilities of other religious organizations "to learn how they gain followers." Organizations he visited include "Shinran-kai," "Toitsu-kyokai," Mormon Churches, and "Communita de Daisaku Ikeda." The reverend learned from them, that the steady activities of persuasion being carried out by "members" is the key in the missionary work. (tr. sk)

LOS ANGELES

Annual Obon Service

The annual Obon service was held on Sunday, July 11th from 11 a.m. This service is an annual memorial service held for the ancestors. Traditionally it is held in Japan from July 13-16th in Tokyo and from August 13-16th in other local areas of Japan.

The origin of the Obon service comes from the story of Maudgalyayana and his deceased mother, whom he saved from the realm of hungry spirits by offering food to all his fellow monks and nuns in the monastery and prayed for her. This merit of his good action saved her from the suffering in the world of hungry spirits. Nichiren Shonin teaches us that the merit of the Obon memorial service extends to not only seven generations of our ancestors but also to all of the deceased.

For those members who have passed away since last year's Obon, this year will be their first Obon. In honor of this occasion, the temple provided a special toba or wooden memorial stupa for the recently departed loved ones. The Fujinkai served refreshments after the service.

90th Anniversary

It has been 90 years since the Los Angeles Nichiren Buddhist Temple was established. There have been many priests, members and friends who had passed away during this time, and the temple would like to express its appreciation to them by offering Odaimoku chanting on Sunday, August 22, starting at 11 a.m.

There will be a banquet held at the Quiet Cannon in Montebello from 6 p.m., on Saturday, August 28, commemorating the 90th anniversary of the temple combined with the 25th NONA Convention. A grand celebration service will be officiated by Rev. Tansei Iwama, Chief Administrator of the Nichiren Shu Order and participated by all the NONA ministers. Members of 14 Nichiren Shu temples and samgha in North America will also attend this service.

Group photographs will be taken in front of the tem-

Church Events

By Sandra Seki



ple followed by a Sayonara Luncheon, hopefully in the newly built Nerio Hall. Please register for these events at your earliest convenience.

25th NONA Convention

The Nichiren Order of North America has been holding a convention every four years coinciding with the summer Olympics and the U.S. Presidential election. This year it is the Los Angeles Temple's turn to host this event.

During the two-day meeting, there will be financial and activity reports, discussion of new events especially the coming 100th anniversary of NONA.

A fee of \$50 per person will be collected for the banquet and two lunches.

SAN JOSE

Tachibana School Certificate Day

The Tachibana School held its year end ceremony on Monday, June 12th, handing out certificates to all the students who had successfully completed their courses.

The new school year will start on September 11.

Obon Sermon (Gratitude)

By Rev. Ryusho Matsuda
San Jose Myokakuji
Betsuin Temple

Obon is the time when we perform memorial services for our ancestors, but it is not only for the deceased. During Obon, we must practice the act of gratitude towards others and realize the Buddha's wisdom and compassion and finally experience the true joy of the Odaimoku.

The Japanese people usually say "gochisosama" after meals. What does this mean? In English, we say, "Thank you very much, I enjoyed the dinner;" or "I had a good time." This means we are expressing our gratitude towards the person who prepared the dinner. But the Japanese term "gochisosama" has a deeper meaning. Literally, "go" is a word of respect; "chi" means running; "so" is also running; "sama" is another word of

respect. Therefore, "gochisosama" simply means, "running."

If one looks at this very carefully, we will be able to grasp its real meaning. In order to cook a meal, the cook must run to the market and buy the ingredients. Before this, farmers must run around in their fields to produce the vegetables; ranchers must run around to raise the cattle for meat and dairy products; and transporters must run about transporting the fresh products to the market. Many people are running about in order to bring a meal to the table.

We eat the food without thinking of these things. But a lot of people have run and worked hard before the food can be placed on the table. These days, some people say that as they have money, they can do anything. Such people do not care who toiled or ran about to feed them; they do not show gratitude to others.

In many countries or religions, there is a custom to say grace before meals. The Japanese say "itadakimasu" before meals and "gochisosama" to show gratitude to all those who have made it possible to bring this meal in front of them. Many Westerners will be surprised to hear that even the host will say "gochisosama," but this is his way of saying, "My fellow citizens of the world, thank you so much for your running about and your labor. Without your efforts and labor, I am unable to stay alive."

Not only during mealtime but also at any time, we must show gratitude towards all the people of the world, because we cannot live even

a day without the efforts of others. It is said that the world has a population of over 6,000,000,000 people. If the people do not have a mind of gratitude, the world will be a desert and we will have to live in absolute darkness. People will be frightened and there will be frequent fighting.

Billions of people may live in this world but we cannot call it a fellowship until they understand each other and have sympathy for each other.

A true community is where truth and wisdom are its light, and where people know and trust each other and have things in common. As a matter of fact, harmony and gratitude are essential for a true community. Observing the Obon service this year, we should realize the importance of showing gratitude not only to our ancestors but to all the people in the world.

HONOLULU

Nichiren Mission of Hawaii Urabon Service

The Shin Bon-e (first year Obon service) was held on Saturday, July 10th at 7 p.m. The ones who lost a family member or relative since last year's Bon service attended this service, in which a lantern was dedicated for each deceased person.

The regular Bon service was held on the following day, Sunday, July 11th from 10 a.m. By giving various offerings to hungry souls, paying homage to the deceased, and having many ministers chant the sutras, the service enables the ancestors' souls to be saved from suffer-

ing, enjoying a peaceful life in the land of the Buddha.

Otakiage Service

The semi-annual otakiage service was held on Sunday, July 18 at 9:00a.m. This service is held twice a year to burn the old Ofudas since these items are not to be thrown away. After a year goes by, they are supposed to be returned to the temple and burned while the sutras are being chanted. Many people brought in their ofudas and prayed with gratitude at the Otakiage service.

Wahiawa Nichiren Mission

The Wahiawa Nichiren Mission's Obon service was held on Sunday, July 18th from 4:00 p.m. followed by a potluck dinner.

SAMGHA

New Scholarship Launched

On May 15, a new scholarship for high school seniors was launched to honor the late Koichi and Toyo Nerio, staunch Nichiren followers of Orange County, with a donation of \$100,000 by Art Nerio, Betty Imamura, Margaret Nerio, and Sumi Leonard (Nerio family members). It was hosted by the SE Japanese School and Community Center in Norwalk at their ninth annual scholarship presentation of \$500 each to four students.

Kyogi-nagashi and Potluck

The Kyogi-nagashi, the ceremony to burn old religious items will be held on Sunday, August 8th from 11:00a.m. at the Long Beach Japanese Cultural Center. It will be officiated by Bishop Kenjo Igarashi. A cool summer somen luncheon with potluck side dishes will follow, with the choice drawing of door prizes.

(continued from p.5)

we had evening service at Pundarika Temple (Myoho San Renge Ji), which was performed by Rev. Gikoh Tabata. It was a special service for us, especially for Mr. Afuk who had the gojukai in Japanese with assistance from Rev. Myosho Obata. The service also included a ceremony for eye opening for ten omamori Gohonzon.

On this special moment, we had the opportunity to learn a great value from Rev. Gikoh Tabata. In his brief lecture, he taught us about the 'Ichinen Sanzen', that it was only a small element inside us which was effecting the good or bad actions. We could achieve happiness by following the great teaching of Sadharma Pundarika Sutra. The second point, Rev. Gikoh Tabata told us the story about Great Bodhisattva Nichiren Daishonin who was offered two options of great powers, such as wisdom or good deeds. However, he chose to have the wisdom to be spread out to all human beings. It shows that he was a true great Bodhisattva. Rev. Gikoh Tabata also cited that there was a Buddha in everyone of us, that we could all become Bodhisattvas. The Great Bodhisattva Nichiren Daishonin was the son of a fisherman family who became the Great Bodhisattva. At the end of the lecture, Rev. Gikoh Tabata explained to us the meaning of the Buddhist symbol to us. The hori-

zontal line means 'no beginning and no end.' Meanwhile the vertical line means 'great space.' Thus the symbol means that great space which has no beginning and no ending. It was an astonishing moment, that the harmony of human being and the practice of common law, blended into one great Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.

The service finished at 19 pm and it was followed by a simple dinner celebration to mark the first anniversary of Nichiren Shu Indonesia Buddhist Association, 752 years of Nichiren Shu practice and Official Opening of Cetya Bodhicitta. The celebration was started by slashing the 'Volcano Rice' by Mr. Tony Soehartono, the principal of Nichiren Shu Indonesia Buddhist Association. 'Volcano Rice' is a traditional Indonesian yellow rice in the shape of volcano which is surrounded by many types of Indonesian food cuisine. It represents appreciation and prosperity.

After dinner, our members, Miss Kelly, Mr. Yap Ie Siu and Mr. Lie Tjun San presented a song, especially for us. Rev. Gikoh Tabata also kindly showed us a song which was called 'Wasan' in Japan.

May this wonderful Dharma spread throughout to the world and bring happiness for all human beings, in accordance to the merit of the great Nichiren Daishonin.

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo

NICHIREN SHU NEWS

c/o NICHIREN SHU Shumuin
1-32-15, Ikegami, Ota-ku,
Tokyo 146-8544, Japan
Tel. 03-3751-7181-3

Board of Trustees: Tansei Iwama, Chief Administrator, Nichiren Shu; Bungyo Yoshida, President, Kaigai Fukyo Koenkai; Ryosho Nakajo, Executive Director, General Affairs Bureau; Shoshin Kurihara, Executive Director, Missionary Bureau; Giko Tabata, Director, Missionary Department, Nichiren Shu

Editorial Board:

Editor.....Keiryu Shima
Supervisor-Editor
.....Kyotsu Hori
Foreign News Editor
.....Sandra Seki
Staff Writers ... Tesshu Saito
.....Gen-ichi Oikawa
(overseas)...Ryuken Akahoshi
..... Chishin Hirai
Advisor..... Hoyu Maruyama