

Nichiren Shu News

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“Wishing the Spirit of Rissho Ankoku to Society.”

*Bishop Nissho Kanno, Archbishop of Nichiren Shu,
Chief Abbot of Ikegami Honmonji Temple, Tokyo*

In this early spring of 2019, I give my sincere compliments of the New Year season to all the ministers and devotees of Nichiren Shu, and truly wish all of you to have pure and restful happiness.

When Honorable Rev. Nisso Uchino retired as the 53rd Archbishop of Nichiren Shu last May at the age of 93, I undertook the important duties as the 54th Archbishop. I know it is a heavy responsibility for me, but I chose to receive this important mission as an order from the Buddha, our Founder, and other deities. I will do my best to carry out all the important responsibilities with the spirit: ‘We will not spare even our lives.’

Honorable Rev. Nisso Uchino took on the heavy task for eight years, running about from east to west; he even conducted the commemorative service to honor the 800th anniversary of Nichiren Shonin’s birth, held in Malaysia to spread the Nichiren Shu teaching. I was really moved by his enthusiasm, expressing my sincere gratitude to him and vowing to succeed to his passion.

Nichiren Shu created the Rissho Ankoku and Odaimoku Kechien Campaign in commemoration of the 800th anniversary of Nichiren Shonin’s birth. This campaign is founded on the spirit of our Founder to establish righteousness and bring peace to the country, wishing to have all the people in the universe live a happy and peaceful life by spreading the Odaimoku.

Nichiren Shonin said in his *Rissho Ankoku-ron*, “When we believe in the Lotus Sutra and the Odaimoku, the whole world will become a Buddha



land. The Buddha land will never decay or be destroyed. Indeed, we will feel safe and tranquil, never suffering from any trouble. Please believe my words as to what the Buddha truly said and act accordingly.”

He wrote this to appeal to the public 700 years ago, but his message still resonates within us today. Our world is in turmoil. Nations act selfishly instead of working together. As global warming increases, natural disasters and abnormal weather cannot be ignored anymore. As Nichiren Shonin predicted, the miserable conditions he faced 700 years ago are here again in our age. As devotees of Nichiren Shonin, we have to face up to the reality, accepting it as our own responsibility. At the beginning of 2019, I hereby offer my New Year greetings, wishing all of us to help each other purify the entire world through the Odaimoku. With Gassho.

—Translated by Rev. Sensho Komukai

A Miracle or Just an Everyday Occurrence?

*Rev. Hosei Nakagawa,
Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu*

I would like to extend my New Year greetings. There were many disasters last year. I wish to pray for the souls of those who lost their lives and offer my sincere condolences to all those who suffered. I am greatly obliged to the young priests for working on relief operations in the disaster-stricken areas.

I would like to express my gratitude to Honorable Nisso Uchino who retired as 53rd Archbishop of Nichiren Shu and Bishop Nissho Kanno who became the 54th Archbishop and wish them to always guide me with their advice.

A year has passed since I became the Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu. During this period, we have worked on behalf of promoting the Rissho Ankoku and Odaimoku Kechien Campaign and expanding the commemorative projects to honor the 800th anniversary of Nichiren Shonin’s birth. I hear some good results have been gained from our efforts, but I should say that it is not enough.

According to Chinese astrology, 2019 is the Year of the Earth Boar in which one falls behind when one does not do what should be done. The 800th anniversary of Nichiren Shonin’s birth is in two years, furthermore the last phase of the Rissho Ankoku and Odaimoku Kechien Campaign emphasizing “Bearing Fruit” begins in April. At such an important period, we must form the foundation of “*rissho ankoku*—to establish righteousness and bring peace to the country” with the heart and spirit of *tangyo raihai*: I Bow to the Buddha in You.

It is nothing short of a miracle that our Founder Nichiren Shonin, born 800 years ago, still gives us the teaching of the Odaimoku in our time. However, unless we deeply appreciate this miracle and spread his precious teaching to society it will be taken for granted. Nichiren Shu temples are facing such problems as declining birthrate, aging population, and continuing depopulation. Do we pretend to be unaware of the problems? Or do we, as disciples of Nichiren Shonin, try to fight against them? Remember,



we have only one choice. All of us have to be ready to work devotedly for Nichiren Shonin whose wish is to spread peace throughout the land by establishing the True Dharma. As a *Shuhosshi* (a priest trained to perform special *kito* prayer services), I have had opportunities to establish good relations with many people and spread the Lotus Sutra and the Odaimoku by performing Kito Blessings. It does not matter whether you are a priest or a devotee. We all have to show fearlessness in spreading the preciousness of the Odaimoku throughout the world. The determination you show will lead to repaying your debt of gratitude towards Nichiren Shonin. Only then can we truly feel and appreciate the miracle of Nichiren Shonin’s birth. I will take the lead in showing determination, whatever becomes of me.

As Nichiren Shu priests and devotees, we must constantly sow the seed of the Odaimoku. I truly hope that all of you will plant the seeds of the Odaimoku for the next generation in order to realize a peaceful society.

—Translated by Rev. Sensho Komukai

YEAR OF THE BOAR

2019 is the Year of the Boar or Year of the Pig, according to the Chinese zodiac. In China, the zodiac sign is the Year of the Pig, giving it a more comical characteristic. However, in Japan it is the Year of the Boar, which presents a more tough, energetic image. It is the twelfth or last position of the horary signs.

Each zodiac sign cycles through five elements: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water over a 60-year period. It is thought that a person’s characteristics are decided by their birth year’s zodiac animal sign and

element. 2019 is the Year of the Earth Boar, whose uniqueness is popularity among friends and a strong sense of timing.

The overall positive characteristics of all those born in the Year of the Boar are that they are diligent, compassionate, and generous. They also have great concentration. So once a goal is set, they will devote



all their energy to reaching it. Boars rarely seek help from others, and they never refuse to lend a hand to others. They also never suspect trickery, so they can be easily deceived. With a great sense of responsibility, no matter how difficult a problem is, they can handle it carefully and properly.

Those born under the sign of the Boar

are optimistic and gentle. Careers related to charity and fundraising are perfect for them, and they also make great teachers and coaches. This year is not a transitional year for the Boar, so it is best to try and “stick it out” since next year will bear fruit. Healthwise, it is best if they can find a good balance between work and relaxation.

Boars are those born in the following years (of the lunar calendar): 1923, 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, and 2019. —Compiled by Sandra Seki

GREAT FIGURES WHO HAD FAITH IN NICHIREN SHU (4)



Rev. Ryumyo Tsunawaki dedicated his life to helping people who were suffering from leprosy.

By Rev. Sensho Komukai

Ryumyo Tsunawaki (1876-1970) was born in Fukuoka in the Kyushu Region. He contracted tuberculosis at the age of 15. While recuperating, his religious faith in Buddhism awakened. He was deeply impressed with Never-Despising Bodhisattva, who always bowed to whomever he met. When Tsunawaki was 16, he received his ordination as a Nichiren Shu priest. He thought, "All human beings can become Buddhas. I have to bow with palms together to their precious lives." To vow to be like

Never-Despising Bodhisattva in front of Nichiren Shonin, he visited Mt. Minobu for the first time in July 1906.

Paying a visit to the Founder's tomb and passing through a temple gate, he found miserable huts standing alongside the river. He met a boy, about 15 or 16 years old, dressed like a beggar. The boy told him that he was suffering from leprosy. Rev. Tsunawaki was very shocked to see about 50 more people suffering from Hansen's disease, from children to adults, living in such shabby old huts on Mt. Minobu with no way to recovery.

In those days, people thought that Hansen's disease was incurable. A leprosy patient was improperly kept in isolation for fear of its infection spreading to others. Because the disease was thought to be hereditary, the patients, as well as their families, were treated badly and faced discrimination.

Rev. Tsunawaki made up his mind to relieve the sufferers from Hansen's disease, saying to himself, "These patients were abandoned by their parents and families. I vowed to practice the way of Never-Despising Bodhisattva. Isn't it the Buddhist way of compassion to help those who are suffering from disease? I know it is not an easy task, but whatever difficulties may occur, I will achieve my goal to relieve them."

In October 1906, he built a temporary sickroom in which 13 patients who had been laying along a riverbed were taken in. The hospital was named *Jinkyō-en*. *Jin* means "deep," *kyō* is "respect," and *en* literally means "garden." The name of the hospital was taken from Chapter 20, "Never-Despising Bodhisattva" of the Lotus Sutra, in which the eponymous bodhisattva says, "I respect you deeply."

Later, it turned out that Hansen's disease was completely curable. Still, there were no government policies on welfare, and few understood that the disease was curable. Rev. Tsunawaki had difficulty in raising funds, because of people's prejudices. Even so, he never gave up. He established a good hospitalization facility that would become an incorporated foundation in 1920.

Rev. Tsunawaki cared for the patients with affection and without discrimination. He often said, "Everybody has a precious personality. We have only to accept each other's existence. Your value as a Buddhist depends on whether you can respect everybody deeply. It is completely out of the question that you bow to them from a mere sense of obligation." Since its opening, 1,436 patients suffering from Hansen's disease were hospitalized and received medical care in *Jinkyō-en* until it closed in 1992.

As a Buddhist priest, Rev. Tsunawaki could not help but do something for the people suffering from leprosy. His motivation may have come from the great compassionate conviction that patients should not be abandoned even if they are incurable.



Rev. Tsunawaki founded *Jinkyō-en* as a place to provide respectful care to people suffering from leprosy.

Buddhism Q&A (12)

By Rev. Ryuei McCormick

What Is the Gohonzon?

In the previous issue, I explained the meaning of the word *honzon* as the "focus of devotion" and how Nichiren Shu depicts the particular *honzon* of our school in five different ways in accordance with Nichiren Shonin's instructions. I described the first two of these ways that emphasize the Odaimoku: the "Great Mandala of Invoking the Ten Worlds" and the "One Sacred Title." Now, I will describe the three other depictions that focus on the Eternal Shakyamuni Buddha.

The third depiction is the "One Stupa and Two World Honored Ones" (*itto ryoson*), a statue arrangement of the Stupa of Many Treasures (often inscribed with the Odaimoku) flanked by the Eternal Shakyamuni Buddha and Many Treasures Buddha. Sometimes, as at Kuonji Temple on Mt. Minobu, other statues may be added of figures who are inscribed on the Great Mandala of Invoking the Ten Worlds, such as the four leaders of the bodhisattvas appearing from underground.

The fourth depiction is the "One World Honored One and the Four Leaders" (*isson shishi*), a statue arrangement of the Eternal Shakyamuni Buddha flanked by the four leaders of the bodhisattvas appearing from underground. This is the arrangement found in the main hall, *honden*, of Ikegami Honmonji Temple.

The fifth depiction is the "One Shakyamuni Buddha who is the World Honored One" (*Shakuson ichibutsu*), a statue of the Eternal Shakyamuni Buddha alone.



Gohonzon 御本尊 means "focus of devotion" and can be depicted in five different ways.

That Nichiren approved of the making and enshrining of statues of Shakyamuni Buddha can be found in writings such as the *Shijo Kingo Shakabutsu Kuyo-ji*, wherein he wrote to his follower Shijo Kingo, "The statue of the Buddha you have erected this time is the living Buddha."

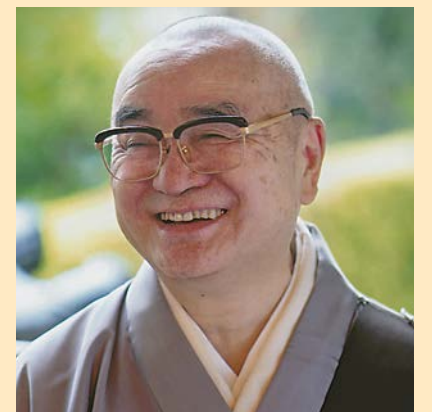
The purpose of the *honzon* of Nichiren Shu, in any of the five ways it is depicted, is to enable us to express our faith in the Lotus Sutra so that we can encounter the spiritual presence and influence of the Eternal Shakyamuni Buddha and thereby receive the wisdom and merit of the Eternal Buddha into our lives through our reception and practice of the Odaimoku.

We welcome readers' questions about Buddhism and Nichiren Shonin. Please send us your questions by e-mail to editor-nichirensnunews@nichiren.or.jp or contact us through your local temple.

REVEREND KANNO PREACHES (55)

"In the case of the Lotus Sutra, when one touches it, one's hands immediately become Buddhas..."

—Nichiren Shonin,
Ueno-ama Gozen Gohenji



Namu-myoho- renge-kyo

The Lotus Sutra, the teaching of the Buddha, is so noble. Moreover, it is the teaching we, the ordinary people, can comprehend. As Nichiren said in his letter, "...when one touches it, one's hands immediately become Buddhas, and when one chants it, one's mouth instantly becomes a Buddha." This is also my understanding.

What does it mean by our hands turning into Buddha's hands, or our mouth turning into Buddha's mouth? Please allow me to explain. When we chant the Lotus Sutra and the Odaimoku, *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo*, before driving our car, maintaining a sincere state of mind focused on the Odaimoku, the car becomes "Car Buddha," protected by the Odaimoku. The same can be said about using a kitchen knife. The knife becomes "Kitchen Knife Buddha." Likewise, a pot becomes "Pot Buddha." Though we pay attention to what we are doing, we do it in the spirit of the Odaimoku we have chanted.

When we speak while keeping the spirit of the Odaimoku, the words naturally become the "Buddha's words," and the "Buddha's voice." Nichiren Shonin encourages us to devote ourselves to become a Buddha bodily, verbally, and mentally.

Now, let us begin by chanting the Buddha's words, the Odaimoku.

Honorable Rev. Nisho Kanno, Archbishop of Nichiren Shu,
Chief Abbot of Ikegami Honmonji Temple, Tokyo

Temples Associated with Nichiren Shonin in Kamakura: Ankokuronji Temple

By Rev. Kanshu Naito

The most catastrophic earthquake people had ever experienced occurred in Kamakura in the first year of the Shoka era (1257). It was reported that more than 20,000 people were killed in Kamakura alone by the earthquake. An already unstable society was thereby thrown into even greater distress.

Nichiren Shonin had been living in Matsubagayatsu for years and had observed a succession of disasters. He thought that the time had come to clarify why such enormous natural disasters had struck Japan and warn the government. He had already thought that the reason was because people had abandoned the Lotus Sutra, the true teaching, and instead put their faith in the Nembutsu and Zen schools, which taught misguided doctrines. Looking for sutras to support his view, he entered the scripture library containing the complete corpus of Buddhist scriptures held at Jissoji Temple, at Iwamoto in Suruga Province (present-day Shizuoka Prefecture), and read many sutras over the course of two years.

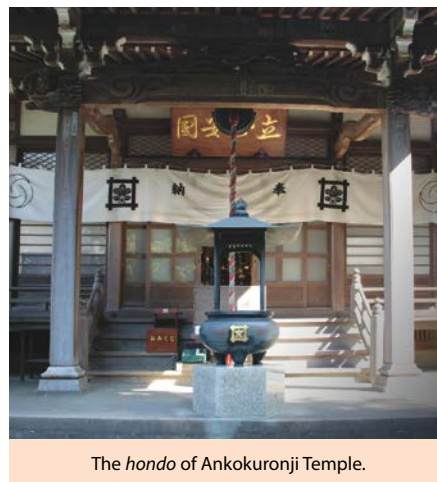
On July 16, 1260, in the first year of the Bun'ō era, Nichiren Shonin assembled his writings in the *Rissho Ankoku-ron* and submitted it to Saimyoji Tokiyori, the retired regent who held the reins of government through his connections with Mitsunori Yadoya, a close aide to the head of the Kamakura Shogunate. His treatise declared that the reason for the natural disasters was

the prevalence of the exclusive practice of nembutsu (chanting the name of Amitabha Buddha) taught by the monk Honen (1133-1212). Nichiren Shonin's treatise concluded that, if the practice of nembutsu was not stopped, there would be more civil wars and foreign invasions, and it strongly insisted that the people should take faith in the Lotus Sutra and abandon nembutsu.

In the Nagoe area, there was a place called Matsubagayatsu, where Nichiren Shonin's thatched cottage was built. Today, three temples are located there. The place where Nichiren Shonin is said to have written and finalized the *Rissho Ankoku-ron* is Ankokuronji Temple, located in Omachi, Kamakura. Nichiren Shonin is said to have lived there from the time he first arrived in Kamakura until the Matsubagayatsu Persecution. It is located near the mountainside, where Omachi-oji leads to the Nagoe Road cutting through the mountains, a suitable place to initiate his propagation efforts as so many travelers would visit this area.

On the right side of the precincts facing the main building, there is a little cottage (Goshoan) built where Nichiren Shonin's cottage once stood. A statue of Nichiren Shonin writing the *Rissho Ankoku-ron* is enshrined within. The statue is said to have been carved by Nichiro Shonin. In the Goshoan, there is a cave (Gohokutsu) where the *Rissho Ankoku-ron* is said to have been written.

In the middle of the night on August 27, 1260, in the first year of the Bun'ō era,



The hondo of Ankokuronji Temple.

about a month after the *Rissho Ankoku-ron* was submitted, the Matsubagayatsu cottage was attacked and set on fire by a mob of nembutsu believers who were outraged by the *Rissho Ankoku-ron* and its author. This was later called the Matsubagayatsu Persecution, the first of the four major persecutions that Nichiren Shonin faced.

According to legend, some white monkeys came and urgently tugged on the sleeves of Nichiren Shonin's robe before the mob arrived. He followed them into a cave in the hill behind the cottage. Soon after, he heard the raising of battle cries and sounds of battle, and the cottage he had just left was attacked and burnt down. As Nichiren Shonin said, "What happened to me? I was able to escape from religious persecution, once again." He narrowly escaped death by concealing himself for a while in a cave called Nammen Kutsu (South

Facing Cave), which is located on the hill behind Ankokuronji Temple.

There is a little shrine built where Nichiro Shonin's remains were cremated near Goshoan. As it is said "Nichiren is accompanied by Nichiro wherever he goes." These two priests were always together, at the Komatsubara Persecution in November 1264, in the first year of the Bun'e era, and at the Tatsunokuchi Persecution in September 1271, in the eighth year of the Bun'e era. Nichiro Shonin, the second chief priest of this temple, passed away at Ikegami at the age of 78 in January 1320, the second year of the Gen'ō era. According to his wish, he was cremated at this special place where he had entered the Buddhist priesthood and served Nichiren Shonin since his youth. His remains were buried at the monkey's field up on the hills around Hosshoji Temple, about two kilometers from Ankokuronji Temple, where Nichiren Shonin had narrowly escaped being killed by the mob.



Nammen Kutsu (South Facing Cave) where Nichiren Shonin concealed himself.

Study Tour in Germany Focuses on Interfaith Dialogue

By Rev. Keiryō Inoue
Photographs by Jan Louy

The Study Tour for 2018 marked the second stage of the complete overhaul of the program initiated with last year's Study Tour in Minobu. That program focused on "International Exchange" by giving Shami and potential Shami from abroad a unique living experience of Nichiren Shu practice along with the students in the Minobusan University Gyogaku Dormitory. This year's program focused on "Interfaith Dialogue" and was held from October 17-23 at Daiseion-Ji Temple in Germany which has conducted many inter-religious activities over the years as their main propagation activity.

Ten Nichiren Shu priests participated in the program and prepared themselves by attending a lecture by a *Rissho Kosei-kai* leader at the Shumuin before departing for Germany. The first stops of the study tour were visits to the Cologne

Cathedral and the recently completed Cologne Central Mosque, and there were exchanges with officials of both institutions. The attendees received a lecture on Christian Interfaith given by Reverend Monshinore, a member of the Roman Catholic Cologne Archdiocese. At the Cologne Central Mosque, attendees heard about the interfaith challenges of practicing Islam in a predominantly Christian country.

The second and third days of the study tour were held at Daiseion-Ji Temple with a series of lectures and panel discussions exploring interfaith issues and how various religions can find a common ground for dialogue. The guest speakers included Sister Maria De Giorgi of the Kumotomo-based Shinmeizan Centre of Spirituality and Interreligious Dialogue, Archbishop Felix Machado of Vasai, India, and Dr. Werner Hobsch of Cologne Archdiocese; all of them long-term partners in Daiseion-Ji Temple interfaith activities. Rev. Shokei Steffens, Head Priest of Daiseion-Ji Temple, explained the various interfaith activities that the temple has sponsored over the years and their significance.

One thing participants took away from the study tour was: respect and perseverance are essential for successful interfaith dialogue. Respect is the first thing that comes to the minds of participants but not perseverance. It takes an open mind and heart, and time, to comprehend and truly understand the differences of another religion. Open

minds and perseverance are needed in all kinds of dialogue, not just religious ones.

The panel discussions provided an important opportunity for the study tour participants to practice real interfaith dialogue with the lecturers. Many participants had not encountered such a situation before and discovered that explaining one's own religion was not so easy, especially when explaining it to a person from a completely different background.

At the end of the panel discussions, Rev. Kobun Sasaki of the Nichiren Shu Missionary Dept. International Section summarized the main points of the study tour and how interfaith dialogue is an

important part of Nichiren Shu policy.

On the final day of the study tour, the participants visited a Benedictine Monastery with a tour conducted by Father Koenigs. The atmosphere was quite different from that of the Cologne Cathedral, which is a tourist attraction. The monastery left a deep impression on everyone. The sense of it being a living, breathing religion was truly palpable. That evening a Nichiren Shu Service and Prayer for World Peace was held in the monastery cathedral. The sound of the Odaimoku powerfully reverberated off the stonework fusing together the many voices of various religious participants into one.



Study Tour participants visiting the Cologne Cathedral.



The Study Tour participants spent their time focusing on "Interfaith Dialogue." Many of the lectures and discussions took place at Daiseion-Ji Temple in Wipperfuerth.

TEMPLE EVENTS

Nichiren Mission of Hawaii Rev. Chishin Hirai Installation of New Bishop

The Nichiren Mission of Hawaii held an installation ceremony for Bishop Shokai Kanai on Sunday, December 9. A welcome party for the new Bishop and his wife Kumiko Kanai, and a farewell party for Bishop Chishin Hirai and his wife Ritsuko were held following the ceremony. Members attending seemed sad to see the Hirais leaving but were happy to welcome the Kanais.



Rev. Hirai will move back to Japan to be installed as the resident minister of Ankokuronji Temple in Kamakura.



Honolulu Myohoji Mission Rev. Josho Yamamura 188th Birthday Celebration for King Kamehameha V

Rev. Yamamura was invited to a ceremony celebrating the 188th Birthday of King Kamehameha V by the Royal Order of Kamehameha I.

The ceremony was held on December 11 at the Aliiolani Hale, the current home of the Supreme Court of Hawaii but probably better known as the "Hawaii Five-O" headquarters building as it is regularly used for filming the popular television show.

Rev. Yamamura did the Pule Hooku (Last Prayer) and chanted the Odaimoku to King Kamehameha V as a representative of all the Buddhists who are living in Hawaii.

Wahiawa Nichiren Mission Rev. Chishin Hirai 70th Anniversary Celebration

The Wahiawa Nichiren Mission located on Oahu Island, celebrated its 70th anniversary in November.

Rev. Myoryu Aniya, disciple of Bishop Kanryu Mochizuki, established a branch of the Hawaii Mission in the town of Wahiawa in February 1948. The year 2018 marked the 70th anniversary of the Mission. A grand ceremony officiated by



Bishop Hirai, assisted by Revs. Chitoku Kawaguchi and Josho Yamamura was held. About 80 attendees, including descendants of Rev. Aniya, participated in the service.

Puunene Nichiren Mission Rev. Chitoku Kawaguchi Rev. Kawaguchi Completes Assignment

After two and a half years as resident minister of the Puunene Nichiren Mission in Maui, Hawaii, Rev. Chitoku Kawaguchi officiated his resignation ceremony on December 1. He will miss all the members and friends at the Puunene Mission and also at the Hilo Nichiren Mission, which he also presided over. Rev. Kawaguchi would like to express his gratitude to all

the members and friends with whom he was able to share good memories in Hawaii. He has returned to Japan with his family. Rev. Kawaguchi hopes to engage in overseas propagation again in the future.

Dragon Palace Temple (Ryuguji) Celebrates Its 19th Anniversary

By Rev. Keiryō Inoue,
Missionary Department

A commemorative service celebrating the 19th anniversary of Dragon Palace Temple, (Ryuguji) in Nagpur, India was held on November 23. Ten participants from the International Buddhist Fellowship Association, six priests from the All-Japan Nichiren Shu Youth Association, and Revs. Shingyo Imai and Keiryō Inoue attended the event. As always, the attendees filled the main prayer hall and listened intently to the Lotus Sutra recited in Japanese.

After the service, a home-blessing prayer was conducted at the residence of Ms. Sulekha Kumbare, a co-founder of Ryuguji Temple. The residence is next



to the temple. Following lunch, Bishop Nichiyu Mochida, head of the International Buddhist Fellowship Association, Revs. Jikei Matsumoto and Shusho Maru, and the priests of the All-Japan Nichiren Shu Youth Association got on stage. After Bishop Mochida's greetings and Ms. Sulekha's address, the Prime Minister of the State of Maharashtra arrived at the temple. He stated, "This service is a bridge that bonds the friendship between India and Japan." The prime minister of an Indian state is extremely busy. His attendance at such a private event was quite unusual and much appreciated. It shows the interest the Indian government has in Ryuguji Temple.

—Translated by Sandra Seki

Celebrating the Buddha's Enlightenment in the City of Lights

By Rev. Ryuei McCormick

On December 8, a retreat commemorating the Buddha's awakening was held in Paris, France. It was presided over by Rev. Ryusho Jeffus for the European members of Wonderful Voice Temple (myoshoji.org), a virtual temple based in Syracuse, New York, with online members around the world. Wonderful Voice Temple was set up as an experiment in the digital age to reach people who do not have a physical temple. It is part of the Enkyoji Buddhist Network established by Rev. Kanjin Cederman of Choeizan Enkyoji Temple in Seattle, Washington. For this rare chance to practice together face-to-face, more than a dozen Nichiren Shu practitioners from France, the Czech Republic, Portugal, and the U.S. gathered together. The event was also streamed live, so that members who could not come to Paris could participate online. The theme of the conference was the "Spirit of Gassho," and Dharma talks were given on that theme by Rev. Jeffus and Rev. Cederman. Attendees also had the chance to practice

shakyo, the copying of a passage from the Lotus Sutra. The passage chosen was Never-Despising Bodhisattva's statement in Chapter 20, "I respect you deeply. I do not despise you. Why is that? It is because you will be able to practice the Way of Bodhisattvas and become Buddhas."

The retreat ended with the celebration of Jodo-e, the ceremony commemorating the Buddha's awakening and a ceremony for several of the attendees for the reception of the precept to uphold the Odaimoku as members of Nichiren Shu. The next day, attendees went on a field trip to the Guimet Museum, one of the premier Asian art museums in Europe, to see works of Buddhist art from India, Southeast Asia, China, and Japan.



Calendar for February 2019–March 2019

FEB 3 Setsubun (first day of spring in the traditional Chinese calendar)
FEB 10 Commemoration Ceremony observing the completion of the 100-day Aragyō Ascetic Training
FEB 15 Nirvana Day

FEB 16 Commemoration Day of the Birth of Nichiren Shonin
MAR 18-24 Spring Higan