

# Nichiren Shu News

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(1)

## ‘Odaimoku Kechien’ Campaign Started

By Rev. Hoyu Maruyama

Taking the opportunity of celebrating the 750th anniversary of the presentation of the “Rissho Ankoku-ron (Treatise on Spreading Peace Throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma)” in 2009 and the 800th birthday of Nichiren Shonin in 2022, the Nichiren Shu order has launched the 18-year “Rissho Ankoku Odaimoku Campaign” starting on April 1, 2005.

The fundamental principle of this campaign has been worked out at the Central Propagation Planning Conference of the Shumuin Headquarters, based on the propositions raised by the local administrative offices and discussed by 11 dioceses (kyoku districts). The principle proclaims:

“Fully complying with the resolution of Nichiren Shonin, and being aware of the mission of the bodhisattvas emerged from the earth (disciples of the Eternal Buddha), let us devote ourselves for the realization of the ideal of Rissho Ankoku (Establish the True Dharma and Spreading

Peace throughout the Country) and the realization of the Land of the Buddha as well as for the spreading of the Odaimoku and sowing the seed of Buddhahood in the minds of all living beings (geshu kechien).

The five fundamental provisions of this campaign are: 1. the odaimoku as the seed of Buddhahood; 2. education, teaching that each of us is the bearer of the Dharma; 3. peace of mind, peace of society and peace of the world; 4. efforts to tackle problems of the present society; and 5. cooperation with Buddhists in the world.

Activities for the accomplishment of the objectives of these provisions are shown as follows:

1. The odaimoku as the seed of Buddhahood: let us sow the seed of Buddhahood in the minds of all living beings now to see the time for harvest. By spreading the odaimoku, let us try to realize the attainment of Buddhahood by people, society and the country.

2. Education, teaching that each of us is the bearer of the Dharma. Priests

should deepen their faith, devote themselves to chanting the odaimoku, spread the odaimoku and exert every effort to let people establish a tie with the Buddha. Lay followers should live the life of faith, assist the priests engaged in missionary activities, chant the odaimoku themselves and spread the odaimoku chanting by others.

3. Peace of mind, peace of society and peace of the world: let us have a healthy mind, build up a happy family, establish a safe and active society, and realize the world peace by chanting the odaimoku.

4. Efforts to tackle the problems of the present society: let us be attentive to the current problems in the society, value the life of people, and put into practice the ideal of bakku-yoraku (taking away suffering and giving happiness).

5. Cooperation with the Buddhists in the world: let us build the foundation for peace by promoting cooperation with the Buddhists of Asian countries and of the world, and the dialogue with other religious groups.

This campaign will actually start

in 2007. The preceding two years, 2005 and 2006, are dedicated to publicizing the principle of this campaign, working on campaign plans and procuring funds.

The campaign of “rissho ankoku” (establish the righteousness and bring peace to the country) is an outward bound campaign while “Odaimoku Geshu Kechien” (sowing the seed of Buddhahood by means of the odaimoku) is inward bound, aimed at the inheritance of faith.

Aimed at the development and prosperity of the Nichiren Shu Order, and launched on April 1, 2005, this campaign will be concluded in 2022, the year of the 800th birthday of Nichiren Shonin.

In this 18-year campaign period, marking not only the presentation of Rissho Ankoku-ron (1260) but also the 750th anniversary of the Four Great Persecutions: the persecutions of Matsubagayatsu in 1260, Izu in 1261, Komatsubara in 1264 and Tatsunokuchi in 1271, it is hoped that the foundation for further development of our order is established.

## Annual Conference of Overseas Missionaries Held in Tokyo

By Rev. Shingyo Imai

The Department of Missionary of the Nichiren-shu Headquarters held the annual conference of overseas missionaries and ministers from May 17 through 19, 2005, at the Nichiren-shu Headquarters in Tokyo, Japan. Nineteen assigned overseas missionaries from the United States, Korea, Malaysia, England, Italy, and Brazil and 6 ministers from the U.S., India, and Germany were gathered to exchange their up-to-date information and to confirm the world-wide campaign of Nichiren-shu for the eight hundredth birthday of our Founder.

Rev. Giko Tabata, Director of Missionary Dept., first explained the Nichiren-shu’s new campaign towards the 800th anniversary of Nichiren Shonin’s birth, the main theme of which is the “Rissho Ankoku Odaimoku Kechien.” “Rissho Ankoku” means to spread peace throughout the world by establishing the true dharma



Rev. Tansai Iwama, Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu Order addressing the conference



Overseas ministers and Shumuin executives in front of the Shumuin Headquarters building, Ikegami

based on Nichiren Shonin’s treatise “Rissho Ankoku-ron,” and “Odaimoku Kechien” means to sow the seed of the odaimoku by chanting it.

Members of the Committee of International Affairs of the headquarters, whose purpose was to decide the strategy of international missionary, also attended the conference to gather information from the overseas missionaries. During the conference, Rev. Eiyu Ishii, chairman of the committee, explained their plan of sweeping reforms for the system of overseas missionary work, which had been discussed for years at the committee meetings. “These changes have been suggested by members of the committee to make the overseas missionary work better and easier for the future” said Rev. Ishii.

The missionaries and ministers from foreign countries and the committee members exchanged their



Conferees discussing the problems of overseas propagation

opinions actively to make the conference successful.

At the closing ceremony of the conference, Rev. Tansai Iwama, the Chief Administrator of Nichiren-shu,

encouraged the people gathered there to endeavor to realize our Founder’s wish of spreading the odaimoku all over the world for the happiness of mankind and world peace.

# The Doctrine of Ichinen Sanzen (8)

## Ichinen Sanzen in the Theoretical Section

By Rev. Kanji Tamura

The Lotus Sutra that unveils the doctrine of ichinen sanzen ("3,000 existences contained in one thought") is divided into two sections. The first half of the sutra is called the theoretical section and the latter the essential section. The theoretical section shows that through the teaching of the Lotus Sutra all sentient beings are equally walking the way to becoming Buddhas.

Meanwhile, the word "vehicle" is used to indicate sutras or certain Buddhist teachings. When we get on vehicles such as a bus, train or an airplane, there is a limit in seating capacity for each, and also if we are late, we will miss them.

Likewise, a Buddhist sutra has its own capacity and regulation. A motor bicycle for one rider can be compared with Hinayana Buddhism, while the teachings of Mahayana are likened to a vehicle that can hold other people. They can hold two, four, hundreds, or even thousands of people but still there is a limit, so they are often called "tentative Mahayana," though, Mahayana originally means "great vehicle."

In Japan some railways have cars only for women, where men are not allowed to enter. Smokers are kicked out of no-smoking cars, and we can-

not sit on first-class seats unless we pay more. However, there is just one vehicle or sutra, to which everyone is welcome.

We have to pay the fare to get on a train, but this vehicle or sutra takes everyone to its terminal station for a minimum fare. That is the Lotus Sutra, and its only fare is "faith," so all of us are able to be relieved equally through its teaching. This is why the Lotus Sutra is called the "true Mahayana," or "(one vehicle)." Only this true Mahayana can reach the final destination, holding everyone.



Rev. Kanji Tamura

The Lotus Sutra does not discriminate people. It accepts young or old, male or female, Hinayana or Mahayana, or even good or bad. Under the teaching of the Lotus Sutra, the way to becoming Buddhas is shown to each being. It is said that even the slanderers, who persecute or hurt the practitioners of the Lotus Sutra, would become Buddhas in the end through the merit of having faith in it. Even if one refuses the Lotus Sutra, he inevitably ends up accepting its teaching. Thus the Lotus Sutra can guide every living being to Buddhahood. It reveals that all lives are essentially connected with the Buddha. In other words, by revealing the doctrine of "3,000 existences contained in one thought," the Lotus

Sutra shows that all sentient beings finally become Buddhas. Even though they may repeat the life of sufferings, all of them essentially have the mind of the Buddha, and through this connection with the Buddha (Sakyamuni), his guidance is bestowed upon them, opening the way to Buddhahood.

## Lord Sakyamuni and Ichinen Sanzen in the Essential Section

In the theoretical section, the doctrine of ichinen sanzen is revealed as the theoretical principle of salvation and attaining Buddhahood for all sentient beings.

Meanwhile, the existence of the Buddha as the concrete goal for all sentient beings is revealed in the essential section. According to Nichiren Shonin, the ichinen sanzen doctrine of the theoretical section is just a step to the ichinen sanzen of the essential section. When the land of the Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha, the true realm of Buddhas, was revealed for the first time in the essential section, the theory of mutual possession of ten realms integrated by the realm of Buddhas as well as the ichinen sanzen doctrine is truly realized in this world. (referring to "Open Your Eyes to the Lotus Teaching")

Comparing both sections, the theoretical section is focused on taking steps upward to the realm of Buddhas while the essential section shows the salvation bestowed downward by Sakyamuni Buddha. Both sections

more or less contain the elements of the both upward and downward. However, the theoretical section emphasizes the self-improvement factors of the Lotus Sutra. It plainly says, "May the merits we have accumulated by this offering be distributed among all living beings, and may we and all other living beings attain the enlightenment of the Buddha!" (Chapter 7) On the other hand, the essential section describes Sakyamuni Buddha's vow to save all sentient beings based on His great compassion, saying, "I am always thinking: How shall I cause all living beings to enter into the unsurpassed Way and quickly become Buddha?" (Chapter 16) There, Sakyamuni Buddha's compassion comes down to sentient beings while sentient beings are to go up to the land of Sakyamuni Buddha by their faith. This two-way connection is the basic form of the essential section.

The ichinen sanzen doctrine of the theoretical section begins with observing the transient mind that changes moment by moment. On the other hand, the ichinen sanzen of the essential section begins with unification between the great compassion of Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha and our mind of faith. In other words, to feel Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha through our existences and our faith is the 'actuality' (or realization) of the ichinen sanzen doctrine. Then, in that case, what is Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha? In the next article, we will learn about who the Lord Teacher Sakyamuni or Eternal and Original Teacher Sakyamuni Buddha is.

(translated by Rev. Kanshin Mochida)  
(to be continued)

# The Legend of Nichiren (15)

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph. D.

## Ito, the Site of Banishment

Following the tearful send-off at Yuigahama Beach, Kamakura, on May 12 (lunar calendar), 1261, the boat with Nichiren Shonin aboard crossed the Suruga Bay and arrived at Ito on the Izu Peninsula, the site of banishment, the same day. There he was placed under the custody of Ito Hachiro-zaemon Tomotaka, the local lord.

As the ship approached the shore of Kawana near Ito at around 4 p.m., the guard ordered Nichiren to leave the ship. "No fair wind is now available for us to reach Ito. You should leave the ship here and walk along the beach to Ito. You see a dark bush over there, which is the place." The guard left Nichiren on a flat rock in the sea off Kawana Beach. Sitting on the rock, Nichiren remained quite at loss as to what to do. Ito was still very far. The rock was washed by waves as the tide began to rise.

After a short while, a fisherman rowing a small boat drew near the rock. The fisherman of Kawana, called Yasaburo, was astonished to find Nichiren sitting on the wave-washed rock. He asked Nichiren, "How did you come here? Have you come down from the heaven? Has an eagle caught you and brought you here?"

Yasaburo continued, "The flat rock you are now sitting is called 'manaita (cutting board) iwa (rock)' off the Cape of Ito. Now it rises up on the sea surface but it will submerge when the tide is high." He rescued Nichiren and

took him to his house in Ito.

The day Yasaburo saved Nichiren corresponded with the 13th memorial day of his mother. He and his wife supplied Nichiren with food, clothing and shelter, and took good care of him despite the notice of the local lord that those who would take care of the exile should be subject to severe punishment. Nichiren stayed with the fisherman couple for 30 days or so before he was moved from Kawana to Ito, where he was kept almost two years as an exile until February 22, 1263.

While Nichiren was staying with the fisherman couple, Ito Tomotaka, the local lord of Ito, had taken poison and fell into a critical condition. It was in the middle of May just after Nichiren was exiled to Ito. Ayabe Masakiyo, a relative of the lord, proposed, "Though Nichiren is an exile, he believes in the Lotus Sutra which is most sacred. Let's ask him to pray for the recovery of the lord." Upon the request, Nichiren visited the lord at Ito on June 17 to chant the Lotus Sutra at his bedside. The lord regained consciousness in three

days, and almost recovered in five days. Expressing appreciation, the lord presented Nichiren an image of the Buddha, which had been hauled up from the sea the year before when a fisherman threw a net over the luminous sea surface.

Believing it to be a statue of Amitabha Buddha, the villagers as well as those coming from the neighborhood offered prayer to the statue chanting the name of Amitabha Buddha. Irrespective of their prayer, a fever spread among them, many of whom fell victim. Examining the stat-



Rev. Gyokai Sekido

ue closely, it was found to be the statue of Sakyamuni Buddha, not Amitabha Buddha. Villagers felt abominable, and entrusted it with the local lord.

Receiving the statue of Sakyamuni Buddha from the lord, Nichiren Shonin was so happy as though he were Superior Practice Bodhisattva meeting with the Eternal Buddha. Believing that the appearance of the Eternal Buddha from the sea was indicative of the right time for the Lotus Sutra to be spread, Nichiren kept the statue throughout his life.



People are looking at the statue of Sakyamuni Buddha hauled up from the sea. The woodblock print is reproduced from "Nichiren Daishi Shinjitsu-den"

## Ichinen Sanzen Part 7

By Rev. Ryuei McCormick  
San Francisco, California

In my last article I discussed the three realms component of the “three thousand realms in a single thought-moment,” in terms of the interconnection between individuals, society (and by extension all sentient beings), and the environment. I hoped to show that part of what is so revolutionary about the teaching of the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment is that it encompasses not just the psychological impact of our mindset and actions but the social and environmental impact as well. This time I would like to briefly review the three realms themselves.

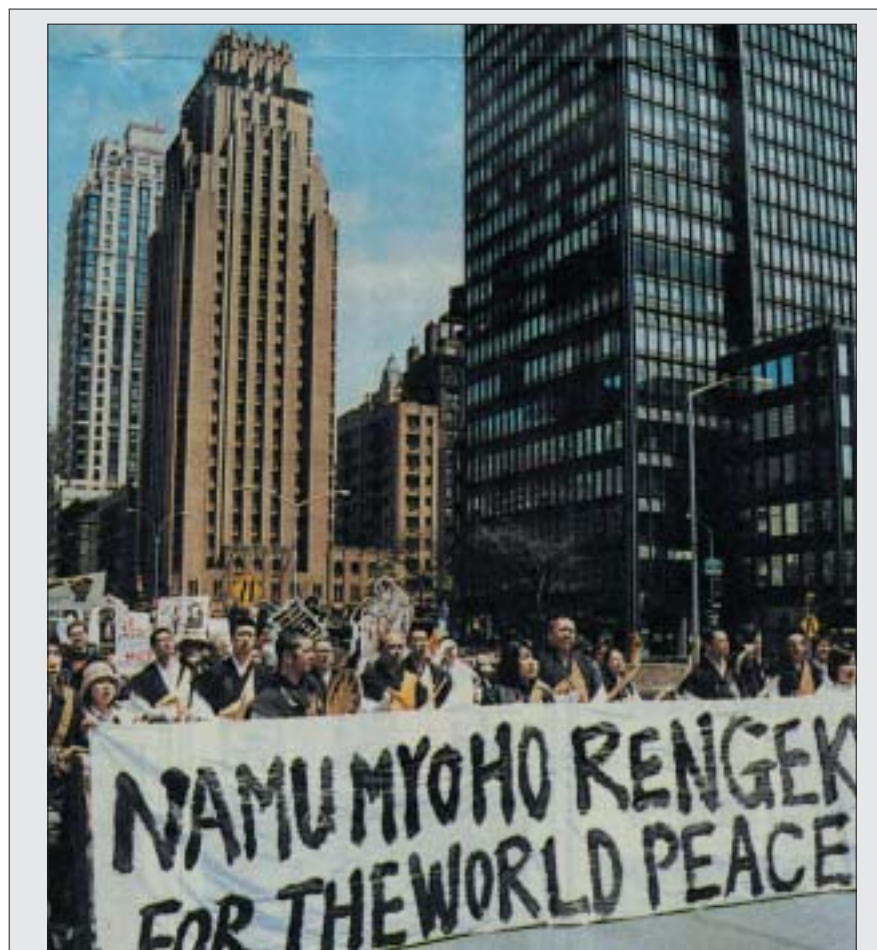
The first realm is the realm of the five aggregates that constitute the life of a living being. These five are: form, sensation, perception, volition, and consciousness. “Form” refers to the physical component of existence, and it is understood in the context of the five aggregates to encompass not just forms that can be touched or seen with the eye, but also sounds, smells, tastes, and the sensation of touch. “Sensation” refers to the pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral feelings arising upon such physical contact. “Perception” refers to the process of recognizing what is being felt and sensed. “Volition” is the way we react, good, ill, or indifferent, to what we perceive. “Consciousness” refers to our awareness, and if we are capable of it self-awareness, of the whole process of physical contact, sensation, perception, and action. Note that the aggregate of volition is the source of karma, that is to say intentional activity plants a seed in our lives that will sooner or later come to fruition in terms of our relationships with others, our environment, and even the transformation of the five aggregates that compose our own life.

The analysis of a living entity into five aggregates is something that appears in the earliest discourses of the Buddha. In his first discourse at the Deer Park to the five ascetics he refers to the five aggregates when discussing the first noble truth, the truth of suffering. He states that the “five aggregates subject to clinging” are suffering. In the discourse immediately following the teaching of the four noble truths, the Buddha elaborates that the five aggregates all bear the three marks of impermanence, suffering, and no-self. What the Buddha was trying to point out is that we create a lot of unnecessary unhappiness by trying to find a secure basis for permanent happiness among things that by their nature cannot provide a secure basis for permanent happiness. According to the Buddha, there is nothing in the world that we can experience which cannot be classified as one or another of the five aggregates. Each of these aggregates is contingent on changing causes and conditions and therefore always subject to change, therefore they cannot provide permanent happiness and will inevitably disappoint, and therefore they cannot provide the basis for a selfhood that is secure and at ease.

The “self” that is seeking such security and permanent happiness among the aggregates is the aggregates themselves working in tandem to bring about a cycle of craving, grasping, frustration, disappointment,

suffering, and anguish. There is no self to gain or lose, protect or maintain, but the process itself has given rise to the delusion that there is such a “self.” Buddha Dharma, then, is a counter-process to end this vicious cycle and in its place create a cycle of liberation and selfless compassion. The Diamond Sutra, for instance, teaches that the bodhisattvas work tirelessly to save all sentient beings but at the same time they know that there are no sentient beings. The bodhisattvas provisionally utilize concepts like self and other, delusion and awakening, but ultimately they know not to cling to such concepts and perceptions. In chapter 16 of the Lotus Sutra, Sakyamuni Buddha reveals that in his awakened view there is no appearance or disappearance of sentient beings and his awakened life and activities also have no conceivable beginning or end. He can say this because he is speaking as someone who no longer clings to the concept of beings who can appear or disappear, and he no longer clings to such a concept because he has seen the five aggregates for what they are and no longer tries to make them the basis of a permanent independent self but utilizes them generously for the good of all beings. Sakyamuni Buddha should not be thought of in terms of the finite and contingent five aggregates, but rather as an all-encompassing timeless awakening activity guided by the constant thought stated at the end of chapter 16 as: “How shall I cause all living beings to enter into the unsurpassed Way and quickly become Buddhas?”

The second of the three realms is the realm of living beings. The entities composed of five aggregates are not isolated from one another. This should be obvious, as one only needs to look around to see how much we depend on other beings even to live from one day to the next. We depend on other beings to manufacture or otherwise provide our clothing, our food, our housing. But somehow people still act as though only their own welfare matters. Some are merely negligent of the people around them, even family and friends. Others actively exploit others for economic or political power. Even those who follow a spiritual path can sometimes act as though only their own liberation or salvation matters, as if being “saved” were a matter of every man and woman out for him or herself. The Buddhism of the Lotus Sutra as taught by Nichiren, however, does not take this view. Nichiren believed that if any beings were left out, unable to attain enlightenment, then no bodhisattva could ever fulfill their mission of liberating all sentient beings. In Nichiren’s view, only the Lotus Sutra guaranteed Buddhahood, complete and perfect enlightenment, to all beings, from the disciples of the Buddha who had believed themselves incapable of it, to evildoers like Devadatta, and even the eight-year-old daughter of the dragon king who no one believed could attain enlightenment because she did not fit the image of a human male celibate monk. Nichiren believed on the basis of the Lotus Sutra that if even one being cannot become a Buddha then no one can, but since the Lotus Sutra taught that all will attain buddhahood in the fullness of time then our own buddhahood is assured. In this view our des-



### Nichiren Shu Priests Join Peace Parade in N.Y.

Twenty-three members of the Nichiren Shu Youth Association and seven members of the Rissho Heiwa-no-kai Group joined the anti-nuclear parade in New York on May 1.

The participants, some 40,000 marched through the downtown of the city for two hours over three and a half kilometers. Japanese participants included the A-bomb victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki totaling some 1,000

tinies are intertwined.

The third of the three realms is the environment. In the Buddhist view of cause and effect, the causes that we set in motion are like seeds we plant in our lives that will ripen and come to fruition in terms of the transformations of our five aggregates, our relationships with others, and even our environment. Buddhism does not see the environment as an inert landscape but as part of the process encompassed by the five aggregates either in terms of the individual or in terms of societies or groupings of entities. Again, it should be obvious that we depend on our environment and that it in turn can be radically changed by our actions. We need trees to provide oxygen but we can cut down those trees or nourish and protect our

forests. We need clean water and air to survive but again we can pollute our water and air or work to regulate or even eradicate pollutants.

The three realms are three different fields in which the interplay of causes and conditions unfold. One can view this interplay in terms of the five aggregates of an individual, the relationships among sentient beings, and the quality and activity of the environment. All three are inextricably interrelated and this must not be forgotten. As part of the teaching of the “three thousand realms in a single thought-moment” the three realms remind us that our actions for good or ill, and our insights or oversights, will impact ourselves, our relationships, and even the air, the water, and the ground beneath our feet. (to be continued)

## Church Events

### SAN JOSE

#### Preparing for 25th Anniv.

The annual Teriyaki Box Lunch Bazaar was another success this year. A lot of help from members and friends made this possible. The profit will be made full use of for the 25th Anniversary. The temple has gratefully acknowledged many generous contributions for the coming event, totaling \$6,125 from 25 families.

To commemorate this anniversary the Temple plans to hold a ceremony on Saturday, October 22, publish a Nichiren Buddhism-related book, and renovate the Hondo and improve the temple ground.

### HAWAII

#### New Trainee

Rev. Kenno Fukushima came to the Hawaii Temple on March 14 to be trained as an official overseas minis-



Rev. Kenno  
Fukushima

ter. He was born in Nagasaki and is 58 years old. After working as a white color worker for many years he decided to retire early and start his third stage of life as an overseas

minister. He retired when he was 55, and after attending Minobusan University for two years, he entered the Shingyo Dojo to attain priesthood. Since he had no knowledge of Buddhism he had difficulty in learning the sutras and carrying out the duties of a priest. After three more months of training in Japan he came to Hawaii to complete his training as an overseas minister. The training ended at the end of May, and he is scheduled to go to Brazil in June.

# An Appeal for a Solid Foundation for the Spread of the Odaimoku Throughout the World

*Acceptance Speech of the Nichiren Shu Comprehensive Foundation Award on April 20, 2005, by Kyotsu Hori*

I feel greatly honored to receive the Nichiren Shu Comprehensive Foundation Award for distinguished service in the overseas mission this evening in the presence of many high priests and officials of the Nichiren Shu Order of Buddhism. The Foundation has commended my years of service overseas as well as my translation works. As for my years of overseas service I have reservations whether it was worthy of this honor.

I was sent to Hawaii by the Nichiren Shu as an overseas missionary 51 years ago and stayed in the United States for 26 years in that capacity. However, about one-half of these years were spent as a student and a college teacher without achieving anything worthy of mentioning as a missionary worker. Many of my colleagues as Nichiren Shu overseas ministers have been abroad more than 30 years at present. Among those in the past, both Bishop Mochizuki of Hawaii, whose invitation brought me to Hawaii, and Bishop Emyo Ishimoto of Brazil, who went to Brazil shortly before I went to Hawaii, worked hard day and night for more than 30 years to establish the foundation of Nichiren Buddhism in their respective land of activities. Both of them passed away, away from their mother land, at the youthful age of sixties, without having the honor such as the one I am receiving this evening.

Compared to these people, I have nothing to show you and was hesitant to appear in front of you this evening. Nevertheless, I found two reasons to stand before you. First of all I felt this was the best chance to express my gratitude to those who have helped me to translate the writings of our Founder for the last 20 years. Specifically members of the Nichiren Shu Overseas Propagation Promotion Association and many others who have encouraged me spiritually as



Prof. Kyotsu Hori

well as financially.

Another reason was that I wanted, if I may, to appeal to you, distinguished leaders of the Nichiren Shu Order, to reconsider its overseas propagation policy. As our Founder taught us that wisdom can be replaced by faith, some Nichiren Buddhists seem to think that foreign languages are not a necessary tool for the overseas propagation of Nichiren Buddhism. I fervently oppose this contention.

Missionary activities by Nichiren Shu priests in Hawaii and North America began 90 or 100 years ago. I am sorry to say, however, their efforts have never been very successful. Today the total population of North America and Hawaii is believed to be about 250 million. How many of them are Nichiren Buddhists? Considering the number of the Nichiren Shu News, which we distribute free of charge once in two months in Hawaii and North America, my estimate of the number of Nichiren Buddhists in the area is about 2,500. It means a mere one thousandth of one percent of the total population. The total population of Japan in the early Tokugawa Period is estimated at 15 million, and the number of Christians converted by Jesuit priests who came all the way from Portugal during the

80 year period is said to have reached 300,000 (two percent of the total). In other words, their achievement was 2,000 times greater than that of the Nichiren Shu overseas priests in Hawaii and North America in the last century. What caused this great difference?

First of all, I would like to point out that our predecessors as well as colleagues have been speaking only to Japanese immigrants and their descendants who understand Japanese. Needless to say the first generation Japanese gradually are dying out. Many nisei (second generation Japanese) can understand Japanese well, but more and more of the third and fourth generation Japanese do not and stay away from the Japanese speaking Buddhist temples. To make the matter worse, both in Hawaii and North America family graves are not in the graveyard of the temples. So there is no bond that ties those who do not understand Japanese to the temple. This is the main reason why Buddhist temples today in America are suffering from decreasing membership without exception.

In the second place, I would like to point out the lack of funds for missionary work. According to the Rule for Overseas Mission of 1923, the overseas missionaries must be those who can afford the expenses for missionary work. I do not know whether or not this rule is still in effect, but I suppose that there are no Nichiren Shu priests working abroad who can afford to pay all the necessities for the mission. Without funds for missionary activities, not to speak of living expenses, how can overseas ministers concentrate on carrying out their duties? The Portuguese Jesuits who achieved the outstanding success in Japan during the late 16th and early 17th centuries were supported by the Jesuit Society, which educated overseas missionaries and sent them out to overseas and supported their activities.

I singled out the two reasons for

the lack of success by Nichiren ministers in America despite their self-sacrificing efforts in the 20th century. I would like to appeal to the leaders of the Nichiren Shu Order for the re-establishment of the missionary work abroad for the 21st century, based on our failure in the 20th century.

First of all we, the Nichiren Shu Order, should have the system of educating overseas ministers before sending them abroad. Probably we should start asking Risho University, for instance, to place a little more emphasis on foreign languages in the curriculum of the Department of Buddhism, especially of Nichiren Buddhism.

In the second place, it is absolutely necessary for us to establish a nation-wide society for the purpose of carrying out missionary work abroad, analogous to the Jesuit Society of the Catholic religion. It is not easy, I am sure, but not impossible by expanding, for instance, the Nichiren Shu Overseas Propagation Promotion Association, which has helped us to publish a number of writings of our Founder in English during the past 20 years, to be the nation-wide organization.

As the first step toward the realization of our Founder's dream, conversion of the entire world to the Wonderful Dharma of the Lotus Sutra, in the 21st century, the English Translation Committee of the NOPPA has been engaged in the project of translating into English the Comprehensive Writings of Nichiren Shonin published by the Shunju-sha Publishing Company of Tokyo in seven volumes and publishing and distributing them through the University of Hawaii Press in Honolulu, Hawaii. We have already published three volumes and are ready to publish the fourth in the near future. I am hoping to be alive until the project is completed. Please everyone be healthy and work hard for the realization of the goal set by our Founder.

Thank you very much.

## Church Events

### LOS ANGELES

#### House Blessing for the Nerio Building

The Koichi and Toyo Nerio Building was completed last August, and the nokotsu shelves and butsudan from Japan were finally installed on April 14, 2005. The floor tiles will soon be placed.

The House Blessing for the new building and open



**Presentation of Appreciation Award:** (From L. to R.: Akira Imamura, Hisako Imamura who is the second daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Koichi Nerio, Don Gillow who is President of the L.A. Nichiren Buddhist Temple and Bishop Shokai Kanai)

house was held on Sunday, May 22. Neighbors who have always been helpful and watching over the temple were invited. The newly made butsudan was installed for enshrining the urns behind the Gohonzon. Each niche is 15" high, 19 and 1/2" wide, and 15" deep. The space can hold up to six urns.

#### Real Elephant Comes to Little Tokyo

The Los Angeles Buddhist Church Federation held its annual Hanamatsuri events commemorating the birth of Sakyamuni Buddha on April 10 at the Japanese American Culture Communication Center in Little Tokyo.

Preceding the service 53 chigo (Buddha's children wearing traditional Japan-



**A real elephant parades through Little Tokyo in the Hanamatsuri event**

ese court costumes) walked the streets around Little Tokyo together with a real elephant. The elephant signifies Queen Maya's dream that a white elephant entered her womb at the time of her

pregnancy with the baby Buddha some 2,500 years ago. A Hana-matsuri shrine decorated with flowers was placed on the back of the elephant. Inside the shrine stood a statuette of the baby

Buddha. It was the highlight of the Hana-matsuri events. Three chigos (Mrs. Seiko Horiuchi's grandchildren) from the Los Angeles Nichiren Temple walked with the elephant.

# Renkoji Temple Opened in Northern Italy

By Rev. Shoryo Tarabini  
Guhozan Renkoji, Milano  
Jiyuzan Byakuren'in, Roma

I am very happy to announce that we have had the very good fortune to have been able to finally open a new temple in Northern Italy. The temple located in the countryside 20 minutes outside of Milano, is smaller than Jogyoji Temple of London where I was recently transferred from and is called Guhozan Renkoji. The temple is located in the city of Villasanta in the province of Milano. Incidentally, Villasanta means "sacred house" in Italian.

Many of the Italian believers laboured for more than 4 years to be able to establish this temple. Over the years they worked hard to propagate the Dharma, maintain their own faith, host Dharma meetings and invite Nichiren Shu priests to their respective areas. They also worked to create and distribute at their own cost, an Italian language newsletter to distribute throughout the Italian peninsula. Last year we traveled from town to town looking for a suitable place to begin activities in northern Italy. We found a small house and then the members worked together to plaster, paint, repair and restore the building, move in and set up the temple and office furniture, put up lighting fixtures and hand-made curtains, and clean the garden to have our new temple presentable for welcoming the believers and guests in order to celebrate Hanamatsuri (the Buddha's birthday) and formally inaugurate Renkoji. The ceremonies which were held over two days of the weekend of 9-10th April 2005, were a culmination of many years of sincere effort, patience and of course, faith, for all the members throughout every region of Italy who have selflessly laboured to pioneer Nichiren Shu in this country.

For the ceremonies, representatives came from all over Italy: Milano and the various surrounding cities in Lombardia, Cremona (famous for Stradivarius violins!), Genova, Torino and the region of Piemonte, Padova, Firenze, Perugia, Roma and Napoli. Also in occasion of the opening of our new temple we received congratulatory messages from Bishop Shokai Kanai of the Los Angeles Betsuin; Rev. Eiyu Ishii of Choshoji Temple, Rev. Shodo Ando of Mayaji Temple and Rev. and Mrs. Shosen Seki of Jokyoji Temple of Tokyo; Rev. Shoyo Tamura of Hokekyoji Temple of Sao Paulo in Brazil; Rev. Kyokei Ono of Germany, as well as from believers in Italy, France and Japan who were not able to attend the day ceremony. Furthermore, just before the opening of the temple, I received an offering of a special hand-made haku-e robe from Mrs. Seiko Horiuchi of the Los Angeles temple which I wore for the first time at the opening of Renkoji. I would also like to express my profound appreciation to a group of persons who especially helped me in realizing our dream of establishing Renkoji Temple, through months of searching estate agencies and properties, working to restore, repair, paint, furnish and prepare our temple: Mauro and Barbara Villa, Federico Pacchioni, Stefania De Cesare, Antonio Magoso, Domenico Perrone, Luca Barbieri e Simona Negri.

The interior of our new temple on



Rev. Tarabini (in white robe) and Renkoji followers gathering in front of the temple

the day was strikingly beautiful. The red vermilion and gold lacquered temple furniture (donated by Bishop Shokai Kanai, my Buddhist master) stood in warm contrast to the light Italian ochre-yellow walls and high white ceiling of the main sanctuary, flanked by two trees – a pure white magnolia and a pink and white peach tree both in full bloom, along with shikimi and many other flowers bought, donated and arranged by the members for this special day together with many bottles of wine, sweets, fruits and many other offerings.

Hanamatsuri (the Flower Festival) is the Buddha's birthday and according to the northern or Mahayana tradition, is celebrated every year on 8th April. This year, however, since that date fell on a Friday, we decided to move the main celebrations to Sunday, 10th April, so that more people could attend. On Saturday evening of the 9th, we began the weekend's activities with a candlelight Shodaigo meditation and chanting service followed by a dinner. At 10 the following Sunday morning, about 50 people assembled on the street in front of Renkoji and we began chanting the Jigage and Odaimoku outside of the closed gate. As we began chanting the Odaimoku, we opened the gates and in procession, together entered the temple compound, purifying the temple grounds inside and out with sake, salt and rice. For this purification ceremony, I was assisted by my disciple, Shamini Shoka Giannini from Firenze. Another disciple, Shoko Milesi of Roma photographed the entire event.

For the very first time, we then sounded the temple bell, entered the sanctuary, sat in front of the Mandala Gohonzon and the statues of Sakyamuni Buddha and Nichiren Daishonin and began the first official service of the temple, Hanamatsuri, in celebration of our Eternal Master Sakyamuni Buddha's birth into this Saha World. The ceremony was conducted together with visiting guest priests Venerable Tae Hye Sunim and Venerable Tae Ri Sunim of Musang Am temple in Leirici (La Spezia) from the Korean Song Tradition (Rev. Tae Ri is also a believer of Nichiren Shu). The ceremony consisted of Shomyo: Dojoge (Verses Upon Entering the Dojo) and Samborai (Veneration of the Three Treasures); accompanied by an offering of incense and flowers to the Buddha,

followed by the recitation Presa di Rifugio nei Tre Tesori (Taking Refuge in the Three Treasures) in Italian, Invocation, Kaikyoge in both Japanese and Italian, of the Lotus Sutra the Hoben, Juryo (Jigage section) and Jinriki chapters, a reading from Nichiren Daishonin's Kanjin Honzon Sho (in Italian) and the chanting of the Odaimoku. During the Odaimoku, as Shoko Milesi sounded the Taiko drum accompanied by Domenico Perrone of Milano on the hand-held Uchiwadaiko, we offered sweet tea to the statue of the infant Buddha Sakyamuni



Rev. Tarabini officiating Hanamatsuri service at the newly-opened northern Italy temple

and powdered incense. After a prayer to commemorate the birth of our Eternal Master Sakyamuni Buddha, we recited in unison the I Quattro Grandi Voti del Bodhisattva (Four Great Vows of a Bodhisattva) in Italian and Japanese. The ceremony was then brought to a close with once again, Shomyo, in the sung recitation of Buso (Thanking and Bidding Farewell to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas).

After the ceremony, I spoke briefly about the life of the Buddha together with words of recognition and appreciation to all the members in realizing the goal of establishing this temple – not only for all the physical labour and various donations, but for their sincere effort in propagation and protecting the faith of Nichiren Shu in this country for many years without the presence of a resident monk. Truly all these people are the Bodhisattvas of the Earth as expounded in the Lotus Sutra, and thanks to the Italian believers and their firm faith and devotion, today we have not only one, but two temples in Italy. We then all encouraged words of congratulations and encouragement from visiting monk, Most Venerable Tae Hye Sunim to maintain our faith in the Lotus Sutra and Odaimoku. After the ceremony, a reception was held outside in the tem-

ple portico and garden.

Later in the day, we had the further good fortune to receive a surprise visit from the Venerable Raffaello Longo, President of the Italian Buddhist Union (Association of all the various Buddhist schools throughout Italy), who came all the way from the Tibetan monastery Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa where he resides in the hills of Pomaia (near Pisa) in Central Italy. He paid homage to the Buddha in our modest sanctuary, spoke with us for a while and warmly encouraged us, before turning around and returning all the way back to Pisa ~ many many hours away.

The following weekend of the 16th and 17th May, witnessed a continuation of the same festivities as we held commemorative ceremonies and discussion meetings in a beautiful rustic town in the Toscana region outside Firenze, and then in a small town called San Benedetto along the Adriatic Sea in the Le Marche region. We had also meant to hold further celebrations for the Roman and Napoli Nichiren Shu communities, during the weekend of 23rd ~ 24th May, but these activities had to be postponed at the last minute, due to sudden poor weather conditions in the region.

Renkoji is the second temple in Italy and the fourth temple in Europe after Daiseioji in Germany and Jogyoji in London. Byakuren'in of Rome was the first temple in Italy and the third in Europe, established two years ago on 28th April 2003 in commemoration of the 750th anniversary of the founding of Nichiren Shu. As mentioned earlier, the name of this new temple is Nichiren Shu Guhozan Renkoji. In accordance with ancient Buddhist tradition from China, we gave our temple a mountain name (because all temples in Ancient China used to be built atop mountains) and a temple name. In modern terms, you might say that it is like a person's first and last name. Guhozan means "Dharma Propagation Mountain" and Renkoji signifies "Lotus Light Temple" with the sincere hopes and prayer that our little temple will somehow be helpful in the propagation of faith and practice of the Lotus Sutra and the spreading of Nichiren Daishonin's teachings throughout Italy and the surrounding countries, together with all the other priests and believers of Nichiren Shu in Europe.

Next year, 2006, will mark the 5th anniversary of the founding of Nichiren Shu in Italy. In commemoration of this event, we are planning a theatrical presentation on the life of Nichiren Daishonin in Italian and also hope to host a pilgrimage of American believers from Los Angeles to Renkoji which is also now in the planning stages, pilgrimages to the Buddha's historical sites in India and to Mt. Minobu, amongst other events and activities.

We greatly appreciate your prayers and humbly ask your continued guidance and support in helping all of us in Italy to correctly observe our Buddhist faith and propagate the Dharma.

Gassho, Namu Myoho Renge Kyo

### SRI LANKA

#### Wheelchairs and Crutches for Sri Lanka

The Lotus Aid Network (LAN), a volunteer group made up from five Nichiren Shu temples in Tokyo has been raising funds for wheelchairs and crutches to be presented to the disabled in Sri Lanka since last year. The group has had ties with Sri Lanka since its leader, Rev. Ryoko Koga, has been sponsoring a preschool there for the past 13 years. With the funds raised from each temple's bazaars, and donations from the members and friends, the group was able to buy 46 wheelchairs and 20 crutches in total. Since the taxation of foreign goods is very heavy in Sri Lanka, it was decided to buy them directly from a local company.

The group led by Rev. Koga with a few devout members of the Joenji and yours truly, left for Sri Lanka on Saturday, May 21.

The dedication ceremony took place on Sunday, May 22, at the Sastoradaya Temple which is headed by Ven. Muttettuwagama Ananda. Ven. Ananda has had a deep connection with LAN, mainly because he is the local supervisor of the Joenji Preschool, which is located on his temple premises. The Joenji Preschool is sponsored by Rev. Koga of the Meguro Joenji Temple in Tokyo and offers education to orphans and local children of preschool age. The group



Rev. Koga with a disabled man delighted with his new pair of crutches

## Church Events

By Sandra Seki



The group at the Aryurvedic Hospital

filed the following report of their trip:

"We were greeted with a parade of dancers and drummers performing the famous Kandyan dance and marched together with them to the main temple hall. Since the event coincided with the Wesak festival the occasion was more festive. The Wesak festival is a grand Buddhist festival held annually commemorating the Birth, Enlightenment and Nirvana of the Buddha. It is held every year on day of the full moon in May. Since Sri Lanka's population is 70% Buddhist, Wesak is one of the biggest national festivals.



Rev. Koga, second from left, Ven. Ananda, Rev. Eimei Ando, and Rev. Daichi Homma. Ven. Ananda's mother, on far left

"The villagers of Marapana, in Ratpanura county where Ven. Ananda's temple is located, greeted us with the Wesak Kuluva decorations: lanterns of all shapes and sizes and the five-colored Buddhist flag. At the temple we had a luncheon with Buddhist priests from Bangladesh, Beijing and other parts of Asia who all belong to the Hinayana Sect of Buddhism. We were able to exchange ideas and thoughts about global Buddhism for the future.

"Ven. Ananda had received more than 100 applications for the wheelchairs and crutches so he had a hard time choosing the proper candidates. Disabled people and their families came from all over the island to receive these precious gifts. Each individual was brought up onto the stage and placed on his wheelchair. Those with crutches received new sturdy ones for their old wooden, unstable ones. Although the ceremony took close to three hours, we were thanked with grateful smiles and gassho by all who received these priceless gifts. In the back of each wheelchair was printed—Lotus Aid Network.

"After a concluding speech in English by Rev.

beamed with happiness.

"Lastly, we visited the Ayurvedic Hospital in Ratnapura where they use the tradition Ayurvedic (herbal medicine) treatment for patients. Here three little children with muscular disability and loss of eyesight were placed on the wheelchairs. They also seemed proud of their new form of transportation.

"We were very happy to actually see and feel the happiness of the people for whom we have been raising funds. We hope to continue helping the disabled, orphans and people in need all over the world. There is so much we can do but the effort and drive is something that is necessary to keep this group going."

#### Lotus Aid Network (LAN)

LAN is one of the many Buddhist volunteer aid groups in Japan. It was established in 1995 shortly after the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. It is made up of five Nichiren Shu Temples in Tokyo: Meguro Joenji headed by Rev. Ryoko Koga, Takanawa Jokyoji headed by Rev. Shosen Seki, Mita Yakuoji headed by Rev. Kenjo Kobayashi, Aoyama Myoenji headed by Rev. Jikyo Homma and Asakusa Myokyoji headed by Rev. Yuko Yamaguchi.

The network works to give voluntary assistance to disaster areas throughout Japan and the world. It has given assistance both menially and monetarily for the Hanshin-Awaji, and Niigata earthquake devastated areas, and also sent donations and aid to the Sumatra Tsunami victims and the Sri Lanka orphans and victims of the civil war that has been going on for years.

The group would like to continue giving assistance to disaster areas and act immediately when an emergency occurs.

(more stories on page 3 and 4)



Rev. Koga with a disabled woman at Rev. Athula's facility for the retarded

### NICHIREN SHU NEWS

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