

Nichiren Shu News

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(1)

2 Groups Have Officially Joined Nichiren Shu

By Rev. Shokai Kanai,
Bishop of North America

Two Odaimoku groups in the United States have formally joined NONA (Nichiren-shu Order of North America) at the dedication ceremonies held recently: Nichiren Buddhist Samgha of Texas, Houston, Texas, and the Lexington Nichiren Buddhist Community, in Lexington, Kentucky. Members of these groups had been engaged in their own activities for more than 10 years until they finally obtained the official sanction to join the Nichiren-shu Order in their dedication ceremonies with Bishop Shokai Kanai officiating.

The Houston Samgha is accommodated in the house of Shami Myokei, who is taking the initiative of the group, under the guidance of Rev. Ryuo Faulconer, resident minister of the Portland Nichiren Buddhist Temple. Rev. Faulconer, who visits the samgha several times a year, has been designated "acting" minister of the samgha while serving as the resident minister of the Portland temple.

Some 20 Americans of the district attended the ceremony held on June 9. They chanted the "Hobempon" and the "Juryohon," using the Romanized texts, and chanted the Odaimoku to the accompaniment of the taiko.

Rev. Shinkyō Warner received the letter of appointment as the minister of the Lexington Nichiren Buddhist Community, which is now a recognized member of NONA, at the dedication ceremony of the Community held on June 12.

Preceding the ceremony, the annual Dharma Conference was held at the Marriot Hotel for two days. Usually the activities of the Community are held in a room of an office building in the city.

At the Dharma Conference, which was attended by 20 Americans and one Japanese student, Bishop Kanai delivered a lecture, "The Lotus Sutra—We are Children of the Buddha." Rev. Ryūken Akahoshi talked about "The Teaching of the Nichiren-shu Order—Rishō-ankoku and Sowing the Seed of the Odaimoku." Rev. Warner Shinkyō gave an introduction to the Nichiren-shu Order. Rev. Faulconer dealt with "Questions and Answers" and Shami Myokei spoke on "Women in Buddhism."

The opening ceremony was conducted in English. Some two-thirds of the participants were those from other states. Since they are not able to regularly attend the Sunday service, some expressed their hope for receiving correspondence courses.

(related photos on page 4)



Ancient Lotus in Bloom

Ms. Tokiko Nagashima, Honorary Professor of Keisen Jogakuen University, Kawauchi-machi, Tochigi Prefecture has succeeded in making the 800-year-old lotus seed germinate and bloom. It was excavated at the ancient site of the Chusonji, a Tendai-shu temple, Hiraizumi, Iwate Prefecture (above). The seed was found in the site of an old pond of the temple, constructed in the 12th Century. The excavated seed measures 1.5 cm long and 1 cm wide. The seed is presumed to have been dormant covered by a hard shell buried one meter deep in the earth (by courtesy of The Mainichi Newspapers). The photo below shows the ancient Chinese lotus which has bloomed in the compound of the Ryuhonji Temple, Kyoto.

Many ancient lotus flowers, including the 2,000-year-old Ogha Lotus are grown in the temple in 60 pots. The photo is taken by Rev. Tendo Miki, head priest of Kyobo-in Temple. The lotus of the Saddhamapundarika Sutra is a white lotus, and the lotus, to which the bodhisattvas emerging from the underground are likened, is a red one. These ancient seeds seem to suggest the eternity of the Buddha Sakyamuni and His activities of saving us.



Attendees at the dedication ceremony of the Nichiren Buddhist Samgha of Texas. In the front row (from left to right) are: Rev. Ryuo Faulconer, Bishop Kanai and Shami Myokei



A scene of the dedication ceremony at Nichiren Buddhist Samgha of Texas, June 9



Attendees at the dedication ceremony of the Lexington Nichiren Buddhist Community on June 12. In the Second row are (from left to right) Shami Myokei, Rev. Shinkyō Warner, Bishop Kanai, Rev. Akahoshi and Rev. Ryuo Faulconer

The Doctrine of Ichinen Sanzen (9)

Ichinen Sanzen and Lord Preacher Sakyamuni Buddha of the Essential Section

By Rev. Kanji Tamura

Ichinen Sanzen is the doctrine of attaining Buddhahood as well as relieving all sentient beings from suffering. The Buddha we try to become as our goal or the Buddha who saves all sentient beings is the Lord Preacher Sakyamuni Buddha described in the essential section of the Lotus Sutra. Nichiren Shonin looked up to the Lord Preacher Sakyamuni Buddha of the essential section not only as the fundamental Buddha eternally living in this Saha World to guide sentient beings but also as the supreme Buddha who unifies all the existing Buddhas. That is why he dedicated his absolute devotion to Sakyamuni Buddha.

Some Nichiren Buddhists, however, misunderstand that Lord Preacher Sakyamuni Buddha of the essential section is inferior to Nichiren Shonin. According to them, Nichiren Shonin is the most supreme and original Buddha, and Sakyamuni is nothing but His cast-off skin. Nowadays that kind of incorrect view is internationally spread although Nichiren Shonin never stated that. He simply asserted the complete devotion to the Eternal and Original Buddha. In this article, we will learn what the correct view of Nichiren Shonin about Lord Preacher Sakyamuni Buddha of the essential section is.



Rev. Kanji Tamura

The Genuine Writings of Nichiren Shonin

Today more than 900 writings including treatises, essays, letters, drawings or pieces of writing have been affiliated to Nichiren Shonin.

Among these writings about 660 have their original manuscripts found wholly or partly. We should, first of all, take these original writings as the standard for studying his works. (See the Showa Teihon Nichiren Shonin Iibun, etc.)

This is because after Nichiren Shonin passed away, many counterfeit writings were made in the name of Nichiren. During the Medieval Age and pre-Modern era in Japan, forged or counterfeit writings ascribed to great persons appeared in great quantity. In the meantime, many original manuscripts have been lost in the course of time. In case of some historical figures, when all of their originals had been lost, it is very difficult even for the specialists to discern between true writings and fake ones. Fortunately, as far as Nichiren Shonin's writings, more than 660 originals out of 900 or so have surprisingly been found existing over 700 long years. Since more than half of his writings have their original manuscripts, it is very effective to carefully compare the contents of the dubious writings with the words, sentences or theories seen in the origi-

nals when discerning his true writings from the counterfeits.

When we go through the original writings of Nichiren Shonin, he clearly states again and again that the object of devotion for us in the Latter Age of Degeneration is Lord Preacher Sakyamuni Buddha. There is no sentence in his originals, in which he maintains that he himself is the Original Buddha, or that Sakyamuni is His cast-off skin. We have to follow the righteous faith based on the correct works of Nichiren Shonin.

Why Were Counterfeits Made?

Incidentally, why were so many counterfeit writings made by Nichiren Buddhists? One of the several possible reasons is that a certain group of Nichiren Buddhists created them in order to emphasize its superiority. Believing that theirs was the legitimate and righteous group among Nichiren Buddhists, they made fake documents, claiming that those counterfeits are the secret writings that descended from Nichiren Shonin only to their group. Needless to say that Nichiren Shonin did not have such intentions. That was why he appointed the Six Senior Disciples in order to leave his teaching equally and impartially among his followers.

Those counterfeits include the secret writings of the Fuji group such as "Hon'inmyo-sho (Treatise about the Wonderfulness of the Original Causation)," and "Hyaku-rokka Sojo (106 Inheritances)." These writings

have the appearance of being preached by Nichiren Shonin, which were written down by Nikko Shonin. Nevertheless, the diction in them is totally different from that in the original manuscripts. Moreover, their contents are quite different from those of the original manuscripts of Nichiren as well as Nikko. (See the Nikko Shonin Zenshu).

In these secret writings of the Fuji group, the core of the idea of worshipping Nichiren Shonin as the Original Buddha is described. According to them, Sakyamuni Buddha and Nichiren Shonin are like two sides of a coin, but Nichiren Shonin is the superior Original Buddha. However, as stated above, the idea of Nichiren as the Original Buddha cannot be found anywhere in the original manuscripts of Nichiren Shonin. On the contrary, in the original manuscript of "Hoon-jo (Essay of Gratitude)" it is clearly stated that we should regard Lord Preacher Sakyamuni Buddha of the essential section as the Most Venerable One. "Kanjin Honzon-sho (Spiritual Contemplation and the Most Venerable One)" also preaches that both the merit of practicing the Bodhisattva Way performed by the Eternal Buddha and the virtue of Sakyamuni as the Eternal Original Buddha are included in the Daimoku of the Five Characters of the Wonderful Dharma, and that Sakyamuni Buddha transmitted this Daimoku to his disciple called Superior Practice Bodhisattva, who will spread it in the Latter Age of Degeneration. Being aware of himself in his bosom as Superior Practice Bodhisattva, the messenger of Sakyamuni Buddha, Nichiren strived to propagate the Daimoku.

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

The Legend of Nichiren (16)

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph. D.

Nichiji Shonin (1250- ?)

Nichiren Shonin was released from the Izu banishment on the 22nd day of the second month of the third year of the Kocho Era (1263). It is believed that Hojo Tokiyori, the most powerful man of the shogunate, made the arrangement for Nichiren's release. Though he had given up the post of the Shogunal Regent, he was holding the real power of the military government.

Therefore, Nichiren Shonin submitted his "Rissho-ankoku-ron (Treatise on Spreading Peace Throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma)" to the ex-Regent Hojo Tokiyori. Tokiyori admired the courageous attitude of Nichiren Shonin though he ignored the "Rissho-ankoku-ron." It is because in those days those who dared to go straight to the man of the highest authority should be ready for the capital punishment. Tokiyori died in the year when the banishment of Nichiren Shonin was lifted. Thereafter, the government oppressed Nichiren Shonin harder than before.

A legend says that sickness and ominous dreams harassed the leading figures of the shogunate following the banishment of Nichiren Shonin to Izu. Hojo Shigetoki, father of Nagatoki, the sixth Shogunal Regent, died of illness. Nagatoki, and Tokimune,



Rev. Gyokai Sekido

son of Tokiyori and the eighth Shogunal Regent, were haunted by a nightmare every night. It was a dream in which they saw Shigetoki writhe in agony in a burning vehicle. Moreover, their limbs became numb though they were not sick, and their breasts ached. Many monks copied the Lotus Sutra, and held special services in an attempt to save them from these sufferings. However, their regret of exiling Nichiren Shonin did not disappear. Finally, they decided to release Nichiren Shonin.

On the 22nd day of the second month in the third year of the Kocho Era (1263), Nichiren Shonin was chanting the Lotus Sutra facing the sun on the beach in Izu. A stranger came up to him and said, "The time has come for you to leave this place." Then the stranger left to nowhere. The notice of his release arrived on that day.

After he returned to Kamakura, Nichiren Shonin was watching the state of the world for a while. In those days, Nichiji (1250 - ?) became the disciple of Nikko (1246-1333). To be precise, it was in 1263 when Nichiji was 14 years old. When Nichiji was 21 years old, impressed with the doctrine of Nichiren Shonin, he became a disciple of Nichiren (in 1270). Both Nikko and Nichiji were nominated as members of "Six Senior Disciples" of Nichiren Shonin at the time of Nichiren's death. After observing the

13th memorial anniversary of Nichiren Shonin in 1294, Nichiji determined to set out for an overseas propagation mission. His footprints can be spotted in the northern part of Japan, namely Aomori Prefecture and Hokkaido. From there, he is said to have set out for a voyage of Mainland China, but there remain no authentic traces of him left there.

According to the legend Nichiji climbed Mt. Minobu on the 13th memorial day of Nichiren Shonin in 1294 and bade farewell to the statue of our Founder, reporting his determination to go abroad for missionary work. He left the Ren-eiji Temple, Shizuoka Prefecture, which was founded by himself, on New Year's Day of the following year, waving the sleeves of his robe to his disciples. He was 46 years old.

He traveled through the northeastern part of Japan, and arrived at Hirosaki in the present Aomori Prefecture. There he wrote the odaimoku on a wayside rock, making it his last commemoration in Japan. It is said that Nichiji then went over to Hokkaido, the northernmost island of Japan, and from there to Mainland China, but he was lost thereafter. Therefore, the first day of the first month in the



Ren-eiji Temple, Shizuoka City, is a temple founded by Nichiji

year of 1295, when he left the Ren-eiji Temple, is regarded as the day of his passing away.

There exists a "village of the Lotus Sutra" and many "temples of the Lotus Sutra" in China and Korea. These are presumed to be founded by Nichiji. A history book even says that an odaimoku flag was found in the Chinese army at the time of the Japanese invasion of Korea. It is also reported that 16 Japanese shipwrecked crewmen were guided to the Nichiren-zan Hokekyoji Temple, one of the 18 temples of the Lotus Sutra. There they found a tomb of Nichiji on which was inscribed the date, May 18, indicating the day of his death, but the year name was not mentioned.

(to be continued)

'No Regrets About Path I Have Traveled'

By Shami Myokei Lynda Barrett
Nichiren Buddhist Samgha of Texas

My discovery of Nichiren Shonin's Buddhism began when I was a young teenager struggling to find answers to the suffering I was experiencing, primarily loneliness and isolation. While my parents did not push religion, my siblings and I were always sent to church so the value of religion was always made quite clear to us. Since we were a military family with two diverse cultures, our religious focus tended to be rather generic so we were able to experience Christianity in all its various forms. None of these teachings provided satisfactory answers to the questions I had. I was always told that I simply need to "have faith" and that I would become happy. I had no understanding of what that meant but I knew that faith was something miraculous and marvelous because I had seen all the movies romanticizing religious life. "The Nun's Story" starring Audrey Hepburn created a desire to become a nun. Her life of service seemed so rewarding and so exciting. I also fell in love with Jesus as portrayed by Jeffrey Hunter in "King of Kings," a recreation of the New Testament.

The primary understanding I gained from my early search was that religion was about introspection and self development. I continued my search and studied religion deeply and was led eventually to an NSA (now SGI) weekend meeting. One of my mother's friends invited us to attend the meeting which was in Amarillo. My mother was not interested but gave me permission to go with the strict admonition not to join anything. I don't recall much of the meeting except hearing the experiences people shared about the benefits received from chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. The stories were all quite fantastic and some seemed unbelievable, such as one young lady saying she had learned to speak English simply by chanting. The pressure to receive an omandala was quite strenuous especially since I could not leave and go home—it was a considerable distance from Amarillo to El Paso! However, because my mother had said not to join, it seemed only logical in my rebellious teenaged mind that I should get an omandala.

It took awhile before the omandala arrived from Japan and what I remember is that it was a beautiful scroll, but it meant nothing much beyond that to me. I was totally uneducated about practicing or the meaning of anything. All I knew was that I could chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and I could achieve my wildest dreams. It wasn't until I went away to college at 18 that I began to learn about Nichiren Buddhism because one of my roommates was an SGI member.

I was still distant from the SGI organization even at that point because of my desire for independence. It was the first time I had ever been on my own away from home and learning how to manage my life occupied most of my time. It wasn't until I left college that I started to participate with the SGI organization and really began to practice.

I learn to introduce many people to



Shami Myokei
Lynda Barrett

the practice of Nichiren Shonin's Buddhism and to chant hours and hours of odaimoku. It was quite normal at that time to participate in regular 24 hour daimoku toshos as youth division members dedicated to spreading the dharma for world peace. Study at that point wasn't really that important to me, but I did manage to learn a good deal more about Nichiren Buddhism. However, I did maintain a great deal of independence from the organization because I truly did not want to be like everyone else; I wanted to benefit from the practice but I also wanted to have my freedom to explore as much of life as I could. I practiced this way for many years until I moved away from my home town and went to the big city—Houston!

Moving to Houston changed my life as I encountered many challenges in learning how to survive on my own. On the way to this point, I had become a single mother and managed to gain suitable employment that at the time seemed quite promising. When the bottom fell out of the oil industry, I really had to challenge myself and my practice simply just to survive. My study of Nichiren Buddhism deepened at this point as I sought answers to my struggles in Nichiren Shonin's letters. I found great comfort in learning about his life and the ways in which he overcame his obstacles and fulfill his mission. At the same time, I identified quite strongly with his apparent rebellion and independence—I came to believe that we had a great deal in common.

The more I studied and the greater responsibility I was given renewed my dreams of being of service to others. I could not be a nun like Audrey Hepburn, but I could definitely support samgha members in their practice. Previously, I shared Nichiren Buddhism with others for my own selfish gain. It was simply enough to introduce people to the practice and let others take care of developing them. Something changed when I met some of the members in Houston who had never experienced samgha in the manner in which I had begun my practice. The people in my previous community were family friends and members of military families who had much the same background as my own family. The women were all Japanese and the men were all American soldiers. Naturally, this common experience bonded us together and we took care of each other as family. I wanted to share what I had experienced as part of that Buddhist family. I became a district leader and took responsibility for spreading Nichiren Buddhism and developing capable people.

I put my entire heart and soul into this endeavor and this effort was often misunderstood and perceived as an attempt to gain personal power. I had bought into the dream of world peace and wanted to accomplish this goal, but my efforts to do so were often thwarted because I was still a rebel at heart and wanted to do things differently from the norm. Initially, I was quite successful in developing a group of people who could practice and practice well. There were many times when I was constrained by the rules

governing my activities and this was the beginning of my need to find a greater voice in how I should practice and serve the dharma.

I began to seek deeper and more thorough understanding of Nichiren Buddhism and found a greater level of freedom and independence in my practice to trust myself. Along the way, I discovered that what I had learned about Nichiren Buddhism and its application to daily life and relationship was in fact often incorrect. I became increasingly concerned about the preservation of the correct teachings of Nichiren Buddhism and how it would be interpreted in the future. I had, however, gained a great deal from vigorous practice within the SGI.

My increased understanding made it very difficult to continue within the SGI organization. I did try to initiate change and it was rejected at every instance. I eventually determined that the majority of people were happy with the way things were in SGI. Since I was not, I should leave and look elsewhere for a community.

When I joined Nichiren Shu, I discovered the Lotus Sutra. I had previously studied small parts of the Lotus Sutra, but only understood the value of Chapters 2 and 16. It was almost as if the rest did not matter. Studying the Lotus Sutra totally changed my life and my practice of Buddhism. No longer did I feel at cross purposes with what I understood Nichiren Shonin to be saying in his letters. I also came to understand the connection that Nichiren Shonin had with the Lotus Sutra and the reasons he chose to practice the way he did. I also learned to understand the true spirit of Buddhism and spreading the dharma. I had finally found the place where I could truly be at home in my faith and practice. For the first time, my being female and independent—the qualities that made my life so difficult previously—were acceptable and treated as if they were of little consequence. I found my master in life and began to train as a Nichiren Shu minister.

Throughout these years of practice, I cannot even remember a time when our home was not used for meetings. In fact, when my husband and I looked for a home, we made sure we would have enough parking and restroom facilities to accommodate meetings. We have always felt it a great privilege to have meetings at our home because the activities for the dharma seemed to energize the space and keep it safe and secure.

For the last 22 years, we have always had a "Gohonzon" room dedicated to our practice since both of us practiced together since the beginning of our marriage. Once we joined Nichiren Shu, our small group incorporated as a nonprofit organization in the State of Texas and we began to build the Nichiren Buddhist Samgha of Texas from the ground. We now have 13 members who actively practice on a regular basis.

Our samgha was given a large "shutei" omandala by Nichiren Shu Shumuin which we enshrined in place of our personal one. This simple action changed the way the entire samgha thought about the gohonzon room. We came to view it more as our temple and we found that we began setting it like the more traditional views we had seen in pictures of

Nichiren Shu temples. We knew we were setting a stage for our future growth as a community; all the samgha members felt a sense of ownership for our newly renovated space.

Twice each week, we gather together for formal activities. On Wednesday evenings, we hold shodaigyo services. Generally speaking, most new guests are looking for a meditation practice and shodaigyo is a great introduction. The first Sunday of each month, we gather to pray for peace. We hold a service and business meeting on the second Saturday of each month. On the third Sunday, we study a chapter of the Lotus Sutra and conduct the service chanting the particular chapter in English. On the fourth Saturday of each month, we have "ichi ichi mon mon" practice of Yohon.

At least twice a year, we have an intensive retreat during which we practice shakyo, shabutsu, walking meditation, and drumming. We may also occasionally practice the Hokke Sembo and enjoy lectures and discussions conducted by our minister, Reverend Ryuoh Michael Faulconer of Portland.

Our samgha also supports two prison samghas: one in Huntsville and the other in Navasota. The Navasota samgha is a Nichiren Shu group whose core members are studying the Lotus Sutra and learning to practice Nichiren Shonin's Buddhism. The Huntsville samgha is an eclectic group with whom we simply share shodaigyo. We also publish our monthly newsletter, Lotus on the Bayou, which is sent to all samgha members as well as approximately 40 prisoners who are interested in Nichiren Buddhism.

In addition, we are developing a program which we hope to share in our local community to introduce shodaigyo to young people in an urban setting whose lives are marked by violence and poverty.

Today, I am fortunate to be able to focus most of my time on the study of Nichiren Buddhism. I recently completed my last semester teaching American Government and Politics at a local university and plan to apply for admission to a clinical pastoral chaplaincy program to gain training in counseling and ministry. I would also like to pursue advanced study of Buddhism.

My husband, Mike, is the president of the samgha and both of us devote a great deal of time and energy to developing the samgha. He works for Jacobs Engineering as an electrical designer. Our daughter, Merisa, is 16 and has been practicing since she was a small child. She has also been a very talented dancer and singer since the age of 3. She will be attending the International Youth Camp at the NBIC this July. Our family is completed by two akita, Quidam and Zazen.

I am very happy and content with the life I have chosen and have absolutely no regrets about the path I have traveled. Every failure and every victory has shaped my life deeply and profoundly. My journey is full of challenges, but the rewards are extraordinary. I know that one day in Houston there will be a strong, established Nichiren Shu community with a beautiful temple. I am truly fortunate to have a family which shares my dream as well as a community of friends who work together to make this dream a reality.

SEATTLE

By Shobo Mitomo

As an annual event in August, we have a special service commemorating the end of World War II with floating lanterns placed on the lake as a tribute to all those who lost their lives in the Pacific War.

In order to raise funds for the temple we hold a Chow Mein Sale in September after the Ohigan. For this day only, the young and the old get together for days to prepare the chow mein, rice and pickle set, teriyaki chicken, apple pie and sweet potato cakes.

This sale is very popular among the Japanese Americans in Seattle and every year the event draws a crowd. About 1,300 sets are sold but the time and effort which is put into the preparation is getting harder for our elderly members. There are thoughts of ending this event. However, when people come up and comment on "How delicious the food was!" or "When is it taking place next year?" we know we must continue this worthwhile event.

It has been a year since I got this assignment as a resident minister of the Seattle Buddhist Church. I have experienced hardships and toil. I am, however, doing my best. If anyone gets tired of living in this fast moving society, please feel free to drop in at the Seattle Nichiren Buddhist Temple. We can always offer you the beautiful greenery and some coffee to relax your tired mind and body. We are always welcoming new



Shoronagashi in Seattle

Church Events

By Sandra Seki



members and help for our temple events.

HONOLULU

Shin Bon Service

The annual new Bon service for the loved ones who had passed away since last summer's Obon was held on Saturday, July 9th from 7 p.m. A lantern was dedicated to each of the deceased. The Obon service was held on the following day, Sunday, July 10th from 10 a.m. The Segaki service was held with the Obon service. This service originated with Ven. Maudgalyayana, one of the 10 great disciples of the Buddha, who saved his mother from the realm of hungry spirits. By giving various offering to the hungry souls, paying homage to the deceased and having the ministers chant the sutras, we can pray that our ancestors will be saved from suffering and that they will enjoy a peaceful life in the land of the Buddha. It is important for us to think over the relationship with our ancestors, parents, brothers and sisters and try to repay their favors to us. We should hold memorial services for them to renew our sense of gratitude and enrich our lives.

Sunday School Activities

The Sunday School Children's activities were held on Sunday, July 31, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Jungle River Mini Golf Village. Children were welcome to

enjoy a round of mini golf, pizza and had lots of fun.

Mini Bazaar

After the Obon services on July 10, a mini bazaar was held to raise funds for the Rainbow Conference by the Fujinkai. Crafts and simple food (sushi, cookies, cakes, etc.) were sold.

WAHIAWA and HILO

The Wahiawa Nichiren Mission held its Obon service on Sunday, July 17th, from 4 p.m. and the Hilo Mission's Obon service was on Sunday, July 26th, from 7 p.m.

PUUNENE

On June 11, the Puunene Nichiren Mission held its annual Bon Dance Festival. As another event was scheduled for the day, it was feared that not many people would be able to attend our event. At 7 p.m. the Shin Bon service conducted by Bishop Joyo Ogawa began. After this service many people began flocking into the temple grounds. People were looking forward to this annual Bon Dance. At 8 p.m. the Tanko Bushi began and all the dancers made a circle and started dancing around the scaffold.

There are no written records to show when the first Bon dance began in Hawaii or why they were held on the temple premises. However, when the Japanese immigrants began coming to Hawaii, they brought with them their tradition of New Years, Obon and other festivities. They were held near the sugarcane fields where they worked.

The Bon dance tradition has not disappeared. Nowadays, not only the Japanese-Americans but also other ethnic groups enjoy this festival. The Caucasians come wearing hanten and yukatas and it is a trend to collect the tenugui given out by the different temples. Some even make their own hanten with their collection. Some are so earnest that they attend all the Bon dances held every Saturday or sometimes Fridays throughout the season. Their style of dancing is more rhythmical compared to the traditional Bon-odori.

On June 5, six days prior to the event, members gathered to set up the scaffold and clean up the premises. Both the young and old cooperated. On June 7 and 8 preparations for the manju sale took place. All the manju are made by the members and they are the highlight of

the Puunene Bon Dance. On June 11, members gathered early to prepare makizushi, tune the instruments and check the lighting. It was a fine day and almost 150 people came. The manju and makizushi were all sold out and the chilidogs, chili rice and hotdogs were almost all gone, too. The game corner was thriving with people and it was obvious that this event was another success. The sales from this event all go to help maintain the temple, thanks to the hard work of the temple members and friends.

SAN JOSE

25th Anniversary

This is a reminder to all members and friends that the 25th anniversary ceremony of the temple is just four months away. We would like to ask for your support for the temple renovation and commemorative publication.

As of June 21, the temple has received a pledge of \$10,650.00.

Congratulations Rev. Sugawara

Rev. Zuishoh Sugawara, who has been practicing at the San Jose Temple since last August, was wed to Ms. Mikiko Kameyama on July 2nd at his hometown in Fukushima Prefecture,

Japan. Congratulations to you!

LOS ANGELES

Perpetual Memorial Tablet

At the Board meeting it was decided to buy 300 white tablets from Japan for the souls of the perpetual memorial prayers. This service is held every year in November for the deceased who are registered on the temple perpetual memorial list. 250 deceased have been registered since the 1960's, and there are wooden tablets written with the donor's names on the wall of the waiting room. Since all the urns that were installed in the memorial chamber behind the main hall were moved into the newly built Nerio Hall, the shelves in the memorial chamber behind the main hall are empty except for the tablets. The new Eitaikyo tablets will be installed on these shelves so the ministers can offer prayers for the deceased every morning. Since the new tablet is plain wood, Bishop Shokai Kanai has to write the Buddhist name of each deceased and the donor's name. It may take many months or even years to complete this project. However, it is very important to have such wooden tablets in memory of the deceased of our temple. There is no extra fee for this. The Eitaikyo memorial service will be held on November 17, 2005.

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The Stars and Stripes and a Buddhist flag welcome visitors to the temple of Nichiren Buddhist Samgha of Texas, accommodated in the house of Shami Myokei



Some 20 people joined the annual Dharma Conference, held this year at Lexington Buddhist Community, June 12

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