

Nichiren Shu News

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Nichiren Shu News Fetes 150th Issue

Congratulatory Messages

by Rev. Tansei Iwama,
Chief Administrator, Nichiren Shu

It is my great pleasure to congratulate the publication of the 150th issue of the Nichiren Shu News.

For 30 years since 1976 you have striven to publish the News despite the various difficulties and obstacles arising from the difference in lands, natural features, cultures, languages and customs in order to spread the teaching of our Founder Nichiren Daishonin throughout the world. In the name of the Nichiren Shu Order of Buddhism, I express the most sincere gratitude today to you all who have helped in publishing it, the Nichiren Shu overseas missionaries, and the editorial staff of the Nichiren Shu News.

Looking at the social conditions today, we live in the chaotic world in which heart-rending happenings continue to occur day after day, and nobody can live without the fear of life threatening crisis.

Under the circumstances the Nichiren Shu Order has started the "Rissho Ankoku Odaimoku Kechien Campaign" with the "absolute respect

of life" as its basic idea.

Living in this violently changing society, we followers of Nichiren Buddhism must take the first step of a religious movement aiming at the realization of "Rissho Ankoku (Spreading Peace throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma)," the dream of our Founder. We must sow the seed of the odaimoku in the mind of anxious people living in the chaotic society, realize the happiness of all living beings and peace in the world, and bloom the flower of the Wonderful Dharma of the One Vehicle, true sutra.

In conclusion, I pray so that all those who work for the Nichiren Shu News as well as those who subscribe to it may double the strength of faith and the whole world may be blessed by eternal peace.



Rev. Tansei Iwama

by Rev. Bungyo Yoshida,
President, Nichiren Shu Overseas
Propagation Promotion Association

It is a great honor to offer our congratulations upon the publication of the 150th issue of the Nichiren Shu News. On this special occasion, I am pleased to express my deepest gratitude to all of those who have kindly helped publish the News.

When the late Rev. Shingaku Oikawa was installed as the first President of the Nichiren Shu Overseas Propagation Promotion Association (NOPPA), he started the publication of the Nichiren Shu News in order to send information about Nichiren Buddhism all over the world. With the help and efforts of the late Rev.



Rev. Bungyo Yoshida

Senchu Murano as the editor, the first issue was published on Oct. 13, 1976. For about 30 years it has carried articles on not only the achievements or exploits of the Nichiren Order outside Japan but also hardships and difficulties of spreading

Nichiren Buddhism abroad. In this sense the publication has clearly shown the history and changes of the Nichiren Order overseas. And I am sure that today the demand for news of the readers, who live throughout the world believing that the Lotus Sutra and Namu Myoho Renge Kyo are essential to attain peace of mind, is increasing amazingly.

Under the guidance of the current editor Rev. Keiryu Shima, supervisor-editor Rev. Kyotsu Hori, foreign news editor Sandra Seki, and all the other editorial staff, I sincerely hope this publication will continue to help all the followers of Nichiren Buddhism understand what is the True Dharma, perform the mission of spreading Nichiren Shonin's teaching and contribute to our task of leading more people to chant Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.

Editor's Note: Commemorating the publication of the 150th issue, our newspaper features a collection of articles contributed by 31 overseas missionaries. Professor Kanji Tamura's lecture on

"Ichinen Sanzen," "Legend of Nichiren Shonin" by Rev. Gyokai Sekido and "Church Events" by Foreign News Editor Mrs. Sandra Seki appear on Page 10, 11 and 12, respectively.

2005 Youth Leader Exchange Seminar Held at NBIC

The Nichiren Shu International Youth Leader Exchange Seminar for 2005 was held for six days and five nights from July 25 to July 30 at the Nichiren Buddhist International Center, Hayward, California. It was attended by lay leaders from various countries in the world.

This seminar for leaders is held for the great purpose of realizing our Founder's dream of converting the whole world to the teaching of the Lotus Sutra. For this purpose, youth leaders of the Nichiren Buddhists who are actively working in various countries in the world are gathered under one roof to study the importance of Nichiren Buddhism through living and studying together, gain an understanding of other peoples' way of looking at things, and to become youth leaders who would shoulder the Nichiren Shu Order in the coming generation. It was started last year, so the seminar this year was the second experience. The Chief Instructor was Rev. Giko Tabata, Head of the Propagation Department in the Nichiren Shu Headquarters, who was assisted by two instructors in the persons of Bishop Shokai Kanai of NONA and Rev. Ryuken Akahoshi of the Nichiren Buddhist International



Grace with gassho by participants

Center. The teaching and office staff numbered 10 while students totaled 12 (4 from North America, 2 from Honolulu, 4 from Malaysia, and 2 from Singapore).

As the lectures centered around the theme of "Now, Here, and I," each student seemed to seriously look for the "real self," beginning to have awareness as a future leader of each country. They also made friends

without political boundaries, realizing the joy of knowing fellow Nichiren Buddhists who chant the odaimoku throughout the world. There were some who could not hold back tears from rolling down their cheeks during the candlelight service on the closing day. The seminar accomplished its purpose. (related story on p.12; more photos on p.10)

Instructors and Participants

Chief Instructor:

Rev. Giko Tabata, Director, Propagation Promotion Department, Shumuin.

Instructors:

Rev. Ryuken Akahoshi, General Manager, Nichiren Buddhist International Center, California

Rev. Shokai Kanai, Bishop of North America

Staff Members:

Rev. Shingyo Imai, Rev. Kammyo Watanabe, Rev. Shobo Mitomo, Rev. Chisen Maeda, Rev. Kazuo Ogawa

Interpreter:

Rev. Kanshin Mochida

Camera:

Rev. Kazunori Matsumura

Participants:

(from U.S.A.)

Mr. Aaron Rodriguez, Lexington Nichiren Buddhist Community; Ms. Lee Ung, Gardena Hompoji Betsuin; Ms. Merisa Caine-Barrett, Ms. Nichole Amara Fedtke, Texas Nichiren Buddhist Samgha; Ms. Cody Hiroko Aihara, Mr. Beau Takashi Aihara, Nichiren Mission of Hawaii

(from Malaysia) Ms. Kee Swee Ling, Ichinennji; Mr. Marvin Lee, Ms. Angie Ng Ping Ping, Ms. Tai Yee Chean, Kanonji

(from Singapore) Ms. Lai Liyun, Ms. Chua Xin Juan, Daimokuji

Temples and Overseas Missionaries

North America

Los Angeles Nichiren Buddhist Church:
Rev. Shokai Kanai,
Rev. Shoda Kanai,
Rev. Shogen Kumakura
Sacramento Nichiren Buddhist Church:
Rev. Kenjo Igarashi
San Jose Nichiren Buddhist Temple:
Bishop Ryusho Matsuda,
Rev. Shinko Matsuda,
Rev. Ryuei McCormick
Gardena Hompoji Betsuin:
Rev. Ikuta Kanshu
Portland Nichiren Buddhist Church:
Rev. Ryuoh Faulconer
Seattle Nichiren Buddhist Church:
Rev. Shobo Mitomo
New York Daiseionji: Rev. Join Inoue
Chicago Nichiren Buddhist Temple:
Rev. Hoshō Higuchi

Myogyo-ji Buddhist Temple of
Greater Boston:
Shami Michael Hewitt
Minorikai, Portland, Or.:
Rev. Zuigaku Kodachi
Lexington Nichiren Buddhist Community, Ky:
Rev. Shinkyo Warner
Nichiren Buddhist Samgha of Texas, Houston:
Shami Nun Myoeki Caine-Barrett
Toronto Nichiren Buddhist Church:
Rev. Kanto Tsukamoto
Shami Kanjin Cederman
Hawaii
Nichiren Mission of Hawaii:
Bishop Joyo Ogawa,
Rev. Chishin, Hirai
Honolulu Myohoji, Rev. Eijo Ikenaga
Hilo Nichiren Mission: (vacant)
Wahiawa Nichiren Mission: (vacant)
Puunene Nichiren Mission:
Rev. Bungen Kaneko

South America

Templo Nichiren Shu Hokekyou do Brasil:
Rev. Kenno Fukushima,
Rev. Shoyo Tamura
Comunidade Budista Nitirensyu do Brasil:
Rev. Myoho Ishimoto

Germany

Daiseion-Ji, Wipperfuerth:
Rev. Shokei Stephens

Italy

Tempio Buddhista Renkoji:
Rev. Shoryo Tarabini

U.K.

Nichiren Buddhist Temple of London:
Rev. Kangyo Noda

India

Nichigatuzan Horinji, Varanasi, U.P.:
Rev. Nun Myojo Sasaki
Dragon Palace Temple, Nagpur,
Maharashtra: (vacant)

Sri Lanka

Minobusan Sri Lanka Betsuin,
Botelegama Lunuwila: (vacant)

Malaysia

Penang Ichinenji:
Rev. Nun Myosho Obata
Klang Kannonji, Klang Senangor:
(vacant)

Indonesia

Jakarta Rengeji: (vacant)

Singapore

Singapore Daimoku-ji: (vacant)

South Korea

Hodo-ji, Seoul: Rev. Woo Hee Tae

Nichiren Buddhist International
Center, Calif.:
Rev. Ryuken Akahoshi

Editor expresses sincere apologies to contributors for cutting short the original articles due to space reasons.

Sennichi-Ama by Rev. Shokei Stephanes

"I just thought my dear mother was reborn in Sado." Thus described, the Nun Sennichi was honored by Nichiren Shonin, receiving the Mandala of Women Attaining Buddhahood and the 10 fascicles of the Lotus Sutra our Founder copied by himself.

Escaping observation around midnight and walking for miles away to the shack in Tsukahara, Sennichi used to deliver offerings to Nichiren Shonin with her husband. She kept the faith in the Lotus Sutra at the risk of her life.

Our Founder, being exiled to



Rev. Shokei Stephanes

Sado Island, faced not only the stern climate but also the unspeakable cruelty. "Most of those sent to the island die on the way. A few survive. Even though they barely reach the island, they are treated worse than murderers." (Horen-sho)

In such circumstances, Sennichi lapped our Founder with heartfelt humanity, took the risk in serving him, offering the earnest faith to the Lotus Sutra. Unfortunately, her conversion came out later, and through the persecution by the islanders, Sennichi and her husband, Abutsubo were deprived of their

house. However, the Founder told her that the Lotus Sutra was the original scripture for women to become Buddhas. How this teaching delighted her above all!

Sennichi and her husband were faithful believers of the Pure Land Sect before their conversion. Yet in the sutras they used to read, there was not a single line, mentioning women's attainment of Buddhahood. Women in those sutras were regarded as sinful. The encounter with the Lotus Sutra must have been the joy beyond words. Through relentless practice, her faith became sturdier, with the deeper understanding of the teaching. She simply and confidently made her mind open up to the faith of Nichiren Shonin and lived up to her faith without regret.

Her life was literally admirable,

and this brings lots of relief and comfort to the women of today. Women's value and the way they live are matters we should tackle seriously.

We, who believe in the Lotus Sutra as women, should throw away selfishness and face up to oneself through the teaching of the sutra and our Founder, and keep the kindness, wisdom and courage like Sennichi in order to contribute to the world peace and happiness of mankind. In this chaotic era, instead of living "cleverly," we should simply try to live "well" as the beings endowed with the precious gift called life. Now is the time to be awakened to this mission, that is to live "well." The women, who perform this mission must be "Women Attaining Buddhahood," like Sennichi in the Kamakura Period. (k.m.)

Ichinen Sanzen by Rev. Hoshō Higuchi

The doctrine of "Ichinen Sanzen (3,000 existences contained in one thought)," the idea that one momentary thought is connected with the 3,000 existences is the essential doctrine of Nichiren Buddhism. In this article I do not intend to explain the ground or reason for the specific number of 3,000 because what is important for us is how to grasp or understand a religious theory rather than knowing the reason.

The important aspect of the Ichinen Sanzen doctrine lies in the relationship between oneness and mul-



Rev. Hoshō Higuchi

tiplicity represented by the number of 3,000. I dare to interpret this multiplicity as all existences or all the elements of the universe. That is, Ichinen Sanzen means the oneness intimately links into all existences in the universe, and Ichinen (one thought) should symbolize our positive intention. Then Ichinen Sanzen could mean that, if we intend to do so, we are able to figure out a common denominator among physically separated different existences.

For example, in the theory of the Big Bang, this entire universe began

with a single explosion. If so, all existences were born at the same place. Then the idea to share the same origin naturally suspends all discrimination leading us to the sense of absolute equality. Thus, we reach the idea that all sentient beings have Buddhahood without exception.

Although perceiving this idea requires a lot of energy of positive intention, we can say that it is the very enlightenment itself. Probably, in ancient times, Sakyamuni Buddha realized this under a bodhi tree without any background knowledge. However, just being enlightened only for a moment changes nothing, and in that case, Sakyamuni Buddha could not have become the great leader. Rather He thought, "All beings come from the same place,

so not only all sentient beings but also all the elements constructing this universe are absolutely equal, forming a community that makes the tracks of the same fate." And He positively strove to save others with compassion. That is the reason why He had acquired mysterious powers and transformed Himself into the Sacred One.

Meanwhile, Ichinen Sanzen has two aspects: theoretical and practical. Their difference lies between "enlightenment in a theory" and its "actualization." What makes the Great Mandala drawn on just a piece of paper the sacred object of worship is our positive intention and energy of practice. That is the idea of the actuality of Ichinen Sanzen that Nichiren Shonin proclaimed. (k.m.)

Rissho Ankoku Ron by Rev. Kenjo Igarashi

The "Rissho Ankoku Ron" is already translated into English, and is probably not an unfamiliar subject to the Nichiren-Shu members. Since I heard that this article was going to be on the Nichiren News, I thought there was no doubt that this article was going to be read by Nichiren-Shu members in America and overseas. I believe nowadays when you talk about "Rissho Ankoku ron" there are too many restrictions because everyone says that you can believe any religion you want. I am certain that there are a lot of calamities, ter-



Rev. Kenjo Igarashi

rors, and wars occurring in the world right now. Now is certainly the Latter Age of the Decadent Dharma.

As I am writing this article right now, the state of Louisiana was hit by Hurricane Katrina and because of the hurricane, peace and order was disturbed. Now, the victims of Hurricane Katrina look like they are in the three evil realms (which are hell, hungry spirits, and animals). However, can we say that nobody believed in the teachings of the Lotus Sutra? Is it because everyone believed in the evil teachings that this calamity

occurred when they are suffering right now? These days, people know how phenomena like earthquakes, typhoons, hurricanes, etc. occur but how should I teach people what "Rissho Ankoku Ron" is? Now, if I say anything like "Teachings other than Lotus Sutra are evil teachings" there is a possibility in which I will be sued. Therefore, the first thing I would like to say is, it's about time for the Nichiren priests to shape up and we have to make effort to propagate the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Buddhism.

It says in the "Rissho Ankoku Ron" that "The priests are all flatterers and crooked in mind. They mislead the people". Next, the Lotus Sutra discusses in detail the behavior of the evil priest in the Latter Age of the decadent Dharma. In the period

in which Nichiren Shonin lived, obviously there weren't many Nichiren shu priests, like so Nichiren Shonin criticized and warned other Buddhist schools' priests. I now wonder if Nichiren Shonin's criticisms and warnings are for us Nichiren shu priests. In the 21st century, I think many calamities occurred. Some survey results in the 21st century says that in Japan, one of the ten jobs that aren't needed in Japan are priests. That is how much priests can be ignored.

I think propagation is when you don't rely on anyone, you don't rely on Nichiren Shu headquarters, you only believe in the Lotus Sutra, and save people in the Latter Age of the Decadent Dharma. Isn't this the present day understanding of the "Rissho Ankoku Ron"?

Becoming Buddhas *by Rev. Shoyo Tamura*

The Lotus Sutra dramatically begins with numerous people gathering around the Buddha to hear Him preach. However, the Buddha at first told them that He would not preach because it was too difficult for them to understand the Buddha's wisdom.

Most of those who gathered there were trying to be enlightened either through hearing the teachings or through their own efforts. However, they were attached to their own enlightenment and thought that they were different from others as they had kept strict precepts and

accomplished many practices.

They clung to their own enlightenment too much to consider others.

Their ways had become quite different from the Buddha's teaching, so they had been considered incapable to attain enlightenment in the sutras preached before the Lotus Sutra was. With that kind of attitude, the true teaching of the Buddha will never be understood, so the Buddha tried to correct their partial mind. That is why the Buddha said He would not preach.

Nevertheless, among the congre-



Rev. Shoyo Tamura

gation, a disciple called Sariputra beseeched the Buddha, "The Buddha, please teach us, please!" He repeated the request three times. Finally the Buddha said, "You asked Me to preach the Dharma three times. Now I will answer your request. Listen carefully to me."

Then the Buddha revealed the reason why He had appeared in this world. The Buddha appeared in this world in order to open the gate to His wisdom, show His wisdom, teach His wisdom, lead people into the way to His wisdom. Namely, He appeared in this world in order to make all the people attain enlightenment. This is the ideal of absolute equality: all the people are equally able to reach enlightenment.

The Buddha continued, "Sariputra, all the deeds of Buddhas are to

show all the people the way to become Buddhas. That is the sole teaching of the Buddha. Hearing that, Sariputra realized his mistake of clinging solely to his own enlightenment. Then the Buddha predicted that Sariputra would become Flower Light Buddha in the future. The whole congregation who heard the Buddha's prediction were delighted, knowing that they also were able to reach enlightenment in the future.

Becoming Buddhas means for us to follow the teaching of the Buddha, who shows the way to enlightenment, while realizing one's own faults in the past. The Lotus Sutra states that all the people are able to become Buddhas. So we, Nichiren Buddhists, have to practice the way of bodhisattvas everyday in order to become Buddhas. (k.m.)

Mt. Minobu *by Rev. Zuigaku Kodachi*

Shortly after arriving at Mt. Minobu, Nichiren Shonin wrote in his letter to Lord Toki, "After all, I should be alone, wandering around the country of Japan. I wish to send those priests back to you and stay on my own." He seemed to be so disappointed at the failure of his last remonstrance with the government. He wrote to Lord Ueno, "Please imagine my humble dwelling. It is like living under a tree with tree leaves as the floor." We could imagine what his

hermitage was like.

However, from the following year, the first year of Kenji (1275), his description of Mt. Minobu began to have scenic and serene flavor. He wrote to Nii-ama, nun, "To the east is Mt. Tenshi; to the south, Mt. Takatori, to the west, Mt. Shichimen, and to the north, the mountain of Minobu, from the top of which, we see dense forests spreading over, and down in the valleys, boulders ranging to the distance. The seclusion of the Seven Sages



Rev. Zuigaku Kodachi

of the Bamboo Grove must have been like this." In the first year of Koan (1278), after describing the mountains and rivers of Minobu, he wrote, "On the mountains, resonant voices of cicadas; and in the valley, howls of monkeys echo. Trees grow like reeds in a river, and grass like falling rain."

And around the second year of Koan (1279), Nichiren Shonin began to see Mt. Sacred Eagle through Mt. Minobu. He wrote to Lord Matsuno, "I respectfully recite the Lotus Sutra day and night, and expound the Great Concentration and Insight morning and evening. So Mt. Minobu looks to me exactly like the Pure Land of Mt. Sacred Eagle and differs little from Mt. T'ien-t'ai." In the

letter to Lord Ueno, he wrote, "This is the residence of such a marvelous practitioner of the Lotus Sutra, so why should it be less than Mt. Sacred Eagle? It is said that as the Dharma is wonderful, so those who keep it become respectable; and as they are respectable, so are their residences." Comparing Mt. Minobu with Mt. Sacred Eagle, he wrote, "My disciples and followers should make pilgrimages mainly to this mountain. That is the bond of Mt. Sacred Eagle."

I just selected several writings of Nichiren Shonin, showing that for him, Mt. Minobu was correctly sacred as the manifested trace of its original reality of Sakyamuni Buddha on Mt. Sacred Eagle. (k.m.)

Kuon Jitsujo *by Rev. Shinko Matsuda*

Kuon Jitsujo is the term used by Nichiren Shu Buddhists to describe the original or true attainment of enlightenment of the Buddha in the remotest past.

In Chapter 16, Sakyamuni explains during the ceremony in the sky the inconceivable or incalculable amount of time that had passed since his original attainment of Buddhahood.

He explained, "Everybody in the world, even the deities in heaven and demons, think that I was born at the palace of the Sakya

kingdom, renounced the world, sat at the place of meditation near the city of Gaya, attained supreme enlightenment, and became the Buddha. However, in reality it has been an infinite time, comparable to one hundred thousand millions of billions of asamkhyas of eons, since I became the Buddha."

All this time, I have been living in the World of Endurance; teaching by expounding the Dharma to them.

Nichiren Shonin also commented on the subject of Kuon Jitsujo



Rev. Shinko Matsuda

in his writing, "Kaimoku Sho - Opening the Eyes" by tying the relationship between Ichinen Sanzen, the three thousand existences in one thought, with the Eternal nature of the Buddha. He also explains in Kaimoku Sho that Ichinen Sanzen can only be achieved by those who have faith and uphold the Lotus Sutra and the Odaimoku. In Kaimoku Sho, Nichiren Shonin comments, "Coming to the essential section of the Lotus Sutra, it was revealed that the Buddha had attained perfect enlightenment in the eternal past, making it untenable to assert that he attained Buddhahood for the first time in this world. Thus, the Eternal Buddha doctrine destroyed the Buddhahood resulting from the Four Teachings. As

the Buddhahood resulting from the four teachings became untenable, those four teachings proved to be invalid. Thus the ten realm doctrine preached in the pre-Lotus and the theoretical section of the Lotus was destroyed and the causal relationship among the eternal ten realms was established in the essential section of the Lotus Sutra. This is the true doctrine of cause and result. In this relationship, the Nine Realms are all included in the realm of the Eternal Buddha, and the realm of the Buddhas is in each of the eternal nine realms. This is truly the "mutually possessed characteristics of the ten realms," "100 realms each holding ten factors of existence" and "3,000 existences in one thought."

Bodhisattvas from Underground *by Rev. Kanto Tsukamoto*

"The ground of the Saha World, which was composed of one thousand million Sumeru-worlds, quaked and cracked, and many thousands of billions of Bodhisattva-mahasattvas sprang up from underground." (Chapter XV: "The Appearance of Bodhisattvas from Underground")

Sakyamuni Buddha pronounced that He will entrust them with the mission of spreading the Lotus Sutra after His death. These bodhisattvas, all golden-colored, are led by four leaders: Superior Practice, Limit-

less Practice, Pure Practice, and Steadily Established Practice. They symbolize, it is understood, the four basic elements of all things of the universe, namely earth, water, fire and air.

The earth, from where they emerged, symbolizes ignorance, and the golden color of these bodhisattvas, stands for ever lasting eternity. These bodhisattvas are compared to the lotus flower which stays pure, growing in muddy water.

Thus, it is suggested in the Lotus Sutra that those qualified to spread



Rev. Kanto Tsukamoto

the teaching of the sutra and purify the world should be those who are born and grown on the earth.

The names of the four leaders of the bodhisattvas appearing from underground each has the Chinese character meaning "practice." They are bodhisattvas of practice. Those who come from the other worlds are required to fulfill their duties in their respective worlds. Their achievement can be accomplished where they are born and live.

Nichiren Shonin believed that these bodhisattvas led by the four leaders will reappear in the Latter Age of Degeneration, assigned with the mission of spreading the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. He seems to have come to believe that he was one of them, specifically the Superior Practice Bodhisattva,

though he has never clearly declared it.

Our Founder states in one of his writings known as "Shoho jisso-sho": "Nichiren is leading the bodhisattvas appearing from underground. If Nichiren is one of their leaders, the followers of Nichiren are inevitably members of the group."

We, who are dedicated to spread the Lotus Sutra following Nichiren Shonin are the bodhisattvas led by the four leaders who appeared in front of Sakyamuni Buddha when He was spreading the Lotus Sutra on Mt. Sacred Eagle. The work of spreading the Lotus Sutra means the reunion of bodhisattvas led by Nichiren Shonin, the Superior Practice Bodhisattva, in this world, and it is a trip of finding fellow bodhisattvas. (k.s.)

Segaki *by Rev. Woo Hee Tae*

Segaki literally means to offer food to all sentient beings in the realm of hungry spirits through the power of the Buddha and Dharma. Usually it means the services of Segaki. Regarding the origin of Segaki service, there are various opinions, such as the episode of the demon of the wasteland in the Nirvana Sutra, the tale of Hari-ti described in Vinaya (Buddhist Precepts), and the hungry ghost in the Dharani Sutra for Saving the Burning-mouth Hungry Ghost. The episode of Ananda and the Burning-mouth Hungry

Ghost is famous, so the Segaki service is normally conducted based on this tale.



Rev. Woo Hee Tae

According to the Dharani Sutra for Saving the Burning-mouth Hungry Ghost, one night, a demon named Burning-mouth visited Ananda, asking him for food. Then Ananda told this to Sakyamuni Buddha, and then the Buddha immediately taught the meaning of Segaki and recommended

all his followers of both monks and lay believers to hold the Segaki services.

Based on this sutra, now the ser-

vices are held to pray for the spirits who do not have any relatives. Sometimes it is held for ancestral services or for happiness of family. Its specific date has not been decided. Recently as an annual event, the services are often held with Ullambana.

In Korea, on the 15th day of the seventh month in the lunar calendar, mainly Buddhist temples regardless of different schools celebrate the festival called Baekjung: All Souls Day. That is like the combination of Ullambana and Segaki, originated from agricultural events. People visit temples, shrines or their family graves to pay respect to their ancestors around that day. Chuseok or Hankawi: Harvest Day held exactly a month later is also famous for the tradition of the ancestral worship. (k.m.)



First issue

Fiftieth Person's Merits of Joy *by Rev. Eijo Ikenaga*

The Lotus Sutra Chapter XVIII describes "Merits of the Joy of the Fiftieth Person." The Buddha reveals "His eternal life" or "the origin of eternal life" in the Lotus Sutra. At an interval between the Buddha's discourses, Maitreya Bodhisattva asks the Buddha how meritorious a person who rejoices at hearing this teaching will be.

The Buddha answered: "Suppose a man who rejoiced at hearing this teaching does not keep it to himself and tells it to his parents, relatives or friends. Then the person who heard it from him, rejoiced and told it to a third person, who in turn

told it to the fourth person. The merits of the fiftieth person who heard the teaching this way are still incomparable and immeasurable."



Rev. Eijo Ikenaga

We easily understand the merits of the first person are immeasurable and limitless, but tend to think that the contents and merits of the teaching will gradually fade while being transmitted from one to another.

The Buddha continued: "Suppose a man is devoted to do all the good deeds he can think of and to make offerings to all sentient beings for 80 years, that is, for all his life, surely his merits are extraordinary. Yet those

merits are far less than the fiftieth person's. Actually the fiftieth person's merits are tens of thousands times greater." Thus the Buddha tells us how precious it is to hear the truth and how important to spread it among others.

To transmit the teaching is called "Shishi sojo (Inheritance of the Master's Quality)." It means to pass the teaching from a master to his disciples, from them to their disciples as if a glass of water is moved from one to another thoroughly without a drop left, though the so-called scientific mind claims that the amount of water decreases while it is moved.

However, the Buddha says to Sariputra, 'the wisest' in the Lotus Sutra, "Even you have understood this sutra only through faith, not your wisdom." Because of our shallow thought, we think that the merits of the teaching would fade when it is transmitted. Sure-

ly we, human beings, spread the teaching, so its expressions may change in course of time, but what is really transmitted is 'the eternal life,' 'the unchanged truth.' Either a tenth person or a fiftieth person, all of them must freshly rejoice at hearing the truth. That is 'the moment of true faith,' so the Buddha preaches that the fiftieth person will receive far more merits than great bodhisattvas or arhats will.

There is no need for us to hesitate. Nichiren Shonin says, "(We turn into) our original respected figures, lit up by the Five Letters of the Wonderful Dharma." When we chant Namu-myo-horen-ge-kyo at the moment of true faith, all beings including us brighten and regain our original entities through the light of the eternal life. How wonderful the merits of the Lotus Sutra are! May we rejoice at hearing this Sutra! (k.m.)

Nichiren's Life and Faith in America *by Rev. Shinkyō Warner*

We are tremendously grateful for Nichiren's example. The question is, how should we apply that example in our time? Sometimes I wonder, do we need a 21st Century Nichiren?

My country today is in some ways very different from 13th Century Japan. One of the foundations of our society is the ideal that the church and the state are two separate institutions. Few in Nichiren's time would have considered the possibility of state authorities not either supporting beneficial religious practices or prohibiting harmful ones.

Today, this separation has allowed the United States to develop into a society of people from many different cultures and religions. While in our history there are egregious examples of our mistreating people from a specific culture, today we have a situation of tolerance for diverse ideas, diverse practices and diverse faiths. This encourages us to look

Rev. Shinkyō Warner

for the best qualities of people with practices different from ours. At the same time we recognize our obligation to speak clearly and firmly about practices that are

harmful.

Despite the differences between our society and Nichiren's, we still face many of the same questions Nichiren engaged. When if ever is war justified? What can we do about the degradation of our natural environment? What should we do when people are treated unjustly, and how must we conduct ourselves when we are treated unjustly?

As followers of the Wonderful Dharma, we know there are more questions at the root of these that are likely not in the minds of the general public. What is the correct teaching that will lead all beings to the enlightenment of the Buddha? How can we develop our Buddha nature? How can we spread the seeds of the Buddha's enlightenment?

It is relatively easy for us to imi-

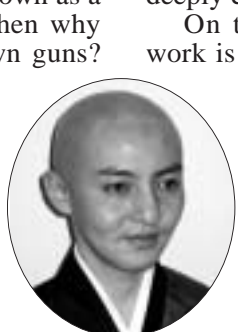
tate Nichiren's actions. Anyone could set up a platform in the center of town and preach the Lotus Sutra. Anyone could tell everyone who follows other faiths that they are headed to the Hell of Incessant Suffering unless they follow the Wonderful Dharma.

Developing the faith similar to what drove Nichiren's actions is much more demanding. For that we need to nurture our own faith, using Nichiren's example as a guide and inspiration. As our faith expands, and we gain the insights that sprout naturally from the seeds of our own Buddha nature, we will realize what needs to be done in our time, guided by the same protective deities who vowed before the Buddha to protect Nichiren and all of us who practice the Wonderful Dharma.

Mutual Possession of Ten Realms *by Rev. Shobo Mitomo*

Gun violence is well known as a big issue in the U.S.A. Then why do people still want to own guns? Shockingly enough, some people purchase guns not only for self-defense but also to show off like fashion accessories. I have to admit that the realms of asura-demons and that of animals are very close to our daily lives. From the view of Mutual Possessions of Ten Realms, each realm contains the characteristics of the other nine realms. Thus, the increasing crime rates all over the world including the U.S.A. are also

deeply connected to our minds.



Rev. Shobo Mitomo

On the other hand, volunteer work is very popular in the U.S.A. Some high schools give credits to the students engaging in volunteer work. Recently, though, other schools do away with this system based on the idea that volunteer work should not be compulsory. Each school has different characteristics.

The word "volunteer" means a person, who does something willingly. As an educational method, it would be a good idea to make the volunteer work an elec-

tive and lead students to choose among some subjects willingly.

The other day, I went shopping for some electrical gadgets and was asked at the checkout counter whether I have engaged in any volunteer work in the past year. I said that I was not sure, but I was a Buddhist priest. Then I received a 20% discount. That shop was actually sponsoring a fund, which support volunteers.

When we think about the situation in Japan, even though it is hard to get guns, incidents as tragic as seen only in movies often happen nowadays. The other day, a high school student exploded a handmade bomb in his school. Japanese society seems to have abandoned its traditional values such as the smiling face and kind-

ness, or the life of modesty and satisfaction.

In this tiny existence of myself, there are the minds of ten realms; mind of anger of hell that cannot be honest, mind of greed like hungry spirits, mind of animals retarding my improvement, mind of asura prone to start a fight.

In my family, my sister is going to have baby in October, so whenever I see other babies, I think of my coming nephew or niece. When I look at the smiles of babies, I also smile without knowing it. Isn't this a smile of a Buddha in the realm of Buddhas?

After I became an overseas missionary priest, I became aware that the ten realms were very close to our lives. Once we realize them, they are like the egg of Columbus. (k.m.)

Hoon-jo by Rev. Shoda Kanai

The importance of Hoon-jo ("Essay on Gratitude") is to reiterate the fact that we must repay our debts to those who have shown us favor. To do so, we must all master Buddhism completely with sound judgment. The problem is that with many different sutras, it will take years to achieve this goal.

Nichiren Shonin knew that there could only be one superior scripture, which was the Lotus Sutra. It states that it is above all other sutras. None of the other sutras purport such a fact.



Rev. Shoda Kanai

Nichiren thought it odd that those men of wisdom ranked other sutras over the Lotus Sutra, but then he realized it was the time of the Latter Age of Degeneration, when practice and realization of the true teaching became misconstrued.

Why is the Lotus Sutra important? Many have argued that their sutras reflect the true teaching, but they do not realize that they are slandering the True Dharma and condemning themselves to hell. Nichiren realized, however, without propagating the True

Dharma Japan would be destroyed, foreigners would invade, and famine, drought and suffering would continue. He understood that his path would not be simple and contain many hardships. At the cost of his life Nichiren tried to reason and inform those who followed the other sutras. Those with clouded minds did not wish to have their eyes opened and see the truth. But for those who understood that the Lotus Sutra was the most important teaching taught by Sakyamuni Buddha, salvation was near.

The essence of the Lotus Sutra is in the five characters, Myo-Ho-Ren-Ge-Kyo, which capture all 28 chapters of the Lotus Sutra. This title itself can drown out all the other sutras and makes their func-

tion useless. Many hundreds of thousands of merits can be gained by chanting "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo" and reciting the Lotus Sutra. Those merits that Nichiren gained through the years, he respectfully dedicated to his Master Dozen so that his master may be saved and assured of his future attainment of Buddhahood. Master Dozen, may not have been a true believer of the Lotus Sutra, but to show gratitude Nichiren gave away all his merits.

Just like Nichiren, we must all strive to show gratitude to those who have assisted us, our family, ministers and strangers. The best way to show this gratitude is through the teaching of the Lotus Sutra, so that we all may be saved and be assured of our future attainment of Buddhahood.

Senjisho by Rev. Shogen Kumakura

Nichiren Shonin wrote Senji-sho ("Selecting the Right Time") in the first year of the Kenji Era (1275).

The so-called War of the Bun'ei Era (the first Mongol invasion of Japan) began in the tenth month of the previous year (1274). The Chinese character "sen" in the title of Senji-sho means to select. Therefore, the title of this essay means the "Essay on Choosing the Correct Time." At the beginning of this writing Nichiren says, "To study Buddhism, first of all we must know the right moment." He then continues to explain with examples that in Bud-



Rev. Shogen Kumakura

dhism one should not preach unless the time is right even if there are people with the capacity to comprehend the preaching and want to learn. The timing is important for one to preach his wisdom.

We are presently in the midst of a warlike age, in which the current order collapses. People are losing their trust in the system of their country and even their own paradigm. We, ordinary people in the Latter Age, however, do not have the competence of seeing the right time. Therefore, Nichiren suggests that we "contemplate" the time

through the Buddha-eye, namely to take time to observe the land shone by rays of the wisdom of the Buddha as "brilliant as the sun." In order to "Spread peace throughout the country by establishing righteousness," Nichiren said "Therefore, I urge you my disciples to practice Buddhism as preached in the Lotus Sutra without sparing your life. Put the truth of Buddhism to proof once and for all." "Putting Buddhism to proof once and for all" means to strengthen our faith in Buddhism and to learn from experience that the Lotus Sutra is the ultimate truth. We can't physically have the same "eyes" to see as the Buddha did, but we can have His "wisdom." Then we can reexamine the problems in the world once again. Together we can find the right solution that everyone can agree.



100th issue

The Lotus Sutra by Rev. Shoryo Tarabini

The Lotus Sutra was transcribed in Sanskrit with the title, "Saddharma Pundarika Sutra." "Sad" signifies "True," "Dharma" indicates the teaching of the Buddha. "Pundarika" means a white lotus flower (indicating the perfect enlightenment of the Buddha) and Sutra as mentioned above, signifies the written teaching or collection of words of the Buddha.

Notice the word Pundarika in the title of the Lotus Sutra literally means "white lotus" and symbolizes Bodhi, or the pure and perfect



Rev. Shoryo Tarabini

enlightenment of the Buddha. Lotus blossoms are usually depicted in Buddhist art with eight petals. These eight petals symbolize the Eightfold Path, the first doctrine preached by the Buddha. The lotus is the only flower that blooms with a seed pod already developed. This represents the principle of cause and effect, one of the most basic concepts in Buddhist philosophy. Another important aspect of the lotus is that it blooms in very dirty and muddy water. In fact, the dirtier the water, the more beautiful the blossom. If

we compare this example to our own lives, it demonstrates that from the suffering we experience in daily life, we can obtain the pure and beautiful condition of Buddhahood, in precisely the same way as the lotus blooms from filthy water. All beings possess this potential for Buddhahood.

In Essential Teachings of the Lotus Sutra, Sakyamuni explains he didn't originally attain Buddhahood under the Bodhi tree, as most people have always thought. In chapter 15, Springing up from the Earth, are His myriads of disciples, thousands upon thousands of Bodhisattvas He taught and trained since the limitless past.

He also introduces us to the leader of these Bodhisattvas whom he informs us will be reborn during the era of Mappo to lead all living

beings to enlightenment. This is Bodhisattva Jogyo. He prophesies that this Bodhisattva will undergo countless hardships for the sake of the Lotus Sutra. Everything in the Lotus Sutra that illustrates the life of this Bodhisattva, identically mirrors the life of Nichiren Daishonin. He is the Bodhisattva prophesied to lead us to faith in the Lotus Sutra, the Eternal Buddha and hence to enlightenment, sent as the very messenger of the Buddha.

The ultimate miracle of the Lotus Sutra, is that the Buddha in transmitting his teachings to his disciples, has not only revealed his own Buddhahood, but also shown us the way to accomplish the same quality of enlightened life.

Gassho, Namu Myoho Renge Kyo

Persecutions by Rev. Ryusho Matsuda

My exile is merely a trifle in this present life, which is not lamentable at all. Instead, I feel it is a great joy as I am sure I will be rewarded with great happiness in my future lives. (Kaimoku-sho)

Buddhism is the teaching to attain Buddhahood. In our history, many people have sought it and by having assurance of their future Buddhahood, they were as joyful as if they were sprinkled with nectar and felt peace and happiness in their minds.

Nichiren Shonin also studied for that purpose for many years. Finally



Rev. Ryusho Matsuda

he concluded that the Lotus Sutra represented the perfect culmination of the true teaching of the Buddha.

His conviction was that the highest value is to live in accord with the Lotus Sutra. He expressed this in his treatise, "Spreading Peace throughout the Country by Establishing True Dharma," written and presented to the Kamakura Shogunate in 1260.

Nichiren Shonin's efforts to promote the true teachings and practice of the Lotus Sutra were not only ignored by the government, but also brought him countless hard-

ships. Among them, from 1260 to 1271 when he was exiled to Sado Island, He encountered the Four Great Persecutions successively and also countless minor persecutions.

Buddhism should bring happiness and peace, but why did he suffer from those persecutions? Nichiren Shonin also wondered about the reason, and thought that grave sins in his past lives were revealed through his merits in defending the Dharma in this life. But he was confident that he had been upholding and practicing the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. He expressed his intention to continue his propagation by saying, "No matter what happens, abandoning the Lotus Sutra will cause us to plunge into hell."

Through his religious life he was awakened to a sense of mission as

the "practicer of the Lotus Sutra" as described in the sutra; and at the same time he started to think of himself as Superior Practice Bodhisattva, one of the leaders of the bodhisattvas who sprang up from the earth with the task of transmitting the five characters of Myo, Ho, Ren, Ge, and Kyo, the essence of the "Duration of the Life of the Buddha" chapter, to the people in this world.

We recognize Nichiren Shonin to be the prime practicer of the Lotus Sutra in the world. Let us follow his teachings by believing his compassionate words in Kaimoku Sho: "I, Nichiren, should continue upholding the Lotus Sutra and go to the Pure Land of Mt. Sacred Eagle, so that I will be able to return to this world to guide the people."

Great Mandala by Rev. Chishin Hirai

Nichiren Shonin drew and granted many Great Mandalas during his lifetime. We still have about 130 of the original Great Mandala hand-drawn by Nichiren Shonin. It is a miracle indeed to uphold so many Great Mandalas even today. Why have so many Great Mandalas been protected and enshrined over 700 years? What is the Great Mandala?

It was in 1273 when Nichiren Shonin drew the first Great Mandala while on Sado Island in exile. According to his "Kanjin honzon sho" which is one

of his five major works, what was drawn in the Great Mandala is the world the Buddha preached in the Lotus Sutra. Sakyamuni Buddha preached the Lotus Sutra to His disciples and followers in the last 8 years of preaching. The Lotus Sutra is the supreme teaching of the Buddha and is His Enlightenment. The world the Buddha preached in the Lotus Sutra is the world in which His entire Enlightenment appeared and our ideal world was created. And names of the disciples who believed and spread the Lotus Sutra in India,



Rev. Chishin Hirai

China and Japan were added in the Great Mandala. It means that the wonderful teaching of the Lotus Sutra is beyond time and place. Nichiren Shonin visualized the world as the Great Mandala. That's why the Great Mandala is the ideal goal to be reached and the object of worship.

If you observe many original Great Mandalas hand-drawn by Nichiren Shonin, you will notice that about half of them have special notes in them. It was because Nichiren Shonin granted the Great Mandalas to his disciples and faithful followers. When he granted the Great Mandalas to his disciples, he let them use it for propagation. As I said, the Great Mandala is very important. When he granted the Great Mandalas to followers, he

made sure of their faithfulness. If he was not sure of someone's faith, he did not grant it to him. Followers of Nichiren Shonin to whom the Great Mandalas were granted meant that their strong and sincere faith was acknowledged, so they must have been so happy and devoted themselves more to the Lotus Sutra. Needless to say, the follower cherished the Great Mandala more than anything else. That's why we have so many original Great Mandalas hand-drawn by Nichiren Shonin even today. We can say that one of his achievements in life was drawing the Great Mandala. The Great Mandala has been kept and worshipped over 700 years. We have to do so, too. And we have to tell everybody about the Great Mandala.

Shodai: Chanting the Daimoku by Rev. Kenno Fukushima

The first Daimoku Chanting is said to be the one chanted by Nichiren Shonin on top of Asahigamori of the Seichoji Temple in Chiba Prefecture on the 28th day of the fourth month in 1253.

Last March, I visited the Seichoji Temple in Chiba Prefecture while training to become an overseas missionary. It was unusual for that season that the temple was covered by heavy snow. Standing on the snowy hill of Asahigamori, I for a while chanted the Daimoku towards the Pacific Ocean. At that very place, more than

750 years ago, Nichiren Shonin did so, praying that all beings would embrace the Wonderful Dharma. Then, wondering how I could spread this Daimoku in Brazil where I was going to be assigned, I chanted the Daimoku wholeheartedly while shivering in the cold as well as anxiety and hope.

When Nichiren Shonin was exiled to Izu Peninsula, he was left on a rock in the offing called Manaita (chopping board). As the flood tide gradually sank the rock and his body, Nichiren Shonin chanted the Daimoku. Then, Yasaburo the Boat-



Rev. Kenno Fukushima

man heard his chanting across the caps of waves and narrowly came to save him.

Nichiren Shonin wrote in his "Kanjin honzon-sho (Spiritual Contemplation and the Most Venerable One)," "Sakyamuni Buddha's merit of practicing the bodhisattva way leading to Buddhahood, as well as that of preaching saving all living beings since His attainment of Buddhahood are altogether contained in the five words of myo, ho, ren, ge, and kyo (Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Dharma) and that consequently, when we uphold the five words, the merits which He accumulated before and after His attainment of Buddhahood are naturally transferred to us." As he had expressed this merit by himself through the Manaita Rock episode, so Daimoku Chanting surely protects our

life, leading this world to peace.

The practice of Daimoku Chanting is now called Shodai-gyo that was widely practiced by Gudo Dogan-kai (Association of the Same Wish of Seeking the Way). The late Archbishop. Nichijun Yukawa, the former president of that association, created the current style of Shodai-gyo, and went all over Japan to spread it until he passed away at the age of 93. I learned this style directly from Rev. Okazaki, Chief Abbot of the Seichoji Temple, and practiced it in Brazil just as soon as I came here. Because I explained it in Japanese, however, the Brazilian members did not fully understand it. However, I believe that Shodai-gyo is one good way to realize the vows of Nichiren Shonin, so I would like to improve it in a Brazilian way and try hard to spread it. (k.m.)

Sado Island by Shami Myokei Caine-Barrett

For followers of Nichiren Shonin, there are two important facts about his exile to Sado Island in October, 1271. Images of the silent, soft frigid blanket of white snow and icy sea winds scaring up gusting snow flurries brought the environmental austerity of Sado Island into stark reality.

Nichiren Shonin may have felt alone and sometimes gripped by the depths of despair in such circumstances. After all, he lived in a small abandoned shrine, Tsukuhara, located in a small cemetery. The bodies of the dead were

often thrown on the frozen ground during winter. The shrine's boards were warped and wind whistled noisily through the cracks. His letters never dwelled on the meanness of his living conditions

Nichiren Shonin extended all his courage and conviction to support and encourage his disciples who had accompanied him. Food was scarce and their clothing was hardly suitable for the climate. There was hardly any firewood to burn for even a small bit of heat. Nichiren Shonin could not be weak nor could he



Shami Myokei Caine-Barrett

waver in his convictions because of his circumstances.

The second important fact was the existence of Abutsubo, a samurai, and his wife, Sennichi-ama, who had come to Sado Island out of loyalty to the former emperor, Juntoku, several years prior to Nichiren Shonin's arrival. Following Nembutsu, they had become lay priests and kept vigil at the emperor's tomb after his death. Abutsubo determined to kill Nichiren Shonin, but first decided to understand the nature of his "enemy." After spending time in dialogue with Nichiren Shonin, he abandoned all thoughts of killing him and became a disciple. He and Sennichi-ama secretly supplied Nichiren Shonin with food, clothing and firewood; thus, providing the means for his survival.

Because Nichiren Shonin was

able to survive the winter, he was able to spread the Lotus Sutra as well as complete some of his most important works such as the Kai-moku-sho and Kanjin Honzon-sho. Even after being released from exile, his followers continued to support and cherish him. Abutsubo made several pilgrimages to visit Nichiren Shonin at Mount Minobu, despite his advancing age.

Whenever I feel down or as if I cannot continue, I am always encouraged by these two important facts. I can bring the image of Nichiren Shonin to my mind and imagine the dire circumstances on Sado Island. I can also rely on the example of Abutsubo in expressing his loyal support for Nichiren Shonin as well as his determined and unflagging seeking spirit for the Lotus Sutra.

Junyoze: Ten Aspects by Rev. Bungen Kaneko

Junyoze: Ten Aspects, described in the Lotus Sutra Chapter II, are appearance, nature, entity, power, activity, primary cause, environmental cause, reward, retribution and totality of the above nine aspects.

The concept of Junyoze is summarized as follows: All things have their appearances and natures. They make the entities of things which naturally store powers. From the entities, various activities appear because of various primary causes and environmental causes. Then those activities produce some direct effects as their rewards as well as some indirect

effects as their retribution. And the totality means that in all existences those nine aspects are active equally while being interrelated closely.

Anything must have an appearance as well as a nature within it. Its appearance and nature form the body (entity), which potentially holds powers. Under certain conditions, that power changes into some specific activities, which in turn bear some results that change into next causes to influence the original thing itself. Then, the last aspect of totality, pronounced in Japanese as "Hon-matsu kukyo-toh," originally means the state, in which the



Rev. Bungen Kaneko

nine aspects from the beginning aspect (appearances) to the ninth (retribution) are ultimately synthesized together and become equal. These nine aspects are linked and react with one another as if forming a circle, and each aspect is equal like a part of a circle. That is the totality.

Meanwhile, when we recite the Lotus Sutra we read the part of the ten aspects three times, and when we do so in Japanese, the way we read it is different for each time. The reason why we read the part three times is to remind the concept of the Threefold Truths of Voidness, Temporality and the Middle Way. "Nyoze" is interpreted as "as such," though, "Nyo" means "as it is," symbolizes the flexibility of Voidness while "Ze" is a demonstrative pronoun like "this" or "these," that implies the character of the Middle Way, connecting Voidness with each aspect.

So first, we chant it as, "These

appearances are as it is," putting the stress on the word 'Nyo: Voidness.' The second time goes like, "(It is) as these appearances," emphasizing the temporariness of the ten aspects. The third is, "Appearances are as this." This time, emphasized is the demonstrative pronoun, which connects the Voidness of 'Nyo' with the Temporality of each aspect.

The ten aspects are the way a thing exists in the world. Our existences are the totality of various causes and effects, and an existence can exist in relation to others. Then, if we respect others, our minds are relieved from selfish attachments, becoming greater to see things equally as we realize that we are connected with one another in the circle of the ten aspects. The world of delusions and attachments then turns into the Buddha Land of wonderfulness. (k.m.)

Nikko Shonin *by Rev. Kangyo Noda*

Nikko Shonin was born in the third month in 1246. As a child, he entered a Tendai temple called the Shijuku-in, learning the basic knowledge of Tendai theology, Confucianism, as well as the study of Japanese classical culture. When our Founder entered the library of the Jissoji Temple at Iwamoto in preparation for writing the "Rissho ankoku-ron (Spreading Peace Throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma)," Nikko Shonin was accepted as a disciple of Nichiren and was renamed Hoki-bo Nikko. When our Founder entered Mt. Minobu, Nikko Shonin



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actively propagated Nichiren Buddhism in the whole area surrounding Minobu, in the provinces of Suruga, Kai, and Izu (Shizuoka and Yamanashi Prefectures today).

On the eighth day of the tenth month in 1282, our Founder named the Six Senior Disciples as the leaders of Nichiren Buddhism after his death. Nikko Shonin was named one of the six and he also was given an honorary title of Byakuren Ajari. In the first month of the following year it was decided that the Six Senior Disciples alternately attend the Founder's grave. The decision, however, was not observed

strictly, and by the time of the third memorial day of the Founder, the Founder's temple on Mt. Minobu seemed to have been devastated. After consulting with Nambu Sanenaga, Nikko Shonin decided to stay in Minobu permanently to take care of the Founder's temple. Meanwhile Nikko Shonin also came to Minobu to help Nikko Shonin. The cooperation of the two leaders (two of the Six Senior Disciples), which seemed to be working ideally, did not last more than a few years.

Nikko Shonin was strict by nature, demanding the absolute reverence to the Buddha and the Founder from disciples and lay followers, while Niko was gentle-natured and generous. The difference between the two leaders in attitude toward Nambu Sanenaga finally forced Nikko Shonin to leave Minobu. In the 12th month of 1288, Nikko Shonin,

together with his disciples, left Minobu for Fuji in Suruga Province (Shizuoka Prefecture).

With the help extended by Nanjo Tokimitsu, Nikko built a hermitage at the Ooishigahara in Fuji County and lived there for a while. This is the origin of the Taisekiji Temple. In 1298, Nikko built the Hommonji Temple at Omosu (Fujinomiya City, Kitayama today) a little over a mile away from Taisekigahara, and moved there to live. He opened a seminar called Omosu Dansho and engaged in the education of his disciples for 36 years until he passed away on the seventh day of the second month in 1333 there.

The Taisekiji Temple is the General Head Temple of the Nichiren Shoshu today while Omosu (Kitayama) Hommonji is one of the grand head temples of the Nichiren Shu Order. (k.h.)

Kaimoku Sho *by Rev. Ryuei McCormick*

On September 12, 1271, Nichiren Shonin was arrested and taken to the execution grounds on Tatsunokuchi beach. Nichiren Shonin was saved from death when a mysterious ball of light that flew through the sky frightened the executioner and the other samurai. A messenger from the regent arrived soon after with orders that Nichiren Shonin was not to be executed in any case but exiled to Sado Island. On October 10, 1271, Nichiren Shonin was sent into exile on Sado Island. At first, he lived in



Rev. Ryuei McCormick

a small broken down shrine in a graveyard called Tsukuhara. His enemies hoped that Nichiren Shonin would die in the harsh winter of Sado Island without any adequate shelter or provisions.

Many of Nichiren Shonin's followers, like Nisshin and Nichiro had also been arrested and imprisoned. They wondered why they had not been protected from such persecution, so in order to resolve these doubts Nichiren Shonin wrote the Kaimoku Sho (Open Your Eyes to the Lotus Teaching) in Feb-

ruary 1272. Shockingly, Nichiren Shonin wrote that he had been beheaded at Tatsunokuchi and it was his spirit that had come to Sado Island. This reflects Nichiren Shonin's feelings that he had already died and begun a new life. At the same time, he was aware that he could still literally die in the harsh conditions of winter on Sado Island or else may once again face execution. So he stated that the Kaimoku Sho was intended to be a memento and an expression of his true will in case he should die.

In the course of the Kaimoku Sho Nichiren Shonin shows through a series of comparisons that only the teaching of the Lotus Sutra can enable all people to attain Buddhahood. He also shows that the Lotus Sutra itself predicted that anyone

propagating it in the Latter Age of the Dharma would be bound to encounter the kinds of hardships that Nichiren Shonin and his disciples had been and would continue to face. Nichiren also discerned that of all the teachers in Japan, Nichiren Shonin states his determination in the form of a threefold vow to continue upholding the Lotus Sutra for the sake of Japan, no matter what hardships he might have to face. "...No matter how many great difficulties fall upon me, I will not submit to them until a man of wisdom defeats me by reason. Other difficulties are like dust in the wind. I will never break my vow to become the pillar of Japan, to become the eyes of Japan, and become a great vessel for Japan." (Writings of Nichiren Shonin Doctrine 2, p.106)

Kanjin Honzon-sho *by Rev. Join Inoue*

This title is usually abbreviated to just "Kanjin honzon-sho (A Treatise Revealing the Spiritual Contemplation and the Most Venerable One)."

In "Kanjin honzon-sho" Nichiren Shonin writes, "Spiritual contemplation means for one to meditate on his own mind, observing through it ten realms, from the hells up to the realm of Buddhas, all of which are by nature contained in every mind." He thus explained the way to see how the Buddha resided in our minds.

"Unless grass and trees possess



Rev. Join Inoue

both matter and spirit and the principal of cause and effect, it does not make sense at all to worship wooden icons and portraits." He also says all existences including wood and flowers are equipped with spirit or mind.

Then what is the spirit or mind that he mentions? The term called mutual possession of the ten realms is referred to in this writing. The ten realms are the realms of hells, hungry spirits, beasts, asura demons, men, gods, sravakas, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas and Buddhas. It is said that

these ten realms are the substance of mind. All existences contain these ten realms in them.

"Anger represents hells; greed, hungry spirits; ignorance, beasts; flattery, asura demons; delight, gods; and calm, men." In detail, the first six realms are called the Six Ways of Illusion, and the latter four are the Four Holy Beings. According to the "Kanjin honzon-sho," even the minds of ordinary people, namely, in our very minds, Buddhas exist, as all existences possess these ten realms.

Nichiren Shonin continues, "A man, no matter how inconsiderate he may be, loves his wife and children. It shows that he is partly in the bodhisattva realm. The only realm yet hard to see is that of Buddhas. However, since we see nine other realms included in the realm of human

beings, we can conjecture that the realm of Buddhas, too, is contained therein. You should firmly believe this and have no doubt about it," and, "The reason why we, ordinary people, born in the Latter Age, can put faith in the Lotus Sutra is that the realm of Buddhas is included in the realm of human beings."

Even a vicious criminal in captivity can feel sorry for his family. That is a sign of the compassionate minds of bodhisattvas, and we can believe in the Lotus Sutra because our minds contain the realm of Buddhas. Consequently, to be able to believe in the Lotus Sutra and chant the Daimoku is the evidence that the Buddha realm surely lies in our minds as well as the actual manifestation of the Buddha realm in this human world. (k.m.)

The Never-Despising Bodhisattva *by Rev. Myoho Ishimoto*

Nichiren Shonin writes in his "Letter about Emperor Sushun," "The gist of practicing the Lotus Sutra is shown in the 'Never-Despising Bodhisattva' chapter. Contemplate why the Never-Despising Bodhisattva stood on the street to bow to passersby. The true purpose for Sakyamuni Buddha appearing in this world was to teach us how to behave on a daily basis. Consider this well. The wise are called human beings while the foolish are beasts."

He is saying that without firm reverence towards others, one cannot



Rev. Myoho Ishimoto

be said to have practiced the Lotus Sutra.

The Lotus Sutra describes the Never-Despising Bodhisattva as follows: After the first Powerful Voice King Buddha entered into Nirvana, during the Age of the Semblance Dharma, there lived a bodhisattva named Never-Despising, who bowed in veneration and praised with gassho everyone he met, saying, "I respect you deeply. I do not despise you. Why is that? It is because you will be able to practice the Way and become Buddhas."

However, at that time there were many arrogant people, who did not understand what Never-Despising was doing. When they saw him, they said, "That monk comes again. He assures us that we will become Buddhas. We do not need such a false assurance of our future Buddhahood," and they struck him with sticks, or pieces of wood, tile or stone.

Though injured, Never-Despising did not get angry. He ran away to a distance and still repeated loudly, "I do not despise you. I never hate you." Saying, "You will become Buddhas," with gassho to all the people, he continued this practice until he was about to die.

When he was about to die, from the sky came a voice of the Powerful Voice King Buddha expounding the

Lotus Sutra. Even though he did not have any knowledge about it, Never-Despising immediately understood it. Then, through the power of the Sutra, he had his six senses purified, prolonged his life, and obtained the great power of eloquence and tranquility to guide innumerable living beings.

Sakyamuni Buddha conclusively says in the chapter, "The Never-Despising Bodhisattva at that time was no one but Myself. Because I kept this Lotus Sutra, I attained the Buddhahood quickly."

To become bodhisattvas is to have a mind of compassion, sharing the problems of others, while looking for solution with them through the law of the causes and effects. Without the mind of love and compassion towards others, we cannot be bodhisattvas. (k.m.)

Shoju-Shakubuku *by Rev. Joyo Ogawa*

Shoju and Shakubuku are two opposite ways of leading sentient beings: the persuasive and the aggressive ways. Shoju means to receive or to embrace warmly, and Shakubuku means to conquer the evil aggressively. Nichiren Shonin states in his "Kaimokusho (Open Your Eyes to the Lotus Teaching)," "there are two differing ways of spreading Buddhism: the aggressive and persuasive. Such statements in the 14th chapter of the Lotus Sutra as 'Do not be critical of others' represent the persuasive



Rev. Joyo Ogawa

way, while such words of the Nirvana Sutra as 'Arm yourselves with swords and sticks, and behead those who break the teaching of the Buddha' stand for the aggressive way. Though these two ways are opposite in nature, they both benefit the people."

He also said, "Now, although there are two ways of propagation, the persuasive and aggressive, they are incompatible with each other just as water and fire are. The fire dislikes the water, and the water hates the fire. Those who prefer the persuasive tend to laugh

at those who practice the aggressive and vice versa. So, when the land is full of evil and ignorant people, the persuasive means should take precedence as preached in the 14th chapter of the Lotus Sutra. However, when there are many cunning slanderers of the True Dharma, the aggressive means should take precedence as preached in the 20th chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

"As there are lands of evil men as well as those of slanderers of the True Dharma in this degenerate age, there should be both aggressive and persuasive means of spreading the True Dharma. Therefore, we have to know whether our country today is a land of ignorant men or that of slanderers in order to decide which of the two ways we should use."

Nichiren Shonin also taught us in his "Sadogoshō (A Letter from Sado)," "Whether we should use the method of Shakubuku or Shoju depends on the circumstances."

According to Nichiren Shonin, the worst sin in the Buddha's teaching was slandering the True Dharma. So, he used aggressive ways to save them with great compassion and risked his life to spread the True Dharma of the Buddha.

Shakubuku is a strict way of spreading Buddhism to awaken religious feeling in others so that they would be converted. On the other hand, Shoju is a gentle way of persuasion according to the individuals and circumstances. To resort to Shakubuku as a way of persuasion, the person must strictly discipline himself first.

Kaidan *by Rev. Myosho Obata*

Kaidan literally means the platform where those who believe in Buddhism receive the Buddhist precepts. The precepts platform made in India was a mound of earth about sixty centimeter high and about three meter square.

Tao-hsuan particularly studied the precepts of the Buddha, and founded the Lu Sect in China in 615. He made a precepts platform, which was, however, a modification of the original one made in India because the Lu Sect belonged to provisional Mahayana Buddhism.



Rev. Myosho Obata

Ch'ien-chen introduced the Ritsu Sect to Japan and established a kaidan at the Todaiji Temple in Nara in 754. Saicho, the founder of the Tendai Sect of Japan, appealed to the government that another kaidan be established for the priests of the Tendai Sect based on the Lotus sutra. His appeal was granted after his death, and another kaidan was installed on Mt. Hiei.

Nichiren Dai Shonin claimed that the kaidan on Mt. Hiei was established for the priests whose duty was to save the people in the Age of the Semblance Dharma and

that a new kaidan should be established for the priests who would save those in the Latter Age of Degeneration. He thus revealed Hommon no kaidan for receiving the precepts and practicing the essential teachings of the Lotus Sutra to us in the Latter Age of Degeneration.

In Nichiren Shu Buddhism, those who uphold the Lotus Sutra and with faith chant the Odaimoku are themselves in the place of practice, their surroundings are in turn the Treasure Land. The unprecedented Great Mandala of all Honored Ones is embodied in everyone who upholds the Lotus Sutra and the Odaimoku in the ten thousand years of the Latter Age of Degeneration. It is preached in the twenty-first chapter of the Lotus Sutra, "In any world where anyone keeps, reads, recites,

expounds, or copies this sutra, or acts according to its teachings, or in any place where a copy of this sutra is put, be it in a garden, in a forest, under a tree, in a monastery, in the house of a person in white robes, in a hall, in a mountain, in a valley, or in the wilderness, a stupa should be erected there and offerings be made to it because, know this, the place, (where the stupa is erected) is the place of enlightenment. Here the Buddhas attained Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi (Perfect Enlightenment). Here the Buddhas turned the wheel of the Dharma. Here the Buddhas entered into Parinirvana."

According to Nichiren Dai Shonin, kaidan can be anywhere where one sincerely practices chanting the Odaimoku. Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.

Ikegami Honmonji *by Rev. Ryuken Akahoshi*

Nichiren Shonin passed away at the residence of Lord Ikegami Munenaka on October 13, 1282. According to the temple history, before his death, Nichiren Shonin converted the Hokke-do, a hall of practicing the Lotus Sutra, standing in the Ikegami property into the Honmonji Temple. Also it is said that Ikegami Munenaka donated 69,384 tsubo of land, equivalent to 51.89 acres. The number of the donated tsubo corresponds to the number of Chinese characters in the Lotus Sutra. Honmonji Temple must've been



Rev. Ryuken Akahoshi

already big in the early stage of the temple history because of the size of Nichiren Shonin's statue enshrined in the Soshi-do, or the founder's hall. This statue was curved by Nichiji, one of Nichiren Shonin's six senior disciples, and Nichijo to commemorate the anniversary of the founder's death in 1288. There are a 96' tall five-story pagoda built in 1608, Honden where Sakyamuni

Buddha and the four great Bodhisattvas are enshrined, Gobyō-shō (mausoleum) where Nichiren Shonin's ashes are enshrined and Reihō-

den (treasure hall) standing in the temple property.

Oeshiki, one of the most important services for Nichiren Buddhists, is a memorial service for our founder, Nichiren Shonin who passed away at Ikegami on October 13, 1282. On the night of October 12, all the main streets from Ikegami Station to Honmonji Temple and the temple's precincts are jammed with more than three hundred thousand crowds. There are about 50 lay-groups, called "koh" of "mando" gathering in Ikegami. Carrying "Mando," literally meaning 10,000 lanterns, and "matoī," firemen's standards of Edo period, those group of koh gather in Ikegami from all over Tokyo and other Kanto regions and they parade on the streets accompanied by flutes, bells,

and drums played by enthusiastic members of "koh," from toddlers to the elderly.

About 16' high Mando is structured with an umbrella frame topping on the form of five-story pagoda with the Odaimoku inscribed or the life of Nichiren Shonin painted on the sides. The umbrella frames are decorated with artificial cherry blossoms, representing a legend that when Nichiren Shonin passed away, the cherry trees came into bloom even though it was in fall. But it is not a legend but a true story that the cherry trees come into bloom in October. When I visited Hongyoji Temple, also called Daibo, where the exact place that Nichiren Shonin passed away, I saw cherry trees in front of the temple blooming fully on the eve of October 13.

Aragyo *by Rev. Ryuoh Falconer*

In the recorded history of our world people have dealt with an array of physical and mental sicknesses. People of many cultures devised ways to deal with what appeared to be to them people who were possessed. These methods frequently took on the form of religious ceremony to cleanse the victim and restore their mind and body to its original self. We can see in our society remnants of these rituals which still exist. Nichiren Buddhism has kept these somewhat esoteric rituals alive. A practice known as Arago lasts for



Rev. Ryuoh Falconer

100 days and prepares the practitioner for the awesome task of facing sickness. Not only the everyday sickness of the physical body, but also the sickness of our spiritual being. Often this sickness can manifest itself even in our physical body and cripple our attempts to thwart it. The ministers who enter the 100 day practice learn a technique using the Lotus Sutra to heal those in trouble and restore them. Sometimes

while living in this Saha world we develop anxiety, stress and depression. These things can keep us from our practice by causing physical sickness.

We sometimes need an extra boost to get us out of the rut we may have fallen into. These esoteric rites can help us get back into the saddle and grab hold of the reins of our life again. As a minister of the Nichiren Shu, I have seen these rituals used to cleanse practitioners and help them regain their path to enlightenment. Practitioners feel refreshed after receiving Kito blessings. Even-though Kito blessings do not help everybody, many times it prepares them to confront the problems in their lives and gives them the strength to do so.

I have not attended the Arago Dojo myself. The Dojo which lasts for 100 days is a grueling ascetic practice. This proposes a problem and a discussion as to its validity as a Buddhist practice. After all, the Buddha himself said that extreme ascetic

practice was not the middle way. The Arago Dojo includes ritual bathing, chanting and learning of the Kito prayers. These are practiced from early in the morning until late at night with only two meals to be consumed during the day and many hours sitting in seiza. The practice is a test of the ability of the minister to face the ravages of sickness and death. What might be even more ravaging is the illusions and desires in our society that pull at people consistently. Even-though some, through their practice, can see the illusions for what they are, others need help to gain the strength to face what they may not really feel they can. This would elude to the idea of using an expedient to help them overcome their illusions of despair. I feel this is the place of Arago in our practice.

Nichiren's Birth *by Rev. Shokai Kanai*

Nichiren was born the son of a fisherman in a tiny village of Kominato in Awa Province on the southern tip of the Boso Peninsula in present-day Chiba Prefecture on the 16th day of the second month in 1222. His father, Nukina Jiro, was a fisherman considered to be a candala, a member of the lowest social class. A fisherman of that time was considered to be an executioner who lived by slaughtering living beings.

The newborn baby was named Zen-Nichi-Marō literally meaning "Virtuous-Sun-Boy." His birthplace,



Rev. Shokai Kanai

Kominato, is located on the far-east side of Japan. The rays of sunshine hit the top of Mt. Kiyosumi near Kominato before anywhere else in Japan.

The sun and the ocean affected Nichiren throughout his life. He realized that stormy black clouds may cover the sun, but the sun never fails to reappear a few days later just like a phoenix and gives comfort and energy to all living beings.

Chapter 3 of the Lotus Sutra says that those who do not believe the sutra but slander it will be poverty-stricken and mean. Nichiren wrote

his "Zemui Sanzo-sho (Treatise on Tripitaka Master Subhakarasiṃha)," "I am a son of poverty-stricken [parents] in Awa." Nichiren thought that the reason why he encountered many persecutions was that he had slandered the Lotus Sutra in his previous lives. By facing these persecutions, he believed that he was atoning for these past sins.

It is stated in the Lotus Sutra, chapter 14, that a bodhisattva who expounds this sutra should not approach candala, fishermen or other people who commit evil acts for their livelihood. The term, candala, appears in Nichiren's "Sado Gokanki-sho (Treatise on the Banishment to Sado)," where it is stated "Nichiren is a son of candala at the ocean side of Awa, Tojo in Eastern Japan. My stinky body is thrown away for the

sake of the Lotus Sutra. It is as precious as changing a stone to gold."

He wrote this letter on the 10th day of the 10th month, 1271, while on the way to Sado Island after narrowly escaping execution at Tatsuno-kuchi. He was joyful that the Lotus Sutra saves even the people in the lowest social class.

His atonement was not just for his own sins, but he also shouldered the sins of all the people.



Lotus Flower

Kumarajiva *by Rev. Chisen Maeda*

Kumarajiva was a Buddhist monk who translated various sutras written in Sanskrit or the Central Asian languages into Chinese. He is famous for translating the Lotus Sutra into Chinese as the Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma, which we recite everyday.

It is said that there had been six separate translations of the Lotus Sutra in Chinese, including, the Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Righteous Dharma translated by Dharmarakṣa before the Kumarajiva's translation and the Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma with



Rev. Chisen Maeda

Additional Chapters after Kumarajiva. Among them, the Kumarajiva's version has been highly esteemed and widely spread.

Why was the Kumarajiva's translation of the Lotus Sutra esteemed highly? One reason was that while in the past most translators worked independently, Kumarajiva brought many translators together to work jointly for translation. Besides Kumarajiva was well versed in Chinese.

Thanks to Kumarajiva, we can recite the Lotus Sutra today. Nichiren Shonin, who also esteemed him highly

as the translator of the Lotus Sutra and the man who widely introduced it to the world, frequently mentioning him in his writings such as "the Response to My Lady the Nun Sennichi," and "Senji-sho (Selecting the Right Time)."

The Nichiren-shu Order has also recognized his great work and in 1986, sent a group of Nichiren Buddhists headed by the late Archbishop. Nichiyu Iwama, the former Abbot of the Kuonji Temple, to pay respects to his grave in China, holding a memorial service in appreciation of his great work.

Translation appears to be a simple work, but it is very difficult when we actually do it. Once a month I have to struggle to translate some phrases of Nichiren Shonin into English for the newsletter of Hawaii Nichiren Mission. To translate even several phrases is difficult for me. Needless to say it

requires a skill of experts to convey the correct meaning of the complicated phrases or idiomatic phrases with profound meanings in translation. It is possible that a translator may change the original meaning or even state the opposite. Most of the Buddhist scriptures are full of complicated and meaningful terms and idioms, so even translators who mastered a language to some extent, find it difficult to translate them. That is why a great translation is rare.

Today we are able to worship and practice the Lotus Sutra in many parts of the world. This is because not only have there been the efforts of many people who transmitted this sutra to the present but also Kumarajiva made its superb translation. We should always be grateful to him for his wonderful translation of the Lotus Sutra. (k.m.)

Hokekyoji Temple *by Rev. Kyotsu Hori*

The Hokekyoji Temple, commonly known as the Nakayama Hokekyoji, is located in the Nakayama section of the present day Ichikawa City in the eastern outskirts of Tokyo. The temple is designated as one of the several Grand Head Temples of the Nichiren Shu Order because it is the oldest Nichiren temple, and the temple collected and preserved many of the original writings of Nichiren Shonin (go-ibun) for more than seven hundred years.

The origin of the Hokekyoji Temple lies in the Hokke-do Hall (later renamed Hokkeji Temple) built within



Rev. Kyotsu Hori

the grounds of Toki Jonin's residence in 1260, when Nichiren's residence at Matsubagayatsu, Kamakura, was burned down by a mob, forcing Nichiren to seek refuge under the protection of Toki Jonin at Wakamiya in Shimousa Province (Chiba Prefecture today). It is said that Nichiren preached there for 100 days from the end of the year to early spring of the following year. Therefore this temple is considered as

the "Holy Site of the First Turning of the Wheel of the Dharma by a Disciple of the Original Buddha." Shortly later Ota Jomyo of nearby Nakayama

also founded a Hokke-do Hall (renamed Hommyoji Temple later). It is said that the dedication ceremony of this Hall was also conducted by our Founder.

When Nichiren Shonin passed away in 1282, Toki Jonin entered the priesthood renaming himself Nichijo. The following year, when Ota Jomyo passed away, Jonin entered the Hommyoji Temple and controlled both temples. In 1279, he established the rule strictly prohibiting taking any mandalas and writings of our Founder outside of the temple. It was this rule established by Jonin (Nichijo), which was diligently abided by successive resident priests and officials of the temple that successfully protected many original writings of Nichiren Shonin from being scattered and lost.

In 1931, the new treasure house

for the temple (named Hokekyoji as the combination of the Hokkeji and Hommyoji since 1545) was completed by the Seikyo Goji Zaidan (Holy Writings Preservation Foundation). Preserved in this stupa-like building include such important writings of our Founder as "Rissho ankoku-ron (Spreading Peace Throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma)" and "Kanjin Honzon-sho (Spiritual Contemplation and the Most Venerable One)," which are both designated as national treasures of Japan.

Besides, this temple is known as the headquarters of the gokito priests. It is said that when Nichiren was ambushed at Komatsubara, he escaped to seek the protection of Toki Jonin, and he carved a statue of Kishimojin (Hariti) and taught Jonin the secret dharma.

Six Paramitas *by Shami Kanjin Cederman*

The Six Paramitas are referred to in chapter 17 of the Lotus Sutra. There the Buddha praises the limitless merits gained by Bodhisattva's practicing the Six Perfections. They are generosity, morality, patience, vigor, meditation, and the perfection of wisdom, becoming the basic guidelines for all the aspects of our behavior, action and thoughts in our lives. These six qualifications are necessary for us to become a Bodhisattva practitioner and gain the enlightenment in order to save all beings and



Shami Kanjin Cederman

make this world a peaceful place.

The Perfection of Generosity, this simply states that practitioners should not be attached to material things and should be able to give both material items as well as spiritual teachings without reserve, to save all living beings.

The Perfection of Morality, the foundation of morality is found in the five precepts. They are; do not kill, steal, commit sexual misconduct, lie, or cloud the mind with intoxicants.

The Perfection of Patience, a

Bodhisattva should always cultivate a calm and patient spirit in the face of obstacles and opposition.

The Perfection of Vigor, to constantly giving the best effort in all moral endeavors.

The Perfection of Meditation, the correct direction of our minds to concentrate on our practice and purpose.

The Perfection of Wisdom, which connects the others practices in ones mind and the Buddha Dharma. This aspect being the connector and conductor of the other five practices taught to a Bodhisattva. This causes the mind to become pure in all its actions.

These practices seem impossible for us as human beings to perfect. But, we are able to accom-

plish these in our present lives here and now. Keeping in mind and using these practices as a basis for the morals of our actions. Through deep faith in the Lotus Sutra we are able to practice these all at once and gain all the benefits in our lives. Our founder, Nichiren Shonin said in the Kanjin Honzon Sho, "All the good deeds and virtues of the Buddha Sakyamuni are manifested in the title of the Lotus Sutra, that is, in the five characters: Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo. However sinful we may be, we shall be naturally endowed with all the deeds and virtues of the Buddha if we adhere to these five characters." Turning this world, into peaceful and safe Pure Land for all beings to live. Chant Namu MyoHo RenGe Kyo!

The Doctrine of Ichinen Sanzen (10)

Salvation by Lord Preacher Sakyamuni Buddha Expounded in the Lotus Sutra, Chapter 16

by Rev. Kanji Tamura

Ichinen-sanzen is the doctrine of the salvation of all sentient beings by Lord Preacher Sakyamuni Buddha. It is the universal truth that forms the Sakyamuni's realm of enlightenment. In this article we simply learn how the salvation by Lord Preacher Sakyamuni Buddha works and what His realm of enlightenment is according to the "Life Span of the Buddha" chapter in the essential section of the Lotus Sutra.

Sakyamuni Buddha was born in a small city called Kapilavastu located in northern India. At the age of 19, He left his family, becoming a monk in order to overcome the sufferings of life such as suffering of birth, old age, disease, and death. After years of practice, He at the age of 30, attained enlightenment under a bodhi tree in Buddhagaya, and from then on He is said to have traveled all over India, preaching Buddhism to people. However, in the Lotus Sutra, chapter 16 (in the essential section), it is revealed for the first time that the Buddha actually attained enlightenment in the remotest past in this Saha World, and since then He has been saving people, often changing His appearances in various ways as occasion may demand. It is also stated that He had already accomplished uncountable practice and penance as a bodhisattva. Hence the way the Buddha observes and recognized the world is totally



Rev. Kanji Tamura

undetectable. His view transcends above the narrow and partial views of humans. Surely, He is the Eternal Buddha, free to appear to the world or show His extinction from it as the necessity arises in order to bring salvation to various people.

The works of salvation by Sakyamuni Buddha is indicated in the Lotus Sutra with a parable called "a doctor and his children." According to the parable, there was a doctor who was wise and intelligent and excellent in healing illnesses. He had many children, a hundred of them in number. While he was abroad

on a business trip, his children played with his medicine and mistakenly took poison. Deeply affected by it, they were writhing and rolling on the ground in pain. When the father came home, he found his children suffering from the poison. Some of them were out of their minds while others were barely in their right minds. The father doctor at once compounded various herbs into a good medicine and tried to give it to them. Those in their right minds, though barely, took the medicine immediately and recovered. Those who lost their sanity, however, refused to take it. At that, the father hit upon a plan. He planned to shock his children, so that they could awake to the medicine. Saying, "I will die soon of my old age. I leave this good medicine here for you to take," and the father left for a foreign country. From there the father sent a messenger

to tell his children that he had passed away. The children, out of the shock and sorrow, came to themselves and could take the medicine. When all his children were recovered, the father as a good doctor returned to them fine.

In this parable, the father as a good doctor represents Sakyamuni Buddha, and his children indicate all sentient beings. Although sentient beings originally have the same minds as the Buddha's, driven by delusion, distress, and suffering, they lost their true selves. They are like the children suffering from poison. According to Nichiren Shonin, the children, who lost their sanity, means us, who live in this Latter Age of Degeneration. The good medicine prescribed by Sakyamuni Buddha is the Lotus Sutra that is the concentrated virtue of all sutras. The children in their right minds took the medicine and received the salvation by the Buddha immediately. But he disappeared from the children who lost their sanity, and sent a messenger to give the good medicine to them. Nichiren Shonin states that this messenger of the Buddha is Superior Practice Bodhisattva, and the medicine handed to them is the Daimoku, concentrated virtue of the Lotus Sutra. That is to say, in the Latter Age of Degeneration, a long time after Sakyamuni Buddha passed away, Superior Practice Bodhisattva appears as the Buddha's messenger and gives the Daimoku saved by the Buddha to the mouths of all sentient beings. We can say that the attainment of Bud-

dhahood for all sentient beings is summarized by taking this good medicine of the Daimoku. And in the Lotus Sutra, chapter 21, Superior Practice Bodhisattva and other bodhisattvas receive this medicine, the essence of the Lotus Sutra, and promise to spread it in the Latter Age of Degeneration. The doctrine of "3,000 existences contained in one thought" is also the essence of the Lotus Sutra, so the Daimoku can be said to be the good medicine of the integration of the "3,000 existences contained in one thought."

It is also preached in the 16th chapter of the Lotus Sutra that even after Sakyamuni Buddha passes away, if people try to see Him with their faith at the risk of their lives, the Buddha with His disciples will reappear on Mt. Sacred Eagle, (where the Lotus Sutra is preached), and he always lives there without extinction. And even if this Saha World, where the Buddha lives, seems to appear turbulent as if it stands at the edge of destruction, its true nature is the eternally peaceful Pure Land, free from all the troubles and suffering. At the end of this chapter, the Buddha concludes that He everlastingly wishes how to teach all sentient beings to attain Buddhahood and lead them into His peaceful Pure Land.

We can say that this diagram of the Saha World equals to the Buddha's Pure Land is the very world of salvation and enlightenment as well as the world of "3,000 existences contained in one thought." The sight of this world is the appearance of Sakyamuni Buddha and His disciples on top of Mt. Sacred Eagle. Nichiren Shonin later drew this image in his Great Mandala. (tr. Rev. Kanshin Mochida)

(to be continued)

Seminar continued from p.1



Photo shows: (from left to right; front) Ms. Lai Liyun, Ms. Lee Ung, Ms. Kee Swee Ling, Rev. Ryuken Akahoshi, Rev. Giko Tabata, Rev. Shokai Kanai, Ms. Angie Ng Ping Ping, Ms. Tai Yee Chean, Ms. Chua Xin Juan; (rear) Rev. Kanshin Mochida, Rev. Shingyo Imai, Mr. Marvin Lee, Rev. Kanmyo Watanabe, Mr. Aaron Rodriguez, Ms. Merisa Caine-Barrett, Ms. Nichole Amara Fedeke, Ms. Beau Takashi Aihara, Ms. Cody Hiroko Aihara, Rev. Chisen Maeda, Ms. Kazuko Ogawa, Rev. Shobo Mitomo



Rev. Giko Tabata, chief instructor, presents a completion certificate to Ms. Cody Hiroko Aihara

The Legend of Nichiren (17)

by Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph. D.

Nichiren Shonin returned home in Kominato to see his mother who was ill in 1264. In his letter, "Kaen jogo, gosho," Nichiren states that her life was extended by four years due to the prayer he conducted for her. It is a historical fact that Nichiren Shonin prepared charms and amulets for his lay followers. He also conducted prayer services for recovery from illness and to drive out evil spirits for those in "critical age." However, no record has been found showing that Nichiren used a rosary and a wooden sword in such a way as modern gokito masters of the Nichiren Shu Order use them in prayer services. The method of prayer



Rev. Gyokai Sekido

services of the Nichiren Shu Order as currently conducted became popular in the Edo Period (1600-1868), though its origin can be traced back to Nichiren Shonin (1222-1282) and Nichizo Shonin (1267-1342).

Worrying about his mother, Nichiren traveled home accompanied by his disciples. Legend says, it was in autumn of 1264, the time when quacking wild geese were seen flying in the sky. When he arrived at his parents' home, he found it noisy inside. His mother, who had been in sick bed, was at her

last moment. He ran up to his mother and called out to her, "It is Nichiren." But she did not respond. Nichiren Shonin, immediately wrote a gohonzon, and started chanting the Odaimoku, and a passage in chapter XXIII, Lotus Sutra, "Medicine King Bodhisattva," which reads "Illness heals instantly." Then, miraculously, his mother opened her eyes and started chanting the Odaimoku. Nichiren Shonin was very much pleased at this, and stayed by her bedside for many days, telling her many stories.

In those days, an epidemic was spreading in Kominato, Nichiren's hometown. He wrote the Odaimoku on a piece of white cloth, and asked a fisherman to put it on the stern of his ship and navigate the ship along the nearby beach. He also wrote down sentences of the Lotus Sutra on a stone, sank it in a



Nichiren Shonin conducted prayer services for his mother, and her life was extended for four years. The cloud in the picture shows the progress of time. The wood-block print is reproduced from "Nichiren Shonin Chugasan"



Nichiren Shonin lost two of his disciples in an ambush by Tojo Kagenobu somewhere around the present Kamogawa City, Chiba Prefecture in 1264. He had a cut on his forehead. The wood-block print is reproduced from "Nichiren Shonin Chugasan"

thought ill of Nichiren.

At around noon, the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1264, Nichiren and his disciples, a party of about ten people, left the Rengeji Temple for the mansion of Kudo Yoshitaka at the invitation of Lord Kudo, chanting the Odai-moku. Midway, the party was ambushed by Steward Tojo and his troops, one hundred or so in number. Nichiren's party was unarmed. Two of his disciples were killed instantly. Hearing of the attack, Lord Kudo rushed to the scene without his armor and was also killed by the Tojo troops.

Steward Tojo riding on horseback rushed toward Nichiren. Nichiren chanted the prayers of nine letters (Chinese characters), "Myo-ho-ren-ge-kyo Jo-hon-dai-ichi," wielding his rosary, and escaped Tojo's attack, though he had a cut on his forehead with a sword. When Tojo tried to repeat his attack against Nichiren, Hariti who made a vow to protect Buddhism, appeared and stared at Tojo. Taken aback, Tojo fell off his horse. Nichiren and his disciples ran away. Thus his life was saved.

Because the wound on his forehead was painful, Nichiren entered a cave of a snow mountain to rest. While he was chanting the Odaimoku, an old woman bearing a rosary and a stick passed by. Seeing the wound of Nichiren, she took off her hat stuffed with cotton, and covered the wound of Nichiren with it. This is the origin of the custom among Nichiren Buddhists putting a cotton stuffed hat on the head of Nichiren in winter. (to be continued)

Laos Study Tour

The Nichiren-shu Order with the cooperation of the Buddhist Aid Center (BAC) carried out a study tour in Champasak Prefecture, Laos, from August 30 to September 8.

Rev. Keitsu Ito, the Director of BAC, headed this tour group, and Rev. Shingyo Imai, Manager of International Affairs, and Rev. Dairyo Tomikawa, a Supervisor of the Missionary Department, both of the Nichiren-shu Headquarters, led the group. Buddhist ministers and university students altogether 16 of them participated.

At the work site, they wrestled with the activity of "the elementary school construction" that BAC had been carrying out for many years, and participants actually took part in the construction work and mingled with villagers including children and workers.

This time they constructed two classrooms next to the three classrooms that had been built by the first study tour. They poured cement, put in reinforcing rods and piled up bricks. A farewell ceremony was held on the last



day with the traditional Laotian "Bashi ceremony." Some participants were unable to suppress their emotions and shed tears.

The study tour participants attended at a traditional "Bashi" ceremony at the farewell party of the concluding day of the tour (photo). (story by Rev. Dairyo Tomikawa)



BRAZIL

'A Deity Incarnated in Human Form'

By Rev. Kenno Fukushima, Hokekyoji

As I wrote in my first Newsletter, it was our goal at the Hokekyoji Temple to increase our membership from five to twenty within a year. Fortunately, we have already reached the goal as of September 3.

Since in Brazil we do not have a danka system like in Japan, all the followers become members from their own will and pay some dues. We have divided the members into four different groups with different annual dues: regular membership, family membership (family members of the regular members), future members (family members under age 15) and supporting membership (those who cannot join the temple but who give monetary support).

We have aggressively propagated among the friends and relatives of the original five members and have approached former Nichiren Shu believers and those who are interested in Nichiren Shonin's teachings. The seed of the Buddha that the former resident minister, Rev. Tamura, planted is slowly beginning to sprout. At present there are 10 regular members, nine family members, one future member and one supporting member, totaling 21 members. We will try to keep the sprout growing but our next step is to plant more new seeds to expand our propagation movement.

When we were planning to move from a rented room to an independent building, the house where we were going to move in was in a totally devastated condition. Electric wires were hanging down from the ceiling, and the floors were in terrible worm-eaten condition. (Brazil is notorious for its termites!) I had just arrived in Brazil and Rev. Tamura was debating on what to do. Then the Buddha sent us a "Henge no Hito (a deity incarnated in human form)."

Rev. M. visited us at our temporary quarters. He had come to Brazil as an immigrant more than twenty years ago and had started a con-

struction company, which had done really well. However, his younger brother, who had succeeded his father as the resident priest of a Nichiren Shu temple in Japan, had passed away last year, forcing Rev. M. to return to Japan to take over the temple. Unfortunately his wife, whom he had left in Brazil, had a cerebral hemorrhage in June this year and so he had to return to Brazil to take care of her. Rev. M. who had read about our Hokekyoji Temple in our newsletter visited us in Sao Paulo. Seeing the run-down condition of the temple, Rev. M. decided to help us by providing building material and help for the renovation at a very reasonable rate through his former construction company.

Unfortunately, Rev. M.'s wife passed away and her funeral service was held at a larger Nichiren Shu temple in Sao Paulo. When he was living in Brazil he used to be the vice-president of this temple and had an expert knowledge about temple management and gathering members. On the day of his wife's funeral, Rev. M. took me around this large temple despite his busy schedule.

After two weeks he returned to Japan leaving a huge monetary donation to our Hokekyoji Temple. On arriving in Brazil I had been robbed of the temple funds and was deeply depressed. This gift of Rev. M. was like a dream for us all. The renovation of Hokekyoji was completed and the new head of the construction company promised to help us for the maintenance of the temple.

In the Lotus Sutra there is a passage pertaining to "Henge no Hito." I truly feel that Rev. M. was the "Henge no Hito" himself. The Buddha always is looking over us and trying to help us. His support was such a great one for us. I will use this as a basis for the future of propagation in Brazil.

HONOLULU

Thanks from Fujinkai

The Fujinkai would like to thank each one of you for

Church Events

By Sandra Seki



your contribution and help in the mini-bazaar. The Fujinkai was able to make a donation of \$1,080 towards the Rainbow Conference fund.

The Fujinkai will also participate in the City & County Mayor's Fair on Saturday, November 19, 2005. They are asking for your help and donations of handmade craft items, baked goods, patchwork, small plants, and pickled items. Due to the Board of Health restrictions bento and sushi will not be sold.

Nichiren Youth Leadership Retreat

By Ms. Cody Aihara

On July 25, Maeda Sensei, my brother Beau, and I went to California to attend the Nichiren Shu International Youth Leadership Retreat. The retreat was held at the Nichiren Buddhist International Center in Hayward, California, and lasted two and a half days. The center served as both classrooms for lectures and meeting places for our daily activities. There was a total of 10 staff members and 12 students from Malaysia, Singapore, and the U.S.A. The students from the U.S. came from Tennessee, Texas, and Hawaii. Most of the staff members were from Japan but Maeda Sensei from Hawaii and Mitomo Sensei from Seattle also participated.

There were many things discussed in the lectures, but most of them centered on the saying of "Now, here and I" (ima koko watashi). Now or ima represents the ever changing time cycle we live in. Kanai Sensei from Los Angeles, explained that nothing lasts forever and that nothing will ever remain the same. Everything is up to us to do or finish now, basically we should live in the present rather than make plans for the future that may not exist. Here or koko represents the place you live in or worship or anywhere you want it to be. Akahoshi Sensei from Portland explained that we are right now here in Hayward, but Hayward is also a part of California, and California is a part of the U.S. and so on and so forth. Sometimes we pray to the Buddha when we are in a classroom right before a test or before going to bed, and although we are not in a temple or in front of the hotokesan, we are still speaking directly to Him. Therefore where we are doesn't make a difference; it is our choice to choose where we pray and where we choose to spread the teachings of the Lotus Sutra.

Tabata Sensei from the Nichiren Shu Headquarters gave a lecture on I or watashi. He explained that each of us have three types of "myself." One is the myself that we decided or our own perspective of ourselves. The second myself is the way others perceive me. The third myself is the essence of Buddha that exists in everyone. We are able to control the first and third myself, but it is what we do that determines how the second myself will develop. Everyone is not raised the same or have the same experience as another person, and this is why we are all unique. There is no one in the entire world like you, therefore you should be respectful of yourself.

I think this trip allowed me to learn more about myself and the teachings of the Buddha. The teachers were very helpful in answering any questions we might have had, and because the group was small, everyone got to know each other very well. Overall the trip was fun and a very knowledgeable learning experience.

Thank you.

LOS ANGELES

Oeshiki Service

The Oeshiki service not only commemorates the passing but also celebrates the entire life of our Founder. This year the ceremony is to be held on Sunday, October 16, at 11 a.m. The ceremony will commence with a traditional Mando procession with the harmonious chanting of the Nichiren Shu Wasan and the Odaimoku to the beat of the taiko drum. After the service a potluck luncheon will be held. Please bring your favorite dish enough for five people.

In remembrance of the cherry blossoms in Ikegami, Japan, which suddenly bloomed as the Great Master passed into Nirvana, we will decorate the main hall with artificial Oeshiki cherry blossoms. Please help us decorate the main hall on Saturday, October 8 (clean up day).

Taiko Beat and Sutra Chanting

Rev. Shokai Kanai will teach the taiko beat starting 9:15 a.m. on the second Sunday of each month before the Sunday service. He will teach different beats of the Odaimoku, "Jiga-ge" as well as the festive taiko. If you are interested please come to the Nerio Building Hall at 9:15 a.m. on the second Sunday of the month. There is a donation of \$5

per practice. The fee will be used to buy more taiko equipment and for inviting a taiko instructor in the future.

The morning service starts at 7 a.m. every morning in the main hall throughout the year lasting 45 minutes. We read the "Yohon" major chapters of the Lotus Sutra slowly word by word. You may leave the main hall after the chanting. However, Rev. Kanai and Rev. Kumakura continue to chant in different rooms and in front of the monuments for another 45 minutes. Chanting helps you start a day full of vitality! If you would like to attend the morning service, please call the temple a day before, so the gate to the parking lot can be opened before seven.

SAMGHA

Important Task

A few days before Nichiren Shonin passed away, he gave an important task to a 13 year old boy named Kyoichimaro. At the time Nichiren had many disciples and friends around him. He told the boy to complete his studies and then appeal to the Imperial Court in Kyoto for their acceptance of the Lotus (Dharma) Sutra. It was a difficult task but the trust Nichiren placed on the young boy was great. Nichiren was looking ahead and his trust bloomed into a huge growth in western Japan of the believers of the Lotus Dharma.

Oeshiki

It is said that all attending Nichiren disciples and lay parishioners at the Ikegami estate during his final hours were awe stricken by the cherry blossoms blooming off-season on the nearby hills. This baffling sight inspired the making of the massive "mando" portable lanterns decorated with thousands of paper cherry blossoms—hoisted by dozens of people—a prime attraction in the annual Oeshiki grand parade at Ikegami.

It was thereafter that the Ikegami estate was sanctified as the Hommonji Temple where the Administrative Head Office of the Nichiren Shu Order is now located. Adding to the parade are numerous "Matoi," standard streamers identifying diverse supporting organizations. The annual turnout of spectators is reported to average over 300,000 and it has become one of Tokyo's major attractions in recent years.

Let us do our part in keeping with Nichiren's legacy and join together to celebrate the upcoming Oeshiki, the 724th Memorial Service for our Founder to be held on October 2, Sunday from 11 a.m.

NICHIREN SHU NEWS

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