

Nichiren Shu News

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A Biography of Nikko Shonin (2) Nikko Shonin and His Disciples and Followers

By Rev. Shincho Mochizuki, Ph. D
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Leaving Minobu: Nikko Shonin went to Minobusan when he was 37 years old. He hoped to serve his master, Nichiren Shonin, sincerely and devote all his life to helping Nichiren as his right-hand man.



Rev. Shincho Mochizuki

N i k k o , however, is said to have left Minobusan several years later in December 1288. Many reasons for his action were speculated in later years including his

discord with Niko Shonin and Hakii (Nambu) Sanenaga. On the other hand, the reasons based on the historical materials of Nikko Shonin are: 1. to establish the Three Great Secret Dharmas in the essential section of the Lotus Sutra (the Honzon: the Most Venerable One, the Kaidan: Precept dais, and the Daimoku); 2. to educate his disciples; 3. to write about important teachings; and 4. to concentrate on chanting the Lotus Sutra and the Daimoku.

Educating disciples: Nikko hoped to establish a precept dais revealed in the essential section of the Lotus Sutra and a base for his mission at Oishigahara, Fuji. He said that he visited and gained the support of Nanjo Tokimitsu, the estate steward of Ueno, Suruga Province, to establish the Shimonobo Temple at Shimojo Village. He also founded the Taiseikiji Temple at Oishigahara (Kamijo, Fujinomiya City, Shizuoka Prefecture) in the tenth month of 1290. It is said that he won the support of Ishikawa Yoshitada, the estate steward of Kitayama, to establish the Hommonji Temple (Kitayama, Fujinomiya City) at Omosu 8 years later, in 1298. Here he opened a Dan-sho (Danrin) as an educational institution for priests to teach and train his disciples and followers. He taught many pupils including Nichimoku Shonin very near Mt. Fuji, and enlightened such followers as the Nanjo family, the Yui family, the Ishikawa family, the Nitta family and the Akiyama family, and remonstrated with court nobles and samurai families.

Nikko closed his 88-year-old career at Omosu on the 7th day of the 2nd month, 1333. When he passed away, it is said that many of his disciples and followers were engaged in missionary work in Shikoku (Sanuki) and Kyushu, far away from Suruga Province.

Missionary Work in Suruga: Nikko



The portrait of Nikko Shonin preserved in the Kyoshinji Temple

began to work as a missionary in the Provinces of Kai and Suruga late in the 6th month of 1274. He served Nichiren sincerely and propagated the teaching of the Lotus Sutra around the localities of Suruga. The greatest footholds for his propagation were the Jissoji Temple (Fuji City, Shizuoka Prefecture) and the Shijukuin Temple. Nichiji Shonin, one of the Six Senior Disciples, as well as Nichigen Shonin and Nichii Shonin, the Junior Disciples, who all belonged to the Shijukuin Temple became the disciples of Nikko.

There was an ancient temple of the Tendai Sect named the Ryusenji Temple at Atsuwarago, four kilometers east of the Jissoji Temple. Shimotsukebo, Echigobo, Mikawabo, Izumibo and Hyobubo, priests living at the Ryusenji Temple, were converted to the teaching of Nichiren by Nikko around the 6th month of 1275. Nichiren gave them names as follows: Nisshu to Shimotsukebo, Nichiben to Echigobo and Nichizen to Shoubo. They were learned priests of the Tendai Sect, who were converted by Nikko. As these disciples were disputing the teaching of the Buddha with Gyochi of the Ryusenji Temple, their lives were in danger, forcing some such as Sammibo and Daishimbo to fall away from the ranks of Nikko's disciples.

Nikko's Disciples: Nichigo Shonin wrote the order of the funeral service of Nikko, his master priest, and the records of apportioning his remembrances. We can see from these writings that there were many disciples of Nikko. There were also many disciples of Nikko among those of Nichiren. It was decided that Nichiren's grave on Minobusan

would be guarded and served by the duty roster with Nichiren's main disciples, the Six Senior Disciples and the Junior Disciples, as chief members. According to the article of the service in rotation in the "Shuso Gosenge Kiroku (Record of the Founder's Demise)," the whole record of Nichiren's funeral service, written by Nikko, altogether 18 disciples offered their service in rotation with one or two disciples every month from the first to the last month. Many members of the service were Nikko's disciples. From the nationwide viewpoint, we can see that Nikko's disciples offered the sincere service because of their advantage of living near Minobusan.

In 1298' following the precedent set by Nichiren Shonin, Nikko selected his six direct disciples in his "Honzon Bunyo-cho (Register of Apportioning the Most Venerable Ones)," that is to say, the catalog of Nikko's handwritten Most Venerable Ones given to his priests and lay disciples. He selected Nikke (Jakunichibo, founder of the Myorenji Temple at Shimojo), Nichimoku (successor of the Taiseikiji Temple), Nisshu (formerly a priest of the Ryusenji Temple), Nichizen (formerly a priest of the Ryusenji Temple), Nissen (propagating in the Shikoku district) and Nichijo (formerly a disciple of Nichimoku), as "Nikko's prime disciples." Sixty-seven names are listed as the recipients of his Honzon: 28 priests, 14 male peasants, 7 lay females, and 18 samurai. It is said that 9 priests, Nichiji, Nichiben, Nippo, Nichiei, Nichii, Nichiden, Nikkyo, Higoko and Chikuzembo, left the rank of Nikko's disciples after his demise.

Nikko's Believers: Nanjo Tokimitsu of Suruga Province was an early follower of Nikko. The Matsuno family also came to believe Nikko through Tokimitsu's wife who was a daughter of Matsuno Rokurozaemon. Tokimitsu was a devout believer in the Lotus Sutra who served Nikko after Nichiren's death and donated a piece of land in Oishigahara to Nikko. Ishikawa Yoshisuke was the estate steward of



The sutra storehouse of the Jissoji Temple



Rev. Nichiji Sakai

Rev. Sakai Installed As 51st Chief Abbot

Rev. Nichiji Sakai, 87, head priest of the Honmonji Temple, Ikegami, was installed as the 51st Kancho (Chief Abbot) of the Nichiren Shu in a ceremony held at the Shumuin Headquarters on May 9. He has succeeded Rev. Nichiko Fujii, head priest of the Minobusan Kuonji Temple, who retired from the office due to ill health.

"The present aspect of society is distorted. It should not be neglected any more. Acknowledging the heavy responsibility of the office, I am determined to do my best to realize the ideal of Nichiren Shonin—Spreading Peace Throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma," he declared in his inaugural address.

The first Chief Abbot of Nichiren Shu was Rev. Nissatsu Arai, the 65th head priest of the Minobusan Kuonji Temple, who assumed the office in 1874.

Omosu and Tokimitsu's elder sister's husband. He was one of the donors of Mieido (a temple to enshrine Nichiren's statue). The wife of Lay Priest Takahashi Rokurobei of Fujikashima, Suruga, was an aunt of Nikko. Lay Priest Nishiyama living at Nishiyama in Fujigun (Shibakawacho, Shizuoka Prefecture) is said to be Nikko's uncle. Nitta Shiro Nobutsuna's younger brother was Nichimoku and his elder brother's child was Nichido. Akiyama Yasutada, who moved from Kai Province to Sanuki Province, was also one of Nikko's supporters. Thus the Yui family at Kawai including Nikko's blood relatives came to believe in the teaching of Nichiren through Nikko's guidance.

Thus many disciples and followers of Nikko supported the Nichiren Buddhist Order near Minobusan, and went to Minobu as often as possible to guard Nichiren's grave. It should be mentioned that in the history of Nichiren Buddhism many people became Nichiren's disciples and followers through the guidance of Nikko.

(Trans. by Rev. Kanshu Naito)
(to be continued)

The Doctrine of Ichinen Sanzen (14)

Theorem (RI) and Actuality (JI)

By Rev. Kanji Tamura

Various Meanings of "JI: Actuality" (4)

Nichiren Shonin introduced the doctrine of the Ichinen Sanzen of "JI: actuality," that should be practiced and realized in this real world. "JI: actuality" has various meanings, and in the previous articles, we learned: (1) to actually feel Lord Sakyamuni; (2) to chant the Daimoku; (3) to worship the Great Mandala as the Most Venerable One; (4) the practice of sowing the Daimoku, seed of the Buddhahood; (5) to read the Lotus Sutra through "Shiki: color" and to spread peace by establishing the True Dharma; (6) to spread the Daimoku into the present-day society in the Latter Age of Degeneration; and (7) to renovate history. In this article, we learn about the "self-awareness of the Original Disciples Emerged from the Earth" as a unique aspect of "JI: actuality," though it somewhat overlaps with what we have already discussed.

7. To have the self-awareness of the Original Disciples Emerged from the Earth

The bodhisattvas that emerged from the earth are the original disciples of the Eternal and Original Buddha Sakyamuni. They are the practicers who have the mission of spreading the Lotus Sutra in the future. They had been practicing Buddhism deep under the ground of this Saha-world and emerged from there responding to the call of the Sakyamuni Buddha. Then they received the essence of the Lotus Sutra directly from Him and



Rev. Kanji Tamura

promised to spread it after His extinction. Their leader is called Superior Practice Bodhisattva.

However, Buddhist leaders before Nichiren Shonin had scarcely referred to those particular bodhisattvas described only in the Lotus Sutra. Even Grand Master T'ien-t'ai's interpretation of their significance and future dissemination was very simple. We can say that until Nichiren Shonin, their true values had been missed.

In the latter half of his "Kanjin Honzon-sho (A Treatise Revealing the Spiritual Contemplation and the Most Venerable One)" Nichiren Shonin states with firm confidence that the bodhisattvas as the Original Disciples that appear from the earth will appear and spread the Daimoku among the people in the Latter Age of Degeneration: "In the beginning of the Latter Age of Degeneration, the country would slander the True Dharma, and the people would be inferior in disposition. That was the reason why Sakyamuni Buddha restrained others from propagation and called out the great bodhisattvas from the earth, numbering as many as the dust-particles of a thousand worlds. Then He bestowed the Five Characters of Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo as the essence of the 'Life Span of the Buddha' chapter of the Lotus Sutra to be spread among all the sentient beings of the Jambudvipa (all the world)."

Nichiren Shonin indicates that Sakyamuni Buddha transmitted the Five Characters of "Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo" to the bodhisattvas emerged from the earth in the "Divine Powers of the Buddha," chapter of the Lotus Sutra. He interpreted that Sakyamuni Buddha bestowed the essence of the Lotus Sutra to those bodhisattvas, by saying in this chapter, "All the teachings (Dharma) of the Buddha, all the unhindered, supernatural powers of the Buddha, all the treasures of the hidden core of the Buddha, and all the profound achievements of the Buddha are revealed and expounded explicitly in this sutra."

Actually in various writings of T'ien-t'ai's, "the unhindered" means "Myo (wonderfulness)," "the treasury" means "the store of the lotus flower," "the profound achievements" means "the causation between the flower and the seed of the lotus." In his theory, this phrase of the Lotus Sutra indicates the five deep significances which its very title contains (the Five Profound Meanings). Thus, the above phrase of transmission expresses the Five Characters of Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo.

According to Nichiren Shonin, the bodhisattvas emerged from the earth and received the Five Characters of the Wonderful Dharma will surely appear in the Latter Age of Degeneration. For him, in the first 1,000 year-period after Sakyamuni Buddha's extinction, the Age of the True Dharma, the teachings of Hinayana Buddhism spread. In the next 1,000 year-period of the Age of the Semblance Dharma, the teachings of the provisional Mahayana spread. From

the middle of the Age of the Semblance Dharma to the Latter Age of Degeneration, the Grand Master Nan-yueh (teacher of T'ien-t'ai) appeared as the incarnation of World Voice Perceiver Bodhisattva and T'ien-t'ai as that of Medicine King Bodhisattva. He mentioned that they had highlighted the teachings of the Theoretical Section, putting the teachings of the Essential Section underneath, revealing the meanings of the 100 Realms, 1,000 Aspects and the 3,000 Existences Contained in One Thought (Ichinen-sanzen).

However, both of them had only preached the theoretical potentiality. That is to say, they showed that all sentient beings were equipped with Ichinen-sanzen, but they did not publicly engage in the Practice of "JI: actuality" (practical acts based on reality) such as to chant the Daimoku of the Five Characters and to worship the Most Venerable One of the Essential Section (the Great Mandala centering the Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha).

And now in the beginning of the Latter Age of Degeneration, the Buddha Dharma is confused, nature and society are in disorder. The Bodhisattva Disciples of the theoretical teaching such as World Voice Perceiver and Medicine King disappeared, and the deities of the heavenly deities left the country. Nevertheless, this is the very period when the bodhisattvas emerged from the earth as the original disciples will appear for the first time in this world. They will give the Five Characters of the Wonderful Dharma as the medicine to the fatuous sentient beings there, and finally the Most Venerable One would be completed as those bodhisattvas become the retainers of the Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha, says Nichiren.

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

The Legend of Nichiren (21)

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph. D.

The Tatsunokuchi Persecution (2)

The execution of Nichiren Shonin was formally suspended, and it was decided that he was to be banished to Sado Island as originally sentenced. Nichiren Shonin was then taken to Echi (present Atsugi City, Kanagawa Prefecture), en route to Sado. According to a legend, it was because a strange object shone on the coastal waters of Enoshima that his execution was suspended. Moreover, there is another legend that the sword of the executioner was struck by lightning and the sword was fractured into three. In reality, however, it is believed that the entreaty activities carried out by his disciples and followers proved successful.

Adachi Yasumori (1231-85), who was the most influential of the Kamakura shogunate, was friendly to Daigaku Saburo, a calligrapher who was a leading lay follower of Nichiren Shonin. It is because Yasumori, too, liked calligraphy. Adachi Yasumori once asked Nichiren Shoin to hold a Buddhist service. Heino Saemon commanded the arrest of Nichiren Shonin. They wielded strong power in the shogunate, and confronted each other. Disciples and lay followers of Nichiren moved fast and hard for a pardon in the short time from Nichiren's arrest to



Rev. Gyokai Sekido

his execution. It is a fact that the execution of Nichiren was suspended by the effort of leading figures of the shogunate who were friendly to Nichiren such as Adachi Yasumori.

The following is legendary. Long ago, a lake called Fukazawa was in Tatsunokuchi. An evil dragon lived in it. The dragon fed himself with many children. Mists and clouds covered the sea around Enoshima, and there was an earthquake during the reign of Emperor Kimmei. Suddenly, the sky became fine, flowers rained, music was heard, and a celestial maiden descended from the sky. She was Goddess Benzaiten of Enoshima Island. Impressed by the beauty of Goddess Benzaiten, the evil dragon proposed to marry her. She answered, "I am a younger sister of the dragon woman who appears in the 'Devadatta' chapter of the Lotus Sutra. I can't marry you, a malicious dragon, because I am here to protect Buddhism. I will accept your proposal if you change your mind and protect Buddhism with me." The evil dragon swore to protect Buddhism thereafter. It is said that Tatsunokuchi became an execution ground because that dragon sucked the scoundrels' blood and swore to protect Buddhism.

Many disciples and lay followers chanted the Daimoku while crying. As they watched, the execution was about to be carried out. Homma Saburo Zaemon Naoshige (? - 1329) of Echi took out the noted sword, and prepared for the execution. But, he began to cry and told Nichiren Shonin, "I know that you are a wonderful person. You are not a robber. You did not plan treason. You only preached the Lotus Sutra. I am in the closing years of fifties. I don't want to kill a priest though it is the order of the shogunate. You should abandon the Lotus Sutra, and have faith in the nembutsu. If you do this, I will ask the shogunate to stop the execution." But, Nichiren Shonin, declined the offer saying, "It is joyful to dedicate my life to the Lotus Sutra."

Naoshige had no choice but to begin preparation for the execution. Then, rain clouds appeared suddenly, and strong winds blew. Big drops of rain began to fall noisily, and big waves rose in the sea. All the lights of the torches went out, and fences and curtains were blown off. A big shiny object like the full moon appeared and flew away over the sea of Enoshima from the southeast to the northwest.

With all his might, Naoshige raised the sword, but his noted sword broke into three. Heino Saemon and his 300 retainers were surprised and jumped aside. Nichiren Shonin shouted, "Hurry up and execute me." But no one approached him because they were afraid. Soon, the wind and rain weakened and the day broke. Heino Saemon quickly told the shogunate about this accident.

The shogunate held a conference about the execution of Nichiren Shonin. Because a strange natural phenomenon happened, it reached the conclusion that he should not be killed. A letter of pardon was written hurriedly and Nanjo Shichiro, a samurai follower of Nichiren, rushed to the execution ground with it. The messenger of Heino Saemon from Tatsunokuchi rushed to the shogunate, too. Nanjo Shichiro met the messenger in the river of Shichirigahama. It came to be called the Yuki Ai Gawa River (the river where they met).

(to be continued)



Nichiren Shonin at the execution ground. (This wood-block print is reproduced from "Nichiren Shonin Chugasan")

People I'll Always Remember (3)

By Rev. Ryusho Matsuda



'I Don't Want to Have Spiritual Death'

A Letter to Mr. Thomas Milliken

"You should know that there is no Pure Land other than the very place where the practitioner of the Lotus Sutra resides. Why should we concern ourselves seeking a Pure Land in any other place? (Treatise on Protecting the Nation: Writings of Nichiren Shonin, Doctrine I, U. H. Press, 2002, p. 68.)"

Hi, Tom,

How are you? And where are you? Where have you been wandering around since you left San Jose?

About 10 years ago, you left us suddenly, saying: "I will be traveling for a while." I was not sure which direction you were headed until Keith [your son] sent me a New Year greeting five years ago from Hokkaido, Japan, where he was teaching. In the card, he wrote that he was also not sure where you were now. According to his letter, you had been teaching English in Chiba Prefecture, then you went somewhere to a country in Southeast Asia. I am writing this letter to you with a wish that you would read this through the "Nichiren-shu News" somewhere in the world.

You visited our temple for the first time sometime in the summer of 1984.

Do you remember that our first greeting was a funny one? I said, "Welcome to our temple!" Then you said, "Are you a visiting minister? I have been coming to Sunday services for the last three weeks, and this is the first time I have met you." Because I was away from the temple almost four weeks, due to missionary work as NONA Bishop and for personal reasons, Rev. Ryuken Akahoshi [who was then the associate minister of our temple] was providing guidance to you on Nichiren Shu Buddhism. You told us that your wife, Masako, who had been a devoted SGI member for many years, caused you to come to this Nichiren Shu temple. She became sick, and you tried to chant the Odaimoku to the SGI Gohonzon so that she would recover from her sickness. But you were not able to follow their guidance, and finally you found our temple. However, in spite of your prayers, your wife passed away, leaving three young children (13, 12, and 10 years old). You may have been at a loss when she was gone.

You said to me: "We are seriously interested in becoming a part of your congregation. But our financial situation is very bad right now. You have made no mention of money, but I know you

have your needs. For the moment, please accept this art piece I created."

It was a beautiful glass art. Although you said that glass arts were just your living expedients, your skill and technique were marvelous. I still have a hummingbird, a dew drop from a water faucet, and a forest tree made of glass that you created.

But I agree with your words. You are more like a religious thinker than an artist. I was often amazed by your thinking that was always expanding wider or deeper. One time you wrote me, "I will have physical death (bodily and mental dissolution) someday, but I do not want to have spiritual death (death of self). In the same way, I may have material poverty but not spiritual poverty."

You really wanted to be free from any bondage. In 1995 or 6, when you saw your children complete their college education and become independent, you sold your house, furniture, and automobile, and you moved to a warehouse that had been your factory. In your letter dated on February 21, 1997, you wrote: I am fine—continuing my hermit-like existence. My world consists of only that to which I can walk or ride a bike. Yet what a large world that can be! I have pursued the idea that less is more. That is by



Mr. Milliken's family

reducing the quantity of involvement, the quality increases. So I create something of a vacuum by avoiding TV, movies, novels, newspapers, magazines, etc., and then wait to see what fills this vacuum.

Your children offered to live with you. Nevertheless, you refused their offers and you set out on your travels. I do not know where you are now. However, I hope this letter reaches you by some means. No matter where you live, please keep Nichiren Shonin's guidance. You should know that there is no Pure Land other than the very place where the practitioner of the Lotus Sutra resides. Why should we concern ourselves seeking a Pure Land in any other place? But remember! San Jose is your second hometown. In the near future, I hope that you will come back here. Let us chant the Odaimoku together, and once again have the opportunity to talk about our life together.

Annual Confab of Missionaries Held

By Rev. Dairyo Tomikawa

The annual conference of overseas missionaries sponsored by the Missionary Department of the Nichiren-shu Headquarters was held from May 23 through 25, 2006, at the Nichiren-shu Headquarters in Tokyo, Japan. Nineteen overseas missionaries from North America, Hawaii, Korea, Malaysia, England, Italy, and Brazil as well as seven ministers from the U.S. and Germany gathered to exchange their up-to-date information and to discuss strategy of international propagation for the future. The following are the main points of discussion.



Rev. Kancho Kajiyama

Rev. Kancho Kajiyama, Director of the Missionary Department, explained the "Rissho Ankoku Odaimoku Kechien Campaign." He said that "Rissho Ankoku" means spreading peace throughout the country by establishing the True Dharma, and the "Odaimoku

Kechien" means sowing the seed of the Odaimoku by chanting it." Rev. Kajiyama emphasized the importance of the goal of this campaign saying, "Let us build the foundation for peace in the world by promoting cooperation with the Buddhists of Asia and of the world, and dialogue with other religious groups."

Rev. Shokei Stephanes, Daiseionji Temple, Germany, introduced their activity of dialogue with other religions. "It is very difficult for any religion except Christianity to propagate in Germany. However, due to our dialogue activity, we are trusted by society and Christianity and get high evaluation from the administration. If anyone is confident of one's religion, dialogue should be dignified anywhere. So, I hope Nichiren-shu Headquarters would take the lead to promote dialogue with other religious groups," said Rev. Stephanes.

Rev. Kenno Fukushima of the Hokekyoji Temple in Brazil clarified his method of missionary work by making good use of his past experience as an office worker. He said, "Working for a company, we are judged entirely by our achievements. First, we should decide a goal and evaluate it. Afterwards, we have to check regularly whether our numerical targets have been achieved or not. We should not try to find 100 reasons for not attaining a desired goal, but think of one method to accomplish it."

During the conference, Rev. Eiyu Ishii, chairman of the Committee on

International Affairs of the Shumuin Headquarters, came up with a committee's plan to carry out sweeping reforms for the system of overseas mission. "By changing the name of those engaged in overseas missionary work from KAIKYOSHI (overseas missionary) to KOKUSAI FUKYOSHI (international propagator), many of the Nichiren-shu ministers can be engaged in missionary work abroad more actively. For example, a minister who

was not born in Japan, or a minister who works in international cooperation, are all included in KOKUSAI FUKYOSHI," said Rev. Ishii.

At the closing ceremony, Rev. Ryuji Ito, Executive Director, Missionary Bureau of Nichiren-shu Headquarters, offered praise and encouragement to overseas ministers and expressed his appreciation to them for their devotion to the work of spreading the Odaimoku despite numerous difficulties.

Church Events

By Sandra Seki

HONOLULU

Japan Tour

A Japan tour has been organized from October 26–November 3, 2006. The cost will be \$2,500 per person. The tour will visit Kyoto, Minobu, Tokyo and Chiba. In Kyoto we can enjoy the beautiful autumn foliage and visit some places connected with Yamauchi Kazutoyo of "Komyo Ga Tsuji" being shown on KIKU TV now. In Minobu, we will visit Minobu-san Kuonji, the mother temple of Nichiren Shu. We can also enjoy onsen (hot springs) there.

In Tokyo, the capital, we will visit several famous places. In Chiba, which is the highlight of the tour, we will go to the Nakayama Hokekyoji Temple. This temple has been keeping a lot of Nichiren Shonin's handwritten documents for over 700 years. They are exhibited once a year on November 3. We can meet Nichiren Shonin through his original writings. This tour not only has a lot of sightseeing but also a lot of

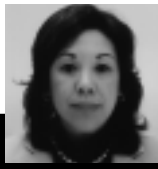
shopping time. For further information, please feel free to contact one of the ministers.

SAN JOSE

Teriyaki Box Lunch

The annual chicken teriyaki box lunch bazaar held on April 23 was a great success. Many volunteers, members and friends gathered together and made 800 bento this year. Other food like curry rice, bean curd (Mabo Tofu) with rice, noodles, festival rice and barazushi were also sold out. Besides the food, the Tachibana School had booths selling cut flowers, craft sales, omanju and dango.

The Marimokai showed their special skill of Koto performances and Sakaguchi Sensei led the Tachibana students for their Koto recital. Kika Shibata Sensei and the members of the Shibata Sogetsu School displayed and demonstrated their flower arrangements. Special thanks to the San Jose Kendo Dojo and Silicon Valley Shorinji Kempo Dojo for helping out.



Church Events

By Sandra Seki

ITALY

Rev. Shoryo Tarabini has been visiting several cities and towns in Italy to set up study sessions and prayer services in private homes and other facilities. Beside Milan and Rome, sanghas have come up in Boario Terme, Bergamo, Brescia, Napoli, Torino and Florence. He has been busy flying throughout Southern Europe propagating the teachings of Nichiren Shonin.

“Ankokuron Gokan Yurai”

The booklet on Nichiren Daishonin’s “Ankokuron Gokan Yura (Reason for the submission of the Rissho Ankoku Ron)” has been published in English by the Nichiren Buddhist International Center (NBIC). A limited number of copies arrived at Renkoji and Rev. Tarabini has ordered additional copies for all the members of Renkoji and Byakuren’in. This is the third in a series published by the NBIC. Rev. Tarabini collaborated in the translation of this writing and also in the second of the series, “Letter to the Priests of Seichoji.”

Since the majority of people throughout Southern Europe don’t understand English very well, Rev. Tarabini has asked the NBIC to help in the publication of study mate-

rial not only in English but also Italian, French and Spanish. Together with the help of the local followers, the completed translation of a writing of our Founder in English, Italian and French has been completed and entitled: “Letter to Ben Dono and Ama Gozen.” Ben Dono (Nissho Shonin) is the first disciple of Nichiren Shonin.

Rev. Tarabini hopes to translate all the other letters which Nichiren wrote to his first disciple, with commentary, explanation and historical background on Nissho Shonin. The title of this future publication will be “Letters to Nissho Shonin.” It will be published in English, Italian and hopefully French. Rev. Tarabini is working on this project at the moment and hopes to have it ready for publication within this year.

Revisions and corrections of the “Nichiren Shu Liturgy Book” for the lay followers in Italian have been completed by the temple’s Translation and Editing Committee. The French edition has already been completed by Mrs. Kolitcheff of Paris and distributed to the followers in France.

BRAZIL

Hokekyoji Temple

A ceremony to celebrate

Sakyamuni Buddha’s birthday was held on April 2. The temple altar was adorned with many flowers and sweet tea was poured over the statuette of the Baby Buddha. Many people attended this ceremony.

Rev. Kenno Fukushima and President Kaneko visited the villages of Salvador and Giottaka on a three-night, four-day propagation journey. It was a long and difficult journey but as a result they were able to welcome five new gojikai (temple maintenance) members.

Rev. Fukushima together with Rev. Shoyo Tamura will go to Japan to attend the annual overseas minister’s meeting from May 21–29. They will return to Brazil, accompanied by Rev. Okuda, who is a Hokekyoji research student. There will be a welcoming party for Rev. Okuda after the study class on June 3.

As of April 25 the Brazil Hokekyoji has 34 full time members, 23 family members, 4 future members and 3 supporting members.

LOS ANGELES

Memorial Service for Forgotten People

This annual event will be held at 10:30 a.m., Sunday, May 28 preceding the Memorial Day service. It will be

held in front of the Monument for the Forgotten People. Rev. Shokai Kanai will pray for all the people related to the temple who have passed away, and also for the souls of those who died in the Boyle Heights Area; especially for the 108 people whose forgotten graves are in the 123-year-old Boyle Heights potter’s field, which were recently unearthed for the subway construction.

Woman of the Year Award

Ms. Yasuko Furuhashi, a longtime member of the Los Angeles Nichiren Buddhist Temple, recently was awarded the 2005 Woman of the Year Award from the American Biographical Institute for her longtime support of cancer patients and her volunteer work. Yasuko has been a professional lingerie fitter and owner of Lingerie Salon in Pasadena for 35 years.

“Women who have lost one or both breasts to cancer are usually very depressed when they first come to my store. My role is to shift their attitude toward the positive during the fitting. I want them to leave here smiling,” says Yasuko. Her great reputation for supporting cancer patients both physically and mentally, spreads by word-of-mouth and people of all ages come to see her for advice. “Taking care of others and making them happy became part of my life. I feel like the whole of society is my family and to make people happy is my pur-

pose in life now,” she said. The L.A. Temple is very proud of having such a wonderful member.

PORTLAND

Mini Bazaar

The annual mini bazaar ended in a big success. This was only possible with the help of many volunteers, members and friends. Thank you all for your help! The basement was repainted and retiled just before the mini bazaar this year. This could not have been done without the help of donations from friends who wish to remain anonymous. The temple would like to express its most sincere thanks to those who gave this donation.

Although there have been some improvements there are still places that must be repaired. One of them is the roof on the temple building. In the past ten years repairs have been carried out to keep the rain out but the problem has been recurring and this time the roof has to be replaced. The tiles have become too brittle to walk on and the underlying sheet has become so worn, allowing leaks during windy storms. The brittleness of the roof makes further repairs impossible. The board of directors have created a capital improvement fund for the roof. If you would like to make a contribution to this fund, please send a check marked “roof fund” to the temple.

‘Kosenrufu in Southeast Asia’ (2)

Interview with Mr. Ang Tiang Soon, Chairman of Penang Nichiren Shu Buddhist Association: the Ichinenji Temple in Malaysia

By Rev. Myosho Obata, Nichiren Shu Southeast Asia



Rev. Myosho Obata

established the Kannonji Temple in Klang, Malaysia, in April 2004. We observed the opening ceremony and I think that the Ichinenji Temple of Penang has contributed a lot for this. Can you please elaborate?

Mr. Ang: The Kannonji Temple in Klang, Malaysia, was no different from the Ichinenji Temple of Penang as they were also the pioneer group for Nichiren Shu in Malaysia. Even though we are about 400 kilometers apart, we constantly visit and support one another in all our activities. They were also among the group of 88 converted en masse to the Nichiren Shu Order in 2002. Before moving into the Kannonji Temple, Klang members normally conduct their prayers and activities at the residences of Mr. Or and Mr. Sunny Ng. I like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to all Klang members for their support in the propagation activities of the Nichiren Shu in Malaysia.

Rev. M. O.: Mr. Ang and I visited

the Lotus Sutra Buddhist Association in Singapore in December 2003. It was the first time for us. How did you actually come in contact with them?

Mr. Ang: I only knew a handful of the senior members during my earlier affiliation with the Nichiren Shoshu Singapore. Coincidentally during one of the internet sessions of my son (Alex) who had maintained communication with a Youth Buddhist group in Singapore, it came to our knowledge that the Lotus Sutra Buddhist Association of Singapore had already severed their attachment with the Nichiren Shoshu. Knowing that, we started to contact Mr. Chan (one of the senior members of Lotus Sutra Buddhist Association of Singapore) to find out their present situation. We were told of their actual status and predicament, which we relayed to Rev. Kanshin Mochida to seek his advice. After obtaining Rev. Kanshin Mochida’s consent, we started to make the arrangement with Mr. Chan to visit them in Singapore.

Rev. M. O.: We visited the Lotus Sutra Buddhist Association of Singapore for the second time in February, 2004, together with Rev. Gakugyo Matsumoto to explain and enlighten the Nichiren Shu’s doctrine to the Singaporeans. How did you support this

propagation?

Mr. Ang: During our first visit to the Lotus Sutra Buddhist Association of Singapore, we were able to comprehend and appreciate that they were not ready to convert to Nichiren Shu due to their past experiences and practices with the Nichiren Shoshu. It was through constant dialogue, perseverance, and discussion thereafter with Mr. Quah that the Lotus Sutra Buddhist Association of Singapore requested the Nichiren Shu Headquarters to arrange for some reverends to visit Singapore. The visit was to further explain to them about Nichiren Shu’s doctrine and the way of practice. They felt that the fundamental of understanding the 28 chapters of the Lotus Sutra and the acceptance of Sakyamuni Buddha as the original Buddha was not as was previously perceived. This in fact was an entire paradigm shift in the principle of belief.

(to be continued)



Mr. Ang Tiang Soon

Nichiren Shu News

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