

Nichiren Shu News

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First American Nun Installed as Resident Minister of U.S. Nichiren Temple



Rev. Myokei and devotees of the Myokenji Temple, Texas



Rev. Myokei receiving congratulations following the installation ceremony

Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett, the first American (Afro-American) nun of the Nichiren-shu Order, was installed as the first resident minister of the Myokenji Temple of the Nichiren Buddhist Sangha of Texas in a ceremony held in the Cullen Oaks Community Center on July 8.

Bishop Shokai Kanai of the Nichiren Order of North America witnessed the transfer of responsibility from Rev. Ryuoh Faulconer—acting minister of the Myokenji Temple and Rev. Myokei's master—and he officiated the service, assisted by Shami Ryusho Jeffus.

The service was attended by nearly 60 family members and friends of Nun Myokei who had supported her throughout her journey to become a Nichiren-shu priest.

After the installation ceremony, Rev. Myokei performed her first conversion ceremony as Phil Hardy from Tucson, AZ, became a new member of the Myokenji Temple.

Back on February 9, 2003, Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett started her journey to become a priest as she entered the priesthood under the guidance of Rev. Ryuoh Faulconer in Portland, Oregon.

Two months later, she traveled to Japan with Rev. Faulconer and two other shami to participate in the docho ceremony on April 4. She spent the next few years training at the Nichiren Buddhist International Center as well as in Portland, at the Hotoji Temple, where Rev. Faulconer was the resident minister.

The year 2006 was a busy one as Rev. Myokei attended the Sodorin at the Seichoji Temple in June, took the written test in September at Minobusan, and attended her final shami conference. In March 2007, she took the oral examination in Tokyo and became eligible for the Shingyo Dojo.

With the support of her daughter and her husband, Rev. Myokei left for the Shingyo Dojo in May, 2007. She was joined by them and her mother on the final day of the Shingyo Dojo. The remaining sangha members planned and prepared for the ceremony back home.

(a related story on page 3)



Bishop Shokai Kanai



Rev. Faulconer



First conversion ceremony



Preparation for the ceremony

Condolence to Late Rev. Kanshu Ikuta

By Rev. Chishin Hirai, Manager Nichiren Buddhist International Center

Rev. Kanshu Ikuta of Gardena Hompoji Betsuin passed away on April 19, 2007 at the age of 82. He was born on February 20, 1925 in Shimane, Japan. After graduating from the Okayama University and Risho University, he came to the U.S. as a Nichiren-shu missionary in 1952.

From then, for 54 years he devoted himself to missionary work in the U.S. in such capacity as the Head Minister of the Seattle Nichiren Buddhist Church and the Gardena Hompoji Be-



Rev. Kanshu Ikuta

tsuin. He presided over the ministers' meeting of the Nichiren Buddhist Order of North America (NONA) for years and also led ministers as the general manager of the Nichiren Buddhist International Center (NBIC).

He was a well-known calligrapher. He did his best to spread the Japanese culture of calligraphy as the President

of Beikoku Shodo Kenkyu Kai. Because of his great achievement, he received awards from both the US and Japanese Governments. The Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold and Silver Rays was the decoration awarded by the Japanese Government.

He was a very kind, caring, and calm minister with strong faith. He had to overcome many difficulties but he never spoke about them to others. He was beloved by all so the huge Main Hall of the Los Angeles Temple was filled with many people who wished to express their condolences at his funeral. His efforts will be remembered forever.

A part of his ashes were enshired in the Monument for Overseas Ministers on Minobusan on July 24.

(a related story on page 5)

Events

June–July

- June 1: Seasonal Change of Clothing for the Founder
- June 13: Ceremony in Commemoration of the Founder's study at the Koyasan Kongobuji Temple
- June 14: Ceremony in commemoration of the Founder's study in the library of the Iwamoto Jissoji Temple in Fuji City in preparation to write the "Risho Ankoku-ron"
- June 14–15: Ceremony in commemoration of the Founder's entrance to Minobusan on the 17th day of the fifth month of 1274
- June 25: Memorial service for Nitcho Shonin
- June 30: Ceremony to mark the completion of the 35-day "Special Shingyo Dojo"
- July 3–5: Training for lay devotees at the Seichoji Temple, Kiyosumi, Chiba
- July 13–16: Obon services
- July 24–27: Nichiren Shu International Youth Leader Retreat. A total of 13 youth leaders from Hawaii, North America, Korea, and Japan received training on Minobusan and Kyoto

by Rev. Tsuo Yokoi

Rev. Komatsu Visits Singapore and Malaysia

By Rev. Sensho Komukai
Missionary Department, Shumuin

From July 1 through 6 Rev. Joshin Komatsu, Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu Administrative Headquarters, paid an official visit to the temples of Singapore and Penang Island of Malaysia, which Revs. Myosho Obata and Kangyo Noda have been in charge of.

On the first day of the visit, Rev. Kaigen Noritake, Ph.D. and Associate Professor of Ritsso University, delivered a lecture, "The Role and the Possibility of Buddhism in the Future World

on the Basis of the Lotus Sutra," in Chinese at the Singapore Expo. As well as with the congregation members, people who were just interested in Buddhism also attended the lecture. Altogether, a total of 400 people were present.

The next day (July 2), Rev. Komatsu and his party visited the Singapore Daimokuji Temple of the Fivefold Hill, and on July 3 they went to the Penang Ichinenji Temple of Malaysia. The services were conducted by Rev. Komatsu.

It was the first time since World War II for the Nichiren Shu Chief Administrator to visit and hold a ser-

vice at newly established temples in Southeast Asia.

Rev. Komatsu said in his speech during the service, "Our Founder Nichiren Shonin said in his writing, 'Buddhism is body and the world its shadow. When a body is not straight, its shadow also is slanted.' The teachings of the Buddha, like a human body, focus on how every human being can live a happy life, while the society is like the shadow reflecting it.

"Unless we seriously try to solve many problems in our daily

life according to the Right Teachings, the world will go in the wrong direction."

Rev. Obata expressed her thanks to all the attendees, saying, "Taking this opportunity I would like to publicize how hard the ministers and the congregation work together to spread the Odaimoku and the Lotus Sutra in Southeast Asia."



Rev. Komatsu (center) and the congregation at the Penang Ichinenji Temple



Rev. Komatsu (center) delivering his message at the Singapore Daimokuji Temple



Rev. Noritake giving his lecture at the Penang Ichinenji Temple

Lecture on the Lotus Sutra in Cambodia: 'Bodhisattvas Appearing from the Soil' Are Entrusted for Establishing Buddha Land



Rev. Yosei Ikegami

By Rev. Tsuo Yokoi
Missionary Department, Shumuin

A lecture on the Lotus Sutra was held at the Chaktmouk Hall, Phnom Penh in Cambodia on May 31. The lecture, the second of its kind, was spon-

sored by the Nichiren Shu Order with the assistance of Catuddisa Sangha. The lecturer was Rev. Yosei Ikegami, Head Priest of the Chijakubo Temple, Minobusan. About 300 Cambodian monks and nuns as well as lay devotees attended the lecture.

"How are the bodhisattvas revealed in the Lotus Sutra" was the theme of Rev. Ikegami's lecture. The gist of his lecture is as follows:

"The bodhisattvas shown in the Lotus Sutra are different from the bodhisattvas appearing in other Mahayana sutras. They are the bodhisattvas appearing from the earth to whom Buddha Sakyamuni entrusted the work of spreading the Lotus Sutra after His passing.

"It was not such noted bodhisattvas as Manjusri, Maitreya, or Avalokitesvara who were entrusted with the mission. It is predicted in the Lotus Sutra that the Land of Buddha or eternal peace will be realized by the effort of these bodhisattvas appearing from the soil."

By referring to sutras of the earlier days, Rev. Ikegami stated that the lay devotees who inversely remonstrate priests and guide them can be called bodhisattvas, and said that

"bodhisattvas" exist beyond the boundary of priests and lay people.

He also said, "The bodhisattva people, who are the immediate followers of the Buddha, are born by their own wish to proliferate the Lotus Sutra and realize the Land of the Buddha in this world, which is the ultimate goal of Sakyamuni Buddha."

Closing his lecture, Rev. Ikegami gave a memorial address for Maha Gosananda, who built a Buddhist temple in the camp of Cambodian refugees and organized the "Dhamma Yatra," a peace march across Cambodia, and declared that Maha Gosananda is one of the Cambodian bodhisattvas "appearing from the soil."

The lecture on the Lotus Sutra was part of The Pray Day for World Peace by Buddhists, an event sponsored by Catuddisa Sangha, as it was last year.

The sangha, which has faith in the Lotus Sutra, is a nonsectarian Buddhist group, engaged in relief activities. It was founded by a Japanese NGO working on the activities of development and assistance in the farming areas.

The Pray Day for World Peace by Buddhists is gaining wider recognition. Besides Cambodia, the event was held in Thailand, India, Mongol and Taiwan, this year. In Japan, Rev. Taiken Kawakami of Hokkaido has organized, "Catuddisa Sangha Hokkaido."



Cambodian attendants of Rev. Ikegami's lecture



About 300 Cambodian monks, nuns, lay devotees attending the lecture of Rev. Ikegami

People I'll Always Remember (10)

By Rev. Ryusho Matsuda



'You Are a Link in the Buddha's Golden Chain of Love'

Dear Thomas Taku Renovich,

Hi, Taku-chan! How are you? Did you have a morning service with your grandma this morning and say: "Namu Namu" to Nichiren-sama? Oh, pardon me. You will be five years old soon and no longer a baby. I heard you pronounce "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo" clearly at the 90th Anniversary of the Seattle Nichiren Buddhist Church last year.

It was wonderful for you to participate in the Ochigo parade to celebrate the ceremony as a messenger of Deity Indra. I am sure that your dad was happy to see you as an Ochigo-san because he also did the same role 30 years ago.

You are a fortunate boy. Both of your parents grew up in Buddhist families receiving good guidance of daily practices from a young age.

Your grandma, Kinu, told me that it became a custom for her to have morning and evening services together with you ever since you were born.

At the age of one, you started to help your grandma for the daily services by hitting the bell and mokusho, though she had to stop her chanting



Mr. Stephen Renovich

quite often due to your mischief. But she looked at you gently and prayed for your growth.

Your grandpa, the late Stephen Renovich (1921-1992),

was one of the first Caucasian Nichiren Buddhists in the United States. After World War II, he wished to find peace of mind and started reading the Asian religions and thoughts.

He then found a Buddhist magazine called "The Young East." This magazine was published quarterly by the Young East Association which was organized by many Buddhist scholars (like Makoto Nagai, Shobun Kubota, Entai Tomomatsu, Hajime Nakamura, Daisetsu T. Suzuki, Reiho Masunaga, Taitetsu Unno, etc.) from various universities for the purpose of spreading the Buddhist thoughts to the world.

Your grandpa wrote letters quite often to the managing editor, Prof.

Senchu Murano, (the translator of the Lotus Sutra, which is published by the Nichiren-shu Administration). With his guidance, your grandfather became a Nichiren Buddhist.

About the same time, your grandma was a pen pal friend with your grandpa. With that karma, they finally met each other for the first time at the Nichiren-shu Headquarters in Tokyo in 1964 by the arrangement of Rev. Murano.

Because they settled down in Vancouver, B.C., they started visiting me at the Seattle Nichiren Buddhist Church along with your father, and I also visited their house often and enjoyed seeing the tremendous collections of "Choo-Choo train models" as well as his library of Buddhist books.

His understanding of Buddhism was deep and we talked for many hours on Buddhism. Since then, I

became a good friend of your family. Even after I moved to San Jose, our communication did not stop.

When I visited your grandma (at Vancouver, B.C. in Canada) last October, I was so pleased to see you guiding me to the niche of your grandfather's remains and sending a prayer to him sincerely. When I

chanted "Mujo Jinjin Mimyo no Ho wa . . . Shojo Sese Chigushi Chodaisen" with your dad and grandma, you followed us and I was amazed to learn that you had memorized all the verses.

As it is said in the verses, it is actually difficult to meet the Lotus Sutra even once in many, many years. However, you are fortunate to be able to see, and hear the Sutra because of the karma of your ancestors.

You are a link in the Buddha's golden chain of love that stretches around the world. Please keep your link bright and strong and be kind and gentle to every living thing.

Please say pure and beautiful words to everybody. And may you always be happy throughout your long life in the future by receiving the great compassion of the Buddha and Nichiren-sama.



'Taku-chan' dressed in the 'Ochigo-san' costume and his family on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the Seattle Nichiren Buddhist Church in October 2006.

Rev. Myokei's Shingyo Dojo: 'We Shared Tears on Many Occasions and Became Close Sisters'

By Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett

Early on May 27, my master, Rev. Ryuoh Faulconer, and I attended the early morning service at Kuonji before entering Shingyo Dojo (May 27 to July 30), Rev. Faulconer had assured me that no shami entering Shingyo Dojo would miss the service that morning.

Imagine my surprise to note only one other shami there—and as I learned later, she was one of my han (group) mates! As the morning continued, I became increasingly more nervous and unsure of the rightness of my decision.

I questioned my sanity and my intelligence. How could I manage 35 days in the monastery without the language skills for good communication? Would I make friends or suffer 35 long days of solitude?

That first day passed quickly in a whirlwind of activity. I can hardly remember what happened except that

we spent time hurrying around and getting settled into our rooms and our hans. I had hoped to be rooming with friends I had made earlier in my training; yet my han mates were strangers. My friends had been spread among the other hans and I would have very little time to interact with them.

Shingyo Dojo routine quickly became normal: up at 3:50 a.m. and continuing until 9 p.m. every day. My hanmates and I quickly worked out a method of communication with each other; it wasn't perfect, but I managed to understand most of what was going on.

I often felt like a small child with a bunch of parents providing me direction and all I could do was follow. There were three things I feared: seiza, the mountains, and the Japanese language. These were my obstacles to face and overcome; yet, the greater obstacle was the pressure I put on myself to be perfect and to succeed.

My presence at Shingyo Dojo was important because I was the first second generation American shami, the first person of African-American and Japanese descent, and possibly the first American woman to attend Shingyo Dojo. There was no room for failure.

Within a week, I developed problems with my legs and ankles. My feet looked as if they were made of bread dough and my legs swelled to twice their normal size.

Because of this, I had to

remain in the monastery until the swelling went down, a time which proved to be wonderful. I worked on copying the Juryohon chapter in solitude surrounded by the vibrant sounds of birds, insects, and nature—rain, thunder, sunshine, and humidity.

I imagined Nichiren Shonin doing the same thing and I began to understand why Minobusan was his hermitage. The spirit and energy of the mountain became a part of my being and I began to lose my fear of it.

Since our group numbered only 16, we interacted well with our instructors, who were excellent and very inspiring. My lack of language challenged everyone and everyone did their best to make sure I felt included.

The level of care and concern was truly wonderful since all of us faced similar emotions and longings for home, family, and things like coke and coffee. We shared tears on many occasions and became very close sisters in faith. I can safely say that there is a very special place in my heart for all the women and teachers of my Shingyo Dojo group.

Everyone experienced loneliness in dealing with inner demons of doubt and uncertainty, and the difficulty of the physical challenges we faced through pain, heat and humidity and rain.

I learned to respect the spirit and quiet, elegant courage of my sisters. They became my role models in handling the absolute solitude of being without language skills.

This solitude gave me the opportu-



Rev. Myokei relaxing at Oogiya Inn, Narita on July 7 before departing for home

nity to understand my own mother. Over 50 years ago, my mother migrated to America with my father and was without English language skills.

I know now what it took to survive and I have developed a greater respect and love for my mother and all the other women who traveled to America after World War II.

I'll never forget the experience of Shingyo Dojo and I am truly grateful to all those who supported me and made the experience possible.

I learned a lot about myself and my strengths; I know the experience prepared me well to spread the Dharma. From this point, I am determined to spread the Dharma far and wide and build a strong sangha for the future.

I am adding services to our weekly temple schedule, such as Lotus Sutra study classes, beginners classes, and possibly a film night to share ideas about Buddhism. I continue my prison ministry and have also had offers to speak about Buddhism in other venues. There is a great deal to be done and I am eager to make things happen.

I also look forward to seeing my sisters and instructors again in the future.



Rev. Myokei, second from right, in the Odaimoku procession in front of the Main Hall of the Kuonji Temple

Visit from the Boy Scouts

—On Their “Multi-Faith Hike”—

By Rev. Shinkyō Warner,
Lexington Nichiren Buddhist
Community, Kentucky

Last April a local Boy Scout leader asked me to include our temple in a “multi-faith hike” he was planning. I replied that they would of course be welcome. We agreed on a date and time and he gave me a list of questions he thought would be helpful. These made me even more eager to talk with them. I had been a Boy Scout, so I was familiar with their activities and the values they worked to promote. I thought it would also be great practice speaking to people who were interested in Buddhism but did not know that much about it.

These were the questions:

1. Who started your religion?
2. What are the primary documents or scriptures of your faith?
3. What are your main beliefs?
4. What is required to be a member of your religion?
5. What do you believe happens when and after we die?
6. Describe the God you worship.

On the arranged day, I stood at the door outside our building to welcome them. For several minutes a steady stream of khaki uniforms appeared. By the time the last stragglers came through there were almost 30 boys and men, crammed into every available square foot of our little temple.

Who Started Your Religion?

I started by asking if anybody had heard of the Buddha. Several hands went up. One boy said he was a prince who lived a long time ago.

I told them that was right. The Buddha was born as a crown prince. He lived in northern India 500 years before Jesus was born. He grew up very spoiled. Even his name, Siddhartha, meant “every wish fulfilled.” In other words, he was more spoiled than Paris Hilton.

They knew exactly what I meant.

“Even though the young Siddhartha had lots of attention and every material comfort he could want,” I continued, “he knew there was more to life than just being comfortable. He wanted to know why people were so unhappy, and if it was possible for nobody to ever be unhappy again.

“When he was about 25 he left home and became a wandering holy man. At first he lived with very little food and water. This made him so weak that he almost drowned while he was bathing in a river. As he lay exhausted on the bank, a kind shepherd girl brought him a bowl of milk mixed with grain. He ate it. After he got his strength back, he realized that the extremes of denying himself or indulging himself weren’t working; he had to find a middle way.

“After he recovered,” I went on, “he spent a night meditating under a tree. As the morning star came up over the horizon, he realized what he was looking for. People around him immediately saw that something wonderful and profound had happened. They asked him, ‘Are you still a man? Have you become a God? What has

happened to you?’ His answer was, ‘I am awake.’”

There was another person I had to tell them about. This was Nichiren, the founder of our branch of Buddhism. I explained how he lived 750 years ago in Japan. He was as the son of a common fisherman. Even as a child people recognized his intellect and curiosity, and he was accepted at a monastery near his village.

What are the Primary Documents of your Faith?

Between when the Buddha “woke up” and when he died, he spent 40 years teaching. During that time he taught many different things to different people.

Those who heard him made over 14,000 sutras, or collections of what the Buddha taught. Sometimes the Buddha taught one thing to one group of people at one time and another thing to another group of people at another time. For many who read these different teachings at the same time, this was confusing. They wanted to know which of these teachings they should believe.

When Nichiren was 17 years old, he vowed that he would become the wisest man in all of Japan and solve this mystery. For the next 17 years, Nichiren walked all over Japan, studying as many of the sutras he could find and talking with the great Buddhist scholars of his time.

In the Lotus Sutra, Nichiren found his answer. The Buddha taught things differently at different times because different people have different abilities to understand and practice what he was teaching. Just like when you teach somebody how to make a fire, you start by using matches or a lighter. Later you can teach how to use flint and steel. In all cases the overall goal is making a fire. But you have to suit your methods to who is being taught.

The Lotus Sutra is our primary document. We approach it differently than other people may approach the documents of their faiths. We believe it contains teachings that the Buddha left for our benefit.

The Lotus Sutra, however, does not contain a list of commandments and instructions telling us what to do and what not to do. We use what Nichiren wrote as a guide for how to interpret this book, but ultimately each of us has to make sense of it ourselves and put it into practice.

This is just like the Boy Scout manual. You can’t just look at the section on knots, memorize everything it has to say about the square knot and say you know the square knot. You have to take pieces of rope in your hands, use the instructions to make a knot, test it, see if you’ve done it right, and if not try again. Then you have to take what you have learned and use it in your life, maybe by putting up a tent or building a tower. Learning the Buddha’s teachings is exactly like this.

What are your Main Beliefs?

The Buddha never asked anybody to stop using their minds and believe everything he told them whether it made sense or not. Faith and under-

standing do not oppose each other. Asking questions and using our minds are essential to this practice.

Take happiness. Most people go through life wanting to feel good as much as possible and feel bad as little as possible. When we feel good we say we are happy and when we feel bad we say that we are unhappy or that we are suffering.

The Buddha found what causes suffering. It’s not because there’s something wrong with us. It’s not even because we don’t have something we want. It’s because we want what we don’t have.

Knowing the true cause of suffering, the Buddha knew how to end suffering, how to become happy. He called this the Eightfold Path. First we have to see things right, then we can think about them right, then we can speak the truth, then we know how to do what is right, then we can live without causing harm, then we can apply our efforts properly, then we understand how our mind works, then we know how to concentrate our mind on what is important.

These steps can seem like they’re just for making ourselves happy. The Buddha explained how what he taught about suffering was just the first step for what he really wanted to explain, namely that anybody could become just as awakened as he was.

Becoming just like the Buddha can sound impossible. How do we do it? By benefiting other people. We should want them to be happy. Why? Not just because he says so, because they themselves want to be happy.

Instead of trying to be happy by getting what we want, we should help people get what they want, by being of service to other people. This is very much like the Boy Scout Law: A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent. All these are meant to guide Boy Scouts to be a benefit to each other and the world.

What is Required to be a Member?

Anybody can read or listen to the Buddha’s teachings, think about them, use them in their life, and see if they work. Then you go back, get more teachings, try those out, and so on. If you can do this with a group, it is much easier. Just like it’s easier to be a Boy Scout when you have a Troop to work with instead of just trying it by yourself.

The Buddha knew this too. He taught how important it was to have what he called a Sangha, or a group of people working together to study and practice his teachings. He knew that different people have different abilities, different talents, different experiences and different perspectives on things. Until someone can become as enlightened as he is, no one person has all the answers.

What Happens When and After we Die?

We don’t believe that there is a permanent heaven or a permanent hell. Since all beings are eventually going to become Buddhas, then even the beings who are suffering in hell or who are completely full of joy in



Rev. Shinkyō Warner

heaven will eventually leave those places and continue their progress towards becoming Buddhas.

Nichiren taught that heaven and hell are just states of our minds. When we are angry we are in hell; when we have joy we are in heaven. Both the Buddha and Nichiren talked about how we can move from the more difficult states of mind, like anger, to states of mind like joy that are more similar to our true nature.

Describe the God we Worship

We don’t believe there is a powerful supreme being who controls what happens in the world every day and decides after we die whether we go to heaven or hell. We believe everything that happens has a cause and that the Buddha’s teachings help us find that cause. Rather than worshiping the Buddha or even the statues we have of him, we develop a deep reverence and gratitude for the Buddha and his teachings.

The closest thing we have to what other religions call a God is a teaching included in the Lotus Sutra. The Buddha said this teaching is the most difficult to believe and understand.

The Buddha taught that even though people saw him as a man who grew up as a prince, left home, became enlightened, and taught for several decades, the real “Ever Present” Buddha existed before that man was born and will continue to exist for a countless number of years after that man dies.

In all that time this Ever-Present Buddha is teaching all beings in all worlds, even the ones in heaven and hell, teaching them how to become just as enlightened as he is. He teaches whether we listen or not and whether we practice his teachings or not. He is always thinking, “How can I cause all beings to set themselves on the path to Enlightenment and quickly become Buddhas?”

Seeing Off

There were a few minutes left for questions. Some asked how many members we had in our temple and how many members there were overall in Nichiren Shu. Some asked whether I had always been a Buddhist and how I became a Buddhist.

Their leader then thanked me sincerely for talking with them. I thanked them for including our temple on their hike. A few took some pamphlets with them. I could hear lots of conversations in the hallway as they left that gave me the impression they had heard something interesting. I also noticed that several of the boys took pictures of our building as they walked past.

I would be happy to see any of them again soon.

The 3rd International Youth Retreat: 'I Would Like to Come Back Next Year'

By Rev. Sensho Komukai
Missionary Department, Nichiren Shu Headquarters.

The third annual International Youth Retreat began on July 24 at Minobusan and ended on July 27 in Kyoto. A total of 13 young people, aged 13 through 37, participated. Their problem was that they did not know what to do when they introduced each other because they were from Korea, USA, and Japan. They could not use their native language! They looked away from the other participants.

Besides, the schedule was tight. Taking the steep staircase called the Bodaitei (Stairs to Enlightenment), they went up to the Kuonji Temple and the Shishinkaku Temple. Then Rev. Giko Tabata, the chief lecturer for the retreat, gave a lecture and at night led the shodaigyo (to keep chanting Namu Myoho Renge Kyo) practice.

The next day after attending the morning service at the Kuonji Temple at 5:30 a.m., they quickly left for Kyoto on the Shinkansen Express to

visit the Enryakuji Temple and the Yokawa Jokoin on Mt. Hiei.

When they arrived at the Myokenji Temple, where they were supposed to stay, they looked totally exhausted. Nevertheless, they visited three more temples and listened to lectures delivered by Revs. Kanno Nakayama and Shuju Onishi.

They were young and incredibly active, though. The hard training program gave them a sense of solidarity, prompting them to talk with one another. On the final day at the closing ceremony, many of them, including the staff, were moved to tears; nobody wanted to end the retreat.

"At first, when I arrived at the training center on Minobusan, I was worried, and wanted to go back home because I did not know what was going on," said one young man who took part in the retreat for the first time.

"But as I started talking haltingly, I enjoyed making friends with people from other countries, and I felt like crying as the final day came. I would like to come back next year," he said.



In front of the Shishinkaku, Okunoin: (front row from left to right) Lee Hanae Ung (U.S.), Sky Hiroshi Ung (U.S.), Kim Eun-sun, Rev. Giko Tabata, Kim Eun-hyeon, Kang Hyune-jung and Choi Hye-jin; (second row): Rev. Shingyo Imai, Toru Tsurusaki, Cho Nam-kwon, Han Sung-won, Choi Jyung-hwan, Kim Byung-kon (a Risho University student from Korea), and Rev. Sensho Komukai; (third row): Rev. Woo Hee-tae, Rev. Tsuoh Yokoi, Rev. Kanshin Mochida, Beau Takashi Aihara



Odaimoku-chanting procession at the Kuonji Temple



Odaimoku-chanting procession at the Kuonji Temple



Service at the Myokenji Temple, Kyoto



Party at the Myokenji Temple, Kyoto



Memorial photo at the Yokawa Jokoin Temple, Kyoto



Dinner in Kyoto: (from left to right) Kim Eun-hyeon, Choi Hye-jin, Toru Tsurusaki (left side) and Kang Hyune-jung, Kim Eun-sun and Cho Nam-kwon (right side)



The closing ceremony of the Third International Youth Retreat held at the Ryuhonji Temple, Kyoto.



Burial at Minobusan; a ceremony of burying a part of the late Rev. Kanshu Ikuta's ashes in the Monument for Overseas Ministers on Minobusan took place on July 24 officiated by Rev. Giichi Kamikura, Director of General Affairs of the Kuonji Temple. The ceremony was attended by Mrs. Hiroko Ikuta, wife of the late Reverend Ikuta, and Ms. Lee Hanae Ung and Sky Hiroshi Ung, granddaughter and grandson of Rev. Ikuta, who attended the Third International Youth Retreat. Rev. Ikuta passed away on April 19, 2007. His posthumous Buddhist name is Shinsen'in Nichigen Shonin

- Groupings**
- Chief Instructor: Rev. Giko Tabata (Eishoji)
 Instructor: Rev. Shuju Onishi (Shorin'in), Kanno Nakayama (Hosenji)
 Staff: Rev. Kanshin Mochida, Rev. Sensho Komukai, Rev. Tsuo Yokoi, Rev. Gishin Wakasa, Ms. Akiko Iwama
 Translator: Rev. Shingyo Imai (Nichiren Mission of Hawaii), Rev. Woo Hee-tae (Hodoji)
- Group A (Instructor: Rev. Tsuoh Yokoi)
 Ms. Kang Hyune-jung (Hodoji), Ms. Choi Hye-jin (Hodoji), Toru Tsurusaki (Myozenji, Saga), Beau Takashi Aihara (Nichiren Mission of Hawaii)
- Group B (Instructor: Ms. Akiko Iwama)
 Ms. Min You-mi (Hodoji), Kim Byung-kon (graduate student of Risho University), Choi Jyung-hwan (Hodoji)
- Group C (Instructor: Rev. Sensho Komukai)
 Ms. Kim Eun-hyeon (Hodoji), Ms. Lee Hanae Ung (L.A. Nichiren Buddhist Church), Han Sung-won (Hodoji)
- Group D (Instructor: Rev. Gishin Wakasa)
 Cho Nam-kwon (Hodoji), Ms. Kim Eun-sun (Hodoji), Sky Hiroshi Ung (L.A. Nichiren Buddhist Church)



Church Events

By Sandra Seki

SAN JOSE

Teriyaki Box Lunch Sale

The annual chicken teriyaki box lunch sale held on April 22 was another success. With the help of members and friends the temple was able to sell 800 bentos this year. Other food like curry rice, noodles, festival rice and barazushi were also sold out. Besides food, there were booths for cut flowers, craft sales and Oman-ju sales by the Tachibana School.

There was also a collaboration performance with koto by the Marimo-kai and Ikebana demonstrations by the Sogetsu teachers. Also thanks to the San Jose Kendo Dojo and Shorinji Kempo Dojo for their help. It was a great gathering and it was good to see people meeting old friends and making new friends.

2007 Scholarship Awards

The Nichiren Buddhist Temple of San Jose awarded scholarships to three youths this year. The Myokakuji Betsuin Scholarship was awarded to Yugi Sakaguchi of the Tachibana School who is attending the San Jose State University. The title of his essay was "The Way I See Buddhism."

Stephanie Harada was also awarded this scholarship. Her family are members of the temple and she is attending the Sierra College. Her essay was, "My Family."

The Joenji Scholarship was awarded to Wakana Hirayama, a member of the Tachibana School and Shorinji Kempo. She is attending the UC Davis. She wrote an essay entitled,

"Taking Things for Granted."

SANGHA

Kyogi-nagashi

It is time for the annual clean up for worn out religious items. The "Kyogi-nagashi" offers a spiritually proper way to dispose of these religious items that have served their purpose throughout the years and to express "Thanks" for their usage.

Please bring in the items before the service, which will be conducted by Rev. Kenjo Igarashi on Sunday, August 5, at 11 a.m. at the Long Beach Japanese Culture Center. Following the religious service, an "otoki" luncheon will be served by the Sangha matrons.

The "Kyogi-nagashi" means to float a slate with scriptures and names of the deceased loved ones down a river or out to sea. This was a practice carried out in memory of those who had passed away. With changing times, the "Kyogi-nagashi" includes burning worn out religious items. It is always important to remember to dispose of personal religious items with respect.

PUUNENE

Bon Dance

The annual Shin Bon Service and Bon dance were held on Saturday, June 9 at the Puunene Nichiren Mission in Kahului, Hawaii. The service was officiated by Bishop Joyo Ogawa, followed by a sermon given in English by Rev. Junsei Nagayoshi of the Honolulu Betsuin.

Also three guests from Shimane Prefecture, Japan, flew

over to attend this event making it more grand. They were Revs. Kojun Bun'ya, Koken Umeki and Hoko Okada.

After the service, the famous Maui Bon Dance was held on the temple grounds. More than three hundred people participated in the dance, which continued for two hours with songs like "Dai Tokyo Ondo," "Fukushima Ondo," "Dai Hiroshima Ondo," etc. Usually the temple ground is very quiet but on this night it was very lively and all the participants had a great time!

HONOLULU

Toba Kuyo

The toba is a thin wooden plate shaped like a tower, on which the Odaimoku is written. In India, this kind of plate was made of stone and is called "Stupa," which means tower. The Chinese called it "Sottoba" and when it was brought into Japan, they called it "Toba."

It is said that when the historical Buddha Sakyamuni went into Nirvana (passed away), his ashes were dispersed to 84,000 places all over India and Buddhist followers erected towers as a reminder of Buddha's virtues. Since that time, Buddhists have been making offerings of towers, namely "Toba" for the Buddha and the deceased.

In the Lotus Sutra chapter 21, it is preached that Buddhists should erect towers and offer alms to the Buddha. This is why toba offerings are given during the Obon service. The Toba Kuyo was held on Sunday, July 15 from 10 a.m.

Sunday School Activities

After this month's Kito service on July 1, the children started Taiko beating practice. After the Obon service the children gathered to make lotus flower-shaped floats to sail on the lotus pond.

Fujinkai Notice

The Nichiren-shu Fujinkai will be participating in the City & County Mayor's Cultural Fair on Saturday, November 10, 2007. The Fujinkai is requesting your help and donations

for handmade craft items, baked goods, patchwork, small plants and pickled foods.

Due to the Board of Health restrictions, however, bentos, and sushi will not be sold. We are looking forward to your cooperation!

LOS ANGELES

Let Us Make Pilgrimage to Minobusan by Bishop Shokai Kanai

For the last nine years of his life, Nichiren Shonin lived on Minobusan where he educated his disciples and followers. He sent a letter to Lord Hakii saying that since he had stayed in Minobu for nine years, he felt it was his home and wherever he passes away, he wants to have his tomb erected at Minobu because his spirit would dwell there forever.

Nichiren Shu has started its campaign under the slogan of "Odaimoku and Peace," in April 2007. Rev. Joshin Komatsu, Chief Administrator of the Nichiren Shu Headquarters, said in his 2007 policy speech, "First, let us visit Minobusan, our Founder's mountain, and make a vow of faith in front of our Founder."

"Let us practice 'I Deeply Respect You!' at Minobusan. The posture of putting our palms together and bowing will awaken other people's minds even though there is a difference in faith, ideology, and values."

At Minobusan, the Kuonji Temple prepares a registration form. All visitors to the temple are requested to fill out this form and to attend its morning service and have the Kaicho (receiving the Founder's blessing by opening his shrine doors).

The Kuonji Temple will record the number of visitors from each district and temple and give a souvenir. If you have an opportunity to visit Japan please pay your respects to our Founder at Minobusan.

Resignation of Rev. Kanai

Rev. Shokai Kanai has submitted his resignation as the head priest of the Los Angeles Nichiren Buddhist Temple because of his health condition. Rev. Join Inoue of the New York Dai Seionji will succeed Rev. Kanai. The combined resignation and installation ceremony will be held after the Oeshiki Service on October 14.

Rev. Kanai will be moving to Las Vegas and try to establish a new Nichiren Shu temple there and also educate young ministers. He will con-



Rev. Shokai Kanai

tinue working as the Bishop of NONA until his term ends in August, 2008.

Obon Service

The annual Obon memorial service was held on Sunday, July 15, at 11 a.m.

The temple enshrined a toba for all those newly deceased. The family members of the newly deceased offered flags with a written phrase from the Lotus Sutra. Some sacred water was sprinkled on the food and incense was offered during the memorial service.

Rev. Zuigaku Kodachi, head of the Minorikai of Portland and Professor Emeritus of the Lewis and Clark College, gave a message after the service both in English and Japanese.

NONA

Memorial Service for 9/11

NONA will host the Seventh Buddhist Year Memorial Service for the victims of the 9/11 terrorist attack, on Sunday, August 26, at Battery Park, New York City, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. The service will be conducted by the ministers of NONA and other denominations. We will offer flowers, incense and, most importantly, chant the Lotus Sutra for the approximately 3,000 victims.

The spirit of the service is to pray for the victims, so that they can receive our chanting and rest in the Buddha Land. Also, it will be to comfort the families and friends of the victims and pray for world peace.

NONA Meetings

Preceding the memorial service, on August 24, the NONA ministers' meeting will be held in the morning and Rev. Gikoh Tabata from Japan will teach Nichiren Shu Wasan to the ministers and their spouses in the afternoon.

The Dharma Conference for lay people will be held all day on Saturday, August 25, at the New York Marriott Financial Center. Registration forms are available at all the NONA temples. Please try to attend this event.



More than 300 people participate in the 'Maui Bon Dance' at Puunene Mission

Nichiren Shu News

c/o NICHIREN SHU Shumuin

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