

Nichiren Shu News

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750th Anniversary of the Presentation of 'Rissho Ankoku-ron' to Be Observed in 2009

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph. D.

We, Nichiren Buddhists, welcome the 750th anniversary of the presentation of the "Rissho Ankoku-ron (Treatise for Spreading Peace Throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma)" by our Founder. Rissho Ankoku-ron was completed on the 26th day of the 5th month in the first year of the Bunno Period (1260), and was presented on the 16th day of the 7th month to the former Shogunal Regent, Hojo Tokiyori, the de facto ruler of the Kamakura Shogunate, through Yadoya Saishin. Nichiren Shonin was 38 years old at the time.

Thirty-six pages of the original manuscript (excluding the 24th page) are kept as a National Treasure of Japan in the Nakayama Hokekyoji Temple, Chiba Prefecture.

The reason why our Founder wrote this treatise was that a series of strange phenomena in the sky and natural calamities on earth occurred in succession from the first year of the Shoka Period (1257) to the first year of the Bunno Period (1260).

Especially, the severe earthquake that beset Kamakura in the first year of Shoka directly moved him to write this essay. To find the cause of these disasters Nichiren Shonin re-examined all the scriptures of Buddhism in the

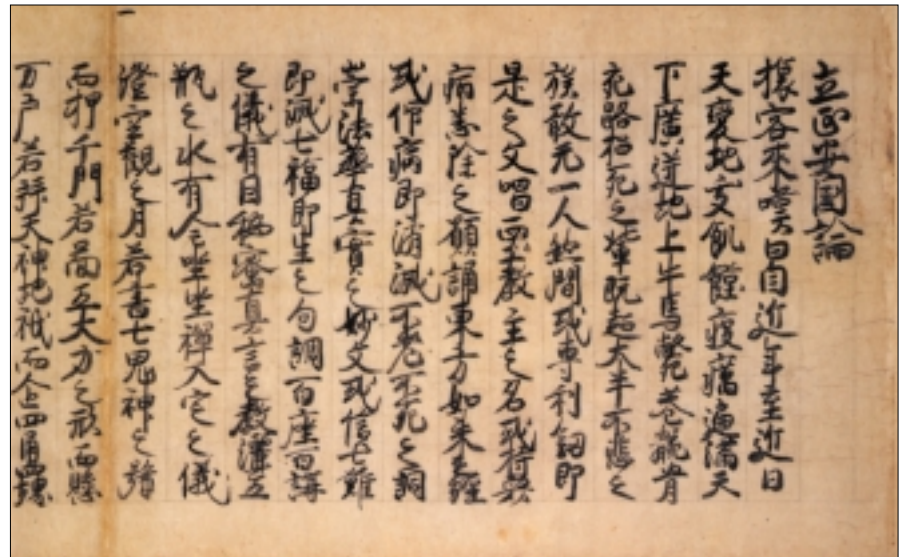
library of the Iwamoto Jissoji Temple in Shizuoka Prefecture. His findings and conclusions were put together in this treatise.

The main theme of this essay is that the Buddha Land can be established in this world through practicing the Lotus Sutra. This idea constitutes the core of Nichiren Buddhism, which Nichiren Shonin upheld throughout his lifetime.

Various memorial events are planned in 2009. The Nichiren Shonin Monka Rengokai (Federation of Nichiren Buddhist Denominations) is composed of Nichiren Shu, 10 other schools and one group of Nichiren Buddhism. This Federation is planning "The Nichiren Exhibition (tentative)" to be held in the Kyoto National Museum from October 10 to November 23, 2009.

The same Federation presented in 2003 a similar exhibition, "Nichiren—Art and Belief," in the Tokyo National Museum in commemoration of the 750th anniversary of the establishment of Nichiren Buddhism. A number of objects of personal significance to Nichiren Shonin and artworks inspired by the Lotus Sutra were displayed at the exhibition.

Several years have passed since then, and the Federation now plans to hold "The Nichiren Exhibition" in



The opening sentences of "Rissho Ankoku-ron"

Kyoto next year in which the original "Rissho Ankoku-ron" manuscript as well as other treasures of Nichiren Shonin and artworks of the Lotus Sutra that have been passed down through centuries will be displayed.

The Federation of Nichiren Buddhist Denominations sincerely hopes that many people will take advantage of this rare opportunity to view such a collection of true treasures. Taking this opportunity, one can enjoy sight-seeing in the beautiful autumn colors

of Kyoto and pay homage to various temples of Nichiren Shu as well as those of other denominations in Kyoto.

This exhibition will be held in autumn and the memorial service and other memorial events of Nichiren Shu will be held in spring. The Federation hopes to take this opportunity to enhance the spirit of "Spreading Peace Throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma" in the modern society.

Fifth World Conference of Overseas Ministers Held



Participants of the Fifth World Conference of Overseas Ministers in front of the Shumuin



Rev. Shoryo Tarabini reporting his activities in Europe

By Rev. Sensho Komukai

Altogether 24 Nichiren Shu ministers who are stationed Overseas attended the Fifth World Conference of Overseas Ministers at the Nichiren Shu Headquarters in Tokyo from May 12 to 14. They came from North America, Hawaii, Brazil, Europe, Southeast Asia and the Republic of Korea.

During the four-day conference, each minister gave a report on his or her activities and the current situation. Rev. Shogen Kumakura of New York proposed that a signboard announcing the principles of Nichiren Shu should be hung up at each overseas temple, following the example of other Buddhist denominations.

Rev. Shokei Stephens of the Daiseionji Temple of Germany said that she is doing her best to promote dialogue with other religious groups, and is busy responding to inquiries from the "new Odaimoku groups."

On the final day of the conference Rev. Gyobun Nakao of the Rissho University gave a lecture on the Gohonzon.

Rev. Kin'ichi Kunieda from the Tokyo New Church gave a lecture on clinical pastoral education at the NBIC-sponsored seminar held on May 15.

On May 16 some 10 ministers visited the Kuonji Temple on Minobusan to hold a memorial service for the late overseas ministers including Rev. Myoyo Mizuno, who passed away last year.

Events

April–May, 2008

- Apr. 5: "I-no-lympic" held at the Daikyoji Temple, Shibamata, Tokyo
- Apr. 8: "Hanamatsuri," Buddha's birthday celebration
- Apr. 15–May 19: Annual First Shingyo Dojo at Minobusan, in which three foreigners participated
- Apr. 22–24: National Conference of Shumu-shocho (heads of local administrative headquarters) at the Nichiren Shu Headquarters
- Apr. 28: 756th Annual Commemoration of the Proclamation of Nichiren Buddhism
- May 12: 748th Annual Commemoration of Founder's exile to Izu
- May 12–15: Fifth World Conference of Overseas Ministers
- May 16: Service to lay to rest the ashes of the late Rev. Nun Myoyo Mizuno, former resident minister at the Hilo Nichiren Buddhist Temple, Hawaii, at the Monument of Overseas Ministers at Minobusan. She passed away on Oct. 31, 2007
- May 27–June 30: Annual Special Shingyo Dojo at Minobusan

by Rev. Tsuoh Yokoi

Statement on Tibet Unrest

By Rev. Joshin Komatsu
Chief Administrator
Nichiren Shu Order of Buddhism

Several weeks have passed since a large-scale unrest began on March 14 in the Tibet Autonomous Region without finding a solution.

It worries us a great deal to hear the news reporting that some Tibetan temples are sealed off and many people have died. We are afraid that the situation will worsen unless remedial measures are taken.

We, the Nichiren Shu Order, based on the teaching of "Establishing

Righteousness to Secure the Peace of Our Country" expounded by our Founder Nichiren Shonin, try to make this world a peaceful Buddha Land, transmit the teaching of the Lotus Sutra according to the true intent of Sakyamuni Buddha for appearing in this world, and encourage people to

believe, recite, and uphold the Daimoku (title) of this sutra.

We sincerely hope that the current problem in Tibet will soon be resolved by understanding the value of life, mutual respect and peaceful discussions.

March 28, 2008

The Life of Sakyamuni Buddha (5)

By Rev. Shinkai Oikawa, Litt. D.

8. Sweet temptations of devils

It is said the place where He sat then was under a big tree called "The Bodhi tree" in Buddhagaya. Bodhi (bodai) means to acquire the wisdom of the Buddha's enlightenment. This memorable place where Sakyamuni achieved enlightenment (attained Buddhahood) still exists. It did not take Him one night. He achieved it in an instant and He became a Buddha (Enlightened man).

He left home when He was twenty-nine years old, undertook such asceticism as fasting and stopping breathing, and at last he finally ceased breathing. He ate a bowl of porridge and other food, recovered His strength, and achieved enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at the age of thirty-five. Although the name of the tree was asvattha, it came to be called a Bodhi tree because Sakyamuni became a Buddha under it.

Practicing asceticism and getting enlightened, He suffered very much both physically and mentally. We wonder how He could maintain his physical strength. We suppose that He struggled against temptation to quit day and night. Sometimes He wanted to stop fasting and to eat food, but the next moment He wanted to continue fasting. It was a war against His own desires. This is extremely dreadful.

Many demons appear in old sutras in order to explain this war against desires without explaining them directly. It is written in sutras that demons came up to Him and tempted sweetly, saying, "Stop doing such stupid things. This is more enjoyable. This is more delicious. This is more beautiful." On some occasions the demons appeared smiling as charming women, on others with many kinds of delicious food. The demons never threatened Him, but were very kind. They never were scary but tender. They tempted tenderly.

S a k y a m u n i fought against these demons for six years. It was extremely difficult. They never gave up even when Sakyamuni was about to be enlightened. It is their business to make people unhappy. The unhappier people become, the more customers they gain. They will have no customers



Rev. Shinkai Oikawa

when Sakyamuni attains enlightenment and makes people all happy. This is their serious problem. All the people go to Sakyamuni and they will have no business.

There is the oldest Buddhist sutra called "Sutta-nipāta" that talks about how the demons came near to Him. A demon said, "Hello, you are practicing asceticism very hard. But you look pale. How are you feeling? You are dying soon, aren't you?" It was absolutely true. Sakyamuni had been practicing fasting and stopping breathing so He was rapidly losing His health.

"You look 99% dead. Your life remains by just 1%," the demon said. "But life is really good. You must live." We tend to think it is quite right, don't we? He continued, "We will be happy if we live on. To live is not bad or hard, but very good. Live on." What kind of good things are there? He explained, "Live on, worship and make offerings to gods, and they will never fail to take you to the heavens. You don't need to try hard by yourself."

"It is very hard for you to stop breathing and undertake fasting, isn't it? Stop it. Stop it! You'd better live." It is written in sutras that the demon stood besides Sakyamuni whispering like this. The demon's temptation continued further. Sakyamuni could not make up His mind whether or not He should stop.

In spite of the demon's temptation Sakyamuni roused Himself up, saying, "I don't yield to your sweet temptation. I will keep on asceticism in pursuit of my pure state of mind. I will see it through to the end even if my blood dries up. You demon, I understood you revealed your real intention. Your first army is desire."

All human beings have their own desires. First of all, we have the desire to live at all cost. Everyone thinks so. What is more, we have desires to eat food, to make love when young, to gain a good social position and to get rich. This is the first weapon of the demons. We are always exposed to the dangerous weapons. So I say the first army is desires. Next come "starvation," "thirst," and "sleep." Human beings cannot live without sleep. So sleep is one of the most important of the demons' temptations. Furthermore we doubt. We cannot easily believe what someone says. This is doubt. We cannot escape from doubt.

Another one of the demons' ways is "hypocrisy." That means pretension to do something good. The demons dangle "honor" and "fortune" before us. We easily give ourselves up to them. Temptation to make a large profit is also his way. Ordinary people like to be praised but to speak ill of others. We feel pleasant if praised, but it is dif-

ficult to praise others. We all have such "true nature." This is the demons' way, too. After setting out these sweet temptations Sakyamuni declares, "I will never be defeated by these desires."

Demons came up to Him on the last scene of His enlightenment in order to hinder Him from attaining Buddhahood. In art museums in India there remain many old sculptures showing the scenes of the Buddha's enlightenment. There are scenes showing the demons' attacks and temptations of women exposing their big breasts. The demons tried many ways to hinder Him from attaining enlightenment. But Sakyamuni would never move from under the Bodhi tree till His enlightenment. He knew if He moved, He would lose everything. At last He beat the demons. They retreated, saying "We've hung around Sakyamuni for seven years, trying to tempt Him in vain. It was impossible to tempt Him. We could not find any chances." The demons went away from Him getting extremely depressed.

It is said that the demon went away without noticing that he dropped his cherished biwa or Japanese lute. A biwa is a Japanese musical instrument, including Heike biwa and Satsuma biwa. It is called "vina" in the Indian language. It came to Japan from India via China and Korea, and came to be called "biwa."

Under these circumstances Sakyamuni achieved enlightenment after He was completely relieved from the demons. This concludes today's lecture. I would like to speak of the content of His enlightenment in the next meeting.

I am going to tell you what kind of powers Sakyamuni gained and what kind of people He saved through His divine powers by preaching around India for forty-five years.

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



Mahabodhi Temple built at Buddhagaya, the sacred place of the enlightenment of Sakyamuni Buddha



Inner view of the Mahabodhi Temple

Nichiren Shonin and His Lay Followers (5)

By Rev. Kanji Tamura
Professor, Risho University

The Ikegami Brothers, Munenaka and Munenaga (1)

Among the influential lay followers of Nichiren, the Ikegami brothers—Munenaka (?–1293?) and Munenaga (?–1275?)—are known to have carried through their faith in the Lotus Sutra.

Munenaka, also called “Uemon no Tayusakan,” was a steward residing in the Ikegami section of Musashi Province (Tokyo today). As the Commissioner of Construction of the Kamakura Shogunate (military government), Munenaka was involved in the construction of the Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine, guardian deity of the shogunate.

His brother, Munenaga, also named “Hyoesakana,” was kind-hearted, and his relationship with his elder brother was excellent.

The Ikegami brothers are said to have met Nichiren in Kamakura, becoming his followers. Of the two, Munenaka’s faith in the Lotus Sutra was especially firm. Their father, Ikegami Saemonnojo Yasumitsu, had been a devoted follower of Ryokan-bo Ninsho of the Gokurakuji Temple.

Ryokan was a high priest of the Shingon Ritsu (Precept) School, performing the prayer services through his divine power, which he claimed to have gained by his strict observance of the Buddhist precepts.

Ryokan also emphasized philanthropic works such as the construction of bridges and was influential among the leaders of the military government. Nichiren, however, strongly criticized Ryokan, stating: “Precept Buddhism is a national traitor.” Nichiren insisted that in the Latter Age of Degeneration (following the 2,000 years after the passing of the Buddha) society was in disorder, human feeling was too weak



Rev.
Kanji Tamura

to observe the precepts, and therefore it was simply a lie and hypocrisy for anyone to claim to be an observer of the precepts.

Ikegami Yasumitsu, who was aware of Nichiren’s criticism of Ryokan, disliked his sons’ devotion to Nichiren. Finally in the spring of the 12th year of Bun’ei (1275) he demanded that his two sons abandon their faith in the Lotus Sutra. When the two refused to obey his order, the Father disowned the elder son.

Encouragement for Faith in the Lotus Sutra

Upon hearing of this incident, Nichiren wrote a letter to the Ikegami brothers and their wives on the 16th day of the fourth month. This long letter is known as “Kyodai-sho,” in which Nichiren declares first of all that the Lotus Sutra is the essence of all the scriptures of Buddhism, through which all the Buddhas in the past, present, and future existences attain Buddhahood and guide all living beings.

Citing examples of those who established a relation with the Lotus Sutra but in the end abandoned it due to bad karma and thereby fell into hell, Nichiren then warns them not to abandon even a character or a dot of the Lotus Sutra. He then states that it is extremely difficult to encounter a person who expounds the Lotus Sutra exactly as stated in it, and that some high priests in the past did not think highly of the Lotus Sutra and died a sudden death, went to hell and were reproached by Yama, the King of Hell.

King of Evils in the Sixth Heaven

Nichiren in this letter then states

that the believers of the Lotus Sutra should be careful about the King of Evils in the Sixth Heaven, who leads living beings astray, tempts them to abandon the Lotus Sutra, causing them to fall into the evil realms. Nichiren states that this King of Evils in the Sixth Heaven enters the bodies of high priests and confuses innocent people. Other times he enters the bodies of a wife and children to fool a husband and parents; the body of the ruler of a country to threaten a practitioner of the Lotus Sutra; or bodies of parents to censure their filial children. Why do we encounter these difficulties in this life? According to Nichiren, it is to lessen or extinguish the sins that we committed in the past by slandering the True Dharma. Nichiren further explains that the miseries of the Mongol Invasion of Japan are actually caused by the rulers of Japan, who promoted the wrong schools of Buddhism such as Shingon and Nembutsu, becoming the enemies of the Lotus Sutra, the True Dharma.

To the wives of the brothers Nichiren encourages them saying, “Women are weak minded. I am afraid you may change your mind. Uncompromisingly clench your teeth and never withdraw.”

True Filial Piety

Enumerating the exemplary devotion to the king and parents in history, Nichiren states that although one should follow the parents in all matters, as for the way of attaining Buddhahood is concerned, not to follow them seems to be fundamental of filial piety. The 27th “King Wonderful Adornment” chapter of the Lotus Sutra narrates the tale of two princes, Pure Store and Pure Eyes, who converted their Brahman father (King Wonderful Adornment) to Buddhism through the Lotus Sutra. Nichiren praises the Ikegami brothers, comparing them to these

princes (Pure Store and Pure Eyes), namely future Bodhisattvas Medicine King and Medicine Superior.

Three Hindrances and the Four Devils

Nichiren also cites a statement of Grand Master T’ien-t’ai from his Great Concentration and Insight saying, “When practicing the ‘3,000 existences contained in one thought’ doctrine, it is inevitable that the three hindrances and four devils compete to interfere with the practitioner.” According to Nichiren, practicing the “3,000 existences contained in one thought” doctrine means practicing the Daimoku. The three hindrances means (1) obstacle of passions, (2) obstacle of wife and children, and (3) obstacles of the ruler of a country and parents, etc. while the four devils are (1) evil passions which torment one’s mind and body, (2) five elements of one’s existence which produce various kinds of pain, (3) death, and (4) King of Devils in the Sixth Heaven who thwarts one’s attempt to do good.

Nichiren’s Criticism of Other Sects

Why did Nichiren criticize all schools of Buddhism other than the one based on the Lotus Sutra? If we compare all the scriptures of Buddhism to the foods prepared by the Buddha, each food has its expiration date. All the foods prepared by the Buddha except the Lotus Sutra have passed the expiration dates by the Latter Age of Degeneration, namely they are no longer edible. The Lotus Sutra alone is the exception; its value increases becoming more tasty and nutritious by fermentation. A bowl of curry and rice, for instance, tastes much better if you eat it a few days after cooking. Some kinds of wine taste better while fresh but others grow better in taste after years or even ages. It is believed that this was the reason why Nichiren harshly criticized all the sutras except the Lotus Sutra as unsuitable to the Latter Age of Degeneration.

(Trans. K. H.)
(to be continued)

Specialists Working on the Petzold Collection

By Rev. Chishin Hirai
General Manager
Nichiren Buddhist Int’l Center (NBIC)

In March, a group of specialists from Risho University visited the Yenching Library of Harvard University in Boston to do research on a collection of Buddhist scrolls.

They found that the collection, donated by the Petzold family has 459 scrolls, of which 41 are the scrolls of Nichiren Buddhism, including a picture depicting the last moment of Nichiren Shonin and a Great Mandala. Others are scrolls from Tendai and Shingon lineages.

The collector was Bruno Petzold (1873–1949), a German, who came to Japan in 1910 as a newspaperman, accompanying his wife who was invited to teach vocal music at the present Tokyo University of Fine Arts.

He himself taught German at the present Tokyo University and other universities including the Risho. He became interested in Buddhism and was ordained as a Tendai priest. He

published essays on Buddhism and collected many books on Buddhism and Buddhist items.

His dream was to establish a library of his collection on Mt. Hiei, the mother temple of Tendai Shu. He died in Japan in 1949. After his death, his son sold 6,000 books, about half of his collection, to the Harvard University around 1951.

The Buddhist scrolls studied this time are supposed to have been donated to the university at that time.

Rev. Gyobun Nakao, Professor Emeritus of the Risho University, first visited the library in January last year to examine the collection which had so far remained as an “unknown collection.” He discovered many Buddhist scrolls in the collection.

His discovery led to the visit to the Harvard University of a research group of Nichiren Shu in December 2007. The group included Rev. Tengen Hamajima, Rev. Tan’yu Marumo and Rev. Chishin Hirai of the NBIC.

Shumuin dispatched the second research team to the university in March 2008. The team consisted of the

Risho University scholars and Rev. Chishin Hirai, head of the NBIC. The Risho scholars were Rev. Naofumi Annaka, Professor of Buddhist Studies; Ms. Tomoyo Nosaka, part-time instructor of Buddhist Studies/Risho University Institute for Restoration and Conservation of Buddhist Cultural Properties; and Naomi Sasaoka, Ph.D. of the Institute.

The team worked for 10 days, taking detailed pictures, measuring and cataloging the collection. A catalog of the collection will be put together, focusing on the pieces which are from the Nichiren lineage.

While in Boston, the group visited the Nichiren Buddhist Sangha of Greater New England for Sunday service. They carefully examined the Nichiren statue acquired by the Sangha last year at a local antique shop. After carefully studying the statue, the group



The Yenching Library, Harvard University

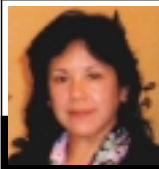
spent some time cleaning and restoring the figure and came to the conclusion that the statue was most likely from the early to mid-Edo era. The group took measurements and photos to document the statue for records at the Risho University.

Hopefully, the Sangha will have a catalogue of the collection available so that these hidden treasures in the heart of New England can be understood, seen, and enjoyed.

Why did Petzold collect such a great number of Buddhist scrolls? One reason is that he was a devoted scholar. Another is that Buddhism was suppressed by the Meiji government which wanted to establish Shintoism as the national thought. Many Buddhist temples were forced to close and their treasures were scattered and lost. Under such circumstances, it was easy for Petzold to collect these Buddhist items.



Prof. Naofumi Annaka (left) and Prof. Naomi Sasaoka examining a scroll



Temple Events

By Sandra Seki

BOSTON

Tokudo for Shami Jason Litts

The Tokudo (entering the priesthood ceremony) for Shami Ryoan Jason Litts, a long time member of the Nichiren Buddhist Temple of Portland, Oregon, was performed in Boston on April 19, 2008.

His master, Rev. Ryuoh Faulconer, of the Boston Sangha and Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett of the Myokenji Temple of Houston were present at the ceremony. Shami Litts will be receiving Docho (official permit for entering the priesthood) next spring at the Kiyosumi Temple in Chiba, Japan.

Shami Litts is currently on the Temple Board of Directors and he has held Wednesday Shodaigyo at the Portland Temple for the past year. He has also worked on several committees for Buddhist celebrations in the Portland area.



Shami Jason Litts (right) with Rev. Caine-Barrett, Rev. Faulconer

Three New Ministers Complete Training

Shami Ryunin Sorenson, Shami Ryusho Jeffus and Bassett Kanjo Joel have successfully completed the Shingyo Dojo, 35-day training at Minobusan to officially become Nichiren Shu ministers. They graduated the



Rev. Ryusho Jeffus



Rev. Bassett Kanjo Joel

course on May 19.

TEXAS

Nichiren Shu Retreat

The Nichiren Buddhist Sangha of Texas in cooperation with the Nichiren Order of North America (NONA) will hold a summer retreat in August 2008. The retreat will be held at the Margaret Austin Center located just northwest of Houston from August 1 to August 8. This will be the first week-long retreat offered by the Nichiren Shu in North America.

The focus will be on practice along with discussions and Dharma Talks.

Please consider attending this historic event to learn more about your practice and yourself.

The retreat begins at 4 p.m. on August 1 and ends at around 9 a.m. on August 8. The cost is \$300 per person. Two work scholarships are available at a reduced fee. Please call Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett for more information about this option.

The fee includes room and meals (vegetarian) for one week. If you are coming by air, a shuttle will be available from the airport at an additional cost.

For more information about the retreat and how to register, visit the Houston Sangha's website: <http://www.nichiren-shu.org/Houston/retreat.htm> or contact your

local minister.

HAWAII

Two New Ministers

As of March 31 two new ministers have registered to start training as overseas ministers. Rev. Chitoku Kawaguchi from Kyoto, aged 31, and Rev. Hosho Sugawara from Chiba, aged 30.



Rev. Kawaguchi



Rev. Sugawara

The two ministers arrived at the Nichiren Mission from Japan on April 30 to be trained for six months, after which they will formally be appointed as overseas ministers.

Kickoff for New Campaign

Hawaii Nichiren Shu will hold a kickoff service for the new campaign to celebrate the Founder's 800th birth year. The Nichiren Mission in Hawaii will begin its campaign with the slogan: "Be a Bodhisattva for World Peace with Compassion and Respect."

The first project is to revise the Teachings of the Lotus book (Hasu No Oshie).

The second project is to have a successful kickoff ceremony on June 22, 2008. The kickoff service will be officiated by the Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu from Japan at 10 a.m. on June 22, at the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii.

The keynote speaker will be Professor Naoto Yoshikawa, Chancellor of Hawaii Tokai International



Rev. Ogawa busy preparing for the new campaign

College. Prof. Yoshikawa previously worked at the United Nations for many years.

The Wahiawa Nichiren Mission will also celebrate its 60th anniversary on Saturday, June 21 at 2 p.m. The celebration will be a joint one with the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii at the Oahu Country Club on June 22.

LAS VEGAS

Funds for New Temple

Since Rev. Shokai Kanai moved to Las Vegas to establish a new temple, he has received many congratulatory donations from Japan and out of state believers. He has set aside a special fund for the land and a new building for the Nichiren Buddhist Kannon Temple of Nevada.

Since the temple received an Employer Identification Number from the Internal Revenue Service on March 28, it is now able to operate as a non-profit organization. All donations to the temple will be tax-exempted.

BRAZIL

Rev. Ishimoto Interviewed

On May 12, Sandra Seki attended the World Nichiren Missionary conference and had the pleasure of meeting Rev. Myoyu Ishimoto of the Minobusan Betsuin in South America.

After many years of strife and hardships, the 73-year-old Rev. Ishimoto has strode on in

propagating Nichiren Buddhism in Brazil.

Brazil will be celebrating the centennial of the Japanese Immigrants to Brazil this June.

There will be a special service at the Emyoji (Betsuin Temple in Brazil), where a wooden statue of Nichiren Shonin will be

enshrined to commemorate this event.

Rev. Ishimoto wishes to say that the world is suffering at the moment. Family issues have brought suicide, depression, and splits in the family. She feels that all of these occur depending on how children are raised.



Rev. Ishimoto (left) and Ms. Sandra Seki, foreign news editor

According to her there are three things which irritate and upset children from their very young days. 1) Having great expectations for a child and over-praising them so that they do not realize their own capacity. 2) Praising their father or grandfather and telling the child to be like their forefathers. 3) Praising one child excessively and criticizing the other children. These things add up and eventually lead the children to turn away from the family, society, and the world.

Rev. Ishimoto thinks the family can help in understanding the situation before it becomes uncontrollable. The teachings of the Lotus Sutra within the family is the key to the harmony within the household. This inter-exchange of ideas and feelings will help support the young people.

'This Is the Right Path for Me'

My Shingyo Dojo Experience

By Rev. Ryunin Sorenson

Graduating from Shingyo Dojo was one of the greatest accomplishments of my life. I had been practicing and studying as a Shami for five years prior to attending this course of training required for all Nichiren priests last April.

The entire 35 days was rigorous, yet fun and exciting. I had a few moments of doubt about whether or not I would make it, but, with the encouragement of fellow attendees and my Senseis, those moments quickly passed.



Rev. Ryunin Sorenson

and thought "What am I doing here?"

I have had prior military training, and Shingyo Dojo definitely was, in some respects, just as difficult. There were moments when I was sitting in seiza on the hard wood floor

How will I get through?" and almost as soon as the thoughts came, they passed.

I tried to keep my goal in mind, which was to pass and make my teachers proud. Being a disciple of an American priest meant failure was not an option. All eyes were on the American novices, and I think we did well.

I had moments of clarity, too. After climbing Mount Shichimen and doing a sunrise service at 4 a.m., I knew that this was meant to be. Watching the sun come up over the horizon in beautiful pinks and oranges and casting light on Mt. Fuji, I actually got emotional. I knew that this was the correct path for me and I don't think I've chanted a louder or clearer Odaimoku.

I have gout, so my left foot hurt, especially after seiza on the hard wood floor, but I thought of my teacher and it helped to carry me through. I didn't mind the suigyo early in the morning, but some mornings I dreaded the climb to Kuonji, yet I was always happy to be there and do morning service with my fellow ministers in training. I am happy that I made many friends, especially with the people in my Han (group), and we have all vowed to keep in touch. Any doubts I had about my decision, are now cleared.

I know that this is the right path for me and I hope to be able to spread the Dharma and the Lotus Sutra for the rest of my life, however long that may be.

Nichiren Shu News

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