

Nichiren Shu News

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1

The Restored Five-storied Pagoda Dedicated at Minobusan

The dedication ceremony of the five-storied pagoda was held for five days from May 13 to 17 at Minobusan. The completion of the pagoda is the final phase of the restoration of the buildings of the Founder's mountain

which were all devastated by fire in 1875. Not only the buildings but also the original copy of "Kaimoku-sho (Open Your Eyes)" and other important writings of the Founder were reduced to ashes. Rev. Zuio Inoue,

Director General of Minobusan, representing all devotees of the Nichiren Shu Order expressed the hope that the pagoda will serve as a symbol of spreading the odaimoku from the Founder's mountain.



Archbishop Uchino officiates the commemorative service in the Main Hall on May 17



Visitors at the outdoor dedication ceremony on May 13



Rev. Inoue, Director General of Minobusan, addresses the gathering of celebrating devotees on May 15



The five-day dedication ceremony is held from May 13 to 17



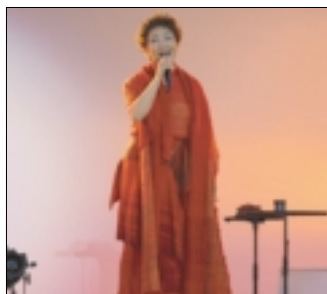
Archbishop Uchino at the tea ceremony on May 15



Sen Genshitsu, master of the tea ceremony, performs a tea ceremony



Ms. Shizue Isogai leads the wasan (Nichiren-shu hymns) of Minobusan and Pundarika chorus groups May 16



Ms. Tokiko Kato is on stage on May 14



Joji Yamamoto, enka singer on May 17



Yoshikazu Mera, male soprano on May 15

Dedication of the New Building of Ichinenji

By Rev. Tomonori Kawaguchi

The new building of the Ichinenji Temple of Penang Island, Malaysia, was dedicated on April 26. Over 200 persons, not only from Penang but also from Taiwan, Klang (Malaysia), Jakarta (Indonesia), and Singapore, attended the dedication ceremony.

Rev. Ken'itsu Saito, Director of Missionary Division, Nichiren Shu Head Office, performed the ceremony assisted by Revs. Kangyo Noda and Tomonori Kawaguchi of Southeast Asia.

When the Penang Ichinenji was approved as a Nichiren Shu temple in 2002, it was located in

Green Lane, Penang, and its activities were held in a one room business building.

Responding to the wish of the temple members to move to a bigger place, Vice-chairman of the Ichinenji Temple, Mr. Ng Kim Fatt, purchased a building and donated it to the temple.

All members contributed for renovating the factory into a temple.

In the evening, a banquet was held at the Red Rock Hotel. Following the congratulatory address by Rev. Saito, the chairpersons of the sanghas of Klang, Jakarta, Singapore, and Taiwan expressed their congratulations for the

opening of the new temple building.

Penang members were really grateful for the support of various people. All those who participated in this event felt that they were all in one big family of the Odaimoku even though they lived in different places, spoke different languages, and had different cultures. They confirmed that the future of Nichiren Shu in Southeast Asia is bright.



Devotees of Penang, joined by those from Taiwan, Klang (Malaysia), Jakarta, and Singapore attend the dedication ceremony



The new building of Ichinenji



Rev. Ken'itsu Saito (2nd from right) leads the tape-cutting

The Life of Sakyamuni Buddha (11)

By Rev. Shinkai Oikawa, Litt. D.

10. Sakyamuni's Missions and Entering Nirvana

(1) Tales of the Hells

This is the last of my lectures. I will start with the tales of the hells. I wrote about "Sakyamuni" and "the hells" in a magazine a few days ago. To tell you the truth, it was quite difficult for me to write about the hells. I do not know much about the hells because I have never been there.

What I wrote is that I do not know whether Sakyamuni really knew "the hells" and "utmost pleasures" or not. The hells are said to be very hard places. First of all a term of imprisonment is very long. A prison term in the hells requires many kalpa (aeons) to finish.

One kalpa (aeon) is said to be a period longer than the duration of the sesame seeds fully loaded on a cart will last when one seed at a time is taken out every one hundred years. It is much longer than we can imagine.

"Asamkhya kalpa" is a unit of time. "Asamkhya" means "countless" in the Indian language. So "Asamkhya kalpas" means countless kalpas. It is almost an astronomical figure, isn't it? We say some hundred million light-years. It is a length of time for the light of stars to reach the earth. A light-year is a unit of the speed of light. We can see the light of a star extremely long after it started. Therefore "Asamkhya kalpa" is an incredibly long period of time like light-years.

The unit of length in Buddhism is far longer than the human life span and, moreover, longer than astronomical figures. Actually I cannot understand such units of time. So I am at a loss. The hells are the same.

One is kept afflicted with constant



Rev. Shinkai Oikawa

pains in the hells for an unimaginably long period of time. Also, punishments there are very appalling. For example, "ken-yo-rin" or "sword-leaf forest" in the hells is where there are many trees with swords.

Charming women are atop the trees. Many lustful male prisoners of hell under the trees climb straight up them for the pretty women without looking around. As all the leaves of the trees are sharp like razor blades, they climb with blood all over their bodies.

The moment they reach the top, the women move onto the ground in a split second and invite them to come down. All day long these men go down to the ground and climb to the top again covered with blood till their bodies are cut to pieces.

Unfortunately the prisoners of hell do not die at all. They are restored to life again the day after. They repeat the same things over and over.

If I reflect upon myself carefully, this resembles my life. I am afraid I have been repeating such stupid actions without learning my lessons throughout my life. I wonder if my life might be the hell in this world. Anyway, the prisoners in the hells are tor-

tured for such a long time.

(2) Is Buddhism Endless?

One of the characteristics of Buddhism is to bring up such subjects as long time and innumerable quantities. One example is the "Four Great Vows."

It states, "Sentient beings are innumerable, I vow to save them all." "Sentient beings" are human beings or living beings like us. They are innumerable and endless or boundless. There is no end. It is extremely difficult to save innumerable beings.

Then, we chant, "Our evil desires are inexhaustible, I vow to quench them all." Evil desires occurring in our bodies or desires we want strongly are innumerable and countless.

The third vow is "The Buddha's teachings are immeasurable, I vow to study them all." Since Buddha's teachings are immeasurable, they never come to an end. One thing to study after another appears continuously.

The last vow is "The way of the Buddha is unexcelled, I vow to attain the path sublime." "The way of the Buddha" is supreme. It is impossible to reach the top, even if we try to go as far up as we can.

All the pledges concern with the endless and innumerable things. We are actually at a loss.

We chanted the sutra today and read the "Life Span of the Buddha" in the sixteenth chapter of the Lotus Sutra. This sutra is quite the same.

To begin with, the chapter says that "Since I attained Buddhahood the number of 'kalpa' that have passed is immeasurable: hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions, trillions, 'Asamkhya' years." The number of 'kalpa' which have passed is infinite trillions here.

As I said before, one "kalpa" is a

longer period than the duration of sesame seeds loaded on a cart will last when one seed at a time is taken out every one hundred years. What is more, the number of the "kalpa" is immeasurable: trillions and "Asamkhya."

We cannot imagine how long ago it was. I even venture to imagine it explains about the time when the earth was created in chaos before human beings were born. I am thrown into a panic and cannot understand it at all upon hearing the word "kalpa."

The sixteenth chapter of the Lotus Sutra continues, "Constantly I have preached the Dharma and taught countless billions of living beings."

It means that the Buddha has been alive preaching for a very long time without dying to teach countless billions of living beings.

This is a sutra characteristic of Buddhism, especially of Mahayana Buddhism. The Lotus Sutra is the sutra of Mahayana Buddhism. The Buddha of the Lotus Sutra has been saving human beings ever since immeasurable past.

However, the Buddha I mentioned in the last two lectures is not this Buddha but the Buddha who was given birth by His mother, lived and died at the age of eighty in India, and never appeared again.

Sakyamuni was born in India approximately 2,500 years ago and was spiritually enlightened when He was 35 years old and died at the age of 80. He had been circulating all over India for 45 years saving the people. He rested with His head toward the north and on the right side and passed away between two Sal trees at Kusinagar.

Thus today I am going to tell you about the middle to later years of Sakyamuni's life. Sakyamuni began to preach His teachings as invoked strongly by the King of the Brahma Heaven saying "Since you were enlightened, I want you to be kind enough to save us."

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

Temple Events

HONOLULU

A Dream for Creating Hawaiian Buddhism

Bishop Shingyo Imai, the newly appointed 13th Bishop of the Hawaii Nichiren Mission, would like to make some changes. He feels that although the Japanese traditions in Buddhism are

Myanmar Cyclone and Chinese Sichuan Earthquake Emergency Relief Fund

We would like to thank everybody for generous contributions in support of the Myanmar Cyclone and Chinese Sichuan Earthquake Emergency Relief Fund which ended November 30. In five months, collections from contributors associated with the Nichiren Shu International Aid Fund totaled 5,849,919 JPY. The total contributed aid was 7,800,000 JPY with the difference being contributed by the Nichiren Shu International Aid Fund. (Nichiren Shu Head Office)

to be respected, he will not hesitate to change them to make them fit the people in Hawaii. He intends to create the Hawaiian Buddhism for the people in Hawaii.

He would like to make a gradual change not a sudden one. The Bishop would like to hear comments and ideas from the members to make the Mission's future a bright one, so please everyone feel free to contact him at any time.

First of all, the Sunday morning service will begin from 7 a.m. instead of 6.30 a.m. to try and have as many people as possible attend. Also the morning services will be held completely in Japanese except for the sermon which will be given in both Japanese and English. Sunday services from 10 a.m. will be in English although the chanting of the sutras will be in Japanese.

Another change will be in reciting Vandana & Ti-sarana. It was previously recited as: "I go to the Buddha for guidance . . ." Instead we will recite it as "We go to the . . ." This is because we as bodhisattvas need to focus more on caring for others, said Bishop Imai. "You are not living in this world alone."

"We are related to each other even though we are not aware of it in our daily lives. Therefore, we must have respect for each other. This is the basic theme of the bodhisattva's way of life,"

added the Bishop. This is why he would like to change the wording to "We" go to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha together.

If all of us can share the sufferings and overcome them together, and not be afraid of them, we will someday find peace in our minds which will be the first realization to world peace.

New Fujinkai President

Mrs. Yoshiko Imai, Bishop Imai's wife, has become the new Fujinkai President. She would like to re-energize the Fujinkai with the help of everyone, young or old, active or not so active. She would like the kai to continue traditions like making the ohagi at Ohigan, decorating the Hanamido for the historical Buddha's birthday and participating in the Mayor's fair as well as adding at least one service activity to help out the community. Some other projects coming up this year include preparing lunch for the students of the Minobusan High School on May 24 and making curry for the volunteers for the mid-year Spring cleaning on June 28.

As for community service a great idea was submitted from one of the members regarding "family love and our commitment against domestic violence." In order to carry out these projects, the mission needs all the

members to join in and lend a hand.

Minobusan High School Students

On the annual Memorial Day service, a group of the Minobusan High School students will be joining the members. Some of the students are priests to be and they will be assisting the priests of the mission to hold the service.

Events

April-May, 2009

- Apr. 8: "Hanamatsuri," the Buddha's birthday
- Apr. 15-20: "Sembu-e (chanting of the Lotus Sutra, one thousand times)" at the Nakayama Hokekyoji Temple
- Apr. 21-23: National Conference of Shumu-shocho (heads of local administrative offices) at the Nichiren Shu Administration Office
- Apr. 27-29: "Sembu-e (chanting of the Lotus Sutra, one thousand times)" at the Ikegami Hommonji Temple
- Apr. 28: the 757th Annual Commemoration of the Proclamation of Nichiren Buddhism
- May 12: the 749th annual ceremony in commemoration of the Izu Persecution
- May 13-17: Inauguration ceremony of the five-storied pagoda of Minobusan
by Rev. Tsuoh Yokoi

Nichiren Shonin and His Lay Followers (11)

By Rev. Kanji Tamura, Litt. D.
Associate Professor,
Rissho University

Ryoke-no-ama and Nii-ama (1)

Conversion

Nichiren Shonin is believed to have been a son of a local official serving the lord of a manor, "Tohoku-no Sho," in Awa Province, present Chiba Prefecture, and was in charge of the management of the manor. The manor (private land) system appeared in the Nara Period (710-794). Ryoke-no-ama was the nun-wife of the lord of a manor. The wife of the lord came to have faith in the Lotus Sutra, as guided by Nichiren Shonin.

At about the time when Nichiren Shonin proclaimed the establishment of a Buddhist sect by propagating the Odaimoku, Tojo Kagenobu, a local lord of the Tojo County, attempted to invade the adjacent Tohoku-no Sho owned by the Ryoke family. Kagenobu, a believer of Amitabha Buddha, attempted to convert the priests of the Seichoji Temple and the Futama-dera Temple, located in his Tojo County, to his own faith.

Siding with the Ryoke family, Nichiren Shonin helped the family to win the trial on land dispute against Kagenobu, and reduced the influence of Kagenobu on the Seichoji and Futama-dera Temples. Our Founder was not only a learned priest but a priest with the knowledge of judicial affairs. Some claim that our Founder was brought up as a person in charge of disputes at the Seichoji Temple.

Since Kagenobu lost the trial, his hatred toward Nichiren Shonin increased, and finally, he attacked Nichiren Shonin at Komatsubara, present Kamogawa City, in the eleventh month of 1264.



Rev.
Kanji Tamura

There existed a close relationship between the Ryoke couple and the parents of Nichiren Shonin as lord and vassal. In these circumstances the wife of the Ryoke family became a devoted follower of Nichiren Shonin. Our Founder called her "O-ama (elder nun)," and her daughter or daughter-in-law "Nii-ama (new nun)." Nii-ama also became a follower of Nichiren Shonin.

Giving it up, and standing pat

Nichiren Shonin was exiled to Sado Island following the aborted execution at Tatsunokuchi, Kamakura, in the 10th month of 1271. The organization of his devotees was given a devastating blow by Heino Yoritsuna and other ranking officials of the Kamakura Shogunate. Nichiren Shonin encouraged his disciples and followers to overcome the crucial moment. However, Ryoke-no Ama gave up her faith in the Lotus Sutra.

In the meantime, Nii-ama stayed firm with her faith, and continued to send offerings to Nichiren Shonin in exile on Sado. Her conduct of sending offerings to Nichiren Shonin deeply touched the heart of the Founder.

Nichiren was pardoned from his exile in the third month of 1274. He returned to Kamakura and advised the shogunate on the preparations for the Mongolian invasion, and remonstrated against the adoption of the wrong faith of Buddhism for the third time. Knowing the government would not accept the faith in the Lotus Sutra, he retired into Minobusan in the fifth month of the same year.

Toasted Laver and Minobusan

In the second month of the next year, the offering of toasted laver was delivered to Nichiren Shonin in Minobusan respectively from Nii-ama and O-ama. In a letter of thanks to Nii-ama, Nichiren Shonin says, "Thank you for sending me packages of toasted laver. O-ama also sent me packages of toasted laver. I feel very much humbled."

His complex state of mind is expressed in the letter as he received offerings from O-ama who gave up her faith in the Lotus Sutra. He then describes the geographic condition of Minobusan in the letter of thanks to Nii-ama:

"This place is called Mt. Minobu.... From the seaside of Ukishima-ga-hara of your county (Awa) to the peak of Minobu, Hakii County, Kai Province, the distance is hundred *ri* or more. The road is more troublesome than any other road with the distance of one thousand *ri*. (as it is a bad, mountainous road.)"

"The Fuji River, the swiftest river in Japan, runs from the north to the south. Located to the east and west of the river are high mountains. The valleys are deep and huge rocks are lined up on the left and right sides, as if high folding screens are set up.

"The river water flows swiftly as if a strong samurai shot an arrow into a cylinder. (The river flows straight, rapidly and powerfully.) We trip along the left or right banks of the river or cross it aboard a boat. Since the river flow is so rapid and many stones are lying about, the boat is sometimes shipwrecked.

"Going through these dan-

gerous spots, we find a huge mountain, called the peak of Minobu. Located to the east is the peak of Tenshi, to the south, the peak of Takatori, and to the west the peak of Shichimen. The peak of Minobu is located in the north. It looks like four high folding screens standing."

Nichiren Shonin describes the detailed scenery of Minobu as is given in a bird's eye view. Ladies living in the Boso Peninsula might have visualized the figure of Nichiren Shonin living in a hardly imaginable far and deep mountain. The scene of the mountain is further shown in the letter.

"Climbing up to the peak, we find plants grow thick in the woods, and when we descend to the valley, we find boulders cover the bottom of the valley. The howls of wolves fill the mountain, and cries of monkeys reverberate in the valley while the cries of stags seeking a mate sound pitiful and the chirping cicadas are annoyingly loud. (Since spring visits belatedly in the mountain) spring flowers bloom in summer and autumn fruits ripen in winter.

"People we see at times are woodcutters collecting firewood and old compatriots of mine who visit me occasionally . . ."

Finding toasted laver of his home land among the offerings to him, Nichiren Shonin became nostalgic as told in his letter of gratitude.

(Tr. K. S.)
(to be continued)



A bird's eye view of Minobusan

Exchanges with Street Children

By Rev. Tsuoh Yokoi
Study Tour Secretary

The fifth Study Tour was held at Kolkata, India, for nine days from February 6 to 14, sponsored by the Shumuin administrative office with the assistance of RainDrop (Representative: Rev. Homan Kita) and Calcutta Social Project (CSP), a local NGO.

Ten participants ranging in age from 21 to 32 took part in the project which is designed to bring up youths who will be engaged in international activities of the Nichiren Shu Order, including missionary duties. The first tour was held in Laos in 2005.

The theme of the fifth tour was the exchanges with local street children.

The program actually started on

February 7 when the participants visited the "Home," an orphanage operated by CSP where the participants had their first exchanges with local children who all looked cheerful contrary to expectation.

In the evening of the day, Mr. Arjun Dutt, President of CSP, gave the participants a briefing on street children of Kolkata and CSP activities. The briefing was followed by a dinner sponsored by CSP.

The next day, Sunday, the participants all went to a near-by park where they spent all day playing football, jump rope and other games with the "Home" children.

In the following days, the participants held exchanges with the students of Bowbazar and Madanstreet, CSP

operated schools. The former was a school in a park and the latter, a school run under the pavement roof.

The exchanges they achieved during the Tour program included visits to Bowbazar and Madanstreet, eating family dishes at the homes of the students, a visit to a CSP evening school, a farewell party at Bowbazar, joined also by Madanstreet students, a joint



Children of "Home"

field day of Primary School, Chetla and Home, all run by CSP.

A participant confessed that the Study Tour has made him think "What is true happiness?"



Visit to Bowbazar



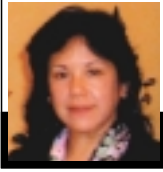
Children in the street



Visit to Madanstreet



Visit to Madanstreet



Temple Events

By Sandra Seki

TORONTO

Garage Sale

The annual garage sale was held on Sunday, May 24 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Popular items for the sale were: kitchen utensils, fashion jewelry, knick-knacks, furniture, electric appliances and books.

Odaimoku Kechien Undo

Four main projects of the Odaimoku Kechien Undo are: (1) Welcoming the new members to the temple. Since 2008, five new members have joined. (2) Visiting members' homes and conducting services. (3) Having a joint service with the members of the Momiji Kai, (home for the elderly) twice a year. (4) Planning an international pilgrimage to Japan in October 2009 visiting Minobu, Ikegami, and Sado.

LAS VEGAS

Birthday Celebration in the Desert

On April 28, 1253, Nichiren Daishonin stood on Mt. Kiyosumi, Chiba Prefecture, Japan, and chanted "NAMU MYO-HO-REN-GE-KYO" for the first time. To commemorate this event, Rev. Shokai Kanai stood in front of the Lake Mead National Recreation monument on Lake Mead Boulevard and chanted the Odaimoku while beating a hand drum on April 28. The monument is located about 19 miles northeast of the temple (Las Vegas Nichiren Temple Kannonji) and it is in the middle of the desert among the natural scenery of Nevada.

While chanting the Sacred Title of the Lotus Sutra, the reverend requested permission from the deities of the heaven and earth of the State of Nevada for him to be able to spread the Odaimoku.

Pilgrimage to Japan

The Nichiren Shu Shumuin has announced the following schedule for the pilgrimage and retreat to Minobusan this fall. The tour also includes a visit to the Kyoto National Museum, where a special exhibition for Nichiren Buddhism will be exhibited. The cost of the tour includes transportation within Japan, meals, and sanpai (entrance) fee at the temples. The Shumuin has picked up

some of the expenses for the tour in order to make it affordable.

Airfare is not included, since people are coming from different cities. Please purchase your own ticket and meet at a designated hotel in Tokyo on October 10, 2009. The tour is limited to 50 people. Those who are interested please call Bishop Kanai at (702) 396-6276.

Optional Tour of Sado Island

October 8 (Thu.) Meet at Niigata Station at 11.30 a.m., go to Sado Island by ferry.

October 9 (Fri.) Visit temples in Sado.

October 10 (Sat.) Return to Niigata Harbor and dismissal there. Individually go to Tokyo for 40,720 yen per person (20 Participants max.).

Main Tour

October 10 (Sat.) meet at a hotel in Tokyo.

October 11 (Sun.) leave for Minobusan by bus, stop by the Kitayama Hommonji, Gobyosho, and Lecture.

October 12 (Mon.) Morning service, two lectures, Shishinkaku and Mando parade.

October 13 (Tue.) Morning service, one lecture Oeshiki service, Gobyosho, Shodai-gyo.

October 14 (Wed.) Morning service, then to Kyoto, stop by Nose Myokensan.

October 15 (Thu.) See Nichiren exhibit at the Kyoto National Museum, dismissal after supper. 67,590 yen per person (50 Participants max.).

Hieizan Optional Tour

October 16 (Fri.) Hieizan, Enryakuji Temple, and Yokawa Jokoin by bus, and return to the Apa Hotel. 18,393 yen (no meal) per person (20 Participants max.).

PORTLAND

Resignation and Installation Ceremony

The resignation ceremony of Rev. Ryuken Akahoshi and the installation ceremony for Rev. Myosho Obata were held on Sunday, April 12.

Rev. Ryuken Akahoshi's Hopes for the Future

I have learned many important things while I was in the U.S. Through propagation, I learned that faith is the base for daily life. The mem-

bers and supporters of the temples in the U.S. are willing to help plan events and carry them out successfully. Spreading the Odaimoku not only in America but throughout the world has great possibilities. The important thing is to make sure we understand what the people are seeking. We should not compromise with the principles of others and we should have the ability to make proper judgments and give whatever we are able to offer. In order to do this, we must increase our potential. From now on, while inheriting the traditions of Nichiren Shu, I would like to search for something new along with being flexible. I would like young ministers to spring forth and go abroad to find opportunities to discover themselves.

Rev. Myosho Obata's Hopes for the Future

On Sunday April 5, the last day of my Sunday service in Southeast Asia, I could not fully express my gratitude in words for the support and kindness of all the members and supporters of Southeast Asia. However, I told the members that although we are hundreds of miles away from each other, we will all be connected by the Odaimoku and the Lotus Sutra which Nichiren Daishonin left for us. With this I left Southeast Asia on April 6, returning to Japan and leaving for Portland on April 10.

On April 12, the installation ceremony took place and I received my new assignment from the Nichiren Shu Shumuin via Bishop Shokai Kanai. I vowed to help spread the Lotus Sutra and Odaimoku in Portland, Oregon. After the ceremony, a warm welcome party was held. Members had



Rev. Akahoshi (right) receives a message of appreciation from Bishop Kanai

gathered two days prior in order to prepare Japanese dishes for me, which moved me deeply.

A month has passed since I came to Portland. I have gotten accustomed to life here and flowers blooming here and there are signs of spring. However, since I was in a tropical region for about six years, Portland still seems to be a little chilly. I am waiting for the warm summer to come.

I would like to strengthen the link with the members by visiting their homes and exchanging ideas and experiences. From there we will be able to attain understanding. As it says in the Lotus Sutra, "We should put into practice what we learn from everyday life," I would like to cooperate heartily with the members and supporters to spread this teaching.



Rev. Akahoshi (center) at the party of appreciation



Rev. Obata (center) at the party of appreciation



Rev. Obata and the welcome cake



Rev. Obata and Rev. Akahoshi with the Portland Congregation

Nichiren Shu News

c/o NICHIREN SHU Shumuin

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