

# Nichiren Shu News

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## New Year's Greetings: 'The Happiness of Meeting with the Greatest Teaching'

By Honorable Rev. Nichiji Sakai  
Archbishop of Nichiren Shu

The teaching of the Lotus Sutra is the milk that raises us in our life. It is the milk of the dharma, namely "dharma milk." This is what was preached by Honorable Reverend Taïdo Matsubara, a Zen priest, who kept on preaching the Buddhist dharma at the age of 103 as the head of the Buddhist association called "Namu-no-kai."

Rev. Matsubara said that reading the Lotus Sutra does not mean to read the characters of the sutra individually but it means to put yourself in the sutra. In other words the readers assimilate themselves with the Lotus

Sutra, understanding its deep meanings by reading it with a gentle and obedient mind ("nyunanshin" as defined in the Lotus Sutra).

Rev. Matsubara stated further, "As people developed different personalities, even though they grew up with the same breast milk, the dharma milk of the Lotus Sutra was applied by the founders of various Japanese Buddhist schools to develop the faith of their schools. Among them was Nichiren Shonin, who spent many years studying Buddhist thoughts, reaching the conclusion that the Lotus Sutra was the Mahayana sutra perfectly representing the teaching of Sakyamuni Buddha."

Having reached this conclusion, Nichiren Shonin shed tears. In the words of our Founder, "Birds and insects do not shed tears. Nichiren does not cry but sheds tears ceaselessly." Nichiren's tears were not the same as those of us ordinary persons. His were of religious ecstasy.

As we have encountered the dharma milk of the Lotus Sutra, we should at least be grateful for this good fortune, if not the religious exaltation.

As we welcome the New Year, let us try to live an active life. A Buddhist poet, Tokuya Azuchi, said in his poem:

*A green pea blooms in a rubbish heap,*



Archbishop Nichiji Sakai

*A lotus flowers in a muddy pond,  
And people all have the seed of  
beauty.*

*What flower will we see tomorrow?  
Let us all endeavor to have beautiful  
flowers of life again this year.*

(Tr. K. H.)

## 'Let Us Live and Prosper Together'

By Rev. Nisso Uchino  
Head Abbot of Nichiren Shu

May I congratulate you, all the readers of the Nichiren Shu News, for having welcomed the brand New Year of 2010. I would like to take this opportunity to express my most sincere appreciation for your devotion to the Founder's Temple.

In May last year we were able to celebrate the completion of our long awaited Five Story Pagoda. This was solely due to the help of the Buddha, our Founder, and all the protective deities as well as all those temples and individuals who extended their helping hands to us on Minobusan.

The words at the beginning of this writing are those of Archbishop



Head Abbot Nisso Uchino

Nichiyu Iwama, who served as the head abbot of this Founder's Temple before my predecessor. Reverend

Nichiyu Iwama had served this temple as the head of the Propagation Department for many years before being promoted to the Director General and finally the 90th Head Abbot (Hossu) of this temple. I had the opportunity to serve this temple under Archbishop Iwama and I have always remembered these words as a maxim for a man of religion.

Needless to say, all living beings are alive at the cost of other living beings. In other words, we cannot live by ourselves. Also our lives are naturally ours but we do not know when they would end. That is to say, we have to remember that all living beings live according to the order of nature. Therefore, it is important to be grateful to be alive with the blessings of nature,

and live together with people helping each other.

It was a precious fate that we encountered the teaching of the Lotus Sutra in this life. While believing in the Lotus Sutra, if we fight, censure, hate, or have a grudge against one another, we run counter to the spirit of the Lotus Sutra, do we not?

Witnessing disturbing events both in Japan and abroad, we feel it is urgent that we establish a world in which we humans all "can live and prosper together." The international world should be like a one Buddhaland without hindrances as stated in the Divine Powers of the Buddha chapter of the Lotus Sutra. We have to make the world in which we live peaceful without fighting or quarreling with each other. May the coming new year be peaceful and glorious for us all!

(Tr. K. H.)

## The Year of the Tiger

### 'May Your Strong Faith Overcome All Problems Throughout the Year'

By Ms. Ai Kimura, Staff Writer,  
Nichiren-shu Newspaper

2010 is the Year of the Tiger according to the 12 zodiac signs in Chinese astrology. Nichiren Shonin wrote about a tiger in his "Reply to Lord Shijo Kingo."

The Founder states, "It is stated by Grand Master T'ien-t'ai in the eighth fascicle of his 'Great Concentration and Insight' and Grand Master Miao-le in the eighth fascicle of his 'Annotation on the Great Concentration and Insight' that the stronger one's faith is, the greater the protection of the gods. Whether or not you will receive divine assistance depends on your faith. The Lotus Sutra is indeed a mighty sword,

but it depends on the faith of the person who uses it whether it has a sharp blade or not . . .

"General Li Kuang, whose mother fell prey to a tiger, shot an arrow toward what he thought was the tiger. Actually, it was a stone that looked like a tiger. Even though what he thought was a tiger was a stone, the arrow sank into it up to its fletching. Later, the general again shot at the stone, but he was not able to pierce it again. From that time on General Li Kuang has been known as 'General Stone Tiger.' Even if enemies try to attack you, you will be able to get out of trouble when your faith in the Lotus Sutra is strong. Whatever you do, the first priority for you should be faith in the Lotus Sutra."

This letter was addressed to Shijo Kingo, a great devotee of Nichiren Shonin, in the 10th month when Nichiren Shonin was 57.

Lord Shijo was a samurai who practiced medicine. He came all the way from Kamakura to Minobusan to treat and give medicine to Nichiren Shonin. Nichiren had long suffered pain from an illness. In this letter, Nichiren Shonin expressed his gratitude to Lord Shijo for his treatment. He also expressed his worry about the safety of Lord Shijo who might encounter enemies on the way to and from Minobusan, and advised him not to come to Minobusan for a trifle matter.

These warm words of the Founder are followed by two citations from T'ien-t'ai and Miao-le, and ancient Chinese history mentioned in the beginning of this writing.

Many old proverbs, such as "Faith will pierce into a rock," "Faith will reach up to heaven," and "An arrow

sticking into a stone" —all of them mean that you will obtain your wish when you do anything with one mind—come from this historical recounting about General Li Kuang.

From the story of the general, Nichiren Shonin advised Lord Shijo, "Even if enemies try to attack you, you will be able to get out of trouble when your faith in the Lotus Sutra is strong. Whatever you do, the first priority for you should be faith in the Lotus Sutra."

How encouraging and powerful are these words of Nichiren Shonin! When one has strong faith, one will overcome any difficulty.

Everything depends on you. It is important to realize that your current situation is a mirror of your own mind. Strive to keep your faith in the Lotus Sutra and that faith will lead you to the way of the Buddha and Nichiren Shonin. In this way, you will find yourself satisfied and comfortable this new year.

(Tr. S. K.)

# The Life of Sakyamuni Buddha (15)

By Rev. Shinkai Oikawa, Litt. D.

## 10. Sakyamuni's Missions and Entering Nirvana

### (6) A Tale of Devadatta

I will tell another story. There are various people in the world. Sakyamuni did not necessarily keep company with respectable people. One of the wicked persons was called Devadatta, who appears in the Lotus Sutra. Devadatta defied Sakyamuni, though he was His cousin. He was about thirty years younger than Sakyamuni. He joined the Buddhist order and became a priest. But he disagreed with His ways. So he thought he would kill Him by some means or other.

He conspired and made a secret promise with the crown prince Ajatasatru (Ajase), saying "Prince Ajatasatru, now your father, King Bimbisara still lives long. Kill your father. I will kill my master Sakyamuni. Then one of us, two youngsters, will be a king and the other will be a young leader of the Buddhist religious order, and we can do well together."

Ajatasatru put his father king in jail and made him fast and starved him to death. This is terribly evil. His mother, Lady Vaidehi, hearing that King Bimbisara was imprisoned in the jail and starving, was let in the jail, and she coated herself with honey. She tried to let her husband lick the honey and live longer. But it was discovered soon and ended in failure. The king was getting thinner and thinner. At that time he looked out of a high window of the jail, praying "Buddha, help me. Buddha, help me." Then the Buddha encouraged him from far away with the words, "It is all right. Do your best!"

The king tried very hard to keep living, shivering again and again. Knowing that the king tried to stay alive, his son covered the window and caused his father to die.

On the other hand, a priest called Devadatta was also wicked. He made as many efforts as possible to kill Sakyamuni. For example, he forced an elephant to drink much liquor, making it mad and rush at the Buddha, and dropping a large rock from the top of a mountain to crush Him. Moreover, he went to hide under the floor and tried to kill Him by his poison nails. There is a



Rev. Shinkai Oikawa

record that a small rock rolling down hurt and caused the Buddha's thumb to bleed. Devadatta made every effort he could think of to harm the Buddha but did not succeed at all. It is said he spat blood and fell into hell in the end.

Prince Ajatasatru killed his father, but he repented and became a disciple of Sakyamuni later. He did not fall into hell because he repented. Devadatta is now spoken very evil of. Although he is said in Buddhism to revolt against Him and to split the religious order, the affair is not known correctly. However, there are some things we can think of which are not so bad. For example, Devadatta submitted to Him a paper of five requests that he wanted Him to improve His religious body because it was slacking.

His requests were as follows: Priests must not go into company. They must practice asceticism a little away from company. They should live only on alms-food. They are not permitted to be invited for meals. They should wear only priest's robes called pamsukula (hunzoue). What I wear now is not "hunzoue," because they are clean. "Hunzoue" are robes made of worn-out cloth thrown away at garbage dumps or cloth for wrapping dead bodies left at cemeteries.

Cemeteries in the old days were not so clean. They were dumping grounds for dead bodies. It was seen distinctly there how human dead bodies decayed. On the whole, as they rot, they are eaten by worms, birds, or beasts, and stricken by rain, and become skeletons. Gradually skeletons break into pieces. Buddhist priests in the olden times (not in Japan) often practiced asceticism in graveyards in order to know human beings are frag-

ile.

Last time I said that Sakyamuni taught the transitoriness of life in the cemetery to Nanda whose wedding ceremony He went to in order to force him to be a priest against his will. Cemeteries in the olden times were not like places adorned beautifully with flowers in the present day, but like very fearful and dismal places. "Hunzoue" are robes with patches all over them made of dead persons' cloth gathered at such places. Devadatta insisted that priests should observe the rule to wear "Hunzoue." What is more, he said to Him, "It is not permitted to eat meat of birds, fishes and animals."

Then Sakyamuni got troubled. The priests are given food cooked by ordinary families. Generally speaking, do they make a vegetarian meal every day? Of course not. They change cooking food every day, making a chicken dish today or a pork dish tomorrow. Then they give priests the day's food. The priests must eat the food. So they cannot eat anything if they do not eat chicken, pork or mutton.

Therefore in Buddhism these foods are not fishy. He explained that real

fishy things are not like these. But Devadatta insisted, "This is not permitted. We must take real vegetarian food." Sakyamuni said, "It is quite impossible, because we live with people." The book I translated explains what is fishy or corrupt. It says that it is not fishy or corrupt to eat meat of fishes and animals. One episode answers this problem as follows: Sakyamuni was once condemned by a Brahman. The Brahman asked, "You eat well-cooked and well-made good food given by people. You lead a luxurious life, don't you? Are you really an ascetic?"

Sakyamuni answered, "Real fishiness or corruption is not such a problem as you insist. It is real fishiness that we kill, knock, cut, bind living things, or steal things from people, tell lies, deceive and cheat others, or have an illicit love affair with an other man's wife. It is not fishy to eat animal meat." "It is fishy that we kill and eat swine and mice by ourselves. But it is not fishiness to eat food others cook and give. Fishiness is to do evil.

Therefore, Buddhism teaches from the time of Sakyamuni, "You gladly should take any food, if meat, which others cook and give. But you should not be covetous of its tastes. You should eat the food as valuable to nourish yourself just for today."

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



## Rev. Kanno Preaches (4)

"Everyone Prospers Without Fail If He Practices the Root of Goodness"  
(Uenodono Gohenji, the first month 1280)

### 'The Root of Goodness (Good Deeds)'

Buddhism teaches us the principle of cause and effect. If we sow a good seed, we gain a good sprout. If we sow a seed of poor quality, we get a poor sprout. That is to say, if we do a good act, we receive a good result, and if we do an evil act, we receive an evil result. This is a common and basic teaching of Buddhism.

Even schoolchildren know this principle. However, it is not easy to practice it even for an 80-year old grown-up who has rich experience in life.

The quotation above is quoted from a letter of Nichiren Shonin addressed to Nanjo Tokimitsu, residing in the present Shizuoka Prefec-

ture. In this letter, dated the 11th day of the first month of 1280, the Founder instructed Tokimitsu to remind himself of the principle of causality upon greeting the New Year.

The principle of cause and effect exists at the basis of illnesses, social events, countries, instability in the world and every other phenomena. However, few persons are aware of this fact and observe the principle in dealing with these problems.

There is no way of knowing what this year holds. However, let us start this year by "sowing good seeds."

(Rev. Nissho Kanno, head priest of the Kaichoji Temple, Shizuoka)

## Rev. Watanabe Elected New Chief Administrator

Rev. Shobin Watanabe (72) of Horenji Temple, Chiba Prefecture, was unanimously elected Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu at the special session of the Nichiren Shu Congress held at Shumuin on December 18. He has suc-

ceeded Rev. Joshin Komatsu who resigned from the post after serving out his term of four years.

A graduate of Risho University with a major in economics, Rev. Watanabe has served four terms in the Nichiren Shu Congress.

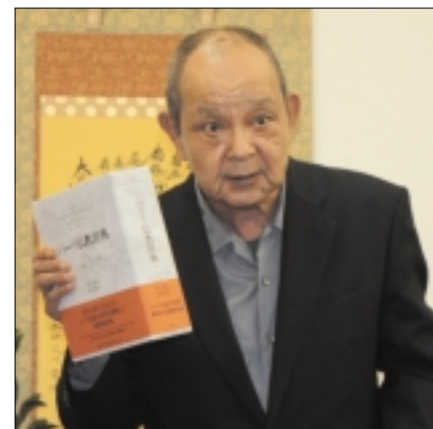


Rev. Shobin Watanabe

## Rev. Oikawa Completes Pali Dictionary

Rev. Shinkai Oikawa, authority of Pali language, delivered a lecture commemorating the publication of the Pali Dictionary of Buddhism (Glossaries to the Suttanipata and Paramatthajotika I & II) at the Joenji Temple, Shinjuku, Tokyo, on November 1 last year. The dictionary published by the Shunjusha Publishing Co. in September 2009, is a joint project of Shinkan Murakami, Professor Emeritus of the Tohoku University, and himself. The two scholars had been working together to publish the dictionary designed to make the readers understand the difficult Pali literature since 1990, when they wrote "The Words of Buddha-Paramatthajotika," winning the Award of the Japan Translators' Association.

Looking back on his university



Rev. Oikawa holding his book

days, Rev. Oikawa remembers Prof. Ryujo Yamada, his teacher, saying that Buddhism is like an encyclopedia. Rev. Oikawa would like to try to analyze what human beings are through the guidance of Buddha's teachings.

## Events

### December 2009–January 2010

- Dec. 8: Jodo-e (Enlightenment Day)—Commemorating the day when the Buddha attained Enlightenment, held at many Nichiren temples throughout Japan
- Jan. 1: Memorial Service for Nichiji Shonin, one of the six main disciples of Nichiren, whose ambition was to propagate overseas
- Jan. 13: Minobusan Opening Ceremony for the New Year at the Minobusan Kuonji Temple
- Jan. 21: Memorial Service for Nichiro Shonin, one of the six main disciples of Nichiren who passed away at the age of 76 in 1320

by Rev. Tsuoh Yokoi

# Nichiren Shonin and His Lay Followers (15)

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

## Myoichi-ama (Nun Myoichi) (1)

**Sajiki (balcony) of Kamakura:** Myoichi-ama (? — ?) was a relative of Nissho Shonin (1221-1323), a leading disciple of Nichiren Shonin. She lived at the Sajiki section of Kamakura with her husband, a sick son, a daughter, and others. The place where her family lived was called "Sajiki" meaning a balcony because it was there that Minamoto Yoritomo, who founded the Kamakura Shogunate, built a balcony with a commanding view of the Yuigahama Beach. It is believed that it was located somewhere around the present Omachi section of Kamakura City.

Myoichi-ama lost her husband in the midst of a crackdown inflicted on Nichiren followers. Along with the crackdown, the execution of the Founder was attempted, and he eventually was exiled to Sado Island. Many of his followers one after another, abandoned their faith. However, Nun Myoichi never renounced her faith in the Odaimoku.

On the contrary, Myoichi even dispatched Takio-maru, her child servant to attend the Founder in exile. Though she was in poor health, she single-mindedly upheld the faith in the Lotus Sutra and kept sending offerings to the Founder.

**Child Servant Takio-maru:** On the 25th day of the fourth month, 1273, Nichiren Shonin (51 years old) finished writing the "Kanjin Honzon-sho (A Treatise Revealing the Spiritual Contemplation and the Most Venerable One)" at Ichinosawa, Sado, and sent it to Toki Jonin in Shimousa, the present Chiba Prefecture, on the following day. Simultaneously, he wrote a letter of



Rev.  
Kanji Tamura

thanks to Myoichi-ama in Kamakura expressing his appreciation of her kindness in sending Takio-maru to Sado to attend him.

Nichiren was still under house arrest although the condition of the confinement at Ichinosawa was better than that at Tsukahara, where he was detained initially.

Takio-maru is believed to have worked devotedly for Nichiren Shonin, who was experiencing serious inconvenience, helping the Founder to concentrate and finish writing the "Kanjin Honzon-sho."

The Founder kindly teaches Myoichi-ama, "(As expounded in the Devadatta chapter of the Lotus Sutra) a king served under the Hermit Asita for one thousand years, even offering his body as the chair of the hermit, and received the Odaimoku of the Lotus Sutra from the hermit. The king is the present Sakyamuni Buddha.

"Now, Myoichi bikuni, the present day patron, ordered her child servant to attend this poor practitioner of the Lotus Sutra (Nichiren) who practices the Buddha's teaching."

Thus the Founder praises the devotion of Myoichi-ama, who sent Takio-maru to attend him, by referring to a passage of the Devadatta chapter, which Myoichi-ama is presumed to have been chanting every day for the attainment of Buddhahood by women.

Nichiren Shonin continued, which may be restated here in simple words, "In the Lotus Sutra, devotion by a king is expounded. What you are offering to me is the devotion by a child of humble origin. A king does not have to fear the state authority, but I, Nichiren, am in

exile by the order of the 'king.' The Lotus Sutra refers to an event of the good old days, but your devotion is in the Latter Age of Degeneration, performed by a woman of low rank. When I think it over, your devotion is above the king's devotion. The achievement you will attain will never fail to be equal to that of Sakyamuni Buddha. (You will certainly attain Buddhahood by the Odaimoku of the Lotus Sutra.)"

Upon hearing the highest praise by Nichiren Shonin, Nun Myoichi must have shed tears of gratitude.

**Winter Always Turns into Spring:** Following the pardon of exile in Sado, Nichiren Shonin filed his third remonstrance with the Kamakura Shogunate (asking the government to lead the entire nation to become believers of the Lotus Sutra), and retired to Minobusan.

When the Founder entered the mountain, Myoichi-ama dispatched her servant to the mountain to attend the Founder as she did when the Founder was exiled to Sado. And in 1275, she sent a robe to the Founder, who was 55.

In his letter of appreciation, the Founder recalls her husband who lost his life in the crackdown on Nichiren followers, and sympathizes with his concern for his family. Lamenting the death of her husband who passed away without knowing the pardon of Nichiren from the exile to Sado and the prophecy of the Mongolian assault becoming a reality, Nichiren Shonin assured her of the attainment of Buddhahood by her husband, who was a devotee of the Lotus Sutra, thus consoling Myoichi-ama.

Nichiren Shonin states, "Those who profess faith in the Lotus Sutra are compared to winter. Winter always turns into spring when flowers bloom. You have never heard that winter turns back to autumn, have you? Likewise,

we haven't heard that persons who believe in the Lotus Sutra remain unenlightened. In the Lotus Sutra, it is expounded none of those who listen to the Lotus Sutra do not attain Buddhahood."

The persuasive words of Nichiren Shonin who had survived adversity must have encouraged her greatly.

**Late Husband Watching Over the Family:** Praising her late husband who died for the faith in the Lotus Sutra, Nichiren Shonin tells Myoichi-ama that her husband would keep watch over his family.

Nichiren Shonin states, "Your late husband has accumulated a great deal of merits. He now lives in the Great Moon or Great Sun. You and your children are seen in the 'Mirror of Heaven' which reflects everything. He is watching over the family 24 hours a day. Since you are unenlightened, you might not see or hear your husband. It is, for example, like a man whose hearing is impaired does not hear the loud crack of thunder or a person whose eyesight is handicapped will not see the glitter of the sun. Don't be doubtful. Your husband has become the guardian deity for you and your family. Moreover, he might visit you sometime."

Encouraged by the Founder's words, Myoichi-ama had become increasingly a strong believer of the Odaimoku.

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



A wooden sculpture depicting a scene from the Lotus Sutra "a thousand-year attendance" at Daikyoji Temple, Tokyo

## Daimokuji of Singapore Celebrates Fifth Anniversary

By Rev. Kangyo Noda

The Gojusan Daimokuji Temple of Singapore celebrated its fifth anniversary on November 15, 2009. The Singapore Daimokuji joined the Nichiren Shu Order of Buddhism on November 13, 2004. Since its establishment the temple has made a great deal of effort to expound the Dharma for the people of Singapore as one of the major temples in Southeast Asia.

On the anniversary day, about 80 people gathered at the main hall of the

temple, not only from Singapore, but also from Malaysia and Indonesia to share the joy of the special day. Before the fifth anniversary service, conducted by Rev. Chitoku Kawaguchi, the resident minister of Singapore, cleaning of the Mandala Gohonzon and statues on the altar was held at 3 p.m. While all participants were chanting the Odaimoku, the members respectfully removed dust and paid their deep appreciation to the sacred platform. Just before 4 p.m., the fifth anniversary ceremony began. During the ceremony, five

representatives including the chairman of the Daimokuji, Mr. Chua Guan Chew, came forward and made vows to the Buddha that they would uphold the Lotus Sutra and Odaimoku more deeply and advance the temple activities more vigorously to introduce the Lotus Sutra to others. All the members sincerely prayed that their sincere Buddhist practice would make the world peaceful.

After the ceremony, the congratulatory address from Ven. Joshin Komatsu, Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu, was read. The Chief Administrator was very grateful that the Daimokuji welcomed its fifth year commemoration in the 750th anniversary year of submitting the "Rissho Ankoku Ron." The

message from Rev. Myosho Obata of Portland Nichiren Temple, was presented since she had propagated in Southeast Asia until April. Rev. Kangyo Noda, Rev. Chitoku Kawaguchi, and Mr. Chua Guan Chew gave their congratulations and appreciations to the attendees of the ceremony.

They moved to Chang Clan General Association on the same street as the temple to hold a reception party. Each representative from other sanghas of Penang, Klang, and Jakarta offered their congratulations to Singapore. Also many members made speeches relating their experience in faith and voiced the importance of supporting other sanghas' activities.



Daimokuji members gather together with Rev. Kawaguchi (left), Rev. Noda (right), Mr. Chua Guan Chew, the gentleman with white hair and necktie is at the back

# Temple Events

## LAS VEGAS KANNON TEMPLE Hoshimatsuri and Setsubun

Setsubun means "to divide the seasons" in Japanese. According to the ancient Japanese calendar, it is the eve of spring. The actual day of Setsubun is February 3. On Sunday, February 1, at 10.30 a.m., the Kannon Temple of Nevada will hold a special ceremony.

All those who are born in the year of the Tiger will toss roasted soy beans to the congregation to chase away the evil spirits. Hopefully, all who attend will have their evil minds cleansed and receive a blessing from Rev. Kanai. The people born in the year of the Tiger are those born in 2010, 1998, 1986, 1974, 1962, 1950, 1938 and 1926. Rev. Kanai will be presenting a yearly amulet on request. Please send him your name and your families' birth dates ahead of time so he can have the amulets ready for you at the service.

## HAWAII

### Buddhist Retreat Begins

A Buddhist Retreat of Meditation was held on January 30 and 31 at the Nichiren Sect Mission. This retreat is

being held to introduce the most basic Buddhist teachings through meditation to the people of Hawaii. Bishop Imai would like to focus on training the Mission's members as faith-leaders in this retreat. The attendees will be able to learn and practice how to solve problems in their actual lives by the teachings of the Four Noble Truths, and various kinds of meditation like silent Zen meditation, writing meditation, and chanting meditation. Bishop Imai plans to hold this kind of retreat twice a year.

## CHARLOTTE

### Overnight Retreat Held

On New Year's Eve, December 31, 2009, Myoshoji, Charlotte, North Carolina, held an overnight retreat for members of our temple. There were six people who spent the night at the temple. Some of them were from out of town, some from various parts of North Carolina and Georgia. There were even people who had traveled over five hours to be at the temple.

Beginning at 10 p.m. we gathered together with several other members who were not staying overnight to perform the Hokke Sembo Reflection Ceremony. All together there were eight people who did this



Group photo after service on New Year's Day 2010. (L to R) Myra Diuguid, Cristiano Mondello, Ashley Penny, Denise Harvey, Danny Satterfield, Misa Osad, Allen Rogers, Rev. Ryusho Jeffus, Michael Daniels, Y'honatan Gimbel, Marcus Barlow, Rita Rouse, Austin Sugg, Yavonka Hodges, John Saunders

service. Then at midnight we all took turns ringing in the new year by striking the temple bell 108 times, after which we had a toast for the New Year 2010.

In the morning everyone woke up at 6 a.m. and went outside to perform the suigyo, the water purification ritual. The temperature outside was below freezing and the water was very cold. Nobody however, objected and with great solemnity started the New Year by cleansing themselves to make great efforts to spread and practice the Dharma. After the suigyo we had a short service going to all the rooms that contained mandala throughout the temple and recited portions of Chapter 16 to each Oman-dala.

After the temple clean up we all sat down to eat breakfast together. During the meal everyone shared their impressions and feelings of the activities so far. Following

breakfast everyone helped to clean the kitchen and prepare the Hondo and temple for the New Year's service.

At 11 a.m. we began our first service for the year 2010 with the presentation of offerings which the overnight participants brought as offerings to place on the altar for the Buddha. At the conclusion of the service everyone went outside to hang New Year ema, prayer boards, and cremate the ema from last year. All of this was followed by a large potluck luncheon and lots of conversation.

This was our temple's third New Year service and we had our largest attendance. It was a great way to begin the New Year. (By Rev. Ryusho Jeffus)

## TORONTO

### Setsubun Service

The annual Setsubun service was held on January 31 at 1 p.m. After the traditional bean tossing ceremony, a study class on Buddhism was held for an hour.

### Omamori

The 2010 Omamori (charms) were enclosed with the New Year newsletter.

Donations are not required for the charms. This Omamori is for the safety of you and your family throughout the year so please take good care of it. If you have any expired Omamori, please return them to the temple. Rev. Fukushima will take them back to Japan for a purification ceremony.

### Supporting the Temple

All Buddhists have the three treasures that we must support: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. For us Nichiren Buddhists the Buddha stands for Sakyamuni Buddha, founder of Buddhism; the Dharma stands for the Lotus Sutra, which is the final teaching of the Buddha; and the Sangha represents Nichiren Shonin and our temple.

We must keep these three by all means. The Supreme Buddha is the founder of Buddhism, the Lotus Sutra is the Buddha's ultimate teaching and the Nichiren Buddhist temple is the place for us to pray to the Buddha. If we lose this place, we lose our hearts. We can live without our hearts but it means that we lose the purpose of life and the meaning of it as well.

In order to maintain our spiritual sacred place, the temple maintenance fund is necessary. We manage our temple with your membership fees and personal donations and we beseech your continuous support and understanding. (By Rev. Kennou Fukushima)

## NBIC SHAMI SEMINAR

### 'Bond Formed with Others Through Faith'

By Shami Myoran Gifford

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the 2009 shami seminar at NBIC in Hayward, California. This training period only takes place once a year in North America and I was especially excited about this seminar being held a little closer to my home in Canada.

At this time my Master, Rev. Tsukamoto resides in England. For the past two years with his help, I have been traveling to wherever we are able to organize training. I had been very nervous about attending the seminar. One part of the training I was especially nervous about was sitting

**Editor's Note:** the 14th shami seminar, sponsored by the NBIC (Nichiren Buddhist International Center), Hayward, California, was held at the NBIC from December 2 to 6. Participants were Myoran Gifford, disciple of Rev. Kanto Tsukamoto of England, and Yoryu Alzaa, disciple of Rev. Yodo Okuda of South America. Here is the report by Shami Myoran Gifford.

in seiza. This traditional way of kneeling in Japan can be very painful. But rather than pain, I found a wonderful learning experience and a circle of people dedicated to teaching and ensuring that we become good ministers. We were always gently reminded that we were there to learn.

The days began so early at 5 a.m., by preparing and cleaning the Hondo for service. Before service, we were taught how to do suigyo. This is a cold water practice whereby a person splashes very cold water over the body seven times while chanting the Odaimoku, to purify the body. A person cannot help feeling apprehensive about that first splash! The water is so cold and as soon as it hits your body, you catch your breath! But soon after the seven splashes, the body quickly warms and leaves one feeling very peaceful, calm and refreshed. I found my mind was able to focus and absorb more information after this practice.

The lectures given each day were an immense learning experience. Each day focused on making us better teachers of the Lotus Sutra and the Nichiren-Shu doctrine. On one day in particular, as we reviewed the work of Nichiren Shonin and his disciples and the suffering that they must have

endured such as cold winter exiles and constant government persecution for expounding the Lotus Sutra, I became so moved by the deep faith each of them must have had and suddenly something like the pain sitting seiza seemed so minor. This I found to be a very humbling experience. We were very fortunate to have two ministers present at the seminar from Japan to teach the proper ways to perform shomyo and demonstrate the eloquent manners that are required for service and for presenting to the Buddha and Nichiren Shonin. This was very significant for our learning. If we were inviting the Buddha and Nichiren Shonin into our temples, we would want them to be treated with the utmost grace, respect and dignity.

When the seminar ended, I could tell we all had a greater

appreciation for this journey. Although the week was very intense, I came to realize the bond that is formed with others through faith and determination and the common goal of spreading the Lotus Sutra to people. I do hope that I am fortunate enough to attend another seminar in the future. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Rev. and Mrs. Hirai for the warmth and generosity shown during my stay at NBIC.

Thank you, With Gassho



Memorial photo following the closing ceremony of the seminar: (back row, L to R) Myoran Gifford and Yoryu Alzaa; (front row, L to R) Revs. Ryuei McCormick, Ryuoh Faulconer, Shungen Yazawa (shomyo instructor), Chishin Hirai, Shunko Kawasaki (shomyo instructor), Myokei Caine-Barrett

## Nichiren Shu News

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