

Nichiren Shu News

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New Year's Greetings from Minobusan: Learn True Meaning of 'Rissho Ankoku-ron'

By Honorable Rev. Nichiko Fujii
Archbishop of the Nichiren Shu Order

Minobusan is the seat of the Buddha, where the murmur of aged cedar trees and little streams becomes the Buddha's voice preaching the Lotus Sutra. Thus our Founder said, "As we on Minobusan recite the Lotus Sutra day and night and discuss the Great Concentration and Insight morning and evening, we feel as though we are in the Pure Land of Mt. Sacred Eagle."

Our Founder entered Minobusan when his disciples and followers were subjected to severe persecution while Japan as a nation was at the brink of destruction by the threat of the Mongol invasion. In 1275, our Founder wrote a letter to Lay Priest Soya Jiro Horen



Archbishop
Nichiko Fujii

ment of the ruler of Japan reflected in the mirror of heaven and earth."

Nichiren Shonin consistently taught us that we can establish peace and tranquility and realize the state of the Buddha Land in this world if we work together based on the True Dharma.

After studying various schools of

stating, "Heaven and earth are a mirror in which the state of a country is clearly reflected. The continuous series of natural disasters today in Japan is the misgovern-

Buddhism for 16 years, Priest Rencho (Nichiren Shonin) returned to Mt. Kiyosumi to promulgate a new school of Nichiren Buddhism in 1253. Knowing the True Dharma of the Buddha Sakyamuni, Rencho wanted to rectify the false teachings advocated by others.

At the age of 38, Nichiren Shonin wrote the "Rissho Ankoku-ron (Essay on Spreading Peace Throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma)" and submitted it to Hojo Tokiyori, Former Shogunal Regent of the Kamakura military government.

Unfortunately, Nichiren's political proposal was not accepted by the military government. Moreover Nichiren Shonin thereafter had to go through a series of persecutions. We can say that the "Rissho Ankoku-ron" indeed was

the starting point as well as the conclusion of our Founder's missionary activities.

By advocating "Rissho Ankoku-ron" Nichiren Shonin tried to see the condition of the time, society and the people reflected in the bright mirror of the Buddhist Dharma and re-establish the teaching of the Buddha in the Latter Age of Degeneration through the One Vehicle teaching of the Lotus Sutra. This is our Founder's way of repaying the debt of gratitude to the Buddha Sakyamuni.

We, Nichiren Buddhists, who have been guided by our Founder and given the seed of Buddhahood, should respectfully learn the real motive of Nichiren Shonin in writing the "Rissho Ankoku-ron."

"Namu Myoho Renge Kyo."

Now Is the Time to Fulfill Our Duties

By Honorable Rev. Joshin Komatsu
Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu

In reading the writings of Nichiren Shonin, we are taught by our Founder that those who study and practice Buddhism must know the "time." Besides, he directs us to closely observe the reality of society with the "Buddha-eye," not the value judgement or perception of ordinary people.

As we observe the social conditions today, the changes in the living bases and transformation of the family and household due to the continuing trend of the falling birthrate, aging of society, and fluctuations in economic conditions are giving rise to serious uneasiness in society. Especially in recent years, things have been steadily getting worse in respect to human lives as, for instance, the rise in vicious crimes and suicides, tragic incidents involving children, and a trend of slighting human life.

Moreover, we are unable to put brakes on the destruction and pollution of nature, while the fear of destruction of life is closing in on us in the form of the strife against the background of deep-rooted racial or religious antagonism and the spread of acts of terrorism. The foundation for the dignity of human life has been shaken severely. This is the very condition in the Latter Age of Degeneration.

Living in such an alarming and difficult time as this, we must review anew for what purpose we human beings should live. Our ultimate goal is to become Buddhas ourselves, to lead other people to the state of Buddhas, and to realize the peaceful Buddha Land in this world.

Now is the "time" for us Nichiren Buddhists in the Latter Age of Degen-



Rev. Joshin Komatsu

Nichiren Shonin for the realization of peace throughout the country. They are also requested to fully understand the purpose of the "Rissho Ankoku, Odaimoku Kechien Campaign" of the Nichiren Shu Order. With both priests and lay people united in one mind, let us begin to trek the steps of the missionary activities firmly based on the realities of society.

We aim to accomplish the following as the "Basic Goals" of the movement. **Odaimoku is the seed of Buddhahood**

Let us sow the seed of Buddhahood now to see the time for harvest.

By spreading the Odaimoku, let us try to realize the attainment of Buddhahood by individuals, society, and country.

Educate people because people are the bearers of the dharma

Priests should deepen their faith, devote themselves to chanting the Odaimoku, spread the Odaimoku, and exert every effort to sow the seed of Buddhahood in people to make them establish a tie with the Buddha. Lay followers should live the life of faith, assist the priests to engage in missionary activities, chant the Odaimoku themselves and spread the Odaimoku chanting among others.

Peace of mind, peace of society, and

eration to fulfill our duties. All the priests and their families as well as lay followers throughout the world are requested to put their hearts together with the heart of

peace of the world

Let us have a healthy mind, build up a happy family, establish a safe and active society, and realize world peace by chanting the Odaimoku.

Efforts to tackle the problems of present society

Let us be attentive to the current problems in society, value the life of people, and put into practice the ideal

of "bakku-yoraku (taking away suffering and giving happiness)."

Cooperation with the Buddhists all over the world

Let us build the foundation for peace by promoting cooperation with the Buddhists of Asian countries and of the world and have communication with other religious groups.

(The list of New Cabinet is on page 4)

Let's Create the Buddha Land on This Earth

By Rev. Shokai Kanai
Los Angeles Minobusan Betsuin

Happy New Year to You All!

With your trust in the Odaimoku or the Sacred Title of the Lotus Sutra, I sincerely pray for your peace and happiness and for you to spend your valuable life meaningfully throughout the year of 2006!

"Heaven: Where Is It? How Do We Get There?" was a broadcast by ABC as a holiday special on December 20 last year, preceding the Christmas Holidays. Barbara Walters, a long time anchor, interviewed the most fascinating people of the year 2005, including the Dalai Lama and Richard Gere, a Buddhist Hollywood star. Her interviewees were Buddhists, Jews, Muslims, evangelical Christians, and atheists. She also stopped by a maximum security prison to mingle with members of the Palestinian militant group, Hamas, and sat down with an attempted suicide bomber. She asked, "Would you like me to go to hell?" "Yes" seemed to be his answer. According to many of the interviewees, Buddhists go to hell because they do not believe in Jesus Christ or the Prophet Muhammad.

Do not worry about what they say. Chapter V of the Lotus Sutra says, "Having heard the Lotus Sutra, people

become peaceful in their present lives. In their future lives, they will have rebirths in good places, enjoy pleasures by practicing the Buddhist ways, and hear

the Lotus Sutra again." It promises us that we will surely go to the Buddha Land, where Buddha Sakyamuni and Nichiren Shonin are preaching the Lotus Sutra, after our death.

Another quotation is one of my favorite phrases in Chapter 16 of the sutra, "Ga Shi Do An Non...." or "This world of mine has gardens and palaces adorned with all kinds of gems and jewels, and trees abounding with blossoms and fruits. It is to all, indeed, the land of bliss. Hark, the gods are beating heavenly drums and playing a variety of celestial music. They are also raining heavenly flowers on me and the multitude of devotees." It explains what the Buddha Land looks like. The altar of the Los Angeles Nichiren Buddhist Temple models the Buddha Land.



Rev. Shokai Kanai

(continued on page 3)

The Doctrine of Ichinen Sanzen (12)

Theorem (RI) and Actuality (JI)

By Rev. Kanji Tamura

Various Meanings of "Ji: Actuality" (2)

The doctrine of "3,000 existences contained in one thought," which Nichiren Shonin advocated, is that of "Ji: actuality" encompassing the practice and movement within the real world. "Ji: actuality" has various meanings, and in the previous article, we learned three of them: first to actually feel Lord Sakyamuni, secondly to chant the Daimoku, and thirdly to worship the Great Mandala as the Most Venerable One. In this article we also learn other meanings of the "Ji" based on Nichiren Shonin's writings.

4. Practice of Sowing the Daimoku, Seed of the Buddhahood in the Hearts of Sentient Beings

In his Kanjin Honzon-sho (Treatise Revealing the Spiritual Contemplation and the Most Venerable One), Nichiren Shonin describes the five letters of the Daimoku as "the Buddha seed of Ichinen Sanzen." He maintains that without this Buddha seed, not only the attainment of Buddhahood by people but also the consecration of the object of worship out of wooden statues and portraits will be meaningless. The Buddha seed of Ichinen Sanzen means both the seed that contains Ichinen Sanzen doctrine and the seed that brings the doctrine into reality. According to Nichiren Shonin, Ichinen Sanzen means more than the state of enlightenment privately achieved through mental contemplation. It is the world of the Buddha's enlightenment realized through the practical missionary work in the real time and society.



Rev. Kanji Tamura

Nichiren Shonin considers that the sentient beings living in the Age of Degeneration (the age of confusion in which the minds of people become corrupted and the world goes to ruin from 2,000 years after the extinction of Sakyamuni Buddha) either have no Buddha seed or threw it away in their previous existences. Although all sentient beings have the Buddha nature, the mind of the Buddha cannot be activated in reality without the Buddha seed. Therefore, regardless of people's preferences, Nichiren Shonin forced people to hear the Daimoku, sowing it in their minds, so that they could build a relationship with it. This missionary method is called "building the relationship through dissemination" (Geshu Kechien).

5. Reading the Lotus Sutra through 'Shiki: Color' and Rissho

Ankoku-ron (Treatise on Spreading Peace Throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma)

The word "Shiki: color" in Buddhism means something visible. The term symbolizes our real visible and audible world. Our bodies, which are visible, are also categorized as "color." Thus "color" implies the opposite of the invisible state of enlightenment and the mental world.

The world of enlightenment is called "Ri: theorem" while the real world "Ji: actuality." When our inner world is classified as the mind, and its

outer world as "color," those states of "Ri: theorem" and "Ji: actuality," or the mind and the color are like both sides of the same coin. We, ordinary people, always want immediate things because we get lost in the world of "Ji: actuality" and "Shiki: color."

Nevertheless, in order to enter the world of "Ri: theorem" or the mind of the Buddha, we have to use the real world of "Ji: actuality" and "Shiki: color" as a springboard. That is the importance of Ji and Shiki. Grand Master T'ien-t'ai shows the practice of mental concentration in order to enter the world of "Ri: theorem" from the world of "Ji: actuality." However, Nichiren Shonin rather tries to realize the world of "Ri: theorem" in the real world of "Ji: actuality" than to try to enter the theoretic world from the actual world. In his Rissho Ankoku-ron, Nichiren straightforwardly states that this triple world (the real world of confusion) becomes the land of Buddhas when we embrace the teaching of the Lotus Sutra. The idea and act of Rissho Ankoku-ron that try to realize the Buddha Land in this real world are fundamental of the Ichinen Sanzen of "Ji: actuality."

In the meantime, reading the Lotus Sutra through "Shiki: color" also means to read the meaning of the sutra in the very real world. The Lotus Sutra indicates that the practitioner who truly spreads this sutra in the future may encounter various difficulties but will overcome them finally. This context can be said to be the prediction of Sakyamuni Buddha. Those who actually experience that context in the real world are the true practitioners of the Lotus Sutra. Likewise reading the

Lotus Sutra through "Shiki: color" substantiates the prediction of the Lotus Sutra in the real world. In his Kaimoku-sho (Open Your Eyes to the Lotus Teaching) Nichiren Shonin writes that he has reached the self-awareness of the practitioner of the Lotus Sutra who had overcome numberless obstacles and difficulties (numerous minor troubles and four major ones) to spread the Lotus Sutra.

Moreover, he writes in his Toki Nyudo-dono Go-henji (Response to the Lay Priest Lord Toki), "The Great Concentration and Insight states that the 'three hindrances and four devils' will disturb the practitioners. Now they are disturbing me, Nichiren, in detail, and they are more powerful than those at the time of Grand Masters T'ien-t'ai and Dengyo. There are two ways of meditating on the doctrine of Ichinen Sanzen. One is the 'theoretical' way, and the other is the 'actual' way. Grand Masters T'ien-t'ai and Dengyo practiced the former while I now practice the latter. As my method of practicing meditation is superior, difficulties befalling me are harder to bear. What T'ien-t'ai and Dengyo propagated was based on Ichinen Sanzen of the theoretical section while what I, Nichiren, propagate is based on Ichinen Sanzen of the essential section. The difference between the two is as great as the difference between heaven and earth." Nichiren Shonin regarded the active substantiation as more important than the notional practice, and stipulated that the Ichinen Sanzen of "Ji: actuality" as the practice of realizing the world of the Lotus Sutra in the real world. He was proud of spreading the Daimoku and overcoming persecutions in the Age of Degeneration. That is to read the Lotus Sutra through "Shiki: color."

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

The Legend of Nichiren (19)

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph. D.

The Arrival of the State Letter of Mongolia

The state letter of Mongolia was delivered in 1268. Ostensibly it stated that they wanted to establish a friendly relationship with Japan. In reality, however, Japan's obedience to Mongolia was demanded. If Japan didn't obey the demand, the letter stated that Mongolia was ready to use military force. The people in Japan were all terrified by the threat of the Mongolian attack. There was a person who predicted this crisis. It was Nichiren Shonin. He predicted the crisis of the foreign invasion of Japan in his "Rissho Ankoku-ron (Essay on the Peace throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma)." The people who approved the assertion of Nichiren Shonin gradually increased.

The drought continued from about the fifth month of 1271. Nichiren Shonin competed in prayer for rain with Priest Ninsho (1217-1303) of the Ritsu (Precepts) Sect. Ninsho prayed first in vain. Then it was Nichiren's turn to pray. Ninsho promised, "If it rains, I will become your pupil." When Nichiren Shonin prayed, a black cloud appeared, and it began to rain. Ninsho criticized Nichiren Shonin without



Rev. Gyokai Sekido

keeping his promise. Ninsho was doing social work under the protection of the shogunate. Because of this many statesmen embraced him. Ninsho's criticism of Nichiren Shonin eventually led to the persecution of Nichiren at Tatsunokuchi.

The Mongol threat made the leaders of the Kamakura Shogunate tense. It was not desirable for them that the people embracing Nichiren Shonin increased rapidly. Then the criticism of Nichiren by Ninsho, whom they trusted, couldn't be ignored. The shogunate arrested Nichiren Shonin, and took him to the execution ground at Tatsunokuchi.

The historical fact of the prayer for rain by Nichiren and Ninsho is detailed in the "Yorimoto Chinjo (Letter of Explanation by Yorimoto)." Nichiren also mentions the state letter of Mongolia in his "Ankoku-ron Gokanyurai (Reason for Submitting the Rissho Ankoku-ron)" and so on; so these actions of Nichiren in those days are known in detail to us. Furthermore, it is said that he climbed Mt. Fuji on one of

those days.

There was a farmer whom Nichiren Shonin met in 1269 on the way to the Province of Kai (present Yamanashi Prefecture). He admired the virtue of Nichiren Shonin, thinking that Nichiren Shonin was the prime Buddhist priest in Japan. Then, he made his son Nichiren's pupil, named Nisshin. He himself became a priest, too, and he was named Nichigen. Nisshin later became the third chief priest of Minobusan. Nisshin is believed to be the second son of Soya Kyoshin, follower of Nichiren Shonin in Shimousa (present Chiba Prefecture). Nichigen was a descendant of Abe Sadato (1019-62), a local magnate in the Tohoku District during the Heian Period. They escaped to Kai and became farmers when Abe Sadato was defeated by Minamoto Yoriyoshi (988-1075) during the middle of the Heian Period.

One day, Nichigen invited Nichiren Shonin to climb Mt. Fuji. They left soon thinking "Procrastination is the

thief of time," and they reached Yoshida (present Fujiyoshida City). There were many followers of Nichiren Shonin, and the Jogyo-ji Temple was built later. They climbed Mt. Fuji from there. The sky was fine and the scene of the various provinces was wonderful. Nichiren Shonin buried eight volumes of the Lotus Sutra that he copied in the mountain. Then they recited the Lotus Sutra. Because of this, the ground is called the "Kyoga Take (the Peak of the Sutra)."

On the way down the mountain they dropped in at the village of Kodachi-mura. Many villagers who respected Nichiren Shonin gathered, and they chanted the Daimoku. They had pieces of paper in hand and asked Nichiren Shonin to write the Most Venerable One (Honzon). There were 28 sheets of paper. Nichiren Shonin put the sheets together and wrote the big Honzon. It exists in the Okano-miya Kochoo-ji Temple of Suruga (present Numazu City).

(to be continued)



Nichiren Shonin prays for peace after burying the Lotus Sutra he had copied halfway up Mt. Fuji (The picture is reprinted from "Nichiren Shonin-den Emaki," painted by Uenaka Jikisai)

People I'll Always Remember (1)

By Rev. Ryusho Matsuda



'I See You in the Gohonzon'

In this column, Rev. Ryusho Matsuda speaks of the person who is the most memorable during his 25 years of service as the head priest of the Myokakuji Betsuin Temple, San Jose, California. He resigned from the post last October, when he was succeeded by Rev. Arnold Shinko Matsuda, his son.

A Letter to the Late Ven. Shingaku Oikawa

"Do not seek to obtain this Gohonzon just anywhere, for it exists only in the flesh of those who have faith in the Lotus Sutra and who chant 'Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.'" (A Response to Lady Nichinyo)

Gozensama! This is the passage of Nichiren Shonin you wrote in the mandala that you presented to me. I read it

every morning and evening at the altar in my home. Since you passed away in 1992, 14 years have passed. At that time, I was at a loss and sad because I thought that I would not be able to receive your guidance directly any more. However, when I read this passage daily, I feel you are close to me. I see you in the Gohonzon and find myself also in it.

Gozensama! Myokakuji Betsuin, the temple you established in 1980, observed its 25th Anniversary in October, 2005, thanks to much encouragement and support from the people who still view you as their spiritual leader.

Gozensama! I still remember the day you dedicated this temple. In your dedication prayer, you expressed your gratitude to Nichiren Shonin saying,

"In order to return a favor to Nichiren Shonin, I have established this temple here in San Jose. May the tiny seed that I planted here grow big and wide throughout the world." In the beginning, we did not have any members, but you entrusted me to spread the Nichiren Buddhism. You also said: "I will be a living mausoleum and lend a hand to sustain this temple." With your encouragement, I was able to start my mission of spreading the true spirit of Nichiren Shonin.

You always said that a temple must be a place to practice Buddhism, but also a place to widen the Buddhist thoughts among all people: Buddhists as well as non-Buddhists.

Gozensama! Now, 25 years later more than 500 people pass through this temple weekly. Many of them are not Buddhists, but despite their differences in cultural background, race, and religion, they put their hands together in Gassho in front of the Buddha. They attain rich and pure minds by being around the Buddha.

Gozensama! You also said that Nichiren Buddhism must have Ameri-

can-born priests in the future, then true American Nichiren Buddhism will take root in the soil. Fortunately, one of your disciples, Rev. Arnold Shinko Ma-



Ven. Shingaku Oikawa

tsuda, who was born in the U.S.A., has succeeded me. I am sure that he will proceed into the next quarter-century confident that the fruit of the Odaimoku received by the faithful comes from a flourishing tree which grew out of the seed of the Buddha's teaching planted 25 years ago in San Jose.

Although I have resigned from the position of the head priest, I will continue to devote myself in supporting the new head minister as well as maintaining and protecting the Gohonzon of this temple. So, please permit me to become a small living mausoleum after you.

The Year of the DOG

By Rev. Hoyu Maruyama

2006 is the year of the Dog in Chinese astrology. The year of the Dog in Japan is considered to be a year of a new start following the year of the Rooster, the year of big changes. 1946 was also the year of a new start just after World War II ended, when the Japanese Emperor declared he was a human, and the first popular election took place. In 1958 Mr. Shigeo Nagashima joined the Yomiuri Giants, which is said to have changed Japanese professional baseball. In 1982 Nichiren Shu made a new start after the 700th anniversary of Nichiren Shonin.

Nichiren Shonin met the year of the Dog five times in his life. Above all, the second year of Kocho (1262) and the eleventh year of Bunnei (1274) were years after big changes had happened to him. The former was the year following his exile to Izu, when he wrote "Shionsho (the Essay on Four Debts of Gratitude)" and "Kyokijokusho (the Treatise on the Teaching, Capacity, Time, and Country)" at Ito, Izu. The latter was the year after he wrote "Kanjin honzonsho (the Spiritual Contemplation and the Most Venerable One)" and depicted Daimandala Gohonzon (the Most Venerable One), when he was permitted by the military government to return to Kamakura from Sado, where he had been exiled, and then left Kamakura for Minobusan on the twelfth day of the fifth month.

Nichiren was at Kominato when he was 5 years old in the year of the Dog, 1226. He was studying in Kamakura at the age of 17 in 1238. He was supposed to be staying in Kyoto at 29 years of age in 1250.

A famous legend of Nichiren Shonin with reference to "A Dog" is that of "A White Dog" which is even now told at the Jotakuji Temple at Shimoyama, Minobu-cho, Yamanashi Prefecture.

While Nichiren Shonin stayed on Minobusan, Zenchi Hoin of Komurosan at Kajikazawa near Minobu was defeated by Shonin in the debate over the Buddha's teachings, converted his faith, but did not necessarily believe in Nichiren from the bottom of his heart. One day Zenchi



By Shoko Kinoshita (1926-1998)

visited Nichiren's thatched cottage on Minobusan with portable stacked boxes of food in his hand. He handed them to Shonin saying, "These are some pieces of rice cake made by my wife." Nichiren threw one of them to a white dog playing in the garden. The dog wagged its tail joyfully, ate the rice cake, and immediately its four legs trembled, vomited blood, and died. Zenchi confessed, "I was defeated by you in the debate the other year. I have been holding a grudge against you, although I call myself your disciple in word. I have always been trying to murder you with poison. But my scheme to kill you was revealed by this white dog at the last minute. Please forgive me, My Great Priest." He repented his sins and prostrated his body in worshipping Nichiren. Shonin felt compassion for him, forgave him and said, "This happening was caused by a devil that possessed you while you were not conscious. Therefore you are not guilty, since it is not you who have done this bad deed."

The dead white dog was buried respectfully and its tombstone was erected at Shimoyama. Shonin held a religious service for the white dog and erected on its grave a stick made of a branch of a ginkgo tree as a stupa. Mysteriously this stick took root in the ground, put forth new leaves and buds, and grew into a big tall tree.

This ginkgo tree came to be called the "Ginkgo Tree for Antitoxin" many years later, and its leaves are made into talismans as a miraculous medicine. Eye drops are made from its extract. The tree is also called "Ohatsuki-icho" because it has nuts on the leaves, and its nuts, "Ginnan," are said to be shaped like a dog's fangs. What is more, the tree is called "Sakasa-icho," because all its branches hang down. It is known as one of the most rare trees in the world.

(Trans. by Rev. Kanshu Naito)

(continued from page 1)

Many scholars and religious leaders of the Lotus Sutra said that this Buddha Land in Chapter 16 is a spiritual place if our minds become pure like the Buddha; when that happens, then this world looks just like the Buddha Land. I agree with them; however, I want to see the physical Buddha Land on this earth while I am still alive.

The teachings of the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Shonin emphasize creating the Buddha Land on this earth. Nichiren Shonin said in his Kanjin Honzon Sho that this Saha-world is the Eternal Buddha's Pure Land, which is free from the three calamities of fire, water and wind, and also the four cycles of birth, old age, disease and death. We do not want to get old, so ladies make themselves up with cosmetics to look young. We do not want to get sick, so we exercise and take many vitamins and medicines. Because

we do not want to die, many people receive dialysis or organ transplants. The things that we do everyday are related to being free from the four cycles of birth, old age, disease and death, aren't they?

Because we want to be free from disasters from fire, water and wind, we listen to the weather forecast and buy expensive insurance to protect our homes and families. Your life today must be better than that of your parents. Your children's and grandchildren's lives should be better than yours. Please try to make this world better for yourself and others. Whatever you do at work or at home, please be sure that you are trying to make this world better. Please keep my message in your mind throughout this year.

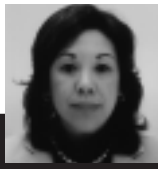
Not only do we wish to go to the Buddha Land after our death, but also let us try to create the Buddha Land on this earth.



New Year's Retreat

By Ryuoh Falconer

On December 31st, 2005 the Treasure Tower Temple, also known as the Nichiren Buddhist Temple of Portland, held a New Year's retreat. The retreat started on New Year's Eve at 7 pm. Over a dozen participants registered and prepared their bedding for the night. At eight everyone went to the Suigyo area, where they all participated in water purification. After Suigyo, we spent an hour-and-a-half folding paper cranes for peace in the upcoming year. Two hours before midnight, we began a candlelight service based on the Hokke Sembo. The service was conducted completely in English and everyone participated. We finished the service a few minutes before midnight. At midnight, we began the ringing of the temple bell 108 times. The participants took turns ringing the bell over a 54 minute time period. Then we all went to sleep. In the morning, we did a 90 minute Shodaigyo service which was followed by a New Year's service. Ootoso and Ozoni were consumed by the participants at the New Year's breakfast. Around noon the group disbanded with the hopes that the New Year would be a time of peace, prosperity and greater faith.



Church Events

By Sandra Seki

BRAZIL

'This Is All the Will of the Buddha'

Interview with Mr. Takashi Nishioka
by Rev. Fukushima, Hokekyoji Temple

Let me begin by relating the firm faith of Mr. Takashi Nishioka (65), one of the first five members who helped establish the Hokekyoji Temple in Brazil. Recently, thieves broke into Mr. Nishioka's house in the middle of the night and took some cash and a Rolex watch.

The following day he had some things to do at the temple and told me the story. "Some cash and a Rolex watch were stolen but because of the protection of the Buddha, none of my family members were hurt. My expensive camera which was kept in a shelved cabinet in front of the Butsudan was untouched," explained Mr. Nishioka.

He did not complain about the robbery but instead he said he was grateful to the Buddha for a small loss and no injuries.

Evidently the thief had made a duplicate key and entered his house. "The Buddha sent us a warning so I have decided to place a secure lock from the inside," said Mr. Nishioka.

"The Buddha can see our conduct from above so I must lead an honest and trustworthy life. When I die and meet the Buddha and Nichiren Shonin I don't want to feel ashamed of myself," added Mr. Nishioka.

The following is my interview with Mr. Nishioka:

Rev. F.: Mr. Nishioka, you have a Ph. D. in medicine, physics, and chemistry. Does this have anything to do with your former profession?

Mr. N.: Yes, it does. After graduating from school I joined an American electric company and worked there for 11 years. Next, I was head-hunted by a chemical company where I was asked to do research on medical gases. After 8 years, I decided to set up my own company researching on herbal medicine. I produced a Brazilian ginseng with similar effects to the Korean ginseng. This herb is good for improving one's physical constitution and it sold well and is still selling well. For those who could not pay I didn't accept payments. I gave it to them for free. To this day my patients are very grateful for this. Another product I made from natural sources was able to fight a special type of virus which was threatening the lives of many people in this area. I even received a certificate of gratitude from the Hideo Noguchi Foundation of Japan. Both occupations were based on long hours of research. With this medicine I gained a lot of money, but I was also attacked by some people in the same line of business. I am fighting a case in court at the



Mr. Takashi Nishioka

moment about the medicine's effect.

Many doctors and patients who have used the medicine have testified on the effectiveness of it. Because of this trial I am not working now and I have the time to visit the temple more often than before. I think this came about as an arrangement of the Buddha.

Rev. F.: How did you encounter the Hokekyoji Temple? And what is your personal history?

Mr. N.: My father was a parishioner of the Ise Shrine and I am a second generation Japanese in Brazil. When I was young I had no connections with the Lotus Sutra. I was first introduced to it in my 20s through Rev. Kojun Matsuda, who became a priest in Brazil and Rev. Kimura from Japan. With their influence I became an ardent follower of the Lotus Sutra. Twenty-five years ago, I got together with the other followers and built the Myohozan Kemponji Temple but there was a confrontation about the way of propagation within the religion at the time. Rev. Matsuda, Rev. Kimura and a few others including myself left and became an independent religious organization. Later Rev. Kimura returned to Japan because his master had passed away and when Rev. Matsuda passed away, the group could not continue meeting. Through the help of Rev. Kimura, we asked for help from Nichiren Shu and five of us became Nichiren Shu followers.

Rev. F. Have you had a lot of hardships?

Mr. N.: No, I haven't. This is all the will of the Buddha. Members at the Hokekyoji Temple have increased and I am very satisfied. I would like to continue increasing the number of members.

Rev. F.: What is your dream for the New Year?

Mr. N.: The temple we are renting at the moment has become too small to house all the members. We would like to move to a more spacious place. If possible I would like to build my own temple, even if I have to pay for it in installments. I am looking for a suitable place at the moment.

Rev. F.: Thank you very much, Mr. Nishioka.

Mr. Nishioka lives with his kind wife, three sons and a daughter. He lost his first son many years ago. The boy had suffered from cerebral palsy and even after three major operations he passed away at the age of eighteen. Even so Mr. Nishioka gives thanks to the Buddha for making the boy live till he was eighteen. At his son's final moments, Mr. Nishioka held him in his arms and the end came peacefully. For this again Mr. Nishioka is grateful to the Buddha for making his son pass away quietly and peacefully.

The Buddha will always protect Mr. Nishioka because of his good deeds and personality of giving, helping and gratitude. He only wanted to help people and before he realized it, he had made a fortune. He always gives large amounts of donation to the temple and when others refused to sign the document of guarantor for renting the temple premises, he gladly took on this responsibility. Mr. Nishioka comes to the temple twice a week, and we hope he will stay healthy and continue to support the Hokekyoji Temple.

(Trans. by Sandra Seki)



Rev. Kenno Fukushima

SAN JOSE

New Year's Events

The Nichiren Buddhist Temple of San Jose held several events in observance of the 2006 New Year. In preparation for the New Year, Nichiren Buddhist Temple of San Jose held a small Mochitsuki using the machine brought to the temple over 15 years ago by the Nakanishi Family to create the Mochi to be used for Osonae for the temple's altar.

On New Year's Eve, the annual Joya-Hoyo or New Year's Eve service was held at 11:30 p.m. Approximately 35 people attended this service. Immediately following the New Year's Service, we had the traditional "toshi-koshi soba" and it was a good opportunity to welcome in the New Year with old friends as well as the people whom we met for the first time that evening.

On New Year's Day, the temple held the New Year's Day service promptly at 8:00 a.m.

Tachibana School also held its annual New Year's Event on Saturday, January 7, 2006. During this event, a mochitsuki was held employing the traditional method and also each student participated in doing the kakizome or the first calligraphy of the year.

SEATTLE

Rev. Mitomo Is Married

The resident minister of the Seattle Nichiren Buddhist Temple was married on December 25, 2005. He made this sudden decision since he will be applying for permanent residency in the U.S.

Once his papers are submitted he will not be able to leave the States for a few years. This is the reason for his decision.

Rev. Mitomo says that there are many hardships which he must overcome in a foreign country: the difference in language, culture, insurance, tax payments and so on. To overcome these hardships it is better to be with one's partner so that the hardships will be shared by two.

Rev. Mitomo would like to have the support and help from all the members of the church to start his life in the U.S. He is also very grateful to all those who have helped him. He and his bride, Kei-san (photo), will try their best to propagate Nichiren Buddhism in the States.



New Cabinet for Nichiren Shu Administration Chief Administrator: Rev. Joshin Komatsu

Members of the Nichiren Shu Congress, the highest legislative organ of the Nichiren Shu Order, were elected anew on November 17, 2005. The newly elected members assembled at the Special Session of the Congress on December 14, 2005, and elected Rev. Shozan Hirai of Saga City as the Chairman and Rev. Bunkyo Tanaka of Sapporo City as the Vice Chairman. At the same time Chief Administrator Tansai Iwama asked to resign due to ill health, which was approved. Accordingly it was decided to call the Congress for an extraordinary session for the purpose of electing the new Chief Administrator six days later, on December 20. As a result Rev. Joshin Komatsu of the Takeibo Temple at Minobu, Yamanashi Prefecture, was elected the new Chief Administrator of the Nichiren Shu Headquarters. The new Chief Administrator immediately began selecting the new cabinet members, who were officially confirmed on December 22, 2005.

The new cabinet members are:

Chief Administrator: *Joshin Komatsu* (age 58)

Executive Director, Missionary Bureau: *Ryuji Ito* (age 65),
Joshoji Temple, Yokohama City

Executive Director, General Affairs Bureau: *Jucho Harita*
(age 56), Myoryuji Temple, Kanazawa City

Director, Missionary Department: *Kancho Kajiyama* (age 68),
Renchoji Temple, Fuefuki City, Yamanashi Prefecture

Director, Education Department: *Shobin Watanabe* (age 68),
Horenji Temple, Ichikawa City, Chiba Prefecture

Director, General Affairs Department: *Eiho Fujioka* (age 59),
Honzoji Temple, Moriyama City, Shiga Prefecture

Director, Financial Affairs Department: *Kyogen Komano* (age
54), Jozajji Temple, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo

Manager, Office of the Chief Administrator: *Ryoko Osa* (age
56), Chokoji Temple, Minato-ku, Tokyo

Chief, Center for the Study of Modern Religions: *Gentai
Tazawa* (age 57), Myokoji Temple, Mobarra City, Chiba
Prefecture

President, Nichiren Shu Newspaper Co.: *Shoko Ito* (age 55),
Jorenji Temple, Kawasaki City, Kanagawa Prefecture

Nichiren Shu News

c/o NICHIREN SHU Shumuin

1-32-15, Ikegami, Ota-ku, Tokyo 146-8544, Japan Tel. 03-3751-7181 ~ 3

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