

# Nichiren Shu News

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## Inauguration of Renkoji Temple



Clockwise from upper left: group photo in front of the Hondo, Rev. Tarabini with Mayor Tribocco at the banquet, banquet at the local restaurant, Rev. Yoneda officiating the ceremony, banners decorating the front of Renkoji Temple, inauguration celebration cake made for Renkoji

**By Sandra Seki**

The inauguration ceremony for Renkoji Temple was held on Saturday, September 10, 2011 in Cereseto, Italy. The temple actually opened last year in this small town located in the Piedmonte region between Torino and Milan in northern Italy. Due to preparations and procedures, the inauguration ceremony was postponed until this fall.

On this particular day, the town whose population is only about 450, was crowded with 150 followers and ministers from Japan, North America, England and other parts of Europe. The ceremony was officiated by Rev. Sen'yu Yoneda of the Finance Department of the Nichiren Shu Headquarters accompanied by several other priests from Japan including Rev. Eiyu Ishii and Rev.

Gyojun Tsujimura. Bishop Shokai Kanai, and Rev. Chishin Hirai attended from the U.S.A., Rev. Kanto Tsukamoto from London and Rev. Morioka from Germany.

The hondo (main prayer hall) which used to be a wine cellar in the Middle Ages was renovated and converted into a cozy prayer hall with the Itto Ryoson Shishi (sacred Buddhist statues) surrounding Nichiren Shonin's statue in the center. The adjoining rooms were crowded with officials of Cereseto, ministers from different religions and followers from all over Europe, North America and Japan. Guests who were unable to sit inside the hall were standing outside in the hot autumn sun in order to participate in this memorable service. All joined in prayer and chanted the Odaimoku in unison. Because the structure used to

be a wine cellar, the voices of the attendees resounded beautifully.

Rev. Shoryo Tarabini found this spot one day while he was traveling through the countryside. He had had a dream in which Nichiren Shonin appeared and pointed out an area where cherry blossoms bloomed and rolling hills extended endlessly. When Rev. Tarabini happened to stop by in Cereseto, he found the cherry blossoms in full bloom and the rolling hills surrounding them and he realized that this was the place that Nichiren Shonin had shown him. The people of this town were very kind to him and accepted him right away. Rev. Tarabini felt tranquility, peace and warmth in this new place. With an old medieval castle in the background and a huge pine tree (similar to the kind in Japan)

in front of the hondo, he decided that this was the ideal location for Renkoji Temple.

After the inauguration ceremony, a banquet was held at the only restaurant in town. Followers and friends of Renkoji Temple gathered for a warm celebration. The Mayor of Cereseto, Mr. Renato Tribocco, attended both the service and the banquet. He said that he was very pleased to see a Buddhist temple open in this town and would be glad to help Renkoji Temple.

Rev. Tarabini was overwhelmed at the number of attendees who had traveled a long way to attend this memorable event and vowed he would continue propagating from Renkoji Temple, making it a central point of Nichiren Shu activities in Europe and Africa.

# Buddhism and International Society

By Rev. Kanshu Naito

## Buddhism and International Society (6)

Emerson as an editor, firstly published Hindu literature named "Veeshnoo Sarma" in the series "Ethnical Scriptures." Later Thoreau edited "Sayings of Confucius" and "Chinese Four Books," etc. Thoreau is presumed to have helped Emerson with his editorial policy as this series was the first attempt to introduce such Oriental sacred books to American readers. This series continued up till the last issue of "Dial," but "The Preaching of the Buddha" appeared with the article Hermes Trismegistus in Thoreau's edition in the January issue just before it ceased publication in April 1844. He did the only one exceptional edition to publish two ethnical scriptures on this issue. He must have thought this Buddhist sutra was worth introducing to Americans even if he took an exceptional measure. Much later, Thomas Tweed, a Buddhist scholar, said that this translation with commentary, opened the American interest in Buddhism (The American Encounter with Buddhism, 2000, xxxi).

"The Preaching of the Buddha" was published anonymously and both its editor and translator were not identified. At present there seem to be two views concerning its editor and translator. The views say Thoreau both edited and translated it, or that he edited and someone else translated it. It's most likely the translator was Elizabeth Palmer Peabody (1804-1894), who led an active life with Emerson, Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, the Alcott family, etc. who were very active in Concord in the suburbs of Boston, at that time. As her younger sister was Hawthorne's wife, Elizabeth acted intimately with these transcendentalists. Since she had a good command of several languages such as Latin, Sanskrit, Chinese and so on, it is not improper to suggest she translated it. She held up the educational principles, that is, "to think rightly, to feel rightly and to act rightly" which



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were common to the Eightfold Holy Path teachings of the Buddha, at the school she ran in partnership with Alcott. It can be said that intelligent leaders who sympathized with Buddhism appeared here and began to

plant seeds of the teaching of the Buddha in the soil of America.

This introduction of Buddhist literature in "The Dial" was very rare and attractive to the transcendentalists who took increasing interests in Oriental documents. Presumably Emerson was influenced by "The Preaching of the Buddha" published in 1844, because it is said that he began to take an interest in Buddhism around 1846. So this article must have filled a role as a guidebook of Buddhism to New England.

The explanation about this original work at the beginning of the preface says its title is White Lotus of the Good Law, and adds as follows: this work, which is written in Sanskrit, makes part of the numerous collection of Buddhist books, discovered by Brian H. Hodgson, the English resident at the Court of Katmandou, and sent by him to La Société Asiatique de Paris (the Asiatic Society of Paris). Eugène Burnouf (Professor of Sanskrit at the College of France, 1801 - 1852) examined, some years since, this collection, which includes a great part of the canonical books of the Buddhists, and of which translations are found in all the nations which are Buddhists, (the people of Tibet, China, and Mongolia.) The book, from which the following extracts were taken, is one of the most venerated, by all the nations which worship the Buddha, and shows very clearly the method followed by the Sage who bears this name. The work is in prose and verse. The versified part is only the reproduction in a metrical

rather than a poetical form of the part written in prose.

It is very interesting for us Buddhists that this article indicates Saddharma Pundarika Sutra is "one of the most venerated by all the nations who are Buddhists." When Buddhism was not introduced enough nor well known in America, this Sutra was, above all, recognized objectively the most venerated teaching of Buddha by European Christians.

Understanding the relation of the prose and verse mentioned above, Thoreau seems to have edited and changed considerable parts of this English translation. In fact, the content of "The Preaching of the Buddha" is the English translation of Chapitre V, Les Plantes Médicinales of Le Lotus Blanc de La Bonne Loi translated into French by Burnouf and almost the same as Chapter V, "The Parable of the Medicinal Herbs" of Saddharma Pundarika Sutra.

However, as for the content of Chapitre V, Le Lotus, the order of the first half "The Parable of the Merciful Rain" and the second half "The Parable of the Herbs" in the original is reversed, that is, "the herbs" appear at the first half and "the merciful rain" comes next in Le Lotus. Although in Le Lotus both the versified part and the part written in prose of "the herbs" are translated, only the versified part of "the merciful rain" is translated. Burnouf himself changed the positions of these two parables and chose the translated parts. On the other hand, as to "The Preaching of the Buddha," the positions of the two parts are the same as Le Lotus, but the versified part of "the herbs" is omitted and only its prosaic part is adopted. "The merciful rain" is opposite to "the herbs." Only its versified part is adopted because there is no translation of its prosaic part in Le Lotus. It is said that it is Thoreau who omitted the versified part of "the herbs." He must have understood that the versified part is the

reproduction of the prosaic part and adopted the prose of one parable and the verse of the other by his sense of being a literary man. On the other hand, Burnouf was a scholar. The translation of Saddharma Pundarika Sutra was an object of his study. It is presumed that he came across this Sutra in the process of his research of oriental cultures and published Le Lotus as part of his study. Therefore, he tried to translate both the parts of "the herbs," to clarify the relation and characteristic of the verse and the prose. As for Thoreau, who did not know of Burnouf's devices, he received Le Lotus as the valuable classic and important thought of the Orient, and added these changes thinking about the balance of these two parts.

There isn't the versified part of "the herbs" in the Lotus Sutra translated by Kumārajīva. Burnouf may place this parable in front attracted by the title of Le Plantes Médicinales. He must have thought it is natural that "the herbs" come before "the merciful rain" because the title contains the herbs and, what is more, it is easier for its readers.

A "Parable of the Herbs" that are familiar and closely connected with everyday life all over the world is preached in the Parable of the Herbs of Le Lotus de La Bonne Loi or of "The Preaching of the Buddha." Moreover, this Parable is said to be overwhelming among the seven parables of this Sutra because it depicts the mysteries of the Great Nature. Therefore, this chapter could be easily understood and accepted by Europeans and Americans.

Taking into consideration the development and influence of Buddhism in America on later generations, it was a beneficial affair on the Buddhist side that Buddhism was introduced in "The Dial," edited by Emerson and Thoreau, intellectuals of New England when nearly no American knew about it. (to be continued)

## Rev. Kanno Preaches (15)



"May we have the purest eyes of wisdom  
Just like yours!"  
(Chapter VII. The Parable of a Magic City)

### Eyes of Wisdom

This phrase shows our sincere wish to reach the state of mind free of all worldly desires and sins by acquiring the purest eyes of wisdom of Sakyamuni Buddha. It is the eyes of wisdom and at the same time, the eyes of compassion of the Buddha. In Buddhism, five types of eyes are shown:

- 1) Eyes of those who have a material body, meaning us, sentient beings.
- 2) The divine eyes of celestial beings.
- 3) Eyes of wisdom by which the "two-vehicles" observe the thought of non-substantiality.
- 4) The eyes of Dharma by which bodhisattvas perceive all teachings in order to lead human beings to enlightenment.
- 5) The Buddha's eye: the four kinds of eyes, mentioned above, exist in the Buddha's body.

A traditional phrase says, "People are disgusted to see neighbors build treasuries." This is why the Buddha's eyes of wisdom and compassion are expounded in the Lotus Sutra. We often make our judgment based on the first impression. The judgement always concerns whether it is a friend or a foe, whether it is a profit or a loss. This judgment leads to evil passions. "May we have the purest eyes of wisdom just like the eyes of the Buddha to make the judgment rightful and free of evil passions." (Rev. Kanno, head priest of Kaichoji Temple, Shizuoka)

## Calendar December 2011-January 2012

December 8th: Jodo-e (Enlightenment Day) commemorating the day when the Buddha attained Enlightenment  
December 31st: Omisoka-New Year's Eve Service, year-end bell ringing ceremony

January 1st: Memorial service for Nichiji Shonin  
January 13th: Otoko-e, Minobusan first ceremony for the New Year  
January 21st: Memorial service for Nichiro Shonin

# The Small Talk on Various Topics of Buddhism (9)

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph.D

## Saicho and Enryakuji Temple (Mt. Hiei in Kyoto Prefecture)

Enryakuji Temple on Mt. Hiei is the head temple of the Tendai Sect. The origin of the temple dates back to 785 when Saicho (767~822) built a hermitage on Mt. Hiei to study and practice Buddhism. The mountains which range from Shiga Prefecture to Kyoto Prefecture are named collectively Mt. Hiei.

It is described in the Kojiki, an old Japanese history book of the Nara Period, that deities had been residing in those mountains since ancient times. It is known that hermits were residing in those mountains and practicing mystical rites in that era.

Saicho entered the priesthood at the age of 12. Several years afterwards in 785, he entered Mt. Hiei and built a hermitage on the mountain. Three years later, the hermitage was converted to a temple, called Hieizanji. Later, the temple developed into Ichijoshikan-in, the present Komponchudo. Yakushi Nyorai or Medicine-Master Buddha was enshrined there.

It was nine years after he entered the mountain when Heian-kyo was constructed. In later days, the Enryakuji Temple came to be known as the temple of protecting the northern ominous direc-



Rev.  
Gyokai Sekido

tion of the Imperial Court.

Saicho, the founder of the Japanese Tendai Sect was born in Omi Province (present Shiga Prefecture). He entered the priesthood at the age of 12 and "accepted precepts" at the age

of 14. In 785, he built a hermitage on Mt. Hiei and devoted himself to chanting the Lotus Sutra and other sutras. He also concentrated on studying Chinese Tendai scriptures.

In 802, he came down from the mountain for the first time after he entered the mountain and gave lectures on the Lotus Sutra at Takaosanji Temple in Kyoto.

When he entered the mountain, he felt "impermanence" of the world as well as his immaturity. He made five vows in his practice of Buddhism, and swore not to leave the mountain until his vows were accomplished.

In 804, by imperial order, he went to China. There he studied Tendai doctrines. Coincidentally, Kukai (774~835), the founder of the Shingon Sect of Buddhism was staying in China almost at the same time. Several years later, Saicho came back to Japan and propagated the Tendai doctrines.

In 822 he asked the Imperial Court for permission to erect the "Platform of Mahayana Precepts" (platform to receive precepts) on Mt. Hiei. Strongly opposed by priests of Nara, the imperial permission was not given until seven years after his death.

Saicho is known as having engaged in a heated discussion against Tokuitsu, a Hosso priest, over Buddha nature. Regarding Saicho as the practitioner of the Lotus Sutra, Nichiren Shonin respected him as an indispensable transmitter of the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. ("The three countries and four masters", a phrase used by Nichiren Shonin, refers to "four masters in three countries," namely: Sakyamuni Buddha in India; Tien-tai

Chih-i in China; Saicho and Nichiren Shonin in Japan.)

The photograph attached to this article shows a pair of six-fold screens, entitled "Scenes in and around Kyoto." Gold leaves are laid on colored screens. Depicted are the scenes in and around Kyoto City of the Imperial Court during the early days of the Tokugawa Shogunate (Edo Period). Homma, a shipping agent, purchased these screens in Kyoto and donated them to the Myohoji Temple in Sado on his return voyage. The painter is not known. It can be claimed a precious art work since it shows the buildings and living styles of that age. The account book of a merchant bears the date of the seventh year of Genna (1621).



"Scenes in and around Kyoto" preserved at Myohoji Temple, Sado Island

## 2011 NONA Intensive Practice Retreat

By Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett

We often hear the term "dog days of summer" and that is exactly what people generally think about when contemplating August in Houston. This year's intensive practice retreat was no exception as the temperature rose to 106 and remained in the triple digits, truly revealing the reality of dog days! We were fortunate that the humidity was relatively low; yet, the temperature was often unrelenting. Fortunately, the facility was fully air-conditioned and the temperature was lower in the evenings.

Members from Canada (Margaret Cram Howie and Larry Howie), Seattle (Pam Reaville), Boston (Max Calderwood), New York (Weezie Abernathy), Memphis (Shaka Khalphani), Austin (Mark Welch) and Houston (Mike Barrett, Christie Carrington, Erik Rubalcava), gathered to practice together with NONA ministers Myokei Caine-Barrett Shonin, Ryuoh Faulconer Shonin, Shogen Kumakura Shonin and Kanjin

Cederman Shonin.

We began each day with Suigyo and exercise, and continued with various activities designed to awaken joy through faith, practice, and study. Each day, there were lectures covering topics such as compassion, the meaning of Myo, iconography and esotericism. Services were varied depending upon the priest acting as doshi; thus, services were sometimes in English, shindoku and Japanese. Sermons were given each day based on Nichiren Shonin's writings.

There were also periods of guided journal writing during which members were asked to write from their hearts about various topics. These journals remained a private space in which members could freely express themselves. Each evening after shodaigyō, we held council to discuss various topics such as why they chose to participate in the retreat and what they hoped to gain as well as ideas about Buddhism in North America. Included was also the Hokke Sembo, reflection service.

Kanjin Cederman Shonin shared a platform teaching on the life of Nichiren Shonin, the first time many members had ever seen such a teaching. Two participants, Shaka Jakusei Khalphani (Memphis) and Erik Eshin Rubalcava (Houston) took jukai during the last evening of the retreat. Also, during the last evening, participants made presentations sharing their thoughts about a variety of topics, primarily what they had gained from the retreat. In addition, the women presented a skit about Kishimojin and the Buddha.

The first time the retreat was held at the Margaret Austin Center in 2008, we encountered the armadillo, an animal usually seen dead on the side of the road, but alive and well each morning as we began service. This year, we were visited by a family of vultures bathing in the fountain in the middle of the bamboo grove. Toward the end of the retreat, they seemed to be quite comfortable sharing space with us.

Despite the heat, participants and

teachers were able to bond together and create a sacred space and time for sharing faith, practice and study with like-minded dharma friends. Everyone is looking forward to next year's retreat to be held on the West Coast.

### Comments from the retreat participants:

One of my favorites this time was the platform service or teaching. Very enjoyable, and I could really imagine that this was the way people learned about Nichiren for centuries. I also enjoyed the opportunity to explore the Sangha and work with these in Shabutsu.

Just a general comment. I do feel that location and seclusion are very important. Being able to keep the group together and isolated from outside influences is what creates the retreat setting and allows us to really explore and develop our concept and understanding of the Sangha. Without that capability, or in a setting or a facility which did not allow this to happen, I think it would change the experience in negative ways.



Participants talking outside at the retreat



Rev. Kumakura talking with a participant



Revs. Kumakura, Faulconer, Caine-Barrett and Cederman with participants

# Temple Events



Rev. Warner in front of the Aryaloka Buddhist Retreat Center

## NONA Ministers Meeting By Rev. Ryuoh Faulconer

Every spring and fall the Nichiren Order of North America ministers have a business meeting. At the spring meeting, we generally have had lectures as continuing education for the ministers. This fall, we held a retreat which included our business meeting at the end of our time together.

The retreat started on September 28 and ended on October 2. This is the first time in over 10 years that a retreat has been held in North America for the ministers. We held the retreat at the Aryaloka Buddhist Retreat Center in Newmarket, New Hampshire. The center belongs to the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order and is rented to other Buddhists for retreats. The retreat center is located in the forest just outside of Newmarket. There are very few neighbors around which leaves the retreat center in a quiet, contemplative state. The Nichiren Buddhist Sangha of Greater New England helped with setting up the retreat, cooking and transportation.

The NONA ministers practiced together in a structured setting similar to being in a monastery. We woke up early each morning to perform Suigyo. This was followed by morning service, breakfast, discussions on the future of NONA, lunch, ceremony practice, evening service, dinner, discussions and shodaigyo before bed. The practice was very successful and allowed the ministers to expand their understanding of our doctrine,

help perfect ceremony manner and get to know each other in a deeper way. A guest minister joined us from Hawaii to share ideas of what temples there are doing and for him to listen to what NONA was doing to propagate the Wonderful Dharma. On October 2, after breakfast, the ministers moved to the Nichiren Buddhist Sangha of Greater New England's Hondo located just south of the center and across the border in Haverhill Massachusetts. The NONA ministers held Oeshiki service with the Sangha led by Bishop Kanai. Overall the retreat and Oeshiki service were a success. Not every challenge that we face was solved, but we have plotted a course to take NONA into the future.



NONA ministers in discussion

## SEMINAR OF NICHIREN SHU BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF UK

By Rev. Kanto Tsukamoto

On Saturday the 27th and Sunday the 28th of August, 2011, we held a Buddhism Seminar at our temple. The lecture, which covered historical Buddhism through to Nichiren Shu, was well received by all attendees.

Europe consists of many countries which have a strong

conservative nature. Consequently European countries are very cautious and rarely adapt other religions. In comparison, Britain is generous to other European countries due to its exposure to different cultures and religions, especially sought after colonies such as India and Sri Lanka. The Buddhist Society, which was founded in London in 1942, is one of the oldest functioning Buddhist organizations in Europe.

The seminar was prepared in order for beginners to be able to understand easily. In total 10 people attended. The speakers were, Rev. Kanto Tsukamoto, Nichiren Shu Buddhist Temple of UK and guest speaker, Rev. Kanjin Cederman, Choei-zan Enkyoji, Seattle, United States. Instruction was based on two themes, "Study and Practice". Under Study, the speakers discussed the following:

- Biography of Sakyamuni Buddha
- Initiation Teaching of the Buddha
- Prosperity of Buddhism
- Outline of the Lotus Sutra
- Nichiren Shonin's Biography

Under Practice, the speakers discussed:

- How to Chant the Odaimoku Service Manner
- How to do Shodaigyo Shakyo (copy the Odaimoku)
- Shabutsu (copy the Image of the Buddha)



Revs. Tsukamoto and Cederman with seminar participants

The fee for the Seminar was £20 for Saturday and £25 (including lunch) for Sunday. We had a unique curriculum that the participants could attend only one day or both, and if they missed either Saturday or Sunday, they would be able to take the class at the next seminar in the future. We organized the seminar as consecutive lectures. All participants were earnest and both speakers wished more time was available.

The Seminar concluded with the following message from Rev. Tsukamoto:

"In closing, I would like to

advise you one thing and that is to maintain the Faith of Buddhism. As you know Buddhism will bring each of you various wisdom to guide you to Enlightenment. So, you will study Buddhism more. However, did you know that in order to receive the wisdom properly it requires not only study, but also your actions based on the teachings of Buddhism? This means that the teachings that you received in this two-day seminar is still just information, not yet wisdom. You need to make the effort by yourself to transform the information into wisdom. What does this mean?



Practicing Shakyo

In Buddhism learning is not yet finished by getting information. You need to process to reflect the teachings in your daily life. You can learn about the living teachings from the feedback through the experiences. Such an effort is action or experiences to transform information to wisdom."

"We sometimes misunderstand about learning Buddhism and feel satisfaction by collecting different reading materials and information. Approaching Enlightenment is not collecting a lot of information but a process to transform information to wisdom throughout your experiences. We must not leave information as it is; we should transform information to wisdom as well as. This effort will guide you to true Buddhist Faith or Enlightenment. Please keep this in your mind and study and practice every day without laziness. Gassho."

## The Workshop for Priest's Spouse

By Rev. Chishin Hirai

NBIC

The Nichiren Buddhist International Center hosted the Workshop for Priests' Spouses from Oct. 27 through 25 at the

NBIC. The purposes of the workshop were to build mutual friendship among spouses, to learn the basic teachings of Nichiren Buddhism, and to help them better understand their positions and roles.

We all know the importance of the priest's spouse in our daily propagation. Priests outside of Japan are usually in charge of a huge area. Kaikyo and International Priests, however, are very busy taking care of members and followers in their area, so they are often away from their temples. Their spouses, on the other hand, often spend more time at the temple and so have deeper communication with local members. In some cases, the spouse is the key person at a temple. Although we understand their important role, we have not done enough for them, such as hosting workshops, seminars, or producing materials to guide or support them. This is our motivation for holding this workshop.

This workshop was for the priest's spouse. It did not matter whether the spouse was male or female, an associate priest or lay follower. We had nine participants from North America, Hawaii, and Asia. We also invited Rev. & Mrs. Tsumyo Murakami as special instructors through Shumuin.

The position and role of a priest's spouse, the current situation of a priest's spouse in Japan, the structure of Nichiren Shu, Buddhist items and robes, and Buddhist protocol. They also shared the situation of each of their temples and discussed what was expected of spouses. They all appreciated this rare opportunity. The participants learned many things and got to know each other well.

I hope that they maintain their friendship, continue to share and exchange information between each other, and that the workshop will have been a source of empowerment to help them overcome difficulties.



Rev. Hirai with workshop participants

## Nichiren Shu News

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