

# Nichiren Shu News

Published by the Head Office of Nichiren Shu Buddhism & NOPPA

No. 190

June 1, 2012

1

## 2012 NONA Pilgrimage Stimulates Our Faith



Clockwise:

1. Archbishop Nisso Uchino with pilgrims at Minobu
2. Pilgrimage group at Myohonji Temple in Kamakura
3. Cave near Kosokuji Temple in Kamakura where Nichiro and other disciples of Nichiren were imprisoned during Nichiren's exile to Izu
4. Pilgrims in rain gear ready to climb Shichimensan (Mt. Shichimen)
5. Peace Pagoda at Seichoji, from left to right: Max Calder, Tristan Miller, Rev. Shinkyō Warner, Bishop Shokai Kanai, Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett, Don Zedde, and Rev. Shogen Kumakura

By Rev. Shinkyō Warner

Bishop Shokai Kanai, leader of the Nichiren Order of North America, organized and conducted a tour of sites from the life of our Founder, Nichiren Shonin. Participants came from New York, Texas, New England, Florida, Nevada, and Alberta in Canada. We enjoyed comfortable accommodations, including both western-style hotels and traditional Japanese Ryokan, and wonderful food throughout the trip. Our destinations included:

**Seichoji:** This is the temple where Nichiren began his study of the Buddha Dharma. After a short hike from the main buildings, we were able to stand on the same hill where Nichiren first proclaimed the Odaimoku on April 28, 1253.

**Myohonji:** This temple in Kamakura is near the cave where Nichiren's followers were imprisoned during his exile to Izu Peninsula. We got to walk on the same street where Nichiren preached the Lotus Sutra in Kamakura, and then,

following his example, we ourselves beat drums and chanted the Odaimoku for the crowds there.

**Nakayama Hokekyoji:** This temple stands where Nichiren recuperated under the care of Toki Jonin after an angry mob burned his hut near Matsubagayatsu.

**Butsugenji and Renkeji:** At these temples on the Izu peninsula, we saw the statue of Sakyamuni Buddha that Nichiren carried with him until he died. The temples are also within sight of the reef where Nichiren was abandoned for his exile on Izu, and near the cave where Funamori Yasaburo and his wife hid and cared for him at the risk of their own lives.

**Ryukoji:** This temple in Kamakura is near where Nichiren was almost beheaded at Yuigahama Beach.

**Minobusan Kuonji:** The head temple of Nichiren Shu is part of a large complex of temples, memorials and educational facilities to support our practice. Here we enjoyed an audience with Archbishop Nisso Uchino, the head of our order, who assigned us to perform Rinban: Caring

for Nichiren's legacy and spreading the Odaimoku throughout the world.

**Ikegami Honmonji:** This temple is where Nichiren died and was cremated after assigning his six senior disciples to perform Rinban. One of the temples here keeps preserved the pillar against which Nichiren leaned when he gave his last sermon.

Besides seeing these historic sites, we hiked three miles (5km) with other pilgrims up Shichimensan and stayed there overnight. We were rewarded for our efforts by both the hospitality of the priests and other workers who maintain the temple complex at the top, and a beautiful, clear sunrise over Mt. Fuji.

Everywhere we went, people welcomed us warmly, eager to share the legends of their temples and hear how we spread the Wonderful Dharma in North America. Archbishop Uchino, was particularly inquisitive, asking insightful questions about problems we face, and offering ideas of how Japanese, Canadians and Americans can work together to improve our world.

To be in these places brings Nichiren's story to life. To chant the Odaimoku on the hill where he first proclaimed it and in the streets of Kamakura where he preached the Lotus Sutra. To see the statue of Sakyamuni that he kept to the end of his life. To see ocean waves pounding the reef at Izu where he was abandoned and the dark caves where he and his followers were imprisoned. To touch part of the pillar that supported him during his last sermon. And then to meet other pilgrims and hear of their faith. All these experiences have a profound effect on our practice.

One of the hikers we met going up Shichimensan told us: "Odaimoku shika dekimasen." Roughly translated, this means, "I can do nothing but chant the Odaimoku." This phrase, and the memories of the trip, will stay with us a long time and motivate us to continue to strengthen our faith and practice. We encourage anyone who is considering a pilgrimage to make the effort to go. You will not be disappointed.



# Shobo: Nichiren Shonin's Thoughts on The Lotus Sutra

## Chapter II and Nichiren's Reminiscence

By Prof. Gyouko Otani

**“Only the Buddhas attained the highest Truth, that is, the reality of all things in regard to their appearances as such, their natures as such, their entities as such, their powers as such, their activities as such, their primary causes as such, their environmental causes as such, their effects as such, their rewards and retributions as such, and their equality as such despite these differences.” (Chapter II “Expedients” of the Lotus Sutra)**

**“The lifetime of the Buddha is reappearing at present and the present time is the recurrence of Sakyamuni's lifetime. Referring to this, the gist of the Lotus Sutra preaches that all phenomena and things are themselves ultimate reality and that both the essential and the non-essential have their reasons to exist and they are after all one and equal.” (Reminiscences: from Tatsunokuchi to Minobu)**

Sakyamuni Buddha, rising to His feet quietly out of meditation, saw the congregation with compassion

in His eyes. Everyone who looked up to Him waited with high expectation that the Great Dharma Teaching would now be expounded. Soon, the Buddha stared into the face of one of His disciples, Sariputra. This caused Sariputra to tense up. Time flew silently. Those present were holding their breath, paying close attention to those two holy men.

Finally the time when the ultimate teaching which would eternally save all sentient beings beyond time and space was about to be revealed.

Sakyamuni Buddha began to expound, “The wisdom of the Buddhas is deep and immeasurable.” The Buddha attained the infinite and profound Dharma. It was the teaching which thoroughly explored all phenomena as ultimate reality. “All phenomena, as ultimate reality, can be revealed only by the wisdom of Buddha, regarding everything as manifestation of the Dharma Truth. All things are equal and each has its own value of existence.” Seen from the insight of the Buddha, all sen-

tient beings live within the Buddha world and there is no one who cannot attain Buddhahood.

Grand Master T'ien-t'ai, based his doctrine of the “Three Thousand Things in One Moment's Thought” on the idea of all phenomena as ultimate reality. Nichiren Shonin put his own interpretation on the doctrine, asserting that according to the teaching of the Original Gate of the Lotus Sutra, the 3,000 Things in One Moment's Thought are all contained in the five letters of myo, ho, ren, ge, and kyo.

Nichiren, in trying to spread the Lotus Sutra, did encounter many great difficulties. He clearly explained the reason for his adversities by making a comparison between his situation and events in the lifetime of Sakyamuni Buddha. He was delighted to see strong enemies were “good friends (=leaders),” who made him truly practice the Lotus Sutra. Nichiren was sure this was the main point of all phenomena as ultimate reality shown in the Lotus Sutra. (Tr. S. Komukai)

(to be continued)



Statue of Nichiren Shonin in Sado



Sakyamuni Buddha and Sariputra



Mt. Sacred Eagle where the Lotus Sutra was preached

### Rev. Kanno Preaches (18)



**“As Nichiren's compassion is infinite, 'Namu Myoho Renge Kyo' shall spread over 10 thousand years and forever...” (Ho-on sho)**

#### Compassion

This is a part of the written memorial dedicated to Dozen-bo, master of Nichiren Shonin at the time when our Founder entered the priesthood. “Nichiren's compassion” does not mean Nichiren Shonin's personal compassion.

It means the compassion attributed to Jogyo Bosatsu or Superior Practice Bodhisattva to whom the Buddha Sakyamuni commissioned the mission of spreading the Lotus Sutra in later ages.

Thus we can realize the Odaimoku, Namu Myoho Renge Kyo was transmitted to us by Sakyamuni Buddha through Nichiren Shonin who attained the awareness of Jogyo Bosatsu.

Transcending time and space, the Odaimoku links us to Sakyamuni Buddha, Himself, who appeared in this world some 2,500 years ago. When we are aware of this linkage, generation to generation, the Odaimoku shall spread infinitely.

Expressing our gratitude to our Founder, let us chant and encourage others to chant the Odaimoku, thus making the merit of the Odaimoku even bigger.

Editor's note: Dozen-bo (? -1276) was a priest of Seichoji Temple, Awa, the present Chiba Prefecture, and served as master priest for Nichiren Shonin after our Founder took his vows as a priest at the age of 11 in 1233 in his temple.

After our Founder declared his faith in the Lotus Sutra on the 28th day, fourth month, 1253 at Seichoji Temple, Dozen-bo allowed Nichiren Shonin to escape from Seichoji Temple before he could be attacked by Tojo Kagenobu and his men. Another version of the story has it that Dozen-bo submitted to the orders of the local lord and expelled our Founder from the temple.

Dozen-bo failed to convert to faith in the Lotus Sutra even after Nichiren convinced him, and continued his earlier practice at his temple until his death.

Hearing of his master's death, Nichiren Shonin dedicated a written memorial for him in front of Dozen-bo's grave.

## Tsunami Disaster Recovery Donation Update

By Rev. Kanjo Bassett

In the year since the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami disaster of March 11, a great number of Nichiren Shu temples, members and organizations both in Japan and abroad, have made donations to the Gien-kin relief fund. This fund supports Nichiren Shu temples and members affected by the disaster as they rebuild their temples and communities. At the close of last fiscal year, March 30, 2012, Gien-kin donations totaled ¥602,066,131 of which ¥557,920,000 has been paid out to those in need. Please contact your local temple if you would like to make a donation.



Rissho University student volunteers cleaning rubble in Iwate prefecture

### Calendar June - July 2012

**June 1:** Minobusan, Founder's Hall, change of the Founder's robes

**June 2:** Lecture on the Lotus Sutra in Cambodia

**June 13-15:** The 9th World Missionary Conference

**June 15-17:** Minobusan Kaibyaku-e, commemorating the day when Nichiren Shonin entered Minobusan (May 15, 1274)

**June 25:** Memorial for Nitcho Shonin

**July 1:** The 100th Anniversary Celebration of the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii

**July 13-15:** Bon Festival

By Rev. Tsuoh Yokoi



# Nichiren's Admonitions

## Pointing the Way to the Correct Practice of the Lotus Sutra: Introduction

By Rev. Ryuei McCormick

Nichiren is known for his advocacy of the Lotus Sutra, and for his denunciation of other Buddhist schools, often summarized in the form of the "four admonitions": "Pure Land Buddhism is a way leading to the Hell of Incessant Suffering; Zen Buddhism is the act of heavenly devils, who hinder the Buddhist way; True Words (Shingon) Buddhism is an evil teaching leading to the destruction of our nation; and Discipline (Ritsu) Buddhism is a false teaching by traitors." These admonitions can be found scattered throughout Nichiren's writings and there is no doubt that Nichiren condemned Pure Land, Zen, True Word (J. Shingon), and the Precept (J. Ritsu) schools. Why did Nichiren condemn these four schools of Buddhism? It is because Nichiren saw these four schools as actively slandering the Lotus Sutra and causing people to turn away from it. Instead of embracing the teaching that could enable all people to attain Buddhahood and transform this world into a pure land, the people of his day were taking up teachings that Nichiren



Rev.  
Ryuei McCormick

saw as debilitating to the individual and to society as a whole.

To many of us, the four admonitions sound very negative and sectarian. However, I believe that the four admonitions are consistent with the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha. According to the Mahaparinibbana-sutta of the Long Discourses of the Buddha (as translated by Maurice Walshe), the Buddha spent his last year making sure the Dharma would be taught correctly after His passing.

On their last teaching tour together, the Buddha told Ananda, "I have taught the Dharma, Ananda, making no inner and outer: the Tathagata has no teacher's fist in respect of doctrines." The Buddha meant that He had held nothing back. There were to be no secret teachings to be doled out by any successor. This undercuts the claims of any group that would claim that one needs special

initiations or empowerments, or to be taught special esoteric rituals to attain awakening. Through our faith in the Lotus Sutra we are initiated directly into Buddhahood and empowered to actualize the qualities of the Buddha's insight and virtue in our daily lives.

The Buddha then said, "You should live as islands unto yourselves, being your own refuge, with no one else as your refuge, with the Dharma as an island, with the Dharma as your refuge, with no other refuge." Here the Buddha is saying that we will find the Dharma within our own lives. It is not something that will be given to us by some external savior. He says nothing here of having to die and be reborn in a pure land. The Pure Land of Tranquil Light is found by upholding the Lotus Sutra here and now.

On His deathbed beneath the Sala trees, the Buddha said, "What I have taught and explained to you as Dharma and discipline will, at my passing, be your teacher." According to this account the Buddha did not appoint a successor or patriarch. In fact, earlier the Buddha stated that after His passing any teaching put forward as the Dharma should be verified

by comparing it to the Buddha's actual discourses. In Nichiren Buddhism it is taught that we each inherit the Dharma directly from the rolls of the Lotus Sutra.

The Buddha also told Ananda, "If they wish, the Sangha may abolish the minor rules after my passing." At the first Buddhist council, however, it was decided to keep all the precepts in place. Nichiren could see that conformity to such precepts from another time and place missed the true point of Buddhism as taught in the Lotus Sutra. As Nichiren Buddhists we do not formally take precepts, but live in the spirit of Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.

The Buddha's final admonitions, and Nichiren's four admonitions both show that we can practice the Dharma directly and immediately. We need not depend upon esoteric initiations, external saviors, patriarchal transmissions, or formalistic adherence to precepts. In the next four articles of this series, I hope to put Nichiren's admonitions into the context of his times and explore whether they can guide us in our own practice today.

Gassho

(to be continued)

## On the Way Towards Becoming a Shami

By Gabriel De Luca Garrofe  
Spain

After learning about Nichiren Shu and having received the Mandala Gohonzon in 2009 at Renkoji Temple, in its previous location near Milano, a desire to begin the path of a Shami has continued to grow within myself. At the time when I became a member, I was the only Nichiren Shu believer in Spain. There were no other active practitioners. I only had the support of Rev. Shoryo Tarabini at Renkoji.

I felt the need to organize weekly meetings at home and to make the teachings of Nichiren Shonin known to others here. Today, we have become a group of 20 participants from different cities throughout Spain.

Many times, I thought to myself that if I had known Nichiren Shu when I was younger, I might have become a monk. My desire to become a monk grew stronger but on the other hand, I also thought, "I'm 53 years old..., I need to improve my English in order to study Buddhism and I also need to study Japanese to deepen my understanding of the scriptures and traditions." This caused me to think, "I do not know if I can do it..." I often felt discouraged.

At the inauguration of Renkoji Temple in October 2011, in its new home in Cereseto, five Spanish followers came with me to participate in the ceremony, celebration, and Dharma Conference. It was there I decided: "I want to begin the path of a Shami." Relying on what I felt in my heart, I then returned to Renkoji numerous times to practice and study with Rev. Tarabini. He encouraged me to go to Japan, not only to take an intensive course in Japanese, but to also experience temple life there in preparation for many years of study, dedication, and practice

as a possible future novice.

So on December 21, 2011, I traveled to Tokyo where I had the opportunity to live in the temple of Mayaji, until February 28, 2012. At Mayaji, I was warmly welcomed by Rev. Ando, his family, and the other monks and the temple Sangha members.

During my stay, I had the opportunity to participate in various activities: study sessions, recitation of the Lotus Sutra, Shakyo (copying passages from the Lotus Sutra), learning how to read and use a Japanese language Sutra Book, funerals and memorial services, pilgrimage, and the daily practice of Otsutome. I also had the opportunity to visit many historic sites related to Nichiren Shonin in Chiba, Kamakura, and Minobusan, as well as meeting other monks of Nichiren Shu from Tokyo, with whom I shared pleasant moments.

While cultural differences between East and West are significant in their customs, food, ways of thinking and expressing emotions, I felt warmly supported by everyone at Mayaji, in particular by Rev. Shodo and Mrs. Ando.

This experience has been very intense, giving me a deeper insight, and helped me to learn many things and immersed me into the Japanese culture. Regarding the Japanese language (grammar, vocabulary, Hiragana, Katakana and Kanji), this left me with much to study, to recall and to memorize. I found it difficult and at times, I felt my mind would explode, but nonetheless, I persevered and decided to continue to study Japanese upon my return to Spain. I understand, and I'm aware of the importance for a monk to know the Japanese language.

With all that I experienced and from the care and support received, I have come to feel today that part of my family is now the people of Mayaji. I feel deep

gratitude towards Nichiren Shonin, the monks and Sangha of Mayaji, Ando Sensei who became my "inseparable" instructor, Tarabini Sensei for his confidence and unconditional support, Rev. Gen'ichi Oikawa of Shumuin, Rev. and Mrs. Shosen Seki, Rev. Eiyu Ishii, Rev. Daijo Nakajima, Rev. Kodo Shibuya, and many other monks and believers in Tokyo who gave me much encouragement and made it all possible.

I have given the best I could, and I will continue to do so. After having gone through this experience of living in a temple for 70 days, to experience the aspects of the life of a monk, to observe, learn and participate in various activities, I have decided to start the path of a

Nichiren Shu novice monk.

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo



Gabriel serving toso on New Year's Day



Gabriel (center) and Rev. Ando (left) at Mayaji temple



# Temple Events

## Portland Nichiren Buddhist Temple

By Rev. Myosho Obata



Hanamatsuri service

There are three important roles that the Portland Nichiren Buddhist Temple plays. One is that the temple is a place to gather and try to find answers to the problems we face today through the teachings of the Buddha and Nichiren Shonin. Members from different cultural backgrounds come every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. to attend the Sunday service. Together we read the Lotus Sutra, chant the Odaimoku and study Nichiren Shonin's Goibun. On Wednesdays, from 6:30p.m.- 8:00p.m., we do Shodaigyo (chant the Odaimoku together), meditate, study the basic teachings of the Buddha and study about Nichiren Shu. The younger generation is interested in meditation and they share their religious experiences with others.

The second important role is to make the temple a place for social gatherings. Through religious services and cultural

events, Japanese culture and tradition are passed down to the next generation. We celebrate Setsubun, Hanamatsuri, Shichigosan (seven-five-three celebration), and Joyanokane (ringing the bell on New Year's Eve). Many Japanese women married to Americans bring their children to these events so that they can teach them the Japanese tradition.

The third important role is to participate and cooperate with the local community. In May, we support the activities of the Richmond Elementary School and in September, we will take part in the Belmont Street Fair.

The Portland Nichiren Buddhist Temple is not only a place for religious activities, but also a place where people can study, gather and enjoy cultural events. We will continue to propagate Nichiren Shu Buddhism and cooperate with the local community.



Yakisoba booth at community bazaar

## Puunene Temple Maui, Hawaii

By Rev. Tetsudo Takasaki



New Year's Kito Blessing

The Setsubun-Hoshimatsuri service and annual New Year's Party were held at our temple on Saturday, February 4, 2012. The service had three guest ministers, Rev. Junsei Nagayoshi of Wahiawa Nichiren Mission, Rev. Hoshō Sugawara of Hilo Nichiren Mission, and Rev. Josho Yamamura of Honolulu Myohoji.

All participants received Kito Blessing by Rev. Takasaki, Rev. Nagayoshi, and Rev. Sugawara during the service and Rev. Takasaki handed the participants Hoshimatsuri Amulets. Many attendees were moved by the power of the three ministers' Kito Blessing. After the service, "Toshi-Otoko" and "Toshi-Onna" sprinkled beans to "Welcome fortune" and participants were entertained by Rev. Yamamura's wonderful opera songs. Everyone had a good time at the New Year's party, and we would like to thank the workers and donors who made this party a success. Thanks go out to: Mr. Glenn Yoshino, Mr. Randy Hongo, Mrs. Hildred Yoshida, Mrs. Carolyn Suda, Mrs. Stella Yamamoto, Mrs. Lorraine Nishijo, Mrs. Jackie Yamamoto, Mrs. Lorraine Teruya, Mr. Stan Sakata, and M/M James Sato. We would also like to thank Ms. Nani Watanabe for assisting persons with hearing disability to play the bingo game.

Our annual Bon Service and Dance will be held on Saturday, June 9, 2012. The Service starts from 7:00 p.m. and Bon Dance starts from 8:00 p.m. This is an important event for our temple because this is our major fundraiser and promotion. Over 300 people visit our temple for this event every year.

We hope that we express our mind of gratitude to all the spirits of the universe and have a good Bon dance with a great many people.

## Establishment of Nichiren Shu France

By Roland San Salvatore, Paris

Last year, on December 8, 2011, the day of Buddha's Enlightenment, the French government granted our application for the establishment of a cultural association, and thus Nichiren Shu France was created. This application had been submitted some time before that date, so we were all overjoyed to hear our request had been accepted, especially on such an auspicious day. This came about after many years of effort to promote Nichiren Shu Buddhism in France by Rev. Shoryo Tarabini and a handful of initial believers. Over time, the first two Sanghas were created, one in Paris for northern France and another in the alpine town of Uriage for the believers in the cities throughout the southern part of the country.

Last year was an event-filled year for us. Besides the establishment of our association, we held the first-ever French Seminar and retreat at our temple of Renkoji in Cereseto, Italy, in May followed by a summertime workshop in southern France and our group participation in the Grand Opening Ceremony of Renkoji in September 2011, with representatives coming from all over France.

In Paris, our members gather regularly every Friday morning to chant the Sutra and recite the Odaimoku together. On Monday evenings once every two weeks, we also gather to practice and study the Lotus Sutra with an average of 10 to 15 people attending on a regular basis.

In Uriage, the members meet every week to practice and study together. Since we have members who also live in different areas throughout the nation and very far from these two centers, during each of these Paris and Uriage meetings, we also use video conferencing to communicate with other French-speaking members in Portugal, Africa, Luxembourg, and some French cities such as Nice, Bordeaux, and Lyon.

We have had to face many difficulties in order to finally establish the foundation of Nichiren Shu Buddhism here

in France, but actually, strong roots have been planted and the bases for promoting the teachings and faith of the Lotus Sutra are developing. A good feeling of harmony exists between all the members from north to south, and we constantly strive to overcome these distances using the many resources available to us through the internet. We regularly contact Rev. Tarabini to receive his advice and direction, translate his sermons, Lotus Sutra and Goibun translations into French, as well as translate other articles about Nichiren Shu into the French language. As is often the case throughout Europe, many people today have come to learn English, but their skills are still often elementary or limited. Therefore, we need to translate everything into French in order for the people to gain a more profound insight into the teachings of Buddhism in Nichiren Shu.

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the Sangha President's Workshop at N.B.I.C. in Hayward near San Francisco, California, as a representative of all the European and African Sanghas of Renkoji Temple. The workshop was held from March 2- 4, 2012 and I was able to learn a lot to improve my faith in Nichiren Shu Buddhism, meet the leaders of North America and share our experiences with great pleasure. I also very much enjoyed the good relationships I was able to foster with Bishop Shokai Kanai, Rev. Chishin Hirai, and the other reverends which has helped me a lot in my daily practice.



Nichiren Shu France members meeting in Uriage, southwestern France



French members doing shakyo at Renkoji Temple

## Nichiren Shu News

c/o Nichiren Shu Shumuin 1-32-15, Ikegami, Ota-ku, Tokyo 146-8544, Japan

Tel. 03-3751-7181~3

**Board of Trustees:** Shobin Watanabe, Chief Administrator, Nichiren Shu;  
Bungyo Yoshida, President, Kaigai Fukyo Koenkai;  
Kenitsu Saito, Executive Director, Missionary Department;  
Moumi Shiozaki, Executive Director, General Affairs Department;  
Honshu Nakai, Director, Missionary Department, Nichiren Shu

### Editorial Board:

Editor: Sandra Seki,

Supervisor: Kyotsu Hori / Chief Advisor: Keiryu Shima,

Layout Advisor: Kanjo Bassett

Staff Writers: Kanshu Naito, Gyokai Sekido, Kanji Tamura, Gen'ichi Oikawa (overseas)

Chishin Hirai, Shingyo Imai

Advisor: Hoyu Maruyama