

Nichiren Shu News

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'Odaimoku and Peace' Campaign Kicked Off



Some 500 priests and lay devotees held a rally September 10 and 11 at Minobusan to start "Rissho Ankoku Odaimoku Kechien Movement"

The Nichiren Shu Order of Buddhism, which for the past several years has planned to carry out the all-Nichiren Shu campaign entitled "Rissho Ankoku Odaimoku Kechien Movement" held a rally on September 10 and 11 at the Kuonji Temple on Minobusan, where the leading priests and followers of the sect gathered from all over Japan as well as overseas and vowed to the Founder that they would

all exert themselves for the success of the campaign.

Altogether 500 leaders, representing 74 districts in Japan and districts of North America and Hawaii, gathered at the Kuonji Temple and paid respect to the statue of Nichiren Shonin enshrined in the Founder's Hall before the rally began in the Main Hall.

Abbot Nichiji Sakai of the Ikegami Hommonji Temple, Archbishop of

Nichiren Shu, presided over the Kick-off Service, during which Chief Administrator Rev. Joshin Komatsu read his rally statement: "May the followers of Nichiren all realize themselves as the bodhisattvas that appeared from the earth. When can we fulfill our duty except at this moment? Let us assume our Founder's great ambition of Spreading Peace by Establishing the True Dharma, and realize the original vow of our Founder by spreading the Odaimoku, seed of Buddhahood, widely."

Archbishop Sakai read his prayer: "May we, all followers of our Founder, together participate in this general campaign of the Nichiren Shu Order, study the way of bodhisattvas without being contaminated by worldly ways, just as lotus flowers stay pure in the muddy water."

Representing the lay followers, Mr. Mikio Emori declared in his vow: "Realizing the self-awareness of Bodhisattvas from the Earth, we will exert ourselves to lead this Nichiren Shu Movement. Boosting the self-awareness of members of the Nichiren Shu Order, we will try our best to establish the society in which people in the world all can live happily."

Rev. Zuiyu Inoue, Director General

of the Kuonji Temple greeted the attendees: "The five-story pagoda of Minobusan will be restored next year, which I hope will be the symbol of the dispatch base for the general campaign of the Nichiren Shu. I sincerely hope that this campaign will be successful."

After spending the night at various "inns" on Minobusan, the participants of the rally attended the morning service at 5.30 a.m. the next morning and were blessed by Head Priest Nisso Uchino of the Kuonji through "receiving the sutra" service. They attended the study session in two groups, one for priests and another for lay people, and listened to Rev. Honsho Ueda, Vice President of Nichiren Shu Kangaku-in, who spoke of "The Way Toward Rissho Ankoku—Practicing the Way of Never Despising Bodhisattva."



Chief Administrator Rev. Joshin Komatsu reports the start of the movement to the Founder

Declaration on State of Affairs in Myanmar

By Rev. Joshin Komatsu
Chief Administrator
Nichiren Shu Buddhist Order
in Japan

Based on the spirit of our Founder, Nichiren Shonin, expressed in his "Treatise on Spreading Peace

Throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma," the Nichiren Shu Buddhist Order in Japan has been for seven centuries spreading Sakyamuni Buddha's teaching of the Lotus Sutra, chanting its title (Daimoku) as the practical way of Realization of the Buddha Land in this world, Peace and

Tranquility of the entire world.

The Nichiren Shu Order of Buddhism is shocked by the use of armed force by the government of Myanmar against its Buddhist priests and citizens. We cannot help expressing our deep anxiety and indignation upon the news report that several citizens of

Myanmar including Buddhist priests were shot to death.

We urge the government of Myanmar to immediately stop the use of arms and to work in a peaceful manner to solve the problem. We also urgently request the Japanese government, the United Nations and other international organs to do their best to solve the problem in Myanmar peacefully.

October 1, 2007

NONA Dharma Conference and 9/11 Memorial Service Held

By Rev. Join Inoue

The annual Dharma Conference was held from August 25 through 26 in Manhattan, New York. The conference began with an opening ceremony conducted by Bishop Shokai Kanai followed by lectures from several ministers in North America.

The lecturers and their themes were: Rev. Myokei Barrett from the

Texas Sangha (Five Obstacles for Women and the Lotus Sutra), Rev. Ryuoh Faulconer from the Boston Sangha (Pilgrimage to Minobusan), Rev. Ryuei McCormick from San Francisco Nichiren Buddhist Temple (Hate and Violence; Compassion and Non-Violence), and Rev. Chishin Hirai from NBIC (Rissho Ankoku Ron).

Rev. Ryuken Akahoshi of Portland Nichiren Buddhist Church supervised a

discussion. There were 40 attendees on the first day.

The following day began with a memorial service for the victims of 9/11 conducted by Bishop Kanai accompanied by the Wasan chorus performed by the temple members.

The service was conducted at the

Battery Park nearby the site of the tragedy. There the NONA ministers, other Buddhist ministers and members gathered together to pray for all the victims of the previous wars, the victims of 9/11 and, moreover, everyone prayed for a world without war and violence.



Rev. Shokai Kanai officiates a memorial service for the 9/11 victims



Rev. Giko Tabata conducts the Hokke Wasan chorus

Events

August–September

- Aug. 2–Sept. 5: Shingyo Dojo (Hall of Faith and Practice on Minobusan) for the second term
- Aug. 15: Memorial Service for the War Dead at the Chidorigafuchi Cemetery for the War Dead, Tokyo
- Latter Part of Jul.–Aug.: Youth Seminars for Elementary and Middle School Children throughout Japan
- Sept. 3–10: Fourth Study Tour to Calcutta, India
- Sept. 10–11: Rally for Starting the All-Nichiren Shu Rissho Ankoku Odaimoku Kechien Campaign on Minobusan
- Sept. 12: Service in Memory of the Tatsunokuchi Persecution
- Sept. 18–19: Service for Goddess Shichimen at Minobu-Shichimen-zan

by Rev. Tsuoh Yokoi

The Life of Sakyamuni Buddha (1)

By Rev. Shinkai Oikawa, Litt. D.

1. Are the North and the South quite different?

My name is Shinkai Oikawa as introduced. I was born and grew up in this temple and lived here for about 50 years. This is the very home of mine.

The Buddha passed away at the age of 80. As He was born at the foot of the Himalaya Mountains, He is said to have made His way home toward the end of His life, but passed away on His last travel at the age of 80 before arriving home. I think Nichiren Shonin also left Minobusan for his home in Awa Province shortly before his death. Anyway our hometown is quite a heart-warming place.

Now I will begin my lecture on the Buddha. This is the first of three lectures. I wonder where the main subject will be if I divide one man's life into three parts. It may be confusing as my talk will jump here and there. Therefore, I decided to divide my lecture into three subjects of the "Buddha's childhood and youth," "His manhood," and "His later years." Today I will speak about the Buddha's birth, childhood and youth.

I have been studying Pali, which is an old Indian language. This language is used in the Southern Buddhist sutras in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and some parts of Vietnam. You chanted the sutra written in the Chinese characters a while ago, and we students of the Pali language study the sutras written in Pali before they were translated into Chinese.

At this point the two sets of sutras are different, but the original meanings are the same. Buddhist teachings were given at first in India and traveled northwards through the Silk Road, desert lands, into China and Korea and to Japan. These are the sutras we chant today and are called the Northern Sutras spread by way of north.

What students like myself study is the Southern Buddhism spread southwards from India to Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, and Cambodia. The original sutras of two kinds were the same, but their contents became some-



Rev. Shinkai Oikawa

what different as they took different routes to spread. So the Buddha in the Lotus Sutra we chant in Japan is a little different from the Buddha I research. It is very confusing for me to tell why they are different.

It is written in the Lotus Sutra in Chinese, the chapter of "Life Span of the Buddha," that the Buddha had been born many times before appearing in this world and that he had been the Buddha ever since quite a long time ago and then appeared as a temporary image in order to save all of us. Therefore the Buddha appearing in the chapter is called the eternal past Buddha or the Buddha with an eternally long life attaining Enlightenment in the eternal past.

But the Southern Buddha is an actual human being. He was born as a human and passed away at the age of 80 in this world. So we have to recognize these two Buddhas are not the same.

It is written in chapter 15 of the Lotus Sutra that very old distinguished Bodhisattvas appeared from the soil and worshipped before the Buddha calling Him an honorable master. The Buddha spoke to them as if He was their senior: "Welcome. Nice to meet you, everyone." Bodhisattva Maitreya and others were surprised to see this and wondered why.

The Buddha had an air of importance and seemed to be a great master while the senior bodhisattvas from the soil bowed respectfully in front of

Him. Thinking it was strange, they asked the Buddha why they were so respectful to Him. The Buddha answered, "I understand what you think. I will explain why." Thus He expounded the 16th chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

In this chapter the Buddha explains for the first time that he has been the Buddha for thousands and billions of years. He says, "I appeared temporarily in this world as if I were really born to save all of you. Actually I have been the Buddha since innumerable years ago." That explains the Bodhisattvas appearing from the earth are His disciples and the Buddha in the Lotus Sutra is eternal.

The very old Pali sutras I have been reading are called "Agama Sutras." The Buddha in those sutras is not an eternal being but just a human being who lived for 80 years in this world.

2. The examination of Sakyamuni's family register

We all have a family register showing when and where we were born and who our father and mother are, but actually we do not have enough information about Sakyamuni's family register.

Strictly speaking, we don't have any piece of completely certain information proving that He actually existed. Nevertheless, I can give you some pieces of information.

A great discovery was made in 1898. At a town called Piprahwa, 13 km from Kapilavastu in Nepal to the north of India, W. C. Peppe, an English official resident, excavated a pot and found a second pot in the first pot.

The second pot contained ashes in it. It was inscribed on the second pot that these were Sakyamuni's ashes. If this inscription is true, the contents in this smaller pot must be His ashes. This proves Sakyamuni lived in this world because His body was cremated and some of His ashes were buried in the pot.

The sutras say His body was cremated after He passed away, that the ashes were carried in eight pots to dif-

Editor's Note: We are publishing a series of lectures on the Life of Sakyamuni Buddha by Rev. Shinkai Oikawa, Litt. D. The lecture was delivered at the Honryuji Temple of Hachioji, Tokyo, in 2004. It was sponsored by the Rissho Chionkai headed by Rev. Shudo Sato. The translation of the lecture given in Japanese is done by Rev. Kanshu Naito, head priest of the Hondoji Temple, Izunokuni City and professor of English literature at Atomi Women's University.

ferent places and memorial services were held for them. From this we can conclude that the Buddha actually lived in this world.

Although the other seven pots were missing, one was already discovered. This discovery can lead us to think that He existed.

Although we do not know exactly when He was born, we can assume that His birth was approximately 2,500 years ago, that is, 500 B.C., according to the "Record of Dots by Sages," which tells us that the disciples who inherited the commandments after He passed away continued to put a dot as a record once a year.

As a result, we get the year when He passed away by counting the number of the dots recorded. We have an idea that He passed away in 483 B.C. by counting the dots accurately.

The problem is whether we can believe the dots or not. Such problems are inevitable if we examine ancient relics. We cannot long discuss old trivial matters in vain, so His death should be generally considered to be about 2,500 years ago.

Nevertheless, we have some ways to presume it. For example, we can assume it from specific times. The clearest in the history of India is the period of King Asoka, when there existed contact between Greece and India.

Greece recorded historical dates clearly. That is why persons in contact with Greece are clearly known. The history is clear after King Asoka, but it is not clear before him.

Opinions vary about the Buddha's death depending on which year we take, 100, 200 or 150 years before the period. It is quite difficult to determine the year of His death. Although it is not precisely known, it is not false to say His birth was 2,500 years ago.

(to be continued)

Hospital Visitation

By Rev. Junsei Nagayoshi

In America, every religious group must promote some kind of social welfare. Here at the Hawaii Nichiren-shu Betsuin it is carried out in the form of hospital and nursing home visitations. We visit sick members in nursing homes or at their homes.

When I was first assigned to this job, every third Tuesday was the only day to visit two nursing homes where two of our members resided. Since many of the residents were Buddhists, we were asked to perform a Buddhist service.

We were very excited to be able to propagate outside the Betsuin. However, we were always pressed for time and could not give much attention to each individual. We didn't have time to shake hands with them or give them some warm words.



Rev. Junsei Nagayoshi

From this September, we are now able to visit the different nursing homes every Tuesday so we can spend more time with the residents. But there are other problems, too. Many of the residents are from different ethnic backgrounds and the services are car-

ried out only in Japanese and English.

Another problem is that many of the residents have dementia and it is difficult to have eye contact or shake their hands because they cannot understand what is going on.

This April, Rev. Imai returned to Hawaii from Japan and we started to make the rounds together. With his jovial, outgoing personality things have begun to change a little.

He always brings his own guitar, and after the service sings Buddhist hymns in English. Being able to switch from English to Japanese and vice-versa without hesitation the communication barrier seems to have disappeared.

After the service Rev. Imai strums his guitar and sings old Japanese folk songs like "Furusato" or "Aka Tombo" and some members sing along or clap to the music. With familiar tunes like the "Sukiyaki Song" even the

non-Japanese move their body to the world famous tune.

Rev. Imai is now known as the "Singing Minister" and some nursing homes even have instruments ready for our visitations. What surprised me the most was after a few visits some residents who are not Buddhists have started to put their hands together in "Gassho" when we visit them. This is a great step forward and a sign of successful propagation!

(Trans. by Sandra Seki)



Nichiren Mission of Hawaii

Nichiren Shonin and His Lay Followers (1)

By Rev. Kanji Tamura
Professor, Ritssho University

Toki Jonin (1)

Nichiren Shonin's disciples and lay followers had tried to surmount their problems through their belief in the Lotus Sutra and Odaimoku as taught by Nichiren Shonin. Nichiren wrote many humorous, heart-warming, or heart-rending letters to his followers who had the worries of life such as relationship between the superiors, parents, and husband and wife.

The Kamakura Period was an era of samurai warriors and it was under the control of the force of arms. It was a feudal society which was organized by the strict relationship of lord and vassals, and was also a completely male-dominated society. Public peace and order were worse than today; there was no medical science to stop epidemics. Sometimes samurai warriors killed ordinary people as a matter of course. It was the time when people constantly faced death. The average life span then was about 20 to 30 years. Conversely, in the Kamakura Era people could deeply appreciate the preciousness and joy of life. Today in Japan, where the average life span is the longest in the world, the people seem to least appreciate the preciousness of life.

What does the interchange between Nichiren and his disciples and lay followers teach us? We will pursue and study the lives of Nichiren and his followers from his letters, and will



Rev.
Kanji Tamura

explain the circumstances of his guidance concretely.

Toki Jonin (1216-99) was one of the most influential patrons of all of Nichiren's lay followers. His residence was located in Shimousa-Wakamiya (Nakayama, Ichikawa City, Chiba Prefecture; Hokekyoji-Okunoin Temple). He was a civil servant of Chibanosuke, a powerful local leader whose family name became that of Chiba Prefecture.

Toki Jonin's birthplace was Inaba Province (Tottori Prefecture) and his father, Rennin, moved to the Kanto

district with his family. Jonin was six years older than Nichiren and their relationship was very close. He took care of Nichiren's parents as stated in Nichiren's letters.

The Chiba family whom Toki Jonin served had been a direct vassal (houseman) of the Kamakura Shogunate ever since the first shogun. They had a branch residence in Kamakura. When Lord Chiba was in Kamakura, Jonin followed him and lived nearby, and seems to have gone to the branch residence of Lord Chiba daily. After proclaiming the establishment of a new religion at the age of 32, Nichiren Shonin left the Seichoji Temple for Kamakura. Presumably, Toki Jonin became a devotee while Nichiren Shonin was engaged in missionary work in Kamakura. Toki Jonin was

married twice and his second wife (Toki-Ama) was from Fuji-Omosu (Shizuoka Prefecture). She had two boys. The older boy, Iyobo-Nitcho (1252-1317), became one of the Six Senior Disciples of Nichiren. The younger boy, Jakusenbo-Nitcho (1261-1310), became a disciple of Niko (one of the Six Senior Disciples of Nichiren). However, younger Nitcho later became a disciple of Nikko (one of the Six Senior Disciples of Nichiren), who made him the first principal of the Omosu-Dansho (a Buddhist seminary built in the Omosu-Hommonji Temple). The two brothers were outstanding and talented. Especially, Nichiren had a great hope for the elder brother, Nitcho. However, Jonin and his adopted son, Iyobo-Nitcho, were incompatible, causing Nichiren to always worry about their relationship.

(Trans. by Rev. Chisen Maeda)
(to be continued)



The Founder's Hall and the five-story pagoda of the Hokekyoji Temple which stand at the site of the residence of Toki Jonin (1216-99). [Photos by Rev. Joo Watanabe of the Hokekyoji Temple]



People I'll Always Remember (11)

By Rev. Ryusho Matsuda



A Letter to a Lady Who Wishes to Withdraw from Temple Membership

Dear Anonymous:

I received your letter a few days ago. I was surprised to know your intention of terminating your temple membership. Our temple members have been talking about you anxiously because we have not seen you for a while.

Since you started coming to our temple several years ago, you have unfailingly been eagerly participating in our service, study class and volunteer work for the temple activities. I was so glad to see your sincere faith in the Buddha.

Your letter says: "I have finally come to accept that my interest is not in religion." Until you made this decision, you might have been afflicted with much thought.

Many of us, ordinary persons, think that there are many important matters beside religious life, like family affairs, jobs, health problems, and ultimately social affairs. Many people claim that these are essential matters in our daily lives and religion does not affect our daily living.

We often spend our days trying to hastily do things and end up passing many days without even thinking about the Buddha and our ancestors.

Nevertheless, I believe that religion

is important because of such aspects of life. Looking around us, we can rarely find a person who can say, "Sincerely I keep the teachings of the Buddha by all means."

I am a Buddhist priest who is supposed to have faith in the Buddha, to receive benevolence of the Buddha's compassion, to speak about the teaching of the Buddha to people, and to work hard for the realization of the Buddha Land on this earth.

But such a person like me has a lot of worldly passions, and my mind is constantly filled with greed, anger, and ignorance.

As you remember, our temple has a pretty moss garden in front. However, it will be a badly-kept garden if we neglect caring for it by not weeding. Our mind is the same. We need the light of the Buddha's wisdom, nourishment of the Buddha's teachings daily, and we must have sincere aspiration.

Let me explain about it through a metaphor. One can get fire if one holds a lens between the sun and some combustible material, but where does the fire come from?

The lens is an enormous distance from the sun; it appears as though there is no connection, but the fire certainly appears upon the combustible material.

If the combustible material was something that would not kindle, there would be no fire.

Similarly, if the light of Buddha's wisdom is concentrated upon the human mind, its true nature, which is Buddhahood, will be enkindled, and its light will illuminate the minds of other people by its brightness, and will awaken faith in the Buddha.

It is because of the Buddha's mercy and compassion that He holds the lens of faith before all human minds so that they may be enlightened.

Nichiren Shonin said: "Illuminated by rays of light emanating from the characters "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo," all [who are seated in the Gohonzon] have been transformed into Buddhas, whom they originally were (Nichinyo Gozen Go-henji)."

Nichiren Shonin also teaches us how important faith is. "If the minds of living beings are impure, their land is also impure, but if their minds are pure, so is their land. There are not two lands, pure or impure in themselves.

"The difference lies solely in the good or evil of our minds. It is the same with a Buddha and an ordinary being. When deluded, one is called an ordinary being, but when enlightened, one is called a Buddha. This is similar to a tarnished mirror that will shine like a jewel when polished (Issho Jobutsusho)."

"Of the people who put faith in the Lotus Sutra today, some have faith like fire while others have it like water. Those who have faith like fire refer to those who become enthusiastic upon listening to the preaching but their passion cools down as times goes by, and they eventually forget the teaching.



The altar of the San Jose Myokakuji Betsuin Temple

"On the other hand, those whose faith is like water mean those whose faith is like a ceaselessly flowing water, namely those who retain their faith without retreating. . . . Your faith is like water, is it not? How precious you are! (Ueno-dono Gohenji)"

As an example, my life is not smooth from time to time. My mind would be swayed quite often by waves and winds of human passion. At such a time, I made it a rule to recall the Gohonzon of our temple, then I am able to calm my mind down.

I am sure that you have imprinted the images of our Gohonzon and Nichiren Shonin in your mind. Whenever you are happy, lonely, joyful, and sad, please remember the images of our Gohonzon, then you will find peace of mind.

Our temple door is always kept open. Please keep your faith in the Gohonzon and visit us at any time.



Church Events

By Sandra Seki

HONOLULU

New Dharma Circle

A new gathering called, "Dharma Circle" began on Wednesday, September 12 from 7 p.m. at the Nichiren Mission. This meeting is open to anyone who is interested and will be held on the first Wednesday of every month.

During the first four sessions, a candle light shodai-gyo practice in the darkness for 20 minutes is followed by discussions on how we can apply the Buddha Dharma in our daily lives.

In the future, Rev. Imai plans on trying something new like chanting the Lotus Sutra in English.

If there are any questions please feel free to contact Rev. Shingyo Imai at 808-595-3517.

The first meeting was held on the anniversary day of our Founder's Tatsunokuchi Persecution. According to Nichiren Shonin's writings he believed that he had died in Tatsunokuchi and his new soul was reborn after the incident.

It means that his belief in the Sakyamuni Buddha and the Lotus Sutra became much stronger than before. Also he became firmly confident that the best teaching of the Buddha was the Lotus Sutra. To start a new gathering on such a memorable occasion in the life of our Founder is a good omen.

LOS ANGELES

Resignation and Installation

The resignation ceremony for Rev. Shokai Kanai will be held on October 14, after the Oeshiki service. A welcome ceremony will also be held for the incoming Rev. and Mrs. Join Inoue. This will be a potluck luncheon so please bring your favorite dishes for five people.

Rev. Join Inoue of the New York Daiseionji, will be transferred to the Los Angeles Nichiren Buddhist Temple in October. He was born in Kobe in 1965, and graduated from the Minobusan College majoring in Buddhism.

He became a NONA minister in 1988 and has completed the Nichiren-Shu

Daiaragyo. He became the minister of the New York area in 1994. He will be accompanied by his wife, Shinako (Shami Chisho) who is ordained to become a Nichiren-shu priest.

Lifelong Dream of Rev. Kanai

Rev. Shokai Kanai first stepped on American soil on April 16, 1964. His dream was to establish a new Nichiren-shu temple in the United States. The late Rev. Ryobo Fujiwara, head of the Los Angeles Nichiren Buddhist Temple then, trained Rev. Kanai for six and a half years as an overseas minister.

Rev. Fujiwara was busy building the new temple at the time, giving Rev. Kanai an excellent opportunity to be in charge of the Sunday School and Young Buddhist Association. He visited the sick at their homes or in hospitals, held meetings at the members' homes and held fund-raising events.

He also edited and published the "Betsuin Dayori," a monthly bulletin, which was important to communicate to

those who lived far away. He has thereafter always published a monthly or bi-monthly bulletins wherever he was transferred.

A week after the dedication of the new Los Angeles Buddhist Temple in September 1970, Rev. Kanai was transferred to the Salt Lake City Nichiren Buddhist Temple in Utah. He went back to Japan for his first Aragyo training soon after.

During his nine years in Salt Lake City, he visited members scattered all across the Midwest: Colorado, Idaho, Nebraska, always looking for a new location for his temple. In order to support his family he worked as a gardener, computer operator at a bank, graveyard attendant and a Japanese language teacher.

He also pursued his studies in philosophy at the University of Utah. Then he started a Japanese language school and Sunday school for his children and those of the temple members.

In 1979, he was transferred to the Seattle Nichiren Buddhist Temple, where the members supported his family financially making it possible for him to become a full-time minister. Although he was able to spread the Odaimoku, there was no chance to establish a new temple.

In 1988 he returned to Tokyo to take over his deceased father's temple. During his six years in Japan he completed Aragyo trainings two more times and also became a certified Reidanshi (a study to read the future). These experiences helped him immensely when he returned to the U.S. in September 1994 as the head of the Los Angeles Nichiren Buddhist Temple.

He was surprised to see the decrease in the number of members since he had been there 25 years earlier as an assistant minister. As the temple had financial problems, the Ikegami Hommonji in Tokyo had to support it for 12 years till April 2005.

Rev. and Mrs. Kanai began visiting some members in Las Vegas in April 1997, and found that there were many people interested in Nichiren-shu. Whenever they visited a believer's home, there were at least 15-20 people who wanted to follow the Lotus Sutra.

This is why he decided on Las Vegas as the place to start his next phase in life. With his resignation from the Los Angeles Nichiren Buddhist Temple, he will finally be able to fulfill his lifelong dream of establishing a new temple in the U.S.

Good Luck Rev. and Mrs. Kanai!

4th Study Tour for the Youth: Friendship Exchanged with Street Children

By Rev. Tsuoh Yokoi

The Nichiren-shu Administration Headquarter' Overseas Propagation Section sponsored its fourth study tour for eight days from September 3 to 10, visiting Calcutta, India.

It was headed by Rev. Homan Kita, a Nichiren-shu priest of Hyogo Prefecture, who founded the Japanese NGO called "Raindrop" which has supported the underprivileged children in India for more than two decades.

Participated by 19 young people, ages 19 to 29, the group experienced inter-cultural activities with the "street children" of the most populous city in one of the most crowded countries in the world.

They visited the informal schools for

the "street children" and homes for orphans run by the Calcutta Social Project, an Indian NGO, and exchanged friendship by showing puppet shows, singing songs, dancing, and teaching the art of origami.

Some even tried to teach the children simple Japanese by using English words, through pictures, and body and hand gestures.

The "street children" in India are believed to number more than 1,100,000. Some children have no family. Others may have families today, which may disappear tomorrow.

Either way they are too poor to attend school, nor are they guaranteed even to have one meal a day. Without education they have no chance of earning anything beyond merely staying alive.

Their lives remain miserable generation after generation. Legally speaking, there is no caste system in modern India, but nobody who lives on the streets knows

how to get rid of his miserable life.

Mr. Arjun Dutta of the CSP declared in his lecture to us study tour participants that "The purpose of the CSP to operate orphanages, schools, job training centers, etc. is to provide the "street children" with an opportunity."

One of the tour participants said, "Meeting with the "street children" of Calcutta gave me a chance to think about the world. Likewise, I hope our meeting with them provides them with a kind of opportunity."

Raindrop

Raindrop is a Japanese NGO founded by Rev. Homan Kita of Hyogo Prefecture who, with his more than 20-year experience of inter-cultural relationship with Indian people, has been supporting underprivileged children in Calcutta with the cooperation of the Calcutta Social Project (CSP), an Indian NGO. For 38 years the CSP has worked to strengthen the socially and economically weak in Calcutta, operating the so-called informal educational classes, vocational trainings, day care centers, orphanages and so on to support more than 1,000 beneficiaries. Its mission is to break the chain of inherited poverty in Calcutta. Rev. Kita now runs a photo studio in Hyogo Prefecture. (Editor)



Staff and school children playing a game



Staff member teaching "Origami" art to orphans



Children of an orphanage



A woman begging in the streets



A school child and his family

Nichiren Shu News

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