

Nichiren Shu News

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Wahiawa Mission Celebrates Its 60th Anniversary

Wahiawa Nichiren Mission celebrated its 60th year of founding on June 21 as Rev. Shobin Watanabe, acting Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu, officiated the ceremony which was attended by some 50 mission members.

In his commemorating speech, Rev. Watanabe told the attendees, "We sincerely beseech Rev. Nagayoshi, the head priest of the mission, to devote himself to raise the banner of the

Odaimoku high, with priests and laymen in one mind."

The speech of Mr. Hisashi Matsumoto, President of the mission, is as follows (in excerpt):

"The teaching of Saint Nichiren's Lotus Sutra in Wahiawa began in 1938 at the Kilea street residence of Rev. Nun Myoryu Aniya. Prior to Wahiawa, Rev. Aniya began her teaching at Camp 12, Waipahu under the tutelage of Mr. Ishihara.

"A special 'Mahalo' to Rev. Eijo Ikenaga of Honolulu Myohoji Temple who unselfishly assisted us during the eight long years when there was no resident minister here.

"My wife and secretary, Sally Matsumoto, was the key person behind the scene, responsible for the monthly newsletter and coordination of scheduling the numerous events.

"But—the most important people are the faithful members of our close-

knit mission. You members are the greatest asset and I thank you very much for your dedication.

"The challenge before us is to increase our membership. Our new resident minister, Rev. Junsei Nagayoshi has indicated that he will do his best in order to achieve this goal. I ask that we all support him in his cause.

"Another goal is the renovation of the building. A new structure is improbable due to building and parking restrictions. The task before us is enormous. With all our dedication and strong determination to continue our ancestors' legacy, we will prevail."

(related photos on page 4)

Commemoration for 100th Anniv. of Japanese Immigration to Brazil



Memorial photo in front of Emyoji



Koto performance at Emyoji



Congregation at Emyoji



Congregation at Hokekyoji



Founder's statue



Memorial photo in front of Hokekyoji

By Rev. Sensho Komukai
Missionary Department, Shumuin

A memorial service for the Japanese immigrants and their descendants who died in Brazil was held at the Emyoji Temple, Sao Paulo on June 22 in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Brazil.

The service was officiated by Rev. Kansens Mochida, who led the 21-member delegation of the Nichiren Shu International Buddhist Friendship Association from Japan.

Following the establishment of the law accepting Japanese immigrants to Brazil, Japanese started to immigrate to the country in 1908. In the initial year of immigration, some 800 people crossed the Pacific Ocean to work on the coffee plantations. Some 300,000 Japanese immigrated to Brazil by 1993, when the law was abolished. The Emyoji Temple was established in 1970.

Preceding the memorial service, koto music accompanying a song written for the immigrants was performed by the members of the Emyoji Temple. At the end of the service, Rev. Mochida presented a memorial gift to Rev. Myoho Ishimoto, who took care of the temple for more than 20 years, rewarding her for her efforts to keep alive the faith in the Lotus Sutra in Brazil.

Founder's Statue Enshrined at Hokekyoji

After the memorial service at the Emyoji Temple, the delegation moved to the Hokekyoji Temple to hold an eye-opening ceremony of a statue of Nichiren Shonin. The Hokekyoji Temple started in 2004 to propagate the teachings of Nichiren Shonin for the local people.

The Founder's statue was carved by Rev. Anjo Asahina. It is the second Founder's image sculptured by the reverend, the other being the one enshrined at the Ichinenji Temple in

Penang, Malaysia.

To enshrine the statue in the temple, Rev. Anjo Asahina carved it in wood and completed the work on June 16, just three days before leaving Japan for Brazil.

Rev. Mochida together with the ministers of the association led the ceremony service, attended by Rev. Eisei Ikenaga and Rev. Yodo Okuda, resident ministers of the Hokekyoji Temple.

More than 50 members and friends of the temple attended the ceremony. Among them were three shami trainees who were born in Brazil and are eager to be Nichiren Shu ministers.

After the service a BBQ party took place in the courtyard of the temple, where the attendees enjoyed a friendly exchange.

Events

June–July, 2008

- Jun. 1: Change of Founder's Robe at Minobusan
- Jun. 4: Lecture on the Lotus Sutra by Prof. Yosei Ikegami of the Minobusan University in Phnom Penh, Cambodia
- Jun. 15–17: Services to mark the arrival of Nichiren Shonin on Minobusan on the 17th day of the fifth month, 1274
- Jun. 25: Memorial service for Nitcho Shonin
- Jun. 30: Commencement Exercise for the Special Shingyo Dojo
- Jul. 1: Service commemorating the 50th anniversary of the rotation system to serve the Founder's Mausoleum at Minobusan
- Jul. 8–10: Central Training Course for Lay Devotees at Minobusan
- Jul. 13–15: Obon services
- Jul. 26–Aug.1: Sofurin shami school at the Ikegami Hommonji Temple
- Jul. 28–31: Nichiren Shu International Youth Leaders' Retreat at Kamakura and Minobusan, 14 youth leaders from Canada, Korea, Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia participating
- Jul. 29–Aug.1: Central Convention of Studies on Nichiren Buddhism at the Nichiren Shu Administration Headquarters in Tokyo

by Rev. Tsuoh Yokoi

The Life of Sakyamuni Buddha (6)

By Rev. Shinkai Oikawa, Litt. D.

9. Sakyamuni's Manhood

(1) From Asceticism to Buddhahood

Today I am going to tell you that Sakyamuni finally became enlightened and attained Buddhahood after He left His castle and practiced asceticism very hard, but I am afraid I cannot speak convincingly of it to you.

Sakyamuni was enlightened and attained Buddhahood at the age of thirty-five. As I am not yet enlightened, however, I do not know exactly about enlightenment. This is why I am worried whether I can speak of the Buddha sufficiently clearly to you or not.

I brought a book for my lecture today. I am going to speak according to what a great scholar says about the Buddha. I am very sorry to say that today's lecture can make you a little sleepy because it is about "enlightenment."

Last time I spoke of Him leaving His home at the Kapila Castle at the age of twenty-nine. Why did He leave home? It is clearly because He did not want to be the king. Being the king meant He could lead a pleasant and comfortable life and have many pleasures in a way, but He could not avoid a great responsibility of governing a country. He must be always thinking of the people's safety. Presumably Sakyamuni thought He was ineligible as a king in this respect.

His only son Rāhula was born when He was a twenty-nine-year-old prince named Siddhārtha. He was so happy to have a son because He thought that He would be able to leave home at last. He had to have a successor in any case. And He had a son. He fulfilled His responsibilities. Thus He thought it would be permissible for Him to leave home because His son would succeed Him as the crown prince of the country. He made up His mind and left home with great joy.

Sakyamuni practiced asceticism quite hard for six years after that. An ascetic is called a bhikṣu, which means a Buddhist monk who practices asceticism begging for food and feeding himself as if he were a beggar. He did not lead a happy life by making money, buying and eating anything he liked. He did not make any money at all.



Rev. Shinkai Oikawa

Sakyamuni lived for six years begging for alms by which He fed Himself as a bhikṣu.

Sakyamuni practiced many kinds of hard asceticism like having one meal a day, stopping breathing, burning Himself in the sunshine on hot days and keeping awake all night.

One-hundred-day asceticism is held in the "Great Rigorous Ascetic Exercise Hall" by Nichiren Shu every winter. This is the asceticism practiced for one hundred days without a break from November 1 to February 10. This is very hard asceticism. So the priests may return with great pride.

Sakyamuni's asceticism was much harder. He continued to practice it without a rest for six years. Six years are about two thousand and two hundred days. So it can be said Sakyamuni practiced one-hundred-day asceticism twenty-two times ceaselessly. His body really fell to pieces. What was the result? Could He attain spiritual enlightenment? This is the most important point. Unfortunately He failed to do so, as I told you before.

Sakyamuni's mind did not reach the state of spiritual enlightenment. Therefore He stopped practicing asceticism. The five priests who accompanied Him thought He was "hopeless" or "degenerated" because the Indian people in those days were certain that they would never fail to attain enlightenment if they practiced asceticism. Thus they thought it was no use following Him and went away, leaving Him all alone.

(2) Bathing in the River Nairanjana

Then Sakyamuni went into a vil-

lage, was given milk porridge by a young girl, Sujata, and felt relieved. In a word He had normal food. After recovering His strength He bathed in the nearby clear river called Nairanjana, washed away the dirt of hard asceticism and thought about what to do next. He had left His father, mother and a newly born baby, and become a priest. Since He had left home in order to get enlightened, He could not fail to achieve it. What could He do then?

It is getting more difficult for me to speak beyond this point. What I am going to speak of is my imagination. I think we don't really understand what the truth is without actually experiencing it. I don't understand what I cannot experience myself no matter what a great person states. But a book written by my professor explains something as if he understands it perfectly without actually experiencing it. It makes me wonder whether or not my teacher really understands it. I think he is a wonderful master, but I still doubt that he truly understands it.

What I want to tell you is that religion is not a study but a practical experience. Personal experiences must appeal directly to our bodies not just to our heads. We must learn by body. This is religion. So Sakyamuni practiced asceticism by treating Himself cruelly in vain.

He contemplated, "What shall I do now?" He washed Himself clean and had a bowl of porridge and felt relieved. He recovered His strength quickly, because He had strong life force. He must have felt completely exhausted in the river. When He contemplated with His eyes closed "what to do next," He may have remembered His childhood. I can say this from my own experience. I lived in this temple (the Honryuji Temple) for fifty years. I was here when I was a mischievous boy. When I came here today after a long absence, I remembered the time when I was given over completely to enjoying myself. I can clearly remember some details of my boyhood. I suppose Sakyamuni did the same.

When He was a little child, Sakyamuni lived in the Kapila Castle from which the Himalaya Mountains could

be seen in the northern part of India. He remembered the good days when He lived a peaceful life.

Sakyamuni was under a big tree enjoying the cool air, while peasants were plowing fields over there with their oxen. Then a worm was plowed out of the earth, a little bird came to peck at it and flew away in the sky carrying the little worm in its mouth. And then a big bird flew to attack the little bird and flew away with it in its mouth. He seemed to me to have remembered watching a sequence of the scenes.

Then Sakyamuni realized the need of thinking about the structure of the world accurately. What is the structure of the world? Aren't we human beings making the world after all? As far as the world, society, and life are concerned, each of us is making them up. "What are human beings then?" He could not get relieved without solving this problem. The Buddha seems to have contemplated in this way. In other words it was people-watching. Although each of us human beings is not the same, it is most important to watch ourselves. It is so difficult for us to understand others that we watch ourselves carefully again. How are our bodies working? How are our feelings changing? The Buddha seems to have come to think, "I will watch it once more carefully. I may manage to understand it."

We usually are busy living in this world, aren't we? It is because circumstances around us never stop changing like a revolving lantern. We seem to have time to think of ourselves, but actually not.

When we happen to get sick, we hurriedly consult a doctor or think seriously of our own health. But we usually do not take care of ourselves while in good health. We do not come to realize how valuable our bodies are.

The Buddha recovered His health by having a bowl of porridge, but Sakyamuni then must have thought that He could not solve problems in the world unless He thought of human beings first of all. Sakyamuni never ceased to think of human bodies and minds, especially those of His own, while practicing meditation. I think He made up His mind to bring the problem of "What is a human being?" to a conclusion.

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

Hawaii Nichiren Missions Kick Off New Campaign of Nichiren Shu

By Rev. Shingyo Imai
Nichiren Mission of Hawaii

The Nichiren Mission of Hawaii had the Kickoff Ceremony of Nichiren Shu's new movement named "Rissho Ankoku/Odaimoku Kechien Campaign" on June 22, 2008 towards the 800th birthday of our Founder,



President Mr. Eric Kawatani delivers his speech

Nichiren Shonin in 2022.

The kickoff service was officiated by Rev. Shobin Watanabe, acting Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu Japan and Director of Education Department of Nichiren Shu Headquarters, co-officiated by Bishop Joyo Ogawa of Nichiren Mission of Hawaii and Rev. Eijo Ikenaga of Honolulu Myohoji Temple, and assisted by ministers in Hawaii



Gagaku music performance

from 10 a.m. at Nichiren Mission of Hawaii.

The service began with Japanese court music performed by the Gagaku Kenkyukai group from the University of Hawaii. During the service, the congregation enjoyed listening to the music and Shomyo performed by ministers.

Although the service was held in the Japanese language, everything was well explained in English in the program booklet and by the Master of Ceremony, Mr. Kelly Flynn.

During the service, Mr. Eric Kawatani, chairperson of the Hawaii Missions' Rainbow Conference, climbed up to the stage and declared the theme of the campaign in Hawaii: "Be a bodhisattva for world peace with compassion and

respect."

After the service, the luncheon was held from 11:30 a.m. at the Oahu Country Club's Club House, next door to the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii. At the beginning of the luncheon, the keynote lecture was delivered by Dr. Naoto Yoshikawa, Chancellor of Hawaii Tokai International College.

Dr. Yoshikawa spoke of his experience of seeing suffering people when he worked for the United Nations in Bangladesh.

He concluded his speech by saying that we should all be aware that only through compassion and respect of others can we realize world peace.

The Hawaii Nichiren Missions are now facing the two major goals: revision of our prayer booklet "The Teachings of The Lotus" and the campaign to expose our existence and spread the idea of bodhisattva in Hawaii as a step toward the realization of world peace.

Nichiren Shonin and His Lay Followers (6)

By Rev. Kanji Tamura
Associate Professor,
Rissho University

The Ikegami Brothers, Munenaka and Munenaga (2)

Although Munenaka was disowned by his father Yasumitsu in 1275, Nichiren Shonin encouraged the Ikegami brothers to keep faith in the Lotus Sutra again and again. Finally, Yasumitsu pardoned his son and became a follower of the Lotus Sutra himself.

Nichiren Shonin states in his letter of the ninth month in 1277 addressed to the younger brother Munenaga, "Ryokan and the other evil monks deceived your father, trying to force you brothers to abandon your faith. However, as you wisely accepted my advice and joined forces with your brother, you were able to induce your father to the faith of the Lotus Sutra."

Munenaka Was Disowned Again

However, the faith of the father Yasumitsu remained unstable. Influenced by the campaign for one million Nembutsu staged by Ryokan of the Gokurakuji Temple, Yasumitsu again became a follower of Ryokan and disowned Munenaka for the second time. Munenaga, the younger brother, appeared sympathetic to his father.

Nichiren Shonin wrote to Munenaga again two months later, remonstrating:

"Your father seems to have become an enemy of the Lotus Sutra while your elder brother has become a prac-



Rev.
Kanji Tamura

ticer of the Lotus Sutra. You seem to stand by your father. You will not be dutiful to your parents if you follow your father who has become the enemy of the Lotus Sutra and abandon your brother who is a devotee of the One Vehicle. Make up your mind to follow your elder brother and accomplish your faith in Buddhism."

Nichiren Shonin then refers to Prince Siddhartha's renouncement of the world against the will of his parents, and his work of enlightening his parents upon attaining Buddhahood.

"Your family will not prosper several thousands or several ten thousands of years even if you inherit the estate of your family from your father. Think it over and over and pray for

the future happiness," writes the Founder.

Return to the Faith of the Lotus Sutra

Father Yasumitsu returned to the faith in the Lotus Sutra upon the persuasion of Munenaga, the younger brother. Rejoicing over the turn of events, Nichiren wrote a letter to Munenaga in which he refers to the examples of malicious brotherly relations told in the Repaying Indebtedness Sutra, and also the unfortunate relation between Minamoto Yoritomo, the founder of the Kamakura military government, and his younger brother, Yoshitsune.

The Founder thus praises Munenaga saying that although greed and jealousy cause strife among brothers, Munenaga acted wisely and unselfishly, causing his father, brother, and himself to become Buddhas and guaranteeing the prosperity of his posterity.

Founder's Funeral and the Ikegami Brothers

Nichiren left Minobusan on the eighth day of the ninth month, 1282, for Hitachi to recuperate from his ill health. He dropped in at the residence of Munenaka on the 18th day of the same month, where he passed away on the 13th day of the tenth month.

The funeral took place at midnight of the 13th. The elder brother Munenaka proceeded in front of the palanquin carrying the coffin side by side with Shijo Kingo, both carrying funeral banners. Munenaga, the younger brother, walked behind them carrying the sword of the Founder.

The Ikegami Hommonji Temple now stands at the site of the Ikegami family mansion. The statue of the Founder enshrined at the temple was sculptured on the occasion of his seventh memorial service, and contains a bronze tube containing the ashes of the Founder. Inscribed on the tube are the letters: "the Grand Donor, Munenaka."

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



Scene of our Founder entering Nirvana



The Ikegami Hommonji Temple

Third Lecture on Lotus Sutra Held in Phnom Penh



Prof. Ikegami and local monks

By Rev. Kanshin Mochida
Missionary Department

The third lecture on the Lotus Sutra was held at the main hall of the Ministry of Cults and Religions of the Kingdom of Cambodia, on June 4. The previous two lectures held in 2006 and 2007 were sponsored by Catuddisa Sangha as a chapter of its "Prayer Day for World Peace by Buddhists." This time, however, Nichiren Shu supported the program independently for the most part.

The lecturer was Rev. Yosei Ikegami, Professor of Minobusan University, the same as before. Approximately 200 people, including the high monks of the Maha Nikaya and Dhammayutika Nikaya, attended the lecture.

Rev. Ikegami's lecture was about

the first part of the Lotus Sutra, so-called "the First Assembly on Mt. Sacred Eagle (chapters 1 to 10 of the Lotus Sutra)."

He introduced various parables, such as "the Three Herbs and Two Trees," "the Three Carts and the Burning House," or "the Rich Man and His Lost Son," revealing the essence of the Lotus Sutra, potentiality for all sentient beings to attain Bud-

dhahood.

The Cambodian monks seemed to be interested especially in the parable of the Three Carts and the Burning House, which represented the teaching of the One Buddha Vehicle of the Lotus Sutra beyond various teachings.

Cambodians are still suffering from the damages caused by the civil war that lasted until the 1990s. In the Khmer Rouge Era, one third of Cambodians, mostly intellectuals including teachers, technicians, and monks, were killed and various traditions, valuable books, and materials were lost.

Cambodian people today are making strenuous efforts to revive their culture and reestablish the nation. The lecture on the Lotus Sutra is also aimed to revive Cambodian Buddhism

in cooperation with the Ministry of Cults and Religions.

The Nichiren Shu Administration Headquarters engaged in this inter-cultural event in collaboration with Catuddisa Sangha and T·M Ryoyaku Center. Catuddisa Sangha is an international Buddhist association searching for an alternative way of international aid and exchange.

T·M Ryoyaku Center is an NPO expanded from a group supporting Hansen's disease patients. The staff of both organizations are deeply involved in the teachings of the Lotus Sutra.

On June 5, the day following Rev. Ikegami's lecture, T·M Ryoyaku Center inaugurated a school building and observed the ground breaking ceremony for another school building in the Takeo region, 75 km from Phnom Penh.

The delegates from Japan including Rev. Ryusho Wada (Hojuji Temple, Osaka) were welcomed by Mr.



Local monks show interest in parables

Min Khin, Under Secretary of the Ministry of Cults and Religions Affairs, and 300 students and villagers.

On the other hand, Catuddisa Sangha held the Prayer Day for World Peace in cooperation with the Buddhist monks and followers from Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Tibet, and Taiwan at the Killing Field. According to Catuddisa Sangha, which is run by Nichiren Buddhists, they are bound by the spirit of the Wonderful Dharma.

T·M Ryoyaku Center is now building up a closer relationship with the Ministry of Cults and Religions of Cambodia, and is also actively developing its support programs in Myanmar, Vietnam, and Sri Lanka (Ceylon).

Catuddisa Sangha, while steadily increasing sympathizers and supporters, is trying to bring together various Buddhist traditions across the differences between Mahayana and Theravada, activity which can be described as the "Buddhist Renaissance." (Rev. Ikegami).



Prof. Ikegami delivers his third lecture on the Lotus Sutra



Temple Events

By Sandra Seki

LAS VEGAS KANNON TEMPLE

Study Classes for American Ministers

There are eight American born Nichiren Shu ministers in the U.S., most of whom are striving to spread the teachings of the Lotus Sutra while working full time for a living.

Accordingly it is very rare for them to see their senior ministers' missionary work and learn directly from them. In order to provide a chance for them to study, Bishop Shokai Kanai held a two-day seminar on May 25 and 26. The participants had to pay their own transportation and accommodation while the Bishop provided the lecture free of charge.

Since the students were so eager to learn, Bishop Kanai extended the seminar by an extra day right up to their flight time home. Bishop Kanai emphasized practical teachings rather than the academic while Mrs. Kumiko Kanai taught the Nichiren Shu Wasan.

TENNESSEE SANGHA

Cancer and the Dharma By Rev. Will Warner

Entire sutras have been written describing the tangible benefits to our lives of our

practice of the Dharma. Recently there was a situation in my life, through which the Wonderful Dharma of the Lotus Sutra showed a great benefit to me and to countless beings.

In September 2007, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. This was a shock since I eat well, exercise regularly, and live a relatively healthy life. There is no history of this kind of cancer in my family and I am 15 years younger than the average age at which most men get this diagnosed. The good news is that since it was in the early stage, I have gotten rid of it.

People still laugh when I tell them that I believe having cancer was one of the best experiences in my entire life. I admit being more than a little freaked out the first few weeks after the diagnosis, but I was never troubled by the thought of "Why me? What did I do to deserve this?" I never thought that this disease was a punishment for something I had done in this or another life.

In Chapter 10 of the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha describes to Medicine King Bodhisattva, those who will become Buddhas in their future lives. "The good men or women who keep, read, recite, and copy even a phrase of the Lotus Sutra..." the Buddha continues, "they should be considered to have appeared in this world by their vow to

expound the Lotus Sutra out of their compassion towards all living beings."

This means whether I have cancer or not, I am one of those good men or women the Buddha described. Based on this realization, I could not look backward and ask why this was happening to me. I knew from the Buddha's teaching that I had to look forward and ask, "How can I use this disease to benefit all beings?"

First, I had to let people know what was happening and accept their help. I was overwhelmed at the number of calls, cards, and e-mail I received from people all over the world assuring me that they would help however they could.

The support I got from them made me think of the support we get from the protective deities of the Dharma. In fact I thought of my friends and family as my protective deities. People took care of almost anything I asked for. They were there to listen when I was anxious and I was there to listen to them when they were upset about what was happening. By allowing them to benefit me, I benefited them.

I also met at least a dozen other men who had already overcome this disease. They all showed me that it was possible to beat it. When I heard their stories, it reminded me of how Sakyamuni Buddha tells us all through the Lotus Sutra that we are going to be Enlightened. He has been through it, He has done it, and He knows we can do it too.

We who practice the Wonderful Dharma already have the Buddha for our inspiration. How we live our lives can be an inspiration for others. We can use all the situations of our lives to spread the Dharma: Happy situations, Fearful situations, Confident situations, and Desperate situations. The Buddha has given us the assurance that no matter what happens we are all becoming Buddhas just like Him. With that in our minds, where is there room for fear?

WEST NEW YORK NICHIREN BUDDHIST SANGHA

Tanabata Service

On July 7, at 7 p.m. a Tanabata festival service was held by Rev. Kanjin Ceder-

man. This festival originated from a Chinese folk legend about two stars: the Weaver Star (Vega) and the Cowherd Star (Altair) who were said to be lovers who could only meet once a year on the seventh night of the seventh month provided it didn't rain and flood the Milky Way. This legend was brought to Japan and the name Tanabata was taken from the weaving maiden who made clothes for the Gods.

On Tanabata, people can visit the WNY Sangha and write their wishes and romantic aspirations on long, narrow strips of colored paper and then hang them on bamboo branches.

Obon Festival: August 13-16

This festival is held to honor our ancestors. On August 13, welcoming fires are made in front of our homes to help the spirits find their way home. Prior to this day, usually on the August 12 a Shoryodan (spirit altar) is set up in front of the Butsudan with various offerings. During this time one should visit and clean the ancestors' graves. Please arrange for the minister to chant the sutra at your home during August 13-15. On August 16, we will hold a Toro Nagashi, lantern floating to send the ancestors back to the spirit realm.

PORTLAND TEMPLE

'Why I Pursue the Path' By Shami Ryoan Litts

Why am I pursuing the path to become a minister in the Nichiren Shu lineage?

This is a question I have frequently asked myself from the moment I requested to become a Shami.

I have considered myself a Buddhist since the early 1990s and I have studied and practiced many forms of Buddhism: Theravada, Zen, Tibetan and other forms of Nichiren Buddhism.

All of these have wisdom and merit but it wasn't until I began to attend the Nichiren Shu Temple in Portland that I felt I had a home. This form of Buddhism resonated with me because of its message: universal enlightenment for everyone.

Those who read, recite, and copy the Lotus Sutra will attain enlightenment regardless of their appearance, their nature, their entities, their powers, their activities, their primary causes, their environmental causes, their rewards and retributions and the equal-

ity despite their differences.

The essence of Nichiren Shu Buddhism is universal enlightenment. This is what appealed to me. I am fortunate to have exposure to other Buddhist groups in that, despite the differences in the teachings, the Dharma remains.

Buddhism historically spread from India through Asia and Buddhism can adapt to the culture of the people who are exposed to the Dharma. The teachings may change but the essence of the teachings remain pure.

Nichiren Shu is rooted historically in Japan, however, the teachings are not rooted in Japan. The teachings of the Buddha in the Lotus Sutra is enlightenment for all who read, recite, and copy the Sutra. As Nichiren Shu expands in the U.S., the demographic of the Sangha has and will continue to change but the essence of the teachings will not change.

When we chant Namu Myo Ho Renge Kyo, we chant as a Sangha, we chant as Buddhists. The teachings of the Lotus Sutra are profound and unsurpassed.

My motivation is to uphold and spread the teachings, which are for everyone. I have a long road ahead and much to learn as I train to become a Nichiren Shu minister.

I would not be able to attempt this without the help from my masters, Rev. Ryuoh Falconer and Rev. Ryuken Akahoshi. I owe both a debt of gratitude as they sacrifice in their efforts to train me.

I also benefit from the teachings that come from my Sangha. I remain committed to serve the Portland Temple and strive to spread the Dharma.

Bon Dance at Puunene

By Rev. Tetsudo Takasaki

The Shin-Bon service and Bon dance were held at the Puunene Nichiren Mission on June 14, 2008. Not only do Japanese-Americans look forward to Bon dance, but also so do all the people on Maui Island. Many people attended it, having the chance to learn about Nichiren Shu.



(continued from page 1)

Wahiawa Mission's 60th Anniversary



Memorial photo in the front yard of the mission



Rev. Watanabe addresses the devotees



Mission members at the ceremony

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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