

# Nichiren Shu News

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1

## New Year's Greeting: 'To live lively'

By Honorable Rev. Nichiji Sakai  
Archbishop of the Nichiren Shu  
Order

Lively and Vividly, a Happy New Year!

"To live lively." This is a teaching of the Lotus Sutra.

The Lotus Sutra is a poem in limitless praise of human beings that sings:

For being human beings  
Love human beings, and  
Treat human beings precious.

The basis of the Lotus Sutra is a view of life that all human beings are equipped with Buddhahood.

When I was a child, my father taught me that "The temples have to be like a mother's milk." That is to say, the Buddhist temples should give the joy of a lively life to the people in the same manner as a mother's milk filled with love, which resembles the mercy of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, and

raises babies born to this world healthily.

To put it another way, it is the duty of the temples to help people realize that all human beings without exception are born with the Buddha-nature (mind of the Buddha) and, at the same time, to help them nurture such realization.

Thus, I was taught, the teaching of the Lotus Sutra is milk that nurtures life, that it is the milk of the dharma, or "dharma milk."

Now, when we shift the angle of our point of view and observe the social conditions of these days, regrettably we cannot say they are "lively." Incidents beyond our imagination that we doubt our own eyes and want to close our ears to are becoming everyday affairs.

It seems to me that we are losing our mind to love and treating human beings precious.

I assume it is because we tend to stay away from a calamity as long as it does not directly concern us, saying,

"Let sleeping dogs lie. Heaven forbid!" However, other people's calamities are not merely other people's affairs.

Nothing is more terrifying than the trend of the times. I venture to say it is because I had the experience of being dragged out into the battlefield for four years after receiving (a draft card which was supposed to be the nation's last resort at the time of necessity.)

Those who sent me a draft card seriously believed that non-soldiers were not humans and forced others to believe the idea of creating peace through war by embellishing it with phrases such as "patriotism" and "martyr of the nation."

Now, let's shift the angle of our viewpoint to the present day. The mess we are in today can be likened to diarrhea caused by "democracy" which we swallowed without digestion due to the rejoicing over the liberalism which released us from the long-lasting pressure of "militarism."

The phrase of the President-elect Mr. Obama consistently used to appeal to the American people was "Change America," meaning "Reform America" or Revitalize America."

What do you think about it? Ameri-



Archbishop Nichiji Sakai

ca, the original source of liberalism itself is disgusted with the "diarrhea" of liberalism in which a middle school student fires a gun randomly in school.

Now, let's reflect and look at the social conditions in Japan today. "Don't you feel frightened? We have no time to waste. Let us all accept today's distorted world as our own business and make efforts to revitalize Japan with the lively spirit of the Lotus Sutra!

(Tr. K. H.)

## 'Most Rewarding Days Were When I Was atop Shichimenzan'

By Rev. Joshin Komatsu  
Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu

Upon welcoming the 21st year of the Heisei Period, I wish to extend my most sincere greetings to you all.

This is the third year since our "Rissho Ankoku Odaimoku Kechien" campaign actually began, and it is the 750th year since our Founder Nichiren Shonin submitted his "Rissho Ankoku Ron" to the Kamakura Shogunate. That is to say, this is the year of importance in the first period of our general campaign.

We are, therefore, planning to hold the all-Nichiren-shu service at the Hiki-gayatsu Myohonji Temple at Kamakura and also at the Nakayama Hokekyoji Temple in Chiba Prefecture.

We also are getting ready to hold the "Concert of Life" stressing the preciousness of life as a message of "Rissho Ankoku" to society.

Another plan for our attempt to promote the "Rissho Ankoku Odaimoku Kechien" campaign is the "Exhibition of Well-known Treasures of Nichiren and the Lotus Sutra" at the National Museum of Kyoto, October 10–November 23. We hope that as many people as possible will appreciate the cultural depth of the commoners in Kyoto based on faith in the Lotus Sutra, preserved in various Nichiren-related temples. I sincerely believe this will provide an excellent opportunity for many people to enjoy seeing them against the background of the beautiful autumn foliage in Kyoto



Chief Administrator Joshin Komatsu

as well as making a group trip to temples in Kyoto and nearby areas.

Please forgive me for speaking of myself. In my life of 60 years, some of the most rewarding days were when I was serving as the head priest of the temple atop Mt. Shichimen, which required me to climb up the mountain often. Mt. Shichimen, one of the high

peaks of the Minobusan system, is 1,982 meters (6,503 feet) high and noted for its steep trail. The pilgrims all walk up this steep mountain way while chanting the Odaimoku to pay homage to the Keishin-in Temple on the top.

Even today I still remember how hard it was to climb up the trail. I also vividly remember while descending the mountain the scene of the pilgrims climbing up the mountain trail chanting "Namu Myoho Renge-kyo" and encouraging one another.

As I encountered the various scenes of pilgrimage while going up and down this mountain, I felt that I was taught by Goddess Shichimen about the proper way of life and by our Founder how to tread the way of faith.

It is said that human beings live their daily lives with regret for the past and fear for the future. Also our predecessors teach us that when we shut our hearts, we make mistakes in our judgment.

**NEW YEAR'S DAY AT MYOSHOJI:** Members of the Myoshoji (Wonderful Voice) Temple, NC are gathered in front of the temple on a beautiful cold New Year's Day. They are: (left to right) Austin Sugg, Susanne Rainwater, Allen Rogers, Misa Osada, Michael Daniels, Rita Rouse, Kido Takeshi, Mary Takeshi, Kento Takeshi, Rev. Ryusho Jeffus



Turning our eyes to the world today, we are troubled with various harsh realities. Especially in recent years the problems involving human life have been on the increase such as vicious crimes, suicides, lonely deaths and frequent occurrence of tragic events involving children and innocent people.

The true way shown by our Founder in his "Rissho Ankoku-ron" is the practice of the Lotus Sutra for the pacification of this world, namely the attainment of Buddhahood by the entire world by admitting our mistakes and working together in order to build the Buddha land.

I firmly believe that this present society filled with a sense of despair is the very time when we Nichiren Buddhists, who uphold the true teaching of the Buddha, should fulfill our duty seeking not only salvation for ourselves but also trying to show the example of having faith and respect for each other's irreplaceable life.

I sincerely hope that you all show respect for each other's life by holding your hands in gassho and move forward together toward the realization of the enriched world by spreading the seeds of Odaimoku.

(Tr. K. H.)

### Events

December 2008–January 2009

- Dec. 8: Buddha's Enlightenment Day
- Jan. 1: Memorial Day Service for Nichiji Shonin
- Jan. 13: Otoko-e, New Year's event on Minobusan to offer greetings to our Founder
- Jan. 21: Memorial Day Service for Nichiro Shonin

by Rev. Tsuoh Yokoi

# The Life of Sakyamuni Buddha (9)

By Rev. Shinkai Oikawa, Litt. D.

## 9. Sakyamuni's Manhood

(continued from (6) [No.169])

At dawn He received the wisdom to see through the present, past, and future because everything filthy had gone out of Him and He became completely clean and purified, which is called the "extinction of illusion."

This was the Buddha after all. Only enlightenment does not make the Buddha. I think He had powers to see through to the heart of things. It was just six o'clock in the morning when He understood He had gotten the powers.

Night was divided into three parts in the olden times. Each part is four hours, and they are called the first night, mid-night, and later night. The first night is from six to ten o'clock. The next four hours is the midnight. The night nearest to dawn is the later night. It was the later night when Sakyamuni became completely enlightened. It was when the day was just dawning. He realized He acquired the power at dawn.

We interpret "enlightenment" as understanding something. It is not so but it actually means "perfect acquisition of the power." The power is beyond human powers. We do not call ones who do things that can be done easily by human powers Buddha. He acquired a certain power beyond human powers at the time and became the "Buddha." Buddha in Indian is a past participle of the word meaning "awaken" and means "awakened" in the morning. But in case of Sakyamuni, Buddha means "to be awakened to the truth."

Sakyamuni was confined in the darkness. He continued to meditate and practice asceticism for six years saying I cannot understand. He failed asceticism itself, but was awakened to the truth, had His eyes opened fully and found Himself bathed in the light. He could see things that could not have been seen before in a flash under the Bodhi tree.

He could see His past, future, and present. For instance, He came to understand a doctor's prescription soon. It is a prescription showing what is best for a person, that is, what is best for happiness of a person. He can



Rev. Shinkai Oikawa

understand what medicine He gets and when and how He should give it to the person.

It is not sufficient to cure only the illness. We need many kinds of physical therapy to recover completely from illnesses and medical care can totally give us back good health.

The mental cases are quite the same. It is a great pleasure for us that Sakyamuni healed a psychological problem on the first attempt. However, the problem cannot be completely cured easily, though the condition may be improved. He taught various people how to completely cure it in as many ways as possible.

### (7) Sakyamuni's Traveling Practice —Traveling as the Savior

India is a very large country as you know. They had to travel around on foot at the time of Sakyamuni. They walked on the average 10 km a day. This distance to walk in a day is called yojana. Sometimes it took them one month or two to walk in order to reach a destination 300 km or 400 km away.

Sakyamuni took the five men as his first disciples at the "Deer Park" in Baranasi (Benares). But He forbade them from waiting on Him. He drove them away, saying, "Go anywhere in India quickly to save the people living in need and in trouble as I taught you how to save them." They were also told to go separately, without going together so that they could go to five separate places. I think Sakyamuni decided to save as many people as possible when he was invited by the King of the Brahma Heaven to preach the enlighten-

ment He attained. And He was sure that He could save the people.

Sakyamuni died at the age of eighty. Before He died He said, "Scatter my ashes all over India." And He added, "Many people who can worship my ashes can be saved. So distribute my ashes to many places where many people can see them." In a word, all He wished was saving as many people as possible. Later, King Asoka built 84,000 pagodas to scatter His ashes all over India. He did not think of Himself at all but of the people in need. His first disciples went to save the people at once.

Sakyamuni had taken many people as disciples since then. There were many kinds of disciples, some of whom wanted to be taught by Him with sincere adoration, but others wanted to be His disciple in order to live an easy life. Their motivations were never simple.

There were also women who wanted to be His disciples, called "bhik-suni," Buddhist priestesses. Sakyamuni refused to accept female disciples at first because priests tended to be distracted at the sight of priestesses. It was troublesome, so the Buddha said to the women, "Please do not join us."

Finally, Mahaprajapati, the Buddha's foster mother, asked Him to take her as His disciple. He declined her offer three times in vain, and took her as His disciple. Thus she became the first Buddhist priestess.

When Sakyamuni attained enlightenment, there already existed a lot of other trainees and great priests, who had 500 or 1,000 disciples. Sakyamuni occasionally dared to talk to them and took at once as many as 1,500 people as disciples. He had occasionally done such decisive things like this.

I do not quite understand why He went to the wedding ceremony of Ananda, His younger brother or son of King Suddhodana and Mahaprajapati, and forced him to be a priest against his will. I cannot understand why He had done such a horrible thing. He took Ananda away from the wedding ceremony and forced him to become a priest.

Ananda was unhappy and restless

day and night because he was newly married and could not forget his beautiful new wife. He could not concentrate on ascetic practices at all under such conditions. Then Sakyamuni said to him, "Ananda, you look pale and unsettled. Try hard to practice asceticism." Ananda could not listen to Him because he was made a priest against his will. Then the Buddha showed him a divine power.

"Look, this woman is beautiful, isn't she?" Sakyamuni said. "Yes, she is almost as beautiful as my wife," said Ananda. "You think so? Good. Women are beautiful, aren't they?" "Yes, I agree." And then Sakyamuni suddenly changed the woman into an old one by his supernatural power. He asked, "What do you think of this woman?" "Yes, she got a little older." "The same woman, isn't she?" And this time He made her much older. "She is much older, isn't she?" Next, He tentatively made her extremely older, shabby, grey-haired, toothless, and bent back. Sakyamuni was preaching his teachings in this way, actually showing that even young women could not escape from this reality.

Ananda was embarrassed. But Sakyamuni did not stop here. This woman died, was discarded at the graveyard. "What do you think?" "Oh, she was dead." He showed that she had rotted away, been crushed out of shape and become only a skeleton. He showed that people were all like this. Ananda was not pleased, but he could not help saying, "I understand." He had to say, "People are like what you showed me, aren't they? I will agree with you. So I will give up my attachment to my wife."

Although Sakyamuni completely gave up all relations with His father, mother, wife, and child, I cannot give up my relations with my family. The relations are so strong that I cannot escape from them. Sakyamuni was a prince, or a successor to the throne of the country. He had already abandoned all things including His country, family, and people though He was the great hope of the king and the royal families. It can be said that He made His people quite unhappy in a sense. However, I think that He saved all these people in the end. All religious leaders may be said to have such nature. But I must confess that I cannot do the same things as Sakyamuni.

(Trans. by Rev. Kanshu Naito)

## Otonowa-kai Gives Concert in Boston

By Rev. Tomonori Kawaguchi

Otonowa-kai, a group of court musicians in Kyoto, gave a concert of court music and Buddhist hymns in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Boston-Kyoto sister city agreement at the Showa Boston Institute for Language and Culture on November 7.

Eight Nichiren-shu priests including Rev. Chikoh Kawaguchi, President of the Otonowa-kai group and the Head Priest of the Zuikoji Temple in Kyoto, participated in the concert.

A total of about 500 people attended the concert, which was performed twice, day and night, in the 300 seat capacity hall of the institute. Among those who visited the concert were Mr. and Mrs. Yoichi Suzuki, Consul General of Japan and his wife.

The program consisted of three

parts: musical instruments, Buddhist hymns, and dance with music.

Featured in the dance program was the dance of "King Ranryo," a story of a Chinese king in the 6th century. The story says since the king looks handsome and gentle, he hardly wields authority in the battlefield. Hence, he puts on a mask with a ferocious expression to command his soldiers. The dance signifies such a situation.

At the dinner party of the concert, Mr. Peter Grilli, President of the Japan Society of Boston, Inc., expressed his high praise to the Otonowa-kai group,

saying that he had attended the King Ranryo program of court dance and music at the age of eight in Japan.

Otonowa-kai was established in 1996. The group has been actively holding overseas concerts since. Most recently, the group gave the court music concert in the cities where



Photo shows (left to right): Rev. Chikoh Kawaguchi, Yoichi Suzuki, Japanese Consul General in Boston, Peter Grilli, President of the Japan Society of Boston, Inc. and Ms. Mari Nagayasu who played the part of "King Ranryo"



Otonowa-kai performance at the Showa Boston Institute for Language and Culture on November 7, 2008

Nichiren Shu temples are located, in Toronto, Canada, in 2006, and in Wipperfurth, Germany, in 2007.

Rev. Chikoh Kawaguchi says, "We hope as many people as possible come to listen to our court music and feel the Buddha's Pure Land. We also hope that our performance will contribute to world peace and be helpful for the overseas missionary activities of the Nichiren Shu Order."

# Nichiren Shonin and His Lay Followers (9)

By Rev. Kanji Tamura  
Associate Professor,  
Rissho University

## Abutsu-bo and His Wife, Nun Sennichi (1)

The couple, Abutsu-bo (1189–1279) and his wife Nun Sennichi (?–?) became dedicated followers of Nichiren Shonin while the Founder was in exile in Sado. Tradition says that Abutsu-bo was named Endo Tamemori as a layman. He was a chamberlain of ex-Emperor Juntoku who was exiled to Sado following the Jokyu Incident (1221).

After the death of the retired emperor in 1242, Abutsu-bo and his wife entered priesthood and continued to stay in Sado, offering prayers to the late ex-Emperor.

His name “Abutsu” is a shortened form of “Amidabutsu (Amitabha Buddha).” He was economically well to do and educated. He is presumed to have been a powerful landholder-warrior (who managed land lots under the control of the manor lord and collected taxes from farmers). The couple lived in the neighborhood of Kokufu, provincial government, of Sado.

In the tenth month of 1271, Nichiren Shonin was exiled to Sado Island, and settled in the Sammai-do at Tsukahara on the first day of the eleventh month. His life was in extreme danger due to the harsh environment.

Hearing the rumor that Nichiren Shonin repeatedly criticized the faith of Amida Buddha, Abutsu-bo visited Nichiren Shonin and censured him. Instead, he was refuted by Nichiren Shonin and was awakened to the faith of the Lotus Sutra. He received much



Rev.  
Kanji Tamura

guidance from Nichiren Shonin. Nun Sennichi also became a devoted follower of the Founder, and served Nichiren Shonin with her husband while Nichiren Shonin spent his life of exile on Sado Island for two years and five months.

In a letter to Nun Sennichi, the Founder expressed his sincere appreciation to her for serving him at the risk of her life. He says in his letter, “When I was exiled to the Province of Sado, the Protector (appointed by the Kamakura Shogunate) for Sado Province, following the order of the provincial governor, was hostile to me... Stewards (appointed by the Kamakura military regime) and followers of Amitabha Buddha watched the hermitage of Nichiren day and night trying to seduce anyone who visited me. Nevertheless, you, having Abutsu-bo carry the chest, visited me at night many times.

“I will not forget this even in my future lives. I felt as though my compassionate mother was reborn in Sado.”

Yearning for the Founder, Abutsu-bo visited him at Minobusan three times—in 1274, 1275, and 1278—accompanied by a lay priest of Ko, his close friend, braving his old age in the nineties. Abutsu-bo and the Lay Priest of Ko were neighbors. They used to work together, cooperating in serving the Founder in exile.

On his third visit to Minobusan, Nun Sennichi entrusted to him a letter to the Founder. In this letter, she states

that she firmly believes in the affirmation by the Founder that women’s attainment of Buddhahood is given priority in the Lotus Sutra although she is concerned about the deep sins allegedly attributed to women.

In his relatively long reply, the Founder states: “Beginning with the ‘Expedients’ chapter in the first fascicle, the sutra expounds that bodhisattvas, Two Vehicles (sravaka and pratyekabuddha), and ordinary people are all able to attain Buddhahood, though there is no actual proof yet.

“However, it all became clear when the most important doctrine of becoming a Buddha with one’s present body was expounded in the ‘Devadatta’ chapter in the fifth fascicle of the Lotus Sutra.

“The Buddha helped a small snake, who was actually a daughter of the dragon king, attain Buddhahood with her present body. Therefore, the Lotus Sutra expounds attainment of Buddhahood by all people after the model of enlightenment of women.

“Grand Master Dengyo of Mt. Hiei and Grand Master Tien-tai of China stressed in their writings the attainment of Buddhahood by women expounded in the Lotus Sutra, saying sutras other than the Lotus Sutra do not expound the enlightenment by women.”

In her letter, she also asked the Founder to observe the memorial service for her father as his 13th memorial day was drawing near, and offered in his memory one kammon of coins (\$1,000 in present day

value), attached with the letter. Highly praising her respectful wish, the Founder sent the threefold Lotus Sutra in 10 fascicles which he had kept on hand, saying, “When you think of me, have Gakujo-bo (priest living nearby) read this sutra and listen to him. With this Lotus Sutra as your passport, you will see me again in the Pure Land of Mt. Sacred Eagle in the next life.”

A large-scale mandala, written on 18 pieces of paper put together, claimed as the “Gohonzon Manifesting Women’s Attainment of Buddhahood” is now preserved at the Myosenji Temple in Sado. It is said that it was written in 1273 by our Founder at Ichinosawa, where He was in custody of Lay Priest Ichinosawa, a local clan leader. It was then given to Nun Sennichi, testifying the devoted faith of Abutsu-bo and his wife.

Abutsu-bo was given the priest name of Nittoku by the Founder, and he died in the third month of 1279 at the age of 91. Tokuro Moritsuna, Abutsu-bo’s son, traveled from Sado to Minobusan with the urn containing the ashes of his father around his neck, and visited Nichiren Shonin in the seventh month of that year and buried the ashes in the holy mountain.

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



Treasure House and the Founder's Hall of the Myosenji Temple, Sado Island

## ‘Finding the Hidden Gem’

By Shami Myoran Gifford

On October 3, 2008, I visited the Seichoji Temple in Chiba Prefecture, Japan, to attend the Docho Ceremony. By participating in this ceremony, I would be ordained officially as a Shami, (novice Nichiren Shu minister.) Until this time, I had been asked often by friends and colleagues, “How did you become interested in Buddhism?” The answer for that question began almost 10 years ago.

Since a child, I had been raised as a Roman Catholic. Although, I felt knowledgeable about the doctrines of the Church, I did not feel spiritually connected with the teaching—something was missing for me. I began asking a lot of questions and looking for differing opinions concerning faith and beliefs. One of the questions that became a constant was, “Who is God?” Who is this God that people rely on so much? When something bad happens we say, “Why would God do such a thing?” Contrary, when something good happens people say, “Thank you God!” I really wanted to know why we as a society put so much power and responsibility in an unknown force; all joy, suffering, and praise are attributed to one cause, God. If this is the case, what are we responsible for? As I went searching for answers, I read a newspaper article in which the Buddha was

quoted as saying, “Make of yourself a light, and do not depend on others.” This made sense to me and I decided to learn more about Buddhism. I went to a Pure Land temple, Chinese temple, and Tibetan temple. All of these seemed similar to the complicated religion that I had left behind. The next temple that I visited was the Toronto Nichiren Buddhist Temple. On that day the Minister, Reverend Tsukamoto, took the time to explain to me very carefully and with a lot of patience the life story of Sakyamuni Buddha. The information that I received that day was simple and beautiful. Over time, I came to know who Nichiren Shonin was and the importance of the Lotus Sutra. At that time I knew that I had at last found the truth. For the next few years, I continued to attend the Temple on a weekly basis to study the Lotus Sutra.

One day, the idea came to my mind that I wanted to become a minister. I asked Rev. Tsukamoto for permission to become a Nichiren Shu minister. He explained very carefully what would be involved and the hard work and perseverance needed. He then asked me why I wanted to become a minister. That question should have been very simple to answer, but it wasn’t. There were many reasons why, such as I wanted to help and teach suffering people with the Lotus Sutra. The response from my

Teacher was that as a lay person I could do that. So the result was that he said “No” to my request. Again I took time to learn more deeply, through patience and self-reflection, I soon realized that I had been selective about which Teachings I preferred, ignoring the others such as the topic of hell. This concept is widely used in Christianity, so I was uncomfortable with the subject. Of course, all the Teachings expounded from my teacher are equally important, so I learned to accept things “As it is.” Over time, I came to know the amount of spiritual maturity and devotion that is needed to become a minister. Such as not having any barriers in helping people and being available at all times. I asked once more for permission to become a minister. Finally, after seven years, since my first time asking, I received permission to begin the training required in becoming a Nichiren Shu minister. In April of 2008, I travelled to my Master’s home temple called Enkyoji located in Saga Prefecture, Japan, to receive the Tokudo ceremony. This was a very emotional event for me and the amount of compassion that was shown to me during my stay at the temple was immeasurable. During the ceremony, I received the Dharma name, Myoran which means, “a wonderful orchid.”

### Docho Ceremony

Arriving at the Seichoji temple, I was overwhelmed by the natural beauty of the surroundings. This was the

place where, Nichiren Shonin had studied. The next morning, everyone gathered to walk up to the top of the mountain to face the sunrise. This was the same place where Nichiren Shonin first chanted the Odaimoku. This event was very emotional for everyone and marked the beginning of a life dedicated to helping suffering people. After leaving the Seichoji Temple, my Master and I travelled to Minobusan to report to Nichiren Shonin that I had my Docho Ceremony. This experience was for me very peaceful and calm, I have found at last the hidden gem that was always with me. With Gassho



Shami Myoran Gifford in front of the Founder's Statue



## Temple Events

By Sandra Seki

### TORONTO

#### Winter Events

• On Sunday, January 11, from 1 p.m. the annual New Year service was held. After the service O-toso (spiced sweet sake) was served to everyone who attended, followed by a potluck lunch.

• Setsubun Service was held on Sunday, January 25 from 1 p.m. This Japanese tradition of throwing roasted soy beans from inside the house to the outside shouting "Devils Stay Out! Good Fortune Come In!" is supposed to wish everyone and his family good fortune and happiness throughout the year.

• Old Omamori (amulets) should be brought to the temple to be burned after their duration has expired. We must treat the old and expired omamoris with care. Rev. Fukushima will take them back to Japan and hold a ceremony to purify and burn them.

Rev. Kenno Fukushima will temporarily return to Japan from January 30 to February 24, to attend his mother's first memorial service and give some lectures.

### NORTH CAROLINA

#### Myoshoji Temple

In October 2008, Myoshoji was recognized officially as a NONA temple. This had been the dream of all the members and Rev. Ryusho Jeffus since the temple was opened in August 2007.

In November 2008, Rev.

Ryusho with some temple members participated in the annual Charlotte Walk for the Homeless. This was a community event to highlight the situation of the homeless in the nearby community.

Many organizations including faith groups gathered together on this extremely cold Saturday morning to walk three miles to awaken awareness of the homeless and raise money for their services.

On December 1, Rev. Ryusho was asked to make a presentation at an interfaith activity to commemorate the World AIDS/HIV Day. Many different faith communities participated and Rev. Ryusho was asked to represent the Buddhist faith. Rev. Ryusho believes, "The spreading of the Dharma in our community is especially important at this time, when many people are losing hope and becoming discouraged."

### PORTLAND

#### New Year Service

The annual New Year service was held on Sunday, January 25 at 2 p.m. followed by a General Meeting, election of Board Directors and a New Year Party.

### LAS VEGAS

#### Dharma Essay Ready

Kannon Temple Website: <http://www.kannon-temple-nevada.org>.

This essay is a compilation of Rev. Shokai Kanai's sermons and lectures made in Salt

Lake City, Seattle and Los Angeles over the past 44 years.

### HONOLULU

#### Ema

The ema is a popular Japanese New Year tradition where worshippers who come to shrines and temples write their wishes for the New Year on a wooden plaque (the ema) and hang them at the shrines and temples for the Buddha or deities to read and bless.

The Honolulu Betsuin has adopted the ema as part of the "Be a Bodhisattva" campaign. The temple wishes everyone to donate for the ema and that as part of your New Year prayers, you will pray for compassion and respect to spread throughout the world and for the Buddha to bless everyone, including your family, and friends to achieve the pure heart of a bodhisattva. You can also write your personal wishes, New Year resolutions and prayers on the back on your ema.

This year's ema has a picture of Daikoku on it. Daikoku is a folk deity of plenty who assures that everyone will have enough rice (food) and fulfill his wishes. The temple wishes that you will include prayers so that no one goes hungry in the world and that your wishes together with the bodhisattva's wish to help others with compassion and respect will be fulfilled.

#### Traffic Kito

A traffic kito was held on Sunday, January 18, from 11

a.m. This service is held yearly to have your car blessed for safety on the roads throughout the year.

### SAN JOSE

#### Sho-chiku-bai

During the New Year, the Japanese focus on the combination of sho-chiku-bai (pine-bamboo-plum). Each of these plants teaches us a virtue that is beneficial in our daily lives.

The pine is an evergreen tree that represents strength, perseverance, health and longevity. The pine tree will continue to grow hundreds of feet into the sky and lives for hundreds of years.

The bamboo represents honesty, constancy, and flexibility.

The Japanese plum flower is not only beautiful but also stands for nobility and courage. The plum blossom is the first flower of the season and blooms while the snow is still on the ground. It is only after the flowers bloom that the leaves appear and its highly respected fruit, the plum appears.

### TEXAS

#### Houston Myoken Temple

The Texas Sangha is not very large but members can be found in Tampa, FL, Tucson, AZ, Austin and San Antonio TX, and Sangha friends are in Louisiana, New Mexico, Mexico, and Costa Rica. Communication is made through regular e-mail and holding services over the internet. The temple has regular weekly meetings and monthly social activities.

Every month, the group shares a Shodaigyo service at the Manninger Clinic. This

clinic is a world-renowned leader in psychiatric treatment, research, and education. The group also participated in the monthly rotation of interfaith meditation. Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett is always looking for additional opportunities to engage in interfaith activities.

The temple's prison ministry has been going on for over five years and several prisoners have received jukai and they are continuing to develop their practice and faith. This activity is only possible through donations and support from various sangha friends who are interested in prison ministry. The "sangha behind bars" continues to grow and spread as the group shares newsletters with inmates all over the U.S.

Rev. Myokei also attended the Women of America Buddhism Conference in Denver which was sponsored by the Tri-State Denver Buddhism Temple and the Institute of Buddhist Studies. She was very happy to be able to represent Nichiren Shu because many people did not realize that there were ordained ministers in the Nichiren Sect.

Rev. Myokei had resumed working as a college professor in the fall of 2007. However, this was taking a great toll of her time. Since many members and sangha friends are spread over a vast area she needed more time to visit and propagate at different places. She has decided to retire from her teaching career and focus on the propagation of Nichiren Buddhism. She has already been asked to give lectures at different events. Her big project for the year 2009 is to prepare for the pilgrimage to Japan this October.

## Missionary Training in Hawaii

### 'I Wish to Contribute as Court Music Player'

Rev. Tomonori Kawaguchi

I finished training to become an overseas minister on October 31 last year at the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii. Winding up the six-month training, I find it necessary for me to continue studying English.

I wished to become an overseas minister when I visited the Toronto Nichiren Buddhist Temple two years ago to play the Japanese court music. There I found that the members wanted to feel the Buddha's Pure Land by listening to the Buddha's music.

Since there are no overseas ministers who play the court music, I thought that I would be able to contribute to the overseas missionary activities of Nichiren Shu by making



Rev.

Tomonori Kawaguchi

use of my ability as a court music player. Besides learning English, I learned an ideal way of overseas Buddhist temples from the daily life of the ministers, and the events and services of the temple during the course of training.

Lastly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Bishop Joyo Ogawa and Rev. Shingyo Imai for providing me with many kind instructions as senior overseas ministers. I also appreciate the great help that the Hawaii members rendered me. Thank you very much.

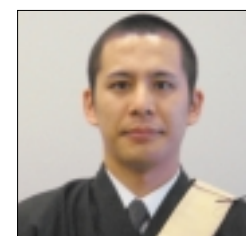
### 'We Should Realize Importance of Child Education'

Rev. Hosho Sugawara

What impressed me the most in many ways during my overseas missionary training for six months at the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii was the shelter operated by a Christian church for homeless people and their missionary activities aimed at young people.

The manager of the church told me that about one hundred children come to the church for worship every Friday. Surprised to hear that, I visited the church on a Friday night. I found a lot of children showing up.

The worship started. Contrary to my supposition, the manner of worship was not quiet at all. There were many songs, music, and drama on the stage, and those children seemed to be spending happy hours. I was very much impressed by the fact that all the 100



Rev. Hosho Sugawara

children had a strong faith.

The church staff does not force the worship on children. Even if they are still young, they contribute something as

individuals. Even the younger kids have troubles. I felt that this type of worshipping is intended successfully to understand the suffering of children.

We should realize the importance of the education for children, and take action at once. This is the same in Japan, I believe. I studied "hot wishes" for missionary work in this training.

Rev. Kawaguchi will start his overseas activities in Southeast Asia soon. Rev. Sugawara now stays in Nichiren Mission of Hawaii—Editor

## 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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