

# Nichiren Shu News

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## Honolulu Myohoji Mission Celebrates 80th Anniversary

By Rev. Josho Yamamura

Honolulu Myohoji celebrated its 80th anniversary on May 16, 2010. Bishop Giichi Kamikura, head priest of Homyoji Temple, was sanctioned by the offices of the chief administrator of the Nichiren Sect to officiate the 80th anniversary ceremony. Rev. Kamikura was assisted by Rev. Shingyo Imai, who is the Bishop of the Hawaii Nichiren Shu, and Rev. Eijo Ikenaga of the Myohoji Mission. They were joined by five other overseas ministers from Hawaii: Rev. Josho Yamamura, Rev. Junsei Nagayoshi, Rev. Tetsudo Takasaki, Rev. Hosho Sugawara, and Rev. Eisei Ikenaga.

The occasion also drew the attention of guests from Japan. Rev. Shinsho Koyama, representing Minobusan Kuonji Temple, Rev. Yuki Koshizuka of Anryuji Temple, and Rev. Gikyo Jimori of Renshoji Temple participated in the ceremony. Rev. Joyo Ogawa also participated as the former bishop of the Hawaii Nichiren Shu.

Over 150 members and well-wishers participated in the festivities. The ceremony was followed by a lunch reception in the social hall of Myohoji. Awards were presented to recognize outstanding members of Myohoji who have offered many years of service to the temple. A video outlining the history of Myohoji was also shown. It showed all the hard work and effort by

the ancestors of many of the present members of the temple. This was followed by stage performances by a Japanese dance troop, and I offered a song. The reception ended with Rev. Ikenaga offering a calligraphy demonstration.

The 80th Anniversary celebration also marked the retirement of Rev. Eijo Ikenaga as the head priest of Honolulu Myohoji. He had served for over 50 years from 1958 to 2010. He succeeded in building the peace tower containing the Buddha's ashes, the main prayer hall, and the Honolulu Myohoji Cultural Center. Rev. Ikenaga is succeeded by Rev. Josho Yamamura, who was installed as the sixth head priest of Myohoji on May 30, 2010.



Rev. Eijo Ikenaga retiring after over 50 years of service



Front view of Myohoji



Newly installed Rev. Josho Yamamura



Gathered together inside the Hondo of Honolulu Myohoji to celebrate the 80th anniversary

## Seventh World Missionary Conference Held

By Sandra Seki

The Missionary Department of the Nichiren-shu Headquarters held its annual World Missionary Conference at Shumuin (Nichiren shu Headquarters) in Ikegami, Tokyo, from June 29 through July 1, 2010.

Eighteen overseas missionaries from the United States, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Canada, Italy, England and Brazil gathered to exchange their updated information about their individual temples and to confirm the worldwide campaign of spreading the Odaimoku.

Rev. Ryokou Koga, director of the Missionary Department started off the meeting with a prayer service and then Rev. Gen'ichi Oikawa, newly appointed manager of the International Missionary Department, introduced all the atten-

dees.

Rev. Chishin Hirai, director of Nichiren Buddhist International Center gave a lecture on the present and future of overseas missionary work. He said that although propagation has been progressing, the final goal would be when the whole world could chant the Odaimoku. Since there are 192 countries registered in the United Nations, he hoped that the Odaimoku would spread to all of them.

The meeting continued for two days with all of the 18 missionaries giving reports on their propagation strategy and their hopes for the future. Although each temple had different problems and difficulties, all the attendees were able to get an overall picture of what kind of missionary work was being done throughout the world.

The final day started off with a greeting from Chief Administrator Shobin Watanabe followed by a lecture on Hoshiki and Shomyo. Later individual interviews were carried out for all the overseas missionaries.

The three-day conference ended with many exchanges of ideas, suggestions and some changes in ways of propagation. Moreover, cooperation among the different temples was requested to realize Nichiren Shonin's wish of spreading the Odaimoku throughout the world for the happiness of mankind and for world peace.

### Calendar

#### June-July 2010

June 1: Minobusan, Founder's Hall, change of the Founder's robes  
June 4: Lecture on the Lotus Sutra in Cambodia  
June 15-17: Minobusan Kaishu-e, commemorating the day when Nichiren Shonin entered Minobusan (May 15, 1274)  
June 25: Memorial for Nitcho Shonin  
June 28-29: Training for Korean Followers held at Hodoji, Seoul  
June 29-July 1: The 7th World Missionary Conference  
June 30: Special Shingyodojo Completion Ceremony  
July 13-15: Bon Festival  
July 16: 751st year since the presentation of the Rissho Ankokuron  
July 27-30: Nichiren's doctrine study session at Shumuin

by Rev. Tsuoh Yokoi

## New York Peace March and Message from the Chief Administrator

By Rev. Chishin Hirai  
Nichiren Buddhist International Center

There are many marches and parades in New York every year. These marches have the power not only to say something to New York but also to appeal to the entire United States and the world. There was a special march on May 2, 2010, which had a very important meaning for Nichiren Shu.

New York is home to the headquarters of the United Nations, and it is a center for business, art, and culture in the US. However, New York is not just a city in the US. It is a center for international politics because of the UN. The UN is the world's largest international organization and consists of 192 nations. Many topics are discussed influencing our everyday lives.

The UN consists of many councils and committees such as the Security Council, and many treaties are signed through the UN. One of them is the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The NPT is signed by countries which promise not to have nuclear weapons and countries which promise not to spread the weapons.

The UN has a review conference for the NPT every five years. President Barack Obama said in Prague, the Czech Republic, that the United States would take concrete steps toward a world without nuclear weapons. Since the review conference discusses the fear of nuclear weapons against human beings, we all have to pay attention to it and it is very important for all of us.

There is a committee concerning nuclear policy within Nichiren Shu called the Risho Heiwa no Kai (Ri-

ssho Peace Committee). The committee was established in 1969 and has been working for world peace since then. One of their projects is a peace march to take place when the review conference is held. The committee has walked for peace whenever they have held the review conference. The peace marches are highly evaluated by every Secretary-General of the UN and influence the results of its discussion. 20 members of the Risho Peace Committee (including Rev. Shun'ei Kawasaki, the chairman of the committee) came all the way from Japan and joined the march, which totaled about 20,000 people. At the end of the march, the committee presented a petition against Nuclear Arms with about 85,000 signatures to the UN. These were collected by Nichiren Shu from all over Japan.

Rev. Ryusho Jeffus wrote details about this peace march in the June issue of the Nichiren Shu News.

What we have to know about this year's peace march is that the Risho Peace Committee presented an official message from the chief administrator of Nichiren Shu, Rev. Shobin Watanabe, to the Secretary-General of the UN through the chairman of the NPT. This is a very important thing for us, too. On behalf of the entire Nichiren Shu, the chief administrator expressed our will for peace and our stance against nuclear weapons in public. Of course, we have been insisting on world peace. However, we seldom make this kind of public announcement at the center of international politics. This message is not only a formal announcement to the world, but it is also encouragement for us to make every effort to realize world peace without nuclear weapons. The message of the chief administrator was also published in the June issue of Nichiren Shu News.

## Memorial Service in Palau

By Sandra Seki

A group of 15 priests and followers led by Rev. Nissho Kanno, head priest of Kaichoji Temple, Shizuoka, visited the Republic of Palau from June 14-18.

The main purpose of this visit was to conduct memorial services at several war memorial sites in Palau. This country which consists of more than 200 islands, lies in the western Pacific. It was also a place where many soldiers (more than 20,000) both Japanese and American lost their lives, during World War II. It became an independent country in 2007.



Pilgrimage group at Pelelieu Elementary School

Rev. Kanno has visited Palau several times because he was a novice at Zuirinji Temple, Yanaka, Tokyo. At the time, the abbot of this temple was the late Rev. Kennei Kobayashi, and Rev. Kanno studied under this abbot. Rev. Kobayashi had a strong relationship with the people of Palau and he often visited the islands and donated educational equipment and stationary goods for the children. He was known to the people of Palau as the "Father of the children of Palau." The government of Palau honored his achievements and presented an island to him for his long years of dedication. The island was formerly owned by the Morei family who

still take care of the island. A special monument was erected on this island for the late Rev. Kobayashi and every three or four years, Rev. Kanno and Rev. Kenjo Kobayashi, the son of the late Rev. take a group of priests and followers to pay their respects.



### Rev. Kanno Preaches (7)

"When you wish to purchase something nice for your parents without having money, you had better smile at them a few times a day."

("Ueno-dono Gohenji" 1275)

#### 'Smile'

When we can't afford to buy something for our parents as a gesture of practicing filial piety, we should greet them with a smile two or three times a day.

All in all, this is a wise remark. "Filial duty" has become almost a dead concept, nowadays, and in that sense, there may be few who admit it as a "wise remark." However, everybody will agree with Nichiren Shonin, thinking of another popularly known remark, "one will become grateful for parents after one has children."

However, is it right for us to demand it one-sidedly from children? Thinking of the phrase "prime

the pump," parents (including parents-in-law) should know their smile is also sought for. It has long been said that "parents exist although we are reluctant to show devotion to them."

The day will necessarily come when we become parents and parents-in-law. We will then understand what our Founder meant in those words. His instruction for giving a smile holds true not only in the parent and child relationship but in our social life. We often encounter raised eyebrows these days. Let us keep in mind these words of our Founder.

(Rev. Nissho Kanno, head priest of Kaichoji Temple, Shizuoka)

Another important part of the trip was to deliver stationary goods and sports equipment to the children of Pelelieu Elementary School. Pelelieu is one of the larger islands of Palau and a place that has had cultural exchange with Japan from the 1920s.

Although the school was closed for

the summer holidays, the group was met by Vice Principal, Ms. Anemary Sanbal, and about 15 children. The children were excited to see the boxes of stationary goods, origami kits, and most of all soccer, volleyball, and basketball equipment. In return they sang the anthem of Palau for the group.

## Hokekyo Lecture in Cambodia

By Rev. Tsuoh Yokoi  
Missionary Department, Shumuin

On June 4, 2010, Nichiren Shu held a Hokekyo Lecture in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, through the cooperation of the Ministry of Cults and Religions of Cambodia and the Catuddisa Sangha. This lecture was held not only for priests but also the general public, and about 100 people gathered to listen to it.

The lecturer was Rev. Yosei Ikegami of Minobusan University, who is a specialist on Southeast Asian Buddhism. This has become an annual event for Rev. Ikegami and in the limited amount of time he has, he has been explaining various chapters of the

Lotus Sutra. First, he reviewed last year's lecture about the Eternal Buddha who appears in Chapter 16 of the Lotus Sutra and then went on to explain the differences in the two branches of Buddhism, the Hinayana and Mahayana. In Cambodia and most parts of Southeast Asia, Hinayana Buddhism and the faith in the past Buddhas are popular, whereas in Japan, Mahayana Buddhism is predominant. He also explained "Tangyoraihai," the way of respecting and revering others before oneself.

In the afternoon, the attendees participated in the "World Simultaneous Service for Peace," at Myohokke-in Temple, hosted by the Catuddisa Sangha. This temple was built by the Sangha near Killing Fields. After the

service, the group did angya (march and chant the Odaimoku) to the memorial tower at Killing Fields, and held a prayer for peace service there.

Prior to this event, Rev. Kangyo Noda, head of the Nichiren Shu Southeast Asia New Propagation Region, gave a talk on the "Effectiveness of Mutual Help and Cooperation in a Community," in the light of Nichiren Shonin's teachings.

(Tr. S. S.)



Rev. Ikegami giving a lecture at Myohokke-in



Various groups of people gathered to listen to the lecture

## Small Talk on Various Topics of Buddhism (1)

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido

### Motive of Sakyamuni Leaving Home

About 3,000 years ago, Sakyamuni was born as a prince at Lumbini in Nepal near India. The Himalaya Mountains could be seen afar from his beautiful birthplace. There was a small nation of Sakya in the southern part of the Indian plain of Nepal. It was a very good place, not so cold, not so hot. Sakyamuni is said to have been a prince born in a castle. As for Sakyamuni's life, there are various views because it was about 3000 years ago. I want to introduce his biography based on the "Daichido-ron." His mother, Queen Maha Maya, died a week or 10 days after his birth. Because of that, he was brought up by his mother's younger sister, Maha Prajapati. He was also brought up by his father, King Suddhodana, with great care. Because he was a Prince of the Sakya nation, he was blessed with a good life. Though he spent a rich daily life, he



Rev.  
Gyokai Sekido

thought of the problem of sufferings in life.

An episode tells us of his motive for leaving home when he went out of the gates in all directions of the castle, and into the city.

One day, he met an old man when he went out from the east gate. Another day he met a diseased man at the south gate, and met the line of a funeral at the west gate. Lastly, he met a priest when he went out from the north gate. As a result, he met the four types of sufferings. They are the sufferings of birth, old age, sickness, and death. Why does a human being grow old, why does he become sick, and why does a human being die? He decided to adopt the aim of the priest to pursue the true nature of sufferings about the mind. He abandoned

his position and property, and he escaped from the castle at the age of nineteen.

Sakyamuni faced the reality of life squarely and realized that life did not turn out the way he thought it should. There are many worries in life, and they are immeasurable. He pursued them, and called them sufferings. These sufferings can't be avoided even if we want to avoid them. It is necessary for us to know the real aspects of sufferings, and to deepen our experience. Then, the Buddha expounds transcendence from there, that is perfect enlightenment.

It is written in the "Kyodai-sho" (Writings of Nichiren Shonin Volume Six) that King Suddhodana, worried about his son, and made 2,000 retainers watch the gates in all directions of the castle but, Sakyamuni disobeyed his father and became a priest. A child should follow his parents in general society. But it becomes filial piety with Buddhism when a person realizes the

perfect enlightenment. Then, it is an actual repayment to save his parents from the sufferings of life and to lead them to the Buddha's peaceful world. The "Kyodai-sho" is the letter of Nichiren Shonin admiring the deep faith of the Ikegami brothers. They overcame their parents' opposition, and carried through their faith. They got their parents' understanding at last.

(to be continued)



A sitting statue of Sakyamuni Buddha; Kyoto Hompoji Temple

## Day Long Retreat for Theological Seminarians

By Rev. Ryusho Jeffus  
Nichiren Buddhist Temple of  
Charlotte

Recently I was contacted by Samuel Dansokho, a professor at the Hood Theological Seminary, a Christian Seminary, located in Salisbury, North Carolina. He informed me that he was teaching a summer course on world religions and was interested in exposing his class to the Buddhist faith. Over several weeks we exchanged e-mail and visits to iron out the details of this activity.

Finally it was decided that the class would spend a day at Myoshoji engaging in a variety of traditional Buddhist services and activities. The class that he would be bringing would consist of 12 students and himself, all of whom are either already Christian ministers or finishing up their ministerial training.

On the morning of June 15, they all arrived here at Myoshoji. The first thing they all did was to sit through a brief orientation about what the day's activities would be like and what to expect. Also they were instructed to pay particular attention to how they treated each other. They were also told

that the day would be mostly quiet and that they should refrain from idle conversations to focus their minds on being engaged in the moment. Also it was pointed out that they were under no obligation to engage in any activity that they felt would go against their Christian beliefs so things like offering incense were not required. Also they were asked to be respectful of those who chose to do those kinds of activities and not judge others in terms of their own faith, but to be open to respecting each other.

We started with a formal service consisting of shomyo and sutra recitation, chanting the Odaimoku and incense offerings. I had some reservations not knowing how the group would actually respond to Buddhist practice. I was put at ease right away, because I heard so many people reciting the passages and chanting along with me. Many even chose to offer incense. What a wonderful experience that we could all celebrate together with openness and respect the wonderful Dharma.

After the service we did Shakyō and Shabutsu. I had made prior arrangements with Prof. Dansokho that we would offer the students two

options in order to engage in this practice of meditation. There would be an image of the Buddha for those who would like to draw the Buddha and we would offer a passage from the Bible for those who wished to write out scripture. Again, I was surprised by the fact that about half the class chose to draw the image of the Buddha. After we completed that we then had everyone sign and dedicate their work and we put them on the walls of the Hondo.

At the morning orientation, each person had been given a chore. After Shakyō/Shabutsu everybody cleaned the temple, set the table, and prepared lunch.

After the meal we had time for everyone to share their impressions, make comments, and ask questions for me to answer during the afternoon. Each person was allowed three minutes to speak. Most people did not take their entire three minutes but we all sat quietly respecting each person's time even if they didn't use it.

After lunch and clean up, we set the chairs up in the Hondo for the remaining activities in the afternoon.

The afternoon session was composed of a lecture during which the questions the students posed were

answered. We then closed up the day with a short meditation session.

This was a fantastic opportunity for me to share the Buddha's teachings with a very respectful and open group of people who had perhaps never known anything about Buddhism. It was also a wonderful opportunity for me to get to know a group of open, respectful, Christians who shared the day towards a common goal of peace and harmony. I hope that I get the opportunity to do something like this again. Thank you to all the students and the professor at the Hood Theological Seminary.



Participants in Day Long Retreat, Front row, L. to R.: Randall Manser, Jeremiah Pegram, Ryusho Jeffus, Sandra Ireson; Mid. row, L. to R.: Linda Velto, Tonja Thorpe, Ruth Brown, Freddie Fox, Essie May; Back row, L. to R.: Samuel Dansokho, Roy Miller, Fredna Grimmett, William Dyer, Chuck Ireson

## Final 5th Year Event Held

By Rev. Chitoku Kawaguchi  
Singapore Daimokuji

Singapore Daimokuji welcomed the Otonowakai based in Kyoto and Nichiren Shu priests from Japan to hold their final fifth year event. Otonowakai performed gagaku music and dance on Sunday, April 18. There were two performances, one in the afternoon and the other in the evening at the Japanese Association Auditorium. Gagaku music, Shomyo and dance expressed a solemn world and spread the grace of traditional music and the heart of peacefulness to around 500 Singaporeans.

On the same day, a Ceremony of Offering Gagaku was conducted at

Daimokuji Temple. During the ceremony, many shomyo and one piece of gagaku music were offered to the Triple Gems. At the end of the ceremony, a gagaku dance, "Nasori," was performed for members of Singapore Daimokuji. This was the final event for the Singapore Daimokuji's fifth year anniversary celebration.

A welcome party was held in the afternoon, at which, among other things, the participants could deepen their friendship. The Chairman and members of Daimokuji and many priests from Japan presented their impression about gagaku, faith, and differences between Japanese and Singaporean members.

Mr. Chua Guan Chew, chairman of

Daimokuji, said in his speech: "The Gagaku concert was a very big project. However, through the fifth anniversary events, Daimokuji has confirmed members' unity and has been growing the heart of 'Itai Doshin (Different Bodies but One Heart).' By listening to the gagaku performance, I was able to visualize the scene of Chapter 16, 'The gods are beating heavenly drums, making various kinds of music, and raining mandarava flowers on the great multitude and me.' All members had an enjoyable time."

On April 19, the Otonowakai visited two local kindergartens. They introduced the Buddhist music to the kindergarteners.

The Otonowakai was established in the ancient capital, Kyoto, in 1996. Since then, the Musical Group of the Imperial Household Agency intensely

guides the Otonowakai to develop gagaku skills and its spirit. The Otonowakai has shown their achievement at annual concerts and overseas performances in Toronto, Boston, India, and Sydney. And they have opened gagaku classes at local schools to transmit Japanese traditional music to the next generation.

Rev. Chikou Kawaguchi, chairman of the Otonowakai, commented about the overseas performances. "I wish that many people in the world could experience the gracefulness of gagaku music and feel the world of the Buddha. Our sound spreads the peaceful heart to the world. And I hope that this helps propagate Nichiren Shu."

Peaceful winds blew throughout Singapore as the events for the fifth anniversary of Daimokuji came to an end.

# Temple Events

## Toronto Nichiren Buddhist Temple

By Rev. Kenno Fukushima

Recently, there was a man that I had met at a language school. He had escaped from Afghanistan with his wife and two children. He speaks English much better than I do, but at times, he asks me some questions about vocabulary. Each time he asks me, I use my electronic dictionary to search for the vocabulary. One day, I asked him if he did not have his own dictionary. He replied, "I would like to have an English dictionary but it is too expensive." I felt sorry for him and gave him an old dictionary I had at home. He was very happy.

However, he still continued to ask me questions so I asked him what had happened to the dictionary I gave him, or if he had forgotten it at home. "At school, if I ask you a question, you help me out. However, my wife and children, left at home, do not have anyone to teach them. That's why I left the dictionary at home so that we can all use it together. I come here directly after work so if I have the dictionary with me, they cannot use it," he said apologetically. I felt ashamed for not realizing his feelings, and to think that he was a forgetful person. I had forgotten that he was struggling to make a living and could not afford a dictionary for his family. In fact, I believe the thought did not even occur to me since I am stained with the Japanese sense of having great economic power.

Normally, I spend a much simpler life compared to general Japanese people. Yet, I may have been feeling arrogant by thinking that I am practicing hard living my life this way. Perhaps I may have forgotten to be considerate. It is not that I cannot buy something. I am just making a living without buying. Thus, I am not under pressure.

I had forgotten that people who have escaped from their poverty-stricken or conflict-ridden country could not afford to buy certain things, even if they wished to do so. I must say that the moment a reverend becomes arrogant, it is when they are to be disqualified.

In the Lotus Sutra, it says "Anokutara Sanmyaku Sanbodai." The base of this teaching is "our own dignity as a

human being." The action is to realize "the dignity of others," and to respect them regardless of their background, age, gender, belief, or if they are rich or poor. You should not be able to kill the person you look up to, start a war or terrorize other countries, or discriminate against them.

In today's world, people do not realize their "own dignity," nor "the dignity of others." It seems I am still far-off in the distance to learn this as well.

## Portland Nichiren Buddhist Temple

By Rev. Myosho Obata

### Celebration of Beiju (88th birthday)

On this sacred occasion, we held a celebration for Mrs. Emiko Fujimoto and Mr. Noboru Okazaki who both turned 88 this year. They have dedicated themselves to our temple since they were young. We were very happy to celebrate their 88th birthdays. The honored elders were dressed in festive red and they received commemorative gifts and many cheers for the celebration.



Celebrating their 'Beiju' (88th) birthday, L. to R.: Mrs. Emiko Fujimoto and Mr. Noboru Okazaki

## Hilo Nichiren Mission

By Rev. Hosho Sugawara

It has been over four months since I arrived here in Hilo, Hawaii.

During this period, my biggest task was to hold a Tsunami memorial service at the State Park. We held the 50th Tsunami Memorial Service on Sunday, May 23, at the Wailoa River State Recreation Area in our Nichiren Buddhist style by chanting with drums and offering incense to all the victims. President Nakagawa of our church and I, made the special Ihai, with the victims' names written on it. We placed the Ihai at the altar and prayed in front of it.

We also lighted 61 candles on the ground around the Shimmachi Tsunami Monument as a memorial to all the victims. I gave a short speech for the victims and those in attendance. In the speech, I said, "It is the everlasting and unchanging rule of this world that everything is created by a series of causes and conditions and everything changes, nothing remains constant. This place is a park. Some people are enjoying sports, some people are fishing. As time passes, people start to forget the damage of the Tsunami. Those gathered here this evening are very small in number. Let's have this Tsunami Memorial Ceremony every year from now on. The heart of our prayers will reach not only the victims but also everyone in the world."

This service's article was in the local newspaper "Tribune Herald" on Friday, June 4.

Secondly, as one of our biggest tasks, we are holding a gathering to show the movie "GATE." This is a documentary film that was related to the atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II. Following the 2005 videotaping of a 1,600-mile walk by Buddhist monks from San Francisco to Trinity Test Site in New Mexico, the location of the first atomic bomb detonation, the movie was made in Japan by an American director who was adopted into a Japanese family in Hiroshima and raised in Japan.

"GATE" is obviously nothing like the hitherto known movie related to the atomic bomb. It is not only about the dismal state of affairs, but also having knowledge of the nuclear power or the history of the Pacific War. I hope more people in Hawaii will watch this movie, because this movie is a great opportunity to realize the immense destruction of nuclear weapons and wars.

This article about the movie showing was also covered by all the local newspapers on Friday, May 7.

## Puunene Nichiren Mission

By Rev. Tetsudo Takasaki

The annual Hatsu-Bon Service and Bon Dance Festi-

val were held on Saturday, June 12, 2010. The Bon Service had prayers offered by, Rev. Eisei Ikenaga of the Honolulu Betsuin, Rev. Junsei Nagayoshi of the Wahiawa Nichiren Mission and Rev. Hosho Sugawara of the Hilo Nichiren Mission.

"Hatsu-Bon" is the first Bon season for newly deceased spirits. At the service, we particularly prayed for the newly deceased spirits of those who had passed away this year.

After the service, a Bon Dance was held from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. Many people came and continued to dance for two hours. Members and friends of the Puunene Nichiren Mission took two weeks to prepare much food for sale at the food booth and we sold lima beans manju, sushi rolls, chow-fun noodles, nishime (nimono), shoyu chicken, roast pork, curry rice, baked cakes, shaved ice, and cold drinks. All the food we prepared was sold out. This year, we had a new plan. We played the song "Hokey-Pokey" for the kids before the Bon Dance started, and we gave a free ticket to play Yo-Yo for the kids who danced to the music. Many small kids also enjoyed the Bon Dance this time because of this event. Members of the Puunene Nichiren Mission and the resident minister, Rev. Tetsudo Takasaki, expressed their appreciation to all the helpers and visitors.

## Italy-Renkoji

By Rev. Shoryo Tarabini

**Editor's Note:** Rev. Tarabini first started Renkoji in the city of Villasanta in the province of Milan in 2005. Though he had many cooperative members in the group, there were many conflicts which ended up in a court case with some neighbors who were against his practices. With support from Nichiren Shu, he was able to

find a better place for propagation in a rural area outside Milan this year.

Since moving from the suburbs of Milan to the Piedmonte region (area between Torino and Milan) our temple activities have begun to take on a new energy. Many people have begun to work hard in many areas to propagate the Dharma, help out in translations, membership statistics, and many other things.

Besides our weekly Sunday services, which begin with a spiritual preparation of meditation followed by sutra recitation, each week we study from the Three Fold Lotus Sutra, Nichiren Shonin's writings, and other facets of basic Buddhist concepts and values.

The membership has begun to grow and expand into neighboring countries, with Nichiren Shu practitioners in all parts of Italy, Northern and Southern France, Spain (primarily Barcelona), Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, Greece, Poland, and now even in far-away French-speaking Congo in the African continent. Notwithstanding the distance, many believers come to Renkoji from all over Italy and other countries. I also try to travel to many of those areas by either car or plane in order to visit the believers. We have come up with some not-so-traditional but creative ways to keep people informed and help them feel more connected to their temple, such as e-mailing sermons, news and various translations or by conducting study lectures or discussion meetings via skype or pre-recorded videos.

We are now discussing and making preparations for further translations, study materials, videos, the grand (official) opening of Renkoji and a future "Thank you pilgrimage" to Kuonji, Minobusan, and other principle temples in Japan.



Renkoji, new location in the Piemonte region

## Nichiren Shu News

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