

Nichiren Shu News

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Episodes of O-eshiki

Editor's Note: Nichiren Shonin passed away at the mansion of local lord Ikegami Munenaka, where now stands the Daibo Hongyo-ji Temple, Ikegami, Tokyo, on October 13 (lunar calendar: in the middle of November by the present solar calendar), 1282 at the age of 60. We, followers of Nichiren Shonin, observe the memorial day ceremony, popularly known as O-eshiki, on October 13, preceded by festivities on the day before, characterized by "mando (10 thousand lanterns)" processions. Following are the stories related with the O-eshiki memorial day events written by Rev. Gyokai Sekido (gs) and Rev. Hoyu Maruyama (hm).

Cherry Blossom of O-eshiki

Unexpectedly cherry blossoms bloomed in the garden of the mansion of Ikegami Munenaka, a leading follower of Nichiren Shonin, at the last moment of Nichiren's life. Cherry blossoms grieved over the death of Nichiren as his disciples and followers did. Even today, the cherry blossoms at the Hongyo-ji Temple of Ikegami, Tokyo, bloom in autumn (photo). The memorial ser-



vice for Nichiren, known as o-eshiki, is held in Nichiren Buddhist temples throughout Japan annually from October to November. After the cherry blossoms that blossomed at the passing of Nichiren, artificial cherry blossoms attached to tree branches decorate the Main Hall of the temples all over Japan. (gs)

The Last Sermon

Nichiren gave a lecture on the "Rissho ankoku-ron" just before his death. It was his last sermon. The pillar which he leaned on at the time of his last sermon is kept carefully in the Hongyo-ji Temple even today. The "Rissho ankoku-ron" was copied by Nichiren himself many times. And it is known that he gave a lecture on it to his disciples and followers many times. The "Ichidai goji keizu" is a genealogical chart of the Buddha's lifetime teachings made by Nichiren. He used this chart for his sermons. Several charts made by Nichiren still exist today. It is believed that one of them was used for the lecture on the "Rissho ankoku-ron" because quotations cited in it are the same as those in the "Rissho ankoku-ron." The handwriting of this chart suggests that it was written at the time when Nichiren was on Mt. Minobu. We can guess how he gave lectures to his disciples on Mt. Minobu. Nichiren submitted

the "Rissho ankoku-ron" to the Kamakura shogunate in 1260 and he passed away in 1282. We can see how important this writing was in his life. (gs)

Distribution of Articles Left by Nichiren

At the funeral of Nichiren it was agreed that his Six Elder Disciples would maintain Mt. Minobu in turn. At the same time articles left behind by Nichiren were distributed. A

record kept then still exists today, making it clear that articles left by the late Nichiren such as stoles and horse were distributed among his disciples and followers. Among the important items was a statue of Sakyamuni Buddha and his personal copy of the Lotus Sutra. The former was given to Nichiro while the latter was given to Nissho. When Nichiren had been banished to Ito in Izu Province (Shizuoka Prefecture), he was able to cure the illness of the feudal lord of Ito. In gratitude, the lord gave Nichiren a standing statue of the Buddha, which had been caught in the net of a fishing boat. Ever since then Nichiren treasured the statue with great care. It was given to Nichiro, a disciple of Nichiren since childhood.

Nichiren's personal copy of the Lotus Sutra was filled with various quotations from Buddhist sutras and explanatory materials jotted down by Nichiren himself. Called "Chu Hokekyo (Lotus Sutra with Annotation)," this sutra is kept in the Myohokke-ji Temple at Mishima (Shizuoka Prefecture) today. This is the tangible result of enormous number of books read by Nichiren in the study of the Lotus Sutra. Nissho was one of Nichiren's principal disciples, and he and Nichiren had been friends ever since the time when they had studied on Mt. Hiei. (gs)

Statue of Nichiren (7th Memorial Service)

A statue of Nichiren was made for his seventh memorial service at the suggestion of two principal disciples (Nichiji and Nichijo) and followers. This is the wooden statue of the Ikegami Hommonji Temple. The bronze container with the ashes of Nichiren was discovered inside the statue by the investigation of 1925.

It provided us with accurate information regarding when the statue was made and those who were involved in the project. This statue holds a hossu (priest's horsehair flapper), which is said to have been made of the hair of Nichiren's mother, in the right hand and one roll of the sutra in the left hand. It is believed that this statue reproduces Nichiren's figure precisely because it was made shortly after his death. It is the robust physique of a man who grew up in the seaside. The clerical robe is carved on the statue but not the stole. It is conceivable that one of Nichiren's stoles was put on the statue. This statue of Nichiren at the Hommonji Temple is designated as an important cultural asset of Japan. (gs)

Buso O-meshi-ko

Prior to the o-eshiki service, the clothing on the statue of Nichiren enshrined in the Hommonji Temple is changed from summer wear to winter wear. It has been the custom that the ceremonial robe and stole are donated by devotees of the temple but the white kimono (o-meshi) is by the members of the Buso O-meshi-ko (Buso Association for Donation of O-meshi) centering in northern Kawasaki City, Northern Kawasaki was along the "silk road" of Japan where farmers raised mulberry trees and produced silk. After the Meiji Restoration it was the distribution center of silk and silk products, which were main export items of Japan. The Association donated the light summer wear (white kimono) in spring and thick winter wear at the o-eshiki in autumn. The white clothes they donate are made in a special sewing method without a knot. (hm)

Overseas Propagation by Nichiji (13th Memorial Service)

Nichiji is one of the Six Elder Disciples of Nichiren. Holding the 13th memorial service of Nichiren on the 13th of the ninth month in 1294 at his temple in Matsuno, Nichiji visited the tomb of Nichiren on Mt. Minobu on the 13th day of the 10th month (13th memorial day of Nichiren), expressing his determination to engage in propagation abroad. He left home for China on New Year's Day of the following year. His footprints after that are not clear. He went to Hokkaido by way of the Northeastern District of Honshu, and is said to have gone to the continent of Asia. There exist remains of Nichiji in the Horei-in Temple of Kuroishi and the Rengeji Temple of Aomori City (Aomori Prefecture); the Myooji Temple of Hakodate, the Myokenji Temple of Todohokke-mura, and the Hokkeji Temple of Matsumae (in Hokkaido). Recently, articles claimed to have been left by Nichiji have been excavated in China, but they are not confirmed yet. (gs)



'Never Mind Ikkan-sambyaku'

Many mando or manto (meaning ten thousand lanterns) (photo) are "donated" to the temple where the o-eshiki service is held. People parade through the street leading to the temple with the accompaniment of drums, bells and flutes. The parade is led by a fireman's banner, with the banner bearer shouting "ikkan sambyaku dodemo yoi (never mind about the day's wage)." It shows the spirit of the Nichiren Buddhist wage earner. (hm)

Comic Story

Confirmed by the temperament of the common people of Edo (Tokyo), the o-eshiki became a popular annual event in the Edo (Tokugawa) Period, producing many stories based on the o-eshiki which were told by comic storytellers and narrated by naniwabushi reciters. The following is one of these stories.

There was a storekeeper and his employee, a young boy named Seikichi, who always said something unnecessary. One day the storekeeper was having his shoulders massaged by Seikichi. Their conversation revealed that they were followers of Nichiren Buddhism. Seikichi's parents had prayed to Seisho-ko (Lord Kato Kiyomasa) for a baby, and as a result a baby boy was born. This boy was named Seikichi after Seisho-ko. Lord Kato Kiyomasa was a devoted follower of Nichiren Buddhism. He fought hard under the "flag of the daimoku" in Korea, where he led a Japanese army sent by Toyotomi Hideyoshi. He was deified after death and was worshiped as a guardian deity. Many manto (10,000 lanterns) parade with people striking portable drums, danced by the o-eshiki of the Ikegami Hommonji Temple. Seikichi said, "Ikegami o-eshiki; drums are struck; don! don! don!" The storekeeper said, "Why do you strike my head?" Seikichi answered, "I mistook your head for a drum." (punch line) (gs)

Request of Propagation in the Imperial Capital

Prior to the last sermon, Nichiren Shonin called Kyoichimaro (1269-1342) to his bedside, requesting him to spread Nichiren Buddhism in Kyoto, a cherished plan Nichiren was

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The State of Ichinen Sanzen (4)

By Rev. Kanji Tamura
(translated by Rev. Kanshin Mochida)

Mutual Possession of Ten Realms

The practice of chanting the daimoku taught by Nichiren Shonin or his actual missionary works is based on the doctrine of "Three Thousand Existences Contained in One Thought" doctrine, meaning that all existing worlds are contained in our minds at any moment. The numeral symbol of '3,000' is derived by multiplying the conceptual categories of existence: 'Mutual Possession of Ten Realms (10 x 10),' 'Ten aspects' and 'Three Factors of Existences.'

Emphasizing the importance of 'Mutual Possession of Ten Realms,' Nichiren Shonin writes in his "Kaimoku-sho (Open Your Eyes)," "The teaching of the '3,000 in one thought' is based on the 'Mutually-possessed characteristics of the Ten Realms.'

The teaching of the 'Mutual Possession of Ten Realms,' means that each of the ten realms of living beings (hell, realms of hungry spirits, beasts, asura demons, human beings, heavenly beings, sravaka, pratyekabuddha, bodhisattvas and Buddhas) contains the characteristics of the other nine realms. Therefore, the inhabitants of hell possess the minds of hungry spirits, beasts . . . or human beings . . . and also of Buddhas even though it may be very slight. Then those minds become the factors for them to improve themselves towards the upper realms, opening the way of salvation.

In the meantime, the Buddha is able to reach out for the salvation of inhabitants of hell because the realm of Buddhas also possesses the mind of

hell slightly. In other words, all living beings including us contain the Buddha-nature (the original quality of Buddha) as well as the quality of hell.

We are not born good or evil. Our way of living is decided, rather, depending on which mind we nurture, which mental state among the Ten Realms we try to bring up.

Nichiren Shonin states in his "Kanjin Honzon-sho (A Treatise Revealing the Spiritual Contemplation and the Most Venerable One)," "To get angry is hell; to be greedy is hungry spirits; ignorance is beasts; being wicked is asura demons; being peaceful is human beings; to get pleased is heavenly beings; to feel the transiency of life is for sravaka and pratyekabuddha, and the mind of compassion is bodhisattvas."

Each human being has a deferent character. Some are passionate, but others are eccentric, cheerful, or sympathetic. . . . Each of us possesses various characteristics of the Ten Realms, and the deference of their mixture would be reflected in each character. Any person of character inevitably has an evil mind even if it may be very small, and any wicked person could also have a righteous mind no matter how slight it may be. It would be the invocation of hell within human beings to have recourse to violence, drawing terrorism or wars, and the mind praying for the peace of the world would be the invocation of the compassion of bodhisattvas. It is essential therefore for us to educate a person or lead the society in the right direction, that is to say, to nurture the Buddha-nature and to eliminate evil nature in man.

Nichiren Shonin said that the realm of Buddhas is quite difficult to manifest itself among the Ten

Realms. In other words, he meant that it is not easy to realize the Buddha-nature in us but the fact that we have ability to believe in the Lotus Sutra shows that the realm of Buddhas is contained in the realm of human beings. Nichiren also said that as Sakyamuni, who was born in the realm of human beings, became the Buddha, we should believe that the realm of human beings possesses the realm of Buddhas. By receiving and upholding the daimoku, he said, we would all be bestowed the merits of the realm of Buddhas from Sakyamuni.

Ten Aspects (1)

The Ten Aspects are the actual conditions of existence of each living being in the Ten Realms. As each living existence consists of ten elements, they are called the ten aspects, which are described in the "Expedients" chapter of the Lotus Sutra:

1. The Appearances: the external appearances of all beings.

2. The Natures: the internal quality, mind or character of each being. The Appearances and Natures are inseparable. For example, on the face or shape of a person, his character and quality are inevitably reflected.

3. The Entities: the substances consisting of the Appearances and Natures. Like the substance, the body and mind of each existence consists of an individual.

4. The Powers: the internal energy, motivation or will. It means the internal energy causing the action or development outward.

5. The Activities: the condition that the powers is being developed or practiced outward. The will causes activities, and the activities must be based on the function of will or moti-

vation, and the basis of forming will depends on the character of each being.

6. The Primary Causes: the (direct) cause.

7. Environmental Causes: the secondary causes which affect the results, helping the Primary Cause.

8. The Effects: the result formed by the Primary and Environmental Causes.

9. The Rewards and Retributions: the secondary results derived from the Effects. Seeking the causes of 'catching a cold,' we may find a primary cause of 'staying in a cold place for a long time,' and an environmental cause of 'failing to condition the body afterwards.' The results of 'catching a cold' may draw the secondary result of 'having to take a day off' and so on.

Likewise all things in this world are connected like a chain by the Primary Causes, Environmental Causes, Effect, and Rewards and Retributions. Therefore, to seek good Effects, the good Primary Causes need to be rooted, and the good Environmental Causes need to be connected there. Then, through the good effects achieved, will be born the better Rewards and Retributions. This is the law (of the Causes and Effects). Therefore, when one tries to improve oneself, the good results cannot be realized when one does the same as before without trying to do something new.

10. The Equality of the Nine aspects: The nine elements from the Appearances to the Rewards and Retributions cannot be separated and they are ultimately one. When the practitioner learns the relationship between those Ten Aspects, he could observe all living beings, grasp their various circumstances thoroughly, and finally lead them (into the Buddhist way). This is the teaching of the Ten Aspects. **(to be continued)**

The Legend of Nichiren (11)

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph. D.

Renaming Himself Nichiren

Rencho left the Seicho-ji Temple and went to Kamakura. As the capital of the military government Kamakura was the political center of Japan in those days. He built a hermitage in the city, and he spread the teaching of the Lotus Sutra. Then he changed his name to Nichiren. "Nichi" of Nichiren means the sun, and "Ren" means a lotus. We do not know precisely when he changed his name. As for the circumstances of his name change, there is the following legend.

Narrowly escaping the pursuit of Steward Tojo Kagenobu, Rencho felt that he could not stay at Kominato any longer, so he decided to visit his

parents to say good-bye. His father and mother were waiting for him outside the gate though he was afraid that he would be unable to see them because he had escaped from the Seicho-ji Temple under turmoil. His parents took him in the house. Nichiren told them about his determination to go to Kamakura. His parents told him an old tale which was like a distant dream. When he was born, Mother dreamed that the sun god aboard a lotus flower appeared out at sea. At that time, Father scolded her for the strange dream, but now they realized that it was the sign for the birth of a saint.

They felt that their child's speech and action were more respectable than those of scholars of the various Bud-

dhist sects, and told their son that they decided to enter the priesthood. Determined to become their son's disciples, they changed their names, Father to Myonichi and Mother to Myoren. "Myo" was taken from "Myoho Renge-kyo (the Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma)." "Nichi (sun)" and "Ren (lotus)" were taken from "the sun" of the strange dream and "the flower of the lotus."

Then, Rencho renewed his determination, and renamed himself Nichiren, too. In other words, his name Nichiren represented his parents themselves.

Nichiren thus started the journey to Kamakura to spread the teaching of the Lotus Sutra.



Nichiren Shonin's mother dreams a dream of a sun god aboard a lotus flower appearing out at sea before she gives birth to Nichiren Shonin. The picture is reproduced from the collection of pictures depicting the life of Nichiren Shonin, painted by Tenrei Horiuchi and published by Suiryosha publishing company

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unable to accomplish. Entering the priesthood as a disciple of Nichiro, Kyoichimaro renamed himself as Nichizo and began carrying out his plan for propagation in the imperial capital of Kyoto after the twelfth memorial service of the Founder in 1293. First he underwent ascetic practice in Kamakura for 100 days during the coldest season of the year in order to see whether or not he had the physical and spiritual power to bear the expected persecution and strive for spreading the Dharma at the cost of

life as the Founder had done. This ascetic practice of Nichizo is said to



be the origin of the 100-day ascetic session at the Nakayama Hokekyoji Temple today.

Following the 100-day asceticism, Nichizo pursued the sites of Nichiren's persecution, from Kamakura to Sado Island. Thereafter he went to Kyoto through the northern coast of Honshu, where he wasted no time spreading Nichiren Buddhism and converting many Buddhist temples. In Kyoto, Nichizo engaged in the street-

corner preaching as Nichiren had done in Kamakura and was able to convert many townsmen including some influential people. Finally he was able to found the Myokenji Temple (photo), fulfilling the request of the Founder.

As a result there exist many Nichiren temples founded by Nichizo Shonin in Kyoto as well as the northern coast of Honshu today. As Nichizo passed away on the 13th of the 11th month, the term o-eshiki sometimes means the memorial service of Nichizo Shonin in northern and western Honshu. (hm)

Rev. Kanai Emphasizes Education for Lay People

Upon his election to new Bishop of NONA, Rev. Shokai Kanai, resident priest of the Los Angeles Nichiren Buddhist Temple, stressed the importance of education for lay people in an interview with the Nichiren Shu News. The election took place at the NONA convention held at the temple on August 29. He succeeded Rev. Kenjo Igarashi as Bishop of NONA.

Q: How do you evaluate the current activities of Nichiren Shu in the U.S.?

A: Considering our 90-year history, we have not grown bigger. Many

groups organized by lay people, such as NSA, Risho Koseikai, Shinran Kai and Shinnyo En, are increasing their membership in America.

Q: What should be done?

A: Mahayana Buddhism is supposed to be based on lay people. I would like to emphasize education for lay people by means of Dharma Conferences, seminars, study classes, services conducted by lay people, summer retreats for children and others.

Q: What are our activities in this regard?

A: An intensive seminar for lay people was held at the Los Angeles temple last year. I am planning to hold it

again on the first week of December. There will be three services a day plus shodaigyo, shakyo, shabutsu, meditation, lectures, taiko practice, and so forth.

Q: How about education for children?

A: Though devoted, Nichiren Shu members in the past were not able to teach children. It was a shame. I am planning to hold a summer camp for children near Big Bear Lake in the San Bernardino Mountains next summer.

When I was a minister of the Salt Lake Nichiren Buddhist Temple during the 1970's, I held Sunday school at the temple and at a member's

house every other week. I thought the children might have become Mormons after I left. However, when I visited Utah recently, I found that

they bought "Raihai Seiten (a service book)" to practice chanting at their home. Education during childhood is very important.

Q: What is your long-range plan of propagation?

A: I wish to establish a seminary for Nichiren Shu lay people who can practice Nichiren Shu

Buddhism any time of year for any length of time as they wish. I am looking for more information in this regard. (related stories on page 4)



Rev. Shokai Kanai

The Ten Aspects of All Existence

By Rev. Ryuei McCormick

In the previous article in this series, the ten worlds and the mutual possession of the ten worlds were discussed. These ten worlds consist of six lower worlds that are not worlds as such, but rather states of becoming through which sentient beings are constantly transmigrating from lifetime to lifetime or even from moment to moment. The four higher worlds are the states of those who have achieved some degree of awakening to the truth, or even full and complete awakening. It might be helpful to review these worlds again in terms of the character traits of those who are said to be in them:

The six lower worlds consist of the hell-dwellers, the hungry ghosts, animals, fighting demons, humanity, and the heavenly beings. The hell-dweller is obsessed with his or her own suffering to the exclusion of all else. It is a state characterized by intense anguish, lashing out in unthinking rage, self-pity, despair, and self-destructiveness. The hungry ghost is obsessed with satisfying a craving that can never be quenched. It is a state of self-destructive addiction or fixation where the desire itself has become an unceasing source of suffering. The state of animals is a little better, but is a state wherein one looks only for immediate gratification and short-term gains, and is heedless of consequences. The fighting demon is dominated by pride, arrogance and competition and is obsessed with the idea that someone else may get ahead of them or have more than they have. The state of humanity is a state of enlightened self-interest, capable of applying reason and insight in order to attain the objects of desire. Humans think things through and at least aspire to an ethical standard of conduct. The heavenly state is one of heedless bliss for one who has at least temporarily gained the object of desire—whether material or spiritual. But it is also a state prone to complacency, self-satisfaction, and even self-righteousness and is no more lasting than the other states.

The four higher worlds consist of the voice hearers, private-buddhas, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. The voice-hearers are those who hear the Buddha's teachings and take heed and put them into practice. The private-buddhas are those who really look at things as they are. The bodhisattvas are those who are filled with compassion for others. The Buddhas, the

awakened ones, are those who see that beyond birth and death and all its suffering is an underlying peace and joy to which nothing need be added and from which nothing can be taken away. They see the true nature of reality that is the Unborn, the Deathless.

As discussed in the previous installments of this series, these ten worlds are all embrace and are contained by the others. The lower worlds contain the higher as potentials within themselves, and the higher embrace the lower through their compassionate engagement with them. The Grand Master T'ien-t'ai believed that they were able to interact in this way because ultimately these were not ten separate worlds or states of being but ten different ways of expressing the causes and conditions that make up all that is. This underlying causal flux is what unites all the ten worlds and allows them to mutually embrace and flow into one another. The Grand Master T'ien-t'ai identified the passage on the "ten suchnesses" from the first prose section of the second chapter of the Lotus Sutra as a description of ten aspects of the interdependently transformative process that manifests all ten worlds. The passage, which is regularly recited as part of the daily practice of Nichiren Buddhists, is as follows:

"Only the Buddhas attained the highest truth, that is, the reality of phenomena in regard to their appearances as such, their natures as such, their entities as such, their powers as such, their activities as such, their primary causes as such, their environmental causes as such, their effects as such, their recompenses as such, and their equality as such despite these differences."

So what exactly are these ten aspects? Overall they are a means of pointing out and appreciating the dynamism and contingency of the phenomena that compose the ten worlds. Nothing is simply what it is. Everything is temporary and contingent on many factors and the give and take of relations both internal and external. Let's now take a look at each of the ten aspects:

Appearance is the external or objective aspect of phenomena. That which is seen, heard, smelled, touched, or tasted is included in this aspect. Appearance involves the way we experience people, places, things, and witnessed events in terms of the physical senses. One might think of the beauty of a lotus flower.

Nature is the internal or subjective

aspect of phenomena. This aspect focuses on the way that inner thoughts, feelings, memories, and associations color all that we experience, including ourselves. For instance, when many Buddhists view a lotus flower they often can't help but think of it as the seat of the Buddhas or as a symbol of awakening because of past associations of the lotus flower with these things.

Entity is the aspect that points to the total and ongoing integration of the first two aspects. Everything we experience is a composition of external sensory impressions and internal subjective impressions. Nothing can be reduced to only its objective or subjective side. In this way, the aforementioned lotus flower is at once a flower and also symbol of the Dharma. For others, it might represent something else, but it will always carry different subjective impressions for those who view it.

Power is the aspect of phenomena's ability to change and to effect change. Things are what they are because of what they can be and what they can do. But this power can only come into play under the right causes and conditions, including an act of will on the part of sentient beings who are responsible for their actions. The lotus flower has the power to bring beauty to a pond, parts of it can be eaten, and for Buddhists it has the power to exalt people's minds and make them think of attaining Buddhahood.

Activity is the aspect that deals with actual change. Just because something has the power to do something or become something, doesn't mean that it will do or become something. If "power" describes what something can do, "activity" describes what it is actually doing. A lotus flower coming into bloom would be one example of something actualizing its power.

Primary Cause is the aspect concerned with the main cause that brings something about. These causes have causes themselves and so tracing things back to a single cause is something that Buddhism declares an impossibility. Provisionally, however, key causes can often be identified. In terms of human life, thoughts, words, and deeds are viewed as primary causes that will become the seeds of our future sorrow, joy, or awakening. Returning to the lotus flower, the primary cause is obviously its seed.

Environmental Cause is the aspect that covers the many contributing causes or conditions that allow a pri-

mary cause to bring about its effect. Environmental causes are the muddy soil, pond water, and sunlight that allow the seed of a lotus flower to come to bloom.

Effect is the aspect that focuses on the most immediate and obvious outcome when causes and conditions bring about change. It is the seed taking root, or the blossoming of the lotus flower in a muddy pond.

Recompense is the aspect that covers the less obvious effects and far reaching repercussions of an event. When a lotus comes to bloom, for instance, it also contains seeds that will bring about more lotus flowers in the future. So the one effect sets the stage for many more effects.

Equality is the aspect that accounts for the total integration of all these aspects into a consistent but impermanent whole. When the causes and conditions change, so will all the other aspects and a new phenomena will appear. Each of the aspects are different from the others, but at the same time they are all equal in that none of them convey any permanent nature or substance. This lack of a fixed or independent nature is the true nature that all ten aspects point to. Looking again at our lotus flower, we see that it too is only what it is because of a temporary conglomeration of causes and conditions, as well as relationships, not the least of which is our own subjective impression and naming of it as a "lotus flower."

The lesson here is that reality as we experience it is not simply given but is the product of a constant flow of causes and conditions and we are part of that flow. We condition it and it conditions us. In awakening to this, we are empowered to make more effective, liberating, and compassionate choices in life. In a famous Buddhist teaching story from China, an ancient master is transformed into a fox for five hundred lifetimes because he mistakenly taught that awakened ones are free of causality. He is freed from this when a teacher named Paichang (720-814) tells him that awakened ones are not blind to causality. In Nichiren Buddhism, we do not chant to circumvent the law of cause and effect, but to awaken to the causal nature of all things, taught here in terms of ten aspects. Through our faith in the Lotus Sutra and our practice of Odaimoku we can realize that the only difference between a hell-dweller and a Buddha is the causes they make in life. If every moment contains three thousand worlds, what cause will we make in order to bring out the best of all possible worlds?

LOS ANGELES

90th Anniversary Celebration

The Los Angeles Nichiren Shu Betsuin celebrated its 90th anniversary with several events in August. It started with a special service on August 22, held for the late ministers, members and supporters who passed away during the past 90 years. The service was officiated by Rev. Shokai Kanai with the assistance of Rev. Shoryo Tarabini of the London Nichiren Buddhist Temple.

A special banquet was held at the Quiet Canyon on the evening of August 28, to celebrate the 90th anniversary. One hundred fifty people from Japan, Canada, other states and all over California joined in the celebration. During the banquet, ten honorees were recognized: Koichi Tom and the Toyo Nerio Charitable Remainder, who gave exceptional support to build the Nerio Building; the Lily Endo Family for their outstanding services and support for more than four generations; Mr. Kikuo Nishihara who devoted many years of untiring service as a member, President and Treasurer of the temple; Mrs. Tsuneko Yamada and Mrs. Taneko Honda who both cel-

Church Events

By Sandra Seki



The Los Angeles Temple

brated their 90th birthdays and for their many years of dedicated support as active members; Mr. John Villalobos who developed the Internet Home page for the temple and the many service books in English and Japanese; Mrs. Hina Ciesla and Mrs. Edna Kawata who have both devoted their untiring service as members and as President and Treasurer of the Woman's Club for many years; Mrs. Seiko Horiuchi for her dedicated service as President of the Nichiren Buddhist Fujinkai; Mr. Don Gillow for his dedicated service as President of the Nichiren Buddhist Temple.

On Sunday, August 29, a special service to commemorate the 90th Anniversary of the temple was held from 11:00 a.m. with Bishop Tansei Iwama, Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu, Rev. Nisshu Hayami, Rev. Kenjo Igarashi and Rev. Ryusho Matsuda officiating the ceremony.

Prior to this, the 25th NONA (Nichiren Order of North America) Convention was held at the brand new Nerio Hall. At this meeting Rev. Shokai Kanai was elected the next Bishop of NONA by the ministers, and delegates of all the temples and churches involved. Rev. Kanai became the 10th resident minister of the Los Angeles Betsuin in 1994 and has been earnestly propagating the Lotus Sutra and the teaching of Nichiren Shonin both in English and Japanese for the past 40 years.

He has been publishing the newsletter 'Lotus' and has also opened an internet propagation site directed towards the whole world. His prayers have been answered by the increasing members and supporters of the temple.

The highlight of the ceremony was a recitation of the Wasan by the members of the temple. This was a memorable event since it had only been three years since Mrs. Kumiko Kanai and Mrs. Seiko Horiuchi went to Japan to learn the Wasan. They visited Rev. Giko Tabata (Wasan master) at the Eishoji Temple in Aomori, Japan, to go through Wasan training. Through long hours of practice the group was able to perform a fantastic recitation. Rev. Tabata who attended the service was amazed at the progress of his students. "It was wonderful to see the Wasan tradition cross the Pacific to be presented in the West," said Rev. Tabata.

After a congratulatory speech by Bishop Iwama, the ceremony ended with the whole group chanting the Odaimoku in unison.

Rev. Tarabini Helps 90th Anniversary

Rev. Shoryo Tarabini, who had been helping the

Los Angeles Temple before, visited the temple to help with the 90th anniversary. The Rev. is presently the head of the London Nichiren Buddhist Temple but he had had an open-heart surgery this spring and has finally gotten well enough to travel. Many members were glad to see him again and gave a big applause after his greeting message.

Since he has a fine command of Japanese, he worked as an interpreter during the NONA Convention. At the banquet and the grand ceremony, he explained Bishop Tansei Iwama's message. After the temple events, he paid a short visit to his parents in Northern California and returned to London.

Nerio Building Completed

The ground-breaking ceremony for the Koichi and Toyo Nerio Building was held on March 7, 2004.

During the past five months, there have been a lot of changes and delays due to the city inspector's vacation and misunderstandings. However, the city finally granted a permit to use the building one day before the NONA Convention! Until the permit was granted chairs, desks and tables had to be left outside for a week after the August Cleanup Day and the NONA ministers meeting as well as the NONA lay people's cabinet meetings were held in the rooms inside the main hondo building. The permit to use the building was finally granted on August 27.

The memorial chamber, (Nokotsudo) is one of the main purposes of this building, besides the multipurpose hall. On September 3, a cabinet to keep the urns holding the ashes of the late members and supporters was assembled on the west wall of the room. Two more cabinets on the south and north sides are going to be installed in the near future. The temple is now accepting reservations for the cabinet space, which is 14"x 12"x 12" apiece for a donation of \$1,500 each. One cabinet space is able to hold one to three urns depending on the size of the urn. You may also keep an o-ihai (wooden tablets) in it.

HONOLULU

Why Are the Ministers So Busy?

By Rev. Chishin Hirai

Most members and their families come to the temple only on weekends for special services, but aside from these events, there are many works that keep the ministers busy

at the temple.

The kito service is the most popular service and is performed for many reasons. Aside from the monthly kito services, the otakiage and traffic safety kito services are a regular part of the Sunday services. Private kito services are conducted for eye-opening, eye-closing, personal safety, first blessing of a newborn child's good health and growth, successful outcome of an exam or difficult project at school or at work and business prosperity. The ministers even pray to help find a good partner. Yaku-doshi blessing, house blessing, car blessing and groundbreaking ceremonies are frequently conducted.

Aside from kito services, wedding ceremonies, initiation ceremonies, bedside services, funeral, burial, 49-day and memorial services are conducted. The ministers also help parents name their newborns and select Buddhist names too. They also visit the elderly or sick regularly at nursing homes or at the members' home. If you know of anyone who needs visitation and words of encouragement, please let the ministers know. They are also available for counseling.

A typical day for the minister begins at 6:30 a.m., when he opens the main hall to start the morning service at 7:00 a.m. (Monday-Saturday). On Sunday, the day begins at 5:30 a.m. and the morning service begins at 6:30 a.m. After the morning service, the ministers return home for breakfast before heading to the office. Someone is normally available at the office between 9:00 and 17:00. During the week, the ministers are trying to update the membership files, welcome visitors, answer questions, clean up and write sermons.

Finally, the ministers publish the monthly newsletter with the help of volunteers. When time permits Bishop and Mrs. Ogawa clean the temple grounds. The temple can certainly use more volunteers to assist with the temple maintenance so the ministers would like to ask everyone of you to consider how you can serve your temple best!

New Tables and Chairs Needed

Now that the temple has a new Social Hall, the current tables and chairs look a little too old.

We would like to replace them with new ones, and once again we are asking for your help.

A donation of \$1,000 will purchase a set of one table and eight chairs. The tables and chairs will be designated with the names of the donors just like the pews. If you are interested please contact the ministers.



Rev. Kanai (third from right in front) and other Nichiren-shu priests who attended the 90th anniversary



The local congregation at the commemorative anniversary

NICHIREN SHU NEWS

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