

# Nichiren Shu News

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(1)

## 'I Never Thought of Returning to Japan'

**Editor's Note:** Rev. Eijo Ikenaga, minister of the Honolulu Myohoji Temple received the 2004 "Sogo Zaidan Sho Award" in a ceremony held at the Pacific Hotel, Tokyo on April 21. Initiated in 1984, the award is given to individuals and organizations credited for distinguished propagation activities. Rev. Ikenaga became the minister of the Honolulu Myohoji Temple in 1958 upon the request of the temple that was then a temple not belonging to the Nichiren Shu, operating independently. Having built the Hondo main hall and Peace Tower, he succeeded in refurbishing the temple completely.

By Rev. Eijo Ikenaga  
Honolulu Myohoji Temple

I received a letter from the Sogo Zaidan of Nichiren Shu in mid-February. It was an unexpected letter that brought me a great surprise. It was to notify me that I would be honored to receive the "Nichiren Shu Sogo Zaidan Sho." What a surprise! This should not have happened to me.

This particular award is the most honorable one awarded by Nichiren-shu only to such person who did great meritorious works in propagating Nichiren Buddhism. It would be embarrassing if I received it. However, it would be insolent to decline the decision of authority. It took me quite some time to decide to go to Tokyo to receive it.

It was the fall of 1958 when I was invited to the Honolulu Myohoji as a resident minister. At that time, Hawaii was isolated to most of us in Japan. I needed a great deal of commitment to go overseas. I visited the old Nichiren

Shu Headquarters, which looked shabby like an obscure paper company.

I was told, "That temple is a questionable one. (It was an independent temple at that time.) It is up to you if you want to go." I respectfully bowed to them, and said, "I shall go."

I found myself at the Honolulu Myohoji Temple in the midst of a "jungle" on the isolated island. Since then, my main job was to fight with the "jungle." The California grass which seemed to grow an inch a day would soon cover the way from the temple building to the street. Just to keep the way open in and out, I swung the sickle every day, trying to control the fast growing weeds.

However, I never thought of returning to Japan because I was deeply impressed by the people of the temple. The lines on their faces persuasively told me the hard time they had in their plantation days. Under unbearable conditions, they worked hard, raising their children. Although

they wanted to go home to Japan, they just could not.

Thinking of their efforts and patience, I changed my first plan of going back to Japan after one year or so. I truly thought how I alone could go home to such a wonderful motherland, Japan, leaving them behind on the isolated island. Moreover, they had a dream of erecting a Peace Tower in this jungle.

Ten years had passed like a day. It was 1968 when the Peace Tower (Busshari Heiwato) and Hondo were dedicated. After another ten years, the development of the land for the condominium started. Praying for a successful project, I decided to attend the 100 day session of Aragyō at Nakayama in 1979.

At this chance, the board of the Honolulu Myohoji made a resolution that the Honolulu Myohoji would join the Nichiren Shu Order. I handed the resolution to Bishop Juken Matsumura, the Chief Administrator of the Nichiren Shu Headquarters. In October 1983, the Honolulu Myohoji Social Hall was dedicated.

Thus, 45 years had passed since I came to the "jungle." If this award

was credited to the years I could manage to stay there, it was not my merits. It was due to the grace of the Buddha that the way was always opened before us no matter what difficulties we encountered. It was due to the help of those people who cherishingly pushed me forward toward success.

I cannot talk about the Honolulu Myohoji without mentioning one thing: the retaining walls on both sides of the Nuuanu Stream which runs through the property of the Honolulu Myohoji. They were 10 feet to 15 feet high and 500 yards long, they were all built by the members' hands. The Honolulu Myohoji is standing on this foundation. Truly, every corner of this land reflects their souls and efforts. On this base, the members today are practicing the Lotus Sutra in appreciation.

"I shall go to Tokyo to receive such an honorable award, representing those people who dedicated themselves to the Dharma, those people who are supporting the Honolulu Myohoji today." This is how I made up my mind to receive the honorable award which is a bit too heavy for me.



Rev. Eijo Ikenaga

## Honolulu Myohoji Today

By Rev. Eijo Ikenaga

A symbol of the Honolulu Myohoji is the Tahoto style pagoda (a Busshari Peace Tower) which stands among the magnificent Ohai trees. People enter the gate of the temple, looking up at the pagoda in which the sacred relic of Sakyamuni Buddha is enshrined, experiencing the refreshing breeze from Nuuanu Valley, beautiful voices of the birds among the trees and the gentle sound of Nuuanu Stream.

People love the peaceful air of the Buddha Land. People are enjoying

themselves in various activities religiously, spiritually and culturally.

The Hondo is the central place of the religious activity. In every Sunday service, the people feel glorious, chanting the Odaimoku and receiving the light from the Mandala (Gohonzon). The Wasan group of the Fujinkai sing wonderfully. The good practitioners are good listeners.

The multi-purpose building of the Honolulu Myohoji Social Hall is contributing to the society in various ways. Shakyo (copying sutra), tea ceremony, flower arrangement, calligraphy, Japanese dance, shamisen,



Rev. Ikenaga and Odaimoku procession

yokyoku, kendo, aikido, bojutsu, etc. are held in this Social Hall.

In the Shakyo class, we meditate and chant sutras in utmost calmness and tranquility. We then start copying the sutra with fude-brush character by character, taking into account that each character of the sutra is a Buddha. The Shakyo class is held every Friday at 9 a.m. Following the Shakyo practice, a lecture on Hokekyo and Buddhism is given by Rev. Eijo Ikenaga. After, questions and answers are exchanged enthusiastically, often lasting for hours.

Calligraphy (the art of brush writing) and Kendo (a martial art) classes are also conducted by Rev. Ikenaga. The lessons in the two arts, as with Shakyo, emphasizes "right posture,"

"right mind" and "right way of doing," which are based on the teachings of the Buddha and Nichiren Shonin.

In Tea Ceremony class, Flower Arrangement class and other classes of Japanese culture, people may be pursuing "kokoro" in their concentrations of rhythm, harmony, beauty, etc.

Entering the gate of the Honolulu Myohoji, people would feel the "Buddha's Mind" at any corner of the precincts. People are immersed in peace and harmony.

In the year 2005, Honolulu Myohoji will be celebrating its 75th anniversary since its founding in 1930. Commemorating the anniversary, plans are now underway to build a minister's living quarters.



The drama "Nichiren" in eight acts was staged at the temple commemorating the 750th anniversary of the "Proclamation" in 2002. Members of the temple performed in the play while Rev. Ikenaga narrated it

# The Doctrine of Ichinen-sanzen: Three Thousand Existences Contained in One Thought (2)

By Rev. Kanji Tamura  
Lecturer, Risho University

## The Doctrine of Ichinen-sanzen: Three Thousand Existences Contained in One Thought described in the "Maka Shikan" (Great Concentration and Insight)

The basic idea of ichinen sanzen, which Nichiren Shonin preached and practiced, is described in the "Maka Shikan" (Great Concentration and Insight) written by the Grand Master T'ien-t'ai. There he explained the practice of "kanjin" based on the Lotus Sutra.

"Kanjin" is the practice of observing one's mind and is also called "shikan." The word, "shi" means to calm down and center one's mind. The word, "kan" means to observe that calmed mind. T'ien-t'ai asserts that this practice of observing one's mind is the way to become a Buddha. Following the example set by Sakya-muni Buddha: meditation, subduing of evils and attainment of Buddhahood, T'ien-t'ai pursued the practice of "shikan" in order to reach the enlightenment equivalent to that of the Sakya-muni Buddha.

The state of enlightenment he pursued was to perceive how one's mind and body are united with all existing worlds, and in fact the whole universe. That is the idea of "ichinen-sanzen."

How does the observation of our mind allow us to perceive our unity with the whole universe? The

Avatamsaka Sutra (the Flower Garland Sutra) states, "There is no discrimination among one's mind, the Buddha and living beings," and also "One's mind is like a skillful painter, and all existences are made from one's mind."

According to T'ien-t'ai, next to the Lotus Sutra, the Flower Garland Sutra contains that which T'ien-t'ai called the "Round Teaching" or "Perfect Teaching" (the ideogram he chose means both "round" and "perfect"). The Perfect Teaching is the teaching that perfectly shows the Buddha's intention. Based on these sutras, T'ien-t'ai claims that when we perfectly examine our own mind, there develops the state of enlightenment, the enlightenment of the fact that all existence is united. Thus he recommends the practice of "shikan," or "kanjin."

How can we practice "shikan" or "kanjin"? It is not so easy as one might think. You can't just say, "OK, let's start." We should begin with the delicate and complicated preparatory practices, called "the 25 practices." They are: 1. to keep strict precepts; 2. to eat proper food and clothe oneself adequately; 3. to stay in a calm environment; 4. to quit all other work and concentrate only on this practice; 5. to associate with good and wise people; 6. to 10. to cut off the desires arising from sight, sound, smell, taste and touch; 11 to 15. to cast away greed, anger, desire to sleep, restlessness and worry, and

doubt; 16 to 20. to regulate one's meals, sleep, the body, breathing, and the mind; 21. to cultivate the aspiration to reach enlightenment; 22. to endeavor always; 23. to always contemplate the attainment of enlightenment; 24. to have tactful and skillful wisdom; 25. to be resolute.

Likewise, the preparatory practices require us to duly arrange our environment, regulate ourselves spiritually and physically and encourage ourselves and concentrate our minds.

After going through these 25 preparatory practices, the practice of "shikan" to observe one's mind can begin. (However, Nichiren Shonin teaches that we, who are born more than 2000 years after Sakya-muni Buddha, do not have good karmic roots, and therefore will find it next to impossible to fulfill these conditions.)

Those who have accomplished these 25 preparatory practices embark on the practice of "shikan." The practice is called, "The meditation method of the ten states of mind and ten practices." The ten practices consist of the practice of observing one's mind and nine other assisting practices.

The ten states of mind which are to be observed are: 1. the mind stained with the desire for such things as food, clothing, shelter and other needs which appear in every moment

of life; 2. the deep rooted desire which manifests as the practice progress; 3. the sick mind; 4. the mind resulting from the good and evil conduct done in the previous lives; 5. the evil mind which hampers practice; 6. attachment to meditative states; 7. various wrong views and misunderstandings about enlightenment; 8. arrogance; 9. clinging to the Two Vehicles (the mind of the Hinayana Buddhists); 10. clinging to the Bodhisattva Vehicle (the state of mind of those who have not yet reached enlightenment).

Almost all the minds are thoughts that arise in our daily life in every moment and are based on our greed and craving. Even if the intensity of these desires is high or low, even if these desires are conscious or unconscious, instinctive or intentional, these desires are based on greed. Appetite, sexual desire, sleepiness, hunger for fame and knowledge, desire for self-preservation, political desire, ambition, like and dislike...all of them are aspects of greed. The practice of "kanjin" advocated by T'ien-t'ai based on the Lotus Sutra is intended to perceive that the three thousand worlds or all forms of existence in the world are contained in that very mind by observing one's very mind that is ruled by such desires or greed.

(related story on Page 3)



Rev. Kanji Tamura

## The Legend of Nichiren Shonin (9)

The accurate biography of Nichiren can be perceived through his essays and letters and the ancient documents. But there are many dramatic legends, too. So, let us think about various legends in this paper.

By Rev. Gyokai Sekido, Ph. D

### Appearance of the 'Thirty Guardian Deities'

After returning to Kyoto from Mt. Koya, Rencho revisited Mt. Hiei. The legend of the appearance of the "Thirty Guardian Deities" is connected with his stay on this mountain.

The legend says that there on Mt. Hiei, a strange person appeared in the garden while Rencho was chanting sutras. Thirty such different persons appeared in the garden for 30 days.

One day, Rencho asked the person very politely who they were. He told Rencho, "We are 'Thirty Guardian Deities' of the Lotus Sutra." When Sakya-muni Buddha expounded the Lotus Sutra on Mt. Sacred Eagle, many gods and goddesses swore to protect the believer of the Lotus Sutra.

The Thirty Guardian Deities appeared in front of Rencho to keep the promise. They, the deities, introduced themselves. Rencho wrote down their names and then let a painter draw each image of the deities. It is claimed that the list of the Thirty Guardian Deities, written down by Rencho himself and their painted images are preserved in the Myokai-ji Temple in Shizuoka Prefecture and

the Risho-ji Temple in Yamanashi Prefecture.

The Thirty Guardian Deities are the deities who appear in turn for 30 days to protect those who keep the Lotus Sutra. The belief in the deities is known as early as in the Heian Period (794-1185). It is claimed that the belief began when Saicho (767-822), the founder of the Tendai Sect, offered a prayer on Mt. Hiei to the deities residing in various parts of the country for the protection of Buddhism.

Legend says that Nichiren Shonin adopted this faith in the Thirty Guardian Deities. However, historically it can be claimed that the belief was first adopted by Nichizo (1269-1342), who propagated the teachings of Nichiren Shonin in Kyoto.

Nichizo is the person who preached the Lotus Sutra in Kyoto for the first time in accordance with the will of Nichiren Shonin. Nichizo was worried about his propagation activities in Kyoto since beliefs in deities were popular there.

"Guardian deities have left the country because the people have abandoned faith in the Lotus Sutra," so writes Nichiren Shonin in his "Rissho Ankoku Ron" (Treatise on Spreading Peace Throughout the Country by

Establishing the True Dharma).

Based on this assertion of Nichiren Shonin, Nichizo recommended the faith of the Thirty Guardian Deities, which was kept on Mt. Hiei, to the people. By adopting the belief in the Thirty Guardian Deities, Nichizo attempted to promote his mission.

Ever since, the belief in the Thirty Guardian Deities became popular, and statues of them were produced and halls to accommodate them, the Hall

of Thirty Guardian Deities, were constructed. Many people who hoped for "benefits in this world" visited these halls. It is believed that each of these guardian deities has strange powers to protect us throughout the month on each day.

A family register of deaths, which the Nichiren temples use at present, bears the name of these Thirty Guardian Deities on each page irrespective of whether we believe in them or not.



Rev. Gyokai Sekido



Photo shows part of the statues of the Thirty Deities enshrined at the Gokokuji Temple, Shimabara, Nagasaki Prefecture. The temple was built in 1615 by the Lord of Shimabara. The first head priest of the temple was Nichiyo Shonin, a Korean. It is one of the temples of which founders were Koreans, who were brought to Japan as captives during the Korean invasion by Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Nichiyo Shonin was admired as one of the three master calligraphers of Nichiren Shu in those days

## Practice of Tranquility and Insight Meditation in Light of the Odaimoku

By Rev. Ryuei McCormick  
San Francisco, Calif.

In the United States, the practice of sitting meditation has become popular enough that every major city boasts several Buddhist meditation centers, yoga studios, and bookstores (or at least whole sections in major bookstores) that cater to those who regularly practice meditation. Zen from Japan, Vipassana from SE Asia, and various concentration and visualization practices from Tibet all have their adherents in North America. The practice of tranquility and insight meditation (Skt. Samatha Vipasyana) has even been taken outside the confines of Buddhism and used as a form of secular therapy for treating stress, depression, and anxiety. If there is anything that Americans look to Buddhism for, it would be the practice of silent sitting meditation. It has even been said in jest that in America the eightfold path has been reduced to the one-fold path of meditation. In the US, some people are even introduced to Nichiren Buddhism initially through the practice of sitting meditation, usually combined with the chanting of Odaimoku in Shodaigyo Meditation.

The first time that I met my sensei, the Ven. Ryusho Matsuda, he was conducting the first Sunday sitting meditation practice at the San Jose Temple. I was pleased that this kind of practice was available at the temple but a little surprised. Afterwards, I commented, "I was not aware that Nichiren Buddhists ever meditated." He seemed quite taken aback by this and said, "Of course we meditate. All Buddhists meditate." At this time, I have learned enough to realize that even the practice of Odaimoku is a form of meditation in that it brings about mental stability and concentration and opens the mind so that it can receive the insight of the Buddha. I have also learned that Nichiren himself gave lectures on the Great Concentration and Insight of the Grand Master T'ien-t'ai (538-597) throughout his life. And what is the Great Concentration and Insight if not a comprehensive manual of tranquility and insight meditation infused with the spirit of the Lotus Sutra? So even today, the practice of silent sitting is used, in Shodaigyo Meditation for instance, to calm and center the mind in preparation for our primary practice of chanting "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo."

The practice of tranquility and insight meditation is based upon the meditation instructions of Sakyamuni Buddha Himself as given in sutras such as the Greater Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. It could reasonably be said that all forms of Buddhist meditation trace back in one way or another to this discourse and that all complete forms of Buddhist practice contain the elements of tranquility (Samatha) for calming and centering the mind and the element of insight (Vipasyana) for awakening to and understanding the true nature of reality. Even Zen meditation is named after the states of concentration (Skt. Dhyana, Ch. Ch'an-na, Jap. Zen) attained through the practice of tranquility and insight meditation. What T'ien-t'ai accomplished in his magnum opus the Great Concentration and Insight was to put the practice of tranquility and insight meditation into

the framework of Mahayana Buddhism, and especially the One Vehicle of the Lotus Sutra.

In the Great Concentration and Insight and other shorter works (one of which was included in Dwight Goddard's influential anthology, the Buddhist Bible, and called "Dhyana for Beginners") T'ien-t'ai explained how to prepare one's body, mind, and surroundings for the successful practice of tranquility and insight meditation. He specified 25 different items which should be attended to, including the regulation of one's sleeping and eating habits, the clothes one wears, the people and places in one's life, the rhythm of breathing, bodily posture, mental and emotional states and much more. It is a comprehensive set of recommendations for creating a life that is peaceful and centered and therefore capable of performing the practice of tranquility and insight. In reviewing these 25 preparatory practices one could not be blamed for thinking that very few people then or now could ever fully succeed in this type of practice. This alone shows the huge gap between the often faddish nature of meditation in the world today, and the great care and seriousness with which the practice was approached by practitioners of the caliber of T'ien-t'ai.

Once the preparations were taken care of, one could then begin to observe the nature of the mind itself. Judging from the ten types of mental states that are listed in the Great Concentration and Insight, it would seem that T'ien-t'ai's idea was that we should "start where we are" with our practice of stopping and looking at the mind. Each of the states he lists are mental states that any of us could easily identify within ourselves from time to time. They range from the natural desires of the physical body to arrogance, to various forms of greed and attachment, including attachments to spiritual attainments that lead to self-satisfaction and complacency. T'ien-t'ai taught that by observing these states of mind one could transcend them and realize the nature of mind itself—the three thousand worlds in a

single thought-moment. In accomplishing that insight one would then have attained Buddhahood.

In Nichiren's day, the average person, even the average monk, did not esteem their abilities or circumstances as highly as many of the people who study meditation and attend occasional workshops or retreats do today. The people of Nichiren's time believed that the Latter Age of the Dharma had begun, therefore those who had the karmic roots to successfully practice the rigorous requirements of tranquility and insight meditation were no longer being born into such a corrupt world so far removed from the time of the Buddha. Nichiren, however, realized that the point of Buddhism was not to meet a rigorous list of requirements, preparations, and prerequisites. All of these things were originally aimed at one thing—the realization of the three thousand worlds in a single thought-moment which specifically meant that Buddhahood is an ever-present reality right here and now. Nichiren taught that this insight was still attainable through faith in the Lotus Sutra. In the Latter Age of the Dharma when people could no longer find it within themselves to search within their own minds for the Buddha, they could now encounter the Buddha directly by upholding the Lotus Sutra and chanting "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo." The practice of chanting Odaimoku with faith and joy in order to receive the merits of the Buddha's practices and enlightenment and the great jewel of the three thousand worlds in a single thought-moment embodied in the five characters of "Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo" would become the new practice of tranquility and insight for this age.

I find it interesting, then, that Nichiren did not simply set aside the Great Concentration and Insight of T'ien-t'ai. Why would he continue to lecture on it? What relevance could it have if the practice of tranquility and insight meditation has been replaced by the chanting of Odaimoku? Unfortunately we have no reliable records of those lectures. For my own part, when

I look over the 25 preparatory practices listed by T'ien-t'ai, it occurs to me that just about all of them can be viewed even now as helpful recommendations for living a happy, healthy, and peaceful life. From a Nichiren Buddhist point of view, it seems to me that they should not be viewed as prerequisites or requirements one must meet in order to practice Buddhism. Rather, they can be seen as a form of guidance that will help us deepen our faith and practice of the Odaimoku. They can also be viewed as the benefits or fruits of our practice, insofar as the chanting of Odaimoku should enable us to have the kind of lifestyle characterized by good physical and mental health, peaceful surroundings, and good and wise friends to name just a few of the 25 items.

One could also look at the ten states of mind that T'ien-t'ai recommended for observation in tranquility and insight meditation. It is helpful to be aware of these states of mind as well because any of them can and undoubtedly will arise in the course of any given moment or in the course of chanting Odaimoku. Instead of giving in to these states, or trying to deny or repress them, we should simply be aware of them and hold them in the light of the Odaimoku. These states of greed and attachment and shortsightedness will arise in the course of our practice and whether they are present or not the important thing is to continue to center our mind and heart on the Odaimoku. However, it is nice to know that T'ien-t'ai himself did not see any cause for alarm or discouragement. Rather, he saw these states as the very things that should be examined in the light of tranquility and insight meditation. As Nichiren Buddhists, we should view them as the states of mind, that we can illuminate and transform through our practice of Odaimoku. It is often said that the deeper the mud, the greater the bloom of the lotus flower which grows in it. In this case, the deeper our Odaimoku can penetrate into the various workings of our mind, the greater will be the awakening that arises from such practice.



Led by Rev. Chishin Hirai (extreme right), overseas ministers practice the shomyo, the chanting of Buddhist hymns, at the Shumuin Headquarters, Ikegami, Tokyo, May 24 and 25. They are (from left to right in the front row of chairs) Rev. Nun Myosho Obata, Penang, Malaysia; Rev. Chisen Maeda, Honolulu; Rev. Michael McCormick Ryuei, San Francisco, Calif.; Rev. Michael Falconer Ryuoh, Portland, Oregon; Rev. William Warner Shinkyo, Lexington, Ky. and Rev. Gakugyo Matsumoto, former minister of Hilo, Hawaii. Seen in the second row is Rev. Nun Myoho Ishimoto, Brazil. The shomyo seminar was sponsored by the Nichiren Buddhist International Center (NBIC), Los Angeles, Calif. Ten overseas ministers (kaikyoshi) and three American ministers attended. Rev. Nishu Hayami Chief instructor, Grand Shomyo Master emphasized that respect to the Gohonzon and solemnity are most important in performing shomyo

# HONOLULU

## Rev. Matsumoto Returns to Japan

After 10 years of serving as an overseas minister in Hawaii, Rev. Gakugyo Matsumoto has resigned and returned to Japan. This is a digest of his last sermon in Hawaii.

“Nirvana originally means ‘to blow out the fire’ but in Buddhist terminology it means, ‘to live in the eternal Buddha’s world which transcends reality.’ Prince Siddhartha of the Sakya tribe attained enlightenment and became Sakyamuni Buddha. He created and left behind 1,800 sutras, among which the Lotus Sutra, which we study and believe daily, is the foremost sutra and is called the King of Buddhism. The reason why this is so is because within the Lotus Sutra, it is proclaimed that there isn’t a single person who will not become a Buddha.

“The Buddha’s teachings are given to us in the way similar to the way we raise children. When our children are very small, we tell them what not to do. For example, ‘Don’t watch TV while you eat,’ or ‘Don’t jump on your bed.’ This is similar to the early stages of Buddhism which forbade 250 actions in daily life such as ‘You should not make your right hand dirty,’ or ‘You should not turn over while sleeping.’ The Hinayana Buddhism or Ritsu (Precepts) Buddhism follows these strict rules and says that if one violates the commandment, one cannot become a Buddha.

“Once the child has grown up a little, the next step is to teach him what to do. ‘Go clean your room,’ or ‘Wash your hands before eating.’ This style is more like the Para-Mahayana Buddhism or Suggested Buddhism where you are told what to do such as to make offerings to chant the Nembutsu or else you will not become a Buddha.

“The final stage of raising children is one of encouragement and praise, which is especially difficult for parents. The parents must carefully observe their children to find the innate goodness within them and praise them in order to progressively cultivate those good qualities. For this,

# Church Events

By Sandra Seki



Rev. Gakugyo Matsumoto (left)

the children must be matured and developed enough to understand their parents’ purpose in the previous stage. This final stage is not easy but it is very important towards building up their character. This is similar to the Mahayana Buddhism of the ‘Solid truth of the One Vehicle.’ Our Lotus Sutra is a principle derived from this stage of development.

“The Lotus Sutra appeared when Sakyamuni Buddha shockingly announced, ‘In My teachings for the past 40 years, I have yet to teach you the true essence of enlightenment,’ and fell into deep meditation. His disciples, who had been listening dutifully to His teachings became uneasy upon hearing that they had not been taught the ‘True Teachings.’ So they pleaded to the Buddha to tell them the true teachings but instead of answering them, He continued to meditate. It is said that 5,000 disciples then left Sakyamuni Buddha assuming that He would not teach them any more. To the disciples who remained the Buddha said, ‘All living things have an equal chance of becoming a Buddha’ and this was the beginning of the Lotus Sutra. Then He said to Sariputra, one of His 10 greatest disciples, ‘Continue your wonderful training and in the future you will become Flower Light Buddha.’

“Then to all those who were listening, Sakyamuni said that they can become Buddhas and so this was the opening act to the world of the magnificent Lotus Sutra.

“The 5000 disciples who had left the Buddha because He would not answer their question, could not discover proper personal conduct beyond the teachings that told them what they could and could not do. This is the same

as children who have not sufficiently trained themselves.

“We all have met through the Lotus Sutra. We study and have faith in the Lotus Sutra. This is not only because we remained to hear Sakyamuni Buddha teach the Lotus Sutra but also because the guarantee that we too may become Buddhas in the future and attain Nirvana impressed us and made us grateful. It is said that we have made a vow to Sakyamuni Buddha that in any period of time that we are born, and in the country where we are born, we will strive to follow the teachings of the Lotus Sutra.

“I will be returning to Japan, however, please keep believing in the Lotus Sutra and when you chant the Odaimoku, I will also be chanting the Odaimoku far away in Japan. This is the concept of the nature of the Lotus Sutra; Eternal and Equal. I must say farewell, but not goodbye, for I am sure that someday, somewhere, we will meet again.”

## Seishoko Festival and Senshi-e Service

The annual Seishoko Festival and Senshi-e Services will be held on Sunday, June 13 from 10 a.m.

The Seishoko Festival is a memorial service for Kato Kiyomasa (1562-1611). He was the Lord of Kumamoto and was a well-known ardent believer of Nichiren Buddhism.

He built many Nichiren Shu temples and set the social and political foundations for Kumamoto. When Nichiren Shu began its propagation in Hawaii, there were many members from Kumamoto Prefecture. We still worship Kato Kiyomasa as Seishoko, a role model of Nichiren Shu believers.

The Senshi-e Service will be held on the same day. The word Senshi-e means a service for the previous Nichiren ministers. A memorial service for all the deceased Bishops and associate ministers of the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii will be held. This service is also for the Sendatsu, who although were unordained, were treated as ministers after their death. Please come and make your sincere incense offerings to them.

## SANGHA

### “Mother’s Day”

by Kay Hara

Nichiren Shonin was exiled to Izu in May 1261 by the militaristic Hojo government during the Kamakura Era. He was abandoned on an offshore reef by some official guards, and escaped drowning when a fisherman rescued him from the rising tide. Fisherman Yasaburo and his wife were going against the law by harboring a fugitive and Nichiren felt a deep sense of gratitude towards them. Their warm hospitality reminded him of his aging mother and of her welfare.

Within two years, he was unexpectedly pardoned by the Kamakura regime and he hastened by way of Kamakura, to visit his mother in Kominato, (his home village in Chiba). His mother was gravely ill and was in a coma. He ran to her bedside and recited excerpts from the Lotus Sutra. This eko (merit transference) brought her back to consciousness and gave her added years of good life.

At Mother’s Day service let us cherish the fond memories of our mothers whether deceased or living and show our gratitude towards them in spiritual tribute.

### “49th Day Memorial” by Bishop Igarashi

When a loved one passes away the family and friends sink into deep sadness. The forty-nine day period after the death is viewed as a time when the deceased may sink into a limbo, and have to endure barriers caused by past karma.

Initially, in this intermediate state (a place between the mortal and immortal realm) one will face the trials of scaling a rugged cliff (first 7 days). Next comes the river with three currents- slow, medium, and fast movements.

A good karma merits a slow current while the worst merits a crossing through strong rapids (second 7 days). And these trials will continue throughout the third, fourth, fifth, sixth set of 7 days. On the seventh 7-day period, or 49-days, King Yama, Lord of the Dead, finally allows the deceased to receive directions towards a human-like realm.

Thus the surviving ones should not sink into deep sadness but instead pray for the deceased conducting eko, merit transference, so that it bestows the compassion of Sakyamuni Buddha and the loved one will be able to make it through the 49-days.

### Tribute to Soldiers

A special prayer service for the safe return of Sgt. Col-

in S. Hayakawa, son of Kenny and Wendy Hayakawa, and Daigoro Oshita, Medic. Sp., brother of Ricky Oshita, both serving in Iraq, will be held on Sunday, June 6 at 11 a.m. It will be at the Long Beach Japanese Cultural Center, officiated by Bishop Igarashi.

## SAN JOSE

### Teriyaki Box Lunch

830 bentos were made for the annual chicken teriyaki box lunch day. Again a lot of help from members and friends enabled the event to be very successful. There were other foods like curry rice, noodles, festival rice, and barazushi, which were all sold out in no time.

Besides food, there were booths for cut flowers, crafts, and omanju by the Tachibana School. The Marimokai highlighted the event with their skilled koto performance. The Shibata Sogetsu School members displayed beautiful arrangements and demonstrations. Thanks to the San Jose Kendo Dojo and the Shorinji Kempo Dojo for their help.

This event is always a place where new friends are made and reunions occur, which makes it so worthwhile.

## LOS ANGELES

### Memorial Service for the Forgotten People

On the Sunday preceding Memorial Day, a special memorial service was held at 10:30 a.m. in front of the Monument for Forgotten People. This monument was erected on December 8, 1991, as a memorial to the deceased people of the Boyle Heights Area and all those affiliated with the temple. This service has been held on the day before Memorial Day every year.

### Buddhist Jazz and Statue Exhibition

Mrs. Kumiko Kanai went to see a Buddhist Jazz performance by Rev. Joseph Jarman, Rev. Koho Toyota and a group called the Troy Winds on April 10, at the Los Angeles Hongwanji Buddhist Temple Hall. She was awed at the three statues on exhibit in front of the stage: Amitabha Buddha, Eleven Face Kannon Bodhisattva and Sound-Voice Bodhisattva. About 300 candles surrounded the statues beautifully and solemnly.

On stage Rev. Jarman of the Brooklyn Buddhist Association sang Buddhist songs which he had composed. He also played the flute and the alto-saxophone. Rev. Toyota of the LA Jodo-shu Temple played the drums and Troy Wind played the electronic organ, bass guitar and piano. The audience in the nearly full hall were deeply impressed with the fantastic Buddhist jazz and the statue exhibition. A tremendous round of applause was given to the players.

## 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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