

Nichiren Shu News

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Centennial Memorial Held for Archbishop Nichimyo Asahi, Honoring the Modern Day Father of Overseas Propagation

A ceremony honoring the 100th memorial of Nichimyo Asahi (1833-1916), the 18th Archbishop of Nichiren Shu, was held on June 18 in the main hall of Ikegami Honmonji in Tokyo. Known as the modern day father of Nichiren Shu overseas propagation, he traveled abroad over 40 times and established temples in Korea, China and North America.

Rev. Junko Kobayashi, Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu, officiated and was assisted by 14 International Fukuyoshi priests from Hawaii, North America, South America, Europe, and Southeast Asia. During the service, they chanted an English version of the Lotus Sutra Chapter Two, Expedients. The event was sponsored by the Nichiren Shu Overseas Propagation Promotion Association, Bungyo Yoshida, President,

and the Nichiren Shu International Buddhist Fellowship Association, Nichiyu Mochida, President.

Before the ceremony, Rev. Kiichi Tsumori of the Joenji Buddhist Research Institute gave a presentation on the life and accomplishments of Archbishop Asahi, describing how late in his life he made trips to Korea, China, India and North America laying the foundation for teachings for a new era. Archbishop Asahi was a pioneer for spreading Nichiren Shu Buddhism overseas.

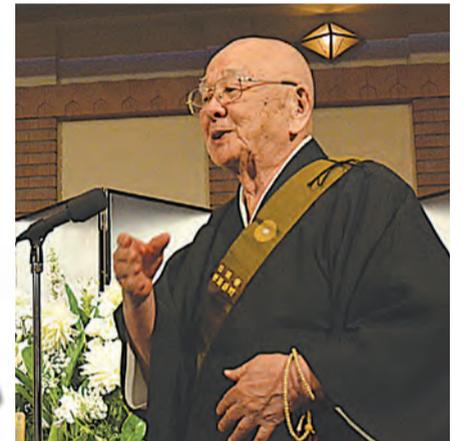
The memorial ceremony was held concurrently with the International Fukuyoshi Conference hosted by the Shumuin on June 17-19. NOPPA coordinated the event so that the International Fukuyoshi could be an integral part of the proceedings.



Detail from a scroll painting of Archbishop Nichimyo Asahi that was painted in 1911.



Incense was offered to commemorate Archbishop Asahi's work in propagation and spreading the teachings of the Lotus Sutra.



NOPPA President Bungyo Yoshida, hosted a banquet for the International Fukuyoshi and guests at the Imperial Hotel.



International Fukuyoshi led chanting in English of the Lotus Sutra, Chapter Two, Expedients.



Participants from Hawaii, North America, South America, Europe, and Southeast Asia took part in the International Fukuyoshi Conference that was hosted by the Shumuin in Tokyo on June 17-19.



Rev. Kiichi Tsumori gave a presentation on the life and accomplishments of Archbishop Asahi.

OBON – A JAPANESE TRADITION

Every summer, Obon is celebrated throughout Japan. In Tokyo, we have the *Shichigatsu Obon*, or July Obon, from July 13-16. In other parts of Japan, there is the *Kyubon*, from August 13-16. This traditional festival has been celebrated for more than 500 years. It welcomes the spirits of deceased loved ones back to their homes for just a few days every year.

Priests visit the members' homes and hold a special Obon service for the family in front of the altar. During the *Kyubon*, which is based on the lunar calendar, most companies and schools are closed, and people go to their hometowns to visit their families and their ancestors' graves.

The Buddhist altar is decorated with seasonal fruit and vegetables, and a decorative paper lantern is placed near the altar to welcome ancestors home. A *mukaebi*, or welcome flame, is lit outside the front door so that the ancestors can easily enter their home with the smoke from the flame. For three days, favorite foods and flowers decorate the family



altar. On the final day, an *okuribi*, or farewell flame, is lit outside the front door, this time guiding the ancestors back to their world. In Kyoto, the *okuribi* are lit on the sides of the mountains surrounding the city. This has been carried out for centuries, and both tourists and locals can view the fire from many places in Kyoto.

In many local areas, floating lanterns with the names of the deceased are set afloat in a river. These carry the spirits back to where they came from.

The highlight of the Bon Festival is the Bon Dance which is held even overseas. The dance welcomes the spirits. People dressed in *yukata*, a cotton summer kimono, dance around a *yagura*, a high wooden scaffold placed in the middle of the dance area. The music is based on local folk songs that most people in Japan know from their childhood.

Though Obon is more a Japanese tradition than a Buddhist festival, it is an annual event that strengthens the bond between families and their ancestors. —Sandra Seki

Daiseionji Celebrates Its 15th Anniversary

Rev. Shokei Steffens, Resident Minister
Daiseionji Temple, Wipperfuerth, Germany

On June 6, Daiseionji Temple in Wipperfuerth, Germany celebrated its 15th Anniversary and held an inter-religious symposium. More than 200 local Germans and about 100 people from Japan attended the ceremony to offer prayers for world peace.

The temple was established in the year 2000 by Rev. Shoki Takeuchi, the head priest of Myokenkakuji Temple in Osaka, Japan. Two years later, an arsonist attacked the temple, burning it down completely. The attack was probably based on the belief that Buddhism is heretical. Despite deep concern about another



disaster occurring, Rev. Takeuchi and Rev. Steffens were both determined to rebuild the main hall of the temple and continue promoting inter-religious dialogue. Within their community they proclaimed, "We are not here to convert people to Buddhism, but to establish world peace together through inter-religious dialogue." In 2003, the reconstruction was successfully completed with Rev. Zuio Inoue, Director General of Kuonji Temple of Minobusan, leading the re-inauguration ceremony.

At the 15th anniversary ceremony, Rev. Junko Kobayashi, Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu, delivered a congratulatory address: "There are still wars, conflicts and terrorist attacks even in the 21st century. Inter-religious dialogue is essential to eliminate antipathy between different cultures, religions and values, and to create a peaceful world through the True Dharma, where there is a state of



peaceful coexistence between nations."

One of the guests, Archbishop Felix Machado of Vasai, India, stated that Buddhism had been accepted as a partner at the Second Vatican Council 50 years ago. Father Indunil Kodithuwakku, Under-Secretary of the Pontifical Council of Interreligious Dialogue in the Vatican, also remarked, "Whoever you are, if you refuse to cooperate with people and treat them as brothers and sisters, we cannot rely upon God in a real sense."

Rev. Takeuchi expressed his thanks, saying, "As globalism rapidly advances, it is expected that we will see more conflicts caused by different cultures, religions, and values. It is because we have emphasized controversial talk, which only stirs up critical and divided opinions, without a positive attitude toward a full understanding of one another. Only clergy who highly regard inter-religious dialogue will win popular support."

Afterwards, the attendees enjoyed a local chorus group, the Focolare Trio, singing and performing a wonderful show. One of the attendees



commented, "The temple can succeed in embodying the universal truth human beings are looking for. This is significant. We will continue to seek world peace and see human social ties spreading worldwide."



Honolulu Myohoji's 85th Anniversary

By Rev. Takamasa Yamamura

We celebrated the 85th anniversary of the Honolulu Myohoji Temple on Sunday, May 17. The service was highlighted by the visit of the Society to Honor Nichiji Shonin, the first Nichiren Shu overseas missionary who began spreading the Lotus Sutra throughout the world. This year is the 100th memorial year of Archbishop Nichimyo Asahi. The President of the Society, Bishop Tsumyo Ito, presided over the celebratory service.

In keeping with the spirit of the Lotus Sutra, the Gods of Hawaii were also honored by a traditional Hawaiian chant and sacred hula at the beginning of the service. This was the first time in the history of Nichiren Shu where the local Gods were honored during a formal ceremony. This celebration was not only for honoring a single temple's founding but also the affirmation of the unity of all faith and the fulfillment of the possibility for a world of genuine peace and prosperity.

In his congratulatory speech, Bishop Ito said, "In the year 2020, Tokyo will host the Summer Olympics. The following year, 2021 will be the 800th anniversary of Nichiren Shonin's birth, and we will have a grand service for this event. I hope to see all of you here again at Myohoji."



A celebratory banquet was held after the service with the attendance of the Honolulu Consul General of Japan, Mr. Toyoei Shigeeda, President of the Japanese Culture Center of Hawaii, Mrs. Carole Hayashino, and President of the United Japanese Society of Hawaii, Mrs. Rika Hirate.

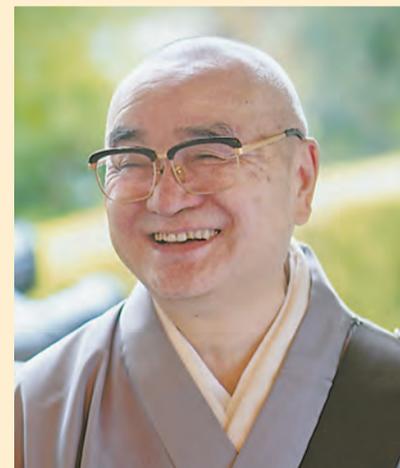
More than 250 attendees enjoyed Hawaiian food accompanied by wonderful music performed by Manoa DNA, a popular local band.



REVEREND KANNO PREACHES (37)

*"Anyone who expounds
This supreme teaching
In the evil world
(after my extinction)
Will obtain great benefits
(as previously stated)."*

—Lotus Sutra,
Chapter XIV:
Peaceful Practices



Great Benefits

These are the closing verses of the "Peaceful Practices" chapter. When the Buddha says "evil world" he also means "evil age." Our age and our world is full of selfish people. They care only about their own families, their own companies, and their own small groups. War, violence, disease, and natural disasters are rampant. This is the present state of Japan and the entire world.

Before "expounding this supreme teaching," we are required to have faith in the teaching, practice the teaching and comprehend the teaching. After we believe in the teaching and practice it, we will get "great benefits."

This does not mean anything like winning a big lottery prize. It means we will obtain great peace of mind. In other words, we will reach the world of great peace. In this phrase, the Buddha Shakyamuni calls us to practice His way with firm faith in the Lotus Sutra and the Odaimoku. We will reach the state of great peace of mind even if our country, the whole world, our society or our families are under extremely unfavorable circumstances.

The late Yukawa Nichijun Shonin, the leader of Odaimoku-chanting practice, teaches us, "Fully rely on the Buddha Shakyamuni and continue chanting Odaimoku calmly until we feel our voice and the voice of the Buddha become indistinguishable." Let us chant Odaimoku and reach the state of great peace.

Rev. Nisso Kanno, Head Priest, Kaichoji Temple, Shizuoka Prefecture

Peace March in New York City

By Rev. Shogen Kumakura

On April 26, Rev. Shunei Kawasaki, chair of the Rissho Heiwa no Kai, led a Peace March in New York City. The march began in Union Square and went to the United Nations building. Twelve Nichiren Shu members from Japan participated, along with Rev. Eisei Ikenaga of NBIC. The march was timed to coincide with the re-examination of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held at the United Nations every five years.

The main purpose of this event was to pray for world peace and deliver a petition, written by Nichiren Shu and signed by 2,551 people, to ban all



nuclear weapons and strive for peaceful settlement of conflicts throughout the world. Rev. Junko Kobayashi, Nichiren Shu Chief Administrator, stated in the petition, "In Nichiren Shu, we have a slogan, 'Gassho to Life.' Let us put our palms together and pray for world peace and the banning of all nuclear weapons."

Before the Peace March, Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists joined in a prayer for world peace in an Inter-faith Convocation at Tillman Chapel in the United Nations building.

The following day, the group visited Ground Zero and held a prayer service at New York City's 9/11 Memorial Park in Lower Manhattan.



The Journey of Re-Discovering Nichiren Shu in Southeast Asia (PART 2)

By Alexander Ang, Penang Nichiren Shu Temple Member

In the last issue, I described a story I heard about a Nichiren Shu temple being founded in Ipoh, Malaysia many years before the present temple in Penang, Malaysia was founded in 2002. Discovery of an Odaimoku Stupa dated 1900 at the Japanese cemetery in Penang was concrete evidence that such a temple may have existed.

We continued to search for this temple, making multiple trips to Ipoh and visiting many places to find further evidence. After many years of searching, we finally found it. Along with Rev. Kangyo Noda, we visited the location and confirmed it was the elusive temple that we had been looking for. The Ipoh temple is located at Tambun, Ipoh. It is now part of the Banjaran Hot Spring Resort. As we heard in the original story, there is a natural hot spring by the temple. Tambun, Ipoh is the site of an old mining area. In the early 20th century, traveling there was difficult. I was so surprised that a Nichiren Shu priest was able to travel such a distance into a very unfamiliar region.

A further uniqueness of this discovery was that it was a cave temple. In the cave, there is still today a large Odaimoku carved into one of the walls. We also found that this temple was established on September 12, 1913, the second year of the Taisho Era, by Rev. Baba from Kumamoto. This means the first Nichiren Shu temple in Malaysia was established 102 years ago.



Two inscriptions were made by Rev. Kanjo Asahi, a disciple of Archbishop Nichimyo Asahi.

The next discovery was just as astonishing. Among the many writings all around the temple cave walls, there were two inscriptions belonging to Rev. Kanjo Asahi, a disciple of Archbishop Nichimyo Asahi. These are believed to date back to 1916, the fifth year of the Taisho Era.



A 1907 postcard shows the stairs to enter the cave.



A 1924 postcard shows the temple.

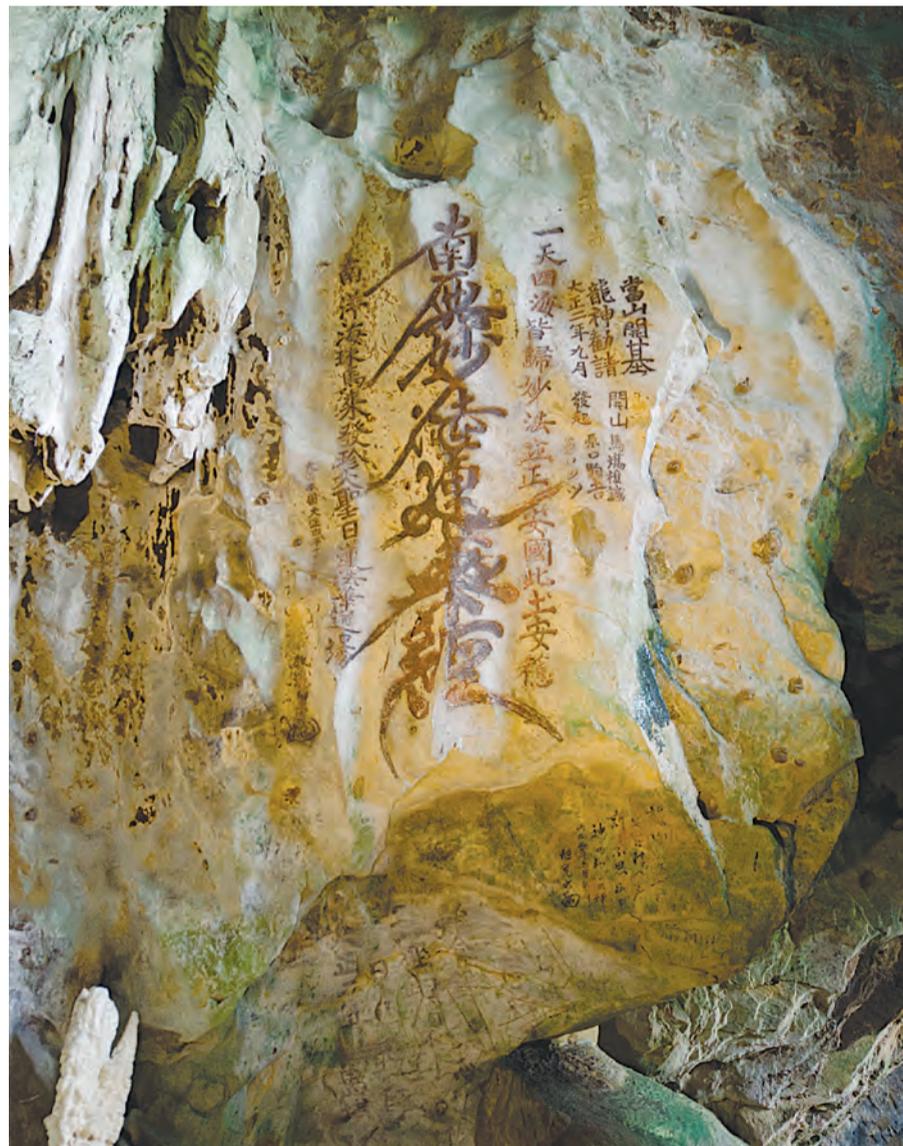
Recent photos capture the scenic beauty of this remote location.



There were also many Odaimoku inscriptions written all over the temple walls and many other writings and names throughout the cave.

From old Nichiren Shu newspapers and articles, we learned that the name of the temple was Hokekyo-ji. At one time, it had 290 members made up of 80% local people, 5% Japanese and 15% others. The members were from Penang, Ipoh, Taiping, Kuala Lumpur and the Cameron Highlands of Malaysia.

It is interesting to compare photos of how the temple surroundings looked over 100 years ago and today. First, consider a postcard dated 1907. It is believed to be depicting the temple location where the staircase leads up to the temple. Next, a postcard dated 1924 shows the temple clearly visible with a glimpse of the altar.



Along with various other inscriptions, this large Odaimoku was found carved into the cave's stone wall. A Nichiren Shu temple had been in Malaysia more than a hundred years earlier than we had thought.

More recent photos show the current surroundings of the location where the temple used to be.

Near the location of the Ipoh temple, we managed to visit the Perak Japanese Cemetery. On the cemetery grounds there is a building which hosts several Buddhist altars. To our surprise, one of the altars was a very old stupa which we believe includes statues of the two Buddhas with the Odaimoku in the middle.

Besides the Ipoh Temple, I believe there is more information yet to be discovered. The journey of re-discovering Nichiren Shu in Southeast Asia continues.

Personally, I have always been very fascinated with the Dharma teachers who are willing to go far and beyond to spread the Buddha Dharma. In the Nichiren lineage, I believe Nichiji Shonin is the prime example of an Overseas Missionary who exhibited the spirit of a selfless act for all sentient beings in order to share the Buddha Dharma.

This spirit of teaching the Dharma can be felt and seen through the eyes and actions of these great priests who ventured to Southeast Asia and to the rest of the world. They truly exhibit the practices in Chapter 10 of the Lotus Sutra, Teachers of the Dharma. Let us all learn this spirit from them to share the Buddha Dharma to all sentient beings throughout the Saha World.

TEMPLE EVENTS

**Nichiren Buddhist
Kannon Temple of Nevada**
Rev. Shokai Kanai

**NONA Dharma Conference
(Shodaigyo and Wasan Training)
November 21-22 (Sat-Sun)**

Kannon Temple of Nevada will be holding a weekend study session November 21-22 on Shodaigyo and Wasan. We have invited Rev. Giko Tabata from Eisho-ji Temple in Aomori, Japan to lead us in both activities. He is well known in both fields. Although this is a NONA event, it is open to everyone including ministers and lay people, so please make arrangements to attend. The registration fee is \$50. You must arrange for your own transportation and accommodations. Those interested please contact the temple (702) 866-5956 or via email kannontemplenv@gmail.com for further information.

Nichiren Mission of Hawaii
Bishop Chishin Hirai

Obon Service

The Shin Bon Ceremony was held for newly deceased members and friends of the Mission on Saturday, July 11 at 7:00 p.m. This was followed by a *toronagashi*, or floating lantern ceremony.

The annual Obon service was held the next day on Sunday, July 12 at 10:00 a.m. The Obon service is dedicated to people's ancestors and deceased friends.

To accumulate great merits, it is wonderful to offer *toba*, or wooden stupas, to the Buddha and the deceased. Offering a toba is an expression of sincerity, respect and appreciation to our loved ones. The donation for a paper lantern was \$20.00 and \$8.00 for each toba.



Puunene Temple, Maui
Rev. Tetsudo Takasaki

Puunene Bon Dance (Maui)

The annual Puunene Bon Dance was held on Saturday, June 13. The Bon service began at 7:00 p.m. with the Bon Dance following at 8:00 p.m. The food booths opened at 5:15 p.m., drawing a huge crowd. It was another successful event for the temple. The Puunene Bon Dance on Maui is one of the exciting events of summer, and it triggers enthusiasm for the other Buddhist temples that hold Bon Dances locally.

**Nichiren Buddhist Temple
San Jose**

Rev. Arnold Matsuda,
Resident Minister

Annual Nichiren Bazaar

It was another successful year for our Annual Nichiren Bazaar with a lot of help from members and friends. We made more than 600 Teriyaki Chicken Bento box lunches with Barazushi. Other food included Charlie's special curry rice, noodles and festival rice, all of which sold out very quickly. We also had a booth for *omanju*, Japanese sweet cakes, run by the Tachibana School. There was a performance on the *koto*, a Japanese stringed instrument, by the Marimokai, and a chorus by Kakehashi. Guests also enjoyed calligraphy, crafts, and Ikebana flower arrangements created by the Tachibana students. We got to watch a Japanese tea ceremony demonstration and participate in tea tasting. Many children took the challenge to make their own *uchiwa*, Japanese fan, by writing Japanese characters at the art corner. The Sogetsu Campbell Class displayed their Ikebana, and four teachers demonstrated their arrangements.

Our thanks go to the members of the San Jose Kendo Dojo and Shorinji Kempo Dojo for their great help.

It is always great to see people meeting new people and chatting with those they have not seen in a long time. Thanks to everyone for their support and help in making this event another successful one!

**Nichiren Buddhist Sangha
of Greater New England**

Christine Tello-Lorenz,
Temple Member

The New England Sangha continues to offer a full schedule of services and classes for beginners throughout the summer. Recently temple members attended local events to promote the sangha. In April, temple members had a booth at Boston's annual Japan Festival hosted by the Japan Society of Boston. Hundreds of people visited the booth asking questions and purchasing various amulets and *omikuji*, or fortune readings. In May, the local Tibetan center organized an interfaith gathering to celebrate the Buddha, and temple members along with Bishop Myokei Caine-Barrett chanted Jigage and Odaimoku to a large crowd just outside of Boston. We plan to attend another festival in the fall. Email us at ryuoh@comcast.net if you would like to be added to our quarterly newsletter.



INSTALLATION CEREMONY AT LAS VEGAS KANNON TEMPLE



Rev. Shokai Kanai ceremonially hands over the position of head priest to Rev. Shoda Kanai.

On Sunday, June 7, the installation ceremony for Rev. Shoda Kanai was held at the Nichiren Buddhist Kannon Temple of Nevada in Las Vegas. He has been studying, practicing and continuing his training as a Nichiren Shu priest at Shinnyoji Temple in Osaka since December 2012. During these three years of training, he completed the 100 Day Aragyō Ascetic Training twice.

As a witness to the installation, Rev. Kanju Ueda, head priest of Shinnyoji Temple, and his brother Rev. Kansen Ueda came to Las Vegas along with a group of priests and lay members from Japan.

The ceremony began with a special tea offering to the Gohonzon by Jodie Cohen-Potter, teacher of the Urasenke Tea Ceremony School, Las Vegas

Chapter. Assisting with the ceremony were NONA Bishop Myokei Caine-Barrett, from the Nichiren Buddhist Sangha of Texas, Rev. Ryuoh Faulconer, from the Nichiren Buddhist Sangha of Greater New England, Rev. Shogen Kumakura, from New York Daiseionji, and Rev. Eisei Ikenaga, from NBIC.

After the service, congratulatory speeches were given by Rev. Kanju Ueda and also from Kathleen Blakely, Honorary Consul General of Japan in Las Vegas.

I am stepping back from the position of head priest, but I will remain with the temple as Rev. Shoda Kanai continues his examinations and further training in Japan. He will also represent the Kannon Temple at the NONA meetings and ceremonies in North America. —Rev. Shokai Kanai



So many people came for this ceremony, it took two group photos to include them all.

Calendar for August 2015–September 2015

AUG 13-16 Obon (Traditional Chinese Calendar)

AUG 15 Memorial Ceremony and Prayer for World Peace for the victims and unknown war dead at the Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery, sponsored by Nichiren Shu

AUG 27 Commemoration Day for the Matsubagayatsu Persecution

SEP 3 Memorial for Niko Shonin

SEP 12 Commemoration Day for the Tatsunokuchi Persecution

SEP 17 Memorial for Nisshin Shonin

SEP 18-19 Grand Ceremony at Shichimenzan

SEP 20-26 Autumn Higan (Equinox) Week

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