

Nichiren Shu News

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In Memory of Our Founder: How Nichiren Shonin Entered Parinirvana

Rev. Sensho Komukai

Our Founder Nichiren Shonin left Mt. Minobu on September 8, 1282 heading for the hot springs in Hitachi Province to cure his illness. He arrived at the residence of his follower Ikegami Munenaka on September 18. He ate his favorite tofu dish for lunch, *hikizuri tofu*, ground black sesame on grilled tofu. Exhausted, he lay on his side hoping for relief from his illness and the long journey. The next day, he wrote his last letter to Lord Hakii Sanenaga, entreating that his grave be erected on Mt. Minobu.

On September 25, Nichiren Shonin gave a lecture to his disciples and followers on his treatise, the *Rissho Ankoku-ron*, while leaning against a pillar in the Ikegami residence.

On October 8, he appointed Nissho, age 62, Nichiro, age 38, Nikko, age 37, Niko, age 30, Nitcho, age 31 and Nichiji, age 33, as his six senior disciples. On October 11, he called the 14-year-old boy Kyoichimaro, later named Nichizo, to his bedside, entrusting him with spreading the Lotus Sutra in the imperial capital of Kyoto. In the evening of October 12,



he turned toward the north, with the great mandala displayed in front of him and his standing statue of the Buddha enshrined to the side.

Between 8:00 and 9:00 in the morning on October 13, 1282, surrounded by many disciples and followers chanting the Lotus Sutra and the Odaimoku, 'Namu Myoho Renge Kyo,' he peacefully entered parinirvana. Nissho rang the bell to let it be known that our Founder's life had ended. People ran together to the Ikegami residence and sobbed with grief in the garden. Cherry blossoms, which normally bloom in the spring, bloomed on that fall day in the garden.

The following evening around 8:00 or 9:00, Nissho and Nichiro put Nichiren

Shonin's body in a coffin. They held the funeral at midnight. There was a long procession to the crematorium. Nichiro walked in front of the coffin, Nissho walked behind, and 12 other disciples attended the coffin side by side. Today, where Nichiren Shonin was cremated, there stands a Stupa of Many Treasures.

On October 16, his ashes were transferred into an urn. After holding his sixth day memorial service on October 19, the disciples and followers left for Mt. Minobu to erect his grave in accordance with his last wishes. The 49th day memorial service was held on November 30 at his hermitage on Mt. Minobu. On January 23, 1283, on his 100th memorial day, the grave of our

Founder was completed, and his ashes were laid to rest.

In 1288, for the sixth-year memorial service, Nippo Shonin carved a statue of our Founder. It is enshrined in the Founder's Hall at Ikegami Honmonji Temple. Nippo Shonin was a great sculptor who had served Nichiren Shonin since he was a child. He remembered best how our Founder looked. The statue holds the sixth scroll of the Lotus Sutra in his left hand and a *hossu*, or whisk, in his right. A hair from Nichiren's mother is implanted in the *hossu*. It is the oldest statue of our Founder and shows him true to life.

Every year on the eve of the anniversary of his parinirvana day, many people visit Ikegami Honmonji Temple. They walk in line with *mando*, ten thousand lanterns decorated with paper cherry blossoms, hoisting *matoi*, firefighters' standards and chanting the Odaimoku with gongs, hand drums, and flutes. Their mood is festive rather than mournful. They express the joy of encountering the Odaimoku, chanting the Odaimoku and helping others hear the echoes of the Odaimoku.



INTERNATIONAL PROPAGATION IN THE COVID-19 ERA

Kokusai Fukuyoshi, Overseas Ministers, have been burning with passion for spreading the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Shonin all around the world. They are now facing an unprecedented crisis with COVID-19, which has been restricting their missionary work and stopping many temple activities. They have never given up. They are summoning their best wisdom to turn everything to good account. Sunday services and study classes on the Lotus Sutra or our Founder's writing are being shared online on Facebook and Zoom video conferences. This been producing better than expected results.

Rev. Shoryo Tarabini in Italy held online study classes on the *Rissho Ankoku-ron* in Italian, English, French, and Spanish. He has received many responses from around the world in people's own languages.

Rev. Shoda Kanai in Nevada held Sunday services, study classes, and even a tea party online. Local members, and many followers from California, Utah, Washington, the East Coast, and even Asia, participated in the online services.

Rev. Josho Yamamura of Honolulu Myohoji Temple joined the Online Goshuin Project, creating a special 'Goshuin' stamp, like those used for

people visiting temples. When people visit the temple online, they can receive the special stamp and hand inscription by mail to show that they visited.

Rev. Ervinna Myoufu in Indonesia started the "24 Hour Odaimoku Offering to Heal the World" to pray that the pandemic would disappear quickly. On Facebook, ministers and followers from around the world joined in the Odaimoku chanting in these 24-hour sessions in which the Odaimoku was continuously being recited somewhere in the world. Hopefully, followers who have joined in these events have felt more at one, like the unity of family.

Now you understand how hard the Kokusai Fukuyoshi work to pray for the world to be safe and to remove people's anxiety in these confusing times. They are seeking the best way forward through this difficult situation. They truly hope that the pandemic will subside quickly and look forward to recovering a normal state. But please remember, the dearest wish of all ministers and followers is to make it possible for everyone to go back to their temples to chant with drums, to study, talk, and smile in a clean and pure atmosphere. We sincerely hope that we can realize that wish very soon.

—Nichiren Shu News Editor



Taking Care of Dragon Palace Temple in This Pandemic

By Sulekha Kumbare

Since February 2021, Dragon Palace Temple has been closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. The Nagpur District was declared a “hot spot” with some 300 to 400 people dying every day in the months of March, April, and May of 2021. This was the second wave. Before that, we had a lockdown in 2020 that lasted over six months.

Last year, we replaced the roof tiles of Dragon Palace Temple. We also replaced the lawn and did beautification work. The whole renovation of Dragon Palace Temple was done to make it appear as new as it was on its Inauguration Day.



Volunteers worked to restore the tiled roof.

We celebrated the Anniversary of Dragon Palace Temple last year, but it was very limited in terms of people and scope. Sadly, there were no international guests, so we missed seeing Bishop Nichiyu Mochida and the other priests from Japan.

On the eve of the Buddha's parinirvana, we held a special prayer and



Special prayers were held at a social distance.



Renovations of the Dragon Palace Temple were done to make it as splendid as the day it opened.



The dome was bathed in colored light for Parinirvana Day.

organized a Peace Candle March. The Dragon Palace Temple and the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Memorial were decorated with colorful lights. Pictures of this were published in the local paper.

During the pandemic period, and despite the lockdown closing the temple, every day all the workers and employees still clean and maintain the Dragon Palace Temple campus grounds, including the Dragon Vipassana Meditation Centre and the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Memorial. Every morning at 10:30 a.m., a special Buddhist Vandana and Chanting of *Namu Myo Ho Renge Kyo* is offered by myself and all the temple employees and workers.

During the pandemic, there was no source of income for our temple. The

donation box was empty. No parking collection was possible. Despite these hardships, I still paid salaries to all the employees throughout the pandemic. I took out some bank loans to help make this possible and maintain the temple. Beside this, we also helped people suffering with COVID-19 get medicine and hospital care. We made one lakh or 100,000 masks and donated them to hospitals and people living in slum areas, and we paid the women who made the masks.

At present, the situation is normal, but all schools, colleges and religious places are closed to the public. It has been predicted that the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic will come in the next month in India. As such, the

anniversary celebration for Dragon Palace Temple is likely to be done on a small scale with a limited number of people. Our hope and wish, if flights are available from Japan, is that some Nichiren Shu priests can be present for the 22nd Anniversary of Dragon Palace Temple on November 19. We are all taking care of Dragon Palace Temple and the people around us. It is a difficult time and will be even more challenging if the lockdown continues for a long time.

On September 2, we held a special memorial prayer honoring the second anniversary of Madam Noriko Ogawa's passing. I will always keep Madam Ogawa in my life, and I will also continue to support her mission to propagate the Wonderful Dharma in India.



Peace Candle March for the Buddha's Parinirvana.



100,000 masks went to hospitals and people in need.



Support was provided to people with COVID-19.

Unknown Histories of Nichiren Shu Temples in Sado (3) – Myoshoji Temple

By Rev. Sensho Komukai

Honma Saburo, dispatched to Sado Island as a provincial magistrate governor, executed Lord Suketomo Hino who had been charged with treason against the Kamakura military government.

Suketomo's son, Kumawaka-maru, a 13-year-old boy, on hearing of plans for his father's execution, came all the way from Kyoto to Sado to see his father's face one last time. But his earnest request was refused. The execution and cremation were carried out in an inconspicuous place. Just given his father's ashes, Kumawaka-maru became so furious that he vowed to take revenge on the executioner, Honma Saburo. One stormy night, he sneaked into the Honma residence and stabbed Honma Saburo to death.

Honma Saburo also had a young son who went to Myoshoji Temple to report his father's death to Nichijo Shonin who was the first resident minister of Myoshoji Temple, a well-known place where Nichiren Shonin had written his important treatise *Kanjin Honzon-sho*.



Kumawaka-maru trying to escape by using a bamboo branch to jump over a fence after he had killed Honma Saburo.

Saburo's son told Nichijo Shonin about his father's greatest wish. His father had been a Nembutsu follower. However, after his father met Nichiren Shonin on Sado Island, he was deeply affected by Nichiren Shonin's teachings, so much so that he wanted to become a priest as a disciple of Nichiren Shonin. Saburo had sincerely wanted to lead a virtuous life and purify himself until his sins as an executioner could be expiated under the clear guidance of Nichiren Shonin.

Saburo's son asked Nichijo Shonin if he could enter into the priesthood on behalf

of his father. Nichijo Shonin was so impressed to find the boy having no vengeance against Kumawaka-maru who had killed his father, and inheriting his father's high intentions to become a priest, that he allowed the boy to take vows and gave him a Buddhist name, Gakuyu-bo. Far from having the desire for revenge, he made great efforts in his study and practice and dedicated his life to the Lotus Sutra. Later, Gakuyu-bo was given the name of “Nichimyo,” and he went on to become the third resident minister of Myoshoji Temple.



Gakuyu-bo/Nichimyo became the third resident minister of Myoshoji Temple.

An Oeshiki Gift: Writings of Nichiren Shonin

VOLUME ONE
NEW SECOND EDITION

By Rev. Shinkyō Warner

The two most important publications for Nichiren Shu are the *Lotus Sutra* and the collected *Writings of Nichiren Shonin* (WONS). In 2012, after many years of working with Rissho University and the Nichiren Buddhist International Center (NBIC), we published the third edition of Bishop Senchu Murano’s translation of the *Lotus Sutra*. As part of those efforts, we produced a digital version that was readable on tablets and other devices. We also moved away from the long-standing practice of printing thousands of copies of a book and then selling them from a publishing warehouse. We moved to “print on demand” where individual books are printed when they are ordered.

Back in 2002, Rev. Kyotsu Hori, with the support of the Nichiren Shu Overseas Propagation Promotion Association (NOPPA), released the first of seven volumes of translations from the *Nichiren Shonin Zenshu*, *Complete Writings of Nichiren Shonin*. These included Nichiren Shonin’s five major works, *Rissho Ankoku-ron*, *Senji-sho*, *Kaimoku-sho*, *Kanjin Honzon-sho*, and *Ho-on Jo*, and all of his other letters and minor treatises deemed authentic and included in the *Showa Teihon*. Rev. Hori continued working his way through the series, publishing the sixth volume in 2010.

After organizing translations for the seventh volume, Rev. Hori became ill and was unable to continue his work. In 2014, I was asked to help finish the seventh volume, so I reassembled the team that

had worked on the third edition of the *Lotus Sutra*, and we went to work.

By the time we released the seventh volume in 2015, publishing had moved almost entirely over to print on demand. This meant we could no longer follow the old publishing model. Fortunately, we had also set up the seventh volume for print on demand, but this had not been done with the previous six volumes, so they needed to be reformatted with that in mind. As such, we would need to redo the entire series.

As we approached the work, one of our first decisions was that we also wanted to create a digital version of WONS as we had done with the *Lotus Sutra*. This would make it so that all of Nichiren Shonin’s writings could be searched at the same time, rather than having to look through seven separate physical books.

Having just finished work on the seventh volume, I figured that producing the other six volumes would be roughly repeating what we had done about six more times. I thought it might take a bit longer as some of the volumes had more pages and more complex writings.

However, there was a critical difference in this series that only became clear as I started looking at the series as a whole. With the *Lotus Sutra*, we had a single translator in Senchu Murano. With WONS, dozens of translators had contributed to the project. Working together with so many people was part of the genius of Rev. Hori’s approach. This made it possible to complete all seven volumes much more quickly than if there had only been a single translator.

The disadvantage was that there were many differences in how terms were translated and described by the different translators. The differences were subtle in places, but at times they made it hard to see key connections between writings. I also began to notice differences in the focus of glossary entries for the same term in different volumes.

As we were creating a main volume for the series, we needed a main glossary. Combining glossaries was a huge undertaking. We started with around 1,500 terms in the seven volumes. After combining and refining them, we narrowed it down to around 1,000. We also had to keep track of which terms were used in which volumes. It would be impractical to include all the terms

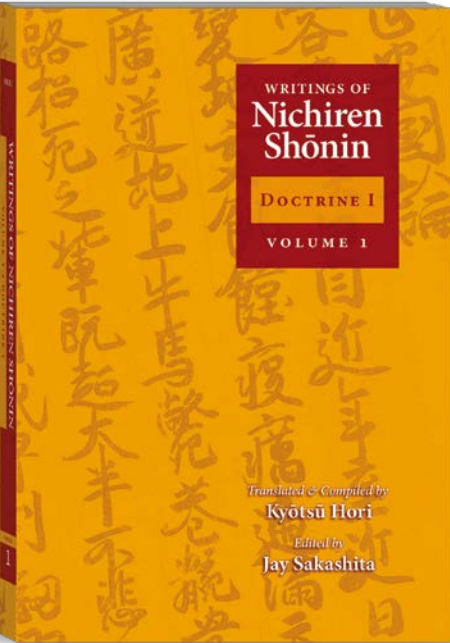
in each printed volume. In the later volumes in the series, it would have doubled their size.

The first version of the combined glossaries was completed last year and presented to NOPPA just weeks before the pandemic lockdown began. Since then, we have been working through the first volume, finding changes in the main text that resulted from changes in the combined glossary, in addition to other revisions meant to make the text more consistent and readable.

Thanks to the keen eye of our designer, Alan Rowe, advice and many clarifications from Rev. Sensho Komukai, and the patience and support of NOPPA, we will be releasing the first volume of the new series, including on Amazon, on October 13 to coincide with Oeshiki.

This volume includes two of the five major works, the *Rissho Ankoku-ron* and *Senji-sho*. It also contains a fascinating description of the rulers of Japan, *Sovereigns of our Divine Land*, and an expansion of Nichiren Shonin’s famous reproach of Hachiman, *Admonition of Bodhisattva Hachiman*.

We have already begun work on the second volume, which contains the *Kaimoku-sho* and *Kanjin Honzon-sho*. The *Ho-on Jo* comes in the third volume. We plan to keep chipping away at the series. The second volume should be easier than the first volume, since the glossary for the entire series had to be completely reworked before we could finish the first volume. We will certainly keep you informed as volumes in the series come out.



An Invitation from the Smithsonian

By Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett, Myoken-ji Temple, Houston, Texas

In November 2019, I was contacted by Dr. Teddy Reeves, curator of religion at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D.C. He invited me to serve as a panelist for the Telly Award-

winning conversation series entitled, “gOD-Talk: A Black Millennials and Faith Conversation Series,” conducted by the Center for the Study of African American Religious Life at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African

American History and Culture in association with the Pew Research Center. The program consisted of an intergenerational group of panelists having a conversation, which was filmed and produced for the “gOD-Talk” series.

At the same time, I was asked to contribute an oral history for the museum as the first western woman of African American and Japanese descent to hold the position of Bishop of the Nichiren Order of North America (NONA). This was a separate interview that was intended to explore my personal journey, ministry, and vocation. The team came to Houston to interview me and do the filming. The plan at the time was to collect the clothing I wore at the Shingyo Dojo to be placed in the Smithsonian Museum. The COVID-19 pandemic put those plans on hold.

Early this year, I was asked to join in a conversation on the Smithsonian’s “Sidedoor” podcast to further explore the oral history that I had contributed previously. It is available on a number of different platforms.

Currently, the museum’s staff is preparing an information package, including pictures and information about various events in my life, to support the material’s inclusion in the Smithsonian’s collection.



Rev. Caine-Barrett, first woman of African American and Japanese descent to serve as NONA Bishop, is now included in Smithsonian events and podcasts.



Rev. Caine-Barrett at the conference in 2014 where she was selected to hold the office of Bishop of the Nichiren Order of North America (NONA).

PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS OF REV. MYOKEI CAINE-BARRETT

In February, a curatorial assistant from the Center for the Study of African American Religious Life at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture contacted me regarding the photographic portraits that

I took of Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett following her selection as Bishop of the Nichiren Order of North America (NONA).

I recently received a letter from Kevin Young, Director of the Smithsonian’s National

Museum of African American History and Culture, informing me that five of my images of Rev. Caine-Barrett have been fully verified, their acquisition recorded, and permanently catalogued into the Smithsonian’s collection.

I am pleased that Rev. Caine-Barrett’s story and my photographic portraits of her are being considered for publication by the Smithsonian as well as for digital exhibition and eventual display within the museum.

—Jan Louy



Nichiren Mission of Hawaii Rev. Shokai Kanai

Peace Prayer with the Lotus Sutra

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rev. Kanai has been praying for the quick recovery of all those infected by the disease. For those who lost their lives, he prayed for their attainment of Buddhahood. Initially, Rev. Kanai chanted by himself, but now there are 13 people who join him in prayer from Oahu, the Big Island, Maui, the west coast of the U.S. and Japan using Zoom.

July 1st marked one year since we began reading from the Lotus Sutra, chapter by chapter in English, every day at 5:00 p.m. In total, the group has now read the entire sutra more than seven times.

If you would like to join us, please access the Zoom session with the Meeting ID: 722 0124 8932. The password is 4V35nU. The services last about 30 minutes.



Pond Cleanup for Toro Nagashi

On July 4, we had our annual pond cleanup to clear away the lotus for the Shin Bon ceremony. Originally, Shami Shougou Kuni cleared the path to float the lanterns in the pond for the Obon *toro nagashi*, floating lanterns. This was his way of furthering his Buddhist practice. As the water gets warmer, the lotus grow thicker and taller throughout the muddy water.

This year over 20 people, including some of our neighbors, came to help with the pond cleanup.

We held our Obon service on July 11 and Shin Bon service on July 17 offering our prayers to our ancestors and friends.



Honolulu Myohoji Temple Rev. Josho Yamamura

Caregiving = Heart-giving

It is estimated that over 40 million people in America are caring for a loved one at home. Every day, we see many instances where caregiving is done without pay.

Dr. Frances Lewis, Professor of Nursing at the University of Washington in Seattle, explains that roughly 25-35% of the caregivers are suffering from anxiety or clinical depression.

When a patient has a serious illness, whether physical or mental, medical attention is, of course, focused mainly on the patient. However, Dr. Lewis cautions that illnesses have a strong effect not just on the patients but on their caregivers as well. Unfortunately, the much needed care for those providing care is often neglected. Caregivers often refuse to pay attention to their own needs until they develop more serious illnesses. They often even feel a sense of guilt when they take time to take care of themselves.

Dr. Lewis conducted a unique experiment with caregivers and asked them to complete a couple of simple tasks over an extended period.

1) Spend at least 15 minutes a day doing something you enjoy that is not directly connected to caregiving.

2) Practice active listening with your spouse by genuinely listening without trying to fix things. Dr. Lewis refers to this process as “becoming a love sponge.” Just listening to your spouse, absorbing his or her words and feelings was like a sponge. The results of the tests showed intriguing results.

Caregiving is hard work, and it requires both physical and mental tenacity. Dr. Lewis’ research shows that it is indeed a labor of love. Once a caregiver understands that caring for oneself is just as important as caring for the needs of others, the work brings healing to both the provider and recipients of the care. Active listening is an important part of “becoming a love sponge.”

Guided by the hope of Nichiren Shonin, the Honolulu Myohoji Mission continues

to work towards a peaceful society. We have been collaborating with psychologist Dr. Yukari Kunisue, a trained and experienced life coach, to offer a safe online space. A free consultation project is offered at the Mission through the guidance of Dr. Kunisue.

Seattle Enkyoji Temple Mrs. Mamiko Cederman

Online Graduation Ceremony 2021

In June 2020, we started a beginner’s course for lay leaders meeting every Saturday using the Enkyoji Temple Lay Leaders Manual. This year on June 19, we had an online graduation ceremony for our newest lay leaders.

This course consisted of two levels: level one was a monthly seminar and lasted about half a year. Each seminar featured three lectures, feedback sessions, and group interaction.

Level two was an apprenticeship in Buddhist lifestyle and mission. Participants in this level could put into practice the leadership skills promoted and enhanced in level one and specialize in one area of local mission.

Each lay leader would have a shami, novice priest, as a mentor, and meet once a month or more to get assistance or ask questions. By the time participants graduated from this course, they had learned the foundation of Buddhist culture. These are the building blocks of a tradition that will grow and gain roots in foreign lands.

On our first memorable graduation, we had a total of ten graduates from the U.S., Canada, England, and Italy who received their certificates.

On July 10, we began a new course for lay leaders with new participants. This time around, we have 16 people in the course from the U.S. and Europe. We are looking forward to an exciting year to spread Nichiren Buddhism to new attendees and people in new places!



Renkoji Temple, Italy By Rev. Shoryo Tarabini

Buddhism and Health

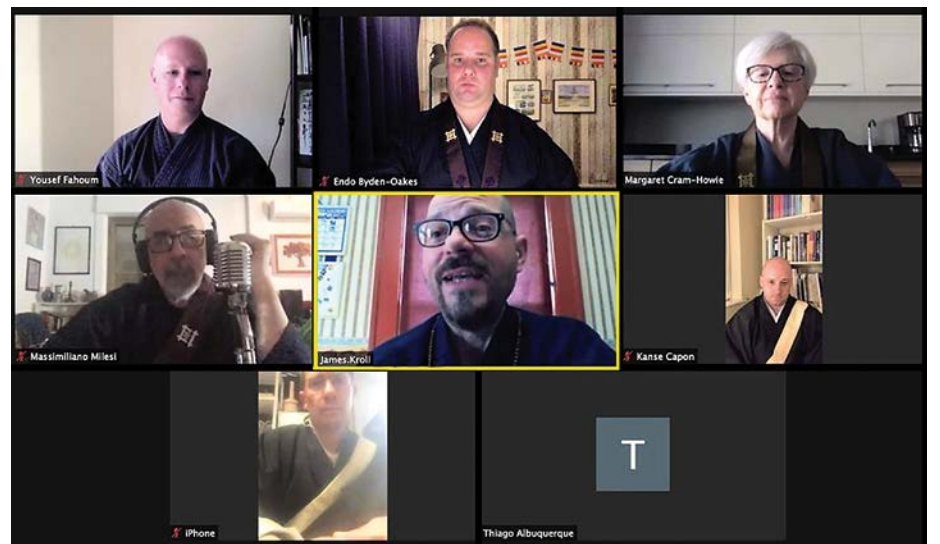
On August 29, we started a varied series of presentations discussing Buddhism, health, and philosophy. Inspired by Buddhism, martial arts, shiatsu, finger pressure massage, and a variety of other holistic and cultural practices were born and developed.

The first session began with a general speech on Buddhism and Health, followed by Qi Gong, a Chinese form of gentle exercise, and a Shiatsu massage demonstrations. The full day event went from 10:00 in the morning until 4:00 in the afternoon.

The event was free and open to everyone.

Obon Ceremony

For the first time this year, in the hopes of sharing the Japanese Obon ceremony, tradition, and spirit with other Buddhist schools in Italy, we held a joint Obon ceremony with Ven. Paljin Tulku Rinpoche of Samten Ling Monastery in Graglia in Biella Province.



Calendar for October 2021 – November 2021

OCT 10 Ceremony in Memory of the Founder’s Exile to Sado Island, Minobusan
OCT 13 Oeshiki
OCT 31 Ceremony of Changing the Robes on the Statue of Nichiren Shonin, Minobusan

NOV 11 738th Memorial Service for Nichiren Shonin
Commemoration Day for the Komatsubara Persecution
NOV 13 Memorial for Nichizo Shonin

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Editorial Board Sensho Komukai, *Editor*; Shinkyō Warner, *Assistant Editor*; Kosei Uchida, *Staff Writer*; Sandra Seki, *Advisor*.

Art Director Alan Rowe

日蓮宗
Nichiren Shu

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