

# Nichiren Shu News

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## Great Success of the 800th Birthday Celebration for Nichiren Shonin in Hawaii

By Rev. Shokai Kanai

I deeply appreciate all of you, locally and overseas, who contributed to the success of “The Commemorative Ceremony of the 800th Anniversary of Nichiren Shonin’s Birth – Live from Hawaii.” It was held on January 23 and broadcast on YouTube. This was the next to last of these commemorative events.

The temple building was newly painted, the floors were shiny and waxed, the ten red and white Odaimoku banners representing the five Nichiren Missions in Hawaii were waving in the breeze, and Hawaiian and chrysanthemum flowers decorated the altar beautifully with amazing colors.

25 members from the local missions attended in person along with over

100 people from around the world participating live on YouTube. The ceremony at the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii was broadcast side by side with the service conducted in Japan.

The distinguished Archbishop of our order, his Holiness, the Benevolent Nissho Kanno, officiated the Grand Ceremony from his temple at Ikegami Honmonji in Tokyo, Japan. Locally,

Rev. Josho Yamamura and I assisted him together with three Shamis and the members who attended in person. We recited the Lotus Sutra and chanted the Odaimoku in unison with the Archbishop Kanno.

Even with the COVID-19 restrictions, through YouTube, we were all able to be of one mind praying and chanting as Nichiren Shonin would have wished.

**EDITORS NOTE:** As mentioned in our last issue, the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii held a special ceremony commemorating the 800th Anniversary of the Birth of Nichiren Shonin on January 23. Unfortunately Archbishop Nissho Kanno and Chief Administrator Eshin Tanaka as well as other officials could not attend in person due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. The event was held instead with online participation. You can watch the commemorative ceremony on YouTube using this link [https://youtu.be/\\_Ag80tR4nkU](https://youtu.be/_Ag80tR4nkU) or scan the QR Code.



### SOME OF ARCHBISHOP KANNO’S REMARKS FROM THE HAWAIIAN CELEBRATION

This grand ceremony celebrating the 800th anniversary of our founder’s birth is not just celebrating a birthday. Each and every one of us — priests, members, and devotees — must accept Nichiren Shonin’s vow as our own, in the face of continuous natural calamities, wars on a global scale, and confusion in our hearts here at home. Now is the time for each of us to choose a world of peace,

powered by our faith in the Lotus Sutra and the Odaimoku.

In 2003, there was a grand ceremony commemorating the centennial of propagation in Hawaii. I took part in that ceremony as Propagation Department manager. It left a deep impression on me. I can also never forget the great pleasure of keeping a promise to teach Shodaigyo to members of the Nichiren Mission of

Hawaii shortly after my installation at Ikegami Honmonji Temple, practicing Odaimoku with them for three days.

I was especially looking forward to going to Hawaii for a third time for this ceremony. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic, this became impossible. It is with these thoughts and feelings in my heart that I conduct this ceremony, along with this address, in gratitude.



### IN THE SPIRIT OF ALOHA... COMMENTS ON THE HAWAIIAN CELEBRATION

Thanks to everyone who saw this event. The leaders of the Hawaii Nichiren Missions sincerely hope that you enjoyed it. I wish to express my deep appreciation to Archbishop Nissho Kanno and to everyone else who contributed their time, expertise, and service to make the celebration day such a tremendous success. Without your help, none of this would have been possible. Thank you very much.

—Keith Nagai, President,  
Nichiren Mission of Hawaii

This event was an incredible time to come together. We have all suffered from not being able to gather. However, we are excited and privileged to celebrate the 800th anniversary of our founder’s birth. Nichiren Shonin’s birth was a miracle, the creation of the great mandala, and the constant sacrifices that he made to propagate the teaching of the Lotus Sutra is something that we must all remember.

—Diane Omura, Vice President,  
Puunene Nichiren Mission

We want to thank everyone, people too numerous to mention here, involved in making this celebration and producing the worldwide live broadcast from Honolulu, Hawaii and Ikegami Honmonji Temple in Tokyo such a success as the event had to be reconfigured on such short notice. Our special thanks to Archbishop Nissho Kanno. Again, even if we thank them, we cannot thank them enough.

—Rev. Josho Yamamura,  
Honolulu Myohoji Temple

The 800-year celebration resonates the meaningful teachings of Nichiren Shonin. These beliefs and practices have only existed in the Hawaiian Islands for a little over 100 years. Our work at Honolulu Myohoji is to show these teachings are most relevant in our lives in the 21st century. We hope our efforts will resonate the teachings of Nichiren Shonin in the Hawaiian islands for the next 800 years.

—Daniel Liu, President,  
Honolulu Myohoji Mission

# Preparing for the 800th Anniversary Commemorative Ceremony in Hawaii

By Rev. Kanjo Bassett

The sincere wish of the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii members and Rev. Shokai Kanai was to have the Honorable Rev Nissho Kanno, Archbishop of Nichiren Shu officiate the ceremony in person. The full resources of Nichiren Shu from Shomyo masters to the Chief Administrator's office converged into 'pull out all the stops' planning mode. Up until November 2021, it looked as this would indeed be possible with

various Nichiren Shu dignitaries from Japan, including Shomyo masters and, Aragyō masters, and North American Kokusai Fukyoshi all attending to help conduct the ceremony. Then the COVID-19 Omicron variant hit, and plans had to change. The event would still be officiated by the Archbishop, but it would be held mostly online. On-site

attendees in Hawaii would be limited to Rev. Kanai, Rev. Josho Yamamura, and a few select temple board members. Chief Administrator Rev. Eshin Tanaka would give his greeting online. It took major efforts in Hawaii and Japan to rearrange everything on such short notice.

Due to time differences, it was not possible for Archbishop Kanno to

officiate the ceremony live from Ikegami Honmonji Temple. Instead, this part of the ceremony was recorded on December 23. It was fascinating to watch Shomyo Master Rev. Shunko Kawasaki preside over the planning and rehearsal. There is so much that goes on behind the scenes for such a large international event, plus coordinating between Hawaii and Japan. From planning to rehearsal to taping, to the online ceremony itself, there were many obstacles and challenges. Everyone worked hard to make it happen.



**BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER:** With a limited time to reconfigure an in-person event in Hawaii into a global broadcast for this final event in the Celebration of the 800th Anniversary of the Birth of Nichiren Shonin, Nichiren Shu pulled out all the stops to make this grand celebration a truly memorable event. This included pre-recording portions at Ikegami Honmonji Temple to avoid any communications or connection problems on the day of the event.

## 24 Hour Shodaigyo Relay

In connection with the grand celebration in Hawaii, a "24 Hour Odaimoku Offering to Heal the World" relay was held on February 16 and 17 on Facebook. Temples and sanghas around the world participated. The relay began at the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii and ended at the Honolulu Myohoji Mission.



Doing Shodaigyo alone in the temple might sound lonely, but it had special meaning as we could all chant the Odaimoku together around the world celebrating Nichiren's birthday. Each leader had their own chanting style. Some did greetings, some gave mini-sermons, and some jumped right into chanting, but the feeling of being one was always

there. The messages I got from people online were really encouraging. We had thought about using other platforms, like Zoom or YouTube, but each platform had its own limitations and challenges. In the end, we decided to use Facebook, despite it being limited to Facebook members, as it was the easiest to use.

—Rev. Kangyo Noda (Japan)

This event was an important moment for our spread-out Brazilian Sangha, so far from the other temples. Gathering with people from so many different places, even just to say "we are here, together, chanting with you!" We felt embraced and united in the same spirit to fulfill Nichiren Shonin's wish observing his 800th birthday.

—Shami Yotatsu Chiamulera (Brazil)

"Sanghas around the world have put their palms together, praying for this world. World peace won't happen if each of us don't have inner peace. In our practice, we keep a peaceful mind and heart through chanting the Odaimoku. Let's continue working together to send the merits of chanting the Odaimoku to this world.

—Rev. Myoufu Ervinna (Southeast Asia)

# Writings of Nichiren Shonin

## VOLUME THREE, NEW SECOND EDITION

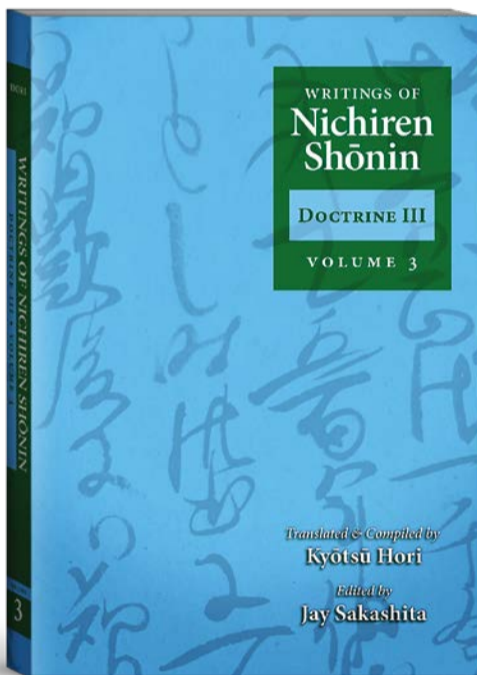
By Rev. Shinkyō Warner

As part of the update of the *Writings of Nichiren Shonin* (WONS) series, volume three was released in March of this year. This volume includes the last of Nichiren's five major writings after the other four were included in the first two volumes. The *Hoon-jo, Essay on Gratitude* (ST 223), was written from Nichiren's hermitage on Mount Minobu in 1276, the second year of Kenji, in the month after receiving news of the death of his master, Dozen-bo. Unable to leave his hermitage, he sent his disciple Niko to read the essay at his late master's tomb and before the other monks at Seichoji Temple.

This volume also includes what is sometimes called Nichiren's "sixth major writing": *Soya Nyudo-dono-gari Goshō, A Letter to Lay Priest Soya* (ST 170). This expands on another writing contained in this volume, *Kyōki Jikoku-shō, Treatise on the Teaching, Capacity, Time and Country* (ST 29), in which Nichiren lays out the five principles for propagation. It also describes the *Lotus Sutra* as precious medicine for saving the people living in the Latter Age of Degeneration.

One of the more colorful works in this volume is the *Ken Hobo-shō, A Clarification of Slandering the True Dharma* (ST 31) in which Nichiren describes the conditions of the eight major hells and what people do to find themselves in these horrifying places. Then after describing how the worst of these hells is the destination for those who commit the worst transgression of slandering the *Lotus Sutra*, he argues that there is only one way to Buddhahood. That is, forms of Buddhism other than the practice of the Wonderful Dharma of the *Lotus Sutra*, not to mention non-Buddhist practices, will only leave people trapped in cycles of suffering.

This ties in with the overviews he provides in *Ichidai Shōgyō Tai-i, Outline of All the Holy Teachings of the Buddha* (ST 10), *Shōshū Mondo-shō, Questions and Answers on Other Schools* (ST 5), and *Ichidai Goji Keizu, Genealogical Chart of the Buddha's Lifetime Teachings in Five Periods* (ST 20). Following T'ien-t'ai's assertion that it is necessary to comprehend the superior position of the *Lotus Sutra* relative to the Buddha's



*If we spare our lives in this life, in which life will we be able to become Buddhas? In which life can we save our parents and masters? Thus I decided to speak up with the true teaching.*

—Nichiren Shonin, *Hoon-jo, Essay on Gratitude* (ST 223)

As part of the essay expressing devotion to and appreciation for the life of his master, Dozen-bo, Nichiren reminds us of how precious our own lives are and the importance of our propagation of the Wonderful Dharma of the *Lotus Sutra*. We will certainly face difficulties, and even rejection by those whom we want to help. But we are Bodhisattvas who chose this life to benefit all beings. Let us remind each other of this as we persevere.

—Rev. Shinkyō Warner

other teachings, Nichiren gives us an overview of those other teachings with details of how each of them falls short of the Wonderful Dharma of the *Lotus Sutra* that leads all beings to the Buddha's wisdom.

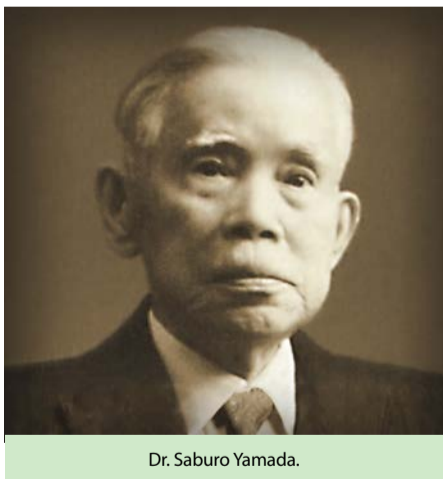
We can see in all these writings how Nichiren was not merely working to add to his followers' understanding.

He is preparing us to engage with people who may not have heard of the Wonderful Dharma, and who may reject it once they hear it. As the leader of us, the Bodhisattvas who emerged from underground, he is awakening our capacities to bring the benefit of the Buddha's Wisdom to a world suffering and badly needing it.

## One Man's Devotion Led to Creating the Sacred Teachings Sanctum at Hokekyoji Temple

By Rev. Senshō Komukai

Dr. Saburo Yamada (1869-1965) was born in Nara prefecture in 1869. After he earned a master's degree in law at Tokyo University at the age of 30, he went abroad to study international law



Dr. Saburo Yamada.

at Heidelberg University in Germany and the Sorbonne in France. In 1901, when he returned to Japan, he was appointed as Professor on the Faculty of Law at Tokyo University and became a leading authority in the field of international law.

In 1904, he married Shigeko Egawa, who was from an ancient and respectable family in Izu. In the mid-13th century, Hidechika Egawa, the 16th head of the Egawa family, served as the local

governor in Izu. One day, he heard of the banished priest named Nichiren, who healed the lord of a manor of a malignant fever of unknown origin through his prayer. Hidechika invited Nichiren Shonin to his house to learn his teachings and became his devotee. Since then, the faith of the Egawa family in Nichiren Shonin has been passed down up to the present day.

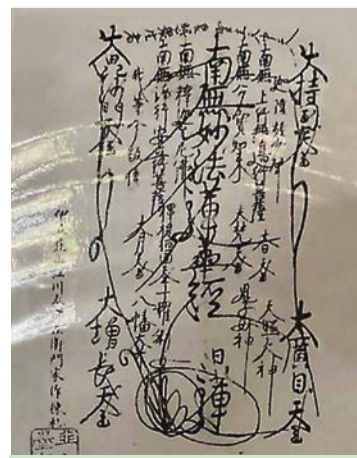
When Dr. Yamada visited the Egawa family home, he found a talisman that was kept in a room upstairs. "What is this?" Shigeko answered, "This is a talisman to prevent fires. Nichiren Shonin wrote it with his own hand. There has never been a fire in this house thanks to the wondrous efficacy of the talisman." "I am greatly honored to hear this story. Do you have any books or sutras with references to Nichiren Shonin?" This was how Dr. Yamada started applying himself to studies of the writings of Nichiren Shonin. The more he learned and understood the *Lotus* teachings, the more interested he became in Nichiren's teachings and attracted by his straightforward personality. He formed an association called Hokke-kai so that ordinary people could further study the *Lotus Sutra* and Nichiren Shonin's teachings.

In 1922, he heard a shocking report that some of the extant works of Nichiren Shonin were missing from a

coffer stored at Hokekyoji Temple. "This is a serious matter. Nichiren put his entire soul into his writings. There are many great works such as the *Rissho Ankoku-ron* and the *Kanjin Honzon-shō* at Hokekyoji Temple. If these are lost, that would be a catastrophe for all of us! Such a deplorable case must not happen again. A strong storehouse should be constructed as soon as possible." He then became absorbed in fund-raising activities in legal and financial circles. He also asked first-rate architects for help. Once construction started, it took five years for the building to be finished. Finally in 1931, a treasure storehouse called the

Sacred Teachings Sanctum, *Shōgyō-den* in Japanese, was completed.

On November 3 each year, weather permitting, the door is opened to inspect the treasured works for defects or damage and to let in fresh air. There are four keys needed to open the door. One of the four keys is kept and managed by the Hokke-kai Association. This is meant to pay tribute to Dr. Saburo Yamada, who devoted so much of his life for the construction of the *Shōgyō-den*.



Talisman in the Egawa family home for "Preventing Fires for a Long Time," which was written by Nichiren Shonin.



Sacred Teachings Sanctum at Hokekyoji Temple.



### Nichiren Mission of Hawaii

Keith Nagai, President

#### Tokudo Shiki Ceremonial Initiation

On February 22, Ms. Claire Ariyoshi and Mr. Mikio Tomioka took their first steps toward becoming Nichiren Shu priests through their master, Bishop Shokai Kanai. In their Tokudo Shiki ceremonial initiation, Ms. Ariyoshi and Mr. Tomioka took their oaths to study, practice, and strengthen their faith to expound the Odaimoku and Lotus Sutra to us in the Saha World. Join me in congratulating Ms. Ariyoshi and Mr. Tomioka and to support their journey and effort as ministers-to-be from here on.



### Nichiren Mission of Hawaii

Rev. Shokai Kanai

#### Buddha's Nirvana Day

Shakyamuni Buddha lived for 80 years, all the while transmitting his teachings to his disciples before passing away on February 15, around 2,500 years ago.

On February 13, we showed our gratitude to the Eternal Shakyamuni Buddha chanting "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo" to Shakyamuni Buddha and the Lotus Sutra.

Interestingly enough, Nichiren Shonin was born on February 16, a day after Shakyamuni Buddha's day of passing.

Shami Shougou and the two newly ordained Shamis, Myoshin Ariyoshi and Shoju Tomioka, assisted Rev. Kanai in the ceremony.

### Honolulu Myohoji Temple

Rev. Josho Yamamura

#### New Year Prayer

At the New Year Prayer, we paid homage to all the deities of the universe, and among them particularly the deities of India and the deities of Japan, to whom Nichiren Shonin continued to pray wholeheartedly for our salvation from 1253, when he founded our Order, until 1282, when he died. We followed this by offering our prayers. The prayers were for peace of the earth and peace throughout the world. This was followed by a prayer for a peaceful, happy life for us all in 2022.

To pray for the peace of the lands of the world and to pray for world peace are the responsibilities for us, who live on this earth, and it is also particularly the responsibility of the followers of Nichiren Shu. That is because the premise for our happiness is the peace of the land and the world. Let us make this the standpoint for our faith.

At Myohoji Temple, we can accept up to ten people in attendance at services. Please make an appointment by email. All attendees are required to wear facemasks.

If you wish to attend the service remotely, please join us on Facebook.

### Seattle Enkyoji Temple

Mrs. Mamiko Cederman

#### New Year Blessing Ceremonies

Every year, we have the honor of performing many New Year blessing ceremonies for our members and the community. One of the most important ceremonies that we are asked to perform is that of the Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu School of Kenjutsu, located in Woodinville, Washington. Additional blessings and events include our annual Shishimai Lion



Dog performance at the Wing Luke Asian Museum in Seattle and blessings for temple members from the Washington Court Justice Office, Lee and Lee Law Office, and the Carrabba Violin Shop.

There's a video of Shishimai performance at the Wing Luke Museum at: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=396601111432730>

### Nichiren Shu Sangha of the San Francisco Bay Area

Shami Ryugan Herrick

#### Sangha Activities

The Nichiren Shu Sangha of the San Francisco Bay Area, was founded in 2016 by Rev. Ryuei McCormick, a disciple of Rev. Ryusho Matsuda. Rev. McCormick is assisted by his disciple, Shami Ryugan Herrick. The sangha is located in Oakland, California and hopes to open a Nichiren Shu temple and practice center by the end of the decade.



The sangha has several activities and services every week. Sunday morning services are followed by either a dharma talk or open discussion and sharing. Wednesday evening secular community meditations are adapted from Nichiren Shu Shodaigyo. On Thursday mornings, we have Shodaigyo again. The sangha has a Lotus Sutra Study Program and regularly participates in "24 Hours of Odaimoku to Heal the World." Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the sangha's services and activities are hosted on Zoom.

For more information, check out [www.nichirenbayarea.org](http://www.nichirenbayarea.org)

**CORRECTION:** An article in the February issue incorrectly stated that the date of the Seattle Nichiren Buddhist Church's centennial was in 2018. In fact, the centennial was held in 2016. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

### Kannon Temple of Nevada

Rev. Shoda Kanai

#### Setsubun and Hoshi Matsuri

On February 6, our temple held its annual Setsubun (Lunar New Year's Eve) and Hoshi Matsuri (Festival of Planets and Stars) to bring in the New Year of the Tiger. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, participants joined in on Zoom.

We are fortunate that every year a company in the Los Angeles area donates roasted soybeans for Setsubun. As is customary, we throw the roasted soybeans out the door saying, "Oni wa soto" (devils out) and "Fuku wa uchi" (good fortune in). The date of Setsubun was a few days past, but we continued this tradition with a twist. As there were no members present, Rev. Shoda Kanai threw the beans at the camera rather than out the door, so that everyone could experience this ritual. When people received their "lucky beans" by mail, they could then throw them, continuing the time-honored tradition.

This is also a time that we commemorate Hoshi Matsuri honoring the turning of the lunar calendar to the new year. In the picture, you can see various "heisoku" that represent the various deities representing the heavens, such as the Four Heavenly Kings (North, South, East, and West), Sun God, Moon God, Star God, Myoken Bodhisattva, Seven and Nine Star God, and finally Fortune Direction God. Rev. Kanai is a master of "heisoku" and incorporates the various deities whenever possible.

A special "Guide to 2022" based on the Nine Star Astrology was distributed to everyone in attendance. I wonder what their fortunes will be?



## FIRE DESTROYS MYOSHOJI TEMPLE IN SADO

By Rev. Kanjo Bassett

A disaster for Nichiren Shu struck on December 6, 2021. Myoshoji Temple in Ichinosawa Sado in Niigata Prefecture was destroyed by fire. This temple has particular importance to all Nichiren Buddhists as this was where Nichiren spent the second year of his Sado exile (1271-1274). It is where he first inscribed the Mandala Gohonzon in the form

that we see today, and where he wrote his most important treatise: the *Kanjin*



*Honzon-sho, A Treatise Revealing the Spiritual Contemplation and the Most*



*Venerable One.* Unfortunately, some of the Edo-period treasures and all of the Edo-period temple structures were destroyed. These cannot be replaced.

The temple has not had a resident priest for some time, a growing crisis for temples in rural areas with declining populations. The preservation of Japanese Buddhist culture is becoming more difficult and challenging with each passing year.

### Calendar for April – May 2022

**APR 8** Hanamatsuri (Buddha's Birthday)

**APR 15-18** Nakayama Hokekyoji Senbu-e (1,000 Recitations of the Lotus Sutra)

**APR 27-29** Ikegami Honmonji Senbu-e (1,000 Recitations of the Lotus Sutra)

**APR 28** Rikkyo Kaishu-e (Anniversary of the Founding of the Order)

**MAY 12** Izu Honan-e (Ceremony commemorating the Anniversary of the Izu Persecution)

**MAY 15-16** Wesak Day in Southeast Asia (Buddha's Birthday, Enlightenment, and Nirvana Observed)

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Nichiren Shu