



NA MU MYO HO REN GE KYO

PEACE PAGODA NEWS

August 2005

Leverett, Massachusetts

TEACHINGS FROM GURUJI -1974



Maha Bodhisattva Nichiren preached in one of his tenets about the attainment of Buddhahood of "ichinen-sanzen". Instead of a single person becoming a Buddha in complete isolation from others, the entire sphere of domain, the country, must be transformed into a Pure Land where enlightenment is achieved. This is known as "the enlightenment of the domains." Human beings create a sphere of existence. One is not to seek Buddhahood only for oneself by entering deep into a mountain, but must become Buddha together with the people of one's community whom one sees everyday. Thus is called "Enlightenment of Community." All at the same time, our hearts and minds must become Buddha. Our hearts and minds can follow the path that leads to Buddhahood if we are intent and right-minded.

How are we to achieve enlightenment of our domain? Today our domain is being destroyed. The term used is environmental destruction. It is the destruction of the sphere of countries. Just because we live in a certain place does not give us the right to destroy it.

We should live simply in nature. Birds do not destroy the trees they live in. Fish do not pollute the water they swim in. Human beings are the only ones who live on earth and do destructive things. In recent years, pursuit of profit under the pretext of industrial development has made people completely indifferent to any ill effect they cause. In such a world one should not be concerned about one's own enlightenment alone.

Everything and everyone must become Buddha in life. The domain, the country, thus realized is the Pure Land. Each and every one of us, every child, woman, and man must become Buddha. This is what is referred to as the "Buddhahood of communities."

PEACE PAGODA ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OCTOBER 2, 2005

Dear Friends,

We are very happy to be sending this invitation to the 20th Anniversary of the New England Peace Pagoda. We sincerely hope you will be part of the celebration.

We share the following with you to ask your generous cooperation over the next few weeks. We realize that it is a busy time of year, but whatever time could be given to help with the preparations for October 2 is needed and very deeply appreciated. We believe with your help it can be a very wonderful celebration. Below are listed briefly the areas of work in which we need help.

Painting the Pagoda in honor of its 20th Anniversary is our top priority. We invite all willing to wield a paintbrush to join for a weekend, a day, a half-day to paint the railings that surround the dome. Please call if you can help the painting process.

Celebration Preparations. As we prepare for the celebration on the 2nd there will be very many tasks we will be in process of finishing. As with every celebration there are lots of decorations - flowers to be folded, flower trees to be repaired and/or painted, multitudinous scrubbing and cleaning up both at the Dojo and around the Pagoda site. Outside, help is needed mowing the grass, piling brush, watering flowers, weeding around the Pagoda. Help running errands, transporting and welcoming guests, and offering hospitality to guests from afar is also appreciated. There are many aspects to planning for the day itself: setting up the days before, parking, food prep, cooking, and serving. Whatever you would like to do, just call the Pagoda and leave a message saying what you would like to ... 413-367-2202.

HELP US REMEMBER 20 YEARS

We invite you to send photos or written stories you wish to share. Please send these contributions, not in the original, but copies on 8 1/2 x 11 size paper and please identify the date, the people, the time/event, and place. When we receive your reminiscences we shall put them in plastic sleeves which will be displayed at the ceremony on October 2. What a wonderful opportunity to collectively share our memories

A NOTE ON THE PRACTICE OF GIVING:

Your help and devotion over the past 20 years has been essential, so precious. We deeply appreciate it. Making offerings is the most basic spiritual practice; its purpose is to nourish life. Your spontaneous "physical offering" (Buddhist term) has led also to your accumulating virtuous merit.

Since the time of Lord Buddha, who was a mendicant and carried a begging bowl, the life of monks and nuns has been sustained by the offerings of the lay people. Likewise, today, the building and maintenance of the Peace Pagoda, the New Temple and all Nipponzan Myohoji activities are supported by voluntary offering – labor, food, financial help – solely from people interested in this work.

Fujii Guruji (and the Buddha originally) teach us that the practice of offering is essential to create a peaceful world, because it is a practice which nourishes others – i.e. the entire interdependent world. By the *dana paramita* (the practice of offering), we cultivate faith, generosity, and detachment. By giving to that in which we believe, we can purify our lives and our labor. In the *Lotus Sutra* it is taught "Desiring to fulfill the *six paramitas*, I earnestly bestowed alms with an unsparing mind..." This means that although there are six ways of Buddhist practice leading to enlightenment, Shakyamuni Buddha, in his previous lives practiced solely *dana paramita* in order to fulfill the other practices. So, offering is a very basic condition for followers of the way of Buddha, or the way of a "peace maker." Through this practice you also accumulate virtuous merit spontaneously.

Because of the great generosity of all of you, our community, the Peace Pagoda was constructed, and so much effort for peace has been possible over these last 20 years. We acknowledge our great debt of gratitude that your generosity has truly sustained our lives with food and other necessary support; there has always been enough food to share with all who have come, as well. Whatever financial resources have been donated for the Peace Pagoda have been and will be spent only for the construction and maintenance of the Peace Pagoda, New Temple, landscaping, etc.

The Pagoda Sanctuary is dedicated to the people who come to visit, that they may attain peaceful and true thoughts, that their spiritual desire can be awakened and cultivated.

The light, tranquillity, and beauty of the hilltop – with the Peace Pagoda, New Temple, Gendai Hoto Sama, Rock Garden, trees, and flowers will continue to manifest and shine forth for people from the joy of your practicing the *dana paramita* and accumulation of virtue.

Gassho san pie (with palms together bowing three times,

Monks and nuns of New England Peace Pagoda

PROGRESS ON THE NEW TEMPLE

This summer has been a time of planning and painstaking preparation for major work to be undertaken this fall, including the front façade, the exterior walls, the updating of the septic system, and the electrical connections made. After that the following are on the docket: the prayer room ceiling, the bathrooms, the kitchens, and of course, eventually, the entire interior – first and second floors.

Much of the planning, trouble shooting, and problem solving over the course of this summer has been furthered by our good friend Doug Blower, a contractor and consultant from Conway. He has spent many hours with us at the Temple site giving invaluable counsel. Our long-time friend, Bob English, who helped so much on the Pagoda construction 21 years ago, has given tremendous assistance for the fabrication of the exterior walls and the front façade. In the late spring, our Dutch friend, Jan Huisers, spent many weeks in diligent and carefully crafted work on

Many things are waiting in the wings for just the right time for installation. We give thanks for a most generous and thoughtful design process, given to the Temple kitchen by Frank Barrett-Mills. Due to Frank's love of kitchens and his generous gift of expertise, the Temple Kitchen will be graced by a durable poured floor and a number of wonderful appointments that will totally enhance the food preparations for the Sangha and the greater community.

We humbly thank everyone who has helped from the beginning to where we are now, bringing us this far by faith, generous energy, and good work. We thank also those who have offered financial support, making it possible for us to purchase much needed materials and supplies as well as to hire specialized professionals with needed expertise beyond our capacities. We are always grateful for help and support of all kinds.

THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

In previous newsletters we have mentioned about the significance of 60 years in Japanese culture. Sixty, marks the completion of a cycle - a full turning of the zodiac - and a redemptive opportunity to begin again, this time with wisdom. So, the 60th Anniversary of the detonation of nuclear weapons on human beings can be thought of as having tremendous significance for the large scale transformation of consciousness, learning from the terrible experience of the past and choosing a much more enlightened future for humanity. And, true to form, 2005, has seen a great quickening of effort, of commitment, and of vision for just that. We wish to share news of three such efforts with which we are strongly connected.

REPENTANCE IN NAGASAKI AND HIROSHIMA

John and Carrie Schuchardt, our dear friends who cofounded the House of Peace in Ipswich, Massachusetts, undertook a profound 9 day fast and vigil on the streets of Nagasaki and Hiroshima of this year. They went to Japan to acknowledge the terrible atrocity and of repentance. and to be channels for a deep and sincere spirit of repentance. John and Carrie have said that their experience of the soul of the Hibakusha and the hearts of the Japanese people was life-changing and they feel a responsibility to try to communicate the experience to others. They believe that the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki should become great centers of Pilgrimage for spiritual awakening for the human family, especially for us Americans, whose government has far more nuclear arsenals and daily develops more heinous weapons for detonation under the earth and in space, and makes reference to their use without compunction.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE NOMINATION FOR THE HIBAKUSHA -

survivors of the A-bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Irene Michaud, a close Quaker friend, with deep ties to the Peace Pagoda, has spear headed an effort for the last five years to nominate the Hibakusha, survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and their umbrella organization Hidankyo, for the Nobel Peace Prize. With Irene's full commitment and ardent perseverance, supported collaboratively by Traprock Peace Center, Western Mass American Friends Service Committee and the Peace Pagoda two major Nobel Laureate organizations, have nominated the Hibakusha this year. There have also been many supporting nominations from professors and other eligible nominators. We ask you to hold this nomination prayerfully in your hearts. If the Hibakusha collectively receive the Nobel Peace Prize this year, it certainly will help to bring the world's attention to the terrible truth of their experience and to their most precious voices calling for an absolute end to all nuclear weapons and all war.



PRAYER VIGIL AND FAST OF REPENTANCE HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI AUGUST 1 TO AUGUST 9, 2005

DEAR RESPECTED HIBAKUSHA — We, as Americans, apologize for the cruelty of the atomic atrocities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

We come for nine days to vigil and pray and fast, to say, person to person: we are deeply sorry for the American nuclear destruction of the defenseless people of the beautiful cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.”

We are grieving and feel great remorse and great shame because of your unending and innocent suffering, caused by the diabolical atomic bombs.

We are deeply thankful to all Hibakusha for the ceaseless efforts you have made for 60 years to plead for peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons.

We are here to unite our hearts and our lives with you in solidarity with your witness to the world.

WE BELIEVE — *The death planes Enola Gay and Bock's Car committed unprecedented War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity. History must record the atomic bombings as the greatest double deed of intentional civilian massacre and atrocity ever perpetrated as acts of war in all of human history.*

— *The further development of thermonuclear weapons, a thousand times greater in murderous death and destruction, followed by a world-encircling proliferation of nuclear weapons, has brought the human family face to face with the end of history.*

— *For the light of hope to be born, amidst the present darkness of nuclear escalation and proliferation, these most colossal sins against Humanity and against Creation must be confessed and repented.*

— *Human survival depends upon the abolition of nuclear weapons and the abolition of war, following the heroic moral example of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution.*

AND WE DENOUNCE *as inhuman and criminal the current U.S. policies of nuclear threats and preemptive wars.*

During these days of sorrow of the 60th Anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, praying for all victims of the atomic bombs, we remember and we repent. We know our feelings are shared by much of the peace movement in America. To manifest our apology we vow to create peace in action and build a fearless spiritual base for a non-violent future.

John and Carrie Schuchardt

MAYORS FOR PEACE

Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba, the current mayor of Hiroshima has given tremendous inspiration and leadership to the UN NGO *Mayors For Peace* which began over 20 years ago. The simple and powerful focus of *Mayors for Peace* is that Mayors coalesce globally to insist on the total elimination of all nuclear weapons by the year 2020: this being the only way to protect their local constituencies from the most horrific suffering and death of nuclear weapons. *Mayors for Peace* also embraces the clear and simple truth that resources poured into nuclear weapons should be recommitted to the true needs of the people. Over 1,000 mayors have joined worldwide. Here in Western Mass, nine out of the eleven mayors have joined! A very moving press conference was held in the Northampton City Council Chambers, with several Western Mass mayors speaking from the heart about their commitment to *Mayors For Peace*. In addition, state representative, Peter Kocot, brought a Resolution to the State Legislature endorsing the *Mayors For Peace* and this Resolution was overwhelmingly passed by the statewide body. This vote is actually a very historical vote, providing an opportunity for *Mayors for Peace* to take root in every Massachusetts community, as well as being an inspiring model for other State Legislatures. There was a sense that an entirely new reality had been opened up with unforeseen potential for transformative work. Ultimately the power of *Mayors for Peace* lies directly in the grassroots – so let's make this a living vehicle for the abolition of nuclear weapons and social change.

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**20th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2005**

THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE HOUSE

MAKES U.S. HISTORY

State representative Peter Kocot and several of his colleagues made national history in passing the first State Resolution in support of the U.S. Conference's of Mayor's call to support the global Mayors for Peace initiative and nuclear abolition.

Excerpts from the Resolution

WHEREAS, as long as nuclear weapons exist, cities around the world will be vulnerable to instantaneous devastation on a scale exceeding even that experienced by Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, and
WHEREAS, a nuclear war would devastate many cities, an accidental missile launch would devastate several cities, and use of nuclear weapons by terrorists would devastate a city, and
WHEREAS, any nuclear attack would obliterate City Hall and all emergency response mechanisms rendering any city planning for such a disaster utterly futile, and
WHEREAS, the world's foremost line of defense against nuclear dangers in the Nuclear Non-proliferation treaty (NPT) which is currently in its seventh review cycle with all parties to the treaty scheduled to meet next May to ensure that the treaty is being fully implemented, and
WHEREAS, the International Court of Justice unanimously found in 1996 that all states were obliged to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. And
WHEREAS weapons of mass destruction have no place in a civilized world...

