

Nichiren Sect Mission in Early 20th Century Hawaii: Findings from its Early Documents in the 1910s

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1. An Introduction

Studies on the Nichiren Sect and its missionaries overseas have increased along with Japan's advancement overseas. Present author has once conducted a study on various areas in East Asia, specifically focusing on the clergy who have ventured into Sino-Korean countries, about the temple organizations which hailed them to go abroad, including the social trends of the believers of these organizations, as well as the reaction of the local people and government to the imported Buddhist activities.

The collapse of the Tokugawa Shogunate brought forth the new Meiji Era, rendering a Japan which staked a greater interest in foreign countries. In Asia, Japan would conclude a treaty with Korea in Japan's favor. The treaty allowed Korea to open ports in favor of Japan and to accept Japanese council jurisdiction, both of which clearly display Japan's strength at the time. Soon, Japanese Buddhism would find its way into Korea.

The first missionary activity in Korea by any sect of Japanese Buddhism was made by the Ōtani branch of the Jōdo Shin Shū (True Pure Land Sect) in 1877. As for the Nichiren Sect, Reverend Nichiun Watanabe

would arrive in Pusan for the first time in 1881. Shortly thereafter, a small house for religious activities was put up expressly so that Japanese Nichiren followers in Pusan could gather for prayers. The zealous efforts of the believers in Pusan moved Reverend Nichimyō Asahi, a leader in propagation, so much that he would work to acquire financial aid from the Nichiren Sect to build a temple in Pusan for them. During the Sino-Japanese War, Nichiren priests were sent to Korea to move with the army, and act as religious counselors. As the tide of the War changed, small changes were made in terms of whether one was part of the first or second dispatch. By the end of the war, Reverend. Zenrei Sano set forth on his personal quest to elevate the status of Buddhist priests, by working for the removal of the ban to enter the Han Castle, or by inviting Korean Buddhist priests to Japan for study.⁽¹⁾

In contrast, the activities of the Nichiren Sect in Hawaii are quite different from that in East Asia. As is known, Hawaii, presently a state of the USA, was originally called the Kingdom of Hawaii. It then became the Republic of Hawaii, until it was annexed by the US as a territory. Hawaii gained statehood in 1959. Many Japanese have made their way to Hawaii since immigrants from Japan were favorably accepted until the enactment of the Immigration Act of 1924,.

Naturally, the Japanese immigrants' search for something fond and familiar led them to religion, in this case, Japanese Buddhism. Buddhist priests arrived in Hawaii not only to meet this demand but to spread their doctrines as well. The first Buddhist sect that came to Hawaii was the Jōdo Shin Sect, especially the Hongwan-ji Temples. They were followed by the Jōdo Sect (Pure Land), the Jōdo Shin Sect (*Ōtani Group*),

and the Nichiren Sect.

This paper examines the activities of the Nichiren Sect in Hawaii, with special focus on Reverend Gyōun Takagi, who came to Hawaii during the Meiji Era.

2. Rev. Gyōun Takagi's mission in Hawaii and "A Diary on Overseas Missions in Hawaii"

The propagation of Nichiren Buddhism in Hawaii began in October 1899 by Reverend Gyōun Takagi. He had been the chief priest of Rencho-ji Temple, in Nara Prefecture of Japan; and also was a faculty member of *Chū-danlin*, a Buddhist school in the third school district located in Honkoku-ji temple, Kyōto Prefecture. This school was a secondary education school of the Nichiren Sect.⁽²⁾ When he decided to resign his honorable post to go to Hawaii, he disclosed his feeling to one of the priests:

As I am going to Hawaii before long to propagate, I am now making a farewell address to all of you who have helped me a lot. As Japanese citizens wished earnestly, the Japanese Empire has recently enhanced national prestige so much. If I, as a Buddhist priest, allow a heretical religion to expand its influence in Japan and do not try to spreading the Nichiren Buddhism abroad at this very moment, when can I convert all the people in the world to the Wonderful Dharma?

We find the number of the Nichiren Sect ministers as many as 5,000, and the number of the members 1.5 million. Because I personally feel I need more knowledge and ability compared with those respectable priests and members, like a mere drop in the ocean, I want to light at least a small lamp in the world of darkness. This is the

sheer reason why I aspire to go abroad.

As Hawaii is a small island where not many people live, it may not be suitable to spread the Nichiren Buddhism there. However, there must be some reasons why most of the immigrants chose to live in Hawaii instead of going to Western countries. As many as 100,000 Japanese people live abroad, most of who stay in the small island (Hawaii). Though they want to cry, there are no parents. Though they want to pray, there is no temple or priest. Because I cannot help feeling pity for them in such a poor environment, I am willing to go there to show them the light of the Buddha's wisdom.

Geographically, Hawaii is an important point in a transportive and strategic sense between Japan and USA. If such an important place is much influenced by the Japanese Empire and Buddhism, the advantage is that many talented and expert ministers will be, with less difficulty, able to spread Buddhism throughout North America in the future. Besides, this will be good for Japan in the case of a war between Japan and the USA. This is why I want to go to Hawaii.

Lacking in knowledge and talent, I have been helped by many people while in Japan. Although I still feel myself inexperienced, I have decided to go to the strange land. I do not expect to attain greatness myself there, but the only duty I feel is to open up the way for the propagation of Nichiren Buddhism, then just wait for more excellent ministers to come. That is what I wish for.

Hopefully, all of you here sincerely understand my feeling, and will assign some excellent ministers to go abroad to follow my path. I am pleased to work hard to establish a foundation for the overseas

missionary. I am now taking leave of you, wishing a warm support from all of you.⁽³⁾

From this address, we know that Rev. Takagi believed that it was time for Japanese priests to go abroad to spread Buddhism when Japan was enhancing its national prestige; and, though he thought that he may not be mature enough to do so, it was his duty to spread Nichiren Buddhism overseas. The reason he decided to go to Hawaii was because he was sure that many Japanese immigrants, most of who chose to live in Hawaii, imbued with fear and worry every day and night, seeking spiritual help. And he thought that Hawaii would be a good place for spreading Buddhism because it is located in the middle between Japan and the US; and in terms of transportation, it would be convenient enough to make advances toward North America in the future. Furthermore, we find he anticipated a more talented minister to go overseas to propagate.

Rev. Takagi left Yokohama Port for Hawaii on September 2 in 1899. The ship he took was a freighter which an immigration service company had leased from a British company. Its cabin was crude, as a loading stage was used for the room by a temporary partition wall made of a log, a board, and a rope so that many immigrants could go on board. The daily meals were so coarse that some people grew ill and died during the voyage.

It was September 16, when the ship arrived at Honolulu Port. Then, from the next day the passengers were detained at a quarantine station for three days where their visas were strictly inspected and they were asked about the purpose of the trip in detail. The first thing he did after being allowed to land was to decide where to establish his base of

propagation.

Many inexpensive rooms were offered for as low as \$10 a month, including three meals. But these were very dirty because they were meant for day laborers. Considering that the room would be visited by many members, Rev. Takagi wanted a more hospitable room. Finally he rented an eight-mat room with furniture and a lamp. It was well-equipped, but the fee was \$10 a month for a room alone, without meals. Since he had but \$50 at the time, he aimed to hold down expenditures to \$25 a month, which would include other expenses such as food, thinking he would stay in the room for not more than two months. As he wanted to stay in Hawaii as long as possible, he asked the Nichiren Sect to provide financial support. His request was rejected. He, then, resolved to propagate in Hawaii until his body rots away.⁽⁴⁾

In time, he would visit each island of Hawaii. How he propagated, how many members he gathered, and whether he was financially helped by the Nichiren Sect, remain unknown. I guess, however, that some people must have approached him because a temple began to be built at Kapapala which is 60 miles away from Hilo, the island of Hawaii, in March 1902. It was just one and a half years after he came to Hawaii. The reason why a temple was built in Kapapala is said to be because he noticed that there were many followers of Nichiren in Kapapala while visiting each island of Hawaii.

Rev. Takagi visited the Japanese immigrants day and night to raise funds for a building. It is said that one of his devotees accompanied Rev. Takagi, carrying a statue of Saint Nichiren on his back. The construction was finally completed after taking two months. A dedication ceremony

was held on May 18, where 200 members came to offer their congratulations.⁽⁵⁾

It is evident that Rev. Takagi maintained his religious activity based on the temple built in Kapapala; but it is regrettable that there exists little data on how Rev. Takagi actually conducted his propagation or in what manner his followers worked for the temple.

It was not until his base of operations was moved to Honolulu, on the island of Oahu, in 1912 that the activities of Rev. Takagi and his followers become clear. There exists a diary which Rev. Takagi and other priests have kept. As this diary has no title, I will refer to it as "A Diary on Overseas Missions in Hawaii."

On the first page of "A Diary on Overseas Missions in Hawaii", is a title, 'The Reason the Temporary Temple Was Built', explaining why and how he moved to Honolulu. Records begin from April 2nd of 1912, start from the third page. The stationery on which the diary is kept is a ruled notebook, 24.8 cm. in height x 19.8cm. in width. Page numbers 1 to 301 are denoted in handwriting on each page. On page 245; there is a note on the lower right side of page that reads "go to volume 2 from 1920, May 1". Handwriting by different people is evident; which may suggest that a number of other ministers joined the propagation in Hawaii after Rev. Takagi's move to Honolulu.

Furthermore, three pieces of letter paper were put into the notebook. The first one is "A Petition for Subsidizing a Building Site for Propagation of Nichiren Buddhism in Hawaii" which is directed to the archbishop of the Nichiren Sect. From the handwriting and its entry, "I, Gyōun, an unworthy person." at the head of the page, we can assume that the

author of the document was Rev. Takagi himself. We can also infer that this was written just before March of 1919, when Rev. Takagi left Hawaii for Japan, because "Closing Accounts for Expenses of the Newly-Built Temple at the End of January 1919" was found together with the petition. However, it is doubtful that the original petition has been kept in Hawaii. In addition, this document is written on letter paper; and is thus just a draft or a copy of the petition. Perhaps, Rev. Takagi brought this copy of the petition with him when he returned to Japan.

Besides this petition, there is: "An Entreaty for the Support of Building Expenses for a Nichiren Sect Temple in Hawaii", written on two sheets of paper. Rev. Takagi is also considered from its handwriting to have written it. That the entreaty represents a request to the Nichiren Sect by his followers, it may have been Rev. Takagi who prepared a draft for them.

A number of other notes and receipts found in the notebook also exist. These are all kept at the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii located in Honolulu, also the Headquarters of Hawaii Nichiren Missions.

3. Start of Activities in Honolulu

Let us, then, take a look at what activities Rev. Takagi conducted in Honolulu until October 1914, when a site for building a temple was purchased.

The reason Rev. Takagi moved from Kapapala to Honolulu as a main base for propagation is as follows:

In January 1912, the chief priest of Katō Shrine in Honolulu, where Lord Katō Kiyomasa was enshrined as the object of worship, conferred

with Rev. Takagi to build a shrine-temple, a single unit which combined Shintoism with Buddhism. Lord Katō Kiyomasa is well-known as a general who served the Toyotomi clan, and an earnest believer of Nichiren Buddhism as well. After his death, he was deified, such that some Nichiren Sect temples have enshrined him, where people come to worship him as *Seishōkō* (*kō* = Lord, *Seishō* = Chinese-style reading of Kiyomasa). The worship of *Seishōkō* is widespread throughout the nationwide, and especially in Higo Province (Kumamoto Prefecture) which Lord Katō ruled during the Tokugawa Period. Since there were many immigrants from Kumamoto, the worship of *Seishōkō* was very popular throughout Hawaii. It was under such a condition that a plan to build a combined shrine-temple was offered to Rev. Takagi.

On February 20, a discussion between a priest of Katō Shrine and Rev. Takagi took place. Afraid that it might lead to trouble in the future, Rev. Takagi refused to go along with the idea, thinking that it would be better to build a new Nichiren temple. He discussed his idea with his acquaintances, and they transmitted it to others. They all agreed with him. Later, two meetings were held, where it was decided to hold a Nichiren Buddhist Convention at the Nihonjin (Japanese) Club. It was decided at this convention that a center for propagation should be set up in Honolulu. They rented a house on Liliha Street to be used as a temporary temple. The following entry describes how Rev. Takagi, after returning to the island of Hawaii on March 13, arrived at the temporary temple on April 2, 1912. This day is regarded as the date of establishment of the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii:

— The Reason for Temporary Temple in Honolulu —

I received a letter from a Shintō Priest named Takeshita of the Katō Shrine in Honolulu in January 1912. Takeshita said in the letter that he would like me to introduce a Buddhist Priest since he was planning to establish a shrine-temple. Though I met him to talk about the plan on February 20, I declined the offer because I foresaw the trouble ahead, and decided to establish a Nichiren temple. Mr. Asahina and Mr. Togawa announced this to rest of the followers, and they all agreed with me and decided to hold a meeting for discussion on the night of February 28 at the Palama Hot Spa. The meeting was attended by seven men: Umekichi Asahina, Ichijirō Nagamori, Umata Togawa, Shūji Miyake, Daikichi Sakata, Kiyomatsu Takahashi, and Shichirō Tanaka. Though just a few people attended the meeting, they agreed with me on the idea and decided to hold the second meeting at the Mr. Nagamori residence next Monday. This time Mr. Asahina, Mr. Sakata, Mr. Miyamoto, Mr. Mamiya, Mr. Miyake, Mr. Inukai, Mr. Togawa, and Mr. Tomioka attended the meeting. They decided to hold a Nichiren Buddhist Convention at the Nihonjin Club on March 10 because there were more than 100 Nichiren Buddhists in Honolulu. To prepare for the convention, they wrote, printed and distributed the manifesto of the Nichiren Buddhist Convention to Nichiren Buddhists. Attending the convention were: Mr. Asahina, Mr. Hashimoto, Mr. Inukai, Mr. Mamiya, Mr. Miyake, Mr. Togawa, Mr. Sakano, Mr. Tanaka, Mr. Miyamoto, Mr. Sakata, Mr. Ieda, Mr. Suzuki, Mr. Sakata, Mr. Murayama, Mr. Mitooka, Umeji Inukai, and Mr. Katayama. They all expressed the

necessity of establishing a temporary temple in Honolulu; and, requesting that I move to Honolulu to propagate. When I came to Honolulu again, a house was rented for the temporary temple. Then I returned to the island of Hawaii on March 13, and finally moved to the temporary temple in Honolulu on April 2.⁽⁶⁾

Despite the entry, 'To prepare for the convention, they wrote, printed and distributed the manifesto of the Nichiren Buddhist Convention to Nichiren Buddhists,' I could not find the printed manifesto anywhere. Nevertheless, the very manifesto was scribed in the diary:

Hawaii is located at the crossroads between the United States and Japan, and Honolulu is her capital city. Therefore, many Buddhist Sects vie with one another in establishing temples and temple edifices in this city, so that their devotees may strengthen their faith and gain solace day and night, work in happiness, and manage the way to establish permanent homes in peace. What about the followers of the Nichiren Sect Order? The number of Japanese residents today in Honolulu is over 20,000. We believe that they include many Nichiren Buddhists, who have no place to practice their faith and are today lost in the path to enlightenment. We have lamented this for years. Now Rev. Takagi came to Honolulu and revealed his plan to spread Nichiren Buddhism in this city.

How wonderful his plan is! S'ākyamuni Buddha preaches in the Lotus Sūtra that this is the correct time to expound the Dharma. Our Founder states that the True Dharma will be revealed after the expedient teachings are expounded. How true it is that the existing conditions of the city of Honolulu exactly fit the holy words! Let us

promptly hoist the banner of the *Myōhō Renge Kyō* in the sky of the city of Honolulu, resoundingly beating the drum of destroying-the-evil and establishing-the-True Dharma, quickly meeting the auspicious spring when all the people in the entire world are converted to the Wonderful Dharma, and we, together with others, to be with the Eternal S'ākyamuni Buddha.

Now is the time for all Nichiren Buddhists to rise. We will hold a Nichiren Buddhist Convention to discuss the preliminary arrangements at the Nihonjin Club at 1:00 p.m. on March 10. We urge you, Nichiren Buddhists, all to be with us.

March, 1912

Advocators: Heizaburō Inukai, Ikutarō Imanaka, Taisaburō Hashimoto, Umata Togawa, Usuke Ōhashi, Kinzaburō Kanemitsu, Kiyomatsu Takahashi, Shichirō Tanaka, Benzaburō Nerima, Ichijirō Nagamori, Shichizō Mamiya, Umekichi Asahina, Daikichi Sakata, Saiji Sakano, Shūji Miyake, Chuzō Miyamoto

(in [Japanese] alphabetical order)⁽⁷⁾

We can infer from the manifesto that each of the Buddhist sects in Japan established temples in Honolulu, the state capital, to gather their followers and to actively pursue their propagation. The number of Japanese residents in Honolulu at that time was over 20,000, not a few of whom were Nichiren Buddhists. To provide Nichiren followers with spiritual comfort, the Nichiren's teaching needed to be expounded as soon as possible. To this, it was necessary for the followers to rise to the occasion

as well. Thus, is there a notation that preparations were being made to hold a Nichiren Buddhist Convention at 1:00 p.m. on March 10 at the Nihonjin Club for this purpose. The bottom of the document lists the names of 16 men who would act as 'advocators' — who are supposedly the key people who established the Nichiren Sect in Honolulu.

As mentioned earlier, Rev. Takagi arrived in Honolulu on April 2 1912. A detailed account of the moment of his arrival, the names of who came to the Buddhist service on the following day, and what he was offered is described in the diary:

April 2 The ship arrived at 10:00 am. Mr. Togawa and Mr. Katayama waited for me. We went to the temple where Mr. Asahina and Mr. Miyake came to see me. In the afternoon I gave them an invitation to attend an evening service.

3 In the evening, I held a Buddhist service which was attended by Mr. Asahina, Mr. Togawa, Mr. Miyake, Mr. Suzuki, Mr. Ieda, Mr. Ogasawara, Mr. Inukai, Mr. Sakano, Mr. Katayama, Mr. Moriuchi, and Mr. and Mrs. Sakata (who offered artificial cherry flowers).

It ended at midnight.

4 Mr. Moriuchi offered incense sticks and candles.⁽⁸⁾

A later entries note that Rev. Takagi gave a sermon to visitors, visited members' houses, and had a funeral service. However, he did not write everyday. The frequency of Rev. Takagi's entries since arriving in Honolulu, between the period of April 1912 and March 1913, is shown below:

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Year	Month	No. of days entries made
1912	April	18
	May	13
	June	8
	July	6
	August	5
	September	6
	October	4
	November	6
	December	4
1913	January	5
	February	4
	March	6

He also paid special visits to temples of other Buddhist sects:

September 20 I went to Maui to attend a joint memorial service for the war dead which was held at a Sōtō Sect temple in Paia. I returned to Honolulu at five in the morning on Sep. 25.⁽⁹⁾

From the diary, we can confirm that there was a memorial service at a Sōtō sect temple for fallen soldiers. This was to be held by a conglomeration that included all the Buddhist sects. Rev. Takagi went to Maui to attend this service. Considering the period, the memorial service was probably held for those who had died in the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War. A Sōtō temple named Mantoku-ji Temple exists in Paia today, but it is not certain whether the temple is the one where the joint memorial service was held at the time.

One of the most important events in the Nichiren Sect is the Memorial Service for our founder, Nichiren. The service, called “*Eshiki*” in Japanese, is held on the date that Nichiren Shōnin passed away. The diary shows how the temple and its members worked to prepare for the service:

December 1 The ‘*Eshiki*’ Service. Members came to help prepare for the service a few days prior to the ceremony. Many kinds of offerings, such as a bale of rice cake, two boxes of apples, and a box of oranges, together with artificial cherry flowers and arranged flowers, were decorated before the altar. An edge gate was made at the entrance of the small road, with flags of *daimoku*, decorated with patterns of the *tachibana*, a wild orange. A hundred lanterns were hung in all directions; and a temporary structure was built using 50 pieces of galvanized iron sheet in order to receive visitors. Since the members came to help, I had no difficulty in its preparation. One unfortunate thing was that it rained in the afternoon, so I refrained from inviting any close relations. The donation amounted to \$110, with many offerings. The total income was \$128.10. ⁽¹⁰⁾

Records show that the members came to the temple to prepare for the service a few days in advance. On the day of the service, many offerings, like rice cake and fruits, artificial cherry flowers and arranged flowers were decorated inside the temple. Outside, there were flags with the *daimoku* written on them, along with many paper lanterns. It is said that

cherry blossoms bloomed just before the Nichiren died, which is why even today we use artificial cherry flowers in the '*Eshiki*' Memorial Service. Similarly, the use of *daimoku* flags and lanterns suggest that those in foreign countries held the service in similar fashion as is often done in Japan. To have set up a temporary structure to receive visitors shows that many people must have participated in the service.

4. The Election of Executives and the Purchase of Land

Just before the first anniversary of Rev. Takagi's arrival in Honolulu, an election to select board members in the establishment of the temporary temple took place in March of 1913. As shown below, the total number of votes was 57, which probably represents the number of households, rather than the number of believers:

March 12 Votes for the election of board members were opened tonight. Total votes numbered 57.

<u>President:</u>	55 votes - Umekichi Asahina; 2 - Mr. Nerima
<u>Vice-president:</u>	42 - Kiyomatsu Takahashi; 6 - Shūji Miyake; 4 - Ikutarō Imanaka; 2 - Ichijirō Nagamori; 2 - Taisaburō Hashimoto; 1 - Benzaburō Nerima
<u>Accountant:</u>	47 - Taisaburō Hashimoto; 3 - Benzaburō Nerima; 2 - Kiyomatsu Takahashi; 2 - Bunkichi Suzuki; 1 - Ikutarō Imanaka; 1 - Tōji Inukai
<u>Secretary:</u>	54 - Bunkichi Suzuki; 2 - Saiji Sakano; 1 - Gyōun Takagi ⁽¹¹⁾

Ever since the Tokugawa Shogunate enforced the law requiring all families to belong to a certain Buddhist temple, the relationship between

a temple and its *danka* parishoners has been maintained to this day in Japan. That this system was even more pronounced during the Meiji and Taisho eras in Japanese society, it is not surprising that such a notion was deemed important in a foreign land such as Hawaii as well. An examination of the names voted for reveals but males only. Though there may have been no detailed byelaw requiring excluding women, one can assume that the candidates were selected in a customary manner.

This does not mean, however, that female members were not taken into account. Indeed, there were often some female names in the diary. In January 1913, Rev. Takagi wrote, "We need to have meetings organized by women, sermons for women, and a women's association." This alludes to the fact that an organization for women was already established.

Through discussions between the president and Rev. Takagi, 20 members, all of whom were men, were chosen to act as councilors of the temple, all of whom were men:

March 20 After a discussion with both the president and the vice-president, the following people were chosen as councilors:
Benzaburō Nerima, Shūji Miyake, Ichijirō Nagamori, Saiji Sakano, Gisaburō Komori, Tōji Inukai, Kichisuke Mitooka, Kenzō Miyake, Heizaburō Inukai, Genpachi Sakata, Chuzō Miyamoto, Gonpei Moriuchi, Tamehei Nagai, Shichirō Tanaka, Ikutarō Imanaka, [probably read 'Miroku'] Ōsawa, Shūjirō Takimiya, Usuke Ōhashi, Kamekichi Kishinami, Seiji Sano⁽¹²⁾

The reason for selecting board members — a president, a vice-

president, an accountant, a secretary, and councilors — probably lies in their objective of transforming the temporary temple into a permanent one. This plan is divulged in a council held within a month after the councilors were chosen. Four clauses concerning donations toward a new building were decided in the council:

April 13 A council was opened, attended by Mr. Asahina, Mr. Hashimoto, and Mr. Suzuki; and the councilors: Mr. Nerima, Mr. Miyake, Mr. Sakano, Mr. Komori, Tōji Inukai, Mr. Mitooka, Kenzō Miyake, Mr. Miyamoto, Mr. Moriuchi, Mr. Nagai, Mr. Ōsawa, Mr. Kishinami, and Mr. Sano.

Resolutions passed:

1. To begin to collect contributions for a new building.
2. To first ask the members who wish to make donations to enter their names; when to begin collecting contributions will depend on the suitable conditions.
3. Donations will be asked to be paid in 8 time installments within two years.
4. The accountant will be in charge of raising the money.⁽¹³⁾

Later, Rev. Takagi would go to the islands of Maui and Hawaii to ask for financial help to construct a new temple in Honolulu:

May 31 At 3 pm, I left for Lahaina, Maui on the ship, Maunakea, to visit the family of Dr. Soga. I asked

them to make a donation for a new temple and received a ready consent from them. I then went to the island of Hawaii to visit a new member, Mr. Iseri, who agreed to make a donation. I returned home on June 21.⁽¹⁴⁾

From September 13 to 23 Rev. Takagi went to Maui; and from November 14 to December 6, he went to the island of Hawaii again in order to raise funds.

Even while Rev. Takagi visited the islands, the plan to build a new temple was continued by the council:

July 6 A council was held, and attended by Umekichi Asahina, Shūji Miyake, Taizaburō Hashimoto, Saiji Sakano, Bunkichi Suzuki, Benzaburō Nerima, Seiji Sano, Kichisuke Mitooka, Kenzō Miyake, Tōji Inukai, Tamehei Nagai, Chuzō Miyamoto, and [probably read 'Miroku'] Ōsawa

Resolutions passed:

- (1) Donations will be asked to be made within the year 1913, in September and in December.
- (2) The construction will start next spring.
- (3) The councilors in charge of raising funds are Mr. Asahina, Shūji Miyake, Mr. Hashimoto, Mr. Sakata, and Mr. Sakano.⁽¹⁵⁾

Thus, did they set a term for collecting donations, along with a general date for beginning the construction. That construction of the new temple would start next spring suggests that this plan did not allow ample time

for preparation.

In September 1913, Reverend Chōsei Nunome would arrive in Hawaii, to be in residence with Rev. Takagi, until he was assigned a ministry in Pahala on the island of Hawaii. The reason why Rev. Nunome came to Hawaii was not to build a new temple in Honolulu but to manage the temple on the island of Hawaii in the place of Rev. Takagi.

The location of the new temple was discussed for the first time between February and March:

February 4 Umekichi Asahina, Taizaburō Hashimoto, Shūji Miyake, Saiji Sakano, Kiyomatsu Takahashi came to talk about the new temple. We decided to search for a suitable site and to hold a council on 6th. Yoshitarō Yoshikawa was recommended as a councilor.

February 6 A council was held at night, which was attended by Mr. Nerima, Mr. Sano, Mr. Komori, Mr. Mitooka, Heizaburō Inukai, Mr. Miyamoto, Mr. Nagai, Mr. Kishinami, Mr. Sano, Mr. Yoshikawa, Mr. Asahina, Mr. Hashimoto, and Mr. Suzuki — a total of 13 people.

(1) Based on the decision of Feb. 4, we talked about whether to purchase a site next to a leprosy hospital. (It was on high elevation with fresh air, a superb view, and with a cheap rent fee.)

Resolution of the council: Though the place is very inexpensive and suitable for a temple, it is in such a remote place that it would be inconvenient for people to

come. Therefore, almost everyone agreed that it should remain a proposed site; and should a more convenient place be found, whether it be leasehold, it would be better to rent and construct a new temple in such a place.

An additional note: there is a site proposed by Mr. Miyamoto, who says that the end of Stable Street at the corners of Benyard and River would be fit for a new temple. We asked about making further inquiries about it.

February 8 A council was held, attended by Mr. Asahina, Mr. Hashimoto, Mr. Miyake, Mr. Yoshikawa, Mr. Sano, Mr. Sakano, Mr. Nagai, Mr. Suzuki and Mr. Sakata. Resolution: As the site next to the hospital was inconvenient, it was rejected. The site proposed by Miyamoto or some other site should be further examined; upon which, another council would be held on the night of February 12.

February 12 A council was held to talk about the purchase or rental of property. It was attended by Mr. Takahashi, Mr. Hashimoto, Mr. Suzuki, Mr. Nerima, Mr. Miyamoto, Mr. Ōhashi, Mr. Nagai, Mr. Komori, Heizaburō Inukai, Tōji Inukai, Mr. Sano, Mr. Mitooka, Mr. Sakano, and Mr. Yoshikawa. Resolution: We all agreed to purchase Mr. Ichiyama's site next to a Japanese hospital for a new temple.

February 15 President Umekichi Asahina tendered his resignation.

February 28 After the service, a council was held where an announcement was made about Mr. Asahina's resignation. All attended agreed to form a committee to persuade him from resigning. This committee consisted of Mr. Sakano, Mr. Nagamori, Mr. Kishinami, and Mr. Nerima. They immediately began to persuade Mr. Asahina to remain in office.

March 1 Mr. Asahina withdrew his resignation.⁽¹⁶⁾

From the above, we find that on February 4, the president and vice-president, and several other board members had a discussion about a site for a new temple, and decided to hold a council on the 6th. Although the proposed site was affordable with a good environment, it was an inconvenient place to go to in terms of public transportation. So, it was decided that it would be better to choose a more convenient place for the members to visit, even if the property was leasehold. The first proposed site would be officially rejected in a council on Feb. 8. After searching for another site, they decided to purchase 'Mr. Ichiyama's site next to a Japanese hospital.'

During discussions about the location for a new temple, Umekichi Asahina announced the resignation of his presidency. The reason for his resignation was not mentioned in the diary. However, it is foreseeable that the first proposed site for a new temple probably had much to do with his announcement of resignation. Despite withdrawing his resignation after being persuaded to do so by Rev. Takagi and the other board members, it was also true that the incident caused a fault in the

membership.

Entries concerning the purchase of a site are not made until June 29, when a meeting of the standing committee was held at President Asahina's home:

June 29 At 8 p.m., a permanent committee met at the Mr. Asahina's house to discuss purchasing a site for a new temple. It was attended by Mr. Asahina, Mr. Hashimoto, Mr. Nagamori, Mr. Yoshikawa, and Mr. Sakano.

Motions enacted:

- (1) To purchase the site next to a Japanese hospital.
- (2) The price is \$3,800.
- (3) The method of payment:
 - \$1,500 would be mortgaged from a bank;
 - \$2,300 would be paid along with \$1,000 upon the agreement to purchase of the site;
 - \$500 to be paid at the end of July;
 - \$800 to be paid at the end of October.
- (4) To pay by donations, bank savings, the money to be collected from those who agreed to donate, and the \$100 from those members who have agreed to pay in advance.

Addendum:

Those who have promised to make advances: Mr. Asahina, Mr. Hashimoto, Mr. Nagamori, Mr. Yoshikawa, Mr. Sakano, Mr. Ōsawa, Tōji Inukai.

Those undecided: Heizaburō Inukai, Benzaburō Nerima, Kiyomatsu Takahashi.

Other Agendas:

It will cost \$6~700 to make the move and repairs to the temple.

To register the property of the temple as that of a non-profit religious organization.

Discussed the collection of donations.⁽¹⁷⁾

The details of the 'standing committee' remain unknown. However, judging from the attendance, which included the president, accountant, and councilors, it can be inferred that the standing committee members gathered for a talk before a council took place for final decision-making. It is also apparent that some members were counted upon to make advances for the purchase of the site, and that this property should be administered as a non-profit religious organization. Later, a council would held on July 8 to discuss matters decided by the standing committee. The following resolutions were made:

June 8 A council of standing committee members was held at 8 p.m.

Attendants: Umekichi Asahina, Taizaburō
Hashimoto, Bunkichi Suzuki, Yoshitarō Yoshikawa,
Saiji Sakano, Genpachi Sakata, Heizaburō Inukai,
[probably read 'Miroku'] Ōsawa, Seiji Sano, Shichirō
Tanaka, Tamehei Nagai, Gisaburō Komori, and
Kamekichi Kishinami.

Deputies: Mr. Nagamori, Kenzō Miyake, and Tōji

Inukai.

Motions enacted:

- (1) Purchase of land for a new temple and its residential quarters was set at \$3,800.
- (2) Due dates for payments:
\$1,500, to be paid by July 31;
Make certain that we receive a receipt for \$1,500, as collateral towards a loan from the bank;
\$800, to be paid by October 30.
- (3) The \$100 borrowed from some of the members should be used for the payment before using the one loaned from the bank.
- (4) The property of the site for the temple should be a non-profit religious organization. However, this choice should be deliberated.
- (5) Those who are in charge of investigating the site are the following four people: Taizaburō Hashimoto, Saiji Sakano, Yoshitarō Yoshikawa, and Tamehei Nagai.
- (6) The negotiators for the purchase are Umekichi Asahina and Ichitarō Nagamori.
- (7) Fundraising should begin just upon purchase of the site.

The above was decided; and the meeting was adjourned at midnight.⁽¹⁸⁾

Thus, motions ratified in detail were the purchase price, the due date,

the debt accrued by the members, the reclassification of the property as one overseen by a non-profit organization, the appointments of officers in charge of evaluating the site and of negotiating its purchase, and the time to begin collecting funds. Later, however, one of the negotiators, Mr. Asahina, announced that the due date determined by the standing committee had to be readjusted. As a result, payments were hastened, such that the first payment was rescheduled to be paid by July 15, the second, by July 31, and the third, by November 30.

Despite the declared payment deadlines, the following entry describes what occurred one day before the due date: "the payment was not made because Michizō Tashiro, in charge of examining documents for the purchase, advised not to go through with the purchase for a flaw in documentation, thus concluding the matter on a sour note." Though a detailed explanation is not provided, they did not purchase the site which the council had decided to buy for reasons of incomplete documentation. On August 20, the board of directors met at the house of Umekichi Asahina, where they discussed a new plan for the purchase of a site. The following were decided:

August 20 The board of directors met at Mr. Asahina's house at night to talk about the purchase of a site for a new temple.

Those who attended were: Mr. Asahina, Mr. Hashimoto, Mr. Suzuki, Mr. Sakano, and Rev. Takagi.

Motions enacted:

To buy the 17530 sq. ft. site on School [Street] for

\$3,500.

To ask Michizō Tashiro to investigate, and move ahead with the paperwork for the purchase.⁽¹⁹⁾

From the above, it is apparent that they decided not only to purchase the site 'To buy the 17530 sq.ft. site on School [Street] for \$3,500.', but also to ask Michizō Tashiro, who had examined the previously proposed site, to proceed with purchase procedures again. Tashiro must have been someone who was engaged in real estate. Ten days later, on August 30, a general meeting for all members was held to discuss the temple's registration with the government as a non-profit religious organization:

August 30 A general assembly was held to discuss the temple's registration with the government as a non-profit religious organization.

Attendance: Umekichi Asahina, Taizaburō
Hashimoto, Saiji Sakano, Yoshitarō Yoshikawa,
Benzaburō Nerima, Bunkichi Suzuki, Kamekichi
Kishinami, Tamehei Nagai, and Yasutarō Momii.

Motions enacted:

- (1) To be registered as a non-profit religious organization.
- (2) To make a draft of rules and regulations.
- (3) To have the 8 members of the board of directors appoint a general manager.
- (4) To reappoint officers.

8 Board Members: Umekichi Asahina, Taizaburō Hashimoto, Yoshitarō Yoshikawa, Saiji Sakano,

Benzaburō Nerima, Ichitarō Nagamori, Tōji Inukai,
and Tamehei Nagai.

Officers: General manager: [Rev.] Gyōun Takagi;
Assistant manager: [Rev.] Chōsei Nunome;
Accountant: Taizaburō Hashimoto;
Secretary: Tōji Inukai;
Auditors: Yoshitarō Yoshikawa and Saiji
Sakano.⁽²⁰⁾

Since we can confirm only nine people to have attended the meeting, it may suggest that the general assembly was a mere formality. Nonetheless, they did manage to talk about the rules and regulations, and about the directors and officers, in due part to the classification of the temple as a non-profit organization. On September 28, the temple was officially sanctioned to function as a religious non-profit organization. Then, on October 6, the board of directors met to discuss the following topics:

October 6 The board of directors met at Mr. Asahina's house at 8 pm, which was attended by Mr. Asahina, Mr. Hashimoto, Mr. Nerima, Mr. Sakano, Tōji Inukai, Mr. Nagai, Mr. Nagamori, and Rev. Takagi.

The order of business:

- (1) Announcement of the approval of as a religious non-profit organization.
- (2) To have a special general meeting on October 8 at the practice hall.
- (3) To assign several managers.

Bills to submit to the general meeting:

- (1) Announcement of the permit to exist as a religious non-profit organization.
- (2) To gain the approval on the rules and regulations of the temple.
- (3) To gain the member's approval of current officers and directors.
- (4) To change the title of "councilor" to that of "manager".
- (5) To select a manager from all those who pay the maintenance fees of the temple.
- (6) To get the approval to purchase a site for the new temple.
- (7) To start collecting funds.
- (8) To select someone from the group of officers and managers who would be in charge of collecting funds.⁽²¹⁾

Then, the special general meeting was held on October 8 as agreed, where all of the submitted bills were passed. In this manner, did a propagation center of the Nichiren Sect gain the approval of its believers and of the government to begin as a non-profit religious organization.

5. A Conclusion

Just as an entry on November 8, 1914 reads, "architectural plans ordered", construction work had begun after a month had passed since various proposals were approved in the general assembly. The ceremony for the dedication and enshrinement of the Buddha were finally held in

October 1917. It took five years to accomplish the project of building a new temple since Rev. Takagi's arrival in Honolulu. The diary notes that besides Oahu, he traveled to other islands such the island of Hawaii to collect contributions for building expenses. It also appears that Rev. Takagi was accompanied by representatives of the congregation. We must not forget how much they helped Rev. Takagi.

Despite their valiant effort, it is also undeniable that this project burdened Rev. Takagi and his followers with financial problems. The expenses for this project were recorded in the diary as follows:

— Statement of Accounts of the Newly Built Temple,
as of the End of November 1917 —

Income:	\$ 7,565.25	
Details:	\$ 6,124.60	donations for building expenses
	\$ 1,166.20	donations for enshrinement of the Buddha
	\$ 245.35	general donations
	\$ 29.10	bank interest
Expenditures:	\$ 15,501.53	
Details:	\$ 3,500.00	purchase price of the land
	\$ 8,290.00	building expenses
	\$ 2,219.78	Buddhist altar fittings
	\$ 368.00	registration fee as a non-profit organization and real estate fees
	\$ 609.03	payment of interest on a loan

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 \$ 514.72 travel expenses to collect donations
Balance: (\$ 7,936.28)⁽²²⁾ deficit

From this, it is possible to discern that about half of the cost was covered by donations, and the shortages were supplemented with a loan. Under this situation, it is highly possible that the congregation may have petitioned the archbishop of the Nichiren Sect for financial support as aforementioned: "A Petition for Subsidizing a Building Site for Propagation of Nichiren Buddhism in Hawaii" and "An Entreaty to Support Building Expenses for a Nichiren Sect Temple in Hawaii".

In March 1919, a year and five months since the establishment of a new and complete temple in Honolulu, Rev. Takagi, who had been the chief priest of the temple in Honolulu, returned to Japan. He was replaced by Rev. Chōsei Nunome, who had come to Hawaii in September 1913. He had conducted religious activities from January of the following year while residing at the temple in Kapapala on the island of Hawaii, which Rev. Takagi had founded. During this period, Rev. Gen'yū Ōba began his propagation on the island of Maui. Thus, did the ministers of the Nichiren Sect go to Hawaii and spread their religious activities.

Although Rev. Takagi's focus may have been limited to Japanese immigrants alone, it must have been a very frightening experience to have traveled thousands of miles to Hawaii from Japan to start a propagation all by himself. To overcome this anxiety, and then produce results is not an easy task. It is imaginable that he was subjected to great hardships to overcome. The members should also be praised for having hailed Rev. Takagi and for having helped in establishing the foundation of Nichiren Buddhism in Hawaii.

Hereafter, in examining the activities of ministers such as Rev. Takagi and his congregation, we are able to greater comprehend the mission of the Nichiren Sect in Hawaii. This researcher believes that this is both vital and necessary.

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- (1) Refer to “The Modern Buddhism Exchange between Korea and Japan” or the report of the “Nichiren Sect and its Overseas Missionary” on the activities of the Nichiren Sect in Korea and China in the Meiji Era.
- (2) “Nisshushinpou (The Daily News of the Nichiren Sect)”, issue #701 (4/8/1899)
- (3) “Nisshushinpou (The Daily News of Nichiren Sect)”, issue #709 (6/28/1899)
- (4) “Nisshushinpou (The Daily News of Nichiren Sect)”, issue #721 (10/28/1899)
- (5) “A History of Nichiren Buddhism in Hawaii” (11/14/1982), “A Century of Nichiren Buddhism in Hawaii” (5/18/2003)
- (6) “A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii” p.1–2
- (7) “A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii” p.2
- (8) “A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii” p.3
- (9) “A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii” p.7
- (10) “A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii” p.8
- (11) “A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii” p.11
- (12) “A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii” p.11
- (13) “A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii” p.12
- (14) “A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii” p.13
- (15) “A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii” p.14
- (16) “A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii” p.19–21

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- (17) "A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii" p.23—24
- (18) "A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii" p.24—25
- (19) "A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii" p.26
- (20) "A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii" p.26—27
- (21) "A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii" p.27—28
- (22) Two pieces of paper titled 'Statement of Accounts of the Newly- Built Temple, as of November 1917' are now kept, inserted between pages of "A Diary on Overseas Missionary in Hawaii" together with "A Petition for Subsidizing a Building Site for Propagation of Nichiren Buddhism in Hawaii" and "An Entreaty to Support Building Expenses for Nichiren Sect Temple in Hawaii."