



Padmasri

ILAB Newsletter <Vol.2> Dec. 2009



~ Autumn Outing to Jindaiji temple ~

Our journey started in joyful atmosphere

On October 4th, we had the pleasure to visit the renowned Jindaiji temple located in Musashino. After the long lasted rain for the past few weeks, we were blessed with beautiful sunshine and fresh, delicious air. 27 members and guests from France, India, Australia, USA and Japan, attended this trip. After boarding the bus, Ms. Rinko Okano welcomed all of the participants. Everybody introduced him/herself, and under the cheerful MC of Ms. Karen Okano, laughter never stopped during the 40minutes' bus ride.



The area's specialty – "Jindaiji Soba"

Jindaiji area is famous for its rich natural environment and clear spring water. The name of Jindaiji actually originated in the legend of the God of Water. Soba (buckwheat noodles) made with water from this area is very tasty and it became a specialty. After getting off the bus, the first place we visited was "Suijin-en (Water god palace) restaurant", from where we could see a beautiful garden and natural waterfall. The participants enjoyed an elegant and delicious soba lunch.

Talk by the abbot and meditation in the main temple

Under the courtesy of the abbot and Rev. Myosei Midorikawa (ILAB board director/nun of Jindaiji), we had the opportunity to visit the main hall of the temple. The abbot gave a talk about the history of the temple. Jindaiji was established in 8th century and is one of the oldest temples in eastern Japan. The "important cultural asset" of the temple is the "kneeling Buddha" statue of Hakuho-era in 8 century which was found under the dais of Ganzan Daishi-Do building in 1909. Transmission of this icon was covered with enigma, but the compassionate smile of the statue appeals to visitors throughout the ages. The abbot talked about the famous "soba" as well. During special Buddhist practices, monks are not allowed to eat the five grains (soybeans, rice, wheat, proso millet, foxtail millet). Soba was not included in the category and thus can be consumed. Also, Soba can be eaten fresh. So, Soba has been an important food for practitioners.



After the recitation of "Homage to the Triple Gems" in Pali and Heart Sutra in Japanese, everybody enjoyed a peaceful time in meditation.

Homa ceremony: Flame of wisdom dispels our sufferings



In Ganzan Daishi-Do building, we attended the Homa ceremony. Homa means “burning” in Sanskrit. In this ceremony, Buddhist practitioners chanted vibrantly in front of a flame which rises to almost 2 meters high. Firstly, they purified the place and made offerings to the Buddha, the Bodhisattvas and St. Ganzan Daishi who is worshipped at Jindaiji temple. The fire, which represents wisdom, burns away our ignorance and sufferings. Before the ceremony, we wrote down our wishes on a piece of wood (Gomaki). The wood was burnt in the flame and our wishes were delivered to St. Ganzan Daishi. It was an extraordinary experience for all participants. The venue was filled with powerful and

positive energy.

1300 year-old icon of Shakya Muni Buddha

The last place we visited was Shakya-Do building where the “kneeling Buddha” statue made 1300 years ago is enshrined. Now, the statue is designated as an “important cultural asset”. We had a special opportunity to enter the building and appreciate the statue at a very close distance. Looking at the compassionate smile of the Buddha, a feeling of gratitude naturally emerged in our hearts.



Time passes quickly and we soon came to the end of the trip. On the way back, we enjoyed the exchange of comments and feedback about the trip and we all brought back peace and happiness to share with our family and friends.

~ Announcements ~

★ **We welcome you to ILAB membership.**

We have three types of memberships: Regular membership and Student membership for Buddhist people, and Associate membership for non-Buddhist people. We sincerely welcome your application. ※For more details, please see the application guideline.

What is International Ladies Association of Buddhism, or ILAB?

ILAB aims at offering opportunities for females to meet and exchange their views, to learn and practice Buddha's teachings regardless of denominations and nationalities. It also aims to educate and support young female Buddhist students/academics. ILAB Chairperson is Ms. Rinko Okano (Vice President, Kodo Kyodan), and Board Directors are Ms. Ann Sado (Executive Director of social enterprises), Rev. Ikuko Hibino (Head Priestess of Kayadera Temple/Jodo denomination), Ms. Hiroko Maruyama (Lecturer/ Waseda School of Environment), Rev. Myosei Midorikawa (Nun/Tendai denomination), Ms. Karen Okano (Wife of President of Kodo Kyodan). Alberte Rabiller (Teacher at an international school), and Ms. Jayanti Minato (Translator). ILAB is a part of the activities organized by International Buddhist Exchange Center (IBEC), an independent academic organ of Kodo Kyodan. Program includes meditation, talk, introductions of Buddhist culture and rituals, debate, workshops, and contests, etc. At the moment, we are conducting two general meetings a year, as well as occasional outings and visits to Buddhist temples and sites. Our activities will be conducted mainly in English with Japanese translation when

(*Padmasri* is the name of ILAB's newsletter; it is a Sanskrit name meaning 'Divine Lotus'.)



INTERNATIONAL LADIES ASSOCIATION OF BUDDHISM (ILAB)

38 Torigoe, Kanagawa-ku, Yokohama, Japan ☎221-0064

Email: info_ilabuddhism@yahoo.co.jp FAX: (045) 434-1188