ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE NYOIRIN-JI

The Nyoirin-ji at Mt. Yoshino in Yamato was established during the Enkyō (901~923) by Saint Nichido Dōkai, who is the brother of Dōkai's Nichido Dōkai. Nichido Dōkai advised the Emperor Daigo to become a believer in Buddhism.

When the Emperor Go-Daigo transferred the capital to Yoshino, he worshipped at the Nyoirin-ji. The Emperor Go-Daigo visited the Nyoirin-ji with Kusunoki Masatsura and his 143 retainers in the second year of Sengen. The Nyoirin-ji was on the decline after the Seita, Saint Bungo Tetsugyu rebuilt the temple in the third year of Kegon. He converted the Nyoirin-ji from Shingon to Jodo-Su and spreaded Buddhism. He protected the Emperor's Mausoleum.

THE EMPEROR GO-DAIKO AND KUSUNOKI MASATSURA

The Emperor Go-Daigo defeated the arbitrary Hojo shogunate and carried out the Kenmu Restoration in the third year of Genko. But Ashikaga Takauji resisted the Emperor. The Emperor escaped from Kyoto and went to Mt. Yoshino in Nara in the first year of Engen. He transferred the capital to Yoshino and worshipped at the Nyoirin-ji.

Though the Emperor had been eager for defeating Ashikaga Takauji and coming back to Kyoto, he was taken ill and passed away in Yoshino after all. His last word was as follows: "I am very sorry I cannot come to Kyoto any more. Bury me toward Kyoto at least, when I died. He was buried in the mountain behind. And, it was called Tounkura.

The Emperor Go-Murakami succeeded to the in Yoshino. In 1348, the second year of Shouhe, the large army of Ashikaga began to charge at Yoshino. Kusunoki Masatsura and his 143 retainers bid farewell to the Emperor hurriedly. After that, they visited the Mausoleum and worshipped the Nyoirin-ji. There they cut their hair a little and offered them to the Buddha, and wrote down their names on the necrology.

Lastly, on the door of the Nyoirin-ji, Masatou wrote down a farewell poem with the arrowhead to express his desperate feeling: "Kaitai zu kanete omoeba azayuuni nakaizumiru naraa to ii kowai," (I think I can not return alive this time. So I wrote down my name on the necrology and I am going).

Thus he went to Shijouwatake in Osaka, and fought heroically and died with his brother Masatoki. The existing Nyoirin-do is re-built in the third year of Kegon (the Edo Era). But the door still remains in the treasury.