

RADIANCE

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July/August 2016

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SACRED WORDS

*It is because this sutra is a good medicine for the diseases of the people of the Jambudvīpa (this world).
The patient who hears this sutra will be cured of his disease at once. He will not grow old or die.*

Lotus Sutra, Chapter XXIII—The Previous Life of Medicine-King Bodhisattva (p. 313)

Obon Mass Memorial Service

July 10th, 10:30 a.m. (Sun)

Buddhism can save all souls even those in hell. The Obon Memorial Service originated with the story from one of Sakyamuni Buddha's disciple, Maudgalayana. His mother was saved from her incessant suffering from starvation in hell. While she was alive, she raised him to be superior in intellect over others, no matter the consequences. She was extremely self-centered toward her son which resulted in her falling into the hungry state of hell. The Buddha's advice was for him to serve food to one thousand monks in a monastery and request them to recite the Lotus Sutra and pray for her repentance in order to attain buddhahood.

Please write your name and ancestors' on the enclosed prayer form and send it back to the Kannon Temple before July 10th with your donation. Together with the congregation, we will pray for your deceased loved ones and all hungry spirits in the hell stage.

Obon Cemetery and Home Visitations in Utah August 12th ~ 14th

The Kanai family will make their annual visitations to the gravesites and homes of members in northern Utah such as Corinne, Ogden, Syracuse and Salt Lake City. A detailed schedule will be sent out later to those members in Utah.

Matsubagayatsu Persecution Service August 28th, 10:30 a.m. (Sun)

The first of four major persecutions in St. Nichiren's life. An angry mob tried to kill him and burned his hut down. According to legend, he was saved by a monkey.

Please come join us to commemorate this important event.

Yard Sale

We held an unexpected Yard Sale at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Kunio Yahiro on June 3rd and 4th. We made a total of \$269.05 from both days plus \$100 from an anonymous donor. This amount will be saved for our Building Fund.

We deeply appreciated everyone who made donation of goods and volunteered at the sale especially Kunio and Michiko Yahiro, Paula Patterson, Kazuko Underhill, Yvonne Smeltzer, Kumiko Toyoda and Jane Asari.

You're a Buddha

Rev. Shoda Douglas Kanai

Several weeks ago, I was in Japan for the Overseas Ministers Conference. There I learned of their new campaign to commemorate the 800th Anniversary of St. Nichiren's birth. The message is simple, **"You're a Buddha"**. Now this phrase has many different meanings depending on the person's point of view.

At first glance, this phrase may seem interesting. "Wow, I am a Buddha!" Or it could mean something they have never heard before, "I am a Buddha?" Or some may believe too readily into the phrase, "I am a Buddha already, therefore I no longer need to study!" How do you view this phrase?

Every one of us has the capability of becoming a Buddha with all the tools already inside of us. Some can see this nature in themselves but for the rest of us we cannot. Due to our bad karma we cannot see what is right in front of us.

In Chapter 8 of the Lotus Sutra, there is a parable about "The Gem in the Garment". A poor man visits his rich friend who sows a priceless gem into the garment of the poor man while he was sleeping. This gem was to be used in a time of need. The poor man does not realize this gift until the rich man tells him of the gem many years later. The Buddha is the rich man, the poor man is all of us and the gem is Buddhahood.

We all have the gem inside of us, we just are not aware of it. By proper study and practice we can remove our blindness and see the truth. How can we remove our blindness? By chanting Odaimoku, *Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō* we begin to realize the true meaning of the Lotus Sutra and awaken ourselves. By realizing that we are Buddhas ourselves, that means the person next to you is a Buddha as well. How do we realize their Buddha? By placing hands together in *gassho*.

In previous articles, I have talked about *gassho* and its meaning of creating harmony and respecting others. This respecting of others is the true spirit of *Odaimoku*. Make it a habit when you greet anyone by smiling at them, bow to them with palms together in *gassho*. At first, this may seem awkward, but by constantly bowing and doing *gassho*, you will realize your Buddha nature as well as causing the person you are respecting to realize theirs. **We are all Buddhas!**

My View Point (As I heard and as I see)

Ainu Strip-Owl

Kumiko Kanai

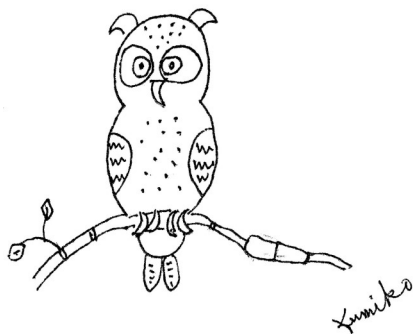
The Hokkaido Bullet Train opened on March 26th this year. It takes exactly four hours and 2 minutes from Tokyo to Hakodate Hokuto Station. The train runs 300 km per hour. So we took a trip to Hokkaido in the middle of May. I received a lot of natural energy from the magnificent view of Hokkaido.

In Sapporo, we visited the Ainu Culture Center called *Pirka Kotan*. This means “beautiful village of Sapporo.” I had wished to see the clothing made from fish skins. You can touch about 300 displays of various items at this museum. The clothing is called “*cep-ur*” in Ainu language. It could be anything made from the skins of fish from the river and ocean.

I was surprised to see other items like a *ra-un-kaut* or an amulet inherited from a grandmother, a mother and a daughter; *tama-say* or a jewelry, *ton-kori* or spiritual string instrument, *cep-keri* or salmon skin shoes and others. Some of them are similar to American Indian items.

The most impressive story was an Ainu mythology on the stripe owl that was the highest god in Ainu tradition. One day in a famine year, the hunters went hunting in the forest and fishing in the rivers, but they could not capture anything. So they were in deep distress. Thereupon an owl came out and told them, “When you hunted a deer, you hit the head of the deer by a dirty stick, skinned off, cut off its head and left it in the mountain. When you went fishing, you hit the head of a salmon with a decayed stick and killed the fish. It seemed to be that you treated them rudely. Show your appreciation to them and nature. Respect the deer head when you capture it. Use beautiful hunting tools. Do not waste any parts of the captured animal as much as possible.”

The Ainu stripe owl decorated at the entrance at the culture center is telling us to appreciate more to the nature.



Not Grow Old or Die

Rev. Shokai Kanai

Kumiko and I had a wonderful trip to Japan last May. The highlight of the trip was to enjoy hot springs at *Furou Fushi* Hot Spring at Fukakusa in northern Japan.

That hot spring bath is very famous and always filled with tourists. It is located at the tip of a small peninsula facing the Sea of Japan. While I soaked in the open-air bath, I observed the panoramic 180-degree ocean view. The sunset from the outside spring bath was wonderful ☺

☺ and well-known. The day we stayed was sunny but the horizon was covered with dark clouds, and we could not see the actual sunset. However, the reflection of the sun to the western sky off the clouds were very beautiful.

By the way, “*Furou Fushi*” means “Not grow old or die.” This is from Chapter 23 of the Lotus Sutra referring the spiritual realm of our eternal lives.

Buddhism always teaches “Everything is constantly changing. Nothing last forever.” Then the phrase above, “Not grow old or die” contradicts with the basic teaching of the Buddha? However, the Lotus Sutra revealed by Sakyamuni Buddha during his last eight years talks about existence of the Eternal Buddha in many chapters. Frankly speaking our soul is also constantly changing to improve.

In Chapter 7 of the same sutra, the Buddha reveals the relationship between Sakyamuni Buddha and us. You do not have to believe this, but according to the sutra the relationship between the Eternal Buddha and us had begun in the world (a planet) called Well-Composed inconceivable *asamakhya* kalpas ago (before many Big Bangs). When Sakyamuni in his previous life, he practiced the Lotus Sutra and expounded it to many people who were us. Then, He chose Saha-world (the earth) as his Buddha-Land. When we had come to this earth together with Sakyamuni Buddha hundreds billions years ago, each one of us might be a single cell. We human beings had perfectly continued to adapt to the earth environments by repeating birth and death countless times. So we have now 60 trillion cells in a human body and still in the process of progress. Our souls are also constantly progressing.

Our spiritual beings continue rebirth countless times until we become Buddhas. Our physical bodies are just like our cars. Our souls dwell in our current bodies until our death just as we change a car when the time comes.

Thus, the soul never gets old nor die. Therefore, in spiritual realm we will be able to see our loved ones, ancestors, Great Bodhisattva Nichiren and Sakyamuni Buddha.

The *Obon* is the time for us to remind ourselves the existence of our souls and also our ancestor’s. We try to improve ourselves and for our ancestors to achieve higher levels by repeating birth and death until we attain real Buddha-hood.

New Building Fund commemorating the Nichiren’s 800th Anniversary of Birth

\$76,858.36

462 *shakyo* tracing Chapter 25 of the Lotus Sutra offered, 16,700,000 times of Chanting *Odaimoku* offered, As of June 23, 2016

Thank you very much! Please continue your support.

EVENTS

<u>July</u>		<u>August</u>	
3 rd (Sun)10:30 a.m.	Monthly <i>Kito</i> Blessing	7 th (Sun)10:30 a.m.	Monthly <i>Kito</i> Blessing
10 th (Sun)10:30 a.m.	<i>Obon</i> Mass Memorial Service	14 th (Sun) No Service	Utah <i>Obon</i> Memorial Service
17 th (Sun)10:30 a.m.	English Service (Chapter 17)	21 st (Sun)10:30 a.m.	<i>Shodai-gyo</i> (Chanting Meditation)
24 th (Sun)10:30 a.m.	<i>Shodai-gyo</i> (Chanting Meditation)	28 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Matsubagayatsu</i> Persecution
31 st (Sun) No Service	5 th Sunday		

- Kanai Family will visit the members’ houses and cemeteries in northern Utah for *Obon* Memorial Services from August 12th (Fri) to 14th (Sun)

*** Those interested in Study Class & Counseling, please contact the temple to make arrangements ***