

RADIANCE

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July/August 2019

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SACRED WORDS

However, when they encountered this sutra they could enjoy it fully, thereby putting an end to their hunger. That is what the Lotus Sutra says. If so, pray for the hungry ghosts with the chanting of this phrase [from the sutra] and Namu Myoho Renge Kyo when you make offerings for them.

St. Nichiren—*Shijo Kingo-dono Goshō*

Obon Memorial Service

July 21st, 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, who saved his mother from her incessant suffering in the level of Hungry Ghost.

For the newly deceased, this will be their first *Obon* Memorial Service. We will create a special *Toba* (wooden tablet) with their name written on it and make special offerings to them. This is a special message to the deceased.

Please write your name and ancestors' on the enclosed prayer form and send it back to the Kannon Temple before July 21st with your donation. Together with the congregation, we will pray for your deceased loved ones and all hungry spirits in the lower realms.

Obon Cemetery and Home Visitations in Utah July 13th ~ 15th

Shoda Shonin will make the annual visitations to the gravesites and homes of members in northern Utah. A detailed schedule will be sent out later to those members.

There will be no service in Las Vegas on the 14th.

Matsubagayatsu Persecution Service

Aug. 25th, 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.

English Sodorin Training Session

July 25th ~ 31st

The next wave of English priests-to-be are preparing for their final push in becoming ordained. As part of this final process, these *shamis* will be attending a training session of which Shoda Shonin is the assistant instructor. He will be helping them better understand the duties of being a priest.

How to Quench Thirst

Shoda Douglas Kanai

It has been a mild spring in Las Vegas, but suddenly the temperatures have risen over 100 degrees! An excessive heat warning has been issued to make sure everyone is taking proper precaution and not get sick. I have to remind myself to drink plenty of water and apply sunscreen so that I won't get sunburned.

During these hot times, I pour myself a cool glass of *mugicha* (roasted barley tea). This is a traditional summertime beverage in Japan. Some may prefer lemonade during the summer, but *mugicha* uses no sugar and is healthier. As I enjoy my refreshing drink, I am reminded that some people may not be able to satisfy their thirst. These are the people in the Hungry Ghost realm.

Hungry Ghost can be viewed as a place where cravings go unfulfilled, extreme desires are never met, and no satisfaction. The usual descriptions are of people trying to eat or drink and it turns into fire before consumption. Or a place where stomachs are bloated with a small mouth, thus only a little amount of food can pass. We can never satisfy our hunger and thirst. Have you ever been thirsty? What about being hungry? Do you remember how you felt? What actions did you try to overcome that feeling?

Sometimes, we may go to extreme lengths to quench our hunger and thirst. I remember my times during the 100 Days *Aragyo* Acetic Training of being extremely hungry and eyeing other people's food. It is extremely tempting to take it to solve my hunger issue. We do not think rationally when our body craves nourishment. By experiencing this hunger, I have a small understanding of what it must be like to be in the Hungry Ghost realm.

I want to eat but cannot not. I want to drink but cannot not. This type of suffering is unbearable. So then why do people end up in this realm? It is because of our actions that we caused in this life. Have you ever been selfish? Instead of sharing the cake with others, you took it all or a larger portion than the others? Wanting something so bad that you cheated to get it? These types of actions have a consequence, which means unhealthy desires cause one to fall into one of the lower realms.

Our actions and thoughts do create the effects that one day, we may end up in Hungry Ghost. There is ⇒

⇐a way out. We are now entering the *Obon* season and one of the special ceremonies that are conducted is the *Segaki-e* (Offering for Hungry Ghost Ceremony). We offer our merits gained through the Lotus Sutra and chanting *Odaimoku* to those who are suffering. We sprinkle water over washed rice and offer various types of food and sweets to the altar. We are symbolically feeding those in Hungry Ghost.

There are four magical phrase that are also chanted during the service:

- *Nyoi Kanro Sha* (As if sprinkled with nectar)
- *Jonet' Toku Shoryo* (We shall feel cool and refreshed)
- *Nyoju Ke Kokurai* (As if from a country suffering from famine)
- *Kotsugu Dai ozen* (and now seeing the meal of a great king)

These passages are from Ch. 6, Assurance of Future Buddhahood. We see all this wonderful food but hesitate. Can we really eat this? Once we are permitted, we feel refreshed. The Buddha used this parable to remove our doubts about our future attainment of Buddhahood.

We can also use these passages literally to help others quench their hunger and thirst. If you look closely, these are the scared words written on special banners decorating the altar during *Obon* Service. We remind everyone that there is a possibility to be saved from our past actions and have them changed into good merit, even if they have never heard of the Lotus Sutra before. If somehow we end up in Hungry Ghost, someone will surely help us out. That is why we chant *Odaimoku* in order to save all beings.

As the summer heats up and my consumption of *mugicha* rises to quench my thirst, so too we can help others quench their thirst and help them out of Hungry Ghost by the power of *Odaimoku*. Let us pray for everyone so we can save everyone. *Odaimoku* is truly wonderful!

New Building Fund commemorating the 800th Anniversary of St. Nichiren's Birth
\$142,633.19.

609 shakyo tracing Chapter 25 of the Lotus Sutra offered, **22,110,000** times of Chanting *Odaimoku* offered, As of June 19, 2019
Thank you very much! Please continue your support.

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

Lotus Blossoms in my Backyard

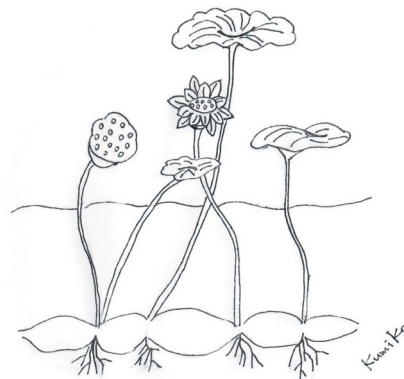
Kumiko Kanai

In my backyard, the lotus that I have planted in a bucket has sprouted many leaves but no flowers. It seems that there are many ways to eat the lotus, which has been transmitted for thousands of years in China. It is said that Japanese people only eat lotus root, but recently, in the Hikari Renkon farmhouse in Ibaraki Prefecture, I saw in the news that the seeds were eaten as well since they were children.

Lotus roots are not actually from the roots but from the stems that are called rhizomes which are enlarged. The farmer seems to soften the soil with a soy and rice bran fertilizer.

In China, it is still customary to eat all parts of the lotus from the seeds, stems, leaves, and flowers. The leaves are used when steaming *mochi* rice. The seeds are dried then soaked in water, peeled and stewed with sugar or in chicken soup. The lotus roots are seasoned before eating. The stems are lightly boiled and used as a straw. The flowers are dried and made into flower tea. Lotus seems to be enjoyed in various ways.

Soon the hot Las Vegas summer will be upon us. I wonder when the flowering season will come to my backyard lotus?



EVENTS

<u>July</u>		<u>August</u>	
7 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Kito</i> Blessing	4 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Kito</i> Blessing
14 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	Utah <i>Obon</i> Visitation (No Service in Las Vegas)	11 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	English Service
21 st (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Obon</i> Memorial Service	18 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Shodai-gyo</i> (Chanting Meditation)
28 th (Sun) No Service	Shoda Shonin at N.B.I.C	25 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Matsubagayatsu</i> Persecution

- Shoda Kanai Shonin at N.B.I.C. for training *shamis* at English *Sodorin* 7/25 ~ 31.

*** Those interested in Study Class and/or Counseling, please contact the temple to make arrangements ***