

## **THREE TREASURES**

Every so often we read the “Three Treasures”, I place my faith in the Buddha, I place my faith in the Dharma, I place my faith in the Sangha. What does this mean? Why do we read this to reaffirm our faith? For one, we are Buddhists. We believe in the teaching of the Buddha taught to us many, many years ago. Through his many precepts and expedients, he showed us the way to live and think during this lifetime. We as his disciples continue the teachings after his death. We call this the “Three Treasures”, because we value treasures, not in a greedy way, but as value. Diamonds are rare and hard to find. Many tons of rock needs to be crushed in order to find the diamonds. We have to cherish these three treasures everyday and always keep it close to us.

So, when you say “I place my faith in the Buddha” you are paying homage to the original teacher who was able to find a way to open your eyes to be able to escape the bonds of suffering. I hope you respect your teachers at school. I hope you do not talk back and ignore what the teacher is saying. Are you lazy? Do you not want to learn? School is boring? These bad thoughts, evil thoughts are the roots of your suffering. If you do not learn proper grammar and arithmetic, you will not be able to go to college. If you do not go college, you will not get a good paying job. You will be stuck doing menial work because that is all you know. To be a doctor, it takes many years of study. That study will pay off when they will be able to treat your sickness. You are all sick patient, the Buddha heals you with his knowledge and teachings, which is the Dharma.

The second phrase is “I place my faith in the Dharma”, you are saying that you will follow the teachings of the Buddha. He gave us many, many sutras to follow depending on our capacity to learn. As your studies progress you will learn parts from

many sutras and apply them to your daily life. This culminates with the Lotus Sutra of which we Nichiren Buddhist expound. The Lotus Sutra is the highest level of Buddha's teaching, but it also incorporates all the previous teachings, so though the Lotus Sutra is difficult to understand, by our faith we will gain all the merits contained in the 28 chapters and all the many, many sutras the Buddha taught before. It is like going to college as a five year old. You may think a five year old may not have success, but that five year old has special powers, which is in the Odaimoku. Nichiren Daishonin, found that through the five characters of Myo, Ho, Ren, Ge, Kyo, you can capture all the merits of the Lotus Sutra and by association, all the sutras expounded before. Now that is power. A word of caution, just because you chant the Odaimoku, does not mean you can do whatever you want. You still have to follow the teachings of the Eight Fold Path of Right Views, Thoughts, Speech, Action, Livelihood, Effort, Mindfulness and Meditation. Chanting means nothing if your heart and soul is not fully committed to learning and understanding the truth.

Lastly, when you say, "I place my faith in the Sangha", you are placing your faith in the community of this temple and all the other Buddhist sects. The basic principles taught by Buddha Sakyamuni is followed by everyone, thus anyone who considers themselves as Buddhist is in the Sangha. As a practicing community, everyone is striving to better their lives and hopefully attain Enlightenment. Sanghas can be broken down into smaller groups by doctrine, region, temples and study groups. In these smaller Sanghas, we try to promote peace and harmony to all as well as continuing our education in the Dharma. Here at the Kannon Temple the Sangha is still relatively small, but we are

growing. Rome was not built in one day. So through hard work and your continued support, we will make Kannon Temple one of nicest place to visit and learn.

Always remember that the “Three Treasures” are important to all Buddhist. Imagine that you have gems around your heart that represents Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Then you will not forget what it is to be a Buddhist; your faith in the teacher, faith in the teachings and especially for us, faith in NAMU MYO HO RENGE KYO and faith in this temple and the people in it.