

**The First Issue** (January 1, 2008)

## **RADIANCE**

By Rev. Shokai Kanai

### **2008, Happy New Year!**

Propagation of the O'Daimoku in Nevada will begin on the New Year's Day with the sunrise chanting at Red Rock Canyon. The first official blessing for visitors will be held at 10:30a.m. at the Nichiren Buddhist Kannon Temple of Nevada. Everyone is welcome!

Since moving to Las Vegas, I wake up early in the morning and worship the morning star (Venus) and the moon in my backyard. I chant the Odaimoku, "Name Myoho Renge Kyo." After a short rest, I go for a walk to a park before sunrise. I chant "Jiga-ge" from chapter 16 in the Lotus Sutra and a phrase from chapter 21, "As the rays of the sun and the moon eliminate all darkness of the world, this person takes away sufferings of all people." After coming home I do the morning service.

As you know the rays of the sun, the moon and the stars illuminate darkness and give energy to all living beings, I would like to bring happiness and harmony to everyone who visits the Kannon Temple. People call Las Vegas "*Sin City*"; I wish and pray that this city will become the Buddha Land.

I am working on obtaining non-profit organization status from the State of Nevada as well as trying to be designated as tax exempted from the IRS. After receiving the tax exemption number, I will donate all of my Buddhist statues, altar materials and office equipments to the temple. One of the Buddhist statues is a Juichimen (Eleven Faces) Kannon Bodhisattva (deity of compassion) that was donated to me by a devoted follower in Japan. The statue is made from *Yakusugi* (a cedar tree more than three thousand and five hundred years old, grown in Yakushima Island in Southern Japan).

Faith in the Deity Kannon is very popular among many non-Nichiren Shu Buddhists in Southeast Asia and some Americans. Actually the compassion of Kannon Bodhisattva is revealed in Chapter 25 of the Lotus Sutra. As the result of my long missionary work in America, I believe that it is easier for general public to visit a Kannon Temple than it is to a Nichiren Shu Temple.

When we get the tax exemption number, I will start the fund-raising for a new temple site and a new building since the present temple is only a residential house now.

## **Why I Chant the Odaimoku**

By Rev. Shoda Douglas Kanai

The other day, my father lent me a book to read about Buddhism. This book showed me a different perspective on how and why people should chant the Odaimoku. The main theme states that you should chant to make changes in your lives, to help you heal mentally and physically and to find happiness. The power of prayer has been documented to help those who truly believe and have placed tremendous effort towards their goals. The mind can be altered which can shape the environment around you. On a deeper level, the Odaimoku has the power to help heal your bad karma and focus your energies towards becoming calm, thus being able to attain Buddhahood.

I know that through the power of the Odaimoku, I can improve myself and help me become a better person, but I can also chant the Odaimoku to help others. Nichiren Shonin has stated that by chanting Odaimoku, you gain innumerable merits and obtain all the merits contained within the Lotus Sutra especially attaining Buddha-hood . Since I was a small child, I have been reciting “Namu Myoho Renge Kyo” and the Lotus Sutra. I have accumulated vast quantities of merits and with these merits, I can share and lend to those who have less. There are many people who are living and deceased wandering around aimlessly and who have yet to hear the teachings of Nichiren. I can help them hear the wonderful teachings of the Lotus Sutra and the Odaimoku to help them blossom their seed towards Buddhahood.

How can they hear when they are not present? I focus my mind in sending the powers of the Odaimoku to all those in need. I dedicate my prayers to liberate them from their sufferings. This is one of the reasons why I chant “Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.”

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