

SACRED WORDS

Keep, read, recite, expound, and copy this sutra, and act according to the teachings of it with all your heart after my (Buddha's) extinction! In any world where anyone keeps, reads, recites, expounds or copies this sutra, and acts according to its teachings, or in any place where a copy of this sutra is put, be it in a garden, in a forest, under a tree, in a monastery, in the house of a person in white robes (lay-people), in a hall, in a mountain, in a valley, or in the wilderness, there should a stupa (temple) be erected and offerings be made to it because, know this, the place where the stupa is erected is the place of enlightenment.

Lotus Sutra Chapter 21, The Supernatural Power of the Tathagatha

Lucky Number: 8, 80, and 800!

Rev. Shokai Kanai

Lucky number 8, 80, and 800 are not for gambling. The numbers signify that I will be eighty years old in eight years. That year is 2022 when Nichiren Buddhists will celebrate 800th Birthday of the founder of our order, Nichiren Dai'Shonin!

It is very important for Nichiren's followers to celebrate his 800th birthday with special events. I made a vow to erect a new temple building for the Kannon Temple of Nevada in front of Archbishop Nisso Uchino who visited our temple together with his entourage and tour group from Minobusan Kuon-ji Temple on June 30th.

As you may know reading the last issues of RADIANCE, there were over 151 people from eleven different groups who visited our temple from June 25th through July 2nd. Among them, three groups came by a big tour bus at different times. Since buses cannot park in our parking lot, the buses parked two blocks away. The visitors from Japan had to walk under the burning sun to the temple. In the temple there are no room for a dressing room and a kitchen. The hall is almost full when 30 people come in, and some of them have to remain standing along the back wall. The hall is just enough space for regular Sunday services, but it is too small for special events.

Why should the new temple be located in the southwest Las Vegas? It is because there is a beautiful Mormon Tabernacle at the northeast side of the city. The Northeast and Southwest are better places to protect a temple or a city rather than the center according to Japanese legend. Mormon missionaries first found the city of Las Vegas. So let them protect the city from the northeast while the Kannon Temple will protect from southwest. The temple building should be at a higher elevation, so we can overlook the city. At the temple we will recite the Lotus Sutra, chant "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo," and pray for safety, peace, and prosperity of the city every morning and appreciation of the day in the evening.

The location is also along the flight path into and out of Las Vegas, so we must pray for the safety of thousands of passengers who come and go from McCarran International Airport every day. The Kannon Temple of Nevada is for all people in Nevada, from out-of-states and the world. We welcome all visitors; some of them wish to stay here for a few days, a week or a month for studying and practicing Nichiren Shu Buddhism. For their comfortable stay and practice, the main hall is not enough. We must have a kitchen, showers, rest rooms, rooms for lodging and library besides the resident minister and his family's living quarters. In the future we will have trees and plants and flowers in the garden to create a relaxing atmosphere to establish a spiritual temple of "Peace of Body, Mind and Spirit."

How about a building fund? Well, right now we will resume the *Shakyo* Project. Anyone can trace the gatha of Chapter 25 of the Lotus Sutra and make some donation toward the building fund as we did in the past and bought a current property and renovated. Please contact Rev. Kanai if you would like to participate in the *Shakyo* Project. He will send you *shakyo* booklets. All your *shakyo* and the 10,000 Times Odaimoku Chanting sheets will be buried under the new building. They will be kept there forever.

403 copies of Chapter 25 have been donated as of August 14, 2014
13,140,000 Times of Odaimoku were offered as of August 25, 2014

Autumn O'Higan Memorial Service **Sep. 21st (Sun) 10:30 a.m.**

It is a time again to practice the Six Paramitas for Bodhisattvas (us) especially during seven days of the autumn equinox season. Spring equinox is the time for planting seeds while autumn equinox is for harvesting. Appreciation to nature is equal to appreciation to our ancestors. O'Higan is very important for Buddhists who practice the Middle Way. Please write your name and ancestors on the enclosed prayer form and send it back to the temple with your donation. Together with all congregations we chant the Lotus Sutra and O'Daimoku and pray for your ancestors. Everyone is welcome to attend the service.

By the way, after the fall equinox, the rays of the sun slowly shine inside the main hall through the window. When the rays hit the linoleum floor, the reflecting rays shine the statues of the Buddhas. This happens during morning chanting and it is very exciting to watch.

O-E-Shiki Service **Oct. 19th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.**

October 13th is the memorial day of Nichiren Dai'Shonin. O-E-Shiki Service will be held on the day or after the day at Nichiren Buddhist temples, churches, and sanghas around the world. It is to show our appreciation toward the founder of the Nichiren Buddhist order. We will hold our service at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, October 19th. Let us chant the O'Daimoku together.

As I heard and as I read

St. Francis of Las Vegas

Kumiko Kanai

I saw the statue of “*St. Francis Preaching to the Birds*” at a house where I visited the other day. It is about one foot high. It seemed that the saint was saying something to me, so I watched it for a while. Then I recalled the spoken words of a painter in 2011.

“If your husband is preaching to the birds as Saint Francis, his temple will be built in future in Las Vegas,” said he, and he gave me a picture of *St. Francis preaching to the bird* that he drew on a piece of a memo pad. Just as he said, the Kannon Temple of Nevada opened in March, 2013.

St. Francis lived the high-spirited life typical of a wealthy young man; however, he lost his taste for his worldly life. On a pilgrimage to Rome, he joined the poor in begging at St. Peter’s Basilica. The experience moved him to live in poverty. He returned home, began preaching on the street. He was the most venerated saint in the medieval period in Italy. He energetically preached and showed miracles. The painting of “*St. Francis Preaching to the Birds*” is at St. Francis of Assisi in central Italy.

Assisi will be the destination for my third visit to Italy.

HELLO FROM JAPAN 15

Rev. Douglas Shoda Kanai

How is everyone’s Buddhist practice going? Are you chanting the Lotus Sutra every day? What about studying various Buddhist concepts? It is difficult in the beginning to practice every day. There are many worldly distractions that interfere with your studies such as school, work, family and friends. A long day can be exhausting so we rather sleep-in instead of waking up early for daily morning service. This interference is *Mara*, “King of Devils” which is the personification of temptation that keeps us from spiritual practice.

We make choices every day, some are meaningful and most others are hurtful. When we decide not practice or study the Lotus Sutra, *Mara* is winning. *Mara* is preventing us from realizing our true nature, which is Buddhahood. Every one of us has the capacity to become a Buddha, which is the Buddha seed. As with any seed, it will not just grow into a plant without first cultivation. This cultivation is our continued studying of the sutra as well as practicing what it teaches. Every day as we recite passages from the sutra, we are helping our seed grow. For those that have read the Lotus Sutra, it is very difficult to understand. We must have knowledge of advanced Buddhist principles to fully grasp its meaning. But do not despair, there is an abridge version.

St. Nichiren first recited the Odaimoku, “*Namu Myoho Renge Kyo*” on the morning of April 28, 1253. He stressed the importance to have faith in this Odaimoku, because in these seven Chinese characters, the essence of Sakyamuni Buddha’s teachings is contained therein. By chanting the Odaimoku,

we can keep the excitement of hearing the Lotus Sutra indefinitely, thus keep our Buddha seed growing. Some people say all you need is just the Odaimoku, but this is a false view.

How can we see in a dark room? Someone has to tell us where the light switch is and then we go and flip the switch. The room is our mind and heart. St. Nichiren has pointed out where the light switch is with the Odaimoku, he has given us direction to see in the dark, thus be able to expand our mind and heart. We still have to go turn on the switch ourselves to be able to see in the room, which is chanting the Odaimoku. To keep the room always lit, that is accomplished by studying the Lotus Sutra. Turning on the lights is not the final act, but keeping the room well lit is. A well lit room is a nurtured path towards Buddhahood. You are growing your Buddha seed. As we grow our faith and understanding, then we can start to see the results of our fruition, as we are transformed into better beings.

Do not let *Mara* tempt you to slow down your Buddhist practice. Remember to whole-heartedly chant the Odaimoku and continue with your studies to help “keep your room lit bright.”

EVENTS

September

7th Sun 10:30 a.m. Monthly *Kito* Blessing
14th Sun No Service O’Higan Service at the Toronto Nichiren Buddhist Temple
21st Sun 10:30 a.m. Autumn O’Higan Memorial Service
28th Sun 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service reading Chapter 5 of the Lotus Sutra
Rev. Shokai Kanai will be in Toronto, Canada for O’Higan Service from 12th to 14th

October

5th Sun 10:30 a.m. Monthly *Kito* Blessing
12th Sun No Service O-E-Shiki Service at the Seattle Nichiren Buddhist Church
19th Sun 10:30 a.m. O-E-Shiki Service for Nichiren Dai’Shonin
20th Mon 10:30 a.m. Deity Daiko’s Blessing
26th Sun No Service Rev. Shokai Kanai will be in Boston for NONA Conference
Rev. Shokai Kanai will be in Boston for NONA Ministers’ Mtg. from 23rd - 25th,
In Boston for NONA Conference 25th - 26th,
Rev. Shokai Kanai will be at Minobu-san, Tokyo, Kamakura, Ichikawa, Japan from 10/27 - 11/2

November

9th Sun 10:30 a.m. Monthly *Kito* Blessing

Individual Lesson on Buddhism

We currently have four private classes on Buddhism. Since everyone has different schedules and different understanding on Buddhism, Rev. Kanai holds individual lessons during the week, day or night. Anyone interested in learning Buddhism, Lotus Sutra, and Teachings of Nichiren Shonin are welcome to join any time. Just call (702)866-5956 to set up a time and day that is convenient for you.