



RADIANCE

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May/June 2021

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SACRED WORDS

He preached Hinayana or quasi-Mahayana sutras, but statues and portraits of the Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha revealed in The “Duration of the life of the Buddha” (Ch. 16) of the Lotus Sutra were never made. Now in the beginning of the Latter Age of the Decadent Dharma, is it not the time that such statues and portraits are made?

Nichiren Shonin—*Kanjin Honzon-Shō*

COVID-19 Update

Good News! The State of Nevada is gradually lifting restrictions, therefore Kannon Temple will open for in-person service starting June 6th. We request that everyone gets vaccinated, wear a mask, bring their own DHARMA book, and social distance as much as possible. There will be no meal after service so please do not bring anything. Services will still be broadcasted online via **Zoom**. For those interested in participating, please contact the temple at: kannontemplenv@gmail.com to obtain meeting ID and password. Donations can be made through [venmo.com](https://www.venmo.com/@kannontemplenv) to: [@kannontemplenv](https://www.venmo.com/@kannontemplenv).

Izu Persecution and Mother’s Day Service May 9th, 10:30 a.m. (Sun)

On May 12, 1261 Nichiren Shonin was arrested and exiled to Izu Peninsula under the indictment of disturbing the government. Instead of being dropped off on land, he was left on a rock in the bay. As the water rose, he was saved by a fisherman.

This event is considered to be the second of four major persecutions. Nichiren realized that he was living the Lotus Sutra. Let us commemorate this occasion remotely so that we too can live the Lotus Sutra.

May 9th is also Mother’s Day. Nichiren Shonin always stressed filial piety and to show gratitude towards one’s parents. Let us also show our respect to our parents, especially to all mothers on her special day. And let us not forget our fathers on Fathers Day, June 20st.

Memorial Day Service at the Veterans Cemetery

May 31st, 11:00 a.m. (Mon)

May 31st is Memorial Day! This is the day for all Americans to show their respect and appreciation to all soldiers who sacrificed their lives for this country. The Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery is in Boulder City, southeast of Las Vegas. There are several soldiers who are buried there related to our members of Kannon Temple. Social-distancing permitting, we will continue the tradition began by Shokai Kanai Shonin, with Shoda Shonin visiting each one of their tombs to say prayer starting at 11:00 a.m. If you can make time, please come to the cemetery and meet him to pray together.

Nichiren Shu News

In the past, many of you have been receiving hard copies of *Nichiren Shu News* paper along with this newsletter. Due to the current pandemic, physical copies cannot be delivered in time as the Japanese Post Office has suspended mail service to various destinations.

In lieu of the physical copy, please direct your attention to: <http://nichiren-shu.org/news/> to download or view the PDF version. Physical copies may resume once the pandemic subsides.

If you have any questions, please contact the temple.

Electronic Newsletter

If you wish to receive this bi-monthly newsletter electronically, please email temple with your request at kannontemplenv@gmail.com. We are in the process of moving many processes online, which will help reduce temple expense. If you have any questions, please contact the temple.

Receiving a Gohonzon

Shoda Douglas Kanai

For many new followers to Nichiren Shu, they are always curious when they can receive their *Gohonzon*, as it is referenced quite a bit in service and sermons. Newcomers may be thinking, what am I chanting to? Where is my object of veneration?

Other sects may bestow *Gohonzon* right away or only after a short while, as this is needed to focus their chanting. In our tradition though, it may take several months before a new follower will be bestowed their own *Gohonzon*. Why is that? The priest determines the level of participation and dedication from the follower. Are they truly wanting to learn the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Shonin or is this just another passing fad that has peaked someone’s interest at this moment.

Receiving a *Gohonzon* is very special. In Nichiren Shu practice, we do not bestow *Gohonzons* to anyone and everyone. The recipient must show their faith in the Lotus Sutra through their actions and willingness to study. In order to receive a *Gohonzon*, one must pledge to become a member of Nichiren Shu by taking refuge in the Three Treasures: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and vow to uphold the ⇨

⇐Teachings of both Sakyamuni Buddha and Nichiren Shonin. A special ceremony is held where the person makes their vows in front of the altar and the priest conducts an eye-opening ceremony to bring life to the scroll.

Nichiren Shonin, the founder of Nichiren Buddhism, sought an object of devotion for his followers because the statues and mandalas that existed at the time did not represent the Eternal Buddha. To do this, he created a calligraphic description that incorporated concepts from the Lotus Sutra to help guide practitioners on their path to enlightenment. It also represented the ten spiritual realms: Buddha, Bodhisattva, Pratyekabuddha (realization), Sravakas (learning), Heaven, Humanity, Asura (arrogance or anger), Animality (brutality), Hungry Ghost, and Hell.

The *Gohonzon* is a tool to help us focus our minds on the realization that we are all buddhas. As humans, we have a hard time concentrating due to the world's many distractions. An object, such as the *Gohonzon*, can help reel in our "monkey mind" and motivate us to concentrate on the dharma. It will not bestow special powers upon us or grant all our wishes, and it is not a source of idol worship. It is a mirror that reflects our inner-most thoughts.

With proper connection between mind and heart, the new follower can deepen their spiritual progress as they chant towards their own *Gohonzon*, realizing their full buddha-nature potential. If you have yet to receive your *Gohonzon*, please be patient and continue to practice and learn daily. As another priest has said, "The only people who should receive mandalas are the ones who realize that they don't need one in the first place."



From the High Desert, I Bring you Good News!

Far, Far Way to Walk

Shoda Kanai

The other day, I traveled to Salt Lake City, UT to conduct a funeral. Upon arriving at the airport, which was different than what I had remembered as it was completely remodeled.

As this airport is new, I had difficulty trying to find my way to baggage claim. I walked and walked and walked. Then down some escalators and up again, I emerged in another terminal and continued on. I did feel sort of lost as I continued to walk. There were no shortcuts via trams like at the Las Vegas airport, so walking was the only way. I was not sure where the exit was or that if I will ever make it out. This reminds me of our journey through life, especially our practice.

There is an uncertainty if we are on the right path and heading in the right direction. Will we reach the end? We may feel apprehensive, but do not worry. There are signs posted leading you to the right direction. We just have to follow those signs to then end.

What are those signs? They are the Teachings of the Buddha and Nichiren Shonin. They left us clues to help guide those that follow later. What is the biggest sign? That is the *Odaimoku*. We may not feel like we know where we are going, but the *Odaimoku* and the Teachings points to the correct direction. All we have to do is continue to persevere, keep moving forward with our chanting and practice. Eventually we will find the exit.

During the journey, we may also feel that this path is not right for us. That is OK. We find ourselves questioning if this path is correct. This is our inner demon or *Mara* who is trying to steer us off course. Don't be fooled by *Mara*, but know that we have all been lucky to see and touch the Buddha, so we are already on the correct path and can continue forward.



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

676 *shakyo* tracing Chapter 25 of the Lotus Sutra offered, **23,980,000** times of Chanting *Odaimoku* offered, As of April 25, 2021

Thank you very much! Please continue your support.

EVENTS

(Services will be conducted online until it is safe for everyone to meet again)

<u>May</u>		<u>June</u>	
2 nd (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	Monthly Kito Blessing	6 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	Monthly <i>Kito</i> Blessing
9 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	Izu Persecution/Mother's Day	13 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	English Service
16 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	English Service	20 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Shodai-gyo</i> (Chanting Meditation)
23 rd (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Shodai-gyo</i> (Chanting Meditation)	27 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Shakyo</i> Tracing
30 th (Sun) No Service	5th Sunday		
31 st (Mon) 11:00 a.m.	Cemetery Visit in Boulder City		

*** Join in every Wednesday night at 6 p.m. for **Tea Time with a Priest** to have your questions answered. Email temple for zoom ID and password ***

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