

RADIANCE No. 32
March/April, 2013

SACRED WORDS

Regarding all sentient beings, if there is anyone who has yet to abandon ANGER, may they do so; if there is anyone who has yet to abandon GREEDINESS, may they do so; if there is anyone who has yet to abandon DELUTION (stupidity), may they do so. May all sentient beings abandon the one-sided and wicked views of the worldly matters and follow the Middle Way. May all sentient beings keep apart from dust, abandon suffering, and enter the way of Enlightenment.

Quotation from Nichiren Shu Higan Memorial Prayers

Learn to Control Your Mind before Gun Control

Rev. Shokai Kanai

President Obama wishes to pass the Gun Control Bill as a federal law. I wish the law would pass too, but I strongly wish all Americans to learn to control their minds and not to get angry.

Soon after the White House announced the Gun Control Bill, longer lines formed to get into the Las Vegas Gun Show, and the news said that more people than the previous year bought guns and ammunitions because it may be harder to purchase later. The Second Amendment of the United States Constitution protects the right of people to keep and bear arms. The law was passed on December 15, 1771. The Amendment seems to be out of the date, but it is an integral part of American history and spirit, so it is very hard to change. Even if the government restricts the buyers of guns with background checks, people can still buy them on the black market or steal from someone else. Generally speaking, even with such restrictions, people easily get upset and readily pull the trigger.

By the way, Buddhism teaches us to avoid Three Poisons. They are Anger, Greediness and Delusion. Anger is the lowest state of mind and its result will be hell. Hell is not the place where those bad people go after their death. Hell exists in our daily lives not only for those who are bad but also for the victims and their families and societies. The most recent mass shooting incident occurred on December 14th in Newtown, Connecticut at an elementary school, where 26 students and educators were killed. The lives of the family and community have changed. Those parents will never be able to watch their children grow older. Schools may be viewed as not safe. Those children who survived may be traumatized. This is just one example among many. There are victims from gun violence around the world each day.

The second poison is greediness. Greediness is attachment that causes us more suffering. Greediness is the act of Hungry Spirits in our minds such as hunger for money, jewels, fame, position, estate, selfish ideology, etc. Buddhism teaches us to be satisfied with what you have now and to get rid of excessive material possessions. In many cases of gun violence, the root cause is from greediness.

The third poison is delusion or stupidity. Stupidity in Buddhism means ignorance to the Law of Cause and Effect, Three Generations of the Past, Present and Future, and the Law of the Relation between one and others. One's action, thought, and words either good or bad will affect others for many years and many generations. Many people are selfish and do not realize the impact that they have on those around them. I hope that what I write here will affect many people to avoid the Three Poisons for many years to come.

When you are upset, please take a moment and take a big breath. If you can do it, your anger will slowly dissipate. Think of the results that your anger will cause, not just now but later on. Think how your anger affects others and yourself. Do you feel better or not? If you can do that, your anger will disappear. This is easy to say but hard to practice; therefore, Nichiren Shu priests and followers chant the Sacred Title of the Lotus Sutra, "NAMU MYO-HO REN-GE KYO" daily. If you practice every day, your anger will decrease little by little without notice. Anyone can chant, not just practitioners of Nichiren Buddhism. Learn to control your mind is a way to control the gun.

Spring *Hi-gan* Memorial Service **10:30 a.m., March 17 (Sun)**

Hi-gan means the "other shore" (Buddha Land) while *Shi-gan* means "this shore" (worldly land of the material). Nichiren Shu teaches the Buddha Land is not in the far west nor heaven but here with us. The world we can see is this shore while the other shore is the spiritual world that we can see only through our faith. *Higan* Memorial Service is a ceremony to show our appreciation to the deceased in the spiritual world. By offering chanting to our ancestors, they also attain Buddhahood. Buddhism teaches salvation of the living beings and the deceased.

Please write your name and the names of your ancestors on the enclosed prayer-form and send it back to the Kannon Temple of Nevada with your donation. Let us recite the Lotus Sutra and chant the Sacred Title of the sutra together.

At the time of printing, we are not sure the new temple will be ready by then, but the service will be held at the current place if it is not ready.

Tentative Moving Date to the New Kannon Temple

The site of the new Kannon Temple of Nevada is located at 1600 East Sahara Avenue, Las Vegas, just about ten blocks east from the former Sahara Hotel and Casino. It is still in process of renovation. Until the City of Las Vega gives us the Use Permit for Place of Worship, we cannot move in.

March 16th (Sat) is set as the moving day if everything goes as planned. We need many volunteers. Please let Rev. or Mrs. Kanai know if you can help on that day in advance. We will let you know for sure the date later.

Hello from Japan (6)

Rev. Shoda Douglas Kanai

Hello again! It is nice to be back and be able to continue writing to you all. I am pleased to say that I have completed the Nichiren Shu Dai Aragyo-do 100 days special training and be able to walk out of “Zuimon” the entrance/exit gate at Nakayama Hokkekyo-ji.

From November 1st of last year, all I did was chant (recite Ch. 16 over and over) and do water purification 7 times a day (3am, 6am, 9am, 12n, 3pm, 6pm, 11pm). This winter was especially cold as there were 48 days of zero or minus Celsius temperature taken at 6am (6am was the coldest part of the day). The lowest was -5C or 23F, with the average being around -2C (26F) to -3C (28F). Add in two meals a day consisting of “okayu” (rice porridge) and miso soup which was consumed in less than 30 seconds. Sleep was regulated to only 2.5 hours from 12 midnight to 2:30am. The long periods of chanting, the coldness and lack of food and sleep made this ordeal rigorous.

Since this was my first 100 days, the first 35 days was the toughest as this period was dedicated to the purification of the self. The body and mind has yet to adjust to the rigorous training, thus the amount of endurance at times was unfathomable. Add in language and cultural barriers, made my experience that much tougher than everyone else. This type of training may seem like an individual practice, but as I found out early on, one could not do this training alone. I knew many people, but they were all “senpai” or seniors who have already completed their first 100 days. It took a while to form friendships and create a support network amongst all the first year ministers because of strict gap between them and us. After a couple of weeks, with these friendships, I was able to adjust to the strict lifestyle and continue with my chanting.

After 35 days, visitors were welcome to visit but only for 5 minutes. Five minutes in this case is a very short time. In the beginning it was hard to keep to this time as everyone was curious to how I was doing and how I was handling this strict practice. By then my appearance had changed drastically.

Besides long hair and a beard, I lost upwards of 14kg or 30lbs so my face was gaunt. I do not have many friends or temple members in Japan like everyone else, so visits from family members and a few close friends made these visits extra special. To see their smiling faces motivated me to try harder and not give up. These visits also reminded me of all the people back home, cheering me on. Though you could not visit in person, your spirit was with me. I believe that your prayers helped me stay healthy, not get hurt and contribute to my successful completion. I thank everyone one of you.

After finishing the 100 days training, my work was not finished. Next was “kizanshiki” or welcome back celebration. Each minister would leave Dai Aragyō and go on a tour of various temples to conduct special blessing services in their home district. Water purification is the showcase before the service to display the type of rigorous training completed. Traditionally, one could not return home until it was their turn to conduct the service. Therefore, I will not return to Las Vegas until late March. My “kizanshiki” will be held on Sunday March 24th. Please stop by to experience what I went through. Several Dai Aragyō ministers will also assist with the service.

I know this was the toughest, most challenging thing I have done in my life. Besides the punishment I put my body and mind through, I also was able to see how extreme conditions affect others, both good and bad. This surprised me more than anything else. What are you capable of doing when you are hungry, when you are sleepy, when you are cold? The answer may not be to your liking. I am still grappling with this question as I review my experience. It will take some time as I am also trying to recover my health and catch up on much needed rest. In the meantime, I thank you again for all of your support. I could not have successfully completed the 100 day Dai Aragyō alone.

Homecoming Ceremony for Rev. Shoda Kanai and Grand Opening Ceremony for Blessing the New Temple 10:30 a.m. on March 24th

Rev. Douglas Shoda Kanai completed the Nichiren Shu Dai-Aragyō on February 10th together with 134 priests. He will be back to Las Vegas on March 21st together with four fellow priests. The Homecoming Ceremony will be held at the new Kannon Temple on 1600 East Sahara Avenue at 10:30 a.m. on March 24th. The service will be preceded by *sui-gyo* ritual or purification of their bodies and mind with cold water in the back parking lot.

We are very fortunate that the five priests who have just left the monastery bless the new temple and all congregations. Since the capacity of the building is very limited, please let Rev. or Mrs. Kanai know if you would like to attend the ceremony.

A Pot Luck Luncheon will follow after the service, please bring your favorite dish – does not have to be vegetarian. Since there is neither sink nor oven, please bring ready to eat food. Thank you very much for your support!

Even if we do not get the use permit from the city, the ceremony will be held at the current temple. Since capacity is very limited, the ceremony is only for invited guests and private. Sunday service for the public will be held the following Sunday, March 31st.

Buddhist Seminar for Beginners at the new Kannon Temple

April 13th (Sat) 9:30 a.m. to 14th (Sun) noon.

Fee : \$75 including books, material and a vegetarian lunch box

To commemorate the new temple, a Buddhist Seminar for beginners will be held at 1600 East Sahara Avenue with registration starting at 9 a.m. on April 13th. This study course is mainly for beginners to Buddhism. Participants will learn Buddhist manner, new Buddhist terms, introducing Buddhist alter items, brief history of Buddha Sakyamuni, tracing an image of the Buddha, chanting the Sacred Title of the Lotus Sutra, introduction to the sutra, *Shodai-gyo* (chanting and meditation), and life of Nichiren who is a real practitioner of the Lotus Sutra. On Sunday, all participants will attend the Buddha's Birthday Ceremony.

Lecturers are Bishop Shokai Kanai, Douglas Shoda Kanai Shonin, Shogen Kumakura Shonin, and Linda Myokei Canine-Barrett Shonin. The fee is \$75 including materials and vegetarian lunch box on Saturday.

Those who are interested in the seminar, please contact Rev. Kanai at (702)396-6276.

***Setsubun* Soy Beans Donation**

Throwing roasted soy beans is a part of the *Setsubun* Service to chase away evils from our minds. The roasted beans were donated by Miyako Oriental Foods Inc. in Baldwin Park, California through the Las Vegas Mutual Trading Company. Mr. Noritoshi Kanai who is the president of both companies donated the roasted organic beans every year. Since the beans were roasted professionally, everyone enjoys eating them. Thanks to Mr. Noritoshi Kanai for the donation!

Yaeko O'Donnell participated in tossing the beans since she was born in the Year of the Snake.

A Point of View

E-hō-maki

Kumiko Kanai

E-hō-maki (special futomaki shushi roll) is a large, uncut sushi roll that is eaten in the evening on February 3rd (*Setsu-bun*). When you eat it, you must face toward the lucky direction of the New Year according to the yin and yang calendar. The lucky direction in 2013 is south-south-east. You will be lucky throughout the year if you east ① facing toward the lucky direction, ② without speaking, ③ must eat whole roll, ④ make your wishes while you eat, and ⑤ the sushi roll must not be cut otherwise your luck will be cut. The sushi roll must have seven different ingredients for the seven gods of good luck.

Imagine Rev. Kanai and I eating that special large sushi roll facing the lucky direction without talking!

I wish you in good luck and good health throughout the year of 2013.

EVENTS

March

Rev. Shokai Kanai will be at NBIC for NONA President/Vice-P. Seminar from 1st to 3rd

Rev. Shokai Kanai will be in Japan for Nichiren Shu Congress Meeting @ Shumuin from 4th to 8th

Rev. Shokai Kanai will be at Minobusan on 9th and will be back to L.V. on 11th

Morning Chanting (Everyone Welcome) Daily 8:30 a.m.

No Monthly *Okaji* Blessing Ceremony in March

Moving to 1600 E. Sahara Ave. 16th (Sat)

Spring *Higan* Memorial Service 17th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.

Rev. Douglas and his group coming to Vegas 21st (Thu) afternoon

Grand Opening of Kannon Temple and

Rev. Shoda Douglas Homecoming Ceremony 24th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.

Sunday Service 31st (Sun) 10:30 am.

April

Morning Chanting (Everyone Welcome) Daily 8:30 a.m.

Study Class on Nichiren's Kaimokusho Every Wed. 7:30 p.m.

Monthly *Okaji* Blessing 7th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.

Buddhist Seminar for Beginners 13th (Sat) 9:00 a.m. Registration

Buddha's Birthday Ceremony 14th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.

Sunday Service 21st (Sun) 10:30 a.m.

Nichiren Shu Birthday Ceremony 28th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.

Deity Daikoku Blessing

28th (Sun) 1:00 p.m.