

RADIANCE

No. 20 (March 1, 2011)

March/April, 2011

SACRED WORDS

A lady like you, who makes offerings to the *Gohonzon*, should have happiness in this life. In the next life, the *Gohonzon* will stand by you, Lady Nichinyo, and protect you like a lantern in the darkness or a carrier on a steep road. As it is said in chapter 3, “A Parable,” of the *Lotus Sutra*, “Have good friends but abandon friends who are evil.”

Nichiren, *Nichinyo Gozen Gohenji*

Spring *Hi-gan* Memorial Service 10:30 a.m., March 20 (Sun)

Hi-gan means the “other shore” (Buddha Land) while *Shi-gan* means “this shore” (worldly land of the materials.) 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 or mind. By offering our chanting to our ancestors, they cheer us, “Go, Go, Go!” Thus, *Higan* Memorial Service is a ceremony to show our appreciation to the deceased in the spiritual world.

Please write your name and names of your ancestors or their individual names on the prayer form and send it back to the Kannon Temple of Nevada with your donation. Let us chant the Lotus Sutra and Odaimoku together for them.

Buddha’s Birthday

Celebration

Blessing New Born Babies

10:30 a.m. April 10 (Sun)

Happy Birthday to the Buddha Sakyamuni!

According to legend, the baby Buddha, soon after his birth, stood firmly, and walked seven

steps and proclaimed, “From heaven to the earth, I alone am the most honored one!” by pointing his right index finger to heaven and his left index finger to the earth. This legend was based on a recorded document that the Buddha said to a Brahman priest after his enlightenment. Even in the Twenty-first Century today, there is no one like the Buddha.

Although we are far away from the Buddhahood, we try at least to be like the Buddha by faith. Process is more important than the result now.

We welcome anyone to attend the celebration. We will serve sweet tea in signify Buddha’s birth.

New born babies will receive Rev. Kanai’s blessing and amulets.

The Lotus Sutra and Nichiren (No. 2)

Rev. Shokai Kanai

The Teachings of the Lotus Sutra

Rencho (Nichiren’s former name) studied all Buddhist scriptures and other religions in Kamakura, Kyoto, Nara, Mt. Hiei, and Mt. Koya for 14 years. Returning to Kiyosumi Temple, he chanted, for the first time, the sacred title of the Lotus Sutra, “NAMU MYOHOU RENGE KYO,” as he faced the rising sun over the horizon of the Pacific Ocean. To affirm his conviction, he changed his name to NICHI-REN, “Sun-Lotus.” This was April 28, 1253. This is the birthday for Nichiren Buddhism. “Just as the light of the SUN and the moon eliminates all darkness, he will be able to eliminate the darkness of the living beings,” as stated in Chapter 21 of the sutra. And “They are not defiled by worldliness just as the LOTUS is not defiled by water,” as stated in Chapter 15. The teachings of the sutra represent the sun and the lotus, so as Nichiren wished to be like the sun and the lotus to keep pure and brighten the minds of all living beings.

He made three great vows; “I shall be the pillar of Japan (nation), I shall be the eyes of Japan (nation), and I shall be a large vessel of Japan (nation.)” The vows were his firm determinations, so he lived his life according to the vows.

What does the Lotus Sutra teach to make him have such a strong determination?

At first we have to know who Sakyamuni Buddha was. Generally speaking, Sakyamuni left the palace of the Sakya Clan about 2,500 years ago in India, sat at the place of enlightenment not far from the City of Gaya, and attained Enlightenment and became the Buddha. However, the Lotus Sutra says, “To tell the truth, it is many hundreds of thousands of billions of *nayutas* of *kalpas* since I became the Buddha.” The Buddha transcends time and place. He exists eternally

from time immemorial to the eternal future; therefore, he is able to watch us and protect us at any place and any time with his compassion. He is always with us. Thus, he is called the Eternal Buddha.

Another distinguished outstanding teaching of the Lotus Sutra is everyone can be saved and become a Buddha. How are we saved from all sufferings and troubles? Most sutras before the Lotus Sutra revealed that we must quench all desires to become Buddhas or that those who seek salvation only for themselves cannot become Buddhas. However, the Sutra reveals that anyone; the good and the bad, will be saved and become Buddhas. Then some people may say that it is not fair that even evil people are saved. However, the evil can be changed to good, once he or she repents wrong conducts and practices the teachings of the Lotus Sutra.

All of us have some sort of worry, annoyance, or sufferings. People often say, “Why do only I suffer?” and blame others or society. But the Buddha teaches us our sufferings and worries are created by each individual. The causes of sufferings are the Three Poisons (greediness, anger, and ignorance to the Universal Truth). The troubles in a family, a society, and between countries are caused by these three poisons. How can we eliminate these poisons? The Buddha says the wisdom to see things as they are and compassion toward everything around us will bring forth liberation from all sufferings and troubles. Originally we have minds of compassion and wisdom to live together in harmony; therefore, we just need to brush them up. “Have wisdom and be nice to others!” It is easy to say that, but hard to practice them. But the sutra says we will be saved when we take the remedy of essence of the Lotus Sutra that is “Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.” We will be protected by the Eternal Buddha.

Thus, the Lotus Sutra emphasizes the existence of the Eternal Buddha and the potentiality for everyone to become a Buddha.

Setsubun Soy Beans Donation

We held the *Setsubun* Service on February 6. Throwing roasted soy beans is a part of the Service to chase away evils from our minds. A box full of beans was 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 organically grown beans last year and this year. Since the organic beans were roasted professionally, everyone enjoys eating them. Some people requested two or three bags. Thank you very much for the donation!

Ericka Manasewitsch and Howard Epstein participated in tossing the beans as they are born in the Year of the Rabbits, while Nicholas and June put devil face

Donation of Altar Items

When we move our temple to a new location in a commercial zone, we need many altar items. Rev. Shokai Kanai buys a piece every year and donates to Kannon Temple of Nevada. At the end of last year, Mrs. Frances Furuya donated two stands for a Buddhist cymbals and gong. The donation was made in Memory of the Late Richard Furuya who passed away on October 23, 2009. These musical instruments are used when we have big services like *Higan* and *Obon* Memorial Services. Thank you very much for the donation.

A Point of View

Groundhog Day, “Spring is here soon!”

Kumiko Kanai

Groundhog Day is February 2nd and celebrated across the United States and Canada. This is a purely North American tradition. On the second day of February, I was watching TV. “Spring is here soon!”

This is based on belief that on this day the groundhog, or woodchuck, comes out its hole after winter hibernation to look for its shadow.

If the shadow is seen, it’s a sunny day. And the groundhog foretells ‘six more weeks of bad weather’ and thus a lingering winter. But spring is coming if no shadow is seen because of clouds. The groundhog then behaves accordingly. It goes back into the hole if the weather turns bad, but stays above ground if spring is near.

Only ten times in the last 125 years have the groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil, predicted on early spring!

Loud Voce

Rev. Shoda Douglas Kanai

Over these past few months, I have noticed that when I chant, I am able to project my voice. I remember being told from very little to “chant very loud” in *shami-ko* school in Japan, at that time, it almost amounted to yelling and quickly the voice goes as the vocal chords are stressed.

So I never really tried to chant very loud. I also was told that in order to chant loud, this comes from the stomach, meaning the energy comes from deep within instead of from the chest. This tends to be difficult without practice and quickly the chanting reverts back to chanting from the throat as the volume is told to increase. So it comes as a surprise that this loud voice is coming out of my mouth as I have not specifically practiced to project my voice. The loud voice might have come from a special awakening.

When I am able to chant loud, I feel as though I am sending the characters of the Lotus Sutra to the heavens so that everyone in the spiritual realm can hear and rejoice in the words. Besides those in heaven, my loud voice also sends out positive energy to those in the congregation who may need extra blessing. They feel the power resonating within their bodies and helps uplift them. Sometimes the loudness may come as a shock to some people but soon the warm feeling overtakes any misgivings previously held.

I try my best to maintain my loud tone. Sometimes I still revert back to chanting from the chest so I stress my vocal chords. This may be that I am trying too hard. With less stress, the voice will flow naturally. This means I have continued practice ahead of me to be able to chant loudly all the time. Maybe I should seek voice lessons, specifically for the opera. Those singers can project various tones in an auditorium so all can hear. In the meantime, will you join me in chanting loud?

EVENTS

March

Morning Chanting (Everyone Welcome)	Daily 7:00 a.m.
Monthly Blessing Ceremony	7 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Shodai-gyo (Chanting & Meditation)	13 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Deity <i>Daikoku</i> Blessing	16 th (Wed) 10:30 a.m.
Spring <i>Higan</i> Memorial Service	20 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Service	27 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Study Class on the Lotus Sutra	Wednesdays 7:30 p.m. (No Class on 9 th)
Private Japanese Language Class	Fridays 1:30 p.m. (No Class on 11 th & 18 th)
Rev. Shokai Kanai will visit Japan for a meeting on March 6 th ~ 14 th .	
Rev. Shokai Kanai will visit Toronto and N.Y. on March 26 th ~ 28 th .	

April

Morning Chanting (Everyone Welcome)	Daily 7:00 a.m.
Monthly Blessing Ceremony	3 rd (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Buddha's Birthday Celebration & Blessing New Born Baby	10 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Shodai-gyo (Chanting & Meditation)	17 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.

Sun Worshipping Service & Picnic at Sunset Park

(Birthday of Nichiren Shu)

24th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.

Study Class on the Lotus Sutra

Wednesdays 7:30 p.m.

Private Japanese Language Class

Fridays 1:30 p.m.