



# RADIANCE

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March/April 2021

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## SACRED WORDS

*If we believe in the merit of “Namu Myoho Renge Kyo,” Sakyamuni Buddha will be conceived in our hearts before we know it, just as a woman is pregnant before she knows it. We cannot feel it in the beginning, but as the months pass we begin dreaming of the Buddha residing in our hearts, until we feel happiness within us.*

Nichiren Shonin—*Matsuno-dono Nyobo Gohenji*

### COVID-19 Update

Even with restrictions loosening, Kannon Temple will remain closed to continue the safety of our followers. Services will still be broadcasted online on **zoom**. For those interested in participating, please contact the temple at: [kannontemplenv@gmail.com](mailto:kannontemplenv@gmail.com) to obtain meeting ID and password.

We have also created an electronic payment option in addition to check/cash. Please create a **venmo.com** account and send donation to: [@kannontemplenv](https://www.venmo.com/@kannontemplenv). Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

### Spring Higan Memorial Service Mar. 21<sup>st</sup>, 10:30 a.m. (Sun)

*Higan* means the “other shore” (Buddha Land) while *Shigan* means “this shore” (worldly land of the material). The world we can see is “this shore” while the “other shore” is the spiritual realm that we can see only through our faith. *Higan* Memorial Service is held to show our appreciation to those in the “other shore” by offering our chanting so that our ancestors can attain Buddhahood.

Please write your name and family names of your ancestors or their individual names on the enclosed prayer form and return to Kannon Temple of Nevada with your donation. Let us chant the sutra and *Odaimoku* together for them.

### Buddha’s Birthday Celebration Blessing New Born Babies Apr. 4<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 a.m. (Sun)

Happy Birthday to Sakyamuni Buddha!

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 means the Buddha is the only person who has attained such precepts, meditation and good roots of virtue. It also means there is no person just like you in this world who have the same appearance, character, and karma. Therefore, you are the most honored one as well as any other person.

This year, I will pour the sweet tea in honor of his birth for everyone.

Newborn babies will receive Shoda Kanai Shonin’s blessing and special amulets. Please let him know the name of any new born baby ahead of time.

### 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.

### Hina Matsuri

March 3rd is *Hina Matsuri* or Girl’s Day. This is the time to display special dolls representing the Imperial Court and coming of spring. I may create a small display at the temple.



### What is Faith?

Shoda Douglas Kanai

I have been asked this question recently from a couple different people. There is no simple answer. Merriam-Webster defines faith as, “Something that is believed especially with strong conviction, especially: a system of religious beliefs.”

In trying to teach Buddhism in the West, it becomes difficult in explaining certain concepts as it is not easy to comprehend. If I say, “There is no phenomena.” Well, what does that mean? (Nothing exists wholly by itself.) With our western way of thinking, we want definitive answers to our questions. We are always searching to find out why and the reason. When we do not know the answer, we are confused. We seek answers anywhere we can, even if it is misleading and false.

Try as we might if we do not understand, it is easy to quit, find another path that is easier or no path at all. Many people do start Buddhism but do not finish. They stop halfway through and think that they had not developed their faith. They believe that faith stems from understanding from the mind and when they do not comprehend, Buddhism is something that they ⇨

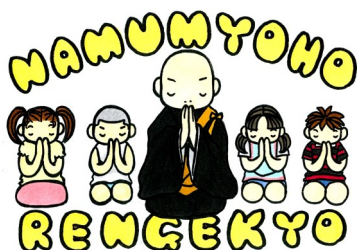
⇐ think is not right for them. These people are mistaken.

Though we may think we do not understand, thus have no faith, we actually do. It is through the *Odaimoku* that our faith develops. Read this month's SACRED WORDS carefully. The Buddha develops within us as we continue to chant the *Odaimoku*. It will take some time before we know this, just as a woman does not know she is pregnant at first, but later her body will let her know.

Faith is developed first from the inside, from our sub-conscious then moves to our conscious minds. When we are re-introduced to the Lotus Sutra, we are reactivating our inner Buddha. It has been lying dormant for many, many years, thus will take some time to warm up. As we are warming up, we may feel uncertain, just like being groggy when we just wake up.

As we all continue to warm up, the uncertainty recedes and our understanding of the Dharma through our mind will develop. Difficult concepts will turn to easy concepts. From here our faith deepens as we begin to see the deeper meaning contained within the Lotus Sutra that we had not realized before. Our "eureka" moments will continue as we grow to fully incorporate the Dharma within our daily lives.

There may be days when we question ourselves if we are even on the path set forth by Sakyamuni Buddha. Yes of course! Just by being able to read this newsletter, attending weekly services, and join study class, everyone has faith in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, which are the Three Treasures. Just continue to practice and learn daily. This is all part of building your faith. The day will come when you doubt no more.



**New Building Fund** commemorating the 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Nichiren Shonin's Birth

664 *shakyo* tracing Chapter 25 of the Lotus Sutra offered, **23,950,000** times of Chanting *Odaimoku* offered, As of February 25, 2021

*Thank you very much! Please continue your support.*

## From the High Desert, I Bring you Good News! **Why is There a Large Taiko at the Temple?**

Shoda Kanai

Before the pandemic, everyone participated in chanting *Odaimoku* with the large drum (*oh-daiko*) and little handheld drum (*uchiwa-taiko*). I believe everyone enjoyed hitting their drum.



Why do we use drums? Going back in history, early humans created various instruments from wood, bone, and stone to make music and communicate. Then someone had the idea to pull tanned animal hide over a cylinder, making the beginning of the modern drum.

Drums were mainly used for ritual purposes. There is a hypnotic effect from the sound and feeling of the beat. Maybe this is like feeling our own heartbeat, enforcing that we are alive.

Later on, with advancements in drumheads, the sound could carry further, thus used as a communication tool. Villages could send messages between each other without sending a messenger. This led to war drums that can communicate positions and movement on a chaotic battlefield.

The sound of the drums can reach faraway places. Could this also mean places that we cannot see such as *Higan* "the other shore?" Yes. The drums that we use at temple are a way for us to reach those who are not here in this realm. Our chanting voice rides on those beats to reach our ancestors. The beat also helps those who are lost in this realm find the temple so that they can hear the True Dharma and be saved. It is a beacon of light that attracts those who seek salvation.

Even during these trying times as everyone cannot come to the temple to hit *tai-ko*, let us find other ways to communicate, such as clapping our hands. In this way our chanting can be boosted so that we can reach our ancestors and save all those who are not in this realm.



## EVENTS

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

<u>March</u>		<u>April</u>	
7 <sup>th</sup> (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	Monthly Kito Blessing	4 <sup>th</sup> (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Hanamatsuri</i> (Buddha's Birthday)
14 <sup>th</sup> (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	English Service	11 <sup>th</sup> (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	English Service
21 <sup>st</sup> (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Ohigan</i> Memorial Service	18 <sup>th</sup> (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Kishimojin</i> Kito Blessing
28 <sup>th</sup> (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Shodai-gyo</i> (Chanting Meditation)	25 <sup>th</sup> (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Shodai-gyo</i> (Chanting Meditation)

\*\*\* 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 \*\*\*