



RADIANCE

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September/October 2016

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SACRED WORDS

To sum up, all the teachings of the Tathāgata, all the unhindered, supernatural powers of the Tathāgata, all the treasury of the hidden core of the Tathāgata, and all the profound achievements of the Tathāgata are revealed and expounded explicitly in this sutra.

Lotus Sutra, Chapter XXI—The Supernatural Powers of the Tathāgatas (p. 300)

Tastunokuchi Persecution Service September 11th, **10:30 a.m. (Sun)**

The fourth of Four Major Persecutions in St. Nichiren's life. On the night of September 12, 1271, St. Nichiren was arrested and sentenced for execution. Miraculously he escaped death when a "bright light" shot across the sky, frightening everyone. Later he was exiled to Sado Island instead, where he began to create some of his greatest treatises.

Please come join us to commemorate this important event.

Autumn O-higan Service Sept. 18th, **10:30 a.m. (Sun)**

The autumn equinox is the time to commemorate our ancestors. This is the time of equal parts day and night, thus the veil for this world and the "other shore" is close. Our chanting of the Lotus Sutra and *Odaimoku* can readily reach our ancestors to help them reach enlightenment. Please join us for this special service by writing down your ancestor's names on the included form and send back to the Kannon Temple with your donation.

Oeshiki Memorial Service Oct. 16th, **10:30 a.m. (Sun)**

On the morning of October 13th, 1282, our founder Nichiren Shonin entered into *parinirvana* after spreading the teaching of the Lotus Sutra for many difficult years. We are holding the 735th Memorial Service for him. Let us join our hands together in *gassho* to show our appreciation towards him for the lessons that he has taught and the gift he has left, which is the *Odaimoku*.

All of Buddha's Teachings Rev. Shoda Douglas Kanai

Recently I was asked about the difference between Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism, specifically Nichiren Buddhism. Here is my response.

Theravada Buddhism follow the precepts that their dharma (mainly Pali Canon) is the direct words spoken by Sakyamuni Buddha which were later written down. Since these are his exact words, they are golden and should be followed. There are many parables and stories that help to explain Buddha's teachings. This is more ↗

monastery based teaching, where only high monks can attain arhatship, which is the cessation of birth and death; nirvana. For lay people, their only hope is to make offerings to the monasteries in order to create good karma so maybe the next life will be a better one.

The other school is Mahayana Buddhism which emerged around 1-2 CE out of northern India/Pakistan/Afghanistan. This teaching expands on Theravada to begin including lay people in their ability to attain nirvana. The concept of everyone being a bodhisattva begins to appear. This teaching spread north through China, Korea, Japan and parts of Southeast Asia.

Some argue that Mahayana sutras are not authentically spoken by the Buddha, as many sutras begin with "Thus I have heard." I say that Mahayana sutras were taught by the Buddha, but not written down right away. It was still difficult to comprehend thus only spread in certain monasteries and universities. Later, when the people's understanding grew, did the Mahayana sutras begin to make sense and was thus written down to be preserved. Mahayana sutras are the next step in the evolution of understanding. There is more to just ending the cycle of birth and death (nirvana).

With the Lotus Sutra and along with St. Nichiren's teachings, the ultimate goal is to become a buddha yourself and that anyone, good or bad, male or female, human or animal can become a buddha. Going from a select few (monks) who can be saved vs. everyone. Now that is progress! The teachings are very contemporary. This what Buddha wanted to share from moment he attained enlightenment, but took many steps, lessons and time in order to do so.

Though the Lotus Sutra is the highest truth, I still use various stories from Pali Canon and incorporate it into my teachings. Some schools get into the thought that their sutra is the best and can best explain Buddha's teachings. No, we have to use all of Buddha's teachings. He left us many examples to use "to speak to the level of understanding" of the listener. Thus many of the earlier parables are easier to understand as well as fit into a message that I want to convey. St. Nichiren in his writings references many other sutras to validate and express his point. Without understanding of those other sutras, it is difficult to understand the context of what he said. To make it easier on us, St. Nichiren created the *Odaimoku, Namu Myoho Renge Kyo* as an expedient so that we can capture the essence of all of Buddha's teachings without going through the arduous study of Theravada and Mahayana sutras, as the Lotus Sutra captures it all. Thus faith is more important than understanding by mind. Understanding will come later as faith increases, naturally as we being to comprehend the Wonderful Dharma.

My View Point (As I heard and as I see)

The Bar Counter

Kumiko Kanai

Thousands of the people visit Las Vegas from around the world every day.

Some of them have visited the Kannon Temple of Nevada from out of states and countries such as Japan, Canada, Italy and Brazil. Since McCarran International Airport is only 20 minutes away from the temple, we usually picked them up at the airport and brought them to the temple first before taking them to their hotels.

Because they stayed at different hotels, I could see many different hotels in Las Vegas. Although I do not drink, I often approached quietly to the bars in the hotels and checked the thickness of the counter. The counters are mostly made of wood or marble and the thickness are about six inches.

The reason why I check the thickness of the bar counter is that a Japanese song writer, *Toyohisa Araki* once said in his essay, *Sake and Music in Daily Life*, "Do you know why the thickness of the bar counter is about 15 to 20 centimeters? It is because the counters are the places for men to set the heavy loads of their minds from their daily lives. So the counter must be able to hold the heavy weight. The men carry heavy load of things to do daily although they do not say in voice. The bars are the place for them to rest a while. It is man's manner. When we were young, we sometimes act unreasonably, but after we have many experiences in our lives, we drink smarter."

Let me relate what he said to our temple. When someone comes to our place with heavy load, we wish that the temple is the place for them to rest peacefully. No alcohol is served, but I try to continue to give advice in order to release them from their daily burden.

If you have a chance, try to check the thickness of the counter of a bar.



Why Do I need Religion?

Rev. Shokai Kanai

"Why do I need religion?" Someone gave me an assignment to write in dream I had about a couple weeks ago. This someone was not like a supreme being. He was just a man at a window in an office. I awoke up soon after the dream.

"Religion is just like air for me," the answer came out in my mind soon after being asked the question. I was born as a son of a Nichiren Shu priest, so I had been raised to hear my father's chanting the Lotus Sutra and its sacred title, "*Namu MyoHo RenGe Kyo*" since the first day of my birth.

When I was in elementary school, my father told me to become a priest. I tried to be an obedient son and tried to memorize "Verses for Opening the Sutra" and "Hobenpon" of Chapter 2 of the Lotus Sutra.

However, when I was in my early teens, I wished to be a pilot because of my dream to go out of Japan to see the world. A friend of mine in the middle school who took lessons of flying a glider told me, "You cannot be a pilot because you are near-sighted." Then, I wished to be a diplomatic officer in foreign affairs, so I might have a chance to see the world. In my high school age, in order to learn English conversation for free, I went to a Christian church where an American evangelist from Alabama taught the Bible in English. While I commuted to the church for over two years, I thought at that time, Christianity was so fresh and easy to understand comparing what I know about Buddhism.

When I was at college, I took many classes on the doctrine and history of Buddhism and Nichiren Shu. There, I realized how I was ignorant on Buddhism. I learned that Buddhism is for everyone around the world regardless the age, the race, the era and the place. It teaches the reasons why I was born, am alive, get sick and die. It teaches the relationship with human beings, plants, animals, air, water, everything in the universe. It also teaches how to establish world peace, happiness of the people and society. It is "To live Together and Prosper Together." We are all inter-related. This is called "縁" (EN). Our appearance and disappearance depends on others. Not only human beings but we also live together with all other beings. When we appreciate it, we and others prosper.

Many people forget how much our lives depend on the air, water, food, land, other people and the universe. My religion is Buddhism. Therefore, religion is just like air and milk or water for me since I was born.

New Building Fund commemorating the 800th Anniversary of St. Nichiren's Birth
\$78,860.79

467 *shakyo* tracing Chapter 25 of the Lotus Sutra offered,
17,040,000 times of Chanting *Odaimoku* offered,
As of August 22, 2016

Thank you very much! Please continue your support.

EVENTS

<u>September</u>		<u>October</u>	
4 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	Monthly <i>Kito</i> Blessing	2 nd (Sun) No Service	Seattle Church 100 th Anniversary
11 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Tatsunokuchi</i> Persecution	9 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	Monthly <i>Kito</i> Blessing
18 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	Autumn <i>Ohigan</i> Service	16 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	<i>Oeshiki</i> Memorial Service
25 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)
		30 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.	English Service (Chapter 18)

- Kanai Family will visit the Seattle Nichiren Buddhist Church to commemorate their 100th Anniversary from September 30th (Fri) to October 2nd (Sun)

*** Those interested in Study Class & Counseling, please contact the temple to make arrangements ***