

RADIANCE

No. 18 (November 1, 2010)

November/December, 2010

SACRED WORDS

One Volume of the Lotus Sutra contains 28 chapters and 69,384 *kanji* characters. Each chapter contains the Buddha's body. Each phrase has equal value with "Myo-Ho-Ren-Ge-Kyo." This sutra condenses all other Buddha Dharma; therefore, each character of this sutra is truly a manifestation of the Eternal Buddha, and the teachings of the Buddha truly benefits all living beings. Once you hear a phrase or a word of this sutra, even if you have not practiced the Six Paramitas, the Paramitas appear naturally in one's action.

Nichiren, *Selected Phrase from the Lotus Sutra*

WAY OF BODHISATTVAS

Rev. Shokai Kanai

The Way of Bodhisattvas is revealed in many chapters of the Lotus Sutra.

December 8th is the Bodhi Day when Gautama Siddhartha of Kapilavastu Kingdom attained Enlightenment and became Sakyamuni Buddha as a human being. Everyone is able to become a Buddha that is based on the three doctrines in the Lotus Sutra: ①people belonging to lesser vehicles will also become Buddhas, ②the Eternal Buddha exists, and ③the three thousand realms are contained in one thought. The way of Bodhisattva is for us to chant the sacred title of the sutra, "Namu Myo-Ho Ren-Ge-Kyo."

Nichiren Daishonin says in *Sen Hokekyo* that the Lotus Sutra contains eight chapters and over 69,000 characters. Each character is a manifestation of the Eternal Buddha; therefore, it benefits all living beings. Even if you have not practiced the Six Paramitas intentionally, you are practicing them without knowing.

The Six Paramitas are ①giving something to others, ②keeping rules and precepts, ③becoming patient, ④devoting oneself to Buddhist practices, ⑤having a calm mind, and ⑥having wisdom. These practices are for Bodhisattvas, you and me, who practice Buddhism.

When you practice the way of Bodhisattva, by chanting "Namu Myo-Ho-Ren-Ge-Kyo," it is the same function as with the Buddha; in other words, we are able to lead others to better ways.

By chanting, not only can you improve yourself but also improve your children, siblings, and people around you. Do you know why? It is because everyone has Buddha Nature, the potential to become Buddhas. When you chant “Namu Myo-Ho-Ren-Ge-Kyo,” you act in the Six Paramitas without knowing.

For example, when you chant, it is offering to the Buddha, the Gohonzon, your deceased parents and ancestors. You build up great virtue by doing so. Then, they will watch above you and protect you. When you chant, your bad karma will be eliminated little by little, and you will become less angry. Because your mind will become calmer, you will have good wisdom to help others. Because you help others and are less angry, you are able to influence others. As a result you will accumulate more virtues.

The way of Bodhisattva is to chant “Namu Myo-Ho-Ren-Ge-Kyo.” It is our vow to follow the teachings in the Lotus Sutra and to follow the rules of our society. In turn, the Buddha and deities vow to protect us. Thus, we are able to help others without knowing just like the Buddha.

Bodhi Day Service

Dec. 19, Sunday

10:30 a.m.

We will celebrate Buddha’s Enlightenment Day with candle lights. We place a homemade bodhi tree near the altar. A Buddha statue sits under the tree. All attendees offer candle lights.

Since this will be the last Sunday service of the year, we will have the yearend potluck luncheon. Please bring your favorite food.

Las Vegas Marathon

Dec. 5th

This will be our third year to pass cups of water at the 23rd mile of the Las Vegas Marathon. It will start at 6:00 a.m. on December 5th. Please contact Kannon Temple of Nevada if you can volunteer early in the morning.

Note:

The Sunday Monthly Blessing will be held at 1:00 p.m. on that day!

The Year End Chanting

7:30 p.m.

On New Year's Eve

The New Year's Eve Service will start at 7:30 p.m. on December 31. This is to show gratitude to the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, Gohonzon, deities, ancestor, and all those around us throughout the year 2010.

After chanting, each attendant will hit a tiny temple bell a total of 108 times to say good-bye to the year, followed by eating *soba* noodle which signifies our long life.

Introspection

Rev. Shoda Douglas Kanai

As the weather turns yet again towards winter, this is a good time to relax and look inwards. Spring and summer are times of growth and renewal. These are times when we go out and give ourselves and our time to others. We share our knowledge and our accumulated merits to help better those around us and the community. There comes a time when our knowledge and merits needs a boost. In order to recharge our batteries, fall/winter is a good time to slow down and focus on the self.

Fall/winter is usually cold, stormy and not pleasant to be outside. We mainly stay indoors. Use this indoor time wisely to further expand our knowledge of the Lotus Sutra and other areas that we do not understand. Also, take the time to look deeply within yourself and ask, "Am I following the Way of Bodhisattva?" "Have I done our best?" "Have I contributed in a positive way?" "Have we come closer in achieving Enlightenment?" Answers to these questions are not simple. We must think long and hard before creating an answer.

As we sit in meditation to search for the answers, try chanting the Lotus Sutra. By chanting, this helps clear the mind and rejuvenate the spirit. I have been told many times that chanting the Sutra is a form of mediation, especially when reading in *shindoku* (reading of the Chinese characters in Japanese). There is a natural rhythm when reading each character. But when chanting in English, just reading does not lead to rhythm. By chanting English broken out by syllables, you get a rhythm. This rhythm is the source of the meditation. It has a way of putting you at ease so that you will be able to focus on the words instead of having your mind wander. This is the focus that will help bring about self realization.

As the seasons move towards dormancy, we too should look inwards to better improve ourselves. Through our practice of chanting not only the Odaimoku, but also the Lotus Sutra, helps us better understand the Buddha's Teachings and how we can prepare to be Bodhisattvas. By spring, we will be able to go forward and be a better person.

A Point of View **The Benefits of Being Bilingual**

Kumiko Kanai

A lifetime of speaking two or more languages appears to pay off in old age, with recent research showing the symptoms of dementia can be delayed by an average of four years in bilingual people.

Multilingualism doesn't delay the onset of dementia – the brain of people who speak multiple languages still show physical signs of deterioration – but the process of speaking two or more languages appears to enable people to develop skills to better cope with the early symptoms of memory-robbing diseases, including Alzheimer's.

“Speaking two languages isn't going to do anything to ‘dodge the bullet’ of getting Alzheimer's disease or dementia, says Ellen Bialystok, a bilingualism researcher at York University in Toronto. “But greater cognitive reserve means the same as the reserve tank in a car. Once the brain runs out of fuel, it can go a little farther,” she says.

In a subsequent study, Dr. Bialystok and her colleagues looked at brain images of monolingual and bilingual Alzheimer's patients of the same age and stage of disease. They found that the brains of the bilingual people appeared to be in worse physical condition.

This suggests that bilingualism does not delay the disease process itself, but rather helps bilingual individual better handle memory deficits, Dr. Bialystok says.

(From the Wall Street Journal 10/12/2010)

EVENTS

November

Monthly <i>Kito</i> Blessing Ceremony	7 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Deity Daikoku Blessing	10 th (Wed) 10:30 p.m.
Komatsubara Persecution Day Service	14 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Shodaigyo (Chanting & Meditation)	21 st (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
(No Sunday Service on 28 th)	
25th ~ 28th: Rev. Kanai's Family Reunion in Seattle, WA	

Morning Chanting (Everyone is Welcome) Daily 7:15 a.m.
Shakyo Class Tue. (2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd) 10:00 a.m.
Private Japanese Lesson Tue. (2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd) 5:00 p.m.
Reading the Lotus Sutra Wed. (3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th) 7:30 p.m.

December

Las Vegas Marathon Volunteering 5th (Sun) 6:00 a.m.
Monthly *Kito* Blessing Ceremony 5th (Sun) 1:00 p.m.
Shodaigyo (Chanting & Meditation) 12th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Bodhi Day Service 19th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Year End Potluck Luncheon 19th (Sun) after the service
(No Sunday Service on 26th)
New Year's Eve Chanting 31st (Fri) 7:30 p.m.

Morning Chanting (Everyone is Welcome) Daily 7:15 a.m.
Shakyo Class Tue. (7th, 14th, 21st) 10:00 a.m.
Private Japanese Lesson Tue. (7th, 14th, 21st) 5:00 p.m.
Reading the Lotus Sutra Wed. (1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd) 7:30 p.m.