

RADIANCE #21

May/June, 2011

SACRED WORDS

You should convert yourself to the faith in the Right Law of the True Vehicle at once. Then this world will all become a Buddha-Land. How can the Buddh-Land decay? The worlds of the ten quarters will become a treasure-world. How can a treasure-world be destroyed? If our country does not decay, and is not destroyed, we shall be safe and peaceful. Believe my words; treasure them!”

Nichiren-Rissho Ankoku Ron

The Lotus Sutra and Nichiren (No. 3)

Rev. Shokai Kanai

(Continued from the Last Issue)

Establishment of the Righteousness and Security of the Nation

Here again we must go back to Nichiren Shonin who entrusted his entire life to the Lotus Sutra. The 13th century was just the beginning of *mappo* or the Declining Latter Age of the Dharma (from 2,000th year after Sakyamuni Buddha’s death to 10,000th year). This is the period when doctrine alone is still alive, but there is neither practice nor enlightenment. But this is the time for the true teachings to be revealed. Nichiren sought how to save all these suffering people. The Lotus Sutra is hard for people to believe and hard to practice. We live in the era of *mappo* when there is no salvation. Nichiren’s answer was to spread the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and the simple method of chanting the sacred title of the sutra or *Odaimoku*, “Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.” The *Odaimoku* is the remedy for us to cure the blindness to the truth. It contains all merits of the Eternal Buddha; therefore, if you take this remedy, you will receive Buddha’s wisdom and compassion, thus you will be liberated from sufferings and

troubles.

Nichiren reached his strong determination to spread the sutra and led people to chant the *Odaimoku*. His first sermon was at Kiyosumi Temple at noon on April 28, 1253. However no one had ears to listen to him, instead he was almost be-headed by a local police chief who had strong belief and faith in Pure-Land Sect. Then Nichiren traveled to the city of Kamakura where political capital of Japan resided at that time.

Although there were many huge temples of different denominations and many famous priests who lived in the temples, they maintained their positions in the Kamakura Government since the government built these temples for the priests to pray for the security of Japan. The original task of Buddhism to save suffering people was forgotten. Because of the many natural disasters, diseases, and starvation, they gave up life on this earth and looked for rebirth in the Pure-Land. There, Nichiren stood at crossroad of Kamakura and preached that we should be saved while we are still alive and expounded the teachings of the Lotus Sutra.

In order to be saved while we are still alive, we must change the government authority's thinking. For Nichiren, these constant disasters were an indication that something was not done right. Unless something was done to end the present calamities and to avert similar disasters in the future, more downfalls were soon to come. He researched all Buddhist doctrines to find the solution to save the county. Finally the quest for peace was set forth clearly in *Rissho Ankoku Ron*.

Nichiren presented this petition to the Kamakura Government. It states, "The government and the people are standing against the Right Law. They believe wrong teachings. Therefore, gods have deserted this country, and saints who protect the people have left us." He continues, "The peace of our country will be realized if slanderers of the Right Law are eliminated and keepers of the Right law are respected." According to Nichiren the slanderers of the Right Law are those priests who threw away the Lotus Sutra and emphasized on being born in the Pure-land and those priests who neglected the Lotus Sutra but prayed for the security of Japan with other sutras which do not reveal righteousness. He predicted quoting *Medicine-Master Sutra*, "Five of seven disasters predicted in the sutra have already taken place, leaving just two still to occur; foreign invasions and civil wars." His petition concluded, "You should promptly discard your false faith, and take up the true teaching of the Lotus Sutra at once. Then this triple world of the unenlightened will all become Buddha-Land."

By the way, Eastern Japan was hit with a 9.0 earthquake and tsunami on March 11th, furthermore, with the nuclear power plants out of commission, and radiation leak made people worry not only in the affected area but also around the world.

I believe these natural disasters were a warning for Japanese people to practice righteousness. It was a warning from gods of Japan. According to Japanese mythology, Izanagi and Isanami, were believed to have created the islands of Japan by dipping a jeweled spear into the sea as they stood on the Floating Bridge of Heaven.

In the 13th Century Japan, Nichiren Shonin, wrote in *Rissho Ankoku Ron*, "Reasons for the natural disasters like earthquake, the tidal waves, famine and disease were indication that something were not done right. God and saints have abandoned this country, and devils and heretics have created calamities. ... The peace of our country will be realized if the slanderers of the Right Law are eliminated and the keepers of the Right Law are respected."

Recently, majority of the Japanese people lost value of their culture and tradition. They do not honor their national flag; do not sing their national anthem at school. They become more self-centered and very materialistic. Some honest people in Japan worry and say that China may invade Japan like what happened to Tibet in 1959. Japanese people are too naïve to protect their own country. Japan depends on the U.S. Military for her security but they try to cut the security treaty between the two countries. Japanese seem to lose loyalty to their mother land. Former ambassador to Japan, Dr. Edwin Reischauer, said that United States sent 500,000 soldiers to Vietnam; America could not protect South Vietnam as long as the people in South Vietnam had no loyalty to protect their own country.

It is now for all Japanese to unite in one spirit to arise again. I heard that many people cancelled their overseas travels and held back any joyful events these days. We wish victims and devastated areas in Eastern Japan will be better than before and have happier life in the near future.

No More Service at the Kannon Temple of Nevada?

“No church worship in residential district” is common in American society. Since Rev. Shokai Kanai has opened a new temple in Las Vegas over three years ago, there were no complaints. In order to expound the Lotus Sutra and Odaimoku; he placed a banner of the temple name and Sunday service advertisement in front of his house. A few weeks later two Code Enforcement Specialists came and gave us a Notice of Violation.

Now we are in the process of obtaining a use permit. We had to turn in many documents to Clark County; as a result, we are scheduled to present our case to the Town Board Meeting and Planning Commission Meeting to seek approval. Even if we are successful in being granted a use permit, we cannot change the appearance of the residential house and we are not able to have regular worship or scheduled services.

We need your help in purchasing a new building with enough space for parking to be able to meet the county codes.

We sincerely request your support of any amount towards the building fund. In the meantime we are still continuing *Shakyo* as part of the building fund donation. We wish to celebrate the Fifth Anniversary and Open Temple in fall, 2012.

In the interim, we will continue to have Dharma Discussions on Sundays at the same place as usual until we are able to move to a new location.

STUDYING AND PRACTICING

Rev. Douglas Shoda Kanai

As part of the process of growing up we have to go to school. In America you are only required to go to school until the age of 16, other places even younger. Growing up, school did not seem fun and seemed more like a chore. Why do I need to study and learn English, arithmetic and science? This knowledge would be useless later in life. These thoughts and feelings are common with school age children. It is only until when they are adults that, indeed, what they learned in school is extremely useful. Without this basic knowledge, we will not be able to find a good job and provide for ourselves and our families. Those who drop out of school will find it difficult to provide for them. Many people do not want to face the truth that education is extremely vital and always continuing.

This is the same with studying Buddhism. There are many sutras of varying difficulty. The Lotus Sutra was thought in the last eight years of Sakyamuni Buddha's life; therefore, this teaching is more for the advanced followers. To fully comprehend the Lotus Sutra takes many years of study and practice. Many times it is written to Keep, Read, Recite, Expound and Copy the Lotus Sutra. It is advised that everyone follow these five practices. Even following these five practices, it is still difficult to understand. We have faith that will help us with comprehension.

But for me, it has come the time to further my studying and practicing abroad. In order for me to be able to help all of you, I have to further my training, both in knowledge and spiritually. I will be traveling to Japan starting this summer to begin a year of study. My goal is to learn the most I can in that short time.

Education is important as it helps develop the mind and further understanding. It is through the developed mind and deep understanding that helps guide us to make the right decisions and be able to help others. Even as we grow older, we still need to continue to learn and stimulate the mind. A good way is to continue studying the Lotus Sutra and learning more about the One True Dharma. I will return to be the catalyst to your educational efforts.

SYMPATHY

I am deeply sorry for all victims who perished from the Earthquake and Tsunami in Eastern Japan on March 11th. With erecting a *toba* for them I pray for them every morning during my chanting.

I also extend sympathy to all victims who lost their loved ones, homes and jobs. I sincerely pray for quick recovery and a better life than before.

Nichiren Order of North America continues to accept any amount of monetary contribution toward the Japan Disaster Relief Fund. Please make a check payable to NONA and send it your local Nichiren Shu temples and churches. I will take all accumulated donations to Nichiren Shu Headquarters in May when they hold a general meeting and again in June.

Gassho,

Bishop Shokai Kanai,

Nichiren Buddhist Order of North America

Prayers from Nichiren Shu Headquarters:

With palms together we respectfully bow to the three treasures of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sanga before us, and offer our prayer.

With reverence we offer the merits of the Odaimoku to the irreplaceable lives lost in the Great East Japan Earthquake and pray with all our hearts that they rest in peace.

Namu-Myoho-Renge-Kyo

We also pray that the compassion of the Buddha light the whole world and give strength to the disaster victims, that they quickly find peace of mind and body and shelter, and quickly rebuild the devastated areas successfully.

Namu-Myoho-Renge-Kyo

As followers of Nichiren Shu, we respect all life and vow to create a peaceful society with perfect harmony among all people based on the teachings of Rissho Anokoku.

“I respect you deeply. I do not despise you.”

Namu-Myoho-Renge-Kyo

A point of View

A Narrow Escape

Kumiko Kanai

I would like to extend my sincere sympathy to the people devastated in Eastern Japan by the huge earthquake and tsunami on March 11th.

I have two brothers who live in Japan; the elder one in Abiko, Chiba and the younger one in Yokohama. I found out through e-mail that all the family members were safe and I was relieved.

My sister-in-law in Abiko told me over the phone excitedly as follows: “On that day I went to my sumi-e class. On the way back from the class, I was on bicycle. Suddenly the ground shook funny, so I got off the bicycle and pushed it while I walked. (I did not realize it was earthquake). Soon after that I heard behind me a very huge sound of block walls falling down on the sidewalk and roof tiles were sliding down to the ground. If I was one minute late, I might be hit with falling block walls or roof tiles and be injured. Returning home, I found a flower vase and *ihai* or memorial tablets for ancestors were on the

floor, but nothing else was broken or fell. I then finally realized it was an earthquake.

I brought out an emergency aid bag and placed it at the entrance and prepared to leave the house anytime with my family. At night I could not change into pajamas and kept wearing street clothes just in case I needed to escape quickly and went to sleep.”

In another case, I received an email from a friend and said, “I watched T.V. news from Los Angeles, ‘Japan had many tragedies and overcame all of them. Japan will surely come back!’ I was so touched with this encouragement. I was full of tears.”

A friend of mine in Los Angeles who was from Sendai said, “I contacted my siblings and relatives in Sendai, but two of them are still missing, so I am lost. But I play guitar to comfort myself and all victims of the disasters.”

May Events

One Day Seminar on Buddhism

Day/Time: May 14 (Sat) 9:00 am to 7:00 pm

Place: Extended Stay Hotel (1550 E. Flamingo Rd., Las Vegas, NV)

Theme: Life of Sakyamuni Buddha and Buddhist Doctrine on Lotus Sutra

Basic Teaching on Lotus Sutra

Life of Nichiren and His Teachings

Making wrist *juzu*

Tracing an Image of Buddha

Chanting and Meditation

Lecturers: Rev. Douglas Kanai, Rev. Chishin Hirai, Rev. Ryuoh Faulconer

Coordinated by Bishop Shokai Kanai

Fee: Donation of \$75 (including textbooks: Lotus Sutra & Liturgy of Nichiren Shu,
Discount if you bring these texts, other teaching material, and lunch)

Capacity: 20 people (spots are still available)

Registration: Make reservation by phone (702) 396-6276

Other Events in May and June

Due to the R-I district code where the Kannon Temple locates, we cannot advertise our service and other events; please call (702)396-6276 or send e-mail at revkanai@gmail.com for more detail events of the time and place.

Rev. Shokai Kanai will visit Japan for District Managers Meeting at Nichiren Shu Headquarters from May 22 to 28th.

He also goes to Japan for World Missionary Conference at Minobusan from June 13 to 18th.