

(For Home Page)

RADIANACE #30

November/December, 2012/10/16

SACRED WORDS

Strive to carry out the two ways of Practice and Learning. ... Endeavor yourself and cause others to practice these two ways which stem from faith. If possible, please spread even a word or a phrase of the sutra to others.

Nichiren-Shohou Jissou Sho

ARAGYO

Rev. Shokai Kanai

December 8th is Bodhi Day. Gautama Siddhartha, the prince of Kapilavastu, the present Nepal, became Sakyamuni Buddha after seven days in meditation under the bodhi tree preceded by his six years of ascetic practice or self-denial. One of his major teachings is the Middle Way, not to exceed one way or the other. However, our lives are not always happy like spring. There is severe cold winter and hot summer like Las Vegas where we had 81 days of over 100 degrees this summer.

Rev. Douglas Shoda Kanai will, for the first time, enter Dai-Aragyo, one hundred days of ascetic practice starting November 1st and ending February 10th of next year. I have done this Aragyo training three times, so I know what it is like.

Before entering the monastery there is an opening ceremony. There, the master of Dai-Aragyo will say, "You offer your lives to the *Gohonzon* of this Aragyo Monastery. You are not permitted to do selfish conduct, or you may leave here now."

Every day starts with a wake-up call at 2:45 a.m. Everyone lines up around the sides of a raised shallow pool. At 3:00 a.m. the first chanting of prayer is given in front of the water which lasts five minutes. Twelve people at a time pour at least seven buckets full of water over their heads to purify their bodies and minds. This ritual starts from the most senior determined by how many times they have entered the monastery. So, for first time candidates like Douglas must wait and chant together until all seniors finish their purification. This ceremony will be repeated seven times daily at 3 a.m., 6 a.m., 9 a.m., 12 noon, 3 p.m., 6 p.m., and 11 p.m. No one can sleep until finishing the 11 p.m. water purification.

For the rest of the time they chant the Lotus Sutra constantly without any interruption. When they chant, they must do "*seiza*," or sitting on one's heels. This is very painful for first time practitioners who will be glad to have water purification every three hours, because they can stand up and stretch their legs.

One day before entering the monastery all priests must shave their heads and faces, but during the 100 days, they cannot shave and cut their hair. Twice daily meals consist of only a bowl of rice porridge and *miso* soup for the first 35 days. During this time all practitioners must cleanse their bodies and minds with the fast, the water purification and chanting. All their bad karma should be extinguished. They learn to be unselfish and to be obedient to their teachers and seniors, so they can devote themselves to others even after they complete Dai-Aragyo. Of course there is no communication with the outside world during the first 35 days.

After 35 days, everyone will learn various methods to save the suffering people depending on their levels of experience. The priests' followers can visit their reverends and ask for guidance in their daily lives, but time is limited to only five minutes.

In our daily lives we must sometimes deal with severe hardship or mishaps or sickness. These Dai-Aragyo practitioners have the tools to give advice in how to deal with those hardships depending on how the priests trained and practiced.

Let us pray for Douglas to complete this ordeal and look forward to his return. He prays for us, too, during his 100 day ascetic practice.

The 5th Anniversary Was a Great Success!

Rev. Shokai Kanai

I would like to express my gratitude to all the people who attended the Banquet, the Ceremony, and the Luncheon for the Fifth Anniversary of Kannon Temple of Nevada. Thank you very much for your donation towards the temple. I also appreciated those who sent contribution even though they did not attend any of the events. We were fortunate to have many special guests from Japan, especially Bishop Kenitsu Saito, Director of Nichiren Shu Missionary Department, who officiated the commemorative service and Bishop Eiyu Ishi who performed the Eye-Opening Ritual for the One Statue and Two Buddhas.

Coinciding with the NONA Convention, we were fortunate to have NONA ministers participate in the service which added to the grandeur. This was a unique service in America, starting with the purification of the hall, making and offering tea to the altar and Eye-Opening Ceremony for the Sakyamuni/Taho Buddha statues. I hope you will get a chance to experience this type of service in the future.

Without your support since the establishment of this Temple, there would be no Kannon Temple in Nevada. Your continued generosity has allowed us to move to a new location where we can further expound the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha and Nichiren Dai' Shonin.

With Las Vegas being a tourist destination, it will be easier for many to come and visit the city. Why not also visit the Temple to further expand upon your knowledge and faith? After renovations are completed, please come visit us again.

FALL GARAGE SALE ANOTHER FUND RAISING SUCCESS

Katie Hutchinson

On Saturday, October 13th, from 7:00 am to 1:00 pm, a second garage sale fundraiser was held at the home of Jodie Cohen-Potter, Reverend Shokai Kanai's tea ceremony instructor and friend. There was a great turnout of volunteers. Special thanks to: Scarlett Mujica, Paula Patterson, Katie Hutchinson, Jeannie Epstein, Jodie and her husband, John Potter, Kumiko Kanai, and Rev. Kanai himself. At the end of the day, a total amount of \$373.48 was raised. This was almost the same amount of the previous sale.

At this sale, there were flyers on hand about Nichiren-Shu Buddhism and Buddhism's belief in Non-Violence. It was wonderful to see many people reach for the flyers. More free donations were also received during the sale than the time before.

The temple hopes to hold another sale in the early spring of 2013. The place, date, and time will be determined as the date gets closer, though hopefully it will be hosted at the new temple. Please start saving any items you would like to donate to the sale or contact Rev. Kanai about volunteering or any inquiries. Thank you and here's to a successful sale and another great sale in the spring.

A Point of View

Eggplants

Kumiko Kanai

Fall has finally come to Las Vegas. In our backyard garden, we harvested eggplants, *kabocha* pumpkins, green onions, mint, basil, and strawberries. Some of them are still growing especially eggplants. I heard that all flowers bloomed become eggplants, it is true. I pull off several eggplants almost every day. There are various recipes for this vegetable and enjoy cooking it.

The old saying in Japan, "Don't let daughter-in-law to eat the eggplants." Is it because of good taste?

HELLO FROM JAPAN 5

Rev. Douglas Shoda Kanai

A brief visit back to the States in late September to help with the NONA Convention and The 5th Anniversary for the Kannon Temple of Nevada has given me a boost. It was finally good to speak English again after all these months. I did not realize how much stress I have been under trying to think and speak in Japanese. With this little reprieve over, now the purpose for me being in Japan is about to commence.

By the time you read this, I will have already entered Dai-Aragyo for 2012. The location is Daihonzan Nakayama Hokekyo-Ji Temple, in Chiba Prefecture. On November 1st, myself and 150 or so other ministers have entered a secluded section within the temple to begin the 100 days special training. We will not be permitted to leave until the 100 days have been completed. It is only after the first 35 days that visitors are permitted. If you are in Japan in December or January, please stop by to visit. I may be a bit delirious due to lack of sleep and minimal nourishment, but your pleasant face will help lift my spirit and give me strength to continue with my practice.

Nine months has come very quickly and with help of Rev. Kanju Ueda and his family. I am prepared enough to handle the intense practices that I will have to endure. I know that there may be material that I may have overlooked, but until I am actual inside will not know. There are many uncertainties that I ponder about every day. Though I try to displace these thoughts, they are still lying low, as this probably will be the biggest challenge of my life. I just hope I can gain the wisdom so that I expound what I have learned to you all.

I will not be able to post any further message until the March/April 2013 Radiance. Once I complete the 100 days practice, I will be returning to Osaka, to Shinnyo-Ji Temple to continue my studies as well as visiting other temples for more training. I hope to have a brief homecoming sometime in late March or early April. Do not be alarmed by my changed appearance. Until then, all of you will be in my prayers and well as a source of strength. I hope you include me in your prayers as well (pray for my health and health for my feet and knees-sitting "seiza" all day could lead to lesions and possible infection).

EVENTS

November

Rev. Shokai Kanai Returns from Japan on November 2nd.

Morning Chanting Daily 7:00 a.m

Monthly Blessing Ceremony 4th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.

Rev. S.Kanai will visit Japan from 11/14 to 19th for NBIC Board of Director Meeting

Buddhism for beginners in English Wed. (7th, 21st and 28th) 7:30 p.m.

December

Monthly Blessing Ceremony 2nd (Sun) 10:30 a.m.

Morning Chanting Daily 7:00 a.m.

Rev. Kanai will visit NBIC from 12/3 to 7th for the Seminar for Oversea Ministers
Buddhism for Beginners Wed. (12th and 19th) 7:30 p.m.
New Year's Eve Service 31st (Mon) 7:30 p.m.