

No. 2 (March 1, 2008)

## SACRED WORDS

**The Lotus Sutra is the true teaching because Buddha Sakymuni preached it from the bottom of his heart exactly as he was enlightened. ... The chanting of the sutra will lead us to righteousness unconsciously. ... For example if one has good friends, his attitude will become good.**

Nichiren, *Zuiji-I Goshō*

## Place for Inner Peace

By Rev. Shokai Kanai

Are you in agony or frustrated everyday? Buddha teaches the way to depart from the eight types of sufferings.

Siddhartha Gautama who tried to liberate himself from all sufferings left his palace and began his new life as a homeless monk to seek salvation. After practicing self-denial for six years, he found the truth about suffering and became Buddha Sakyamuni. Out of the eight types of sufferings, there are four major sufferings, which are birth, old age, disease and death. The four minor sufferings are parting from loved ones, meeting with disliked people, not obtaining what one seeks, and the pain from attachments to our body, mind and environment.

The Nichiren Buddhist Kannon Temple of Nevada was established for you to feel inner peace by removing your frustration and agony.

For this purpose I use various methods such as amulets, prayer tablets, *Kito* Blessing, *Reidan* for divination and others depending on each case. If you want a consultation, you may call me at (702)396-6276 anytime before midnight or send me e-mail at [revkanai@gmail.com](mailto:revkanai@gmail.com) and explain your problem as well as set up an appointment.

The most important thing to do for your inner peace in Nichiren Buddhism is to chant Odaimoku, "Namu Myōhō Renge Kyo." However it may be hard for many people to chant or continue to chant without achieving inner peace. Therefore I encourage you to attend Sunday services and to practicing chanting daily at your home.

I started the weekly services on New Year's Day. Those who visited this temple say, "Wonderful," "Quiet," "Good Feeling," and so on.

I am grateful when you feel inner peace at the Kannon Temple of Nevada.

## **A PRINCE IS BORN**

By Rev. Shoda Douglas Kanai

April is an important time for Buddhists, since on April 8<sup>th</sup> Sakymuni Buddha was born. About 2,500 years ago, there was a small kingdom in northern India (now present day Nepal) where King Suddhodana and Queen Maya ruled. It was customary in those days for an expecting Queen to return to her homeland to give birth. On her journey back, Queen Maya and her courtesans stopped by Lumbini Park to rest. Since this was spring time, the flowers were blooming with bountiful forests and clear spring ponds. Legend has it that as Queen Maya was about to pick a flower off a tree, a perfect infant was born. This infant took seven steps towards the east, south, west and north, raised his right hand toward heaven and left hand towards the earth and declared, "I alone am honored, in heaven and earth." As this infant spoke flowers and sweet nectar rained down from the heavens.

Sadly this happiness was short lived. Seven days later, Queen Maya passed away. Her sister Mahaprajapati became the prince's step-mother. As custom, the king presented the prince to the wisest man in India to have his fortune read. Upon seeing the infant, Asita proclaimed two paths, either this prince will become a great and mighty king or he will become a great religious teacher. Thus the prince was named Siddhartha, literally meaning "he who accomplishes his aim."

The king was worried about this proclamation. Since Siddhartha was his only son, who would take over the kingdom, when the king died. So as the little prince grew up, the king sheltered his son by only showing the prince the beautiful aspects of life; young playmates, happiness, pleasure and amusement, so that the prince would not dwell on serious matters. There were two occasions that the prince experienced suffering and death.

One day as a little boy, Siddhartha observed men plowing a field. This tilling caused worms and insects to the surface. Birds swooped down for a meal. Worms and insects tried to escape, but could not. As the birds flew away, hawks swooned and snatched the birds. Siddhartha was horrified. Creatures killed creatures for food. How cruel. Life was suffering.

When Siddhartha was bit older, he and his cousin Devadatta were playing in the garden. Devadatta was not as kind-hearted and shot a swan in its wing with his bow and arrow. As the swan fell to the ground, Siddhartha immediately rushed and pulled the arrow out of its wing. He nursed the swan back to health and let it fly away. This was the second time that Siddhartha experienced pain and suffering.

As time passed, the little prince grew up to be a handsome man, married and had a son. Though this would bring happiness, Siddhartha was still troubled. He still dwelled

on the cause of suffering. Then one day, he left the castle out of the eastern gate, where he noticed an unusual sight. The attendant told the prince that this was an old man and that no one can escape time not even nobles. Distressed, he returned to the castle.

Again Siddhartha wanted to leave the castle but instead of leaving the eastern gate where he saw the old man, he left out of the southern gate. As he traveled, he saw a man in misery that fell flat on his face. The attendant explained that this man was ill and no one can escape sickness. Deeply troubled, he returned to the comfort of the castle.

On another occasion, Siddhartha left out of the western gate where he met a funeral procession. Curious, the attendant explained that the spirit of this person has left the body, forever unable to see those around him. Everyone will die. Out of sorrow he returned to the castle.

After some time, Siddhartha ventured out of the northern gates where he came upon a monk, barefoot, dressed in robes and with a begging bowl. "Why do you beg?" he asked. The monk replied, "I have renounced the joys of earth. I am seeking salvation, a way to escape from suffering." When Siddhartha heard these words, joy sprang into his heart. He knew what he had to do.

At the age of 29, Prince Siddhartha left his wife, child and kingdom behind to search for the cause of suffering and how to remove suffering from our lives. Though he was given the best in life and sheltered from the outside world, he could not escape the fact that life was full of suffering. His dedication and renunciation had given us a path to salvation, so we too can remove the bounds of suffering and attain enlightenment, liberation from all sufferings.

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