

RADIANCE

No. 19 (January 1, 2011)

January/February, 2011

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

January 1, 2011

According to the Chinese calendar, this is the **Year of the Rabbit** and the Seventh Star which denotes Evening, Fall, Money, Pleasure. This means that there will be a lot of coming and going of money. Please be careful how you spend money. The location of the star also indicates that it is wise to avoid living and moving your business either to the east and/or the west.

New Year's Day Blessing

Jan. 1st (Sat) 10:30 a.m.

During the ceremony Rev. Shokai Kanai will bless the congregation with the scroll of the Lotus Sutra. Traditional *otoso* (herb) drink for good health will be served to everyone.

New Year's Prayers

For special prayers throughout 2011, please write your name, mark your prayers on the enclosed form, and return it to the temple. Rev. Kanai will read all your prayers during the New Year's Day Blessing. Donation for the prayers will be greatly appreciated.

New *ofuda* (prayer tablets) will be handed to each family who attends the first service of the New Year. For those who do not attend the service, the *ofuda* will be mailed out either on January 3rd or 4th.

The Lotus Sutra and Nichiren (No. 1)

Rev. Shokai Kanai

Nichiren and His Era

Many religions talk about salvation after one's death such as going to heaven or be born in the Buddha Land in the far-far west. On the other hand Nichiren Buddhism teaches to create the Buddha Land on this earth while we are alive. Therefore, it is not necessary for us to seek heaven or the pure land besides this earth. Nichiren says, "The peace of our country will be realized if slanderers of the True Dharma are eliminated and keepers of the True Dharma are respected." One's happiness and

peace of a nation depend on the people's attitude toward righteousness. Nichiren who lived during the Kamakura Era in the thirteenth century Japan left many important messages for us today.

He gave us a simple remedy, "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo," which means to embrace the teachings in the Lotus Sutra. This sacred title of the Lotus Sutra has been alive in countless people's hearts for over 750 years.

What do the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren teach us? What kind of message can we receive in the 21st century? In order to find the answers, let us review the life of Nichiren.

Japan was ruled by the Imperial Family since the beginning. Thirty years have passed since the Kamakura military faction took over the Emperor's role in Kyoto. The struggle for power between Kyoto and Kamakura continued. Peace and security did not prevail. Besides, strange phenomena in the sky, natural calamities, epidemics, earthquakes, drought, wild fires, and famines proliferated all throughout the land. Oxen and horses lay dead at crossroads, and the streets filled with skeletons. Many of the population have perished, and the survivors suffered with grief.

Buddhism only functioned as a means for praying for security of the nation at any number of the elaborate temples and as scholastic learning for the noble class, while common people sought Buddhism for liberation from human sufferings. Priests exploited the common people's fears with the emphasis that there was no salvation on this earth and to count only on Amitabha Buddha who will take you to the Pure Land in the far west after one's death. This idea hastened many people to commit suicides so that they could find paradise.

During this tumultuous time, a boy was born to a family of a fisherman in Awa, Kominato (present Chiba Prefecture) located on the far eastern side of the main island of Japan where the sunrise hits first. It was February 16th, 1222 (note that Sakyamuni Buddha entered into nirvana on the 15th). He was named Zen Nichi Maro meaning "Righteous-Boy-like-the-Sun," who later became Nichiren.

Since boyhood, Zen Nichi Maro enjoyed studying hard. At the age of 12 he entered Kiyosumi Temple, a center of study for reading and writing in his district. He ordained at 16 and received a Buddhist name, "Ren-cho," or Lotus-in-Eternity. The young monk was full of ambition to study all Buddhist scriptures in order to find causes of these natural calamities, draught, wild fires, and famine. He read all the available materials in the library of the temple; however, this only added to his confusion. Which Buddhist scripture reveals the real truth of Sakyamuni Buddha's essence? He entered the sanctuary of the temple's guardian deity of wisdom, Kokuzo Bodhisattva, and prayed for blessing and guidance. He fasted and prayed to become the foremost man of wisdom and knowledge in Japan for three weeks.

Since the introduction of Buddhism into Japan in 538C.E., it flourished with the backing of the noble class and rich samurai warriors. They built many temples and pagodas, while the common people lived in agony, starvation, poverty, and filled with suffering. Buddhist texts teach that when Buddhism is flourishing; the country is secure, peace prevails, and people are happy. Rencho's main concern was, "why do people suffer so much even though Buddhism seemed to be flourishing in the first place?" "Why did so many different denominations exist among one Buddha Dharma?" "Why do they dispute each other?" "Which sutra is the real essence of Buddha's enlightenment?"

Seeking the answers, the clever young monk left Mt. Kiyosumi and traveled to Kamakura, Hiei, Kyoto, Nara, Mii, Koyasan and other places to study intensively all denominations and scriptures. He especially studied at Mt. Hiei, the center of Buddhist learning at that time for total of 13 years. As a result, Rencho reached the conclusion and conviction that only the Lotus Sutra reveals the True Dharma and profound enlightenment of Sakyamuni Buddha. All Buddhists in Japan at that time considered the Lotus Sutra too

hard to be understood and difficult to realize its true teachings. (cont. next month)

Hoshimatsuri & Setsubun

Service Feb. 6th (Sun), 10:30 a.m.

Setsu-bun means “to divide seasons” in Japanese. It is the eve of spring according to the Japanese zodiac calendar. The actual day of *Setsu-bun* is February 3rd. During the service those who were born in the year of the Rabbit will toss roasted soy beans to the congregation to chase away evil spirits. Hopefully you will cleanse your minds by attending the service and receiving the Reverends’ blessing.

The years of Rabbit are people who were born in **2011, 1999, 1987, 1975, 1963, 1951, 1939 and 1927**. Those rabbits who would like to toss beans during the service, please contact Rev. Kanai at (702)396-6276. Non-members are also welcome.

Ceremony to Burn Old Religious Items and Tea Whisks

Feb. 20th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.

If you have some old religious items such as old *ofuda* and amulets, and do not need them at your home, please bring or mail them to the Kannon Temple of Nevada. Old *cha-sen* from tea ceremony and old dolls (burnable) are also accepted. We will hold a special appreciation ceremony for them and ask the spirits to leave from them and return to the universe. The burning ceremony will take place in our back yard.

New Homepage for Kannon Temple of Nevada

It has already been four years since the establishment of Nichiren Buddhist Kannon Temple of Nevada in Las Vegas. We are preparing a wonderful homepage for people around the world to access. It will contain introduction to Nichiren Buddhism, lectures on the Lotus Sutra, sermons by Rev. Shokai Kanai and Rev. Douglas Kanai, bi-monthly newsletter, events, explanation of the Gohonzon and Buddhist statues, and many more. It is coming soon so please be patient!

Las Vegas Marathon

By Cindy Campbell

On December 5, 2010, the Kannon Temple had the pleasure of volunteering at the Rock 'n' Roll Las Vegas Marathon. This marks the third year in which we have participated by working at one of the many water stations located along the 26.2 mile race route. It is a lot of fun to be able to participate in one of the oldest marathons in the United States.

The runners were pleased to have a cup of water and a few words of encouragement as they worked to complete the race. Some runners ran for personal goals, in memory of loved ones, or the chance to win a prize. The money raised from the marathon goes to the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation.

Nicholas Manasewitsch, one of our members, came in second place for the 12-14 year old category in the half marathon. He even managed to shave two minutes off of last year's time. Congratulations for a great job!

Another one of our members, Kathleen, treated us to a lovely spaghetti lunch when we returned to the Temple Sunday afternoon. We appreciate your home cooking!

Chanting Odaimoku 7 Million Times

The campaign of Odaimoku Chanting One Million Times started last April and has already reached three million times by November 18th of last year. The next goal is Seven Million Times. The circle of Odaimoku chanting is spreading wide, little by little. When you encourage chanting to your family and friends, it will become a big Odaimoku circle, so you will help to establish Buddha Land on this earth.

A Point of View

Reverberating Mozart in Sake Brewery

Kumiko Kanai

I found a very interesting website on the internet last month. It was KANEI Brewery Ltd in Hatano, Kanagawa Prefecture in Japan. This *sake* making company plays Mozart in the *koji* brewing process. *Koji* is the starter made from steamed rice cultivated with special mold. I saw the video of the work done to make this new sake.

Kanei Company hires a chief brewer of sake from Niigata Prefecture where major sake breweries are located. The work starts at 5:30a.m. With three meter long sticks, they stir steamed rice, molt, and water from "Omote Tanba" in a big tank with a height of 2.3 meters.

The vibration from the melody of Mozart activates more of the mold during fermentation, making for a milder taste. This sake won the top prize in 2009.

Although I cannot drink sake, I just wonder what kind of taste it will be, and if I will be very happy after taking a sip of this Mozart Sake.

The Company name is KANEI Brewery Ltd, but when it is written in Japanese, it is the same character with my name, 金井. Mozart's birthday is January 27th, the same as mine. I feel some kind of "E-N," relationship.

When you get a chance to drink Mozart Dai-ginjo or unprocessed Mozart sake, please let me know your opinion.

Advice

Rev. Shoda Douglas Kanai

As we enter the new year, we are still faced with many issues every day. Some are easy to deal with and others difficult. We seek advice from family and friends. Sometimes these advice are not enough and does not resolve the underlying issues.

A big part of Mahayana Buddhism is introspection, culminating in the The Law of Cause and Effect. If we do A then B will happen. We have to live with B. We cannot not say no to B and hope C will occur. This just does not happen, thus the root cause for many of our sufferings. Introspection is very difficult. We may not like what we see, but we must see ourselves as we truly are. It may be frightening. What can we do? One tool is to have discussions with your minister. Some do have special training that can help see into yourself and guide you with self discovery. There are hidden truths within us all which can be revealed and be brought to light. This result is not an end all, but a guide in helping you with your journey through life.

Many times this will involve chanting the Odaimoku sincerely, not from your mouth but from your heart. You can chant Odaimoku thousands of times, but it does not have the same power if you chant from the heart only once. By being truly sincere, you might be able to touch the Buddha within yourself. As you focus, answers do appear. This is the magical power of the Odaimoku.

I can help you with your journey. View me as a guide through the murky forest. Just as in Chapter 7 of the Lotus Sutra, the path is dangerous but by Buddha's supernatural powers, he can create a Magical City where you can rest. I can help guide you to the Magic City as you continue down the path of life.

Do not hesitating in contacting me at either the temple (702)396-6276 or doukanai@gmail.com.

EVENTS

December 31st, 7:30 p.m. New Year's Eve Service – 108 sounds of the Temple Bell

January

New Year's Day Blessing	1 st (Sat) 10:30 a.m.
Monthly <i>Kito</i> Blessing	2 nd (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
First of the Year Deity Daikoku Blessing	9 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Shodai-gyo and Meditation	16 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Service	23 rd (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
(No Sunday Service on 30 th)	
Morning Service (Everyone is welcome)	Everyday at 7:15 a.m.
Shakyo (Copy Kannon Sutra)	Tue. (18 th , 25 th) 10:00 a.m.
Private Japanese Language Lesson	Every Wed. 1:30 p.m.
Reading the Lotus Sutra	Every Wed. 7:30 p.m.

February

Hoshi-matsuri & Setsubun Soy Bean Tossing Festival	6 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Buddha's Great Nirvana & Nichiren's Birthday Ceremony	13 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Ceremony to Burn Old Religious Items and <i>Chasen</i> whisk	20 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
(No Sunday Service on 27 th)	
Rev. Douglas Kanai will conduct Nirvana & Nichiren's Birthday Service in Seattle on 13 th	
Reverends Shokai & Douglas Kanai will attend Minister's Workshop @NBIC on 2/26 & 27	

Morning Service (Everyone is welcome)	Everyday at 7:15 a.m.
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Private Japanese Language Lesson
Reading the Lotus Sutra

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