

RADIANCE #36

November/December, 2013

SACRED WORDS

There lived a Bodhisattva called Wonderful-Voice offered hundreds of thousands of kinds of music and eighty-four thousand *partra* (bowls) of the seven treasures to Cloud-Thunder-Sound-King Buddha for twelve thousand years. Because of this, he was able to appear in the world of Pure-Flower-Star-King-Wisdom Buddha, and obtain supernatural power.

- Lotus Sutra, Chapter 24

Offering of Music to the Buddhas from Hollywood

Rev. Shokai Kanai

The Kannon Temple of Nevada has a professional singer from Hollywood who offered her song to the Gohonzon. Her name is Siedah Garrett.

Before her singing, I showed her the above sentences from Chapter 24 of the Lotus Sutra and to read it. Then, I asked her possibility to offer her singing at the altar facing the Gohonzon. She was happy to do so and sang: *“Do not blame others for your problems or issues, start with yourself. The answers are all within you!”* While singing, she directly looked at the statue of the Odaimoku and Two Buddhas. Her eyes were a little watery with joy. This song was the one she wrote for Michael Jackson and also sang it with him.

Chapter 24 of the Lotus Sutra is that of Wonderful-Voice Bodhisattva from the far eastern universe who visited Sakyamuni Buddha preaching the sutra at Mt. Sacred Eagle. He did not come by any space ship or rocket. According to the sutra “Thereupon Wonderful-Voice Bodhisattva entered into a *samadhi* (deep meditation). He did not rise from his seat or make any other movement. By the power of this *samadhi*, he caused eighty-four thousand lotus-flowers of treasures to appear in a place not far from the seat of the Dharma situated on Mt. Sacred Eagle.” He came to make offerings to Sakyamuni Buddha and to hear his preaching of the Lotus Sutra. He could teleport just like in the movie, “Star Trek.” There Manjusri and other people in the congregation on Mt. Sacred Eagle were shocked to see this and asked the Buddha, “What root of good did he plant and what kind of meritorious deeds did he do in order to obtain this supernatural power?” The Buddha’s answer was the quotation in the above Sacred Words; “Offering many music and treasures to Buddhas.”

Nichiren Shu priests use many different instruments during services. At your home, please use a small bell during service. When we recite the sutra and chant the Odaimoku, we are offering our recitation and chanting Odaimoku to the Gohonzon, Buddhas, Nichiren Dai'Shonin, other deities, and ancestors; therefore, please chant from your lower abdomen. It is because they are glad to hear your chanting anytime. By repeating these good deeds everyday for many years and many lives, you will obtain some sort of supernatural power like a skill, talent, good personality, etc. that others do not pose.

Perpetual Memorial Prayers Offering **(*E-i-tai Kuyo*)**

There are many people who are afraid to be forgotten about after death. Even if one is a devoted Buddhist sometimes their children are not enthusiastic in their parents' belief. Or there are many people who have no descendants or close relatives who will memorialize their name after death. Others are worried about where to place their ashes.

Here is a solution! Kannon Temple offers Perpetual Memorial Prayers for those worried people. The donation toward the Perpetual Memorial Prayers will be set aside in a trust fund that will be used for the temple's major repair, renovation, enlargement, or new building in future. We will make a special *O-i-hai* memorial tablet for the deceased and pray for them every morning.

For more detail, please ask Shokai Kanai, Shonin.

Invitation to the 1st General Meeting **For Members and Members to Be** **11:00 a.m., on Nov. 10th (Sun)**

Over six months have passed after the opening of the Kannon Temple of Nevada at this new site on 1600 East Sahara Avenue. How to keep up the temple is the important matter for us. Anyone who is interested is welcome to attend the first general meeting. It will be held after a short Sunday service on Sunday, November 10th.

2nd Buddhist Seminar for Beginners
9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., on Dec. 7th (Sat)

Anyone who wishes to learn about Buddhism is welcome to participate in the Second Buddhist Seminar for Beginners. It will be held on Saturday, December 7th from 9:30 a.m. at Kannon Temple of Nevada. In lieu of a registration fee, a heartfelt donation is appreciated. Capacity is limited to 30 people, so first come, first serve. So, please send in your donation ahead of time to the temple to reserve your spot. The seminar topics range from Chanting and Meditation, Buddhist manners, Buddhist items found in a temple and house, Buddhist terms used in daily life, the Life of Sakyamuni Buddha (CD), difference between Nichiren Shu and other Buddhist denominations, making your own wrist *juzu* rosary and daily service practice. We will have a special guest lecturer from Seattle, Kanjin Cederman, Shonin. Lunch will not be provided so please bring your own sack lunch.

Peace March
10:30 a.m., on Dec. 8th (Sun)
Bodhi Day Service
11:00 a.m.

Before service, we will march for *Peace and Security* of our neighborhood on Sahara Avenue while beating taiko and chanting Odimoku. Please arrive early so that we can make preparations before starting the march. Everyone is welcome!

We will celebrate Buddha's Enlightenment Day with offerings of candle lights. We place a homemade *bodhi*-tree at the altar. A Buddha statue sits under the tree representing the time when he attained Enlightenment. The candle lights represent the Buddha's vast wisdom.

A potluck luncheon will immediately follow the service. Please bring your favorite food and your family and friends.

My View Point (As I heard and as I read)
The House under the Ground
Kumiko Kanai

There is a house for sale only five houses south from our house. It is an unassuming two story house with a secret. There is another complete house 26 feet underground! This home, which spans more than 5,000 square feet, is part of a 15,000-square-foot basement. It was built in the 1970s to give the owner a place to safely retreat to when the Soviets wiped out humanity

with a nuclear missile strike.

The house has two bedrooms, two hot tubs, a sauna, a four-hole putting green, a swimming pool, a dance floor with a small stage, a bar, a barbecue among other things. Light switches labeled “Sunset,” “Day,” “Dusk,” and “Night” mimic those settings by dimming or brightening lights. The ceiling is painted sky blue with white clouds with stars appearing when dark.

The article says that the house underground exists not only in Nevada but also in other states as well. I did not expect a underground house within my neighborhood until I read it in the newspaper. I used to pass by there all the time without giving it much attention.

I wished to see the inside of the underground house as a neighborly courtesy, but they do not show it until seeing a certified mortgage loan for the sale price of \$1.6 million.

Oh, it’s disappointing!!

The Year End Service **7:30 p.m., Dec. 31st (Tue)**

The New Year’s Eve Service will start at 7:30 pm on December 31st. This is to show gratitude to the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, Gohonzon, deities, ancestor, and all those around us throughout the year 2013. We have a *hansho* bell donated from a temple in Japan. Everyone hits the gong total 108 times. Gone are all negatives with the sound of the gong to welcome a Happy New Year!

HELLO FROM JAPAN 10 Rev. Shoda Douglas Kanai

Every year in September at Minobusan University, there is a weeklong study course and subsequent testing for those priests who did not attend either Rissho or Minobusan Universities (religious colleges for Nichiren Shu priests to be). This test is known as *Koshu* or “First Class”. Taking this test is optional and not required in being as priest within Nichiren Shu. But there are occasions when higher rank is required before being able to participate in certain events, such as going for the third 100 Day Aragyō or to be leaders among the priests. In most cases for those

that did not attend either university, passing the *Otsu* test or “Second Class” is suitable. The *Otsu* test is taken before a candidate priest can attend *Shingyodojo* or “35 Day Training Session in Becoming a Priest.” Subject matter captures the basic tenets of Nichiren Shu which all priests should know, such as the biographies of Sakyamuni Buddha and Nichiren Dai’Shonin, basic Mahayana Buddhism and the Lotus Sutra. Those wishing to take the *Otsu* test also attend the weeklong study course along with the *Koshu*.

To make most of my time in Japan, I decided to attend this study course as a challenge to see how well I could do. Of course the subject material is in Japanese and at the college level. Terms, concepts and textbooks are geared to this advanced level. Remember, that *Koshu* test is for those that did not attend the two universities, so for one subject matter, a year’s worth of lectures is crammed into five hours! The term intense is an understatement. Going in I had no expectation of passing a single subject. I was going as an observer to see how the testing was done and do better next year. If I passed one subject I would be quite pleased.

From 9:00am to 4:50pm Monday through Friday were seven 50 minute classes with one hour lunch break. Everyone is required to attend each class before being able to take the tests on Saturday and Sunday, so one is required to stay at Minobusan. Depending on where you stay, from one of the many inns or temple inns, costs could get expensive. One must also factor in meals, especially for lunch. Fortunately, I was able to procure a spot at a cheaper location, *Shingyodojo* (as mentioned above this is where one goes to become a priest, it is also the name of the building). The summer session finished the day before and thus the building was open for rent. There would be other like-minded priests whom I could study with and possibly share notes on sections that I might have missed. Mind you, I have not stepped onto the grounds since the last time I left, which was 19 years ago! Much has changed that would make life easier, such as washing machines. In my time, I did laundry by hand, in a bucket.

After each day, I would spend hours well into the early morning studying what was taught and what would be taught the next day. Lights out was at 9:00pm, but fortunately *Koshu* applicants had their own study room with no light restrictions. *Otsu* applicants had to use the mess hall to study after 9:00pm.

Subject matter for *Koshu* is as follows: *Tendaigaku* (Tendai Buddhism), *Shakusonden* (Sakamuni Buddha’s Biography), *Shugitaii* (Denomination Doctrine Synopsis), *Shumonshi* (Doctrine History), *Soden* (St. Nichiren’s Biography), *Bukkyogaku* (Theravada & Mahayana Buddhism) and *Hokekyotaii* (Lotus Sutra Synopsis). Each subject was covered in the textbook that I had but the lectures added more material. I was told that the textbook was geared for *Otsu* level and was to be used as a foundation. Therefore answers for the *Koshu* test would need to include material outside of the textbook and given lectures. Thus, it is extremely difficult passing all sections. Some priests have been coming back four or five times, concentrating only a couple of subjects to pass at a time.

After one week concentrating on Buddhism in Japanese, it was time to take the tests. I did my best; with some parts left intentionally blank as I could not understand the questions in Japanese or recall the answers that was in all *kanji* (fortunately I was allowed to answer in English). One major problem though is with my handwriting. Japanese are taught to mimic the alphabet exactly as printed. As with other American males, my handwriting is atrocious. Therefore I had to go back several times and rewrite what I wrote so that it would be easier to read. If the professor cannot read, that means no points. I need all the points I can get.

So in early October, I received the results. I passed three sections! This is more than I expected. I could have passed four, but barely missed out on points. I know what to study for now and know the types of questions that would be asked, so I will be better prepared next year. A bonus is that I only have to concentrate on passing the remaining four parts and then I will be able to increase my rank.

Events

November

Monthly <i>Kito</i> Blessing	3 rd (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
<i>Shodai-gyo</i> (Komatsubara Persecution)	10 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
General Meeting for Members (to be)	10 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Service	17 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Service	24 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
<u>Study Classes:</u>	
Life of Nichiren Dai'Shonin	Tuesdays, 3:00 p.m.
Japanese Class	Tuesdays, 5:00 p.m.
Nichiren Dai'Shonin's Words	Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m.
Introduction to the Lotus Sutra	Thursdays, 12:15 p.m.
The Teaching of the Buddha	Thursdays, 4:00 p.m.
Introduction to the Lotus Sutra	Fridays, 5:00 p.m.

December

Monthly <i>Kito</i> Blessing	1 st (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Buddhist Seminar for Beginners	7 th (Sat) 9:30 a.m.
Peace March in Neighborhood	8 th (Sun) 10:30 am.
Buddha's Enlightenment Day	8 th (Sun) 11:00 a.m.
Sunday Service	15 th (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Service	22 nd (Sun) 10:30 a.m.
New Year's Eve Service	31 st (Tue) 7:30 p.m.
<u>Study Classes:</u>	
Life of Nichiren Dai'Shonin	Tuesdays, 3:00 p.m.
Japanese Class	Tuesdays, 5:00 p.m.

Nichiren Dai'Shonin's Words
Introduction to the Lotus Sutra
The Teaching of the Buddha
Introduction to the Lotus Sutra

Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m.
Thursdays, 12:15 p.m.
Thursdays, 4:00 p.m.
Fridays, 5:00 p.m.