

NICHIREN NEWS

July, 2016

Sacramento Nichiren Buddhist Church - 5191 24th Street, Sacramento, CA 95822 (916) 456-8371

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July, 2016

| | | |
|----|---------|----------------|
| 3 | 11:30am | Sunday service |
| 10 | --- | no service |
| 17 | --- | no service |
| 24 | 11:30am | Obon service |
| 31 | 11:30am | Kaji Kito |
| 31 | noon | Church meeting |

August, 2016

| | | |
|----|---------|----------------------------|
| 7 | --- | no service |
| 14 | 11:30am | Matsubagayatsu persecution |
| 21 | --- | no service |
| 28 | 11:30am | Kaji Kito |
| 28 | noon | Church meeting |

OBON SERVICE

Obon services will be held on **Sunday, July 24, 2016 at 11:30am**. The purpose of this service is to pray for the souls of our ancestors.

Please write the names of your deceased family members on the enclosed form, and return the completed form to the Church before the 11:30am service.

SUMMER BAZAAR

THANK YOU to all Church members, friends & family who worked so hard preparing for the Summer bazaar. The bazaar was a success selling out on almost everything.

The following are the raffle prize winners for this year:

1st prize (\$1,000) - Dexter & Louise Dong
2nd prize (\$250) - Sugimoto

3rd prize (\$100) - Ellen Morisawa
4th to 7th prizes (\$25) - S. Reeve; Chuck Kobayashi; Tristian Vade Bruka; Chicago Nichiren Church
8th prize (California Bank & Trust gift) - Ryan Vide
9th to 11th prizes (Ohana Hula Group) - K. Nakatogawa; Lisa Shepherd; Haradas
12th to 16th prizes (Shoki Ramen House certificates) - Greg Steed, Midori Sunahara; Nichiren Sangha (2); Nob Tateishi

FALL FOOD BAZAAR OCTOBER 8, 2016

The annual Fall Food Bazaar will once again be a pre-sale event. We ask that you distribute the pre-sale forms and encourage your friends, family, co-workers & neighbors to place an order for food. We also plan to make extra food to sell at the event. If you need additional forms to distribute, please contact the Church.

CHURCH MEETING - 5/29/16

◆ Discussed summer bazaar preparations. Noted that we should create a listing of all items we need to order for the Summer and Fall bazaars.

CHURCH MEETING - 6/26/16

- ◆ John Hughes was successful in getting the Church a state ID number and will work on getting the federal number. Having a federal number would mean no taxes paid on the home or back lot properties.
- ◆ Discussed summer bazaar improvements for next year.
- ◆ Discussed accepting credit card payments at the bazaars & pre-orders online.
- ◆ The financial report for the Summer Bazaar was discussed. There are still outstanding

invoices so a final report is pending receipt of those invoices. However, the net profit, at this point, is over \$6,000 more than last year.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We gratefully acknowledge the generous donations from those listed below:

Bazaar: Dag Nakatogawa/\$100; Thomas Murry/\$100; Takashi Mizuno/\$50; Shoki Ramen House/\$50; Lily Hitomi/\$44; Dexter Dong/\$250; Dave Tanaka/\$20; Chuck Kobayashi/\$25; Ellen Morisawa/\$25; Joe Hitomi/bottled water and soda; John Hughes/signs for booths; Kanji Hitomi/plants; Fusako Okamoto/tsukemono & jams; Yoshiko Hitomi/umeboshi; Mike Tamai/plants; Nobu Tateishi/(bungee cords for canopy)
Bazaar Craft Booth: Susumu Fujiwara; Ruby Gotow; Kato family; Kiyoko Kuwabara; Kevin Mine; Gail Tanaka

Eitaikyo: John Hughes/\$300 (for Edwin Hughes, Mary Hughes & Michiko Wada)

Fujinkai: Sandra Sugiyama/\$10 (Fujinkai membership);

Special donations: John Hughes/\$160 (6 gallons of paint and painting supplies for the carport); Betsi Ann Nagasawa/\$20; Fusako Okamoto/flowers for the temple

Membership (\$240): Jon Kitamura; Kiyoko Kuwabara; Arthur Sugiyama; Chiharu Yamada
Memorial: Mary Hughes/\$500 (49th day memorial for Michiko Wada); Meriko Murata (in memory of Henry Murata)/\$30

Roof Repair: Liz Kono & Peter Kato/\$300; Nobu Tateishi/\$1,000

Write the names of your deceased family members on the form below, cut out the form and return it to the Church before the service.

お悔

YOUR NAME

Same Situation, Different Perspectives

Kenjo Igarashi

With 2016 already over halfway over, we are quickly approaching *obon*, one of the most widely recognized Buddhist events of the year. The event lasts for approximately three days, during which time our ancestors will pay us a visit to our homes. We humans will come into contact with spirits living outside the realm of human beings, such as the world of the heavenly beings. To better understand this, I would like you to first consider the two realms that we often think to be complete opposites: *gokuraku* (the Pure Land of the Buddha) and *jigoku* (hell).

Nichiren Shonin refers to these two realms in *Omonsu-dono nyōbō gohenji* (重須殿女房御返事), which is a letter he wrote to one of his followers. He states, “In answering your question as to where the *hotoke* (Buddha or those that have attained Enlightenment) reside, there are some who say that they dwell beneath the earth and others that say you may find them in the Pure Land of the Buddha. However, with careful scrutiny, one may find that both *jigoku* and *gokuraku* exist within...our physical being.”

To better explain the differences between *gokuraku* and *jigoku*, I would like to tell you a story, first told by a Buddhist priest in Thailand. There was once an old lady, known by everyone in her town for her compassionate nature. When a person needed help with a task, she would assist them to the best of her ability, never refusing anyone. The old lady eventually passed away, at which point she started her 49-day journey (which I previously explained). Finally on the 49th day, she arrived in front of the final judge, who told her to choose one of the six gates leading to the six different spiritual realms. Aware of her many good deeds, the judge reassured her that whichever gate she chose would inevitably lead her to *gokuraku*. However, upon hearing this, the old lady made a special request to see if she could see *jigoku*, before ultimately entering *gokuraku*. The judge hesitated, yet ultimately agreed on the condition that a bodhisattva would accompany her there. The old lady traveled with the bodhisattva and entered *jigoku*, to find that it was around mealtime. They peered into the dining room and watched as an elaborate feast appeared on the table. A bell rang, signaling the beginning of the mealtime. At that moment, the doors of the dining room flung open as the spirits entered, shouting that they were hungry and wanted to eat. The moment they sat down, they were immediately strapped in their seats, restraining their movement. Eager to eat, they quickly grabbed the approximately six-foot long eating utensil in front of them, which was also immediately bound to their hand. Each individual tried to eat, but because the utensil was so long, they could not bring the food to their mouth. They continued shouting, each person wanting to eat before the other, yet only succeeding in flipping the dishes of food over. An hour passed, yet not a single person could carry even a morsel of food to their mouth. However, mealtime was done and the food immediately disappeared from the tables. The spirits were unstrapped from their seats and able to let go of their utensils. They were immediately forced out of the dining room, shouting, even more hungry and frustrated than an hour prior. Seeing this upset the old lady, who told the accompanying bodhisattva that she had seen enough and was ready to go to *gokuraku*. When she entered *gokuraku*, it was also around mealtime. Upon hearing the bell ring, she entered into the dining room along with the other spirits, to see a huge table with several delectable dishes laid out. Each spirit was strapped to their seat and bound to their six-foot long eating utensil in the same way that she had seen in *jigoku*. She was led to her seat and sat down, still pondering on how they would eat, especially since she had seen how the spirits in *jigoku* had struggled to eat under these same conditions. It was at that moment when she realized that a spirit sitting across from her was offering her food using their long eating utensil. She looked around and saw that each spirit was not feeding themselves, but another spirit sitting across from them. The old lady graciously accepted her food and also used her own utensils to offer food to the other spirit. An hour later, the bell rang and all the spirits left the room, satisfied and having enjoyed their meal.

In referring back to Nichiren Shonin’s letter, we now understand that Nichiren Shonin is suggesting that *jigoku* and *gokuraku* are very similar, yet the difference results from one’s actions and perspectives. In the story, we see that even under the exact same mealtime conditions, what separates the spirits in *gokuraku* from *jigoku* is their approach to how they chose to eat their food. We can also apply this same idea to our own world and daily lives. For example, if we were to eat in a similar dining room as that in the story, what would we do? Some individuals might offer you food, as in *gokuraku*, while others only want food only for themselves. As a result, when our ancestors visit us during *obon*, we should recognize the similarities we have with them, rather than the differences. Further, it is important to understand that though we live in different worlds, the similarities allow us to provide for our ancestors in the form of our physical offerings of food in front of the Buddhist altar as well as our prayers. My hope is that you will remember this as you prepare to greet your ancestors for *obon* this year.