

# NICHIREN NEWS

JANUARY, 2017

5191 24<sup>TH</sup> STREET – SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA – 95822 – (916) 456-8371

~ Happy New Year ~

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### January, 2017

1	11:30am	midnight service
8	----	no service
15	----	no service
22	11:30am	Kaji Kito
22	noon	Church meeting
29	11:00m	Tsuito-e
29	noon	New Year Party

### February, 2017

5	----	no service
12	11:30am	Setsubun
19	----	no service
26	11:30am	Nichiren-Shonin birthday Shakuson nehan Kaji Kito
26	noon	Church meeting

### SETSUBUN

The Setsubun service will be held on **Sunday, February 12, 2017** at 11:30am. This is a special service for members who were born in the year of the rooster (12, 24, 36, 48, 60, 72, 84, 96 years old). As always, we will have a raffle after the service so please bring "paper products" for the raffle.

### MOCHI TSUKI

Thanks to all the Church members, family & friends for their hard work during our annual mochi tsuki. In addition to the pre-ordered mochi, we sold out of the extras which were made & all the takuan donated by Fusako Okamoto. The mochi tsuki took place on Saturday, December 16, 2016.

### CHURCH NEW YEAR PARTY

The annual Church New Year

party will be held at noon on **Sunday, January 29, 2017** at the Church. The luncheon is \$20 per person (12 & under are free). If you would like to attend and have not been contacted about your attendance, please call the Church by January 23, 2017.

A memorial service for Church members will be held before the party. The service is scheduled for 11:00am at the Church.

### CHURCH MEETING

#### HIGHLIGHTS - 11/20/16

- ✓ Discussed 2017 Summer Bazaar: dates are June 10-11, 2017; agreed to order postcard notices, no large posters and some 8 1/2" x 11" flyers
- ✓ John Hughes noted that the IRS has agreed that our church is a charity organization;
- ✓ Agreed to no longer place New Year ads
- ✓ Discussed New Year Party

### CHURCH MEETING

#### HIGHLIGHTS - 12/18/16

- ✓ Discussed New Year Party.
- ✓ Discussed Mochi Tsuki and noted that the net profit was \$1,297.08 which was about \$20 less than the previous year
- ✓ John Hughes reported on the tax situation with the Church. Currently the house does not qualify. John will meet with a representative who makes the final decision on the tax status to discuss the decision.
- ✓ Gail Tanaka discussed options in setting up a golf tournament. This has been highly successful for other churches. Will look into available locations & dates.

### Acknowledgment

We gratefully acknowledge the generous donations from the

following:

**Eitaikyo:** Fudeko Bibbins' family (for Fudeko Bibbins)/\$100

**Membership-\$240:** Kanji Hitomi; Miyo Kitamura; Takashi Mizuno; Hitoko Nagasawa; Dag Nakatogawa; Masanao Okamoto; Brian Tsuda

**Memorial:** Fudeko Bibbins' family/\$10,000; in memory of Mangoro & Shizue Kodani (Dick Kodani/\$300); in memory of Takeshi Kawawaki (Etsuko Nakamura/\$50); in memory of Yukio Aoki and Dan Webb (Liz Nettle/\$50)

**Special donation:** Nancy & Al Chin/toilet paper & paper towels; John Hughes/burn barrel; Thomas Murray/\$100 & \$150; Betsi Ann Nagasawa/\$20; Fusako Okamoto/flowers for Sunday services

**Roof Repair Fund:** Jane Hitomi/\$1,000; Lily Hitomi/\$1,000; Merry Hitomi/\$1,000

**Bazaar:** Kanji Hitomi/\$356.98 (for bazaar & mochi tsuki)

**Mochi Tsuki:** Yoshiko Hitomi/50 lb sweet rice & 10 lb mochiko; John Hughes/50 lb sweet rice; Kiyoko Kuwabara/50 lb sweet rice; Fusako Okamoto/50 lb sweet rice & 10 jars Takuan

### CONDOLENCES

We offer our sincere sympathy to the family of Fudeko Bibbins who passed away on October 25, 2016 at the age of 87.



## The Innate Goodness of Mankind

Kenjo Igarashi

Throughout history, individuals in various fields of study have proposed many views as to the innate characteristics of human nature. Despite various characteristics for potential discussion from a Buddhist standpoint, I would like to further elaborate on the idea of the innate goodness of mankind. We have all witnessed people whom we can place on different levels of the “good”/“evil” spectrum. We make these decisions based primarily on any actions we observe taken by the individual. Thus, depending on the observer, a single individual could be placed on very different levels of the spectrum. This leads us to the question of whether or not we are born with the innate knowledge of good or bad.

Before discussing any further, I would like to share an article published in a Japanese newspaper several years ago. It was written by Hiroshi Mikado, a famous traditional Japanese narrative singer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He writes:

I was asked by the head director of juvenile detention centers to travel across Japan and give speeches to juvenile delinquents. I recall one visit I made to a juvenile detention center. I spoke to an audience of 400 individuals and my speech lasted for approximately an hour. Throughout my presentation, there was one young man who for some reason caught my attention. After my speech, I asked one of the staff members at the center if I could talk to this individual who was sitting three chairs from the back on the right side of the auditorium. The staff told me, “Sir, I do not think that is a good idea. He is 18 years old and since his arrival here, has not shown even a bit of remorse for the crimes he has committed. Speaking to him will only disappoint you.” I replied, “Is he really that bad of a person? I have traveled to several juvenile detention centers and prisons throughout the years. I have met a lot of people but no one has completely disappointed me thus far. Could you please invite him to speak with me?” The staff member called the young man over and upon speaking to him I realized that indeed this individual was far from an example of the model citizen. He had committed crimes of robbery and murder. He told me that he had snuck into his boss’s house to steal, thinking that the house would be empty. He soon realized that he had been caught stealing by his boss’s wife who was at the house, so he attacked and murdered her. After hearing his story, I decided to show him three pictures that I had with me. The first picture showed a mother breast-feeding her child. The second picture showed the mother giving her child some spending money. The last picture showed the aged mother who was taking a break from working in the fields to place her hands into a *gassho* and pray towards the sunrise. I asked him to choose the picture that he thought presented the most beautiful gesture. He looked at the picture for a long time and slowly pointed his finger to the third picture of the aged mother praying. At that moment, I was struck with great surprise. Even someone who had committed such heinous crimes considered praying to be an act of beauty. This experience made me realize that no one is innately evil.

Similar to Mikado, Nichiren Shonin also stated that everyone is innately good because we are all born with a Buddha nature. I have previously mentioned the analogy of the Buddha nature being the inside of a seed with the outer shell being the bad karma that results from our previous actions. However, by chanting the *odaimoku*, which is the name of the Buddha nature, our Buddha nature will grow and eventually break through the outer shell. Even individuals that commit bad actions are innately good since they all possess the Buddha nature, which still has a thick outer layer of the bad karma. Nichiren Shonin writes in his *Kanjin Honzon Shō*, “Even an evil man who does not feel remorse for his actions will still love and care for his wife and child.”

With the New Year having begun, I hope that everyone will continue to reflect on his or her actions and take the time to help develop their Buddha nature.