

NICHIREN NEWS

MAY, 2018

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May, 2018

6	---	no service
13	11:30am	Izu persecution service and Kaji Kito
13	noon	Bazaar mtg
20	---	no service
27	11:30am	Eitaikyo service
27	noon	Bazaar meeting

June, 2018

3	----	no service
4	8:00am	set up canopy
6	8:00am	Bazaar cooking (Wednesday); clean chicken shed
7	8:00am	Bazaar cooking (Thursday); set up counter
8	8:00am	Bazaar cooking & clean chicken (Friday)
9	11:00am 5:00pm	Bazaar (Saturday)
10	11:00am 5:00pm	Bazaar (Sunday)
10	5:00pm	take down canopy
17	---	no service
24	11:30am	Kaji Kito

EITAIKYO

The Eitaikyo service will be held on **Sunday, May 27, 2018 at 11:30am**. The Eitaikyo service is a perpetual service in which prayers are given for the deceased. This service is held annually (one-time subscription fee of \$100 per deceased person).

FUJINKAI DUES

The Fujinkai dues are **\$10** a year. Please send your dues to the Church.

SUMMER BAZAAR

JUNE 9 & 10, 2018

All Church members, family & friends are asked to help at the bazaar. Please see the calendar of events, the kitchen schedule, & chicken schedule for details.

The craft & book/magazine booths need items to sell. Please bring your new or gently used donations to Church. Japanese items sell well.

Please call the Church if you need more raffle tickets to sell or buy.

CHURCH MEETING

HIGHLIGHTS 3/25/18

- ▶ Discussed summer bazaar
- ▶ Reverend Igarashi will not be available during the bazaar.
- ▶ Agreed to increase chicken to 1,200 halves
- ▶ Need additional vendors for open booth spaces.
- ▶ Changing chicken booth schedule so all help begins at 7am and ends when the chicken is done (noted that Joe and John will start the charcoal at 6am).
- ▶ Kitchen help begins at 4am to closing.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP DUES

If you have not already done so, please send your church membership dues to the Church. The dues are still **\$240** per year.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We gratefully acknowledge the generous donations from the following:

Memorial:

Yoshiko Hitomi/\$500 (in memory of Kanji Hitomi); Linda Tomita/\$250 (in memory of Mangoro & Shizue Kodani); Steve Saxton/\$60 (in memory of Nate Saxton); Dexter Dong/\$100

Acknowledgement continued

Memorial:

(in memory of Kazuma & Kimiyo Yoshimura); Liz Kono/\$100 (in memory of Mitsuko Kato); Brian Tsuda, Gail & Dave Tanaka/\$200 (in memory of Yoshimi Tsuda/27th yr and Yuri Kimoto 17th yr)

In memory of Nobi Tateishi: Tateishi Family/\$500; Gerald Adams/\$100; Jim Fujii/\$100; Jeff Kato/\$20, Peter&Lillian Kato/\$20; Liz Kono/\$20; Anonymity/\$20

Membership (\$240):

Renee Dennis/\$20 & \$20; Dexter Dong/\$240; Gary Gotow/\$240; Lily Hitomi/\$240; Kyomi Igarashi/\$240; BetsiAnn Nagasawa/\$68; Yurimi Sawamura/\$240; Steve Saxton/\$240; Chiharu Yamada/\$240

Ohigan:

Joe Hitomi/\$20; Kathy Mine/\$20; Chiharu Yamada/\$20; Kinjiro Nakatogawa/\$25; Yurimi Sawamura/\$25; Lily Hitomi/\$30; Masanao Okamoto/\$30; Susumu Fujiwara/\$40; Kiyoko Kuwabara/\$40; Hideko Tsuetaki/\$40; Brian Tsuda/\$40; Yoshiko Hitomi/\$50; Mary Hughes/\$50; Keiko Lucas/\$50; Takashi Mizuno/\$50; Kazuyo Johnson/\$100; John Hughes/\$150; Thomas Murray/\$300

Hanamatsuri:

Susumu Fujiwara/\$40; Joe Hitomi/\$20; Yoshiko Hitomi/\$30; Kiyoko Kuwabara/\$40; Keiko & Kevin Lucas/\$40; Gail & Dave Tanaka/\$30; Brian Tsuda/\$20; Hideko Tsuetaki/\$30

Special Donations:

Fusako Okamoto/flowers for the altar each week; Linda Tomita/\$20



Merging Religion and Culture

Kenjo Igarashi

Throughout history, we have seen how different religions have been integrated into various countries and cultures. Famous examples of this include the religions that spread along the route of the Silk Road. In the case of Buddhism, the Silk Road contributed to the development of Buddhist art. It is said that statues of the Buddha did not exist prior to 3rd century BC, when Buddhism reached Gandhara, a kingdom of Ancient India, located in present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan. Gandhara is famous for Greco-Buddhist art, an art form that merged classic Greek culture and Buddhism. The first statues of the Buddha emerged from Gandhara and are thought to have been created by Indo-Greeks who lived in the region. The sculptors were inspired by figures in Greek mythology, which influenced the European facial features of the early statues of the Buddha. Greco-Buddhist Art would later influence Buddhist art and depictions of the Buddha in various countries, primarily those in Central and East Asia.

Interestingly, in many pieces of Gandhara art, we see that the Buddha is shown being protected by Heracles, thought to be one of the greatest heroes in Greek mythology. He represents strength and masculinity, among other features. Many believe that Heracles is representing Vajrapani (*Jp. Shukongoshin*), a bodhisattva that protects and guides the Buddha. Further examination of Gandhara art reveals that other figures from Greek mythology are also shown along with Bodhisattvas and the Buddha.

Similarly, we see that Nichiren Shonin incorporated deities of Japanese mythology throughout his own practice and propagation of the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*. This is most evident in his mandalas, where he inscribed names of bodhisattvas and deities in Japanese mythology, among other figures. Nichiren Shonin's reasons for incorporating these Japanese deities were not just to merge Buddhism and Japanese culture. It also related to his idea that deities that show up in the *Lotus Sutra* as well as those in Japanese mythology have the obligation to protect the followers of the *Lotus Sutra*. Specifically, it is said that *Shotenzenjin*, guardian deities, often gathered around the Buddha when he was giving his sermons, and vowed to the Buddha that they would protect the followers of the *Lotus Sutra*. Unlike the previous example of Heracles representing Vajrapani, Nichiren Shonin did not represent bodhisattvas as Japanese deities, but directly included them by name into the mandala. However, Nichiren Shonin also incorporated some of deities from Japanese mythology that were directly accepted as bodhisattvas (syncretistic deities) during the 8th century in Japan. There are many opinions regarding his reason for incorporating these Japanese deities. One suggested reason is Nichiren Shonin's idea that these Japanese deities had continued to protect Japan ever since the country was first created. Therefore, Nichiren Shonin believed that they would support spreading the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* in order to save the people of Japan during the time of *mappo*. I am hoping that the next time you have the opportunity to look at the Nichiren Shu mandala, you will be able to see how Nichiren Shonin incorporated the *Lotus Sutra* into Japanese culture.