

NICHIREN NEWS

JANUARY, 2019

5191 24TH STREET – SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA – 95822 – (916) 456-8371

~ Happy New Year ~

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January, 2019

6	11:30am	New Year Kaji Kito
6	noon	Church meeting
13	----	no service
20	----	no service
27	11:00m	Tsuito-e
27	noon	New Year Party

February, 2019

3	----	no service
10	11:30am	Setsubun
17	----	no service
24	11:30am	Nichiren-Shonin birthday
24	noon	Church meeting

SETSUBUN

The Setsubun service will be held on **Sunday, February 10, 2019** at 11:30am. This is a special service for members who were born in the year of the boar (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. The mochi tsuki took place on Saturday, December 15, 2018.

CHURCH NEW YEAR PARTY

The annual Church New Year party will be held at noon on **Sunday, January 27, 2019** 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 14, 2019.

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 12/16/18

- ✓ Discussed New Year Party which is scheduled for 1/27/19.
- ✓ Agreed to purchase a new amplifier for the church. The old one will be used for social hall & bazaars.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We gratefully acknowledge the generous donations from the following:

Membership-\$240: Renee Dennis/\$20; Yoshiko Hitomi; Jon Kitamura; Janet Kyotani; Takashi Mizuno; Betsi Ann Nagasawa/\$20 & \$20; Fusako Okamoto;

Memorial: in memory of Masanao Okamoto (Fusako Okamoto/\$5,000; Susan Tamai/\$50; Toshiko Akiyama/\$50; Jessie Goi/\$50; Jim Fujii/\$50); in memory of Yukio Aoki and Don Webb (Liz Nettle/\$50); in memory of Aki Shimada (Jim Fujii/\$50)

Acknowledges continued:

Special donations: Don Kazama/\$60; Thomas Murray/\$200; Kinjiro Nakatogawa/\$25; Fusako Okamoto/flowers for Sunday services; Yoshiko Hitomi/flowers for Sunday services

Fujinkai: Fusako Okamoto/\$1,000 in memory of Masanao Okamoto; Yoshiko Hitomi/\$10 membership

Mochi Tsuki: Sweet rice donated by: Jane Hitomi/25 lbs, Lily Hitomi/25 lbs, Merry Hitomi/25 lbs, Yoshiko Hitomi/50 lbs, and Kiyoko Kuwabara/50 lbs

Oeishiki:

Susumu Fujiwara/\$40; Joe Hitomi/\$20; Lily Hitomi/\$20; Yoshiko Hitomi/\$20; Kiyoko Kuwabara/\$40; Kathy Mine/\$20; Thomas & Deardra Murray/\$200; Gail & Dave Tanaka/\$30; Brian Tsuda/\$30

CONDOLENCES

We offer sincere condolences to the family of:

Masanao Okamoto who passed away on November 12, 2018 at the age of 95.



The Circulation of Karmic Benefits (Part 1)

Kenjo Igarashi

Before arriving in Sacramento, I became the head minister of the San Francisco (S.F.) Nichiren Buddhist Church starting on September 12th, 1976. This also happens to be the same day that Nichiren Shonin was persecuted at Tatsunokuchi in 1271. And while I refer to it as a church, it was technically a small one-bedroom apartment where the head minister could also live. Therefore it was difficult for me to adjust to living in what was also a place of worship. Nevertheless, I was still young, ready to fulfill my duties under the given circumstances, and full of hope for the future. To further explain, I had arrived in the United States (Los Angeles) the year prior. During that year, I had held services for members of the Shintokai, the Nichiren Shu Sangha Association in Los Angeles. To this day, I am grateful for all these members to have had enough faith in me to hold these services, given that they had only known me for a short period of time. I was determined that even upon moving to S.F., I would continue to fulfill what I felt as my responsibility to the Shintokai members. To that end, I have continued to hold monthly Shintokai services for the past 44 years.

Upon arriving in San Francisco, I realized that many of the members were scattered all over San Francisco, Palo Alto, and the East Bay. I would drive and pick up many elderly members who could not come to the services on their own. Aside from Shintokai and S.F. Church services, my daily life primarily consisted of chanting the sutra in front of the altar. During this time, on the first day of every month, I started praying for Rev. Chikyo Kurahashi. He was the fourth resident minister of the Sacramento Church (simultaneously in charge of the S.F. Church) and had subsequently transferred to the Portland Nichiren Buddhist Church. He had passed away on November 1st, 1957, at the age of 49 in a motel, while traveling all over Oregon to collect donations from every member of the Church for the Church's building fund. The more I thought about his family members, the more sorrow I felt. Hearing his story and his level of commitment to his job was very shocking, especially to someone like me who had just arrived in the U.S. prepared to fulfill my position as an overseas minister. Soon thereafter, I would further realize that life would be more difficult than what I had envisioned.

During this time, life for overseas ministers was very different from what it is now. While I did not receive any salary from the S.F. Church, the Shintokai provided me \$50 for the monthly services. Given that this was my only source of income, I had to think of ways to survive off of \$50 per month. Around that time, Mrs. Masako Sano, an elderly member of the S.F. Church, invited me to a party at her house. During our conversation, she suddenly asked me to teach judo three times a month to her four grandchildren. She had known about my background in judo, which included having a 5th degree black belt, as well as competing in the National Athletic Championships in Japan as a student. She had somehow realized my struggles and had offered me a way to put my years of judo training to use. I started teaching her grandchildren judo in her son's garage. After every lesson, her daughter-in-law would have food prepared for me to eat there and also to take home with me for the next day. Her kindness was essential in helping me survive.

However, it was not too long until I would once again be faced with challenges. After months of adjusting to my new life, the owner of the apartment, who was also a member of the Church, informed me of her decision to sell the building. I was fortunate enough to find another apartment. A year later, Bishop Joyo Ogawa, who at the time was the head of the Nichiren Order of North America (NONA), visited the Church just in time for the November Church meeting. During the meeting, I vividly remember him suddenly stating, "As of today, President Nakanishi of the S.F. Church will be leaving his position and will no longer be a member of this church." President Nakanishi did not come to this meeting and thus it made this situation very confusing. I later learned that some members had already known about this. However, this was shocking news to not only me, but also to many of the elderly members. I remember not fully understanding what President Nakanishi's departure meant and trying to internalize the situation. In that moment, I did not fully comprehend what exactly was going on. Treasurer Ito continued by stating, "The Church will pay rent for this apartment only until the end of December so please leave before then." It was then that I finally realized that the S.F. Church was being shut down in a month and this was the first time I was being informed about it.

To be continued...