

NICHIREN NEWS

MARCH, 2020

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 2020

1	---	no service
8	---	no service
15	---	no service
22	11:30am	Ohigan service
29	11:30am	Kaji Kito
29	noon	Church meeting

April, 2020

5	---	no service
12	11:30am	Hanamatsuri
18		rummage sale
19	---	no service
26	11:30am	Kaishu-e Kaji Kito
26	noon	Church meeting

OHIGAN

Ohigan services are held twice a year (during the Spring and Fall Equinox) and are memorial services for our ancestors. The Spring service will be held on **Sunday, March 22, 2020 at 11:30am**. Please write the names of your ancestors and your name on the enclosed form; return the completed form to the Church before the 11:30am service.

HANAMATSURI

Sakyamuni Buddha was born on April 8. Hanamatsuri is the celebration of his birth. The Hanamatsuri service will be held on **Sunday, April 12, 2020 at 11:30am**.

NEW YEAR PARTY

The Church New Year Party was held at the Church on Sunday, January 27, 2020. Many thanks to the Fujinkai, Church members & friends who prepared the delicious luncheon. Thanks also to all who donated raffle prizes.

CHURCH MEETING HIGHLIGHTS - 1/5/20

- Discussed the church accounts
- Discussed preparations for upcoming New Year Party.

RUMMAGE SALE April 18, 2020

There will be a church rummage sale on Saturday, April 18, 2020. Please bring donations for the sale by Sunday, April 12, 2020.

PILGRIMAGE TO JAPAN

Due to the uncertainties regarding the coronavirus, the trip to Japan will NOT take place this year.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We gratefully acknowledge the generous donations from the following:

Bazaar: Ruby Gotow/\$20; Joe Hitomi/\$1,062.74; Fusako Okamoto/\$30

New Year Party:

Susumu Fujiwara/\$20; Ruby Gotow/\$30; Jane Hitomi/\$50; Lily Hitomi/\$50; Merry Hitomi/\$50; Yoshiko Hitomi/\$50; Reverend &

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (CONTINUED):

Mihoko Igarashi/\$100; Cindy Kadokawa/\$20; Kiyoko Kuwabara/\$40; Kevin & Keiko Lucas/\$100; Mike Tamai/\$60; Barbara Tanaka/\$30; Shige Tanaka/\$25; Gail & Dave Tanaka/\$50; Yozo Yamada/\$50

Setsubun (raffle prizes):

Lily Hitomi; Yoshiko Hitomi; Mary Hughes; Reverend Igarashi; Kiyoko Kuwabara; Kevin Lucas; Kathy Mine; Fusako Okamoto; Gail Tanaka

Special Donation:

Joe Hitomi/\$200; Yoshiko Hitomi/soy beans & candy for Setsubun service & edger; Mihoko Igarashi/flowers for Sunday services; Kathy Mine/\$60; Kinjiro Nakatogawa/\$40; Fusako Okamoto/flowers for Sunday services; Nobuo Yura/flowers for Sunday services

Special Thanks: Joe Hitomi & John Hughes repaired the fence in the back lot.

Membership - \$240 per year:

Misayo Chamanara/\$120; Renee Dennis/\$20; Renee Dennis; Dexter Dong; Ruby Gotow; Joe Hitomi; John Hughes; Kyomi Igarashi; Janet Kyotani; Keiko Lucas; Thomas Murray; Betsi Ann Nagasawa/\$20; Kinjiro Nakatogawa; Steven Saxton; Dave & Gail Tanaka; Yozo Yamada



Faith

Kenjo Igarashi

Many of us try to justify our actions and beliefs using primarily logic and reason. This makes sense because many of our beliefs are built in our experiences, which allow us to justify and provide what we consider to be support for making the decisions we make and taking the actions we take. However, we rarely see these terms being used to describe someone's faith in a religious belief. Though there are various explanations behind this, one of the main reasons probably has to do with the fact that we ourselves cannot fully experience or even see the "higher being" or deities that we believe in. That being said, many people still try to use solely scriptures and texts to deepen their faith, thinking that comprehending written words alone will give them something even remotely close to the "logic" and "reason" that some of us so often yearn for in our religious practice. However, it is my belief that text alone cannot teach you or help you to fully understand your faith—some knowledge must be acquired through action and experience.

My reason for believing this has to do with my experiences with aragyō, which I have talked about multiple times in the past. Aragyō ended this year on February 10th, with all the practitioners exiting the Nakayama Hokekyō-ji Temple via the *zuimon* or gate. The *zuimon* opens only twice a year (on the first and last day of aragyō) and permits only the practitioners to pass through these gates. Though I passed the *zuimon* for the last time during my fifth and final practice over ten years ago (2008), I still remember the sadness I felt, to know that I will never pass this gate again. I had completed my first aragyō practice before coming to the U.S., thinking that I would never have the opportunity to undergo this practice again. However, 13 years later, I entered aragyō for the second time, soon followed by the third, fourth, and fifth time, the last few times even being asked to enter aragyō. And while it is true that every time I entered aragyō, I underwent ascetic training that was both strenuous on my mind and body, I was also able to acquire knowledge and have experiences that I would not have had otherwise. It was through these experiences that I learned that not everything can be explained via logic or reason.

In the same way, I am also reminded of Nichiren Shonin who through his practice and studies during his exile to Sado Island, underwent the realization that he was the reincarnation of *Visistacarita* (Jp. *Jogyō* Bodhisattva), who is thought to protect not only the *Lotus Sutra*, but also its devotees. Though this may be a little difficult to explain, it is in fact my belief that Nichiren Shonin's spirit was not initially that of *Visistacarita* and by this, I mean before he started his practice of the *Lotus Sutra*. It was through finding the *Lotus Sutra*, fully embracing it, and risking his life to spread the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* to many people that he acquired the spirit of *Visistacarita* into his own. To further explain, throughout my own training as a minister, I feel as if the spirits of various benevolent deities (*Shoten zenjin*) have entered my own spirit to not only help me further my practice, but also protect me during any arduous training I have undergone and also help me spread the teaching of Nichiren Shonin and the *Lotus Sutra*. Therefore, it is my belief that our actions will reflect the spirits that enter our own pre-existing spirit and protect us—those that commit crimes will have several types of evil spirits entering their soul, only to destroy them from within. However, taking actions to deepen our faith and making an effort to live our life to the fullest by following the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* will allow for these benevolent deities to enter our own spirits and protect us from within. This is why faith cannot just be acquired through solely logic or reason, but requires action—you have to work for it.

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.

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YOUR NAME