



## 【First of all, we ourselves must believe in the teachings and grasp them correctly】



In New York City, the temperature is 33°C (91.4°F) today, and it's expected to be 35°C (95°F) tomorrow. Could this be the peak of the hot spell? . . . The days certainly have been hot. Hope everyone is doing well despite the heat.

I know this is sudden, but I would like to continue to share our experience during our missionary trip to Florida.

After leaving the Hunter's residence, we stayed overnight in Palm Coast. The next day we continued our drive southward for three hours, making a dash toward the Wekarski's residence in Orlando...we were welcomed by Kayo-san and her husband Mike.

We immediately started the leadership training session. It began with Kayo-san giving a lecture on "the Eightfold Path." They are: right view • right thought • right speech • right action • right livelihood • right endeavor • right mindfulness • right concentration/meditation. Together, these are the eight "right" paths which comprise the method of practice for the extinguishing of suffering.

The word "right" is a prefix to every word in the Eightfold Path. We are taught that "right" means to be 'in accord with the Universal Truth,' that the viewpoint that sees • thinks in accordance with the Universal Truth will surely 'be in harmony.' Furthermore, the viewpoint that sees • thinks in accordance with the Truth will 'perfectly fit the objective, to deal with any circumstance.'

We all contemplated the deep significance imbued in the word "right." Another expression for this is the "Buddha's viewpoint," the Buddha's vision which can see through things clearly without error, to see the ultimate reality of all things (the real state of things). As we learned this, all of us, once again, felt we had reaffirmed the profound depth of the teachings. Although it may be extremely difficult and seem far-fetched to think that we could have a viewpoint which is similar to that of the Buddha, we learned the importance of wanting to become more like the Buddha, and of repeatedly making the effort to encounter everyone and everything with a pure, open-minded and unbiased heart.

Time passed in a flash. That night, the six members Kayo-san had guided to the faith came to the meeting on their way home after work.

When we began the Hoza to read the President's Dharma guidance together, Rosie-san stated, "The way I view things has changed. I used to have a strong tendency to think I was never wrong. However, instead of reacting, I can now pause and reflect before I respond."

Then, Solange-san also commented, "The way I view things has also changed. As I try to revere others, I feel I am developing my patience. I am starting to notice my good points when I interact with my friends. I am inspired by the realization that my growth is connected to my becoming a Buddhist. My husband also told me that I have changed."

The smiles on their faces shone brilliantly as each one tried to grasp the true teaching.

Here in Orlando as well, such wonderful members are living with a purpose as they put the teachings into practice in their daily lives.

The next day, we headed south for about three hours on the Florida peninsula toward Fort Lauderdale, where Mrs. Nobuko Steele lives. Our drive continued.

As to be expected in Florida, it was truly hot as result of the midsummer sun. In the clear blue sky, the cumulonimbus clouds would billow in and soar powerfully, at times causing a heavy downpour. Seeing such vigor and force seem to recharge our energy. Gratefully, just moments after the pounding rain had stopped, we arrived at Mrs. Steele's residence.

That was the first time Yasuko-san and I met Nobuko-san. Yet, it was remarkable. Because we are mutually connected by the Founder and the President's teachings, we already felt close. For Yoshi-san, it was a reunion after many years with Nobuko-san. We were all moved by the joy of encountering one another. The flower of the Dharma bloomed, as if the gap between the past and present time and space had instantly disappeared. As she related the joy of meeting her late husband, Bob, raising their children, and



living together as husband and wife, actively seeking the teachings – what we saw in Nobuko-san was the spirit of taking refuge in the Three Treasures, and her gratitude. She grasped the value • the virtue of the teachings. Her heart and her smile, overflowing with gratitude from within, was certainly healthy and strong.

After that, we headed toward our final destination, Fort Myers and Mary Sigman’s home. I think it took us about three hours to drive northwest from the previous inland area.

Next morning, it was a reunion with Mary-san. Since it was a weekday, we could not meet with the members who usually gather for the Sunday Service. However, this visit’s objectives were a training session for the Gohonzon Ceremony for this November’s recipient Marilee Kaufman-san, and receiving Mary-san’s missionary report and leadership training for the Lotus Sutra study session.

Pennee-san also participated in Marilee-san’s training for the Gohonzon Ceremony. Pennee-san shared the joy of Marilee-san receiving the Gohonzon and was given the opportunity to join the training.

Learning about the establishment of the Eternal Buddha as our focus of devotion, that all things are caused to live by Original Life Force • the Great Life Force of the Universe • Truth of the Universe • the Dharma • • • • to the explanation on our taking refuge in the Eternal Buddha. Marilee responded that she had learned from the Episcopal Church as well, and that she can fully understand the viewpoint on the Eternal Buddha. I was very grateful. All of us present were able to also confirm our mental attitudes as leaders.

Furthermore, through three days and two nights, we held a study session with Mary-san on the Lotus Sutra’s Chapter 21, “The Divine Power of the Tathagata.” Because this is the overall summary of the teachings of the Lotus Sutra, we must know in what sequence and what the Buddha had expounded as his teachings up to this chapter.

The source of life for all living beings is the Eternal Buddha; we all live the same eternal life as the Buddha. Moreover, we are children of the Buddha; that is, to realize that we possess the buddha nature • • • we were able to study together in various ways.

The five-day missionary trip, filled with much gratitude, ended here.

At present, after having completed it, there are thoughts that well up in my heart.

There is a saying, “One must believe, then help others believe.”

It is often used to express the attitude we should have as members and as the objective of our practice. This means, “First we should believe in the teachings, accept them rightly and appropriately, share the teachings with as many people as possible, and guide them to have faith.”

Particularly on this trip, I felt that Mary-san as leader of the center and Kayo-san as area leader, first of all, believe in the teachings themselves, are rightly accepting the teachings, putting the teachings into practice, and that their wish and belief to share the Dharma with as many people as possible, is being conveyed to each and every member. I am very grateful.

And, whenever one encounters the magnificence of each and every one putting into practice one’s faith, many people will come to believe, and the circle will continue to become larger.

Gassho  
 New York Center Minister  
 Etsuko Fujita

*Reflection*

In June, I received an opportunity to go to the Seattle Chapter. There, I saw a dear Sangha friend who, in the past, was an active member of the Los Angeles Dharma Center and is at present living in Arizona with her husband. She had experienced many sufferings and hardships, but she always accepts everything positively, and like the Founder, she cherishes every person she encounters. At any time, in any place, when she meets someone, she has always put into practice her wish to connect that person to this teaching. She has accumulated countless merits, and is now living a life filled with much happiness. While in Seattle, I was able to observe her attitude and posture. She helped me to realize, once again, the importance of radiating from my heart, the wish to share the teachings, instead thinking only of my own happiness.

Gassho  
 Chicago Chapter Leader  
 Kayo Murakami





Episcopal Church Youth Members' Visitation  
Lecture on [Buddhism and Rissho Kosei-kai]  
by Rev. Fujita



Three-day Leaders Training



Missionary trip to Florida



Steele's residence



Wekarski's residence



Hunter's residence



Kaufman's residence



# SCHEDULE FOR NEW YORK CHAPTER

## August 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b> 9AM First Day of the Month Service <b>President's Dharma                      Guidance</b> 2-4PM Area Leaders' Meeting	<b>2</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Reach out day	<b>3</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza	<b>4</b> 9AM <b>Memorial Svc for                      Founder</b> 10AM Hoza	<b>5</b> Closed: Dharma Practices at home
<b>6</b> 1PM <b>Prayer for Peace                      President's                      Dharma                      Guidance</b>	<b>7</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza	<b>8</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza	<b>9</b> 9AM Special Prayer for renovation <b>10AM Steering                      Committee/                      Missionary                      meeting</b>	<b>10</b> 9AM <b>Memorial                      Service for                      Cofounder</b>	<b>11</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation <b>10AM                      Monthly                      Memorial Svc</b>	<b>12</b> Closed: Dharma Practices at home
<b>13</b> Closed	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> The Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni Day	<b>16</b> Summer Holiday	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Closed: Dharma Practices at home
<b>20</b> 1PM <b>Sunday Service                      Study Session</b>	<b>21</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation <b>10AM                      Lotus Study for                      Japanese</b>	<b>22</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza 2-4PM Area Leaders' Meeting	<b>23</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation <b>10AM                      Meeting for                      young mothers</b>	<b>24</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation <b>6:30PM                      Jyoshi-kai</b>  <b>Online All US                      Ministers Meeting</b>	<b>25</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza	<b>26</b> Closed: Dharma Practices at home
<b>27</b> Closed	<b>28</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza	<b>29</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza	<b>30</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Reach out day	<b>31</b> 9AM Special Prayer for renovation 10AM Hoza		