



# Rissho Kosei-kai of NY

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## News Letter December 2020



Hello, everyone! How are you? Hope you are all doing well.  
We have entered December, the last month of the year 2020.

We started this year with abundances of hopes and aspirations. However, from the beginning of the month of March, the coronavirus pandemic spread throughout the world, with numerous infected people and deaths. When it finally seemed to be contained, there was a second wave, followed by a third wave, and without any sign yet of returning to normal, this year is about to end.

Meanwhile, strenuous efforts of everyone in the healthcare industry and our self-restraining stay at home life help continue the economic activities. Yet many additional economic activities are at a stand-still.

Let us also express our deep gratitude to all the essential workers who continue to support our daily lives in so many ways.

Moreover, let us mourn from our hearts those who lost their lives due to the coronavirus infection and also pray for the rapid recovery of those who are now ill with, as well as suffering from the after effects of, this infectious disease.

Last month in November, I was in Tokyo for a temporary visit. After two weeks of quarantine, I participated in the assembly that was jointly convened by Headquarters' Guidance for the Staff, Rissho Kosei-kai International (RKI), and Rissho Kosei-kai International of North America (RKINA). The assembly was held for several days out of our Headquarters. We received detailed explanation of the policy and plan for the Year 2021.

Every year until this year, the reverends from all over the world gathered at Headquarters to receive the presentation of the following year's policy for our organization and guidance from President Niwano.

This year, however, the format was completely changed. The meetings were held using the internet through YouTube and Zoom with 500 participants connecting from their respective districts all over the world.

All the Centers in Japan together with the World Sangha attempted the unprecedented experience to connect and unite through the internet.

The images, starting with the President to all the leaders of the organization giving guidance and sharing of their faith as they looked at the camera from the altar of the empty Great Sacred Hall at Headquarters, felt strange.

However, in the midst of big changes in the way of life due to the coronavirus pandemic, our organization has reconsidered our past activities. We were told that the plans for the Year 2021 were formulated as a first step to make changes in our policies, hereafter keeping in step with the times, so that we do not end up with mere countermeasure to the coronavirus.

The organization's missionary policy for the Year 2021 is as follows:

“The New Age of Skillful Means”

--- Toward liberation of each and every person ---

『Let us embrace the smiles and the tears』

This takes us back to the starting point when our organization was established and is based on our wish to create a Sangha in which each person becomes liberated through aligning with the spirit of the Lotus Sutra.

In simpler words, we wish to be a Sangha which actually values each and every person. Establishing such warm Sangha will surely connect us to the path to many people • to world peace.

At the RKNY Buddhist Center, while we have already built such cordial and warm Sangha, let us take this path further, all the more.

In Japan there is a saying from olden days, “Washing the Potatoes Practice.” Even when we just place potatoes in a barrel and stir them, they tend to get mutually bruised.

However, this parable says that when the water known as the teaching (Dharma) is poured in and moderately stirred, the skin of the potatoes are naturally removed and become clean.

In such water “aligned with the teaching,” people will not hurt and bruise one another, allowing themselves to be cleansed when the skin is appropriately removed. But with the society in general, due to lack of such water, we often witness bruises caused by people rubbing one another.

By mutually working hard, learning from others and encouraging one another to improve in accordance with the teaching, our human nature will be polished and we will be in alignment with the meaning of the Chinese characters for “Rissho Kosei-kai”...see (Please note) below.

For the time being, even in 2021, it does not seem the coronavirus infectious disease will be contained.

Let us mutually wait patiently on this, grasp that “any place we happen to be is indeed the place of practice” and aim to start the New Year with positive attitudes.

(Please note)

Rissho Kosei-kai:

Organization (Kai)

in which the members

align the teaching of the true Dharma in our hearts and minds (Rissho)

and aspire to perfect ourselves through interaction with many people,

learning together and encouraging one another (Kosei)

Gassho

RKNY

Rev. Tomokazu Hatakeyama

