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January 2021 Newsletter



Year 2021! Happy New Year!!!

Hope everyone was able to welcome the New Year with a renewed spirit.

Last year was a year that was overwhelmed by coronavirus infectious disease • pandemic. Situations no one could possibly have predicted, at the start of the year in January, emerged and that severity continues even now, accompanied with various countless societal influences.

In the midst of this situation, we experienced a new way of life and many awareness, both of which are still ongoing as we start another year. Without feeling discouraged by the major changes since last year, let us challenge ourselves with the spirit of taking a new step.

Last year, through Zoom, the New York Center Sangha learned much and became one.

The culmination, it seems, was the Chicago Branch's 50th Anniversary Celebration Service on December 13th. Across the national borders, across the state borders, people were able to participate in the service from various districts, allowing us to celebrate through the cooperative efforts of many people. It was a splendid achievement.

According to life science research, human will or behavior are not controlled solely by the brain. Rather, each organ and cell of the body respectively has its own will and information and conveys that to the brain, and it is the mutual interrelated connection that is maintaining the whole body.

Moreover, each organ and cell recognizes its own role and coordinates with other organs, always working unselfishly allowing the system of the body to work smoothly.

If we were to apply this concept to our society's interrelationship between the individual and the whole, rather than working based only on the willful decisions of the leader and others just following instructions, the sound way for the organization to move forward is for individuals to constantly recognize what is one's appropriate role based on one's circumstances, while keeping communications open with the leader.

At present, since the COVID 19 crisis will most likely continue for a while, there might possibly be the tendency to feel lonely, a sense of isolation. Do not accept this merely as a physical condition. Isn't it important that precisely at such times, each and every person become a proactive initiator who tries to deepen the connection with other people?

It is not about having someone else do something for me. Let us make this year, the year to personally challenge our own self to approach and encourage others.

As I had also mentioned before, it is said that people actually sense happiness through their interactions with other people. Handshakes and hugs, hearing voices on the phone, the moment when smiles are exchanged through Zoom...at such times, the serotonin, called the happy hormones, are secreted inside the body, filling a sense of security and becoming the source connecting to health and longevity.

At present, circumstances do not allow us to meet in person to exchange words.

However, let us use various methods such as the phone, letters, and the internet to develop each and everyone's practice toward the goal set by our organization, "Getting Connected with People Without Limit: Let Us Be a Nursery to Nurture Bodhisattvas"

The distribution of vaccines for the coronavirus infectious disease have begun and the inoculation is being encouraged.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to the great efforts of everyone in the healthcare industry who have willingly taken risks throughout this prolonged period as well as to all the public and essential workers who have supported us to sustain our daily lives

Furthermore, let us mourn the multitude of people who have lost their precious lives and pray for the rapid recovery of all those who are now ill receiving medical treatment or recuperating.

Last year, we experienced very sad partings with several members of the New York Buddhist Center. We deeply mourn our fellow followers of the Founder and the President who had supported the Center and endeavored to practice together with us. We pray that they will watch over us in our efforts.

We may ask ourselves, what changes will we experience this year?

No matter what happens, let us not lose heart, and live our daily lives filled with gratitude together, "cheerfully, kindly and warmheartedly."

Thank you very much, everyone, for your kind support last year.

I appreciate your continuing support.

Gassho

Rev. Tomokazu Hatakeyama

Minister of RKNY

