

A World Overflowing with Human Kindness

New Year Message

A hopeful new year has come. I pray that all members, all people, and all humanity share in the abundant grace and light of the Dharmakāya Buddha, the Fourfold Grace.

This past year was one of transitions. Both at home and abroad new administrations were inaugurated that will establish a new era and a true civilization. And there are newly appointed leaders in our order who will preside over the 100th anniversary of *Won-Buddhism*, exemplifying great belief and dedication, great public spirit, and great accumulation of merit.

At the same time, there are many problems facing us that we need to solve right now. The capacity for human empathy is drying up. You can see it as the gap between the rich and poor widens. Pollution is on the rise, leading to catastrophic disasters around the world.

These problems are not the sole responsibility of a few leaders. They should be solved through our collective wisdom and determination. I would like to suggest several action items to address these issues.

First, let's cultivate our original moral virtues

We all have the seeds of love and compassion in our minds. It is called 'Merits and Moral Virtues,' and refers to the infinite merits of our original nature.

However, due to excessive competitiveness and selfishness our moral virtues are becoming weaker. And despite an abundant material civilization ushered in by scientific advances, we are experiencing lower levels of happiness.

We need wisdom and courage to help us recover and cultivate our moral virtues. For this to happen, we need to stop our excessively greedy minds and live in harmony with our true nature. In this way, the moral virtues will be able to manifest naturally.

We should also be leaders of compassion by connecting with the spring of grace in our minds. Then we will be the incarnation of compassion and have grace, which leads to the enjoyable life of paradise.

Second, let's expand the warmth of our empathy.

It seems that many people will experience difficulties this year, which is why warm empathy is truly necessary as a way to encourage people. Usually, people are only compassionate towards those they are close to. If we expand these boundaries, the area of paradise will increase.

Since the very beginning, our morality has been based on the development of a society where humanity can blossom. In these harsh times we should be reaching out to our neighbors in need, sharing their burdens, and planting hope in their hearts. It is also for us to be more considerate and willing to embrace our neighbors who have hardness of heart. Let us take the initiative to make this a world of warm-hearted human beings.

Third, let's build an era of success by working together in unity.

Numerous beings and material things exist together in unity. We are indispensable to each other, in that we cannot live without others. So we should be aware of the principle of cause and effect, which means giving is receiving and receiving is giving. With awareness of this principle, we can build mutually beneficial relationships.

These times call for a spirit of great cooperation so we can focus squarely on the family, the society and the nation.

We are at a critical moment. Deep reflection is required, not only on the relationships between human beings, but on the relationships between humans and heaven and earth. We model our lives on heaven and earth as the source of life, so we are confronting a huge disaster. It is time for a transition, time to return to our mutually beneficial and grace-filled relationship with heaven and earth.

Let's create a world of great cooperation that brings success not just to the individual but to all living beings.

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