

From the Associate Kyomunim

Rev. IlDug Kim

In *Won*-Buddhism, “dedication means an unremitting state of mind, which is the motive force that will achieve the objective when we try to accomplish anything.”

Ven. Sotaesan said, “No matter what one may be doing, whether a person is wholly devoted to it or not depends on how well he understands its connection to him.” Understanding the connection between us and practice is critical. Once we clearly feel that meditation is spiritual nourishment, we cultivate a need to eat that spiritual food. However, we sometimes are unclear about the connection.

When my brother and I were in college, my parents sent us herbal medicine to be taken regularly for a month. My brother finished his, but I still had 20 doses left. He said, “This is not just a medicine, it is my parents’ love and care for me. So I have tried to be mindful to take it on time.” His example showed me that taking the medicine required dedication, which came from mindfulness.

When some beginners shared their delight in spiritual practice to Ven. Daesan, he asked, “Can you keep that mind for 50 years?” They said, “No, we cannot.” Ven. Daesan asked again, “Can you do it for 10 years?” They answered, “Yes, we can.” Ven. Daesan said, “Then, Do it for 10 years, 5 times.” Once you decide to do something, check your mindfulness, and do it for 10 years. If 10 years is too long, do it for 1 year, 10 times.

I pray that all of you continue on your spiritual journey with dedication.



From the Head Kyomunim

Rev. WonGong So

Often when I am doing yard work, a whadu will occur to me. Once when I was raking leaves, I questioned, “How many fallen and rolling leaves are there in this Temple yard? Can I count them at all?” The answer was, “So very many leaves... countless numbers.” I was reminded of the Buddhist mantra, “Sentient beings are countless; I vow to save them all from suffering.” The mantra goes on to say, “My troubled and delusive thoughts are countless; I vow to end them all. The teachings in my dharma path are countless; I vow to learn them all. The Buddha Way is above all; I vow to attain it.” These are the aspirations and vows that all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas carry throughout many life times. When we recite these vows and carry them with us, it means we are walking on the path of buddhas and bodhisattvas.



Ven. Sotaesan, the founding Master of *Won*-Buddhism, guided us with the Ilwonsang vow as a model for our path toward spiritual realization. Following his teaching, I vow to progress, being graced, rather than to regress, being harmed. I vow to practice modeling wholeheartedly after Ilwonsang, the symbol of universal truth and our original true nature. I vow to balance my mind, heart and body. I vow to gain wisdom from life and universal principles. I vow to use my mind, heart, and body mindfully. I vow all these until I attain the great power of Ilwon and until I am united with the essential nature of Ilwon.

I feel as if I am the luckiest person on this earth as I live with these vows, and there are such wonderful dharma friends from the Temple and beyond who are also on this path. Each day is a new day. Joy and bliss are soaring in my heart today and every day.