

New Year's Message

by Rev. T. Kenjitsu Nakagaki

“Always Keep Compassion in Mind”

Happy New Year to you all.

As our economy is getting worse, it is hard for some people to celebrate this particular new year. When people have difficulties, our minds tend to be narrower and to become more selfish. Because of that, I want to emphasize in my greeting that we need to always keep the mind of compassion in our life, especially when we face difficulties. Don't be poor in mind!

Here may be one key to overcome difficulties. When some people face difficulties, they treat it as if this is the end of life. Yet from Buddhistic point of view, when something ends, at the same point something new begins. If one says, “everything is over!” then it means that everything starts anew at this moment. At this time of the year as we count down, we experience the end of the year is the same time of beginning of new year.

In any case, here is a gift of words from “Metta” (Loving Kindness) Meditation. As you keep loving-kindness compassion, your mind should be broader, less selfish, and richer.

May all beings be happy and secure;
May their hearts be wholesome.
Whatever living beings there may be,
feeble or strong, tall, fat, or medium, short, small, or large,
without exception,
seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near,
those who are born or who are to be born,
may all beings be happy.

Let none deceive another, not despise any person whatsoever in any place.
Let him/her not wish any harm to another out of anger or ill-will.
Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life,
even so, let him/her cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings.
Let his/her thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world:
above, below and across
without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity.
(from Sutta-Nipata)

Needless to say, the simplest way of keeping compassion in mind is to say the Nembutsu, “namo-amidabu” which reveals the Buddha of the boundless compassion.

With palms together in Gassho—Nembutsu on New Year's Day of 2009.

