



## 【 To have a theme based on The Three Treasures...】

On January 17 after welcoming the New Year, I went on a missionary trip to Fort Myers, FL, with our branch leader, Yasuko. There are days in Manhattan when the highest temperature can go below **0°C (32°F)**, but on that day it was relatively warm at **2°C(35°F)**. After a 2 hours 30 minutes flight, we arrived to a **19°C(66.2°F)** early summer like warmth at Fort Myers. Wonderfully mild and balmy days continued.

This time, there were total of 16 participants at the Center, both members and non-members.

With Mary as leader, the sutra recitation was held. Thereafter, we held a study session on “the significance of the enshrinement of the Gohonzon (an image of the Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni-our Focus of Devotion) and Gohougo (the Dharma Titles)”

I sensed the sentiment of each participant earnestly seeking the teaching.

This opportunity once again at the beginning of the New Year, gave me a chance to refresh my heart and mind so I also can proceed this year with deeper understanding of the essence of Buddhism and self-realization of being a Buddhist.

Now, the President’s New Year’s Guidance for this year is titled “**Steadfast Work.**” Let us, once again, deepen our understanding of the guidance.

(The first item)

\* **《Taking Refuge in the Three Treasures as a Basis, Have a Theme, and Follow the Bodhisattva Way》**

Here the President said, **A new year has arrived, and I believe that all of our members have expectations in their hearts, and continued with reflections of the past year.**

**Last year was an important turning point as we marked the fiftieth anniversary of the completion of the Great Sacred Hall... I referred to last year as the beginning of the second half-century...(filled with) the spirit in which we would take a step forward together and proceed with fresh outlooks.**

**The reason that our organization’s focus of devotion is a standing statue of the Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni is that it is the symbol of ... forward-looking attitude and dynamism, and we can say these were precisely the wishes of the Founder. I believe that this year we should move forward...as diligently as we can.**

Then he gave us the guidelines for our practice as members. Here, the President said:

**The gist of my remarks for this year has not been different from my remarks for earlier years...I (only wish) that you will always have a fresh frame of mind as you make your efforts.**

**The core of this year’s guidelines are:**

- ① **Based on our taking refuge in the Three Treasures of Buddhism**
- ② **Let us walk the Bodhisattva Way (the path we must walk as human beings)**

As for ①, the President said: **Since 2008, Rishso Kosei-kai has promoted the enshrinement of the Gohonzon (an image of the Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni) in every member’s home. It is in this historical context of Rishso Kosei-kai that taking refuge in the Three Treasures, the fundamentals of Buddhism, is being accomplished.**

To explain the reason for this, he said: **Through the establishment of these basic forms of taking refuge in the Three Treasures—the Gohonzon (the Buddha), the teachings of Shakyamuni (the Dharma) and good friends in the Dharma (the Sangha) - all members can increase their Buddhist self-realization and practice their devotions. This is at the root of our practice.**





In reference to this, the President has, for 3 years in his New Year's Guidance since 2008, declared the following:  
1st year (2008) New Year's Guidance -> From this year forward Gohonzon will be enshrined in every member's home.

To have the Gohonzon enshrined in every member's home allowed the focus of taking refuge and devotion for us, as Buddhists, to become clear. The President has been teaching us that by having the Gohonzon enshrined in the home, which is the primary place for character development, there is a definitive influence on the character development of the youth. And the act of kneeling down (or sitting) in front of the Gohonzon allows everyone in the family to come into contact with and learn the Buddha's teaching, and eventually to live our daily lives repeatedly seeing things from the Buddha's perspective.

Through the task of enshrining the Gohonzon in every member's home, we all started to take steps toward establishing our own outlook on the Gohonzon. That year was, the so-called, year to establish our view on the Gohonzon (the Buddha).

2nd year(2009) New year's Guidance -> He declared "Joyfully learning the Dharma"

And the President explained the meaning of learning (shuugaku) as follows:

"It is to comprehend the Buddha's teaching correctly, and to constantly and repeatedly check our own daily lives in the light of what is learned. In other words, to change from seeing things with just our own point of view, but to defer to see things from the Buddha's point of view. Then, we will see the world around us differently from before.

For example, even if the phenomena remain the same, when we are able to release our attachments and acquire emotional freedom, we can accept things broad-mindedly. Isn't this the true meaning of "when I change others change?" When I read that, I spontaneously put my palms together and bowed deeply thinking, "Yes, President, that is so true." Furthermore, the President has been saying: "When we receive the wisdom of Shakyamuni, our hearts and minds quickly feel freer, more at ease and we will feel happier. Therefore, learning the Dharma is by nature a very joyful experience." I once again reflected that to learn the Dharma (the wisdom of Shakyamuni) is, first of all, to acquire the viewpoint of the Buddha. I felt, through this, the President had indicated the importance of the Dharma in an easy to understand manner.

That year was the year the President declared establishing The Three Treasures as the basis of the (Dharma).

3rd Year(2010) New Year's Guidance -> "Become good friends in the Dharma"

Shakyamuni taught us that "Our having good friends and being with them is itself the entire Sacred (Buddha) Path."

These are group of friends who are walking together on the Path, each striving to "Make Yourself Your Light · Make the Dharma Your Light"

Within these relationships, we can witness the workings of the Buddha. We were taught to discover the value that each person definitely possesses and to revere one another with our palms together. It was the year we worked toward forming a Sangha based on true liberation of Buddhism. It was the establishment of Sangha.

Above-mentioned points are the guidance from those three consecutive years. Then he repeatedly raised the practical teachings over and over again every year and we members tried diligently to apply them. The establishment of the basic forms of taking refuge in the Three Treasures declared by the President in his New Year's Guidance this year materialized through such sequence of events.

I accepted this as becoming aware that the requirement to be a Buddhist is to take refuge in the Three Treasures, "The Buddha · The Dharma · The Sangha," and that to become a genuine Buddhist, we must diligently step up our efforts.

As for ②"Let us walk the Bodhisattva Way (the path we must walk as human beings),"the President said:...we have been entrusted with the mission of walking the Bodhisattva Way (our path as humans) so that the world of great harmony that the Buddha desires for us is realized in the home, the community, the nation, and the world. The driving force for this can be none other than the natural humanity (bright and cheerfulness, kindness, and warm-heartedness) and the loving-kindness and consideration for others in the spirit of Shakyamuni as well as our Founder and Cofounder.

(2nd item)

\*«Be Clear About What You Must Do and Focus on How to Do it»

Here, the President said: In reality, however, our daily lives are too rushed.

• With this in mind, I have said (as part of this year's guidelines) that we should choose a "theme" for focusing our efforts on dissemination.

"Theme" has various meanings such as main topic, wish, target, goal, and the like. Briefly, it refers to something that one should do, something that points to the direction in which to proceed. To develop sincere rapport with someone wishing for "that person to find happiness" is an example of this.

As Buddhists, “To emulate the Buddha and become a compassionate person,” is the ultimate theme for us. When we become aware of this, then we will be naturally guided to what we should be doing now.

· Realities of our daily lives are always likely to become complicated. We would like to come up with various ideas on how to focus constantly on the things that are important. (This) intrinsically has the religious sense of “single-minded concentration on the practice of following the Buddha Way.” The first of the two characters for the Japanese word for “government ministry,” *shouchou*, has two senses of its own—“to eliminate or omit” and “to reflect upon.” To focus on something now, it may necessary for you to eliminate something (else) in order to focus on it. Also, we may fail to direct our attention to, or inadvertently forget, something important... I either file important mottoes as memos or, if necessary, place them in the inside pocket of my coat. There is a word in Japanese, *kun-sen*, meaning a nice, penetrating fragrance, and similarly when I read these or say them out loud they have a way of penetrating my mind.

(3rd item)

\*« Treasure our consideration for others and our natural humanity, and move forward with our feet on the ground » Here, the President mentioned that each of us should clarify our personal theme and take action. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. More than three-quarters of the present population were born after the war...Because of this, hearing what those who experienced the war have to say about their experience and their desire for peace is extremely important in creating the future. Human beings over the course of history have repeatedly engaged in disastrous conflicts. Because of its peace constitution., Japan has enjoyed peace... but there is no guarantee that this will continue for eternity...no matter how peaceful the world we happen to be in...we should never drop our guard in our steadfast work for peace...book on Confucianism has a saying meaning having a morally correct mind and living a virtuous lifestyle lead to an orderly family, a well-governed country, and world peace.” If we apply this to Risho Kosei-kai, when we take refuge in the Three Treasures as our bases and treasure our natural humanity (bright cheerfulness, kindness, and warm-heartedness)... by following the Bodhisattva Way...

That was an outline of the 2015 New Year’s Guidance from the President.

In the 2015 guideline for our faith and practice, the President said: let us engage in our missionary practice with our “theme” - based on our taking refuge in the Three Treasures. In his New Year’s Guidance, I feel he explained this concretely in great variety of ways. I understand that by realizing the value of our own lives and the lives of others we have all been given, and by comprehending the True Path through actual experience, we will be able to see things from the Buddha’s viewpoint.

My theme is to treasure our natural humanity (bright cheerfulness, kindness, and warm-heartedness) and the loving-kindness and consideration for others in the spirit of Shakayamuni, as well as our Founder and Cofounder—to respect myself and to reverently respect every person, with whom I come into contact.

Gassho

New York Church Minister Etsuko Fujita



1/18 Ft. Myers Sangha



Session by Rev.Sugino



# SCHEDULE FOR NEW YORK BRANCH

## February 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 1pm Special Practice of the L.S. Chanting Setsubun-e	<b>2</b> 10am Missionary Mtg	<b>2</b> 2-4pm Branch Leader Meeting 6pm Meditation	<b>4</b> Memorial Service for Founder	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Closed Dharma Prac- tices at home Youth leader Web-ex mtg
<b>8</b> 1pm Sunday Service President Dharma Talk	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Memorial Ser- vice for Co- Founder	<b>11</b> 10AM Monthly Memorial Service	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Closed Dharma Prac- tices at home
<b>15</b> 1PM Nirvana Day Service Sharing Face	<b>16</b> Closed Presidents' Day	<b>17</b> 2-4pm Branch Leader Meeting 6pm Meditation	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Closed Dharma Prac- tices at home On-line Seminar on Internet Min- istry Mtg.
<b>22</b> Closed	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Closed Dharma Prac- tices at home