

September message

Hello, everyone!

Hope you are doing well.



On August 19th, I returned to New York from Tokyo after being away for five months.

At the end of March, I went back to my home in Japan thinking it would be for a short visit, not realizing I would be away for so long. Please accept my apologies for all the inconveniences and concerns I may have caused.

More people than ever have lost their lives due to the unprecedented coronavirus infectious pandemic.

With our heartfelt condolences, we pray that they may rest in peace. We also pray for the speedy recovery of all who are presently receiving treatments in the hospitals.

Let us also express our deep gratitude to the protracted efforts by everyone in the healthcare industry as well as all the essential workers who continuously support our daily lives.

As we enter the month of September, Cofounder's Annual Memorial Day is on the 10th but the service will be held on the 13th and the Annual Memorial Service for the victims of 9.11 will be held on the 11th.

The Special Autumn Memorial Service (*Ohigan-e*) will be held in the latter half of the month. Let us solemnly conduct this special service and reverently offer our gratitude; let us renew our vows and determine our future bodhisattva practice.

At present, we are confronting "coronavirus infectious disease." When we reflect back in the history of humankind, we realize that we have undergone numerous infectious diseases and in each case, they caused significant change in history.

A contributing factor for the decline of the Ancient Greece civilization and the Roman Empire was the fury of the infectious disease, and in the Middle Ages, the widespread outbreak of the "pestilence" called the Black Plague has been attributed to have caused the dismantling of feudalism, the Renaissance, and the religious revolution. Furthermore, that pestilence is said to have first occurred in Asia and through the East-West trade routes of the Mongol Empire that had conquered the Eurasian Continent, it spread widely to India and to Europe.

In South and North America, numerous indigenous people lost their lives because they lacked immunity to smallpox and other infectious diseases brought over from Europe.

When we entered the 20th Century, the widespread outbreak of the "Spanish flu" became rampant causing the death of over 40 million people throughout the world, and greatly amplified the difference in the economy • national strengths between nations.

The present ongoing "coronavirus infectious disease" got on the wave of globalization and, as quick as a blink of an eye, reached the stage of worldwide pandemic. Moreover, rather than having each country in coordination to deal with this infectious disease, the isolation tendency increased, resulting with each country in economic slump and people in distress. Responses to such conditions are varied, with totalitarian cases invoking coercive power of the state to cases trying to hold firm to democracy, giving us glimpses of the changes in the post coronavirus societies

When looking at the actual situation of the world, here in the United States, with the presidential race, movement in opposition to racial discrimination in various parts of the country, damages due to the massive hurricanes occurring so frequently, etc., there are so many issues, it can be overwhelming, and in Japan, Prime Minister Abe's declining health prompted his sudden resignation. Our anxieties for our future are varied and endless.

With such conditions facing us, there are researchers who say that in our society hereafter, there will be further rise in interest to look more deeply into the inner life of human beings, with questions such as: "How human beings should live"; "What is true happiness."

They are also saying that 'economy as top priority' and 'profit seeking only' points of view will be replaced by heightened interest in hitherto neglected philosophy and religion.

Especially at times like now, rather than being swayed by such numerous changes, let us each, one by one, deepen our faith based on the teachings of Buddhism and, without hesitation, devote ourselves to bodhisattva practice. This month, let us take care to practice realistically and effectively, and let us together give our best efforts, day by day.

Gassho

Minister of RKNY

Tomokazu Hatakeyama

