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January 2026 Newsletter

Theme: Living the Great Life — From the Self to the Universe

Hi Everyone:

I hope that this message finds you well & Happy New Year 2026!

And yes, Happy New Year 2026 and yet we are extremely prayerful for all for the challenges we faced in 2025, with many of us facing different illness, some accidents, some economic challenges and others, even loss of close loved ones. And yet we remain together as one, facing a new time, a new day, with hope and faith in our hearts, and thankful for our ever-growing compassion and friendship along the way.

And while I was reflecting on 2025 and then looking forward to 2026, I thought it was interesting that when looked at 2026 from the perspective of numerology, the year 2026 is something meaningful. Indeed, numerologically, **2026 reduces to the number 1** ($2+0+2+6 = 10 \rightarrow 1$).

Notedly, in many traditions, the number one points to beginnings, emergence, and clarity, the moment when something new steps forward after a long period of preparation.

And in Nine Star terms, I believe 2026 can be understood as a year of returning to the “Great Life” as lived support, and not as an abstract truth.

In any event, I see 2026 as a major marker for change that will require us to go ever deeper into the meaning and teachings of Rissho Kosei Kai because we can see by the world’s ongoing challenges, that our period of preparation is gently ending.

As you may recall in December, we reflected on giving the year of our merit in 2025 back to the Buddha through our reflection and practice, so that we could be true and active Bodhisattvas!

January 2026 now invites us to notice what is *emerging* from that depth of practice. And if you are with me, you can sense strongly that 2026 will be energetically and radically different, not because the world suddenly becomes easier, but because our way of standing within it is changing. That is, the blinders are off as it were, and that which was hidden in our society has now been revealed.

In this emerging environment Rissho Kosei Kai’s touchstone phrases like: “Itai Doshin” (Many in Body, One in Mind), for example, becomes more than just a quaint saying, but rather, a literal survival kit for our times.

President Niwano captures this movement and change in history beautifully in his January guidance for 2026, as we can see here, when he quotes the words of Kenji Miyazawa (the noted Japanese writer and poet), written a century ago yet speaking directly to our time:

It is impossible for the individual to be happy until the whole world becomes happy. [For] awareness of the self gradually evolves from the individual to the community, society, and the universe... To live correctly and strongly means to be aware that **the galaxy exists within yourself and to act accordingly.** (President Nichiko Niwano's January 2026 Message).

What is striking here is not a call for us to do something extraordinary, rather it is asking for us to be our best selves in the world, with an awareness that the Buddhist life we now live, is over time, the natural unfolding of an awareness—from “me,” to “we,” and from that we can see that the universe itself exists within us. Just Amazing!

I think that we can see that this insight aligns directly and deeply with the Founder's teaching of **The Great Life**. For, when the Founder spoke of the Great Life, he was not pointing to some distant or exotic power, or an internal special state reserved for a few.

In fact, the Founder when using the term “The Great Life,” was carefully pointing to the very fabric of life itself, the universe itself, as a **“field of interconnected relationships.”** That is, our life, “As Is”, is not something we possess, so much, but as something we participate in.

In this way of seeing, “Life” is not owned, it is enacted, it is participated in, and that in our active participation in it, its true power and sacredness are automatically and naturally revealed. This is why self-reflection and understanding of our essential nature by reading the Kyoten and meditating on it, are so very important.

For as outer notions fall away, we do not lose ourselves, we emerge more fully at one with the Great Life itself and our essential nature shines forth. And this emergence does not require heroics on our part. It does not require perfection. It simply asks us to be sincere and to act from this knowledge. When we do this, we are in resonance with the Lotus Sutra, life itself, and importantly to be vow born or activated in our daily activities.

President Niwano reminds us in his guidance that Miyazawa never sought to indoctrinate anyone; rather, by living honestly and praying for the happiness of all, his words naturally awaken compassion in others. For this, too, is how the Great Life moves, quietly, **relationally**, and most importantly without force or harm to others.

This is why it is so important to realize as we enter 2026:

We do not need to add anything to ourselves to live this year well.

We do not need to become exceptional beings.

We are invited simply to be our true selves, without the armor of isolation.

When we live this way, “We Are One” is no longer a slogan or an idea. It becomes descriptive. Not sameness. Not erasure.

Difference remains. Relationship deepens. Yet, the fiction of isolation loosens its grip.

So, as we begin 2026, perhaps the most helpful question is not *“What should I do?”* but:

What naturally unfolds when I allow my heart and mind to widen?

From the individual,
to one another,
to the world,
to the vast life that holds us all.

Finally, may this year be a turning point not because we force change, but because we trust the Great Life already moving through us. And may we walk forward together with clarity, humility, and quiet courage.

For.....We Are One — Itai Dōshin

Happy New Year 2026!

We are ready for you!

Wishing you the very best always



Gassho

Rev. James Hiroshi Lynch
Minister RKNY