

**2017 NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE**  
**Let's Courageously Share the Joy of Being a Child of God!"**

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Happy New Year!

May 2017 be filled with God's many blessings for you and your family.

Together with the members throughout the country—no, throughout the entire world—let's deepen our prayers, and while making the mind of God our own and aligning our living environment with His will, proceed on the path to world peace brightly and cheerfully. To do this, please read the Seicho-No-Ie President Rev. Masanobu Taniguchi's New Year's Message thoroughly. He teaches us carefully and in detail the path that we members should take. Please share his message with as many fellow members as possible and mutually deepen the bond you have with one another.

In his writings, Founder Rev. Masaharu Taniguchi has written to the effect of the following:

“The grace of the blessings of nature permeate everywhere. The whiteness of the frost, the leaves falling from the trees, the footprints of the little birds left on the frost, the sun rising, the sunny skies, the cloudy skies, the thick fog, the song of a hundred birds, white doves flying, dogs running—when we awaken, we realize that there is nothing that is not a blessing. Our mind's eye opening is, in effect, a New Year. It is not that the calendar day is new, but it is that life has been born anew.”

As we continue to practice the three correct religious practices (Shinsokan meditation, reading of the holy sutras and songs in praise and Seicho-No-Ie books, and practicing deeds of love) that are the foundation of our life of faith, let us keep hold of the “feeling of being born anew” and courageously share the joy of being a child of God again this year!

Thank you very much for your tremendous effort and the many deeds of love that each of you dedicated yourselves to in propagating the teachings in your respective Missionary Area, Regional District, and each base of propagation throughout the 2016 Movement Year. Thanks to the workings of *musubi* that came from your having looked after others with so much care, many people touched upon the teachings and are walking on the path of happiness. Please accept my heartfelt appreciation for your efforts.

I am grateful that the new events we had during 2016 produced various positive results.

In particular, the “Seicho-No-Ie Blessings of Nature Festa” held for the first time in the United States on Saturday and Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, was held in a wonderful environment, thanks to your warm support, and proved to be a wonderful opportunity to show many people the joy of our living together with nature and a way of life related to giving hope to the next generation. It was so successful that there were comments such as, “I can’t wait for the event to be held next year!” In the food booths, there were “no-meat, low-carbon lifestyle” foods, in the arts and crafts corner, there were examples of a “resource-saving, low carbon lifestyle,” and in the walking and group bike ride event, we introduced an “emphasis on nature and a low-carbon lifestyle.” In addition to all of this, there were multicultural performances of dance and song and it was a program that people of all ages could enjoy.

As you know, to realize world peace, there is a need for humankind to change quickly to a life that realizes happiness without destroying nature—in other words, a life that “grows together with nature”—and build a “new civilization.”

We in Seicho-No-Ie have been taught that a “new civilization” comes from the objective of balancing the biodiversity of the entire world and the realization of the happiness of humankind, controlling one’s personal desires, and even when it comes to the use of scientific technology and resources/energy, making choices based on that objective. To do that, human consciousness must grow from a personal level to a level that includes the

region, country, humankind, and all living things on earth. Therefore, International Headquarters, while keeping close ties with the community, is developing its work operations and way of life in the direction of deepening its ties with nature. The “Seicho-No-Ie Blessings of Nature Festa” came from this effort. In other words, share the concrete example of a life that “grows together with nature,” not only with the members but including the people within the community, offer them an opportunity to experience and sense this and thereby elevate their level of consciousness and increase the number of practitioners who live a life that “grows together with nature.” I believe this initiative will expand even further throughout the world. Each Missionary Area will hold a similar event this year, so I do hope you will make every effort to participate in it.

The first Delegates’ Meeting with the officers elected in last fall’s Seicho-No-Ie elections participated in their first (in-person) U.S. Delegates’ Meeting held in December. All participants praised the accomplishments of the outgoing officers and confirmed that they will be filling our organization, which was built by the pioneers of our Movement, with love and harmony, add new ideas appropriate for the times, and make it shine even more brilliantly. Following this, we deepened our mutual understanding of the Movement Policy that will be carried out for the next three years beginning in 2017. I am happy to say that it was a wonderful, harmonious meeting filled with bright hope for the future.

Let us work together under the guidance of each minister and the representatives of your areas again throughout the 2017 Movement Year, and, in an orderly way, develop a bright, positive Movement!

Thank you very much in advance for your cooperation in this coming year.