



KARMA KAGYÜ GEMEINSCHAFT DEUTSCHLAND E.V.

UNTER DER SCHIRMHERRSCHAFT
S.H. DES XVII. GYALWANG KARMAPA OGYEN TRINLEY DORJE

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A New Year Message from the XVII. Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje

Natural disasters, war, political upheavals and the worsening environmental crisis made 2016 a difficult and disturbing year for many people. At the beginning of this new year of 2017, I think it is important to remember once more that we live in an interconnected world. This is based on common sense. If we examine our own lives carefully, we will quickly realise that since before we were born our very existence has depended on the kindness and hard work of others. When we forget this, we can make great mistakes and create many problems, and this leads to an increase in suffering for both ourselves and others.

Likewise, when we seek happiness, it should not be just for ourselves. The self that wishes only for its own happiness is mistaken. From the Buddhist point of view, that self does not even exist in the way we think it does. Seeing ourselves as the centre of the universe is like being trapped inside a prison of our own making. It has a negative, distorting effect on all our relationships. But if we think carefully about how things really exist, we come to understand that essentially there is no difference between ourselves and others. They are a part of us, and we are a part of them.

The Buddha taught that ultimately, the only true and lasting happiness in this world comes from changing our focus from ourselves to others. When we sincerely wish and work for the happiness and benefit of others, we create our own happiness and make our lives truly meaningful. Shantideva expressed this very well in the Way of the Bodhisattva:

May I become at all times, both now and forever: a protector for those without protection; a guide for those who have lost their way; a ship for those with oceans to cross; a bridge for those with rivers to cross; a sanctuary for those in danger; a lamp for those without light; a place of refuge for those who lack shelter; and a servant to all in need.

I pray that in the year ahead, whatever challenges arise, we will find the courage to face them and that through our efforts happiness, peace and well-being will increase in every corner of the world.

