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As people in the world are aware of, Buddhism is about the teachings of non-attachment and the wisdom of contentment. Even if Buddhists are disadvantaged by the others, Buddhists try to adhere to tolerance and concession. In the history of humankind, Buddhism is the most peaceful religion. Because of economic, political and religious greed, the world is burning from suffering. However, Buddhists can shine a light on this world like the full moon that rises on Vesak day.

This Buddhist philosophy and the "Buddhist virtues on social-economic development" may sound distant from each other. I believe this consideration arises when the general misconception gets associated with an idea that considers Buddhism is pessimistic and passive.

I'd like to approach "Buddhist virtues on social-economic development" from an angle of compassion. If Buddhists actively participate in economic development and help those in need with commodities generated from such development, it would be an ideal practice of positive compassion.

The Internet connects the world in real time. Like make other countries, tasks in companies and students' classes in Korea are made possible by connecting to the Internet. On the other side, three billion people who compose half of world's population are isolated from the conveniences of information technology. Also, according to IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development), world's 1.4 billion people live in extreme poverty on under \$1.25 a day. This is the cold reality of the human world.

You all may remember a wealthy merchant called Anathapindika. He built and dedicated Jetavana, which was the first Buddhist monastery. After the Jetvana Monastery, Venuvana Vihara (Bamboo Park), and many other beautiful temples were built and dharma teachings

were delivered. Even though the Jetavana has vanished through time and only some vestiges remain, I believe inside many majestic and splendid Buddhist temples, Anathapindika's earnest heart still remains. If it were not for Anathapindika and other patrons, I wonder if Buddhism would have grown as fast as it has.

Through socio-economic development, we must raise more Buddhist patrons. We should also actively participate and guide such efforts so they progress in a direction that benefits all sentient beings. The effort should not dwell on achieving rapid growth, which will destroy humanity and nature. We must shift the paradigm in order to unify and harmonize everyone. If we can deliver the fruits of our labor to our neighbors in need and through such efforts, the teachings of Buddha can manifest. We then could come a step closer to the utopia of a Buddhahland.

If we approach with the spirit of compassion, we can simultaneously accomplish development in Buddhism and development in our society. Currently, the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism manages "Korean Buddhist Foundation for Social Welfare and Volunteering" with an annual budget of 147 billion Korean won (about 135 million in US dollars). I believe this is an important movement to strengthen the Buddhist community. It has also been a major contribution to spread a positive image of Buddhism in Korea. This is the true power of compassion.

Lately, many countries in the world are experiencing great number of deaths from natural disasters. All of our karmas have gathered to create this samsara. Other

people's pain is no different than my own. I'd like to conclude this congratulatory message with praying for all sentient beings with Buddha's blessings.

Signature

The Most Ven. Jaseung
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