

New Year Prayer to Mother Earth and all Our Ancestors

Dear Beloved Mother Earth,

Dear Ancestors, both Spiritual and Genetic,

We present ourselves before you at this solemn moment of the New Year to express our awareness, our gratitude and our aspiration as a spiritual family. We know that our ancestors are always alive in us and that we can always take refuge in you and in our ancestors.

Dear Mother Earth, breathing in, we see that we and all of our ancestors are your children. With your patience, stability, endurance and creativity you have raised us and guided us through many lifetimes. You have given birth to countless Great Beings, Buddhas, Saints, and Bodhisattvas. You are the great Earth, you are Terra, you are Gaia, you are this beautiful blue planet. You are the Earth Refreshing Bodhisattva—fragrant, cool, and kind. We see that though we and our ancestors have made many mistakes, you have always forgiven us. Each time we return to you, you are ready to open your arms and embrace us.

Because of our wrong perceptions and discrimination we have lived a life of separation, hatred, loneliness, suffering, and despair. We have allowed individualism to prevail, and it has caused a lot of damage and hardship to you and to ourselves. We have run after fame, wealth, power, and sensual pleasures and have forgotten that these pursuits could never bring us true happiness.

We have spent many lifetimes not able to recognize your presence as the Pure Land, as the Kingdom of God, as the most wondrous home that we have. We have run after a distant Promised Land, in heaven or in the future. This has caused us and you much suffering. Tonight as we touch the Earth, we let go and offer you and our ancestors our true presence. We have arrived. You are our home, our only home.

We have learned that only love and compassion can make our lives meaningful, allowing us to protect and preserve your beauty, and allowing us to heal ourselves. We can learn to live as one family -- as a community of brothers and sisters, all children of the same Great Mother Earth, giving our descendants a chance for a healthy and a bright future. We know that only through building brotherhood and sisterhood in the present moment can we make this future a reality.

Dear Mother, tonight, on the occasion of the New Year 2012, we make the vow to learn to live in harmony and peace, in the very heart of our family and our community, just as bees in the same beehive and cells in the same body. We promise that we shall remain openhearted and capable of communicating with the members of our family and our community. We promise to always listen deeply and to use peaceful and loving speech. We shall learn to listen to your voice, Mother Earth, to understand you deeply and to hear your guidance and the guidance of our ancestors. We vow also to listen to our brothers, our sisters, our friends, and to our children so that we may live in peace and harmony with them. We promise to learn to see the happiness and well-being of our family and community as our own happiness and well-being.

Dear Mother, with great reverence, we give rise to the deep aspiration to begin anew. We promise to you and also to our children: that we shall learn to breathe and walk mindfully each moment of our daily life, to use the eyes and ears of the family and community in order to understand, to live simply and to love without discrimination, as you do. We promise to stop running from our suffering, but to recognize, embrace and transform it. Only by understanding our suffering can we heal and touch true happiness, and at the same time, restore your beauty and freshness. You have been calling to us, and some of us have heard your pain. You have been asking us for many lifetimes whether you can count on us. Tonight, with palms joined and with one heart, we say "yes, Mother, you can count on us." We shall practice for you and for all our ancestors so that joy, peace and harmony will become possible again. Please accept our offerings of incense, flowers, fruit, tea, and our love. Yes Mother, we will be faithful to you.