

Prajna

LIGHT OF COMPASSION

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Happy New Year – *Akemashite Omedeto!*

2551 B.E. (Buddhist Era)

From the *Parinirvana* (death of the Buddha)

From May to May by the Lunar calendar

2008 C.E. (Common Era)

From the Birth of Christ

Heisei Niji-nen

20th Year of the Heisei Emperor's Reign

Year of the Rat

Chinese Calendar



A dog, a cat, and a rat

On a recent vacation to Santa Barbara, my wife and I were walking down the main shopping street of State St. when we came across a small crowd encircling what to human beings was an amazing sight. A man was seated on a bench with his pets lying on the ground in front of him. It was a white rat sleeping on the back of a cat who was sleeping on the back of a sleeping dog. Three animals whom humans deem to be genetically programmed to be enemies were quietly sleeping together. This was such an astounding sight, that the man made a fair income by donations made by people wanting to take a picture of his pets. He said that the cat and rat were raised as babies with the older dog and the three had become inseparable.



The fact that this sight could attract human beings all day long was an experience to watch. It is sobering to realize that the single species called human beings can't seem to do this, much less with other species. This failing on the part of human beings might have something to do with the attractiveness of this picture of the dog, the cat, and the rat. We seem to think that unless we have something in common, we cannot get along harmoniously. I am at a loss to see anything in common between the dog, the cat, and the rat – and yet here they are sleeping together. Even if religiously, politically, or culturally we are nothing alike, how is this problematic?

Namoamidabutsu

Rev. Mas