

Happy New Year – AKEMASHITE OMEDETO!

2552 B.E. (Buddhist Era)

FROM THE PARINIRVANA
(DEATH OF THE BUDDHA)
FROM MAY TO MAY BY THE LUNAR CALENDAR

2009 C.E. (Common Era)

FROM THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Heisei Nijichinen

21ST YEAR OF THE HEISEI EMPEROR'S REIGN

Chinese Calendar Year

YEAR OF THE OX



Connected and disconnected thoughts

It is common to hear when someone has a serious illness or finds himself in a tragic circumstance, "I am dealing with it one day at a time". Why do we not then say the same thing in happier circumstances? Whatever comes this day is fine, tomorrow will have to wait. Let your Samsaric self fret over the future and over the past, to make plans, attempt to control, to guide, to steer, etc. Let the present moment be for sheer enjoyment, for playing in the pure land. Going to and coming from the pure land is not linear but circular or spiral. Linear is working hard to make money so that you can enjoy yourself later. Circular is enjoying your work and play. Linear needs to be in control, circular is already rolling. Carefully planned vacations are more often than not boring, making the unfamiliar familiar before encountering it. Butterflies before a performance usually make for a spectacular performance. Kinnara gagaku and bugaku performances are usually much better when the rehearsal is a disaster. Why are the first two years after retirement so dangerous - Deaths within two years after retirement are frequent among Nisei and Sansei - not so the Issei. Why? Could it be because play was put off until retirement - only to discover that they did not know how to play? Play has no purpose other than to

enjoy, it does not calculate, it does not objectify itself, it does not worry about what others think, it simply enjoys - in the same way that the Bodhisattvas are said to go to the Pure Land to play. In the land of truth, beauty, and light, what else is there to do but play? And play is infectious - it removes anger, greed, and stupidity in all who observe it - and the Three Poisons of anger, greed, and stupidity, after all, are what make the world go around - squeaking and groaning all the while. I once saw a little girl on a hill squealing in delight as the wind blew in her hair - it made my day and kept me civilized for two days more. Namoamidabutsu is the "wowness" of the moment wherein there is nothing to do but enjoy, and in hindsight say "thanks". When you are connected to what you observe, there is no observation, only participation. When you are observing your connection to things, you are playing at playing. Namoamidabutsu is so much more to the point.

Gassho,

Rev. Mas