

Broader View

By Rev. T. Kenjitsu Nakagaki

A Happy New Year to you all! May the year 2008 be filled with joy and happiness, embraced by the Boundless Compassion and Wisdom of Amida Buddha.

This year will be my fourteenth year of serving the New York Buddhist Church as your resident minister. It is amazing how fast the time has passed. (Thanks for your support during these years!) Certainly various experiences that I have had enriched my life as well as my understanding of the Buddha-Dharma.

In last month's newsletter, I talked about the importance of learning and experiencing the Dharma with your own body and mind, instead of Dharma on the desk. The important part of learning with your body is that our views become broader, deeper and more open. Knowing the larger world also means knowing our narrowness, limits and smallness. In New York, I have met many accomplished individuals in various professions, whom I really admire. Knowing such people, I feel that I am not mature enough. In a way, being in New York City means meeting various Bodhisattvas incarnated from the Buddha-World. I feel like that I am learning many teachings from living Bodhisattvas who depart from the sutra-books.

When Shinran Shonin met his master Honen, I believe, Shinran must have been impressed by not only Honen's teachings, but also by the openness and vastness of Honen himself. Knowing the broad and profound world of Honen made Shinran say, "Even though I go to hell, being deceived by Honen, I have no regrets."

Shinran Shonin was always looking at the great vast world of the Dharma, formed by the universal vows of Amida Buddha. He must have lived life in the ocean-like Nembutsu-Dharma with an open and joyful mind. My favorite expression of Shinran is "My mind is rooted in the Wisdom Ground of the Universal Vow, and my thoughts are floating in the inconceivable Dharma-Ocean."

May the new year invite you to the vast world of the immeasurable light and life, called "Amida."

Namo to the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, teachers and
Even to those whom you don't care for or you don't like
With respect and value all lives.

You and I, she, he, they and we,
Even animals, insects and vegetations
Are equally important as living beings in the eyes of Enlightenment
Rare is it to gain such vast world of non-dualistic wisdom of the Buddha. 🌀