

## NEW YEAR'S GREETING

*"Immeasurable Light and Life."*

At the beginning of the new year, I would like to send you my greetings from Hongwanji in Kyoto.

Last year was truly a difficult year. At first I had hoped that from April, we could conduct an exciting and lively memorial for Shinran Shonin, one which is observed only once every fifty years. However, the March disaster changed everything. Although I believe that the agony of the disaster-affected people goes beyond anything we can imagine, this catastrophe has brought me to ponder everyday about what we should do, what we can do, and what the future holds. The nuclear power plant accident, in particular, has caused tremendous difficulties for not only the victims in that area, but has also hindered the enthusiasm of people engaged in relief and restoration activities, as well as plunging the future of not only Japan, but also the entire planet into uncertainty and apprehension.

At the same time, we are truly grateful for the monetary and material contributions for our relief efforts and condolences that the people throughout the world have been sending to Japan.

It is easy to grasp the meaning of the sentence "Everything is impermanent," but extremely difficult to accept the truth which it expresses. Being aware of the working of Amida Tathagata's wisdom and compassion could enable you to take a step forward in accepting and realizing this stark truth.

Massive earthquakes and unsettling weather patterns that caused great famine had also taken place during Shinran Shonin's time. It is certain that the teaching clarified by Shinran Shonin, including shinjin, the heart entrusting to Other Power and our expression of gratitude as the Nembutsu, corresponds the experiences that he actually went through. In saying Namu Amida Butsu and following the path to the Pure Land where we can attain Buddhahood, we are able to find possibility of solving the issues lying deep in our minds, which cannot be resolved merely by our own attempts and efforts.

We saw a variety of aspects in the tsunami disaster, namely, some past experiences that were well-employed, while others were totally forgotten or ignored, and we were also faced with our excessive trust in scientific technology. How we should control our endless desire that we can never rid ourselves of as long as we are foolish beings and how we can make use of our limited wisdom and capability are issues that I have accepted as our assignment for the new year. Keeping in mind that all life is embraced in the Light of Amida Tathagata, together, let us walk forward.

January 1, 2012

OHTANI Koshin

Monshu, Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

光寿無量

新しい年の初めにあたり、京都の本願寺よりご挨拶申し上げます。

昨年は本当に大変な年でした。五十年に一度のご勝縁である親鸞聖人の大遠忌法要を四月からにぎにぎしく、お勤めできると思っていたのですが、三月の大地震によって事態はすっかり変わりました。被災者の方々の苦悩は想像を越えるものと思いますが、京都にいる私は、何をすべきか、何ができるのか、将来はどうなるのだろうかと思いを巡らす日々でした。特に、原子力発電所の事故は、被害者の困難だけでなく、支援活動の熱意を削ぐとともに、日本の将来や地球の将来を不安におとしれました。

世界各地の方々が心配してくださり、義援金などのお見舞いをしてくださいましたこと、まことに有り難うございます。諸行無常という言葉は理解しやすいですが、その現実を受け容れることは容易ではなく、その先へ進むためには、阿弥陀如来の智慧と慈悲のはたらきが大きな力となってくださると思います。親鸞聖人の時代にも、大地震があり、気候不順から飢饉がたびたびあったと伝えられています。他力の信心、お念仏一つという教えは、親鸞聖人のご体験と相応しているに違いありません。できることをするだけでは満たされないこころの奥底の課題は南無阿弥陀佛によって往生成仏の道を歩むところに解決の可能性があります。

津波災害では、過去の経験が活かされたところ、忘れられたところ、無視されたところ、あるいは、科学技術を過信したところなどがありました。凡夫の限りない欲望をどのように抑え、限りある智慧や能力をどのように活かすかは、新しい年の課題だと受け取りました。あらゆるいのち、阿弥陀如来の光の中にあることを思いつつ、共に歩む日々を過ごしたいと思います。

2012年1月1日

浄土真宗本願寺派

門主 大谷光真