

With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year

2020-2021

"Christmas comes but once a year, and when it comes it brings good cheer." So we are now once again in the festive season, and the time has come for me to write a Christmas letter. I'm still healthy at 94, but I have a few of those minor ailments that come with old age.

If I can, I always begin with some notable event, and this year once again I have a good opportunity. On February 23rd the Emperor Naruhito celebrated his 60th birthday, and this is an auspicious age in China and Japan. There are two series of years by which events are calculated, one of ten years and the other of twelve years, and these keep



repeating. So suppose that in the year when you are born one series has got to the year 4 and the other to the year 7, the same combination won't occur again until you are 60. I won't try to describe the series of ten, but the series of twelve consists of twelve animals, so it's now known in English as the zodiac. We are now in the year of the Rat, and next year will be that of the Ox (Bull?, Cow?).

As I now write, it is November, and November 3rd was the birthday of the Emperor Meiji, the first Emperor of modern Japan, who reigned from 1867 to 1912. In 1920 a shrine was built in his honour, just exactly 100 years ago; it is, as you might guess, called the Meiji Shrine, and is a favourite place of pilgrimage. On Meiji's birthday the Emperor would usually go to the shrine, but this year he abstained because of this wretched coronavirus.

At Christmas time I expect to be asked to read a passage from the Bible, which will form one of the lessons at the Christmas morning service. This year, they will play a recording which I will make here in my room. I continue to be in quarantine in my room, but am now allowed to have up to two visitors, whom I meet in a room downstairs.



With my warmest greetings,

Hugh E. Wilkinson



Christmas 2019 at Tokyo Union Church



My 94th Birthday with Arisuno-mori staff



Halloween 2020 with Kyoko and Noriko