



Three Wheels NEWS



London Shogyoji Trust

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ANNUAL PEACE AND RECONCILIATION CEREMONY

On the 15th August the Annual Reconciliation Ceremony was held at Three Wheels and was attended by sixty-seven people; including representatives from the Japanese Embassy, Burma Campaign Society, Japan Society and also the Nipponzan-Myohoji, Jodo Shin-shu, Rinzai-shu, Tendai-shu and Theravada Buddhist traditions. Most notably two surviving veterans of World War II, and long-standing members of the reconciliation movement, Mr Philip Malins and Mr Maurice Franses joined the meeting as they have every year to date.

Taking in the wonderful atmosphere amongst all those gathered together for the meeting Reverend Kemmyo Sato spoke of the Japanese Buddhist term 'metsugo no riyaku' which means 'benefits received after death'. Reverend Sato said that since the death last year of Mr. Masao Hirakubo, the guiding light of the reconciliation movement, all that he has done for us has become clearer and clearer. As such, even as the number of surviving war veterans has sadly been dwindling, the spirit of peace transmitted by Mr Hirakubo, Mr Philip Daniels and other sadly missed figures has continued to spread and develop.



The Japanese Consul General Mr Sumio Kusaka

Formally opening the Ceremony of Prayer and Remembrance Consul General Sumio Kusaka concurred with Reverend Sato's sentiment and thanked "all those people who dedicated their time and energy to this worthy cause". He then helped set the tone for the ceremony by sharing an account of Stephen Metcalf, the son of British missionaries in China, who spent his teenage years in a Japanese internment camp. The Consul General had met Stephen Metcalf on 30th July at a Reconciliation Reception at the Japanese Embassy and been very moved by his story.

During his captivity Metcalf met the teacher and famous runner Eric Liddell, of 'Chariots of Fire' fame, who taught him about

forgiveness and how to pray for his enemies before he died whilst still a prisoner. Inspired by his late mentor Metcalf travelled to Japan in 1952 where he stayed for thirty-eight years sharing the message of peace. Minister Kusaka said that since coming to the UK and having such experiences he has come to feel that "we must learn much more about what we Japanese did and what took place during the war ... to think about the past and those who suffered and what can be done now toward the future."

A Buddhist ceremony then followed in which members of the afore-mentioned traditions chanted scriptures as a prayer for peace whilst representatives of the Japanese Embassy, Burma Campaign Society and Three Wheels offered incense in remembrance and gratitude to those who have died through warfare.

Closing the religious ceremony Mr Philip Malins and Mr Maurice Franses read out the famous poems 'Exhortation' and 'Kohima Epitaph'. Everyone was particularly moved by Mr Franses' reading as they listened to him use all the strength in his frail body to recite the vow held so very deeply and firmly in his heart all these years. A minutes silence was then observed.

The keynote address of the meeting was given by Mr Andrew Webb and took the form of an appreciation of an essay recently published by the Shogyoji Archives Committee entitled 'How Faith Inspired the Save the Bell Movement.' As well as giving a brief account of the various peace activities in which Shogyoji has been involved over the years Mr Webb particularly sought to describe the spirit of the late head Priest Venerable Master Daigyoin whose exceptional mind of faith was and still is the driving force behind all of the temple's endeavours. As Mr Webb's talk will likely be published in the Three Wheels newsletter and on the website I will not go into detail. However a succinct expression of Daigyoin-sama's profound religious



**Mr. Maurice Franses and his wife Jean
during the ceremony**

consciousness may be found in his response to the atomic bombing of Japan; "Alas, that holocaust is what has been caused by my own state of ignorance." As Mr Webb pointed out, this extraordinary and "uncompromising confession" reveals Master Daigyoin's awareness that the cause of war is to be found within each individual and can only be overcome through the foundation of 'inner peace' rooted in 'the world of awakening'. Following Mr Webb's talk the meeting was addressed by representatives of some of the communities and organisations involved with the reconciliation movement. A letter from Mr Satoru Yanagi, a Japanese veteran and member of Shogyoji temple, was read out on his behalf due to poor health preventing him from attending the ceremony. In his letter Mr Yanagi paid tribute to veterans such as Mr Hirakubo, his Buddhist friends and teachers, and his family, for supporting him on his journey of healing and forgiveness. "Looking carefully at the current world situation," he said, "I do not think we can expect world peace to prevail for all mankind with no discrimination. Therefore I, a veteran of the cruellest war ever experienced, will continue shouting out to the world as loudly as possible that war, regardless of outcome, leaves only a sense of helplessness and enormous sacrifice."

Mr Malins, a British veteran, echoed Mr Yanagi's feelings and pointed out that history clearly indicates the importance of reconciliation. It was after all, he said, the spirit of revenge and reparation after the First World War that led inevitably to the Second. He also poignantly said that when his generation have all passed away "the last obstacle to reconciliation will be gone."

Whilst this may be true in one sense it is of course equally true that if we forget the cruelly learnt wisdom of Mr Malins' generation then future suffering will be inevitable.

Mrs Akiko MacDonald, chair of the Burma Campaign Society, spoke of her motivation for getting involved in the reconciliation movement as someone with a British husband and thus living within two cultures. She then shared some correspondence she had had with a Japanese veteran who having grown-up in Hawaii found himself fighting in the Japanese military against the country which had nurtured him through his childhood. His background, with roots in both countries, allowed him to see the futility of the war and to feel sympathy for those he was taught that he should hate. Since the war he has therefore adopted the name of an American P.O.W, with whom he was friendly, as an act of remembrance.

Mrs Phillida Purvis of Links Japan thanked Reverend Sato for his support of the peace movement and spoke of her hope that the reconciliation between Japan and Great Britain can become a model by which Japanese people can also become reconciled to their neighbours in Korea and China.

The meeting concluded with a buffet meal during which Prof. Ryugo Matsui showed a video presentation he had made of interviews with veterans and members of the Burma Campaign Society.

Andy (Kyoshin)

Editor's note: The text of Andrew Webb's talk 'To Build an Everlasting Temple' can be found on the Three Wheels website: www.threewheels.co.uk

A Letter of Thanks

Editors note: This letter was read out after the ceremony to pray for world peace and reconciliation.

Namu-Amida-butsu

Dear Dharma friends in London,

Although I am constrained by illness to remain in Japan, it gives me great pleasure to feel myself part of your gathering there at the London Eza.

It was in 1973 that I first had the occasion to visit Shogyoji Temple. Problems concerning my eldest son brought me to the temple to listen to the Buddha-dharma. Before that, due to my own foolishness, I had known very little about Buddhism, ignorant even of the simple way of saying the nembutsu with palms together.

Born in the United States, where I lost my father at the age of five, I was working very hard before that first visit to the temple to support myself and my family and, regrettably, had never taken the time to think about all my own parents had done for me. My eldest son was causing me a great deal of anxiety around that period, as he had stopped going to school after being involved in a traffic accident while still at high school. Thus I went to Shogyoji seeking a way to solve this very serious problem.

In the course of my introspective session, I began thinking of my father who had been taken ill and died in the U.S.A., leaving four young sons behind on foreign soil, and this in turn made me think of my mother and all the difficulties she had had to face alone without the support of my father. This led me to pronounce the nembutsu from the bottom of my heart for the first time in my life.

Then, in January 1973, although I was not yet fully aware of the true nature of the wonderful experience of attaining faith,

I was given the opportunity to express, with tears in my eyes, my heartfelt gratitude in the Buddha Hall of Shogyoji Temple. I had this marvellous feeling of being supported by the nembutsu of the entire congregation of Dharma friends and, just as I left the Buddha Hall and stepped outside, the sun began to rise. Every leaf of every tree shone like gold and suddenly it felt as if everything and everybody I re-encountered there were welcoming me in a holy radiance. I have never forgotten the profound emotions I experienced that morning, not even now so many years later.

After my connection with Three Wheels brought me into contact with the late Mr. Hirakubo, I visited you all many times. Although I myself made no contribution, you always made me welcome and my gratitude is beyond words. My repeated visits to London strengthened my prayer for world peace and for the inner peace of all involved, as I thought back to my own painful memories of the last World War.

In his teaching, Venerable Chimyo Takehara, Head Priest of Shogyoji temple, always emphasizes the importance of "establishing inner peace within ourselves."

I heard, too, that the late Pope John-Paul II, while visiting Nagasaki, declared, "Peace is the greatest treasure of our hearts."

Despite the sadness of the deaths of both Mr Hirakubo and Phillip Daniel, we can be very grateful to them for impressing on us the importance of thinking of peace from an international perspective.

The only source of joy left me now is to do service to the Buddha, mornings and evenings, and, though I am afraid my

way of chanting sutra may be somewhat out of tune, I follow the same order of service as at Shogyoji Temple every morning, including reading out a letter from the *Letters* by Rennyō Shōnin.

My eldest son, on whose account I first visited Shogyoji, made his journey to the Pure Land the year before last. He used to remind my wife and me of the words of Genshin Sozu, “No matter how shallow our faith, we are assured of salvation when we entrust ourselves to Amida Buddha, because of the immeasurable depth of Amida’s Original Vow .” He also used to speak of the importance of entrusting ourselves to Amida Buddha. I am not sure if he himself really understood what he was saying at the time, but I now accept those words in gratitude as coming from Buddha himself.

Looking carefully at the current world situation, I do not think we can expect world peace to prevail for all mankind with no discrimination. Therefore I, a veteran of the cruelest war ever experienced, will continue shouting out to the world as loudly as possible that war, regardless of outcome, leaves only a sense of helplessness and enormous sacrifice.

Finally, together with the late Mr Hirakubo and Phillip Daniel, I would like to send you all the greeting, “Shalom!”, that is, ‘peace be with you’ in Hebrew.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Satoru Yanagi

SPRING SCHOOL

Editor’s note: The 10th Spring School took place between 25th of March and 6th of April 2009. Nine people (six pupils, a young man, a young lady and a priest) all flew over to London from Japan to take part in this educational session to promote spiritual development. For most of those participating this was their first taste of a foreign country. Of course they enjoyed visiting the usual tourist spots such as the British Museum, Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, the Royal Observatory at Greenwich, Buckingham Palace and so forth. The special feature of their Spring School experience, however, was that they also attended Service to the Buddha mornings and evenings. In addition to this religious attendance, the young people also read a sutra entitled *The Sutra on the Gravity of What Has Been Done by Our Parents*. They all visited Coniston in Cumbria and climbed Old Man Mountain where eight stones of the twelve used in the Zen garden at Three Wheels come from. They also visited University College London where they were given a very warm welcome. Here are three of the moving essays by those spring school students.

Kenta Saito

High school second former, aged sixteen.

Namu-Amida-Butsu

Mindful of the general theme of the Spring School, ‘An inner journey in search of ourselves’ I can say that I have enjoyed my journey here in England.



The pupils at UCL

Starting the day after our arrival at Three Wheels, London, and continuing for all of the next twelve days, we read through the *Bumo Onjyu Kyo (The Sutra of the Gravity of What Has Been Done for Us by Parents)* two whole times. That sutra reminded me of all the incalculable things my parents have done for me. On the second reading important points that I had missed the first time round became a whole lot clearer to me and I felt I was being led by the sutra to appreciate one after another all the things my parents had done for me.

The realization of the fact that, ever since my birth and right up to the present, my parents had been caring for me above everything

else, neglecting their own concerns, pleased me very much indeed. What I now realized too, however, was, unconsciously or not, how deeply my selfish behavior must have wounded my parents. Until this point I had not been aware of so many of the things my parents had done for me. I have so often missed the opportunity of expressing my heartfelt appreciation to them personally, even when I knew I should have done so.

Kenshin san, after reading my impressions of Spring School written in Cumbria, asked me to try and look at myself through my parents’ eyes rather than through my own. Since then I have always been in search of my true self, asking myself who I really am. Seen from my parents’ viewpoint, I feel how selfish I am! I have been taking it absolutely for granted, for example, that my parents should make meals for me every day. If I were in their position I wonder if I would be so willing to do whatever they asked of me, neglecting my own concerns.

All these thoughts have led me to feel more and more grateful towards my parents. I really want to respond to them in a way that will show my gratitude for all they have done for me out of selfless love. I would like to make a start by doing whatever I can.

But it is not a question of giving back to them in the way things were given to me. I am not thinking of some sort of system of “give-and-take.” Rather, I would like to respond to them with gratitude for all that they have done for me.

What I could do now, perhaps, is relieve them as much as possible of the burden that is me by doing things for myself as much as possible, as well as by giving them a helping hand around the house. In this way I would like to become independent in the true sense of the word. The first thing I want to do when I get back home is to bow down to them in the most humble and sincere way and say “thank you” to them from the bottom of my heart for everything they have done for me, as well as to say “sorry ” for all my past misbehaviour .

I really enjoyed our London tour with my friends. The people we came across were, needless to say, foreigners to me. They spoke English obviously. The buildings were different from those in Japan. All the shops I visited were very impressive and comfortable. We were visiting so many different places on our tour, the schedule was sometimes a bit tight, but London never once made me feel bored.



In front of the Stupa of Namu Amida Butsu at Brookwood Cemetery

Of the many places we visited in London, UCL made the greatest impression. I also very much enjoyed our three day trip to the Lakes, especially to Lake Windermere for tea. We appreciated both the sandwiches and the beauty of the lake. Indeed, everything was like a dream. Afterwards we climbed up a mountain called the Old Man. Although we did not manage to climb right up to the top, the view even from half way up was breathtaking, unlike anything one might expect to see in Japan. It was a pity it was rather misty.

Before coming to England, I cherished a dream of coming here one day and I really wanted to communicate with English people in their own language. While I was here in England, therefore, I tried to be with Andrew san, who kindly accompanied us on our London tour, so that I could have lots of chances of speaking to him in English. Regrettably, however, my shyness and lack of confidence in my English ability prevented me from speaking to him. All the same it has led me to make up my mind to study English as hard as possible after I go back to Japan.

Those good memories of Spring School, I know, will stay with me for the rest of my life.

Toko Ebikai

Junior high school first former, aged twelve.

In the course of my stay at Three Wheels attending the tenth Spring School I have had the chance to read *“The Sutra of the Gravity of What Has Been Done by our Parents”* and have been awakened to two important points.

The first of these is how selfish and self-centered I have been. As an only daughter with two older brothers I have always left it to others to do the things my parents asked of me, instead of saying “yes” straight away and doing the things myself. Had I been the one asking my parents to do something and they had wanted me to wait, there is no doubt I would have been really impatient and would have insisted they do whatever it was straight away. My parents have always been so accepting of me and tolerant of my laziness, whereas I have been so impatient, asking them to do this, that and the other without ever attempting a proper

conversation. I realise now that it is because I have always played the role of a baby in my dealings with my parents. When I go back to Japan, I want to be someone who can say “yes” to my parents wholeheartedly and without hesitation.

Secondly I have been awakened to what has been done for me by my parents. I had never given all they had done for me much thought but had always taken the loving care with which they brought me up for granted.

As regards all that our parents have done for us I have learned there are ten kinds of parental love:

1. Mothers keep and protect us in their womb.
2. Mothers suffer pain in childbirth.
3. Mothers forget their pain when they see their new born babies.
4. Mothers nourish us with their milk.
5. Parents sleep in the damp in order for us to sleep in the dry.
6. Parents make sure we have clean clothes.
7. Parents make do with leftovers so we can have nice food.
8. Parents protect us even if that means creating evil karma.
9. Parents always think of us when we are far way.
10. Parents absolutely love us just as we are.

Although I have received so much love from my parents, right from the time I was in my mother’s womb, I have never ever thanked them and it really pains me now. Of the ten kinds of parental love, I have a special attachment to the ninth because I experience it often in daily life. Whenever I come back from somewhere far away, my mother always asks me with loving kindness if everything went well. I remember what a flat answer I gave her when she asked me where I was going. With all my heart I am really sorry for the nasty way I replied to my parents. Consciously or not I have been hurting them and I would like to say “very sorry” and “thank you very much” when I see them again in Japan.

Apart from that, we visited various places in the two weeks of this tenth Spring School. Although I was a little nervous to start with, this was my first journey abroad and I had high expectations. Seeing Big Ben on the 1st day after our arrival here was really exciting. It was also great that by going on outings together we could all make good friends. I was most impressed by the view of London from the London Eye. I was able to see the entire city including some places we had already visited. We had fun taking photos of one another. Covent Garden was also an unforgettable place and we had a good time chatting and shopping in the streets there with a Chinese lady called Tamaki-san.

Spring School will end soon. On my return home I shall be a junior high school student. I shall never forget what I have learned here and I want to do my best in my new school.

Yuri Sato

Junior high school first former, aged 12

Namu-Amida-Butsu

Ten days have already passed since our arrival in London on 25 May. During this time I have been taught a great many things by all of you at Three Wheels, as well as by the young helpers who came from Shogyoji for this educational course.

As this Spring School draws to an end I am still thinking very hard about the teaching of *The Sutra of the Gravity of What Has Been Done for Us by Parents (jp. Bumoonjukyo)* that we have been reading since the beginning of Spring School.

I ask myself “Do our parents adopt the same selfish attitude as we children do whenever asked to do something?” I have been awakened to the fact that, although I have always assumed I knew my parents, in fact I don’t know them at all. Our parents who have been taking care of us since our childhood have their own ways of thinking, which are never revealed to us children. Accordingly I never realised before how much they had been thinking of us.

I remember when I was much younger making my mother cry. Although I have forgotten the reason for it, I know I was clinging to my father, saying “I like you, Daddy, much better than Mummy.” When my mother tried to hug me, I refused. This happened in their bedroom one night with my mother weeping in the bed.

I really appreciated reading *The Sutra of the Gravity of What Has Been Done for Us by Parents* and it brought back this very strong memory. It was eight years ago that I made my mother cry like that and my heart still aches as I read the sutra. I feel as if I am heavily burdened with bad karma. I feel I have committed a grave offence.

Of the five grave offences, there is one called “killing parents.” I really feel I have committed that offence, that I have wounded my mother very deeply.

Because of my lack of maturity I have been behaving very selfishly and caused my parents a lot of grief, whilst casting just myself in the role of tragic heroine. As for my piano lessons, I have often been cross with my mother. I didn’t really want the lessons because I never enjoyed them. But now I’m glad I’m learning the piano. Thanks to my mother I can enjoy the piano.

My mother kept saying to me, “If you stopped your lessons, you would regret it later.” I didn’t believe her at the time. Now that I have understood how much my mother has always been thinking of my best interests, I cannot help wanting to see her. I would like to apologize to her for my past bad behaviour and thank her for all the things she has done for me. I really want to change for the better.

When we had meetings about *The Sutra of the Gravity of What Has Been Done for Us by Parents*, I was given time to reflect on my relationship with my brothers. I hated my elder brother. All our childhood we have had constant quarrels. I always believed he was in the wrong. But why have I never shown respect to my brother who is a good two years older than I? If I had respected him and shown a bit more humility, there would not have been any trouble between us. Why can I not be kind and gentle towards my brother who really deserves my respect, seeing that he is a whole two years older? Why am I like this, when I know full well that such an attitude pains my parents? Whilst looking into myself, I felt afraid of what I had done in the past. I wanted to run away from myself. I wanted to erase my past as if nothing bad had ever happened. When my mentor kindly reminded me that in an earlier essay I had written that to investigate oneself was of vital importance, I learned even to fear running away from myself. I did not know how to solve the problems of the past. In response to Kemmyo san’s prompting, however, I have found the direction to take. I want to continue receiving spiritual guidance from Shogyoji Temple. I know that there is a master there able to teach me how to solve the problems in my life.

THREE WHEELS GARDEN OPENING DAYS 2009

Yet again we opened our Zen Garden to visitors for two afternoons in May this year. The first day was 16th May when we welcomed 29 visitors. The weather was not particularly wonderful—it was damp with a chilly north wind and some strong gusts almost blew the entrance marquee off the ground.



Prof. John White in the Garden

On Sunday 17th, the weather was much improved, and the sun shone on all of us. The number of visitors increased to 60 and delighted us all.

Regardless of the weather on both days, all the visitors were most enthusiastically and warmly welcomed into the garden, and Prof. John White, who braved 2 days of cold and wind without a hint of flagging, enthralled them all with his comprehensive and

captivating talks. As usual the two Tea-Masters, Chizuru-san and Kumiko-san, together with some helpers who were dressed in Kimonos, served lovely green tea to whoever wished to take part in the ceremony. The average length of stay per visitor was over 50 minutes.



Kumiko-san and Chizuru-san preparing the tea

I, for one, chatted with some Dharma friends and got to know them better, and over the two days, many opportunities were provided for encounters and re-encounters. One particular meeting must be mentioned. A visitor who came for the second year running, whose first meeting with Kenmyo-san led to him attending the August Eza and bringing with him to the Eza, a number of his friends from the Zen Group to which he belongs.

We will be taking part again in the National Garden Society in 2010 to raise funds for NGS supported British Charities. Considering the current, challenging economic climate support of this kind is even more important for the majority of charitable organizations so that they can carry on playing their vital roles in the society. Please continue giving your support and participate

again in the running of the garden opening next year at Three Wheels.

The scheduled dates are May 8th and 9th 2010(Saturday and Sunday) and June 19th and 20th 2010(Saturday and Sunday), and the opening times will be from 2.00pm to 5.30pm.

Etsuko Crellin

THIRD SHOKAI RETREAT

Exploring Shin Buddhist Practice at Three Wheels

Editor's note: *Shokai retreats are held bi-annually at Three Wheels, usually in May and October. If you are interested in attending please contact Rev. Kemmyo Taira Sato for more information.*

Our third Shokai Retreat was held at Three Wheels from Friday 22nd until Sunday 24th May 2009. Including the priests and *taya* residents of Three Wheels there were 22 participants, 6 of whom were attending for the first time. The theme of this Shokai was 'Practice' (*gyo*) based on the second chapter of the *Kyogyoshinsho* by Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhism.

After a short service, Shokai began with a 'Vow of Sincere Practice' given by Mr Sam Kelly on behalf of all the participants. Standing in front of the Buddha Shrine, Sam in the vow he had composed, began by expressing gratitude to the Head Priest and Samgha of Shogyoji Temple from whom "The jewel of the Samgha shines through".

Reverend Kemmyo Sato then gave a free talk to open our third



The participants of the Third Shokai

On Saturday morning Andy (Kyoshin) gave his talk on 'The Paradox of Practice' the theme of which was the relationship of practice to Dharmakara's 17th Vow 'that all Buddha's extol the Name [of Amida Buddha]'. Looking with great sincerity and honesty over his life experience in which he struggled with the idea of practice, both before and after his encounter with Shin Buddhism, Andy unravelled the various, often conflicting notions of what practice means and how his understanding of it deepened in the ongoing process of following the Buddha – dharma in his daily life.

Saturday afternoon was taken up with a work session or *Sagyo* ('working in the Samgha'). Introducing the session, Reverend Ishii asked us to think of the reasons why we do *Sagyo* and the attitude we should have towards this kind of practice. Reverend Ishii shared his own idea of *Sagyo* with the example of his own daily work at Three Wheels, undertaking such tasks as making flower arrangements for the Buddha shrine and raking the Zen Garden. He explained that these activities were a way of expressing gratitude to the Buddha.

Our evening meditation session was introduced and guided by Mr Dave Zimmerman who has been assisting at the weekly meditation group at Three Wheels for a number of years. Dave introduced us to the various ways in which we can sit the correct posture to take and the breathing techniques we can use. With great knowledge and enthusiasm, Dave provided support and encouragement for everyone whatever their experience of meditation. We had two sessions of sitting for 30 minutes, for the second session some of us sat together on the viewing platform of the Zen Garden as the sunset began.

After breakfast on Sunday morning Mr Andrew Webb gave a talk he had prepared on 'The Relationship between Faith and



During the talk

Shokai. He began by expressing his deepest gratitude to everyone for attending from towns and cities all over the country. It was, Reverend Kemmyo related, "one of the happiest days of my life to see everyone together at this Shokai". Reverend Kemmyo continued by exploring the ways in which we can encounter the working of Amida Buddha's Eternal Life and Light. Amida's Light holds and embraces us always, Kemmyo-sensei said, shining out through individual people and things, a spiritual manifestation which his master Venerable Chimyo Takehara described as 'The Buddha appears through the individual'.

On Friday evening Reverend Ishii led an hour long lesson in which we practiced the formal way of chanting the *Shoshinge*. Ms Mary Hall introduced the practice session by recalling that at Shogyoji Temple all of the priests and lay-people train regularly in the correct way to chant sutras. It is not something only for beginners to do but a life long practice to follow. Reverend Ishii then gave a short talk on 'The Relationship of Chanting (Service) to Practice.

Practice' looking at faith as the source and impetus of practice, through the relationship between the 17th and 18th Vows of Amida Buddha. Following an overview of Shin Buddhist notions of faith and practice and examining the interrelationship between them, Andrew shared his own journey to the Buddha during and after his 'introspection session' at Shogyoji.

Mr Matthew Alberges gave the closing talk of thanks at our last event of this Shokai. After attending the last Shokai, Matthew

noticed now many problems had dissolved in his life and expressed his gratitude for having had through Shokai a special opportunity to encounter the Buddha's teaching through the support and guidance of Reverend Kemmyo Sato and Reverend Kenshin Ishii. Matthew gave special thanks to the Head Priest of Shogyoji Temple and his wife together with the Shogyoji samgha for providing us with the spiritual foundation that has made Shokai possible.

Andrew Webb

Letters of Thanks from Two Participant's of the 3rd Shokai

A letter from Jon expressing his gratitude on having attended his first Shokai retreat

This weekend just passed was my first experience of Shokai at Three wheels and on reflection I am left with nothing but the utmost gratitude, not only to Reverend Sato for his kind invitation, but also to every participant from whom I have learned so much.

Although I had always felt that I had a good intellectual understanding of the importance of samgha within the Three Jewels, it wasn't until listening to and sharing in other people's heartfelt experiences of Dharma at this Shokai retreat that I began to experience a personal understanding.

The degree of openness and sincerity with which everyone spoke and the value in which their contributions were held deeply moved me. Listening to their words, I was witness to the light of Amida's compassion shining through them and saw the reality of the 17th vow in which all Buddhas 'extol the Name' of Amida Buddha.

I realise on reflection how utterly futile and useless my own efforts are in bringing about liberation and how utterly dependent I am on the working of Amida Buddha's Dharmakaya [Ed. Absolute enlightened nature], whom out his Great Compassion, manifests in the fellowship shared with others, such as that which I experienced at this Shokai retreat.

From a letter of thanks by Duncan who had also attended his first Shokai retreat

Most importantly thank you. Thank you also to Hiroko, to Rev. Ishii and his family, to Kaori and all the Three Wheels Samgha

for making the retreat possible.

Thank you also to your mother temple, Shogyoji, and their support. Without all of you I would not have the opportunity of the Shokai Retreat.

My encounter with the Pure Land Teaching has, I believe, helped me to understand Zen Master Dogen's insistence that Zazen be done for the doing - and without any idea of gain. To think of doing something, Zazen, chanting the Buddha's name or any other, so called practice, in order to gain something - to gain enlightenment - is to divide that which is already whole. So much is already given. I really felt that I encountered the "given ness" at the Shokai Retreat.

I think for me, at the moment, Amida Buddha and the Pure Land is the "given ness". This is something wonderful. so much offered.

And yet I know that I don't always see it that way.

There is a phrase in Sandokai [Ed: By Dogen] "If, from your experience of the senses, - basic truth you do not know, how can you ever find the path that certain is, - no matter how far distant you walk?"

I feel this refer to our encounter with others and thereby with the Buddha. The good fortune of a human being endows with us with the "senses" that allows encounters to take place.

Perhaps this very land is the Pure Land. Oerhaps there are more embodied Buddhas around than I am ready to perceive. I am mindful of your quote of Dharma Mother Ekai's words about seeing people's Dharmakaya [Ed. 'Enlightened Nature']

STEPPING STONES TO THE FUTURE

Within the unity of all that is, the practical and the symbolic, the physical and the spiritual, blend in a multitude of ever-changing forms. For Buddhists, in particular, this is very clear, and is well illustrated in two events which have taken place at Three Wheels in the current year.

Stephen Montgomery, in the April issue of the News, wrote of the London Shogyoji Trust, its composition and its history. From its inception it has symbolised the fundamental principle of 'unity within diversity' which is central to the workings of Shogyoji and its many offshoots and associated Temples. It is a striking fact, within that context, that none of the four British

founding members of the original eight-strong body, all of whom are still serving, are actually Buddhists themselves. Now the election, at the Twenty-First Trustees' Meeting in April, of Andrew Webb and Andy Barritt, both of them Shin Buddhists and well-known and active members of the Samgha, marks a major step forward in the life of Three Wheels. It is also a stepping stone towards the future as the outcome of long years of tireless effort and self-sacrifice on the part of Taira and Hiroko. In another sense, it marks a further stage in the process of ensuring continuity and of securing the future of Three Wheels by introducing new, and younger blood into the Trustee body, which began with the appointment of Kaori Punwani in 2003.

Another less important, but nonetheless significant event, was the laying, with the help of Masayuki Ogawa, of the actual stepping stones in the garden of Tenrin Taya. Not only will they prevent the creation of an ugly and in winter, muddy track across the grass, but they also create a further, physical bond between the Taya House and Three Wheels itself. The obvious visual linkage with the stepping stones between the Buddha Shrine and the Zen Garden is, indeed, symbolic of the wish to bring the two houses



The stepping stones

shine at night, which is not only an attractive, but a useful feature in itself and proof, if proof is needed, of the part that serendipity, if we are lucky, plays in all our lives.

The layout of the stepping stones has been designed to make them seem to form a stream in which the predominant flow is from the terrace of the Taya House towards the gate that leads to Sanrin Shoja and the Buddha Shrine, and it is hoped that for Shin Buddhists, and indeed for all the Buddhists, who may walk on them, they will symbolize the path towards that Pure Land to which all of them are travelling.

John White



During the works

ever closer together in a physical as well as in a spiritual sense. It was extremely fortunate that, just when we needed them, we were able to find paddlestones of a related, but distinctive, form. Not only does the rain transform their pale hues into a rich golden brown, but they actually appear to

POET'S CORNER: Prof. John White

Gyosen Taya (Ferryboat)

**A ferry
to cross**

**the great stream
of existence**

**and reach
the far shore.**

Editors' Note.

For comments, criticisms, and questions concerning the Newsletter or if you want to provide material for inclusion, please contact Dr. Lucien Chocron, 31 Sherlock Court, Dorman Way, London, NW8 0RU, Tel/Fax 020 7722 1693, Email: lucienchocron@msn.com.

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