



Three Wheels NEWS



London Shogyoji Trust

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A Message from the Supreme Primate, His Eminence Koken Otani

Editor's Note: This special message from the Supreme Primate, His Eminence Koken Otani, was read out by him in a video shown at the 89th London Eza. It is addressed to all of the friends and supporters of Three Wheels.

Dear Dharma friends,

I am sending you, the members of Three Wheels, a special message to mark the occasion of the opening of the *Jiko-den*, or Hall of Compassionate Light, here at the Higashi-Honganji Temple Headquarters, at Asakusa, Tokyo.



His Eminence Koken Otani

On November 28, 2009, the precise day of our annual commemoration of the death of Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhism, it was with very great pleasure that the members of our tradition also celebrated the opening of our new building, the *Jiko-den*, or “Hall of Compassionate Light,” as part of our project to celebrate the 750th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin in 2011.

Of the extra special anniversaries held for Shinran Shonin every fifty years this will be one of the most important in the history of our tradition. As the average human life span is only some seventy to eighty years, this 750th memorial service will be a once in a life-time event and certainly the holiest most of the followers of our tradition will ever experience.

This is not just because such an event occurs only once every fifty years, but also because all the members of the Shin Buddhist faith will come together at the *Gohonzan*, the Head Temple of our tradition, to show their appreciation of the love and compassion of Amida Buddha, whose Original Vow Power saves all living beings including ourselves. At the forthcoming special gathering, we will definitely

appreciate with the deepest gratitude all that has been done by Shinran Shonin for our birth in the Pure Land.

More than seven hundred and fifty years ago, Shiran Shonin set out to spread the true teaching of Pure Land Buddhism in the Kanto District, an area roughly corresponding to present day suburban Tokyo, where the new political centre was located at the time, far away from the then capital, Kyoto.

Shinran Shonin embodies the love and compassion of Amida Buddha who wishes to save each and every sentient being, wherever they may dwell. In the Pure Land, therefore, Shinran Shonin must be very happy to see that far away from Japan, right the other side of the Eurasian Continent in a city called London, there are many members who now follow his teaching because of the Dharma seeds he planted for all human beings without discrimination some eight hundred years ago.

Releasing this message to my Dharma friends in London is my very first undertaking following the opening ceremony of the *Jiko-den*, or “Hall of Compassionate Light”. Having observed the way the Three Wheels Samgha was becoming a Nembutsu Dojo, I wanted to send this video by way of congratulation.

Shinran Shonin encouraged nembutsu followers by saying, “When you rejoice alone, think to yourself that you are with another, and when you rejoice with another, think to yourself that you are actually three. One of you is me, Shinran.” His words have been encouraging us for seven hundred and fifty years, and now the great compassion of Shinran Shonin warmly embraces the hearts and minds of the members of Three Wheels.

Please entrust yourselves to the grace of Amida Buddha and, as you study the teaching of Shinran Shonin, tend carefully the Dharma seeds sown within you. It is my firm belief that the Three Wheels Samgha will continue now to grow and grow.

I hope to see you here in Tokyo in 2011, the year of the 750th memorial service. With many thanks to you all.

Koken Otani

Head-Priest of Higashi-Honganji Temple

Three Wheels Activities

Hoonko Otorikoshi

This year's Hoonko Otorikoshi Eza was held at Three Wheels on Sunday 5th October 2009. Attending alongside guests from all over Britain were four Dharma-friends from Shogyoji Temple in Japan. Reverend Kemmyo Taira Sato introduced this most important event in the Shin Buddhist calendar, which commemorates the death of Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhism, as a time for the Samgha to express their thanks to Shinran Shonin for having taught the truth of Amida's Vow "to save all sentient beings without any form of discrimination." The three main talks given during this Eza each described, in the light of their own experience, three individuals' expressions of gratitude for Amida Buddha and Shinran Shonin.

Firstly a Dharma-friend who recently moved into the temple community spoke in eloquent and profoundly moving terms of how he came to be living at the Gyosen (Ferryboat) Taya house of Three Wheels. This was a story which began in his childhood and unfolded during his lifetime of spiritual practice in different religious traditions. Expressing his deepest feelings of thankfulness, he related how he wanted to live his life with "heartfelt gratitude" towards his parents, sister, wife and family, all of his friends, and "many, many others past, present and future." Through having been awakened to the truth of his existence, surrounded by the light of all of these many Buddhas, he vowed to live his life: "Joyfully and happily, pronouncing the *Nembutsu* right up to the end, giving my life to others, walking and living with them in gratitude."

Mr. Izumi Ida, a regular visitor from the temple community in Japan and responsible trustee of Three Wheels, began his talk with an overview of the wonderful spiritual developments that had recently occurred at Three Wheels declaring that he: "would like to fly back to Japan with my pockets filled with the lively air of the London taya (Shin Buddhist Samgha) and report to my Japanese Dharma

friends on the joy I felt visiting Three Wheels on this special occasion."



Mr Izumi Ida

The last of the three main talks was given by a student and resident of Three Wheels, Mr. Shogo Sakimura, who had recently undertaken an introspection session at Shogyoji. In a talk that was by turns both humorous and serious but always sincerely honest in the telling, Mr. Sakimura expressed his gratitude to everyone who had encouraged him to go forward and undertake this very important session of spiritual training at Shogyoji.

Mr. and Mrs. Ishii who are also residents of the taya community in Japan, expressed their joy and gratitude on attending the Three Wheels Otorikoshi Eza for the fifth time. Mr. Ishii spoke warmly of how, through the untiring and everlasting efforts of Professor John White, a true Shin Buddhist Samgha became established in London.

Mr. Duncan Kennedy who has for a long time been attending Reverend Sato's meetings to study the *Tannisho*, the *Shoshinge* and the Letters of Rennyo, described being at this Otorikoshi meeting as being like a "taste of the Pure Land" in which he felt like he was sitting surrounded by "Bodhisattvas everywhere".

Andrew Webb

Encounter with a 'Good Teacher' – The 89th London Eza

Mr Andy B introduced the Eza's main speaker Reverend Kenshin Ishii. The theme of Rev. Kenshin's talk was *My Encounter with a Good Teacher*. He chose this subject for his first talk in English because without his encounter with a good teacher, he would have never attained faith, let alone become a priest. He continued by discussing his encounter with Venerable Chimyo Takehara and how he became a priest. He grew up in Usuki, a five hour car ride from Shogyoji Temple. Even though it was far away from Shogyoji, his family regularly attended service and Ren-seikai (the bi-annual assemblies held at Shogyoji every winter and summer). As a teenager, Rev. Kenshin found himself bored with the meetings and didn't want to go. At that time, the one thing he always looked forward to was hearing the words of welcome and seeing the warm

smile of Boumori-sama, the wife of his master Venerable Takehara.

Later on, Rev. Kenshin lived in Shogyoji Temple whilst studying for his Pharmacology degree and then moved to the Kyoto branch where he worked as a pharmacist for five years. Dr. Shimizu, the director of the Kyoto branch, encouraged Rev. Kenshin to return to Shogyoji for an Intro-spection Session. What emerged from his time of deep introspection was the awareness of the evil nature of his true self, a self that did not realise what had been done for it by others and that had hurt everyone emotionally. Whilst for the first time he truly understood how selfish and ignorant he had been, he also became aware of the unconditional love of his master, his parents and all his Dharma friends.

After his Introspection Session he struggled with his wish to be sincere in his dealings with people who were looking after him and his own desire to justify and assert himself.



Rev. Kenshin Hiroshi Ishii

It was at this point that he was surprised to learn from another priest of his master's suggestion that he be ordained as a priest. He consulted his father, as he couldn't make a decision about this. His father gave him an unexpected response. Whilst his father had never wanted to be a priest when he was young, he now wished to be able to die in the temple. Although his father's words made a deep impression, he was still uncertain about his path. Rev. Kenshin was then invited to meet with his master, Venerable Takehara. Rev. Kenshin had many questions in his mind that

he wished to ask, but his master cut through all his attachments to this world and to his qualifications within it by simply saying: "You have realised the extent of your karma, haven't you? I think the only way you can be saved is if for you to become a priest in the truest sense of the word. Once you have been saved by Amida Buddha, everyone emotionally hurt by you will be saved as well." This is the very essence of having a Good Teacher.

In the discussion that followed Rev. Kenshin's talk, Mr. Jon Brown said how he found the talk very moving which made him reflect on his own experience at Three Wheels and how fortunate he is to have met a good teacher. Jon commented on how in today's society we want to do everything on our own, but it is so essential to have others. In particular Rev. Kenshin had always been a great encouragement to him. Mr. Sam Kelly mentioned that he became a Buddhist twenty-eight years ago but it was only at Three Wheels that he could find good teachers, Professor John White commented on Rev. Kenshin's talk noting how lucky we all are to have Rev. Kenshin and his family living at Three Wheels. His talk was so good because of the unconditional love of his good English teacher – his daughter Hitoe!

After the meeting, we had our end of year party, which featured a food, a raffle, performances by the children and a quiz.

Mary Patricia Hall

Visit of to Three Wheels of Venerable Wakamatsu, Head-Priest of Honseji Temple

At our 46th meeting to read 'The Letters by Rennyo Shonin' we were deeply honoured and privileged to welcome the attendance of the Venerable Wakamatsu, commonly known by his title of 'Honsenji-Sama', a direct descendant of Rennyo Shonin and one of Japan's leading masters in liturgical chanting within the Shin Buddhist tradition.

Venerable Wakamatsu is the 17th Head-Priest of Honsenji, the chief of the five temples founded by Rennyo Shonin himself. Historically Honsenji Temple he was succeeded as Head Priest by three of Rennyo Shonin's sons and has remained in his lineage ever since. Through his longstanding connection with Shogyoji Temple, Venerable Wakamatsu has been passing on to the priests there the traditional way of chanting sutras (*shomyo*) of which he is the leading master within the Higashi-Honganji tradition of Shin Buddhism. Venerable Wakamatsu was accompanied by Reverend Wajun Sudo from the Osaka branch of Shogyoji who, with the great deal of valuable support he provided, made Venerable Wakamatsu's visit to London possible.

In an extremely rare and valuable opportunity for Three Wheels, Venerable Wakamatsu led a special lesson in sutra chanting that was open to everyone in the Samgha to attend. This class was held following the talk given by Reverend Sato on the 5th letter of Fascicle IV of the Letters by Rennyo Shonin.

felt to have Venerable Wakamatsu at this meeting and to be able to give a talk about Rennyo Shonin in front of one of his direct descendants. During Reverend Sato's talk, and in the discussion that followed, we looked in detail at the notion of 'past good' (*shukuzen*), which is a very important theme to understand in Shin Buddhism. Reverend Sato summarised its meaning as:

"Shukuzen stands for the individual relationship we each of us have to the Buddha-dharma, a relationship gifted to us by the outside world, no matter whether we are conscious of it or not. In this respect, shukuzen, or "past good," is essentially that which has been given to us."



Venerable Wakamatsu

Reverend Sato began by saying how incredibly moved he

We discussed how *Shukuzen* is not the property of any one person and should not be said to be present in one person and not in another. However when we look deeply within ourselves we find that there is nothing which we can sincerely call ‘past good’. To thus realise we have no past good is to be aware of the nature of our karmic existence. Yet at the moment we become aware of the lack of past good within us we find ourselves embraced as ‘good’ within the Light of Amida Buddha.

Venerable Wakamatsu summarised the teaching of ‘past good’ by plainly stating; “All people have *shukuzen*”. Venerable Wakamatsu later went into more depth on this same topic by explaining that even though we are all embraced by Amida Buddha this fact is very difficult for us to realise. However this difficulty is entirely on our side. Amida has no difficulties in saving you.

After lunch we began a two hour lesson in chanting the *Shoshinge* (Hymn of Right Faith in the *Nembutsu*) and *Wasan* (Japanese hymns). The *Shoshinge* and *Wasan* were both composed by the founder of Shin Buddhism, Shinran Shonin, and are recited every day in Shin Buddhist services.

Venerable Wakamatsu began the lesson with an overview of the nine different ways of chanting the *Shoshinge* which vary considerably in cadence and intonation. Today we

practised the version known in Japanese as *Soshikumesage* that we recite at our London Eza’s and other formal occasions at Three Wheels. Venerable Wakamatsu explained that this version was the fundamental method of reciting the *Shoshinge*.

Venerable Wakamatsu surprised and delighted us all with his ability in expressing himself in English despite saying he had no knowledge at all of the language. After hearing everyone recite the verses together, Venerable Wakamatsu pointed out the areas which needed correction and demonstrated the right way in which they should be delivered, which we then practised under his guidance. He even put some of us firmly on the spot by asking us to recite some lines solo in his particularly direct way!

Despite our many errors Venerable Wakamatsu said he was very pleased with the ability everybody showed which he put down to the training we have been given by Reverend Sato and Reverend Ishii over the past few years. Venerable Wakamatsu concluded the lesson by expressing his happiness at hearing us all recite the *Shoshinge* and *Wasan* (Japanese hymns by Shinran Shonin) together so well by saying with great joy; “Today is a very beautiful day!”

Andrew Webb

Shokai Retreat

Exploring ‘Faith’ – The 4th Shokai Retreat

The 4th Three Wheels Shokai was held between 23rd and 25th October 2009 and was attended by eighteen people including nine non-resident Dharma students. Following on from the previous two retreats this Shokai focused on the subject of Pure Faith (*Shinjin*) as discussed in the third chapter of Shinran Shonin’s *Kyōgyōshinshō*. In addition this particular training session was especially notable in that the key note speaker was Reverend Keimei Takehara, from our parent temple of Shogyoji in Fukuoka, Japan, who generously travelled to the United Kingdom to support our activities.

Friday 23rd October 2009

As ever the opening ceremony and faith-meeting played a crucial part in focusing our minds in advance of the weekend’s activities. Carefully chaired by Sam Kelly, who took on this important responsibility for the first time, the opening meeting incorporated: Devotions to the Buddha, a Vow of Sincere Practice made on behalf of the participants by Jon Brown, a free talk by Rev. Kemmyo Sato, and personal introductions from those attending. Jon Brown’s Vow of Sincere Practice was especially noteworthy in that a major theme of the retreat, namely the importance of encountering a good teacher, was demonstrated through his personal testimony: “Witnessing over this past year the level of deep entrusting ever present here at Three Wheels has revealed to me the profound way in which Dharma-kaya’s great compassion manifests in the midst of everyday life”.

Rev. Sato then went on to welcome and introduce Rev. Takehara. He pointed out that in 1994 Rev. Takehara attended the first ever London Eza, held in front of an O-myogo (calligraphy of Namu-Amida-butsu) given to Rev. Sato’s group of Dharma friends by Rev. Takehara, and as such has been deeply involved and concerned with the development of Three Wheels ever since its inception. Rev. Takehara said that the faith-movement in England is very important to people at Shogyoji, and that hearing about it brings particular joy and happiness to the older generation of the Samgha as



During the Shokai Retreat

they contend with the difficulties of their daily lives. On the Friday evening Rev . Ishii gave a talk on *The Relationship of Chanting Services to Faith* and led a lesson in how to chant the *Soshikumesage* version of the *Shoshinge*. On his talk Rev. Ishii stressed two points; firstly that “the most important thing for your chanting is your joy of faith” and secondly that “it is very difficult to receive true faith from Amida Buddha only by [our] own efforts.”

Saturday 24th October 2009

The following morning Rev . Sato talked about one of the *One Sheet Dharma Words* of Rev . Takehara and recalled how at one hot summer training session Ekaisama admonished everyone that; “You are all ‘*Namu Coca Cola*’”. Rev. Sato said that the object, or objects, of our attention tend to vary according to circumstances but what is most important is that we discover the matter of ‘ultimate concern’. Then, receiving *Shinjin* which is free of attachment, we will be able to do everything freely in gratitude for the Buddha’s embrace. As Rev. Ishii put it later; “Freedom is not doing whatever we want and following our desires but rather being released from our own karmic darkness.”

After having breakfast together (one of many wonderful meals prepared by Sanae Ishii, Kaori Punwani, and Atsuko Sekine) we gathered once again in the Buddha Room to hear Rev . Takehara’s specially prepared Dharma talk on the topic *The Faith of Shin Buddhism in the Parable of the White Path between Two Rivers*. As we took our seats Rev. Sato played a slide-show of the grounds of Shogyoji, introducing some of those present to the beautiful purity of the temple for the first time.

Rev. Takehara’s talk was extremely carefully prepared and meticulous in its planning and delivery . Using diagrams,

stories, and meditations, Rev. Sato introduced us to the significance of Master Zendo’s famous parable, and Master Shinran’s own unique interpretation of it, according to the structure of Purpose, Scene, Story , and Commentary, concluding with a detailed look at ‘The Three Minds’ in *The Commentary on the Meditation Sutra*. Rev. Takehara’s talk was so comprehensive and profound that I think that it will be a long time before I even begin to start to penetrate its depths. Indeed it will be a lifelong treasure for me to reflect on.

After Rev. Takehara’s talk we had lunch and then spent several hours doing *Sagyo* (work practice) pulling up ivy and bramble roots from the garden of Tenrin Taya. This gave everyone an opportunity to let Rev. Sato’s talk settle in their minds, and as such later in the day we were able to have a stimulating follow-up discussion about the Parable of the White Path. It should also be said that thanks to Sanjee C.’s excellent leadership we got a lot more work in the garden done than had been anticipated.

Sunday 25th October 2009

After breakfast, at the final faith-meeting of Shokai, I gave a talk entitled *Some Reflections on Shinjin*. I will leave it to others to comment on it. However after I spoke about my recent spiritual re-encounter with my father, Mrs. Hiroko Sato said, “This is not only your experience.” These words are still echoing powerfully in my mind, reminding me not to take for granted all that I have received and also to remember Rev. Sato’s words that; “We have been given three Taya houses by Rev. Takehara and we should welcome people to them with open-mindedness and without egotism”.

Gassho in Dharma,

Andy Barritt

Reflections on Chomon

A week or so before undergoing an Introspection Session or Chomon I came across a passage in the book I was reading at the time, Ashvaghosa’s *The Awakening of Faith*. “All beings since their first aspiration till the attainment of Buddhahood are sheltered under the guardianship of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who, responding to the requirements of the occasion, transform themselves and assume the actual forms of personality. Thus for the sake of all beings Buddhas and Bodhisattvas become sometimes their parents, sometimes their wives and children, sometimes their kinsmen, sometimes their servants, sometimes their friends, sometimes their enemies, sometimes reveal themselves as Devas or in some other forms”.

The truth is, upon initially reading these words, a surge of pride swelled up inside me and, feeling very satisfied with myself, I led myself to believe I had a good understanding, awareness and appreciation of such a teaching. Needless to say, such an illusion was shattered quite dramatically upon being led to encounter the depth of my ignorance during introspection.

This awareness of my true nature as being nothing but blind passions began to reveal itself at the first morning Ezra I attended. Upon requesting Chomon from Venerable Chimyo Takehara, several letters were read out to me from my close Dharma friends. Although their words, filled with kindness and compassion, moved me very deeply , at the same time I felt extremely small and ashamed. I was entirely unable to say that I would have, freely and unprompted, offered such words of love and support to someone about to undergo Chomon, even someone as



Mr. Jon Brown

close to me as my Dharma friends.

Despite during introspection recalling the many times my self-centered behaviour had led to the suffering of those around me, I deep lay my ignorance that in vain searched for an explanation that lay outside of myself, some reason I could conveniently place the blame on other than my own selfish nature. But with the compassionate guidance of Reverend Kemmyo Sato and Reverend Keimei Takehara I came to see how throughout my entire life there has been a clear pattern of dependency on others and an unwillingness to take responsibility for my own actions. Together with Reverend Sato and Reverend Takehara I took refuge in the Buddha and with my whole being chanted the *Nembutsu*.

During my very first Shokai Retreat back in May of last year I remember expressing that I would like to hold in

mind all of us there were “future Buddhas” and to encounter each participant as such. How Reverend Sato responded to my words by telling us that we were all already Buddhas guiding him to the Pure Land deeply challenged and shook my small and limited understanding. Of course, so heavy was my mind of blind passion that I was completely unaware of the truth of his words in my own life and as it was, I feigned a suitably impressed response while cynically thinking “that’s a beautiful idea Reverend Sato but...” Looking back over my time at Shogyoji and indeed, as I continue to come and be challenged at Three Wheels though, I see the truth in his words, the compassion in which he said them and the reality of them in my own life, through everyone I encounter.

Jon Brown

A Message of Thanks to the Japan Society

Editor's Note: Reverend Kemmyo Taira Sato, the Director of Three Wheels, was given a special achievement award by the Japan Society at their annual dinner held on the 25th January 2010. The award was made in recognition of Reverend Sato's great contribution to UK-Japanese relationships through his “activities with people from many different backgrounds and beliefs”, since the establishment of Three Wheels in 1994. The following is the text of Rev. Sato's message of thanks read at the award ceremony by Mrs. Hiroko Sato.

Ladies and gentlemen, to all of you, my friends, attending today's annual dinner, I extend my sincerest apologies. Faced with the impossibility of being present on this special occasion, I find myself unfortunately with no other recourse than to write to you to express my deepest and most heartfelt gratitude.

When I first received the letter from the Japan Society about their annual award, I was both confused and taken aback, for I really see myself as an ignoramus, burdened with blind passions, not as someone deserving such an honour.

My master in Japan, however, suggested that receiving such a happy piece of news, quite apart from being extremely nice for me, would be so encouraging for all my friends involved in the activities of Three Wheels where we constantly seek to improve Anglo-Japanese friendship as well as to look after the spiritual welfare of individual Japanese residents. And so, despite my awareness of the sad reality of my own existence, I decided to accept the award with deep humility.

It is indeed only through the help and support of all my friends of various nationalities and traditions that I have been able to accomplish all the things described in the Award citation. Without their warm friendship I would never have been able to complete a fraction of that important work. It is not so much I, as my friends, who deserve the award.

So now, in the context of the Anglo-Japanese relationship, let me talk about something very important. In 2008, two years ago, we celebrated the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of what is formally seen as the start of the Anglo-Japanese relationship in a large number of fields,

including politics, economics, fine art, literature and so on. What we should be at pains never to forget, when looking back over this longstanding Anglo-Japanese relationship is the flow of pure human love between individuals, both British and Japanese, that underlies political, economic, academic, cultural and interpersonal relationships.

I know time is pressing, but let me refer to one outstanding example of loving kindness shown by a certain Professor Alexander William Williamson to groups of young Japanese students who came to London nearly one hundred and fifty years ago. The first group of five students from Choshu arrived in London in 1863 for the specific purpose of studying Western culture and technology. Not only did Professor Williamson invite those students from a distant, unfamiliar country to attend his chemistry class at University College London but he also invited them into his own home. With similar warmth and kindness he subsequently welcomed a further nineteen Japanese students from Satsuma in 1865. All these students, on returning to their homeland, became pioneers of the modernisation of Japan. Among them was Hirobumi Ito, the first Prime Minister of modern Japan.

Nor were those students who returned to Japan safely the only beneficiaries of Professor Williamson's loving kindness. When one of them, Kosaburo Yamazaki by name, fell seriously ill as the result of the inclemency of the British weather and his own poverty, Professor Williamson and his wife, Catherine, invited him to stay in their home. When, despite their best ministrations, this unfortunate student died in London on 3 March 1866, Professor Williamson arranged a funeral for him and even helped the young man's colleagues construct his grave. According to a letter written by Shinsaku Takasugi, one of Yamazaki's friends, this was the very first Japanese

grave to have been made in Europe. Close to this grave at Brookwood Cemetery are the graves of three further Japanese students, possibly also erected with the help of Professor Williamson.

But the story does not end there. Professor Williamson himself, it would seem, chose to be buried in close proximity to those four graves for Japanese students at Brookwood Cemetery. When I discovered his grave two weeks before the inaugural ceremony for the Stupa of Namu-Amida-Butsu, which we had built for all Buddhists and Japanese people in this country, I immediately felt compelled to prostrate myself before his headstone, so overwhelmed was I by a sense of the unconditional human love he had extended to Japanese students of the day, a love that went beyond all considerations of race, religion or nationality. And as I did so, it seemed to me that the love he had shown those former students from Japan overlapped in my heart

with the love I, too, had been receiving from my British friends, such as Professor John White, former Vice-Provost of University College London, who have been helping me proceed on the Buddhist path of benefiting oneself and others simultaneously.

Behind every form of human love or relationship, I believe, lies an unconditional, selfless love, free of all discrimination and prejudice, which reveals itself from time to time through the medium of pure encounter. Although it is not at all easy, what is most important is for us not to forget but instead to foster that pure human love, exemplified by Professor Williamson, in the context of Anglo-Japanese relationships for the future. Thank you for your patience.

Kemmyo Taira Sato

Other Three Wheels Activities

Garden Opening Days 2010

As part of the National Garden Scheme (NGS) Three Wheels opens its Zen garden to the general public on two weekends in the year. This year (2010) the open days are scheduled for the 8th and 9th of May (Saturday and Sunday) and the 19th and 20th of June (Saturday and Sunday). On each day the garden will be open to visitors from 2:00 to 5:30 pm.

I am happy to announce that Professor John White, the designer of the garden, is again able to give talks on the making and design of the Zen garden during the event. We are also delighted to be able to hold formal tea ceremonies in the viewing shelter during the course of the open days,

conducted once again by two Tea-Masters in traditional full Kimono garments.

A few days ago, I had the privilege of being invited to a meeting with other fellow gardeners participating in the NGS. With the aid of postcards and greeting cards, it was a great opportunity to introduce our Zen garden to those who were there. I was extremely pleased to find out that our garden is valued very highly and stands out as an especially unique and special place amongst all the other beautiful gardens that take part in this annual event.

Kaori Punwani

Children's Retreat at Three Wheels

Our first junior retreat was held at Three Wheels from Saturday 19th until Sunday 20th September 2009. There were 5 participants in all aged between 9 and 11 years. They all thoroughly enjoyed their experience and said they would like to join the event again.

Although the monthly children's meetings held at Three Wheels are very successful events, we expect that children entering their teens may not find the regular meeting as exciting as before. Consequently a new gathering was suggested as some mothers hoped that their children could deepen their friendships and at the same time feel closer and more familiar with Three Wheels and its residents. All the participants' parents received 'home work' and had to answer the question "why do you and your partner want your child to join this event ?" To share the answers we therefore held a 'parents meeting'. As an example of the responses, one of the parents said that they would like their child to experience life in the temple, as this would be such a privileged opportunity to be given.

The retreat began on the Saturday afternoon. At first, children made biscuits to eat after dinner for their dessert.

There then followed an evening service in which Rev Kenshin Ishii gave a short talk. He threw a question at children asking if they had been using very simple words like 'thank you' and 'sorry' in their everyday lives. He also asked to whom they think they would most need to use these expressions towards, maybe their parents? Rev Ishii kindly asked everyone to think about this question together over the next two days.

After dinner, the children all very much enjoyed a card game competition before sleeping in their sleeping bags which they had each brought with them to Three Wheels. The following morning, before the service, everyone joined in with the regular cleaning of the temple. After service, Rev. Kemmyo Sato gave a short talk to the children. He told them that everything that their parents had done for them was not 'normal'. He explained using very simple language the meaning of 'indebtedness to one's parents'. After breakfast, the children took part in washing and brushing border stones from the Zen garden in the water-basin in the back garden.

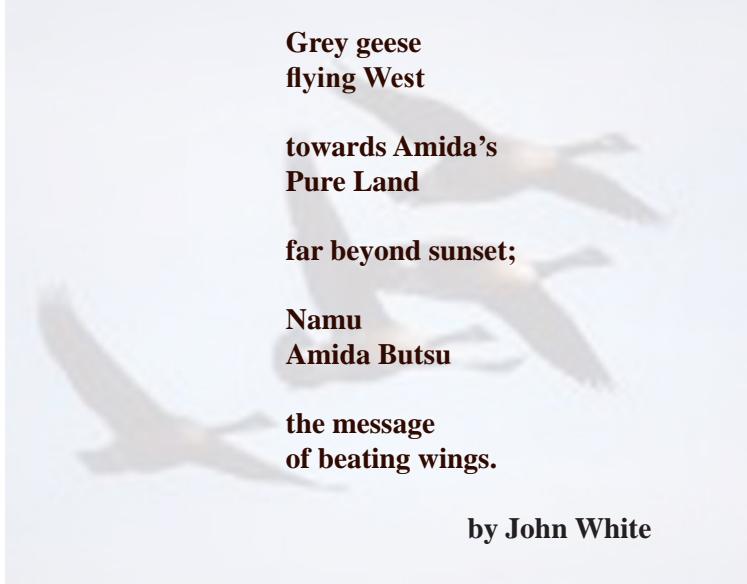
At the closing ceremony, each of the children made very

honest comments about their experience over the weekend. Some examples are: "The rules here were quite strict but I enjoyed it"; "I would like to join again"; "I enjoyed the card game lots"; "I learned how much my mum is doing things for me"; "I thought of what my parents have done

every day for me"; "I enjoyed cleaning too" and "I would like to say sorry and thank you to my mum as soon as I return home".

Sanae Ishii

Poet's Corner



Grey geese
flying West

towards Amida's
Pure Land

far beyond sunset;

Namu
Amida Butsu

the message
of beating wings.

by John White

Coming Events

April

- **91st London Eza:** Sunday, 25th 13:00 - 15:00

May

- **Garden Open Days:** 14:00 - 17:30, on Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th
- **Rennyo Meeting at Three Wheels** Sunday, 16th 10:00 - 12:00
- **Biannual Shokai Retreats:** From Friday, 28th 18:00 to Sunday, 30th 12:00

June

- **Rennyo Meeting at The Buddhist Society:** Sunday, 06th 14:00 - 16:00
- **Garden Open Days** 14:00 - 17:30, on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th
- **92nd London Eza:** Sunday, 27th 13:00 - 15:00

July

- **Rennyo Meeting at Three Wheels:** Sunday, 4th 10:00 - 12:00
- **Daisetz-ki** (大拙忌) Monday, 12 July 10:15 - 12:00
- Rennyo Meeting at The Buddhist Society Sunday, 25th 14:00 - 16:00

August

- **Rennyo Meeting at The Buddhist Society:** Sunday, 08th 14:00 - 16:00 (It has been cancelled)
- **Bon Ceremony Memorial Service:** Friday, 14 August 10:00 - 15:00
- **93rd London Eza (Including our Annual Ceremony to Pray for Peace and Reconciliation)** Sunday, 22nd 13:00 - 15:00

September

- **Rennyo Meeting at Three Wheels:** Sunday, 05th 10:00 - 12:00
- **Rennyo Meeting at The Buddhist Society:** Sunday, 19th 14:00 - 16:00

Every Week

- **Meditation Class:** Every Monday 19:30 - 20:30

Monthly

- **Japanese Dharma Talk meeting:** Once a month at the week-end. For further details, please visit our website.
- **Children's Meeting:** Once a month at the week-end. For further details, please visit our website.

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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All donations are welcome