



# Three Wheels NEWS



**London Shogyoji Trust**

December 2013

Number 23

## UNVEILING CEREMONY FOR THE MONUMENT TO PROF. AND MRS. WILLIAMSON

I would like to thank everyone very much indeed for all the help and support that enabled us at Three Wheels to stage the Unveiling Ceremony of the Monument to Professor and Mrs. Alexander William Williamson at Brookwood Cemetery on 2 July 2014.

all the way from Japan.

The whole ceremony was prefaced by an introductory address from Professor John White, after which the monument was unveiled by the Ambassador accompanied by a beautiful performance by our Gagaku musicians. The Ambassador then presented Sir Malcolm Grant, Provost of UCL, with a posthumous letter of thanks, addressed by the current Japanese Prime Minister to Professor and Mrs. Alexander Williamson, in which he thanked them for all the help and compassion they had shown our pioneering Japanese compatriots. It was an event of considerable historical significance, celebrating the pure human love, devoid of all discrimination, that the Williamsons had shown the first ever Japanese students in London at the very beginning of our Anglo-Japanese relationship. Sir Malcolm responded to the Prime Minister's letter of thanks and Dr Parker of the Royal Society of Chemistry gave a brief talk outlining Professor Williamson's academic achievements.



**Mr Keiichi Hayashi, the Ambassador of Japan, unveiled the Monument**

With the invaluable support of the Embassy of Japan, Three Wheels organised the unveiling by His Excellency Mr Keiichi Hayashi, the Ambassador of Japan, of the monument to Professor and Mrs Alexander William Williamson, the couple who showed such kindness to the first Japanese students to visit the U.K. in the eighteen-sixties. Over two hundred and fifty people attended the ceremony, including about one hundred and fifty who had come



**The Offering of flowers at Prof. Williamson's grave**



**The Offering of flowers at the students' graves**

The participants then visited the Williamson's gravesite for a memorial service conducted by the Director, after which their representatives offered flowers to the couple. Finally everyone moved to the Stupa of Namu-Amida-Butsu, where Ven. Chimyo Takehara, Head Priest of Shogyoji Temple, led a Shin Buddhist service of thanks to Professor and Mrs Alexander Williamson and the first Japanese students,

including those who passed away without achieving their cause. The Gagaku musicians offered all the deceased a beautiful piece of music in recognition of all they had done for us. Ven. Takehara also gave a moving Dharma talk on the subject of ‘parental love’. Under the leadership of Rev. Kenshin Ishii the entire event was organised and staffed by members of the Three Wheels Samgha who worked tirelessly to ensure everything went according to plan. Mrs Kaori Punwani did an excellent job as ‘Master of Ceremonies’ for the entire event.



**Ven. Chimyo Takehara leads the Buddhist service at the Stupa of Namu Amida Butsu**

Today it is my fervent hope that, despite the many problems we are facing in the world, the fact that such unconditional love was shown and felt at the very start of our Anglo-Japanese relationship may encourage us all to go forward on the road of developing that

relationship with mutual understanding and respect.

Rev. Kemmyo Taira Sato

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**A Letter of Thanks to Professor Alexander William Williamson  
and his wife Emma Catherine Williamson  
by The Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe**

Professor and Mrs Williamson, you made a tremendous effort to welcome groups of young men from Choshu, Satsuma and other clans in Japan, who came all the way to your country at the end of the Edo Period for the modernization of our country. You provided both practical and spiritual support to these young men, who studied at University College London, after which they went on to play leading roles in the establishment of modern Japan. You also made an invaluable contribution to the building of modern Japan by sending your students and colleagues, such as Professor Robert Atkinson, to our country so that they could lay the first foundations of modern academic institutions in our country.

I believe that pure human love without any trace of discrimination and UCL’s philosophy of ‘harmony within diversity’ together with your efforts, led the university to accept those Japanese students. This was symbolized by the fact that you accepted one of them who had become ill and took care of him at home till the very end of his life.

Looking back at the history of the ever-evolving ties between the United Kingdom and Japan I am immensely impressed to find right there at the start your unconditional love and your strong wish for the further development of our friendship.

This year we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the time when you welcomed the first five students in 1863. I am very moved to learn that the unveiling ceremony of the monument specially erected to



**Mr Keiishi Hayashi the Ambassador of Japan presenting the Prime Minister’s Letter to Sir Malcom Grant**



**Sir Malcolm Grant CBE, President and Provost of UCL responding to the Prime Minister’s letter**

commemorate both of you is taking place during this special year. I would like to express to you, on behalf of the whole Japanese nation, our deepest and most sincere gratitude.

2 July 2013

Shinzō Abe, Prime Minister of Japan

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**Response to the Japanese Prime Minister's letter  
by Sir Malcolm Grant CBE, President and Provost of UCL.**

I am honoured to reply on behalf of UCL to your generous and heartfelt letter of thanks to Professor Alexander William Williamson, and his wife, Emma Catherine Williamson. Their story is indeed moving and remarkable. They assumed responsibility not only for the education but also for the welfare and acculturation of young Japanese students from Choshu, Satsuma and other clans who came to UCL at the end of the Edo period.

The generosity of their hospitality reflected the ethos of UCL as the first university in England to embrace, in the spirit of equality, students of any race, religion or class. But in their personal support they went well beyond the realm of institutional welcome. We are all of us touched by the exceptional humanity that they displayed.

Much has been built since on those firm foundations. A small group of students educated at UCL were to have a rapid and profound impact on the development of the modern nation of Japan, across many areas of activity. A strong trading and cultural relationship has developed between Japan and the United Kingdom, and in particular an extensive network of collaborations between Japanese and British universities.

It is in these successes that the true legacy of Professor and Mrs Williamson is to be found. We at UCL today share your admiration for them, and will continue to build on their vision, their internationalism and their commitment, for the benefit of our staff, students and society more generally.

Professor Malcolm Grant CBE  
President and Provost, UCL

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**An Address of Thanks from Ven. Chimyo Takehara**

*Editor's Note: This is an extract from the Address of Thanks given by Ven. Chimyo Takehara, the Head Priest of Shogyoji Temple, at the Unveiling Ceremony for the monument to Prof. and Mrs Williamson.*

At today's ceremony the Japanese Ambassador, Mr. Keiichi Hayashi, has posthumously presented Professor and Mrs. Williamson with a letter of thanks from Mr. Shinzō Abe, the Prime Minister of Japan, written on behalf of the Japanese people in recognition of the Williamsons' seminal contribution to the modernization of our country.

All the young Japanese who studied in London in the 1860s will have thought of their parents – those who contributed so much to their homeland on their return, as well as those who yearned for that same homeland, I'm sure, as their brief lives ended under a foreign sky.

Towards the end of the Edo Period, there lived a great thinker who succeeded in expressing to perfection the gratitude he felt for the love that parents feel for their children. This was Yoshida Shoin. It was Yoshida Shoin who was responsible for educating those early students, either directly or indirectly, desiring that they should work for the modernization of Japan.

A victim himself of the feudal Edo Bakufu government, he was executed at the youthful age of twenty-nine. Just before his death he composed a farewell poem, in which the depths of his feeling and attitude towards his parents are expressed. The poem reads:

*'Far deeper than the feelings we have for our parents is the unconditional love they bear for us. How will my parents feel on hearing today's tidings?'*

Today, however, despite the tragic circumstances in which it was written, this Japanese poem shines with a radiance all its own, imbued as it is with infinite gratitude.

The purity of parental love is not so easily recognized by children, but now the unconditional nature of that love has been made manifest to us in the form of the generosity of heart shown those students by Professor and Mrs. Alexander Williamson.

Listening to Yoshida Shoin's words, I feel as if he, together with his parents, were thanking Professor and Mrs. Alexander Williamson for all that they have done for us Japanese.

What an incredibly profound world of entrusting it is, where parental minds encounter one another and exchange greetings! Today, retracing the darker and lighter aspects of the one hundred and fifty years of Japanese modernization, we have been able to encounter once again the special attitude of mind that informs parental love, something we ourselves may have lost sight of for quite a long time.

The feelings of deep gratitude conveyed in Yoshida Shoin's poem can be shared by all of us gathered here. The phrase, "today's tidings," resonating beyond time and space, also expresses our own emotion at finding ourselves all together at this special place today. Who would ever have imagined such a wonderful event! Please accept my heartfelt thanks for bringing it about.

Ven. Chimyo Takehara

## PEACE AND RECONCILIATION SERVICE AT THREE WHEELS

The 110th London Eza also marked the occasion of the Ceremony at Three Wheels to pray for world peace and reconciliation, and memorial service for all those soldiers who took part in the Second World War.

Mr Akio Miyajima, the Minister Plenipotentiary of the Embassy of Japan, was the first to speak at the meeting noting how impressed he has been by the efforts made by those on all sides of previous conflicts to find reconciliation, including those who have now passed away. He paid tribute to the huge contribution of Rev. Sato and others at Three Wheels to promote the reconciliation meetings over many years which has recently been recognised with a reward presented by the Embassy. He stressed the long standing ties between the UK and Japan in many areas including education and trade, and that reconciliation underpins the long term stability of the relationship. While it may sometimes be difficult to find reconciliation, it is crucial in order to build friendship for the years ahead.

Rev. Sato then led a short service, with chanting from both the Pureland and Tendai traditions, which created a wonderful reflective atmosphere that permeated the remainder of the meeting. The spirit of friendship was further developed as participants from different groups – some longstanding friends and other new acquaintances – were asked to shake hands with one another making a symbolic connection across cultures and generations.

Rev. Sato then gave a talk reporting on the recent ceremonies in memory of Prof. and Mrs. Williamson, reflecting on their humanity and kindness in welcoming so wholeheartedly their Japanese guests 150 years ago, and how this set the context for positive relations since that time. Rev. Sato shared part of a recent exchange of letters between Ven. Chimyo Takehara, the Head Priest of Shogyoji Temple and Prof. John White who designed the monument to Prof. and Mrs. Williamson and who was instrumental in organising the unveiling ceremony in July. Describing how his life had profoundly changed through his encounter with Ven. Takehara Prof. White wrote:

"It is you who have been the inspiration and driving



Mr Akio Miyajima, Minister Plenipotentiary  
of the Embassy of Japan

force behind everything that has happened as a result of the creation of Three Wheels, and the last twenty years of my life have been transformed by my encounter with you and Bomori-san, with Shogyoji, with Taira and Hiroko, in particular, and with so many others whom I have come to know through you”



**Mr Bill Smyly, Representative of the Bedford branch of the Burma Star and his wife.**

Mr. Bill Smyly a British veteran of the Burma campaign and representative of the Bedford branch of the Burma Star Association was in attendance at the meeting. Through his deep desire to be reconciled with Japanese people during his lifetime, Mr Smyly, now in his 90's, had come into contact with Rev. Sato and through the reconciliation work of Mrs. Akiko McDonald of the Burma Campaign Society. Following his encounter last year with Rev. Sato at the ceremony of Reconciliation at the Church of St. Peters de Merton in Bedford on Peace Day last year, Mr Smyly had come to participate in this year's Ceremony of Peace and Reconciliation at Three Wheels. He talked about how annual reunions took place following the War with German counterparts, and how these were always both well attended and of positive spirit. He then told a story to demonstrate that acting correctly, motivated by love, would always be superior to seeking some personal profit.

A number of other attendees also shared personal reflections from the meeting, including thanking

Rev. Sato and Three Wheels for having organised the event, and how through encountering the sincerity at the meeting, our own hearts can start to open to one another. One participant noted how Three Wheels feels like a big family, and another of how we simultaneously draw significant personal enrichment through our time in the Samgha.

Miss Suzu Mamiya who had just returned from attending the annual Summer Training Assembly at Shogyoji Temple expressed her deep gratitude to Shogyoji for the wonderful encounters she had shared there with the temple Samgha. She was especially moved by the way everyone had looked after her and the positive examples she received from the other students which had been a great inspiration. Rev. Kenshin Ishii who had also just returned from Shogyoji described the warm atmosphere of the Summer Training Assembly and the rich spiritual exchange that had occurred particularly between the young members of Three Wheels who had attended and their Japanese Dharma-friends.



**During the Buddhist service**

Reflections were followed by friendly discussions as we shared the wonderful food and drink contributed by participants, and a special tea ceremony by a visiting Tea master was performed on the meditation platform.

Matthew and Andrew

## OUR VISIT TO YORK

Between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013 a Mayoral delegation of 17 people from Shonai Town in Yamagata Prefecture, Japan, led by Mr Kenichi Okuyama, mayor of Shonai Town came to York to further enhance the educational, cultural and business

links between Japan and United Kingdom focusing on the City of York.

They were accompanied by 7 members of the Burma Campaign Society (BCS) including Mrs Akiko

Macdonald the chair of BCS and the participation of Rev. Sato the Director of Three Wheels.

They have also a particular interest in the Battle of Kohima where the Japanese General Koturo Sato commander of the 31<sup>st</sup> Division and John L. Grover of the British 2<sup>nd</sup> Division (York) were the opposing commanders.

Kohima is a hill town in North-East India. From April to June 1944 the location of one of the most bitterly fought battles of WWII. For the first time the Japanese were defeated and General Sato, disobeying the orders of his superior to attack, decided to retreat saving the lives of thousands of Japanese soldiers.

General Sato was born in 1893 and died in 1959 in Shonai City. A monument was erected in his memory. The delegation was very interested in seeing the Kohima Museum and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division who fought General Sato.

On Monday morning we were invited to a Mass in memory of the Japanese and British soldiers who died in Burma. After the service we went to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Memorial Wall where Mr Kenichi Okuyama and Mrs Akiko Macdonald laid a wreath in presence of the Dean of York Minster who led a prayer for the deceased. Rev. Sato recited a Sutra.

The delegation then visited St John's University where a lunch was prepared. It was decided to initiate an exchange programme between British and Japanese students in York and Shonai Town. In the evening we had a dinner in the Novotel Hotel with Bob Cook the

curator and other members of the Kohima Museum. On Tuesday morning the Japanese Minister Mr A Miyajima joined the delegation to visit the Kohima museum.

We were invited for a lunch at the officers' mess of the York Imperial Barracks by Brigadier Bibby. We could meet and talk to his friendly staff officers. Presents were exchanged, Mr Kenichi Okuyama received the double Keys representing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division and Brigadier Bibby received a Japanese *temari* ball. After lunch we went to the Memorial Wall where the Japanese Minister Akio Miyajima laid a wreath and Rev. Sato conducted a Buddhist service.



Rev. Sato reciting the Sutra

The Rt Hon the Lord Mayor Cllr Julie Gunnell received the delegation at the York Mansion House hoping to improve cultural, educational and business links between York and Shonai Town. She offered a seal of the City of York and she received a *temari* ball. At 17:55 we all took the train back to London.

Lucien Chocron

## JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER'S COMMENDATION AWARD

At a special ceremony, hosted by His Excellency Mr Keiichi Hayashi the Japanese ambassador to the UK on 5th November 2013, Rev. Sato was presented with the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation for his long dedication to friendship and reconciliation between the two Countries. You can read the text of Ambassador Hayashi's presentation speech below.

On receiving the commendation award Rev. Sato paid tribute to everyone who had supported him and the activities of Three Wheels including his master the Head Priest of Shogyoji Temple Ven. Chimyo Takehara and Prof. John White the Hon. Secretary of the London Shogyoji Trust. He then went on to say:

“When I left Japan, my master, Venerable Chimyo Takehara, wished me to promote spiritual exchange between British and Japanese people and also to look after the welfare of Japanese people resident in the U.K. Supported by the purity of my master's prayer that we should all attain inner peace, and assisted at all times by the enormous efforts and loving kindness you have each of you shown me, especially through the unveiling ceremony of the monument to the Williamsons, even I, ignorant person that I am, have become aware of the truth that unconditional selfless love does appear through those individuals around us.”

Rev. Sato concluded his speech by expressing his thanks to a “very good new friend, if I may call you such, our Ambassador Mr Keiichi Hayashi”.



The Presentation of the Award

### **Presentation Speech by the Ambassador, Mr Keiichi Hayashi**

At the outset I would like to thank all of you for coming to my residence for this small gathering of selected guests to witness together the presentation of the Japanese Foreign Minister’s Commendation to Reverend Kemmyo Sato.

I am delighted to be able to host this ceremony. I am not saying this out of formality or courtesy typical of a Japanese diplomat, but I really mean it. Why? Because what Reverend Kemmyo Sato has been doing is very close to my heart and is very dear to me. That is reconciliation between the peoples of Japan and the United Kingdom in the aftermath of the wounds incurred in the course of World War II.

Frankly I had not recognised the significance of reconciliation until I came to this country as a Political Counsellor in 1996. That was one year after the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, when the surge of emotion erupted into frequent and continuous demonstrations and protests against Japan or the Japanese Embassy. How to respond to these former prisoners of war, civilian internees, their families and their supporters was a serious, complicated problem.

The protesters demanded compensation from the Japanese Government but as far as the legal aspects

were concerned, there was virtually nothing we could do in this regard. However, we could not afford to do nothing, either. The emotional flare-up was there and was harming the UK-Japan relationship. There must be something we should and could do in order to sooth the hard feelings of the victimised people.

That is the very basis of reconciliation; we asked the then Japanese Prime Minister to send a letter of apology to his counterpart or even to write to a tabloid paper. The then-Ambassador sent letters to literally all MPs explaining our position. With the Government fund as well as the financial support from the private sector, we organised, or helped volunteer groups to organise, various programmes for reconciliation and mutual understanding for those related to the victims. It would not be an exaggeration if I say more than 80% of my energy and time then were spent on activities related to reconciliation.

But the Embassy’s ability was very limited compared with the enormity of the task. That is how I came to know people like Keiko Holmes, Marie-Grace Browning, various people of the Royal British Legion as well as the late John Nunnally, Masao Hirakubo and Philip Malins of the Burma Campaign Fellowship Group, who all made dedicated efforts in the cause of reconciliation.

That is about the time Kemmyo Sato came to join in the forces of reconciliation. Through his encounters with both Masao Hirakubo and Philip Malins, Reverend Sato realised the importance of reconciliation between our two countries. He approached the task in his own way, which was to organise an annual ceremony of Peace and Reconciliation, or Eza, to pray for world peace and reconciliation between Japanese and British war veterans at his temple, Three Wheels. Ecumenical and inter-religious events for reconciliation were co-organised with Anglican churches including Westminster Abbey, Coventry Cathedral and Canterbury Cathedral.

It was never easy in the beginning to mitigate the lingering bitterness of the by then aged victims. Gradually, however, the sincerity of the people involved started melting the ice. The number of participants at the reconciliation gatherings and other events steadily grew, and veterans from both sides started holding meetings face to face, even over dinner and drinks. Reverend Sato was one of the driving

forces behind this movement and has now become a leader himself.

There is another achievement by Rev Sato that is also close to my heart. In 2007, at Brookwood Cemetery in Surrey, he 'discovered' the tomb of Professor Alexander Williamson of UCL and his wife Catherine. The couple devotedly looked after the first generation of Japanese students who came to the UK in the late 19th century to learn the technology vitally needed to modernise Japan so that the country could survive the rough waves of Imperialism.



**Prof John White, Rev. Sato and Ambassador Mr. Hayashi**

The Williamsons took under their wing the Choshu Five and many others who invariably contributed to Japan's rapid modernisation. They even took good care to the end of some of those students who sadly fell ill and had to die in the UK in the middle of their mission; truly selfless acts of humanity. But over the years their activities came to be remembered only among a small group of people.

Reverend Sato, with the great support and collaboration of Professor John White and many others, worked hard so that proper public recognition could be accorded to the late Professor and his wife. This effort culminated in the establishment of the Williamson Monument in the same cemetery where the couple and some

Japanese students who prematurely died are buried.

In this commemorative year of the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Choshu Five, with the support and recognition given by Prime Minister Abe and with the participation of many from Japan, a solemn ceremony was held there last July. I had the great honour of formally unveiling the Monument and conveying the letter of gratitude from Prime Minister Abe to the Williamsons.

The formal recognition given to the Professor more than 100 years after his death was a wonderful reminder of the long history of the close bilateral relationship between our two countries. Once again Rev Sato was the driving force behind the whole event. In fact this time nothing would have been possible without his leadership and personal efforts.

Both as Japanese Ambassador and as a Japanese individual living in the UK, I feel we should thank Reverend Kemmyo Sato for his long dedication to reconciliation and friendship between Japan and the United Kingdom.

Thus it gives me not only great pleasure but also a sense of pride to present him today with the Foreign Minister's Commendation.

Thank you.



**The Guests of the Award Presentation**

## CHRISTIAN - BUDDHIST INTERFAITH MEETING

Further to Rev. Sato's participation in a Christian-Buddhist dialogue at The London Buddhist Society last year, he was subsequently approached by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Interfaith Secretary, Dr Katherine Wharton, with a view to holding a more specific meeting between Christians and Shin Buddhists. This was duly arranged for the 4<sup>th</sup> March

2013 and was attended by twenty-four participants including representatives of Three Wheels, various Churches of different denominations, and several Christian monastic and lay-orders. The meeting itself was skilfully and warmly chaired by Rt. Rev. Michael Ipgrave, Bishop of Southwark.



Reverend Kemmyo Sato and Father Tom Plant both gave extremely insightful and clear talks on the subject of ‘Faith Experience as Spiritual Encounter’ which provided the foundation for our subsequent discussions. Important themes that arose included the problem of the relationship between dualism and non-dualism, and, in the question of spiritual ‘choice’.

open for the future. For instance Bishop Michael raised a question about the role of social ethics in the context of religious community and the master-disciple relationship, and several of the Christian participants were keen to explore the extent to which we can attribute ‘personality’ to God and/or Amida.

Overall though, despite the very limited time available to us, I felt that a foundation of trust was established that will, I hope, enable future dialogues to explore the world of faith in a deeper and deeper dimension. Dr. Wharton wrote to Rev. Sato afterwards, “although we always say dialogue is about forming friendships, there is a difference I think between the ones I made at Three Wheels and others I make in the majority of my work. Professor Sato, I think it is your sensitivity and grace that has nurtured this very unique community and it reflects an impression I have had before, at my own monastery which was founded by the disciple of a Saint, that it is the personality of the founder that makes the personality of the community - if they embody love then the community itself can be like a family that is full of grace.”

Andy



The Interfaith Meeting at Three Wheels

Inevitably this first meeting at Three Wheels could only touch the surface of potential dialogue and there were important strands of discussion that remained

## SPIRITUAL ENCOUNTER AND AMIDA’S WORKING

The 750<sup>th</sup> memorial ceremony (Jp: *Goenki*) for Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhism, was held with great success at Shogyoji temple last November.

Ten Dharma friends from Three Wheels were able to join the ceremony. They flew to Shogyoji and arrived on the first day of the event to join Rev Sato and myself. They planned to arrive in the early evening, just before the first service of the Goenki Ceremony began. Unfortunately, however, it was not until after the service, around ten p.m., that they arrived at Shogyoji. What made them arrive so late was a major delay to their flight leaving London. They spent more than thirty hours travelling from their own houses to Shogyoji. They seemed extremely exhausted when I picked them up at Fukuoka airport. Some of them were lost for words on the way from the airport to Shogyoji due to their tiredness.

However, at the very moment that our car arrived at Shogyoji, their expressions completely changed and everyone could see how joyful they were on receiving such a warm welcome from the Dharma

friends waiting for them at the temple gate. Despite the fact that they were badly suffering from jet lag and extremely fatigued, they attended all the events at Shogyoji Temple. After that, they moved to Shogyoji’s branches in Kyoto and Tokyo, where they were again welcomed by many Dharma friends. During their time in Kyoto and Tokyo they visited some of the historical places associated with Shinran Shonin and their journey became to them a spiritual pilgrimage.



The Memorial Ceremony at Shogyoji

On their return everyone wrote thank you letters to Shogyoji and Rev. Sato and I was amazed to read their words. The great joy they expressed was completely beyond my expectations. Here are a few of these impressions:



**The Ten Dharma Friends accompanied by Rev. Sato , Rev. Sudo and Rev. Ishii**

Having been met by Kenshin-san and others from Shogyoji, tired after a delayed flight, we arrived in the dark to a brightly lit temple gate with many priests and followers there to welcome us. The tiredness evaporated and everything seemed joyful. We were greeted by Ven. Takehara and Bomori-sama (*the Head Priest and his wife*). I will never forget Ven. Takehara's big-hearted smile. In my mind I felt I was not worthy of such a great honour and was brought to tears with joy and gratitude. During the four days of *Goenki* we stayed at *Nishi Taya* and had our meals at *Seiwa Taya*. We were looked after with great care. Everyone seemed so pleased to see us. It was a wonderful encounter. *Duncan*

As soon as I arrived at Shogyoji temple I was overwhelmed by the kindness and thoughtfulness shown by every person I met. Everyone was so concerned with looking after us and making sure that we would want for nothing. I could feel Amida's compassion working through everyone that I met. It

was so easy to feel relaxed and at home. *Chris*

The journey began with a delay of nearly 5 hours in the departure of our flight from London Heathrow, and almost 39 hours after leaving home, we were approaching Shogyoji. It was already quite late into the night, and I was fully expecting to be invited into the temple quietly through its back gate so as not to disturb all those people who were already there and settled for the night. In the dark night, however, Shogyoji was burning bright, brilliantly illuminated with lights. Further, there were very many faces with warm smiles welcoming us with enthusiastic applause. This sight of the people welcoming us was far beyond my wildest imaginings and moved me so very deeply. My tears started to fall. *Etsuko*

I felt warmly accepted in Kyoto as well. Every time that we left the temple to visit great historical sites of Shin Buddhism, we came home to a very warm welcome. It felt like coming home. I learned many things about Shin Buddhism and felt its wisdom through the people that I had encountered. The many temples, artists and works of art that I saw had deepened my understanding of living Buddhism. I left Kyoto with a greater sense of the rich history of Buddhism and experience of a culture that lives with Amida's light every day. *Dave*

As you may tell from these words everyone was extremely delighted to be welcomed at the temple, feeling Amida's compassion working through everyone that they encountered, even those they had never met before. We ordinary people may not know where Amida is or what Amida is like but we can feel Amida's working through our encounter with others.

I hope all of us will be able to feel Amida's working thorough our encounters in the U.K. as well.

Rev. Kenshin Ishii

## THE 12TH SHOKAI RETREAT : AMIDA'S LIGHT

The 12th Shokai was attended by 16 people, including Mrs Wendy A and Mrs Fumi W who had recently made Rev. Sato's acquaintance when he addressed a talk to the Southern Counties branch of the Japan Society. Wendy has a long-standing connection to Japan through her late husband's business, while Fumi comes from a Japanese Buddhist temple family. Both ladies greatly contributed to the retreat in both

the spiritual and practical senses.

Notable at this Shokai was the enormous effort that Reverend Sato made to support the retreat. In particular he gave at least four Dharma talks during the course of the weekend, covering subjects such as emptiness and co-dependent origination; self-benefiting and benefiting others; how we can know

the Buddha and Amida's Mind-Light.

Reverend Ishii also greatly exerted himself and, as well as organising many practical aspects of the retreat, presented us with his talk given recently at the Los Angeles Hoonko Otorikoshi. As a result of this talk the Shokai participants unanimously agreed that they would like to develop stronger links between the British and American branches of the Samgha.

Aside from the talks given by the two priests, Mr Andy B gave an impression, titled 'The Empty Shrine', on the Rennyō Shonin Goichidai Kikigaki (A collection

of the words and deeds of Rennyō Shonin) which concluded with the words: 'The Buddha shrine is empty: / when I take refuge in emptiness / the Buddha appears.'

During the various meetings many Dharma friends shared their personal impressions. At the closing ceremony Mr Sam Kelly drew everyone's attention to all that we have received as a Samgha and asked, 'Why should the Japanese Dharma friends have given us this?' He answered, 'It can only be their compassion.'

Andy

### THREE WHEELS ACTIVITIES

#### National Garden Scheme (NGS) Garden Open Days

Yet again we had such bright, summery and successful Garden Open Days on 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> of July. Thank you very much to everyone who helped and visited us during this wonderful event. Visitors learnt a unique insight into the background and meaning of our Zen Garden through the 40 minute talks given by Prof. John White. The three tea masters, with some kimono-clad assistants, demonstrated and explained the tea ceremony to our guests. All the income generated from selling tea and books was donated to Three Wheels.

**Our next Garden Open Days in 2014, are on the weekend for 6th-7th June and 5th-6th July from 14:00 to 17:30.**

***A Big Thank You to all our friends who supported the Zen Garden***

We are delighted to report that a planning application, which would have seriously endangered the Zen Garden and the trees surrounding the boundary, was refused by both Ealing Council and the Secretary of State on appeal. Three Wheels would like to extend



The Tea Ceremony during the Garden Open Days

their thanks to everyone who supported the Garden by writing letters of opposition to the planning officer. The 'adjudicating inspector's report' said among other things that the proposed development would in his judgement have a very obtrusive and therefore harmful effect on the character and appearance of the delicate and harmonious Zen garden' which he also referred to as a 'very distinctive and meticulously designed space'.

#### Youngsters Activity News

##### Children's Meetings

This monthly meeting is one of the most popular meetings for young families targeting the 2-10 year old age range accompanied by mums or dads. Their learning activities range from simple Buddhist talks for children, etiquette in the Buddha hall and seasonal

Japanese cultural activities. Forthcoming events are *Mochi-tsuki* (pounding rice for New Year) and Brush painting. Please contact Three Wheels, and see our website for further details.

Our email is [threewheels@threewheels.co.uk](mailto:threewheels@threewheels.co.uk)

## Spring School

This year the 13<sup>th</sup> Spring School was held at Three Wheels between 22<sup>nd</sup> March and 5<sup>th</sup> April. Ten students from Japan and eleven English-speaking students from this country took part, together with two helpers, Rev. Washo Shinohara and Mr. Shintaro Miyahara. The students from Japan were accompanied by Reverend Shodo Kuniyoshi, a priest from Shogyoji Temple, and a large number of Dharma friends from Three Wheels also lent assistance.

The theme of this Spring School was “Let’s discover my framework” and they read ‘*The Sutra on the Extreme Importance of What Has Been Done for Us by Our Parents.*’ Whilst the Japanese students read the Japanese version, the eleven English-speaking students had at their disposal a very new translation of the sutra completed by the Director. The impressions of the sutra offered by both the Japanese and the English students were extremely moving.

Besides enjoying the beautiful countryside of Cumbria for four days, the students visited UCL and Brookwood Cemetery, both of which are very important in the history

### **A new group has been established by the members of the Three Wheels Students’ Meeting.**

These will be comprised of bi-monthly one night stay meetings for Secondary school students. They named themselves the ‘General Affairs Group’ as they would like to help run some of Three Wheels events. Their

first job is to organise the end of year party following the London Eza in December. We, adults are very much looking forward to see the youngsters shine brightly.

Besides enjoying the beautiful countryside of Cumbria for four days, the students visited UCL and Brookwood Cemetery, both of which are very important in the history of Three Wheels, and visited a number of other places of historical interest, including Greenwich, Windsor Castle and St. Paul’s Cathedral.

### **Visit by the ‘Living Choshu 5’ group.**

Eleven students from the Engineering Department of Yamaguchi University visited Three Wheels, accompanied by an associate professor and a lady organiser, and had a four days training session at Three Wheels from 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> September in advance of their English study course at the UCL Language Centre. During this training session the Honorary Secretary’s talk on the Zen garden at Three Wheels was very well received. The Director also gave two talks on the relationship between UCL and Three Wheels and on the Unveiling of the Monument to Professor and Mrs. Alexander William Williamson, who accepted and taught the pioneering Japanese students to UCL in the 1860’s with non-discriminating, loving kindness. During their stay they read *The Sutra on the Extreme Importance of What Has Been Done for Us by Our Parents* paragraph by paragraph after the morning service. Their moving impressions were compiled into a booklet by Shogyoji Temple.



The Spring School Students at Three Wheels



The Yamaguchi Students at the Stupa in Brookwood Cemetery

*Editors’ Note.*

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**All donations are welcome**

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