



# Three Wheels NEWS



London Shogyoji Trust

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## The Annual Ceremony for Peace and Reconciliation at Three Wheels

Three Wheels was filled to overflowing with over 90 guests and visitors who attended our annual Ceremony for Peace and Reconciliation on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2015 for our 122<sup>nd</sup> London Eza - We were very lucky the weather was finer than forecast, and the rain held off for the afternoon, allowing the garden to be used for seating some of this great number. The Eza was chaired by Mr Andy Barritt who began proceedings by welcoming His Excellency Mr Keiichi Hayashi the Japanese Ambassador to give the opening address.



**His Excellency Mr Keiichi Hayashi the Japanese Ambassador**

Mr Hayashi paid tribute to all those who had dedicated their lives to promoting peace and reconciliation in the 70 years since the ending of the Second World War. In particular those who had been organising this annual meeting at Three Wheels Temple, which has been providing the spiritual basis for the process of healing the wounds of those who suffered greatly from the conflict. Reconciliation is not a singular achievement but a long running event in which the anguish of guilt is healed and friendship is won in place of hatred. Mr Hayashi concluded by expressing his wish that this ceremony will continue to provide an opportunity for the older generation to share with their younger counterparts the lessons learned from war.

A solemn service of chanting *Gathas* was conducted by the *Jodo Shinshu* priests in remembrance and gratitude for the courageous individuals who gave their lives for both sides in World War II and our late friends Reverend Ganshin Rock and Mr Satoru Yanagi who both passed away within the last year. During the service before the shrine to Amida Buddha incense was offered by representatives of the Japanese Embassy, war veterans and the societies and associations who have been supporting this annual ceremony. Sutras were then chanted by monks, nuns and priests from Amaravati, Nihonzan Myohoji and the Shobon-an Zen Centre which greatly added to the poignant and reflective atmosphere of the memorial service.

The Bishop of Woolwich, the Very Reverend Michael Iprgrave, then gave a personal and moving address in which he looked back at the life of his father, who was captured in Singapore and served as a prisoner of war in Thailand. After Bishop Iprgrave's mother died his father came to stay with him for a month in Japan whilst he was serving as a priest in Chiba. During that time his father was able to meet many ordinary Japanese people and enjoy eating and drinking with them and he found himself undergoing a deep change as he formed friendships with people he previously considered enemies. He saw a world in which Japanese and British people were creating a new future together, a vision which was tremendously enriching to him. Bishop Iprgrave ended by saying that although we look back in sadness and sorrow as we recall the loss and pain and suffering of the past, we also need to look to the present and the future, to celebrate the friendships we have with people of different religions and to work together for a better world of peace and stability.

After the traditional shaking of hands in reconciliation among all of the participants, Rev. Kemmyo Sato gave a Talk of Thanks inspired by three different matters connected to this meeting for Peace and Reconciliation. The first was Rev. Sato's own experience during his childhood of the end of the war. Though only five years old he had been taught through the education and media of the time that western people were the objects of hate and anger and other Asian countries were the targets of

discrimination and hatred. In this continuing atmosphere of war, which horribly changed the nation and people all was utter darkness, evil and insane. Reflecting on his own small part in that state, Rev. Sato expressed his personal sincere apology and wish that we should strive with all our means and energy to avoid war at all costs. In order to bring about world peace, Rev. Sato reminded us, the first and most fundamental step is to establish spiritual inner peace in our own hearts and minds.



**The Very Reverend Michael Iprgrave**

Secondly Rev. Sato announced the publication in Japanese of 'A Biography of Alexander William Williamson' by Takaaki Inuzuka. Through his loving kindness to the early pioneers of modern Japan, Prof. Williamson had laid the foundations of trust between Britain and Japan which has been a vital part of the subsequent movement for peace and reconciliation. Lastly Rev. Sato expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Bishop Iprgrave both for his participation in today's ceremony and for everything he has done for the Christian and Buddhist Interfaith dialogue that has become a very important part of Three Wheels religious activity. Rev. Sato expressed his hope that this special occasion of reconciliation could also develop a dimension of interfaith dialogue between people of different traditions.

Mr Barritt then invited various guests and friends of Three Wheels to contribute their own impressions to the Eza. Mr Bill Smyly, a war veteran from the Burma Star Group, spoke first about his memories of the brutal battles fought in Kohima in which the British army overcame a starving and ill-supplied Japanese force. Although the Japanese Army may have wished to continue to fight, Mr Smyly thought that the chance should have been given to them to agree to an honourable surrender. Paying tribute to Rev. Sato's earlier talk Mr Smyly said that if apologies were to be given, perhaps he should say sorry too for what had happened in Kohima.

Next to speak was Mrs Philida Purvis who recalled her time as junior diplomat in Japan during the 1980's when there was still a great deal of antipathy against the Japanese that she wanted to understand. During her time in Japan she helped organise visits by war veterans and heard first hand from them stories of the war and captivity. Through hearing their harrowing accounts of suffering she wanted to find a way, even if only a small one, through which she could help them find peace and reconciliation. 'Through this annual ceremony at Three Wheels we can make sure the younger generation understand what happened during the war. This is our responsibility', Mrs Purvis continued, 'and if we cannot do this what did all those people die for'?

Mrs Akiko Macdonald, Chair of the Burma Campaign Society (BCS) spoke about the recent activities of the Society which had recently established a branch in India where people had been inspired to form their own part of the society after hearing about the activities of the BCS in the UK and Japan. This reminded Mrs Macdonald that the war in Burma was not just fought between the Japanese and British but included people of many different nationalities and cultures. Although there may be different perceptions and attitudes towards war throughout the world, when people meet and talk together their way of thinking changes, which is why this movement for peace and reconciliation should continue into the future.



**During the Service**

Prof. Matsui let us know about a book he is completing on the late founder of the BCS Mr Hirakubo. He asked everyone who had a special memory of Mr Hirakubo to contribute to it so his great work for peace and reconciliation, and those of other war veterans, can be recorded for the next generation.

Rev. Kenshin Ishii reported on the first *Obon* memorial service he conducted this summer at the home of the late Mr Satoru Yanagi who passed away last year at the age of 93. Mr Yanagi fought for the Japanese in Burma and for many years held within himself feelings of anger and dislike towards the British following his experiences in the

conflict. Despite his unwillingness to travel to the U.K. he followed the advice of his master, Ven. Chimyo Takehara, the Head Priest of Shogyoji and attended the first Peace and Reconciliation Ceremony held at Three Wheels in 1997. During the ceremony he met the British veteran from the Burma conflict Mr Maurice Franses and they simply embraced one another saying ‘sorry and thank you’. Whenever I hear this story of Mr Yanagi’s reconciliation, Rev. Ishii continued, ‘I can’t help thinking of my own feelings of anger deep within my heart’ and, as reminded by Bishop Igrave in his address, ‘what I need to do is celebrate my relationships with others becoming aware of all that has been done for me. As one of the younger generation I would like to do all I can to remember the suffering of the war veterans and transmit to the next generation the importance of peace and reconciliation’.

experience of living at Three Wheels was a great treasure for her and had completely changed her view of life which she now realised was completely supported by Amida Buddha. ‘It is an extremely special thing to feel part of the Three Wheels family and when I go back to live in Tokyo I will remember you all as I say *Nembutsu* in my home’.

Mrs Kaori Punwani formally announced the publication of the publication in Japanese ‘A Biography of Alexander William Williamson’ by Takaaki Inuzuka of which there are copies available at Three Wheels to purchase. It was a special privilege, Mrs Punwani said, to be able to announce this publication in the presence of four descendants of Prof. Williamson who were attending today’s London Eza. Prof. Williamson was someone who expressed through his life the principle of harmony within diversity and this book is a great reminder for us of all that he did for us at the beginning of the 150 year history of Anglo-Japanese relations.

As a very special event to conclude this London Eza, a traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony was conducted in the viewing shelter of the Zen Garden by a visiting Tea Master, Mrs Izumida. It was a fitting way to conclude the London Eza through enjoying quiet conversation and reflection within the peaceful atmosphere of the Three Wheels Zen Garden. Our deepest gratitude is extended to everyone who participated in this annual Ceremony for Peace and Reconciliation and who by doing so help keep its spirit alive for future generations to encounter.



Reverend Isago,

Attending the London Eza for the first time was Rev. Isago, the secretary to the Supreme Primate of the Higashi Honganji, His Eminence Koken Otani. Rev. Isago had been staying at Three Wheels for a few weeks to spend time in the Three Wheels Samgha and also to study English. Rev. Isago expressed his happiness at being able to participate in this London Eza and meet Dharma-friends here in the U.K.

Andrew Webb

Saying farewell to the London Eza and to her 20 month stay at Three Wheels was Miss Mika Aoki, as well known glass artist who has well as studying for a master degree in Art had been undertaking a devoted period of spiritual practice at Three Wheels. Miss Aoki told us that her



The Tea Ceremony in the Zen Garden

**Speech by H.E. Keiichi Hayashi,  
Ambassador of Japan to the Court of St James’s, at a Joint Memorial Service  
to celebrate the Seventieth Anniversary of the End of World War II  
at Three Wheels Temple on Sunday 30 August 2015**

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It is a great pleasure to be with you today.

*Sanrin Shoja* (Three Wheels) holds a bimonthly Eza or religious gathering. Although my own family on both maternal and paternal sides have long been devout *Jōdo Shinshū* believers, I must confess I am not a practising Buddhist. I know,

however, that when I pass away, my funeral will certainly be conducted in a Buddhist manner. But, of course, making a reservation for the ceremony for my eternal departure is not the reason I am here today.

It has primarily to do with my profession. As a diplomat I have been pursuing the theme of reconciliation. During my first stint as a diplomat here in London in the late '90s, reconciliation was a major political problem between Japan and the United Kingdom in the context of the settlement of WWII. I clearly remember the raw emotions that flared up at the time. Then, when I became the Ambassador to Ireland, reconciliation between Ireland and the UK as well as among the Irish people themselves was a big issue. I learned the complexity of the issue of reconciliation: about who reconciles with whom; who forgives and who seeks forgiveness.

When I came back to London again about five years ago, the UK-Japan reconciliation over the Second World War was no longer at the forefront of the political agenda. But that does not mean that the issue of our two countries' reconciliation is over. No. I believe reconciliation is not a one-off achievement but a long-running process that could – and, in fact, should – go on as long as there are those who need to be offered atonement for past injuries, whether physical or mental, stemming in this instance from the war. This Three Wheels Temple has been a vehicle to provide the spiritual basis for such reconciliation between our two peoples. The annual August Eza particularly focuses on our reconciliation, and of course this is a special year, the 70th anniversary of the end of the War.

I have come here to pay tribute to the Rev. Kemmyo Taira Sato and to everyone else who has helped to organise this series of events. I hear that the 'three wheels' stand for a giver, a recipient and a gift. In the current context the gift in question is reconciliation, and that the act of giving and receiving can be an exchange of forgiveness and contrition. The giver of magnanimity can accept the offer of an apology and win a sense of atonement whilst the giver of the apology can also be healed by being freed of the anguish of guilt and winning friendship instead of hatred. In this sense this temple is most fitting as the venue for a gathering for reconciliation.

Reconciliation is easier said than done. The devastation of WWII was so huge and so extensive that its scars still linger on and may never be fully healed. That is the reason why a catalyst is necessary for the process. It could be religion. It could be the simple passage of time. Or it could be inspiring individuals.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my respect to many non-governmental groups and individuals who, regardless of their religious beliefs, became comrades of the Rev. Sato and his group in the pursuit of reconciliation at the grass-roots level. To name a few, The Coventry and Canterbury Cathedrals, the Agape World led by Keiko Holmes, the Burma Campaign Fellowship Group led by Masao Hirakubo and John Nunnally, the International Friendship and Reconciliation Trust led by Philip Malins, Mary-Grace Browning's Pacific Venture as well as this Three Wheels London Shogyoji Trust have been major contributors.

Despite the enormous challenges and obstacles, their dedication gradually but steadily succeeded in healing festering wounds and in forging new, enduring friendships. I am convinced that the deeply peaceful and amicable relationship between the Japanese and British people evident today owes a great deal to the indomitable courage of the outstanding people involved in those initiatives. And, in fact, for everyone that has come forward for reconciliation, it must have been a momentous, difficult and even painful decision. That has been particularly true with the FEPOW members and civilian internees and their families.

In his recent statement marking this special memorial year, Prime Minister Abe firmly upheld the Japanese Government's position of deep remorse and heartfelt apology for the unbearable suffering caused by the Japanese military and expressed his gratitude for the tolerance of those who had accepted Japan once again as a member of the international community and had even helped Japan to rebuild its society from the ashes of the war. In so doing Mr Abe specifically acknowledged that such people, including the former POWs from the UK, must have experienced a hard and emotional struggle after the war and made a tremendous effort in order to be able to exhibit such tolerance.

Today, we have many people present from the post-war generation. I hope this occasion will provide an opportunity for the older participants to share with their younger counterparts the invaluable lessons bequeathed by the war.

We have come a long way, but the importance of the cause of reconciliation has never diminished. Officially and personally, I will remain forever grateful to you all for getting together to bear witness to and further promote the priceless friendship and reconciliation that has been earned so dearly.

Thank you.

## “Human Discrimination and Amida’s Unconditional Love” - 15<sup>th</sup> Shokai Retreat

The theme of this our 15<sup>th</sup> Shokai retreat held at Three Wheels was: *Myriad Rivers Become One Ocean – The Relationship between Human Discrimination and Amida’s Unconditional Love*. It was a topic which nourished a number of heartfelt personal reflections and discussions among the twenty participants as we looked deeply at the issue of human discrimination. It is a subject which, as Rev. Sato emphasised in his welcome message given at the opening service, has often arisen during our Sangha discussions on certain passages from the Sutra’s and the Letters of Rennyo Shonin. Rev. Sato hoped that we could all, during the course of the retreat, reflect together on our experiences of discriminating and being discriminated against under the illuminating light of Amida’s Unconditional Love.

The Vow of Sincere Practice was given on behalf of the Sangha by Mr Andy B. In his moving and introspective vow which set the tone for the entire Shokai, Andy shared two aspirations for the retreat: “to ever have a heart-mind that is open to the Great Compassion eternally working through the Name beyond form” and to “wholeheartedly take refuge in the Sangha and listen humbly to the advice and reflections of my fellow practitioners”. It was a vow which arose from Andy’s own personal experience yet embraced everyone. Listening to his sincere words we could each in our own way accept his vow as our own.

During the Saturday morning service Mrs Kaori P read the 20<sup>th</sup> letter of fascicle 5 of the Letters by Rennyo Shonin which had as its main theme the attainment of Buddhahood by women. It was so refreshing to hear Kaori’s reading of this traditional text which made the words become suddenly so alive and meaningful.

After the Saturday morning service we held a short meeting in which some of the participants reported on the group *Zadan* (Faith) meetings which had been held the previous evening. The theme of the retreat had inspired at the *Zadan* (Faith) a diverse range of impressions which had been shared within the intimate group settings. Some of the common themes which emerged at these group meetings related to how discrimination was so deeply rooted in the human condition that it becomes a seemingly habitual action arising as it does from the individual’s own self-centred consciousness. From the Shin Buddhist perspective we should always treat this problem as being subjectively our own and, through becoming aware of the way we discriminate against others, take refuge in Amida Buddha’s non-discriminating love and compassion. At the conclusion of this morning meeting Rev. Sato illuminated for us this path of self-awareness and taking refuge through his own deep and personal introspection on human discrimination. It was a very moving re-encounter with the mind of our teacher.

After breakfast we returned to the Buddha-room for Rev. Sato’s main talk of the retreat entitled: *The Relationship between Human Discrimination and Amida’s Unconditional Love*. The theme of this talk and of the retreat as a whole was inspired by a question given to Rev. Sato by Mr Matthew A on whether certain passages from the Letters by Rennyo could be considered today as being discriminatory towards women by regarding them as a different class of beings to be saved apart from men. These passages are based on Amida Buddha’s 18<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> Vows in the *Larger Sutra of Eternal Life* which themselves contain some parts which could be considered as discriminatory whilst at the same time promising salvation without any form of discrimination. Rev. Sato went honestly and insight fully to the heart of this paradox and shed an illuminating light on how we are to understand such seemingly discriminatory expressions. Rev. Sato emphasised to us that what Shinran and Rennyo found lying behind such language, influenced by the androcentric cultures at the time of the compilation and subsequent transmission of the *Larger Sutra*, was Amida’s sincere prayer that all beings, women included, will attain Buddhahood.



The Chanting lesson at the 15<sup>th</sup> Shokai Retreat

Following lunch we had a period of *Sagyō* (work practice concentrating) on the gardens around the Three Wheels *Taya* houses. Attending Shokai for the first time was Mr Craig H from the Chomon House Shin Buddhist Sangha in Southampton. Craig is a professional tree surgeon and worked tirelessly in the garden of the *Tenrin Taya* pruning some of the larger trees.

Following *Sagyō*, Rev Ishii lead a period of chanting practice concentrating on the *Shoshinge* (a primary text of Shin Buddhism) and three *Nembutsu Wasan* (Japanese Hymns on the Pure Land) which we usually chant at the London Eza services. Rev Ishii expressed his happiness at the tone and enthusiasm of the participants voices which despite the smaller number was much louder than usually heard at the London Eza services. Following our evening

meal we had some free time for informal conversation but we used some of that valuable time to hear an update on the *Namuamidabutsu* (I take refuge in Amida Buddha) stele to be erected on Mt. Hiko which has been sponsored by Dharma-friends of Three Wheels.

The final part of the retreat was held on Sunday morning. The day began with a session of *Zazen* meditation led by Mr Dave Z. Dave ended the meditation session by pronouncing the *Nembutsu* together with the participants. Rev. Sato said he would now like to do the same at the conclusion of the regular Monday evening meditation periods at Three Wheels as he felt very impressed by Dave's idea of concluding *Zazen* with *Nembutsu*.

After morning service and breakfast the focus of the next two hours of the retreat were further *Zadan* group meetings. Following the small group meetings we all met together in the Buddha-room to share a final *Zadan* meeting with

everyone present. This final meeting was chaired by Mr Andy B who invited everyone to share some of their reflections on the Shokai. At the conclusion of this meeting Andy exhorted us all to take refuge in Amida Buddha and pronounce his Name together lead by Rev. Sato before the Buddha Shrine. In this way we went beyond the name and form of our differences and returned to oneness in Amida Buddha.

The customary talk of thanks was given by Mr Duncan K. As part of this we remembered with gratitude the deep love and compassion of Ven. Chimyo Takehara and the Shogyoji *Samgha* without which our temple in London, much less our twice yearly Shokai retreats, would not exist. In his closing words Rev. Sato reminded us that the peaceful awareness of faith in Amida Buddha is always embracing us whether we are conscious of it or not.

Andrew Webb

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*This is a letter sent by a participant of the 15<sup>th</sup> Shokai Retreat*

Dear Rev Sato,

Thank you for again letting me take part in Shokai. The weekend went so quickly and throughout the retreat I felt a certain "lightness of spirit." I was able to leave behind my usual worries and anxieties.

I was grateful to hear your wonderful talk on *The Relationship between Human Discrimination and Amida's Unconditional Love* and especially in relation to women and their position of equality within the Sangha. I have always felt that discrimination against women went against the 'spirit' of the Buddha's teaching. Your talk helped to clarify the Buddha's teaching of non-discrimination in this regard and I am grateful for it.

I was also struck by part of the Shokai title - "Myriad Rivers Become One Ocean"

When chairing our *Zadankai* (Discussion) group I became aware of the very openhearted encounter between those present. I was reminded that you often say that we encounter the Buddha through the individual. I had the feeling that the "One Ocean" becomes "Myriad Rivers", that each individual in the *Zadankai* is unique and precious.

Once again thank you to you, and all the Three Wheels Sangha, for making Shokai possible,

Namuamidabutsu,

Duncan

*Editor's note: For all Japanese words regular or italic please consult our Shin Glossary: [www.threewheels.co.uk](http://www.threewheels.co.uk)*

## "The Unity of All That Is And Is Not"

The 119<sup>th</sup> London Eza was held on a cold wet February afternoon and was attended by over thirty people.

The focus of the Eza was twofold; a memorial service for Professor Taitetsu Unno, also a talk by Prof. John White entitled *The Unity of All That Is And Is Not*.

The meeting was chaired by Mrs Kaori Punwani, and she opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the first London Eza of 2015.

Mrs Punwani then introduced the Memorial Service for

Prof. Taitetsu Unno, which included the opportunity for those who had met Prof. Unno, when he visited Three Wheels, to make an offering of incense. Rev Daichi, Gary Robinson talked about the considerable contribution Prof. Unno had made to the spread of Shin Buddhism in the West, through his very influential books in English, including *River of Fire*, *River of Water* and *Shin Buddhism*. Following the very moving memorial service, Professor John White gave his talk entitled *The Unity of All That Is and Is Not*. He started by saying that generally we function in life by making distinctions, such as night and day, with the underlying principle of Buddhism being the title of his

talk. He gave a wonderful summarisation of all he has learnt from Buddhism, practically and spiritually, through his life. He discussed many of the fundamentals of Buddhist philosophy, such as emptiness, illusion, interdependent origination, impermanence and the unity of all that is and is not, and their close relationship to the development of modern science. He also talked about practical aspects of Buddhist philosophy such as encounter, non-attachment and doing for the doing. It was a wide ranging and very profound talk. Prof. White gave everyone at the meeting the opportunity to glimpse his profound understanding.

encounter to take place between two persons, each must escape from the *prison of self*. He then relayed how he had recently witnessed a disabled person being bullied by someone who could not break free from the ‘prison of self’, making true encounter, and the fading of the distinction between self and other; impossible.

There was a general feeling that it would take more than one reading of Prof. White’s talk for most of us to try and gain a greater understanding of his insights.

Dr Shonit Punwani shared his, and his family’s experience when visiting Shogyoji Temple during a visit to Japan, he said they had all gained so much and they would have to visit the head temple again, so that they could experience that kind of positivity again.

Rev. Sato spoke about the influence and contribution Prof. White had made, and continues to make to Three Wheels. Indeed, Prof. White had also raised the question of the role of women, with the Head Priest Ven. Chimyo Takehara, while on a visit to Shogyoji Temple, and in due course a woman was appointed a trustee at Shogyoji. He is a great friend and asset for Three Wheels.

As is the tradition the London Eza was followed by a communal meal and friends old and new mingled together happily.

Sam Kelly



Mrs Kaori Punwani making an offering of incense

There was then the opportunity to ask Prof White questions related to his talk, Mr Sam K. said he agreed that for true

## In Memory of Rev. Taitetsu Unno (1929 - 2014)

On 13th December last year Dharma friends of Three Wheels were saddened to hear news of the death of Rev. Taitetsu Unno, variously a friend, acquaintance, and inspiration to many members of our sangha; as well as a pivotal figure in the transmission of Shin Buddhism to English speaking people in Europe and North America. We were also joyful, however, to hear that to the very end, he was fully aware and at peace, saying, “Thank you for everything, *Namuamidabutsu*,” and when he could no longer speak, simply putting his palms together in gassho.

Rev. Unno was born in Shogyoji temple in Kokura, in the city of Kita-Kyushu, Japan, February 5th, 1929. He arrived in the U.S. in 1935 at the age of six and went through the turbulent years of the Pacific War when he and his family were put into internment camps. After the war, his family settled in California, where he eventually graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, with a bachelor’s degree in English literature. Around that time he met the great Buddhist scholar D. T. Suzuki who encouraged him to study Buddhism in Japan, a move that led to his receiving

an M.A. and Ph.D. in many of his Buddhist Studies from Tokyo University.

Returning to the United States he taught extensively, both as a thirteenth generation Shin Buddhist priest and a University professor, and wrote popular books such as *River of Fire, River of Water: An Introduction to the Pure Land Tradition of Shin Buddhism* (1998), and *Shin Buddhism: Bits of Rubble Turned into Gold* (2002) which became essential guides to many of us at a time when English language information about Shin Buddhism was extremely difficult to obtain.

Rev. Unno visited Three Wheels on a number of occasions, along with his wife Alice, and greatly encouraged our young community with his enthusiasm, humour, and the



Rev. Taitetsu Unno

robust energy of his teaching. In particular the seed for the very successful and lively Three Wheels childrens' meetings was originally sown by the Unno's during one of their visits. It is also notable that some members of our Sangha would probably never have encountered Shin Buddhism without Unno-sensei's pioneering work.

Rev. Unno will be greatly missed by all of us that knew

him, whether that was personally or through his pioneering efforts to share Shin Buddhism in many his direct and compelling books.

Thank you for everything you did for us Tai-sensei.

Namuamidabutsu.

Andy

## “Fabric of Light” by Miss Mika Aoki

The 120th London Eza was held on a cloudy afternoon on Sunday 26th of April. It was very well attended with many guests visiting Three Wheels for the first time. As always everyone was warmly greeted by the residents and made to feel very welcome. The Eza service was very moving, with the Buddha shrine looking beautiful and the Sutra chanting led by the Priests was very inspiring. After the service Mr Andrew Webb, who was chairing the meeting introduced Miss Mika Aoki, a famous artist, who is currently a post graduate student at the Royal College of Art. She gave a talk entitled Fabric of Light. Firstly she talked about how she had originally come to

much compassion and kindness towards the first Japanese students to come to England more than 150 years ago.

Afterwards Rev. Kemmyo Sato, on behalf of the Trustees of the London Shogyoji Trust, made a presentation to a very surprised Dr Lucien Chocron of a Silver Salver in recognition of the tremendous effort he has made over many years by helping Three Wheels in so many ways.



Mika Aoki's Artwork



Miss Mika Aoki

stay at Three Wheels in 2003, and how she had been so impressed by the way she had been accepted with such kindness and warmth. Also, by being taught *The Sutra on the importance of what has been done for us by our Parents*, she was able to see how much unconditional love she had been receiving from her own Parents. With some beautiful photographs, Mika talked about her glass art, and how it related to her own outlook on life. The skill involved in her work was breath-taking. Mika then talked about some of her experiences during her 18 month stay at Three Wheels, and how she became aware there of how much support and protection she has been receiving from everyone around her.

After the meeting we had ample time to socialise and get to know each other. The Zen Garden was looking amazing and the first time visitors were greatly impressed. We were also able to see some of Miss Mika Aoki's artwork which was even more impressive seen up close.

As always the hospitality shown by the Three Wheels residents was humbling and the food was as tasty as ever.

Chris Dodd



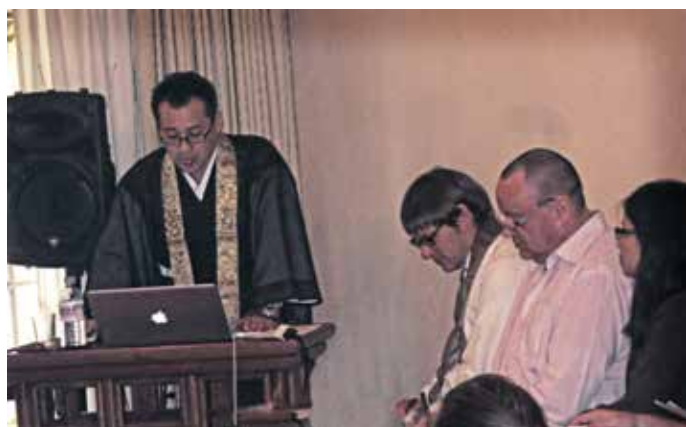
Mika Aoki's Artwork

Next Mrs Kaori Punwani very gladly introduced Mrs Liz Barr, who is a direct descendant of Prof. Alexander and Mrs Emma Katherine Williamson, who both showed so



## “Awakening to the Reality of Interdependent Relationships”

The 121<sup>st</sup> London Eza was held on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2015. Around 30 people gathered to hear Rev. Kenshin Ishii’s talk entitled “*Awakening to the reality of interdependent relationships*”. He emphasised that this is equivalent to the religious awareness of our own existence not abstract or intellectual understanding of it. There are two important aspects of awakening in Shin Buddhism: firstly “awakening to myself” “often translated as ‘pretending to be a good person’ and secondly “awakening to Amida Buddha’s unconditional love” translated as “realization that we have been supported by a lot of invisible things around us”. Rev. Ishii then showed us a short clip on screen to teach us the visible example of how blind we could be towards something invisible. He then concluded that spiritually invisible parts are more important than the apparently visible ones in daily life.



Rev. Kenshin Ishii giving a talk

Rev. Ishii then gave the example of how the teenagers who attended this year’s Spring School at Three Wheels were able to come to an important awareness about themselves, especially, their relationships to their parents which were of themselves an awareness of the truth of interdependent relationships. Rev. Ishii also shared with us the welcome message that Rev. Sato gave to the participants of this year’s Spring School and added that this message showed the direction towards how we can understand the meaning of interdependent relationships in our daily lives. “When you find yourself doing something bad, it is important to admit it honestly and correct yourself immediately”.

After the talk, Andrew Webb who was chairing the meeting thanked Rev. Ishii on behalf of all the attendees saying how Rev. Ishii reminded him how important self-awareness is for our spiritual journey.



During the projection of the clip

Michael Moylan, who came with his family members to join the meeting, expressed how grateful he was for the Spring School, which his children participated in. Also he mentioned how deeply the content of Rev. Ishii’s talk resonated with him such as his examples of how we can appreciate the fact of Amida Buddha’s great working within our daily lives. Rev. Daichi Gary Robinson from Chomon House in Southampton contributed his own reflections on how important it is to be aware of what we do not see by relating that to the spaces in the Stone Garden.

Andrew Webb then read out a report on the recent Shokai Retreat and some of the participants’ letters of thanks so that the audience could hear about the wonderful encounters that had occurred during the retreat.

Kaori Punwani announced and reported about the Garden Open Days held a few weeks previously. She thanked all the volunteers who helped to make the events so successful. After the meeting everyone enjoyed a wonderful shared light meal and informal conversations carried on until the evening.

Kaori Punwani

## Interpersonal Relationships in Shin Buddhism - Hoonko Otorikoshi.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, our annual meeting known as Hoonko Otorikoshi, in which we express our heartfelt thanks to the founder of the Shin Buddhist tradition, Shinran Shonin. This Eza is the most important ceremony of the year. The Otorikoshi service before the formally decorated Buddha Shrine, used special Buddhist chanting at the start, Japanese hymn (*Wasan*), in the middle and a

Letter by Rennyō Shonin was read at the conclusion.

Rev. Kemmyō Taira Sato’s talk was entitled *Interpersonal Relationships in Shin Buddhism* and was based on one of Rennyō’s Letters, namely the First Letter of Fascicle One. Rev. Sato’s forthcoming translation and commentary on the Letters of Rennyō Shonin includes this chapter and

will soon be published by the Buddhist Society, London. At the beginning of his talk, Rev Sato especially introduced us to one of the Letters (Letter Fifteen Fascicle IV), which was read out during today's service in Japanese. The Letter includes the words 'I do hope so very much, morning and evening, that each one of you may attain faith whilst I am yet still alive ..... By all means, you should attain faith decisively during this seven-day period of the Hoonko Ceremony so that every single one of us, ourselves and others, may fulfill our original desire of attaining birth in the Land of Utmost bliss.'

translation are beyond imagination.

Reverend Ishii commented that, "In today's *Wasan* (Japanese hymns) the name of Maitreya Bodhisattva appears several times. Shinran Shonin, founder of Shin Buddhism, wrote that those who attain faith are nearly equal to Maitreya, who is to be born in the Pure Land. Thanks to today's service and Rev. Sato's talk, I was able to feel that Shinran Shonin must have written about his followers with this wish and belief, keeping a respectful mind towards them."

Prof. John White made a final remark saying that the translation of the Rennyō's Letters is a gift to the Sangha, one which could not even be imagined of by the Head Priest of the Shogyoji Temple when he made the decision to send Rev. Sato to establish a Shin Buddhist Sangha in the U.K.

Kaori Punwani



The Hoonko Otorikoshi Ceremony

After the talk Rev. Sato expressed his most sincere appreciation for the help given to him by Mrs Dilly Suzuma, Prof. White as well as all the participants who have attended the study sessions he has held over the last 10 years to read the Letters by Rennyō. Many of the audience commented individually on how grateful they were for Rev. Sato's publication in the near future and that the benefit English speakers will receive from this new



Rev. Sato giving his talk

## Students', Children's and Infants' Meeting at Three Wheels

A two night "sleep over" Student's Meeting was held on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2015. All the participants were so happy to get together after a long time. One lady who found out about the meeting from a recent Garden Open Day brought her son for the first time.

The students thought about rules which they were concerned with in their daily lives such as rules about alcohol, curfew and school regulations. Even though the law allows them, all students have different house rules. Rev. Kenshin then asked them: "Do those rules which were decided have a purpose? Do not these rules which bind us also have a precious intention?" After that they had a time to reflect on the intentions of their parents and teachers when they made those rules.

For the first activity, students went trampoline jumping and they enjoyed this dynamic exercise. The next day, two Japanese films made by Shogyoji Temple in Japan,

were translated by the Students into English. Sometimes Rev. Kenshin advised Shin Buddhist teachings in the movies. Strong Japanese speakers and strong English speakers worked together and showed their special ability in translating the script. Everyone applauded when they found the perfect phrase. Then the Students discussed together ideas for the annual End of the Year Party that is to be held after London Eza in December. They also discussed some new ideas for the party to show thanks for all the Dharma-friends who have supported Three Wheels throughout the year.

In the Closing Ceremony each of the participants shared their impressions:

"I thought about rules which were not decided for just their own sake but were decided and given for our benefit. I would also like to think about the intentions of people who made the rule for me", said one of the students. Another student said, "I cannot choose which activity I enjoyed the



**The Participants and Helpers**

most because everything was so enjoyable .” Mrs Hiroko Sato remarked that she felt the Students’ Meeting itself is an expression of harmony. All students are looking forward seeing each other in December and they went back home joyfully with bright smiles on their faces.

Children’s meeting is held every month at Three Wheels. At the last meeting, Rev. Kenshin Ishii asked them “Why do we clean our surroundings?” and he talked about keeping a mind of gratitude towards everything around us. After that, they made a *Zokin*, which is a quilted floor cloth made of old used towels, by using needles and threads. They promised to clean some rooms or their furniture which they use in their daily life in order to express their gratitude.

I would like to announce that Three Wheels started holding a monthly Infants’ Meeting. At the first meeting they learnt to hold their palms together in front of Buddha Shrine. For further details about this or any of our meetings for Students and Children, please contact Three Wheels.

Sanae Ishii

## The 15<sup>th</sup> Spring School

Our fifteenth Spring School was held over 10 days in April 2015 at Three Wheels and it was very moving to see how much the seventeen participants from Japan, and their teenage counterparts from London, deepened their understanding of *The Sutra on the Importance of What Has Been Done for Us by Our Parents*. Whilst staying with us at Three Wheels, the young people from Japan, accompanied by Rev. Sainyu Ogawa and Mrs Hiromi Shinohara, had the opportunity to visit University College London and Brookwood Cemetery, as well as a number of famous London tourist destinations, such as the British Museum, Greenwich Observatory and Westminster Abbey. They also went travelling around the beautiful countryside of Cumbria.



**The Japanese Students and English ‘Teenagers’**

## Welcoming the Students of Yamaguchi University

Three Wheels held a spiritual training session for 14 students of Yamaguchi University from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> September 2015. This session began in 2013 and it was now the third year for Three Wheels to welcome students from the University. Remembering wonderful impressions from previous sessions, I had big expectations in my mind but I cannot deny a little anxiety about how things would go!.

During the session, they learned about the important relationships between Yamaguchi Prefecture in Japan and University College London (UCL), UCL and Shogyoji Temple, and Shogyoji Temple and the Anglo Japanese Society in Yamaguchi Prefecture. Also they visited Brookwood Cemetery to clean the Japanese graves site and the Graves of Prof. and Mrs Williamson, who took care of Japanese students at UCL about 150 years ago. It was a memorable moment for us when we paid respect to the grave of Prof. and Mrs Williamson and were able to place

a very new book published 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2015, “The Biography of Prof. Alexander William Williamson” on their grave stone. I reported to them in my mind that Shogyoji temple has sponsored the publication and Japanese people are gradually becoming aware of what has been done for Japan by Prof. and Mrs Williamson. We all expressed our deepest gratitude towards not only Prof. and Mrs Williamson for their unconditional love but also towards the four Japanese Students buried in the cemetery for their courage. Rev. Sato conveyed to the University students what Prof. White had said to Spring School students more than ten years ago, which was that “you are very lucky and happy because you came here to learn peace and harmony but those Japanese students buried in the cemetery came to London to study armaments”. This comment sounded warmer and stronger than usual to me in the 70<sup>th</sup> memorial year of the end of World War II.

Every morning, the students of Yamaguchi University read the Sutra on ‘*the Importance of What Has Been Done by Our Parents*’ and shared their impressions. What they felt and thought during such a short period of the session was written down in their essays together with their own ambitions of how they would like to be in their lives in the future. In short, what they said was that they would like to walk step by step in their journey of life always remembering what has been done for them by others.

Listening to the heartfelt words of the Provost of Yamaguchi University and associated staff, especially those of Mrs Yamada, who has been taking responsibility for organising the training session, I felt the warmth of their hearts towards their students which illustrates their love and sincere efforts towards educating them. When I was able to appreciate such warmth, I found my tiredness had gone and I was refreshed by their wonderful impressions.

Thank you very much for allowing me to join this activity and being given an opportunity to become aware of what has been done for me by other people.

Rev. Kenshin Ishii



The Students visiting Brookwood Cemetery and cleaning the Graves.

## National Gardens Scheme: Garden Open Days 2015



Initiation to the Tea Ceremony

We had such wonderful Garden Open Days on 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> of June and 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> of July! We would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who helped us on the day and paid the entrance fee to visit us, which raised a total of £596 for the NGS supported charities such as Macmillan Cancer Support and Marie Curie Cancer Centre. Currently NGS gives away £2.5 million to charity every year. Our visitors were also given a unique insight into the background and meaning of our Zen Garden through a 40 minute talk by Prof. John White. The tea masters, with some kimono-clad assistants, demonstrated and explained the traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony to our guests. All the income generated from selling tea and books was directly donated to Three Wheels.

Kaori Punwani

## A poem by John White

To love  
and be non-attached

is the paradox

of a life  
well lived.

Editors' Note.

For comments, criticisms, and questions concerning the Newsletter or if you want to provide material for inclusion, please contact Dr Lucien Chocron, Tel. 020 7722 1693, Email: [lucienuk03@gmail.com](mailto:lucienuk03@gmail.com)

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**From 1st January 2016 our Website has changed to:  
[www.threewheels.org.uk](http://www.threewheels.org.uk)**

**All donations are welcome**

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