



# Three Wheels NEWS



**Three Wheels is a branch of Shogyoji Temple in Japan**

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## Voices from Japan Welcoming the New Image of Amida Buddha.

*Editor's Note: Ever since the inception of Three Wheels in 1994, Ven. Takehara and the Shogyoji Temple Sangha have been tirelessly supporting our Buddhist centre here in London in countless ways both spiritually and practically. In this edition of Three Wheels News we are very grateful to introduce an article generously written by Ven. Chimyo Takehara, the Head Priest of Shogyoji, on the very special activities that are currently underway there.*

### **On The Taking-Refuge Round Shrine and The Buddha-Image That Consists of the Three Honoured Ones within One Single Aura of Light.**

In this article I would like to talk about The Taking-Refuge Round Shrine (*Kimyō Endō* in Japanese), currently under construction in the Eastern precincts of Shogyoji Temple, and the two images to be enshrined there: The Buddha-Image That Consists of the Three Honoured Ones within One Single Aura of Light (*Ikkō Sanzon Butsu* in Japanese) and the image of *Bodhisattva Maitreya*. The ceremony to be held on 12 November this year will commemorate the three hundredth anniversary of the death of Dharma Master Tōsen, the third head priest of Shogyoji, who called for a new temple bell to be made four years into his appointment.



**The New Image of Amida Buddha**

This new bell was paid for by three Ōga brothers, members of an old established family that had given its full support to the establishment of Shogyoji Temple. The donation of the bell was the brothers' way of expressing their heartfelt gratitude to their deceased mother.

Normally we think of a temple bell as an instrument that vibrates on a solemn note when struck with a wooden hammer, but its true purpose ever since its conception in India has really been to generate the voice of the Buddha, the voice we all strive to hear.

This is particularly true of the temple bell of Shogyoji, whose sound carries with it our fervent hopes for peace. Such a meaning finds further confirmation in Professor John White's poem, "One Hand Clapping,

One hand  
clapping  
is the drumbeat  
of reality,  
the true sound  
of silence,  
where there is  
no duality,  
no drumstick,  
no drum.

It is with this attitude of mind that we, the Dharma friends of Shogyoji, live our life of Nembutsu, hearing the sound of the temple bell day in day out.

Dharma Master Daigyō-in Reion Takehara, the thirteenth head priest of Shogyoji, deeply revered Prince Shōtoku, worshipped in Japan as an appearance of Shakvamuni Buddha. In the fervent hope that Japan, a world of ignorant people in the last Age of the Dharma, might become a land suitable for Mahāyāna Buddhism, at Shogyoji Temple Venerable D. R. Takehara established a form of Sangha in which priests and lay people could unite in oneness.

Prince Shōtoku gave much thought as to how we should understand our relationship with the Dharma, arguing that the cause of doubt stemmed simply from our own misunderstanding of the relationship between our karmic

existence and the essential truth of Dharma. Helped by the supernatural power of the Buddha, the prince looked for the correct mode of contact between “a person and true Dharma,” a search that finally led to the Great Way of Taking Refuge.

Going back to the original meaning of Mahāyāna Buddhism, Prince Shōtoku declared that ‘The way of doing good originated from taking refuge [in the Buddha]’. Based in Japan, the land located farthest to the east, Prince Shōtoku taught that Pure Land Buddhism was the ultimate teaching of One Vehicle, through which all ignorant beings could be saved without exception. His *Commentaries on Three Sutras*, the first Japanese commentaries on Buddhist sutras ever written, also ensured that Japan became a country where Mahāyāna Buddhism could truly flourish.

His virtuous teaching was transmitted to Hōnen Shōnin, Shinran Shōnin and Rennyo Shōnin and on down the line to Venerable Daigyō-in Reion Takehara, the former Head Priest of Shogyoji, and Dharma-Nun Daihi-in Ekai, from whom we too, contemporary followers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, have likewise received the teaching directly, without cessation.

On 12 July 1966, Shogyoji completed the construction of the *Kimyōdō*, or Taking-Refuge Hall, built for the purpose of interring and making offerings both to the remains of our ancestors and to the unknown soldiers who sacrificed their lives during the Second World War. Our wish was to maintain the spirituality of the teachers, who had been transmitting their teaching down the generations, and the spirituality of their followers.

Now, half a century later, and with the forthcoming Dharma Assembly to commemorate Dharma Master Tōsen in mind, we have decided to construct a new wooden building, the ‘Taking-Refuge Round Shrine’, its round or, more accurately, octagonal shape representing the traditional form of a *Yume-dono* (literally Hall of Dreams).

This type of Buddha-Image that is to be enshrined in the Taking-Refuge Round Shrine (*Kimyō Endō*) is known as the ‘The Buddha-Image That Consists of the Three Honoured Ones within One Single Aura of Light’ (*Ikkō Sanzon Butsu*) and was brought to Japan as our country’s very first Buddha. This particular image of Buddha, having originated in India and come to us by way of China, is also known as “the Buddha transmitted through the three countries”.

Since the time this Buddha first appeared in Japan in 552, there have been conflicts between those who worshipped it and those who abhorred it, but this particular Buddha image was finally enshrined in Zenkōji Temple in Shinano Province, where it remained for hundreds of years as the ‘hidden Buddha’.

Whilst staying in Kanto District the founder of our tradition, Shinran Shonin, realized in a vision the profound spirituality of The Buddha-Image That Consists of the Three Honoured Ones within One Single Aura of Light and brought a copy of the image to Takada. This particular

Buddha-Image has been transmitted down the centuries right up to the present day as the hidden Buddha in the Main Temple of the Takada tradition.

Why this Buddha image is known as the hidden Buddha would appear to be because of Prince Shōtoku’s conviction that only the Buddha of Dharma-body, being completely formless, could be called the true Buddha, not the Response-body or the Transformation-body. One who sees the Buddha working out of the truth of formlessness can be called a person of Mahāyāna spirituality.

Returning once more to the present day, on 9 June 2015 the *Ikkō Sanzon Butsu*, or The Buddha-Image That Consists of the Three Honoured Ones within One Single Aura of Light, was moved from the sacred precincts of the original temple of the Takada School, the tradition of Shinran’s disciples, and taken to the Tokyo Honganji, where the head priest is the direct descendent of Shinran Shōnin. The date marked the first time that the *Ikkō Sanzon Butsu* had ever been openly displayed since it was first brought to the area now known as Takada in Kanto District by Shinran Shonin.

Both His Eminence of Higashi Honganji, Dharma Lord Kōken, and His Eminence of the Takada tradition, former Dharma Lord Ran’yū, graciously agreed that Shogyoji should welcome and enshrine the *Ikkō Sanzon Butsu* as the main Buddha of the newly built Shrine, the *Kimyō Endō*, or Taking-Refuge Shrine.

I was filled with unutterable joy to see two calligraphies of the Buddha-Name written by those two Dharma Lords placed inside the body of the *Ikkō Sanzon Butsu*.

On learning of the construction of the *Kimyō Endō*, His Eminence Jung-woo, former Head Monk of the Korean Zen School known as Jogyejong, graciously intimated that he would donate to Shogyoji an image of Bodhisattva Maitreya sitting in contemplation in the half-lotus position.

Such an offer evokes parallels with the gift of a similar image of Bodhisattva Maitreya received from Korea by Prince Shōtoku about 1400 years ago. I feel my whole being thrill with joy.

Next November, at the ceremony marking the three hundredth anniversary of the death of Dharma Master Tōsen, we have decided to mark too the seventeenth anniversary of our benevolent master, Dharma-Nun Daihi-in Ekai, who helped us take the Path of Birth in the Pure Land.

All I can do in the here and now, whilst holding back tears of both joy and sorrow, is to thank the Tathāgata from the bottom of my heart for manifesting himself in this way for us all to see.

The *Ikkō Sanzon Butsu* was carved by Master Buddhist Sculptor Kōkei Eri, who also designed the *Kasuga* shaped shrine for the *Ikkō Sanzon Butsu*.

**Ven. Chimyo Takehara**

## Praying for World Peace and Reconciliation The 134th London Eza

Three Wheels annual ceremony to pray for world peace and reconciliation between veterans of the Burma Campaign was held on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2017. It was a deeply humbling and inspiring experience to be among such a large number of dignitaries, venerable monks, nuns and priests from other Buddhist traditions as well as friends both new and old, who had all gathered for the same purpose.



**Mr Tomohiro Mikanagi opens the Eza.**

Mr Tomohiro Mikanagi, political minister from the Embassy of Japan, prefaced the event with an opening address he had generously prepared for the occasion in which he paid tribute to the dedication and selfless effort of Rev. Kemmyo Taira Sato and all those connected with the peace and reconciliation movement. Now returning to London as political minister for the Embassy after a long period away, Mr Mikanagi found he had a new appreciation for the work everyone had been so tirelessly doing.

A message graciously written for the meeting by His Excellency U Kyaw Zwar Minn, Ambassador of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, was read out in which Mr Minn said that this Eza, in which peoples of all different religions, cultures and races all come together, symbolises an ideal future where we can overcome hatred and prejudice caused by ignorance of each other.

During the memorial service to the soldiers and civilians from many different nationalities who lost their lives during the Second World War, Michael Moody, nephew of Mr Thomas Bruin one of the veterans of the Burma Campaign Society who died last year, together with his wife Maureen, offered incense in gratitude for everything his uncle had done for the peace and reconciliation movement.

Venerable monks, nuns, priests and representatives from other Buddhist traditions chanted sutras before the Buddha-shrine in a very moving display of harmony

within diversity. Included amongst them were members of the Thuwanna Thingi Mogot Vihara (a tradition from Myanmar), Amaravati Buddhist Monastery, Nipponzan Myohoji, Rissho Koseikai and the Shobo-an Zen Centre.

A message was then read out from the Right Reverend Michael Ippgrave, Bishop of Lichfield, who is a long time supporter and participant in the interfaith activities of Three Wheels. Bishop Michael told us in his message that it was his great joy in January of this year to visit Myanmar with Rev. Kemmyo Taira Sato to share in a Buddhist- Christian consultation. He said that for him the highlight of those very powerful days together was the opportunity for them to read together from the holy scriptures and to share the meaning of true neighbourliness in our own lives.

Following the traditional shaking of hands together in reconciliation, Rev. Kemmyo Taira Sato gave a talk of thanks in which he reflected on recent events strongly connected with this peace and reconciliation meeting. Hearing the chanting of sutras by the gathered representatives of other Buddhist traditions, Rev. Sato spoke of how much he felt the presence of those war veterans who are no longer with us. Remembering Mr Thomas Bruin, a war veteran who regularly attended this meeting to pray for continued reconciliation with his former combatants in the Burma Campaign, Rev. Sato expressed his sincerest gratitude to him and to all the other war veterans, both British and Japanese, for their sincere and deep commitment to the task of helping us awaken to the vital importance of realising world peace and inner peace.



**The Eza Participants filled the Buddha-room**

Rev. Sato remembered his first meeting with Mr Bill Smyly, a war veteran from the Burma Star Association, in the summer of 2012 after hearing him say that “I would like to be reconciled with Japanese people before my death.” Soon after that Mr Smyly came to Three Wheels to attend the Peace and Reconciliation Eza and continued to attend the London Eza whenever his health would allow him. Rev. Sato then recalled the London Eza in April 2017

which Mr Smyly attended despite being seriously ill and talked about how he had encountered the Japanese spirit of *Bushido* when his life was spared by Japanese soldiers on the battlefield in Burma. Rev. Sato described how moved he was by Mr Smyly's appreciation of *Bushido*, realising that it was precisely this profound understanding of the essence of *Bushido* or the pure form of unconditional love for mankind – beyond both love and hate – that led Mr Smyly to say he would like to be reconciled with Japanese people.

Attending this meeting for the first time was Mrs Keiko Holmes who, along with the late Mr Masao Hirakubo, founded the movement for reconciliation between Japanese and British war veterans. Mrs Holmes recalled how, since 1988, she had met hundreds of families of prisoners of war and had been learning a lot from this ongoing encounter which she had extended into other countries such as China.

Mrs Phillida Purvis, Chair of Links Japan, was next invited to speak. Mrs Purvis gave her sincere thanks to everyone involved in organising the day's event which she felt was even more meaningful in light of the recent sad developments in the world, such as the ever worsening situation in North Asia with North Korea. There are now, she highlighted, even more refugees in the world than there were at the height of the Second World War.

Mrs Akiko MacDonald, Chair of the Burma Campaign Society, highlighted how the effects of war can be felt by people in affected areas for many years into the future, a fact she had witnessed for herself in recent tours of Burma

and India to visit past battlefields, where the inhabitants are still suffering the effects of war.

Dr Desmond Biddulph, President of the Buddhist Society, paid tribute to his long friendship with Rev. Kemmyo Taira Sato whom he had first met whilst Rev. Sato was lecturing at SOAS well over twenty years ago. Reflecting on the meaning of "reconciliation", Dr Biddulph recalled the words of the Buddha who taught that we must always start with the "problem at home" which are our deep-seated blind passions. Unless we can come to terms with the seeds of violence in our own hearts, world peace can never be achieved.

Mr Richard Pe Win, a trustee of the Myanmar Buddhist Association, attended the meeting together with several other members of this longstanding organisation. Although on the surface peace can seem to be such a simple concept, Mr Win told us, underneath it requires many years of deep striving and the remembrance of what has happened in the past. From this point we can build a peaceful future together.

The last speaker was Rev. Kenshin Ishii who, looking towards the future, expressed his happiness at receiving some important teachings during recent spiritual activities at Shogyoji and Three Wheels. "If I become aware", Rev. Ishii emphasised, "that I am always supported, always loved by someone, my mind becomes full of gratitude and even for just a moment, free of the attachments that lead to conflict with others".

**Andrew Webb**

## **Nenbutsu in Mindfulness The 20th Shokai Retreat**

Our 20<sup>th</sup> Shokai Retreat at Three Wheels was held on 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2017. The theme of the Shokai was "Nenbutsu in Mindfulness" inspired by an article written by Ven. Chimyo Takehara, the Head Priest of Shogyoji, our parent temple in Japan.

In preparation for the Shokai, Rev. Sato and Rev. Ishii asked each of us to reflect carefully on the topic of 'An unforgettable occasion that changed my point of view.' This important event in our lives could be either special advice, or an event that had made a significant impression on us. It could be drawn from any area of our lives, home, work or activities in Three Wheels Sangha. The important thing was that the 'occasion' was still working within our lives and it was one that we would especially like to share with the Sangha over the course of the retreat weekend. This preparatory 'work' helped create an atmosphere of thankfulness and joy as we shared our unforgettable occasions together. We carried this feeling into the 135<sup>th</sup> London Eza that followed shortly after the close of the retreat on Sunday afternoon.

The Shokai retreat started on Friday evening with the Opening Service and 'Vow of Sincere Practice' given by Chris D, on behalf of David A. The vow contained wisdom and insight and helped us to focus on the theme of the Shokai. We also greeted Christopher, a first time participant at Shokai.

Rev. Sato then welcomed everyone to this Shokai with a really marvellous Dharma-talk in which he described the depth of Amida Buddha's great compassion for us and how the key to dealing with our karmic existence is to always return to the Nenbutsu and an awareness of Amida Buddha's unconditional love for us.

Following our evening meal, as some participants had experienced long and tiring journeys and may need a rest after supper, we had an optional Zadankai group meeting. Following some initial discussion, Hiroko-san treated us to a wonderful description of a retreat she attended in Plum Village, a retreat centre in France. Everyone was very pleased to hear her detailed recollections.



As the only full day of the retreat, Saturday was very busy with a wonderful variety of spiritual encounters for the Sangha to experience. Our day started with an early morning work session (*Sagyo*) at 6.30am, followed by one of Dave's excellent *Zazen* (seated meditation) sessions that really helped to get our day off to a positive and productive start. After breakfast we shared our reflections of "An unforgettable occasion that changed my point of view." This allowed Dharma friends to share in one another's life and practice experiences. I'm sure we all benefited from being allowed a 'snapshot' from each other's varied experiences. The preparation work for the Shokai certainly bore much spiritual fruit.

After lunch, we took part in *Sagyo* in the gardens and there were also some house painting activities. This brought us together working in an atmosphere of harmony and much was achieved for Three Wheels. The next activity was a 'chanting lesson' given by Rev. Ishii, this included the Buddhist liturgical verses *Shoshinge* and *Wasan*. In particular Rev. Ishii patiently and sympathetically helped those who were experiencing difficulties with the service order. The final activity of the day was writing our impressions of the retreat, reflecting on all that we had experienced during our time together since Friday evening.

Sunday morning was spent sharing reflections of all we had experienced together during the retreat. This filled us with gratitude as each of us became aware of how

much we had gained during our shared journey of the 20<sup>th</sup> Shokai with its theme of "Nenbutsu in Mindfulness." Each Shokai has a different 'flavour' and this one was another great opportunity for the Three Wheels Sangha to come together and spend much valued time having wonderful encounters. It is also a time to reflect on the support we receive from Goinge-sama, Ven. Chimyo Takehara, the Head Priest of Shogyoji, and Japanese members, without whom we would not be able to practice this wonderful Shin Buddhism at Three Wheels.

**Samuel Kelly**



**Closing Ceremony for the 20th Shokai Retreat**

## Living with Thanks The 135th London Eza

*Hoonko Otorikoshi*, the annual memorial service for Shinran Shonin, the founder of the Shin Buddhist tradition, is the most important religious ceremony of the year. It is a time when we can say "thank you", and show our gratitude for everything that he has done for us. On this special occasion the Buddha shrine had been prepared especially beautifully, and upon entering the Buddha room everyone noted how lovely it looked.

The *Hoonko Otorikoshi* service consisted of a special Buddhist verse (*gatha*) at the beginning, Japanese hymns (*wasan*) in the middle, and a notable letter by Rennyo Shonin at the end. Fortunately during the Shokai Retreat, which had been held just before the Eza, the participants had received a chanting lesson, and so during the service everyone was in fine voice!

After the service, we were introduced to Rev. Kemmyo Taira Sato, who gave the afternoon's talk. It was in late 2001 that Rev. Sato began the momentous task of translating one by one the "Letters of Rennyo", the great 15th century reformer of the Shin Buddhist Tradition, whose letters are fundamental to the transmission of Shin Buddhism. Now

16 years later his completed translation and commentary on each of the 80 letters has been submitted for publication. The title of the forthcoming book is, *Living with Thanks – The Five Fascicle Version of Rennyo Shonin's Letters*.

The topic of Rev. Sato's talk was the preface to the completed publication written by his Master, Ven. Chimyo Takehara. This preface serves as a wonderful introduction to the work as a whole which Rev. Sato read out together with his own words of thanks to the Sangha for all the support given to him when writing the book. Ven. Takehara wrote of the importance of taking refuge in the Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and that "Salvation through the Nenbutsu is universally given to anyone, at any time and in any place". We were told that "taking refuge in the Buddha" was the true essence of Mahayana Buddhism and that it was in the one thought-moment, or single instant, of taking refuge that the Dharma, or Truth, becomes one with the heart of a sentient being. Rennyo Shonin in his letters repeated time and again the phrase "the oneness of *Ki*, or the person to be saved, and *Ho*, or the Dharma that saves them, in *Namu Amida-Butsu*."

We were also reminded by Ven. Takehara of the importance of “Peaceful Awareness” (*Anjin*) and how steadily over the years a sense of peaceful awareness had been emerging at the gatherings of Dharma Friends at Three Wheels.

After the talk many people thanked Rev. Sato, and expressed their gratitude to him for not only writing such an important book, but also for the last 24 years, which have seen Rev. Sato tirelessly working in creating a Sangha here at Three Wheels, which is not only continuing to grow in size but also in depth. It was also emphasised that, without the help and support of his wife Hiroko, Professor John White and others, it would not have been possible.

After this, we were given short impressions by some of the participants who had attended the Shokai Retreat before the Eza. They all expressed their gratitude and joy from

their own personal experiences. It was especially good to hear from Mr. Chris Duxbury, who was attending his first Shokai retreat. Initially, he had been a little nervous, but as soon as he entered Three Wheels he had been amazed by the warmth of the welcome he received, and was immediately able to relax and enjoy the Retreat. Mr Sam Kelly expressed his deep gratitude to Shogyoji Temple and to Three Wheels for holding the Shokai retreat which allowed him to encounter the truth of the Buddha’s teaching.

To close the meeting, we were informed of events and activities that will be happening over the coming few weeks. Then it was time to relax and socialise over a fine buffet meal.

**Chris Dodd**

## **Pilgrimage to India The 136th London Eza**

Despite the fact that it was snowing quite heavily, many people braved the elements and were able to attend the 136th London Eza. Although it was cold outside, on entering Three Wheels the welcome was as warm as ever. The service was very uplifting and because the student members had been practising earlier, the Sutra chanting was very strong and full of energy.

Following the service we were introduced to Rev. Kenshin Ishii, who gave a talk, entitled, *A Pilgrimage to India following Shakyamuni 30.11.17 – 8.12.17*. In fact Rev. Ishii had only returned from India 38 hours earlier, so to be able to give such a wonderful talk was quite amazing in itself! The subject of the talk was his pilgrimage, along with seven other priests and four lay people from Shogyoji, our parent temple in Japan. The pilgrimage was to follow the life of Shakyamuni Buddha, from birth to death. They were able to visit many important historical sites



**The Pilgrims pay their respects at Mahabodhi Temple, the place where Shakyamuni Buddha was Enlightened**

including Lumbini, where Shakyamuni was born; Bodhi Gaya, where he attained enlightenment; Sarnath, where he first preached the Dharma, and Kushinagar, where Shakyamuni entered Nirvana. The photos and explanations were really interesting, and Rev. Ishii was able to bring back to Three Wheels much of the atmosphere they had experienced, along with the sense of reverence and devotion the pilgrims showed. We were also shown a video made by Rev. Emmyo Sato which was really beautiful, conveying the wonder of the sites that they had visited.

Rev. Kenshin Ishii told us how he had been so moved by the sincerity of the many pilgrims that he had encountered, and how the pilgrimage had shifted his view towards Shakyamuni into a completely fresh dimension in which he felt like he was able to listen to Shakyamuni’s preaching directly and to express his gratitude to him.

After the talk many interested listeners gave their thanks and asked many questions. Rev. Kemmyo Sato commented that even though Shakyamuni Buddha had entered Nirvana thousands of years ago, he was still here with us now, beyond time and space.

Following on we were introduced to some of the student members of the Sangha, who gave a video presentation entitled, *Colours – Gather the Light*. This was a collection of impressions and reflections which had been given at a ladies’ meeting during the summer training assembly held at Shogyoji earlier in the year. Not only had the texts been very carefully and skilfully translated into English, but they were also accompanied by beautiful photographs that had been taken by the students which perfectly harmonised with the reflections. It was so nice to be able to listen to Dharma friends from Shogyoji temple, and the students did a wonderful job of making it possible.

Then it was time for the end of year party. The atmosphere was very relaxed and friendly, and began with a quiz and raffle, again organised by the student members. The buffet was especially delicious, with freshly made crepes being made to warm everyone up. We were then treated to some beautifully sung songs and carols, accompanied by guitar,

flute and Irish harp.

**Chris Dodd**

## O-Bon Ceremony August 2017

*O-Bon* (お盆) is one of the most important Japanese traditions. Commonly people believe that their ancestors' spirits come back to their homes to re-unite with their families. Japanese people clean their houses, place a variety of food offerings, pray to the ancestors' spirits and put a lantern (*Chochin*) in the Buddhist altar (*Butsudan*) room to guide them. *O-Bon* is also the time for the families to visit the graves of their ancestors, cleaning the stones and the ground around the graves.

In Shin Buddhism, however, *O-Bon* is emphasised as a special time to pay respect to our ancestors and to thank them for all they have done for us.

Every year Rev. Kemmyo Sato conducts three *O-Bon* services, at Three Wheels, at Hendon Japanese Cemetery and at Brookwood Cemetery. This year I accompanied Rev. Sato for the day in order to write about it for the Newsletter.

I arrived at Three Wheels in time for the 10 am service conducted by Rev. Sato in the presence of his wife Hiroko, Mr Chris Dodd and myself. Then Rev. Sato, his wife and I went by car to Hendon, arriving an hour later at the Japanese Cemetery.

The Japanese Residents' Association in London was responsible for restoring the cemetery containing the remains of their compatriots, many of whom could not be returned to their mother country due to war or financial circumstances. The burial ground is contained within a larger cemetery in Hendon, north London.

The Association decided to act when they saw the state of the graveyard and realised that many of those buried there probably had no chance to get back to their home country before they died. They started work in 2006 on repairing uprooted paving stones and correcting subsiding lanterns. They also had to reinforce the central memorial stone, which had been shipped over from Japan in 1935 when the cemetery was first constructed.

There is a total of thirty one Japanese names and one English name listed on the headstones, with burial dates ranging between 1935 and 1959, mostly in the years before the war but also some during the war, when many Japanese were held in internment centres. Sachiko Fujita, a member

of the Japanese Residents' Association, is in charge of the cemetery.

As we arrived, many members of the Association were busy clearing weeds, pruning trees and cleaning the stones. When the cleaning was finished Rev. Sato began the service, which was attended by about thirty attendees, among them three diplomats from the Japanese Embassy, and ended it with a speech. Mrs Fujita thanked him on behalf of the Association and the ceremony was concluded by everyone singing together the well-known song *Furusato* (故郷) which means "old home" or "hometown".



**O-bon at the Hendon Japanese Cemetery**

We returned to Three Wheels for lunch and a short break, then Rev. Sato drove his wife and myself to Brookwood Cemetery, about an hour away. First he attended the graves of the four Japanese Students who died in London in 1863 and 1865, followed by silently paying respect to Prof. Williamson's monument. Next he celebrated *O-Bon* in front of the Stupa and then went on to reflect and chant a Sutra at the grave of Prof. Williamson who, together with his wife Emma Catherine Williamson, had selflessly looked after the students up until the end of their short lives.

We then returned to Three Wheels at the end of another year's eventful *O-Bon* day.

**Lucien Chocron**



## A Sleepover at the Temple The Children's Meeting

I attended the children's meeting at Three Wheels with my 8 year old son. He had enjoyed his time at previous children's meetings at the temple and was keen to go to this one. He was particularly excited to attend this event as it included a sleepover at the temple.

The meeting began with a short meditation and some chanting in the shrine room. I was very impressed with how well the children sat, especially given the young age of some of them. It also did a good job of settling the children down and focusing their attention. The main activity of the meeting was for the children to practise a play that they will perform at the Flower Festival (*Hanamatsuri*). It was nice to see the children work together with the organisers to create something that I am sure will be enjoyed by all at the festival. Some of the other activities included making origami sumo wrestlers and watching a film, which all the children enjoyed.

As well as the fun activities, there were also opportunities for discussions and lessons in the shrine room. The general theme was being thankful for all the things that people do for you, and also to consider things that you feel sorry for, in order to be less selfish. The children made contributions

to these discussions, and I think it really helped them to see the importance of not being selfish and being grateful for the things that they have and for the things that others do for them. Overall, the weekend had a really nice balance of fun and learning.

After returning home, I had some time to reflect on the weekend. I realised that as well as it being a good experience for my son, it was also beneficial for me. It was a nice experience to get to know the other parents and children at Three Wheels and the various teachings that the children received were also very relevant to my own life. Further to this, after a period of meditation in the evening, I felt a very deep sense that everything I take for granted only exists because of the efforts of other people. It seemed very clear to me that I have so much to be grateful for and that many of the things I consider "mine" only exist because somebody else worked hard to produce them. I think I learned so much from this experience, and would like to thank Three Wheels for allowing my son and me to attend.

**Christopher Duxbury**

## A Poem by Matsuo Basho

*tsuki kage ya  
shimon shishu mo  
tada hi totsu*

**Under the moonlight  
the four gates and the four sects  
are all of them one**

*From a new translation by Prof. John White of selected haiku verse by Matsuo Basho. This haiku was written by Basho on the occasion of visiting Zenkoji Temple in Nagano, Japan.*

*Editors' Note.*

*For comments, criticisms, and questions concerning the Newsletter or if you want to provide material for inclusion, please contact Three Wheels Temple.*

*Edited and created by the Three Wheels Editorial Committee.*

**All donations are welcome**

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