



# Three Wheels NEWS



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## An account of the Ceremony held on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing.

The first thing to strike me in the small garden, above the School of Oriental and African Studies building on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> of August was the sense of serenity established through the preparation of the ceremonial space and the laying out of the holy objects of Shin Buddhist worship from the Three Wheels temple. As soon as I noticed the tranquillity growing within me I did my best to surrender to the feeling. Having gladly agreed to take some photographs during the ceremony, I found a position that afforded me a good view.

Following a short introduction from Dr Keelans of SOAS, Professor Sato of Three Wheels began the ceremony - in reverent remembrance of those who lost their lives held following the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki sixty years ago. It was a ceremony conducted from the heart in deep respect and aspiration for peace in this world. Sixty years, Dr Keelans elucidated marks the beginning of a new cycle in Japanese tradition; a new direction was being welcomed.

The ringing of a small bell punctuated the recitation of Sutras in a call for peace. Throughout the proceedings, spirals of dispersing smoke from the incense burner in front of the wooden platform rose above the silent vigil held by those people in attendance. On occasion the wind threatened to blow down a scroll hanging behind the altar but, just as it began to sway too hard, the breezes subsided.

All chanting was brought to silence after a prayer to Amida Buddha.

Professor Sato then delivered a moving talk, which explained some of the significance of the ceremony; raising awareness of the massive destructive power and potential human extinction housed within our present day nuclear arsenals across the globe. This served to heighten the importance of Professor Sato's closing words. They

were a vow taken before those present on the altar who fell beneath the nuclear bombs to cultivate inner peace in daily life through a lessening of the anger and hatred created by selfish greed. He explained prior to this that in our thoughts, words and deeds we could salute those who fell, as a corollary of this greed, by seeking to cultivate the quality so lacking in the conditions of their demise, peace in the world. Professor Sato emphasised that the most expedient route to this ideal, though seemingly long and arduous is to develop awareness of the selfishness we bring to our daily lives and, through this awareness, to lessen its generation of anger and hatred within ourselves by noticing our greed.

My thanks go to Professor Sato for the gift of this insight on this remarkable occasion. Thanks must also be given for the wind not being any stronger and the rain steering clear of central London on that day.

**Christopher Barker**

### On Hiroshima

The following is an extract from the talk given by Professor Sato at the School of Oriental and African Studies on the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima.

May I first of all thank you most sincerely, Doctor Keelans, for inviting me here today to conduct this special ceremony on this

special date. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to all of you thoughtful participants for attending this memorial service for those who died in the atomic bomb over Hiroshima on August 6<sup>th</sup> 1945. The ceremony I have just conducted comes with my humble prayer for peace in our world.

Were it not based on our aspirations for world peace, any memorial for those citizens who perished in the atomic



Rev. Pr. Sato at SOAS

blast over Hiroshima would lack deeper meaning, for what they, the victims, really wanted to see during their lives, whether consciously or subconsciously, will have been exactly that - peace.

Sixty years have passed since those atomic bombs were dropped first on Hiroshima, then on Nagasaki. We can count ourselves fortunate that there has been no further aggressive use made of nuclear weapons since the end of the Second World War. The atomic explosion over Hiroshima killed in an instant over twenty-five thousand citizens and the number of those affected by the bomb and who subsequently died as a result of atomic-bomb radiation amounts to over two hundred and sixty thousand. Ask any group of Japanese people if they are related to the victims of those two bombs and you will find that many of them indeed have some connection with those who suffered. I, myself, am one of those Japanese people that must answer Yes. My grandmother-in-law died almost immediately after the bombing and my eldest brother, now a Shin Buddhist priest, who visited her in Hiroshima the day after the bomb fell is still suffering from leukaemia. The talk he gave on his experience that day filled me with the most profound horror. He said that as he walked through the centre of the city he felt he was walking through hell on earth. But there is no time now to go into the details of his terrible ordeal.

The explosive power of the much bigger nuclear weapons of today is said to be one thousand six hundred times that of the atomic bomb dropped over Hiroshima. The number of nuclear weapons owned by the U.S.A., Russia, France, the U.K., Israel, Pakistan, India and other countries is said to amount to several tens of thousands. The detonation of a single large nuclear weapon could easily destroy a small country and might lead to a series of disastrous explosions, eventually resulting in the end of mankind. We are constantly exposed to such danger.

We should never make use of nuclear weapons. Hiroshima should never be repeated. If a nuclear weapon were to be used again, it could entail the destruction of millions of people in a single instant. The establishment of world peace is of vital importance and desperately urgent. Yet this globe of ours is full of conflicts between nations, which can lead to nuclear war. Tragically we human beings have been creating wars even in

the name of world peace and international justice.

Confronted by this sad reality of the present world, I have a feeling of personal helplessness. At the same time, however, I think it is extremely important for each one of us to become aware of the fundamental cause of human conflict and to attain inner peace ourselves as individuals by overcoming those conflicts in our own daily lives. The cause of conflict is anger and hate, based on blind greed. When the pursuance of our selfish desires is hindered, we become angry and burn with hatred for those who would appear to thwart our ambitions. Consciously or unconsciously, we prepare weapons, whether in our minds or in physical reality, with which to fight those that oppose us.

For all adherents of the world's religions, as long as those religions are based on unselfish love, the attainment of inner peace is an absolute imperative, for only those who have attained inner peace by overcoming greed and anger will be able to love others unselfishly.

When we face difficult problems in life, we should never turn to violence, be it mental or physical. Our problems will never be solved by resorting to arms, especially not by resorting to nuclear weapons. Slow and insignificant as it seems, the best way for us as individuals to establish world peace is for each of us to attain inner peace ourselves by overcoming selfish desires and anguish, the hidden cause of atomic bombs, in our own daily lives.

Although it is not easy to be always aware of how selfish we are, nor easy constantly to overcome this selfishness as we progress through life, it is the best and shortest way to establish true peace in this world.

Let us try to establish inner peace in our interpersonal relationships. If we can do so through faith or enlightenment, we will realise the true importance of inner peace, or to give it another name, spiritual tranquillity.

Now, standing in front of all those who died in the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and then Nagasaki sixty years ago, I would like to vow to walk on this path of attaining inner peace in everyday life, never resorting to any kind of violence, either in thoughts, words or deeds.

**K.T.Sato**

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## **World Peace and Gagaku Music**

This is part of the talk given by Professor Sato that was inspired by the wonderful experience he had attending an audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Japan last spring.

Shogyoji Temple, the parent body of Three Wheels, was invited to the Aso Shrine to have an audience with His Holiness. My master, Venerable Chimyo Takehara was accompanied by some of his followers as well as myself, acting as an interpreter between His Holiness and my master.

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On 11th April 2005 His Holiness the Dalai Lama undertook a visit to Aso Shrine, a very old Shintoist shrine, at Ichinomiya in Kumamoto Prefecture, one of the towns actually within the Aso volcano. Venerable Chimyo Takehara, Head Priest in Japan of

At the beginning of the audience, immediately after his formal visit to Aso Shrine, His Holiness declared how pleased he was to be able to pay his respects to the kami, or Japanese Shinto gods, enshrined in the Aso Shrine. He also emphasised the inestimable importance of the meaning of interfaith if we are ever to establish peace in our world, explaining that, whatever religious organization he visited, be it a Catholic church,

Muslim mosque, Hindu temple, Buddhist monastery or Shinto shrine, it was his custom to pay his respects to the object of their worship. On hearing such words from His Holiness, I was greatly impressed by his deep concern and involvement in the current interfaith movement, and especially by the humble attitude he displayed expressing his respect to other traditions.

The Gagaku music is the oldest traditional music of Japan. Having originated in India it reached Japan along with Buddhism in the sixth century, travelling over great distances via the Silk Route, China and Korea.

In the Buddhist tradition the Gagaku music is said to be the sound of gratitude to all Buddhas. It goes beyond joy and anger, sadness and happiness and its essence lies in a sense of peace contained in the sound of music. Gagaku music is usually played together with accompanying dance (Bugaku) as an offering to the Buddhas or gods (kami). At Shogyoji Temple Gagaku music and Bugaku dance are performed on special occasions such as Hoonko, Eitaikyo, Higan-e (Equinoctial Meetings) and the Bon Service.

The start of Gagaku music at the temple can be traced to near the end of the Second World War. Venerable Reion Takehara, the then Head Priest of Shogyoji, ordered the purchase of a set of Gagaku musical instruments in order to keep these traditional artefacts safe at Shogyoji Temple and protect them from the wartime inferno. It was quite a shock for his followers to hear such an unexpected request in the midst of wartime poverty and hardship. I have gathered that some of them thought he had gone quite mad! He stated with confidence, however, that the

need for such music of peace would not be long in coming. When we met His Holiness in April this year and my mother mentioned the story of the special Gagaku musical instruments, His Holiness responded by saying, "It is very important for us to preserve our cultural traditions in order to keep our own identity alive".

His Holiness's remark reminded us of the enormous effort he himself had made to preserve the Tibetan cultural traditions immediately after his escape to India. At the same time and in a deeper dimension it also helped us understand what Venerable Reion Takehara had been doing when he sought to preserve traditional Gagaku music. Knowing the end of war was at hand and faced with the complete destruction of our country, it was not from madness but from deep compassion that he sought to keep this tradition alive for future generations. I realise now that it was his ardent prayer for us to attain inner peace and eventually establish world peace.

After the Second World War 'the Shogyoji Gagaku Group' was formed using those same instruments. Followers of Shogyoji Temple, interested in Gagaku music or dance, have been trained successively as musicians and dancers. They have worked very hard indeed in their pure desire to dedicate their Gagaku performance to the Buddha on special occasions at the temple. Our prayer for peace lives on energetically in the tradition of Shogyoji Temple.

**K.T. Sato**

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## Spring School 2005

The 6<sup>th</sup> Spring School took place between 24<sup>th</sup> of March and 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2005. Fourteen people, eleven teenagers and three helpers (two priests and one lady), flew over to London from Japan to take part in this educational session. Whilst staying at Three Wheels and participating in the daily Buddha services and meetings, the party also had the opportunity to visit a number of special locations such as Central London, Brookwood Cemetery, Greenwich and U.C.L. They were even able to spend a few days in Dartmoor. When the Spring School participants visited the Golden Buddha Centre in Devon, they were warmly welcomed by Mr Richard St. Ruth, the owner of the centre, and his wife, Mrs Diana St. Ruth. Likewise they also received a very kindly welcome from Professor Treleaven when they visited

University College London. For most of the students it was their first experience of leaving their own country and living away from their parents. In the course of their visit they came to realise how much they had always been protected and supported by their parents. Each student wrote an account of their experience at this Buddhist educational training. Some of their essays were very spiritual and at the same time expressive of the change that had come over them during their stay at the Spring School. About five months after their return to Japan Three Wheels received some very happy news concerning their spiritual development. Some of the participants from the Spring School had gone on to take the opportunity of an introspection session and these had been very successful



The Spring School

## A memorial ceremony to pray for reconciliation and world peace 63rd Eza

In this year of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War a large number of people from various faiths and countries gathered at Three Wheels Shin Buddhist Dojo to take part in a memorial service and ceremony for reconciliation and world peace.

The Eza opened with an address from the Japanese Consul General Mr Kenji Hiramatsu in which he echoed his Prime Minister's recent apology for Japan's part in the war, as well as giving his own impressions of participating in various VJ-day ceremonies. His speech was then followed by a service of sutra chanting during which members of the Burma Campaign Society and other veterans, Japanese and English, burnt incense in remembrance of those who lost their lives during the war. After the service poems of commemoration were read out, and then all present shook hands in a gesture of peace and reconciliation.



The Japanese Consul General Mr. Kenji Hiramatsu

Next Reverend Kemmyo Taira Sato gave a talk entitled *World Peace and Gagaku Music* in which he spoke about the activities of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and of Shogyoji Temple's former master Venerable Reion Takehara to preserve the traditional music of their respective traditions during times of war. Reverend Sato seemed to imply the need for a special kind of cultural awareness in which people seek to protect not their cultural difference as an abstract nationalistic idea but rather to protect those aspects of their cultures which are edifying to all of humanity. This important point is well illustrated by the way in which followers of Shogyoji Temple sought to prevent their temple bell being turned into weaponry during World War Two. Venerable Reion Takehara's expenditure of temple money on musical instruments, for the performance of peace-promoting religious music, during a time of wartime poverty and hardship

also represents this important message.

After his own talk Reverend Sato read out a message from Mr Satoru Yanagi who was prevented from attending the ceremony, due to ill-health, for the first time in eight years. Mr Yanagi told movingly of how "wandering along the borderline of life and death" during the war had awakened in him a desire to understand his "uncomfortable feeling towards the nation and people [he] had fought during the war". Thanks to his 1997 encounter with Mr Hirakubo, Mr Maurice Frances, Mr Philip Daniels and others at Three Wheels, all "expressing their sincere prayer for peace" he had felt "all my ill feeling gradually melted away".

Professor John White echoed Mr Yanagi's gratitude for the peace work of Mr Hirakubo, pointing out that Mr Hirakubo has worked tirelessly for reconciliation between Japanese and English veterans despite considerable opposition and animosity from some quarters. He also noted the way in which Mr Hirakubo's Christian faith had sustained him in this effort.

Mr James Evans, attending the ceremony for the first time, also spoke vividly of his wartime experiences. In particular he described, with bewildering gratitude, how the hard steel make-up of a Japanese bullet meant that it passed cleanly through him causing little internal damage. He then described a subsequent visit to Lumbini and a sense of peace he found at the Buddha's dusty birthplace. He put forward no overt message on the back of these anecdotes but one got the sense that Mr Evans has discovered a special kind of awareness that finds grounds for gratitude in the messy events of life.

After further talks the meeting concluded with a speech of farewell from Shinpei Hashimoto who, having lived at Three Wheels for several years with his wife Sonoko and daughter Tamako, will be shortly returning to Japan. On his return home he will be helping to manage his family business and he said that he hopes to continue learning about ethical and sustainable business practices. He also said that what he had learnt at Three Wheels was the importance of awakening a mind of gratitude for all that has been done for oneself.

The 63<sup>rd</sup> Eza was a considerable success and resulted in many new encounters between a great many people. One attendee subsequently said to me, "the peace and reconciliation ceremony was a wonderful experience! To see old war veterans shaking hands and embracing was extremely moving. I had tears in my eyes as I do now even thinking about it! We see and hear so many evil things in this world.

It is encouraging and refreshing to see such powerful acts of reconciliation taking place in front of our very eyes. What an example to all of us who were present to witness such an event!"

**Andy Barritt**



Rev. Pr. Sato leading the Chanting before the Buddha Shrine. (Picture by Mr. Kato)

## MAY LONDON REST UNDER A SKY OF PEACE.

### A Message to the Reconciliation Meeting at Three Wheels from Satoru Yanagi.

20th August 2005

Namu-amida-butsu

As I write these few words of welcome for this special occasion, I feel very sorry that I am unable to see you all gathered together at Three Wheels today. I would like to ask all of you over there to forgive me for my absence, due to the uncertainty of my health. I am now eighty-four years old.

During the Second World War, I found myself wandering along the borderline between life and death in the battlefields of Burma. Back in Japan, though I prayed for peace, it has to be said that I was quite unable to rid myself of a certain uncomfortable feeling towards the nation and people that I had fought against during the war; something that for a long time caused me a great deal of distress. However, thanks to the thoughtful arrangements made by the Head Priest of Shogyoji Temple, whilst still in this state of mind I attended a memorial service held at Three Wheels on 7th December 1997, for the British and Japanese soldiers who had lost their lives during the Second World War.

On being introduced to this wonderful place, I was able to encounter Mr. Hirakubo and many others in a dimension beyond national boundaries, race and religion. Hearing your sincere prayer for peace all my ill feeling gradually melted away.

In this special place of encounter I met Mr. Maurice Franses, who had once stood confronting us on the same battlefield in Burma. Words cannot describe how moved I was to meet and get to know him; to shake hands and embrace each other. Since that time onwards I have been coming regularly to see

you every August. Each time I visited you all at Three Wheels I encountered wonderful friends. The late Mr. Philip Daniel, who died last spring, is one of those I can never forget. His voice intoning "Shalom" (Peace in Hebrew) still reverberates towards me through the air, a rallying call for the innermost recesses of our consciousness.

So many visitors! I am very grateful to you all for coming together every year to hold this special meeting. I would also like to say a special thank you to Reverend Sato, Mr. Hirakubo and all the other participants today for making such a consistent effort in your daily lives to bring about this special event.

The Head Priest of Shogyoji Temple has been encouraging us to attain 'inner peace' by saying that unless we solve our own personal problems, there can be no world peace. The late Pope John Paul II, who went to heaven last spring, had been working for world peace, declaring that although there are many people who individually pray for peace, there are few who gather in one place to do so. I have no doubt whatsoever that your gathering together is for you to attain 'inner peace' and to pray for peace whilst 'gathering together in one place.

I pray from the bottom of my heart that you may continue to foster this all important light and that it may burn ever brighter and stronger with your sincere prayers for peace.

Satoru Yanagi

## Speech of Thanks given at the 63<sup>rd</sup> London Eza

I have been living at Three Wheels Temple for almost three years while studying for a Master in business administration at Royal Holloway, University of London. I moved to London immediately following my marriage to my wife, Sonoko. During our stay in London our daughter Tamako was born. After submitting my final dissertation next month, I am returning to Tokyo, where I will join my father's property development company in October. So now our long honeymoon is finishing and we are going back to reality! I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Sato and his wife Hiroko for accepting us and sharing all the responsibilities of our life in London, just like our parents. Without them, I cannot imagine how we would have been able to have lived through these past three years. I think this situation shows that we have been embraced by the immeasurable compassion of Taira-sensei and Hiroko-san, who are the existence of Amida Buddha to us.

Through the Dharma talks given by Professor Sato, I have been taught about the importance of inner peace. However, it may be impossible to establish peace in my mind only by my own effort. I think the source of inner peace is the feeling of gratitude. My mind which is filled with greed, anger and selfishness becomes calm when the feeling of gratitude emerges in my mind. Without the existence of other people who have kindly given such great support for my benefit, there would be no opportunity to show my gratitude. In this sense, I suppose, inner peace in this way can exist between all people, including you and me. During these past three years, I have met many people from various countries at Three Wheels, my university and other places I have visited. I have been helped and supported by all of them in various ways. I am sure that all of you are the source of my inner peace.

As I said, one of my reasons for coming to London is to study business. However, more significantly, another reason is to encounter people from all over the world. This is because I enjoyed working with British people when we rebuilt the garden in the 'second house' during my first visit to Three Wheels three years ago. At that time, I was overjoyed by the

process of making a garden with the people rather than just enjoying seeing the garden itself - the result of the process. It was an experience that broke through my tiny "take-things-for-granted" world. I thought that the creation of a garden was not only about harmonizing trees, grasses, stones and rocks but also harmonizing the diverse people who worked for it. Then, following a suggestion kindly given to me by Professor John White, I decided to come back to London in order to expand my experience.

Some people may say that the business world is a type of war in which people conflict with each other for their own benefit. However, through my study of business administration, I realize that this situation has been changing. Organizations have become doubtful about the advantages of concentrating on solely maximizing their profit selfishly for their own benefit. They are considering what they can do to benefit ordinary people. Because of the rapid development of globalization, organizations have to think about developing global harmony through sharing resources and benefits. I am hoping that my experience of inner peace in London will help my future career in the field of business.

I am very pleased that my family can share in the experience of inner peace because Shogyoji Temple, Taira-sensei, Hiroko-san, Three Wheels, and all of you have accepted us and made us a part of the community. I feel very happy to be a Buddhist because I can always refresh this feeling of gratitude through the daily Buddhist services by pronouncing Nembutsu as an expression of my gratitude. Always I can keep sending my gratitude to you from Japan in this way. I hope my daughter Tamako has already become aware of this feeling and will express her gratitude by pronouncing Nembutsu in the future. I would dearly like to thank each of you personally for everything.

**Shimpei Hashimoto**

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## Hoonko Otorikoshi - The 64<sup>th</sup> London Eza

Today, friends of Three Wheels from many parts of the U.K together with Dharma-friends from Japan, met for the annual Hoonko Otorikoshi celebration. For Shin Buddhists, Hoonko is the most important religious observance of the year as it commemorates the death of Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhism. Essentially Hoonko means "an assembly to express our gratitude to the founder for all he has done for us". At Three Wheels many people who are not Shin Buddhists also attend this meeting to express their gratitude towards the traditions they belong too or to their own "good teacher".

Reverend Kemmyo Taira Sato, the spiritual director of Three Wheels, introduced the meeting and welcomed everyone to Three Wheels as honourable guests of the founder Shinran Shonin, remembering the words and teaching of his late master the Dharma mother Ekai-sama. Reverend Sato then gave a talk entitled "The Meaning of Nembutsu in Shin Buddhism", in which he discussed the development of the idea of nembutsu from its traditional Sanskrit source, meaning to think or to be mindful of the Buddha, through to its flowering in Shin Buddhism as "pronouncing the Name of Amida Buddha" (jp:

shomyo nembutsu) which is to say the words Namu Amida Butsu.

Next we were grateful to be introduced to six Dharma-friends from Shogyoji Temple in Japan: Reverend Hoshin Kataoko and his wife Junko, Mr Kanji Ban and his wife Haruko and Mr Izumi Ida and his wife Junko, who were visiting Three Wheels in order to participate in this year's Hoonko Otorikoshi celebration. Their attendance reminded Reverend Sato of the Shogyoji Temple sangha and through them he could feel the presence of the great masters of Shogyoji Temple Daigyoin-sama and Ekai-sama.

Reverend Kataoka spoke of how his father's life course had been completely turned around through his sincere encounter with



Mr Ben reading his speech

the then Head Priest of Shogyoji Daigyoin-sama and how many years later he is enjoying living his life at Shogyoji. Reverend Kataoko told us that now he was in front of the Buddha at Three Wheels all he wanted to do was "say the nembutsu in gratitude for the fact that I am now allowed [through Amida Buddha] to live my daily life surrounded by a good teacher and good Dharma friends".

Mr Ban described his daily life living at the Gobyō taya and his impressions of two Dharma talks he recently heard that were very meaningful. Kanji-sama remembered when, after one of the British members of the Three Wheels sangha completed his introspection session at Shogyoji Temple, he had pronounced the nembutsu together with him at the morning service and said "Today once again I put my hands together towards Amida Buddha and pronounce the nembutsu alongside Andrew. What an inconceivable relationship is contained in our encounter".

Reverend Sato announced how Mr Izumi Ida and his wife Junko have made the momentous decision to attend Hoonko Otorikoshi at Three Wheels every year following Mrs Ida's encounters at Three Wheels during last year's Hoonko celebration. Mr Ida described his deep respect and interest for British cultural traditions and her people. He explained how he felt that Japan and Britain had much in common and has faced

similar situations in the past. Mr Ida showed his happiness to be able to fulfil his long held aim to visit the U.K and went on to say that "Starting from this year, I would like to visit Three Wheels every year together with my wife".

Mrs Junko Ida spoke of her gratefulness to be at Three Wheels again and to meet with all her Dharma-friends. She showed her appreciation for her encounter with "all Buddhas" which first began in her life when she met her very good teacher Ekai-sama. Of this she said "my first impression was that she was not an ordinary person but an enlightened person pronouncing the Buddha Name". Mrs Ida expressed her gratitude to Ekai-sama, her present master Chimyo-sama and all her Dharma-friends who, she said "are all Buddha's around me. Without any one of them I cannot live such a peaceful life".

Mr Tsugoto Takiguchi has been living at Three Wheels for the past two years whilst studying for an MA in International Accounting. As this was the last Eza he would be attending before his return to Japan, he gave a special speech of thanks for the wonderful time he has experienced in London. He talked about how he dedicated his study to the memory of his late father. Tsuguto-san concluded by saying "I received everything possible from all of you here. All I experienced in London is invaluable; I have received all of this from you, all Buddhas".

At the end of the meeting, Reverend Chikugai Furuya a priest from the Fuke tradition of Zen Buddhism played a beautifully haunting performance of two traditional compositions on the shakuhachi. One piece he played in front of the Buddha Shrine, the other in the Zen garden. It was a rare, if not unique, opportunity to hear a master of this instrument play and everyone deeply appreciated having him attend Three Wheels.

Again Hoonko Otorikoshi was a precious time to experience the meaning of the Shin Buddhist teaching of true encounter, through the chance to meet with good teachers and Dharma-friends, as guests of the great founder Shinran Shonin.

**Andrew Webb**



Rev. Chikagai Furuya playing the Shakuhachi

## Children's Meetings

Children's meetings are held every month at Three Wheels. On average some twenty adults and children regularly take part. These meetings are always very lively containing challenging and interesting themes that the children (and parents!) always enjoy participating in. On the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2005 the meeting incorporated the annual flower festival celebration of Shakyamuni Buddha's birthday. This special meeting was additionally attended by the students of our annual Spring School. In April a traditional Japanese tea ceremony was held on the viewing platform of the Three Wheels Zen garden. The children patiently watched as the tea was prepared and listened to an explanation of its significance. They were then able to appreciate drinking the powdered green tea together in such a serene and beautiful setting.



Hanamatsuri - the annual flower festival celebration

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## Brush Painting Classes at Three Wheels

The brush painting classes have been continuing under the guidance of Hiroko Sato. Recent classes were attended by about six people and it was lovely to see some young children also participating.

At each class everyone was provided with water, ink stones, paper and brush, all neatly set out on our arrival. There were even brush rests specially made by Prof. Sato.

During the class any beginners were shown how to make the ink and the amount to put on the brush before finally attempting to draw a line in the correct manner as demonstrated by Hiroko. The intention was to produce a quick brushstroke with a gradation of black rather than a solid black line painted slowly and deliberately - not as easy as it looked! After much practice at drawing lines in various ways we tried some circles and eventually cherries, bamboo and flowers were attempted. As models we were provided with the beautiful brush paintings sent over from Japan by Hiroko's teacher, Mr Mitsunori Takao.

Sensei and Hiroko were very encouraging about our efforts throughout the classes and indeed, some people appeared to be getting on very well. At the end of the October class we were each given a card and invited to paint something, which was then photographed by Hiroko to be shown to her teacher. For this she also demonstrated how to make the red seal with our names in Japanese characters.

There was a very friendly and supportive feeling present during the classes, despite the fact that some people had never met before, and in fact it was a good opportunity to get to know sangha members.

Details of the next brush painting class are available on request. Participants are requested to donate £3.00 for materials. Beginners are always welcome.

**Hazel Waghorn**

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**POSTCARDS AND SEASONAL GREETING CARDS ARE AVAILABLE AT THREE WHEELS.**

**All donations are welcome**



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