



Three Wheels NEWS



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Stupa Inauguration Ceremony

It is with great pleasure that I write to inform you of the recent visit to Brookwood Cemetery undertaken by members of the Three Wheels Dharma community:

Early rising at Three Wheels brings many benefits that I do not generally receive in my day to day life. As we awaited the arrival of the coach at Three Wheels that would take us to Brookwood Cemetery, I was still enchanted by having seen - in the pre dawn sky over London - the crescent moon in close proximity to a planet. Both reflected the rays of the Sun to anyone looking into the sky before dawn here in the western hemisphere. This brought home to me a sense of wonder at the beginning of what was to be remarkable day for the Three Wheels community.

Upon arriving at Brookwood, those members of the community who had travelled on the coach walked amongst tall trees and stone memorials in order to reach the site of the Stupa recently erected on behalf of all who wish to find a resting place there. This was an amazing point of reflection for me – that anyone who found a connection to the Dharma in whatever degree might rest their earthly remains under this stone monument, belonging still to a community. In the peace that surrounded us, those present had a chance to see first hand this site, beset as it is on all sides by grass, trees and stone memorials to past lives.



The Stupa

Within a rectangular border of low stone blocks and surrounded by a sea of bright gravel there rises in the centre of the site a mound of green grass; on top of this mound sits the stone that was lovingly carved in Japan that bears the inscription 'Namu Amida Butsu' on its front face.

A service of Sutra chanting began the inaugural ceremony of the site; I was later informed by a Dharma friend that the Sutra chanted, the Tambutsuge, contains within the first section an invitation to the Bodhisattvas who assist Amida Buddha to be present at the ceremony. I felt a sense of joy during the ceremony in the fact that in this place of peaceful rest, religious service could be enjoyed by all beings present, seen and unseen.

On this note, three Gagaku musicians from Shogyoji temple Samgha then played their music for all those in attendance. The antiquity of this music is almost palpable in the listening since it evokes deep feelings, in those who hear it, of its ancient and sacred origins. So it was that, with further wonderment, we went on to listen to Kemmyo Sensei deliver a short talk that elucidated some of the intricate and profound workings of the Dharma that led to the construction of this Buddhist Stupa at Brookwood



The Sutra chanting

cemetery; the details of which will hopefully be available to the community through Kemmyo Sensei's talk. In brief summary we heard of the four young Japanese who are buried at Brookwood cemetery, how they came to be there and the great kindnesses shown to one of their number in particular by two other souls - whose bodies rest within 300 metres of the memorial to these Japanese people; they are Alexander and Catherine Williamson



The memorials of the four Japanese students

who, as well as hosting some of the Japanese pioneers in their own home, nursed Kosaburo Yamazaki with great compassion until his death. His is the oldest Japanese grave to be found in the west.

After the inauguration of the Stupa site we made the short walk to the gravesite of the four pioneers of modern Japan whose lives ended during their studies in England. The second Sutra of the day chanted here was the Sansige, in which I am told Dharmakara Bodhisattva vows to become a Buddha and to create the Pure Land.

Whilst listening to the Gagaku music played here after the Sutra service I wept at the thought of these four young Japanese people; I felt that if any parts of their spirit remained in anguish, or lost and far from home, that this music, available to hear 140 years ago in their homeland would guide them to the embrace of Amida's all encompassing light.



Professor Alexander and Catherine Williamson's memorial

It was after the Gagaku music that those present made the walk of approximately 300 metres to the grave of Catherine and Alexander Williamson. The size of Brookwood Cemetery is marvellously apparent to anyone who has opportunity to walk its paths between many different types of tree and a vast array of

stone memorials.

The Sansige was recited once more at the grave of Catherine and Alexander Williamson. I walked towards their grave following the service as many of the people in attendance were leaving and upon kneeling before the memorial I felt that these two souls were already walking towards a pure land when they showed such kindness to those Japanese pioneers within their lifetime. It is quite remarkable that until two weeks before the inauguration of the Three Wheels Buddhist Stupa that the location of Professor Alexander and Catherine Williamson's memorial was unknown to the community of Three Wheels. Kemmyo Sensei told us in his talk how moved he had been to discover its location and to see for himself the headstone of these compassionate individuals. He told how he had prostrated himself before the grave, so moved he had been to finally see it and to think of the kindness shown to the early pioneers from Japan.

Thinking about it, he himself is a pioneer and faces too the opportunity to leave his body far from his homeland. Namu Amida Butsu.

Kemmyo Sensei also told us in his talk, with a heartfelt chuckle, how one of his Japanese Dharma friends, in England to help construct the Three Wheels Stupa of Namu Amida Butsu, had upon his arrival in England jovially remarked to Kemmyo "we are here to build your grave".

With palms together in the Dharma.

Christopher Barker

Editor's note: The Stupa is meant for not only Japanese Buddhists but for Buddhists from any tradition who wish their ashes to be interred there.

On the Stupa at Brookwood Cemetery

It is my firm belief that the activities we have witnessed over the past fourteen years, from the unveiling ceremony in 1993 of the monument erected in memory of the Japanese students studying at UCL nearly a century and a half ago right up until today's inaugural ceremony at Three Wheels of the Buddhist Stupa erected at Brookwood Cemetery, have been brought about by the sort of profound encounter never before seen in the long history of spiritual exchange between Great Britain and Japan, or indeed between East and West.

I was deeply impressed by the honour paid those four students, who had died in this country about one hundred and forty years ago, and by your very earnest endeavours in the preservation of their graves. In close proximity now to those students' last resting place stand the new Stupa erected by Three Wheels.

The historical process leading from the erection of a monument for the Japanese students of 140 years ago right up to the building of the Stupa of Namu-Amida-Butsu at Brookwood Cemetery surely involves an awakening to the Dharma, or the truth of life, in an even deeper dimension.

Born of total sincerity and compassion, it is the innermost prayer firmly based on wisdom and love that has brought about this spiritual movement that transmits its Dharma message to succeeding generations beyond the confines of time.

Venerable Chimyo Takehara

Two years ago an English Zen monk, Venerable Zenko Croysdale, came to visit me at Three Wheels and spoke to me of his intention to leave us a bequest in his will. When I talked about this to Venerable Takehara, my master suggested that, based on this bequest, we might try and construct a grave site, free of all discrimination, for all Buddhists of any tradition.

Three months ago Mr Masayuki Ogawa, a Japanese garden designer from Kyoto, and six other Dharma friends flew over to London to start work on the site and the Three Wheels' Stupa of Namu-Amida-butsu was born. On arriving in London, one of these friends remarked to me, only half jokingly, "Kemmyo-san, we are here to make your grave." For two weeks all the Dharma friends worked very hard indeed. Once again, regarding the details of the design and the work process itself, we are very much indebted to Professor John White for his invaluable help and advice. As a result, our beautiful Stupa of Namu-Amida-butsu has now come into being. Of course, it's not only for me, but for anyone of you who would also like to have your own ashes laid to rest beneath its granite stone.

The central granite monument was carved in Kyoto by Mr Kinzo Nishimura, the best stonemason in Japan. The strong and beautiful calligraphy inscribed on the granite was executed by Venerable Chimyo Takehara, modelled on Shinran Shonin's own writing of Namu-Amida-butsu.

There is a phrase in the Amida Sutra "[We all] meet together in

one and the same place (the Pure Land).” The Stupa of Namu-Amida-butsu symbolises the Pure Land where Amida Buddha welcome all those who pronounce his Name with all sincerity. Under the stupa there is a rectangular space surrounded by panels of grey granite where the ashes of the deceased can be placed. All their names will be set down on a traditional Japanese scroll and preserved in a beautiful box, skilfully decollated by means of the ancient craft of *kirikane* (application of cut metal foil) by Mrs Sayoko Eri, honoured in Japan during her life time a living national treasure. Regretfully I have to tell you that Mrs Eri has herself now died overseas, a few days ago, whilst on a trip to London and Paris to demonstrate her art to the West.

Now that Three Wheels’ Stupa of Namu-Amida-butsu has

been built here, this small area of Brookwood Cemetery has been opened wide to all Buddhists of any tradition, and to all our friends who might feel sufficiently comfortable with our Buddhist way of living.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the British and Japanese who have helped realise this wonderful project, especially to my master, Venerable Chimyo Takehara, whose original idea it was and who has come over to London, despite the condition of his health, in order to celebrate the completion of this Buddhist stupa, accompanied by his Dharma friends and Gagaku musicians.

Reverend Kemmyo Taira Sato

Three Wheels Activities

Hoonko-Otorikoshi

On Sunday 7th October 2007, we had our 76th Eza celebrating the opening of our Brookwood Stupa and Hoonko-Otorikoshi. We were honoured to have Venerable Chimyo Takehara, the Head Priest of Shogyoji Temple visiting, along with several Gagaku musicians from Shogyoji and many other visitors from Japan. Three Theravadan Buddhist monks were in attendance along with Reverend Dharmavidya David Brazier of the Amida Shu and Dr. Desmond Biddulph, Vice President of the Buddhist Society.

Reverend Keimei Takehara read out the message of congratulations from the Supreme Primate Koken Otani. The Supreme Primate expressed his thanks to Kemmyo-sensei, Professor John White and the trustees of the London Shogyoji Trust for working so hard to erect the Stupa in Brookwood. Kemmyo-sensei was surprised and happy to hear the wonderful words the Supreme Primate had for us.



Venerable Chimyo Takehara

Venerable Chimyo Takehara, then gave a very moving talk on the subject of emptiness. He expressed his regret at not being able to visit Three Wheels every year, but that this was due to his ill health. Chimyo-sama then went on to discuss the connections between Japan and England - from the Japanese students taken care of by Professor Alexander Williamson one hundred and forty years ago to the Japanese students and other visitors helped by Professor John White. Professor White with his profound understanding of the concept of "Emptiness" helped build the foundations of Three Wheels, a place where even ignorant lay people can appreciate the meaning of "Emptiness."

Chimyo-sama explored this notion of emptiness further quoting a talk that Professor White gave on the subject where Professor White realizes that even the belief that 'now' is knowable is itself an illusion. He then gave a very personal example of his own experience of "Emptiness". He discussed his six month-long stay in a treatment resort far away from the temple. One day, while he was near his lowest point, he looked out of his window and saw a very frail old man slowly walking around his small rice field. With each step the old man took forward, he was "enlarging his environment that much more and opening up his mind that much wider." This first step should remind us of the principle of the nembutsu of gratitude. Before he left the solitude of his sickbed, he decided he must follow in the footsteps of Shinran Shonin and see with his own eyes where Shinran had experienced his life.

In closing his talk, Chimyo-sama noted that Shinran Shonin used the metaphor "water of rivers and steams" to express Other-power faith. This water of Other-power faith symbolizes the faith "by which we, streams and rivers of blind passions, return to and re-enter the ocean of Amida's Original Vow." He continued, saying, "[W]e, ignorant beings in this world of defilement, come to know the working of "Emptiness" simply through meeting one stream of Other-power faith." He ends his talk by quoting the beginning of a poem Professor White has written, "Here in the garden/do not ask who made it,/or why or when/The garden is/and you are./Be."

After Reverend Takehara's talk, Kemmyo-sensei discussed a bit more about the box for the Dharma-name scroll. Those who are buried at the Stupa in Brookwood will have their names inscribed on that scroll in the beautiful box that Mrs. Saioko Eri, a living national treasure, had created using lacquer and *Kirikane*, a cut metal foil technique. This was Mrs. Eri's final work, as she died only a few days before the Eza while visiting France. Mrs. Eri had been in London at the invite of the British Museum and had given a wonderful talk and demonstration of her technique. She had also been interested in taking a closer look at a piece of glass from the 3rd century BC in Egypt, which no one had been able to confirm as using *Kirikane*. She was able to confirm that is was indeed *Kirikane* and that the history of *Kirikane* can be pushed back more than five hundred more years.

Professor John White then gave a brief talk on the importance of having Three Wheels as a place of true encounters between

people of different ages and cultures. It is very important that this continues into the future. The Stupa is for the future. Reverend David Brazier then spoke with gratitude about the friendship between Kemmyo-sensei and his group and how that has had such a wonderful impact.



The box for the Dharma-name scroll.

Dr. Biddulph from the Buddhist Society then gave a short talk about what the west has given to the world in the 140 years since those Japanese students died. It is time for Eastern culture to redress the imbalances with the values of Buddhism. He returned to the notion of emptiness and how that will give rise to love and work for the good of all.

Reverend Junso Ebikai then read his talk. He expressed his deep gratitude to Professor White, Reverend Zenko Croysdayle, Reverend Kemmyo Sato, and all the Three Wheels Dharma

friends for all their work in helping to erect the Brookwood Stupa and their help with Three Wheels. Izumi Ida also gave a short talk. He was very moved by seeing the large number of people gathered together to celebrate Otorikoshi and the opening of the Stupa. He was grateful to Reverend Takehara in exhibiting his deep mind when he decided to erect the Stupa in Brookwood. He was ashamed that he had never thought of such a wonderful thing! This made him realize that he looked too often at the surface of things and that he needs to look more at the underlying matters.

Kemmyo-sensei then asked Andrew Webb to give a brief talk as a representative of the younger members of the temple. He said that all that has happened reminded him of a Buddhist story about a tree where its roots grow underground for hundreds of years and then suddenly sprouts and grows very quickly. Three Wheels is like that - beneath the surface so much is going on and then all of a sudden we are shown the results of it.

Kemmyo-sensei introduced the three Gagaku musicians who came from Japan to help us celebrate the opening of our Stupa. He described how the ensemble came to be after World War II and how Daigyoin-sama wanted to use Gagaku music to fulfil his wish for world peace. The Gagaku music ensemble has, in recent years, been fortunate to have some training from Imperial Court musicians. Using this training and dedication, they went to Beijing for the World Music Festival, where they won an award. The three musicians, Reverend Ryojun Sato, Reverend Eshin Shinohara and Mr Tsuneharu Mori, then played a beautiful set of music for us.

Mary Hall

Impressions of the Annual Ceremony of Peace and Reconciliation from Andy (Kyōshin)

This Obon, as on previous years, the Sangha, members of the Burma Campaign Society (BCS), representatives from the Japanese Embassy, and various guests, gathered to participate in a service and meeting of peace and reconciliation. This important event, originally instigated at the request of Mr Masao Hirakubo, has long played an important role in repairing and healing relationships between Japanese and English war veterans and also their families. This being the case, the meeting was extremely poignant this year for the notable absence of a number of veterans who have now passed away, or were too ill to attend. On the other hand, however, several BCS members were represented by their children or relatives; who are continuing their work towards building a peaceful and harmonious future between nations.

The meeting was opened by the Consul General of the Japanese Embassy Mr Kenji Hiramatsu who spoke of his pleasure at attending the meeting again this year and of his gratitude to those involved for helping to foster good relations between the United Kingdom and Japan. Reverend Sato then led a service of chanting sutras during which representatives of the BCS and London Shogyoji Trust offered incense to the Buddha in memory of the war dead. This year the service was particularly notable for the fact that a number of English and American Sangha members contributed to the sutra chanting, along with their Japanese Dharma friends, making the prayers for peace truly international.

Also, on a related note, the meeting was attended for the first time by a Burmese gentleman Mr. Thein Chu, from the organization Asia Pacific who offered a prayer in front of the

Buddha shrine for the people of his home country who were caught in the middle of the fighting during WWII. Having never much thought of the Burmese peoples' own suffering before, I was ashamed of my short-sightedness and very grateful for this reminder of yet another dimension to the misery that human warfare inflicts upon the world.

Following the service of remembrance Rev. Sato gave a talk, and then a message from Mr Satoru Yanagi was read out. I mention these two things together as they both dealt with the subject of the 'Three Dharma Seals' of impermanence, non-self and nirvana. Rev. Sato spoke of how, as the war generation gradually pass away, those left behind must discover the meaning of inner peace if the peace movement is to survive as a genuinely transformative phenomenon. Without inner peace it will simply become a political movement and will not have the ability to change people's hearts and minds. Inner peace, Rev. Sato said, comes from deeply understanding the Three Dharma Seals. The first of these, impermanence, is not difficult to appreciate but the second – the impermanence of our own selves – is harder to accept. However when we discover and are reconciled to our own impermanence then we naturally realise that the mutability of our nature necessarily entails our interconnectedness and unavoidable relationship to all other things and beings. As such, when our consciousness is no longer isolated and alone, the peacefulness of nirvana begins to enter our awareness.

What Reverend Sato spoke of is of course much easier to comprehend intellectually than it is to actually realise in one's body and spirit. In fact faced with the threat of death, especially violent death, it is more usual for people to experience fear and

hatred of those who cause that fear and to get into a ‘me or them’ mentality. This is why it is all the more impressive and inspiring that veterans such as Mr Yanagi have managed to overcome the taint of war and affirm their human and spiritual relatedness to their former enemies.



Rev. Fumihito Ando

Mr Yanagi’s letter was also very moving for its mention of the

way in which the recent death of his son has brought home even more deeply to him the truth of impermanence. As I understand it Yanagi-san’s son guided his parents towards their encounter with the Buddha at Shogyoji and it seems that through his life and death he is still helping them. This Bodhisattva activity, the mysterious functioning of Amida Buddha, working in harmony with and through generations of human relationships is truly marvellous.

Following these talks a guest, Rev. Fumihito Ando, of the Shinshu Takadaha, spoke of his gratitude at being invited to participate in the ceremony of reconciliation. As someone born on ‘No More Nagasaki’s Day’ he has reflected on the horrifying nature of war many times and therefore expressed his appreciation at the efforts of Shogyoji and the BCS in their towards developing world peace. Mr. Kazuo Tamayama, the author of *Tales by Japanese soldiers*, was also among those present.

At an Eza which focused on the ultimate significance of human relationships, which transcends life and death, it was appropriate that the meeting concluded with a lively meal during which many new friendships and encounters were formed.

Namuamidabutsu.

An encounter with Fumihito Ando and ancient Japanese documents

On my arrival at Three Wheels on the morning of the Eza, I hadn’t even the time to put my bag down and take my shoes off, before an excited Andy Barritt told me that Fumihito Ando was visiting for the Eza. The fact that he was the “32nd successor to the Myōgenji temple of the Takaha-ha Jodo Shin lineage” meant little to me, but my ears perked up when I discovered he was from the oldest Jodo Shin temple, and the curator of over one hundred medieval documents as well as over two thousand from the sixteenth to nineteenth century, including original letters of Shinran *in Shinran’s own hand!* As someone who works in an academic library, I was exceedingly excited. The fact that original documents of such antiquity were available in Japan had always amazed me, for in Europe this is very rare. I had heard before that the letters of Eshinni, Shinran’s wife (1182–1268?) *in Eshinni’s own hand* had lain undiscovered at the Nishi Honganji temple in Kyoto until 1921, and the fact that they were *the only female letters* extant from medieval times, I found simply unbelievable. When I got to talk to Ando-san, I feel I was rather overbearing in my desire to learn more about such incredulity, but he wasn’t at all troubled and proved a gracious and very learned teacher. In Europe, there are very few medieval writings in the author’s own hand. Religious teachers in monasteries would have a secretary to take down their instruction and this would be copied by scribes for distribution. So what autographs there are, tend to come from less wealthy circumstances – for instance there are two letters *in St Francis’ own hand*.

What also surprised me was the antiquity of paper. Ancient European documents are found on papyrus and later medieval ones on vellum (calfskin), so I was very interested to learn that Japanese had been using paper since the seventh century, and even more amazed to learn that wood pulp paper has been used in China since the second century BC! It wasn’t until the crusaders’ incursion into the Holy Land that Europe discovered paper, which remained unaffordable till the 15th century. An interesting side effect from the Japanese’ use of layered paper, means that

an unscrupulous individual can peel open the different layers of paper to convert one page of calligraphy into several copies, which can then be sold on as originals. To me, as a librarian, this did not seem to be a bad thing – the more copies there are of old documents, the more likely they are to survive and end up in a library for everyone to read. But for Ando-san, it seemed that the additional copies were in some way counterfeit, a tricky curatorial issue.

Of further interest is the manufacture of Japanese ink for calligraphy. Despite Ando-san’s excellent English, I was only able to pick up that the ink came somehow from pine trees. It was not until the next day with the aid of Hiroko-san and a dictionary that we worked out that the pine tree is burnt down! The resultant combination of resin and soot forms the basis of the ink.

Even more fascinating was our later “kitchen discussion” about the different Japanese scripts. Chinese kanji were widely adopted in Japan by the sixth century and were later simplified into the syllabic katakana (one katakana character equals one syllable sound). This direct relationship between characters and pronunciation means that it is much easier to learn to read “out loud” than, for example in English, where words like *trough*, *through*, *slough* cause confusion to novice readers. This feature of the language was used to great effect by Shinran, who wrote his letters to semi-literate rural communities in katakana, so that they could easily be read aloud.

Also, fascinating (but in a way uncomfortable to modern readers) was the development of hiragana – which is basically a different way of writing the katakana sounds. Why two ways for writing the same sounds? Simple: one for men and one for women. Women were denied the access to higher education so developed their own writing system. *The Tale of Genji* (possibly the world’s first novel) was written in hiragana, by Japanese noblewoman in the eleventh century.

A morning in the life of a student at Three Wheels

My report on the meeting to read the Letters of Rennyo Shonin hold on Sunday 5th of August.

On this beautiful sunny August morning, light and warmth engulfed the Buddha room as we sat around the table, waiting to study the 5th Letter of Fascicle 3, entitled “Surpassing the Compassionate Vows of Other Buddhas”.

Reverend Sato began by explaining to a newcomer, Amreen, the composition of the Letters, specifically how many letters are included in the collection and how they are organized into 5 fascicles. I am instantly reminded by this of the importance of being alert to others needs, specifically to new people joining our faith, as they might not know what we are already familiar with.

Moving on to the contents of the Letter, Reverend Sato came to this important passage: “The original Vow of Amida surpasses the compassionate vows of all other Buddhas. The answer must be that it does not lie in the power of those other Buddhas of the ten directions to save sentient being heavily weighed down by the most evil karma, or indeed women burdened with the Five obstacles and Three hindrances”. At this point Professor Sato paused to explain that this part of the text refers to a time in history where women did not yet have the recognition that they have today.

We then proceeded to examine the difference between Amida’s Vows and those of other Buddhas. The working of Amida’s Vows, known as Other Power, includes everyone with in his great compassion, no matter how deep their evil karma may be.

Further Rennyo Shonin in this letter makes the vital remark that; “First of all, the mainstream nembutsu teaching so popular in the world today advises people that they will all be saved merely by repeating Namu Amida Butsu, no matter whether or not they understand the meaning behind the words. That, however, is in no way to be relied upon”. I understood from these words that should not follow the Buddha’s teaching blindly without making an effort to understand its true meaning.

Rennyo Shonin goes on to write “Now listen carefully to this teaching, straining your ears to achieve emancipation and lowering your heads in reverence, and you will be able to rejoice in the awakening of faith”. To “strain your ears” reminded me that we should not assume that we understand everything so we should always be attentive to listen to the teachings and “Lowering your heads” that we should by recognising our ignorance always be humble.

To summarize, our teacher tells us that it is Amida Buddha who surpasses all the other Buddhas in his great work liberate all sentient beings without any kind of discrimination. It is important for us to awaken to ourselves or to the reality of our limited existence, heavily burdened with evil karma. Once awakened to the reality of our karmic evil, all we need to do is entrust ourselves to the unconditional love of Amida Buddha un-fettered by any attachment to our own self-consciousness. As a dear friend of mine once told me; “turning towards Buddha, not with our head or our heart but with all the little holes in our skin”.

Jocelyne Spencer

Shin Buddhism Teachingg

What is Nembutsu?

Roughly speaking in the Pure Land tradition the term nembutsu has two meanings: firstly contemplating on Amida Buddha and his Pure Land and, secondly, pronouncing the Name of the Buddha. In main-stream Pure Land Buddhism ever since the time of T’an-luan (476-542), the concept of nembutsu has been understood to mean pronouncing the Buddha-name. It is well known that Shan-tao (613-681) laid particular emphasis on this aspect of the nembutsu. Indeed, according to Shan-tao, the real purpose of the Meditation Sutra lay in teaching about pronouncing the Name to those too heavily burdened with karmic transgressions to be in any sort of a position to contemplate on Amida Buddha and his Pure Land. The only alternative they had was to invoke his Name. After the transmission of Pure Land Buddhism to Japan, Honen Shonin and his disciples, including Shinran Shonin, continued along this course. Thus, when Rennyo Shonin talks about the nembutsu within the Shin Buddhist tradition, what he refers to is pronouncing the Buddha-name or, more precisely, pronouncing the Name after the attainment of pure faith.

In the fourth Letter of fascicle 3 of ‘The Letters’ by Rennyo Shonin, the act of pronouncing the Name is in fact mentioned in two different lights, first negative and then positive. Let me quote both instances, one to be found in the fourth and the other

in the last paragraph.

1) **What is generally understood in the world, however, is that, only if we recite “Namu-amida-butsu” loudly, will we be able to be born in the Land of Utmost Bliss. That is not at all to be relied upon.**

2) **You should understand that it is simply by reciting out loud “Namu-amida-butsu” that we are responding to the Buddha’ in deepest gratitude for all he has done for us.**

These two quotations from the same letter clearly illustrate the two contrasting values given the word nembutsu. In both cases we are talking about “reciting Namu-amida-butsu loudly” or pronouncing the Name of the Buddha. What then is the difference?

In the first case “Namu-amida-butsu” is recited loudly in order for the person invoking the Name to be born in the Pure Land. In other words it is practiced as a means of attaining birth in the Pure Land. It is still part of self-power practice and not yet freed from selfish attachment to good acts or their attendant merit. It is in short the nembutsu of self-power practice.

The second quotation, by contrast, refers to that other nembutsu, uttered not to attain some special goal, but as an expression

of gratitude to the Buddha for all he has done for us. It is a spontaneous outflow of our gratitude towards the Buddha. It wells up spontaneously from within our being. The nembutsu is a manifestation of the working of Other-power. It is an effortless expression of our heartfelt gratitude. The nembutsu in this sense is really spiritual. This expression of gratitude is an invocation of the Name, “Namu-amida-butsu.”

These two kinds of nembutsu - the nembutsu of self-power and the nembutsu of Other-power – are identical in form but different in quality. In the case of the nembutsu of Other-power, there is no virtue-transference on our part. All virtue-transference stems from Amida.

In this context let me quote from the *Memoir of What I Heard during Rennyo Shōnin’s Life Time*, translated by Kōshō Kō-nyo Ōtani:

“The Nembutsu of *Jiriki* (Self Power),” the Shonin then continued, “is when a person recites the Nembutsu many times in order to accumulate merits so that the Buddha may save that person by virtue of his oft repeated Nembutsu. The Nembutsu of *Tariki* (Other Power) saves a devotee immediately, exactly at the moment there arises in the devotee the “one-thought of awakening” in which he entrusts himself entirely to Amida Buddha. Further recitation of the

Nembutsu, “*Namu-Amida-Butsu, Namu-Amida-Butsu,.....*”, is an expression of joyful gratitude at being saved and is completely spontaneous with no self-power involved.

The difference between the nembutsu of self-power and the nembutsu of Other-power is clearly expressed in this quotation. We become aware of the nembutsu of Other-power, or the nembutsu as the working of Other-power, at the precise moment we attain faith and entrust ourselves whole-heartedly to Amida Tathagata. Both at and after that special moment of entrusting ourselves to Amida Buddha the nembutsu of Other-power streams out of the ocean of faith as an expression of gratitude to the Buddha for his unconditional, all-embracing love. Thus the nembutsu of Other-power as an expression of gratitude is the nembutsu that wells up from within us at the moment of attaining faith and keeps on doing so. If we focus our attention at the moment of attaining faith, the nembutsu - forsaking all self-power practice and pronouncing *Namu-amida-butsu* - is one with the faith of entrusting ourselves to Amida Tathagata. In this respect the nembutsu is faith and faith is the nembutsu. The nembutsu is an outflowing from the ocean of faith and is called the nembutsu of Other-power.

Reverend Kemmyo Taira Sato

National Garden Scheme – Stone Garden Open Days

The successful outcome of the 2007 Garden Open Days at Three Wheels enabled us to raise over 400 pounds for the National Garden Scheme (NGS) in support of a number of charitable organizations in the UK.

With the encouragement of the NGS and the continuing enthusiasm of our supporters and participants on, it has been agreed that Three Wheels will again open its garden to the public in 2008. Please take note of the dates and, if you can, please come and help in any way you can, e.g. run a stall, man the entrance/Buddha room, talk to visitors, help serving tea/cake etc., or bake some delicious home-made cakes, etc., etc. Also, if

you have any suggestions for making the event more interesting still, do please tell either Hiroko, Kaori, Kenshin or Etsuko.

The two Tea-Masters, Chizuru-san and Kumiko-san, have kindly agreed to perform tea ceremonies again on the open days. The 2008 Three Wheels Garden Open Days will be;

Saturday and Sunday, 17th & 18th May, from 14:00 to 18:00 hours

Saturday and Sunday, 13th & 14th September, from 14:00 to 18:00 hours

Etsuko Imamura-Crellin

Contributions towards the Three Wheels’ Buildings Upkeep fund

One of the methods of making a regular contributions, at a time in an amount convenient to the donor, is by Standing Order. For anyone wishing to contribute by this method a suggested minimum amount is 5 pounds a month but this is entirely up to each individual to decide.

For the details of the Building Upkeep Account, please call Hiroko-san or Kaori-san at Three Wheels 020 8248 2578

Etsuko Imamura-Crellin

Shokai Retreats

As a new venture for 2008 Three Wheels is planning to hold **two residential weekend retreats using 55 and 57 Carbery Avenue** to accommodate the participants.

During each retreat there will be two Dharma talks, meditation sessions and lessons in chanting sutras. You will also get to know other supporters of Three Wheels and experience life in this Buddhist community.

The dates are Friday 23 May to Sunday 25 May and Friday 31 October to Sunday 2 November.

Please contact Three Wheels for further information or email at threewheels@threewheels.co.uk

Stephen Montgomery

Children's story: A Zen tale

The great Zen teacher, Benzei had many pupils. One day, one of them was caught stealing by his fellow-students and they reported him to Benzei. But he took no action against the boy.

A few days later the same boy was again caught stealing. And again Benzei did nothing. This angered the other students who drew up a petition asking for the dismissal of the thief. They threatened to leave en masse if the boy was allowed to stay.

The teacher called a meeting of the students. When they had assembled he said to them: "You are good boys who know what is right and what is wrong. If you leave you will have no trouble in joining some other school. But what about your brother who does not even know the difference between right and wrong? Who will teach him if I don't? No, I cannot ask him to go even if it means losing all of you."

Tears coursed down the cheeks of the boy who had stolen. He never stole again and in later life became renowned for his integrity.



Poet's corner: Sugawara Michizane (845-903)

The autumn breeze rises

The autumn breeze rises
on the shore at Fukiage
and those white chrysanthemums
are they flowers? or not?
or only breakers on the beach?

Japanese poets often delight in exploring ambiguities. One of their favorite themes is the difficulty of discerning one white object from another: a white spider on a white flower, or here, white flowers and the foam of waves beating against the shore. Nature in the Heian period (794-1186) was never an untamed wilderness but most typically represented by the carefully tended garden or a painting on a folding screen. This poem was attached to a chrysanthemum during a courtly competition where the flower was placed in a miniature representation of the beach at Fukiage done in a tray. The author is best known as a scholar and poet of Chinese verse.

Editor's Note.

For comments, criticisms, and questions concerning the Newsletter or if you want to include material for inclusion, please contact Lucien Chocron, 31 Sherlock Court, Dorman Way, London, NW8 0RU, Tel/Fax 020 7722 1693, Email: lucienchocron@blueyonder.co.uk

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All donations are welcome

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