

**A Piece of Good News from Three Wheels**

Three Wheels was established at the end of 1994. Thanks to the generous help and support it received from all of you it developed steadily, becoming a UK registered charity, under the name of the London Shogyoji Trust, in July 1999. Nowadays quite a range of activities is held at Three Wheels, but I am afraid that up to now you may not have been sufficiently well informed of all that was going on at our Buddhist centre. This being so I am particularly happy at this very beginning of a New Millennium to be able to give you a piece of good news, namely that Three Wheels is to issue its own quarterly newsletter.

The first issue being now in your hands, as you can see the Newsletter will inform you of the latest activities as well as events programmed for the near future, including the schedule for the next three months.

I would like to thank Dr. Lucien Chocron for the enormous effort he has kindly put in to producing this newsletter for Three Wheels.

I would also like to thank all the friends who joined in their various ways in the editorial work of the Newsletter.

I am looking forward to seeing you at Three Wheels in the near future.

With Gassho  
Rev. Prof. Kemmyo Taira Sato



**Peace and Reconciliation**

The creation of harmony within diversity was the basic idea behind the setting of Three Wheels as a place in which to bring Japanese and British people, young and old, closer together within the peaceful environment of a Shin Buddhist Centre. It is also the underlying the design of the Zen Garden in which each rock, retaining its own importance and individuality, makes its special, unique contribution to the unity of the whole.



During the ceremony..

It is therefore entirely fitting that, under Taira Sato's leadership, Three Wheels has, for several years now, held a memorial service for those who fell in the Second World War and has become, in a very special way, a centre for annual prayers for World Peace and Reconciliation. Each ceremony has revolved around British and Japanese Veterans who fought each other in some bitterest battles of the campaign in Burma. What has made these meetings so moving and so memorable has been the sight of brave old soldiers, who fought on opposite sides in such ferocious conflicts as the battle of Kohima, shaking hands in mutual friendship and respect.

Their bravery in battle has been matched by the moral courage which they have shown in distancing themselves, often at no small personal cost, from the hatred and the continuous bitter memories which so many of their wartime

comrades on either side have been unable to leave behind.



At the fourth such meeting, which took place on Sunday, August 20<sup>th</sup>, some thirty Japanese and British members of the Burma Campaign Fellowship Group (BCFG) came to Three Wheels, both to reinforce old ties and to consider ways in which their torch of friendship and reconciliation could be kept alight by future generations. After the singing of Gathas by Shan-Tao, Dharmakara Bodhisattva and Shinran Shonin, the Director gave a talk on one of the central features of all such ceremonies, namely the Buddhist concept of “offering”, as it is set out in the *Avatamsaka Sutra*. There were then, in the presence of Barry Nicholas, the Secretary of the BCFG, short speeches by Masao Hirakobu, whose tireless efforts against all the odds, were in large part responsible for the creation of the Fellowship Group, by Barry Nicholas, John Pike and Philip Daniel, and not least by Satoru Yanagi who, together with his wife, Yuko had for the fourth time, made the long journey from Japan especially to be present at the annual renewal of this moving and most meaningful of occasions.

John White



## Second Hoonko Otorikoshi Ceremony

The temple was full to overflowing when two special guests from Japan attended the second Otorikoshi at London’s Three Wheels Temple on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000.

There were 74 people to greet Reverend Tetsuo Kamata, Head Priest of a Shin Buddhist Temple in Toyama Prefecture, and Professor Masahiro Shimoda of Tokyo University, who is regarded as the most eminent scholar in the field of Buddhist studies in Japan.

Also attending were three Buddhists from Spain – Carlos Vergata and his two friends. Among them was a Zen priest.

Reverend Sato first made a speech thanking everyone who attended the ceremony. He likened the gathering to past occasions when his master Ekai-sama, took pleasure in inviting her friends to share the happiness of being together during this special ceremony.

Professor M Shimoda then gave a lecture<sup>1</sup> on the ‘Philosophy of Impermanence,’ during which he presented his own translation of the Sanskrit phrase: ‘sarvasamskara anityah.’

His lecture began with an observation of the “remarkable convergence between the Buddha’s principal teachings and the ideals of Three Wheels” – a place where many people of different nationalities and divergent personal histories gather together spontaneously to reach for new horizons.



Based on his own translation of ‘sarvasamskara anityah’: the act of composing and the resultant composition can never be eternal, he stated that English of the phrase, as in the translation ‘ all phenomena are impermanent’ or ‘all is transitory’, might be inadequate.

“It is usually words that give a unitary meaning to every sphere of our daily activities,” Professor Shimoda said. “In most cases, the name that forms the ultimate framework of our whole life is ‘I’. Never for one moment do we cease to be the author of our own stories.

He went on to say, "Our greatest afflictions are caused by nothing other than this 'I-centred' position."

The Reverend Tetsuo Kamata then spoke of racial discrimination in Japan. He referred to Korea and the Buraku Min, the outcasts of Japan. He said that such discrimination was against Amida Buddha's Original Prayer.



Professor Shimoda also said, "Within the Original Prayer there is no discrimination between people of different races, between rich and poor, male and female. Shin Buddhists understand that everyone is welcomed by the Buddha as if each one of them were his only child."

Such discrimination, he suggested, might be likened to "a way of trying to justify ourselves in our own eyes and actually works to mask a deep-seated inferiority complex."

Discussion was opened and some people gave their opinions about discrimination in Japan towards foreigners. Mr Lucien Chocron spoke about double nationality, which is not recognised in Japan.

Finally, thanking the Reverend Kamata, Professor John White told us that the worst thing is our personal, internal discrimination towards other people, which we fail to recognise.

To express his gratitude to Professor Shimoda, he read out a poem entitled: *Sutra*

***And so it was heard  
by me***

***Silence***

***And out of the silence,***

***silence,***

***no words,  
no answers.***

***So, I am content  
to be  
and not to be.***

***And when I am not,  
I shall never know  
that I ever was.***

***So,  
out of the silence  
it was heard,***

***by me,***

***and I am content  
to be***

***and not  
to be.***

***John White***

At the end of the Otorikoshi Ceremony, Ms Ikuko Haga made a farewell speech. She had to return to Japan because her visa has not been renewed. It was three years since her first visit to Three Wheels; and from that day on she attended the religious service every morning.

Ms Haga told us it was here that she had begun to understand – "little by little" – the Buddha's teaching. She paid tribute to Reverend Sato and his wife Hiroko; and also thanked everyone else who had helped her.

After this, a Tea Ceremony was performed in the Zen Garden. This was presided over by Grand Master, Mrs Yamamoto and her two students.

<sup>1</sup> A full transcript of both Professor Shimada's lecture and the Reverend Kamata's talk can be obtained from Three Wheels



## Projected activities in 2001

### 1) Regular meetings

- a) **Shusho-e (New Year's Meeting), 1<sup>st</sup> January 2001** and each subsequent year.
- b) **Bon Memorial Services, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2001.**
- c) **London Eza.**
- ❖ 36<sup>th</sup> London Eza, 2: 00 p.m., 18<sup>th</sup> February.
  - ❖ 37<sup>th</sup> London Eza, 2: 00 p.m., 22<sup>nd</sup> April
  - ❖ 38<sup>th</sup> London Eza, 2: 00 p.m., 24<sup>th</sup> June.
  - ❖ 39<sup>th</sup> London Eza, 2: 00 p.m., 26<sup>th</sup> August.
  - ❖ **(On the 19<sup>th</sup> August attendance at the Mass of Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral)**
  - ❖ 40<sup>th</sup> London Eza, 2: 00 p.m., the 3rd Otorikoshi in London, 4<sup>th</sup> October.
  - ❖ 41<sup>st</sup> London Eza, 2: 00 p.m., 2<sup>nd</sup> December.
- d) **Monthly Meetings to Read Shin Buddhist Texts.**  
Prof. K.T. Sato is expected to give the last lecture on *The Tannisho* on 7<sup>th</sup> of January  
Professor Sato will start another series of meetings to read *The Collection of Records on Venerable Rennyo's Life* and *The Letters by Ven. Rennyo*, whilst repeating the series of lectures on *The Tannisho* as an introduction to Pure Land Buddhism at Birkbeck College.  
The first lecture will begin on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March.
- e) **Weekly Meditation Classes**  
Meditation classes are planned to continue to be held between 7:30 and 8:30 every Saturday evening.
- f) **Sunday meetings.**  
After the morning service to the Buddha at 8:30, Prof. Sato gives a short talk.
- g) **Daily Services**  
Morning and evening services. After each service those attending will have a meeting.  
Morning service to start at 7:00 and evening

service at 6:30.

### 2) Spring School

A group of teenagers will be coming over to London from Japan and staying at Three Wheels for about ten days (March - April 2001). A number of British friends are expected to join the programme. With the help of Dr. and Mrs. Montgomery it is planned for those teenagers to travel to Yorkshire.

### 3) Buddhist Ceremony to Pray for Peace and Reconciliation

This will be held at Three Wheels on 26th August 2001, with both British and Japanese war veterans invited to attend. Several members of the London Eza will attend the Mass of Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral on 19th August.

### 4) Taking part in the United Buddha Day.

This festival to celebrate Buddha's Birthday will be held at Hammersmith Town Hall in May under the leadership of Srirankan Sangha Sabha of Great Britain in late Spring.

### 5) Hoonko Otorikoshi

In Shin Buddhist tradition there is an annual festival called *Hoonko*, held to commemorate the death of the founder, Shinran Shonin (1173-1262). It is the most important ceremony of the year for Shin Buddhist followers. When held anywhere other than a formal temple *Hoonko* is called *Otorikoshi*. We are going to have the Third Hoonko Otorikoshi on 4th October at Three Wheels, inviting several Japanese, both priests and lay people.



**ALL DONATIONS ARE WELCOME**

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