

# Three Wheels NEWS

London Shogyoji Trust

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## Professor Unno's Visit at Three Wheels

Sunday 1st June saw the much anticipated visit by Dr Taitetsu Unno to Three Wheels. Dr Unno is well known throughout the world for his books notably *River of Fire River of Water*, *Shin Buddhism: Bits of Rubble Turn into Gold*, his translation of *The Tannisho* and lectures on Japanese culture and religion. It was with great delight that he was welcomed to Three Wheels, by friends gathered from throughout the country, to give a dharma talk entitled "*The Lay Buddhist Path to Enlightenment*". Dr Unno was accompanied by his wife Mrs Alice Unno who, with seeming irrepressible joy and enthusiasm, spoke with members of the Three Wheels samgha and provided valuable contributions to Dr Unno's talk. I report below a few of my personal recollections taken from the contents of Dr Unno's talk.

The talk began with a simple yet thoroughly thought-provoking question; 'Where is the Buddha?' and continued with Dr Unno using personal examples in an engaging and moving way, from pivotal incidents in the lives of people he knows and his own, to express the working of the transformative power of Amida Buddha within them. The Buddha is deep, deep, deep inside of us beyond the boundaries of subject and object; Dr Unno explained in response to his question that had everyone thinking. The Buddha is not an objective being, standing outside of ourselves and also not a subjective entity existing only within our hearts or minds. Yet it was not an unfathomable paradox that Dr Unno presented, as his words brought to life the inconceivability of Amida Buddha in a truly engaging way, as the living process of infinite love and wisdom that embraces each person equally. Dr Unno further explained how understanding cannot come from study of doctrine alone but from living experience. Hearing Dr Unno speak with such life affirming sincerity, was proof enough, if any were needed, of this essential need for 'deep listening' to the Dharma. A deep listening of both heart and body through which one rediscovers one's true and real self, affirmed by the total transformative grasp of Amida Buddha.

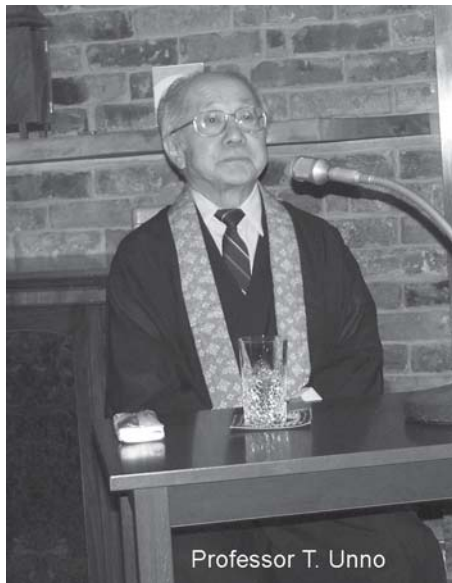
Dr Unno's quoted two was an by Shinran Shonin as illustrative of the nature of the infinite working of Amida Buddha's boundless compassion upon one's limited, finite, self:

"Through the benefit of the unhindered light,

We realize shinjin of vast, majestic virtues,  
And the ice of our blind passions necessarily melts,  
Immediately becoming water of enlightenment.

Obstructions of karmic evil turn into virtues;  
It is like the relation of ice and water:  
The more the ice, the more the water;  
The more the obstructions, the more the virtues."

He explained how one's life is characterised by a continual wanting, a craving for a life that is always beyond one's reach, one that is free of the problems that our everyday lives encounter. When confronted by difficulties one tries to run away from them. Dr Unno went on to say that it is these seemingly negative situations that can hold the answers so desperately sought. That the 'answers come from an unknown source, usually from something we do not want'. The ice of one's own being of 'blind passion' is melted by the power of Amida Buddha's 'Primal Vow' to become the free flowing 'water of enlightenment'. Every karmic hindrance thus becomes 'treasured as an opportunity to break free from it'.



Professor T. Unno

At the conclusion of the talk Dr Unno invited questions, comments and reflections from the samgha. This began a deeply moving exchange of experiences inspired by those shared by Dr Unno during his dharma talk. It was a wonderful and humbling experience to of been able to share these experiences spoken with such sincerity and honesty. Dr Unno fielded a wide range of questions that arose from his dharma talk. He explained 'deep hearing' as giving up oneself to Namu Amida Butsu through truly hearing this call of Amida's Name from the 'deep centre of life itself. A call that comes not from ones own deluded mind but from Amida Buddha - the heart of boundless compassion, the deep centre of life itself. After the conclusion of the discussion there was plenty of opportunity for all to speak with Dr and Alice Unno and to share thoughts and reflections.

This occasion was a very memorable event for Three Wheels which will live long in our hearts. It is hoped that it won't be to long before Taitetsu and Alice Unno return again.

Andrew Webb

# Ceremony to Pray for World Peace and Reconciliation

## 51<sup>st</sup> London Eza

Present for the seventh consecutive year was Mr and Mrs Saturo Yanagi. What made Mr Yanagi's visit particularly special this year was that he was joined for his stay in London by his granddaughter Maki. Maki deeply wished to see and experience the reason for her grandfather's visits to Three Wheels each year for this annual Eza. Maki said that although she had fortunately not experienced the horror of war herself, she felt the effects of the last war through the memories of her family. She expressed her gratitude for being given the opportunity to participate in the ceremony which she attended in order to share her grandfathers joy in speaking on peace and to help further the movement for peace and reconciliation in the world. Maki read the English translation of her grandfather's talk, entitled "On the Way to Peace", the full text of which is reprinted with thanks in this newsletter.

It was a truly moving occasion to hear the speeches given by the Japanese and British members of the Burma Campaign Society who had fought in some of the most brutal conflicts the world has known. For those of us for whom such a past is an unknown world there was so much to learn and take inspiration from if the present and future is to listen too and take credance from the past. The talks of Mr Philip Daniel and Mr Masao Hirakubo are reproduced below with kind thanks to the authors.

A visible symbol of the peace movement is the replica of the Shogyoji Temple bell housed at Three Wheels, in particular the "dragon's head" which was cut off when the bell was seized by the Japanese authorities during the second world war and preserved at Shogyoji Temple. Reverend Sato recounted how Venerable Chimyo Takehara, the Head Priest of Shogyoji, presented His Holiness The Dalai Lama with a photograph of the dragon's head which the Dalai Lama signed and returned in a gesture of

utmost gratitude to Venerable Takehara. Reverend Sato was able to show everyone of copy of the signed photograph was is now kept in the Buddha Room at Three Wheels as a symbol of the spritual encounter between Shogyoji Temple and His Holiness. It was wonderful to see how the dragon's head had again become a renewed emblem of world peace.

Participating in this year's ceremony was Reverend Ganshin, a priest from the Tendai tradition of Buddhism and several members of his group. Ganshin-san spoke of how the subject of anglo-japanese understanding was close to his heart and how Buddhism was an ideal medium through which such understanding could be furthered. Modgala Duguid from the Amida Trust then spoke of how she had experienced the effects of war first-hand in Sarajevo. Philip from the BCS described, in relation to the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, how those civilians that died should be seen as martyrs to peace. Through the loss of their lives we have an indelible reminder what could easily happen if there is a third world war.

In what is now a time honoured tradition at Three Wheels, students from Japan attending their first Eza, were asked to give short talks on themselves and their plans for the future. At this eza we were delighted to hear from Sugoto, Maki, Mako and Mika. They all expressed themselves superbly in English.

Once again Three Wheels Temple, through this service of peace and reconciliation shone brightly and hopefully into the future.

**Andrew Webb**



# On Peace – 51<sup>st</sup> London Eza

Several people are expected to give a short talk at today's meeting and there will also be a special address by Mr Satoru Yanagi. That being so I feel I should not take up too much of your time and would therefore just like to say a few words on the subject of peace.

First of all, from the Buddhist point of view, the attainment of inner peace by each and every individual is absolutely crucial if we are to bring about peace in the world. This is why, whenever he has talked about world peace, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has always emphasized the importance of attaining inner peace first. Without inner peace, world peace is beyond our reach.

This is not to deny the importance of social movements for world peace. Actually there are many ways of approaching this goal and peace activism can play a vital role, acting as a very necessary brake on the strong drive to wage war for economic or political reasons.

However, even if we recognize how important involvement in a peace movement is, serious problems still arise as to how peace is to be maintained between the actual groups themselves or within the individuals making up those groups. This is because there are various kinds of self-interest at work within each person involved in a peace movement, whether they are actually conscious of it or not. Of course many of those involved in such social movements may be highly conscious of ethical values and may know how to overcome those blind passions, especially those selfish desires and feelings of anger that could hurt others.

However, the most serious difficulty is that there are also many people who are simply not aware of the real problems of their karmic existence. These problems may persist even after those people have become involved in a peace movement or in a religious community. Due to their sincere commitment, such individuals usually deny that anything is wrong. They are just unaware that they have problems. Even if they become conscious of them, they tend to dismiss them as being of very minor importance. These people are very aware of doing good and neglect to look into themselves more deeply.

What kinds of problems do they have? On the whole their problems are caused by selfish desires that exist deep down in their minds even after their devoted commitment to the higher values of their chosen communities. Such karmic desires recur unnoticed in the minds of those who have assumed they had overcome those blind passions. In the Japanese Buddhist tradition these desires are classified as the triple desire for fame, for wealth and for domination (*myomon, riyō and shōta*).

In the history of Japanese Buddhism spanning the Heian (794-1185) to the Kamakura Period (1185-1333), we come across

many recluse priests (*hijiri* in Japanese). These are priests who abandoned the main temples of the old religious orders that had close ties to the then government. In the old Buddhist orders such as Enryakuji Temple on Mt. Hiei and Kongobuji Temple on Mt. Koya, many of the Buddhist priests were all too concerned with academic achievement, fame, status and property. Generally speaking, recluse priests, also known as “those who renounced the world” (*intonsha*), were serious seekers after truth. The Japanese word *intonsha* in this sense sounds strange, because all Buddhist monks are in principle those who have already left the world. But on Mt. Hiei or on Mt. Koya sincere monks who seriously sought after truth felt obliged to forsake their old orders in order to get away from “the world” they found there, a world still filled with worldly desire for fame, wealth and domination. The recluse priests' renunciation of the world was actually a second renunciation.

Almost all the recluse priests were Pure Land Buddhists practising the nembutsu. Eminent Pure Land priests such as Honen Shonin and Shinran Shonin were all recluse priests. They were very serious in their search for inner peace - birth in the Pure Land. After such a double renunciation of the world, recurrent concern with worldly desires would have been a cause for great shame.

There is an interesting anecdote concerning the triple desire for fame, wealth and domination. Let me quote from a talk I gave at the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting to read *The Letters* by Rennyo Shonin.



Prof. Rev. Kemmyo Taira Sato

According to *The Kudensho (The Record of Oral Transmission)* by Kakunyo (1270-1351), Honen Shonin seriously admonished Shoko-bo Bencho (1162-1238), one of his most famous disciples, when Shoko-bo left for his native country after studying under his master, Honen Shonin, for several years.

When Shoko-bo went to Honen Shonin to take his leave, Honen Shonin murmured, as he watched him depart, “Why ever is this monk leaving without cutting off his topknot (hair)!” On hearing Honen Shonin say this, Shoko-bo came back and asked Honen Shonin, “It was a long time ago that I was first ordained as a Buddhist monk, yet I have just heard you remonstrate about my leaving without cutting off my topknot. I wonder why you said so. With your words echoing in my mind I could not proceed further. I have returned in order to ask why you spoke like this so I can understand your meaning. Then Honen Shonin answered, “Dharma Master, you still have three kinds of topknot: desire for domination, desire for wealth and desire for fame. For the last three years you have been recording my teachings, which you are now taking with you. Returning to your native country with those teachings you will look down on people and make them become your followers. Is this not your desire for domination? Doing so, you will wish to be known as a good scholar. Is this

not your desire for fame? Furthermore you will probably wish to have wealthy donors. Is this not your desire for wealth? Except you shave off these three kinds of topknot, it will be impossible to call you Dharma Master. This is the reason I made my comment.” Then Shoko-bo expressed his repentance, burnt all the documents in his baggage and once again took leave of his Master.

This famous story of the “three kinds of topknot” is a good way of illustrating the most serious problems we meet after attaining faith or entering the priesthood. When we come to experience the religious world, we tend to think we have overcome the karmic world of blind passions and attachment. What is important is for us Shin Buddhists to be aware, under the light of Amida Buddha, that we are still burdened with various kinds of blind passion, even after our attainment of faith. Of all the blind passions those three, the desire for fame, for wealth and for domination, are the most insidious, invading our religious consciousness. If it were not for the light of the Buddha, we would be unable to be awakened to the fact that those desires exist within ourselves. The only way to solve this problem is to entrust ourselves to the unconditional love of Amida Buddha, or, in short, to attain faith.

In the case of Shin Buddhism or Pure Land Buddhism, it is through faith alone that we attain inner peace. Faith in Shin Buddhism is like the pivot of a folding fan. If we forget faith or awareness, everything will disintegrate.

Faith is the way of attaining inner peace. If we forget the importance of inner peace, it will be useless for us to talk about world peace or reconciliation. If we really pray for and desire for peace, we must be very careful about our own worldly desires, for our own attachment to selfish desires is the root cause of the disturbance of our inner peace and at the same time the principal reason for our conflict with others. First of all we must become aware of those desires within ourselves. This is the only way to attain inner peace. However, all this can only take place through our awakening and entrusting ourselves to Amida Buddha’s unconditional love. Although it is not easy for us to be always confronting our own worldly desires, in our efforts to solve this problem, we have to do so in order to realise peace in our world.

It is not that we cannot go forward in life without first attaining inner peace. Inner peace is an eternal task for us to attain at any given moment and the process of attaining inner peace always mirrors the ultimate goal. Inner peace is the very foundation of our life that sustains all our myriad activities including the peace movement and our prayer for world peace and universal reconciliation.

Those who have attained inner peace do not see others as enemies but are fully aware that the real enemy is our own attachment to self-centred desires for fame, wealth and domination. Inner peace comes when that selfish attachment is extinguished.

Kemmyo Taira Sato

Namu-Amida-Butsu

## On the Way to Peace

I am so happy to be with you all again this year too for the Dharma meeting at Three Wheels and the memorial service for the souls of the British and Japanese soldiers who died in the Second World War.

As I look back at my recent visits to London, I realize that seven whole years have passed since, encouraged by my master of thirty years, the Head Priest of Shogyoji Temple, I first made your acquaintance here at Three Wheels.

As someone who had himself fought in Burma, I was motivated by my encounter with you to change my whole attitude to life. I freely admit that in the past, long before our meeting, I had been prey to various twisted thoughts as, poised between life and death, I fought on the battle front. But through our spiritual exchange, something that I experienced with my whole being as I shook hands with each one of you in turn, everything that had remained unresolved till then simply melted away. All the doubts clouding my mind disappeared and I found myself enveloped in a boundless light that allowed no discrimination between friend and foe.

In 1943, toward the end of the Second World War, when Venerable Daigyoin Reion Takehara was the Head Priest of Shogyoji Temple, the then Japanese government

ordered all Buddhist temples to hand over their temple bells to the state so that they could be made into weapons. Shogyoji Temple was one such temple. With one accord, however, all the Dharma friends of the temple came together at the risk of their lives to prevent the government’s representatives from carrying off their bell. They no doubt felt that their temple bell which had



led them in their prayers for faith and peace should on no account be changed into bullets that killed people. On seeing his followers making such a stand, Venerable Takehara declared, “Based on your fervent prayer for peace, you are risking your lives to protect the Triple Treasure. But such devotional action is in itself a living temple bell.” And so eventually he let the bell go, pronouncing the nembutsu along with his followers.

Although the temple bell was taken to the Saganoseki refinery in Oita Prefecture, one of the section leaders at the refinery greatly sympathized with the Dharma friends’ deep prayer for peace and secretly sank the bell in the sea. Subsequently the bell was discovered but, just before it was committed to the blast furnace, the section leader was able to cut off “the

dragon's head" (the head part of the temple bell) and later took it to Shogyoji Temple. The dragon's head is now preserved amongst the temple treasures. It is both evidence of living faith and a symbol of peace.

When Venerable Chimyo Takehara, current Head Priest of Shogyoji, had a recent audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he brought with him a picture of the dragon's head and talked about the temple bell, expressing his own desire for world peace. Moved by this encounter, His Holiness returned the picture to our master after kindly adding his signature.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is well known for teaching his disciples the importance of the three Rs:

- 1) Respect for oneself,
- 2) Respect for others,
- 3) Responsibility for (one's) every action.

This coming September, in the company of His Eminence, the Primate Koken Otani, the director of Three Wheels, Reverend Kemmyo Taira Sato, will again be able to see His Holiness, the Dalai Lama.

Venerable Daigyoin Reion Takehara taught that the essence of Buddhism lies in practicing the basic principle for world peace. "What is important," he declared, "is to put our human world in harmonious order."

As one who actively took part in the last World War, I strongly believe that we should never again wage war. War brings all kinds of tragic results that hugely influence not only the human world but also the natural world and eventually will bring about the destruction of all humankind.

What can I do to promote world peace? Unwilling to bring myself to admit that what can be done by just one man is probably fairly useless, I am once again here before you, despite my advancing old age.

Arnold Toynbee, one of your country's most famous historians, once said at an international conference of religions for world peace that unless each and every member of the human species lives their lives in harmony with those around them, we cannot say we are at peace. Be it war or peace, our reality proceeds from the inner life of every individual. The destiny of the human race depends on our struggle to overcome selfishness within!

What Toynbee is saying here is how important it is for each and every one of us to become a person who creates peace.

More than thirty years have passed since first I visited Shogyoji Temple at the age of fifty. Up until then my eyes had only been directed outwards towards the external world. I was so ignorant that I did not know how to look into myself, into my inner reality. But then at last the light of the Buddha reached that inner self for the very first time and illuminated the karmic reality of my own existence. I became aware that both war and peace had their origin in my mind. Above all it is important I first find peace in my own mind. If our minds become peaceful we can forgive and care for one another. I really want to maintain this peaceful friendship with you for a long, long time.

I do hope that this memorial service will not end up merely as a way of consoling old war veterans but that it will actually become part of religious practice to pray for world peace and that this prayer for peace will be taken up by young friends from the next generation.

I am happy and delighted to be able to attend this Dharma meeting, aware as I am that every visit of mine could be my last. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all those who have cooperated in bringing about this meeting, especially to all my friends at Three Wheels.

Thank you for listening so attentively.  
With palms together.

Satoru Yanagi

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## Reverend Professor and Dear Friends,

*"The walls do not reach up to heaven"*

When Pope John Paul II went to Hiroshima, it is sobering to think as long ago as 1982, he said in the course of his address

*"To remember the past is to commit oneself to the future. to remember Hiroshima is to abhor nuclear war. In the face of the calamity that every war is one must affirm and reaffirm time and time again that the waging of war is not inevitable or unchangeable. Man is not destined to self destruction."*

And yet this year we have seen war waged again, and if in one instance we were tempted to think that the casting down of idols and the removal of one tyrant was a plus for peace, we are now uncomfortably aware that we may have sewn dragon's teeth. Many important people have suffered and continue to do so.

Truely the way to true peace is hard, and just as this time last year we gazed with dismay at one set of fallen towers, so we are now bewildered by the frustration of decent intention, and aware of a welcome that turned so quickly to hostility and recrimination.

So what can we veterans of one nuclear war recommend today? The first, and perhaps the only response, is to say "Hold fast to hope". As you know I have several times in the past sought help in the scriptures prescribed in my Church for the Sunday nearest to August 15th, and especially in the Old Testament, in tribute to my Jewish colleagues. A moveable Easter gives some flexibility, but this years readings brought no acceptable "prompt". So I turned to the Iraq experience for inspiration.

And found it, first, in the words of that British Commanding Officer to his men of the eve of battle, when he told them that they were in the most Biblical of lands; that land which had been the cradle of all the civilisations of the Western hemisphere. "Tread lightly" he said "in the land of Abraham, the Ur of the Chaldees". For Iraq is the Mesopotamia, Chaldea, whence came the earliest readers of the skies, from which Abraham set out to find the land promised by Yahweh, the land of the Magi who sought the babe in Bethlehem because of the star in the east. It was also the land where the story of the tower of Babel, Babylon, tells of man's fatal tendency to selfishness of family and clan, and attraction to division.

What we need to do from our own now old experience is to affirm and reaffirm our belief in brotherhood, and sisterhood. In the words of the great Abbe, Paul Cotourier, who died 50 years

ago, and was for many of us the father of ecumenism, we must all Christian and non-Christian, become “spiritual ecumenists”.

‘Ecumenism’ like dialogue has entered into common speech and parlance. “Oikumene” is Greek for the whole inhabited world, for all those who live in houses. The search for the unity of the Christian Church, destroyed like Babel by the egotism of man, is inseparably linked to the longing for the unity of mankind.

Here in this sacred house, in the midst of a great city, among persons of very differing spiritual traditions, we can show to one another a divine courtesy, a sincere desire for what the Abbe called “spiritual emulation”, a mutual upholding of the best impulses of all those present.

Christian and non-Christian alike, we are all in the one “invisible monastery”, as Courtourier might have put it. If I believe of the Lord I try to serve what you believe of Him, then the walls of division do not stretch up to that heaven to which we all aspire.

And so I say once more “Shalom to you all. May the Peace which passes all understanding be with you”.

**Philip L. Daniel KC\*SG; GCHS**



## Journey to America

Reverend Kemmyo Taira Sato flew to America in September and, together with Reverend Keimei Takehara and others from Shogyoji Temple, attended the meeting between His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, and His Eminence, the Supreme Primate Koken Otani, which took place immediately after the inaugural ceremony of the Chamtse Ling Temple at Bloomington, Indianapolis, on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

What was most moving among various happenings during the meeting was that towards the end of audience, when a miniature of the temple bell was presented by Shogyoji Temple as a symbol of world peace, His Holiness placed the miniature bell between the Primate and him and rang it five times together with the Primate. It was a moving scene. Listening to the sound fading away, His Holiness admired the beautiful sound of the bell and stated, “The sound is empty.” According

to him in Tibet they say that the sound of the temple bell is empty. Then the Director said, “Therefore it can be a symbol of peace.” His Holiness immediately responded to it, saying “Good, good!”

Reverend Keimei Takehara and the Director visited Professor Daigan Matsunaga at the Reno Buddhist Church and then attended the Eleventh Biennial Conference of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies, where the Director gave a talk on 12<sup>th</sup> September.

Finally the Director and all the other members from Shogyoji attended the Inaugural Ceremony of the Buddha’s Entrance held at the house of Mr Shigeru Ono, the second son of Mrs Sumiko Matsunaga, in Los Angeles on 13<sup>th</sup> September.

## A report on the first meeting of the children’s group at Three Wheels

Here is a short report on the first meeting of the new children’s group at Three Wheels. The group met on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September. It was attended by 6 children and their parents. We began the meeting with a very short chant, with the children being shown how to bow, sit and hold their Ojuzu in the shrine room. The shortness of the chant was good as the children were able to follow it comfortably. The important thing was that that the children were at the centre of this meeting. After the chant I read a Jataka story about one of the Buddha’s former lives. I am going to try to develop a number of Jataka stories emphasizing the need for kindness in life. After this story the children went out into the garden to pick up leaves, which they obviously enjoyed and this developed into play.



This was our first meeting. As much as we are able we hope to meet like this once a month. The meeting felt like something new, which hopefully both children and adults will settle into and develop ideas within. Personally I found it quite hard to read a Buddhist story to children. Except for my interactions with my own son I am not comfortable with communicating within the world of children. Learning how the Dharma is recognized by children is important for me as an adult.

I am very glad that this group has begun. I am grateful to Professor Unno and his wife Alice for coming to Three Wheels and explaining the importance and value of such a meeting. I hope that this group will develop the children’s relationship with the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. For my own son I deeply wish for him to be connected to the goodness and truth manifested at Three Wheels.

# The 2003 Hoonko Otorikoshi Ceremony at Three Wheels

The Hoonko Otorikoshi festival marks the death of our great teacher Shinran-Shonin and, as such, many Shin Buddhists consider the year to start and end with Hoonko. That the festival has such importance comes from its special atmosphere in which people reflect on all that the Jodo Shin teachings have given to them. Indeed, Kemmyo-sensei told us that his master Ekai-sama used to say that all people who come to Hoonko are the guests of Shinran-Shonin.

After a ceremony of chanting sutras Kemmyo-sensei introduced the special guest speaker, his good friend Professor Masahiro Shimoda - an expert in Buddhist Philosophy at Tokyo University and a member of the Shogyoji Sangha. Kemmyo-sensei described Professor Shimoda as a very gifted interpreter of Buddhism who has an excellent ability to combine profound philosophical thinking with skilful linguistic study. His praise was certainly borne out by the Professor's talk.

The subject of Professor Shimoda's talk focused on the origins of Mahayana Buddhism but was far from being simply a historical or scholarly discourse. Instead Professor Shimoda diagnosed the delusory way of living in which people attempt to move towards a pseudo-future which is entirely fabricated on the misconceived fragments of past experience. He then contrasted this with the activity of the Bodhisattva who makes a radical act of repentance which involves taking responsibility for the entirety of past karma, not merely those acts which they can recall by memory.

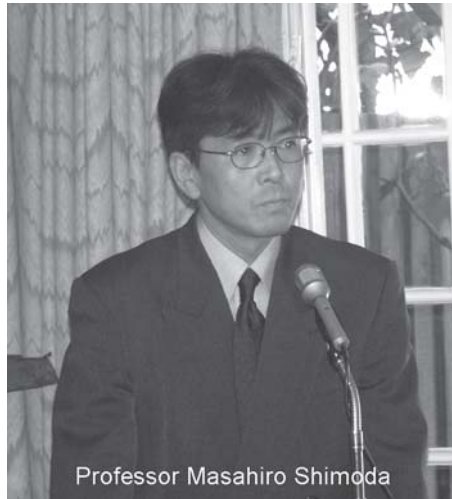
In highlighting these two contrasting paths, of selfish delusion and selfless action, Professor Shimoda broke open a vision, in the minds of his audience, of a new vista in which living transcends the bounds of time and self-consciousness; and becomes something far greater.

Unsurprisingly the excellent talk was followed by many questions. Mr. Hirakubo asked about the difference between being 'repentant' and being 'apologetic'; to which Kemmyo-sensei replied that the former was far deeper - relating primarily to a transformation within oneself rather than an outward act of social contrition.

Ann then started a very interesting line of questioning by asking approximately; "If the future, as we conceive it, is no more than our memories of the past then are you denying original thought and imagination? Can't we imagine something that has not already happened in the past?" Kemmyo-sensei and Professor Shimoda replied that, whilst the future is a projection of past experience, our creative imagination is still very important. Professor White, speaking as a poet, added that, "What we call imagination and creativity is bringing together two things that were already there but not brought together before."

Ken linked this idea of creativity to the contrast between the Bodhisattva way and the life of the person who lives their future in the grip of the past, asking to hear more about the way out of the latter situation. Andy added to this question saying, "In your talk there is some tension between the temporal dimension, where Buddhahood is always in the future, and the fulfilment of Buddhahood. I remember that in the sutras bodhisattvas are said to act 'playfully' and in Shin we talk about 'naturalness'. I wonder if the tension between the endless process and eventual Buddhahood is resolved in the creativity of the present moment?"

Professor Shimoda did not quite understand the way this question was expressed and Michiko-san clarified by adding approximately "The last sentence of your lecture seems to describe a vital process in every moment that we move forward." There is a difference, she seemed to imply, between creativity based on our fragmentary memories, and creativity based on seeing reality as-it-is right now. Professor Shimoda appeared to agree with this point.



Professor Masahiro Shimoda

Next Kemmyo-sensei expressed his personal gratitude for Professor Shimoda's talk. He said, "Thank you. Listening to you I felt as if various things that have happened recently merged into oneness. A few days ago I had a vision about Ekai-sama my first master. I was seriously looking into myself in front of her small shrine one evening. The next morning I woke having had a vision of my master telling me off, saying, "Your mind is not working at all!" As such I was awakened from that condition."

"Greeting Professor Shimoda I remembered that both of us are disciples of this same lady master, and I remembered one important lesson I received from her. One day, in my twenties, I said that it might be difficult for a lady, who was staying at the temple at that time, to attain faith because she was a westerner from America. Immediately Ekai-sama told me off, "Why not? She is a human being!" At that time I was still yet to overcome that nasty attitude to strangers. I wouldn't say that I have overcome it entirely; it is a lifetime task for me to do this. Discrimination comes in sneakingly when we are not conscious of it."

"When I think of all my masters past and present I find what is common to them is their prayer for inner peace and selflessness. Not only to obtain happiness for themselves but for all others. What is important to attain faith, awakening to the reality and compassion of Buddha. Faith is taking refuge in the Buddha."

"In today's talk, Professor Shimoda mentioned placing one's trust in the 'Three Treasures'; that is faith. In the very act of entrusting oneself to Amida Buddha everything becomes one; going beyond all differences and discrimination. Speaking in terms of time, it is in gratitude that the difference between the past, present and future disappears. Taking refuge in Amida

Buddha is transcendence. And at the same time it is also the dimension in which we find ourselves one with others. Our selfish walls are destroyed and we find ourselves involved in interdependent relationships with others. Everybody, and everything, exists together in their selfless liberating harmony. Listening to Professor Shimoda's talk I felt as if everything I have experienced recently became one."

"I also recalled my recent journey to America. There I attended a meeting between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Supreme Primate Koken Otani, along with Keimei Takehara and others. What impressed me most was that at the end of our audience His Holiness brought out the miniature temple bell, which we had just presented to him, and placed it between the Primate and himself. Then he hit the bell five times. Listening to the sound fading away His Holiness admired the sound of the miniature Shogyoji Bell and stated that the sound was 'empty'. I was surprised and said; "In Tibet you say the sound of temple bell is 'empty', and in Japan we say that it is 'impermanent!'" The sound of the bell symbolizes the impermanence or ultimate emptiness of things. So I said to him, "It can become a shared symbol of peace", and he said "Good, good"."

"You know 'emptiness' means interdependent origination. That everything is connected to everything else. So the 'selfless self' of the bodhisattva who takes refuge is also empty and they continue to do work to benefit their self and all others until the end of time. That is a very important aspect of the bodhisattva attitude. According to my interpretation of Professor Shimoda's talk; in the very instant of 'taking refuge' the differentiation of things disappears and we are reborn into a new world. And we also realise the true nature of time in repentance of the past and in the vow of the future. My English is not very good, I don't know if you understand."

After listening to Kemmyo-sensei's reflections a lady said, "Professor Shimoda made a point in saying that transmigration is not the only important thing."

Kemmyo-sensei replied, "We don't need to be attached to transmigration in the sense of reincarnation. What is important is to take responsibility for the whole past now, and vow to do this work forever."

Duncan followed up this remark saying, "We desire to make the world what we want it to be but it never is, and as a result we experience that quite painfully at times. Coming here today a thought came into my mind of the white path with raging fires on one side and torrents of water on the other (*Ed. - a symbolic image used by Master Shan-tao*). There is no way you could control these but all you could do is trust in the Buddha and take the next step with trust."

Adding to this poetic image Professor White quoted a Waka poem which he had recently composed and which he felt to be pertinent:

*How lucky to be  
How lucky to have not been  
Seasons come and go  
What I was before I was  
Who now am  
I will soon be*

This brought the Hoonko Otorikoshi meeting to a beautiful and poignant close.

Andy

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## Message to British-Japanese joint memorial at Three Wheels by Mr. Masao Hirakubo

Since 1995 the Burma Campaign Society (BCS) has asked Three Wheels to include their wishes for a British-Japanese joint memorial for those who died in Burma and India during 1941-1945 in the Buddhist ceremony. We hereby thank Three Wheels for their continuing cooperation in this.

Yesterday, in Japan, a memorial for the 3.1 million victims (3.1 million military personnel and 0.8 million civilians) of the second world war, was held at Budokan. Prime Minister Koizumi re-confirmed Japan's policy of non-warfare.

The BCS has recently started a project to talk about our war-time experiences with the younger generation. As a matter of fact, last week I talked with Japanese residents in Los Angeles about my war-time experiences. It was a surprising success. I wish to expand this scheme in the future.

Next year, 2004, is the 60th anniversary of the battle of Kohima which was the turning point for both armies. There is to be a joint memorial next year on the 10th of March at the Catholic Cathedral in Kohima.

I hope you will all be interested in studying the past and will construct a peaceful and prosperous nation.

**Masao Hirakubo**  
Chairman BCS

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Edited and created by: Prof. Rev. Taira Kemmyo Sato  
Mr. Andrew Webb  
Dr. Lucien Chocron

**All donations are welcome**

**Three Wheels**  
55 Carbery Avenue, London W3 9AB  
Tel:020 8248 2542, Fax: 020 8248 2578  
Email: [threewheels@threewheels.org.uk](mailto:threewheels@threewheels.org.uk)  
Website: [www.threewheels.org.uk](http://www.threewheels.org.uk)