



Three Wheels NEWS



Three Wheels is a branch of Shogyoji Temple in Japan

December 2019

Number 33

Summer Reunion for Peace and Friendship

On Friday 14 June 2019, Rev. Kemmyo Taira Sato was the guest of honour at the 23rd Annual Summer Reunion for Peace and Friendship, held at the Embassy of Japan in London. This is an annual meeting to promote friendship between Japanese and British war veterans, their families and those engaged in reconciliation activities. At this year's event there was a special celebration of the recent bestowal by the Government of Japan of The Order of the Rising Sun (Gold and Silver Rays) upon Rev. Sato. He had received this highly prestigious decoration from the Emperor of Japan at a special ceremony held in Tokyo a few weeks previously. The award was conferred upon Rev. Sato in recognition of his outstanding contribution to promoting reconciliation between Japan and the UK. Rev. Sato has been continuously working for over 25 years to achieve this aim through the activities of Three Wheels Temple, particularly through the annual meetings for peace and reconciliation between Japanese and British war veterans, which Three Wheels has held since 1997.

Over 230 guests, a record number for this event, attended the Japanese Embassy. It was a great joy to be able to meet at the reception with many familiar faces from the reconciliation meetings at Three Wheels. From Shogyoji Temple we were honoured with the presence of Rev. Keimei Takehara and Mr Kenji Toda, both of whom were present at the very origin of Three Wheels Temple and significantly contributed to its establishment. The very first London Eza was itself held at the London home of Mr Kenji Toda during his stay in the UK. Prof. John White, who has constantly supported and encouraged Rev. Sato since he first arrived in London, looked full of happiness at attending this memorable event.

The Ambassador, Mr Koji Tsuruoka, spoke warmly of the enduring international friendship which developed



Rev. Kemmyo Sato receiving the decoration

between Japan and the UK after the end of the Second World War. This had been made possible through the efforts of those, like Rev. Sato, who had strived for peace and reconciliation between those who were directly involved in the sad conflicts of the past. Paying tribute to the way Rev. Sato and others had brought together Japanese and British war veterans, who were finally able to reconcile with each other after many years, Mr Tsuruoka expressed how very difficult it is for one person to build such a movement for peace. The hardest thing in such endeavours, Mr Tsuruoka emphasised, is to move from zero to one. Once this great difficulty is overcome and you are joined by one other person, the movement naturally builds and develops.

Looking back over the 25 years Rev. Sato has lived in the UK, Mr Tsuruoka expressed his deepest appreciation for the work Rev. Sato undertook to

discover and make known the lost history of the four Japanese students who tragically died whilst studying at UCL as well as the selfless care they and many other Japanese students from Choshu and Satsuma, were given by Prof. Alexander Williamson and his wife Emma.

Turning to Rev. Sato's contribution towards the development of religious encounter and understanding between Japan and the UK, Mr Tsuruoka highlighted the importance of his translations and commentaries on the *Tannisho* and the *Letters* by Rennyo that have both been published internationally. The other major publication Rev. Sato has been involved in is the translation, together with his great friend Prof. John White, of 300 *haiku* by the great Japanese poet Matsuo Basho.

Rev. Kemmyo Taira Sato was then invited to give his greeting of thanks. He began by expressing his great happiness at being able to gather with so many people at an event dedicated to praying for world peace and reconciliation between the UK and Japan. The honour of receiving the award from the Emperor, Rev Sato related, was not his alone but to be shared with all those good friends with whom he had sought and prayed together for world peace and reconciliation over the years, some of whom were still living, and others who had already passed over to the other shore.

Rev. Sato then talked about the many encounters he had received with British and Japanese friends, through the connections his master Ven. Chimyo Takehara had established with several major figures at University College London, including the then Provost, Sir Derek Roberts, and Pro-Provost, Professor John White. These formative encounters led to the creation of Three Wheels, a Shin Buddhist temple in

Acton Town, with the avowed aim of furthering the development of international spiritual exchange and the welfare of Japanese residents in the UK.

Amongst all the wonderful encounters Three Wheels was host to, one of the most memorable to Rev. Sato was meeting the British and Japanese war veterans who, defying age and infirmity, sought to convey their profound wish for peace and reconciliation and would travel to Three Wheels to pray for world peace and reconciliation.

Rev. Sato recalled the words of Mr Masao Hirakubo, father of the reconciliation movement, who used to say, "I live my life as a gift, a gift given to me by others," in remembrance of the fact that he only survived the war because of those who had lost their lives. As a result of the inspiration given by Mr Hirakubo, Rev. Sato began the annual meetings to pray for world peace and reconciliation between Japanese and British war veterans at Three Wheels.

What is of vital importance, Rev. Sato impressed, is that we of later generations remain mindful of all that those brave veterans have sought to accomplish, at times at considerable risk to themselves, and that we continue to do our utmost to respond to their fervent wish for peace and reconciliation, based as always on our own inner peace.

Rev. Sato's speech revealed the deep connections between so many different people, and events, both across time and space. I feel this is all possible because of Ven. Chimyo Takehara's original wish to establish Three Wheels as a place where these encounters can continue in even greater depth.

Andrew Webb

The Annual Ceremony to Pray for World Peace and Reconciliation The 143rd London Eza

This year's annual Ceremony to Pray for World Peace and Reconciliation was especially poignant since those veterans, both Japanese and British, who first gave birth to the reconciliation movement have sadly now all passed away. Despite their absence, however, these great figures, such as the late Mr Hirakubo and Mr Malins, were recognised in the opening address by Mr Jun Miura, Political Minister of the Embassy of Japan in London. Mr Miura, who has just returned

to the United Kingdom 25 years after his previous appointment here, noted how much progress has been made in the Anglo-Japanese relationship during that time. Japan and the United Kingdom are now, he feels, among the closest friends and international partners. He was delighted to celebrate the conferral of the Order of the Rising Sun (Gold and Silver Rays) on Rev. Kemmyo Taira Sato, by His Majesty Emperor Reiwa, as a representative of the reconciliation movement

pioneered by the late Mr Masao Hirakubo and many others over the years. “I hope you will all go forward in your efforts,” Mr Miura said, “continuing to send a message of peace and reconciliation through these regular meetings and activities.”

Following the minister’s speech, the main memorial ceremony was held, which included the offering of incense by representatives of the governments of Japan and Myanmar; the reading of two traditional poems held very dear by war veterans; the chanting of sutras by various Buddhist Sanghas; and shaking hands in reconciliation. A message was also read out from Fr. Thomas Plant as a representative of the Anglican Christian tradition. Fr. Plant encouraged everyone to look beyond simplistic oppositions such as “East” and “West” and reminded us that “True friendship has to transcend the easy binary of ‘same’ and ‘other’”. This requires of us “hard, demanding self-examination, repentance and honesty... the crucifixion of mere self, for the discovery of true self in mutual gift to one another.”

After the ceremony, Rev. Kemmyo Sato gave a talk of thanks which was full of emotion as he spoke of the “beautiful spiritual encounters and reencounters” he had witnessed between Japanese and British war veterans over the years. He said that, “What is of vital importance is that we of later generations remain mindful of all that those brave veterans have sought to accomplish, at times at considerable risk to themselves, and that we continue to do our utmost to respond to their fervent wish for peace and reconciliation by always trying to return to inner peace.”

To conclude the ceremony, those in attendance were invited to share their feelings and reflections. Mr Andrew Webb spoke of how pleased he was to welcome representatives of the people of Myanmar, reflecting our growing recognition of the suffering of the indig-



Mr Jun Miura opening the ceremony

enous people who were affected by the great conflict that overtook their country from outside forces.

Rev. Kenshin Ishii also spoke briefly and noted the wonderful peaceful atmosphere that was created by the chanting of the various monks, nuns and priests of various traditions. He said that finding a moment of inner peace in the here and now is the essential starting point for overcoming hatred. To elaborate his feeling and conclude the meeting he shared some advice he once received from an older Shin Buddhist priest: “We ordinary people are always counting what we don’t possess, but what we can do instead is become aware of what we have already been given. Each moment of awareness of what we have received brings gratitude to our heart. Food, water, air, family, everything is a gift. When we realise this in each moment why should we be angry?”

Andy B.

Smile, Sorry and Thank you The 17th Spring School

In the opening ceremony for the 17th Spring School, Rev. Sato gave a gentle and heartfelt talk about Interdependent Origination, one of the fundamental teachings of Buddhism. The essential point of his talk was: “We exist here and now interdependently. Each

of us is supported by many people such as parents, teachers and friends. Please become aware of this fact through your new experiences in the UK.” Following Rev. Sato’s talk, the students listened to a talk about the Zen Garden by Prof. John White. In this talk, the

words which remained in the students' hearts were: "What we see is illusion. Being aware of the invisible part is probably more important than the visible part." I felt such warmth in the messages to the young in both Rev. Sato's and Prof. White's talks.

Having received these words, that evening one of the students shared his very first feelings about London: "Seeing different buildings and adverts which all are written in English, I saw myself as having been in such a small self-centred world until today." Day by day, not only this boy but also all the other students looked deeper and deeper into themselves. Through reading the sutra, they became aware that each of their lives was the most precious gift from their parents. Through helping with the daily cleaning and washing, they also came to realise that they had selfishly taken it for granted that they were given a place to sleep, were given food every day, and were given clean clothes to wear.

I would like now to introduce a few of the impressions given by three of the student participants:

Shizuku, 12 years old

I was deeply touched when Rev. Kemmyo Sato said: "Denying others means that you are spiritually killing them." This made me think how much I had been hurting others. I was also able to realise what has been done for me by my parents and how much they have been loving me. However, I still have a self-centred way of thinking. Firstly I would like to say "Thank you" and "Sorry" and I would like to entrust myself to the Three Treasures: Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

On this 14-day journey to discover myself, I indeed gradually became able to find myself. I realised that there are people around me who I can trust. So even if I make mistakes in my life, I will talk to them. Thank you very much for letting me realise many important things. Even though this is only a small awareness, I would like to continue to be aware of myself.

Aya, 16 years old

In a talk by Rev. Kenshin Ishii, I leaned about some important encounters between Prof. John White and Rev. Sato, between Japanese war veterans and British ones. I feel that their spiritual relationships are very special and they overcame the barriers of countries and languages.

Having learnt this, I came to realise the value of existence of friends for the first time. I had thought that friendship meant always laughing with each other and spending time together just for fun. Therefore, I'm so impressed by their really special relationships, which are different from my idea of friendship. At the same time, I was ashamed by my previous idea, which values the quantity of friends rather than the quality. I still cannot imagine having such a precious encounter with a trustworthy person to whom I can leave everything, but I believe that the temple is the place where I can meet such wonderful people.

Hitoe, 16 years old

After Hiroko-san (Mrs Sato) passed away, I was able to see how much influence a single person could have on others. So many people came to Three Wheels in the same mind to pronounce the *Nenbutsu* for Hiroko-san, which showed how much Hiroko-san had been taking care and watching over each one of us.

I can't forget Rev. Sato's words: "How much we are aware of what has been done by our parents for us is as small as the tip of an iceberg. And even what we are aware of, we see this through our self-centered minds". Having received this teaching, I felt that, as with my relationship to Hiroko-san, I take my parents' existence for granted and don't realise how privileged I actually am.

For nine months I was protected in my mother's womb and I am still being protected by my parents and other people. So I feel that my life is not only my own but also a life of others. Therefore, before I regret making the same mistakes again, I want to be able to realise the treasure of having people around me who love and take care of me.

Rev. Kenshin Ishii



Students of the 17th Spring School

Meeting Amida Buddha's Light in the Sangha

The 23rd Shokai Retreat

A gentle and peaceful light embraced the proceedings of the 23rd Shokai and was remarked upon by many of the participants. I cannot help but believe that it was the *samādhi* of Shakyamuni's disciple, "Good Nun Wonderful Seed" (the late Mrs Hiroko Sato), lingering softly upon the Sangha and showing us how to go forward in her physical absence.

At the opening ceremony of the retreat Dr Christopher D. gave the traditional Vow of Sincere Practice. He spoke movingly of how, coming to Buddha-dharma only in his middle age, he had thought that it would be impossible for him to engage with it seriously as anything more than a sort of hobby. After visiting Shogyoji with Dharma-friends, however, he came to realise that Buddha-dharma is not a matter of gathering knowledge but a process of awakening to one's ignorance and to the truth of life. As such he now feels able to go forward with confidence and joy on the *Nenbutsu* way.

Rev. Kemmyo Taira Sato said that Christopher's Vow of Sincere Practice was wonderful and contained: "everything relating to the subject of the retreat, namely 'Meeting Amida Buddha's Light in the Sangha'". Rev. Sato told us that the Sangha is not simply a "Buddhist community". He said that the Buddha is the one who is awakened to the truth of life; the Dharma is the truth of life he was awakened to; and the Sangha is the manifestation of the Dharma that is itself formless. To be welcomed into the Sangha means that we are already embraced in the truth of life. If we do not realise this point, we cannot truly appreciate the profundity of the Sangha. Sharing a story from his own youth, Rev. Sato told us that if we feel something wonderful, that gives us a sense of direction, we should take it seriously and also not forget that is a gift from the Buddha.

During the course of the weekend there were several *Zadan* meetings where we shared our impressions and feelings about the theme of the retreat. Unfortunately there were too many wonderful points to report here, but a few of them were as follows.

Mr Sam K. spoke of how he notices that when he is with other members of the Sangha, "my mind empties

out naturally and that helps me to listen better. It gives me some space inside and I can have a beginner's mind."

Mrs Tina S. said that Mrs Hiroko Sato had taught her not to worry if she couldn't understand the teachings. She said that Hiroko-san told her that the word "Understanding" shows us that the teaching reaches us from underneath or beyond our own thoughts and feelings.

Rev. Kenshin Ishii welcomed Tina's comment and pointed out that although the students who attended the recent Spring School didn't ask Prof. White to explain his words "everything we see is an illusion", they came to realise it very naturally when - reading the *Sutra on the Importance of What Has Been Done for us by Our Parents* - they found that they had been completely unaware of how much their existence was upheld by their parents' love and support.

On the Saturday, Mr Andrew Webb, a trustee and long-term member of Three Wheels Sangha, gave a talk based on his own impressions theme of the retreat. He said that it was not an easy talk to give but that he managed to do it by imagining himself writing a letter to his Dharma friends. In his talk Andrew spoke about how, when he noticed some "gap" between his life away from the temple and his life in Sangha, he tried to understand this problem by thinking about what was different. However, he said that "the more I struggled to remember, the more I found myself falling into the same [difficulty]". Happily, while preparing his talk, he discovered that it was not necessary for him to understand the difference and that all he needs to be aware of is "that my mind could change simply through being in Sangha. To come to Three Wheels and sit on the same floor where we are now, despite all those nagging doubts and hesitations that constantly overcome my mind, is to be welcomed and accepted by Amida Buddha. [When I came to realise this] the feeling of separation naturally turned into the warmth of spiritual encounter."

All of the Dharma-friends present contributed in their own ways to the retreat, both spiritually and practically, but it was particularly wonderful to see

the flourishing of the newer members of the Sangha. For example, Mr Martin L., who chaired the chanting lesson for the first time, brought both sincerity and humour in equal measure to all his contributions. He said, “The Sangha is more important than I realised. Rev. Sato mentioned positive experiences which should be taken seriously even if they are fleeting. However I don’t take things seriously but tend to throw them away, and I consider the negative bad karma I’m bathing in as real. Now I am realising that, what you are saying, is that it’s the other way around. The small anomalies [in my experience] are the real thing.

Andy B.



The participants sharing their impression and thoughts

Shakyamuni's Teaching Becomes Entirely Clear in the Sangha The 144th London Eza

On the occasion of the April 2019 London Eza, which was also Shinran Shonin's monthly memorial day, Rev. Kenshin Ishii gave a talk on the theme of “Meeting Amida Buddha's Light in the Sangha”. As his starting point, Rev. Ishii reminded us of Shakyamuni's last words to the Sangha, “Hold yourself as a light, Hold the Dharma as a light”. For many years this advice confronted Rev. Ishii with a challenging spiritual question: “how can we entrust ourselves in this way when we are full of blind passions?” However one day, some years ago, he found that Shakyamuni Buddha's teaching had started to naturally become clearer to him during his day-to-day life in Sangha. He realised that: “When we hear this teaching, “Hold yourself as a light”, we should consider the meaning of the word “yourself” in this context. I mean that we need to be aware of ourselves. I need to really consider who I am.”

Rev. Ishii went on to explain what he meant by sharing his impressions of listening to the young Japanese students who recently attended the 17th Spring School at Three Wheels. After sharing various comments made by the students, he observed that: “[These] students purely listened to each other as if they had no ego at all. I felt that their spiritual attitude in listening was amazing. In Shin Buddhism our practice is listening. Listening in our tradition means both listening physically with your ears and listening spiritually with your heart.”

In concluding his talk Rev. Ishii reminded us of Rev.



Rev. Kenshin Ishii

Sato's advice at the October 2018 Shokai: “Even if you find yourself heavily burdened with your karmic problems, please do not feel down because it is the evidence of Amida's working that you become aware of your karmic problems. Just say ‘Sorry’ and ‘Thank you’.” Reflecting on these words, Rev. Ishii said: “Let's listen to the above teaching by our hearts and digest it within us, encouraged by each other and brought up together with their purity, humility and sincerity in Sangha. When we find ourselves being selfish, let us pronounce *Nenbutsu* of repentance. When we find ourselves being loved and supported, let us pronounce *Nenbutsu* of gratitude. When I am mindful of myself, the Shakyamuni's teaching; ‘Hold yourself as light, Hold Dharma as light’ becomes entirely clear in Sangha.”

After Rev. Ishii's talk, Mr Andrew Webb chaired a short period for impressions, questions and discussion.

He expressed his thanks to Rev. Ishii, saying: “You always give very vivid, relatable and practical illustrations to help us understand the teachings”. He also referred to a video record of the 17th Spring School that we had watched together, commenting that: “Seeing the joy on the faces of the Spring School participants refreshed us all and showed us how to look into ourselves.”

Attending the Eza, on only her second visit to Three Wheels, a new participant in the Eza called Ruth asked the heartfelt question: “Can the word ‘Sangha’ be said

to include those who are not Buddhists?” Rev. Ishii said that the Sangha is not a place of certain beliefs but that it exists when there are people to receive Dharma, the truth of life. Rev. Kemmyo Sato added that Sangha is “founded by, or on, the deepest truth of life... Sangha consists of people who embody this formless truth. Through encounter through individuals we feel the working of the Buddha. Fundamentally the foundation of Sangha is very peaceful, gentle and quiet.”

Andy B.

Garden Open Days 2019

We successfully welcomed 215 visitors over four afternoons in June and raised £771.20 for the National Garden Scheme (NGS). Currently, NGS gives £2.5 million to their supported charities every year, such as Macmillan Cancer Support. All the income generated by our volunteers, by selling tea and books, was donated to Three Wheels. We would like to thank everyone involved who made this wonderful event possible.



Prof. John White explaining the creation of the Zen Garden

Many visitors who found Three Wheels for the first time at the Garden Open Days are now regular attendees, such as Mrs Jeni Evans who kindly wrote to tell us about her experience:

“I have now been visiting Three Wheels temple for a couple of years. I first came to visit the temple on the garden open day. I had for many years attended the London Buddhist Vihara in Chiswick, doing meditation sessions and classes. This temple practices Theravada Buddhism, so after my visit to Three Wheels, I was very interested to come and learn about Mahayana Buddhism about which I knew very little.

“I came with my friend Sheena and we both loved the atmosphere here. At first, I didn’t really know what it was all about. I had never really heard of Amida Buddha and at first did not know how to connect Shin Buddhism with the Theravada teachings I had so far received. The concept of Amida Buddha I found here does however resonate with my own feelings about nature, love and the universe. I love coming to Three Wheels, even in the winter when it is difficult to walk out of the house into the darkness and cold and catch a bus.

“Rev. Kemmyo Sato and Rev. Kenshin Ishii, Mrs Sanae Ishii and formerly the late Mrs Hiroko Sato are always welcoming, good teachers, and willing



A large number of visitors attended the event

and interested to listen to us and interested in the teachings we have had before. We, here in the West, have no Buddhist tradition, and because of this I think we Westerners are more likely to investigate different Buddhist teachings. Who knows, perhaps this is a new form of Buddhism. Three Wheels is a very special place to visit.”

Dates for Garden Open Days 2020;
6th, 7th, 20th and 21st June.
2 ~ 5 pm. Entrance fee £3.50

Please spread the word to your friends and family.

Kaori Punwani

Basho and Haiku The 145th London Eza

The 145th London Eza was held at Three Wheels on 30th June. The focus of this Eza was a talk by Professor John White on the *haiku* poet and Buddhist, Matsuo Basho. The month of June is a busy time at Three Wheels, with two of the weekends given over to the Garden Open Days. Even so, everyone was very enthusiastic to hear Prof. White's talk, especially because many people have been enjoying reading the wonderful translations of Basho's *haiku* that Prof. White has recently published, in collaboration with Rev. Sato, under the title *5-7-5: The Haiku of Basho*. Prof. White started by giving some history of *haiku*, explaining that they began not as a separate poetic form, but were actually part of sequenced linked verses called *renga*, where each verse was by a different poet. He then went on to discuss common

and painstaking process that had gone into translating the *haiku* in such a way as to preserve the meaning, the rhythm and even any patterns or emphasis in the original text. When hearing this explanation, it was clear to me why reading the translations feels so profound. It is not just a literal translation, but is a work of art and spiritual depth.

Many examples of *haiku* were given throughout the talk with explanations and analysis. I particularly enjoyed how Prof. White explained the deep Buddhist sentiments behind a number of the *haiku*, even in cases that were not overtly Buddhist in language. He also explained that "Like a Zen garden, a fine *haiku* must be constantly returned to if one is even to begin to know it", going on to say that there is no logical approach to a true *haiku* and that "it is only in sleep or deep in our subconscious minds, beyond the realm of words and conscious thought, that it is reachable".

The first question following the talk was from Jeni, a regular participant of Three Wheels activities, who asked how best to read the *haiku*, how many should be read in one day and whether you should aim to read the *haiku* in the seasons about which they are written. Prof. White's reply to this was that in many ways, the *haiku* leave the natural world behind and take the reader to another realm, so in that sense the current season of the present natural world shouldn't matter to the choice of *haiku*. With regards to how many should be read in a day, Prof. White said that there isn't a set amount but that it isn't beneficial to read through lots together. In this regard, care was taken to present the *haiku* separately, one per page, so that the reader can focus properly on one at a time.

The next question was from a new Eza participant called Melanie. She asked Prof. White to further discuss the process that went into producing the translations. He replied that the process generally starts



Prof. John White

aspects of Basho's *haiku* such as the way the senses are combined, for example with colours having scents or a scent having a sound. In this way, the reader is given the sense of the oneness of all things, the unity of all that is of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow to save all sentient beings. Next, he went into detail of the careful

with him choosing a set of *haiku* that are of interest. Next, Mr Ogawa, who visits Three Wheels from Japan Rev. Sato then translates the Japanese into English for Prof. White to adapt into the original syllable structure (usually, but not always, 5-7-5), whilst every effort is made to maintain the underlying sentiment of the original Japanese. In this stage of the process, there is some back and forth discussion between the two of them until they come to an agreement, at which point the translation is complete.



Dr Stephen Montgomery

Rev. Sato further expanded on this explanation to say that literal translation is often difficult because the old style of Japanese contains vocabulary that is sometimes difficult to understand. However, he said, more importantly than just the words is that the poem is “only really reachable in the subconscious”, and that because Prof. White is a poet, he understands well how to do this. He said that he came to understand the true meaning of the *haiku* following his discussions with Prof. White. Finally, he said that he is currently pouring all of his energy into getting other *haiku* works published as soon as possible, and that working on this has been one of his greatest pleasures in his life.

Dr Stephen Montgomery, one of the first participants in Three Wheels activities, talked about how he was present when Prof. White and Rev. Sato first met and he is so happy to see how their special relationship came to fruition with works such as the Basho translation. He said that he felt it was very characteristic of John’s work that the book is so meticulously laid out, with original Japanese script, followed by the phonetic *Romaji* script and finally the English translation. He expressed delight in seeing this book published.

each summer to do work on the temple gardens, was welcomed and invited to speak. Mr Ogawa explained that he enjoys coming to Three Wheels every summer for two weeks. He went on to talk about something that recently happened in Japan that he was really delighted about. For the last ten years, he has had an apprentice working for him who will soon begin working on his own. As part of this, Mr Ogawa had suggested that he take an introspection session at Shogyoji temple. The apprentice took Mr Ogawa’s advice and spent a week at the temple. Following the session he said that he had gained insight such that he now sees himself as like a tree trunk, where everyone who supports him are like leaves and branches but his parents are like the roots. He said that roots are things which we do not normally see but it is important to remember all that they do, and the same is true of our parents. Mr Ogawa was touched by this insight and commented that even though his own parents are now sadly passed away, he still feels that all those close to him are roots supporting him. He said that “wherever we go, we often see trees and in the same way, wherever we go, we can see the influence of our parents”. Prof. White then reminded everyone of the immense privilege that Three Wheels has by having such a top gardener as Mr Ogawa help with the Zen garden. He said that without Mr Ogawa’s help, the garden wouldn’t even have existed in the first place.



Mr Masayuki Ogawa

The final speaker was Rev. Ishii, who offered his congratulations as well as his thanks to both Prof. White and Rev. Sato for producing the Basho book. He expressed that while having listened to Prof. White, Rev. Sato and Mr Ogawa, he felt that although the three of them are separate, they become one in

his mind. He said this is because without Mr Ogawa, the garden could not exist, and without Prof. White and Rev. Sato, the garden, the book and Emperor's award would not exist. He reminded us all that these things happened under Amida's light and that the roots of Three Wheels are spiritual encounters. He said that Mrs Sato had already become the roots of Three Wheels and that Prof. White and Rev. Sato will one day join her as roots. Because of this, he said, the younger generation need to try hard to digest this fact and work hard for the Three Wheels so that it survives strongly and doesn't just become a historical place. He reminded us that this year will be the 25th anniversary of Three Wheels, so it is important to remember that spiritual encounter was what made

everything possible, and that we need to give back to the temple by properly receiving this message. I myself was very moved during the Eza by seeing the achievements of Prof. White, Rev. Sato and Mr Ogawa. They are inspirational, and through their efforts I am able to enjoy wonderful *haiku* translations, a beautiful Zen garden and a special place to hear the Dharma teachings. Following the words of Rev. Sato, I intend to strive to keep in mind their hard work and do what I can to help to ensure that Three Wheels is able to continue to move forward.

Christopher Duxbury

Voices from Japan Visiting Shogyoji Temple

In August of this year, I was lucky to have the opportunity to visit Shogyoji Temple for two days. I travelled to Shogyoji with my friend, Dan, from London who had visited Three Wheels before but isn't a practicing Buddhist. When we arrived at Shogyoji, we had already been in Japan for almost a week, which was very enjoyable but also hectic and, at times, exhausting. The combination of jet lag and moving to a new hotel every day or two meant that my thoughts were scattered and my emotions had been mostly centred on selfish enjoyment.

At Three Wheels in London, I have been learning about the importance of having a routine that includes regular spiritual practice. I usually do a short morning service at home each day and visit the temple every Sunday for the morning service and Monday for meditation. However, whilst travelling in Japan, my routine was completely broken. I am ashamed to say that I had hardly been focusing at all on my Buddhist practice.

For this reason, by the time I arrived at Shogyoji, I was feeling tired and stressed and only thinking about myself. We arrived at Shogyoji during a heavy storm. Despite this, people came out to greet us and give us a warm welcome. Soon after our arrival, it was time for the evening service. Within a minute or two of sitting down in this Buddha hall on the first day, my feeling

changed completely. I suddenly felt calm, happy and safe, as if embraced by Amida Buddha's light. It was incredible to me how differently I felt in such a short space of time. This feeling stayed with me for the whole time that I was staying at Shogyoji.

The following morning, we joined the service and I was able to share some thoughts that I had prepared in Japanese. Despite my poor Japanese, people listened kindly and gave me some positive comments afterwards. After the service, we joined a morning discussion group where we were able to share our impressions as well as listening to the thoughts of many Shogyoji residents. During this time I was struck by how close I felt to these people and how moved I was by their words, despite having only just met many of them for the first time. I saw this as a wonderful example of seeing the Buddha's working through interactions within the Sangha.

After the meeting and a delicious breakfast kindly prepared for us at the temple, we were taken out to enjoy some sightseeing. Despite the stifling heat, people willingly showed us around the famous Dazaifu Tenman-gū Shinto shrine, amongst other places. In the evening, we went to the service followed by an invitation to enjoy dinner out with a number of the priests. This was another great opportunity for encounter with the Shogyoji Sangha, and was a really

memorable evening.

On the final morning, we had a last opportunity to share impressions at the morning service followed by another delicious breakfast. Finally, many of the Sangha came out to say goodbye and wish us well as we left. Despite only staying for a short time, I was sad to be leaving and hope to return at the next possible opportunity.

Because everyone was so kind and welcoming to someone as unimportant as me, it is very easy to feel Amida's working all the time and everywhere at Shogyoji. This time, I felt that I got to talk to many Japanese Dharma friends there and really share some

wonderful encounters. I had planned to visit Shogyoji as part of my holiday, mostly just with the intention of saying "hello" and "thank you" to everyone there for making me so welcome on my previous visit in November 2018. But everyone showed me the Dharma working clearly through their kindness, so actually I received a big reminder of the importance of my practice and also of how lucky I am that I can regularly take part in activities at Three Wheels and learn the Dharma there. I wish to thank everyone at Shogyoji for making this experience so special.

Christopher Duxbury

Bon Festival Service

On 14th August 2019, Bon Festival memorial services were held at Three Wheels, then at the Japanese gravesite at Hendon Park Cemetery and finally before the Stupa of Namu Amida-butsu at Brookwood Cemetery.

The Bon Festival is an annual Buddhist memorial ceremony in which we express our gratitude not only to our ancestors, but everyone who has supported our life in some special way and has gone before us to the Pure Land.

This was the first Bon ceremony in which we could pay respect to the life of Mrs Hiroko Sato and give our deepest thanks before the Buddha Shrine at Three Wheels for everything she has done for us. It was very moving to remember how Mrs Sato assisted her husband, Rev. Kemmyo Sato, in holding the three Bon services every year without fail. We could strongly feel the warmth of her presence watching over us from the Pure Land.

Despite the torrential rain, which did not abate for the whole day, over 40 members of the Japanese Resident's Association and their friends joined the service at Hendon Park Cemetery. They all worked very hard in such difficult weather conditions to ensure the gravesite was clean and tidy for the service



After the service at the Stupa of Namu Amida-Butsu

led by Rev. Kemmyo Sato.

Finally at 3pm in the peaceful surroundings of Brookwood Cemetery, Rev. Sato held a service before the Stupa of Namu Amida-butsu where the ashes of friends of Three Wheels are interred.

The Bon Festival services are held every year at Three Wheels on the 14th August and all are welcome to attend this very special annual remembrance.

Andrew Webb

Volunteering Work at Three Wheels

For the last few years I have been a fairly regular visitor to Three Wheels, doing mainly painting, DIY and also sometimes helping with gardening in the three houses that make up Three Wheels.

I can remember Mrs Hiroko Sato asking me for the first time, if I would help with some painting work in number 43, and I said I would be happy to help. When I started working at 43 on that very first occasion I had a deep feeling of at last being able to say "thank you" and giving something back as I had received so much from everyone at Three Wheels.

Little did I know that by visiting Three Wheels regularly I would receive even more. By being able to share work, mealtimes and many conversations, I now had the benefit of knowing everyone at a much more intimate level by becoming "part of the family". I have joked with Rev. Kenshin Ishii that I am visiting my Japanese family when I come to Three Wheels.

Another unintended effect is that I have also had the opportunity to sometimes meet, and have brief conversations with other visitors to the temple including Mr Ogawa, the master gardener, who comes from Japan every year to carry out work in the three gardens as well as Brookwood cemetery. In the summer just gone, it was such an honour to be able to work with him and experience his wonderful way of

carrying out his various tasks in the gardens. Each time I arrive at Three Wheels, when the door is opened I am met by a welcoming smile and the words "Thank you for coming to help us", and I always reply: "You are the ones who are giving and I am the one who is receiving." We are so fortunate to have Three Wheels here in London where we can come to learn about the teachings of Shinran Shonin, Shin Buddhism and the Mahayana teachings. I have said on many occasions, mainly at Shokai, that without the support of our Japanese Dharma-friends and the Venerable Chimyo Takehara, head priest of Shogyoji Temple, there would be no Three Wheels temple for us to visit, be part of and hear the Buddha Dharma.

There is a question that people sometimes ask: "Do you prefer being a giver or a receiver?" Every time I visit Three Wheels I know that I am both; each time is another opportunity to take a few more steps (sometimes more than a few) along the Dharma path.

Sam Kelly

Ed. Note: The work of Three Wheels is made possible through people giving their time to help practically with all of the many tasks running a temple entails. It takes all sorts of skills to do so. If you are interested in volunteering your time please do contact Three Wheels for further details on how you can help.

A poem by Yosa Buson

*haru no umi
hinemosu notari
notari kana*

*the sea in spring time
is moving all the day long
gently so gently*

This poem is taken from a new translation of Buson's haiku by Prof. John White and Rev. Kemmyo Taira Sato. This book and a new publication of the poems of Kobayashi Issa, are now available to buy from Three Wheels.

Editors' Note.

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

Edited and created by the Three Wheels Editorial Committee.

All donations are welcome

Three Wheels
55 Carbery Avenue, London W3 9AB
Tel: 020 8248 2542
Email: threewheels@threewheels.org.uk
Website: threewheels.org.uk