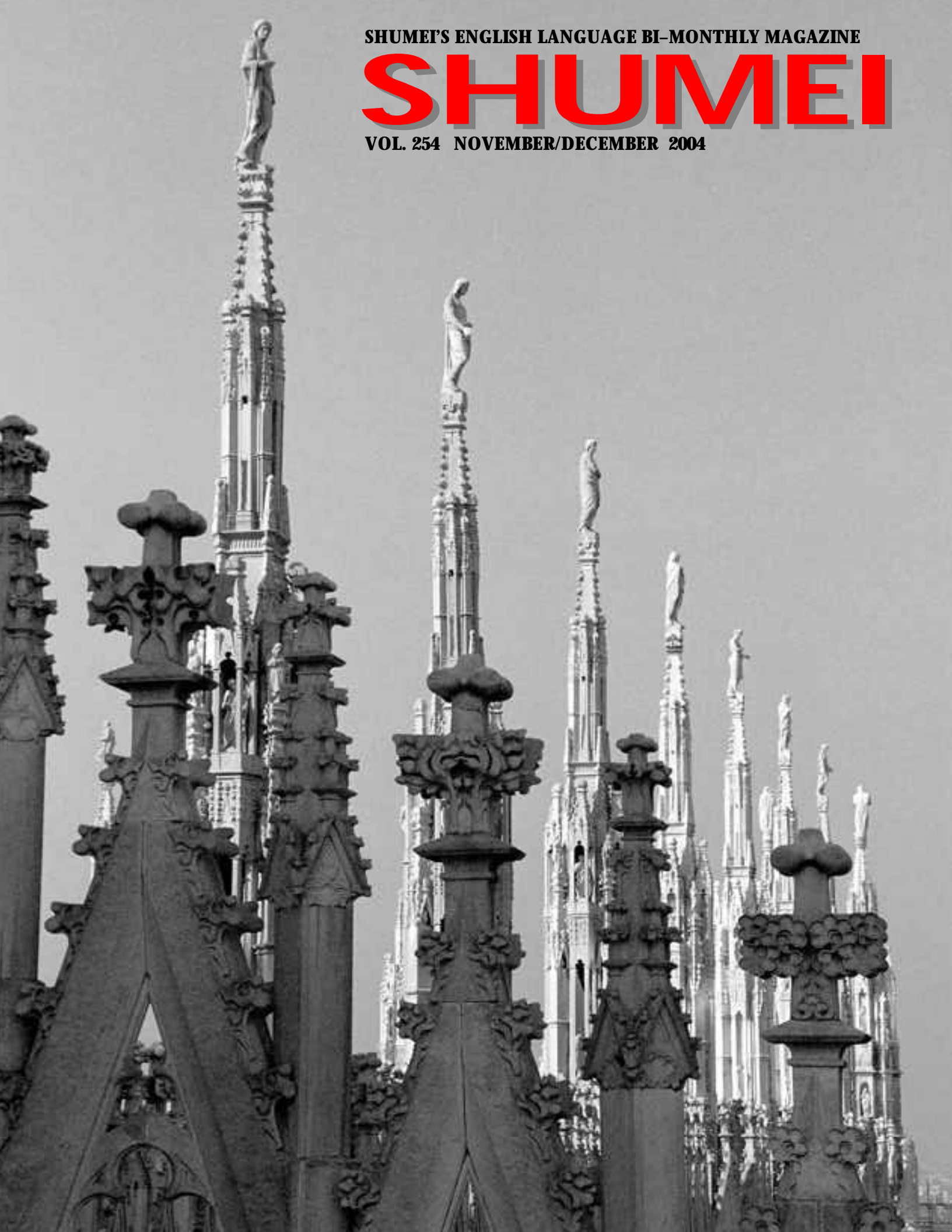


SHUMEI'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

SHUMEI

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OUR PURPOSE

Shumei America is a spiritual organization comprised of people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds who transform their lives and the lives of others by focusing Divine Light.

We provide an environment for spiritual growth by practicing Jyorei as a purification of the spirit, appreciating art and beauty, and promoting Natural Agriculture.

SHUMEI MAGAZINE is the English Language Publication of the Shumei Family for the American and International Shumei Communities. Our Purpose is to inform and inspire through the presentation and discussion of Meishusama's Philosophy, and through being a Forum for Self-expression, Art and Beauty.

ABOUT THE COVER

Don Riedel, SHUMEI Magazine's Photo Editor, captured this picture of the statue-topped spires of Milan's famed gothic cathedral shortly before Shumei Europe celebrated its seventh anniversary in that city. Articles concerning the anniversary celebration begin on page 4.

SHUMEI MAGAZINE STAFF

Editor: George Bedell

Text Editor: Gerard Rohlfing

Photo Editor: Don Riedel

Editorial Facilitator: Eugene Imai

Agricultural & Environmental Editor: Alan Imai

Cultural Events Editor: Jane Imai

UK Editor: Paul Dunne

Youth Editor: Akemi Imai

Contributors: Pauline Lomas & Patricia McNaughton

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We only accept photos and artwork by mail or special delivery and will return them only if the submission is accompanied by a self-addressed and stamped envelope. Text should be sent by e-mail to be considered. Entitle submissions "Shumei article" and send to: shumei.america@juno.com. Photos should be sent addressed to: **SHUMEI Magazine Submissions** 2430 East Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, California 91107

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SHUMEI LOCATIONS

ASIA:

Hong Kong Center

111 Chuk Yeung Road, Sai Kung HONG KONG
Phone: 852 2792 1998 Fax: 852 2295 0370
E-mail: hk567@netvigator.com

Manila Center

Shumei Philippines INC.
Unit 906- Tower B, Valencia Hills Condo
Valencia cor N. Domingo St., Quezon City,
PHILIPPINES
Phone: 63-2-721-7337 Fax: 63-2-725-2576
E-mail: shumeiph@skyinet.net

Singapore Center

Block 911, Tampines, Street 91, #08-101 SINGAPORE
520911
Phone: 65-6785-8942 Fax: 65-6260-7307

Taipei Center

No. 3 Lane 90 Tienme East Road Taipei City TAIWAN
Phone: 886 2 2872 1152 Fax: 886 2 2874 0369

EUROPE:

Adapazar Center

Karaman 1482-2-9, Adapazar Sakarya TURKEY
Phone: 90 264 221 3456 Fax: 90 264 221 3455
E-mail: ozono@superonline.com

Belfast Center

55 Lakeside Dr., Belfast
N. IRELAND BT10 ONU
Phone & Fax 01232-601184

Frankfurt Center

Thomas Mann Str. 1
60439 Frankfurt am Main GERMANY
Phone: 49 69 570 00123 Fax: 49 69 576 350
E-mail: frankfurt@shumei-eu.com

London Center

Flat 9 Northways, College Crescent
London NW3 5DR UNITED KINGDOM
Phone: 44 20 748 34667 Fax: 44 20 744 92850
E-mail: London@shumei-eu.com

Milan Center

Viale Brianza 31, 20127 Milano ITALIA
Phone: 39 02 67078964 Fax: 39 02 66719212
E-mail: Milano@Shumei-eu.com

Paris Center

189 Rue Saint Honore, 75001 Paris, FRANCE
Phone: 33 1 47.03.40.88 Fax: 33 1 47.03.33.32
E-mail: Paris@shumei-eu.com

NORTH AMERICA:

Shumei America National Center

2430 East Colorado Blvd.
Pasadena, California 91107, USA
Phone: (626) 584-8841 Fax: (626) 584-8846
E-mail: Info@Shumei.org

Hollywood Center

7406 Franklin Ave.
Los Angeles, California 90046, USA
Phone: (323) 876-5528 Fax: (323) 876-7961
Shumeihlwd@sbcglobal.net

New York Center

165 Elizabeth St., 2nd Floor
New York, New York 10012, USA
Phone: (212) 219-2737
Fax: (212) 274-1055

Pennsylvania Center

38 Conrad Rd., Alburtis, Pennsylvania 18011, USA
Phone: (610) 845-7297
E-mail: shumeipenn@aol.com

San Francisco Center

405 Serrano Dr. Apt. 6A
San Francisco, California 94123, USA
Phone & Fax: (415) 585-8548

Shumei International Institute

3000 East Dream Way Road
P.O. Box 998, Crestone, Colorado 81131, USA
Phone: 719 256-5284 Fax: 719 256-5245

Toronto Center

32 Brimorton Drive
Scarborough, ONT MIP 3Y9, CANADA
Phone & Fax: 416 438-0167

Vancouver Center

4461 Cambie Street, Vancouver B.C. V5Z 2Y8
CANADA
Phone: 1-604-875-6123 Fax: 1-604-875-6123

Victoria Center/Pender Island Farm

2235 Port Washington Road
Pender Island B.C., V0N 2M1, CANADA
Phone & Fax 250 629-6283
E-mail: v.island@telus.net

SOUTH AMERICA:

Sao Paulo Center

Av. Brig. Luis Antonio, 1930 Bloco I-121
CEP : 01318-909
Bela Vista-Sao Paulo-SP, BRAZIL
Phone and Fax 55 11 3253-7335
E-mail: shumeibr@uol.com.br

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS:

International Center and Home Offices

2 Shinen, Shigaraki-cho, Koka-shi, Shiga
529-1814 JAPAN
Phone: 81 74 882-3121 Fax: 81 74 882-2922
Misono International Department e-mail:
kokusai@shumei.or.jp

SHUMEI'S WEB SITES:

Shumei: www.shumei.org

SII Crestone Center: www.shumeicrestone.org

Shumei Taiko Ensemble: www.shumeitaiko.org

Shumei Arts Council of America: www.shumeiarts.org

You may contact us by e-mail at: info@Shumei.org

Meishusama's Teachings

Henri Bergson

(Abridged)

Iwish to write about the French philosopher, Henri Bergson. I find extremely few people who can grasp a simple truth, even when the situation seems simple enough for anyone to understand. On these occasions, I always remember the philosophy of Bergson.

When we ask why people cannot understand simple things, we find the following reason. It is that these people are not in that state which Bergson terms "the instantaneous self." Bergson's theories state that everyone, as soon as he or she attains a state of consciousness, asks questions and listens to the traditional stories, and receives the ideas of his culture. These form a rigid and inflexible bar at the center of his mind. For this reason, if he hears anything greatly different, the bar interposes itself and prevents his consciousness from taking in the new information in the form he hears it.

If the mind is made blank and receptive, however, the new ideas can be absorbed with little trouble. It seems that almost nobody notices the fixed body of ideas that is blocking their receptivity. Therefore, I ask you now to notice your own "instantaneous self."

The "instantaneous self" is a state of consciousness that reacts exactly at that instant when a person sees or hears something. It is not hampered or distorted by preconditions, prejudices, received ideas, or other obstructions; it is just like the spontaneous reaction of a child.

Bergson describes this as the philosophy of intuition. He advocates a direct, undistorted perception as the only true perception. Another important part of his philosophy is summed up in the phrase "universal flux." This means that everything in the universe is

constantly and ceaselessly moving. The world and society have changed, as have one's personal ideas and environment. Everything is in flux; nothing is at rest for even an instant.

When we apply this principle to human life, we can say that we must deal with every incident with a fresh mind. Most people, however, allow their minds to be obstructed by the attitudes of yesteryear, the ways of thought of previous decades, and they pass these on from generation to generation. As a result, they are unable to grasp precisely the realities of the present. In other words, although everything is in flux, one conceives of oneself as a pool of stasis in the river of life. This kind of person can only eat the leftovers of society. He or she is certain to find only unhappiness and misfortune.

The lack of activity and success of established religions is attributable to the same cause. The underlying force which maintains the eternal flux and transforms the universe from instant to instant is that of Kannon. Kannon is sometimes known as Ojin Maitreya, and this indicates exactly this function, for "Ojin" has the meaning "adapt oneself." In other words, Kannon is capable of infinite adaptation and transformation in terms of things temporal and physical.

How should you apply this to personal behavior? First, you should adjust your way of speaking to your listener. Speak suitably to an old man, speak gently to a lady, speak philosophically to an intellectual, and talk common sense to an ordinary man. If you do so, your listener will become interested and listen with pleasure and appreciation. If you spread the word of Shumei in this way, you will meet with unprecedented success.

Kaicho-Sensei's Shumei Europe Anniversary Address

Kaicho-Sensei (Ms Hiroko Koyama, President of Shumei) delivered this address as part of Shumei Europe's seventh anniversary celebration held in October of this year in Milan, Italy. The articles by Ken Yasuoka, Mohammad Bashar Al-hneidi, and Roberto Muttoni that follow Ms Koyama's speech also concern the European anniversary celebration.

It is a pleasure to greet so many Shumei members and friends at the anniversary celebration of Shumei Europe here in Milan.

On January 1, 1935, at the opening ceremony of the Kannon Society of Japan, Meishusama spoke of "Creating the World of Light." I would like to share with you excerpts from his speech today.

"A world of light is a world where there is no darkness, no suffering, no crime, vice, or spiritual impurity. This is the world that people have longed for since ancient times, yet we have not been able to achieve it. So naturally, it is difficult for people to place much faith in something as intangible as an ideal world. But, here, I say to you that this ideal is possible. The absolute power of Kannon, the compassionate power of God, will be more clearly revealed to the world. It is a manifesting force that will unite the elements of Daijo and Shojo, two kinds of faith and religious practice.

"Shojo is more of a self-centered faith, which is only concerned with individual interests and benefits. Those who practice this faith would show concern for their families, but they would not have serious consideration for society or humanity in general. They would pray for the health of their family or success in business.

"Daijo would address broader issues. People who practice this type of faith are constantly concerned about social problems. They tend to forget about themselves and even sacrifice their relationship with their family. Their faith, associated with a passion for working to help others, is admirable but also somewhat impractical.

"Each of these paths contains part of the truth but is insufficient in itself. An ideal type of faith is neither exclusively Daijo nor Shojo. The ideal would be to adopt the Daijo or Shojo approach according to the time and situation. Self-centered Shojo faith cannot help humanity transform spiritually. Instead, self-interest leads to friction and conflict among people and thus ultimately causes wars. Daijo faith leads people to sacrifice themselves, but this also does not end the suffering of humanity.

"Our world is made up of people from different countries. Countries are made up of cities, towns, and villages. Cities, towns, and villages are made up of families, and families are made up of individuals. In order to create a peaceful world, greater balance is needed. Both the world and the individual must be equally helped. For example, if one takes a single family as a model of the world, when the family achieves an ideal state and is supported well, others in the world are helped as well. We are all interconnected. Our deeds affect the lives of many others. Therefore we must help and elevate individuals first to elevate the state of the world.

"Two civilizations have emerged in our history, the vertically-inclined eastern and the horizontal western. Eastern civilization can be characterized as Shojo and is more accepting and inward in its thinking. Western civilization can be characterized as Daijo and is more outward looking. However, neither civilization alone is adequate.

"There is a great need to unite these two civilizations. When the lateral and vertical aspects are combined in a cross of perfect balance, the power of Kannon, the power of the light is generated and the long-awaited ideal world, a world of harmony, will be created."

Seventy years ago, Meishusama spoke about the importance of creating the ideal world with balance and harmony, bringing together East and West. Today we also speak about bridging the North and South.

In 1970, Kaishusama¹ established Shinji Shumeikai in order to realize Meishusama's vision and put it into practice. She dedicated herself tirelessly to continuing his work. Today with the creation of Misono, Kishima Island, and the Miho Museum, the model for the ideal world, a world of truth, virtue, and beauty, is complete.²

Meishusama taught us that Jyorei is the art of life, the spiritual purification that will elevate us as individuals; Natural Agriculture is a way of life that creates harmony within oneself and with one's community and environment; and the appreciation of art and beauty also helps create this inner harmony. The Miho Museum, considered a symbol of paradise, fosters an appreciation of art and beauty that will uplift the spirit and cultivate a deeper appreciation of life and all creation.

We all must work hard to contribute to world peace and achieve Meishusama's vision by practicing these activities.

Kaishusama passed away on November 29 of last year. She had dedicated her life to continuing Meishusama's work. She reached out and shared the light tirelessly. Since her passing, I have felt that we have opened a new chapter in our international efforts. I am aware of Kaishusama's guidance in this endeavor.

In May of 2002, Shumei International Institute opened in Crestone, Colorado. Our headquarters in Misono represents fire, Kishima Island represents water, and Crestone represents earth. The three elements of fire, water, and earth are now present in our work. I am very excited by the idea that our efforts for world peace will materialize in a more concrete way.

It was during the opening of the Crestone Center that Maurice Strong, Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, told us, "Meishusama's teaching is a philosophy for all human beings. It should be shared by everyone in the world." Then he suggested that we apply for Non Governmental Organization status with the United Nations. I was very surprised yet excited by the idea. I



Kaicho-Sensei (center, first row) surrounded by members and friends of Shumei Europe at the European Centers' seventh anniversary celebration in Milan, Italy.

thought to myself that this must be Meishusama's guidance.

In 1949, Meishusama participated in an interview with a politician. During the interview, he said, "It is our organization's goal to achieve world peace. The United Nations has been trying to achieve world peace through politics, and UNESCO has been trying to achieve world peace through culture and education. Both avenues are necessary and will eventually lead to a world federation. In an ideal world, both politics and religious faith are in accordance with one another."

Last June, we applied for NGO status. At that point, we were told that there were 2000 pending applications and it would take at least two or three years to process our application.

Yet this past July, with miraculous speed, we received confirmation from the United Nations that Shumei has been granted special consultative status with the United Nations. We were told numerous times that we needed to go through scrutinizing interviews, question and answer sessions, and so on during the application process. However, we did not have to go through any of that.

It was unbelievable. I thanked Meishusama and Kaishusama.

From September 19th to the 21st of this year, Shumei, as a United Nations Non Governmental Organization, sponsored the Pan Asian Youth Leadership Summit organized by UNDP in Hiroshima. It was the first UN-organized program in which Shumei has participated. Approximately 100 young leaders

from throughout Asia and other areas gathered in Hiroshima, Japan.

They exchanged ideas, resources, knowledge, and expertise to conquer challenges they face in their regions and to work together towards peace. At the end of the Summit, they all walked to the atomic bomb memorial and offered flowers to the spirits of the deceased.

Thirteen of the youths had participated in a special home stay program, which included a visit to the Miho Museum and Kishima Island. They were so touched and inspired by the experience. Many said that they felt very spiritual and peaceful. The UN staff, participants, and delegates were all impressed by the Shumei staff's hospitality. A number of the participants are now hoping to start Natural Agriculture projects in their own countries.

I felt that each of our member's faiths is surely affecting others in the international arena in a subtle way.

Meishusama said that religion is not only for a particular group of people or country. It is for the whole world.

Being an NGO affiliate of the United Nations means that we will be finding many new avenues through which to work to fulfill the vision of Meishusama for benefiting humanity. I am sure that as more people share Jyorei, the effect of elevating the spirit will slowly influence the global community.

As our work with the United Nations expands, so too our international work will grow in importance. The United Nations has plans to hold a similar youth leadership summit in Europe next summer, and it is my

hope that some people from our European Centers can participate. The work you are doing in Europe is extremely important for the fulfillment of Meishusama's vision for the world. Your commitment to Jyorei will help transform the spirit in many people here, and we hope to expand our Natural Agriculture practice in Europe in the near future. We count on each of you to practice the teachings in your daily life and in this way you will bring Light into communities throughout Europe. It is important to realize that in a subtle but very real way you are helping to uplift the world.

This is an exciting time for Shumei. With Kaishusama's blessing and our continuous effort, our world will be transformed into a world of Light where there is no suffering, no crime, vice or spiritual impurity. It will be a world of truth, virtue and beauty.

¹ Kaishusama (Mrs. Miho Koyama) was the first President and spiritual leader of Shumei.

² Misono is Shumei's International Headquarters and Spiritual Center in the Shigaraki Mountains of Shiga Prefecture, Japan. The name "Misono" means "Sacred Garden."

Kishima is an island in the Inland Sea of Japan, and one of Shumei's major Centers. A designated nature preserve, the island is used as a retreat, a summer camp for children, and for the practice of Natural Agriculture.

The Miho Museum in the Shigaraki Mountains of Japan was designed by I.M. Pei to house the Shumei Art Collection.

Toward New Steps in Europe

Ken Yasuoka (Milan)

Shumei Europe's Seventh Anniversary Celebration was held on October 23 in Milan. The celebration creates a special atmosphere in terms of being held in a different country every year, gathering lots of people from various countries and places. This year over 100 people gathered from UK, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Japan, as well as Italy.

Ms Hiroko Koyama, President of Shumei, led the Amatsunorito while facing

the Scroll of Light.¹ Afterwards, she made a stirring address to members and friends, in which she quoted excerpts from Meishusama's speech "Creating the World of Light."

After the ceremony we moved from the Milan Center to a large hall called "Mondo X," where we enjoyed a buffet of delicious Italian food prepared by the staff. Mondo X is an institute created in 1961 by the Franciscan Order of Assisi, Italy. It can be thought of as a utopia set amidst the chimneys of a factory district in Milan. Its purpose is to promote the Franciscan spirit by giving a face to God's love and realizing St. Francis' passion for humanity. I felt very moved by the place. It is immaculate and tidy, and one can feel there the tremendous spirituality to be found in the Christian spirit. The staff was very friendly and helpful. They made lunch for us and served it with great makoto.² I did hoshi in Misono from 2000 to 2003, and the Mondo X hospitality reminded me of that experience.³ Many participants at our celebration this year told us that it was a huge success. I think a great part of its success is due not only to our efforts but to the place in which most of this event was held. Thank you, Mondo X and staff!

All through the celebration we met with joy, friendship, contentment, talk, sincere smiling and sharing of many matters that reached beyond nationality, race, and social position. We all felt a very positive energy at being part of this special annual assembly.

As you might know, this year's European anniversary took place after we had the opportunity of seeing the Shumei Taiko Ensemble give concerts throughout Germany, Italy, Austria, and Spain. So, we were still caught up in the excitement of this, the Ensemble's second European tour.

Ms Izumi Shiokawa and her three daughters from Shumei's Nagoya Center in Japan presented an exhibition of Japanese calligraphy and origami. Many people came up to them to talk about their work. And vegetables grown at Shumei's Natural Agriculture farm at Steinfurt, Germany were also exhibited during this time. It was a small display but it contributed greatly to the celebration's atmosphere.

On October 24, the second day, we had a meeting to present and share a multitude of opinions and activities from each of our

European Centers over the past year. In Italy, over 3000 people received Jyorei through health expos in Milan, Catania, and Bologna. Since these events, many of those in attendance have contacted us to share their feelings about Jyorei's tremendous healing power. A number have asked for Jyorei seminars in Catania and Bologna. In the UK over thirty people of various backgrounds and nationalities, including some from America, Syria, India, Russia, and the UK, have received Ohikaris. Our Jyorei activities are expanding at a great rate.

In Steinfurt, Germany, promotion of Natural Agriculture activities is underway and the vegetables harvested there are distributed to residents of the area and a well-known restaurant. Activities at the Steinfurt farm have found expression in a local newspaper.

Through our European Centers' activities as well as our Taiko Ensemble's tour, Meishusama's philosophy has spread among many people. I believe that all these activities have the special blessing of our late spiritual leader, Kaishusama, and that through her blessings Meishusama's Light will shine with increasing strength all over Europe.

Shumei Europe has entered a new chapter with this anniversary celebration. There was a harmony of people, place, and atmosphere that was wonderful to experience. After the presentations on the 24th, Ms Koyama encouraged us by saying, "Don't be afraid of anything, Meishusama is with you!" With that in mind, we will strive to further improve our activities and achieve Meishusama's ideal throughout Europe.

¹ The Amatsunorito is an ancient chant that Shumei's founder, Meishusama (Mokichi Okada), modified for use in Shumei observances. The Amatsunorito is always chanted before exchanging Jyorei at a Center, and during all Shumei observances.

Scrolls of Light are revered scrolls usually placed above an offering table in Shumei Centers and homes. The Chinese characters depicted on them vary in significance but in all their calligraphic forms they signify Divine Light.

² Makoto is an ancient term often used by Meishusama in his teachings, such as "Makoto-Sincerity and Truth." It sums up the basic view of life in which we are all part of the whole and can live in harmony by practicing truth in thought, word, and deed.

³ Hoshi is volunteer service, sometimes described as "sacred work," that Shumei members perform on behalf of the Shumei organization.

Sincerity and Truth

Mohammad Bashar Al-hneidi (London)

Mohammad Bashar Al-hneidi is a member of Shumei's London Center. The following is a transcription of an address he delivered at Shumei Europe's anniversary celebration.

I would like to share with you what has led me to become a Shumei member. I am not going to try to sound evangelical although that is what might happen when one talks about the invisible. I hope to express the spirit of Meishusama's introductory teaching, "Sincerity and Truth."

Although I am known to many of you as Zak, my name is Mohammad Bashar Al-hneidi. I came from Damascus, Syria, and migrated to England at the beginning of 1991. I was 21 years of age and spoke very little English. I battled through the hardships of the host culture, trying to fit in. It was very hard, mainly due to the language barrier and lack of family and friends.

Although I disliked every minute of that period, I now fully understand its purpose. It taught me how to be what I am, through being what I am not. It pushed my comfort zone to limits that, at times, distorted my personality. I struggled in my job. I struggled in my relationships, and I struggled with myself.

Atheism was then a safe place for me, following my emergence from my home culture where religion dictates every thought and action. I had seen people manipulate their religion to advance their material aims and their political, economic and social endeavors. I hope what I am saying here does not imply that I, myself, was a saint. I put forth my fair share of lying, cheating, hatred, fear, anger, and jealousy. However, at the back of my mind I always knew that I wanted to live differently. I wanted to live with love.

In reaction to the religionists in my past, I began labeling everybody who said they believed in God as fearful, immature, and a cheat to themselves and others. On the other hand, I found atheism to be mentally safe but emotionally and spiritually painful.

Only recently was I able to open up and allow the invisible to take part in my life. With hindsight, I believe it started many years ago as I did metaphysical research,

reading many books on religion, philosophy, and self-help. I gained a firm belief that there is a place where every being can be happy and fulfilled. This is what I now know as "Heaven on Earth"; hence I was able to digest Meishusama's teachings as if he wrote them for me.

I was introduced to Jyorei on May 31, 2004 after attending a Mind, Body, and Spirit Expo. To put it mildly, Jyorei blew my mind. Subsequently, I have experienced happiness that I've never felt before. I suppose all the thanks go to Seiji Tagima, my spiritual brother. For two weeks after attending the workshop, I had Jyorei every day, sometimes twice a day.

I then received my ohikari on July 24, 2004 and gave Jyorei immediately after by attending what is called a "Jyorei gathering."¹ We went to people's homes and gave Jyorei to the sick as well as the so-called healthy.

Our spiritual work in London was taking on a fast pace in terms of giving Jyorei, but we were lacking the other two important aspects of Shumei's philosophy, Natural Agriculture and art. This is where I came in. After finishing Meishusama's teachings, I kept asking Yoshinori (Joe) Amanai, our Sensei, to start a Natural Agriculture project in England.²

Yoshinori, together with Katsunori Tatsuta who is now in Japan, put me in touch with Shumei's Frankfurt Center in Germany. Shortly after, I visited them and was introduced to their farm, where I spent four days. I can truly say that experience changed my life by changing my psyche.

While harvesting potatoes, aubergine, and tomatoes in Germany, I was asking myself, would I be able to do this? Would I be able to start farming? Would I be able to leave my city life for a rural one? For a while I was immersed in sheer anger and resentment for letting myself go down the rabbit hole by choosing to do farming. My personality was kicking back at me even though whatever I was getting into was very logical.

During my time in Germany I ate all Natural Agricultural produce and I cannot tell you how tasty and filling it was. I remember one day I ate nothing but three tomatoes and did not feel at all hungry. I felt energetic and happy. In fact I wanted to stay on the farm forever. The prospect of returning to London was daunting.

I returned to London very late. I had something to eat and then went to bed.

During the night I wakened throwing up and feeling very unbalanced. My stomach was doing all kinds of somersaults. After calming down I went to sleep.

The following morning I thought about it and realized that what happened the previous night was the answer to my questions. I decided to start farming in London following Natural Agricultural methods. So, together with my fellow members at the Shumei London Center, I began searching for lands to rent and farmers who were interested in Natural Agriculture. We found neither. However, we came up with the idea of starting small-renting small holds of land and then moving to bigger and bigger plots as we gathered experience. We have done exactly that. Joe Amanai, Shinya Yamamoto, Tatsuya Sugimoto, Hiroyuki Saratani, Kiyoe Ikeda and I now have small holds in London and we are all working on them. We are still at the beginning but this is exactly what we want to have in London, "A new beginning." We would welcome and encourage any kind of help that you think necessary to ensure a happy and successful future.

Since I started my spiritual path by receiving or giving Jyorei, reading books related to the subject, meditating regularly, and participating in Natural Agriculture, I have noticed that I am becoming more and more sensitive to the subtle energy that surrounds me. My Jyorei is becoming magnified; my personality is becoming more aligned with my soul.

One last thing I would like to share with you is, being a member of Shumei places responsibility on me as well as my fellow members. Hierarchy is all around us but it is only beneficial when it is implemented with love and compassion. So, I would say to all of you that I had no hesitation at all in joining Shumei because it has helped me to give me back to myself. I have worked in many institutions and realized that the major problem is when members become so enmeshed in their egos that they forget the authenticity of their institution.

A tree can only function holistically when its branches and leaves work in conjunction with its roots. So, I ask everyone to always remember the roots because without them there will be no tree. A clear example of that is the London Center where our tree is flourishing

The responsibility we have is not to put too much emphasis on ritual or cultural

habits and, in the process, forget our aims. Our responsibility is to help people in finding their magnificent potential.

So, let us work together and give people back to themselves by reminding them of the abundance of energy that surrounds them, showing them that heaven on earth is not a concept but a reality.

Everyone being members of the same family means that the light will travel to many countries and cultures. I hope that one day God will give me the strength to take the light to my home country.

¹ An ohikari is an individual Scroll of Light worn by all Shumei members when giving Jyorei.

² Sensei, a Japanese word meaning "master," is a title given those who have achieved a certain degree of skill and knowledge in a certain field of endeavour. Shumei's Senseis are authorized by Shumei to teach, counsel, give spiritual guidance, perform particular spiritual practices, and administer within the organization.

A Vision of Eden

Roberto Muttoni (Milan)

Roberto Muttoni is an exceptionally active yet relatively new member of Shumei Italy, having received his ohikari on July 25 of this year. The following is an address that he delivered at Shumei Europe's seventh Anniversary Celebration, hosted by Shumei's Milan Center.

I am deeply honored to have been chosen as a witness here in front of you, even if at the beginning I was not so sure what to say or, better, how to say something that is so difficult to speak about. It seems the best thing to do is to tell you the "truth," even if at times it may seem trivial. This is why I think it would be marvelous to listen to all of you, because I think each one of you has real and fantastic things to tell us, things that come from the heart.

I would like to start by telling you that approximately two years ago I had a dream. I dreamt of a completely green mountain, covered by thick woods. On it was a spot where people could gather to live as if they were in Paradise, the fantastic world of the mythological Eden found

in the book of Genesis. At first, I thought it was a “well-being” resort, the usual kind of beauty farm, but there was something bigger about it that I could not quite grasp.

After my dream, the first thing I did was to enter a website called Edenspace (www.edenspace.it). I am telling you this so you can believe me. In fact, I registered with this site before my encounter with Shumei. But Edenspace did not provide an ideal vision at all comparable with that in my dream.

Somewhat later, I was introduced to Shumei at a health fair in Milan. What stuck me first was exactly the sense of my heart opening. Passing by Shumei Italy's stand, I was invited to experience Jyorei. I had not even read the leaflets on the table. In short, I was taken by surprise. As soon as I sat down, I closed my eyes. I remember the peaceful face of the Japanese girl sitting in front of me. The only thing I knew was, I'd been asked to close my eyes and relax; there was no other influence to explain what happened then. After approximately a minute, I felt my eyes moving and a huge energy move inside my head. It was very strong, like a heat wave. Then, I felt something like pins and needles on the left side of my body. At the time, I was under a lot of pressure because of my job. It was a time of chronic fatigue. But after that first Jyorei session, I was full of life, had a positive attitude, and felt in my heart a strong curiosity and urge to look for God. And after I returned home, I visited Shumei's website (www.shumei.org) to get more information. Well, all this just to tell you of my surprise, seeing Misono among the site's photographs, I realized that this was the place I had dreamt about. Totally identical! This coincidence was one of the main reasons I joined Shumei. I strongly believe that in life nothing happens by chance.

Over time, as I continued receiving Jyorei at Milan's Center and widening my knowledge of Meishusama and texts from my own Roman Catholic religion, I realized that the key to everything is love. The Great Bright Light “Dai Koh Myo” is born uniquely for each person in the love of one God alone. Yes, a God that wants to give each one of us the possibility, through His Light of Love, to act rightly towards others and ourselves and to find the earthly paradise once more. Meishusama teaches us, “In the future, people have to learn to become citizens of the world.” I think this is a grand thought that we must attend to. In fact, Shumei doesn't

just have a spiritual ideal, but also a social commitment—a recognition that today more than ever is the time of God's Light, the Light of love that relates God to Meishusama and to the world's people. During his life Meishusama demonstrated this love towards others and testified that through illness his continuous process of purification brought him closer to God. He also began construction of the Heavenly Paradise, testifying to God's message that tells of a rich land ready to bear fruit for everyone, if only there is love among those who believe in Him. Love for others. Jyorei's Light is a spiritual energy that lives in love, and in a love for nature, human beings, and all that God has created for us.

For this reason, in accord with Meishusama's teachings, Shumei has made a commitment to Natural Agriculture and to the beauty of men's works. Art is the biggest representation of man's soul.

All this led me, after a few months, to want to become a member of Shumei. On July 25, 2004, I received my ohikari from Joe Sensei of the London Center. It was a beautiful experience. The ceremony, the happiness and above all the energy that I felt come upon me made me truly happy. I must thank Hideaki who has stayed by me and whom I consider a true and genuine friend, without whom probably I wouldn't have found the courage to reach my goal. And thanks to Luciano Panciroli, too, whom I deeply esteem for his courage and the professional skills he uses to promote and give his full support to Shumei Italy. And let me thank my wife too, since she has always stood by me, never opposing me on my journey.

But let us get back to my experience. I must say that nowadays my faith in God has grown. I have experienced new events. For example, in the vicinity of sanctuaries or places of worship, I can feel Divine energy, the same energy I feel more strongly when I give or receive Jyorei, or when I enter Goshinzen, a sanctuary room. I am really convinced that Jyorei is the Divine strength that comes from prayer and from our ability to give and receive. As a matter of fact, Meishusama teaches us to give Jyorei while praying and asking for Divine intercession.

I have been studying Meishusama's teachings and reading some texts on Christian spiritual exercises. I have found that there are various similarities between the two. God is the source of love. Love is resplendent light that passes through us,

making us reborn and purified. Light is born from the love existing between God, Meishusama and us. This Light is called various things: the Great Bright Light, the Holy Spirit, and others. All these similarities enabled me to become a Shumei Italy member without changing my religion, and what is more, my desire to look for God became even more enlightened.

Far from wanting members to change their faiths, we of Shumei are quite happy when people of other religions come to us as they are. Shumei wants to give harmony to all mankind, and wants to transform the whole world into one single family. We recognize all religions as our colleagues and, continuing our journey, we will join hands with others as a sign of our mutual friendship.

Finally, I would like to tell you a few experiences I have had during the past months since becoming a member of Shumei.

One day I gave Jyorei to a lady who was going through an obvious nervous breakdown. When I finished, her shy, faint smile gave me a welcome reward.

But my most beautiful experience took place during the Bologna Fair. I was on holiday in Tuscany, and on my return, I accepted an invitation to help at the fair. I managed to give Jyorei to at least fifteen or twenty people, all different from one another, some incredulous, some practicing Reiki, some just suffering. The episodes that touched me the most are three.

The first one is about an Australian girl who was outwardly smiling. We began Jyorei and I just kept on for a few minutes; often I do this because I hate looking at my watch when I feel in harmony with God and Meishusama. After about ten minutes, her head began swaying quickly from side to side, faster and faster. I was almost scared, but I went on praying. When we finished, she burst into tears, thanking me because it had been a fantastic experience. She said, “It's really God's energy.” She cried and smiled for a few minutes longer. Then I sent her to see Luciano Panciroli so she could have a talk with him and get information about the Center. Believe me, I was touched to see such a happy person.

The second experience deals with a Sicilian Reiki master who sat down and immediately told me, “Don't tell me anything about energy, because I've felt it when passing the stand.” Once he'd received Jyorei, he asked for information

about our Center and told me that the energy he had felt was “Beautiful, better still—very beautiful.” Again in this case, new contacts were born.

The last case concerns a lady who from the first sight seemed scary. She had a dark, glassy cold look, but also seemed very unyielding, as if she wanted to challenge someone. Halfway through Jyorei, which was difficult for me as I felt a force that I can only describe as negative, she ran away, saying, “Okay! Okay!” This was enough of a goodbye.

In short, each person was a case in him or herself, and each time I felt more and more able to feel the entity's suffering. In fact, after many Jyorei sessions, I began to feel ahead of time what the person receiving Jyorei would tell me after the session ended. I will end by saying that what is beautiful about Jyorei is that the more one gives the more one feels good, and the more one would like to give it. I have also tried to give Jyorei in my office to some colleagues, but in Italy if you do not say that it is a NEW AGE technique, there is a lot of suspicion. I hope that in time Shumei Italy members will grow so we are able to do a lot of Jyorei and preserve Meishu-sama's teachings.

I address my prayer to all those who together want to build “Paradise on Earth” as soon as possible.

Congratulations Joe Sensei

London Center Head Becomes Europe's First Sensei

Paul Dunne (London)

Paul Dunne received his ohikari February 20, 2002. Since then he has become one of the Shumei London Center's most active members. He coordinates and conducts Jyorei gatherings at selected, private homes and has given Jyorei thousands of times. Presently, he is compiling material for a future publication that concerns people's individual experiences of Jyorei. He became SHUMEI Magazine's UK Editor as of this issue.



Sensei Joe Amanai presents an ohikari to a new member at Shumei's London Center.

Having shied away from Sensei Eugene Imai's continuous encouragement for him to become a Sensei, Joe Amanai could no longer resist the natural force of his calling and made the decision towards the end of 2003 to take up this new challenge and go to Japan where he would undergo the required examinations. Joe felt that with the increased activities of the London Center and also Europe the time was now right for this big decision in his life.

Having appealed to many for prayers, Joe successfully passed his exams and became a Sensei on March 1, 2004. Forty-four people sat for the exams. Only 16 became Senseis, and Joe was the only one among them who is based in the west. There was a great buzz of anticipation as we all looked forward to his first group Jyorei at the Monthly Sampai on March 14.* This was an incredible experience for so many and I was among those who became emotional and shed some tears. It truly was powerful Jyorei, as they all have been since.

Joe's first major task was to initiate 14 new people into Shumei at an Ohikari ceremony on April 24, 2004. This was a momentous occasion for the London Center and for Joe. His first continental European assignment to present ohikaris to new members was in Milan on May 22. Since then he has performed other ohikari ceremonies in Berlin and Frankfurt.

In late June of this year, the landlord of the London Center served notice for us to vacate within three months. This came

as a huge shock to all of us and presented Joe with the difficult task of finding a suitable place close to our present Center and within reach of public transport. This exhaustive search lasted over six weeks and the pressure was beginning to tell on Joe. Then came a chance phone call in late September with the landlord, and Joe would lead to us to being allowed to stay in the Center until July of 2005. Joe believes this sudden change of heart by the landlord was truly miraculous.

It is well-known that one of Joe's hobbies is cooking. People who visit from Japan are amazed to see a Sensei cooking and preparing food for the staff. For those who know Joe, he is a real hands-on man. He loves to participate in the Jyorei gatherings, has made many visits to our farmland to dig and prepare for our eventual Natural Agriculture activities, and more recently he joined me on my house visits, which took in six homes and a nursing residence. He enjoyed this so much as it reminded him of his earlier days giving Jyorei in London. Since then Joe has recommended that all staff experience a night of house visits with me.

For all of us it is a real blessing that Joe took the decision to become Sensei. We are now blessed with a most radiant man who is sensitive to the needs of all of us, commands a great respect from staff, and has so much enthusiasm for his mission. He is truly a shining example to all. Joe feels that we are forming a mini-United Nations here at the London Center with new people joining from all parts of the world. One of his long-term dreams is to see a Jyorei Center opening in Africa.

Joe Sensei's next major assignment will be to travel to New York on November 19th, to witness the unveiling of a Scroll of Light, something he will have to do himself in the future. After that, who knows what is planned for this new vibrant Sensei.

* Group Jyorei is performed by a Sensei who gives Jyorei to an assembly of people. It is more usual that one Shumei member gives Jyorei to one other person.

One Who Sings of Life

An Interview with Paul Winter

As part of the Shumei Arts Council of America's participation in Pasadena's Tender Land Festival, the acclaimed saxophonist and composer, Paul Winter, performed his "Greater Symphony of the Earth." The concert took place at Shumei Hall, Pasadena, on November 14, 2004.

The Grammy-winning Mr. Winter is one of the pioneers of world music. During his solo performance at Shumei Hall he told stories of his adventures in the traditional cultures and wilderness areas of six continents. He was accompanied by recordings of various instruments and notable voices, among them those of wolves, humpbacked whales, and the song of the Amazonian rainforest's elusive bird, the uirapuru.

To learn more about the Tender Land Festival and the Shumei Arts Council of America, please visit shumeiarts.org.

George Bedell conducted this interview on November 13, 2004. This is an abridgement of the original interview. The full version can be found on Shumei's website, Shumei.org.

SHUMEI MAGAZINE: You were fortunate to come from a musical family and receive early training. If you were to have planned your musical education what would you retain of your background and what would you change?

PAUL WINTER: I have been so fortunate to be supported and nurtured by my parents. It is hard to imagine it differently or be critical of it. But in the two realms of freedom and discipline, I maybe had more of the latter as a kid—more study, more discipline.

S.M.: You would have preferred more freedom than discipline?

P.W.: Having a child of my own now and looking at that whole issue very closely, I am very much leaning toward freedom with her and her journey. Maybe that is a bit of a reaction to my own path. But more than that, it reflects what I have come to



Saxophonist/composer Paul Winter performs at Shumei Hall in Pasadena as part of the Pasadena Tender Land Festival.

any major city to have any interplay with them in terms of exposure to music. But there was great diversity of music where I grew up, marching bands, concert bands, German bands—oompah-pah music—, symphonic music, church music, and choral music. It was all part of the community and there was community participation. We are talking about the nineteen-forties. This was pre-television, before the age of monoculture, which unfortunately is where we are now. There was still diversity and local culture.

So, yes, playing those different instruments as a kid awakened in me love for different sounds.

S.M.: After leaving your hometown, what led you to your exploration of world music?

P.W.: The openness to world music was sparked by jazz. Jazz has always been world music. It is a convergence of cultures, at first a convergence of African and European traditions. Jazz always had a very welcoming spirit. The jazz that I grew up with, New Orleans, Dixieland, and Swing, all was happy music—community music. It aspired to awaken enjoyment in people. It had a spirit of welcoming the listener and also other musicians. Jazz has always been open. Latin American influences started from at least the forties with Stan Kenton's Band.² You had guitarists from Brazil and Cuban percussionists. Jazz has always said, "Hey, let's play together. Let's try something. Let's explore." To me, it was the quintessential American spirit.

S.M.: Was it the jazz you played that led you to embrace the sounds of other cultures, or was this openness something innate in your own character from the beginning?

P.W.: I am very able to answer that question because of observing my daughter as she is growing. I think it is innate. It is there in all of us. I think our natural inclination is to be open to others. I think it was in my nature as a kid. I also think that I went through the typical muting process that happens to kids when they are in school. I was drawn to music because of this muting.

My parents were serious about my sister and I, and also very serious about our

value as an adult music maker and how I like to guide other people toward discovering their own voice, their own path in life.

S.M.: Freedom first, then discipline?

P.W.: Yes, because each of us is unique and nature abhors uniformity. Nature demands diversity both among species and individuals. Each of us has a unique voice and unique path. Certainly, you want to impart your best values to your child. Yet, you also want to give that child a context in which to explore and make choices.

S.M.: Who were your childhood influences?

P.W.: When I was seven, I studied clarinet with a man who was born in Sicily. He had a very Latin spirit and also played some jazz at the same time he taught classical clarinet. I also studied with a German lady who was very kind but very strict—very classical. She was the Apollonian; he the Dionysian.¹ So, I was very lucky to have had that balance. If I were to make any slight adjustment, it would have been to have more opportunities to express myself freely.

S.M.: As a child you started playing a variety of instruments, both percussion and wind, before settling on the saxophone. Did this exposure to a wide range of sounds open you up to the wide range of musical forms you later embraced?

P.W.: When you lived in Altoona, an isolated city in the mountains of central Pennsylvania, you were not near enough to

education. Perhaps we were a little overly disciplined. And my response to that was to shut down a little. Which is a paradox because at the time I was involved in so many activities. I was gregarious, but I was not very expressive emotionally. Music was my doorway to my own song.

We need challenges in order to grow. So, to fashion the perfect childhood and upbringing for somebody is a bit of a disservice. It might be too protective. A life path is rarely easy for people. For me, my shyness in terms of my own expression was one of the reasons I was drawn so deeply to music. I had a deeper need. Had I not had that need, I might have gone on to law school.

S.M: Law school.

P.W: Yes, that is where I was headed.

S.M: You mention finding one's own voice. Do you remember a particular moment when you discovered your own voice?

P.W: I think that finding it is a lifelong quest. I am continually seeking it. As a child I played music publicly and was applauded. I was precocious. I had a reaction to the adulation, the praise, a reaction to being special. I really did not want to be special. I wanted to be just like the other kids. I wanted very much to belong, to be part of something. And so by twelve, having played for five years around all the fraternal organizations, Rotary Clubs, and church auxiliaries in our community, I did not want to go on a solo path. I wanted to be part of a band. That is when I formed my first band. That motivation has stayed with me all these years. So, I am still doing what I aspired to do when I was twelve.

S.M: You not only play music with other fine musicians from a variety of traditions, but your collaborators in sound have come to include non-human species as well, such as wolves and whales. How did this start?

P.W: In May of 1968 I went to a lecture by Roger Payne at Rockefeller University, who had recorded humpbacked whales. It blew me away. The beauty of their voices—the soulfulness of their voices struck me in a similar way that the saxophone playing of Charlie Parker had moved me.³ There was something about the soul of life, the soul of the earth, the soul of the world in it. Whales sing these long, complicated patterns that sometimes last thirty minutes

and have as much variety as in a Beethoven symphony. Then, they repeat the same thirty-minute complex sequence verbatim, again and again. All the whales are singing this same complex song. Then, a year goes by and the whales are all back singing yet another song. This revelation was staggering. Here is a creature that has been for so long regarded as a big mound of blubber, using an intelligence that is every bit as extraordinary as human intelligence.

I began to realize that we are just one of fifteen or twenty million species. It did not take very long to realize that we are the youngest of all those twenty—the very youngest. The whales and the wolves have been around for, say, thirty million years. We have been here with our big brain for maybe three hundred thousand. That is just one one-hundredth as long as those other creatures. I realized that not only do these creatures have intelligences that are admirable in terms of our own values, in terms of the way they interact with each other, in terms of the beauty of the way they are, but also that they long, long ago learned how to live in harmony with their environment—or else they would not be here. And we haven't even begun to learn that.

And these twenty million species that are here now are probably some tiny fraction of the thousands of millions of experiments that nature brought forth. And the other 99.999% are gone because they did not find out how to be in balance with nature.

And, where are we going to be in the next few years?

S.M: Perhaps another one of nature's failed experiments—melancholy thought. But how do you think that the music you play in any way will help our species come into balance with our environment before it is too late?

P.W: In my experience, the motivation for making music has been to make it for its own sake—the love of music in its beauty and variety of voices, and also as a means of celebrating voices, creatures, and people. It is an expression of love, an attempt to translate that feeling you have while being in the Grand Canyon, that exalted feeling I have when visiting the Miho Museum or when first seeing Misono. It is like bringing home a photograph of a place that you have been to show your family. You hope to convey something, to say I was here and had this experience.

You cannot go into it thinking you have a chance to turn the world around. It is not like a political campaign. You do it because you dream of hearing this certain combination of sounds. Anything that happens beyond that is a bonus.

From another point of view, I feel optimistic that music has a potential for making a tremendous contribution to our wayward species. I think that the aural faculty is possibly one doorway to our salvation. Most of us are mainly visual. The aural is just a soundtrack that accompanies what we are watching. But the aural, left to its own devices, when hearing it with one's eyes closed, is an amazing gateway to a realm of experience that might give an integrated experience of life. To me, it is close to what Zen people call the “beginner's mind.”

Aural perception does not get filtered through what I call the “supreme cortex,” which is always judging, grinding things out, and constantly wanting something new. Even the most beautiful Sierra Club photograph is looked at once and then put on the shelf. But if there is a piece of music that has moved you, you can listen to it hundreds of times and still be moved.

S.M: You mention places, such as the Grand Canyon and the Miho Museum, whose character you would like to express in music. You have played in some notable acoustical spaces. Do these spaces influence your choice of sounds or do you look for spaces that fit the music you intend to make?

P.W: It is like singing in the shower. You look for a space in which your own voice will be enhanced. Certainly, when I went to the Grand Canyon I needed to project in that space. I found the side canyon where I had great acoustics, where I recorded about half the “Canyon” album. I brought only horns that would project, a French horn and a sax. In that vast side canyon, with its eight hundred foot, curving wall that formed a cul-de-sac, with its seven-second reverberation, I imagined instruments that had a much longer, more intense projection.

S.M: What are your thoughts on spirituality and your music?

P.W: Certainly, the root of the word “spirit” means breath and therefore life.⁴ So, the words “spirit,” “music,” and “life” are synonymous in a way. I have come to aspire to what I call “music-life.” That is not only

sound—play when you call it music, but also sounds resonating as part of daily life, much in the way birds make sound—music in the morning and evening—all birds, not just the ones that took lessons and were told they have talent. One of my favorite quotes is “The woods would be very silent if the only birds that sang were those that sing the best.”

Again, looking at my daughter these last few years, her spontaneity, her expression and the joy in her movements, to me she is an absolutely musical being. Not always harmonious, she can be a rascal, but even in that she is being authentically herself. She is being much more honest in her whole range of expression than I was at her age. I was being a little bit more contained.

Also, I think a lot about the musical relations among people, people filled with kindness and enthusiasm. I like the root of the word “enthusiasm” as well. It comes from “entheos,” which means the god within. I would say that expression is the true reward of living—giving out, not taking in.

Giving out is much more gratifying than taking in, consuming. To me what is most evident in the developed world is off-track; it is taking, it is power. We have leaders and cultural icons who are pathologically addicted to power. And it is as severe an addiction as cocaine or alcohol. It is a disease.

Art should express our true nature. Not necessarily the special abilities of superior people. There is too much praise of famous people in our culture. I feel that there is innate expression in every human being and therefore there is art in every human being. I do not set art or the artist apart from other people.

If everyone has an innate ability for self-expression, a unique voice, maybe it is different from anything experienced by anyone else. There are millions of mothers who are great saints and artists in their devotion to their children. The goal we ought to encourage, not only our children but also all people—people who perhaps are in the later stages of their journey and perhaps never allowed themselves to think that they had the license to do what they most love—is to find their own voice. Joseph Campbell calls this “finding your bliss.”⁵ That is a thrilling prospect. I want every kid to be told that.

I do not want them growing up aspiring to be the next Bruce Springsteen or the next Frank Sinatra or the next Jascha Heifetz. What I tell people in my music workshops is not to aspire to be like those people, because their life path is already covered and nobody can do what you do as well as you. Also, I think that the world needs your song. It does not want you to be somebody else.

In Bali many people participate in artistic expression. And I would think that is the direction in which everyone ought to be going, rather than being among the thousands of media sheep flocking to halls to worship at the altar of famous stars, the ones who have all the “talent.”

I am interested in the expression of the humble and the shy. I want to encourage them. We are not all going to be clarinet players or piano players or dancers. But there is a huge array of possibilities in life. And somewhere in that vast diversity of opportunities for adventure and expression there is something for everyone.

S.M: You mentioned your young daughter throughout this interview, yet you never have given her name or her age.

P.W: She is eight and her name is Keetu.

S.M: Keetu.

P.W: It is a Mohegan Indian name. The whole name is Keetuhomanet. It means, “one who sings of life.”

¹ Apollonian and Dionysian, two approaches to life and art, taking their names from the Hellenic gods Apollo and Dionysus, roughly related to Meishusama's concept of Shojo and Daijo.

² Stan Kenton (1911–1979), innovative bandleader who revolutionized jazz, especially the big band sound during the 1940s through the 1970s, by introducing progressive arrangements, harmonies, and rhythms, and integrating jazz with other genres.

³ Charlie “Bird” Parker (1920–1955), legendary alto-saxophonist from Kansas City. One of the most talented and influential jazz musicians of his era.

⁴ The English word “spirit,” from which the word “spiritual” derives, comes from the Latin “spiritus,” which means “breath.” As the sound of the human voice comes from breath, and the voice is humankind's first musical instrument, it can be said that music comes from the spirit.

⁵ Joseph Campbell (1904–1987), highly influential American anthropologist, mythologist and writer.

Agricultural Research

From a Natural Agriculture Perspective

Diana Jerkins, Professor, Cal Poly Pomona

In 1998, a research project was begun at California State University Pomona to compare the growing of vegetables using Natural Agriculture (NA), Organic (O), and Conventional (C) methods. This was an unusual research project because each of these methods had specific practices and philosophies that make comparisons difficult, especially the Natural Agriculture methods, since each farmer grows crops based on his or her local conditions and understanding of Meishusama's teachings. This uniqueness made this project different than traditional scientific research projects. This would also be the first site outside of Japan where Natural Agriculture would be compared to western conventional agriculture and American organic farming practices. Several questions were to be investigated:

1. Could Natural Agriculture be used to grow crops in a much different environment than that of Japan? Southern California is very hot and dry and has different soil types than found in Japan.
2. Was there a difference in the production of crops using these different methods?
3. How would visitors respond to this different way of growing crops?

A research staff was formed including a Natural Agriculture advisor. Because the environment can change each year and cause crops to grow differently, a five-year plan was designed to see what changes happen in the way crops produce and other changes to the fields that might occur. In 2004, the project completed the fifth and final growing season. This report is a brief summary of the findings of this research project. More detailed reports are being prepared for publication in scientific journals.

Each system applied specific practices that were appropriate to the philosophy of that system. These different practices

applied the use of fertilizers, composting, weeding, watering, and insect controls according to each system's requirements. Five summer and five winter crops were selected, including traditional American and Japanese vegetables. These were: green beans, corn, tomatoes, eggplants, soybeans, spinach, broccoli, potatoes, Chinese cabbage, and onions.

What type of information was collected? The weight of the harvest or yield was recorded, the number of plants harvested, and the weight of the plants. Soil and plant nutrient levels and insect conditions were also measured. All of this information was analyzed for statistical analysis to compare the different systems' productivity and growth.

If we consider the different information that has been collected, general conclusions can be made about the comparison between NA, O and C systems. Comparing all summer crops for each system as to growing characteristics, yield, plant size, yield per plant, and number of plants, overall performance rates the O system performed the best, followed by the C, NA, and NAS (no summer crop rotations) systems. Comparing specific crops, these results indicate that all of the NA summer crops were better than or equal to the NAS crops; two of the NA crops were better or equal to the C crops; and one of the five summer NA crops was better or equal to the O crops. This follows the relationship of the overall system rankings. Most successful NA summer crops were green beans, soybeans, and tomatoes.

In the winter crops, the rankings changed with C having the best performance followed by NA, O, and NAW (no rotation of winter crops). Comparing the individual crops, the overall results indicate that again all of the winter NA crops were better or equal to the NAW crops. Two of the NA crops were better or equal to the C and O crops. We can see that winter NA and NAW crops grew better than the summer NA and NAS crops. Most successful NA winter crops were onions, potatoes, and broccoli.

Production was different in different years. The amount produced varied from year to year for all crops and all systems. For example, C and O green beans grew a large crop every other year. NA produced at the same level for each year. Therefore,

averaged for all five years, the NA system produced similar to the C system.

NA can produce similar to O and C systems if allowed to use different practices. NA plants grow slower than O or C plants and are generally smaller in size. Therefore, NA crops will need longer time in the field to be most productive. Greater planting densities will also allow production to be similar to the O and C systems depending on the crop. For example, NA and NAS soybean yield was better than O and C because more soybeans were planted in the NA fields. Each plant produced the same as the O and C plants, but more plants allowed greater overall yield.

A major constraint in the NA system was competition from weeds. This is a primary reason for decrease in production. For example, the smaller size and lower number of eggplants in the NAS system could be related to the amount of weeds in those plots. We need to better understand the balance necessary between increasing the food crop and allowing other plants to have a place in the growing area to balance the natural system.

Testing the soil's physical and nutrient conditions can give us an indication as to whether the methods being used are beneficial or detrimental to the soil. This is especially important to the O and NA farmers, since there is the belief that their philosophy and practices should improve the conditions of the soil and therefore support healthier plants. Over a five-year period, very little change was observed in any of the systems in the soil conditions. Nutrient levels were similar for all the systems. NA nitrogen level, for example, continued to be maintained at the same level over time. This is an interesting finding, since no fertilizers or amendments were added, which would be expected to deplete the soil nutrient levels. Phosphorus averaged at the same level over time and potassium increased slightly for all systems. Organic matter levels, which indicate the health of the soil, showed little change over time.

The quality of the crops varied between the systems. Measurement of nutrient levels in the plant tissue and fruit of tomatoes showed that nutrient levels were slightly higher in the NA tomato fruit for ten of the twelve elements tested and six of the thirteen elements tested from the leaf tissue. NA levels were greater than

NAS levels. This may be considered unexpected, since nutrients were supplied in the other systems with the addition of fertilizers or compost, but not in the NA system. Consumer taste tests also confirmed that the O and NA tomatoes were sweeter in flavor than the C tomatoes. From a scientific perspective, we would wonder how the NA plants were able to obtain sufficient nutrients from the soil over time even though additional fertilizers were not added.

Total number of insects for the five years was intermediate for the NA system compared to the other systems. Specific kinds of insects increased and decreased over the research period depending on the year. The NA had the highest level of good or beneficial insects. This would indicate that the NA fields were changing over time in attracting more beneficial insects and creating a better balance due to the increase of different types of insects.

Based on these overall conclusions and observations of Natural Agriculture farmers, several recommendations may be suggested for practicing Natural Agriculture.

- Crops can be grown in different climates and in different countries using Natural Agriculture methods.
- To be more profitable, Natural Agriculture farms need to have a direct link between farmers and consumers because Natural Agriculture is very labor intensive and needs the assistance of consumers in such activities as planting and harvesting.
- To provide for sufficient levels of production to support consumer needs, fields need to be planted at a higher density than with other agricultural methods.
- Farmers must educate their customers to the potential additional value of the quality of Natural Agriculture foods and the preservation of the environment through Natural Agriculture practices to improve the quality of life for all species.
- Farmers should meet with other Natural Agriculture farmers to compare ideas and learn about Natural Agriculture practices

Continued on-farm research and learning about the many ways to practice Natural Agriculture can continue through farmers observing each other's farms and experimenting in their own fields to observe changes over time. Because of

the unusual design of this project, which observed many different types of production practices, this has been a unique experience for the University and for introducing Natural Agriculture to the community. In addition to doing scientific research, the project also was a demonstration to students who used the site for class projects, and to faculty and visitors to the campus who observed and participated in Natural Agriculture farming. The best reward came from allowing sampling and comparing of produce from the three systems. The research staff at Cal Poly Pomona hopes that the results from these five years will provide additional interest and information about Natural Agriculture. We wish to thank Shumei for allowing us the opportunity to conduct this research program and learn more about the application of the Natural Agriculture philosophy.

Journeying with the Divine Light

A Personal Testimony of Physical Healing and Spiritual Health

Gil Reoma (Baguio City, Philippines)

My encounter with Shumei started with a friendship way back in 1997. I was then working with a private voluntary organization based in Quezon City that dealt with social and environmental issues. One of my jobs in this organization was to organize a social exposure program for both Filipinos and non-Filipinos.

One of those who participated in this social immersion activity that I coordinated was Neil Fukui, a Japanese gentleman who had just arrived from Tokyo and was looking for ways to integrate himself into the social environment of Metro Manila. The social exposure program fit his personal need to know our Filipino ways of living and the social environment in which he wanted to put down roots. It was also an appropriate opportunity for him to learn both Tagalog and English. I accompanied Neil to a rather congested community in Quezon City where my organization at the

Gil Reoma (far right) and his wife, Cynthia Abalos-Reoma (far left), with their family. Their eldest daughter, Maristella Agnes, who is mentioned in Gil Reoma's article, sits front and center.



time, Green Forum Philippines, was coordinating a program on Solid Waste Management. Here Neil stayed for three days with one of the families I contacted as hosts for the social exposure program. Those three days turned out to be the beginning of a sustained friendship between Neil and the community members. Those important three days were also the starting period of my friendship with Neil and his Japanese companions, and eventually my getting to know about Shumei.

Not long after his social exposure, Neil and I started to exchange calls and visits. At that time, Shumei had no Center yet. Neil was staying in the house of Mrs. Ruby Orendain in Quezon City. Ruby, I later learned, was a long-standing member of Shumei. My friendship with Neil developed further when we started tagging along with each other. I brought him to my friends and introduced him to my family. At that time, I was renting a house in a middle-class subdivision in Bulacan. He, in turn, brought me to the homes where he and his Japanese friends were staying in Quezon City.

In many instances when we were together, Neil tried his best to explain to me what Shumei is all about. Because he was not yet so eloquent in both English and Tagalog, I just had to content myself with knowing more about the Shumei philosophy, doctrines, and practices through the literature that Neil shared with me.

I learned about the three mandates of Shumei: teaching people how to develop their inner beauty through the appreciation of art and beauty, promoting health among people through Natural Agriculture, and promoting the health of peo-

ple through the purification technique called Jyorei.

Jyorei and Me

I must confess that I did not yet fully understand what Jyorei really meant, and it was simply because I trusted Neil so much as a friend that I agreed to receive Jyorei from him. I trusted that he, as a friend, would not give me something that would damage me physically or spiritually. The deepest reason, however, why I agreed to receive Jyorei through Neil was that, at that time, I badly needed physical healing.

When I met Neil in 1997, I was silently suffering from severe back pains. Earlier on, I had visited a medical doctor and had my back X-rayed. The diagnosis was that I had a mild case of scoliosis. Since I was with NGO workers who were strongly promoting alternative modalities of healing, I underwent a regimen of acupuncture healing. The back pain would stop shortly after the acupuncture sessions. But after some time it would recur.

When Neil shared with me his stories about Jyorei and its physical and spiritual effects on the recipient, I gathered all the trusting and humble attitudes that I had and asked Neil to do Jyorei for me. My Jyorei sessions with Neil took place almost on a daily basis. We would have Jyorei sessions in my office, and on many occasions I received Jyorei in public places like McDonald's and Jollibee. Now I can testify that after about one

month of such healing sessions, I was completely healed of my severe back pains. Ever since I have been completely free of pain!

Jyorei and My Child

My friendship with Neil expanded into friendship with the other members of Shumei. Neil and the others also became friends of my wife and children. In 1999, Shumei Philippines inaugurated its first Center, located at Barangay Del Monte in Quezon City. It was in this Center that I participated, for the first time and then regularly, in the Monthly Sampai of the organization. Monthly Sampai is a regular celebration of fellowship. The fellowship is defined by chanting, offering, and sharing from the deep thoughts and golden teachings of Mokichi Okada, now revered as Meishusama (Master of Light). The times that I participated in the Monthly Sampai were always opportunities for me to gain more insights into the mind, heart, and soul inherent in Shumei members.

There were times that I brought my wife and children to Shumei gatherings, which included the celebration of Christmas. At Christmas 2000, another blessing came to me through Jyorei.

Some weeks before December of 2000, my oldest child, Agnes, was complaining of pains in her right leg. During those days of pain, some marks of blood clots would manifest in her leg. We were told that it was because of a certain vitamin deficiency. We gave the child the prescribed vitamins. But the pain kept returning.

Towards the end of that Shumei Christmas celebration in 2000, I asked Tommy, one of Neil's pioneering companions, to give Jyorei to my daughter. Tommy spent some thirty minutes giving my child Jyorei. Afterward, we went home feeling warmhearted because of the Christmas greetings we had exchanged with the other members and friends of Shumei. Early the next morning, Agnes was the first among my children to wake up. She jumped up out of bed, happy to find that her leg pains were gone. Ever since then, Agnes has been free of those leg pains.

Jyorei and My Wife

Health and healing are continuing needs for everyone. After my problems and

then my oldest child's, it was my wife's turn to be a recipient of God's healing energy.

In the middle of 2001, my wife, Cynthia, contracted pneumonia while serving as a teacher of an improvised nursery school in a remote coastal barangay in Infanta, Quezon. The disease weakened her so much that she had to be confined in a hospital in Metro Manila. We were on the brink of giving her up to God because apparently her body was already surrendering to the attacks of the disease. That was when I asked Neil, Tommy and the other Shumei friends to visit her at the hospital and appeal for God's healing power. Tommy did Jyorei for my wife for almost two full hours! While he was doing this, I was also fervently praying for God's intervention. Now, with full faith and sincere gratitude, I can affirm that Cynthia recovered that very night. A few days later, the doctors advised us that we could bring her home to complete her recovery.

Continuing the Journey with Love and Light

It's obvious that Neil and his companions are determined to carve a place for Shumei in our country. After the celebration of the First Anniversary of the Shumei Center in 2000, the first Shumei "board" was formed. Neil, Tommy, and Mrs. Ruby Orendain were at the center of this group. We met once a week at the house of Mrs. Orendain. The meeting was always focused on how to improve the Center and its services, how to inform and educate the members, and how to increase the number of people visiting the Center and getting to know the Shumei spirituality.

My modest contribution in this regard was to connect Shumei with the NGOs with whom I was working. First, I was able to introduce Shumei to the network of NGOs that have been celebrating "Earth Day" every April 22 at the Quezon Memorial Park in Quezon City. Since 2000, Shumei has been giving more variety to the activities of Earth Day celebrations with its Shumei chanting, Jyorei, and lectures about Art and Beauty and Natural Agriculture. Then, I introduced Shumei to the Peacemakers' Circle (a group that advocates Peace by "drinking" from the Well of Spiritual Traditions of different Faiths and Persuasions and initiating dialogue with

one another). No doubt, the Shumei philosophy and teachings have also enriched this circle of peacemaking persons. At the moment, Cathy Oida, a member of Shumei, serves as Board Member of the Peacemakers' Circle.

In May this year, Neil and his wife, Sarah, visited me in Baguio. My family and I moved to Baguio in 2001 because, by God's grace, I have been employed there by St. Louis University as professor of Religious Studies. From May to July this year, Neil and Sarah have already visited me three times. So far, I have introduced them to many different sorts of people representing different walks of life: from mainstream medical doctors to Pranic Healing practitioners to businessmen and artists to Catholic priests and Muslim Imam. Where we are leading from here, I have no clear idea at the moment. What is clear to me now is that my journey with Shumei continues. And with all the blessings that I have received from God through our friends from Shumei, I am definitely excited with this continuing journey. I am ready for more delightful surprises from Meishusama.

Gil Reoma can be reached via e-mail:
gil_reoma@yahoo.com

Thank You, Mary Ann Scott

This current issue marks a milestone for SHUMEI Magazine. This is the first issue to be published in nearly a decade without the watchful and caring guidance of Mary Ann Scott. Mary Ann stepped aside as our dynamic Editor-in-chief with the September/October issue of this year.

With her departure, we hope to continue publishing this periodical with all the diligence, integrity, and love that she brought to our enterprise. We learned much by working with her and hope that future issues of SHUMEI Magazine will meet her demanding standards. Yet, we are assured and comforted by the thought that we are sure to hear from Mary Ann if the standards she has set for us ever falter.

Mary Ann, you are greatly missed.

From the Miho Museum Collection



Pair of Tokkuri Jars with Weeping Cherry Decorations

Japan. Momoyama period (16th century A.D.). Height 22.1 cm. Mouth diameter 5.7 cm. Torso diameter 12.1 cm.

This pair of relatively small tokkuri jars have uniquely Momoyama characteristics, which can be seen by the swelling form of their torsos and the spread of the rims of the mouths at their extreme edges.

Coated overall in black lacquer, each jar is decorated with a single weeping cherry tree. Typical Kodaiji makie lacquer techniques are employed, such as the superb use of gold hiramakie with an

enashiji patterning and the hari-gaki lacquer drawing technique, in which a needle was used to draw lines in wet makie surfaces. A close look at this pair of vessels reveals that one shows an old cherry tree, while the other shows a young tree.

The use of this kind of elaborate decorative embellishment on eating and drinking utensils began in the Momoyama period and reflects the open atmosphere of Japan's pre-modern era.

SHUMEI AMERICA

2430 East Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91107