

SHUMEI'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

SHUMEI

VOL. 262 MARCH/APRIL 2006

SHUMEI IN THE PHILIPPINES

Articles by Kaicho-Sensei and
Gabriel Mondragon

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Arthur Kikuchi

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 teachings, and through being a forum for self-expression, art and beauty.

ABOUT THE COVER: This bright face of a young Filipina embodies all of Shumei's hopes for the future of the Philippines: that it be happy, healthy, and brilliant. The photo was taken by SHUMEI Magazine's photo editor Don Riedel while in the Philippines. Mr. Riedel noted that, "The sincerity and friendliness demonstrated by Shumei's Manila members and friends on my recent trip truly reflects Meishusama's teaching that we are all citizens of the world."

Articles about Shumei's involvement in the Philippines begin on page 4.

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It is strongly recommended that our guidelines be read before a submission is made. Please contact the e-mail address below for a copy of the guidelines.

Text should be sent by e-mail. Entitle submission "Shumei Article" and send to bedellgeorge@covad.net. Photos should be sent addressed to: SHUMEI Magazine Submissions, 2430 East Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, California 91107

SUBSCRIPTIONS: To cover postage and handling, subscriptions to SHUMEI Magazine can be obtained for \$20.00 per year (\$25.00 if outside the U.S.). Please make your check payable to SSA. Send your request with your name and address to: SHUMEI Magazine Subscriptions Dept., 2430 East Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, California 91107.

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Information concerning Jyorei: www.jyorei.org

If you have questions about the Shumei organization, please contact us by e-mail at: info@Shumei.org

Excerpts from Meishusama's Writings on Kannon's Way

Judge Not

This is the second of six excerpts from the "Kannon's Way" teachings by Shumei's founder that are scheduled to be published in Shumei Magazine during 2006. The text of the present teaching "Judge Not" is a new translation. SHUMEI Magazine's staff is deeply honored to present this writing to our English language readers for the first time.

The following text is extracted from five separate dialogues that took place between Meishusama and his students. These sessions took place and were transcribed at various times during 1948, 1949, and 1950. Each of the questioners might be a different individual but all of them were likely to be prominent students of Meishusama.

The usual formal order of each of Meishusama's insights given below in this compilation is that of a quote drawn from Meishusama's answer, followed by the question that prompted the answer and then, finally, the complete answer itself.

"Before passing judgment upon others, judge yourself and deeply reflect upon yourself. When the urge to judge others arises, stop and deeply reflect upon yourself. It is completely wrong to call others either good or evil." [Transcribed from a meeting that took place on October 18, 1948.]

Question: What is the relationship between judgment and salvation?

Meishusama: There is a close connection between them. It is because of Divine judgment that there is good and evil. Judgment decides who is saved and who is not. God judges everything constantly. However, this constant judgment is different from that which will occur during the Great Transformation,¹ when judgment will befall the entire human race. To make it through this critical transition you must deeply examine your soul and give yourself completely to God.

One of the largest problems we humans face is that of people judging each other. It is completely wrong to be judgmental of others. When people judge others as either good or evil, God simultaneously judges them. Before passing judgment upon others, judge yourself and deeply reflect upon yourself. When the urge to judge others arises, stop and deeply reflect upon yourself. It is completely wrong to call others either good or evil. As to salvation, I will make it perfectly clear that humans, by themselves, cannot bring about true spiritual salvation. God does this. Humans are His mere instruments. Yet, to be God's mere instrument is truly a great blessing.

"The Divine drama would be incomplete if the cast were made up solely of thoroughly good characters." [Transcribed from a meeting that took place in July 1949 and was published on July 30, 1949.]

Question: There is a tendency among some members to be captivated by the power of evil. Even some very outstanding members are caught up in this. Could you explain a spiritual principle that leaders of our organization should follow concerning this?

¹ Meishusama envisioned the present age as the "age of night," which would give way to an ideal era called "the age of day." This global transformation would involve great catastrophes but would end with an enlightened and peaceful world.

Meishusama: I think that for the heart of a human being to judge another as being under the influence of evil spirits or as being attracted by evil spirits is wrong. To accuse someone of being possessed by evil is mistaken because we humans do not have the ability to correctly judge others. Only God can judge us. From this perspective, a person who makes these accusations disrespects God's sanctity.

You probably know the phrase from the Bible: "Judge not, lest you be judged." This exactly echoes the matter and goes to its heart. I must make it clear that no ordinary human being can tell who is or who is not possessed by evil. And as for anyone who accuses others of being possessed by evil, I would say that this person might likely also be possessed, as well.

In line with this, you must refrain from calling others evil. It is fundamentally impossible for you to judge others correctly with your limited abilities. Judgmental people are especially inclined to accuse those whom they do not like of being possessed by evil. Surprisingly, one who is labeled as being evil sometimes does exceptionally good deeds, while one who seems good often turns out to do the opposite. But God is never deceived by appearances and is always able to penetrate a person's heart.

God needs a variety of people to play out His divine drama, just as with dramas penned by humans. The Divine drama would be incomplete if the cast were made up solely of thoroughly good characters.

It is important to distinguish evil spirits from the people possessed by them. In addition, there are hundreds of thousands, if not millions of evil spirits. Besides that, there are the two primal deities of yin and yang who exist under God.

[Meishusama takes three cigarettes and arranges them in a triangle to make his point.]

The two bottom points of this triangle represent these two opposite deities. One is the deity of good and the other is the deity of evil. Placing the two deities like this, God at the upper point proceeds with His cosmic drama here on earth. There is no good or evil in God himself. In God's eyes, good is indistinguishable from evil. This idea is also expressed in the familiar saying, "Good and evil are as one." From this perspective, we humans cannot grasp the true nature of good or of evil.

However, depending on the particular situations in the cosmic drama, a certain spiritual force needs to manifest itself from the unknowable nature of God so as to encourage good and thwart evil.

Kannon² never punishes evil and constantly rescues all beings, indiscriminately.

Yet, another aspect of God's spiritual force, Kunitokotachi-no-mikoto,³ never fails to punish wrongdoers. This aspect transforms into Enma⁴ to judge deceased souls in the spiritual world. This is the vertical side of God's power.

² Kannon is the Buddhist deity of compassion from whom, in December 1926, Shumei's founder, Mokichi Okada, known as Meishusama, received his divine revelation concerning the future of the world. Kannon is that aspect of divinity that is all loving and all merciful.

³ "Kunitokotachi-no-mikoto" literally means "the deity who eternally stands on earth." According to ancient Japanese myth, this god was the first deity to appear at the time of the creation of heaven and earth.

Kannon is the horizontal side of God's power. It is never good to swing too far to either side. We need to harmoniously incorporate both of these principles into our lives according to the needs of situations and people.

“People are unable to evaluate the good and the evil or the right and the wrong of a person's character.” [Transcribed from a meeting that took place on February 8, 1949.]

Let us suppose that the total measure of a person's goodness can be calculated in ten points and that seven of these points are scored as good and the remaining three as bad. In situations such as this, people would generally tend to regard this person as bad because they focus only on that person's negative aspects. I see this tendency particularly among those with strong Shojo⁵ faith. However, God never fails to determine a person's virtue accurately, because subtracting three negative points from seven positive points leaves four positive points left over. We humans

⁴ Enma is the lord of death and final judgment. Similar to the Hindu deity Yama. Kunitokotachi and Enma are two aspects of one spiritual force representing the vertical, or Shojo, element of God. Kunitokotachi works in the physical world, whereas Enma works in the spiritual world. Together, they symbolize the Shojo principle of the universe.

do the contrary. People are unable to evaluate the good and the evil or the right and the wrong of a person's character.

“To judge another is the height of arrogance.” [Transcribed from a meeting that took place on May 28, 1948.]

Question: How should we care for a member when they stumble in their understanding of an important point?

Meishusama: It's best to wait for the right moment. No one can make another person understand. To try to awaken another to higher spiritual values is arrogant. To judge another is the height of arrogance. In such instances, it is enough just to say what is necessary to help that person and leave the results to him or her. When someone is slow to understand, it is important to be patient and wait. While waiting, you can pray for guidance to help that person reach understanding

⁵ Shojo is a principle of Buddhist origins adapted by Mokichi Okada, known to Shumei members as “Meishusama.” Shojo is vertical in nature and represents a spiritual expression that is principled, restrictive, narrow, and disciplined. It is conservative, introspective, and appeals to the emotions. Its complement is the principle of daijo. Meishusama taught that both horizontal daijo and vertical shojo must be in harmony for a spiritual pursuit to succeed. The symbol of such harmony is the cross.

more quickly. But ultimately, people who try too hard to make another understand do not have right understanding themselves. I have many students. None understand my teachings perfectly. There are many things I want them to understand, but I hold my tongue since the time is not yet ripe.

[The following was transcribed from a meeting that took place on March 3, 1950.]

Question: Is not saying, “Why did you do that?” a form of blaming?

Meishusama: I don't see it as blaming. “Why did you do that?” is just a question.

[Laughter]

Question: Is it appropriate to induce caution by saying, “Do it this way, the other way is wrong?”

Meishusama: It's fine to give cautionary words to people after an initial attempt to help them realize a mistake. Practically speaking, instead of saying, “You shouldn't do that,” it might be more effective to say, “This might be a better way,” or “Maybe you should do it this way.” Forbidding is never good. A scolding voice creates fear, and restraining people with fear is very foolish.

Shumei In The Philippines:

The Manila Center Celebrates Its Seventh Anniversary

Promptly at 9:00 on the morning of January 22, 2006, Shumei's president, Kaicho-Sensei, Ms Hiroko Koyama, led the chanting of the Amatsunorito¹ at a small Sampai in Shumei's Manila Center in Quezon City, The Philippines. It was the first event of a day set aside to celebrate the seventh anniversary of our organization's presence in The Philippines. It was at this sampai that two new Shumei members received their ohikaris² from Kaicho-Sensei.

¹ The Amatsunorito is an ancient chant that Shumei's founder, Mokichi Okada, modified for use in Shumei observances. It is chanted before exchanging Jyorei and during Shumei observances.

² An ohikari is a sacred emblem worn by Shumei members when giving Jyorei. It consists of a small parchment bearing calligraphy by Meishusama and worn about the neck.

After the small sampai at the Manila Center, the formal Anniversary Sampai was held at the Manila's Legend Hotel, where over 150 guests attended. It was at this event that Ms Koyama delivered her address, “The Three Arts: The Creation of an Ideal World,” which follows on page five. During the celebration guests viewed a video highlighting Shumei's activities in the Filipino nation during 2005. Because of the growth in membership and the acceleration of our activities during the last year, 2005 appears to be a benchmark for Shumei Philippines. Two members, Carol Naval and Solita Almaden, shared their gratitude with the guests. Please see page nine for Carol and Solita's messages. The entertainment included a troupe of teenage artists performing traditional Filipino dances

and songs, and a concert by the performance artist and environmental activist, Chin-Chin Gutierrez. Later in the afternoon, Ms Koyama met for private greetings and conversation with all the members and friends who attended.

The following day, Kaicho-Sensei visited the Natural Agriculture³ fields of Iba Zambales, where she was shown the abundance and variety of crops that had been planted during the previous year. These fields had been planned and laid out by the renowned Natural Agriculture horticulturalist, Reiji Murota. Later that day, she attended a welcome party at the

³ Natural Agriculture is a spiritually based horticultural practice created by Shumei's founder, Mokichi Okada. The essence of the Natural Agriculture method is having reverence for nature and cultivating the food crops in a manner close to the way plants thrive in a natural setting.

Total Rural Development Movement (TRD) headquarters. For more information about Shumei's relationship with TRD, please see Gabriel P. Mondragon's article on page seven.

It is our hope that Shumei will be able to continue its progress on behalf of a healthier environment both in the Philippines and throughout the world.

The Three Arts: The Creation of an Ideal World

Kaicho-Sensei (Ms Hiroko Koyama)

The following is an address given at the Shumei Philippines' Seventh Anniversary Celebration on January 22, 2006.

Good morning, Shumei members and friends. It is wonderful to be with you again at the anniversary celebration of our Philippine Center. This is my second visit to the Philippines and I am very happy to be back here today.

Shumei's vision is to create a world without sickness, poverty, and conflict. Meishusama told us, "It is often said that scholarship and human knowledge have progressed, but as this kind of progress is merely physical and material, the associated spiritual progress is very slow. The only cultural advance that is valuable takes

Young dancers perform traditional Filipino dances for guests attending the Shumei Philippines' anniversary celebrations. Photo by Tamao Koyama.

place when physical progress and spiritual progress come about harmoniously and in accord. It is because cultural progress is seen as being only one of these two essential parts that the achievement of an apparently fine cultural level is not accompanied by human happiness. Or, to put it another way, stress on material progress impedes spiritual progress. It is for this reason that I am urging the human race towards a great awakening through the flowering of a spiritual culture."

Our mission is to create this ideal world through three main activities Meishusama taught us: Jyorei, Natural Agriculture, and appreciation of art and beauty.

Jyorei Is the Art of Life

Meishusama said, "In Shumei, Jyorei is usually given with the purpose of healing sickness, but really it has significance far greater than that. This significance is, in short, that Jyorei is a means of creating happiness. As I have explained before, the thing that we term, all too simply, "sickness" is in fact a process of physical purification caused ultimately by the need to dispel the clouds accumulated on the human soul. And not only sickness but all kinds of human suffering stem from the same underlying cause. Thus poverty and war too are signs that a process of purification is taking place, and so it is obvious that there is no essential difference between sickness, poverty and conflict.

"The most important of all these ways of purifying the body and soul is, of course, sickness, as it is connected with the basic problems of life and death. If we can only find a way of curing sickness, then it is inevitable that cures for poverty and strife will follow. And if these are achieved, then humanity will have found the basic conditions for happiness. Conversely, the fundamental cause of unhappiness is spiritual clouding. And there is a sure means of clearing this clouding of the spirit; there is



Kaicho-Sensei (far left) socializes with members and friends of Shumei Philippines. Photo by Tamao Koyama.

Jyorei. So you can see that Jyorei is not just a means of healing the sickness of individuals."

Natural Agriculture Is the Art of Food Cultivation.

From early on, Meishusama developed a system of food production called Natural Agriculture. It advocates a natural growing process without the use of fertilizers and agricultural chemicals.

Meishusama told us, "If you continue practicing Natural Agriculture over a period of time you will have no need to spend money on fertilizers. Insect damage will be reduced to a fraction of what it was and damage from wind and water will be reduced to less than half of the former level. It is indeed a very marvelous agricultural method.

"One thing worthy of special mention is the delicious flavor of the crops grown by Natural Agriculture."

Meishusama said that natural soil has all the components needed to produce healthy vegetables to nourish and sustain humans and animals. Soil left to its own devices is full of nutrition. However, people have mistakenly assumed that fertilizer provided nourishment



Kaicho-Sensei delivers her address on Shumei's three arts at Shumei Philippines' anniversary celebration at Manila's Legend Hotel. Photo by Tamao Koyama.

to crops, and have used all sorts of man-made fertilizers. The result has been that the essential nature of the soil has been almost destroyed. So in order to strengthen the soil itself, you must avoid mixing anything impure into the soil, you must use only natural compost. You must purify the soil as much as possible.

Meishusama said, "The essential effect of compost is to keep the soil moist, to warm it and to keep it from becoming compacted. Thus the soil absorbs heat and water and does not become hard.

"The fundamental principle of Natural Agriculture is an overriding respect and concern for Nature. Nature can teach us everything. All the manifestations of Nature in the world are created and formed from the three basic spirits, fire, water and earth—the spirits of the sun, the moon and the earth. You will find the truth of this the more you examine the many wonders of Nature. Crops of course are no exception. Therefore if they get enough sunlight, if their water supply is adequate, and if the soil they grow in is pure, there will be enough crops to satisfy the need of humanity, and more besides."

It is also very important to use home-saved seed from naturally grown crops.

Even when you have completely changed to the natural agricultural method, chemical fertilizer and animal manure, which are sure to remain to a greater or lesser extent in the soil and seeds, will continue to have a great influence. Therefore, in order to insure the purity of the seed, it is essential not to add any fertilizer to the soil.

As you all know, we have started a Natural Agriculture farm in Iba, with the support of the Total Rural Development Movement of Iba, Zambales (TRD), two years ago. This model farm, called Shumei Farm and created by Mr. Murota, has received many visitors, including representatives and officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and farmers who are interested in sustainable farming. We have also received many school children as part of the school curriculum of exploring nature. These children helped harvest rice and experienced Natural Agriculture farming for the first time. We hope this type of educational curriculum will increase so that more children can experience a lifestyle in harmony with nature, and farming that advocates respect for nature. I am happy to hear that Mrs. Gina Lopez is promoting the idea of "school farm" throughout the Philippines, which will help make known the Natural Agriculture principle to the next generation. I am also happy to learn that representatives of TRD are very much interested in promoting Natural Agriculture.

The Art of Beauty

The ultimate aim of God is the creation of an ideal world of truth, virtue, and beauty.

Meishusama said, "People should, within their own means, make their clothes, food and dwellings as beautiful as possible, in accordance with God's purpose. Above all, beauty is not just for one's own personal satisfaction; it brings pleasure to others and, in this sense, is itself an act of virtue....

"The case of individuals is essentially the same. Men should try to give a pleasant impression to others and keep up a level of personal beauty, which they think suitable. And women should make efforts to make themselves beautiful and charming....

"Again, the interior of your house should come in for the same care. Pay special attention to clearing spider webs from the ceiling, clean the living room and arrange the furniture and fittings neatly and in an orderly way. If you do so it will be pleasant not only for your family but for anyone who visits, you and feelings of respect will rise unbidden in their hearts so that the social value of the host and hostess of the house will grow....

"As you can see, we have a great need to nurture and promote a keen sense of beauty. Both on a smaller personal scale and on a larger and national one, this idea will extend a good influence beyond what most people could imagine. And not only that, for a beautiful environment is sure to have the effect of beautifying the hearts of the people who live in it, and crime and evil behavior are sure to decrease. This phenomenon alone will be one of the means of furthering the realization of Paradise on Earth."

Our commitment to foster an appreciation of the arts led to the creation of the Miho Museum in 1997. The museum, a modern day Shangri-la, was designed by I.M. Pei, a world-renowned architect, and is built into the

mountainside in full harmony with the splendor of its natural surroundings. True to Kaishusama's spirit, the museum symbolizes a harmony between the environment, architecture, and art objects that uplift the soul.

I would like to share with you a story that took place at Miho Museum six years ago.

Ms Impy Pilapile, a well-known glass artist and journalist in the Philippines (as most of you know), went to visit the Miho Museum. She wanted to introduce Mr. I.M. Pei's architectural masterpiece in a Philippine newspaper.

On the day she visited the museum she was not feeling well. But she did not cancel her appointment with us, and came to the museum. When she reached the entrance of the museum, she almost collapsed from a great pain. I was there to greet her at the entrance so I quickly offered to give her Jyorei. She received Jyorei and a few minutes later her pain started to disappear. She explained to me that her experience of Jyorei was very powerful, and she felt strong heat as if someone was making fire right behind me as I gave her Jyorei. She also described to me an orange light that she saw. After receiving Jyorei, she no longer was suffering from any pain and was able to proceed with the interview. We both enjoyed our dialogue, and developed a friendship.

Since then she visits our Philippine Center whenever her schedule permits, to receive Jyorei.

I am pleased to know that people from all over the world come to the Miho Museum to experience the world of beauty. It is a place where peoples' souls are uplifted. I hope more people have an opportunity to visit the Miho Museum.

One of the most critical needs today is to communicate and build relationships with people of other races, creeds, and cultures. Perhaps this is the most important factor for a peaceful future.

As Meishusama said, "Even in religion, sects and schools have until now been attempting to spread their own colors in competitions with each other, ignoring the progress made by society, and in complete disregard of the will of God. Instead of this, will they not advance with us hand in hand, recognizing the deepest plans of God, which lie at the heart of the progress of civilization, and helping in the creation of the ideal world that will soon spring into existence."

Shumei is committed to creating this ideal world. I hope all of you will share Jyorei and try to incorporate Natural Agriculture philosophy and appreciation of beauty into your daily lives to make the ideal world a reality.



The day after the anniversary celebration in Manila, Kaicho-Sensei and visiting Shumei members survey the Natural Agriculture fields of Iba Zambales.

Leading on the Path Towards a Sustainable Future

Gabriel P. Mondragon (The Philippines)

Gabriel Mondragon is the Executive Director of the Total Rural Development Movement (TRD) of the Philippines. He lives in Iba, Zambales, where he is in charge of the Natural Agriculture project. His story concerns the partnership that developed between Shumei and TRD.

Japan and the Philippines have established a historical milestone in the practice of Natural Agriculture to rehabilitate Mother Earth, bring cultural and spiritual development, and to eradicate world poverty. Shumei Natural Agriculture Network (SNN) of Japan, together with Total Rural Development Movement of the Philippines, established a model natural farm in Iba, Zambales, the Philippines, for the whole world to replicate. This natural farm will produce food for the body, the mind, and the soul. Natural Agriculture is a sure way to bring humanity closer to nature and to God.

The Beginning

It started with a simple, chance encounter in April 2003 in Quezon City Circle. It was Earth Day, and many earth-loving citizens of the world were gathered there to celebrate. Shumei Philippines was a participant, and Mr. Dennis Teves, TRD Institute Vice President, met and talked with some Shumei members. On that day, the idea of a possible partnership between Shumei and TRD was born. This chance meeting led to a visit of Shumei staff members to Iba to see about a partnership devoted to Natural Agriculture in Zambales. First came a meeting with Sona Roy, TRD's President, and other TRD officers. Nine months later, after several more visits and meetings, there emerged a memorandum of agreement between the TRD Institute of Cooperatives and the Shumei SNN.

Nearly three years since, the idea has grown to become a very impressive reality—the Shumei Farm at TRD Village in Iba, Zambales. The Shumei Farm demonstrates a self-reliant model of Natural Agriculture for a typical family owning about one hectare of farmland. It has become a major attraction for hundreds of farmers who come there to learn about Natural Agriculture.



Kaicho-Sensei, Shumei officials, and members of Total Rural Development at the headquarters of TRD in Iba, Zambales. Kaicho-Sensei is at center.

Building a Natural Agriculture Model Farm

The Shumei Natural Agriculture Farm at TRD Village is a monumental success, not only as a model of the Natural Agriculture method, but as a triumph of architectural design. Much of the credit goes to Mr. Reiji Murota,¹ who works with Shumei and has promoted Natural Agriculture for the last three decades. Mr. Murota not only designed the farm, but through his hands-on leadership, made all this possible in barely two years.

While designing the farm, Mr. Murota met several times with TRD officers and staff. He also made many observations of local conditions—the crops, the climate, and even the grasses that grew in the area. By doing this and interacting with local people, he could discover the farm's potential. For food crops there would be rice, corn, cassava, sweet potato, banana, papaya, and pineapple. There also would be assorted vegetables such as eggplant, tomato, okra, mungo, kangkong, and beans. Forest trees would serve as windbreak and shade providers. Fertilizing or pest controlling trees included acacia aurie, acacia mangium, ipil-ipil, kakawate, neem tree, and aguho. Fruit trees included cashew, mango, and coconut. Within an area of about one hectare, the Shumei Farm successfully demonstrated that a self-sufficient and self-reliant farming system can provide year-round food and income for the family.

¹ Reiji Murota is one of Natural Agriculture's foremost horticulturists. Under his guidance, Kishima Island has become a major research facility for this form of sustainable agriculture, and he has become a mentor to all who practice Natural Agriculture throughout the world. He has practiced horticulture for more than forty years.

Beauty is one essential feature of the Shumei Farm. The design was not only scientific, with all plants and crops having a symbiotic relationship with one another, but at the same time genuinely artistic. The ornamental plants include gumamela, bougainvillea, peanut creeper, and santan—all giving varied colors that lighten up and beautify the farm.

All the plants and crops grown in Shumei Farm share the same ultimate purpose—to continuously improve the earth as they improve the welfare of the people caring for it. Their leaves and branches are a continuous source of organic matter that enriches the soil. They provide fresh air, food, shelter, and medicine for people. They block harsh sunlight, break the strong winds, and drive away insects or divert their attention. All together, they create a microclimate that is cooler than the terrain outside the farm so that plants within the farm are better protected and given the optimal conditions in which to grow and develop. They all create a beautiful place for people and birds, for bees and for butterflies.

What the World Wants: A Working Model

For Filipino farmers who have been exposed to chemical fertilizers and pesticides for more than thirty years, the addiction to, and belief in, the myth of chemicals cannot be overemphasized. At present, most farmers are clinging to the myth that only chemical fertilizers will give them better harvests. Without practical experience and a model to prove that doing away with chemicals is pos-

sible, shifting to Natural Agriculture would be very difficult.

The Shumei Natural Agriculture Model Farm answers this need. It is living proof that farming with and by nature alone does work. Farmers from all over the province and from the neighboring provinces of Pangasinan, La Union, and Ilocos admire what they saw at this model farm.

Not only farmers are attracted to the Shumei Farm. Elementary and high school students from Temple Hills International School were among those who benefited from their experience at the model farm. The students were trained how to make natural compost. They also planted crops such as pineapples, malunggay, herbs, bananas, and papayas. They also harvested rice.

The experience was not only educational—it also was an eye opener for these rich urban kids who knew nothing about soil, plants, or how plants interact with nature. It was a lot of fun for them as they discovered nature and found their own symbiotic relationship with other living creatures.

Strengthening the Partnership

During the last two years we saw the partnership of SNN and TRD further developed. Several groups of Shumei members from all over Japan came to visit the Farm, experience living with Filipino families, and help to rehabilitate our denuded forests. Shumei youth under the Social Explorer Program came in two groups. They conducted Jyorei with TRD staff and cooperative members. On two occasions, Social Explorers participated in a home-stay program with TRD staff. They also had contact and bonding with students from the Ramon Magsaysay Technological University (RMTU) who major in Tourism and Hotel and Restaurant Management.

Twice I was invited by Shumei to visit Japan. In August of 2004, I attended the Pan-Asia Pacific Youth Leadership Seminar as a Shumei representative from the Philippines. I had an opportunity to visit the Miho Museum, meet with Shumei Hiroshima members, work with Shumei staff during the conference, and stay in a Shumei member's home. It was a very enlightening exposure to Japan, particularly Hiroshima as a historical site and Shumei as a spiritual organization.

My second visit to Japan took place in November 2005. I was to speak during a Symposium on Sustainable Agriculture held in Tokyo. Hosted by SNN Tokyo, the

Symposium tackled comparative experiences in pursuing sustainable agriculture in developing countries like the Philippines and Zambia, as well as developed countries like Japan, the U.S. and the United Kingdom. On three days of my trip I was able to learn about Shumei Natural Agriculture's philosophy and practice at Misono. My second trip to Japan was significant in deepening my understanding of Natural Agriculture.

The SNN has given valuable support to the Shumei project in Iba, Zambales. For two consecutive years, Shumei president Ms Hiroko Koyama together with other Shumei leaders has toured the Shumei Farm and met with TRD officers and staff.

Her visits signify Shumei's full support of this globally relevant project. Ms Koyama was very satisfied with the produce of the farm, especially ripe papayas, which she likes very much.

In all, continuing exchanges of experiences and views, training, and visits will fine-tune TRD and Shumei's partnership. It will become stronger, more productive, and more effective in promoting Natural Agriculture.

Replicating the Model

With the Natural Agriculture Model Farm now established, it is important that we start sharing the experience and knowledge with as many farmers as possible. Already several visiting farmers have expressed their willingness to adopt Natural Agriculture. To promote Natural Agriculture more systematically, TRD has formed the Institute for Natural Agriculture with Shumei. This will be a continuing education program for TRD cooperative members.

To encourage the adoption of Natural Agriculture, TRD and Shumei signed a Memorandum of Agreement for a one-year period. A full-time staff was hired to undertake the project's activities. Initially, four farmers were chosen to undergo a gradual shift to Natural Agriculture. However, a massive promotion of Natural Agriculture is underway, in which more than one thousand farmer-members of the TRD Cooperative will be involved. In the immediate future, about ten percent of the membership is targeted to partially adopt Natural Agriculture.



Student volunteers take a break from planting trees on the mountain sides of Iba, Zambales, one of TRD's many projects to restore the natural environment. Photo by Gabriel Mondragon.

Natural Agriculture in the Uplands

Zambales is predominantly hilly and mountainous. Only eight percent of its land is suitable for agriculture. The mountains themselves are denuded and badly in need of rehabilitation as a result of logging and yearly forest fires.

Shumei's respect and love of nature coincides with TRD's own commitment to rehabilitate Mother Nature by planting trees and developing agro-forestry areas. It was a natural, logical step for Shumei and TRD to become partners in upland development.

TRD has a pilot upland development project, a 100-hectare agro-forestry farm in the mountains of Botolan, Zambales. The major strategy to rehabilitate the upland is to utilize whatever water is available. Spring water has to be conserved and distributed for food production, maintenance of planted trees, and fire protection. Construction of spring boxes and a series of earth or concrete ponds for water impounding, all connected by pipes to the springs, are critical to the success of this upland development project. Shumei Hiroshima realized this critical need and gave financial support to the project. Currently, one spring box has been constructed, and also one concrete pond and two earth ponds to collect and distribute water to about five hectares being tilled by four families. Shumei Tokyo, with Ms Koyama's help, raised funds last November during the Symposium on Sustainable Agriculture in Tokyo. These funds will be used for the construction of additional ponds to expand the coverage of the water impounding and distribution system. With increasing support from Shumei

members, the project's potential is enhanced, and greater benefit will come to upland families, mostly Aeta people displaced by the Mt. Pinatubo eruption in 1991.

The upland development project is another model of Natural Agriculture's progress. No chemicals are used, only natural methods. Leaves and grasses are made into compost that continuously enriches the soil, making it more suitable for plant growth. To prevent loss of nutrients in the soil, burning is not practiced. Diversified cropping is employed to ensure stability of the system by preventing pest and diseases caused by planting only one crop.

The ultimate challenge for present and future generations is how to optimize the use of dwindling and increasingly degraded resources. Developing successful agro-forestry projects offers the best solutions. TRD is very happy to find in Shumei a sincere partner in this endeavor—to develop about 100,000 hectares of forestlands in Zambales.

Rising from a Disaster to Rebuild a Paradise

The eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991 destroyed almost half of our agricultural lands, closed the biggest mining companies, which employed thousands in Zambales, and forced the U.S. military bases in Subic to pull out ahead of their scheduled closure. All of these events brought the worst economic dislocation in the history of Zambales and Central Luzon—a crisis approximating the impact of the bombing of Hiroshima. However, as with all disasters, an opportunity was created. The volcanic eruption was nature's reminder that we are living in an unnatural way.

For several decades before that, our economy was fueled by the U.S. occupation forces, which as their helpful purpose faded were also giving rise to prostitution and other social maladies in the name of “rest and recreation” for American soldiers. The exploitative mining by the big mining companies also had to end, not only because of the depressed world prices of metals, but because abuse of Mother Earth has to stop. We needed to be awakened by a volcanic eruption to turn ourselves back to nature and all its bounties. The seas are for the fish and all marine life, not for warships and weapon-carrying submarines. The mountains are for trees, for birds, plants, and wildlife, not for cranes and bulldozers.

The volcanic eruption brought us together—NGOs, community organizations, and other civic-minded people came together to help the victims. Later, we united to create the Total Rural Development to eradicate poverty. The TRD Movement was born out of the need to provide immediate relief to the victims. Now,

it is committed to attain food security and job security for all. We are re-engineering the local economy towards a sustainable and cooperative-based self-reliant economy. Together with Shumei, we are working to chart a new sustainable future. And the way to this sustainable future is through a spiritual renewal—redefining our relationship with nature, redefining our relationship with plants and animals, redefining our relationship with one another.

Shumei and the TRD Movement have started a journey to build a paradise on earth, one that is founded on universal love—love of Mother Earth, love for all the creatures—for plants and animals, large and small. Love lights our path to eternal happiness. Through natural farming we are demonstrating to the world that we truly love and care for Mother Earth.

Shumei reminded us that farming is not only an economic activity. It also is an expression of art and a spiritual exercise that strengthens our bond with earth and our Divine Creator.

God gave us paradise but we have let it crumble and dissolve away. Now Shumei and the TRD Movement are united in a divinely inspired movement to rebuild a true paradise on earth.

Messages of Gratitude from the Philippines

Carol Naval and Solita Almaden delivered the following addresses at the Shumei Philippines seventh anniversary celebration at Manila's Legend Hotel on January 22, 2006.

Carol became a member of Shumei on August 7, 2005. She lives in Quezon City, Metro Manila in The Philippines. She has two sons and one granddaughter.

A Caregiver's Story

Carol Naval (Philippines)

After finishing school, I worked for most of my adult life, progressing from ordinary jobs to more complex and better paying ones. Suddenly, from out of the blue, I felt that I had enough, and wanted freedom from the pressures and demands of the daily grind, freedom to do whatever I wanted in my own time, whenever and wherever—to catch up with my reading, which I love with a passion, to go out with the friends and relatives I neglected for so long, and to visit

interesting places, not in connection with work, but at my leisure.

However, barely a month after I took early retirement, traces of boredom were starting to set in. I wanted a quiet life, but not so quiet that I felt that I was just waiting to breathe my last.

Then my mother had a stroke that left her bedridden, and she required a lot of care. Was God reading my thoughts? Did he see this as a way of giving me something else to do? Changing geriatric diapers certainly was not my idea of fun. Neither did I want my mother to be sick. However, being the only immediate relative around, I rose to the challenge and became my mother's caregiver.

The task had indeed become a challenge. My mother had become a very difficult patient. Her inability to do things she used to do by herself, let alone getting out of bed by herself, led her to suffer depression, and she was in a foul mood most of the time. This took a toll on my own disposition, and my blood pressure rose abnormally high. I remember telling my sister, who was living in the United States at the time, that I might die before our mother.

Then one day in February 2005, while taking a much-needed rest, I switched on the TV. The program that was on was Straight Talk and the guests being interviewed were a Japanese fellow and a Filipino lady. They were later introduced as Sensei Eugene Imai and Ms Ruby Orendain.¹

I was so fascinated by their talk about their organization being dedicated to creating paradise, an ideal world free of sickness and poverty, in harmony with all humanity—all of which was to be achieved through the appreciation of art and beauty, the practice of Natural Agriculture, and Jyorei.

I suppose that the reason I felt their words so strongly was because of the gravity of my own situation, and also because of the fact that, while I never intruded into others' affairs or caused any trouble for anyone, I also did not go out of my way to help other people unless they were related to me.

Thereafter, I started attending Shumei's seminars, and my mother started receiving Jyorei. To my amazement, my mother's attitude started to change. She became more accepting of her situation, became more pleasant and cooperative with regard to taking her medication and receiving care. She started to have the desire to be well again. She eventually was able to get out of her bed by herself, walk with the aid of a walker to the

¹ For a transcript of Sensei Eugene Imai and Ruby Orendain's interview on “Straight Talk,” please see page 4 of the May/June 2005, issue 257 of SHUMEI Magazine. Back issues of our magazine can be downloaded from Shumei's website, www.Shumei.org.

dining room for her meals, and brush her teeth and take a bath in the bathroom, although with my assistance. She became at peace with herself.

In August of 2005, I received my ohikari and started giving Jyorei to my family and friends. I myself have gained a feeling of serenity and happiness that seems to come from nowhere. I have learned to let go and no longer worry about things, and have become more patient and tolerant of others. I had the perception that we chart our own destiny. I now believe that God has a plan for everyone and that things happen in His good time and not before.

Even the effects on some of the neighbors to whom I administered Jyorei are incredible, but I prefer not to go into too many details. One started crying after receiving Jyorei and then, seeing the cause of her suffering as being offences committed against other people, vowed to correct them.

I must say that I did not make a mistake when I decided to join Shumei. More than just a truly great experience, it has been an opportunity for greater enlightenment and personal growth.

Four Reasons to Believe

Solita Almaden (Philippines)

It is my honor and privilege to be part of this group who render spiritual service to our fellow men. It not only really helps individuals who have problems just concerning themselves, but also helps others as well.

The first time I learned about Jyorei, I was very curious about how it would be done. What would the feeling of receiving Jyorei be like, and how would it affect our emotions and our physical and spiritual condition? I realized the answer to my questions when Jyorei was given to me. I felt as if my useless thoughts, negative beliefs and intentions, and my unhealthy condition were washed away from me. Everything in me turned out to be normal just by someone standing in front of me and earnestly praying. I like Jyorei because I believe that, step-by-step, it helps us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. To verify how Jyorei has helped me, I would like to share four of my experiences with Jyorei with you.

First. Because of misunderstandings, my family had problems with some of our relatives. I could not help but believe that we were right and they were wrong. So, our relationship with them was not very good, and it was awkward to deal with them. When Shinya and Azenith² got married, Shinya administered the healing prayer to almost all our relatives. When I was giving Jyorei, I felt a different feeling for those relatives with whom we were not on good terms. I felt bad about continuing to

treat them as enemies. It was an insult on my part to be so willing to be healed myself, but still not able to have a good relationship with them. They also have always wanted Shinya to give them Jyorei. I realized that Jyorei has made it possible for us to rebuild a relationship with our relatives, and this happened because they also believe that Jyorei will make them better. We are now happy, and deal normally with one another. I am so thankful that Shinya started to practice Jyorei, because if she had not, I am sure that my family would not have reconnected with our relatives.

Second. In 2005, I had an accident. I was riding a motorcycle with a cousin when I fell off and was dragged along the street. I had bruises all over my body. It was very painful and I really suffered. When I got home, I remembered that I had some holy water³ that Shinya had given to me. So, I drank a little because I thought it would help my body rid itself of the pain and stress. I was relieved of the pain after a day. I believe the holy water helped me, because I was not able to take a medicine at that time.

Third. When my mother was fifty years old, she had high blood pressure. The medicine she took did not cure her. Her condition got worse, to the point that half of her body lost its strength. We were very worried about her condition, and spent a lot of money for her medicine. When Shinya came to our family and introduced us to Jyorei and gave us holy water, my mother agreed to receive Jyorei and drink the water, hoping that it would help her. Slowly, we saw my mother's condition improve. She became active and attentive to the people around her. Her health has improved, and I think this positive change is due to Jyorei. Our family is so thankful for this blessing. Today my mother has a happy face.

Fourth. My late father worked hard to feed us. He was a laborer. But he smoked cigars, which caused his sickness. He did not talk about his health, and we always assumed that he was feeling good and that his condi-



Carol Naval (left) and Solita Almaden. Photo by Tamao Koyama.

tion was normal. When we discovered that he was ill, we had him admitted to a hospital. There the doctor told us that his condition was critical and that he probably had just a month or so to remain with us. We were shocked. Our father had cancer, and had only a few remaining days. It was a trial for us because we had to struggle to stay alive without him, to feed ourselves, and to solve whatever problems we had. We would no longer have our father to call upon to help us and be our inspiration.

Despite what happened, I did not lose hope. I worked for fifteen years in Mitsumi and strove to handle the responsibilities that my father left to me. It was a challenge, but I still believed that God would not abandon us. I suffered from headaches and stomachaches. I was so glad when Shinya and Yoshijuki Tominaga, a Shumei staff member in Cebu, came our way to give us Jyorei. Whenever Shinya or Yoshiyuki is available to administer Jyorei, it really helps us. My family is now happier because of Jyorei.

Now, the life we share with our family and relatives is becoming closer. We are bonded together as we help one another. Even though we cannot avoid some problems, God is still there to heal and help us.

I know that Jyorei has done good things to me and my family, to my relatives and my friends: the good health we have, the happy family we have, and the peace, and the good people we have around us. These blessings are due to Jyorei, and above all, to our Almighty Father, to His Divine Mercy and Providence. I am thankful to Him and will always keep faith and believe in Him. Jyorei is an instrument for us to keep close to Him, and I'm so glad that Jyorei exists.

2 Shinya and Azenith are Shumei members. Shinya is Japanese and Azenith is a Filipina. Although they reside in Japan, where they are members of Shumei's Nishinomiya branch, both have strong ties with and lend support to their Filipino relatives. Solita Almaden comes from the same hometown as Azenith.

3 This is water drawn from a fountain at Misono called "Kumo Ga Taki," a cascade designed by the sculptor Masayuki Nagare. The spring from which it flows is considered sacred and, like the waters of Lourdes and Bethesda, it is thought to have many healing properties.

Food for Thought and Action

Let us Restore the Unity of Our Spirit and Nature

Arthur Kikuchi (Canada)

Arthur Kikuchi is a writer and horticulturalist who operates, with his wife and two children, Shumei's Natural Agriculture farm on Pender Island in British Columbia, Canada. He also heads the Victoria Shumei Center.

In British Columbia, Canada, many aboriginal peoples used to live in harmony with nature. They handed down their cumulative knowledge of the land, plants, and animals through generations in order to lead a sustainable way of living over millennia. For native peoples, there is no separation between nature and culture, and thus, over 120 plants are said to have been used for specific cultural applications, such as for food, other materials, and for traditional ritual or ceremony. As a certain expression of their land ethics, they always show their respect toward all the things given to them by nature: "We humans are given the responsibility to protect food sources. Everything comes by the season in the cycle of nature, and therefore, it will come back if we do not overtax it."

Native peoples also recognize the healing energy of the plants they eat, and so they believe that "Everything is a gift of the Creator. Always remember to give your prayer of respect and thankfulness for the healing properties of the food we eat."

As far as I know, the ancient traditional cultures in Japan have had the same worldviews and values as those found in the native peoples' cultures in northwestern North America. Nevertheless, looking back on my childhood, my diet and lifestyle furnished a good example of how bad foods directly or indirectly affect the health of body and mind. To tell the truth, I used to eat junk snacks with lots of sugar and fat content. I liked to eat what are considered the first junk foods, such as hamburgers or French fries, and I drank many kinds of soft drinks. I cooked instant noodles, which contain many kinds of chemical condiments. I thought I was not doing anything wrong because I was eating what other people were eating. However, I suffered from lots of bodily dysfunctions such as tympanitis, nasal catarrh, tonsillitis, occasional intensified fever, conjunctivitis, stomatitis, anemia due to lack of

iron in my blood, and decayed teeth with lots of pain. After my diet had already been established in my younger days, it was extremely difficult for me to change my dietary habits. Probably my sense of taste did not allow me to quit eating unhealthy foods—just like people who are addicted to drugs.

At the age of 29, when I was in Paris working mainly towards Jyorei propagation, I was too busy to cook healthy food for myself, so I always dined out and ate junk foods. Finally, I suffered from a slight but chronic fever, constant fatigue, and dropsically swollen hands and legs, all of which lasted over three years. I thought my suffering would be fatal.

However, I was fortunate enough to change my lifestyle and diet when, following Shumei president Kaicho-Sensei's advice, I went to work on Kishima Island¹ in Okayama, Japan and learned to practice Natural Agriculture. My job on the island was very simple, and I felt my lifestyle and diet moving back into harmony with nature. While practicing natural farming right beside the chicken coop, I was reminded of the old days of farm life in my mother's hometown. One of the most wonderful things I experienced was planting, harvesting, and eating vegetables grown by the Natural Agricultural method. I was reminded that the very starting point of human life was genuine involvement in the food production process. Besides, when I ate freshly picked crops from the field I cultivated, I could feel spiritual energy spreading from within my stomach to my entire body, and at last my devastated health conditions have been greatly healed. Now I have become a father of three children, including a new baby, and therefore, I have to consider seriously how I can insure the well-being of my children through a healthy diet and a nature-based lifestyle.

Let us look into the history and current situations of Japan in terms of "Food and Agriculture," because we can always learn from past errors. Since the advent of rapid economic growth, from the mid-nineteen-fifties through the sixties, the Japanese people have lost their close relationships with the land, and the number of agricultural households has been reduced. Though the farm was the original starting point for the entire work force, agriculture now ranks only second or third as an industry. Domestic farmlands under cultivation have been reduced under a national policy. In exchange for allowing exportation of industrial products from Japan,

¹ 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 and research of Natural Agriculture.



The ancestral poles of the indigenous people of Alert Bay, British Columbia, Canada. The first inhabitants of this area of North America, where Shumei's Pender Island Farm is located, might have had a firmer grasp of humankind's proper relationship with nature than today's "developed" societies.

we had to open up the market to imported agricultural products from around the world. As a result of the Plaza Accord of 1985, through which the Japanese Yen was revalued from 240yen to the dollar to a little over 120yen, food imports in Japan have significantly increased. Also the self-sufficiency rate of grain has been reduced to less than 30%, with other agricultural and fishery products being reduced by 20 to 50% since 1965.

What are the fundamental results of this increased reliance on food imports from foreign countries? What I have found is that, as the Japanese people's lifestyle lost intimate contact with nature, their worldviews or value systems changed. They have lost their sense of place, the pleasures and unity of family, and their traditional food culture. Now it seems to me that they put more value on the Secondary and Tertiary Industries, which make more money, while putting less and less value on a nature-based lifestyle such as agriculture. Unfortunately, this modification of food and culture are more likely to be transformed into social, cultural, and health problems, such as we are currently facing today. For example, the traditional Japanese diets of rice, vegetables, fish, and miso soup are now being replaced by, or mixed up with, imported foods such as bread, butter, meat, and milk, including lots of value-added processed foods. In fact, according to research done by the Japanese government, the Japanese now tend to consume more fat and fewer carbohydrates, just like Western people do. Other statistics indicate that more and more

people in Japan suffer from cancer, diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, and heart disease, the causes of which, I suspect, are related to dietary changes in Japan.

How about the impact on people's health and our environment due to changes in agricultural food production and distribution systems? In concurrence with economic growth and an increase in the demand for cash crops, Japanese agriculture has shifted to monoculture and industrialized mass production systems, which definitely pollute air, water, soil, and people with agri-chemicals. Moreover, importing or transporting food causes big problems; imported foods have a high risk of herbicide, fungicide, and pesticide contamination, which occur during food production in foreign countries and through the food inspection process at the port of Japan. Food transported over long distances is more likely than locally produced food to be contaminated by synthetic food additives such as preservatives, artificial coloring, chemical sweeteners, or flavoring. Many pesticides or synthetic food additives used in the food production or transportation processes have a high risk of causing food allergies, cancer, nerve damage, birth defects, and genetic mutations in consumers. Furthermore, it is also widely reported that artificial coloring, chemical sweeteners, or flavorings used in food production processes can adversely affect children's mentality and behavior, resulting in symptoms generally recognized as ADHD (Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). Now I know why I became such a defiant and impulsive student in my high school days, when I also had many appetite problems.

Because of these analyses, I am concerned that what is happening to Japan must also be



The use of pesticides, as depicted in the left-hand photo, as well as other synthetic additives employed in modern industrial food production might be the cause of many modern ailments, such as the previously unknown allergy that afflicts the baby shown in the right hand photo.

happening in many parts of the world. In fact, the province of British Columbia, where I live, went through something similar in terms of human relationships with the land. After the advent of the Gold Rush, native peoples in B.C. underwent radical changes socially, economically, and culturally, and also suffered epidemic diseases that

Two of Arthur Kikuchi's children, five-year-old Kenta and three-year-old Yoko, romp among the Swiss chard, kale, parsley, and turnips in a greenhouse at Shumei's Natural Agriculture farm on Pender Island, B.C., Canada.



were accidentally brought in by new settlers. Gradually the newcomers greatly increased their control over the land and resources, transforming the life ways of native peoples significantly. Due to the government's modernization policy, native peoples were disconnected from the land in various ways, forced to curtail their traditional subsistence pattern while confined within Indian Reserves or residential schools with little space for growing crops or raising cattle. As they were compelled to modify their own traditional cultures, their traditional diet also changed. Today, many young native people in the Songhees Nation of Victoria suffer from diabetes because they often eat junk food with high sugar content. Now they are heavily dependent on a Western dietary regime and medical care, and are still suffering from disease.

Is there a way to transform the world so it is again a sustainable place to live? Yes, there is, and this is the critical role of Natural Agriculture, which is able to reconnect people with nature and achieve a sustainable food production system and lifestyle on both a global and local scale. I live on Pender Island, B.C. Let me share with you what I am trying to do here. In order to restore the unity of people's spirits with nature, I think we should transform our modern cultures into one that is more supportive of a Natural Agriculture lifestyle. How can we do it? First of all, as consumers, we would do better to support local natural or organic farmers by consuming locally grown food, not only because it is fresher, tastes great, and is good for our health, but also because we will re-establish a good consumer-producer relationship, develop a stronger local economy, and build a healthier, more sustainable community. And supporting locally grown food has even more benefits. Not only can we secure a local food supply, but we can also preserve farmland and the surrounding natural environment. Furthermore, localization of food systems will reduce greenhouse gases, which will lead to a moderation of global climatic changes through the reduction of transportation and refrigeration. My family also joined a local slow food² movement in Victoria in the hope that we can restore the traditional slow food culture in our community.

However, we do not have to end up being just a consumer. Because it is essential for consumers to be involved in the food production processes in order to reconnect themselves with the land, I think everyone could become a natural farmer by cultivating a small natural farm. If the price of farmland is neither affordable nor available, at least each household would be able to grow one's own food in a back yard garden, community gardens, or even a tiny space on a balcony. Moreover, in order to nourish our body, mind, and spirit, let us try to eat bounties of the season such as freshly picked vegetables or fruits from our garden, because, as Mokichi Okada, the founder of Shumei, said, "The life force emitted by all food is the fundamental source of nutrition." Furthermore, seed saving is also important for our future food security. Old landrace³ seeds, with genetic diversity, have especially good resilience and greater ability to adapt to the ongoing global climate change because they have the past, present, and future in their genetic memory. For this reason, my farm is a part of a seed conservation project initiated by local seed savers on Salt Spring Island, B.C., Canada.

More importantly, considering the adverse impact of global climate change on future food production, the prospect of extreme weather, drought, and disease infestation, it is critical to be an environmentally conscious farmer and reduce fossil fuel and other external inputs through less tillage, irrigation, and transportation. It is also vital to be an ecologically friendly farmer and respect diverse forms of life on earth, because they are all interconnected and involved in the processes of food production that sustains our lives. Finally, one important thing I would like to pass on to our future generations is that all of our food comes from the spiritual essence of once living organisms, so we should always remember to show our respect and gratitude for the food that we eat. I believe this attitude and mindset are related to an expression of makoto,⁴ sincerity and truth, toward all elements of nature and our relations with all beings on this planet.

² "Slow Food" is a culinary movement that began in Italy during the 1980s, which today advances a variety of food and wine cultures throughout the world. Slow Food opposes the standardization and globalization of tastes, defends the need for consumer information, and promotes cultural ties with foods. The movement emphasizes the local and traditional cultivation and preparation of meals. Above all, it stresses the unhurried enjoyment and communal aspects of time-honored cooking and eating customs. It is the opposite of "fast food."

³ The term "landrace" refers to primitive or antique varieties of plants and animals associated with traditional husbandry, which are often highly adapted to local conditions.

Editor's Note: Arthur Kikuchi developed this article from the keynote address he delivered at the Fourth International Natural Agriculture Conference. The event was held at the Shumei International Institute's headquarters in Crestone, Colorado on January 26, 27, and 28, 2006. Its theme was "Food Education and Natural Agriculture in the Western World."

Horticulturalists, farmers, those committed to creating both a healthy environment and food supply, and ordinary people interested in learning more about the practice of Natural Agriculture attended this event. Participants enjoyed firsthand reports about Shumei's North American farming activities in the Catskills, Crestone, Santa Cruz, Hollywood, the Rodale Institute, and our wheat fields in Alberta, Canada. Also discussed was our nationwide Makoto Wheat Project, which is presently setting up a network by which Natural Agriculture wheat can be distributed throughout North America. Although the emphasis of the conference was on the development of Natural Agriculture throughout North America, there was a good representation of people beyond Canada and the United States, as well. Sensei Alan Imai, International Programs Director of the Shumei Natural Agriculture Network and Director of the Shumei International Institute, opened the proceedings and later lent the occasion a more global scope by giving a positive update of Shumei's activities among the farm cooperatives of Zambia in Africa. (Please see SHUMEI Magazine, volume number 259, September/October 2005 issue for more information on Shumei's activities in Zambia.) We hope to run an article concerning our continuing efforts in Zambia in the next issue of SHUMEI Magazine.

Horticultural practices other than Natural Agriculture also came to the fore when two presenters, one from a nearby Carmelite monastery and the other from a local Subud spiritual group, spoke of their own sustainable farming practices. Thus the audience could see the affinities we share with other groups practicing sustainable agriculture as well as the differences.

On Friday night and Saturday, the participants broke up into groups to discuss some of the issues that were brought up during the presentations. In line with the conference's theme, all the food served was vegetarian, natural, and healthy.

The conference began and ended with two very similar and very disturbing images—pictures of infants with bodies ravaged by lesions and sores caused by a puzzling new allergy that may have its source, as some medical experts are beginning to suspect, in food produced by modern industrial methods. The first image was presented by Sensei Koichi Deguchi, Shumei's Director of Natural Agriculture, who had read a newspaper report concerning this strange new illness shortly before leaving Japan for Crestone. At the end of the conference, Arthur Kikuchi showed the audience a similar photo and touched on the effects that food has on the welfare of very young children. If it is true that our commercially mass-produced foods, genetically modified and grown with the use of hormones and pesticides, could potentially make the youngest amongst us very ill, we have much to fear for both ourselves and future generations. Perhaps now more than ever, better education and purer food supplies are needed both in North America and throughout the world.

"Enduring Legacy of Japanese Art" Opens at the Miho Museum

Don Riedel (USA)

Those of us who attended the Miho Museum's recent opening ceremony of an exhibition from the Mary Griggs Burke Collection had no idea of the added grandeur that was in store for us. The date was March 14 of this year, and we were gathered in the Miho's glass-enclosed entrance hall to hear introductory speeches by attending dignitaries. The hall, designed by renowned architect I.M. Pei, gives a magnificent view of the pine-clad mountains that surround the Museum, and in the distance one can see Misono's Meishusama Hall and Joy of Angels bell tower, also designed by Pei, peeking over the mountain tops. Beyond question, the museum's structure is perfectly integrated with the surrounding terrain, affording spectacular views of the natural beauty all about, but what the gods of nature showered upon us that day was awesomely stunning, even by the usual standards of this splendid building. The wind began to blow with increasing intensity, and soon a swirling curtain of snow enveloped the entire Museum, while in the far distance the Joy of Angels and Meishusama Hall slowly and majestically disappeared from sight. In the

wonder of the moment, I couldn't help but think that Kaishusama,¹ herself, must have joined us for the occasion, for it's well known that she loved the beauty of the occasional snowfalls that cloak the Shigaraki landscape and the Miho.

It might be noted that the works found in Mary Griggs Burke's collection, now on display in the Miho's North Wing, seem to have a nat-



Tawaraya Sotatsu's painted hanging scroll, depicting the "Utsu no yama" episode from the "Ise Monogatari," is one of the many works on view at the Miho's presentation of the Mary Griggs Burke Collection. This 17th century artwork was used as the exhibition's poster image.

ural affinity with those collected and cherished by the Miho's founder, Mihoko Koyama (Kaishusama). Both women were notorious among art dealers as having "sharp eyes" for art. In addition, both of their collections show a broad, unfussy taste in art, both of their collecting practices place primary importance on the inherent beauty of an individual work of art, and both of them shared a deep and expansive love of Japanese culture. Looking at the works in both collections one senses a dignity and freshness that is common to both. And so perhaps the Miho Museum, which is the culmination and embodiment of Mihoko Koyama's artistic sensibilities, is a very fitting place in which to welcome and appreciate the treasures that Mary Griggs Burke collects.

It proved to be a very memorable show for me, as it gave me an opportunity to see and admire many of the masterpieces of the fine

⁴ Makoto is an ancient term often used by Shumei's founder, Mokichi Okada, in his teachings. It is most often translated as "sincerity and truth." It sums up an approach to life in which each person can find harmony with the world by practicing truth in thought, word, and deed. Essential to its practice are consideration for others and for the will of God. The word's connotation often varies according to circumstance, and might include sincerity, a true heart, honesty, hospitality, integrity, loyalty, and a dedication to principle.

¹ Kaishusama is an honorific name used when referring to Mrs. Mihoko Koyama, Shumei's first president and spiritual leader. She was an avid art collector and connoisseur, and founded the Miho Museum in 1997. Kaishusama passed away in November of 2003.

Mary Griggs Burke Collection. The exhibition is comprised of one hundred and sixteen works, representing less than a tenth of the collection's total size. In its entirety, The Mary Griggs Burke Collection is thought to be the largest and most all-encompassing private collection of Japanese art outside of Japan. The Miho's exhibition includes such notable works from the Collection as the Okuni Kabuki Screen and the White Glazed Square Sake Bottle. The objects on display covered a large swath of Japanese history, ranging from the Jomon (about 2500 to 1500 B.C.) through the Edo (1615 to 1868 A.D.) periods. These works brilliantly span almost the entire history of one of the world's great cultures. They also cover the gamut of diverse mediums, including sculpture, painting, calligraphy, ceramics, and lacquerware. Among the highlights of the show were a ceramic vessel from the mid-Jomon Period, folding screens and hand scrolls depicting scenes from the epic "Tale of Genji," as well as paintings by Ogata Korin, Ito Jakuchu, and Yosa Buson. All the works on exhibition offer the viewer an excellent opportunity to take in the whole breadth of Japanese art history.

I particularly enjoyed viewing the hanging scroll entitled "White Plum Blossoms and Moon," which is generally recognized as one of the most important paintings in the Mary Griggs Burke Collection. I also was captivated by the semi-abstract visual flow and use of colors found in a painted scene of a man and his entourage traveling a narrow path on Mount Utsu. This painting is featured on the poster publicizing the exhibition, and it uncannily captures the mood of the entire show.

Shumei's president, Hiroko Koyama, attended the opening attired in a traditional kimono, and seemed radiant as she greeted many of the guests, including several that came all the way from Sweden to tour the Miho. The opening of this exhibition proved to be an additional treat for them, as I genuinely hope that this exhibition will be for you, as well, if you are fortunate enough to visit the Miho while it is on display. If you plan to come to Misono this year to attend the Grand Sampai in May, I strongly suggest that you take time to visit the Miho as well.

The Exhibition: *The Enduring Legacy of Japanese Art: The Mary Griggs Burke Collection.* The exhibition is on display from March 15 through June 11, 2006 at the Miho Museum, 300, Momodani, Shigaraki, Shiga, 529-1814 JAPAN.

For details call 0748-82-3411 or fax 0748-82-3414. Please visit the museum's website at www.miho.or.jp for more information.

Two Students Say Farewell

Among Shumei's intercultural efforts to foster global citizenship and cultural awareness is a student exchange program that gives students from around the world the opportunity to experience living in each other's countries from a few weeks to several years.

The beginnings of this exchange program started over twenty years ago when young men from Japan would visit the United States each year to learn about American culture and help with Shumei's activities. Today, the program has expanded to include young men and women from wherever Shumei has a presence.

The following are speeches given by two students who participated in this program in 2005. Kaori Nishimura and Keiko Miyoshi delivered the following addresses at Monthly Sampais held at Shumei America's National Center in Pasadena before each returned home to Japan.

Kaori Nishimura (Japan)

Good Morning everyone. I am from Kyoto, Japan and have been staying at the Pasadena Center and doing hoshi¹ for three months. Today I want to talk about my experiences with Jyorei² and my feelings of gratitude to Meishusama.

I became a member of Shumei in April of 2003. With Meishusama's help, I had a miraculous experience.

My health had suddenly changed for the worse after my university graduation. My shoulders became stiff and heavy and I felt pain in my back when sitting. Also, I easily became tired throughout my whole body. My body and eyelids felt heavy, especially during the winter. I felt depressed. Also, I had pains in my abdomen.

I went to many different clinics to get checkups, but the doctors could not find any cause for my pain. All I could do was to take medicine given by my doctor, but the medicine was not effective at all.

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

2 Jyorei is divine light, directed by a member of Shumei to another person. Those who share Jyorei, either as givers or receivers, often feel relief and a sense of contentment. Repeated sessions of Jyorei may bring improvement in physical and emotional problems, and enhancement of one's general well-being.

Meanwhile, I had the chance to receive my first Jyorei from an acquaintance, Eiji. When I received Jyorei in a coffee shop for the first time, I felt my body getting warmer and felt the pain leaving through my head. I was surprised because nothing worked for the pain before and because after only one experience of Jyorei the pain was reduced, even though I was not completely cured. After that first time I received Jyorei many times from Eiji in the coffee shop.

One day I went to his house and received Jyorei from him and his wife. I could not stop crying though I was not feeling sad. I felt as if another person were crying inside me. After I received Jyorei my eyes became clear and my facial expression softened. I really wondered what exactly Jyorei was and where its light came from. Eiji told me that the tears I shed came from my ancestors.

When I came home, I explained to my parents what had happened at Eiji's house and what he had told me about my ancestors. My father then told me that he had two brothers that died in childhood. At the time my grandfather had come to live with my family. He had lived alone before but he had a back problem, so he needed to live with us so that we could care for him. There was a Buddhist altar in his house and it was moved to our home when he came to live with us. However, after we set up the altar in our home we did not take care of it or pray before it. It was during that time and under those circumstances that my bad physical condition began.

Eiji said to me, "If you want to receive your ohikari,³ you too can give Jyorei." So, I decided to receive my ohikari immediately.

He took me to a Shumei Center in Nishinomiya and I became a Shumei member. My mother also received her ohikari soon and we exchanged Jyorei with each other at my house.

Also I started going to sampai⁴ at the Nishinomiya Center several times a week, after work most days. It took me two hours to go to the Nishinomiya Center from my house. It was very hard to get to sampai, but after I went to the Center, prayed, and did hoshi, I felt my soul become lighter and I felt as if my soul was being purified. My feelings became cheerful on the way to my house after sampai. The more I attended sampai, the more joy I felt.

3 An ohikari is a miniature sacred emblem worn by all Shumei members when giving Jyorei. It consists of a small parchment bearing artistic calligraphy by Meishusama and worn about the neck.

4 Sampai is a special time or place set aside for honoring God with reverence and gratitude. It is an occasion dedicated to receiving Divine Light for spiritual illumination and overall happiness.

Also, I went to Misono⁵ for sampai once a month. Misono is a very sacred place where I can breathe very clean air. Seeing well-kept buildings and gardens is a pleasure for me, so I feel my soul was always being cleansed. I wanted to stay in Misono for as long as possible, so I went to Misono many times to do hoshi. I was eager to go to my Center and do hoshi as much as possible.

My father received his ohikari last September. My grandmother also received her ohikari in January of this year. My hope that someday I would go to Misono with my family came true.

The condition of my body was getting better and the pain in my abdomen was also improving. I worked at the library of a university and the surroundings in my office also were changing for the better.

I joined study programs through the youth department in Misono in March of 2006 to prepare for my visit to America. When in America I had the opportunity to visit San Francisco, Santa Cruz, Hollywood, Pasadena, and Crestone. Those experiences broadened my views. Following that I joined another program to visit the Philippines in September of 2005. The Philippines is not materially rich, but Filipino people have very warm hearts, so my heart was full of joy. I learned that what makes a person's heart fulfilled is not material wealth but other people's warm hearts.

Now I have another vision. I want to go to Misono to do hoshi in 2006. Now the activities of Shumei are expanding in the world as Meishusama said they would. I came to America to have my vision broadened, and I want to come closer to being a citizen of the world.

After I came to America, what really surprised me was that everyone always speaks their opinions loudly and clearly during the weekly staff meetings at the Pasadena Center. There are many differences between Japanese and Western cultures. I was surprised that some members here are open to many religions and other spiritual organizations. In Japan this is rare. Being a Shumei member, a person can study other spiritual teachings. Their goals are the same, so now I realize that in order to create peace in the world many other spiritual organizations should join hands with each other.

I had many wonderful experiences since I came here. I really enjoyed Shumei America's anniversary celebration.

At Shumei's Natural Agriculture farm in Santa Cruz I harvested beautiful carrots, bell peppers, Swiss chard, lettuce, and sweet pota-

toes with Masa Noda, who runs the farm, and we sold them at the Farmers' Market in Santa Cruz and San Francisco three times during my stay. I really enjoyed selling those vegetables to people at the farmers' markets.

I want to thank Francois Kuwata for taking me to San Diego to do Jyorei.

I thank Carmen Marcus for allowing me to stay at her house. She really takes care of her health and she cooked a very healthy meal for me. I admire her lifestyle.

Another time I visited Bibi Chapman's house, and she gave me an opportunity to introduce Jyorei to her students. In the Pasadena Center, speaking with Jan Totten, Sandy Snyder-Traverso, and Roy Gibbon helped me improve my English skills.

Sensei Eugene Imai⁶ told us of the long history of Shumei America and showed us his pictures and letters from Mikotosama⁷ and Kaishusama. It was very impressive, and I really admire Eugene Sensei for his hard work, courage, and effort.

I am really grateful to Meishusama for helping me to improve my soul and my surroundings.

While I stayed here in Pasadena I wanted to talk with Shumei members as much as possible to share Jyorei stories. I want to devote myself to creating Paradise on Earth as Meishusama taught. Thank you Meishusama and thank you all.

Keiko Miyoshi (Japan)

I come from Hiroshima and received my ohikari on March 15, 1987. Before I was born, my parents had become members of Shumei. So, since childhood, morning and evening chanting was a part of my daily life. Because of it, I always felt that God was in my heart. What a wonderful environment I lived in.

I arrived in America to participate in the student program at the Pasadena Center. I decided to come here to improve my character. I felt that I was too uptight and serious, and I wanted to be more relaxed and cheerful. I wanted to have a sense of humor.

Last October I came to know about this program, which allowed me to come to Pasadena for a few months. I wanted to broaden my horizons by experiencing a different culture, making contact with many people, and seeing the vast scenery of America.

At first, when I came to Pasadena, the wonderful, big, blue sky satisfied my heart every day. It is difficult for me to see clear blue skies in

Japan because it's usually cloudy there. Also, while I was here, I had many opportunities to appreciate wonderful art. I had a chance to see a violin concert in Shumei Hall. And I went to museums and attended the opera. I was truly happy to find that I enjoyed and appreciated the arts from the bottom of my heart.

Moreover, last month I began to paint water-color pictures. Ever since I was a junior high school student, I have wanted to paint pictures, but didn't have the opportunity. Before I came here, I was always too busy to engage in making art. So I was very happy to finally have time to do this.

I started to paint. A few days after I did, I met an artist. When I showed my picture to her, she said to me, "Please continue painting, if only for a little time each day; it's important to paint every day." She gave me a wonderful message and I appreciated her unexpected support.

I also went on trips to Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon, and Zion National Park. Zion National Park is an unforgettable place. I walked along a rocky path with steep mountains on both sides until I finally reached the end in a deep canyon. It was a heavenly place. Then, when I looked at the top of the rocky cliffs, I was able to see a beautiful blue sky between the rocks. The color of that sky is my favorite color. It was just like the sky I had seen every day in Pasadena. It was the most beautiful blue I had seen during our entire three day trip. I felt as if Meishusama was showing it to me.

I got a special message from nature. It is that nature is perfect and beautiful just as it is. This part of nature was untouched by humans. It didn't need to be changed into anything else. Nature taught me that it is also unnecessary for me to change—I am fine just as I am. I was wrapped in nature's love, and I shed tears of thanks.

There are many kinds of miracles. Recovering from a serious illness is only one type. I have been given many miracles in my daily life. When I have problems, when I pray seriously, I receive answers to my problems at just the right time. The timing often seems amazing. I always feel that God is right beside me every day.

During my stay in America, I met many people. I could feel all their hearts when talking to them. It has been wonderful. I found that some had kind hearts, some had pure hearts, and some had gentle hearts. When everyone puts their good hearts together, I think that the Pasadena Center will become an even more wonderful place.

I pray for peace on earth, hoping that each of us can inspire the people around us, regardless of our different nationalities. I will continue to pray to make this happen.

⁶ Sensei Eugene Imai is the Director of Shumei America and the Director of Shumei's International Department.

⁷ *Mikotosama* is an honorific given to Shumei's dynamic second president, Sokichi Koyama, who passed away in 1985.

⁵ Misono is Shumei's International Headquarters and Spiritual Center in the Shigaraki Mountains of Shiga Prefecture, Japan. The name "Misono" means *Sacred Garden*.

From the Miho Museum Collection



Standing Woman with Dog

China. Tang period (Early 8th Century A.D.). Ceramic with three-color glaze. Height, 29cm (11 3/8")

Images of court ladies and dogs were not uncommon in the art of the Tang period. However, extant funerary statuettes of a lady with a dog, such as this figurine from the Miho Collection, are rare.

The figure leans slightly to the left, lending itself a graceful contour. The lady's jacket sleeves conceal her clasped hands. The rosettes embroidered on her flowing gown represent a motif that was introduced to China from the West and became very popular during this period. The lady's hair is arranged in the "twin-fork bun" style that became a fashionable hairstyle among young, unmarried women of the time. A small, pug-like dog attentively stands guard at its mistress's feet. The markings of the canine's coat are depicted in a few dots of black.

The lady's face and neck are unglazed, with traces of black paint accentuating her eyes and brows. Cinnabar red colors the maiden's lips as well as the V-shaped edges of her jacket neckline. Between the brows a faintly painted flower design can barely be seen. This facial decoration is believed to have first come into fashion during the Six Dynasties Period between 220 and 589 A.D. According to legend, a plum flower by chance fell upon the forehead of a sleeping princess. By morning the flower had dried to such an extent that its image could not be removed. Inspired by this story, court ladies began to emulate the legend by having plum blossoms painted on their brows.

SHUMEI AMERICA

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