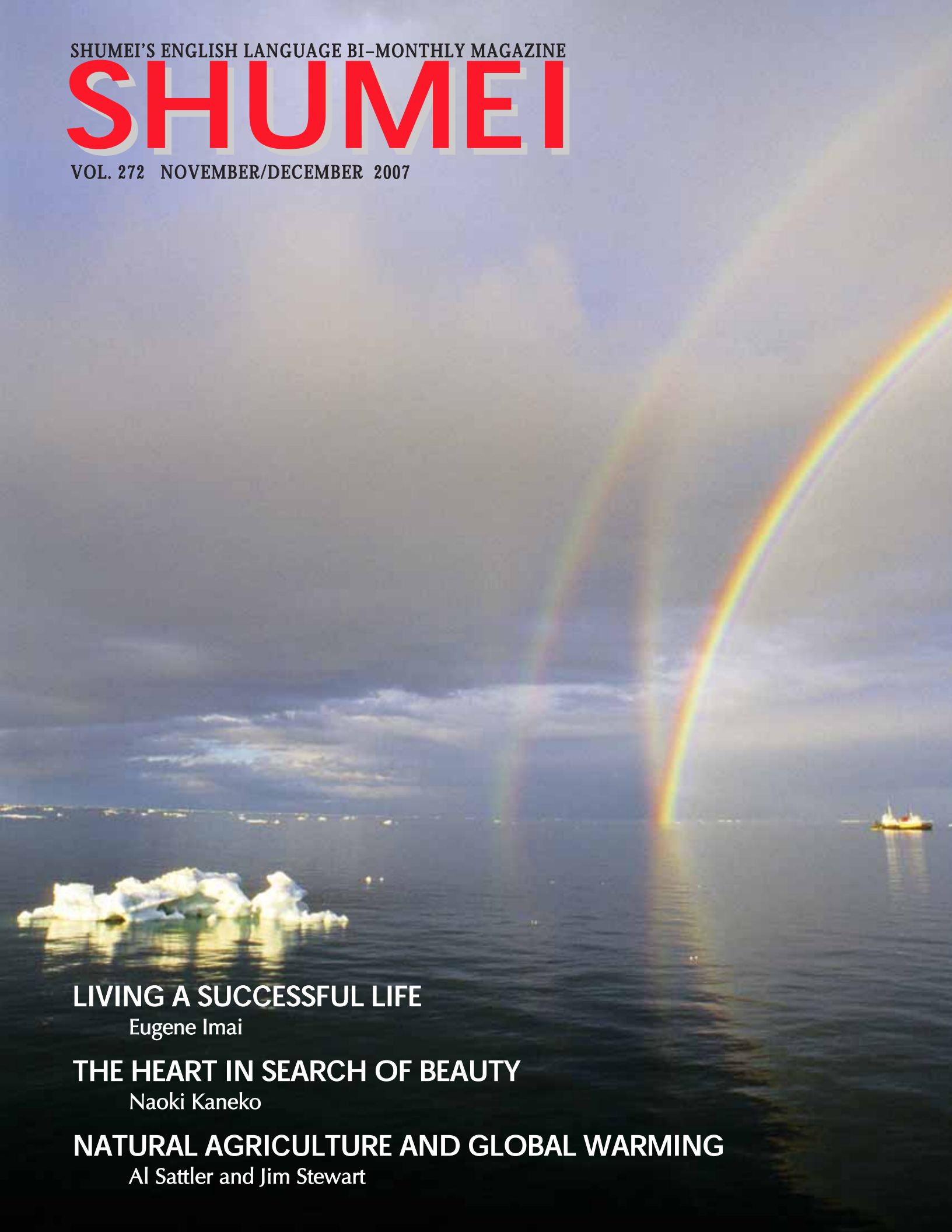


SHUMEI'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

# SHUMEI

VOL. 272 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2007



## LIVING A SUCCESSFUL LIFE

Eugene Imai

## THE HEART IN SEARCH OF BEAUTY

Naoki Kaneko

## NATURAL AGRICULTURE AND GLOBAL WARMING

Al Sattler and Jim Stewart

SHUMEI MAGAZINE is the English language publication of the Shumei Family for the international Shumei community. Our purpose is to inform through the presentation and discussion of Meishusama's teachings, and by being a forum for the voices of Shumei's members and friends.

**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.

**ABOUT THE COVER:** This issue's cover image is by Gary Braasch. Entitled "Arctic Ocean, Double Rainbow," the photograph of a twin rainbow and its reflection was taken off Prudhoe Bay, Alaska in June 1997 on the deck of a Greenpeace ship that was monitoring oil drilling in the area. An exhibition of Mr. Braasch's work will be on view at the Shumei Gallery at Shumei America's National Center through November and December of this year. Please see "Global Warming Made Visible" on page 11 for more information concerning this exhibition and the global warming conference that will be held at Shumei's Pasadena Center during November, 2007. Photograph © 2007 Gary Braasch.

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# Excerpts from Meishusama's Teachings on Kannon's Way

*This is the twelfth installment of excerpts from the "Kannon's Way" teachings of Shumei's founder, Mokichi Okada, and the sixth to appear in this magazine in 2007. Our publication's staff is deeply honored to present these writings to our English language readers for the first time. The texts were translated and edited by Atsushi Fujimaki and Roy Gibbon for use in SHUMEI Magazine.*

*The following were extracted from separate dialogues that were transcribed at meetings between Meishusama and his students. These sessions took place at various times during 1948 and 1949. Each of the questioners might be a different individual; no names have come down to us, but all of them were probably prominent students.*

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## On Kannon's Heart

**Questioner:** Can you tell us about Kannon's Power, Kannon's Way, and Kannon's Heart?

**Meishusama:** Kannon's Power is the power that Kannon exerts, and this power can be displayed by anyone once they have learned to acquire it. This must be evident to everyone here by the fact that you, my students, have experienced so many miraculous events as a result of using this power. The strength of this power, however, varies, depending on the person using it.

Kannon's Heart is the actual embodiment of Kannon's great compassion, which is acquired when one adopts that heart as one's own. Kannon's Way is to act from this heart. In particular, for one to practice Kannon's Way with this heart, it is never acceptable to reproach others by standing in judgment of them. Calling someone to account is the worst thing one can do.

In a collection of my poems, there are some lines referring to the bodhisattva, who in India is considered a saintly being. While anyone can become a bodhisattva by personal effort, it is never easy for one to reach the state of a tathagata or 'liberated being.' Along with the names of other figures holding various ranks within Buddhism, such as bodhisattva, acalanatha, devanam, and so on, the name tathagata, of course, originated in India.

Kannon is also identified with Mugeko-Nyorai, the 'Unhindered-Light Tathagata,' or Ojin Miroku, the 'Accommodated-and-Transformed Maitreya,' by the nature of her work, which involves quickly and easily adapting to changing circumstances as they arise. The literal meaning of the word Ojin is "to fully respond to the person," which further implies the ever-changing nature of Ojin according to the specific person and the situation. This has to do with the belief that Kannon is manifested in the forms of thirty-three different figures. In line with this, people have to obtain the ability of Ojin, or 'adaptability,' in practicing Kannon's Way. Once you have digested this aspect of Kannon's Way, you will be able to handle things with much greater ease.

In addition, Kannon has a very fierce and tough aspect, which corresponds to another of Kannon's names, Saishomyo-Nyorai or "Most Victorious Tathagatta." This horse-headed Kannon is a manifestation of Kannon that appears as a beast in order to conquer various devils.

All of this relates to a God who is rational. There is always an underlying reason that we can understand for how God works and offers His blessings. In line with this, our actions also have to be unforced and in alignment with reason. But, I do not want people to take this point too seriously and feel that it is too difficult to act in a rational way. After all, Kannon's Way teaches people to do simply what they are supposed to do. As an old saying goes, "Sleep and wait for good luck." It is never wise to begin things rashly and impulsively. People should cultivate a patient attitude that allows them to wait for things in a relaxed, almost sleepy sort of way. Once they have learned this, things will go well. This is one more aspect of Kannon's Way. (March 1, 1949)

## On Guidance and Effort

**Questioner:** How will the correct times, places, and positions be determined in the Age of Daylight?

**Meishusama:** The times, places, and positions that work best for you should be discovered naturally. In this regard, when cultivating faith, it is never good to rely solely on your own actions. Ideally, there should be a perfect blending of nature's guidance and human effort. This attitude, which is described in the old saying, "After doing all that is humanly possible, wait for the Will of Heaven," is important to acquire. On the other hand, to persistently rely on one's own abilities never goes well. In this instance the old saying, "Where there is a will, there is a way," is obviously wrong. Those who tenaciously cling to their lives in a life and death situation, declaring, "I will not die! I will survive by the sheer power of my will!" end up dying first.

[Laughter.]

Contrary to this, if you can overcome your attachment to life and openly trust in God or in the Buddha, there is a much greater chance of survival. This is exactly what I learned from my own experiences while recovering from illness. (January 8, 1949)

## On Removing Egotism and Worldly Attachments

**Questioner:** What is the easiest way for one to remove egotism and worldly attachments?

**Meishusama:** The best way is to make up one's mind to remove them. Simply say, "I will do it!" If you constantly reaffirm this conviction, eventually you will overcome them quite naturally. Since your egotism is your own property, the first thing you must know is that it is yours to discard. You simply cannot depend on others to rid you of your own selfish nature.

[Laughter.]

Since humans invite misfortune because of their selfishness and greed, once these have been subdued, good things will inevitably come to them.

In the spiritual world, souls weighted with worldly attachments cannot ascend to a higher dimension. They can only do so once these attachments have been left behind. Likewise, it is not good for people in this physical world to be caught up in worldly attachments. I also

have been attached to worldly things, but I managed to renounce them rather easily. It is easy to do this. The key is to recognize that everything is in God's hands. As long as you struggle against worldly attachments, trying to conquer them by yourself alone, they will not be dropped easily. So when you find that you cannot remove them despite of your best efforts, consider the possibility that your struggles might have a deeper meaning, and that they are part of a necessary process arranged by God for your spiritual growth. (February 28, 1949)

## On Strong Self-motivation and Personal Preferences

**Questioner:** Some people say that those who have no strong self-motivation or personal preferences emit a powerful spiritual aura. What do you think?

**Meishusama:** I don't believe it. Strong self-motivation and personal preferences are necessary in life. However, it might not be such a good idea to express them too openly.

[Laughter.]

As to this, I think that a phrase from the Oomoto<sup>1</sup> scripture, Ofudesaki, which says, "You must have self, but it shouldn't be shown," might be a good principle to follow. (August 3, 1949)

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1. The Shinto-related faith that Meishusama adopted in 1920. After achieving executive status in 1929, he headed the organization's Hanzomon center in Tokyo until his resignation in 1934. The word 'Omoto,' means 'foundation' or 'origin.' The organization was founded by Deguchi Nao (1837-1918). Today, headquartered in Kyoto Prefecture with close to 170,000 members, it is a strong advocate for world peace.

## Acquiring Wisdom

**Questioner:** Is wisdom what we learn from God?

**Meishusama:** Yes. However, if you have a strong ego, that will block you from receiving it. Therefore, you need to have an open heart and a flexible mind. In our society, people care very much about the opinions of those in high positions, but tend to ignore what those of a lower status have to say. I think that is due to egotism. To listen carefully to your subordinates demonstrates magnanimity. I myself often listen to my students' advice and then take action based upon it. Observing from the sidelines, some wonder why I am listening to things that seem worthless. But I am sure that due to my behaving this way, people feel happy working with me. When people ask me to authorize one of their projects, even when the project sounds like it will surely fail, I still say, "Yes." Although I know that the project will eventually fail, at least those who proposed it will learn something significant from the experience and thus gain wisdom. In these cases, I emphasize the acquisition of wisdom, makoto,<sup>2</sup> and common sense.

That which has true value is always aligned with common sense and is rational. (August 28, 1948)

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2. Makoto is a Japanese word that stands for a fundamental character trait that includes such higher qualities as sincerity, truthfulness, altruism, reliability, and integrity. It has a broad, yet profound, meaning that cannot be summarized by just one or two words because its meaning varies according to context. People have makoto when their actions are in alignment with their words and ideals. Essential to the practice of makoto is the consideration for others and for the will of God.

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# Living a Successful Life

Sensei Eugene Imai (USA)

*Sensei Eugene Imai is the Director of Shumei America and the Director of Shumei's International Department. This text was transcribed from a speech that Eugene Imai delivered on July 8, 2007 at Shumei America's National Center in Pasadena during that Center's Monthly Sampai. It has been edited for SHUMEI Magazine.*

I was in Japan last week and while there I went to Kuroda Sensei's home.<sup>1</sup> He had passed away on June 8, 2007, and since it was still within fifty days of his passing, there was an altar set up with his photo and ashes, together with flowers and dishes. As

with those who follow the Buddhist tradition, many in Shumei believe that the fifty days after a death is the time it takes for the soul of the departed to make the full transition from the physical to the spiritual world. On the fiftieth day, we say our last goodbyes, and the deceased belongs entirely to the spiritual realm.

Because Kuroda Sensei was very special to me, I asked my brothers to come with me as well. It is very rare these days for all three of us to be together at the same time. So, Chikahito, Hisashi, and I went to pay our last respects. Almost thirty-seven years ago, when all of us brothers received our ohikaris,<sup>2</sup> Kuroda Sensei was there.

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2. 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. The silk pouch in which an ohikari is held must be kept clean and changed regularly.

He passed away at the age of 83. He had overcome three major purifications.<sup>3</sup> The first was rheumatism, which paralyzed him completely. Then, he developed stomach cancer and tuberculosis. He came close to death a few times before he finally passed away, but always managed to survive. Despite his trials, he was always positive and ready with a joke. His manner of teaching was so wonderful, and he touched many people's lives. Because of that, many people came to his memorial sampai.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, I could not attend that service, so I sent a telegram of condolence.

On the day we visited his house, my brothers and I sat in front of his altar and chanted. As we did, I began to wonder, was Kuroda Sensei's life a success? Of course, his life was a big success. Yet, I recalled him once complaining that he was not successful in business. He

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3. The concept of purification is one of the major tenets of the Shumei philosophy. It is the process by which spiritual impurities are dissolved. It is a cleansing process that usually includes unpleasant side effects. Among Shumei members the word 'purification' is often used as a synonym for 'misfortune' or 'illness.'

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. Within Shumei, sampais are held both on a daily basis and for special occasions, such as weddings and funerals.

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1. Hajime Kuroda became a Shumei member in May of 1958 and a sensei at the end of 1968. He belonged to Shumei's Kanzaki branch throughout his life.

had a rice shop. Remember that in Japan, rice is the main staple, so if one owns a shop that sells rice, he never goes out of business—everyone buys rice. For a while his business would do very well. Then he would get sick, and every time he recovered and was ready to make money again, he got ill again. He asked himself, “When will I get better?” He found that he was only healthy when he gave Jyorei,<sup>5</sup> and unless he helped people with Jyorei, he could not go on being healthy. His life was totally given to others. He wanted to make a big success in business, but success would not happen the way he wanted it to. People needed him, and when he was at the end of his life, he realized that very many people loved him and they thanked him for his help.

July is also the anniversary of my father's passing. My father died on July 19. So this past month, I have been wondering a lot about success in life. What is my success? What is your success? When we talk about success, usually it is in terms of accomplishing something. That is what we mean when we say that something was successful.

When my father died, I was just 19 years old. My father was just 46. At the time, he seemed as if he were on the verge of having a great life. Everything he had worked so hard for seemed to be coming to blossom. He was about to enjoy the results of his efforts, but he did not.

Seeing my father's early death, I made up my mind that I was going to make my father very proud of me, and I set my goals very high. My ambition was to become a very rich man. My father could not do that, he did not live long enough, but I could be a great success and I would make him proud of me. For a time I was on course with my ambitions. I was doing all right. I went to a good school and was offered a good job when I was just a junior in college. My future seemed set and was filled with promise. But something happened during my college years. Instead of material wealth, I was guided to seek spiritual wealth. I received my ohikari, started giving Jyorei, and became more interested in people's lives than in making money. So I decided not to work for the company that offered me a position. Instead, I decided to work for Shumei. So right after graduation, I went to Shumei headquarters, which at the time was

located in Kyoto. I was very happy. However, my mother was not all that happy with my change of path, as she expected me to make enough money to support the family. Yet, she is a very kind woman, and despite her disappointment, she supported my calling.

Every day I was full of life. I was very lucky to be chosen to come to this country in 1975 as Shumei's first staff member in America. I came alone. My mission was to establish Shumei Centers and share Meishusama's teachings and Jyorei. So the next goal I set for myself was to make Shumei a big success in this country. This was also our organization's goal for me. I knew that if I achieved this, my life would be a success. I focused myself on developing this organization. To do this, I needed to develop my language and organizational skills, I had to learn about leadership and communication, and so forth. At one point, I wanted to become a real American. So, Sensei Alan Imai<sup>6</sup> and I decided to play golf and go out dancing. We tried to become very American, but it did not work out as we planned. No matter what we did, we were still Japanese. So, one day I said, “Alan, this isn't working. Let's just settle for being ‘Japanese-Americans.’ That way we will be ‘unique’ as Americans.” After that, I became more lighthearted and relaxed in my new country. Yet my focus was still firmly set on the advancement of the Shumei organization in America. How could I make this organization bigger? How could I create more Centers and increase membership?

But, gradually, I began to realize just how self-centered my goals were. I was putting too much pressure on myself and on my family. My wife and my two daughters were suffering because of my ambitions. Do you know the expression, “preacher's kids?” Preachers, like educators, lawyers, and doctors, generally have very high hopes and set high standards both for themselves and for the people close to them. They expect high achievements from those that follow them. And, of course, quite often their kids cannot stand it. So, it often happens that the preacher's kids rebel and run away. My kids did not run away. But although their bodies might have been there at home with me, in looking back at that time I think their hearts were already gone. They could not stand Daddy's demands or his high expectations. Thanks to God, somehow I received an incredible miracle in my life. I was invited to

take a communications course called P.E.T., which is the acronym for ‘Parental Effectiveness Training.’ My wife, Jane, and I took this course. It was fascinating. It made me realize just how much of a gap there was between me and my own children. The communication was only one-way. I was expecting and demanding, but I was not listening. It was not a very democratic way of communicating. So I began to change the way that I talked with my kids. It was at that time that Shumei was also beginning to change, as well. It was a gradual but big change that began almost ten years ago. I was very lucky to have taken the P.E.T. course before we entered this big change.

Over the last ten years, I have witnessed tremendous evolution in our organization and in myself as well. My personal life has been transformed. I am grateful for this, and also I am grateful to my family. They are very patient and supportive of my spiritual growth. Although my original goal was to make this organization bigger, I found instead a much larger purpose in life: to see myself being transformed, and seeing families and friends and even enemies transformed. Work and adversity seem like transformations, as well. Everything that has happened to me was given to me so that I could grow spiritually. I am so grateful for this realization. At this point, I can say my life is successful because I found out that we are all here to grow. Yet, I still believe that we are also all here to accomplish something, as well. We all need incentives to live. We are not here just to eat and die. We are here to do something, but the most important thing we can do is to grow spiritually. Everything is given to us to support that growth: our jobs, our families, the good times and hard times, every season, every person, and every event.

The day I went to Kuroda Sensei's home and sat before his altar, I saw how beautiful his life was, how beautiful my life is becoming, and how beautiful your life is, as well. Please, enjoy each moment. You might have some agenda, some plans that you are desperate to accomplish, but your most important purpose here on Earth is your spiritual growth. If you do not pay attention to that, no matter what you have been given or have accomplished, your life will be empty. Enjoy your family, enjoy your friends, enjoy each moment. This is a beautiful life. And looking back, I am so very grateful for the opportunity I was given to come to this country to work for Shumei, to have my family, and friends like you. This is a wonderful, wonderful life.

5. Jyorei is the spiritual practice of sharing divine light that was created by Shumei's founder, Mokichi Okada, and is now administered to people by Shumei members. Those who share Jyorei, either as givers or receivers, often feel relief from afflictions as well as a sense of contentment. Repeated sessions of Jyorei may bring improvement in physical and emotional health, and foster spiritual refinement and growth.

6. Sensei Alan Imai currently serves as International Programs Director of the Shumei Natural Agriculture Network, and as Executive Director of the Shumei International Institute in Crestone, Colorado. He came to the USA in 1985 and later became America's second Shumei Sensei. Although he and Eugene Imai share the same surname, they are not related.

## REMEMBRANCES OF KAISHUSAMA

As we approach the anniversary of Mrs. Mihoko Koyama's passing on November 29, 2003, and the celebration of the Miho Museum's Tenth Anniversary this November, SHUMEI Magazine offers the following stories.

Mrs. Koyama, known to Shumei members as 'Kaishusama,' was the first president of Shumei and its spiritual leader. Among this extraordinary lady's many accomplishments was the founding of the Miho Museum and its collection of antiquities. The opening of the museum in 1997 was the culmination of a life lived in the pursuit of truth, virtue, and beauty.

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### Passages of Running Water

Mihoko Koyama (Japan)

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*The following was written by Kaishusama in 1957. It concerns her youth and education.*

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This story begins in the days of my youth, just after I graduated from a girls' school that based its teachings on moral education. It was in Osaka city. Very few girls pursued higher education, although there was a slightly increasing trend toward girls' academic advancement. It must be very hard for present-day youth to imagine such a situation.

However, I could not think of just staying home to prepare myself for marriage. I wanted to continue my education, not as a means of gaining useful knowledge or skills, but out of a yearning for something either spiritual or aesthetic. It was not easy to decide what school was best for me. Finally, I chose Jiyu



*Mihoko Koyama's class at the Freedom School. She is the second student from the right in the middle row.*



*Kaishusama addressing Shumei members at the Hollywood Center during a visit to America in the 1980s. Photo by Jahmil Prescott.*

excited and they flatly refused to listen to me. But despite such difficulties, I did not have to encourage myself consciously. I was able to persevere in my mission. I really think that I owe this to my education at Freedom School.

It was from this firm foundation that I was able to absorb Meishusama's teachings with my own passion and makoto. I, who had become a simple housewife, without political talent or ability, was eventually transformed into the person I am now by God's mercy. People with a high spiritual level can grasp the essence of our beliefs quickly without preconceptions. In my case, I do not think about it as going the long way around. Looking back, my lifetime on the path of our founder, Meishusama, causes me to be unceasingly grateful to Mrs. Hani.

Gakuen, known as the "Freedom School,"<sup>1</sup> in Tokyo, which was founded by Mrs. Motoko Hani. With my parents' blessing, I left Osaka for Tokyo and started learning through the experience of daily living, which was the foundation of an education at the Freedom School. I learned independence and cooperation. The spirit of the school formed my personal foundation, which nurtured my budding aspiration to be a missionary.

My story proves that religious education has a great impact on one's life. Mrs. Motoko Hani's principle was "Thinking, Living, and Praying." She always taught us that as human beings, it is fundamental for us to give service to society. Because that teaching was inscribed strongly in my heart, I did not have any hesitation later in giving myself to the work of God through Meishusama's beliefs. My involvement in this work sometimes caused people to look upon me as a strange character, or even to despise me. Many times I was discouraged, especially when I was

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1. Jiyu Gakuen, known in the west as the 'Freedom School,' is a progressive Christian academy located in Tokyo, Japan. It is an innovative institution for young women that fostered a sense of independence and creativity, qualities essential to making a genuine contribution to society; here real life experience is still considered part of the learning process. The school was founded by Motoko Hani in 1921.

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### My Sister, Kaishusama

Sensei Kiyoko Fujii (Japan)

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*Kiyoko Fujii was Mihoko Koyama's elder sister. She became a Shumei member after seeking help when her child was suffering from diphtheria. She strongly supported her sister and eventually became the head of Shumei's Kyoto Branch. Here she reflects on her sister's life.*

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In those days, my sister did not attend any opening or graduation ceremonies, or any such conference with teachers at school. Day and night, she was preoccupied with helping people. All her days were filled with appointments. She barely had enough time to spend with her children.

But all three children were happy and healthy. They behaved extremely well because they understood that their mother had dedicated herself to God's work. They told me that when their mother sometimes came home earlier than usual and they had not gone to bed yet, they enjoyed cheek-to-cheek caressing with her. It sound-



Young sisters, Mihoko Koyama (left) and Kiyoko Fujii.

## The Heart in Search of Beauty

Naoki Kaneko (Japan)

*Miho Museum curator Naoki Kaneko became a Shumei member in October of 1980. He was the first of his family to be associated with Shumei. In 1985 he became a hoshisha<sup>1</sup> at Misono. While there, Shumei's first president Kaishusama assigned him to work with the art collection housed at the Villa Miho.<sup>2</sup> His artistic sensibilities were finely honed under her tutelage. He has been with the Miho Museum since its opening.*

The words "a heart in search of beauty" could exemplify the values that the founder of Shumei and the Miho Museum, Mrs. Mihoko Koyama, embodied throughout her life. The phrase also epitomizes the ideals that have been consistently adhered to by the museum and its staff as we approach the celebration of the museum's tenth anniversary this year.

When one hears the word 'spirit,' one might think that it only concerns the purely conceptual world and therefore lacks concreteness. However, this is not so. For the spirit of beauty manifests itself mainly in a tangible form, a form that exists independent of religion, politics, culture, or even any one artistic genre or theory. Moreover, genuine beauty will demonstrate what truth

is, what virtue is, and, if allowed, will lead humankind to integrity and well-being.

Known to Shumei members as 'Kaishusama,' Mrs. Koyama personified the idea of a heart in search of beauty. An example of this spirit is evident in the way Kaishusama entertained the guests that she received. The delicacies on the plates and in the bowls were not the only aspects of a dinner or luncheon party with which she was concerned. It was also important to her that the house, garden, and the lanes around the house be immaculate and tidy, so that her guests could enjoy a



Mihoko Koyama with her children.

ed funny that even when they became bigger, they would not leave their mother's lap. But it was understandable because they could not have this time together with their mother from morning till night. They felt themselves adored when they were with her.

Kaishusama continued to live her life of devotion not just for one or two years, but also for all these years up till the present. I really admire her. Some people might wonder if there is any love at home between mother and children in the course of such a life. But her simple actions, aglow with the sincerity of helping others, need no words of explanation.

These actions speak for themselves and touch people's hearts around us. In turn, such a family will be well looked after, and blessed with a solid foundation of true communication and love.

stroll on the grounds, if they wished. The room in which the guests were served was decorated with paintings and scrolls that corresponded to the time of year, and, of course, there were always superbly arranged flowers of the season on display.

When socializing with her guests, she approached each of them with a broad, panoramic view and simultaneously with a concentrated focus that allowed her to grasp the whole at a glance. Moreover, her hospitality was always warmhearted and genial. She truly wanted to please others and make them happy.

Kaishusama constantly applied her aesthetic sensibilities, her 'eye,' to the particulars of her daily life. The serving dishes she used were all chosen for their beauty. Freeing her mind of fixed ideas and conformist biases, she often would use unlikely objects as vessels to hold flowers, such as a discarded pot that had collapsed in the kiln but yet retained an intriguing shape. Thus, her floral arrangements were always soothing to the eye, and often more captivating than those that relied on conventional vases.

It is significant that all the furnishings a person buys for daily use are expressions of the buyer's heart. However, most of us neither care nor believe enough in the power of beauty to express what is best in ourselves. Kaishusama was an exception. Her approach to art was neither dogmatic nor rigid, yet there was no vagueness in her aesthetic judgment; it was a clear-sighted quest for that which is beautiful, and her decisions to acquire these objects were often swift and decisive.

She was fond of Shigaraki ware<sup>3</sup> and had a collection of Shigaraki pottery. In 1999, the Miho displayed 180 Shigaraki pieces for a special exhibition. Only pieces of the highest quality from eminent collectors were shown. Among all those masterpieces, one Shigaraki vase stood out in particular in its austere elegance. It radiated a dignity that I immediately recognized. It was part of Kaishusama's collection. As with all the art that she collected, her approach was not overly programmatic. The

3. Established as a center of pottery in medieval times, Shigaraki is one of Japan's great "Six Old Kilns." Presently, it has over ten thousand operating kilns. Traditional Shigaraki ware is unglazed and rustic in form. Its particularly rich appearance is due to the unique quality of the white clay found in the area, and its distinctive coloration derives from pine ash used during firing. Its splendid diversity of color and texture arises from the varying distances of the kiln's flames from areas of its surface. Looking at Shigaraki ware, it seems as if Japan's rich natural environment and seasonal changes are captured in each piece. Each has a highly individual appearance, brimming with an allure firmly rooted in a uniquely Japanese sensibility. Shigaraki is the nearest town to Shumei's headquarters at Misono and the Miho Museum.

1. Hoshishas are members of Shumei who perform hoshi, sacred work done on behalf of Shumei's mission to promote the betterment of humankind.

2. The Villa Miho is a grand traditional Japanese residence built in the sukiya style of fine and rare woods, located at Shumei's International Center at Misono, Japan. It is used as a reception facility for special occasions.



The interior of the Miho Museum's entrance hall with a view to the Shigaraki Mountains and two other structures that Kaishusama commissioned, Meishusama Hall and the Joy of Angels bell tower in Misono (far left). Photo by Sumio Koike

point is that Kaishusama bought Shigaraki pottery not because she primarily wanted a collection of Shigaraki ware, but because she was drawn to each piece individually. For her, beauty did not exist independently of the objects perceived to be beautiful. Beauty was not found in abstract ideas, but only in the shape, color, and texture of a physical object. Therefore, beauty existed not in general notions of 'Shigaraki ware,' but in individual examples of pottery from Shigaraki.

Kaishusama lived with a clear standard of beauty. If you are a person who is aware of your own tastes, you will understand. When you have a definite sense of what you find beautiful, the objects that you acquire reflect your character; that is to say, what you collect shows who you are. For this reason, we can still perceive Kaishusama's character and presence directly through the artistic legacy that she has left us. She said that "seeking beauty is seeking God." Kaishusama was a deeply spiritual person and we can sense her love of God through the works of art that she left for us to enjoy.

At the Miho Museum's restaurant and the tearoom, we can sense Kaishusama's wish to make others happy in every aspect of these eateries, from the shape and color of the serving dishes and the freshly cut flowers to the layout of the menus. She truly believed that the world could fundamentally change for the better if more people cultivated their hearts to seek out beauty and applied this search for the beautiful to every aspect of life, agriculture, education, lifestyle, and so on.

*If you seek happiness, look at beautiful things.*

*If you seek a kind heart, reach out and encounter beautiful things.*

*If you seek a smile, if you want to know the eternal, Turn your thoughts to beautiful things.*

*If you want to know perfection, if you want a believing heart,*

*Then look long and carefully at beautiful things.*

This is the prologue of "Legend of Peach Valley," written by Shomei Yo, the well-known author of graphic books. The story concerns a mystical experience an exhausted traveler has when visiting the Miho Museum. The visitor is soothed and healed by beauty's power. After reading this modern version of "Peach Blossom Valley"<sup>4</sup> I lazed in its balmy afterglow. I felt inspired, as if I were the weary traveler who had found relief and happiness.

The foundation of Kaishusama's convictions was set when she was a very young woman. After graduating from a girls' high school in Osaka, she attended the famed Jiyu Gakuen, known as the Freedom School, in Tokyo. The school was founded in 1921 by Yoshikazu Hani and Motoko Hani, prominent

4. The Chinese classic "Peach Blossom Valley," by poet Tao Yuna-ming (365–427 AD), tells the story of a fisherman who rowed upstream and came upon a grove of peach trees deep in the mountains. In the midst of the trees, he found a cave that led to an earthly paradise untouched by war or famine. The fisherman later returned to his own village, but could never find heaven on earth again. The story was I.M. Pei's inspiration for the Miho Museum.

educators who instilled in their students the spirit of progressive Christianity. The philosophy of the school was that once a person is born into society, one should contribute to society. This concept was what attracted Kaishusama to the school. The rigorous dormitory life at Freedom School engendered within her a spirit of service to others and also self-reliance. The institution's motto was "Thinking, Living, and Praying." Looking back on her school life, she later said that this enterprising environment helped form her personality. The base of her great achievements was largely influenced by her experiences there.

Later on, Kaishusama met her lifelong mentor, Mokichi Okada. In him she found a kindred spirit, and closely identified his philosophy with her own aspirations. She expressed his ideals through the Natural Agriculture<sup>5</sup> activities in which Shumei is involved and the building of the Miho Museum, both of which brought Shumei its present status as a worldwide organization.

The Miho Museum has a clear vision and mission. Its purpose is to purify and uplift the human heart through beauty, and in doing so, help bring greater harmony and balance to the world. By visiting the Miho one might be inspired to share in the world of truth, virtue, and beauty that Kaishusama sought. In that sense its founding was the journey's end for a heart in search of beauty.

The objects in the Miho collection were selected primarily on the basis of what was perceived as their inherent beauty. This approach to collecting is based on the idea that the value of a work of art is the result of the artist's focus and vision, and that this same focus and vision is imbued in the artwork and is inseparable from it. Every art object that Kaishusama collected has this quality. When viewing an object, she did not attempt to be overly analytical, but instead allowed the object to radiate its own innate qualities. In a sense, she allowed each piece to speak to her directly. This required a way of seeing and concentrating one's attentions on an art in such a way that the boundaries between the viewer and object dissolve, and the object's qualities become those of the viewer. Eventually, the object and viewer are one. It is at that moment when the color, texture, and shape of the physical object are sensed and recognized as beautiful that the spirit of an art object directly touches and nourishes the heart, a heart in search of beauty.

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

During one of the meetings concerning the construction of the Miho Museum, I recall one of I.M. Pei's staff asking Kaishusama, "What is your favorite artwork from your collection?" Kaishusama smiled and said, "All of them." She was very satisfied with her collection and felt that, as a whole, it perfectly represented her aspirations. The collection itself epitomized her acts and deeds. Her mentor, Meishusama, believed that beauty has a power to elevate and refine the world. That belief was distilled in Kaishusama with a very fine filter, and the creation of the Miho Museum was the result. The museum was created as a place where people from throughout the world, from all cultural backgrounds and national identities, could come together to celebrate the artistry of humankind.

She had a clear and strong vision of art and art's role in the world. Yet, she taught us that what was important was not necessarily to follow the paths that she had trod, but rather to seek in art what she was seeking by relying on one's own judgment.

One day Kaishusama asked me, "Did you buy anything lately?" The question was so unlikely, so sudden, that I was dumbfounded. I could not answer. She went on, "Buy what you find really beautiful. You need small things to furnish your day-to-day life, don't you? If there is something that you long for, and if you can get it by pushing yourself a little further, you should have it, even if you will have to bear the absence of other things. The things you obtain with effort, you will love and take good care of. While using that object with love and care, that object will help you to evolve to a new level, and you will be able to see without too much effort what you could not see before. You will be able to make judgments from a higher point of view."

The idea that material things could guide a person to new heights of awareness puzzled me. I was skeptical, but I tried to follow Kaishusama's advice. I wandered around the city center for half a day. I stopped at a shop that had an atmosphere that attracted me. When I opened the door to look inside, I stood rooted in the spot. The spaces between the

*A small, hanging flower arrangement by Kaishusama set in a stalk of bamboo.*



objects on display, the way they were positioned, seemed so beautiful. Slowly, I started to walk around and soon one teacup caught my eye. As I looked at it, I was touched. It was as if I were meeting a good friend or a sweetheart after a very long absence.

Once home with my new cup, I filled it with some newly brewed tea. It was the usual tea I bought and served myself, but its flavor was much better than I could ever remember. The new taste had something to do with the tactile quality of the cup's edge against my lips. This was all very mysterious.

This experience did not stop there; it recurred again and again. First with a saucer for my new teacup, then a new teapot, and then a fine tray on which to serve it. Gradually, my acquisitions expanded to furniture and fixtures. As the years rolled by, I found that the blank space that once was my life was being filled with beauty. My personal environment had been transformed into something that seemed like the beginning of fulfillment. My life changed.

It started to change with just one teacup. Now, when I go to a bookstore, certain books on the shelves seem to beckon me. I find that the information I need to work and live now comes to me at exactly the right time and in just the right amount. This seems miraculous because I used to think that there was a glut of information, too much information to deal with out there. Gradually, these experiences led me to a deeper comprehension and awareness of who I am.

When we acquire for our daily lives what we find beautiful, and use these objects with care and affection, our lives become integrated with these objects, and they in turn show who we are. Simply put, beauty as a way of life is the very heart of Shumei's philosophy.

Not long ago some young people and I were walking up a path in the valley beneath the Miho Museum. We were following the same route that Kaishusama had once walked by herself. The museum, Misono's bell tower, and the roofline of Meishusama Hall<sup>6</sup>

6. Meishusama Hall is the centerpiece of Shumei's International Center at Misono, Japan. Designed by Minoru Yamasaki and built in 1983, it is considered one of the modern world's foremost engineering feats. It holds over 5,000 people.

were all visible. I spread my hand in front of my eyes to conceal these structures, to remove them one by one from my sight. I wanted to get an idea of how the valley appeared when Kaishusama first saw it, when there was just the view of untouched evergreen mountains. I imagined her walking alone through this wilderness. As I started to inch my hand from the picture, little by little I could trace the story of Kaishusama's influence on the mountains. In the same order as they had been built, first Meishusama Hall came into view, then



*The rustic elegance of Shigaraki pottery is evident in this Muromachi period jar that Kaishusama acquired for the Miho Museum's collection.*

the Joy of Angels bell tower,<sup>7</sup> and at last the museum's expansive edifice. Kaishusama's image disappeared from my mind. Instead of her image, I sensed her spirit, a spirit in search of beauty that resides in all the structures seen from the valley path—the same spirit that lives on in the art that she collected, as well as in each ear of rice that was planted in a Natural Agriculture paddy. Her spirit remains.

Perhaps if, with care and love, we cultivate within ourselves a heart that searches out beauty, we might someday meet with Kaishusama's spirit. Perhaps, if we do, she might smile and comment on our journey.

7. 'Joy of Angels' is the name given to Misono's carillon tower. The structure was designed by I.M. Pei. Its fifty bells were cast at the famed Eijsbouts Bell Foundry in The Netherlands.

She might say, "Yes! Seeking what is beautiful is seeking God. Wasn't it wonderful to have made the pilgrimage on your own two feet?"

Watching the lush mountains and the vast expanse of sky above, I give more than a passing thought to Kaishusama's great love.

**Editor's Note:** Naoki Kaneko will visit North America to give presentations concerning Kaishusama and the Miho Museum in December of this year. He will be at the Shumei America National Center in Pasadena, California on December 9, 2007 at 2:00 p.m., and at The Shumei International Institute's headquarters in Crestone, Colorado on December 11, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

If you would like more information concerning these events, for Pasadena call 1-626-584-8841 between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Pacific Time, for Crestone call (719) 256-5284 between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Mountain Time.

If you would like to order a copy of Shomei Yo's "Legend of Peach Valley," please call the Shumei America Gift Shop at 1-626-584-8841 between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (PST, USA) or you can send an e-mail message to [giftshop@shumei.org](mailto:giftshop@shumei.org).

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## OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Natural Agriculture and Global Warming

Al Sattler and Jim Stewart (USA)

*For more than thirty years Al Sattler has been an active member of the Sierra Club. Within that distinguished organization he has held various leadership positions, including that of Chairman of the Angeles Chapter Conservation Committee. Currently he serves on the Chapter's Global Warming, Energy and Air Quality Committee. Putting his ideals into practice he grows organic fruit in his own backyard and buys most of his other produce from local farmers' markets. Al Sattler is a chemist by profession and an environmentalist by avocation.*

*Jim Stewart earned his Ph.D. in Nuclear Physics from Yale University. He was formerly Assistant Professor of Physics at the University of New Haven and did research in nuclear and chemical physics. He has also held the position of Associate Director of the Southern California Council on Environment and Development. Currently, Jim is Executive Director of People for Parks. He also is Organizing Director for Earth Day Los Angeles, as well as Chief Environmental Scientist for Best Technology Company. He is co-chair of the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter Air Quality and Global Warming Committee. In addition, he teaches Physical Science and Biology at the University of the West.*

*The following article is drawn from a presentation prepared by Al Sattler and Jim Stewart and presented by Al Sattler last January at the 2007 Natural Agriculture Conference at Shumei America's National Center in Pasadena. The text has been edited and abridged for use in SHUMEI Magazine.*

The idea that humanity produces gasses that will change our climate is at least one hundred years old. Let us first look at the natural greenhouse gas process. The light of the sun hits the earth, is absorbed, and the earth then radiates heat. If there were no greenhouse gasses in our air, the earth's average temperature would be a chilly zero degrees Fahrenheit. The greenhouse gasses that are naturally present in our air are water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide.

One theory, known as the Gaia Hypothesis,<sup>1</sup> says that the many organisms, which make up life on earth, interact to maintain our planet in a state that is hospitable for life. For example, if our planet gets too cold, organisms will do something to warm it up. However, humanity now has a dominant position on our planet and is moving outside of Gaia and the interaction of all the other organisms. Our actions have been producing a large amount of greenhouse gasses, especially carbon dioxide, which is created when anything is burned. We are also producing methane gas, nitrous oxide, and fluorocarbons, causing our planet to heat up.

The chart at right on the opposite page shows the temperature changes that have taken place on our planet for the last thousand years to our present day, and how the temperature is now taking a very sharp turn upward. About ten or twenty years ago scientists did enough modeling to say that around the year 2000 we would be able to see our planet heating up, and they were right.

In particular, the concentration of carbon dioxide is increasing. Although it is not the only greenhouse gas, this is the gas that people focus on the most because it is the one we produce the most. After thousands of years of carbon dioxide concentrations at no higher than 290 parts per million, we now have concentrations at over 380 parts per million. When we think of 300 parts per million, which at 0.03% is less than 1%, it does not seem like a lot, but it is enough to absorb some of the heat that would otherwise radiate back out to space, effectively warming our planet.

One scientist, Dr. Charles David Keeling,<sup>2</sup> decided to study the concentration of carbon dioxide on our planet. He began in 1958, on top of the Mauna Loa volcano in Hawaii, far away from factories. After two years his studies showed that our carbon dioxide concentration was increasing. Before the Keeling study people assumed that the ocean would absorb all the carbon dioxide that humans were creating. In the spring and summer plants grow and breathe in the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. In the fall and winter they do not grow or absorb carbon dioxide and so the concentration level in the atmosphere spikes upward. The plants and the ocean are not able to take care of all the carbon dioxide that we are creating. In the last 50 years, the carbon dioxide level has been increasing by about one and one half parts per million per year, however the rate is now over two parts per million per year.

When we combine carbon and oxygen in the burning process we get carbon dioxide. So, burning coal to make electricity is in particular one of the worst things we can do because it adds more carbon to oxygen than any other fuel. Natural gas at least has some hydrogen in it and is mostly methane, but still produces plenty of carbon dioxide when burned.

Estimates for rising planetary temperatures are based on computer models. It took a long time before climatologists were satisfied with the quality of those models and in order to test them they ran them using past environmental conditions. They knew what the historical conditions were. If the results of the model matched what actually happened, then they concluded that the model was working. Even so, there are a range of estimates for what our future temperature is going to be and part of what determines our future temperature will be based on how much carbon dioxide we produce. If we manage to keep our carbon dioxide levels, and other greenhouse gasses, to our present concentration levels, we will avoid catastrophic planetary effects. If the global temper-

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1. For information concerning the Gaia Hypothesis see: <http://www.mountainman.com.au/gaia.html>

2. For more information concerning Dr. Charles David Keeling visit: [http://earthguide.ucsd.edu/globalchange/keeling\\_curve/01.html](http://earthguide.ucsd.edu/globalchange/keeling_curve/01.html)

## Regions Vulnerable to Sea Level Risk

ature increases exponentially we will be in real trouble as a civilization. The extent to which we manage to control our emission of greenhouse gases will determine if we will have greater or lesser climate change.

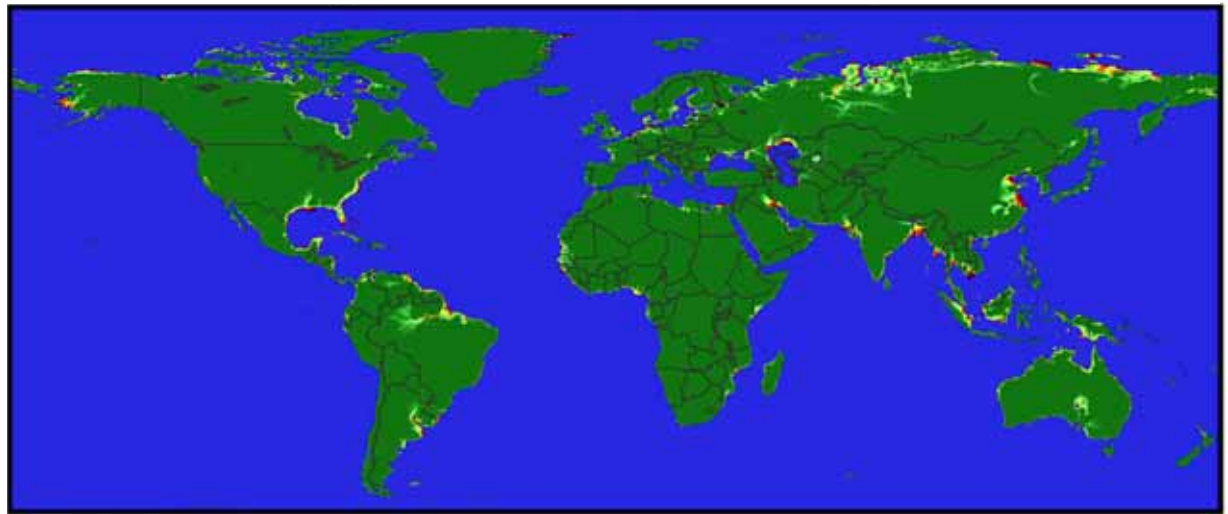
We can compare recent photos of glaciers, which are melting, to historical photos. The effects of planetary warming are obvious and astonishing. The following map shows what our world would look like if the sea level were to rise 250 feet. Florida would be mostly under water and the Amazon Basin would be a big estuary. We do not believe it is going to rise that much for several centuries, but if almost all of our glacial ice melted the sea level would rise just about 250 feet. Our sea level is expected to rise, partly because the water will be getting warmer and will be expanding, but also because of various glaciers melting into the oceans. Some estimates predict that soon the ocean will be two to three feet higher, but if some glaciers melt faster than expected, the sea level could rise greater than the estimated two or three feet.

Hurricanes get their energy from warm water. If we increase our planetary temperature, and the temperature of water, there is more energy to pump into hurricanes. Katrina crossed a patch of warm water and suddenly gained a lot of energy just in a few days. No one is saying that we will have more hurricanes, but the hurricanes we do have will be more energetic and damaging. The insurance industry is very worried about global warming catastrophes.

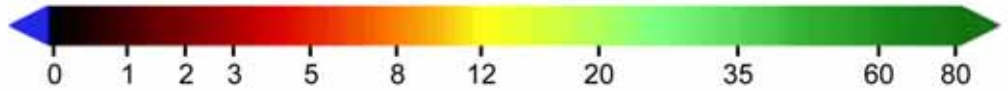
*A comparison of ten different published reconstructions of mean temperature changes during the last 1000 years. More recent reconstructions are plotted towards the front and in redder colors, older reconstructions towards the back in bluer hues. An instrumental history of temperatures is also shown in black. The Medieval Warm Period and the Little Ice Age are labeled at roughly the times they are believed to have occurred, though it is still unclear whether these were global or only regional events.*

*Note that it is unknown which, if any, of these reconstructions is an accurate representation of climate history; however, these curves are a fair representation of the range of results that have appeared in the published scientific literature to date. It is significant that the general curves of all these reconstructions indicate that the mean temperature of the earth is increasing.*

*Temperatures are given on the Celsius scale. Chart courtesy of Global Warming Art.*



Height above  
Sea Level (m)



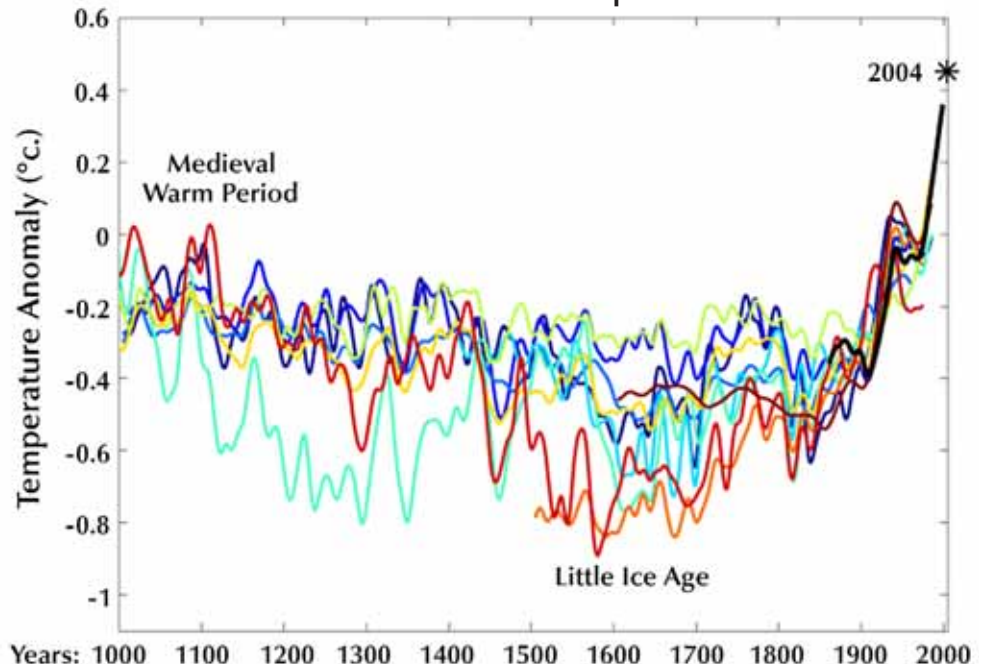
*The two topographic maps above and right, one of the world, the other of Florida, emphasize regions that might be vulnerable to a rise in sea level. Areas in warmer colors are closer to sea level and therefore more prone to floods and submersion.*

*Measurements are in meters. Charts courtesy of Global Warming Art.*



We are also experiencing heat waves, but global climate change also will cause some areas to become cooler. Our civilization has evolved while enjoying a nice, stable temperature. However, some past civilizations were destroyed by climate changes. The American Indians of the Southwest had a terrible drought and were not able to practice agriculture for a time. It is possible that a change in weather was involved in the end of the Maya civilization and other ear-

## Reconstructed Temperatures



lier civilizations. We might well be in for much worse changes than those suffered by past civilizations.

Agriculture is a big issue in California. If our climate warms up too much, our snow pack in the Sierras will melt too quickly. Snow normally serves as a reservoir for us as it slowly melts during the summer. If there is not enough snow and ice to slowly melt during the summer, or if it all melts too quickly in the springtime, causing floods, we will not have water to irrigate our summer crops. We do not get summer rains in Los Angeles, and that is true for most of California as well, so we really depend on irrigation for agriculture.

It is estimated that the USA's agriculture would suffer economically from global climate change. Realizing this, some people might say, "We will just move farther north for our agriculture." Recently the Los Angeles Times published an article about wine makers around the world who are saying that because their climates are becoming warmer, they will not be able to grow their usual variety of grapes. Up till now farmers have been used to fairly stable temperatures and climates.

Scientists now say that approximately 18 to 30 percent of our plant and animal species will become extinct because of global warming. Part of the problem is that our civilization has fenced in many wild areas, while surrounding them with civilization, forcing plants and animals into isolated islands where they cannot migrate north when the climate becomes too warm. The Australian author of "The Weathermakers," the wildlife biologist Tim Flannery, became involved in the issue of global warming when he discovered that the natural habitats he cared for were being damaged by global warming. He states angrily, "The impending destruction of Australia's wet tropical rainforests is a biological disaster on the horizon and the generation held responsible will be cursed by those who come after. What will they tell their children if their increasingly larger homes, four-wheel drives, and refusal to ratify the Kyoto Treaty<sup>3</sup> cost them the nation's foremost natural jewels?"

Some people might say, "If we increase the carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, it will make plants grow better, because plants use carbon dioxide." True, some plants do grow better, but others do not. It turns out that some of the plants that grow better are the plants that we do not want, weeds such as poison oak. Warmer temperatures are also more favorable for many insect pests. We are already seeing more forest fires because the

forests are stressed from drought. Insects are also attacking and killing forests where the trees are stressed.

We are seeing many changes in vegetation around the planet. Tundra is becoming forest and areas usually covered with permafrost are melting. Who is doing this? We all are. The United States produces almost the largest amount of carbon dioxide per capita in the world. China is also high in carbon dioxide production. This year, China will exceed the United States in total emissions. By 2031, India will probably have a larger population than China, because India is not working to control its overpopulation problem. In California we are taking steps to reduce our production of carbon dioxide. California law now prohibits electric utilities from making new contracts for using coal to generate electricity, which is a good thing. We are also not finding much oil around the world, so oil is at a peak, while our population is still rising.

We need to make sure that our food supply is good, and we believe that is why Natural Agriculture is very important. Being conservative with water is also important, as well as buying local produce when possible. Transporting food long distances uses a lot of energy and that does not help our planet.

The governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger,<sup>4</sup> realizes that global climate change is a problem. In 2006 he signed an executive order to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions here in California. In addition, AB32, the Global Warming Solutions Act, passed in 2006, will work towards a reduction in gas emissions. Once implemented, these steps will put California beyond the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol. We need to put market mechanisms in place to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions. We are going to have to work harder than the Kyoto Protocol suggests and we need to start now.

Some people will say, "It is too expensive. We can't stop burning fuel." The Stern Report,<sup>5</sup> published in Great Britain, estimated that by using one percent of our global economic production we could avoid ecological disasters that would cost 20 percent of our global production in the future. This is a worthwhile investment and we have the technical means to do it, we just need to decide to make the necessary changes.

Animal agriculture is responsible for a significant amount of greenhouse gases.

Methane, which is produced by cattle flatulence, is actually 21 times more potent a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Nitrous oxide is what the dentists give you as an anesthetic, but it is also a very potent greenhouse gas. It absorbs heat very well, is about 170 times more potent a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, and it will stay in our atmosphere longer. Industrial agriculture produces a lot of nitrous oxide because ammonia is applied to the soil as a fertilizer. Using pure ammonia in the soil kills the organisms that live in the earth and some of this ammonia is converted to nitrous oxide. Natural Agriculture and organic farming are ways to avoid nitrous oxide production and can make a very important contribution towards the overall reduction of our greenhouse gases. If everyone on our planet practiced Natural Agriculture, methane would still be produced by livestock, but good soil would absorb that methane; limited use of fossil fuels would still produce carbon dioxide, but good soil and healthy plants could absorb much of it. Nitrous oxide is produced by manure and the overuse of fertilizers, neither of which are ever used in Natural Agriculture.

There are other ill effects caused by industrial agriculture, like anaerobic dead zones in oceans, which are caused by waste runoff from concentrated animal feeding operations, where many cattle, pigs, or chickens are kept in small, contained places, and their manure is not treated. The waste runs into the streams and then down into the ocean. It acts as a fertilizer, the algae then begins to overproduce, then dies and rots. The algae decomposition absorbs all the free oxygen in the water, a process called 'oxygen demand,' until there is no oxygen left. Without oxygen that part of the ocean cannot support fish or higher life forms and thus becomes a dead zone.

Here are some things you can do personally to improve this situation. Try to reduce your production of carbon dioxide as much as possible. Use compact fluorescent bulbs to reduce the use of electricity. Purchase a smaller car that is as fuel efficient as possible. You can also go online to one of several different organizations, estimate the amount of emissions you produce, and pay them to offset your carbon dioxide production by helping to pay for a new wind turbine, the planting of trees, or various other environmental efforts to reduce climate change.

Drive less, bicycle more, do not waste water—reduce, reuse, and recycle. Every new item that you buy requires energy to create it. If you can reuse something instead of buying something new, you are saving energy and producing less carbon dioxide. There are significant subsidies presently available to

3. For information about the Kyoto Protocol visit:  
<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.htm>

4. For information about California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signing the Executive Order visit:  
<http://gov.ca.gov/index.php?press-release/5174/>

5. For information concerning the Stern Report visit:  
[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent\\_reviews/stern\\_review\\_economics\\_climate\\_change/stern\\_review\\_report.cfm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/stern_review_report.cfm)



*The photographer Gary Braasch holds a 1932 image of Glacier Broggi in the Peruvian Andes made by Hans Kinzl of Austria against the same scene as seen today. Andean glaciers and those of other tropical mountains are melting rapidly. Photograph © 2007 Gary Braasch.*

homeowners to help pay for insulation and the installation of solar panels on your roof to generate electricity and hot water.

On the heels of the release of former Vice President Al Gore's documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth," the topic of Global Warming finally made the cover of Time Magazine. However, there was concern even as far back as 1988 when the story made the cover of Newsweek. We recommend that you see the Gore movie, which is now available for rental or purchase on DVD, and read the book. To better understand the scientific information, please take the time to visit the websites recommended in the footnotes of this article.

**Editor's Note:** Engaging in arguments as to the scientific details of global warming or its causes is outside the scope of SHUMEI Magazine. However, we feel that, as a conscious and intelligent species, we have an ethical responsibility to recognize the dangers and take care of our planet and all life upon it.

## Global Warming Made Visible

### Exhibition and Conference

A one-day interfaith conference entitled "Global Warming Made Visible" will be held on November 10, 2007, from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm, at Shumei Hall in Shumei America's National Center in Pasadena, California. This event is being sponsored by Shumei America, the Southern California Organizing Com-

mittee for the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR), and the Southern California Ecumenical Council.

This conference is the first of a series and is being held to support dialogue between the world's religions on the issue of climate change. The goal of the CPWR is to advance interfaith dialogue, understanding, and cooperation on the global level. The Southern California Committee for the CPWR, under the direction of co-chair Pastor Jeff Utter, is co-sponsoring this conference because of that organization's belief that climate change might very well be the first completely global issue in all of human history, and that religions need to urge people to address this challenge.

American photojournalist Gary Braasch, who has documented natural history and environmental issues since 1975, will give a presentation on global warming at the conference, and many of his images will be on display in the Shumei Hall Gallery in Pasadena from November 10 through December 10, 2007. The exhibition is sponsored by the Shumei Arts Council of America and supported in part by Shumei International Institute. One of Mr. Braasch's striking images appears as the cover photo for this issue of SHUMEI Magazine, and another in our story on global warming by Al Sattler and Jim Stewart, above. These images appear in Mr. Braasch's book, "Earth Under Fire: How Global Warming is Changing the World," published in 2007 by University of California Press.<sup>1</sup>

Eight years ago Mr. Braasch began an extraordinary journey around the world to

observe and document environmental changes resulting from the warming of our climate. In his new book he brings us along to witness firsthand what he discovered as he crossed both the Antarctic and Arctic Circles, trekked to above 15,000 feet in the Andes, dove in the waters around damaged coral reefs, and followed scientists into the field in Europe, Asia, and North America.

Featuring more than one hundred photographs, including before-and-after comparisons, "Earth under Fire" records species, cultures, and entire ecosystems that are at risk due to the receding glaciers, eroding coastlines, rising sea levels, and thawing permafrost. Braasch's powerful, eye-opening images show glacial retreat from the Alps to the Andes, coastal erosion threatening native villages from Alaska to Bangladesh, and other direct evidence that global warming is happening right now.

Braasch's text is equally compelling. His on-the-scene reporting introduces teams of scientists who are documenting rapid climate change on all seven continents, and tells personal stories of the people whose lives are being disrupted. "As a witness to climate change, I have stood in the empty rookeries of displaced Adelie penguins and felt the chill as huge icebergs separated from an ice shelf in Antarctica," writes Braasch in his Introduction. "I have heard the anguish in the voices of native Alaskans as they describe their village being washed away, of Chinese farmers facing famine caused by drought, and of Pacific Islanders driven from their homes by increasingly high tides."

In-depth and thoroughly researched, "Earth under Fire" discusses the science behind climate change and the larger implications for business, governments, and societies. It describes the danger of our continued dependence on fossil fuel and addresses the critical question, "What should we do—individually and as a society." But Earth under Fire is not just a warning. "Fortunately, there is a great deal we can do, and many of us have already begun," writes Braasch. "The shape of this change is visible already. Many people, companies, and nations...are already reducing their impact on the atmosphere." The book's final section outlines the alternative energy sources now available and shows how they are being used worldwide.

For more information concerning the conference and exhibition, please contact Jane Imai at **1-626-584-8841**.

1. For information concerning "Earth under Fire: How Global Warming is Changing the World," and Gary Braasch's photographs, please visit [www.ucpress.edu](http://www.ucpress.edu), [www.worldviewofglobalwarming.org](http://www.worldviewofglobalwarming.org), and [www.braaschphotography.com](http://www.braaschphotography.com).

# REFLECTIONS OF LIGHT

## Hoshi: Finding the Heart of Beauty

Eri Ohata (USA)

*Eri Ohata became a Shumei member in 1990. Currently she works in Shumei's International Department. Among her duties is managing traffic for Shumei's websites. Her plans for the future include working for the betterment of humanity and the environment through Shumei association as an NGO with the United Nations. She strongly feels that the world is ready for Shumei's voice to be heeded and that Shumei's endeavors can contribute significantly to solving some of the world's problems.*

I spent a year in Misono, Shumei's international headquarters in Japan, where I participated in Misono's hoshi program.<sup>1</sup> I went there to learn the heart of hoshi. It turned out to be a very great experience as well as a learning process for me.

Without Koji Nakamura<sup>2</sup> I would have never gone. He kept on recommending it to me, and for ten months kept persisting in his proposal that I join the program, despite my definite "no." Now, I must truly thank him for pushing me to do it. I also want to give special thanks to Sensei Eugene Imai for his patience and generosity. I am not easy to convince, but Eugene Sensei was always receptive and agreeable to whatever I said, and this helped me decide to go to Misono. Eugene Sensei was never demanding. He once told me, "I want you to learn about 'beauty' in Misono, the beauty that has been handed down to Kaicho-Sensei<sup>3</sup> from Kaishusama." At that moment when I got my assignment "to learn Beauty," I was still not sure what those words meant. I found the answer in Misono.

1. Shumei's International Center in Misono employs hundreds of volunteers to maintain its facilities. To be a 'hoshisha' in Misono is considered a spiritual practice of the first order.

2. Koji Nakamura was the Shumei Taiko Ensemble's first leader. He now lives in Pasadena, where he is involved in promoting taiko groups throughout North America.

3. 'Kaicho-Sensei' is an honorific name used when referring to Ms Hiroko Koyama, the current president of Shumei.

*Eri Ohata as a hoshisha at Shigaraki No Sato.*

Misono manifests perfect beauty with its Meishusama Hall, the Joy of Angels bell tower, the gardens, and the other buildings and art objects. They were all created by distinguished architects, garden designers, and sculptors. Everything in the sacred area of Misono is a work of art, surrounded by an abundance of natural beauty, and there are varieties of beauty in each seasonal transition.

In April 2006, I became a freshman hoshisha. There were fifty-eight other young people in my group. In Misono, there are several facilities that have to be kept clean and beautiful. To learn the heart of hoshi, one mainly cleans and keeps things in order. The first department I was assigned to was 'Oniwa,' which is gardening. It was physically demanding at the beginning, but soon I started loving it. All day long I was outside on the sacred grounds, watering, weeding, and sweeping. Nature was just so great. Watching Meishusama Hall and the Joy of Angels with their perfect symmetry and proportions, the sky with its floating clouds, the beautiful sunsets with their shifting colors, and the diversity of flowers, I found myself very happy to be there.

In August, I was transferred to the Kitchen Department. This, too, was physically challenging for me, particularly working there for such long hours. It was especially hard for me to be inside of a building. In addition, in the Kitchen Department I had to follow unwritten rules regarding behavior and how to talk in a very structural and hierarchical manner. It was mentally difficult.

Fortunately, none too soon, I was transferred to the Natural Agriculture Department, where I did farm work at Shigaraki no Sato,<sup>4</sup> headquarters of the Natural Agriculture Network. I was back in nature again, and had lovely experiences and met nice and interesting people while learning about Natural Agriculture, as well.

As winter approached, before it got too cold to work in the fields, I was luckily transferred to the Miho Museum. However, the Miho is not open in wintertime. So, I did usher duty for only four days before the museum closed. During my time there, I had the good fortune to listen to a series of special, personal lectures given by the curators.

4. Shigaraki-no-sato is a cultural heritage site near Misono and the Miho Museum, where two traditional Japanese farmhouses have been relocated and restored, and where a model Natural Agriculture farm is located.



They generously shared the experiences they'd had with Kaishusama, how they got involved with the museum, and their views on the power of art and beauty. I asked many questions. They answered all of them, dispelling my skepticism.

Here, I must confess that I have been a Shumei member for seventeen years, and for the first seven of those years I was completely dedicated to Jyorei activities. I had witnessed many people, including myself, change and become more altruistic through Jyorei. I had seen what the power and action of prayer could do for others. I knew what Jyorei could do, but did not quite understand the correlation between developing an aesthetic eye and becoming a helpful person to others.

Yoko Azuma,<sup>5</sup> a curator at the Miho, once told me that Kaishusama used to say, "Try to look at things that are first class, the beautiful and the best, on a daily basis, and you will be happy." Yoko said, "When you see beauty that inspires you reflected in the best, it gives you a feeling of warmth and happiness, and a moment of tranquility. With growing awareness of such small but clear personal experiences, you will gradually retain this feeling within you. Then, you can apply this feeling within yourself to make decisions within your daily life—with whom you will meet, how you talk with people, how you treat others, what you think, and what things you buy, how you arrange your environment, and so on. When you act in accordance with your feeling of warmth and happiness, you are making a right decision for yourself and for others."

5. Yoko Azuma has been a curator with the Miho Museum in Shigaraki, Japan since its opening nearly ten years ago. Her specialty is Buddhist and oriental art, and her duties include educational projects for young students and lecturing on behalf of the Museum. She has been a Shumei Member since 1982.

Akiyoshi Hatanaka<sup>6</sup> told me that he learned much from the art workshop that Kaishusama hosted, i.e. “Be inspired and delighted by seeing the best in quality and beauty.” He explained that being inspired occurs not in our minds, but in our hearts and spirits. By being inspired often, one can polish the mirror of his or her heart, which will eventually take one to a higher stage where one can see and tell what is real and what is not. It is exactly the same as purifying your soul.

Mr. Kaneko, another curator, was even more practical. He said, “It requires training to see. There are three main ways to use your eyes and see things: to see, to look at, and to watch. To ‘see’ means that you are seeing objects without intention. To ‘look at’ is to see an object with intention. In contrast, ‘to watch’ means that you really pay attention to the object. When you pay attention, try to feel, understand, and be open to the object with a tranquil mind and love, you will start seeing it with the vision of your soul—your ‘third eye.’ It is then that you will see the invisible in the object. If you always practice this way of seeing, you will be able to grasp both the entire atmosphere and the details of an object at a glance. Attaining an aesthetic eye is just the same as other spiritual practices. Kaishusama said, ‘Seeking beautiful things is seeking God.’”

Mr. Kaneko also told me that he felt that Shumei has a strong spirit that will lead people to truth and virtue through beauty.

These were important lessons for me. I kept the words of those curators in my heart, and kept an eye on the incredible art objects of the Miho's collection while vacuuming the exhibiting rooms. I applied what I had learned in my daily life while back in Misono, as well.

Soon, I realized the unique effect that beauty has. Innately, I have a strong sense of justice. I tend to try to do the right thing, and to be true and fair both to other people and myself. Sometimes, it takes a while for me to take action because I am always asking myself, “Is this right?” “Is it appropriate?” “Is it somebody else's responsibility or is it mine?” “Should I do this or not?” A lot of mental activity goes on, and oftentimes a struggle takes place in my mind while deciding to take action. However, I find that when I focus on my sense of beauty, it is much easier to make decisions. I can come to the same conclusion for an action regardless of whether I am inspired by truth and virtue or inspired by beauty. However, when it's beauty, I can easily take action without going through a mental struggle. It is a shortcut to

action. I can even have fun and enjoy being helpful to others, making a place clean, fixing a problem, or creating beauty and harmony. After I realized this, I did not mind the structured manner and detailed rules for cleaning up in Misono any more, because I could see beauty and harmony in what I did.

After the intensive course in beauty at the Miho Museum, I concluded my hoshi as a freshman at the Kyosoden Department, which covers Meishusama Hall and the sacred grounds. In terms of cleaning, there was no place that needed to be cleaned up, at all. It was already very clean, but the hoshisha cleaned everywhere all the time, anyway. Once, when we were washing off the grounds by Mitarashi, the water fountain where we rinse our mouths and hands before going on to Meishusama Hall, I suddenly noticed a difference in the atmosphere. “We are cleaning the spiritual world in this place!” I exclaimed quietly. When we do hoshi with a pure and beautiful heart, full of joy, gratitude, prayer, and love, we are not only cleaning the physical place, but also purifying the spiritual world of the place as well. I had heard about this idea before, but I really experienced it at that moment. I learned that true beauty is created by pure and loving thought.

Misono is a special place filled with light and love. I had experiences that were overwhelming, and was inspired. I found myself crying a lot in Meishusama Hall with no apparent reason. I believe I have received a lot of light through doing hoshi. I also recognized the pure light in the hearts of the people there.

What I learned from participating in the Hoshi Program at Misono concerned the power of beauty and the heart of hoshi. We do not need an abundance of material wealth to create beauty and harmony in our lives. They come from within our hearts. There is beauty in simplicity, harmony in our environment, only because we ourselves are harmonious. In this way, we can create heaven on earth in an enjoyable and heavenly manner, working more efficiently and effectively as individuals by taking this power of inward beauty and acting with a pure heart. I was also able to integrate all of the three Shumei arts—the art of Jyorei, the art of Natural Agriculture, and appreciation of art and beauty. There is a significant spiritual meaning in practicing all three.

Shumei recently published a pictorial book about Kaishusama: “Feel the Beauty.” I recommend that you read it. The Miho Museum celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. And Kaicho-Sensei announced on Meishusama's birthday last year that Shumei will open a high school in 2010 where young people will learn and cultivate a heart in

search of beauty. Shumei's quest for beauty is ongoing, and I truly feel that we are all being guided in this direction by the spirits of Meishusama and Kaishusama.

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## “END QUOTES”

This issue's ending quotations are by one of 20th century Japan's finest and most influential cultural critics, Hideo Kobayashi (1902—1983). Although primarily a literary critic, he wrote and lectured on a wide range of topics, including history, ethics, and even the game of golf. Among his best-known books are *Watashi no jinseikan* (“My View of Life”) and *Kangaeru hinto* (“Hints for Thinking”).

Toward mid-life he became an antiquities dealer and amassed a large collection of traditional Japanese art. In 2003, an exhibition entitled “The Heart in Search of Beauty,” displaying paintings and antiques from Kobayashi's collection and honoring the hundredth anniversary of the writer's birth, was held at the Miho Museum.

Mr. Kobayashi once wrote:

*The beauty of flowers has no existence.  
What really exists is a beautiful flower.*

Hideo Kobayashi, *Mujo to iukoto*  
(The Meaning of Transience).

*I believe that the issue of beauty lies in each of our own little, specific experiences of beauty, not in complicated, abstract debates. To find something beautiful is to feel the beauty of its form or shape. The heart in search of beauty is the heart in search of the beautiful form and shape of things...*

Hideo Kobayashi, *Bi wo motomeru kokoro*  
(The Heart in Search of Beauty).

Kobayashi's thoughts on the nature of beauty find an affinity with Kaishusama's approach to aesthetics as presented in Naoki Kaneko's article on page 7 of this publication.

“End Quote” is a periodically featured column that appears in SHUMEI Magazine. If you have a favorite quote that you would like to share with our readers, please send it to the End Quote Editor:

**shumei.america@charter.net.**

All quotes must be attributed and include brief biographical material about the author and the sender.

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6. Akiyoshi Hatanaka participated in planning and preparing for the Miho Museum's opening in 1997, and afterwards was named Curator of Japanese Art, taking responsibility for the museum's Japanese ceramics and objects relating to the tea ceremony.

## From the Miho Museum Collection



### Cypress Fan

Japan. Muromachi period (AD 14th to 15th centuries). Wood with color on surface. Length of spokes, 40 cm.

An *ogi* is a type of folding fan. Its name derives from *ogu*, an archaic Japanese word meaning 'to invite' or 'call forth.' *Ogi* were long believed to be objects in which spirits and divine beings dwelt, and were often used to ward off crop-damaging insects or diseases prevalent in summer. Folding fans of this sort also were thought to call forth good health and fertility.

The Miho Museum's Cypress Fan is composed of 27 thin slats of cypress, each 40 centimeters long. Both front and back

are decorated with mica, gold, and silver leaf sprinkled in motifs of trailing clouds and mist. The front has a polychrome motif of pine and maple trees, the back a design of autumn foliage and distant mountains.

This ornately styled fan closely resembles in size, construction, and design the 11 cypress fans of the old shrine treasures preserved at the Kumano Hayatama Grand Shrine, and probably was originally part of that same set.

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