

SHUMEI'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

# SHUMEI

VOL. 279 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2009

## HEARTBREAK and HOPE Remembrances of a Tragic Day in Hong Kong

Kaicho-Sensei with Sensei Kenichi Yasuda,  
Tang Chi Hang, & Yip King Ho

## HEARING AMERICA'S GATHERING VOICES

Sensei Eugene Imai

## THE ZERO POINT FIELD

Sharon Franquemont

**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:** When in bloom, an abundance of delicate flowers of a Chinese Orchid tree greets guests at the main gate of Shumei America National Center in Pasadena. The tree was planted shortly after the National Center was built 16 years ago. When

in full blossom it is covered by a profusion of greens, blues, magentas, and pinks.

Don Riedel, Shumei Magazine's Photo Editor, captured the image.



*A broader view of the Shumei America National Center's Chinese Orchid tree in full bloom.*

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**EDITORIAL POLICY:** Shumei is a spiritual and humanitarian organization committed to furthering the well-being of all humankind. Reflecting this, the editorial stance of SHUMEI Magazine is apolitical and nonpartisan. Nor do we support one religious point of view.

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## EXCERPTS FROM MEISHUSAMA'S TEACHINGS ON

# Kannon's Way

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*This is the nineteenth installment of excerpts from the "Kannon's Way" teachings of Shumei's founder, Mokichi Okada, known as Meishusama, and it is the first installment to appear in this publication in 2009. We are honored to present these writings to English language readers for the first time.*

*The texts used in these excerpts were translated, abridged, and edited by Atsushi Fujimaki and Roy Gibbon for use in SHUMEI Magazine. They were extracted from transcriptions of speeches, question and answer sessions, or from Meishusama's own writings. The excerpt below comes from the question and answer session between Meishusama and his students that took place in June, 1953.*

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### Listening Patiently to Others

Even when the person you are talking with is telling a lie, you should not judge him or her right away. It is better to listen and respond as if he or she were being completely truthful. On the other hand, you must clearly recognize the lie for what it is. To cultivate this attitude you need to be, in a sense, 'lazy' about making your point.

Art dealers sometimes underestimate my aesthetic sensibility and give me unnecessary explanations about art works, kindly describing objects and even letting me know that such-and-such an object is a mere reproduction of an authentic work. Listening to them, my usual response is, "Yes, you're right. Your explanation really helped me." But at the same time it often happens that in the pit of my stomach I cannot help feeling, "What are you talking about? Are you foolish enough to think I'm that ignorant?" When this happens, I cannot pay full attention to his explanation, although I still try. Then, unexpectedly, I get impressed by the dealer's articulate way of explaining things, and even sometimes turned about and convinced by his particular point of view. In this way, I have learned some very important things.

There is an old Chinese proverb: "Don't judge the words you hear by the person speaking them." This adage suggests that there are instances in which you can learn very valuable things from people whom you would not normally turn to for advice. So, you should be equally open to what people tell you regardless of who they are. Anything that you happen to hear deserves your contemplation of its possible meaning. For example, often we can learn something important from children. I think everyone has had this experience—where a child very wisely expresses the truth.

Just as philosopher Henri Bergson<sup>1</sup> states when writing on intuition, since children maintain a higher degree of intuition be-

cause their minds are usually less distorted by preconceptions, prejudices, and conditioning, they can say very pertinent things. Even when a mother is scolding her little child, we often observe that what that child says in reply is quite relevant. So, if you cultivate an attitude of patiently listening to others and deal with what you hear, you will never face a serious problem you cannot handle. When you are trying to help someone who is sick by giving him Jyorei, but his family all oppose it, you should listen to them sincerely and comply with their wishes. That way they might begin to think of you as a trustworthy person. In situations like this, you probably will need to tell them, "We never force anyone not to see a doctor or not to take medicine. It is up to you how to deal with your sickness. However, the basic principle, which we believe is divinely inspired, is that medicine is poison and not the ultimate solution to sickness since it does not heal the root cause of the problem. It is still up to you whether to count on medicine or not." Having heard you say this, he or she will either avoid doctors and medicine, or make the opposite choice, see a doctor, and take medication. Anyway, depending on what the person asks for, he or she will deserve what comes.

After all, as long as you embrace makoto<sup>2</sup> in the depth of your heart, things will be well. If you do, you need not worry about what you are doing. For if you have makoto at the center of your being along with a passion to help others, then you will naturally find flexible and effective ways to serve people. You will exemplify the divine quality of infinite adaptability. Contrary to what most do, it is not practical to always act according to preconceived ideas. The ability to spontaneously adapt yourself to the environment is key. And yes, for this to be possible, difficult though it might be, you must refine your soul.

So, as I am always saying, you should lose whenever possible. Debates are one of the activities at which you should learn to lose as part of your spiritual training. Sometimes you need to seriously listen to people's lies, even though you know they are lying. This is not easy, but demonstrating patience with them is also a good way to elevate your soul. This is an authentic spiritual practice you can perform in your daily living. Although others may sometimes misunderstand you when you lose at something, the damage is only temporary and will not overshadow you for very long.

If you are right, the opponent who defeated you will eventually regret what he did to you and apologize. Not only that, but if your opponent comes to realize that you withdrew your opinion intentionally in order to allow him to learn an important lesson, then he will respect you. And if he realizes how trivial his remark was, he will realize how patient you are. Furthermore, the openheartedness you showed him will earn you his trust.

June 1, 1953

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1. Henri Bergson (1859-1941) was a philosopher, writer, teacher, Nobel Prize laureate, and diplomat. Widely influential between the World Wars, his ideas were a major challenge to a materialistic and mechanistic view of existence. He believed the true world could be known only through intuition, as only intuition could grasp the endless flow or 'universal flux' that was the reality. He once said, "There is nothing in philosophy that could not be said in everyday language." His thoughts had a profound influence on Shumei's founder, Meishusama.

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2. Makoto is a Japanese word with ancient roots in Eastern terminology. It was often used by Shumei's founder, Mokichi Okada (Meishusama), in his teachings; it sums up an approach to life in which each of us can find harmony with the world by practicing sincerity and truth in thought, word, and deed. Essential to the practice of makoto is consideration for others and for the will of God. Its meaning might vary according to circumstance.

# Heartbreak and Hope

## Remembrances of a Tragic Day in Hong Kong

Kaicho-Sensei with Sensei Kenichi Yasuda (Japan), Tang Chi Hang (Hong Kong), & Yip King Ho (Hong Kong)

As May 1 of 2008 came to a close, Shumei members throughout the world deeply grieved the deaths of nineteen of their fellow members, all from the Tsz Wan Shan Branch of Shumei in Hong Kong. The tragedy occurred when a bus carrying our members sped out of control while descending a steep hill, ploughed into a noise barrier, and overturned. The passengers were on their way to Monthly Sampai<sup>1</sup> at Shumei's Sai Kung Center. Additionally, forty-one Shumei members were injured, at least twelve critically. At the time, it was the worst traffic accident to occur in Hong Kong in over five years. It is the worst misfortune to befall Shumei in our history.

In the tragedy's wake, observances were scheduled at Shumei Centers throughout the world, as members' thoughts, prayers, and love poured out to the victims, the survivors, their families, and their loved ones.

The following was transcribed from speeches delivered in Meishusama Hall<sup>2</sup> at Shumei's International Center, Misono<sup>3</sup>, in November, on the occasion of that month's Sampai in 2008. Shumei's President, Kaicho Sensei<sup>4</sup>, while delivering her monthly message, introduced Sensei Kenichi Yasuda, who reported on his experiences while visiting Hong Kong immediately after the disaster. After Yasuda Sensei spoke, Kaicho-Sensei read translations of two testimonials that she

had heard while attending the Anniversary Celebration of the Hong Kong Center in October of 2008. This had been the first anniversary to take place at the Hong Kong Center after the tragedy. The testimonials were given by two young Shumei Hong Kong members, Tang Chi Hang and Yip King Ho, who were intimately involved in the May Day misfortune. The two men's speeches greatly impressed Kaicho-Sensei and she wanted to share them with those attending Misono's November Monthly Sampai.

All of the following transcriptions have been abridged and edited for use in this issue of SHUMEI Magazine.

**Kaicho-Sensei:** Various events took place last month that I would like to share with you today. First, I would like to tell you about the Hong Kong Center's Anniversary Celebration, which I took part in on October 26. But before talking about the anniversary, I must tell you of the immense purification<sup>5</sup> that took place in Hong Kong on May 1 of this year.

I have refrained from referring to this purification in public before now as I thought it too shocking. However, because of the powerful blessings that were given us in the tragedy's aftermath, I now would like to share with you the stories of some of our members who were involved with the events of that terrible day.

On the morning of May 1, a bus carrying Shumei Hong Kong members, their families, and friends hit a wall at high speed on the way to the Shumei Center. It was a terrible accident. Nineteen people's lives were claimed and forty-one more were injured, some very seriously. Soon after hearing this shocking news, I prayed for the protection in the spiritual world of those who lost their lives.

I wanted very much to do something to help the people involved in the accident, as well as their families and friends. So I asked Tamao Koyama, the leader of the Shumei Youth Department, and Kenichi Yasuda, one of Shumei's

directors, to fly to Hong Kong as soon possible to help in any way that they could. Unfortunately, there were no flights available that day, so the two of them flew to Hong Kong very early the next morning. Soon after returning to Japan, Mr. Yasuda gave me his report. And now, he will tell you of his experiences.

**Sensei Kenichi Yasuda:** I want to share with you what I experienced and what I learned during my first visit to Hong Kong after the tragedy.

It all started around noon of May 1, when at our monthly sensei's meeting here at Misono, we first heard of a traffic accident involving Shumei members in Hong Kong. A little later and into the evening, we learned more. I was called to a task force meeting where I was asked to go to Hong Kong with Tamao Koyama on behalf of Shumei.

Early the following morning, we were on our way to Hong Kong. We arrived at the Hong Kong Center around 2:00 in the afternoon. After chanting, we went to the site of the accident with the Hong Kong Center Directors to chant and say prayers. There were many people there, including the families of the deceased and injured. The media was there as well. Facing the

1. Monthly Sampais are celebrations that are held once each month at local Shumei Centers. They involve receiving Jyorei, chanting, and engaging in social activities.

2. 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 and is used for both daily Sampais and special events throughout the year.

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

4. 'Kaicho-Sensei' is an honorific used when referring to Ms Hiroko Koyama, the current president of Shumei. The word 'Kaicho' means 'president.' The word 'Sensei' means 'master,' in the sense of being a teacher. Ms Koyama is the daughter of Shumei's first president and spiritual leader, Mrs. Mihoko Koyama, known to Shumei members as 'Kaishusama.'

5. 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.



*Sensei Kenichi Yasuda in Meishusama Hall.*

direction of Misono, we all chanted the *Zengensanji*<sup>6</sup> for the victims, to help heal their spirits in the afterlife. While doing this, we were spotlighted with klieg lights as the news team focused their cameras on us.

Returning to the Center, we watched videos that had been broadcast the day before by local news stations that covered the accident. Watching them made us fully realize just how very, very awful it all really was.

Later we went to the hospital to visit the injured and share *Jyorei*<sup>7</sup> with them. Some of our members were in intensive care, others were in the general ward. We were able to recognize them easily because there were already many Hong Kong Shumei members there. So, we went to wherever we saw someone giving *Jyorei*. We shared *Jyorei* longer than usual with the victims in intensive care. Many of their faces were badly bloated.

The next day, May 3, we held a meeting with our Hong Kong members to explain to them the payments and benefits that would go to the families of the victims and injured.

On May 4, we visited the families of the victims and people with less severe injuries who were recuperating at home. We heard their stories as they revealed their deepest feelings during this terrible event. That night we headed back to Japan with 300 Hong Kong Shumei members who were to attend the Grand Sampai at Misono on May 5.

On May 10, I received a phone call and learned I had been assigned to go to Hong Kong again. This time we were to express our appreciation to the head of the Hong Kong Government, who upon learning of the accident rushed to the accident site to offer, with bowed head and folded hands, his silent prayer for the victims. Afterwards, he visited the injured in the hospital. Also, local charities offered donations of condolence to the Hong Kong Center. We arrived on the 12th and visited the government office and the charity organizations to offer our gratitude and appreciation.

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6. 'Zengensanji' literally means "A Collection of Good Words of Praise." It is a compilation of phrases from Buddhist texts that is chanted during some Shumei observances. The text presents vivid images of an earthly paradise that is meant to strengthen the chanter's resolve to help create a heaven on earth. The chant was modified for use in Shumei ceremonies by Shumei's founder, Mokichi Okada, also known as Meishusama.

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

Afterward, we visited the hospital and were pleasantly surprised to learn that all of our members were released from intensive care and had been transferred to the general ward. Many members already had been released from the general ward as well. What an improvement in less than two weeks! There was little resemblance between how those members still hospitalized looked during our first visit and how they looked during our second. In fact, we heard that the doctors and other medical staff were amazed to see their uncomplicated and speedy recoveries.

Revisiting the survivors, we heard some amazing stories. People were so frightened when the bus accelerated on the steep grade that they cried out, "Help us, Meishusama!" One survivor who hit his head very hard and yet, luckily, could still swallow, told us that the person next to him had been thrown completely out of his seat. Chards of glass flew everywhere, cutting faces, heads, and ears. The man we spoke with had twenty-one stitches.

After impact, those who were able began to chant and plead together. They feared that the leaking gasoline would erupt in flames and consume them all.

Amazingly, a two-year-old was sitting in his father's lap at the back of the bus when the accident happened. Afterwards, he was still seated on his father's lap without a single scratch. Thanks to God.

During Grand Sampai at Misono this year, some claim to have seen four of our Hong Kong members who had died in the accident, all of whom had applied to attend the Grand Sampai before the accident. A man who had been in the accident and lost his mother went to his local Center to offer gratitude for his quick recovery after breaking his ribs. After signing the offering envelope, he found that he had written his mother's name instead of his own. Upon examining the signature closely, it was discovered that the handwriting was not his but that of his mother. She had been a very loyal member who came to her local Center daily. It was as if she now visits the Center with her son.

I will share one more incident. It is about a husband who lost his wife in the tragedy. Afterwards, he lived a very lonely life. He did not eat well, and as a result his health weakened. His condition improved greatly after attending the Men's Grand Sampai here at Misono.

Through this purifying experience, everyone was blessed with great love. We appreciate

the nurturing spirit of all those Hong Kong members who made such a great effort to go to the hospital to share *Jyorei* with the survivors.

By the time of the Hong Kong Shumei Anniversary Ceremony on the 26th of October, Kaicho-Sensei could not tell how badly the members had been injured when she met them at the celebration.

All in all, having visited Hong Kong during the anniversary, I was relieved to realize that we are very fortunate to wear our *ohikaris*<sup>8</sup> and to have Meishusama's teachings. I believe we should all share *Jyorei* and Meishusama's teachings with as many people as possible, and to firmly place our trust in Meishusama's wisdom to overcome the sufferings that might occur in this troubled and confused world.

**Kaicho-Sensei:** Thank you, Sensei Yasuda. Having listened to his story, we now know how wonderful the blessings are that come to us through *Jyorei* even in times of great suffering.

Now I would like to read to you the words of two young men who are members of Hong Kong Shumei, Tang Chi Hang and Yip King Ho, as they presented their remembrances of May 1 at the Hong Kong Shumei Anniversary Ceremony.

**Tang Chi Hang:**<sup>9</sup> My mother, Mandy Chui, was injured in the accident. On the morning of the bus crash, I was getting ready to go to work as usual when I heard a TV news announcer who was broadcasting live from the site say that there had been a traffic accident, and that one person so far had been confirmed dead. But I really did not give it much thought at first. However, on my way to work, I remembered that my mother was going to attend the Monthly Sampai in Sai Kung. I began to worry. So, I called her. There was no response. All I got was her recorded message. It was then I realized that she could have been on the coach that had crashed. As I heard more about the accident, I came to realize that my mother indeed had been on that bus. I rushed to the Prince of Wales Hospital in Sha Tin, where she had been taken. I was shaking uncontrollably and could not stop praying that my mother and all those traveling with her would be all right.

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8. 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.

9. Mr. Chihang is a member of the Tzewashan Center in Hong Kong. He has been a member of Shumei since January, 1988.

When I arrived at the hospital, I asked an emergency room nurse if my mother was okay. She told me that the staff had been so overwhelmed by the number of injured that they had not had time to make up a patient list yet. The hospital was in chaos, which made me even more nervous. The relatives of other victims were arriving. The crowded, frenzied atmosphere of the hospital grew dire.

Later on, the nurse I first spoke to came and told me that she had found my mother. She was on an examination table and her injuries were not life threatening. I felt a great relief. I could finally breathe freely.

When I was let in to see my mother, I found her semiconscious in a hospital bed. She looked so pale lying there, and her hands still trembled in fear. At that moment I wanted so much to do something for her, but did not know what I could do. I wanted to give her Jyorei, but I had abandoned my ohikari years before when it needed purification. I had put off getting my ohikari purified for so long. And now, when I needed it most, I did not have it.

“The fourth to tenth breastbone on the left and the bottom last breastbone on the right were either broken or cracked. Half of the function of left lung is lost. The lung and spleen show signs of hemorrhage,” is how the doctor described my mother’s injuries. My mother had injuries to her pancreas, suffered a collapsed lung, and had broken bones. She was in much pain.

Beginning that afternoon, many Shumei members came to the hospital to give Jyorei to the injured. By that time, my mother was

taken out of intensive care. I watched as people queued up to give her Jyorei. However, at about 6:00 p.m. she was taken back into the intensive care unit to prevent visceral hemorrhaging. At and around 9:00 p.m., Sensei Teresa Kwok, who heads the Hong Kong Center, and Sensei Lau Kwong-Kin, who heads the Tsz Wan Shan Branch, came to the hospital to give Jyorei to my mother and the other injured members. I pleaded with Sensei Kwok to be allowed to receive my ohikari again so that I could care for my mother. “Yes,” she said. I was grateful for this.

I received my purified ohikari on the morning of May 3 at the Hong Kong Center. Straight afterwards I got a call from the hospital. My mother had been transferred from intensive care back to the ordinary ward. The hemorrhaging had stopped. I will always believe that her quick recovery had something to do with having my ohikari returned to me.

Mother had an ultrasound scan on May 5, and her doctor found blood clots and a build-up of fluid in her lungs. She needed an operation. However, the doctor decided to wait and to recheck her lungs on May 7. When he did, he found that the fluid had completely disappeared, and only a few small clots remained. The operation was called off. And on May 14, she was allowed to leave the hospital.

After returning home, my mother showed significant improvement, and was able to do some hoshi<sup>10</sup> at the Shumei Center. Her internal injuries had healed, her organs had resumed their normal function, and all that remained was for a few of her broken bones to complete their mending.

During the past few months, I have given Jyorei not only to my mother, but to the other injured people as well. The nurses seemed surprised by the quick recoveries of our Shumei members. They recovered faster than those suffering similar injuries. Their faces had better color. Through seeing these amazing healings, I was better able to understand the divine light that had been given to us through the practice of Jyorei. It is powerful and wonderful. And I have recommitted myself to giving Jyorei whenever I can.

Looking back on my history with Shumei, I received my ohikari with Sensei Kwok’s encouragement when I was just thirteen years

old. But after graduating from High School, I began to work and lost my enthusiasm for Shumei. Materialism rather than spirituality dominated my life. The idea of following Meishusama’s path made me feel as if I were fettered. I enjoyed going out with my friends more than going to my Shumei Center. Now, looking back, I feel shame.

In recent years, after being away from Shumei for some time, I would ask myself, “What is the sense of enjoying myself, taking care of myself—and myself only—for the rest of my life?” I suddenly felt so empty and so very lonely. I felt that something was lacking in my life—something important. It seemed impossible for me to feel any real happiness. Sensei Lau Kwong-Kin and my mother often urged me to receive my ohikari again. When this accident happened, it allowed me to understand the full power of Jyorei. And I think that is wonderful.

The world has a population of over seven billion people, of which I am only one. Yet, I feel honored and proud that I am one out of those seven billion who has been given an ohikari and has been given the opportunity to follow the path that Meishusama set before us. I am one among billions who has been given the chance to participate in God’s work, given the opportunity to help create a heaven on earth.<sup>11</sup>

Meishusama’s blessing not only saved my mother, but also saved me. I am very grateful for this, and I feel I must help spread this wonderful light throughout the world.

**Yip King Ho:**<sup>12</sup> I have been blessed by a number of amazing experiences. Having been physically weak in childhood, I tried many spiritual groups and several different kinds of medical treatments in my struggle to become healthy. However, none of them worked out very well.

My mother had a friend who was a Shumei member who told us about Jyorei. My mother received an ohikari, and my health greatly improved. It was an impressive experience.

I have been serving as a hoshisha at the Hong Kong Center since this past April. My mother had wanted me to become one for a very long time. I used to belong to a gang, did many bad things, and ended up in jail a few times. I was a drug addict as well as a dealer. I borrowed large amounts of money from loan sharks to buy drugs. My already frustrated



Tang Chi Hang giving his testimonial at the Hong Kong Center’s Anniversary Celebration.

10. Hoshi is volunteer service, sometimes described as ‘sacred work,’ that Shumei members perform on behalf of the Shumei organization and Shumei’s mission to promote the betterment of humankind. Hoshishas are Shumei members who perform hoshi full-time.

11. ‘Heaven on Earth’ is a term often used by Shumei’s founder, Mokichi Okada (Meishusama), to describe his vision of a future world free from illness, poverty, and strife, and filled with joy and contentment.

12. Yip King Ho became a Shumei member in December of 1998. He presently works as a hoshisha staff member at the Hong Kong Center.

parents had no choice but to pay off my debts for me. But I decided to become a hoshisha member as my mother wished, and now am completely reformed.

Before becoming a hoshisha, I had an interview with Sensei Teresa Kwok, who heads the Hong Kong Center. My mother accompanied me. Sensei Kwok said that she had never before seen such a happy mother when an offspring was admitted to the program.

A week later, my father, my grandmother, and my kid brother were on a bus headed for the Hong Kong Center. They were going to Monthly Sampai. It was the first of May. My father is not a Shumei member and had only been to the Tsz Wan Branch twice before, but he missed me a lot and wanted to see how I was getting on.

I waited for them at the Center for some time, but their bus never came. So, I called my father's mobile phone. He answered and told me that there had been an accident. At first I thought he meant that he had witnessed a car accident. Then he told me that he was slightly injured, but that my grandmother and kid brother were still trapped inside the coach. My father had tried with all his strength to free them, but could not. Only gradually did I begin to grasp the full scale of the accident. My father was lucky to have escaped with only a few minor injuries. My grandmother and kid brother were rescued from the bus an hour later. Both were conscious and uninjured.

Sensei Kwok told me that, although I had only been doing hoshi for a short time, all of the divine light that I gained through doing it spread to my family and protected them.

There is a fellow hoshisha at the Center, Chan Kam-Chuen, whose mother also was on the bus. Luckily, she only had minor injuries. Both his and my experiences that day made me realize how wonderful it is to serve as a hoshisha.

Recently, my grandfather had a stroke that left him in critical condition. We thought that he might not make it. All the family gave him Jyorei continuously, and his condition changed for the better and he recovered.

Through living at the Center and doing hoshi, I learned about teamwork and human relationships. I was able to grow mentally with the other hoshisha members, and this eventually deepened my appreciation of Meishusama. I am happy to have this opportunity to learn and grow. And I give my deep thanks to Sensei Kwok for giving me chance after chance to bring out the best in myself.

Between August 5 and 8, I was in Mainland China. I had followed Sensei Kwok, two other Senseis, and a few Japanese members there to give Jyorei to local residents. It was the first time that I had given Jyorei to non-Shumei members. Many people were interested in Jyorei, and a long line formed of people waiting to receive the blessing. I was deeply moved and grateful for what I experienced during this trip.

As I said before, I was once a bad guy. I was a materialist, always inclined to take risks. I did a lot of bad things and did not even have a proper job. Even my parents thought that I was hopeless and had almost given up on me completely. However, things changed for the better when I became a hoshisha. Now my love for my family has deepened and I am filled with so much happiness. To be honest, I was afraid that I would not be allowed to serve as a hoshisha because of my past. Once I asked Sensei Kwok, given my bad record, would it be possible for me to learn and grow in the future? She told me that everyone has a past and everyone has done bad things at one time or another. What is important is to be sorry for the wrong we have done and focus on the path Meishusama set out before us. If you do, you will find many opportunities to participate in his work. "When chances come, grasp them with both hands," were Sensei Kwok's words. I now know that I always have to be ready to catch opportunities as they come, and to work hard to forward Meishusama's great vision.

My dear friends, my life has turned around since I started serving God. I hope that more young members will become hoshishas so that they too will be filled with divine love and lead a life full of happiness. I pray for that.

**Kaicho-Sensei:** There were strong blessings that came about through this tragedy. Many people were protected in various ways.

On the day before the Hong Kong anniversary, I went to the site of the accident and chanted the Zengensanji, a prayer that has the power to purify and console the spirits of the dead. After chanting, I felt serenity.

When meeting people who had been in the accident, I found that most of them had recovered from their injuries, and I was not able to tell how badly they had been injured. Hospital staff members were very surprised by the accident victims' speedy recoveries. Those still in wheelchairs were simply grateful to be alive.

The accident itself was a tragedy, but the ties among the Hong Kong members were strengthened through the continuous Jyorei that was given afterwards and there was a renewed commitment to Jyorei. In turn, this brought about many great blessings.

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## Hearing America's Gathering Voices

Sensei Eugene Imai (U.S.A.)

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*Sensei Eugene Imai is the Director of Shumei America and Shumei's International Department. The following text derives from a speech he gave at a conference organized by the Global Peace Initiative of Women, entitled "Gathering Spiritual Voices of America." The event was held in Aspen, Colorado from November 6 through November 9, 2008. The Global Peace Initiative was an interfaith meeting, coordinated to explore how spiritual leaders of diverse faiths could help create a compassionate and unified spiritual program for our nation and the world, and, at the same time, balance our material and spiritual development.*

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I practice my spirituality through Shumei, a Shinto-influenced spiritual practice. I am grateful and honored to speak to you at this special gathering, held so soon after America's historic presidential election. I was born in Japan and came to this country thirty-three years ago. My wife and I now are citizens of the United



Yip King Ho tells his story of the May 1 tragedy at the Shumei Hong Kong Center.

States of America. We are citizens not by birth but by choice, and the two of us voted this time with great enthusiasm and hope. During the past few months, we discussed this election at length with our daughters, Akemi and Aki, who are 20 and 16 years of age. On the evening of November 4, as I was listening to Barak Obama's victory speech, I saw many people in Grant Square crying. I also started to cry. People did not cry for joy because Mr. Obama was victorious over Mr. McCain. People did not cry because the Democrats beat the Republicans. People cried in happiness for the victory of certain principles and ideals that they held dear. In our hearts, we Americans are a people of principles and ideals. After hearing Obama's speech, our 20-year-old daughter cried out, "Daddy, I can have hope." Our 16-year-old said, "He's speaking not only to the people in this county, but to the whole world." You see, the United States of America has a great mission to lead the whole world by example.

One clear difference between Japan and the U.S.A. is how the birth of each country came about. People do not remember who created the country of Japan. It has been there for a long time. So Japanese people are very optimistic about the continued existence of their country. They think it will continue to be there no matter how bad politicians or world events become. Conversely, the United States was created, not so very long ago, based on noble values and principles that have to be maintained with great care during each generation of its history. People here know that if our system fails to be maintained correctly, the whole country and what we stand for could vanish. I am amazed by the sensitivity and passion of the people in the United States in preserving the union and existence of their country.

Now, as our President-elect tells us that we have to come and work together to overcome the great challenges that face us in our lifetime, spiritual workers need to become leaders in our united efforts to create a new era. We have to restore trust and respect among people who have been humiliated and degraded during the last eight years.

I feel strongly that Kannon's Way is a key to successfully navigating through this critical time. Kannon's Way is one of Shumei's main teachings. It is a particular pattern of thinking and acting, centered on balance and timing. Kannon's Way is a nonjudgmental and holistic approach to life. 'Kannon' is the name of the Buddhist deity of compassion, that part of divinity that is all loving and giving. The essence



*Sensei Eugene Imai speaks at the "Gathering Spiritual Voices of America" conference in Aspen, Colorado*

of Kannon's Way is living with kindness and love. I strongly feel that we all need to think and act according to the principles of Kannon's Way if the world is ever to find true peace and happiness.

Kannon's Way, like many spiritual teachings, has to be practiced in everyday life. Spiritual workers are good at telling people what to do, but sometimes we do not act according to what we preach, and we do not even notice that we are not doing so. So, it is a good idea for us to look at ourselves once in a while with discernment and introspection. Speaking of myself, I have counseled others to be more balanced, be more nonjudgmental, and try to see situations from other people's point of view. However, at the same time I was asking people to behave in accordance with Kannon's Way, I was not acting that way toward my own daughters. A certain enlightenment came to me about ten years ago through one of my friends. He shared an ordeal he was going through with his own teenage daughter, who stopped going to school. After much struggle, he finally found a successful way of communicating with her. He learned that instead of oppressing others with power, it is best to communicate with respect and with an open heart. My friend got great results with this approach with his daughter, as I did later with my own daughters. I learned from this experience and tremendously improved my relationships with friends, my Shumei members, and with everyone else. I am ever grateful for this lesson.

Kannon's Way is the way of balance. There are many contrasting pairs of opposites, such as man/woman, east/west, rich/poor, young/old, water/fire, black/white, religion/science, conservative/liberal, Democrats/Republicans, inner/outer, head/heart, contemplation/action, and so on.

We tend to view these as polar opposites and therefore as opposing each other. On

the other hand, Kannon's Way teaches us that opposites do not have to oppose each other, but can actually complement and embrace each other. It is not a case of 'either-or,' but of 'both.' We need both sides of these polarities—even such polarities as right and wrong, good and bad. We usually think we need

only the right and good, but not wrong and bad. It is as if we needed only expansion in this world but not contraction; only summer but not winter; day but not night; success but not failure. But we need both to become truly whole. We need two opposite elements to exist in a balanced way. Without balance, no pair of elements can be in harmony. But the question here is how to find such a balance.

I believe that GRATITUDE is one answer. Gratitude is not only about what we have, but what we do not have. Gratitude not only about what we see, but what we do not see. Gratitude not only about what we love, but what we dislike. Our teacher Mochichi Okada said, "Gratitude breeds gratitude. Discontent spawns discontent. These are true and honest words. For a grateful heart rises straight to God." Grateful hearts connect us with the divine. This balance is not static, nor is it fixed. It is dynamic and flexible, like driving a car or flying an airplane. But it is extremely difficult. We must be guided by divinity to find this perfect balance. Gratitude can help us stay connected with the divine.

The world is so divisive that now, more than ever, we need to be united. I moved to this country from Japan and have lived here for over three decades. This country gave me a great opportunity to see Kannon's Way in action through the beauty of America's diversity. Through living and working here, I have become a better world citizen. I am grateful for what this county has given me. This is the very reason why I decided to become a citizen of this great nation.

President Obama's task is enormous, and we must help him to lead the whole world toward a greater and brighter future.

Yes, we can make a difference. Yes, we can make a change.

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# The Zero Point Field: Information and Freedom All Around

Sharon Franquemont (U.S.A)

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*Sharon Franquemont, a much-valued member of the Shumei family, is the Director of Education for Life Science Foundation, and works closely with the University of Minnesota's Center for Spirituality and Healing. The University of Minnesota is one of the most advanced institutions for educating doctors and nurses in complementary alternative medicines in the United States.<sup>1</sup>*

*Sharon is an author, educator, and consultant, and she is currently working on a book titled *World Citizenship and the Philosophy of Mokichi Okada*.<sup>2</sup> She is also a co-founder of the *Prayer Vigil for the Earth*, an annual interfaith gathering on the Washington Mall in Washington, DC. The *Prayer Vigil* is a completely voluntary event that includes Jyorei and Shumei taiko artists. The event celebrated its sixteenth year in October of 2008.*

*The text derives from a speech that Ms Franquemont gave at Shumei America's National Center in Pasadena in July of last year. It has been edited for use in SHUMEI Magazine.*

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**S**ensei Eugene Imai asked me to speak on the Power of Thought. We explored this topic together here, two years or three years ago. At that time, one of the key images I hoped we would remember, or at least be excited about, was the discovery that monkeys could move cursors—computer cursors—with their thoughts alone. That discovery has given birth, for those of you that do not know, to an entirely new field in medicine: neuroprosthe-

sis. Today, some years later, there are people who can move their prosthesis<sup>3</sup> with only their thoughts. However, most people who lose a limb now will be treated with a normal prosthesis. This is because the brain signal activated by thought is generally too weak to be effective. But, research scientists are working hard to learn how to augment thought energy enough to make neuroprosthesis devices practical. Progress is being made. And, there is still a long way to go in the development of the mechanics and the training of those who would benefit from such devices.

We know that Mokichi Okada said to us, “You are what you think.” One example he used is, “Gratitude breeds gratitude,” or as you think, so will your life go. We have a really famous author in the United States named Napoleon Hill. He wrote a book called “Think and Grow Rich.” Of course, his focus was not on spiritual growth; it was on making money. But, he still said the same thing—reality happens first in the mind. I would like to explore some ‘wild’ concepts in modern quantum physics, as well as some things I am pondering with regard to their potential implications, particularly to Jyorei, Mokichi Okada's method of using light for healing, and the concepts that invite Shumei members to chant the Zengensanji, a call for heaven on earth.

Mokichi Okada was convinced throughout most of his life, in spite of everything he lived through—his financial difficulties, his poor health, the death of family members, his nation going through a war—that we could have...we, meaning humanity, could choose to create a ‘new civilization of beauty’ as heaven on earth. What relevance does scientific research have to the creation of such a civilization, heaven on earth?

It is such a vast field, but I hope I can simplify the implications of quantum research enough to be understandable to you and to me. I am also making the assumption that some aspects of quantum laws will be applicable to the macro, or large-scale level, even though at this moment most people tend to see the physical world we share primarily through Newtonian, mechanistic lenses. Perhaps a little background and a few stories will help us.

The real beginning (of course, this ‘beginning’ was always there, but we never saw it) of the idea that there might be something quite a bit stranger than we think going on in the principles, laws, and mechanics of the

physical world was the insight of Einstein and his theory of relativity. Essentially, Einstein demonstrated that reality wasn't a fixed thing, but relative to the situation in which it was placed. For example, time that was thought to be linear and fixed slows down as it reaches the speed of light. It is not fixed in all situations. Another physicist, Max Plank, discovered something that is even stranger—that the space between atoms, the vacuum that looks like it contains nothing, is in fact teeming with energy. To understand the implications, imagine looking up on a dark night. When you look out in space and you see the stars, you tend to think that everything that is black or dark has nothing in it. The stars stand out. But, now we know that the blackness, the darkness, is what is pervasive and teeming with energy. Stars are, in fact, what is absolutely unique; the space in between is an active, abundant factor. This teeming-with-energy ‘emptiness’ is really a full ocean, with a few islands of matter (stars) here and there. In many ways, this turns our ideas about reality upside down and inside out. But what does this imply?

A very brilliant man, Ervin Laslow, the founder of an internationally famous think tank called the Club of Budapest, suggests that this incredible, ‘empty’ field is basically an information carrier. Called the Zero Point Field, this empty space or Zero Point Field is all around us, inside us, and everywhere. Let us apply this metaphorically to our sitting here in Shumei Hall in Pasadena. Just imagine that we are like the stars, and everything in the room that seems to be nothing is teeming with energy. If Laszlo is correct, we are basically swimming in, breathing in, and interacting in a huge information field. Reality is actually arising out of the Zero Point Energy. We are creations within the field—stars within the night sky. But again, what does that all mean?

Let me tell you four stories that may point us toward understanding. Shireen Strooker was attending a retreat and found herself blindfolded in a field with 600 other retreat participants. Previously, she and all the participants drew pictures and gave them to the organizers. After the participants were blindfolded, the organizers hung 600 pictures on the fence surrounding the blindfolded participants. When everything was ready, the organizers told the blindfolded participants, “Without the use of your eyes, find your picture.” Shireen walked straight to her picture. Some part of her knew exactly where to find

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1. The partnership between the Life Science Foundation and the University of Minnesota's Center for Spirituality and Healing that involves three projects: “Taking Charge of Your Health” ([www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu](http://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu)); an annual symposium for health care professionals that is entitled “Ways of Knowing” ([www.lifesciencefoundation.org/prmain.html](http://www.lifesciencefoundation.org/prmain.html)); and an undergraduate university course that is called “Whole Systems Healing,” dedicated to healing from personal to planetary.

2. Mokichi Okada is Shumei's founder, known to Shumei members as ‘Meishusama,’ an honorific that means ‘Master of Light.’

3. A ‘prosthesis’ is an artificial device used to replace a missing body part.

her picture, although she could not see a thing. Most of the 600 people did not have that experience, but several did including Shireen. How did Shireen know precisely where her picture was located? Was Shireen able to find her picture by tapping into the information field we are all embedded in? This story brings us to the field of intuition and spiritual surprises where events are magical.

In the 1940s, a neuroanatomist, named Harold Burr, was very interested in salamanders. He discovered that there were energy fields around living organisms and that young salamanders have a light field around them in the shape of an adult salamander. As you may know, if salamanders lose their tails or any limbs, they simply grow another one. Could it be that this ghost-like, light body surrounding the salamander is an information field capable of telling the salamander what shape it will assume in the future? Do salamanders know how to keep their relationship with this energy field strong, or better than most other living things know how to? We can wonder together if the reason salamanders are able to reproduce their lost tails or limbs is because they identify with this light or energy field, not with the physical form. Finally, does the 'light body' surrounding the salamander contain the information necessary to reconstruct a preferred lost reality?

Another example is the story of a child born in England with hydrocephalus, something once called 'water on the brain.' (We now know that it is not water that surrounds the brain, but spinal fluid.) The child was raised in a family, and acted normal all her life, so her doctors were startled when they took a picture in her later years, and she had practically no brain! Her cranium was filled almost entirely with spinal fluid. What was left of her brain was squeezed into a tiny corner. How could she have a personality, go to school, do everything that everybody else does if she has almost no brain? Although this certainly is a rare story, it immediately raises the questions: What is the brain? Where is memory? Is memory really in the brain?

These are the type of questions that fascinated biologist Paul Pietsch of the University of Indiana. He was particularly interested in knowing where memories are stored in the brain. He began experiments with salamanders by teaching them specific patterns of behavior. After they were successfully trained, Pietsch thought that he could destroy their memories by removing their

brains and grinding them up in a meat grinder. So, he ground up their brains and later put their ground-up brains back inside their heads. Amazingly, after a period, the salamanders began doing the patterned behavior he taught them before he took their brains out and ground them up. Dr. Pietsch concluded that memory is not located in the physical brain as we understand it, but seems to exist elsewhere. Could stored memories be part of an information energy field, or the light body as Dr. Harold Burr characterized it, found surrounding the salamander's body? If so, what are our brains? Where are our memories, if they are not stored in the physical brain?

Finally, another example of how life might not be what we think comes from an experiment done by Harvard University psychologist Ellen Langer. Langer's experiment raises questions about the meaning of time, and might imply how relative time is. Langer took a group of 70-year-old people to a fake 'town' she had created. The town, like in the movie, "Back to the Future," was constructed as a 1959 town. The furniture, movies, newspapers, and magazines all came from 1959. Within a week, the group seemed to have shifted their aging process. The joints in their fingers became more flexible; their eyesight improved. Langer believed that the participants' bodies responded to all the 1959 information by automatically 'going back' to a status closer to their 1959 reality. Once again, we can ask: was there a 1959 information energy field around the 1959 objects, and did that activate a memory that in turn changed their bodies?

When you hear these stories and studies, you might think, "Well, if we know this about aging, why do not we take advantage of it?" It might be that we are not ready as a human family to accept what the stories' and studies' implications are. But, Mokichi Okada was ready. This is what I am proposing to you. Meishusama was so ready that he even taught people to live as if they understood that reality is created by our thoughts. Further, quantum science might be implying that the thoughts we create are not strictly our own. We each live in a field of thoughts. You and I live in a field of thoughts. You have an experience, you freeze that experience with your attention, and you think that you are the experience. Then the experience is stored in the field, not in your brain.

Werner Heisenberg discovered that at the quantum level, photons behave like par-



Sharon Franquemont

ticles or waves depending on when they are observed. Their interdependency with 'agreed upon' reality is demonstrated in that, until they are observed, they are not frozen—labeled as a particle or a wave—but remain in flux. In other words, observation is what makes things assume reality at the quantum level. In short, what we pay attention to—what we get impacted by—is what creates our reality, because we freeze it to ourselves. We isolate it and say, "This is us. This is who we are." Positive, negative, it does not matter. We are walking around with this field of memories that we identify as ourselves. We are identifying those things as ourselves, and we draw those kinds of experiences to ourselves. It is not as if those things are locked in us.

I once heard that the Sanskrit word 'Nirvana'—finding enlightenment—means to 'blow out obstructions.' When Meishusama says to us, "You are what you think," one way I can hear that is, "I am what I have frozen." I am the obstructions, or the ideas of myself—I am not really living free as I was designed to be. What if—and I am just making a radical proposal—what if Jyorei (Mokichi Okada's healing method of focusing divine light) is designed to dissolve our frozen ideas of ourselves? It is dissolving our identity as an ill or troubled person. What if Jyorei is setting us free, purifying our souls, purifying our memories of who we are? What if Jyorei is setting us free to live in the information field with freedom? What if Meishusama is asking Jyorei to purify our ideas of who we are? And when we are in

that purified state, what happens if we pay attention to what brings happiness? What if Shumei is constructing a world of happiness by agreeing that, as long as the world is a product of our observations, let us observe happiness; let us observe beauty. What if we are being asked to construct heaven on earth by becoming free of our false, negative identities and choosing our positive, life-affirming identities?

The great teachers throughout all time have said to humanity, "You are much more powerful than you think." When Jesus, as he was doing miracles, said, "All this and more you will do," he freed us to be miracle workers. The Buddha taught us that we could live without suffering. In the African traditions, what does a healer do? He or she becomes an empty reed—a place without memory, without thought. In the Native American tradition, medicine people work to become hollow bones. In that place of great emptiness we can choose what it is that we attend to—what it is that we choose to freeze in time—and let those choices continue to be what Mokichi Okada asks of us.

We have the power to do this, for as he stated in a favorite quote of mine, "It's such a precious thing to know every day that God loves you." It is the greatest, most precious gift to wake each morning and go to bed each evening knowing God loves us. And, what is the deeper meaning of this gift? God's love means that we can be who we wish to be, not only as individuals, but also as a human family. Mokichi Okada, as one of a few human beings who walked on this planet as a teaching entity capable of changing our world, is showing us a way to make those choices.

Let us remember these possibilities. We can live every day with this type of reality. So when you find yourself thinking, or worrying, or visiting memories about worries, allow your field to be nonfrozen. Let the memories go back into the field, leaving your mind free. Notice when you 'freeze' so you can dissolve the memories that may lead you to hurt yourself, your loved ones, or others you encounter. In addition, be ready to freeze your experiences when happiness, the good, and the beautiful arise.

If we can learn to do this individually and as a species, we can construct the inner world of thought which will allow us to manifest the outer world of heaven on earth—the Zengensanji.

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## "END QUOTES"

This issue's ending quotations are by Mihoko Koyama, known to Shumei members as 'Kaishusama,' the first president and spiritual leader of the Shumei organization. They come from a recent graphic publication of Kaishusama's collected quotes entitled "Feel the Beauty," which was illustrated by Yoh Shomei, designed by Manami Mizusaki, and printed by Mokuji-Sha Inc. English translations of the texts are by Alice Cunningham and Martha J. McClintock.

Kaishusama's words cover a variety of topics and are striking for their pithiness and eloquence; they are so heartfelt and straightforward that all can understand and benefit by them.

On spiritual paths, Kaishusama said:

*For the truth seeker, there is a fierce honing of the heart, and then rapid progress.*

Of Heaven on Earth:

*To build a paradise on earth is a dream of people all over the world.*

*The earthly paradise sought by all people is not achieved by military might or paid for by financial power.*

*It can only be created through God's benevolence.*

Appreciating others:

*You can learn from anyone.*

On perception:

*One by one, things touch the heart.*

*And such impressions are what nourish life.*

About purity of intent:

*Become innocent.*

*Act sincerely and faithfully.*

*Do not worry about what others say as long as you act with all your heart and humility.*

And finally, about herself:

*I was just an ordinary woman, nothing special, no particular skill.*

*Indeed, this path I took was nothing more than fate.*

*My only desire as a mother, to raise three healthy children, led me to this faith.*

*By no means was it my objective to hoist a major philosophy and advance headlong. I was simply a mother seeking to raise my children to lead healthy lives. Basically, I started out from that human, maternal instinct, as any mother would.*

"End Quote" is a column that is periodically featured in SHUMEI Magazine. If you have a favorite quote or perhaps several that you would like to share with our readers, please contact the End Quote Editor: shumei.america@charter.net.

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

**Editor's Note:** Yo Shomei's books "Feel the Beauty," "Legend of Peach Valley," and "The Gentle Earth—the Blue Bird of Crestone" are available at the Shumei America National Center's Gift Shop in Pasadena, California. If you wish to order directly by phone, please call 1-626-584-8841 between 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (PST, USA) from Monday through Friday. You also can send an e-mail message to giftshop@shumei.org or a fax to 626-584-8846. Visa, Master Card, American Express, and Discover Cards are all accepted.



## Daikokuten

Ogata Korin

Japan. Edo period (18th century AD). Ink on paper. Height, 52.9 cm. Width, 28.3 cm.

Although better known for screen paintings, lacquer work, and textile designs, the genius and originality of Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716) perhaps is even more apparent in his monochromatic ink drawings.

Daikokuten, originally the Indian martial deity Mahakala, for some time after his introduction to Japan was regarded as a wrathful god. However, during the Muromachi period (1333–1573), he came to be identified with Ōkuninushi no Mikoto, an ancient Shinto god, and was widely embraced as a benevolent deity, one of the seven gods of good fortune.

Here, Daikokuten stands with a sack and a straw rice bale on his back, gripping a bamboo staff in his right hand, a mallet in his left. In this portrayal, Daikokuten is filled with vitality and in the prime of life. His animated pose and the skillful placement of black pupil marks in his tiny eyes lend him an energy that makes him seem as if he were about to lift his staff and stride out of the painting. Though rendered with a light, breezy touch, on closer look the work reveals an uncanny attention to detail, such as the light shading found in the beard and the inside of the clothing's outlines. Without a doubt, this is Kōrin at his wittiest.

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