

300,000 AT FUNERAL OF JAPAN SECT HEAD

TOKYO, April 20 (AP)—A throng estimated by the police at 300,000 persons turned out today for the funeral of a religious sect leader. The police said Premier Nobusuke Kishi was among them.

Josei Toda, the leader, died of a heart attack April 2, after expanding his "Soka Gakkai" sect within a few years from a group of a few hundred believers to a million-member religion.

Mr. Kishi is not a believer in the religion, which is excommunicated by orthodox Buddhist denominations, but was reported to have attended the funeral in defiance of strong opposition from many of his top lieutenants. The police reported he was accompanied by Education Minister Toh Matsunaga.

Political quarters agreed that Mr. Kishi could have been lured by the million votes controlled by the religion. General elections are due next month.

"Soka Gakkai" — literally meaning value-creating academy — ran a score of candidates for the upper house elections last July. Three were elected, polling a total of nearly 800,000 votes.

"Soka Gakkai" is derived from Buddhism, but its activities are more militant. It rapidly expanded by threatening death and destruction to nonbelievers by chanting against them. Its missionaries preached that "Soka Gakkai" should become the state religion.