

**A GENUINE RELIGION  
A RECORD OF MY LIFE  
BY DAISAKU IKEDA**

**Expressing the SGI's strong stand against nuclear weapons, SGI President Ikeda says that 'a genuine religion does not dream of some ideal vision of society while making people forget the issues they face in reality....'**

In September 1987, on the 30th anniversary of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons, the "Nuclear Arms: Threat to Our World" exhibition was held in Japan in Yokohama, Kanagawa, where the declaration was made. The late Governor of Kanagawa, Kazuji Nagasu, said at the opening: "I sincerely hope that this exhibition being held in Yokohama, a city with an illustrious history, will unite and strengthen the commitment of the people of our prefecture to work for the abolition of all nuclear weapons."

Along with the exhibition, we held a lecture series on peace, and the Soka Gakkai youth division members in Kanagawa conducted a public opinion poll among local residents on nuclear weapons. The Kanagawa organization also held a culture general meeting to coincide with these events, marking a fresh start for the prefecture's activities.

In my speech, I said: "Let us carry on our mentor's vision and go out widely into the world, there striving for its realization." From that time, I have worked and fought without rest to make that wish come true.

The Soka Gakkai's peace movement is a natural consequence of the Buddhist ideal of peace articulated in the "Rissho Ankoku Ron" (On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land) and active involvement in society. A famous passage from this treatise is succinct on this point: "If the nation is destroyed and families are wiped out, then where can one flee for safety? If you care anything about your personal security, you should first of all pray for order and tranquillity throughout the four quarters of the land, should you not?" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 38).

A genuine religion does not dream of some ideal vision of society while making people forget the issues they face in reality; it does not lose itself in meditation on a perfect world while fleeing from daily life. True security for both oneself and others can only be attained by praying and acting for "order and tranquillity throughout the four quarters of the land."

Why has the SGI's peace movement spread throughout the world and proven so enduring? In Japan in the 1950s, there were numerous organizations and movements vehemently opposed to nuclear weapons. As the only nation that had experienced nuclear warfare, this wasn't surprising.

But while, for a time, these movements had widespread support, many later were turned into political tools, which led to growing division within their ranks and a loss of momentum. The Soka Gakkai's peace movement, in contrast, has endured tenaciously and spread from Japan to the rest of the world. It has never become alienated from the people.

That is because it has always remained firmly based on the bonds of mentor and disciple. This strong foundation has saved it from being swayed from its course and from becoming self-centered. The motivation behind everything in our movement is to carry out the wishes of our mentor in life, and that is why our movement has never become a venue for personal gain or self-promotion. As long as we remain true to the spirit of our mentor, our way will be eternal and unchanging.

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Subject: World Tribune 11/19/99 n.3269 p.5 WT991119p05

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Keywords: Daisaku Genuine Ikeda Life Record Religion Tribune World

It was not a coincidence that Mr. Toda chose to make his declaration in Kanagawa, an area experiencing tremendous membership growth in those days. A headline in the first issue of the *Seikyo Shimbun* (April 20, 1951) paid tribute to one of Kanagawa's leading chapters: "The Flame Burns High in Tsurumi."

In more recent times, it was from Kanagawa, after stepping down as Soka Gakkai president in 1979, that I began my furious struggle for the integrity of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. During those days, when scheming foes surrounded me and tried to keep me isolated, my mentor's image was always in my mind, his words of encouragement always in my ears.

### **Selfless efforts for others will eventually awaken people's conscience.**

In February 1979, just a few months before stepping down, I visited India, a nation with a great spiritual heritage, having given birth to Buddhism in ancient times and to Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolent movement in this century. I have an unforgettable memory of that particular visit: It was after my meeting with one of Gandhi's leading disciples, Mr. J. P. Narayan, who was called the conscience of India, at his home in Patna, Bihar State. I stood on the banks of the Ganges River, not far from our hotel. It was evening, and high in the western sky was a bright full moon.

The fiery sun that seemed to scorch all beneath its rays during the day had sunk below the horizon, and the moon had appeared, bringing with it the cool night air and a serenity that seemed to calm the city bustle. The full moon's reflection wavered on the surface of the Ganges, which flowed with a dark majesty through the night. When the moon passed behind a cloud, its round outline shone dimly, radiating an otherworldly aura.

That day was Feb. 11, my mentor's birthday.

Years ago, Mr. Toda had written this poem:

*To the people of Asia  
Who pray for a glimpse of the moon  
Through the parting clouds,  
Let us send, instead,  
The light of the sun.*

Mr. Toda, struck by the turmoil affecting the people of Asia, fervently wished to introduce Buddhism to them again, in accord with the Daishonin's prediction of the westward transmission of Buddhism.

Since ancient times, the light of the moon and the scent of sandalwood were thought in India to relieve the heat. Based on this, the moon and sandalwood came to be regarded as possessing the power to calm human passions and anger. Moonlight became a symbol of wisdom and truth. Shakyamuni attained enlightenment on the night of a full moon.

One of the Sanskrit names for the moon is *shashin*, meaning that which possesses a rabbit (Skt *shasha*). There is an Indian folktale about the moon and the rabbit: Once, in the woods, there was a man who was near death from starvation. The animals took pity on him and brought him gifts of food, but the rabbit had nothing to give, so it leapt into the cooking fire and offered its own flesh to the man. The god Indra (Jpn *Taishaku*), moved by the rabbit's spirit of self-sacrifice, rescued it from the flames and carried it to the heavens, giving it a permanent home on the moon.

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The moon is a symbol of selfless devotion. It is also a symbol of sincerity. Selfless concern and efforts for the welfare of others will eventually quell the flames of hatred and will, without fail, awaken people's conscience.

I am reminded that it is the selfless devotion and sincere words and deeds of our members, the noble children of the Buddha, that have led to the growth of the kosen-rufu movement that we see today.

### **Three in a series**

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