

Message from Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto



Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto, Leader of Myochikai, President of the Arigatou Foundation, Inaugurator of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC)

It was in February 1945, very near the end of World War II, that I had the great fortune to meet Rev. Kohei Miyamoto, whom Myochikai members revere as *Daionshi*, or great spiritual leader. Not long after, I began a new life with the *Daionshi* and his wife, Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto. At that time, they were poor and unknown ordinary people, but I was deeply impressed by their passion and devotion to the Buddhist faith.

The *Daionshi* was totally selfless, free from complaints and frustrations, and constantly exuded a deep gratitude for all things. During the severe bombing of Tokyo near the end of the war, he kept a lonely vigil at the head temple of the religious organization to which he belonged. Despite suffering burns in the explosions, he stayed there, risking his life to protect the spiritual treasures in the building. This kind of unwavering faith—and putting it into practice—is the essence of the spirit of Myochikai.

After the *Daionshi* passed away, Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto founded Myochikai to continue with the devoted teaching and practice of Buddhism she had always shared with her husband. The year was 1950. Myochikai members revere her as *Kaishu*, or great spiritual master.

The *Daionshi* once wrote, “A little good deed takes a little perseverance; a great good deed takes great perseverance.” Both the *Daionshi* and *Kaishu* actually

led lives completely characterized by a tremendous perseverance for the sake of good. I am convinced that the heart of Myochikai lies in this practice of perseverance, which we call *Ninzen*. Through the practice of *Ninzen*, we can purify the heart and soul. This explains why the *Kaishu*, on her deathbed, wrote only a single word—“heart”—as her last message to us. To this day, I have given my every effort to upholding the truth of the teachings of the *Daionshi* and *Kaishu*, convinced in my heart that this is the mission of my life.

The *Kaishu* founded Myochikai with the words, “I am only a human being, a woman—but I resolve to become the base and backbone of the whole world,” and set the ultimate goal of world peace before us. It has never been easy to build world peace, because world peace is indeed a very great good. However, with the spirit of *Ninzen*, Myochikai has made constant efforts to share the teachings of Buddhism in order to build a world where all people can lead happy lives based on the principles of peace, freedom and equality. Through the practice of prayer for our ancestors, we have worked to help develop individuals, families and societies who are eager and able to serve others.

In 1990, in response to the terrible suffering of so many children around the world, I established the Arigatou Foundation and gave it the mission of creating a better environment for children everywhere. Working as a faith-based NGO in cooperation with UNICEF, UNHCR, Medecins sans Frontieres and other organizations, the Foundation has, thanks to the voluntary donations of Myochikai members, been able to provide assistance for children around the world who are in distress from natural disasters, armed conflict, and other desperate circumstances.

In 2000, realizing that we could not achieve our vision for the children of the world without the cooperation of people from all religious traditions, I inaugurated the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC). Religious leaders and grassroots faith workers from every continent and seven major religions joined together in the GNRC, dedicating themselves to making a contribution from the religious perspective to the promotion of child rights in the 21st century. That same year, I also organized the Conference of Children for the Coming Generation (CCG), bringing together children from around the world, transcending ethnic, national or religious boundaries, to discuss and envision the future for themselves.

Then, at the United Nations Special Session on Children in 2002, speaking on behalf of the GNRC, I proposed the establishment of a global-scale Interfaith Council on Ethics Education for Children.

Each one of these small efforts had its origin in my firm resolve to do all I can to realize the ideals of the *Kaishu*. After all, peace is built by human beings, and human beings are built from their hearts. Myochikai strives to nurture the human heart. With the founding spirit of the *Kaishu* deep in my heart, I pledge to further strengthen my efforts to build a world of peace through prayer and practice.

It is my hope that this booklet will help our friends around the world to better understand the story of Myochikai, the Arigatou Foundation, and the GNRC. May you be blessed by the Divine Presence!

Takeyasu Miyamoto



Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto (left) with Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto, founder of Myochikai

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