

Myochikai *Making the Heart Bloom*

DEVOTED TO ENLIGHTENMENT

The teachings of Buddha arrived in Japan in the 6th century A.D., having originated in India and come eastward through China and Korea. Shortly after, the Lotus Sutra, one of the primary Buddhist scriptures, was first taught in Japan, probably in the year 606 A.D.

Some 1,350 years later, Myochikai was born in Japan as a modern-day branch of Buddhism teaching the recitation of the Lotus Sutra in prayer for the sake of the souls of one's ancestors. Founded on October 12, 1950 by the late Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto, Myochikai currently has some one million members.

The establishment of Myochikai was the fruit of more than 30 years of exacting training undertaken by Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto in the Buddhist way of life. Together with her husband, Rev. Kohei Miyamoto, she practiced spiritual disciplines aimed at purifying the heart by eliminating all such things as selfishness, anger, discontentment or regret. Unfortunately, Rev. Kohei Miyamoto passed away in November 1945, at the age of 55.

Unwavering in her commitment to preserve this sacred wisdom and to serve all humanity, Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto founded Myochikai five years later with the proclamation: "The mission of Myochikai is to become a ray of light that permeates the world with unconditional love and mercy for every person. I am only a human being, a woman—but I resolve to become the base and backbone of the whole world. May the light that we shine make a contribution to world peace!"



Rev. Kohei Miyamoto and Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto practice spiritual disciplines

After Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto passed away on March 28, 1984, Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto became Leader of Myochikai, following completion of 1,000 days of ascetic disciplines. He had been an eager student of both Rev. Kohei and Mitsu Miyamoto since 1945, respecting them as parents. In 1950, he witnessed the founding of Myochikai by Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto. His training in the Buddhist way of life under Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto continued for 39 years, until the end of her life. To this day, he works with great passion and resolve to accomplish the goals she set out when founding Myochikai.

Myochikai members follow four primary teachings—which involve both prayer and practice—in pursuit



Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto, Myochikai Kaishu

The mission of Myochikai is to become a ray of light that permeates the world with unconditional love and mercy for every person, and by doing so, to contribute to world peace.

of enlightenment and peace. These are: prayer for ancestors, perseverance for the sake of good, confession and repentance, and gratitude for all things—or in Japanese, *Senzo Kuyo*, *Ninzen*, *Sange*, and *Kansha*. (Pages 5-8 of this booklet provide more details on these teachings, as well as personal testimonies by Myochikai believers who practice them.)

Through these spiritual practices, Myochikai seeks to help people to develop their hearts and thus become able to contribute to the happiness of other individuals, families and societies. In so doing, Myochikai aims to build a world of true prosperity, based on the well being of each and every person, and ultimately, to realize lasting world peace.



Rev. Kohei Miyamoto, Myochikai Daionshi

DEDICATED TO PEACE

For Myochikai, initiatives for peace are the natural fruit of sincere spiritual practice. In 1963, Myochikai sent Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto to Europe and the United States as a delegate of the Religious People's Peace Mission for the Total Abolition of Nuclear Weapons. Later, in the early 1980s, Myochikai members helped to collect 37 million signatures on a petition for peace, which was presented by Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto to the United Nations Second Special Session on Disarmament.

Benevolent activities also grow naturally from the lifestyle of “prayer and practice” advocated by Myochikai. After four decades of assisting people in need in various ways, in 1990 Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto established the Arigatou Foundation as a faith-based NGO dedicated to creating a better environment for children around the world. The activities of the Arigatou Foundation are all rooted in Myochikai's recognition that children are the treasure of humanity, the inheritors of the Earth, and the bearers of future peace. (See pages 13-22 for more details on the Arigatou Foundation.)

Myochikai is also active in the area of interreligious cooperation. It has been an active participant in the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) since sending a delegation to the first WCRP conference in 1970. In the year 2000—the 50th anniversary of Myochikai's founding—Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto inaugurated the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) by inviting 294 people representing 7 major religions and 33 countries and regions to the First Forum of the GNRC in Tokyo, where they shared their spiritual commitment to working for the well being of all the world's children. (See pages 23-32 for more details on the GNRC.)

Over the first half century of its journey, Myochikai has witnessed significant growth and brought many initiatives to successful fruition. It has forged effective partnerships for peace with many other organizations—religious, international, governmental, and non-governmental. Now, bringing this rich history into the 21st century, and dedicated as always to the spirit of its founder, Myochikai is more prepared than ever to realize the mission proclaimed by Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto on a global scale.



The resting place of Rev. Kohei Miyamoto and Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto

The Four Primary Teachings of Myochikai

The teachings of Myochikai explained on these pages were first formulated and announced by Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto, who called them “the essence of the teachings of Myochikai.” These teachings guide Myochikai believers in their daily prayer and practice. The aim is to practice each teaching with purity of heart—on all occasions and in all relationships—and thus to manifest the intrinsic Buddha nature within the individual.

1 SENZO KUYO PRAYER FOR ANCESTORS

Senzo Kuyo means praying for a peaceful, happy repose for the souls of one’s ancestors, a practice which Myochikai members believe helps to bring peace to all human beings and societies. By attending in prayer to the needs of those who have gone before them, Myochikai believers realize that their own existence is deeply intertwined with that of their ancestors. The practice of *Senzo Kuyo* leads to a way of life in the present that is rooted in respect for the lives of those in the past. Without reverence for those who have gone before, *Senzo Kuyo* teaches, it is impossible to recognize the value and meaning of one’s own life or the lives of others living today.

The prayers of *Senzo Kuyo* are not only an expression of respect for one’s ancestors, however, but also an offering of compassion. *Senzo Kuyo* teaches that one’s ancestors may be suffering, for example for the misdeeds of their lifetimes. For Myochikai believers, helping one’s departed ancestors by offering them

spiritual nourishment in the form of scripture chanting and prayers is as natural as helping a living child in need. The motivation for *Senzo Kuyo* is thus pure reverence and compassion for one’s ancestors. The practice, however, yields fruit of various kinds. For example, in a very practical way, praying for unseen ancestors can help a believer to develop greater love and compassion for the neighbors he or she sees every day.

Consider this typical *Senzo Kuyo* parable of a tree. Ancestors are compared to the roots, adults living today to the trunk, their children to the branches, and their descendants, to the fruit. If the roots are wizened or injured, the trunk and branches will grow weak, and the fruit will be withered and sparse. But when the roots are healthy, the trunk and branches will be strong, and the fruit will be sweet and beautiful. Myochikai members see praying for their ancestors as watering their roots. Through *Senzo Kuyo*, they hope to comfort and please their ancestors. Prayers like these can be likened to filling the well of life with water for the children of the future.



Mr. Tomoaki Tashiro (32)
Yamagata Prefecture, 1998

I am a graphic designer, and have often had to work overtime, even all night. On the night of February 20, 1998, while at my desk, I suddenly felt dizzy and fell from my chair. My body grew stiff and I had a convulsion in my right leg, and finally I lost consciousness. At the hospital, the doctor told me the cause was extreme fatigue. So I took a short leave and then went back to work. But one month later, I had a strong convulsion all over the left half of my body, and lost consciousness again.

This time, the doctor warned me, “At worst, you could lose your life.” Hearing this was shocking for me, because I had always been confident in my physical strength. I realized there had to be more to it than just fatigue. I thought and thought, and suddenly I remembered how, seven years earlier, my father had been killed in a traffic accident. In the accident, the car had hit my father’s right leg first. It was the same part of my body that had convulsed the first time! Then, my father had been knocked to the ground on the left side of his body. It was exactly the same part of my body that had strongly convulsed the second time. The parallels were too obvious to ignore.

I told my mother what I had realized, and she said, “Have you lost your thankfulness toward your father? You should pray for him, reciting the Lotus Sutra, so that his soul will be comforted and find peace.” Her words went straight to my heart, and I was full of remorse that I had not been grateful to my father. That night, sitting in front of the Buddhist altar in my home, I confessed my lack of appreciation to my father in tears, and prayed, reciting the Lotus Sutra for the repose of his soul.

Since then, I have recited the sutra for my father everyday. At first, it was challenging, as my limbs were still paralyzed and I was suffering. Despite my difficulties, though, I kept praying, because I knew my ancestors were waiting for my prayer. While I was chanting, I often remembered the good old faces of not only my father but also my grandfather and grandmother, who had loved me very much. I thought, “Many of my ancestors’ souls have not been comforted and pleased. I want to make them happy.” Every morning and evening, I prayed with all my heart, reciting the sutra for them more fervently than ever.

Then everything began to change, and day-by-day, my physical condition improved. Now, every night before going to bed, I never forget to express my appreciation to my ancestors for protecting me each day. Seven months after losing consciousness for the second time, I have now completely recovered.

As Myochikai believers teach and practice *Senzo Kuyo* purely for the sake of their ancestors, they also expect that doing so will gradually but steadily contribute to peace for all the people of the world. They believe that the respect and compassion for those who have gone before which *Senzo Kuyo* teaches can help individuals to become aware of the priceless dignity of each and every human being. Where this reverence for life consumes the human heart, there is no longer room for hatred, killing or war—or any of the “smaller” evils which eventually lead to these catastrophic consequences. In a very direct sense, when Myochikai members pray for their ancestors, they are praying for lasting peace for all people.

2 NINZEN PERSEVERANCE FOR THE SAKE OF GOOD

Ninzen means cultivating the spiritual strength to endure the difficulties that arise when one strives to do good. The word “*Ninzen*” is made up of two Chinese characters. The root meaning of the character “*Nin*” is endurance, perseverance, and patience. For Myochikai, *Nin* means that one should always remain calm and content, even in the face of the unexpected. “*Zen*” stands for what is good, right and virtuous. Myochikai teaches that *Zen* signifies the good inherent in the Buddha’s teachings and the righteousness that results when human beings practice them seriously. *Ninzen* teaches a way of life that is unshaken by obstacles

in pursuit of the good. Strengthened by the spirit of *Ninzen*, Myochikai believers strive to overcome both personal trials and external challenges for the sake of bringing about good for the world.

Myochikai teaches that *Ninzen* is essential to building true world peace. On a personal level, irritation and anger create discord and conflict. This is further aggravated when, rather than remaining calm, people bemoan challenging circumstances and blame difficulties and obstacles on others. Through the practice of *Ninzen*, Myochikai members seek to overcome anger and jealousy, and to grow in tolerance. With *Ninzen*, challenges and difficulties are seen as opportunities to grow as a person.

In 1963, when Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto visited Europe and the United States as a member of the Religious People’s Peace Mission for the Total Abolition of Nuclear Weapons, he exchanged views with world religious leaders, including Pope John Paul II. Upon his return to Japan, he proclaimed that Myochikai’s uniqueness was to be found in its spirit of *Ninzen*.

Myochikai members believe that the spirit of *Ninzen* is needed more than ever in the conflict-torn world of today, and that *Ninzen* is indispensable to peace-building. Without the great calm and eternal perseverance taught by *Ninzen*, achieving a goal as lofty as world peace is but a dream. Indeed, *Ninzen* is needed to accomplish even the smallest of good deeds. For Myochikai believers, *Ninzen* offers a realistic path to peace for individuals, societies and the entire human race.



Ms. Sachiyo Fujita (48)
Gunma Prefecture, 2000

“I would like to try to convey the teachings of Myochikai to other people and make them happy.” I had this thought after I was married, had children and had been living a comfortable life for quite some time. So I rang the doorbell of a stranger’s house and said through the intercom, “I am a member of Myochikai, which teaches prayer for ancestors through recitation of the Lotus Sutra. May I have a moment of your time to share these teachings with you?” The door never opened. I went to house after house, but no one gave me a chance to share. Many days passed this way. One day, seeing that I was weakening in my faith, my sister encouraged me: “Recite the Lotus Sutra diligently, fervently asking, ‘Please give me the chance to convey these teachings,’ and you will surely succeed, with the help of an invisible power.”

Since that day, I have been reciting the sutra daily without fail and continuing with my mission work. One day, I ran into an old classmate from elementary school for the first time in 35 years. She was still suffering from having had infantile paralysis, using a wheelchair and living in a rehabilitation facility for the disabled. She had finally begun dating someone, but because couples were not allowed to live together in the facility, she said, on the verge of tears, that she would have to

give up the idea of marriage altogether. I saw how much easier my life was compared to hers, and was cut to the heart.

I too had suffered from infantile polio, but it was thanks to me having this crippling disease that my parents had come to join Myochikai. I thought, “If my parents had not dedicated themselves to practicing these teachings day and night for the sake of my health, I would not be blessed as I am today and would have lived out her fate.”

After that, I visited up to 200 houses a week, but I still could not find anyone who wanted to become a member of Myochikai. Seeing my distress, a Myochikai leader taught me, “If you have visited 200 houses, it means you have bowed in respect at least 400 times and shared the teachings of Myochikai 200 times. You are freeing yourself from your karma.” These words penetrated my heart, and I could not stop crying.

After that, I continued walking from house to house, this time without any doubt. One day, when I visited my husband’s aunt and shared the teachings of Myochikai with her, she said, “These teachings are excellent,” and she decided to join. Since that time, people who had not wanted to listen to me have begun to listen intently to my sharing, and people have been coming to me to seek advice with their problems. In just three months, 24 people have decided to join Myochikai. From this experience, I learned that only by following the teachings of Myochikai with all my heart would I be given results without fail—not through my own strength but by the invisible help of the Buddha.

3 SANGE CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

In order to purify their hearts, Myochikai members practice confession and repentance of their sins. This is the teaching and practice of *Sange*. Through *Sange*, Myochikai believers continually strive to emancipate their souls from all evil.

Sange teaches that every human being has the original nature of the Buddha, and thus the innate potential to become Buddha. This means that even the wickedest person, deep within, possesses a heart of love and mercy. However, if this heart remains hidden inside the soul and is never manifest, the person can be compared to a mirror which never reflects the pure light of day. For Myochikai, *Sange* is not just confession of sins, but also a cleansing of the soul to allow the Buddha nature within to shine forth more and more purely.

Sange recognizes that, for most human beings, it is far easier to sin than to do good. But it also acknowledges that people naturally hope to do good and to change for the better. *Sange* offers a way to rid oneself of the inevitable stain of sin in order to reveal the heart of Buddha deep within.

In practice, Myochikai members strive to admit their own misdeeds, and to reflect on their consequences. The remorse that results is then expressed through sincere confession—a verbal articulation of the wrongs committed, either in prayer to the Buddha or to the person or persons who have been hurt as a result. In this way, *Sange* teaches, the heart of the individual is purified, clearing the way for the original light of the Buddha nature to shine forth. In cases where two persons have been at odds, one person's true *Sange* always generates repentance in the other. *Sange* is thus the process of spiritual renewal and reconciliation through the renunciation of sin.

For Myochikai, the practice of *Sange* provides insight into the original source of the conflict and injustice so prevalent in the world. Since all have sinned in some way, each believer admits to partial responsibility for the lack of peace in the world. Personal repentance and the reconciliation in human relationships that results can make a substantial contribution to world peace. Through the practice of *Sange*, Myochikai hopes to demonstrate to the world a way of humility that leads to reconciliation and peace for individuals, nations and the globe.



Ms. Yukie Yamada (28)
Tokyo, 2002

I got married in 1998 and now have two children. My husband often caused car accidents or made trouble for others by drinking too much alcohol. So we often quarreled, and I left home and stayed with my parents. Then, on November 1, 2001, the police phoned and told me that my husband had hit a college student when driving drunk, and that she had been seriously injured and was in critical condition. When I heard this, I felt great hatred for my husband and decided to divorce him because I didn't want my children to be the children of a criminal.

I hurried to the hospital to see the student and apologized to her parents on my knees. That night I told a Myochikai leader about everything. She advised me: "If you don't stop hating your husband, the student won't recover." I changed my mind at once because I did not want the student to lose her life. I desperately recited the Lotus Sutra and confessed my hatred through *Sange*. Fortunately, the student did not die.

But my husband had only been thinking about himself, and had sought the services of a private lawyer. I could not tolerate his irresponsibility in thinking that money would just get him out of trouble. I wondered why my husband was like this and began praying

fervently, seeking help from the Buddha. While reciting the Lotus Sutra, I suddenly started crying. I realized that I had been blaming my husband all along, thinking I was fine and my husband was in the wrong. I realized that my husband's wrongdoing was an expression of our ancestors calling for help, and that I had not been faithful enough to even think of this and had not prayed seriously for our ancestors. For the first time, I felt truly sorry to have been hurting my husband, who had been merely a vehicle to convey the cry of our ancestors for help.

Just after I finished reciting the Lotus Sutra, the police called and gave me some unexpected news. My husband had chosen a public defender and wanted to see me to apologize.

Since I had changed my way of thinking, it turned out that my husband had started reciting the Lotus Sutra while in custody. One day he wrote to me, letting me know he was truly sorry for his wrongdoing and begging me to trust him again, because he had changed. I couldn't stop crying.

The prosecutor had demanded one year in prison for him. However, on February 27, my husband received only four years of probation, and was released on the very same day. The victim's parents had said, "Condemn the offense and not its perpetrator; being in jail is not the only way to make up for one's sin."

Through practicing the teachings of Myochikai in this way, I have received many priceless things.

4

KANSHA

GRATITUDE FOR ALL THINGS

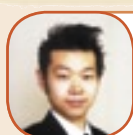
Kansha teaches Myochikai members to be grateful for all things. The source of spiritual abundance, for practitioners of *Kansha*, is a heart capable of gratitude for everything that supports and enriches one's life. This thankfulness is based on the realization of the complete dependence of one's life on many types of support. For instance, every human being comes into this world only with the love of his or her parents. And each person survives now only with the help and encouragement of many other people. *Kansha* teaches that the life of every human being is intimately dependent on countless people and things, on the natural environment, and on the Buddha.

This interdependence can be seen, for example, in the food chain. In one sense, human beings are nothing more than one link in the chain, consuming other plant and animal life in order to live, and even upon death, becoming food for other creatures. Truths as basic as this often go unnoticed, but through *Kansha*, Myochikai believers strive to cultivate the awareness that they have their lives only together with all other living things. Realizing this helps the believer to be grateful for all things, and to seek to help all things just as all things help him or her. In this way, *Kansha*

provides a wellspring of continuing motivation to do good for others, and to pursue further spiritual enlightenment.

The Buddha taught that the three poisons of greed, anger and ignorance had to be eliminated to attain peace of mind and true happiness. Through *Kansha*, Myochikai members strive to rid themselves of the heart of discontent that comes from ignorance, and to rejoice in gratitude for all things.

For Myochikai, the practice of *Kansha* is essential in building harmony between people and societies. The gratitude for "all things" taught by *Kansha* includes being thankful even for so-called "enemies." Replacing fear and hatred of "the other"—the root of discrimination and war—*Kansha* encourages thankfulness for all people, no matter how their views or situation may differ from one's own. For Myochikai, *Kansha* is the native state of all existence, and its practice restores human beings to their original position of harmony with all things.



Mr. Kazunari Tone (24)
Tokyo, 2000

When my mother and I first joined Myochikai, I was a 2nd grader. My parents were separated at the time and my mother and I had to live off of the child support from my father and her salary from a part-time job. We were poor. Every day, we ate meatball soup and rock-hard dinner rolls that my mother brought home from work.

My mother and I prayed for our ancestors a lot, reciting the Lotus Sutra. It was mysterious that, as we prayed, my mother received a bonus and her work environment improved. As for me, I was able to make more friends. Having friends made it more fun to go to school. I also became very active in the Myochikai Youth Group. After I graduated from high school, I trained to become a chef of Japanese cuisine. After five years, I passed a difficult exam and became a licensed globefish cook. This license is said to be the most difficult to get in all of Japanese cuisine, and I was the youngest person to pass in the history of the exam.

Now, putting my mother's salary and mine together, we can live an average life. One day, my mother said, "We were so poor at that time

that I didn't want to keep living. I seriously thought about giving up and ending our lives." It was then that we encountered Myochikai. In this sense, Myochikai literally saved our lives.

From now on, I want to enable my mother to live in comfort, because I have given her so much trouble already. I will not deny that I had a grudge against my father: I thought it was all because of him that my mother and I were so poor. However, now I can say with pride that being poor was a treasure for my life. While living in poverty, I learned the importance of perseverance and endurance. I could only have gained this priceless treasure through being poor. After I realized this, I let go of the negative feelings toward my father. Now, I am even grateful to him for giving me the opportunity to learn these precious lessons. I will keep following the teachings of Myochikai, always thankful for this treasure in my heart.

I want to thank the *Daionshi*, the *Kaishu*, Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto, Leader of Myochikai, my friends in the Youth Group, my colleagues at work, and most importantly, my mother who has spent her life bringing me up. I'll try with all my heart and soul to make my mother happy.

On the Path to World Peace

Since its founding, Myochikai has consistently endeavored to realize the vision of its founder—contributing to lasting world peace. For Myochikai, Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto's founding proclamation (see page 3) expresses the essence of Buddhist teaching and practice for building peace. Myochikai members seek to follow her dedicated example of selfless service and her practice of mercy and unconditional love. To this end, they follow the four primary teachings, which spring intrinsically from the heart of the founding proclamation. For Myochikai members, the practice of each one of the primary teachings, in its own way, directly contributes to peace for individuals, families, societies and the world.

EXCERPT FROM SPEECH ON BUILDING PEACE THROUGH GASSHO BY REV. TAKEYASU MIYAMOTO

OCTOBER 12, 2001

"Today, I want to share with you a story about a Buddhist saint described in the Lotus Sutra, named Jofukuyou. Every time this enlightened being met a person, without exception, he expressed respect by placing his palms together in a gesture of prayer, which we call Gassho. But people spoke ill of Jofukuyou, and became angry with him. Once, they even threw stones at him. But he responded with palms together in Gassho, saying, 'You have the nature of the Buddha, and thus I respect you; you are a wonderful person.' And he continued even more passionately to greet each person with palms together in prayer, worshipping the Buddha within his attackers.

The source of Myochikai teachings is this Gassho—in other words, in all our actions, enduring the difficulties that arise when striving to do good.

Listen, everyone. Do you see this fist? It is the image of attack, the shape of anger. Can you pick anything up with a clenched fist? No, you can't. Can you sense the warmth of a person with your fist? No. Rather, the first time you feel warmth is when you place your palms together in prayer, like this.

Hands together in prayer are the image of non-resistance, a shape rejecting violence, and an expression of reverence for peace. This Gassho is the image of Ninzen, which overcomes any trial, no matter what happens.

I have cried out for the creation of a world of Gassho for the last 51 years. However, my efforts have not yet been sufficient. All of us are responsible for the suffering in the world. If we all had love, if we all had mercy, would problems like the recent tragedies ever even occur?

It's not someone else's fault. It's the selfish nature inside each one of us. Let's change our hearts, if even just a little. Then, let's build a truly bright and wonderful world."

GASSHO—Prayer for Peace

Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto, Leader of Myochikai, once said, "If I were asked to name the most beautiful thing in the world, I would answer without hesitation—the shape of two palms placed together in prayer." This gesture is called *Gassho*, and it is deeply significant for Myochikai as an act of worship directed toward the Buddha nature inherent in all people and things. Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto has long advocated "*Gassho* in everything" and "building a world of *Gassho*," and often speaks about it as the path to peace. In essence, all of Myochikai's efforts to build peace can be seen as an expression of the spirit of reverence embodied in *Gassho*.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PEACE— Reaching Out

The compassion that starts with the practice of *Gassho*—hands together in prayer—naturally extends, for Myochikai, to reaching out a helping hand to those who are in need. Since its founding, Myochikai has been active in assisting victims of disasters, disease and conflict. In 1953, just three years after Myochikai began, it made its first major offer of emergency financial assistance, to help survivors of the severe flooding in Kyushu, Japan that occurred that year. Ever since, Myochikai has provided help both in Japan and overseas—assisting victims of earthquakes, fires, typhoons, floods, and mud slides, as well as diseases such as leprosy. Its first overseas project was cooperation with the "Heal Leprosy Fundraising Campaign" in India, in 1965.

In 1990, on its 40th anniversary, Myochikai founded the Arigatou Foundation, and in the years since, the Foundation has extended Myochikai's helping hand more specifically to children around the world. Through the Arigatou Foundation, Myochikai assistance has broadened to include help for children affected by violence and armed conflict in many countries. The Arigatou Foundation also provides continuous financial assistance for projects in fields such as water and sanitation, as well as education. (See pages 13-22 for more details on the Arigatou Foundation.)

Arigatou Foundation programs are entirely funded by the voluntary contributions of Myochikai members, who offer donations as a means of putting into practice their prayers for world peace. These offerings are a fundamental part of their Buddhist spiritual practice.

APPEALING FOR PEACE— Hands Outstretched

On the strength of members' personal commitment to giving and compassion, Myochikai has also had an active voice in peace advocacy since it began. Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto has traveled in Europe, North America, Asia and the Middle East as part of various missions to plead for peace, such as the Religious People's Peace Mission for the Total Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (1963). In 1964, both Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto and Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto were asked to serve on the committees which planned the building of the Flame of Peace at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, now known the world over as a poignant reminder that atomic warfare should never be allowed to occur again.

Most notably, in 1987, at the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei, Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto made an historic proposal on building world peace, speaking on behalf of Japan's religious people to the religious leaders assembled from around the world.

Myochikai's efforts to build peace have led to active participation in secular fora such as United Nations Special Sessions on Disarmament (1982 and 1988). In May 2002, Rev. Miyamoto addressed the United Nations General Assembly during the Special Session on Children, speaking on behalf of religious people from around the world. Myochikai's appeals for peace continue to gather the support and understanding of an ever-wider spectrum of people and organizations.



At the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei

INTERRELIGIOUS COOPERATION— *Joining Hands*

Myochikai's longstanding commitment to interreligious cooperation for peace began as early as 1953, when it joined the Federation of New Religious Organization of Japan, or *Shinsburen*. Myochikai has also been active in the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) since it began in 1970. In 1981, in recognition of Myochikai's contributions in this area, Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto was invited by H.H. Pope John Paul II to attend an Interreligious Conference at the Holy See. Later, in 1997, Myochikai hosted its own Interreligious Prayer for Peace, which was attended by religious dignitaries from various faiths.



Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto meets H.H. Pope John Paul II

A major fruit of the first five decades of these efforts was the launch of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) in May 2000. Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto explained it this way: "When I inaugurated the GNRC, I hoped for two things. One was to create a place where many people of various faiths engaged in activities for children could engage in dialogue, experience mutual enlightenment, and enhance cooperation. The other was to expand the circle of prayer and practice. The GNRC could not have been launched successfully without the cooperation of distinguished religious people from around the world." Since that time, the GNRC has grown through the voluntary initiatives of its members, and regional networks have been formed in South Asia, Africa, Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America. (See pages 23-32 for more information on the GNRC.)



Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto with participants of the First Forum of the GNRC

CHILDREN FOR PEACE— *Passing the Torch*

Myochikai seeks to build world peace by assisting the children of today, in the faith that if they grow up safe and sound, they will make a strong contribution to peace—both now and after becoming adults. As early as 1961, it sent youth delegates to the *Shinsburen* Religious Youth Conference. Myochikai youth have often participated in events like the global gathering of the Youth Wing of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) in 1979. In July 2000, the Arigatou Foundation held the Conference of Children for the Coming Generation (CCG), in Chiba, Japan, bringing together 213 youth from 40 countries and regions and many religious backgrounds. Following up on the CCG in May 2002, the Foundation held the Children's Conference in New York as a side event during the United Nations Special Session on Children. In May 2004, some 40 children from every continent are to take part in the Second Forum of the GNRC held in Geneva, Switzerland.



Conference of Children for the Coming Generation, held at Myochikai's Sacred Land in Chiba, Japan

MISSION— *Staying on the Road to Peace*

A great deal has been accomplished in Myochikai's first half century, but there is much left to do to realize a world of true peace. Inspired by the ever-passionate commitment of Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto, Myochikai members continue to strive to build world peace by putting the four primary teachings of Myochikai into practice in their personal lives. This is what it means to make the heart bloom.

Chronology of Key Myochikai Events

- Religious Cooperation
- ◆ Financial Assistance
- ▲ Major Myochikai Event
- ♣ Peace Activity
- ♥ Concern for Children
- Major Prayer Event
- ★ United Nations Participation

▲	Oct. 12, 1950	Myochikai founded by Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto.
■	May 19, 1953	Myochikai joins the Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan (<i>Shinshuren</i>).
◆	Jul. 1953	Myochikai provides emergency assistance for the first time to help victims of a natural disaster in Japan.
■	Aug. 8, 1953	Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto, Great Spiritual Master of Myochikai, becomes an Executive Director of <i>Shinshuren</i> .
♣ ■	Sep. 14 - Oct. 24, 1963	Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto visits Europe and the United States as a member of the Religious People's Peace Mission for the Total Abolition of Nuclear Weapons.
♣	Mar. 9, 1964	Preparing for the installation of the Flame of Peace at Hiroshima Peace Park, Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto and Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto serve on the construction and executive committees, respectively.
♣ ■	Feb. 3-21, 1965	Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto visits the Middle East as a member of the Japanese Religious People's Peace Mission.
◆	Jul. 30, 1965	Myochikai cooperates with the "Heal Leprosy Fundraising Campaign" in India.
♣	Jul. 28, 1966	Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto and Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto participate in the Asian Conference against Nuclear Weapons.
■	Oct. 19, 1967	Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto becomes a Vice President of the Board of <i>Shinshuren</i> .
♣ ■	Aug. 21, 1969	Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto participates in the first Conference for Peace of the World Federation of Religious People.
♣ ■	Oct. 16, 1970	Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto participates in the first General Assembly of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) as an honorary advisor. Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto participates as a Japanese delegate.
♣ ■	Jun. 12, 1976	Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto participates in the 8th Conference for Peace of the World Federation of Religious People.
♣ ■	Nov. 25-30, 1976	Representatives of Myochikai participate in the first meeting of the Asian Conference on Religion and Peace (ACRP), in Singapore.
◆	Nov. 10, 1978	Myochikai makes a financial contribution to institutions for children with cerebral palsy and severe physical/mental disabilities (again on May 14, 1987).
■	Feb. 24, 1981	Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto participates in the Meeting with Representatives of Non-Christian Religions at the invitation of H.H. Pope John Paul II, during his visit to Japan.
■	Apr. 23, 1982	Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto talks with Mother Theresa.
♣	May 23, 1982	Myochikai finishes collecting 7.8 million of the 37 million signatures on the Petition for Disarmament and the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons.
● ▲ ♣	May 28, 1982	Myochikai holds the Gathering of Prayer for World Peace and the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons.
★ ♣ ■	Jun. 22 - Jul. 1, 1982	In New York, Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto presents 37 million signatures to the United Nations Second Special Session on Disarmament, as the Honorary Leader of the <i>Shinshuren</i> Special Peace Mission from Japan.
■	May 24, 1984	Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto becomes a Vice Chairman of the Board of <i>Shinshuren</i> .
◆	Dec. 15, 1984	Myochikai leads the "Send Blankets to Africa" campaign, collecting and dispatching 36,000 blankets.
■	Aug. 29, 1986	Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto joins the Japan Conference of Religious Representatives' standing committee on preparation for the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei.
♣ ■ ●	Aug. 3, 1987	Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto makes a proposal for building peace at the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei.
★ ♣	Jun. 4-13, 1988	Representatives of Myochikai go on a peace mission to the United Nations Third Special Session on Disarmament, in New York.
■	Jan. 26, 1990	Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto becomes an Executive Director of the WCRP Japan Committee.
★ ■ ♥	Jul. 25-31, 1990	Representatives of Myochikai participate in the "World's Religions for the World's Children" conference, held in Princeton in the United States.
♥ ★	Sep. 10-17, 1990	In the year of Myochikai's 40th anniversary, representatives of Myochikai participate in the 43rd Annual DPI/NGO Conference and visit UNICEF headquarters in New York.
▲ ◆ ♥ ●	Oct. 13-14, 1990	The Arigatou Foundation established on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Myochikai, as a faith-based NGO working to build a better environment for the world's children.
■ ♥ ★	Aug. 30 - Sep. 6, 1993	Representatives of Myochikai participate in the Conference of Religious Leaders for Children organized by UNICEF and WCRP, held in Melbourne, Australia.

♣ ■	Oct. 19, 1996	Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto becomes a member of the ACRP Executive Committee.
■	Feb. 4, 1997	Representatives of Myochikai participate in the Japan Conference of Religious Representatives' mission to Europe.
♣ ■ ●	Aug. 4, 1997	Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto participates in the Interreligious Prayer Ceremony for World Peace on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei.
■ ♣ ●	Aug. 6, 1997	Myochikai hosts an Interreligious Prayer for Peace, attended by H.E. Francis Cardinal Arinze, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue of the Holy See.
■	Feb. 9, 1999	A Korean Buddhist mission visits Myochikai for a Korea-Japan Religious Cultural Exchange.
● ■	Oct. 25-28, 1999	Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto visits Rome to attend the Interreligious Assembly held by the Pontifical Council of Interreligious Dialogue, accompanied by 25 representatives of Myochikai.
♣ ■	Nov. 23 - Dec. 3, 1999	Representatives of Myochikai join the <i>Shinshuren</i> Peace Mission to the Middle East.
♣ ■ ♥	Nov. 25-29, 1999	Representatives of Myochikai visit Amman, Jordan to participate in the 7th WCRP General Assembly.
♣ ♥ ▲ ■ ●	May 16-18, 2000	First Forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) held in Tokyo, attended by 294 participants representing 7 major religions, from 33 countries and regions. On May 18, Myochikai hosts an Interreligious Assembly for Prayer, where representatives of 11 religions pray for peace.
♣ ♥ ▲ ■ ●	Jul. 25-28, 2000	Conference of Children for the Coming Generation (CCG) held in Chiba, Japan, bringing together 213 youth from 40 countries and regions to discuss their own future. The CCG Message is created and sent to world leaders.
★ ♣	Aug. 28-31, 2000	Representatives of Myochikai attend the UN Millennium Peace Summit held in New York.
♣ ♥ ■ ★	May 10, 2002	Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto addresses the United Nations General Assembly on the final day of the Special Session on Children, speaking on behalf of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC).
★	Feb. 2004	Myochikai (Arigatou Foundation) granted special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.
♣ ♥ ▲ ■ ●	May 17-19, 2004	Second Forum of the GNRC to be held in Geneva, Switzerland, with some 300 participants representing every major world religion, including 40 children. Interfaith Prayer for Peace to be held on May 19.
▲ ♥ ■ ★	May 2004	Establishment of the Interfaith Council on Ethics Education for Children to be formally announced.