

# Buddhist Seek Control of World, Is Claim



**AMBITIOUS BUDDHISTS** — Soka Gakkai, a society of fanatic Japanese Buddhists, in Tokyo, is determined to conquer Japan, America and the entire world with the Buddhist religion. In this photo, Daisaku Ikeda, president of the organization, acts as cheerleader during a Soka Gakkai mass meeting. (UPI)

By ROBERT CHAPPEL  
United Press International  
TOKYO (UPI) — In a Tokyo newspaper cartoon, a little girl fingers the Christian religious medal hanging from her father's neck.

"Daddy," says the caption, "you're the only one that wears this any more."  
The newspaper is called Seikyo News. It is the mouthpiece of Soka Gakkai, a society of fanatic Japanese Buddhists who are determined to conquer Japan, America and the entire world with their peculiar religion.

Another issue of the paper blisters American Christianity for its handling of the Negro problem.

Soka Gakkai means business. In Japan it is the wonder of the post-war religious world, a mixture of religion and politics that has jolted older religions and thrown a scare into politicians.

Abroad, it is the subject of controversy. The Roman Catholic weekly "America" calls it a movement of "present power and potential danger."

**Grows In Numbers**  
Soka Gakkai had only a handful of followers in 1945 — today it claims 10 million throughout the world, although informed observers are skeptical. In America, it boasts 4,000 followers in Los Angeles alone.

Its professed aim is to establish a "third civilization" that is neither capitalist nor Communist.

Its enemies compare it with Hitler's nazism, and other Buddhist sects in Japan are gang-ing up to fight it.

It has won converts among American service men in Japan, working on them through their Japanese wives. U. S. military authorities refuse any public comment on it, but watch it closely.

"Our organization now has

one million youths," says Soka Gakkai's well-tailored president, Dai Saku Ikeda. "This means the future of Japan is in our hands."

Soka Gakkai, written with four Chinese characters which mean create-value-learning-society, has made its biggest inroads among the poor and friendless of Japanese society.

The underpaid housemaid, the harassed shopkeeper, the threadbare pensioner and the small town boy lonely at some obscure job in Tokyo are its natural targets. It has made little headway among the prosperous and successful people in Japan.

**Uses Hard-Sell Technique**  
The worst criticisms that have been leveled against Soka Gakkai involve its forceful system of winning converts, and its active intolerance of other religions, even other forms of Buddhism.

**Royal Families Use Symbols for Plates**  
WASHINGTON (UPI) — Even royalty is in the game of using automobile license plates as cherished status symbols.

The National Geographic Society here reports that the Maharana of Udaipur, for example, disdains mere numbers for his royal Rolls-Royce. His car carries a brilliant gold sun disk, the family symbol.

In the tiny Himalayan kingdom of Sikkim, the royal family's tags simply bear the word "Sikkim."

**ODD JOBS**  
SAN FRANCISCO (UPI) — A report of the local Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals showed its work included handling two snakes, two skunks a monkey, a crab and a crocodile.

It draws its inspiration from a medieval Japanese Buddhist prophet named Nichiren, who called members of other Buddhist sects "fiends" and "devils."

A prospective convert is apt to be besieged virtually night and day by Soka Gakkai workers, pleading, praying and threatening. Sometimes the convert gives in just to get a little peace.

People entering the religion for the first time go to a temple for a ceremony. They receive a replica of a slab of wood on which Nichiren inscribed the essence of his religious thinking. Called a "honzon" or "basic object of worship," it must be enshrined in the believer's home.

Prayers are said in front of it every morning and night. Alarming to the Japanese political world has been Soka Gakkai's demonstrated ability to deliver its followers' votes. Candidates with Soka Gakkai backing seldom get beaten, especially in the Tokyo area.

Like Christianity, Buddhism is fragmented into a wide range of sects. The Indian teacher Gautama, who founded the religion 400 years before Christ, had been dead eight centuries when Buddhism arrived in Japan via China. By that time a host of prophets had embroidered Gautama's ideas almost beyond recognition.

The Japanese continued the process, creating purely Japanese sects different from any in the Buddhist world.

One of these is the Nichiren Shu sect, for which Soka Gakkai is a lay organization. "Soka Gakkai is peculiarly Japanese," says Woodward. "I certainly can't see it spreading widely in the United States. Outside Japan, I think it will be confined to places where the Japanese live."

The religious movement that was to disturb post-war Japan and arouse anxiety in far parts of the world was the creation of two obscure provincial school teachers.

It was founded in 1937 by Tenmeisaburo Magiguchi, a primary school principal and Nichiren Buddhist. Soka Gakkai's fanatic character soon got it into trouble with the Japanese militarists — Soka Gakkai rejected emperor worship. Its leaders were jailed during the war, and Makiguchi died in prison.

**Toda Took Lead**

His collaborator, Josei Toda, survived the war and turned Soka Gakkai into what it is today. Toda's years as a teacher had given him a complete mastery of the techniques of mass teaching. He was also a brilliant and forceful writer of propaganda. It was he who worked out Soka Gakkai's hard-hitting conversion techniques.

Before he died in 1958, he had pushed Soka Gakkai's membership past the million mark, and laid the foundations for future growth. When he died, leadership passed to Daisaku Ikeda, a professional Soka Gakkai worker.

Ikeda was 32 years old at the time — the same age as Nichiren when the medieval prophet proclaimed his new and intolerant brand of Buddhism.

**Third Largest**  
Soka Gakkai got into politics in 1955, electing 90 candidates to town councils in Tokyo and other communities.

By 1962, the number of Soka Gakkai members in the House of Councillors had swelled to 15, making it the third largest party in the upper house.

In Tokyo this spring it ran 136 candidates for ward councils, and elected all of them. Throughout the country it backed 604 city council candidates, and 587 of them won.

Occasionally it delivers its votes to candidates of the major parties. Usually it backs men from the Conservative party, which currently governs the country with pro-American and anti-Communist policies.

Politically, Soka Gakkai still is vague about what its proposed "third civilization" is to consist of.

**Claims All Roles**

As a large and well-disciplined organization, it is a standing target for Communist infiltration. Red China's official publications have said kind things about it, and three of its leaders were invited to the Soviet Union this year. But there are no signs that the Communists have

made any headway in penetrating it.

In planning its campaign in America, Soka Gakkai has taken a multi-racial approach. It now claims Negroes, Mexicans, Chinese and Filipinos among its followers, along with Japanese.

Seizing on the Japanese wives of service men as a vehicle for pushing Buddhism in America, Soka Gakkai organizes English classes to help them spread the faith when they take up residence in America.

There are chapters almost everywhere in the non-Communist Far East save for Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalist China, which has banned Soka Gakkai because of its attack on established government.

America is apt to hear more about Soka Gakkai and Buddhism in general in the decades ahead.

After a long sleep, the old faith of Asia shows signs of stirring. When it harnesses the techniques of modern propaganda and organization, as Soka Gakkai already has done, a new

competitor may be ready to enter the battle for men's minds.

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