

February, 1979

Twenty years ago, in 1979, I visited India, known in the Daishonin's time as the "land of the Moon." I still remember vividly to this day the breathtaking beauty of the full moon illuminating the immortal Ganges. I was on the anniversary of my mentor Josei Toda's birth, Feb 11.

Today, there will also be a full moon over Japan.

Two decades ago, an unsavory alliance of treacherous ex-Gakkai members, scheming priests and hypocritical political leaders attacked our organization. they sought to take over the Soka Gakkai, wishing to control and use it for their own self-serving ends, and to get rid of me, who stood on their way.

I am a disciple who has directly inherited the legacy of Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda, our first and second presidents. I have a responsibility to protect the pure organization of the SGI. I fought alone in the storm. I fought without ceasing to this day. This year will mark the 20th anniversary of the day I saw that spectacular full moon over the Ganges.

(New Year's Speech by Daisaku Ikeda. WT 01/15/99)

February, 1979

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 ray 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.

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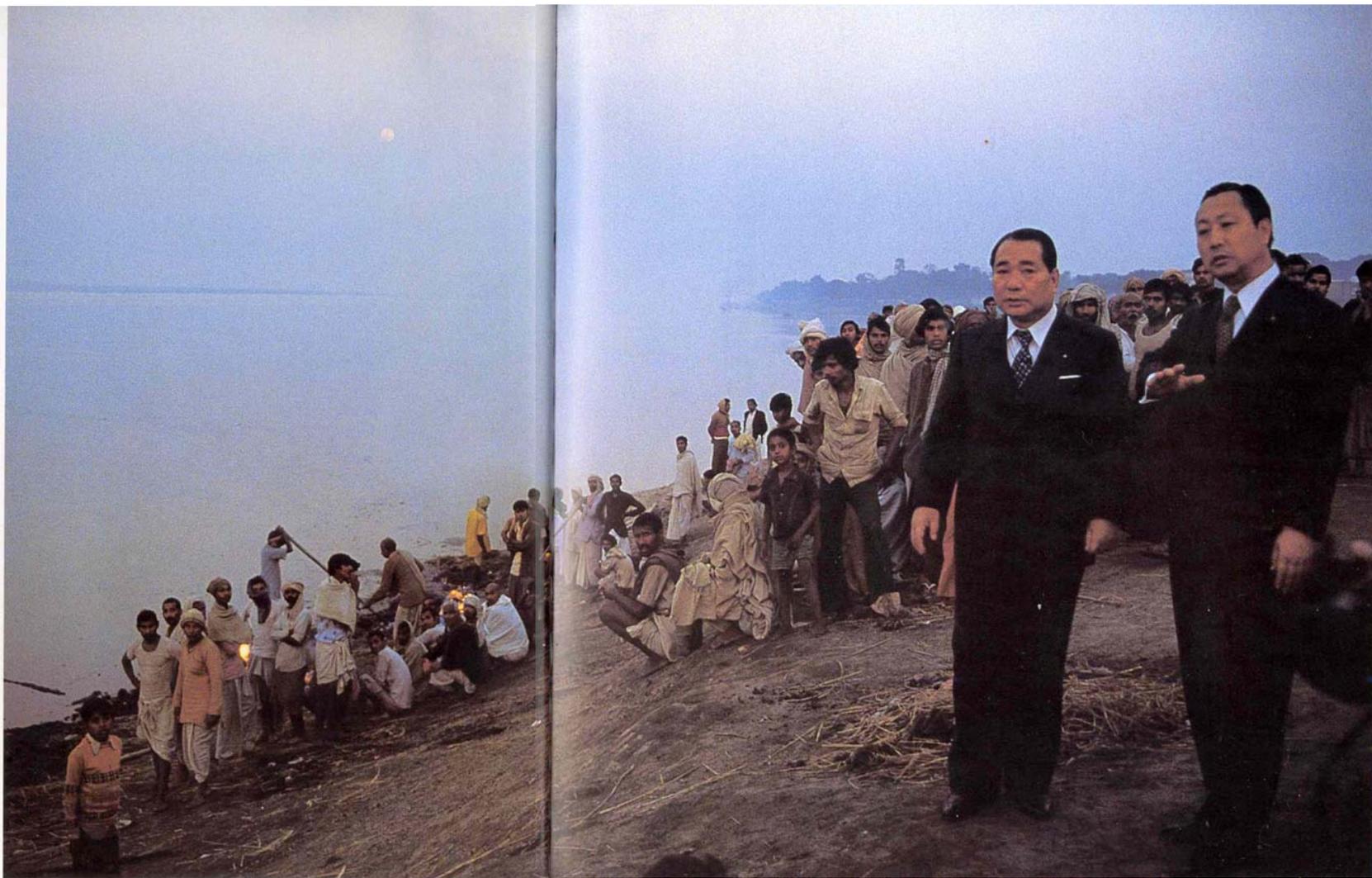
Since ancient times, the light of the moon and the scent of sandalwood were thought in India to relieve the heat. Based on this, the moon and sandalwood came to be regarded as possessing the power to calm human passions and anger. Moonlight became a symbol of wisdom and truth. Shakyamuni attained enlightenment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

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.

(An essay by Daisaku Ikeda. WT 11/19/1999)

The full moon over the Ganges river

February, 1979



悠久の大河ガンジスのほとりに立つ
(インド・パトナ 1979年2月11日
恩師・戸田第2代会長の誕生日)

Patna, India, February 1979

March 6, 1979

January 28: The second Nichiren Shoshu temple members general meeting is held at Taiseki-ji. Active anti-Gakkai priests continue their harsh criticism of the Gakkai. At this meeting, Nittatsu, in a tone rather critical of the Gakkai, states: "The priests have pointed out the Gakkai's errors and united here with you temple members in order to protect Nichiren Shoshu. Their sincere intent is to widely spread the fundamental spirit of Nichiren Shoshu. I ask that you recognize their profound sincerity. Some priests, however, still remain nonchalant although erroneous teachings have been propagated. Yet so long as they are priests of Nichiren Shoshu, I will protect them magnanimously. I am protecting them as priests of Nichiren Shoshu. I ask for your understanding in this regard. I also ask that you please refute erroneous teachings to the best of your ability . . ." (*Complete Works of High Priest Nittatsu*, vol. 5, part II, pp. 614-15).

March 6: Genjiro Fukushima, then Soka Gakkai vice president, openly criticizes the priesthood at the Omuta Community Center in Fukuoka Prefecture. In his speech,

Fukushima comments: "When President Ikeda goes to the head temple, Gakkai members eagerly greet him, calling him 'Sensei.' But they do not go near the high priest. Nor do they yearn to see him. Even if the high priest walks by, they simply wonder, who is that old man? So priests are jealous and accuse us of treating the president as the true Buddha..." The priesthood is outraged by Fukushima's speech, which has effectively nullified the Gakkai's efforts for reconciliation thus far. (Fukushima later quits the Gakkai and becomes a vehement anti-Gakkai spokesperson, eventually lending support to Nikken.)

March 12: The Nichiren Shoshu Administrative Office submits a letter of inquiry to the Gakkai regarding Fukushima's comments.

March 13: On behalf of Nittatsu, Taiseki-ji's Internal Affairs Department submits a letter of inquiry to the Gakkai regarding Fukushima's comments.

March 31: The Hokkeko Federation (an association of temple parishioners) holds an emergency board of directors meeting and passes a resolution requesting Mr. Ikeda's resignation from the position of chief lay representative.

April 2: Taiseki-ji's Internal Affairs Department, dissatisfied with the Gakkai's response to its initial inquiry, sends another letter of inquiry regarding Fukushima's statements and other matters.

April 6: Mr. Ikeda meets with Nittatsu in hope of restoring harmony. At the meeting, Mr. Ikeda communicates his decision to resign from the position of chief lay representative.

April 8: The Soka Gakkai publishes an apology in the *Seikyo Shimbun* for Fukushima's statements under the name of Hiroshi Hojo, then the general director.

April 24: To resolve the conflict and prevent Gakkai members from being subjected to further abuse from the priesthood, Mr. Ikeda announces his resignation from the position of Soka Gakkai president at a prefecture leaders meeting. He becomes honorary Soka Gakkai president, and Hiroshi Hojo becomes the fourth Soka Gakkai president. The priesthood asks the Gakkai to no longer allow Mr. Ikeda to attend meetings and to refrain from covering his activities in its daily newspaper, the *Seikyo Shimbun*.

Excerpt from the *Untold History of Fuji School*