

(あい だいじろう)

S P I R I T U A L J O U R N E Y

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Daijiro Ai (Ittoen kkyoto Japan)

The 2006 IARF Taiwan Congress

Hello, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am Daijiro Ai, a principal of Ittoen School, Kyoto Japan.

Perhaps some of you knows well about Ittoen, which is a religious living community founded by Tenko Nishida in 1905.

He often said to us in his life that Ittoen is not religion but a way of life.

There is surely a very spiritual atmosphere in this ground.

There are many buildings; several member's houses, office buildings, a dinning hall, worship hall and schoolhouses.

First of all, I would like to mention briefly about the life and career of Tenko Nishida, the founder of Ittoen.

Tenko san, as we often call him with respect and affection, was born in 1872 in a family of an old paper merchant in Nagahama Town, Shiga Prefecture near Kyoto.

From the time of his youth, he showed outstanding practical ability and deep spirituality.

When he was twenty years old, he endeavoured to pioneer the wilderness of Hokkaido, the northern part of Japan as a leader of 100 farmers.

To start with, he succeeded with his business to grow hemp which was used as the material of military uniform of soldiers fighting in the field of the Sino-Japanese War.

But his success soon came to an end after the War finished under Japan's victory.

He noticed that the cause of his success was in the War, that is, it had been supported by the death of the young soldiers in the field.

On the other hand, he was pushed to pay money to the both, the investors from his home town, and the farmers he took with him.

Thus he was faced with the subject of Money and War, an issue which would follow him throughout his life.

He searched eagerly for a way of life without dependence on Money and War.

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But there was no way to find such a way of life anywhere.
He fasted for three days without eating or drinking all the while sitting

on the porch of a small temple in his home town.

Before the dawn of the fourth day, he heard a baby crying faintly, with hunger and sleep in the twilight somewhere around the temple.

When it suddenly stopped, he imagined its mother giving her breast milk to the baby, realising there is both, mother and baby, together in happiness.

He noticed that there is neither Money nor War between Mother and Baby, that is, Mother is happy to give and Baby is happy to receive. And then he realized the path he should take.

He made up his mind to cast away his small self, and follow the law of Nature completely, giving himself in trust of the Light (or God), like a baby trusts and depends on its mother completely.

With this realization, he entirely left himself in the hand of the great Mother Nature.

After that, he worked to help people without any remuneration, and wherever he went, he was given what he needed to live like the baby.

His truthful, completely selfless way of life attracted spiritual people, and a large number of men and women, young and old, gathered around him who had no home or fortune.

In 1913, a woman follower donated to him a small training and practice hall, which was named "Ittoen" (meaning Garden of One Light).

This spiritual training hall, "Ittoen Dojo" attracted a lot of competent people, who were not only religionists, but also artists, scholars, businesspersons and others, who left their footsteps in the later Japanese history.

Ittoen's activity became known not only in Japan but also in foreign countries.

They requested Tenko san to lecture from several parts of overseas; Hawaii, the mainland U.S., "Manchuria" (Northeast China), Java and elsewhere.

The local mass media introduced him with headlines such as "Japan's Mahatma Gandhi" or "St. Francis of Asia"

Although Tenko san passed away in 1968 at the age of 96, Ittoen even now continues to hold trust in this way of life, including about 200 people

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ople belonging to 30 families living in a communal spirit of sweat and prayers.

Most of the members are engaged in Ittoen's cultural and economic activities, which are several companies of printing, publishing, architecture, agriculture, theatrical troupe, and educational institutions ranging from a kindergarten, elementary, junior and senior high school.

Ittoen had the 100th anniversary of its founding two years ago, in 2004.

Well, As the theme of speech given to me today is "Spiritual Journey", I would like to talk about my experiences enlightened by Tenko-san or any idea of the spiritual journey in my life.

I was born in Ittoen in 1936, my father and mother followed Tenko san when they were young before their marriage.

As my father died when I was 10 months old, I don't remember the figure of my father in my mind.

But I loved music since early childhood, as my father has studied to play the violin at the Art University in Tokyo before coming to Ittoen.

My mother also loved music and gave her young children, two daughters and two sons, a chance to listen to many kinds of music; the works of Mozart, Beethoven or Tchaikovsky and a lot of other composers, as we gathered in front of a gramophone, an old-fashioned record player, on the anniversary of my father's death every year.

Every night before going to bed, we, four young siblings surrounding our mother enjoyed singing many kinds of songs like "Halleluya Chorus" by Handel, "Japanese Nursery Song", "Mother Goose Rhyme" or once in a while "Beethoven's Choral Symphony".

I am proud of my family which loves music.

Now, since my boyhood I was often taught from Tenko san about a lot of things my father's stead, especially about spiritual ways to live.

He often told me about the Greatness and the Secret of the Mother Nature.

One day when I was young, as I greatly wanted to play the piano, I asked Tenko san to let me play it.

He asked me,

"Do you like music, Daijiro?" "Yes, I do."

"Whom do you like?" "I like Beethoven."

After a moment he answered,

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"Well, dear Daijiro, Beethoven is in the murmur of a stream, isn't he?"

I muttered "Damn! him" in my mind.

I couldn't take his words in the right spirit at the time.

But about several years later, when I traveled in Tohoku district alone, I heard his words again in my mind walking along the Oirase stream, which has beautiful clear water running among some rocks with green moss.

"Well, dear Daijiro, Beethoven is in the murmur of a stream, isn't he?"

At that time a certain sight flashed into my mind.

The sight was the figure of Beethoven listening to the murmuring of a stream or a song of birds in a pastoral landscape in Vienna.

I noticed that the murmur of a stream or a song of birds in the Great Nature was the original scene of his 6th Symphony, "The Pastoral".

I was impressed when I noticed these facts, and Tenko san's words awoke me from unsatisfying days.

After that I came to see Nature with a new point of view, especially feeling that an unfailing spiritual secret is hidden in the Great Nature.

Even now I spend my days giving thanks and drawing inspirations.

When the 25th IARF World Congress was held in Tokyo in 1984, I often heard certain impressive words; "Spiritual Desert" from some participants, especially westerners during the congress.

Although the main theme of that congress was "The Tide of Religion" and the sub theme was "Eastern Initiative, Western Response", I felt the phenomenon "spiritual desert" had spread over not only in Western countries but also in Japan.

I think that the Great Nature gives us, all human beings, a spiritual feeling at our birth in a divine providence.

If you take a two or three years old baby into a deep forest, you will notice that its heart beats more rapidly.

This means that all human beings are able to feel at birth the spiritual waves which are sent from the Universe, which transcends age, all human knowledge or human power.

Some scientists report that the waves running through the deep forest or in the green field of Nature are 7.8 hertz.

And this 7.8 hertz wave makes the heart of people comfortable and

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produces the hormone called alpha wave from their brain.

In addition, it is reported that the brain wave of babies at birth is also 7.8 hertz.

This is why we feel comfortable and at peace when we are with a baby or in the Great Nature.

Although I have four daughters, I don't think we, my wife and I, created them. We were given them from the Great Nature.

They all have individual characters and we are happy with them.

My second daughter lives in South Dakota in America and she is married to an African - American.

I was surprised and a little sad when she first told me about this, because it is rare that Japanese marry African - Americans.

But after their marriage, I studied about African-Americans, and I learned of a sailor named John Newton, who lived in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

He was a slave trader and his work was to take black people as slaves by ship from Africa to his country America across the Atlantic Ocean.

One day he met a heavy storm with a lot of black people on the boat, and he prayed to God to forgive him his sin and to help all the people together on the boat.

After the storm was soon lulled, he thanked to God and took the people back again to Africa and dedicated the rest of his life to the abolition of slavery to compose a beautiful poem titled "Amazing Grace" with the spirit of his penitence.

Nowadays, this song is sung all over the World.

Particularly many African-American people love it, as they feel it is the song of their spiritual home.

I was taught by my daughter all human beings on the earth have the same spirit to live with love and peace.

Finally, I want to thank all of you for your attention and read the first and last sections of this song, "Amazing Grace".

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Amazing Grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now am found
Was blind but now I see

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbear to shine
But God, who called me here below
Will be forever mine

(注 記) とりあえず英語で纏めてみました。

当日も出来れば英語でスピーチしたいと思っておりますが、4ページ中程の会話のシーンはその場の雰囲気を出すために、下記に日本語の表現を書いておりますので、通訳の方にお伝え頂ければ有り難いと思っております。

天香さんは私に尋ねました

「大二郎、、、おまえは音楽が好きか？」 「はい、好きです」

「誰が 好きや？」 「ベートーベンが好きです」

暫く沈黙の後、天香さんはゆっくりと答えました

「あんな、大二郎、、、ベートーベンは 小川のせせらぎの中に いるんやなー」

私は心の中で

「この くそじじい」と思いました。

相 大二郎 (あい だいじろう)

略 歴

昭和11年(1936年) 京都に生まれる

昭和34年(1959年) 一燈園大学林卒業

昭和47年(1972年) 慶應義塾大学文学部(哲学科)卒業

幼い頃から「一燈園」創始者西田天香師に導かれ、一燈園の祈願である「個人の成就」と「人類真平和」について、その「祈り」と「実践道」を教導される。

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現在携わっている教育現場をはじめ、国際理解教育、ユネスコ運動、ボランティア活動、IARF(国際自由宗教連盟)等の諸活動は、いずれも師西田天香の精神とその実践道を受け継ぐものである。

現 在

一燈園小・中・高等学校 校長
京都高等学校国際理解教育研究会副会長
全国高等学校ユネスコ協議会理事 (前)
日本ボランティア学習協会理事
I A R F (国際自由宗教連盟) 日本連絡会議世話人

論 文・著 書

「北海の小島に祈る」
「一燈園教育共同体」
「水がお湯になるとき」他