

## Japan- Here I come with Dreamy Eyes

By

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### Abstract

The basic Buddhist practice of Soka gakkai members is chanting Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo reciting portions of the Lotus Sutra (referred as Gongyo), sharing the teachings of Buddhism with others in order to help them overcome their problems.

Myoho-Renge kyo is the title of Lotus Sutra.

Nichiren Diashonin's Buddhism teaches that all living beings are buddhas. Both oneself and others are inherently endowed with the life force of Buddha.

In November 2013 the magnificent citadel of worldwide kosen rufu -The Hall Of Great Vow for Kosen Rufu was inaugurated.

Ikeda Sensei (3rd President) enshrined in this great hall the Joju Gohonzon on that bears the inscription, " For the fulfillment of the great vow for Kosen rufu through the compassionate propagation of the great law'.

### Keywords

Bodhisattva, Gohonzon, kosen rufu, Lotus Sutra, human revolution

### Introduction

The land rising Sun...Japan! There resides my mentor Ikeda Sensei who taught us . The art of happiness lies in making others happy; a human revolution to be precise. I had taken this practice like a fish in the water.

It was my ardent desire to visit Japan and chant in this Hall of Great Vow...with a seeking spirit of keeping my mentor in my heart, fulfilling the mission of Kosen Rufu in my life.

Ten years had passed since I took up the practice. The flame of my desire remained strongly aglow in my heart; An impossible desire it seemed, as none of my family members followed this practice.

Somewhere in Feb 2017, my daughter inquired, "Mom, there's a Japan package on Wow(women on wanderlust). Would you like to come along?"

What Japan! I almost fell from the chair!

Holding my horses I said, "Only on the condition that you take me to visit my mentor's place."

Her affirmation really surprised me. I was witnessing my impossible dream coming alive.

With one thing sorted, the rest of the exercise fell perfectly well like a jigsaw puzzle. Mystically though only one date was allocated to visit the hall, that was -25th March. We decided to travel one day early, visit the hall on 25th and then join the group in the evening.

With strict instructions, "Mom, travel very light...you will have to carry your own luggage...don't expect me to carry your luggage", we boarded the flight. My heart was overwhelmed with joy!

Here are a few glimpses of my adventurous travel to Japan.

## The Hall of Great Vow for Kosen-rufu

A newly built headquarters, in Shinanomachi, inaugurated by Ikeda Sensei was open to all Bodhisattvas from across the globe gather here in the hall and chant alongside their mentor's voice.



**Image 1: The Hall of Great Vow for Kosen-rufu**

After the orientation, I was allowed to enter the hall. That feeling of being there, along with the global Bodhisattvas chanting alongside my mentor's voice had electrified my whole being with unsurpassed joy.

The eight columns alongside the front of the hall equated 8 Chinese characters from the Lotus Sutra expressing that you should rise and greet him(any person) from afar showing him the same respect you would a Buddha.

## Tokyo Tower

The Tokyo Tower is a communications and observation tower in the Shiba-koen district of Minato, Tokyo, Japan, built in 1958.

It has the modern charm and looks magnificent as it lights up at night but the real thrill comes as you climb to the top to see the dynamic view of the city.

At the base of the tower is shopping complex called foot town which features an array of international shops and restaurants

### **Kaguwa Amusement Show**

Joining with the rest of the group on 25th we witnessed a splendid lavish dinner and an amusement show depicting emotional Japanese culture dealing with a red light district featuring everything of the Meiji Era (1868 -1912) exterior interior space and show restaurant.

Excitement begins the moment a guest steps in Kaguwa restaurant in Tokyo



**Image 2: Kaguwa Amusement Show**

It is one of the best memories during the trip to Japan.

### **Adventurous Fall**

After the event as we were welcomed to the stage, I slipped and fell from the 6ft high stage. A real bad fall could be fatal but was saved with just a hairline fracture in the left ankle.

Our Guide Miharu took it upon herself to take me to the doctor, get the plaster done and wheel me in a wheelchair all throughout the trip. My heartfelt gratitude to her for life.

I witnessed the drama of life with pleasure and pain both at the same time.

Returning back to the prime point of my faith was reminded of the lines by Nichiren Diashonin. I quote, " Suffer what is there to suffer, enjoy what is there to enjoy. Consider both suffering and joy as part of life and continue chanting Nam myoho renge kyo no matter what."

With gratitude in my heart, each moment spent in Japan was no less than the wondrous and memorable one for lifetime.



**Image 3: Moments to Cherish**

## **Sensoji Temple**

Sensoji temple is an ancient Buddhist temple located in Asakusa, Tokyo, Japan. It is Tokyo's oldest temple, and one of its most significant. Adjacent to the temple is a five-story pagoda, the Asakusa Shinto shrine.

The Nakamise-dōri walkway is a street on the approach to the temple.

The legend says that in the year 628, two brothers fished a statue of Kannon, the goddess of mercy, out of the Sumida River, and even though they put the statue back into the river, it always returned to them. Consequently, Sensoji was built nearby for the goddess of Kannon. The temple was completed in 645, making it Tokyo's oldest temple.

## **Mt. Fuji**



**Image 4: Mt. Fuji**

Mount Fuji, being the 7th highest mountain on the earth, is located about 100 km (62 mi) southwest of Tokyo on the island of Honshū. Exceptionally symmetrical cone, it remains covered in snow for about five months of the year.

Over the years the peak has evolved from an object of worship to a source of artistic inspiration, having featured in poetry, literature and countless art prints.

An interesting tale while travelling in the coach bus, our tour guide Miharu told us that Mt Fuji is considered to be a lady mountain and believed to be a shy mountain by the locals. It shall give the audience only if it wants to.

True to the belief or by chance until the last lap the mountain remained covered with thick fog and grey clouds. It was only at the last corner bend that the clouds parted, fog cleared and we had the magnificent glimpse of Mt. Fuji in all its grandeur. We were spellbound. Nature compels one to do obeisance to such grandeur.

The base of Mount Fuji is surrounded by five stunning lakes which sit around 1,000 feet above sea level and offer spectacular views of the mountain. The lakes area has become a popular spot among tourists thanks to their unrivalled setting. Due to the geothermal activity in the area, there are hot springs to bathe in – perfect for easing those aches and pains after a long day's climbing.

### **The Shinkansen (Bullet Train)**

The Shinkansen, colloquially known in English as the bullet train, is a network of high-speed railway lines in Japan. No trip to Japan can be complete without experiencing the ride in the train. For me it was special. I was amazed at their prompt service and action. The attendants would already be there to support me. From Atami we reached Hiroshima.

## Hiroshima Peace Memorial



**Image 5: Hiroshima Peace Memorial**

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial is a haunting tribute to the lives lost when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. Set in a park, the memorial features Genbaku Dome, the only building left standing in the vicinity after the bomb dropped. This harsh reminder of a world at war reminds visitors of the importance of human life and honors the victims so they will never be forgotten. The Bento Box was a heart-touching Story told by our Guide Miharu...Shigeru Orimen was a first-year student at Second Hiroshima Prefectural Junior High School. He was exposed to the bomb at his building demolition work site at Nakajima-shin-machi. His mother Shigeko searched for him desperately through the devastated city but failed to find him. On August 9, she found a body with this lunch box clutched to the abdomen. Shigeko's grief deepened when she realized that Shigeru never got a chance to eat the lunch he had been so eagerly anticipating.

Yet another striking feature towards creating value in small children was told by our guide. What you give comes back to you: When Parents take their children to this Peace Monument they tell them."America is our friend and not enemy. In life whatever we give comes back in the same coin. We must have done something wrong that's why this happened. If we give love we shall receive love."This is actually sowing the seed of love and compassion to the future generation.”



### **Kinkakuji ( Golden Pavilion)**

Kinkakuji ( Golden Pavilion) is a Zen temple in northern Kyoto whose top two floors are completely covered in gold leaf. Golden pavilion is one of the most popular buildings in Kyoto, attracting many visitors annually. Formally known as Rokuonji, the temple was the retirement villa of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, and according to his will it became a Zen temple of the Rinzai sect after his death in 1408.07-Aug-2020 It is designated as a National Special Historic Site.

### **Todaiji Temple**

Nara is the capital of Japan's Nara Prefecture, in south-central Honshu. The city has significant temples and artwork dating to the 8th century when it was Japan's capital. Deer roam in Nara Park, site of Tōdai-ji temple. Daibutsu, Tōdai-ji's 15m-high bronze Buddha, is displayed in a large wooden hall. On the park's east side is the Shinto shrine Kasuga Taisha, which dates to 768 A.D. and has more than 3,000 lanterns.

### **Geisha & Cherry Blossoms**



**Image 6: Geisha**

In the Gion district where Geishas travel to work, we were lucky to get a few glimpses of them. Nishijin textile centre for a beautiful Kimono fashion show. Osaka Castle and

Shinsaibashi shopping arcade held us all spellbound. Equally fascinating are the Cherry blossoms which make Japan so colorful and beautiful.

With all the beautiful memories embedded in the heart, we bade goodbye and boarded our return flight.

## References

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## About the Author



An Educator, Voice modulator, Author & Poet, Radio-Artist, Creative Artist for Crafts and Dramatics, Kiren Babal has a rich experience of 40 years; with a flair for writing both in English and Hindi.

To her credit she has many children's books, poetry books and anthologies both in English and Hindi. Her focus always remained in keeping her hobbies alive.

She is passionate about storytelling and loves to interact with NGO children by way of storytelling. Life unfolds itself in all her creative pursuits, be it writing, singing, painting, poetry , storytelling, or social services. The journey goes on.

