

## Arbitration Instead of War

SHAKU SOYEN OF JAPAN

**W**HAT A GLORIOUS evening this is for Buddhists to see! The whole platform is occupied by us Buddhists only from the Orient. What a happy time this is that we see such a big gathering of well-educated ladies and gentlemen who are assembled here with the praiseworthy object of listening to the voice of truth! I have always regarded it a high honor in my life that I had the honor of seeing you from this pulpit the last time as one of the foreign delegates to this successful Parliament of Religious Congresses. But this happiness and honor I have this evening in having another opportunity of addressing you are much greater.

My subject is "Arbitration Instead of War." I am a Buddhist, but please do not be so narrow-minded as to refuse my opinion on account of its expression on the tongue of one who belongs to a different nation, different creed, and different civilization. Why? Because the truth is only one. There must be no distinction, and all must be equal before the light of the truth.

First, let me thank you for the success which is crowning this parliament. But allow me to assure you that this parliament is only the beginning of universal brotherhood and fraternity, though if the object be dropped now it will surely be fruitless, meritless, and come to naught. Let us hope that you and I—nay, all the people on the earth—will combine in harmony in promoting the grand project patiently and steadily. And what do you think I really mean by the grand project? It is the formation of a common family in universal brotherhood. I assure you that this project is not like a castle in the air at all, but quite hopeful.

Our Buddha, who taught that all people entering into Buddhism are entirely equal in the same way, as all rivers flowing into the sea become alike, preached this plan in the wide kingdom of India just 3,000 years ago. Not only Buddha alone, but Jesus Christ, as well as Confucius, taught universal brotherhood. Then let us, the true followers of Buddha, the true follower of Christ, the true followers of Confucius, and the followers of truth, unite ourselves for the

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sake of helping the helpless, and living glorious lives of brotherhood, under the control of truth. Let us hope that we shall succeed in discountenancing those obstinate people who dared to compare this parliament with Niagara Falls, saying, "Broad, but fruitless." We the lovers of truth and martyrs of love, must not rest till success smiles upon the home of truth.

Now let me speak a few words about international law, which is the outburst of universal brotherhood in itself. Why does war take place? Is there no alternative but to appeal to swords? What excuse can there be? Why should men fight and kill each other over things that do not concern them? The nature of war is not acceptable at all. And why? Because it is only the ambition of a few men disturbing the social peace, the social order, against the course of truth. How great a story of dreadful wars and battles that have been fought in the world does history tell us? The perusal of those barbarous records is enough to make the blood of those who love truth, peace, and fraternity tingle and shut the book with a crying sigh!

And now we have international law which has been very successful in protecting the nations from each other and has done a great deal toward arbitration instead of war. But can we hope that this system shall be carried out on a more and more enlarged scale, so that the world will be blessed with everlasting, glorious, bright sunshine of peace and love instead of the gloomy, cloudy weather of bloodshed, battles, and war?

And what is gained by war? Nothing; it only means the oppression of the weak by the strong; it simply means the fighting among brothers and the shedding of human blood. The stronger gains nothing while the weaker loses everything. We very often say that we are brothers, but what a troublesome brotherhood it is where one has to be armed well against the other. Look at the present state of European powers. What is the state of the triple alliance? Is it for the promotion of peace and love? I hope it is, because when each nation is busily engaged in defending itself against the other, at the highest expense in its power, there will be no time to think for the promotion of true peace and love.

We are not born to fight one against another. We are born to enlighten our wisdom and cultivate our virtues according to the guidance of truth. And, happily, we see the movement toward the abolition of war and the establishment of a peace-making society. But how will our hope be realized? Simply by the help of the religion of truth. The religion of truth is the fountain of benevolence and mercy. It is the duty of religion and of truth to attain this beautiful project of brotherhood, and is it not our duty to become the nucleus and motive power of this great plan? It is, and we must be that nucleus and power.

We must not make any distinctions between race and race, between civilization and civilization, between creed and creed, and between faith and faith.

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You must not say "go away" because we are not Christians. You must not say "go away" because we are yellow people. All beings on the universe are in the bosom of truth. We are all sisters and brothers; we are sons and daughters of truth, and let us understand one another much better and be true sons and daughters of truth. Truth be praised!

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