

Dr. Minoru Kasai

Recipient of the International Award for Promoting Gandhian Values Outside India – 2015

Born: June 13, 1932

Born in Ichinoski in northern Japan, Minoru Kasai was brought up in Shanghai, China. He graduated from the International Christian University in 1958 and then studied religion at the Princeton Theological Seminary during 1958-60. Thereafter, he studied at the College of Indology, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) for six years. He obtained a doctorate in 1966. Since the 60's, Minoru Kasai has been an ardent Gandhian and a Gandhian scholar, as his relation with India and scholarship on Gandhiji's life and philosophy started during his student days at the BHU.

Kasai strives to vividly portray, in his speeches and publications, how Gandhiji is the converging point of diverse cultures, a universal figure and an eternal witness to man's active prayer for the redemption of suffering humanity. As a thinker and philosopher, Kasai has helped create a better understanding of Indian and Gandhian ideologies among the Japanese society, especially amongst its youth.

Since over four decades, through research and teachings, and in the form of lectures, chapters and articles in various publications, he has propagated Gandhian philosophy and messages in other countries as well. Kasai has visited India several times on teaching assignments and research presentations at various universities.

Since 1968 till date he has been associated with the International Christian University (ICU), Tokyo, Japan and currently is the Professor Emeritus of the University. After retirement, he is still actively conducting monthly studies on Gandhiji's Swaraj at the ICU. Dr. Kasai is yearning for reconciliation and creative co-existence beyond hatred with forgiveness on conflicts between China and Japan. Kasai is currently writing a book along with a friend in Cambridge, England on this theme.

Kasai's mission in life continues to spread Gandhiji's revolutionary message and vision in India, America, Philippines and South Africa. During a recent visit to Manila, he met the people who had participated in the 1986 Philippines EDSA (People Power) revolution. Kasai was impressed to find Gandhiji's beliefs and ideologies alive in them.

Kasai was a Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University (1966-67); Director of Japanese Studies Program, Ateneo de Manila University (1972-74); and Japan Foundation Fellow in India (1978-79).

He comprehends the civilization changes and interprets them on the grounds of reason that is sustained by truth. The writings and talks also address the evolution of plural models of sustainable development and inclusiveness of all sections.

One of his professional publications titled Gandhi and the Contemporary World was published in 1980. It is Kasai's de profundis, a reminder of the horrifying, satanic reality of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In this book he has brought a message of hope, as he recounts how a sensitive soul in the Philippines sees an Eastern face of Christ in Mahatma Gandhi. He also presents on how the troubled consciousness of many contemporary thinkers across the world is coming to recognize Gandhian thinking as a possible communion of the spirit; with a patient, active waiting for a future civilization which is truly universal, humane and just.

Kasai has written book chapters titled Gandhi and the Converging Point of Cultures, Mankind's Consciousness and Structure of Culture, Studying Gandhi in Universities among many others.

Some of Kasai's research based presentations at the various seminars included 'Mahatma Gandhi's View of History' at the Institute of Gandhian Studies, Varanasi and the Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla in 1976; 'Gandhi and Nehru' at the University of Australia in 1989; 'Religion and Politics in M.K.Gandhi's Independence Movement' at the Japanese Association for Religious Studies in 1994; 'How are Studies on Gandhiji's Life and Thinking as Impossible in the University Possible' at the Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, India in 1994.

Dr. Kasai sees Mahatma Gandhi as the guiding spirit for search of tomorrow. Kasai's inspiring work and literary contributions to spread Gandhian philosophy has created a deep impact.

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