

Introduction to Romain Rolland
(By Miyamoto Masakiyo, founder)

Love, freedom and peace!
Works of hope and courage

Romain Rolland was born the son of a notary public in the town of Clamecy, central France, in 1866. After graduating with distinction in history from the École Normale Supérieure, he was selected to undertake a two-year study period in Rome. He gained a doctorate in literature, returned to his old school to teach history of music, then went on to teach at the University of Paris. He had a passion for drama and produced many works, although he did not achieve major success in this field. However, Rolland's biography of Beethoven imparted great emotional impact on its readers and brought hope and encouragement to life. The work that brought Rolland's name to fame was *Jean-Christophe*. He received the literature prize from the French Academy, and became the recipient of the 1915 Nobel Prize for literature. His second major work, *The Enchanted Soul*, parallels *Jean-Christophe* in its grandeur. These works are a source of hope and courage for those who desire a righteous life and freedom in a modern world filled with injustice and inconsistencies.

The Pacifist Rolland

After the First World War, Rolland settled in Switzerland and produced many works (novels, drama, political and social essays and research) surrounded by the beautiful nature on the shores of lake Léman. Numerous individuals respected his character and those who valued his thoughts and artistic works came to visit from afar, including Gandhi and Tagore. Having a natural talent and a deep understanding for literature, philosophy, history and music, he was also concerned with the political and social issues and conditions. He surpassed the boundaries of race and nation to fight for the protection of oppressed peoples. His ideal was peace and freedom and harmony for all the people on the Earth.

Rolland was born to a Catholic family. Although he abandoned God in his youth, he maintained a strong religious nature as expressed in his words "I am religious at heart." Indeed, love may be his God. Romain Rolland and his works have continued to provide deep spiritual inspiration in Japan for the past sixty years.