

Japan anime fans plan to send 'Spear of Destiny' to moon

February 5 2015

Sci-fi fans in Japan are trying to raise nearly \$1 million to recreate in real life a fictional scene in which the "Spear of Destiny" is plunged into the moon.

The spear—also known as the Holy Lance or Heilige Lanze—is the weapon Christians believe was used to stab Jesus in the side during his crucifixion.

Also called the "Lance of Longinus", it is well-known in Japan for its appearance in the "Neon Genesis Evangelion" sci-fi animation series, particularly for a scene in which the main character flies into space and thrusts it into the [moon](#).

To mark the 20th anniversary of the cartoon, fans are trying to crowd-fund a 100 million yen (\$850,000) mission to send a 24-centimetre (9.5-inch) replica to the lunar surface aboard a specially-designed lander.

If the craft successfully reaches the moon, the lance will be ejected and hopefully stuck in the dusty surface, the organiser has said.

As of Thursday, a total of 33.9 million yen had been pledged by more than 800 people. The project will be cancelled if the funding campaign fails to collect at least 100 million yen by April 5.

However, the plan has provoked fears of a religious backlash in a country deeply scarred by the recent beheadings of two of its citizens by

Islamist extremists.

"Wouldn't it trigger the fury of the Pope? Can we really do this? Oh, I am worried," one comment on the crowd-funding website reads.

"I am against this. Please don't do this. I cannot be more worried about my children now after the Islamic State named Japan as a target," wrote user Shizuka Yasuda.

Many Japanese believe in aspects of both native Shintoism and imported Buddhism—although few would describe themselves as devout—and there is little general understanding of world religions, which can appear undifferentiated to some.

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Citation: Japan anime fans plan to send 'Spear of Destiny' to moon (2015, February 5) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-02-japan-anime-fans-spear-destiny.html>

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