

## **Dawn's Light: Toward an Age of Buddhist Renaissance A New Year's Poem by SGI President Daisaku Ikeda**

A new first morning!  
In every language of the world,  
the new year is celebrated.  
From friends in 128 countries  
benedictions can be heard.

Radiant, on the horizon of the century — the sun,  
the Buddhist Renaissance proclaims the dawn  
as did that other Renaissance  
create a new spiritual kingdom  
and augur the way to a new world.

The new world's theme —  
the human being and the humane self.

Find now the bronzed ideal for the rebirth  
of those who would create value  
in the person and in the thought  
of Soka Gakkai's first president.

Find in Tsunesaburo Makiguchi  
a great teacher for humanity,  
the light that is the human in being,  
the brilliance that is the human self.

Find in his thought education,  
not for war but for the individual and peace,  
the light of his originality  
and the brilliance of his faith.

He alone did not retreat,  
did not retrace a single step.  
Standing firm against totalitarians  
— the many who would sacrifice the one —  
he eyed the multiplying armies and believed,  
believed in the advent of a human age.

Awakened to human rights, to liberty,  
never stooping to the varied uses of evil power,  
a new populism flexes unprecedented strength  
heralding an era with the people as protagonists:  
hope marches forward in a new renaissance.

My own mentor Josei Toda left his words,  
"Live your own life."  
Shakyamuni Buddha also told us to live after his death  
true to ourselves and the Law he taught us.  
"Rather one lion than a thousand sheep,"  
said Makiguchi.  
Like a lone rock, unyielding, jutting out from the sea,  
meet the turbulent vortices of the world  
and pierce them through, living as you believe,  
polishing that which is most truly you.

The spiritual victory over barbarism —  
that is renaissance.  
The power residing within revealed  
to breach the walls of oppression  
imposed from without —  
this is one's own human revolution  
and the true meaning of renaissance.

Rock-solid individuals:  
they are a bastion against the barbaric  
and a bridge from Buddhism to the mundane.  
The shadows cast by chaos  
when evil dresses itself as justice  
are deep,  
but not a thing to dread  
in the light of Emerson's words:  
"Pythagoras was misunderstood,  
and Socrates, and Jesus,  
and Luther, . . . Copernicus, . . . Galileo, . . .  
To be great is to be misunderstood."  
To let one's true self shine and, for that,  
to discover one's happiness  
in the happiness of others;  
spreading the joy of the bodhisattva's way,  
let us join forces  
to shoulder the way a few steps forward  
toward the new century.

Building bridges of thought,  
to sublimate into brotherly love the differences  
among people's places and beliefs  
that this land, that region may flourish —  
throughout the world  
I too will continue this task  
and then  
the renascent century will open wide  
in ravishing splendor.