

SGI President Ikeda's New Year's Poem
Dawn's Light: Toward an Age of Buddhist Renaissance

*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 the Soka Gakkai's first president.*

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

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*“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 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*

— January 1