

EDITORIAL: Rising to the Challenge

At a meeting at the Florida Nature and Culture Center last year, SGI President Ikeda described six qualities that form the basis of human happiness: 1) a sense of fulfillment; 2) to possess a profound philosophy; 3) conviction; 4) cheerfulness and vibrance; 5) courage; and 6) tolerance. Also, in a recent installment of *The New Human Revolution*, Mr. Ikeda recalls: “Just before Mr. Toda’s death, he announced the following guidelines: 1) faith for a harmonious family, 2) faith to enable each person to become happy, and 3) faith to surmount obstacles. We can surely consider these to be the three eternal principles of the Soka Gakkai.”

These points underscore the basic goal of Buddhist faith and practice — the happiness of individual human beings. One challenge we each face, then, is to shine with unquestionable proof that we are actualizing the purpose of our faith in these realms.

We also have a parallel challenge as Buddhists: to take responsibility for not only our growth and happiness but for the happiness of our friends and families, and the peace and prosperity of our community, our nation and the world. Nichiren Daishonin emphasizes this spirit when he says, “You must not only persevere yourself, you must also teach others.”

Abigail Adams, wife of 2nd U.S. President John Adams and mother of 6th President John Quincy Adams, wrote to her son in 1780: “These are times in which a genius would wish to live. It is not in the still calm of life, or in the repose of a pacific station, that great challenges are formed.... Great necessities call out great virtues.”

What great necessities confront us now? Overcoming the hopelessness and violence infecting our youth, the growing poverty and intolerance in our society — to name a few. If we cannot contribute to alleviating these problems through our humanistic Buddhist movement, then who will? What more important challenge can we undertake than developing, solidifying and expanding our movement, the number of people it empowers, and the positive impact it has on our society?

Addressing young people, President Ikeda recently said: “The doctrine of a life-moment possesses 3,000 realms is ultimately a teaching for changing the current state of things. Youth possessing compassion and philosophy have to courageously challenge the real suffering that exists in society.”

At the end of last year, General Director Zaitzu shared with us six challenges for the future: 1) continue ever more strongly in our expansion movement; 2) focus on the district as our first priority; 3) raise young people by boldly entrusting them with responsibility; 4) create a neighborhood-based organization; 5) develop a spirit of tolerance and respect for all people; and 6) make study our foundation. Mr. Zaitzu elaborated on each of these points in his speech before the 1996 SGI-USA Council on Dec. 7 last year, which appears in the Dec. 20, 1996, *World Tribune*.

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, one definition of *challenge* is “a test of one’s abilities or resources in a demanding but stimulating undertaking.”

By rising to these six challenges, we will not only solidify the foundation of our movement into the 21st century but in the process “call out great virtues,” expanding our personal abilities and spending a most stimulating and fulfilling 1997.

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