

## Development Depends on Selflessly Dedicated Individuals

*SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech at the presentation ceremony of an honorary professorship from Shanghai University, China, held at the auditorium of the university's main campus, May 12.*

Honored Chancellor Qian Weichang and Madame Kong Xiangying, esteemed faculty of Shanghai University, distinguished guests, beloved students:

With deep appreciation and a sense of profound honor I humbly accept the title of honorary professor conferred by Shanghai University — this proud institution of higher learning and hope, this dynamic driving force behind the extraordinary development of the great nation of China into the 21st century. I express my most heartfelt gratitude to all at Shanghai University. *Xie xie* (thank you).

In the spring month of May, 25 years ago, the great British historian Arnold Toynbee and I discussed our views of what the future would hold. We agreed that China would undoubtedly play a leading role in future world history.

Today, just as we predicted, your nation — perhaps nowhere more so than in this thriving city of Shanghai — stands tall with dignity, confidence and courage as a key player in the international arena. Beholding China today, witnessing the magnificent growth and prosperity it has achieved after weathering and triumphing over so many vicissitudes and bitter challenges, brings me inexpressible joy.

I have the highest esteem for Shanghai University, a dynamic center powering this growth by producing so many young men and women of outstanding talent and ability who are actively contributing to China's development.

I have spoken a great deal recently to a worldwide audience of young people about the valiant struggles of pioneering Chinese figures. Just as the respected writer and father of the modern Chinese spirit, Lu Xun (1881–1936), declared, your country has “people who quietly immerse themselves in hard work, people who desperately strive beyond the limits of their being, people who champion the cause of the people, and people who give their lives to seek truth.”<sup>1</sup>

Lu Xun is describing great lives — lives undaunted by superficial disturbances, that reach for the heavens and embrace the depths of the ocean. I wish to impress upon the youth that modern China's triumph has been a result of the shining spirit of people of genuine character and humanity.

On my first trip to Shanghai [1974], I visited the tomb of Lu Xun and the house where he lived in his later years. When I entered the house, I was drawn to some handwritten words by Lu Xun displayed on the wall: “Should I survive, then of course I will study further.” They were from a letter he had written only two months before his death.

I am deeply moved to see how this passionate, indefatigable spirit has been proudly, solemnly carried on by Shanghai University. Your university's motto, “Be Strong and Untiring,” is the perfect embodiment of this spirit.

One of the major reasons for the dead-end that Japan and many other contemporary societies now face is that our leaders have become arrogant and lazy. They have lost the humility and earnestness that inspire one to continue learning throughout life. That is precisely why the following words of rousing encouragement that Chancellor Qian, a world-renowned physicist, once delivered to some young people reverberate in my heart: “Effort will never betray you.... Whoever the person, whatever their talents, however much

they have achieved until now, once they stop making efforts, all progress will immediately cease.”<sup>2</sup>

When he was young, Lu Xun studied in Japan at the Kobun Gakuin, a school for students from China. As a matter of fact, the founder of value-creating education, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the first president of the Soka Gakkai, taught at Kobun Gakuin the year after Lu Xun completed his studies there. One of the students was so deeply impressed by Mr. Makiguchi’s class that he later translated lectures Mr. Makiguchi gave on his landmark work, *The Geography of Human Life*, into Chinese and published them. This attests to the bond that must have grown between Mr. Makiguchi and the Chinese students.

In his dissertation written in Japan, Lu Xun said, “One must proceed with dedication toward the goal one believes in,...without being discouraged by criticism,...without being afraid to stand alone though one is surrounded by ridicule and abuse. Only such a person can illuminate the darkness and enable the sunshine within people’s hearts to shine forth.”<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Makiguchi was of the same belief: “If you cannot be a courageous enemy of those who are evil, you cannot be a friend to the good,”<sup>4</sup> he said. With the heart of a lion, with righteous indignation, he fought against Japanese militarism, dying for his beliefs in prison at 73. As Lu Xun said, “Those who are ahead of their times are never accepted in their native land and indeed are persecuted by their contemporaries.”<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Makiguchi refused to back down from the truth, even under the rigorous interrogation of Japan’s Special Higher Police. His immovable insistence that Japan’s invasion of China was a fundamental, unconscionable mistake survives in police transcripts of his interrogation. In my work for peace and friendship between our two nations, the spirit of Mr. Makiguchi is always in my thoughts and heart.

In recent years, archaeologists and other researchers have turned increased attention to the ancient civilization of the Yangtze River valley, of which Shanghai is a part. There can be no question that Shanghai will play an increasingly important role as a center for the new global civilization and the fusion of East and West into the next millennium. I am convinced that Shanghai University will be a major force in creating and sustaining that role. The world is watching your endeavors with great expectations.

Your university motto embodies a profound Chinese philosophical tradition. One of the Five Confucian Classics, the *I Ching* or *Book of Changes*, states: “The movement of heaven is full of power. / Thus the superior man makes himself strong and untiring.”<sup>6</sup> In this we see a clear statement of the mystical unity and harmony of heaven and humanity, nature and the individual. Dr. Toynbee identified this philosophy of symbiosis, a vital part of Chinese thought, as the secret to solving the many global problems that confront and seriously threaten contemporary civilization.

At a memorial service commemorating the 10th anniversary of Lu Xun’s death, held in Shanghai in 1946, Premier Zhou Enlai stood before a photograph of the great writer and delivered these impassioned words: “There have been many tyrants, emperors and dictators throughout history, but they have all fallen one by one. But the even greater number of slaves, the oppressed and the peasants throughout history have firmly held their ground and developed. The century of the people is already here. That is why, like oxen, we must exert ourselves in the struggle, unite as one and be ready to lay down our lives for the people.”<sup>7</sup>

From today, as a member of your illustrious university, as a student filled with creativity, I determine to work even harder with all of you to build the new century of the people.

In closing, I once again express my deepest thanks and offer my wishes for the continuing glory and prosperity of your fine university and the health of all present today.  
*Xie xie.*

**WT**

1. Translated from Chinese. *Lu Xun Quanji* (Collected Works of Lu Xun) (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 1989), vol. 6, p. 118.
2. *Qian Weichang Wenxuan* (Selected Works of Qian Weichang) (Zhejiang Kexue Jishu Chubanshe, n.d.), p. 215.
3. *Lu Xun Quanji*, vol. 8, p. 25.
4. *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo Zenshu* (Collected Works of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi) (Tokyo: Daisan Bummeisha, 1983), vol. 6, p. 71.
5. *Lu Xun Quanji* (1987), vol. 3, p. 256.
6. *The I Ching; or Book of Changes*, trans. Cary F. Baynes (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 6.
7. Translated from Chinese. *Zhou Enlai Fengfan Cidian* (Encyclopedia of Zhou Enlai) (Beijing: Zhongguo Gongren Chubanshe, 1991), p. 205.

Title: Development Depends on Selfless Dedicated Individuals  
Subject: World Tribune 06/20/97 n.3144 p.9 WT970620p09 Shanghai, China 05/12/97  
Author: Daisaku Ikeda  
Keywords: 05/12/97 Attitude China Dedicated Depends Development Individuals Messages People  
Practice President Selfless Shanghai Speech Speeches Writers Xan