

## Make Causes Now for the Distant Future

*SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech at the Kansai Representatives Conference, at the Kansai Culture Center in Osaka, May 17.*

I've just returned from Shanghai, and I couldn't be feeling better. My heartfelt gratitude to all of you for your support and prayers for the success of my trip.

Shanghai and Osaka are sister cities, so quite a few people I met in Shanghai asked me to convey their warmest regards to their Soka Gakkai friends in Osaka and other parts of the Kansai region.

It was in Shanghai that the young champions of a new China launched the Chinese Revolution. It was also in Shanghai that women stood up to challenge outmoded customs and practices and create a society in which women could enjoy equal rights. And now, once again, Shanghai is leading in efforts to reform and open up China, boldly pulling the great country toward the 21st century.

A country that is developing or an organization that is growing is certain to have a particular area that becomes its cornerstone and functions as the power source that propels the whole forward. In China, a people's republic, Shanghai performs this role. And in the popular movement of kosen-rufu, Kansai does.

Kansai's mission — no, its task and pledge — is to create a great new momentum to victory, to raise hopeful new talent, and to open a glorious new page in the history of our movement, manifesting to the fullest the energy of *soka* — of value-creation.

This year has special significance for me. It is my 50th since taking faith; the 45th since I took the first step for kosen-rufu here in Kansai; and the 40th since that momentous Osaka Rally.<sup>1</sup> It was with the purpose of opening a new chapter in the indomitable advancement of "Ever-victorious Kansai" that I returned from Shanghai directly to this pivotal center of our movement.

Whenever I come to Kansai, I feel immense peace of mind. Kansai is a model of kosen-rufu. It is the pillar, the axle, the foundation of our movement. From here, let us once again generate a powerful impetus that will spread across the country and around the entire world. I want to teach and convey the true spirit of the Soka Gakkai and to create and leave behind an organization that embodies that spirit. Please join me in this effort!

We attain Buddhahood by challenging life's negative functions and fighting to overcome all manner of obstacles and attacks. People of faith, who have the courage to wage such a struggle, are always youthful. Those who strive energetically for kosen-rufu are always lively and animated. And they will be born in wonderful Buddha lands in lifetime after lifetime.

### Looking Five Decades or a Century Ahead

Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger once asked Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai how he appraised the French Revolution. Premier Zhou reportedly replied that it was still too early to give a proper evaluation. It was almost 200 years after the French Revolution when he said this — illustrating the monumental scale of his vision and his long-range approach to history and world events, always putting their significance into the perspective of hundreds or thousands of years hence.

We, too, have our sights set on the 21st century, the 22nd century, the 23rd century — on through the 10,000 years of the Latter Day of the Law.

As was announced some time ago, the first half of the 21st century will mark the second cycle of Seven Bells.<sup>2</sup> I envision this as the time when we consolidate the groundwork for peace in Asia and throughout the world.

Looking further ahead to the latter half of the coming century — the century of life — I hope that the tenet of the sanctity of life will be the underlying spirit of the age and of the world.

Having a clear vision of how kosen-rufu will develop in the 21st century, I am now turning my attention to the 22nd century.

During the first half of the 22nd century, I pray that an indestructible foundation for world peace will be laid. And on that foundation, in the latter half of the 22nd century, I picture a brilliant flowering of an age of humanism.

In the mid-23rd century, in 2253, is the millenary of the establishment of Nichiren Daishonin's teaching. I conceive this to mark a brilliant new phase in our movement. These are, of course, not "prophesies." Rather, they are my determinations arising from my wholehearted prayer for peace.

Kosen-rufu is a long-term struggle we are pursuing over the 10,000 years of the Latter Day. Therefore, as we strive to realize victory in the present, we need to maintain a vision of the next 50 or 100 years. Each day I am making efforts with my focus on the infinite future.

What will the future be like? No one knows. All we know is that the effects that will appear in the future are all contained in the causes that are made in the present. The important thing, therefore, is that we stand up and take action to achieve great objectives, without allowing ourselves to be distracted or discouraged by immediate difficulties.

### **Who Will Win?**

In whose hands does victory lie? The 19th-century American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson writes: "The day is always his, who works in it with serenity and great aims. The unstable estimates of men crowd to him whose mind is filled with a truth, as the heaped waves of the Atlantic follow the moon."<sup>3</sup>

Emerson, the flag-bearer of the American Renaissance, is telling us: Work each day with great aims! If you do, you are certain to be victorious. But you will also be plagued by shiftless rumors and aspersions, the same way that the brilliant moon shining in the heavens generates high waves by its gravitational pull. Remain unperturbed.

He also says, "Good-nature is plentiful, but we want justice, with heart of steel, to fight down the proud."<sup>4</sup> If people are merely good-natured, then those who are arrogant and highhanded will have free rein to carry on as they please. Only those who fight with "hearts of steel" are people of justice.

All of us who are now striving for kosen-rufu with "conviction of steel" are in reality creating the 21st century, as well as the 22nd and 23rd centuries. Moreover, we are engraving in our lives the causes to continue working for kosen-rufu then as well.

### **Do Not Be Deceived!**

In the Gosho, we find the expression "tigers in a marketplace" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 222). Unscrupulous priests who try to pass themselves off as superior or as possessing superhuman powers are as preposterous as tigers in a marketplace. Their posturing is all a lie. In this Latter Day in which we live, there are no priests who uphold superhuman precepts. Do not be deceived! Do not be led astray! — this is the warning contained in the expression "tigers in a marketplace."

In China, there is an account about a prince of the kingdom of Wei who was to be

handed over as a hostage to the powerful rival kingdom of Zhao during the Warring States Period (475–221 B.C.E.). A loyal minister who was to accompany the prince as a fellow hostage had the following exchange with the king before their departure.<sup>5</sup>

“Your Majesty,” he asked, “if one person came to you and said that there was a tiger in the marketplace, would you believe it?”

“No, I would not,” the king replied.

The minister continued, “If two people reported a tiger in the marketplace, would you believe it then?”

“I might begin to wonder whether it had some truth,” the king answered.

“Then if three people came to you and reported a tiger in the city, would you believe it?”

“Yes,” the king replied, “then I would probably believe it.”

The minister rejoined: “It’s impossible that a tiger would turn up in the marketplace. Yet on the claims of only three people, it will be taken as fact that a tiger has appeared there.”

This illustrates how easily people can be deceived. They don’t bother to think about or examine things for themselves.

The minister continued: “When I leave the capital with your son and go far away as a hostage, you will hear many bad things about me. There are far more than three people who want to discredit me. But please do not believe them.”

The king assured the minister that he understood and promised not to be deceived. At length, however, the king was taken in by the lies and schemes of malefactors, and the minister was persecuted.

## **An Ascending Path in Life**

I am always most grateful to the members throughout the country who deliver our publications early each morning. Thank you for your selfless efforts.

In *Walden*,<sup>6</sup> Henry David Thoreau, a writer of the American Renaissance, describes morning as a sacred and pure hour and says that during that time “some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night.” “Morning,” he says, “brings back the heroic ages.”

Thoreau also cites a line from the ancient Indian text of the *Vedas*, “All intelligences awake with the morning,” and the inscription on the bathtub of a Chinese king, “Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again.”

Morning, says Thoreau, is accompanied by “the undulations of celestial music” and “a fragrance filling the air.” When we greet each day brimming with hope and aspirations, he says, we awaken to “a higher life than we fell asleep from.” In other words, we follow an ascending, not descending, path in life.

All of you who deliver the publications know very well the serenity and beauty of the morning. You walk together with the sun and renew yourselves each day. Step by step, you are advancing along an ascending path in life. Though the responsibility you have taken on is demanding and a lot of hard work, with each step you take, a still grander view opens up before you.

My friends in Kansai, working together with Kansai Chief Ryozo Nishiguchi as you aim toward the 21st century, please cause the brilliant sun of indestructible Kansai to rise anew!

**WT**

1. Osaka Rally: a huge rally held at Nakanoshima Civic Hall on July 17, 1957, to protest Mr. Ikeda’s unjust detention by the Osaka district prosecutor’s office.
2. Second cycle of Seven Bells: Seven Bells is the term given to the seven seven-year periods marking the history of the Soka Gakkai’s development from its founding in 1930

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through 1979. Mr. Ikeda introduced this concept (which the second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda, had developed) on May 3, 1958, shortly after President Toda's death, and has also announced guidelines for a second cycle of seven bells to begin in the year 2001.

3. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," *Essays and Lectures* (New York: The Library of America, 1983), p. 66.

4. *Ibid.*, "The Young American," p. 227.

5. From the ancient Chinese work *Zhanguo ce* (Intrigues of the Warring States). This episode is based on the Japanese translation of this work: *Sengokusaku*, trans. Masahiro Sawada (Tokyo: Meitoku Shuppansha, 1969), vol. 2, pp. 80–82.

6. All quotes are from: Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (London: J. M. Dent, 1995), p. 71.

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