

Doing the Right Thing

SGI President Ikeda poses the question ‘Why are people persecuted?’ in this speech. ‘Because they are doing the right thing’ is his answer. ‘It is the fate of the right and just to incur the jealousy and harassment of the corrupt and evil.’

This is part 2 of SGI President Ikeda’s speech at the 24th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, July 16. Part 1 appears in last week’s issue.

A Single Word

A single word can determine whether a situation turns for the better or worse. It can be very subtle but make all the difference in the world.

In public relations or diplomatic efforts, it is important to choose every word wisely. Unfocused, rambling words are useless, and an arrogant or sloppy attitude will only invite laughter and scorn.

And as SGI leaders, how we interpret the words of members and what we say in response is important. A genuine leader is someone who gives measured thought to such matters. When talking with individuals, ask yourselves: “What are they worried about?” “What are they trying to say?” “What are they thinking?” “What is it they seek?”

Try to discern these things in others. Try to know. Try to understand. This is the challenge of leadership.

It all comes down to whether leaders have the strong determination to do whatever they can to foster, help and support others. From such compassion arises wisdom.

Why Persecution?

Mr. Kobayashi [Kazuo Kobayashi, TV newscaster in Japan] writes about Czech President Václav Havel. I met Mr. Havel in 1992 — he is an unforgettable man. He is best known, perhaps, as the central figure in Czechoslovakia’s 1989 Velvet Revolution, symbolic of the democratization in Eastern Europe. Mr. Kobayashi asked Mr. Havel, imprisoned by the communist regime for his active support of democracy, what sustained him during his harsh struggle in prison. “My wife’s letters,” he replied, “and the fact that I knew I was right.”

“I knew why I was in prison,” continued President Havel. “Because what I had done, what I believed in, was right. And I knew just as clearly that those who had imprisoned me were wrong. I was thrown in prison because I was right. I also knew that this could not continue forever.”

President Havel fought and survived with the certainty that he was right and his captors wrong. He was also confident that because of that his situation would have to change for the better. He was determined to be vindicated.

When I met him, I was struck by what a gentle man he was. But I also saw that a blazing passion burned in his breast.

Why are people persecuted? Because they are doing the right thing. It is the fate of the right and just to incur the jealousy and harassment of the corrupt and evil.

Mr. Kobayashi states that, as a journalist, he has always believed that, in whatever aspect of the world he covers, things that are wrong, that go against reason, cannot long survive.

There were people in Russia who felt the same. They knew that the communist dictatorship could not last forever and, unperturbed by the dangers involved, made every

Title: Doing the Right Thing

Subject: World Tribune 09/18/98 n.3209 p.10 WT980918p10 Tokyo, Japan 07/16/98

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: 07/16/98 Doing Guidance Japan Messages President Right Speeches Thing Tokyo

effort to protect and preserve the nation's artistic heritage.

Mr. Kobayashi sheds light on such unknown stories. He wants these individuals' courage to be recorded for all time. This is the source of the title of his book.

The title of Mr. Kobayashi's book, The Stage Curtain of the Hermitage, refers to the stage curtain of the Hermitage Theater in St. Petersburg, Russia. The author recounts how the curtain, which bears the imperial Romanov crest, was hidden and preserved during 70 years of communist rule.

What has Mr. Kobayashi's goal been as a journalist? To meet and talk directly with the people he reports on. Now some may think this is only common sense, but the fact is that it is not widely practiced in journalism today.

But does a person who writes about people without ever meeting and talking to them deserve to be called a journalist?

Mr. Kobayashi records another goal: to meet someone new every day. Meeting people broadens our horizons. It helps us grow as individuals.

I hope all of you, as SGI leaders, will make the effort to go out and meet as many people as you can. Meet new people, make new acquaintances. This is the key to broadening your lives.

The SGI Changes the Course of History

Secretary Barros of the Legislative Assembly of Brasilia Federal District, who is here with us today, is a great admirer of Mahatma Gandhi.

Gandhi wrote, "A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history." A group's size is irrelevant, he maintains. What's important is whether each member of that group is filled with a genuine commitment to his or her mission. As always, Gandhi sees straight to the heart of things.

The Soka Gakkai also started as a small organization, but its members burned with an indomitable faith. That was the secret to its tremendous growth. That was why it changed the course of history.

The American Renaissance philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote that "never was any single act or achievement in history [carried out] but by this expenditure [of inner force or spirit]." Everything is decided by the force of your spirit, not by appearances or outward formalities. You can't capture the hearts of people by wearing fancy clothes or trying to make yourself look important. You can't stir people's emotions just by reading a script without any feeling. If you cannot speak out with a force or passion that shakes people at their very foundation, you will not triumph in the struggle against evil.

It's all a matter of spiritual force, which is the product of true conviction — of the readiness to give one's life for the sake of the people.

Emerson also wrote, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." We have triumphed in our struggle because of our enthusiastic faith, our enthusiastic efforts to achieve kosen-rufu. That has made us such a great organization. No matter what pressures were brought to bear upon us, we did not flinch. And now the Soka Gakkai has become the pillar of peace of Japan.

Let me say here and now that the SGI, filled with people burning with enthusiasm for their mission, is an organization that will change the course of world history.

Kosen-rufu is an undertaking that will continue throughout the 10,000 years and more of the Latter Day of the Law, and our field of activity is the entire globe. We must look calmly down on the petty infighting that takes place within this tiny nation of Japan and, while

Title: Doing the Right Thing

Subject: World Tribune 09/18/98 n.3209 p.10 WT980918p10 Tokyo, Japan 07/16/98

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: 07/16/98 Doing Guidance Japan Messages President Right Speeches Thing Tokyo

firmly solidifying the foundation for kosen-rufu, make our way into the world.

Politicians Only Know First Aid

I am overjoyed to announce that today the Federal District of Brasília has conferred posthumous Certificates of Commendation on the first and second presidents of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda.

Mr. Makiguchi once wrote in an essay on educational reform, “While politicians administer first-aid treatment to the problems of the present, we are looking to the future and making plans for posterity.” Politicians, he asserted, only offer first aid. That is, they offer stopgap solutions to society’s problems, whereas we are looking to the future and making plans of enduring value for future generations. Mr. Makiguchi addressed not only educators in this but all of us.

Meanwhile, Mr. Toda said, “The mission of the Soka Gakkai is to ensure the happiness of the people for all ages to come.”

Do you agree?

It is foolish to be swept away by the petty sorrows and joys of daily life. The true spirit of the SGI is not so petty, so small.

The youth division members have stood up. They have striven with all their might, they have grown strong, they have opened a new door. Countless youth will undoubtedly follow in their footsteps in the coming years. Let us wholeheartedly support and encourage them in their efforts.

We have now entered a completely new age. Let us nurture new talent, shed new light and build a new future. Old generations make way for the new. Today’s youth will one day be society’s leaders.

The youth are the key to the future. I want all the youth division members to stand up and take full responsibility for kosen-rufu. The future belongs to you!

I hope that the Soka Gakkai Headquarters will continue to solidify headquarters and regional personnel and work on every front for a well-organized, smooth-running structure — with plenty of new approaches and ideas conceived with a view toward the new century.

I want the top regional leaders nationwide to discuss and work together with President Akiya to devise constructive steps for our continued growth and development — for the sake of the 21st century, so that we may create a new age of value-creation where the people will truly shine.

Guarding Against Jealousy

Let me share with you these words of Shakespeare from his tragedy *Othello*:

*Poor and content is rich, and rich enough;
But riches fineless is as poor as winter,
To him that ever fears he shall be poor.
Good God, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy!*

The person who is content is rich. The person who lives ever in fear is poor. What matters are the treasures of the heart; what matters is faith. If you lose your faith, your spirit becomes poor and lowly. Those who stop striving alongside their comrades for kosen-rufu will end up as dry and withered as a dead tree.

Shakespeare urges us to guard against jealousy. Unfortunately, Japan today is a society wracked by jealousy.

Title: Doing the Right Thing

Subject: World Tribune 09/18/98 n.3209 p.10 WT980918p10 Tokyo, Japan 07/16/98

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: 07/16/98 Doing Guidance Japan Messages President Right Speeches Thing Tokyo

Please never be jealous of your fellow members. Upholding the Mystic Law, we each possess supreme, boundless treasures. We each are striving to widely spread Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and as such are the most noble, worthy people in the world.

That is why it is important for us to respect every member. As SGI leaders, we must always show our gratitude for the members' efforts. We must sincerely thank them and show concern for their welfare.

No leader has the right to boss around the members, constantly pressuring them and making unreasonable demands. Each member joined the SGI to become happy. That is why they participate in SGI activities.

You are a true leader when members genuinely respect and trust you from their hearts. High-handedly ordering others is to misuse the SGI, to abuse the members' sincere faith.

In closing, allow me to offer my prayers for the development and prosperity of Brasília and the health and happiness of Chairperson Carvalho and our other Brazilian guests. And I am always praying for the health and fruitful activities of all our members. Let's all meet again at our August leaders meeting! My thanks to the Brass Band for their performance and to our overseas members.

Hurrah for Brasília!

Muito obrigado (Thank you very much).

WT

Title: Doing the Right Thing

Subject: World Tribune 09/18/98 n.3209 p.10 WT980918p10 Tokyo, Japan 07/16/98

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: 07/16/98 Doing Guidance Japan Messages President Right Speeches Thing Tokyo