

**Buddhism in Daily Life**  
**SGI President Ikeda's thoughts on various topics, excerpted from**  
**'Discussions on Youth,' volumes 1 and 2.**

**WHO IS DAISAKU IKEDA?**

Daisaku Ikeda was born in Tokyo in 1928. He studied under his mentor, Josei Toda, and, in 1960, succeeded him as president of the Soka Gakkai, a position he held until 1979. Since 1975, he has been president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI). He is the founder of a university, junior and senior high schools, elementary schools, kindergartens and two art museums, and is honorary president of the Seikyo Press. His writings have been translated into more than a dozen languages.

**On Love**

Happiness is not something that someone else, like a lover, can give us. We have to achieve it for ourselves. And the only way to do so is by developing our character and capacity as human beings, by fully maximizing our potential.

Rather than becoming so love-struck that you create a world where only the two of you exist, it is much healthier to learn from those aspects of your partner that you respect and admire and continue to make efforts to improve and develop yourself. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the author of *The Little Prince*, once wrote, "Love is not two people gazing at each other, but two people looking ahead together in the same direction."

**On Work**

A tree doesn't grow strong and tall within one or two days. In the same way, successful people didn't get to where they are in only two or three years. This applies to everything.

There is a saying that urges us, "Excel at something!" It is important to become trusted by others wherever you are, to shine with excellence.... "What one likes, one will do well," goes another saying....

Once you have decided to work at a certain place, it is important that you pursue the path you have chosen without being discouraged or defeated, so that you will have no regrets over making that choice.

**On Sadness**

It is crucial that we become strong. If we are strong, even our sadness will become a source of nourishment, and the things that make us suffer will purify our lives.

Only when we experience the crushing, painful depths of suffering can we begin to understand the true meaning of life. Precisely because we have experienced great suffering, it is imperative that we go on living.

The important thing is to keep moving forward. If each of you use your sadness as a source of growth, you will become a person of greater depth and breadth — an even more wonderful you. This is the harvest of your pain and suffering.

**On Friendship**

What is friendship? It is not simply a matter of being favorably disposed toward someone

because he or she spends a lot of time with you, lends you money, is nice to you or because you get along well and have a lot in common. True friendship implies a relationship where you empathize with your friends when they're suffering and encourage them not to lose heart. And where they, in turn, empathize with you....

### **On Religion**

Religion is proof of our humanity. Of all the animals, only human beings have the capacity for prayer, a most solemn, sublime act....

Human beings have an undeniable instinct for prayer. Religion first came into being in response to this. Prayer did not come into existence because of religion; it was the other way around.

Even those who consider themselves not to be religious pray for something. Just wishing for the good health of one's children or resolving to improve oneself in some way constitutes a prayer, even if you don't want to call it that.

Prayer in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism — chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the Gohonzon — directly fuses all our diverse prayers with reality, based on the universal law of life. In short, religion came into being out of the human desire for happiness.

### **On the SGI**

People began forging bonds with one another, and then those ties of friendship spread, naturally giving birth to the Soka Gakkai organization. For that reason, we must be aware that the organization exists for people. People don't exist for the organization. Please never forget this point.