

SGI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE EDUCATION: THE FUNDAMENTAL IMPETUS

In his message to the cornerstone laying for the library at the new SUA campus, President Ikeda, university founder, explains why he feels education is so important at this moment in human history. He says that it is 'the fundamental impetus that enables us to dynamically enrich the lives of not only ourselves but others, and it is the driving force that enhances the prosperity and harmony of society proper.'

From the distant shores of the western Pacific, I offer this heartfelt message of appreciation to all of you who have taken time from your demanding schedules to gather here, on these verdant foothills of Aliso Viejo made so resplendent by the dawning sun of May.

As founder of Soka University of America, I am filled with immense joy and gratitude that this ceremony to lay the cornerstone for the university library is blessed with the attendance and goodwill of so many of our friends from the local community.

I especially appreciate the presence of Supervisor Tom Wilson, the legislative aides, the representatives from our neighboring cities and Carmen Vali and the other members of the Aliso Viejo Community Association Board representing this great community.

I also want to express my appreciation to the La Paz Intermediate Jazz Band, the Oak Grove Elementary School Fifth Grade Choir and ADAWE for your musical performances. I can think of no better way to celebrate this auspicious occasion than your wondrous gift of music.

SUA is an institution that will grow and flourish together with you, as a privileged member of this community, into the next century and beyond. I look forward to the day the doors of this library will open, so that it may serve you, your children and theirs.

As the curtain is raised for the new millennium of humanity, we may ask ourselves: From where have we come? And to where are we going?

If we desire to live a truly humane life, advancing toward happiness together with our fellow members of humankind, then I am convinced that the only recourse left to us is education. This is the fundamental impetus that enables us to dynamically enrich the lives of not only ourselves but others, and it is the driving force that enhances the prosperity and harmony of society proper.

Education founded on a philosophical bedrock of the noble ideals of humanism may be considered a truly sacred undertaking that serves the innermost needs of the individual, of nations and, indeed, of the entire world.

This university was drawn to your country precisely because it is hallowed ground, peerless in its profound vision of humanistic education, open and free for all. And we alight upon this land bearing in our hearts the three most cherished mottoes of SUA:

*Be philosophers of a renaissance of life
Be world citizens in solidarity for peace
Be the pioneers of a global civilization*

As a liberal arts college, SUA pledges to work hand in hand with each of you, members of the local community, to forge open the grand way of education, exuding a new hope for

future generations.

It is our unswerving resolve to spare no effort in the service of the needs of Orange County. This is underpinned by the educational philosophy we embrace — Soka education — which upholds the point of departure for education as the local community, the place where we carry out our daily lives and, therefore, the place where learning truly begins.

This imperative is reflected in the fact that the construction of our new campus begins with this library, a facility to share the intellectual and spiritual heritage of humanity.

Benjamin Franklin is admired for his sustained efforts to improve and expand America's public library system, further inspiring his compatriots toward a grand experiment in democracy — one that still stands as a model for the entire world to emulate.

And in the East, one proverb holds that reading reaps uncounted rewards.

The founder of Soka education, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, stood up against Japanese militarism during World War II and died in prison for his anti-war convictions at age 73.

Yet his incarceration did not stop him from reading, much less thwart his determination to continue polishing his character and forging his spiritual strength. In a letter written one month before his death, Makiguchi was to record how he was carefully studying the philosophy of Immanuel Kant.

The significance of a library and its mission loom larger than ever today, especially given the increasing estrangement from the written word in the contemporary world.

It is my earnest hope that the SUA library, erected on the hills of Aliso Viejo, be loved and utilized by all members of this community, and that it become a beacon of boundless wisdom, inspiration and creative energy to illuminate the world.

In closing, please accept my warmest wishes for the continued good health and success of all present today, and that the Orange County I love and cherish will flourish for all time.

May 3, 1999
Founder
Daisaku Ikeda