

**AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA
THE HARD-WORKING
PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND**

SGI President Ikeda says that 'the people of Scotland have endured and overcome a harsh natural setting and history. They are hard-working, honest and patient.'

*With honest pride, I scorn
each selfish end,
My dearest meed, a friend's
esteem and praise.*

These are lines of verse by the great Scottish poet Robert Burns, whom I read fondly in my youth.

Recently, a wonderful letter came along in the mail from Scotland. It was from Dr. J. Forbes Munro, professor of economics and social history at the University of Glasgow, and his wife, Sylvia.

On June 15, it will be five years since I received an honorary doctorate from that university. Dr. Munro kindly enclosed some photographs of that time as a memento. I can only join my hands in reverence at this warm, unchanging friendship.

Dr. Munro, in his capacity as clerk of the university senate, delivered an address during the dignified conferral ceremony, in which he explained the university's reasons for presenting me with an honorary doctorate.

The ceremony was steeped in the loftiest traditions of European higher learning. Celebrating its 550th anniversary in 2001, the University of Glasgow is truly a most hallowed, venerable institution.

The hall where the ceremony was held was illuminated by soft light pouring through stained glass windows, and the solemn strains of an organ filled the room. The silver mace carried at the head of the procession into the hall was a symbol of the university's dignity that had been passed down from the 15th century.

Each person who was to receive an honorary doctorate took his or her place in turn in a black stone chair that was fitted with an hourglass. Traditionally, hourglasses were used, I was told, to measure the time during examinations for academic degrees.

A throne of learning that is devoted to the endless pursuit of truth must surely have just this rigor. A palace of education that preserves complete freedom of spirit must be just as awesome and sacred.

The University of Glasgow has always been overflowing with a pioneering intellectual spirit, which has led the way in humanity's development.

At the end of the 18th century, it was this adventurous citadel of applied learning that provided support to the inventor James Watt. Adam Smith, father of classical economic theory and a university member, used to visit Watt's workshop regularly to encourage his efforts. Needless to say, Watt went on to invent the steam engine, which led to the industrial revolution, which completely changed our entire world.

The University of Glasgow is also known for possessing the largest collection of works of the 19th-century American painter James McNeill Whistler anywhere in the world. At a time when Whistler was still a complete unknown, a professor of the Scottish universi-

ty recognized his artistic achievement and promoted his paintings. As an expression of his gratitude, Whistler left much of his work to the university.

The University of Glasgow also made great contributions to Japanese education in the mid-19th century, unsparingly sharing the light of its learning with a Japan emerging into the modern world.

In all these actions, we see a university that does not merely look on in silence upon those trying to blaze new trails and those exposed to unfair opposition or persecution. Precisely because their work is so difficult, the university extends a hand, supports, encourages and fights alongside them. This is the wisdom of true humanism.

Firmly defend those who are working for truth and justice! That is the Soka spirit, too.

Wearing a deep blue robe, Dr. Munro stood at the dais and spoke in the confident and well-modulated tones of a fine actor. The words *Soka Gakkai* and *Josei Toda* rang out powerfully again and again. The reverberations of that proud voice echoed in the depths of my heart, from where they will never fade.

Dr. Munro concluded his speech by quoting a poem of mine:

Like the waterfall, fierce
Like the waterfall, unflagging
Like the waterfall, unfearing
Like the waterfall, merrily
Like the waterfall, proudly —
A man should have the bearing of a king.

I wrote that poem upon seeing the waterfall at Oirase in Aomori Prefecture, Japan. Two months after receiving the honorary degree from the University of Glasgow, I visited Aomori for the first time in 15 years and shared this honor with all my dear comrades in that northeastern region of Japan known as Tohoku.

Glasgow is a city of the north, sitting at 55 degrees latitude. The day we arrived in Scotland, Loch Lomond shone brightly in the sun, but on the day of the ceremony the wind was unexpectedly cold for the month of June. The weather was extremely changeable. My wife said to a friend that in our four days there, we had a taste of each of the four seasons.

In winter, Glasgow begins to grow dark from 3:00 in the afternoon, and by 4:00 the sun is completely gone. At 9:00 in the morning, it is still not fully light. It is a season of endurance, especially for the Soka University students who study there as foreign exchange students.

What gets the students through those dark days and long nights is the warmth and friendship of Dr. and Mrs. Munro. There is also the warm support of the local SGI members, who are as kind as parents to the Soka University students.

Up to now, including those who have gone to Glasgow for brief study periods, 227 Soka University students have studied at the university, creating memories of hard work and impressive self-improvement that will sustain them throughout their lives. Just the other day, past and present University of Glasgow exchange students sent me a most heartening report on their current activities. They are all challenging themselves earnestly in their respective endeavors.

Title: The Hard-working People of Scotland

Subject: World Tribune 07/09/99 n.3250 p.6 WT990709p06 Scotland

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: Daisaku Essays Hard-working Ikeda People President Scotland Tribune World

The name Glasgow derives from a Celtic word meaning green glen. During my visit, I took a commemorative photograph with the late SGI-UK General Director Richard Causton and SGI family members of Scotland in the Botanic Gardens in Glasgow, surrounded by burgeoning green. I have such fond memories of all of them. And I cherish that photograph to this day.

Led by Scotland Headquarters Leader Richard Porteous and Women's Leader Akemi Porteous, a great alliance of members — based on the spirit of many in body, one in mind (*itai doshin*) — extends today throughout Scotland, centering on Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and the Heart of Scotland.

Wishing to welcome my wife and me to Scotland some day, Mr. and Mrs. Porteous held weekly daimoku sessions at their home for 10 years, continuing for more than 500 sessions until our visit was realized.

Nichiren Daishonin writes: “Now in the Latter Day of the Law, the daimoku that Nichiren chants is different than that of previous ages. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo entails practice both for oneself and others” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1022). A life in which we chant daimoku and work for kosen-rufu together with a harmonious assembly of fellow believers will create a rhythm of success, happiness and victory that grows stronger and more vigorous year after year. Those who pursue a solitary Buddhist practice will live a sad, lonely life, without joy or satisfaction.

Sir William Wallace, the great Scottish national hero who rose up to fight against oppressive rulers, was from the region that is now western Glasgow. He was eventually betrayed, imprisoned and cruelly executed, but his fierce fighting spirit lived after him and inspired the Scottish people, who finally freed themselves from English rule. A treatise on human rights composed by the leaders of that resistance movement is said to have been used as a reference by the drafters of the American Declaration of Independence.

Courage opens the way to all things.

The people of Scotland have endured and overcome a harsh natural setting and history. They are hard-working, honest and patient. With a magnanimity of spirit that enables them to make their home wherever freedom reigns, they have also left Scotland to be active on the world stage. Mr. Makiguchi, in his book *Geography of Human Life*, made note of this.

In November 1995, a year after I visited Glasgow, I flew to Nepal, the birthplace of Shakyamuni, to receive an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from Tribhuvan University. To my surprise, the band played “Scotland the Brave” in my honor. Thinking of all my friends in Scotland, standing tall and proud as the Himalayan peaks, their faces shining with friendship and goodwill, I listened with a feeling of supreme reverence.