

## OUR TIME IS NOW THE THEME OF YOUTH

For many of us, the first time we see tangible proof that our practice is valid stands as a terrific experience, a precious memory, which won't soon be forgotten. Even "fortune babies" (those born to parents who practice) can identify some specific moment in their youth when they made a major advancement in their faith, some one episode of tangible proof or deep struggle.

Examining the background of President Ikeda's first meeting offers many insights. In particular, his history beautifully illustrates the idea of timeliness. Young Ikeda was 19, smart, bold, sick and struggling.

He was a typical youth, daydreaming and discussing idealistic notions about society, yet gradually rising above the self-righteousness prevalent among peers. Until meeting Toda, young Ikeda knew he hadn't yet found a satisfying basic philosophy or actually *any* philosophy for conducting daily life.

Many of us are much like the 19-year-old Ikeda was. We are desperately seeking answers to fundamental questions: What is life? Why do we die? How should we live? How do we stop war and violence?

Such questioning becomes very powerful if coupled with action. Consider what President Ikeda states in his latest peace proposal:

"We may talk of a third millennium, but the mere change in calendar dates will not bring about a sudden change in the nature of the age. Only human will and action can create history and open up new horizons" (May *Living Buddhism*).

Understanding that both ambition *and* action are needed, we see that now is an amazing time to be practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, which holds both prayer and action as essential.

Imagine if today's teenagers (reminiscing from, let's say, the year 2050) could look back on this time and say, "1999 is the year I stood up!" Clearly, this would be a major component to a successful turn of the century. There are four months left till next year – a big chunk of time available to unleash that extra effort and gather momentum for the next millennium. If we strive, then, as President Ikeda says for those who work hard as true leaders for world peace: "Cause and effect is absolute. You will receive great benefit in this lifetime and throughout all future lifetimes, lasting generation after generation" (July 14 *Seikyo Shimbun*).

### READ MORE ABOUT IT!

- Get a copy of *The Human Revolution* – Retelling of the above scenes were based on volume 2, number 4, of *The Human Revolution*.
- Around the nation, read the reactions of other youth members as they discuss impressions of President Ikeda's anniversary on page B.