

FORTY YEARS OF CREATING TRUST
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Achieving American kosen-rufu is as simple as creating trust. We're in the process of establishing trust for the SGI movement throughout American society, doing this one person at a time—convincing one friend after another that our organization has something irreplaceable to contribute to this country.

Oct. 2, World Peace Day, is a reminder every year for us to keep creating trust, to never slacken in doing so. Next year, Oct. 2 will mark the 40th anniversary of President Ikeda's 1960 arrival in Hawaii, the first stop on his first trip for world peace.

From the beginning, what he did, too, was create trust. At the first discussion meeting held in America, which was during the Hawaii visit, President Ikeda told the pioneer members that "as children of the Buddha, you each have a mission of boundless proportions. With that mission and pride in your hearts, please become excellent citizens who are trusted by all. To win the love and respect of others leads to the propagation of Buddhism; kosen-rufu exists in developing such trust" (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 55).

How exactly do we develop this trust? There's no set way—there can be as many ways as we can imagine. We can set an example, we can engage people in meaningful conversation, we can show proof in our lives, etc.

From the get-go, though, we have to trust the people whose trust we want to win. Our trust in them is the cause for earning their trust in us.

When President Ikeda decided to form a district in Hawaii, the first outside Japan, everyone was surprised—especially those who became the district leaders. President Ikeda was placing the responsibility for American kosen-rufu in the hands of members he had just met!

Placing this kind of trust in people rarely happens in our society. This kind of trust, though, is desperately needed—everywhere, as soon as possible. E. M. Forster in "What I Believe" puts it this way: "One must be fond of people and trust them if one is not to make a mess of life." We have made a mess of our world precisely because we haven't trusted one another. Kosen-rufu offers a solution to this, a way to change the direction of our history until now.

To create this solution, we also have to be honest with people; we have to honestly share with them what we feel about this Buddhism. Even if people don't want to join our organization or aren't attracted to our ideas, they will take notice of our honesty and respect it.

In 1960 in Hawaii, President Ikeda answered the members' questions one after another, urging them to change their karma through Buddhist practice. He didn't shirk from telling them what he knew they needed to do—the steps he felt they had to take to become happy. His honesty, more than anything else, convinced and inspired them.

In "The Daimoku of the Lotus Sutra," the Daishonin says that "the basic character of a Buddha is honesty and straightforwardness" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 3, p. 21). Oct. 2, World Peace Day, is a reminder that it's qualities like these we should always strive for in our efforts for American kosen-rufu.

The lesson of Oct. 2 is that without such sincerity—without always going back to sincerity as our starting point—we'll never get far; we won't create trust, we won't accomplish our mission. With sincerity, we are guaranteed to win. **WT**

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