

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE MOVING FORWARD WITH OPTIMISM AND COURAGE

SGI President Ikeda says that 'this life, this existence, is precious. Let us strive together earnestly and win in all challenges' this year.

Happy New Year's to my beloved SGI members! With the magnificent success and development of our kosen-rufu movement, we usher in this new year marking the 70th anniversary of the Soka Gakkai's founding. I hope that you, my precious comrades in faith throughout the world, will join me in celebrating this brilliant, hope-filled occasion. I deeply appreciate all of your timeless efforts.

The year 2000, to my great delight, marks the 100th anniversary of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's birth. It is also the Year of Youth, in which we will raise the curtain on the 21st century. This year also signals the exuberant start of our momentous journey toward the third millennium.

As the SGI embarks on a new century, I humbly wish to convey that our membership has now spread from 128 countries to 148 countries around the world. Fellow Bodhisattvas of the Earth are working valiantly and energetically for kosen-rufu in all corners of the globe. I am confident that Nichiren Daishonin, the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law, would be overjoyed at this unparalleled achievement in the history of Buddhism.

You have made this unprecedented achievement possible. Because of this, I am absolutely convinced that the good fortune you have accumulated as a result will shine brilliantly in your lives forever. It will become a boundless, immeasurable treasure, indestructible throughout the three existences of past, present and future, just as the Daishonin promises.

Celebrating a golden age of Buddhism surpassing that which flourished under the ancient Indian king Ashoka, let's keep striving cheerfully for kosen-rufu and courageously advance, like the lion king that roams the plains and the eagle that soars in the sky.

Throughout his life, the Soka Gakkai's founding president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, tenaciously fought against evil and injustice. He declared with powerful conviction, "Happiness and kosen-rufu are contingent on our causing devilish functions to appear and eradicating them."

After Mr. Makiguchi died in prison for his beliefs, our mentor Josei Toda stood up with an indomitable resolve to carry on Mr. Makiguchi's work. He proclaimed that kosen-rufu could not be achieved without great courage and an invincible fighting spirit.

I, too, have fought for kosen-rufu for more than five decades, without deviating in the slightest from this noble Soka Gakkai spirit, and I have written an immortal history. In all that time, I have not rested a single day nor retreated a single step. Because the Soka Gakkai has forged ahead with solid unity of purpose, centering on the three successive presidents, it has achieved the phenomenal development it has today. As a result, it is hailed by leading intellectuals around the world as "a miracle of the 20th century."

There is no life more respectable than a life dedicated to kosen-rufu.

In giving guidance, Mr. Makiguchi often used to say, "Rest assured that persecution sends those of false faith into retreat, while it fosters genuine lions."

Armed with the pride and resolve of true victors that "no strategy is more powerful than

the strategy of the Lotus Sutra,” I hope you will join me once again this year in advancing with confidence and light hearts along the great path of peace and culture.

Let us work together to create a Century of Life and a Century of Humanity that will go down in history — an age that humankind has been dreaming of and that will pave the way to lasting happiness for all people.

This life, this existence, is precious. Therefore, let us strive together earnestly and win in all challenges, moving forward intrepidly with optimism, courage and a progressive spirit in order to achieve victory in our lives.

All of you are extremely precious to me, and I am praying each day with all my heart for your good health and longevity. I am also praying fervently that each of you, without a single exception, will lead a life of great happiness and fulfillment.

I also look forward to your continued success and progress in your activities for the sake of kosen-rufu in the year ahead in your respective regions and countries.

Praying for the eternal development of the SGI, I conclude my New Year’s message.

Daisaku Ikeda
January 1, 2000