

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S FEB. 27 SPEECH—PART 2 OUR PRIME POINT IS HELPING OTHERS

‘To bring hope to those suffering the most, to devote oneself to helping those experiencing the greatest hardship, to thoroughly fight against injustices that trample on the sincerity of good, honest, decent people—this, I want to reconfirm, is the Soka Gakkai’s prime point,’ SGI President Ikeda says.

Part 2 of SGI President Ikeda’s speech at the 43rd Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Hyogo Culture Center in Kobe, Japan, Feb. 27.

My mentor in life, Josei Toda, often used to say: “Becoming happy ourselves is nothing. It’s easy. The essence of faith, however, is to help others become happy as well.”

He also said, with great conviction: “I will die only after I have accomplished everything I have to do. What is that? To help those who are poor and sick and suffering. That is why I continue to loudly proclaim the validity of Nichiren Dai-shonin’s Buddhism.”

To bring hope to those suffering the most, to devote oneself to helping those experiencing the greatest hardship, to thoroughly fight against injustices that trample on the sincerity of good, honest, decent people—this, I want to reconfirm, is the Soka Gakkai’s prime point. It must be transmitted without deviation into the 21st century.

Fight with the spirit that Kansai is No. 1! The Kansai spirit is the Gakkai spirit. I want Kansai to burn brightly with this spirit and set an example for all our members in Japan and around the world!

A person who speaks out is a messenger of the Buddha.

I want to share another wonderful statement by General José de San Martín, one of the great leaders of Latin American independence: “Ten men who cry out make more noise than a hundred thousand who are silent.” As we say in Buddhism, “The voice does the Buddha’s work” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708).

A person who speaks out is a messenger of the Buddha. The Buddhist law of cause and effect is strict. If we don’t speak out for truth and justice now, Buddhism teaches that we may be reborn in a lowly, intimidated state of life—like that of a frog transfixed before a snake, a small bird preyed upon by a hawk, a mouse hunted by a cat. So let us fight against the enemies of Buddhism! Let us speak out for justice and truth!

I have fought and spoken out alone, not depending on anyone. And while bearing the full brunt of all attacks and slander, I have rigorously protected the Soka Gakkai.

If we let evil people triumph, we will be enslaved.

San Martín also says, “Divided we will be enslaved; united, our victory is assured.” This is similar to a statement made by the Daishonin. [The Daishonin writes: “Even an individual at cross purposes with himself is certain to end in failure. Yet a hundred or even a thousand people can definitely attain their goal, if they are of one mind” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 618).] Mr. Toda often said the same thing. If we let evil people triumph, we will be enslaved.

There are those who have gained recognition and comfortable lives thanks to the Soka Gakkai and have then become arrogant and corrupt, finally leaving the organization and

stirring up trouble for it. We can never forgive their treachery, nor can we ever let ourselves be defeated by their schemes. We must triumph in this fight for right.

Let us rise above those who have joined Nikken in committing grave slander of the Law and, as a great force of compassion, advance boldly into the future.

Great people are invariably envied and attacked.

Women are strong. Juana Manso, a 19th-century Argentine teacher and educator, stood up and fought bravely against the dictatorship of her day. She campaigned for the spread and reform of education. She made a special effort to expose the Argentinean people to good books and good writing. [In addition to founding a school, Manso established a library to which she donated her entire collection. She traveled around Argentina giving lectures encouraging people to read. From her youth, she also wrote novels and is known as the “Argentine George Sand.”]

Manso cried out: “The people must be freed from the shameful chains of ignorance, the most disgraceful form of slavery of all, for it harms our humanity and perverts the destiny of humankind.” This is absolutely true. Nevertheless, unscrupulous, envious forces insulted, attacked and defamed this noble woman.

How did she react? She only raised her voice louder and continued to call for truth and justice undeterred.

Great people are invariably envied and attacked. We must always be aware of this. People are persecuted precisely because of their justness and integrity. We could perhaps call this unvarying formula the inescapable destiny of humanity.

For we live in a realm governed by the Devil of the Sixth Heaven. That is why we must protect and fight for the persecuted. Despite this being the case, there are those afraid of being persecuted, who cunningly try to hide in the shadows of great people. You must absolutely not become that sort of cowardly person.

Manso was not afraid. She did not despair. She was prepared to fight and die for her beliefs. She won an immensely profound spiritual victory and was a towering champion of the spirit.

Speaking out with a lion’s roar—this is the Gakkai spirit.

An international floral exhibition will be held on the island of Awajishima—the center of the Great Hanshin Earthquake—starting in March. What a wonderful idea this is! I am sure it will be a highlight of spring 2000. [At the request of the exhibition’s planning committee, selected photographs from the exhibition “Dialogue with Nature—Photographs by Daisaku Ikeda” will be displayed.] Are there any members here from Awajishima? Thank you for coming!

The earthquake was a terrible, terrible disaster. I have heard in detail the great hardships all of you have gone through.

Speaking of flowers, José Ingenieros of Argentina says, “Through the power of artistic education, let us bring to beautiful and luxuriant bloom the most wonderful flower in the universe: humankind.” Ingenieros was active at about the same time as the Soka Gakkai’s founding president, Tsunesa-buro Makiguchi. A renowned doctor and educator, Ingenieros loved young people. Mr. Makiguchi’s value-creating education was also designed to bring the precious life of each individual into full bloom.

When my wife was a child, she had an opportunity to meet Mr. Makiguchi. He once even spoke at a discussion meeting at her house. Though Mr. Maki-guchi was being

observed by the Special Higher Police—Japan’s wartime thought police—he was unafraid and continued to speak out with a powerful lion’s roar, boldly refuting the erroneous and revealing the true.

The seed of warm encouragement that Mr. Makiguchi planted in a young girl’s heart those many years ago has bloomed into a radiant flower today.

Speaking out with a lion’s roar—this is the Gakkai spirit. You must all confront injustice with this same lion’s roar!

In his famous speech on March 16, 1958, when he passed on the baton of kosen-rufu to the youth, Mr. Toda proclaimed, “The Soka Gakkai is the king of the religious world!”

On another occasion, he declared: “When I die, I have to go to work for kosen-rufu on some other planet in this vast universe. I will leave the kosen-rufu of the Earth to my disciples.”

Buddhist philosophy expounds an infinite, unbounded view of life and the universe that embraces all space and time.

All the Buddha’s words are true. The Daishonin’s Buddhism allows us to attain a vast state of life that embraces the entire universe. Buddhism teaches that a life-moment encompasses 3,000 realms. Therefore, at any given moment, we can be in the world of Hell or the world of Buddhahood, experience a life-state of suffering or one of immense happiness and joy, depending on our mind, our determination in faith. Faith is the foundation for establishing our lives on an eternal course to happiness. Everything that has form is eventually destroyed, but faith is never destroyed. And if faith is never destroyed, neither is happiness. These are indestructible.

For example, though you may be suffering financially right now, if you open the door to good fortune, you can achieve a state of life in which you never need want for anything. Through exerting yourself in faith, each day you are accumulating eternal good fortune in the “bank” in the inner depths of your life.

Let us make the suns of our lives rise afresh each day.

Let us form an exciting alliance of communication and exchange with the Universidad Nacional del Nordeste as part of our great alliance of like minds encircling our green Earth! [The Universidad Nacional del Nordeste, Argentina, conferred an honorary doctorate on SGI President Ikeda at this meeting.]

The symbol of the Argentine university is a bright, shining sun. As comrades of this esteemed school, let us make the suns of our lives, brimming with boundless wisdom and energy, rise afresh each day. And let us determine together today that, as we shine our light on friends everywhere, we will cause “human flowers” fragrant with happiness, fulfillment and victory to bloom in profusion the world over!

I hope the members of Kobe and all of Hyogo Prefecture will continue to advance with the awareness and sense of responsibility that they are the center of Japan.

In closing, I pray for the continued successful endeavors and good health of Universidad Nacional del Nordeste Rector Aldo Torres and Mrs. Torres, and the other distinguished guests present today. I also pray for the lasting peace, security and prosperity of Northeastern Argentina, home of the Universidad Nacional del Nordeste, as well as of the respective regions in which each of you is nobly carrying out your mission.

Muchas gracias!

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS INDESTRUCTIBLE HAPPINESS

From This Speech:

Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism allows us to attain a vast state of life that embraces the entire universe. Buddhism teaches that a life-moment encompasses 3,000 realms. Therefore, at any given moment, we can be in the world of Hell or the world of Buddhahood, experience a life-state of suffering or one of immense happiness and joy, depending on our mind, our determination in faith. Faith is the foundation for establishing our lives on an eternal course to happiness. Everything that has form is eventually destroyed, but faith is never destroyed. And if faith is never destroyed, neither is happiness. These are indestructible.

- 1) "A vast state of life that embraces the entire universe" — what does this mean to you? Do you think that you have experienced it?
- 2) Have you experienced how your life-state can change? When have you experienced Hell? How did you get out of it? And when have you experienced Buddhahood?
- 3) Do you think you have a tendency toward one of the Ten Worlds? When you get stuck in it, do you recognize it immediately? How do you get out of it?
- 4) SGI President Ikeda suggests that even when we die, our faith and happiness cannot be destroyed. What do you think of this? Why do you think he's emphasizing this point?