

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MAY 3 MESSAGE AMERICA, LEAD THE WAY!

‘With the sound of construction reverberating far and wide,’ SGI President Ikeda says, ‘I ask that America lead the way in raising the curtain on another new phase in the worldwide kosen-rufu movement.’

My dear, dear friends: I am so happy to be able to greet this glorious, triumphant dawn of May 3, on the brink of the new millennium, together with all of you, my fellow SGI members throughout the world.

I say to you with all my heart: “Congratulations on May 3!” “Congratulations to all of you!”

What a truly victorious May 3 this is!

In the Goshō, Nichiren Dai-shōnin writes: “At first only Nichiren chanted Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō, but then two, three, and a hundred followed, chanting and teaching others. Propagation will unfold this way in the future as well. Does this not signify ‘emerging from the earth’?” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishōnin*, p. 385).

This year, it is 25 years since the SGI was founded. In this short time, we have spread the Daishōnin’s Buddhism throughout the world—with SGI members now active in a total of 156 countries and territories. And through these efforts, we have created a powerful tide toward peace. As a brilliant sun of hope, the SGI has illuminated humanity with its light, breaking through the profound darkness of the age.

All of the SGI’s achievements are your victory! They are the great triumph of each one of you! I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

I am particularly overjoyed to see the magnificent number of capable people who have “emerged from the earth” to work for kosen-rufu in North America.

It was from the United States that I took my first step for worldwide kosen-rufu, in the year of my appointment as third president of the Soka Gakkai. It was also from the U.S. that I embarked on the second chapter of worldwide kosen-rufu to open a new phase in the development of our movement, after becoming honorary president of the Soka Gakkai.

It has been my unchanging conviction that the pioneering continent of North America, brimming with the dynamic spirit of freedom and democracy, has a natural destiny to lead the propagation of the Daishōnin’s Buddhism throughout the globe.

The new campus of Soka University of America, now under construction in Orange County, Calif., is steadily taking shape. It will be a haven of water, greenery and sunshine. I am confident that the university’s presence will be a great source of hope for the entire world.

With the sound of construction reverberating far and wide, I ask that America lead the way in raising the curtain on another new phase in the worldwide kosen-rufu movement.

We must make the 21st century an age of the solidarity of the people. Today, in various fields, exchange and unity among ordinary citizens, transcending national borders, are beginning to find a place on the center stage of history. As one of the world’s foremost people’s movements, the SGI is in the vanguard of such efforts. Our movement is now attracting increasing attention around the globe as a shining hope of the people.

Humankind today is grappling desperately with questions of survival and what it means

to lead a valuable existence. A new system of global values to replace the outmoded values of the 20th century is urgently needed. Buddhism can provide a philosophical framework and an inexhaustible source of wisdom for that purpose.

Let us work on a global scale to forge a harmonious solidarity among various philosophies, with the humanism of Buddhism serving as a connecting bridge.

Buddhism exists for the self-realization of the individual. And the SGI organization, too, exists first and foremost to help each person become happy. Its purpose is to enable individuals to shine in their own unique way and manifest their greatest and highest potential.

A Buddhist scripture states that all good teachings and good actions in the secular world comprise, in and of themselves, the truth of the Lotus Sutra. In other words, the validity of Buddhism is proven through the positive actions undertaken by each person in society. All of you, my friends of the SGI, have striven to be exemplary citizens, actively contributing to the prosperity of your countries and communities and becoming a driving force for social revitalization. Your integrity of character and the sincerity of your words and conduct have won the widespread support and trust of many people. This is clear proof of the validity of Buddhism.

Buddhism does not impose one single way of life or cultural tradition. It teaches tolerance and respect for all cultures. The Buddhist way of life is to follow the culture—the customs and traditions—of the particular country and society in which we reside. It calls for us to undertake our activities with wisdom and common sense and to become a sun-like presence illuminating all around us, thereby winning trust in society and setting an inspiring example for others.

Another Buddhist scripture states, “Though one defeats a million men in battle, one who overcomes the self alone is in fact the highest victor” (*The Dhammapada: Sayings of Buddha*, p. 39). It is important that we triumph over ourselves. This is the purpose of Buddhism.

No matter what stormy seas you may encounter in the journey of life, please keep sailing forward bravely, convinced that you can definitely show actual proof of “transforming earthly desires into enlightenment”—the Buddhist teaching of achieving true happiness. Also, please value good friends and fellow members, doing your utmost to strengthen and further expand the network of people united in shared purpose—in the spirit of “many in body, one in mind.”

My fellow members of the SGI! This May 3 marks a new departure for the SGI. Everything starts anew from today. With a fresh pledge in our hearts, let us take the first step in the final approach to the 21st century, on the great path of the propagation of the Daishonin’s Buddhism for the 10,000 years and more of the Latter Day of the Law.

For my part, I will continue to build a glorious network of friendship and philosophy that crisscrosses the globe like so many colorful rainbows spanning the world’s skies.

Let us set off on our joyous, hope-filled journey, advancing together in friendship, harmony and good cheer! To eliminate war, misery and unhappiness from the face of the earth! To rid the world of all evil and injustice! To enable all people to change their karma and enjoy healthy and fulfilled lives! To realize lasting peace for humanity!

And I will continue to offer this, my unceasing prayer:

*My precious fellow members of the SGI!
May you be champions of happiness!*

May you be champions of the people!
May you be champions of justice!
May you be champions of hope!

May 3, 2000
Daisaku Ikeda
SGI President