

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S APRIL 25 SPEECH—PART 1 MOVING ALWAYS TOWARD THE FUTURE

Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 45th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting commemorating May 3, Soka Gakkai Day, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, April 25.

On behalf of the SGI, I wish to wholeheartedly praise the members from 50 countries and territories who have traveled all the way to Japan to participate in an SGI training course and deepen their understanding of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Thank you so much. I deeply appreciate your dedication.

The causes we make are clearly manifested in this lifetime.

First Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda was always unstinting in his praise for people who had traveled from afar to attend training courses so that they could contribute to the cause of Buddhism and the realization of kosen-rufu. He assured them that the benefit they would accrue from such efforts would be boundless and immeasurable.

The workings of the Buddhist Law are wondrous. In a Buddhist scripture, there is a story of a small boy, who, having nothing else to give, sincerely offers Shakyamuni a mud pie that he has lovingly made. As a result of this offering, the scripture says, the boy is later reborn as King Ashoka, a towering ruler in world history. At work here is the law of cause and effect. What matters is our heart or spirit. What is important is our faith. The causes we make are clearly manifested in this lifetime, not only in the next.

To the visiting SGI members, I say: Please continue to take good care of your health for the sake of kosen-rufu. Only the SGI can accomplish kosen-rufu—the realization of genuine, lasting peace. I am always praying that each of you, without exception, will lead a life of ever-greater happiness. On your return home, please give my best regards to your fellow members.

I ask the Japanese members to join me in a warm round of applause for our noble friends from abroad.

Nichiren Daishonin's spirit resides in the Soka Gakkai.

With boundless praise and appreciation for your efforts, it is my humble honor to report today, on the eve of our milestone anniversary, May 3, that the number of countries and territories where SGI members are active has grown from 148 to 156. This has been achieved through your passionate commitment to realize kosen-rufu, and because the intent of the original Buddha, the Daishonin, pervades our organization.

The trust you have gained in your respective countries and the fine contributions you are making in your local communities are clear and unmistakable. How happy Soka Gakkai presidents Makiguchi and Toda must be!

Incidentally, representatives of both the Makiguchi and Toda families have kindly joined us for this meeting.

Today, four decades after becoming third Soka Gakkai president, I report to both my predecessors with deep joy, on behalf of all of you, the magnificent growth we have achieved in our worldwide kosen-rufu movement.

The Daishonin states: “[Despite the personal interference of the Devil King of the Sixth

Heaven,] it is because the heavenly deities came to my aid that I survived even the Tatsunokuchi Persecution, and that I also safely emerged from other great persecutions. By now the Devil King must be thoroughly discouraged” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 843).

The Daishonin’s spirit resides in the Soka Gakkai. We have endured all manner of persecution and attack in the course of propagating Buddhism, and we have emerged triumphant each time—just as the Daishonin’s teachings assure us.

Persecutions encountered for the sake of Buddhism signal the advance of kosen-rufu. They signal glory. The Soka Gakkai is a true champion of justice. This has been proven more clearly than ever before. The SGI has won on all fronts. Today, I proclaim a grand victory for the Soka Gakkai and the SGI! I want this declaration to shine in the annals of our movement.

Those who chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo are never deadlocked.

What is the landmark 156th country where SGI members are active? It is the Republic of Cyprus in the Mediterranean.

May 27–29, incidentally, a peace conference—the Human Security and Global Governance West Asia Conference II—sponsored by the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research will be held there. The theme of the conference will be “International Security and Cooperation in West Asia.”

Also, I am happy to report that SGI organizations in two Central American republics have become chapters: El Salvador and Honduras. A member from El Salvador is in the audience. My sincerest congratulations to you!

As if in accord with the principle of transforming and purifying the land (*The Lotus Sutra*, chapter 11), the 156 countries and territories where SGI members today dwell have been reborn as great realms where the teaching of the Mystic Law is spreading far and wide.

I pray with all my heart for each country to be blessed with the light of hope, with happiness, with peace, and with victory and glory.

Today, I am delighted that two world-renowned musicians, Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter, have joined us. I’m so glad to see such dear friends again. I warmly welcome them and thank them most sincerely for taking time out of their busy, international schedules to be with us today.

Through their thoroughly forged lives and their sublime artistic spirit, both men continue to convey the joy of life and the strength to go on living to people around the world.

It is with profound gratitude that my wife and I today accepted the heartfelt honor of the Global Artist Award from these two outstanding heroes of art, whom we respect from the bottom of our hearts. Thank you so very, very much.

What made these two creative geniuses pursue the path of art? Someone once said these famous words: “If anyone wants to keep creating they have to be about change. Living is an adventure and a challenge” (*Miles: The Autobiography*, p. 394). That someone is the late Miles Davis, the great 20th-century jazz virtuoso, with whom our two guests were closely associated. Be it in art, life or faith, everything comes down to unceasing challenge, change and creativity—the spirit to keep advancing from today to tomorrow, moving always toward the future.

Just staying home and watching television all the time gives rise to no change or challenge. It is an existence little different from that of an animal. To keep improving and

changing in a positive way, as we move from the present into the future—this is human revolution. Those who do so triumph. They succeed.

This supreme rhythm of victory is the Mystic Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. In the end, nothing can match those who embrace faith in this Law. For those who chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo are never deadlocked.

(To be continued in the June 9 issue)

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS CAUSE AND EFFECT

From This Speech:

The workings of the Buddhist Law are wondrous. In a Buddhist scripture, there is a story of a small boy, who, having nothing else to give, sincerely offers Shakyamuni a mud pie that he has lovingly made. As a result of this offering, the scripture says, the boy is later reborn as King Ashoka, a towering ruler in world history. At work here is the law of cause and effect. What matters is our heart or spirit. What is important is our faith. The causes we make are clearly manifested in this lifetime, not only in the next.

- 1) How have you experienced the “workings of the Buddhist Law” in your life? How has your life changed due to your Buddhist practice?
- 2) “What matters is our heart or spirit”— what does this statement mean to you?
- 3) What do you do when you feel like your spirit’s weak? How do you make it strong again?
- 4) Have you had the experience of the effects for the causes you have made vastly exceeding your expectations? How have you been surprised?
- 5) What kind of causes are you making now for the future? What do you think your future will be like, based on what you’re doing in the present?
- 6) What kind of causes can we make for the future of the SGI-USA? What do you think our organization will be like in the future?