

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA LET US CONTINUE OUR SONG

Reflecting on 40 years of leading the Soka Gakkai—from May 3, 1960–May 3, 2000—SGI President Ikeda encourages each of us to ‘continue our song! Let us, you and I, keep moving forward! Looking down on the foul swamp of low-minded hatred and jealousy, let us shake hands with noble friends around the world....’

May 3, 1960

A thrilling sound rose from the venue like crashing waves. Again and again, the Brass Band’s rousing performance shook the huge Nihon University Auditorium.

It was May 3, 1960—the day of my inauguration as third Soka Gakkai president. Everyone there was looking toward the future, aiming for the goal of worldwide kosen-rufu. Their hearts were filled with excitement, and their eyes sparkled with hope. How indestructible was their determination to achieve that lofty goal! How noble was their mission!

In the Gosho is the passage “One’s body and mind at a single moment pervade the entire realm of phenomena” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 366). Before my eyes was a gathering transcending time and space, where valiant individuals prepared to dance out onto the grand stage of mission from time without beginning.

It seemed to me that the heavenly deities were watching over these heroic trailblazers of Soka, who continued to forge ahead energetically, day and night, on the great path of spreading Nichiren Daishonin’s teachings. It seemed to me that the sun, moon and stars were shining down their praise and veneration on the members.

The Soka Gakkai had been buffeted by countless storms of hatred and malice in the course of its efforts to realize kosen-rufu. All over Japan, my beloved fellow members had borne the painful brunt of unjustified criticisms and oppression. But none among these intrepid friends, dedicated to realizing the Buddha’s intent and decree, was deterred by these onslaughts. They were applauded and embraced by all Buddhas and bodhisattvas, having triumphed in all their struggles and advanced proudly to the strains of an indomitable song of human victory.



The Bodhisattvas of the Earth—the champions of truth who are undaunted by the roaring cannon fire of criticism and abuse, who are filled with determination and perseverance, and who fight with absolute certainty of their final triumph—possess a faith of enormous, indestructible power.

Every day, we hear the music of an exuberant victory march, in which everything is a source of joy. In our morning and evening gongyo, we find the rhythm of total victory that is at one with the universe. This is because gongyo embodies a distillation of joy, wisdom, freedom and life’s sanctity.

We will never be defeated by wild attacks or the actions of degenerate, inhuman individuals. We gaze on such pitiful, arrogant people from the heights of our unsurpassed citadel, which brims with our pure-hearted, vital force, as we talk of the future with friends, share laughter and encourage one another. This is because we live with assurance

and joy, like suns shining brightly in the infinite universe. Because, possessing the spiritual sword of truth that sparkles with vitality and fulfillment, we confidently make our way through life with an indefatigable fighting spirit.

My comrades, my friends! Let us, you and I, continue our song! Let us, you and I, keep moving forward! Looking down on the foul swamp of low-minded hatred and jealousy, let us shake hands with noble friends around the world, enveloped in the exhilarating, welcoming golden breezes of the heavenly deities.



The great Chinese Tang-Dynasty poet Li Po writes:

*The phoenix rides with the wind all day and, stirring up whirlwinds,
Soars in an instant to 90,000 li*
[a Chinese unit of length].

On May 3, 1951, my mentor, Josei Toda, became the second Soka Gakkai president. I became president on May 3, 1960, to work on your behalf, to work for the Soka Gakkai members and to work for kosen-rufu.

May 3 is our initial starting point. Simultaneously, it is the day we make our final declaration of complete victory. It is the grand anniversary that celebrates our efforts to realize a golden age of supreme spiritual triumph and glory.



May 3 is invincible, unshaken by raging tempests. May 3 is filled with jubilation and ever-victorious hope. May 3 is the day on which friends around the world rejoice, celebrate and deepen their determination to keep fighting for kosen-rufu.

We know that the Daishonin is watching over us, praising us and smiling at us.

There are members who are far away. There are members who are ill. There are members who are bravely struggling to survive trying economic times. There are members who are grappling with all kinds of circumstances and situations.

But the goal of all is clear, and so is the outcome. Namely, victory, happiness, everlasting truth and justice, and becoming a person of immense spiritual wealth and integrity, living in accord with the law of cause and effect.

That is why there is no need to fear being misunderstood by the world. There is no need to fear the spiritually dead who dwell among us. There is no need to fear the criticisms of the morally bankrupt. There is nothing to fear in pathetic slurs and slanders. They all simply accord with the Lotus Sutra's prediction "There will be many ignorant people / who will curse and speak ill of us" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 193).

We are great pioneers, whom people of the 21st century — no, of the 10,000 years and more of the Latter Day of the Law — will thank, weeping tears of gratitude. We are champions who possess lives as bright and strong as diamonds, not poor fragile lives of glass. We are walking the supreme, unparalleled path as human beings, a path that will lead us out of a society resembling a long, dark, underground prison and put our lives on the course toward a Buddha realm pervaded by eternity, happiness, true self and purity.

We know that our determination, our efforts and our living in accord with the Mystic Law are the fundamental, ultimate causes that will clearly decide the outcome of all our struggles. Buddhism teaches the oneness of time without beginning and the Latter Day of the Law, and the oneness of this moment and eternity.

The purpose of our efforts—right here, right now—is to realize our pledge from the infinite past. The purpose of our practice and struggle in each moment is to be eternally victorious in all things. Those who live contrary to these principles will lead a dark, painful, sad life. They will be defeated and end up in the state of Hell.

That May 3 of 1960 was bright and sunny. The hearts of all those who had assembled that day were bright and sunny, too. Without doubt, the May 3 of time without beginning was just the same. The Soka Gakkai, champion of truth, alone having inherited the pure spirit of the Daishonin's Buddhism, has never been daunted by the nefarious schemes and insidious persecution of the Nikken sect. We have never been defeated by that base group of slanderers, including a convicted extortionist, which continues to attack and lay dark plots against us.

The great literati of Ming-Dynasty China, Liu Ji, says, "If 10,000 men unite, they will be invincible." The brilliant light of the SGI has spread to 156 countries, and the shimmering mountain ranges of peace—of worldwide kosen-rufu, the goal we have dreamed of so long—are beginning to come into view.

We have fought! We have won! May 3 celebrates the triumph of the forces of the Buddha called Soka.

*We have beaten
the base-hearted Devadatta,
demonstrating the power of Soka,
champion of justice.*

May 3, 2000

The weather was fine on May 3, 2000. It was fine all across Japan. And the fragrance of the spring greenery was wonderful. When I awoke, the first thing my wife said to me was, "It's a sunny day." I was delighted.

My wife went on to say, with deep conviction, "Our fellow members throughout Japan and the world must have prayed for this sunny weather."

Congratulatory telegrams flooded in from around the globe.

Fondly remembered overseas members sent mountains of telegrams that accumulated in a happy heap on my desk. In addition, I received congratulatory telegrams from top government leaders of more than 50 nations.

Dr. Linus Pauling Jr., son of the late Nobel laureate Linus Pauling, sent me the following warm message: "It is the 40th anniversary of the beginning of your international travels, activities that have increased the awareness of many political and lay leaders of the necessity for peace, education and tolerance, and which have enabled the lives of many people in many countries to become enriched."



As May 3 approached, each day saw more than 10,000 people from all over Japan visit the Soka Gakkai Headquarters Annex in Tokyo [where a Visitors Center is located] to pay their respects. My appreciation for them is boundless and inexhaustible.

Seeing the joyful throngs of Soka Gakkai members gathering at the Headquarters, a nonmember who came to offer congratulations on this anniversary, said to the staff with admiration: "This is wonderful. Where else in the world can one see such a vibrant,

dynamic group of people?” He went on to say: “For a variety of reasons, including my position in society, I am not a member, but I feel in my innermost heart that such inspiring faith, which enables people to lead vigorous, hope-filled lives, is essential. I know my wife feels the same.”



One of our youth division members wrote me: “The stage of the 21st century now lies before us. We will do our very best and win. We will strive to grow and develop.” How happy those words made me, ringing as they did with enthusiastic determination!

An elderly member, a true hero of faith who has long fought by my side, wrote me: “Living my life together with the Soka Gakkai has been my unsurpassed joy. I celebrate this May 3 without a cloud in my heart. My life resounds continually with the music of good fortune and is free of all darkness and regret.”

Another leader, an honest, forthright man, copied a passage from the Goshō for me in brush and ink: “Life is limited; we must not begrudge it. What we should ultimately aspire to is the Buddha land” (WND, 214). In closing, he wrote, “Magnificent May 3 is a day of fresh departure.”

Another member, who has made outstanding contributions to our movement, composed this waka poem:

*Even old trees
Sprout fresh young buds.
We, too,
Undaunted and fearless,
Continue to speak out and press forward.*

On the spot, I composed this reply:

*“Until you wither,
Live your life like a young tree”—
Together, let us deeply ponder and appreciate
These words of our mentor [Mr. Toda].*

I profoundly treasure all your congratulatory messages.

A fresh advance toward the 21st century has begun throughout Japan and the entire world.



In the Soka Gakkai, we have no need for the arrogant, base-hearted or degenerate. Nor do we need cowards, schemers and seekers of fame. Anyone who wishes to behave this way can do so but not in the Soka Gakkai.

We don’t need the spiritually dead, who haunt the world like ghosts. Nor devious people who exploit sincere people while cunningly looking out for their own best interests, their hearts shut away from sunlight, their lives lonely and isolated from others’ lives.

This was Mr. Toda’s strict, constant teaching.

Our forces for kosen-rufu gather under a roof of eternal, undeniable beauty, honor and glory, perfect and indestructible. We have the most fortunate home base in the world—a citadel where people who possess that strong, unshakable conviction known as faith come

together. This movement of Soka is formed by the fusion of your life with the great cause of truth and justice.

We know no despair. We know no fear. We need no one's sympathy. Why? Because in the depths of our hearts, we know the pleasure and joy of eternity, happiness, true self and purity.

Many people disappear in the shadows of the heavy mist of destiny at the end of their temporal journey through this lifetime. We, on the other hand, engrave in our beings a state of supreme happiness. Our lives come to shine with radiant brilliance.



The cowardly lot who seek to destroy the forces of the Buddha, the forces of Soka, though exhausting themselves with futile efforts, still pathetically continue their assaults. But those attacks are nothing but the empty cries of a gang of petty criminals—people without integrity, publicity seekers without any sense of truth or justice, those lost in a pitiful maze of their own making.

Their painstakingly constructed falsehoods, their laughable lies, which go on ad infinitum, are all nothing but the profoundly malevolent intrigues of a pack of the most reprehensible human beings.

Whatever happens, the momentum of our advance will never diminish. Our joy will only increase. And, as we courageously fight against evil, seek out the enemy and eagerly push the front lines forward, our path will become a battleground of victory and glory.

A poet says: “The sonorous sound of gongyo thrills my heart. I see and I hear it rousing waves toward victory, toward triumph.”

In the process of doing gongyo, the fragrant flowers of deep compassion naturally bloom. A graceful, sublime music fills the air. The great path leading from the world of Hell to the world of Buddhahood opens before us. A marvelous, shimmering palace of profound depths comes into view within our lives.

In the last 40 years, in which we have created a golden history, we have been subjected to fierce assaults of slander and abuse in untold number. The attacks, criticisms and accusations have all been based on lies. In contrast to that black, putrid and uninterrupted stream of falsehoods, our world has been a bright, clear, happy and well-ordered realm of joy and prosperity.