

EDITORIAL
'SOKA' MEANS VICTORY FOR ALL
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'The spirit of "soka" applies directly to our lives,' writes Jeff Farr. 'While we define "soka" generally as value creation, it also means the victory creation in our lives that we alone can accomplish.'

The aim of the SGI-USA's current focuses—Soka University, Soka Spirit and Soka Caring—is the happiness of each of us. All three come from *soka*, the main point being, through these kosen-rufu efforts, to create value for every member.

SGI-USA activities help us to create value, but ultimately it is up to us. The answer to SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima's favorite question—"Are you happy?"—can only be answered by us.

In other words, the spirit of *soka* applies directly to our lives. While we define *soka* generally as value creation, it also means the victory creation in our lives that we alone can accomplish.

Our biggest obstacle to becoming happy is usually internal—it lies in our own minds. There are plenty of reasons we can come up with for letting go of the dreams that we intended to cherish. Maybe we tell ourselves that we don't know how to reach them; maybe we know how, but we fret over how hard it will be; maybe we doubt if we are ready to win. If we can handle it. If we deserve it.

This is why the Daishonin places so much emphasis on mastering our minds and warns against letting our minds master us (see *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 390). To keep telling ourselves that we will win, to keep praying and taking action with that confidence—this is fundamental to practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism correctly.

The Daishonin often encouraged his followers to have this feeling in their hearts. And he set the example for them by living confidently when all the world seemed against him. To his disciple Shijo Kingo, the Daishonin joyfully stated, "Already I have the feeling that I have achieved victory" (WND, 685). At that time, 1276, opposition in Japanese society to the Daishonin's movement was at its peak; his confidence that he had already won deeply impressed his followers, who were being heavily persecuted for supporting him.

His meaning to Shijo Kingo was more than just "Don't worry, be happy." It was "Know that you are guaranteed to win! Live with complete confidence in this!"

SGI President Ikeda shared a similar message with Dr. Allen Lee Sessoms, president of Queens College of the City University of New York, when they talked on May 31 in Tokyo. "Life is a battle," President Ikeda said. "Whether we have won or lost in life—this is something that we must decide for ourselves. It is not something that someone else can decide for us. The important thing is not to be defeated. It is to have the powerful determination and spiritual fortitude to vow, 'No matter what happens, I will not be defeated!' Those who resolutely maintain this conviction will ultimately be victorious."

The world is in need of this victorious mind of *soka* today; the decay of humanity's confidence in itself underlies all the disturbing things that we see in society, from the Chechen war to the persistence of world poverty.

Historian Jacques Barzun suggests in *From Dawn to Decadence* that the creative

mind—the mind that believes it can always find new solutions—has in our time been replaced by blankness. Barzun goes so far as to say that humanity can think of “no clear lines of advance.”

But Buddhism teaches that a clear line of advance can begin with any one of us. “A great human revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a nation,” as President Ikeda has taught us, “and further, will enable a change in the destiny of all humankind.”

We each have a decision to make—to become happy or not. From our total resolve to become happy, others will be led to happiness, too. Livin’ *la vida soka* is the direct line to *el mundo soka*.

Toward May 3, 2001, as we involve ourselves in a variety of challenging SGI-USA activities, their purpose is important to keep in mind: to help us become happy and share our happiness widely. If we remember this, the nine months leading up to May 3 will be an unforgettable time of *soka*, of victory creation, for every one of us.