

## **SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S OCT. 5 SPEECH—PART 2 JOY IS FOUND IN THE STRUGGLE**

**‘Victory and hard work go hand in hand,’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘If you exert yourself 100 percent, victory will come to you quite naturally. I hope you will recognize that joy is found not so much in victory itself but in the struggle, effort and challenge to achieve victory.’**

*The conclusion of SGI President Ikeda’s speech at the 50th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Soka Gakkai’s founding, at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Oct. 5.*

The dialogue that I conducted with Dr. Austregésilo de Athayde, late president of the internationally acclaimed Brazilian Academy of Letters, was published in Portuguese in May of this year. Dr. Athayde was imprisoned many times and forced to live in exile abroad. Refusing to be cowed, however, he fought head-on against the military dictatorship that ruled his homeland.

When I flew to Rio de Janeiro in February 1993, after a visit to Colombia, Dr. Athayde kindly came to the airport to see me, arriving some two hours before my plane was scheduled to land. [On that occasion, the 94-year-old Dr. Athayde told SGI President Ikeda: “You are a symbol of world peace. Let’s work together to change history!”]

Dr. Athayde writes [in a newspaper article from Oct. 30, 1945]: “During 15 years spreading democracy, in exile and in prison, I sought for all ways available to me, through the written word and through the press, to infuse the soul of the people with the lost spirit of human dignity.” The same spirit exists in the Soka Gakkai. Three generations of presidents were imprisoned, but none of them bowed to the pressure of authoritarian state power.

Dr. Athayde continues: “What began with a fistful of indomitable determination grew and spread until it became the overwhelming majority of the nation. Finally, a small current gained the proportions of an irresistible torrent, a breeze became a tornado.”

The members of SGI-Brazil have fought and won, following this exact same pattern.

Dr. Athayde rejoiced at our dialogue. It turned out to be the last dialogue for publication that he conducted. After his death, I had the opportunity to meet with his son and daughter, Roberto Athayde and Laura Sandroni, when they visited Japan. I fondly remember that meeting.

### **When people get along well, benefit is forthcoming.**

Above all, the members of SGI-Brazil get along well together. They are a splendid example of unity, of oneness of mind and purpose. It is always a delight to meet them.

In Brazil, one finds art, poetry, people, warm hearts and fragrant flowers. With their bubbling enthusiasm and energy, our members in Brazil are expanding their beautiful realm of friendship.

By contrast, in organizations where people do not get along, hearts become closed and narrow, and jealousy and selfishness reign—ultimately, nobody works together for the same purpose. When people get along well, benefit is forthcoming. When they do not, there is no benefit. This is what Buddhism teaches.

All over Brazil this month, general meetings — to be attended by 100,000 people — will be held to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the kosen-rufu movement in that country. How wonderful is Brazil's passion and enthusiasm!

Let all of us here in Japan, as well, create a magnificent new milestone in the kosen-rufu movement, with the top leaders setting the example by going all-out with their daimoku — chanting and chanting, then chanting some more — and working energetically on the front lines of the organization.

Forty years ago this month, on Oct. 19, 1960, I headed for South America as part of my first trip abroad for peace. I was not in good health. The exhausting schedule had begun to take its toll, and I had a fever of close to 104 degrees.

The leaders traveling with me were against my making the long trip to Brazil from the United States. But I thought, “If I don't go now, I may never have another chance.” I was determined to go at all costs. Nothing could stop me. If I was going to collapse, then so be it. That was my feeling.

Thus, while fighting against illness, I took the first step for kosen-rufu in Brazil. I threw myself into a busy round of activities with the pioneering members and planted the seeds for kosen-rufu there.

I am overjoyed to see the magnificent development that my beloved Brazilian members have achieved. I salute them. Praise to Brazil! Praise to its tradition of continuous victory — of total triumph!

*Viva Brazil! Pique! Pique! Brazil!*

### **The priesthood reacted negatively to the SGI's development.**

Today, we have with us Dr. Richard Seager, a noted American scholar of religious studies [and the author of *Buddhism in America*]. Dr. Seager's field of specialty is religious history and comparative religion. He has for many years researched modern Western religions and cultural traditions, as well as encounters between the religions of East and West.

He made the following observation about the essence of the split between the Soka Gakkai and the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood: “The rupture occurred because the dynamic growth of Soka Gakkai simply began to outrun the authority, power and imagination of the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood, particularly once Soka Gakkai began to flourish as an international movement” (*Buddhism in America*, p. 77). This is a keen insight.

Dr. Seager also notes that the Soka Gakkai has established new institutions in America that are devoted to “progressive and humanistic value creation” (p. 86), citing as examples Soka University of America and the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century. He has voiced high hopes for the future activities of these institutions. I am firmly determined to respond to Dr. Seager's expectations.

### **Victory hinges on how serious we can be.**

Yesterday, Oct. 4, soccer fans all over Japan were captivated by the artistry that Italian soccer player Roberto Baggio displayed on the field during the JOMO Cup exhibition soccer match that was held in Tokyo. Mr. Baggio received the Fighting Spirit Award for his wonderful performance. My wife and I watched the game on television.

Mr. Baggio is very kindhearted. Once again, as he has done on previous occasions when he has played in Japan, he invited a group of students from Tokyo Soka Elementary School to attend the game. He made sure that it was a memorable day for them, even going out of

his way to join them in a commemorative photo on the soccer field. As the school's founder, I wish to take this opportunity to convey my deepest appreciation to Mr. Baggio for his kindness. *Grazie!*

It has been a year since I last saw Mr. Baggio and his wife, Andreina, and I am delighted to meet them again today. You both look wonderful.

I want to share with our youth some of this great soccer hero's philosophy on winning [from an interview with Mr. Baggio in the December 1999 issue of the Soka Gakkai-affiliated monthly magazine *Ushio*].

In response to the question "What is crucial for victory?" Mr. Baggio says, "First, I think soccer is above all a very passionate sport.... Without a strong, strong desire to win, it is like the engine is turned off. Without that strong urge, you cannot win."

When you resolve that "I am going to win! I am going to win without fail!" the engine of your entire being starts to move into gear. In any battle, the victors are those who discard all pretensions and airs, and fight to the end, never letting go of their tenacious drive and determination to win. Victory hinges on our seriousness.

### **Those who can unite are truly wise.**

Mr. Baggio also says: "You cannot win without arduous effort. Training is crucial above all. You have to train and practice till it hurts. Victory is only won through agonizing effort—without agonizing effort there can be no victory." It is the same in Buddhist practice.

Mr. Baggio continues, "Only when you work really hard to win can you savor a deep sense of satisfaction in winning." Victory and hard work go hand in hand. If you exert yourself 100 percent, victory will come to you quite naturally. I hope you will recognize that joy is found not so much in victory itself but in the struggle, effort and challenge to achieve victory.

Responding to a question on how he deals with pressure, Mr. Baggio says, "What I do is tell myself: 'Endure! Endure! Endure!'" People with perseverance will always be happy in the end. Let us advance with this unflagging spirit! No matter what happens!

Mr. Baggio also states his belief that in any job the key to success is solid teamwork. The tremendous success of the Soka Gakkai, too, has been won through our solidarity. Being able to unite is wisdom in the truest sense. The wise savor glory, while the foolish taste defeat.

Mr. Baggio further says: "The only way for me to fight against the callous criticism and abuse I received was to play really well—and not just simply play a good game but to win. By winning, the criticism and abuse disappeared." Victory—let us advance with this as our goal! Our fellow SGI members, Mr. and Mrs. Baggio, have triumphed splendidly. Look at their magnificent victory! One who is good and right must not be defeated. The kind of justice that can be defeated is not true justice. Our faith is committed to justice and truth. Buddhism is win or lose. We achieve kosen-rufu by winning.

The youth will shoulder our movement in the 21st century. I have no one else to count on but you—you are my only hope.

My young friends, may you follow Mr. Baggio's example and lead a youth of great meaning, a youth of challenge, a youth free of regrets, a youth of absolute victory. Armed with that strength, may you score many winning goals for the ultimate victory of the people.

In closing, I want to share with you the words of some philosophers. First, Romain

Rolland declares, “Losers have no history.” And Pascal says, “Man without faith can know neither true good nor justice.”

I am praying that you will enjoy ever-greater good health and happiness. Thank you for your long attention today.

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS WIN OR LOSE

From This Speech:

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1) Roberto Baggio suggests that we can show actual proof by winning in a struggle. In what areas of your life are you striving to show actual proof? How do you hope this will make others think of your Buddhist practice?

2) Why do you think that SGI President Ikeda is concerned that “one who is good and right must not be defeated”? How do you know if you are “good and right”? And how do you make sure that you are not defeated by anything?

3) Do you think of achieving victory in your own life as a form of justice? How do your own victories contribute to creating a just society?

4) “Buddhism is win or lose,” President Ikeda often says. What does this mean to you? What is your greatest experience of winning?