

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JAN. 2 SPEECH WIN THROUGH YOUR OWN EFFORTS

‘The key is for you to develop a lofty state of life based on the Mystic Law through your own efforts — to find inspiring hope and to savor, create and construct your own wonderful life-state of happiness,’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘This is the purpose of faith.’

SGI President Ikeda's speech at a New Year's Gongyo Meeting held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Jan. 2.

Happy New Year at the start of the New Century! The brilliant sun of the Century of Soka has risen.

Yesterday, on New Year's Day, and again today, the majestic sunlit form of Mount Fuji was visible from the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall. The sight inspired me to compose the following poems. [In these poems, SGI President Ikeda uses the image of Mount Fuji (Jpn *Fuji no yama*) in association with the concept of the oneness of mentor and disciple (Jpn *shitei funi*). The Chinese characters for the word *oneness* can be read both as *funi* and *fuji*, and can also be used to refer to Mount Fuji.]

*The snow-cloaked King
Reveals his presence
The mountain of Fuji*

*In gleaming
Snow-white armor
You and Fuji*

*Mount Fuji
World's foremost symbol
Of oneness of mentor and disciple*

*Resolutely
Watching over us
Mountain of Buddhas
And heavenly deities*

*The mountain of Fuji
Is our friend
Our fortress*

A new era will be created by the passion and energy of youth.

In 163 countries and territories around the globe, lively, exuberant New Year's gongyo meetings are being held with attendance far surpassing anything we have seen in the 20th century.

Yesterday, many dignitaries and top leaders from various fields of Japanese society visited the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Shinanomachi, Tokyo, to convey their New Year's

greetings. I received a report that many of them commented on how bright and hopeful the Soka Gakkai members seemed, saying that it was indeed rare to see such a wonderful, positive organization.

The student division, champions of intellect, held a high-spirited convention on New Year's Day. The young men's division, today, and the young women's division, tomorrow, will be holding similar lively conventions in the city of Kita-Kyushu, Japan. Our successors, the youth, who are full of shining promise for the future, are leading the ascent of the mountain of kosen-rufu of the 21st century.

Already looking toward the 21st century back in 1951, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda said in his "Precepts for Youth," "A new era will be created by the passion and energy of the youth."

Individuals and organizations who strive for their goals with the vibrant, sunlike passion and energy of youth who are dedicated to the cause of justice will survive and triumph in the 21st century.

The happiness of each person is the sole purpose of the SGI.

What is my wish? What is the wish of SGI leaders? It is that all SGI members may lead healthy, enjoyable and happy lives.

I want each and every person to achieve a life of joy and fulfillment. I am praying for this with all my heart. This is why we carry out our SGI activities and work for the sake of kosen-rufu. This is the purpose of the SGI.

Of course, because each of us has our respective karma, life may not always be smooth sailing. But when we steadfastly follow the path of faith, practice and study taught by Nichiren Daishonin, no matter what difficulties we may encounter, we will definitely attain Buddhahood, a life-state of eternally indestructible happiness.

In any event, SGI leaders must not be arrogant. I ask that leaders offer sincere, careful guidance to their fellow members and juniors in faith, so that each person can confidently advance on the correct path of faith and become truly happy. Genuine concern for the welfare and happiness of one's fellow members and juniors is the essence of giving guidance in faith.

In addition, no matter what happens, it is crucial that you never stray from the SGI, an organization that upholds faith committed to the realization of kosen-rufu exactly as taught by the Daishonin. This is the foundation for becoming happy. It represents an unsurpassed way of life. Ultimately, only in the Mystic Law do we find a source of light that can lead humanity and the world to happiness.

The 26th high priest, Nichikan, writes in his "Commentary on 'The Entity of the Mystic Law,'" "Through the power of the Mystic Law, we manifest the life of the Daishonin within ourselves." He states that we who believe, chant and spread the Mystic Law will have the unequalled good fortune of manifesting the noble life-state of Buddhahood.

However, if we slander the Law and bear hatred and jealousy toward our fellow members, we will receive no benefit. The Daishonin strictly warns of this in his writings.

Let us advance together on the path of attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime, creating a world in which unity, peace and happiness prevail.

This world is dominated by the devil king of the sixth heaven.

In the "Supernatural Powers of the Thus Come One" chapter of the Lotus Sutra, the task of widely propagating the sutra throughout the 10,000 years and more of the Latter Day

of the Law is entrusted to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. A majestic ceremony of entrustment takes place—a solemn life-to-life transmission, in which the mentor entrusts the disciples with the mission of kosen-rufu. The core of the Lotus Sutra is the spirit of the oneness of mentor and disciple.

The “Supernatural Powers of the Thus Come One” chapter states:

As the light of the sun and moon
can banish all obscurity and gloom,
so this person as he passes through the world
can wipe out the darkness of living beings,
causing immeasurable numbers of bodhisattvas
in the end to dwell in the single vehicle.
(*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 276)

Once, in response to a question by his interrogators in prison during World War II, first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi spoke on this passage, stating his position firmly and with dignity. [Mr. Makiguchi was arrested by the militarist authorities on July 6, 1943, on charges of breaking the Peace Preservation Law and of lese majesty.]

Viewed from the perspective of Buddhism, this world is dominated by the devil king of the sixth heaven. The Soka Gakkai’s presence is like that of a sun of supreme justice bursting through the deep darkness of negativity and destruction that shrouds the planet.

The official transcripts of his interrogation record Mr. Makiguchi as clearly asserting, “Unless you join this organization [the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai, forerunner of the Soka Gakkai], not only will you fail to attain happiness and security in your lives, but also society as a whole will have no stability.”

Just as he asserted, the Soka Gakkai today stands tall, in name and in reality, as a pillar of peace and stability in Japanese society.

Intellectual figures around the world perceive the true value and worth of the SGI.

Dr. Lokesh Chandra, director of the International Academy of Indian Culture and one of the most eminent thinkers of India, the birthplace of Buddhism, says that the illuminating spirit of altruism expounded in the Lotus Sutra has been inherited in totality by the SGI.

One of Russia’s leading historians, Dr. Yuri Petrosyan vice president of the St. Petersburg Scientific Center at the Russian Academy of Sciences, also praises our activities. He says, “Were it not for the positive presence of the SGI in the world working for the lofty ideal of creating spiritual value for the sake of humanity, the history of the human race might have been very different.”

Everything will be determined by our mind of faith.

This year, we will celebrate the 130th anniversary of Mr. Makiguchi’s birth and the 50th anniversary of Mr. Toda’s inauguration as second Soka Gakkai president.

Today, we have members of the Makiguchi and Toda families, as well close friends of our illustrious first two presidents, here with us.

The true heritage of the Daishonin’s Buddhism—of faith that is dedicated to the realization of kosen-rufu—is found nowhere but in the SGI, which is carrying on in the footsteps of Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda.

Nichiren Shoshu, although it may claim to base itself on the same Buddhism, has

completely lost sight of faith that is devoted to kosen-rufu. Far worse, it has trampled on and utterly betrayed the Daishonin's spirit and intent.

The Daishonin writes, "If the mind of faith is perfect, then the water of wisdom, the great impartial wisdom, will never dry up" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1015). Everything is determined by our "mind of faith."

Nothing attests more clearly to the absolute correctness of the faith practiced by the SGI members than the fact that we today have members in 163 countries and territories around the world.

We must never ever forget the spirit of 'shakubuku.'

The *Yomiuri Shimbun*, one of Japan's leading daily newspapers, recently conducted a readers survey on which books or written works to pass on to the 21st century. The Daishonin's treatise "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" ranked second place in the category "Great Works of Japan." [In another survey, published in the same paper, of annual bestsellers in Japan during the 20th century, President Ikeda's *The Human Revolution* and *The New Human Revolution* were ranked as No. 1 bestsellers in 1965 and 1998, respectively.]

"On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" contains the philosophy of peace and the philosophy of dialogue. My efforts to conduct dialogue bridging cultures and civilizations around the world have been based on this teaching.

This treatise also brims with the valiant spirit of refuting the erroneous and revealing the true. We must raise our voices loudly in protest against any scheme or design that tramples on human dignity, insults decent ordinary people and undermines humanity's concerted efforts for peace. We must courageously fight back, through dialogue and the written and spoken word, making ourselves heard like fearless lions. We must never ever forget the spirit of *shakubuku*, the spirit to refute erroneous teachings and ideas.

The most important thing is that you have courage. That you yourself speak out and fight against injustice.

Socrates, the great teacher of humankind, says, "If a man would move the world, he must first move himself." And the renowned French author Victor Hugo writes, "The devotion of one man had given strength and courage to all."

I turned 73 today. I have received birthday wishes from friends throughout the world. One was from Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Joseph Rotblat, president emeritus of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, who writes, "Please keep on with your remarkable efforts for a peaceful world."

The 92-year-old scientist and activist had said when we met in Okinawa in February 2000, "Let's continue working together for world peace."

"I can't afford to be tired"—this is Dr. Rotblat's creed. He talks and works and strives for peace unceasingly. This fighting spirit, this unswerving commitment, makes a person's body and mind, a person's life, healthy. I am looking forward to the day he and I can meet again.

Another name for the Buddha is One Who Can Endure.

Material wealth does not necessarily make for happiness. Nor does fame. Happiness is determined by the philosophy we base our lives on.

That is why it is so important to possess hope. Hope is life's greatest treasure. A life without hope is bleak and gray. If you have no hope, create some!

We live in this strife-filled *saha* world, a world of endurance. Another name for the Buddha is One Who Can Endure (see WND, 23). Happy are those who can endure. No matter what hardships may arise, they can transform everything into something positive, changing poison into medicine.

To always be full of dissatisfaction and complaint is itself a source of unhappiness. It is self-defeat. You are only making causes to experience unending suffering throughout your life.

The key is for you to develop a lofty state of life based on the Mystic Law through your own efforts—to find inspiring hope and to savor, create and construct your own wonderful life-state of happiness. This is the purpose of faith.

With the power we have, what can possibly stop us?

Today, we have with us representatives of the successful applicants who will join the historic first class of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo. I want to keep an eternal record of the names of all the participants gathered here today and at all New Year's gongyo meetings around Japan at SUA, AV.

Thomas Paine, one of the pioneering advocates of American independence, says: “Men of good will march together and know their own strength. With the power we have, what can stop us, or even slow us? What can't we achieve, what new worlds, what glories, what promises!”

Once again this year, as we further widen the Soka Gakkai's path into the future, let us realize magnificent expansion in our movement for kosen-rufu, so that we can win resounding victory and glory for countless generations to come.

I am earnestly praying for your good health, happiness and energetic endeavors.

Please take care. I look forward to your wonderful efforts in the year ahead.