

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JAN. 7 SPEECH—PART 2 NEW INITIATIVES IN NEW PLACES

‘To undertake initiatives in new areas or in places that are out of the limelight,’ SGI President Ikeda says, ‘and there forge expanding centers of peace, is the wisdom and struggle of great commanders, of brilliant leaders. I want SGI leaders to be trailblazers who forge a new history.’

Part 2 of SGI President Ikeda’s speech at the 1st Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Jan. 7.

Over the years, I have written proposals on many subjects. Now, in commemoration of SGI Day, Jan. 26, an English-language compilation of my thoughts from various peace proposals and addresses will be published by Middleway Press in the United States, making them widely available to readers around the world now and for the future.

The book’s title is *For the Sake of Peace: Seven Paths to Global Harmony, A Buddhist Perspective*. The seven paths are the path of self-mastery, the path of dialogue and tolerance, the path of community and human solidarity, the path of culture, the path of building nations committed to peace, the path of global awareness and the path of disarmament.

Put your heart and soul into everything you do.

Dr. Glenn D. Paige, noted peace scholar and professor emeritus of political science of the University of Hawaii at Manoa, contributed a most gracious foreword to the book. He shares that he first encountered my pacifist ideals in a small English-language booklet of my addresses compiled by Soka University students back in the university’s early days. [The booklet, titled *Toward the 21st Century: Addresses by Daisaku Ikeda*, contained speeches related to the founding spirit of Soka University that were delivered between 1968 and 1977.]

This slim volume, the product of bright, enthusiastic students, touched and inspired many people, changing their thinking and outlook. My thanks again to all those who were involved in this project.

You never know what will move history or serve as a powerful driving force. Work into which you put your heart and soul is so important.

Dr. Paige says in the foreword that he was especially inspired to learn of the pacifist spirit and motto of Soka University through this booklet. As a scholar who was educated in world-class private institutions with religious roots, including Princeton and Harvard universities, he was struck by the principles of independence and intellectual freedom upheld by Soka University, an institution that refuses to be dominated by religious dogmas.

In the conclusion of his foreword, Dr. Paige writes: “Like all major peace figures in history, he [SGI President Ikeda] has encountered opposition as well as received support. The path to peace has not been and will not be easy. But as he advises, ‘Never be defeated!’ ... The courage, clarity and informed nature of his call to follow ‘The Path of Disarmament’ contrasts greatly with the silence or contrary advocacy by political leaders of today’s major military states. For this alone respectful readers may wish to award him a people’s peace prize for the twenty-first century” (p. xiii).

I am humbled by this generous assessment. My unceasing efforts for peace have been driven by a passionate resolve to prove the greatness of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, the first and second Soka Gakkai presidents, who gave their lives for the cause of peace. Dr. Paige has shown profound empathy for this solemn spirit of mentor and disciple.

I am determined to continue making various proposals for the sake of the future, so that we can realize an age of peace and an age of education.

The SGI's great diversity cannot be found elsewhere.

Joyous SGI New Year's gongyo meetings were held at the start of the year throughout Japan and the world. The members in Boston, too—world capital of intellect and birthplace of the American Renaissance—gathered together in high spirits on New Year's Day. And Dr. Elise Boulding, the world-renowned peace researcher and activist, joined the members. The 80-year-old Dr. Boulding is a pioneering scholar of peace studies and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990. She is also the recipient of the SGI-affiliated Boston Research Center for the 21st Century's first Global Citizen Award, in 1995.

Seeing the liveliness and joy of the SGI members, Dr. Boulding said that such a diverse group of people from different ethnic backgrounds gathering together to celebrate the new year could not be found anywhere else. This was another sign, she said, that the SGI was a peace organization.

Dr. Boulding has worked with the SGI for many years, giving early recognition to the peace activities of the Soka Gakkai's women's division. [As early as 1984, Dr. Boulding visited the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Japan and met with women's representatives.]

In a recent interview in a Japanese women's magazine, Dr. Boulding said: "History until now has placed too much emphasis on the culture of war. From now on, we have to shed light on the hidden and forgotten culture of peace. The same can be said about religion. In that respect, the SGI is an outstanding example of a group in the faith community that has a very clear vision of how the teachings need to be interpreted and transmitted.

"I deeply admire the contributions President Ikeda has made to world peace by making these teachings available through the establishment of various educational and peace research institutes. In particular, the Soka Gakkai's promotion of music and the arts shows great foresight."

With the teachings of Buddhism as its foundation, the SGI has spread a movement of education, peace and culture throughout the world. One of the world's leading intellectual lights sees our activities clearly, with great perception, saying that we are setting a good example in the faith community.

Talking face to face is very important.

Dr. Boulding also acknowledges the importance of small group discussions, such as our SGI discussion meetings, saying that they promote the culture of peace.

This is an important point. The key lies not in big meetings, not in public addresses before a vast audience, but in small groups, in discussions where everyone talks face to face and really communicates.

Even past the age of 70, Mr. Makiguchi attended discussion meetings. I am sure he would sternly rebuke any SGI leader who scorns or skips discussion meetings.

This January, marking the start of the Century of Women, the women are holding high-spirited general meetings throughout the country as small group discussions. I believe the women's vigorous efforts are symbolic of the animated development the Soka Gakkai will

achieve in the 21st century.

Nichiren Daishonin cites this sutra passage: “If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as they are manifested in the present. And if you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 279). Our resolve and actions at this present moment determine everything in the future. Our present resolve and actions will decide the future of our kosen-rufu movement. They will decide all future victories. Therefore, I pray for the great success of the women’s small group general meetings.

Women must be valued more in the world.

Who was the first American woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize? The social activist Jane Addams. She received this prestigious award 70 years ago, in 1931—the year after the Soka Gakkai’s founding.

Basing her activities in the local community, Addams took up the challenge of strengthening government welfare services for mothers and children. She was a pioneer who advocated peace education and campaigned for women’s suffrage. The life of this great woman serves as an outstanding model for us all. [In 1889, Addams established Hull House, a neighborhood social welfare center, or “settlement house,” dedicated to serving the needs of working-class immigrants in a crowded Chicago neighborhood. It became a center of social and cultural exchange for the poor residents of the community. Similar welfare facilities were later opened in other cities across the United States. Addams also was involved in a drive to clean up political corruption. When the Spanish–American War of 1898 broke out, she announced her unwavering commitment to pacifism. She conducted peace activities on a global scale and called for women around the world to unite together for peace.]

Addams maintained that women’s suffrage was an indispensable requirement for the realization of a peaceful society, asserting that war was unlikely to happen in a society where women share civic responsibility with men.

“When women stand up, war will disappear! True peace will arrive!” This was her belief. Addams’ message has deep meaning for us today. Women must be valued more. I want the men to respect and cooperate with women and stand up together with them.

I ask the members of the women’s and young women’s divisions to pursue cheerfully and patiently the path of dialogue, talking to many people and fostering friendship in their local communities.

Again, small places, small gatherings are important. Big cities, big meetings may be more exciting and interesting—and leaders may find them easier to go to—but the far greater and more crucial challenge is cultivating solid ties of trust and friendship in places where there are few or no members. Making steady efforts in this sphere will open the way to a century of humanism.

To undertake initiatives in new areas or in places that are out of the limelight, and there forge expanding centers of peace, is the wisdom and struggle of great commanders, of brilliant leaders. I want SGI leaders to be trailblazers who forge a new history.

Let’s bring the flowers of friendship to bloom.

The garden of the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall encompasses an area that has been known since olden times as Plum Fields and is famous for its plum blossoms. Plum blossoms, braving the harsh winter cold to bloom before all other flowers, are

exceptionally lovely.

In commemoration of today's meeting, I dedicate the following poems to the women's division members:

*In the bitter winter
Already victorious
The plum blossoms*



*Having conquered
The bitter winter
Plum blossoms bloom*



*Plum blossoms
Heralding the joy of spring
In the bitter winter*

I hope that all of you will bring fragrant flowers of hope, friendship and happiness to bloom beautifully in your local communities and regions through heart-to-heart dialogue.

To be continued in the March 2 issue

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS CREATING THE FUTURE FROM THIS SPEECH:

Nichiren Daishonin cites this sutra passage: "If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as they are manifested in the present. And if you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 279). Everything in the future is determined by our resolve and actions at this present moment. Our present resolve and actions will decide the future of our kosen-rufu movement. They will decide all future victories.

1) What does "If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as they are manifested in the present" mean? What is a good example of this in society? What is a good example of this in your own life?

2) What does "If you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present" mean? What is a good example of this in society? What is a good example of this in your own life?

3) What kind of world do you want this to be in the future? What kind of country do you want America to be? What resolve and actions do you need to have now to make this happen?

4) What kind of life do you want to have in the future? What are the biggest dreams you are fighting for? What resolve and actions do you need to have now to make them happen?

5) How can we strengthen our resolve and actions for kosen-rufu today? What do you think the kosen-rufu movement will be like in the future if we do?