

## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S 'CLEAR MIRROR' GUIDANCE WOMEN MUST LEAD THE WAY

*The following excerpts are from SGI President Ikeda's speech at the first SGI-USA Women's meeting on Feb. 27, 1990. The speech appears in its entirety in the booklet Buddhism Is the Clear Mirror That Reflects Our Lives.*

I hope that all of you will be cultured and graceful. Intelligent and kind people are beautiful. They inspire trust and a sense of reassurance in those around them. As you continue to deepen your faith in Buddhism, you can broaden your sphere of knowledge.

Without wisdom and sagacity, leaders cannot fulfill their mission, that is, convince others of the power of this Buddhism and help them attain true happiness. In this sense, I would like to speak about the correct attitude in faith through the analogy of mirrors.

A Japanese proverb has it that the mirror is a woman's soul. It is said that just as warriors will never part with their swords, women will never part with their mirrors. There would seem to be some truth to this saying, in that mirrors are prized by women the world over.

In Buddhism, the mirror is used to explain various doctrines. In one place, Nichiren Daishonin states, "There are profound teachings transmitted secretly with regard to mirrors" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 724). Another Gosho states: "A bronze mirror may reflect the body but not the mind. The mirror of the Lotus Sutra reflects not only our physical form but our inner being as well. Furthermore, the sutra mirrors, with complete clarity, one's past karma and its future effect" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1521).

Mirrors reflect our outward form. The mirror of Buddhism, however, reveals the intangible aspect of our lives. Mirrors, which function by virtue of the laws of light and reflection, are a product of human wisdom. On the other hand, the Gohonzon, based on the Law of the universe and life itself, is the culmination of the Buddha's wisdom and makes it possible for us to attain Buddhahood by providing us with a means of perceiving the true aspect of our life. Just as a mirror is indispensable for putting your face and hair in order, you need a mirror that reveals the depths of your life if you are to lead a happier and more beautiful existence.



Just as you look into a mirror when you make up your face, to beautify the face of the soul, you need a mirror that reflects the depths of your life. This mirror is none other than the Gohonzon of "observing one's mind," or more precisely, observing one's life. Nichiren Daishonin explains what it means to observe one's life in the Gosho "The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind," "Only when we look into a clear mirror do we see, for the first time, that we are endowed with all six sense organs" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 356).

Similarly, observing one's life means to perceive that one's life contains the Ten Worlds and, in particular, the world of Buddhahood. It was to enable people to do this that Nichiren Daishonin bestowed the Gohonzon of "observing one's mind" upon all humankind. In his exegesis on "The True Object of Worship," Nichikan, the twenty-sixth high priest of Nichiren Shoshu, states, "The true object of worship can be compared to a wonderful mirror."

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Nichiren Daishonin states in the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,” “The five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo mirror all things without a single exception.” The Gohonzon is the clearest of all mirrors that reflects the entire universe exactly as it is. When you chant to the Gohonzon, you can perceive the true aspect of your life and tap the inexhaustible life force of Buddhahood.



In *Le Père Goriot*, the French author Balzac (1799–1850) writes, “Whatever evil you hear of society, believe it...” So full of evil was the world that he perceived. He adds: “And then you will find out what the world is, a gathering of dupes and rogues. Be of neither party.”

We must gain decisive victory over the harsh realities of society and lead a correct and vibrant life. This is the purpose of our faith. We have to become wise and strong.

Also, in the organization for kosen-rufu, we have to clearly say what must be said. The purpose of Buddhism is not to produce dupes who blindly follow their leaders. Rather, it is to produce people of wisdom who can judge right or wrong on their own in the clear mirror of Buddhism.

I hope that you, women’s division members, learn the correct way to practice Buddhism so that, in the event that a leader or a man does something that goes against reason, you will be able to clearly point out the error and identify the correct path to follow. Nichiren Daishonin compares men to an arrow and women to the bow. An arrow flies in the direction that the bow points it.

I would like to tell you that when the members of the women’s division freely devote themselves to activities and provide a confident and strong lead for men, that will mark the dawn of the new SGI-USA.