

## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S FEB. 27 SPEECH—PART 2 A NEW SUN OF HOPE RISES

**‘We can trust the youth,’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘The youth are our only hope. As long as the youth burn with anger against evil and injustice and take bold action against them, a new sun of hope will rise on human history.’**

*The conclusion of SGI President Ikeda’s speech at the 3rd Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Feb. 27.*

Where can we find hope in human history? We can find it in the fact that in every age, youth dedicated to truth and justice have risen up to fight against the forces of injustice.

And where today can we find hope for the 21st century? In you, our SGI youth, and only here.

The Greek philosopher Socrates is hailed as one of the great teachers of humanity. Some 2,400 years ago, however, opponents who envied and hated him falsely accused him. He was slandered with malicious lies, insulted and painted a villain. Finally, he was executed for living a life devoted to truth. The formula of persecution—slander born from jealousy—remains the same today.

Facing his arrogant, gloating persecutors, Socrates declared with solemn composure, “I affirm, you men who condemned me to death, that vengeance will come upon you right after my death, and much harsher, by Zeus, than the sort you give me by killing me.” This is a famous scene from Socrates’ trial described in the *Apology of Socrates*, written by his disciple Plato.

Socrates goes on to say: “There will be more who will refute you, whom I have now been holding back; you did not perceive them. And they will be harsher, inasmuch as they are younger, and you will be more indignant.” Socrates is saying here that many young people will inherit his legacy and fight even harder against the corrupt and unjust. He maintains that they will be more fearsome than he, more fierce, and warns his persecutors to be prepared for their vengeance. Even after being sentenced to death, Socrates made such a bold declaration.

At the time, Socrates’ young disciple Plato was 28. In perfect accord with his mentor’s words, Plato initiated a determined spiritual struggle to avenge the injustice of Socrates’ death. It is a well-known historical fact that Plato’s efforts did much to establish his mentor’s reputation as a great philosopher and teacher.

Plato’s ideal of rule by philosopher-leaders was also born from this unrelenting pursuit of truth and justice that he shared with his mentor. Even after more than two millennia, their struggle shines with undiminished brilliance.

It is young disciples who realize the ideals of their mentors.

In the past, militarism dragged Japan into war, caused first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi to die in prison and inflicted untold suffering on the peoples of Asia. Second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda rose to challenge the despicable evils of nationalism head-on. I have inherited that same spirit.

At any rate, we can trust the youth. The youth are our only hope. Both Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda shared this conviction, leaving it to us as their legacy. I hold exactly the same sentiments.

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As long as youth burn with anger against evil and injustice and take bold action against them, a new sun of hope will rise on human history. Please do not forget this unchanging law.

**If youth do not struggle, they will lose out in the long run.**

I want to talk a little bit about former Chilean president Patricio Aylwin, a philosopher-statesman with whom I have published a dialogue in Japanese entitled *Dawn Over the Pacific*. I have met Mr. Aylwin several times, including at the magnificent La Moneda Presidential Palace in Santiago, Chile's capital. He is a tall, dignified leader, a lofty revolutionary and a president who will go down in history.

For 16 years, following a coup d'état in 1973, Chile was ruled by a military dictatorship. The authoritarian regime trampled brutally on the human rights of its citizens. More than 2,000 people were executed by firing squads. And more than 1,000 others "disappeared"—no one knows if they are still alive. Countless innocent people were arrested, persecuted, tortured and exiled. Some 900,000 children suffered the pain of seeing parents or grandparents subjected to this fate.

For many years, the authorities and the mass media worked hand in glove to spread lies that became a breeding ground for violence. This led to a climate in which the persecution of good and honest people went unchallenged. The most outrageous and unbelievable deeds were committed with impunity.

During the 1973 coup d'état, the home of SGI-Chile General Director Yoshimasa Chinen, who hails from Okinawa, came under tank fire.

Many SGI members around the world are struggling under truly trying conditions. They are working intrepidly to build districts and chapters and expand our SGI network.

It was youth who took the lead in reversing the nightmare reign of terror that held Chilean society in its grip. A galvanizing incident took place at an officially sanctioned, televised gathering of youth. In a dramatic turn of events, a young man rose to deliver the opening remarks. He put aside the speech that had been approved by the censors and suddenly exclaimed: "I want to tell the truth about Chile."

He continued: "Chile today has many problems, and its youth live in suffering and fear. The Chilean people are being abused." Then a young woman got up and spoke out bravely: "We want justice, not injustice! We want freedom, not oppression! We want truth, not lies!" This is how it should be, they declared—this is how our country was meant to be! How thunderously the audience must have applauded in their hearts!

The youth of Chile continued to speak the truth, fighting the dictatorship head-on. The passion and strength of these youth, who were willing to put their lives on the line for freedom, changed history.

In a speech after Chile's democratic revolution, President Aylwin praised the nameless young men and women who had spoken out: "For all peoples, youth represent promise and hope. Without the power of youth, a society is in danger of stagnation."

I now place all my trust in the youth. I have faith in none but the youth.

Mr. Aylwin has great hopes for young people. When he visited Soka University in 1994 and delivered a speech there, he was happy to see how lively and engaged our students were. He also said that the presence of these wonderful young people was proof of the validity of our movement.

Mr. Toda, too, treasured the youth beyond measure. He also trained us rigorously.

Young people are the creators of the age. This is true in every country of the world. That

is why I hope you will never betray our ideals.

Youth must struggle. If you do not, you will lose out. You will have no fond memories to look back on.

The people of Chile carried out a unique grassroots protest against the military dictatorship. When evening came, mothers stood in their doorways and banged on pots and pans, sending a rousing voice of protest ringing through the streets. This was a brilliant idea devised by ordinary citizens. And not only was it effective, it was free!

The clamor spread through the town and struck fear in the military authorities. They were more afraid of the united force of the people than of bullets.

This awakened citizenry went on to carry out the Chilean democratic revolution and usher in a new era. With pencil and paper—in other words, the power of the vote—they toppled a dictatorial regime of guns and brute force.

### **When you are energetic, everything that happens turns into something positive.**

The time for the revolution had arrived. In October 1988, the military government confidently scheduled a national election to endorse their rule. With their enormous political power and the mass media under their control, the authorities believed they could persuade the people to legitimize their rule.

Mr. Aylwin, leader of the Christian Democratic Party, bravely decided to run in the election. He would beat the dictator on the dictator's own ground!

For the sake of democracy, Mr. Aylwin and his supporters made a massive effort to build a nationwide coalition of citizens that transcended regional and group affiliations. One of their major challenges was getting the people of Chile, apathetic and fearful from the long years of oppression, interested and involved in the political process again.

The people of Chile united behind the call "Say 'No!' to the Military Dictatorship!" The coalition of citizens fighting for democracy was filled with vigor. They forcefully refuted the baseless insults and slander thrown at them.

When they were criticized as an uncohesive "hodgepodge" of diverse groups, they used the attack to their advantage and adopted as their symbol a rainbow—a beautiful harmony of different colors. They made the diversity of their "hodgepodge" a point of pride and turned it into a strength.

When you are filled with energy, you can put everything to positive use, make everything an asset.

The military dictatorship declared a "national emergency" and used that as an excuse to restrict the freedom of the press and freedom of assembly, and to sow doubt and anxiety among the people. But the citizens responded by singing the song "Chile, Joy Already Comes!" and using upbeat slogans to give the people hope and confidence.

Other songs appeared as well. As the people happily sang them, their spirits rose and their movement gained momentum. This is why Chile's democratic revolution has been called a triumph of "songs and handshakes"—handshakes symbolizing the coalition forged among so many groups.

Mr. Aylwin was active in the campaign. He personally went to see people, patiently visiting them again and again and engaging them in dialogue, always with an encouraging smile on his lips. Broadly extending the scope of that dialogue to those without any party affiliations and to thinking people all over the world, he made every effort to insure that the election would take place fairly and openly.

## **Words are the ammunition of truth.**

Mr. Aylwin also used radio to let the people of Chile hear his energetic, confident voice urging them to take back their freedom. The power of his voice stirred and inspired the people.

Words are the ammunition of truth. The voice is the herald of victory.

Mr. Aylwin declared to his fellow citizens:

*We are going to win.*

*Because Chile wants peace and it does not want more war.*

*Because Chile does not want more hatred and violence.*

*Because Chile wants justice and not more crimes and privileges.*

*Because the people of Chile want to shake off the humiliation of fear and regain their dignity as free citizens.*

*Because Chile wants democracy and not more dictatorship.*

*We are going to win, because we are an immense majority!*

*We are going to win, because we represent hope!*

Then, on Oct. 5, 1988, the elections resulted in a loud and clear “No!” to the military government. Peacefully, without bloodshed, the door to democracy was opened.

The youth had won! The people had won! A joyous cry for the victory of truth and justice rang out in the skies of Chile, echoing against the towering Andes.

The victory of the Chilean people’s solidarity, along with a move toward democracy in many other Latin American nations, was a crowning event of the 20th century. It was part of a wave of democratization that later swept Eastern Europe and saw the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Velvet Revolution, which brought an end to communist rule in Czechoslovakia.

Mr. Aylwin says, “History is made by the men and women who give their all to build a better world.”

For us of the Soka Gakkai in Japan, the curtain has risen on our first big challenge of the 21st century, with the whole world looking on. I hope that our youth will leave behind a history of great victory, as they continue to expand our network of justice and humanism even further.

## **The ultimate essence of faith is to manifest Nichiren Daishonin’s life within ourselves.**

The 26th high priest Ni-chikan states, in an important passage in “Commentary on ‘The Entity of the Mystic Law’” that I have mentioned many times before, “Through the power of the Mystic Law, we manifest the life of the Daishonin within ourselves.”

When we chant and exert ourselves for kosen-rufu, we can block devils or negative, destructive forces from “entering” our lives and allow the positive, protective forces of the universe to “enter” instead. Please chant with strong conviction, as if calling, “Brahma, Shakra and the gods of the Sun and the Moon, ‘enter’ my life and put your power to work!” The ultimate essence of faith in the Mystic Law is to manifest the Daishonin’s life within ourselves. We can then fight with the same strength as the Daishonin. When we do so, we will never be defeated, no matter what hardships we encounter. We will not be unhappy. We will not fail to win. We will not fail to become happy. This is the quintessence of faith. I hope you will all be completely convinced of this and live your lives filled with optimism

and hope.

Please always advance in harmony and friendship with one another. Harmonious development is the starting point for happiness, construction and value creation.

As we each strive to grow with every passing year, let us accumulate good fortune and together achieve happy, healthy and wonderful lives.

Thank you for your long attention today. Please take care not to catch cold in this wintry weather. Let's meet again next month!

### **TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS CAPTURING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S SPIRIT FROM THIS SPEECH:**

**The ultimate essence of faith in the Mystic Law is to manifest Nichiren Daishonin's life within ourselves. We can fight with the same strength as the Daishonin. When we do, we will never be defeated, no matter what hardships we encounter. We will not be unhappy. We will not fail to win. We will not fail to become happy. This is the quintessence of faith. I hope you will all be completely convinced of this and live your lives filled with optimism and hope.**

- 1) SGI President Ikeda says, "The ultimate essence of faith in the Mystic Law is to manifest Nichiren Daishonin's life within ourselves." What does this mean? How does this correspond to the oneness of the Person and Law?
- 2) Does manifesting the Daishonin's life mean we lose our own identity?
- 3) Why is it important for us to study the Daishonin's life? Why is it important to understand his spirit?