

EDITORIAL
A MOST IMPORTANT LESSON
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There is a great lesson to be learned from SGI President Ikeda's leadership since May 3, 1979.

Seeing the great health of our organization today, it may be hard to believe that just two decades ago the SGI faced a very serious problem. In 1979, some Nichiren Shoshu priests, hoping to take control of the organization, pulled together a conspiracy to force President Ikeda's resignation (as Soka Gakkai president in Japan).

For many members, it was an intensely confusing time — what the priests were really up to was unclear, although the tension between Nichiren Shoshu and the organization was well known. The function of the priesthood vs. that of the laity became a big question in many people's minds. What was the right way to proceed for kosen-rufu? Who was best qualified to lead the way? Did Nichiren Daishonin have anything to say about this in his writings?

Over these 22 years, President Ikeda has taken the SGI from great confusion to great clarity through what we could call his own Soka Spirit movement. He has worked harder than anyone to educate all of us — always based on the Gosho — of the grave danger found in blindly following corrupt priests and the absolute necessity of committed people like ourselves taking *total* responsibility for the spread of the Law.

“This May 3, I hope we can all reflect on the greatness of President Ikeda's achievement since 1979,” SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima says. “In a relatively short amount of time, he has accomplished centuries' worth of progress for kosen-rufu, firmly establishing the understanding that each of us, as a Bodhisattva of the Earth, has a mission in this movement that we alone can accomplish.

“As disciples, I feel we must continue President Ikeda's Soka Spirit movement, now more than ever. We have to teach more and more people the truth of the Daishonin's Buddhism, never forgetting what we have learned: *We* are the true heroes of kosen-rufu. Buddhism is by and for the people. It must be this way from now on. It has to be.”

On May 3, 1979, just days after his resignation, President Ikeda made the same point in dramatic fashion. The May 3 meeting that year was held in the Soka University Gymnasium, where members were told not to anger the priests by applauding or even acknowledging President Ikeda.

As President Ikeda was leaving the gymnasium, a group of women, who had been waiting a long time with their children to see him, cried out, “Sensei!” He encouraged them one by one and then strictly said to the top Soka Gakkai leaders: “The Soka Gakkai exists to make such people, the genuine common people, happy. For this purpose, Buddhism, too, exists. Don't you think so? *You have to remember this point.*”

Kosen-rufu is an endless effort to remember this. To return to this all-important idea again and again, in everything that we do. To always find new ways of putting it into practice, making it real, sharing this empowering outlook with more friends.

“We should base every SGI-USA activity, from our district discussion meetings to the May Commemorative Contribution, on the members' happiness,” Mr. Nagashima

emphasizes. “This is our starting point, every time. Our sole purpose is to discover greater and greater happiness for every participant.”

We could call it Purpose No.1. As long as we keep strengthening it in our hearts, we cannot help but stay on the right track. This is the lesson of May 3, 1979, the lesson of the last 22 years. This is how the SGI will keep growing, how kosen-rufu will keep expanding, from May 3, 2001, far into the future.