

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S APRIL 25 SPEECH—PART 1 OUR NEW GOAL: MAY 3, 2030

‘Since we have now attained our important goal of May 3, 2001, I propose—if you all agree—that we embark afresh toward a new goal, May 3, 2030, the year marking centennial of the Soka Gakkai’s founding,’ SGI President Ikeda says.

Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda’s speech at the 5th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, commemorating May 3, Soka Gakkai Day, held at the Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium in Sugamo, April 25.

May 3, 2001—a goal that once seemed so far away—is here at last! We have finally arrived at this momentous milestone, adorned with great victory, thanks to your energetic, united efforts.

One noted figure has said in wonder: “No matter how the times may change, the Soka Gakkai is always vibrant and full of life. It just keeps flourishing and growing. It is truly amazing.”

Since we have now attained our important goal of May 3, 2001, I propose—if you all agree—that we embark afresh toward a new goal, May 3, 2030, the year marking centennial of the Soka Gakkai’s founding.

At that time, all of you will be considerably older than you are now! But just look at Dr. Joseph Rotblat, Nobel laureate and president emeritus of the Pugwash Conferences, whom I met in Okinawa last year. He is over 90 and still going strong!

The Lotus Sutra expounds the principle of faith prolonging life. Infinite life-force wells forth when we embrace faith in the Mystic Law. This is the essence of Buddhism.

Taking good care of ourselves and making every effort to extend our lives to the fullest, let us gather again in good health and high spirits on that fresh milestone of the Soka Gakkai’s 100th anniversary!

True, lasting victory always has its roots in solid faith.

Guiseppe Mazzini, who was a leading advocate of Italian independence, said, “I do not know, speaking historically, a single great conquest of the human spirit, a single important step for the perfecting of human society, which has not had its roots in a strong religious faith.”

A victory that does not have its roots in religious faith is not enduring. True, lasting victory has its roots in solid faith. This is a fact borne out by history. This is the insight of a famous revolutionary.

A friend of my heart, the French writer Victor Hugo, asks, “We who believe, what can we fear?” Those who have something they truly believe in are fearless. As Nichiren Daishonin declares, nothing can match a person of strong faith.

The Soka Gakkai’s kosen-rufu movement has now, in name and fact, become the pillar of Japan in the 21st century. We of the Soka Gakkai are undeterred by the incredible slanders and abuse we encounter.

Indeed, we have been impervious to all attempts to undermine or destroy our movement over these many decades. There is no other organization like ours. Japan’s future will be decided by the Soka Gakkai’s advance. That is the kind of era we have now entered. For

the first time in human history, we have succeeded in creating a great tide of world peace and kosen-rufu, for which the Daishonin would surely commend us.

Of course, irrespective of our great achievements so far, we must always stay alert. While entrusting the future of our movement to the youth, I wish to declare that a solid foundation for the next millennium, for the next 10 millennia, is complete in every way.

The SGI network today encompasses the entire globe.

A short while ago, I received a report that another two countries have been added to our global SGI network. First, Grenada—a beautiful island-country in the Caribbean. And second, Mozambique—a country achieving vibrant development in that great continent of hope, Africa.

The SGI network today encompasses the entire globe, extending to a total of 165 countries and territories. We have built a great solidarity of global citizens without parallel.

At this meeting, we have members representing some 18 overseas countries and territories, including South Korea, Brazil and Spain. Thank you for joining us from so far away.

The central figures who are leading kosen-rufu activities in the two new countries joining our network are, incidentally, both women. The central figure in Mozambique is a doctor and in Grenada it is an airline company employee.

They have stood up resolutely with the determination to take full responsibility for the development of kosen-rufu in those countries. This is wonderful proof that we have indeed entered a Century of Women.

May 3, 2001, also marks the first Soka Gakkai Mother's Day of the 21st century. Congratulations to all our mothers! We should have the utmost appreciation for the great mothers of kosen-rufu throughout Japan and the world. Let us give them a hearty round of applause.

Also, I am happy to say, we have recently celebrated the 50th anniversary, on April 20, of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. Let us also give a big round of applause to those whom we owe an immeasurable debt—our “Uncrowned Heroes” who deliver the *Seikyo Shimbun* to us day in and day out. Thank you so much for your unstinting efforts.

In the SGI, everyone is a champion of kosen-rufu.

Buddhism is a teaching of great impartial wisdom. All members are presidents. All are block leaders. All are champions of kosen-rufu. This is the Soka Gakkai.

In the early days of the Soka Gakkai, we had leadership titles such as corps chief and the like, which were criticized as sounding militaristic. My mentor, Josei Toda, second Soka Gakkai president, who fought against militarism, deliberately chose these terms. He said: “We are not militarist in substance. Peace is our cause, not war.” I also commented to Mr. Toda, “Christianity, too, has a group that proudly calls itself the Salvation Army and is carrying out various activities in society to contribute to people's welfare.”

Some have also claimed that our Japanese Soka Gakkai songs sound like military songs. In response to this, a distinguished scholar from overseas, who is well acquainted with our organization, says: “I have heard the brass band perform Soka Gakkai songs many times, and I enjoy them immensely. They are filled with the passion to work for the welfare of humanity and with the joy of human revolution. It is rousing music that springs from the heart, just like that of Beethoven.”

Only the noble can truly appreciate noble deeds.

Just as people might tire of you always wearing the same clothes, people grow weary of leaders talking about the same thing all the time. They will be turned off, for instance, if every time you open your mouth you go on about “many in body, one in mind”! You will not succeed in getting your message across.

Here, I want to touch on the words of the American thinker and poet Henry David Thoreau. He also greatly influenced the thinking of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who both championed the cause of nonviolent action. Thoreau asked the question “When a noble deed is done, who is likely to appreciate it?”

In our case, noble deeds refer to activities such as introducing Buddhism to others, widely spreading its principles and teachings, helping others attain enlightenment and genuine happiness, and working to create lasting world peace. All of which we do, moreover, free of charge! [Laughter.] However, the world is all too full of deeds that are motivated only by self-gain or ambition for personal advancement.

Who is it that can correctly appreciate selfless, altruistic efforts? Thoreau asserts: “They who are noble themselves.... How can a man behold the light, who has no answering inward light?” Only the noble can appreciate noble deeds, he says.

Sometimes in our efforts to share Buddhism, instead of winning the other person’s understanding, we meet with hostility and rejection. The Lotus Sutra predicts that those who propagate the Buddha’s teachings will encounter attacks from arrogant lay people and arrogant priests—the first two of the three powerful enemies of Buddhism. The sutra teaches that Buddhism will spread for the 10,000 years and more of the Latter Day of the Law, for all eternity. Therefore, let us advance with such a big heart and vision as to be able to say serenely: “There’s no hurry. We can gradually gain people’s understanding over the course of the next 10,000 or 20,000 years!”

Allow me to share some more words of Thoreau’s of which I am fond: “The one great rule of composition—and if I were a professor of rhetoric I should insist on this—is to speak the truth. This first, this second, this third.” The important thing is to just *speak the truth*. To speak out exhaustively until you get your message across.

To be continued in the June 1 issue.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS ADVANCING WITH PATIENCE FROM THIS SPEECH:

Sometimes in our efforts to share Buddhism, instead of winning the other person’s understanding, we meet with hostility and rejection. The Lotus Sutra predicts that those who propagate the Buddha’s teachings will encounter attacks from arrogant lay people and arrogant priests – the first two of the three powerful enemies of Buddhism. The sutra teaches that Buddhism will spread for the 10,000 years and more of the Latter Day of the Law, for all eternity. Therefore, let us advance with such a big heart and vision as to be able to say serenely: “There’s no hurry. We can gradually gain people’s understanding over the course of the next 10,000 or 20,000 years!”

- 1) Have you ever encountered “hostility and rejection” in your efforts to share Buddhism with others? What was your response when meeting with this kind of reaction?
- 2) If people respond negatively to your efforts to share Buddhism with them, does that mean that the benefit you receive is less than the benefit you would get if they responded positively?
- 3) SGI President Ikeda says: “Therefore, let us advance with such a big heart and vision as to be able to say serenely: ‘There’s no hurry. We can gradually gain people’s understanding over the course of the next 10,000 or 20,000 years!’” What do you think he is trying to teach us about the spirit of sharing Buddhism with others?
- 4) Why is sharing Buddhism with others such a powerful cause to bring forth the true potential of our lives? Do you have experiences of benefit derived from sharing Buddhism with others?