

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MARCH 28 MESSAGE—PART 2 THE SGI UPHOLDS THE TORCH OF JUSTICE

‘The 20th century was a century of war and violence,’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘In its midst, valiant fighters for the cause of world peace passionately upheld the torch of justice. Now that torch has been squarely entrusted to the SGI, a movement of global citizens.’

The conclusion of SGI President Ikeda’s message to a representative regional leaders conference held in Shinanomachi, Tokyo, March 28.

The May 3 dedication of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, in Orange County, Calif., is fast approaching. Leading figures around the world from many realms, including from academia and education, have expressed high hopes for the university.

Dr. Joseph Rotblat, with whom I have been in close, extended communication, shares these high expectations. He is an eminent scientist and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. We have met and spoken at length on two occasions, once in Osaka and once in Okinawa. We promised to continue our discussions at SUA, and I have heard that Dr. Rotblat is eagerly looking forward to that day.

Dr. Rotblat has experienced two world wars. He lost his beloved wife in the Nazi Holocaust. Determined that such a tragedy should never be repeated, he has fought vigorously with an undaunted spirit, enduring oppression and insult, for the cause of peace and humanity. Welcoming Dr. Rotblat to SUA, which is committed to fostering leaders of peace for the 21st century, will be a profoundly meaningful event. I await that day with great anticipation.

Incidentally, Dr. Hideki Yukawa, the eminent Japanese physicist, joined Dr. Rotblat and another dear friend of mine, the late Dr. Linus Pauling, in writing a noble page in history. In 1955, in the midst of the tensions of the Cold War, the Russell-Einstein Manifesto was issued. This was an epochal declaration, in which many of the leading scientists and philosophers of the 20th century called for the complete abolition of nuclear weapons. In total, 11 people of conscience and intellect signed the appeal, including Einstein, Yukawa, Rotblat and Pauling. The latter three men also kept the spirit of the declaration alive through the Pugwash Conferences, working together in the struggle for world peace. [Dr. Rotblat is currently president emeritus of the Pugwash Conferences.]

The ideals championed by Josei Toda are shining in the 21st century.

The first time a Pugwash Conference was held in Japan was in August 1975, in Kyoto, the city where Dr. Yukawa lived. Kyoto was chosen because everyone was eager to have the Japanese scientist participate. In May of that year, however, Dr. Yukawa was suddenly hospitalized. He was found to have cancer. With the encouragement and nursing care of his wife, Sumi, he was able to fight his illness and attend the conference.

His opening speech was so energetic that it was hard to believe he had recently been so ill. He called to those present: “We must return to the spirit of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto of 20 years ago. Nuclear weapons are an enemy of all humanity, and their complete elimination is our ultimate goal.”

Dr. Rotblat was the next to speak. He declared that he had the greatest respect for the invincible courage of Dr. Yukawa in attending the conference despite his illness, and he promised that he would do his best to keep the Japanese scientist's spirit alive in the Pugwash Conferences. It is a wonderful story of shared commitment, as rousing as a great drama.

Dr. Rotblat first visited Japan in 1957, shortly after the first of the Pugwash Conferences was held. [That conference was held in July 1957 in the village of Pugwash, Nova Scotia, Canada, from which the Pugwash Conferences take their name.] This was the same year that Mr. Toda made his Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons at the Mitsuzawa Stadium in Yokohama, on Sept. 8.

Reflecting later on this coincidental timing, Dr. Rotblat told me: "I also regret that I never met Mr. Toda in person because he died shortly afterward. But nevertheless, the work that he started has been pursued in parallel by you and the Soka Gakkai, and we at Pugwash—for both our organizations are committed to the creation of a world free of nuclear weapons, indeed a world free of war altogether."

The ideals championed by Mr. Toda—human revolution, global citizenship and the right of all human beings to live happily—are shining ever more brightly as a key philosophy of peace for the 21st century.

A new appreciation of Dr. Linus Pauling's lifelong dedication to peace is now spreading.

Dr. Linus Pauling's eldest son, Dr. Linus Pauling Jr., a renowned psychiatrist, is also a dear friend of mine. The "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" exhibition, which is the fruit of our friendship with the Pauling family, has to date been viewed by some 400,000 people in the United States.

Mountains of abuse and persecution were heaped on the late Dr. Pauling because of his activities for peace. These included insidious attacks by the authorities, such as his interrogation by various U.S. senate committees. However, together with his wife Ava Helen, Dr. Pauling always faced these challenges bravely and continued his antiwar struggle. A renewed appreciation of his lifelong dedication to peace is now spreading.

On Feb. 28 this year, a celebration of the 100th anniversary of Dr. Pauling's birth was held at his alma mater, Oregon State University. At that ceremony, Dr. Pauling Jr. related: "My father said: 'I am certain that after my passing, the struggle for peace that my wife and I have devoted our lives to will be carried into the future by President Ikeda and the SGI.'" I share this statement with you because it is a very important declaration. [Dr. Pauling Jr. also said that one of the greatest highlights of his father's life was meeting President Ikeda. Through his encounter with the SGI leader, he continued, his father was convinced that the struggle for peace to which he and his wife had dedicated the better part of their lives was identical to that advanced by the SGI.]

The 20th century was a century of war and violence. In its midst, valiant fighters for the cause of world peace passionately upheld the torch of justice. Now that torch has been squarely entrusted to the SGI, a movement of global citizens.

We are forging deeper exchange with thinking people throughout the world.

Dr. Yukawa said: "Peace is something that the majority of the people must work together diligently and ceaselessly to build. While destruction can be carried out by a minority, construction requires the concerted efforts of the majority, which is the reason for the

uncertainty of humanity's future." The uncertainty clouding humanity's future cited by Dr. Yukawa still persists.

And if that is not enough, many thinking people are sounding the alarm at the signs of growing danger they see in Japan. They see a society seething with envy and jealousy, an upsurge in narrow-minded nationalism, the irresponsible, defamatory reporting of the mass media, human rights infringements and the steady siege on spiritual and religious freedom.

As SGI members, we are committed to forging deeper exchange with thinking people throughout the world and further developing at all costs an unshakable alliance for peace and humanism.

Those who only act out of obligation cannot create their own history.

The German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, for whom I have had an immense fondness since my youth, has left a great mountain range of towering masterworks. He continually strove to elevate the "pyramid" of his life as high as he possibly could. He continued writing to the end of his days, never giving up on challenging himself.

Goethe hated what he called "mannerism," asserting: "Mannerism is always longing to have done, and has no true enjoyment in work." Those who have no challenge or purpose of their own, who only act out of obligation, cannot create their own history.

Each day of life is a new, precious and irreplaceable day. Those who challenge themselves earnestly, with all their heart and being, shine with joy and fulfillment. In each fresh day of challenge, we can open the way to momentous victory.

As Goethe writes:

*If you act with determination, you will succeed
For the work was already half done.
The twinkling stars are my sun.
Night exists only for the coward.*

In other words, are we going to do it or not? If we start a task with steadfast determination, it is already half completed. For the courageous person, the twinkling stars are as bright as the sun. But for the coward, there is only the blackness of night. Therefore, have the courage to take that first step, says Goethe.

Like Goethe, who caused the sun to rise in the vast skies of his heart, let us, too, live in such a way that all of our actions are a cause for victory.

Leaders need to communicate clearly. They need to give everyone courage and hope. This is the model that all wise leaders have shown us down through the ages.

The renowned Chilean poet Pablo Neruda writes: "He who does not fight now is a coward. Ours is not the time for looking back on past achievements or for exploring the labyrinth of dreams."

He also cries out:

*Now, let us sing together
Of those who have risen up from endless sorrows,
Of those who have appeared
Out of the heavy silence and solemn victory.*

The French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau declares, “You owe the use of your life to your fellow men!” That is, we must dedicate our lives to the welfare of humanity.

And Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, the father of European unification with whom I published a dialogue titled *Civilization East and West*, states: “Without improvement, there is no incentive. Without incentive, there is no accomplishment.”

**Since we champion the cause of good and truth,
it is vital that we emerge victorious.**

Exactly 50 years ago today, on March 28, 1951 — a Wednesday just like today — President Toda spoke at a monthly chapter leaders meeting. It was in the midst of the Korean War and a month before he became the second Soka Gakkai president. “How can we bring the light of hope to the peoples of Asia, and indeed all humanity, who do not know what tomorrow will bring?” he asked. “Surely it is only by enabling them to be embraced in the compassion of Nichiren Daishonin. In other words, kosen-rufu is the only way.

“And who will carry out this sacred task? Though the Buddha’s will is difficult to fathom, it is we of the Soka Gakkai and no one else. [The propagation of the Daishonin’s Buddhism in Asia and the rest of the world] has been our destiny and mission since the time of our mentor Mr. Maki-guchi.... All that is left is for us to advance, to fight on.”

It is the Soka Gakkai — made up of each one of you — that has worked to actualize kosen-rufu, the Daishonin’s will, in complete accord with the lion’s roar of President Toda.

Buddhism is about winning. Since we champion the cause of good and truth, it is vital that we emerge victorious. If we summon courageous faith and fight tenaciously against evil and injustice, we will definitely attain clear, incontestable results.

“We will advance toward kosen-rufu! Forward, ever forward! Taking on challenge after challenge!” This is the Soka Gakkai’s eternal vow.

It is from this commitment that we can build a magnificent force for peace among the people. No matter how deeply society sinks into chaos, if the people stand up, there will be hope.

Now is our chance to construct the foundations for lasting peace. Let us unite in purpose and advance without retreating a single step.

In closing, I call to you: Be strong, be ever strong, and adorn the drama of your life with triumph!