

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JUNE 27 SPEECH—PART 1 BIG GOALS AND BIG VICTORIES

SGI President Ikeda says that victory ‘depends upon our determination. If we are going to do something, we may as well set big goals for ourselves and brightly and positively strive toward them.’

Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 7th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium in Sugamo, June 27.

Let me begin my speech today with the words of the famous French philosopher Henri Bergson: “The future belongs to those who work diligently.” Those who spend their lives in shallow amusements, who avoid difficulties and challenges, who are spiritless and apathetic—in other words, those who make no effort to create anything of value in their lives—will have no future.

A bright future belongs to those who keep striving and tirelessly exerting themselves. The Soka Gakkai is advancing in complete accord with these words of Bergson.

The German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe writes: “Zephyrs [Gentle breezes] breathe, we breathe in answer, roll the thunders, ours go rolling / Stunning in reverberation, threefold, tenfold, after it.” We return the roar of the thunder with even louder thunder. We respond to one wild accusation with sound counter-arguments twofold, threefold and tenfold. We must make the jubilant cheers of people of principle and conviction resound throughout the land.

Newspapers and books are our enduring history.

The father of modern China, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, boldly declares the arrival of a new age: “[When the Republic of China was established in 1912,] the people became the master, and the emperor became their servant.” These are well-known words. The people are the sovereigns.

In Japan today, too, sovereignty resides in the people. We all have the right to vote, and every individual and group has complete freedom to support and vote for any candidate he or she chooses. The constitution guarantees such fundamental freedoms. Each citizen of Japan is a sovereign.

The Soka Gakkai, denigrated in the past as a gathering of the poor and sick, has become Japan's pillar of peace. This is an amazing time. The Soka Gakkai's victory is the proud history of the people arising as a great force of outstanding leaders. It is proof of the indisputable advance of kosen-rufu.

Congratulations on this 7th Headquarters Leaders Meeting! First Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda [whose portraits are on display in the auditorium] are smiling with special joy today, as if to say: “We are so happy to see all of you gathered here in triumph!”

Today, we have with us representatives of our “uncrowned heroes,” the deliverers of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. Every morning, rising with the sun and illuminating all like the sun, they go on their paper rounds. It is the duty of our leaders to wholeheartedly encourage, support and treasure these noble individuals. Such is the realm of faith.

From the organization's early days, many kosen-rufu leaders have received their training through working as "uncrowned heroes" and delivering the *Seikyo Shimbun*. The true spirit of leadership is to do one's part, however small, in taking the lead—for instance, in delivering the *Seikyo Shimbun*. In this regard, relying on others or adopting a superior attitude is a lowly, base attitude. Let me take this opportunity to praise and to say thank you once again to my most esteemed newspaper deliverers. I deeply appreciate all your hard work.

The French writer Victor Hugo writes, "The press is a living bugle, it sounds the morning call that awakens the people, it announces in a ringing voice the advent of right." The mission of the press—that is, newspapers and books—is an important one. The press is our history. It endures, unlike television, which someone has said is like a ghost that disappears into nothingness when we switch it off.

How truly praiseworthy are our *Seikyo Shimbun* newspaper deliverers, who sound the morning bugle of kosen-rufu and awaken us!

Hugo also says: "Gentlemen, what is an aid to the patriot? The press. And what is a scarecrow to the coward and the traitor? The press." The *Seikyo Shimbun* is a newspaper dedicated to refuting the erroneous and revealing the true for the sake of kosen-rufu, and those who deliver it each day are working harder than anyone for the sake of truth and justice.

Delivering the *Seikyo Shimbun* produces the same benefit as working to introduce Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism to others. From the perspective of eternal life, you will absolutely be a victor. You will achieve a life-state of supreme happiness without fail. Delivering the *Seikyo Shimbun* is *shakubuku*, kosen-rufu, working to spread our network of friendship and the expansion of our movement.

I hope that all our *Seikyo Shimbun* deliverers will take care of themselves. Please make sure you get enough sleep, and use utmost prudence and wisdom to avoid accidents at all costs. My wife and I pray earnestly every day for the safety, good health, longevity and good fortune of our "uncrowned heroes."

By achieving many victories, we gain confidence and good fortune.

Our fellow members throughout the world are overjoyed at the wonderful strides we in Japan are making in our struggle. Nonmembers, too—people of intelligence and good conscience around the globe—are congratulating us on our efforts. They are hoping, watching and waiting for us to score an even greater victory.

It is always enjoyable to win. By winning, we write a great record of achievement. We gain confidence and good fortune.

It all depends upon our determination. If we are going to do something, we may as well set big goals for ourselves and brightly and positively strive toward them.

I hope that all of you, as leaders of our movement, will work together with the regional leaders and display brilliant leadership in your respective areas, advancing in such seamless unity that all will acclaim you in praise and wonder.

Incidentally, the unity of our members across Japan—in Kansai in particular—has been superlative. Thank you very much!

The honors the SGI is receiving symbolize worldwide kosen-rufu.

We have many SGI members joining us today, hailing from 12 countries and territories. Thank you for traveling from so far away! There is an especially large contingent of

members from South Korea, Japan's neighbor across the sea. I am delighted to see all of you.

Now, let us fly to the other side of the world, to Brazil and the Amazon rainforest, which is known as "the womb of life." Congratulations for our successful struggle in Japan have also been pouring in from Brazil. Even in Brazil, the country furthest from Japan, members are imbued with the joy of our victory.

As you know, the area of the Amazon River basin is the largest of any river in the world. [It encompasses some 2.3 million square miles.] It is 18 times the size of Japan. At its widest point, the river is 250 miles wide—the approximate distance from Tokyo to Osaka.

The SGI-Brazil's Amazon Ecological Research Center is located in Manaus, in the middle reaches of the river. In May, earthenware artifacts—a cooking pot and a section of a taller vessel—were excavated from the center's site. Both are thought to have been used by the original inhabitants of the region. The cooking pot, about 30 inches in diameter, was in particularly good condition. The section of the taller vessel indicates that the original vessel was about 25 inches in diameter. They are thought to date back 1,200 to 1,500 years. Experts at the University of São Paulo are scheduled to issue a detailed evaluation of their age and origin in mid-July.

A research laboratory is currently being constructed on the center grounds, and it was in clearing the land for construction that these precious artifacts were uncovered. Their discovery has stirred considerable interest within the archaeological community.

The SGI-Brazil's strong commitment to preserving the region's historical and cultural heritage, to transmitting that legacy to future generations, was evident in the way it has made every effort to ensure that the excavation was conducted with great care. These efforts have drawn wide praise and support from people in various fields.

I am deeply humbled to note that the site at which the artifacts were discovered has recently been named the Dr. Daisaku Ikeda Archeological Site. This was the idea of Dr. Francisco Jorge dos Santos, director of the Amazonian Museum of the University of Amazonas in Manaus, who has been overseeing the excavation. [Director Santos writes in a letter of notification: "Because of Dr. Daisaku Ikeda's outstanding contributions to the Amazon and Brazil, and also because of his tireless struggle for world peace, we recommend that the site be named Dr. Daisaku Ikeda Archeological Site. In this way, we want to honor this great humanist, philosopher and thinker."]

Enthusiastic cheers of support for our movement have also arisen from the Amazon rainforest. It is for this reason that I share this news with all of you.

Indeed, we continue to receive a stream of honors from countries all around the globe. This is a symbol, I believe, of worldwide kosen-rufu in the 21st century. All of these honors will be passed on to the children and grandchildren of all of you, who are working so hard to spread the Daishonin's Buddhism. I accept them as your representative, hoping to promote the ideas of presidents Makiguchi and Toda. That is my sole motivation.

All of these honors are your good fortune, and will go on to be the good fortune of your children and grandchildren. Please also be aware that they constitute the good fortune of the Soka Gakkai, as well as proof of our victory and the rightness of our cause.

To be continued in the Aug. 3 issue.

**TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS
CONTINUALLY STRIVING
FROM THIS SPEECH:**

The famous French philosopher Henri Bergson says, “The future belongs to those who work diligently.” Those who spend their lives in shallow amusements, who avoid difficulties and challenges, who are spiritless and apathetic—in other words, those who make no effort to create anything of value in their lives—will have no future. A bright future belongs to those who keep striving and tirelessly exerting themselves. The Soka Gakkai is advancing in complete accord with these words of Bergson.

1) SGI President Ikeda says that “those who spend their lives in shallow amusements, who avoid difficulties and challenges, who are spiritless and apathetic—in other words, those who make no effort to create anything of value in their lives—will have no future.” Why do you think Buddhism views avoiding difficulties and challenges as so destructive to a person’s growth? Why, from the standpoint of Buddhism, does it run completely counter to human happiness to spend one’s life pursuing shallow amusements? Do you have any experiences where, by confronting difficulties and challenges head on, you were able to experience the tremendous power of faith in the Gohonzon?

2) President Ikeda also says, “A bright future belongs to those who keep striving and tirelessly exerting themselves.” Can you think of any passages from Nichiren Daishonin’s writings or the Lotus Sutra that correspond with this spirit of continuously exerting oneself to create a valuable future for ourselves and others? Can you think of any experiences where, through having to exert yourself tirelessly in your practice, you were able to create great value and expand your life?