

## **SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JUNE 27 SPEECH—PART 2 TRANSFORMING OUR LIVES WITH NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS**

**‘We should strive to read Nichiren Daishonin’s writings every day,’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘Busy as you may be, I hope you will all make renewed efforts in this sphere. Reading his writings changes our lives in enormous ways. Tremendous confidence that we can triumph in all life’s struggles wells forth within us.’**

*The conclusion 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.*

Approximately half of all the species of living things on Earth are found in the Amazon basin, a rich repository of life. Recently, a new insect has been discovered in the Amazon region. Dr. Rosaly Ale-Rocha, a brilliant researcher of the National Amazon Research Institute, who discovered the insect, has named it *Euhybus ikedai* after me.

Dr. Ale-Rocha is a symbol of the Century of Women. She has expressed strong agreement and sympathy with the movement to protect the Amazon that I have advocated and that SGI-Brazil has been advancing. The scientist said that as an academic she named the insect after me with the profoundest respect. She is very gracious, and I thank her from the bottom of my heart.

### **A new age of youth, a new century of youth, has arrived in the SGI.**

*Euhybus ikedai* is one-sixth of an inch long, with long, slim legs and wings, and a big head. He is light brown and shiny. He belongs to the insect order Diptera, meaning he has two wings. And he is said to fly energetically through the Amazon forests.

One of his special characteristics is that he keeps in check populations of other insects that destroy crops. In other words, he is what is called a “beneficial insect.” He fights against the “bad guys” and is useful to human beings.

So, the next time you visit the Amazon, please be careful not to step on, squash or otherwise harm my little namesake! [Laughter.]

One of his other unique characteristics is that his compound eyes are located above his antennae, enabling him to attack harmful insects by flying up at them from beneath. One young Brazilian researcher said that we could think of *Euhybus ikedai* as a “bug hero” patrolling the jungle and fighting against bad bugs. Our SGI-Brazil members likened him to their trusty youth division members, who work to support and protect their region.

Today, the youth division has risen to take the lead all around the world. My hearty congratulations on the 50th anniversary of the youth division this July! [The young men’s division was founded on July 11, 1951, and the young women’s division was founded on July 19, 1951.]

I am told that to celebrate this anniversary there is going to be a gathering of some 50,000 youth in Brazil, with youth representatives from various nations of Latin America attending. All across the globe, the youth are moving into action with a powerful momentum. A new age of youth, a new century of youth, has arrived in the SGI.

## **Nichiren Daishonin's vast view of life is based on equality.**

In the Amazon, with its lush splendor and infinite wonders, the newly discovered *Euhybus ikedai* is believed to play an important role, together with the other living things that inhabit the basin, in terms of maintaining the delicate balance of the complex ecosystem. First Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, who possessed an ecological perspective that was far ahead of his times, writes of the significance of beneficial insects in his work *The Geography of Human Life*. [“Many insects,” Makiguchi writes, “are the scourge of farmers in that they attack the leaves, stems, or roots of useful plants, but there are also a large number of beneficial insects.”]

I am certain that Mr. Makiguchi would also be delighted that I should have an insect named after me on the occasion of the 130th anniversary of his birth. As this event underscores again, the SGI's great movement to promote respect for the sanctity of life and the importance of protecting the environment now embraces the entire world.

Nichiren Daishonin also writes of insects, “We living beings, right down to crickets, ants, mosquitoes, and flies, all possess life that is without beginning or end” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 382). Some may think that the Daishonin is just going into great detail here, but he is actually refuting the True Word school of Buddhism. In their arrogance, they declared that the Buddha they worshiped, Mahavairochana, was without beginning or end and therefore superior to Shakyamuni Buddha.

The Daishonin instructs his followers to refute this claim by saying that the lives of all living things, even down to the humblest insects, are equally without beginning or end—in other words, eternal. To deny this fact, he says, is to take the position of a non-Buddhist teaching, to transgress the very spirit of Buddhism.

The Daishonin's view of life is one of equality and is vast in its scale.

It is important to respond immediately to false or distorted statements. I hope the youth in particular will acquire and polish the wisdom and strength to keenly and forcefully rebut every attack without pause in their struggle for truth and justice.

## **Nichiren Daishonin urges us to greet hardships with joy and fight even harder.**

Today, June 27, is the birthday of the great Brazilian writer João Guimarães Rosa, a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters. [SGI President Ikeda is a nonresident member of the academy, and he gave a lecture at the academy in Rio de Janeiro on the conferral of this honor in February 1993.]

In the speech he gave on his induction into that venerable academy, Rosa declared, “We die to prove that we have lived.” This is a powerful statement.

How, and based on what guiding philosophy, have we lived and struggled, and ultimately won in life? In striving to leave a clear record of this, we find life's meaning and challenge.

That is why dedicated members of our organization who have died in the course of our journey to realize kosen-rufu are all great victors in life.

In the Daishonin's writings, the votary of the Lotus Sutra is likened to the kalakula (see *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 471). The kalakula is a mythical insect. Its body is very small, but it feeds on the wind, swelling to an enormous size and consuming all around it. The Daishonin writes, “A strong wind makes a kalakula grow larger” (WND, 471). This is a famous passage.

We should strive to read the Daishonin's writings every day. Busy as you may be, I hope you will all make renewed efforts in this sphere. Reading his writings changes our lives in

enormous ways. Tremendous confidence that we can triumph in all life's struggles wells forth within us.

Now, then, what does the wind that makes the kalakula grow larger correspond to in the case of the votary of the Lotus Sutra? The Daishonin clearly states that it is persecution (see WND, 471).

As votaries or practitioners of the Mystic Law, the more we struggle undefeated amid daunting obstacles and hardship, the more our life-force grows, the more our good fortune multiplies and the more our energy increases. We can use everything as fuel to power our human revolution and transform poison into medicine, becoming stronger and more compassionate people and developing an expansive state of life.

That is why the Daishonin urges us to greet hardships with joy and fight even harder. He says we should regard meeting obstacles as "true peace and comfort" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 750).

If we have the fighting spirit to work for kosen-rufu, we can attain Buddhahood. If we embrace the Gohonzon, but lack this crucial spirit, we will not be able to attain Buddhahood. Cowardice represents the life-state of Animality.

The Soka Gakkai has always advanced with this powerful fighting spirit. That is why it has developed into the worldwide organization it is today. This fighting spirit is the essence of the Soka Gakkai and the very heart of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

### **Youth should strive not just for ordinary success but for overwhelming success.**

Finally, I want to mention Rio Branco, a great Brazilian diplomat, who was earnest and passionate in all his diplomatic initiatives. He strove not just for ordinary success but for overwhelming success. This was his spirit.

I call on the youth to emulate this spirit in their endeavors. I hope you will score a decisive victory of youth in the manifold day-to-day "diplomatic initiatives" of kosen-rufu. Let us set off afresh in our challenge to create a magnificent history based on our overwhelming success.

To all of our members in Japan, I hope you will give your all to the upcoming challenge in July and then rest up and recharge in August. I particularly ask the men to ensure that the women get sufficient rest at that time.

Thank you for traveling so far in such hot weather. Please give my best regards to all the members who could not attend today. Stay well!

## **TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS MEETING OBSTACLES FROM THIS SPEECH:**

**As votaries or practitioners of the Mystic Law, the more we struggle undefeated amid daunting obstacles and hardship, the more our life-force grows, the more our good fortune multiplies and the more our energy increases. We can use everything as fuel to power our human revolution and transform poison into medicine, becoming stronger and more compassionate people and developing an expansive state of life. That is why the Daishonin urges us to greet hardships with joy and fight even**

**harder. He says we should regard meeting obstacles as “true peace and comfort” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 750).**

1) Nichiren Daishonin says we should regard meeting obstacles as “true peace and comfort” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 750). Why do you think the Daishonin makes this assertion? What principles in Buddhism does this idea correspond to? How does meeting obstacles relate to the true purpose of our Buddhist practice?

2) SGI President Ikeda says: “The more we struggle undefeated amid daunting obstacles and hardship, the more our life-force grows, the more our good fortune multiplies and the more our energy increases.” What was your view of encountering obstacles and hardship before you began chanting? How has it changed? Do you have an experience where, by continuing to struggle bravely in your practice amid daunting obstacles, you were able to become stronger and enjoy greater happiness?