

## AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA MAKING THE FUTURE BRIGHTER

**‘The future will always be bright for those who are committed to justice and truth, who strive passionately to uphold them,’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘It will always be bleak for those whose lives are ruled by evil.’**

If we wish to achieve extraordinary results, everyone must strive hard. When everyone strives hard, great success can be realized.” I encountered this passage many years ago, but it still has a strong hold on my heart. These are the words of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, one of the forerunners of the Chinese people’s revolution, who made Yokohama, in Japan’s Kanagawa Prefecture, an important base for his activities.

Dr. Sun also says, “To accomplish that which we seek to achieve, we must take the initiative and not lag behind others.”



July 3 is an unforgettable anniversary for all of us in the Soka Gakkai. It is the day second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda was released from prison in 1945, and also the day that I, his disciple, had the privilege of going to prison for the sake of Buddhism in 1957.

Over the years, it has become a tradition for us in July to step up the energetic momentum of our advance toward kosen-rufu, our earnest struggle for justice and truth. Our renewed, dynamic efforts in this cause have also made July a month when the lofty spirit of oneness of mentor and disciple burns even brighter.



May 3, 1979—just after I stepped down as Soka Gakkai president—was a bright, sunny day. The commemorative general meeting held that day at the Soka University gymnasium with the attendance of High Priest Nittatsu, however, was subdued and somber. And no doubt the hearts of many of the participants even now are filled with deep remorse and self-directed anger that they were unable to prevent the situation.

That day determined the future course of each participant, depending on what was in his or her heart. Their victory or defeat today—whether they have gone on to achieve a continuous series of triumphs or have grown corrupt and degenerate—was decided then. In both the good sense and the bad, those individuals have personally experienced the strict workings of the law of cause and effect in their lives.

It was a moment that was to sort out the genuine Soka Gakkai leaders, true champions of kosen-rufu, from cowardly, false leaders who exploited the world of faith for self-serving ends.

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After taking my leave from that meeting, I headed straight for the newly built Soka Gakkai Kanagawa Culture Center in Yokohama.



As you may know, President Toda one time called himself Jogai (literally meaning outside the castle). The name came from his assertion that while his mentor, first Soka Gakkai

president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, could remain inside the castle (Jpn *jochu*), he, his disciple, was determined to remain “outside the castle” and fight against the enemy forces.

Therefore, following my mentor’s example, I did not return to our “main stronghold” in Tokyo on that May day but went directly to our center in Kanagawa — “outside the castle,” as it were. From there, I was determined to carry out a new struggle — the true, essential struggle for the Law that represented the purpose for my appearance in this world.

Though certain fellow members let me down or betrayed me, I have never betrayed my vow to my mentor. For I know that this is the most correct way of life, both from the perspective of Buddhism and as a human being.

It was from my beloved Kanagawa that I launched my first battle after becoming the Soka Gakkai’s honorary president, holding aloft the flag of truth and justice all alone.

On July 3 that year — the Day of Mentor and Disciple — I was also at our Kanagawa Culture Center, with its sweeping view of Yamashita Park and the waters of the port where ships sail into the Pacific Ocean.

I had met with an important guest that day, a university professor from Costa Rica. That discussion on the future of humanity, on peace, on culture, marked the start of a new page in our history of meaningful dialogue with leading world figures.

I also spent July 3, 1980, the following year, in Kanagawa. The Kanagawa members, in conjunction with Saitama representatives, held a special commemorative meeting on that occasion.



Again in July 1984, I made the noble citadel of the Kanagawa Culture Center my base, from there launching a fresh round of activities. During that month, I visited the area of Misaki, in Kanagawa’s Miura City, for the first time in many years.

Among the many meetings held in Kanagawa at the time of my visit, the high-spirited July 10 headquarters leaders meeting was a particularly historic one. On that occasion, I was able to personally present Soka Gakkai organizational flags — the banners of kosen-rufu — to representative leaders from throughout Kanagawa. I presented flags to the leaders of the Kanagawa, Naka, Nishi, Hodogaya, Asahi, Isogo and Kanazawa wards of Yokohama City; to the leaders of Kawasaki, Saiwai, Nakahara, Takatsu, Miyamae, Tama and Asao wards in Kawasaki City; and to the leader of Fujisawa Zone. I presented all of these ward and zone flags with the spirit of bestowing banners of glory upon every single Kanagawa member.

The Kanagawa members were filled with life and vigor. When I thought of how these noble comrades in faith were leading the way, fighting at the forefront of the struggle for kosen-rufu as true Bodhisattvas of the Earth, hot tears spilled from my eyes.

As I presented the flag to each leader, I tried to encourage them by saying things like “Do your best!” “I am counting on you!” And I was convinced at that moment that our organization in Kanagawa was rock-solid.

The stirring sight of those spirited, noble champions of kosen-rufu remains fresh in my memory to this day.



I am reminded of an occasion 30 years before that — back on Jan. 6, 1953. At a meeting held that day, I was appointed leader of the young men’s 1st corps, and I received the corps flag directly from my mentor.

As he handed the flag to me, his eyes glittered brilliantly behind his glasses, asking,

“Are you ready to fight together with me your entire life for kosen-rufu?”

The moment I received the banner of kosen-rufu from his hands, my spirit leapt up like a bright flame.

He said to me: “Fight hard to the very last battle, ever waving this flag high! I am counting on you, Daisaku!”

My great mentor treasured and cared for us youth. I can never forget the enormous debt I owe him.

At that meeting, I led Bansui Doi’s famous song, “A Star Falls in the Autumn Wind on Wu-chang Plain,” to respond to President Toda. I have written many times about singing this song for him.

As he sat listening with closed eyes, allowing the lyrics to reverberate in his heart, all of us present could sense how deeply moving he found it.

The song recounts the tragic demise of Chuko K’ung-ming, the Chinese regent who loyally strove to carry out the late emperor’s wishes but in his later years was struck down by a serious illness in the midst of his campaign.

*The autumn wind, with  
deepening sorrow,  
Blows from Mount Chi  
Gloomy clouds gather over the battleground  
Of Wu-chang Plain.*

*The Regent lies gravely ill.*

When I finished, he said, “Again!” Overcome with emotion, he asked us to sing the song over and over. Tears streamed from his eyes.

*Though some may argue his success or failure,  
He was loyal to the very end.*

*Do they [the stars] shine their silvery light upon  
The hero’s lonely anguish?  
Touched by his valor,  
Even demons wail in the autumn wind.*

No doubt, ever since his imprisonment by the military authorities during the war, President Toda had been searching with all his heart for young flag bearers to carry on his work.

From that day on, I have fought every battle — no matter how bitter — without retreating a single step, fighting, fighting and fighting until I have gained a firm victory.

Today, new flag bearers — our brave young men and women of Kanagawa — stand proudly before me.



In 1991, the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood, which we of the Soka Gakkai had trusted, protected and made the most wholehearted offerings to, arbitrarily severed ties with us. This was based on nothing but jealousy toward our organization and, specifically, toward

me. The priesthood revealed its true ugly nature as an entity of base evil pervaded by arrogance and degeneracy.

That year, I led our movement time and again from Kanagawa, shining citadel of the spirit. “Let us embark on a new Soka Renaissance!” I cried.

I attended numerous events throughout the region: the Odawara Music Festival at the Soka Gakkai’s Atsugi Peace Center, as well as the Yokosuka and Kawasaki music and culture festivals. I also visited our auditorium in Yokohama’s Nishi Ward. In January 1992, I attended a joint Kamakura-Shonan choral festival.

In a famous speech, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill declares, “But there is one bond which unites us all...that we are prepared to proceed to all extremities, to endure them and to enforce them.”

No matter what unscrupulous plots or cruel persecutions an aberrant high priest has launched against us, the unity of the Soka Gakkai, fighting for truth, has not been shaken in the slightest.

Exerting themselves with even greater energy, the Kanagawa members adorned the final decade of the 20th century with brilliant victory.

Now, the second Seven Bells—which will determine the direction of the 21st century—have started to ring joyously in Sagami-hara, Yamato, Atsugi, Hiratsuka and all the Kanagawa towns and cities.

Kanagawa has already begun a fresh, resolute advance, leading the way for Japan and the rest of the world.



The great standard bearer of the American Renaissance, Ralph Waldo Emerson, says in his essay “Fate,” “So women, as most susceptible, are the best index of the coming hour.”

More than 700 years ago, Nichiren Daishonin declared the equality of the sexes, saying, “There should be no discrimination among those who propagate the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo in the Latter Day of the Law, be they men or women” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 385).

It is in this spirit that the Soka Gakkai has begun to build the Century of Women. And Kanagawa is a model of that ideal.

I present the Kanagawa members with these words of Simone Weil, the French philosopher and political activist: “To act is nothing else, for me, than changing myself.”

My beloved Kanagawa members! Be courageous, determined and filled with invincible fighting spirit, and achieve absolute victory!

Let the great banner of justice and glory flutter triumphantly in the sky!

—On July 3, 2001, at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters

This essay was published in the “Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*” series in the July 5 *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai’s daily newspaper.