

## AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA THE SGI: A CONSTRUCTION PROJECT OF THE PEOPLE

**‘We are building an eternal citadel of kosen-rufu that will remain standing for 1,000—no, for 10,000 years and more, on into the eternal future,’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘It is a construction project of the people that does not rely on political authority or coercion.’**

Tokugawa Ieyasu, who founded the Tokugawa military government that was to rule Japan for three centuries, chose Edo (now Tokyo)—within view of Japan’s most famous peak Mount Fuji—as his capital.

In Japanese, the words for *view of Fuji* and *indomitable* have the same pronunciation (Jpn *fujimi*). Hence, for me, Mount Fuji always conjures images of indestructible strength and majesty.

No doubt gazing at this unwavering king of mountains, Mount Fuji, Ieyasu resolved to build an invincible stronghold in Edo. The construction of his castle was carried out with patience and perseverance over three generations.

In our dialogue together, Dr. Arnold Toynbee named Tokugawa Ieyasu as one of the great political leaders of all time. The British historian was impressed by Ieyasu’s formidable ability to bring about a dramatic change in the country’s direction while at the same time painstakingly creating a system of government that would endure for centuries.

Today, we of the Soka Gakkai are building an eternal citadel of kosen-rufu that will remain standing for 1,000—no, for 10,000 years and more, on into the eternal future. It is a construction project of the people that does not rely on political authority or coercion but follows instead the great principle of establishing the correct teaching for the peace of the land (Jpn *rissho ankoku*).

Our main bastion in this effort is Tokyo. For that reason, Tokyo cannot be defeated.

The destiny and mission of our organization in Tokyo is to create powerful waves of victory that will spread throughout every corner of Japan and, further, through out the entire world. Tokyo has the responsibility and the strength to score triumph after triumph, based on the unity of many in body, one in mind, and ensure the Soka Gakkai’s victory throughout eternity.

Two of Nichiren Daishonin’s followers, the Ikegami brothers, lived and worked in an area of Musashi Province that is now Tokyo. Because the two brothers were important pillars among the lay believers in the area, the Daishonin always took a strict attitude with them and did not hesitate to reprimand them sternly when necessary. He told them, “Put into flames, a rock simply turns to ashes, but gold becomes pure gold” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 497). Such injunctions were an expression of the Daishonin’s tough love, aimed at training his disciples to forge an indestructible, diamond-like state of life that would remain impervious in the face of the inevitable onslaughts of the three obstacles and four devils.

No one was more pleased or full of praise than the Daishonin when the Ikegami brothers overcame difficulty after difficulty and attained their great triumph. “Could there ever be a more wonderful story than your own?” he wrote, commending them on the solidarity they had shown in the face of adversity (WND, 499).

How immeasurable is the debt we owe our mentor in Buddhism, the Daishonin!



There are villains with cracked minds, uncaring of the consequences of their actions, who skulk around in the darkness, ignominiously seeking to dampen the spirits of sincere, good-hearted people.

Power is an evil potion that intoxicates and poisons. The Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, who waged an uncompromising struggle against the authoritarian political and religious powers of the day, understood this. He declared, “Love of power is inconsistent with goodness; but quite consistent with the very opposite qualities—pride, cunning, cruelty.” How true this is!

In Buddhism, the devil king of the sixth heaven, which is also known as the Heaven of Freely Enjoying Things Conjured by Others, personifies this insidious working of power. [This is the sixth and highest of the six heavens of the world of desire. It is commonly referred to as the sixth heaven and is the abode of the devil king. (See WND, 1266.)] The devil king represents a devilish function inherent in life that takes pleasure in entering the hearts of those in positions of power, causing them to exploit and manipulate others as they please.

Those who are enslaved by the devil king fear people awakening to the correct teaching and becoming independent. They envy and despise people of justice who are working for the welfare and benefit of others, and they attack them with slander and lies.

Here we see the pattern and method of operation of the three powerful enemies, which is clearly explained in the Lotus Sutra and the Daishonin’s writings.

Kosen-rufu is indeed a struggle in which we fight unceasingly against these destructive, negative forces and strive to expand the realm of genuine peace and happiness for humankind based on the ideals of Buddhism.

“The bad showed itself a destroyer of happiness both in individuals and in the whole body, while the noble and right seemed to produce and secure the happiness of one and all.” These are the astute words of that great spiritual warrior Goethe, who kept a constant, vigilant watch over right and wrong in the realm of politics.

Once, brushing aside criticism of our organization’s support of political candidates for election to public office, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda said: “It is the right and the duty of all citizens to take part in supporting the political candidates of their choice. Moreover, we of the Soka Gakkai are working for kosen-rufu, which is about achieving happiness for all people. The election results of the candidates we support are important, because they will leave a record—both in Japan and overseas—of our ongoing accomplishments.”



July 12, 1957, was a wet, rainy day in Tokyo. I, who was then 29, had been incarcerated in Osaka, arrested on completely false charges of violating the election laws.

In Tokyo, President Toda, deeply concerned for my fate, resolutely took the lead in a drive to crush this dark plot by the authorities. Our Tokyo comrades in faith, enraged at the injustice perpetrated against me, joined President Toda at a meeting held at the National Sports Arena in Kuramae. Some 40,000 members gathered despite the pouring rain. The gymnasium was packed to capacity, and the overflow crowd stood outside.

This was the historic Tokyo Rally, where the members passionately stood up for justice. The speakers at this massive protest denounced the baseless arrest of Soka Gakkai General

Director Takashi Koizumi and myself and demanded our immediate release.

Ten days had passed since I was arrested on July 3—the same date that Mr. Toda had been released from prison many years earlier. On July 8, I had been transferred from the Osaka Prefectural Police Headquarters to the Osaka Detention Center, and I was being mercilessly interrogated day after day.

It was clear that the authorities' real target in this wave of persecution was President Toda. My interrogators repeatedly threatened to raid the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Tokyo and arrest him. This was only about nine months before he passed away, and he was in extremely poor physical health. I knew that imprisonment would spell death for him, just as it had for our martyred first president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. Amid this raging storm, all I thought of and prayed for was that I might be a shield to protect my mentor and the Soka Gakkai Headquarters.

And the whole time I was in prison, President Toda also suffered great anguish. Worried for my safety, he repeatedly called the Kansai Headquarters for updates.



July 12 was a major turning point in this affair, which came to be known as the Osaka Incident.

The evening of July 11, the small group of Soka Gakkai members actually involved in election law violations—who had already been questioned and released by the prosecutor's office—let it be known to the Soka Gakkai's leadership that the prosecutor had coerced them into making false confessions. They explained that he had offered to release them, if they would admit that they had committed the violations on my instructions. When President Toda learned of this underhanded tactic, he came out fighting, powerfully denouncing the iniquity of the authorities.

At the Tokyo Rally, President Toda held a frank, no-holds-barred dialogue with the 40,000 members in the form of a Q-and-A session. When some members complained that the Soka Gakkai Headquarters had not taken a strong enough stance in the matter, Mr. Toda fiercely proclaimed his deep, powerful determination to fight against this unjustified persecution by the government.

“Since becoming president,” he told the audience, “I have been fully prepared to give my life if necessary. Therefore, I am not afraid of anything.... So do not think I am going to take this lying down!”

Several days after the Tokyo Rally, on July 16, President Toda headed for Osaka and went to the local prosecutor's office. Weak and emaciated, President Toda had to be supported by the Soka Gakkai leaders accompanying him as he climbed the stairs to the prosecutor's office. He made his way on unsteady legs, the effort leaving him gasping for breath.

However, when he came face to face with his quarry, he drew on every ounce of his remaining strength to harshly denounce the prosecutor's actions. It was as if he were firing a flaming arrow to sear away the lies and reveal the truth.



My wife, Kaneko, and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Shiraki, attended that July 12 rally in Tokyo with a special determination. That day marked the anniversary of the Shiraki family joining the Soka Gakkai in the summer of 1941, the year when the Pacific War began.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of their embracing faith. From the time they started practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism, the Shirakis' home in Yaguchi, located in

present-day Ota Ward of Tokyo, became a center for kosen-rufu activities.

President Makiguchi visited their house many times. Legendary today are the discussion meetings that were held there during the war with President Makiguchi in attendance. He would speak boldly under the surveillance of Japan's "thought police," who would repeatedly interrupt him when his subject matter became controversial.

Since my wife and her family had been completely imbued with the Soka Gakkai spirit of "regarding obstacles as true peace and comfort" (see *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 750) along with the first and second presidents, they faced my imprisonment without trepidation.

They were perfectly aware of the power of faith. Before joining the Soka Gakkai, my mother-in-law had been so ill that she had been told she would never again be able to make a long train journey. However, after taking faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism, she regained her health and, as a pioneering member of the Tokyo women's division, traveled widely, with courage and energy, not only around Tokyo but to such far-flung regions as Hokkaido, Tohoku, Chubu and Kansai. She worked dynamically to introduce Buddhism to others and to encourage members through dialogue.

Faith is action, and action leads to the attainment of Buddhahood.

In her later years, when she was no longer able to get about freely, my mother-in-law carried out the Buddha's work with her voice, over the telephone.

In any event, the important thing is for the members of Tokyo to fully shoulder responsibility for kosen-rufu and to exert themselves to the utmost for the advance and triumph of the entire Soka Gakkai. This is the pride of the main force of kosen-rufu, which has been staunchly supported by our noble pioneer members.



Three days after the Tokyo Rally, on July 15, General Director Koizumi was released. The prosecutor's office, however, continued interrogating me that day and the next, from morning to night. My release did not come until shortly after noon on Wednesday, July 17.

Members who had traveled all the way from Tokyo joined the crowd of Kansai members who were there to greet me at the entrance to the Osaka Detention Center. For as long as I live, I will never forget the tears I saw glistening in their eyes.



As the mystic workings of destiny would have it, the original Buddha, the Daishonin, died in Tokyo. From the perspective of Buddhism, therefore, it is inevitable that Tokyo will continue to be the main battleground in our struggle for the eternal perpetuation of the Law.

"You must grit your teeth and never slacken in your faith," the Daishonin writes. "Be as fearless as Nichiren when he acted and spoke out before Hei no Saemon-no-jo" (WND, 498). This was the Daishonin's appeal to the Ikegami brothers, our predecessors in the arduous, ongoing struggle for the Law in Tokyo.

It is important at all times to courageously confront challenges head-on. This is the spirit of Indomitable Tokyo, the main force of kosen-rufu.

The French writer Victor Hugo urged his fellow citizens: "We must continue fighting day and night. We must fight in the mountains, on the plains, and in the forests. Arise! Arise! Never rest!"

July is a passionate starting point of our struggle.

My beloved comrades in faith throughout past, present, and future, who have gathered together in Tokyo deeply committed to the mission that has been your cherished wish from

the remote past! May each of you be ever-victorious! And let us also resolutely pledge— as we advance forward in battle after battle, triumph after triumph—to develop a solid, ever-growing network of support, starting in Tokyo and expanding outward. A network that will ensure our continuous victory in the 21st century.

This essay was published in the “Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*” series in the July 12 *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai’s daily newspaper.