

## **SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JUNE 28 MESSAGE UNITY LEADS TO BOUNDLESS BENEFIT**

**SGI President Ikeda says that ‘ultimate human solidarity can be forged only by the supreme unity of comrades who dedicate their lives to the great wish for kosen-rufu. Where there is such unity, members receive benefit that increases boundlessly.’**

*SGI President Ikeda's message to a nationwide prefecture leaders conference, held at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters, Shinanomachi, Tokyo, June 28.*

Thank all of you for your efforts to attend this nationwide prefecture leaders conference.

Through nationwide unity, we have crowned the month of June with brilliant victory. This remarkable triumph accords with Nichiren Daishonin's statement "If the spirit of many in body but one in mind prevails among the people, they will achieve all their goals" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 618). The kind of communication, rhythm and teamwork that derive from this prefecture leaders conference are the driving force for all victory.

### **There is no world of greater human warmth than that of the SGI.**

The Great and Vast Buddha Flower Garland Sutra explains that the palace of the deity Indra is surrounded by a magnificent net of jewels known as Indra's net (see *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 634). At each knot in the net, a brilliant jewel is attached. And each one reflects all the other jewels. It is a brilliant artistic symbol of boundless mutual interrelation.

This magnificent image is a metaphor for a new kind of network of diversity and mutual respect toward which humankind should aspire in the 21st century. I discussed this in an address at Columbia University (see *My Dear Friends in America*, pp. 432–42).

The solidarity in the Soka Gakkai is the same. Different regions and prefectures encourage one another, carrying out exchange on many levels, mutually invigorating and inspiring one another. The power of each organization is then increased many times over, and a new force greater than anything previously imagined is born.

This ultimate human solidarity can be forged only by the supreme unity of comrades who dedicate their lives to the great wish for kosen-rufu. Where there is such unity, members receive benefit that increases boundlessly. Though unseen, the Buddhas and bodhisattvas definitely observe all of our sincere efforts.

There is no world of greater human warmth than that of the SGI. There is no life more noble than one dedicated to kosen-rufu. Please lead lives of joy with this profound confidence.

The great French author Victor Hugo says: "There is but one thing that I would like to seek of you. Through uniting, you should be able to win.... Unite, for then you will be unassailable." Even in today's information society, unity is power. In any field, those who become isolated are left behind and will come to ruin.

I want each of you to become an "invincible General K'ung-ming of the Mystic Law." Uniting around SGI Deputy President Einosuke Akiya, please concentrate your wisdom while proudly, joyfully constructing a network of total victory in the 21st century that is without parallel in the world.

Hugo declares his intention to hound those who drive the people to misery: "Until my last breath, I will continue battling them on every front. They will no doubt discover me.

I will continually appear before them as a citizen boldly making an address at the podium, or as a soldier in the streets.”

I want all of you to become thoroughly eloquent, like Hugo. I want you to become courageous leaders who can defeat the enemies of the Buddha.

**We should read Nichiren Daishonin’s writings each day, even a paragraph or sentence.**

The Daishonin says, “Employ the strategy of the Lotus Sutra before any other. ‘All others who bear you enmity or malice will likewise be wiped out.’ These golden words [from the “Medicine King” chapter of the Lotus Sutra] will never prove false” (WND, 1001). No strategy surpasses the strategy of the Lotus Sutra. When we advance based on faith, based on the Daishonin’s writings, we can defeat any enemy, no matter how powerful.

Please read the Daishonin’s writings each day, even if only a single paragraph or sentence. Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, used to say, “When you are tired, that is when you should study the Daishonin’s writings.” His writings blaze with his brilliant life. When we expose ourselves to the Daishonin’s writings, our lives change—wisdom, courage and confidence well forth.

I want to share a passage from “Revealing the True Spirit.” Here, the Daishonin, after affirming that his predictions of internal strife and foreign invasion (made in “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land”) have come to pass, strictly warns:

“Those [among my disciples] who are believers in name only, whose faith is shallow and whose minds are not wholly imbued with pure faith, will no doubt fall into the [Avichi] hell of incessant suffering for a certain period of time, though perhaps not as long as one thousand kalpas, but at least for one, two, ten, or one hundred kalpas.

“If you wish to avoid this suffering, you should burn your elbows as Bodhisattva Medicine King did as an offering to the Buddha, or tear off your skin to use as paper for transcribing Buddhist teachings as the ascetic Aspiration for the Law did. You should willingly sacrifice your body for the Law like the boy Snow Mountains, or dedicate your whole heart like King Suzudan. Or else you should throw yourself on the ground with sweat pouring from every part of your body. Or else you should pile up rare treasures in front of the Buddha. Or else you should become a slave and serve a person who practices the Lotus Sutra correctly. Or else.... Your practice should accord with the four ways of teaching [four ways in which the Buddha expounds his teaching depending on the situation], employing the one most suited to the time.

“Even among my disciples and believers, those whose faith is weak and shallow will manifest the state of hell of incessant suffering at the time of death. At that time they should not blame me” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 537).

Not advancing is to retreat. No matter what great hardships we might encounter, we can secure absolute happiness as long as we continue advancing with the faith of selfless, wholehearted dedication.

**Organizations in which women energetically carry out activities will be victorious.**

The SGI movement is a struggle of popular liberation for happiness and peace. Within our advance, the members of the women’s and young women’s divisions are playing the most important role. From the bottom of my heart, let me express my gratitude to you. Thank you so much for your constant efforts!

After the long-cherished wish of India's independence had been achieved, Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first prime minister, remarked with pride: "There is no doubt that the part the women of India played was not only significant but of paramount importance. It made all the difference in the world in that struggle." Nehru added he was convinced that progress in India "can be and should be measured by the progress of the women of India."

Jeannette Rankin, the first woman to serve in the U.S. Congress, struggled to refashion government to serve the needs of mothers and children. Alarmed by labor practices that forced pregnant women to continue performing hard physical labor and the exploitation of children, Ms. Rankin argued that politics should reflect women's aspirations. She spearheaded efforts to pass laws that would be the ally of the weak, her conviction being that the greatest meaning derived from speaking out for justice and championing the causes of society's least fortunate. The members of the women's and young women's divisions, who are raising high their voices for justice, are on the leading edge of the Century of Women.

From prison, Nehru wrote to his daughter, Indira, of his joy in sharing the struggles and triumphs of Mahatma Gandhi: "We have the joy of working and struggling for a great cause; we have a great leader, a beloved friend and a trusty guide, whose sight gives strength and whose touch inspires; and we have the surety that success awaits us, and sooner or later we shall achieve it."

It is remarkable how even in the most difficult circumstances, the determination of a leader can draw forth irrepressible joy and courage, and can inspire profound confidence in everyone. You are all leaders of kosen-rufu and leaders of faith. Therefore, no matter what might happen, please continue to resolutely lead the way to victory, encouraging everyone and helping them advance with hope and high spirits.

Please give everyone the strength and joy to win. Toward that end, we must sincerely treasure the women in the organization and make every effort to help them freely, fully manifest their strength and ability.

The advance of the women's and young women's divisions is the advance of the SGI. Organizations in which women energetically, vigorously carry out activities will be victorious in the 21st century.

### **In denouncing the priesthood, presidents Makiguchi and Toda saved Buddhism.**

At the 7th Headquarters Leaders Meeting (see the July 27 and Aug. 3 issues of the *World Tribune*), I could not help feeling that the portraits of Soka Gakkai presidents Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda hanging in the Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium were watching over us with great delight. We have won, and we have reported our victory to our mentors. There is no greater joy, no more solemn drama in life.

In conjunction with that meeting, general meetings for the Chubu region and Shizuoka Prefecture were held. It was 58 years ago, in June 1943, that first president Makiguchi and President Toda were summoned to the Nichiren Shoshu head temple Taiseki-ji in Shizuoka Prefecture and ordered to accept the Shinto talisman, which would have amounted to great slander of the Daishonin's teachings.

But this mentor and disciple of Soka, fiercely indignant at the priesthood's cowardice, staunchly refused to accept the talisman. If at that time they had not denounced the priesthood's errors, the Daishonin's great spirit of establishing the correct teaching for the peace of the land would surely have been extinguished. And the lifeblood of kosen-rufu would have ceased to flow.

President Makiguchi and President Toda's determined, unrelenting struggles amounted to a supreme effort to defeat the "one evil" (WND, 15) of nationalism in Japan. On June 28—exactly 58 years ago today—President Makiguchi again admonished the high priest to his face.

The priests then took the remarkable step of severing ties with the Soka Gakkai, which was upholding the Daishonin's teachings. They probably feared that they would become the target of repression by the militarist authorities themselves.

Presidents Makiguchi and Toda were arrested in the early morning hours of July 6. In autumn of the year following his arrest—on Nov. 18, which commemorates the Soka Gakkai's founding in 1930—President Makiguchi died in prison, making the ultimate sacrifice for his convictions. His disciple and successor, President Toda, was released from prison on July 3 the following year.

Upon his release, he began a struggle for vengeance against the devilish nature of power that had driven his mentor to his death. Each year when July comes around, President Toda's indomitable spirit to protect the Law blazes brighter than ever.

### **The activities of youth light a fire, give buoyancy and bring vigor to our advance.**

It was in the month of July exactly 50 years ago that President Toda inaugurated the youth division. [The young men's division was formed on July 11, 1951, and the young women's division was formed on July 19.] July is therefore the month of youth.

A solid force of youth who will fight on without fear has now been formed. How elated presidents Makiguchi and Toda must be at this! And the activities of the younger members of the youth division are particularly reassuring.

Following the victory of the civil rights movement, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a great leader of nonviolence, remarked, "In most of the recent direct-action crusades, it had been the young people who sparked the movement." He credited young people and students with having "brought a new impact to the crusade, and the impetus that we needed to win the struggle."

This is also the principle for the SGI's victory. The activities of youth light a fire, give buoyancy and bring vigor to our advance. I ask that all men's and women's division leaders do their best to encourage and raise the youth, who will shoulder the task of responsibility for world kosen-rufu in the new century.

The bond of mentor and disciple is most solemn and profound. On July 3, the same date that President Toda was released from prison—and at the same hour, 7:00 p.m.—I, his disciple, was arrested and thrown in jail on trumped-up charges in 1957. Together with my beloved comrades in Kansai, I initiated a new tradition of "ever victorious" Kansai. July is therefore also the month of Kansai.

The Daishonin says, "If teacher and disciple are of different minds, they will never accomplish anything" (WND, 909). If mentor and disciple are not of the same mind, they will not succeed in any endeavor.

On the other hand, when mentor and disciple are united in spirit, there is nothing that will prove beyond them. They cannot fail to win.

When we steadfastly dedicate ourselves to the path of mentor and disciple, we can boundlessly manifest the wisdom and power that is inherent in our lives. In this world, nothing is stronger than the united struggle of mentor and disciple. Nothing is more joyful.

President Makiguchi boldly declares: "Buddhism primarily concerns itself with victory

or defeat, while secular authority is based on the principle of reward and punishment' (WND, 835). Actual proof of benefit and punishment is the life of religion."

Let us proudly demonstrate actual proof of justice. To be victorious in every struggle—that is the purpose of faith. Kosen-rufu lies in establishing a rhythm of eternal victory.

### **A person who embraces the Mystic Law can turn everyone and everything into an ally.**

President Toda cherished the dream of creating a solidarity for peace spanning the globe of more than 10 million people. He was convinced that constructing such a popular force for peace would ensure the country's stability, even in the face of resurgent nationalism, and would open an eternal path to world peace. This was Mr. Toda's grand vision and his dream.

The Daishonin cites the following Lotus Sutra passage: "Although the devil and the devil's people will be there, they will all protect the Law of the Buddha" (WND, 750). A person who embraces the Mystic Law can turn everyone and everything into an ally. A leader should be able to make everyone he or she meets an ally of kosen-rufu.

Faith has to become manifest in action. Please initiate a powerful advance through strong faith, and please accomplish great development through taking bold action.

### **All your efforts are for yourself, your family, the world and kosen-rufu.**

I mentioned this at the 7th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, but I want to reiterate my heartfelt gratitude to all those who are taking action and exerting themselves for kosen-rufu, beginning with the "uncrowned heroes" who daily deliver the *Seikyo Shimbun*, our Soka Gakkai newspaper.

To deliver this herald of kosen-rufu each day, even in the rain or snow, is to propagate the Mystic Law, advance kosen-rufu and carry out Buddhist practice. Shakyamuni walked far and wide expounding his teaching. The Daishonin, too, visited many different places in spreading his teaching. Those who deliver our publications are advancing along the path of kosen-rufu in their footsteps. It is a noble enterprise.

The individuals who carry out this work certainly accumulate good fortune, develop vitality and become healthy. Please convey my warmest regards to these "uncrowned heroes" and to all who are struggling behind the scenes in your areas.

Lastly, I want to again cite the words of Hugo. When he was attacked and slandered, the great author calmly responded: "Later generations will view these mocking voices as reverberations of glory." "To be persecuted—that's fine. But whatever form this persecution takes, one thing is certain: we should face it with joy and with self-respect." "My friends, you must not weaken. You must continue charging on toward your goal."

With thoroughgoing enthusiasm, boldness, wisdom, cheerfulness and courage, I urge you to demonstrate great leadership that will be remembered by future generations. And please advance brightly and joyously.

During the first July of the 21st century, let us strike out for justice in every region of the country! Please remember that all of your efforts are for yourself, for your family, for the world and for kosen-rufu. Let us firmly establish an unprecedented victory for kosen-rufu! On that note, I conclude my message.

Please convey my warmest regards to all of my fellow members. Let us wage an all out struggle and then joyously reconvene! Please take good care of yourself during the hot summer months. I look forward to seeing you soon in high spirits!