

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA BEING EVER-VICTORIOUS EACH AND EVERY DAY

‘Let us do all we can on this precious, irreplaceable day that is today, so that we have no regrets, and devote our lives to kosen-rufu and the happiness of humanity!’ SGI President Ikeda writes. ‘Being ever-victorious means winning resolutely in the present; it means winning today.’

SGI members around the world are filled with admiration for Kansai—no, more than admiration, awe! Our Tokyo members are deeply grateful for the enthusiastic friendship and support of their fellow Kansai members.

Kansai is strong! Osaka is strong! Our great, Ever-victorious Kansai is an invincible domain of the people, an undefeated victor peerless in all the world.

The Kansai members possess the spirit of mentor and disciple. No one can ever sever the spiritual ties between the Kansai members and I, the shared commitment to fight passionately to realize kosen-rufu. Nor will we ever allow the sullied hands of authoritarian powers to touch this precious bond.

Everything begins and ends with the mentor–disciple relationship—this is the spirit that has built Ever-victorious Kansai.



When Josei Toda became the second president of the Soka Gakkai 50 years ago, in 1951, one of the first things I said to him was “For the future development of kosen-rufu in Japan, we should give top priority to constructing a chapter in Osaka, the capital of the people.” President Toda replied on the spot: “All right. If that’s what you think, Daisaku, you go to Osaka and build the chapter there.”

The construction of our organization in Kansai began from this unity of spirit between mentor and disciple. At the time, we had hardly any members in Osaka, and the top Soka Gakkai leaders never even dreamed of establishing a chapter there.

But President Toda had declared that he would achieve a membership of 750,000 households. [The total membership then was a little more than 3,000 people.] And I was President Toda’s disciple. As such, I thought long and hard, with the enthusiasm and idealism of youth, about what was necessary to realize the widespread propagation of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. And it was this that prompted me to make my suggestion of establishing a chapter in Kansai.

While Tokyo is Japan’s political and administrative capital, Osaka—indeed, all of Kansai—is its commercial capital. If we could establish a strong base for kosen-rufu there, I thought, the ripples of its forward momentum would undoubtedly spread to other areas such as Chugoku, Shikoku, Kyushu and eventually all of Japan.

The following year, 1952, the beginnings of Osaka Chapter took form. I went to Osaka on Aug. 14 of that year, and President Toda followed the next day, to kick off our summer regional propagation campaign and take the first step toward the full-fledged development of our organization in Osaka. [There were only some 40 members in Osaka at the time.]

While reporting to President Toda day and night, I worked steadily to attain victory. The Kansai members united together in high spirits and threw themselves into the campaign. Their eyes sparkled with life, and their whole beings brimmed with hope and confidence.



President Toda clearly stated his purpose for going to Osaka: “Let us rid Osaka of all sickness and poverty!” This was a solemn declaration to wipe the tears of unhappiness and suffering from the eyes of the Osaka people. I made his vow my own. To achieve that goal, I would have to dedicate myself earnestly to propagating the Mystic Law and imparting courage to many people, so that they could lead happy lives.

The aim of a true religion is to free people from the chains of suffering. A living religion helps people transform misery into happiness. Religion should not function as a mere source of solace or sympathy, nor as an “opiate” that offers an escape from reality.

As a result of this determination, strong, courageous individuals, who had awakened to a new way of living and found a new social awareness, stood up to work for the reform and betterment of the society in which they lived. As citizens, they had every right to construct a humane society, a society that served their needs.

“We must build Osaka—a city of honest, industrious people—into a capital of happiness, overflowing with goodwill.” This was my determination as a young lion of 28 who, from the start of 1956, began to take more leadership in the construction of Ever-victorious Kansai. Together with the Kansai members, I launched a concerted effort—a struggle of faith and kosen-rufu—to achieve that goal. [In January 1956, President Ikeda was dispatched by President Toda to lead activities in Osaka Chapter, centering on discussion meetings. In May 1956, he and the Osaka members achieved a monthly propagation record—11,111 households—unprecedented in the annals of kosen-rufu.]

An Upper House election was slated for July that year, and the Soka Gakkai Headquarters had decided to field its own candidate in the Osaka regional district.

Whether or not to field a candidate had been an extremely tough choice for the Headquarters. Everyone thought it was a race that could not be won. Both inside and outside the Soka Gakkai, many were saying that it was a rash move and doomed to failure.

But I made a firm pledge to my mentor: “No matter what obstacles we may face, I promise you we will win. I will bring you a victory, Sensei!”

On President Toda’s birthday (Feb. 11) that year, I composed a poem for him expressing my determination. And he responded with lightning speed. It was an exchange between mentor and disciple that I will never forget, as long as I live.

I want now to offer the poem I sent him to our members in Kansai, with renewed meaning.

*The golden citadel
Now being built
In Kansai
Will be eternally
imperishable,
Forever subduing the
devilish forces.*

Allow me also to share with you the poem that President Toda responded with that day:

*The joy of looking up
At the golden citadel
Built
By my disciple
Through his propagation
activities.*



The first president of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, offers this profound guidance: “Although there is a saying that even dust, when it accumulates, can form a mountain, there are in fact no mountains that have been made from accumulated dust.... Real mountains are formed by sudden, dramatic shifts in the earth’s crust.” President Makiguchi strictly teaches us here that we can only fundamentally transform ourselves and build an unshakable state of life by engaging in an earnest struggle of great good against great evil.

If we must fight, let it be a towering struggle! Let us win an explosive victory, an overwhelming victory!

I had only one mission—to build an undefeatable golden citadel in Kansai. To do so, I was determined to give my entire life and resolutely triumph.

But the sheer size of the goal that President Toda had set made it an undertaking physically impossible for a single individual to achieve alone. I therefore resolved to put 100-percent effort into meeting with the Kansai members, into encouraging them, into spurring them on and into raising them to be courageous champions of kosen-rufu who would work with me in this struggle.

And I translated this into action. I was certain that my burning determination—the passionate flame of the human spirit that could make the impossible possible, beyond imagination—would definitely spread and set alight the hearts of many others.

I wanted to win. I had to win. Winning and then reporting that victory to my mentor was my supreme mission as a disciple; it was the actual practice of the oneness of mentor and disciple.

I chanted sincerely day after day to have the strength to achieve my goal. I chanted continuously with the firm conviction that everyone I came in contact with would become an ally of our movement or would function as a protective force.



Our propagation efforts in Osaka in 1956, which our members throughout Japan were watching expectantly, gained dynamic, explosive momentum, day by day, month by month.

The energy and tenacity of the leaders determine the organization’s overall momentum.

I boldly took the initiative, throwing my entire being into the struggle. I never hesitated, staying constantly on the go and speaking without rest. I spent every day, from early morning until late at night, encouraging our members in every corner of Osaka.

There were times when I attended 25 or 26 meetings in a single day, always on the move, always telling myself: “I have time for one more.” “I can encourage more members.” I was drenched with sweat, my voice was hoarse from speaking, and my legs felt like cement.

There were so many people I had to meet, so many people I wanted to see and encourage, so many people I wanted to contact within the limited time of each 24-hour day. If I let this moment, this opportunity, pass by, I might never be able to see this person again. That is why I was desperate to make the most of every second.

If someone pointed out a member’s house to me, while I was traveling from one meeting place to another, I would always try to stop by, even if just for a minute. Whenever a member came to the Kansai Headquarters, I would always try to make time to speak with him or her, even if just a word of greeting or encouragement. At times when I simply could not stop, I would wave or acknowledge people with my eyes, silently sending daimoku to them from my heart.

I knew that if our hearts touched for even a moment, we could forge a connection for

Buddhism; if I just passed by without reaching out, nothing of value would be created.

Human revolution is meeting with people. Kosen-rufu is talking with people. These actions embody courage, wisdom and compassion.



Wherever I went, exciting dramas of life-to-life inspiration and communion unfolded, giving rise to expanding waves of joy.

If I stopped by the home of a local leader but he or she happened to be out, I always left a message of encouragement with their family. And as I made the rounds of the local meeting places—usually the members’ homes—I would take up my writing brush and present the members with pieces of calligraphy, hoping to encourage them in any way I could. I would write things like “Decisive Battle,” “Courageous Struggle” and “Great Triumph.”

In a flash, a wave of fellowship spread. And a ready, responsive fighting spirit to work together for the common cause of kosen-rufu was soon established. All my trusty fellow members in Osaka grasped my aims and determinations. They rose up and exerted themselves tirelessly alongside me, sharing both joys and sufferings.

I read countless passages from the Daishonin’s writings together with the Kansai members. Among them was “One day of life is more valuable than all the treasures of the major world system” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 955).

Let us do all we can on this precious, irreplaceable day that is today, so that we have no regrets, and devote our lives to kosen-rufu and the happiness of humanity! Being ever-victorious means winning resolutely in the present; it means winning today.

Making their way through arduous trials in perfect accord with this spirit of the Daishonin, the Kansai members finally triumphed! In May of that turbulent 1956, we realized the magnificent monthly record of enabling 11,111 new households to receive the Gohonzon. This achievement firmly secured the foundation of the golden citadel of kosen-rufu in Kansai.

And in the Upper House election that July—the first Upper House election in which the Soka Gakkai fielded candidates—our Kansai members, working in close teamwork, won a tremendous victory [with their candidate in the Osaka regional district] that brought applause and cheers from their fellow members throughout Japan.

That victory would stir up a storm of persecution on the part of scheming, treacherous authorities in July 1957, in a manner just as the Daishonin warns. This was, of course, the Osaka Incident that I wrote an essay about recently (see “The SGI: A Construction Project of the People,” Aug. 17 *World Tribune*).



My noble Kansai friends have reenacted that great struggle of 45 years ago time and time again, clearly establishing a brilliant history of continuous triumph. A new page of history of unending victory has once again begun in Kansai. Our victory in the very first year of this new century will become a lifeline for a succession of victories.

Great Kansai, be tenacious! Take one step of courage and integrity after another, until the very end! Ever-victorious Kansai, triumph in everything, never forgetting your honor and your mission— together with me!

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