

## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S OCT. 11 SPEECH—PART 1 GENUINE TRUST BEGINS WITH DIALOGUE

**‘Neither military force nor political coercion is the answer,’ says SGI President Ikeda.  
‘It is through one-on-one dialogue that individuals form bonds of genuine trust.’**

*Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 10th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Oct. 11.*

Justice is sweet and musical; but injustice is harsh and discordant.” These are the celebrated words of the American philosopher and writer Henry David Thoreau.

The sweet music of justice. Each month, inspired afresh by the magnificent performances of the Brass Band at these Headquarters Leaders Meetings, we have advanced, achieving tremendous progress. [The Soka Gloria Brass Band regularly performs at the Headquarters Leaders Meeting.]

Let us offer a round of applause to express our appreciation to the members of the Soka Gloria Brass Band for their fine performances. Thank you!

**The SGI has overcome every obstacle by winning victory after victory.**

On Nov. 18, we will celebrate our first Soka Gakkai Foundation Day of the 21st century. The Soka Gakkai is an organization dedicated to kosen-rufu, a goal that is the very essence and will of Nichiren Daishonin.

When people lose this fundamental spirit of faith—of being fully committed to achieving kosen-rufu—they become self-centered. Though they may give the appearance of being Buddhists, they are really “robbers of the Law.”

Because we are an organization working to accomplish kosen-rufu, the Soka Gakkai has been able to overcome every obstacle and realize phenomenal development by continually growing and advancing, winning victory after victory. This is all due to your efforts. I most sincerely thank you.

Faith manifests itself in health. I hope all of you will become people who enjoy abundant good health, possess wisdom and compassion, and embody profound philosophy.

**Those who applaud the champions of kosen-rufu  
will accumulate great fortune.**

The Daishonin quotes the following words of the Great Teacher Dengyo from *A Clarification of the Schools Based on T'ien-t'ai's Doctrine*: “Those who praise him [a person who upholds the Lotus Sutra] will amass good fortune rising as high as Mount Calm and Bright [Mount Sumeru], while those who slander him will be committing an offense that will lead them to the hell of incessant suffering” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1039).

Mount Sumeru is a towering peak like Mount Everest, situated at the center of the world in Indian mythology. As this passage indicates, the benefit that accrues to individuals who praise the practitioners of the Lotus Sutra is incalculable. It is an unchanging rule of Buddhism that those who applaud the champions of kosen-rufu will accumulate great good fortune, while those who slander them will fall into the hell of incessant suffering.

Some people spend their days pursuing idle amusements. Some live aimlessly,

succumbing to indolence and apathy.

Neither of these ways of life will ever lead to true fulfillment or happiness, however. Not realizing this is one of the great follies of humankind.

In contrast, you are taking action for kosen-rufu. You are advancing for peace, happiness, security and harmony. You are propagating the Buddhist teachings, which provide the foundation for all of these things.

There is no nobler life than this. All of you have my unstinting praise.

### **If we stop moving forward, we immediately set ourselves up for defeat.**

What is happiness? This has been a central focus of philosophy for millennia—from the ancient Greeks to the French philosopher Alain, best known for his treatise *On Happiness*.

The French thinker Romain Rolland said that happiness is finding one's own path—it is “never stagnating, life moving forward, advancing!” The spirit of Buddhism is that of ceaseless advance as characterized by the famous passage from the Lotus Sutra “To exert oneself bravely and vigorously” (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 23).

If we stop moving forward, we immediately set ourselves up for defeat. Not to advance is to regress.

Who qualifies as youth? It is not simply a question of age. A youth is someone who keeps progressing day after day. This was first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's conviction.

A person who advances is a youth in the truest sense. If we lack the spirit to advance, we are old at heart, no matter how young we may be in years.

Moreover, the Mystic Law is the fountain of perennial youth and eternal life. It allows us to make our way through the three existences of past, present and future with boundless life force.

The Soka Gakkai is overflowing with the dynamic spirit of continual advance in every corner of Japan. We are always cheerful and high-spirited, standing proud and tall as invincible champions of truth, no matter what happens.

Today's meeting is a gathering of ever-advancing youth. Congratulations on this 10th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, which is also the general meeting of our great Kanto Region, which has achieved total victory on all fronts. Since we always describe the Kansai Region as “ever victorious,” I propose that from now on we make “total victory” the catch phrase for Kanto.

### **Only by triumphing over injustice can true justice be proven.**

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant, whose thought President Makiguchi continued to study up to his death in prison, writes: “A cheerful heart alone is able to find happiness in the good. A religion that makes people gloomy is false....”

The Soka Gakkai is limitlessly cheerful because it stands for truth and justice. It possesses the strength of the people, their ability to brightly smile in the face of adversity and keep moving forward.

“Come, let us take action!” “Let us work for kosen-rufu!” “Let us expand our SGI network!” Joy resides in such a bright, positive spirit. Those who gladly strive for kosen-rufu and for the welfare of their friends savor true happiness.

In contrast, those who criticize others and try to bring about their downfall are like vipers—they can never know genuine happiness. Similarly, a religion that does not make

people happy but instead makes them feel gloomy and depressed is in error. This is a perfect description of High Priest Nikken Abe and his followers.

The 10th anniversary of that ridiculous “excommunication” of the Soka Gakkai by the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood is fast approaching. [In a notification dated Nov. 28, 1991, the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood arbitrarily excommunicated the Soka Gakkai.] Who in the realm of Buddhism excommunicates anyone in this day and age? We are not living in feudal times—such anachronistic behavior shows just how far out of touch the priesthood is with the modern world.

Up to that time, the Soka Gakkai had served the priesthood with unimaginable dedication, yet they cut us off just like that. They hoped this would mean the end of the Soka Gakkai, but the scheming priests completely miscalculated. Instead, the Soka Gakkai today has achieved tremendous development as a global religious organization.

Only by triumphing over injustice can true justice be proven. And it is precisely because we have encountered those who sought to obstruct the flow of kosen-rufu that the correctness and validity of our movement shine so brightly.

### **Those who act against the Buddhist Law will incur strict retribution.**

Today we have with us members from 15 countries and territories, including South Korea, Indonesia and Italy. A warm welcome to all of you!

Ten years ago, SGI members were active in 115 countries and territories. Today, freed from the priesthood’s shackles, we have achieved unprecedented growth, expanding to include 177 countries and territories.

In addition, as your representative, I have received honorary doctorates and professorships from many educational institutions around the world. This autumn, the number of academic honors bestowed on me from the end of 1991 onward—that is, in the 10-year period since our split from the priesthood—will come to exactly 100. [In 1991, the number of academic honors received by SGI President Ikeda stood at 12, the first being an honorary doctorate received from Moscow State University in 1975. That number has now grown to 109, with three more universities scheduled to bestow academic honors on him this autumn, bringing the total number to 112.]

Both President Makiguchi and second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda were educators. They knew that religion without education tends to lapse into self-righteousness. I believe that the various educational honors I have received bear testimony to the fact that we of the SGI are walking the ideal path as a religious organization. I wish to share all of these honors with you, my friends. Together we have weathered countless obstacles and triumphed over all.

I earnestly pray each day that you will live the happiest lives, that you may enjoy good fortune, safety, longevity and good health.

In his well-known letter “Many in Body, One in Mind,” the Daishonin writes: “Although Nichiren and his followers are few, because they are different in body, but united in mind, they will definitely accomplish their great mission of widely propagating the Lotus Sutra. Though evils may be numerous, they cannot prevail over a single great truth” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 618).

I wish to declare that, just as this passage states, through your united efforts, we have completely triumphed in every respect over both the corrupt priesthood who betrayed the Daishonin as well as other unscrupulous individuals who have plotted against us.

In one of the essays of the famous French thinker Montaigne, we find the passage “Evil

swallows most of its own venom and poisons itself.” Those who slander the law writhe in agony from the venom they themselves have produced: This is a perfect description of the sad fate that awaits High Priest Nikken and his cohorts.

Since the Buddhist Law is the ultimate truth, those who act against it will incur strict retribution in accord with the uncompromising workings of cause and effect.

### **In these turbulent times, women are forging a vast network of peace and respect for life.**

President Makiguchi was also a pioneer in the education of women. He firmly believed that women, who create the values that foster peace, are the builders of the ideal society of the future. Mothers are educators who protect and nurture the infinitely precious treasure of life. [More than 90 years ago, out of the desire to provide educational opportunities to all women, President Makiguchi organized free classes for women who lacked financial means. He also established correspondence courses for women. He assembled a top-notch group of teachers and excellent teaching materials for this purpose and held audio-visual presentations in the form of short films, aimed at gaining popular support for this movement.]

The Japanese writer and educator Nitobe Inazo, who went on to become under-secretary-general of the League of Nations and was well known for his activities in the international arena, was a close acquaintance of President Makiguchi. In contrast, the Soka Gakkai's founder, who was imprisoned for his opposition to the military authorities during World War II, did not enjoy wide renown in society during his lifetime.

Nevertheless, today his far-reaching vision shines with a brilliance that only increases as time goes by. He was truly a great man.

As a glance at the international situation will reveal, we are living in a turbulent age. In these times, all our women's and young women's division members—here in Kanto, in other parts of Japan and across the globe—are forging a vast, unprecedented network based on the ideals of peace and respect for life. The only way to establish genuine world peace is to further expand and consolidate this network. I wish to strongly impress this upon you.

### **The only real way to break out of today's chaos is for human beings themselves to change.**

Let us recall some of our goals. We have vowed to secure the foundation for peace in Asia and throughout the world during the second Seven Bells, in the first half of the 21st century. Then, during the third Seven Bells, in the second half of the 21st century, we will see the philosophy of the sanctity of life established as the spirit of the age and the world (see the Feb. 2 *World Tribune*, p. 6).

Humanity's future is still in peril. The only real way to break out of this chaos is for human beings themselves to change. With our grand vision for the 21st century, let us ring the bells of eternal peace, of kosen-rufu, steadily and resolutely, one after another!

The world at peace and all humanity living together in harmony is the dream and hope of the 21st century. The surest first step toward realizing this goal is for human beings to reach out and engage in dialogue that transcends all differences.

A crucial passage in the Daishonin's treatise “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land” says, “Let us discuss the question at length” (WND, 7). The host here invites his guest to engage in a discussion with him. The Daishonin highly valued one-on-one dialogue. “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land” is

itself structured as a dialogue between the host and his guest.

This treatise is the starting point for peace. It is said that the Daishonin's Buddhism begins and ends with "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land." And dialogue is the backbone of this important work.

Neither military force nor political coercion is the answer. It is through one-on-one dialogue that individuals form bonds of genuine trust.

A world where all people can assemble together without discrimination, transcending all national and ethnic differences—the SGI is truly a model of this dream. Just look at the international gathering we are holding today, with so many friends from different countries around the globe. All we need to do is expand this network of human harmony.

We are spreading dialogue for peace throughout the world. We are conducting dialogue with people of different cultures and traditions.

I have personally engaged in more than 1,500 dialogues with leading thinkers from all continents, starting with British historian Arnold Toynbee. Moreover, my dialogues with some 40 of these individuals have either been published or are in the process of being published, all with the aim of fostering international understanding.

The Soka Gakkai's movement for peace is striving through dialogue to establish the philosophy of the sanctity of life as the spirit of the 21st century. The dialogues you engage in every day are noble and important. I hope you will continue them with supreme confidence and pride.

After World War II, President Toda embarked on his own campaign to expand dialogue here in Kanto. [In September 1946, President Toda traveled with a small group of leaders to Tochigi and Gumma prefectures on the organization's first regional propagation drive after the war.] I am thus very happy that we are making a cheerful, energetic departure today with this Kanto Region General Meeting toward 2002, which has been designated the Year of Expanding Dialogue.

To expand dialogue is to expand well-being, peace, victory and the future.

*To be continued in an upcoming issue.*

## **TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS TRANSCENDING DIFFERENCES THROUGH DIALOGUE FROM THIS SPEECH:**

**Humanity's future is still in peril. The only real way to break out of this chaos is for human beings themselves to change. With our grand vision for the 21st century, let us ring the bells of eternal peace, of kosen-rufu, steadily and resolutely, one after another! The world at peace and all humanity living together in harmony is the dream and hope of the 21st century. The surest first step toward realizing this goal is for human beings to reach out and engage in dialogue that transcends all differences. A crucial passage in Nichiren Daishonin's treatise "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" says, "Let us discuss the question at length" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 7). The host here invites his guest to engage in a discussion with him. The Daishonin highly valued one-on-one dialogue.**

1) SGI President Ikeda says that “the surest first step toward realizing [world peace] is for human beings to reach out and engage in dialogue that transcends all differences.” Do you think courage is important in this endeavor to reach out and engage in dialogue that transcends all differences? If so, in what ways? Can you think of ways to create opportunities for genuine dialogue with others in your daily life?

2) Shakyamuni, Nichiren Daishonin and President Ikeda are all masters of dialogue. Based on their examples, what do you think are some important elements that make genuine dialogue possible? Can you think of things that impede the free exchange of ideas?

3) Why do you think thorough discussion with other people — even those we may disagree with — is so important for the future of humanity? Do you think raising our voices in this way can change the course of humankind? If so, how?