

## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S AUG. 21 SPEECH—PART 2 SHARING THE JOY OF BEING ALIVE

**‘Let us continue sharing with others the joy of being alive,’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘Let us continue proclaiming the truth of life. Even if we are alone, our cry will open the eyes of many and become a force that moves the times.’**

*The conclusion of SGI President Ikeda’s speech at a joint training session for leaders of the Hokuriku and Shinetsu regions, held at the Nagano Training Center in Karuizawa, Japan, Aug. 21.*

Henry David Thoreau, the well-known American Renaissance thinker and author of *Civil Disobedience*, is acclaimed as a philosopher who changed history. Thoreau’s thought had a major influence on Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

I regard it as a tremendous honor to have been named an honorary life member of the Thoreau Society, an organization dedicated to carrying on the spirit of this giant figure of the past (see June 8 *World Tribune*, pp. 6–8). I am currently participating in a dialogue with Thoreau Society President Ronald A. Bosco and Secretary Joel Myerson, who are renowned Thoreau scholars. Both men visited the Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo campus and expressed their deep empathy with the school and its ideals.

Thoreau said, “My life itself was become my amusement and never ceased to be novel.” And, “I go to see many a good man or good woman, so called, and utter freely that thought which alone it was given to me to utter.” He also said: “Let us see who is the strongest. What force has a multitude? They only can force me who obey a higher law than I.”

Let us continue sharing with others the joy of being alive. Let us continue proclaiming the truth of life. Even if we are alone, our cry will open the eyes of many and become a force that moves the times. This is the movement of Soka.

### **The slightest error may cause everything to come crashing down in an instant.**

In a letter to his disciple Sennichi-ama, the wife of Abutsu-bo and a resident of the Shinetsu region, Nichiren Daishonin uses the following metaphor to strictly warn against slandering the Law: “Suppose there is a ship that sails on the open sea. Though the ship is stoutly built, if it is flooded by a leak, those on the ship are sure to drown together. Though the embankment between rice fields is firm, if there is an ant hole in it, then surely, in the long run, it will not remain full of water” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 626).

These are reasonable words that must be taken to heart. Whether in an organization, one’s own life or some undertaking, regardless of how solid and strong things may appear, the slightest error may cause everything to come crashing down in an instant. Ruin begins with complacency and the arrogance that accepts even minor blunders.

It is a leader’s responsibility to deal with such problems quickly and appropriately, without overlooking the smallest detail. Each of these instances represents an important crossroads on which future development hinges. We must never forget this.

### **We need to unite and pray in the spirit of ‘many in body but one in mind.’**

The struggle for kosen-rufu begins with prayer. “The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of

Life,” which the Daishonin wrote while in exile on Sado Island, states: “All disciples and lay supporters of Nichiren should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the spirit of many in body but one in mind, transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim. This spiritual bond is the basis for the universal transmission of the ultimate Law of life and death. Herein lies the true goal of Nichiren’s propagation. When you are so united, even the great desire for widespread propagation can be fulfilled. But if any of Nichiren’s disciples disrupt the unity of many in body but one in mind, they would be like warriors who destroy their own castle from within” (WND, 217).

In short, we need to unite and pray in the spirit of “many in body but one in mind.” When everyone prays together for victory in the endeavor to “refute the erroneous and reveal the true,” their daimoku becomes that of the lion king.

When everyone prays with one mind, kosen-rufu advances with increasing momentum. Prayer itself is the greatest power with which to forge ahead.

The Daishonin says: “Just as all the different kinds of plants and trees come forth from the earth, so all the various teachings of the Buddha are spread by persons. As T’ien-t’ai said: ‘Even during the Buddha’s lifetime, the Law was revealed by people. How then, in the latter age, can one say that the Law is worthy of respect, but that the person who upholds it is to be despised?’

“Hence, if the Law that one embraces is supreme, then the person who embraces it must accordingly be foremost among all others” (WND, 61).

What kind of person demonstrates true human greatness and nobility? It is someone who, no matter what happens, single-mindedly works for kosen-rufu without wavering in the least, without moaning or complaining. This is what the Daishonin teaches. It is also the way of life expounded in the Lotus Sutra.

Living this way requires enormous effort, but those who exert themselves for kosen-rufu steadily accumulate benefit without even realizing it. They rapidly accomplish their human revolution.

### **Because life is eternal, the present is extremely important.**

The benefit of the Mystic Law is inconspicuous. Even if we cannot see the results of our efforts right away, everything is constantly moving in the best direction for our lives. That itself is the most profound benefit.

There is no more worthy cause than taking action for kosen-rufu. No one can surpass a person tenaciously carrying out activities for kosen-rufu. Absolutely nothing can defeat a noble champion of the spirit. Please be confident of this.

The Daishonin explains that at the moment of death those who have practiced in such a fashion will be welcomed by many Buddhas and escorted to Eagle Peak. In “The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life,” he says: “How can we possibly hold back our tears at the inexpressible joy of knowing that not just one or two, not just one hundred or two hundred, but as many as a thousand Buddhas will come to greet us with open arms!” (WND, 216–17).

Regardless of how their life comes to an end, those who have struggled for kosen-rufu embark on a journey over the three existences of past, present and future that abounds with the greatest happiness and joy. They will be reborn where and when they choose with complete freedom. Such is the immense power of the Mystic Law permeating the three existences of life.

Life is eternal. For this reason, the present is extremely important. Buddhism teaches:

“If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as they are manifested in the present. And if you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present” (WND, 279).

Our eternal victory depends entirely on our struggles in the present.

### **‘Buddhism primarily concerns itself with victory or defeat.’**

To Shijo Kingo, who had a close connection with the Shinetsu region, the Daishonin wrote, “Buddhism primarily concerns itself with victory or defeat” (WND, 835). And: “Buddhism is reason. Reason will win over your lord” (WND, 839).

Also, to Ota Jomyo, who had a connection with the Hoku-riku region, he wrote, “In the first place, within [both] the truth of the secular world and the ultimate truth revealed by the Buddha, it is victory or defeat that is essential” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1002).

I hope all of you will continue achieving victory upon victory and thereby expand and advance kosen-rufu in the Hokuriku and Shinetsu regions.

The Daishonin was overjoyed to learn that his followers Abutsu-bo and Sennichi-ama had taught their son about faith and raised him to be a sincere practitioner. The Daishonin writes, “His [Abutsu-bo’s] son, Tokuro Moritsuna, has followed in his footsteps and become a wholehearted votary of the Lotus Sutra” (WND, 1045). I hope Hokuriku and Shinetsu will be the best examples of transmitting faith to the next generation and raising fine successors.

I hope you will send capable people dedicated to the cause of good out into the world. Please foster many “Tsune-saburo Makiguchis” and “Josei Todas” of the 21st century.

Next year will mark the 730th anniversary of the Tsukahara Debate on Sado Island. Describing how he had refuted several hundred priests of other Buddhist schools on this occasion, the Daishonin says, “I overturned them as easily as a sharp sword cutting through a melon or a gale bending the grass” (WND, 771–72). I pray and have every expectation that the youth of Hokuriku and Shinetsu will expand their network of truth and justice with their sharp minds and gale-like strength.

I want to present you with these words of Helen Keller: “The real way to grow is by aspiring beyond our limitations, by wishing sublimely for great things and striving to achieve them.” She also said: “When we do the best that we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life, or in the life of another.”

I particularly hope the members of the young women’s and women’s divisions will engrave in their hearts the conviction of this great individual who triumphed over so many difficulties.

### **May you always enjoy excellent health and fulfilling lives!**

Walt Whitman, a favorite poet of mine, sings,

*Pioneers! O Pioneers!  
All the past we leave behind,  
We debouch upon a newer mightier world, varied world,  
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the march.*

I pray that this summer training course will be a significant, historic event for all of you, the true pioneers of kosen-rufu. Please convey my best regards to all the members in your respective areas.

May you always enjoy excellent health and fulfilling lives! May you live long and

accumulate good fortune each day. I am daily praying for your happiness.

To commemorate this training session, I want to present you with several poems. First, to the Hokuriku members:

*Noble network of Hokuriku  
That possesses  
The golden spirit  
Of kosen-rufu—  
Your future is assured.*



*Never forgetting  
The dauntless  
Faith of Soka,  
Construct a splendid palace  
In great Hokuriku.*



*With my whole heart  
I pray and pray  
For the excellent health, longevity,  
And the joy-filled journey  
Of all my friends in Hokuriku.*

And for the Shinetsu members:

*Year  
After year  
You traverse  
Countless mountains and rivers  
Creating a noble history.*



*Forging your lives  
Through cold winds,  
You dauntlessly  
Exert yourselves  
As champions of benefit.*



*Cheerfully  
And brightly,  
Adorn this life  
With great happiness  
As millionaires of victory.*

Thank you again for all your efforts in attending today's meeting. Together let us embark on a fresh journey toward a new world!