

A Network of Hope for the New Century
New Year's Poem by Daisaku Ikeda

Harbinger of the new millennium
emerging from the folds
of the mountain that will be thrust up
by the new century,
first comes light—
the sun is rising.

For 50 years I have lived
only to circle the globe in travel,
to fill the skies with the light of peace,
to erase with that light the shadows of misery
on the face of the earth.

To you, who with me have climbed
the mountains of this century
to you my friends around the world
I call again, now—
it's time to take on the ridges and ranges
of the new century.

Cast a network of hope over the world
again, a thousand times again
in and around society, around yourself.
I call to myself as I call out to you
again and again, wider and wider
to cast lines of hope to the world
and to all of you.

Going westward, traveling eastward,
I have met the ancient civilizations
and called upon the new cultures
for half a century.
I do not believe in the clash of civilizations.
Rather, what I have found hidden in the fissures
are gems in which multitudes have found
that which charms them.
If sought, revealed and illumined
in the light of equality
that I believe is the wisdom in Buddhist thought
they will glow once more
with new life's sheen

regardless of time or the distance to be crossed.
And so believing, I have traveled.
Beyond the iron curtain,
the bamboo curtain as well,
behind the base rock of ideology—
if one searches one finds
the indigenous soul,
a universal light
sparkling on that which is human.

In the West and in the East,
at the crossroads where civilizations meet,
whatever country, whatever people—
the ground on which their culture stands
is underlain with a sparkling gem,
the cosmic spirit scintillating in global time.

If the “mystic” of the mystic law in which I believe
is to revitalize,
then to take each precious jewel
of the multiplicity that is our world’s cultures
and set them into a connected whole,
that they may interact and enrich each other
in a network of values that work
toward the good of all—
that must be my lifework.

Such a network of values
is connected firmly and directly
by the trust and friendship
which you continue to spread around the world.
In it are woven peace and happiness for humankind.

Linking person to person and thought to thought,
plying back and forth on the streams of cultures,
bridging civilizations, the past and the present—
these are our joint venture.

Over the network of hope
broadly threaded with Buddhist love of humanity
is how dawn will arrive,
to usher in the new century in which
suppression will change to freedom,
separation will become fusion,
and confrontation will turn to coexistence.

Seeking to meet friends and fellow human beings
I will continue to travel around the world
because my practice of faith means to create
the mutual understanding between human beings
that is the fulfillment of truth and amity.
All this is ultimately the product of dialogue,
and again dialogue.
Therefore, let's join together
in a last challenge to the mountains of this century,
making our final approach to the summit a happy one,
abundant in hope, as we continue
to engage in fruitful and rich dialogue.

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