

Be True to the People's Trust

SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech at the 5th Headquarters Leaders Meeting held at the Soka University Auditorium in Hachioji, Tokyo, on Nov. 17, 1996, to commemorate Soka Gakkai's Founding Day, Nov. 18.

Today we celebrate the magnificent 66th anniversary of the Soka Gakkai's founding. Heaven and earth are bright and clear, as are the hearts of 10 million fellow members. Your jubilant, confident cheers of victory reverberate in my heart. Thank you!

Everything we have achieved is the result of your efforts and faith. Allow me to express my most profound gratitude and congratulations to each of you, who I hold in the highest esteem.

What profound joy it gives me to report on this glorious celebration to Nichiren Daishonin, first President Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and second President Josei Toda! As their proud disciples dedicated to realizing kosen-rufu, we have soundly defeated the three powerful enemies, I fought fearlessly against the tyranny of oppressive authority and finally opened a brilliant path that will continue on eternally throughout the 10,000 years and more of the Latter Day of the Law.

Let me take this opportunity to once again offer my most heartfelt appreciation to each of you. You have my deepest respect.

An Honor from Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen) University

I have just received the title of honorary professor from Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen) University, one of China's most preeminent and cutting-edge institutions of higher learning. I thank the university deeply for this honor.

This year marks the 130th anniversary of the birth of the university's founder, Sun Yat-sen (also known as Sun Zhongshan; 1866–1925), who is revered by the Chinese as the “father of modern China.” On Nov. 12, which is not only Sun Yat-sen's birthday but the anniversary of the founding of Zhongshan University, celebrations to commemorate these events were held all over China.

Sun Yat-sen firmly believed that the people are the emperor and sovereign. With that unshakable conviction, he embraced the lofty vision to awaken humanity to the goal of world peace.

In one of his lectures, Sun Yat-sen declared: “During the imperial period, a single individual was the emperor, but now that we have democracy, every one of our 400 million people is the emperor. This is what is meant by ‘the people are sovereign.’ This is the true exercise of the people's rights.”²

As a tribute to that conviction, I share the honor I have received from Zhongshan University today with all of you here and with all the SGI members in 128 nations around the globe.

Faith Means Maintaining Trust

Nichiren Daishonin, whose Buddhism we embrace, clearly and irrevocably declared

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that Japan is the disciple of China and Korea (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1272). Japan inherited not only Buddhism but an enormous amount of its culture from China and the kingdoms of the Korean peninsula. We must never forget the tremendous debt of gratitude we owe the Chinese and Koreans. That is the path of true humanity and the way of life of a genuine Buddhist.

In the past, however, Japan forgot this debt of gratitude and treated the Chinese and Koreans with arrogance and contempt, ultimately launching itself down a path of self-destruction.

Faith means maintaining trust and goodwill in the strongest, deepest way possible. Based on such humanism, the Soka Gakkai has formed friendships with people throughout Asia and the entire world. The fact that China trusts us so deeply is proof that the Soka Gakkai is unerringly following the path set by Nichiren Daishonin.

It thus gives me unsurpassed pleasure to welcome distinguished guests from Zhongshan University here today as we commemorate the anniversary of both the Soka Gakkai's founding and the day on which President Makiguchi died in prison a martyr to his beliefs.

In 1905, while living in Tokyo as a political exile, Sun Yat-sen went about his activities quietly and unflaggingly like the flow of a mighty river, gathering around him many able young people dedicated to the liberation of China. He eventually formed the Alliance Society, a revolutionary coalition. Tokyo was thus one of the starting points of his revolution.

At the time, more than 10,000 Chinese students lived in Japan, and most of them were affiliated with revolutionary groups that sought to overthrow the corrupt Qing dynasty. When Sun Yat-sen founded the Alliance Society, the efforts of these various groups were consolidated into a unified force.

Around this same time, the young Makiguchi was teaching at Kobun Gakuin, a school for Chinese foreign students among whom were active members of Sun Yat-sen's Alliance Society. Mr. Makiguchi was then 34, five years younger than Sun Yat-sen. One of his Chinese students, who was impressed with his classes, later translated Mr. Makiguchi's lectures in *The Geography of Human Life* [his pioneering work on the indivisible relationship between people and their environment] into Chinese and published them in China.

The Soka Gakkai's ties with China are truly mystic. Soka University was the first Japanese institution of higher learning to invite foreign exchange students from China, following the restoration of diplomatic relations between China and Japan in 1972.

Passionate Lectures

One of Sun Yat-sen's nicknames was "the Cannon." He was given the name because he was a bold, decisive leader, as unreserved and dynamic as a cannon blast. I fondly recall a journalist, who knew Mr. Toda well, once saying that the latter had resembled Sun Yat-sen in many ways.

I am very happy that members of the Makiguchi and Toda families could join us today. I am confident that our two great mentors are smiling as they watch over us celebrating on this occasion.

As is exemplified by Zhongshan University, any university that remains faithful to the spirit of its founder can continue to grow and develop forever. An organization or body in which the founding spirit remains vital and alive can advance limitlessly.

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Zhongshan University was founded in 1924 — originally under the name, Guangdong (Canton) University — just one year before Sun Yat-sen’s death. Despite suffering from poor health, Sun Yat-sen went to the new university almost weekly. He delivered 16 lectures to the students whom he would entrust to carry on his work to reform Chinese society.

Each lecture was two hours long and devoted to an in-depth discussion on the subject of “The Three Principles of the People” (nationalism, democracy and the people’s livelihood), which formed the core of Sun Yat-sen’s political doctrines.

Sun Yat-sen passionately declared to his students that those who oppressed the people were acting against Heaven and that resisting such oppressors constituted acting in accord with Heaven. In other words, not to fight against despotic authority runs counter to the morally correct path of human conscience. Sun Yat-sen also emphasized that the world’s people must unite to stand firm against those who would rule by force.

This is in complete agreement with Mr. Makiguchi’s and Mr. Toda’s sentiments. Mr. Makiguchi refused to compromise with Japan’s unscrupulous militarist authorities. Even in his prison cell, he continued to insist with dauntless courage that Japan’s invasion of China and the rest of Asia was based on a fundamental perversion of Japanese thought. And he died a martyr’s death in prison for his convictions.

His disciple, Mr. Toda, who shared an indivisible bond with him, also believed that no people of any country should ever have to suffer at the expense of another country. All the world’s people, he cried, must find happiness and prosperity together. He was an advocate of the ideal of a global human family.

Upholding the People’s Trust

The words of Sun Yat-sen’s wife, Song Qingling, who knew the heart of the great Chinese statesman and his devotion to the people better than anyone, come to mind: “We must never betray the people.... We must be eternally faithful to their trust.”³ This spirit — “Never betray the people! Be ever true to the people’s trust!” — is also the fundamental spirit of the Soka Gakkai, one that we must never forget.

As is always the case with great, visionary leaders, Sun Yat-sen’s life was a series of persecutions. After all, persecutions are the proof of greatness. A slanderous pamphlet of fabricated accusations, titled “The Crimes of Sun Yat-sen,” even circulated in and outside of China. At one time, a price was set on his head. Yet he fought on with the spirit to meet every setback with ever-stronger resolve, every obstacle with ever-greater determination.

This is the mark of a true revolutionary, the mark of true greatness. It is the most lofty, noble way a human being can live; it is also the Soka Gakkai way of life.

Recently, a Japanese newspaper reported that research has shown Sun Yat-sen to be a 70th-generation descendant of Sun Tzu, the great Chinese military strategist who lived during the 4th-century B.C.E. Certainly, Sun Yat-sen mastered one of the great tactical lessons of battle — “Let loose with your war cries first and rob the enemy of his strength.”

Our voice costs nothing and is our strongest weapon. Nichiren Daishonin wrote, “Do not spare your voice” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 726). And there are different voices needed for different situations: the clear, resounding voice that declares truth and justice; the strong voice that refutes evil; the bright, confident voice that tells others about the greatness of

this Buddhism; the warm voice that gives encouragement; the sincere, friendly voice that offers praise and words of appreciation to others.

The important thing is that we meet and speak with people widely inside and outside the organization. Especially through actively engaging non-members in dialogue, we can spread a correct understanding of our organization and activities. Acting loudly and brashly in the presence of fellow members but hardly saying a peep to people outside is cowardly and contradictory.

Our voice is an expression of our life force. That is why our voice is so important. It is vital, therefore, that we speak out with confidence, dignity and the courage of lions, and we fearlessly refute — with razor-sharp reasoning — the slanderous accusations leveled against us. This is the path that leads to kosen-rufu's progress.

Youth Defended Their Mentor

Great men and women are always subject to betrayal. In his later years, Sun Yat-sen's very life was imperiled by the treacherous intrigues of rebels. Students and other young people, however, rose up powerfully to protect Sun Yat-sen, successfully expelling the traitors who had caused him so much suffering. Secure knowing his cause was in good hands, Sun Yat-sen died, drawing to a close a tumultuous life.

The Chinese leader had endured enormous struggles for many years. He had taken upon himself the full brunt of all attacks, striving desperately to buy time for the cause of liberation. The emergence of a group of brave, determined young successors was his final triumph. The curtain had risen on the great revolution of Chinese society that was to come.

I feel I know all too well what Sun Yat-sen must have been thinking, as I, too, have been trying to buy time, enduring the unendurable, waiting for youth to rise and shoulder the future. In every age, in every struggle, it is those youth who have inherited the spirit of great leaders or teachers who determine victory.

It is wonderful to be young. Nothing holds a candle to youth — not titles, not wealth. Mr. Toda also always valued young people. Today, there are far too many leaders in society who look down on the youth and seek only to exploit them. One of the reasons that the late Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai was interested in the Soka Gakkai was because I was young. When I first met him in December 1974, I was only 46. And in fact, for some time before that, the premier had been paying attention to the Soka Gakkai.

President Wang Xunzhang of Zhongshan University, a renowned scholar in his field, is also young at 45. He is in fact the youngest head of any major Chinese university.

Illumination Will Come

The great Chinese writer Lu Xun (1881–1936) taught at Zhongshan University. In a newspaper column, he wrote: “There are still many monsters who prefer the darkness, and they may yet produce their dim miasma, but illumination will come in the end, without fail, just as the dawn cannot be held back.”⁴ We are advancing toward the glorious dawn of the century of life that all humanity has been waiting for. Let us all vow to propel the Soka Gakkai and the SGI toward that dawn together — bravely, with pride and dignity, our gaze fixed firmly on eternity.

Thank you!

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1. Three powerful enemies: three groups of people who persecute the votaries of the Lotus Sutra in the evil age after Shakyamuni's passing: 1) lay people ignorant of Buddhism; 2) arrogant and cunning priests; and 3) false saints in league with corrupt secular authorities.
2. Translated from Japanese: *Son Bun to Mo Takuto* (Selected Writings of Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong), ed. Hidemi Onogawa (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1980), p. 246.
3. Translated from Japanese: Yutaka Nozawa, *Son Bun* (Sun Yat-sen) (Tokyo: Seibundo, 1962), p. 238.
4. Translated from Japanese: *Lu Xun, Rojin Zenshu* (Collected Writings of Lu Xun) (Tokyo: Gakushu Kenkyusha, 1986), vol. 10, p. 139.

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