

A Great Castle of People for the New Century

**SGI Deputy President Einosuke Akiya
wrote the following article for the March 1997 'Daibyakurenge,'
the Soka Gakkai study journal.**

The passion and power of youth will create the new century.” These are the opening lines of second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda’s “Precepts for Youth.” In accord with this guidance, it has always been the youth division members who have stood up in the vanguard and opened the path of kosen-rufu. During the time of President Toda, the youth division, headed by the young Daisaku Ikeda, was the force propelling the entire organization.

Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism is the “Buddhism of youth shining like the brilliant morning sun.” It could be said that Buddhism was from the outset a philosophy alive with the spirit of youth. Shakyamuni attained enlightenment when he was in his early 30s; throughout his life he traveled far and wide, tirelessly taking action with youthful exuberance. Similarly, Nichiren Daishonin was 32 when he declared the establishment of his teaching. From the youthful pulse in his heart, a world religion of the morning sun was born.

The future of any organization depends on youthful successors, on whether and how they will uphold and put into practice its philosophy and ideals. Efforts to perpetuate a teaching or belief without capable successors are, the Daishonin says, as meaningless as trying to instruct wooden or stone statues (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 115).

People the world over are watching to see how the younger generation will carry society forward. Entire organizations and countries, too, looking to their very survival, are putting their energy into fostering youth — those expected to chart the course into the coming century. Cuban Minister of Culture Armando Hart Dávalos, who welcomed SGI President Ikeda to Cuba in June 1996, sees international youth exchanges as an important force for democratization. It was based on this conviction that Dr. Hart came to Japan to visit Soka University and the Soka Junior and Senior High Schools in January 1997.

The task of overcoming the various issues that humankind will face in the 21st century can be entrusted only to youth. Professor Hidetoshi Taga of Waseda University, Tokyo, characterizes the present as a time when the global system centering on the nation is fast becoming obsolete — and when people are opening their eyes to the universal value of human life. He further says that the strength of youth lies in their power to initiate change, take constructive action and understand and reach out to people in distant lands living under radically different circumstances. Professor Taga also voiced his sincere desire for the continued success of the international network and wide-range activities of SGI youth.

In his dialogue with SGI President Ikeda, the leading Chinese novelist Louis Cha (pen name, Jin Yong) of Hong Kong said: “The SGI of Hong Kong, upholding Buddhist ideals, has issued calls for cultural exchange and international peace. Because their basic principles are lofty and pure, the group has realized rapid development in Hong Kong.” The SGI of Hong Kong has indeed been lauded for its contributions to society; many people have high hopes for the young people who are at the very core of its activities.

Young people have the power to change the world. And SGI youth division members everywhere are pioneering a new current of humanism, paving the way to an age of the

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people and a century of life. For young people, to play an active role on this global stage is the greatest possible honor. Everything depends on the extent to which our youth, awakened to this keen realization, courageously create friendships and conduct dialogue based on trust with people throughout the world.

Herein lies the mission of today's youth division. Once a person awakens to this grand mission, he or she can without fail champion the cause of kosen-rufu in the 21st century. During one's youth, the important thing is to polish one's inner life. By further training and forging a strong self through heart-to-heart exchanges with people of similar ideals, it is without doubt that we can construct a grand, unshakable castle of capable people for kosen-rufu.

Youth division members are now wholeheartedly standing up in response to the high expectations of the SGI president. And they are once again, with "passion and power" like the youth of our movement's pioneering days, boldly taking the initiative to transform the age. With this clear indication of their willingness and ability to succeed to this great mission, we observe March 16, Kosen-rufu Day — the historic day when Josei Toda entrusted leadership for kosen-rufu to President Ikeda and the youth division.

As we scale the final peak of the 20th century, already we have our sights set on the mountains that lie ahead. What could be more joyful! Deeply reflecting on the significance of devoting our lives to kosen-rufu and of our individual missions for kosen-rufu, let us grow into courageous champions of peace who exultantly ascend from one ridge to the next toward the summit of kosen-rufu in the 21st century.

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