

Happiness Lies in a Solid Self

The following speech by SGI President Ikeda was delivered by Soka Gakkai Vice President Shigeo Hasegawa at the 2nd Nationwide Young Women's Division Leaders Meeting in Tokyo, Feb. 10.

Congratulations on this 2nd Young Women's Division Leaders Meeting! Thank you for traveling from all over Japan to attend today!

Tomorrow, Feb. 11, marks the 97th birthday of the second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda (1900–58).

Like a compassionate and benevolent father, Mr. Toda cared deeply about the happiness and growth of the young women's division members. He always urged them: "Be bright and cheerful! Be pure of heart! Don't be defeated by your weaknesses! Make Buddhist study your foundation!"

How delighted he would surely be to see all of you — your lives shining with intellect and courageous resolve to stand up for truth and justice — gathered at this Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium today!

To celebrate this high-spirited meeting, I will share a few words as an expression of my boundless expectations for your growth and future endeavors.

Tagore Peace Award

I first met my mentor, Mr. Toda, on Aug. 14, 1947. The following day, Aug. 15, India gained its independence. I still vividly remember the announcement of that inspiring news. Fifty years have passed since then.

Recently, India's prestigious Asiatic Society honored me by naming me the first recipient of its Tagore Peace Award. It gives me unsurpassed joy to dedicate this honor to Mr. Toda.

The other day, some members of the young women's division international group presented me with an outline of the Asiatic Society's history they had compiled and translated.

The Asiatic Society was established 213 years ago in 1784. As the oldest academic institute in India, it has contributed greatly to the renewed appreciation of India's cultural heritage and to the country's spiritual revitalization. The Asiatic Society also established India's first modern library, museum and art gallery. Today, the awards the society confers are regarded as the country's highest academic honors.

During the administration of India's third prime minister, Indira Gandhi, the Asiatic Society was officially designated an Institution of National Importance. Known for her abiding love for culture and awareness of the profound value of learning, Indira Gandhi was a truly remarkable leader. She was the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India.

Prime Minister Nehru, incidentally, visited Japan in October 1957, some six months before Mr. Toda died. I cannot forget how Mr. Toda said with great feeling at that time: "I would very much like to meet Prime Minister Nehru. I'm sure we'd get on like a house on fire!"

Making my mentor's heart my own, I have forged friendships with many leaders around the world, including from India.

Living by a Pledge

I would like to share a beautiful story that took place between Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter, Indira, involving her marriage in 1942. At the wedding ceremony, with great dignity and poise, the young woman said her vows in a clear, confident voice. It was a solemn moment. Her pledge included a Sanskrit verse that had been added by her father:

If there are any people in the four quarters of the earth who venture to deprive us of our freedom, mark! Here I am, sword in hand, prepared to resist them to the last! I pray for the spreading light of freedom; may it envelop us on all sides!1

What Nehru wished for his beloved daughter as she stood on the threshold of her new life was not a future of ease and comfort nor happiness for her alone.

“Do not allow yourself to be occupied with such trivial things! You mustn’t hide within your shell! Turn your gaze to the wide world before you! Fight for the freedom of our people, every single one! Fight to the end against the devilish nature of power! Life’s true joy is found in devoting yourself to a great purpose!” — this was the cry that emanated from the depths of this praiseworthy father’s heart.

A life lived by a pledge is truly noble.

This year, my wife and I will celebrate our 45th wedding anniversary. When we got married, Mr. Toda, who was our unofficial go-between, solemnly urged us to dedicate our lives “to accomplishing the great bloodless revolution of kosen-rufu.”

The pink sari worn by Indira Gandhi at her wedding, by the way, was woven from cotton yarn spun by her father while he was in prison. Sonia Gandhi wore this same sari when she married Indira’s son Rajiv, who later became prime minister of India.

Nehru’s spirit — his undying love and compassion for humanity — was passed on to his daughter Indira and, through her, to his grandson Rajiv and Rajiv’s wife, Sonia. That spirit continues to burn brightly in the hearts of their children, Rahul and Priyanka.

Triumphing Over Hardships

When Rahul finished school, he wanted to travel. His father recommended a solo trip to the Himalayas. This was an example of Rajiv Gandhi’s strict fatherly love.

You cannot truly grow if you are always flattered and spoiled by those around you. You must resolve never to avoid hardship. If anything, you should have the spirit to go out of your way to find and challenge difficulties. The ultimate victors in life are those who have undergone and triumphed over hardships.

Life is long. There is no need to be impatient. The important thing is to steadily and surely build a solid self.

Since you uphold faith in the Mystic Law, whatever may happen, you can propel yourself in the best possible direction. I hope you will advance with that conviction.

We have now entered a crucial phase in our ascent of the summit of kosen-rufu for the 21st century. This year is especially important. Everything will hinge on whether you have the energy, wisdom and tenacity of spirit to keep advancing up this great mountain.

Nichiren Daishonin writes, “The wise may be called human, but the thoughtless are no more than animals” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 240). To be obsessed with the latest fads and manufactured images and to let them dominate your life is a shallow way to live. To be concerned only about immediate goals and be constantly swayed by your environment is foolish. I hope each of you will glow with vitality and joy, reflecting the fulfillment that adorns the palace in the depths of your life.

Mr. Toda asserted, “If you base yourself on faith, you can come to terms with things that you can’t come to terms with intellectually.”

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The key is deciding how you will live your life and then devoting all your strength and energy toward that. This is what faith is all about. This is the life of a person who possesses a solid philosophy.

Aiming for the 21st Century

Daughters are like the sun. If a daughter shines brightly, she can illuminate her whole family. Therefore, the important thing is that you shine, no matter what.

Faith is deep self-awareness. Faith is unshakable conviction. Faith is rich character. Faith is a strong sense of responsibility.

In closing, I wish to say to each of you: Without fail, please climb the great mountain of the 21st century during this important time of your youth — and throughout your life. Continue moving forward harmoniously, supporting the young women's division chief and encouraging one another in a spirit of mutual respect.

I am always sincerely praying: May you be blessed with good health! May you be wise! May you have courage! May you be victorious! May all happiness be yours!

WT

1. Sonia Gandhi, *Rajiv* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India [P] Ltd., 1992), p. 20.