

SGI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Only When You Fight Can You Become a Lion King

Congratulations on holding the 4th U.S.–Japan Youth Peace General Meeting! The solidarity of youth division members of the United States and Japan has been expanding year after year through your youthful friendship exchanges. I have been watching over your progress, which I find more reassuring than anything else.

I also express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. David Krieger, president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and a noted activist for the abolishment of nuclear weapons, for having travelled so far to attend today's meeting.

Youth embody hope and passion. There is no retreat for youth; they single-mindedly press forward.

So youth must not be afraid to make mistakes. Their hearts aflame with a sense of justice, youth should never fail to seize the moment, to stand up just as Nichiren Daishonin states: "I ask that my disciples be the lion king's cubs, so as not to be mocked by a pack of foxes" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1589).

The time of youth is a succession of worries — but do not avoid hardship. Youth's only treasure is having the heart to take full responsibility and challenge yourself with a cheerful spirit. The Greek poet Aeschylus once sang, "Suffering is the only way to learn." And a Japanese novelist once wrote, "Hardship, if accepted fully, makes a jewel out of man."

I ask each of you to not succumb to your weaknesses. Please win in your daily life and surmount your challenges at school or work, thus creating your own record of life, victorious and free of regret.

As Walt Whitman sings, "I live to be the ruler of life, not a slave, / To meet life as a powerful conqueror." I ask you, my trusted youth, to ride over the billows of hardship while singing with strength and cheer your own "Song of Joys."

For 50 years, I have lived to realize the grand ideal of kosen-rufu — that is, world peace as decreed by the Buddha. Embracing my mentor's heart, I have exerted myself to the fullest, as befitting a youth. Not for even one day have I ceased to advance. I have always lived in the same spirit as President Toda, day in and day out continuing a dialogue with him in my heart. This is why I have no regrets.

After all, human revolution is a ceaseless struggle against our own devilish natures. We must not tolerate the demonic forces that try to destroy a human being's goodness. In this burning sense of justice, the spirit of Soka, from the times of first president Makiguchi and second president Toda, has lived. Their great spirit is our supreme pride. Please remember that in their spiritual legacy lie our true freedom and happiness.

The Daishonin has taught us the eternal guideline for the accomplishment of world peace and the happiness of all humanity as securing the peace of the land through the propagation of true Buddhism. To the youth division members of the United States and Japan, my valiant heroes of Soka, I present the following passage from the "Rissho Ankoku Ron," the Daishonin's admonition to the world: "Rather than offering up ten thousand prayers for remedy, it would be better simply to outlaw this one evil doctrine that is the source of all the trouble!" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 20).

Only when you fight this one evil doctrine can you become a lion king.

I envision you, youth division members, taking leading roles on the grand stage of kosen-rufu and society, while honing sharp swords of compassion and wisdom with which to protect your comrades — the sons and daughters of the Buddha. I entrust humanity in the 21st century to you. With this in mind, I conclude my congratulatory message.

May the young lions of Soka be healthy, glorious and victorious!

SGI President Ikeda

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