

**COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS**  
**To Propagate**  
**JOY**

*SGI President Ikeda, the founder of Soka University, sent the following message to the 3rd graduating class of Soka University of America. The graduation ceremony was held Dec. 17 at SUA's Calabasas, Calif., campus.*

To the members of the 3rd graduating class, whom I consider the treasures of my life and the dawning sun of hope: My heartfelt congratulations on your joyful departure!

I wish also to express my sincere thanks to our distinguished guests, among them Dr. David Krieger of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, who have made the time and traveled great distances expressly to participate in this graduation ceremony.

I also voice my profound gratitude to the faculty and staff who have so warmly encouraged and fostered the students' growth and development. And, finally, permit me to share in the great joy and happiness of the family and friends of the graduates.

As my heart fills with joy at the gallant image of our graduates, vibrant and active on the global stage of the 21st century, I am moved to share my thoughts on three specific points.

The first is: Be world citizens brilliant with the light of character!

One of the core objectives of *soka* education is to develop character. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, originator of this educational philosophy, was convinced that only education that fosters people of real capability can offer a fundamental resolution to the confused impasse in which society is now enmeshed.

All endeavors to create value must be based on the individual and must serve to enhance and bring to fullness the individual's character. For this is the only means by which humanity can advance beyond the present era of military, political and economic competition — marked by hatred and confrontation — and enter an age of humanitarian competition, an age of peaceful coexistence inspired by mutual respect for the unique qualities of each person.

There is no doubt in my mind that each of you will play a key role in ushering in such an era. In his later years, Albert Einstein devoted himself with passionate commitment to the anti-nuclear movement, leaving us these words: "The really valuable thing in the pageant of human life seems to me not the political state, but the creative, sentient individual, the personality; it alone creates the noble and sublime."

I was indeed happy to learn that many of the 3rd graduating class have chosen careers in education. It is my fervent hope that you will learn to bring forth infinite possibilities from within both yourselves and others. And that you will joyfully forge a solidarity movement of value-creating world citizens toward the new century.

The second point I want to emphasize is this: Be people of wisdom and courage, always on the side of the ordinary citizen!

To live among the people, to share their joys and sorrows, to struggle on their behalf — this is the grand, proud path of *soka* education. A life shared with the people is filled with strength and vitality. A way of living firmly rooted in the lives of the people will never know stagnation or deadlock.

For it is in ordinary people that we can find an unrestrained, timeless wisdom that transcends all limitations. Here also we find a deep, passionate yearning for peace. And it is in the lives of the people that we discover vitality welling forth ceaselessly, with ever-undiminished freshness.

Pearl S. Buck was an extraordinary woman, a writer of enormous gifts, who worked to

link East and West. In her acceptance speech on receiving the Nobel Prize in literature, she expressed her profound appreciation for literature born and nurtured in the “good earth” of the people. The people, she declared, are “sounder judges than anyone.” And she movingly described how she had learned to write for them.

It is my hope that each of you will value your bonds with the people, that you will live in the rhythm of their lives. Develop your capacities and talents so that you may serve as stalwart guardians of their happiness.

It was Mr. Makiguchi’s credo that those who lack the courage to be an enemy to evil cannot be a friend to good. I hope that, bearing this in mind, you will advance with pride and dignity along the grand path of humanity.

Third, I urge you to continue to scale, with courage and determination, many peaks of victory in life.

Over the course of a lifetime, we are certain to encounter the storms of trial, to fall prey to a sense of failure or disappointment. I hope, however, that, as champions of value creation, you will never abandon the challenge of your choosing, that you will continue your ascent of those lofty peaks with unflagging courage, energy and perseverance.

As Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first prime minister, so trenchantly stated: “The higher one goes the more laborious becomes the journey, and the summit recedes into the clouds. Yet the climbing is worth the effort and has its own joy and satisfaction. Perhaps it is the struggle that gives value to life, not so much the ultimate result.”

So long as you struggle to advance, you will develop your strengths and abilities, even if you do not reach the peak immediately. It is exactly this training that releases your vitality and strength to take on the challenge of further ascent.

Therefore, I urge you: Continue to advance, step by step! Never, ever, give up hope!

The patience to wait wisely, steadily bringing the time and conditions to ripeness — this capacity holds the key to a life finally victorious.

I will close by quoting a few lines from the great Chilean poet of the people, Pablo Neruda, whose works I know are also loved by Dr. Krieger. In this way, I voice my prayers for the limitless growth and health of the members of the 3rd graduating class as you set off to be great leaders of the next century.

*I wish to give to the people,  
the gift of the earth,  
for I have learned, in battle,  
that it is my mission  
to propagate joy.*

**WT**