

SIGNIFICANT DATE: May 3: Soka Gakkai Day
The Instant Your Destiny Changes
By MARK KAPLAN, San Francisco correspondent

None of you who declare yourselves to be my disciples should ever be cowardly,” writes Nichiren Daishonin (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 176). This to me is the essence of May 3, Soka Gakkai Day.

There is a Buddhist fable about a small bird determined to save her burning forest. Without regard for the impossibility of the task, she plunges into a nearby river, soaks her feathers, and then rushes to the fire to shake droplets of water on the flames. Over and over, she repeats her efforts, determined to extinguish the fire, but the fire rages on.

Her strenuous efforts attract the attention of a Buddhist god who watches and is moved to tears by the little bird’s determination. One of the god’s tears falls on the fire and completely extinguishes it.

The point of this story is that with unwavering determination we can accomplish anything. We might not always know exactly how something is going to work out, but by chanting furiously and implementing the best plans that we can think of, the forces in the universe will rally behind us and something, often completely unexpected, will lead to the accomplishment of our goal.

For me, May 3 is the day of unwavering determination. On May 3, 1951, President Toda was inaugurated as the second president of the Soka Gakkai. Although it is difficult to ascertain exactly how many members practiced at that time, only 3,080 members signed the petition supporting Josei Toda as the second president (see *The Human Revolution*, vol. 5). Yet in less than seven years President Toda succeeded in building the organization to more than 750,000 households.

This is even more remarkable when you consider that, earlier, in the first seven years after Josei Toda’s release from prison, the organization’s growth was modest at best. What changed in 1951?

In his essay “The History and Conviction of the Soka Gakkai,” President Toda answers this question by saying, “I must have lacked the necessary confidence.” He goes on to say that although he still lacked confidence, he as well as each individual of the Soka Gakkai had finally, in 1951, resolved to dedicate his or her entire life to kosen-rufu. Each had awakened to a great mission as a Bodhisattva of the Earth and had a deep collective conviction. Up until that time Josei Toda had been distracted by financial problems, but in 1951 he decided to focus exclusively on kosen-rufu, confident that his personal financial problems would be resolved.

This same conviction was shared by everyone at the inauguration, together, in unison. *The Human Revolution*, vol. 5, describes this scene: “Among them there must have been some who were suffering from illness, some haggard from fighting poverty, some living in the depths of hell, and others deep in the abyss of total suffering. This very moment, however, gave them the intuition that the direct path to shattering their binding karma lay in devoting their lives to faith while surmounting their troubles” (p. 10).

It was a similar intuition that led Daisaku Ikeda to accept the presidency of the Soka Gakkai on May 3, 1960.

In 1960, he was still a defendant in the court case over the 1956 Osaka Election Campaign, and a conviction seemed inevitable. If the president of the Soka Gakkai was convicted, it would cause tremendous trouble for the Soka Gakkai. But if he didn’t accept the presidency, the organization would continue to flounder. He had to act, and he did so by courageously taking the presidency.

Title: The Instant Your Destiny Changes
Subject: World Tribune 04/10/98 n.3186 p.1 WT980410p01 San Francisco, California
Author: Mark Kaplan
Keywords: California Changes Dates Destiny Francisco Gakkai History Instant Kosen-rufu News
Significant Soka Tribune World Your

For both Mr. Toda and Mr. Ikeda, then, accepting the presidency was an amazing act of courage and faith. We can take that same kind of action on May 3. We can say, “This May 3, I will dedicate my entire life to kosen-rufu.”

In his *Lectures on the “Expedient Means” and “Life Span” Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*, President Ikeda writes:

Our single-minded determination for kosen-rufu, and that alone, creates the “time.” “That time” is when we set our lives in motion, when we stand up of our own volition and by our own will and strength. “That time” is when we summon forth strong faith and take our place on the grand stage of kosen-rufu.

“Goethe writes, ‘The moment alone is decisive; fixes the life of man, and his future destiny settles.’ ‘That time’ is the moment you resolve from the depths of your heart: ‘Now I will stand up and fight!’ From that instant your destiny changes. Your life develops. History begins. (vol. 1, p. 33)

Let’s begin a tremendous history for ourselves, for America and for the world this May 3!

WT

Title: The Instant Your Destiny Changes
Subject: World Tribune 04/10/98 n.3186 p.1 WT980410p01 San Francisco, California
Author: Mark Kaplan
Keywords: California Changes Dates Destiny Francisco Gakkai History Instant Kosen-rufu News
Significant Soka Tribune World Your