

SGI President Ikeda's Essay
Nothing Fake About the Kansai Spirit
By DAISAKU IKEDA, SGI President

Why are the SGI members in Kansai so remarkable?
Because they don't just wait for instructions — they take the initiative.
Their personal commitment to work for kosen-rufu is what motivates them.
'People from Kansai don't trust show-offs, phonies or big talkers,'
SGI President Ikeda writes in this essay.

Ever-victorious Kansai is the star of the Soka Gakkai. Being ever victorious is the eternal and indestructible tradition of Kansai, and the Kansai spirit is known throughout the world as the finest example of the Soka Gakkai spirit.

Why is the Kansai organization so strong? Why has it been able to continue writing a history of unending victory over the decades? Let us examine these questions as we approach July 17, Osaka Day.



On July 17, 1957, I was released from the Osaka Detention House. A by-election for a Upper House seat in the Osaka district had been held in April that year. I had been in charge of campaign activities for the Soka Gakkai-backed candidate in that election.

A year earlier, the victory of a Gakkai-backed candidate from the Osaka district in the Upper House elections had taken the nation by surprise. The political establishment began to fear the appearance of people power.

During the campaign, there were some individual Soka Gakkai members who violated the election law. The authorities decided to use this as an opportunity to attack the Soka Gakkai. They set their sights on me, arresting me on July 3. But as the trial would later prove, the charges they pressed against me were completely false.

While in custody, I was subject to extremely harsh interrogation. Though I presented myself to the authorities voluntarily for questioning, they handcuffed me and paraded me in public. They questioned me relentlessly day after day, for hours on end, far into the night. They threatened me, too, saying that unless I admitted to the charges against me, they would arrest Mr. Toda, who was very ill and weak.



The day I left prison, I attended, with Mr. Toda, the Osaka Rally held at the Nakanoshima Chuo Civic Hall. I was determined to prove my innocence in court, and I knew my battle had just begun. It was raining very hard that day. Thunder roared and lightning ripped savagely through the dark clouds. My words to those gathered that day were very brief. I simply called on them to fight with me against this injustice with absolute confidence that those who sincerely practice the Daishonin's Buddhism will triumph. Actually, Mr. Toda had cautioned me quietly beforehand not to talk too long or get carried away by the heady emotion of the moment.

Kosen-rufu is a struggle that we must win without fail. It is a struggle of good against evil, right against wrong. My brave fellow members, who spent many sleepless nights — taking my arrest as if it were their own and filled with anger and resentment toward the actions of the authorities with their insidious motives — came to realize this keenly.

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They responded to my cry with wholehearted applause, and they vowed in their hearts: “Buddhism is a struggle to win. We mustn’t lose. We cannot allow ourselves to be defeated!”

And that was the beginning of the indomitable, ever-victorious Kansai spirit.



Once these courageous members made a firm resolve to win, they never complained or grumbled, no matter how tough the situation became. The greater the difficulties they encountered, the brighter their fighting spirit burned. They overcame every obstacle in their path and continued on to their moving victory.

The rain-drenched Kansai Culture Festival held in the midst of a storm at the Koshien Baseball Stadium in Osaka [1966] is another symbol of that invincible spirit. The Kansai members treated the pelting rain as part of the performance, and their mud-splattered uniforms became the robes of majestic champions alight with the golden flame of a powerful determination to win.

That same Kansai spirit has been passed on from parent to child, elder to youth. No other region places such great value on its own tradition.



The Kansai members do not wait for instructions and then simply do as they’ve been told. The personal commitment and resolve of each individual member to work with me for kosen-rufu is what motivates them. This inner-motivated spirit is what makes them so strong.

Nothing stands between us, no barrier separating our hearts. That is how the Soka Gakkai should be. No matter what tribulations I have faced over the years, the love and support that the Kansai members have always so generously extended toward me — the affectionate bonds of mentor and disciple — have never wavered.

When I became honorary president of the Soka Gakkai in 1979, when a band of schemers were trying to destroy our organization, it was the Kansai members who were the first to spring to action. At a Nov. 18 meeting they designated the 1st Kansai General Meeting, they declared their determination to join me in my struggle. And it was from Kansai that a new tide of kosen-rufu began to sweep the land, vanquishing the oppressive forces that sought our downfall.



The Kansai members are strongly unified. Kansai is one. While making the most of the unique features of each area within the Kansai region, they are like one big family that shares a pride in being ever victorious.

What is the key to this unity?

Humanism. People from Kansai don’t trust show-offs, phonies or big talkers. Our leaders in Kansai never succumb to authoritarianism or bureaucracy. They are always themselves, real people who are deeply involved with the members, sharing their sorrows and joys. And when the time comes to fight for their beliefs, they head straight into the fray without a moment’s pause.

This network of trust links each district, chapter and headquarters, and embraces all of Kansai.

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This July marks exactly 20 years since I wrote the lyrics to the Kansai Gakkai song, “Ever-victorious Skies.” Over the years, my fellow Buddhists in Kansai have sung this song enthusiastically and kept the banner of victory waving on high.

Our fellow members outside Japan say, “Look to Kansai to learn about faith!” Kansai is now a model for the world. The 21st century will be the century of Kansai.

Kansai, let us join together again and embark on a new struggle for human rights, a new struggle for the human spirit, and work toward another brilliant victory.

May the Kansai spirit live on forever! May Kansai, the golden citadel of the world, endure for all time!

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