

EXCERPTS

Triumph In the Final Chapter of Life

SGI President Ikeda attended a conference with SGI General Director Eiichi Wada and representatives from throughout Japan as well as Brazil, Mexico, the United States, Canada, Thailand and Peru, held in Tokyo, July 26. The SGI leader emphasized the importance of how we live the final years of our lives.

- Ultimate victory in life is determined by the quality of our final years, not by the successes and setbacks we encounter along the way. President Toda also stressed this point strongly. Some people enjoy favorable circumstances in their youth and middle age, but end their lives in suffering and agony. Such a life is one of defeat.

- There are people who put on airs because their children are studying in a foreign country or have been admitted into a prestigious university. However, viewed from the standpoint of Buddhism, truly worthy of respect are the ordinary members who are working tirelessly, without fanfare, to spread the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin to realize peace for all. No matter how exciting or impressive the course you may decide to pursue in life, if you forget to work for kosen-rufu, it will ultimately have no meaning. It is also an unfortunate fact that there are many people who forsake their faith due to self-conceit and vanity and, as a result, experience great suffering in the final chapter of their lives.

- The Buddhist Law is very strict. There are people who have gained position and prominence due to the support of their fellow SGI members and have then forgotten their debt of gratitude and forsaken their faith. Failing to repay the immense trust and expectations everyone placed in them, they have fallen victim to their self-centered egos and grown corrupt. Such individuals have without exception come to a wretched end. The family members of such individuals also suffer great misfortune. There are many examples that clearly attest to this.

- Our SGI activities represent the true Buddhist practice of the modern age. Those who sincerely strive in their SGI activities and selflessly devote themselves to kosen-rufu end up leading truly admirable lives and enjoying genuine happiness without fail. Those who work hard in the organization shine as victors. The true lifeblood of faith of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism exists nowhere apart from our organization for kosen-rufu. I hope you will always remember this.

- I once suffered such poor health that even President Toda observed that I might not live past 30. However, as you all know, I turned 70 this year in remarkably good health. I have undertaken wide-ranging activities for peace on a world scale. This is all the immense benefit of practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism.

- When President Toda was experiencing grave financial troubles, I was the only person who continued to stand by him. I changed all my plans to attend a university and supported him 100 percent. There was no other way to safeguard the Soka Gakkai or the future of our kosen-rufu movement. The central focus of my life all these years hasn't been myself; it has always been President Toda. I have made the path of mentor and disciple the core of my existence. I have to date received 55 honorary doctorates and professorships from

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universities around the world. I am confident that all these honors are the result of my decision to gladly abandon my dream to attend a university in order to support my mentor all those years ago — the profound workings of the law of cause and effect.

- I wish for all of you to look at my achievements as an example of how great a life dedicated to kosen-rufu can be. I also hope that you will lead lives of great victory, your final chapters adorned with brilliant triumph.

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