

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MAY 5 SPEECH SUCCEED IN EVERYTHING!

President Ikeda tells junior high and high school division members to 'never be defeated, no matter what! Live your lives brightly and cheerfully! Succeed in all things, with boundless strength and fortitude!'

I hear that all of you are model sons and daughters! Congratulations! And I hear that every one of you is an excellent student! Congratulations again!

Including those who will view this meeting later via satellite throughout Japan, a total of 500,000 junior high and high school division members will participate in this gathering. I want to store the names of all the participants in a special monument for posterity. I propose that this monument to the leaders of the 21st century be erected near Soka University's new Central Tower.

Today, May 5, is officially recognized as Children's Day in Japan, but I have come to feel that this is not the proper name for such an auspicious day. I think some better names would be Leaders of the 21st Century Day, the Day of the Young Men and Women of the 21st Century or the Day of Youth. We should try to come up with a new name with significant meaning.

Children, after all, are individuals in their own right. They are frequently very mature. In contrast, there are many adults who act childish and immature. I consider all of you much more admirable than such grown-ups.

Whether you become happy or unhappy is solely up to you.

Some of you may have lost your parents. I say to those of you who have no father: Please live with the spirit that "I will be the father of my family," and take good care of your brothers and sisters.

And to those of you who have no mother, I say: Please live with the spirit that "I will be the mother of my family." You will only feel unhappy if you give in to your loneliness, become depressed and look glum. Whether you become happy or unhappy depends solely on your inner determination; it's a matter of making a decision.

Remember that there are many families where parents and children live together but are constantly arguing with one another. Things won't be perfect just because you live with both parents.

There are many great people who have grown up in families with no parents. No matter what your circumstances, I want you to become people who can declare, "I am the happiest person in the world!" Please develop yourselves into such strong individuals.

There may be some of you who are not getting good grades in school right now. For those who fall into this category, please study with all your might. By doing so, your grades will definitely improve. The most important thing is your inner resolve.

Some of you also might wish that you could have been born into a wealthier family. However, if, from the time you are very young, you are always eating fine food and wearing expensive clothes, it's highly unlikely that you will become a person of depth and substance.

To be ruled by one's desires is to fall into the path of Animality and eventual ruin. This is

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too sad. How much more exhilarating it is to become great individuals through struggling hard amid less-than-comfortable financial circumstances!

When you grow up, you can get a job that allows you to earn enough not to have to worry about money. One of the things you have to learn now is patience. I also hope that all of you will understand and appreciate the struggles your parents are going through. If you can do that, you are an adult.

It's important to chant with firm resolve, until you've solved your problems.

I am sure that there are some of you who have been bullied at school. But the important thing is not to be defeated by such cowardly bullying. I hope you will have the sense to make friends with good, decent people and unite with them.

If the teachers at school do not do anything to deal with the bullying, please consult your mothers and fathers and the various leaders of the junior high and high school divisions. I, too, will protect you. Remind yourself that you have the support of 10 million SGI friends behind you.

You must never suffer on your own. There is absolutely no need for it.

It is also most important for you to chant — to chant with firm resolve, until you've solved your problems. Daimoku is the most powerful weapon there is, and everything will begin to move in a positive direction if you chant to the Gohonzon.

Never use violence against your parents. There is nothing more sad or pitiful than domestic violence, and we must never let it happen in our homes.

Whether your grades are good or bad, please be sons and daughters who cherish your parents. Be resolved to do something nice for them in the future, when you are grown up. I hope that you will have such beautiful families.

In any family, parents always nag their children, shouting: "Hurry up!" "Turn off the television!" This has been an unchanging pattern since time without beginning! Please use wisdom to avoid upsetting your parents. Make an effort to bring them joy and comfort, and try not to fight with them. OK? [The meeting hall resounded with a big "OK!"] I hope that all of you will answer in this same fashion when you're at home, too!

Faith is the propeller that moves our lives ahead.

My wife, who is here today, began practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism when she was a fourth-grade student. It was during World War II, and her family was constantly persecuted and harassed by local military officials and abused and slandered by neighbors. Even amid such difficult circumstances, my wife — as a young trailblazer of what has today become the junior high and high school divisions — attended Soka Gakkai meetings and did Gakkai activities with her mother.

Based on her experiences, she later shared the following viewpoint with our three children: "Before going out to play, you're in high spirits. But you often come home afterward feeling exhausted and drained. In comparison, before going to a Gakkai activity, you may not feel so excited, but afterward, you always come home feeling enriched and uplifted. Joy wells up inside you, and you are left with a great sense of fulfillment."

This is the world of faith. I am sure that you would probably agree with my wife's observations. Faith exists in order to help us improve ourselves. It exists so that we can create

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and generate hope. Faith is a propeller — the propeller that moves our lives forward. Everything in our practice exists for our growth.

Many people go through life aimlessly, agonizing over what course of action they should take. Buddhism is the law of life that allows us to stand up resolutely and advance along on our chosen path, brightly and correctly, without wasting any effort.

The sun rises in the east. Summer follows spring. Such phenomena, too, accord with an unchanging law. The earth revolves around the sun, and the solar system itself is moving at an enormous speed.

There is something — a wondrous rhythm, a great law of the universe — that moves all things in the cosmos with well-ordered precision. It is the Mystic Law. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is this great law of the universe. It is not something that someone just created.

Therefore, living in accord with the Mystic Law is the most correct way to live. That is why it is so essential to embrace the correct teaching, the correct faith that expounds this great law of the universe.

Our personal development contributes to the development of society and the world.

There are people who may possess great scholarship but who suffer from ill health. There are people who are brilliant but are mean and spiteful. There are people in high positions who may inflict suffering on many good, decent people.

Those who incite people to war are a case in point. There are people with prestigious educational backgrounds who look down on others, their arrogance causing them to be disliked and rejected.

Please uphold the correct law in order to develop yourselves into fine, upstanding human beings. This is a basic tenet of the SGI. We practice Buddhism for our growth. Our personal development contributes to the enhanced welfare of society and the world.

If we plant a tree, it will flower and bear fruit. In the same way, one person is important. Everything starts with one person's human revolution.

We are fortunate to have with us today guests of outstanding intellect and character: Professor Stuart Rees of the University of Sydney in Australia, the land of hope; Professor Majid Tehranian of the University of Hawaii, that lovely group of islands in the Pacific; and Ambassador Zephyr Mutanguha and his wife Odette of Rwanda, a country that will help open wide the Century of Africa, of which I have often spoken.

A little earlier, together with all of you, my beloved successors and leaders of the 21st century, I humbly accepted two peace-related awards from institutes at the University of Sydney and the University of Hawaii, both world-renowned, venerable places of learning. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude for these solemn honors.

In their speeches today, our distinguished guests presented a global outlook on life, in addition to revealing a profound poetic spirit. Their richly stirring words flowed forth like the refreshing waters of a beautiful river.

All great people fight momentous struggles.

When he was about your age, Iranian-born Dr. Tehranian began to speak out for the sake of peace and justice. Later, while studying abroad at Harvard University, he threw himself into the movement to bring democracy to Iran, his native land, as a result of which he was

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followed by the secret police. When he returned to Iran, he was immediately taken into custody by the police — right in front of family members who had come to pick him up at the airport.

All great people and people who are bound for greatness are fighting momentous struggles. None of them is idly wasting time. Dr. Tehranian was soon released from custody, but for the next seven years, he was constantly kept under police surveillance.

Those walking the correct path will be spoken ill of and persecuted exactly because they are doing what is right and just. This is an unchanging pattern throughout history.

The Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, which I founded three years ago, is working to bring the world's civilizations closer together through dialogue. Under the strong leadership of Dr. Tehranian, it has quickly become an internationally recognized peace institute.

I am filled with joy that the name of my mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, has become known throughout the world as a symbol of peace. As a direct disciple of President Toda, there is nothing that could make me happier.

Working hard for others' happiness is the best way to make peace.

Professor Rees is also well-known as a peace scholar of action. Outstanding individuals are humble and do not put on airs. In contrast, arrogant people are unable to accomplish anything great, no matter how powerful they may pretend to be or how eloquently they speak. As a result, they are not trusted.

Professor Rees does not shut himself off in the ivory tower of learning. He is more concerned for others, for the future of the youth, than himself. He is an important person.

Out of the wish to create a more humane world, he has made valuable contributions to human welfare in many countries, including the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, India and Sri Lanka.

Professor Rees also has close ties with the SGI members in Australia. I understand that he said SGI members gathering and uniting to create value is the exact opposite of the destruction caused by war or the use of arms.

The mothers and fathers of many of you are busily engaged in SGI activities each day. They are encouraging many people and working hard for the sake of others' happiness. These efforts in themselves constitute the most steady, most noble creation and construction of peace.

Although the names of those who carry out such efforts may be unknown in society, I feel they all deserve an award of the highest honor. Where else can you find individuals who work every day of the year for the sake of others? I believe that these people are far nobler than those who merely possess fame and power. I want you to wholeheartedly respect and treasure such hardworking and dedicated parents.

As I mentioned, we also have with us today Rwandan Ambassador Zephyr Mutanguha and his wife Odette, both of whom will be returning home in June at the close of the ambassador's term in Japan. The ambassador is a person of great wisdom and integrity. He has also attended many SGI events. Let us offer our best wishes for the continuing good health of Ambassador and Mrs. Mutanguha and for the ongoing development of Rwanda.

Currently, Satoshi Sasaki, a Soka University graduate who was once a member of the junior high and high school divisions like you, is working to aid the social development of

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Rwanda. For job-related reasons, Mr. Sasaki is back in Japan for a short period of time and has come to participate in today's meeting. The 21st century is the Century of Africa. I wish Mr. Sasaki great success in his endeavors to forge a path for those who will follow in his footsteps in the years ahead.

What brings forth our ultimate strength is nothing but correct faith.

Humanity is sick of conflict and war. We have entered an age in which human beings seek a peaceful world — a society in which human beings can live together happily, with dignity and humanity, working together for the welfare of all. We have entered an age where humankind, until now so foolish, is gradually becoming wiser through the many bitter experiences it has undergone.

This is exactly why having a command of foreign languages will be so important in the future. I want all of you to apply yourselves diligently to your language studies.

It is important to have sound intellect, to continue developing your minds and to polish your sincere humanity. That said, even if you can speak a foreign language but are arrogant — or if you are very intelligent but look down on people from other countries — you will only end up undermining or destroying friendly ties with those countries in the long run. That is folly. There are many Japanese who behave this way.

There is an impressive motto engraved on the crest of the University of Sydney. In Latin it reads, “*Sidere mens eadem mutato,*” which can be translated as “Though the stars are changed, our spirit is the same.”

The constellations vary according to the season, but our spirit remains unchanged, displaying its light of wisdom for all eternity. In other words, there is nothing mightier than the strength of the spirit, which is our very essence. Napoleon said the same thing. What brings forth this ultimate strength is nothing other than correct faith.

I hope that you, the SGI junior high and high school division members, will open a fresh, new millennium for humanity. Hold high the writer's pen of justice and the jeweled sword of this great humanistic life-philosophy.

Finally, together with all the guests attending today's gathering, I say to you, the young scholars of peace for the new century: Never be defeated, no matter what! Live your lives brightly and cheerfully! Succeed in all things, with boundless strength and fortitude!

SGI President Ikeda's speech at a junior high and high school division general meeting commemorating Soka Gakkai Successors Day, held at the Soka International Friendship Hall in Sendagaya, Tokyo, May 5.

Topics for Discussion Meetings

Firm Resolve

From This Speech:

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Gohonzon.

1. What does it mean to you to chant with firm resolve?
2. When you're facing a problem, how do you encourage yourself to chant with this firm resolve?
3. What's the difference between chanting with a firm resolve and a weak resolve?
4. Have you ever had the experience of having to chant for a long time to solve a certain problem?
5. Have you ever had an experience of realizing that daimoku was a lot more powerful than you thought it was?
6. What are you chanting about now?

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