

## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MAY 1 SPEECH WHEN OUR HEARTS ARE ONE

In part 1 of his Soka Gakkai Day speech, the SGI president stresses the importance of the mentor–disciple relationship to the kosen-rufu movement. He says that ‘when the hearts of mentor and disciple are one, there is no prayer that will not be answered.’

Congratulations on May 3, Soka Gakkai Day! Happy Soka Gakkai Mother’s Day! I celebrate this joyous occasion with all my dear fellow members throughout Japan and the world.

Three cheers for the Soka Gakkai!

Three cheers for the women’s division!

Three cheers for all SGI members!

And three cheers especially for the arts division members here today!

How great are our SGI activities! They are filled with song, poetry and dialogue. They give us the chance to study philosophy and expand our circle of friends. We can learn something from all these activities. They are all part of our Buddhist practice.

Each effort we make becomes our strength. Through SGI activities, we naturally develop into well-rounded individuals. There is nothing more wonderful than this.

We have entered a time when dialogue is becoming increasingly important. The time of unilateral commands from above is over.

In the SGI organization, too, it is anachronistic for leaders just to talk to people in a one-sided, top-down manner. We are all human beings, all of us just ordinary people.

Buddhism is based on the principle that everyone is equal. Fellow members reaching out to each other in friendship, linked arm in arm, eager to talk with one another and have enjoyable activities — this, I believe, is what SGI meetings should be like.

### **Please respect and treasure all women’s division members.**

On today’s date, May 1, in 1278, Nichiren Daishonin wrote to one of his followers: “Though the sun and moon may fall to the earth and Mount Sumeru may crumble, there is no doubt that women [who embrace the Lotus Sutra] will attain enlightenment. How encouraging! How reassuring!” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1390).

This is a promise by the Daishonin that women who practice the Mystic Law will definitely attain Buddhahood.

In a letter to another follower, Kubo-no-ama Gozen, the Daishonin writes: “In this turbulent world [rampant with persecution] that conjures up images of howling winds buffeting the grasses and lightning striking terror in people’s hearts, it is most wondrous that you should maintain your trust in this faith. It is said that if the roots of a tree are deep, the leaves will not wither, and if there is a gem in a spring, the water will never run dry. Likewise, your faith is always fresh and resolute, probably because the roots of your faith are deep, and the gem of courageous faith shines in your heart. How respectable and admirable this is!” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1479).

The Daishonin frequently praises the courageous faith of his women followers. Today, they correspond to you, our Gakkai women’s division members. Rest assured that the orig-

inal Buddha is wholeheartedly applauding your efforts! You are foremost in the world, foremost in the universe. I hope that all of you will have a wonderful Soka Gakkai Mother's Day!

Yesterday, I had an informal discussion with some women's division representatives. During that meeting, several proposals were made: 1) "On May 3, Soka Gakkai Mother's Day, all husbands should buy their wives a present!" Gentlemen in the audience, what do you think of that? Since you all seem to approve, I'm tempted to ask you all to report back to me later, and let me know how it went! And don't forget, if you fail to keep the promise you've just made, you'll disqualify yourself as leaders!

In any event, I ask that the men's and young men's division members respect and treasure the women's division members. I hope that you will have the thoughtfulness to give some small gift of appreciation — what it is, doesn't matter. Remember, one's heart is the most important thing.

Three other points came up during that discussion: 2) "On Soka Gakkai Mother's Day, husbands and children must do whatever their wives and mothers say." That means *all day*, from morning till night! 3) "On that day, husbands must pray especially for the health and long lives of their wives." And 4) "On that day, the men will take on responsibility for everything — propagation activities, delivering the *Seikyo Shimbun*, soliciting new subscribers and organizing and running meetings — and give the women a complete rest."

Although I won't have these four points made law here today, I hope that all you gentlemen present will capture their spirit, and put them into practice!

Even on just this one day, please thank the women's division members for their efforts, personally seeing every last one of them off on their way home from the community center or meeting place. Men should have that kind of magnanimity.

### **Everything depends on the central figure's leadership and resolute prayer to the Gohonzon.**

On the beautiful green hill across the way, visible from this Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall, the new Soka University Central Tower has been completed (see p. 1). In the United States, meanwhile, construction on the proud new campus of Soka University of America in Orange County, California, is progressing steadily. Both are the fruits of your sincere support. I wish to humbly thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Yesterday, the construction company formally presented the completed building to the university in a special ceremony. I heard that the high point was the view of the snow-capped peak of Mount Fuji in the distance from the top of the 18-story structure. In the evening, a lovely full moon illuminated this temple of learning. By all accounts, it was a scene worthy of a painting.

Tomorrow, our nearest neighboring planet — the red planet Mars — will make a close approach to the Earth, coming within 54 million miles of us. Many decades ago, I remember writing in my diary [Sept. 7, 1956] of an even closer Mars approach — it was 35 million miles away.

That year, 1956, was the year of our Great Osaka Campaign, which made Japanese society sit up and exclaim that the impossible had happened. I took leadership in that campaign with stand-alone resolve. Everyone said that we were fighting a losing battle, and that we couldn't possibly succeed.

I have always gone to the most difficult places and there taken action, producing the

Title: When Our Hearts Are One (1)

Subject: World Tribune 05/21/99 n.3243 p.8 WT990521p08

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: Daisaku Disciple Encouragement Gakkai Guidance Headquarters Hearts Ikeda Leaders Major Meeting Mentor President Soka Speech Speeches Tribune World

most amazing results. Faith depends on practice. People who fail to make earnest practical efforts, who just get ahead by wiles and cunning, cannot be trusted.

Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda was particularly pleased by our resounding victory in Osaka. “Daisaku, you did a great job!” he said.

By contrast, the Tokyo campaign had suffered defeat. My prayer was focused on only one thing: protecting President Toda. I also staunchly supported my mentor throughout the trying times he faced when his business ran into financial difficulty. I paid back all of the huge debts that it had incurred.

President Toda trusted me from the bottom of his heart. He said: “Daisaku, thank you. You saved my life. Thanks to you, I’ve been able to do my job as Soka Gakkai president.”

As soon as the Osaka campaign was over, I immediately launched into the Yamaguchi campaign. Mr. Toda wanted to secure an important foothold in Yamaguchi, cradle of the Meiji Restoration, and he entrusted the task to me. “You’ll take care of it, won’t you, Daisaku?” “Yes, you can count on me.” It was decided in a moment.

*The Yamaguchi campaign unfolded over a three-month period, including October and November 1956 and January 1957. At the end of September, just before the campaign was launched, the Soka Gakkai had a membership of 459 households in Yamaguchi. By the end of January, the number had increased almost tenfold to 4,073 households.*

There was an increase in the Gakkai’s membership to more than 4,000 households in Yamaguchi. And a total of 11,111 new member-households had been achieved in a single month in Osaka.

Everything depends on the central figure’s leadership and resolute prayer to the Gohonzon. When one prays to the Gohonzon to realize kosen-rufu, to actualize and prove the validity of one’s mentor’s words, to truly bring one’s mentor joy, results will absolutely follow.

The practice of the Daishonin’s Buddhism is dedicated to the realization of kosen-rufu. Genuine faith is found nowhere but in this. Also central to the Daishonin’s Buddhism is the mentor–disciple relationship committed to kosen-rufu. When the hearts of mentor and disciple are one, there is no prayer that will not be answered.

Many fellow members fought alongside me in those Yamaguchi and Osaka campaigns. The circumstances were far from favorable. I had to pay for my own transportation expenses. I worked and strove tirelessly — morning, noon and night. I was 28. I put all my youthful energy into realizing kosen-rufu. Sometimes I was so exhausted when I came home at the end of the day, that I would virtually collapse in the entrance, not even having the strength to take off my shoes.

Looking up at the silvery stars of the Milky Way, I would think, “I’m ready to die, whenever the time comes.” That was the resolve with which I fought. That is how I built one foundation after another for kosen-rufu.

It has by no means been an easy undertaking. It has been a history of hard work and trials. The SGI, today a world-acclaimed organization, has been built through such real-life struggles. I hope that all our young successors will never take this for granted, and assume simply that everything was accomplished easily, without effort.

## **We have chosen to be born on this planet to propagate the**

Title: When Our Hearts Are One (1)

Subject: World Tribune 05/21/99 n.3243 p.8 WT990521p08

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: Daisaku Disciple Encouragement Gakkai Guidance Headquarters Hearts Ikeda Leaders Major Meeting Mentor President Soka Speech Speeches Tribune World

## **Buddhist Law here.**

The Daishonin writes: “The assembly where the Lotus Sutra was preached was as vast as not only the entire major world system, but also four hundred ten thousand million asamkhya worlds. The bodhisattvas, people of the two vehicles, people of the realms of humanity and heaven, and the eight kinds of non-human beings, who populated those worlds, all received the Thus Come One’s decree and cherished the wish to spread the Lotus Sutra in the respective lands in which they dwelled” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 76).

The scale of Buddhist thought is immense; it encompasses the universe. I am sure that, had such eminent thinkers as Bergson, Kant, Hegel and Marx encountered the Daishonin’s great universal philosophy, they would have been deeply impressed and held it in high esteem.

In contrast to the huge scale of Buddhism, how small and insignificant are such things as worldly fame and power!

From among the vast infinitude of space, we have chosen this planet as the place where we wished to be born, so that we might propagate the Buddhist Law. It is vital that we accomplish that mission. Let us ever continue to take bold action for the sake of humanity — for the peace, happiness and prosperity of all.

President Toda tutored me in classical Chinese in my youth. He had quite a fondness for the subject, even though his specialty was mathematics. There are a number of quotes I remember studying with him. For example: “The whole world is defiled. I alone remain pure.” I can still recall President Toda telling me to always have this self-awareness. The only way to live purely is to live based on faith, based on the Mystic Law. This quote is by a poet-statesman named Ch’ü Yüan from the Warring States Period in ancient China.

Another memorable quote was “To the person who has a gentle heart and a tranquil mind, a hundred blessings will gather spontaneously.” These words are from the work *Vegetable Root Discourses*, written by the Ming-Dynasty author Hung Yingming.

In terms of Buddhism, one could say that a “tranquil mind” corresponds to the world of Humanity, while a “gentle heart” corresponds to chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with a fresh, lively spirit. When we chant daimoku in this way, a hundred blessings do come to us quite naturally.

Then there were these lines of verse of the Northern Sung-Dynasty poet Mei Yao-Ch’en: “Why seek fleeting honor? You should seek to be known for a thousand years.”

There was also a quote by the Chinese philosopher Mencius that President Toda strongly urged me to memorize. “Daisaku, make this your spirit!” he said. And I have tried to do just that. It goes, “If one finds oneself in the right, one goes forward even against men in the thousands.”

I studied these and many other classical Chinese writings under my mentor’s tutelage in the “Toda University” in my 20s. For 10 years, President Toda taught me all manner of subjects — chemistry, science, law and Japanese literature, to name but a few.

*Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda’s speech at the 33rd Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, commemorating May 3, Soka Gakkai Day, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, May 1.*

Title: When Our Hearts Are One (1)

Subject: World Tribune 05/21/99 n.3243 p.8 WT990521p08

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: Daisaku Disciple Encouragement Gakkai Guidance Headquarters Hearts Ikeda Leaders Major Meeting Mentor President Soka Speech Speeches Tribune World