

## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JULY 3 SPEECH —PART 2 HUMAN REVOLUTION: THIS RELIGION'S PURPOSE

*SGI President Ikeda explains that the purpose of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is 'human revolution — the inner reformation of each individual.'*

The ancient Greek writer Aristophanes wrote a comedy called *Assembly of Women*, in which women infiltrate the all-male Ecclesia, the Athenian assembly, and take over the government, wresting it from the men's control.

*The Athens women disguise themselves as men and, through their brilliant powers of oratory, form a government of women.*

There is a scene where the women rehearse what they will say in the Assembly. The women's leader, Praxagora, pretending to be a man, makes a bold appeal: "I say that we must hand over the city to the women! For in fact, we use them in our households as administrators and treasurers." She further declares: "So, gentlemen, let us turn over the city to them [the women], and not babble nor inquire about what they intend to do, but simply allow them to rule, considering this alone: That being mothers of soldiers first, they will desire to save them. Next, provisions: Who would send a soldier more [provisions] than the one who bore him?"

Being a comedy, Aristophanes' play is not, of course, entirely complimentary to women, but the fact remains that in any nation, women are sharp observers. They possess great strength. If we pay attention to what women have to say, our families and our societies will flourish. This, I believe, is a truth that applies to all nations.

I have constantly asked that everyone treat the women's division members with the highest respect. But no matter how many times I say it, there are some men who can't break the habit of looking down on women.

Any man in our organization who looks down on the women's and young women's division members, who are striving so hard for kosen-rufu, is utterly unqualified to be an SGI leader. I want to take this opportunity to say once again, with the strongest emphasis, that our male leaders should have supreme respect for women.

Nichiren Daishonin, to an astonishing degree, valued and praised his female followers, who dedicated themselves to their Buddhist practice with utmost sincerity. Respect for women is the spirit of the Dai-shonin's Buddhism.

Anyway, who wants to be on women's bad side? Who wants to be the kind of husband whose wife, after he finally dies, exclaims, "At last he's gone!" It's a pretty sad, miserable way to live. There also seem to be a lot of men who lord it over women in the organization, only to turn into henpecked husbands the minute that they get home.

It is important for men to be big enough to accept and value women. I hope that all our male SGI members from overseas here will take this message back to their home countries.

### **Action without a purpose is the same as groping in the dark.**

During World War II, when Mr. Makiguchi was Soka Gakkai president, the organization

put out a monthly journal called *Value Creation*. Nine issues were published before the military authorities ordered the Gakkai to cease publication, the first issue appearing in July 1941. At that time, Japan had already invaded a number of its Asian neighbors and was heading into the Pacific War, which began five months later [with the December attack on Pearl Harbor].

One of Mr. Makiguchi's lectures, titled "Establishing a Sense of Purpose," was carried in the journal's first issue. In this lecture, Mr. Makiguchi lamented the fact that Japan had come to a dead end and had absolutely no vision of its future.

Makiguchi had a completely different viewpoint from the irresponsible political, military and academic figures of the day, who had no clear perception of where Japan was going. Mr. Makiguchi put his finger on the source of Japan's troubles: a lack of a sound philosophy and sense of purpose. Action without a purpose, he said, is no more than blind groping in the dark. It would never succeed.

Some people back then thought that if they saved up enough money, they would lead a good life and be happy, but that goal, Mr. Makiguchi pointed out, is very different from having a true sense of purpose. A life based on that way of thinking is like starting a journey in the dark, hoping to reach a certain point where at last you might be able to see where you are going.

Nothing can be more uncertain than setting forth without a clear aim. Short-term goals cannot be determined without first setting one's long-term goals, one's ultimate purpose, he declared. And he was right. He had identified a fundamental problem on both the individual and social levels.

### **Only by putting into practice respect for life can we achieve happiness for both ourselves and others.**

How, then, does one discover one's ultimate purpose? Mr. Makiguchi said that this can never be done as long as one remains closed up in one's self, one's family and one's nation. One has to open one's mind to encompass the world!

"Unless you know the world," he says in this lecture, "you will never know your own nation."

*Mr. Makiguchi goes on to say: "The livelihood of the family can never be secure unless the livelihood of the nation is secure. Thus, to secure the livelihood of the family, first the livelihood of the nation must be secured. Likewise, unless the livelihood of the world is secure, the livelihood of the nation cannot be secure."*

When Mr. Makiguchi talks about knowing the world, he doesn't mean its superficial present appearance. "We cannot understand the world unless we understand the eternity of life throughout the three existences of past, present and future," he says. "Only when we understand the law of cause and effect operating across the three existences can each individual secure their present lives. This cannot be achieved through the natural sciences, which can affect only the present existence."

This is why the correct teaching of the Daishonin's Buddhism, which elucidates the eternity of life throughout the three existences, is indispensable. Only by putting into practice the principle of the dignity and sanctity of life can we live with the ultimate purpose of achieving happiness for both ourselves and others. This was Mr. Makiguchi's bold asser-

Title: Human Revolution: This Religion's Purpose (2)

Subject: World Tribune 08/06/99 n.3254 p.1 WT990806p01 Hachioji, Tokyo, Japan 07/03/99

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: 07/03/99 Daisaku Encouragement Gakkai Guidance Hachioji Headquarters Human Ikeda Japan

Leaders Major Meeting President Purpose Religion Revolution Soka Speech Speeches Tokyo Tribune World+m

tion. It is a clear philosophy. Mr. Makiguchi was truly an outstanding teacher. And we are his disciples.

Armed with this ultimate purpose of life, all of you are advancing down the most correct path, just as Mr. Makiguchi urged. You are, in actuality, bringing happiness to people with far greater effect than any celebrity or self-important political leader. I hope all of you will take pride in this fact.

## **The fundamental direction of the Soka Gakkai and Nichiren Shoshu started to diverge in the days of Japanese militarism.**

The Sino-Japanese War got under way in earnest in July 1937. Two months later, Mr. Makiguchi published a treatise, *Practical Experimentation in Value-Creating Educational Methods Through Science and Supreme Religion*. In it, he argued emphatically for the realization of world peace: “There can never be a revolution in education unless it is based on the ultimate truths of Buddhism. And unless education is revolutionized, world peace will never be attained, no matter how many international conferences are held.”

In striking contrast, at the very same time, Nichiren Shoshu’s acquiescence to Japanese militarism was growing daily more evident. The priesthood even held ceremonies to pray for Japan’s victory in its invasions of other nations.

Thus, here was a situation where the Soka Gakkai was dedicated to peace on the one hand, and Nichiren Shoshu was cooperating with the warmongers on the other. Already from that time, there was a marked divergence in the fundamental direction of the Soka Gakkai and Nichiren Shoshu.

Mr. Makiguchi called for a complete restructuring of the human spirit as the means to attain world peace and happiness for all: “The fact is, that unless the very foundation of the human spirit is transformed through a religious revolution, all human affairs will remain in chaos forever.” In other words, a religious revolution, a spiritual revolution, was necessary to put an end to the chaos and disruption of human society, he proclaimed. In all things, it is the spirit, the heart, that is crucial.

Today, at the turn of the century, in a world that lacks a sound philosophy, intelligent and concerned people throughout the globe are beginning to recognize the genius of Mr. Makiguchi’s thought.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi was born in Niigata Prefecture in 1871, exactly 600 years after the Daishonin’s exile to Sado Island, which is also part of that prefecture. And when he was arrested by the wartime military authorities, on July 6, 1943, he was in Izu, another place to which the Daishonin was exiled. The following year, Mr. Makiguchi died in prison, upholding his beliefs to the end.

His true disciple, Josei Toda, who shared his heart as his own, was released from prison on July 3, 1945, 54 years ago today. From that day forward, Mr. Toda began his indefatigable struggle, carrying on Mr. Makiguchi’s legacy and holding high the ideals of the Daishonin’s life philosophy, religious revolution and human revolution. July 3 is a day of immeasurably profound significance.

## **Our movement of peace, culture and education is the best way to make contribute to global society.**

British historian Arnold J. Toynbee, with whom I held a dialogue in the early 1970s, told

me that with the decline of Christianity three new religions were born: 1) faith in progress through science, 2) nationalism and 3) communism. But, he asserted, none of them had proven satisfactory. They had all failed. They could not bring true happiness to humanity.

He then said that he hoped for the emergence of a new higher religion that would provide humanity with the strength to “contend with, and to overcome, the evils that are serious present threats to human survival” (*Choose Life: A Dialogue*, p. 318)

Such was the conclusion of one of the great scholars of our time. And what religion did Dr. Toynbee look to and hold out hopes for? Mahayana Buddhism.

That is how he came to express an interest in meeting me. We met and shared our ideas for a total of more than 10 days in 1972 and 1973, talking from morning until night. How fondly I remember those times!

Dr. Toynbee had immense faith in what the Soka Gakkai was working to achieve. The published record of our dialogue has now appeared in 21 languages, and leaders around the world have read it.

The 21st century is the century in which the Daishonin’s Buddhism — the quintessence of Mahayana Buddhism — will prove itself on the international level.

What is the aim of the Daishonin’s Buddhism? In contemporary terms, human revolution — the inner reformation of each individual. Our movement of peace, culture and education, based on human revolution, is the way to make the greatest contribution to global society.

Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda blazed this trail. My contribution has been to consolidate this path through practical, concrete efforts and to extend it around the world. And you are the pioneers carrying out this momentous experiment in the history of humankind in countries everywhere around the world.

Your efforts may not be flashy. They may not attract the media spotlight. But what you are doing is thousands of times greater than the deeds of any celebrity or warmongering political leader. You are shaping the currents for a complete transformation of human history. I am certain that Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda would have only the highest praise for your efforts.

I want to share a few more anecdotes with you, stories that I hope you will find spiritually enriching. Rosa Parks, the mother of the American civil rights movement, is a precious friend of the SGI. At 86, she remains healthy and active. Recently, Mrs. Parks received the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor from the U.S. Congress.

When my wife and I learned that Mrs. Parks was to receive the award, we immediately sent a congratulatory telegram dated May 3, SGI Mother’s Day. Mrs. Parks sent a reply inviting us to the presentation ceremony on June 15. Unfortunately, we were unable to attend, so we asked Dr. Tomoko T

akahashi, dean of the Graduate School and professor of linguistics and education at Soka University of America, Calabasas, to attend on our behalf. [Dr. Takahashi has translated a number of Mrs. Parks’ books into Japanese].

Mrs. Parks also sent the following message, which I want to share with you: “Please give my very best to President Ikeda and the entire Soka family. I am deeply grateful for their friendship.”

*President Clinton attended the presentation ceremony at the U.S. Capitol and said, “We must never ever, when this ceremony is over, forget about the power of ordinary people to stand in the fire for the cause of human dignity.”*

At an event celebrating the award, held a day before the presentation ceremony, one of Mrs. Parks' favorite poems, "Still I Rise" by African American poet Maya Angelou, was read. The words of the poem rang out as Mrs. Parks sat listening.

*You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may trod me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.*

.....  
*You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.*

.....  
*Leaving behind nights of terror and fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear  
I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.  
I rise  
I rise  
I rise.*

Now, together with Mrs. Parks, the SGI women have risen! You are the hope of the new age. You are the ones who will realize the dream of the new century.

### **We should wake up every morning ready to take on the world.**

Dr. John Kenneth Galbraith, world-renowned economist and professor emeritus of Harvard University, is 90 years old and continues to work at a steady pace. Even now he is writing a new book.

We have been friends for 20 years. I have visited him at his home in Boston in 1993, and he has met with me here in Tokyo in 1978 and 1990. He was kind enough to act as a respondent on the occasion of my second lecture at Harvard, "Mahayana Buddhism and Twenty-first Century Civilization."

Something that Dr. Galbraith said during our 1990 meeting made a deep impression on me. "Next week," he said, "I will be 82, but I think of it as my very first birthday. I believe that the older we get, the more there is to learn."

This is the philosophy of life of the ever-youthful Dr. Galbraith. He also offered his view that having firm goals or plans for the day ahead when we get up in the morning is important in terms of staying alert and healthy.

We should wake up every morning ready to take on the world. In that regard, a vigorous morning session of gongyo and daimoku, which enables us to start the day fresh and energetic, is a wonderful way to stay healthy.

### **Our voice reaches all the protective functions of the universe.**

Reciting gongyo and chanting daimoku are a sublime ceremony in which we bring the microcosm of our lives into harmony with the fundamental rhythm of the macrocosm, the universe. We join our hands in prayer before the Gohonzon and recite gongyo and chant daimoku. Our voice reaches all Buddhas, bodhisattvas and heavenly deities — the protective functions of the universe. Though we cannot see them, they gather round us to keep us safe from harm. We are in their midst.

When we do morning gongyo, we face the east and greet the sun, the representative of all the heavenly deities. And when we do so, we offer those deities a taste of the Law. Then, when we turn to face the Gohonzon again, all the heavenly deities of the universe join us in facing the Gohonzon, palms pressed together in reverence, dedicated to carrying out our wishes.

How awesome is chanting daimoku! All the protective functions — Buddhas, bodhisattvas and heavenly deities — become our allies. That is why we have the power and ability to lead humanity to happiness and also why it is our mission to do so.

### **There is no retirement from faith.**

Dr. Galbraith also said that “the biggest mistake that elderly people make is to retire from their work. Unless you have work to do, you cease to exert physical and mental effort. And it is very bad, especially, to stop exerting mental effort.”

This applies all the more in the realm of faith: there is no retirement from faith. Our SGI activities for kosen-rufu are the greatest mental and spiritual effort. They strengthen our life-force, and as such are a fundamental means for staying in good health.

I asked Dr. Galbraith about his vision for the 21st century, and he answered: “I can state my vision for the 21st century in very few words. This is my personal hope, but I want the next century to be a time when it is a joy to be alive. I want it to be an age when everyone shares a belief that a better life can be lived, that they can attain happiness, and that there is an end to killing.”

He was expressing his sympathy with our movement and its goals, for our SGI is an organization working to build an age in which all people can lead joyous lives. With his words, I want to bring today’s “World Kosen-rufu Conference” to a close.

*President Ikeda then suggested that the Soka Gloria Wind Orchestra play “March Toward the 21st Century” and “Song of World Kosen-rufu.” When the performance began, President Ikeda came down off the stage to shake hands with and offer words of personal encouragement to the visiting overseas members.*

I pray that all of you will stay healthy and active. Please take care of your health. When you return home, please give my best to your fellow members. I am praying for the victory of all our members in Japan and throughout the world. May you each enjoy success, happiness, health, long life and peace and harmony!

*The conclusion of SGI President Ikeda’s speech at the 35th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, July 3 (Day of Mentor and Disciple).*

### **TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS**

Title: Human Revolution: This Religion’s Purpose (2)  
Subject: World Tribune 08/06/99 n.3254 p.1 WT990806p01 Hachioji, Tokyo, Japan 07/03/99  
Author: Daisaku Ikeda  
Keywords: 07/03/99 Daisaku Encouragement Gakkai Guidance Hachioji Headquarters Human Ikeda Japan Leaders Major Meeting President Purpose Religion Revolution Soka Speech Speeches Tokyo Tribune World+m

## **The Power of Prayer**

From This Speech:

Reciting gongyo and chanting daimoku are a sublime ceremony in which we bring the microcosm of our lives into harmony with the fundamental rhythm of the macrocosm, the universe. We join our hands in prayer before the Gohonzon and recite gongyo and chant daimoku. Our voice reaches all Buddhas, bodhisattvas and heavenly deities—the protective functions of the universe. Though we cannot see them, they gather round us to keep us safe from harm.

1. How do you feel when you do a great gongyo or have a great daimoku session?
2. What do you do when you feel your gongyo or daimoku is not up to par?
3. What does it mean to you to be in rhythm with the universe?
4. When we talk about the protective forces of the universe, what are we really talking about?

Title: Human Revolution: This Religion's Purpose (2)

Subject: World Tribune 08/06/99 n.3254 p.1 WT990806p01 Hachioji, Tokyo, Japan 07/03/99

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: 07/03/99 Daisaku Encouragement Gakkai Guidance Hachioji Headquarters Human Ikeda Japan

Leaders Major Meeting President Purpose Religion Revolution Soka Speech Speeches Tokyo Tribune World+m