

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JULY 24 SPEECH OUR STRUGGLE IS FOR JUSTICE

SGI President Ikeda explains that 'our movement for kosen-rufu is a struggle of the utmost justice.'

SGI President Ikeda's speech on the conferment of an honorary professorship from China's Northeastern University at a Soka Gakkai Youth Division General Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, July 24.

I thank all of you for coming today to participate in this meeting despite the hot weather. Socrates said, "Do not regard...living or anything else as more important than justice." Our movement for kosen-rufu is a struggle of the utmost justice.

Napoleon had the maxim "There is no friend more dangerous than a fool." It is just as he says. Has it not been foolish individuals who have caused great trouble and strife for the SGI?

My young friends do not be foolish. Be wise, sound friends.

Napoleon's mother once said that never giving in to adversity is the hallmark of true nobility and dignity. I wish to assert that this indomitable attitude is the essence of faith, of life, and of the SGI.

The finals for the Women's World Cup were held in Los Angeles on July 10. It was a closely contested game between the women's soccer teams of China and the United States. The game was ultimately decided through penalty kicks: America won the championship by one goal with China coming in as runner-up. Spectators in the stadium and TV viewers around the world applauded this magnificent match. The media reported that China's President Jiang Zemin and U.S. President Bill Clinton exchanged messages commending the performances of each other's national team.

The People's Republic of China, which this year celebrates the 50th anniversary of its founding, has shown impressive prowess in sports as in many other areas. In the most recent Olympic Games, Chinese athletes took home no fewer than 50 medals.

Who do you suppose was China's first Olympic athlete, who opened up this golden age in Chinese sports? It was in fact a student of Northeastern University—representatives of which are present today—by the name of Liu Changchun. At age 22, Liu intrepidly took his place at the Tenth Olympiad, held in Los Angeles in 1932. With a time of 10.7 seconds in the men's 100 meters, he was hailed as one of the 10 fastest sprinters in the world.

At the time, the Japanese army had overrun northeastern China, establishing there the puppet state Manchukuo. It was also in this region that the Japanese military engaged in its heinous "strategic bombing" campaign, the first in history. They indiscriminately bombed entire cities, not limiting the attacks to military targets.

The Japanese army also occupied the campus of Northeastern University [in what was then the city of Mukden, now Shenyang, capital of China's Liaoning Province]. In an attempt to gain legitimacy for the puppet state, the Japanese army schemed to use Liu, a student of this university, having him represent Manchukuo at the Olympics.

But the youth steadfastly refused. "I will never become a slave to Japanese power!" he declared, burning with indignation. "No matter how they might try to threaten or induce me, I will not waver in my stance! I will never become a traitor!" At the opening ceremo-

ny in Los Angeles on July 30, 1932, Liu Changchun proudly entered the Olympic stadium as the only athlete representing China.

With the students of Northeastern University as their nucleus, the young people of northeastern China united in the cause of justice. And their resistance to fascism created a ripple effect of like-minded action across the globe.

I extend a hearty welcome to President He Jicheng and the other visiting faculty of Northeastern University. Thank you for undertaking such a long journey.

From its founding in 1923, Northeastern University has developed into a world-renowned “bulwark of science and capable people,” which has become a driving force behind the construction and development of the new China. It is a fine institution, among the first to be designated “one of the hundred most important universities for the 21st century” by the Chinese government.

I wish at all costs to adorn our departure into the new century with eternal friendship established between Japan and China. This is the only sure path for the peace and stability of Japan. Solemnly committed to this aim, I humbly accept the title of honorary professor from the distinguished Chinese university—an honor that I share with my youthful successors gathered here today. Thank you very much.

Dr. He was one of the first students to be sent abroad to study by the Chinese government as part of its “reform and liberation policy.” He came to Japan and did graduate research at the University of Nagoya. And I know for a fact that he was commended by the Chinese government as one of the outstanding representatives of the Chinese students studying abroad who were making important contributions to China.

Attending this meeting today are also students from Cuba and Sri Lanka who are studying at Soka University. They will shortly be returning home, having completed their year of study here.

I know that you, our foreign students, have worked very hard, and I appreciate your efforts. I will continue to pray throughout my life for your good health and successful endeavors.

In the early years of this century, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, founder of value-creating education and first Soka Gakkai president, taught at the Kobun Gakuin, a school in Tokyo for Chinese students. In his classes, he lectured on his original theory of the influence of geography on human life and society. Mr. Makiguchi, then still a young man, had a profound respect and admiration for China.

Even as Japan embarked on its war against China in the late 1930s, Mr. Makiguchi kept striving to make Japanese youth aware of the greatness of the Chinese people and their culture. And, as you all know, he died in prison as a result of his staunch opposition to the Japanese military powers, who were perpetrating a war of aggression throughout Asia and the Pacific.

The spirit of the Soka Gakkai is none other than a spirit of great justice.

Those who strive to learn will constantly grow and develop.

Dr. He’s area of expertise is metallurgy [the science and technology of metals]. He is a leading scientist, who has the distinction of being the first person in China to earn a doctorate in the study of metallurgic reaction processes.

Those who study and strive to learn are constantly growing and developing; their hearts are rich. People who continually seek to acquire new knowledge and understanding are life’s ultimate victors.

Title: Our Struggle Is For Justice

Subject: World Tribune 10/22/99 n.3265 p.4 WT991022p04 Hachioji, Tokyo, Japan 07/24/99

Author: Daisaku Ikeda

Keywords: 07/24/99 Daisaku Encouragement Guidance Hachioji Ikeda Japan Justice Speech Struggle Tokyo

From ancient times, China prided itself on possessing the most advanced iron manufacturing technology in the world. This technology is among the many things that Japan acquired from China.

Nichiren Daishonin writes: “Iron, when heated in the flames and pounded, becomes a fine sword. Wise men and saints are tested by abuse” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 38). People of great character are frequently envied, maligned and attacked.

Through weathering such trials, we can cultivate a self as strong as steel—a self impervious to all harms. When we calmly view things from this standpoint, we need not fear anything.

When we join forces with people of different dispositions and personalities, we bring forth strength we didn't know we had.

A little earlier, I accepted from our Chinese guests some commemorative items that were made of a premium titanium alloy developed by Northeastern University's metallurgical research institute. I express my profound gratitude for these sincere gifts. Also, I propose that these items be included among the treasures of Soka University.

Titanium alloy is strong, lightweight and highly resistant to corrosion. Many have hopes for it being a basic material of future civilization. Today, titanium alloy is used in space-ships and rockets.

When an alloy is made from titanium through the addition of other elements such as aluminum, the unique properties inherent to titanium are brought out and enhanced to the fullest, producing a metal that is even stronger than titanium itself. Similarly, in human society, when we join forces with people of different dispositions and personalities, we can bring forth new and often unexpected strength and potential. This is a key point.

What is vital in these confused, chaotic times in which we live? We need a solid philosophy and sense of purpose that boldly focuses and directs everything toward the happiness of the people. We also need good friends. Those who have friends with whom they can share common ideals and aspirations possess limitless strength.

Working to benefit others and society is like climbing a steep mountain.

The city of Shenyang, where Northeastern University is located, was also the scene of a major battle during the Russo–Japanese War of 1904–05. Many innocent Chinese civilians were caught up in this conflict and became victims of the war between these two foreign powers. Six years after the attack on Shenyang, a young teenager was brought to the devastated battlefield by a friend's grandfather. The old man, his heart filled with bitter memories, told the youth: “What I regret most of all is that we were powerless to do anything as they trampled over our beloved country! We look to you young people to stand up to see that justice is done.”

That youth was the young Zhou Enlai, future premier of China, who spent three years during his teens in Shenyang. Zhou stayed true throughout his life to the determinations he made in his youth.

Already, 25 years have passed since my meeting with Premier Zhou. Although he was seriously ill at the time, his eyes had a youthful blaze, shining with great passion.

Leading a frivolous, self-centered and irresponsible existence might seem comfortable and carefree. To use an allegory, it is like relaxing at the foothills of a mountain. In contrast, actively dedicating our lives to a great teaching and working to benefit others and

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society is like climbing a steep mountain. There will be storms, obstacles and sheer cliffs along the way. Such a life is a succession of win-or-lose struggles that will not permit the least carelessness.

The only way to succeed is to strive to the end with sincerity, tenacity and unflagging spirit.

What was one of the pseudonyms that Premier Zhou used while engaged in his transcendent struggle to construct a new China? It was Bi Cheng, which literally means certain success. “The final leg of our journey will most likely be fraught with difficulties more painful than any that we have experienced so far,” he said. “But we simply have to overcome them.” This is truly well said.

Once we have embarked on an enterprise, we must have a firm resolve to see it through to the finish. We must not become discouraged, lose heart or give up along the way. Nor should we let ourselves be carried away by emotion or become consumed by strategy.

The only way to succeed is to strive to the end with sincerity, tenacity and unflagging spirit. This is the kind of person I want each of you youth division members to become.

The school song of Northeastern University, which has been sung through many a dauntless spiritual struggle, goes in part:

With love for our alma mater,
Love for our hometown,
Love for our country,
And love for humankind,
We hope to finally achieve
The goal of world peace.
If we should have such an
important mission,
How can we help but exert ourselves vigorously?

Last year, Northeastern University, which has produced more than 120,000 outstanding graduates—each one possessing an important mission—marked its glorious 75th anniversary. The Soka University students and I extend our heartfelt wishes for the eternal prosperity of your venerable university.

Next year, the year 2000, will mark the 70th anniversary of the Soka Gakkai’s founding as well as the centennial of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda’s birth. And, on a personal note, next year it will be 40 years since my inauguration as third Soka Gakkai president. It will also be the 25th anniversary of the SGI’s founding.

The British historian Arnold Toynbee expressed in our dialogue that East Asia, and China in particular, would lead the way in ushering in the dawn of an age of peace for global human society. Joining hands with the faculty and students of Northeastern University, which is like a morning sun embodying this hope, we in the SGI will advance, burning with the ideals of dedication, pursuit of truth, unity and creativity. Further, we solemnly promise to support the brilliant advance of culture and education on into the 21st century.

Thank you very much!