

**THERE IS NO GREATER PRIDE THAN LIVING FOR KOSEN-RUFU  
A RECORD OF MY LIFE  
BY DAISAKU IKEDA**

**This is the first installment of SGI President Ikeda's new memoir series, 'A Record of My Life.' He explains that 'the record of my life resides only within the Soka Gakkai. There is no greater pride than living a life dedicated to kosen-rufu throughout the three existences of past, present and future.'**

To wait for the right time. To make the right time.... The establishment of the SGI on Guam in January 1975 was a watershed in the full-fledged spread of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism throughout the world. Almost a quarter-century has passed since that time.

Who could have predicted then the global scope and development our movement has achieved today?

I made that visit to Guam the starting point of an essay series titled "A Record of My Life," which was serialized in the Soka Gakkai-affiliated monthly magazine *The Third Civilization* from its April 1995 through June 1999 issues. I endeavored to set down faithfully, without embellishment, a record of my life and the significant events that happened along the way, in chronological sequence.

My life is kosen-rufu. Hence the essays quite naturally portray the dynamic progress of our movement to promote peace, culture and education.

That first series of "A Record of My Life" comprised 51 essays, concluding with an account of my visit to the Dominican Republic in February 1987. When I finished writing the essays for that series — which I thought of as part one of a longer, ongoing series — I set down my pen for a short interval. Now, at the request of many readers, I take up my pen once more to continue part two for serialization in the *Daibya-kurenge*, the Soka Gakkai's monthly study journal.

In any event, the record of my life resides only within the Soka Gakkai. There is no greater pride than living a life dedicated to kosen-rufu throughout the three existences of past, present and future. I challenge myself again today to record another page.

**We must avoid being at the mercy of science and technology.**

Recently, there has been a great deal of talk about the Y2K computer problem, a tremendous challenge to our computerized civilization. Older computers were originally programmed to record and read the years of the century by only their last two digits, which means that at the turn of the century, there is the possibility that they will mistake the year 2000 for 1900. If that happens, all sorts of computerized systems will cease functioning correctly. Unless something is done to avert this, our societies could be thrown into chaos.

Many fear that ATM cards will be rendered useless, that there will be power outages and downed telephone systems, and that even medical equipment will fail. The worst-case scenarios paint pictures of planes crashing and missiles being inadvertently fired.

Both government and private sectors are working hard to find a solution. The systems are, after all, made by human beings. We must avoid, at all costs, the perilous future scenario where we are at the mercy of science and technology run amok.

**Josei Toda's Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons was the**

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### **natural consequence of his experiences.**

This Y2K problem has the potential to take us all unexpectedly back to the year 1900—the year of the birth of my mentor and the second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda. He was born at the dawn of a new century and grew up in a period of great change. The Russo–Japanese War broke out in 1904 and intensified Japan’s march toward militarism. Mr. Toda lived through the Tokyo Earthquake of 1923 and directly experienced the hardships of the Great Depression that was triggered by the stock market crash of 1929. He experienced two world wars and then Japan’s defeat in 1945.

With the 21st century approaching, it has become popular to look back over the past 100 years. When we do so with Mr. Toda, we find that his life, thought and actions are inextricably linked to the tumultuous history of 20th century.

A museum dedicated to journalism—the Newseum in Arlington, Va.—has published a list of the 100 most important news stories of this century, based on selections made by prominent American journalists and scholars. In first place were the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Japan’s surrender ending World War II in 1945. In second place was Neil Armstrong’s walk on the moon in 1969, and in third place was Japan’s bombing of Pearl Harbor and the U.S. entry into World War II in 1941.

During the war, Mr. Toda was imprisoned by the Japanese authorities for his opposition to militarism and released just a few weeks before the war’s end. I think his later Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons in 1957, the first of his final instructions for his successors, was the natural consequence of the life he lived and the things he experienced.

Not long after delivering the declaration, heedless of his frail health, he sought to visit Hiroshima, a city that had been devastated by the atomic bomb, to give guidance and encouragement to the members there. To those who tried to dissuade him from this course of action, he declared, “I don’t care if it kills me, I’m going!” His spirit blazed with such fierce determination.

### **Mr. Toda propounded the concept of a global family.**

Although Mr. Toda did not live to see humankind take its first step on the moon, he propounded the concept of a global family, a prescient vision of the globalism humankind’s exploration of space would herald. His call for the complete elimination of all misery from the planet was a demand that the interests of humanity and the individual be put before the interests of nation-states.

In this, he stood on the same philosophical ground as first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, who foresaw the dawning of an age of humanitarian competition superseding that of military and economic competition. Both men, having lived in a century wracked by war and strife, were philosophers of the first rank, possessing a clear vision of humanity’s future. The visionary nature of their thought will become more and more widely appreciated around the world as the years pass.

Recently, in a *Time* magazine poll, Albert Einstein was listed among the 20 most influential scientists, thinkers and inventors of this century. Mr. Toda and Mr. Makiguchi attended a lecture given by Einstein in Japan, and Mr. Toda described it as one of the happiest events of his entire life. The lecture took place on Nov. 19, 1922, at the Keio University auditorium in Tokyo; it lasted for some five hours. How like these two men of tremendous intellectual curiosity to attend such an address!

Incidentally, the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai, forerunner of the Soka Gakkai, was founded

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almost exactly eight years after that, on Nov. 18, 1930.

Many years later, I conducted a dialogue with Dr. Linus Pauling, recipient of two Nobel Prizes, one for chemistry and one for peace. In our discussion, we touched upon the Russell–Einstein Manifesto launched by Bertrand Russell and Einstein in 1955, calling on fellow scientists and researchers to recognize the grave threat that thermonuclear war poses to humanity’s future. Dr. Pauling was one of the 11 scientists who signed the manifesto.

The Russell–Einstein Manifesto paved the way for the Pugwash Conferences, a series of gatherings attended by scientists from both Eastern and Western blocs, transcending ideological borders. Dr. Joseph Rotblat of the University of London, also a signatory of the manifesto, served as the Pugwash Conference’s first secretary general. The conferences went on to play an important role in creating a tide of thought that put the brakes on the nuclear arms race among the United States, the Soviet Union, and other powerful nations.

Interestingly, the first Pugwash Conference was held in 1957, the year that Mr. Toda made his Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons. And in 1989, I had the opportunity to meet and exchange views with Dr. Rotblat.

This turbulent century has been marked by a progression of significant developments surrounding war and peace. First came the construction of the atomic bomb, brought within reach by Einstein’s theory of relativity. This development was quickly followed by concerned scientists warning of the dangers of nuclear weapons, which in turn led to the appearance of numerous peace movements around the globe.

I am certain that I am not the only person who, as we approach this century’s end, feels that the world is converging toward a reexamination of the innermost depths of the human being.

*One in a series*