

## AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA MAKING THE GOSHO PART OF OUR LIVES

**‘Leaders who are genuinely committed to realizing kosen-rufu will read the Gosho every day,’ SGI President Ikeda says, ‘even if only a line or a paragraph, and make it a living part of themselves. I also hope that the youth division members, in particular, will study the Gosho thoroughly, as they strive to achieve their goals.’**

The majestic sun of a new millennium has begun to appear on the horizon. Today, the humanistic light of Nichiren Dai-shonin’s Buddhism has spread to 148 countries and territories. And a realm of indestructible, everlasting peace—of the widespread propagation of the Mystic Law throughout the entire world—is, through the darkness and confusion, coming into view. The stars of hope and glory shine brightly in the heavens.

We are indeed approaching the dawn of an Age of Soka. The living breath of the music of the Mystic Law, playing a melody of eternal harmony, will infuse fresh life into all things and give rise to a new world of creativity. How wonderful and exciting this is!

From the far-reaching, penetrating view of Buddhism, a thousand years is not a long time. Nichiren Daishonin writes, “If Nichiren’s compassion is truly great and encompassing, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo will spread for ten thousand years and more, for all eternity” (*The Writings of Nichiren Dai-shonin*, p. 736).

Even if lightning should crash and thunder roar, the great movement of the SGI will not be daunted in the least. Ours is a momentous journey to realize lasting peace and happiness. We advance with joy and boisterous good cheer.

As we stand on the threshold of a new century, I want to reconfirm the basic path of the Soka Gakkai. That is, the Soka Gakkai will always advance in complete accord with the Lotus Sutra and the Daishonin’s writings. It has been the Soka Gakkai’s firm, unchanging position, since the time of its first and second presidents, Tsune-saburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, to practice in accord with the Buddha’s teachings, just as the Daishonin instructs.

And that is precisely why, as the Sutra warns, the three powerful enemies and the three obstacles and four devils have appeared.

It is also why we were able to crush the plot to destroy the SGI hatched by the Nikken sect priests, those “animals dressed in priestly robes” (WND, 760). It is why, as proof of its commitment to upholding the Buddha’s will and decree, the SGI today enjoys infinite good fortune.

The Daishonin stresses the importance of faith, practice and study. Without study, without a firm understanding of the Daishonin’s Buddhism, we are likely to be swept away by our emotions or circumstances when some crisis arises and waver in faith.

We saw this happen during World War II, when the majority of the Soka Gakkai leaders abandoned their faith, bowing to pressure from the military authorities. This was because they didn’t have a solid grounding in Buddhist study to draw on.



When Mr. Makiguchi was moved to what was to be his place of death, the Tokyo Detention House in Sugamo, the very first thing he asked his family to bring him was the Gosho. He specifically asked for a clean copy, one that he hadn’t already made notations

in. He wanted to take a fresh look at the Daishonin's writings during his stay in prison. This was an expression of his profound commitment.

In his letters from prison, Mr. Makiguchi wrote many times that his imprisonment constituted persecution on account of his efforts to uphold the Lotus Sutra, the Mystic Law—a fact, he said, that the Sutra and the Goshō confirm.

A month before he died, in what was to be his last letter, he observed that, by connecting his theory of value to faith in the Mystic Law, several thousand people [the members of the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai, forerunner of the Soka Gakkai] had shown actual proof in the form of benefit. He declared: "Because of this, it is quite natural that the three obstacles and four devils will vie to attack us. It is just as the Sutra states." Such was the unshakable conviction of the Soka Gakkai's noble founder.



Mr. Toda, Mr. Maki-guchi's successor, awakened to his mission as a Bodhisattva of the Earth while in prison, and he rose to begin his struggle, basing himself on the Lotus Sutra and the Goshō, to widely propagate the Mystic Law.

Before Mr. Toda became Soka Gakkai president, starting from the time his business was in dire financial straits, he made a supreme effort to instruct me on the Goshō, not caring what it might cost his physical health.

When I look at my diary entries from that time, I see that he lectured me on such writings as "The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," "The Enlightenment of Plants," "On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime," "The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind," "The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life," "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land," "The True Aspect of All Phenomena," "On the Three Great Secret Laws," "On the Ultimate Teaching Affirmed by All Buddhas throughout the Three Existences," "On the Buddha's Prophecy" and "Remonstrance with Bodhisattva Hachiman."

His home and the old Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Nishi-Kanda were the main classrooms for his Goshō lectures. But when we were traveling, the train quickly filled that role.

Mr. Toda also lectured me on "The One Hundred and Six Comparisons" [an important teaching that the Daishonin entrusted to his successor, Nikko Shonin].

One day, when he was lying down resting, my mentor suddenly said: "All right! Let's start!" And he happily gave me a Goshō lecture right then and there.

If I were ever less than attentive, he promptly rebuked me: "That's enough! I'm not a machine."

In any event, he transmitted to me the essence of the Daishonin's Buddhism—from mentor to disciple, from one life to another—with intense passion and wholehearted commitment. I am profoundly grateful to have had such a mentor.



At that time, I was working single-handedly against great odds to support and protect Mr. Toda. Yet every night, I forced my tired body and mind to open the Goshō and study.

One day I was encouraged by the passage "For more than 20 years, I, Nichiren, have been confronting him [the devil king of the sixth heaven], mustering a vast force, and I never once felt inclined to retreat" (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 1224). Another day I etched into my heart the passage "Each and every one of you should be certain deep in your heart that sacrificing your life for the Lotus Sutra is like exchanging rocks for gold or dung for rice"

(WND, 764).

The harder the times I faced, the more eagerly I sought the Daishonin's words. And each time that I did, I found new courage. An inextinguishable sun rose in my heart, breaking through the darkness.

During the great campaigns that I waged in Osaka — the golden struggle of my youth — I always based myself on the Goshō while earnestly fighting on the front lines. This my comrades in Osaka know very well.

The Daishonin exhorts us, "Employ the strategy of the Lotus Sutra before any other" (WND, 1001). This is the key to victory — a point that we must never forget. For Buddhism is about winning.



The human race is earnestly seeking a source of light to illuminate the next millennium. Buddhism is the sun of hope that will save humankind. It is the spiritual lighthouse that can guide all humankind to bravely weather and triumph over the rough waves of life.

The Goshō shines with this great light of wisdom and compassion. It is an inexhaustible wellspring of the courage we need to live our lives and a sword to refute the erroneous and reveal the true in our fierce battle with the forces of evil.

As long as we advance, firmly embracing in our hearts this scripture of the Latter Day of the Law, the Goshō, the road of ever-victorious champions of life — stretching on into the 10,000 years and more of the Latter Day of the Law — will open before us.

We have at last entered a new era, in which those who continue to boldly proclaim the correctness and validity of Buddhism, speaking out with youthful passion and conviction, will win.

When the Soka Gakkai published the *Goshō Zenshu* (Collected Writings of Nichiren Daishonin) in 1952, Mr. Toda composed a poem:

*If you uphold the Goshō  
Overflowing with the power of the Buddha  
The strength to surmount every obstacle  
Will arise within you.*

Leaders who are genuinely committed to realizing kosen-rufu will read the Goshō every day, even if only a line or a paragraph, and make it a living part of themselves. I also hope that the youth division members, in particular, will study the Goshō thoroughly, as they strive to achieve their goals. I have found that those who don't tend to be shallow and frivolous.

Study is the marrow of the SGI. Unless we are armed with compassion and an understanding of the principles of Buddhism, we cannot carry out kosen-rufu.

My dear, courageous comrades! Let's do our best! Let's stride with energy and enthusiasm on the vast open road leading into the 21st century.