

**IT IS UP TO ME**  
**BY IRENE ISHII, SEATTLE**

My heart sheds tears  
But not those of pain or anger  
It sheds light, joyfully dancing petals  
Like those of a cherry blossom tree

In Japan, the scattering of cherry blossom petals is symbolized  
As a deep sadness or loss  
But when I see them scatter  
I see the spring snow glistening in the sun's warm rays  
They seem to waltz in the wind, floating through the air

I see nothing sad about their dance  
The scattering petals are like my hearts tears of joy  
The cherry blossom tree is living, still growing  
As it sheds its petals,  
It is welcoming a new season  
Like confetti at a New Year's celebration

My last memory of the Soka University cherry blossoms  
Will be the cherry blossom buds in late March  
These buds represent my life  
Cared for throughout the years  
Watered and pruned by others  
The cherry blossom tree  
Finds strength to spread its branches  
Finally!  
It expresses itself through the emergence of its precious buds

Leaving Japan, this bud is bursting to blossom  
To show its beauty and inspire others  
To lighten people's hearts

When I set foot in Seattle  
The cherry blossoms will already be in bloom  
They are telling me it's time  
To open my life for kosen-rufu  
It is time for me to be  
"A single ever fresh flower  
Dressing up our dreary world"  
(“Angels of Peace,” Daisaku Ikeda)

It is time for me to  
“Walk the path of happy smiles

True to myself  
Undefeated by anything  
Striving in my own way!  
For this path  
I regard as my greatest treasure!"  
("May the Fragrant Laurels of Happiness Adorn Your Life," Daisaku Ikeda)

Everything I have learned in Japan  
Is contained in these buds  
And as these buds come to life in Seattle  
They awaken people's spirit to the mentor-disciple relationship  
To the mission of kosen-rufu  
This will be me in Seattle

Who will bring hope in this new century?!  
I have been inspired by my mentor  
I know now, with confidence  
It is up to me!  
I believe now, with strength  
In my own capabilities

And I share now, deeply in my heart  
The dream of my mentor  
And I can now  
Protect my mentor in America  
And make kosen-rufu a reality