

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S DEC. 10 ENCOURAGEMENT CREATING A NEW AGE

SGI President Ikeda's encouragement at a Kansai Representatives Conference in Osaka, Japan, Dec. 10.

The age of youth is here at last. The role of young women is especially important. When the young women are active, it brings joy to all—the whole atmosphere is brightened. I want Kansai to become a model for the Century of Women.

I also hope that the men's and women's divisions will unite with the young men and women, doing their utmost to support, love, encourage and foster the youth.

Not advancing is regressing. When those who are senior in faith burn with a youthful fighting spirit, go about their activities cheerfully and energetically, and continue to learn and grow with a bright, positive spirit, their juniors also develop.

Taking advantage of others for one's own ends is a manifestation of the devilish nature within. Working wholeheartedly for the benefit of others, on the other hand, is the way of life of a Buddha.

Allow me to share the illuminating words of some famous thinkers. Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore says, "What a delight it may be for you, and what a responsibility, this belonging to a period which is one of the greatest in the whole history of man!" I want you to create an age of which you can say, "Our age is the greatest ever!"

The philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau says: "I maintain that to feel the great goods he [man] must know the little ills. Such is his nature." "Of all the virtues, justice is the one that contributes most to the common good of men." True happiness lies in devoting our lives to justice and truth.

Rousseau also says, "If you do not also open your heart, others' hearts will always remain closed to you." It is not what others do but what we do. When we reach out to others with a spirit of generosity and unaffected sincerity, they will open their hearts to us as well.

I want also to share a quote from French writer Michel de Montaigne's *The Complete Essays*, which was one of my favorite books in my youth. As a matter of fact, there was a scene in a movie I once saw that I will never forget. It was set during World War II, and there was a soldier—a young scholar—who was constantly abused and beaten by his superior officer. The young man always kept a book by his side—Montaigne's *The Complete Essays*.

Montaigne observes, "A man who is truly brave will always be brave on all occasions." We should not think that only our activities in the organization are important. The truly courageous are those who always shine with unsurpassed humanity, whether it be at home, in the workplace or in SGI activities.

One of the most famous writers of Russian literature, the Ukrainian-born Nikolay Gogol, says: "It is my body that is infirm, not my soul. On the contrary, everything in my soul is gaining in strength and firmness. And my body will grow stronger too." Even should we fall ill, there is nothing that can destroy our life-state of boundless good fortune. No matter what happens, we must never lose our fighting spirit.

The year 2001 will soon be here. The world is waiting for the humanism of the SGI. Let us continue to dance joyfully and vibrantly on the brilliant stage of kosen-rufu in the new century.