

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S APRIL 2 SPEECH BECOME LEADERS OF TRUE CONVICTION

‘Soka University seeks to raise value-creating leaders who will dauntlessly open up new victories of the people amid the turmoil of society,’ SGI President Ikeda tells the Soka students. ‘Studying hard, learning to carry out a sustained and effective struggle, and really challenging yourself—it is through such training that you can cultivate true conviction.’

SGI President Ikeda’s speech at the joint entrance ceremony for the 31st class of Soka University of Japan and the 17th class of Soka Women’s College, held at the Soka University Auditorium in Hachioji, Tokyo, April 2.

My sincere congratulations on this first entrance ceremony of the new century, taking place on this glorious day with the cherry trees in full bloom!

The magnificent weather calls to mind a passage [from a standard English primer] that I am sure all of you know by heart: “Winter is over and spring has come. The sunshine is bright.”

Among the multitude of universities and the countless students in the world, it is you who stand in the vanguard—as shall those who will follow in your footsteps over the next hundred years of the 21st century.

Please learn with an unwavering tenacity of purpose.

Please live vibrantly. There is no need for you to hold back or stand on ceremony. I hope you will feel free to discuss anything at all with your teachers, fully availing yourselves of their life experiences.

Studying is your right. It is the responsibility of your teachers to present things in a way that is understandable to you. When it comes to learning, I hope you will advance with unwavering tenacity of purpose, absolutely never compromising.

You, the members of the entering class, have an extremely noble mission. Once again, I congratulate you, and I present you with a poem celebrating this occasion:

*Welcome!
Young friends kindling
a thirst to learn.
Welcome!
Young people of talent
sharing a profound bond.
Like your hearts,
The sky is clear,
the land aglow,
And the future rosy as far as the eye can see.
This day of your
matriculation
Is truly a significant
occasion!*

*My friends,
Absolutely never give up!
While sharing
 profound exchange
With new acquaintances,
While surmounting
 the wild flames
Of chaos and disarray,
Decisively seize victory
With voices raised in song
 infused with hope—
As heroes of learning,
As champions of philosophy!*

*Gazing into your
 shining eyes,
I proclaim with
 boundless joy:
May you be healthy!
May you shine!
May you be victorious!*

Members of the 31st class of Soka University! Members of the 17th class of Soka Women's College! Capable graduate students! Students of the Division of Correspondence Education! Precious exchange students from around the world! I proudly welcome all of you to the university that I founded!

Is there anyone here from the Kansai area? [Vigorous response in the affirmative.] Congratulations on the Kansai Soka High School's great victory in the Spring National Invitational High School Baseball Tournament! [Earlier that day, the Kansai Soka team advanced to the semifinal round.]

I sincerely congratulate the family members of all entering students. Also, I offer my sincere thanks to those of you who, despite having traveled long distances, are viewing these proceedings via telecast from the gymnasium.

And I ask the members of the faculty and staff to again make every effort to ensure that all students have a rich, rewarding educational experience.

A few moments ago, as Soka University founder, I was named an honorary professor of Northwest University, a school that promises to lead China's advance in the new century. My heartfelt gratitude to the venerable President Sun Yong, a renowned geologist, and to the entire party of educators from Northwest University.

Today, April 2, is the date on which my mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, died. It also marks the auspicious 30th anniversary of Soka University's founding. On this significant occasion, I respectfully dedicate this honor to my mentor. At the same time, I share it with all the faculty, staff and students of Soka University, who have worked to develop and protect the school.

Xi'an, where Northwest University is located, was the eastern terminus of the Silk Road, which served as an important crossroads of human civilization linking East and West. Japanese envoys to the Sui and Tang courts braved the rough seas to study there, at the

capital of a great cultural benefactor.

Our forebears forged strong friendships and inviolable bonds of trust that transcended the bounds of nationality.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's spirit of martyrdom is Soka University's prime point.

In the early years of the 20th century, Tsunesaburo Maki-guchi, the first Soka Gakkai president, taught at a school called Kobun Gakuin in Tokyo, which had been set up for visiting students from China. There he formed close friendships with many Chinese youth. As it happens, seven Kobun Gakuin students went on to teach at Northwest University.

These young people had been much impressed by Mr. Makiguchi's lectures on his work *The Geography of Human Life*. And there is evidence that after returning to their country, they translated and published it in Chinese.

A recent scholarly reference identifies the Chinese edition of *The Geography of Human Life*, published on April 1, 1906, as a "work on human geography that was influential during the final years of the Qing dynasty." I was really surprised to learn about this. The entry clearly lists Mr. Makiguchi as the author.

Two young researchers, Soka University graduates—Takao Ito and Daisaku Matsuda—sent word of this important discovery on the eve of the 130th anniversary of President Makiguchi's birth, which will be June 6.

At present, there are a number of researchers who occupy themselves ferreting out hitherto unknown facts and details about Mr. Makiguchi's life. These include Mr. Masayuki Shiobara, a member of the Soka University staff, who is known as a "walking encyclopedia" on President Makiguchi, and Professor Tsuyoshi Takahashi. It seems that the more we learn, the more brilliantly President Makiguchi's legacy shines.

Yet Japan—an island country whose people are plagued by jealousy and scheming—branded this great philosopher a traitor and sent him to his death in prison. At the same time, the country was committing unconscionable atrocities against the people of Asia: invading China, its cultural mentor, and trampling on Korea. This reveals the true nature of the nation of Japan.

Soka University has President Makiguchi's spirit of martyrdom as its prime point. Peace is our prime point. The mission of Soka University is to spread peace, culture and education throughout the world while forever battling narrow-minded nationalism. This, I declare!

Learning languages is a great advantage in working for peace.

Soka University is a school open to the world. Over the past 30 years, we have welcomed guests from 102 countries and territories. And the Orange County campus of Soka University of America is now opening.

I hope each of you will make continuing efforts to gain mastery of foreign languages. Please really apply yourself.

Without learning languages, you will be hampered in your ability to carry out exchanges for peace with people from other countries. The scope of your lives will be constricted. It will be your loss. Please study hard—SUA is waiting for you!

Friends today are also attending this ceremony from Malaysia, a golden link in the "Marine Silk Road." I am delighted to welcome Vice-Chancellor Tan Sri Dato' Syed Jalaludin bin Syed Salim, his wife Datin Dr. Nafisah Nik Mohd Adeb and International Director Liew Man Lin of Universiti Putra Malaysia. Thank you for the honorary doctor

of letters degree that your university awarded me last November.

In addition, we are joined today by exchange faculty from Wuhan University, Peking University, Fudan University, Shenzhen University, Shanghai University and Xiamen University in China.

Thanks also to our many guests, who include jazz great Buster Williams, for taking time out of their busy schedules to be here today.

Young people should shake up society and revitalize the whole world.

One of the Chinese youth who studied at Kobun Gakuin was the great author Lu Xun. Seventy-seven years ago, in July 1924, Lu Xun gave a series of 11 lectures on the history of literature at Northwest University, speaking for a total of 12 hours. The arrogant militarist clique, brandishing its power, pressured him to talk not about literary arts but about military arts.

Lu Xun rejected their entreaties, however. True to his spirit, he addressed the students with the attitude that no matter what anyone might say, he would communicate to young people what was in his heart.

He absolutely refused to tolerate falsehood and deception, which are an affront to human dignity. He wanted young people to dedicate their lives to the struggle for justice and truth, and to be victorious.

Youth, be courageous! Do not fear evil people! Boldly speak out! Cause your voice of conviction to resound like a thunderclap that awakens all living beings! Shake up society, which has grown stagnant, and revitalize the world!

That was the hope that Lu Xun entrusted to those future leaders. My feelings as I stand before you are exactly the same. “Be courageous!” This spirited cry of Lu Xun marked China’s departure. And now, having weathered all manner of difficulties, a new, reconstructed China stands proudly before the world.

My mentor, Josei Toda, had the greatest respect for China and for Lu Xun. It occurs to me that President Toda and Lu Xun were a lot alike.

I understand that the Northwest University students participate in various activities to contribute to society. For example, some teach classes on a volunteer basis for poverty-stricken children who cannot regularly attend school. This is most admirable.

Universities should lead society – not the other way around.

Last year, UPM Vice-Chancellor Syed Jalaludin and I discussed the mission of the university in the 21st century. We firmly agreed that the university ought to lead society, not the other way around.

Soka University seeks to raise value-creating leaders who will dauntlessly open up new victories of the people amid the turmoil of society. Studying hard, learning to carry out a sustained and effective struggle, and really challenging yourself during your years here — it is through such training that you can cultivate true conviction.

Yesterday, I received a wonderful letter from a Soka alumnus. He writes: “I am the first graduate of Soka University to be appointed principal of a junior high school. Before anything else, I wish to report this matter to the founder. In my new position, I am determined to demonstrate actual proof of humanistic education.”

Already there are approximately 3,000 Soka University graduates active in the world of education. Soka graduates have also passed national examinations in many fields. They include 99 who passed the National Bar Exam, 133 who have passed the CPA exam, 73

who acquired credentials as tax accountants, 48 who passed the exam to enter the diplomatic corps, 28 who passed the exam to enter the senior civil service and approximately 1,200 active in the civil service on the municipal or prefectural level.

I hope each of you will likewise challenge yourself to excel in some area, to acquire the foundation to really be able to contribute to society. Your time at Soka University or Soka Women's College will pass very quickly.

While working to solidify your foundation in all areas with strength, spirit and tenacity—just like the Kansai Soka High School Baseball Team today—please create a history of proud, unequivocal victory. I want you to become people who can later look back and say, “During my youth I gave it absolutely everything I had, and I succeeded in creating my own Silk Road!”

Lives animated by seeking, by inquiry, can never be deadlocked.

In a joint research project with Soka University, the Zhou Enlai Research Center of China's Nankai University recently published a volume [in Chinese] on Zhou Enlai's years as a student in Japan. At their request, I contributed a preface to the work. [President Ikeda is an honorary professor of Nankai University and an honorary director of the Zhou Enlai Research Center.]

The work calls attention to an entry that Premier Zhou made in his diary when he was about the same age as all of you. The 19-year-old Zhou sets down his own three-point motto:

- 1) Be ahead of the times in your thinking.
- 2) Conduct yourself in the most up-to-date manner
- 3) Keep abreast of the most current scholarship.

From that time forward, the young Zhou, his life burning with the spirit of inquiry, initiated a personal campaign to open up a new era in his thinking, studies and activities. And he firmly maintained this youthful earnestness and humility throughout his entire life. As a result, he developed the profound character that won him the love and admiration of the world's people.

Those whose lives are animated by the spirit of seeking and inquiry are never deadlocked. They boundlessly advance, summoning forth fresh energy at every turn. On the other hand, those who succumb to decadence find themselves at a dead-end on a daily basis.

In 1973, one year before he passed away, Premier Zhou graciously met with me despite his being very ill. Gazing into my young eyes, he entrusted me with his commitment to realizing a new age of China–Japan friendship and world peace.

Strive each day to open up a new age of victory for yourself and all humankind.

Members of the glorious 1st class of the new century of Soka University and Soka Women's College, from this moment forward, please strive each day to open up a new age of your own victory as a human being and of the victory of humankind. Cheerfully advance, tenaciously along the brilliant path of your mission—together with your professors, together with me, together with your irreplaceable friends.

My heartfelt prayers for the excellent health of all our distinguished guests from Northwest University and UPM, as well as all the faculty and staff who have kindly attended this ceremony.

Xie Xie! (Thank you very much!)