

## **SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S AUG. 6 SPEECH GREAT BENEFIT FOR NOW AND THE FUTURE**

**‘Kosen-rufu activities require enormous effort,’ SGI President Ikeda says, ‘but for that reason we can accumulate great benefit—not only for ourselves in the present but for our descendants well into the future. Therefore, to pass up the opportunity to take on this struggle would be our infinite loss.’**

*SGI President Ikeda's speech at a nationwide executive leaders conference, held at the Soka Gakkai Nagano Training Center in Karuizawa, Nagano Prefecture, Japan, Aug. 6.*

Life is a drama. Since we are going to perform on the stage of life anyway, we ought to live vigorously and joyfully, enacting an inspiring drama of successive victories. We have to win in life. We have to win in society. We have to win a resounding victory for kosen-rufu.

Toward that end, we need a “supreme strategy” that will assure victory. What is required is iron unity—everyone uniting in spirit. We need to take courageous and meticulous action.

We need the determination of an indomitable leader. In a sense, it was the great determination of Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, which resulted in the Soka Gakkai's present development.

Also, by seizing the initiative, we can gain the upper hand. In any struggle, it is necessary to be proactive. These are the secrets of an ever-victorious leader—these are the timeless, universal principles of victory.

President Toda used to say: “When we have won, we tend to sow the seeds of future defeat. Conversely, when we have lost, we can create the cause for future victory.” He used to always admonish us, “You must keep up your guard, even after a victory.” When we are victorious—that is when we should rebuild the organization and solidify our own footing.

Take the example of someone with a regional leadership position: The person may vaguely imagine that he or she is keeping watch over the entire region, but that is too general and abstract. We need to clarify the specific prefecture and sphere of activities for which the person is responsible. We need to decide the person's home base. On that foundation, he or she can then carry out activities spanning the entire region.

To keep your own responsibility vague, so as to avoid having to do anything while making others work hard—and then putting on an air of self-importance—is sneaky and cunning. SGI leaders must not have such an attitude. When leaders have such an arrogant attitude, everything comes crashing down.

Kosen-rufu activities require enormous effort, but for that reason we can accumulate great benefit—not only for ourselves in the present but for our descendants well into the future. Therefore, to pass up the opportunity to take on this struggle would be our infinite loss.

Because there are enemies, we can exert ourselves. Because we energetically engage ourselves, we can accumulate benefit. And because we work hard, we can savor supreme joy.

**At the start of the 21st century, human society  
must discover the sanctity of life.**

The SGI movement is winning strong sympathy and support around the world. The other day, Dr. Winston Langley, acting provost and vice chancellor for Academic Affairs of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, endorsed my 2001 SGI Day peace proposal in

an interview with a correspondent of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. [On Jan. 26, President Ikeda announced his peace proposal commemorating the 26th SGI Day, "Creating and Sustaining a Century of Life: Challenges for a New Era" (see the May *Living Buddhism* magazine).]

A prominent political scientist, Dr. Langley is a person of profound erudition and rich character. He serves as an advisor to the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, which I founded.

Dr. Langley observed that the world today is in many senses divided. And he credited me with keeping my focus trained on global society amid all of this division, and with bringing many disparate fragments together as part of a comprehensive outlook.

He also applauded my efforts to raise new questions and deepen the discussion on ways of thinking about events that people have come to take for granted. And he suggested I am advancing this work on the planes of philosophy, education and religion from a standpoint of universal humanism.

I have long affirmed that the 21st century will be a Century of Life. Needless to say, during the 20th century, human life was treated with savage disregard. Now, at the start of the 21st century, human society is at last earnestly searching for a philosophy that upholds the sanctity of life. People are beginning to seek out a new humanism. In truth, the Age of Soka — an age in which the humanistic principles of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism gain wide acceptance — has arrived.

Our movement for kosen-rufu is a noble enterprise to put the Buddhist philosophy of the sanctity of life into practice in all areas of society. Let us take pride in advancing on the leading edge of the times.

### **'Humanitarian competition' means a shared struggle.**

Dr. Langley observed that the concept of symbiosis, which I discussed at length in the proposal, means the creative coexistence in which each party seeks the good of all. Taking up the idea of humanitarian competition, which I introduced in my January 1996 peace proposal (see the April 1996 *Seikyo Times* magazine), he clarified that this does not mean competition in the usual sense but that all parties challenge themselves to achieve a common objective. It means shared struggle.

The educator noted that the English term *compete* originally referred to people coming together to face some challenge. When we base ourselves on this lofty perspective, he said, we can overcome negative competitiveness and work together to achieve our spiritual evolution.

With regard to Japan's constitution, which is famous for its renunciation of war, Dr. Langley said that the essential question is not whether Japan ought to militarize but how the spirit of Japan's constitution can be spread to all people. In that regard, he affirmed, Japan can make a very important contribution to the world.

According to Dr. Langley, Japan's constitution can serve as a model not only for Japan but also for all humankind, and he offers suggestions for the future scope of the United Nations. He also applauded my proposal that people should work together in liaison with the United Nations toward achieving lasting peace based on the principle and the spirit of Article 9 of Japan's constitution. [Article 9: "Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. 2) In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well

as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.”]

Dr. Langley’s generous words are praise for all of you who are working to promote the spread of peace and humanism throughout the world. It is for this reason that I have taken the liberty of introducing Dr. Langley’s comments. [Dr. Langley also said that while the development of modern thought has by and large excluded the spiritual side of life, people today are becoming aware of the need to revive spirituality and are genuinely searching for spiritual leaders. In that context, he felt that President Ikeda’s proposals, while based on Buddhist thought, do not seek to impose any particular religion on people. The educator added that he was grateful for the existence of a leader possessing such a profound spiritual perspective.]

### **The only way to stop war is for the people to become strong.**

Professor Takehiko Furuta, an authority on the ancient Japanese kingdom of Yamatai, sent me a copy of a paper that he wrote. In the paper he describes the essential nature of modern Japan’s invasion of Asia as follows: “It seems to me that Japan was trying to play catch-up with the imperialist West. It was a matter of imitation. Japan should realize the ugliness of its past actions and discard its posturing [in imitation of the West].”

He went on to say that even if the peoples of China, Korea and other countries in Asia did not seek an apology, Japan ought to apologize before all humankind. That would be the proper stance for the country to take, he said.

Professor Furuta stresses that the arrogance of Japanese militarism must not be revived. I entirely agree.

During World War II, my four older brothers were drafted into the army. My eldest brother died in the war. Our home was burned down in the air raids. The root evil that caused the war was nationalism.

To ensure that this tragedy is never repeated, the people must become strong. That is the only way. The people must become wise. And the people must keep a strict watch over power. That is why the Soka Gakkai’s advance is itself the advance of peace.

As it is still quite hot, please be sure to get adequate rest, so that you can vigorously lead activities in good health.