

April 22nd, 2011 Seize the Day—Ikeda Kayo-kai Study

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On February 18 this year, I first heard the original draft for the young women's new song, "Vow of the Ikeda Kayo-kai," which is now being sung throughout Japan and also [in translation] in other parts of the world. I thought it was a fine song and that its writing team had done a commendable job. But I knew that they could do even better—that, with the challenging spirit of the Kayo-kai, they could easily go beyond what they had achieved so far and produce not just a good song but a great one that would live on for generations. This is because I truly believe in the potential of these young leaders I had fostered. I shared these thoughts at the women's division and young women's division executive conference that was held that day.

United in purpose, the Kayo-kai songwriting team eagerly set themselves to the challenge once more. Fueled by daimoku and passionate life-force, they infused the lyrics with a deeper vow, an even more profound commitment.

Mentors believe in their disciples. And it is precisely because of their immense faith and hope in their disciples that they don't go easy on them, that they train them thoroughly and are strict with them. Disciples who respond wholeheartedly to their mentor's belief in them can bring forth immeasurable power and ability. This is the rhythm of mentor and disciple. It is a symphony of victory. I heard the new version of the Kayo-kai song two days later. It had been completely rewritten and brimmed with vibrant joy. [*The following is a literal translation of the Japanese lyrics for the song's third verse.*]

*Now, together with our mentor,
committed to truth and justice,
we will build an age of peace
for all women around the world,
striving brightly side by side
with our Kayo-kai sisters.
"Ikeda Kayo-kai, dance as flowers of mission!"—
heeding this call, we will joyfully fulfill
the vow of the Kayo-kai, a vow of gratitude.*

In *The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings*, the Daishonin states: "Great joy [is what] one experiences when one understands for the first time that one's mind from the very beginning has been the Buddha. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the greatest of all joys" (OTT, 211–12); and "Joy means both oneself and others possessing wisdom and compassion" (cf. OTT, 146). The joy taught in Buddhism is more than ordinary joy. It is to know our infinitely noble mission as people who have been Buddhas from the very beginning. It is to stand up courageously alongside our fellow members, overflowing with the joy of having encountered the Mystic Law, which enables all people to attain enlightenment.

The revised lyrics for the Kayo-kai song beautifully captured the joy of a life dedicated to that mission as well as the lofty bonds of shared commitment. Listening to them, I could feel the young women's bright, spirited resolve to never be defeated by any hardship and to start anew with fresh determination.

I was delighted with the results: "It's fabulous! Perfect!" Smiling, my wife agreed: "It's very good—cheerful, invigorating, and easy to remember."

With English and Mandarin Chinese versions of the song now also completed, the hopeful melody of the "Vow of the Kayo-kai" continues to spread across the globe.

*Never forgetting
the importance
of perseverance and faith,
attain happiness,
ascending the jeweled summit.*

Discussion questions:

1. Which portion of this essay has moved you most and how will you apply it to your life?
2. Which portion of the "Vow of Ikeda Kayo-kai" song is your favorite and why?