

April 2021 *Living Buddhism*, pp. 53–62

**“THE BUDDHISM OF THE SUN: ILLUMINATING THE WORLD” [63]**

**TO OUR FUTURE DIVISION MEMBERS, THE TORCHBEARERS OF JUSTICE—OUR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE**

**PART 2**

**“The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life”—Humanity Is Awaiting Your Growth**

**POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND REGARDING BUDDHIST STUDY IN THE SGI**

- 1) Our understanding of Nichiren Buddhism has deepened significantly since the 1991 priesthood issue—culminating in doctrinal clarifications in 2014. What Nichiren Shoshu teaches is completely different from the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, the foundation of SGI study.
- 2) SGI is a “living” religion with a “living” philosophy, meaning that the application of the core, unchanging principles of Buddhism is always adapting to changing times and circumstances.
- 3) Even for longtime members, it is important to continue studying current materials. Our mentor’s explanations of Nichiren’s writings in his monthly lectures represent this “living” Buddhism.

**GOALS FOR PRESENTERS**

- 1) Let’s learn together: This is the recommended approach for presenting Ikeda Sensei’s lectures. Rather than lecturing on his lectures, the goal of the monthly presentations is to study the material together with fellow members. With this in mind, presenters should aim to read the material several times and share 2 or 3 key points that inspire them, rather than attempting to cover every point.
- 2) Let’s unite with the heart of our mentor: Sensei strives to encourage members through his lectures, just as Nichiren did through his writings. Let’s strive to convey this spirit as we study with fellow members and apply these teachings in our daily lives, efforts in society and advancement of kosen-rufu.

**BASIC POINTS FOR PRESENTING “THE BUDDHISM OF THE SUN” LECTURES**

- ⇒ Read the full lecture several times.
- ⇒ Read the footnotes, as they often provide additional background information. (April LB, 62)
- ⇒ Chant abundant daimoku before your presentation to grasp and convey Sensei’s heart.
- ⇒ During the presentation, have someone read aloud key Goshō excerpts and your selected passages from the lecture. Ensure the reader has the opportunity to prepare well ahead of time.
- ⇒ Encourage participants to also read the lecture and find their own points of inspiration.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**📖 “Oh, We Will Stand Tall as Pillars of Our Era!” (April LB, 55)**

- “The Torchbearers of Justice” song:
  - April 2019 LB, 49–50
  - May 2017 LB, 48–49

**📖 “A Promise From the Infinite Past” (April LB, 55)**

- “make certain the Law will long endure” [the eternal perpetuation of the Law] (LSOC, 216)
  - *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 18, p. 89
  - November 2019 LB, 63

**📖 “The Gohonzon of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo” (April LB, 57)**

- <https://www.sokaglobal.org> (Resources > Study Materials > Buddhist Study > Basics of Nichiren Buddhism > Chapter 6.1)

**📖 “The ‘Heritage...’ Is the Teaching for the Enlightenment of All People”**

- August 2014 LB, 20–33 (see attached)

**📖 “An Ideal Organization of Many in Body, One in Mind” (April LB, 59)**

- NHR-17, 294–95 & 347
- *The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life: SGI President Ikeda’s Lecture Series*, pp. 73–77
- *The Wisdom for Creating Happiness and Peace*, part 3, pp. 5–7

**📖 “You Are Like Pure Gold” (April LB, 60)**

- *The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life Lecture Series*, 80–87

**📖 “Mentor and Disciple Are Born Together” (April LB, 60)**

- “Those persons who had heard the Law ... constantly reborn in company with their teachers”
  - *The Wisdom for Creating Happiness and Peace*, part 3, pp. 47–51
  - *The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life Lecture Series*, 87–90

**SGI President Ikeda's  
Lecture Series**

**Learning From the Writings  
*of Nichiren Daishonin:***

**The Teachings  
*for*  
Victory**

**— Study for August —**

# Special Lecture

Commemorating May 3,  
Soka Gakkai Day

## “*The* HERITAGE *of the* ULTIMATE LAW *of* LIFE”

Uniting With Eternal Friends Toward  
a New Age of the People’s Triumph

### THE PASSAGE FOR STUDY IN THIS LECTURE

All disciples and lay supporters of Nichiren should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the spirit of many in body but one in mind, transcending all differences among themselves<sup>1</sup> to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim. This spiritual bond is the basis for the universal transmission of the ultimate Law of life and death [Nam-myoho-renge-kyo]. Herein

lies the true goal of Nichiren’s propagation. When you are so united, even the great desire for widespread propagation [kosen-rufu] can be fulfilled. But if any of Nichiren’s disciples disrupt the unity of many in body but one in mind, they would be like warriors who destroy their own castle from within. (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 217)

### LECTURE

**Glorious May 3**, Soka Gakkai Day! It is the day when Soka mentors and disciples—comrades from time without beginning—set forth boldly, burning with the vow of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth to realize worldwide kosen-rufu. Eternal

friends in faith gather joyfully with their mentor, showing brilliant actual proof of victory in the respective spheres of their mission. This day is forever both a proud triumphal return and a fresh departure, from which we advance toward the

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distant future with vibrant, powerful life force and cheerful unity.

Each year when May 3 arrives, I recall the solemn vow I made on this day in 1951—the day when my mentor, Josei Toda, was inaugurated as the second president of the Soka Gakkai. He stood up to realize the great vow for kosen-rufu, and his disciples and successors stood up with him.

Mr. Toda later presented me with a photograph that had been taken of him to commemorate his inauguration. On the back of it, he had written the following poem for me:

*Now and  
in the future, too,  
together  
sharing joys and sufferings—  
how wondrous our connection!*

The Lotus Sutra refers to the eternal karmic ties shared by mentors and disciples in the realm of Buddhism, stating, “Those persons who had heard the Law dwelled here and there in various Buddha lands, constantly reborn in company with their teachers” (*The Lotus Sutra and Its Opening and Closing Sutras*, p. 178).

## The Eternal Bonds of Mentor and Disciple

**Mentors and disciples** dedicated to the widespread propagation of the Law are always together throughout the cycle of birth and death across the three existences of past, present and future, bathed in the light of the Mystic Law from time without beginning. Striving side by side for kosen-rufu, they share joys and sorrows, overcome hardships and achieve victory together.

In accord with the words “in the future, too, together,” which Mr. Toda solemnly imparted to me in his poem, I followed the same path as my mentor and became the third president of the Soka Gakkai on May 3, 1960, carrying on his great vow

for kosen-rufu. Even at this present moment, my mentor’s vow beats powerfully in my heart as my own.

Kosen-rufu is the struggle to ensure that the brilliant light of the Mystic Law endures forever and to help all people attain enlightenment. Naturally, it is an endeavor that cannot be achieved in a single lifetime. For that very reason, we must ensure that the Lotus Sutra’s fundamental aim of leading all living beings to the Buddha way is never lost but passed on to future generations.

The path of mentor and disciple is dedicated to keeping alive this essential wish of the Buddha—the widespread propagation of the Mystic Law, or kosen-rufu—securely passing on the baton of this lofty cause as in a relay race, handed from one runner to the next. The great vow for kosen-rufu can only be fulfilled through the correct teaching of Buddhism being transmitted from mentor to disciple.

In this installment, let us once again study the famous passage on unity from Nichiren Daishonin’s “The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life,”<sup>2</sup> and reconfirm the foundation of victory for our movement—namely, winning through faith based on the “oneness of mentor and disciple” and the solid unity of “many in body, one in mind.”

## Create an Epic Drama of the Brilliant Victory of the People

**We have studied** this passage of Nichiren Daishonin’s writings many times. It contains a crucial teaching—the heart of which the mentors and disciples of Soka have correctly grasped and translated into practice. Compelling proof of this is found in the fact that we of the SGI have been actualizing the great vow for kosen-rufu, spreading the Mystic Law to 192 countries and territories around the world.

In this passage, we find the phrase, “All disciples and lay supporters of Nichiren” (WND-I, 217). The path of mentor and disciple directly linked to the Daishonin is the central axis of our Buddhist practice and, as such, the foundation for everything.

The “heritage of the ultimate Law of life and death” is the heritage to be passed on to all living beings, with the aim of enabling everyone to attain enlightenment. Nichiren made available to all people the heritage of the Mystic Law that Shakyamuni entrusted to Bodhisattva Superior Practices [the leader of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth]. Our Buddhist practice dedicated to the realization of kosen-rufu based on the oneness of mentor and disciple is the key to inheriting “the heritage for attaining Buddhahood” (see WND-1, 217).<sup>3</sup> The heritage of the Law is passed on only through the actions of mentor and disciple; there is no separate, mysterious or secretive transmission of the Law.

At the same time, an organization united in faith based on the spirit of many in body, one in mind is absolutely necessary in order for each person to firmly establish their Buddhist practice and enable countless others throughout the world and into the future to transform their karma and carry out their human revolution. When we unite together with the same spirit as our mentor—as disciples who share our mentor’s heart—and strive with our fellow members in unity of purpose, the heritage of the ultimate Law of life and death can be transmitted to all people. That’s why the great vow of kosen-rufu can only be achieved through the combination of practical efforts based on the spirit of oneness of mentor and disciple and a united organization whose members strive together in the spirit of many in body, one in mind.

With this unshakable and indestructible spiritual pillar at its core, the beautiful unity of comrades in faith expands outward in concentric circles. Indeed, with the spirit of oneness of mentor and disciple and the unity of many in body, one in mind as the vertical and horizontal threads, we of the SGI are weaving an epic drama of the brilliant victory of the people.

## The Harmonious Community of Practitioners

**Our Soka organization is** incredibly important as far as Buddhism is concerned.

In response to a question from an interrogating

prosecutor during his wartime imprisonment for his beliefs, founding president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi declared that the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Value-Creating Education Society; forerunner of the Soka Gakkai) was not like a Buddhist temple that was operated by professional clergy, but an independent “faith-based lay organization that existed in its own right.”<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Makiguchi conceived the Soka Gakkai as an organization that, in the midst of the evil age of the Latter Day of the Law, would be dedicated to propagating the Mystic Law, transforming society and engaging in positive, life-enhancing value creation.

Unable to withstand the harsh persecution of the militarist authorities during World War II, however, the majority of the Soka Gakkai’s leaders abandoned their faith. In the misery and confusion of war, the membership dispersed and the organization virtually collapsed. [Mr. Toda, then the organization’s general director, had also been arrested and imprisoned for his beliefs alongside President Makiguchi, who died in prison on November 18, 1944.]

In July 1945, just prior to the war’s end, Mr. Toda emerged from his solitary struggle in prison. On his release, he immediately set about rebuilding the organization.

The painful lessons of the war years spurred him to forge an invincible organization of the people that would keep striving for kosen-rufu, no matter what kind of persecution it faced. He was determined to succeed this time without fail.

Mr. Toda clearly recognized that when courageous disciples stood up as individuals with the same commitment in faith as their mentor, whatever the time or place, they would open the way forward for kosen-rufu, and harmonious gatherings of practitioners—“the disciples and lay practitioners of Nichiren”—would form around them.

## Establishing the Path of Mentor and Disciple

**Josei Toda gave** me one-to-one lectures on “The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life.” I have a particularly vivid memory of a study session we had together in the busy year-end period of December

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1950—a time when Mr. Toda’s businesses were in their worst state of crisis. Mr. Toda had stepped down from his position as the Soka Gakkai’s general director in order to protect the organization from his personal business problems, and was waiting for the time when he could freely undertake his great mission for kosen-rufu. But people were unaware of his profound resolve, and he was subjected to a barrage of criticism from people within the organization, in addition to what he already faced from the public owing to his business situation.

I also remember copying down in my diary, at the start of January 1951, this famous passage from “The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life,” determined to etch it into my life. This was during a critical moment for our movement, when the mentor and disciples who had embarked on rebuilding the organization after World War II were faced with the question of whether they could once again surmount great persecution. At that time, I vowed: “I will make the way of mentor and disciple the eternal way of the Soka Gakkai.”<sup>5</sup>

The most important theme of the Lotus Sutra is the entrustment of the vow and mission to propagate the Mystic Law—from the teacher of “time without beginning” to the disciples of “time without beginning.”

We of the SGI embody this principle of mentor and disciple in the present age of the Latter Day of the Law, and we have emerged to carry out the great vow of kosen-rufu, the cherished wish of Shakyamuni and Nichiren Daishonin.

Having overcome great obstacles, Mr. Toda was finally inaugurated as the second Soka Gakkai president (on May 3, 1951). He then immediately undertook the most important step—giving new structure to the Soka Gakkai. The headline “Establishment of an Organization for the Happiness of Humanity” danced boldly across the front page of the Soka Gakkai’s newly launched newspaper, the *Seikyo Shimbun*.

At the time, there were only about 3,000 members. But it wasn’t a matter of numbers. Mr. Toda was firmly convinced that a force of people united in the spirit of many in body, one in mind for the

sake of kosen-rufu was certain to fulfill its great and historic mission.

I am reminded of a conviction voiced by the Indian independence leader Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948): “A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history.”<sup>6</sup>

Our organization dedicated to the victory of the people—whose members share “an unquenchable faith” in their noble mission to fulfill the great vow of kosen-rufu—has indeed changed the course of history.

## A Gathering of Good Friends Practicing Buddhism Together

**Josei Toda declared** that the Soka Gakkai organization was more important to him than his own life. Its significance in terms of Buddhism is that of the sangha<sup>7</sup> of the present day—the harmonious community of believers who practice the correct teaching of the Buddha.

In order to preserve and transmit the correct teaching eternally into the future, there must be people who uphold it and pass it on to others. In other words, there must be an organization.

During Shakyamuni’s lifetime, a community of believers formed around him.

Ananda, who was known as foremost in hearing the Buddha’s teachings, once asked Shakyamuni: “It seems to me that by having good friends and advancing together with them, one has already halfway attained the Buddha way. Is this way of thinking correct?”

Shakyamuni replied: “Ananda, this way of thinking is not correct. Having good friends and advancing together with them is not half the Buddha way but all the Buddha way.”

Shakyamuni continued: “Consider this, Ananda. Is it not so that by taking me as their good friend, people are able to liberate themselves from the sufferings of birth, aging, sickness and death? As one can conclude from this, having good friends and advancing together with them constitutes not half the Buddha way, but all of the Buddha way.”<sup>8</sup>

This teaches us that making the path of mentor



**SGI President Ikeda wholeheartedly encourages a member of the Shiraito Group, a young men's training group, at the Shiraito Falls in Shizuoka, Japan, August 1972.**

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and disciple our foundation and living out our lives together with good friends—our fellow members in faith—is the way to overcome the sufferings inherent in the human condition. In the SGI, we refer to this as the oneness of mentor and disciple and the unity of many in body, one in mind shared by fellow practitioners.

The same Buddhist scripture describes Shakyamuni's disciple Shariputra, who was known as the foremost in wisdom, saying with deep feeling on another occasion, as if to reaffirm the conclusion reached by Shakyamuni and Ananda, "My teacher, being together with good friends, good comrades, is all of the Buddha way."<sup>9</sup> Shakyamuni rejoiced at Shariputra's words, stressing once more that advancing with good friends is all of the Buddha way.

Shakyamuni placed the highest value on the bonds linking fellow practitioners. The gathering of teacher and disciples and of good friends in faith is the harmonious community of believers—also known as "the invincible Sangha."<sup>10</sup>

Shakyamuni's community of believers was open to all people, to the world. He warmly welcomed those who joined this community, showing them the greatest respect, never discriminating against anyone on account of class or social status.

The ideal realm of Buddhism is one where everyone respects and encourages one another based on warm, heart-to-heart ties of caring and understanding.

Disrupting the harmonious community of believers is nothing other than closing off and



Saikyo Press

President Ikeda takes a photo of young men out of appreciation for their hard work behind the scenes during his visit to Brazil, Sao Paulo, March 1993.

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The unity of many in body, one in mind based on faith dedicated to realizing kosen-rufu is the strategy that ensures absolute victory. Let us thoroughly safeguard the SGI—our invincible bastion of the people—and forever continue winning victory after victory.

destroying one's own path to Buddhahood. It is the action of "worms born from the body of the lion itself feed on the lion" ("The Selection of the Time," WND-1, 570) or "warriors who destroy their own castle from within" ("The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life," WND-1, 217).

## Unity Is the Power for Victory

**Being united** in the spirit of many in body, one in mind is the foundation of "the invincible Sangha." Such unity is the driving force for victory. It goes without saying that this is true in many fields of endeavor.

Thomas Paine (1737–1809), the pamphleteer who played a key role in the American Revolution, wrote, "It is not in numbers, but in unity, that our great strength lies."<sup>11</sup>

The unity of many in body, one in mind based on faith dedicated to realizing kosen-rufu is the strategy that ensures absolute victory. Let us thoroughly safeguard the SGI—our invincible bastion of the people—and forever continue winning victory after victory.

In the indelible words of Nichiren Daishonin:

If the spirit of many in body but one in mind prevails among the people, they will achieve all their goals, whereas if one in body but different in mind, they can achieve nothing remarkable . . .

Although Nichiren and his followers are few, because they are different in body, but united in mind [many in body, one in mind], they will definitely accomplish their great mission of widely propagating the Lotus Sutra [Nam-myoho-renge-kyo]. ("Many in Body, One in Mind," WND-1, 618)

This formula for victory remains unchanged today.

## Respecting One Another as Buddhas

**We are, however,** a gathering of human beings—of ordinary people of the Latter Day of the Law.

Just calling for unity doesn't mean that we can easily get people to unite.

The reality of human society is that there will always be people we don't like or just don't get along with. That's why it's important not to get carried away by momentary emotions, but instead to make a conscious effort to work together and to strive for unity. The correct path of the wise lies in not becoming mired in arrogance and prejudice.

The Daishonin repeatedly offered advice to his follower Shijo Kingo who, while having a strong sense of right and wrong, tended to be short-tempered and unable to hide his emotions. In a letter to Shijo Kingo, he writes about the importance of Kingo maintaining good relations with those around him, saying: "However disagreeable it may be to you, you should associate with them amicably" ("The Three Kinds of Treasure," WND-1, 849–50); and "Always maintain friendly relations with them" (WND-1, 850).

In another letter, "The Fourteen Slanders," he writes:

Always remember that believers in the Lotus Sutra should absolutely be the last to abuse one another. All those who keep faith in the Lotus Sutra are most certainly Buddhas, and one who slanders a Buddha commits a grave offense. . .

If someone proclaims even a single verse or phrase of the Lotus Sutra, you must respect him as you would the Buddha. This is what the sutra means when it says, "You should rise and greet him from afar, showing him the same respect you would a Buddha." (WND-1, 756–57)

This is very important guidance that we should always bear in mind. "All those who keep faith in the Lotus Sutra are most certainly Buddhas" (WND-1, 756), says the Daishonin. Buddhas do not argue with or speak ill of one another.

As human beings, we can only polish and develop ourselves among other human beings. To always go out among the people—this is the vow of Mahayana bodhisattvas. It is the practice for overcoming self-centeredness and growing and developing as a person.

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## Genuine Champions Who Take Personal Initiative for Kosen-rufu

I have engraved in my heart the following words of Nichiren Daishonin while exerting myself for kosen-rufu since the time of my youth:

The devil king of the sixth heaven<sup>12</sup> has roused the ten kinds of troops<sup>13</sup> and, in the midst of the sea of the sufferings of birth and death, is at war with the votary of the Lotus Sutra to stop him from taking possession of and to wrest away from him this impure land [the saha world] where both ordinary people and sages dwell.

It has been twenty or more years now since I found myself in that situation and began the great battle [to propagate the Mystic Law]. Not once have I thought of retreat. (“The Great Battle,” WND-2, 465)

The struggle of kosen-rufu to free all living beings from the sea of sufferings, the Daishonin says, is a fierce battle against the troops of the devil king of the sixth heaven.

Nichiren experienced an unending series of life-threatening hardships and persecutions. He fought through them intrepidly, never relaxing his guard for a moment.

In his later years, he calmly declared:

[Despite the personal interference of the devil king of the sixth heaven,] it is because the heavenly deities came to my aid that I survived even the Tatsunokuchi Persecution<sup>14</sup> and emerged safely from other great persecutions. By now, the devil king must be thoroughly discouraged. (*Gosho zenshu*, p. 843)<sup>15</sup>

In other words, he says, the devil king of the sixth heaven has been forced to accept defeat.

Nichiren’s towering struggle as an indomitable lion king, which struck fear into the forces of the devil king, inspired assistance from the heavenly deities—the protective forces of the universe—allowing him to emerge triumphant even during the Tatsunokuchi Persecution.

The Daishonin’s disciples are a gathering of champions, each and every one of them having inherited the spirit of this great lion king.

He instructs us sternly, “None of you who declare yourselves to be my disciples should ever give way to cowardice” (“The Actions of the Votary of the Lotus Sutra,” WND-1, 764). In light of this, our people’s movement based on the spirit of many in body, one in mind is characterized by the powerful solidarity shared by fearless champions.

Stand-alone faith is what makes the unshakable unity of many in body, one in mind possible. True unity isn’t possible if we have the passive or irresponsible attitude to leave all the hard work to others, thinking that it’s not our concern and that someone else will take care of it.

Responding to Nichiren’s words “I entrust you with the propagation of Buddhism in your province” (“The Properties of Rice,” WND-1, 1117), we each need to stand up in the place or community where we are right now.

## “Kansai Will Become Stronger and Stronger”

**Josei Toda’s wish was** to build an indestructible bastion of the people that would remain undefeated by any onslaught of the devilish nature of authority.

July 17, 1957, is a day I will never forget. It was on this day that I was released after two weeks in police detention following my arrest on false charges. That evening, amid a fierce rainstorm that seemed to express the outrage of the heavenly deities, an event called the Osaka Rally was held at Nakanoshima Civic Hall to protest the unjust actions of the authorities.

What came to be known as the Osaka Incident<sup>16</sup> was a case of government oppression aimed at the Soka Gakkai. Seeing that I was the unifying force for our members in the Kansai region, the authorities targeted me with the intent of using



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President Ikeda captures Niagara Falls flowing in a ceaseless torrent, Ontario, Canada, June 1981.

my arrest as a stepping-stone to indicting Mr. Toda. Normally, this would have been enough to destroy an organization. But when the authorities launched their vicious attack on the Soka Gakkai, the mentor and disciples of Soka—especially our members in Osaka, ordinary people committed to truth and justice—remained fearless and unperturbed.

Mr. Toda sincerely praised the unity of the Kansai members, who chanted and stood up to fight against this injustice together. They didn't regard this incident as someone else's problem, but were outraged as if they themselves were under attack. Mr. Toda said to me with firm conviction, "Kansai will become stronger and stronger."

And now in accord with Mr. Toda's ardent wish, invincible golden citadels of many in body, one in mind have been built not only in Kansai, but also throughout Japan and around the world. This truly makes me happy.

## Actualizing Worldwide Kosen-rufu Through Our Network of Bodhisattvas of the Earth

**With my inauguration** as third Soka Gakkai president (on May 3, 1960), the age of worldwide kosen-rufu began in earnest. First, one pioneering champion of the Mystic Law and then another appeared in this country and that territory. They each awakened to their mission for kosen-rufu, took action to share Buddhism with others and went on to help one person after another to do the same.

Our members in some countries and territories had to endure long winters of adversity. But the harsher the conditions they faced, the more magnificent the actual proof of victory they have demonstrated in society.

Our organization in Brazil, for instance, was



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**President Ikeda takes a photo of “Toynbee Walk” at Taplow Court, Maidenhead, England, June 1994.**

persecuted for many years under the long military dictatorship that ruled the country. As a result, I was unable to visit our members there for 18 years. Also, in South Korea and Taiwan—places that had suffered under Japanese military rule before and during World War II—our members faced repeated difficulties because of deeply entrenched misunderstandings and prejudices in those societies. However, tenaciously surmounting all trials and tribulations by solidly uniting in the spirit of many in body, one in mind, our members there have built truly wonderful organizations of global citizens that are models for the rest of the world.

When I met with SGI members in Nepal, the birthplace of Shakyamuni, I urged them to make harmony their first, second and third priority.

In an organization where the members are united in purpose and advance together in harmony, there is hope, happiness and victory.

Our members in the Ivory Coast and other

nations in Africa, the continent of hope, are also continuing to make beautiful progress, rallying together with the mottoes, “Itai Doshin” (Many in Body, One in Mind) and “Victoire!” (Victory).

“Many in body”—in the term many in body, one in mind—can also be expressed as “diversity.”

In a discussion with SGI-USA Culture Department representatives (in August 1992), I said that uniformity leads to despotism and dictatorship, and that Nichiren Buddhism and the SGI celebrate diversity and creatively put it to positive use.<sup>17</sup>

Metaphors such as an orchestra or a salad bowl have been used to describe culturally diverse societies. In an orchestra, a diverse collection of instruments, each with its own unique sound, works together to produce a beautiful symphony. A rich variety of colorful vegetables in a salad bowl makes for a vibrant harmony. These are metaphors for a society in which various different individuals coexist harmoniously.

In fact, the rich diversity of the SGI in multi-ethnic and multicultural societies around the world is one of the features of our organization that has attracted the attention and admiration of thinkers everywhere.

It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the SGI, whose very heart is unity in diversity, embodies the ideal of a truly global society.

Wherever our network of confident, self-reliant SGI members spreads throughout the world, the path of value creation for happiness opens wide and the music of peace and hope resounds. Such is the wonderful age we have now entered.

## All Buddhas and Bodhisattvas Praise Our Noble Members

**Who at this time** in the Latter Day of the Law has been carrying out the worldwide propagation of the Mystic Law, the teaching for the enlightenment of all people?

Who, in actual fact, has plunged into the midst of those who are suffering and has been imparting the light of hope for a brighter future to those around them out of a wish to help them dispel the darkness of despair?

Who, while struggling with their own difficulties, has been reaching out to warmly support others who have problems and persevering in dialogue to help them draw forth the courage and energy to lead vibrant, positive lives?

Who has been tirelessly encouraging people throughout Japan and around the world, confidently telling them: “Now is the time to transform your karma. Let’s chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo together and strive our hardest!” “Winter always turns to spring. You can overcome this suffering and become happy, without fail!”

It is none other than our noble members. It is none other than the SGI, a gathering of Bodhisattvas of the Earth. It is none other than us, the mentors and disciples of Soka.

The principle expressed in “Life Span,” the 16th chapter of the Lotus Sutra, “I am always here, preaching the Law” (LSOC, 271)—in other words,

that the eternal Buddha is always here in the saha world expounding the Mystic Law—is made a reality by the presence of the SGI, which is dedicated to realizing the vow for kosen-rufu. This is also the significance of the SGI as the organization that accords with the Buddha’s intent and decree. The SGI is the true Buddhist sangha—harmonious community of believers—of our times. This is why Mr. Toda said that in future Buddhist scriptures the Soka Gakkai would be referred to as “Soka Gakkai Buddha.”<sup>18</sup>

Without a doubt, Nichiren Daishonin and all Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions and three existences of past, present and future are exclaiming “Excellent! Excellent!” in praise and delight at the tremendous strides we of the SGI have made, and continue to make, in advancing worldwide kosen-rufu.

## Mutual Encouragement and Harmonious Progress

**At the beginning of** this year, I asked that a calligraphy I had inscribed of one of my mentor’s poems many years earlier be shown to the members at the January Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting marking the start of the Year of Opening a New Era of Worldwide Kosen-rufu. The same poem is also engraved on a monument that graces the northern courtyard of the Hall of the Great Vow for Kosen-rufu [in Shinanomachi, Tokyo]:

*The journey to propagate  
the Mystic Law  
is long;  
let us encourage each other  
and advance together.*

We, the mentors and disciples of Soka, live out our lives together, struggle together and strive to fulfill the great vow of kosen-rufu together eternally throughout the three existences of past, present and future, our hearts forever one.

We are all comrades who share the same purpose, confronting the fundamental sufferings of birth, aging, sickness and death, and struggling to attain happiness for ourselves and others. For that

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reason, the SGI is a group whose members encourage and support one another. It is a group whose members study together and inspire one another. It is a group whose members strive to overcome obstacles together and achieve mutual growth.

I am always thinking of our incredibly noble members in areas affected by the March 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami who have been working tirelessly to bring people together, impart courage and hope, and illuminate the way to recovery. The light of reconstruction and happiness is now shining ever more brightly. As they press steadily forward with a dauntless, invincible spirit, that light continues to spread and brighten the lives of all those around them.

Our members in other parts of the world also shine as lights of hope for those around them. While facing all manner of personal difficulties, they continue to encourage members and friends, and wage an indomitable struggle for kosen-rufu.

In the future, too—on into eternity—we of the SGI will continue to advance based on faith, united in the beautiful spirit of many in body, one in mind, warmly supporting and encouraging one another, no matter what tempests may lie ahead. We will

continue our journey of courage and hope together, fearing nothing.

That is the way to realize the worldwide propagation of the Mystic Law. It is also the way toward a global society that resounds with paean to life and humanity.

I am confident that the day will come when the beautiful unity of the SGI—a gathering of ordinary people striving together in the spirit of many in body, one in mind—is etched in the triumphant history of the human race as the most exceptional of accomplishments.

The dawn of a new age of the people has already begun through the united efforts of our network of Bodhisattvas of the Earth across the globe.

—With deepest gratitude to  
my beloved SGI youth division members  
and future division members, the emissaries  
of tomorrow,  
as well as my dear men's and women's division  
members,  
the most trusted members of our Soka family,  
for being able to share with you this May 3  
filled with victory, glory and hope.

Translated from the May 2014 issue of the  
Daibyakurenge, the Soka Gakkai study journal. ❀

## Notes:

1. The phrase “transcending all differences among themselves” could be rendered literally as “without any thought of self or other, this or that.” This is not a denial of individuality, but rather urges the bridging of the gaps between people that arise from self-centeredness.

2. “The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life”: This letter, dated February 11, 1272, was written by Nichiren Daishonin at Tsukahara on Sado Island, and was sent to Sairen-bo Nichijo, a former Tendai priest who was also living in exile on Sado. It was composed in

response to a question from Sairen-bo, who had become the Daishonin's disciple, regarding the ultimate Law of life and death that is the key to attaining Buddhahood.

3. The Daishonin writes, “Nichiren has been trying to awaken all the people of Japan to faith in the Lotus Sutra so that they too can share the heritage and attain Buddhahood” (“The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life,” WND-1, 217).

4. Translated from Japanese. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo zenshu* (Collected Works of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi), (Tokyo: Daisanbunmei-sha, 1987), vol. 10, p. 188.

5. See Daisaku Ikeda, *A Youthful Diary: One Man's Journey from the Beginning of Faith to Worldwide Leadership for Peace* (Santa Monica, California: World Tribune Press, 2000), p. 81.

6. M. K. Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (New Delhi: The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1977), vol. 68 (Oct. 15, 1938–Feb. 28, 1939), p. 81.

7. *Sangha* (Skt.): Also, *samgha*. The Buddhist Order, or the community of Buddhist believers. The Sanskrit term originally meant a collective body or assembly and later came to refer to the body of Buddhist

practitioners.

8. This episode has been creatively paraphrased here. See Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya* (Boston: Wisdom Publishing, 2000), “Maggasamyutta” [2 (2) Half the Holy Life], p. 1524.

9. See Ibid., “Maggasamyutta” [3 (3) Sariputta], p. 1525.

10. See Ibid., “Devatasamyutta” [37 (7) Concourse <55>], p. 115.

11. Thomas Paine, “Common Sense,” in *Thomas Paine: Collected Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1995), p. 36.

# A GUIDE FOR PRESENTING THE “TEACHINGS FOR VICTORY” AT MONTHLY STUDY MEETINGS

The monthly district study meeting is the place where members come together to delve into the “Teachings for Victory.” This guide is intended to help designated lecturers create an effective presentation.

## STEP 1:

### Read the material.

- Read the lecture several times to become familiar with its content and overall intent.
- Read the featured letter in *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, including the background.
- Study for your own education and encouragement; note what you learned and found inspiring.

## STEP 2:

### Prepare the background and context.

- Prepare a brief explanation of the letter’s background to convey the context in which Nichiren wrote it.
- Review the lecture’s opening section, where President Ikeda

often connects the content of the letter to the present.

## STEP 3:

### Decide on your conclusion.

- Determine your presentation’s end point—knowing where you’re going helps plan the route you’ll take.

## STEP 4:

### Work on your main points.

- Confirm the main points you intend to make in your presentation. We suggest highlighting two to three key points.
- Include memorable passages that participants can engrave in their hearts.
- Speak about content that excites or encourages you. This will convey your enthusiasm for study.

- Share an experience that illustrates how the material applies to daily life.

- Keep the cited passages brief.

## STEP 5:

### Practice your presentation.

- Practice your presentation several times. Read slowly while tracking the time.
- Does the presentation make sense to you? If not, more work is needed.

## STEP 6:

### Chant abundantly.

- Chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo abundantly to be able to convey the spirit of Nichiren Daishonin and of President Ikeda through your presentation.

12. Devil king of the sixth heaven: Also, devil king or heavenly devil. The king of devils, who dwells in the highest or the sixth heaven of the world of desire. He is also named Freely Enjoying Things Conjured by Others, the king who makes free use of the fruits of others’ efforts for his own pleasure. Served by innumerable minions, he obstructs Buddhist practice and delights in sapping the life force of other beings, the manifestation of the fundamental darkness inherent in life. The devil king is a personification of the negative tendency to force others to one’s will at any cost.

13. Ten kinds of troops: The ten kinds of troops represent ten

kinds of hindrances. Nagarjuna’s *Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* lists them as 1) greed, 2) care and worry, 3) hunger and thirst, 4) love of pleasure, 5) drowsiness and languor, 6) fear, 7) doubt and regret, 8) anger, 9) preoccupation with wealth and fame, and 10) arrogance and contempt for others.

14. Tatsunokuchi Persecution: On September 12, 1271, powerful figures in the government unjustly arrested the Daishonin and led him off in the middle of the night to the execution grounds on the beach at Tatsunokuchi on the outskirts of Kamakura, the seat of government, where they tried

to execute him under cover of darkness. The execution attempt failed, and about a month later the Daishonin was exiled to Sado Island.

15. “Okō Kikigaki” (The Recorded Lectures); not included in volumes 1 or 2 *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*.

16. Osaka Incident: The occasion when SGI President Ikeda, then Soka Gakkai youth division chief of staff, was arrested and wrongfully charged with election law violations in a House of Councilors by-election in Osaka in 1957. At the end of the court case, which continued for more than four years, he was fully

exonerated of all charges.

17. See *SGI Newsletter*, No. 967.

18. Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda once said: “The Soka Gakkai has appeared as the Daishonin’s emissary and is practicing the bodhisattva way in order to widely spread and convey the supreme teaching to all people of the Latter Day of the Law. This is surely an embodiment of the Buddha’s statement: ‘I have been constantly in this saha world, preaching the Law, teaching, and converting’ (LSOC, 266). The Soka Gakkai deserves to be known as ‘Soka Gakkai Buddha’; it is a gathering of Buddhas.”