

March 2022 *Living Buddhism*, pp. 53–62

**“THE BUDDHISM OF THE SUN: ILLUMINATING THE WORLD” [74]
EXPANDING OUR GATHERING OF COURAGEOUS INDIVIDUALS
WHO TREASURE THE DIGNITY OF THEIR OWN AND OTHERS’ LIVES**

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 applying 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. In his monthly lectures, our mentor’s explanations of Nichiren’s writings represent this “living” Buddhism.

GOALS FOR PRESENTERS

1. Let’s learn together: This is the recommended approach for presenting President Ikeda’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 cover every topic.
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.

ESSENTIAL POINTS FOR PRESENTING “THE BUDDHISM OF THE SUN” LECTURES

- ⇒ Read the entire lecture several times.
- ⇒ Read the footnotes, as they often provide additional background information. (March 2022 LB, pp. 61–62)
- ⇒ Chant abundant daimoku before your presentation to grasp and convey Sensei’s heart.
- ⇒ Have someone read aloud key Gosho excerpts and your selected passages from the lecture during the presentation. Ensure the reader has the opportunity to prepare well ahead of time.
- ⇒ Encourage participants also to read the lecture and find their own points of inspiration.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

-  **Starting from “We Are Forever...”**
(March 2022 *Living Buddhism*, p. 55)
 - The courage of a lion king ([Dec. 2021 LB, pp. 48–56](#)); ([Aug. 2016 LB, pp. 41–45](#))

-  **“In the Continent of Jambudvipa”**
(March 2022 LB, 56)
 - Feb. 19, 2010, *World Tribune*, pp. 4–5
 - Feb. 26, 2010, *World Tribune*, pp. 4–5
 - See attached PDF

-  **Starting from “The Unassailable Life ...”**
 - *Teachings for Victory*, vol. 1, pp. 13–14

-  **Ikegami Brothers** (March 2022 LB, 58)
 - TFV-1, 59–112

-  **Starting from “Could There Ever ...”**
(March 2022 LB, 58)
 - Essay: “Imparting Hope and Inspiration Through Dialogue” ([July 9, 2021, World Tribune, pp. 2–3](#); second half starting with: “While confined at the Tokyo Detention Center...”)

-  **Starting from “You Should Join Together...”** (March 2022 LB, 59)
 - Unity ([The Wisdom for Creating Happiness and Peace, Part 3, 23.2, pp. 126–30](#); and [23.3, pp. 130–35](#))



SEIKYO PRESS

The following is part one of SGI President Ikeda's study essay from the "Writings of Nichiren Daishonin and the Oneness of Mentor and Disciple" series published in the April 22 edition of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.

SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's Study Essay—Part 1 of 2

Triumph With the Heart of a Lion King

"My wish is that my disciples will be cubs of the lion king, never to be laughed at by the pack of foxes. It is hard to encounter a master like Nichiren, who since distant kalpas in the past down to the present day has never begrudged his body or life in order to expose the faults of his powerful enemies!" (From "In the Continent of Jambudvipa," *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2, p. 1062).

My mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, once said to a group of students: "If you wish to join me in becoming true seekers of this Buddhism, then behave as genuine disciples of mine should! Having the attitude of an indifferent outside observer really won't do." Genuine disciples are those who sincerely put their mentor's teachings into practice.

The SGI is the organization truly carrying out the Buddha's intent and decree. Its members are courageously practicing Nichiren Buddhism in the present age and spreading it throughout the world.

The SGI is a great alliance of individuals who champion the cause of *kosen-rufu*.

Soon it will be April 28 (2009), the anniversary of Nichiren Daishonin's establishment of his teaching. On that day in 1253, the Daishonin declared the teaching of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo for the first time at Seicho-ji temple in Awa Province (present-day southern Chiba Prefecture). In doing so, he launched a great struggle for *kosen-rufu* aimed at leading all people to enlightenment throughout the Latter Day of the Law. This event immediately drew hostility and persecution from priests and followers of the existing Buddhist schools and the secular authorities

of the day.

In many of his letters, Nichiren refers to the community of believers who strive alongside him as "Nichiren's disciples" or "Nichiren's followers." After the establishment of his teaching, more and more followers began to emerge in different parts of the country, inspired by the Daishonin's profound compassion and personal integrity.

The community of disciples who were firmly resolved to uphold and protect the Mystic Law grew to cover a considerable area. For instance, in Kamakura, the seat of the military government, there were followers such as Shijo Kingo. In the provinces that today comprise Chiba Prefecture, Toki Jonin and other disciples were active. There were also numerous followers in the area near Mount Fuji, to which Nikko Shonin, one of Nichiren's leading disciples, had close links. Later, followers who embraced the lofty mission of *kosen-rufu* even appeared on the distant island of Sado, where Nichiren was exiled.

The community of believers is a great faith-based alliance of individuals who champion the cause of *kosen-rufu* together with their mentor and offer moral support and encouragement to one another in their endeavors. In modern terms, it corresponds to the organization or body of Buddhist practitioners carrying

out the propagation of the Mystic Law.

How delighted Nichiren would surely be to see the growth of the community of "Nichiren's disciples," which today extends to 192 countries and territories as a result of the tireless efforts of the mentors and disciples of Soka.

The more training we receive, the stronger we become.

Let us now turn to the passage from "In the Continent of Jambudvipa" that we are studying this time:

"My wish is that my disciples will be cubs of the lion king, never to be laughed at by the pack of foxes. It is hard to encounter a master like Nichiren, who since distant kalpas in the past down to the present day has never begrudged his body or life in order to expose the faults of his powerful enemies!" (WND-2, 1062).

Although this letter is only a fragment, and its recipient is unknown, it nevertheless conveys the fundamental spirit that one should strive to cultivate as a disciple of Nichiren.

Lion king is a term used to describe the Buddha, and here, it signifies Nichiren's lofty state of being as a champion of the Mystic Law. Nichiren's message is that since the teacher is a "lion king," the disciples must behave as "cubs of the lion

king." In other words, they must strive fearlessly and not be ridiculed by the "pack of foxes"—a reference to cunning people who resent and slander the correct teaching of Buddhism and try to obstruct *kosen-rufu*.

Life is a battle. Work is also a battle. Buddhism is about winning, as the Daishonin stresses in his writings. Young people, in particular, need to have the strength to triumph over adversity. It is crucial that they acquire the kind of ability that will let them always emerge victorious, the kind of ability that commands others' respect. The basis for this is our Buddhist practice, which is the key to absolute victory.

Mr. Toda said, "The Daishonin's disciples are the cubs of the lion king, which means the more training they receive, the stronger they become." To become lion kings ourselves, we need to win in one challenge after another, no matter how small it may be, never growing careless or complacent. Nichiren testifies to this point, stating, "The lion king is said to advance three steps, then gather himself to spring, unleashing the same power whether he traps a tiny ant or attacks a fierce animal" (WND-1, 412).

In the struggle of life, victory leads to happiness, while defeat leads to unhappiness. We must therefore strive to win in the end, regardless of the setbacks we may

have experienced along the way.

Follow in the footsteps of the lion king, surmount all obstacles, never be defeated by corrupt or malicious forces and achieve one brilliant victory after another!—this is Nichiren’s call to his disciples.

He then further outlines how his disciples should conduct themselves.

Uniting our efforts with our mentor is the foundation of *kosen-rufu*.

Nichiren specifically emphasizes four points.

First, he instructs his followers to practice as he does; in other words, to strive in faith with the spirit of the oneness of mentor and disciple. This means the spirit to join in the Daishonin’s struggle for *kosen-rufu*, earnestly chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo and widely propagating the Mystic Law.

In other letters, Nichiren stresses: “Those who call themselves my disciples and practice the Lotus Sutra should all practice as I do” (WND-1, 978); and “Those who become Nichiren’s disciples and lay believers should realize the profound karmic relationship they share with him and spread the Lotus Sutra as he does” (WND-1, 994). Furthermore, as I touched on earlier, he repeatedly addresses his followers as “Nichiren’s disciples,” “my disciples,” “Nichiren and his followers,” “you who are my disciples” and so on. The Daishonin does his utmost to drive his message home to his disciples so that each of them, without a single exception, will continue to advance intrepidly on the great path of the oneness of mentor and disciple.

The Daishonin fostered his disciples’ faith and commitment by confidently proclaiming himself to be the model they should follow and urging them to practice alongside him with the same spirit of devotion. Perhaps no other teacher can compare in this regard in the history of religion. Nichiren’s bold use of his own name was also a mighty lion’s roar in defense of the correct teaching, a fearless declaration of his resolve to bear the full brunt of the seething jealousy and hatred of the three powerful enemies, and the inevitable storms of persecution. We can also interpret it as an expression of his profoundly compassionate wish to help his disciples gain greater strength and wisdom through emulating his dauntless struggle against persecution and so be able to adorn their lives with honor and victory.

To borrow a metaphor, the mentor can be likened to a needle and the disciple to the thread. Only by the thread following the needle can a garment be completed.

It is the mission and responsibility of disciples to preserve and pass on the brilliant legacy of the oneness of mentor and disciple to future generations.

To unite one’s efforts with the mentor, to follow the mentor’s example—this is the foundation for achieving *kosen-rufu*. If this shared spirit of the oneness of mentor and disciple is lost, the correct teach-

ing will neither flourish nor be transmitted to people of future ages.

How do we actualize our mentor’s vision? To constantly ponder and chant about this question and to keep seeking to understand what that vision is; to strive in faith with the same spirit as our mentor—this is where true oneness of mentor and disciple can be found.

Strive with the spirit of not begrudging one’s life.

Second, the Daishonin emphasizes the courageous spirit of not begrudging one’s life. The mark of a genuine disciple is the strong resolve to champion the correct teaching with ungrudging devotion. If we remain true to the eternal Mystic Law to the very end, our lives will also shine with everlasting brilliance.

Throughout his life, Nichiren demonstrated a spirit of selfless dedication to the Law, ceaselessly propagating the correct teaching, undeterred by persecution.

The mentor leads the way, setting an example for the disciples. The path of the disciple is to strive with energetic and wholehearted commitment to follow the mentor’s lead.

There is no room for empty posturing. Genuine disciples give their all to protect their mentor from malicious attacks, even if they come under fire themselves. They have the spirit to take on persecution to shield their mentor from harm. They resolve to become cornerstones contributing to the development of the community of believers—the organization of faith built by the mentor through painstaking, selfless effort. In the prayers and actions of such disciples flows the heritage of the mentor’s noble spirit. In contrast, ungrateful individuals who trample on the profound debt they owe their mentor are certain to receive stern retribution in accord with the law of cause and effect.

Mr. Toda declared, “*Kosen-rufu* can definitely be achieved if even one young person is willing to dedicate his or her entire life to it.” I therefore decided to be that one youth.

When one of Mr. Toda’s companies was facing the crisis of having to close down operations in August 1950, I wrote in my diary:

*Do not fear, though obstacles surround you,
You, a Bodhisattva of the Earth.
.....
Mighty waves that tower on high,
Break with all your fury.
Test your power against mine!*

It is impossible for me to fully describe in words the joy and honor I feel at having worked alongside such a great mentor as Mr. Toda. I did everything I could do to support and assist him, ready to give my entire life and all my worldly possessions if need be. I was prepared to sacrifice my personal desires, my family life and everything else if I had to. It is solely because of this resolve that the Soka Gakkai has grown into the great global organization it is today.

We can establish peace when we courageously speak out for the truth.

Third, Nichiren indicates the importance of “exposing the faults of powerful enemies”—in other words, the need to refute the erroneous and reveal the true. This refers to speaking out to thwart the efforts of those who would destroy the teachings of Buddhism and the happiness of the people.

In the passage we are studying, “powerful enemies” is specifically understood to mean the priests of the Tendai school who embraced esoteric teachings. In a broader sense, however, it also could be taken to refer to all the priests of the different Buddhist schools and the secular

‘*Kosen-rufu* can definitely be achieved if even one young person is willing to dedicate his or her entire life to it.’

authorities of the day who viewed Nichiren and his followers with enmity and joined forces to persecute them.

In another writing, Nichiren states: “It may be impertinent that I make charges of this kind, but if I do not do so, then the relative merit of the Mahavairocana and Lotus sutras [which are the central teachings of Tendai Esotericism and Mahayana Buddhism, respectively] will continue to be misunderstood as it is at present. That is why I risk my life to bring these charges” (WND-1, 710).

Here, we can see the profound spirit of the Daishonin. He risked his life to point out the erroneous doctrines being preached by the established religious authorities of the day. He went on to clearly expose and prove the errors of these powerful enemies of both Buddhism and the happiness of the people. These errors had become deeply embedded in society, adversely influencing people’s beliefs and leading people astray.

In a similar context, Mr. Toda once declared:

“We have to establish a tradition of defeating powerful enemies at a crucial moment. To do this, we need to apply ourselves with a sense of dedication and responsibility. We can accumulate tremendous good fortune when we denounce malicious and destructive attacks, and do our utmost to support our mentor in faith. That is how we create causes for the future growth of the Soka Gakkai.”

Negative influences that obstruct the flow of *kosen-rufu* mustn’t be ignored or

left unchecked. Nichiren states, “When they [the provisional teachings] are a source of confusion, they must be thoroughly refuted from the standpoint of the true teaching [the Lotus Sutra]” (WND-1, 394).

Through courageous efforts to speak out for truth and justice, and to set the record straight, we can expand our circle of trust and friendship in society. Only by forging ahead tirelessly on this path can we hope to actualize the Daishonin’s ideal of realizing a peaceful and prosperous society based on the humanistic principles of Buddhism—that is, “establishing the correct teaching for the peace of the land.”

Nothing is more wonderful than encountering a great mentor.

Fourth, the Daishonin notes that it is hard to encounter a master or great teacher of Buddhism. With this statement, he is reminding us of the importance of having gratitude for one’s mentor.

The master or great teacher of Buddhism referred to here, of course, specifically indicates Nichiren. He is the person who showed the world the quintessential life-state of the lion king, invincible and ever victorious. The first and second presidents of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, meanwhile, rose up to carry on the work of *kosen-rufu* in exact accord with the Daishonin’s teachings. They are the Soka Gakkai’s great mentors or teachers in faith.

There is nothing more wonderful or fortunate than being born in the same age as a great mentor and sharing and striving for the same ideals and aspirations as that mentor. I have been so fortunate to encounter my own mentor, Mr. Toda, and this is what I truly feel. I cannot fully express my gratitude for the wondrous karmic bond I share with him.

The above four points lie at the heart of the proud spirit of “Nichiren’s disciples” whose mission it is to propagate the supreme teaching of the Mystic Law. They constitute our true path of practice from “distant kalpas in the past down to the present day.”

Nichiren deeply cared for his disciples.

Nichiren put his own life on the line to protect his loyal and dedicated community of followers. His letters to his disciples brim with his profound compassion and concern for them. How deeply Nichiren must have prayed for their health, long life, development, happiness and victory. He had a clear grasp of their individual situations, their health, their personalities, even their strengths and weaknesses. He perhaps knew them far better than they even imagined. With such insight and understanding, he chanted for his disciples’ happiness and encouraged and guided them in faith so that they could open the way to absolute victory. For this reason, the Daishonin embodies the

—Please see *Essay*, p. 6



SEIKYO PRESS

The following is the conclusion of SGI President Ikeda's study essay from the "Writings of Nichiren Daishonin and the Oneness of Mentor and Disciple" series published in the April 24 edition of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.

SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's Study Essay—[Part 2 of 2](#)

A Lionhearted Person Is Never Defeated

"My wish is that my disciples will be cubs of the lion king, never to be laughed at by the pack of foxes. It is hard to encounter a master like Nichiren, who since distant kalpas in the past down to the present day has never begrudged his body or life in order to expose the faults of his powerful enemies!" (From "In the Continent of Jambudvipa," *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2, p. 1062).

"Justice—I carry the banner of justice alone." These are the words I wrote as a calligraphy piece on May 5, 1979. [President Ikeda stepped down as third Soka Gakkai president on May 3, 1979, to protect the Soka Gakkai members from the machinations of the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood and former Soka Gakkai members who colluded to bring about his downfall.] It was in a room at the Kanagawa Culture Center overlooking the waters of Yokohama Harbor that lead out to the world.

At that time, members of earnest seeking spirit, not only from Tokyo and Kanagawa, but also from Kansai, Shikoku and other parts of Japan, traveled to our center in Yokohama, hoping to see me.

Thirty years have passed since then. Now, together with my fellow members in Japan and across the globe, I would like to loudly proclaim for all to hear that justice has prevailed. We of the SGI have won!

Nichiren remained undaunted by the persecutions befalling him.

How did Japanese society, under the rule of the Kamakura military government, react to the rapidly growing com-

munity of followers that emerged after Nichiren Daishonin established his teaching? Most conspicuously, the misguided priests of the established Buddhist schools—even those who might have confessed a grudging appreciation for the Lotus Sutra—harbored intense hostility, resentment and jealousy toward the Daishonin. Since their doctrines were no match for the correct teaching that upholds the supremacy of the Lotus Sutra, they plotted to discredit and silence its foremost teacher, Nichiren. These were the dark motives that prompted the religious authorities to conspire with powerful government figures against Nichiren.

Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda lamented: "Too often, human beings are driven mad by jealousy. Slanders inspired by envy have caused untold harm to decent, upright people throughout history. This is a sad truth."

The Daishonin keenly understood the fundamental nature of persecution befalling those who practiced the correct teaching and was therefore thoroughly undaunted when it descended upon him. Knowing full well that the attacks against him would intensify if he spoke out, he nevertheless "battered down

the gates of the provisional teachings" (WND-I, 392) and "refute[d] the teachers and the doctrines of all the other schools" (WND-I, 394). By doing so, he sought to transform the spiritual climate of Japanese society, which was tainted by erroneous teachings.

Telling others about one's mentor is a disciple's source of pride.

Efforts to spread recognition of Nichiren's name and philosophy are equivalent to "sowing the seeds of the Mystic Law by letting others hear the teaching"—that is, propagating the great pure Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. For genuine disciples, telling others about their mentor is a source of pride.

Many of the followers who experienced the Daishonin's boundless compassion—such as Shijo Kingo, Toki Jonin and Nanjo Tokimitsu, who overflowed with seeking spirit—were proud to call themselves his disciples and were actively involved in propagating the Law. People who are reluctant to let others know about their mentor have been defeated by their own inner weakness and ultimately have forgotten what it means to be a truly committed disciple.

After Nichiren's passing, there were also cowardly individuals who were too afraid to admit to being disciples of Nichiren. The five senior priests—all six principal disciples of Nichiren except for Nikko Shonin—immediately revealed their true feckless nature in this respect. They announced themselves as "priests of the Tendai school"—in other words, "T'ien-t'ai's disciples"—and even destroyed many of the Daishonin's writings, discarding the precious teachings contained therein. They cut themselves off from the lineage of "Nichiren's disciples" by their own hands, leaving the correct path of the oneness of mentor and disciple in a betrayal of Nichiren and his teachings.

Mr. Toda pointedly observed: "Although the five senior priests were committed to propagating Nam-myoho-renge-kyo while the Daishonin was alive, they allowed themselves to be intimidated by the great persecution that ensued after his death. As a result, they called themselves 'Tendai priests.'"

Nikko Shonin alone fearlessly proclaimed his mentor's name, and he boldly signed his letters of petition to government officials: "Nikko, disciple of the sage Nichiren." He dauntlessly affirmed the validity of the Daishonin's teaching

and continued to fiercely rebuke the errors of those who had betrayed their mentor. This struggle of Nikko Shonin to protect the Law offers a model for all genuine disciples.

The essence of Buddhism can only be widely transmitted through the efforts of disciples who earnestly follow a correct teacher of the Law and confidently tell others about their beliefs and the integrity of the teacher they embrace.

By the same token, it is also crucial to thoroughly denounce treacherous individuals whose actions mirror those of the five senior priests, who lost the *shakubuku* spirit [the spirit to correct another's false views and awaken that person to the truth of Buddhism] instilled in them by Nichiren, and who succumbed to worldly self-interest and sowed division in the harmonious gathering of believers dedicated to *kosen-rufu*.

A disciple vows to vindicate his mentor.

The lifeblood of the mentor-disciple bond shared by the Daishonin and Nikko Shonin has been directly inherited by the Soka Gakkai's first three presidents in modern times and, through their efforts, spread around the world.

Mr. Toda oversaw and also funded the publication of his mentor first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's book *The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy*. He had the work's title and author's name printed on the cover of the first edition in gold lettering. This, too, was an expression of his sincere respect and devotion to his mentor.

After the war, as a living extension of Mr. Makiguchi, who had died in prison for his beliefs, Mr. Toda rose up alone in the ravaged country of Japan to carry on his mentor's vision. He resolutely endeavored to show the world that Mr. Makiguchi was in the right. He pledged to become a Count of Monte Cristo in the realm of faith who would accomplish something great in order to vindicate his mentor and repay the debt of gratitude he owed him.

I will never forget how I worked with Mr. Toda to donate copies of Mr. Makiguchi's *Kachi ron* (Theory of Value) to more than 420 universities and academic institutions in some 50 countries around the world. We did it to mark the 10th anniversary of Mr. Makiguchi's passing (in 1954). Mr. Toda said: "It's our duty to share Mr. Makiguchi's writings with the world as great masterworks. We have to inspire people everywhere to read and study them."

I made my mentor's fate my own.

The time when Mr. Toda's businesses fell into dire financial straits was also a period of adversity for the Soka Gakkai. In August 1950, Mr. Toda suddenly decided to step down as the organization's general director. His credit union had been ordered to suspend operations, and he did not want the company's prob-

lems to negatively impact the Soka Gakkai or its members.

I took it upon myself to ensure that Mr. Toda's huge debt was repaid, especially working tirelessly to negotiate with the creditors of the failed business. I applied myself with wholehearted dedication and determination.

As I saw Mr. Toda showered with criticism and abuse, I was deeply convinced that this was the perfect opportunity for me to read *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* with my life and become a genuine practitioner of Nichiren Buddhism. "Mr. Toda is my one and only mentor. I will thoroughly support him and see him inaugurated as the second president of the Soka Gakkai. This is the path of a disciple." With this resolve in my heart, I embarked on what was literally a life-or-death struggle. I devoted myself to assisting Mr. Toda with the readiness to make his fate my own.

Many of those who gave an outward appearance of respecting Mr. Toda did an abrupt about-face. They deserted him in this time of crisis, insulting and cursing him as they left. It was just as Mr. Toda often told us: "People's true colors are revealed at a crucial moment." He said to me, "Daisaku, you are now all I have."

I alone continued to call Mr. Toda my mentor and refer to him as the leader of our movement. In Buddhism, it is vital that we let others know about the greatness of our mentor and the teachings our mentor espouses.

Eventually, one genuine fellow member after another responded to my call, and an awareness of being disciples of Mr. Toda grew within the Soka Gakkai. As this sentiment intensified and spread, Mr. Toda was finally inaugurated as the second president on May 3, 1951.

I wrote in my diary: "Will protect President Toda to the best of my ability—as long as I live. I have but one reason. That is, to protect President Toda is to protect the spread of faith in the Gohonzon." Based on this conviction, I strove as an extension of Mr. Toda and an indomitable champion of the Mystic Law to propagate Nichiren Buddhism. We were truly united as mentor and disciple.

Mr. Toda said to me later: "I'm so fortunate to have had you in my life. You have been a wonderful disciple, and that makes me very happy. I'll never forget what you've done. You have made today possible."

No one can ever dispute that the Soka Gakkai is an organization of the oneness of mentor and disciple. Wherever I go in the world, I proudly talk to others about the convictions and achievements of Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda. Failing to do so would be a sign of cowardice, weakness and ingratitude as a disciple.

SGI members are Nichiren's true heirs.

Today, numerous streets, bridges and parks in the Americas and around the world are named after Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda. Citizens of many countries respect the first two presidents of our

organization as great figures of the 20th century who fought for peace and the welfare of humanity. This recognition has been won as a result of the outstanding efforts that our SGI members have been making to contribute to their respective communities. Uniting their hearts with mine, they are cheerfully walking the noble path of Soka mentor and disciple.

It is my imperishable honor that I have made the names of these two great mentors of Soka known throughout the globe by sharing their lives and achievements with people everywhere.

I acted as a "shield" and "breakwater" in rigorously protecting my mentor, and

To be called a 'lion' in Nichiren Buddhism is the ultimate tribute for an undisputed victor.

for more than 60 years, I have also done so for the community of practitioners of the Soka Gakkai, an organization of Buddhas.

The mentors and disciples of Soka have borne the brunt of every imaginable slander and attack, battling devilish functions inside and outside of the organization, while working to extend our great citadel of good fortune, friendship and peace to 192 countries and territories around the world.

I firmly believe that our tireless efforts for *kosen-rufu* and our magnificent actual proof of victory demonstrate that we are the true heirs of the Daishonin, who called on his disciples to follow his example and practice with the same spirit he did.

Youth, strive to be lions!

Nichiren states, "My wish is that my disciples will be cubs of the lion king, never to be laughed at by the pack of foxes" (WND-2, 1062). I present this passage to my youthful successors, with my highest aspirations for their endeavors.

Buddhism is the "philosophy of lion kings." Mr. Makiguchi was a lion, as was Mr. Toda. I, too, have fought as a lion and triumphed. Lionhearted individuals are never defeated. They don't rely on manipulation or devious schemes. To be called a "lion" in Nichiren Buddhism is the ultimate tribute for an undisputed victor in the realm of faith.

I therefore ask that all of you, my young successors, will strive to be lions who can intrepidly defeat the "pack of foxes"—that is, those who slander the correct teaching and its practitioners. Please boldly speak out for our noble cause with youthful courage and passion. Pour your hearts into letting people gain a true appreciation of the activities of the SGI. Demonstrate

the power of Nichiren Buddhism for all to see and impress them with the vibrant energy of the SGI youth division.

As the Daishonin writes, "When the lion king ... roars, the hundred cubs will then feel emboldened, and the heads of those other beasts and birds of prey [who seek to attack them] will be split into seven pieces" (see WND-1, 949). The roar of a lion king brings courage to the good but strikes fear into the hearts of the corrupt and ill-intentioned. Speaking out—that's what counts. For "the voice does the Buddha's work" (see *The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings*, p. 4). It's a struggle of words. The greater our efforts to reach out and talk to others, the more people we can help form a connection with Buddhism, thereby furthering our humanistic cause.

The more we challenge ourselves, the greater the strength and wisdom we can acquire. This is the essence of Nichiren Buddhism. Change must first begin with us. And a key way to set change in motion in all aspects of our lives is to actively share the teachings of our mentor with others. By doing so, we will not only be able to steadily transform our own lives day after day, but also positively transform our environment.

As the Daishonin notes, it is hard to encounter a master or great teacher of Buddhism (see WND-2, 1062)—in other words, a lion king of faith. How wondrous it is, therefore, to be able to encounter such a great teacher and to dedicate ourselves to *kosen-rufu*, a noble endeavor to lead all people to enlightenment. It is no mere coincidence that we are striving together today as members of the Soka Gakkai. We are all admirable Bodhisattvas of the Earth joined together by profound karmic ties, who have appeared in this troubled *saha* world with our own important missions to fulfill.

Nichiren states, "Nichiren's followers are like roaring lions" (WND-1, 997). We of the SGI epitomize these words as a gathering of practitioners committed to carrying out the Buddha's intent and decree.

Let's renew our vow.

Mr. Toda once said: "When it comes to practicing Buddhism, I have complete self-confidence. Though I am unworthy, here I am, seven centuries after Nichiren Daishonin's passing, serving as his emissary. So if people want to say that the Soka Gakkai is all lies and rubbish, then let them. But just wait and see what happens. We will triumph over all."

My young friends, usher in a new era. Find new capable individuals. Win without fail, and give a victory cheer that resounds through the heavens.

Many of the world's leading thinkers are now praising our SGI movement. Dr. Nicholas Gier, emeritus professor of philosophy at the University of Idaho, has said: "In order to transform individual good into social good, leaders are indispensable. Such a goal can only be achieved when there is a network of

—Please see *Essay*, p. 6

SGI President Ikeda

Advance With Composure

(**Essay**, continued from p. 5)

individuals who are able to develop and elevate themselves by emulating a teacher. This needs to become a value system shared by all humankind. With such an outlook, it will become possible for us to create a new humanistic culture for the future. I see this taking place in the interaction between SGI members and President Ikeda.”

May 3, a glorious day of celebration of

the oneness of mentor and disciple, is fast approaching. Renewing our vow from time without beginning, let us forge ahead energetically and realize fresh victories.

*Our gathering of lion kings,
joined together
by life-to-life bonds,
advances with fearless composure
throughout the three existences.*

Discussions

Dr. Nicholas Gier, emeritus professor of philosophy at the University of Idaho, has said: “In order to transform individual good into social good, leaders are indispensable. Such a goal can only be achieved when there is a network of individuals who are able to develop and elevate themselves by emulating a teacher. This needs to become a value system shared by all humankind.”

- Why is it important to have a mentor in faith?
- How does having a mentor help us transform our lives?