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Inspiring Youth, One After Another



The struggle of courageous Bodhisattvas of the Earth will bring successive victories that will last forever.

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Live out your youth to the fullest and win certain victory in this life, just as a Buddha would.

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The light of kosen-rufu brilliantly illuminates the entire world, thanks to you, our wonderful youth.

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY

Expanding the Ranks of Our Youth

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SGI youth are an impressive force committed to truth and justice.

The following is SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's essay from the "The Light of the Century of Humanity" series published in the Seikyo Shimbun, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. Shin'ichi Yamamoto is a pen name of President Ikeda.

By SHIN'ICHI YAMAMOTO

*Vigorous
Soka youth
dedicated to truth and justice,
exert yourselves
in raising the curtain
on a new history.*

"People. It all comes down to people." These words are attributed to Zhuge Liang, one of the heroes of *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, in Japanese novelist Eiji Yoshikawa's retelling of the classic Chinese tale, which I studied with my mentor Josei Toda. Zhuge Liang said this to Liu Bei immediately after their victory in the famous Battle of Red Cliffs. Liu Bei had asked Zhuge Liang, his advisor on military strategy, the secret to leading the nation to victory and prosperity.

Everything depends upon people.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Japan-China Peace and Friendship Treaty. To celebrate this landmark event, the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum in Hachioji, Tokyo, will be holding an exhibition titled "Great Romance of the Three Kingdoms." Among the items that will be on display, I am told, are such artifacts as arrowheads and



'A true hero cherishes capable people. Those who don't value capable people cannot rise to heroic action,' second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda once said. (Above) SGI President Ikeda joins students for a lecture at Soka University, Tokyo, January 2004.

spears excavated from a site where the Battle of Red Cliffs is said to have occurred, exactly 1,800 years ago (in 208). I wish the exhibition great success.

The three kingdoms were the ancient states of Wei, Wu and Shu. The northern state of Wei was ruled by Cao Cao. Allied with the imperial house, it held the ad-

vantage of perceived legitimacy and was the most powerful of the three. Wu was ruled by Sun Quan, and enjoyed the benefits of the rich farmland south of the Yangtze River. The third kingdom, Shu or the Shu Han, ruled by Liu Bei, was known for its domestic harmony, or the unity of its people, and had secure hold of the west.

While this balance of three powers—outlined in the Longzhong Plan—was in effect, Zhuge Liang emphasized the importance of fostering capable people as the basis for strengthening the state of the Shu Han.

Referring to *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Mr. Toda used to say: "We mustn't be petty and incompetent. A true hero cherishes capable people. Those who don't value capable people cannot rise to heroic action. We must make the Soka Gakkai a bastion of capable people."

And just as Mr. Toda taught, the Soka Gakkai has triumphed because it has continued to foster, on multiple levels, capable people who are committed to furthering

kosen-rufu, upholding sound convictions and principles and achieving peace.

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Exactly 55 years ago, in the cold February of 1953, the year following my February Campaign in Kamata Chapter, I took the lead in a new struggle to develop capable individuals. Being 25 years old at the time, I fought with a vigorous spirit much like the younger members of our young men's division today.

I was in my second month as leader of the young men's division First Corps, having been appointed to that position by Mr. Toda at the start of the year. [At the outset of 1953, the Soka Gakkai youth division consisted of four corps for the young men's division and five for the young women's division, with several chapters represented in each corps.] In order to realize my mentor's goal of attaining 750,000 member households, I launched an intense campaign to rally young people with whom we

could together foster and develop new capable individuals. I made a steadfast vow: "Our mentor President Toda is praying and hoping for his disciples to surge forth in great numbers. I will present him with an impressive force of youthful disciples committed to truth and justice!"

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*Boldly
set forth to win,
to advance—
a heroic force
of tremendous numbers.*

That year's goal for developing capable people was very clear. Our First Corps would become a corps of 1,000 by the end of the year. When I became leader of the corps, members were centered around Sumida, Koto and Edogawa wards (on the east side of Tokyo). There were six groups and about 300 members. Our goal was to increase our numbers more than threefold. I was sent there on assignment, away from my home



Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda said, 'We must make the Soka Gakkai a bastion of capable people.' (Above) Elementary School Division members at an SGI gathering, Minnesota, Dec. 2, 2007.

VAL BOURASSA

area of Kamata (on the south side of Tokyo). Obviously, it would not be an easy task. But if we were to attain Mr. Toda's larger goal, it was crucial at that moment to accelerate the solidarity of the youth division. Just as Kamata Chapter had achieved a breakthrough for *kosen-rufu* as a whole, if the youth division could show the way to create expansion in one locale, it was certain to have positive repercussions that would spread throughout the country.

Mr. Toda appointed me First Corps leader as an expression of his total confidence and faith in me, knowing that if he entrusted me with this critical task, I was certain to achieve it. In my mind, there was no challenge that couldn't be achieved if it were assigned by such a superb mentor of *kosen-rufu*. Moreover, we had the strategy of the Lotus Sutra. The key was to inspire each member to stand up with burning faith. It was essential to enable the core members striving alongside me to launch into the struggle feeling confident that our course of action would lead to victory.

The first thing I did was to expand the number of groups within our corps from six to 10 by adding new group leaders, and I designated these 10 group leaders the "10 corps champions." I understood that in order to achieve victory in any struggle, it was absolutely necessary to solidify the core. My next task was to develop 10 sub-group leaders under each of the 10 group leaders, with the aim of creating 100 strong leaders in the corps. Then, to cap it off, if each of the 100 sub-groups could cultivate a membership of 10, our corps

would become a force of 1,000 capable individuals.

Therefore, we had no need to be intimidated by such a large numerical goal. All we had to do was to inspire and rally new youth, one after another. Knowing that this was the path to certain victory, I united all of the members of my corps to take on the challenges before us.



*This path I have built
with my fellow members,
conversing happily
as we live out our lives
with confidence and dignity.*

As a matter of fact, before I was appointed leader of the First Corps, there was very little feeling of corps solidarity. Many new members were quickly leaving the organization; all the efforts involved in introducing them to Nichiren Buddhism were negated by the poor follow-up in providing them the necessary encouragement and guidance in the early stages of their practice.

This troubled me. Every young person who decides to start practicing Nichiren Buddhism does so out of a serious interest in learning about the philosophy. Those who left so soon had not yet had the chance to experience the wonderful benefits of the Mystic Law. They hadn't learned about our remarkable teacher, Josei Toda. And they didn't have a chance to learn of the profound mission of the Soka Gakkai youth division. For them to stop practicing without knowing any of this was, I felt, a tragedy. And so I set out on an earnest struggle to create an alliance of capable individuals

united in spirit with our mentor, Mr. Toda.

The first step I took was to carry out a diligent search for capable people. This meant making a sincere effort to get to know each and every member in the corps.

While it may be the trend in modern society to settle for shallow relationships, the Soka Gakkai is different. We should not waste any opportunity to meet and talk with others. It is important to listen and offer encouragement. Sharing the worries and concerns of fellow members, we should chant and take part in activities together.

The more we know a person, the more deeply we can pray for that individual to bring out his or her full abilities for *kosen-rufu* and to cultivate a relationship with a mentor in faith. Such profound prayer is the driving force for developing capable people.

The second step I took was to strive to impart pride and self-confidence to all my members. Enthusiasm is important in any endeavor. Pride, in the positive sense of the word, is essential. No one can succeed at anything with a defeatist attitude.

I urged the members of the First Corps to be first in every challenge, in line with the group's name. And whenever I discovered individuals who were producing first-class results, or making a first-rate effort behind the scenes, I offered my praise and gratitude.

My third step was to create a rhythm in our activities. Every Sunday, I opened up my apartment in Sanno, Omori [in Tokyo's Ota Ward] to any corps members who wanted to receive guidance and discuss ways to conduct our activ-



'The key was to inspire each member to stand up with burning faith,' says SGI President Ikeda. (Above) At an area youth meeting, Florida, Dec. 17, 2007.

ities, and these gatherings naturally developed into planning meetings for the corps. Each month, we held a full corps meeting as a target to achieve immediate goals as well as a launching point for the next month's activities.

Now, during this "second act of *kosen-rufu*," the monthly Soka Gakkai Youth Division Leaders Meeting in Japan serves the same purpose as a pivotal occasion for spurring our successive victories and continuous advance.

My fourth step was to strengthen members' conviction in faith and their ability to articulate our message through regular Buddhist study. Together with members who met at my apartment, we studied such major writings of Nichiren Daishonin as "The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind," "The Selection of the Time," "The Entity of the Mystic Law," "On Practicing the Buddha's Teachings" and "On the Buddha's Prophecy," deeply engraving in our hearts Nichiren's momentous personal struggle and profound philosophy to work for the people's welfare.

Our corps carried out consistent study of Buddhism. We also initiated a tradition of reading good books, just as Mr. Toda had trained me to do. Through these activities, members honed their abilities to read, write and speak for *kosen-rufu*, enabling them to effectively convey the message of Nichiren Buddhism to anyone.

Members are not "soldiers" of the organization. They each have a significant mission to be a leader for *kosen-rufu* and an exemplar of winning in society, and each is certain to gain tremendous benefits.

*The struggle
of courageous
Bodhisattvas of the Earth
will bring successive victories
that will last forever.*



The French author André

Maurois wrote, "Not only must he make use of existing [capable people], but it is his duty and to his interest to create new [capable people]." I agree. For any organization, the true ability of its leaders is evident in whether it has a wide array of talented individuals engaged in vibrant activity and whether it is continually fostering new capable people. The failure to produce able new individuals is a sign that its leaders are afflicted by arrogance, conceit and self-interest. That is why leaders need to be the first to break through their own limitations and constantly develop themselves. They must actively undertake their own human revolution.

In February 1953, I was striving wholeheartedly to foster capable people and develop our organization. I wrote in my diary: "Someday, I want Sensei to see the result of our behind-the-scenes unity and growth.... I, myself, however, must first take the initiative and serve as an example. Personally resolved to take a great leap forward during the coming year."

*Live out your youth
to the fullest
and win certain victory
in this life,
just as a Buddha would.*

Aurélio Peccei, the co-founder of the Club of Rome with whom I once published a dialogue, was a courageous fighter in the resistance movement against the barbarity of fascism during World War II. Though imprisoned and tortured in his youth, he refused to betray his comrades. Dr. Peccei said that the first step toward the victory of truth and justice is to create "a small nucleus of like-minded people."

Each group and sub-group of our First Corps was just such a small nucleus. Indeed, the First Corps as a whole was the key nucleus for the explosive expansion

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'The more we know a person, the more deeply we can pray for that individual to bring out his or her full abilities for *kosen-rufu*,' says SGI President Ikeda. (Above) At a youth meeting, Santa Monica, Calif., Sept. 15, 2007.

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of *kosen-rufu* that we achieved, together with our mentor Josei Toda.



In June 1953, six months after I became the First Corps leader, 100 enthusiastic members assembled for a corps meeting in Koiwa in Tokyo's Edogawa Ward. It was a magnificent occasion. Though they were all poor young men, wearing clothes smeared with grease, threadbare shirts and unkempt hair, the spirit to live for *kosen-rufu* was ablaze in their eyes, which sparkled as they looked to the future. The force of "100 corps champions" was boldly taking shape.

I felt a thrill in my heart, thinking to myself: "From this group, many revolutionary leaders of the Mystic Law are certain to appear. They are all youthful pioneers. They are Bodhisattvas of the Earth. I will expand this gathering of a hundred individuals into a thousand, ten thousand, millions!" And in line with that determination, our First Corps fostered capable people and developed, growing to a membership of 1,000 in a single year. Our youthful network spread throughout Tokyo and to neighboring prefectures such as Saitama and Chiba.

I was able to report to Mr. Toda that I had built the foundation of an ever-victorious youth division that was directly connected to him, a youth division that would gloriously open the way to the future of *kosen-rufu*. I consider my mentor's joyful smile on that occasion to be one of the greatest badges of honor of my youth.



*The light of kosen-rufu
brilliantly illuminates
the entire world,
thanks to you,
our wonderful youth.*

In his treatise "The Selection of the Time," Nichiren points out: "Little streams come together to form the great ocean, and tiny particles of dust accumulate to form Mount Sumeru. When I, Nichiren, first took faith in the Lotus Sutra, I was like a single drop of water or a sin-

gle particle of dust in all the country of Japan. But later, when two people, three people, ten people, and eventually a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, and a million people come to recite the Lotus Sutra and transmit it to others, then they will form a Mount Sumeru of perfect enlightenment, an ocean of great nirvana. Seek no other path by which to attain Buddhahood!" (WND-1, 579-80).

In complete accord with this passage, our Soka youth division has developed into a grand worldwide alliance of peace and justice through faith dedicated to *kosen-rufu* together with their mentor.

This February, during the coldest part of winter, insightful young leaders of the SGI-USA youth division have come to Japan in the noble pursuit of study and training. Their earnest desire to seek Buddhism, their unity and their vigor shine with the spirit of a "First Corps" of global *kosen-rufu*.

Last June, the SGI-USA youth made a fresh start with new leaders. Since then, they have achieved unprecedented growth. More than 7,500 members have joined the SGI-USA in the past year, a remarkable increase spurred in large part by the youth's efforts.

Youth Leader Kimberly Herrmann, Young Men's Leader Nathan Gauer and Young Women's Leader Vinessa Shaw are determined to realize even greater advances. They have identified the source of the organization's momentum in the following: (1) New members, filled with the joy of faith, are introducing Nichiren Buddhism to their friends, thus creating an expanding groundswell of happiness; (2) Fellow members and local leaders are continuing to look after the new members, offering encouragement and support so that they may joyfully participate in activities and develop in faith; (3) Members of the men's and women's divisions are working together to support the youth, and everyone in the organization is amicably helping one another; (4) And most of all, behind all of these efforts has been a steady focus on deepening the mentor-disciple spirit. As a result, the youth have been able to demonstrate greater strength than ever before.

The vision of the emergence of countless Bodhisattvas of the Earth that my

TAKAKO HASHIMOTO



'I am determined to work with my beloved young friends, from today toward tomorrow,' says SGI President Ikeda. (Above) At an SGI-USA meeting in Miami, Nov. 4, 2007.



'Enthusiasm is important in any endeavor,' says SGI President Ikeda. (Above) Youth rehearsing before the SGI-USA Central Territory Kick-off Meeting, July 21, 2007.

mentor Josei Toda and I dreamed of 55 years ago has now been actualized as the harmonious unity of our magnificent Soka youth throughout the world.

Nothing could make me happier or give me greater joy.



*A towering
mountain range
of capable individuals—
the realm of the heart
has golden wings.*

The American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote:

*Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
is our destined end or way;
but to act, that each tomorrow
finds us further than today.*

Now, having turned 80, I am determined to work with my beloved young friends, from today toward tomorrow, as this poem implies, to open up a bright future and apply the finishing touches to the foundation of our movement so that it will continue on for generations to come.

Nichiren states: "What a joy it is for us to have been born in the Latter Day of the Law and to have shared in the propagation of the Lotus Sutra!" (WND-1, 1026) and "The reason that you have survived until now when so many have died was so that you would meet with this affair" (WND-1, 829). How wondrous it is that we were born into this world together and are spreading the torch of happiness that is the Mystic Law throughout the world and into the future!

This February, which marks the 108th anniversary of Mr. Toda's birth, the

profoundly significant youth division leaders meeting will not be held as a single-venue assembly of representatives from all over Japan. It will be conducted by having youth members gather together at their local discussion meetings around the country. This is something that would have given immense joy to Mr. Toda, who wished more than anything that youth members would be active in Soka Gakkai discussion meetings. I hope that the "parents" of our Soka Gakkai family, the men's and women's divisions, will support them.

Discussion meetings were also the driving force behind the famous February Campaign in Kamata Chapter (in 1952). And now, youth members will play a pivotal role in discussion meetings that will form the history of a new February Campaign in the second act of *kosen-rufu*.

My wife and all the women's division members especially are looking on with praise and approval at the formation in Japan of the young women's division group Ikeda Kayo-kai, whose members are vibrantly active and opening the door to a hope-filled new era.

Mr. Toda declared, "If you summon the immense power of faith and generate the tremendous power of practice in your chanting and efforts to share Buddhism with others, the supreme power of the Buddha and power of the Law cannot fail to appear."

My young friends, advance with pride and dignity on the journey toward the victory and glory of mentor and disciple.

*The whole world
is watching
our youth division—
adorn your youth
with a victory cheer.*

Recent Guidance from President Ikeda on Leadership

“Please generate a new groundswell of expansion for the propagation of Buddhism with the power and passion that originates from districts, involving many new and capable leaders.” (*Message to SGI-USA on the formation of the new organization, 6/24/07*)

“Mr. Toda also said, ‘In the Soka Gakkai, we must constantly be appointing the most capable individuals to leadership positions.’ In other words we need to actively foster and search out sincere and able individuals. Never forget this important point. When you notice people who have bright potential, immediately take steps to put their talents to use and to encourage them.” (*WT, 7/20/07 p.3, 8th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, 6/18/07*)

“The failure to produce able new individuals is a sign that it’s leaders are afflicted by arrogance, conceit and self-interest. That is why leaders need to be the first to break through their own limitations and constantly develop themselves. They must actively undertake their own human revolution.” (*WT, 3/14/08 p. C Essay to the Youth*)

“I’d now like to share with you some words of the great Chinese military strategist Zhuge Liang, who is portrayed in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*..... ‘Do not fear being relieved from your position.’ In other words, don’t be unsettled by or afraid of personnel changes. In terms of holding positions in the Soka Gakkai organization, always be aware that the time will come when your juniors will succeed to the post you’re in at the present. Keep fostering capable individuals and giving them opportunities to make the fullest possible use of their talents. It’s important to have the spirit to rejoice at the growth and advancement of our juniors.” (*WT, 3/21/08 p2, 15th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, 2/06/08*)

“Premier Zhou declared, ‘Generation after generation must be victorious, and each subsequent generation must be an improvement on the one before it.’ The formula for victory is the same in any realm, organization or group. Following the generation of the founding Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, my generation and now your generation, the Soka Gakkai must continue to triumph in each generation. True victory is continual victory; it is lasting success and prosperity. The only way to achieve this is to foster young people who will go on to surpass us.” (*WT, 4/11/08 p2, 16th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, 3/05/08*)

“To those handing over their positions to younger leaders: I would like to thank and commend you for the fine jobs you have done, and I hope you will continue to do your best even though your positions may now have changed. A person doesn’t have more faith just because they have a high position in the organization or are senior in years. Faith is not defined by some superficial, exterior measure. Faith is a matter of the heart. Please never forget that. You will only stand to lose, otherwise. Let’s show our appreciation and gratitude to the senior leaders who have paved the way for those who will succeed them!

Whatever your position, be someone who carries kosen-rufu forward, who leads the entire organization forward. Never lose that spirit and sense of responsibility. In both life and faith, always advance with the resolve to make even greater effort. Those who do so will triumph in the end.” (*WT, 5/30/08 p.4, 17th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, 4/23/08*)

“Mr Toda also emphasized: “Don’t be jealous of your juniors; pray for their growth! Your job is to raise fine young people who can contribute to the welfare of society, their country, and all humankind. That is the Soka Gakkai’s purpose.” (*WT, 6/27/2008 p.4, Tokyo No. 2 Area Executive Leaders Conference*)

“While it is natural to treat one’s colleagues with due respect and strive to maintain harmony, it is not possible to lead others toward progress and reform if one is overly reserved or timid.” Continued...

“It is vital that our more seasoned leaders open the way so that a new generation of leadership may emerge and freely exercise their capabilities. And our newer leaders should give careful thought to finding fulfilling new roles for their predecessors, who have made so many noble contributions over the years. The main point is to enable everyone to take a fresh step toward kosen-rufu.”

(*WT, 7/04/2008 p.5, Tokyo No. 2 Area Executive Leaders Conference*)



“Imparting Pride and Self Confidence to the Members”

Quotes about Confidence and Pride

“I hope that you will lead immortal, invincible and joyous lives, filled with **confidence, pride** and good cheer. I also hope you will display inspiring leadership, while doing your utmost to protect your respective areas.” (For Today and Tomorrow, p. 187)

“The purpose of faith is to become happy. I hope all of you will take this sure path to happiness, never wandering onto byroads that lead to unhappiness. Please walk the great path of kosen-rufu with **confidence and pride.**” (For Today and Tomorrow, p. 338)

“When experiencing failures and disappointments, frustrations or illness, people tend to lose **confidence** and let fear overtake them. At such times, however, we need to make a conscious effort to move forward with strength and courage. When you say to yourself, “Next time I’ll succeed!” or “I’m going to get better and make it through this!” you have already won.” (Buddhism Day By Day, p. 104)

“There is no such thing as pessimism in Buddhism. The Lotus Sutra gives us the key that enables us to possess great **confidence** and burn with hope, even amid circumstances that appear dire. Nichiren Daishonin proved this with his life.” (Learning from the Gosho, p. 129)

“The British essayist William Hazlitt (1778-1830) was an acute observer of human psychology. He wrote that if we believe we can win, we will, asserting that **confidence** is a prerequisite for victory. The belief that you will win without fail summons all your strength, even that which is normally latent, making your triumph a reality.” (Faith Into Action, p. 75)

“If you practice faith while doubting its effects, you will get results that are at best unsatisfactory. This is the reflection of your own weak faith in the mirror of the cosmos. On the other hand, when you stand up with strong **confidence**, you will accrue limitless blessings.” (Faith Into Action, p. 101-2)

“Through prayer, hope turns into **confidence**. This spirit of **confidence** unfolds in three thousand ways, finally resulting in the attainment of our hopes. Therefore, we must never give up.” (Learning from the Gosho, p. 91)

“It is important that we offer prayers with great **confidence**. The powers of the Buddha and the Law are activated in the direct proportion to the strength of our faith and practice. Strong faith is like high voltage—it turns on a brilliant light in our lives.” (Learning from the Gosho, p. 92)

“Leaders in faith need to possess unshakable **confidence** in the Mystic Law, a warm sensitivity and thoughtfulness, and the ability to respond to the hearts of others with wisdom and flexibility. Without such qualities, they cannot hope to win the trust of many people or realize kosen-rufu. Conversely, the more there are leaders who do possess such qualities, the more our kosen-rufu movement will advance.” (For Today and Tomorrow, p.197)

“The nobility of such efforts is beyond words. Members, setting aside their own worries and concerns, wholeheartedly devoted themselves to helping those who are suffering. People burned with a keen sense of **pride** in carrying out the practice of true bodhisattvas, embodying the spirit of Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

As a result, even if they were poor, in their hearts they were wealthy. In their state of life they possessed immense riches. By fully devoting themselves to the compassionate practice of *shakabuku*, they experienced fundamental peace and happiness even greater than that of the people to whom they were talking.” (The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra vol.3, p. 182)

“President Toda became enlightened not only to the wellspring at the core of his own being, but also to the foundation of life that all people share. He realized that, as he put it, “in essence, all people are in fact Bodhisattvas of the Earth.”

With that conviction President Toda racked his brain to find a way to enable all members to share that same profound level of **confidence** in their lives. Sometimes in urging the members to work together to accomplish the goal of kosen-rufu, he would address them as “fellow Bodhisattvas of the Earth.” President Toda wholeheartedly sought to teach us the nobility and strength we can attain by basing ourselves on an awareness of the truth as the wellspring of our being. He showed actual proof of this truth through his own life. Because of his conviction, the members of the SGI now share this awareness of the common “homeland of life.”

“The power of one person is truly immense. Such power and strength cannot fail to be activated in those who awaken to their mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth. Such **confidence** is the starting point for everything. The very wellspring of our lives is free of all impurity and as vast as the universe.” (Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra vol.3, p. 266)

“Wisdom arises from prayer. Prayer gives birth to **confidence** and joy.” (Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra vol.2, p. 194)

“Having faith means having unshakable **confidence** in what we are doing. Let’s engage in conversations that clearly communicate our conviction, and expound a correct understanding about our movement! Let’s do our utmost to always deepen our relations with the people we come in contact with, and through our interactions let’s really try to strike a chord in their hearts.” (*Seikyo Shimbun*, To My Friends, May 27, 2009.)

“We need to enjoy our propagation efforts, keeping a generous spirit and an open mind. And we should do so smiling brightly with **pride** and appreciation, aware that there is no higher honor than telling others even a few words about the Mystic Law during this lifetime.” (Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra, V. 5, p. 253, Ikeda)

“How can you come to know yourself? Never by thinking, always by doing. Try to do your duty, and you'll know right away what you amount to.”(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

"Either we advance or we retreat; there is no middle ground. Either we cringe in fear and surrender to the devilish functions--the negativity in our own lives or in the lives of others--or we challenge our conviction in faith. This difference in resolve determines everything." (Living Buddhism, May/June, p. 43.)

“The greater the hardships befalling him, the greater the delight he feels, because of his strong faith. Doesn't a fire burn more briskly when logs are added? All rivers flow into sea, but does the sea turn back their waters? The currents of hardship pour into the sea of Lotus Sutra and rush against its votary. The river is not rejected by the ocean; nor does the votary reject suffering. Were it not for the flowing rivers, there would be no sea. Likewise, without tribulation there would be no votary of the Lotus Sutra.
(Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, p.33)

“One must live with dignity. Character is the foundation of human rights. It is far more valuable than money. We must build a society that has more than its short-term profit as a goal. To do that, the first step is to respect ourselves and to live with dignity, **self-confidence and pride**. Such a person can then treat others with respect.” (SGI Quarterly, 2008, *The Essence of Human Rights*)

“It is important not to lose hope. Losing hope is, in a way, like living in a winter of the spirit. The English Romantic poet Shelley said, “If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?” No matter how long and bitter the winter may be, spring always follows. This is the law of the universe, the law of life.

The same applies to us. If we seem to be weathering an endless winter, we mustn't abandon hope. As long as we have hope, spring is near. It will come without fail.

Spring is a time of blossoming, Buddhism teaches that all things have a unique beauty and a unique unfolding. Every person has a singular mission, his or her individuality and way of living. It's important to recognize that truth and respect it. That is the natural order of things. That is how it works in the world of flowers—and in the world of human beings, different kinds of flowers bloom harmoniously in beautiful profusion. “(The Way of Youth, p.119-120)

“My Third Step Was to Create a Rhythm in Our Activities”

Faith into Action

***Care of members P187**

“How can I help others experience joy? How can I help them practice in high spirit and really exert themselves?” It goes without saying that someone who gives no thought to these questions and does not respond to members’ needs is not qualified to be a leader in the humane world of Buddhism. Therefore, our practice has to be based on strong prayer for the happiness of each person.” (LG p 153)

***Encouragement P187**

In giving guidance, leaders must continually ask themselves “what can I say to this person right now to lift his or her spirits?” “How can I encourage, what can I do to enable this friend to advance with new vitality?” It is important to have this spirit of concern. There is no value in giving one-sided guidance that does not take into account what the other person is thinking or feeling. (2/24/96)

***Discussion Meetings P215**

“Significant discussions that foster mutual understanding are much more valuable than the self-complacent pronouncements of one person. Please conduct discussions that deeply penetrate the hearts of the participants – the kind that make them want to say: “That was really refreshing. I have so much hope now. That gave me confidence. I now have the strength to advance.” (10/2/91)

***Activities P214**

“By devoting ourselves earnestly to SGI activities, we gain the ability to turn difficulties and obstacles into benefit, recognizing that earthly desires and delusions are enlightenment and that the suffering of birth and death are nirvana. No matter how unpleasant the circumstances we find ourselves in, we can transform them into hope and good fortune – into eternal happiness. How incredible this is! (6/16/98)

***Growth P191**

“Leaders who are responsible for organizing and holding discussion meetings in the SGI must study. If they do not, they cannot hope to satisfy the participants and inspire them with fresh energy and enthusiasm.” (7/19/96)

“I ask you to please spend your life from now on as a district chief who, together with me, lives for the members’ happiness. Most people find it is all they can do to worry about their own happiness and that of their immediate family. It is, therefore, no easy feat to live for the happiness of your friends and fellow members, for the sake of the Law and for kosen-rufu, while at the same time grappling with your own personal problems.

The fact is, however, that when you worry, pray and struggle for the sake of others, you are providing by your very actions that you have transcended the bounds of your own individual concerns and are opening the way for your own splendid human revolution.

The organization will change and develop in any number of ways depending on the *ichinen*, or deep-seated determination, of the central figure. “

From The New Human Revolution, “Sunrise” Chapter

A Youthful Diary,

Sunday January 25, 1953 Clear, then overcast.

Received a report that Mr. Toda is not feeling well. Feeling quite bad myself. Rested until 10:00.

Thought about the other day's spiritless leaders meeting of Koiwa chapter, held at Masui's house. There were about sixty participants. They lacked joy and appeared to have lost confidence. Decided in my heart to charge forth with tremendous passion into this desert-like area. I am worried that these leaders, however, who lack spirit or an understanding of their mission, cannot accept my spirit and intent.

Whatever the chapter and whomever the members, I want them to become happy. Dreaming of making the Gakkai, with vigor and unity, a nationwide, even a worldwide organization. Convinced this can only be achieved through all the members attaining happiness. Disturbed by the shallowness and bias of two or three top leaders who do not understand President Toda's will. Visited Mr. Toda in the afternoon. He was delighted. It seemed he hadn't had visitors for some time.

Returned home, 10:30.

Tuesday, January 27, 1953. Rain, then snow.

A cold day. Mr. Toda was absent again. I think it best that he gets a good rest.

Snowflakes fell. Led a study session on the book *The Principles of Law*. We've made a quite a bit of progress. Returned home at 8:00; went to bed early.

Ichinen, single-minded determination—this is what enables the arrow to pierce the rock, as the saying goes. Mr. Toda's frequent statement that "there is no power stronger or greater than faith" has gradually come to touch my heart.

Wednesday, February 4, 1953. Overcast, then clear.

Feeling wretched, as if a hot iron plate has been inserted into my back or a burning wooden pole driven into my chest. Once I recovered my health and strength, there will be nothing to fear. Faith is the only solution.

Koiwa Chapter leaders meeting held at Josen-ji. Very successful. I, too, will stand up with a strong resolution. After the meeting, I accompanied Mr. Toda to the I.s' home. Witnessed the strict guidance of Buddhism and the Gakkai concerning I.'s problem. Felt as if I had been cut with a sharp sword. Saw Mr. Toda home. It was already 1:00 in the morning. This will become a historic evening, one filled with profound memories. Must study. Must become an excellent individual of fine capability.

Tuesday, March 3, 1953. Cloudy.

A youth division meeting at 6:00 at Jozai-ji. The First Corps was the best by far. Other corps members seemed struck with admiration.

The other day I wrote a poem for each group chief, which I presented to them individually. Today, I wrote fresh words of encouragement for each corps chief.

I pray that, from among the members of my corps, men of power and ability for kosen-rufu will appear in rapid succession.

Members of my corps! I pray you will each develop into men who surpass me in capability.

Members of my corps! I pray not one of you will discard your faith.

These days, I deeply sense the tremendous mercy of the Gohonzon.