

## Building Humanity's Future—The Noble Endeavour of Fostering the Next Generation

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Hi everyone, welcome to our February study podcast. We have studied last month President Ikeda's lecture: The Buddhism of the Sun- Illuminating the World - A Compass Guiding Us to Lives Brimming with Joy and Pride. This month we will study the next installment focusing on the fostering of capable individual especially the future division.

President Ikeda begins this lecture by talking about the lyrics of "Torchbearers of Justice" song he composed in July 1978 in Okayama Prefecture, at a time when the Soka Gakkai was beset by fierce obstacles of the first priesthood issue. Sensei said to a group of future division members: "Please promise me to become people committed to justice, who seek out challenges and surmount them. I will be carefully observing to see whether you succeed in that goal." These youth have now grown into wonderful leaders of kosen-rufu and society.

In July 2010, Sensei revised the lyrics, and it was adopted as the future division song. The men's, women's, and youth divisions are fostering future division members, singing their song together with them. Fostering capable individuals is the way to ensure the enduring development of our organization,

Sensei has reviewed two Goshō passages in this study and reaffirm the key elements for fostering successors. The first passage is from "The True Aspect of All Phenomena."

**At the Ceremony in the Air, when the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions gathered together, the two Buddhas, Shakyamuni and Many Treasures, nodded in agreement. What they decided on was nothing other than the perpetuation of the Law throughout the Latter Day. Many Treasures Buddha had offered Shakyamuni Buddha a place beside him, and when they unfurled the banner of Myoho-rence-kyo, the two leaders of the entire multitude made their decision together. Could there have been anything false in their decision? Their ultimate purpose in meeting was to provide a way for**

**all of us living beings to attain Buddhahood. (WND-1, 385–86)**

The Daishonin explains in this passage the purpose of the Ceremony in the Air. He begins by clarifying that Shakyamuni and Many Treasures appear seated next to one another in the treasure tower to ensure “the perpetuation of the Law throughout the Latter Day”, that is the continuing development of kosen-rufu in the Latter Day of the Law. The two Buddhas decided to enable all living beings to attain Buddhahood. The Daishonin revealed Nam-myoho-renge-kyo as the essence of the Lotus Sutra and the fundamental Law for the attainment of Buddhahood by all people, and he dedicated his life to propagating it.

The crucial point here is who will inherit this great teaching for the enlightenment of humankind and spread it widely. Sensei teaches us that the first requirement for those who seek to spread the Mystic Law is to stand up of one’s own accord with the commitment of a successor and carry on the Daishonin’s intention.

In 1964, the first group established after Sensei’s inauguration as third Soka Gakkai president was the high school division. It was followed by founding the junior high school division and the boys and girl’s division, and made fostering and encouraging the young people of the Soka Gakkai top priority.

Growth happens through mutual inspiration. The conversations and interactions our future division members have with members and friends at meetings and other activities have a profound impact on them. They learn through their efforts for kosen-rufu and enable them to open a path forward in their lives. That is why we need to create and expand positive opportunities for future division members to connect with the Soka Gakkai, fellow members, and the realm of faith. These tireless efforts will pave the way to the Soka Gakkai’s future and advance kosen-rufu from the Soka Gakkai’s centennial (2030) onward, aiming toward the next 100 years.

The second Gosho passage in this study is from “Protecting the Atsuhara Believers”. Mr. Toda said near the end of his life: “I don’t need anything else—all I hope for are capable people!”

**Though we may suffer for a while, ultimately delight awaits us. It is like the case of a crown prince, the only son of the king. Consider this: How can he possibly fail to ascend the throne? (WND-2, 882)**

This Gosho is a letter the Daishonin sent to his young follower Nanjo Tokimitsu, who

sincerely persevered in the way of mentor and disciple. Tokimitsu was a model practitioner who embraced the Daishonin's teachings from an early age, like today's future division members.

Tokimitsu had to support his family and faced opposition and criticism because of his faith in the Daishonin's teachings, and he had to face his younger brother's sudden death and his own serious illness.

The Daishonin repeatedly stressed to him the importance of "faith for overcoming obstacles," teaching him to have the heart of a lion king. Having received guidance and instruction from the Daishonin for many years, when the Atsuhara Persecution arose, Tokimitsu courageously continued to uphold the Daishonin's teachings and staunchly protected his fellow believers.

The Daishonin's words arise from his powerful conviction that no matter how difficult things are now, Tokimitsu will undoubtedly emerge victorious.

Faith is invincible courage; it is indomitable conviction infused with the spirit to never give up. Because our mission is great, so are our struggles. But by tenaciously fighting through all, we can become noble champions of life.

The Daishonin taught Tokimitsu a brilliant philosophy of humanity, happiness, and achieving victory in life. Above all, he taught him that unwavering faith is the foundation of Buddhist practice.

The Daishonin writes:

Today there are people who have faith in the Lotus Sutra. The belief of some is like fire while that of others is like water. When the former listen to the teachings, their passion flares up like fire, but as time goes on, they tend to discard their faith. To have faith like water means to believe continuously without ever regressing.  
(WND-1, 899)

Continuing in Buddhist practice with faith like water, whatever the situation, is the path to attaining Buddhahood.

When Tokimitsu fell ill, the Daishonin told him that, because he had deepened his faith and was assured of attaining Buddhahood, his illness was an attempt by devilish functions to obstruct him.

At the time, the Daishonin himself was battling against illness. The Daishonin consistently taught Tokimitsu to have courage based on faith and also to have hope that he could positively transform all hardships and sufferings, changing poison into medicine, and become happy.

Sensei quotes Mr. Toda: “What is the most necessary thing in life and faith? It is conviction. We must value above all the Daishonin’s absolute conviction.”

He also said: “We need to be patient in our Buddhist practice. Through faith, everything will definitely move in the direction of happiness. ‘No prayer goes unanswered’ and we can overcome all problems and sufferings.”

Kosen-rufu is a movement to enable each individual to achieve human revolution and realize happiness for themselves and others. It is the monumental and lofty challenge of transforming the destiny of humankind. If we can sincerely convey this message to our future division members, then they will surely come to appreciate the Soka Gakkai’s noble mission.

The first step in fostering successors is showing our commitment to our vow for kosen-rufu through our actions and sharing it with the youth. Religion can be a revitalizing force for humanity.

Buddhism always focuses on people. The Law requires people to embrace, spread it, and revealed its power. Young people who embrace the Law and teach it to others are crucial.

The Soka Gakkai is an academy of humanistic education, dedicated to fostering world citizens. The Buddhism of human revolution has the power to elevate the life state of humankind. This is a source of hope and inspiration for building a world where all people can live with dignity.

In summary, I would like to share Sensei’s guidance as featured in the 44th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting on November 18, 2019.

I hope you will boldly advance in your Buddhist practice with the conviction that, year after year, we are making our way forward on the long, eternal march to kosen-rufu. Let’s forge ahead joyfully and cheerfully together, with the Soka Gakkai spirit to fight, advance, and win without fail, no matter what the situation.

Ours is a long march of 10,000 years and more (Sensei is using the Long March of China in 1930s as an illustration of the struggles ahead). The road ahead is long.

Therefore, I call on the youth to develop themselves as much as possible, for I will entrust the 21st century to them. The youth division is my focus. I wish to train and foster them thoroughly. My wish is that they will splendidly bring our aims to fruition.

I hope that we will all make the vow and take action to enable each individual to achieve human revolution and realize happiness for themselves and others.

Thank you