

## To My Dear Friends of the Youth Division—Part 2 Invincible Spirit—Be Champions Who Are Never Defeated

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This month, we will continue to study the second installment of the lecture series by President Ikeda called “To My Dear Friends of the Youth Division” from The Buddhism of the Sun—Illuminating the World. The theme of Part 2 is “Invincible Spirit—Be Champions Who Are Never Defeated”.

What is a true champion of life?

In 1952, President Ikeda in order to realize President Toda’s goal of membership of 750,000 households, achieved a victory through an invincible spirit in the February Campaign. In the following year, as the acting chapter leader of Tokyo’s Bunkyo chapter, he urged the members there to strive with pride, confidence, and an invincible spirit. The chapter transformed from a small and stagnated chapter into a top chapter in the country.

President Ikeda says:

Nevertheless, they pressed on with an unyielding fighting spirit, visiting one home after another to share the Daishonin’s Buddhism. The greater the difficulties they faced, the brighter the flame of their faith burned.

Those who dare to look adversity in the face and confront it with an invincible spirit, rather than avoiding or fleeing the situation, are true champions of life.

In this installment, let’s study the essence of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism - invincible spirit.

Now, let’s study the first Goshō passage.

**Even though you chant and believe in Myōhō-renge-kyō, if you think the Law is outside yourself, you are embracing not the Mystic Law but an inferior teaching. “Inferior teaching” means those [Buddhist teachings] other than this [Lotus] sutra, which are all expedient and provisional. No expedient or**

**provisional teaching leads directly to enlightenment, and without the direct path to enlightenment you cannot attain Buddhahood, even if you practice lifetime after lifetime for countless kalpas. Attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime is then impossible. Therefore, when you chant myoho and recite rengo, you must summon up deep faith that Myoho-rengo-kyo is your life itself. (WND-1, 3; “On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime”)**

The first key to maintaining an invincible spirit is believing in yourself.

Nichiren Buddhism is not a dependent faith which relies on external power for help. Seeking the Law outside ourselves means looking for the causes and effects of happiness and misfortune outside our own lives. This will lead us to blame people or the circumstances.

President Ikeda says:

The Daishonin goes so far as to say that if we seek the Law outside ourselves, we will not attain Buddhahood, no matter how much we chant; instead, our practice will become an “endless, painful austerity” (WND-1, 4).

How can we have the confidence to overcome life’s problems without being discouraged or feeling sorry for ourselves?

President Ikeda says:

Chanting Nam-myoho-rengo-kyo is a battle against the darkness or ignorance that shrouds the truth that we ourselves are Buddhas. That’s why it requires serious dedication. Through chanting daimoku, we can conquer our doubts and break through the shell of our lesser self. Nam-myoho-rengo-kyo is the fundamental power that can transform even sorrow into a wellspring of creativity.

President Toda explained the basic attitude we should have in our prayers, saying, “You have to decide that your life itself is Nam-myoho-rengo-kyo!”

Let’s study the second Gosho passage.

**This I will state. Let the gods forsake me. Let all persecutions assail me. Still I will give my life for the sake of the Law. . . . Whatever obstacles I might encounter, so long as persons of wisdom do not prove my teachings to be false,**

**I will never yield! All other troubles are no more to me than dust before the wind.**

**I will be the pillar of Japan. I will be the eyes of Japan. I will be the great ship of Japan. This is my vow, and I will never forsake it! (WND-1, 280-81; “The Opening of the Eyes”)**

The second key to maintaining an invincible spirit is the vow for kosen-rufu.

President Ikeda deeply engraved this Gosho passage when he became the third president of the Soka Gakkai.

He says:

The determination to never forget or forsake our vow for kosen-rufu is vital to maintaining an invincible spirit. It’s important that we stay true to our vow and keep striving to fulfill it, no matter what the obstacles. This resolve is the second key to the invincible spirit that lies at the very heart of Nichiren Buddhism.

Nichiren Daishonin overcame series of persecutions and casted off his transient status and revealed his true identity as the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law at the time of the Tatsunokuchi Persecution.

President Ikeda says:

It is in this spirit that he declares his vow to relieve people of their suffering: “I will be the pillar of Japan. I will be the eyes of Japan. I will be the great ship of Japan” (WND-1, 280–81). It is the great vow to open the path for kosen-rufu and for all people to attain enlightenment into the eternal future.

The Daishonin states unequivocally: “This is my vow, and I will never forsake it!” (WND-1, 280). When we make this vow of the Buddha our own and live out our lives with steadfast faith, we will attain the life state of Buddhahood. We will be able to bring forth unequalled courage, infinite wisdom, boundless compassion, and limitless strength.

President Ikeda also shares the invincible spirit of Shijo Kingo as follows:

Expressing his trust in Shijo Kingo, who fought to protect his fellow practitioners and led efforts for kosen-rufu despite facing great adversity himself, the Daishonin states: “He is a man who never gives in to defeat and who greatly values his friends” (WND-1, 955).

President Ikeda further explains:

Carrying out the struggle for kosen-rufu is not separate or distinct from our personal efforts to carry out our human revolution and transform our own karma. Rather, when we live with unyielding dedication to our vow for the sake of the Law, for our fellow members, and for kosen-rufu, we will demonstrate an invincible spirit we didn't know we possessed and tap the great power of the Buddha within our lives.

On July 17, 1957, President Ikeda was released from police detention and he declared his brief remarks in the Osaka Rally:

“In the end, the correct teaching and those who strive tenaciously in faith, steadfastly upholding the Gohonzon, will definitely emerge victorious!”  
The spirit to not be defeated by any obstacle, to repel every attack, and to broadly open new paths for the development and success of kosen-rufu—this is the invincible spirit of Soka mentors and disciples.

President Ikeda joyfully states the “Never be defeated!” spirit has been inherited not only by Kansai youth division members but also by Soka youth around the worldwide.

He says:

That is why nothing can defeat the mentors and disciples of Soka who are dedicated to realizing the vow of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. We were all born to win, each of us carrying out our mission from the remote past. We are guaranteed to show actual proof of victory.

President Ikeda concludes that:

An invincible spirit is one and the same as the vow of mentor and disciple. It is another way of describing the life state of Buddhahood, and is the driving force for the victory of humanity.

As long as an invincible spirit pulses vibrantly in the Soka Gakkai, we will continue writing a triumphant history of the people into the eternal future. You, our youthful successors, are the protagonists of this never-ending epic. Our invincible spirit is the key to tomorrow's victories.

Let's challenge ourselves and encourage our family and friends who are interested in Buddhism to join the Level 1 Basics of Buddhism Study Exam in October. The exam materials are printed in English, French and Chinese; and the study guide is posted online.

Thank you.