



Organization Dept

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MEMO NO: ORG—003

DISTRIBUTE TO: All Members
FROM: Organization Center—Barbara Snyder
SUBJECT: SGI Honorary Women's Leader Mrs. Kaneko Ikeda's 2010 Message to SGI Women

Attached please find SGI Honorary Women's Leader Mrs. Ikeda's 2010 message to SGI women. This message also appears on page one of the January 15, 2010, issue of the *World Tribune*. Please feel free to share this at appropriate meetings. Thank you very much for your support!

Prayer: the Sharp Sword of Faith

The following is a message from SGI Honorary Women's Leader Kaneko Ikeda.

A new and hope-filled Year of the Total Victory of Soka and the Dynamic Development of Youth has just begun! My husband and I are chanting wholeheartedly that all of our precious fellow members around the world will enjoy a year of good health and ever-expanding good fortune. My personal determination for 2010 is that the prayers of the women of the SGI will lead the way to great victory in this 80th-anniversary year of the Soka Gakkai.

There is a passage from Nichiren Daishonin's writings that I used to read together with my parents, who joined the Soka Gakkai out of their respect and admiration for its founder, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi:

“Though one might point at the earth and miss it, though one might bind up the sky, though the tides might cease to ebb and flow and the sun rise in the west, it could never come about that the prayers of the practitioner of the Lotus Sutra would go unanswered” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 345).

Having walked the path of human revolution and *kosen-rufu* in accord with the guidance of the first three presidents of our organization, I have experienced these words firsthand time and again over the years.

Nothing is more powerful than chanting with single-minded prayer through every challenge we face. When we do so, we will see results without fail. I am reminded of the words that second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda often shared with the members of the Kayo-kai [the young women's training group he established in 1952]: “No matter what happens, keep chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.”

Nothing will change if we just worry about our situation or complain to others about it. But when we sit in front of the Gohonzon and chant Nam- myoho-enge-kyo, everything starts to move in the direction of hope, progress and victory. I'm sure you have all had such a profound experience yourselves.

In one of his writings, the Daishonin quotes the Great Teacher Dengyo of Japan: “When in the family honor is paid diligently to the teachings, the seven disasters will most certainly be banished” (WND-2, 1026). A woman who sincerely chants Nam-myoho-enge-kyo can absolutely change poison into medicine in her family as well as in her community.

I recently received an inspiring letter from a woman who has been serving as a district women's leader in the Kanto region of Japan for the past 19 years. Her husband abruptly left her 22 years ago, and she was faced with the daunting challenge of raising five young children on her own. But taking to heart the Daishonin's assurance that “winter always turns to spring” (WND-1, 536), she chanted earnestly while giving her all to working, raising her family and participating in Soka Gakkai activities.

Today, she has received recognition from the mayor of her city for being a model employee at the company where she works, demonstrating clearly the trust she has won from her fellow workers and citizens. In addition, each of her five children, basing themselves on the encouragement they have received from SGI President Ikeda over the years, and having been raised in the Soka Gakkai family, have grown into fine adults who are taking action as leaders of *kosen-rufu* and society.

Her second son has shared that he cherishes as his prime point in faith the words that President Ikeda addressed to him as a future division member, “Treasure your mother.” He went on to study at Soka University with a deep sense of appreciation and gratitude. Currently, he is very successful as the

president of an overseas branch of a leading Japanese company and has been featured on television. He also continues to be a caring and considerate son.

In concluding her letter, this women's division member writes: "At last, spring has come to our family. Continuing to make President Ikeda's words my foundation, I will never be defeated as I keep striving for *kosen-rufu* together with my five children, always engaging in the shared struggle of the oneness of mentor and disciple."

Practicing Buddhism correctly means struggling against the three obstacles and four devils [various obstacles and hindrances that impede one's Buddhist practice] and the three powerful enemies [described in the "Encouraging Devotion" (13th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra as three types of arrogant people who persecute those who propagate the Lotus Sutra in the age after Shakyamuni's passing]. But no matter what challenges we encounter, we can chant to break through them. Prayer is the sharp sword and supreme strategy of the Mystic Law. We therefore have nothing to fear.

The first of the five guidelines for absolute victory for the women's division [presented by President Ikeda in March 2009] is "Everything begins with prayer." In this profoundly important year of the Soka Gakkai's 80th anniversary, with united prayer based on the shared commitment of the oneness of mentor and disciple, let's expand our life-state, our good fortune and our network of friendship and attain tremendous victory in our lives and in *kosen-rufu*.

My husband once wrote to a women's leader: "Live out your life with courage; this is the best path to happiness."

Even in Nichiren's lifetime, there were dedicated women disciples who staunchly supported and protected the Daishonin and their fellow believers.

Immediately after the Daishonin submitted his treatise "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" to the authorities 750 years

ago, an angry mob attacked his residence in Matsubagayatsu, Kamakura (in August 1260). This event is known as the Matsubagayatsu Persecution. How did the Daishonin escape harm in this attack? He writes of that incident:

"Certain influential persons banded together and, gathering a crowd of townsmen about them until they numbered several tens of thousands, came in the night to attack and put an end to me. But, perhaps because the ten demon daughters [who appear in the "Dharani" (26th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra and are described as protectors of those who uphold the sutra] had planned it that way, I was able to escape from danger" (WND-2, 1052).

President Ikeda has said that this reference to the workings of "the ten demon daughters" is very meaningful. His interpretation is that a female disciple learned of the impending attack in advance, and risked her life to warn the Daishonin. Perhaps because she constantly prayed to be able to protect the Daishonin and took every step she could to do so, she was able to fulfill this important mission at a crucial moment. President Ikeda further suggests that the Daishonin didn't mention this disciple by name because he wanted to shield her from possible retaliation.

Buddhist faith has nothing to do with one's position or status. My husband is always saying: "We must never forget that there are women all over the world who are making outstanding contributions to *kosen-rufu* behind the scenes, unbeknownst to others. Let's send them our prayers as long as we live."

Many thinking people across the globe are paying attention to the tremendous efforts of the women of the SGI. Among them is Sarah Wider, former president of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society and professor of English and women's studies at Colgate University in Madison County, N.Y. Dr. Wider,

who is currently engaged in an ongoing dialogue with President Ikeda, has expressed profound sympathy with the SGI philosophy of value creation, saying: “All people have the potential to become ‘value creators.’ When human beings lose sight of that potential, their more destructive tendencies come to dominate society. I think it is deeply significant that a gathering of people who have faith in human potential and are dedicated to its development is named the Soka Gakkai or ‘Value Creation Society.’ ”
Dr.

Wider has further applauded our movement, noting that the beautiful human connections shared by the women of the SGI are the foundations of a culture of peace.

As women are called upon to play an ever-growing role in our world, we will no doubt face greater challenges and struggles. That makes it all the more important for the women of the SGI—filled with the pride that their behavior sets an example in creating a culture of peace for all humanity encourage and support one another as they forge ahead undefeated and in high spirits in 2010.

Lastly, I would like to share some recent words of encouragement from my husband. The first is for the members of the SGI Ikeda Kayo-kai [the young women’s training group he established on Sept. 5, 2008] around the world:

*Youthful, noble young
women’s division members,
as a result of your tireless efforts
to advance kosen-rufu,
your lives will brim with
happiness and good fortune
for all eternity.*

The next is for women’s division members everywhere:

*My appreciation to the
precious women’s division
members
who are advancing spiritedly,
joyously and earnestly
for the noble cause of
kosen-rufu.*

With my sincerest wishes for your good health,

*Kaneko Ikeda
SGI Honorary Women’s Leader*