

## March Discussion Topic - The Mission of Youth

President Toda's vision for kosen-rufu was that youth have a great mission for world peace. He said, "A new era will arise from the passion and power of youth."<sup>1</sup>

President Ikeda, too, has deep confidence in the power of young people. He says, "The younger generation [...] have a stronger ability to remain true to their beliefs. They are more forthright and honest. That's why Mr Toda [...] constantly stated that young people were important and that he was waiting for young men and women to emerge to carry on his work."<sup>2</sup> On March 16<sup>th</sup> 1958, he entrusted the youth division with the realization of kosen-rufu, declaring, "March 16th's Ceremony of Kosen-rufu is the time when disciples stand up! It is always a starting point. It always brims with a challenging spirit. Always with unity. Always with advance. Always with the will to refute evil. Eternally with victory. One must make a vow to realize kosen-rufu oneself. If we stand up with the spirit of the lion, we will truly live the Ceremony of Kosen-rufu."<sup>3</sup>

President Ikeda encourages young people with all his might to grasp what their mission is, to rise up and to build a network of happy people on the basis of the humanism of Nichiren Buddhism. He says, "The time is ripe for young people to freely demonstrate their boundless potential for the momentous undertaking of kosen-rufu on our planet. [...] The life-affirming philosophy of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is the sharp spiritual sword that allows youth to cut through the chains of an evil age and the fetters of karmic suffering, and fully display their limitless youthful potential."<sup>4</sup>

Dedicating one's life to promoting kosen-rufu, breaking through limits together with the youth and with the heart of a youth, is the eternal tradition of our ever-youthful Soka Gakkai. What is youth? It is the inner strength not to stagnate or grow resistant to change but to stay open to new possibilities. It is the power of the spirit that refuses to succumb to complacency and strives ever forward.

1. How can we cherish young people, and what do they need from us in order to fulfil their potential?
2. How can we always keep a youthful spirit and avoid stagnating?

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<sup>1</sup> *Unofficial translation*. Josei Toda, *Seinen-kun (Guidelines for Youth)*, *Toda Josei Zenshu (Collected Writings of Josei Toda)*, Tokyo, Head Office of the *Seikyo Shimbun (Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper in Japan)*, 1992, Vol. 1, 58.

<sup>2</sup> From President Ikeda's speech at the 11<sup>th</sup> Soka Gakkai Headquarters' Leaders Meeting on 12 October 2007.

<sup>3</sup> From President Ikeda's series, "The Light of the Century of Humanity".

<sup>4</sup> SGI Newsletter 8243.