

Wednesday, March 16, 2011

SGI President Ikeda's Message

Never Be Defeated! Have Courage! Have Hope!

I offer my sincerest condolences to those of you who have been affected by the devastating earthquake and tsunamis that struck northeastern Japan five days ago (March 11, 2011) and have left many people still missing and unaccounted for. I can only imagine the fatigue and exhaustion you must be suffering. My wife and I, along with the members throughout Japan and the world, are sending daimoku to you with all our hearts, earnestly praying for your health and well-being and that all Buddhas and bodhisattvas—the positive forces of the universe—will rigorously protect you.

I wish to deeply thank those of you who are selflessly devoting yourselves to the rescue and relief efforts in the stricken areas. I also truly appreciate those of you who are supporting your communities as solid and reliable pillars during this difficult time. Takuboku Ishikawa (1886–1912), a renowned, youthful poet who hailed from Tohoku, the northeastern region of Japan, declared: “Helping one person is a far greater achievement than becoming the ruler of a country.”¹ I, therefore, express my deepest respect and gratitude to all of you.

Nichiren Daishonin writes that even if we should meet with disasters and calamities, they cannot destroy our hearts (cf. WND-2, 135). Nothing can destroy the treasures of the heart. Every adversity is but a trial for us to overcome so that we can attain eternal happiness. The Daishonin's Buddhism, our practice of faith in the Mystic Law, enables us to transform all poison into medicine without fail.

I am offering solemn prayers for all your loved ones—family members and friends—who have lost their lives. This disaster is truly heartbreaking. Life, however, is eternal, and through chanting daimoku, we can transcend life and death to connect with the lives of those who have passed away. Your deceased loved ones and friends, who through you share a profound connection with the Mystic Law, will definitely be enfolded in the embrace of the heavenly deities, attain Buddhahood, and be reborn quickly somewhere close to you. This is an essential teaching of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

During the Daishonin's lifetime as well, what was known as the great earthquake of the Shoka era (August 1257) caused unprecedented damage. Grieved by the pain and suffering of the people and amid great persecutions, the Daishonin embarked on

¹ Translated from Japanese. Takuboku Ishikawa, *Takuboku Zenshu* (Collected Works of Takuboku) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1970), vol. 7, p. 118.

writing his treatise, “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land,” thereby raising the banner of peace and justice for all humankind. He assures us: “When great evil occurs, great good follows” (WND-1, 1119).

Today, March 16, is the day that my mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, entrusted his youthful successors with carrying on the work of kosen-rufu in order to eradicate misery from the face of the earth. Now, let us triumphantly overcome this great disaster by further strengthening our vow for kosen-rufu while wholeheartedly supporting and encouraging each other.

I am fervently praying and calling out to each of you: “Never be defeated! Have courage! Have hope!”

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