

MESSAGE

I extend my heartfelt congratulations on the opening of the World Picture Book Exhibition, now named “Read Me a Story!” Nothing could give me greater joy than knowing this exhibition is being held in Canada, a land blessed with an abundance of natural beauty and poetic sentiment.

The “Read me a Story!” exhibition presents folk tales and fairy tales that have been passed down from generation to generation in every corner of the world. A selection of these stories, which transcend time and culture, have been given new life in the large murals by modern artists called, “panorama picture books.”

This exhibition, which gained wide support during its tour of Japan, also introduces over 1,200 picture books from among the 10,000 that were collected from 120 countries and regions around the world.

Children possess the universe in their hearts. They have the ability to transform everything they see or hear into something precious. To our children, who are natural born poets, we want to be able to show the beauty of our world. We hope we might plant “seeds of goodness” in their hearts and provide them with spiritual nourishment so they can grow up fearless and carefree. This is our responsibility as adults. Children are the treasures of humanity and it is to them we entrust the future.

It is from a deep desire to fulfill my responsibility, in my own way, to our future generations, that I have continued to write creative stories for children. Let us create an age in which children, brimming with hope and brilliant smiles, can savour genuine happiness and joy. This aspiration is what led us to initiate the World Picture Book Exhibition in Tokyo in 2001.

I am well aware that Canada is renowned as a nation where diverse peoples live together; a great nation of culture where peace is cherished and children are raised with a richness of heart. The celebration of diversity and the spirit of mutual respect occupy a central place in your country’s national character, allowing the poetic spirit to flourish and form the basis for harmonious coexistence – for a culture of peace.

As the presenter, it would give me the greatest pleasure if this exhibition could in some way help your children inherit the poetic spirit and tradition of spiritual values that thrives in your country. In this regard, the SGI is firmly committed to moving forward together with all of you, as part of a cooperative community network.

I would like to conclude this message by once again expressing my sincerest gratitude, and offering my heartfelt prayer for the continued good health and well-being of each of you in attendance today, and for the further prosperity of Canada, a country that I dearly love.

December 9, 2015
Daisaku Ikeda
President
Soka Gakkai International