

World Tribune

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THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

FEBRUARY 28, 1997

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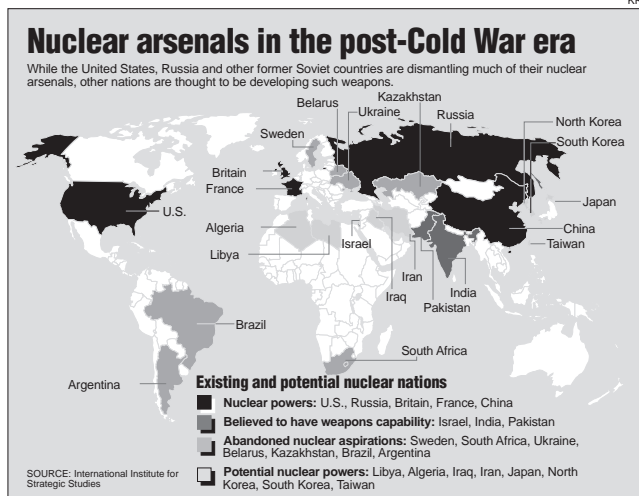
Peace Proposal Urges Inner Revolution

SGI President's peace proposal addresses disarmament, sustainable development, NGOs and the human solutions to global issues.

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER

An overemphasis on external reform in the 20th century has resulted in great tragedy and suffering, SGI President Ikeda says in his 1997 peace proposal. We have failed to stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to stop environmental degradation, poverty, hunger and ethnic conflict, President Ikeda explains.

He argues that only a spiritually based, inner revolution can bring about the peaceful transition to a people-centered global order in the 21st century. Only human revolution — the transformation in the depths of peo-



This year marks the 40th anniversary of second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda's declaration against nuclear weapons. In his peace proposal, SGI President Ikeda says that Mr. Toda urged young people to 'fight without compromise against the evil of nuclear weapons,' which he considered a threat to people's right to survival.

ple's lives — can bring about a global revolution in all the problem areas we are facing.

"New Horizons of a Global Civilization," President Ikeda's 15th annual peace proposal, was

published in the Jan. 26 issue of the *Seikyo Shim-bun* to commemorate the 22nd anniversary of the SGI's founding. The entire text will appear in a future issue of *Living Buddhism*.

Mr. Ikeda also details specific measures to address disarmament, sustainable development, the role nongovernmental organizations can play and other related issues. In each case he looks for human solutions to the complex problems he discusses.

The SGI leader observes, for instance, that various environmental problems directly reflect contemporary civilization's structural limits. He underscores the SGI's commitment to this issue by dis-

PLEASE SEE PEACE PROPOSAL, 4

SGI President Begins Visit to Hong Kong

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER

Hong Kong, Feb. 15

With only four months to go before Hong Kong returns to Chinese rule on July 1, SGI President Ikeda began a visit here this week to meet with members and various dignitaries. During this evening's meeting with the prominent Hong Kong writer Jin Yong, the SGI leader observed that Asia and the rest of the world are closely watching developments in the territory and expressed confidence that Hong Kong would continue to prosper.

It is his belief, however, that spiritual fulfillment will become an increasingly important focus, since human happiness is not based on economic wealth alone.

Concurring, Mr. Jin said that the people of Hong Kong have an especially strong desire for material wealth and security — with money, an affluent lifestyle and social prestige tending to become people's top priorities in



Jin Yong (l), author and political commentator, discusses Hong Kong's return to China with the SGI president.

life. Even culture and the arts tend to be appraised in terms of their commercial value, he said. He agreed that there is a need for spiritual values to fill the inner emptiness that many in the territory feel.

Mr. Jin is optimistic, though, that the end to Hong Kong's status as a British colony and its restoration to China will have a

positive effect on the citizens of the territory, providing them with a spiritual anchor. He envisages that exchanges with people of the mainland will nurture a love for China and a deeper appreciation of its cultural traditions, particularly Confucian ethics and philosophy.

As a Buddhist scholar, Jin Yong also voiced the opinion

that the citizens of Hong Kong could learn much from the teachings of Buddhism, most important the spirit to help not only themselves but others as well. In this regard, he hoped the SGI members of Hong Kong and other parts of the world would continue sharing their

PLEASE SEE HONG KONG, 4

VOICES
.....

What's most important to you in raising your child (children) to thrive in the 21st century?

Members from Florida Joint Territory respond:



We want to raise our children in a positive environment. If they have a positive environment, it will be much easier for them to build self-confidence. The basics of this is creating a positive discipline. People sometimes think you have to be mean and cruel to get children to follow rules. But that's not true. We try to focus on the things our son does well and really praise him. Everybody has to follow rules — not only the child. That's something we let him understand.

— STEVE & MIRIAM MARINELLO, Pompano Beach, Fla.



Most important is a good education and letting them grow up in the SGI-USA organization. My oldest three children came to activities when they were young, but didn't learn gongyo. Now with my younger three children, I realize it's important for them to practice and learn gongyo at an early age. If they don't know gongyo, they feel out of place when they come to activities.

— GABRIEL TAMAREZ, Pembroke Pines, Fla.



What's most important is making sure they have the best education and foundation. I look to them as Renaissance people. I want them to be able to do anything. The reason is so they can be contributors to society, leaders in their own right and make a better world in the 21st century. I want them to be people who give and share something positive in their lives.

— MILA WOODS, West Palm Beach, Fla.



One of the most important things is to give her a foundation. What is honesty? What is true? I want her to learn how to decipher that on her own. I want her to think for herself.

— TRACY COOPER, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.



I think it's important to expose my kids to many different points of view, cultures and ways of living. For example, we had a chance to attend the Chinese New Year's recently in Miami. My kids fought against going. They get a lot of ideas from television, but in this case they found out things were completely different. They loved the food, the music and looking at the people. I want to do more of these things as a family.

— VICTOR GOLDEN, Miami

If you've got ideas for questions, please mail 'em, fax 'em or e-mail 'em. Thanks.

A Bold Degree of Trust

EDITORIAL

Are we unique in that we live in a nation, in a time, when our youth are at crisis? The tides of history have swept away countless societies and civilizations whose eventual collapse was presaged by a decline in the hopeful prospects or character of their youth.

When youth are at risk, the future is at risk. When young people are growing — becoming rich in intellect, character, wisdom and courage — a rewarding and prosperous future awaits. In that sense, the future is here now, living in our youth.

The purpose of our movement is to lead the way to a future of peace and prosperity, an era of genuine humanity — and this is perhaps why we hear repeatedly that it is important to place highest priority on the growth of young people.

One of the six challenges that General Director Zaitso posed to SGI-USA members at the end of last year is to "raise young people by boldly entrusting them with responsibility."

Certainly, this is a call to action. Nothing could be more irritating or seem more patronizing to young people than to bandy such a phrase about without acting upon it.

But how can we — regardless of our age or organizational division — respond to this challenge?

To raise means to elevate. It is the tendency of the older generation to look down on or exclude those younger or less experienced. It was to overturn this tendency that President Toda founded the youth division of the Soka Gakkai. He felt that youth should be regarded eye to eye — that they should be included in all discussions about achieving kosen-rufu, as equally invested, responsible partners to the task.

Adlai Stevenson (1900–65) once said, "Nothing so dates a man as to decry the younger generation." If so, then nothing instills greater youthfulness than to praise, trust and support the next generation.

In *The New Human Revolution*, SGI President Ikeda expresses his conviction on this point through the novel's protagonist, Shin'ichi Yamamoto:

He [Shin'ichi] recognized his responsibility to be the pillar that supported the Soka Gakkai after President Toda's death; not only to support and protect his fellow members across Japan but to educate and nurture young people so that they would become even more effective leaders of kosen-rufu — more effective than himself. Precisely because he felt that responsibility so keenly, he was deeply concerned.

Nothing was more difficult than to keep young people continuously inspired. Shin'ichi knew that the only way to accomplish this was never to lose sight

of his own source of inspiration and model — his mentor, Josei Toda. No great river can survive and flourish when cut off from its source.

Boldly implies courage, courage that exists only in action. It means a readiness to pull out all the stops and to act against the grain. It is impossible, then, to boldly ask anything of anyone unless we are ready and willing to do it ourselves. To boldly entrust we must first of all boldly challenge ourselves. Young people have no wish to be directed by those who are inert or remiss, or who have ceased growing themselves — those who "talk the talk without walking the walk."

Entrust means to trust. In Buddhism, capability is not measured by age, nor is it defined by tenure or position. Shakyamuni was only 19 when he embarked on the path of enlightenment. Nichiren Daishonin was even younger. Both revealed the substance of their teachings while still in their early 30s. In our movement, President Ikeda assumed full and complete responsibility for every aspect of the Soka Gakkai and kosen-rufu while still a young man of 32. Had President Toda not trusted him with all his life, most of us perhaps would never have heard of nor had opportunity to benefit from this practice.

Trust and *courage* mean allowing youth to try, and even to fail — but never to lose.

Responsibility implies the ability to respond. What does it mean to be a responsible Buddhist? — surely it is not simply a matter of being accountable to a higher authority. All of Buddhism essentially boils down to our ability to respond to the people, to the sincerity, the suffering and the seeking spirit of ordinary people. One who can do so is exemplifying the essence of Buddhism.

To entrust someone with responsibility, then, does not mean simply assigning a task and walking away. It means creating opportunities that will speak to young people's innate desire to take initiative, to their willingness to work for people's happiness and to contribute substantially to the development of kosen-rufu and society, while we are doing the same.

To rise to the challenge of raising the next generation requires courage, the ability to trust and be trusted, and a responsiveness to the sincerity of youth. We may feel lacking in these qualities. But if so, why not pray tenaciously and consistently to bring them forth, tapping the inexhaustible power of the Mystic Law within us? Only then we will have something we can truly entrust to the next generation. **W**

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WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Don't Settle for 'Happy Talk'

I agree with Esther O'Bannon's letter (Feb. 7 "Mailbox") about the back-page article on the Kennedy assassination (Dec. 27, 1996). Although it will be a long time, if ever, before the truth is known, there is no doubt that those in power have kept it from the American people, the rightful sovereigns of this country. SGI President Ikeda has warned against "fascism with a smile" where "a citizenry lacking wisdom would fall easy prey to...manipulation" (Sept. 26, 1991, Harvard University).

Although the SGI is not a political organization, as citizens we are responsible for our government's actions and responsible for seeing through lies and double talk from those in positions of responsibility. I am not saying "hate the state," but I am saying that justice is everyone's responsibility. Part of this responsibility is refusing to settle for glib assurances and "happy talk" when people are being hurt. A prime example is the assurance that the scheduled "sub-critical" nuclear weapons tests and bomb design research (under the guise of fusion power research) have no impact on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

It is true that most people in our government are doing the best they can, but they need our help. Anger of justice is a form of compassion, since an unjust person, knowingly or not, is slandering human life. The Daishonin states, "Even though one may resort to harsh words, if such words help the person to whom they are addressed, then they are worthy to be regarded as truthful words and gentle words" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 4, p. 82).

— EDWARD B. RIPPY, Oakland, Calif.

What 'Official Version'?

In reference to Esther O'Bannon's letter: She seems to have read more into the piece than I originally intended. Nowhere in the article did I use the word *official* to describe anything relating to the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Being a native of the Dallas area, I merely wanted to acknowledge the efforts of a local resident who has had a positive impact regarding the way that we have faced the assassination.

To quote Ms. O'Bannon, "As people committed to seeking peace, we must not allow ourselves to be duped by the media into accepting comfortable lies." In this I agree completely. And I should add: As people committed to seeking peace, we should also be committed to seeking the truth. In defense of Conover Hunt, her efforts and those of others have helped tens of thousands find their own truth regarding President Kennedy's assassination. The Sixth Floor Museum does not support any "official version" but rather presents all of the facts surrounding the assassination and lets the viewer decide.

I personally applaud the *World Tribune* and any group or organization that is willing to present all of the facts. Only then can we make accurate decisions regarding our own truths.

— PRESTON RICHARDS, Dallas

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In the "Mailbox," we will publish members' comments, suggestions and questions as they pertain to the World Tribune. Because of volume, not all letters can be printed, but they are all read. All letters are subject to condensation.

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Real Change Starts With Me

PERSPECTIVE

By JOHN SARGENT
NORTHBRIDGE, CALIF.

My full name is John Kennedy Sargent. Yes, I was named after the 35th president of the United States (at least one person says I even look a little like him). As children, my brother and I were prohibited by my mother from using a certain word that starts with the letter "N" — I think you get the idea — or have our mouths washed out with soap. On the walls of our home were pictures and quotes of JFK and Martin Luther King Jr.

When I joined the SGI at age 19, I noticed that there were people from many different races and backgrounds working harmoniously for a common goal. It seemed natural to me that people could get along well together in spite of their differences. After all, these values were instilled in me as a child.

But recently, I have been trying to reconcile my overwhelming tendency toward prejudice and racism. It seems that for whatever reasons, the lessons that I learned early on just didn't stick.

In addition, I have had to deal with the fact that my mother, who preached tolerance all her life, was also prejudiced. I was confused to find out that she did not accept my wife into the family until last year solely because Keiko is Japanese.

I have grown increasingly intolerant, full of fear and hatred for that which is different from me. I guess you could say that a great evil has tried to take over, or that my lesser self, my ego, has emerged. It has been a terrible contradiction in my life: to belong to an organization that truly accepts all people, to know and respect SGI President Ikeda, an individual who has made great accomplishments for the sake of humanity, and yet to have to live each day in dread that our beautiful community is being overrun by those who are different.

Since Jan. 1, I have been on a

one-hour-a-day daimoku campaign. I have now realized that the only way to change my life tendency is to wholeheartedly chant daimoku and completely change my way of thinking. That is, to study and practice the basics of Buddhism.

I have learned that real change must come from the individual — you by someone else. As Nichiren Daishonin states in the "Rissho Ankoku Ron": "Therefore you must quickly reform the tenets that you hold in your heart and embrace the one true vehicle, the single good doctrine of the Lotus Sutra. If you do so, then the threefold world will all become the Buddha land, and

how could a Buddha land ever decline?"

I will continue to challenge my anger and delusion, changing it into caring and wisdom. I know that there is a long road ahead of me.

I take this passage as a clear admonishment to quickly change my erroneous beliefs and judgments about others and to chant daimoku to the Gohonzon to build the strength and life-condition of the Buddha. Nichiren Daishonin promises me that when I do this, my environment will become the Buddha land. In other words, I can build the strength not to be swayed by the changes in my environment.

Recently, rather than justifying my tendency to separate myself from others, I have been making extra efforts to create dialogue and friendship with anyone I come in contact with. Sometimes it is just a simple "hello" to a stranger, other times it might be a short conversation. Either way, I am now making causes whenever appropriate to bring down the barriers of division in my immediate environment.

I truly value our SGI organization for providing a model to the rest of the world of unity among diversity. However, I believe that the true battle for tolerance does not take place solely within the confines of the organization. Instead, it is our day-to-day interactions in society that determine how we break the bonds of hatred and anger within ourselves and others.

I'm not saying that we should like everyone in the world. This would be impossible. But I am saying for myself as well as for

others that we should not judge people, especially when we don't know them. Getting upset over others' behavior or differences just shows that I have a lot of human revolution to do.

Whenever I visit my brother who lives north of Seattle, I am reminded of how friendly the people are there. It seems that a lot of good folks who used to live here in Los Angeles sort of "Escaped from L.A." However, I was born in Los Angeles and I won't leave. I believe that we, as practitioners of true Buddhism who are directly connected in spirit to the Daishonin, must become examples of how to get along with others. President Ikeda states in his poem written for Los Angeles members, "The Sun of Jiyu Over a New Land":

The waves of egoism eat at the shores of contemporary society. The tragedy of division wraps the world in a thick fog.

I believe that ideology not grounded in a firm philosophy will soon crumble. That is why, in my opinion, many political platforms and community activist organizations succumb to the same hatred and prejudice that they were originally intended to defuse. President Ikeda has often said that phrases such as ethnic and national identity have been greatly abused. I have often found myself wrapped up in the fact that I was born in America and how could these people who were not even born here be given the same rights and opportunities as me. I am instead trying to adopt the idea that I was born into the group called Earth, and I'd better start making causes to make this a better planet.

I believe I have done a good job of covering up my hatred and prejudice. I had to muster up a lot of courage to express these things. It has also been a real challenge to get guidance on this issue for fear of embarrassment.

I will continue to challenge my anger and delusion, changing it into caring and wisdom. I know that there is a long road ahead of me. I am therefore determined to fight alongside my fellow members for the sake of my growth.

I hope I can become a source of encouragement in the future for others who are facing similar challenges.

PEACE PROPOSAL, FROM PAGE 1

cussing the Buddhist doctrines of dependent origination and the indivisible relationship between human beings and their environment.

Also discussing U.N. reform, Mr. Ikeda urges the international body to more clearly reflect the needs and desires of citizens, rather than just national interests. He points to the important role NGOs can play in allowing the people's voices to be heard and proposes the establishment of an annual Global Forum through which citizens from around the world could serve in an advisory capacity to U.N. policy-making forums.

This year, he also writes, marks the 40th anniversary of second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda's 1957 declaration for the abolition of nuclear weapons. President Toda decried them as "an absolute evil" that threatens all people's right to survival. This was Mr. Toda's spiritual call to young people to fight without compromise against the evil of nuclear weapons.

The SGI leader cites the

Chemical Weapons Convention, to take effect this April, which bans the use, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons, as a sign of hope. Its broad-based verification mechanisms assure reliability, he says. Two remarkable steps were also taken last year against nuclear weapons. President Ikeda mentions: last September's conclusion of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and the International Court of Justice's opinion that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a violation of international law. Mr. Ikeda says that it is significant that the debate on nuclear weapons is now occurring in so prominent a forum.

President Ikeda concludes his proposal with a warning: We are now standing at a crossroads — we can either continue as we have in the 20th century, heading ultimately toward self-destruction, or open a new path to a global civilization based on humanism. He calls on humanity to unite as fellow travelers aboard the same ship, urging us not to sit back as idle spectators but to each take responsibility for the future. WTT

Children's WORLD

Tony Villanueva, 5

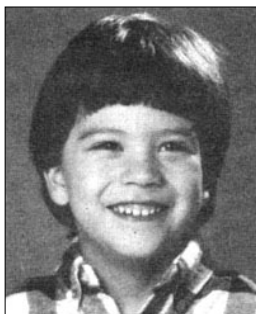
I have a friend at school. His name is Alex. We played together every day, just him and me. Then one day he wanted to play with the other kids.

I felt very hurt and angry and I cried a lot. That night, I couldn't sleep. My mom asked if I wanted to chant. I said, "Yes."

I chanted very hard for Alex to be my friend. The next day, I was nervous about seeing Alex. When he played with the other kids, I felt sad a little bit, but I stayed in control and I had a really great, fun day!

After school, I told my mom that chanting worked. Then we went to my favorite toy store.

Alex and I are still friends, and we both play with all of our schoolmates now. I told Alex that he needs the Gohonzon, too!



In a photograph taken on Feb. 14, a Hong Kong commuter passes by a neon sign erected by China that counts the number of days until the territory reverts to Chinese rule on July 1.

President Ikeda Begins a Visit to Hong Kong

HONG KONG, FROM PAGE 1

value-creating philosophy with as many people as possible.

The first two installments of an ongoing dialogue between President Ikeda and Mr. Jin, now being serialized in the Japanese magazine *Ushio* and the Hong Kong magazine *Ming Pao Monthly*, also focused on Hong Kong's return to China.

Mr. Jin expressed his gratitude to the SGI leader for the wonderful words of encouragement and advice he offers the citizens of Hong Kong. He also remarked that while many people only discuss the territory's return to China from the viewpoint of its economic repercussions, Mr. Ikeda looks at the situation from the standpoint of culture and peace.

The Chinese author [whose real name is Louis Cha, but who is fondly referred to in Hong Kong by his pen name, Jin Yong] was a member of the Basic Law Drafting Committee, which formulated the Basic Law, or mini-constitution, that will govern the territory after its return to China. He is also a well-respected political commentator and opinion leader. President Ikeda lauded the writer's efforts to secure a smooth transition for all parties concerned, asserting that the people of Hong Kong are most fortunate to have someone of Mr. Jin's caliber working in their interests at this epochal time for the territory.

The SGI leader spoke highly of China's recent economic development, and went on to say that if Japan wishes to achieve a new level of trust and cooperation, it should offer a clear and genuine apology for its wartime aggression against China and the suffering it inflicted on the Chinese people. Mr. Jin agreed, adding that should Japan offer such an apology it would surely change the way the country is viewed by the international community. In that regard, he said, Japan, more than China, has much to gain by doing so.

The writer also remarked that he would never forget Mr. Ikeda sharing with him the story of how Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the first president of the Soka Gakkai, died in prison for his refusal to bow to the Japanese military authorities during World War II. Mr. Jin further expressed his hope that China-Japan friendship would continue to deepen with each passing year.

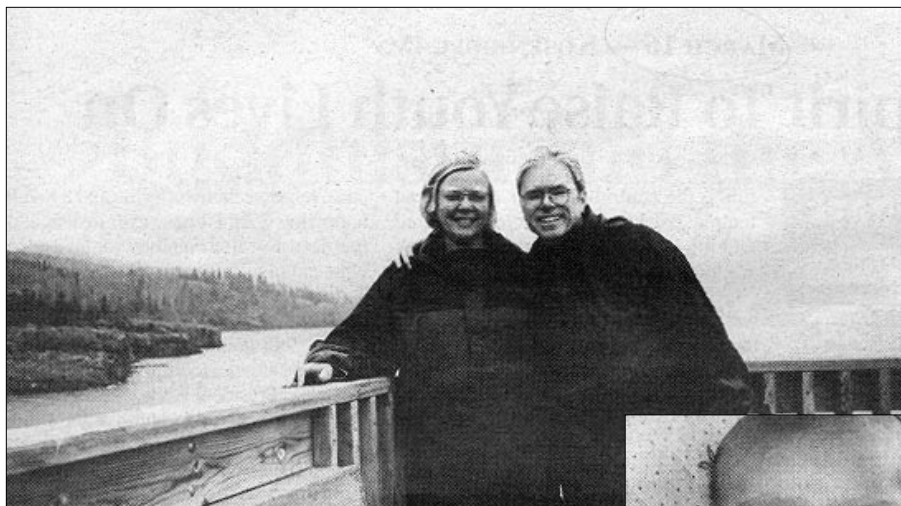
President Ikeda thanked Mr. Jin for agreeing to contribute his calligraphy for inscription on a monument to world peace scheduled to be erected this year

at the Soka Gakkai Chugoku Memorial Park in Hiroshima. The monument will commemorate the 40th anniversary of second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda's declaration for the abolition of nuclear weapons in September 1957. The inscription by Jin Yong, who has long been a staunch opponent of nuclear weapons, Mr. Ikeda said, is sure to inspire a fresh commitment for peace in the Japanese people's hearts.

Turning to the subject of literature, the SGI leader maintained that a renaissance in literature is needed to revitalize humanity. His mentor Mr. Toda, he explained, held that we could deepen our understanding of Buddhism by reading great literary works because they encompass the entire spectrum of the human condition, the central focus of Buddhist teaching. Mr. Jin concurred that both literature and Buddhism address life's problems and enrich the heart.

The two men, who are both prolific writers in their own rights, promised to continue their discussion on literature at a future point. WTT

Mr. Ikeda expressed confidence that Hong Kong would continue to prosper after its return to Chinese rule.



Joe and Donna Carr (above) and son Travis (r).

JOE AND DONNA CARR, ST. LOUIS PARK, MINN.

At the Crossroads of Destiny

Joe: Our son, Travis, was born in December 1995 and died four-and-a-half months later in May 1996. He was born with Down's syndrome, a large hole in the center wall of his heart and a number of other physical difficulties.

We knew during the pregnancy of most of these problems. We decided not to terminate the pregnancy for three reasons: First, we wanted to have a child. Second, we wanted to change our family karma. Third, and most important, we realized that aborting our baby would deny him the opportunity to change his karma. We really wanted to help him do that.

The name *Travis* comes from the French for "at the crossroads." He was indeed at the crossroads — either he could suffer greatly as a result of his destiny, or he could use these severe handicaps to change his destiny and develop a happy and fulfilled life. It was our determination, of course, that he would be happy.

Donna: During the pregnancy, we chanted for the baby to be as healthy and normal as possible. I was determined to develop courageous faith. At birth, because of our many daimoku and a nutritional program that Joe, who is a chiropractic doctor, had me on, Travis did not look like a Down's syndrome baby. His Apgar score¹ was nine out of a possible 10, which is very high for a baby with Down's syndrome. The

nurses at first refused to believe me when I said he had a heart defect.

When Travis and I first met that day, I knew we had a lifetime connection. I sensed we had pledged to work for kosen-rufu together in a past life.

Joe: I have received many benefits over many years of practice, and have also seen how the daimoku I chant for others benefits them. Still, I was amazed by how deeply the daimoku Donna and I had chanted for Travis, and the daimoku of many others, penetrated his life.

One example was his appearance. Many people, including nurses who had worked with thousands of Down's syndrome babies, were surprised that he had this condition because he showed so few signs of it.

His bright life-condition also hid the severity of his heart defect. At the time of his first heart surgery, the surgeons were surprised — the hole in his heart wall was much worse than they had anticipated — because he looked and acted much healthier than he actually was.

Donna: When Travis was two-and-a-half weeks old, he almost died at home with severe heart failure and was admitted to the Minneapolis Children's Hospital Intensive Care Unit. Joe had fractured his hand that weekend (not good for a chiropractor), and I had a high fever from a bladder infection. It



was clear that Travis would need one. The pacemaker is needed in only about 5 percent of similar surgeries. You cannot imagine the anguish parents feel when they learn that their 3-month-old baby will have a machine implanted to keep the heart beating, and that surgery will be necessary every five years to replace that machine.

After the surgery, Travis was on a respirator machine, two IVs and various other tubes inserted in his body, many drugs including narcotics like morphine, and in recovery in the Intensive Care Unit for six days. My leader's guidance at this time was to chant for the best result and have confidence in the Gohonzon.

We had several chanting sessions at our house for

Travis during the pregnancy and when he was in the hospital. During one of these daimoku sessions, he started to bottle feed for one of the nurses in the hospital after having been tube-fed for three months. We were thrilled.

The day before he was to leave the hospital, the surgical pocket that his pacemaker was in opened. Also, the cardiologist discovered two more small leaks in his heart wall, as well as a leak in his tricuspid valve. This was starting to put pressure on his lungs and there was excess fluid around the heart.

As a result, he had to have a second open heart surgery, plus a reconstruction of his pacemaker pocket. The cardiologist said that in his 25 years of medical practice, he had never seen a pacemaker pocket open up. We continued to chant more daimoku, determined to deal with it.

Travis was in the hospital for a total of 27 days for his heart surgeries. Friends with similar babies were released in seven to 10 days with no complications. We decided we must be expiating a huge chunk of our negative karma.

When we finally got him home, Travis had difficulty bottle-feeding. He had developed an oral-facial aversion. That is, he had difficulty accepting a bottle into his mouth because of all the invasive procedures done to him. He also had to learn how to bottle-feed, since he had been tube-fed most of his life and had almost lost his sucking reflex. It was very difficult work.

Joe: A second way our daimoku affected Travis was in the strong and gentle spirit that he showed. Though Travis suffered a great deal of pain, he seemed to deal with it with a strong, composed attitude that was both amazing and encouraging. In all, he spent half of his short life in hospitals.

All the nurses and caregivers at the hospital fell in love with him and seemed to be taken with his gentle and robust spirit. I often heard: "Oh! You're Travis' dad." They didn't know me as Joe but as Travis' dad.

When a young cousin met Travis for the first time in the hospital, he asked his mom if Travis could live with him, because he wanted Travis to be his brother and not just his cousin.

Donna: We received many financial benefits. When our employer learned of our baby's physical difficulties, he agreed to as much time off work as we needed. He also paid for our hospital insurance for March and April. I learned of an unadvertised program called Tefra, for special needs children. We were approved for this program, which paid for Travis' health insurance, all of his copayments and his medication.

Travis was in the hospital for six weeks, had two open heart surgeries, a pacemaker operation and many other expensive procedures. We paid only a small parental fee for all of these services. In addition, Tefra paid for an in-home nursing service so that I could go back to work with confidence, knowing that a nurse was watching my sick child. Finally, we received SSI for Travis for April and May, which helped pay for some of our bills while we were not working.

Joe: It amazed me how the protective forces of the environment surfaced all around him. People not only in Minnesota but on both the East and West coasts were constantly calling and asking about him, sending their daimoku and other prayers. It seemed as if his various caregivers, such as nurses, home health aides and special education professionals, were practically tripping over each other to help him. During the times that Travis was at home, his pediatrician insisted on making house calls so that Travis would be more protected.

SIGN POSTS

APPLYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS TO DAILY LIFE

I Am Not Merely A Survivor

By CRAIG GREEN

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

Those who believe in the Lotus Sutra are as if in winter, which never fails to turn into spring. Never have I seen or heard of winter turning into autumn. Nor have I ever heard of any believer in the Lotus Sutra who remained a common mortal. (The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 150.)

When I began to practice, I felt that some things would never change. Maybe there would be something to get excited about occasionally, a benefit here or there, but the essential flow of my life would go unaltered. But that's not Buddhism.

This letter was written to a woman whose husband had died, leaving her to raise their two children, while she was battling with ill health. It is not only a letter written out of Nichiren Daishonin's compassion, but it is also a very clear illumination of one of the basic tenets of Buddhism.

Life is difficult. It entails struggle, sacrifice and pain. This is true at some point for every person that has ever lived — for every person that will ever live. No one is free of the cycle, no one is exempt from the process. Yet belief in the Gohonzon (which Nichiren Daishonin refers to here as belief in the Lotus Sutra), allows us to come through our struggles much stronger than when we began.

We emerge not merely as survivors, as I had envisioned when I began my practice, but as Buddhas. Our struggles, our winters, can help us to reveal our innate natures. Our Buddhahood.

Practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is in accord with the natural laws of the universe. It is a law of nature. Those who practice it become everything that they could imagine and more.

It further allows us to have a stronger belief in our worth, and in our ability to tap the storehouse of energy, wisdom and joy that lies within. It allows us to see our winters not as never-ending obstacles but as seasons that will give way to the wondrous. WT

MARCH 16 — KOSEN-RUFU DAY

The Spirit To Raise Youth Lives On

SIGNIFICANT DATE

By DAVE SHADOVITZ
PHILADELPHIA BUREAU CHIEF

Thirty-nine years have passed since March 16, 1958, when some 6,000 young men and women met on the front steps of the Grand Lecture Hall at the head temple, Taiseki-ji. There, with second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda, they held a ceremony that, in the words of President Toda, would be a "dress rehearsal for kosen-rufu."

Actually, not everything went quite as planned on March 16. Japan's prime minister was scheduled to visit the head temple that day, so Mr. Toda, hoping to welcome the prime minister in a way that would be remembered, initiated this ceremony to provide a "preview for kosen-rufu." As things turned out, the prime minister was unable to attend at the last minute, instead sending a representative.

"Not until March 16 itself did we learn that our eagerly awaited guest, the prime minister, would not be coming," SGI President Ikeda later recalled. "The youth division members formed a row

lining the central pathway of the head temple.... I knew they were exhausted and my heart ached for them, but they waited with fortitude."

After learning the prime minister wasn't coming, Mr. Toda felt badly for the youth division members and went to encourage them. Carried on a litter by youth division members, he arrived before them near the newly completed Grand Lecture Hall. President Toda then passed on the responsibility for kosen-rufu to the youth division.

Much has changed since that historic day. Under the leadership of President Ikeda, the SGI has evolved into a worldwide organization with members in 128 countries. Its efforts to promote peace have been recognized by many prestigious organizations, including the United Nations. Indeed, the SGI has earned the respect of world leaders because it has never lost sight of its mission to carry out the will of Nichiren Daishonin — kosen-rufu.

Over a 39-year period, it's not uncommon for an organization to change direction or even to entirely lose sight of its original direction. But in the case of the SGI, it has never wavered from its quest to help spread the Mystic Law so people

can overcome their suffering and live full, happy lives. And it has never lost sight of the need to raise capable young people who can inherit that responsibility.

In *A Conversation With Youth*, President Ikeda recalls that Mr. Toda often said, "Unless our youth become great individuals, we cannot accomplish kosen-rufu." Likewise, President Ikeda is striving every day to raise capable youth for the future — to pass to them the baton of kosen-rufu. So the spirit of March 16 lives on.

In line with this spirit, SGI-USA General Director Zaitusu has set "boldly entrusting the youth" as one of SGI-USA's six challenges for 1997. "To boldly entrust the youth division with responsibility," Mr. Zaitusu said, "is a Gakkai tradition dating back to President Toda's time." But that doesn't mean for the other divisions to dump all the responsibility on them, he explained, and then sit back and relax. No. "Raising youth means to be mentors to them," he went on, "to take them under our wings, to help them set challenging targets, to protect them — not necessarily from failure but from any feelings of inadequacy."

Clearly, the task of entrusting the youth division with that responsibility is as important in 1997 as it was in 1958. WT

THE SECULAR WORLD AND BUDDHIST LAW

Turn On Your Light!

BUDDHIST CONCEPT

By FRED MAYER
PHILADELPHIA CORRESPONDENT

We play many roles in our lives. We may be a parent or child, student or professional, senior citizen or teenager. These and all our other roles act as convenient vehicles for us, as practitioners of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, to show actual proof. Nichiren Daishonin himself taught this by saying that "whereas they [the provisional teachings] relate secular matters in terms of Buddhism, the Lotus Sutra explains that secular matter ultimately are Buddhism" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 269).

As SGI members, each day we spend at work, with friends, with family or in school is an opportunity to demonstrate the Mystic Law in action. We are the bullfighters in every arena of our lives. And the throng of people of the Latter Day cheer us on as we, time and time again, deflect and overcome the advance of obstacles.

To think that our day-to-day life is not related to Buddhism is to deny the very

nature of life itself. "I'd be showing actual proof if not for this lame job" — this kind of sentiment is not in the spirit of Buddhism. Teachings that do not find any connection to the secular world can never bring forth a peaceful society. And people who do not challenge their current situation — who are "waiting for something better to come along" — can't create a happy life.

Resolving domestic conflict, bringing advancement to a field, fighting discrimination, enhancing the community, overcoming illness and disability, helping people in crisis, excelling in studies, forming meaningful bonds of friendship — these are just some of the badges of honor in daily life that we, as Buddhas of the Latter Day, can earn.

Each time we walk into any situation in life it's as if we are wearing a sash across our bodies that says "I Chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo." We may not perceive that the "sash" is there at all, but the people in our lives can't help noticing the proof of the Mystic Law

displayed in our behavior.

Nelson Mandela said in his 1994 inaugural speech that "as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

Buddhism is meant to enhance and create value in the secular world. As first Soka Gakkai President Makiguchi said, "The purpose of interaction or exchange should not be simply to promote self-interest but to protect and enhance the lives of both ourselves and others...."

Whether at the bus stop, in the supermarket or, in fact, wherever our

daily travels take us, there is always an opportunity to create value for kosen-rufu. Like King Midas in his time, we have the ability to turn the mundane into precious gold and lead all people toward the realization that they, too, possess the Buddha nature. Society is indeed the proving grounds of the Buddha! WT

Wherever our daily life takes us, there is always an opportunity to create value for kosen-rufu.

A NEW CENTURY OF HEALTH

Buddhism and the Art of Medicine



Senile Dementia [23]

Participants in this installment are: SGI President Ikeda, Soka Gakkai Women's Division Nurses Group General Chief Reiko Inamitsu, Vice Chief Kazuko Matsumoto and Secretary Akiko Kojima.

Ikeda: Our topic for today is senile dementia.¹ In conversation, people frequently say that people who are very forgetful are "senile." How is that different from real senility, or senile dementia?

Inamitsu: Forgetfulness is one manifestation of aging. To a certain extent, it's unavoidable, just like wrinkles. In contrast, senile dementia is a degenerative disease that occurs mainly in the brain.

Matsumoto: Benign forgetfulness is characterized by forgetting some part of an experience. With dementia, however, you forget the entire experience and, in addition, you have no awareness even that you have forgotten anything.

Ikeda: The difference, I guess we could say, is that an elderly person who remembers that he or she ate breakfast but forgot what he or she had to eat is merely suffering from a decline in memory function, but that an elderly person who forgets that he or she has eaten breakfast altogether has symptoms of senile dementia.

Kojima: Yes, that's the distinction. Dementia makes it difficult to live a normal life. If left untreated, the forgetfulness becomes even worse.

Alzheimer's Disease and Multi-infarct Dementias

Ikeda: Alzheimer's disease²



The most common types of senile dementia are those caused by Alzheimer's disease and multi-infarct dementias. Patients who interact with children have shown significant improvement.

is a well-known form of senile dementia.

Inamitsu: Yes. The most common types of senile dementia are those caused by Alzheimer's disease and multi-infarct dementias,³ the latter being caused by stroke and other vascular disorders.

Matsumoto: Alzheimer's accounts for more than half the cases of senile dementia worldwide. The disease leads to changes in the brain cells themselves, but the cause is still unknown.

Kojima: In multi-infarct dementias, in contrast, blood vessels supplying the brain become blocked and impair the brain's function.

Ikeda: Is Alzheimer's named after the doctor who discovered it?

Matsumoto: Yes, it is. Dr. Alois Alzheimer, a German neuropathologist active in the early years of this century, first published a paper on the disorder in 1907.

The Symptoms of Dementia Can Be Ameliorated

Ikeda: Can benign forgetfulness caused as a result of old age be treated?

Inamitsu: If active measures are taken, the condition can be improved in most cases.

Ikeda: How about senile dementia? Can it be cured?

Matsumoto: In some cases, early treatment can lead to recovery. But unfortunately, at present there is no known cure for either Alzheimer's disease or

multi-infarct dementias.

Inamitsu: But proper nursing can alleviate some of the more obvious symptoms and slow the progress of the disease. This, in turn, can result in a greatly reduced nursing load. Therefore, it is important to begin appropriate treatment and nursing at the earliest stage possible.

Ikeda: Does it sometimes happen that senile dementia occurs simultaneously with a decline in memory function that is the ordinary result of aging?

Kojima: Yes. They are interrelated in a complex way. Thus, though we may not be able to cure senile dementia at this point, by lessening the severity of the symptoms of reduced mental function that is the normal result of aging, the condition of those suffering from dementia can be

significantly improved.

Ikeda: That means what we learn about how to approach and deal with dementia will also be of use in preventing and treating ordinary mental deterioration. Let's start by looking at the symptoms of senile dementia. What are they?

Matsumoto: Severe loss of memory function is perhaps most characteristic — especially forgetting where one has put things. Often the person can no longer perform simple calculations or mental arithmetic.

Inamitsu: Another common symptom is repeating yourself, or asking the same question again and again. The person begins to forget the names of people and things, and as a result the frequency of expressions such as "What's-his-name," "You know, that thing...what's it called?" starts to increase.

Kojima: Another symptom is a loss of interest in things that were once important to the person, like favorite TV programs or hobbies.

Inamitsu: When you notice any of these symptoms, along with significant changes in speech or behavior patterns, you should encourage that person to see a doctor without delay.

Ikeda: In such cases, I don't imagine people would take kindly to being told: "I think you have senile dementia. You should really see a doctor."

Kojima: Yes, that's one of the problems. Very few elderly patients in the first stages of senile dementia are aware that anything's wrong with them. They are certain they aren't sick. They may bristle when someone tells them what to do. If you tell them to see a doctor, they'll refuse.

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Matsumoto: In such cases, try to persuade that person to get a general checkup, or have his or her usual doctor or someone they will listen to urge a medical examination.

Ikeda: I see. We must use our wisdom — wisdom is also an expression of love. It would be wonderful if we could all view aging and senility as the noble prices individuals have paid for working hard all their lives for the sake of others, their families and society, and give earnest thought to how we can make things easier and more comfortable for them.

If Senile Dementia Is Diagnosed

Ikeda: What do we need to pay attention to when someone in our family is diagnosed with senile dementia?

Kojima: First, look after that person carefully so that he or she remains physically healthy and doesn't fall ill from some other disease.

Matsumoto: The person's ability to concentrate will deteriorate, so special care must be taken to prevent household accidents, particularly falls. Drugs and other dangerous substances should be kept out of reach.

Inamitsu: Another point to consider is to avoid making sudden changes in the person's surroundings or daily routine. A change in the arrangement of a room, for example, can confuse them and exacerbate symptoms of disorientation. Nor should we alter their lifestyle drastically from the way it was before the onset of dementia. Depriving them of the chance to take care of themselves, for instance, can hasten their mental deterioration.

Kojima: We should encourage them to take care of themselves as much as they possibly can. Only help with the things they can't do on their own.

Matsumoto: Try to preserve a normal daily rhythm in the patient's life. Make a clear distinction between day and night, periods of activity and periods of rest. The elderly often lose the natural rhythms of sleep and drowse during the day. Then they can't sleep at night, and a vicious circle is set in motion.


Kojima: It is important to make sure that they are dressed

KRT


Genes that cause Alzheimer's disease

Scientists have found a gene that causes the most aggressive form of Alzheimer's. This is the third gene linked to the brain disease.


Three genes linked to disease



1 ■ Newfound gene; defective version can cause Alzheimer's in people in their early '30s



2 ■ Causes disease in rare cases at an early age, but not as early as newfound gene



3 ■ Risk factor for developing the disease after age 60

Alzheimer's defined

■ Degenerative brain disease that impairs memory, thinking and behavior.

SOURCE: News reports

in clean clothes at all times. Unless we take care to change their clothes frequently, they will not only get used to being dirty but their daily habits in general will become slovenly, and that, in turn, has a major effect on their mental and emotional state.

Inamitsu: If the person's symptoms are still mild, insisting that they eat properly, walk properly and greet others in a normal fashion will help contribute to their mental alertness.

Speak in Clear, Short, Simple Phrases

Ikeda: We should also pay attention to the way we communicate and interact with those suffering from senile dementia, shouldn't we?

Inamitsu: Yes. Start with the way you speak. Those with dementia have reduced memory and comprehension abilities, so speak to them in clear, short, simple phrases.

Matsumoto: Restrict each sentence to one topic. For example, instead of saying, "Let's take a bath, then change our clothes, then eat," parcel out the information. First, "Let's take a bath." After the bath, you can say, "Let's change our clothes." When that's finished, it's time to say, "Let's eat."

Kojima: And speak slowly, so the person can easily comprehend you.

Ikeda: Some people lose the power of speech as their disease progresses.

Inamitsu: Yes. When that happens, you can hold the person's hand, or sit or walk close beside him or her, and communicate through touch and gesture. With some people, you can communicate in writing, or through pictures.

Though Mental Abilities Decline, Emotional Life Persists Unchanged

Ikeda: What else should we be aware of?

Matsumoto: A person with senile dementia may say and do things that are difficult to understand. Nevertheless, it is important not to panic, not to get angry, and to always treat them with kindness and a smile.

Kojima: The forgetfulness and other things a senile person might do are not done on purpose. Remember, the person is suffering from a disease and can't help what is happening to them.

Ikeda: In other words, we mustn't scold or reproach them as if it were their fault.

Inamitsu: Precisely. We must also remember that in most cases the loss of memory and other mental capabilities is not accompanied by a loss of feeling or sense of personal dignity. Because of that, the patient is very sensitive to the emotions of those nursing them.

Matsumoto: It is a terrible mistake to think that someone who is senile doesn't understand what you say, or will forget it soon, so you can say whatever

you like. Though the exact content of what you say may soon be forgotten, your critical tone of voice will be long remembered.

Ikeda: People with senile dementia still have feelings. So instead of arguing or trying to reason with them, we should be considerate of how they feel.

Inamitsu: Yes. We say that in nursing those with dementia, it's more better to go along with them than argue with them. Instead of trying to make patients understand what we want, we make an effort to understand what they want, and work from there.

Ikeda: Yes. Although I'm sure that's much easier said than done, it's still extremely important to make such efforts. Those suffering from senile dementia are doing their best, afflicted as they are with a debilitating disease. There is very often some kind of reason or source for their different symptoms, such as anxiety or loneliness, or some personal trauma or emotion they have long endured or suppressed. There is an unheard inner cry seeking release. I think that good nursing starts with a desire to understand what is disturbing the patient and to heal their pain.

Unlike other types of nursing, I'm sure that caring for those with senile dementia can be disheartening at times. However devotedly you care for such patients, often they cannot express either gratitude or understanding. But the mind is truly mysterious. On the most profound level of life, the patient

often really does understand, even though they may not appear to.

'My Wife's Senility Changed My Life'

Kojima: That reminds me of a story that appeared once in the *Seikyo Shimbun* (Oct. 3, 1990), recounting Mr. H.'s experience in caring for his wife who had senile dementia. Mr. H. first noticed that something was amiss with his wife when he was hospitalized. She tried to straighten up the things on his bedside table, and after an hour still did not finish. Not only that, but she could no longer find her way home.

Inamitsu: In other words, Mrs. H. was showing signs of senile dementia.

Kojima: That's right. An examination at the hospital revealed that she was suffering from multi-infarct dementia. Eventually she began to wander around for hours on end, as if looking for something, during both day and night.

It was no use locking her in the house. Once she tried to get outside through a second-floor window; she slipped on a ladder, fell and received a severe cut on her head. This is what Mrs. H. had come to. She had been a master teacher of flower arrangement and tea ceremony with over 500 students, but now she was completely lost.

His wife's illness made Mr. H. deeply ponder the meaning of marriage and of life, and that struggle for answers led him to join the Soka Gakkai. He prayed for his wife's recovery, and gradually his own attitude began to change. He watched his wife one night snoring away peacefully and thought how sweet she looked. He was startled to observe the changes that were taking place in his heart, as he experienced feelings he had never known before. He keenly realized how painful it was for a sick person to be unable to leave the house, so he began taking his wife outside, never missing a day.

Matsumoto: You can sense how much he loved her.

Kojima: Then, one day, when they were riding a train together, Mrs. H. turned to her husband and began to scold him: "How dare you take me to this kind of place? I'm going to tell everyone!" Such outbursts, of

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course, are characteristic of dementia. Mr. H. admitted that, as he endured the curious stares of his fellow passengers, for a moment he felt a shock of anger and shame.

He remained confused and upset. Then, while praying deeply, he realized: Had he ever asked himself what his wife was feeling as she scolded him? He strongly felt, he said, that life was made up of each passing moment. Since that was the case, he must make each moment of his wife's life truly precious. How could he do that? By bringing his wife, moment by moment, whatever joy or pleasure he could.

"At the core of my love for my wife, I sensed the great mercy and compassion of the Gohonzon," he related. "The more I prayed, the more my heart was purified, and the deeper my love for her became." From that time on, until his wife passed away, Mr. H. nursed his wife tirelessly, always making a conscious effort to know what she was feeling and thinking.

Six years after the onset of senile dementia, Mrs. H. passed away peacefully. In death, her face was so beautiful and serene. Indeed, so radiant and alive was her complexion, that it seemed she might still speak at any moment.

Mr. H. said: "In our 45 years of married life, it was only after my wife became sick that we really came to know each other. I truly believe that was our best time together as husband and wife."

Ikeda: What a beautiful story! Prayer does deepen our hearts. It is important in any relationship with others to polish the mirror of our heart so we understand others' thoughts and feelings as if they were our own.

As we saw in the story you just related, many patients suffering from senile dementia begin to roam about as their symptoms advance, don't they?

Matsumoto: Yes, various symptoms begin to appear, among them wandering, talking to oneself, irrational outbursts, delirium, paranoia, eating strange things, overeating and incontinence.

Ikeda: What are some practical approaches to dealing with these symptoms?

Kojima: Mr. H.'s wife began roaming about aimlessly. This is extremely dangerous. The pa-

tient can easily get lost or be involved in an accident. On the other hand, if you don't allow the patient to go outside, their condition often worsens.

Matsumoto: It is very useful to sew a tag onto their clothing listing their name and address as well as the telephone number of a family member or relative who can be contacted in case of

'Creative hobbies such as painting or crafts, as well as writing, such as keeping a diary or writing letters, also keep the mind active. Using our voice — speaking, conversing with others and singing are also helpful.'

— Kazuko Matsumoto

just such an emergency. If possible, one should never leave the patient alone or unwatched. This will prevent accidents and provide a sense of security.

Inamitsu: It can also be helpful to let the neighbors know about the person's condition and ask them call you if they see the person out walking alone.

Ikeda: Some families are ashamed to have a senile family member, and keep them locked up in the house. Senile dementia is an illness. It is absolutely not something to be ashamed of. Rather, it is better to explain the patient's condition to your neighbors. Their understanding will put them at ease and it will also win you their cooperation in watching over the person.

Kojima: Yes. The help of neighbors can be indispensable in caring for those with dementia. In by far the most cases, bravely bringing the problem out into the open and telling your neighbors will be good for all concerned.

Ikeda: When Mrs. H. began scolding her husband in the train

— is that what you mean by irrational outbursts?

Inamitsu: Yes. And when the patient starts making wild claims like "the house is falling down!" or "I'm going to be killed!" they are evidencing delirium. There is always a reason behind such behavior. If we react not to the words and actions themselves but to the feelings behind them,

their anxiety, hold their hand, comfortingly rub their back, and offer a sympathetic ear to what's worrying them.

Matsumoto: Many people with senile dementia will ask right after finishing a meal, "When are we going to eat?" A nervous disorder makes them unable to feel full, or they forget that they have just eaten. The

proach to this is to humor them. You can ask, "Why don't you stay one more night?" or offer to see them home tomorrow.

Kojima: If they still want to leave, offer to take them and then take a walk around the neighborhood for a while before returning home. Then everyone at home should say: "Welcome back! We were waiting for you." This will



Diana McGowin, 55, apparently is the first person with Alzheimer's disease to write a book about what it's like to live with it. McGowin, author of 'Living in the Labyrinth,' holds birds Sam (l) and Big Bird.

the symptoms are relieved and sometimes even cured.

Matsumoto: One of the characteristics of dementia is that the symptoms appear most strongly in front of people the patient trusts. People with this disorder say what they want freely to those who take care of them every day.

Kojima: In many instances, irrational outbursts and delirium occur because the past and the present are all mixed up in the patient's mind. Something in the present triggers past feelings, such as a loud crash setting off memories of war, making the patient want to flee.

Be Accepting and Respectful

Ikeda: How can these episodes be handled successfully?

Kojima: Don't panic. Stay by the patient's side, going through the routine with them. Anxiety is what sets off most such attacks, so turn off the television, the vacuum cleaner, or the washing machine, and create a quiet environment. To ease

best approach to this problem is to ask, "What would you like to have?" and encourage the person to think about the kind of food they would like. Then ask how it should be prepared, and ask them to wait a while. This interaction is often enough to satisfy the patient.

Ikeda: Such nursing is really a tremendously challenging task, but the best thing to do is, as much as possible, to let the patient have his or her way. Nothing good will come of ignoring or making fun of them, or pointing out the contradictions in what they say. In fact, you can work on improving yourself as a person by always treating the ill person with respect and love. Find something that the patient was good at or proud of, even if a long time ago, and talk about that.

When the Patient Asks, 'Who Are You?'

Ikeda: Some people with senile dementia suddenly announce "I'm going home," even though they're already there.

Inamitsu: Yes. The best ap-

usually set their mind at ease.

Ikeda: Many with senile dementia forget their family members' names, don't they?

Kojima: When a patient suddenly asks, "Who are you?" many family members are startled. But when you are asked this, you should address the person clearly and state who you are, for example, "Dad, I'm your son Jack," including both your name and your relationship to them.

Inamitsu: Another good way of keeping the person in touch with reality is to talk to him or her about the time of day. In the morning, say, "Good morning, it's time to get up!" Around midday, say: "It's lunch time. Let's eat." And in the evening, "It's night, so let's go to bed." Keep a calendar conspicuously displayed and cross out each day as it passes, so they know what day of the week it is.

Matsumoto: There are some drugs that are effective in alleviating certain symptoms of de-

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mentia. Though it's not good to rely too much on drugs, temporary use may stabilize a patient's condition and prevent further deterioration.

Using Public Health-care Services

Ikeda: Can families avail themselves of public health-care services to assist with the nursing of patients with senile dementia, as they can for the elderly?

Inamitsu: It depends upon the patient's condition, but basically they can. It's best to start by talking with your doctor or health-care worker.

In particular, if, while the patient's symptoms are still mild, the family avails itself of day-care services, which teach patients to take care of their daily needs, or of short-stay services, where patients can be cared for on a temporary basis by professional health-care staff, it can help prevent the worsening of symptoms. This also gives the family the opportunity to confer with and seek advice from professionals specializing in this kind of nursing care.

Kojima: Senile dementia is going to be an increasing problem as Japan's society ages, but we have yet to address the issue properly as a society.

The Prevention of Senile Dementia

Ikeda: How can dementia be prevented?

Inamitsu: In the case of multi-infarct dementia, by preventing strokes and other vascular diseases such as cerebral arteriosclerosis. The best way is to avoid a diet with too much salt and fat and monitor carefully for high blood pressure and diabetes.

Ikeda: Staying physically active — especially maintaining the physical dexterity of our hands and the mobility of our legs — as well as meeting and socializing with others also keep the brain young.

Matsumoto: Yes. Creative hobbies such as painting or crafts, as well as writing, such as keeping a diary or writing letters, also keep the mind active. Using our voice — speaking, conversing with others and singing are also helpful.

Inamitsu: Moderate exercise

is also indispensable in preventing senility. Walking is fine, but tasks that actually contribute to the family welfare, such as shopping, cleaning, and doing the washing, give the patient a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

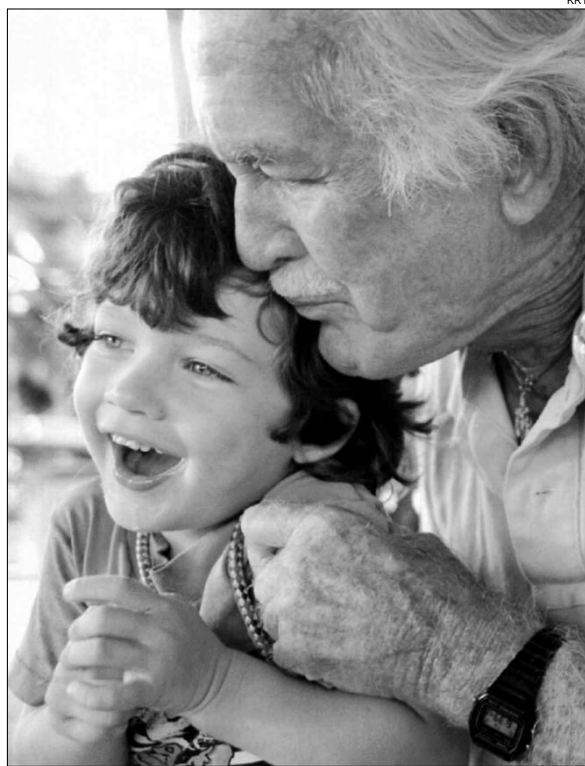
Kojima: Moving residences or renovating the home of an elderly person can trigger the onset of dementia. Some might

being deliberately separated from the rest of the household.

Matsumoto: The most important thing is to maintain warm communication. It provides the person with senile dementia with a sense of security.

Life after Retirement

Ikeda: Some traumatic ex-



Logan McGuire, 4, revels in his grandfather Jack's playful embrace. Sometimes now, Jack McGuire or 'Papa' is short with the children. The 78-year-old former pilot, amateur boxer and competitive cyclist is a member of a group no one wants to join: four million Americans with Alzheimer's.

think it would offer a welcome change of pace and stimulus, but such major changes often confuse the elderly.

Ikeda: Yes, it is true that sudden changes in an elderly person's environment can lead to various abnormalities manifesting in their physical and mental conditions. It's like changing the water in a fish pond. The fish in the pond have gotten used to their water, and changing it can make them sick.

The human heart is a delicate thing, and the most unexpected things can cause a person to feel lonely and isolated. There are people who are glad to be living with their grandchildren, but then get depressed when the same grandchildren make fun of their infirmities. When given a nice new room with the best of intentions, some people aren't pleased and think instead that they are

experience or worry can eat away at a person and act as a trigger for senile dementia, can't it? In many cases, retirement often triggers senility, I've heard.

Inamitsu: Those who have made their jobs their lives are particularly affected in this way because they lose their social role, sense of purpose and satisfaction when they retire.

Matsumoto: Yes, senility is often caused by the loss of some useful role. In Japan, for instance, many elderly women who once used to manage their households begin to manifest signs of senility when they move in with a married son or daughter and no longer have such day-to-day responsibilities to perform.

Ikeda: If our school years are our first stage of life and the

years after that our second stage, then our retirement years, when we put the finishing touches on our lives, are our third stage. Though our bodies may be weaker, as long as we set our minds to it we can still make our lives shine.

A positive attitude — "The future awaits me, I have new goals, and I'm going to meet them!" — stimulates the brain cells and gives us new energy. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, first president of Soka Gakkai, was still studying English after the age of 50 and, in his 60s and 70s, his activities rivaled those of a youth in their passion and energy.

Matsumoto: What wonderful spiritual strength!

Kojima: It is true that those who have a clear purpose in life tend to remain energetic even as they grow older.

Ikeda: As age exacts its toll, our memories may begin to fail us but our overall judgment, ability to understand others and knowledge about life are superior to young people. We reach the age when we can make the most of those abilities earned and honed by experience.

Old age is the time, more than any other period in our lives, when we must ask ourselves about our worth as human beings. Do we still have something of value in our hearts, apart from social prestige and positions? In that sense, prevention of mental deterioration and senility start while we are still young. I think we can say it has a deep relationship to how we live our lives as a whole.

Of course, senile dementia is a disease, and what I am saying does not apply to that.

It is said, however, that those who are less likely to become senile: 1) read newspapers and books, and continue to use their minds; 2) don't complain and fret about every little thing; 3) are not selfish and enjoy caring for others; 4) are warmly sensitive, able to rejoice and delight over things; and 5) have goals and a strong desire to improve themselves.

Matsumoto: Yes. I think that's why SGI activities can help prevent senility.

Ikeda: As members of the Soka Gakkai, every day we read the *Seikyo Shimbun* and other publications. We strive to surmount problems through the practice of faith. We talk to people about our experiences and exert ourselves tirelessly for the

happiness of others. We are moved and inspired when we see how friends have revitalized their lives through faith. We taste life's joy and exhilaration. Our hearts, minds and bodies don't have time to rust.

At the basis of everything, of course, lies daimoku. There is no medicine more wondrous or effective than daimoku for revitalizing our lives. Nothing is ever wasted in our activities for kosen-rufu — such activities surely constitute the most excellent regimen for good health we can find.

Inamitsu: It's also said that people who have others to talk to are less likely to become senile.

Kojima: That's another wonderful thing about the SGI organization.

Ikeda: Exactly. I hope all our members will establish a daily rhythm conducive to good health within our shared rhythm of kosen-rufu and live cheerful and vital lives, true to themselves. I hope they will all live long and happily.

Buddhism teaches that we will grow younger and our good fortune will accumulate (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 158). A new sun rises every day in the lives of those who practice the Mystic Law. A rich, vibrant life force surges forth within them. They burn with hope, eager to fulfill their mission throughout the three existences of past, present and future. Thus, their hearts grow younger with each passing year and their good fortune increases.

By living each day to the fullest to the very end, may we bring our lives to a magnificent close like majestic golden rays illuminating the sky in all directions at sunset. ☸

1. Senile dementia: a progressive, degenerative disease of the brain, the most common causes of which are Alzheimer's disease and multi-infarct dementia caused by high blood pressure or some other vascular condition such as cerebral arteriosclerosis.
2. Alzheimer's disease: a degenerative brain disease characterized by the death of nerve cells in the cerebral cortex, causing atrophy in the frontal and temporal lobes. It is the largest single cause of senile dementia.
3. Multi-infarct dementias: also known as vascular dementias. Caused by a serious impairment to the brain's cognitive functions due to arteriosclerosis-induced cerebrovascular disease.

My Recollections



Turgut Özal, Former President of the Republic of Turkey

By SGI President Ikeda

One of the favorite sayings of the late Turkish President Turgut Özal (1927-93) was "You're in a rut!" If one is shackled by old ways of thinking and doing things, the response to any new idea or plan of action will always be "We've always done it this way," and nothing new will ever emerge. The president used to keep repeating "You're in a rut!" to those around him who were afraid to try new things, in order to break through their calcified thinking.

In diplomacy, his watchwords were *dynamic* and *open*. The conflict over the island of Cyprus created difficulties between Turkey and its neighbor Greece. Back when Mr. Özal was prime minister (1983-89), he was the first Turkish prime minister to visit Greece in 36 years. He also visited Italy — the first time a Turkish prime minister had been there in 56 years.

Both trips were journeys for peace. For that very reason, they were also journeys fraught with danger. But Mr. Özal was determined to make Turkey a bridge between East and West.

In domestic affairs, he encouraged the liberalization of the economy and made bold social changes. He worked hard to improve the standard of living. Whenever he confronted an obstacle, he would encourage his fellow citizens with his favorite saying: "We're in a rut! We have to try something new!"

Anyone who tries to change the world is bound to stir up resistance. In 1988, this great reformer became the target of an assassin's bullet at a political rally in Ankara, Turkey. An extreme rightist standing 10 meters from the podium shot twice at Prime Minister Özal as he delivered a speech. One shot hit the microphone, and the second grazed the prime minister's right thumb.

Mr. Özal immediately threw himself onto the ground, while the rally collapsed into chaos. A gunfight broke out between the assassin and the security forces, and many were wounded. After



SGI President Ikeda conducts a dialogue with the late President Turgut Özal (1927-93) of Turkey.

the criminal was finally apprehended and the ruckus died down, the prime minister rose courageously to take his place at the podium and went on with his speech. The crowd was deeply moved by his determination, his refusal to succumb to any threat, no matter how deadly.

A great love for his country burned in Turgut Özal's breast. He was determined to make his nation a better place. So he energized Turkey's foreign relations, opening his country to the world. This pulled him into a struggle against the prejudiced views many Westerners had of Turkey. The British historian Arnold Toynbee also recognized this problem — the firmly entrenched, preconceived notions that most Western nations hold about Turkey and the rest of the Islamic world.

Yet from the Islamic perspective, the famous medieval Crusades, which Europe regarded as holy wars, were nothing more than the attack of barbarians upon a noble civilization. In fact, Islamic civilization is thought by some to have been superior in every respect to European civilization at that time. For example, the Jews were harshly persecuted in Christian Europe, but

the Islamic world had a tradition of freedom of religious belief that permitted them relative freedom and equality.

As prime minister and then as president from 1989, Mr. Özal used his warm, cheerful and open personality to combat these notions and promote mutual understanding. He was a man of friendship and goodwill, a bridge builder.

I met him in Tokyo in November 1990, immediately after a meeting with U.N. Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. Many in Turkey have friendly feelings toward Japan and those of the president were very strong. He was a hearty man with the presence of a great leader. There is a saying, "A gentleman is someone who puts others at ease." He was such a gentleman.

Our frank, open conversation turned quite naturally to a romantic story concerning his wife, Semra, who was also present. "One day," he began. "I learned that she would be attending a wedding reception, and I decided to take the opportunity to ask her to marry me. But I just couldn't get my courage up to do it. I was a very shy young man. Finally, I had a few drinks and, with the courage

the alcohol gave me, I was ready.

"But while waiting for her to arrive at the reception, I couldn't avoid dancing with another young lady there. My wife caught me in the act! She was so angry that she refused to dance with me." His warm humor made his story most enjoyable.

People today are discerning. They will not listen to or think much of those who put on airs. They feel close to and respond positively to those who are honest, humanistic and unaffected. In international relations, too, the basic principle of friendship is the recognition and promotion of the truth that we are all human beings, with similar hopes and dreams.

In that respect, President Özal was the perfect person to build bridges of understanding linking different peoples.

The president was born in the city of Malatya in east central Turkey, an area also known as Anatolia or Asia Minor. The modern city of Malatya was founded on the site of an ancient trading center on the caravan route that connected East and West. An archeological site there known as Lion Mound (Turkish: Milid) dates back to

the Hittite Empire's glory as pioneers in the art of iron-working. President Özal was born in 1927, one year before me and four years after the Republic of Turkey was founded.

Under the leadership of first president Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), the country made incredible strides forward. This was the period of the Turkish Revolution, which Dr. Toynbee described as "the Renaissance, the Reformation, the secularist, scientific [revolution],...the French Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution...telescoped into a single lifetime...."

The famous words of Kemal Atatürk came up in my discussions with President Özal: "Dear youngsters! Life consists but of a struggle. For this reason there are only two things in life: to overcome or to be vanquished. The conscious mission we charge [you] with and entrust in you, the youth of Turkey, is always to be victorious, and I am sure, you will always be that!"² Before the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire — known in its closing days as "an ailing power" — was eyed hungrily for its territories by surrounding nations. In that regard, it was in a similar situation to another great empire of the East, China.

One of the main problems of the Ottoman Empire was that its people had grown used to oppression, hardship and lack of freedom. The father of modern Turkey, Kemal Atatürk, sought to shake people out of this apathy. Speak out, stand up and show your shining mettle! — this was his impassioned cry to his compatriots. He declared proudly: "In this world there are two kinds of people: those who have allowed themselves to live with oppression, and those who refuse to do so. The Turkish people belong to the second group!"³

There is an old Turkish proverb: "If you speak up, you will be attacked. But if you remain silent, your blood will boil." Given the choice, isn't it better to speak up, repulse attacks, and give a jubilant cry

PLEASE SEE ÖZAL, NEXT PAGE

ÖZAL, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

when victory is won? This brave spirit also coursed vigorously through President Özal's actions. He wrote a book titled *Turkey in Europe; And Europe in Turkey* (1991) to communicate the truth of Turkish history and demonstrate how much Turkey had contributed to European and world civilization.

The Turkish people are invincible. Since the centuries before the Common Era, they have been traveling back and forth across Eurasia, weaving a bright pattern in the carpet of history. At one time, they controlled the trade routes spanning the plains; at another, they endured the subjugation of foreign conquerors; at another, they were leaders in craftsmanship and technology; and at still another, they abandoned their nomadic ways and settled on the land.

The Turkish people have never feared change or striking out into



The Bosphorus Strait of Istanbul links Europe and Asia. President Özal assisted in building two bridges that span it.

a new age. And that is precisely why they have spread as far as they have and survived these many long centuries.

I visited Istanbul, a marvelous museum of world history, for the second time just

four years ago [June 1992], after a 30-year interval. President Özal was then convalescing from illness and my son went as my representative to visit him. The president was overjoyed and spent many

hours talking with my son. He also was kind enough to compose a long message for the opening of my photography exhibition in Ankara.

Only 10 months later [April 1993], I received word of his

death. A clear vision of his friendly face rose in my mind as I offered solemn prayers for his eternal happiness.

The Bosphorus Strait of Istanbul links Europe and Asia. The two bridges that span this strait are called the Great Eurasian Bridges. President Özal assisted in the construction of both. He was a bridge builder all his life: between East and West, nature and civilization, tradition and modernism — and more than that — between person and person. ❧

1. Arnold Toynbee, *The World and the West* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 28.
2. Quotations from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, trans. *Yılmaz Öz*, from an original compilation by Akil Aksan (Ankara: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey).
3. Translated from the Japanese version of Jacques Benoist-Méchin's *Mustafa Kemal, Ou La Mort D'un Empire* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1965), p. 215.

EXPERIENCE, FROM PAGE 5

Donna: Three days before Travis died, I received guidance. "Why is this happening?" I asked. "What is the protection of the Gohonzon? Why is everything getting worse?" "We can't see the future," I was told. "Don't give up." The more confused I felt, the more I needed to chant daimoku.

Right after this, I worked a 25-hour shift. When I got home, I wanted to take a nap. Instead, I chanted two hours straight and cried through it all. I felt like my selfish ego was being ripped out of my body and with each daimoku, my Buddha nature was emerging.

Joe: Travis died unexpectedly in the middle of the night. His death was devastating. But just as he was so composed through all of his suffering, so was he at the moment of death, when Donna and I found him. It seemed to me as if he was serenely gazing toward the future, looking forward to his next challenge.

Donna and I had chanted 5 million daimoku for him by the time he died. One of our leaders said that he was confident that because so much daimoku had saturated Travis' young life, his life-condition had become so expansive it no longer matched his crippled body and he had to move on. He needed to die so that he could be reborn into a healthy body and mind and be a real asset for kosen-rufu.

Donna: We believe that through this experience, we faced our destiny with courage. We helped Travis change his karma and our family karma.

When your child dies, memories are locked inside of you like a shrine. Another Buddhist mother who lost her child this year summed it up by saying, "My Buddha nature knows she is enlightened, but my common mortal side misses her." Sometimes, I feel a deep sadness and intense pain, yet I know in my heart that Travis is happy.

Through this experience, I have a deeper understanding of this religion. It's not just about chanting for a good parking space or a more expensive car. It's about strengthening your Buddha nature so that you can effectively deal with your problems. It's about developing your self identity, because when you die, the car or the parking space does not go with you. The only permanent thing is your life force. Treasures of the heart are the most significant benefits. No one can take those away from you.

I don't chant to face my destiny or look at my problems with joy. But I do know that no matter what problem arises, I can turn it into a positive result, based on chanting to the Gohonzon. I understand with my life what it means to change poison into medicine.

Joe and I have no regrets concerning Travis, because of all the daimoku we chanted for him. In the last two years, we

have chanted a combined 8 million daimoku. When I was pregnant and learned of his Down's syndrome and heart defect, our daimoku changed. We chanted with penetrating determination for our baby's happiness.

Sometimes relationships end in divorce after the death of a child, because the parents grieve differently and have feelings of guilt. But this experience brought us closer together. We chanted massive amounts of intense daimoku, so we are confident that the best thing happened.

My greatest benefits from this experience are from my internal changes. In the past, because of my arrogance, it has been difficult for me to get guidance. When faced with a tragic circumstance with so many uncertainties, I had to open myself up and do what was best for my child's future. I was totally open to my leaders' guidance.

It has been difficult for me to practice for others because of my self-centered nature. I would help others occasionally, based on my needs. Now I have a deep desire to share the Gohonzon with others. I want to encourage others to deepen their faith and develop their Buddha natures.

We sent a letter to SGI President Ikeda soon after Travis died, explaining the circumstances of his life. He immediately sent a personal reply and said that he was sending daimoku in memory of Travis.

President Ikeda sent this letter on May 30, 1996, the very day he was leaving for his busy trip to the United States and elsewhere. We were deeply moved that he took the time to read our letter and send a reply, especially on a day when he was obviously so busy.

We had a beautiful memorial service for Travis. The hall was filled to standing room only, and a great many of the people were not SGI members. It was truly a moving tribute to his short life that touched so many others. Many friends commented to us on how moved they were by this service and how much sense the Buddhist view of death made to them. One friend started to practice as a result of her experience at this service. Joe and I are counting this as Travis' first result in propagating this Buddhism.

We have started an informal support group with other Buddhist parents in our area who have lost children recently.

The most important lesson that I have learned is that people with disabilities are human beings first. Their disability is secondary.

Joe: I more deeply appreciate my Buddhist practice and how it has helped Donna and me get through this ongoing ordeal and grow from it. First, I appreciate the organization — the members who supported us with their compassion and daimoku.

Second, chanting abundant daimoku has helped me bring up the life force to deal with all this

pain in a positive way. In my work as a chiropractic doctor, I treat people in natural ways. I try to help them become more vibrantly healthy, so they have much less need for hospitals and the drugs and surgeries that go with them.

So to see my baby go through so much suffering, with so many drugs and so much surgery at such a young age, was truly a wrenching experience. Without abundant daimoku, I'm sure that I would be in a deep depression. I now more deeply appreciate being able to renew myself every day with gongyo and daimoku. I also feel that my chanting is much more focused than before.

Third, the Buddhist view of death as a necessary step to renew life is a source of great hope for me.

I now have confidence, because I have seen how deeply daimoku affected and benefited Travis, that the continued daimoku Donna and I now chant for him is definitely helping him renew his life force so that he may quickly be reborn — free of Down's syndrome, free of the heart defect and other major health problems, free to give full play to all his capabilities and be a real asset for kosen-rufu, for a better world — on the stage of the 21st century. ❧

1. Appgar score: a quantitative rating test, with a maximum score of 10, used to measure the vital signs of a newborn a minute or so after birth. A score greater than seven signifies good health.

It All Comes Down to Compassion

SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech at a New Year's gathering at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Jan. 2.

Thanks to all of you for traveling so far at the start of the new year to attend this meeting. No one can compare to the members of the SGI when it comes to earnestness and sincerity. Each day my heart swells with the most profound admiration and respect for all of you.

What makes a person great? What makes someone noble? Greatness does not derive from popularity, status, fame or wealth. Nichiren Daishonin writes, "Since the Law is supreme, the Person is worthy of respect; since the Person is worthy of respect, the Land is sacred" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 264). Those who uphold and spread the supreme Law are truly noble. Those who embrace the Mystic Law and work among the people, for the people, are truly respectable. Any place where such people dwell is itself the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light.

SGI members in more than a hundred countries have sent reports of their joyful New Year's gatherings. In 128 countries, SGI members are contributing to society and the people's happiness. The SGI is truly developing on a global scale. The current of human revolution, like the flow of a great river, grows ever wider and stronger.

A noted business leader recently said: "No matter how the Soka Gakkai is persecuted or attacked, it continues advancing cheerfully and vigorously. Never before has there been

such an outstanding popular organization."

The important thing is to have resolute faith, to have the courage not to fear anything. A strong person is happy. A weak person who is swayed by the slightest thing is miserable. A cowardly person who fails to fight against evil and injustice cannot gain the great benefit of the Law.

Faith Means Absolute Confidence

Faith is absolute confidence; it means to live vibrantly. A person of faith lives his or her life with unflinching hope and courage to the very end. He or she spreads the Mystic Law and thoroughly savors the joy derived from it, leading an existence in which all wishes are fulfilled.

The noted French art historian René Huyghe emphasizes the importance of spiritual struggle.¹ He argues that people in this century are most unfortunate because they have forgotten what it means to forge and cultivate the spirit. They have instead become indolent and weak.

In that sense, I feel, Japan's future is in grave danger. All too many Japanese have completely lost sight of spiritual values. They have become weak and decadent and have no hope or ideals, nor a vision for the future. I am not alone in my concern that if Japan continues along its present course its future will be extremely bleak.

Indeed, if people neglect to engage in a spiritual struggle

— to develop and temper themselves spiritually — the future of the world, too, will be imperiled. We, the members of the SGI, are carrying out the most essential and ideal practice for cultivating the spirit. People of resolute faith are the ultimate victors in life.

The "Encouraging Devotion" (13th chapter of the Lotus Sutra says that people "will curse and speak ill of" those who correctly practice and propagate the Law in the evil age after the Buddha's passing (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 193). A true practitioner of the Lotus Sutra will inevitably meet with slander and encounter various difficulties.

But the Buddhist gods Bon-ten and Taishaku will definitely protect those who persevere valiantly to promote kosen-rufu in the face of hardship. The Lotus Sutra also clearly states that those who persecute its practitioners make the causes for falling into the hell of incessant suffering.

Leaders Need Compassion

Nichiren Daishonin declares: "When it comes to understanding the Lotus Sutra, I have only a minute fraction of the vast ability that T'ien-t'ai and Dengyo possessed. But as regards my ability to endure persecution and the wealth of my compassion for others, I believe they would hold me in awe" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 100). The SGI is the only body in the world that advances with these golden words at heart.



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

What good is self-knowledge without the ability to influence the self? The freedom human beings truly need arises from self-mastery. We can obtain such freedom only by struggling against the fatalities oppressing us.

— René Huyghe

Everything comes down to compassion. Leaders who lack compassion are not qualified to be called leaders.

Members do not exist for the leaders' sake. Leaders are there solely to serve the members, to work for the happiness and welfare of each of you.

Genuine Buddhist leaders give constant thought to others' welfare, paying attention to the minutest details. Such individuals continually ask themselves: "What can I do to raise everyone's spirits?" "Will there be facilities available where the participants can get refreshments?" "What is the transportation situation like?" "Are people getting tired?" "Is there anything I forgot?" "Isn't there something I can do to make things more

comfortable and pleasant for them?"

Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime

This life is infinitely precious. Eternity is decided in this lifetime.

True victory or defeat comes at the moment of death. Those who staunchly persevere in faith are eternal winners — this is the principle of attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime. Toward ultimate victory in this life and throughout eternity, together let's make this a year of brilliant triumph! **WT**

1. René Huyghe's dialogue with the SGI president has been published under the title *Dawn After Dark* (New York: Weatherhill, Inc., 1991).

Expressions

At 80...This!

I am glad just to be!
My being is free!
Each moment, a gem!
A rose on a stem!
No matter the pain...
I've Sun in the rain!
Hello, everyone!
Dear World, please have fun!

— JOSEPH KRENGEL,
Santa Monica, Calif.

MUSIC CORPS

I was born into this practice in Kansas City, Mo., lived there 16 years, then moved to Chicago with my family, where I've been ever since. When I was nine years old, my mother had me learn piano and violin. Liking music, I was very interested in joining the Fife and Drum Corps right away. My then-Junior Pioneer leader tried to talk me out of jumping in at such a young age, but I was adamant.

I learned how to play the fife and eventually the flute, and I found I really enjoyed Fife and Drum Corps activities. Despite the struggles entailed in participating in the Fife and Drum Corps — such as my strict leader and very long and hot practices for parades and conventions — I enjoyed the feeling of accomplishment I got after every performance.

In any case, I came to Chicago in 1989 with a strong spirit. At 16 I was doing a pretty consistent gongyo, and I had about a whole two months' worth of group leader experience under my belt. About a month after I arrived, I heard about Andy Matsuda, a young men's division member *my age* who had been made Brass Band chief. Well, I made a very deep/serious cause when I heard this news. I thought to myself, "If *he* can be Brass Band chief, I can be Fife and Drum Corps chief!"

A month later, Akemi Bailey, the Fife and Drum Corps leader, told me it was time for her to graduate and asked me if I wanted the position. I was speechless. I told her I had no leadership experience and she replied, "Well, how do you expect to gain that experience?" I had no answer, and ended up accepting.

My first few years as Fife and Drum Corps chief were a disaster. I didn't know the joint territory staff very well, so I ended up taking the name list Akemi had given me and calling every single girl to let her know about practices — which I did not get put on the joint territory calendar. This was also when SGI President Ikeda came to the United States in 1990 and activities started to slow down.

Needless to say, there were complaints from parents who did not find out about practices. I went to rehearsals with two or three girls attending if I was lucky. Things got so bad at one point that I was told that our performances were discouraging the members.

I did have some support from my former Fife and Drum Corps

and current Chicago Territory #3 leaders, however, and I ended up developing a Territory #3 Fife and Drum Corps who performed only for our meetings. These girls knew how to play instruments already. I found it very difficult to teach how to read music and play instruments to those with no musical background and at the same time prepare to perform for meetings.

At around this time, the Chicago Joint Territory was getting ready to welcome the Fuji Drum and Bugle Corps, who were to compete in Wisconsin at the Drum Corps International competition. The joint territory

arranged an exchange performance with them on a high school football field. Well, I definitely did not have enough people to cover the main Gohonzon room's stage, let alone a football field, so I had a choice: either not perform or do something different.

By this time I was attending Northwestern University's engineering school, and had been in the marching band's Color Guard for about two years. I wrote a proposal to the joint territory to have a Flag Corps perform, and it was accepted! The joint territory even purchased 30 flagpoles and silks; I would be responsible for finding and

teaching 30 people to twirl these five-foot-long flags.

To make a long story short, 30 boys and girls, many between the ages of 10 and 13, performed with the Brass Band playing "Devil in a Blue Dress." The boys and girls took up a large portion of the football field, and although they weren't 100 percent together, it was our first success. It was definitely my first turning point.

Until the beginning of 1995, the flags would perform to music on tape for meetings while the band did its own performances. But then talks about a Chicago culture festival started popping

up. Although performing to music on tape was nice, we thought it would be nicer to work with live music, so Andy proposed we join the band and flags together again and if it worked out, to make it permanent.

I agreed, and we let the culture festival committee know what was going on. Then, about three months before the culture festival, I found I was accepted for a summer-long internship with Motorola, Inc., in Tokyo — and it would last right up to the day of the culture festival. This was my second turning point. I had to figure out if the Flag Corps members were well off enough for me to leave them. After a lot of daimoku, I appointed two of my most consistent and responsible members as co-leaders.

I was also more at ease because of the support of a women's division member, who actually had previous drill experience. She also promised to help take care of the group. Not having missed a single practice until then, I had been thinking about developing the girls to have rehearsals without me, and I figured this would be as good a time as any.

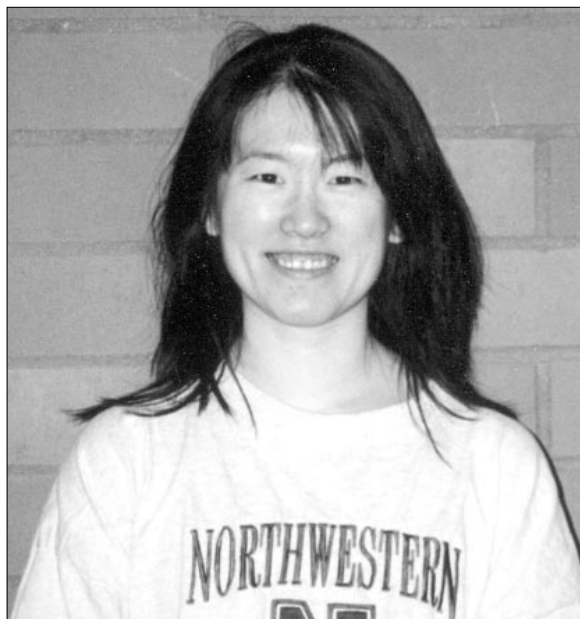
I went to Japan and came back the day of the culture festival to see a very grown-up Flag Corps. I admit I had tears of joy after their performance. I was glad that we could watch the Color Guard from Japan, as they gave us a standard for which we could strive.

After the festival, things went back to normal. I returned to my former leadership position but continued to train a backup for me. I knew I couldn't continue in this position forever, and I also knew I couldn't graduate without being sure I had a capable person to take over. I was to graduate from Northwestern in December 1995 and leave for Japan for another internship with Motorola. Before I left the country, Andy and I tried to formalize the structure of what was now called the Music Corps, within which are three groups: the band, the Flag Corps and a new group of ribbon dancers.

I decided to formally graduate from the Music Corps before going to Japan, knowing that I needed to focus more on my studies as I went on for my Ph.D. in computer engineering. When I returned last August, however, I found it hard to isolate myself from the Music Corps. I continue to help out behind the scenes, which is nice because I can see how I helped these girls

KIYOKO AOKI, CHICAGO

'I Couldn't Give Up On the Fife & Drum Corps'



Kiyoko Aoki, with persistence and innovation, helped develop the Chicago Music Corps, with its band, Flag Corps (below) and ribbon dancers.





Since combining forces in 1995, the co-ed Music Corps in Chicago Joint Territory has seen membership increase. Local Chicago members (pictured) are joined by members in six other states.

1996 In Review

- January** — Local Chicago Music Corps performs Seal's "Kiss from a Rose" at New Year's gongyo.
- March** — The Chicago Joint Territory Music Corps performs "Forever Sensei" at the March 16 commemorative meetings.
- July** — Local Chicago Music Corps performs an original composition, "Renaissance Festival," for Day of Chicago festivities.
- October** — The Southern Ohio Music Corps performs "Global Family Medley" for U.N. International Festival.
- November** — 1st Chicago Joint Territory Music Corps General Meeting; they perform "Alegria" from the Cirque du Soleil.
- December** — At a year-end leaders meeting, local Chicago Music Corps plays "Forever Sensei" as a final song for the first time since 1990.

Co-Ed Music Corps A Natural for Chicago

Intro

The Chicago Joint Territory Music Corps currently consists of three groups that perform together: band, flags and ribbons/dance. Membership across six states consists of young men's and young women's division members. Eighty percent of total membership is Junior High and High School division age. A staff of 12, including section leaders, communicators, coaches and advisors plan the performances and bi-weekly rehearsals.

History

Before 1995, Chicago Brass

Band activities were nearly non-existent. Rehearsals were attended by three or four members at the most, and many rehearsals were canceled when no one showed up at all. Brass Band leaders had been trying to reevaluate the purpose and application of the Brass Band since 1990, questioning whether it should exist at all.

The Chicago Fife and Drum Corps was also encountering some difficulties. Waning interest in the musical, as opposed to the dance, side of Fife and Drum Corps created difficulties in performing at any activity. Fife and Drum Corps leaders decided to become a Flag Corps exclu-

sively and had some success gaining membership and performing to recorded music.

With word of a Chicago culture festival in 1995, Brass Band leaders knew it would be difficult to complete anything by October when the culture festival was to be held. After discussing options with the Fife and Drum Corps, the Brass Band and Fife and Drum Corps leaders decided to combine the two groups into one and adopted the name Music Corps on May 3, 1995.

At first, discussions were difficult; two groups who had always competed for time and resources now had to think as one

and decide what to perform and how to perform it.

But as word got out about this new group, membership started to increase. Young men and women who had never participated in either the Brass Band or the Fife and Drum Corps felt natural in this coed environment and helped others see the advantages as well.

After five months of rehearsals, the Chicago Joint Territory Music Corps performed at the culture festival with 80 members from seven states.

It was a dream come true for the leaders of the Music Corps, who had tirelessly fought to create this fresh new group. ❧

'I Couldn't Give Up on the Fife & Drum Corps'

FIFE, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

who've continued to come to rehearsals and perform during the last couple of years.

There were many times when I was told to give up the Fife and Drum Corps because it was just not working out, but I was never comfortable with that. Maybe it's because I'm arrogant or don't like to give up, but I like to think it's because I really feel that the Fife and Drum Corps, now the Music Corps, is one of the best opportunities for young people to not only grow and develop themselves but to get to know other young people in the organization and create enriching performances that encourage us and those for whom we perform. ❧

What Do You Think of Music Corps?

Because of existing talent in dance and baton twirling among members of the Flag Corps, a Ribbons/Dance Group was started. One of the current problems we face is finding space to share with the rest of the Music Corps, but we have all cooperated to share the stage. I'm hoping that in the future, the Ribbons/Dance Group eventually will grow to perform on our own.

Taeko Goto
Ribbons/Dance Group leader

The Flag Corps began in the summer of 1993 when we performed with the Brass Band for the first time for the Fuji Drum and Bugle Corps exchange meeting. After our performance at the Chicago culture festival in 1995, our Flag Corps chief graduated and appointed three flags section leaders to take her place. One section leader, with whom I am close, trained me by giving me some responsibilities.

Later, in August 1996, I took over the role of Flags

Corps chief. Although at 15 there were some doubts about whether or not I could handle the responsibility, through my determination I now get along comfortably with the older staff members.

My first performance as Flags Corps chief was in November, using the song "Alegria" which we heard in Los Angeles at the Fife and Drum Corps Summer Music Festival. The performance went very well, and I was proud to be a part of Music Corps.

Even though some people feel that coming to practice on Sunday mornings is a drag, many of us feel good about Music Corps and try to encourage one another to strengthen our faith and, by doing so, move people through our performances. I hope that the music corps, fife and drum corps and brass bands all around the world continue encouraging others through their music.

Linda Jong
Flag Corps leader

'A Dream That Can Come True'

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS



Martin Luther King III stands in front of a portrait of his father, the late Martin Luther King Jr., as he is introduced to speak on Jan. 14 in Mobile, Ala.

B. JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

For a man who dreams of human liberty, it must be a source of the greatest fatherly pride when his children take on his dream as their own. Martin Luther King Jr. would be proud to see his four children today — Yolanda, Martin, Dexter and Bernice — putting his dream into action each in their own way.

Now 39, Martin Luther King III has run with his father's dream into the realm of public service. Since graduating from Morehouse College, King III has been busy: He served on the Fulton County, Ga., commission for seven years; led voter-registration campaigns; lobbied for his father's birthday to be a national holiday; worked for the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change; helped set up

the Africa Initiative to curb starvation in Africa; and launched many community programs like summertime employment for high school students, charity basketball games to benefit newborn babies of substance abusers, and mentorships for young African American males.

Next year Martin Luther King III will commemorate the 30th anniversary of his father's assassination. In these 30 years, the dream King es-

poused has come up against some harsh realities. But King III believes his father's dream is still viable. "It obviously is not going to happen today, this week, next week, next month or even five years from now," he told *Black Collegian* in 1991. "It may not even happen in my lifetime. It may be a hundred years. But it is a dream that can come true."

Martin Luther King Jr. would be proud. WT