

# World Tribune

No. 3126

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

FEBRUARY 14, 1997

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Pioneer members show their vigor in morning exercises at the Florida Nature and Culture during the recent Pioneers Conference.

## Pioneers Stay Young at Heart

**Pioneer members inspired by General Director Zaitzu's five guidelines for pioneers given at FNCC conference.**

By **TERRY ELLIS**  
BUREAU CHIEF

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., Jan. 23-26

If you ask her age, Betty Akers of Port Hueneme, Calif., says she's getting younger all the time. At 65, her goal is to reach 101 — and she plans to dedicate the coming years to sharing the joy and appreciation she gains from her

practice of Buddhism.

The day after she returned from the Pioneers Conference at the Florida Nature and Culture Center, she visited another pioneer member in the hospital, and she has kept moving ever since. "The guidelines [General Director] Zaitzu gave the last day of the conference especially for the pioneers were so great!" she says. "They so much hit my heart that I knew I had to take action right away."

She rattles off the five guidelines in Japanese and English, her voice charged with the kind of enthusiasm sports fans reserve for

statistics on their favorite team: Think of the other person's happiness. Take care of youth. Stay close to SGI President Ikeda's heart. Advance — don't think about the past. Be optimistic.

"One by one, he told us, try to accomplish these. Really, this is so important," says Mrs. Akers. "I want to advance, no matter what. I don't want to lose this feeling of challenge."

That same realization was echoed by other pioneers who attended this first conference of the year at the FNCC. Twenty-five or 35 years of practicing Buddhism and 60 or 70 years of life, and

they remain undaunted. They are "the living history of kosen-rufu," as SGI-USA Women's Division Chief Wendy Clark describes them. "Their whole lives were spent with Buddhism and the spirit of the SGI." And now their general director was challenging them to live long and healthy lives and to continue the difficult and sometimes unappreciated work of raising people for the future.

"It's a natural tendency as we get older to have more memories than thoughts about the future,"

PLEASE SEE PIONEERS, 4

## Art Students Invited To Participate in Int'l Show

By **JEFF FARR**  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Santa Monica, Calif., Feb. 5

"Culture and art transcend time and last for all eternity," Egypt's Minister of Culture Farouk Hosni once told SGI President Ikeda. If that's so, SGI-USA youth division members who are college-level art students have a chance to participate in the eternal — with the 11th Soka Student Art Exhibit.

The Executive Committee for the exhibit and the SGI-USA student division are inviting art students to submit entries for the

exhibit, to be held at the Soka Gakkai Ota Ikeda Culture Center in Tokyo. The exhibit, which will be open from March 23-April 18, will be viewed by thousands of SGI members and their friends.

Entries from the United States will be highlighted in a special section of international works. "We feel this is a great opportunity for art students in the newly established student division to participate in an international student division effort

PLEASE SEE ART, 4

## Student Art Exhibition in Japan

- **When:** March 23-April 18, 1997
- **Where:** Tokyo, Japan
- **Who:** Open to all youth division college-level art students
- **What:** Oil and water paintings  
Prints  
Graphic design  
Free-style design
- **Deadline:** In Japan by March 9

(See accompanying story for full details.)

**VOICES**  
.....

**As a Buddhist, how do you combat the winter blues?**

Members from Seattle Joint Territory respond:



I wish I could blame the innate darkness I battle on the inside on the dark weather outside. How easy! I know that when I practice sincerely, chant daimoku and think of others instead of just me, my depression lifts. I don't care what the weather's like outside when I'm trying to polish my life on the inside. Weather doesn't determine life-condition. I know, because I started practicing where there is the best weather in the world (Southern California), and now I'm living here. I've seen the contrast, and it's irrelevant.

— HELENE MAIETTA, Seattle



I live up in Barrow, Alaska, where there are four to six months of darkness a year. You have to create an energy inside yourself — a weather of happiness inside you. You do this by chanting daimoku and by looking at the beauty in everything.

— LORRIE FROST, Barrow, Alaska



I lived in Alaska for three years during high school. I lived in a small town and it was grey and overcast sometimes for two months straight. You didn't see the sun. That was very depressing. At that time, I didn't know about Buddhism. Now, I actually kind of like the rain. The rain is really cleansing. Many people are moving here from all over and adding to the congestion. The rain cleans the air, cleans away the smog and cleans up the dirty streets. It's like starting again fresh. It even smells good. Everything is greener and fresher.

— JOHANNA RICHARDSON, Seattle



When it rains, that's the best time for me to read and do things inside the house. It is also beautiful to see the rain — when my life-condition is high. So I try to raise my life-condition so that I can enjoy the rainbows.

— MEGUMI INOUE, Seattle



When I first moved to this area 20 years ago, I hated the wintertime. I heard people talk about the beautiful fall colors. I tried to appreciate them, but I had a heck of a time. Over the years, I found I can overcome the winter blues by throwing myself into SGI activities. Also, rather than look at winter as a negative thing, I've come to see it as an opportunity to do more things inside the house, like reading and indoor projects.

— TOM EDDY, Tacoma, Wash.



I try to laugh a lot. Fortunately, I have a young women's division member who lives near me and we talk. I ask her to say something nice or we get together and chant. I do a lot of self-care things: keeping the house musical, keeping it light, going for walks, playing with my kitty and staying connected with my friends. I also have a tendency to really sleep, so I have to set the clock!

— KENYA DAUGHERTY, Seattle

# Strengthening Our Faith Is Our Responsibility

## EDITORIAL

There are four powers of the Mystic Law that empower us to receive benefit: the power of the Buddha, of the Law, of practice and of faith. The powers of the Buddha and the Law are inherent within the Gohonzon, while individually we are the key to the powers of practice and faith. To the extent that we bring forth these powers, we tap into the powers of the Buddha and the Law.

That's one reason why the importance of faith is stressed repeatedly. Nichiren Daishonin writes in "The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon": "The Gohonzon is found in faith alone. As the sutra states, 'Only with faith can one enter Buddhahood'" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 213).

One factor in establishing and strengthening our faith is study. Another is experiencing actual proof — benefits — in our lives. As we learn, through study, to apply this philosophy in our daily lives, and as we witness, through benefits, its validity, our confidence — our faith — takes root and grows.

But at some point, our continued growth in this philosophy may require, so to speak, a leap of faith; that is, a proactive approach to faith. That means making a conscious effort to trust in the Mystic Law, in our Buddha nature. We choose to have faith in the Gohonzon. "I choose to believe in the Law," we can say. "I choose to live according to the Buddhist principles."

Rather than waiting passively for the Law to prove its power to us over and over again, we can remind ourselves that this is our faith, this is what we have chosen to believe in.

This is especially significant in those moments when we have so many problems that doubting the Gohonzon may seem like common sense. Doubts

and worries are not proof that the Law doesn't work but are proof of the existence of our fundamental darkness.

It is up to us whether we indulge in our fundamental darkness or persevere in our practice and use Nichiren Daishonin's teachings to take control. That one phrase — persevere in our practice — describes the process of building and nurturing strong faith.

While doubts and worries arise without any effort on our part, strengthening our faith requires conscious effort. Strong faith does not come without concerted effort. It is earned, not given. It is our responsibility to develop. It is up to us to learn how to make the practice work, to derive the most we can from it. We should not expect that our leaders or the organization will develop our faith for us.

When we encounter a difficult problem for which there seems to be no solution, we can pray to the Gohonzon with the determination: "I will overcome this problem. The power of Buddhism, my power, is unlimited. I will not be defeated."

In his writing "The Strategy of the Lotus Sutra," Nichiren Daishonin encourages us that "faith alone is

what really matters.... Employ the strategy of the Lotus Sutra.... The heart of strategy...derives from the Mystic Law. A coward cannot have any of his prayers answered."

He also explains here that we should have self-reliant faith when he says, "No matter how earnestly Nichiren prays for you, if you lack faith, it will be like trying to set fire to wet tinder" (MW-1, 246).

As we consciously strive to strengthen our faith, it will eventually become part of our attitude — the confidence that no problem can defeat us.

Because we choose not to be defeated. ▽

*Strong faith does not come without concerted effort. It is earned.*

### QUESTION OF THE MONTH: *"How and when do you tell others about this Buddhism?"*

Please be specific and limit your responses to 50 words or less. All responses are subject to editing. Please send your responses and a face photo of yourself to: "Question of the Month," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, Calif., 90401. Fax: 310-260-8910. Or e-mail us at: SokaNews@aol.com.

**Deadline: Feb. 24**

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**WORLD TRIBUNE  
MAILBOX**

**Well Done, Byakuren!**

The first several *World Tribune* issues of the new year were excellent and augur a new beginning for our entire organization. Thanks especially to Christine Allen and the *World Tribune* for the Jan. 24 article on the San Francisco Byakuren retreat. In the past, reports of local SGI activities were great validation for those who had attended but boring stuff for some members elsewhere. Predictably, these articles would begin with the weather, faithfully mention each song and presentation, and end in an unsubstantiated generalization about how every one left totally encouraged. Then began the innovation of relating each activity to SGI President Ikeda's latest guidance on dialogue and diversity; this began nicely but got old after a bit.

Ms. Allen, on the other hand, effectively used the personalized reflections of three Byakuren who attended the retreat to remind all of us about the debt of gratitude we owe to the Byakuren and the incalculable personal benefit to be gained from regular participation in divisional activity groups. The article could not have been more timely, because many such activity groups are crying out for more participation and the members do need more benefits!

Keep up the good work! I'll try to submit more material and meet the standard set in the January issues.

— MIKE LEVINE, Silver Spring, Md.

**All Are Respectworthy**

When I read the letter and the counterpoints about President Makiguchi, I could understand each view and the reasoning behind them (Jan. 17 "Mailbox"). What I didn't understand is how Jim Johannsen's comment that "obviously, Mr. Freedman has much to learn about the spirit of pioneers of this organization" applies to the issue being discussed. I am sure that Mr. Johannsen doesn't know Mr. Freedman, for if he did, he would know that Mr. Freedman is worthy of respect and that insults are not any way to convince him.

— MIKE FIROVED, Mission Viejo, Calif.

**Puh-leeze**

Though I applaud attempts to make the *World Tribune* less stilted and predictable, I must say I find "Joe YMD" (Jan. 1 *World Tribune*) patently offensive. It is so painfully reminiscent of our past perspective on how to practice Buddhism: basically, the rule of behavior and loyalty to the almighty SGI.

Isn't this fabulous life philosophy a bit deeper than showing up for Soka Group because "that girl you like is here and some Byakuren is handing out fresh *mochi* cakes."

Puh-leeze.

— JESSIE NEWBURN, Columbia, Md.

*Letters printed here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the SGI-USA or the World Tribune.*

*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.*

*Please include signature, mailing address and telephone number. Pseudonyms and initials will not be used. Send letters to "Mailbox," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90401; or via CompuServe (102137,354) or America Online (SokaNews).*

**Her Legacy: 'Chant for the Buddha Wisdom'**

**PERSPECTIVE**

**By PATRICIA ELAM RUFF**  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

**E**va Sullivan, 71, a pioneer member in Washington, D.C., died on Dec. 31, 1996, after practicing for 25 years. Her legacy is now woven into the rich history of Buddhism in America, and in particular, the expanding history of African Americans in this practice.

Mrs. Sullivan began practicing through the efforts of her sister, Sarah Jordan, another deceased pioneer member, and Mrs. Sullivan's then-14-year-old daughter, Tracie. In helping Tracie learn gongyo, Mrs. Sullivan herself began to do gongyo and became a Buddhist. One year later, her other daughter, Francine, began to practice as well.

Over the years, Mrs. Sullivan worked as a hostess for servicemen during World War II and a nursing assistant for learning disabled children. In the early years of her practice, when Mrs. Sullivan worked a swing shift, she often couldn't make meetings, but she would always chant for their success.

Her life was devoted to supporting and encouraging other people. She understood that through the practice of Buddhism one can make changes in the depths of one's life. Her standard encouragement, to those who sought it, was, "Chant for the Buddha wisdom." Her Southeast District members adopted this as their unofficial motto.

Although Mrs. Sullivan was always a very independent woman (she purchased and completely paid off her home by herself after her divorce), when she became ill three years

ago and was operating with only one-fourth of her lung capacity, she had to rely on others. This was difficult for her because she feared that if she appeared weak others might take advantage of her. But through her practice she started to open her life up even more. Her true



Eva Sullivan

nature began to shine and her warmth, which sometimes hid behind her strict guidance, came to the forefront. She continued sharing her life and wisdom with others.

One member recalled that Mrs. Sullivan loved gongyo. When he visited her during one of her hospitalizations, she was determined to do a full gongyo even after a very difficult night. Instead of complaining, she courageously battled her illness, often quoting from Nichiren Daishonin's "Reply to Kyo'o": "Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is like the roar of a lion. What sickness can therefore be an obstacle?... A sword will be useless in the hands of a coward" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pp. 119-20).

Mrs. Sullivan's Southeast District is located in an area some consider to be D.C.'s

most dangerous and downtrodden, but Mrs. Sullivan never saw it in that light. She always saw its beauty even when others did not. Because of her vision, her members now dream of a future culture center in that part of the city.

The members of Mrs. Sullivan's district came to rely heavily on her wisdom, tenacity and encouragement. They were constantly asking what they could do to help her. When members realized how sick she was and that she was growing closer to death, they, along with her daughter, Francine, began fiercely chanting for her to recover. Their unified chant amounted to: "Don't go. We're not strong enough."

But, Francine recalls, "As I continued to chant, I started letting her go." It was as if Mrs. Sullivan knew before her family and members that she had in fact given them enough to stand on their own and that it was OK for her to leave. Until the very last moment, Francine chanted in her mother's ear at the hospital, telling her how very victorious she was as she made it to the last day of the year, which is such an important day in Buddhist tradition. The hospital staff was extremely courteous — the head nurse hugged Francine and even the doctor told Francine how sincerely sorry he was.

"It was such a warm experience," says Francine, "but I was wondering where were the 1,000 Buddhas who were supposed to come get my mom? A leader had to point out that they were there, all around me in the form of hospital staff, friends and members."

In addition to her members and her children, Mrs. Sullivan also leaves behind many grandchildren, nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews to continue "chanting for the Buddha wisdom." W

**What Do You Think?**

*Please write to us and let us know your thoughts on the World Tribune. What articles do you like or don't like? Which types would you like to see more of, less of? Do you have ideas to make us better? Do you have questions you'd like answered? Would you like to get involved in your local area? We welcome all letters at: Mailbox, World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.*

## Pioneers Stay Young With Five New Guidelines

PIONEERS, FROM PAGE 1

Mrs. Clark says. "The spirit of this weekend was to remind ourselves that Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism looks toward the present and the future."

Some, like Wallace Payne of Aurora, Colo., actually were drawn to Buddhism because of its focus on the future. "I've always been the type not to dwell on the past," he says. "I've always looked to the future."

It is an attitude he developed early in life as he watched his mother, Gladys, in her day-to-day struggle to live and raise him. He was only 18 months old in 1927 when she left New York and moved the two of them to Colorado where they were to live during the Depression.

"I'm sure that was the greatest impact on me," he says. She lived to the age of 72, which he now has reached. As far as determinations for the future: "I want to stay alive and be healthy," he says. "If I can be of help to anybody, I would like to do that."

That's exactly what was on Tina Phillips' mind when she got home from Florida to Las Vegas. She celebrated her 70th birthday, invited her exercise teacher at the local senior center to the upcoming women's division general meeting, and talked to her Omni District leader about starting up a women's mini-study group in her area.

"I'm going to make study my

### Five Guidelines for Pioneers

- 1) Be pioneers who always pray for the happiness of others.
- 2) Be pioneers who are always devoted to raising juniors and youths.
- 3) Be pioneers who are directly connected with the heart of SGI President Ikeda.
- 4) Be pioneers who are always positive and optimistic.
- 5) Be pioneers who always look to the future.

*'Now the age is different. But one thing never changes — the basics are the same. Never leave the Gohonzon, get happiness, get benefit.'*

— Kimiko Nishida, pioneer

top priority," Mrs. Phillips says. "I'd already decided this before I went to Florida, but since I came back, I'm even more determined. As Mr. Zaitzu said, when you study, you feel connected to President Ikeda. You

cannot be swayed and you maintain hope." That is exactly what she needs to maintain high spirits at the senior center where, she says, people her age are full of complaints.

When Mr. Zaitzu spoke about focusing on the present and the future, Mrs. Phillips wondered if he had read her mind. "I felt like he was talking to me!" she says. "Four years ago, when I moved from Los Angeles, I found myself saying, 'We did it like this in L.A.' Without realizing it, I was reverting to the

past. Also, my daughter is the district chief, so I've asked myself how I can be a mom and support her. My answer is not to go to the past. As Mr. Zaitzu said, I'm going to really think one day ahead or one year ahead, but never to the past."

Kimiko Nishida, 64, of San Francisco, laughs as she thinks about the guideline not to talk about "before." "We need to support the youth division behind the curtain," she says. "Now we have lots of young people. I want to enjoy this practice together with them. Now the age is different, the time is different. But one thing never changes — the basics are the same. Never leave the Gohonzon, get happiness, get benefit."

After 34 years of practice, she's glad she kept going, sometimes through tears. That spirit is something she would like to share. ❖

## Direct Mail System for Subscriptions Takes Effect

By DAVE McNEILL

MANAGING EDITOR

Santa Monica, Calif., Feb. 5

Renewal notices are in the mail for those whose subscriptions are about to expire, and some 35,000 new subscription forms have been distributed to joint territories throughout the country. The long-awaited direct mail subscription system for the *World Tribune*, *Living Buddhism*, the biweekly *Seikyo Shimbun* and *Daibyakureng* takes effect this month.

Now readers wishing to renew their subscriptions can simply fill out the form they receive in the mail and send it in with their checks, rather than turn money in to their leaders. Subscribers can even use their credit cards. And there's no waiting. You can send in your form anytime.

"We are very hopeful about this new system. It should make it easier for people to order and pay for these important publications. Delivery should be improved as well," Ken McDougall, head of SGI-USA's Subscriptions Office, said.

New subscribers, too, only need to fill out a simple form, which was sent to each joint territory last week. The forms for new subscribers are already available at many community centers and through

the districts. Many people are also carrying the forms with them on home visits.

While members no longer have to collect money, their efforts are still needed in promoting the publications. Vice General Director Greg Martin said. "Our organization's publications are used as a source of encouragement and inspiration in faith for our subscribers and keep them up to date with the SGI's movement for peace," he said. "Because of this new system, we can spend our time talking about the value of the publications and not have to worry about the money."

As the system now stands, current subscribers will receive two renewal notices before their subscription expires and one afterward, if they have not yet renewed. And for new subscribers, publications will start arriving in their mailbox beginning with the first issue after their payment has been processed. Gift subscriptions will also be accommodated.

As always, anyone can contact the Subscriptions Office directly by telephone, fax or e-mail. The phone number is (800) 835-4558, the fax number is (310) 260-8970 and the e-mail address is SGI SUBS@aol.com. ❖

## Children's WORLD

Brian Nakamura, 12, Metairie, La.

Do you want to be shot in the head? Do you want to be stabbed in the back? If you don't, don't do it to other people.

Remember — treat people the way you want to be treated.



## Art Students Invited To Participate in Int'l Show

ART, FROM PAGE 1

for culture," SGI-USA Student Division Chief Valerie Thomas said. "It's a way for us to communicate with the world."

While the exhibit carries the theme "We Are the Ones To Link the World — Believing in Our Limitless Possibilities," entries are not required to match this theme. The Executive Committee asks only that artists include an explanation of their work's theme — which can be in the form of a quotation from a novel, poem or whatever the artists feel is appropriate — when they send in their artwork.

Entries must arrive in Japan by March 9 at:

Executive Committee of the 11th Soka Student Art Exhibition  
c/o World Youth Culture Center  
Students Office  
25 Shinanomachi, Shinjuku  
Tokyo 160, Japan

The committee asks that artists roll up their artwork and send it in tubes to avoid in-transit damage. While the artists must bear the expenses of

sending their submissions to Japan, the Executive Committee will cover the return postage for all pieces.

Artwork will be accepted in the following four categories and sizes only:

- Oil and water paintings:** 76 inches X 100 inches (194 cm X 259 cm) or smaller
- Prints (wood block, etching, lithograph, silk screen):** 76 inches X 100 inches (194 cm X 259 cm) or smaller
- Graphic design:** 27.5 feet X 39 feet (841 cm X 1189 cm) or smaller (floppy disks are also welcome)
- Free-style design (other two-dimensional pieces such as collage or mixed media work):** 27.5 feet X 39 feet (841 cm X 1189 cm) or smaller

Participants should include their name, address, telephone number, school, the organization in which they practice, date of birth, the date they joined the SGI-USA and the title of their work. If they can also let Valerie Thomas at (310) 260-8957 know when they have sent their piece, she'll notify the Executive Committee that it's coming. ❖

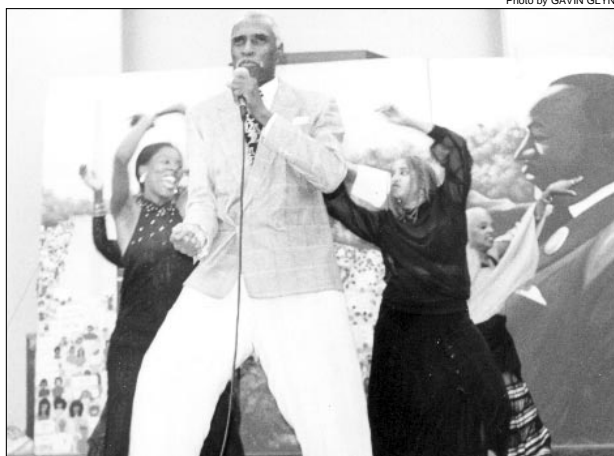


The story of slavery is told in a slow, sorrowful dance during a recent performance of 'The African American Tale' by L.A. SGI-USA members.

# Telling a Tale of Hope

## L.A. members unite to spread message of history, diversity and humanism in 'The African American Tale'

By PATTI CONNORS  
CORRESPONDENT  
Santa Monica, Calif., Jan. 19



'B.J.' Woods (center) sings a jazz number during an upbeat section of the show.

The audience is gathered, the stage set. All around the room, large three-dimensional sets painted with lifelike scenes stand ready to tell their story. Next to the piano and drums, the musicians take position, their instruments waiting to sound the story. Backstage the dancers, singers and narrators, dressed in grand style, prepare to dance the story. At the front, the *griot*, an African historian in charge of the customs and traditions of his tribe, appears pensive. At last the cue is given — the *griot* steps up to the microphone and the story begins.

What is the story? It is *The African American Tale*, performed by a group of Los Angeles-based members. For three years the show has been performed more than 20 times at SGI-USA community centers, local schools and community associations, gaining widespread praise. This afternoon's performance commemorates Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Appropriately so, since Dr. King's story is the story of *The African American Tale*. And so is Harriett Tubman's and Rosa Parks', Billie Holiday's, Nelson Mandela's and others' who remain unknown but have nonetheless fought for justice.

In fact, as the performance continues, you find *The African American Tale* isn't a single tale but a multitude of tales folded around one another like the buds of a flower. As the tale is told, each separate petal unfolds, some at the same time, others alone.

The story of great kings and beautiful African queens is danced in powerful movements and lavish costumes. At one time, these kings and queens ruled Africa, the show proclaims. Africa was a thriving, advanced culture when other civilizations around the world were still in their infancy.

Suddenly this pride is shattered by the next story: that of slavery. This story of capture is danced with quick sudden movements of panic and terror. When the capture is complete and the clenching chains bound, the story be-

comes slow and sorrowful, weighing heavily in the limbs of the dancers and sketched in agony on their faces.

The tale doesn't stop with slavery but shows the continued struggles and celebrations of blacks in this country, taking us through the decades from cotton-picking

to the explosive jazz era and finally to Dr. King's dream that a day will come when a person is not judged by the color of his or her skin but his or her character.

*The African American Tale* is truly a multitude of stories about African Americans — but even this multifaceted tale, rich with history, passion, hope and struggle, is not the entire story. *The African American Tale* has yet another dimension: the stories of its cast, which are ultimately the story of the SGI's peace movement. No one better understands this than the group's director, Burt Woods, affectionately called "B.J." by the cast.

B.J. joined the practice in 1989. He soon hooked up with the SGI-USA's *This Is America* group and also participated on a flashcard team. Because of his skill and experience as a long-time performer and choreographer, who had danced with Michael Jackson and Della Reese, B.J. was asked to look into *The African American Tale* to see what he could contribute. Always looking for a challenge, B.J. thought the piece could develop his directorial skills. He discussed it with Gail Bunn, the author and initiator, and then took over as director.

When B.J. first saw *The African American Tale* performed in Long Beach, the cast numbered only six or seven and the roles were limited to mainly speaking and acting. He knew instantly what it would take to create a magnificent performance: more daimoku, unity and fearlessness about who they were. And there was another necessary element: diversity. Back then the group consisted primarily of African Americans. Today, Italians, Jews, African Americans, Caucasians and Japanese participate.

"Diversity is the way to save humanity," B.J. explained. "We all have humanity in us that transcends color." Telling the story in a harsh, blaming tone was

# The New Human Revolution

By HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 5, Chapter 4

## Lion

Translation of parts 10–12 of the 'Lion' chapter, as printed in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. Ho Goku is the pen name of Daisaku Ikeda, who appears in the novel as Shin'ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1962.

In his speech at the Hokkaido General Chapter Leaders Meeting, Shin'ichi praised the members' splendid bearing and appearance. The members' lively spirit and growing prosperity, evident each time he visited Hokkaido, was itself actual proof of the great beneficial power of the Law, he told them. He stressed that the time to accomplish kosen-rufu was at last upon them.

He continued: "President Toda often said: 'In the Warring States period<sup>1</sup> of feudalistic Japan, the samurai had to wear armor and helmets. During the Pacific war, *monpe* [baggy female work pants gathered at the ankles] became an essential clothing item for women. But neither armor nor *monpe* are necessary today. The times have changed. Similarly, you can't sell heating coal in the summer, nor can you sell ice in the winter. Everything has its proper time. It's the same with Buddhism. Now is the right time for Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism to spread widely throughout the world.'

"In fact, the Gakkai is advancing at a blistering pace toward a membership of 3 million households. The time for the worldwide spread of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism has surely arrived. I wish to declare that now is the time for the Bodhisattvas of the Earth to awaken to their mission. Let's advance confidently and joyously again this year to work for the happiness of our friends."

After the general chapter meeting, Shin'ichi attended a meeting of district leaders from around Hokkaido at the Hokkaido Headquarters Building. Here he again stressed that the time for kosen-rufu had arrived.

"If we have indeed entered the time of kosen-rufu," he said, "then, as the Gosho predicts, the three obstacles and four devils will appear and persecution will definitely assail us. We will also be the target of malicious schemes, criticism and slander. Nevertheless, it is precisely by struggling against obstacles and persecution that we can attain Buddhahood.

"Hokkaido has the glorious history of triumphing over the injustices perpetrated against our members in the Yubari Coal Miners Union Incident. A commitment to truth and a firm refusal to tolerate injustice characterize the lofty spirit that pervades Hokkaido. With this sense of justice, please always hold high the banner of triumph for the ordinary people. My most fervent wish is that the 'lions of Hokkaido' will rise to this challenge."

The following day, Shin'ichi managed to squeeze some time out of his tight schedule to attend a wedding reception for Fusataro Fujita, the Hokkaido young men's division chief, and Makiko Aoi, a local young women's division member. He wanted to offer his congratulations on this fresh start for two young people who would shoulder responsibility for the coming era.

The Hokkaido cold played havoc with Shin'ichi's health, but he pushed himself to the limit to meet and encourage members, to exert himself for their well-being. All who came in contact with him were left with a palpable sense that a new springtime — a fresh season alive with promise — would soon be upon them.

A gray fog blanketed Tokyo on Jan. 17. That day the 40th regular session of the Japanese Diet resumed, having been in recess for the New Year's holidays. Opening ceremonies were held in the plenary chamber of the House of Councilors [Upper House] at 11:00 that morning. Afterward, reporters and photographers from a dozen news organizations, including the major newspapers *Asahi* and *Mainichi*, and the government-sponsored TV station NHK, assembled in the pressroom on the third floor of the House of Councilors building. A group of House of Councilors representatives who were Soka Gakkai members — Hisao Seki, Chuhei Yamadaira and others — were seated on a sofa in the room's center. Seki, looking a bit nervous, began to speak.

"We representatives who are supported by the Soka Gakkai have formed a political group called the Komei [Clean Government] Political Federation," he said.

A buzz rose momentarily from the reporters, but Seki went on speaking: "We have called this news conference today to announce this fact." With that he began to read the guiding principles of the Komei Political Federation:

"We are deeply concerned that all political parties, whether conservative or progressive, devote most of their time and energy to factional infighting, place partisan interests above the welfare of the Japanese people and, as a result, are increasingly alienated from the electorate.

"The Komei Political Federation is fundamentally different from other parties. We are dedicated to promoting policies that will ensure that social prosperity leads to individual happiness and to achieving not only true happiness and prosperity for the people of Japan but lasting peace for humanity the world over.

"Our political ideals are founded in Nichiren Daishonin's spirit of *rissho ankoku* — the realization of a peaceful and prosperous society based on Bud-

dhist ideals. With this unsurpassed philosophy and its unbounded compassion as our guide, we pledge to apply these ideals in a contemporary fashion and, as the most democratic of political organizations, to demonstrate an unwavering opposition to all injustice.

"These points constitute our basic philosophy. Now I will announce the Komei Political Federation's policy platform."

Seki went on to identify opposition to nuclear weapons, preservation of Japan's democratic peace constitution, fair and honest elections, clean politics and the strengthening of the House of Councilors' autonomy as comprising the group's major agenda.

The last point addressed the need to reform the House of Councilors and solidify its autonomy from the House of Representatives so that the bicameral legislature could perform its originally intended function.

The prime purpose of the House of Councilors when it was established was to correct the excesses of, and to make up for any shortcomings in, legislation passed by the more openly partisan House of Representatives [Lower House]. But the Upper House, too, had become heavily partisan — so much so that it often functioned as no more than an extension of the House of Representatives. The Komei Political Federation wanted to restore the Upper House to its original function as the conscience of the legislature.

The primary reason Shin'ichi Yamamoto decided to take the step of forming the Komei Political Federation was that it was important, in his judgment, to preserve the Soka Gakkai as a strictly religious organization that refrained from direct involvement in government. This, he felt, was particularly vital when considering the Gakkai's future. His aim was that the Gakkai, on its own accord, would implement an institutional division between religion and the political activities it supported.

Essentially, Japan's Constitution guaranteed religious groups the right to field political candidates and participate in politics. To bar religious organizations from involvement in political activities was an infringement upon the freedom of expression, the guarantee of

equality under the law and freedom of religion.

Article 20 of the constitution mandated the separation of church and state. But *state* here meant the national government, not political parties; and church, religion or religious organizations. The article separated the national government and religion, saying that the state must remain neutral and unaffiliated religiously and could not interfere with religious activities. It did not prohibit religious organizations from taking part in political activities.

The principle of the separation of church and state as articulated in Japan's Constitution was based on the legal history of the West and was a result of the lessons learned from the acts of religious repression perpetrated before and during World War II by the Japanese government, which had made Shinto the state religion in order to promote its Imperialist national war policy. Article 20 was implemented to bolster religious freedom, not to limit it.

As a result, the Soka Gakkai was perfectly free to sponsor candidates for elections, as well as to take part in political activities.

In fact, the basic aims of religion and politics are the same: to ensure happiness for the people. But the two operate on different levels. If religion is the earth, the basis of everything, political activity is a tree that flourishes on top of it. Given this fundamental distinction, the way they go about achieving their aims must also be different.

This might be illustrated by a look at the approach politics and religion take to the problem of nuclear arms. As a religious institution, the Soka Gakkai's role is to cultivate in the minds of individuals the idea that nuclear weapons threaten our basic right to life and therefore must be eliminated. The function of politics, in contrast, is to seek, in the context of differing national interests, points of agreement and cooperation among nations that can lead to practical negotiations for reducing and eventually eliminating such armaments.

Religion also differs from politics in that it bases itself on an absolute truth or ideal, while politics is concerned with the temporal or worldly realm, in which all is relative and changing. For these reasons, Shin'ichi had concluded that a clear organizational and institutional distinction between the religious and political activities of the Soka Gakkai was needed. He had felt that the best direction to head in would be for a political organization to direct all political activities, while the Soka Gakkai limited itself to popular support of the political organization and its candidates.

(To be continued)

1. A 100-year period from 1467 to 1568.

DANIELLE OPYT, CHICAGO

# Winning the Struggle With Myself

Your victory is determined by whether you win or lose in the struggle with yourselves, with your own limitations in this battle with the devilish nature of life. — SGI President Ikeda Aug. 20, 1990, *World Tribune*

As the youngest child in my family, I was a follower and never developed a strong self-identity. I started failing math in elementary school and began to put myself down. I tried to apply myself, but it was very difficult and I became discouraged, which affected my other classes. The school system labeled me as slow.

I didn't understand the importance of education. I didn't like myself, lost my self-confidence, became depressed and turned my frustration and anger inward. Instead of dealing with these issues, I blocked them out of my reality and dug myself deeper into darkness. I was completely dependent on the environment for solutions to my problems.

I did have a talent for sports and became very involved in athletics, which took me further from academics and reinforced my dependence on the external. Eventually entering a fine arts college, I was determined to apply myself 100 percent to my studies — but the second week my father was killed in a car accident. My life was destroyed. I couldn't break this chain of misfortune and genuine sadness. At 18 I was shocked and scared.

My father left us in such a terrible financial situation we had to sell our house. I had based all my security on my father and that house. Now I felt abandoned, alone and without a home. I wanted to continue college but had to work full time instead. I was angry with myself for wasting time at sports rather than scholastics. I thought if I were smarter I might get a better job, but I did not want all this responsibility. It didn't seem fair. I was miserable and begrudged my life.

Hoping to start over, I moved to Chicago from the suburbs and became a maid at an upscale hotel. I went back to college, paying for it myself. I studied

acting, percussion, music and the music business. My dream was to work for Island Records because my favorite band, U2, was on that label.

Around this time I started practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. I was terrified to chant at first, and my practice was very inconsistent. There were already enough negative effects in my life, however, and I was ready to make some positive causes. I joined the Fife and Drum Corps to strengthen myself and my practice and especially to develop courage. I worked full time and carried a full class load, keeping very busy, but still not dealing with my issues of responsibility and self-esteem. In 1990, after five years, I finally graduated with a degree in arts, entertainment and media management.

I was exhausted from struggling and didn't know what to do with my life. Finally starting to chant and do gongyo consistently, I quit my job at the hotel and began working as an extra in several major movies being shot in Chicago. I applied for better jobs but was never hired because I had no experience; all the jobs I had held were menial.

Using the experience I had gained during college working for small local record labels and bands, I started my own business booking and promoting local musicians. I now had three part-time, low-paying jobs that barely covered my basic needs. Finally, I took a job as a cashier at a sports store. It was there my human revolution began.

With this job, I was back in the same situation as when my dad had died, except that now I was 24 and a college graduate. I was embarrassed — my life was going backward. Depression resurfaced and grew deeper. I sat around or slept most of the time. I read President Ikeda's guidance that "Buddhism is the mirror that perfectly reflects our lives" and realized that something deep in my life needed to be resolved.

I heard that U2 was coming to Chicago on their Zoo TV Tour. My excitement and strong desire to connect with the band helped me to never miss



Danielle Opyt has discovered renewed confidence in herself through a sincere practice, and now enjoys her work at Manga Entertainment, a film and video company that markets and distributes Japanese animation nationally.

gongyo; I chanted for a total of 27 hours. To my surprise, the band walked into the nightclub where I was working part time — right up to me! This encouraged me to challenge my inner life as I saw how I could change my environment with sincere and consistent practice.

At the sports store I got my first promotion and quit two of the part time jobs. I had management responsibilities and was learning accounting and book-keeping. Again I struggled with math, but this time I was determined to defeat this karma. The more I chanted about defeating the devilish functions in my life, the more my faith deepened and the more my life started moving in a positive direction.

Slowly I developed the courage and wisdom to face issues that had long been buried. I realized that my depression came not from external circumstances but from deep within my life. My consistent practice allowed me to see the negative tendencies in my life and take responsibility for changing them. I began to break out of my depression and self-slander.

I joined the Byakuren to change my negative attitude about work. I learned to think of other people's happiness and get beyond the "poor me" syndrome that weighed me down. I began to feel compassion for others and learned what value-creation was all about.

With my new attitude, I soon met the president of a local record company owned by Island Records and one of his artists, LaTour. I wanted to create value in my personal life and determined to do three things: to go on tour with LaTour; to get a job at the local record company; and to work internationally. Soon after, I became LaTour's road man-

ager for his first U.S. tour!

I worked directly with Island Records in New York and was responsible for the budget, income, expense reports and paying everyone. After a couple of weeks on the road, however, the record company decided not to give us any more financial support. I couldn't believe it.

We were devastated but decided to continue. Now my responsibilities were doubled. Buddhist practice on the road was very difficult, and I often called fellow members for encouragement in faith. I used my practice to become more centered and to develop the confidence I needed to handle this responsibility.

The reason I had always been defeated before was my tendency to base my happiness on the environment. This time, I put the practice first and my worries later. With a strong life condition, I developed self-reliance and confidence. The crowds came, and we completed the tour.

When I returned home, the record company was out of business. For the first time, I was concerned about the people who had lost their jobs rather than myself. When I went back to cashiering, I knew something deep in my life had changed. I had pride and self-respect; I accepted and liked who I was. I was finally ready to take full responsibility for my life and was at peace with myself for the first time.

One day before my 27th birthday, I got a surprising phone call. The former president of the record company offered me a full-time job. I didn't even need to interview. Island's founder was extending one of his European companies into the United States. Manga Entertainment, a film and



video company marketing and distributing Japanese animation nationally, would be located in the offices of the old record company in Chicago.

I was hired as the theatrical publicist and fan club director. Our animation studio in England created and produced the drawings in U2's music video for *Batman Returns*, which won an MTV award for Best European Video. One of our theatrical releases, *Ghost in the Shell*, has a U2 song on the soundtrack.

Through my practice of Buddhism I have reconstructed my inner life. I now have the life and career I was so desperately seeking when my father died. By strengthening my practice, I strengthened my life. I no longer judge my worth by how others see me. I take responsibility for my successes and failures and no longer blame my environment.

I am determined more than ever to develop my intellect and create value in my life. I want to thank President Ikeda for his guidance and all the SGI members for their support in helping me win. I am now taking responsibility as a young women's division group chief and am determined to work with the SGI and President Ikeda to share the joy and truth of practicing this Buddhism. 卍

UPI/CORBIS-BETTMANN

*SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech at the 6th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Dec. 16, 1996.*

**M**y thanks and deepest appreciation for your many efforts this year. Thank you! I also thank the musicians for their wonderful performance.

*Earlier, the Tokyo Wind Ensemble performed a rousing medley of Soka Gakkai songs.*

Let's always keep singing Gakkai songs together! Let us move forward, joined in jubilant song!

All day today, from this magnificent "Makiguchi Castle," we had a glorious view of snow-capped Mount Fuji. The sight of the beautiful, inspiring peak of Mount Fuji always moves me to press my palms together and bow my head in reverence.

The gesture of joining one's palms together in prayer or reverence, incidentally, symbolizes the mutual possession of the ten worlds.

**Make Mount Fuji Your Model**

Mount Fuji reminds me of the novel *Miyamoto Musashi*, an account of the 17th-century master swordsman of that name, written by the well-known Japanese writer Eiji Yoshikawa (1892–1962). My fifth-grade teacher, Mr. Hiyama, read it aloud to our class.

I will quote a passage from the book that has remained engraved on my mind since that time. These words contain a deep truth, and I have mentioned them many times in my speeches:

Rather than worrying about your future, thinking, "Perhaps I should become this. Perhaps I should become that," first be still and build a self that is as solid and unmoving as Mount Fuji.

Never court the favor of people in society. If you become someone who is looked up to by others, then the world will naturally accord you the value you merit.<sup>1</sup>

Never be shaken, no matter what happens or what others say. Never be flustered. Never lose confidence. This is the way we should strive to live our lives. Doing so is a sign of genuine character.

Developing a resolute self is even more crucial for SGI mem-



José Martí (1835–95), author and national hero of Cuba.

# Youth, Build the New Century!

**“ When you look within your heart, and when you reflect on your present actions, you should be like the earth illuminated by the rays of the morning sun. You should feel the directness and purity of the morning’s light. Leave the realm of petty concerns to others. You are better than that. Pass through that realm lightly, with a smile on your lips. ”** – José Martí

bers, given that the essence of Nichiren Daishonin’s teachings is to selflessly dedicate our lives for the sake of the Law. We must make a firm commitment to wholeheartedly devote ourselves to our chosen spheres of endeavor, to keep striving in our fields of mission until our last breaths.

Once, when I was still a youth division member, Mr. Toda and I were alone, gazing up at Mount Fuji, and he said: “Daisaku, Mount Fuji seems to be still and serene, but its summit is buffeted by raging winds. Likewise, anyone who stands at the top must also brave raging winds.” I will never forget those words as long as I live.

In any event, I wanted to share that stirring passage from *Miyamoto Musashi* with all of you today.

Mr. Toda declared, “A new century will be created by the power and passion of youth.” In just a few years, the 21st century will be upon us. The Soka Gakkai and the SGI have entered the time to entrust the members of the youth division with kosen-rufu’s future. The youth division has become a presence of decisive importance in our movement.

Times change. They must. Unless they do, a new age will never dawn.

In that spirit, I call upon the members of the men’s and women’s divisions to make every effort to support and train the youth division members, so that the youth can blaze a truly magnificent path as successors.

**Fresh Focus on Youth Division Leaders Meetings**

I hope the members of the youth division will also advance with that determination. And I hope that they will brilliantly carry on the mission of the Soka Gakkai — an unrivaled organization that has appeared in accord with the Buddha’s will and decree, a noble organization dedicated to making kosen-rufu a reality.

Toward that end, I would like to make a proposal: From next year [1997], in our lead-up to the 21st century, how about starting the youth division monthly leaders meetings again, kicking off the new year with the 1st All-Japan Young Men’s Division Meeting and 1st All-Japan Young Women’s Division Meeting? [A joint young men’s and young women’s division meeting was held Jan. 11.]

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If possible, I ask all of the top leaders, from Soka Gakkai President Akiya on down, to attend these meetings and lend their full support to the youth.

Making these meetings milestones in your advance for kosen-rufu, please build a solid tradition that will endure into the coming century; please foster a great river of capable people. I am also counting on the members of the youth division to open the way to a wonderful new age of the SGI.

### 'Wealth of the Spirit' Is True Beauty

I visited Cuba this year [June 1996]. It was a most memorable visit. José Martí (1853-95), the Cuban writer, is admired by the people of that country as a national hero for his tireless struggle to free his homeland from Spanish colonial rule. In the last two years of his life, Martí wrote a series of encouraging letters to a young girl, from which I'll share some excerpts with you today.

Martí writes:

A person who possesses wealth of the spirit has no need for physical adornment. Those who care only for their physical appearance are often spiritually impoverished, and try to conceal that poverty with exterior trappings. Those who are aware of their inner beauty don't seek borrowed beauty from outside. They shine with the knowledge of their inner beauty.

They also make an effort to cheer up others and to make them happy. That is because they know it is their duty as a human being to bring joy, and not sorrow, to others.

Moreover, those who are aware of their own beauty see beauty in others. That allows them to respect and value both themselves and others.<sup>2</sup>

On another occasion, he writes:

Love and cherish your mother. You should be proud of the fact that this woman who is your mother brought you into the world. When you look within your heart, and when you reflect on your present actions, you should be like the earth illuminated by the rays of the morning sun. You should feel the directness and purity of the morning's light. Leave the realm of petty concerns to others. You are better than that. Pass through that realm lightly, with a smile on your lips.<sup>3</sup>



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Japan's Mount Fuji. Josei Toda once said: 'Mount Fuji seems to be still and serene, but its summit is buffeted by raging winds. Likewise, anyone who stands at the top must also brave raging winds.'

His words resound with profound truth. The "realm of petty concerns" is of no interest to us, either. Our gaze is focused on the profound and noble realm of the eternal. Buddhism is a search for eternal happiness. Please calmly survey the ever-changing, evanescent world from the lofty perspective of faith and remain true to your beliefs and convictions.

We must follow our chosen path. Let's continue to make our way on the great road to eternal happiness and development.

### The Courageous Example of Mrs. Sats

Recently, I received a book from Moscow, an autobiography of Natalia Sats, who is regarded as the mother of the children's arts movement in Russia and beloved by children the world over. She died just three years ago [1993], at the age of 90. Viktor Prokhorov, president of the Moscow State Children's Musical Theater, which Mrs. Sats founded, sent me the book.

The bonds of friendship that Mrs. Sats and I cultivated while she was alive continue to this day. I, and indeed the SGI members, have many such friends around the world. In her autobiography, Mrs. Sats also writes of her memories of our meetings.

*President Ikeda and Natalia Sats met seven times, the first being in May 1981 in Moscow. The Moscow State Children's Musical Theater also visited Japan twice at the invitation of the Min-On Concert Association.*

Mrs. Sats once said that the Buddhist view of eternal life she had learned from me had given

her boundless hope. Today, members of the SGI organization in Russia, who began their activities as a chapter just two years ago [1994], are applying themselves diligently to the two ways of practice and study. If Mrs. Sats were still alive, I know they would find a sympathetic supporter in her.

When Mrs. Sats was young, her husband, though innocent of any crime, was executed during one of Stalin's purges. She herself was falsely accused of a crime and sentenced to five years in prison, a substantial part of which was spent in labor camps in Siberia. Yet in spite of such persecution, she refused to renounce her principles and fought dauntlessly against her oppressors.

In her autobiography, she recalls her experiences in Siberia. Her interrogators were devious and cruel. They promised her she would be released and returned to her family if she would make false statements incriminating her friends. She told her interrogators simply: "I'm sorry, but I was taught from childhood to respect the truth. That's why I would never purchase the happiness of my loved ones with a lie."<sup>4</sup> She proudly upheld her dignity as a human being. She lived a brave and noble life.

We are people of faith — faith is the ultimate conviction. Nothing could be sadder or more shortsighted, therefore, than complaining or giving up when we encounter some small obstacle in our path. The Daishonin writes, "The wise may be called human, but the thoughtless are no more than animals" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 240). We don't want to be thoughtless. A gen-

uine Buddhist is a person of wisdom and conviction.

### Encouraging Others

There were several other innocent female prisoners in the cell where Mrs. Sats was incarcerated. They were all numb with fear and sadness at their plight. Though Mrs. Sats was in an equally dismal predicament, she did not withdraw into her sorrow. She immediately began to think of how she could raise the spirits of her despairing cellmates. By thinking of others, the sun of hope began to rise in her heart.

Women are strong. Women are like the sun. The Japanese feminist and social activist Raicho Hiratsuka (1886-1971) expresses a universal truth when she writes, "In the beginning, woman was truly like the sun."<sup>5</sup>

Mrs. Sats also writes in her autobiography: "I should help them and myself to survive. I need to switch my thinking, try to believe that this present reality is by no means the end..."<sup>6</sup> Her resolve was that no matter how wretched her present circumstances appeared, her life was not over — and she would fight to the very end.

### Turning Defeat Into a Cause for Victory

Mr. Toda once told me: "You can make a defeat the cause for future victory. You can also make victory the cause for future defeat." The Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin is the Buddhism of the True Cause, the Buddhism of the present and the future. We don't dwell on the past. We are always challenging ourselves from the present toward the future. "The whole future lies ahead of us! We have only just begun!" — be-

cause we advance with this spirit, we are never deadlocked.

The SGI is an order of believers dedicated to carrying out the Buddha's will and decree, a body created in accord with the wish of the original Buddha. It will advance for eternity. We shouldn't allow ourselves to be overly preoccupied by the minor concerns of the present. Gazing down on the praise and criticisms of others from a higher perspective, we should always look to the future and have a firm commitment to eternal progress.

When we change our attitude, we can change our circumstances. Buddhism teaches the principles of the oneness of life and its environment and that a life-moment possesses 3,000 realms.

When Mrs. Sats looked around her, she noticed that people of diverse talents were occupying her cell. Nothing was to be gained by sitting around moping. She decided to make use of the women's abilities by organizing a school — a classroom in the cell where they could share and exchange the knowledge each possessed.

One woman lectured on chemistry, another on medicine. Mrs. Sats, with her rich theatrical background, sang for them. On one occasion, she recited a Pushkin poem with a clear, vital voice that inspired courage in the hearts of her listeners.

The cell was dark and isolated — which made it a perfect place to study! It also served as a theater in which the women enjoyed the arts.

Your attitude can totally transform your situation. The thing is to decide to spend each day happily and productively — wherever you happen to be. A wise person can create value under any circumstances.

### Giving Courage, Hope, Whatever One Can

Buddhism, of course, teaches that "the mind is like a skilled painter" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 133). Like a skilled painter, the mind can freely draw and portray anything at will. Consequently, life itself is a great painting created by the mind. It is a work of art that our minds produce.

In offering guidance to members, too, we can relate any number of beautiful dramas of faith, if we set our minds to it.

If a person is hungry, we should give him or her bread to eat. When there is no bread, we can at least give nourishing words. To a person who looks ill or is physically frail, we can turn

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the conversation to some subject that will lift his or her spirits and fill him or her with the hope and determination to get better.

Let us give something to each person we meet: joy, courage, hope, assurance, philosophy, wisdom or a vision for the future. Let us always give something.

For instance, there may be some people who, for one reason or another, have no room in their hearts to enjoy the beauty of flowers. They come home after work, complain about their day, and go to sleep. We can try to help them change their mind-set by drawing their attention to the beauty of flowers or of a work of art. That often is enough to get them to open their hearts and minds to all sorts of new possibilities.

Please become outstanding leaders who can use your minds with precision and sensitivity just as the hands of a great artist use a brush.

### History Is Made in Inconspicuous Places

Mrs. Sats' cell was small, but a great history was created there.

Small gatherings are important. There is nothing special about speaking at a large meeting and being applauded by a huge audience. Small, inconspicuous gatherings — discussion meetings, home visits and personal guidance — are what really matter. Large meetings tend to be like a one-way street, with all the talking coming from one side. They don't allow everyone to participate and cultivate their true abilities.

Truly capable leaders can engage others, on a one-to-one basis, in inspiring dialogue and

move them with warm-hearted encouragement to set forth with renewed determination in faith. Determinations inspired in this way tend to last. They become catalysts, causing ripple effects that spread out to touch many, many other people.

But only steady efforts to visit one member after another and to conduct sincere heart-to-heart dialogue can produce such ripples. Such efforts have been the secret to the SGI's development to this day. So if we resolve to redouble our commitment to such efforts, we can create another powerful ripple effect. It is along this path that the eternal development of kosen-rufu lies.

Mrs. Sats and her fellow prisoners decided that it was wrong for people to suffer by themselves. Alone, our suffering only deepens. Hope disappears. Human beings need to be with and among other human beings. Engagement with others forges our characters and enriches us.

There may be times, certainly, when being a member of an organization seems bothersome and we just want to be alone. But how sad it is if we are left alone without any support and then lose our faith. True growth comes from striving together with our fellow members in the living realm of human beings, ourselves experiencing the rich gamut of human emotions.

### The Purpose of the Organization Is To Deepen Our Faith

Mrs. Sats was a great philosopher and humanist. Humanism is not some grand, high-sounding theory. It means having faith in human beings and forging links with others. This is true human-

ism. In other words, it is making friends.

Friendship is strong. Friendship, camaraderie and unity in faith lie at the heart of the SGI. They come before the organization. We must never make the mistake of thinking that it is the other way around. The organization serves as a means for deepening friendship, comradeship and faith. To confuse the means and the end is a terrible mistake. When an organization begins to exist for its own sake, it will lapse into the vice of all failed organizations — authoritarianism.

As a result of our SGI activities to spread friendship in our local communities and throughout society, we are accumulating valuable treasures in our lives day after day.

### Everything Starts With Our Human Revolution

We are practitioners of the Daishonin's Buddhism. I hope that each of you will live in such a manner that others will look at you and say, "She is a wonderful person!" and "I want to be like that!" I hope each of you, in your unique way, will script the wonderful drama of your human revolution.

What is human revolution? When a person who has spent all his or her time playing and goofing off suddenly starts to study, that's human revolution. When a person who has hardly ever opened the Goshu begins to read it, when a person who didn't work very hard gets up early and starts to work — that, too, is human revolution.

It doesn't matter in what area, but just keep working on your personal revolution to transform and improve yourself in the way most

natural for you. The important thing is that you change in some positive way. There is surely no more exhilarating life than one in which we write our unique history of human revolution each day. And the growth and transformation we achieve in this way can convince people of the greatness of the Daishonin's Buddhism more eloquently than anything else.

### If We Attain Buddhahood in This Life, We Attain Complete Freedom

Allow me now to share with you a passage — a famous passage — from the "The Opening of the Eyes" that I have cited many times:

Although I and my disciples may encounter various difficulties, if we do not harbor doubts in our hearts, we will as a matter of course attain Buddhahood. Do not have doubts simply because heaven does not lend you protection. Do not be discouraged because you do not enjoy an easy and secure existence in this life. This is what I have taught my disciples morning and evening, and yet they begin to harbor doubts and abandon their faith.

Foolish men are likely to forget the promises they have made when the crucial moment comes. (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 180)

"We will as a matter of course attain Buddhahood" — if we keep up the struggle during this life, we will attain Buddhahood, the Daishonin assures us. So whatever difficulties you may meet, he urges, work to attain Buddhahood in this lifetime.

As the Daishonin writes in another Goshu: "This life is like a dream. One cannot know if he will live until tomorrow" (MW-4, 283). This is the truth, and there is nothing we can do about it. But attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime means creating a self of utter freedom throughout eternity. This is the purpose of faith. Whether we attain such a state of being or not is the measure of our victory in this lifetime.

Transforming one's inner state of life cannot be done through science, economics or politics. Only the Daishonin's Buddhism enables us to do this. And we have had the good fortune to encounter this Buddhism in this lifetime.

Once we attain Buddhahood in this life, on this planet, we can be born in a Buddha land other than the Earth. This Earth is not the only place where human beings live. There are infinite lands throughout the universe. Of all of

them, this strife-filled *saha* world is one of the worst.

In "The Four Debts of Gratitude," for example, Nichiren Daishonin writes, "Since all the lands in the ten directions, with the exception of those in the *saha* world system, are pure lands, their people, being gentlehearted, neither abuse nor hate the worthies and sages" (MW-5, 3).

Going back to the passage from "The Opening of the Eyes," the Daishonin instructs us not to doubt the great benefit of the Lotus Sutra, for in the long term we will definitely be protected. Even if we appear to suffer temporary setbacks, he says, we can always turn poison into healing medicine.

The Daishonin also tells us not to be discouraged if our lives aren't of ease and comfort. If they were, we would never be tested or forge inner strength. If one can eat and sleep whenever one wants, one only grows lazy and spoiled.

We can only achieve a brilliant, indestructible, diamondlike state of life through struggling with obstacles and hardships. That is why the Daishonin declared, "One should regard meeting obstacles as true peace and comfort" (*Goshu Zenshu*, p. 750).

Our Buddhist practice entails much hard work and effort, but there is also the tremendous joy of human revolution that can never be derived from merely leading a life of idle pleasure. That is why the Daishonin sternly warns that we must not forget the promises we have made when the crucial moment comes.

Let us join together to make 1997 another year of magnificent triumph!

Please give my warmest regards to all your fellow members. And thank you once again for your hard work over the past year. I wish all of you the very best of health and a very happy New Year!

Cheers for the youth division! ❖

1. Eiji Yoshikawa, *Miyamoto Musashi* (Tokyo: Rokko Shuppan-bu, 1965), vol. 5, p. 8.
2. Translated from Spanish. *José Martí Epistolario* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1993), vol. 5, p. 148.
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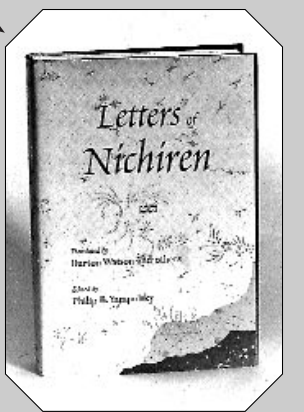
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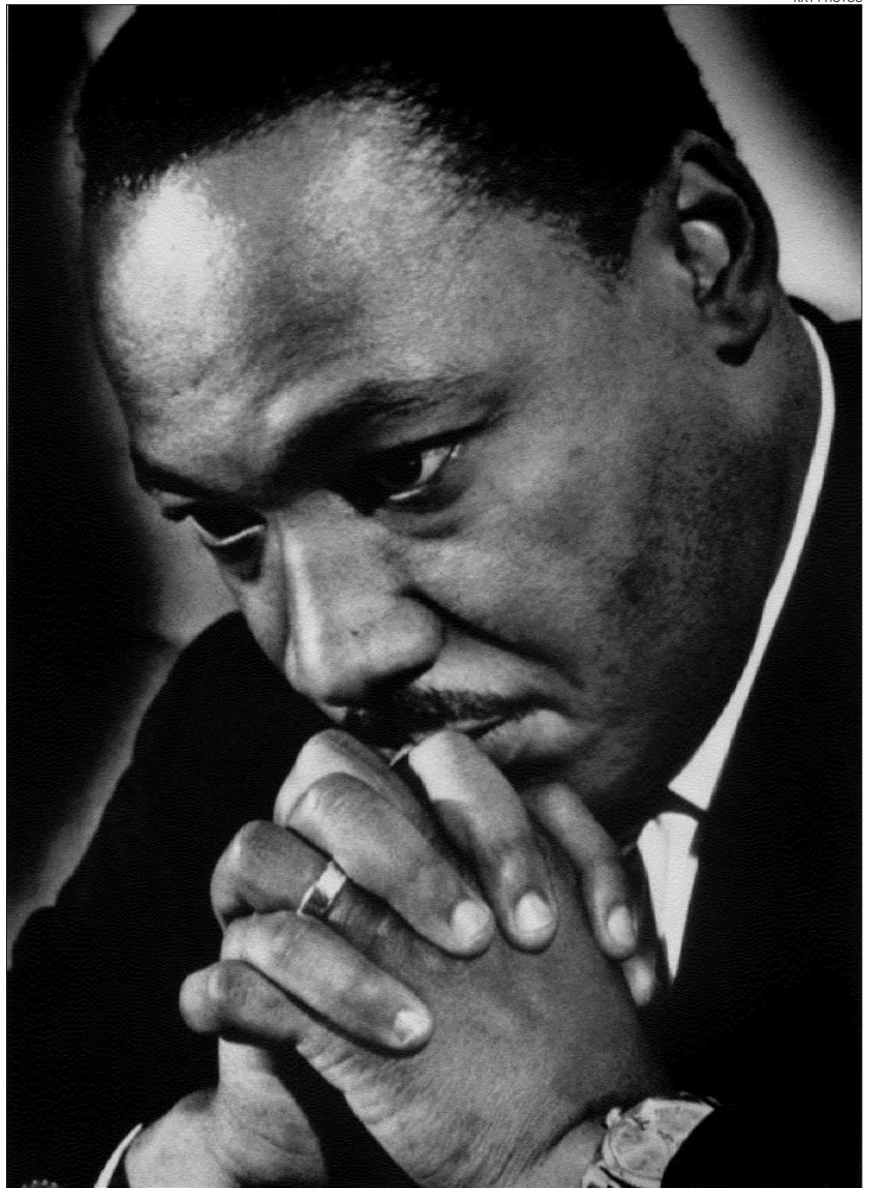
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‘If you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice; say that I was a drum major for peace; I was a drum major for righteousness.... I just want to leave a committed life behind.’

— Martin Luther King Jr.

# Drum Majors for Peace

Bonnie Boswell draws parallels between Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s movement for justice and our own movement for peace, culture and education



By **BONNIE BOSWELL**  
LOS ANGELES

Some years ago, a man said: “A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth. A true revolution of values will lay hands on the world order and say of war ‘this way of settling differences is not just.’... America, the richest and most powerful nation in the world, can well lead the way in this revolution of values.”

The speaker was Martin Luther King Jr. This speech, delivered one year to the day before his assassination, is called “A Time To Break Silence.” It, not the popular “I Have a

Dream” speech, is considered by his students to be his most important. In it, he speaks out against the war in Vietnam, global poverty and the need for American society to go through a “radical revolution of values.” King makes it abundantly clear to all those who would narrow-cast him that his fight is not limited to civil rights but extends to justice for all.

When we, as Buddhists, reflect on the life of Dr. King, it is not hard to draw parallels between his movement for justice and our own. I draw your attention to another of King’s speeches, called “The Drum Major Instinct.” In it King talks about two men who, believing Jesus was to become the king of Israel, asked to be appointed his closest assistants. King says their request displayed the “drum major instinct,” the desire

in all of us to be out in front, leading the band, strutting.

Well, apparently, Jesus answered them by saying: “Don’t give up this instinct. It is a good instinct if you don’t distort it. But I want you to be first in love. I want you to be first in moral excellence. I want you to be first in generosity.”

King concludes his remarks by saying that after his death not to mention that he had a Nobel Prize. He said: “If you want to say that I was a drum major for justice; say that I was a drum major for righteousness.... I just want to leave a committed life behind.”

Seven hundred years before King, the ultimate drum major for justice was born. On Feb. 16, 1222, Nichiren Daishonin, the founder of our Buddhism, was born in a small fishing village in

Japan. He also led a committed life. Disturbed by the great sufferings of people around him, Nichiren Daishonin left the priesthood to find a teaching that would enable all people to become happy.

He concluded that the essential teaching of life was the phrase Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. And that there was no difference between the Buddha and the common mortal. “Abutsu-bo is the treasure tower, and the treasure tower is Abutsu-bo,” he said. “No other knowledge is purposeful” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 30). He also wrote, “There should be no discrimination among those who propagate the five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo” (MW-1, 93).

For this thesis on nondiscrimination — the recognition of the fundamental dignity of all

human life and the inseparability of life and all phenomenon — Nichiren Daishonin was vilified, attacked, imprisoned and sentenced to death. He, too, was a drum major for justice.

Nichiren Daishonin was concerned about the sufferings of others. He challenged the government to give up teachings that were driving the country to ruin. In his famous treatise, the “Rissho Ankoku Ron,” he notes: “There are...strange occurrences on earth, famine and pestilence...spreading throughout the land.... Over half the population has already been carried off by death, and in every family someone grieves” (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 3).

But Nichiren Daishonin was not content to watch his nation decline. He said: “If even a good priest sees someone slandering

PLEASE SEE ESSAY, NEXT PAGE

ESSAY, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

the Law and disregards him, failing to reproach him, that priest is betraying Buddhism. But if he takes the slanderer severely to task, then he is my disciple and truly understands my teachings" (MW-1, 30). Year after year, whether on a desolate beach, an isolated island or far-away mountain, Nichiren Daishonin dedicated his life to taking to task those who denigrated human life. He was a drum major for justice.

When I look at our world today, I wonder what Nichiren Daishonin would think. We have our share of famine, pestilence, war, earthquakes and floods. And that's just in Los Angeles. But there's more. Every day in our land, 135,000 children take guns to school; 27 children die from the effects of poverty.<sup>1</sup> More than half of the yearly deaths are from suicide.<sup>2</sup> The United States imprisons more of its population than South Africa did under apartheid.<sup>3</sup> There is no peace and security in this land.

In the last 20 years, real wages have plummeted for 80 percent of the population.<sup>4</sup> MIT economist Lester Thurow has said, "No country without a revolution or military defeat has experienced such a sharp shift in the distribution of earnings as America in the last generation."

Meanwhile, corporations, driven simply by short-term greed, have emerged as the dominant governance institutions on the planet. Economist David Korten points out that economic globalization has shifted power away from government responsibility for the public good. Our democratic institutions are rendered impotent — feeding on life in an insatiable quest for money. Income

for the top 1 percent has ballooned by 60 percent in the last 10 years.<sup>5</sup> There is no peace and security in this land.

I wonder what Martin Luther King Jr. would say about our land, where certain forces co-opt and re-lexify the language of justice. Now we have a "civil rights" initiative that promotes the myth that race is no longer an issue in America. We practice the politics of denial in America — despite the facts and despite the need for justice. White males constitute 47 percent of the work force yet occupy 95 percent of all top managerial jobs.<sup>6</sup> Blacks are 11 percent of the population but still are only 3 percent of its doctors and lawyers.<sup>7</sup> There is no peace and security in this land.

I believe Martin Luther King Jr. and Nichiren Daishonin would want us all to be drum majors for justice. I think they would expect us to take up the mantle for peace. I think they would want us to challenge, to the best of our abilities, the forces that denigrate human life, whenever we find the opportunities — on the job, in the voting booth, in our neighborhoods. We are in the middle of a holocaust, and few seem to notice.

To be drum majors for justice, we need to reeducate ourselves. When popular culture promotes greed as the path to happiness, we must seek out new sources of information. When the "watchdog of the government," the press, is little more than a medium for entertainment — promoting sex, violence and banality at every turn — we need to seek out new sources of information.

To be drum majors for justice, we need to study the sages of our land. In the "Rissho Ankoku Ron," Nichiren Daishonin writes: "[The people] give their allegiance to evil. This


is the reason that...sages leave and do not return" (MW-2, [2nd ed.], 5). I believe one of the greatest sages of our land was Martin Luther King Jr.

The mainstream media, through intent or ignorance, have romanticized and marginalized King as a civil rights leader. They have ignored the fact that he was a drum major for justice and a prophet in our world. By ignoring his broader message, they, in essence, have devalued him in the eyes of the nation and removed from closer examination the full range of his message, thus lessening his historic significance.

Although he dipped down into a different spiritual well, he challenged a corrupt, discriminatory and hateful society to be better than it was. He took action against a lethargic government and an unjust justice system. He questioned the moral values of an indifferent public.

Martin Luther King Jr. can be an example for all of us. Although he did not practice Buddhism, on the American scene I think we can say he lived the spirit of Buddhism. What Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism has to offer people that is so unique is what King called for: a revolution of values. The practice of this Buddhism gives us a way to experience, firsthand, the inseparability of ourselves and others. This is the heritage of the ultimate law of life to which we are heir.

I believe it is the difficult, lonely struggle to speak up that allows a person to turn the negative drum-major instinct into a positive one. A person who engages him- or herself in the struggle and takes a corrupt society to task is forced to find reservoirs of spiritual strength, courage, humor and grace. The



**Martin Luther King, Jr.**  
Martin Luther King, Jr. became the second American, after George Washington, whose birthday is observed as a national holiday.

**BORN:** Jan. 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Ga.

**EDUCATION:** Entered Moorehouse College (Ga.) at age 15; divinity degree from Crozer Theological Seminary (Pa.); PhD in theology from Boston University

**CIVIL RIGHTS TRIUMPHS:**

- **Founded** Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957
- **Organized** March on Washington in 1963, where King gave one of his most famous speeches, "I Have a Dream"
- **Received** Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, becoming third black and youngest person ever to receive award

**DEATH:** Assassinated by James Earl Ray on April 4, 1968

SOURCES: "1,999 Facts About Blacks: A Sourcebook of African-American Accomplishments," Raymond M. Corbin, "Milestones in 20th-Century African-American History," Alton Hornsby, Jr., World Book; KRT Photo; Research by: BRENNIA SINK

engagement is the transforming experience.

We are inseparable from our environment. And that's the good news. Because when we stand up in the middle of the holocaust and, with prayer and action, encourage others to reform the tenets in their hearts, we can begin the revolution of human values. We honor men like Nichiren Daishonin and Martin Luther King Jr. only by capturing their spirits — making their voices our voice, their visions our own. This alone gives us hope — knowing there is darkness before the dawn, that winter does turn to spring, and that an arrow aimed at the earth will surely make its mark.

In closing, I would like to share some words from Martin Luther King Jr.'s last book, *Where Do We Go From Here?*:

When our days become dreary with low-hovering clouds of despair, let us remember that there is a creative force in this universe working to pull down

the gigantic mountains of evil, a power that is able to make a way out of no way and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows.... The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

Let's honor the great men that came before us, each in our own way, by becoming drum majors for justice. Let's become drum majors for peace. Let's become drum majors for righteousness. ❧

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2. National Center for Health Statistics.
3. Greenberg, Jack, "Apartheid Exists on Death Row," *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 1995.
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7. Ibid.

TALE, FROM PAGE 5

not appropriate either, he thought. Now the piece is realistic about the history, but its message that we human beings can transcend our colors and differences for the cause of world peace is center.

It is obvious that the cast members perform *The African American Tale* with a decided commitment to kosen-rufu. Of her performance as Harriett Tubman, Babe Evan says it is about encouraging people toward peace. Without this aspect, she realizes, her acting might end up being only egotistical.

Likewise, Jovin Montanaro, who has been part of the cast for

a mere two weeks and an SGI member for two years, says performing in SGI functions has an added dimension from his other professional gigs. Since becoming a member, he's learned to be more of a performer from the heart. "Ultimately you have to have joy," he says. "If you work from the heart, you have a chance to move people."

To further bring out the message of humanism, others in the group studied the meaning and characters of the piece. Gail Jennings was so moved she nearly cried when she saw Rosa Parks, whom she plays in *The African American Tale*, live on television. Now every time she performs, she tries to carry out Parks' obvious

dignity and humanity.

Rosslyn Jeffries, a singer and dancer who plays Billie Holiday, dedicates her performance to her father who died in 1992 and her mother who died of cancer two years ago. Her mother never saw the performance, only a video of it, but Rosslyn knows she understands the message. She was well informed of African American history and was always active in the civil rights movement.

All of the cast talk of doing human revolution together and chanting to unite. There were many struggles with the performances and rehearsals — at times with people just getting to the performances and rehearsals.

There were struggles in their personal lives as well. When it was learned a cast member's grandmother was dying of cancer, one rehearsal was stopped for all to join in chanting for her health.

Judging from the audience reaction, the show's message of peace and humanism comes through loud and clear. "It was beautiful that it concentrated on freedom," said one. "It was a lot about Africa but ended up being about everybody, the whole world."

Darla Alexander said there were so many messages in it, but was most happy to hear the positive message of hope.

Rachel Rockman was moved

to tears by the finale, "None of Us Is Free if One of Us Is Chained." "They expressed a lot of love for all mankind," she said. "That's what I'm walking around with. If one person is suffering, everybody suffers."

Twelve-year-old Kai Perry said he liked the part about Martin Luther King Jr. the best. He felt the most important message *The African American Tale* gave him was that freedom is important — "Freedom for everybody; Martin Luther King Jr. died trying to make freedom for everybody," he said.

Barbara Alston, a friend of a cast member, echoed that feeling: "We have to keep [King's] dream alive for the children." ❧

## SIGN POSTS

APPLYING  
NICHIREN  
DAISHONIN'S  
WRITINGS TO  
DAILY LIFE

### Changing the 'Weather' for the Better

By KIMBERLY SCOTT

SGH-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

**A truly wise man will not be carried away by any of the eight winds: prosperity, decline, disgrace, honor, praise, censure, suffering and pleasure. (The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 206)**

This was the first passage that I ever studied and chanted about. In it, Nichiren Daishonin teaches Shijo Kingo not to be swayed by superficial ups and downs but to constantly seek self-improvement.

My first district leader gave this passage to me as I was about to finish graduate school and start working as an actor in New York. I remember thinking: "What's this? I know that I shouldn't be discouraged by the things that don't work out in my career — but can't I at least celebrate my victories?"

At that time, I suffered from deep, debilitating depressions. Being a high-energy person, I covered them well. But still I would always interpret my colleagues' comments in the worst possible ways, thinking a hurtful meaning was lurking beneath every comment.

As I emerged into the "eight winds" of theater, film and TV work, I came to realize this industry is equivalent to a hurricane! Individuals with more responsibility and decision-making power can openly do and say things that wreak havoc with your well-being. (An article in *Buzz* magazine aptly described these interactions that go beyond impolite as "full frontal rudity.")

But seeing this reality helped me understand my mission: to change this tendency in the business, starting with my own behavior. With my evolving capability and character, honed by my human revolution, I am standing up with grace and integrity in the face of my sometimes coarse, inhumane industry.

I remember a scientific theory about the possibility of a butterfly in the rain forest positively affecting global weather; in the same way I am determined to have a positive affect on every production I am a part of, in large or small roles, daily changing the "weather" for the better. **WT**

*In this issue, we begin a 10-part series on the mentor-disciple relationship with a special two-part essay by Dr. Alfred Balitzer of Claremont College.*

By ALFRED BALITZER  
CLAREMONT, CALIF.

Last July, SGI President Ikeda honored me in one of his speeches by quoting a few words from a letter I had written to him about the mentor-disciple relation. Speaking about mentor-disciple to President Ikeda is a sure antidote for pride: In this period of world history, no one understands more fully or deeply the true meaning of the relation than Daisaku Ikeda. Therefore, I wish to warn the reader that my contribution to the dialogue on mentor-disciple will be meager.

Mentor-disciple is that relationship which, when added to all others — teacher-student, father-son, a founder to his people — perfects the social bond and elevates the participants to a higher plane of humanity. Mentor-disciple infuses the customary relationships of life with a truly selfless motive, drawing the parties closer in pursuit of a common ideal and diminishing the incentives that cause relationships to founder, including egotism and the desire for material success. When touched by the spirit of mentor-disciple, ordinary relationships are transformed and the purpose of nature in man fulfilled. To the extent that all other forms of human association have their meaning enhanced by participation in the mentor-disciple relation, mentor-disciple is the most fundamental and the most perfect of all forms of human association. I understood this only imperfectly until I reflected upon guidance President Ikeda gave to my son during our first and subsequent meetings.

It might seem incredulous to some to hear that mentor-disciple is the most perfect form of all human associations. "After all," some might question, "are not husband-wife and mother-daughter examples of relationships that spring from nature itself?"

The answer to this query is to be found in the principle underlying all human relations, the pursuit of happiness: If one's own happiness results from devotion to assisting another attain happiness, then mentor-disciple, which dedicates each party to the happiness of the other, is the most perfect of all human associations and the model which we should strive to imitate in our own relationships.

Not all teachers are mentors and not all students disciples. Mentor-disciple is rare, particularly in today's desiccated learning

environment where education no longer speaks to the totality of human existence, sundering the natural bonds, moral and intellectual, that bind teacher and student in life's most important enterprise.

On the "left," teachers urge students to commit themselves to various theories of social change, often with little regard for the individual whose quest includes knowledge of life's purpose. On the "right," teachers encourage learning for the sake of a prosperous career, all too frequently without reference to the longing that young people have for participation in a greater good. Other teachers collect knowledge like some collect antiques, advocating the acquisition of knowledge "for its own sake."

It is the rich, caring relationship of mentor-disciple that considers the whole human being as the object of education. Mentor-disciple reunites teacher and student in a common mission, the fulfillment of which requires the full, unstinting dedication of both parties. It puts the needs of the student ahead of abstract ideology, narrow self-interest or dilettantism, and it gives

tially describes the mentor-disciple relation: A common mission may be two cannibals contemplating their dinner! The mission, then, must be for the advancement of humanity. Aum Shinrikyo leader Shoko Asahara celebrated death and destruction, forming a slavish pact with his followers for the satisfaction of dark, Satanic urges.

Mentor-disciple celebrates life. It is not slavish; to the contrary, it is a voluntary relationship, enhancing all relationships that embrace it, including those that are not voluntary, such as father-son. For this reason, it is the ultimate expression of freedom. Because it elevates both parties it is the embodiment of wholesomeness.

I would like to conclude by speaking about the mentor. Mentoring is not a part-time hobby; rather, it is a way of life. Dedicating himself so thoroughly to others deprives the mentor of many consolations that are part of the ordinary expectations of life. What, then, does the mentor gain from the mentor-disciple relation? Why does the mentor, who has striven mightily, often against great odds, for so many years, now

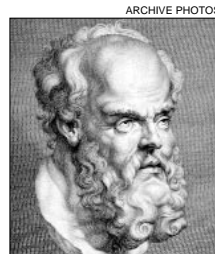
humble himself, devoting his understanding and his great powers to others, especially to the most untutored of the species, for their benefit? Why does he make himself the servant of others? At the pinnacle of life, why does he not just reap the glory?

Mentoring is an exhausting and inexhaustible way of life: It

tires and it energizes all at the same time. Even while beset by fatigue, the mentor draws energy from his disciples, seeing in them the spirit that first animated him — seeing in them the continuation of the things for which he has lived and dedicated his life. They are his living memorial.

Furthermore, the mentor is driven by an intransigent force of nature — his unconquerable compassion for his disciples. In 1838, Abraham Lincoln, speaking on "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions" to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Ill., reflected on the differences between a statesman and a tyrant. The statesman, Lincoln pondered, could be a tyrant except for this devotion to the people who have entrusted him with power. How easy it would be, he thought, for the statesman to cross the line, to become a Bonaparte, and rule for his own sake rather than for the sake of his people. The difference between the two, Lincoln concluded, is the compassion of the statesman for his people, a compassion that drives him to protect their happiness. It is from dedicating himself to their happiness that his glory results. I think this example amply illustrates why the mentor becomes the servant to his disciples.

*(To be continued)*



Socrates



Plato



Aristotle

the teacher a reason to teach once again.

Self-knowledge, not knowledge for its own sake, is the purpose of acquiring knowledge, according to Socrates, the 5th-century Greek father of Western philosophy. In turn, self-knowledge gives us an understanding about what benefits us and others as human beings. Self-knowledge is a bridge to humanity and to the fulfillment of life's purpose.

Socrates imparted his wisdom to his disciple Plato, who imparted it to his disciple Aristotle — passing from mentor to disciple in a tradition that has lasted for more than two millennia. One of the important functions of mentor-disciple is that it acts as a vessel, transporting and protecting over time truths of great importance to humankind. Especially during the dark periods of human history, mentor-disciple is often the common man's only beacon, the only source of truth and compassion, therefore, of hope.

When the relation of mentor-disciple is added to that of teacher-student, a common mission results, comprehending the good of each in a greater good. Its physiognomy is much like Aristotle's description of friendship: one spirit in two bodies. Participation in a common mission, however, only par-

Por CRAIG DE ROUSSE  
LOS ANGELES

**Amor: Una emoción poderosa que se siente hacia otra persona y se manifiesta a sí misma en un profundo afecto, devoción o deseo sexual.**  
(Definición del Webster's New World Dictionary)

¿No es el amor mucho más que eso? Después de todo, el amor produce tanto momentos de éxtasis extremo como de aguda depresión. Si el amor sólo se manifiesta de acuerdo a la definición del diccionario, ¿por qué casi el cincuenta por ciento de todos los matrimonios legales terminan en divorcio? ¿Qué es lo que ha sucedido o dejado de suceder para crear una situación tan funesta en relación a esta cosa llamada amor?

Dependiendo de a quién uno le pregunta podemos conocer cualquier cantidad de causas, incluyendo la liberación de la mujer, influencia de los medios de comunicación, la co-dependencia, la predisposición genética o la pérdida de valores familiares. Sin embargo, de acuerdo a las enseñanzas del Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin, todas las respuestas existen dentro de cada vida individual y de sus acciones. Como es a menudo el caso, cuando las personas se enamoran se preocupan por el amor en sí mismos o más específicamente por el objeto de su afecto. Dos amantes arrastrados por la fuerza del éxtasis fácilmente se tornan cada uno en el centro de la vida del otro. Cualquiera que haya crecido rodeado por dulces canciones de amor en la radio, las imágenes superficiales de "Amor verdadero" en las películas, en la televisión y en la literatura, tendría muy pocas razones para pensar que debería ser de cualquier otra manera. Nuestra cultura, medios de comunicación y hasta el diccionario nos han pintado una bellísima, romántica y ensañadora descripción del amor.

Desafortunadamente el amor no es tan simple. Muchos amantes pueden dar testimonios del hecho que el amor tiene el potencial de cambiar o de transformarse en una emoción muy diferente sin previo aviso, por ejemplo: en odio. En el pensamiento budista tradicional el amor romántico era considerado con obvia negatividad por esa razón. Se le consideraba débil y poco estable mientras que la misericordia (*jihī*) era vista como imparcial e ilimitada. Mientras el enfoque tradicional del deseo (a menudo asociado con el Budismo de Shakyamuni) busca eliminar el deseo humano,

Nichiren Daishonin enseñó que el deseo es un aspecto fundamental e inevitable de la vida. Por ejemplo, para vivir tenemos que desear seguir viviendo. En vez de suprimir el deseo, él enseñó que al entonar daimoku por el deseo podemos lograr felicidad iluminada. Al respecto, él dice: "Cuando uno entona Nam-myoho-enge-kyo aún durante la unión sexual de un hombre y una mujer, entonces los deseos mundanos son iluminación y los sufrimientos de la vida y la muerte son nirvana" (MW-2, 229).

Sin embargo, la realidad de dos personas intentando engranar sus vidas conjuntamente, puede llegar a ser desastrosa. Aparecen los viejos patrones de conducta, se presentan choques de personalidad, problemas emocionales y sexuales, problemas familiares, desacuerdos financieros. Cualquier cosa puede pasar, pero si dos personas se aman mutuamente, especialmente si uno o ambos entonan daimoku ¿cómo podrían llegar a odiarse uno al otro? De acuerdo al Budismo se debe a lo siguiente: Cuando dos personas se comprometen a llevar una vida íntima, los tres venenos de la Ira, Avaricia (egoísmo) y la Estupidez afloran desde dentro de sus vidas.

El enfoque budista del amor no es pesimista sino realista. El Budismo no sólo reconoce las fuerzas negativas en las relaciones románticas sino que también enseña que por medio de la entonación del daimoku podemos percibir claramente la negatividad, asumir responsabilidad por la parte que nos toca y finalmente transformarla. El punto más importante es el siguiente: Para aquellos que practican las enseñanzas de Nichiren Daishonin, la relación más fundamental que puedan tener es con la Ley Mística y con el Gohonzon. Como dice el Daishonin: "No existe mayor felicidad para los seres humanos que entonar Nam-myoho-enge-kyo....

No existe mayor felicidad que tener fe en el sutra del Loto [Gohonzon]" (MW-1, 161).

El Budismo enseña estrictamente que cada quien debe asumir responsabilidad de su propia felicidad. El propósito de la práctica budista es crear felicidad absoluta e inamovible en la propia vida de cada practicante

porque no estamos seguros de nuestro propio valor. Podemos estar movidos por deseos sexuales inquietantes o atrapados en un patrón de relación poco sano que tiene raíces en traumas de la infancia. Cualquiera que sea el caso, el denominador común de éstos y de otros incontables motivos es que tendemos a depender de algo que no es nuestra naturaleza de Buda, para afianzar sentimientos de seguridad y de satisfacción. ¿Estamos buscando a alguien con quien compartir nuestras vidas y esforzarnos hacia el cumplimiento de nuestra misión o buscamos simplemente llenar un vacío en nuestras vidas? Este punto es crucial y puede que sea una de las más difíciles lecciones de aprender en nuestra práctica budista. La realidad de que la felicidad indestructible reside sólo dentro de nosotros mismos es difícil de aceptar en el desarrollo de nuestro Estado de Buda y de la misión en la vida, sin que ello tenga nada que ver con factores externos y poco confiables como son las relaciones humanas.

El Budismo nos enseña que poseemos todo lo que necesitamos para ser felices. Buscarlo fuera de nosotros no es sólo inútil sino que puede ser la causa de gran sufrimiento. Una relación de amor puede proveer compañía, una vida sexual plena, una familia, y otras alegrías básicas de la existencia humana, pero basar la felicidad de uno en eso es fallar en captar la inestabilidad esencial de esa situación. Después de todo, una pareja puede morir y hasta una relación sexual maravillosa puede sufrir deterioro si otros factores cambian.

Recientemente, en Norteamérica y en Europa muchos psicoanalistas han identificado la incidencia generalizada de codependencia como una de las mayores causas de sufrimiento en las relaciones amorosas modernas. La codependencia se genera en familias disfuncionales, a menudo alcohólicas ó en otro tipo de ambi-

entes familiares agresivos en los cuales los niños satisfacen las necesidades de los adultos, en contraste con la familia funcional en que los adultos satisfacen las necesidades de los hijos.

En muchos casos, esto significa que un niño tiene que enfocar su energía emocional, mental (y a menudo la física) en un adulto, de forma de lograr o mantener sentimientos de estabilidad que al final resultan ser relativos. Esto instala la semilla de la conducta controladora y manipuladora en la personalidad de uno, desviando su enfoque de sus necesidades personales y sentimientos. Cuando los niños que han crecido en un ambiente así llegan a ser adultos, probablemente buscarán amor como la base de su personalidad, tornándose dependientes de otros para su seguridad e identidad.

En esos casos se considera que los otros son los que se deben ocupar del amor, o en algunos casos, está planteando el cómo cuidar de los otros. Cuando los otros fallan en satisfacer sus necesidades, las personas codependientes a menudo se resenten con ellos. Para los miembros que practican Budismo o hayan desarrollado tales características, es crucial que perciban la diferencia entre misericordia y cargar con los problemas de otros, entre recibir amor y depender de otros para ser feliz y entre apoyar y controlar.

Por medio del espejo del Gohonzon podemos vernos profundamente a nosotros mismos y tomar la determinación de romper los mecanismos de defensa de nuestra infancia que quizás nos salvaron de algo pero que ahora nos pueden estar destruyendo. Según el Budismo, cada persona es responsable de su bienestar emocional, mental y físico. Debemos ocuparnos de nuestras propias necesidades y sentimientos a la vez que estamos pendientes de no usar a otros o abusar de ellos en el proceso. A medida que entonamos daimoku por este asunto podemos esforzarnos y confiar en nuestras oraciones para rectificar cualquier situación en sus niveles más esenciales. Podemos también fortalecer la creencia de que nuestro daimoku posee el insondable poder de ayudar a otros, de una manera tal que ni las palabras ni las acciones podrían. Puede que requiera tiempo y esfuerzo pero finalmente nos probaremos a nosotros mismos que ninguna otra estrategia es tan poderosa como la que se basa en el Sutra del Loto. ❏

(Este artículo continuara en la próxima edición de las páginas en español de marzo.)



dentro de sí mismos, con o sin otra persona de significación. Así que: ¿Para qué estamos buscando pareja? En primer lugar, ¿Por qué deseamos una relación? Podemos entonar específicamente para una alma gemela, pero una vez que la hayamos encontrado ¿qué sucede? Quizás deseamos a alguien que nos haga compañía, o nos dé seguridad y nos ofrezca una relación sexual monógama. Quizás queremos a alguien que comparta nuestro sentido del humor, que tenga un carácter fuerte, que aprecie las pequeñas cosas de la vida y muchas otras cualidades que no hayamos encontrado en una sola persona antes. Una vez que la encontramos, ¿pensamos que viviremos felices para siempre?, ¿es la larga lista de características que buscamos en una pareja, nuestro verdadero deseo o simples ilusiones que contienen motivaciones más profundas y ocultas?

Puede ser que nos sintamos profundamente solos o tengamos la necesidad de ser amados

## APRENDAMOS DEL GOSHO

# La Eterna Enseñanza de Nichiren Daishonin

## 'La Única Frase Esencial'

*A continuación la conclusión de la segunda parte de la disertación del presidente Ikeda sobre este Gosho en esta nueva serie.*

Aunque uno no lea ni estudie el sutra, el sólo hecho de invocar su título es fuente de una inmensa buena fortuna. El sutra enseña que las mujeres, los hombres perversos y los que se encuentran en estados de infierno y animalidad es decir, las personas de los Diez Estados pueden manifestar su Budeidad. Esto es fácil de comprender, si imaginamos que cierta piedra extraída del fondo del río puede producir fuego, y que la llama de una vela es suficiente para alumbrar un sitio que ha estado a oscuras durante miles de millones de años. Si encontramos tales prodigios aun entre las cosas más simples de este mundo, ¡Cuánto más prodigioso será el poder de la Ley Mística! La vida de los hombres y mujeres comunes está presa en los grilletes del karma negativo, los deseos mundanos y los sufrimientos innatos del nacimiento y la muerte. Pero debido a los tres potenciales inherentes a la naturaleza de Buda-la Budeidad innata, la sabiduría para tomar conciencia de ella y para manifestarla- nuestra vida puede llegar a revelar, sin ninguna duda las tres propiedades. El gran maestro Dengyo declaró que el poder del Sutra del Loto le permite a cualquier persona manifestar su propia Budeidad. Lo señaló, porque hasta la hija del Rey Dragón pudo lograr la Budeidad mediante el poder del Sutra de Loto. No dude de esto en absoluto. Dígale a su esposo que se lo explicará en detalle cuando lo vea.

Nichiren

De mi puño y letra.

En el tercer día del séptimo mes, en el primer año de Koan 1278

## La fe es la clave de la felicidad eterna

El daimoku es luz. Como afirma el Daishonin, una sola vela es capaz de encender un lugar que ha estado sumido en la oscuridad absoluta durante

miles de millones de años. Del mismo modo, en el instante en que oramos basados en el daimoku la oscuridad de nuestra vida se desvanece instantáneamente. Este es el principio de la simultaneidad de la causa y el efecto. En ese preciso instante, la oración queda respondida y esa respuesta se graba en lo más profundo de nuestro ser.

La causa inherente (*nyo ze in*) de nuestra profunda oración genera, en forma simultánea, un efecto latente (*nyo ze ka*) Para que este efecto se manifieste, debe transcurrir un tiempo indeterminado. Pero, en lo profundo de nuestra vida, la oración se concreta en forma inmediata. En ese momento, se enciende una luz poderosa. La flor de loto (*rengé*) {que florece y da semilla al mismo tiempo} es el perfecto ejemplo de la simultaneidad entre las causas y los efectos.

Por eso, es sumamente importante que las oraciones tengan total convicción. Las fuerzas del Buda y de la Ley se activan en proporción directa a la fortaleza de nuestra fe y nuestra práctica. La fe es como los vatios de una bombilla eléctrica; cuando hay fe arrolladora, en la vida de uno se enciende una luz restallante, capaz de iluminar hasta el último rincón de sombras.

Por otro lado, la oración es invisible, pero si uno ora con toda tenacidad y convicción, sin falta se manifestará un claro resultado en la vida y en el entorno que nos rodea. El principio que explica esto es la verdadera entidad de todos los fenómenos. En todo caso, la fe debe ser convicción en este ámbito invisible. Los impacientes que sólo buscan réditos inmediatos, los que se llavan el mundo por delante en su premura, los que viven alimentando un aureola de vanidad y formalismo terminan siempre cayendo cuesta abajo, en atoladeros que los superan.

Por ejemplo, en nuestra organización el éxito de una actividad depende de la oración intensa que hayan hecho los responsables, para que cada persona se lleve una enorme esperanza, para que cada participante, sin falta, se vaya de la reunión radiante de plenitud. Los que viven pendientes de la imagen que dan a los demás no merecen

ocupar un puesto de responsabilidad dentro de la SGI.

Pero las personas que se basan siempre en la oración son realmente sinceras. La oración limpia el corazón y lo expande; la oración enriquece la personalidad.

## Los sufrimientos son la materia prima de la felicidad

El daimoku es fuego. Cuando uno enciende la leña de los deseos mundanos, arde y chispea la llama de la felicidad, es decir, el fuego de la iluminación. Entonces, los sufrimientos {siempre generados por deseos mundanos} se convierten en la materia prima que alimenta la felicidad. Para la persona que no tiene fe en la Ley Mística, el dolor es tan sólo dolor. Pero para el creyente de fe firme, los sufrimientos



Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

son un estímulo que lo lleva a uno a ser mucho más feliz.

La fe es esperanza inextinguible. La práctica de la fe es una lucha por concretar nuestros deseos. Y la base de esta práctica es la oración. El daimoku firme convierte la mera esperanza en rotunda convicción. Y este espíritu de convicción, que se despliega de tres mil formas posibles, apunta a concretar cada uno de esos anhelos que nos llevaron a invocar. Por lo tanto, no hay nada peor que rendirse a mitad de camino. Hasta las cavernas que vivieron envueltas en la negrura total por millones de años pueden ser iluminadas con la luz de un fósforo. Hasta un pedernal sumergido en el lecho del río puede secarse y ser utilizado para encender fuego. Nuestros sufrimientos

## ¡Victoriosos Derrotan la Adversidad!

Foto por VICTOR VARGAS



Miembros Latinos del Norte de California en la reunión del Segundo Festival, noviembre 1996.

actuales, por muy oscuros que sean, no suman millones de años. Ni durarán eternamente. El sol irrumpirá por sobre el horizonte, sin falta. A decir verdad {aunque no se hayan dado cuenta,} el amanecer ya ha comenzado.

Cuando el ser humano se acostumbra al sufrimiento, durante largos períodos de infelicidad, termina adquiriendo la costumbre de rendirse. Pero cuando se basa en la Ley Mística, jamás se resigna a vivir en la derrota. Bajar los brazos en la vida es lo mismo que denigrar nuestra propia Budeidad. Es lo mismo que despreciar el Gohonzon. Pero esto es, exactamente, lo que estamos haciendo cuando nos cerramos frente a un problema y creemos que nunca vamos a encontrar una solución.

Nunca hay que decidir de antemano que una persona o un área determinada son causas perdidas. Si hay una situación en la que uno debe orar es, precisamente, cuando enfrenta circunstancias extremas. La clave está en orar concretamente y en actuar concretamente, hasta que se produzcan los resultados.

Hasta hace unos años, nadie imaginaba que iba a haber amigos de la Ley Mística en la Unión Soviética y en los países del ex bloque comunista. Pero la época cambió; se puso fin a un largo período de oscuridad. El punto de partida de semejante cambio fue la oración para que los pueblos de esos países fuesen felices y resplandecieran de esperanza, sin falta.

La oración basada en la Ley Mística nunca debe ser abstracta, pues genera una realidad concreta en el nivel de la vida. Orar es iniciar un diálogo, un intercambio, con el mismísimo universo. Cuando oramos, nuestro ichinen está abarcando el universo entero. La oración es una lucha denodada por expandir nuestra vida.

Por favor, comprendan que la oración no es un débil consuelo, sino una convicción potente, ro-

tunda e incondicional. Y debe manifestarse en acciones concretas. Para decirlo de otro modo, cuando la oración es seria y sincera, sin falta se traduce en acciones.

Es decir que la oración se expresa por medio de acciones, y las acciones se apoyan en la oración. Sólo entonces un ser humano es capaz de arrancar una respuesta de las funciones universales y de todos los budas. Quienes oran y emprenden la acción en bien del Kosen-rufu son verdaderos delegados del Buda original. Es imposible que los hombres y las mujeres así no tengan una vida espléndida donde cada deseo se concrete efectivamente.

Aunque uno sea tan feliz que, de tanto en tanto, añore unos minutos de sufrimiento, la felicidad sigue creciendo a borbotones, sigue ascendiendo a paso raudo, como un barrilete que se adueña del cielo. Esa es una prueba concreta de que estamos consolidando nuestra Budeidad. Pero, además, cuando uno establece el estado de Buda como base de esta existencia, sigue viviendo de ese modo maravilloso a través de las existencias futuras.

Como indica el Daishonin al final de esta carta, cuando escribe "no dude de esto en absoluto," es necesario tener gran convicción y vivir con franca esperanza de jóvenes o de viejos. Cuando adquirimos una esperanza radiante, podemos escribir nuestros sufrimientos del pasado con calma y compostura; podemos comprobar cuántas veces nos ahogamos en un vaso de agua, dando a nuestros obstáculos mucho mayor trascendencia de la que realmente tenían.

En esta carta, el Daishonin presenta un alegato a toda la humanidad; "¡Vivamos con esperanza! ¡Y eternamente! Nuestra postura de fe se convierte instantáneamente en la causa, el efecto y la fuerza de la felicidad eterna. Se traduce en una tremenda alegría y en una plenitud sin límites." ❧

# Her Time Has Come

JOHN PINEDA/KRT

Writer, folklorist, anthropologist — Zora Neale Hurston played a prominent role in the Harlem Renaissance

By PATRICIA ELAM RUFF  
WASHINGTON, D.C., CORRESPONDENT

Zora Neale Hurston (1891–60) is one of the most powerful and extraordinary literary voices to come out of the Harlem Renaissance. Her career, though sporadic, qualified her also as a folklorist and anthropologist. Sometimes heralded as “before her time” because many of her contemporaries did not understand her genius, Hurston died penniless and was buried in an unmarked grave in a segregated cemetery in Florida.

During the 1970s, however, writers Alice Walker (who erected a tombstone at her gravesite), Toni Cade Bambara, Henry Louis Gates Jr. and others reintroduced Hurston’s work to a grateful world. Her novels *Mules and Men* (1935) and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) are now standard reading in many college literature classes.

Recently a book collector purchased a cardboard box of Hurston’s college memorabilia for \$150 and found a battered 1925 issue of her Howard University sorority yearbook that contained three undiscovered early works: a play, an essay and a short story. These works, considered vast treasures, are now being published for the first time.

“She devoted her life to collecting folk material of the Negroes furthest down, even when other black intellectuals were rejecting that culture,” says the director of the association that operates a museum named for Hurston in her hometown of Eatonville, Fla. Plans are now being made to produce her newly discovered play in 1998, and a symposium will be held on her unearthed short story at this year’s annual Eatonville festival celebrating her life and contributions.



Cartheda Konchella holds a replica of a Saralee doll she sold at shows around the country to raise money to convert an old school building, background, into a museum honoring folklorist and writer Zora Neale Hurston.

**WOMEN AND LITERATURE**

**Zora Neale Hurston: Influential writer**

Though she died in obscurity, Zora Neale Hurston had been part of the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s as a novelist, anthropologist and folklorist.

- **BORN** in Eatonville, Fla., 1891; attended school until age 13; worked as a maid for an actress in a traveling Gilbert and Sullivan troupe; ended up in Baltimore
- **ATTENDED** Morgan Academy in Baltimore, Howard Univ. in Washington; in 1925 won a scholarship to Barnard College in New York, where she studied anthropology with Franz Boas, and did graduate work at Columbia Univ.
- **IN 1930s** did field studies on Southern and Caribbean black folklore; 1934, first novel praised for its portrayal of black life; six other books and novels followed, establishing her as a major U.S. author committed to preserving her heritage
- **WORKED** as domestic to make ends meet despite her fame, talent and drive; died broke in Ft. Pierce, Fla., 1960

SOURCES: *O*famous American Women, *O*Handbook of American Women's History, *O*The Library of America

**Her complete works**  
Both edited by Cheryl Wajl:  
■ *O*Zora Neale Hurston, Novels and Stories  
■ *O*Zora Neale Hurston, Folklore,

“Recently a book collector purchased a cardboard box of Hurston’s college memorabilia for \$150 and found a battered 1925 issue of her Howard University sorority yearbook that contained three undiscovered early works: a play, an essay and a short story. These works, considered vast treasures, are now being published for the first time.”