

# World Tribune

No. 3127

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

FEBRUARY 21, 1997

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S.F. members love the feel of their auditorium, newly built next to their culture center. The building has conference rooms and a 500-seat Gohonzon room.

## S.F. Makes Fresh Start With New Auditorium

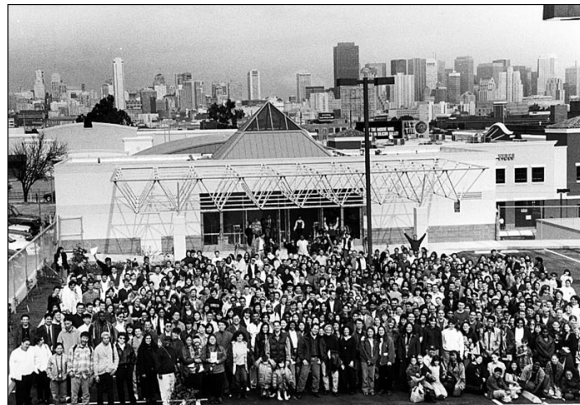
By PENNY WILLIAMS & RON BAIRD

CORRESPONDENTS

San Francisco, Feb. 8-9

San Francisco members had long wanted a large auditorium inside their culture center — and they were going to get one. But new laws passed after the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake put those plans on hold. Though the culture center fared beautifully during that quake (only one apple fell off the altar) and remained seismically safe, the new laws would have required an expensive retrofit if a 500-seat auditorium were built inside and the building's designation changed from "office" to "assembly."

The solution: Build a new structure next to the center, across the parking lot. This weekend marked the opening of the new



The building features a pyramid-shaped skylight over the entrance area.

Ikeda Auditorium after a year of construction.

Many members commented that this building feels like a new

beginning for the SGI movement in San Francisco. Kiyoko Thoma arrived in San Francisco in 1958 and stood with SGI President

Ikeda at the historic Coit Tower visit in 1960. "This is our first brand new building," she said, after she helped cut the ribbon for the opening ceremony Friday night. Every building the members have met in before this weekend had been used previously for some other purpose. The culture center, for example, had been at one time the first women's college in the area and had later housed medical offices.

The new three-story auditorium blends in with the surrounding neighborhood of parks and rolling inclines. Over the reception area when people enter is a metal pyramid with a skylight at the apex. This level also has a conference room and other rooms yet

PLEASE SEE SF, 4

## Children's Rights Exhibit Begins National Tour

By CHARLISE LYLES

CORRESPONDENT

Columbus, Ohio, Feb. 10

An angel-faced boy marching military-style, ammunition and automatic rifle slung across his chest — the Liberian child-soldier in the photograph seemed to call to James Stowe.

"This picture is most devastating to me because this young man will never have a child-

The first stop for an exhibition on children's rights, by the SGI-USA's Youth Peace Conference, garners praise and sparks dialogue

hood. We robbed him of that. And that's a human disgrace," said Mr. Stowe, executive director of the city's Community Relations Commission, as he viewed the SGI-USA exhibition "Treasuring the Future:

Children's Rights and Realities." Mr. Stowe was among hundreds who saw the exhibition as it kicked off a 15-city national tour in the Ohio state capitol, Jan. 16-20.

Prepared by the SGI-USA

Youth Peace Conference in cooperation with UNICEF, the exhibition is based on the international Convention on the Rights of Children, adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 1989. The exhibition's upper panels relay a serious message to adults. Below, interactive toys teach children important

PLEASE SEE CHILDREN, 5

# VOICES

## What does 'faith equals daily life' mean to you?

Members from Rocky Mountain Joint Territory respond:



It means awakening every day happy to be alive. To do gongyo with appreciation for the new day's challenge. I hope by winning each day with faith, I will be able to encourage others to realize their dreams, too.  
— LINDA PALMER, Denver



This concept manifests to me in the interconnectedness of everything. Faith is how important I make my morning gongyo and how much quality daimoku I can chant, along with naturally chanting for others. To the extent that I base myself on faith, I am making proportionate progress in my life, improving relationships, reaching my goals and becoming a happier person.  
— JANET JOHANNSEN, Arvada, Colo.



It means really showing actual proof in all areas of my life. My workplace is rife with people complaining about the conditions, wages, nepotism, etc. If I have a low life-condition, I tend to get sucked into that, too. But when I chant sincerely and do a resonant gongyo, I find I'm able to excel in my job, fully tapping the great training I've received from doing Gajokai, Soka Group and other activities. Through faith, I plan to win at home and in society and enjoy my daily life at every moment.  
— SAM BACON, Denver



Faith in the form of fierce daimoku, diligent attention to gongyo and an unshakable belief in the absolute power of the Gohonzon has completely changed every aspect of my life. I have recently purchased a beautiful new home, overcome a difficult work environment and celebrated my 10th year as a stockbroker for a major Wall Street firm. Also, I was elected as election commissioner in Denver by a predominantly democratic electorate (I am republican!)  
— JAN TYLER, Denver



One year ago, I received guidance to challenge myself to improve my life by increasing my faith in the Gohonzon. By coming to the realization that faith equals daily life, I knew that I had to base my challenges on faith in the Gohonzon. I find as I progress in faith, I also progress in my daily life. Naturally, I have ups and downs, but now I find more ups than downs in my practice and daily life.  
— ROBERT VANSYOC, Lakewood, Colo.



Faith is the essential ingredient in my daily life that gives it meaning. Faith gives me confidence to overcome any obstacle that I encounter and to achieve my dreams, no matter how distant they may appear to be.  
— JUDY WERNER, Denver

Ideas for questions? Mail 'em, fax 'em or e-mail 'em to us anytime. Thanks for your support.

# Prayer, Not Just Chanting, Key to Great Change

## EDITORIAL

Have you ever felt unfocused when you chant? That your heart just wasn't in it? Have you ever gone a long time without seeing benefit?

All of us can go through this at one time or another: We diligently do gongyo and chant daimoku but lack a real prayer. Though chanting many hours can be great, the true benefit of chanting comes from having a specific prayer. In fact, even a 10-hour stretch of chanting can amount to very little benefit if our hearts aren't in it!

After all, in anything we do, if our hearts aren't in it we'll never see much success. The Tom Cruise character in the movie *Jerry Maguire* learns this lesson. Until he really focuses on putting his heart into his daily life — his job as a sports agent and his new family — nothing clicks.

To chant with focus, with specific determinations like "I will do this" or "I will definitely accomplish that" is an important aspect of heartfelt prayer. In this week's issue, SGI President Ikeda says that "there is no real joy or excitement in a life without concrete goals or direction. In the realm of faith, too, we grow when we have clear goals..." (p. 11).

Nichiren Daishonin taught his disciples that making sure our faith is strong is also crucial to getting our prayers answered. In one letter to Shijo Kingo, Nichiren Daishonin expresses concern that the prayers of Kingo's wife are going unanswered; perhaps her faith has become weak. He writes, "The fact that Nichigen-nyo's

[Kingo's wife] prayers have gone unanswered is like a strong bow with a weak bow-string or a fine sword in the hands of a coward" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 73). And in another letter, the Daishonin tells Kingo that "faith alone is what really matters" (MW-1, 246).

Using the common sense formula to first make a clear determination, then chant daimoku with strong faith and finally take the needed action toward our determinations, the world opens up for us.

*To chant with focus is an important part of heartfelt prayer.*

At the same time, always using common sense about when, where, how long — and of course how loud — we chant is helpful. President Ikeda once expressed concern over members sometimes chanting several hours in a single sitting while neglecting their responsibilities, even causing family members and neighbors suffering. And when organizational

units sponsor long chanting sessions, he said, unreasonable demands are often unfortunately placed on members.

"If a leader wishes to launch a major daimoku campaign and get a rhythm of more chanting going," he said, "the important thing is that that person lead by offering deep and strong prayers" (*Selected Speeches on the Basics of Buddhism*, pp. 44-45).

When we offer deep and strong prayers while keeping common sense as our guideline in all things related to faith, Nichiren Daishonin teaches that all our prayers will definitely be answered. ❧

## 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.

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**WORLD TRIBUNE  
MAILBOX**

**Everyone's Equal**

I was recently encouraged by an article in the Jan. 24 issue about the conferences at the new Florida Nature and Culture Center. Especially by what Mr. Zaitsu said about the reasons why they were so successful, that "here there are no leaders or members. Here we are all just human beings. Here everyone learns something. There is no one with all the answers."

I personally believe that one's position in the organization is transitory and is not relative to what degree of faith or amount of human revolution one has achieved. I have never been encouraged just by someone's position but always by their friendship. As we are all equal in front of the Gohonzon in actuality, I am happy that we are moving towards equality in our practice.

— GREGORY KING, Clearlake Oaks, Calif.

**More on Makiguchi**

Having read the Dec. 13, 1996, letter from Eric Freedman Dec. 16 and also letters written in response to it in the Jan. 17 issue, I felt compelled to have some input....

My understanding of Eric's letter is not that he "has much to learn about the spirit of pioneers of this organization" as Jim Johannsen writes, nor is he trying to project the "idea that President Makiguchi's bravado and selflessness are some accident of Buddhist history that any number of those with 'shared beliefs' would emulate," as written by Maurice Patrick McCarthy.

When Eric wrote "Let's make sure..." my feeling is he said this because of his concern that the words "die to insure" could be misinterpreted by those who are not yet well grounded in the study of the Goshō and still struggle with the transition from being Christians to Buddhists. The Christian teaching says that Jesus died for our sins. As the Baptist preacher used to say when I was attending church, "He died *once* for all." This teaching was puzzling for me because it gave the members of his congregation the idea that Jesus had paid for their sins through dying on the cross. In the mind of his congregation, all they had to do was call on the name of Jesus and all would be forgiven. There was no incentive to change their lives....

LaVora Perry wrote: "I am only guessing that the concept of a person dying for another's sins is Mr. Freedman's real sticking point, because he didn't mention it in his letter." Eric wrote that "died 'for us'...at least to me, brings visions of Jesus Christ on the cross." The symbol and the teaching mean the same: died for our sins. Christianity teaches that all people are sinners, that only Jesus Christ has an enlightened nature. Buddhism teaches that all people can bring about their enlightened or Buddha nature.

Jim Johannsen wrote that "to deny our debt of gratitude to Mr. Makiguchi for maintaining the pure heritage of this organization is the epitome of selfishness." Eric wrote that "he [Makiguchi] has become a symbol and example of strong faith and conviction in one's beliefs" and that "President Makiguchi died in prison standing up for beliefs that we all share...." My interpretation of these statements by Eric is this: The fact that he shares the same belief and faith as President Makiguchi is proof of his highest respect and, furthermore, isn't that what the inheritance of the Law is all about? What better way is there to pay a debt of gratitude?

Let us look with the eye of the Buddha and reason with the wisdom of the Buddha before we jump to conclusions that may injure the heart of a Buddha. I am happy that Eric pointed this out and that I have had a chance and the time to respond. Clarification, interpretation, whatever it takes — let us continue together. This organization is sustained and built on this type of communication.

— OLIVIA MEADOWS, Frederick, Md.

**Trust Comes  
Through Friendship**

**PERSPECTIVE**

**By SHEILA MARKSON  
NEW YORK CITY**

I was as antsy as a 6-year-old waiting for the circus show to begin. Then the door opened and Daisaku Ikeda entered the room to wild applause. Intent on separating the man from the celebrity, I sat and stared. Who was this man? It took me back to the beginning of my practice in Toronto.

For the first four years of my practice, I struggled with my negativity and doubts about the practice and about SGI President Ikeda. I trusted no one.

In 1972, following my move to New York City, and the leaders asked each of us to choose one of them as a friend in faith. I chose my women's division chapter chief, Emi Kamiya. From the beginning, I felt that she was sincerely interested in how my practice was progressing.

She promptly returned my telephone calls and was always asking me questions that provoked thought. I began to trust. First, I trusted Mrs. Kamiya, and then through her constant encouragement — "Don't give up. Let's both chant for your goal. When will you call me next?" — I began to trust the Gohonzon.

Years passed and because I had begun to develop qualities that I admired in that very special, compassionate woman, others began to ask me to take more responsibility. Emi's concern for others had indeed become my model.

When there was a major reorganization and Emi was no longer my chapter chief, she was still my friend. For the next 20 years, we built a friendship that could only be described as life sustaining. She was the embodiment of a Gakkai friend. Emi could be counted on to not only encourage and empower but to chastise when she believed it was necessary — "Be quiet and listen now. I'm trying to help you get to the next level of understanding."

She began asking me to help her research background information for her study lectures. As we discussed the basis for a lecture and she answered my

questions, my view of the practice matured. It became more natural to chant and, of course, the more I chanted, the more I could see my life. And what a mess it was!

Emi was undaunted. She kept right on encouraging me. Every time she went to Japan, she "reported" to me about what President Ikeda had said or done at a meeting. When viewed through her eyes, everything looked, at the very least, different. This was a chaotic time for the organization. Emi never wavered and, because of her conviction, neither did I.

genuinely open heart. Her response was always based on the Goshō. She embodied humanism.

Then, in late 1990, I picked up the phone and a very breathless Emi said, "President Ikeda has been removed as head of the lay organizations at the head temple. Do you know what that means?" Well, frankly, I didn't, but I found out along with everyone else. As what came to be called the priesthood issue unfolded, I began to appreciate President Ikeda's incredible strength and his desire to protect the members. I read President Ikeda's poem "Life" and



The happiness Emi Kamiya created in the SGI family was mirrored in her own (l-r): daughter Sumi, husband Smiley (holding Sheba), Emi and son Akira.

Over and over she would encourage me to challenge my negative karma. She rejoiced over every victory as if it were her own. It was.

As my family problems turned around, I surrendered my cynical view of the world. Suddenly, Daisaku Ikeda began to seem a lot more altruistic. Each of my personal problems began to appear as nothing other than training. Life began to appear to be an on-the-job training course that would enable me to help others.

I noticed that many of the people I had introduced to Buddhism had family problems that suspiciously resembled mine. Now I heard myself quoting Emi and even suggesting that members come to visit her with me.

Visiting Emi did not feel like anything but friends coming together. There was no formality. Every visit was built on true life-to-life dialogue. Long before *dialogue* was a Gakkai buzz word, she was teaching me to lead by listening with a

studied the novelized history of the Soka Gakkai in *The Human Revolution* and *The New Human Revolution*.

President Ikeda appeared differently to me. So did the Gohonzon. Somewhere along the way, it had truly become the lantern in my night — and the first hands that I had grasped as I crossed my sea of suffering were those of Daisaku Ikeda and Emi Kamiya. From them, I learned how to hear with my heart and how to speak with my life.

When Emi died of cancer in November of 1995, she taught me two more lessons. The first was how to face death with dignity and courage. To my surprise, the second was how much Josei Toda meant to Daisaku Ikeda. It wasn't until her death that I understood what it means to want to continue someone else's work; what it means to be part of a mentor-disciple relationship.

It started when she helped me learn to trust — her, the Gohonzon, President Ikeda. And now I can do no less than offer that to others. ❧

## New Auditorium Marks a New Beginning for San Francisco Members

SF, FROM PAGE 1

to be assigned. The auditorium, with a seating capacity of 545, is down a flight of stairs that follows the slope of the land. There are two multipurpose rooms also on this level. One level below is a parking garage with 23 spaces for people who need to use an elevator to enter the building.

The Gohonzon room has an expansive feeling. There is light wood paneling complimenting the grey and soft green tones of the walls, seats and carpet — very similar to the color of the eucalyptus trees prevalent in the Bay Area and the colors of San Francisco bay waters. The roof is arched with recessed lighting; there are skylights and an opaque window behind the altar.

"I was bowled over," said Donna Parton of Sacramento, Calif. "The natural lighting creates a whole new feeling." The altar is also of light wood and simple in design. Some people said its shape resembles Coit Tower.

Jonetta Leek, San Francisco #1 Joint Territory vice women's division chief, observed that since the opening of the culture center in 1989, the surrounding neighborhood has been transformed from a car dealership and grocery store into coffee and bagel shops, a McDonald's, clothing stores, a supermarket, a video store, an office supply store, a bookstore and



A wide stairway leads people from the entrance down one floor to the expansive 500-seat auditorium.

a newly landscaped city park with playground and soccer field. (An open house for the local community is being planned for April.)

"My grandfather didn't want me to come to meetings in this part of town," said Jason Ortiz-Williams. "We are beginning to beautify this area and make the barrio a better place to live. The architecture of this new building is

so inspiring and the energy is really high."

Rogers Long, who began practicing in 1967, shared a bit of the organization's history in San Francisco. "We started in somebody's living room," he said. "I was so worried about my shoes because we had to leave them outside in the hall. They were my only pair. Propagation was the

most important thing. We had meetings at all times of the day and night."

The first center of activities was Sachiko and Sam Garcias' house on Cole Street and 30th Avenue. Mrs. Garcia was the first district chief in San Francisco, appointed by President Ikeda on his visit there in 1960. There was also a community center in Daly City,

but that, too, was used by another religious group before the SGI-USA.

"This feels like a new start," said Mr. Long.

Bernie Mraz from Monterey, Calif., said: "This is overwhelming. I've never seen anything like this except in Japan."

Diana Miller from Palo Alto, Calif., said: "It looks expansive and alive, and I feel like San Francisco will become a world leader for kosen-rufu. I think this new building will foster more excitement and activities and will really encourage guests."

Jose Ganutan from Vallejo, Calif., performed as a part of the Mystic Flava dance group. "Everybody made me feel comfortable so I could perform," he said. "I was astounded. I feel this [building] is going to impact the movement a whole lot."

Kay Rood, San Francisco #1 joint territory women's division chief, said: "Seeing everything I have in the last two days, the members are really aware in their lives of the benefits from sharing this practice. This building displays a dream come true that we couldn't have imagined 10 or 20 years ago." ■

*Thanks to photographers Mike Mullen, Kingmond Young, Jack Aldrich, Steve Frus, Safiyyah Scoggins and Gregory Nakasuji.*

## Panel Puts a Human Face on Sexual Diversity

By LAURA L. HILL  
CORRESPONDENT  
Denver, Jan. 19

A panel on sexual differences kicked off a three-part series on diversity today sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Joint Territory Culture Department. The four-member panel addressed gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual issues with three purposes in mind: 1) to increase awareness, 2) to put a human face on the issues, and 3) to create a springboard for future dialogue.

One of the motivations for the series was General Director Zaitu's fifth challenge for the SGI-USA this year: "Develop a spirit of tolerance and respect others."

As the general director states in the January *Living Buddhism*: "Through the kaleidoscope of SGI-USA activities, we can summon forth the life condition of Bodhisattva, not only with those we know and like, but also with those with whom we may not have much in common. In this

way, I am convinced we can help one another rid ourselves of the senseless fear and misjudgment that often arise from diversity."

Another spark that began a fire among members in Denver was Colorado politics, specifically the passage of Amendment 2, which was subsequently overturned by the Supreme Court in May 1996. The measure would have amended the Colorado state constitution to overturn existing protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and prohibit the passage of any such protection in the future.

Since then many Coloradans caught their collective breath and came to the realization that tolerance must be learned — which means that opportunities to teach it must be provided.

"To celebrate diversity, we first have to discover it," said Maria Guajardo-Lucero, Rocky Mountain Joint Territory Culture Department chief.

In thoughtful and honest testi-

monies, the four panelists provided a means of discovery as they invited the audience into their lives by explaining how their sexual differences have defined their lives.

Dr. Beth Firestein, a psychologist and bisexual, is the author/editor of *Bisexuality: The Psychology and Politics of an Invisible Minority*. She pointed out that we live in a monosexual culture that lacks the language to define sexuality outside of our culture's heterosexual bias. Dr. Firestein's presentation helped to profile the issue of inclusion and exclusion generated by sexual diversity.

This very point was forcefully brought home when Dr. Rachael St. Claire, a clinical psychologist and speaker on gender dysphoria, transsexualism and cross-dressing, described her path of defining her sexuality and gender. Born a biological male, Dr. St. Claire struggled for many years to

define herself as she exists today.

Dr. St. Claire's experience portrays the strength of will required to find a place for herself in society, and she defines herself as a survivor, a rarity in people dealing with the issues she has had to face.

The next two panelists, SGI members, not only spoke about their experiences with sexual diversity but gave insightful advice on how others might face such issues. "If it's an issue for the human race, it's an issue for the SGI," was how Ann Seidl began her story. Ms. Seidl, who hosts a gay and lesbian program on a local TV station and has acted as master of ceremonies for several Denver Pridefests, said that by being different herself, she has become aware of her prejudices. She stated that we need to relate to one another as conscious human beings recognizing our prejudices and acting to overcome them.

Fear and intolerance are "symbols and symptoms of a world that

needs healing," said Wayne Thrash, a nurse/psychotherapist specializing in HIV-related treatment and men's sexuality issues. He also pointed out how he has become aware of intolerance in his life and how this "awareness provides an opportunity for transformation. What a wonderful tool to chant and bring about transformation in the world."

During the brief discussion afterward, Dan Nash, a Culture Department member, mentioned how as an organization of individuals, the SGI reflects society in its cultural biases. These cultural biases are reflections of society, not Buddhism, he said. He quoted from the September 1996 *Seikyo Times*: "It's not that there are no differences among people. Rather, it's that the Buddha, while fully recognizing people's differences, does not discriminate among them."

The second part of the series, on racial diversity, will take place in April. ■

# Children's Rights Exhibit Begins Nationwide Tour

CHILDREN, FROM PAGE 1

lessons in fun ways. From teachers, youth groups and the grass roots to South African exchange students, the powerful montage of photographs and texts evoked joy, pain, outrage and awe. And it made many new friends for the SGI-USA.

The local effort began months earlier. With little experience or contacts — only enthusiasm, seeking spirit and determination — members here took the exhibition on tour beginning at the Columbus U.N. Association International Festival, the State Capitol, the SGI Columbus Community Center and City Hall. At the end of the tour, the city presented a certificate of recognition, declaring Feb. 3, 1997, to be SGI-USA Day.

"My mission is to reduce violence in our community," said Councilwoman Les Wright, who issued the certificate. "It fits in with SGI's mission of peace- and harmony-building. The best thing we can do for children is be healthy, whole adults, because adults raise children. Your organization focuses on youth and creating healthy, strong, and, most important, peaceful adults."

Members worked hard to garner support for the exhibition. Schools wanted it. The art museum. The library. The airport. After the three-day UNA festival in November where thousands marveled at the exhibition, the next stop was the capitol. Mr. Stowe was so moved when he saw it there that he lobbied for a one-week display at City Hall.

During the tour, members strove to soar like a flock of geese in V formation. At times, youth division members led. At other times, members with some particular skill or experience led the way.

"This was the first time that we had an activity where we interacted with the community," said Dr. Albert Tsao, exhibition committee chairman. "We learned that we have tremendous talents among the members. And with unity, just as Nichiren Daishonin said, we were able to do something remarkable — a victory in society and actual proof within our individual lives."

At each stop, the exhibition became an engine for community dialogue on diversity and human rights. Beside the grand marble pillars of the capitol atrium, "Treasuring the Future" meshed with a "Day of Dialogue," which commemorated the birthday of slain civil rights

leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The Rev. Joel L. King Jr., cousin of the late Dr. King, saw a link between intolerance and the exhibit's story of Iqbal Masih, a 12-year-old boy who lost his life speaking out against abusive child labor in the Pakistani carpet industry.

"What do we discuss over dinner with our families?" Mr. King asked. "Is it peace issues, nonviolence and anti-racism, children's rights? It is all about cheap labor, whether it be children or other nationalities."

Dilip Doshi, a native of India, was struck by the exhibit's final quote by Mohandas Gandhi: "If we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with children."

Mr. Doshi followed the exhibition to the SGI-USA Columbus Community Center for the Youth Peace Seminar on Jan. 26. The theme was "World Peace and Individual Responsibility: A Children's Rights Perspective."

Questions from youth division members sparked an exchange full of honesty and gusto: "How can we become friends with young people without being scared off by the rebellious clothing or behavior?" was one of them.

"Everyone needs to belong to something," said Mark Jay, Dayton vice chapter chief and a high school teacher. "Gangs and experimentation with drugs come from the breakdown of the family. We have to be parents to young people to whom we're not related."

Adults should think "every child is our child," said panelist Susan Wolford, chairwoman of the Columbus Committee of UNICEF.

From Feb. 3 to 7, the exhibition was displayed at the Columbus City Hall, where the SGI-USA hosted a reception for council members and citizens. Strawberry tarts, fruit, finger sandwiches, gracious smiles and warm conversation — the

women's division at its finest. There the exhibit became the center of yet another community dialogue on human rights. More than 100 people attended, including Mayor Gregory S. Lashutka.

Koko Mokalomg, a member of the South African Parliament and foreign exchange student, came back to see the exhibition a second time.

"The exhibition is most powerful where it talks about educating children," she said. "If a child gets educated, they can help the



The children's rights exhibit is designed with panels below for the kids and upper panels with important messages for the adults. The exhibit will continue its tour in September after some refurbishment.

nation. If not, it will duplicate unemployment and the circle of unhappiness and poverty revolves. This exhibition helps people to see that so clearly."

Said Mokalomg's fellow student, Krish Kumar of Durban, South Africa, "What is so amazing to me is that this is a volunteer group — everybody just got off from work — and you are here trying to meet and talk with people about the rights and suffering of children here and all over the world."

The exhibition's next stop is Los Angeles, where it will undergo renovation and strengthening for its three-year travel schedule. In September, Atlanta Joint Territory will host the exhibition, followed by Philadelphia Joint Territory in October and Washington, D.C., Joint Territory in November. It is intended to be shown in cities within those joint territories that have not previously hosted an SGI exhibition. ❧

*Yours Truly,  
Betty B.*

DEAR BETTY: It's February and I'm getting nowhere with my resolutions: to quit smoking, control my short temper, be more considerate toward my wife and call all my members once a week. But nicotine withdrawal caused me to have an even shorter fuse which made me fuss at my wife, who accused me of calling my members to avoid her!

— BEHIND THE 8 BALL

she marched in the parades, attended the picnics, sang at the meetings. Now she's a teenager and refuses to chant about her problems. Instead she turns out the television to drown out my daimoku! What can I do — that's legal, I mean?

— 19th NERVOUS BREAKDOWN

DEAR TIME TO CATCH UP: While obstacles may seem like they're attacking from the outside — all right, I know you're not really blaming your wife — we must defeat them by building up the reserves of our life force on the inside. This can only be done with lots of daimoku.

Changing your karma — reversing the direction of the well-worn path you constantly create — takes constant, and often excruciating, effort. When I quit smoking, I put on 10 pounds. So my next resolution was to lose the extra weight. I put a lock on the refrigerator (well, figuratively), but I still had all this nervous energy. The solution? I began biting my nails. So my next resolution....

It was tough, all right. But did I take it out on others? Nooooo. I was unfaithfully wonderful to everyone around me.

(OK, IT'S JUST A JOKE! STOP BUGGING ME, WILL YA! — Say, buddy, got a chocolate bar? A stick of gum? Anything?)

Obviously, these things can get pretty complex. Before you know it, you begin to wish you were back to your familiar, if flawed, old self.

Don't look back! Transforming yourself into the kind of person you deeply hope to be is the biggest benefit of our Buddhist practice. Don't settle for less.

DEAR BETTY: From the time she was little, I dragged my daughter to SGI activities —

DEAR MOTHER COURAGE: Would that a parent could stuff wisdom into a child as easily as stuffing the wriggling little critter into a snowsuit. There are few things more frustrating than standing by while a person you love bumbles through life, unwilling to take well-meaning if — from her point of view — dorky advice. But teenagers need the chance to make their own mistakes and test their coping mechanisms with difficulties.

Like any living thing, your daughter will develop in her own time. Patient nurturing is the key: A sprinkling of food, a few gentle words and lo and behold your teen may respond. Then again, she may not. Not right away, anyhow.

Why not see if there's a member your daughter respects who could give her a call once in awhile? Like someone with a navel ring and blue hair, maybe.

Make sure you're setting a good example, too. Don't forget, the little charmers are only too eager to judge Buddhism by our sometimes feeble practice — and actions.

Above all, take heart. All those causes you made weren't for nothing, you know.

SGI President Ikeda said recently: "When parents exert themselves in faith, they can lead their children to happiness without fail.... One light-house illuminates the way for many ships to steer safely through uncertain waters. In the same way, a person with strong, committed faith shines as a beacon of hope for his or her family." ❧

Yes, there is actually a place called North Pole. It is a small town located near Fairbanks in central Alaska. As I often tell people, "Yes, there is a North Pole, and yes, there is a Santa Claus." The summer temperature can get to 90 degrees, and in the winter it can drop to minus 20 or minus 30. But it is a beautiful place to live. I'm the district chief for North Pole District, and I've been chanting for 22 years.

The year 1995 was one of challenge for me. For openers, I have coronary heart disease, hypertension and diabetes. On top of all this, I passed kidney stones, and I had an umbilical hernia that was surgically repaired. This is where my experience begins.

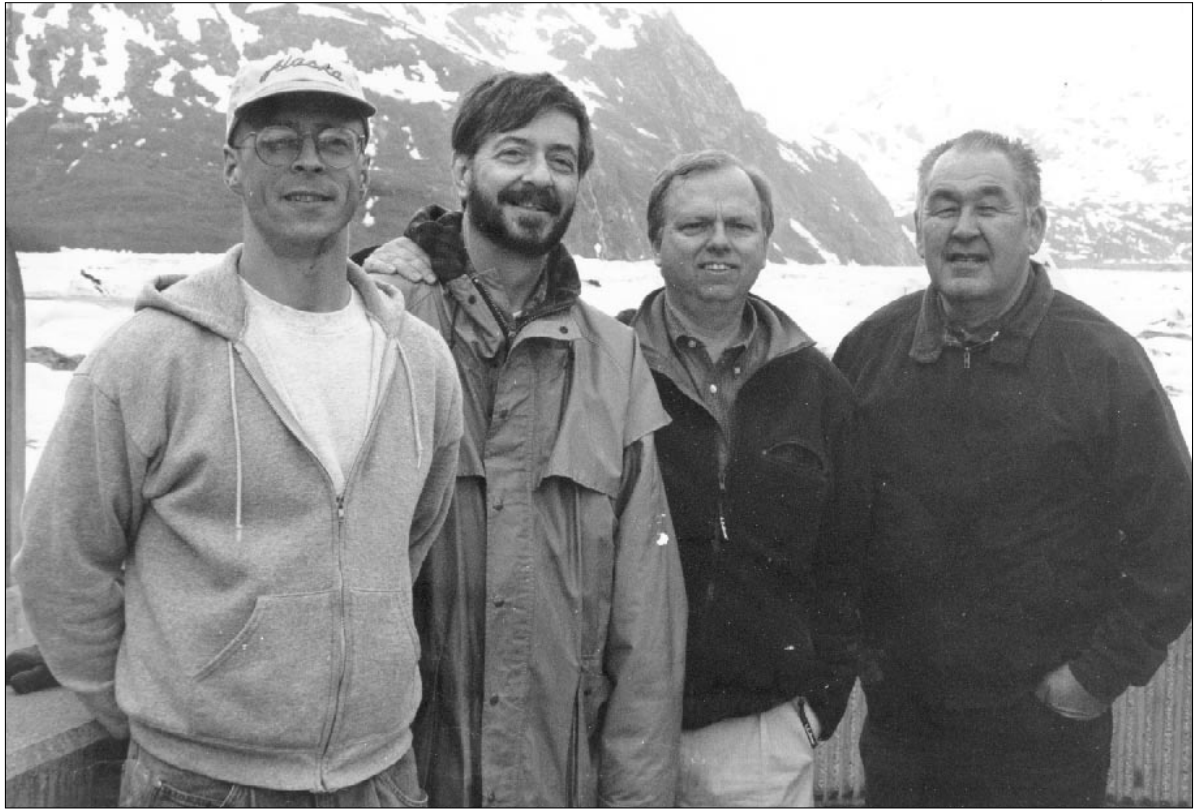
One day in April 1995 I went to see the surgeon who was going to repair my hernia. On the way out of the hospital, I happened to run into my regular doctor. I told him of my pending surgery. He was concerned that I might have problems under anesthesia. He contacted the surgeon, who delayed my operation until some tests relating to my heart were completed.

The encounter with my doctor that day was surely an example of the protective functions of the universe at work. The following week, an ultrasound of my heart showed nothing abnormal. Then I had a cardio-treadmill stress test. The results suggested that something was not right. I was scheduled to see a cardiologist, a doctor who had treated me for heart disease years earlier.

The cardiologist suspected there was a problem with my coronary artery. He asked if I had been experiencing any angina, or chest pain. I told him I had isolated occurrences of chest discomfort after eating and then doing some kind of activity. When I stopped the activity, I told him, it went away. I had thought maybe I had stomach problems relating somehow to the hernia.

I had had an angioplasty performed by this cardiologist back in 1991, and I told him that the discomfort I periodically felt did not seem to be as bad as it was then. The cardiologist set me up with an appointment on June 19 at Providence Hospital in Anchorage for an angiogram, or heart catheter. He wanted to have a look at my heart to determine if there was any evidence of further coronary heart disease.

I asked myself why this should happen to me after my years of daimoku and earnest faith in the Gohonzon. I read guidance from SGI President Ikeda, who said we should not be pulled down or de-



Carl Harrer Jr. (second from left) used his faith and a lot of courage to overcome severe heart disease.

CARL HARRER JR., NORTH POLE, ALASKA

# A Strong, Strong Heart

feated by worries in life. First, I needed to overcome my worries or hardships; I needed to win over myself.

I continued to earnestly chant to the Gohonzon each day with the determination to overcome my health problems and live long and be strong for my family and the members. President Ikeda also said that cowardice is faith's greatest enemy and that faith means to forge on with the courageous heart of the lion king.

I drove myself to Anchorage (about a five-hour drive) for my appointment. I was confident my visit to the hospital was going to be minor and that I would be returning home in no time. I checked into the hospital and had all of the preliminary tests conducted prior to the actual angiogram. I was chanting daimoku to myself the whole time.

There was no pain or discomfort, and I was awake through the whole procedure. As it progressed, I could hear some concern in the doctor's voice as he spoke with an aide. I silently chanted daimoku. When the pro-

cedure was almost over, I heard the aide ask the doctor if he was going to elect surgery. The doctor left the room without responding.

I knew something was definitely wrong. I was admitted to the ward and put in a private room. I was anxious, worried and nervous. Then I thought back on the guidance from President Ikeda that I had placed so much trust in. That evening, I chanted daimoku and did gongyo in the hospital room. I anxiously wanted to hear from my doctor but I dreaded what his decision might be.

I knew that I did not want bypass surgery. I promised myself that that was not an option. I chanted daimoku like I had never chanted before. My doctor came to my room at 1:30 the next morning. After reviewing my test results extensively, he concluded that I had a coronary artery that was considerably restricted. He also said that another artery was blocked.

My coronary artery was restricted so badly that the opening was too small to accept the catheter to repair it. My doctor told me that he thought long

and hard about doing a coronary bypass.

I was still chanting daimoku to myself this whole time. My doctor also told me about a new procedure that was having excellent results. It involved doing an angioplasty, rotobalading and, through ballooning, inserting stainless steel stents into the restricted area of the coronary artery. When complete, the stents would keep my artery from further closure and would soon be covered with tissue and form a natural part of my coronary artery. With proper diet and exercise, I would be a new man.

I was relieved by my doctor's caring decision, and I sincerely thanked him.

Later that day, I called my wife. She had been chanting daimoku ever since I left home. I found out that groups of members in both Anchorage and Fairbanks had been holding daimoku sessions and praying for my recovery.

The next day, I underwent the angioplasty and had four stents placed in my coronary artery. Once again, I was awake during the entire five-hour procedure. I

didn't feel any pain or discomfort (except that the table I was lying on was getting pretty hard and uncomfortable!).

After the procedure, I was again taken to the recovery room and the sheaf was removed. This part was very uncomfortable, because the femoral artery had to be tightly constricted to prevent internal bleeding. I was on blood thinners, so coagulation was slow.

That's when I felt some chest discomfort. Nitroglycerin was put under my tongue. Ten minutes later I had another nitroglycerin pill, and the pain went away. I had suffered a mild heart attack.

How could this happen? My heart had just been repaired, so how could I have a heart attack? I was told that I had suffered a spasm in my coronary artery brought on by the trauma of the angioplasty. I was placed in intensive care. I chanted daimoku throughout the next few days.

On June 25, five days after my heart attack and still being

In the course of their activities as elected representatives, the Soka Gakkai-backed Diet members had also come to clearly sense the need to establish some kind of political organization. When Josei Toda sent the first of his disciples into the political realm, he had felt that it was fine for them to affiliate themselves with whichever political party they preferred; he had no particular bias toward any political party. Toda's wish was that these Diet members would work in their respective positions or roles to clean up politics and restore sovereignty to the people.

But once the Soka Gakkai-backed representatives actually began to pursue their activities as Diet members, they found that they could not wholeheartedly agree with or support the policies and tactics of any of the established parties. At the time, global tensions stemming from the conflicting ideologies of East and West were also reflected in Japanese party politics, deepening the rift between capitalists and socialists.

And though each party made a show of advocating policies that responded to the people's diverse needs, they in fact either stood on the side of the propertied class or on the side of the working class and based their activities on that affiliation. The conservative parties protected the interests of large corporations, and the progressive parties favored policies advantageous to organized labor.

Between these two extremes, there were also centrist parties, but they lacked any clearly articulated political ideals. This vagueness was contributing to their decline.

The Soka Gakkai representatives had no choice but to continue their activities as independent, nonpartisan members of the Diet. In the House of Councilors they joined other independents in a political club for unaffiliated representatives. They aspired for a government truly committed to improving people's lives and for peace, without being influenced by the petty maneuverings of party politics.

But the only thing this group's members had in common was their lack of affiliation with any political party. Their opinions differed widely and when it came time to announce a concrete position on a matter before the House, it was often very difficult to arrive at one that everyone could support.

The Soka Gakkai-backed representatives were especially concerned with unorganized labor — those workers in small factories and businesses who were not represented by big unions —

## The New Human Revolution

By HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 5, Chapter 4

# Lion

Translation of parts 13–18 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.

and strove to turn the government's attention to this group's lot and protecting its livelihood. They also believed that world peace depended upon transcending the ideological differences between East and West and upon working from the standpoint of global citizenship, which Josei Toda had advocated. To achieve this, they believed that the world's nations should be united, centering around the United Nations.

But they were unable to make their voices heard in the government. Of course, there were only nine Soka Gakkai-backed representatives in the House of Councilors at that time. And the fact that they had formed no autonomous political group compounded their difficulty in gaining a forum for their ideas.

The unaffiliated representatives were not only handicapped in making their policies and opinions known within the government, but also lacked the power to make their case effectively to society at large. The public paid

attention that Soka Gakkai-backed assembly members had been pursuing their duties as elected representatives — frustration that led them to call for the formation of a political organization of their own. Many of the representatives had expressed this opinion to Shin'ichi Yamamoto.

Shin'ichi and the Gakkai-supported representatives had first discussed forming a political organization the previous spring, in 1961. Shin'ichi had told the group of elected representatives and Gakkai directors gathered at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters on that occasion: "I agree with you about forming a new political organization. I am sure all of you have come to feel the need for such a body or club through your political activities. I, however, think we'll eventually have to form such an organization from the perspective of the future of our kosen-rufu movement.

"The Soka Gakkai's goal is all people's happiness. To achieve that, we must bring peace to the world and create social prosperity. It is therefore only natural that we must be active on many different fronts — in politics, business, education and activities for peace — all of which promote culture's advancement in the broadest sense.

"The religious organization of the Soka Gakkai nurtures and fosters human beings, the driving force that creates culture, thereby cultivating the soil upon which a healthy society can develop and flourish. It is my belief that people who have been nurtured by the Soka Gakkai should be active in all realms of human endeavor and, if necessary, form groups and institutions that will assist them in contributing to society.

"I believe this holds true not only for political activity, but in the fields of music, art, science and academia, as well as of education and peace studies. Forming a po-

litical body may signal the first of many area-specific organizations we will establish."

Then Shin'ichi added sternly: "But don't misunderstand me. This political organization you wish to form should not exist for the sake of the Soka Gakkai. I do not view it in such a limited way. I'm talking about a new type of political organization, dedicated to the happiness of all the Japanese people, an organization that will serve them with a spirit of great compassion."

The representatives listened intently to Shin'ichi Yamamoto's words. "I hope that if you are going to start a political organization," he said, "you will become self-reliant as soon as possible and win the great trust and support of the people. The Soka Gakkai will continue to support you in the elections, but as far as actual policies are concerned, I hope you will all discuss them carefully and decide amongst yourselves.

"I look forward to the day when a great majority of the Japanese people will find themselves in full support of the policies and achievements of this new political organization, when each of its representatives will have earned a broad base of trust and support so that each will be elected easily even without the Soka Gakkai's support."

When Shin'ichi finished speaking, Minoru Suzumoto, a director of the Soka Gakkai and a representative of the Kanagawa Prefectural Assembly, asked, "Should we regard this political organization's formation as the founding of a political party?"

"No," Shin'ichi said. "I haven't thought as far as forming a political party. At this point, we don't have any members in the House of Representatives. So instead of founding a full-fledged political party, I think it's better to regard this as something less formal, a sort of political club. Mr. Toda often said that monitoring the government's actions was of first importance and that it was sufficient to have representatives in the House of Councilors who could correct any improper government policies."

Hisao Seki then offered his opinion: "Mr. Toda certainly did say that. But our supporters — both members and non-members alike — have told us that to achieve the ideal of *rissho ankoku* [peace and prosperity based on the philosophy and principles of the Daishonin's Buddhism] we espouse, we will need to elect people to the House of Representatives, too, in the future. I also believe that to be the case."

Shin'ichi nodded and replied: "I, too, have heard that opinion expressed. That is an important topic for future discus-



attention to the policies and positions of parties rather than to those of individual representatives. The Soka Gakkai-backed representatives had come to feel that in the world of politics, it was necessary to have a political organization to provide them with a platform to speak from.

The same was true in the local assemblies. It was with considerable frus-

LION, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

sion, but for the time being, let's address the issue of the House of Councilors. The Upper House today no longer functions as it should to correct the excesses and make up for any shortcomings of the House of Representatives.

"This is because its members act only according to party interests. Party dictates rule how they will vote on a bill. An Upper House member may personally judge that a bill passed by the Lower House ought to be rejected, but that judgment is overruled by the party's imperative. I think that restoring the Upper House to its original function as the legislature's 'conscience' is a task of pressing importance in order to return government's power to the people."

Having said this, Shin'ichi looked directly at each of his listeners.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto continued: "At any rate, why not start by forming a political organization for interested representatives in the House of Councilors and the local assemblies who are Soka Gakkai members? And if any representatives feel a need for it, they can establish a political club in their respective assemblies."

The politicians nodded in agreement with Shin'ichi's proposal. Shin'ichi looked intently from one person to another. "With regard to supporting candidates for the House of Representatives," he said, "let's discuss it further. Also, should you all agree to form a political party in the future, let's think about it carefully and work together closely on the matter." While Shin'ichi certainly felt the need to establish a political party and sponsor candidates for the House of Representatives, he had not yet come to a final conclusion on these issues.

When viewing the state of Japanese politics from the perspective of *rissho ankoku*, he felt that these may indeed be unavoidable issues they would have to confront and come to a decision on. But establishing a political party and sending representatives to the Lower House and the Upper House would, at the very least, impose a great burden on the Soka Gakkai, the primary supporter of such endeavors.

Shin'ichi also clearly foresaw the



possibility of these steps embroiling the Gakkai in a tempest of political contention, exposing it to even harsher criticism than it was already receiving from the established parties. Still, he was well aware that the time to make a decision about supporting candidates for the House of Representatives was approaching — although, of course, the choice was not his alone.

Discussions on forming a political organization continued. On one such occasion, Katsu Kiyohara asked, "What do you think we should name this group?"

Hisao Seki pounced on the question as if he had been anticipating it.

"In July 1956," he said, "after the first election in which Soka Gakkai ran candidates for the Upper House, Mr. Toda told the elected representatives, 'I don't care what political party you join, but if you should form a political club of your own in the future, let's call it the Komei [Clean Government] Caucus.' He also said that the Soka Gakkai's political movement was to be based on fair, honest elections that didn't rely on expensive campaigns and vote-buying. It is our mission, he said, to reform Japan's corrupt money politics, back-room deal-making and lavish entertaining where political favors are bought and sold.

"I think using the word *komei* would show that we are determined to uphold Mr. Toda's spirit."

Shin'ichi Yamamoto nodded in assent as he listened to Hisao Seki's proposal. "That's right," Shin'ichi said. "I remember the time very well when President Toda spoke of

using the name Komei Caucus. But if we use the word *caucus*, it will sound like a political club. How about the Komei Political Federation? Then the members in each respective legislature can use the name Komei Caucus for the political club they establish."

Shin'ichi then began to share his personal convictions about politics: "In Japanese politics today, political parties and leaders behave like paid lobbyists for vested interests such as industry, business and labor unions. Far too many politicians think only of their own interests, presenting legislation and promoting policies that favor the groups that supported their election campaigns. Moreover, their supporters also expect and demand special favors. This makes impossible a government that is truly for the people.

"In contrast, the Soka Gakkai has fully, energetically supported members such as yourselves who have run for office. But it has never asked for even a single political favor in return. We have shown a genuine commitment to truly clean, honest elections and clean, honest government. This is something that will never change."

Politicians alone do not determine the quality of government. The political awareness and will of the voters who support and elect politicians are major factors in moving them and determining government's course. That is why true government reform cannot be achieved without developing the people's conscience and awareness. The Gakkai had been awakening the people, empowering them with knowledge and opening their eyes to the direction their society is heading.

Shin'ichi addressed the representatives with almost prayer-like vehemence: "You have no need, as politicians, to ever do special favors for the Gakkai. None whatsoever. I want you to make the happiness of all Japan's people your top priority — without worrying about anything else. Be great political leaders with a vision that looks 100 years into Japan's future, or rather 1,000 years into the future of the world. And work to make that vision a reality.

"In the local assemblies, please remember that you are the servants of the people; help them in every way you can. I want you to be models of service, winning everyone's praise for your tireless efforts for the welfare of your constituency's residents. Please be lion-like in defending the people — that is my wish and hope. I am sure that your fellow members who supported you in your campaign feel the same way."

With each discussion, the shape of the Komei Political Federation became more clearly defined. One day, some of the organization's guiding principles and basic platform to Shin'ichi to review. He immediately began to pore over them. The platform was as they had discussed and agreed upon: opposition to nuclear weapons, protecting Japan's peace constitution and a call for clean politics.

But Shin'ichi spent some time mulling over the draft of the group's basic philosophy. It, too, contained ideas that had been discussed and arrived at by the consensus of all involved. But something about the wording of the third principle bothered him: "Our political ideals are founded in Nichiren Daishonin's spirit of *rissho ankoku* — the realization of a peaceful and prosperous society based on Buddhist 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."

He looked up from the paper and said quietly, "I think the phrase 'Nichiren Daishonin's spirit of *rissho ankoku*' is going to be difficult for many to understand. Most people don't know what it means. It may only lead to a misunderstanding that the Komei Political Federation is seeking some kind of unification of church and state. Wouldn't it be better to reword it in a way that even non-members can easily understand?"

Hisao Seki replied, "Yes, but, I wonder if there is any other way to express this?"

"How about, for example, the 'principle of the sanctity of life' or 'true humanism' or some similar phrase?" Shin'ichi suggested.

Everyone thought about it quietly until finally Koichi Harayama, Soka Gakkai general director and a representative in the House of Councilors, said: "It is true, as you say, that non-members may misunderstand our intent. And I think we could phrase it differently. But I also think that this wording makes a clear distinction between the Komei Political Federation and other organizations. It expresses our unique character.

"We believe that part of our job as representatives is to let people know that the spirit of *rissho ankoku* has nothing at all in common with the unification of government and religion — it falls upon us to promote a proper understanding of its true import. We are all committed to this. Therefore, we really want to retain this statement as it is, if at all possible."

Shin'ichi had no intention of vetoing a decision that the others had arrived at after long, careful thought and serious discussion.

"I see," he said. "So this is what you all want. All right, then, let's go with it!"

(To be continued)

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## SIGN POSTS

APPLYING  
NICHIREN  
DAISHONIN'S  
WRITINGS TO  
DAILY LIFE

### A Lifelong Challenge of Faith

By JEFF FARR

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

**To seek enlightenment without repudiating slander is as futile as trying to find water in the midst of fire or fire in the midst of water. (The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 165)**

Earlier this year, some youth division leaders from the United States attended the 1st Nationwide Young Men's and Young Women's Division Leaders Meeting in Japan (see p. 10). At that meeting I was impressed by how, six years after all the trouble with Nikken began, SGI President Ikeda continues to talk with such intense passion and seriousness on the importance of "repudiating slander."

Quoting this passage from "Admonitions Against Slander," President Ikeda elaborated that "no matter what excuses people make, or what leadership position they hold, if they do not fight against evil, they will fall into hell."

When we speak out against the enemies of our movement, we receive a lot of benefit, he said. But when we ignore them we are essentially assisting them in their work. We then wind up sharing their destiny.

Like many other SGI-USA members, over the last six years I have been struggling to educate myself and my friends about the meaning of the Nikken sect, the concept of the third powerful enemy, etc. — why the SGI is being slandered. There have been many frustrations but also many victories for me along the way.

When I study this passage, though, I realize that what you've done in the past doesn't matter so much. Since the SGI is still being slandered, the time to speak up is still now. And in all likelihood, the SGI movement will continue to be slandered well into the future as it continues to expand.

Repudiating slander, just like seeking enlightenment, is in fact a lifelong challenge for practitioners of this Buddhism. ☐

## UNDERSTANDING MENTOR AND DISCIPLE

# The Perfect Relationship — 2

*This is the second part of Dr. Alfred Balitzer's essay on the mentor-disciple relationship. (See the Feb. 14 issue for part one.)*

By ALFRED BALITZER  
CLAREMONT, CALIF.

My view of the profound relationship between mentor and disciple comes largely from the Jewish tradition. In 70 C.E., the Roman General Titus burned the Temple in Jerusalem; a few years later the Emperor Hadrian forbade Jewish religious practices, crushed Jewish resistance to Roman rule and expelled the Jews from their ancestral land. Thus began the Diaspora, ending only in our time with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. From the 1st century on, rabbis, or teachers, replaced the priest class as the guardians of Jewish belief and the mentor-disciple relationship became the sacred vessel that carried the Law across the centuries.

There are many edifying examples of mentor-disciple in the Jewish tradition, although one in particular has had a lasting influence on my life: the example of Moses Maimonides, a man whose influence on Judaism parallels that of Nichiren's on Buddhism.

Maimonides was born in the Spanish city of Cordova on March 30, 1135, less than a century before the birth of Nichiren. The son of a prominent family, Maimonides had a blessed childhood and was recognized as a prodigy. However, when he was only 13, his serene life was shattered by war and religious persecution. Following the capture of Cordova by a fanatical Islamic sect, Maimonides' family was forced to conceal their Jewish practice.

After a decade of playing out a dangerous deception, the family fled through North Africa to Cairo, Egypt. Along the way, they settled for a brief period in Morocco, where Maimonides' mentor, Rabbi Judah ibn Shoshan, was arrested, tried and executed for practicing Judaism. Soon after arriving in Egypt, Maimonides lost his father and his brother, the latter on a voyage with all the family wealth.

War, persecution and poverty could not defeat Maimonides. Challenged by adversity, he reached down into himself for the resolve to overcome his circumstances, sustained by the spirit of his ancient faith and the belief that his contribution to humanity still lay ahead of him.

And what contributions he made! In Egypt he became the preeminent physician of the age, tending to the Sultan, the famous Saladin, at his court. Furthermore, he became the foremost philosopher of medieval Judaism, exploring the boundary between faith and science. Maimonides also codified the ancestral Law of the Jews, bringing new clarity, un-

derstanding and vitality to the Law, leading many to conclude that he was the greatest expounder of the Law since it was first given to the Jewish people by his namesake, the Prophet Moses.

Maimonides was also the most renowned teacher of the Jewish middle ages. Although the cream of Jewish youth gathered around him in Cairo to study the Law, it was not for the purpose of creating an idle and arrogant intellectual class. Rather, it was for the sake of perpetuating the Law, the central purpose of which is to destroy idolatry.

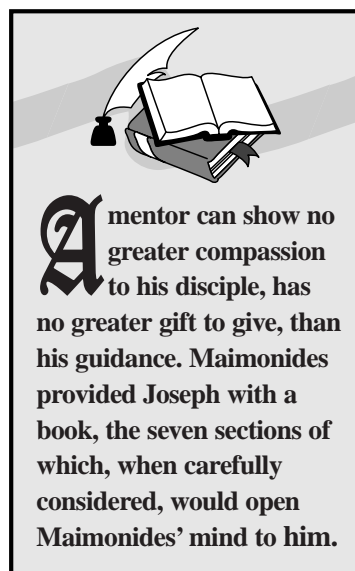
Idolatry divides humankind into contentious factions, creating war and blinding people to the fundamental truth of Judaism, the oneness of all things. It is also

studies, Maimonides provided Joseph with a book, the seven sections of which, when carefully considered, would open Maimonides' mind to him.

Writing is an imitation of speech, the most basic and powerful form of human intercourse. Speech reaches to the heart as well as to the mind. A treatise, such as Maimonides wrote, appeals principally to the mind. SGI President Ikeda's English-language works are largely speeches or forms of speech, as, for example, his many dialogues. He imitates in print the most natural of all human communication, imparting through the printed word his great and indomitable compassion, reaching the heart and mind of his reader, admonishing and inspiring.

For President Ikeda, the emphasis on mentor-disciple is as a life-affirming association. For the Jewish tradition, the emphasis is associated with the preservation of a people. Maimonides' book gives warning: The world is a snare full of idols. Joseph's gift was intended to protect him against idolatry in all of its forms, including science, by taking him through the perplexities he might experience, distinguishing truth from idolatry and falsehood. These two approaches illustrate the differences as well as the similarities between Buddhism and Judaism as regards mentor-disciple, suggesting, I believe, fertile ground for further dialogue.

There is one last dimension of mentor-disciple that I wish to discuss by citing a few words from another letter that I wrote to President Ikeda. Speaking of founders, I wrote that:



History turns on the twin pillars of founders and peoples.... Based on deep insight into the nature of things, founders articulate an intellectual and moral horizon that, put into symbols, words and institutions, gives purpose and daily guidance to the lives of people. It is for the sake of the people that founders do their work, fulfilling their destiny and gaining their role in history. It is the peculiar genius of founders that they are able to become the mentor of an entire people, performing on a cosmic level what the rest of us are only capable of doing on a person-to-person basis. Thus, the real heart of the relationship of founders to people is the mentor-disciple relation.

To conclude, there is, in my view, no better way to learn about the true meaning of mentor-disciple than to study the words and deeds of Daisaku Ikeda. Pick up his books, read his speeches, study his history! Make them your own, inscribing them on your heart and mind. Then, put them into practice. Mentor-disciple is not an abstract, intellectual concept. Rather, through it you will change the world and, with it, yourself. ☐

for this reason that Maimonides argued for the belief in God's incorporeality. To believe that God has a body or form is, according to Maimonides, another form of idolatry. Under Maimonides' tutelage, these students were transformed into disciples, sharing Maimonides' purpose and spirit. Maimonides nurtured them like tender plants so that they would bloom for the next generation.

One young man, Joseph, traveled "from the ends of the earth" to study with Maimonides, but was forced to interrupt his instruction before completing his course of study. For the sake of his young student, Maimonides wrote his famous *Guide of the Perplexed*, a monumental work dedicated to Joseph "and his like."

A mentor can show no greater compassion to his disciple, has no greater gift to give, than his guidance, which serves to protect the disciple and to strengthen him for the time when he must carry on alone without his mentor. That gift is best conferred orally given the familiar nature of mentor-disciple. However, once events compelled Joseph to interrupt his

# Everything Depends On Youth

SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech at the 1st Nationwide Young Men's and Young Women's Division Leaders Meeting, held jointly at the Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium, Jan. 11.

To all you valiant young leaders, I declare with my greatest hopes and expectations: Three cheers for the world's foremost group of young people, the SGI youth division! I am praying for your success in all endeavors!

Today, individuals and groups around the world are earnestly grappling with the questions of how they will meet the challenges of the 21st century and what they must do to survive and realize victory in the coming age. We can perhaps regard these next few years as the all-important approach down the runway for our successful takeoff into the 21st century.

For the SGI, these next few years will signal the time to entrust the youth division with the future of kosen-rufu. Everything depends on youth. This will be the time when young people take full responsibility. Congratulations, therefore, on holding this leaders meeting, a ceremony for transferring the baton of succession for the 21st century!

*A group of SGI-USA youth division members, representing members from throughout the world, then performed a song as a present to Japan's youth division. The Kanto Brass Band reciprocated by playing the marching song "Alte Kameraden" (Old Comrades), composed by Karl Teike (1864-1922).*

"Old comrades" — what a

beautiful resonance that has! This meeting is being attended by members from throughout Japan — from Kyushu in the south to Hokkaido in the north — and by SGI representatives from around the world.

I hope that afterward you will spend some time visiting with old friends, shaking hands, exchanging greetings and rejoicing in one another's growth.

## The Honor of Great Successors of the SGI

The SGI is a wondrous organization that has appeared in accord with the Buddha's will and decree. We are a gathering of people 10 million strong who embrace a great philosophy and are working to promote peace and culture. We are advancing toward the goal of lasting peace, toward kosen-rufu, based on the profound philosophy of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

Throughout the world, SGI members are taking action for the happiness of friends and the prosperity of their communities. There is no greater organization of the common people anywhere in the world — not in the past or, undoubtedly, in the future.

And it is you, the youth, who are the true successors of this great organization. The magnificent stage of the 21st century belongs to you. Your mission is truly immense. I am praying each day that you will take the lead and carry out activities freely in your

respective areas around the world. And I am working with my entire being to lay the groundwork so that you may indeed do so.

## Where Does Happiness Lie?

What is true happiness? Probably people everywhere think they know, but in fact very few really do. There is a saying in Thailand: "False happiness makes people spoiled and deplorably arrogant. Real happiness makes people joyful and fills them with wisdom and kindness." These words, while appearing simple, are actually quite profound. "False happiness" is derived from external sources. "Real happiness," on the other hand, wells forth from within, from the very depths of one's life — the quintessence of which is bringing forth the state of Buddhahood in one's life.

False happiness is derived from the pursuit and acquisition of more and more material possessions. Real happiness is derived from efforts to improve oneself as a human being and develop inner wealth; in other words, from carrying out one's human revolution. The wisdom of Thailand, a country with a long Buddhist tradition, is truly wonderful.

The second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda, also frequently stressed that genuine happiness can only be found in absolute happiness. False happiness is rel-

ative; real happiness is absolute. President Toda's insight always penetrated right to the essence of things.

*President Toda once said: "There are two kinds of happiness, absolute and relative. Achieving absolute happiness is the greatest joy in life; it is carrying out one's human revolution. Fresh and vigorous faith is the secret to becoming happy without fail."*<sup>1</sup>

Up to this point, Japan has been in sole pursuit of relative happiness. As a result, many people see the Japanese as "spoiled and deplorably arrogant," as the Thai saying goes. Japan's future will be bleak indeed if it continues on this path. I believe that true stability, peace and happiness will remain elusive for Japan unless it pursues absolute happiness — in other words, human revolution.

You, the youth of the SGI, who are advancing with the great philosophy of the Mystic Law, are pioneers in transforming society at the most profound level. To you falls the task of opening an era in which all people can savor lives of joy, wisdom and compassion.

No one knows more clearly than we along which path true happiness lies.

## Youth Is Infinite Hope, Unlimited Strength

Youth is infinite hope, unlimited strength, a priceless treasure.

It is immeasurably more precious, noble and sublime than the status, wealth or renown enjoyed by any head of state, millionaire or celebrity.

President Toda often praised the natural vibrancy and beauty of youth, saying, "Youth needs no cosmetic artifice; youth is beautiful in and of itself." I feel the same way.

Each of you is dedicating your youth — your precious, jewel-like existence — to readying yourself for the role you will fulfill in the 21st century.

Being young in itself means to possess the greatest wealth, even if you are penniless. Hope, potential and limitless energy are the assets of youth. You don't need to be in a hurry to own a nice home, or seek status and position, or get rich quick. If you dedicate yourself earnestly to your mission, everything you need for your life will come to you naturally.

If you continue to make steadfast efforts, then, just like fruit ripening on a tree, good fortune and benefit will adorn your life. To be impatient and try to pick the fruit before it's ripe is foolish. Youth is the training ground for forging your character, for developing into a wonderful human being.

When your life shines, people will naturally be attracted to you. So, for those who want to get married, you can easily have a thou-

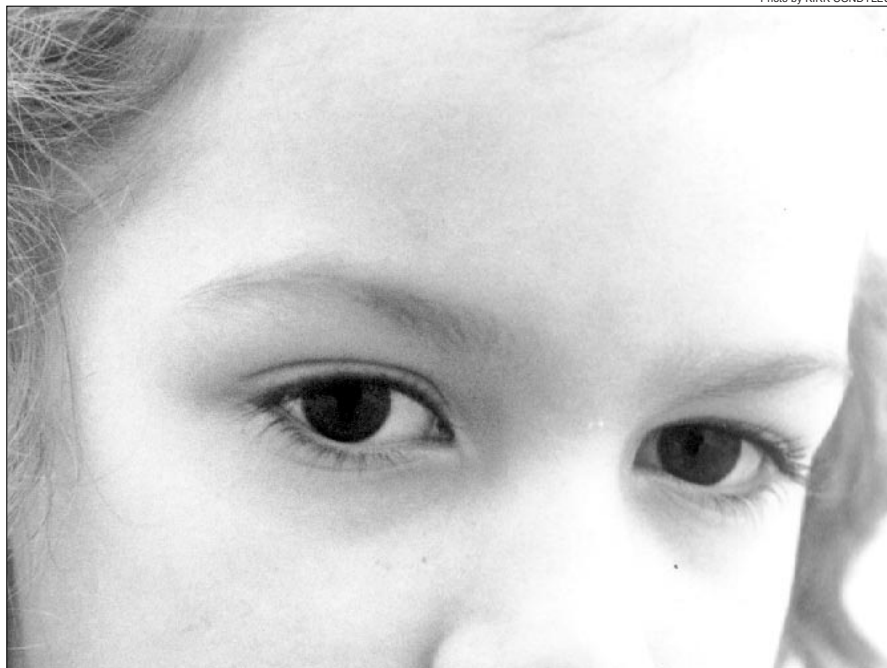


Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

**SPEECH, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE**

sand potential partners vying to marry you! Everything depends on you, on the condition of your life.

It is important that your life shine. And it's best to be yourself, natural and unaffected.

**Actualizing the Words of One's Mentor**

To be young is wonderful, but whether you can appreciate this is another matter.

You have an infinitely great mission. But the outcome of your life will be completely different depending on whether you can recognize your good fortune in having such a profound mission.

Having a personal awareness is important. When we do something, we should do it wholeheartedly and on our own initiative, not dragging our feet and taking action only because someone told us to.

Personal awareness entails a self-awakening. The deeper our awareness, the more our horizons will expand and the more profound our lives will become.

When I was a young man, I made this determination: "I had the fortune to encounter my mentor, President Toda. Therefore, I will actualize all of my mentor's words. And I want to learn and receive training from him." Because this was my unwavering commitment, I do not have any regrets.

**A Life Without Purpose Is Miserable**

Every day, I receive many faxes from throughout the world. Today, I will share one such letter from a member describing the insights of an American entrepreneur.

The entrepreneur observed that no matter how much money, status or wealth people have, if they fail to polish themselves, their lives will be empty. Similarly, without someone to guide them to a higher self-realization, their lives drift in a void, going nowhere. The entrepreneur knew many of the world's wealthiest people, he said, but among those who lacked a real sense of purpose or mission in life it was often the case that they spent lonely, solitary final years, or having amassed vast fortunes and realized all their worldly ambitions, were left with a great sense of emptiness and futility.

When he spoke to such people about the Daishonin's Buddhism or shared my speeches, he said that they drank in his words like parched earth soaks up water. He

was truly glad that he had encountered this Buddhism.

I hope you, my young friends, will take these words to heart as a lesson for the future.

**Fifty Years of Continuous Struggle**

This year marks the 50th anniversary of my embracing faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism [Aug. 24, 1947]. For half a century, except for a 10-day period when I was ill, I have not rested for a single day. I have worked unceasingly, solely for kosen-rufu and for the happiness of the members. I have exerted myself tirelessly in action and deed. And I have written prodigiously. I have accomplished a thousand times, ten thousand times more than you, my young friends, have to date. And I am proud of all that I have achieved for kosen-rufu.

**Develop a Diamondlike Self**

The Buddhist scriptures speak of the Buddha having a "diamond-like body." In other words, the Buddha has a state of being as strong and indestructible as a diamond; good fortune and benefit that can never be destroyed, no matter what happens; and character that sparkles with dazzling brilliance.

How can one develop such a state of being? This is a theme that runs throughout the Goshu. The Daishonin's conclusion is that one must thoroughly oppose evil. That is, one must refute that which is erroneous and spread the True Law; exert oneself wholeheartedly for justice; and struggle for the sake of the Law. Repudiating supreme evil is a cause of supreme good.

"Fight against evil! If you fail to do so, you will doom yourself to a state of hell. If you rigorously attack evil, you will acquire the 'diamondlike body' of a Buddha — you will attain Buddhahood." This spirit is the cornerstone of Buddhism. This is what Shakyamuni taught and what Nichiren Daishonin practiced.

In "The Opening of the Eyes," the Daishonin cites a passage from the Nirvana Sutra where Shakyamuni Buddha says:

Kashyapa, because [in the past] I devoted myself to the correct teaching, I have been able to achieve this diamond-like body that abides forever and is never destroyed....

The Monks [whom you are speaking of] preach various teachings, but still they are not able to utter "the lion's roar"... Nor are they able to refute and

convert evil persons who go against the correct teaching. Monks of this kind can bring no benefit either to themselves or to the populace. You should realize that they are in fact shirkers and idlers. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 184)

In short, when the time comes to act, we must do so. We must wage a thorough and relentless struggle against evil. To the extent that we do so, the negative tendencies in our lives, our negative karma, disappear.

On the other hand, "shirkers and idlers" who fail to speak out when they should and who are

unable to repudiate evil are, in the final analysis, slandering the Law themselves. The Daishonin repeatedly explains this principle; this is the lesson that permeates the entire Goshu.

Negligence is one of the fourteen slanders.<sup>2</sup> Since to be lazy and neglectful is an act of slander, no matter how much daimoku lazy people chant, they will not receive true benefit or develop a diamondlike state of being. They will not attain Buddhahood.

Nichiren Daishonin says, "To seek enlightenment without repudiating slander is as futile as trying to find water in the midst of fire or fire in the midst of water" (MW-1, 165). These are

well-known words. When we repudiate evil, we receive benefit, we attain enlightenment, and we acquire the diamondlike body of a Buddha. The SGI's greatness lies in its members consistently acting in accord with these words.

The Daishonin also cites the words of Nan-yüeh, T'ien-t'ai's teacher:

If there should be a bodhisattva who protects evil persons and fails to chastise them, and if, as a result, the growth of evil is abetted, good people are caused to feel worry and confusion and the True Law is destroyed, such a person is not truly a bodhisattva. He or she will often spuriously assert, "I am carrying out the practice of perseverance." When his or her life comes to an end, he or she will fall into hell along with those evil persons. (*Goshu Zenshu*, p. 1374)

Such people try to justify their inaction by saying things like, "I know they're evil, but there are circumstances preventing me from doing anything about them right now...." They self-righteously portray themselves as martyrs bravely enduring the situation. However, Nan-yüeh severely refutes such hypocrisy.

Buddhism is very strict. No matter what excuses people make or what leadership position they hold, if they do not fight against evil, they will fall into hell. This is what the Daishonin teaches. No matter how people may try to make themselves look good, the Mystic Law cannot be fooled. Everyone without exception must face the reckoning of the Mystic Law. A society that attacks the Mystic Law is sure to come to ruin. Precisely because I don't want to see this happen, I stress this point.

**Encountering Obstacles Is Essential for Enlightenment**

The Lotus Sutra declares, "This sutra is hard to uphold" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 180). In other words, those who embrace the Lotus Sutra are certain to encounter difficulties.

The "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" states, "Those who embrace the Lotus Sutra should do so with the awareness that they will meet persecution without fail" (*Goshu Zenshu*, p. 742).

Unless we strive to surmount obstacles, we cannot become Buddhas. Nor can we accomplish kosen-rufu. For that reason, tena-

“  
Having personal awareness is important. When we do something, we should do it wholeheartedly and on our own initiative, not dragging our feet and taking action only because someone told us to.  
”

Photo by KIRK CONDYLES



## SPEECH, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

ciously enduring all, I continue to fight with the stand-alone spirit against the hardships and persecutions that assail us.

What a great shame it would be not to attain the diamondlike body of a Buddha! For there is no more profound source of happiness than this achievement; it is absolute happiness. Once you realize this state of being, your life will shine like a diamond no matter what happens. It is the same as possessing an inexhaustible store of good fortune.

Everything will be a source of joy. Your life will be pervaded by an unshakable strength and dignity. I want all of you to savor this state of life. This is the reason for our Buddhist practice, our faith and our tireless activities to spread the Daishonin's Buddhism.

Nichiren Daishonin boldly proclaimed: "I will be the pillar of Japan. I will be the eyes of Japan. I will be the great ship of Japan. This is my vow, and I will never forsake it!" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 175). In response to this profound confidence of the original Buddha, President Toda declared, "Today, the Soka Gakkai is the pillar of Japan."

### Those Who Tried To Topple the Pillar of Japan Met a Pitiful End

The authorities of the Kamakura military government tried to do away with Nichiren Daishonin, to topple the pillar of Japan. At the time of the Tatsunokuchi Persecution [1271], Hei no Saemon, one of the most powerful figures of the day, showed up with a force of several hundred warriors clad in armor to arrest just one person, the Daishonin.

The entire country treated the Daishonin as though he were the most heinous villain. Nevertheless, the Daishonin fearlessly proclaimed to his captors: "See how insanely Hei no Saemon is acting! You all have just toppled the pillar of Japan!" (MW-1, 178) His words convey his towering conviction.

*Seeing the Daishonin's dauntless composure, the warriors who came to arrest him shrank back in fear.*

Hei no Saemon, who had tried to bring down the pillar of Japan, came to a miserable end. He was beheaded and his entire family was annihilated. Moreover, the government that had persecuted the Daishonin followed a path of rapid decline from the time of the Mongol invasions on. Because of its slander of the Law and persecution of the Daishonin, Japanese society incurred general punishment, while those directly involved received individual punishment.

In today's world of turmoil and confusion, the SGI stands as the brightest hope for humankind — this is the opinion shared by many people concerned about the future. With a profound awareness of our mission, let us manifest the true power of our faith as genuine disciples of the Daishonin!

When he faced his greatest persecution, the Daishonin discarded his transient status and revealed his true identity as the original Buddha. This is why he affirms, "One should regard meeting obstacles as true peace and comfort" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 750).

I hope that each of you, too, in the course of facing tremendous challenges, will reveal your true identity and profound potential.

### Ceremonies for Passing On the Baton of Kosen-rufu

There is no real joy or excitement in a life without concrete goals or direction. In the realm of faith, too, we grow when we have clear goals — whether it be for propagation or study. In that respect, setting sound goals for activities as organizational leaders is an act of compassion.

Because of this, the goals set should not cause you or others distress, but be reasonable and acceptable to each individual. I want you to advance not as if carrying a heavy burden, but joyfully and confidently as you earnestly apply yourself to the challenges ahead. To do so, wisdom and conviction are important.

Who are the ultimate victors in life? Those who have worked hard and triumphed over difficulties. People who avoid hardship will suffer later. Those who win in the end are those who practice the essence of Buddhism in accord with the Gosho and the Soka Gakkai spirit.

When it comes to faith, those who practice with selfless sincerity gain the greatest benefit and good fortune in their lives; they realize the most profound happiness. This is the conclusion I have reached based on seeing and meeting countless people over the past 50 years.

From now until the start of the 21st century, let's make each monthly leaders meetings of the young men's and young women's divisions a magnificent ceremony for passing on the baton of kosen-rufu. I am looking forward to your splendid victory! ❧

1. Aug. 20, 1955.

2. For further explanation, see "The Fourteen Slanders" (MW-3, 205).

## The Most Meaningful Revolution Is Human Revolution

*The following are comments made by SGI President Ikeda at a conference in Tokyo, Dec. 28, 1996.*

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER

Next year, 1997, I celebrate my 50th anniversary of joining the Soka Gakkai and embracing faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

I was 19 when I met Josei Toda. At that very first meeting, I instinctively sensed that I would carry on in his footsteps and that it would be an arduous struggle.

Mr. Toda was also the go-between when I got married. At that time, he said: "We're going to launch a great revolution. It won't be a revolution that entails the use of guns or despotic powers. It will be a bloodless revolution — a 'human revolution.'"

At 32, I became president of the Soka Gakkai. From that time on, just as the summit of Mount Fuji is constantly blasted by violent gales, I have been subjected to an endless barrage of attacks and insidious schemes. Someone once remarked, "The job of Soka Gakkai president is so rigorous that the average person would not last at it for even a month." Surmounting all kinds of obstacles and persecution, I have built the SGI into what it is today.

The main theme of our drive for human revolution is that the great inner transformation in the life of a single individual can serve as a catalyst for changing society, an entire nation, and even the world.

The Buddhist scriptures describe the body of a Buddha as "indestructible as a diamond" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 184). It is vital therefore to forge a resolute and unshakable self — a self strong enough to calmly withstand whatever conditions or circumstances one may encounter in daily life and society.

The Mystic Law is the supreme and eternal law. Nothing can surpass it. If one upholds the Mystic Law, the Buddhist gods Bonten and Taishaku will unfailingly offer their protection. However, those who act to suppress and negate the Mystic Law will only bring ruin upon themselves.

Buddhism is win or lose. Only by triumphing over devilish functions can we attain Buddhahood. That is why we mustn't fear anything.

The causes we make in the present determine the effects we will see in the future. Therefore, let us advance confidently along the wise and profound path of human revolution. ❧

### EXPERIENCE, FROM PAGE 6

monitored in intensive care, I underwent cardiac arrest. My heart went into a rapid fibrillation with a rate of 186 beats per minute. Someone told me to cough. I did, and that's the last I remember. I passed out from lack of oxygen to the brain. I was out — unofficially dead. I was hit with the paddles from the crash cart.

Gradually, as I came to, I saw shadowy images and heard indistinguishable voices. Then I heard a clear voice calling to me: "Come on, Carl! Come back! You can do it!" I saw Polly, one of my nurses. I reached out and hugged her so hard. I will never forget her.

Some things I cannot change, like my family history of heart disease and diabetes. However, with the power of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I can make a change in my life and overcome health problems that my parents never did. I think about it: Where was I when I went into cardiac arrest? Right there in a hospital in the middle of intensive care! I call that a benefit!

Two days after this episode I went back to a regular ward at the hospital. Eleven days later I was released. I was still very weak. I had great difficulty even walking the length of a room. My headquarters chief took me to his home in Anchorage, and I rested there for the night. The next day he drove

me in my car all the way back to Fairbanks.

When I got home, both my daughter and my wife gave me the biggest hugs and kisses ever. I felt so fortunate to have such family and friends.

Throughout this experience, the choice for me was clear. It was between developing like a gigantic tree into an accomplished person, or finishing my life sadly like a weak, skinny tree. It was all determined by how I handled my obstacles.

Back at home, I took another cardio stress test — this time with successful results. I started back to work on a limited-duty basis. And I began a program called PACE (Pul-

monary and Cardiac Enhancement) at a Fairbanks hospital. At this time I weighed 255 pounds. My threshold of endurance in exercise was extremely limited.

While chanting daimoku, I vowed that I would reach full recovery and become stronger than I ever was. During this time, my fellow members in Fairbanks were very supportive. I was really taken at the concern they showed for me and my family.

I continued the PACE program for 12 weeks. By February 1996, I had lost 40 pounds and 5 inches from my waist (and I'm keeping it off!). I am now stronger than I have ever been. My medication has been reduced to a small fraction of what it was. Since my weight loss, my dia-

betes is under control and my overall health has improved immensely. Because of my results, my cardiologist uses me as an example to many of his patients.

I continue to exercise in the PACE program. I no longer have any restrictions on my activities at work, and I can continue my cardiac rehab training without losing any time from work. This has greatly reduced the stress in my daily life.

I am truly fortunate to have the opportunity to chant daimoku to the Gohonzon and to have many protective forces working all around me. I deeply thank SGI President Ikeda and all the members of Alaska Headquarters from the bottom of my strong, strong heart. ❧

“ I know that my father was always interested in trying to have a very broad experience. That is, to listen to people of different cultures, of different backgrounds. And I think he even had conflicts with some of his friends, who asked, ‘Why do you think discussions with, say, a Buddhist leader are important?’ ”

“ The Club of Rome is a good example of something that he left behind. He started it with the idea of trying to understand better where the world was going. So he was always very brave and unafraid of criticism, but yet he would listen. It was an interesting combination. ”

# STRESSING HUMANISTIC VALUES

*Roberto Peccei, the son of Club of Rome founder Aurelio Peccei, is a Club of Rome member. Yoshi Nagaoka, Seikyo Shimbun staff writer, and Jeff Farr, World Tribune associate editor, talked with him about the club and his father's work at the Club of Rome's annual conference in Ponce, Puerto Rico, on Dec. 1, 1996.*

**WT:** Do you have any recollections of when your father and SGI President Ikeda were becoming friends?

**RP:** I know that my father was always interested in trying to have a very broad experience. That is, to listen to people of different cultures, of different backgrounds. And I think he even had conflicts with some of his friends, who asked, “Why do you think discussions with, say, a Buddhist leader are important?” He said, “Look, we're all in one world, and it's important to get many different perspectives.”

I think he had a very good interaction with President Ikeda and was happy to actually collaborate with him. Unfortunately, my father died soon after.

It would have been interesting to see how their friendship would have developed in the future. But I know that he was very happy about the book they wrote together [*Before It Is Too Late*]. I know they didn't agree on many things, that each had his own road, but they had, I think, quite a reasonable dialogue.

**WT:** Did your father mention anything about President Ikeda to you personally?

**RP:** We always talked together about different things. At that time I was living in Germany, so it was a little easier for me to see him. Now I live in the States; it would have been a little more complicated now.

He certainly discussed some of the things that he was doing

during the writing of his book. He again was quite certain that it was a good thing to do. As I said, it was not a particularly popular thing to do among some of his colleagues. But he felt that it was an interesting thing to do for him. And he felt that it was a very useful experience.

So he did not, if I remember, mention things directly about President Ikeda, but he talked about his ideas and view of nature, the protection of nature, which I know is very much in the thoughts of a Buddhist. And so my father was influenced by that. He thought that was a very good thing.

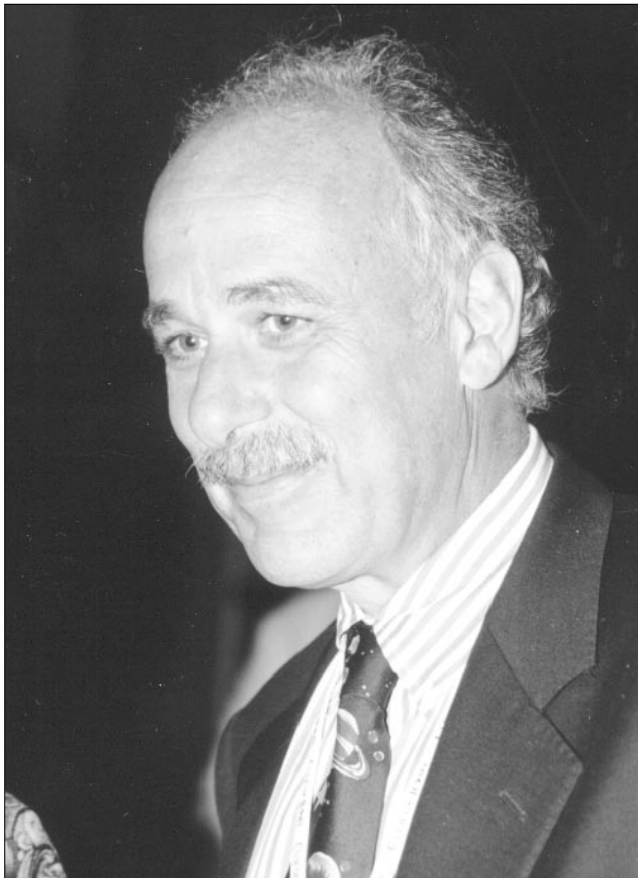
So it was more of a philosophical than a personal connection. Then I actually had the good fortune of meeting President Ikeda some time in 1985 or 1986 in Japan. I went to see him at the [SGI] Headquarters. My wife was with me, too. We had a very, very pleasant time with him and his wife.

**WT:** What was your impression of him?

**RP:** I was very happy to meet him. We talked about all sorts of different things. Again, he was quite happy about the work he had done with my father, the book that they had done together.

And he was very supportive of the ideas of the Club of Rome even then, although now he's more involved. Even then he was very supportive of the general stand of the club.

**WT:** The Club of Rome is a gathering of intellectuals, but the SGI is a gathering of common people. It is so important, though, to work together as organizations that have these different natures.



**Roberto Peccei, the son of Club of Rome founder Aurelio Peccei, is the dean of physical sciences at the University of California at Los Angeles.**

In what particular fields do you think we can work together?

**RP:** I think in the general understanding of how human beings must learn to cooperate and exist together in this world. This morning's session was about mediating conflicts and the interesting role that religious organizations play in conflict mediation. That was an example.

In fact I think we can work together in the stressing of humanistic values, which appears many times in the writings of President Ikeda and other religious leaders; and in giving a moral orientation to society — which does-

n't mean we have to be partners in any one direction, but that we are generally centered in what is positive, what adds value.

And so in that I think there is an overlap between what the club wants to do, which looks perhaps more globally, and what the SGI wants to do, which tends to look more internally, perhaps more toward spiritual things. But if you forget about this distinction between looking outside and inside, in some ways the overlap is quite strong and interconnected.

**WT:** President Ikeda is now conducting a dialogue with youth,

which we are publishing. Recently he introduced your father and some episodes of his life in the Italian Resistance during World War II, including his imprisonment (Dec. 6, 1996, *WorldTribune*).

Mr. Ikeda was talking about how the truly courageous person doesn't give up even if he or she is imprisoned. I think some of our young readers would be interested in how your father, such a courageous man, raised you.

**RP:** I think that I learned from him by example more than by instruction. He sort of did things in his own way. And I learned by observing him rather than his direct teaching.

Actually, I keep learning from him, even though he is now gone. I reflect back on some of the things he did or the way he approached certain things.

And I think that the Club of Rome is a good example of something that he left behind. He started it with the idea of trying to understand better where the world was going. So he was always very brave and unafraid of criticism, but yet he would listen; it was an interesting combination. And he was very good at convincing people to join him. In fact, if you talk to some of the older club members, they were basically all convinced by him that this was something that they should do.

In that sense, he was not that much different from a religious leader who convinces by example, by what is perceived by others as the correctness of the ideas that he or she expounds. So in some ways it is not that surprising that he and President Ikeda got along.

**WT:** Would you like to convey a message to our members?

**RP:** Well, just a message of friendship and the fact that I am quite pleased that President Ikeda is now a little closer together with the Club of Rome. And that I hope that he continues his good work. ■■■

# SUPPORT ACTIVITIES ARE Opportunities FOR YOUTH TO GROW

*Youth division leaders of Seattle Joint Territory with "behind-the-scenes" responsibilities gathered recently to discuss how to create happiness through their activities. The participants were: Donna Keller (vice young women's division chief), Rachel Woo (Byakuren chief), Susan Ishii (Byakuren vice chief), Yuji Hayano (Soka Group chief), Warren Edmonson (Soka Group vice chief) and Paul Houle (Gajokai chief).*



Rachel Woo: 'We should strive to have the wisdom to move things in a positive direction by seeing things in the best light. That's my personal challenge.'

**WT:** Thank you all for joining us here today. In Seattle, we have been studying SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 21st SGI General Meeting held at the Florida Nature and Culture Center on June 23, 1996 (*SGI President Ikeda's Addresses in the United States*, pp. 100-118). Here President Ikeda says that humanity has been looking for the means to create happiness for ages. He gives several examples of the fragility of relative happiness and then he goes on to talk about the means for creating absolute happiness.

**Rachel:** President Ikeda said we should try to be positive all the time, viewing all situations in a positive light. Sometimes while working behind the scenes we face negativity in one form or another, but I think the point is how to view things optimistically. President Ikeda said that strength, wisdom and cheerfulness lead to happiness.

Of course, he also said that being optimistic does not mean being foolish or gullible or allowing people to take advantage of one's good nature.

I think this means we should strive to have the wisdom to move things in a positive direction by seeing things in the best

light. That's my personal challenge. Buddhism teaches that we all have tremendous potential inside. It also teaches us that by manifesting that potential and polishing our character through SGI activities, we can create happiness for ourselves and those around us.

**Yuji:** I have the same kind of struggle in my Soka Group responsibilities. I must ask myself: "How much can I challenge myself to ensure a successful Soka Group movement? How prepared am I for this activity, down to the smallest detail?" This is the spirit I hope we in the Soka Group can share.

**Warren:** I agree. Only by challenging ourselves can we build compassion for others. In the same speech, President Ikeda said: "Leaders must not intimidate or exhaust others. They must be tolerant and have a warm approachability that makes people feel relaxed and comfortable."

"Not only are those who possess a heart as wide as the ocean happy themselves, but all those around them are happy, too" (*ibid.*, p. 106).

**Donna:** The young women's division organization provides opportunities for young women to practice Buddhism together as a peer group and to be good influences on each other. At the same time, though, part of our training in the youth division is to contribute passion and creativity to our district activities.

A young man who is somewhat shy came to his district meeting recently and opened up honestly about the struggle he was facing. Many people in the room, members and guests, responded to his sincerity by offering warm encouragement and sharing their experiences. I think youth division members have the ability to bring that kind

of warmth and humanity to our district meetings.

**WT:** A passage from *The New Human Revolution* reads: "I would like the youth to serve as the driving force in our discussion meetings and warmly embrace their fellow members with their youthful and vibrant spirit. The youth are the hope and the life of the district" (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 2, p. 29).

**Paul:** This gets back to Yuji's point. The Gosho says that if you befriend a person yet lack the mercy to correct them when they are wrong, you are functioning more like an enemy than a friend. Our challenge is to deeply understand what that means and how to apply that to our everyday situations. This comes back to building compassion by challenging ourselves through our activities.

I felt that was the theme of President Ikeda's entire visit to the United States last year. We have to deeply understand the suffering of others and help them to alleviate that suffering. The whole purpose of the SGI might be said to be relieving the suffering of one person.

At the 21st SGI General Meeting, President Ikeda also said that the first condition for happiness is fulfillment. Even if we are very busy, if we are filled with a tremendous sense of accomplishment we can build happiness on that.

On another occasion, President Ikeda said: "Whatever your field, a half-hearted attitude won't do... When young people make truly dedicated efforts — almost as if punishing themselves — their true brilliance will shine forth" (Sept. 13, 1996, *World Tribune*). We can definitely learn from this spirit. I hope no one is punishing themselves, though!



Paul Houle: 'We have to deeply understand the suffering of others and help them to alleviate that suffering. The whole purpose of the SGI might be said to be relieving the suffering of one person.'



**Warren Edmonson:** *'[I ask myself:] "How much conviction do I have to work for kosen-rufu? How cheerful do I look to other people?" I hold these questions up to myself like a mirror.'*



**Susan Ishii:** *'I don't think I'm helping anyone if I take it easy. I don't think I can help anyone develop courage and confidence that way.'*

**SUPPORT, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE**

**Warren:** We are all going to be in the "senior" division some day. That's an unavoidable truth. Then we can always look at each other and say, "In our youth, we struggled together for kosen-rufu."

I believe I can only attain that kind of deep fulfillment if I constantly ask myself: "How much conviction do I have to work for kosen-rufu? How cheerful do I look to other people?" I hold these questions up to myself like a mirror.

**Susan:** I think you need tolerance and compassion, but you also need courage to fulfill your responsibilities. As a Byakuren member, I have a responsibility to fulfill. Sometimes I think, "Oh, I'm so tired," but I try not to let myself off the hook so easily. I don't think I'm helping anyone if I take it easy. I don't think I can help anyone develop their courage and confidence that way. I want to help people get up in the morning — even if it's on the weekend — and be at their meeting place on time! That may sound like a small matter, but being on time is extremely important.

**WT:** At the 21st SGI General Meeting, President Ikeda also said that "a life based on faith is a life of unsurpassed happiness" (*SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's Addresses in the United States*, p. 107).

**Rachel:** When you work behind the scenes during an SGI activity, your priorities are the people's happiness, security, and comfort. I need a lot of daimoku to keep that frame of mind! Look at President Ikeda's example: He is constantly on the move, traveling for the sake of others' happiness.

He is the same age as my mom. She is retired and enjoying her life. But President Ikeda never gives up fighting.

People come to our activity centers in all different life-conditions. As a Byakuren member, I have to prepare thoroughly ahead of time for a successful activity. That way, I can move beyond my little world and really care about other people. This is what "unsurpassed happiness" means, I think: chanting a lot of daimoku and polishing your character through activities. Going beyond your limits.

**Yuji:** I think it's very important to have a life-condition such that you can enjoy other people's happiness. President Ikeda is one of the happiest people around because he really enjoys other people's happiness. If you have the capacity to care for 10 people, then your happiness can increase 10 times! I think that is the bodhisattva spirit and the spirit of working behind the scenes.

Also, by developing this spirit we can create tremendous momentum toward improving our district discussion meetings. I think all of us agree on the importance of having a great district planning meeting. But even if you have a great plan, someone has to make sure that the plan is accomplished. This may mean contacting the master of ceremonies, or the people who are scheduled to give presentations, or the district leaders or whomever. All those things must be considered. And they all boil down to one thing: thorough communication.

I think that youth division members should have the spirit to take on this responsibility without being asked. Our youth division activities are our training for our four-divisional activities.

**Susan:** It's really true that just a single person's smile can brighten up an entire room and bring a feeling of warmth to everyone there. Each person, in his or her own way, possesses that capability. As Byakuren members, we are always reminded how important it is to smile. Sometimes smiling is hard if you're in a bad mood! But a simple smile can bring so much encouragement to another person.

**Donna:** When I think of people working behind the scenes, I often think of the earthquake in the Kansai area in Japan and how quickly the Soka Gakkai youth division members there took action to provide relief. The key is taking action. I prefer to think in terms of "manifesting Buddhahood through action" rather than "attaining Buddhahood," which sounds unreachable to me.

**Paul:** The first two conditions for happiness that President Ikeda lists in his speech are fulfillment and having a profound philosophy. I think in part he is talking about doing our daily

practice of gongyo and daimoku, as we strive to continuously elevate our life-conditions and build conviction based upon faith.

Last month the Soka and Gajokai groups in our joint territory kicked off a study campaign centering on President Ikeda's *Lectures on the "Expedient Means"* and *"Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*. I feel this is a wonderful opportunity for all Soka Group and Gajokai members to deepen their understanding of this Buddhism.

Every morning I recite gongyo, but what does it really mean? Through these lectures, President Ikeda fully reveals the deep humanity inherent in Buddhism. We are challenging ourselves to undertake this study campaign and it's very difficult! But I feel that the long-term result will be that our daily practice of gongyo will be much more profound, that we will be able to, on a daily basis, elevate our life-conditions — which is a requirement for us to do these kinds of behind-the-scenes activities.

**Warren:** Also at the 21st SGI General Meeting, President Ikeda quoted from "The Problem to Be Pondered Night and Day": "Do not spend this life in vain and regret it for 10,000 years to come" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 173). The same Goshu says earlier that Nichiren's disciples should cut "short their sleep by night" and curtail "their leisure by day" (ibid.). In the postscript to this letter, the Daishonin says, "I hope all those who seek the truth will gather in one place and listen to this letter" (ibid.).

**Paul:** We are holding "study prep" sessions at our Soka Group and Gajokai meetings geared toward our district discussion meetings. The idea is that we study material together and then go back to our districts with what we've learned and give some sort of brief study presentation. This, of course, implies that we take some sort of initiative at our district planning meetings to volunteer.

We have to communicate with the men's and women's division leaders so that they can help incorporate this contribution from the youth into each district meeting. As President Ikeda said, "Youth are the hope and the life of the district." ☸

Photos by DIXON HAMBY



**Yuji Hayano:** *'If you have the capacity to care for 10 people, then your happiness can increase 10 times! I think that is the bodhisattva spirit and the spirit of working behind the scenes.'*



**Donna Keller:** *'I think youth division members have the ability to bring warmth and humanity to our district meetings.'*

# 'Once in a Hundred Years'

**From a life of poverty to the applause of nations, Marian Anderson pioneered a new era for the sake of 'those who follow.'**

**By CAROL CHASTANG**  
WASHINGTON, D.C., CORRESPONDENT


**M**arian Anderson (1902-93) possessed many formidable gifts. One of the 20th century's most celebrated singers, Anderson, born Feb. 27, 1897, had a rich, velvety voice and a three-octave range. In 1935, the Italian conductor Arturo Toscanini told her that "a voice like yours is heard once in a hundred years."

Tremendously talented yet unassuming, Anderson was thrust into the spotlight by an encounter with racism that would have embittered a lesser spirit. In 1939 her manager, Sol Hurok, tried to book an engagement at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., the national headquarters for the Daughters of the American Revolution. They were told that all dates were taken. When first lady Eleanor Roosevelt heard the news, she resigned from the D.A.R.

Secretary of State Harold L. Ickes then offered Anderson the Lincoln Memorial for a concert on Easter Sunday. About 75,000 attended the concert, while millions more listened to the radio broadcast.

Anderson never acknowledged ill feelings toward the D.A.R. "It is not in my nature to be combative," she said. "My mission is to leave behind me the kind of impression that will make it easier for those who follow."

In 1958, President Eisenhower made her a delegate to the United Nations.

On Feb. 27, Carnegie Hall will honor her 100th birthday with a special gala. Opera singers Denyce Graves and Jesse Norman — representing two generations of black performers who have revered Anderson as a role model — will perform. 

AP/WIDEWORLD PHOTOS



Marian Anderson poses in costume backstage at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City in 1955. She was the first African American to appear at the Metropolitan in a featured role.