

World Tribune

No. 3130

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

MARCH 14, 1997

INSIDE THIS WEEK

5 HISTORY

'The New Human Revolution,' vol. 5, chapter 4, parts 19-24.

7 SPEECH

SGI President Ikeda discusses Dr. Edward Jenner, who found the immunization against smallpox.

8 SPEECH

The SGI president talks about President Makiguchi's early propagation efforts.

12 MY RECOLLECTIONS

Maria Teresa Escoda Roxas remembers her mother's humanitarian work in the Philippines.

13 INTERVIEW

Carol Bellamy, the director of UNICEF, talks about the difference each of us can make for the world's children.

16 WORLDVIEW

Virginia Woolf's voice still encourages women to become independent.

Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA 90401
RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED
Return To: SGI-USA Subscriptions
525 Wilshire Blvd.
Santa Monica, CA 90401-1467

DATED MATERIAL: PLEASE DELIVER BY ISSUE DATE



Jilin University President Liu Zhongshu (l) came to Hong Kong to award SGI President Ikeda an honorary professorship. 'With more than half of its faculty under 40 years of age, clearly Jilin University is actively opening doors for deserving and talented youth,' Mr. Ikeda said, praising the university in his acceptance speech.

SGI President Receives Honorary Professorship

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER
Hong Kong, Feb. 20

One of China's most prestigious universities bestowed an honorary professorship on SGI President Ikeda today. Jilin University President Liu Zhongshu spoke of his deep gratitude for Mr. Ikeda's devoted efforts to open the way for friendly China-Japan relations.

He also shared his ideas on the importance of education, which echo those of the SGI leader. Mr. Liu praised President

Ikeda's profound views on history, his broad knowledge and rich humanity.


Jilin University, founded in 1946, is located in northeast China. Many noteworthy people who have been instrumental in China's development over the years are Jilin graduates.

President Ikeda, voicing his condolences on the death of Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping the previous day, commended Jilin University's contributions to China. He said that only when people learn the importance of

solidly putting down roots in self-development and self-education can future prosperity be realized.

The SGI leader is more convinced now than he was 20 years ago of the key role China will play in the new century.

In closing, Mr. Ikeda said he was determined to continue working for the further development and prosperity of China.

The text of Mr. Ikeda's acceptance speech will appear in a future issue. 

Commemorative Contribution To Start Soon

The annual May Commemorative Contribution is fast approaching. Beginning April 28 and lasting until June 6, members may make financial contributions to the SGI-USA through their local organizations. Check with your local leaders for more information.

Virginia Culture Department On the Move

By SHARON GUZMAN & MARIE MONTEAGUDO
CORRESPONDENTS
Norfolk, Va., Feb. 8

The Virginia Headquarters Culture Department is taking action. Some 30 members and guests met today to tackle the issue of diversity at a seminar co-sponsored by the Old Dominion University SGI-USA Student Group.

After an overview of SGI President Ikeda's views on becoming a global citizen, each Culture Department division

met in small groups to share their thoughts. In the healing arts division, the members shared with each other the struggles on their jobs, and Dr. Alwin Harding from Washington, D.C., stated that in order to heal others, we must first heal ourselves.

The arts division came up with a list of ideas, including creating a mural, craft and music classes, creative writing workshops and co-sponsoring a youth talent show.

The legal division grappled with ramifications of the diver-

Put Happiness of Members First, SGI President Says

SUMMARY

The following is a summary of a speech by SGI President Ikeda at the Okinawa Training Center, Onnason, Japan, on Feb. 25.

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER

SGI President Ikeda discussed the characteristics of effective leadership today, sharing the example of the late president of Japan Air Lines, Shizuma Matsuo. Mr. Matsuo, known for his perfect safety record during his more than 10 years at the helm of Japan's largest carrier, always made passenger safety his first priority.

Mr. Ikeda recounted the JAL executive's conviction that not only was character important but a strong sense of responsibility was essential as well. Mr. Matsuo, he continued, felt it vital to be alert every second, saying that one can never afford to be careless when people's lives are at stake.

The SGI leader related that Mr. Matsuo was sensitive to the important contributions of those who worked behind the scenes and always did his utmost to express his heartfelt thanks to his employees for their work. Often,

PLEASE SEE SUMMARY, 4

sity issues unearthed by the O.J. Simpson case. The consensus of the educators and academic divisions session was to put an emphasis on youth, such as sponsoring an essay contest addressing issues of diversity. Other points included working with senior citizens and developing programs with the PTA and the community.

Greg Henry, an arts professor from Christopher Newport University, said the meeting was a

PLEASE SEE VIRGINIA, 4

VOICES

How can we break down racial barriers in the workplace or in our communities?

Members from Midwest Joint Territory respond:



My training as a doctor brought me from Thailand to Kansas City, Kans., three years ago. I work in a multiracial environment in a children's hospital. As SGI President Ikeda has said, you should "regard the place where you are as the best stage for you." My practice gives me confidence that I can prove myself to be a valuable person whom other people can trust and respect. When problems occur, I know it's time for me to go back to the Gohonzon and pray for the happiness of people in my environment.

— PORNCHAI KINGWATANAKUL, Kansas City, Kans.



Racial discrimination seems second nature or even inborn to humanity. However, as Buddhists, we know that there is Buddhahood in each one of us, and therefore neither superiority nor inferiority exists among the races. Knowing this profound truth, we, as Buddhists, should continue to breakdown the racial barriers by respecting the people around us at work and in the community, regardless of color or race, and encouraging others to act the same way.

— YANG KIM, St. Louis, Mo.



I teach at an elementary school that has an African American population of approximately 70 percent. Many of my students had negative feelings for Asian people because they had never met any on a personal level. My Buddhist practice has allowed me to bring some of my SGI-USA members to my classroom to interact with my students. Now my students have positive feelings for Japanese people and wish to learn more about their culture. The experiences my students had with SGI-USA members can't be learned in textbooks.

— RAMONA WILLIAMS, St. Louis, Mo.



As overseer of the citizen complaint process against police officers, I apply the powers of faith and practice to break down racial barriers. I chant for wisdom to change the negative perceptions the public have against the police and vice-versa. I have incorporated a mediation piece into the investigative process whereby the police and citizens discuss as a team the causes of disagreements and find solutions to problems. This interaction has created mutual respect between citizens and police officers.

— PEARL FAIN, Kansas City, Mo.

I am an international student advisor at the University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Historically, there has been a lot of tension between international offices and multicultural offices. I have refused to feed into this negativity, respecting the inherent dignity of each human being, including myself. I wrote a grant with the multicultural office to fund a retreat for international, American multicultural and American majority students. It has been a complete success! This now annual event has not only resulted in more multicultural students studying abroad, but has built a bridge between people who didn't mix before. The spirit of striving for genuine dialogue triumphs again!

— HILDA M. MOLESKI, Eau Claire, Wis.

Expressions

Reflections: Past, Present and Future



A relaxing moment at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photo by Kirk Condyles.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

With the May commemorative contribution coming up, what is the significance to you of supporting the organization financially?

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

Deadline: March 24

World Tribune

(ISSN-0049-8165)

The World Tribune (692-720) is published weekly by the SGI-USA, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401; (310) 451-8811; FAX (310) 260-8910. E-mail: SokaNews@aol.com. Subscriptions Office: (800) 835-4558; FAX (310) 260-8970; E-mail: SGI_SUBS@aol.com.

Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA, and at additional mailing offices.

Subscription Rates (subject to state taxes) \$15 for Three Months; \$28 for Six Months; \$50 for One Year; \$85 for Two Years; \$110 for Three Years.

♻️ Printed on 100% recycled paper

Copyright © 1997 by SGI-USA.

All rights reserved. Printed in the USA.

Publisher Fred M. Zaitso
Executive Editor Ted Morino

Managing Editor Dave McNeill
Assistant Managing Editor Lisa Carter Kirk
Associate Editor Jeff Farr

Layout Don Sanders
Contributing Editors Nikki Amdur
Joel Drazner

Staff Translators Jeff Kriger
Shin Yatomi

Chief Photographer Gregory Nakasuji

Bureau Chiefs

Phil Simpson, Atlanta; Fletcher Dalton, Boston; Veronica Evans, Chicago; Terry Ellis, Florida; Joanne Tachibana, Hawaii; Dave McNeill, Los Angeles; Cheryl Utley, Midwest; Robert Taliaferro, New York; Dave Shadovitz, Philadelphia; Chuck Evans, Rocky Mountain; JL Henriques, San Diego; Ron Baird, San Francisco; Bill Lawrence, Seattle; Wendy DeOre, Texas; Jane Crystal Brown, Washington, D.C.

**WORLD TRIBUNE
MAILBOX**

'Drum Majors for Peace'

Thank you (and Bonnie Boswell) for the article "Drum Majors for Peace" (Feb. 14) about the resonance between the Daishonin's Buddhism and Dr. Martin Luther King's conviction that we need a "revolution of values." Her remarks about "the politics of denial" — that "we are in the middle of a holocaust, and few seem to notice" — are all too true.

But things are not as bleak as they might seem. There are countless people, many unknown, in and out of government, who are promoting peace and justice to the best of their abilities. The sad thing is that they rarely have much support and their voices are drowned out by the "sex, violence and banality" of much of the press. One of the best ways we can help is by "studying the sages of our land" and "seeking out new sources of information," as Ms. Boswell points out. It may be impossible for each of us to study every issue, but we can all research one issue and discuss it with each other. Thus through our dialogue we can protect those who are upholding justice and ultimately protect ourselves.

— EDWARD B. RIPPY, Oakland, Calif.

Three cheers to you and the author of the article "Drum Majors for Peace." Bonnie Boswell's writing style is impeccable, and the points raised are both well wrought and lucid. I feel as though we as an organization have too long skirted the issues of poverty, corporate world domination and social inequalities. Well done, Bonnie. And thanks to you, *World Tribune* staff, for having the gumption to print this article.

— STEVEN MCKNIGHT, Olympia, Wash.

Electrifying Reading

A new book about a brilliant but ill-starred inventor, Nikola Tesla (*Wizard: the Life and Times of Nikola Tesla*, by Marc J. Seifer, Birch Lane Press), reveals much of what we call karma in its contents. This genius of the electrical field had polar extremes of success and shattering failure in his 86 years. Yet he doggedly persisted in research. He was very well-read on many subjects, including Buddhism. When one turns on a fluorescent light, it is due to his courageous work in unearthing its secrets. An "electric" story, indeed!

— JOSEPH KRENGEL, Santa Monica, Calif.

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

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

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

The Living Spirit of a Bodhisattva

PERSPECTIVE

By RICHARD BROWN
ATLANTA

In 1976, I began working in the Atlanta City Jail as an identification clerk. I was about to graduate from college with a degree in criminal justice. Around the same time I was introduced to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. I worked for Atlanta in its Police Department, City Jail and Municipal Courts until 1996.

Prior to the arrival of millions for the 1996 Olympic Games, the Atlanta City Council began enacting new laws aimed at keeping the homeless population away from the downtown area. In addition, the police were becoming increasingly aggressive (there was harassment, intimidation and arrests without probable cause) toward individuals who happened to be homeless. The Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, a non-profit organization providing services for and protecting the rights of the homeless, strongly opposed the city's shortsighted response to Atlanta's homeless situation.

The task force was determined to challenge these mean-spirited laws and inappropriate police behavior. Unfortunately, due to timing, politics and the sensitivity of this issue, it was difficult to find a local law firm who would agree to take the case. Finally, in March 1996, a Boston law firm agreed to work with the task force on a pro-bono basis to defend the constitutional rights of homeless people.

On June 11, a federal lawsuit was filed by seven homeless men seeking protection from unconstitutional violations of their civil liberties. On July 11, a federal judge held a preliminary injunction hearing in Atlanta. Six days later (and two days before the opening of the Olympics), the judge granted a preliminary injunction against the enforcement of one newly enacted ordinance and parts of another.

In addition, the judge put city officials on notice that the city must immediately cease what

appeared to him to be a "disconcerting pattern in which Atlanta police officers have arrested and detained individuals engaged in lawful activity." This resulted in an immediate need for the Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless to hire a local attorney to monitor police activity and coordinate evidence-gathering efforts.

Up to this time, I had never given serious thought to what I could do about making changes to the system. It was not until I

portant need. In my heart, I had already made up my mind to resign my position as assistant public defender and go to work for the task force.

But I didn't want to make a hasty decision that I would later regret. As the sole provider for my family (I'm married with two children) and with job advancement opportunities with the city, this was not a simple matter. Also, the task force could not guarantee funding for my position after one year.

This, I knew, would be troubling to my wife, Janice. We had just experienced a severe financial setback attempting to open a day care center. To my surprise, Janice gave me her unconditional support. It seems that all of the human revolution (and daimoku and dialogue) we experienced in our failed attempt was now serving as a new, stronger foundation of communication and unity between us. I felt that she clearly understood that this was more than a job decision — it was an opportunity to fulfill our missions as Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

After chanting daimoku, talking with family and friends and receiving guidance in faith, I found the

courage to make a confident decision. I began working for the Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless on Jan. 2.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once stated that "we have to be careful when we talk about love and compassion, because it is so easy to love everyone in general but to love no one specifically." In observing the humble and tireless efforts of so many who work so hard to address the specific needs of each homeless individual, I have come to understand the living spirit of a bodhisattva.

In getting to know homeless people as individuals, I have learned more about myself and others. I no longer leave my work at the job when I go home. My job is now my life and I am determined and totally confident that I can, in this lifetime, deeply respect the inherent dignity of all people's lives, regardless of their race, religion or personal circumstances. ❧



Richard Brown

was approached by a representative of the Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless about its need for an attorney that I became aware that there were others fighting for the rights of the homeless. I immediately began to think about Nichiren Daishonin and the successive presidents of the Soka Gakkai.

In particular, I was reminded of SGI President Ikeda's many words of encouragement to youth division members about the importance of discerning good from evil and always standing up with courage for the common people. I also thought about the current priesthood situation and just how many times, after studying this issue, that I had encouraged members to challenge corrupt authority and not be satisfied with the status quo.

I felt ashamed for having been so caught up in self-satisfaction and my own security that I had failed to recognize such an im-

Contact us via the Internet . . .

SGI-USA Web Page: <http://www.sgi-usa.org>

E-mail to Editorial: SokaNews@aol.com or

Subscriptions: SGI SUBS@aol.com

Workshops Help Women Expand Their Outlook

By JANIS NICOLOSI-ENDO
CORRESPONDENT
Fair Lawn, N.J.

When the women from the North and Central Jersey territories planning board discussed how to best serve their members, they had two realizations. First, there were many talented women in New Jersey. Second, most women were seeking to develop their knowledge in key areas of their daily lives.

The result: a three-part seminar, "SGI-USA Women's Life Series: Toward the New Millennium," that addressed the issues of health, creativity and finance. The goal was to enable the attendees to broaden their outlook on life and their capability to share their wisdom with others.

"Because of the many roles women perform daily, the life of one woman has the potential to influence the lives of many other people," Zenobia Odiase, one of

the planning committee members, said. "Therefore it is important that women, especially, develop into broadminded, well-rounded individuals. Exposure to different areas of information and cultures is one way we can achieve this."

Although it was open to all women and young women's division members, there was a limited registration. Would-be participants had to fill out an application and were requested to make a commitment to attend each three-hour session for three consecutive months at the New York Culture Center.

Information was presented through lectures, workshops and dialogues. The planners researched appropriate guidance in faith as well as practical advice and distributed supplemental handouts at each session.

The series opened with a health and nutrition seminar. A presentation by Dr. Harry

Schick, a chiropractor, included the method and importance of correct breathing. Later, Dr. Cecilia Willis gave a talk on "Mental Health and the Ten Worlds." In between, during several workshops, members exchanged information on alternative methods for maintaining good health and healing. Topics included skin care, breast self-examination, herbs and exercise.

Greta Lyden, a member for almost 26 years, found the event to be very useful. When she applied what she learned to her chanting, she found that by breathing more completely, she could chant more rhythmically and with less stress. The quality of her daimoku was enhanced as a result, she says.

At the second workshop, members relaxed and enjoyed an afternoon of arts and crafts. They exercised and learned how to create decoupage and needlework. On a more serious note,

they listened to a presentation on "How To Turn Your Talent Into a Business" by Cessarina Caro.

SGI President Ikeda has said, "Art is to the spirit what bread is to the body: a necessity without which it cannot renew itself." Pamela Yamamoto came to the workshop believing she didn't possess any artistic talent. She surprised herself when she became thoroughly engrossed by cross-stitching. According to Pamela, other women in her group found the project too tedious, but by concentrating on the task Pamela felt very relaxed.

The following week she purchased two cross-stitching kits. "It gave me a sense of accomplishment to do something creative," she said.

The last part of the series was on money management. Presentations were made on budgeting, credit and debit management and investing. Everyone's inter-

est was piqued to learn that there were three types of interest collected on credit cards. Many were eager to go home and find out which system their credit companies were using because of the large discrepancy of fees.

Sheree Tillar-Ashe had always wanted to invest but felt it beyond her ability to learn how. The talk on investing changed all that. "The speaker made me feel that I can reach out and invest after doing a little bit of research," she said.

The evaluations passed out after each workshop proved the series to be a success. For Pamela Yamamoto, it was a rare opportunity to share an activity with her mother.

"I had always been a little intimidated by the women's division," she said. "I thought of them as the mom division." Now, she explains, she can see the women as her friends. ❧

Virginia Headquarters Culture Department on the Move

VIRGINIA, FROM PAGE 1

great start. "Those attending today are really concerned for making the Culture Department an oasis for everyone," he said. "We have developed a lot of ideas we can act on. We are a nucleus of different things to come in the future."

"By doing Culture Department activities we can really touch people's lives and focus on the members. We can help them develop their creativity and uniqueness. They will be ex-

cited to develop their lives and see the purpose of practicing Buddhism."

Jennifer Bryant of the educator's division, who traveled from Washington, D.C., seemed to capture the spirit of the day by sharing her impression that Virginia Headquarters is really on the move. "I am just so happy" she said, "to see how excited the members are here to really follow through with the Culture Department and not be afraid to take a first step to actualize our charter on culture." ❧

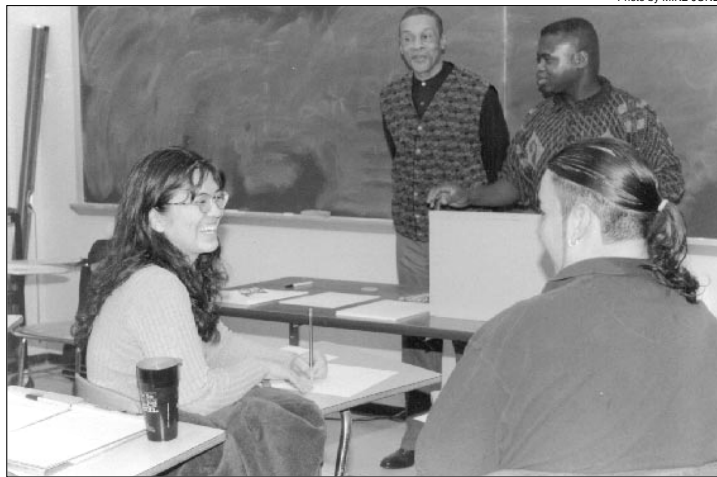


Photo by MIKE JONES

Virginia Headquarters Culture Department members discuss the issue of diversity at a recent meeting.

Put Welfare of Members First, SGI President Says

SUMMARY, FROM PAGE 1

he said, the airline president could be found chatting with members of the ground crew and maintenance personnel.

Noting that 24 hours a day somewhere in the world SGI members are engaging in activities to spread and deepen understanding of the Daishonin's Buddhism, Mr. Ikeda stressed the need for leaders to have the same spirit of concern and appreciation as shown by Mr. Matsuo. In fact, the higher one's position in the organization, he continued, the greater attention one must pay to such fundamental leadership re-

sponsibilities. A few simple words of appreciation for the sincere efforts members make, for example, can be a great source of encouragement and inspiration.

The SGI president also quoted the letter "General Stone Tiger," in which Nichiren Daishonin expressed how worried he was about Shijo Kingo's safety on a return journey from visiting him at Mount Minobu, urging him not to take needless risks when traveling and giving detailed instructions on the precautions he should take in the event of being ambushed.

The Daishonin above all encouraged Shijo Kingo to main-

tain strong faith so as to continue enjoying the protection of the Buddhist gods. Strong faith, by its very nature, explained the SGI leader, also encompasses such qualities as prudence, courage, compassion and wisdom. In conclusion, Mr. Ikeda expressed his sincere hope that the members of Okinawa would continue their efforts to establish an indestructible fortress of capable people.

He said that he would continue to pray wholeheartedly that each member can pilot their way skillfully and safely in their daily life and in SGI activities toward the destination of happiness. ❧

Leaders Appointments

Hawaii #1 Joint Territory

Melvin Padayhag
Chief

Nora Padayhag
Women's Div. Chief

Yoshiko Hara
Senior Advisor

Karen Ishii
Young Women's Div. Chief

Hawaii #2 Joint Territory

Shiela Mier
Women's Division Chief

Mitsue Rife
Senior Advisor

Los Angeles #3 Joint Territory

James Herrmann
Young Men's Div. Chief

The Komei Political Federation officially registered as a political organization at the end of November 1961. Its members had waited until the Diet reconvened in the new year to make their official announcement at the press conference on Jan. 7.

After outlining the fundamental principles and basic platform of the organization, Hisao Seki fielded reporters' questions.

One reporter asked: "The Soka Gakkai has announced that it will back candidates in this year's elections for the Upper House. Will these guiding principles and policy positions apply only for these elections?"

"No," Seki replied, "the Komei Political Federation will continue its work based on these principles and policies from here on."

Another reporter asked, "One of your platform positions is the preservation of the Japanese Constitution, but does your support apply to all provisions of the constitution?"

"Of course," answered Seki. The reporters looked at each other with puzzled expressions.

Another asked: "If you support all the provisions of the constitution, then you must also support the freedom of religion. Yet in one of your fundamental principles, you state that your politics 'are founded in Nichiren Daishonin's spirit of *rissho ankoku* — the realization of a peaceful and prosperous society based on Buddhist ideals.'

"Nichiren rejected and aggressively refuted other religions with his practice of *shakubuku*, as does the Soka Gakkai. Isn't it a contradiction to say that the Komei Political Federation supports freedom of religion?"

Shin'ichi Yamamoto's warning flashed through Seki's mind as he set out to earnestly reply to the reporter's charge.

"It is true," he said, "that the Gakkai practices *shakubuku* — propagation activities to correct erroneous religious views. But that by no means contradicts the freedom of religion as guaranteed by the Japanese Constitution.

"*Shakubuku* means sharing one's personal religious convictions with others, propagating one's beliefs, through dialogue. It is founded on mutual understanding and empathy. In other words, our propagation activities depend on the guarantees of religious freedom and freedom of speech.

"While the Soka Gakkai does indeed insist that Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is a supreme and unparalleled teaching, that is only natural.

"It would be irresponsible to propagate a religion that one did not believe was the very best. Both Christians and Muslims believe that theirs is the highest religion.

"Such conviction is the very lifeblood of religion, and in it exists the pride and conscience of people of faith."

The New Human Revolution

BY HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 5, Chapter 4

Lion

Translation of parts 19–21 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.

Prejudice and misunderstanding about religion underlay the reporters' questions. Another reporter asked, "Excuse my bluntness, but is or is not the Soka Gakkai planning to use the Komei Political Federation to make Nichiren Shoshu the national religion of Japan?"

"Definitely not," Seki shot back.

Religion, by its very nature, is a most personal matter — a function of an individual's deep inner volition. It is impossible to foster genuine religious faith through coercion or external pressure such as might be imposed by the state. If the Daishonin's Buddhism were to become a "national religion," this would invite its decline — the fossilization and extinction of the founder's spirit.

Another reporter asked with a sarcastic smirk, "You mention fair, honest elections as one of your basic policy positions, but can forcing people to vote for Soka Gakkai candidates, calling it *shakubuku*, be fair and honest?"

Seki retorted, "When and where has the Soka Gakkai ever forced anyone to vote for a candidate in the name of *shakubuku*?"

Silence.

"I'd appreciate it if you would refrain from making statements not based on investigation, but only on your personal prejudice and wild conjecture," he said. The question had exposed the reporter's complete ignorance regarding the Gakkai.

The press conference soon ended, but very few newspapers announced the formation of the Komei Political Federation. Only one or two bothered to report it and then only with a brief paragraph.

That night Shin'ichi Yamamoto received a detailed account of the press conference from Seki and the others. Most of the reporters had arbitrarily surmised that the Soka Gakkai drove its members to turn out votes for Gakkai-sponsored candidates without regard for the individuals' wishes — simply so that it could make Nichiren Shoshu the national religion and gain control of the Japanese government. The reporters based their supposition on the fact that Josei Toda in the past had referred to the establishment of a "national high sanctuary" in describing the process of achieving *kosen-rufu*.

In Buddhism, the word *sanctuary* generally refers to a place where the ceremony to confer the Buddhist precepts is held — an ordination platform. The first Buddhist ordination platform in Japan was established by the Chinese monk Chien-chen (Jpn Ganjin; 688–763) who built a Hinayana ordination platform at Todai-ji temple in the city of Nara, then Japan's capital. In the ensuing Heian period, Saicho (also known as the Great Teacher Dengyo; 767–822) devoted himself to establishing a Mahayana ordination platform at Enryaku-ji temple on Mount Hiei. His efforts bore fruit when the platform was finally built after his death.

But even the Mahayana ordination platform at Enryaku-ji was a sanctuary dedicated to the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra. As yet there was no sanctuary devoted to the core of the Buddhist teachings, the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra.

Nichiren Daishonin entrusted his disciples of future generations to establish the high sanctuary of the Three Great Secret Laws implicit in the depths of the essential teaching (second half) of the Lotus Sutra. In his work "On the Three Great Secret Laws,"¹ he states:

With regard to the high sanctuary: When the law of the ruler fuses with the principles of Buddhism, and when the principles of Buddhism merge with the law of the ruler, and both the ruler and his subjects all uphold the Law of the three secrets of the essential teaching [of the Lotus Sutra, i.e., *Nam-myoho-enge-kyo*], and when the ancient example of King Possessor of Virtue and the monk Realization of Virtue² is transposed to a future time in the defiled age of the Latter Day of the Law, you should, after securing an imperial decree and a shogunal directive, find the finest place resembling the pure land of Eagle Peak and there construct the high sanctuary. (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1022)

It was Chigaku Tanaka (1861–1939) who first used the term *national high sanctuary* to describe the high sanctuary mentioned by the Daishonin in "On the Three Great Secret Laws." Tanaka was originally a priest of the Minobu school

of Nichiren Buddhism, but left it during the Meiji Period (1868–1912) to found the *Rissho Ankoku Association* (later the National Pillar Society). Though Tanaka's ideas emerged against a backdrop of rising nationalistic sentiment throughout Japan, they were extremely chauvinistic even for that time.

And while he did refer to the writings of Nichiren Daishonin, he employed them as a tool to trumpet his own brand of ultranationalism, distorting the *Gosho* to support the basic principles of national polity (*kokutai*).³

As a result, he directly linked "the law of the ruler" in the above-quoted passage to the Japanese nation, designating it the Land of the Gods, and set about incorporating everything else into this paradigm. He also loudly proclaimed the Lotus Sutra to be the teaching by which the world could be consolidated into a single empire — and that Japan was the nation to bring about that consolidation.

He interpreted the phrase "When the law of the ruler fuses with the principles of Buddhism" as meaning "When Buddhism becomes the spiritual foundation of the nation as a matter of state policy." He read "When the principles of Buddhism merge with the law of the ruler" as indicating "When the state directly becomes the body of Buddhism" through nationalizing Buddhism as a central philosophy for preserving Japan's unique national polity and for creating a single global empire under Japan's control.⁴

Furthermore, his comments on the phrase "The ancient example of King Possessor of Virtue and the monk Realization of Virtue..." exhibited a new level of nationalistic fervor. King Possessor of Virtue and the monk Realization of Virtue are figures that appear in the *Nirvana Sutra*. Realization of Virtue battles with monks who violate the Buddhist precepts and fights to preserve the True Law, while King Possessor of Virtue defends him with his life. Tanaka twisted this passage to mean "Protecting the Law with the power of state authority and realizing world unification in accord with the way of righteousness, even if it meant punishing those nations not willing to comply."⁵ In other words, Tanaka actively endorsed using military force in Japan's drive for world domination.

According to Chigaku Tanaka, Mount Fuji, Japan's most famous and distinctive mountain, was the "finest place resembling the pure land of Eagle Peak" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1022) where the high sanctuary should be built. From the late 19th century into the first decades of the 20th century (during the Taisho and early Showa eras), there was considerable debate and discussion among various Nichiren schools and splinter groups — particularly among

LION, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

members of the National Pillar Society — concerning this idea of Mount Fuji as the location of the high sanctuary. Eventually these discussions even extended to the question of which Gohonzon was appropriate to be enshrined in the high sanctuary, with attacks being made on the orthodoxy of the Dai-Gohonzon at Taiseki-ji. This drew Nichiren Shoshu into the debate.

In their rebuttals, representatives of Nichiren Shoshu employed the term *national high sanctuary*, which their adversaries had used, making it seem that Nichiren Shoshu also accepted this premise. As a rising tide of militarism swept Japan, Nichiren Shoshu itself took on more nationalist leanings, until eventually it accepted the idea of a national high sanctuary as natural and inevitable. Further, Nichiren Shoshu continued to use this expression after the war to refer to the high sanctuary of true Buddhism. That is why Josei Toda, a lay follower of Nichiren Shoshu, also used the term *national high sanctuary* when talking about the high sanctuary of true Buddhism.

But in no way was it Toda's desire to simply construct the high sanctuary and then make it some sort of national shrine. Knowing that Nichiren Daishonin's supreme wish was for the happiness of the people, he viewed the construction of the high sanctuary as a symbol of *kosen-rufu*, the real means to achieve that happiness. That is why he devoted all his time and energy to increasing the Soka Gakkai's membership to 750,000 households and building a firm basis for the spread of the Daishonin's teachings. He knew that each individual's strong faith was the key if all were to realize happiness.

At the 4th general meeting of Yokohama's Tsurumi Chapter in March 1955, Toda clarified his position on the issue:

I heard several years ago of a certain priest at the head temple remarking in the most matter-of-fact tone as he sat nonchalantly smoking a cigarette, "Right now the head temple is destitute as you can see, but when *kosen-rufu* is achieved, the emperor will build us a temple and we will be great." I don't have to tell you how astounded I was to hear this.

Suppose *kosen-rufu* is achieved. An imperial decree and a shogunal directive are granted, announcing the head temple as the center of *kosen-rufu*, and the Dai-Gohonzon is reverently put on display in the future Grand Reception Hall. But who will communicate the great benefit of the Dai-Gohonzon to all Japan? We will have a situation where many without faith will visit the head temple. Lacking in faith, can you imagine how disrespectfully they will treat the Gohonzon?⁶

As Josei Toda made clear in his guidance at the Tsurumi Chapter general meeting, he was keenly aware that even a national high sanctuary would be meaningless unless people actually had faith in the True Law. Without that, genuine happiness for all and prosperity of the nation would be impossible. If anything, he feared that the creation of a national high sanctuary without this basis might undermine and diminish people's faith — that the Daishonin's Buddhism would just devolve into empty ritual.

At the time, Nichiren Shoshu based its belief that the high sanctuary should be established by the state on the phrase from the Goshō that read "Securing an imperial decree and a shogunal directive" (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 1022). An "imperial decree," of course, was a docu-



ment expressing the emperor's command, and a "shogunal directive" referred to a document issued by the regent to convey the words of the shogun, or generalissimo, the head of the military government that ruled from Kamakura in the Daishonin's time. But in the present, the emperor was no more than a symbol, and Japan was no longer ruled by a shogun or regent. Sovereignty now rested with the people — the people were the rulers of this democratic society.

Toda gave long and serious thought to how they should regard this Goshō passage referring to "an imperial decree and a shogunal directive" if they were to realize in contemporary times the national high sanctuary Nichiren Shoshu spoke of. It seemed conceivable to him that in an age of democracy, such pronouncements would perhaps more appropriately correspond to a resolution in the Diet, the representative body that expressed the people's will, instead of a decree from the emperor.

But regardless of whether this high sanctuary was a "national" one or not, Toda firmly believed it to be no more than a formality symbolizing the achievement of *kosen-rufu*, an issue to be addressed in the far distant future. He therefore decided to entrust the establishment of the high sanctuary to his disciples who would inherit his legacy and carry on his mission. He chose to devote his entire

being to the problem of how to best interpret and implement the concept of "the fusion of the law of the ruler and the principles of Buddhism" because he felt that this was directly connected to the happiness and welfare of the people.

One spring night in 1954, not long after Shin'ichi Yamamoto had become youth division chief of staff, Toda shared his thoughts on this topic with him at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Shinanomachi.

"Shin'ichi, how we interpret the fusion of the law of the ruler and the principles of Buddhism will be an extremely important issue in the future," he said. "If we interpret the law of the ruler directly, it means government by the country's ruler, but I don't think it is limited to government alone. It is actually much broader, meaning all secular realms over which government should bear responsibility. In other words, the concept of the fusion of the law of the ruler and the principles of Buddhism can be interpreted to indicate not only government, but also economics, education, science and academia, and all cultural pursuits of human civilization.

"Thus, what the fusion of the law of the ruler and the principles of Buddhism actually means in practical terms is an extremely important question."

As youth division chief of staff, Shin'ichi Yamamoto's responsibility was to carefully consider the direction the Gakkai was taking in all of its endeavors. Josei Toda expected a great deal of Shin'ichi on this score. That is why Toda was so determined to communicate to Shin'ichi his conclusions on the subject of the fusion of the law of the ruler and the principles of Buddhism, an issue the Gakkai was certain to confront in the future.

Toda continued, "The concept of the fusion of the law of the ruler and the principles of Buddhism most certainly does not mean that government and Buddhism should be institutionally joined. We must consider the meaning of this concept from the perspective of the Daishonin's complete statement in 'On the Three Great Secret Laws,' which is: 'When the law of the ruler fuses with the principles of Buddhism, and when the principles of Buddhism merge with the law of the ruler.' The Chinese character for fuse here has the meanings 'deep,' 'profound,' and 'recondite.' In other words, it is completely different from unity of a surface or institutional nature. It means the law of the ruler, or secular affairs, and the principles of Buddhism coming together on a profound level and firmly establishing the spirit and philosophy of Bud-

dham as the basis of all spheres of human activity. Of course, by this I mean the philosophy and ideals of Buddhism taking root in the heart and mind of each person, for it is people who create society and culture.

"Looking now at the second half of the passage, 'the principles of Buddhism merge with the law of the ruler,' I feel this means the spirit of Buddhist philosophy becoming manifest in each individual's life and behavior, so that secular affairs — that is, society itself — are completely in accord with the way of Buddhism.

"Simply put, Buddhist philosophy teaches that because each person is a Treasure Tower and a child of the Buddha, human life is precious beyond all else and every individual has the right to happiness. It also represents the compassion necessary to help everyone realize this goal of happiness.

"Buddhism is a philosophy of human revolution, through which individuals reveal their inherent Buddhahood and establish an autonomous, creative and indomitable self that can deal with any situation life has to offer. The essential principles of Buddhism can be described as the sanctity of life, the equality of all people, and freedom — all ideals that uphold human rights and make possible the realization of true democracy.

"The guiding principle that the Daishonin espoused for building a sound society lies in establishing these Buddhist principles in the heart of each individual and thereby cultivating and enriching that person's character. The natural consequence of this is the fusion of the law of the ruler and the principles of Buddhism.

"In other words, it is impossible to discuss concepts like the fusion of the law of the ruler and the principles of Buddhism (*obutsu myogo*) and achieving a peaceful and prosperous society through Buddhist ideals (*rissho ankoku*) as something separate from the lives of living individuals. This means that human revolution, which positively transforms the heart and mind — the very life — of the individual, is most crucial."

(To be continued)

1. "Sandai Hiho Sho," written by Nichiren Daishonin in 1282. The Three Great Secret Laws are: 1) the object of worship of true Buddhism, 2) the invocation or daimoku of true Buddhism, and 3) the high sanctuary of true Buddhism.
2. For details of this story, see MW-2 [2nd. ed.], 31.
3. *Kokutai*: Translated variously as the "national polity," "national entity," or "national essence." Refers specifically to the belief that Japan was unique by virtue of its rule by an unbroken imperial line comprising the descendants of the creator gods of Japan.
4. Chigaku Tanaka, *Tanaka Chigaku Sensei Kojutsu* (Lectures of Tanaka Chigaku) (Tokyo: Tengyo Mimposha Shuppambu, Inc., 1927), vol. 4, p. 2640.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 268-69.
6. *Toda Josei Zenshu* (Collected Writings of Josei Toda) (Tokyo: Seikyo Shimbunsha, 1984), vol. 4, p. 269.

SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech at a representatives leaders conference held in Japan on Dec. 21, 1996.

I commend you on your earnest participation in this leaders conference. I also thank you for all your hard work over the past year. I hope you will continue to do your utmost to warmly protect and encourage the members in the coming year. Please exert yourselves wholeheartedly once again to guide and foster capable people so that every person can enjoy a happy and prosperous life and show great actual proof of victory.

Our advance is not a short-sighted struggle. Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, used to say that it would be 200 years before people recognized the significance of our movement. Regardless of what might be said of our organization today, he asserted, 200 years from now, humanity would acknowledge us as benefactors who widely propagated the Mystic Law.

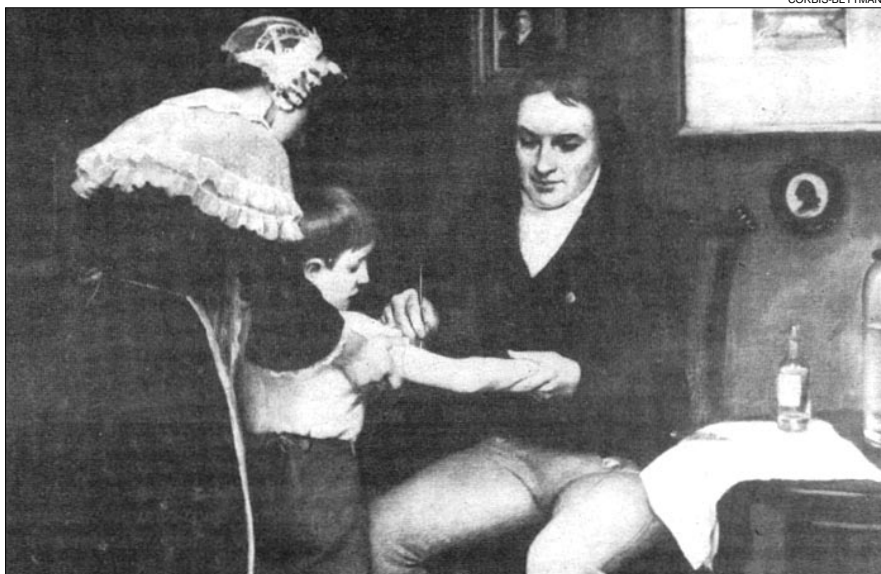
What kind of a span are we looking at when we speak of 200 years?

If we go back 200 years, Japan was in the middle of the Edo period and China was in the middle of the Qing dynasty, while Europe saw Napoleon embark on his Italian campaign.

It was also exactly 200 years ago, in 1796, that the English physician Edward Jenner (1749–1823) discovered a safe method of immunization against smallpox, a landmark in the eradication of that deadly disease.

Almost all Japanese adults bear the characteristic smallpox vaccination mark on one arm. Thanks to Jenner's discovery, we have been spared the threat of dying of smallpox or permanently scarring our faces. But from the dawn of history until just 200 years ago, humankind suffered unceasingly from the scourge of smallpox, which had an extremely high death rate worldwide.

In 1796, Jenner began his revolutionary experiments inoculating people with infected matter from a patient with cowpox, a relatively harmless disease that could be contracted from cattle, as a possible means of immunization against smallpox. His experiments were successful and the procedure of vaccination was widely adopted throughout the world. In May



Dr. Edward Jenner (1749–1823) performing his first vaccination on James Phipps, a boy of 8, on May 14, 1796.

Benefactors of Humanity

1980, the World Health Organization declared that smallpox had been eradicated from the face of the earth. Thanks to Jenner, one blight that had long caused suffering to humanity was at last eliminated. Almost 200 years has passed from the time of his initial discovery. Today, Jenner is regarded as a great benefactor of humanity.

Enduring Criticism

In the beginning, however, Jenner was loudly denounced. Expert physicians did not recognize his work. The prestigious Royal Society of London turned down a paper that he had written describing his findings. And members of the clergy preached that infecting people with cowpox “violated the way of God.”

One critic even wrote that if you were inoculated with cowpox your ears would become hairy like a cow's and you would grow a tail. And many were all too ready to believe it. Hearing this now sounds almost comical, but new ideas are certain to be attacked by people who are set in old ways of thinking. An association was even organized to oppose vaccination; Jenner was ridiculed and attacked from all sides.

But nothing is more eloquent than actual proof. As the effectiveness of vaccination became known, fair and open-minded people came to recognize the im-

portance of Jenner's work. Inoculation with cowpox virus proved an extremely safe and effective means of protection against smallpox compared to the previous method of combatting the disease — that is, inoculating a healthy person with a mild strain of smallpox virus, which sometimes resulted in death.

Napoleon, though in the midst of war with England, praised Jenner, an Englishman, for his work and presented him with a medal. He also had all his troops vaccinated using Jenner's method. Eventually, this means of vaccination spread around the world. Japan, however, due to the country's isolationist policy from the early 17th century, was among the last countries in the world to adopt it, finally doing so in the latter part of the 19th century.

Two hundred years from now, people will undoubtedly speak of us, today's SGI members, too, as benefactors of humanity who put a stop to the spiral of human misery.

Humbly Learn From the People

What led Jenner to discover a vaccination for smallpox using cowpox? It was the wisdom of the people. There was a high incidence of cowpox among people in dairy farming communities at the time. In most cases, cowpox produced only a red rash. It

had become folk wisdom that if you contracted cowpox once, you would not get smallpox. Jenner discovered his vaccination for smallpox by scientifically investigating this popular belief.

Countless others had no doubt heard this piece of folk wisdom as well, but only Jenner, because of his humble willingness to learn from the people, wrote a new page in history

based upon it. This was the key to his success.

The bottom line is that victory comes only to those who have gone through arduous, painful struggles. Without suffering, without agonizing, there is no victory.

Just as Jenner learned from the people, it is crucial for the leaders of the SGI to respect and learn from the members. We must take such good care of the members that they will really feel our sincere concern and consideration.

We must wholeheartedly protect them and pray for their happiness. These are the most essential requirements of SGI leaders. As long as the leaders have this spirit, the SGI will never become deadlocked.

As leaders, it is also vital to put utmost effort into nurturing the youth as capable successors for the future. We must foster the youth by working closely and rigorously alongside them so that they may become strong, wise and dauntless individuals. Let us resolutely forge a great path of absolute victory for kosen-rufu, a path of eternal advancement and unending development. And for our resounding victory 200 years hence, let us start by achieving total victory in all spheres in the coming year.

Please convey my best regards to all the precious members in your respective areas. ❏

Expressions

Emergence

Will it be said, in the end
That I emerged from the earth
And stumbled and yawned
Bowed before the Treasure Tower
And slept?

Or will I make it known
That I roared the Law
And fought though hell and heaven
To open with the sun
Both blossom and mud...

— JASON HENNINGER, Tacoma, Wash.

SIGN POSTS APPLYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS TO DAILY LIFE

'How Precious Life Is!'

By REIKO GROSHALL
SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

If you live even one day longer, you can accumulate that much more good fortune. How precious life is! (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 231)

When I was younger, my growth and development within the organization came first in the Five and Drum Corps. Though I never liked going to practice, I enjoyed spending time with my friends there. We learned gongyo, studied at every practice and thus developed our understanding about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. But it was difficult to distinguish among us, myself included, what level of faith we were at. At that time, it didn't matter to us.

It wasn't until something happened to my friend that I re-evaluated my faith. Her mother became very ill, to the point where the doctors thought she would not live much longer. It was a serious time for all of us. Though her mother broke through and lived (and is still alive today), my friend slowly started to doubt the Gohonzon. "Why is something like this happening to my mother, who has been a strong member for many years?" she was thinking.

Though my girlfriend still likes the organization, she does not practice consistently anymore or come to any activities. I felt that her mother survived because of faith; that she can still be a strong member is her good fortune. I believe she eradicated some deep karma. It is just as Nichiren Daishonin's letter states: "If you live even one day longer, you can accumulate that much more good fortune. How precious life is!" In this letter, he is explaining to one of his followers who is ill the principle of changing one's karma.

Recently, my mother was in an accident. She came out of it fine, but it shook me up. I realized that she could have died or been severely injured; her accident made me appreciate our practice even more. We tend to feel appreciation when something like this happens, but not in our daily lives, like appreciating having good health, wonderful friends, a nice job, etc. — the things we take for granted. ❏

WINNING IN LIFE: THE BASICS OF THE PRACTICE OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM

Understanding 'Faith'

By JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Some friends were recently discussing what the most popular word in SGI-USA is. What word is used more than any other?

They came up with *faith*. Over and over again, we read and hear this word. SGI President Ikeda always mentions it, all the leaders say it and anyone who starts to practice will eventually find themselves using it, too.

"But what is faith?" we sometimes ask ourselves. "And how do I know if I have it or not?" Having faith, in a general sense, means to believe in something. In Buddhism, having faith means we believe that we possess the wisdom, courage and compassion that are all part of the Buddha nature. We believe that by chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo to the Gohonzon and helping others, we can strengthen this Buddha nature in ourselves and thus live the most meaningful, fulfilling lives possible. This is faith for us.

Rather than emphasize faith as something abstract, Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism focuses on the many ways faith is expressed in the real world, giving us a wealth of concrete examples. As President Ikeda suggests in his poem "To My Beloved Young American Friends": "Faith is — / to fear nothing /

to stand unswayed / the power to surmount any obstacle." These are just three ways faith is concretely expressed; there are many more.

President Ikeda's guidance and Nichiren Daishonin's letters are full of such examples. Reiko Groshell, the SGI-USA young women's division chief, says that for her a clear expression of faith is found in President Ikeda's novel *The New Human Revolution*. President Ikeda's real experiences, how he used faith to overcome a wide variety of problems, inspire her.

"It's exactly what President Ikeda has gone through," she says. "And it's exactly like something I might have gone through or will go through." After studying *The New Human Revolution* she likes to chant about what she's read. She finds it deepens her faith. "When I put into action what I have learned," she adds, "I really understand what faith is all about. From *The New Human Revolution*, you see that faith is something you can do."

Arnold Kawasaki, the chairman of the American University Group, experienced the deepening of his faith upon the passing of his father many years ago. Arnold's father was adamantly opposed to the Soka Gakkai. Toward the end of his life, his father experienced a prolonged, devastating hospitalization which exhausted him physically and emotionally. Arnold and his sister con-

vinced their father to chant two days prior to his death. He said: "OK, but don't tell your mom. Give me the beads and book." Arnold recalls that his father's voice emanated from the depths of his life those last two days.

After his father's death, Arnold peered into the coffin. To his surprise, he saw the face of a happy, smiling man expressing great joy! Arnold was then convinced of Nichiren Daishonin's words in the Goshō: "Be resolved to summon forth the great power of your faith and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo with the prayer that your faith will be steadfast and correct at the moment of your death... Only then will you realize that earthly desires are enlightenment and the sufferings of life and death are nirvana" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 25). And also: "Were he to go right now to Eagle Peak, he would feel as delighted as if the sun had come out and illuminated the ten directions; and he would find himself rejoicing, wondering how an early death could be so happy a thing" (MW-5, 281).

As we continue to practice, we collect many such examples of faith from our own experiences, from experiences we hear, from our study of the teachings and so on. All of these add up to fortify our faith and make us stronger. They remind us that we possess all the wisdom, courage and compassion we need to win in life. ❏

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON FAITH

Why Do Some Gohonzon Have Fewer Characters?

By TED MORINO
SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT CHIEF

Q The Gohonzon transcribed by the 26th high priest, Nichikan, now conferred by the SGI, does not have some of the characters that appear on the Gohonzon transcribed by the former high priest Nitatsu or Nikken. Why?

A Through his many writings, we know that the Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon so each of us could perceive the Buddhahood at the core of our lives. The Gohonzon he bestowed on his believers were not uniform in the peripheral characters they contain, even though they all reflect the same unchanging reality that exists eternally within us.

"Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, Nichiren" inscribed down the center of the Gohonzon embraces all ten worlds, that is, all life in the universe. (The ten worlds are represented by noted Buddhist figures inscribed on the remainder of the Gohonzon.) In other words, the potential to manifest a perfect state of life at any moment, in any of the ten worlds, is expounded in the phrase at the center of every Gohonzon.

SGI President Ikeda discusses the Gohonzon in his "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra," saying:

The treasure tower [Nam-myoho-enge-kyo] stands at the center of the universe. In brilliance it is like a gathering of all the jewels in the universe. Its magnificence metaphorically indicates that the life of each person is a cluster of jewels. Its immense size illustrates the truth that each person's life is as vast as the universe. (March 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 26)

And the Daishonin writes in "The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon":

Dwelling in the Gohonzon are all the Buddhas, bodhisattvas and great saints, as well as the eight groups of sentient beings of the two realms who appear in the first chapter of the Lotus Sutra. Illuminated by the five characters of the Mystic Law, they display the enlightened nature they inherently possess. This is the true object of worship. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 212)

Based on the idea that all peripheral characters on the Gohonzon are "illuminated by the five characters of the Mystic Law," the Daishonin used great lati-

tude in selecting the characters he inscribed. For instance, the "eight groups of sentient beings of the two realms" actually never appear on any Gohonzon, even though the Daishonin says he regards them as being there. And, for another instance, among some 120 Gohonzon the Daishonin personally inscribed, two-thirds do not include Devadatta, representing Hell.

The Nichikan Gohonzon being bestowed by the SGI does not include Devadatta, Ashura, representing Anger, or the Wheel-Turning Kings, indicating Humanity. These are familiar to many SGI members as they appear on Gohonzon transcribed by Nitatsu and Nikken. (Incidentally, Ashura and the Wheel-Turning Kings do not appear on about half the Gohonzon that Nichiren Daishonin inscribed.)

It seems that because the doctrinal basis of the Gohonzon — the mutual possession of the ten worlds — was so clear in the Daishonin's mind, he took the liberty to alter the peripheral characters from Gohonzon to Gohonzon. This tradition has obviously continued. The law of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo allows all beings to attain enlightenment — this was the Daishonin's central message in inscribing the Gohonzon. ❏

A Magnificent Drama Begins With One Person

SGI President Ikeda made the following speech at the 7th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held jointly with the 5th Chiba Prefecture General Meeting and the 1st Nationwide Women's Division Leaders Meeting, at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Jan. 7.

Friends throughout Japan and around the world, happy New Year! This year again, let's work together and further advance!

The sunsets from this Makiguchi Memorial Hall are truly beautiful. The popular children's song "Yuyake Koyake" (Sunset), by the way, is about Hachioji.

Morning and evening, the sun enacts a spectacular drama of light. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the Soka Gakkai's founding president, begins the first chapter of his book *The Geography of Human Life*, first published in 1903, with a discussion of the sun. He uses expressions like "the dazzling radiance of sunrise" and "the glorious brilliance of sunset." He discusses the great impact the sun's splendor has on us, both aesthetically and spiritually.

A Youth Like the Morning Sun

President Makiguchi devoted his youth to value creation with a vigor like that of the morning sun. And he brought his life to a most solemn, magnificent conclusion, just as the crimson orb of the setting sun radiates a golden light.

A beautiful sunset promises a beautiful tomorrow. The setting sun that paints the western sky with golden hues ensures clear skies the next day. Similarly, a serene and peaceful death at the end of a great life assures happiness throughout eternity.

The lives of those who devote themselves earnestly to kosen-rufu without regret will shine eternally with the brilliant state of Buddhahood. Let us therefore advance unwaveringly along the supreme path of attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime! Let us devote this life to kosen-rufu! Nichiren Daishonin rigorously stresses the importance of doing so.

The second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda, remarked with great conviction after Mr. Makiguchi's death:



Sir Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), poet, philosopher and Nobel Prize winner. Photo from Corbis-Bettmann.

If we believe in the Daishonin's words and look at things in this mirror [of the Lotus Sutra], then we may be firmly confident that President Makiguchi will be reborn as a prince of a royal house of the purest virtue in a land where the Lotus Sutra has spread. His good fortune after leaving this world must be thousands or tens of thousands times greater than my own. And for that I

can only rejoice with all my heart.¹

The True Nature of the Universe

Buddhism teaches that there are countless worlds in the universe. The universe is enormous; its vastness is beyond our comprehension. Practicing Buddhism awakens us to the fundamental Law of the universe.

A philosopher observed that the universe will probably never be fully explained by science. It is doubtful, he said, that even astronomy can completely clarify the universe's true nature — much less can mathematics, economics, chemistry, politics or any other scientific discipline do so. The Eastern philosophy of Buddhism, he affirmed, is where we find the most deductive understanding of the universe.

How truly fortunate are we who embrace and strive to spread Nichiren Daishonin's supreme Buddhist teaching!

Earth is not the only planet where life exists. It is speculated that there are many planets inhabited by intelligent life. And there are no doubt a good many worlds among them where the Lotus Sutra is widely practiced and upheld. That is why, based on the Gosho and the Lotus Sutra, President Toda declared that Mr. Makiguchi must be reborn as a noble prince of a fine family in a wonderful "land in which the Lotus Sutra has spread." So vast was the good fortune his mentor had accumulated, Mr. Toda said, that it surely exceeded our own — thousands or tens of thousands of times.

Resolute Faith

We are following in the footsteps of Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda. When we devote our lives to kosen-rufu, we are sure to savor the same eternal victory and honor. For this reason, we must not lose. No matter what happens, we must carry through with resolute faith.

The Daishonin says, "One should regard meeting obstacles as true peace and comfort" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 750). No matter what difficulties we encounter, we must not be shaken, we must not be fearful, we must not retreat. Rather, we need to continue struggling forward. Such strong faith is itself proof that we enjoy "peace and comfort."

Only by struggling against obstacles can we forge the indestructible "diamond-like body" of a Buddha that will last through eternity. We must not be fearful, cower or be swayed when something untoward happens. We must not veer from the true path of happiness — the path of faith — on account of such weakness.

True Happiness Lies in Chanting and Teaching Others the Law

Nichiren Daishonin says in the Gosho, "There is no greater happiness for human beings than chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 161); and, "Single-mindedly chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, NEXT PAGE

LUPI/CORBIS-BETTMANN

SPEECH, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

and urge others to do the same; that will remain as the only memory of your present life in this human world" (MW-5, 38).

This life is fleeting and illusory, as the Daishonin affirms when he writes: "This life is like a dream. One cannot know if he will live until tomorrow" (MW-4, 283). We don't know what may become of us a day from now, let alone over the course of eternity. No matter how much wealth, status or fame we may have in this world, such things are as ephemeral as a dream. We cannot take them with us when we die.

In contrast, we are dedicating our lives to kosen-rufu, chanting and propagating the eternal Mystic Law. There is no existence more lofty. In carrying out SGI activities we find an unsurpassed way of life.

Moreover, everything in the universe is a function of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. The fundamental law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo exists in our lives. How truly wondrous this is!

Again today the sun rises. Again today we chant daimoku, causing the inner sun to rise in our hearts. Once the sun rises, it illuminates everything. The challenge is to keep this sun blazing brilliantly in the depths of our lives, to renew each day our determination to chant, fight on, live victoriously and accumulate good fortune. Herein lies the ultimate path to happiness.

May you again make each day this year one of golden triumph through faith. Please win brilliantly in this strife-filled *saha* world, this "world of perseverance."

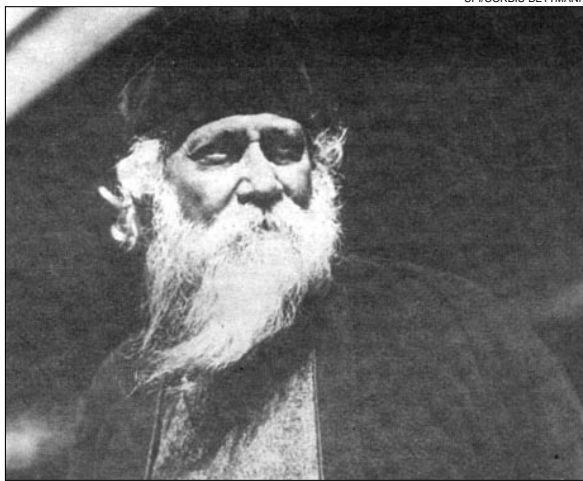
Inconspicuous Benefit Vs. Inconspicuous Punishment

We began this year with a record turnout at the New Year's gongyo meetings throughout Japan. Participation surpassed even that of last year's.

In Chiba Prefecture alone, close to 300,000 people attended New Year's gongyo meetings — this far exceeds the total New Year's attendance throughout the country at Nikken sect temples. Our movement is truly on a different scale.

Year after year, the Nikken sect sinks deeper into pitiful decline. The SGI, on the other hand, with the dynamic energy of the rising sun, is realizing monumental growth.

Buddhism expounds very clearly that great benefit will be enjoyed by those who uphold the



Rabindranath Tagore en route to San Francisco during a 1929 lecture tour.

Law, while great punishment will be incurred by those who slander the Law or its practitioners. In light of the Daishonin's teachings, nothing is more fearful than inconspicuous punishment. Though such punishment may not be immediately manifested, there is a definite, progressive downward spiral — and ruin lies in store in the end. There is no more inexorable verdict than that delivered by the uncompromising law of cause and effect.

In the Goshō, the Daishonin writes, "There are four kinds of punishment: general and individual, conspicuous and inconspicuous" (MW-1, 241). General punishment is that received by all people in a given group or society. Individual punishment is that received by the individual.

Conspicuous punishment occurs right away and in a manner that is clearly apparent. Inconspicuous punishment does not manifest immediately and is the gravest of the four kinds of punishment.

In the Goshō "Letter to Horen," the Daishonin writes: "There are two types of persons who show animosity toward the Lotus Sutra. The first are persons who cultivated the roots of goodness in former existences, who in their present existence are searching for some connection with Buddhism, who conceive a desire for enlightenment and are capable of attaining Buddhahood. It is these persons whose mouths are stopped or whose heads split apart [i.e., they incur conspicuous punishment].

"The other type are persons who have slandered the Law in their previous existences, slander it in their present existence, and for existence after existence go on creating karma that will condemn them to the hell of incessant suffering. These persons, even though they may curse, will

not have their mouths stopped [i.e., they incur inconspicuous punishment]. They are like men who have already been sentenced to execution and are awaiting their turn in prison. While they are in prison, regardless of what evil acts they may commit, they will receive no further punishment other than the death sentence already passed upon them. However, with regard to persons who are eventually to be released, if they commit evil acts in prison, then they will receive warnings [i.e. conspicuous punishment]" (MW-7, 121).]

Buddhism is concerned with victory. As the Daishonin says, "All phenomena in the universe are manifestations of the Buddhist Law" (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 563). Everything is a matter of victory. Since it is a question of winning or losing, then the only alternative is to win.

Develop Indestructible Happiness

Whether in day-to-day existence or the movement for kosen-rufu, solid, unshakable victory is not achieved overnight. While receiving conspicuous benefit is wonderful, you can't expect it to happen all the time. It's like winning the lottery — just because you win it once doesn't mean you'll win it every time. Far more important is inconspicuous benefit.

We need tenacity and perseverance to accumulate benefit through faith steadily and surely with each step we take. We cannot build anything solid or indestructible by neglecting to make efforts when no one is looking nor through pretentious posturing or empty gestures. Results may be invisible at first, but just as the towering trees of the forest grow by putting down deep, strong roots, they will manifest

unmistakably over time. The inconspicuous benefit we amass through our Buddhist practice enables us to construct a state of happiness that absolutely nothing can destroy.

Presidents Makiguchi and Toda staked their lives on building the Soka Gakkai. And I, too, have fought with the same spirit. For precisely this reason, the Soka Gakkai has become the great organization it is today — an organization that stands as fearless as the lion king in the face of all obstacles.

Chiba — Birthplace of a 'Giant Religious Reformer'

To the members of Chiba, congratulations on holding a high-spirited general meeting!

In the masterpiece of his youth, *The Geography of Human Life*, President Makiguchi argues that "peninsulas are the starting points of civilization."² As an example, he points out that the Boso Peninsula in Chiba Prefecture (the southern part of which was formerly known as Awa Province) produced the "giant religious reformer," Nichiren Daishonin. Mr. Makiguchi wrote this long before taking faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism. Nonetheless, from the viewpoint of civilization theory, his attention was drawn to Chiba, where the Daishonin was born and raised. Such was our founding president's penetrating insight. Later, Mr. Makiguchi embraced faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism and also worked wholeheartedly for religious reform.

President Makiguchi often encouraged fellow members in faith by citing how Nichiren Daishonin began his religious movement alone from Chiba.

One time that he did so was in 1939, when he traveled to Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands, to propagate the Daishonin's teachings. At the time, the trip had to be made by steam locomotive; there weren't, of course, any commercial flights as there are today. It must have been an extremely exhausting journey for the 67-year-old Makiguchi. But he would spare no effort for the sake of the Law.

One woman who met Mr. Makiguchi for the first time during that trip was so impressed by his vibrant, youthful voice, his absolute confidence, his sincerity and compassion, that she promptly decided to take faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism. Your voice, confidence and overall manner are important. Everything is a manifestation of the

true entity of life.

Mr. Makiguchi never did anything halfway. When he spoke, his powerful determination to kindle the flame of mission and hope in the hearts of those listening pervaded his words. To this woman in Kyushu he declared, "In light of the principles of Buddhism, your receiving the Gohonzon will eventually liberate the lives of all people in Kyushu from misery!" He drove home to her the profound mission she had to fulfill. He was urging her to advance with the stand-alone spirit.

Wherever it may be, the spread of the Daishonin's Buddhism always begins with one person.

On that occasion, President Makiguchi shared the following passage from "The True Entity of Life": "Only I, Nichiren, at first chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, but then two, three and a hundred followed, chanting and teaching others. Likewise, propagation will unfold this way in the future" (MW-1, 93).

With great feeling, Mr. Makiguchi was said to have explained: "When the Daishonin chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo for the first time at Kasagamori³ in Chiba, he was all alone. In light of the principle of bodhisattvas emerging from the earth to propagate the Law, the fact that you, one person, will now chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to this wondrous Gohonzon means that in the future there will definitely appear two, three and a hundred others in Kyushu who embrace the Gohonzon."

And just as he predicted, the seeds of the Mystic Law that he planted have now splendidly borne fruit as the great Soka Gakkai of Kyushu. Let's hear it for indomitable Kyushu, land of pioneers!

Advancing With 'the Same Mind As Nichiren'

The Daishonin declares, "If you are of the same mind as Nichiren, you must be a Bodhisattva of the Earth" (MW-1, 93). We do not become "of the same mind as Nichiren" merely by praying. Those whose hearts are aflame with the passion to introduce others to the Daishonin's Buddhism, to widely propagate the Law for the happiness of all, are "of the same mind as Nichiren." In that respect, presidents Makiguchi and Toda truly fought with the same spirit as the Daishonin.

Only the SGI is, and will forever remain, "of the same mind

SPEECH, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

as Nichiren.” The Daishonin surely praises most highly those who protect and work to develop the SGI.

I sincerely hope that this year the members of Chiba, making the Daishonin’s heart and President Makiguchi’s spirit their own, will accomplish a magnificent “Chiba Revolution.” Let’s advance boldly as genuine comrades who are truly “of the same mind as Nichiren.” I pray that my beloved Chiba will develop into a flourishing new center of a value-creation-based civilization in the 21st century.

I sincerely thank the Chiba members for the beautiful blossoms that adorn the stage today.

At present, a magnificent Chiba Training Center is under construction in Tateyama. And plans are also in the works for a new culture center. Chiba will play an increasingly important role in the future.

Chiba is vast, so members often travel by car to do activities. Please take utmost care to avoid traffic accidents. You each have a great mission; each of your lives is a precious treasure. When driving long distances, please be careful not to overdo it. I hope you will exercise wisdom and common sense and be sure to take regular breaks along the way.

The First Tagore Peace Award

The Asiatic Society of India, which boasts an illustrious history of more than 200 years, recently announced its decision to present me with its first Tagore Peace Award. This honor has been bestowed upon me as your representative; it is the same as if each of you were receiving it. I dedicate this honor to presidents Toda and Makiguchi.

The Asiatic Society is an international center for research on Asia, which has been designated by the Indian Parliament as an “institution of national importance.” In honoring President Ikeda with this award, the society cited his “creative contribution to the development of human understanding toward peace.”

The Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), after whom the award is named, is a towering figure in history. I have talked about his life and work on many occasions. Today, I’ll touch on just one point: the warning that he sounded to Japan. His insights still have great relevance today.

A Warm Welcome — and a Cold Send-off

Tagore set out for Japan from India on May 3, 1916, aboard the Japanese steamship *Tosamaru*. The ship was lashed by violent storms and tossed endlessly on rough seas, finally arriving safely at its destination in Japan.

Tagore had become world famous as the first Asian awarded the Nobel Prize [in literature, 1913]. The Japanese laid out the red carpet to welcome him. A huge crowd of enthusiastic well-wishers was on hand to greet this man, hailed as “India’s most distinguished author” and “the internationally acclaimed poet Tagore.”

*Tagore later reminisced: “No sooner did we reach the wharf than we were hit by a human typhoon.”*⁴

But when he left Japan three months later, only a few friends saw him off. It was a truly lonely scene; the treatment was entirely different from what he had received on his arrival. Just what had happened during that time? What had caused the attitude of the Japanese toward Tagore to change so radically?

Probably the main cause was the frank concern Tagore expressed about the course on which Japan was then advancing. His earnest words grated on the ear and caused the Japanese to turn their backs on him. He had issued an outspoken plea for Japan to abandon its platform of nationalism. Otherwise, Tagore predicted, the people would be crushed by the state, the country would come to ruin. He called on Japan instead to adopt humanistic policies, arguing that this was where its brilliant mission really lay.

Tagore’s cry 80 years ago and the position maintained by the Soka Gakkai in Japan today are in complete accord.

Condemnation of Selfish Nationalism

In an address at Keio University in Tokyo, Tagore remarked:

I can see her [Japan’s] motto, taken from science, “Survival of the Fittest,” writ large at the entrance of her present-day history — the motto whose meaning is, “Help yourself, and never heed what it costs to others”; the motto of the blind man.... And nations, who sedulously cultivate moral blindness as the cult of patriotism, will end their existence in a sudden and violent death.⁵

He suggested that the Japanese labored under moral blindness and, as a result, could not see the dangers of their present course. “Open your eyes!” he shouted.

Tagore proclaimed to the Japanese the danger of destroying their souls for military might and becoming “money-making puppets” in imitation of the Western “civilization of power.”

*Tagore declared: “Real power is not in the weapons themselves, but in the man who wields those weapons; and when he, in his eagerness for power, multiplies his weapons at the cost of his own soul, then it is he who is in even greater danger than his enemies.”*⁶ He also noted: “Men, the fairest creations of God, came out of the National manufactory in huge numbers as war-making and money-making puppets, ludicrously vain of their pitiful perfection of mechanism.”⁷

Sadly, just as Tagore feared, Japan later used its weapons to launch a war of aggression against Asian countries. Subsequently, the Japanese, like a nation of money-making puppets, have pursued profit and shown neither international good faith nor a spirit to help others. Under such circumstances, it’s practically a foregone conclusion that the country will not be trusted in the international community.

A Country That Criticizes Anyone Who Stands Out

Tagore cried out that rather than oppressing the peoples of neighboring countries with a civilization of power, Japan should work to create solidarity in Asia through promoting a civilization of the spirit.

Not only did the Japanese of the day ignore Tagore’s cry — many heaped censure and slander upon him. He was deluged with petty criticism tinged with jealousy.

Yet, almost none of Tagore’s detractors had taken the trouble to read his writings with any care. Lacking a correct perception of what he was trying to say, they simply made a fuss in blind imitation of others. “Who is he to criticize Japanese nationalism!” they cried. As a result of the country’s failure to heed Tagore’s warnings, 29 years later Japan was in ruins, defeated in war.

This tendency of the Japanese remains essentially intact today. I have openly stated in the past: In Japan, before and during the war, people tagged along behind

military expansion, while in the postwar era they tagged along behind economic expansion. Unless we change society so that people are the central focus, Japan will have no future. Many leading figures heartily concur with this assessment.

Tagore Predicted China’s Development

Tagore predicted that China, at the time seen as a weak country, would eventually manifest tremendous power. More than 30 years ago, at the height of Japan’s postwar economic boom, I, too, foresaw that China would eventually realize great development. And I widely voiced this opinion.

Tagore wrote, “China is holding her own; no temporary defeats can ever crush her fully aroused spirit.”⁸ His position on Japan, meanwhile, was that its apparent veneer of prosperity in the early part of the 20th century was due to its borrowed culture from the West, which had been realized at the cost of spiritual bankruptcy and as such could never have lasted long.

Tagore wanted to convey to the Japanese, in effect: “Recognize the evil of nationalism! You must not become slaves to its insidious lure! The state does not have human character. What Japan should work for instead is cultivating a universal humanism that all people will applaud.”

A soulless country is sure to decline. The Japanese should now humbly heed Tagore’s warning. I cannot help but feel that Japan is now repeating the mistake it made 80 years ago when it lambasted Tagore.

Civilization Built on Reciprocity

Tagore also had great expectations for women. He argued that the present animalistic civilization of power has been created by men. And that under this civilization people are turned into a means; they become machines. He asserted the necessity of building a civilization of the spirit and emphasized that women would play a leading role in developing such a civilization.

*Tagore wrote, “At the present stage of history civilization is almost exclusively masculine, a civilization of power.”*⁹

He also said: “Men have been losing their freedom and their humanity in order to fit themselves for vast mechanical organizations. So the next civilization, it is hoped, will be based... upon

*spiritual ideals of reciprocity.... And then women will have their true place.... [W]oman can bring her fresh mind and all her power of sympathy to this new task of building up a spiritual civilization, if she will be conscious of her responsibilities.”*¹⁰

I completely agree with these words. Perhaps they’ll give cause for self-reflection to those men who tend to be overbearing and power-driven! In all areas of society and in the world of kosen-rufu, women are making outstanding contributions. We have to create an age in which women can play an even more active, decisive role. I have strongly sensed that things are indeed changing in this direction. An Age of Women is at last at hand.

This year — all 365 days of it — I will again put every ounce of my energy into leading the kosen-rufu movement. I will continue to exert myself unstintingly.

While taking care of your health, please continue to advance cheerfully, overcoming all obstacles and accumulating good fortune each day.

Throughout the year, I will continue to pray for your health, longevity, happiness and prosperity. I look forward to your earnest efforts again in the coming year. Please convey my very best regards to all those who could not attend today.

Thank you. ㊦

1. Josei Toda, *Toda Josei Zenshu* (The Complete Works of Josei Toda) (Tokyo: Seikyo Shimbunsha, 1992), vol. 1, p. 320.
2. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, *Jinsei Chirigaku* (The Geography of Human Life) (Tokyo: Seikyo Shimbunsha, 1980), vol. 1, pp. 145–49.
3. Kasagamori: a woody knoll on the grounds of Seicho-ji temple in Awa Province (present-day Chiba Prefecture) where, on April 28, 1253, Nichiren Daishonin chanted the first invocation of the supreme Law, Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.
4. Translated from Japanese: “Nihon Kiko” (Journey to Japan) in *Tagoru Chosaku Shu* (Collected Works of Tagore) (Tokyo: Daisan Bummeisha, 1987), vol. 10, p. 436.
5. Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917), pp. 96–97.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
8. “Poet to Poet,” *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly* (Santiniketan, Bengal, India), vol. 4, part 3, November 1938–January 1939, p. 205.
9. Rabindranath Tagore, *Personality* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1921), p. 172.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 182–83.

My Recollections



Maria Teresa Escoda Roxas — Former President of the Cultural Center of the Philippines

My mother was taken away before my very eyes. Several members of the Japanese military police force suddenly burst into our home carrying rifles. I was 16. I will never forget that moment. It happened on Aug. 27, 1944." A rage that will never be quenched burns in the heart of Maria Teresa Escoda Roxas, former president of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Her mother, Josefa Llanes Escoda (1898–1945), was noble, an angel. She devoted herself to helping others, never expecting anything in return. Even under the Japanese military occupation of her country, she showed no fear, visiting and helping Filipino and American soldiers in detention camps and prisons. Though those around her tried to persuade her to stop, she refused. "I am not afraid to die," she declared. "I will risk it because our soldiers badly need aid."¹

One Filipino veteran never forgot, even decades later, how Mrs. Escoda had helped him and his family: "She was a generous woman, and so long as we have Filipinos like her, life is worth living."²

Mrs. Roxas recalls the day her mother was taken away: "The Japanese military police spoke politely, but they forced my mother to go with them. My mother was taken out of the house, one large soldier accompanying her on either side, and put into a car. She was taken to Fort Santiago, which at that time was being used as a prison.... That was the last time I ever saw her."

Mrs. Roxas' father, Antonio Escoda, a journalist, had been arrested several months earlier.

The three Japanese military police still in the house began searching it, looking for any evidence of anti-Japanese activities. "I think the Japanese military became angry when they discovered my mother was helping not only Filipino soldiers but American soldiers, as well," says Mrs. Roxas. "But she said: 'If the shoe were on the other foot and the Japanese soldiers were the ones suffering in prison, I would help them in the same way. I would do what I have to as a human being.' My mother was a true humanitarian. She wanted to offer help,



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda meets with Maria Teresa Escoda Roxas.

without discrimination, to all who were suffering. But the Japanese militarists did not understand her actions."

Mrs. Escoda was what we call a bodhisattva in Buddhism. And her love was not reserved for human beings alone. If a carriage driver began to mercilessly whip his horse, Mrs. Escoda would not hesitate to stop the carriage to reprimand him.

During the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, the military forced all Filipinos to bow their heads when encountering a Japanese. If they failed to do so, they were slapped across the face in public. The Filipinos remember the occupation as a period when the entire country was transformed into a terrifying concentration camp. The Japanese committed terrible atrocities, such as tossing Filipino children up in the air and then piercing them with their swords as they fell back to earth.

The young Mrs. Roxas was determined not to forgive the Japanese, but her mother told her: "There are good Japanese and bad Japanese. There are good Filipinos and bad Filipinos. There are good Americans and bad Americans. We should show goodwill toward good Japanese. It is enough to hate the bad Japanese." Mrs. Escoda did not care about a person's nationality; she judged people solely on their worth as human beings.

The Japanese militarists were exactly the opposite. The most important thing was whether a person was Japanese or not. That they were a human being came in a distant second. That is how

they justified the unspeakably cruel acts they perpetrated on the Filipinos — acts they would not dare commit against other Japanese. They treated the Chinese and the Koreans the same way. And perhaps the Okinawans as well.

Any Japanese who resisted or criticized those unspeakable acts was attacked as unpatriotic — as was the case with Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, the first and second presidents of the Soka Gakkai. Both of them were in prison themselves at the time Mrs. Escoda was carried away by the Japanese military police in the Philippines. They were all victims of Japanese militarism.

Oppressors who live by lies, discrimination and raging ego; people's movements driven by truth and humanity — the struggle between these two forces continues today.

Mrs. Escoda's conviction to live with unwavering humanity remained unchanged in prison. Seeking to obtain information about the anti-Japanese movement from her, the Japanese cruelly tortured her, leaving her battered and bleeding. But she didn't say a word.

On occasion, her captors would withhold food for as long as a week. Even then, she would talk to her companions in prison of her plans for the future, of her hopes for the development of the organizations she had founded — including the Philippine Girl Scouts and the National Federation of Women's Clubs — and that her two children would have the opportunity, as she had

when she was young, to study in the United States.

Whenever she received food or water from outside, she shared it with her fellow prisoners, though of course she must have been extremely hungry herself. "I'm fine. You eat!" — such words brim with more goodness of humanity than any famous words of wisdom.

At the beginning of 1945, Mr. and Mrs. Escoda were taken from their cells and executed. To this day, the method of execution remains unknown. "I don't even know where they are buried," laments Mrs. Roxas. But before she died, Mrs. Escoda smuggled out a message: "I have done my duty.... If you happen to survive, and I fall, tell our people that the women of the Philippines did their part also in making the ember sparks of truth and liberty alive till the last moments."³

Mrs. Escoda did fall, in the cause of keeping the sparks of liberty alive. For that great cause, she died. She laid down her life so that truth might live. Nothing is more eloquent than the silence of death — especially if that death is that of a martyr who has given his or her whole being to the cause of freedom. Mrs. Escoda's life was brief; she died at the age of 46. But even today her example cries out in a silent appeal, inspiring others. Mrs. Escoda's picture appears on the thousand peso note — the highest denomination of Philippine currency — and many streets proudly bear her name.

But most important, she has energetic spiritual successors in the form of her beloved son and daughter. People whom she had helped, in turn assisted her children, raising money to make it possible for them to study in the United States. One of the dreams that Mrs. Escoda had cherished in prison was thus realized. And today Mrs. Roxas is energetically carrying on her mother's work.

Mrs. Roxas was weak and sickly as a child, so her mother encouraged her to study ballet to strengthen her constitution. Later, Mrs. Roxas became the president of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Mrs. Escoda was a mother of peace, who loved culture; Mrs. Roxas is a mother of culture, who loves peace.

The goals of the Cultural Center of the Philippines are to foster creative activities, keep traditional culture alive and sponsor cultural exchange programs with other nations. As its former president, Mrs. Roxas created a lasting legacy. With regard to Japan, she has earnestly stated: "I think the Japanese have a distorted view of the Philippines. I want to change that."

Our talks together resulted in a Japanese tour by the Cultural Center-affiliated Ballet Philippines, sponsored by the Min-On Concert Association in 1993. The troupe is unsurpassed in Asia, and has been praised the world over. An American newspaper said that it was "worth walking a hundred miles" to see them perform. Prior to that, the 1990 Min-On-sponsored performance of the Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group, which is also affiliated with the center, revealed the high level of Philippine national culture to the Japanese.

Mrs. Roxas said: "The only faces of Japan that the peoples of Asia know are those of militarist Japan during World War II and a contemporary Japan that is an economic superpower and cares only about profit. Japan should present other faces to its Asian neighbors. Japan needs people who will promote such cultural exchange."

She also said: "For many, many years, I was not able to accept the Japanese. But my feelings changed when I accompanied my husband to Japan on a business trip and encountered Japan's traditional arts. I came to love Japanese arts, and through them, at last, to open my heart to the Japanese people. Art can lead us to transcend love and hate. Culture is the strongest tie that can bind human beings together."

Will the cries of this mother and daughter for tolerance and humanity across two generations ever reach Japan, "the soulless nation"? Or will cowardly arrogance lead Japan once again to ruin? Our neighbors in Asia are watching to see which road Japan will take.

1. Tito Guingona, *The Gallant Filipino* (Manila: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 1991), p. 45.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 48–49.

“ I think no single person should ever think that they don't have something to contribute, because I think that every person can make a difference.

” People ask, ‘Well, you see all these problems, don't you get pessimistic?’ And I do occasionally. But the way I stay optimistic — and I think that other people can — is to talk with a child.

Each Individual Makes A Difference

Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF

Carol Bellamy is the executive director of UNICEF. Yoshi Nagaoka, a Seikyo Shimbun staff writer, talked with her in New York on Jan. 6 about her life, UNICEF and what can be done to protect children.

YN: I'd like to ask about your background. We all know you are well-respected and very successful in your career.

CB: I'm actually by training a lawyer; that is my educational background. I've spent about half of my adult career in government or the public sector, both as an appointed and an elected government official. I've spent the other half in the private sector, as both a corporate lawyer and an investment banker.

If I had to pick the most important thing I've done in my life, it would be my Peace Corps experience. Immediately after college, many, many years ago, when the Peace Corps was very young, I was an American Peace Corps volunteer. That was my first introduction to development work in developing countries. And it was a good experience, because it was on the ground, doing what people typically thought Peace Corps volunteers did, way off in the middle of far removed jungle-like areas.

And then 30 years later I was lucky enough to be appointed by the president of the United States as the director of the Peace Corps — the first return volunteer to be appointed. It was probably the most important thing I've done.

YN: You are one of those rare people who knows the front-line situation. Also, you understand the whole picture now of UNICEF. From your perspective, how can we, as ordinary citizens, contribute to the goals of UNICEF?

CB: I think there is clearly an important role that UNICEF plays within the overall framework of the United Nations, as both a doer and a conscience for children worldwide, just as I think non-governmental organizations and other organizations that are focused not only on children do, too. But the reality is that no matter how many organizations you

have, no matter how much institutional money you have, ultimately you can only reach a small number of children.

As an organization, UNICEF can at least improve our impact on reaching children, but realistically it is ultimately each individual who can make a difference. And that's what I think is very important to realize. Government, or quasi-government or even NGOs can't do everything.

I think no single person should ever think that they don't have something to contribute, because I think that every person can make a difference. So, whatever one chooses to do — if you volunteer in your community, in a community program, or local church, temple, or mosque, or if you are an occasional volunteer in your local school system or even with sports teams — you can make a difference.

At the same time, I think from our perspective at UNICEF, we take NGOs very seriously. And I actually see it being an area of activity in UNICEF that will increase over time.

In recent years, there's been a growth of NGOs and the roles they can play. We now know there are good ones and ones that aren't that effective, just the way there are good organizations, reasonably effective organizations and not so effective ones. But I see us working more with NGOs to the extent to which there is a recognition that it isn't government that can do everything and that there are a variety of kinds of organizations out there that can help.

I also see UNICEF working more and more with NGOs as we realize that this is one of the very effective ways, I believe, to do capacity-building. In other words, the role of UNICEF or any organization in development is not to just continue to do for others but to help others to do for themselves; to assist them, then, in building their capacity.

And I think that one of the really important areas for UNICEF to be looking at — working in the variety of countries that we're in and because we're so heavily decentralized — is supporting the growth and the flourishing of NGOs in the



Carol Bellamy

different countries in which we are working. In the long run, advocates for children within their own countries can be their strongest advocates. It's not that we from UNICEF or from NGOs coming from outside don't have a role to play, but really if people advocate and fight for their children, that's where the greatest strength will come from.

YN: The SGI's strength is as a grass-roots movement. Our activities to promote peace, culture and education are based on our small-scale discussion meetings held every month throughout the world. Based on your experience, how can such a movement be effective toward global issues?

CB: I'll use what could be an inappropriate analogy, but when I was an elected official and people would come in my office and pound on my table and say, “We can get 10,000 people to vote against you,” I always thought they had no idea what they were talking about. But when someone would come into my office and say, “We can change the votes of a hundred people in our commu-

nity,” then I thought that these people probably could have a much greater impact because they understood how they could actually make a difference — rather than just talking about huge numbers.

So I think it's not a matter of big and small. It's a matter like that pebble in the puddle, just that one little stone that creates all those waves. I think that's the way you go.

It's not a matter necessarily of size, but a matter of influence. I believe that every single human being can in some way make a difference.

Unfortunately, we live in a time where we're all so media-conscious, or television-conscious, or big-screen-conscious or something like that, that people think that only if they have some kind of public pizzazz, public persona or something like that, only then can they make a difference. But that isn't so. Teachers make a difference on more people every day than some fancy person who appears on television.

YN: The people who can make a difference should have

hope, otherwise they can get discouraged, sometimes too discouraged to even take action. So what is your message to our readers about being hopeful and optimistic concerning the challenges facing the world's children?

CB: Well, I think you have to be realistic to begin with. There are enormous challenges out there for children.

There have been tremendous advances in children's health just in the last 50 years — UNICEF is 50 years old. More children go to school today than ever before, but still it's estimated that there are more than 100 million children who do not.

UNICEF is 50, and we were born out of World War II. Yet we look at the world today and we find probably as many children caught in war as 50 years ago.

And you ask, “What's going wrong?”

On the other hand, I think it's best to be optimistic, and generally I'm optimistic. People ask, “Well, you see all these problems, don't you get pessimistic?” And I do occasionally. But the way I stay optimistic — and I think that other people can — is to talk with a child.

Listen to a child. Just see the optimism that exists in a child. Like the little girl I ran into in Liberia in the middle of this terrible, sprawling camp for displaced people, who was so proud of her essay in her essay book.

Recently I was in Indonesia, and we were visiting some schools and a health clinic. They introduced us to some boys who were called the Little Doctors. All of a sudden I had a little tug behind me and there were little girl doctors, too. They wanted to make sure somebody spoke to them.

I think sometimes if you start losing some of your optimism, the important thing is just to go out and talk to some children. And not just always talk to, but also listen to, the children. First of all, you'll find enormous honesty, which is very helpful, very terrific; they will just tell you what they think. Second, you'll realize the enormous resiliency of children to overcome even the worst adversity.

Segunda parte y conclusión de este artículo. La primera parte fue publicada en el World Tribune del 14 de febrero, p. 14.

Por CRAIG DEROUSSE
LOS ANGELES

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

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

A medida que continuamos nuestra práctica y desarrollamos nuestro potencial de iluminación nuestra condición de vida se eleva de un modo natural.

Esto es extremadamente importante puesto que el Budismo plantea que tendemos a ser atraídos por personas que comparten nuestra condición de vida predominante, tanto si exhibimos características similares o no. A la luz del concepto budista de Los Diez Mundos, podemos representar nuestra condición de vida, la tendencia básica de nuestra vida diaria y nuestras relaciones, como una pirámide..

La base de la pirámide representa la condición de vida de la Budeidad y cada nivel, un poco más estrecho cada vez, representa cada uno de los otros



nueve mundos. El pico representa el estado de Infierno, si nuestra condición de vida predominante es esa, nuestras relaciones tendrán un balance precario en esa aguda punta. Cualquier cosa las hace tambalear o derrumbar, y a pesar de que este es un ejemplo un poco extremo podemos ver que mientras más elevada sea nuestra condición de vida habrá mayor posibilidad de forjar relaciones exitosas y duraderas. En el Budismo está esclarecido que la base ideal sobre la cual se debe construir una relación cercana es el Estado de Buda, que se caracteriza por un profundo nexo espiritual y por la sabiduría, respeto y misericordia, que de forma natural se activan a medida que continuamos entonando daimoku y aprendiendo.

Si no estamos satisfechos con nuestras relaciones pasadas o presentes, también podemos entonar en relación a estas e identificar cual de Los Diez Mundos las han dominado. Puede que descubramos extraordinarias similitudes en patrones negativos de comunicación y conducta tanto en nosotros como en los demás. Esto es lo que el Budismo llama nuestro karma negativo (patrones destructivos de conducta) que estamos forzados a repetir de una forma habitual. Nosotros también oramos para liberarnos de estos patrones y crear otros nuevos.

A medida que examinamos más profundamente nuestros patrones de relación, también podemos llegar a captar que las mismas características que originalmente nos atrajeron de algunas personas son las que precisamente al final nos repele de ellas. Por ejemplo, digamos que a través de los an-

tejos de vidrio teñido de rosado por el amor, a la persona A le cautivó la actitud calmada de B y comienza un romance. Pasa el tiempo y a medida que se desvanece el éxtasis (como suele pasar,) la persona A se

enfrentar las consecuencias. En este contexto, entonar daimoku también es un medio para acumular la buena fortuna para encontrar la persona correcta en el momento correcto. Si ya estamos involucrados con alguien,

el daimoku, puede ayudarnos a dinamizar la sabiduría para descubrir el potencial que existe en la relación y tomar la decisión de cómo actuar de acuerdo a ello. ¿Qué podemos decir en cuanto al romanticismo? La pasión a menudo es espontánea, así ¿cómo podemos lograr todo ese daimoku y reflexión sin perder el entusiasmo y la alegría del momento? Es más, si no permitimos que la relación exista en primer lugar, ¿Cómo podremos llegar a saber si realmente nos queremos comprometer? Hasta las

relaciones fracasadas pueden ser valiosas en cuanto a las lecciones que podemos aprender de ellas.

Todos estos planteamientos son bien interesantes, pero debemos preguntarnos si en verdad nosotros ganamos más de relaciones fracasadas, o de relaciones pasajeras o si fortalecemos nuestras tendencias negativas por medio de éstas. ¿Nos tornamos en personas más llenas de esperanza o más pesimistas? Nuestro actual escenario cultural de permisividad sexual consideraría como algo natural y hasta saludable tener cierto número de relaciones sexuales antes de estabilizarse con la persona "correcta". En el Budismo, el problema no es algo que tenga que ver con lo moral o con el pragmatismo. ¿Cuanta gente se ha beneficiado de esta tendencia cultural estableciendo relaciones más sólidas y duraderas?

Por supuesto que el tiempo

de duración de una relación no es la medida de su valor, pero si las personas son serias en cuanto a encontrar al "ser correcto" y establecer un nexo de lealtad con esa persona, muchos orientadores de familia enfatizan la importancia de asumir primero un compromiso consciente. De no ser así, hay una puerta abierta para escapes en caso de que las necesidades no sean satisfechas. Este punto también es importante a la luz de la Ley de simultaneidad entre causa y efecto. Flotar en una relación a medias es equivalente a hacer la causa para que esta finalice con la primera dificultad y de pié para que surja todo el dolor que ello implica. Pero, por otra parte, podemos ser tan serios como para considerar el casarnos con la persona, lo que en Budismo se considera algo con un impacto eterno. Ciertamente, una decisión tan significativa merece la pena que entonemos mucho daimoku hasta que podamos basar nuestra decisión en la calma de nuestro Estado de Buda y no en las olas del entusiasmo emotivo.

Dándole importancia al profundo significado de tal relación, el Daishonin plantea que el matrimonio "no es asunto de esta existencia únicamente" y que dos personas comprometidas una con la otra de por vida "Son tan unidas como el cuerpo y su sombra... en cada existencia de la vida, pasado, presente y futuro" (*Gosho de Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pág 146)

¿Nos hemos acercado más en algún sentido a las respuestas de nuestras preguntas originales? ¿Qué es eso llamado amor? Si buscamos la respuesta entre las impetuosas emociones que inspira en las personas podemos confundirnos aún más. Después de todo, el amor ha inspirado a los seres humanos a crear algunas de las más importantes obras de arte y piezas musicales, pero también ha producido muerte y destrucción sin sentido.

El amor puede mantener a la gente en diversos círculos viciosos de abuso o nutrir la realización de sus sueños. Puede cumplir la función de ser un chivo expiatorio, una diversión, un deleite, una pesadilla o un estímulo para nuestro crecimiento personal. En todo caso, el amor es tan único como la persona que lo está experimentando, es un reflejo de la propia vida de uno. A la luz del Budismo, el amor es lo que nosotros somos, es lo que nosotros escogamos que sea. W



Construyan la 'Gran Muralla de valores humanos'

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER

Continuación se transcribe un resumen del discurso del presidente de la SGI Ikeda, transmitida por el vicepresidente de la Soka Gakkai Shigeo Hasegawa, durante el encuentro realizado en forma conjunta entre los estudiantes de la Universidad Soka y el Instituto Superior Soka para Señoritas que próximamente se graduarán, celebrada en el Centro en Memoria del Presidente Makiguchi, Tokio, el 17 de enero.

Luego de transmitir sus más cálidas felicitaciones a todos los estudiantes que participaban del

tiempo no puede edificarse mediante el esfuerzo de un solo individuo, sino a través de la lucha firme y tenaz de muchas personas, que coloquen una por una las rocas de su estructura. En relación a esto, el señor Ikeda manifestó sus expectativas hacia los estudiantes así como al alumnado en general, para que continuasen fortaleciendo, solidificando y extendiendo aún más esta "Gran Muralla de valores Humanos." Subrayó que a diferencia de la Muralla china que fue edificada a costa de sacrificar incontables vidas humanas, lo que se trataba era de construir una fortaleza en bien de la humanidad mediada por un sólido círculo de personas que atesoren a todos y a cada una de sus integrantes.

Luego, el presidente Ikeda explicó que en la China la "gran muralla" simbolizaba a un individuo de gran calibre humano, dispuesto a levantarse solo para proteger su tierra. También se refirió a una anécdota acerca de dos soberanos de la antigua China. Según cuenta la leyenda, uno de ellos había ordenado ejecutar a un general que lo había servido con toda fidelidad, y el otro había dejado de contener a un servidor mal intencionado, quien movido por sus intereses llevó a lo ruina a un individuo virtuoso. Al poco tiempo, la dinastía de ambos gobernantes terminó en la ruina. En relación a este hecho, el líder de la SGI señaló que jamás se multiplicarían las fuerzas negativas de la perversidad mientras existiera la "gran muralla de la justicia."

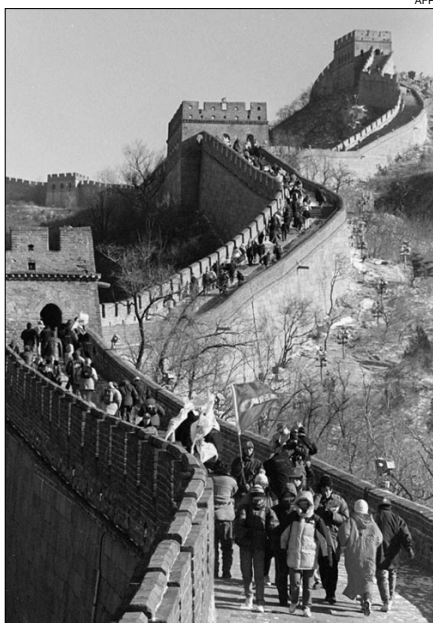
Luego, el líder de la SGI, se refirió a la turbulenta época que atraviesa el mundo actual, caracterizada por que las personas, al haber perdido el sentido de dirección, no saben hacia donde dirigirse. Subrayó que en ningún tiempo como el presente se había

hecho tan imperiosa la presencia de auténticos valores humanos. Desde esta perspectiva, señaló que los estudiantes de la soka debían dedicarse con seriedad a prepararse para desempeñar el importante papel que les corresponde dentro de la sociedad.

Luego, citó las tres clases de personas a la que se había referido el segundo presidente de la Soka Gakkai, Josei Toda; aquella cuya presencia es deseada por todos; la clase de gente que da lo mismo que esté presente o ausente, y aquella persona cuya presencia solo causa problemas. El presidente Ikeda aplicó esta clasificación a la esfera laboral. Describió entonces que estaba el que produce más valor de lo que corresponde a su salario; aquel que rinde en proporción a su ingreso y aquel que solo produce pérdidas. En relación a esto, instó a los participantes a realizar esfuerzos dirigidos a convertirse en clases de persona que rinda mucho más que el reconocimiento que pueda obtener. Añadió que, quién constantemente se desafía por hacer lo mejor, puede hacer que su vida sea brillante y segura. Asimismo, señaló que si bien es un derecho natural el buscar el mejoramiento de las condiciones laborales, era importante no olvidar que el lugar de trabajo representa un sitio de entrenamiento para desarrollarse y forjarse a sí mismo.

Luego, el líder de la SGI se refirió a las palabras del presidente Toda quien consideraba que el tesoro más preciado para la juventud era la confianza que pudiera ganarse. Y alentó a los estudiantes que estén por graduarse que aún cuando no consigan asegurar de inmediato un trabajo en el ámbito en que realmente deseen, vuelquen lo mejor de sí a cumplir cualquier tarea. Por pequeña que sea, para ganarse la confianza de sus compañeros de trabajo. Asimismo añadió que en la medida de que cada persona construya su magnífico castillo en bien de la humanidad, lograría a su vez, edificar la "Gran Muralla de valores humanos."

Para finalizar, el líder de la SGI dedicó un poema a todos los participantes donde transmite su sincera esperanza de que cada estudiante de la Soka se convierta en un auténtico valor capaz de realizar grandes contribuciones a la sociedad. ■



Celebrando los días festivos de año nuevo, ciudadanos llevan a cabo carreras en La Gran Muralla de la China.

encuentro, el presidente Ikeda inició su disertación refiriéndose a la Gran Muralla de la China. Única estructura construida por el hombre que se puede avistar desde la luna, y una extraordinaria obra cuya forma se la ha comparado con un gigantesco dragón que serpentea sobre la tierra que se dispone a remontarse hacia el extenso firmamento.

Señaló que en estos momentos los jóvenes que recibieron educación Soka se están desvolviendo en diferentes esferas de la sociedad decididos a construir una sólida "Muralla de valores humanos" alrededor del mundo. También señaló que un gran muro capaz de mantenerse erguido, resistiendo la prueba del

MENSAJE

Activamente Cerrando El Abismo de Separaciones

Séptima Reunión Conmemorativa de Damas de la SGI-USA

Mejores calidas felicitaciones en el día de hoy-Reunión conmemorativa de Damas de la SGI-USA, y bienvenidos a todos-Miembros, amigos y familiares. Mi corazón se colma con respeto y agradecimiento por sus esfuerzos únicos y sinceros en crear esta reunión para que muchos puedan disfrutar. En los Estados Unidos se están llevando a cabo reuniones conmemorativas en 740 localidades, marcando así, el séptimo aniversario desde que el Presidente Ikeda dio a las mujeres de la SGI-USA su conocida orientación del "Espejo Claro."

En su discurso, el señor Ikeda dice: "¿Cuál es el propósito de la vida? Es la felicidad...La verdadera felicidad yace en establecer un supremo estado de vida." Para establecer este "supremo estado de vida," nos hemos embarcado en una jornada extraordinaria-Nuestra Práctica del Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin- Esta es una práctica de reflexión introspectiva, transformación interna y de una victoria heroica sobre nuestro propio pesimismo y negatividad. Es una práctica a través de la cual podemos desarrollar compasión y confianza en nosotras mismas, para superar la tendencia común de separarnos de los demás.

Hoy en día, la sociedad se enfrenta a una serie de abismos de separaciones críticas a un nivel global-el racismo, xexismo, discordia familiar, violencia sin sentido, guerra y degeneración ambiental. Las raíces de esos problemas, nos ha dicho el Presidente Ikeda, radican en el fracaso de no hacer el ser humano y la felicidad humana, el foco constante y el objetivo en todos los terrenos de la vida. "Activamente cerrando el abismo de separaciones" (Actively Closing the Gap)-Nuestro tema de acción de este año- Puede cerrar abismos de malentendidos, con una acción continua



Wendy Clark

en nuestra relación con otros- a través del diálogo y discusión- usamos nuestras voces para cultivar en nosotras mismas y en los demás características positivas de sabiduría, compasión y coraje.

El Presidente Ikeda nos ha alentado a mirar más allá de los límites de los abismos de separaciones, hacia un nuevo horizonte de una comunidad humana. Debemos tener una visión de ciudadanía global y convertirnos en mujeres capaces de crear valor a dicho nivel.

Hagamos nuestros mejores esfuerzos para activamente cerrar las separaciones de diferencias y distancias, contribuyamos activamente a la comunidad global con vidas rebosantes de alegría, paz, felicidad y amor.

Finalmente, tomemos la iniciativa para unirnos con la juventud femenina, la juventud masculina y la división de hombres para verdaderamente nutrir la juventud de nuestra organización, porque ellos son los que asegurarán el avance continuo del kosen-rufu y construirán la era del humanismo en el siglo XXI.

Una vez más, muchas gracias por sus incansables esfuerzos. ¡Felicitación en la reunión conmemorativa de hoy!

WENDY CLARK
SGI-USA
Dirigente de la División de Damas

A Voice of Her Own

By LISA WILLIAMS

NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT

As a girl, Virginia Woolf faced overwhelming losses. When she was 13, her mother died suddenly. Soon after, her half-sister and beloved brother died, too. She was sexually abused by her half-brothers. And while she wanted a fine education, she was denied admittance to London's best universities simply because she was a woman.

These experiences caused her to deeply empathize with the outsiders of the world. As a writer and thinker, she sought to understand the causes of prejudice and domination, especially in relation to women.

In her long essay *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf, who died in 1941, urged women to establish financial independence, analyzing the conditions necessary for them to create art. She honored those who had spent their lives cooking, cleaning and caring for others when they may have longed to be writers. Without role models and encouragement, Woolf knew it is difficult for women to accomplish their dreams.

She saw they needed to have money — and rooms — of their own to have the independence to develop their capabilities. She further concluded that men's judgment of women as inferior was based on their own insecurities and fears.

Woolf urged women to write truthfully and in the process create a new vision of reality. This is precisely what she accomplished with her work, which has been translated into many languages. Virginia Woolf may have been a citizen of England, but through her writing she became a global citizen. She believed in the power of art and culture to transform the world. □



CORBIS-BETTMANN

As a pacifist, Virginia Woolf vehemently opposed the horrors of war. In her book 'Three Guineas,' she attacked the racist ideology of fascism. Drawing parallels between fascist aggression abroad and women's oppression at home, she saw that both stem from the need to control and dominate others. She called on all people to prevent war.