

# World Tribune

No. 3133

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

APRIL 4, 1997

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## Key Bureaus Make a Fresh Start

Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

In a Florida conference, reps from public relations, publications and study discuss their individual and collective roles in the U.S. kosen-rufu movement.

By CARMEN ROBERTS & TERRY ELLIS

CORRESPONDENTS

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., March 20-23

Do you know you are an ambassador? Yes, you! But you are not like an ambassador to a foreign country or an ambassador extraordinary who goes on special diplomatic missions — your mission is much more important. You and everyone else who practices Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism are ambassadors of peace, and your mission with SGI-USA is entering a new and historic time.

This, in a nutshell, was the message discussed and debated from three different angles by representatives of the public relations and publications bureaus, as well as the Study Department, during a special conference this weekend at the Florida Nature and Culture Center.

While the PR representatives gathered in the Conference Center Auditorium to discuss creative ways of reaching out into our communities, Study Department representatives (affectionately dubbed the "Study Nerds") took over the library and brainstormed ways to help individuals deeply understand and use Buddhism in society.

Simultaneously, in a room overlooking Toda Lake, correspondents debated how to make the SGI-USA publications a world-class source of inspira-



The spirit of friendship and equality permeated every aspect of the joint publications, PR and study conference.

tion for both members and their friends.

The atmosphere was one of empowerment. In the words of Paula Granger, a public relations representative from Atlanta: "This is a historic time; I feel as if the mantle is being passed to us." Even when they did not agree, the participants clearly recognized the powerhouse of experience and capability brought to the discussions. "I was blown away by the brain power and the heart of the study group," said Jesse Goins from Los Angeles. "This triad of study, publications and public relations all works together."

People may not have had all the answers — those answers will continue to unfold in local communities around the country — but the conferees were bound by a strong sense of responsibility and passion for the future

of the SGI-USA movement.

Those attending the public relations sessions focused on how public relations begins with each person — with the image each person presents to society.

"This is a natural outgrowth of our development," said Bill Aiken from Washington, D.C., who is director of SGI-USA media relations.

"To be a good citizen we must look for ways to interact with the community," he said. "This is an awakening to our organization's identity as a citizen of American society."

Ted Morino, the Study Department chief, saw this weekend as the cause for making a study movement more in tune with American members' needs. "What is needed to make our study movement a driving force for the development of each member's faith has be-

come clearer," he said. "By creating a variety of task forces in the Study Department to implement our study programs, I want to see a most compatible study movement grow in this country."

Representatives of the publications bureaus in each joint territory, who voluntarily do much of the work to produce the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*, discussed concrete plans.

"The anxiety that I came with about the future of the publications bureau in Hawaii vanished as I participated in this conference," Joanne Tachibana of Honolulu said. "The healthy and sometimes emotional discussions among regional correspondents with the staff from Los Angeles were frank and bore positive results."

PLEASE SEE BUREAUS, 5

## March 16 Celebration Closes the Generation Gap

By CHARLISE LYLES

CORRESPONDENT

Columbus, Ohio, March 16

Three generations of disciples gathered today to renew their pledge to work for the peace and happiness of humanity in the 21st century.

About 130 Ohio Territory youth were among thousands

who assembled across the country to commemorate Kosen-rufu Day, that chilly morning of March 16, 1958, when 6,000 youth gathered at the head temple to inherit the torch of kosen-rufu from the second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda.

From a historical slide show recounting that event to inspir-

ing experiences, dialogues on mission and the mentor-and-disciple relationship, Music Corps performances, line dancing and pizza, it was a fun- and faith-filled "Dress Rehearsal For The 21st Century."

General Director Zaitzu urged the youth not to fret over problems like having no money.

"To be young itself is the greatest asset," he said.

"The four years leading up to 2001 is the period that we entrust the responsibility of kosen-rufu to the youth division," he said. "So this is a very important time for you to receive training to be-

PLEASE SEE MARCH 16, 4

# ? QUESTION OF THE MONTH: *What's the significance to you of supporting the organization financially?*

Our Buddhist practice is an act of contribution. Offerings such as gongyo, home visits, calling members, district meetings, etc., are all acts of sincerity. Financial contribution is one more act to show appreciation for having a beautiful building to practice our faith and enjoy our activities in.

— TINA L. DICKERSON, New York



When a very close friend of mine visits my house, I treat her the best I can to show my appreciation for the visit. Likewise, I think of my financial contributions to the organization as an excellent opportunity to express my wholehearted appreciation toward the SGI.

— YANG JA PARK, St. Louis, Mo.

Supporting the SGI is an act of my sincere appreciation for the support, dedication and tireless efforts of all those who put the happiness of the members first. Studying the Lotus Sutra and practicing for myself and others is the greatest benefit I can ever imagine. Like Sessen Doji, I am overjoyed to make offerings so that others will be able to hear one verse. Eleven years ago when I first began this practice, I was in debt over my head and saw no way out. However, since I began to contribute financially, I have never been without. Not only my financial circumstances but that of other family members have improved.

— CHRISTINA YANNONE, Philadelphia

I used to contribute to many political groups as well as the SGI, until I realized that I could go broke fast if I gave to every organization whose agenda I support. I asked myself: Who can do the most good for the most people and create a truly happy world? Without a

doubt, it's the people who practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. So by focusing my contributions on the SGI, I feel that I'm reaffirming my conviction in the power of this Buddhism.

— LISA JONES, West Hollywood, Calif.



Giving financial contributions allows me the opportunity to support an organization that is the vital link to contributing to world peace. Over the past several years, I have had many opportunities to participate in contribution campaigns. I consider it an honor and a privilege to lend both time and money to such a great cause. As a result of giving sincerely, I now enjoy financial security. I will always lend my support to the SGI-USA.

— MAUDE O'DONNELL, Houston



Whenever I make a financial commitment to the SGI, I always receive wonderful benefits. But the real reason I make contributions is to pay back, in some small way, the SGI-USA for the way of life it has given me.

— PATTY JACOBS, Las Vegas

The vision and daily life behavior of Daisaku Ikeda convinced me that the SGI will accomplish world peace. The consistency of his leadership causes me to remain convinced, even as our local organization struggles to understand his ideal. Financial contributions represent one more practical way to do world peace with my life. The benefit to me has been financial stability far beyond my expectations.

— CLAUDINE MUSSUTO, Boston

In my view, right now at this place in time, it means challenging myself to find the best possible workplace for me to grow in, so that I can contribute to society in the fields of art and film. This will be a great opportunity for me to experience breakthroughs and overcome self-doubt so others in my life can benefit from my victories as well. Consequently, I can then contribute to the organization of SGI-USA and our efforts for world peace.

— GENIE CHOW, Albany, Calif.



In the past, I made really high contribution goals that I could never meet. But then I made a determination to set a realistic yearly goal and accomplish it. I've done this and as a result my financial situation has improved. I even overcame bad credit and received my own credit card.

— SARA ALGASE, New York



Twenty years ago I was working freelance and didn't have a dime. I remember filling out an income tax return back then. When I realized I owed \$50, I put my head down on the kitchen table and cried because I didn't have the money to pay it. After all these years of steady contributions, \$50 is now chump change to me. Plus I have the more lasting pleasure of enjoying the many new culture centers and facilities created by the members' sincere financial efforts.

— NIKKI AMDUR, New York

Contributing financially to the SGI-USA has enabled me to understand in a very real way what the Daishonin meant when he talked about the immeasurable

benefits one receives when making offerings to the Lotus Sutra. The development of my finances as a result of the May contribution campaigns is insignificant compared to the depth of expansion of my life-condition and the joy and pride I feel in being part of the development and happiness of the American people.

— M.J. WARRENDER-FRAZIER, San Diego, Calif.



I believe that the law of cause and effect is very strict. Therefore, when we make the cause to financially support the organization, the universe, in return, supports our lives and meets our financial needs. Some of us may feel that we are giving to the organization. The reality is we are in fact giving to our lives.

— DOROTHY HAWKINS, Kansas City, Mo.



In Chicago we have a new culture center that wouldn't exist unless the members in the joint territory had understood the importance of establishing a castle of kosen-rufu. The May contribution is a way for me to personally reply to SGI President Ikeda's call to expand the SGI-USA. To make more friends of the SGI, we have to have something to show them. If I am not growing, then kosen-rufu won't expand. And if I can put this feeling into action, then both will occur. The May contribution is an excellent opportunity to do that.

— STEVE FURMAN, Chicago

**Thanks to all who responded.**

## NEXT MONTH'S QUESTION:

*Our Buddhism often emphasizes "standing alone for justice." How do you, in your everyday life, stand alone for justice?*

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, or e-mail us at: SokaNews@aol.com.

**Deadline: April 21**

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**Publisher** Fred M. Zaitso  
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**WORLD TRIBUNE  
MAILBOX**

**Overcoming Prejudice**

Someone recently suggested in this column that it would be nice to hear from a Caucasian with regard to his or her overcoming racial prejudice (March 7 "Mailbox"). In response to that suggestion, I offer the following.

For many years I harbored ill feelings toward the Oriental race. Here I was practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and trying to justify these feelings. I resented the fact that so many members of SGI were "foreigners."

But this practice allows no one to escape the truth, and before long I realized the error of my thinking. I began to chant about this wrongful attitude. I then proceeded to go out of my way to develop friendships with the people I so disliked. I forced myself to open my heart, mind and life before them. I bared my soul so to speak, shared my thoughts and feelings on every level.

To my amazement this was met with tremendous acceptance and trust. The dialogue we shared was so healing. I discovered to my surprise and delight that I had made some of my best friends ever both inside and outside of SGI. My feeling now is gratitude for these wonderful women. Their friendship, acceptance and sharing of their culture has been so beneficial to me. I am so happy to see the Japanese members at meetings and cannot thank them enough for sharing this practice with all of us. Most of all I am grateful for SGI President Ikeda, Nichiren Daishonin and the Gohonzon. I thank them for not letting me miss this opportunity for growth.

— JENNIFER CECERE, Port Orchard, Wash.

**Everyone's Experience Is Valuable**

I am writing in response to Robin Beck's letter (March 21 "Mailbox"). Although I agree that painting members' experiences who have happy marriages and family lives would be of value, I disagree with his belief that abuse occurs primarily in the unmarried population. I'm not an expert in statistics, but I do know that physical and emotional abuse encompasses an alarmingly large number of both married and unmarried couples. Abuse knows no boundaries, be they social status, educational background or ethnic origin. It stems from a deep lack of respect for oneself and others, and for the very dignity of human life.

I speak from experience. I was involved with an abusive husband for 19 years. I practiced sincerely throughout this time, and my husband practiced as well. After years of professional counseling and guidance from my SGI senior leaders, I realized that I had to take control of my own life. My decision to divorce was not an easy one.

With my faith in the Gohonzon, I have begun a shining new chapter in my life. It has taken time to heal, to develop trust and to love again. My faith has seen me through it all.

So, to Robin Beck, I say that as long as we practice earnestly and sincerely, we are all success stories. We should be slow to judge, and we should keep our minds and hearts open to others in regards to their circumstances. We each have our own story to tell and can in turn encourage others that may be experiencing what we have gone through before them.

— ROBIN RACOMA, Pearl City, Hawaii

*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.*

**My Own Private Holiday**

**PERSPECTIVE**

By **JIM CELER**  
OMAHA, NEB.

I consider myself very fortunate in a strange way — I seem to have my own private, annual "holiday."

Feb. 26, 1972: I received the Gohonzon and joined the SGI-USA.

Feb. 26, 1987: SGI President Ikeda wrote "Arise, the Sun of the Century" to mark the 30th anniversary of America's kosen-rufu movement.

Feb. 26, 1990: President Ikeda, during his landmark visit to America that led to the revitalization of our organization, gave a speech on the importance of developing new ways of thinking and demonstrating the greatness of the Daishonin's Buddhism through actual proof.

Feb. 26, 1995: My family received the Gohonzon transcribed by Nichikan.

This year, Feb. 26 marked the 25th anniversary of my practice. I admit that I did not consider the number 25 especially significant — after all, if one is to practice until the last moment of life, I still have (I hope) another 35 or 40 years to go.

But that day's mail brought the Feb. 21 *World Tribune* with two speeches by the SGI president in which he notes that 1997 marks his 50th year of practice.

And then the significance of my anniversary sunk in: President Ikeda has been my guide and teacher for more than half my life and has had a greater influence on me than any other living human being.

In both speeches, he follows his remarks about his 50 years of practice with comments on building a "diamond-like body." In the Dec. 28 speech, he explains: "It is vital...to forge a resolute and unshakable self — a self strong enough to calmly withstand whatever conditions or circumstances one may encounter in daily life and society" (p. 12).

In his Jan. 11 speech, he describes how to build such a life-condition: "This is a theme that runs throughout the Goshu. The Daishonin's conclusion is that one must thoroughly oppose

evil. That is, one must refute what is erroneous and spread the True Law; exert oneself wholeheartedly for justice; and struggle for the sake of the Law. Repudiating supreme evil is a cause of supreme good" (p. 11).

Reflecting on my practice, I see I have not quite managed to build a "diamond-like body." Why not? In the Jan. 11 speech, President Ikeda gives me an answer: "For half a century, except for a 10-day period when I was ill, I have not rested for a single

Yet President Ikeda never feels this way.

At a very low time in 1984, when I was sure I was hurtling toward disaster, he said: "The Gohonzon is absolute. By virtue of the beneficent power of the Gohonzon, where there is earnest prayer, the improvement, progress and fulfillment of desires that you pray for will all come true in time, in exact accordance with your wishes" (*Daily Guidance*, vol. 2, p. 51). Those words restored my confidence and determination, and in fact brought me back to life.

At an even lower time in my life, when I truly did not understand what I needed, he arrived in 1990 and said, "My wish is that NSA [SGI-USA] will become an organization overflowing with smiles, friendship and humanity" (March 1990 *Seikyo Times*, p. 10). That was it! My personal campaign to become a smiling, friendly and humane person led to another revitalization of my life.

So now, owing so much to this man, knowing that he is tireless in his efforts and knowing that there are still so many people who do not know of or understand the greatness of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and the organization that propagates it, how can I feel comfortable? After all, I have a lifelong mentor who every second demonstrates that the way to build a "diamond-like body" is to "refute that which is erroneous and spread the True Law."

And what's more, it is possible, on my 25th anniversary or any day of any year to begin a new life with a new sense of hope and determination.

At 10:05 a.m. on Feb. 26, 1987, President Ikeda concluded his poem to the American members:

*Let us aim for the summit of  
eternal happiness in the  
new century,  
Shining beyond the vast  
prairies.  
This day, this very morning,  
With great pride and  
conviction  
Have we boldly launched  
On a brand new voyage.*

From the midst of the "vast prairies" — congratulations, President Ikeda, and thank you. ☐



**I live in what might be called 'comfortable' conditions: money, a nice house, a loving wife and my child doing well in school.... So by focusing my eyes a certain way, I can believe that 'there's nothing for me to do today.' Yet President Ikeda never feels this way.**



day. I have worked unceasingly, solely for kosen-rufu and the happiness of the members. I have exerted myself tirelessly in action and deed. And I have written prodigiously" (p. 11).

After 25 years of practice, of course, things have changed immensely, and I live in what might be called "comfortable" conditions: money, a nice house, a loving wife, and my child doing well in school. Many members are beginning to look for and take responsibility. So by focusing my eyes a certain way, I can believe that "there's nothing for me to do today."

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# Treasuring People Is the SGI Spirit, SGI President Says

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER  
Okinawa, Japan, Feb. 27

"Nothing is more precious than the people," began SGI President Ikeda at the 2nd Okinawa Executive Conference here today. Treasuring the people and working for their happiness, he stressed, is the fundamental spirit of the SGI.

He then shared a story about an elderly follower of Shakyamuni who had suffered great hardship while in domestic service. After encountering Shakyamuni and embracing faith in Buddhism, all

of her sufferings were transformed into compassion and wisdom to relieve the pain of others. Through her deep concern and common sense, she converted a Brahman, a member of ancient India's highest caste, who was practicing austerities in the hope of lessening his negative karma.

She had much in common, Mr. Ikeda said, with members of the women's division and the Many Treasures Group, adding that the devoted efforts of countless hard-working, ordinary individuals have been the source of the kosen-

rufu movement's development.

With spring just around the corner, the SGI leader said he hoped that the members would use this time to breathe new life into their activities. He quoted a passage from the Lotus Sutra: "A fragrant wind blew away the withered flowers, / whereupon fresh and beautiful ones rained down" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 137). By engaging in dialogue with and encouraging our fellow members, he said, our faith is revitalized. And those whose faith is always fresh and vigorous function as a "fragrant

wind" themselves, he added. In connection with the World Peace Youth Culture Festival that will be hosted by Okinawa in the year 2000, Mr. Ikeda said he wished that the members, especially those of the youth division, would unite to make it a landmark event raising the curtain on a new era of peace from Okinawa's shores.

Turning to the German author Goethe's semi-autobiographical novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, the SGI president emphasized the importance of experiencing sufferings and hardships in life to strengthen character. The novel's protagonist, the artistically inclined and deeply sensitive Werther, was consumed by a passionate but unrequited love for a certain young woman, which in the end drove him to suicide.

Discussing this work, Goethe once said that people of any era can relate to facing obstacles and having one's desires or ambitions remain unfulfilled. Mr. Ikeda said that though life indeed is a suc-

cession of trials, each challenge must be overcome if we are to lead happy and fulfilling lives. He stressed that faith is the driving force behind such a struggle and reminded the members of the Buddhist principle of earthly desires leading to enlightenment.

President Ikeda then quoted Dr. Aleksandr Yakovlev, the Russian architect of perestroika, who once said that the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism enable people to transform any gale of suffering into a favorable wind of creativity. The SGI leader added that when we cherish the great desire for kosen-rufu — a desire that finds expression in our concern for others and for society at large — we can transform our sufferings into positive sources of energy and elevate our life-conditions. He concluded by reaffirming that those who embrace and work to spread the Mystic Law throughout their lives will, at the last moment of their lives, feel a sense of deep and abiding satisfaction. ❧

## ANNOUNCING

### The 1st Annual 'World Tribune' Essay Contest

**THEME:** *Human Diversity*

**CATEGORIES:** *Elementary School  
Junior High School  
High School  
College/University  
Open (All Ages)*

*The World Tribune invites all members to share their thoughts on one of the most important subjects of our day: human diversity. There are so many different kinds of people in our country. Whether we differ in our race, our gender, our size, our background or our sexual orientation, we all share one thing: We are all human. What joys have you experienced in celebrating this diversity? What have you learned about yourself when you've met someone different from you? What prejudices have you faced? What needs to change in ourselves and in our country so we can rise above prejudice and discrimination?*

*We are looking for short, personal essays no more than 750 words long addressing these questions and any other ideas you have on human diversity. A special committee will judge the essays on the quality of writing as well as on clarity and originality. The top three finishers in each category will have their essays published in the World Tribune. Plaques and other non-cash prizes will be awarded to the top three finishers.*

**To Enter:** *Send your essay (double-spaced, typed) to "Essay Contest," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA, 90401. Indicate which category you are entering. Only one entry per person. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope. All essays become the property of the World Tribune. Any essays not double-spaced and typed or exceeding 750 words will not be considered.*

**DEADLINE: JUNE 30, 1997**

MARCH 16, FROM PAGE 1

come great leaders for the 21st century. No matter what obstacles you encounter, challenge to overcome them one by one. SGI President Ikeda is really praying for the SGI-USA youth division's continuous growth."

Next, Chicago Joint Territory Vice Young Men's Division Chief Osamu Kaneko shared his determination. Some faces filled with sorrow as he relayed the death of SGI-USA member Curtis Caldwell, just two days before the meeting. Last January, Mr. Caldwell, of Cleveland, had graduated to the men's division after fighting 10 years in the youth division.

"His death could mean so many things," said Mr. Kaneko, his voice breaking at times. "However, from my deep grief I take this incident as a time to double my efforts for kosen-rufu with our common mentor, President Ikeda, whom Curtis always respected and loved."

Then Mr. Kaneko read his freshly composed poem "A Pledge of My Eternal Battle for Kosen-rufu," which clearly echoed "A Blue Deeper Than the Blue of the Indigo Plant Itself," President Ikeda's March 16 commemorative poem.

*Oh, March 16th,  
It is time for youth to make  
a diamond-like, firm  
resolution  
It is time for youth to begin*

*praying with burning  
passion*

*And it is the time for youth  
to, resolutely and finally,  
start taking action for  
you and others.*

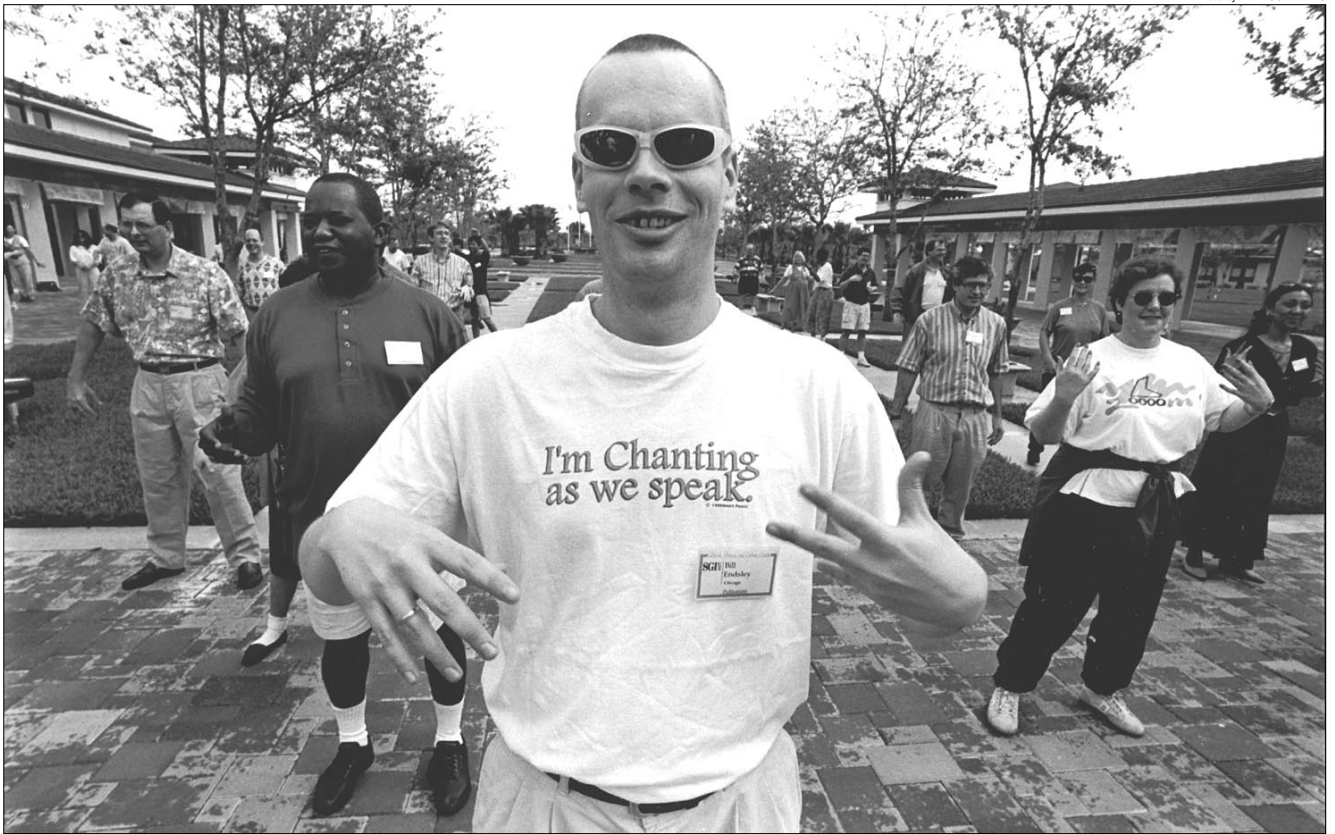
Lyntoya Franklin, 16, followed by sharing her ongoing fight against a congenital heart defect that has caused kidney and lung failure (see "Experience," Sept. 20, 1996, *World Tribune*). The Cleveland youth expressed appreciation to the many members who kept a chanting vigil for her and for the warm encouragement she received from SGI Vice Women's Division Chief Yumiko Hachiya during President Ikeda's visit last June.

Jason Sieminski, 17, of Toledo, Ohio, then shared that the turning point in his faith came last fall when his mother's lungs collapsed. Despite a bleak prognosis, he stayed by her side as she lay unconscious. "Your mission is not over," he whispered in her ear.

"My mom is back home now, has gained over 30 pounds and is doing really good," Jason said. "I've learned that through sincere daimoku, anything is possible. I'm so fortunate to have had so much support from everyone."

In the spirit of mentor and disciple, Lyntoya and Jason both vowed to deepen their faith and to share Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism wherever they go. ❧

Photo by KIRK CONDYLES



Bill Endsley of Chicago joins in the exercises Friday morning of the joint conference of the publications bureaus, PR bureaus and Study Department.

Photo by JONATHAN WILSON

Photo by MIKE MULLEN



Libby Furman of Chicago speaks during the PR conference, where the participants talked about community, academic and media relations.



The Sunshine Terrace is a popular place for dialogue among the conference participants. Fletcher Dalton of Boston (below) enjoys a solitary moment in the early morning.

Photo by CAROL BARNSTEAD

## PR, Pubs and Study Make a Fresh Start

BUREAUS, FROM PAGE 1

Al Albergate, the community relations director for the organization, explained that "making friends is the heart of community relations. Why do we need friends? We're not going to bring about world peace by ourselves. There are many people of good will and integrity, who have the same goals as we do.

"Why not make friends with them, so we can work together? This is what SGI President Ikeda does continually."

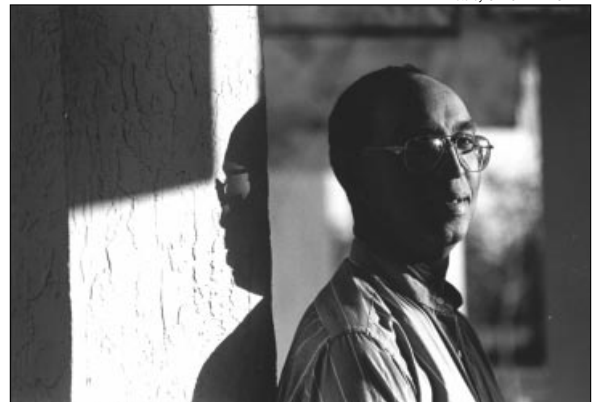
Those common goals include non-violence, tolerance, freedom of religion, world citizenship and non-discrimination.

Conference participants left encouraged about their crucial role in the SGI-USA's movement for world peace.

"I have gained a heightened appreciation for the need to strengthen my determination to do my human revolution if I am to be an effective PR representative," said Jim Wallerstein from Rosemont, Pa.

Carol Woodard from Maywood, Ill., chimed in: "President Ikeda says making friends is PR, so I'm in the right place."

"I am refreshed in faith and my determination, so I'll return home with new insights to slowly, step-by-step, JUST DO IT," added Barbara Wright Cullen from Calabasas, Calif.



The prosecutor's comment startled the Gakkai leaders. What a fine about-face, they thought, given the suffering and hardship this man had inflicted on the Gakkai. But Shin'ichi Yamamoto quietly acknowledged him with a nod. In all likelihood, even this prosecutor felt that his arrest and interrogation had been unjust.

Shin'ichi rode in a car back to the Kansai Headquarters. The leaders who welcomed him there were all smiles.

"Thank you, everyone — we won!" he told them.

After chanting three daimoku to the Gohonzon, he gazed up at President Toda's picture on the wall.

"Sensei, I have been exonerated," he told his mentor silently.

Toda had worried over the outcome of Shin'ichi's trial until the last moment of his life, his thoughts constantly on the future of his disciple and successor.

Shin'ichi wished he could have reported his victory to Toda in person. He recalled how, on the day of his arrest, Toda had come to see him off at Tokyo's Haneda Airport. Toda had tightly embraced him, saying, "Shin'ichi, should death overtake you, I will rush to your side and throw myself upon you and accompany you in death...."

He also remembered how, despite being so weak he could hardly walk on his own, Toda had gone personally to the Osaka District Prosecutor's Office to demand Shin'ichi's release. How overjoyed he would have been at today's verdict! Shin'ichi felt deeply sorry that his mentor was not present to hear the news.

A short time later, the other members who were defendants in the trial arrived at the Kansai Headquarters. Ittetsu Okada and Kunizo Toriyama were among them. While in police custody, these two had suffered long, cruel interrogation while handcuffed throughout. Shin'ichi's greatest concern now was for these members who, though penalized with only a fine, had nevertheless been found guilty of breaking the law.

Shin'ichi took some time to talk with them. In a gentle tone, he said: "Having been a fellow defendant in this case, I couldn't encourage you as much as I wanted to. But today I want to commend you on how admirably you have endured this ordeal for the past four-and-a-half years. I know how difficult it must have been for you and deeply appreciate your struggle. If I could have spared you all this by going to prison, I gladly would have."

Tears glistened in the members' eyes. It had actually been their overzealousness that led them to break the law and subsequently caused Shin'ichi to be arrested and jailed on false charges. But Shin'ichi did not mention any of that. That he should care more for their welfare than his own and take time to warmly encourage them in this way moved them to tears.

## The New Human Revolution

By HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 5, Chapter 4

# Lion

Translation of parts 36–38 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.

Shin'ichi continued quietly: "It's only right and natural to make good any wrongs one has committed. And if you sincerely persevere in faith to the very end, you will definitely attain happiness. Let's continue to work together for kosen-rufu throughout our lives, come what may."

He gazed at each of them. Their eyes shone with fresh determination.

Shin'ichi then delved into the real nature and meaning of the Osaka Incident, his voice now reverberating with anger: "What was the Osaka Incident really all about? The Gakkai, an organization of ordinary citizens, supported candidates for political office based on the wish to secure a peaceful and prosperous society through the humanistic ideals of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and by creating a government that exists for the people, working for their welfare. Seeing our dramatic development, those in power were afraid that the Gakkai would grow into a mass movement that, if left to gain further popular support, would eventually imperil their positions. So the Osaka Incident was really about cutting the Gakkai down to size before it got any bigger.

"To achieve this, they decided to use intimidation — threatening and harassing you upon your arrest for door-to-door vote solicitation, a relatively minor offense. They threatened and coerced you into falsely stating that such illegal acts had been conducted under my instructions and that the Gakkai was involved in illegal activities on an organizational level. Their ultimate goal was to paint the Gakkai as a dangerous, criminal organization.

"The authorities' job should be to protect and safeguard people's rights and welfare, definitely not to harass and torment honest, upright citizens. People are the protagonists in our society and nation. We must resolutely fight against the insidious aspect of power that would enslave, torment and oppress people, trampling on their rights. This, I declare, is the Gakkai's mission.

"Also, as long as we continue to fight on the side of the people, the Gakkai is destined to meet with oppression from those in power and from interests that seek the support and patronage of the authorities. The Osaka Incident is not the

last persecution that we will encounter. It is only the beginning.

"In the future, the authorities may try to twist the meaning of laws so as to rule the Gakkai an illegal organization. Or they may create a law similar to the notorious Peace Preservation Act, introduced during the period of Japanese militarism earlier this century, and then use it to persecute us. Or they may spread false rumors that crimes and events totally unconnected to us are actually the Gakkai's doing, or fabricate various scandals to implicate the organization and its members. Or again, as has happened in the past, they may secretly employ people to harass those who are critical of the Gakkai and then deliberately create the impression that such attacks are being made by our members.

"In any case, it is inevitable that corrupt authority will join hands with forces hostile to the Gakkai and employ any means they can to try to alienate the public from us and drive a wedge between me and the members in an attempt to destroy our movement."

The atmosphere in the room was solemn. The leaders, who had been euphoric over Shin'ichi's acquittal, suddenly sobered.

Shin'ichi continued even more emphatically: "Such oppression, when it arises, comes from all sides, with relentless, concentrated force. But I fear nothing. Just as the Daishonin proclaimed in the midst of great persecution, 'My present exile is not because of any crime' (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 38), I have done nothing wrong. That is why the authorities have schemed to frame me with a crime I did not commit.

I will fight an uncompromising battle against the insidious workings of power. I share the Daishonin's conviction when he said, 'Still I am not discouraged' (MW-1, 166). We are waging a struggle for human rights — for the victory of the people and the triumph of humanity."

Shin'ichi's words were like the roar of a lion king, now broken free of the shackles of oppression. His eyes gleamed with unbending resolve.

The Soka Gakkai's history was one of ceaseless struggle against the devious forces of authoritarianism. This spirit had remained unchanged from the days of its first president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi.

Unlike the vast majority of religions in Japan — which, afraid of incurring the displeasure of the authorities, had a record of bowing to the state's demands — the Gakkai stood resolutely on the side of justice, for the happiness and victory of the people. Because of this, President Makiguchi died in prison while nobly upholding his beliefs. He fought for religious freedom, the most fundamental human right. This is also why the Gakkai has been relentlessly dogged by persecution.

However, this was the Soka Gakkai's destiny, the path upon which it was ordained to advance as a religious organization genuinely committed to human dignity.

The Daishonin writes, "The lion fears no other beast, nor do its cubs" (MW-1, 241). To spread the Mystic Law is to follow the lion's path. Only those of dauntless courage, conviction and integrity can undertake the rigorous challenge of propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism. The path of the lion is also that of mentor and disciple, a path that can only be actualized by disciples who make their mentor's spirit their own.

In closing, Shin'ichi declared: "We are lions. Let us make our way through the storm toward the sunlight."

After taking his leave from his beloved friends in Kansai, Shin'ichi headed by car to the airport.

Having broken free of the net cast by the vicious workings of power, Shin'ichi stood poised to launch himself into the tasks ahead with renewed energy.

He gazed out the car window at the passing scenery. Dazzling rays of sunlight shone down from between the clouds, illuminating the road ahead.

(This concludes the "Lion" chapter and also volume 5 of *The New Human Revolution*.)

(To be continued)

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### Standing Inside the Fire

By KIMBERLY SCOTT

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

**Carry through with your faith in the Lotus Sutra. You cannot strike fire from flint if you stop halfway. Bring forth the great power of faith....** (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 201)

I failed." "I am a failure." Sometimes, in the midst of it all, these words echo through my head. My inner voice of self-judgment berates me. I add up my disappointments. A feeling of profound darkness sets in. And here in the prime of my life, I wonder why I should go on climbing my mountain of hopes and dreams.

Nichiren Daishonin, however, wrote the above words from a most uncomfortable exile: He and his followers had been persecuted; his living quarters were at that point a cold, ramshackle shrine in the middle of a graveyard. From such circumstances, though, he encouraged Shijo Kingo to continue his faith, using the analogy of striking fire from flint to show how our Buddha nature, inherent to our lives, can be brought forth.

The image of Nichiren bundled up and writing this letter encourages me. He could have decided to cut his losses and bag his philosophy for a warm bed and a smile from the powers that be. But the wisdom he brought forth was so profound that he knew his persecutions and obstacles were proof of this philosophy's validity.

Garth Brooks sings a song that goes, "Life is not tried, it is merely survived, / If you're standing outside the fire." I think the real warmth in our lives comes not from comfort or ease but from the consistent efforts we make to stand up — in the fire of our sufferings — for our happiness and that of others.

As SGI President Ikeda said to the SGI-USA youth in 1990: "Lives being pulled toward misfortune and unhappiness are redirected and pulled in the opposite direction, toward good, when they make the Mystic Law their base. It is as if sufferings are made the fuel for a fire of joy and wisdom and compassion. It is the Mystic Law and faith which ignite that flame." I know as long as I remember what ignites the flame, I'll never be left standing outside the fire. ❏

## SIGNIFICANT DATE

By ELIZABETH PAGE

SEATTLE CORRESPONDENT

When May 3, Soka Gakkai Day, comes around, I read a passage from the *Daily Guidance*, vol. 4, which never fails to awe me. SGI President Ikeda writes: "My determination has always been to carry on, no matter what, the essence of second president Toda's spirit and to transmit to future generations the way of kosen-rufu, which he created. I hope that you, as generals of kosen-rufu who are always filled with great, warm humanity, will exert your utmost toward May 3 of next year."

President Ikeda's determination to propagate this Buddhism, as reflected in this passage, boggles my mind. It almost makes me shake. I mean look at it — "To carry on, no matter what, the essence of second president Toda's spirit." That's an amazing statement to me, when I think of how President Toda was such a great martyr for kosen-rufu.

How can we use May 3 — the day on which President Toda became president in 1951 and President Ikeda became presi-

SOKA GAKKAI DAY — MAY 3

# Disciples of Great Lions

dent in 1960 — as a reminder to carry on this spirit? And once we grasp this spirit how can we transmit it to future generations? In the second sentence of his determination, President Ikeda gives us a suggestion: We can accomplish these things by becoming "generals of kosen-rufu." And not just ordinary generals, he says — warm, humanistic ones, who exert our utmost every year toward the next May 3. Whew! Can we really do this? Are we tired yet?

Creating the framework to propagate this Buddhism — to carry on the Soka Gakkai spirit, to transmit it to future generations — doesn't take place at just a special once-a-year event like a May 3rd meeting. It's created instead through our day-to-day efforts. Those endless planning meetings, phone calls, home visits and chanting sessions all add up to slowly create a momentum toward propagation.

As we exert ourselves in the coming year toward May 3, 1998, we can be bolstered by what President Ikeda said in a recent speech: "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."

These obstacles, of course, can appear at any time in our day-to-day efforts. They can make us not want to take action for kosen-rufu. So it is at times like these that we must summon our courage and not be swayed.

In exerting ourselves as successors of the three presidents, we don't need to compare ourselves to others. We simply need to realize we're all disciples of these great lions and walk our own paths based on that. In this week's installments of *The New Human Revolution*, Presi-

dent Ikeda quotes the Daishonin that "the lion fears no other beast, nor do its cubs" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 241). To fear no obstacles in our individual, day-to-day efforts for kosen-rufu — this is the spirit behind May 3. ❏

*In exerting ourselves as successors of the three presidents, we don't need to compare ourselves to others.*

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON FAITH

# Whose Life-Condition Is It, Anyway?

By TED MORINO

SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT CHIEF

**Q I understand that when we fuse with the Gohonzon, the life-condition of the original Buddha wells up within our lives — yet we also are told not to seek the Gohonzon outside ourselves. As we chant, is it Nichiren Daishonin's life or our own Buddha nature that we awaken to?**

**A** In this context, the phrases "Nichiren Daishonin's life" and "our Buddha nature" mean the same thing. Both refer to the condition of Buddhahood innate in our lives. When we say that Nichiren Daishonin's life wells up from within, we mean that every positive human characteristic we have, such as compassion, courage, wisdom and perseverance, is tapped through chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and living in accord with the Mystic Law.

The concept of Buddhahood can be confusing. We live in a society that worships the kinds of megapower that can make a common person feel ineffective and insignificant. "The life-condition of the original Buddha welling up within

us" might sound like we're submitting ourselves to a greater power.

The Buddhist principle of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms, though, clarifies that Buddhahood, a boundless, unrestricted state of being, is actually the essence of all life. You might say that it is a basic building block of our existence. When our Buddhahood is activated by chanting wholeheartedly, we can thus live with boundless, unrestricted creativity.

In "On Attaining Buddha," Nichiren Daishonin says: "If you seek enlightenment outside yourself, any discipline or good deed will be meaningless. For example, a poor man cannot earn a penny just by counting his neighbor's wealth, even if he does so night and day" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 4).

Awakened to this reality of Buddhahood within, Nichiren Daishonin exemplified the most lofty way of living through his life-condition and behavior. Embracing the Mystic Law, he never wavered in his mission to awaken the rest of the world to his dream of true happiness for all — even when ostracized by society or faced with life-threatening persecutions. Likewise, as each of us begins to recognize and then fulfill our specific

missions for the happiness of all people, we awaken the same passion, joy and wisdom in our lives.

In *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 1, SGI President Ikeda describes the pioneer members who came to meet him on his first trip to America in 1960 as Buddhas: "The women were not well dressed, but to Shin'ichi each appeared as a golden Buddha who would lead her friends in America to happiness. Buddhas do not exist in some far-off realm; they dwell here in this very real, strife-ridden *saha* world. A Buddha dwells within each living, breathing human being who experiences problems, sufferings and joy." Talking recently to Hong Kong artist Fang Zhaoling, President Ikeda similarly encouraged her, "Adorned with boundless treasures, your life has been forged and polished by great vicissitude."

Each of us has a mission for kosen-rufu. As we strive to fulfill this mission through our practice, the world becomes a better place because of our efforts. We come to appreciate our role in creating a society of respect and friendship, opening our hearts to the challenge of encouraging even one more person. In other words, the life of the Buddha cannot help welling up within us. ❏

SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech at the Joint Executive Conference of the SGI of Hong Kong and the SGI of Macau, in Hong Kong, Feb. 13.

**C**ongratulations on holding this Joint Executive Conference! Today is the seventh day of the new year, according to the Chinese lunar calendar. This day has traditionally been known as People's Day. It is the day on which human beings were believed to have first been born on Earth — our shared birthday as a species.

In the Chinese lunar calendar, the first eight days of the new year were respectively regarded as the days of birds, dogs, pigs, sheep, oxen, horses, human beings and grains, in that order. The weather on each day was thought to predict the fortunes of that category of living things for the coming year. The seven herbs of spring were also customarily eaten on the seventh day, People's Day.

### **The Land of Eternally Tranquil Light Is Everywhere**

I am so happy to be with you all today on this traditional Chinese holiday. Meeting with my beloved friends from Hong Kong and Macau is one of the great pleasures and joys of my life. The SGI of Hong Kong and the SGI of Macau are making solid and steady progress. You have gained deep and broad trust in your local communities and society. You are setting a fine example for the rest of the world.

When you embrace and live your life based on the Mystic Law, wherever you dwell is the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light. The four leaders of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth — Superior Practices, Boundless Practices, Pure Practices and Firmly Established Practices — are always at your side, protecting and assisting you in everything you do. I hope you will have absolute conviction in your great good fortune.

### **21st-Century Citizens**

At this momentous juncture when Hong Kong will be returned to China in July, I am engaged in a continuing dialogue with the respected Hong Kong writer Jin Yong [Louis Cha] con-



Hong Kong writer Jin Yong once said, "I remember my discussing with President Ikeda...that to become true citizens of the 21st century, we must open our hearts and work for understanding...."

## **Courageously Champion the Cause of Justice**

cerning the territory's future.

Jin Yong has long regarded the activities of the SGI of Hong Kong very highly. Despite his extremely busy schedule, he honored us by speaking at the opening of the Hong Kong SGI Cultural and Recreational Centre last May 3. "I remember my discussing with President Ikeda in one of our dialogues that to become true citizens of the 21st century, we must open our hearts and work for understanding between those of different views, while also nurturing the spirit of compassion," he said at that time.

Partly as an expression of gratitude and respect for Jin Yong's warm support, I will speak today about the great tradition of Chinese literature.

Jin Yong's heroic tales are often compared to the famous Chinese novel *The Water Margin*.<sup>1</sup> The young men's division training group Suiko-kai, which studied directly under second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, began by reading that novel.

Though beloved by the people, *The Water Margin* was often despised by the authorities, who went as far as declaring that it didn't deserve to be called liter-

ature at all. The reason for this antipathy is that the novel pleads the case of the people; it speaks out for their cause. One of the book's main themes is anger toward irresponsible and unethical rulers.

### **Defending the Weak, Fighting Oppression**

*The Water Margin* is set at the end of the Northern Sung Period (960–1127). The country's rulers, from the emperor on down, care only for satisfying their desires. As a result the land is in chaos. Other nations, spotting the dynasty's weakness, are preparing to invade.

A Chinese proverb says, "Duty first, pleasure later." This is the way rulers should behave, putting their concern for the people and society first and their personal comfort and pleasure later. But in the Northern Sung Period, the opposite was the case. *The Water Margin*, the story of a group of heroic individuals who defend the weak and fight oppression, can be said to express the people's anger at such authorities.

Jin Yong has always written from the viewpoint of the people. Most of his historical nov-

els are, like *The Water Margin*, stories of resistance to oppressive authorities. His critical writings and his fiction share this commitment to the people. In that regard, I truly admire and applaud him as a writer who has inherited the spirit of Chinese literature to articulate the needs and hopes of the people.

### **Moral Literature Vs. Personal Literature**

Japanese literature and Chinese literature display very different tendencies. Many have said that Chinese literature is moralistic. It describes the moral path that the individual and society should take.

Japanese literature, on the other hand, is personal and confessional. It describes the individual's feelings and experiences, often without reference to a larger moral structure. In Japan, the so-called I-novel, in which the author writes in the first person, predominates. Most novels describe a character's inner sufferings and private confessions.

Of course, we can find this aspect of human experience described in Chinese writing

as well, but a greater concern with social issues characterizes Chinese literature in general. It is a literature that remains constantly aware of its influence on the individual and society.

Emperor Wen of the ancient state of Wei once said, "Literature is an important national endeavor and immortal enterprise." Literature has tremendous power, and Chinese civilization has always been deeply aware of this truth. That awareness has given Chinese literature the great strength of conviction. The general focus in Japanese literature on the small picture, the concern with individual feeling rather than moral truth, is no doubt partly a result of these different views of the role of literature.

Chinese poetry, too, gives broad expression to the sorrows and sufferings of the Chinese people. Most of the poems in the *Classic of Poetry* fall into this category, as do the great works of such master poets as Ch'ü Yüan and Tu Fu. Compared to Chinese poetry, very few Japanese poems deal with social issues. Dr. Burton Watson, a leading scholar and translator of Chinese philosophy and literature, has made the same observation.

### **Writing for Understanding**

Po Chü-i was a Tang Dynasty (618–907) poet who wrote of the sufferings of the people. Nichiren Daishonin mentions this poet's name in his writings (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 173). Po Chü-i believed very strongly that a writer must stand on the side of the people. As a result, he avoided difficult words in his poems. Instead, he used words familiar to all.

Though he was a high-ranking official (equivalent to a minister of justice today), whenever he composed a poem he would read it aloud to his old, illiterate serving woman and ask her if there were any parts she didn't understand.

*The Classic of the Way and Its Power* states: "The highest good is like water."<sup>2</sup> The best things are as clear and flowing as water, and the best writing flows naturally and easily into the hearts of the reader.

SPEECH, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

## Standing on the People's Side

One of Po Chü-i's poems is titled "Heavy Taxes." It reads in part:

*Mulberry and hemp are  
planted in the earth  
To help the people;  
The people weave cloth  
To sustain their lives;  
If they have any surplus  
They give it to the Emperor  
above.*

...

*But why is it that, when  
days have passed  
The greedy officials, as they  
always have,  
Oppress us and flatter the  
Emperor?  
Year-round, they oppress  
us.<sup>3</sup>*

The authorities forget to carry out their duties, yet they extract heavy, punishing taxes from the people. Po Chü-i was enraged, for the people's sake, by such rulers. He was an ally of the people, of the oppressed. He made the people's cause his own. This is the tradition of the great writers of Chinese literature.

It is also the solemn mission of all those who devote themselves to the literary arts.

## Keeping Promises — No Matter the Cost

Jin Yong's historical novels are often called novels of chivalry in Chinese. *Chivalry* here refers to the courage and conviction to uphold the trust placed in one by others, even at the cost of one's life. A relationship based on such chivalry is not a relationship of superior and inferior or a relationship of profit and loss. It is a free and equal relationship that transcends social position and considerations of personal gain.

Many compare the world depicted in Jin Yong's novels to the stories collected in the *Records of the Historian* of Ssu-ma Ch'ien (c. 145-85 B.C.E.). Ssu-ma Ch'ien, whose work the renowned 20th-century Chinese writer Lu Xun praised as a historical tour de force, followed the code of chivalry.

When Ssu-ma Ch'ien's friend Li Ling incurred the wrath of Emperor Wu, no one dared rise to his defense. Everyone feared getting involved. But Ssu-ma Ch'ien did not desert his friend. He ardently pleaded his friend's case, even though as a result he

was sentenced to the terrible punishment of castration. As Confucius says in *The Analects*, "When there is no trust, the common people will have nothing to stand on."<sup>4</sup> Trust is the foundation upon which all human societies rest.

Today there is a sad dearth of the spirit of chivalry in the very best sense of the word — in other words, a commitment to keep one's word, even at the cost of one's life, and a refusal to betray the trust of others. We need literature that teaches us the way to live ethically, that implants the seed of firm moral action in readers' hearts. I believe that the enormous popularity of Jin Yong's novels of chivalry is an indication of a deep yearning in the depths of people's hearts for lives based on mutual trust and compassion.

## Reading Great Works of World Literature

Mr. Toda always urged the youth to read the great works of world literature. They broaden and improve the mind. When one reads a monumental work of literature, a vast new world opens up. The fresh revelations it brings can transform one's life forever.

A certain Japanese scholar of Chinese literature said that, ironically, if parents want their child to become a politician or a tycoon, they should forbid him or her from reading literature. The reason is, he said, that through literature the child would learn how shameful it is to pursue his or her selfish aims at the expense of others. That is the sustenance that literature can provide the human spirit.

The Chinese philosopher Mencius said, "Those without constant means will not have constant hearts."<sup>5</sup> His meaning here is that unless one's life is sufficiently comfortable materially, one cannot hope to enjoy spiritual tranquillity and richness. Japan, however, has attained material wealth but lost its spiritual wealth. Our "constant means" have overwhelmed our constant hearts. This portends a dark future. And worse, now even our "constant means" are in jeopardy.

What can be done? The first Soka Gakkai president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, used to say, "When you reach a dead end, return to your starting point!" What is our starting point? It is humanity. We must restore humanity to our society. We must open a huge window in our hearts and widely embrace others. Literature can play a major part in achieving this.



'Unshakable conviction and vibrant energy...are what have spread the Daishonin's Buddhism throughout all corners of society.'

Jin Yong and I intend to continue our in-depth discussions on literature, history and life.

## Attitude Toward Gongyo Reflects Faith

On the first New Year's Day Mr. Toda ushered in as Soka Gakkai president [1952], he spoke on the essential practice of our faith, gongyo: "When you do gongyo in front of the Gohonzon, it is the same as if you are sitting before Nichiren Daishonin himself. You should never have a careless or sloppy attitude, nor should you doze off or yawn while doing gongyo.... Chant daimoku resonantly and joyfully."

Mr. Toda is not saying that we have to be rigid and tense when doing gongyo. The Daishonin is "the Buddha originally endowed with the three enlightened properties"<sup>6</sup> (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 759), so we should just be ourselves, in our "originally endowed" form, as it were, in his presence.

The Buddhist scriptures state that we should sit upright and think of the true nature of all things.<sup>7</sup> Sitting upright means to sit in a dignified manner facing the Gohonzon. Weaving and swaying back and forth in an extreme manner is not sitting upright.

We should also focus on specific prayers as we do gongyo. Gongyo is the most basic practice of faith. And considering the principle of the true entity of all phenomena, our attitude toward gongyo reflects our faith. Therefore, I hope you will get into the habit of doing gongyo in such a solemn yet invigorating manner that anyone seeing you will be struck by your dignity and vibrant life force.

## The Voice of Conviction

All of the recipients to date of the Hong Kong SGI Award have

asked me to express their thanks and gratitude to the Hong Kong members. Hanako Anraku,<sup>8</sup> a pioneer member of our Japanese organization whom I mentioned in my speech at the most recent Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting [Feb. 8], is one of those recipients. Mrs. Anraku will be 88 this year and, in spite of failing eyesight, continues her devoted efforts to spread the Daishonin's teachings. She proudly declares her determination to support and protect the Soka Gakkai for the rest of her life. What a noble sentiment!

All of the pioneer members in Hong Kong and Macau, too, are still active and healthy. They continue to exert themselves tirelessly for the SGI's development, working harmoniously — many in body, one in mind — with the great number of new members who have joined them over the years. I can't tell you how happy this makes me.

What was it that led Mrs. Anraku, who had married into a well-to-do and illustrious family, to join the Soka Gakkai in its early days some 40 years ago?

One day, Mrs. Anraku saw a woman walking along the street. Suddenly the thong of one of the woman's *geta* (Japanese-style wooden clogs) broke, and Mrs. Anraku helped her reattach it. As they were talking, the woman asked whether Mrs. Anraku wouldn't like to join a faith that would answer all her prayers.

"Have all your prayers been answered?" asked Mrs. Anraku. "They have indeed!" replied the woman. At this unhesitating, confident response, Mrs. Anraku decided to start practicing. What a sublime meeting of minds!

Such unshakable conviction and vibrant energy on the part of SGI members are what have spread the Daishonin's Buddhism throughout all corners

of society and have been the driving forces behind the development of our movement.

I know that SGI of Macau Chairman Lei Loi Tak, his wife, Lei Vong Yin Leng, and all the other representative leaders from Hong Kong and Macau here today are showing splendid actual proof in their respective societies. Nichiren Daishonin asserts, "When one who is able to show clearly visible proof in the present expounds the Lotus Sutra, there will also be persons who will believe" (MW-7, 102). Nothing is more eloquent, more persuasive, than actual proof.

Each of you possesses a truly noble mission and embodies the life of the Buddha. There is nothing in this world more significant or profound than the real-life stories of your attaining good health, boundless happiness and success in all endeavors.

In closing, I thank the staff members who are working so hard behind the scenes to make all the events during my visit here in Hong Kong such a great success. I am praying for your good health.

Please give my regards to all those who could not attend today. Thank you. 卍

1. Many Chinese versions of this novel exist. One version has been published in English under the title *Outlaws of the Marsh*, trans. Sidney Shapiro (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1993). Another English translation is titled *All Men Are Brothers*.
2. *Chinese Civilization*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey (New York: The Free Press, 1993), p. 27.
3. Translated from Japanese. *Shinshu Chugoku Shijin Senshu* (New Selected Poets of China), ed. Shoichi Takagi (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1984), vol. 4, pp. 209-12.
4. Confucius, *The Analects*, trans. D. C. Lau (London: Penguin Books, 1979), p. 113.
5. *Mencius*, trans. D. C. Lau (London: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 97.
6. Three enlightened properties: the three properties, or bodies, that a Buddha may possess. They are: 1) the property of the Law, 2) the property of wisdom, and 3) the property of action.
7. Fugen Sutra (Sutra of Meditation on Bodhisattva Fugen): regarded as a conclusion to the Lotus Sutra.
8. SGI President Ikeda introduced Mrs. Hanako Anraku, who was present in the audience, at the Soka Gakkai's 8th Headquarters Leaders Meeting in Tokyo on Feb. 8. Mrs. Anraku, a long-standing Soka Gakkai member, has introduced more than 60 households to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

# Each Day's Efforts Make a Big Difference

## YMD EXPERIENCE

By TONY SEKINE  
LONG ISLAND, N.Y.

I was born and raised in Japan; when I was 7 my parents started practicing this Buddhism. At 16, I left home and started working for a restaurant. It was then that I first dreamed of opening my own restaurant someday.

Although I worked hard and did my best, many troubles arose. As a result, by 19 I had lost my confidence and become hopeless.

Fortunately, young men's division members were communicating with me periodically. In my desperate state, they encouraged me to start chanting and doing gongyo. My life began to open toward the future with hope.

Reading SGI President Ikeda's guidance and putting it into practice in my daily life changed my vision for the future. In September 1985, at a culture festival in Tokyo with President Ikeda in attendance, I made a determination to go to America. It was based on



Restaurant owner Tony Sekine and wife, Noriko.

his encouragement to youth to go overseas, to become capable people for worldwide kosen-rufu and society.

In January 1986, I arrived in New York with no English ability, no job and little money. Right away, I started participating in SGI activities. At the same time I got a job as a dishwasher.

Nothing was easy for me living in a foreign country. Even communicating with members by phone was such a big deal. I was nervous, sweaty and exhausted by the end of each phone call. However, I truly appreciated the patience of the members who called me and the opportunity to reach out to others.

Since my first struggles in the United States, many things have changed. I received my green card, bought a house in Long Island, received a GED, completed an associate degree in business — and recently became a U.S. citizen!

Through those years, what never changed was my daily Buddhist practice and my strong bond with SGI members. Steady practice enabled me to break through many difficulties in my life. I now understand how every day's little effort makes a big difference in the future.

Last year was the most incredible year. In January I met a bright, beautiful lady from Japan. Later we got engaged.

At the end of last June — after the New York members' longtime dream of having President Ikeda visit New York finally came true — I went to the Florida Nature and Culture Center as part of the cooking crew. This was the turning point in my life; I was so encouraged by seeing members from all over the world and felt fortunate to work with cooking crew members from across the country. I was making soup, salad and sushi every day. The quantities were incredible, like 600–800 servings of soup every day.

And I was so happy when I saw President Ikeda. I remembered that a little more than 10 years earlier, at the culture festival in Tokyo I had made the determination to come to America. I redetermined to show actual proof of this practice in my daily life for the next 10 years.

At the beginning of August, the fulfillment of my longtime dream of opening my restaurant came close.

Soon, with a capable business partner and a great location for our restaurant, in Westbury in Long Island, we signed a lease agreement and in September had a grand opening. Although we have been open for only a few months, our restaurant has received great reviews in *Newsday* and *The New York Times*.

Now, as a new restaurant owner and new husband, every day I am facing new challenges. Once again I have to broaden my capabilities. I know I can do it, though, by making continuous efforts in my Buddhist practice and daily life.

## KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

### The Underlying Intent

By CRAIG GREEN &  
JEFF FARR  
LOS ANGELES

When the dispute between the SGI and the Nikken sect first broke in late 1990–early 1991, to some it seemed focused on charges of disrespect. There was a flurry of correspondence back and forth regarding desired apologies and clarifications (the priests asking for apologies, the SGI asking for clarifications).

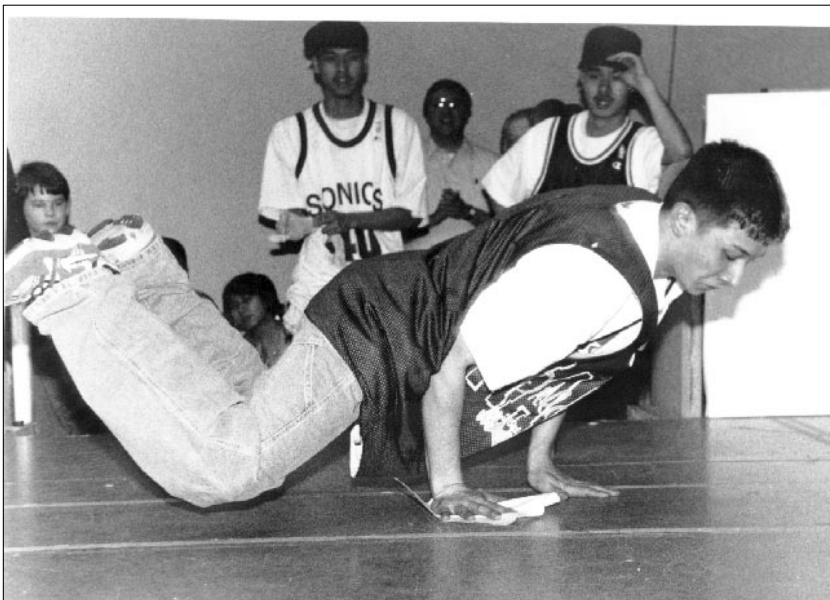
For many members in America, the dispute began to hit home only when the Nikken sect's interpretation changed regarding the fundamental philosophy of the practice, as we explained last time (March 7 *World Tribune*). Most people begin to practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism with this one, elementary — and very correct — understanding: Any person, regardless of race, color or sex, can bring forth his or her inherent Buddha nature by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

But why, when the split occurred, did the Nikken sect begin to take a different track? Suddenly, the priests were saying that, even though all people were equal, the high priest had a higher wisdom than we could ever attain. The Nikken sect explained that since we had not been a part of the lineage of high priests, we could not bring forth the same Buddha nature that Shakyamuni or Nichiren Daishonin did. It was like something the priests had "forgotten" to tell us.

The priests' underlying prejudice against lay believers, which manifested in 1991 but had existed for many years prior, can explain all of the priesthood's actions up to that point and since then.

No. 2 in a series

## Down for the Count



A Seattle YMD member celebrates March 16, Kosen-rufu Day, hip-hop style.

LEARNING FROM SHIJO KINGO — 4

# Nothing Can Stop Our Enlightenment

By SHIN YATOMI

YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE  
CHIEF

Believe in this mandala [the Gohonzon] with all your heart. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is like the roar of a lion. What sickness can therefore be an obstacle? (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 119)

In August 1273, Nichiren wrote this letter to Shijo Kingo and his wife upon receiving the news that their infant daughter, Kyo'o, had fallen seriously ill. Being a physician himself, Kingo must have felt all the more helpless about his daughter's illness.

The couple, encouraged by their teacher's compassion and confidence, renewed their faith in the Gohonzon and prayed powerfully for the recovery of their daughter. As a result, Kyo'o regained her good health. This passage teaches us the importance of faith and prayer in the face of severe difficulties such as illness.

Several years ago, I accompanied a Soka Gakkai vice president to the East Coast as an interpreter. After one meeting, a man in a wheelchair approached the Japanese leader and asked for advice. The man explained how it was medically impossible for him to walk again and how miserable and hopeless his life was.

Quoting this passage, the



Home-care nursing for an AIDS patient.

man asked the leader: "Will I walk again? Or is this passage a lie?"

As I was busily taking notes for interpretation, I was growing curious as to how the leader would respond. I had seen and heard of some SGI members who had overcome terminal illness. But at the same time, I knew that other members die of sickness. Maybe this passage, I thought, does not apply to every illness.

Looking at the leader, I felt that he was well aware of the man's frustration and despair. The leader, after patiently listening to all the man had to say, stated that there was no falsehood whatsoever in the passage and urged him to have faith in the Gohonzon to overcome his suffering.

He then started to explain the meaning of "What sickness can therefore be an obstacle?" Here Nichiren reassures us that no sickness can be an obstacle to our enlightenment — that is, happiness — the vice president said. He does not make any exception to this promise. As long as we maintain faith in the Gohonzon, nothing — not terminal cancer or AIDS nor any difficulty, be it a relationship, financial or health problem — can be an obstacle to our happiness.

The leader said to the man candidly that he was not sure if the man would walk again. "But I'm absolutely convinced," he continued, "that as long as you pray powerfully to the Gohonzon, although you may not walk, it will not in the least hinder you from becoming happy. Rather, because of your disability, you will enjoy even more freedom than those who can walk and run."

I saw the weight of the man's suffering, so heavy on his heart minutes ago, suddenly lift. The man's face lit up with his rekindled hope.

In this passage, Nichiren inspires us to not give up our faith in any circumstance, because with faith in the Gohonzon no obstacle can become an obstacle to our happiness. This experience helped me broaden my perspective and reminded me that I should not limit the power of faith.

**COMING SOON!**

WHAT?  
YMD Leaders Conference

WHEN? July 10-13

WHERE? FNCC

WHO? Open to All YMD Members

If interested please contact your YMD jt. territory leader or James Herrmann @ the World Culture Center.



# What Apes Can Teach Us



R. R. JONES, courtesy UC SANTA CRUZ REVIEW

Anthropologist Adrienne Zihlman with the skulls of three primates: (l-r) a human, a lowland gorilla and a pygmy chimpanzee.

By **JEFF FARR**  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**I**t happened quite recently, in evolutionary terms, that human and ape diverged. Proof of this is found in the DNA we carry — human and chimpanzee are, in fact, 99 percent DNA-similar. Adrienne Zihlman, an anthropologist at the University of California at Santa Cruz, has for 30 years been studying this human-to-ape relationship and questioning our stereotypes about male/female roles in the primate world.

That male apes were bigger and did all the hunting and that females were smaller and stayed home raising babies is all a myth, Zihlman argues. For Zihlman, all the evidence points to female apes standing on equal footing with males, physically and otherwise.

Zihlman's ideas have met with much controversy in the academic world, sending some of her colleagues into heated arguments over whether primate bone samples, like the famous "Lucy" ones, are from males or females. But controversy doesn't faze Zihlman — "I'm willing to stand up and say I don't agree with people," she told the *Los Angeles Times* recently.

What's at stake here for Zihlman and her peers? Besides their careers and reputations, how the human race defines itself is at stake. Zihlman has noted in her popular *Human Evolution Coloring Book* (now under revision) that we are as close to apes as horses are to zebras, as grizzly bears to polar bears. Whatever we find out about apes profoundly affects the way we see ourselves.

It will be interesting in the coming years to see what Zihlman and other anthropologists can learn about humanity through the characteristics we share with apes. Our not-so-long-ago evolutionary brothers and sisters have a lot to teach us. **WT**



for Peace

# Friends



SPECIAL PULLOUT SECTION

APRIL 4, 1997

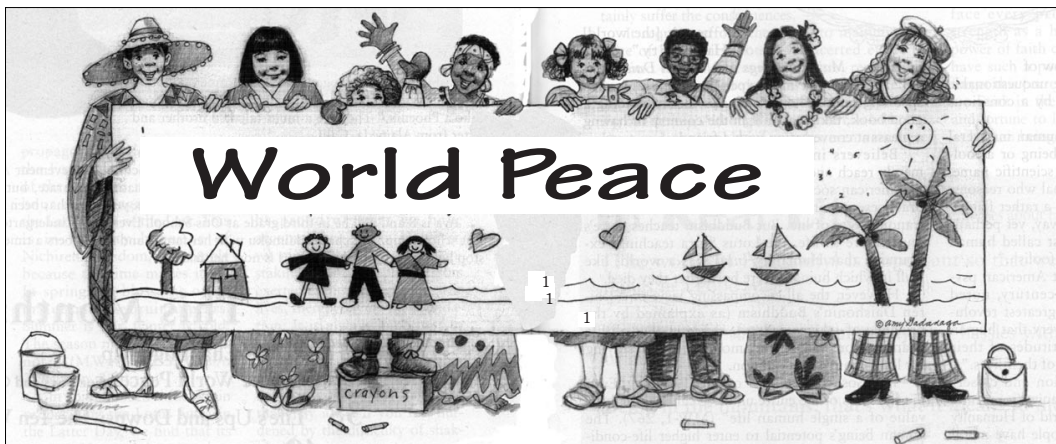
The SGI is our Buddhist organization.

In our country, America, our organization is called SGI-USA. In Italy, SGI is called SGI-Italy, and in Brazil, SGI-Brazil.

There are SGI members in 128 countries around the world. Daisaku Ikeda, our teacher in faith, is the president of the SGI.

Although members speak different languages in different countries, everyone chants the same Nam-myoho-rence-kyo and does gongyo to the Gohonzon.

Members all over the world get benefits from chanting.



us through his writings that as more and more people chant, the world will become a peaceful and joyful place.

Each one of us is different and unique, but we all share the same hope for world peace. By becoming happy, we help

others become happy, too.

What are some ways you can help create world peace in your family, school and neighborhood?

See pages B ("Word Scramble") and D ("Word Search") for puzzles related to this study topic.

## What Is the SGI?

### Boys and Girls Group Study Topic for April

#### How Does Chanting Help Create World Peace?

All over the world, families chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo. Nichiren Daishonin taught

## Hello From Oklahoma!

Left: 'Hootie the Owl,' by Tyrone Foster, 9, in Norman, Okla.  
Below: 'Peace,' by Holly Basey, 11, in Norman, Okla.



Above: 'Bear,' by Tomas L. Perez, 12, in Oklahoma City.

### A New Column for Your Newsletter

#### 'Friend to Friend'

(Friends sharing with one another)

Our Boys and Girls study topic for May is courage. Please send us your thoughts about courage (up to 50 words) along with a photo of yourself. It can be an experience or just whatever you think about courage. Send it to "Friends for Peace" by April 18.

\*Special thanks to Joy Hampton, Oklahoma City Boys and Girls Group leader, for sending in this idea.

## ENCOURAGEMENT

By Daisaku Ikeda


*We will join the world together with culture!  
We will unite the world through friendship!*

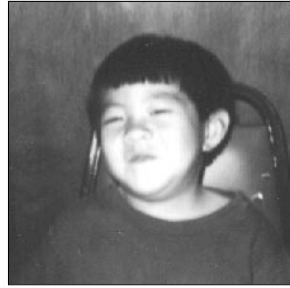
— from *Treasured Moments*

# FRIENDS FOR PEACE

## Martin Saito, 5


New Orleans

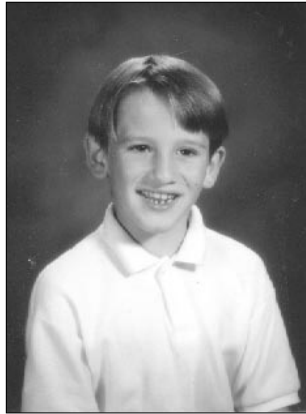
**P**eace is being nice to other people. Be friendly. I hope my whole family will be happy. 



## Olivia Saito, 8

New Orleans

**W**orld peace is happiness. There should be no fighting and nothing that would hurt anybody. I would never hurt anyone and do anything that would hurt them. It doesn't matter what color you are, you just have to be as nice as you can. 




## Kevan Ehrenreich, 8

Sacramento, Calif.


**O**n the Friday night before my birthday party, it was raining. My party was outside at Safetyville USA where kids can ride their bikes in a little pretend town. If it rained, we would not be able to have my party. I chanted two minutes of daimoku and did five pages of gongyo and told the Gohonzon,

"No rain, please!" The next day it didn't rain. It was sunny! My favorite part of my party was riding the electric car.

P.S. I also scored a basket at my Little Dribblers basketball game on that day. 

## Melissa Hirsch, 5


New Orleans

**H**i. I've been practicing all my life. One of my experiences was when my hamster was acting like it was dead. So my mom and me started to chant. After we chanted, we found out it was alive. 




## E.T. Garcia, 12

New Orleans

**A** happy world where everybody jumps for joy. No violence, no drugs, no guns. A good world, a cool world, the only world — Earth. 

## Clara Fernandez, 9

Morroco, La.

**I** think peace is happiness, no violences, smiles, being friendly. And people. 



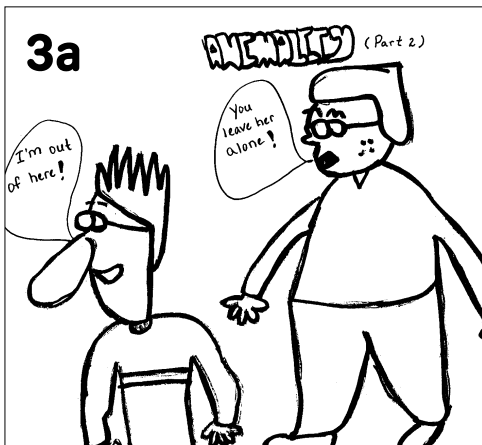
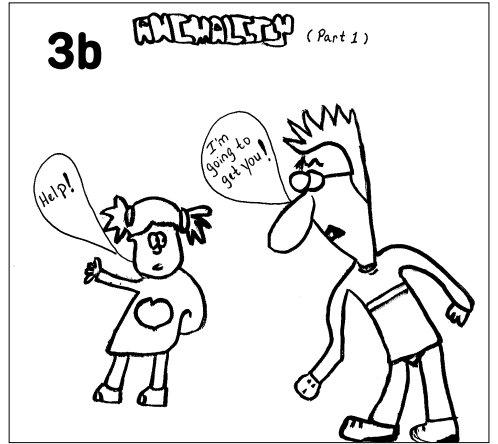
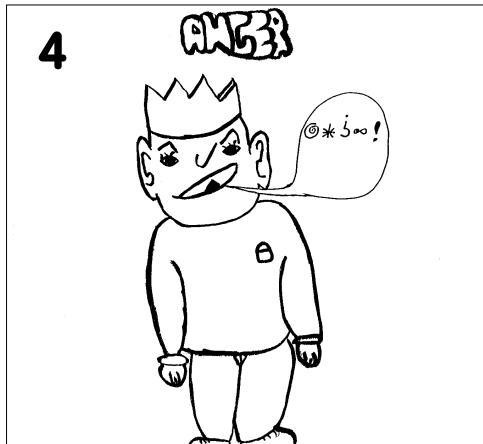
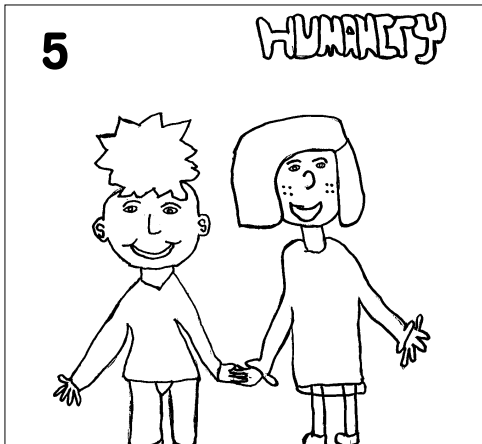
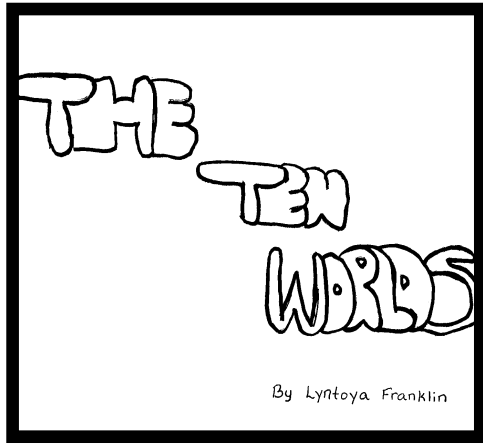
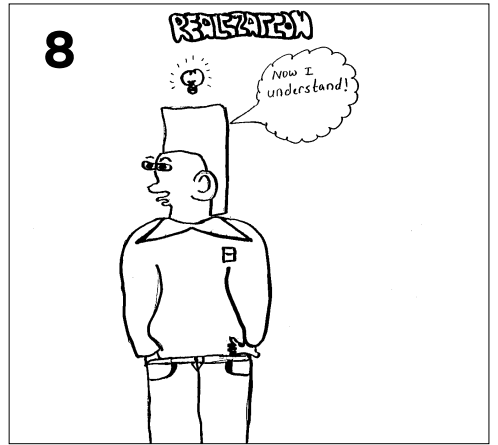
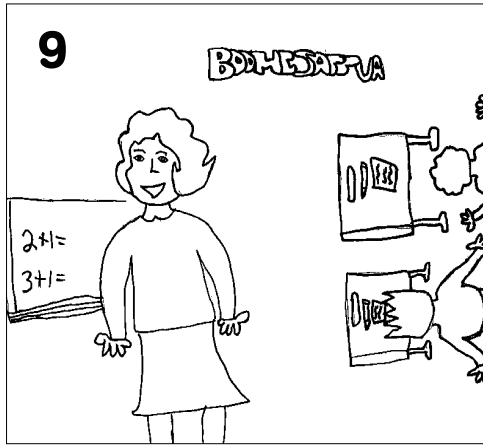
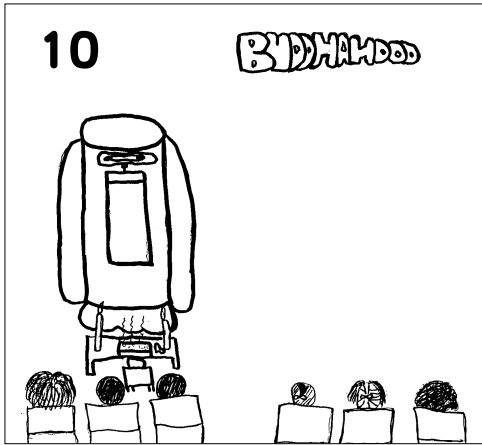
### Word Scramble

Unscramble the letters to find the names of countries where there are SGI community centers or culture centers.

- APJNA      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- NAAAMP    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- ZLIRBA    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- IEBMLUG    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- GATNIRNEA    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- AAIMSLYA    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- ESPIHLPiPN    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- NMOIIDCA    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- WTIANA    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- LRUSATIAA    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

"Friends for Peace" wishes to thank everyone who contributed to this issue for their assistance and support, including LaVora Perry, Joy Hampton, Ann Martin and Amy Sadanaga. Thanks also to Barbara Murphy and Diane Lauble of Chicago for designing the figures in the "Friends for Peace" nameplate.

Please send us your experience (around 150 words), your comments, your questions or your news article to: "Friends for Peace," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.





## What is beautiful...

A handwritten story you made,  
A teddy bear you have been with for many years,  
A present you made for a family member,  
A picture you drew of your family,  
A rainbow with a pot of gold next to it,  
A book you have read to a friend...  
And somebody like you.

What is beautiful.

NIYOKA EVANS, Tempe, Ariz.

## The Question

*If I could teach you how to fly  
or make you an elderberry pie  
or teach you a new song on an old guitar  
or make the sidewalk into stars  
or teach you the way to heaven  
so would you come and be my friend.*

*?  
You cannot teach me how to fly.  
I like the berry but not the pie.  
The old guitar is for only one song.  
The sidewalk is to walk on.  
The way to heaven cannot be shown.  
But I can be your friend.*

LOURDES PEREZ-VEGA, 13, Oklahoma City

The Soka Gakkai International is a world-wide organization. There are members in more than 128 countries. In some countries, there are many members. For example, Japan has millions of members. In other countries, there may be just a handful or even only one or two members who are practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Because we make friends and share the benefits of our practice with others, eventually there will be many members in every country in the world.

In the countries where there are members practicing, there are also community centers, culture centers or both.

Look through the graph and circle the names of the countries where there are community centers. Remember that the words might be written upward, downward, across, backward, diagonal or turning a corner. Here are the names of the countries to look for:

## Word Search

- |                |             |               |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| Canada         | Argentina   | Australia     |
| Dominica       | Austria     | Belgium       |
| Hong Kong      | Bolivia     | Brazil        |
| Japan          | Chile       | Denmark       |
| Mexico         | France      | Germany       |
| Panama         | India       | Italy         |
| Philippines    | Korea       | Malaysia      |
| Sweden         | Netherlands | New Zealand   |
| United Kingdom | Paraguay    | Peru          |
| Venezuela      | Singapore   | Spain         |
|                | Taiwan      | Thailand      |
|                | Uruguay     | United States |

(Do you see any other words below?)

A I Z O P G R A N P H I L N R Y A M E I E L I H C  
 B O U N I T E D K I N G D O M B C F D O F E N P Q  
 M I N Y H D O J K L B G I O N G H I V Y O N V B P  
 O F I E O M D P R M O L A I E C A N I T N E G R A  
 P O T Y C B R A Z I L F I H J R P U A N N W T E R  
 T R E M O E P Y R C I R S M A Y A R Y E O Z T H A  
 S O D R I L L M O A V I Y A I M D E Z M Y E E F G  
 E F S R A G C O Y N I O A L A P S U T R A A N I U  
 N O T T R I A G U C A B L N M I E O E Z O L L O A  
 I B A O A U S T R A L I A Y N L O I P R E A V I Y  
 P I T N B M U S M E U P M U A O E L V C A N N I A  
 P T E O R Y Z V A N D Q B I S N S Y N U X D H T W  
 I H S A U R I C E N O A N O N T X A T I R F T I G  
 L O F T P E I W H P E Y Z T A T R M O P A T U S R  
 I N N I V N Y N A M R E G I O F P I T O N P M D Y  
 H A U A I B P A U O B O Y T H A I L A N D A S N E  
 P R Y M U R E P Z X M P O W R M O Y I O F Y P A T  
 A M O L O V E A N E U Y E Z V H U S W E D E N L E  
 N D F G C X Z J C W H C R S I W A L A O B C I R R  
 I E E J B C O U R U G U A Y K E J R N H C O H E S  
 W N I E L A L B Q V U O I L M A L F N P A I W H O  
 H M O K E B E V E S I N G A P O R E R D N I X T N  
 O A M R H A E R Y U E R J T O K D O E E A N P E A  
 N R O U P P Y O U Z R I E I N D I A S A D E L N M  
 G K O N G I F R E S O T O B P O I S E N A N I T R