

# World Tribune

No. 3134

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

APRIL 11, 1997

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Photo by BOB NARDI

Shirley Jahad, a reporter for WBEZ radio, lets kids try out broadcasting at a College and Career Fair in Chicago.

## 'Villagers' Do Their Part

**Chicago Joint Territory offers a College and Career Fair for junior high and high school students.**

By **BILL ENDSLEY**  
CORRESPONDENT

Chicago, March 9

If it takes a village to raise a child, then the same villagers can also shepherd a young adult into the working world. Families and communities need to guide a student into a career that is both fulfilling for that individual and beneficial for society.

With this in mind, the Chicago junior high and high school divisions, along with the Culture Department, offered for the first time a College and Career Fair for students grades 7-12 at the Chicago Culture Center today.

Representatives from local colleges and universities, as well as experienced professionals covering nearly 30 different career options, were represented at the various booths. They answered questions about careers in such varied fields as graphic design, health care and geothermal engineering.

Shirley Jahad, a reporter for the local WBEZ radio station, offered students a chance to hear



Photo by BOB NARDI

Wei Ming Su discusses a career in biotechnology with students.

how they would sound as radio broadcasters. "These kids were so dynamic and eager to learn," she said. "This fair provided these kids with vital information they need to become successful in life — information they often can't get anywhere else."

Seminars stressed the importance of starting early. Grade point averages can't be brought up significantly during the final year of school and financial planning has to start before applications for admission are mailed.

Dyan Stankiewicz, who helped plan the event, hopes the

event can be offered again — and earlier in the school year. "This is exactly the kind of activity we need to be having," she said, "if we are really serious about promoting education and helping young people."

Harold Black, a student division member, was glad to offer young people a positive view of the future. "We have to provide young people with positive role models," Mr. Black said. "They don't have to resort to illegal activity to get ahead in life." The student division provided a list

## SGI President Joins European Group Dedicated to Dialogue

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER  
Salzburg, Austria, March 8

The European Academy of Sciences and Arts, a community of leading figures whose aim is to contribute to the development of humanity and promote harmony on a global scale, has named SGI President Ikeda an honorary senator of the academy. Mr. Ikeda is the 11th person and the first Japanese citizen to be so honored.

At the conferral ceremony today, Academy Vice President Ricardo Diez-Hochleitner, who is also the president of The Club of Rome, articulated the academy's mission and goal to achieve lasting peace through facilitating dialogue on the European continent. King Juan Carlos I of Spain, Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany, President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic, President Arpad Gönz of Hungary, and President Jacques Santer of the European Commission are among the executive advisors of the academy, which was established here in 1990.

Academy President Felix Unger said that since the academy's founding, members have focused on promoting communication among various religions, based on the belief that religion is the key to achieving global prosperity and peace for all humankind. Dr. Unger stated the vital importance of inter-faith dialogue, but said that a fear of foreign cultures and beliefs has prevented this from happening.

He emphasized that the only way to solve the problems facing our world today is through setting aside our fears and striving to understand one another. Now is the time to transcend our differences and engage in dialogue to bridge the gap dividing cultures, he said.

President Unger expressed his wish that Mr. Ikeda's inauguration into the academy will

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# VOICES

## As SGI members how can we protect and receive protection from the environment?

Members from the San Francisco joint territories respond:



I am completely surrounded by flood plains. I chanted that the flood waters [in January] would drain off and for people to use common sense when developing new neighborhoods. We were able to avoid flooding, and city officials are now more carefully scrutinizing new developments.  
— KAREN BROWN, Rio Linda, Calif.



By reusing what I can and recycling what I can't, I do my part to protect the environment. During the recent flooding, when my neighbors chose to evacuate I stayed and chanted daimoku, praying for protection. The waters then ceased to rise, stopping at my driveway. My prayers were definitely answered.  
— MARLENE JUETTE, Sacramento, Calif.



During the floods we had to evacuate. Many of us went to a member's house in Sacramento. Colusa Yoshimura took care of several of us for three days. We chanted a lot of daimoku for our homes to be safe. We are very lucky to be in the SGI-USA because the members take care of one another. Also I received many calls of concern when I returned home, even from members in Japan.  
— ETSUKO OKUDA, Yuba City, Calif.



When we change, our environment also changes. If we are negative, our environment is ugly and dark. I chant, study and practice because I want others to be happy. I want to show people we can change anything.  
— YOKO COLELLA, Antelope, Calif.



Recently my sister was in the hospital with cancer. I chanted every morning and evening for her stability and for family members who were trying to help her. In the space of just one week, we moved mountains of paperwork and approvals so that we could fly her to another state to the hospital she needs to be in. Knowing I had been chanting about the situation, her son asked me for a prayer book and beads before he went home.  
— ROBERTA FLEET, Sacramento, Calif.

Each week (except when we run "Question of the Month"), members of one joint territory will respond to a question on life, Buddhism or the organization.

# A Revolution of Understanding

## EDITORIAL

**B**uddhism is a revolution. Not violent, never destructive, it aims to overturn the unhealthy order of things in which ordinary people often feel powerless. In a world that values wealth, popularity, power and prestige above all, Buddhism sheds light on what is truly lasting and fulfilling.

Buddhism began as an effort to educate those who weren't supposed to be educated. India at the time was dominated by an elite priestly class known as the Brahmins. They wielded almost absolute power and authority and were considered the ultimate experts on life and spirituality. Ordinary people labored under a system of mandatory homage to them.

From where did the Brahmins derive their power? Historian Will Durant explains: "The power of the Brahmins was based upon a monopoly of knowledge. They were the custodians and remakers of tradition, the educators of children, the composers or editors of literature, the experts versed in the inspired and infallible Vedas. If a Shudra [member of a lower caste] listened to the reading of the scriptures his ears (according to Brahmanical law books) were to be filled with molten lead.... Brahmanism thus became an exclusive cult, carefully hedged around against all vulgar participation" (*The Story of Civilization: I, Our Oriental Heritage*, p. 485).

In the midst of such spiritual and intellectual exclusivism, Shakyamuni strove to inspire "vulgar participation" — involvement by ordinary people — in a most sublime form of education. Through lectures, sermons and dialogues with individuals, he led people to discover the invaluable treasure of Buddhahood that they all inherently possessed. He directly challenged the arrogance of the Brahmins, yet compassionately invited those from that class into his circle of disciples.

Centuries later, Nichiren Daishonin began his revolutionary struggle with years of intensive study;

he then dedicated the entirety of his life to educating ordinary people. Opposed and attacked by a priestly class who wanted a monopoly on the "secrets" of Buddhism, he was even disdained by some of his own elitist priest-disciples for having "condescended" to writing about Buddhism in the language of the common people.

The Soka Gakkai has its roots in this tradition of Buddhist education. Josei Toda, imprisoned with his mentor, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, for refusing to pay homage to Japan's Imperial Shinto deity during World War II, studied seriously in his prison cell.

Toda read the sutra and chanted and grappled with the question "What is the Buddha?" as he agonized alone in the dank prison. While his mentor lay dying in another cell, a profound determination crystallized in the depths of his life, a determination that propelled Toda, through all obstacles, to build the foundation of our movement.

How did he begin to lay that foundation? By encouraging understanding of the Daishonin's Buddhism through lectures and discussion meetings. He was convinced that his fellow Soka Gakkai leaders who had buckled and renounced their faith under the threat of persecution during the war did so because they lacked a deep understanding and conviction rooted in study.

SGI President Ikeda recently said at the 3rd youth leaders meeting in Japan: "The strong faith with which we read the Goshō allows us to truly 'observe our mind,' that is, to do human revolution. From today, I hope the members of the youth division will challenge themselves to read and study the Goshō, if only one or two lines at a time."

We practice Buddhism to gain the wisdom and strength to handle any sort of challenge or difficulty that life deals us. One reason we study is to orient us solidly on that path, so as to never waver, no matter how strongly or in what direction the wind may blow or who may tell us we are not qualified.

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

*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. Fax: 310-260-8910. Or e-mail us at: [SokaNews@aol.com](mailto:SokaNews@aol.com).

**Deadline: April 21**

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**WORLD TRIBUNE  
MAILBOX**

**The Men Are Ready To Help**

I must comment on the "Editorial" in the Feb. 28 *World Tribune*, "A Bold Degree of Trust." While there was much to be admired in the piece, I find parts of it objectionable and not true to my experience.

The writer stated, "It is the tendency of the older generation to look down on or exclude those younger or less experienced." I strongly disagree. I know of no one in the SGI that looks down on the youth or is "patronizing to young people." What I do see is a society and a youth culture that devalues elders. While the pursuit of profit has distorted the values of some adults, there are still many who enjoy any opportunity to work with young people. We know that only through encouraging the younger generation can we fulfill our mission. My life is full of elders who helped me find my path, and I see no lack of men who now want to serve as mentors.

Actually, there are more opportunities for men to work with youth in society than in the SGI. Due to the divisional structure a strange arbitrary line has been drawn between the senior and youth divisions. Now most activities are planned solely by the youth division, with men's division participation only at the joint territory level. While there is some opportunity for working with youth in the district, most of the youth receive encouragement and guidance from youth division leaders. There are many men's division members who have over 20 years experience with little chance to share it with younger people.

The author talked of the importance of trust. I agree. Michael Meade said, "A man who has never felt he was protected by another man will not trust other men and will not be trustworthy." But trust is a two-way street! Do the youth trust and look to elders for encouragement or do they look sideways to their peers? It has been wisely observed you can't learn anything from your peers because they know the same nothing.

I would like to quote Robert Bly: "One problem with the sibling society is that, in its desire to get away from hierarchy it intentionally avoids all vertical longing. What is asked of adults now is that they stop going forward to retirement...and turn to face the young siblings and adolescents. The hope lies in the longing we have to be adults." Well, men's division members have the longing to be adults. My question is, do the young have the longing to trust the elders, and do we have an organizational structure that makes this possible?

As SGI President Ikeda stated: "The present is an age lacking in discipline. For precisely this reason, one must voluntarily receive training and forge oneself." So before fingers are pointed at "the older generation," saying they "look down" on the young, maybe we should facilitate more opportunities for the senior divisions to work with youth. And maybe we should speak of what a great asset we have in those pioneers who are ceaselessly fighting for kosen-rufu.

— DIXON HAMBY, Bellevue, Wash.

*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).*

**Lessons of Death**

**PERSPECTIVE**

By **VERONICA EVANS**  
CHICAGO

After 16 years of practice, I moved from one side of Chicago to another. At my new discussion meeting, I met a wonderful, vibrant young woman. At that moment, we embarked upon a journey that would change my life forever.

She encountered a cancer that recurred often and challenged her many, many times. When it was thought the illness was conquered once and for all, she and her husband came to me for guidance about having children. This was nine years after our first encounter.

After a long discussion, my final words were: "Something wonderful awaits you. I feel it in my heart." Within days, the cancer resurfaced with a vengeance. I had no idea this was the wonderful challenge that awaited them.

It was wonderful because I really believe that earthly desires are enlightenment, and I knew that, no matter what, they would win. Ultimately, she brought out the greatest amount of courage and determination. Everyone who knew of her life and situation was encouraged by her strength and commitment to victory in every circumstance.

When she died, she was so strong and her death was so natural, there was an element of beauty and grace. This was the victory she created through her courage, character and commitment.

Because of her and her husband, I learned some profound lessons. I learned about con-

fronting a life-and-death matter. I learned about challenging my Western notions of death as "bad" and "prolonging life at all costs." I learned that when I trust the Gohonzon and open my life to the Mystic Law, I can see beyond the surface of the situation and view it with the eye and mind of a Buddha.

The following lessons I learned left me more free from worry and feeling absolutely fortunate.

• *In every moment of life, we experience struggles: good vs. evil, the Buddha nature vs. fundamental darkness. It's the way the universe works. Fighting against illness is simply another aspect of this struggle.*

This is a wonderfully simplistic thought. This is how it works! I think I've been afraid in other situations because I was in denial, not understanding these situations are normal.

• *Victory means the illness hasn't prevented the patient or his or her loved ones from chanting for personal happiness or the happiness of others.*

I had always assumed victory meant eradicating a problem. I understand now, however, that continuing to practice, despite these problems looming prominently in my life, I achieve the absolute victory I'm fighting for. This really expands my understanding that Buddhism is concerned with winning. Simply: If I don't continue, I've lost.

• *We all face death. Even if your partner dies because of an illness, you will have to take care of yourself and live your life to the fullest for both your sake. If you don't go forward, not only will you suffer, but the person*

*who is ill will suffer also. We each have a special mission to move forward with SGI President Ikeda for the sake of world peace. By advancing courageously, we can demonstrate the greatness of this Buddhism.*

This clarifies for me the connectedness President Ikeda talks about in his poems. And it further clarifies my challenges as normal, reasonable and, if viewed correctly, not overwhelming at all.

• *We each must live a victorious life and complete our mission for the sake of our loved ones and ourselves.*

Everyone handles such things differently. There are no rules about when to go to activities, how much to smile, whether to cry or not cry, etc. We can just be ourselves and do our best to stick close to the organization.

• *In the Goshō, the Daishonin wrote that every person has a fixed life span and karma. By chanting Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō, the Daishonin said we can live beyond that fixed life span. And if we should exceed that life span by even one or two days, that's a tremendous benefit.*

Like everyone else, I want to live a long, healthy life. This lesson further impressed upon me how lucky I am to chant and survive — no, not just survive but to prosper and live in these turbulent times.

I am so thankful I met this young woman. Because of her and her husband, I understand even more passionately the connection between efforts and attitudes in the challenge to live. They have truly changed my life forever. I wish everyone such meaningful relationships based on Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. ❧

**What Do You Think?**

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

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Photos by IRENE OWADA

Sven Hellering and Kristi Bennett say the reorganization of Boulder Chapter has been a boon for the members, giving people a deeper focus.

## *SGI President Joins European Group Dedicated to Dialogue*

ACADEMY, FROM PAGE 1

open the door for the Eastern philosophy of Buddhism to join and add to the rich dialogues they have already begun with the disciplines of Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Hiromasa Ikeda, Mr. Ikeda's son and a Soka Gakkai vice president, received the award on his father's behalf. Vice President Ikeda read a message from the SGI president stating that global unification is crucial to ensure the future and that cultural exchange between the East and West is the way to achieve this.

Mr. Ikeda further asserted that the coexistence of cultures is the only path toward mutual prosperity and stressed that a new age will be created through fostering a spirit of tolerance and open-mindedness. In conclusion, the SGI leader determined as a member of the academy to promote dialogue toward a 21st century of harmony and coexistence among all humankind.

The ceremony was held in Residenz, a cultural palace, and was attended by some 300 representative academy members from around the world.

Represented organizations include The Club of Rome, All-European Academies and the European Council. More than 50 countries in Europe, North and South America, Asia and the Middle East participate in the academy's wide-ranging scope of scientific and artistic research projects.

WV

## Reorganization Leads to New Friendships

By IRENE OWADA

CORRESPONDENT

Boulder, Colo., March 27

At first glance, it looked more like a geography class than a Buddhist meeting. When Boulder Chapter leaders first gathered last fall to discuss their reorganization into neighborhood groups, they focused on a large map of Boulder County, which covers 742 square miles of the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains. Tiny colored pins showed where all the members were, with each color representing a different district.

"We really wanted to make it easier for the members here to practice," explained Kristi Bennett, the Boulder Chapter leader.

Some of the first planning meetings took place at Ms. Bennett's new home in Louisville, Colo. A 25-year SGI member and long-time resident of Boulder, she had just moved to the Louisville/Lafayette area, about eight miles to the southeast.

"When we started looking at the map, I was amazed at how many members lived in Boulder and was even more amazed at how many members lived in the Louisville and Lafayette area," she said. The



Boulder Chapter members in front of the Colorado University mascot.

biggest concentration of members was in Boulder, where many students attend Colorado University.

Boulder Chapter comprises four districts. Longmont District, about 12 miles north of Boulder, was already well-defined geographically, so everyone agreed it would stay as it was. The other three districts were spread out, overlapping one another, over a large area from Boulder to its eastern neighbors on the plains, Louisville and Lafayette, to the surrounding mountain towns of Nederland and Jamestown.

In the past, when new students came to Boulder, they were divided equally among

the nearby three districts to balance out the youth. But few had cars, extra money or time to spend on transportation. And it was difficult to get to meetings, which were about 20 minutes away. This meant that someone with a car had to go to Boulder and pick up the students to take them to the meetings and then take them home again. Members never complained because they were happy to have young people at their meetings, but people felt it should be easier for the students to go to meetings.

"At the very first reorganization meeting, it was a unanimous conclusion that it was a good time to start the neigh-

borhood meetings," Ms. Bennett said. After several more planning meetings with district and chapter leaders, it was time to propose the plan to the members themselves, taking care not to make anyone feel like they had to change districts.

A questionnaire with computerized maps showing different proposals to reorganize were prepared and given to each member at a meeting on the CU campus.

"About 30 people from the three districts came to that meeting," Ms. Bennett said, "and we got a lot of input from them on how they felt about the reorganizing of the chapter."

"I really liked the meeting; it was like seeing kosen-rufu take place because everyone was working together to make it happen," Leigh Kennicott, a doctoral student, said.

One proposal called for one of the district's meetings to take place right on campus. Several students said they liked the idea of meeting at CU because they didn't have cars and it was awkward to always ask for rides.

Another student said she liked to ask friends to come to meetings, but when she told

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## 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.

## CAREER, FROM PAGE 1

of the top 16 universities in the country, their tuition costs, acceptance rates, student-to-teacher ratios and average costs of room and board.

The organizers agreed that the path to a meaningful life can be treacherous and young people need everyone's support. "These kids can better society just by being themselves," Shirley Jahad said. "We need to support and encourage that. Offering practical, useful information in a setting like this with the goals of the SGI — it just seems like a perfect fit." ❧



Students get questions answered at College and Career Fair in Chicago.

## Reorganization Leads to New Friendships

BOULDER, FROM PAGE 4

them the meetings were off campus, they hesitated.

Pros and cons about meeting on campus were discussed, as the members considered issues like parking for non-students, privacy for doing gongyo and daimoku, and caring for a portable altar.

Sven Hillering said that keeping the students together in one district rather than splitting them up all over Boulder has been a boon to their practice.

"This is what SGI President

Ikeda is talking about when he speaks of kosen-rufu — it's a network of friends," he said. "More and more I get a sense that rather than just being a leader and chanting for some people, that now these are my best friends."

The meetings they've had since have been successful. People have acclimated pretty well.

"The district has a whole schedule worked out for at least six months," Ms. Bennett said. "Not only that, but because their meetings are on campus no one has to worry about cleaning

their house or what to do with the kids."

Ms. Bennett says she feels the reorganization has helped people to grow and has brought members back into the organization. A member who had been out of contact for some years was recently reconnected.

"A member ran into him and told him there were meetings right in Lafayette," she said. "He was excited to hear that. And because the meetings were so close by, he started showing up. Now there's a whole network for him to connect to." ❧

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

THEME: *Human Diversity*

CATEGORIES: *Elementary School; Junior High; 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**

*Yours Truly,  
Betty B.*

DEAR BETTY: My leader told me to be specific about my desires so for the past three months I have been chanting for a boyfriend six feet tall, with dark curly hair and blue eyes, nice pecs, nonsmoking, fond of walks in the country yet enjoys a competitive game of tennis. I was feeling very confident until I realized — Duh! — I forgot to chant about his film preferences. What if he turns out to be an Aliens 3 type? Yikes! Have I blown it?  
— HOLLY WOOD

DEAR HOLLY: No, but have you ever thought of ghost-writing ads for the Personals? Without a doubt, focusing on specific goals can help you make the right causes to achieve them: Looking for a bachelor's degree? Go to college. Want to buy a house? Save up for a down payment.

But if you want to take a ride on the love boat, you may have to navigate deeper waters. So often we tend to go for the superficial. But the more complex our desires, the more difficult to pinpoint what's best for our lives. SGI-USA Study Department Chief Ted Morino once remarked: "Prayer should come from the heart. The Gohonzon knows your worries and desires. Focus on the Gohonzon and simply chant."

So don't play mind games in front of your altar. And don't sweat the specifics — you'll never think of all of them (What if he vacations in the mountains and you like the shore? What if he watches football all weekend long?). Working it out is part of the — *ahem* — fun.

Trust that your life is moving in a positive direction. Like Nichiren Daishonin says, faith alone is what really matters (practice and study come in handy, too). And if the guy with the pecs isn't right for you, don't worry. Just send him to me!

DEAR BETTY: I really like to chant, but sometimes I feel I

can't spend another minute practicing in the organization.  
— STANDING ALONE

DEAR NO MAN IS AN ISLAND: Hey, brother, I can share that space. With all these years of practice, Betty has had abundant opportunity to be peeved with practically everyone she has ever done gongyo with. There's just something mystic — the polite term — about working together toward our noble cause that brings out the good, the bad and the totally unspeakable.

And that's actually a benefit. How else would perfect beings like you and me learn to deal with others' little quirks?

And there may come a time when these members will be just the ones to rush to your aid. Allow me to share my grisly little tale. It all began with a trip to the Florida Nature and Culture Center. How Betty hungered to attend the training session there! How she longed to catch some rays by the pool, luxuriate in the hot tub, smack her lips over the gourmet food. (Oh, and to attend the seminars too.)

And then...the night before the flight...Betty contracted a vicious stomach flu! Should she go? Should she cancel? Well, that flu couldn't last forever....

Wrong! Thus unfolded an epic drama in which Betty battled gamely against a mighty opponent bent on bringing her down amid the fluttering palms. On top of everything, Betty had to try to be a good sport! To keep a high life-condition! To — *gasp!* — actually follow her own advice!

Through it all, the members were wonderful, offering warm wishes, stomach remedies (including a strange concoction supposedly given to UNICEF babies, poor things) and souvenirs from the sight-seeing tours. Their unflinching kindness showed the true value of our organization. It almost made up for missing out on all that fabulous food. But not quite. ❧

ANN MIKS, CULVER CITY, CALIF.

# It's Never Too Late

Most of my life it seemed that everyone else led a better life than I did. The difference between me and others was so great, I adopted as my motto the old cliché, "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence." My friends had nice parents, good health and all the wonderful things I always wanted but never had. But there was one thing I thought I *could* have — marriage and children. Those were normal parts of life; how could it be difficult?

My family moved from Hawaii in the early '50s to the Denver area because of my poor health. I was born with asthma. Denver wasn't as good for my health as they thought, so after a year we moved to Los Angeles. In 1961, when I was 11, my family received the Gohonzon.

I was to learn firsthand the meaning of obstacles and changing one's destiny. Around this time, my parents started divorce proceedings. Immediately after the Gohonzon was enshrined in our home, my mother had a nervous breakdown and was hospitalized. I had to take responsibility for everything, from changing my little sister's diapers and ironing my father's shirts to running to the store for food. There was no time left for me to play with other children. A few years later, my father stopped working because he was stressed out from his job. Since we still had bills to pay, I started working evenings and weekends to pay the rent and buy food. I was 15.

I remember wondering, "Is this what life is about?" I was attending SGI-USA discussion meetings and youth division activities, but I was so overwhelmed with family responsibilities that I always felt ashamed.

I often wondered, "Will I ever have a happy family?" Because I practiced, I knew everything should improve. I was always encouraged when my SGI friends shared their dreams about the future, but I had no confidence that my dreams would come true. And when my friends from school asked me to go out on the weekends to the big dances, I had to turn them down. I didn't have the money, and I had to work.

One of my friends from school even encouraged me to

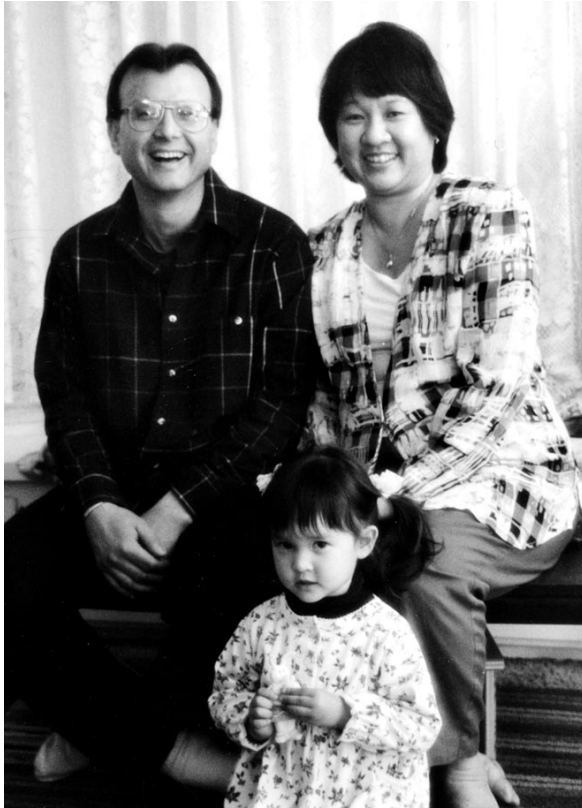


Photo by LISA HOLLIS

Sonny, Ann and their daughter, Alexandra, enjoy a happy family life that was only a dream for Ann when she started practicing 36 years ago.

run away from home. She told me that what I had to do to take care of my family was too much — I should be having fun. I pondered this idea for a while and then realized it would do no good to run away. I would still need money, and I would still need to finish school.

Eventually, as I continued to practice, things began to change. I started to enjoy my life. And I found that I had the energy to keep going despite the difficulties of my young life. I was involved in young women's division activities and the Fife and Drum Corps.

By the time I reached my 20s, my family problems had improved and I began to feel more like a normal person. My father started working again. My sister graduated from high school and was independent, and my mother was no longer hospitalized. I realized I could live my life the way I wanted. So I decided to chant a million daimoku for ME and MY LIFE.

Just before I started this, a man with whom I not only didn't get along but who used to

upset me quite a bit started paying a lot of attention to me, even asking my opinions. I was shocked! As we talked, I found myself falling in love. I had met someone whom I could truly respect and admire. The only problem was that Sonny was in love with someone else. I remember crying in front of the Gohonzon, asking, "How come I didn't meet him first?" Why, I cried, was I so busy taking care of my family that I never had time to find someone I could really like?

As the years passed — and several million daimoku went by — we became good friends. We learned all about each other, our weak points, our strong points and what our true natures were. Those years also gave us the opportunity to develop a relationship that revealed what we had to offer each other. Eventually we married.

When SGI President Ikeda visited the United States in 1990, I remember him saying: "By refreshing your life force through faith, you can work and study much harder than others, and you can also build a model family. People will then place their

trust in you and may remark at how, as a Buddhist or as a member of the SGI family, you stand out among others. This is actual proof."

I felt deep inside that I needed to redouble my prayers and determination to do just that. The idea of actual proof rang over and over in my mind and in my heart. I began to feel stronger and freer — a feeling of no regrets.

Now, if you've been calculating my age as you've read this, you may have noticed that I learned about karma as a teenager, started to enjoy life in my 20s, got married in my 30s and got serious about life in my 40s. Yes, you're right — it's never too late. This is not to say that my problems disappeared; I just became stronger in dealing with them.

I had major surgery just before our wedding, which left me with the feeling that I could never have children. And since I had taken care of my family throughout my life, I felt I'd done that already. I was satisfied with the way things were.

Or so I thought.

Two years later, at 42, I became pregnant. My doctor told me not to announce the news until all the tests showed good results. For a couple of months the doctor seemed happy, but never 100 percent confident. Then he said everything looked good. He assured me that it would be OK to announce my pregnancy. When I did, I couldn't believe the joy my friends expressed.

The next day, I had a miscarriage.

Feelings of failure and disappointment welled up in my mind as I tried to tell myself: "I'm too old to have a child anyway. Everything will be fine."

Eventually I felt myself accepting with greater joy the life that died, and I truly didn't worry. I realized how fortunate I was to have the family I had and grew more determined to care for other people. I enjoyed my life. I was satisfied with the way things were.

Two years later, at 44, I thought I was going through menopause. But no. To the shock of my doctor and my family, I was pregnant again.

Nothing has ever come easy for me. My pregnancy was no different. As the months went by and as the baby grew, so did fibroid tumors. I had three: One was the size of a watermelon, the second the size of a cantaloupe and the third the size of an orange. Specialists reviewed

and monitored my condition constantly.

Sonny was completely supportive. He did everything to take care of me. I even worked all nine months. Without his support, I could never have handled the pregnancy. I also need to add that one month before the baby was due, my husband was laid off from his job.

The doctor told me that I could not have a normal delivery, and that the baby's lungs would be monitored to determine the right time for delivery. My situation was given special attention. Finally a delivery date was decided upon.

But during the Cesarean operation, complications arose and I began to lose blood. The doctors couldn't immediately deliver the baby as expected because she was trapped by the tumors. A tug of war started; I was losing more and more blood. There was a short window of time for the doctors to deliver our baby before both our lives were threatened — and that window closed before they finally wrestled the baby free.

Although I was awake during all this, the doctors didn't say what was going on those precious moments when our baby's life hung in the balance. I was wondering what was going on, but I thought it must all be a normal part of having a Cesarean.

The doctors' first concern was the baby's life; they had no time to lose. They rushed her to the intensive care unit, where she was carefully monitored. I spent a long time in the recovery room — they were trying to replace the blood I had lost.

Apparently I was the talk of the hospital. Each nurse who came into my room would say: "Oh, you're the one! We heard about you!"

By the way, Sonny got his job back the week the baby was born.

We have now been the parents of Alexandra Mitsuko for two years. As challenging and wonderful as her birth was, it was only the beginning. I know we have a lot to look forward to over the next 20 years or so: I'm sure we'll have a lot of challenges, but I know that through them, we'll find even more love.

It's been a fast and enjoyable 36 years since I first chanted to the Gohonzon. I have a lot of appreciation for all the friends who encouraged me to look to the future and never give up hope. I know that all the causes I made to share the practice with others have been my opportunities to change my destiny and enjoy my life. WJ

The new century will be played out on a vast global stage. In far-flung corners of the world, there are friends suffering the agonies of war, mothers overwhelmed with grief and sorrow and starving children crying for food.

Spring water bubbling up from the ground can transform a desert into an oasis. Similarly, the compassion and wisdom that well up from the human heart can transform this planet into a realm of peace and happiness, an eternal treasure land. We call this triumph of humanism kosen-rufu.

On Jan. 29, 1962, Shin'ichi Yamamoto set off for the Middle East. He left from Tokyo International Airport at Haneda at 11:00 a.m. aboard Scandinavia Airlines Flight No. 84. The first stopover would be in Manila, the Philippines.

Shin'ichi's official schedule included visits to seven countries: Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Greece, Egypt, Pakistan and Thailand. His first destination was Teheran, Iran's capital. The primary purpose of the trip was to offer guidance to Soka Gakkai members living in these countries and to investigate firsthand the religious and social conditions.

This time, only youth division leaders accompanied Shin'ichi — Youth Division Chief Eisuke Akizuki and two other young men, Yusuke Yoshikawa and Akira Kuroki, all three of whom were Soka Gakkai directors.

Someone especially delighted by Shin'ichi's planned visit to the Middle East was Torazo Kawarazaki, a special-

## The New Human Revolution

By HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 1

# Treasure Land

Translation of parts 1–5 of the 'Treasure Land' chapter, as printed in the *Seikyo Shimbum*, 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.

ist in Arab affairs and teacher of Arabic at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. Kawarazaki later compiled, edited

mony at the headquarters of the *Seikyo Shimbum*, the Soka Gakkai's newspaper. This research center was the crystallization of an idea conceived and proposed by Shin'ichi during a visit to Asian countries the previous year.



Its function would be to promote research on the cultural heritage of Asia and compile academic material on Eastern thought and philosophy. It would be the forerunner of a variety of cultural organizations that the Gakkai would eventually establish.

At the inauguration, Shin'ichi voiced his hope that the institute would become a seat of knowledge that would produce many internationally respected researchers and give rise to a fresh cultural tradition. He presented each of the staff with an official institute pin and then affixed one to his own lapel. He wished to show that he regarded himself as an institute member and was firmly committed to fostering capable researchers.

Shin'ichi was to meet with Kawarazaki at the Gakkai Headquarters immediately afterward. A local Gakkai leader had asked Shin'ichi to give some words of encouragement to Kawarazaki, a member in his area. Shin'ichi was the first to set himself to the task of developing academicians.

Torazo Kawarazaki, mustached and wearing dark-framed spectacles, was in his late 40s, a man of amiable countenance and impressive build.

Shin'ichi greeted Kawarazaki courteously. He hoped that this expert on Arab affairs might give him some useful advice for his upcoming trip to the Middle East.

"Thank you very much for taking time to visit me here at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters," Shin'ichi told him.

"Not at all, not at all," Kawarazaki replied with a vibrant, booming voice. "It's my pleasure. I'm thrilled to hear that you will shortly be visiting a number of Arab nations. The Arab world is my second homeland."

In his youth, when working for Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kawarazaki was sent to Egypt to study at Cairo University. After graduating with a degree in Arabic, he worked for Japanese missions in such Middle East countries as Egypt and Iraq, deepening his knowledge of the culture of Arab nations in the process.

After World War II, having tired of being a bureaucrat, he quit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and for some time thereafter suffered great financial difficulty. His wife and son, moreover, were both afflicted with tuberculosis.

His wife first heard about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism from a relative who could not bear to see them remain in such painful straits any longer. Mrs. Kawarazaki started practicing in the summer of 1953; in April the following year she finally persuaded her husband to take faith.

Torazo Kawarazaki had no real interest in the Soka Gakkai then, but simply wanted to do whatever might please his wife, whom he loved.

Around that time, Japan and many other countries were greatly interested in developing Arab oil resources; Kawarazaki gained a position with a petroleum company. He was later recruited by another oil concern with which he eventually became a senior research advisor, a job that entailed traveling throughout the Arab world. He was also involved in the development of the first Arab oil well started by a Japanese company. Not long afterward he began to teach Arabic at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in addition to his work in the commercial sector.

Kawarazaki animatedly began to tell Shin'ichi about the situation in the Middle East.

"Many, as you may know, describe the Middle East as the most volatile place in the world," he said. "One reason for this is the rivalry between Eastern and Western powers scrambling for control over oil-rich Arab nations."

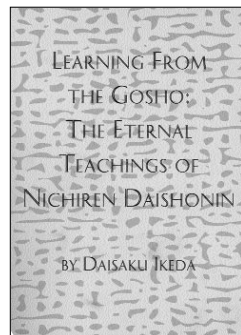
"The Arab nations have been rather late in gaining independence after long colonial rule by various European powers. Consequently, there is a strong trend toward achieving Arab unity. This is what has caused an upsurge in Arab nationalism."

Torazo Kawarazaki continued with growing emphasis: "But as Arab unity strengthened under Islam, a deepening rift began to develop between the Arab nations and the Jewish state of Israel. Also, as characterized by the withdrawal of Syria from the United

## 'Learning From the Goshō'

*SGI President Ikeda's popular series on the Goshō has been compiled in a book. It includes his essays on "Happiness in This World," "On the Opening of the Eyes," "The One Essential Phrase" and other letters. It will soon be available in SGI-USA bookstores and through mail order. Price: \$5.00.*

Available Soon



## TREASURE LAND, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Arab Republic,<sup>1</sup> many obstacles remain along the path to Arab unity.

"In addition, the vast wealth gained by many Arab nations through the exploitation of oil resources has led to sharp inequalities between the rich and poor. The likelihood of revolt in these countries is extremely high. In short, in the Middle East we can find the whole spectrum of possible confrontation — the East–West Cold War, ethnic conflict, religious strife, class struggle and the list goes on.

"Geographically, too, the Middle East has served as a bridge linking Asia, Europe and Africa. Arab nations comprise a significant part of the 48-nation Afro-Asian Group, which has now gained membership in the United Nations. In fact, you could say that developments in the Arab world will have a key impact on world peace.

"However, Japanese government officials, politicians and business leaders view the Arab nations solely as suppliers of oil. They are entirely indifferent to what happens in these countries, so long as it doesn't adversely affect Japan's oil supply. That is truly regrettable.

"The average Japanese knows very little about the Arab world. I really feel Japan should consider what it can do to promote exchange with Middle Eastern countries — existing as they do at opposite ends of Asia — and how they can mutually assist one another. I believe that this would give rise to a human solidarity transcending borders. And if such exchange were extended around the globe, this would contribute to developing the foundations for world peace."

"I totally agree with you," Shin'ichi said. "I can really sense your love for the Arab world. One of my reasons for visiting this time is to initiate such exchange. Peace is not something complex or extraordinary. It begins by forging heart-to-heart ties. This is where cultural exchange will be very important.

"I want to open the way for an exchange

of peace and culture between Japan and the Arab nations. In Japan, American and European culture tends to get all the limelight — to the exclusion of virtually all other cultures. But there are other countries in the world. The Arab nations have a unique culture. I think that there are many things that Japan should learn from them."

"Exactly," Kawarazaki said with a smile, his eyes twinkling genially. "That's precisely my feeling, President Yamamoto."

**S**hin'ichi Yamamoto and Torazo Kawarazaki enjoyed a lively discussion. Theirs was a dynamic meeting of the minds.

"Actually," Shin'ichi informed his guest, "I just came from an event formally establishing the Oriental Science Institute. The institute's purpose will be to conduct research into the cultures, religions and peoples of the world with a special focus on Asia. Its ultimate aim is to promote mutual understanding among people and contribute to peace in Asia and throughout the world."

"Did the Soka Gakkai create this Oriental Science Institute?" asked Kawarazaki.

Shin'ichi nodded with smile: "Yes, it did. It is a research institute that was founded and will be sponsored by the Soka Gakkai. We believe that studying and learning about the cultures and peoples of each country is indispensable to developing mutual understanding among the world's people. The mission of religion is to bring happiness to all



people and to actualize world peace. The Soka Gakkai is seriously committed to finding ways to achieve this."

Hearing this, Kawarazaki straightened in his chair and respectfully addressed Shin'ichi: "President Yamamoto, it seems that I have misunderstood the Soka Gakkai. To be honest with you, somewhere in my heart I saw it as a religious group interested only in increasing its membership with the sales pitch that daimoku enables one to overcome illness and the like. When I started practicing, I thought it not beyond the bounds of possibility that one could cure illness through faith and that quite probably the benefit of the Gohonzon everyone talked about did exist.

"However, it never seemed to me that the Soka Gakkai was making practical efforts to address the peace issue. There are, as you know, so many religious leaders who pay lip service to the peace cause but very few who make earnest efforts to achieve that goal. I am impressed, though, by what you have just told me.

"Actually, I only came to see you today so as not to disappoint my wife. She insisted that I come see you, since you had kindly said you wanted to meet me. Besides, she told me you were going to the Middle East shortly. I thought perhaps it wouldn't do any harm in just going one time to see the president of the organization my wife belongs to. But that was very arrogant and unfair of me. I was looking at the Soka Gakkai with prejudiced eyes, not even bothering to ascertain the facts for myself. I am very sorry about my attitude."

After saying this, Kawarazaki bowed deeply in a gesture of apology.

Shin'ichi assured him there was no need to apologize, saying: "If one does not know the reality of a situation, it is only natural to have misunderstandings. So, Mr. Kawarazaki, you've never done gongyo, then?"

"No. I've been a member in name only...."

**S**hin'ichi then began to talk about Buddhism calmly: "Buddhism teaches that each person is inherently a Buddha worthy of supreme respect, that everyone has an

equal right to become happy. In short, it is a humanistic philosophy, a philosophy of peace, expounding the equality of all humankind. Buddhism also teaches how we can tap the compassion, wisdom and life force of the Buddha within us.

"Everyone has their own ideals and convictions and is working with all their might to realize them. But it is human nature that, even wishing to bring forth compassion in all our dealings we can sometimes succumb to self-interest despite these best intentions.

"Life is full of setbacks and impasses. The key to happiness lies ultimately in possessing the strength to never succumb to anything, to calmly triumph over any obstacle. That is why Buddhist practice is so crucial."

"Yes, I see," Torazo Kawarazaki quietly agreed. "As a matter of fact, I am presently experiencing a deadlock myself. I always wanted to devote my life to working for the Arab world's benefit, but it seems I've just been fighting a losing battle. Whenever I make proposals for cultural enterprises and exchanges to enhance the Japanese people's understanding of the people and culture of that region, I am greeted with complete indifference. The hurdles are truly enormous. Perhaps I'm just being unrealistic. This thought really depresses me."

Shin'ichi answered emphatically: "Mr. Kawarazaki, I feel the reason your wife urged you to embrace Buddhism is that she wholeheartedly wants you to realize this dream. Surely she knows and understands, more than anyone, your deep love for the Arab world. I think you would agree that she is your greatest supporter and sympathizer. I heard that you resigned from a position at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs some years ago. I would be willing to bet that your wife never uttered a word of complaint, but fully supported your decision."

Kawarazaki nodded deeply and said: "You are right. I put her through a lot. We fell on hard times. Yet despite her weak health, she took it all in stride without a word of complaint. She scrimped and saved to make ends meet."

"Your wife's wish," Shin'ichi assured him, "is to see you realize your dream of making a positive contribution to the Arab world. You mustn't give up. Though it is only human to meet with deadlocks, there are no deadlocks in Buddhism."

*(To be continued)*

1. United Arab Republic: formed in 1958 from the federation of Egypt and Syria amid the growing tide of Arab nationalism. Syria, however, left the federation in 1961. Egypt continued alone as the United Arab Republic until 1971, when it changed its name to the Arab Republic of Egypt.

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RODNEY MITCHELL, PHOENIX

# Moving Ahead

A second-year law student, who helps out youth in the community, wins the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship in Arizona.

Photo by KENNY SAMUEL



(L-r) Earlie Mae Mitchell (Rodney's mom), Elsie Fortenberry (Elise's mom), Rodney Mitchell, Elise Mitchell.

By SALLY MARKS McKEE  
MESA, ARIZ.

Some people shrug and ask, "Why?" Rodney Mitchell asks, "Why not?" and moves ahead.

This optimistic attitude paid off when the second-year law student recently learned he was the recipient of the first annual Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship from the Hayzel B. Daniels Bar Association, an all-Arizona group of African American attorneys and jurists. The annual scholarship is awarded to an African American law student who has demonstrated academic excellence and is involved in community service.

"One of my fellow students told me she hadn't bothered to apply because she knew it would be very competitive," said Rodney. "Because we have the Gohonzon, my wife and I have always felt that obstacles were opportunities, and it never occurred to me NOT to apply."

Rodney's wife, Elise, said: "There have been many challenging moments since Rodney made the commitment to attend

law school and I made the commitment to support him in this joint decision. We knew it would be an incredible struggle with many sacrifices. When situations have arisen that seemed insurmountable, Rodney has always consoled me in the same way, saying with conviction in

his voice and strength and compassion in his eyes, 'We have the Gohonzon!'"

In addition to school, work and his active role as the group leader of Ahwatukee Group in Ahwatukee, a suburb of Phoenix, Rodney has expended considerable pro bono work within the

minority community. He is the assistant project director of the Homeless Legal Assistance Project and spends about 10 to 15 hours each week coordinating and providing legal assistance to the residents of three homeless shelters. He was also recently elected by the HLAP board of di-

rectors to be project director during 1997-98.

As a board member of the Black Law Students Association, he participates in that organization's "Street Law" program, providing legal education to middle and high school students, primarily in minority schools. This year Rodney helped start the "Street Law" program at a local inner-city school where there is a high rate of violence. "The more we help our children to understand the spirit and intent of our laws, the more motivated they will be to uphold them," Rodney said.

Receiving the \$1,000 scholarship was a victory for the Mitchell family, which includes Rodney's wife, Elise, and three sons, Joshua, 12, Rodney Jr., 5, and Cheyenne, 3. But meeting the banquet's keynote speaker, Martin Luther King III, was the day's highlight.

"When we were notified that Rodney would be the scholarship recipient, we were ecstatic, but when we found out that he would be presented the scholarship at an awards ban-

PLEASE SEE MOVING AHEAD, 13

## Moving Beyond the 'Isms'

By SALLY MARKS McKEE  
MESA, ARIZ.

Martin Luther King III has carried on his father's legacy to champion equal rights for all people. He has been actively involved in policy initiatives to maintain the fair and equitable treatment of all people in the United States and abroad. Among dozens of commitments to humanitarian concerns, he also founded in 1988 an organization, Leadership 2000, for the development of leadership capabilities in individuals aspiring to public office.

Mr. King has been touring the world giving lectures and prefers that his lectures be in an open dialogue format. Rodney Mitchell accompanied and introduced Mr. King during open dialogue with Arizona State University law stu-



Martin Luther King III

dents. The human rights advocate answered questions and gave his thoughts on how to improve conditions in society. Mr. King said his grandfather preached love, his father taught love, and he is carrying the torch to encourage others to

live in peace and harmony.

In his speech at the Hayzel B. Daniels Award Ceremony (see accompanying "Profile" this page), Mr. King said: "We've got to get beyond the issue of race and class. We have to move beyond 'isms' We've got to find a way to bring people together." He also said, "Every city is made beautiful by its people."

Later that evening, Mr. King discussed the power of love and commitment. After his father was killed, Mr. King said his mother, Coretta Scott King, went to her children and explained that they would not feel their father hug them anymore, but he would always love them.

There was never any mention of hating the person who killed their father. Instead, Mrs. King took the three eldest of her four children on the march that Martin Luther King Jr. was supposed to lead.

"We need to frame our decisions by what is right," Mr. King continued, "not by what is convenient or easy."

He quoted his grandfather's commitment to love his fellow man. "I refuse to allow anyone to force me to hate; I am every man's brother," said the elder Martin Luther King. King Sr. refused to hate even those who took the lives of his wife and his son.

After the banquet, Mr. King spoke of his desire to help youth develop. He described his four-point philosophy for teaching children to live in peace. "It's a simple plan," he said. "Love of self, love of family, love of community, and love of God."

Following his father's philosophy, which was based on the teachings of Jesus and Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. King reiterated the need for a nonviolent society.

"We need to find a way to curtail killing," urged Mr. King. "We need to get angry and not tolerate killing. We have to stop the romanticism of guns in our society. We need to go through healing and move forward and build relationships. We need to raise our children to work in harmony with one another." □

Photo by KENNY SAMUEL

**SIGN POSTS** APPLYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS TO DAILY LIFE

To Tell The Truth

By JEFF FARR

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

**Buddhism is reason. Reason will win over your lord.** (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 3, p. 238)

On March 23 I visited Atlanta, where some student division members took me to the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site and the Atlanta University Center. At both places, I felt that Martin Luther King Jr. is still alive — his words are a living presence.

Quotes from Dr. King were posted on signs, printed on T-shirts and engraved in the bases of statues. In the National Park Service Visitor Center, from an array of TV sets, there were multiple Dr. Kings speaking forcefully, yet calmly, against prejudice.

I wondered why Dr. King's words continue to encourage so many people, when the words of many American leaders have been forgotten. Discussing it with the students, we agreed that Dr. King's words live on because he had the courage to tell the truth — his words of justice continue to do their work. As Dr. King said, "Unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality."

A recent installment of *The New Human Revolution* made the same point (March 28 *World Tribune*). SGI President Ikeda quoted the above passage from "The Supreme Leader of the World" to explain that the truth always prevails over authority.

"Reason will win over your lord," Nichiren Daishonin told Shijo Kingo — and he was right. Kingo's words finally had an impact on his boss, Lord Ema, who had long persecuted him. Ema came to understand Kingo's sincere heart and to cherish his input as an employee and a friend.

At the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, I suddenly remembered that a year before on March 23, Hiroe Clow, who courageously shared the truth of the Seattle Incident, had died. I sent a prayer to Dr. King, Mrs. Clow and all those who have given their lives for justice, and made a determination to always do my best, too, to speak the truth. ☐

UNDERSTANDING MENTOR AND DISCIPLE

# Changing Myself Is the Bottom Line

By CRAIG TACHIBANA

AIEA, HAWAII

Though I have met SGI President Ikeda many times, in Hawaii, Japan and last year in Florida, I do not consider myself qualified to write on the theory of mentor and disciple. However, I want to express what I feel about the mentor-disciple relationship — how it has moved my life and activities.

In November 1975, when I was a seventh-month member, I visited the Hiroshima Atom Bomb Peace Memorial. There I understood the core of President Toda's admonition to abolish nuclear weapons and protect the absolute sanctity of life.

Despite knowing little about our SGI president or the mentor-disciple relationship, I realized there that the mission of achieving kosen-rufu is deadly serious. The Hiroshima memorial itself is a silent teacher.

I burned into my mind the touching black-and-white photograph titled *Child With a Rice Ball*. It shows a little girl being held in her mother's arms after the bombing: Only the girl, with dirty hair, a smudge on her face and a blank expression, can be seen — in her hand is a rice ball. Somehow the photographer captured her innocence and fragility, suggesting the insanity of what had been done. Later, I would use this as a mental picture to propel me again and again into youth division propagation activities.

As a youth division member, I started to feel compelled to read all of President Ikeda's works so I could grasp his many different perspectives. I asked myself: "What does President Ikeda think?" "How does President Ikeda view this subject?" "Is President Ikeda romantic?"

It is a privilege, I believe, to read an author's work while he is still living. I felt that if I did not try to read everything, I would remain blind and shortchange myself and my lifetime practice with him. I endeavored to use whatever I learned for all the members as I participated in Gajokai and Soka Group.

This proved very beneficial when the "Nikken phenomena" occurred. Because of my study of Nichiren Daishonin's works, as well as President Ikeda's many books and speeches, the emotional arguments about the Nikken sect, pro or con, did not affect me, no matter how bad the overall situation appeared to be. I had already decided to be a disciple of President Ikeda at least 10 years earlier.

On a 1994 trip to Japan, the Nikken sect was the main topic. The oft-repeated guidance of SGI General Director Eiichi Wada was that those who understood deeply the issues surrounding the Nikken sect should go to the front lines and inform the members.



Children stage a die-in, Aug. 6, 1996, in the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima. They protest against nuclear weapons on the 51st anniversary of the atomic bombing of the city.

Upon returning to Hawaii, I developed a non-emotional, factual lecture on the Nikken sect based on the Lotus Sutra, Buddhist history and President Ikeda's guidance. I proceeded to give nine to 13 lectures a month from April through August 1994.

Many people helped me to get the invitations necessary to speak at their meetings. And many said that I helped them reduce their confusion about the issue, that with their newfound clarity about it they could take correct action.

At the same time, through my studies of President Ikeda's various speeches, I felt that he was alluding to a so-called direct fusion period. *Direct fusion* is a term I use to indicate a time when the universal Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin fuses and melds with American culture. Both the organization and the country will change somewhat. I envision a network-type, rather than hierarchical organization, with facilitators who make others feel comfortable rather than leaders who take a top-down, directive approach.

The problem was that I was ill-prepared for this coming change he alluded to. By chanting, I realized that quickly changing myself depended on whether I truly believed I could learn something from each of my members. If I wholeheartedly had faith that I could learn from them, I could become a better listener, become more car-

ing, be more responsive to their hopes, desires and sufferings and create better relationships with them. This remains an ongoing challenge for me.

At times, I envision my new role to be getting out of the way so that enthusiastic newer members can "own," or have a vested interest in, their activities. Some people tell me that they see the leader's new role as empowering or entrusting the members. I feel this is an important aspect of being a disciple — letting others grow and try out their new ideas.

For me, putting the mentor-disciple relationship into practice is the question of whether I can fundamentally change myself in front of the Gohonzon as new circumstances in life emerge and evolve. Changing myself is the bottom line. The mentor-disciple relationship is a lifetime process of changing yourself — what your life is like at the end is the result of this.

I do not see this process of changing myself as any different from the valiant struggles and victories that I read in our publications. The children's experiences, for instance, which are simple and sincere, force me to make a staggering assessment of my adult practice. Their experiences always remind me of the *Child With a Rice Ball* photo that I viewed as a new member — which remains as a catalyst in my lifetime mentor-disciple process. ☐

SGI President Ikeda made the following speech on receiving an honorary professorship from China's Jilin University, Hong Kong, Feb. 20.

Please allow me first to offer my deepest regrets and condolences at the unexpected and very sad news of the passing of the great Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping. I met with Mr. Deng on two occasions, and I remember as if it were yesterday his far-reaching vision for the development and prosperity of China he shared with me. Many concur that his distinguished accomplishments will shine in history for all time. I offer my sincerest prayers for his repose.

Dr. Liu Zhongshu, president of Jilin University; faculty of the university; Mr. Li Ling, division chief of the Department of Education, Science and Technology of the Hong Kong branch of the Xinhua News Agency; and honored guests:

Deng Xiaoping established the goal of your fine university by declaring that the unity of labor and education is the fundamental path for the education of tomorrow's youth. I find this a deeply moving, highly worthy educational ideal for the 21st century and the future.

Now, in the presence of SGI representatives from around the world, I humbly accept this honorary professorship from Jilin University, a citadel of human potential destined to lead the great nation of China in the new century of hope. I express my deep appreciation for the great honor bestowed upon me.

By rights I should travel to Jilin University to receive it, yet the university's president and others have traveled all the way from snowy Changchun, in Jilin Province in China's northeast, to present it to me. I am deeply honored. I will not forget this as long as I live.



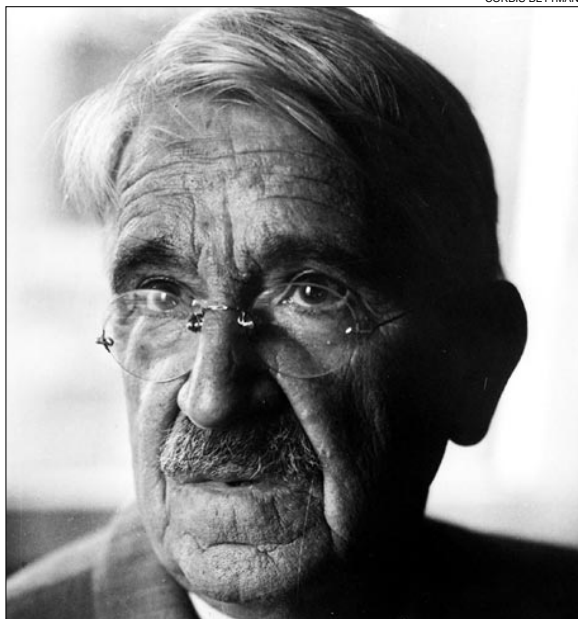
The late Deng Xiaoping placed emphasis on 'the education of tomorrow's youth.'

## Educating a New Type of Individual

I must also thank Mr. Li and other distinguished guests from the Xinhua News Agency, who have taken time from their busy schedules to attend. I have received a congratulatory message from President Liu's brother, Chinese Minister of Culture Liu Zhongde, for which I express my deepest gratitude.

More than 20 years have passed since I sat talking with a top Chinese leader in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, voicing my opinion that China would certainly experience fantastic development in the future, far surpassing Japan. The entire world, I said, would watch the great nation's growth with keen interest.

And today, many speak of the 21st century as the Chinese century. Above all else, I am overjoyed at the tremendous strides China has made. It goes without



American educator John Dewey favored practical results and experimentation in education. He supported China for its innovations.

saying that Jilin University has made outstanding contributions to that growth, especially in the areas of science and technology.

One of your university mottoes is "Seek the practical!" The American educator and philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952), who also emphasized practical results and experimentation, foresaw China's fantastic development many years ago. Incidentally, the New York Culture Center of the SGI-USA, from

which several representatives are with us today, is located in a building where Dewey once taught.

After World War I, Dewey visited both China and Japan. It is interesting that based on his observations, he criticized Japan and supported China. He said that Japan, though it had evidenced rapid growth, had only borrowed elements of foreign cultures and tacked them on to its own, with no fundamental change to its sys-

tem. China, on the other hand, was striving to change from the foundation up — even if it took a long time to do so.

In other words, an entirely new breed of individual was beginning to be born in China, Dewey believed. These new Chinese would provide the base for the emergence of a truly modern state. Jilin University was founded in 1946 to accomplish just that: to cultivate and educate a new type of individual.

The following year, 1947, I first met my mentor, Josei Toda, the second president of the Soka Gakkai. Mr. Toda was always firmly antiwar. While the Japanese military crushed and destroyed Changchun,<sup>1</sup> the beautiful city of culture, academy and forests where Jilin University is located, Mr. Toda stood up against that immoral, inhumane militarism, utterly rejecting it. For that he spent two years in prison. He was a true champion of peace.

His wish was that the Japanese join hands with the Chinese people, to whom we owe so much of our culture and Buddhism — as well as with the rest of our Asian neighbors, advancing toward happiness together. This was the task that he left to me when he died. My greatest pride is that for five decades I have unwaveringly followed the path set forth by him.

That is another reason why I am so impressed by the academic atmosphere at Jilin University, where the bonds between student and mentor are highly valued. Dr. Liu, who carries on the noble tradition that regards promising young minds as precious as life itself, has said, "All of the Jilin University leaders are eager to completely devote themselves to assist and support new young talent."

With more than half of its faculty under age 40, Jilin University is clearly opening doors for deserving, talented youth. I am certain that the light of Jilin University, aimed as it is toward the first decade of the coming century, will brilliantly illuminate the coming Chinese century.

The great 6th-century Chinese Buddhist teacher T'ien-t'ai said, "The deeper the roots, the more prolific the branches" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 4, p. 272). Only when people learn the importance of firmly putting down roots to develop and educate themselves can future prosperity be realized.

## 'Expressions, is Moving!'

Beginning in June, members' poetry will be found in *Living Buddhism*. Please send all submissions to: *Living Buddhism*, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401

The following speech by SGI President Ikeda was delivered by Soka Gakkai Vice President Shigeo Hasegawa at the 2nd Nationwide Young Women's Division Leaders Meeting in Tokyo, Feb. 10.

# Happiness Lies in a Solid Self

Congratulations on this 2nd Young Women's Division Leaders Meeting! Thank you for traveling from all over Japan to attend today!

Tomorrow, Feb. 11, marks the 97th birthday of the second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda (1900-58).

Like a compassionate and benevolent father, Mr. Toda cared deeply about the happiness and growth of the young women's division members. He always urged them: "Be bright and cheerful! Be pure of heart! Don't be defeated by your weaknesses! Make Buddhist study your foundation!"

How delighted he would surely be to see all of you — your lives shining with intellect and courageous resolve to stand up for truth and justice — gathered at this Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium today!

To celebrate this high-spirited meeting, I will share a few words as an expression of my boundless expectations for your growth and future endeavors.



Jawaharlal Nehru with his daughter Indira in 1938.

UPI/CORBIS-BETTMANN

## Tagore Peace Award

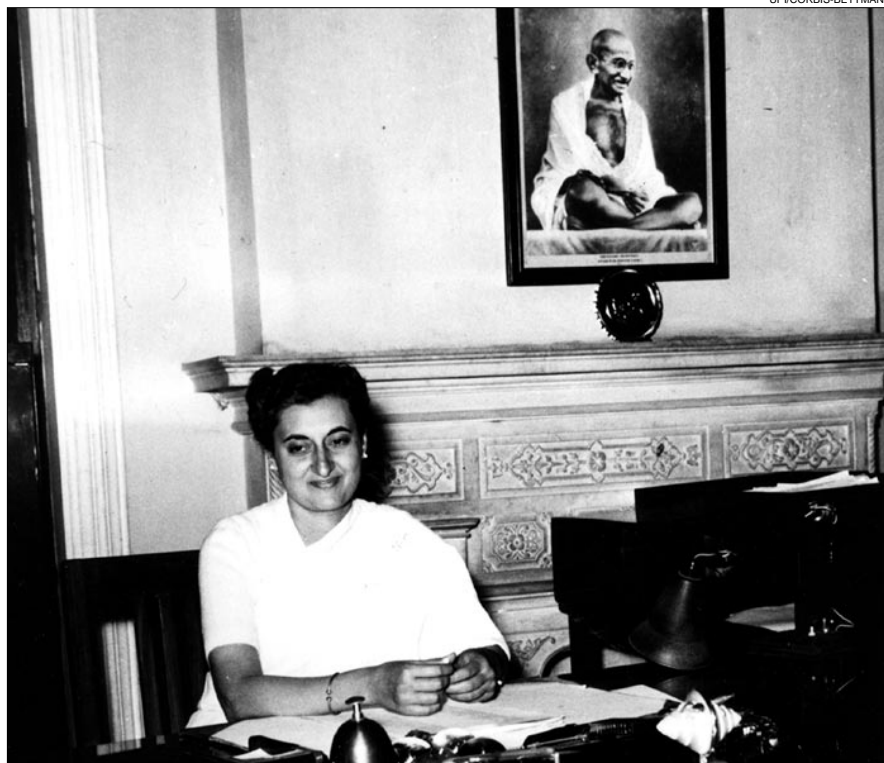
I first met my mentor, Mr. Toda, on Aug. 14, 1947. The following day, Aug. 15, India gained its independence. I still vividly remember the announcement of that inspiring news. Fifty years have passed since then.

Recently, India's prestigious Asiatic Society honored me by naming me the first recipient of its Tagore Peace Award. It gives me unsurpassed joy to dedicate this honor to Mr. Toda.

The other day, some members of the young women's division international group presented me with an outline of the Asiatic Society's history they had compiled and translated.

The Asiatic Society was established 213 years ago in 1784. As the oldest academic institute in India, it has contributed greatly to the renewed appreciation of India's cultural heritage and to the country's spiritual revitalization. The Asiatic Society also established India's first modern library, museum and art gallery. Today, the awards the society confers are regarded as the country's highest academic honors.

During the administration of India's third prime minister, Indira Gandhi, the Asiatic Society



Indira in 1959, seated in the presidential chair in New Delhi after she became the first woman congress president of independent India, with a portrait of her grandfather Mahatma Gandhi in the background.

UPI/CORBIS-BETTMANN

was officially designated an Institution of National Importance. Known for her abiding

love for culture and awareness of the profound value of learning, Indira Gandhi was a truly

remarkable leader. She was the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of inde-

pendent India.

Prime Minister Nehru, incidentally, visited Japan in October 1957, some six months before Mr. Toda died. I cannot forget how Mr. Toda said with great feeling at that time: "I would very much like to meet Prime Minister Nehru. I'm sure we'd get on like a house on fire!"

Making my mentor's heart my own, I have forged friendships with many leaders around the world, including from India.

## Living by a Pledge

I would like to share a beautiful story that took place between Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter, Indira, involving her marriage in 1942. At the wedding ceremony, with great dignity and poise, the young woman said her vows in a clear, confident voice. It was a solemn moment. Her pledge included a Sanskrit verse that had been added by her father:

If there are any people in the four quarters of the earth who venture to deprive us of our freedom, mark! Here I am, sword in hand, prepared to resist them to the last! I pray for the spreading light of freedom; may it envelop us on all sides!<sup>1</sup>

What Nehru wished for his beloved daughter as she stood on the threshold of her new life was not a future of ease and comfort nor happiness for her alone.

"Do not allow yourself to be occupied with such trivial things! You mustn't hide within your shell! Turn your gaze to the wide world before you! Fight for the freedom of our people, every single one! Fight to the end against the devilish nature of power! Life's true joy is found in devoting yourself to a great purpose!" — this was the cry that emanated from the depths of this praiseworthy father's heart.

A life lived by a pledge is truly noble.

This year, my wife and I will celebrate our 45th wedding anniversary. When we got married, Mr. Toda, who was our unofficial go-between, solemnly urged us to dedicate our lives "to accomplishing the great bloodless revolution of kosen-rufu."

The pink sari worn by Indira Gandhi at her wedding, by the way, was woven from cotton yarn spun by her father while he was in prison. Sonia Gandhi wore this same sari when she married Indira's son Rajiv, who later became prime minister of India.

PLEASE SEE HAPPINESS, NEXT PAGE

REUTERS/CORBIS-BETTMANN



'Nehru's spirit was passed on...to his grandson Rajiv and Rajiv's wife, Sonia.'

## HAPPINESS, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Nehru's spirit — his undying love and compassion for humanity — was passed on to his daughter Indira and, through her, to his grandson Rajiv and Rajiv's wife, Sonia. That spirit continues to burn brightly in the hearts of their children, Rahul and Priyanka.

## Triumphing Over Hardships

When Rahul finished school, he wanted to travel. His father recommended a solo trip to the Himalayas. This was an example of Rajiv Gandhi's strict fatherly love.

You cannot truly grow if you are always flattered and spoiled by those around you. You must resolve never to avoid hardship. If anything, you should have the spirit to go out of your way to find and challenge difficulties. The ultimate victors in life are those who have undergone and triumphed over hardships.

Life is long. There is no need to be impatient. The important thing is to steadily and surely build a solid self.

Since you uphold faith in the

Mystic Law, whatever may happen, you can propel yourself in the best possible direction. I hope you

will advance with that conviction. We have now entered a crucial phase in our ascent of the

summit of kosen-rufu for the 21st century. This year is especially important. Everything will hinge on whether you have the energy, wisdom and tenacity of spirit to keep advancing up this great mountain.

Nichiren Daishonin writes, "The wise may be called human, but the thoughtless are no more than animals" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 240). To be obsessed with the latest fads and manufactured images and to let them dominate your life is a shallow way to live. To be concerned only about immediate goals and be constantly swayed by your environment is foolish. I hope each of you will glow with vitality and joy, reflecting the fulfillment that adorns the palace in the depths of your life.

Mr. Toda asserted, "If you base yourself on faith, you can come to terms with things that you can't come to terms with intellectually."

The key is deciding how you will live your life and then devoting all your strength and energy toward that. This is what faith is all about. This is the life of a person who possesses a

solid philosophy.

## Aiming for the 21st Century

Daughters are like the sun. If a daughter shines brightly, she can illuminate her whole family. Therefore, the important thing is that you shine, no matter what.

Faith is deep self-awareness. Faith is unshakable conviction. Faith is rich character. Faith is a strong sense of responsibility.

In closing, I wish to say to each of you: Without fail, please climb the great mountain of the 21st century during this important time of your youth — and throughout your life. Continue moving forward harmoniously, supporting the young women's division chief and encouraging one another in a spirit of mutual respect.

I am always sincerely praying: May you be blessed with good health! May you be wise! May you have courage! May you be victorious! May all happiness be yours!

1. Sonia Gandhi, *Rajiv* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India [P] Ltd., 1992), p. 20.

## MOVING AHEAD, FROM PAGE 9

quet with Martin Luther King III as the guest speaker, it made the other benefits of this event pale in comparison," Elise said. "To think that we would be meeting a man who positively impacts society in so many ways was almost overwhelming. He is a man who is carrying on his father's dream, the son of a man who changed history."

Mr. King's philosophy strongly mirrors the SGI's commitment to respect human life, peace and equality. "There are so many similarities about the message that Martin Luther King III is trying to send and the philosophy of the SGI that at times I felt like I was listening to SGI President Ikeda speak," Elise said.

Mr. King urged his listeners to "get beyond" the issue of color.

"As he spoke, it reminded me of the cherry, plum, peach and damson blossoms part of the 'Orally Transmitted Teachings,' which speaks of mutual understanding and appreciation of one another's differences, thus creating a lush garden of many blossoms," Rodney said.

"It was good to hear the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream being reborn in the passion of his son," he continued. "Mr. King also believes that we need to continue to move forward — not look at the past but learn from it, continuing to advance toward unselfish love and the unity of diverse cultures. Buddhism expresses this as the true cause; from this moment on, making a fresh departure from

the prime point."

Rodney went on to say: "Mr. King quoted from his father's essay 'The Dimensions of a Perfect Life,' saying, 'Whatever work you do in life, even if you're a street sweeper, do your job so well that no one living or dead could do it better.' As I heard this, I laughed to myself, thinking, 'Gee, where have I heard this advice before?'"

During the banquet, Rodney gave his experience of being a shy student in a newly integrated elementary school in Bakersfield, Calif. Although they didn't know each other personally, Rodney was living the same way that was taught to the King family — working in harmony with children of all colors and backgrounds.

Rodney told how, despite being one of only a handful of non-white students at his grade

school, he was determined to make friends. What better way to do this than to run for a student body officer position? His mother helped him write a speech, and he went from being an outsider to the president of Franklin Elementary School. He won by a landslide.

During his scholarship acceptance speech, Rodney thanked his mother, his fellow law students and his wife, whom he met while they were both in the fifth grade at Franklin Elementary School. "She voted for me for school president in the sixth grade, and she has voted for me ever since," Rodney said.

After graduating from law school, Rodney plans to continue to help others, particularly those in need. In his cover letter to the selection committee for the scholarship, he wrote:

I genuinely like and care for people. I fully intend to use my legal skills in ensuring that people in my environment are cared for legally. Whether as a prosecutor, public defender, civil rights litigator or a member of the legislature, I plan on impacting the well-being of the citizens of Arizona as positively as possible.

Rodney's mother, Earlie Mae Mitchell, has her own ideas. When Rodney was a little boy she told him he would be president of the United States one day.

It isn't hard for the many people who know Rodney — including "street people," SGI members, law students, lawyers, and now even dignitaries such as Martin Luther King III — to consider Earlie Mae Mitchell's suggestion and ask, "Why not?"

## EDUCATING, FROM PAGE 11

The Chinese premier Zhou Enlai and his wife, Madam Deng Yingchao, whose friendship I will never forget, also strongly believed that. They placed their faith in me based on that shared belief. Premier Zhou said: "The Soka Gakkai has a broad base of support

among the people. That is why it has my respect."

In 1974, I walked across the Hong Kong border, setting foot in China for the first time. A little girl asked me, "Why have you come to China?"

I replied without hesitation, with utter and complete truthfulness: "To meet you." That was my goal: to meet and be-

friend individuals.

All existence resides within each individual. That is where all things begin as well. In fact, only friendships forged on the individual level are real, grounded and lasting.

My goal has always been to nurture individuals, to create harmony among them. I fervently wish to usher in a spring

of hope for the 21st century that is adorned by the sublime, lofty presence of individuals whose inner treasure tower of life shines with unsurpassed brilliance.

Please allow me to reaffirm my commitment to that goal, here today with my friends from around the world, as a member of the Jilin faculty, as an eternal

friend of the Chinese people.

In closing, I pray for the greater development of Jilin University, the glory and prosperity of China and the health and success of all gathered here today. Thank you.

1. Changchun: The city served as the capital of the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo between 1933 and 1945.

Por CRAIG DEROUSSE

LOS ANGELES

Para la presentación de estudio, realizada en el Centro de la Naturaleza y la Cultura de la Florida, el 17 de agosto de 1996, durante la 3ra Conferencia para la Paz de la juventud Estado Unidense-Japonesa.

**Buda-s**, una persona que ha alcanzado la iluminación.

**Iluminación-s**, un estado que se destaca por la ausencia de deseos o sufrimientos. (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*)

Qué es un Buda? De acuerdo con la definición del diccionario Webster, un Buda parecería ser una persona extraordinariamente feliz, aislada de los sufrimientos mundanos de la humanidad. Sin embargo, como nosotros sabemos por los escritos de Nichiren Daishonin, un Buda no tiene nada que ver con aislamiento. Nichiren Daishonin y Shakyamuni, el fundador histórico del Budismo, vivieron y practicaron entre sus discípulos y con ellos, "sufrieron lo que tuvieron que sufrir y gozaron lo que tuvieron que gozar".

A pesar de que nosotros podemos entender este punto intelectualmente, ¿realmente lo creemos? o más bien, ¿nos imaginamos un Buda como algún tipo de deidad o como un ser perfecto? ¿Nos imaginamos el logro de la iluminación como un momento mágico en el cual rayos de luz iluminan todo nuestro alrededor mientras nos elevamos de la Tierra en levitación? De cualquier modo, ¿qué es la iluminación? Examinemos los ejemplos de Shakyamuni, de Nichiren Daishonin y de nuestras propias vidas, para encontrar algunas de las respuestas.

Nichiren Daishonin dijo que el significado de la existencia de un Buda puede ser determinado por su comportamiento como ser humano. En el caso de Shakyamuni, el Buda histórico, algunos cuentos han pintado de él una figura romántica: dando la imagen de un joven príncipe que se convierte en un buscador filosófico de la verdad universal. Sin embargo, la verdadera vida de Shakyamuni estuvo llena de adversidades y problemas. Sólo después que pasó una vida entera de dificultades, fue que pudo morir y no precisamente, en un lecho de rosas.

Ni siquiera en sus últimos días, Shakyamuni estuvo inmune a las pérdidas y tristezas. Su comportamiento en esos días finales de adversidad, como en el resto de su vida, nos muestra lo que significa



**El Buda eres tu  
El Buda soy yo  
El Buda es la vida misma**

vivir como un Buda. Durante esos últimos días, su lugar de residencia en Shakya, fue invadida por enemigos y virtualmente destruida. En ese mismo tiempo, dos de sus discípulos más cercanos: Shariputra y Maudgalyana, sus amigos de mayor confianza y, quienes de seguro iban a heredar la responsabilidad de la Orden Budista de Shakyamuni, murieron sorpresivamente. Uno fue asesinado por un Brahmán y el otro murió de repente, de una enfermedad desconocida. Sin embargo, Shakyamuni mantuvo su compostura, continuando su viaje y ayudando a los demás a liberarse de sus sufrimientos.

Shakyamuni estaba ya viejo y débil para este tiempo y sabía que su muerte se estaba acercando. En su último viaje, el cual algunos creen que fue hacia su lugar de residencia, Shakyamuni se detuvo en la casa de uno de sus sinceros seguidores quien preparó una comida a base de hongos para él. Desafortunadamente, los hongos le provocaron terribles consecuencias a Shakyamuni, causándole diarrea y una hemorragia intestinal, estos síntomas, le causarían la muerte más tarde.

Shakyamuni sabía que una reacción natural humana, iba a ser, culpar al hombre que le había preparado la comida, por eso,

antes de morir, advirtió a sus discípulos que no le reclamaran nada, porque la enfermedad que le causaron los hongos, no tenía nada que ver con la sinceridad de esa persona. Y repetidamente enfatizó a sus discípulos, lo insensato que sería tal comportamiento.

Shakyamuni estaba preocupado de que sus seguidores pudieran tener dudas que les llegasen a causar sufrimientos en el futuro, por eso, hasta el último momento, en su lecho de muerte, les preguntaba repetidamente si tenían alguna otra pregunta, brindándoles sus consejos hasta su último suspiro. Aún en medio de su propia incomodidad, luchó por liberar del sufrimiento a los demás ayudándoles a manifestar el poder inherente en sus propias vidas.

Tal como la historia de Shakyamuni, la historia de la vida de Nichiren Daishonin también ilustra el hecho de que un Buda no es un ser trascendental que se ha aislado de las realidades mundanas de la vida, ni es un ser con presuntas habilidades supernaturales. Al contrario, un Buda es el ser más "humano", es una persona muy "real" que, mientras se afianza en la realidad, exhibe una compasión ilimitada y puede crear valor hasta de las peores circunstancias. Es un ser humano que experimenta y demuestra los

mismos impulsos negativos que cualquiera otra persona y, contrario a la creencia popular, no está interesado en la eliminación de esos impulsos negativos sino más bien en la transformación total de ellos.

Como dijo el primer Director General de la SGI-Reino Unido, Richard Causton:

Quando comenzamos a revelar nuestra Budeidad, no tenemos que tratar de suprimir o negar nuestros bajos estados de vida, porque nuestra Budeidad, de una forma natural nos permite revelar los aspectos positivos de nuestros otros nueve mundos — de Infierno a Bodisatva — y a crear continuamente, lo mejor para nosotros y para los demás. Por eso es que en el Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin no hay mandamientos ni leyes que regulen la conducta humana. Por ejemplo, cómo vive uno realmente — si uno fuma, bebe o come carne — es asunto enteramente personal. Más bien, el énfasis total está en aprender más y más sobre nuestra propia Budeidad, cómo revelarla y cómo hacerla dominante en nuestras vidas. (*The Buddha in Daily Life* [El Buda en la Vida Cotidiana], p. 76)

En el Budismo de Nichiren no

hay exigencias para reprimir categorías de comportamiento al azar. Ni tampoco un concepto de pecado como lo conocemos de la tradición Judío-cristiana, así que no hay lugar para el concepto de culpabilidad. Más bien, hay una creencia profunda en la ineludible ley de la causa y el efecto; la poderosa convicción de que el individuo dirige su propia vida.

Una de las cosas más grande del Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin es que a medida que lo practicamos, desarrollamos la fuerza interior y la lucidez que nos permite deshacernos de los sentimientos de culpabilidad por nuestras debilidades. Aprendemos a dejar atrás las experiencias que han degradado nuestro sentido de auto valoración y desarrollamos la sabiduría para nunca más volver a experimentarlas.

Las raíces de la práctica Budista se centran en este tipo de psicología interior y nuestra práctica moderna del Budismo, sigue la tradición de 3000 años atrás, de lograr la felicidad por medio de la auto-reformación. Tal como Shakyamuni, el Buda histórico y Nichiren Daishonin, nosotros luchamos por cambiar nuestro medio ambiente, revolucionando nuestro propio estado de vida. Este proceso de manifestar nuestra naturaleza interna de Buda, o potencial iluminado, es a lo que el segundo presidente de la Soka Gakkai, Josei Toda, llamó la "revolución humana."

La clave más importante para la revolución humana es darnos cuenta que todos nosotros, en el fondo de nuestro ser, somos Budas. Los mortales comunes son, simplemente Budas ilusionados; Budas que tienen que todavía comprender el poder absoluto de sus existencias-su identidad como entidades de Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

El Daishonin ilustra este punto cuando dice:

Si el corazón de las personas es impuro, la tierra en que viven también es impura. Pero si el corazón de las personas es puro, su tierra también lo será. No existen dos tierras que sean una pura y otra impura en sí mismas. La única diferencia yace en el bien o el mal de nuestros corazones.

Lo mismo pasa con un Buda y un mortal común. Mientras uno está ilusionado, es llamado un mortal común pero cuando se ha iluminado, se le llama un Buda. Un espejo empañado, si se pule, brillará como una joya. Un corazón, que en el presente esté nublado por ilusiones originadas por la obscuridad innata de la vida, es como un espejo

POR FAVOR VEA BUDA, PÁG. 15

## PREGUNTAS Y RESPUESTAS SOBRE LA FE

## ¿Qué Es el 'Gohonzon Dentro de Nuestras Vidas'?

Por TED MORINO

DIRIGENTE DEL DEPARTAMENTO DE ESTUDIO  
DE LA SGI-USA

**P**¿Cuál es la relación entre el Gohonzon entronizado en mi altar y el "Gohonzon dentro de mi vida"?

**R** Cuando hablamos acerca del "Gohonzon dentro de nuestras vidas." Generalmente nos referimos a la iluminación innata que el Budismo nos enseña existe dentro de nosotros. La mayoría de nosotros entendemos este concepto intelectualmente, porque es la enseñanza básica de nuestra práctica.

Sin embargo, a medida que vamos en el sube y baja de la vida, tenemos la tendencia de juzgarnos a nosotros mismos, sintiendo a veces que nos quedamos cortos de medida al compararnos con la imagen ideal de una persona "iluminada". Preguntándonos en-



Ted Morino

tonces ¿cómo es posible que el Gohonzon pueda existir dentro de nuestra vida?

Aún así, es erróneo pensar que el Gohonzon entronizado en el altar representa un estado de vida fuera del alcance de las personas comunes.

Esto es así, porque el Budismo no considera la iluminación como algo separado de las personas comunes. Sino más bien percibe la

Budeidad, como un principio básico que funciona dentro de nuestra existencia cotidiana.

Este principio fundamental en el Budismo es Nam-myohorenge-kyo y es la base para ambos el Gohonzon en nuestro altar y el Gohonzon dentro de nuestras vidas. Podemos decir que ambos comparten la misma naturaleza de Buda.

Nichiren Daishonin describió esto en "La herencia de la Ley suprema de la Vida" cuando escribió:

Shakyamuni quien alcanzó la iluminación incontables eones atrás, el Sutra del Loto que conduce a todas las personas a la Budeidad, y nosotros, las personas comunes, no somos diferentes en modo alguno ni estamos separados unos de otros. Por lo tanto, invocar Myohorenge-kyo con este conocimiento es heredar la Ley

suprema de la vida y la muerte. (MW-1, 22)

Desde el punto de vista más profundo, Shakyamuni y el Sutra del Loto en esta cita se refiere a "Nam-myohorenge-kyo Nichiren" inscrito a lo largo del centro del Gohonzon. "Nosotros, personas comunes" se refiere a la Budeidad que existe dentro de nuestras vidas. Al decir que "no somos diferentes en modo alguno ni estamos separados unos de otros," el Daishonin declara que el mismo potencial infinito representado en el Gohonzon existe dentro de nosotros. En lo más profundo de nuestro ser, cada uno de nosotros posee el poder de romper la barrera de nuestras limitaciones y progresar continuamente hacia nuestro bienestar y felicidad.

Nichiren Daishonin enseñó que debemos entonar Nam-myohorenge-kyo con la comprensión de la relación que existe entre nuestras

vidas y el Gohonzon. Al despertar a esta realidad, es natural que también deseemos sacar a relucir este potencial de los demás. Eso quiere decir que, espontáneamente comenzamos a propagar la Ley a medida que comprendemos que esta intrínseca naturaleza de Buda es el lazo que nos une como seres humanos — más allá de las diversidades superficiales de la raza, la cultura y hasta creencias religiosas.

La naturaleza de Buda es el tesoro fundamental que nosotros tenemos en común, con el medio ambiente y el ilimitado universo mismo. Tener fe en este punto es el significado de la palabra namu y es la clave para extraer la sabiduría que yace dentro de nosotros; es en sí "heredar la Ley suprema de la vida y la muerte," dirigiendo así, nuestras vidas hacia el valor y el júbilo más grande. **W**

(Traducción del 31 de enero World Tribune, pág. 13)

## BUDA, VIENE DE LA PÁG. 14

empañado pero cuando sea pulido, se pondrá claro, reflejando la iluminación de la verdad inmutable. Manifieste una fe profunda y pula su espejo día y noche. ¿Cómo lo puede pulir? Solamente entonando Nam-myohorenge-kyo. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, págs. 4-5)

Esta "verdad inmutable" a la que el Daishonin se refiere es, que nosotros, todos, somos Budas en el fondo de nuestro ser. Pero, ¿en realidad lo creemos? Habiendo crecido en una cultura Judío-cristiana, hemos reemplazado, por lo menos subconscientemente, la idea de Dios con la de un Buda; hemos reemplazado los modelos cristianos de religión, con el Budismo; hemos confundido la Budeidad con la Santidad.

Mientras la Santidad es un estado de infalibilidad y perfección, el estado de la Budeidad es de humildad y humanidad. Mientras la Santidad es un estado al que los humanos nunca pueden ascender, la Budeidad es inherente en nuestras vidas, esperando que nosotros la manifestemos.

Las enseñanzas Budistas no son revelaciones divinas; las enseñanzas Budistas son los consejos sabios y las experiencias de seres humanos que han revelado su gran poder interno; el poder de transformar todos los sufrimientos en júbilo y nos enseñan a todos nosotros a hacer lo mismo.

Las creencias religiosas de nuestras familias aunque nosotros no las hayamos practicado, pueden haber creado un sistema de creencias internas; una vozita de detrás de nuestras mentes que nos dice que nunca podremos llegar a ser un "Buda," tal como nunca podremos llegar a ser "Dios" en otras religiones.

Podemos haber divinizado, involuntariamente, nuestra imagen mental de Shakyamuni o del Daishonin. Si nosotros divinizamos, aunque sea un poco, el concepto de Buda, se nos hace muy fácil divinizar a la gente que ponemos entre nosotros y el Buda, como los líderes Budistas, por ejemplo. Se nos hace fácil buscar la seguridad fuera de nosotros. Se nos hace fácil olvidar que en el Budismo todos somos iguales.

**E**n lo profundo de nuestra historia cultural está la estructura romana de organización religiosa. A medida que la iglesia romana ganaba influencia y se vino entrelazando con la política, los líderes de las iglesias establecieron su organización con el mismo modelo feudal de la Europa medieval. Los obispos eran como príncipes reales y los sacerdotes eran caballeros reales, manteniendo un sistema espiritual que era una réplica del patrón de las jerarquías seculares feudales. Los practicantes comunes, por eso, estaban en el extremo inferior de la escala, tanto política como religiosamente, muy parecido a la sociedad feuda-

dal en los tiempos del Daishonin.

Los líderes religiosos empezaron a prestarse la autoridad de Dios y a usarla para subyugar a la gente común. Como resultado, la Santa Palabra de Dios, se convirtió en la Santa Palabra de quien la estaba profiriendo a los que estaban abajo en la escalera religiosa. Hoy en día, ya sea públicamente o imperceptiblemente, muchas religiones todavía afirman el rol importante que los sacerdotes juegan en la salvación de la gente; poniendo al sacerdocio entre Dios y los creyentes comunes.

Un punto interesante son los períodos de la política japonesa y la historia religiosa, los cuales son marcadamente similares. Muchos de los seguidores del Daishonin, sin duda, tuvieron dificultades para creer que sus vidas eran tan valiosas como las de sus amos, y mucho menos, que ellos podían verdaderamente alcanzar la Budeidad. Actualmente, en el Japón, la herencia de una jerarquía estricta todavía existe en la sociedad. En el campo religioso, un ejemplo concreto, es el sacerdocio de la Nichiren Shoshu, quienes con mucho gusto se colocarían ellos mismos entre nosotros y el Buda.

En realidad Shakyamuni y Nichiren Daishonin expusieron sus enseñanzas con la explícita intención de habilitar al individuo para que viva seguro de sí mismo. El propósito del Budismo no es crear un rebaño de ovejas. El propósito del Budismo es crear una reunión de

reinas y reyes leones. La Soka Gakkai es lugar de reunión para individuos independientes—de buenos amigos tratando de ayudarse unos a otros a revelar la budeidad inherente en sus vidas.

**D**e hecho, en la superficie, siempre habrá diferencias entre todos nosotros. Después de todo, que entonemos Nam-myohorenge-kyo, no quiere decir que vamos a ser otra Tina Turner. Pero, como Tina o cualquier otra persona que admiremos, porque entonamos Nam-myohorenge-kyo, podemos manifestar el poder de nuestra propia y única personalidad para cumplir nuestra misión individual.

En resumen, la Budeidad no es lugar de destino pre-concebido. La Budeidad es un vehículo, es un proceso. El presidente de la SGI, describió recientemente la Budeidad, en esta forma:

Alcanzar la iluminación significa que hemos entrado tranquilamente al sendero o la órbita de la Budeidad.

La Tierra tiene su propio curso, girando alrededor del sol. Y lo mismo el sistema solar. Todo, en el cosmos, gira alrededor de su propio curso, produciendo una armonía exquisita.

En el cosmos, también existen los senderos de los diez mundos, que incluyen el sendero de la Budeidad. Alcanzar la iluminación significa, entrar en la órbita suprema de la Budeidad in-

herente en el cosmos. [Eso] significa, establecer firmemente, la fe necesaria para continuar avanzando sobre el sendero de una felicidad absoluta e ilimitada, sin fin.

Para entrar en la órbita de la Budeidad, tenemos que abordar el cohete que viaja en dirección de la propagación de la Ley Mística. Este cohete de kosen-rufu es la SGI... Por medio de nuestras actividades, logramos entrar, naturalmente, en la órbita fundamental de la [Budeidad]. Así es como, nosotros, la Persona y la Ley [de Myoho], llegamos a concordar en perfecta armonía. (Abril 5, 1996, *World Tribune*, p. 11)

En otras palabras, la Budeidad es el arte de vivir jubilosamente cada día, comprendiendo la Ley Mística de Nam-myohorenge-kyo. Es el estado de vida en el cual, todo sirve como un catalizador para nuestra felicidad.

En nuestro viaje hacia tan amplia condición de vida, la carta del Daishonin titulada "Sobre la Torre de los Tesoros," nos puede servir como guía, cuando dice:

Usted, Abutsubo, es un Buda verdadero, dotado de las tres propiedades iluminadas. Usted debe entonar Nam-myohorenge-kyo con esta convicción. (MW-1, 30) **W**

(Traducción del noviembre del 1996 Seikyo Times, págs. 14-17)

# BRINGING THE ARTS TOGETHER

'We hope to see unexpected connections between all kinds of people and ideas.'  
— Salvatore Settis, Getty Research Institute director

By **LISA CARTER KIRK**  
ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR

From its vantage point in the Santa Monica Mountains, the Getty Center commands a view that begins with the vast patchwork of Los Angeles and extends into the future of how we understand and appreciate the arts.

Until now, the many arms of the Getty organization — the museum, the re-

search institute, the conservation institute, the grant program, the education institute for the arts and the information institute — have operated apart. The Getty Center, scheduled to open to the public in December, brings them together in a campus-like setting intended to facilitate cooperation and communication among the many arts-related fields.

"There is an excitement of being all there together," said Deborah Marrow,

Getty Grant Program director. "There's a power of [the programs] being together.... The kinds of encounters are serendipitous. Running into someone on the plaza or the tram or sitting down with them at lunch — all of this will spark ideas."

According to Harold Williams, president of the J. Paul Getty Trust, "We intend for [the center] to attract and serve a broad public — people from Los Angeles and from around the world, young and old,

who will come there to enjoy and study art and cultural heritage in an inspiring and stimulating setting."

The seeds of the center were planted in 1953 with oil baron J. Paul Getty's vision for "the diffusion of artistic and general knowledge." In 1982, when most of the tycoon's estate passed to the trust, the question was how to best contribute to the world's visual arts.

The answer is now perched atop a hill overlooking Los Angeles. VI

Courtesy J. PAUL GETTY TRUST (WARREN AERIAL)



Aerial view of the Getty Center. Clockwise from bottom left: the restaurant; the tram arrival station; the J. Paul Getty Museum; and the Getty Research Institute.