

# World Tribune

No. 3190

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

MAY 23, 1997

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## Our Bodies, Our Health

With nearly \$1 trillion spent on medical expenses each year, health care has become America's No. 1 issue. No wonder more than 1,200 women packed the New York Culture Center on April 27 for the local organization's first all-day conference on health.

Recently health care practitioners in Africa concluded that the most important factor in the development of any society is the health of its women. This insight was the springboard of this event. More than 45 speakers traveled from as far away as Massachusetts and Maryland to share their expertise, underscoring SGI President Ikeda's statement that "no matter how wealthy or powerful

PLEASE SEE HEALTH, 5



(Above) One part of the Alexander Technique is to free one's neck and head. Each woman at the New York Culture Center massages her partner's neck and then supports her head at a recent health seminar. Says a newly relaxed Barbara Piontek: 'This is good. This is easy to do.' (L) Provocative displays, as well as a table featuring handouts including pamphlets on teen issues, fitness and nutrition, fascinate this woman, along with a steady stream of her sisters.

## SGI President Begins Tour of China

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER  
Shanghai, China, May 11-12

Just three months after visiting Hong Kong, SGI President Ikeda began a visit to China this week. Mr. Ikeda, who has long offered his hand to the Chinese in friendship — even when others have not — is visiting this country at the invitation of the China-Japan Friendship Association and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

At a banquet to welcome the SGI leader on May 11, President Zhao Yunjun of the Association for Friendship with Foreign

Countries lauded the Soka Gakkai's great contribution to hastening the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan and the conclusion of the China-Japan Peace and Friendship Treaty in the 1970s. He also acknowledged the Soka Gakkai's steadfast opposition to militarism during World War II and expressed his hope that their two organizations would continue to work together for peace throughout Asia and the rest of the world.

On May 12, Shanghai University conferred an honorary professorship on Mr. Ikeda. The



COURTESY OF SEIKYO PRESS  
Chancellor Qian Weichang of Shanghai University.

university stands on a site once reduced to rubble by an invading Japanese Imperial Army.

The chancellor, Qian Weichang, said that he shared the firm belief that exchange not only on a government level but between the ordinary citizens of both countries is vital in building deeper understanding and friendship, an undertaking that the SGI leader has long stressed and actively pursued.

In his address, Chancellor Qian said how happy he was, as someone who had once worked for Zhou Enlai, to share the late premier's memory with Mr. Ikeda, who had also nurtured a deep bond of friendship with

PLEASE SEE CHINA, 6

**VOICES**  
.....

**How do you respond to people of different religions who misunderstand our philosophy?**

Members from Houston Territory respond:



After more than 20 years of practice, I can truly appreciate my family's religious guidance as well as my own crusade to find happiness and peace of mind. My personal investigations have afforded me the experience needed to relate to others in a deeper and more respectful manner, rather than in an argumentative or closed-minded way. The wisdom that I receive through chanting is the key factor in establishing meaningful dialogue and humanistic trust. I find that once mutual respect has been developed, a deeper understanding can result.

— DORIS BRYANT, Pasadena, Texas



I mainly respond by listening carefully before speaking. Through many experiences with dialoguing with people of differing views, and after years of daimoku, I have learned to calmly express my understanding without making it into a debate. I explain that the idea of a supreme deity, who helps you out and tells us what you need to become happy, is not prevalent amongst all religions. In an attempt to encourage the person, I further explain that the concept of a God can truly be found within the self and the positive life force that we all possess.

— YOLANDA WHITE, Missouri City, Texas



I think it is important to have the correct life-condition to respect another person's beliefs. To approach one another with a deeper understanding so that it goes beyond just winning an argument, I point out similarities in our beliefs and then explain certain aspects of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. For example, the law of cause and effect or recognizing the dignity of human life. Daimoku helps me refrain from acting defensively, superior, or argumentatively. This keeps me calm, confident and considerate. This allows room for understanding and friendship.

— MARCIE DASHER, Houston



Although I've been practicing more than 10 years, it has only been recently that I have begun to approach this situation. What I painfully realized was that it was my arrogance, feelings of superiority, and intolerance toward any other religion that kept me indifferent to discussing this topic. After chanting daimoku I began to break

down the borders that were keeping me from opening my self up to talking about other religions. Then I could begin to calmly dialogue with others.

— BABBS BURKE, Houston



I try to ascertain the basis for the misunderstanding, and then I proceed to introduce them to this philosophy. I tell them why I practice. I explain about the freedom of spirit experienced through chanting daimoku, the bonding of one's life's rhythm with that of the universe and the joy of seeing the reaction or effect manifested in one's environment when these two components are combined with sincere action.

— CHERYL SANDIFORD, Houston

**Everywhere Be Bold**

**EDITORIAL**

Buddhism seeks to develop people who are independent and self-reliant. Only self-sufficient practitioners can become happy and can convincingly share our philosophy with others.

One of Shakyamuni's greatest concerns was that his disciples stand on their own. In an oft-quoted episode, Shakyamuni, nearing the end of his life and fearing that his disciples had become too dependent on him, urges them to be self-reliant. "You must be a refuge unto yourself; depend on yourself," he tells them. "Do not depend on anyone else. Take the Law as your island; depend on the Law. You must not depend on anything else" (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 3, p. 201).

To constantly seek instructions from others is to abdicate responsibility for ourselves and for our mission to spread our Buddhist philosophy. Rather, based on a firm sense of purpose, we need to rack our brains to come up with fresh ideas that will spur on our movement.

As SGI President Ikeda has written: "In Buddhism, dependence on others is not sought, and help from others is not awaited. The individual must establish within himself a sound understanding, bright and clear as a mirror, and march forward with that understanding as his sole companion. The Law is the foundation upon which to build such a self" (*The Living Buddha*, p. 134).

Two episodes illustrate this point well. The first, from *The Human Revolution*, is when Shin'ichi Yamamoto and other youth division members are appointed by Josei Toda to become the first so-called General Staff, a committee charged with propelling the organization forward. Toda hopes they will devise new plans and carry them out on their own initiative. But their new role isn't completely clear, so

someone in the group suggests they seek guidance from him.

Shin'ichi objects strongly.

"How can we go and ask the president what to do?" he asks. "He would only become disgusted and disappointed, and he probably would scold us, saying something like, 'I didn't intend the General Staff to be manned by a bunch of cowards.' So we can't do such a foolish thing. If and when it is really necessary to seek his guidance, we must first decide on a definite course and prepare a detailed plan of our own" (*The Human Revolution*, vol. 8, pp. 96-97).

In *The New Human Revolution*, Shin'ichi, now president himself, doesn't have the luxury of asking his mentor. When the Grand Reception Hall is to be built, Shin'ichi ponders whether to allow members to contribute financially. With no one to ask what to do, Shin'ichi has to rely on himself. "After long consideration, and taking into account the Daishonin's admonitions along with his own experiences, Shin'ichi decided to make it possible for all members to participate..." Mr. Ikeda writes (vol. 4, p. 116).

This reliance on ourselves, of course, does not preclude having the seeking mind to receive correct guidance in faith. Seeking the most fulfilling way of life is what Buddhism is all about. This is how we develop the "sound understanding" President Ikeda talks about. Once we have this understanding, though, progress demands we take bold initiatives, not waiting to be told what to do.

Kosen-rufu cannot progress unless we all take the initiative based on a solid sense of self rooted in the desire to help all humankind. When we've grasped the Daishonin's spirit as our own, then it is up to us. As the poet Spenser says, "Be bold, be bold and everywhere be bold." **WT**

**QUESTION OF THE MONTH:**

*'How has studying the priesthood issue helped you deepen your understanding of and faith in Buddhism?'*

Please be specific and limit your responses to 75 words or less. All responses are subject to editing. Please send your responses and a face photo of yourself to: "Question of the Month," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, Calif., 90401. Fax: 310-260-8910. Or e-mail us at: SokaNews@aol.com.

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**WORLD TRIBUNE  
MAILBOX**

**True Success**

I was ready to write a letter to the *World Tribune* with complaints about the overemphasis many articles put on Buddhism's relationship with success in one's career, the attainment of possessions (or good food at SGI Seminars) and any other false symbols of "making it" in American society. Lately, I have noticed how people I know perceive their lives as being successful or not. Both Buddhist and non-Buddhist friends or acquaintances often remind me of the strong influence our society has on our daily attitudes, which ultimately permeates all aspects of our lives.

By acknowledging the power societal standards have in controlling our personal decisions, we can take back the freedom that is originally ours. In transforming my complaints into praise, I turn to Dixon Hamby's honest and insightful look at grief in "I Cried Today" (April 25 "Perspective"). He talks about men being raised in an atmosphere which scrutinizes those who express grief. He encourages us all to feel the sorrow that is universal and avoid becoming numb to the suffering we see every day. This is the message Buddhism has to share. This is the kind of idea that will bring human beings together.

When I read journal entries in the *World Tribune* that mention expensive delicacies and limos pulling into driveways, I cringe with the feeling that there are many others out there reading and feeling separated from such a world, either resenting or envying this luxury. And this makes me grieve.

Nichiren Daishonin refers to the five visions which give one the ability to see at different levels — the highest vision looking through the Buddha Eye. In allowing ourselves to cry, we cleanse our minds, open our hearts and let our Buddha Eye "penetrate any of the worlds in the ten directions" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 105). Thank you Mr. Hamby for your strength in surviving Vietnam, the wisdom of your advice and the heartfelt message of your story. I look forward to more articles in the *World Tribune* with similar clarity of vision and reflections of true success.

— SURISA LANGBELL, San Francisco

**Good Stuff**

In the opinion section, I enjoyed "A Letter to Tiger" (May 9 "Perspectives"). I started to play golf, too, and related to the article. I was able to clip it out and give it to my stepson who is a golf fanatic. It helped me to do a little continuing *shakubuku*.

Enjoyed the "It Isn't Easy" article (May 9 "Essay"), as it related to my early childhood in an affluent residential neighborhood [in Los Angeles]. In the early '60s, the area was all white. But as African Americans moved in, there was white flight, as was happening throughout the United States in urban areas. My parents and I remained along with several other white families. I remember bringing home some African-American playmates from elementary school and my father pulling me aside, telling me I couldn't associate with them. Through my practice of Buddhism, I've been able to interact with all types of people in a positive way. Good article.

— PHILIP RAY, Ventura, Calif.

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

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

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**Making Contributions Is My Own Choice**

**PERSPECTIVE**

**BY MARION D. WHEELER**  
NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.

**A**fter a recent meeting, a member stopped me to ask, "What is this commemorative contribution all about?" When I realized I didn't have a clear answer, I sat down over the next few days and wrote this letter:

Dear Cindy:

I'm glad you asked me this question, because it has forced me to take a hard look at my personal feelings about the commemorative May contribution.

I have been contributing to the organization monthly since the first year of my practice. Over the past 10 years, I have steadily increased my financial stability each year. Direct connection? I think so.

Based on the strict law of cause and effect, any contributions that we make to further our movement for world peace bring fortune. Those contributions come in many forms. For example, doing gongyo every day is a contribution, as is participating in meetings to encourage others, or visiting someone who is struggling. These are all sincere expressions of our desire to positively change our society through Nichiren Daishonin's teachings, and they contribute to our personal happiness. Donating money to the SGI-USA is no different.

As I mentioned, I contribute every month, but it's not something I think about much. Once I decided to make it a part of my life, that was it. It's like brushing my teeth. I receive a pre-paid envelope every month and I write a check, just like I write checks for all my other expenses.

But when the commemorative May contribution comes around and we begin talking about giving money, there's a slight tightening in the pit of my stomach. For the first years of my practice, I don't think I was aware of these feelings. In the past three years, I've been aware, but not ready to face

them. This year, as uncomfortable as it was, I decided to go in there.

The conflict was not a concern that monies were being misused by the organization, nor was it a lack of understanding that our organization needed money to function and expand. Learning about President Toda and President Ikeda's personal struggles surrounding whether to encourage such contributions from the membership at large only served to strengthen my conviction that I belong to the greatest organization in the world.

Yet each April, when the topics of May 3 and the commemorative May contribution came up, I thought: "Oh. That again." I just didn't feel the joy that so many others were expressing. People talked excitedly about how they had been saving toward their targets for months. Every meeting featured at least one personal experience about participating in the May contribution. All my leaders urged me to talk to the members about it. This I rarely did, since, feeling uneasy about it myself, I had no clue how to encourage others.

But, like a "good Buddhist," I made sure I contributed each May. Each time I went to that table to write my check, I was always struck by how joyless an experience it was for me. I dismissed the feelings, relieved that I had done my duty and could go on with my life.

This year, with so much focus on the spirit of offerings and not the act itself, I decided it was time to really chant daimoku about this. Even that was hard. My mind kept drifting to other subjects.

Finally, I called my mother and told her how I was feeling. As only a mother could, she assured me that my lack of joy wasn't due to a lack of sincerity, nor was it lack of appreciation for this organization. As common mortals, she told me, many of us struggle when we hear the word *money* because of our attachment to what it means in society. She said that rather than beat myself up about what I felt was wrong with me, I should take my feelings, just as they

were, to the Gohonzon, and seek to advance.

Within one day of praying that way, I realized something. I had no problem giving money to the organization — that's why I do it every month. My problem is that I don't like being asked to give it!

But guess what else I discovered? I could offer to buy lunch for someone I'd just met, but if that same person asked me to loan them \$10, I would tend to feel uncomfortable. If I invited you to stay at my house for the weekend, I'd do anything to make you feel at home, but if you were to ask me if you could spend the weekend at my house, I would be apt to feel imposed upon.

See what I'm getting at? My issue isn't with the commemorative May contribution. It's some other issue based on my personal background that I had long before I joined this organization! It was a liberating realization.

So you probably think I'm crazy, celebrating the fact that I've discovered yet another aspect of my life that I not only do not like but that actually causes me suffering. But already, I feel like a heavy weight has been lifted. It's not over, but I am now free to address the real problem.

My internal struggle made me uncomfortable with the organization and its push for contributions. But I learned that I cannot let feelings of discomfort stop me from enjoying my practice and advancing in faith. Rather, I must use them to self-reflect and, through prayer, turn them into fuel for deeper understanding. The fact is, nobody in this organization is making me give money. Everything I do is my own choice. The real challenge for me is whether or not I can awaken to my great fortune in having this choice.

So I hope this gives you some food for thought. The most important thing is to chant daimoku about it and make a decision that comes from your heart — even if that means that you choose not to contribute at this time. Kosen-rufu is a lifetime endeavor.

Warmest regards,  
Marion

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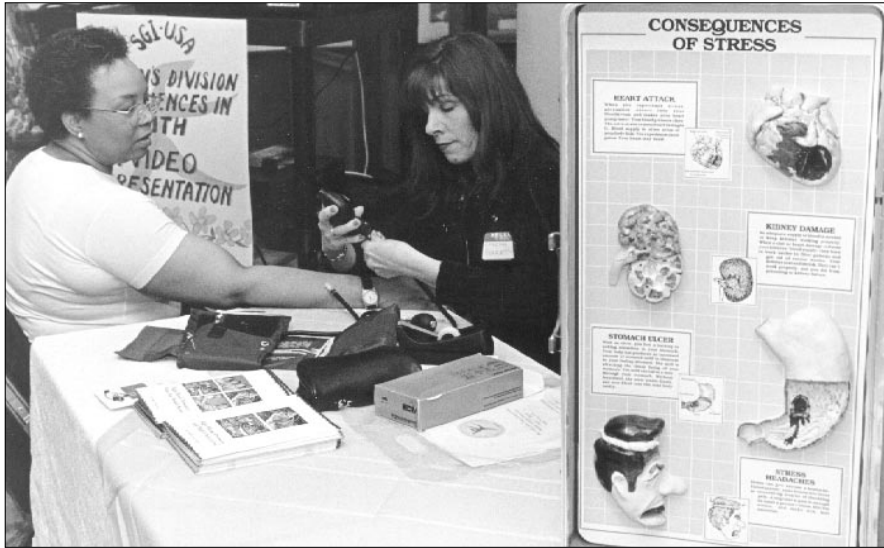
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(Top) In a role-playing session in nearby Union Square Park, some teens practice just saying no to peer pressure. (L) Women perform floor exercises to the steady beat of a conga drum. Later in the day, pull-ups also prove popular once Jacki Garland, sporting leopard Spandex pants, confides, 'I never had a small waist until I did this exercise.' (Above) Annemarie Colbin, New York's renowned Natural Gourmet Cookery School founder and leading authority on food and healing, says: 'What are the best foods for women? Vegetables, vegetables, vegetables!'

• A VOTRE SANTE • GOKENKO NO TAMENI • ALAFIA • TO YOUR HEALTH • SALUD • A VOTRE SANTE •

TO YOUR HEALTH • SALUD • A VOTRE SANTE • GOKENKO NO TAMENI • ALAFIA • TO YOUR HEALTH •



Awareness of your blood pressure level is important. When your healthcare practitioner is also aware of other information — such as your diet, exercise, drugs you've used, pain or other symptoms of personal illness and your individual and family health history dating back at least to your grandparents — she can help you more effectively.

HEALTH, FROM PAGE 1

one is, health is, after all, the most important thing."

For many of the experts, it was the first contact with the SGI — and with this award-winning culture center. They spoke forcefully — and often humorously — on nutrition and natural foods ("If it doesn't run or swim or fly or grow, it ain't food"), chiropractic medicine ("Even Queen Victoria used body adjustments"), wellness ("There's no such thing as a touch of diabetes — get screened!"), healthcare providers ("Make an action plan for better health"), massage workshops ("People went in tense and came out glowing") and more.

While the bodywork and movement sessions got so crowded that each woman could only take small steps, educated and entertained participants agreed that the conference was a giant step for the health of womankind in New York. ■

**Text and reporting by Nikki Amdur, Arzu Titus, Leslie Wines and Brigid Witkowski. Photos by Clare Asconi, Carol Barnstead, Linda Hepard, Daniella Mereu, Anne Digate, Debbie Parker, Misa Crystal, Claudia Thompson, Rashida Williams and Denice Fryburg.**



Keynote speaker Evelyn Borges, a nationally recognized Hispanic leader, wowed the participants with her joyful, high-octane mixed-media presentation that combined reminiscences of the Puerto Rican barrio of her youth, public health statistics and disco music. 'The biggest obstacle to women taking care of ourselves,' she says, 'is our inability to believe that we are important enough to deserve care.'



Reflexology says that nerve endings to all major organs and systems of the human body are located in the hands and feet. Hand massage is demonstrated above. Expert Ruth Stowe told a rapt group that massaging a particular area of each foot can reduce menstrual cramps.

## Tips for Teens, '90s Style

By SARA ALGASE  
CORRESPONDENT  
New York, April 27

Did you know that HIV/AIDS has been the sixth leading cause of death among 15–24 year olds in the United States since 1991?

Did you know that 18 percent of high school seniors are daily smokers and 11 percent smoke 10 or more cigarettes a day? Did you know that approximately 65 percent of all boys and 55 percent of all girls have sexual intercourse before they reach 18?

Sure, we've all heard the statistics. They often make us want to keep our daughters, nieces, cousins and friends locked in their rooms until they're 50! But these are the realities that face young people every day.

These were some of the realities discussed in the Teen Room by both teens and concerned mothers. Spread out on a table were pamphlets like *Diseases That Can Be Spread During Sex*, *How To Say No and Keep Your Boyfriend*, *A Parents' Guide to Drug Prevention*, *How Is Your Self-esteem?*, *Date Rape: 10 Things You Can Do To Protect Yourself*, *It's a Two-Way Street: Traffic Safety*, and *Food Guide Pyramid: A Guide to Daily Food Choices*.

### Quotes From the Trenches

Every topic was open to discussion. Here are some quotes from throughout the day:

"If my mother told me what it was like to raise a child, I may have learned more about birth control."

"I can't tell my daughter not to have sex because I don't know what her body functions are telling her."

"It's not dating anymore. He doesn't come to your house and meet your parents. Instead it's 'Meet me at the club.'"

"What's in between 'No' and 'I'll see ya later'?"

"The best time to have a discussion about sex is not in the bedroom."

"The newest cases of HIV and AIDS are women of color who are heterosexual."

"Listen to your inner voice. Nine out of 10 times, it's your best guide in telling you whether you feel comfortable or not."

"Giving information is not about giving consent; it's about empowering each other."

"Risk-taking is a normal part of healthy adolescent development. Isn't that scary?"

"In the past, girls disappeared from school for nine months. Now teen pregnancy is out in the open. These problems aren't new ones. The same thing was going on in my generation. Teenagers are just problem-solving in the light of what people have been doing all along."

"I learned about the facts of life from my friend Rosemary because my mother never told me."

"The more you don't talk about things, the more there's misinformation."

SGI President Ikeda had the last word: "The amalgamation of the rich, multifaceted experiences of age and the energy of youth will herald the arrival of the family of the future. This would be a family firmly based and free to grow in uniqueness and individuality" (*The Creative Family*, p. 9). ■

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# A Great Achievement in Human History

## EXCERPTS

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER

The following is a summary of comments by SGI President Ikeda at conferences in Tokyo in February and March.

• The steady propagation of the Mystic Law throughout the world is a great achievement in human history. It is a revolution of eternal significance, committed as it is to enabling people to become happy on the most fundamental level. All involved in this noble undertaking possess a truly profound mission.

• In life and in Buddhist practice, serious consequences can

arise from placing our trust in or deciding to follow the wrong person. We have to distinguish correctly whom we can truly trust and follow. Mr. Toda's greatness lies in the fact that he chose Mr. Makiguchi as his mentor and unswervingly upheld the way of mentor and disciple throughout his life.

• In any endeavor, the final stages of completion, the finishing touches, are important. The final outcome of our lives is determined by how we live our final chapter, how we bring our lives to completion. The teachings of Buddhism, which provide essential answers to questions of life and death, are indispensable in this pursuit. Fame, social position, material wealth, knowledge — all are

ephemeral, powerless in the face of death's inexorable reality. When we believe in the Mystic Law, we can make our final moment a majestic conclusion to a wonderful life. And we can make it a fresh departure toward our next wonderful existence, without death ever being a cause of suffering.

• We can create the right direction for our activities when we listen to everyone's opinions, discuss them and reach a consensus. When we look from the top down, we only see about 20 or 30 percent of the organization. But if we view it from the bottom up, we see 70 or 80 percent. We must, therefore, treasure and value everyone's opinion. VII

## Bronze Bust Unveiled

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



Shanghai, May 12 — In commemoration of his inauguration as honorary professor, Shanghai University presented SGI President Ikeda with a bronze bust in his likeness. The bust was sculpted by Associate Professor Yang Jianping of Shanghai University's College of Fine Arts. He said that he felt deeply honored to create a sculpture of the SGI president as an expression of not only the entire university's welcome but his personal one as well, and added that he had striven to capture Mr. Ikeda's compassionate gaze and lofty spirit. Mr. Yang, one of China's most highly acclaimed sculptors, has won many prestigious awards for his work in national and municipal art exhibitions.

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

**THEME:** *Human Diversity*

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

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

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

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

**DEADLINE: JUNE 30, 1997**

## SGI President Begins China Tour; Receives Honorary Professorship

CHINA, FROM PAGE 1

him. The Chinese and Japanese people he said, must try to put the tragic history inflicted by Japanese militarism behind them and create a new history of friendship throughout future ages.

In his acceptance speech, President Ikeda expressed his joy at China's dynamic development and increasingly active role on the world stage. The Chinese writer Lu Xun, he noted, had declared that the appearance of a leader of unwavering conviction in the face of all obstacles and criticisms enables the people to display their inner bril-

liance. Mr. Ikeda commented that the founding president of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, shared the same conviction. Makiguchi held fast to his beliefs, fiercely opposing Japanese militarism and declaring that Japan was making a fundamental error in invading China, Mr. Ikeda said.

Having now become an honorary member of Shanghai University, the SGI leader said he was resolved to work energetically together with the faculty and student body toward the realization of a century of humanity, a goal that had also been the cherished aspiration of Premier Zhou. VII

The Teheran hotel room had taken on the mood of a university seminar. Shin'ichi Yamamoto's companions were busily taking notes as they waited for him to go on.

He continued: "I believe it was Thomas Carlyle who wrote that according to Islam, the very existence of the world is a miracle and as such is sacred. This is an affirmation of the fundamental goodness of existence. It not only affirms human intellect and culture, but strongly encourages a way of life that dignifies and solemnizes the world over which Islam reigns. Islam also traditionally teaches that it is the duty of the faithful to pursue knowledge.

"From this we can say that Islam is a religion valuing knowledge. And that this emphasis on knowledge is no doubt a source of the great achievements of Islamic civilization."

Yusuke Yoshikawa had a question: "But Europe and Christian civilization have a completely different view of Muhammad and Islam. They have vilified Muhammad, as if he were a monster or demon. Why is that?"

"That's an important question," Shin'ichi answered. "In my opinion, one major reason for this reaction within Christendom was fear of Islam's sudden expansion. Another reason was probably a lack of accurate knowledge about the philosophy and true nature of Islam. Though there were many reasons for such a situation eventuating, a lack of dialogue between the two religions ultimately deepened the gap, intensifying their rivalry. Nor can we overlook the factor of jealousy, which arose because medieval Europe clearly lagged behind Islamic culture.

"The Christian reaction to Islam was founded in fear, misunderstanding and jealousy, factors which always create hatred and prejudice. The criticism and slander the Gakkai has been subjected to all resulted from the same factors. This is a universal and, I'm afraid, inescapable truth."

"What was Muhammad really like, I wonder?" Eisuke Akizuki asked. "I think that he must have been a man of strong passions."

"Well, having never met him, I really can't say," Shin'ichi remarked humorously. They all joined in laughter. "But appearance-wise," he continued, "biographies describe him as having had a wide, noble forehead, a prominent nose, a thick beard and mustache and large brownish-black eyes. He was broad-shouldered, deep-chested and walked quickly. He also smiled a lot and was friendly and courteous to all."

Shin'ichi Yamamoto continued to describe Muhammad: "No doubt he also possessed strong personal convictions. I imagine he was stern

## The New Human Revolution

By HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 1

# Treasure Land

Translation of parts 24–29 of the 'Treasure Land' chapter, as printed in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. Ho Goku is the pen name of Daisaku Ikeda, who appears in the novel as Shin'ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1962.

and could demonstrate a fierce intensity. But I can't believe that this was all he was about.

"Gaining control over the entire Arabian peninsula in such a short time was no easy matter. He must also have had great ability and personal charm. Above all, he listened carefully to others' opinions and adopted them when appropriate.

"He was also a superior strategist. On one occasion, a confederacy of 10,000 Meccan troops attacked Medina. If the Muslims in Medina, significantly disadvantaged in numbers, were to engage their attackers directly, they would suffer a resounding defeat. Muhammad ordered the Muslim forces to dig a trench to defend the city from invasion — a method unheard of at that time on the Arabian peninsula. Employing the trenches to their great advantage, the Muslims fought and repelled the Meccan forces who, though keeping the city under siege for two weeks, were unable to breach the trench line and eventually withdrew.

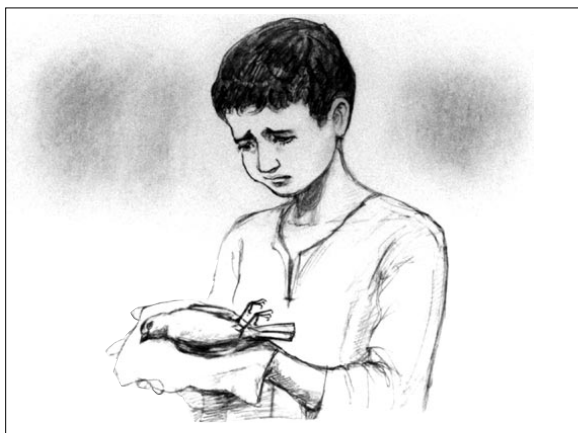
"Muhammad was a man of great patience, acuity and farsightedness. He agreed to a truce with the Meccans that appeared, on the surface, to be disadvantageous to the Muslims. Under the terms of the pact, he and his followers were allowed to make a pilgrimage to Mecca, during which he collected information about the city's situation. In the meantime, he built up his forces and waited patiently until the right opportunity arose. Then he conquered the city with very little resistance or bloodshed.

"Deeply sensitive to people's feelings, Muhammad took many steps to reassure the populace and gain their trust after winning the city of Mecca. People's allegiance cannot be gained by political and military might alone. Muhammad unified the Arab tribes through his abil-

ity to inspire trust in and make allies of the people who were brought under Muslim rule, even former enemies.

"When we consider his achievements in this light, we can conclude that Muhammad must have combined painstaking attention to detail with passionate enthusiasm. He was generous, honest and principled. Some biographies say that he refused to eat foods containing garlic or other ingredients imparting a strong odor, because he didn't want to offend others when he spoke in close proximity to them.

"It is also said that when shaking hands, he never let go of the other person's hand first. And having lost both his parents at a young age, he always insisted



on kindness to orphans. There is an account of how he once comforted and encouraged a child whose pet bird had died.

"I think such episodes of genuine concern and consideration for others demonstrate Muhammad's deep humanity."

It had grown late, but the light in Shin'ichi Yamamoto's hotel room burned on. The engrossing discussion between him and his companions continued.

Akira Kuroki said to Shin'ichi: "When I accompanied you to Europe last autumn, you said at the Vatican that we

should initiate a dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity, Buddhism and Judaism and Buddhism and Islam."

"Yes, I did," replied Shin'ichi. "Our age calls out for such a dialogue. It's really an inevitable development."

Kuroki continued, his expression thoughtful: "But it seems to me that Islam is quite uncompromising regarding the supremacy and absolute infallibility of its God. Doesn't that make dialogue with Islam extremely difficult?"

"Why do you jump to that conclusion?" Shin'ichi

asked. "You don't know that until you actually try. You mustn't allow yourself to be held back by such preconceptions.

"The dialogue with Islam that I spoke of need not be a debate over religious doctrines. We can start by discussing the mutual problems that we face as human beings. We can discuss culture and education. Or we can discuss the imperatives for achieving world peace from a humanitarian standpoint. People all over the world share the same desire for peace and cultural development.

"In the course of frank, open discussion on such issues, I am sure the subject of religion will come up quite naturally. But the goal of dialogue is to find a way to bring happiness to all and realize a peaceful world.

"Islam rejects idol worship, but places great value on the written word. In this respect, I think we can detect a certain resemblance to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. And while I am sure there are many complex arguments defining the one God of Islamic theology, there is a kinship between the idea of Allah, the all-knowing creator of the universe, and the Mystic Law, the fundamental law of the universe.

"Perhaps we can say the same for Judaism and Christianity. If that is true, dialogue will be that much easier. I am convinced that in the process of ongoing dialogue with Muslims we will discover

that they hold many beliefs in common with Buddhism. And they will attain a further understanding of and sympathy for Buddhist teachings."

Shin'ichi said reflectively, gazing into the distance as if at some vision of the future: "Mr. Toda often said a common understanding would be quickly achieved if the original teachers of the major religions — Nichiren Daishonin, Shakyamuni, Jesus Christ and Muhammad — all got together

PLEASE SEE TREASURE LAND, NEXT PAGE

## TREASURE LAND, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

in one room and held a conference. In business, when the top leaders gather for a meeting, they quickly grasp the essentials and promptly make decisions. That's because final responsibility for everything ultimately rests on their shoulders.

"These leaders of the world religions lived at different times and in different historical circumstances, but all fought for the people's happiness amid persecution and fierce opposition. They were all revolutionaries in their times, all wise and brave individuals of profound faith and conviction. If they all got together and talked things over, not only would they most likely appreciate the profound philosophy of Buddhism, but they would quickly reach consensus on the future needs of humanity and what should be done to meet them.

"Since such a conference, unfortunately, is not possible, the only solution is for the different groups' believers today to return to the spirit of these religious teachers — who devoted their lives to the people's salvation — and talk with one another from that standpoint."

It was already past midnight when the discussion with the youth division leaders ended. They had to catch an early flight to Baghdad in Iraq at 10:00 that morning.

That day, Jan. 31, Mr. and Mrs. Ueno came to Teheran's airport to see Shin'ichi and his party off. Yoriko Ueno seemed transformed from the previous day. Her face had a healthy glow. She was cheerful and energetic. Shin'ichi continued to pour all his heart into encouraging the couple until the moment before his departure.

To Yoriko, he said: "I am so happy to see you looking so well today. Remember, whatever problems may arise you can overcome them with daimoku. The power of the Gohonzon is limitless. There are no deadlocks you cannot break through. When you feel discouraged or helpless, just pray to the Gohonzon and you'll surmount your problem, no matter how big it seems."

Yoriko smiled gratefully at Shin'ichi, nodding to convey that she would strive as he instructed.

"By the way, I have a favor to ask of you," continued Shin'ichi. "More and more of our members will likely be coming to this country in the future. If possible I'd like you to become our contact here."

"Of course!" Yoriko replied gladly. Then Shin'ichi turned to her husband, Hideo, and inquired courteously, "Is that all right with you?"

"It's fine," replied Hideo. "We'll do whatever we can."

Exchanging a warm, firm handshake with each of the Uenos, Shin'ichi made his way to the waiting plane.

They arrived in Baghdad at 11:20 a.m. local time. Iraq was under martial law, so arriving passengers were subject to stringent customs inspections. The group's luggage was thoroughly checked.

A military coup had taken place in Iraq in July 1958. King Faisal II, the crown prince and other members of the Iraqi royal family were murdered, the monarchy abolished, and the country proclaimed a republic. Although a new government was in place, Iraq continued to be plagued by problems on the home and international fronts.

In March 1959, Brigadier General Abdul Karim Kassem, who had installed himself as prime minister after the coup, declared Iraq's withdrawal from the Baghdad Pact Organization,<sup>1</sup> an anti-communist alliance formed at the urging of leading Western powers. When neighboring Kuwait, formerly a British protectorate, achieved full independence in June 1961, Prime Minister Kassem made a claim of Iraqi sovereignty over the territory. He maintained that Kuwait had been a part of Iraq during the Ottoman Empire and now that Britain had stepped out of the picture Kuwait should return to its control.

But the Iraqi claim provoked violent opposition from other Arab nations. To add to its troubles, Iraq was embroiled at this time in a conflict with the Kurds living in the country's northern mountain region, who sought to establish an independent state. More recently, in October 1961, there had been a breakdown in negotiations between the Iraqi government and the Iraq Petroleum Company, jointly

owned by British, American, French and Dutch concerns, over the sharing of its profits.

At the airport in Baghdad, Shin'ichi and his party were welcomed by a Japanese guide, a trading company employee stationed in Iraq whose services they had engaged for the duration of



their stay.

In the car on the way to the hotel, Shin'ichi said to the youth division leaders accompanying him: "General meetings of the young men's and young women's divisions are scheduled in Japan for Feb. 1 and 2, respectively, aren't they? When we get to the hotel, let's send them an encouraging telegram."

Youth Division Chief Eisuke Akizuki replied: "Understood. What would you like to say in your message?"

"No, it shouldn't be a message from me. It should be from all of you. It's important for you, the youth division members, to encourage one another as you devote yourselves to kosen-rufu activities. Actually, you shouldn't have to wait for me to tell you. It's something you should do of your own initiative. As leaders of the youth division, isn't it only natural that you be concerned about the members' welfare, no matter where you are, and always do your best to encourage and support them in any way?"

"You mustn't always rely on me. It's important that youth division leaders quickly develop a genuine awareness of their responsibility as leaders, not just talking all the time, but taking action."

Shin'ichi's wish was to encourage them to have a strong awareness of their responsibility as leaders. This trip abroad was an opportunity for him to raise and develop the youth.

It was lunch time when they arrived at the hotel. Yusuke Yoshikawa stopped by Shin'ichi's room as the latter was putting away his luggage.

"Sensei, we thought you might like a change from the local cuisine, so we thought we'd boil some rice for lunch," he said. "It'll be ready in a moment."

"Can you really do that?" Shin'ichi

asked.

"Yes," Kuroki cheerfully assured him. "Prepare yourself for a really delicious Japanese meal."

The youth had brought along a pot and a portable solid fuel burner and now had set about cooking rice. The result, however, was a disaster. The rice had not cooked all the way though. The grains were soft on the outside but still hard on the inside.

A portion of this, served with canned salmon, condiments and pickled plums, hardly fit the description of "a really delicious Japanese meal."

Nevertheless, Shin'ichi said: "It's not bad. The rice is a little hard in the middle, but that gives you something to chew on." He even asked for a second helping.

The youth knew Shin'ichi was trying to spare their feelings. They felt bad about what had happened.

After lunch, Shin'ichi and the youth went out sightseeing around the city.

Baghdad ran along both sides of the Tigris River. The fertile valley encompassing the Tigris and Euphrates rivers was once ancient Mesopotamia. Along with Egypt, Mesopotamia is known as the birthplace of the world's oldest civilizations. Baghdad had many modern buildings and impressive mosques with colorful domed roofs in blue, red, yellow and white stone. Stationed throughout was a considerable number of military and police personnel, driving home the fact that the city was under martial law. Photograph-taking was prohibited in many places.

They decided to return to their hotel while it was still early. With speed and efficiency, Shin'ichi attended to some pending work and contacted Tokyo.

That evening when they went to dine in the hotel restaurant, Yoshikawa said: "I'm sorry that lunch was such a fiasco. This time I asked the restaurant if they could prepare some instant noodles we brought along and serve it with our dinner."

"That's very thoughtful of you. Thank you."

A little while later, a waiter appeared carrying a large platter. He placed it on their table with an ingratiating smile, saying, "Please, Japanese spaghetti."

On the plate was a serving of instant noodles — not in a bowl of soup as they had expected — but arranged, indeed, like spaghetti.

Shin'ichi burst out laughing in spite of himself.

*(To be continued)*

1. Baghdad Pact Organization: a mutual-defense organization comprising Britain, Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Pakistan established in 1955. After Iraq's withdrawal, the alliance was renamed the Central Treaty Organization.

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BROOKE BUNDY, LOS ANGELES

# Fighting Against Death

When SGI President Ikeda was in the United States last June, one of his messages was to chant for our personal happiness. I set out on a journey to do just that with no preconceived strategy — just to focus on becoming absolutely happy. I was determined to be happy, whatever that meant. I just trusted my life, my Buddha wisdom and the Gohonzon.

But I never had a clue that learning to live would bring me so close to death. After all, I had

out of delirium, sometimes muttering: "Help! Help!"

Throughout that day and what was to follow, I never questioned the Gohonzon, but there was one semi-delirious moment when I questioned my practice. Maybe if I prayed to God, I thought in confusion, the pain would stop. No! No! I immediately recalled Nichiren Daishonin's words in "The Opening of the Eyes": "Foolish men are likely to forget the promises they have made when the crucial moment comes" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren*

and it's not often that I get a clear, accurate self-diagnosis in a burst of cosmic insight. But I remembered that, 26 years ago, a dear friend had almost died from peritonitis when her appendix ruptured. She is a physician and explained to me in great detail this medical emergency. I had forgotten it all until this crucial moment.

The paramedics arrived within minutes. My neighbors saw all the commotion and helped break into my house (my dog would not allow anyone else). I remember thinking, "Oh, good, they're here."

And I went into cardiac arrest. Flatlined. Died. Right there on my kitchen floor.

People say they've seen a light, among other things, when this occurred. I didn't. I just heard voices whispering seductively: "Come on, let go. It's not a big deal. You're in so much pain. It'll be over if you just let go. You'll be back. Come on."

I felt that if I left my body, though, I'd never come back. I fought to hold on to my body and thought: "No, I can't die. My daughter needs me. And the members would be so discouraged."

So I screamed in my mind, "No, motherf---!" It's not a word I've used often, but that's how angry and adamant I was. I was determined to live.

The paramedics defibrillated me and revived me. But on the way to the ambulance, I flatlined again. The whole process was repeated, voices and all. Only this time, I was really mad and fought even harder to live.

I continued fighting at the hospital. I kicked and flailed against the doctors and nurses trying to help me, who kept saying, "We're losing her, we're losing her." Finally, one of the nurses said: "She's a fighter. I know how to deal with fighters." I was so happy to hear this, even though it meant they put me in restraints.

Basically, I was in a major bacterial crisis. My immune system was overloaded and beginning to fight (there's that word again). It was fighting everything — including the antibiotics.

Here's where my fortune from 10 years of practice kicked in. My trauma team consisted of two super-specialists in immunity and their nurse, who suggested I might be a candidate for a new drug that allows the immune system to accept antibiotics and other life-saving medicines. I be-

came part of a double-blind study to test the drug's efficacy.

My daughter and her husband, who had rushed from Seattle, signed release forms for me to take part in this study. Apparently, constipation was only part, perhaps even a small part, of this whole episode. A large part of it was stress. When blood had not reached my colon, it had, in a sense, broken down and died.

They prepared me for surgery. Later, I found out the doctor told my daughter that I would probably not survive it. All I know is that I came through and the doctors were thrilled and surprised that I did. (To this day, I don't know if I was given the experimental drug or perhaps a placebo. I won't know for another year.)

The surgeon told my daughter that he had done all he could and had removed 80 percent of my colon. The operation, he said, was a success. I would have two ileostomy bags attached to my small and large intestines, which were now protruding from my abdomen. I would need a second operation, he added, to re-attach my intestines and what was left of my colon.

At one point during my two-week stay in the hospital, doctors wanted to give me an angiogram. I was so scared, I was shaking. But there were two members visiting me and one of them said simply, "Gongyo." I don't know how she got gongyo out of me, but it was the turning point. The results of the angiogram were fine.

Even through the pain, the death experiences, barely being able to think or recognize faces, I knew that this episode was an answer to my prayer to become absolutely happy. I felt hope and had no doubt. I knew I'd be all right. I had so much confidence in the Gohonzon. All the doctors commented on my high life condition during my stay.

Friends came day and night to chant with me. I felt the power of their prayers. One member, who hadn't chanted for awhile, started chanting again for me. She said, with a big smile, "Look what you made me do, you little snot." My neighbor (one who had helped the paramedics break into my apartment) chanted in the hospital with me and later came to a discussion meeting.

I made a determination to leave the hospital by Aug. 5 with one ileostomy bag. I did. I was required to stay at home for another month. My boss kept me on salary for the entire six weeks.

Members cleaned my house until it sparkled. They even pulled up the carpet, which I had been trying to do for weeks.

They not only brought food and made dinner for me, but every night for two weeks one of them would curl up on my couch to make sure I was not alone at night.

I returned to work on Sept. 2. My high life condition had contributed to my speedy recovery. I was even able to do AIDS Walk Los Angeles.

I had started my job only the previous February and entirely out of the blue. I had been a children's agent and suddenly found myself in one of the most prestigious agencies in America, handling major adult stars. I kept wondering: "Why am I here? How did I get here?"

Before this, I had no health insurance, but that was OK — after all, I was always healthy and had no reason to expect any change. Two months before my crisis, I received health coverage through this new job. Could that be why I was there?

I think it was, because I was unexpectedly terminated in late November. This didn't bother me as much as the possibility of losing my health coverage before my second surgery, scheduled for Dec. 2.

I chanted furiously to change whatever I needed to inside myself so I could reach my boss' Buddha nature. As a result, my boss arranged several weeks of severance pay, which meant my health coverage would remain in effect through December.

On top of this, my surgeon, not part of the insurance company's network, volunteered to perform the surgery for free. All I could think was, "What protection." It was amazing.

The second surgery was a complete success. I left the hospital with no ileostomy bag.

My health is great again. I feel free, grateful and so happy to be alive. Both of my parents died in their 50s, so I feel that I've broken through a deep family karma.

I never thought I could exhibit the kind of courage and unshakable faith that I had only heard about, but now I know it's possible. I never felt any doubt, never thought "Poor me." This alone is so amazing and encouraging to me. I have gained an appreciation for life, especially for the lives of others — and the quickness with which it can be gone. I cherish my relationships with family and friends and my connections with others.

And I have also learned that Buddhism is reality, not denial. My determination is not to co-exist with denial anymore.

It will be hard, but not as cold and hard as the bathroom floor. ❏

Photo by LISA HOLLIS



Brooke Bundy has learned the power of determined prayer and struggle.

never been seriously ill, let alone hospitalized.

My odyssey began in the most auspicious of places, the bathroom. In fact, the bathroom floor. That was July 21, 1996. I lay on the floor in unbelievable pain, more pain than I'd ever known before (and I have experienced a lot).

It wasn't the first time I'd been there, but it was certainly the worst. Why was I there again? Why was I still accepting this as OK? Ever since I was a teenager, I've had to take laxatives; I was virtually imprisoned by constipation. It was so embarrassing that I avoided, among other things, intimate relationships. But it was just a part of my life that I accepted. I was in denial that it was a real problem.

This time, however, I couldn't move. I couldn't get to a phone. All I could do was travel in and

*Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 180). Eventually I managed to crawl back into my bed and somehow fall asleep.

The next morning, still in excruciating pain, my mind was clear and focused. A voice deep inside of me said: "You have acute peritonitis and you have 20 minutes to save your life. Get to the wall phone in the kitchen. You must stand up. Don't lie down. Call 911. NOW." I did not doubt the wisdom of that voice. My colon had ruptured.

I crawled to the kitchen phone and called 911. When the dispatcher asked where I lived, I didn't know (the bacteria in my body had already muddled my mind). I knew enough to stay on the line so she could read my address off her screen, then I passed out.

How did I know that I was dying of acute peritonitis? After

# Making Kids Feel Important

Lucy Golden's practice helps her stay optimistic as she experiences successes and failures with at-risk kids.

By TERRY ELLIS  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR  
Goulds, Fla.

Lucy Golden's classroom is one of those bland portables that have become a symbol of overcrowding in Florida schools. But what's inside is anything but bland. It's a place she sees as a cozy, intimate home: A place where students made their own tie-dyed curtains out of old sheets and recently threw a surprise party for her during Teacher Appreciation Week.

These kids at Pine Villa Elementary School in Goulds, a community that borders Miami, are in a Title I Montessori program. This means that most of them live at or near the poverty level. But here at school they're rich: Full of energy, curiosity and a love of learning. Here kids in first through third grade are eager about science and math, reading and writing.

Mrs. Golden stumbled onto the Montessori program at a time when her frustration with the traditional public school system was mounting. She had earned her degree in theater and education at Hunter College, in New York, where she graduated in 1984. She taught for three years in East Harlem and then for a year at an international private school near the U.N. Headquarters. When her family (which today includes her husband, Victor, and four children) moved to Miami nine years ago, Mrs. Golden, who also speaks Spanish fluently, taught ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) at both the elementary and middle school-level.

"I was very disenchanting with the way my kids weren't learning," says Golden, who has been an SGI-USA member for 14 years. "I believe it was through my practice that I was able to find this path. I was at the right place at the right time."

During a teacher's workshop she saw a bulletin about a grant program to attend Barry University in Miami and train as a Montessori teacher. "I actually had missed the deadline for the grant, but someone had dropped out, so I got in," she says. "It was a true benefit be-



Photo by LINDA ST. HILAIRE

Lucy Golden gives a lesson on sentence structure using hands-on Montessori materials. She re-evaluates herself everyday, always searching for ways to build each student's confidence.

cause it was everything I was searching for."

For her internship and later placement, she had a choice between the Title I program and a magnet Montessori classroom, which would have included students from more varied economic backgrounds. She chose Title I. "Maria Montessori originally worked with children who were poor and didn't have the same privileges," she says. "I really wanted to put the program to the test working with the Title I program."

Montessori, who was a contemporary of Mahatma Gandhi and Albert Einstein and a fellow peacemaker, believed that the path to lasting peace begins with respecting the dignity of each child. She also believed that children teach themselves. The Montessori teacher actually is a guide, whose responsibility is to set up a stimulating environment and provide an example of how to learn to the student.

For Golden, Montessori's ideal is a lofty one to live up to. She thus sees her classroom as the ideal place to do her human revolution, a place to constantly refine her character in the mirror of her students.

"In one sense, I intentionally chose this classroom," she says.

"On the other hand, it's a natural place for me to be because I have a lot of anger myself. I can understand the anger they feel. I came from a troubled childhood and as a kid I was very angry.... I know my students well, and they're comfortable to be who they are for better or for worse.

"They see me as a human being, not a person who's perfect," she says. "A person who has her good days and bad days, who sometimes gets ill and doesn't have as much energy. They see me in a very natural way. Sometimes I get angry about their behavior, but behind my anger they know I really care about them. It's not like I scare them. I'm not a perfect teacher, but the underlying message they get from me is they are important and I care about them."

That message comes across clearly to her students. They have days when the challenges they face at home spill over into the school day, but they know Golden will strike a balance between overlooking this and requiring them to change.

"She's nice. She'll give us another chance," says Terrence Henderson, 8. "We love her. She helps us sound it [words] out," says Wynton Jones, 8. "I learned to read here and to write in my journal," says Michelle Palacios, 9. She holds up her

journal and reads the story she has just written, an imaginary earthquake drama.

Lamar Dozier, 8, a third-grader who has been with Mrs. Golden for three years, is eager to share about his school work. "My favorites are the flower lessons and math," he says. "I've learned about different kinds of flowers. Some are poisonous and some are not. We went on a field trip, and I saw poison ivy. Now I know never to touch it."

And what does he want to be when he grows up?

"I don't want to get killed," he says earnestly. "I don't want to be a police officer or a fireman. I don't know what I'd do if someone pulled a gun on me. Maybe I could be an ambulance driver. I want to be safe."

Ulysses Hodges, 7, is about to complete his first year with Mrs. Golden. "He likes his teacher very much," says his mother, Lottie Hodges, who arrived to pick him up at the end of the day. "She really teaches them very well. He loves it and he's come a long way. He made the honor roll and had perfect attendance." Ulysses also has big dreams for the future: "I want to be a doctor," he says.

Many of the third-graders in Mrs. Golden's classroom have been with her for three years. The relationship which Mrs.

Golden has developed with her students due to this consistency is one of the things which has impressed Stephanie Pope, Mrs. Golden's classroom assistant. Although she has worked in other schools and has six children of her own, this school year was her first experience in a Montessori classroom.

"It's been one of the most enlightening experiences for me," she says. "Each child progresses at their own pace.... The lessons are more in depth. It really makes you think.... And the Montessori teacher is essential. She can't be replaced by a regular substitute."

The most important attitude Mrs. Golden brings to the classroom, says Mrs. Pope, is confidence. "It all boils down to how the teacher sees herself," she says. "You have to have the confidence you're doing your best. She has a lot of confidence and she has instilled some of that confidence in me. She also took the time to show me how the classroom materials work. Attitude-wise, she is very, very positive. She's a very strong woman."

Mrs. Golden says she uses her practice to keep her attitude positive.

"It makes me more optimistic," she says. "When you're working with inner city children, it can be depressing — the reality of what they're faced with and the odds. For instance, three out of four African-American males end up in jail. That's my classroom. That's the reality right now. But I chant daimoku for them and I know that if I really instill confidence in them, they have a chance."

After four years, she has seen both successes and failures among her students, but she never gives up on them.

"If I wasn't practicing, I would be burnt out," she says. "I think I would be discouraged. But through this practice, I go through daily self-reflection. I question whether I was too strong with this child or should have given this child more positive feedback. I re-evaluate everything I do and redetermine to do better."



## SIGN POSTS

APPLYING  
NICHIREN  
DAISHONIN'S  
WRITINGS TO  
DAILY LIFE

### From Illness Arises Faith

By SHIN YATOMI

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

**From illness arises the mind that seeks the Way.** (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 280)

In 1278, Nichiren Daishonin wrote this in a letter to Myoshin-ama, whose husband was critically ill. He explains to her that her husband's illness has a profound meaning: It has encouraged him to seek enlightenment through the practice of Buddhism. Although I grew up with Buddhism most of my life, like Myoshin-ama and her husband, only illness, when it afflicted one of my best friends, got me to practice.

I was busily preparing for my final year of college when my friend, who went to junior high, high school and college with me, found out he was in an advanced stage of lymphatic cancer. He was given a year to live.

I was so desperate to help him that I sought advice from my chapter chief for the first time. He passionately explained the unlimited power of faith, urging me to introduce my friend to Buddhism. So I started my daily commute to the hospital. Some days I told him about the greatness of Buddhism, which I feigned to be fully convinced of. Other days I said nothing about it. But everyday I prayed strongly for him.

After visiting my friend for some 40 consecutive days, he told me that he had been quietly chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the ceiling at night. We started to chant together, as much as his circumstances allowed. He was at first weak and emaciated from radiation and chemotherapy, but gradually his cancer went into remission — eventually complete remission. During this long process, many members from my district encouraged him as if he were their own son. Through this experience, I became convinced of the immense power of the Gohonzon as well as the SGI's humanism.

A few days ago, I received a phone call from my friend. "My wife just had a healthy, beautiful baby girl!" he said. I thought again of the passage "From illness arises the mind that seeks the Way." Because of his illness, both of us learned the Way that leads to absolute fulfillment in life. ☸

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

## Sharing Buddhism

By JEFF FARR

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

When the Soka Gakkai in Japan recently received many requests from new members to explain the word *shakubuku*, SGI President Ikeda said that it "essentially means speaking the truth." More specifically, he said it means to speak the truth about this Buddhism, i.e., to share the teachings of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

As new members, we may feel unqualified to "speak the truth" about this Buddhism. That sounds a little daunting, Buddhism being such a profound philosophy. But to share this Buddhism, we don't need to know everything about it. We need only speak about what we have experienced ourselves and learned from the practice — the truth as we know it.

"New members already know the most important thing that non-members need to know, that the Gohonzon works, that they have actual proof," says SGI-USA Vice General Director Greg Martin. "That's ultimately the most impor-

tant thing you can tell them. So even if all you can do is share a brief experience, it's enough. Then all the other questions can be answered by a senior in faith, at a meeting or such. But new members know the most important thing."

President Ikeda often encourages us to be ourselves in all things, "natural and unaffected," as he puts it. This applies to sharing Buddhism, too. For instance, if someone we're introducing asks a question we cannot answer, there's no need to pretend we know more than we do. "When somebody asks me a question that I can't answer — which happens often — first I honestly tell them I don't know the answer," Mr. Martin says. "Then I say, 'Let's you and I go get the answer' — that way we learn together and I can help that person connect to a senior in faith. If he or she can't go with me, I go get the answer and bring it back. But I always promise the person, because I believe there is an answer, that I will get the answer."

When we make this kind of effort to help others understand Buddhism, we

greatly increase our understanding. "Basically I'm a shy person," says SGI Vice General Director Al Albergate. "So in going out and trying to meet people for the purpose of sharing this great life philosophy — and in the course of that talking about my personal experiences, opening my life to other people and talking to them about their lives, their dreams and their problems — certainly I experienced a real revolution in my life. I truly value those experiences because they helped me understand what true compassion is all about."

The ultimate purpose of sharing Buddhism is, of course, a compassionate one — to help our friends become happy. Who can help our friends and families become happy besides us? "Just as all the different kinds of plants and trees come forth from the earth," Nichiren Daishonin writes, "all the various teachings of the Buddha are spread by persons" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 31). Sharing this Buddhism is thus an awesome responsibility — but the first step is just speaking the truth as we know it. ☸

### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON FAITH

## What Is the Real Meaning of the Oneness of Self and Environment?

By TED MORINO

SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT CHIEF

**Q What does the principle of the oneness of the self and its environment mean to my practice and daily life?**

**A** The practical message of this principle is that how we experience our environment depends completely on our life-condition.

The oneness of self and environment is related to another principle, one of the most profound in the Daishonin's Buddhism, that of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms (Jpn *ichinen sanzen*). This principle says that the condition of our lives at each moment can affect the entire universe. Our prayer can thus permeate the entire universe and have a positive impact. Faith in Buddhism in essence means to trust in this.

The oneness of self and environment clarifies this by sharing the Buddhist view of our lives and environments being interrelated. The word in Japanese is *esho funi*. *Esho* is a contraction of *eho* — the insentient environment, or objective world — and *shoho* — the self, or subjective world. *E* of *esho* means "to depend" and *sho* of *shoho*

means "subject," signifying that the environment is necessary for the self to exist. *Ho* in both words means "manifest effect," suggesting that an individual's karma appears in both his or her subjective and objective realities. *Funi* drives home the point that self and environment, while two independent phenomena, are one in their fundamental essence — they are both part of life.

Thus not only does our life-condition or, more specifically, determination affect how we experience our environment, but we can affect society positively with our lives, beginning with our prayer. Ultimately, we shape ourselves and our environment.

But sometimes the oneness of self and environment is misunderstood. It can be tempting to blame ourselves for what's wrong in our environment, saying everything is a reflection of our bad karma, rather than taking action to change our situation. We may even use our misunderstanding of the concept as an excuse not to speak up when we see injustice in our environment. But the import of *esho funi* is that, since we shape our environment, we have to take action to change it.

This can be illustrated in terms of the temple issue: Some people have said that Nikken's attitude and behavior is a reflection of the SGI members' karma. "We should not point out his bad points, but simply self-reflect since we are to blame." While it is the destiny of the SGI to encounter one of Nikken's ilk at this particular time in its history, this does not mean we can just self-reflect and think Nikken will then go away. We have to take action — we have to speak up against what he has done.

In the ideal condition of life called Buddhahood, self and environment are joined. We are naturally protected and supported by our environment because of our prayer, life-condition, determination, action and fortune.

Nichiren Daishonin writes in "On Attaining Buddhahood": "Life at each moment encompasses both body and spirit and both self and environment... Life at each moment permeates the universe and is revealed in all phenomena" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 3). This beautiful principle is not intended to make us feel guilty for all that is wrong in the world, but to make us feel empowered to change it. Who shapes our lives? Who shapes the world? We do. ☸

# My Recollections



Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, 5th Secretary-General of the United Nations

By SGI President Ikeda

Time was running out. It was Dec. 31, 1991, and the year would soon be over. United Nations Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar was at the U.N. Headquarters trying to bring negotiations for a cease-fire in El Salvador to a successful close. His term of office would expire at midnight. And when he was no longer secretary-general, it was likely that the long series of agreements and concessions achieved so far would fall apart.

Only hours remained.

The conflict in El Salvador between the military and the leftist guerrillas of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional had continued for 12 years, claiming an estimated 75,000 lives.

El Salvador is a small nation. In the conflict, many farmers had been driven from their lands, which lay waste. Numberless children had been permanently maimed and had gone without schooling all their short lives. Some 60 percent of El Salvadoran women had lost fathers, husbands or sons.

The secretary-general talked again and again with both sides in the conflict. Coming up against the wall of mutual suspicion that divided them, he confronted that doubt and hatred head-on, trying to bring the two sides closer together with compromise proposals. Everyone trusted him for his fairness and integrity.

In 1988, the trust Iran placed in Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar was also the key to negotiations that ended the Iran-Iraq War. An Iranian diplomat said: "He became important to us. Thousands of lives were saved. Also, we had to maintain a link to the United Nations, and since we had boycotted the council he was our only link. He proved to be a man of honor [with] a high degree of personal integrity."<sup>1</sup>

I met the secretary-general on four occasions. On each I was impressed by his humility and sincere devotion to peace. He had the appearance of a philosopher. In everything he said, I sensed the deep thought he gave



Javier Pérez de Cuéllar waves to supporters in Cuzco, Peru, during his 1995 presidential campaign.

to the question of how he as an individual should live in this world.

Both the El Salvadoran military and the leftist guerrillas were aware of the futility of their struggle. The secretary-general continued to devote his full energies to their problem. Though he was scheduled to leave the U.N. Headquarters with his wife the evening of Dec. 31 for a vacation, he was determined to remain at his desk as long as the slightest chance for a settlement existed.

Finally, a cease-fire was agreed upon late on Dec. 31. This was truly a triumph of the secretary-general's determination and perseverance. The agreement became his parting achievement, as well as his gift to the new year.

People decide everything. People are the key. People make the difference — whether in achieving peace or ringing in a new age.

Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar carefully read my peace proposals. In a letter responding to my 1983 SGI Day Peace Proposal, he agreed with my position that the individual must play a central role in achieving disarmament.

We must never take the individual lightly. Numbers like 10,000 and 10 million are made up of individuals. To solve the problems we confront today, we need a great global alliance. It can

only be created by individuals joining hands in mutual respect. The true enemies of world peace arrogantly look down on individuals, succumb to despair by thinking one person is powerless and scorn and sneer at the individual's value.

The individual is not powerless. We have many examples to prove this. Immediately after the first Berlin crisis (1948-49), the beginnings of a peaceful resolution were found in casual conversation among U.S. and U.S.S.R. representatives to the United Nations as they happened to pass one another in a hallway. All changes start with some meeting. Seeds that are not sown will never sprout. Though the process may be slow and painstaking, new developments always emerge from face-to-face meetings and discussions.

During the Falklands crisis in 1982, when U.S. negotiators reached an impasse, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar stepped in. Just when it seemed that he had succeeded in finding a solution, the negotiations collapsed. But he did not despair. He declared that the necessary conditions for an agreement could not be fulfilled then, but that the seeds he had sown would eventually bear fruit.

The job of U.N. secretary-general — as the organization's first

head, Trygve Lie, once said — is the most impossible in the world.

As the guardian of the U.N. Charter, it was Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar's duty to base his actions on the best interests of all humankind. But when he did so, some nation always criticized him. Member nations usually placed their own interests above the general good. It was particularly difficult, during the Cold War, to gain the support of the United States and the Soviet Union.

For the first half of Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar's 10-year term (1982-1991), his efforts were shackled by the evils of nationalism. Finally, with the appearance of Mikhail Gorbachev as head of the Soviet Union, the secretary-general's efforts began to yield tangible results. The end of the Iran-Iraq War, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the independence of Namibia and the peace agreement in Cambodia — these were some of the remarkable successes achieved by this man, who went about his duties with a quiet dedication and commitment.

He never played to the international press. He knew that the kind of flashy declarations that make the evening news lack substance, and worse, they would be likely to offend the parties concerned and lead to a hardening of their positions.

He had no desire to attract attention. In fact, he felt it better to remain out of the limelight as much as possible. He paid no heed to critics, continuing instead to work tenaciously behind the scenes to find solutions to problems facing the world. His lack of personal ambition inspired trust in all. And that trust produced impressive results. People began to speak of the "U.N. Renaissance."

Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar often said to me that he valued the SGI's support of the United Nations, because the SGI combines practical activities with strong spiritual support. He called the SGI a model example of what U.N. support should be and expressed great appreciation for our efforts.

He recognized that peace is the foundation of Buddhist thought and believed that the Buddhist message is a strong inspiration to those who love peace. He also perceived a great deal in common between the SGI's philosophy and the United Nations' ideals.

The last time we met, in November 1990, he told me that he had begun to read my dialogue with René Huyghe, *Dawn After Dark*. He agreed so completely with what I had written in the introduction that he wished he had written it himself, he said.

In the introduction, I said that the threat to humanity comes not from without but from within. We are destroying our own home, I asserted. And if we are to live happily in this home, each of us has to fundamentally transform how we think and live. It is time, I also said, to stop competing for profit, to stop hating one another and to start loving and supporting one other.

I think Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar also firmly believed that the human race's travails would never end unless there was spiritual revolution.

After observing Japan for a number of decades, he said that the country was gradually losing its beautiful spiritual and cultural heritage. He was not speaking, he insisted, on external heritage such as mode of dress, but the decline of deeper, internal emotional and spiritual values.

PLEASE SEE RECOLLECTIONS, 15

AFP PHOTO, Pedro Ugarte

*SGI President Daisaku Ikeda gave the following speech at the 8th Headquarters Leaders Meeting at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Feb. 8.*

**M**embers of the chorus and ensemble, thank you for your wonderful performances! Friends from overseas, thank you for traveling so far!

The Headquarters leaders meeting is a gathering for those who have been striving earnestly for kosen-rufu. Its purpose is to refresh and invigorate such hardworking individuals, imparting joy, peace of mind and inspiration. Therefore, please just relax and enjoy yourselves today.

### **Everything Depends on People**

The 2nd Young Men's Division Leaders Meeting was held on Feb. 5 at the Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium. Congratulations! The 2nd Young Women's Division Leaders Meeting will be held on the 10th, and I am praying that it too will be a great success. The time has arrived for the youth division to stand up in earnest.

The SGI is the only body in the world dedicated to accomplishing kosen-rufu. In that respect, there is no more noble or respectable organization.

The SGI will always forge ahead in the widespread propagation of the Mystic Law by fostering capable men and women. Our success hinges on the presence of outstanding people, on actively raising individuals to create a magnificent mountain range of capable people. This will lead in and of itself to kosen-rufu.

No matter how superlative the Law may be, it will be of no value to society if there is nobody to spread it. Everything depends on able individuals. Therefore, I am determined to channel even greater energy into nurturing the growth of young people and illuminating the path ahead. Only by fostering the youth can we realize victory in the 21st century.

I propose that from now on the student division — the shining hope of kosen-rufu — hold leaders meetings semiannually, in the spring and fall, making them events brimming with intellect and passion.

The members of the youth and student divisions, every one, will be the leaders of the kosen-rufu movement in the 21st cen-



*'I have frequently spoken about Rosa Luxemburg because in many respects she exemplifies the essential way of life for a human being and for a woman. Her courageous life has much in common with the path of Buddhism.'*

## **An Earnest Person Is Never Forgotten**

ture. It is their mission to lead the new century in all spheres of endeavor as Buddhist philosophers and as SGI leaders.

In life, the season of youth comes but once. What seeds are you planting during this precious period? What are you engraving? To what are you devoting your youthful passion? All of these things will have a critical impact on your whole future.

### **A Beautiful Person**

Twenty-eight years ago, at a summer training course, a group of students performed in front of several thousand of their fellow members. Looking resplendent

in traditional Japanese outfits, they sang a song with all their youthful energy and exuberance accompanied by the dynamic rhythm of Japanese drums. That scene remains vividly etched in my mind. I will never forget it as long as I live.

A person who makes all-out efforts is beautiful. An earnest person inspires admiration and is a pleasure to behold. The memory of such people stays with me forever.

Just the other day, I asked someone to look into what had become of the singers at that training course. Those members, who were around 20 then, are now in their 40s. Today, as core members of the women's

division, they are devoting themselves energetically in their activities, joyfully sharing the Daishonin's Buddhism with others. They are living vibrant and satisfying lives, making significant contributions to their communities and bringing sunshine to their families and loved ones. I was truly delighted to hear this.

For women, especially, happiness is determined from their 40s onward, rather than in their 20s or 30s. That was the conclusion of the second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda. British historian Arnold Toynbee also voiced this opinion during one of our dialogues. That's why developing a strong founda-

tion of faith in youth is so important: It is so that you can be victorious in middle age and enjoy true happiness in the closing chapter of your lives. How to live such a wonderful youth is what the SGI teaches.

### **The Most Just Are Most Persecuted**

The song that those young student division members sang 28 years ago was titled "Rosas of *Shakubuku*," in a reference to Rosa Luxemburg (1870–1919), a revolutionary of global renown who was active in Germany in the early decades of this century. She was also an economist and an educator. Incidentally, we have a number of SGI members from Germany with us today.

I have frequently spoken about Rosa Luxemburg because in many respects she exemplifies the essential way of life for a human being and for a woman. Her courageous life has much in common with the path of Buddhism.

Luxemburg was jailed a number of times [five occasions are documented]. Even so, she continued to live true to her belief in the importance of peace and human liberation. In all, she spent nearly four years in prison. What a grim experience that must have been! Spending just a day in prison is a harrowing ordeal.

In March 1906, Luxemburg, then in her mid-30s, was imprisoned again; this time in Warsaw. She spent her birthday in prison, crammed in a tiny cell with more than a dozen people. The cruelty of the authorities knew no bounds. She was even subjected to a mock execution, where she was blindfolded and taken outside to the execution grounds. Under the intense physical and psychological strain of the ruthless torture inflicted upon her, she fell ill and her hair turned white. Nevertheless, her spirit continued to blaze brightly.

By comparison, the circumstances we face in our struggle for kosen-rufu are all too fortunate. And yet, there are those who grumble and complain or are swayed by the trifling attempts of others to discredit and malign us. This is utterly pitiful.

In the end, Luxemburg was killed in a massacre by antirevolutionary troops in Germany.

All too often, as history testifies, people of the greatest justice and integrity are persecuted most harshly by those with evil aims. This, too, is a common theme in Buddhism. In the

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## SPEECH, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Gosho, Nichiren Daishonin writes, "This world is the province of the Devil of the Sixth Heaven" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 135). Human society, in other words, is dominated by the corrupting nature of power. Throughout his life, the Daishonin waged an unremitting struggle against authoritarianism. He says, "Minor persecutions and annoyances are too numerous even to be counted, but the major persecutions number four" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 96).

Since the day I resolved to devote my life to kosen-rufu, I, too, have been fully prepared to meet with persecution. When my wife, Kaneko, and I were married, we confirmed our shared determination to work together for kosen-rufu, come what may.

## One Person Can Inspire Everyone

While in prison, Rosa Luxemburg received a report that the revolutionary organization in which she was a pivotal figure was in disarray and people's courage and resolution were fading. In response, Luxemburg cried out: "There, that's where I'd like to go as soon as possible! ... I'd shake them all awake...."<sup>1</sup> In other words, it was the resolve: "If I go there, we will prevail in any struggle! I will personally generate the momentum for victory!" What determination!

Everything depends on one person standing up. As long as you foist responsibility on others, lamenting, "That local organization is weak," or "That person doesn't do anything," nothing will change. A leader has to resolve, "I will do it!" When you do so, the passionate flame in your heart will then spread quite naturally to others. That is why Luxemburg declared, "Disappointment in the masses is always the most disgraceful attitude a political leader could have."<sup>2</sup>

Even in prison, she continued to encourage her friends outside. To one person, she wrote, "Calm down, I shall always remain your compass, because your straightforward nature tells you that I have the most imperturbable judgment."<sup>3</sup> Rather than being the one to receive encouragement from those outside, Luxemburg encouraged others from her prison cell. She was tremendously strong. She also wrote: "You must be calm and serene despite everything. This is life, and that is how we

must take it, bravely, undauntedly and smilingly despite everything."<sup>4</sup>

What composure! What fortitude! Under such circumstances, a person might be forgiven for not sparing a thought for others. But Luxemburg possessed great inner strength.

## Strict With Yourself, Gentle Toward Others

A genuine leader is not stuck-up or arrogant. Leaders in the realm of Buddhism must always remember to be strict with themselves but gentle toward their fellow members; to wage an earnest win-or-lose struggle, while taking the pressure off others; to act first themselves, while warmly encouraging everyone; to set an example of hard work, while relieving others of their fatigue; and to fight and cry out against evil, while putting everyone's minds at ease.

You can't expect others to take action if you don't do so yourself. SGI leaders must never sit back on their laurels and order members around high-handedly. We are all members of the SGI family. No one is superior or inferior. We are all equal before the Gohonzon. Truly worthy of respect, therefore, are those who are in reality working hard for kosen-rufu.

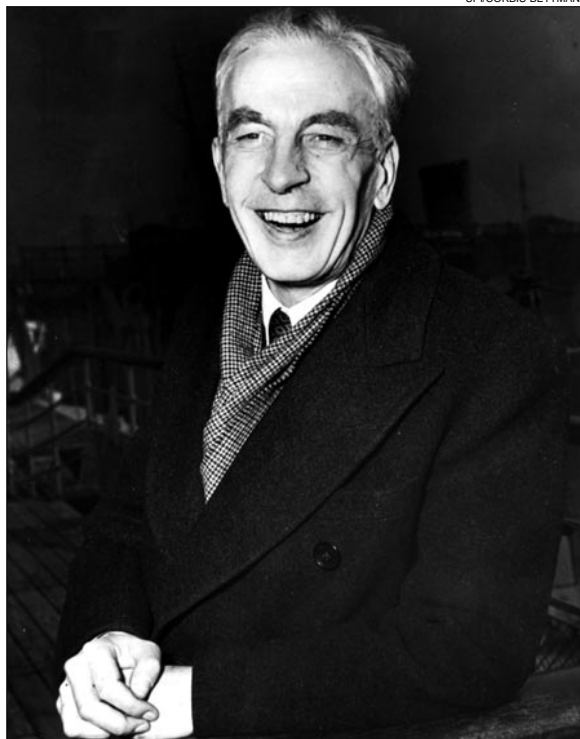
As a leader, you yourself should burn with hope and enjoy your life with great zest and enthusiasm. I hope that at meetings, as at other times, you will welcome people with such warmth and good cheer that they'll be delightfully surprised. Please strive to relieve people of their worries and put a spring back into their steps.

Today's gathering is the 8th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, the 21st Kyushu General Meeting and the 8th Saitama General Meeting. Congratulations to you all! You have won! You have all worked hard.

With us today, we also have SGI members from 21 countries and territories, representatives of Aomori and Yamagata prefectures, and prefecture chiefs from throughout Japan. Thank you all for joining us. In addition, representatives of various specialist divisions and groups, including educators, nurses and *Seikyo Shimbun* newspaper deliverers are gathered here in high spirits.

I want to introduce a wonderful pioneering member of Tokyo No. 2 Territory, where this Makiguchi Memorial Hall is located.

Her name is Hanako Anraku



Historian Arnold Toynbee arrives in the U.S. by ocean liner in 1948 to work on his 6-volume 'A Study of History' at Princeton University.

of Ome Ward. Born in central Tokyo in 1909, Mrs. Anraku will turn 88 this year. Even now, she continues to devote herself cheerfully to activities for kosen-rufu.

Anraku — what a beautiful name! Meaning "peace and tranquility," it is written with the same Chinese characters as the first part of title of the "Peaceful Practices" chapter (Jpn *Anrakugyo-bon*) of the Lotus Sutra. Also, the name of the place where she lives, Ome (literally, "green plums"), is very poetic.

Mrs. Anraku's late husband, an attorney, came from a prominent samurai family of the Shimazu domain of Kagoshima in Kyushu. A fine gentleman, he died while quite young. Mrs. Anraku carried on alone after his death with dauntless resolve.

She joined the Soka Gakkai in March 1958, just nine days before President Toda died. This spring, she will begin her 40th year of faith. To date, more than 60 families have received the Gohonzon as a result of her personal efforts to introduce others to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. She has practiced steadily and tirelessly. "I don't need a position in the organization or benefit for myself," she exclaims. "I would like to present all my benefit to the people I have introduced to this practice." She is hailed by all as a champion of *shakubuku*. She is always bright and cheerful, and

never complains. "I have been practicing this Buddhism for 40 years, and I don't have a single regret or doubt," she says.

Social status or one's position in the organization is irrelevant. It is sincere, dedicated people like Mrs. Anraku who are the mainstay of the Soka Gakkai and the SGI.

Not infrequently, people who attain high standing forget their debts of gratitude and, as a result, bring about their own downfall.

## Open the 'Eye of the Heart'

Mrs. Anraku's prayer is truly beautiful. Every day she pledges: "I will exert myself as the 'women's division chief of kosen-rufu.' Therefore, Gohonzon, please make my faith strong and indestructible."

As I mentioned, this year Mrs. Anraku will be 88 — an age for great celebration in Japan. More than 10 years ago, her sight became impaired. Refusing to let this be a hindrance, she continues to this day to enthusiastically share the Daishonin's Buddhism with close friends and acquaintances.

No matter how dark the skies become, high above the clouds the sun and the moon continue to shine. In the same way, the "eye of the heart" definitely glows brightly in Mrs. Anraku's life.

I am reminded of the venerable Aniruddha, one of Shakyamuni's 10 major disciples renowned as

foremost in divine insight, who went blind because of his severe practice.

But according to the Buddhist scriptures, even though he lost the physical ability to see, he developed divine sight with which he could observe the entire universe. In the Lotus Sutra, Aniruddha receives a prediction that he will become a Buddha called Universal Brightness Thus Come One — a Buddha who will illuminate the entire universe with the light of the Mystic Law.

Mrs. Anraku is the same. She has single-mindedly devoted her life to kosen-rufu and exerted herself to the utmost with noble sincerity to support and protect the Soka Gakkai. She is a person of the greatest merit and achievement.

She has written a number of *waka* poems, one of which reads:

*Together with my mentor  
I struggle ahead  
to the very end  
along the path I have  
chosen  
in the garden of kosen-rufu*

By "to the very end," Mrs. Anraku most assuredly means to the very end of her life. This is the Soka Gakkai spirit. This is the heart of a true bodhisattva.

I highly praise, encourage and eternally protect people of such earnest and wholehearted faith. And I am determined that their names will be recorded without fail in the annals of our movement for the sake of future generations.

Nichiren Daishonin writes: "A woman who takes this efficacious medicine will be surrounded and protected by these four great bodhisattvas [the leaders of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth] at all times. When she rises to her feet, so will the bodhisattvas, and when she walks along the road, they will also do the same" (MW-3, 58).

He promises, in other words, that the protective functions of the universe will rigorously safeguard a woman who embraces the Mystic Law at all times. She will be eternally embraced in a golden state of life imbued with the four noble virtues of eternity, happiness, true self and purity. There are countless such people in the SGI.

To Mrs. Anraku, as a representative of all the noble members of the Many Treasures Group and the women's division members who will follow in their footsteps, I say: "Please stay in good health and high spirits! And may you enjoy the

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greatest happiness!"

**Life's Guiding Principle**

In April 1942, during World War II, when the air raids on Tokyo began, the first Soka Gakkai president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, received a letter from a teacher living in the Kansai area who was worried about the damage inflicted on the capital by the bombing. This person, who incidentally was a native of Kagoshima in Kyushu, had once studied under Mr. Makiguchi. And although at the time he was not practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, he held his former teacher in the highest regard.

In response to the heartfelt inquiry of concern about his safety and well-being, Mr. Makiguchi lost no time in penning a courteous reply. He always treated people with the utmost sincerity — whether they were members or non-members, friends or strangers. After humbly thanking his former student for the letter, Mr. Makiguchi then frankly reported the situation:

Our home, though in the path of the air raid, luckily was not damaged. Among our comrades in faith, there was one person whose home was unscathed even though the surrounding houses on all four sides — in front, behind and on either side — were all hit by incendiary bombs. There were many such instances of actual proof that could not be

put down to coincidence. I am confident that we will be safe and protected without fail. My hope is that all people will embrace the Mystic Law as their guiding principle in life.<sup>5</sup>

"No matter what happens, as long as we have faith in the Mystic Law, we will be free from harm" — this was President Makiguchi's conviction. His belief did not waver in the least. In the midst of the destruction all around him caused by the air raids, he calmly continued work on the construction of kosen-rufu for the sake of peace.

The teacher who wrote the letter to Mr. Makiguchi later took faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism.

**Cherish Youth**

In 1938, Mr. Makiguchi traveled all the way to Kagoshima to visit someone and talk about Buddhism. He also stopped by the family home of several students from Kagoshima who had joined the Soka Gakkai in Tokyo, to pay his respects to the students' parents and try to give them a better understanding of faith.

With its roots nourished by such meticulous concern and courtesy, by such profound sincerity, the Soka Gakkai has grown into the great organization it is today.

Following the example of Mr. Makiguchi, we must treasure, respect and foster each young person. This is the way of a true leader. The warmth of human friendship must always pervade

the SGI — not cold bureaucracy.

Leaders must strictly refrain from angrily berating the members of the youth division; the youth are our organization's future. Let us respect young people with the determination to make them even more capable than we are ourselves. We should never be condescending or patronizing toward them. It is also wrong for leaders to order the youth division members about as if they were their personal underlings.

I received very strict training from President Toda, but never once did he shout at me out of emotionalism. He always treated me with respect. Because of that I respected him, too, and did my utmost to live up to his expectations.

Please respect and encourage the youth. Develop a relationship where you can talk with them about anything and teach them everything you can. Strive to open a path for them so they can display their potential to the fullest. This is the way of a senior in life and of a true leader of Buddhism.

**No Road Too Long,  
No Destination  
Too Distant**

Despite his advanced age, President Makiguchi made the long journey to Kyushu a number of times for the sake of just one person. Each time, he would travel in a third-class railway compartment, sitting on a hard wooden seat with no upholstery to cushion the jolts of the ride. How noble was his spirit!

President Makiguchi would

surely be delighted that so many victorious members from Kyushu have come all the way to Tokyo today to joyfully gather in this great hall that was built in his memory. On Mr. Makiguchi's behalf, I extend a hearty greeting to all of you who have traveled from Kyushu, welcoming you as I would so many Buddhas. It is my wish to bestow upon each of you a great medal of honor of the heart.

Earlier this month [on Feb. 5], René Huyghe, one of Europe's leading intellectuals and a member of the Institute de France, died. He was 90 years old. Dr. Huyghe is famous for protecting many of the greatest treasures of the Louvre, including the *Mona Lisa*, preventing them from falling into the hands of the Nazis during World War II. I met Dr. Huyghe many times; he was a truly cultured gentleman. His face radiated dignity and intellect.

*SGI President Ikeda and Dr. Huyghe published a dialogue together, Dawn After Dark.*

A friend in France delivered my deepest condolences to his wife and family. Mrs. Huyghe graciously conveyed the message that her husband had often spoken about our meetings and that to the very last he had been thinking of me. I was most touched and humbled to hear this. Dr. Huyghe was truly a comrade-in-arms in the spiritual struggle to transform humanity.

Dr. Huyghe had great expectations for the SGI, which he char-

acterized as a force that will prevent the deterioration of human society. During one of our dialogues 10 years ago [in June 1986], he told me emphatically that, in light of the laws of history, "soulless materialist civilization" was bound to collapse. The greatest need of the present, he asserted, was to forge a link between "rationalism" and "spirituality," and commence again from the prime value on life itself.

Life — this is the very essence of the profound awakening that my mentor, Josei Toda, experienced while in prison. He realized that life itself is the "brilliant light that can dispel the darkness of humankind."

The year 2000 will mark the 100th anniversary of Josei Toda's birth, and the 70th anniversary of the Soka Gakkai's founding.

In fall 1999, the Saitama Youth Peace Culture Festival will be held with the participation of 100,000 young people. With this brilliant event, please usher in the dawn of a "century of life."

I hope you will take care not to catch a cold in this chilly weather. You are all infinitely precious. I am praying for your excellent health, happiness and longevity. Thank you!

1. Paul Frölich, *Rosa Luxemburg: Ideas in Action*, trans. Joanna Hoornweg (London: Pluto Press and Bookmarks, 1994), p. 128.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo Zenshu* (Collected Works of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi) (Tokyo: Daisan Bumeisha, 1987), vol. 10, p. 271.

**RECOLLECTIONS, FROM PAGE 12**

As a nation's spiritual power weakens, so does its resistance to nationalism's evils.

The United Nations may seem remote and distant from the lives of ordinary people, but ordinary people are directly linked to one another by the challenge of overcoming petty nationalism. When human power is amplified, united, it produces a great wave buoying up the giant ship of the United Nations. This is the most basic support of the United Nations. Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar recognized this clearly.

He valued all those who worked closely with him. On his first day, he paid greetings to each and every employee of his staff, even including the messengers. He gave up his private elevator privileges and used the ordinary elevator along with the

rest of the staff, much to everyone's astonishment.

It is when you work with a person that you come to know his or her true character.

At the final general assembly before his retirement, all the diplomats present, usually so calm and controlled, rose to give him a standing ovation. It was completely unplanned — a spontaneous outpouring of warmth and affection that seemed to go on forever.

The usually reserved secretary-general was deeply moved, nodding in acknowledgment. It was a moment of triumph for the quiet man named Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.

1. "Chief of U.N. Lifted Body's Reputation; Retired Pérez de Cuéllar Can Reflect on Diplomatic Success," *The Washington Post*, Jan. 1, 1992.

## The Student Files

**Name:** Francisco Palacio  
**School:** Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale  
**Major:** Animation  
**City:** Fort Lauderdale, Fla.



They call it computer art; I call it fun. Ever since I was a kid I have loved to put things together (Lego Blocks, etc.), and now I'll be making a living doing it for the rest of my life.

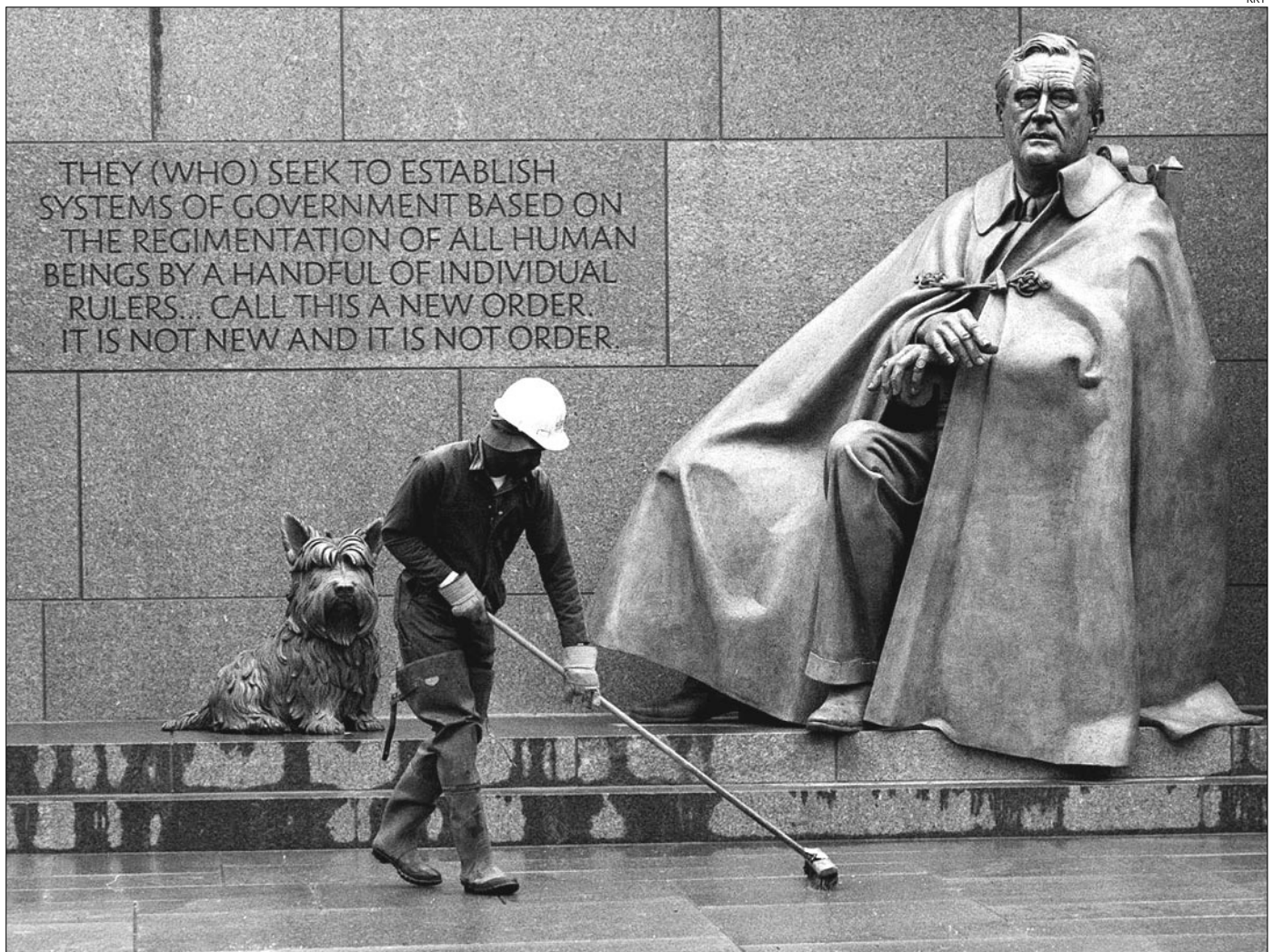
My Buddhist practice enables me to not only get good grades, but to be a happy person — thus affecting my environment in a positive way. (I chanted for the school's growth and there have been major changes.)

Up to this point, I've been shy about ex-

plaining my practice to friends at school. However, I know what is most important is to first make friends, to establish trust.

I've never stopped being a student, in the sense of SGI President Ikeda's guidance in the "Fresh Leaves" chapter of *The New Human Revolution* (vol. 4) for young people to read one or two books a month. However, after being a "dropout" for more than 12 years, I've great feelings of appreciation for being a student again.

# An Unconquered Spirit



A worker cleans in front of the memorial of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his beloved dog, Fala.

By STEVE A. FURMAN  
CHICAGO CORRESPONDENT

The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." These words spoken by Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882–1945), became the lifelong pursuit of an individual whom President Bill Clinton has called "The greatest president of this great American Century." Elected four times, he defined leadership and action.

On May 2, 1997, a 7.5-acre memorial honoring the 32nd president opened in the monumental core of our nation's capital. F.D.R. assumes his rightful place there among those other master architects of U.S. democracy: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. The memorial consists of four outdoor rooms, each one representing a term as president, and symbolizing the four freedoms outlined in his 1932 acceptance

speech: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

Many of F.D.R.'s inspirational quotes are sprinkled throughout the grounds, evoking the era as well as the man. Roosevelt died only months before the end of World War II, and a relief portraying his funeral can be seen in a small, quiet space between the third and fourth rooms. Carved in granite is his wish, "More than an end to war, we want an end to the beginning of all war."

Although physically disabled by polio in 1921 — forever confined to using crutches, braces or a chair — his unconquered spirit was the catalyst for the establishment of his New Deal policies. Social Security, the abolishment of child labor, and the setting of a minimum wage were but a few of his humanitarian achievements. The Work Projects Administration — which he initiated as an antidote to the rampant unemployment brought about by the Great Depression — at one time or another employed 8 million individuals. Skilled laborers were used to erect schools, libraries, city halls,

and other public buildings. Nearly 80 percent of the nation's top artists, writers and musicians were paid for their creative skills by the WPA.

F.D.R. felt that effective political leadership in a democracy was synonymous with teaching. Press conferences were held in a "schoolroom," his plan was called a "textbook" and his speeches were informal "seminars." In his famous "fireside chats," he explained in everyday language the nation's problems, and outlined specific courses of action. Through these talks he forged unique and lasting bonds with the American people.

Despite his detractors — and there were many — the common person loved and respected Roosevelt. He was often at easy access to the public and emerged unharmed from a 1933 assassination attempt. The bullet killed Anton J. Cermak, mayor of Chicago.

Just before his death, Roosevelt offered the American people this final counsel: "The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with strong, active faith." ■