

World Tribune

No. 3191

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

MAY 30, 1997

Photo by JONATHAN WILSON

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

DATED MATERIAL: PLEASE DELIVER BY ISSUE DATE



Vicki Sheppard, who volunteers on the Board of Directors for the Germantown, Pa., Boys and Girls Club, spends some time with Dontia Sellers.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Members Put Volunteerism Into Action

By DAVE SHADOVITZ
PHILADELPHIA BUREAU CHIEF

Buddhism teaches that no human being can exist in a state of total isolation; instead we congregate and live by supporting and helping one another.

— The New Human Revolution, vol. 1, p. 154

It was a chilly, overcast day as President Bill Clinton, former presidents Gerald Ford and George Bush and retired Gen.

Colin Powell gathered in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, where the Declaration of Independence was adopted. There in late April they signed "America's Promise to Youth," a document committing resources to helping 2 million young people.

The signing was part of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, a three-day event that encouraged Americans to volunteer their time to assist at-risk youngsters. Mr. Clinton told those attending that the problems facing young people "can only be

solved when there is a one-on-one connection, community by neighborhood, street by street, home by home, with every child in America."

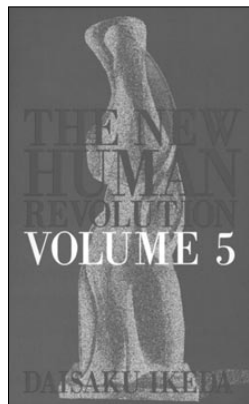
In many respects, this theme and others expressed at the summit echoed challenges set by General Director Zaitzu for 1997, including for the SGI-USA to become an organization rooted in the community.

For those in the SGI, volunteerism is as much a part of their lives as doing gongyo and chant-

ing daimoku. Every day, members diligently exert themselves to help others by visiting fellow members, chanting daimoku with them, sharing experiences and participating in other SGI-USA activities. Such volunteerism affects society on the most fundamental and profound levels.

But for certain members, the spirit of volunteerism doesn't stop there. In some cases, they may volunteer double-digit hours each week assisting children in

PLEASE SEE VOLUNTEERS, 4



'New Human Revolution' Vol. 5 Just Published

The fifth volume of *The New Human Revolution*, Daisaku Ikeda's novelized history of the movement for kosen-rufu throughout the world, has just been published in English by the SGI-USA.

Volume 5 comprises four chapters: "Trailblazing," "Joy," "Victory" and "Lion," which have been serialized in the *World Tribune*. Volume 5 recounts the continuing efforts of the newly inaugurated third president of the Soka Gakkai,

Shin'ichi Yamamoto (the name of Mr. Ikeda's character), to solidify the structure of the organization for kosen-rufu in Europe as well as in Japan.

Among the many valuable insights the reader can find in this passage from the "Joy" chapter, where Shin'ichi responds to questions about how to carry out kosen-rufu in Europe among a society steeped in a Judeo-Christian tradition:

"The most important thing,"

Shin'ichi replied, "is to initiate dialogue. Refusing to talk with other religions because they do not share our beliefs is cowardice. Though their religious beliefs and tenets may be different from ours, if they are genuinely committed to religion, they will desire world peace and be thinking seriously about the happiness of humanity. That spirit has much in common with Buddhism. Our task is to bring

PLEASE SEE NEW BOOK, 6

VOICES

What does being a Buddhist mom mean to you?

Members from Atlanta Joint Territory respond:

[Being a Buddhist mom] is a bitter-sweet experience. Although your children may not necessarily follow your dreams and your wishes, it is important to see the world through their eyes. Raising children has taught me what kind of person I need to be and has built a tremendous amount of character in my life. It's like looking in a mirror.

— MARIA BAYS, Atlanta



[Being a Buddhist mom] means looking in the heart of my child, helping her become all that she can become. It means chanting daimoku, keeping the family balanced and continually developing myself.

— DAMITA STEVENS, Atlanta



[Being a Buddhist mom] means being dedicated to my human revolution, for myself and for my daughter. I want to show her, through my actions, how to live humanistically.

— STORMI EPPS, Atlanta



Being a mom in general means teaching by example. Allowing my child to see the power of the Gohonzon through me, my life, and smiling and laughing with him every day is what being a Buddhist mom is all about.

— DEBORAH HARRIS, Atlanta

It means to always reflect, on our lives, on our actions. It means to see my children as individuals. It means not hurting their hearts. It means fortune.

— VICKI WUJCIK, Atlanta

[Being a Buddhist mom] means listening to them even when I disagree. I always chant for their protection.

— DEBORAH HILL, Atlanta

The amount of daimoku I chant definitely makes a difference in my child's behavior.

— JESSICA LEIBOWITZ, Atlanta

“[Being a Buddhist Mom] is the hardest and most rewarding job in the world. I'm glad that I am able to practice this Buddhism. I want my children to have hope, pride and confidence, and consideration for others. My dream for my children is for them to be happy and appreciate life.”

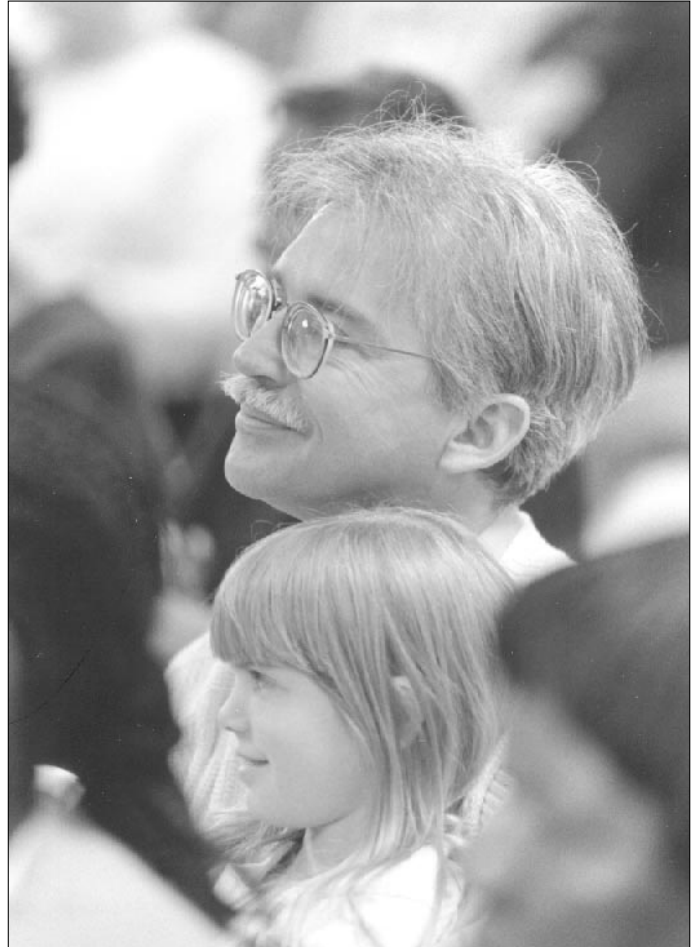
— JANICE BROWN, Atlanta

Each week (except when we run “Question of the Month”), members of one joint territory will respond to a question on life, Buddhism or the organization. If you have ideas about questions we can ask for either “Voices” or the “Question of the Month,” please write to us at: World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90401. Or on e-mail: SokaNews@aol.com. Thank you for your support.

Expressions

Together

Photo by ROB HENDRY



Father and daughter enjoy a recent Boys and Girls Group event in Washington, D.C., Joint Territory. A conference May 15-18 at the Florida Nature and Culture Center brought together Boys and Girls Group coordinators from around the country to share ideas and experiences and to discuss plans to improve activities.

World Tribune

(ISSN-0049-8165)

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

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

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

♻️ Printed on 100% recycled paper

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**WORLD TRIBUNE
MAILBOX**

Tapping the Talent

I was reading the latest issue of the *World Tribune* (May 9) yesterday evening. The editorial ("You Can Give a Good Lecture") interested me. Within the last few months a headquarters leader and I had a discussion about Goshu lectures. We are both concerned about the inconsistent quality of lectures within our local organization. He is particularly concerned that the headquarters leaders are already so overburdened by their administrative responsibilities that they have insufficient time and energy to prepare adequately for the lectures that they give. I am particularly concerned that the capabilities of many members are underutilized.

Our discussion came to an impasse because he informed me that the direction from the national organization is that only joint territory leaders should give Goshu lectures. He said that in our local Boston organization, the joint territory leaders had requested that territory and headquarters leaders assist them with this responsibility. I suggested to him that perhaps the local joint territory had too narrowly interpreted the national headquarters' direction regarding Goshu lectures, and that he might want to contact the Organization Department for clarification. I'm not sure whether he did or not, but the editorial seems to suggest that those in other-than senior leadership roles could be given an opportunity to lecture.

There is a plethora of articulate and intelligent members in our area who do not necessarily have a senior leadership assignment or a leadership assignment at all. Many of these members are advanced-level Study Department members with strong seeking minds, pure faith and rich experiences. Many of them are currently in or recently transitioned from the youth division. I believe the membership would greatly benefit from hearing their voices and perspectives. I vote to give these members opportunities to develop and share lectures with the membership.

— CLAUDINE MUSSUTO, Somerville, Mass.

Editor's Note: According to the Study Department, there is no nationwide guideline concerning who can be a lecturer. It's up to each joint territory to come up with the best study plan for that area and tap the talent in the membership to find the best lecturers.

Tackling Divorce

The editorial "Moving Ahead After Divorce" (March 21 *World Tribune*) was very well done. For all the reasons [*World Tribune*] printed the article, I commend you on tackling a most difficult subject with common sense and courage.

The fact that the Mailbox included a rather interesting perspective related to the same subject gave the piece even more relevance.

— LLOYD FISCHER, Santa Monica, Calif.

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

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

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

To Celebrate Mother's Day Without Her

PERSPECTIVE

By ROSALYE A. SETTLES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

From the tiniest kindergarten student to the chief executive officer of a major corporation, Mother's Day is the time to acknowledge the woman whose unlimited and unselfish acts made life's trials more bearable and life's triumphs much sweeter. It is a pleasant holiday; that is, until your mother dies, and you become a mere observer in the annual celebration of motherhood.

For several friends and I who have lost our mothers, Mother's Day is a bittersweet time when we must survive an onslaught of emotions that can leave us feeling alone and overwhelmed. Although we are always aware of our mothers' absences, on the second Sunday in May we are painfully reminded all day long that we are no longer "Mama's baby," but motherless daughters. There are no decision to make about which gift to buy or which card would be just right. There is no one to call on the telephone and no one to visit and simply say, "Thanks for all you've done."

With hope and courage in our hearts, we endeavor to remain composed as the world screams at us to remember a woman whom we can never forget. We hold our heads high and our shoulders back and try to be the strong and mature women our mothers envisioned we would be.

For the past few years, my friend Cathy and I have called each other on Mother's Day morning. I don't know how this ritual started, but it's one that we have maintained since our mothers passed. Our Mother's

Day Call has become a way to check in with each other and how we are feeling. It is comforting and reassuring to know that someone else understands what it means to be without your mother on that special day. I can cry via fiber optics, if I need to. The Mother's Day Call is a gift that Cathy and I exchange.

After our call, Cathy and I begin our journey through the day. In a sense, we are small children again, learning to

ical characteristics like hair and eye color.

Several women who have been motherless daughters for a while tell me that living through and beyond Mother's Day gets easier as time goes by. The pain never disappears, they say — living with the void just becomes easier. You move forward, take risks and console yourself when you stumble. I am confident that many future Mother's Day mornings will find Cathy and me waking up without feeling battered in body and spirit.

This year my first Mother's Day Call was to my friend Pam, whose mother died just last December (your first Mother's Day without your mother is the toughest). I left her a message on her machine, but the real message was unstated: I care, and you're not alone. Someone else knows how it feels to be without Mom on Mother's Day. She called to thank me the next day.

May 11, 1997, marked my seventh Mothers' Day without my mother. Each day, and especially on Mother's Day, the silent prayer for the deceased reminds me that the parent-child bond is never severed. I continue to chant for my mother's happiness, secure in the knowledge that my daimoku is elevating her life condition. Through my practice I have turned my grief into appreciation. I realize that I was fortunate to have known my mother until I was 30. Since her passing, I courageously try to live in a way that would make her proud to call me her daughter.

As Monday morning dawned, Cathy, Pam and I awoke and walked out into the world with a purposeful stride toward our destinies, a little prouder and a little stronger. We know our mothers, Helen Boston, Sylvia Perkins and Effie Robinson, would not have it any other way. **W**

I courageously try to live in a way that would make her proud to call me her daughter.

walk, except this time we must master new skills without our mothers to catch us.

I was fortunate enough to reach adulthood before my mother died. I can only imagine how painful it must be for daughters denied the opportunity to know their mothers. I became acutely aware of this when I married a widower with three daughters, the youngest of whom was less than 2 years old when his wife died. She has no memory of her mother's voice or the warmth of being cuddled by the person her sisters knew as Mom.

I imagine not knowing the woman who nurtured you early in life leaves you with a knot in your heart. Other people have to answer simple questions about your mother's favorite foods, or whether the two of you shared things beyond phys-

What Do You Think?

Please write to us and let us know your thoughts on the World Tribune. What articles do you like or dislike? Which types would you like to see more of, less of? Do you have ideas to make the paper better? Do you have questions you'd like answered? Would you like to get involved in your local area? We welcome all letters at: Mailbox, World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

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VOLUNTEERS, FROM PAGE 1

school. In other cases, they may work side-by-side with children in the community or lend a helping hand to seniors.

Yet while these volunteers may differ in what they do, they share at least one thing — a belief that they get as much out of their efforts as those on the receiving end.

A Win-Win Situation

“There’s a long tradition of seeing volunteering as a form of charity, based on altruism and selflessness,” explains Susan J. Ellis, president of the nonprofit organization Energize Inc., an international training and consulting firm specializing in volunteerism based in Philadelphia. “The best volunteering does involve the desire to serve others, but this does not exclude other motivations as well.... Instead of considering volunteering as something you do for people who are not as fortunate as yourself, begin to think of it as an exchange.”

Miki Yoshida, a member in Westminster, Calif., has apparently found that to be the case. “Volunteerism is about caring for other people,” she says. “By volunteering your time, you expand your horizon.”

Ms. Yoshida has spent time during the past year working with seniors at Leisure World, a senior citizen community based in Laguna Niguel, Calif. “They enjoy the time I spend with them,” she reports, “and I get a lot out of it, too.”

She notes that the volunteer work she does never fails to encourage her. “Much like doing a home visit, I always leave with a feeling of fulfillment,” says the young women’s division headquarters leader.

Roughly 3,000 miles away in Clifton, N.J., Irma Gorham devotes more than 10 hours a week to volunteering, much of it in nearby Patterson. “If I don’t have a [Buddhist] activity,” she says, “I’m doing some form of volunteer work.”

For Women’s History Month, Ms. Gorham — noticing Patterson wasn’t doing anything related to the event — helped organize food assistance and job training for 125 homeless women. Other SGI-USA members participated in the effort as well.

In addition, Ms. Gorham recently spent time helping young people understand the importance of voting. Along with two other SGI members, she went door to door in the Patterson area to talk with young people be-



(Above) Miki Yoshida, here with her friend Esperanza Hollis, volunteers at Leisure World in Laguna Niguel, Calif. Ms. Yoshida says after volunteering she always feels a sense of fulfillment. (Below) Irma Gorham, who spends about 10 hours per week volunteering in various capacities, speaks at a Women’s History Month function.



tween the ages of 18 and 23 about the importance of registering to vote and voting.

Ms. Gorham, who works for the New York City Housing Authority and has been doing volunteer work for more than 10 years now, hopes that the Presidents’ Summit encourages more people to volunteer their time. She feels that Americans are becoming more open to the idea.

“People started to think that they would have to be paid to volunteer their time in the late 1980s,” she recalls, “that they have specific skills so they should be paid for it. But now I get a sense that there’s more of an attitude that we’re all in this together.”

Ms. Gorham says she encourages other members who have extra time to participate as well. “I told them that this is your community, too,” she says. Some people, she notes, have been hesitant to join in because they feel that they may lack strong communication skills, but “I explain to them that volunteering isn’t necessarily high profile. You can fold and stuff envelopes. You can make calls.”

Striking the Right Balance

Not surprisingly, one of the biggest challenges for anyone interested in volunteering is striking the right balance between volunteer work and other activities.

Vicki Sheppard of Philadelphia, who has been volunteering her time in some capacity for the past eight years, admits that that’s sometimes easier said than done. “I think there are some things that are simply worthwhile doing, or I push myself past my own limitations,” says Ms. Sheppard, who besides being a women’s division district chief recently joined the board of directors for the Boys and Girls Club in the area. “I say to myself, ‘If I attend this meeting, I’ll be able to get some information that might help the kids.’ So even if I’m tired, I’ll push myself to do it — and I’m always glad I did.”

Ms. Sheppard notes that her Buddhist practice was the key to her efforts. “Because of the brick walls you keep running into, a lot of people simply give up,” she says. “It’s frustrating to see children not getting the care they need and to see progress come slowly. But my practice has taught me to look at things for the long haul. You have to keep making causes.”

At the same time, she adds, her practice has allowed her to be-

PLEASE SEE VOLUNTEERS, NEXT PAGE

Photo by KEVIN LYDEN

Photo by JONATHAN WILSON



Vicki Sheppard (center) hopes the Presidents' Summit will get the word out about the importance of volunteerism.

VOLUNTEERS, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

come more compassionate as a person.

Because Ms. Sheppard lives in Philadelphia, where the Presidents' Summit was held, she had the opportunity to participate in the event. She hopes that the summit will help get the word out about the importance of volunteerism, especially as it relates to young people.

"We have to talk about it more," she says. "It's good to see the president and movie stars talking about it. But there has to be more exposure in the media and television, because that's what people respond to."

Links to Daily Life

While it's certainly not essential, these volunteers say, it helps to have your volunteer work tied in some way to other aspects of your life. In the case of Linda Delmar of Southern California, who enjoys writing, much of her volunteer work involves children and arts.

Ms. Delmar has participated in a group called Volunteers in Public Schools since 1987 and has participated in a Creative Writing Workshop sponsored by the Public Corp. for the Arts since 1996. For the latter, she has applied her skills as a short story writer to read her works at area Latino events. Her stories talk about growing up in the barrio.

"I love meeting people," Ms. Delmar says. "In fact, I thrive on it. I love the sharing of ideas, and many of the ideas [I hear in my volunteer work] I bring back to the SGI organization."

She says she specifically chooses activities she can include her children in. "Sometimes I might have to arrange for baby-sitting, but usually my children go along with me to all my activities," Ms. Delmar says. "I feel it is important for me to teach them about the importance of getting involved with the community, and I do so by taking them with me."

She points out that the very first Boys and Girls Group activity she helped coordinate was a beach clean-up. Since then, several such clean-ups have taken place, with one more planned for this June.

"I feel that every person has to feel it in their own heart to get off the couch and do something," she says. "But a person shouldn't feel obligated; a person should feel joyful doing something for others."

Likewise, Denise Mercherson of Chicago believes that having some overlap with what one does for a living can be helpful. Ms. Mercherson, a lawyer with the Chicago Board of Education, is involved with Imagine Chicago, which describes itself as "a bold experiment that invites youth, community leaders, and ordinary citizens to engage in a structured dialogue on their own dreams and the city's future, and then become part of a positive movement toward progress."

One of Imagine Chicago's projects is to create more inter-generational sharing in the Chicago school system, a project the SGI-USA's Culture Department has been involved in.

Personally, Ms. Mercherson has devoted time to tutoring young lawyers who are studying

to take the bar exam. "I enjoy giving to others what's been given to me," says Mercherson, who reports she took the bar twice before passing. "I find great satisfaction in taking the time to help someone anticipate what might be on the exam."

Ms. Mercherson adds that she's been able to transfer a lot of what she's learned about nourishing one-on-one relationships in her SGI activities to the volunteer work she now does. "I've been able to make a connection with these individuals so I can give them the confidence to help them advance," she says.

She believes the subject of volunteerism should come up more in school, suggesting it needs to be incorporated in the social studies program. "It's important for building character," she says.

In general, suggests consultant David C. Forward, volunteers share certain attributes. After interviewing employee volunteers from around the country for his book *Heroes After Hours*, he said he found these four often crop up: they are incredibly busy people, even before their volunteerism involvement; they are results oriented; they have the ability to motivate others; and they take enormous personal satisfaction from the act of serving others.

But the author also added that one other theme emerged from his interviews as well: "That one person can make a difference." For those members volunteering their time and energy to help others in their communities, it's the difference that makes it worth the while.

Finding the Right Opportunity

OK, you want to volunteer in addition to your SGI-USA activities. But how do you find the opportunity that's right for you?

Susan J. Ellis of Energize Inc. says the key to finding the volunteering opportunity that best matches your needs is to first ask the right questions, including:

— **What causes or issues matter the most to me?** Do you know what organizations address these issues in your community? Do you think they are doing a good job and deserve your support? Have you, in fact, already given them a financial donation?

— **Do I want to volunteer for something that uses the skills I apply in my paying work or do I want to do something completely different?** What types of things are you good at? These can be professional skills or even hobbies and recreational talents. Almost every type of skill is needed somewhere. The better you are at explaining exactly what you can offer, the easier it will be to find the right type of volunteer work for you.

— **What would I most like to learn by volunteering?** As a volunteer, you have the freedom to experiment with new activities. Is there

something you wish you had the opportunity to learn?

— **What don't I want to do as a volunteer?** It's OK to identify certain things you want to avoid as a volunteer. The happier you are about what you will be doing, the better you will be as a volunteer.

— **Do I want an ongoing, regularly scheduled assignment, or a short-term assignment, or a one-time assignment?** Some volunteer assignments do require a lot of time. But others can be accomplished in a short time. More and more organizations are designing volunteer work that can be done in the evenings and on weekends, and in short bursts of intense time.

— **Am I willing to participate in a training course or do I want to start my volunteer work immediately?**

— **How do I find information about volunteer opportunities?** See if your community has a "volunteer center," "voluntary action center" or "volunteer bureau" (try the phone directory) that is a clearinghouse for information about volunteer opportunities. If you can't find an organization that does the work you want most to do as a volunteer, maybe you should found a new agency.

Do You Volunteer in Your Community?

In addition to work, family and SGI-USA activities, do you find other ways to contribute to your community? We'd like to hear your story and maybe share it with others in our "Profiles" section. Write and tell us briefly who you are, how you volunteer in your community and how your Buddhist practice helps you. Please include your address and daytime phone number. You can reach us at "Profiles," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401. Or e-mail: SokaNews@aol.com.

SGI President Interviewed for Documentary on Zhou Enlai

COURTESY SGI NEWSLETTER
Shanghai, May 14

To celebrate the centennial next year of the birth of the late, great Chinese premier, Zhou Enlai (1898–1976), Chinese television is producing a biographical documentary. The program will feature reminiscences and anecdotes of those who shared close or meaningful ties with Zhou Enlai.

SGI President Ikeda was asked to contribute to the program and taped an interview this afternoon with the producer, Zhou Erjun, who is related to the late Chinese leader.

On camera, Mr. Ikeda recounted how he met with the premier in Beijing on the evening of Dec. 5, 1974 — a little more than a year before his death. At a farewell banquet on his second China visit, the SGI leader recollected, he was called aside by the late president of the China-Japan Friendship Association, Liao Changzhi, who unexpectedly informed him that Mr. Zhou was waiting to see him. They then made their way by car to the hospital where the ailing premier was being treated.

Despite his illness, the 76-year-old premier was up and dressed to greet the young Soka Gakkai president three decades his junior with a firm handshake. The two had regularly exchanged messages for 10 years through mutual friends and associates.

Moving on to China's development and the international arena, Mr. Zhou voiced his belief that the last 25 years of this century would be of vital importance to China and that the countries of the world should strive to advance henceforth in a spirit of mutual respect and support. He also expressed a strong desire to see an early conclusion to negotiations on the

China-Japan Peace and Friendship Treaty — an agreement that was finally signed four years later in 1978.

Lauding the broad overview of history and world affairs, the penetrating insight into the human condition, and the phenomenal grasp of facts and figures possessed by this gentle yet iron-willed leader who selflessly devoted his life to serving the people, Mr. Ikeda compared Zhou Enlai to a latter-day Chuko K'ung-ming, the brilliant and heroic prime minister who appears in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. In a world where all too many leaders pursue only their own interests, the SGI president declared, Premier Zhou's dedication to the people is truly an exemplary model for leaders everywhere, embodying as he did the bodhisattva spirit.

President Ikeda said that Premier Zhou showed great generosity to Japan by declining to seek reparations after World War II, believing that the Japanese people were just as much victims of Japanese militarism as the Chinese and that to seek reparations would only inflict further suffering. For this reason, Mr. Ikeda asserted, the Japanese must never forget the profound debt they owe Zhou Enlai and the Chinese people.

Mr. Ikeda also said that he enjoyed numerous meetings with the premier's wife, Madame Deng Yingchao. On one occasion, Madame Deng said with regret that she and her husband had never had their photo taken together under the two cherry trees in their garden at home before one tree withered and died. Today, at Soka University, a cherry tree has been dedicated to Zhou Enlai, and another pair of cherry trees dedicated to the Chinese couple grow beautifully together. ❧

it, I am determined to continue to record, to the limits of my ability, the diamondlike, genuine path of mentor and disciple, and depict the grand portrait of glory created by the precious children of the Buddha as they have advanced with the dream of worldwide kosen-rufu, just as Nichiren Daishonin taught."

The New Human Revolution, vol. 5, will soon be available at all SGI-USA bookstores, and can be mail-ordered (MO#0605; price: \$10.00). ❧

NEW BOOK, FROM PAGE 1

forth the inherent goodness in people's hearts and, based on the concerns we share as human beings, work together in our own capacities for peace and happiness."

Near the conclusion of his introduction to this proposed 30-volume work, Mr. Ikeda shares the following thoughts: "I have taken writing *The New Human Revolution* as my life's work. In



On March 22, Miles Tarver (l) and Quincy Lewis of Minnesota celebrate as time runs out against UCLA.

Not His Final Final Four

By BERNADETTE NICHOLSON
CORRESPONDENT
Oakland, Calif.

I intend to come back to the Final Four next year, and when I come back, we're going home with the whole thing. I don't think we're going to be content with just going to the Final Four!

— Miles Tarver

Miles Tarver, who is finishing his sophomore year at the University of Minnesota, has recently undergone the opportunity of a lifetime — a chance to compete in the NCAA Basketball Championship Tournament.

Out of 64 teams chosen to play in the prestigious tournament from hundreds of colleges nationally, the focus comes down to the Final Four. The two elimination games are sometimes more exhilarating and suspenseful than the championship game.

Miles, a reserve forward, is the player many remember dancing with CBS-TV sports announcer Al McGuire when the Minnesota Golden Gophers beat former champion UCLA to make it to the Final Four. At the big game on March 29 against defending champ Kentucky, besides his nine rebounds, Miles will best be remembered for his never-give-up spirit, scoring the last basket of the game when it appeared that some players had given up.

Miles is the son of Mary Miles, a 24-year SGI-USA member and vice headquarters leader in Miles' hometown of Oakland, Calif. Miles himself began chanting 15 years ago at age 5 because he wanted to "feel happy."

At age 10, he began to play basketball when his peers pressured him to be on their team because of his height. Miles turned out to have a great deal of skill. In fact his high school team, which starred now Phoenix Suns guard Jason Kidd, went on to win the state championship two years in row.

Miles then attended Maine Central Prep Institute before entering the University of Minnesota to play for Coach of the Year Clem Haskins. Their team won the division championship.

"Our team had obstacles all year long," Miles said. "The biggest one was convincing the nation we were a good team and capable of beating anyone. Personally, I had to overcome my mood changes during the season. I would chant to boost my spirits. During the school year, I experienced many ups and downs. My chanting helped me lift myself out of my down times."

Seven years earlier, Miles' mother overcame a critical battle with breast cancer using her Buddhist practice. She traveled to Puerto Rico, Kansas City, San Antonio and Indianapolis to support him in this tournament. Even though they sometimes had only a few minutes, Miles and Mary

would spend their time together before each game chanting daimoku.

"Seeing my mother sick when I was 14 made me feel so helpless because I really couldn't do anything for her," Miles said. "Right now it feels good to be able to give her something back emotionally. Now she's having real fun with it. It's great. She's my support system. She's the No. 1 woman in my life!"

When the family came through that hurdle, Miles had learned a great deal and had much appreciation for his mother. "I learned that anything is possible through hard work and a strong determination," he said. "Practicing Buddhism has shown me that all goals are attainable."

And what about the future? As he mentioned, Miles is definitely determined to win in next year's Final Four, saying that he was buoyed by the possibility of winning the NCAA championship this year. "You strive to be recognized as the best, but nothing beats winning it all," he said.

Miles, a theater major, would like to play pro basketball. But whether or not he plays, he says, "My determination for the future is to continue to practice Buddhism, for it can help to make every day pleasant and more enjoyable than the last. And happiness is my ultimate goal."

Another chance to win the NCAA championship next year might help a bit, too.... ❧

Eisuke Akizuki said apologetically: "First lunch and now this. I'm very sorry."

Yusuke Yoshikawa murmured, "When I explained to them how to prepare the noodles, they said they understood...."

Shin'ichi was the first to pick up a fork and taste the noodles.

"If you just pretend they're supposed to be eaten this way, they're quite edible," he said. "Admittedly, though, they do seem to be missing something."

Though the group enjoyed a pleasant meal, the youth division leaders' hearts were heavy.

When they finished eating, Shin'ichi remarked that he wanted to have rice for breakfast again the following morning.

The youth leaders later gathered in Akizuki's room.

"That's twice in one day we've bungled it," Yoshikawa moaned. "We can't even prepare a meal. Some use we are! I feel so ashamed."

Hoping to make him feel better, Akizuki told him: "I think that President Yamamoto is trying to give us opportunities to challenge ourselves and grow, knowing full well that our capabilities still leave a lot to be desired. Actually, I think he's probably waiting to see how we respond when we do fail at some task."

Akira Kuroki nodded in agreement: "I think so, too. By suggesting we eat rice again tomorrow, he is definitely giving us another chance to prove ourselves."

"You're right," Akizuki said with a determined look. "Well, then, let's make tomorrow's breakfast a total success."

The next day, Feb. 1, the three rose before dawn to prepare the rice, praying fervently in their hearts for everything to go without a hitch. Their efforts paid off: The rice this time was perfect.

They joined Shin'ichi for breakfast in his room.

"This rice is fragrant with your sincerity," Shin'ichi said. "It's delicious. Really great. You did it!"

The youth division leaders were pleased and relieved.

"To err is human," Shin'ichi continued. "What matters is how you act when you do. We have to use our mistakes as springboards for growth and ensure that we definitely win in the end, never allowing ourselves to be defeated or disheartened under any circumstance."

"This rice is so good. Why don't we make some rice balls for our guide to eat?"

That day Shin'ichi and the youth division leaders went to visit the ruins of Ctesiphon on the east bank of the Tigris River, southeast of Baghdad.

The New Human Revolution

By HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 1

Treasure Land

Translation of parts 30–34 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.

The ancient city of Ctesiphon had been the capital of the Parthian empire and later the Persian Sassanid empire.

Shin'ichi and the others took a walk around the ruins of the palace, thought to have been built originally by Shapur I (241–272) of the Sassanid empire and extensively renovated by a later Sas-

sanid king, Khosrow I (531–579), in the 6th century. The structure featured a gigantic vaulted hall, the Taq Kisra, known also as "Khosrow's Arch," soaring to 120 feet at its highest point.

Nearby an elderly musician, his head draped with a long white cloth, was sitting on the road and playing a rabab, a square violin-like instrument.

As Shin'ichi Yamamoto stopped to listen, a number of young men and boys gathered around him. They were all friendly. When Eisuke Akizuki pointed his camera in their direction, they all smiled.

The clothes worn by the youth were dirt-stained, and the children were all barefoot. Though the government had undertaken initiatives to close the gap between rich and poor through a more equitable redistribution of land, as well as other leveling measures, it seemed that ordinary people's lives were still not easy by any means.

Asking the guide to interpret for him, Shin'ichi engaged the youngsters in conversation. First he explained that he had come from Japan, but none of them knew where that was.

Shin'ichi asked two of the younger boys what they wanted to be when they grew up. They promptly answered, "Soldiers!" and mimicked firing a gun.

The older youth told Shin'ichi that they made their living by selling clean drinking water and other goods to the tourists who came to see the ruins. All of them hoped for a better life.

Shin'ichi said: "It is only natural to want to live in comfort. If we really want to achieve this, then I feel it's essential we keep striving for self-improvement, working twice as hard as others."

"Let's take running a business, for example. You have to constantly ask yourself questions like what kind of products customers are seeking, how to secure better products, what kind of services you can offer that customers would welcome and appreciate. You have to think long and hard and be creative."

"Look at any country — those who succeed in life are always extremely serious, studying hard, making incredible efforts and are never afraid of hard work. "Iraq has vast, untapped reserves of oil. Unless the oil is drilled for, it cannot be used. In the same way, we each possess a diamond of happiness in our hearts that we can only uncover by making continuous efforts, never giving up or allowing ourselves to be discouraged. Such perseverance will give birth to wisdom and ingenuity, enabling us to break through any adversity."

"Everything comes down to your earnest determination. The harder you work, the greater success you are sure to savor. That's why I sincerely urge you to work hard and challenge yourselves with all your might."

Shin'ichi's audience — upright, honest-looking young men with well-defined features and strong, thick eyebrows — all listened intently.

"Are you a teacher?" one of the youth asked Shin'ichi. "Yes, I suppose you could say I'm a teacher."

"What kind of teacher?" "A teacher of life," Shin'ichi replied with a smile.

"How many students do you have?"

"Counting only youth, there are more than 600,000."

Their eyes widened in surprise.

"However, my school doesn't have a school house," Shin'ichi explained. "All of society and the wide world is where my students learn."

"What is the name of the school?"

"It's called the Soka Gakkai. There are no tuition fees or entrance examinations," he told them. Turning to the members accompanying him, he said, "These fellows here with me are all my students." He then introduced each of them.

"I am so happy to have talked with you," Shin'ichi said. "You may experience many difficulties and challenges in the course of your lives, but I want to leave you with these parting words: No matter what happens, please never lose hope or be defeated by your weaknesses."

"I will never forget you, as long as I live. Thank you for today. Take good care of yourselves."

The elderly musician, who had been listening to this exchange, then addressed Shin'ichi: "What you said was very good. I will play a song for you." Whereupon he filled the air with a light, graceful melody.

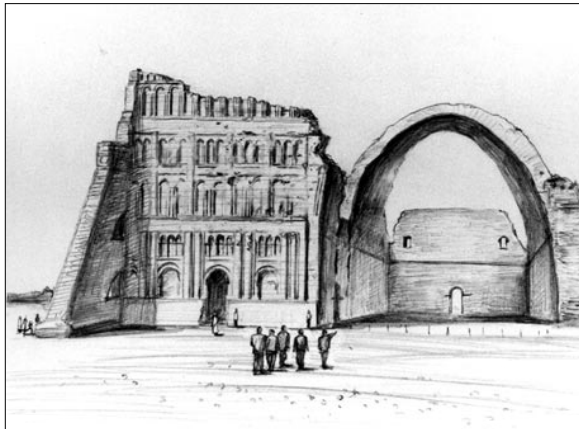
After thanking the musician for his sincere gesture, Shin'ichi took out some Japanese coins he had in his pocket and gave them to the young people as a small memento of their meeting. He shook hands with them all; then he and his companions resumed their sightseeing.

This unexpected encounter had proven a delightful interlude of heart-to-heart exchange.

The group next headed for the ruins of the ancient city of Babylon on the banks of the Euphrates River. The car continued south through the vast desert — a desert of barren earth rather than sand. There was nothing as far as the eye could see. People's homes were made of mud bricks and blended in with the scenery. Only the single road upon which they were traveling cut vividly across the landscape, stretching endlessly in a straight line ahead of them to the horizon.

Rain began to fall. Again and again, the car's wheels slipped and slid precariously on the wet dirt road.

After traveling about an hour and a half, they came to a section of brick wall next to a grove of date palms. They had



like what kind of products customers are seeking, how to secure better products, what kind of services you can offer that customers would welcome and appreciate. You have to think long and hard and be creative.

"Look at any country — those who succeed in life are always extremely serious, studying hard, making incredible efforts and are never afraid of hard work. "Iraq has vast, untapped reserves of oil. Unless the oil is drilled for, it cannot be used. In the same way, we each possess a diamond of happiness in our hearts that we can only uncover by making continuous efforts, never giving up or allowing ourselves to be discouraged. Such perseverance will give birth to wisdom and ingenuity, enabling us to break through any adversity."

"Everything comes down to your earnest determination. The harder you work, the greater success you are sure to savor. That's why I sincerely urge you to work hard and challenge yourselves with all your might."

PLEASE SEE TREASURE LAND, NEXT PAGE

TREASURE LAND, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

arrived at the ruins of Babylon.

The rain continued to fall. And no one had brought an umbrella.

The group strolled around the ruins of Babylon in the rain. The ancient city had been the capital of the first dynasty of Babylonia that flourished from the 19th through early 16th century B.C.E. This period saw the reign of King Hammurabi (1792–50 B.C.E.), best known for the code of law that came to bear his name.

After falling under the rule of the northern Mesopotamian kingdom of Assyria (and suffering complete destruction at the hands of invaders in 689 B.C.E.), Babylon was rebuilt during the Neo-Babylonian (Chaldean) empire (626–539 B.C.E.) that rose to power during the 7th century B.C.E. The empire reached its zenith under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 B.C.E.), who conquered Egypt and twice attacked Judah (Judea). After Judah's fall, Nebuchadnezzar deported its Jewish inhabitants to Babylonia. This exile, during which the Jews were subjected to cruel forced labor, came to be known as the Babylonian Captivity and is generally considered to have lasted approximately 60 years.

The Tower of Babel of Old Testament fame, a soaring tower built, as legend has it, to launch an assault on heaven — and which became a symbol of human arrogance and folly — is also thought to have been located in ancient Babylon.

At its peak, Babylon was a huge city fortified behind high walls with more than 100 entry gates. It was ringed by a canal that served as a moat. There were magnificent palaces and temples built of brick and decorated with colorful glazed tiles. Babylon's streets were laid out in an orderly grid pattern with dwellings arranged in neat rows.

It was also home to one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the hanging gardens of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar II is reputed to have built these gardens to en-

sure that his queen, Amytis, a native of Media, a kingdom in the lush, green highlands of northwest Iran, would not miss her homeland in the stark desert landscape of Babylon and its surroundings. According to one source, various fruit trees were planted on high, layered terraces and water



to irrigate them was drawn from the Euphrates by means of a water mill.

For all its splendor, the Neo-Babylonian kingdom, too, was later destroyed by the Persians in 539 B.C.E. Among the reasons for its fall were internal disputes and the treachery of temple high priests who, at odds with the king, conspired with the Persians. The king, in other words, had alienated the people. The people's hearts are an invisible force that underlies history. Winning people's hearts, therefore, leads to victory and eternal glory.

The ruins were indeed magnificent. The impressive brick ruins and well-ordered layout of the city allowed the group to envision its past splendor. It gave them a powerful sense of the inexorable workings of the rise and fall of civilizations.

At last the rain stopped and the sun's dazzling rays streamed through gaps in the clouds. Gazing at the ruins, Yusuke Yoshikawa said: "I read somewhere that ancient Mesopotamian ruins such as these had been buried under the earth since antiquity and that people living in the region thought the sites were merely hills."

Shin'ichi Yamamoto nodded. "That's right," he said. "But European explorers and archaeologists came here in the 19th century, stood on the top of the hills and claimed that the ruins of an ancient palace were lying underneath them. I'm sure the local people must have been very skeptical at first.

"However, when digging actually began, the walls and gates of a palace were uncovered. The excavation continued bit by bit and the ruins of Babylon were finally unearthed. This lost civilization had at last been awakened from its long slumber."

"There's a kind of adventure in uncovering ancient ruins, don't you think?" Akira Kuroki remarked, excitement in his eyes.

"Yes, there is certainly something exciting about unearthing past civilizations. But what we in the Soka Gakkai are trying to achieve now is a much greater adventure. Kosen-rufu is a movement to uncover the jewel of wisdom and power of goodness lying dormant within people's lives and thereby create a future civilization where peace and happiness reign. This is an unprecedented undertaking in human history. Let's devote our limited time here on earth, Mr. Kuroki, to achieving this momentous ideal."

The ruins of Babylon were bathed in golden sunlight.

It occurred to Shin'ichi that the same sun had continued to shine on Babylon throughout its periods of prosperity and decline. Compared to the sun's unchanging brilliance, human affairs were often vain and fleeting.

No matter how advanced a civilization may be, unless the people who comprise it reject the barbarity of war, it will eventually decline. How dark is the history of slaughter and changing fortunes, this tragic karma of humanity.

But the dawn of the sun of Buddhism, the great law of life, can dispel that darkness and allow the world to shine throughout eternity as a golden treasure land.

Herein lay the mission of the Soka Gakkai.

The sun's timeless brilliance is due to how it blazes fiercely and brightly at every moment. Similarly, to devote one's life to one's mission means to keep the passion in one's heart blazing fiercely from moment to moment, to continually take action. The radiance of brilliant humanism produced by such a ceaselessly burning spirit will lead the way to a dawn of lasting peace.

(To be continued)

(This concludes "Treasure Land," chapter 1 of volume 6 of *The New Human Revolution*.)

'Treasure Land' Chapter Discussion Questions:

1. In parts 24–27 (May 23, 1997, *World Tribune*), Shin'ichi talks specifically about interfaith issues. What observations does he make about other world religions and their founders? How does he propose that religious differences be dealt with?

2. In parts 12–16 (May 9, 1997, *World Tribune*), Shin'ichi encourages a Japanese woman who is unhappy about having to relocate to Iran with her husband. Read these sections and discuss what they mean to you.

3. In parts 1–5 (April 11, 1997, *World Tribune*), what lessons does the meeting between Shin'ichi and Torazo Kawarazaki teach us regarding the Middle East (or about any other area of the world with which we are unfamiliar)? And what does Shin'ichi say to encourage Kawarazaki? What impressions and thoughts do you have as you consider the guidance Shin'ichi gives him, and Kawarazaki's reaction?

What do you think?

Do you find these study questions helpful? Please send comments and suggestions to:

'The New Human Revolution' Questions
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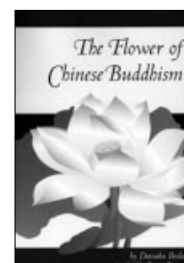
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Crisis Counselor Counts on Buddhism

Rodiste Dearing relies on her experience and training, as well as the wisdom and optimism she gains from her Buddhist practice

By PHIL SIMPSON
ATLANTA BUREAU CHIEF

Photo by LUCY ESTEPHANOS



On an emergency mental health hotline, Rodiste Dearing says, 'You have to understand that pain is pain no matter how small the problem may appear.'

People call us the 'Emotional SWAT Team' because of the work we do to save people," said Rodiste "Roxie" Dearing. Involved in emergency mental health for the past nine years, she supervises a crisis counseling hotline team in Atlanta.

"People call us for many reasons," she said. Some are experiencing problems with drugs, others with mental illness or depression. Many have serious relationship issues, are ill or even are facing old age and death. Many of the 50-100 calls her team receives each day from all over the state are suicidal.

She relies on her experience and training, as well as the wisdom and optimism she gains from her Buddhist practice. A 1974 graduate of DePaul University in Chicago, she received her master's degree in rehabilitation services. Two months later, in August 1974, she joined the SGI-USA.

When Ms. Dearing started her job with the hotline, she took a six-week training course on crisis counseling. She was surprised to see how close many of the ideas were to the common sense she already had discovered in Buddhism and the letters Nichiren Daishonin wrote to fellow believers.

"Because the people who call are in crisis, we have to instill hope and faith that things will get better," she says. "I always tell people you have to keep going, that the same ground you fall on you push yourself up from; that things will get better, and that winter never fails to turn

to spring, like in the Goshu."

She also sees parallels to the idea of human revolution, the process whereby people change themselves as they practice Buddhism.

"When people find themselves in trouble, they don't want to see the dark side of themselves," said Ms. Dearing. "Like with human revolution, I try to help people understand that they can take responsibility — that we have enough control over our lives to make them better. I try to

help them accept both the good and the bad in themselves, to feel their completeness."

The calls to her office in the Fulton County Department of Mental Health come from 911, private therapists, counseling centers and others. Often, Ms. Dearing finds herself in a car, going out to locate the people she talks to, or on the phone with agencies trying to find specialized help for a troubled person. She and her team also travel to local schools and businesses

where there has been a death or suicide to counsel the survivors.

Recently, a local elementary school principal died suddenly and her team went to counsel the teachers and students, who all were very fond of this principal.

"It is most difficult talking to young children, but the right words seem to come out," she said.

Relationships cause many people to suffer, and when it becomes unbearable, Ms. Dearing is likely to be the one who gets the call.

"I'm working right now with a 15-year-old little girl who is in the eighth grade," she said. "She has lost three people who were close to her recently. This girl doesn't know how to deal with it, how to grieve for her losses, and her mother is totally discounting the fact that her daughter is having suicidal thoughts due to this."

Ms. Dearing says that she chants to have a "Buddha's voice," to calm and give reassurance to the girl, and to others like her who are troubled by their circumstances. "I concentrate on my morning gongyo and daimoku to maintain a high life-condition all day," she says. "To hear a stranger say, 'Thanks,' makes my day."

As day supervisor for the 24-hour hotline, Ms. Dearing also is determined to treat each of the

four counselors on her shift with respect.

Gene Pope, who has worked for two-and-a-half years on the hotline staff, said that Ms. Dearing brings fairness and a non-judgmental attitude to her job as a supervisor.

"She brings a great deal to the picture," said Mr. Pope. "She is a very fair person, very objective. She is not judgmental, and if there's some problem, she looks at both sides."

The job of counseling others, Mr. Pope said, requires patience and a broad-minded attitude. "One thing that definitely must be in place is patience. You encounter quite a variety of persons

and attitudes, and you cannot look upon it as threatening. You have to look upon it as something that's reality."

Ms. Dearing puts it this way: "You have to understand that pain is pain no matter what how small that problem may appear to you. You can't minimize a person's problem — to them it's huge, and they want to be rid of the pain...."

"I try to communicate to them what I've learned from Buddhism: That you don't have to be a victim of your environment, that you can change it around and make it work for you."

I try to communicate to them what I've learned from Buddhism: That you don't have to be a victim of your environment, that you can change it around and make it work for you.

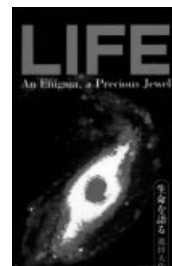
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SIGN POSTS APPLYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS TO DAILY LIFE

100 Million Eons of Effort

By JEFF FARR

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

If you exert a hundred million eons of effort in a single moment of life, the three enlightened properties of the Buddha will appear within you at each moment. (Gosho Zenshu, p. 790)

In his 1993 Harvard University lecture, SGI President Ikeda gave an easy-to-understand explanation of this passage. To "exert a hundred million eons of effort" means to tackle all our problems with everything we've got, he said. By meeting head-on the challenges these problems give rise to, not running away from them, he said that we bring forth the "three inherent properties of the Buddha," i.e., the wisdom from inside us that can guide us in the right direction.

I read President Ikeda's lecture when I was a student at Soka University in Japan. At the time, the problems my wife and I faced seemed overwhelming. They weren't challenges; they were just burdens. We had health problems, financial problems, family problems, work problems, school problems — and it was really cold there. I kept thinking I wanted to go back to America, but when I read this lecture I changed my mind. I imagined myself running a hundred million miles per hour into the cold wind of our problems — not away from them.

This passage kept echoing in my mind during my year in Japan. And eventually it happened: I started liking my problems. Not in the sense of wanting to hang on to them but in the sense of seeing them as challenges. In the end, every one of the problems transformed itself into a benefit I couldn't have imagined.

Recently at a student division meeting in Japan, President Ikeda shared how he engraved this passage in his heart when he was young. He encouraged the student division members to also live by this passage. Since being a student means facing a lot of problems all at once, it certainly seems appropriate. And since we're all students of life, I think this is a passage we can all live by.

Come on problems, I'm waiting. I'm ready to "exert a hundred million eons of effort" again. **WT**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON FAITH

Meaning of the Offerings

By TED MORINO

SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT CHIEF

Q Why do we offer water, evergreens, candles and incense to the Gohonzon or hit a bell during gongyo?

A One way the human spirit expresses itself is by the way we interact with our surroundings. As teenagers, we often declare our identity through our clothes, and express an affinity for our peers by the way we walk and talk. Over the years, each of us tends to develop a distinctive style that reflects our personal values and sense of being.

This sense of ourselves is reflected even in our smallest actions, such as the gentle way a parent pulls a child closer on a windy day or how someone puts aside personal needs to help a colleague. While this behavior might seem insignificant, these actions define who we are.

The offerings associated with the Buddhist altar likewise express our sincerity and commitment to developing the infinite potential within us. Nichiren Daishonin writes: "Whether you chant the Buddha's name, recite the sutra or merely offer flowers and incense, all your virtuous acts will implant benefits and good fortune in your life" (*The Major Writings*

of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 4).

However, it is also important to understand that offerings such as incense or evergreen are formalities based on tradition, not doctrine. As Nichiren Daishonin states in many writings, ultimately, our faith in the Gohonzon — or our sincerity and determination in the practice of faith — is what really counts. This kind of sincere faith is expressed through our behavior, including the act of making offerings. Maintaining traditional offerings to the Gohonzon is an eloquent statement of our desire to manifest the universal Law within our daily lives.

This is because when we care for the altar and make offerings to the Gohonzon, we are praising the life of Nichiren Daishonin and the Gohonzon. Since this same Buddha nature exists within us, we are also acknowledging the unlimited potential and source of boundless joy within our lives.

Each of the traditional offerings expresses a different aspect of this joy. For example, India, the birthplace of Buddhism, is a hot, dry country with limited water. It took considerable effort to draw water from a stream or river and carry it back home, where it was appreciated as necessary to sustain life. It was therefore traditionally offered to important guests as a sign of respect. In our practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, a cup of

water is offered to the Gohonzon from this point of view, showing our regard for the life of the true Buddha.

Evergreen, incense and candles also have traditionally been used as regular offerings to the Gohonzon. Evergreen, which remains fresh and vibrant throughout winter, indicates the pure and enduring life of the eternal Law and the supreme life of Buddhahood. Incense is burned to dignify and purify the immediate area around the Gohonzon with a pleasant fragrance. Candles were commonly offered to light the Gohonzon area, while the bell creates an offering of beautiful sound.

The time and effort to maintain this environment are our offerings to the Gohonzon. They are expressions of respect and appreciation. Since we offer them out of our seeking mind toward the Gohonzon and Nichiren Daishonin, the offerings also reflect our Buddha nature.

In an essay describing a story from the Buddhist scripture called "The Poor Woman's Lamp," President Ikeda writes: "It is not the material worth of an offering but the spirit behind it that counts... A mind which attaches importance even to the slightest matters and which loves and treasures even seemingly insignificant things can profoundly move people even through a small action" (*Treasures of the Heart*, p. 5). **WT**

STUDENT DIVISION ANNIVERSARY — JUNE 30

To Stand Up Against Injustice

By VALERIE THOMAS

SGI-USA STUDENT DIVISION CHIEF

Before the establishment of the SGI-USA student division this year, I was not aware of the significance of June 30, 1957, the day the student division was established in Japan. To better understand the student division's mission in the United States, I did some research.

The establishment of the student division in Japan coincided with events there that provided the opportunity for members to stand up against injustice. During this time, there was a conflict between the coal miners union and the SGI in Yubari. The union treated the members unjustly because they were supporting a political party the union did not support.

The youth division members in this area stood up to the union to dispute its unfair treatment of the members. President Ikeda was in Yubari supporting these members when the inaugural student division meeting occurred on June 30, 1957.

President Toda attended this meeting of the student division at the Azabu Public Hall in Tokyo. Although the announcement of the student division had been made more than a year before, the origi-

nal 190 student division members had located additional student division members and introduced new students to the practice. The success of their efforts resulted in 500 students gathering with President Toda to mark the establishment of the student division.

An account of this day in vol. 11 of *The Human Revolution* describes President Toda as very happy with the students' success in gathering for this meeting. He was especially pleased with the number of young women present.

"When all of you have assumed leading positions in society, you will no doubt completely overshadow those who are now being looked up to as its leaders," he said. "I earnestly hope that all of you will live up to my expectation."

The Human Revolution continues: "On that day, the student division of the Soka Gakkai set out on its journey. The sole remaining vacuum in the organization, for which Josei Toda had long been concerned, had finally been filled." President Toda died 10 months later.

I believe there is tremendous significance in the establishment of the student division in the United States exactly 40 years after it was formed in Japan. For many, their

years as students is a time to question many aspects of life, including religion and other issues in society. Supporting these members and providing the opportunity for them to understand their missions for kosen-rufu, can forever impact their futures.

There are also issues being addressed by members in the SGI today that mirror those that took place at that time in Japan — for example, standing up to the priesthood issue and the negative media coverage of the SGI. I believe the mission of the student division in the United States, as with all SGI members, is to again stand up for the common people's happiness.

The student division in Japan has become a division where members have deepened their faith and answer their questions on life. I believe the best way for SGI-USA members to respond to President Ikeda's expectations for the newly established SGI-USA student division is to similarly create a division where members are encouraged to seek answers to their questions, and fully challenge themselves in all aspects of their lives, as the youth did in Japan when standing up to the coal miners union.

This is what I will be reflecting on as I celebrate the 40th anniversary of the student division. **WT**

Opening the Way With Courage

The following is SGI President Ikeda's message sent to the Okinawa Women's Division Executive Conference, held at the Okinawa Training Center in Onnason, Okinawa, Feb. 26.

Our network for kosen-rufu continues to expand steadily throughout the world. And women — especially women's division members — are without a doubt the driving force behind this great momentum.

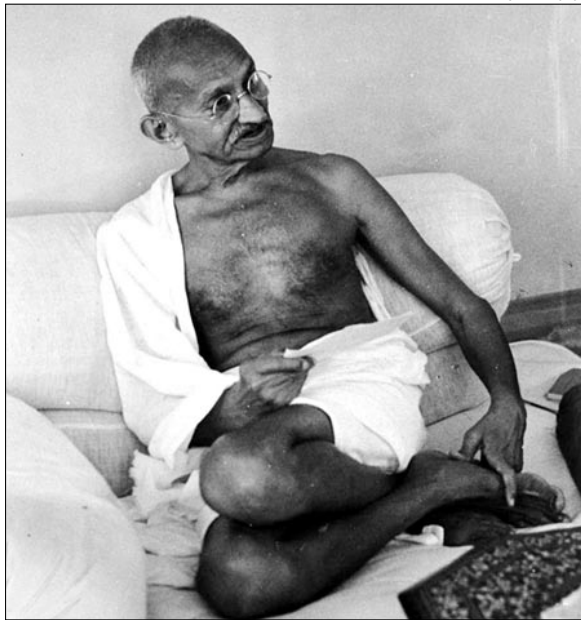
You, the women's division members of Okinawa, uniting together with division chiefs Tamae Nakama and Sadako Hisayama, have been working hard to contribute to human happiness and peace through the ideals of Buddhism. Through your tireless efforts — many of you travel long distances on foot to encourage members — you have forged a path of brilliant victory. Nichiren Daishonin surely knows of your sincere devotion. Boundless benefit and good fortune will pervade your lives throughout eternity. Your wonderful unity is truly a model for women's division members throughout Asia.

A Woman of Great Distinction

Speaking of women in Asia, I will always remember my meeting with Varsha Das, an SGI chapter chief in India. Ms. Das, who holds the important post of editor in chief and joint director of India's National Book Trust, has shown tremendous actual proof in society.

Ms. Das is active in a variety of fields. She is a noted authority on the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941); a linguist fluent in many languages; a journalist and an art critic. Holding a doctorate in education, she has also written a number of children's books and worked to improve adult literacy.

On the same day that the Bharat Soka Gakkai General Meeting was held last November, *The Pioneer*, one of New Delhi's leading English-language newspapers, carried a feature titled, "She treads the middle path," about Ms. Das and her activities. In the article, Ms. Das joyfully spoke of the greatness of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.



ARCHIVE PHOTOS

Born on Oct. 2, 1869, in Porbandar, India, religious and political leader Mahatma Gandhi stands as the most significant figure in the history of his country.

Help Those Who Have Suffered Most Become the Happiest

On a visit to Japan last year, Ms. Das presented me with a precious gift: a handwritten letter by Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948). Her mother, Labhu Mehta, received the Feb. 21, 1933, letter from Gandhi while he was in prison. Gandhi was then 63 and Ms. Das' mother, 15.

The young Labhu's parents struggled together with Gandhi in the movement for Indian independence. When he wrote this letter, Gandhi was incarcerated in Yeravda Jail in Poona [also Pune, a city to the southeast of Bombay]. The authorities were intent on oppressing and hurting this noble champion of justice.

While in prison, however, Gandhi launched a new campaign that has been hailed as one of the greatest social reform movements in history. He founded an organization whose aim was the liberation of those most severely discriminated against under India's caste system, and he started a paper called *Harijan*. The word *harijan* means "children of God," and expresses his burning inner conviction that the most oppressed must be treated most highly.

Gandhi, while at the very center of such a momentous historic struggle, took the time to write a letter of encouragement to the young Labhu Mehta. A genuine leader is ardently committed to

raising youth, to planting seeds of future victory in their hearts.

In the letter, which is written in Gujarati [today one of India's 15 main languages], Gandhi is extremely cordial, remarking, "A rural fellow like me finds your ordinary language so good." And responding with sincerity to a point that the young woman had sought his advice on, he writes, "I cannot tell you anything about your choice, so I can only say that it can be praised after seeing the result." These are strict words; but at the same time they are words of profound trust.

The important thing is to produce positive results. Once you set a goal, you have to produce results without fail. Gandhi did not dictate to the young woman but watched quietly and supportively over her activities and achievements.

Live Each Moment to the Fullest

Gandhi also cautions in the letter, "Make good use of every moment and keep an account." Life is precious and our time on earth limited. How can we put our time to the best possible use? How can we use it to create the greatest possible value? We must not miss opportunities or let time slip through our fingers.

Buddhism stresses the importance of a single life-moment (*ichinen*). The term "Thus Come One," another name for Buddha,

means "truth manifesting itself at each moment." It signifies the dynamic activity of life from moment to moment. Everything depends on a single life-moment. The power of faith enables us to get the most out of every moment of our lives, to keep advancing, to create value from everything, and to steer everything in a positive direction.

Gandhi further offers the penetrating observation that "a real lioness" can always "find the straight way out even in the midst of her sufferings." What wonderful words!

Engraving his message in her heart, the young woman struggled dauntlessly and led a life of splendid achievement.

"[My mother] chanted Nam-myoho-rence-kyo till the last moment of her life," Ms. Das wrote to me. "Today, she will be very happy to see that precious letter [from Mahatma Gandhi] in your hands." When I read these words, I pressed my palms together in deep respect and veneration.

Many thoughtful and conscientious people in India, a land with a rich spiritual heritage, look to the SGI with high expectations as an organization that is carrying on Gandhi's spirit. Let us redouble our efforts to sincerely reply to this trust.

Dr. B. N. Pande, a direct disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and vice chairman of the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti in New Delhi, has remarked that while Shakyamuni appealed to people to struggle with a spirit

of nonviolence, it was Gandhi who actualized this ideal in the form of a broad popular movement. He added that now it is the SGI, under the leadership of President Ikeda, which is carrying on this "struggle of the spirit" and developing a nonviolent movement against the oppression of war. Noting that the SGI leader's philosophy is reaching the hearts of many people throughout the world, Dr. Pande predicted that in the future many successors to Gandhi's legacy would appear.¹

Along with the handwritten letter from Gandhi, Ms. Das presented me with a book of Gandhi's quotations. Among them are two that I would like to share with you today in closing:

If one gives way to fear, even truth will have to be suppressed. The golden rule is to act fearlessly upon what one believes to be right.²

Our faith should be like an ever-burning lamp which not only gives us light but also illuminates the surroundings.³ ❏

1. From Dr. Pande's speech on Dec. 9, 1993, at the symposium commemorating the publication of Dr. N. Radhakrishnan's book, *Daisaku Ikeda: In Pursuit of a New Humanity*, in New Delhi, India.
2. *Great Lives, Great Words — Mahatma Gandhi*, ed. R. P. Dhasmana (New Delhi: Publications Division of India's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1994), p. 22.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

The World's Seven Blunders

Mahatma Gandhi attributed the violence that plagues the world to these seven delusions:

1. Wealth without work
2. Pleasure without conscience
3. Knowledge without character
4. Commerce without morality
5. Science without humanity
6. Worship without sacrifice
7. Politics without principles

Advancing Together on the Front Lines

The following is SGI President Ikeda's message to the Tokyo Chapter Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium in Sugamo, Tokyo, March 8.

To all of you, praiseworthy chapter chiefs and chapter women's division chiefs who are the mainstays and driving force of our great organization in Tokyo, I express my deepest and most heartfelt appreciation for your constant efforts.

I know being chosen to fulfill the important leadership responsibilities for the chapters in your respective areas at this crucial time is a great and daunting challenge. Yet at the same time it is a source of joy and pride that surely nothing else can match. All of your devoted efforts will become a golden history for you and your families and the cause for boundless good fortune throughout eternity. Please continue to advance with untiring good cheer and in high spirits.

In honor of today's meeting, I would like to share with you a historical anecdote about leadership.

Long ago, during the period of feudal warfare known as the Warring States period (1467-1568), Edo (now Tokyo) was not the most important city of eastern Japan. That distinction fell to Odawara (in present-day Kanagawa Prefecture).

Until Odawara fell to the invading warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi, it enjoyed great prosperity. Its first ruler of that period was Hojo Soun, followed by Hojo Ujitsuna and Hojo Ujiyasu in succession. During their rule, Odawara was more bustling and prosperous than Kyoto, the imperial capital. Culture and the arts flourished, and entertainers and artists from all over Japan flocked to Odawara. It was also an active trade center, with a substantial Chinese community.

Judging the Ability of Others

But the third Hojo ruler of Odawara, Ujiyasu, was not optimistic about his domain's future. There is a story that illuminates Ujiyasu's views.¹ One



Rising from obscurity in the chaos of post-Revolutionary France, Napoleon Bonaparte elevated himself from general to dictator of his nation in 1799, then conquered most of Europe during the Napoleonic Wars.

“
Napoleon once said that a leader is one who delivers hope. A genuine leader is one who points to hope and leads people toward it.
”

day, he was eating with his son, Ujimasa, who would succeed him as the fourth Hojo ruler. Suddenly Ujiyasu put down his chopsticks and lamented in a voice choked with tears: “Ah! The Hojo dynasty will end with me!”

The others in the room were taken aback. What did he mean? Ujiyasu replied: “My son just poured soup over his rice twice. He poured it once and ate some, then poured it again, saying ‘Not enough soup.’ Why didn’t he know from the start just how much soup he should pour on his rice?”

“He eats it twice a day, and still he doesn’t know the proper amount of soup to pour on his rice. How pitiful! How can such a person properly judge people’s capacity, something that requires a great deal more discernment? Will he know which person is best in what role? In our age of warring states, one cannot survive without superior personnel.

“If I were to die tomorrow, this domain would certainly be invaded by some shrewd general from another territory.”

The way someone eats his or her dinner may seem insignificant, but a master warrior can grasp the character and ability of others from just such details. This is because such an individual lives each day in utter earnestness, never wasting a single word or gesture, honing his or her entire being into the greatest asset for victory.

The Legacy of the Pioneering SGI Members

Just as Ujiyasu predicted, during the reigns of the fourth and fifth Hojo rulers, Ujimasa and Ujinao, Odawara fell to the forces of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. The last two Hojos were unable to read the current of their times and, overestimating their power, faced Hideyoshi head on and perished.

What was the crucial difference between father and son? Up to the third generation, the Hojo rulers had been severely tested by circumstances over which they triumphed. The first Hojo, Soun, arrived in Odawara,

ADVANCING, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

where he had no foothold or support, and fought to become ruler of Izu and Sagami. The second-generation Hojo (Ujitsuna) worked hard alongside Soun, establishing the foundation for the fief's government. The third-generation Hojo (Ujiyasu) was a brilliant warrior. He fought on the battlefield from the time he was 16, never losing any of the 36 battles in his lifetime. Though he was the general of his forces, he always rode in the vanguard and was covered with battle scars to prove it, including two large scars on his face. He was a brave warrior who never showed his back to the enemy.

But the fourth Hojo (Ujimasa) was raised from the start as the heir to a feudal lord. He was by no means unintelligent, and he was even said to be superior to the young heirs of other domains, thanks mainly to his father's rigorous training. But in spite of that, he had never really suffered or worked hard for anything. At the same time, the retainers of the Hojo clan had grown lazy and arrogant, proud that they were part of the wealthy Odawara domain.

This story shows that the leaders who laid the foundations fought valiantly on the front lines with their forces, working together with them to achieve a shared goal.

In a sense, this is a manifestation of what in Buddhism we call the spirit of "true cause." It is the spirit of a leader uniting with the people and moving forward toward a shared aim — a

future victory of "true effect."

Napoleon once said that a leader is one who delivers hope. A genuine leader is one who points to hope and leads people toward it.

Lead Versus Command

However, the nature of the Hojo leaders changed from the fourth generation on once the domain came to enjoy security and stability through the hard work of previous generations.

Although there were probably many other factors involved, I think we can say that there was a directional shift from leaders and followers facing in the same direction together to the leader facing in the direction of his followers. It is the difference between leading and commanding. In Buddhist terms, the latter is a state of attachment to true effect; one places oneself in the position of perfection, in contradistinction to others.

This can happen in any organization. The leaders no longer work in the spirit of doing things together with the members; instead, they stand above the members and order them around. They use others cleverly so as not to get hurt themselves. This will stop any organization from growing and developing.

This is a key underlying cause of the rise and fall of civilizations witnessed throughout human history. Great dramas have been set in motion by something as subtle as an individual's will.

The later Hojo rulers of Odawara are widely believed to have grown complacent and overconfident because of their past victories and the inviolability of their castle walls. They were also confident that if trouble arose they could rely on the support of Tokugawa Ieyasu and Date Masamune, two other powerful feudal lords of the day. Their information about Hideyoshi and his forces was far from sufficient. The Hojo clan's leading advisors in later generations were stubborn and conservative, which led to the clan's reliance on a passive defensive strategy. There are also accounts of Hojo clan retainers who switched their allegiance because of the fifth-generation ruler Ujinao's thoughtless remarks. In addition, rivalries among the clan's more accomplished retainers led to a lack of unity on the Hojo side.

The Future Awaits!

Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is the Buddhism of true cause. The mentor is the true effect and the disciples are the true cause. Based on this principle, mentor and disciples together eternally practice the Mystic Law of true cause.

Consequently, if one adopts the spirit of true effect, believing that one has already achieved everything necessary or that it's all right to leave the hard work up to others, then one can never hope to receive faith's true benefit. In his writings, we often find the Daishonin urging his followers to exert still greater effort. He would instruct even those of

many decades of practice to strengthen their faith more than ever.

If leaders go among the members with the determination that they will henceforth apply themselves as never before to their Buddhist practice and advance together with the members while giving hope, benefit will well forth profusely in their lives. The SGI will also continue to develop and grow forever.

In particular, unity is going to be increasingly important from now on. I would like all of you to rigorously protect this one and only organization in the world dedicated to the realization of kosen-rufu, based on cooperation, bringing out each member's potential and working together harmoniously and in a spirit of warm camaraderie.

Faith of True Cause Brings Inexhaustible Benefits

In "The Life Span of the Thus Come One" (16th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra, we find the passage, "single-mindedly desiring to see the Buddha / not hesitating even if it costs them their lives" (LS16, 230).² Nichiren Daishonin says of this passage, "I, Nichiren, have called forth Buddhahood from within my life by living this sentence" (MW-2, 205). I will not discuss the most profound meaning of this passage now, but it tells us that when we followers of Nichiren Daishonin wish with all our hearts to see the Buddha, with a faith so strong that we

don't begrudge our lives, the state of Buddhahood manifests itself within us.

There is no Buddhahood nor true benefit aside from the Buddhist practice of the true cause of "single-mindedly desiring to see the Buddha." For us, that desire is our unwavering commitment in faith to widely spread Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, to make our own environment a Buddha land, to carry out our personal human revolution, and also help others become happy.

I hope that all our leaders of kosen-rufu will always be leaders who "single-mindedly desire to see the Buddha," leaders who embody the principle of true cause.

Having once been an acting chapter chief myself, I know how demanding and exhausting your responsibilities can be. I nevertheless hope that all of you, the chapter leaders of our great organization in Tokyo, will solidly unite to protect and assist our members and continue your tireless efforts to advance the kosen-rufu movement.

I will continue to pray even more earnestly for your good health. Please take care! ☸

1. This anecdote appears in the *Odawara Hojo-ki* (Chronicle of the Hojos of Odawara), trans. Masanao Kishi (into modern Japanese) (Tokyo: Kyoiku-sha, 1996), pp. 221-23.

2. *The Lotus Sutra*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). LS is followed by the chapter and page numbers.

GLOSSARY

Buddha: One who perceives the true nature of all life and leads others to attain the same enlightenment. The Buddha nature is inherent in all beings and is characterized by the qualities of wisdom, courage, compassion, spiritual strength, hope and unshakable happiness.

daimoku: Literally, "title." Refers to the invocation, or chanting, of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

Gohonzon: The embodiment of the law of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and the life of Nichiren Daishonin in the form of a mandala. *Honzon* means "object of fundamental respect"; *go* means "worthy of honor." The *Gohonzon* takes the form of a paper scroll inscribed with Chinese and two Sanskrit characters. Together, these characters represent life in its highest condition: Buddhahood. "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, Nichiren" is written down the center of the Gohonzon.

gongyo: Literally, "assiduous practice." In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, gongyo means to recite the "Expedient Means" (2nd) chapter and the "Life

Span of the *Tathagata*" (16th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo in front of the Gohonzon.

Gosho: Literally, "writing worthy of great respect": the writings of Nichiren Daishonin.

ichinen: Literally, "one mind." The life-moment, or ultimate reality, that is manifested at each moment in common mortals.

karma: Sanskrit word meaning "action." The life tendency or destiny that each individual creates through thoughts, words and deeds. One's actions in the past have shaped one's reality at present, and actions in the present determine in turn one's future. This is the law of cause and effect at work.

kosen-rufu: Literally, to "widely declare and spread (Buddhism)." To secure lasting peace and happiness for all humankind through the propagation of true Buddhism.

Latter Day of the Law: The period be-

ginning 2,000 years after Shakyamuni's death, when his teachings lose their power and the true Buddha appears to lead all people to enlightenment.

Nam-myoho-enge-kyo: The fundamental component of Buddhist practice, which expresses the ultimate truth of life and allows each individual to tap his or her innate enlightened nature directly. Although the deepest meaning of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is revealed only through the practice of chanting it, there is a literal definition for each of the component words: *nam* (devotion) means to fuse one's life with the universal law; *myoho* (Mystic Law) is the fundamental principle of the universe and its phenomenal manifestations; *enge* (lotus flower) refers to the lotus, which blooms and seeds at the same time, symbolizing the simultaneity of cause and effect; and *kyo* (sutra, or teaching of a Buddha) broadly indicates all phenomena or the activities of all living beings.

Nichiren Daishonin (1222-82): The true Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law. *Daishonin* literally means "great sage" and is used as an honorific title for Nichiren. He inscribed the Gohonzon and established the invocation of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo as the universal practice to attain Buddhahood.

Shakyamuni: Also known as Siddhartha Gautama. The first historically recorded Buddha, he is the founder of Buddhism.

Soka Gakkai: Literally, "Society for the Creation of Value." The name of the lay organization of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

Soka Gakkai International (SGI): The umbrella organization led by President Daisaku Ikeda, which includes organizations in 128 nations. It was established in 1975.

ten worlds: Potential conditions of life inherent in each individual. They are: Hell, Hunger, Animality, Anger, Humanity, Rapture, Learning, Realization, Bodhisattva and Buddhahood.

YMD Music Corps Celebrates

30 Years of Musical Heroes

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI

By TONY GREGG

SGI-USA MUSIC CORPS CHIEF

SGI President Ikeda describes the founding of the Music Corps in Japan in his book *The New Human Revolution*:

Josei Toda taught and trained Shin'ichi that the way to foster youth was to see how much they could accomplish through their own efforts.

When Shin'ichi first joined the Soka Gakkai, the attitude and behavior of his seniors in the youth division caused him to dislike the organization. Many of these older youth division leaders were high-handed and autocratic, yet refused to take any responsibility themselves. Shin'ichi was always deeply discouraged by their attitude.

One day, he voiced these feelings frankly to Josei Toda, who then told him: "In that case, Shin'ichi, why don't you go ahead and make the Gakkai into the kind of organization that you can really like? Build an ideal Gakkai through your hard work and earnest effort!"

Shin'ichi did just that, working tirelessly in the face of great hardship to create a Soka Gakkai that met with his ideals.

Shin'ichi perceived kosen-rufu as a great cultural movement. And it was he who, as youth division chief of staff, established the Music Corps in May 1954. None of the older leaders or directors of the Soka Gakkai showed any interest in such a plan. Ultimately, Shin'ichi took it upon himself to buy instruments for the band. This was the beginning of what has today become a world-renowned musical organization. (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 5, p. 199)

Meanwhile, as the Music Corps continued to develop in Japan, Mr. Ikeda had established the America Headquarters. In the latter part of 1966, a small group of young men formed a band that would later be known as the America Young Men's Division Brass Band. On Friday, May 5, 1967, the newly formed



A 1,000-piece Brass Band is one of the highlights of the SGI-USA's parade down Kalakaua Avenue in Honolulu during the 1985 convention there.

Brass Band held its first recital at the Embassy Auditorium in Los Angeles. The entire band played six Sousa marches. Then selected members, who called themselves "The Unknown Band," played several numbers, including "Sansho Shima Sayonara," one of the highlights of the program.

After "The Unknown Band," the Brass Band played a series of Soka Gakkai songs. On the last song, "The Sun Shines Over America Headquarters," the YMD leaders all led the audience in the singing of this popular song. Later in the month, on May 16, the band played for President Ikeda for the first time at the opening of Myohoji temple in Etiwanda, Calif.

The band in the United States continued to grow, as did the organization, through seemingly non-stop times of vigorous propagation, parades, conventions, civic events and culture festivals. Throughout the '80s the bands were predominately marching units.

One highlight was the formation of a 1,000-piece marching band that paraded down Kalakaua Avenue in Honolulu during the summer 1985 Hawaii



The U.S. Brass Band debuts on May 5, 1967, in Los Angeles' Embassy Auditorium.

convention. This incredible momentum continued until 1990 when all of SGI-USA experienced a great shift in focus and direction.

Those dedicated individuals who have continued to keep the Music Corps fires burning in their respective areas, particularly over the last few years, surely know what it means to have the stand-alone spirit. For

as seemingly unrecognized as their efforts have been, the YMD music groups in the United States are continuing to grow and develop young men for the future of kosen-rufu. Past and present Music Corps members will tell you how their experiences in the band have been a foundation for their faith and their lives.

President Ikeda recently

noted "that Buddhism places great importance on music. To secure happiness for all human beings, culture should take precedence over such fields as science, politics and economics." He remarked that "music, which directly reaches the depths of human life, can be said to be the supreme art that enables humankind to become truly happy." WJ

30 Years in the United States



A young Daisaku Ikeda leads a small parade of the young men's division Brass Band he founded.

A Mission To Inspire

Excerpts from SGI President Ikeda's 'Precepts for Music Corps'

- There are no boundaries in religious philosophy. Humankind shares equally the desire for peace and happiness, and religious philosophy is the only means by which this desire can be answered. Likewise, there are no boundaries in the field of music. Music is the flower of culture, a language common to the entire world. It is a thing of beauty sought by all people.
- Recalling the history of humankind, we discover that a race of people or a nation strove for happiness and peace only if motivated by a new, sound philosophy. The practice of a great ideology, like the current of a great river, becomes the high ambition and rhythm of that nation. The same holds true of music. The beauty and energy of music have been the source of a nation's growth.
- Let us develop a mammoth musical movement filled with hope. For the sake of the general public, let us sow the seeds for a great new culture. It is my request that all of you, without uttering a word, will be able to move your listeners to deep emotion. Through your performance, I hope that you will move people to jubilation and inspire them to attain their human revolution.
- To the general public, you are being called upon to reveal the true picture of kosen-rufu, thus helping them recognize correctly the Soka Gakkai. Furthermore, as pioneers, you must contribute to the enhancement of world culture. You must complete the mission of the Music Corps within the organization, inspiring millions of bodhisattvas and giving our fellow members hope and inspiration to overcome their sufferings.
- In conclusion, I would like to say that your spirit should transcend vanity, as well as musical techniques and ability. The sound of the Music Corps should be the rhythm of faith. It must roar with the sound of passion, as if to crush the angry waves of the ocean. I urge that you advance with the confidence that your performances will penetrate the hearts of all people. People in a new era look forward to new talents and music. I sincerely hope that you, with glory and awareness as members of the Music Corps, will rise to this challenge and perform on the world's stage.

1964

Brass Band Changes Name to Music Corps

By **TONY GREGG**
SGI-USA MUSIC CORPS CHIEF

After long deliberation, Brass Band leaders around the country have decided to change the name of the SGI-USA Brass Band to the SGI-USA Music Corps. This decision arose out of their desire to better embrace the variety of music groups that

have developed across the United States over the years.

When SGI President Ikeda formed this activity in 1954, he named it Ongaku-tai or Music Corps. Yet out of determination to establish a group with a more American feel, this activity in the United States has been known as the Brass Band since its inception in 1967.

This change will primarily apply to the national support committee and will not force established local bands to alter the names of their groups.

It is hoped that the youth division musical groups of the SGI-USA will continue to evolve in myriad ways, according to the trends and styles of each area. **WT**

Thanks For the Training

SGI-USA Brass Band leaders from years past send congratulatory messages.

Kaneyasu Enomoto 1967

I truly believe that Music Corps is the best training to develop character for life and to teach us how to care for others. Congratulations on 30 years of American Music Corps! I have joy beyond words that this activity has continued to this day.

Robert Dixon 1966-68

What I learned from the Brass Band was not music. What I truly learned about was life. I learned to take a seemingly unattainable goal, in an unreasonable amount of time, and make it happen. That is rare and useful training! It's for that I feel most grateful.

Gary Murie 1969-71

When I joined the Brass Band at 18, there were 26 members, most of whom could barely play their instruments. It was a great struggle to continue. But I was able to connect to President Ikeda through the "Precepts for Brass Band," where he said, "It is my request that all of you, without uttering a word, will be able to move your listeners to deep emotion." This phrase has revolutionized my understanding of culture. Its far-reaching implications have continued to affect my work today.

George Kataoka 1977-83

Congratulations on the 30th anniversary! As I reflect back, so much of what I am today I owe to the Brass Band training that I received. In this age of no discipline and decline, I sincerely pray that many courageous youth will deeply understand the significance and therefore resolve to receive training that will truly determine their future. Again, congratulations and best of luck to all the Music Corps.

Dave Martinez 1983-87

Through those busy times of activities, the "Precepts for Youth" was my motivation then and to this day. Everything contained in this piece has come true. It is so important to have a core of truth, such as this, in one's life. I hope that all Music Corps members can find something to study and take into their hearts, as a basis for developing their lives, for now and into the future.

Arnold Kawasaki 1987-89

I was a Music Corps member from the age of 13 until about 35 years of age. When I was in charge of Brass Band, it was a period of great upsurge in the United States. I witnessed many YMD members develop through this movement. "Precepts for Brass Band" was an important part of this. I hope that the Brass Band spirit can remain in the individual hearts of the members of this group.

Dave McNeill 1989

If it weren't for the Brass Band, I wouldn't be practicing today. The camaraderie and the fun kept me practicing in my teens during the '70s. And the spirit to practice for others that I learned there — the spirit to "move others to jubilation" — continues to be my motivation today. Congratulations on 30 years, and may the next 30 be even greater.

Ted Osaki Jr. 1990-92

Congratulations to all the boys in the band! A lot of blood, sweat and tears were shed during the first 30 years. But these bonds have forever united our lives. I am left still with one lingering thought.... What is the Brass Band definition of "One last time!?" Once again, congratulations.

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'Children Picking Flowers at Special School for Blind Children No. 5, Kiev, Ukraine, USSR' is one photo in the 'Mary Ellen Mark: 25 Years' exhibition. Ms. Mark, one of the most well-known and prolific photojournalists of our time, says she is always on the side of the 'people on the edges.' 'I find them more human, maybe,' she says.

Photos From the Edge

By LINDA ST. HILAIRE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA.

Mary Ellen Mark, one of the most well-known and prolific photojournalists of our time, has dedicated her life to introducing images that provoke us to think about what it means to be a human being.

Through her images, she informs us of what it is like to be homeless or to be dying in poverty conditions with no one to care for us; to live as a blind person or retarded or with a disease such as leprosy. Her photos also inform us of the dignity that people in these conditions manage to keep intact. She wants to acknowledge them as human beings because, as we can, she does truly care about them.

A collection of her photographs titled "Mary Ellen Mark: 25 Years" is showing at the Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art through Aug. 3 and from there continues on to Milan, Italy. The exhibition features 75 selections from many of Mark's best photo essays, including "Streetwise, Homeless Families," and "Mother Teresa's Missions of Charity," all of which first appeared in *Life*

magazine. The final part of the exhibition is devoted to "Indian Circus," a photo essay done in 1989 and 1990, which documents, in her words, "The magic and whimsy of the circus, and my love for India."

Born in Philadelphia in 1940, Ms. Mark studied painting and art history at the University of Pennsylvania, receiving her bachelor's degree in fine arts in 1962. During her graduate studies at the university's Annenberg School of Communications, her interest shifted to photography. This was the beginning of her distinguished career.

"All her pictures contain an expression of time: time spent watching, listening and talking," said Marianne Fulton, chief curator at the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film in Rochester, N.Y., which organized the exhibition. "Mark says that the longer she stays with her subject,

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the closer she gets. And the closer she gets, the more likely she is to find her pictures — pictures that strike at the core of an issue. She feels that she is giving voice to the voiceless."

Ms. Mark, interviewed by phone from her studio in New York City, explained that through the course of her 25-year career, her motivations have remained consistent.

"I still want to make great pictures," she said. "It's not easy to make great images. I want to make images that have an impact on people and that people will remember."

ber. I'm just interested in people on the edges. I feel an affinity for people who haven't had the best breaks in society. I'm always on their side. I find them more human, maybe. I care about them more. What I want to do more than anything is to acknowledge their existence." WJ