

World Tribune

No. 3192

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

JUNE 6, 1997

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Children Cultivate Gandhi Garden

By PAT VEGA
CORRESPONDENT

April 26, New York

Today was Green Up Day in Union Square Park. Farmers Market merchants donated eight flats of plants — marigolds, pansies and impatiens — to be planted in the Gandhi Garden.

Established by the City of New York and surrounding a bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Union Square near the New York Culture Center, the Gandhi Garden has been cared for by members of the Garden Committee and the Boys and Girls Group for the past two years. Last August, the city surprised the volunteers with a certificate praising their efforts.

Today, the garden was so crowded with tulips planted last fall by the children that there was no room for all the new plants. The leftovers, mostly impatiens and pansies, were planted in front

of the New York Culture Center.

Also, during the winter months, the boys and girls decorated clay pots with paint and decoupage and started seedlings indoors.

Last summer, because water in Union Square had been turned off, young men's division members carried water every day to the garden. This year, the city's Parks Department provided ample support, bringing bottles of water, wheelbarrows of chips for mulch, and garden tools.

Manhattan Borough Parks Commissioner Adrian Banepe stopped by to thank the volunteers. Many neighbors also thanked the boys and girls for their efforts to beautify the park.

"The children love it," said Rose Glover, one of the coordinators. "It's something they can point to and say 'I did that.' They love putting on gloves and getting into the dirt," she beamed.

Photo by CAROL BARNSTEAD



Boys and Girls Group members at work in the Gandhi Garden.



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Minuteman Hall at Soka University of America, Calabasas, Calif.

SUA Accepting Graduate School Applications

Now in its fourth year, Soka University of America's Graduate School will soon be accepting applications for its master's degree program in second and foreign language education.

Students seeking admission to the program must hold a baccalaureate or bachelor's degree with a minimum grade point average of 2.7 or B— on a four-point scale. Applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit a Test of English as a Foreign Language with a minimum

score of 600. In addition, the Graduate Record Examination and competence in a foreign language are preferred, although they are not requirements for admission.

Applications for the 1998–99 academic year are due by March 31, 1998. For more information, contact the Graduate Admissions Office at 26800 W. Mulholland Hwy., Calabasas, Calif., 91302. Telephone: (818) 878-3717, e-mail: grad_admissions@soka.edu.

(Please see experience of a recent graduate, p. 4.)

SGI SPRING LEADERS CONFERENCE REPORT Renewing My Conviction

By BOB PRYOR
SAN DIEGO

The following journal describes the April journey to Tokyo for the Spring Leaders Conference.

Saturday, April 19

As we enter the Soka International Friendship Hall, we pass through a gauntlet of Japanese members whose enthusiasm and sincerity are overwhelming. Several women have tears in their eyes. Some spy my name badge and get very excited that I'm from the United States. It's as if our appearance has actualized their dream for world kosen-rufu.

I reach into my "bag of tricks" and hand out a few souvenir trinkets. The recipients act as if they just won the lottery. It's hard for me to fathom the depths of these members' faith and their commitment to kosen-rufu. When I finally pass through the dozens of individuals gathered, completing countless brief but powerful personal

interactions, I feel an emotional overload.

At 2:00 p.m. the International Friendship Meeting starts, and Mr. Wada [SGI general director] is the first to address us. He says that there are 441 members from 56 countries attending this SGI Spring Leaders Conference.

I think about the fact that U.S. participation represents just 10 percent. The United States is a world leader in many categories, but we have a way to go before we are world leaders in the kosen-rufu movement.

Mr. Hasegawa, Soka Gakkai vice president, informs us that we have received a lengthy message from SGI President Ikeda. It turns out that the message is more akin to a speech. It is very detailed and filled with historical references and important contemporary lessons.

I am immediately struck by the depth and thoughtfulness of the message President Ikeda prepared for us, and my head hurts from struggling to grasp its pro-

PLEASE SEE DIARY, 7

? QUESTION OF THE MONTH: 'How has studying the priesthood issue helped you deepen your understanding of and faith in Buddhism?'



It's difficult for me to answer this question without talking about related issues. I am a member of 22 years and have painfully witnessed and struggled through persecutions of SGI President Ikeda and us members by the priesthood in the 1970s, and since 1991. Studying this issue has enabled me to deeply appreciate all that President Ikeda has done for me on a profound level.

It has also enabled me to look at people, events, ideas and the world from many perspectives, with a keen eye. From this standpoint, I have made choices about the direction of my life, based on my values, boldly and confidently.

I also exchanged my Nikken-transcribed Gohonzon for a Nichikan-transcribed Gohonzon and have since experienced remarkable changes in my life. This includes breaking through an eight-year deadlock at my job and getting a wonderful new position with a great company, establishing a strong financial base, moving into a beautiful new apartment, creating family harmony and opening doors to use my creative abilities in rewarding ways.

— CAROL DALY,
Jackson Heights, N.Y.



The priesthood issue has been an impetus for me to read with greater interest SGI President Ikeda's speeches. I realize, as President Ikeda so often emphasizes, that appearance, position and titles have little to do with true character and ability. This is true for me from my personal experiences in society as well.

My understanding is that real power, the power gained from faith, practice and study of Buddhism, is the ability to transform suffering into joy.
— PAMELA SELEY, San Marcos, Calif.

I was thrust into the priesthood issue right away when one of the members of our district became confused and chose to go with the temple. So I had to be on top of this issue right away. The temple in Etiwanda, Calif., was sending me information on their side of the story, and I was reading the special inserts in the *World Tribune*. This helped me develop my ability to see true from false.

But what really made me understand this issue was reading the Goshō "The Opening of the Eyes." Even though it was written 700 years ago, it was as if Nichiren Daishonin himself was commenting on the issue right now. He was warning us to be wary of corrupt priests.

Furthermore, SGI President Ikeda has said in the "clear mirror" guidance that when you fight evil, you have to fight the evil within yourself. It taught me to check my behavior and ask myself: "Am I acting any better than a corrupt priest? Am I acting like President Ikeda's disciple?"

Eventually, the member saw things clearly and came back to the SGI.
— JOHN PAPA, Van Nuys, Calif.



Nowadays, especially preparing for the Entrance Exam, I feel so much joy and pride when I read about the keen insight that the leaders of this organization

(President Toda, especially) have shown when they detected the erroneous beliefs that the priesthood always held. I feel a lot of appreciation for their struggle, a struggle that has allowed me to practice what the Daishonin truly intended us to practice: Buddhism, based on the Three Great Secret Laws....

Also, I am thrilled when I read that this third and most powerful enemy is in reality a good sign; it actually means that the organization's efforts are bringing up those elements, the circumstances that prove the actuality of kosen-rufu.

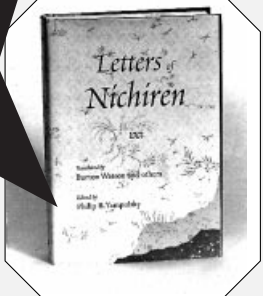
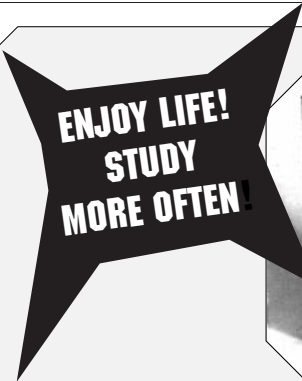
— FRANCISCO PALACIO,
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

I have been involved in the priesthood issue since 1991 when a third of my district went over to Nichiren Shoshu. This caused me to deeply study both sides and break through my own small-mindedness. I learned to open my heart to other opinions and respect the individual. This experience solidified my resolve to reform SGI-USA from within. "By the people, for the people" — this is the spirit of Buddhism!

— DON ROSS,
San Diego, Calif.

Recently I was telephoned by a priesthood follower. She wanted me to go to the temple and meet their "wonderful new priest." In the past, my conversations with temple members have always turned sour. This time, I remembered recent articles I read in SGI publications and decided to get to the heart of this whole priesthood issue by asking her if she knew that the Buddha is her, the Buddha is me, the Buddha is life itself. She replied with shock that she could not chant if she believed that. I told her that this is not an SGI invention, but the words of Nichiren Daishonin himself. I encouraged her to read "On Attaining Buddhahood" (written years before any Gohonzon were inscribed) and "On the Treasure Tower." I hope she will.

— CARSON NICHOLS,
Woodbridge, Va.



(hardcover)

Translated by Burton Watson and others
Edited by Phillip Yampolsky

This final work of the late Prof. Yampolsky of Columbia University is an essential and comprehensive collection of more than 70 letters (Goshō) by Nichiren Daishonin. Translated for the general reader.

Price: \$39.00 M/O #: 0352

NEXT MONTH'S QUESTION:

'What has Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism taught you about independence?'

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

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**WORLD TRIBUNE
MAILBOX**

No More Backward Baseball Caps

I just opened up the May 16 issue of the *World Tribune* and was very pleased to see older faces in the "Voices" column. You see, I'd been intending to write you regarding this column.

I've been receiving the *World Tribune* for only a short time, and being 43 years old, I was becoming peeved: It seemed only the opinions of teens and young adults appeared in the "Voices" column. I didn't know whether this was a pro-youth prejudice on your part, or whether only young persons bothered to write you.

In any case, I'm glad to report that this recent issue has been a reassurance. Please continue including contributions by those of us who no longer wear backward baseball caps.

— BARBARA PIESTER, Denver

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

THEME: *Human Diversity*

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

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

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

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

DEADLINE: JUNE 30, 1997

**Infinity and the Florida Nature
and Culture Center**

PERSPECTIVE

By **LISA JONES**
WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.

"Nothing is too wonderful to be true." (Quote engraved on the Physics Building at UCLA, attributed to Michael Faraday)

No matter how good the food is. No matter how lovely the landscape, how comfortable the accommodations or how delightful the amenities. No matter where I am.

It's a chore, a hell, if I don't feel free.

So I was anxious when I arrived at the Florida Nature and Culture Center to spend four days with more than 100 fellow Buddhists. Sure enough, within an hour of the welcome/orientation session, I felt a need to get away, to hop on a bike and escape into the night. Sometimes I just have to be alone and in motion; walking, running, driving, whatever.

I pedaled along FNCC's pathways and zigzagged through the parking lot. In the circular driveway of the Reception Center, I swooped around and around, the way I used to circle my parents' driveway when I was a kid, finding a thrill in every turn. That was back when I lived in the fabled suburbia of yore, so safe, in a planned residential community, with not a worry, not a fear. FNCC reminded me of that feeling of sheltered bliss.

There was a pond behind my parents' house, much like Toda Lake at FNCC, with its loamy scent and soft-lapping waves. Night air, marbled with currents of warm and cool. An occasional cloud of mosquitoes. Mysterious phrases of birdsong, and cows lowing in the distance. The tangy smell of green grass mixed with the rotty smell of damp reeds. I was having a sense-memory flashback to my childhood.

As I rode, I remembered what a confident little person I used to

be. Back before I knew how it felt to be humiliated by a boss, scorned by a lover, pursued by a creditor. Back when riding a bike felt like soaring through the sky. No limits, no denials, no second-guessing myself. Back when I felt free.

I coasted over the copse where the memorial trees stand, to a dark path on the edge of the grounds. Fireflies blinked, echoing starlight. When I was little, my dad taught me the names of the constellations. He used to be a navigator on a ship; you can always tell where you are on Planet Earth by looking up at the stars,

to be around people," she said, "but that's not true. Every time I see you, you're talking with a different person."

She was right; I had become uncharacteristically sociable. For some reason, people felt like talking with me. Each person was fascinating, and I was alternately awed and entertained.

One woman really opened up to me and shared the details of a pivotal situation that she was facing. It was as if she'd pressed a nugget of gold into my palm. I don't know any pithy guidance, so the only things I had to offer her in return were my ear and a sincere prayer. I hope they help.

At the closing session, one of the leaders emphasized that FNCC is a gift to us from the SGI based on SGI President Ikeda's consideration. The Jacuzzi and the PingPong; the opportunities and the memories — everything is a gift.

Lately, with the rhetoric surrounding the priesthood issue and the barrage of Internet information about other Nichiren-related sects, it has been hard for me to see clearly how the SGI alone is faithful to the Daishonin's spirit. I can't say that I've fully resolved my intellectual and doctrinal questions. But my visit to Florida has made one thing clear to me: President Ikeda's spirit is palpable at FNCC, and it's a vast spirit of freedom.

I think it's true that you can't give something to someone else unless you yourself have it. That goes for the flu, I suppose, as well as for freedom, happiness and all other things contagious. My visit to FNCC has inspired me to solidify my sense of internal freedom so I can infuse others with the same feeling.

Years hence, when I think back on my trip to FNCC, I'll remember that the gift I received was an intimation of my infiniteness. Chalk it up to post-FNCC giddiness if you must, but I feel as if I've been given a fast new car.

I can't wait to get out on the road and see what it can do. ☐



Photo by KIRK CONDYLIS

The Florida Nature and Culture Center.

he'd say. "Where am I now?" I wondered. Far from home, but at home.

Of all the paths at FNCC, I had found one that led me back to a place of wordless joy, the place from which I emerged.

As you can probably predict, the remainder of my visit to FNCC was not a chore or a hell. I did discover, however, that a basketball now feels foreign in my hands, and due to years of neglect, my jumpshot has deteriorated into an embarrassing flail.

Past midnight one night, my friend Amy and I swam in the pool until our fingertips puckered. "You say that you don't like

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Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



Lisa Mommsen, center, at her SUA graduation ceremony in 1995.

Living My When-I-Grow-Up Dream

Lisa Mommsen attended Soka University of America's first graduate program, 1994-95. Currently living in Japan, she shares her experience about becoming a teacher of English as a second language.

As a kid from Nebraska who grew up in the SGI-USA, I remember hearing for the first time about Soka University in far-off Japan and dreaming to be part of the Soka educational system. However, like many children, I grew up and that when-I-grow-up dream was buried beneath the occurrences of everyday life.

When I entered the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1991, I decided to study international business. I enjoyed the international half of my major, but the business half was not as satisfying. I was determined to stick with it, however, because I wanted to be a businesswoman!

It was not until my junior year that a profession in education seemed attractive. The instructor of my Japanese language course, Yoshimi Yamagata, impressed me very much with her concern and dedication to all of the students in the class.

At that time, she was teaching Japanese to English speakers and English to Japanese exchange students. We would sometimes attend one another's classes so that we could practice speaking and exchange cultural information.

Once she even let me plan and conduct a lesson in her English class. From this experience I realized the rewards of teaching. Not only was I helping students learn a language, but I was also learning from the students. At that point I felt a greater attraction to education than to business. However, I had no intention of changing my major

— after all, I had less than a year before graduating.

As my graduation drew closer, I prepared to enter the job market. Around this same time, my joint territory chief was visiting Nebraska Headquarters from Chicago. He informed me that Tomoko Takahashi, dean of the Graduate School at Soka University of America, was going to be in Chicago to talk about the master's program in second and foreign language education with a concentration in TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages). I had seen a copy of the SUA brochure at the community center, but I never thought I could apply or that this was my chance to get into the education field and receive a Soka education at the same time.

I did not want to burden my parents any longer for financial support, but they encouraged me to listen to Dr. Takahashi. My mother even accompanied me on the overnight drive to Chicago. At the meeting, I remember feeling intimidated by the other attendees because many were in the education field, many could speak foreign languages, and everyone seemed so well versed. I, on the other hand, had none of these skills, plus I still had not graduated from college. After listening to Dr. Takahashi, however, I knew I had to apply to the program, no matter what insecurities I felt. Otherwise, I would always wonder about the chance I had given up.

When I received the acceptance letter, I was shocked. But I was ecstatic to actually be doing something that I knew would have a tremendous impact on my life.

The program courses opened my eyes to the impact that language and language education

have on society on a global scale. The classes were intensive and extensive. I studied everything from language theory to constructing a valid language test. I believe I gained the ability to think, to be objective and to question, all of which I used in my final thesis project.

My experience at SUA taught me not only about language and education but also about humanism and friendship. In a message for the Graduate School opening, the founder of SUA, Daisaku Ikeda, described Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's three stages of human development: dependent, self-reliant and contributive modes of living. Mr. Ikeda said:

A dependent life is one of reliance on the authority and capabilities of others, in which one makes little or no effort to think or act for oneself. It is, in other words, a condition of spiritual laziness. A person who lives in a self-reliant manner may have a clearly defined sense of self and creed, but is prey to alienation and self-aggrandizement. A person who lives a contributive life neither relies on external authority nor lapses into arrogance. In a contributive life, the prime motivation is to contribute to the lives of others and to the realization of their happiness. Makiguchi asserted that the human being must progress from a condition of dependence to self-reliance and finally to a contributive way of life. The mission of Soka University of America is to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life.

As a student at SUA, I felt the members of the faculty and staff always had the future of the students and the university's founding principles at heart. I could feel the effort and care that my instructors and professors put into each of us in and out of the classroom. The friendships and relationships that I experienced are most dear to me. I believe it is these bonds created from respect for each unique individual that makes SUA a special place for the future of humanistic education.

I have just finished my first year teaching English in the Business Management Department at Soka Women's College in Hachioji, Japan. I have definitely used what I gained from SUA in my classes and my life. I wish that all students could enjoy the educational experience I had. That's why I will do my utmost to relay the spirit of my alma mater no matter where in the world I am.

Yours Truly, Betty B.

DEAR BETTY: I've been chanting for almost 15 years, and I still don't have the relationship or the career I want. I know all about the concept of human revolution but, hey, I can't be someone I'm not.

— GOTTA BE ME

DEAR DON'T GET IT: No one's suggesting a total personality makeover. But if each date becomes your Un-Significant Other, it's time to get real. Charming as you no doubt are, there may be some aspects of your character that are sidelining a trip to the altar — or even the movies.

Same thing at your job. Could there be some teeny-weeny weaknesses preventing your climb up the corporate ladder?

Sure, change can be painful, but unless we have the guts to look at our lives — and the stamina to keep hammering out those inevitable flaws — we end up going around in circles. For ultimate success, we must undergo our human revolution. Our purpose is not to change who we really are but rather to make that true self shine. After all, just because you've always been a certain way doesn't mean it's helped you get where you want to go.

SGI President Ikeda has said many times that only when we awaken to our mission can we get real benefit. Even if you're not Tom Cruise on an impossible assignment, there's still a unique way for you to contribute to our kosen-rufu movement, both within the SGI and in daily life. Are your daimoku and action focused that way?

Well, nobody ever said it was easy. But your seniors in faith are there to support you: Seek out their guidance and act on it. Take your shot at happiness — and remember, daimoku is a lethal weapon.

DEAR BETTY: The other day I came across a tattered daimoku chart with a list of

goals encompassing marriage, home and career. After 15 years of practice, I've accomplished all of them! So how come I'm not blissfully happy?

— CINDERELLA

DEAR CINDY: Surprise! Even when our dreams come true, we don't necessarily live happily ever after. Yes, what everyone has always told us is true: Money causes problems, possessions tie us down, fame is fleeting, and relationships can get bumpy even with the handsomest of princes. So what's the point? Should we forget about all the things we want?

The answer is a big fat (or, in your case, size six) NO! What is so delightful as residing in a palatial home with your adoring spouse and 2.5 kids? Or whatever. Maybe you prefer a sixth-floor walkup in New York's East Village or a shack in Venice Beach.

Nichiren Daishonin said, "The true way lies in the affairs of this world." We live in this world and we are meant to enjoy it. The problem arises when we expect these momentary pleasures to provide lasting joy. Rich or poor — all right, rich is better — life-condition is the key.

Desire usually just breeds more desire: You get a diamond necklace, you want a bracelet to match; buy a brand-new Honda, soon you're dreaming of a Porsche. Whatever you get, it's never enough — if acquiring wealth or fame is your ultimate goal.

Once you work toward others' happiness — kosen-rufu — those diamonds will sparkle even more brightly as your benefits become a way to inspire others. It's true that for profound satisfaction in the depths of life, you need to go to the Gohonzon. Still, there's no reason you shouldn't go in a Porsche.

WJ

A poet once wrote, "Through man the human world will be conjoined."¹ Friendship brings people together; it links the world, building a golden bridge to peace.

The purpose of Shin'ichi Yamamoto's journey was to engage people of different countries in heart-to-heart dialogue so as to foster friendship and open the way for mutual understanding.

On the morning of Feb. 2, 1962, Shin'ichi and his party left Baghdad, the capital of Iraq, and flew to Istanbul, Turkey. They were met at the airport by Haruko Halil, a Japanese woman who lived in Turkey's capital city, Ankara, and her Turkish husband. She was the daughter of a once aristocratic family, but after her father's death in the war she had experienced many hardships. Shin'ichi had met her before in Japan through the introduction of a Soka Gakkai member. Her husband was a Turkish diplomat who had been stationed in Japan for five years during which time he had learned to speak Japanese.

With a warm smile, he now greeted them enthusiastically: "Welcome to Turkey! I have always felt that there is a mysterious connection between Japan and Turkey. For example, the Turkish national flag is a white crescent moon and stars against a red background while Japan's is a red circle — in other words, the sun — against a white background. Our flags seem to be siblings, as it were.

"Turkey borders Europe and Asia, while Japan borders Asia and the Americas. Japan lies at the easternmost extremity of the ancient Silk Road, while Turkey is at its westernmost extremity. Lying at opposite ends of the Silk Road, our two nations may seem far apart — but I think they are in fact very close and have much in common."

"I agree," Shin'ichi responded. "The two poles of a magnet are strongly attracted to each other. I think the warm relationship shared by you, a Turk, and your wife, a Japanese, is a wonderful symbol of that mutual attraction." Everyone laughed. Good-natured humor is always so refreshing.

After they had lunch together, the Halils gave Shin'ichi and his group a guided tour of the city.

Istanbul is Turkey's largest city, in ancient times known as Byzantium. When Emperor Constantine of Rome moved the capital of his empire there in 330, it was renamed Constantinople. After the Roman Empire was divided into East and West, Constantinople flourished as the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, known also as the Byzantine Empire. After the Ottoman Turks conquered the Byzantine Empire in 1453, the city came to be known as Istanbul. Its long history as a major trading center at the crossroads of East and West gave rise to a unique, cosmopolitan atmosphere.

The New Human Revolution

By HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 2

Long Journey

Translation of parts 1–6 of the 'Long Journey' 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.

Istanbul is the only city in the world situated on two continents. It is located on both sides of the Bosphorus Strait, which connects the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara, and thus straddles both Asia and Europe. On the western side of the strait, there is a narrow inlet known as the Golden Horn. To the south of this inlet lies the old city of Istanbul, rich with ancient ruins from the Ottoman Empire and soaring mosques and minarets. To the north lies the "new" city with its many modern office buildings.

The group visited Aya Sofya (also known as Hagia Sophia), which originally was built as a Christian church but later became an Islamic mosque under the Ottoman Empire. After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the country's first president, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, converted it into a museum without religious affiliation.

Next, they visited Topkapi Palace, where the successive sultans of the Ottoman Empire made their residence, and then went on to the Grand Bazaar (Kapali Çarşı) where they shopped for Oriental carpets and other items. The bazaar was bustling with activity.

Mr. and Mrs. Halil helped with the negotiation of prices. It was the custom of the shop owners in the bazaar to cordially offer tea and entertain their customers as they patiently negotiated purchases. At one shop, when the owner learned that Shin'ichi and his party were Japanese, he smiled and became quite friendly. He immediately lowered the prices considerably and sold them what they wanted with hardly any haggling.

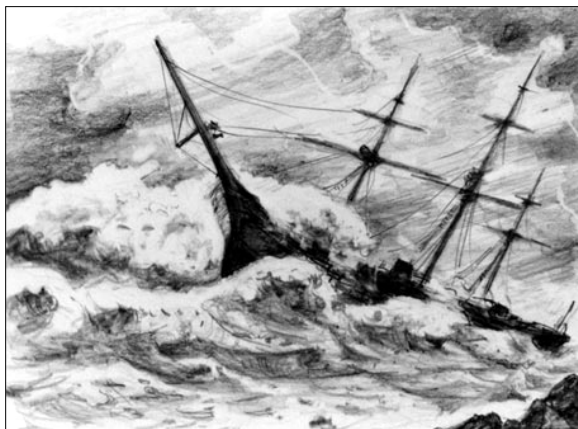
On a small hill overlooking the ocean, where the Halils had taken the group after they finished shopping, Shin'ichi asked Mr. Halil about the sudden change in the shop owner's attitude.

"At that last shop, the owner suddenly lowered his prices when he learned we

were Japanese," Shin'ichi said. "How do the Turkish people feel about the Japanese?"

"They have extremely friendly feelings toward the Japanese," replied Mr. Halil. "But that doesn't mean they will always lower their prices like that shop owner did! You see, Turkey had troubled relations with Russia for many years. When the Japanese defeated the Russians in the Russo-Japanese War, many Turks named their children after the victorious Japanese admiral Togo."

"There is something else, too. Did you know that the first official diplomatic mission from Turkey to Japan was shipwrecked on its return to Turkey and almost 600 people drowned?"



"You're speaking of the sinking of the *Ertugrul* in Wakayama Bay in September 1890, aren't you?" asked Shin'ichi. "I have heard the story of how the Japanese living on the coast nearby did their best to save survivors of the wreck."

Diplomatic relations between Japan and Turkey (as the Ottoman Empire) were initiated in 1887. In July 1889, the Turkish emperor sent an imperial mission to Japan. The ship *Ertugrul*, carrying the mission, which bore letters of friendship and honor for Emperor Meiji, traveled by way of Southeast Asia, Nagasaki and Kobe, arriving in Yokohama in June

1890. The Japanese Imperial house and government warmly welcomed the Turkish mission.

But the day after the *Ertugrul* left on its return, on the afternoon of Sept. 16, it met with a terrible disaster. Off the coast of Wakayama, it ran into a typhoon. Fierce rains, heavy fog, high waves and gale-force winds buffeted the ship. The rudder broke, the engine failed and the *Ertugrul* was wrecked.

It was pushed by the waves to within about 50 yards of the shore where it hit a reef, suffered severe damage and sank. It met its end in the waters off the Kashinozaki

Lighthouse of Oshima (present-day Kushimotocho) at the southernmost tip of Wakayama, an area dangerous to ships because of its many hidden reefs.

It all happened so suddenly that there was no time to deploy the lifeboats. And because the ship went down in the middle of a typhoon, all the villagers were indoors. No one witnessed the ship in distress, so there were no rescue efforts from the shore.

More than 650 passengers were on board and almost all of them drowned, including Admiral Osman Pasa. But some of them managed to reach shore, where they sought help from the lighthouse keeper. It was only then that the villagers learned the terrible accident

had taken place.

Immediately, the village chief and residents came running to the lighthouse to aid the survivors. Their efforts to assist these people from another land, who had met with unexpected tragedy, were swift and dedicated. Of course, they could not understand the survivors' language. In addition, it was a poor fishing village, so there were no hospitals or medical facilities.

In spite of these difficulties, they came to the rescue of the surviving Turks, using wooden doors to carry those seriously hurt to the local school and temple as well as private homes and supporting those who could walk.

They spent the night tending their unfortunate visitors. When the storm ended, the village sent parties out to search for the victims' bodies and gave them decent burials. Sixty-nine passengers survived, but more than 580 died.

The news of the wreck of the *Ertugrul* was reported in detail in the Japanese press and donations poured in from across Japan. The Japanese government cared for the survivors, eventually providing their transportation back to Turkey on two Japanese frigates.

JOURNEY, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

The rescue of the survivors of the *Erugru* was the beginning of warm relations between Turkey and Japan," Shin'ichi Yamamoto said, "and the story has been remembered in Japan over the many long years since it happened. A stone memorial to those who lost their lives in the shipwreck has been built at Kashinozaki."

Mr. Halil nodded. "People in Turkey still remember it, too," he said. "It is one reason why they trust the Japanese as they do."

Shin'ichi smiled and said: "There are no national boundaries when it comes to extending a helping hand to someone in need, or when it comes to human suffering. Exchange on the international level — diplomatic exchange — is very important, of course, but I think we must never forget that the basis of all understanding is exchange on the level of ordinary people. People are like the sea. When the sea is calm and peaceful, many ships can sail on it. In the same way, when people of different countries make many individual friendships, mutual trust and peace are born. That sea of peace then allows the passage of many ships of friendship on all different levels.

"What we in the Soka Gakkai are trying to do is build a great sea of humanity, a sea of friendship that connects the entire world."

Mr. Halil replied, emotion in his voice: "That is wonderful. I am a Muslim, and our religions are different. But what you are trying to achieve is my ideal as well. If there is anything I can do to assist you, please let me know."

"I am deeply grateful for your offer of support," Shin'ichi said, "and in fact there is something I want to ask of you. In the future, increasing numbers of Japanese will be coming to Turkey for work and other reasons. Some of them will be Soka Gakkai members, I am sure. I would really appreciate it if you could offer them advice and assistance if they should run into any problems here."

"Certainly! I will do my best to assist in any small way I can to support friendly relations between Turkey and Japan."

Shin'ichi thanked Mr. Halil and shook his hand.

From their vantage point high on a hill overlooking the ocean, they commanded a magnificent view of a beautiful sunset spreading its light over the peaceful waters.

The next day, after completing the tasks they had set out to do, they visited the modern side of Istanbul to the north of the inlet. There were few mosques there, but there were many Christian churches of the Orthodox, Armenian and Catholic denominations. Dolmabahçe Palace, the home of Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), "Father of the Turks" and the first president of the republic, was also located there.

Shin'ichi and his group visited the Dolmabahçe Palace. After it was completed in the mid-19th century, the sultan's residence was transferred here from the Topkapı Palace

(home to the sultans since the 15th century). Later, with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, it became the Istanbul residence of first president Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. He died in this palace on Nov. 10, 1938, at age 57.

Atatürk was born in 1881 in what is today the Greek city of Salonika. His given name was Mustafa and he was raised by his mother after his father died when he was still small. Mustafa was a bright and ambitious child, so much so that a teacher at school gave him the nickname Kemal, meaning "perfection."

Eventually, Mustafa entered the Military Academy in Istanbul, but was arrested for his involvement in political activities. Nevertheless, embarking on his military career, Atatürk proceeded to distinguish himself as a brilliant young officer.

When the Ottoman Empire allied itself with Germany and the other Central Powers in World War I, defeat seemed almost certain. Nevertheless, young Atatürk demonstrated his skill and leadership in battle, gaining wide renown for his crushing defeat of the British and French Allied forces when they entered the Dardanelles with the aim of capturing Istanbul, then Turkey's capital.

After Turkey fell to the Allies, Atatürk rose up to fight for the freedom and independence of the Turkish people from foreign control. He was convinced that now that the sultan had capitulated meekly to the demands of the Allies and betrayed the will of his subjects, only the united strength of the Turkish people could defend their land. Atatürk traveled from village to village rousing his fellow citizens to this call.

The people were exhausted from the long succession of wars that had assailed them. But Atatürk would not give up. He implored the people to stand up with him for their nation, that their help was needed to save it. Finally, his impassioned cry awakened the national pride of the Turkish people.

Conveying one's message with passion, conviction and tenacity moves people's hearts and spurs them to action. Atatürk united his people, organized a people's army, and convened the 1st Grand National Assembly of Turkey in Ankara, the present capital. It was the birth of an alternative government in direct opposition to the government of the sultan.

The Ottoman government sentenced Atatürk to death in absentia (for treason against the sultanate), but his new nationalist government had earned the people's overwhelming support. He executed brilliant diplomacy in negotiating the Allies' territorial demands and achieving peace. The Grand National As-

sembly abolished the sultanate and, on Oct. 29, 1923, installed Mustafa Kemal as the first president of the Republic of Turkey. A new nation was born.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto and his group left Dolmabahçe Palace and made their way to Taksim Square. There stood a monument to the Republic of Turkey, the centerpiece of which was a bronze sculpture of a dozen-or-so people standing together. The figure in center foreground was Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.



The group got out of the car in front of the monument, and Mr. Halil related the story of the birth of the Republic of Turkey.

After listening to Mr. Halil's account, Yusuke Yoshikawa said with surprise, "Even with the sultan's government reduced to a puppet of the Allied powers, it is remarkable that the people's army defeated it."

"In my opinion," Shin'ichi replied, "it was the Turkish people's determination to achieve self-rule and the strength that resulted from that unity of purpose that brought them victory. They rallied around General Atatürk with a shared goal: to protect their nation and to make it their own."

"The sultan, in contrast, was only trying to protect himself. He had neither the will nor the power to resist the demands of the Allies, and he merely tried to force people to obey his orders based on an antiquated authority. It was only natural that he should fall eventually."

Akira Kuroki voiced his opinion: "I think it's amazing how Atatürk kept the

Allied powers at bay and defended Turkish territorial integrity."

"Yes, it is," Shin'ichi agreed. "Some even call this 'the Turkish miracle.' The Allies, the victors in World War I, eventually accepted Atatürk's position."

"The fact is that the interests of the various Allied powers in Turkey after the war conflicted. Atatürk saw that as far as Turkey was concerned, the Allies were not necessarily allied, and he exploited their rivalries to preserve his homeland."

"The Allied forces were incredibly powerful as long as they remained firmly united in a shared cause, but once their interests diverged, they lost that strength. Most feared the Allies for their name alone, without looking carefully at the real situation."

"People tend to nurture an exaggerated picture of their enemies, to fear that illusory image, and to bring about their own defeat in the process. But Atatürk was determined to win, and that made him aware of his enemies' weak points. And he fought to the bitter end — that is the real cause of victory."

"There is nothing to be gained by fearing one's enemies — this conviction surmounted all difficulties and led his successful negotiations. But what I think I admire most about Atatürk is his motto as president, 'Make new friends, but treasure old ones.' People tend to forget their old friends. Or, if they keep in touch with their old friends, they tend to hesitate to make new friends. But by both valuing our old relationships and making new ones, we constantly open ourselves to new possibilities."

(To be continued)

1. Novalis, *Pollen and Fragments: Selected Poetry and Prose of Novalis*, trans. Arthur Versluis (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Phanes Press, 1989). Baron Friedrich Leopold von Hardenberg (1772–1801), a German Romantic poet, used the pseudonym Novalis.
2. Togo Heihachiro (1848–1934): fleet admiral in the Japanese Imperial Navy. Led naval operations during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05, destroying the Russian Baltic fleet in the Battle of Tsushima, May 1905.

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DIARY, FROM PAGE 1

fundity. To compose a greeting with such thoughtfulness and care must have taken considerable effort and much of President Ikeda's precious time. I feel compelled to learn from his action and example — not just his words.

Next we have a study lecture from Mr. Saito, Soka Gakkai Study Department chief. The study material is President Ikeda's lecture on the Goshō "Happiness in this World" in *Learning From the Goshō*. The point I find most interesting is that Mr. Saito follows President Ikeda's lecture almost verbatim from the book rather than creating his own lecture, though he is, no doubt, capable of doing so. Because of this, I see new depths to President Ikeda's lecture that I had not seen before. I realize how immeasurably fortunate I am to have a mentor who can explain the depths of the Daishonin's Buddhism with such clarity and applicability to today's world.

After the meeting is over we gather in groups of seven to attend various discussion meetings around Tokyo. My group goes to a community center in Hadachi Ward, the first community center in that area. More than 100 members line up to greet us as we arrive.

After traditional Japanese musical performances on the *koto* (a string instrument) and the *shamisen* (similar to an American banjo), we start the meeting. Our translator also acts as the master of ceremonies and asks the audience members if they have any questions for us: "Why did you join Buddhism instead of Christianity?" "How do you get new people to learn gongyo?" One member of our group, Diane, who has her own business, is asked how she juggles her business and SGI responsibilities.

The questions are sincere and simple. I realize that what we take for granted they find most remarkable. I giggle to myself about the irony of coming from America to Japan and answering questions about Buddhism. By the time we return to our hotel we are all a little worn out, but also energized from the day's activities.

Sunday, April 20

Our only activity today is another discussion meeting in Tokyo's Mushashino Headquarters. The atmosphere is different than the day before, since this group has many young families. A number of children turn out to greet us, although the younger ones have no idea what all the fuss is about. A coed youth jazz

trio plays a stirring rendition of "Forever Sensei." A few of us spontaneously begin to dance, to the amusement and delight of the Japanese members.

We begin our friendship exchange meeting with more than 150 members. Two representatives from our group present experiences, we have a gift exchange, and seemingly endless group picture-taking follows the meeting. Lots of fun, lots of laughs, and we return to our hotel around 10:00 p.m.

Monday, April 21

Today is the day we've been waiting for, the day we attend a meeting with President Ikeda. The meeting to celebrate Soka Gakkai Day (May 3) is to be held at the Makiguchi Memorial Hall in the evening, so we have time to go to nearby Soka University, where we tour the Ikeda Auditorium. The lobby has a showcase of rocks, companions of which are buried in the building foundation, donated by 162 universities from 73 countries.

Moving to the main auditorium, we are immediately drawn to the striking curtain covering the stage. It depicts a scene from ancient Greece with Socrates and Aristotle walking and talking in an ancient plaza. This curtain was donated by the graduates of Soka University and their parents on the university's 20th anniversary.

Next we go to the basement where numerous historical treasures are showcased — including original writings from George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Edison, Walt Whitman, Helen Keller, Mark Twain, John Dewey and Walt Disney. I feel transported to another time while reading some of these letters. I have a sense that I don't usually get in a museum, as if the respect accorded to these documents — and to the people who wrote them — goes far beyond a collector's hobby, to the realm of the spiritual. Maybe that's what it is: Looking at these documents seems like a very spiritual, reverent experience.

We later arrive at Makiguchi Hall, and it doesn't appear as large to me as it did from a distance. When I get inside I realize why. It is such a large building that it is hard to have a proper perspective from nearby. It is, however, an indescribably magnificent building. We ride up five or six escalators to get to our meeting room. We enter a large tatami-mat Gohonzon room that has a 35-foot high ceiling. It must hold well over a thousand people, and it is packed by the time the meeting starts.

First we hear activity reports from leaders in Russia and

Colombia. The Russian leader joined 17 years ago and was the second member in Russia. Members there had their first Gohonzon-conferral ceremony in 1993 and eventually became a chapter.

The Colombian leader talks about how President Ikeda first came to Colombia in 1987, despite great personal risk. Recently temple members held a rally at which only four people, all relatives, showed up. In contrast, 100 members showed up for a meeting in support of the SGI. It's interesting, I thought: As the SGI is spreading throughout the world, the Nikken sect is also appearing in every country to try to derail our efforts.

President Ikeda soon enters the room to thundering applause. We hear a rousing performance from the Tokyo Brass Band. They are as polished as a symphony orchestra, but more spirited. The first thing President Ikeda says is that we should make meetings interesting. Leaders may think that making things more complicated or difficult (than they have to be) is good, but we are a movement of the common people, he says.

President Ikeda's style is so direct. He says whatever he feels needs to be said, without considering the personal consequences. He is so courageous.

I reflect that I am both appreciative and content to let President Ikeda blaze all the trails, so I can practice and obtain benefit from this wonderful practice. However, in my heart I know that the correct practice of a true disciple is not just to depend on the mentor, but to fulfill the mentor's vision by blazing new trails as well. There is much room for im-



Conference participants share experiences.

provement in this critical part of my practice.

After the meeting, we go down one floor to a room where a selection of awards, gifts from dignitaries and honorary doctorates that President Ikeda has received are displayed. It is awesome proof of the achievements and friendships he has built around the world. Why doesn't the Japanese and Western press report at least a few of these outstanding accomplishments? We return to our buses and depart for our hotel, with much to think about on the way back.

Tuesday, April 22

It's hard to believe that this is the last day of our training course. The SGI-USA men attend an informal question-and-answer meeting with Mr. Wada and the women with Mrs. Hachiya. We later attend a closing meeting at the Soka International Friendship Hall.

It's clear to me that the theme of this trip is mentor and disciple. In that context, I can clearly see everything that President Ikeda has built in Japan and throughout the world with untiring effort. I

renew my conviction that there is no other mentor of life who is as accomplished, skilled and wise.

The main point I personally take back is that, to be a true disciple of my mentor, I must share his greatness with others. I decide that a good way to do this is to help members better understand President Ikeda's heart through his voluminous and profound writings and speeches. I make a new vow to more deeply study these writings together with my comrades for kosen-rufu as a way to strengthen the foundation for the SGI-USA that no evil outside force can shake.

Wednesday, April 23

We leave Japan and fly back to the States. We arrive the same day, after crossing the international date line. After clearing customs I say my good-byes to both old and new comrades. We have shared a great, historic event together. ☸

Bob Pryor is the study coordinator for San Diego Joint Territory and has a career in the computer software industry. Bob can be reached over the Internet at rpryor@web-in-sight.com.

The Student Files

Name: Angela R. Smith
School: Spelman College
Major: Human services
City: Atlanta



I am currently trying to fulfill my core requirements. I am taking Women of the Bible, African Diaspora and the World and doing my fieldwork for human services.

My practice helps me focus on my studies. I sometimes become overwhelmed by school, work and activities and begin to "think" my way through. But when I realize my mental plans are not working, I return to the Gohonzon.

Students ask me why I am so calm and organized. I usually respond that through my Buddhist practice I have learned discipline and patience. (This opens up dialogue.)

Being a student is the best training in life for life. You quickly discover your strengths and weaknesses. You learn better communication skills, experience short-term poverty, develop a great sense of humor and become a world-class citizen. ☸

KOSEN-RUFU

More Than Just a Word

BUDDHIST CONCEPT

By ELIZABETH PAGE
SEATTLE CORRESPONDENT

Kosen-rufu was probably one of the first words we ever heard at a Buddhist meeting. It appears often in the Goshō, in SGI President Ikeda's guidance and at our discussion meetings. But what does it really mean? Nichiren Daishonin taught that *kosen-rufu* means "to widely declare and propagate Buddhism." The second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda, taught that *kosen-rufu* means "to realize true happiness in the world by elevating the life-condition of all humanity."

But *kosen-rufu* has always been more of a feeling to me than just a word or a definition. It's a dream for humanity we all share in our hearts — the reason we've all gathered together to practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism at this time, right?

Often, though, we casually refer to this concept as meaning "world peace." Let's face it, *kosen-rufu* does sound kind

of weird in our society. Instead of confusing guests, we often say things like "world peace gongyo meeting" or "world peace prayers." Somehow, I've never felt this replacement quite does the concept justice.

To widely declare and propagate Buddhism is, after all, an immense mission, one to which we gradually awaken. It seems too easy to me to just substitute the buzzwords *world peace* for the Buddha's will. And yet we continue to do so, perhaps because we can't think of anything else to say.

Kosen-rufu also implies taking practical action, while world peace sometimes seems like something so big an individual cannot do it. On Feb. 27 in Okinawa, President Ikeda explained:

A youth, and a life, dedicated to realizing the great wish of *kosen-rufu* means willingly taking on suffering for the sake of the happiness of our friends and the peace and prosperity of society. It means asking oneself: "How can I help so-and-so get back on his feet?" "What can I do to encourage her?" or, "What can I do to help my local organization advance?" This is the spirit

of a bodhisattva. It is also identical to the heart of a Buddha.

Kosen-rufu is thus something we learn and that we can best explain through our individual actions to help others. Recently, I had a revelation about this: After nine years of practice, it suddenly occurred to me that I didn't really know what *Nam-myōhō-rengē-kyō* means. Sure, I could spout the English translation of it in my sleep. And, despite my blaring ignorance, chanting it has even worked! But I suddenly needed to really know, with my whole life, what *Nam-myōhō-rengē-kyō* means. I started chanting in earnest about this as I prepared for our March 16 youth division meeting.

During the meeting, suddenly it occurred to me: *Nam-myōhō-rengē-kyō* means to live Buddhism, as in to show what my practice is through my daily actions. And this is how I can best explain *kosen-rufu* to others. It might not be as quick and easy as saying "world peace," but it holds a lot more meaning.

Kosen-rufu is more than just a word. It is my efforts to bring happiness to this world by helping my friends. ❧

DAY OF MENTOR AND DISCIPLE — JULY 3

'Rhyming' Our Lives With the Gakkai Spirit

SIGNIFICANT DATE

By DAVE CORBETT
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA., CORRESPONDENT

American author and humorist Mark Twain once said, "History doesn't repeat itself, it rhymes." In SGI history, July 3 is the day every year that "rhymes" with the oneness of mentor and disciple, the essence of what we call the Gakkai spirit.

On July 3, 1945, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda was released from Toyotama Prison. He had been unjustly incarcerated with his mentor, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, first Soka Gakkai president. Makiguchi died in prison and Toda survived, thus inheriting Makiguchi's spirit and mission to spread the Law.

This event signifies the oneness of mentor and disciple, which transcends the boundaries of life and death and which Makiguchi and Toda inherited directly from their original mentor, Nichiren Daishonin. As President Ikeda writes:

What enabled Toda and Makiguchi to attain this state of oneness? It was their powerful, deep-seated resolution in faith, their determination to offer their lives for *kosen-rufu* — the decree of their original mentor, Nichiren Daishonin. (May 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 53)

This "deep-seated resolution in faith" is the Gakkai spirit.

Exactly 12 years later, on July 3, 1951, young Daisaku Ikeda was arrested by the Osaka Prefectural police on the false charge of door-to-door solicitation for votes. Young Ikeda, who had become Toda's disciple, was arrested on the same day that Toda had been released — this event, too, signifies the oneness of mentor and disciple.

Mr. Ikeda was released on July 17 and that evening wrote in his diary:

Shed tears deep in my heart at my mentor's compassion. Aware that the concern and worry Sensei [President Toda] has felt for me on this occasion has been deeper than the ocean. Must by all means spend the rest of my life repaying the debt of gratitude I owe him. (September 1992 *Seikyo Times*, p. 50)

Thus President Ikeda, wishing to repay his debt of gratitude, also inherited

the spirit and mission to spread the Law.

From the perspective of my 20-plus years of practice, I feel I've only scratched the surface of understanding this spirit and mission. On July 3, 1976, when I participated with SGI-USA members in a New York parade celebrating America's Bicentennial, I first began to learn the Gakkai spirit. And I'm still learning it. Many extraordinary events have occurred to me during the seemingly brief period of my practice, for which I feel I must repay a debt of gratitude to my mentor, President Ikeda.

As long as I keep returning to the basics of practice, I know I can repay this debt and deepen my understanding. Last year on July 3, President Ikeda said in Los Angeles, "When one is completely dedicated to the path of mentor and disciple, there is no doubt or confusion, no uncertainty or fear." I want to "rhyme" my life with this great spirit. ❧

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:

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SIGN POSTS

APPLYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS TO DAILY LIFE

From One's Mouth

By KIMBERLY SCOTT

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

Misfortune comes from one's mouth and ruins him, but fortune comes from one's mind and makes him worthy of respect. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 272)

Ever had a statement leap out of your mouth like a little frog? You know what I'm talking about: those nightmarish moments of hearing yourself say something and, once those words are out in the light of day, cringing and shrinking.

I have had that experience in several different ways. Sometimes my choice of words is offensive, no matter how "right" I may be. Other times the experience has been even more self-revelatory: More dialogue leads to an understanding of how my statements have been perceived aside from my intended meaning.

This Goshō passage reminds me that developing my heart is an important basis for my speech and action. This passage shouldn't be mistaken as Nichiren Daishonin's message to not say anything, but one of my first reactions to this quote was: "I need to just shut up. If I keep my mouth shut, I can't help but come out ahead." Not true. The more I considered this passage, the more I realized that in many cases silence is duplicitous with evil. A bad situation can be made much worse by the silence of those involved.

The fortune that "comes from one's mind," after all, is the wisdom to effect positive change. That means thinking seriously about what I say before I say it — how can my words lead to something positive? That means speaking the truth without discouraging or blaming the hearer. Dialogue and active listening produce a synergy that can only add up to the common good.

This Goshō was written at a time in human history when freedom of speech was not considered a right. Even a whispered comment could get you in a lot of trouble — it could even lead to instant death. But now we live in a world where freedom of speech is expected and fought for. That's why, more so than ever before, our thoughts, statements and actions build the lives we lead. ❧

My Recollections



The Honorable Justice S. Mohan of India

By SGI President Ikeda

A kind heart is more than a coronet." Justice S. Mohan of India inscribed these words on the flyleaf of a collection of his poems, *Random Reflections*, that he presented to me.

The Supreme Court of India is a great fortress defending the human rights of India's 800 million people. Until 1995, Dr. Mohan was a judge of that court. He remains today, after retiring at 65, a leading figure in the world of law in India.

When he came to Japan last summer, Dr. Mohan traveled all the way to Gumma Prefecture as a guest speaker in the Culture Lecture Series sponsored by the *Seikyo Shimbun*. After his lecture, a young woman rose and said: "I have no father. But I am earnestly pursuing my dreams, proud to be a Soka Gakkai member. In the organization, the men's division members are my fathers, and the women's divisions members are my mothers. Just now in your lecture, you said: 'When the atomic bomb fell on Japan, we in India wept. We did so because you, the people of Japan, were in our hearts. We always share every happiness and sadness with all of you in Japan.' I was very moved by your words. May I then also regard the people of India as members of my family?"

"Of course you may," replied Dr. Mohan. "Please do so by all means." Then he paused for a moment, and continued: "As a matter of fact, I never knew my father, either. My father died the day before I was born. I only missed seeing him by a single day. I was brought up by my mother. Even so, I made myself useful to society as a judge on the Supreme Court. You must never forget, my dear young people, the greatness of mothers. Your mothers are the finest people in the world. The divine dwells in your mothers' hearts."

After the speech, as photographs were taken to commemorate the event, Dr. Mohan held the hand of this young woman and continued to offer words of heartfelt encouragement. "I pray," he said, "that the

heavenly deities protect you, that you have a wonderful life, that you find a wonderful husband and have wonderful children! I pray that all the blessings of this world rain down on you!"

Dr. Mohan sparked such wonderful encounters wherever he went. To a first-grade elementary school student, he said: "Please grow up to be a great person. When you are bigger, please come to visit me in India." Another time he said to a student, "If you come to India, I will greet you as one of my dearest friends."

Dr. Mohan's compassionate heart sees a precious, divine essence in each and every individual. This is his religion — one that was taught to him by his mother. In a poem, he wrote:

*O Sweet Mother, no greater glory can I bring,
Through city, my name and fame ring.
I am the helper of the poor,
Friend of the sick,
Companion of the needy;
Neither halt, nor hesitate to help
Even if tumbled to poverty,
nor reduced to pulp
This be thy religion —
You said without an end,
Humble ever will I be,
ready always to bend.¹*

For Dr. Mohan, religion is service to humanity, the science of the spirit and the exact opposite of dogma.

There are trails along which birds fly in the skies and orbits along which the stars travel in the heavens, but they are invisible to the human eye. There also exists a path for human beings to follow. In the same way, though invisible, there is an eternal, sacred Law, the Dharma, that pervades the cosmos and governs all existence.

This universal Law extends to countless distant planets, encompassing the vast infinity of space, while it is also embodied in the gentle souging of the wind through the leaves in a golden autumn forest.

It is the poet who glimpses the soaring heights of the Dharma's song. Only the poet, like some highly sensitive audio device, can give voice to the



Justice S. Mohan

eternal Law. Sometimes that song is as familiar and nostalgic as the music from a bamboo flute. Sometimes it is as relentless as leaping flames.

As far as Dr. Mohan is concerned, his poetry, his faith and his activities as a jurist to realize justice and moral good are all service to the eternal Law. Dr. Mohan said to me: "I have lived with the resolve to dedicate my life to others. Though kings, emperors and generals may strive to leave their mark on history, it is a different sort of person who lives on in people's hearts. It is those with a deep compassion and concern for humanity who win an undying place in people's affections."

After graduating at the head of his class at Madras University, he became an attorney. Eventually, at his mother's urging, he became a judge. "Though I earned a lot less as a judge than I did as an attorney," he said, "I was completely satisfied with my work." Not distracted for a moment by wealth or fame, Dr. Mohan fought for the triumph of justice.

What is justice?

The poet Rabindranath Tagore, whom Dr. Mohan highly respects, asserted that *civilization* is the contemporary word closest in meaning to that ancient Indian concept, Dharma. For *civilization*, we could perhaps substitute *morality, human rights or justice*. For Dr. Mohan, the indivisibility of human rights and justice is an inviolable, sacred decree.

According to Dr. Mohan, any nation that tramples on human rights, no matter how wealthy it might be, is barbaric and uncivilized. He offers a stern warning about Japan's state of affairs:

Any country that violates freedom of religion will eventually violate all freedoms. Religious faith, the heart that seeks the great eternal truth transcending all petty desires, is the most civilizing power.

Dr. Mohan boldly asserts that a lawyer without compassion is deformed, and a human being without religion is a corpse. That has been his unchanging conviction and the attitude with which he has pursued his law career, he said. How can the law be made more humane? His cherished ideal is that laws should exist not to condemn but to save.

An American judge, who was Dr. Mohan's teacher at law school, always said that a judge must never think of himself as powerful. A judge must always be humble. When we are humble, a great human vista opens up and we can see things as they really are.

It is difficult indeed to judge one's fellow human beings. Of course, laws exist, but it is people who exercise them correctly or abuse them. Those who are aware of this tremendous difficulty of judging others inevitably seek a higher truth in which to ground their judgment.

The famous Japanese justice Masataro Miyake, in his book *Saiban no Sho* (A Judge's Reflections), wrote that the secret of passing sound judgment is to train oneself to renounce all subjectivity, whatever the case, and that prayer is a key to attaining that state of selflessness.

As a judge, Dr. Mohan has seen many real-life dramas played out before him. My friend Dr. Krishna Srinivas, president of the World Poetry Society, wrote of Dr. Mohan: "From his noble seat of inviolable Justice, he observes the caravan of humanity march before him in all its textures — a deserted woman crying for succor; an unfortunate condemned to gallows for no crime of his; an orphan craving protection; a saintly being on the Cross; several times truth mauled and facing extinction — these have roused the reality in him to rise above fear or favour and deliver Justice from the inner recesses of his soul."²

Some have not been pleased with the fact that Dr. Mohan praises the SGI at every opportunity. They have even warned him that, as a government employee, he should restrain his enthusiasm. But he is not to be intimidated. "I am a judge," he said. "It is my job and my duty to say what is right is right." What a powerful, committed and courageous response! Those who are kind and compassionate are strong. With his gaze firmly directed at the eternal, Dr. Mohan fears nothing.

He said: "I have served as a Supreme Court judge and a representative of the governor, but such social roles have nothing to do with one's worth as a human being. All that concerns me now is how I can achieve a peaceful death. As a result, the only kind of people I am interested in are those who can help me improve myself as a human being." If all leaders had such an attitude, the world would be transformed overnight.

In one of his poems, Dr. Mohan wrote:

*Who can conquer the world?
One whose heart is a fountain of kindness.
Who can conquer fate?
One who is wisdom's mate.
Who can conquer death?
One whose deeds are kind till last breath.³*

When I asked him what his message to youth was, he answered in ringing tones: "Youth, love all humanity! Compassion can open the door of impossibility. Youth, give everything you have to the service of the people! Pay no attention to the insults or slanders others may heap on you!"

He breathes eternity, which makes him eternally young — a youthful warrior fighting forever for justice. ■

1. Justice S. Mohan, "Oh, Sweet Mother" in *Wild Blooms* (Madras: Pooram Publications, 1982).

2. Preface to Justice S. Mohan's *Genesis* (Madras: Poets Press India, 1981), p. 6.

3. Justice S. Mohan, "Who Can Conquer?" in *Wild Blooms*.

A FRESH LOOK AT BUDDHISM

The Seeking Spirit To Want To Change

By REIKO GROSHELL &
MALINA MOORE
YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

First, for you to ask a question about the Lotus Sutra is a rare source of good fortune. In this age of the Latter Day of the Law, those who ask about the meaning of even one phrase or verse of the Lotus Sutra are much fewer than those who can hurl great Mount Sumeru to another land like a stone, or those who can kick the entire galaxy away like a ball. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 221)

Background

This letter was written on July 3, 1278, to the woman Myohō-ama, when Nichiren Daishonin was 57. Myohō-ama asked if one could attain enlightenment only by chanting Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō. Nichiren Daishonin praised her for asking such a question, describing how rare it is to find someone who asks about the Lotus Sutra.

Seeking Spirit

Throughout his writings, Nichiren Daishonin stresses the importance of developing our desire to learn more about Buddhism and how to practice so that we can become truly happy and help those around us to do so as well. We often refer to this desire as “seeking spirit.”



A young woman visits the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia.

In this letter, Nichiren praises Myohō-ama for asking the question, pointing out that not only is it rare to encounter the Lotus Sutra and pose questions regarding it, but that it is also a source of immense good fortune. This seeking spirit or desire to learn — not only in Buddhism — helps us to keep a fresh outlook on life and assures our growth as human beings.

In his message to representatives attending the opening session of the SGI Spring Training Course in April, SGI President Ikeda said: “As leaders, I hope that you will always have the spirit to learn with a lively curiosity and in-

terest. When leaders are enthusiastic to keep on learning and growing, they inspire others. New ideas emerge and spread. Fresh energy surges forth.”

It is important to not only maintain this spirit, but to manifest it in our actions and behavior. By being willing to learn from others through their suggestions and ideas, we foster unity and open-mindedness.

Sincere Prayer

When we started practicing, our desire to learn, to change our circumstances and to chant for benefits (either material or spir-

itual) seemed so easy. However, continuing to practice becomes difficult, for the more we practice the more we “wake up” our lives to change or improve them. Waking up our lives is often a painful process.

That is why it is so important for us to be surrounded by our friends in the organization so we can get re-energized and re-encouraged to chant sincerely to change our situations. Our seeking spirit to want to change our lives, self-reflect and move forward is the beginning of our happiness. And our sincere prayer to the Gohonzon can change everything for the better. **W**

Photo by JONATHAN WILSON

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

All About Politics

By CRAIG GREEN &
JEFF FARR
LOS ANGELES

With the completion of the Grand Main Temple in 1972, the Soka Gakkai began to focus on strengthening and modernizing its facilities and infrastructure. However, voices of apprehension began to arise from the priesthood, soon turning to voices of accusation.

In 1974, the Soka Gakkai began preparations to establish the Nichiren Shoshu International Center for supporting the expanding international membership. However, there was a fear within the priesthood that NSIC would be used to eventually take control of Nichiren Shoshu. Around this time, there were also occasions where SGI President Ikeda was criticized for lectures and articles he wrote. These criticisms grew so intense that the Soka Gakkai was forced to publicly acknowledge “doctrinal deviations,” appeasing accusations that it was straying from the teachings.

Throughout this period, President Ikeda met often with Nittatsu Shonin, then high priest of Nichiren Shoshu, to try to work out their differences. But by 1979, the voices of discontent in the priesthood were too great. In April 1979, President Ikeda was forced to step down as president and take the position of honorary president of the Soka Gakkai.

It was all becoming too clear. This was not a dispute over matters of faith. This was not about clearing up doctrine. It was all about politics.

No. 4 in a series

Youth Invade the Florida Nature and Culture Center!

YMD Leadership Conference
‘A Great Weekend of Friendship’
Thursday–Sunday, July 10–13
Contact your local YMD leaders

YWD Leadership Conference
‘Strengthening Our True Identity’
Thursday–Sunday, July 17–20
Contact your local YWD leaders

Junior High and High School Division Conference

‘The 2nd SGI-USA Junior High and High School Divisions Leadership Conference’
Thursday–Sunday, July 31–Aug. 3
Contact your local junior high and high school divisions leaders

Fife and Drum Corps, Music Corps and Youth Band Conference

‘The 2nd Nationwide Friendship Exchange’
Thursday–Sunday, Aug. 7–10
Contact your local Fife and Drum Corps, Music Corps and Youth Band leaders

The ground cost for each conference is \$330, which does not include air travel to and from the Florida Nature and Culture Center.

GUIDANCE INTO ACTION

Reaching Out and Interacting With People

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

By JAMES HERRMANN

SGI-USA YMD CHIEF

It is important to push ourselves to advance on the forefront. It all comes down to self-motivation, conviction and the spirit to stand alone. Those who do activities only because they are told to do so, or out of a sense of obligation, will not experience true joy. Since we're alive we ought to live with freshness and vigor. If we are going to run, then we should run with all our might. (*Learning From the Goshu*, p. 197)



James Herrmann is the new SGI-USA YMD chief.

Recently I attended a world peace gongyo meeting in my neighborhood and was moved by a young woman's experience. She explained how, through her efforts to develop a self-motivated practice, she became self-absorbed. I, too, had made the same mistake growing up in this organization. Though I recognized our organizational activities as valuable, I felt my

time was better spent developing myself through self-motivated study.

As a result of this effort to become self-motivated, my career began to take off. But I started to feel something was

missing from the formula — I wasn't contributing to the happiness of others. I was self-motivated, but also self-absorbed. Having recognized this shortcoming, I challenged myself to overcome it. I attended my district

meetings with the attitude of "What can I contribute?" rather than "What can I gain?"

In the above passage, SGI President Ikeda says, "It is important that we push ourselves to advance on the forefront." I have realized that the "forefront" is our districts. I feel it is our greatest challenge to aggressively "push ourselves" to contribute to our district meetings. We should strive to be active participants, not just spectators.

In the Super Bowl, spectators in the crowd cannot determine the victory or defeat of the team. It is only the players in the game who can. In becoming active participants in our District Super Bowls, we should approach our meetings with the same attitude the NFL players do — the attitude to give it our all, pull on our past experiences and actualize a great result based on our serious preparation. In other words, it is important for us to achieve victories.

To become a great victor in our district discussion meeting, we need to be courageous

enough to reach out and express our heart to others. Only then will they open their hearts to us. Our measurement of this victory can be determined by the meeting's atmosphere. It should be one where everyone truly enjoys themselves, engages in discussion and leaves with a new sense of hope and determination to be victorious in their lives.

I have realized that true victory in my life is found in exerting myself for the sake of others. Am I saying to neglect your career development and daily life? No, I'm saying that the key to becoming victorious in your life is to reach out and interact with people who are not necessarily like you. The district gives you this kind of opportunity.

As YMD members, let's live with and infuse our districts with "freshness and vigor." Let's "run with all our might" toward the 21st century. United as comrades, let's create an unprecedented history for humanity, while experiencing many personal victories along the way.

JOE YMD continued...

by Cory Taylor

I couldn't stop obsessing about how I screwed up at work!

I WAS SO INTIMIDATED BY MY MANAGER, AL, I HAD LET IT AFFECT MY WORK. NOW I WAS A NERVOUS SWEATY MESS. WHY WAS AL IN MY LIFE? WHY DID I ALLOW HIM TO MAKE ME FEEL MISERABLE?

WORKING FOR AL MADE ME FEEL LIKE A HELPLESS INMATE AT THE MERCY OF A RUTHLESS PRISON GUARD.

I PLAYED OUT SOME NON-BUDDHIST REVENGE SCENARIOS IN MY HEAD, BUT ONLY FELT WORSE.

I WENT HOME AND CHANTED DAIMOKU. AND THEN IT HIT ME.

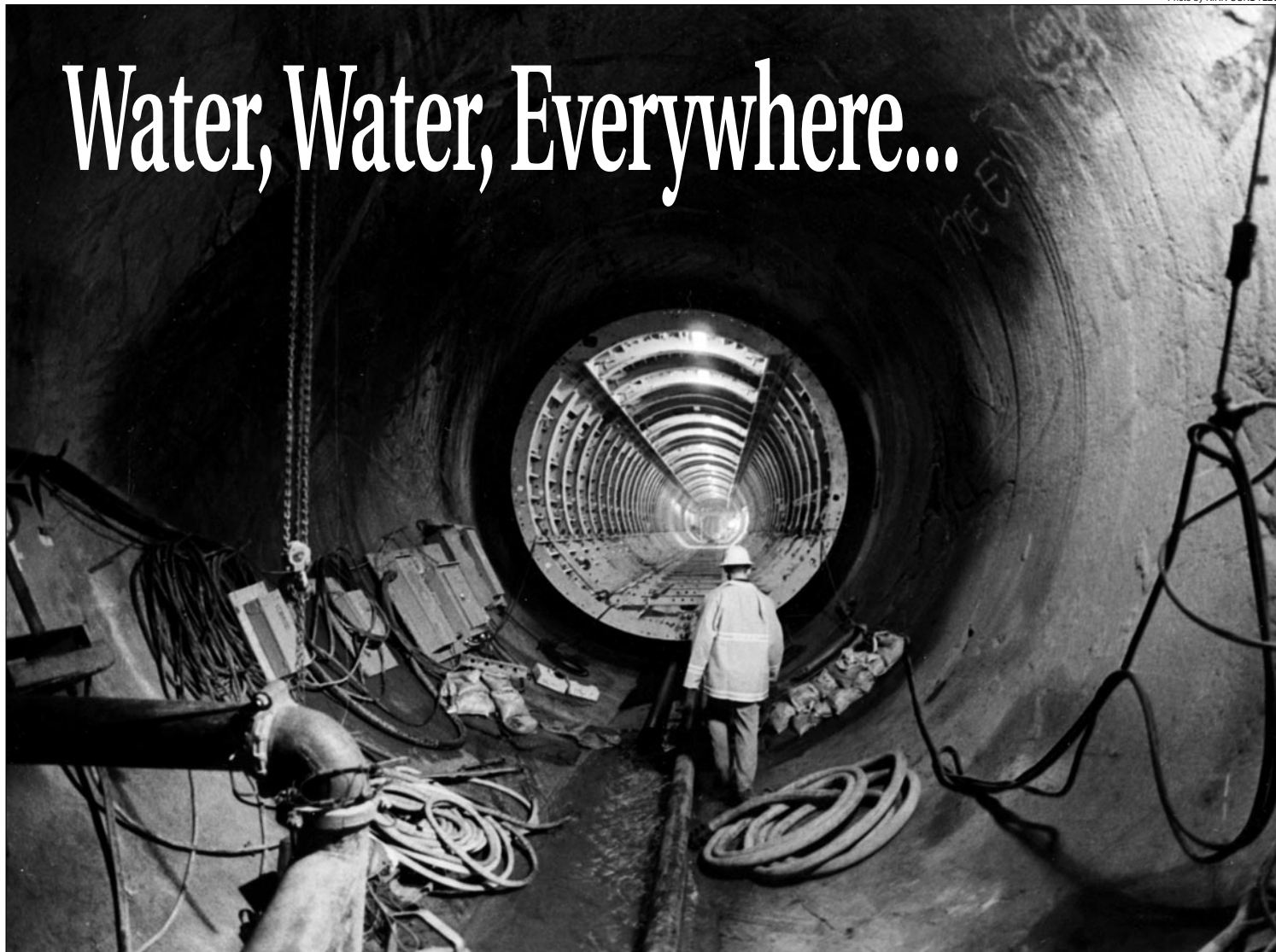
I DECIDED TO SEEK OUT GUIDANCE FROM A LEADER I TRUST.

Ed encouraged me to develop the kind of character to be able to handle such small-minded people.

Ed reminded me of President Ikeda's guidance to challenge myself, where I am, right now. I'm going back to work — and I'm going to face it.

Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

Water, Water, Everywhere...



The New York City water tunnel in Maspeth, Queens, 800 feet down. This shows two phases of the tunnel at their joint (brightly lit portion in the background is the concrete form).

By **TERRY ELLIS**
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The best minds of ancient Egypt, Palestine, Greece and Rome considered how to supply cities with water. More than 2,000 years later, the problem continues to engage our imagination. During the last 40 years, an estimated 10 trillion tons of water have been stored in reservoirs. And still we have a water problem. U.N. officials last year stressed that 1 billion people lack adequate clean water supplies.

"Water issues may be a contributing factor to breaking peace, like oil was in the past," said Wally N'Dow, secretary-general for the 1996 U.N. Conference on Cities. N'Dow also pointed out that since the international debt crisis of the 1980s, lending practices have forced cutbacks in public funding for such things as water supply.

Even in the United States, which by comparison to other countries has virtually no water problem, cities and regions already go to court over water rights. In many older cities where water infrastructures were built at the turn of the century, public officials worry about aging pipes.

The city set out to build a new water tunnel in 1969. More than 25 years later, water finally is flowing in the first section of the new tunnel, although it's still not being used while it's monitored for quality.

New York City epitomizes the issues many people face in varying degrees all over the world, as well as the resourcefulness and perseverance that people can bring to bear.

The city set out to build a new water tunnel in 1969. More than 25 years later, water finally is flowing in the first section of the new tunnel, although it's still not being used while it's monitored for quality.

What was conceived of as a five-year project was stalemated by inflation and funding problems, says Michael Abramson, a civil engineer with the city's Department of Environmental Protection, who has been with the project since its inception.

"Time is a function of money," said Abramson, who spoke from his office at the construction site in Queens.

Water for the city now comes from 19 upstate reservoirs and flows through Tunnel 1 and Tunnel 2, underground aqueducts painstakingly blasted out of rock, and completed in 1917 and 1936.

When water from the first 13-and-a-half miles of Tunnel 3 begins to flow through spigots, city water officials will breathe easier. The new tunnel will supply as much water as the two original tunnels combined. Stage 2 of Tunnel 3's construction is under way in earnest.

By the time Tunnel 3 is completed, the project — a monument to perseverance, determination and innovation — will have taken almost 50 years. **WT**



Hello From Kentucky!

By KATHY TRIBBLE

Louisville, Ky.

The boys and girls here in Kentucky have been very busy this year. So far we have learned two new songs to sing to SGI President Ikeda when he comes to Kentucky. We are very fortunate to have Mrs. Koko Shaw, a pioneer member, to teach us these wonderful songs. One is about winter and the other is about spring. We performed them at our world peace gongyo meeting.

We have also beautified our community center by planting flowers around the walk. And last Saturday we went to Cherokee Park for a picnic. We enjoy reading about our other Boys and Girls Group friends (in "Friends for Peace"), and we hope that we can also contribute to "our" newspaper.



TO ALL THE BOYS AND GIRLS

'Thank You! We Love You!'

From May 15-18, Boys and Girls Group coordinators and supporters from throughout the United States met at the Florida Nature and Culture Center to share ideas for children's activities. Here are some things they want to tell you:

I feel honored and proud to represent you, the Kansas City Boys and Girls Group, at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. Each of you continues to inspire me through your enthusiasm, creativity and seeking spirit.

— Theresa Bosch, Kansas

I want you each to know how important you are...to the SGI, for kosen-rufu and to the entire world. Your thoughts, feelings and ideas are very important, too. If someone tells you they're not because you are "just a kid" — don't believe them! You are VERY important! Please take good care of yourselves — stay safe, be healthy, get enough rest and study hard and play hard, too. Most of all — enjoy each day!

— Evelyn W. Johnson, Salt Lake City, Utah

Aloha. Like SGI President Ikeda, we believe in your true self and unimaginable potential. With the senior divisions' *kokua* (support and cooperation), we're here for you — and love you!!

— Joan Heller, Kauai, Hawaii

I am so proud at how hard our boys and girls have been working — as an example, their participation in the UN50 celebration, the various performances and the many activities they have participated in across the nation. As a result of their efforts, combined with the pure hearts and tremendous efforts of the coordinators and parents, we were able to hold the first national conference at the FNCC, and take additional steps in creating a national network and designing resources for the boys and girls, parents and coordinators.

— Bruce H. Miller, San Francisco



Friends Sharing With One Another

FRIEND TO FRIEND

Our Boys and Girls Group study topic for July is "seeking spirit." Please send us your thoughts about seeking spirit (up to 50 words) along with a photo of yourself. It can be an experience or just whatever you think about seeking spirit. Send it to "Friends for Peace" by June 23. (See page C for the comments everyone sent in this month about the mentor-disciple relationship!)

We need YOU to make
"Friends for Peace"

a success. Tell us your stories, send us your art.

• KIDSPEAK • KIDSPEAK • KIDSPEAK • KIDSPEAK • KIDSPEAK • KIDSPEAK • KIDSPEAK • KIDSPEAK •

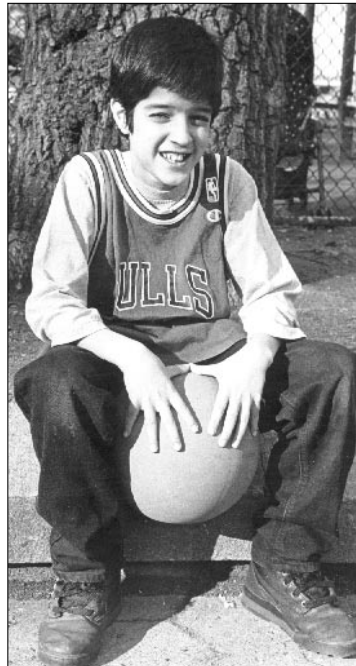


Idonarose Orr, center.

Idonarose Orr, 9

Santa Barbara, Calif.

Hi! The last two years I've been chanting for a big house and guess what? I got it and I am so happy because I got my own room. I have been chanting for the past four years, but I was born a fortune baby, which means [my parents were practicing when I was born]. I am in the Kids Group in Santa Barbara and I lead gongyo at our meetings. Two years ago, our Kids Group had a vote to be called Kids and not Boys and Girls Group, and everyone voted for Kids. We also play music for the world peace gongyo meetings and the members enjoy our Kids Group band. Our Kids Group is cool because we go on field trips, clean up the beach, and even have sleepovers and parties. The last two years we had a Halloween party at our SGI community center and the dads built us a real haunted house! I LOVE SGI AND OUR KIDS GROUP!



Jayanta Williams

New York

My friends call me J.J. I live with my mother, 18-year-old sister, 20-year-old brother, dog and cat. I am in a baseball league and a basketball league. I chanted that I could get a perfect jump shot in basketball and now I have a perfect jump shot. I can shoot from any angle and get it in the basket. It makes me feel good that I could improve in basketball. Before I couldn't even dribble. Sometimes I teach other kids how to play basketball. I've been

playing ever since I was in 3rd grade and I'm in 6th grade now and I practice a lot.

If you chant and get better at basketball, you can chant and get better at almost anything. But you have to keep practicing (basketball), you can't just only chant.



Everett Stokes, 9

Hoffman Estates, Ill.

I have been a member of SGI since I was born. When I was in first grade, I did very poor and not good in school. After hard work and encouragement from my teachers and parents, I am now learning a lot and making good grades. I recently attended a dinner for the BOOK-IT program where I read many books. I want to thank my teachers, Ms. Landbo and Ms. Pharis, for encouraging me to try hard, and also my parents for encouraging me to chant. Chanting is great for everyone.



Russell Di Vincenzo, 9

Buffalo, N.Y.



I was born with the Gohonzon. My mom always tells me that I'm a fortune child. I chant at night to overcome my fears, and I'm doing very well! I have many teachers in my life. I'm learning to follow by studying Taekwondo and I'm almost at a black-belt level. Through my teachers in my life, especially President Ikeda, as I learn to follow someday I will be able to lead. I'm really chanting to meet SGI President Ikeda. Mom says that he really, really likes kids. Hopefully, I will be able to tell him my dream to be in the National Hockey League. I think they need many leaders. Keep on chanting!!!



Marika Rinehart, 6

Garden Grove, Calif.

On Feb. 9 I had a birthday party. Before the party, the newspaper said it might rain and so my daddy chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo lots of times so that the weather would be good. The day after we chanted, the newspaper said there would be no rain. On the day of my party, the weather was

sunny and perfect! We had a great party!



"Friends for Peace" thanks everyone who contributed to this issue, including Ann Martin (Philadelphia). Thanks also to Barbara Murphy and Diane Lauble (Chicago) for designing the figures in the nameplate. Please send us your experience (around 150 words), comments, questions or news article to: "Friends for Peace," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

MENTOR-DISCIPLE RELATIONSHIP — FRIEND TO FRIEND — MENTOR-DISCIPLE RELATIONSHIP

About the Mentor-Disciple Relationship

The *Holt Intermediate Dictionary of American English* says a mentor is a “wise and trusted teacher” and a disciple is a “person who accepts the teachings of a leader and helps to spread them.”

SGI President Ikeda says: “The mentor-disciple relationship, in fact, forms the crucial foundation in Buddhism. We might say that everything is determined by whom a person chooses as a mentor in life. The future is also determined by the kind of disciples the mentor has” (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 2, p. 223).

Questions for discussion:

- What do you think President Ikeda means when he says, “The future is also determined by the kind of disciples the mentor has”?
- Do you know someone who learned from a mentor and then became even greater than the mentor, and went on to be a great mentor him- or herself?
- What do you think it means to take action based on the mentor’s vision?

What other ‘Friends for Peace’ readers have to say:

I am going to explain what I think about mentor and disciple. Our mentor is SGI President Ikeda. I think that President Ikeda had a great mission to spread peace throughout the world. President Ikeda teaches us how to improve our daily lives. He writes books for children about other people and animals who go through obstacles and accomplish or unaccomplish things. I think that President Ikeda is a great mentor because he really makes people understand ways to make people happy and how to make your own life better. My goal is to be just like President Ikeda so that I can make this world better.

— Jennifer Kubota, 10

Mentor means a form of a teacher that helps people in need. A disciple is the person who needs help, and they get it from the mentor. A mentor-disciple relationship is two friends helping each other.

— Benjamin Mapp, Louisville, Ky.

SGI President on the Mentor-Disciple Relationship

While in Denver last June, President Ikeda met with the chancellor of the University of Denver, Daniel Ritchie. Dr. Ritchie was fortunate to have had a good mentor during his youth. While a student at Harvard, he became very active in human rights activities — so excited, in fact, that he stopped attending classes and almost had to drop out of school.

One of his professors worried about him and encouraged him, “Right now is the time for you to study!”

The professor tutored him every day so that he caught up with his studies. Because of this experience, Chancellor Ritchie strongly believes young people need mentors with lots of experience in life to guide them. President Ikeda said: “Human beings are raised by human beings. Only people can help other people.”



Robert Zuehlke, 11

Manila, Philippines

Last November our school had what they call Family Fun Day, which is like a fair. Our class had a booth at the fair, which was called “Wheel of Fortune.” After the next few days of counting the money we had, we couldn’t decide what to do with it. Then we thought that we should give some away for charity. We had a vote for this and just

about everyone chose to give some of it to charity. Then we had to decide how much of the money to give to charity. Either half, one-quarter, three-quarters or all of it. I voted for three-quarters. My friend Gino picked one-quarter. Then other people started raising their hands for either half or three-quarters. Gino then thought that what he was doing was bad and he said, “I better give them more than I thought or else I might go to hell.” When I heard him say this I felt very proud to be a Buddhist because, no matter what, Buddhists should feel confident, not guilty, and also feel confident even when others disagree with their strong opinions.



Joyce Scruggs, 11

Augusta, S.C.

Hi. As some people know, we have been practicing and learning more about Nichiren Daisshonin’s Buddhism, especially gongyo. My mom told me when she was my age, she could do gongyo perfectly. To us, reading gongyo is very hard. We read a few pages at each meeting. When Martha came to our last Boys and Girls Group meeting, we had a

great time. We learned about the concept of the oneness of self and environment, and we all did daimoku for 45 minutes. Every three minutes we switched being the leader. It was a great success. Also we read a poem about a woman who spread a rumor that made all of us think about the consequences that we handle every day. One of my determinations is to achieve the Boys and Girls Group goals for 1997. They are: 1) to study hard at school, 2) to try your best at gongyo and daimoku every day, 3) to cherish your friends, 4) respect everyone in your family, and 5) believe in yourself — no matter what! Never, Never, Never give up on anything! Now, I want to thank all of the leaders for all of the work they did for the Boys and Girls Group.





(From left) Chang-Soo Si, Meghan Tucker, Angela Baesl, Erica Shure, Kenisha, Christina Tucker, Jang-Boo Si, Jessica Tucker, Phong Si, Tae Si, Phillip Campbell and Joyce Scruggs.

Augusta Boys and Girls Perform

By OLIVEA SHURE

Charlotte, N.C.

On Jan. 19, the Boys and Girls Group of Augusta Chapter, South Carolina Territory, performed a dance at a joint territory leaders meeting here. Despite the many days of hard practice and discouraging remarks like "I can't do that," or "That's too hard," they pulled it off with flying colors!

The Boys and Girls Group did a step dance, so they came up with the name the Soka Steppers. Three-quarters of the way through the dance the audience thought they were finished and gave them a standing ovation. The applause was so great the performers didn't hear their cue for the next section of the dance! After they finished, the Soka Steppers received another standing ovation, which brought a proud smile to each of their faces.

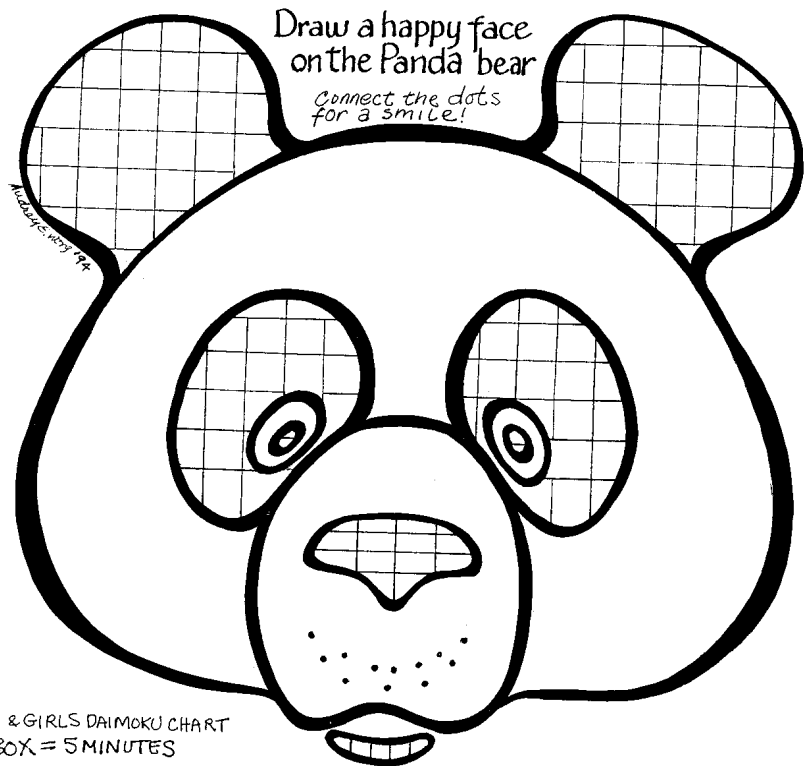
After the performance, I heard many of the Boys and Girls Group members wondering if they were going to dance in Washington, D.C., for SGI President Ikeda. This was a proud and happy moment in each of their lives, making the long four-and-a-half hour drive back home seem not very long at all.

Hi From Williamsport, Pa.!



We travel four hours one way from Williamsport, Pa., to get to our Boys and Girls Group meetings in Philadelphia. We made these posters for the women's division general meeting, to support them. We are getting lots of benefits! (Top, from left to right: Alex Fisher, Crystal Liang, Jane Gallager. Bottom: Danielle and Jack Stewart.)

A Daimoku Chart For You!



BOYS & GIRLS DAIMOKU CHART
ONE BOX = 5 MINUTES



Poem

April

By MELODY LYNN BRYANT MCCALL, 9

Philadelphia

I love April.
Spring is in April.
I like to play in April.
April is lots of fun.
April is special.