

World Tribune

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THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

JUNE 27, 1997

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Soka Gakkai Unveils Peace Monument

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER
Hiroshima, Japan, June 1

A monument to victims of atomic bombs and nuclear accidents — consisting of six bronze statues by noted French sculptor Louis Derbré — was unveiled by the Soka Gakkai today on the grounds of Chugoku Peace Park here.

The statues, situated on a pedestal 50 feet high and 23 feet across, depict six figures who represent construction, tolerance, courage, hope, the future and joy. The calligraphy on the title stone was written by famous Chinese author Jin Yong.

The base of the pedestal includes a message of peace in five languages — Japanese, English, French, Chinese and Spanish — from SGI President Ikeda. The message in part reads, "Indestructible as a diamond, the precious vessel of life is mightier than the accursed power of nuclear weapons." The Prayer for World Peace Monument was dedicated this year in recognition of the 40th anniversary of second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda's call in September 1957 for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

In a meeting with the SGI leader, Mr. Derbré shared that for the first time in his 50 years of sculpting, he discovered in himself a new ability through this latest project and felt he had made a fresh start toward the future. He resolved to advance with the same devotion to peace as the SGI leader, saying that though until now he had sculpted purely for the sake of



The six figures on the monument represent construction, tolerance, courage, hope, the future and joy. This year marks the 40th anniversary of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's call for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

creating art, from today on his work would be for the sake of peace.

The following is SGI President Ikeda's dedication on the Prayer for World Peace Monument.

Prayer for World Peace

"We, the people of the world, have the right to live. Anyone who threatens that right is a devil, a Satan, a monster."

Forty years have passed since our mentor, Josei Toda, bequeathed to us his final instruction, his Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons.

Friends in Hiroshima and Na-

gasaki who met with horrific suffering!

People of Asia and the Pacific who were subjected to appalling calamities!

The abolition of nuclear weapons is the earnest desire of all humanity!

In order to break the nuclear spell, in order to cut through the nuclear darkness, in order to create a century of human triumph, we erect here, at Chugoku Memorial Park in Hiroshima, the Prayer for World Peace Monument.

The title inscription is the calligraphy of Jin Yong, luminary of contemporary Chinese literature.

The clustered sculptures em-

body the sincerity of the world-renowned artist Louis Derbré.

Indestructible as a diamond, the precious vessel of life is mightier than the accursed power of nuclear weapons.

A great spirit upholding a sublime philosophy prevails over any form of atrocity.

With our eyes fixed on a rainbow-spanned era of harmonious coexistence — the dream of all humanity — we arise, we advance.

On this, the 40th anniversary of our mentor's final instruction, we commit to this monument our profound prayer and renew our vow to progress without cease toward the attainment of lasting peace. W

Photo by JONATHAN WILSON



Dr. Ellen Taliaferro, co-founder of Physicians for a Violence-free Society, speaks to members in Philadelphia about domestic violence.

A PERSONAL REPORT

Domestic Violence Occurs In Every Social Class, Doctor Says

By CLAUDE LOMDEN
CORRESPONDENT
Philadelphia

I walked into our Philadelphia Community Center with a ho-hum attitude: I'll just take my notes, I thought, and dash off something perfunctory for the *World Tribune*.

Boy, was I in for a big surprise.

In less than two hours, my

eyes were opened to a common phenomenon in the United States, one that I had thought was far away from me: domestic violence.

Dr. Ellen Taliaferro, an SGI-USA member, physician and co-founder of Physicians for a Violence-free Society, spoke at a small roundtable meeting where

PLEASE SEE VIOLENCE, 4

VOICES

As a Buddhist, what does Independence Day mean to you?

Members from Las Vegas Territory respond:



Independence Day represents the determination of the people who never gave up on their right to choose, who paved the way for us to have the liberty to practice Buddhism as a religion today.

— JENNIFER PORRAS, Las Vegas



True independence is found in following the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin and propagating them.

— JOHN BROWN, Las Vegas



Independence Day has a lot to do with casting off the transient and revealing the true. In its formative period, the United States comprised a lot of conflicting elements. But through our ability to pursue our religious ideals, I feel the last 200 years have seen more spiritual evolution than the previous 2,000.

— STEWART SAINT-DAVID, Las Vegas



Being in the military, it meant how much you had to earn freedom. But as a Buddhist, I've learned that peace is required for freedom. Looking at the surface is wrong. You have to look to the heart of people to see that peace is required for freedom.

— STEVE SCHULKINS, Las Vegas



I feel fortunate to live in a country where we can practice freely. For me, I really think the SGI will eventually bring out the true spirit of Independence Day through each person's practice for world peace.

— JOHN PAYTON, Las Vegas



Even though I was born in Japan, I feel patriotic about it because Americans stood up and fought for their beliefs. Just like [first and second Soka Gakkai presidents] Makiguchi and Toda.

— YURIE SHARP, Las Vegas



Independence Day will occur when all mankind awakens to the reality that to be truly free is to love a peaceful existence.

— JEFF KILIAN, Las Vegas



As a Buddhist, true independence is the freedom to live in a society where everyone is treated fairly, equally and with respect.

— SANDRA JONES, Las Vegas

Half Done, Half To Go

EDITORIAL

Quick. Do you remember the SGI-USA focal point for 1997? The three guidelines for the year? How about General Director Zaitzu's six challenges? Your own New Year's resolutions?

So often we come up with mottoes, guidelines or resolutions only to forget about them a week or a month later. Especially in the SGI, we seem to love having three points for this, five for that and 10 for something else. It's somehow comforting to boil down everything we want to do into bite-size chunks this way.

Even Nichiren Daishonin had three points: faith, practice and study. Everything we do in the SGI and in our personal practice we measure against those three essentials. They form such a core of this Buddhism that we all know them by heart.

But what about all those other slogans and lists? Do they have less value because we can't remember them as easily? Any guideline, precept or resolution is as effective as people make it. If we're serious about losing weight, quitting smoking, getting out of debt or chanting more daimoku, we don't necessarily need a motto to remind us. We will, to quote another slogan, "just do it." But guidelines and "steps to success" can help us if we take them for what they're worth and refer to them once in awhile.

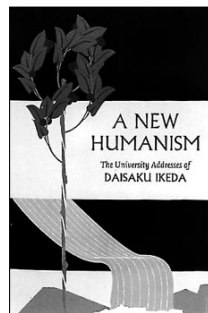
What's most important is what we *do*, not what slogans we come up with. This week, Gen-

eral Director Zaitzu and the Central Executive Committee will review the first half of 1997 and see how far the organization has come in terms of the six challenges he presented last December (expansion; making districts priority No. 1; entrusting the youth; reorganizing by neighborhood; diversity; and study). With the year half over, it's a good time for all of us to review the goals we set for ourselves and decide what we are going to do in the next six months. Without this commitment to live up to our resolutions, our words become meaningless.

Fortunately, Buddhism is concerned with the present and the future and not the past. Goethe writes that "the moment alone is decisive; Fixes the life of man, and his future destiny settles." The power of the present moment is incalculable. As SGI President Ikeda says: "'That time' [from the sutra phrase 'At that time the World-Honored One arose...'] is the moment you resolve from the depths of your heart: 'Now I will stand up and fight!' From that instant your destiny changes. Your life develops. History begins."

Oh, in case you don't remember, the focal point for the SGI-USA in 1997 is: "With strong prayer, we will develop ourselves and contribute to society through compassionate dialogue on Buddhist philosophy." A point well worth living up to.

WT



A New Humanism (softcover version)

University Addresses by Daisaku Ikeda

Over the last two decades, SGI President Daisaku Ikeda has given speeches and lectures at more than 20 universities, research institutes and academies outside of Japan. Here is a collection of those addresses that have profoundly inspired and initiated worldwide recognition of the SGI movement for peace, culture and education. This book will continue to serve as the credo for a genuine peace movement into the 21st century.

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**WORLD TRIBUNE
MAILBOX**

Fresh Language, Please

I read with interest the following excerpt of an American-educated SGI-USA leader's speech that appeared recently in the *World Tribune*: "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."

From a public relations perspective, I think it's important that we speak and write in a style that is clear and representative of American culture. The above sort of rhetoric reads as if it were written in Japanese — a language that employs very flowery language to express emphasis — and translated into English — a language in which restraint and spare word choice best communicates strength.

Moreover, I think that many SGI members are either consciously or subconsciously very, very tired of these cliches, which mean nothing anymore because they've been so recycled and overused. I think that peoples' minds glaze over when they hear this stuff now.

Wouldn't it be progressive if we not only infuse our districts with "freshness and vigor" but infuse the language we use with freshness and vigor as well? If the voice does the Buddha's work, it seems to me that members would be encouraged if at least the American-born leaders speak and write in a more natural and direct manner. I believe that this is an extremely important issue that the SGI-USA needs to address. Thanks.

— JEFF OURVAN, Tokyo

Why Mentor and Disciple?

When I joined SGI-USA, I was not told I would have to accept the Daishonin as my master and strive to be his disciple. I was also never told that I would have to accept SGI President Ikeda as my master and become his disciple, too.

In the May 2 *World Tribune*, in the article "A Promise to My Mentor," Betsy Eppsteiner states, "As a disciple of Nichiren Daishonin and President Ikeda..." The mentor-disciple series that you are publishing is troubling because of its implication that we have to accept a mentor, acknowledge that to have "strong faith" we must have a mentor and this "mentor" be President Ikeda or the Daishonin or both.

This is a complex issue. If indeed we should have a mentor in order to practice correctly, let's very clearly incorporate this tenet into our Buddhist religion rather than leave it up to each person's opinion.

And just because someone chooses President Ikeda as his master, does this conversely imply that President Ikeda has selected him?

These misleading ideas about the "mentor" create confusion in the membership. The concept of having a mentor is complex and personal. It should remain in the hearts of the membership or be fully put forth as a tenet of this practice with substantial validating documentation.

— BOB DORF, Kansas City, Mo.

Editor's note: Ted Morino, the SGI-USA Study Department chief, addresses this question in his Q-and-A series on p. 9.

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

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

Butterfly Muscles

PERSPECTIVE

By PATRICK KELLEHER
MORENO VALLEY, CALIF.

Reflecting on the history of our kosen-rufu movement in the United States, the images of those pioneers who dedicated their entire lives to realizing SGI President Ikeda's vision for the future come into sharp focus. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the history of the SGI-USA is one of courageous personal struggle.

Apart from President Ikeda's guidance, there were no models of how to introduce this Buddhism into the American society and culture. Yet our SGI-USA pioneers engaged in an unprecedented day-to-day struggle aimed at changing the destiny of our nation at one of its most troubled times. It should also be understood that they accepted this challenge in the face of great personal difficulty. Many had only recently adopted the United States as their new home. It is difficult to imagine the tremendous obstacles that confronted those who made President Ikeda's vision for kosen-rufu of America their own.

In his novel *The New Human Revolution*, President Ikeda expresses his conviction that the Daishonin's teachings must be introduced internationally in a manner that accords with the culture and customs of each country. Throughout his travels to the United States and other countries, President Ikeda laid the groundwork for kosen-rufu to unfold free from rigid formality or cultural dissonance. In this regard, he fully understood the importance of each country developing its unique movement for kosen-rufu.

Having practiced this Buddhism for nearly 30 years, I have had an opportunity to observe our SGI-USA pioneers' struggle to establish the Daishonin's teachings on the American continent. In this regard, a

story by Henry Miller, "Why the Butterfly Was Killed," may serve to illustrate the importance of their remarkable legacy to future generations:

A boy in India encountered a wise man who was sitting and looking at something he held in his hand. The boy did not recognize what the wise man was holding, and he asked, "What is that?"

"It is a cocoon," said the wise man. "Inside the cocoon is a butterfly. Soon the cocoon is going to split, and the butterfly will come out."

"Could I have it?" the boy asked.

"Yes," answered the wise man, "but you must promise me

went back to the wise man.

"You see, little boy," the wise man said, "you pushed open the cocoon, didn't you?"

"Yes," said the boy, "I did."

And the wise man said: "You did not see what you were doing. When the butterfly comes out of the cocoon, the only way he can strengthen his wings is by beating them against the cocoon. It beats against the cocoon so its muscles will grow. When you helped it the way you did, you prevented it from getting strong. That is why the butterfly fell to the ground and was killed."

This simple story has profound implications regarding the future development of our organization. In making President

Ikeda's vision for worldwide kosen-rufu their own, our SGI-USA pioneers struggled tirelessly to establish an organization that was uniquely suited to the American society and culture. It might be argued that the dynamic growth of our organization from its earliest days was a direct result of its creative energy and unique fusion with American culture and values.

Although our organization may at times resemble a butterfly struggling to emerge from its cocoon, the future of both our organization and American society is dependent on this transformation process. In a very real sense, the struggle entailed in developing the organization was, and continues to be, absolutely necessary to its critical mission. The golden history of courageous personal struggle created by our SGI-USA pioneers should serve to guide future generations.

There is a saying that the past is prologue. If we hope to construct an organization that has the capacity to realize President Ikeda's vision for American kosen-rufu, we must build on the extraordinary legacy of our SGI-USA pioneers. As the story of the butterfly instructs, the only sure path toward our future development is the one that we ourselves struggle courageously to create.



Patrick Kelleher

that, when the cocoon splits and the butterfly starts to come out and he is beating his wings to get out of the cocoon, you will not help him. Do not help the butterfly by breaking the cocoon apart. Let him do it by himself."

The boy promised and took the cocoon home with him. After watching it closely for some time, the cocoon began to vibrate and quiver. Finally, it opened and inside was a beautiful butterfly. It frantically beat its wings against the cocoon trying to get out.

However, the butterfly seemed unable to free itself. The boy desperately wanted to help. Finally, he gave in and disobeyed the wise man's direction. He pushed the two halves of the cocoon apart, and the butterfly sprang out. But, as soon as it flew into the sky, it fell to the ground and was killed. The boy picked up the dead butterfly and, in tears,

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VIOLENCE, FROM PAGE 1

she also answered questions. By the end, I felt as if I had been walking through and living in a naive vacuum.

Here's a sample of her observations (95 percent of domestic violence is men beating women, so most of the information discussed here refers to violence by men aimed at women):

- Although statistics are poorly kept, we know that between 2 and 4 million women are seriously injured by someone in an intimate relationship with them. That's once every 12 to 15 seconds. Up to 18 million women are beaten each year; 2,000 to 4,000 women die each year from domestic violence.
- Witnessing violence can be more harmful than the actual experience of it.
- Domestic abuse is about power and control. Abusers use beatings to stay in control.
- Some couples see no reason to break the cycle.
- Many perpetrators don't recognize that they're perpetrators.

Dr. Taliaferro's comments as a Buddhist physician and specialist in this field were particularly illuminating:

- Couple counseling or other therapy for the perpetrator often does not work and can even be highly dangerous when it deals only with changing the environment rather than the individual.
- It is not helpful to tell a victim only that "It's your karma." This can be interpreted as "It's your fate," and leave the victim feeling helpless. Karma is dynamic — always changing and manifesting in different ways. What matters most is what you do with your karma, not so much what happens to you. An authority on alcoholism says, "You are not responsible for the fact that you are an alcoholic, but you are responsible for your recovery." This is similar to saying, "If you're a diabetic, you are responsible for taking your insulin." If you're a victim of domestic violence, you are responsible for changing your family situation to a happier one.
- The perpetrator and the vic-

Help Break the Cycle of Domestic Violence

Do you suspect someone you know is experiencing domestic violence? Dr. Ellen Taliaferro offers the following suggestions for action you can take:

- Identify or confirm the domestic violence situation.
- Document what you see and/or hear (it should eventually get into the legal system).
- Refer the victim to a shelter, or at least encourage the victim to work out a secret safety plan. (If she is not in immediate danger, she can call 1-800-799-SAFE to get further information or referrals.)
- Listen. There is no substitute for good listening.
- Send therapeutic messages (everyone is equal, no one deserves to be beaten, you are a person of worth). ❏

tim's states of mind are crucial. As Buddhists, we can understand this. Domestic violence is linked, of course, to the three poisons, and with an understanding of the oneness of self and environment, we need to realize that domestic violence, so prevalent

throughout our environment, is everyone's problem.

- (One participant, who works for a domestic abuse hotline, asked, "What do you do when the victim is stuck in the world of Anger?") Anger is hard to get rid of and is usually painful. There are two

kinds of pain: acute, which eventually heals, and chronic, which defies standard treatment and begins to drive the life of the family. The second type is the kind we're dealing with in domestic violence. Many times we can say of the victim or the perpetrator, "In the beginning, he had pain, but now, the pain has him." In therapeutic terms, we can say to the victim or perpetrator, "The Anger has you," or "You are attached to your Anger." A way has to be found to break the attachment, and it can only begin when the person recognizes it.

Dr. Taliaferro's discussion on domestic violence offered us a rare opportunity to learn about conditions that cause suffering for many people throughout the United States.

Her knowledgeable and insightful comments gave all of us the chance to heighten our awareness — and to be on the look-out for — the possibility of domestic violence among our friends, relatives and colleagues. In this sense, our discussion was a valuable public service. ❏

New Leadership Appointments



James Herrmann
SGI-USA YMD Chief



Jenny Slaughter
SGI-USA Vice YWD Chief



Adin Strauss
SGI-USA Vice Youth
Division Chief



Sumiyo Uruma
SGI-USA YWD Advisor

New York #4 Joint Territory

Angelita Anderson
YWD Chief

Lydia Fort
Junior High School
Division Chief

San Diego Joint Territory

Thomas Kruck
Vice YMD Chief

Ibrahim Nodarse
High School Division Chief

Hawaii #2 Joint Territory

Cathleen Kishi
YWD Chief

Michael Rooney
YMD Chief

Gary Nako
Vice YMD Chief

Seattle Joint Territory

Bill Lawrence
Youth Division Chief

Anthony White
Vice YMD Chief

Los Angeles #5 Joint Territory

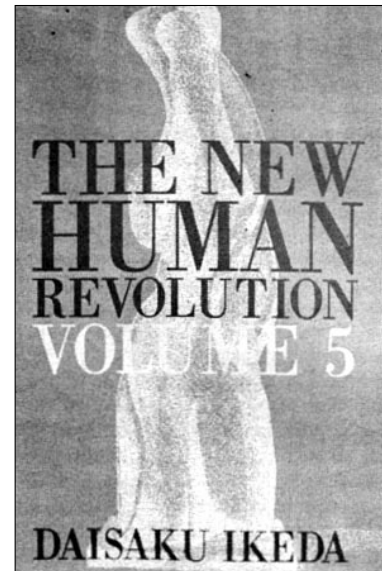
Quynh Vu
YWD Chief

Mark Rappaport
YMD Chief

Etienne Roch
Vice YMD Chief

Kimberly Stapchuk
High School Division Chief

Brent Nakasone
High School Division Chief



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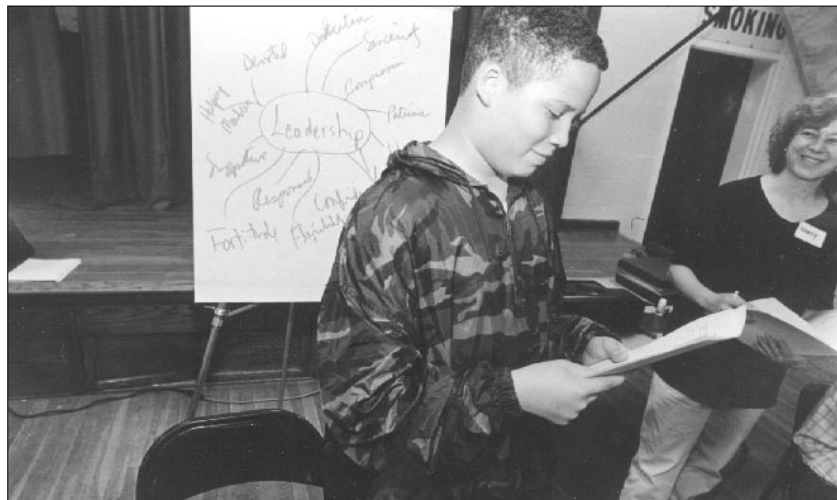


An exercise that teaches cooperation is the highlight of one of the workshop sessions. (Below) In every session, audience participation is sought, and the audience responds.

GOOD NEIGHBORS

In June 1996, Rising Sun Chapter, now known as Nassau Chapter, held its first big neighborhood events on New York's Long Island. Picnics and barbecues were held throughout the area in local parks. The success of these gatherings and the ensuing monthly neighborhood meetings generated much enthusiasm among the members to reorganize accordingly. Last month, Nassau Chapter used its leadership workshop to make the final reorganization announcements. The workshop itself had something for everyone with lots of audience participation and discussions on teams and partners, goal-setting and leadership. — *Julia Carpenter, correspondent*

Photos by Kirk Condyles



(Far left) The sessions leave the members feeling refreshed or, as one person put it, 'ready to give more of myself to our members.' (Left) All ages participate in the workshops, giving reports, for instance, about the smaller group discussions.

DEBBY MATTISON SCHAUER, PHOENIX

Breaking the Karmic Chains of Unhappiness

I was brought up on a farm in a very small New England town. Both my parents were alcoholic — very, very unhappy, fighting regularly, and usually blaming their children for their existence. “If it weren’t for you, we wouldn’t be broke!” “If it weren’t for you, we’d be happy.”

My dream, my vision, was to never be like my parents — ever. I was going to become all the things my parents weren’t.

But as I entered my 20s, major dysfunction began showing up in my life — drinking patterns, relationship patterns (I was with a new man every week; it was almost like changing socks!) and so on. And as much as I fought these patterns, they always came right back.

So, I thought to myself, I’ll remedy this: I’ll get married! Did that help? Of course not. I tried so hard to think right, eat right, you-name-it right, yet nothing came out right. To make a very long story very short, I was divorced in nine months.

Between the ages of 23 and 35 (when I started chanting), I had two near-death experiences, many unsuccessful relationships, and as hard I tried to change, I couldn’t. I never gave up; I had such a desire to become a person with a mission to help people. I began my healing profession (a combination of Jin Shin Jyutsu and Shiatsu body work), which literally saved my life, and I held onto my vision of being a truly happy person. But still, food or alcohol or cigarettes or relationship addictions plagued my life despite the therapy and the external things I tried.

When I was 35, I moved to Los Angeles. Within three months, my life was virtually steered into trying out everything to become happy. Brenda, a client of mine who eventually became a dear friend, told me about Buddhism. “I want to try it,” I told her. “I’m really looking for something. But this week and next week is Kundalini Yoga, the following week is a crystal healing workshop, and the week after that I’m trying transcendental meditation — so, let’s get together the following week.”

My first meeting was a young



Photo by SCOTT SCHAUER PHOTOGRAPHY

‘My vision must be always to believe in people,’ says Debby Schauer, with daughter, Elizabeth, and husband, Scott.

women’s division chanting session at 6:00 a.m. I’m sure everyone loved my daimoku — I was about 10 octaves higher and four beats different, but by the end I was sold. If this can help me, I thought, I’ll do it.

And I did. Chanting for three hours became a light day for me, and the young women’s division dance team became part of my life.

We danced in the 1987 West Coast General Meeting in Seattle. That’s right, me — a 35-year-old young women’s division member, with two left feet, in white shorts and T-shirt and old running shoes. Oh, my. All I remember is that I thought I’d be able to hide on the stage in my taps, swinging across this huge auditorium, but I doubt I did. I was mortified, but, hey — I did it. Even today, I think about that, and I figure, if I could challenge that, I can challenge anything.

I learned that giving 100 percent in any campaign brought wonderful results. By 1989, my business was booming. And by the time that SGI President Ikeda came to the United States in February 1990, I was receiv-

ing many, many benefits, including the one benefit I really needed: I was getting happy and non-addicted. I knew I was going to make a difference in the world.

During President Ikeda’s visit, I felt what I had instinctively been looking for all those years — a happiness that transcended any little ache or pain or emotion I might be feeling. It was, I realized, what kosen-rufu feels like.

After that, I realized I must prove to myself that I could win in every area of my life. My business tripled; I was near to signing a contract to start a healing center, and I knew it would take all my energy and time.

At that time, I also met Scott, my best friend who became my husband within four months. I knew one of my biggest prayers had been answered. Within three years, Elizabeth arrived. When she was 2 months old, we decided to start completely over and move to Phoenix.

The constant challenges of our relationship and our family have been huge. Because of my prac-

tice, I am always filled with appreciation for Scott and Elizabeth.

In 1996, during President Ikeda’s most recent visit, I was invited to come to Denver to take part in activities. My husband knew how important this was to me, and was behind me 100 percent.

Scott has a wedding photography business, which I help him with. We participate in only one bridal fair a year, but that one fair usually books us for 12 solid months, so it is very important to attend. We were registered for a June 9 fair — the same date that President Ikeda would be speaking in Denver.

All I could do was chant with the attitude that something would change. I WILL go to Denver, I told myself. The more I chanted, however, the more I was upset because I realized that my place was not in Denver: It was supporting my husband.

Meanwhile, Scott had even arranged to hire two friends and fly them out from Los Angeles to help him at the fair. As I chanted about this, I asked the Gohonzon — asked my own

Buddha nature — what would President Ikeda say to me? Support your family, was the answer that came back.

I told Scott what had been going through my mind, and I could sense his relief and gratitude.

The very next day, we got a call from the bridal fair organizers. “We have changed the rooms and want to offer you another booth,” they told us. We dropped everything and went to the hotel, to see where our new booth would be. Our old booth placement was terrible — it was tiny and stuck in the center of a huge room with narrow aisles. When we saw the new location, I just knew it was my first benefit from doing the absolute best thing for my family: It was the best location at the whole fair.

Still, despite all the indications that I was doing the right thing, I was very upset to not be seeing President Ikeda. I was filled with vivid memories of how thrilling and refreshing it was to be involved in activities when he was visiting. I was missing it all.

I started chanting for the success of President Ikeda’s visit. I felt him virtually winking at me through every tear I cried in front of the Gohonzon.

That is, until I finally got it. I was with him. All along. Every minute.

Those early days of June, getting ready for the bridal fair — and especially June 9 — went by with such joy and synchronicity between Scott and myself.

To make a long story much shorter, as I felt myself becoming a happier person, I saw my parents becoming happier as well. My mom is not the miserable woman who raised me. That tells me my vision must be to always believe in people, including (especially?) myself.

Because of the power of the Gohonzon, I must continually, as President Ikeda says, not focus merely on reality, but also on possibility. I see myself creating people’s successes, looking ahead to the 21st century. At the same time, I see my family being very happy together, and my petty criticisms getting buried by my daimoku and my hopes. ■

Plato wrote that “the probable outcome of too much freedom is only too much slavery in the individual and the state.”¹ In other words, when there is unlimited freedom under a democracy, the human spirit is defiled and corrupted. Plato argued that it is precisely from this form of government, democracy, believed to be most beautiful and perfect, that tyrannical despotism is born and people are turned into slaves, robbed of all freedom. Plato highlighted the potential contradiction and pathology of excessive freedom.

He studied the virtues and failings of Athenian democracy in great detail. Plato knew that if the human spirit were not functioning in a sound, healthy fashion, no system of government could function properly. Water flows in a downward direction. Unless people forge moral strength and cultivate their character, they are bound to be carried to the lowest depths by desire’s temptations.

Plato considered the question of how to achieve “sobriety of spirit”² and “concord in one’s soul.”³ And he urged each of us to keep our eyes “fixed on the constitution in one’s soul.”⁴ If we intend to make our external constitution, that of our government, as excellent and just as possible, we must by necessity also give order to our inner constitution. In other words, a philosophy that cultivates a healthy spirit is a pillar of true democracy.

Plato wrote: “Unless either philosophers become kings in our states or those whom we now call our kings and rulers take to the pursuit of philosophy seriously and adequately...there can be no cessation of troubles...for our states, nor I fancy, for the human race either.”⁵

There have always been differing assessments of Plato’s critique of democracy, but his insight into the truth — that no republic genuinely committed to its people’s happiness and welfare can exist unless its citizens possess solid moral values — shone with undying brilliance.

The New Human Revolution

By HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 2

Long Journey

Translation of parts 19–24 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.



Shin’ichi Yamamoto turned to his companions and began speaking again: “Plato thoroughly examined the failings of democracy because he wanted to realize the kind of republic that would never sentence just, principled individuals like his mentor to death. Even today

there are some who criticize democracy as mob rule. True democracy can only be achieved when individuals develop and demonstrate a sound, healthy spirit.

“Helping the people to become wise, to become philosopher-kings, is the key to achieving true democracy. And that is the task to which we in the Soka Gakkai are devoted.”

Shin’ichi’s words were filled with his firm determination to bring about the dawning of an age in which democracy would truly triumph.

Feb. 5 was a very busy day, including meetings with Japanese businessmen stationed in Athens. The group was scheduled to fly to Cairo on the 6th; and since their departure was in the evening they spent that day visiting museums and other places

of interest they had yet to see. In the midst of their sightseeing, they came upon a group of children flying kites on a piece of open land. The kites were white hexagons with tails about five or six feet long, to which paper tassels were attached. Shin’ichi stood watching for several moments. He had often flown kites along the shore at Haneda when he was a boy. The scene stirred old memories in him.

The children were having some difficulty getting their kites into the air. “It looks like these descendants of Socrates aren’t very good kite-flyers,” Shin’ichi joked. “I’ll teach them the secrets of the art. I’ve always been good at flying kites.” Shin’ichi joined the group of children, borrowing a kite from one to demonstrate how to send it aloft. His long coat restricted his movement somewhat, but the kite rose into the sky and danced high overhead. The children cheered with delight.

“Kuroki, please interpret for me —

English should be fine,” said Shin’ichi. “The secret to flying kites,” he began, “is to wait for the wind. When the wind starts to blow, you tug the string to make the kite catch the breeze and rise on it, while running against the wind. Kites rise up when they encounter a strong breeze. You must remember, too, that when you experience hard or painful things in your life, they are your strong wind, your chance to grow and fly high. Tell them that, Kuroki.”

He translated what Shin’ichi said into English, but it seemed that the children only knew Greek and didn’t understand most of it. While he was absorbed in watching the exchange between Kuroki and the children, Shin’ichi forgot to pay attention to his kite — it came tumbling down. The children roared with laughter.

“A little neglect will breed great mischief” — Kuroki, please tell them that right away,” said Shin’ichi.

This drew a shout of laughter from Shin’ichi’s Japanese companions.

And so they spent a pleasant time with these young Greeks.

Shin’ichi wanted to leave them with a happy memory of the day they had a good time flying a kite with a Japanese man. Small as that might be, it was a first step in creating mutual understanding that would transcend national boundaries. They might not have understood each other’s languages, but Shin’ichi and the children were soon firm friends having great fun together. When Shin’ichi and the others had to leave, the children waved goodbye regretfully, as if they wished their new friends could stay longer.

Shin’ichi and his party left Athens and arrived in Cairo, Egypt’s capital, after 8:00 p.m., Feb. 6. It was the first time that Shin’ichi had ever set foot on the African continent.

The next day, they finished their business in the morning and went sightseeing in Cairo in the afternoon. Cairo’s Arabic name is al-Qahirah, meaning “victorious”; the city was established with that name in the 10th century C.E. The Nile flowed majestically through the city, its abundant, life-giving waters having irrigated the land and nourished Egyptian civilization for 5,000 years.

The start of the dynastic period in Egypt can be traced back to around 3,000 B.C.E. A succession of 30 or so dynasties unfolded against a backdrop of attack, invasion and dynastic decline and prosperity spanning three millennia, ending finally with the fall of the Ptolemaic Dynasty⁶ in 30 B.C.E., the start of Roman rule.⁷ The ancient kingdoms of Egypt flourished because the annual overflow of the Nile produced rich, fertile plains along its banks. Truly, as the Greek historian Herodotus⁸

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JOURNEY, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

said, Egypt was a gift of the Nile.

After looking around Cairo, Shin'ichi and his party went to the famous Giza pyramids some eight miles to the west. They drove through the suburbs of Cairo on the west bank of the Nile for some time, until the immense forms of the pyramids loomed from the rocky plateau that marked the beginning of the vast desert. Immediately before them rose the Great Pyramid of Khufu. To the southwest stood the pyramids of Khafre and Menkaure. The three great pyramids of Giza had been built around 2,500 B.C.E., or about 4,500 years earlier, during the fourth dynasty, in the period known as the Old Kingdom.

Shin'ichi looked up at the Great Pyramid of Khufu, towering with indomitable majesty as if defying the ravages of time. The sloping walls, made of stones placed one atop another with minute precision, narrowed as they reached the apex where they seemed to be absorbed into the blue of the heavens. The structure measured 755 feet on each side at its base and was 481 feet high when it was built. (Now, because it was missing some of its upper courses, it was 450 feet tall.) Each of its four sides were almost perfectly oriented to the cardinal points of the compass, rising skyward at a steep angle of 51 degrees and 52 minutes.

This pyramid comprises a total of some 2.3 million stone blocks, each weighing an average of 2.5 tons. Cased in fine white limestone when it was first built, it must have gleamed brilliantly in the sunlight.

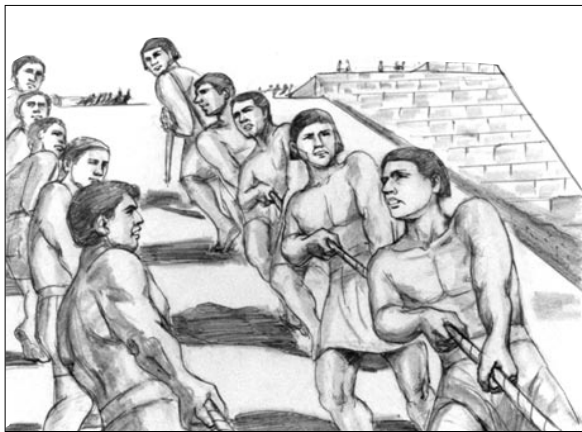
The Great Pyramid of Khufu's presence was overwhelming — a great mountain that rose suddenly from the desert, a soaring monument pushing its way powerfully up from earth into sky. Yet it was not oppressive or overbearing. It seemed almost like a kind of transmission tower, which the ancient Egyptians might have built to carry on a dialogue with the cosmos, to communicate with the sun and stars.

Shin'ichi toured the interior of the pyramid and then walked around its perimeter. Not only was it built on a grand scale, but a high level of technical skill and precision was evident in its construction. The blocks of stone, cut into squares and smoothed, were snugly fit together.

No other structure made by human hands has enchanted, inspired, puzzled and astonished people as the pyramids have for thousands of years. They were the first of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the only to survive intact. Shin'ichi had visited the site of ancient Babylon during his tour of Iraq, but that city's fabled Hanging Gardens, another of the Seven Wonders, had disappeared long ago. The pyramids were truly monuments to eternity.

The Great Pyramid of Khufu was the largest of the three pyramids. The pyramid of Khafre, which stood in the middle, was almost the same size, while the pyramid of Menkaure was substantially smaller than both, nearly half their height. These three monuments were the largest built by the ancient Egyptians; thereafter the size of the pyramids built grew steadily smaller. Of these later pyramids, many did not endure the centuries and crumbled and disappeared, leaving few traces. In terms of both technical accomplishment and durability, the Giza pyramids represented a peak of accomplishment — especially the pyramid of Khufu, which was the tallest, largest and strongest.

To the east of Khafre's pyramid sat the Great Sphinx,⁹ a giant sandstone figure carved out of a natural rock bluff with the head of a human and the body of a lion. The entire structure was about 188 feet long and 66 feet high.



Shin'ichi stood before the Sphinx, looking up at its huge face. From where he stood, towering directly behind it was the pyramid of Khafre, while on the right was the pyramid of Khufu.

Yusuke Yoshikawa spoke, emotion in his voice: "The pyramids are truly awesome. But actually they're the tombs of the pharaohs. I can't help feeling sad when I think of the slaves who labored for years or decades to build these mighty monuments to their rulers."

But Shin'ichi responded: "I wonder if these great pyramids were really built with slave labor. Somehow, I just don't think that is true...."

When Shin'ichi said this, the young men with him looked at him with astonishment. Shin'ichi continued: "It's true that in the account of the construction of the Great Pyramid recorded by the Greek historian Herodotus in his *History*, as related to him by Egyptian priests, the pharaoh forced the entire Egyptian population to work for him."¹⁰

Herodotus was the first non-Egyptian to write a detailed account of the Giza pyramids' construction. He listed the pharaohs who ordered the construction of these monuments, which he said were the

tombs of the pharaohs, as Cheops, Chephren and Mycerinus, believed to be the Greek names for Khufu, Khafre and Menkaure respectively. According to Herodotus, the pyramid of Cheops, or Khufu, was built by teams of 100,000 workers, each team forced to toil in three-month shifts. It took 10 years just to build the road along which the stone was carried to the site and 20 years to build the pyramid itself.¹¹ Herodotus' account resulted in the long and widely held belief that the pyramids were built by cruel forced labor.

"The reason I have my doubts about Herodotus' account," Shin'ichi said, "is that I don't believe anything that people were pressed into building against their will would survive like this for thousands of years. Among the many pyramids that were built, some perhaps were built by forced labor at the pharaoh's command. But I somehow feel this is not the case with the Great Pyramid of Khufu.

"Can labor carried out with no sense of personal responsibility or mission, labor that is coerced, truly endure? In a project as massive as pyramid-building, the slightest carelessness or imprecision could result in the entire structure's collapse. And many pyramids built much later than these at Giza have in fact crumbled to dust. But the fact that Khufu's pyramid still stands means, to me at least, that the workers felt motivated to do their best by a strong sense of personal responsibility. Moreover, it would have been impossible to build the pyramid without tremendous unity of purpose, mutual cooperation and assistance.

"Where would such dedication, such enthusiasm for building this pyramid, come from? Certainly not from forced or slave labor. I think that the construction of the Great Pyramid strongly reflects the will of the people."

Gazing at Khufu's pyramid, Shin'ichi continued speaking with deep feeling: "The Great Pyramid is a magnificent accomplishment. But the people who actually built it deserve even greater respect and admiration. Human strength, wisdom and enthusiasm have infinite potential. Our task is to mine this vast repository of rich potential, using it to build world peace."

The young men with Shin'ichi nodded with earnest expressions.

At the time, they had no evidence on which to judge whether Shin'ichi's intuition was true. But in 1983, some 20 years later, when Shin'ichi spoke with the distinguished French Egyptologist Jean Leclant,¹² he confirmed that his intuition was not mistaken. Recent studies indicate

that the Great Pyramid was not built by slaves but by free citizens.

Three months each year — when the Nile flooded and agriculture was impossible — were devoted to the pyramid's construction. This served as a kind of "unemployment assistance," since the workers were provided food, shelter, and clothing during that period.

Of course, the actual labor was not easy, but those involved seem to have been proud and happy to be participating in such a magnificent venture. For example, writing discovered on the walls of ancient stone quarries records work songs of the masons and songs in praise of the pharaoh. Quarry work-teams also appear to have had their own names such as the Vigorous Gang, the Enduring Gang and the Sound Gang.¹³ They apparently competed to see which performed best.

The workers probably worked willingly, motivated by pride and the desire to create a lasting monument to their revered ruler. Based on these discoveries, some hold that "pyramid building was an essentially voluntary activity,"¹⁴ that the true significance of the pyramids' construction in Egyptian history is how they represent the birth of "people with the consciousness of nationhood."¹⁵

All the large pyramids that survive today were built within the span of roughly a century, with Khufu's pyramid taking center stage. The Great Pyramid is the crowning triumph of the Egyptian people, an immortal monument to their enthusiasm, dedication and creativity.

(To be continued)

1. Plato, *The Republic: Books VI–X*, trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 313.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 411.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 413.
5. *Ibid.*, *The Republic: Books I–V*, p. 509.
6. Ptolemaic Dynasty: Egyptian dynasty of the Greek period (304–30 B.C.E.) begun by Ptolemy I, a Macedonian general of Alexander the Great. Ptolemy declared himself king of Egypt and made Alexandria his capital.
7. Roman rule began following the death of Cleopatra and her brothers, the last of the Ptolemaic dynasty rulers.
8. Herodotus: Greek historian who lived during the 5th century B.C.E. Known as the Father of History, he authored the first great history on Western civilization, the *History* of the Greco-Persian Wars.
9. The Great Sphinx dates from the reign of Khafre around the 26th century B.C.E.
10. *Herodotus: Books I and II*, trans. A. D. Godley (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 425.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 425–29.
12. Jean Leclant: born 1920. French Egyptologist, professor emeritus of the Collège de France. Participated in a number of major archaeological excavations in Egypt.
13. Kurt Mendelssohn, *The Riddle of the Pyramids* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1974), p. 148.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

SIGN POSTS

APPLYING
NICHIREN
DAISHONIN'S
WRITINGS TO
DAILY LIFE

No Doubt, No Hesitation

By CRAIG GREEN

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

What we call faith is nothing extraordinary. As a woman cherishes her husband, as a man will give his life for his wife, as parents will not abandon their children, or as a child refuses to leave his mother, so should we put our trust in the Lotus Sutra.... (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 303)

I recently visited my brother and his wife. They had just become the proud parents of a baby girl. My niece was only a month old. She cried, she slept, she ate, then she got rid of what she ate and then she slept again. A very uncomplicated life. But from this little life, I learned something.

When I began to practice, I was almost child-like. I chanted to feel better. I didn't know what to expect. I knew that I felt like an awful, angry person and wanted to change that. There was no strategy. I just trusted that if I got in front of the Gohonzon and chanted those words, things would get better. And things did get better. But then something changed. I began to analyze everything and the child-like simplicity of my practice disappeared. Everything became complicated, confusing.

But children's lives are focused. True, they spend most of their time drooling, lying in wet diapers and getting passed between strange relatives. But when they want something, they're clear. When a baby wants to be with his or her mother, you know it. When babies cry, there is no hesitation. They're very direct.

Listening to my niece's soft wailing at 2:00 in the morning, I began to think about my practice. When I pray to the Gohonzon, I should be just as clear. I should face the Gohonzon without doubt or hesitation. As Nichiren Daishonin states over and over, the sound of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo permeates the universe. I simply have to believe it. This is faith.

As we grow older, we sometimes begin to think everything over so much that we lose the spontaneity we were born with. But faith is not a matter of contemplation. It's not a mental process. Faith is a heart-wrenching, almost child-like belief in our prayers. It's a trust that our prayers will be answered. ☐

WINNING IN LIFE: THE BASICS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM

Big As the Universe

By JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Last summer at the 1st California Young Men's Division Training Meeting, the guys in my cabin joked around so much I almost didn't sleep. For awhile they were even chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo in English, which, honestly, sounded hilarious. "I devote myself to the law of cause and effect through sound; I devote myself to the law of cause and effect through sound; I devote myself to the law of cause and effect through sound," etc. Well, the Buddhist gods didn't throw any lightning bolts at us and we all had a good laugh, but it got me to thinking. This literal translation of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, which every "shakubuku meeting" veteran can recite in his or her sleep, doesn't express the full flavor, the full meaning, of our chant.

For one thing, each of the Chinese characters that make up Nam-myoho-enge-kyo can have many different definitions. Nichiren Daishonin teaches that *myo*, which we often define as "Mystic Law," also means "to revive." *Kyo*, which we often explain as "sound," can mean "action." And so on.

"We can actually explain Nam-

myoho-enge-kyo in an infinite number of ways, not only one way," clarifies Ted Morino, SGI-USA Study Department chief.

In one sense, Nichiren Daishonin's Goshō is comprised of just that — an infinite number of ways of explaining Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

Mr. Morino emphasizes, though, that Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is a single law; according to Buddhism, the one law of the universe. When combined, the characters that make up the phrase Nam-myoho-enge-kyo take on this bigger meaning. As the Daishonin sets forth in "The True Entity of Life," "All life in the universe is clearly Myoho-enge-kyo" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 89).

If all life is Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, it follows that our individual lives are part of this law, too. "Each person is an entity of the Mystic Law," SGI President Ikeda explains. "Each person is worthy of respect by virtue of his or her humanity." This is Buddhism's unique view of humanity: Each of us is an essential part of the universe. We are each like a piece in the jigsaw puzzle of life. And if even one piece is missing, the puzzle will not be complete.

When we're telling friends about Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, however, we don't have to get uptight about giving them an awesome definition of it. The best way to share Buddhism, after all, is just to make life-to-life connections with our friends. "We can say, 'I have been chanting this and it's great, so why don't you try it?'" Mr. Morino says. "Sharing this Buddhism with others takes more than study, more than theory. It takes our compassion, our conviction. Ultimately, sharing this Buddhism is not just explaining it. Rather, it's a life-to-life thing."

Once President Ikeda asked his mentor, President Toda, if when we share Buddhism with others we aren't sharing it with ourselves, too. President Toda answered that sharing Buddhism means to determine "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is the sum and essence of my being!" When we feel this way, it becomes much easier, much more natural, to share Buddhism life to life.

Getting to the point where we can say "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is my life!" is a process of getting to know ourselves and the universe in which we live. Since Nam-myoho-enge-kyo means our lives are as big as the universe, this process can be nothing short of a big adventure. ☐

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON FAITH

Why Do We Emphasize the Mentor-and-Disciple Relationship?

By TED MORINO

SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT CHIEF

Q Where does the emphasis Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism places on the mentor and disciple relationship come from?

A When Shakyamuni Buddha, a man enlightened to the Mystic Law of the universe, spoke to those who gathered around him to seek this Law, whatever he said later became what we call Buddhism. Originally Buddhism was a way of educating people — a course, if you will, in how to live, carried out through dialogue among ordinary people and a great teacher or mentor. This basic formula remains intact today in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and the SGI.

When we decide to start practicing this Buddhism, to receive the Gohonzon and chant, we naturally become part of this tradition.

To accept the Gohonzon also entails accepting Nichiren Daishonin as our teacher — he first inscribed the Gohonzon and his teachings are the basis of our practice. This is no different than in other religions: If we become Christians, we

accept Jesus Christ and the Church as our teachers; if we become Muslims, we follow Mohammad's teachings, etc.

Nichiren Daishonin taught that the mentor-disciple relationship is essential in Buddhism. In one Goshō he even stated, "When the master and his disciple are not of the same mind, they cannot accomplish anything" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 218).

In Buddhism, the mentor's intent is to save all people from suffering and raise disciples who can carry on this mission into the future. Shakyamuni determined in the "Life Span" chapter, "At all times I think to myself: / How can I cause living beings / to gain entry into the unsurpassed way / and quickly acquire the body of a Buddha?" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 232).

So it is thus the way of the disciple to perceive the mentor's great compassion for all people and respond to it. The mentor-disciple relationship, then, can only reach fruition, can only really "come to life," when the disciple realizes he or she has a mentor.

While starting to practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism means taking Nichiren Daishonin as our teacher, we may not feel at first that he is our mentor.

This feeling of course cannot be forced upon anyone — it has to come from inside. While Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism clearly teaches the necessity of the mentor-disciple relationship, it never orders that we accept this person or that person as our mentor.

The importance of having a mentor in faith has been encouraged by the SGI only because this is what Nichiren Daishonin taught. Thus the lifeblood of the mentor-disciple relationship has lived on in the organization's successive presidents, each courageous enough to assume the awesome task of being a mentor in modern times.

As the 65th high priest, Nichijun, testified in 1958:

The members of the Soka Gakkai today have been taught the principles of the Daishonin's Buddhism by their mentor, President Toda.... This is the true practice of the way of the Lotus Sutra.

SGI President Ikeda now continues this "true practice of the way of the Lotus Sutra" with the belief that upholding this relationship, leaving it to the next generation, is the very root of Buddhism. ☐

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech at the 9th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held in conjunction with the 3rd Kanagawa Prefecture General Meeting and the 18th Arts Division General Meeting, at the Soka International Friendship Hall, Sendagaya, Tokyo, March 5.

Congratulations on the meeting today. Whenever I think of Kanagawa, I cannot help recalling the Mitsuzawa Athletics Stadium in Yokohama and the famous declaration that the second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda, made there on Sept. 8, 1957, calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

This declaration, the first of his final precepts to youth, was delivered before an audience of some 50,000 young men and women at an athletics meet titled Festival of Youth. Mr. Toda said: "Although a movement to ban the testing of nuclear weapons is now under way around the world, it is my wish to attack the problem at its root, that is, to rip out the claws that are hidden in the very depths of this issue.... Because we, the citizens of the world, have an inviolable right to live. Anyone who tries to jeopardize this right is a devil incarnate, a fiend, a monster.... Even if a country should conquer the world through the use of nuclear weapons, the conquerors must be viewed as devils, as evil incarnate. I believe that it is the mission of every member of the youth division in Japan to disseminate this idea throughout the globe."¹

From Kanagawa to all the people of the world, Mr. Toda proclaimed the spirit of achieving a peaceful society through Buddhist ideals (*rissho ankoku*) and the inviolable right of all human beings to live. We have a right to live, he cried, and there is absolutely no reason for us to put up with the threat of annihilation by nuclear weapons. He called upon the youth to rise up and spread this awareness throughout the world.

The Power of Youth

At the very same time, on the other side of the globe, Dr. Linus Pauling also launched an initiative for peace.

An internationally acclaimed scientist and peace activist, Dr. Pauling (1901-94) is the only person to date to have



Dr. Linus Pauling and SGI President Ikeda's dialogues have been published as 'A Lifelong Quest for Peace.'

Working Together To Make a Difference

received two individual Nobel prizes — one for chemistry and one for peace. President Ikeda met with Dr. Pauling in 1987, 1990 and twice in 1993; their dialogue has been published under the title *A Lifelong Quest for Peace: A Dialogue*.

In 1957, Dr. Pauling spoke of the danger of nuclear armaments at Washington University in St. Louis. Surrounded by students, he declared: "These bombs can destroy the world. Now is the time to fight for your lives and the lives of future generations. Don't just lie down and be Hiroshima'd."²

When he finished speaking, crowds of students gathered around him and asked him what they could do to help. How wonderful that the students were so willing to become involved!

A petition calling for the immediate end to all testing of nuclear weapons was drafted, which the students helped circulate and send out. Dr. Pauling and the students rose up and worked together to make a difference. By plunging in among the people, uniting with the youth to mount a grass-roots struggle, Dr. Pauling provides an important lesson for us all.

When youth are awakened

to a sense of mission, their power is limitless. Ultimately, we have to entrust our hopes and visions for the future to the youth. This is a golden rule.

Youth is pure. Youth will rise up to fulfill their ideals without calculation or self-interest. The fundamental spirit of a leader must be to reach out to such young people, work with them, bring out their capabilities and direct their youthful energies in a positive direction. To make every effort to draw out the potential of youth in the best possible direction is the responsibility of leaders.

A leader who is overbearing with the youth and always ordering them around fails as a leader. It is very important for SGI leaders to bear this point strictly in mind.

Going back to my story about Dr. Pauling, the petition calling for an immediate end to nuclear testing was sent out to scientists first in the United States and then around the world. More than 13,000 signatures were ultimately collected. Dr. Pauling presented the petition to the United Nations.

But in the late 1950s, the Cold War was at its height. As a result, the reaction against Dr. Pauling's efforts was also strong. The Senate Internal Se-

curity Subcommittee subpoenaed Dr. Pauling in 1960, intent on finding out how he had collected the signatures. Of course, behind this action was an attempt to put pressure on Dr. Pauling to suppress his peace and antinuclear activities.

No matter how right and good your actions may be, no matter how wise or saintly you are, incurring hostility, attack and persecution is inevitable. The more right and good your cause is, the greater the counteraction. That is the way of the world. Nichiren Daishonin writes, "Wise men and saints are tested by abuse" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 38).

'I Cannot Sacrifice These Idealistic and Hopeful People!'

The subcommittee pressed Dr. Pauling to reveal the names of those who had helped him gather signatures for the petition. The unexpressed threat was that if he didn't cooperate he could be cited for contempt of Congress and sent to jail. The investigation committee had in fact a short time earlier sent another academic, being tried in a separate case on suspected "un-American activities," to prison

for contempt of Congress for similarly refusing to reveal the names of colleagues.³

But Dr. Pauling stood up courageously to his interrogators. He told me about this during one of our dialogues. I will never forget those talks with Dr. Pauling. I can still picture him, his tall, lanky figure, his complexion bright and vibrant. He was truly a man of great integrity and character.

Dr. Pauling responded firmly to the unjust request of the subcommittee: "My conscience will not allow me to protect myself by sacrificing these idealistic and hopeful people, and I am not going to do it. As a matter of conscience, as a matter of principle, as a matter of morality, I have decided that I shall not conform to the request of this subcommittee."⁴ He refused to toe the line with their demands. He would not betray the dedicated people who had worked so hard for a cause they believed in. He was incapable of doing so.

His bravery and conviction were applauded by many, including those who until that time had been critical of and even insulting toward him. Only a cry of genuine conviction has the power to move others deeply — empty rhetoric impresses no one.

Dr. Pauling would not be beaten. The greater the pressure brought to bear on him, the braver he became. He fought back with earnest determination. And, as he struggled against the plots and schemes of those in power, he won the support of many young people.

Youth also play a crucial part in the SGI's continuing development. How we go about developing and strengthening the youth division and women's division will determine the SGI's future.

Fending off one assault after another by the authorities, Dr. Pauling gradually expanded his international network for peace. Finally, in addition to winning the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1954, this great man of towering conscience and intellect was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1962. He was also the recipient of numerous other international prizes and awards.

Four years ago in 1993, Dr. Pauling was kind enough to attend my lecture at Claremont McKenna College in California. I will never forget his commentary on my speech. Before a distinguished audience of scholars, he expressed his conviction that

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humanity must recognize and embrace the world of the Bodhisattva — a state of compassion in which one seeks to save all people from suffering.

He sadly said that religions have been responsible for much of the suffering caused by war in the past and even today. Then Dr. Pauling continued, "But here we have the Soka Gakkai and President Ikeda, firmly standing behind the principle of peace and against war." He was declaring, in unmistakable tones and for all to hear, his firm belief that the SGI movement is a source of hope for the future and for humanity.

Forty years have passed since Mr. Toda entrusted the youth of the Soka Gakkai with the first of his final prescripts: the abolition of all nuclear weapons. I have spent those years working earnestly to achieve that goal, in the spirit of the oneness of mentor and disciple. I have laid the foundation for a people's peace movement, spreading it throughout the world. I have undertaken everything my mentor spoke of or called for. I have made it a reality. This has been the driving spirit of life.

I am fighting solely to protect the members whom I love so dearly. They mean more to me than anything else. These are my sincerest and most genuine feelings.

I am very happy today, therefore, to report to my mentor, Mr. Toda, together with comrades from Kanagawa, who have an immeasurably deep connection with his Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons, that as an organization dedicated to peace we have remained at the forefront of this cause.

To the members of the Kanagawa youth division, young successors in whom I place the greatest faith for carrying on this mission, I wish to say: Culture will come to play an increasingly important role in our pursuit of world peace and human happiness based on the principles and ideals of Buddhism. Through the power of culture, please boldly forge an alliance for peace and justice in the coming century. I hope you will all work together harmoniously to achieve that important goal.

Internal discord and constant bickering and complaining about others is to be strictly avoided. We are all brothers and sisters in the SGI; we are a family. We are comrades who fight together

against the enemies of peace, the enemies of the people. I ask all of the members of Kanagawa's youth division to stand in the vanguard of our SGI movement.

Forged Into a Shining Jewel

Today is also the Arts Division General Meeting. Recently [Feb. 17], I met with the internationally acclaimed artist and calligrapher Fang Zhaoling in Hong Kong. Joining us at our meeting were her sons Fang Mansheng and Fang Linsheng. Her eldest daughter, incidentally, is Anson Chan Fang On-Sang, chief secretary of the Hong Kong government.

I have spoken about Mrs. Fang in several speeches. When she was 36, she lost her beloved husband to illness and was left alone to care for their eight children, who ranged in age from 3 to 11. But she pulled herself up from the depths of her grief and aimed for the mountain peak of triumph, the summit of artistic excellence that was her goal in life. And she advanced toward that goal, one slow but certain step at a time.

After raising her eight children to be fine, upstanding adults, she began to devote all her energies to her art. Today those children are active in a variety of fields, including law, medicine, government, business and the United Nations. How wonderful this is!

Mrs. Fang is a strong woman. She remained cheerful and upbeat through all the many challenges and obstacles she has encountered. And she is also a woman of great astuteness and wisdom. The way she has lived her life is quintessentially Buddhist.

I said to Mrs. Fang: "You shine like a jewel — like a rare and precious jewel of life emanating from the earth and the universe, blazing more brilliantly than all the rest. Adorned with boundless treasures, your life has been forged and polished by great vicissitude."

Looking at the victorious figure of Mrs. Fang, I felt as if her very presence spoke to me of her deepest convictions: "Overcoming challenges, triumphing over adversity — this is what life is all about. A life without any drama or difficulty would be a dull life indeed. I am an artist. I will never neglect polishing my painting skills nor cultivating my spirit. And no matter what others say, I will live my life my way and achieve a wonderful life!"

She once said to me that it took 50 years for her to create



Fang Zhaoling (center) is an internationally acclaimed artist and calligrapher. She says that every day over the 50 years of her artistic career has been one of search and discovery.

her unique style of painting. Every day of those 50 years was, without a doubt, a day of earnest search and discovery. Each day, a day of creativity. This is truly a life of creating value.

"I want to achieve something again today! I want to advance one step further! I want to move forward, with every ounce of my being!" This is the spirit that emanates from Mrs. Fang, who is 83 this year. At the start of the year, she wrote a piece of calligraphy that translates as "I will scale a high peak once again." That is the spirit with which she picks up her brush each morning and devotes herself cheerfully to the challenge of her art until night falls. This is very similar to the Buddhist spirit of true cause — a way of life in which we don't look back at the past but remain constantly involved in the challenge of the moment as it unfolds from the present to the future.

The day after we spoke, Mrs. Fang gave me one of her calligraphic works. She had been writing it from 6:00 that morning, she said. It was a gracefully transcribed verse from a poem by the great Chinese writer Lu Xun (1881–1936): "Stand firm and unflinching / at the criticism of the multitude; / to the little children, be gentle as a tame ox, / lower your head and offer a ride."⁵ Lu Xun's poem tells us to stand up bravely to the harshest winds of criticism and follow the path of our convictions. But though we must be strong in the face of adversity, we should also be willing to serve and to offer ourselves for children, the youth, the people and all humanity.

Mrs. Fang, I feel, has lived her life just as the poem in-

structs. That is precisely why she understands the SGI, seeing it with perfect clarity as a movement that has fought against great obstacles and opposition for the cause of the people.

I hope that all my beloved members of the arts division will also triumph brilliantly through patient perseverance and effort.

What matters is winning in the end. The wins and losses along the way are of secondary significance. It's final victory in life that counts, and that is the reason for our Buddhist practice. No matter how powerful, famous or privileged a person might be, Nichiren Daishonin says, from a Buddhist point of view it is nothing more than a dream, an illusory pleasure; true happiness can only be attained by revealing the state of Buddhahood within our lives (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 386).

We are all Bodhisattvas of the Earth. As such, the Buddha and bodhisattvas throughout the ten directions and the three existences of past, present and future — all the protective functions of the universe — will support us and keep us from harm, cheering us on and applauding our efforts. Let us continue to advance boldly together down this eternal path of glory.

Society's Philosophical Foundation

In 1951, Mr. Toda said that during the Pacific War, the United States followed the philosophy of pragmatism as represented by the American philosopher John Dewey, while Japan based itself on State Shinto. This, in addition to a lack of material resources, had

already determined the outcome of the war.⁶

Mr. Toda always turned his gaze to the spiritual and philosophical foundations of a society.

John Dewey (1859–1952) was also an educational reformer. The first Soka Gakkai president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944), a near contemporary, was one of the first in Japan to take note of the American's ideas on teaching and education. Dewey's major publications include *The School and Society*, *Democracy and Education*, *Human Nature and Conduct*, *Freedom and Culture* and *The Quest for Certainty*.

Dewey's philosophy has often been called a philosophy of discussion. He placed great importance on dialogue and the creation of practical, pragmatic value. In other words, he put wisdom above knowledge, conduct above concepts, practical action above intellectual speculation, and value above theory. His philosophy was in many ways similar to Mr. Makiguchi's and the SGI's.

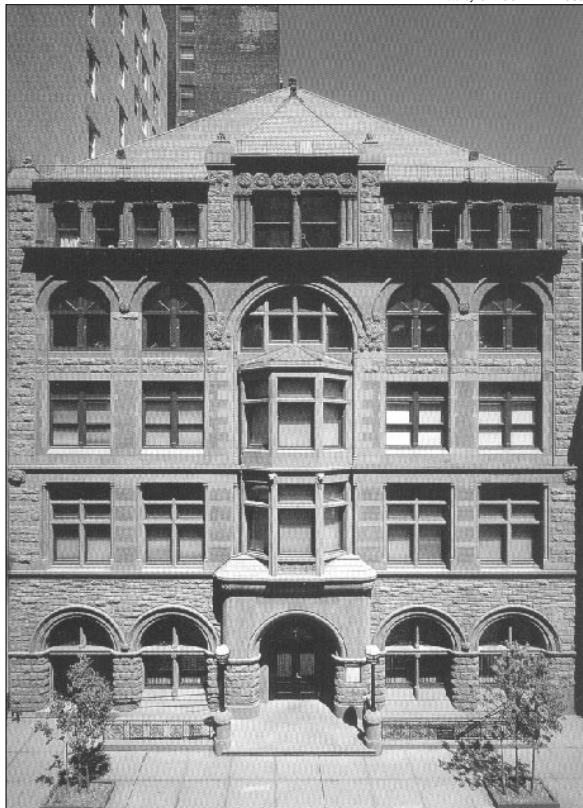
He was not a desk-bound scholar but a scholar of practical action. He lived, worked and talked with the people, and he involved himself in social action. During a demonstration for the enfranchisement of women in New York at the beginning of this century, Dewey himself carried a placard and marched with the other demonstrators up Fifth Avenue.

Prepared for Anything

Speaking of demonstrations, I am reminded of China's May Fourth Movement⁷ in the early

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Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



The New York Culture Center building used to house a school where American philosopher John Dewey often lectured in the early part of this century.

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part of this century. The students involved in the struggle carried a small cup and toiletries on them at all times. Why? So as to be prepared for arrest and imprisonment at any moment, they said.⁸

Dewey, who visited China and Japan around this time, saw in these students "a new Chinese spirit." A new China was seeking to be born, he said. As long as China's youth possessed such an invincible spirit, he maintained, the time would come when China would move the world.⁹ It is well known that the youthful Zhou Enlai and his future wife, Deng Yingchao, were among those students.

Judged by external appearances alone, China at that time seemed backward and chaotic, and Japan seemed modern and efficient. But Dewey knew that Japan's apparent modernism was only superficial, not its true state, not an expression of its inner spirit.

Dewey was a humanist and firmly opposed any suppression of the liberty of the human spirit. Though he was over 80 when World War II was being fought, he criticized the Nazis harshly. The New School for Social Research that he established in New York became a haven from the

Nazi regime for many German refugees.

All in all, there are many similarities between Dewey and Mr. Makiguchi. I mentioned this in my speech at Columbia University last year.¹⁰ Dr. Larry Hickman, professor of philosophy and director of the Center for Dewey Studies at Southern Illinois University, also acknowledged the common objectives of Dewey and Makiguchi, citing [in a letter] their belief that "people everywhere should be encouraged in the active pursuit of the good and the valuable through enlightened forms of education."

Also, in an interview with the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the *Soka Gakkai's* daily newspaper, Dr. Hickman said that Dewey's central educational concept of growth and Mr. Makiguchi's concept of value-creation were alike in many respects.

Cultural anthropologist Dr. Alice Dewey, John Dewey's granddaughter, said in a *Seikyo Shimbun* interview that the SGI — which practices what her grandfather espoused and practiced, that is, social change begins with a fundamental change within people — is significant, especially at a time when humanity seems to be heading toward its destruction.

In this way, leading thinkers around the world recognize that the SGI is at the forefront of positive change for humanity.

There Is No Retirement Age

By the way, the SGI-USA's New York Culture Center building is a site where John Dewey often lectured.

Dewey lived to age 92. He remained active as a writer, lecturer and passionate champion of truth to the end. In an interview in his later years, he was asked how he had made it through a time when the world was fraught with dire problems and insecurity. He replied, "I should say that my philosophy of life is based essentially on the single word *patience*."¹¹ Patience — to forge ahead tenaciously, even though it may be only one step at a time, but ever, always, forward.

Age is not an excuse for giving up. If you allow yourself to grow passive and draw back, it's a sign of personal defeat. There may be a retirement age at work, but there is no retirement age in life. How, then, could there be any "going into retirement" in the world of faith? The Buddhist Law is eternal, extending across the three existences of past, present and future, and the benefits of faith include perennial youth and eternal life.

The Lotus Sutra teaches, "If a person who has an illness is able to hear this sutra, then his illness will be wiped out and he will know neither old age nor death" (The Lotus Sutra, p. 288).

The attitude "This is enough, I've done my part" is not the way of faith. The Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin teaches us to live for all eternity with the faith of true cause — always starting fresh from this moment on.

I, too, promise to keep on fighting. I am determined to continue traveling around Japan and throughout the world for the sake of kosen-rufu. My real struggle lies yet ahead of me.

Dewey Foresaw China's Development

Dewey visited both Japan and China after World War I, and with great foresight he criticized Japan and supported China. I spoke about this in Hong Kong recently [in the acceptance speech on receiving an honorary doctorate from China's Jilin University in February]. And I

said something similar to top Chinese officials more than 20 years ago in the Great Hall of the People: "China is going to undergo tremendous development in the future, far surpassing Japan."

At the time I made that statement, the gap between the Chinese and Japanese economies was immense. Yet today it is the Chinese economy that is booming. Its annual growth rate is around 10 percent. China has a trade surplus with the United States, and it is widely believed that it will surpass Japan's surplus with the United States this year. The economic picture of the world is being dramatically re-drawn.

It is important to remember, however, that the birth of this new China was only made possible by the sacrifices of many courageous individuals who selflessly laid down their lives for their country. China had been invaded, occupied, humiliated. Faced with that outrage, individual Chinese rose up determined to revive their homeland and make it a strong country that no foreign power could take advantage of again.

Having confronted and over-

come all kinds of difficulties, we of the SGI can understand those feelings well.

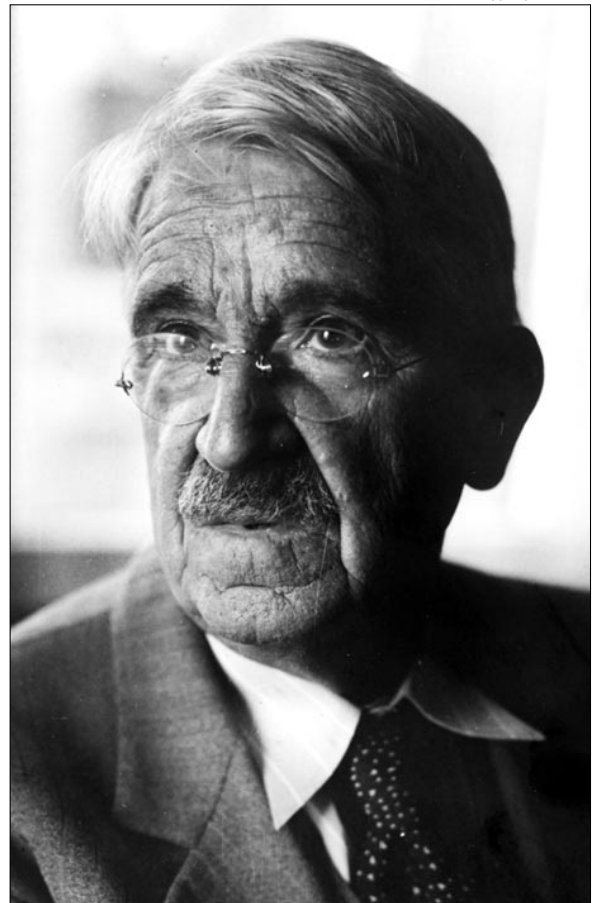
Among these heroic individuals who fought for their homeland were the late Liao Chengzhi (1908–83), the first president of the China-Japan Friendship Association, and his father, Liao Zhongkai (1877–1925), a comrade of Sun Yat-sen, the father of modern China. I vividly recall the visit I made to the grave of Liao Zhongkai in Nanjing in 1978 on my fourth visit to China.

Nothing great is ever achieved unless one is willing to risk one's life. Determined to die in prison, Liao Zhongkai wrote to his children:

*Daughters, do not grieve;
sons do not cry
Your father leaves you,
never to return
If you wish to make your
father happy
My daughters, my sons,
take care of yourselves
If you wish to make your
father glad
My daughters, my sons, be
diligent in your studies*

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CORBIS-BETTMANN



John Dewey's philosophy has often been called a philosophy of discussion. He placed great importance on creating pragmatic value.

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*Your father is fine just as he has always been
Only his body is no longer with you
The body is no more than a sack filled with impurities
After a hundred years, it is discarded in a ditch
In life it is the spirit that matters
Spirit is refreshed day after day, virtue is replenished day after day
Finally, there is one more thing I must write
Remember, all of you, to serve your dear mother with kindness.¹²*

Liao Zhongkai survived the term in prison, but he was assassinated three years later.

The legacy Liao Zhongkai left to his children was his spirit. The noble revolutionary even named his son Inherit My Will (Chengzhi), hoping he would carry on his work. And true to his name, Liao Chengzhi did inherit his father's will, working closely with Zhou Enlai. He was in fact present at my meeting with Premier Zhou. He was also the first person to greet me on my first visit to Beijing. We spoke many, many times. I will never forget him.

A Parched Field Into a Green Garden

Another revolutionary who played a crucial role in the birth of the new China was Lan Daiyu (1916–49). He wrote a letter to his son from prison, just before he was to be executed. In it, he recorded the legacy he wished to leave him:

*Tonight
I part from you for all eternity
Wolves roam the streets
The earth is covered with thorns
In such a world, what can I leave to you?
O, my son
Henceforth
Use your spirit that can transform bitter autumn into sweet spring
Cultivate your parched homeland and make of it a fertile garden
That is my wish.¹³*

“What can I leave you, my son? Not possessions or wealth, not power or position. Only my spirit. To you, my son, I bequeath the spirit to trans-

form bitter autumn into sweet spring” — this was the essence of Lan Daiyu's final testament. It was courageous people like him who rose up and transformed their parched homeland of China, laid waste by foreign powers, into a green garden. And now that nation, so long suffering, has begun to achieve great progress. I am so happy to see this.

The power of the human spirit, the strength of the human will — everything depends upon them. The unfolding of superficial events and long tallies of figures do not tell the whole story. The “new Chinese” who built the new China were men and women who depended on no one but themselves, who never accepted defeat, who followed their chosen path and who lived courageously throughout all. As long as this spirit is well and alive, China will continue to make great strides.

But what about Japan? What Japan needs are “new Japanese” — a fundamental revolution on the individual level. Only the Soka Gakkai is working to make that happen. Discerning people around the world have great expectations for our activities and the immense spiritual richness found within the SGI.

Improving the Quality of Life

What is success in life? Who are the truly successful? There are famous and powerful people who become pitiful figures in their old age. There are people who die alone, feeling empty and desolate inside. Just what is success? The English thinker Walter Pater (1839–94) wrote, “To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life.”¹⁴ The person who lives life fully, glowing with life's energy, is the person who lives a successful life. In the SGI, we would call this the glow of faith, the passion for kosen-rufu.

Success, then, is not a matter of accumulating more of this or that; it is not measured in quantity. It means changing the quality of your life. Wealth, power, fame and knowledge alone cannot make you happy, no matter how much you acquire. Nor can you take them with you when you die. But by improving the quality of your life you will at last approach true happiness.

The late French art historian Dr. René Huyghe described contemporary civilization as a

culture of quantity, and said that our task is to change it into a culture of quality. He also said that the best kind of art and philosophy is that which enhances and adds to the quality of our life.

A World of Sunshine

Today, representatives of the ceremonies division¹⁵ from all parts of Japan are also with us. Let us show our appreciation for their sincere efforts!

Nichiren Daishonin once warmly encouraged one of his followers whose husband was bedridden for a long time [“Beneficial Medicine for All Ills” (MW-5, 279–82)]. He assured her that her husband was on the path to Buddhahood, so she had nothing to fear. Such is the great compassion of the original Buddha.

Encouragement is very important. Encouragement is the embodiment of compassion.

The Daishonin writes:

Were he [your husband] to go right now to Eagle Peak, he would feel as delighted as if the sun had come out and illuminated all the ten directions; and he would find himself rejoicing,



Success, then, is not a matter of accumulating more of this or that; it is not measured in quantity. It means changing the quality of your life. Wealth, power, fame and knowledge alone cannot make you happy, no matter how much you acquire. Nor can you take them with you when you die. But by improving the quality of your life you will at last approach true happiness.



wondering how an early death could be so happy a thing. (MW-5, 281)

So brilliant is the view that one will behold, the Daishonin says, that one will cry out in joy and wonder. Such is the state of mind one will savor at death, he explains. Both life and death become a source of joy. He continues:

No matter what might befall him on the road between this life and the next, he should declare himself to be a disciple of Nichiren.... With respect to my faith in the Lotus Sutra, I am the foremost sage in the entire world. My name has reached the pure lands of the ten directions, and heaven and earth surely know of it. If your husband declares that he is Nichiren's disciple, no evil demon can possibly claim ignorance of the name. (MW-5, 281–82)

Throughout the ten directions — the vast universe — there are surely billions upon billions of planets like the Earth. And the Mystic Law is the fundamental law that pervades everything in that universe. When you die, wherever you may go, or wherever you may be between this life and the next, as long as you are a follower of Nichiren Daishonin you will be safe and protected. You will be at peace and make your way freely and joyfully through all eternity.

The members of our ceremonies division earnestly pray and chant daimoku so that the deceased may travel the path of Buddhahood in peace and security. I am deeply appreciative of your efforts. I hope you will all take care of yourselves with the same energy and purpose with which you serve the rest of our members.

Advancing Confidently

In closing, I want to share with you a famous passage from “On Practicing the Buddha's Teaching”:

What a great pity it is that all the Japanese people are delighted to see Nichiren and his disciples suffer at the hands of the three powerful enemies! What befell another yesterday may befall oneself today. Nichiren and his disciples have but a short time to endure, the time it takes for frost or dew to vanish in the morning sun. When our prayers for Buddhahood are answered and we dwell in the land of eternal en-

lightenment where we will experience the boundless joy of the Law, what pity we will feel for those suffering incessantly in the depths of hell! How they will envy us then! (MW-1, 106)

The Daishonin is saying that those who persecute the practitioners of the Mystic Law will come to regret their actions. He continues: “Life flashes by in a moment. No matter how many terrible enemies we may encounter, banish all fears and never think of backsliding” (MW-1, 106). Let us engrave these strict words of the original Buddha in our hearts.

Thank you very much for today. I appreciate your sincere efforts. ❧

- Translated from Japanese. *Toda Josei Zenshu* (The Collected Works of Josei Toda) (Tokyo: Seikyo Shimbunsha, 1989), vol. 4, p. 564.
- Florence Meiman White, *Linus Pauling: Scientist and Crusader* (New York: Walker and Company, 1980), p. 68.
- Thomas Hager, *Force of Nature: The Life of Linus Pauling* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), p. 516.
- Linus Pauling in His Own Words*, ed. Barbara Marinacci (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), p. 180.
- Lu Xun, “Zi Chao” (Self-ridicule).
- “Soka Gakkai no Rekishi to Kakushin” (History and Conviction of the Soka Gakkai), *Toda Josei Zenshu* (The Collected Works of Josei Toda) (Tokyo: Seikyo Shimbunsha, 1983), vol. 3, p. 105.
- May Fourth Movement: an intellectual and social reform struggle that took place in China 1917–21, the pivotal event of which took place on May 4, 1919, in Beijing.
- Yoshimi Takeuchi, *Nihon to Ajia* (Japan and Asia) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1993), p. 453.
- Ibid.*
- President Ikeda's speech was titled “Thoughts on Education for Global Citizenship,” delivered at Columbia University's Teachers College on June 13, 1996.
- From an interview carried in the Oct. 15, 1939, issue of *The New York Times Magazine*, p. 17.
- Translated from Japanese. *Chugoku Rekidai Kakun Sen* (A Selection of Chinese Family Mottoes), ed. and trans. Yoshio Nagai (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 1991), pp. 22–24.
- Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.
- Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1913), p. 250.
- Ceremonies division: a group of officially designated Soka Gakkai ministers of ceremonies who conduct Buddhist ceremonies such as wedding, funeral and memorial services.



The Bronx and New York youth bands perform at a recent meeting at the New York Culture Center.

JOSH JOFFEE, NEW YORK

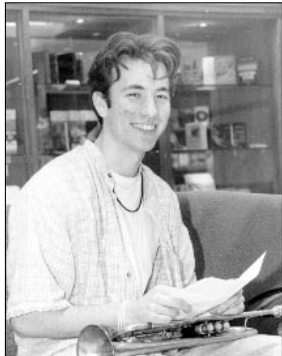
Developing a Love for Music

Photo by JEFF JONES

I started to play the trumpet for the Brass Band when I was 11, around 1989. Come to think of it, I don't remember ever choosing to play in the band. It was the "old days," as many of the members say, and everything was so gung ho at the time. I didn't even know how to play, but my parents still pushed me to join.

I remember my first experiences performing with the band. We were always playing "Forever Sensei," and I could barely get a sound out of my horn. Of course, it didn't matter. "Brass Band must have the fighting spirit no matter what! Hai, hai, hai!" That was the old days for you. One of the other band members figured a way for me to just play the same note over and over again in time with the rest of the band, and that was how I made my way through my first performances.

As I played with the Brass Band throughout the years it became more relaxed, but the goal of lifting the spirits of the members never wavered. In fact the group became more musical. We started playing new types of music such as salsa and reggae and always had



Josh Joffee

the members dancing and singing at every meeting we played for. Through these activities I developed a love for playing and performing music and I have been receiving musical training ever since.

Within the last year the New York Brass Band had to reflect on an important issue. The usual members were getting older, and there weren't many youth coming on to replace them.

As a result we reorganized the band. We have divided the Brass Band as well as the Fife and Drum

Corps into smaller, regional bands designed to get the youth in these areas to be more involved — as well as to be more in control over their performance material.

I have taken on some responsibility over the Youth Band in the Bronx and Westchester.

At 19 I am the oldest member in the band, and we have a fresh, young spirit. We have about 10 young men and women from junior high and high school.

Playing mostly Latin music, we have already performed for a lot of meetings and have continued to reach and lift the hearts of the members.

We are now focusing on the Junior High and High School Division Music Festival that will be held in August, in which all of the performing groups in New York will be participating.

Looking back I fully appreciate the experience that I have received from playing in these activities, and I am determined to apply the training I've received and the love for music I've developed through Brass Band activities toward putting on a wonderful show this August. W

Culture Dept. Supports Youth Performances

By MICHON ORNELLAS
NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT

A core of Culture Department members in New York is conducting performing workshops for the junior high and high school students. These workshops began as a pilot program in April 1996 and culminated in a performance demonstration last September.

Based on the response from the participants, their parents and others, the workshops resumed in November 1996 and have continued monthly. Their pace will pick up in July and August as

the youth prepare for their summer music festival on Aug. 17. This festival will bring together youth from the workshops, youth bands and those who want to write, act or help technically behind the scenes.

The youth themselves are creating this production with enthusiastic support from the youth division and Culture Department.

We Culture Department members recognize that consistent programs that challenge and inspire our youth are essential if we in the SGI-USA intend to assist in their progress and development. W

Long Island Band Gaining Momentum

By MARC COPELL
LONG ISLAND, N.Y., CORRESPONDENT

The Long Island Youth Band had its first rehearsal in December 1996. With enthusiastic support from parents, friends and members, we have conducted monthly rehearsals at a member's home.

Before the formation of the Long Island Youth Band, only a few junior high and high school people from the area participated in any SGI activities, and the participation was sporadic. Members became excited at the thought of having an activity for youth centered on Long Island. This would make it possible for families to contribute their full support! As a result, there are now 20 junior high and high school students participating in the Long Island band.

The highlight for the group so far was a performance at the New York Culture Center for a March world peace gongyo. As the group's central figure, I determined that each member of the group would deepen his or her understanding of the Gongyozon and develop the band with SGI President Ikeda's spirit. Before the performance date, the band had played only twice, so the band members and support team arrived early to the culture center and rehearsed with only a short break before the performance.

The hard work paid off as our first performance sounded like we had been playing together for years! It was remarkable.

Besides rehearsing music, the Long Island Youth Band has been chanting, learning gongyo, reading President Ikeda's guidance, playing basketball and eating together.

When asked what they liked best about the activity some of the members responded:

Shiina Yamada, 14: "The reason I enjoy the Youth Band is because I love the art of music. It gives me faith, the faith that young Buddhists like myself can accomplish something we enjoy together. It's also a lot of fun, which is important."

Jatin Sokhi, 11: "The band helps me learn to cooperate with other people."

Roshan Sokhi, 14: "It helps me meet other people and learn how bands operate."

In a conversation with Brazilian composer and pianist Amara Vieira, SGI President Ikeda stressed that to secure happiness for all human beings, culture should take precedence over science, politics and economics. Music, which directly reaches the depths of human life, can be said to be the supreme art that enables human kind to become truly happy.

Keeping this spirit close to heart, we are determined to continue having musical activities on Long Island. W

A Deep Musical Mission

During SGI President Ikeda's visit to New York in 1996, a youth jazz band comprising music students and professionals performed in the Youth Peace Culture Festival in Carnegie Hall. In the beginning of 1997, it was decided to continue this unique music group to develop the faith of these members who, due to their hectic schedules, may not have much opportunity to attend regular meetings.

A rehearsal studio became a meeting place where we were permitted to chant, do gongyo, study and exchange experiences while rehearsals took the other half of the meeting time. Because of the level of musicianship, it only takes one rehearsal to prepare performances.

The orchestra staff is presently planning to make this a monthly activity, scheduling more performances and creating a repertoire so that we can perform not only for members but also for the general public. By meeting and performing, this group will not only encourage its audience but will deepen the sense of its unique musical mission for world peace. W

Phila. Youth Orchestra Plays With Heart

By PETE MARINO

Times have changed! When I first began with the Brass Band more than 15 years ago, we had more than 50 members. We may not have been very good musically back then, but we were always loud! We had spirit but lacked true musical polish. Now there are days when we may spend the bulk of a rehearsal reviewing how to play a B flat scale. We have returned to the building stages in some ways, but in other ways we have progressed beyond my highest expectations.

Our musical group, the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, is composed of both young men and young women ranging in age from 10 to 20 years. This does not include the more "mature" members who are beginning to act more as advisors than performers. On any given Saturday morning, the rehearsal consists of anywhere from two to 20 members. Some have their own instruments, while some have been known to show up with one drum stick and a gongyo book.

After the "big change" in 1990, we, like others, floundered in frustration for a long time trying to reorganize and move forward. The former Brass Band and Fife and Drum Corps joined forces to make this the first activity group in Philadelphia to be made up of



Ben Cook plays the conga drums in a rendition of 'Oye Como Va' — with a flair all his own.

both young men and young women.

Most practices began with slow gongyo, since many were seriously attempting to do gongyo for the first time. Finding playable instruments was a challenge for a number of members — and playing music was even more of a challenge. There were no standard arrangements for a flute, a guitar, a violin, two trumpets and three drummers! So all music had

to be rewritten by the group.

We began by performing for some world peace gongyo meetings, with great support and encouragement from our wonderful members. But before every performance, we could not predict the outcome!

We did struggle during those first years. And the struggle continues, but with some very significant differences. Everyone either has, or is in the

process of buying his or her instrument. The types of music we are playing have become more sophisticated. The spirit of the group is one of cooperation and friendship.

And one of our most significant advancements is that nearly every member of the youth orchestra cannot only recite but also lead gongyo!

Recently, we gave leadership positions to a number of the

younger members and are passing the mantle of leadership to them.

I am so encouraged to see these young people develop into the leaders who will take our organization well into the 21st century. After years of practice, I am beginning to see how perseverance and genuine caring for others can help accomplish kosen-rufu in the world.

On a recent Saturday, some of the youth orchestra members wrote their determinations for the group:

"For the complete unity of the group. For growth and development musically and in faith. For the group to play with feeling, heart and passion for kosen-rufu! Also for chanting sessions. For our ability to enrich people's lives and inspire with our music." — *Starr Cullars*

"I'm here to make a difference." — *Anthony Thomas*

"My determination for the Youth Orchestra is for each of us to encourage the members each time we play." — *James Schwartz*

"My determination is to establish unity with the other Youth Orchestra members and leaders and to base everything on daimoku." — *Eve Greenspan*

"I'm here to play my best." — *Alex Kihurani*

Members of New Jersey's Music Corps share their experiences and determinations for the group.

● I joined the Music Corps last year. I was very happy when I joined because everyone was very friendly. From then on I spent time trying to attend most youth division meetings and practices. Though I have only been in the Music Corps for a year, it feels as if I have been in it for a long time. I feel very comfortable when I go to practice and meetings. When I come home from them I feel very happy and renewed. Now I am always eager to attend them. I am glad that I joined the Music Corps.

— *Diana Yoshiko Oeda*

● My vision toward the future is that I see more people joining and becoming active. I also see us encouraging more people who are not Buddhist. I have re-

ceived many benefits. One thing that I really like is that I have become more interested in music.

— *Andrew Cody*

● I have a lot of faith that we — youth of the future — can all make a difference. I have received a lot of good fortune and benefits in my life participating not only in district meetings but also in Music Corps where I am among [people] my age.

The most important benefit is that I have opened myself to not only understand more at meetings but to share my feelings with others and help others with their problems. My life is now more healthy physically, socially and most of all mentally. I am very happy to share my feelings with you!

— *Susan Moromisato*

● My 1997 determination for New Jersey Music Corps is to create an environment where each member can have fun, make good friends, learn the value of hard work and feel like he or she has accomplished something great. By deepening my faith in the Gohonzon and strengthening my own connection with SGI President Ikeda, I am determined to encourage each member of the Music Corps to do the same.

Finally, I am determined to make the 1st annual 1997 New Jersey Youth Music Festival a total success!

— *Jason Berg*

● My vision for the future of Music Corps is that it will expand and will be run more by the

youth rather than adults.

When I chant with faith and determination, I will always get what [I want]. I have faith in all I do. For me, determination plus faith equals success. I have learned to work together [with other people]. I have made more friends and in Music Corps I am learning how to read music.

— *Luz Veloz*

● This practice, through the Music Corps, has helped me meet great people that help one another to strengthen our faith.

Also, being a section leader has helped me in becoming confident in helping the less experienced players of the section to build their confidence to play out and not be afraid. Through

the Music Corps I chose my future career as a music teacher.

My determination for the Music Corps for the 21st century is to have the opportunity to play not only for the metropolitan area, but other places as well.

By doing so, I believe that the members in those places would be encouraged to start their own Music Corps and maybe someday we could all play together.

— *Mai Koyo*

● My vision towards the future of the Music Corps is that it will get bigger, more people will join and there will be more dances with color guards.

I have received a lot of benefits. To name a few, I have learned new dances, learned to play the flute and learned to do gongyo better. I met a lot of new people. Now I have become more open, more happy and I participate more.

— *Michelle Para*

New Jersey Music Corps Learns Faith and Music

Challenging Conventional Thinking

By STEVE A. FURMAN
CHICAGO CORRESPONDENT

Aging is “an area of ignorance as vast as the undiscovered continents 600 years ago,” Dr. Caleb E. Finch, a gerontologist at the University of Southern California, believes. With an inventor’s instinct and an explorer’s passion, he is challenging many long-held beliefs about aging. His penetrating insights have made him a pioneer in what may become one of the most significant issues of the 21st century: the aging of America.

The U. S. Census Bureau projects that by 2025 there will be 62 million people age 65 and older, nearly one in five Americans. By 2045, there will be 77 million, more than the entire U.S. population in 1900.

As an undergraduate at Yale in the 1960s, Dr. Finch discovered that biologists considered aging a “bunch of diseases.” He felt this was untrue and in essence humanized the field by looking for factors that can “preserve the health and vitality of the aging brain.” He combines evolutionary biology with natural philosophy and recently held the first workshop ever on slowing aging.

As a scientist open to new ideas, Dr. Finch demonstrated that Alzheimer’s disease might be an inflammatory disorder similar to rheumatoid arthritis. Understanding Alzheimer’s, which strikes nearly half of all who live past 85, and results in memory loss and the rupture of self-identity, would mean millions of people living out their lives creatively and actively. This would have far-reaching implications, because the 85 and older group are increasing at a faster rate than the total 65 and over population.

“We are undergoing a major revolution in our thinking,” says Dr. Finch. His ultimate goal is “to understand an aspect of human existence that is essentially remarkable — why aging occurs. And to study environmental factors and how to manipulate them to enhance health.”

Dr. Finch is skeptical that we age and die within a biologically predetermined period of time. He cites a wide variety of plants and animals that live 50 to 100 years and show little or no signs of aging.

“If you look at the biological world, there are many organisms or species that live a short time and a long time, which tells me life span is completely arbitrary,” says Dr. Finch. “Any life span is possible because cells are essentially the same building blocks of any kind of organism that exists in nature. A worker bee that lives only months has the identical set of genes as a queen bee that lives several years.”

A prolific writer, he has published more than 350 articles on gerontology, and his



Dr. Caleb Finch's research into aging is challenging many long-held beliefs. He believes that Alzheimer's disease may be an inflammatory disorder similar to arthritis.

work has earned him numerous awards and honors. His most recent book is *Longevity, Senescence and the Genome*.

As for his own mortality, Dr. Finch says: “I exercise, watch my diet, try to feel good and don’t expose myself to health hazards.

But I don’t think there’s a magic bullet for living longer.”

When asked what he might tell baby boomers turning 50, he replies, “Look forward to a huge, unexpected gift of time.” ■