

# World Tribune

No. 3150

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

AUGUST 1, 1997

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## Braille Sutra Book

Jenny Knight of Philadelphia does gongyo while reading a Braille sutra book. The SGI-USA has just published an updated version of "The Liturgy of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism." A Braille version was first printed in the 1970s and had not been updated since. This new version includes the new silent prayers, first printed in 1992, and is available free of charge. Interested persons may contact their local community centers, which can request the book from the Administration Department at the national headquarters in Santa Monica, Calif.



Photo by JONATHAN WILSON

## Earth Charter To Set Standard on Environmental Awareness

Document to be presented to United Nations. Grass-roots consultation process begins.

By FLETCHER DALTON  
BOSTON BUREAU CHIEF

In 1957, Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, appealed to the membership, specifically the youth division, to disseminate the idea that nuclear weapons should be abolished. Seizing upon this idea to re-route the direction of history, the youth division overwhelmingly responded.

Now, 40 years later, SGI President Ikeda, in his 1997 peace proposal, declares a need to protect the Earth from environmental desecration through respect for human rights, sustainable liv-

ing and economic equity.

"A task I would like to propose," he writes, "is a grass-roots endeavor that lays down a new set of principles, what can be called an Earth Charter, that will provide a clear vision for the third millennium."

Actually, efforts to create an Earth Charter have been under way around the world for at least a decade. In 1994 a major step was taken when Maurice Strong, chairman of the Earth Council, and Mikhail Gorbachev, president of Green Cross International, decided that the final year of the 20th century, 2000, would be a prime time to submit an Earth Charter to the United Nations. Mr. Strong and Mr. Gorbachev are co-chairs of the Earth Charter Commission.

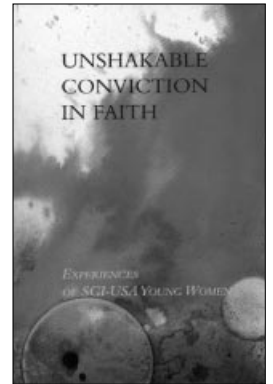
"All we want to achieve by working on the Earth Charter is to show all peoples of the world, politicians and business circles,

that we have only one option," Mr. Gorbachev said in Rio de Janeiro earlier this year. "That is to live within the demands of nature. We must do everything we can to be worthy of our time, to prove that we are a mature society, able to assess our situation and act wisely and responsibly in the interests of the present and the future."

Advocates hope that, like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the United Nations adopted in 1948, the Earth Charter will become an international standard of thought and conduct. The draft itself includes a preamble and 18 principles on environmental conservation and sustainable living (please see box, p. 4).

From now through March 1998, the Earth Charter Commission is actively seeking input

PLEASE SEE EARTH CHARTER, 4



New book by young women: 'Unshakable Conviction in Faith.'

## True Stories of the Young Women's Division

By JEFF FARR  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Santa Monica, Calif., July 23

The just-published young women's division's book, *Unshakable Conviction in Faith*, is the result of two-and-a-half years of hard work. In early 1995, the YWD Renaissance Council was discussing how best to encourage young women when someone mentioned the magic word *experiences*. Light bulbs went on.

The idea for this experience book was born and a committee to edit and produce it formed. The Renaissance Council ran a call for submissions in the *World Tribune*, and from the 60 they received the committee picked 18.

The four young women on the committee wanted to make sure that the experiences showed the diversity found among SGI-USA young women. One of the messages of the book is that this Buddhism can work for any young woman.

The book committee also wanted the experiences to address the most pressing problems and issues young women face today. Included are stories of overcoming serious illnesses like cancer, defeating depression, improving family relationships, getting dream jobs, curing drug addictions and even finding true love. An underlying theme is that young women can, by using faith to solve their problems, develop their sense of identity.

PLEASE SEE CONVICTION, 4

# ? QUESTION OF THE MONTH: *'How do you attract and support youth in your district?'*

The best way to attract young people to the district is to give them plenty of support and encouragement. Most young adults hear only negative comments from their parents, teachers, etc. It is extremely important to always treat our children as we want to be treated and never speak to them in a condescending way. If we do this, these future leaders of our society will grow by leaps and bounds, and our districts will also grow and prosper.

— NORM VALDES, Las Vegas

We involve young people in our district through life-to-life dialogue with individuals. We ask them what they want to see happen and how they want to participate in meetings. One young lady wants "more fun," so that concern shaped our meeting plan. One young man wants to "see what young people are doing in their lives." He's into photography, so we're thinking about an exhibit of his work at our meeting. We plan to visit children and other young members to find out how they are doing and to make life-to-life connections with them.

— CARVEL GRAY, Brooklyn, N.Y.



The most important action is daimoku — sincere prayer to the Gohonzon for the young people's happiness. We do the usual things like encouraging them to

participate in the district meetings, but also have pizza parties and picnics. We are having study meetings just for the junior high and high school division members. We use material from the Entrance Examination and try to make it fun, and have a men's or women's division member help.

I think it is very important to just simply give younger people your attention. Say hi, ask what they have been up to. Call them up and get to know them as you would anyone. And

my favorite thing is going to a Seattle Mariners game with a young men's division member.

— DIXON HAMBY, Bellevue, Wash.

The key is creativity. Just asking helps. It's surprising then how many people will join in a project. All we have to do is ask. We have developed several projects where we work with our young people and non-members in the community.

I think a number of young people want to participate in activities. It's a matter of asking them if this is something that interests them. We are also more creative and innovative in the projects that we are promoting within the district for our youth division members.

— DENISE MERCHERSON, Chicago

Hello from Beijing! When I was young all I wanted was to make a difference in the world. Young people want to find out who they are, to do meaningful work and to be real. They want to feel the universe in their dance. So create the right dance floor and turn on that music!

— STEPHANIE TANSEY, Beijing, China

Leaders need to discern what encourages and interests the youth and restrain their own egos. We need to be ready to discard of routines that become meaningless to youth.

— NICOLETTE SWEENEY, New York

We have been getting young people's opinions. Giving them a voice is very important. Young people are attracted by things they find enjoyable and that will attract their peers who are not (yet) Buddhists. We sat down with them and helped figure out how to implement their ideas — a Buddhist trivia game, sharing their talents of dancing, singing, or reading poetry of their own. They ex-

press how they are experiencing life. And it quite naturally reflects Buddhism. They begin to realize they are truly contributing to the growth of the district.

— JIMMIE and YOUNG CHA RACHAL, Jonesboro, Ga.



Looking back on when I was a young women's division member, I realize that every activity was praised by my leaders. With constant warmth and encouragement, my district leader treated me as though I was a queen. We were taught to believe that we were fantastic. These leaders put their egos aside and lives on the back burner for us. Because they put out so much effort in doing activities with us, we developed a trusting relationship with them.

— GIA PRESTON, Overland Park, Kans.



[We attract and support youth] by having interesting activities and studying SGI President Ikeda's guidance, putting his words into action. I've been practicing this Buddhism since I was 7 years old and I have learned that by continuing my faith I can overcome any obstacle, that I can become stronger and more courageous about working toward my goals. By seeing what other youth are interested in and helping it surface, and by bringing them into the SGI experience, we help them realize they are not alone — and that we as young women are here to support one another.

— CHANDRA REEVES, Atlanta

We chant for youth division members to participate and we work to create an environment where young people will be happy. Most important is the atti-

tude of the men's and women's division members. They have to be willing to accept the youth and their opinions as equal to their own. Otherwise, when youth division members or guests speak up, older members start acting like parents. This doesn't work for young people who have responsible positions in society, where they are treated like adults and equals in their work environments.

— THOMAS A. DUNN, Brooklyn, N.Y.



Youth division members have hopes and dreams, and when struggling to accomplish them I listen to them with an open mind and try to understand their perspective on life. It's important for them to develop confidence in the Gohonzon and themselves. Encouraging words, such as to "never give up" in the midst of obstacles, can help them to move forward in their lives.

— CHERYL UTLEY, Prairie Village, Kans.

The cause to attract vibrant young people to be active in our districts begins with deeply appreciating their presence. There are four basic points we have employed: 1) Chant daimoku for youth to appear, stand up and take action; 2) One of General Director Zaitzu's six challenges says, "boldly entrust youth." This cannot be just a slogan. It means we actually have to trust them; 3) Have mutual communication with the youth. This means to not dump on them, just tell them do whatever they want or just tell them what to do. It is give and take; and 4) Create an environment where they can be inspired. Make it a family-type atmosphere where it is fun and enjoyable to do activities.

— JEFF McDANIEL, San Francisco

## NEXT MONTH'S QUESTION:

*'Why did you exchange your Nikken-transcribed Gohonzon?'*

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

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**WORLD TRIBUNE  
MAILBOX**

**NATO's Not So Great**

In the midst of a feverish international debate over the future of NATO, I was dismayed to find a full page of our beloved newspaper serving as a propaganda outlet for the military-industrial complex (July 4 "Worldview").

In 1949, NATO was formed as an alliance to counter Russia's creation of satellite buffer states in the countries they liberated from the Nazis. Russia has been invaded on a regular basis since the time of Napoleon. Having lost 22 million lives in World War II, the Russians were determined to have friendly nations on their borders....

Now that it no longer has any reason to exist, "the mission of the organization has expanded to promote the stability and security of Europe as a whole."

Where? Preventing ethnic slaughter in Bosnia? Chechnya? Maybe Northern Ireland?

The United States has a defense budget of \$268,843,000 with \$35 billion going toward research and development, and \$40 billion toward procurement. This works out as a per capita expenditure of \$1,034, \$135, and \$154 respectively. By way of contrast, our per capita expenditure for the Peace Corps is \$0.85 and the National Endowment for the Arts \$0.38. It is becoming increasingly difficult to justify to the America public Cold War levels of expenditures to fight a non-existent enemy. The United States is the world's largest exporter of arms, controlling half the market, selling \$15 billion per year. Markets must be maintained in an increasingly skeptical world.

The real purpose of NATO's expansion is to force impoverished countries to squander their precious resources on the modernization and expansion of their militaries. An added benefit will be to encircle and infuriate the Russians to the point that their next round of leaders will restore their nation as an enemy worth fighting.

The best and brightest follow the money, and in Eastern Europe the military is where the action will be. Military personnel, not doctors, get all-expense-paid trips to Louisiana.

General John Sheehan assures us that "people who talk to each other don't fight, because if they are busy talking, they have a tendency not to fight." But soldiers, when so ordered, tend to kill, if only to avoid court-martial.

— MARK ANTON, New York

**Correction:**

Patricia Poindexter of Salem, Va., has pointed out an error that ran some time ago. In the Jan. 1, issue, we ran a story in which SGI President Ikeda talked about the Pilgrims. The story said that Plymouth, Mass., was the first permanent colony in America. Of course, the first permanent colony was Jamestown, Va., 13 years before. Plymouth was the first permanent colony in New England. We regret the error.

Ms. Poindexter writes: "And as for the description of the hardships endured in the first year — the *World Tribune* article could just as easily have been describing the reality of the Jamestown colonists...."

"I wish to conclude...with the eloquent words of C.Vann Woodward, sterling professor emeritus, Yale University: 'This...Virginia has soaked up more of the blood, sweat and tears of American history than any other part of the country. It has bred more founding fathers, inspired more soaring hopes and ideals, and witnessed more triumphs, failures and lost causes than any other place in the country.'"

**From the Same Deep Blue Sea**

**PERSPECTIVE**

By LuANN ADAMS  
NEW YORK

I grew up in a small Minnesota town where a local college recruited many students from New Jersey. At first the racial mixture of students was embraced by the town, but as Vietnam War protests were led by marching students, local support for the new college was withdrawn, it closed, and much of the blame went to "those blacks."

When I was 21, during my last graveyard shift in a facility for multi-handicapped men, the building was broken into by two black men who beat me and the residents. They raped me, holding a gun and a knife to my throat, saying, "Jesus said, 'Don't be afraid to die.'"

As hard as I tried to keep them from hurting the residents, I couldn't. The dear residents, one of whom almost bled to death, were helpless against the violence. One managed to reach a telephone operator, who sent police cars with sirens. That saved our lives, but the men ran off and were never caught.

This was not the first time I had been attacked by men. It fit into a horrible pattern of being brutally beaten or sexually abused, most often by strangers, every one to three years since I turned 13. I truly thought I would be a victim the rest of my life.

Because this was the worst attack (added to the fact that a roommate had been stabbed and beaten by a black man), I developed great fear and anger toward dark-skinned men. Intellectually I knew that there were good and bad people of every race and that I could not give in to despair. But I tried desperately to avoid contact with men, especially black men. I often shook with fear, working as a waitress, when serving African American customers.

Five years later, I started

practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. One of my first inconspicuous benefits from chanting was overcoming my victim mentality. I truly chanted to create peace in my heart, to change my anger, and to have a healthy, loving relationship with a man. I am happy to say that after 10 years of chanting, this has now come true.

As a professional storyteller, I am drawn to pieces about children overcoming obstacles and finding the courage to not only survive but to win — and to encourage others with their triumphs. I often tell SGI President Ikeda's stories and have created storytelling adaptations of them to music with a genius of a composer and fellow Buddhist, Marcia Thomas-Jones, who is African American.

For six years, the New York Public Library asked me to tell stories from Africa for Black History Month — in the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island libraries. I chanted lots of daimoku before each performance to connect with my audiences and the material. I discovered that I loved African folk tales and could have fun and empathize deeply with the characters (as well as with the struggles of my fellow African American young women's division members). However, my compassion for African American men (except for fellow Buddhists) was limited to the characters in my stories.

Last year, I was preparing a new program of stories for performances in Ohio. As I worked to develop the characters in the story of "Pink and Say" (by Patricia Polacco, an incredible, true story in which a young African American soldier saves the life of a young Ohio farm boy during the Civil War) with Marcia's beautiful music, I was snowbound in Cincinnati.

My determination was, through this story, to overcome my residue of prejudice. I knew my heart had to be full of peace and love to sincerely touch the hearts of the children and their

teachers, especially those in the inner-city schools. I wanted them not only to be appalled at the cruelty of war and prejudice, but to see the tremendous bravery and beautiful, inspirational spirit of the young black soldier fighting for his beliefs.

I chanted for hours as the snow fell harder and harder. The Cincinnati Playhouse was producing *An Asian Jockey in Our Midst* then, a new play about an African American couple dealing with their prejudice against Asians. I was one of two people who came to see the Sunday matinee that was canceled due to the snow. Darryl Edwards, an African American man starring in the play, was standing in the lobby and we struck up a conversation. He was interested in my work and after two-and-a-half hours of talking and laughing, I realized that I liked and admired him as a person.

He came to see me perform and afterward told me how much he was especially moved by "Pink and Say." His compliments touched me; I knew that something deep was changing in my life. He was the first African American man, non-Buddhist, I had ever had a heart-to-heart talk with. We became friends and I felt the last residue of my old prejudice melt from my life.

This is what I so much wanted to overcome, not only for my work, but to truly emulate President Ikeda's role as an ambassador for peace. As he says over and over, it's all about life-to-life connections. Now I really understand.

Yes, I still have flashbacks. But as I struggle and win, I want to encourage all the children I have the privilege to meet that no matter what their circumstances are, with hope and courage they can overcome anything and win, too. I have learned that peace begins in my heart. And also that, as President Ikeda says in *Over the Deep Blue Sea*, "We are all sailors come ashore from the same deep blue sea." ❧

**What Do You Think?**

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

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS



Maurice Strong (left) and Mikhail Gorbachev, seen here in Rio last March, co-chair the Earth Charter Commission.

**EARTH CHARTER, FROM PAGE 1**

on the draft from people and organizations around the world. In his peace proposal, the SGI president asked for the Boston Research Center's help in developing the charter, and the center has so far responded with an Earth Charter Consultation on June 14. During two plenary sessions and two small group discussions, attendees discussed the draft at length (please see story below).

Plans are also under way to hold consultation meetings sponsored by the SGI-USA,

with times and locations still to be determined.

"Just as wide scale destruction of the Earth's living systems appears irreversible and hopelessness prevails among the most knowledgeable environmentalists, the Earth Charter emerges as a wake-up call to grass-roots movements like the SGI," says Virginia Straus, executive director of the Boston Research Center. "The consultation process provides a rare opportunity for globally minded citizens to take back responsibility for protecting the Earth by forging principles to govern human-Earth re-

lations, living by these principles, and insisting that corporations and governments live by them, too."

AlAlbergate, SGI-USA Community Relations director, makes it clear that the SGI-USA affirms the idea of an Earth Charter but is not out to defend or promote the language of this particular draft. SGI-USA's purpose is to help in the consultation process by gathering widespread opinions about it. "This is a great chance to not only take part in the review ourselves but to interact with members of the community," Mr. Albergate said. ❖

## The Earth Charter Benchmark Draft

*The following is the latest draft of the preamble to the proposed Earth Charter, which also includes 18 principles (not printed). The charter is being developed by the Earth Charter Commission, headed by Maurice Strong and Mikhail Gorbachev. SGI-USA members will be involved in the consultation process about the charter's language.*

Earth is our home and home to all living beings. Earth itself is alive. We are part of an evolving universe. Human beings are members of an interdependent community of life with a magnificent diversity of life forms and cultures. We are humbled before the beauty of Earth and share a reverence for life and the sources of our being. We give thanks for the heritage that we have received from past generations and embrace our responsibilities to present and future generations.

The Earth Community stands at a defining moment. The biosphere is governed by laws that we ignore at our own peril. Human beings have acquired the ability to radically alter the environment and evolutionary processes. Lack of foresight and misuse of knowledge and power threaten the fabric of life and the foundations of local and global security. There is great violence, poverty and suffering in our world. A fundamental change of course is needed.

The choice is before us: to care for the Earth or to participate in the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life. We must reinvent industrial-technological civilization, finding new ways to balance self and community, having and being, diversity and unity, short-term and long-term, using and nurturing.

In the midst of all our diversity, we are one humanity and one Earth family with a shared destiny. The challenges before us require an inclusive ethical vision. Partnerships must be forged and cooperation fostered at local, bioregional, national and international levels. In solidarity with one another and the community of life, we the peoples of the world commit ourselves to action guided by the following interrelated principles....

# Charter Critique

**CONVICTION, FROM PAGE 1**

By FLETCHER DALTON  
BUREAU CHIEF  
Boston, June 14

## The Boston Research Center for the 21st Century gets citizens involved in reviewing language of proposed Earth Charter.

"I think this is the most wonderful thing I've ever done," said a woman during the lunch break at the Earth Charter consultation at the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century today.

"To think," said her companion, "that our reading, pondering and assessing this Earth Charter Benchmark Draft will affect how people regard and treat the Earth during the next century gives me a lot of hope."

The consultation attracted nearly a hundred people, including university students, persons from business and religious communities, ecologists and others interested in having a say in restoring a reverence for the Earth.

At the first of the two plenary sessions, the facilitators, Carol Zinn and Eileen Gannon of Global Education Associates, told the audience that the meet-

ing would provide a "double learning experience."

The first experience is participation in the consultation process itself. The second is in leaving the meeting "confident enough to hold consultations on the Earth Charter Benchmark Draft within your own personal networks."

Many of today's participants first heard of the charter during the Boston Research Center's "Religion and Ecology" series held earlier this year. Steven Rockefeller, a professor of religion at Middlebury College, presented an early draft of the charter before leaving for an international ecology conference in Rio de Janeiro. Called Rio+5, the conference was the

five-year progress review of the 1992 Earth Summit. Professor Rockefeller is charged with the responsibility of gathering input on the Earth Charter Benchmark Draft from the world's religious organizations.

Between the two plenary sessions, there were small-group discussions on the language and intent of the draft. At the end of the day, the groups made reports and suggestions, ranging from clarification of terms to a need to "reach the heart of humanity," to "acknowledge power differentials and differences in vulnerability."

The charter was described by some as "an invitation to raise people's consciousness" and by others as "a moral, visionary

statement that we can work from."

Some of the comments reflected individual writing styles. "Too long," was one person's assessment. "I want these principles so easy to understand that sixth graders will be able to memorize them."

"The language is not sufficiently elegant," a student said. "It should have the tone and depth of the Declaration of Independence."

"Forget the semantics," another responded. "I'm concerned that it reflect third-world priorities and be sensitive and clear enough to reach indigenous peoples in every country."

And so it went. At the end of the consultation, however, there was a sense of hard work dutifully done and a deeper realization of the importance of creating a code of conduct for future generations who will inhabit the Earth. ❖

Patty Graham of Philadelphia, for instance, shares a moving experience of healing the scars of the sexual abuse she experienced growing up. As a young woman on her own, she had problems with drugs and was once raped. During the early years of her practice, she dipped in and out of depression as she struggled to chant consistently and find herself. And she made it, becoming the first college graduate in her family, with a degree in dance from Temple University. *Unshakable Conviction* is full of victories like this.

Ultimately, the book is meant to encourage anyone, young woman or not, SGI member or not, says former Young Women's Division Chief Melanie Merians, who oversaw the book's editing and production. The principles these young women use to win in their lives will be inspiring to many readers. *Unshakable Conviction* will soon be available at all SGI-USA bookstores, and can be mail-ordered (M.O. #0750; price: \$4.50). ❖

Since the start of 1962 — the Year of Victory — propagation had been moving ahead with even greater momentum. The members' united efforts and their confident achievements spread to every corner of Japan. Wherever there were people, activities for kosen-rufu had proudly begun to unfold.

There was nothing extraordinary or glamorous about the members' activities. Working as emissaries of the Mystic Law, they quietly, earnestly went each day to visit the suffering and unhappy, no matter who they were or in what destitute conditions they might be living. True Buddhism and true humanism exist in precisely these kinds of selfless actions. These are deeds of a nobility that lies beyond the comprehension of the pretentious and conceited, obsessed with others' good opinion, or seekers of fame or status whose lives are consumed by vanity.

In a section of Fukuoka City,<sup>1</sup> on a tract of reclaimed land jutting into Hakata Bay, there was a shantytown known to locals as Dokan. It was a cluttered jumble of tightly packed, makeshift tin-roofed huts.

Today the area bristles with modern high-rises and there is no vestige of its former state. But in the past, people from surrounding neighborhoods were afraid to set foot there. At the end of the war, the area had been deserted; there were only a few scattered warehouses along the road that ran through the reclaimed land, and a solitary ice-manufacturing plant. At some point, large earthen drainage pipes — called *dokan* in Japanese — were discarded there, and the first inhabitants started to appear. It was from these pipes that the settlement took its name.

People who were homeless or unemployed as a result of the war were carried there by the vicissitudes of fate. The drainage pipes were big enough for an adult, stooping slightly, to enter. People would hang pieces of straw matting at either end of a pipe and call it home. As more and more came to Dokan to live, small shacks made from scrap wood and sheet iron took their place beside the pipe dwellings.

Within a few years, shanties of this kind covered the entire area. Naturally, these were illegal, amounting as they did to squatters' dwellings.

The layout of Dokan, meanwhile, could only be described as extremely convoluted. Shacks were thrown together any which way, without the slightest regard for order. Crowded closely together, they were laced by a maze of narrow lanes beneath overlapping roofs that prevented any sunlight from shining through. People there did indeed dwell in

## The New Human Revolution

By HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 3

# Acceleration

Translation of parts 1–6 of the 'Acceleration' 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.

Japanese society's shadows, where even the light of government authority did not reach.

The Dokan area was not very safe. Thefts and brawls were everyday occurrences; blood was often shed. From the middle of the day, people would begin gambling or brewing bootleg liquor. Those in agony over withdrawal from alcohol or drugs — mainly the popular stimulant Philopon<sup>2</sup> — were a common sight. Wanted criminals were also said to take refuge there to evade capture.

Residents in nearby neighborhoods had to tell their children: "You must never go into Dokan! Do you hear me?"

But the Gakkai's wave of propagation spread even to this virtually lawless wilderness — and extraordinary changes began to take place.

spair and self-destruction. The bitterness of past betrayals made them suspicious and mistrustful of everyone. Consequently, Matsumoto's assurances that they could attain happiness through faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism sounded to them like some smooth sales pitch that definitely had to have a catch to it.

But Matsumoto didn't give up. Everyone has a right to become happy, she thought — the Gohonzon guarantees that. Blazing with this conviction, she continued to chant daimoku, persevering patiently in talking to many people about Buddhism. At length, her efforts began to bear fruit and first one, then another started practicing. As they exerted themselves in Buddhist practice, their gloomy, forlorn expressions brightened. They began to experience a variety of benefits resulting from their faith.

Other Dokan residents, seeing this transformation — this proof of the power of faith so close to home — became much more open to hearing about the Daishonin's Buddhism. Members from other areas also came to visit friends who lived in Dokan and introduce them to the practice. As a result, the area's membership rose steadily.

In 1956, there were a total of 30 Gakkai households in Dokan. The following year, there were 60. The year after that, 150. By 1962, Dokan had well over 400 practicing households. Owing to the nature of the dwellings there, most residents were not registered with the local government office,<sup>3</sup> so it is impossible to know exactly how many households there were then. But according to accounts from Gakkai members who lived there, by 1962 more than half the households there were Soka Gakkai members.

In the morning, the sound of gongyo and daimoku could be heard everywhere around the shantytown. People could be seen cheerfully setting off to work. At night, discussion meetings were held in

several places. Tiny, rough-hewn dwellings overflowed with people and resounded with inspiring experiences in faith and happy laughter.

With the increase in Gakkai members among Dokan residents, the school attendance of their children rose and, more remarkably, crime dropped so much that even the local police were astounded.

Faith had filled lives previously shrouded in darkness with a light of hope, giving people fresh courage to go on living. The Soka Gakkai's

greatest undertaking has been going out among the suffering and making it possible for countless individuals to revitalize their lives.

Hisayuki Imura, a Dokan resident who would later become the area's district chief, was one who was revitalized in this way. He took up residence in Dokan in the new year of 1954, when he was 37. He had formerly worked as an accountant for a coal mining company, seeming to have a promising future there. But the asthma that had not troubled him for many years suddenly returned with a vengeance, making it increasingly difficult to work. His attacks grew more frequent; he missed work more often, until, after a prolonged period of absence, he was finally laid off.

He had a wife and three small boys to feed, ages 8, 5 and 2. Out of kindness, his employer allowed him and his family to continue to live in company housing for a while. But there was a limit to how long they could stay and they were soon behind on rent. At the end of the year, they fled in the middle of the night.

The sight of his wife stabbed Imura's heart like a knife: Her neck emaciated from hunger, she trudged silently through the icy north wind with no place to go, her head bowed, leading their middle son by the hand, their youngest son on her back. But he no longer had the energy left to even offer her a warm word of comfort.

As the new year dawned they went from one relative's house to the next. Imura wandered dejectedly through the streets of Hakata in Fukuoka, constantly looking for a place to commit suicide. But the image of his children's sweet, innocent faces stopped him. "I have to keep going, for them!" he told himself. Yet the fact remained that they had nowhere to go. The streets bustled with new year's festivity, but every time he passed people dressed smartly in their best Japanese attire, he cast his eyes down.

His wanderings eventually led him to Dokan. Standing in the cold wind blowing off the sea, gazing at the untidy rows of ramshackle lean-tos before him, he felt for a moment utterly lost and defeated. Gradually, however, he thought that he and his family might try living there for a while.



The first Gakkai members appeared in Dokan around 1954. About one year before that, a woman named Tatsu Matsumoto, who lived near Dokan, began visiting Dokan residents she had come to have a nodding acquaintance with to discuss Buddhism. Matsumoto was determined to see the people in the area become happy. In the beginning, however, no one would listen to what she had to say.

Many residents had suffered great privation and hardship. Having lost all hope, they had abandoned themselves to de-

## ACCELERATION, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

He found a spot there to build a house. Or it could have better been described as a crude shack fashioned from discarded materials he salvaged — wooden beams for the frame, bits of board and straw matting for the walls and iron sheeting for the roof.

Imura, his wife and their children moved into the small shack with a floor area of about 81 square feet, so flimsy that it might be blown away by the first strong wind. Never having so much as held a hammer before, Imura had been a complete novice at homebuilding. After a while, the structure began to tilt ominously. A child's ball placed on the straw mat-covered floor would roll to one side of the room, at the mercy of natural forces beyond its control. Imura felt that ball was a reflection of his life.

He had to find work to feed his family, but his asthma prevented him from holding down an office job or taking on any physical labor. In the end, Imura decided to open a food stand near the entrance of a motorboat race course<sup>4</sup> located near to Dokan. (Incidentally, more than a few Dokan residents had wound up there after gambling away everything they owned on these races, ruining their lives.)

Imura and his wife made a small, portable stand. They assembled a low table from an old sliding door set atop wooden fruit boxes as legs. Then they offered customers *oden*, an inexpensive hot Japanese hodgepodge, as well as *inarizushi*, rice wrapped in thin envelopes of deep-fried tofu. Nevertheless, their daily earnings were meager; they couldn't even afford to buy white rice for their children or proper bedding for them. Even in the dead of winter, all they could do to keep warm was wrap themselves in a blanket. In the summer, a foul smell pervaded the slum, while mosquitoes bred at a remarkable rate in the sewage drainage ditches under the shanties' floors.

Imura's asthma grew steadily worse. He came to feel that it was only a matter of time before one of his attacks finished him off. He became completely spiritless, losing his last ounce of hope. All that issued from his mouth were a persistent cough and weary sighs.

Around this time Imura first heard about Buddhism from one of his customers. At first, he listened with a sardonic smile, but the customer kept on enthusiastically about the greatness of Buddhism.

"You, too, can definitely become happy through this practice," the customer assured him.

*Happiness* — that was a word Imura had almost forgotten. Just thinking about it made him feel bitter. But gradually the person's confident words touched something inside him. Around the same time, his older brother, who lived in a Fukuoka

suburb and had recently joined the Soka Gakkai, came to talk to him about Buddhism. Imura was skeptical, but he told himself that he had nothing to lose. Things could not possibly get any worse. He decided to join the Gakkai and give the practice a try. That was November 1955, almost two years after the Imura family had moved to Dokan.

After joining the Soka Gakkai and doing gongyo and chanting daimoku consistently for a while, Imura's spirits began to lift. His enthusiasm for life was rekindled. From the depths of his being, he resolved to become happy. He earnestly applied himself to Gakkai activities and, at the suggestion of his seniors in faith, began actively introducing others in Dokan to the Daishonin's Buddhism.



As Imura threw himself heart and soul into his work and Buddhist practice, he noticed two curious things. First, the chronic asthma that had caused him so much suffering completely disappeared. In the past, his attacks had been particularly severe at the change of the seasons — from winter to spring and summer to autumn — but in the next spring after beginning his practice, and that autumn as well, the usual attacks failed to occur.

The second thing he noticed was an unbelievable increase in sales from his small food stand. In practically no time at all, sales had jumped to many times their original level. Although a number of other food vendors had set up stands in the area, Imura's seemed to attract people like a magnet.

He had changed his menu to specialize in *udon*, thick Japanese wheat noodles served in a clear broth, and tempura. He also employed various innovations to speed up service and looked into improving the dishes' flavor. Due to these efforts, his stand gained a reputation for being "fast and delicious." Eventually, he purchased a small hand-drawn trailer and the business he had begun with some fruit boxes and an old sliding door at last began to look like a real food stand.

"One day, I will open my own restaurant," Imura declared to his family. "I'll accumulate loads of good fortune. I'll do

it without fail." He began to dream about the future again, something he had almost forgotten how to do.

He put even greater energy into his Gakkai activities and undertook the challenge of studying Buddhism, too. As he read more and more about the principle of changing one's karma, he felt even more inspired to share the greatness of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism with as many people as he possibly could.

There were many around him who had completely lost hope. There were some who spent all their daily wages on alcohol, drinking themselves senseless, collapsing from drunkenness and sleeping it off in the streets day after day. There were those who gave blood for money to gamble with, while scrounging for leftovers.

Imura was unable to ignore their suffering. "If a Gakkai member doesn't help them, who will?" he thought.

So he continued to exert himself, visiting people and telling them about the Daishonin's teaching. Some showered him with angry abuse — "Get out and don't come back!" But he never flinched. He had awakened to his mission as a noble emissary of the Buddha. Imura's earnest insistence that they could rebuild their lives through faith was greeted coldly by Dokan's people, whose hearts were numb. They had given up on life. One murmured sadly: "No matter what we do, there's no way we'll ever get out of here. It's hopeless..."

Conducting propagation activities in Dokan was in many ways a battle against the apathy and hopelessness of people who had lost the will or energy to go on living.

Imura mustered his courage and earnestly told them: "Don't give up on yourselves so easily! First give this Buddhism a try. There's plenty of time for giving up after that, if you still want to."

Through such persistent dialogue, his ardent concern eventually communicated itself. One after another joined the Soka Gakkai at his urging.

Membership in the area steadily increased and in his second year of practice Imura was appointed chief of the Nagahama Group, which included Dokan and the surrounding area.

Frequent discussion meetings were held in Dokan. There was only one venue spacious enough for a good-size meeting — an empty warehouse. Aside from that, there was no place larger than about 23 square feet in which to meet. Sometimes members even held discussion meetings outside under the street lights, sitting in a circle on straw mats to talk about Buddhism.

On weekends, a dozen-or-so members from Dokan would routinely make their way to Hakata Station. There, they would catch an overnight train to other parts of Kyushu for propagation activities. These members were all poor, dressed in work overalls, wearing only *geta*, traditional Japanese clogs. Yet they would set off together animatedly talking about their commitment to helping guide those who were suffering to happiness.

When it came to propagation, Imura would gladly go anywhere. He traveled all around Kyushu and even ventured to the Chugoku region,<sup>5</sup> located across the water on the main island of Honshu. Even before his appointment as district chief in 1962, he had brought more than a hundred families to the Daishonin's Buddhism. The enthusiasm for propagation among his district members burned ever more brightly, until the Dokan area was alive with the benefits of faith.

In 1966, Imura finally left Dokan to open his longed-for restaurant, a rented facility with living quarters attached, into which he moved with his family. He retained the menu of his outdoor stall — *udon* and tempura — but his business did so well that he eventually also opened a fish shop and a more upscale restaurant serving traditional Japanese cuisine. In time, he purchased a brand-new home and later served as president of his neighborhood association for many years, contributing actively to the local community.

The Dokan members, who had unlocked their infinite potential through faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism, lived out many great dramas. Almost all had fought their way back from the edge of despair. When they spoke of Buddhism's greatness, their words rang with powerful truth and conviction.

One such member was Eriko Okawa, who practiced with Imura and later became Dokan's district women's division chief. One dark evening in 1957, she had stood with her husband and four children on a pier at Hakata Bay. The couple had decided to commit suicide along with their children. It was a bitterly cold day, the wind cutting to the bone like an icy knife.

*(To be continued)*

1. Fukuoka City: capital of Fukuoka Prefecture in Kyushu, southernmost of Japan's four main islands.
2. Philopon: brand name of a stimulant that was in wide circulation after the war among Japanese. Addiction to it became a serious social problem.
3. Resident registration: Japanese nationals must report their address to the relevant government office in the area they live and notify it of any changes within a set period. The Residents' Basic Register compiled from this information is used in implementing various administrative policies.
4. Motorboat racing: form of legalized gambling in Japan like horse racing.
5. Chugoku region: encompasses the entire western tip of Japan's main island, Honshu, including Hiroshima, Okayama, Shimane, Tottori and Yamaguchi prefectures.

## SIGN POSTS

APPLYING  
NICHIREN  
DAISHONIN'S  
WRITINGS TO  
DAILY LIFE

### Formalism Vs. Faith

By JEFF FARR

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

**The Lotus Sutra...is divided into two categories, the theoretical teaching and the essential teaching. One is as different from the other as fire is from water or heaven from earth. (The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 3, p. 275)**

Nichiren Daishonin devoted great effort to distinguishing between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, provisional Mahayana and the Lotus Sutra, and the theoretical and essential teachings of the Lotus Sutra. He felt he had to make these clear distinctions between what his Buddhism is and is not for the sake of the people's happiness. This is a challenge we still face today.

Over the last seven years, the temple issue, more than anything, has helped me to understand these distinctions. Dr. Jane Hurst recently said at Harvard University that the SGI has benefitted from the temple issue in being able to clarify the Daishonin's Buddhism. (This was at an event sponsored by the Boston Research Center where Dr. Hurst, who has studied the SGI-USA over the years, spoke specifically on the temple issue.) The temple, unlike the SGI, she said, has emphasized formalism over Buddhist faith. Formalism vs. faith — this Buddhism's uniqueness is indeed found in the complete emphasis it places on the spirituality in each person rather than on religious formalities. Faith is the essential.

Realizing that there's no benefit in practicing Buddhism without this core of individual faith, Nichiren Daishonin made strict distinctions between the theoretical and essential, between formalism and faith. SGI President Ikeda in June gave the above Goshō quote to the Kansai student division with the same intent, warning them to never be confused between the theoretical and essential. Thanks to the SGI's religious revolution of the last several years, all of us have had the chance to learn this crucial distinction — what this Buddhism is and what it is not. ❏

### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON FAITH

## What's Wrong With Me?

By TED MORINO

SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT CHIEF

**Q Is there something wrong with me? Why doesn't this practice seem to be working for me?**

**A** We tend to view ourselves as either good or bad, right or wrong. We have a tendency to be judgmental in this regard. But this is not the primary approach Buddhism takes in how we look at ourselves. The Buddhist view, recognizing that we all have both innate good and bad in us, focuses on strengthening our good points and challenging our weaknesses. Buddhism doesn't tell us that we're essentially good people or bad people — it says we can always become better and stronger. In "The Treatment of Illness," the Daishonin states:

The heart of the Hokke sect is the principle of *ichinen sanzen*, which reveals that both good and evil are inherent even in those at the highest stage, that of *myogaku* or enlightenment. The fundamental nature of enlightenment manifests itself as Bon-ten and Taishaku, whereas the fundamental darkness manifests itself as the Devil of

the Sixth Heaven. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 3, p. 279)

In this passage, he teaches that human life has the potential to exhibit either good or bad according to where we are coming from within. In other words, are we coming from Buddhahood or from our fundamental darkness? That's a vital question in Buddhism. Most important is whether we can consistently come from Buddhahood in our practice.

When we feel that there's something wrong with us, that the practice isn't working because of this, it may actually be that we are waiting passively for results — thinking there's something wrong becomes an excuse! Or we are becoming overly impatient. The problem in these cases is our attitude in faith, not that we're bad people.

The overall goal of Buddhism, we should remember, is to achieve an unshakably happy state of life. This is a life strong and enjoyable even in the face of problems and obstacles, a life that seeks profound rather than shallow happiness.

In the beginning, we may assume that practicing means no problems — that if

we have lots of problems there's something wrong with us — but that's not so. Life is a series of problems, whether we practice or not.

Happiness is the confidence and power to solve each one. The power of the Law is such that we can change the source of our problems and, deep within our lives, our weaknesses into strengths. Therefore, in the final analysis, Buddhism is primarily concerned with winning.

Always thinking there's something wrong with us can become a serious hindrance to our practice. Ultimately, it flies against the teaching that each of us is potentially a Buddha.

In "Letter to Gijo-bo," Nichiren Daishonin explains that the phrase "Single-mindedly yearning to see the Buddha" (*isshin yok ken butsu*), which is part of the sutra that we recite during gongyo, means "to see the Buddha in one's own mind, to concentrate one's mind on seeing the Buddha, and that to see one's own mind is to see the Buddha" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], p. 205). There are no good or bad Buddhas — rather, all Buddhas are continually striving to better themselves as Bodhisattvas of the Earth. ❏

### SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA JOINS THE SOKA GAKKAI — AUG. 24

## You Never Know Who

### SIGNIFICANT DATE

By CRYSTAL CUNNINGHAM

SACRAMENTO, CALIF., CORRESPONDENT

Introducing people to Buddhism is such a precious practice. It can be done in many different ways with varying effects.

Aug. 24, 1997, marks the 50th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's introduction to the Soka Gakkai. At that time he was only 19. Before he learned of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, young Ikeda had no knowledge of Buddhism and no notable philosophy in his life. But he was a lover of philosophy and literature. He spent his days reading and discussing literature with his club members.

This club, the Kyoyu-kai, had many dialogues about the main issues of the day: patriotism and how to live in the most meaningful way. Their hearts were pure; they were open-minded. The Kyoyu-kai felt a burning impatience to find an infallible philosophy that would offer solutions to any problem facing any individual.

Ikeda had two schoolmates who were Soka Gakkai members. The two made a

point of visiting all their friends whose homes had not been burned down during the war. One of those friends was Ikeda. While at his house they noticed how interested in philosophy he was, so they invited him to a lecture where Josei Toda would be teaching what they called "a philosophy that clarifies the essence of life." Ikeda agreed to go, even though he felt ill that night because of tuberculosis.

At the lecture, he grew more and more impressed. He noticed how clear and confidently Toda spoke, with conviction, his words easy to understand. Immediately, there was a connection between the two: Ikeda noticed that Toda was paying special attention to him. When they were introduced, Toda asked, "How old are you now?" President Ikeda writes in *The Human Revolution*, vol. 2, that "instead of saying simply 'How old are you?' Toda asked, 'How old are you now?' Although it was their first meeting, he spoke as if he were talking to someone he already knew."

Ikeda began asking Toda questions like "What is the correct way to live?" and "What is a true patriot?" Toda answered him frankly and precisely. By the end of the lecture, Ikeda knew that he

wanted to study Buddhism and asked if he could study under Toda. To show his appreciation, Ikeda also recited an impromptu poem.

I am sure that the two schoolmates who introduced the young Ikeda to the Soka Gakkai didn't know that the friend they were helping to start practice was the future SGI president. This shows me that one never knows what contribution a person can bring to our movement for world peace.

I enjoy explaining Buddhism to my friends — they say: "So, that is what is different about you. I couldn't put my finger on it!" They always seem to have a positive response. I had a friend who would say, "Crystal, when are you going to chant?" He loved to listen to me do gongyo and chant daimoku. I wonder what contribution my friends may one day make.

With President Ikeda's 50th anniversary of practicing Buddhism approaching, I also wonder what my life will be like when I celebrate my 50th anniversary — or my 75th! It is amazing to imagine what types of accomplishments I will have made, especially when thinking of all the benefits and fortune I have accumulated within a span of just 15 years of practice. ❏

# If Even One Person Stands Up

*SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech at a future division meeting on May 5, Soka Gakkai Successors Day, held jointly with the conferral of an honorary doctorate of letters on President Ikeda by Sri Lanka's University of Kelaniya, at the Soka University Auditorium in Hachioji, Tokyo.*

**V**ice Chancellor Costa and Mrs. Costa, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

It is with profound humility that I accept this distinguished honorary doctorate of letters from the University of Kelaniya, a world-famous center for Buddhist studies with a proud tradition of public service.

Sri Lanka is a great benefactor of Japan. Our debt to you can never be forgotten. During World War II, in an act of hideous cruelty, Japan bombed your beautiful country. Yet at the San Francisco Conference [where the Japanese peace treaty was signed] after the war, Sri Lanka [then known as Ceylon], out of its Buddhist spirit of compassion, took the bold step of foregoing its right to seek war reparations.

That was in 1951, the year that my mentor, Josei Toda, became the second Soka Gakkai president. At that same conference, Sri Lanka also staunchly protected Japan by firmly opposing attempts to partition it as Germany had been divided into East and West.

It may be that many Japanese have forgotten these historical facts. But as a young man, I made a solemn pledge that one day I would repay this great debt without fail. With this in mind, I visited Sri Lanka [1961] soon after becoming the third Soka Gakkai president. The boys and girls whom I encountered on that trip, with schoolbooks under their arms, exuded a lively enthusiasm for learning. Seeing their happy, hope-filled faces, my instinct was: This country is channeling its energy into education. A bright, promising future lies ahead of it.

## **The Grand Drama of Succession**

For the Soka Gakkai and the SGI, today is the deeply significant Successors Day.



President Ikeda recently was honored by the University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka, a country where ancient Buddhist temples still stand. (Above) Ruvanvalisaya Dagoba Stupa, the world's third largest stupa, in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. (Right) Eighth-century Buddhist and Hindu temple, a rare example of mixed architecture, also in Anuradhapura.

Speaking of successors, the University of Kelaniya is carrying on the vital spirit of Shakyamuni, the teacher of all humankind. I am struck by this grand drama of succession — the humanistic philosophy of Buddhism has been handed down from one person to the next, from one heart to another, over thousands of years, in an unbroken chain extending across mountains and oceans.

Shakyamuni was a great pioneer of humanistic education who drew forth boundless wisdom, courage and compassion from all people. And yet he was afflicted with hardships, like the so-called nine great ordeals. People heaped abuse on him out of malice and envy; there were numerous attempts on his life by scheming traitors; false accusations were leveled against him and totally ludicrous incidents were fabricated about him. This pattern of persecution is the same in any age.

While bearing the full brunt of the attacks, Shakyamuni continued to go about his activities with no thought of the personal risk. There were many shiftless adults who merely stood by and watched. Their only thought was that no harm come to them. All their attention went to skillful dodging so as not to get involved in any way. Such an attitude betrays a mean, cowardly spirit.

Those base priests and spineless leaders who stood by without lifting a finger to save Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the first Soka Gakkai president — who was persecuted for oppos-

ing Japan's war of aggression in Asia and died in prison — were exactly the same. Far from trying to protect Makiguchi, afraid of implication by association, they bent over backwards to ingratiate themselves with the authorities.

Similarly, there were many who, when they saw Shakyamuni, would turn away, close their doors or shut their windows.

## **One's Heart Matters Most**

In contrast to such adults there was a child, named Tokusho Doji, who with utmost sincerity and reverence, presented Shakyamuni with an offering of a mud-pie. Tokusho Doji is like the future division members today.

"I am incapable of offering anything significant to this great person of truth right now. But I want to show my support!" — such a spirit is truly noble. What matters most is one's heart.

If disciples are soft and dependent, looking ever to their mentor to do them some favor or to protect them from harm, then they will accomplish nothing, however vast their number.

But if even one disciple stands up with the heart of a lion, burning with the determination: "I will protect my mentor without fail!" "I will undergo persecution and struggle alongside my mentor!" then everything will be accomplished. This is the path of mentor and disciple in Buddhism.

When President Makiguchi underwent great persecution,



Mr. Toda stood alone with him. When President Toda underwent great persecution, I stood up and resolutely protected him.

The Buddhist sutras relate that Tokusho Doji accumulated immeasurable good fortune and benefit, as a result of his admirable spirit and devotion to Shakyamuni. And that 100 years later he was reborn as Ashoka, a king whose name shines in the annals of world history.

Without discussing the eternity of life here, it is a fact that King Ashoka encountered Buddhism and resolved to carry on Shakyamuni's spirit. Until then the ideal society that Shakyamuni had envisioned and begun to build had never been fully actualized. Indeed, during his later years, Shakyamuni's tribe, the Shakyas, was massacred at the hands of the king of Kosala.

King Ashoka fought against the devilish nature of power and showed the world actual proof of Buddhism's validity for realizing peace and of Shakyamuni's greatness. As the third ruler of the great Mauryan dynasty, his was an eternal achievement. Several leading scholars with whom I have spoken have cited King Ashoka as a figure they particularly admire.

Based on Buddhist compassion, Ashoka renounced war and

directed government to serve the people, to promote their welfare. Also, he is famous for treasuring diversity and strictly protecting freedom of belief.

In addition, Ashoka dispatched "peace missions" to countries as distant as Egypt and Greece, embarking on wide exchange among the citizens of different lands. Not only people benefited from King Ashoka's compassion — he also established veterinary clinics for animals, and even undertook environmental protection by planting trees over vast regions.

Vice Chancellor Costa is a renowned zoologist. Also, he is working to solve global environmental problems.

King Ashoka ruled for a long time — 37 years, according to one source. To the end of his reign, he burned with unquenchable energy and the commitment to work tirelessly until every last person had become happy. Such was the resolve that drove him.

On a different level, it is now 37 years since I assumed the Soka Gakkai presidency. All the while, I have continued carrying out the demanding responsibility of leading the kosen-rufu movement that even President Toda undertook for only seven years. And after me, it is you, the

PLEASE SEE PERSON, NEXT PAGE

Photos by GLEN ALLISON

PERSON, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

future division members, who must carry on this task. To you, I entrust everything.

What did King Ashoka hope for in his children? That they would carry on the teaching of Buddhism. His son and daughter, responding to their father's expectations, proudly devoted themselves to their mission. To Sri Lanka they traveled.

The prince boldly determined to inherit the words of Shakyamuni and cause Buddhism to flourish in Sri Lanka, whose people he found to be most discerning and intelligent. It is also related that the princess brought a cutting of the bodhi tree under which Shakyamuni is supposed to have attained enlightenment to plant there. I will never forget how I once received a gift of a leaf from that same bodhi tree from the Sri Lankan minister of culture.

**Importance of the Organization**

President Toda always gave us strict guidance: A great life is not one of authority or celebrity. To become a leader in the Soka Gakkai and to work for kosen-rufu is the highest, most enduring honor in life. Getting a Ph.D. or becoming a physician, studying abroad, getting elected to public office — such things alone do not constitute human greatness. Far

more noble and praiseworthy are the lives of those who strive earnestly in the organization for the sake of people's happiness and a peaceful world.

This is what I hope to communicate to you today, my young friends, heirs of the Soka legacy: Live out your lives together with the SGI, an organization fulfilling the Buddha's decree! Our activities in the organization of faith constitute our Buddhist practice, lead to the realization of kosen-rufu and enable us to carry out our human revolution. To selfishly think, "I'll just practice on my own and however I like," cannot be called correct faith. Such people are Buddhist in name only; they are not true practitioners.

You might feel that you don't like organizations, but the human body itself is an organization — a living organism comprised of many component parts working together in harmony. So is a school, a society, the universe. Nothing exists on its own.

Also, both Shakyamuni and Nichiren Daishonin created organizations — communities or networks of Buddhist believers — and encouraged their followers to practice together. The organization of faith is not something that holds you back or restricts you. Rather, it is a springboard that enables you to develop yourself to the utmost, to lead the most dynamic existence. It is the most precious place for carrying out your Buddhist practice.



Photo by GLEN ALLISON

Cave temple entrance in Sri Lanka. King Ashoka's son and daughter traveled to Sri Lanka to spread Buddhism. His daughter took a cutting of the bodhi tree under which Shakyamuni attained enlightenment to plant there.

Please deeply reflect on why President Toda described the Soka Gakkai as "the organization for kosen-rufu more precious than my life."

**Listen With Tolerance**

I also want to say that it is only natural that there be differences of opinion between you and your parents. You are of different generations. Given the gap of a couple of decades or so between you, society and the times have changed greatly since your parents were young. So it's unrealistic to expect that you will see eye to eye on everything.

The smart thing to do is listen tolerantly to what your parents have to say — and for parents to return the same courtesy to their children. President Toda often

said, "There's nothing more foolish than quarrels between parents and children." This might seem like a simple thing, but it is extremely important.

When you go home, I hope you will pay attention to what your parents are saying. Hearing them out is a sign of maturity and wisdom as well as your love and appreciation for them.

**Never Give Up!**

I visited Sri Lanka for a second time in 1964, the year of the Tokyo Olympics.

The 10,000-meter race is a grueling event, entailing 25 laps around a 400-meter track, lasting more than 30 minutes. In the 1964 Olympics, a Sri Lankan athlete qualified for the final, but fell ill a week earlier

and on the day of the race was in terrible condition. About 10 athletes dropped out of the race without finishing, but not the runner from Sri Lanka — even though he was four laps behind the leaders. Eventually a passionate struggle for the lead ensued among the front runners. After they all crossed the finishing line, the only person left running was the Sri Lankan.

At first, spectators jeered and heckled. Unconcerned, he continued running with single-minded intensity. All alone, he ran lap after lap. The audience of 70,000 that packed the stadium, moved by his earnestness and determination, embraced him in a thunderous outpouring of cheers and applause. When this Sri Lankan runner finally crossed the finish, the crowd gave him a tumultuous ovation — as if he had just won the gold medal. This is one of the indelible dramas engraved in Olympic history.

No matter what happens, my young friends, I hope that, like this Sri Lankan youth, you will never give up. Please continue running along the path of your mission to the very end — courageously and cheerfully, with iron endurance and tenacity, always in a manner true to yourself.

In closing, I want to express my heartfelt prayers for the successful endeavors and achievements of the University of Kelaniya and the shining nation of Sri Lanka in the 21st century. WJ

# Let Us Talk About the 21st Century

SGI President Ikeda dedicated the following poem to the future division members in celebration of May 5, Soka Gakkai Successors Day.

*My Young Successors:  
To You, I Entrust the 21st Century!*

*Divine emissaries of the 21st century  
Build a palace in your heart  
Hold aloft your golden flag!*

*My dear young friends  
Be wise!  
Be strong!  
Illuminated by the moon  
Bathed in the light of countless stars  
Always treasure your parents*

*My dearest friends  
Bring the fountain of learning  
Bubbling forth  
Create a lake of magnificent splendor*

*Surrounded by a forest of towering giants  
Bid farewell to a tragic spirit  
Allow your life to shine  
With a spirit of joy and good cheer*

*Live out your youth  
With all of your might!*

*Youth passes by all too soon —  
Therefore  
To create the most beautiful hope  
And memories  
Let us together, you and I  
Unfold our wings  
My gentle young friends  
My strong young friends  
Tonight again  
Let us chat together  
While gazing up at the constellation of Leo  
Let us talk about the 21st century  
Let us talk about the future and life*

*We who possess  
The solemn spirit  
Of faith  
Must never forget  
That we have a profound mission  
Do not be defeated  
And wallow in misery  
I want you my friends  
To have happy, bright eyes  
That sparkle*

*As you declare in final triumph,  
"I have won!"*

*My dearest friends  
Who will grow into the leaders  
Of the 21st century  
My dearest friends  
The successors of Soka  
The disciples who will realize  
The widespread propagation of the Law*

*Charge bravely ahead through all storms of  
obstacles  
Make your way with composure and dignity  
Through pounding waves of difficulty  
Advance high-spiritedly through the dark gloom  
Of scheming and duplicity  
And employing the jeweled sword of faith  
To resolutely cut through the tangled web  
Of waiting traps and pitfalls  
Forge ahead with determination  
My dearest friends  
Courageously take your place  
On the grand stage of the 21st century!*

World Poet Laureate

MY DISTRICT

# My First Victory As a Leader

By CHICO GARZA  
SAN FRANCISCO

I have been in my current district for 14 years, with the same district leader. In the early 1990s, our district went through many changes, including our women's division leader transferring out and our membership list gaining many, many inactive members. The small core of active members had to travel across town to go to district meetings. And the meetings were boring, without any youth. There was no unity.

Due to a lack of vision and goals for our district, my district chief and I had a great challenge ahead of us. One goal we set was to create a happy family environment, where we genuinely cared for one another. We also had to make our meetings less formal, more attractive.

One sad reality was that I was the only active young men's division member and none of my YMD members ever returned my phone calls. I had absolutely no rapport with any of them, and it hurt. This pain forced me to reflect on my position as newly appointed YMD district leader. In 1991, I wrote to SGI President Ikeda. His response instilled in me the passion to create a heart like his, to work hard for my district.

For the next six years my district chief and I worked hard to actualize our vision for our district. After cleaning up our membership list, we gradually visited every single YMD and men's division member.



Photo by MIKE MULLEN

Creating a happy family environment is Chico Garza's goal for his district.

One night at a bar, four years ago, a young man who recognized me from the old Daly City Community Center asked if I was an SGI member. I found out that he had the Gohonzon rolled up, that he used to be a chapter chief and had even been born into this practice. That night I went home and chanted for him to start practicing again. The next day I called him, visited him, and by the end of the week had encouraged him to re-enshrine the Gohonzon and participate in meetings again. I took many senior leaders to encourage him, I read the Goshō together with him, I composed poems for him and home visited him more than 100 times.

About a year later, his mother died of cancer and his sister of AIDS — within three months of each other. It was at this crucial moment that I saw him struggling with doubts about faith. He finally decided to move back with his family, who are all active members, near Los Angeles. This became his turning point — he broke through many internal obstacles. And this was my first victory as a leader in taking care of a member!

My greatest joy was to see him confident, happy and relying on the Gohonzon. President Ikeda recently said, "Limitless benefit and good fortune adorn those who cherish the members above all, who, rather than meeting the famous or powerful,

would happily meet sincere members...." Words cannot express how my life has become healthier and happier through my efforts to chant for members' happiness and to visit them.

Last year, our district began to blossom. We attracted a diverse crowd that genuinely wanted to practice this Buddhism. In 1996 we had three new members receive the Gohonzon and three more have already joined this year. We now have six active youth and a new women's division leader and YWD leader. We have a new members/slow gongyo/study meeting every Tuesday night — and our meetings are no longer boring.

My district has changed so much!

## KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

## Protect the Power

By CRAIG GREEN & JEFF FARR  
LOS ANGELES

When SGI President Ikeda resigned as Soka Gakkai president in April 1979, it was done to quiet discontent within the priesthood. It was not tendered because of any wrongdoing or impropriety.

In July 1979, High Priest Nittatsu, who had worked with President Ikeda to resolve some of the differences between Nichiren Shoshu and the Soka Gakkai, died. Shortly thereafter — to the surprise of many, including priests — Nikken declared that he had been given the "heritage of the law," making him the 67th high priest.

There were priests within Nichiren Shoshu who immediately questioned the legitimacy of Nikken's claims. But to hold off any opposition, Nikken took action. In January 1980, he met with President Ikeda and demanded that Ikeda apologize again — this time to him.

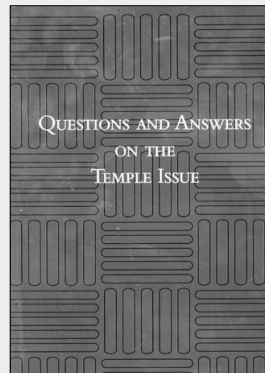
Several months later, a manuscript was presented by the priests with a directive that President Ikeda publish it under his name, with no editorial changes. It was full of more apologies, plus pledges of loyalty to Nikken and Nichiren Shoshu. This article, "My Thoughts on the 23rd Anniversary of My Late Mentor," was published in the April 2, 1980, *Seikyo Shimbun* (see May 1980 *Seikyo Times*).

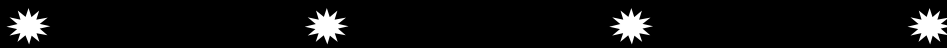
As the new high priest, Nikken wanted to protect his position, to protect his power. That necessitated using President Ikeda and the Soka Gakkai — the forced apologies were all to make Nikken look good.

No. 6 in a series

# Educate Yourself!

A free new pamphlet on the temple issue will soon be available through the organization. Request a copy from your leaders and learn more about this important issue to our faith. In 14 easy-to-read questions and answers, this pamphlet gives you a complete overview of the issue that everyone's talking about. Study it with your friends!





GUIDANCE INTO ACTION

# What a Buddha Deserves

By JEANNIE OLANDER

SGI-USA JR. HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION CHIEF

**While everyone has a sun in his or her heart, all too few are aware it exists. The Lotus Sutra is the scripture that reveals the brilliant sun of Buddhahood inherent in our lives. (SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, *Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*, p. 25)**

Although I originally started chanting as a means to achieve world peace, as I continued to practice I realized that I was a very sad girl. I worked hard to create harmony and goodness in everything around me, but I think I did this as a sort of apology for my existence. As I continued my practice, I became aware that I did not believe in my Buddha nature. This meant that I doubted Buddhism.

I have been working as an associate producer in the TV production business for the last two years. I have advanced quickly in this industry since moving to Los Angeles just four years ago, changing my circumstances from working in the most unbearable aspects of the industry to the most exceptional. For example, from a

crazy boss who would call me at 4:00 a.m. on Sunday morning to get my feedback on some things she had on her mind, to a humanistic boss who would worry about me if I had to work late — and would stay late to help me finish; from minimum wage to six times that; from backstabbing co-workers to true comrades.

Although I made these conspicuous advancements, my underlying belief remained. I didn't perceive my Buddha nature. I could seek it out only when under serious attack or when chanting for others. I oscillated between confidence and self-doubt easily and frequently.

Recently, I was working on a nine-week project — not a lot of time to produce a one-hour TV special. When we were in our fourth week, it turned out the network had a programming problem. Our show had to be completed three weeks early! Insane work hours ensued. And the show received the highest ratings the network has ever had for a prime-time special.

However, after everyone's hard work, we were reminded when we turned in our time cards that we were to be paid a flat rate, that our overtime would jeopardize the budget. I was not

surprised that the 117 hours overtime I had worked in one month would not be paid to me. As I chanted, my mind was drowning in negative thoughts: Do I really deserve to be paid or were those hours the extra time it took me because I was inefficient? Why should I be paid for my inefficiency?

Oddly, during this faith-mustering campaign, an executive from the same company called to ask if I would work on two new projects. I procrastinated and chanted and read President Ikeda's *Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*. "The brilliant sun of Buddhahood inherent in our lives" — through the lectures I realized the recitation of the sutra is all about awakening to one's Buddha nature. I suddenly understood that because I was unable to perceive my Buddha nature, my environment was also unable to perceive it.

The day after this epiphany I bumped into the executive at the office. "I feel that on the last show I was backed into a bad deal and unfairly compensated," I told him.

"Please don't say anything more," he said. "Jeannie, I think you are a very good per-



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Jeannie Olander is an associate producer for TV programs.

son and a tremendous asset to this company. Whatever you think we owe you, just write it down on an invoice and I'll pay it. Also, I want to know what we can offer you. If you want to be a director, a producer, an art director — I want to give

you the opportunity."

I almost fainted. I was fully compensated for my overtime. But more than that this experience helped me understand my human revolution and President Ikeda's unwavering dedication to enlighten humanity. ❧

By KEN SARAGOSA

PHILA. HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION CHIEF

What prompts a 19-year-old to begin to practice a new religion, especially in a climate where all faith is seen as blind, where having firm belief suggests fanaticism? What kind of person embraces philosophy in an age of great cynicism?

On Aug. 14, 1945, Emperor Hirohito addressed the Japanese people, announcing Japan's surrender to the Allied forces. In the difficult postwar days, Daisaku Ikeda would find many reasons to grieve as his family continued to suffer and as his nation found itself conquered and spiritually adrift.

During the next two years, Ikeda tried to find the means to pursue his personal studies, enrolling in one of the many night schools that had sprung up. He

describes the school as little more than a shell of a building with virtually no facilities: "Not a desk or chair was in perfect shape; every one was either partly broken or gouged somewhere.... Students, including of course myself, tried nevertheless to make up for what they'd lost during the war..."

Though the material circumstances of the time were certainly difficult, Ikeda describes the confusion of the day in primarily spiritual terms. For him, it was the confusion — indeed, crisis — in values that was the most important issue to face. Concerning this time, Ikeda writes, "The desolation

## YOUNG DAISAKU (5)

# Age of Great Cynicism

and discouragement of the immediate postwar era had robbed people even of the ability to think."

The American Occupation of Japan had engineered a sudden transformation of the Japanese government and education into one modeled on the United States. This rapid change caused some to cling to traditional values, while others rushed to embrace new systems.

But common to everyone was a deep-rooted cynicism born from the utter bankruptcy of the spiritual principles that had fortified the nation during the war. For youth, even the appeal of nice-sounding ideas like democracy, peace and cul-

ture must have been dampened by the remembrance of the beautiful-sounding ideas that had led many of their friends to their deaths, that had deprived them all of their youth. The war's worst violence was perhaps the spiritual desolation of an entire generation. In this climate, some youth turned to gangs and violence, others to religion to fill the vacuum in their hearts.

In August of 1947, a month that was to change his life, Ikeda held a meaningful discussion with a friend who had decided to become a Christian and urged Ikeda, too, to seek religion. Daisaku's own experiences with the manipulation

of the Shinto faith in the service of the state made him doubt any religion, however. Nonetheless, he felt deeply that there was some deep meaning to life, a purpose that he had glimpsed in his reading but was unable to find clearly articulated. He resigned himself to the likelihood that there was no person, no system of philosophy, that could satisfy his feelings, believing himself destined to a life of spiritual solitude.

This cynicism, this great spiritual desolation — how many young people have experienced just such despair as they have contemplated the meaning of life?

On Aug. 14, 1947, almost exactly two years after Japan's defeat, Ikeda attended his first discussion meeting of the Soka Gakkai. ❧

# Symbolic Sailing

By TERRY ELLIS  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The USS *Constitution* has been called a national symbol. She was one of the first six ships commissioned by George Washington in 1794. "Old Ironsides" went undefeated in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 and supported Marines when they went "to the shores of Tripoli."

But the crew, both past and present, represent something even more essentially American. "Many people don't know it, but from the beginning it was a diverse crew," said USS *Constitution* Captain of the Deck Joseph Wilson, who is of African heritage. "There were African Americans — not slaves — sailors, able-bodied seamen.... The major difference now is that the sailors are both male and female."

Wilson has tremendous admiration for the original crew. "Those were iron men on a wooden ship," he said. "They had Einstein's intellect. We had a tugboat tow us out of the harbor. Those guys sailed right from the pier!"

Wilson's admiration comes from firsthand experience in sailing a ship that originally called for a crew of 450. Since the *Constitution* sailed with only six of its 36 sails — for the first time in 116 years — on July 21, the crew was reduced to around 140 enlisted Navy personnel, civilians, reservists and one Coast Guard representative.

But that doesn't mean it was an easy job. They climbed up rigging so high that it turned grown people into "kids learning to walk again," Wilson said. They hoisted a 1,020-pound main topsail that's about the size of a regulation basketball court and five other smaller sails that totaled 2,330 pounds.

"It takes a lot of teamwork and physical strength to get those sails up," said Chief Wilson, who was assigned to the USS *Constitution* three years ago as a sailing rookie. The crew's mission began with sailing theory in a classroom and progressed to the *Eagle*, a Coast Guard sailing vessel used to train cadets. The final, most important step, said Wilson, was sailing the HMS *Bounty*, a replica of the original ship of *Mutiny on the Bounty* fame. "That's when I said, 'I can do this,'" he said. Even so, that ship's largest sail is smaller than the smallest one on the USS *Constitution*.

Wilson was greatly touched by the outpouring of emotion that surrounded the USS *Constitution*'s sailing, which some 100,000 people on land and sea witnessed. He called it "a very special and spiritual experience."

"It brought America together again. I was looking at the crowd as we drew in the lines," he said. "They were all smiling, some were fighting back tears. All skin colors, ethnic backgrounds and genders were out the door. It was all about America — pulling together for one common cause." ■



KRT/JOHN E. GAY

Sailors on board the destroyer USS 'Ramage' man the rails while escorting the USS 'Constitution,' the world's oldest commissioned warship, under way in Massachusetts Bay, Mass., July 21. 'Old Ironsides' is also escorted by the frigate USS 'Halyburton' while the Navy's Blue Angels Flight Demonstration Squadron passes overhead. Commissioned on Oct. 21, 1797, the USS 'Constitution' set sail, unassisted, for the first time in 116 years. The sailing ship will celebrate its 200th birthday on Oct. 21 of this year, after completing a 40-month overhaul.



## D.C. Boys and Girls Meeting Brings Families Together

By JENNIFER MABERRY, 11  
(assisted by Juanita Maberry)  
Washington, D.C.

The Washington, D.C., Joint Territory Boys and Girls Group held its first general meeting on June 8. It was a beautiful day at the community center, so lots of children and adults from all over the joint territory came.

The first thing we did was eat outside. Each area did a different country, so we had international food. The cities and states represented were Baltimore, Delaware, Maryland/District of Columbia, Northern Virginia, Richmond and Virginia.

Then we went inside

for gongyo. Boys and girls members did the major parts of the meeting. We did master of ceremonies and led gongyo.

After gongyo Jerry Hicks, one of the joint territory leaders, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Then we had experiences. We had five great experiences. After that, they announced the people who were graduating into the youth division — there were about 18.

Then we had performances. We had singing, international dancing, a piano performance, and we even had a karate demonstration.

Wendy Clark, SGI-USA women's division chief, was there. She said that,

judging from the meeting, the 21st century is well taken care of in Washington, D.C., Joint Territory. She passed on SGI President Ikeda's guidance to the boys and girls. He encourages boys and girls to wake up in the morning and go to school, to chant daimoku before school, to have good friends at school, to read books as much as we watch television, and to read the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*.

After that, we went outside for a commemorative photo and to break the Northern Virginia piñata.

It broke after only four people tried. Delonte Mitchell broke it, and we all fell to the ground to get the candy.

The piñata was made by the Northern Virginia boys and girls. It was shaped like a rocket.

We had such a great time, I hope we can do this every year. ☐



## Michigan Kids Have a Hands-on Day

By EMILY BROOKS, 10

Ypsilanti, Mich.

I went with the Boy and Girls Group to the Hands On Museum in Ann Arbor, Mich. What a great success! There were 26 kids and 20 adults.

We met in a group outside and took a picture in front of the building. The Hands On Museum is an old four-story fire house. Each floor has different, exciting science exhibits that are hands on.

Usually it's really busy but we had it all to ourselves. We got to go anywhere we wanted and did not wait in line for the exhibits.

The first floor was all about the body. The second floor was shapes and sizes. The third floor was dark with optical illusions. And the fourth floor had play space, computers, and more exhibits.

I noticed that most kids liked the big bubble tube on the second floor. I think that everyone really enjoyed the visit and I'd recommend all boys and girls and families to go there! ☐



☐ One young man tries his hand at virtual reality.



(Above) D.C. kids perform during the indoor portion of the day's events.  
(Below) Boys and girls enjoy a day of picnics and play with their families.



## Friend to Friend

Our study topic for August is the three basics of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism: faith, practice and study. Please send us your thoughts (up to 50 words) with a photo of yourself. Send it to "Friends for Peace" by Aug. 25.

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

## Jack Stewart, 5

Williamsport, Pa.

All the kids and teachers at the school I used to go to would talk about God and say grace. I told my mom and so now I will go to a new school where there are kids that are from all religions, and I won't have to say grace anymore!

Last week my mom took me to visit her friend in Maryland, and she has two children named Ryan and Tara, and everybody chants, even their dad! I was so happy to play with Buddhist children. Since we came home I chant with my mom now.

I wanted to go to Disney World and Florida, so my mom said the only way we could go was if I chanted to the Gohonzon. For my fifth birthday we got to go! I also chanted for a kitten, because my mom is allergic to cats, and she got me one anyway!

When I grow up I am going to work in a zoo and be an astronaut.



FP

## Jennifer Numagami

Pottstown, Pa.

I was born into this Buddhist practice. I am happy to share this experience. In February, I participated in my school science fair. My school is North Coventry. I am in the fifth grade. I had never done a science fair project, but I like challenges so I signed up for it last November. I put a lot of effort into it. I'll tell you about some of the struggles I dealt with.

First of all, I had to choose what question I should answer for my project. I spent a lot of time thinking of one with my mom. My idea became too complicated for me, though. My dad didn't think we had a good idea; it had too many factors, and he insisted I do his idea. My mom was about to give up, saying it would be too hard to do this project. I knew I couldn't waste any more time. So I did Dad's idea: When boiling various amounts of water (1 cup, 2 cups and 3 cups) using two different pots, how does that effect the amount of time required to reach the boiling point?

I had a lot of fun doing the experiments with my dad. However, it got tough when I had to find a way to display my information.

This was when I realized I needed to chant about it if I wanted my science fair project to be any good. After chanting, finally I decided that I should display the information using my handwriting instead of just typing it on the computer and pasting it on the board. This meant that every time I worked on it I chanted to not make a big boo-boo.

It took a long time, but it was very challenging and exciting. I pulled through feeling glad and relieved. Then I brought it to school. After school I chanted sincerely so that the judges could see the effort I put into it. Obviously they did, because I won first place in chemistry.

This was not the end. I decided to go to the next level of judging. When I was judged I received a bit over 90 percent (an A). I didn't win a ribbon, but this much is true: I did my best, and I will return next year with another project and do my best.



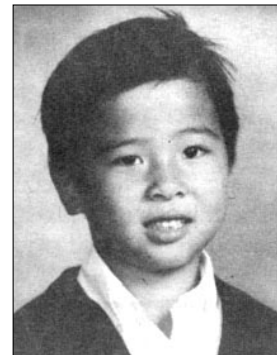
FP

## Ivan Cheung, 7

Hacienda Heights, Calif.

I play the piano every day. Last year I went to a piano contest and it was my first time in a contest. I started to chant Nam-myohorenge-kyo and hoped I could get a trophy and finally I won.

I believe chanting works, so I chant with my mom and I am going to learn gongyo. I wish that every-



one will chant Nam-myohorenge-kyo.

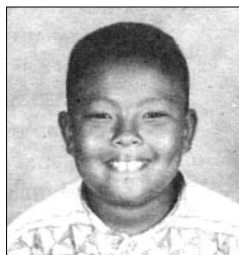
FP

## George Williams Jr., 10

Okinawa, Japan

I met one lady who works at a jewelers. I didn't know why, but I really wanted her to become friends with my mom. And I told my mom my thought. Then they introduced themselves to each other and became good friends. My mom and I started to chant for her happiness. Five months later, on the 25th of May, she received the Gohonzon.

And she told me, "Thank you!" Somehow I was so glad.



FP

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

**RESPECT · FRIENDSHIP · RESPECT — FRIEND TO FRIEND — RESPECT · FRIENDSHIP · RESPECT**

(From the Dec. 6, 1996, World Tribune, pp. 5-6, 10)

## Some Questions About



## And Some Answers From SGI President Ikeda

*President Ikeda wrote in a poem:*

“A true friend is like another self.  
Life without friendship  
is like the world without its sun....”

in the future. Concentrate your energies now on becoming fine people.

I'm also sure that in the future some of you will have friends all over the world.

### What does it mean to be a friend?

It's important to understand that friendship depends on you, not on the other person. It all comes down to your attitude and contribution. I hope you will not be fair-weather

friends, only helping others when circumstances are good and leaving them high and dry when some problem occurs; instead, please become the kind of people who stick by their friends with unchanging loyalty through thick and thin.

### What should we do when we feel hurt or ignored?

If you feel hurt or betrayed by someone, isn't it better to make a new friend, rather than stop trusting people altogether?... No matter how other people are or what they do, it is important that you walk your own path, believing in yourselves.

If you remain constant and stay true to yourselves, others will definitely come to understand your sincere intent one day.

More important, all of you have the power of daimoku behind you. I have heard many experiences in which people have recounted that they were victims of bullying, but after chanting sincere daimoku, they suddenly found one day that the bullying had ceased.

By chanting about your problems, you will find yourselves quite naturally overcoming all hardships and sufferings, almost without your even being aware of it. When you look back later, you will clearly appreciate this fact.

It is also important that you chant for your friends. This is a sign of true friendship. ☐

### What is a friend?

Friendship is the most beautiful, most powerful and most valuable treasure in life. It is your true wealth. No matter how much status people may gain or how rich they may become, a life without friends is indeed sad and lonely. It also leads to an unbalanced, self-centered existence.

You can't choose your parents, but since you can choose your friends, it's an important choice to think about.

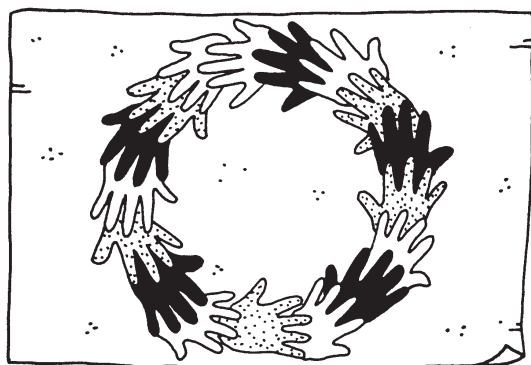
Ultimately, the only way to make good friends is for you to become good friends yourselves. Good people gather around other good people.

### Who should we make friends with?

Sometimes your friends can have a stronger influence over you than your parents or anyone else. So if you make good friends — friends who are interested in improving and developing themselves — you will move in a positive direction as well.

### What if I don't have any good friends?

If some of you feel that you don't have any close friends right now, please don't worry. Just tell yourselves that you don't have any now so that you can have wonderful friends



### Friendship Wreath

Each person traces his or her hand on a sheet of brightly colored construction paper, and then cuts it out. Arrange the hands in a circle (as shown here) to form the friendship wreath. Glue together, mount on cardboard and hang.

## YOU CAN MAKE A FRIENDSHIP BASKET

This is a project you can make to give to a friend. You'll need these supplies:

- **Plastic pint basket** (the kind cherry tomatoes and berries come in)
- **Pretty tissue paper** (to line the basket)
- **Ribbon** (to weave through the basket and tie in a bow in front)
- **Items to fill the basket** (listed below)
- **A small card** with the following printed on it:

- RUBBER BAND:** To remind you to hug others.  
**TISSUE:** To dry someone's tears (or perhaps your own).  
**BUTTON:** To remember to "button your lips" to keep from saying mean things.  
**TOOTHPICK:** To pick out the good qualities of others and yourself.  
**BAND-AID:** To help heal hurt feelings, yours or someone else's.  
**CANDY KISS:** Everyone needs a treat occasionally.  
**GOLD THREAD:** Friendship is the golden thread that ties together everyone's hearts.  
**ERASER:** Everyone makes mistakes sometimes.  
**LIFESAVER CANDY:** Think of the Gohonzon as your "lifesaver." Whenever you need to talk or solve a problem, you can turn to the Gohonzon.  
**MINT:** You are worth a "mint" to me! No one can do it alone.

## It's Summer in Delaware



Delaware boys and girls take a dip during their July meeting.

## Tenaflly Tree Planting



In May, the Englewood Chapter Boys and Girls Group planted a white pine in Sunnyside Park, Tenaflly, N.J. (Back row, from left) Mari Zigas, Gina Cody, Adria Baratta, Christian, Mitsu and Ryan Cody. (Front row) Caroline, Justin Endo, Cliff Baratta, Kenji Endo, Alon, Willi Matthau and Michael.

## Chelsea Andrews, 9

San Diego

When I was 4 years old my natural mother died while we were living in Okinawa, Japan. Before her death we talked about a lot of things together. We even talked about someday getting a baby sister for me to play with. After her death, I felt sad and mad: Sad she was gone and mad because I could not have a little sister.

My mom's death caused me a lot of anger. My dad always told me that everything happens for a reason, and I had to stop being sad or mad because she was gone, but happy with my being alive and having a dad. But I still did not understand.

Four years went by and then my dad started dating my new mom, Eiko, and guess what? She has a daughter! Yes — not a little daughter, but that's OK. I can live with an older sister (sometimes). Eiko and Yuki taught me their religion, Nichiren Dai-shonin's Buddhism. I have learned to chant and know the meaning of cause and effect. I thought my mom's death had a bad effect on my life. Now I believe it had a good effect on my life.

Since I have started chanting, my grades have improved. I'm in the running for the Student of the Year. Because of my chanting, I'm a better person. My dad and mom think I



should chant 24-7 (24 hours a day, seven days a week).

I have made a determination to the Gohonzon to do my math work right and get 100 in math tests. For the rest of my life I will chant for these determinations: not to lie to my parents, not to steal, not to kill. And the things I will do are: be good, go to college, get good grades, read, write neat and do math for extra work. I will chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo and believe it will help me on my way through life.

After I chanted for my determinations, the second semester I had super grades. My mom and dad were impressed. I'm really enjoying the Boys and Girls Group.

FP

## Poem

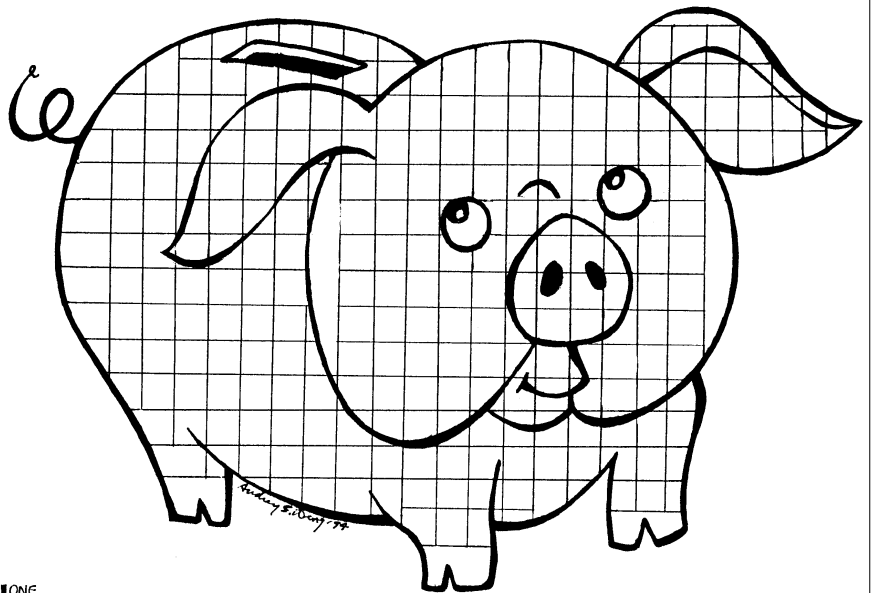
### Here Comes Spring

By TABITHA REYES, II  
Louisville, Ky.

Plant a flower  
Watch it grow  
Here comes spring  
You will know

Little petal on a stick  
It's so pretty, you don't want to pick

Here comes winter  
Snow, snow, snow!  
Bye-bye flower  
There it goes....



ONE MILLION DAIMOKU CHART EACH BOX = 1 HR.