

World Tribune

No. 3153

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

AUGUST 22, 1997

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Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA 90401
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525 Wilshire Blvd.
Santa Monica, CA 90401-1467

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Nepalese citizens inspect a new ambulance, donated by the Soka Gakkai Youth Peace Conference.

Soka Gakkai Youth Donate Ambulance in Nepal

Soka Gakkai's Youth Peace Conference raised funds, consulted United Nations to determine most effective aid.

COURTESY OF SGI OFFICE OF PEACE AFFAIRS
Tokyo, July 25

Responding to a critical need at National Mechi Zonal Hospital in the eastern Nepalese district of Jhapa, a youth contingent from the Soka Gakkai in Japan donated a fully equipped ambu-

lance today.

The Japanese delegation, comprising members of the Soka Gakkai Youth Peace Conference, was dispatched on July 23 to participate in the event and survey conditions at area hospitals.

Proceeds to purchase the new vehicle were raised through a YPC fund-raiser, which has been held annually since 1973. Until the YPC donation, the hospital could not provide emergency ambulance services.

Among those attending the ceremony were Nepalese Health

Minister Krishna Mainali, head of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Jhapa sub-office Peter Jonsen, and acting medical superintendent of the hospital Dr. Ganga Prasad Goit.

The YPC made the presentation to "create better living conditions for all," said delegation chief Hiroki Nagano, alluding to the fact that both local citizens and refugees make use of the medical facilities.

The donation resulted from consultations between the YPC

PLEASE SEE AMBULANCE, 4

Teen Leaders Create New Visions for Their Future

By PAUL CHU

TEEN CORRESPONDENT

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., Aug. 1-4

Four short days and three long nights at the Florida Nature and Culture Center, and the lives of almost 160 youths changed forever. They re-evaluated themselves. They took a different outlook on their future and a different attitude toward the world. And they began to create a new vision of the SGI.

"Those of us who have the opportunity to be here, have the opportunity to change the world, so that when we are parents, our teenagers won't have to face the same challenges," said Emi Gwin of San Diego, who noted that teenagers today face the "toughest times in history."

The 2nd Junior High and High School Divisions Leaders Conference held this weekend brought together a group of young people from across the country who are living these times while practicing Buddhism. They feel the same pressures as many other teenagers in society do and struggle through the same obstacles of life.

One of the conference's main themes was "Creating a Vision" of the SGI organization that will reflect their dreams and the needs of the future. During one open mike session, volunteers spontaneously shared their vi-

PLEASE SEE FUTURE, 6

U.S. Peace Organization Commends SGI President

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER

In honor of the 40th anniversary of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons, the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation in Santa Barbara, Calif., has stated its intent to prepare a commemorative statement recognizing SGI President Ikeda's achievements and pioneering endeavors to create lasting peace.

Foundation president David Krieger informed Mr. Ikeda by letter, saying that he would per-

sonally present the statement to the SGI leader this September. Dr. Krieger noted that now, 40 years after Mr. Toda's bold initiative, many citizen organizations throughout the world are working hard to realize this essential goal of a world free of nuclear arms.

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation was established in 1982. Working together with such noted peace scholars and human rights activists as Dr. Johan Galtung, Dr. Ved Prakash Nanda and the late Dr. Linus

Pauling, it has formed alliances with groups focused on achieving peace across the globe and taken the lead in promoting antinuclear and pro-peace movements in the United States.

In 1957, President Toda made his landmark declaration denouncing nuclear weapons and calling for an unconditional ban on their use and manufacture. Carrying on that vision as his disciple and successor, Mr. Ikeda has visited the United States, the former Soviet Union and China during the height of the Cold War

and has continued to hold frank dialogues with national leaders, scholars and cultural figures around the globe. He has thus built friendships and established trust in an effort to create a world without war. The SGI held the "Nuclear Arms: Threat to Our World" exhibition in 26 cities in 17 countries toward raising awareness of nuclear issues. President Ikeda also founded the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research in February 1996, whose top priority is nuclear disarmament. ■

VOICES

Why is it important to continually study — and participate in dialogue — about the priesthood issue?

Members of Boston Joint Territory respond:

During 1990 to 1994 I was up on the priesthood issue, but as time passed my seeking spirit faded. The first step in my human revolution is realizing how crucial it is for me to understand not only the history but the essence of the issue. It is my responsibility to continually study for my education as well as to be able to dialogue with all members, active and inactive. More than anything I need to continually believe in my heart that I have the ability to stand up for the Law and not leave it up to someone else to defend my beliefs.

— JOEL CAROL BOWEN, Everett, Mass.



As a leader, as a disciple, I should educate myself about the priesthood issue, especially since there is no temple in New England. I believe that Nikken is the embodiment of the devilish function. Not to try to understand, or to be passive, and not fight against evil, is definitely not the attitude of a disciple. From the standpoint of dialogue, I feel I should bring up this subject, find out what issues people have, understand their questions and enable them to deepen their understanding. In our headquarters, we are beginning to work on this.

— LIZA SCHAEFFER, Wellesley, Mass.



Studying and participating in dialogue about the priesthood issue helps me become more confident about practicing correctly. The devilish function is always present: In Shakyamuni's time, in Nichiren Daishonin's time, in the lifetime of [first Soka Gakkai president] Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. For the sake of future generations, it is important to continue the fight today.... From repudiating ideas propounded by the priesthood, I have learned that this is a struggle within my life as well, an uncompromising battle within and without. A Goshu passage reads, "To seek enlightenment without repudiating slander is as futile as trying to find water in the midst of fire or fire in the midst of water" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 165)

— MEENAKSHI GUPTA, Marlborough, Mass.

It is a challenge for me even to think about the priesthood issue. It is a subject I have been avoiding for the past two years. A few days ago, however, I read how active the temple movement has become, and I am determined to study the subject to have a better understanding of it and not be swayed by it. I believe that in studying and engaging in dialogue, I can support SGI President Ikeda and his passion for world peace.

— ZENILDA BASTONE, Boston



Before the split with the priesthood, I was uncertain which aspects of the practice were ritual, which were mere formality, which were Eastern customs and which were the Daishonin's Buddhism. Reading the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism* and studying other materials has helped clarify for me the essential elements of the

practice. Also, previously much of my understanding of the Goshu was superficial, especially in light of the three powerful enemies. Now my understanding is much deeper and has real meaning for my life.

— MARSHA WESTROPP, Framingham, Mass.

Students Need Our Support

EDITORIAL

When SGI President Ikeda meets with students, he often urges them to make study their top priority. For students, he has said, faith manifests itself in their studies. After all, in the long course of life, the time one can devote to intensive studies as a high school or college student is relatively short. And yet it is a decisive time; what students can get out of school deeply influences the direction their lives will take and what they will contribute in the future. With this in mind, one of the missions of the newly formed SGI-USA student division is "contributive life," to "challenge ourselves through academics and faith toward positively contributing to society in the 21st century."

It seems, though, that it's getting harder than ever to be a student in the United States — especially a college student. Because of high tuition, many college students must work while they're going to school.

In addition to working and taking classes, many are also participating, as best they can, in SGI-USA activities. That's a tall order, and the truth is that sometimes it's almost impossible to fill. People have different ways of dealing with the challenge of time management as students: Some cut back on activities or become temporarily "inactive"; a few stay in school longer than they otherwise would so they can fulfill organizational responsibilities. Every student needs to make wise choices.

With a growing number of students in our organization, and with the fall semester coming on, perhaps it's an appropriate time to reflect on how the SGI-USA can best support students. How can our organization help students make studies their top priority, but also give them faith encouragement? How can we establish relationships with these members, whom we might rarely see at activities because of their busy schedules?

One way is through regular communication. A phone call here, an e-mail there, or a calendar in the mail once a month can help students feel connected to the organization. And they want to feel connected. Some students say they are sorry they can't be as active as they were before; some are dismayed when they're unable to attend a discussion meeting for a few weeks and then feel they're "written off"

by their leaders (the phone calls suddenly stop). But if the communication keeps coming, if students feel they're still in the loop, they'll be encouraged to persevere in faith and their studies.

Another way we can support students is by respecting their decisions. Many times students have to decide between doing an activity or studying. Honoring their choice may sometimes be hard. When we really want a student to attend a meeting, and she decides not to, we might start thinking of ways to persuade her to change her mind. "You can study in the car on the way," we might say, offering her a ride to the meeting. But our good intentions might inadvertently cause pressure and resentment.

On the other hand, we may worry about students who are very active in the organization, when we feel they should be studying more. But many students find that what they learn in the SGI gives greater meaning to their studies and translates into greater productivity with their schoolwork. (Of course, if we feel a student is using activities to run away from schoolwork — going to meetings every night during finals week, for instance — we'd do well to express our concern.)

Respecting students' decisions also means to understand that their schedules are sometimes subject to sudden change. Students often don't know ahead of time how much homework they'll have on a given weekend, how long it will take them to finish an assignment, when they'll be able to meet with classmates to work on a group project, etc.

Helping students make their studies priority No. 1 makes us all winners. We can take pride in their victories at school as would their families. And the students will come to more deeply respect the SGI-USA for its support — not pressure — during this crucial time, learning the principle that faith manifests itself in daily life. The SGI-USA has a lot to offer students in this respect.

But ultimately it's up to the students to take responsibility. We can point them in that direction, but whether they can become "humanistic leaders [who] will emerge like a glittering galaxy of stars," as President Ikeda has said he hopes they will, in the end depends on them.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: Why did you exchange your Nikken-transcribed Gohonzon?

Please limit your response to 50 words or less. All responses are subject to editing. Send your response and a face photo to: "Question of the Month," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, Calif., 90401, or e-mail us at: SokaNews@aol.com. **Deadline: Aug. 25**

World Tribune

(ISSN-0049-8165)

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

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

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

Printed on 100% recycled paper

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**WORLD TRIBUNE
MAILBOX**

Just a Thought

Youth Peace Conference Steering Committee member David Bogoslaw is quoted in the *World Tribune* (July 18, "Stop! In the Name of Peace") as saying, "In the past, some of us may have gotten the wrong idea, deciding Buddhism was about creating a safe little world to hide in." An interesting remark. Could be that whatever SGI activity, though it may fall short of someone's expectations, is a priceless opportunity for someone else's personal growth. Could be that someone's "safe little world to hide in" is someone else's "garden of humanity." Just a thought.

— JOE A. KOSTECKE, Los Angeles

My Way of Sending a Message

Since the SGI began conferring the Nichikan-transcribed Gohonzon, I've wanted to share my experience in the *World Tribune*. For me, to embrace this Gohonzon is a great source of pride, since Nichikan himself had such keen insight and compassion. It is my heartfelt feeling that only the SGI is bringing to the world the true spirit of the Daishonin's Buddhism, as did Nichikan.

When I exchanged the Nikken-transcribed Gohonzon for the Nichikan Gohonzon, I felt a new and fresh departure to my practice and a feeling as if once again I was connected to the Daishonin's spirit. Nikken has trampled on the Daishonin's spirit, and turning in the Nikken Gohonzon was my way of sending a message to Nikken: You're not welcome in my house.

— BILL MANHEIM, Los Angeles

No Censorship

In the Aug. 1 "Mailbox," I read a letter that has me very disturbed. It started with the Rebel Flag debate [in the June and July issues of *Living Buddhism*] and continues with this "Mailbox" column.

In several letters, members commented on articles that don't agree with their point of view, which is OK. However, they stated they want the *World Tribune* [or *Living Buddhism*] censored to fit their opinions.

Much blood has been shed over the last 200-plus years to assure all of us freedom of speech and religion. Without that sacrifice on our behalf, the United States and Japan would not have the SGI or all the great benefits we have gotten from the SGI bringing us the Gohonzon....

To me, it seems these members are not listening to SGI President Ikeda. Dialogue is the way to peace. That means you have to LISTEN to the other side. Our practice brings us great fortune and benefit, but it won't bring us peace if we refuse to listen with respect to other people.

War is not spontaneous combustion that occurs due to the presence of guns and/or soldiers. It comes from anger, greed, wounded pride and misunderstanding. The causes of war can be short-circuited by dialogue. LISTEN and talk to others with respect so you can work out the rough spots together.

Bottomline — no censorship of the *World Tribune*.

— PAT CALHOUN, Sherman, N.Y.

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

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

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

When Africa Comes Into Its Own

PERSPECTIVE

By FLETCHER DALTON
BOSTON

For years, SGI President Ikeda has been saying that the continent of Africa will come into its own in the 21st century. This is very encouraging, but until recently I was unaware of any corroborating opinion that I could trust. The media, both electronic and print, generally presents a grim picture of Africa, concentrating on civil conflict, famine and disease.

The first significant verification of President Ikeda's prediction for me was a talk given in Boston in June by new U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who had just returned from a meeting of African heads of state in Zimbabwe. Democracy is definitely going to come about, he predicted, due to the desire and determination of a new generation of leaders to see Africa realize its full potential.

Shortly after Mr. Annan's visit, President Clinton, according to *The New York Times*, "joined with bipartisan members of Congress to promote a series of trade measures with Africa intended to encourage free-market reforms of the continent's most promising economies."

Also, according to the *Times*,

some 30 African countries have shown positive growth rates in the last year, some as high as 12 percent. The administration also pointed out that a majority of Africa's 48 countries have begun economic and political reform over the last 10 years.

The second encouraging event is the advance of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in Africa.

Recently, Boston Joint Territory's Sunrise District in New Hampshire began a correspondence with Groupe Espoir (Hope Group) in Korhogo, northern Ivory Coast. Together, they have created a newsletter, "Kosen-rufu Journal," in which they share hopes, dreams and recent achievements.

In one issue of the "Kosen-rufu Journal," Hope Group Chief Kpan Denis writes: "I was chanting to be able to obtain a microcomputer. After three years of practice, I was able to secure a loan from my bank, which permitted me to buy a computer. I have started a small business with a friend in which we prepare documents for people on the computer. We also offer lessons to people who want to learn about computers."

"As for the latest news from Korhogo," he continues, "Dan Kpan has passed his baccalaureate exam, and Gnakade Joachim has received the great benefit of being appointed a

chief judge (president of the court) in the Town of Touba."

The chief judge himself writes: "As a young and growing group, we attach a great deal of importance to this kind of unprecedented exchange, which can serve to fortify our faith in the Gohonzon. We take your gesture of friendship as an immense benefit.... I hope this bridge between our two communities united in faith can perpetuate itself for all time."

From a radio announcer: "I am still in Korhogo at the radio station 'The Voice of the North.' Soon, we will have the authorization from the Ivorian government to operate. I have been chanting for this for two years."

The "Kosen-rufu Journal" contains statements from high school students, housewives, office workers and gardeners, among others.

Of course, there have been SGI members in Africa for a long time, but the "Kosen-rufu Journal" represents the first opportunity I have had to read stories of the daily struggles and victories of African members.

Altogether, the statements of Mr. Annan, Mr. Clinton and the members of Hope Group seem to me a profusion of buds that will blossom and become a glorious flower garden in the 21st century, which President Ikeda long ago declared to be the Century of Africa. WTT

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Corrections:

- What war did we say? For those of you wondering if we got the wrong year for the commissioning of the USS *Constitution* in our Aug. 1 issue: No, we didn't. But we mentioned the wrong war. "Old Ironsides" was commissioned in 1794, almost 20 years after the Revolutionary War.
- Some readers may have noted different numbers quoted by news sources on the number of crew aboard the USS *Constitution* when it sailed July 21. The *World Tribune* reported about 140, which according to the ship's executive officer, Lt. Cmdr. Claire Bloom, reflects the numbers of people it took to actually sail the vessel. Higher crew numbers reported in other sources include former commanders, dignitaries and others not directly involved with the work of sailing.
- The photograph of female boxer Dallas Malloy in our Aug. 8 issue was taken by David Vernon of Ardmore, Okla. A credit line for the photo was inadvertently omitted.
- In our Aug. 15 article on former Supreme Court Justice William Brennan, we give two different dates of death. The date in the caption, July 24, is correct.

Tolerance Brings Peace, Says European Academy President

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER
Tokyo, July 11

The earth's fate rests on our efforts to promote dialogue, said the president of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts in an address at Soka University today. Dr. Felix Unger afterward met with SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall.

In his address, titled "Tolerance — A Basis for Intercultural Dialogue," Dr. Unger stated that the ability to understand and appreciate the differences of others is conceived through dialogue. When put into action, tolerance enables us to lay the groundwork for peace, he asserted.

Dr. Unger went on to stress the importance of interfaith dialogue toward establishing mutual understanding among the various religions and cultures, and using it as the foundation for building a new, global culture. In conclusion, he held that respect for life and the development and protection of humanity are fundamental in creating harmonious coexistence — that only when we take action based upon universal values can we solve global problems.

The European academy, located in Salzburg, Austria, named Mr. Ikeda an honorary senator this past March. During their meeting, the SGI leader said that Dr. Unger, a heart surgeon and social activist, reminded him of

the Greek physician Hippocrates, whose oath to use his judgment and abilities for helping people — not causing them harm or hurt — is well known. Dr. Unger's academy embodies this spirit, President Ikeda affirmed.

The SGI president also said that the world is presently in a state of chaos, and that people everywhere are seeking answers to questions about what the 21st century holds, about what they can do. It is the responsibility of all thinking people in the world, he said, to address such queries and propose solutions, and provide inspiration and education. He added that a new solidarity among intellectuals is vital, not only in Europe and North America, but throughout Asia, especially in China and India, and in South America and Africa.

Agreeing with the SGI leader, Dr. Unger emphasized that it is the duty of people of conscience around the world to clarify global human values.

President Unger also introduced the academy's plan to establish a Monument of Tolerance in a suburb of Salzburg. He then presented Mr. Ikeda with a mar-

ble sphere, explaining that the monument's foundation will be made of the same material, and that it will be a symbol of the academy's desire to unite the world in a network of tolerance.

The European Academy of Sciences and Arts, established in 1990, is a community of leading

social figures whose aim is to contribute to the development of humanity and promotion of harmony on a global scale. Its executive advisors include King Juan Carlos I of Spain, Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany, President Václav Havel of the Czech Republic,

President Árpád Göncz of Hungary and President Jacques Santer of the European Commission. Former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev also takes part in one of the academy's divisions. Represented organizations include the Club of Rome, All-European Academies and the European Council. More than 50 countries in Europe, North and South America, Asia and the Middle East participate in the organization's wide-ranging scientific and scholarly research projects.

Action based on universal values can solve global problems.



Youth Peace Conference members on a fact-finding mission to Nepal, surveying conditions at refugee clinics and hospitals.

Soka Gakkai Youth Donate Ambulance in Nepal

AMBULANCE, FROM PAGE 1

and the UNHCR in Nepal on what would be the most effective contribution to the refugees, who reside in area camps, as well as Nepalese citizens in neighboring communities.

The YPC dispatched its first medical fact-finding mission to eastern Nepal to survey conditions at refugee clinics and local hospitals in March 1996.

For its initial support phase, the YPC decided to provide medical supplies and instruments, including an electrocardiograph unit. It is also funding the employment of new medical personnel later this year at a nearby hospital in Damak, which is administered by the Japan-based Association of Medical Doctors in Asia, with the aim of boosting the overall capacity of area hospitals.

We Want Your FNCC Impressions!

Have You Been to the Florida Nature and Culture Center Yet?
Share Your Experience With the World!

What was your visit to the FNCC like? Did you make any new friends? Did you learn something new about your practice? Did the FNCC change your view of the SGI? Was there a leader who impressed you? What did you bring home to your family, work or local organization?

The World Tribune is about to start a new series of "FNCC Impressions" and we need your help. Please send a photo of yourself and your 200-word FNCC story (or poem) to the World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

The Student Files

Name: Ronda Dynice Brooks
School: California State University, Long Beach
Major: Costume Design



This September I begin my third and final year for my master's of fine arts and will graduate in May 1998. Some of the subjects this semester are costume illustration, period patternmaking, make-up and lighting. I am designing my master's thesis show, which is an original play about the life of Giacomo Puccini and opens Oct. 3.

Whenever I get into a creative block, have a lack of confidence and doubt myself, I go to the Gohonzon and chant for

wisdom. My true courage, confidence and wisdom emerge, allowing me to express myself creatively in ways that represent my Buddhahood. I am learning to trust myself and not compare myself to others.

Friends at school usually notice something unique and composed about me even when I'm under stress. When they ask me what I do to stay happy, I tell them about chanting. Because each person is different, I use wisdom when talking with them.



Chorus members perform for patients at the Hospital for Sick Children, a neighbor of the D.C. Community Center.

Chorus Sings for Hope, Peace and Friendship

By SANDRA ARCHER WINKLER
& LINDA WRIGHT
WASH., D.C., CORRESPONDENTS

The Washington, D.C., Chorus is making wonderful friendships. Recent performances have not only inspired audiences but have allowed the performers to deepen their commitment to the mission of achieving peace through song.

After their performance at the U.N. Association-USA's 1997 National Convention, Vice President for National Programs James M. Olsen told the chorus: "I always have a vision of how these meetings should go, but this year, because of you and your wonderful music, this meeting has surpassed my dream. I hope you could tell by the reception from the audience how much they appreciated your performance."

Warm responses and positive comments such as this are tributes to years of dedication and hard work on the part of the chorus members. Chorus Administrator Karen Leigh explains that for several years the chorus has struggled with its identity and reason for being. However, during the last two years, the chorus has grown tremendously.

"When I first performed in the chorus I didn't realize singing was so difficult," chorus member Troy Roots says. "I knew a little about music and I enjoyed singing, but the practices were real work and very intense." As a section leader, Mr. Roots calls about 20 men two or three times a month to commu-

nicate the schedule and offer encouragement. "People talk with me about difficulties with music and transportation," he says. "I have to explain last minute decisions and policies — something like a diplomat. I've been encouraging them for their development and for the development of the chorus."

As with the other chorus members, his dedication helps him better reach the audience. "In performing now, I am aware of people in the audience — their expressions — smiling, nodding, crying," he says. "I feel good that we can touch people like that."

The chorus is definitely a place for personal growth, says Chorus Director Mollene Fowlkes. "Our mission is to support our Buddhist movement for world peace through music," she says. "Chanting for and striving to achieve that through singing has helped all of us in our individual practice and in all aspects of our lives. We have become stronger as individuals and that is what gives us our joy. We are now interacting with the community and sharing our joy and determination with all kinds of people from all religions and backgrounds. Music is the universal language and our mission is a good vehicle to send the Buddhist spirit of peace throughout the world."

On June 29, the chorus again spread the message of health, happiness and hope when members sang at the Hospital for Sick Children. They conveyed to the

kids that each of them is precious and holds the potential to experience tremendous joy — a feeling that can definitely be obtained if they never give up on their dreams. Children and staff responded by joining in, singing and clapping to the tunes, indicating that message had struck a chord.

The performance was part of a program initiated by the Rev. Rebecca Bentzinger, who recently began holding non-denominational services as the chaplain for the hospital, which is in the same neighborhood as the SGI-USA Washington, D.C., Community Center.

She put out an invitation to local church choirs to sing for the children as part of the weekly Sunday service. An arrangement was worked out to conduct a Buddhist ceremony followed by the pastor's Christian service.

Interspersed in a medley of songs, chorus members shared inspiring Buddhist concepts.

After the performance, Ms. Bentzinger thanked the chorus, saying that their spirit was appreciated. In a letter, she said: "The patients, staff and families of the Hospital for Sick Children join with me in thanking you for your beautiful musical message of peace and hope! Sunday can sometimes be a slow day for the children, so having a special musical treat really can lift their spirits. Your commitment and enthusiasm were evident to us all, and we hope that you will return to be with us again! Peace be with you!"

*Yours Truly,
Betty B.*

DEAR BETTY: *On vacation the weather was gorgeous, the kids were delightful, and the food was terrific. Now I'm home and the kids are whining, the place is a wreck, and I can't think of what to make for dinner. Why can't life be like a vacation?*

— FADING TAN

DEAR HOPE YOU USED SUNSCREEN: I hate to be a wet beach blanket, but those idyllic days are not reality. Let's face it, beautiful surroundings, lavish meals and constant entertainment aren't tough to take. They don't require you to chant a whole lot. But the less-than-fabulous environment of daily life — that's another matter.

The challenge is to develop the kind of life-condition where meatloaf tastes like filet mignon and your window box resembles Monet's garden at Giverny. Of course it's perfectly OK to work toward buying steak every night (cholesterol aside) and to save toward your own estate in the south of France. In the meantime, learn how to enjoy what you've got. President Toda once said that he was in the state where he enjoyed living itself. Can you say the same?

Granted, it's easy for me to give advice as I dictate this column from the pink sands of Bermuda (just kidding), but since the majority of our lives is consumed by day-to-day minutiae — work, kids, shopping, dishwashing — what makes more sense: to relegate happiness to a two- or three-week segment of the year or to pump ourselves up with enough daimoku, home visits and study to enjoy every moment? You decide. And don't forget to send me a postcard.

DEAR BETTY: *I got on the scale when I returned from vacation and discovered I had put on 10 pounds! I'm trying to diet but so far no luck. Strangely enough, it's hard for me to force myself to do gongyo and chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, too.*

— LAZY DAYS OF
SUMMER

DEAR LAZY (Well, you said it first): They say you can't be in two places at once, but we sure keep trying. Could be you're still in the vacation mode — minus the beach or the mountains or whatever.

Though I sympathize with your struggle to lose those 10 pounds (this summer Betty B. herself stayed at — where else? — a B&B that served the most scrumptious biscuits and muffins every morning — definitely a broadening experience), your diet is a personal choice.

But if you want to change your karma, there's only one recipe: gongyo and daimoku. Accomplishing anything in life — doing gongyo, losing weight, saving money, gardening — requires self-discipline. It's not always easy to muster up the motivation. But let me tell you a little secret. It's hard for all of us to do gongyo and chant every day. Yes, even for your leaders, those paragons of...OK, they're only human, but they're out there making efforts. And that's what all of us need to do to change our lives, whether it's replacing that morning lemon poppy seed muffin with sit-ups to get in shape for our fall wardrobes or setting our alarm a half hour earlier to get in some extra daimoku for our back-to-school — or work — goals.

SGI President Ikeda said recently: "Life is a struggle with ourselves. It is a tug-of-war between moving forward and regressing, between happiness and unhappiness. Those short on willpower or self-motivation should chant daimoku and pray with conviction to become people of strong will, who can tackle any problem with real seriousness and determination."

If you can't do it on your own, find a pal and encourage each other. The end of summer is upon us. Time to find our way back to the "earth" of our Buddha nature. You may have made Contact with some beautiful sights out there, but as all earthlings know, there's no place like home.

Teen Leaders Create New Visions for Their Future

FUTURE, FROM PAGE 1

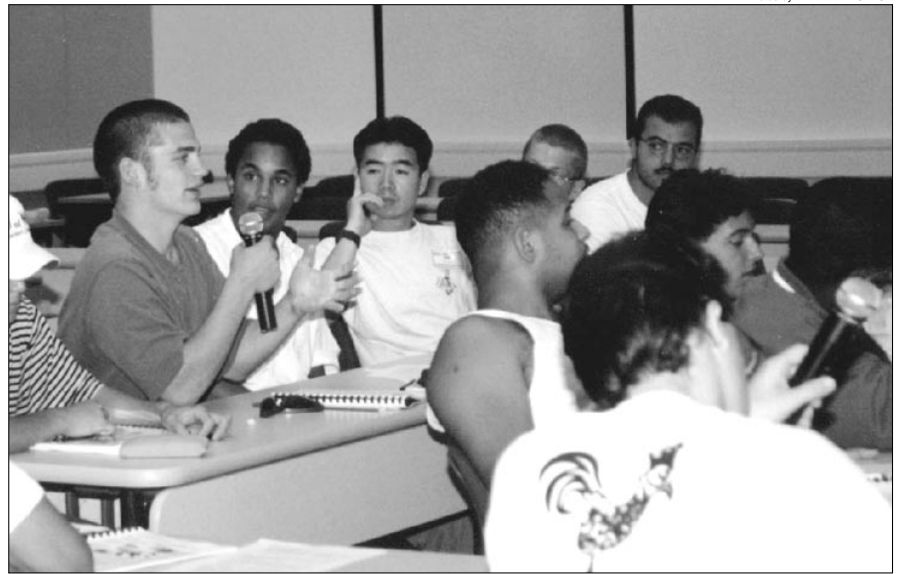
sions, which took the form of strong statements of appreciation, including a rap poem, which brought participants to their feet in applause.

"My vision is such an intense thing to put into words," said Ivan Meyreles of San Francisco. "I struggle to understand what SGI President Ikeda's mission is, not just the theoretical side but the practical aspect of his vision. We cannot achieve the practical side unless we break down the barriers. To have no restrictions, to have absolute freedom. When President Ikeda came in 1990, he was trying to develop an organization where young people will have the power to break down all the barriers, so that we don't restrict our potentialities. I hope that all

of us here go back to our organizations and use this conference as momentum of hope for the future."

"My vision has changed since I came to the FNCC," said Jason Berg of New Jersey. "I thought I understood President Ikeda's vision for us, but in coming here I realize his vision is a lot bigger: That each member should become a capable member in society, that we should develop into people that take responsibility for their lives, that we have the power to pursue our dreams and hopes. My vision is that the junior high and high school divisions in New Jersey connect with President Ikeda."

Since January, the national junior high and high school leaders have been working with joint territory leaders via teleconferences to plan the conference.



In the various session, the junior high and high school divisions leaders share their visions for the future.

Dialogues, panel discussions, lectures, presentations and social activities were held. Some organizational leadership issues were discussed, including guidelines and policies on consent forms, fundraising and event planning. Participants also shared ideas on how to create valuable relationships among themselves, with parents and with other divisions. In one session, they were asked to give suggestions on creating a nationwide study curriculum for the junior high and high school divisions.

Vice General Director Greg Martin gave a lecture on "The Mind and Body Relationship," which especially captivated listeners, interweaving visual handouts with stimulating oratory that emphasized critical thinking and questioning one's beliefs.

"Through the lecture," said Wayne Thomas Jr. of New York, "everyone could gain some fundamental understanding of why we go through our daily obstacles and how to take the neces-



Making new friends is part of the experience at the Florida center.

sary steps to overcome them."

An encouraging presentation also was given by San Francisco members on the success of their study group. "I had never taken the study part [of my practice] so seriously, until I came here," said Joe Castro Jr. of Los Angeles. "Now I know if you study it guides you, it gives you courage and strength to really keep fighting."

Throughout their time at the

FNCC, the participants opened their lives to each other and shared their dreams and hopes, creating instant bonds of friendship.

"I really felt people's sincere determinations to overcome their karma and fight for kosen-rufu," said Boston member Jomo Thorne. "I was touched by everyone's honesty and sincerity; it was encouraging to hear that we all have the same struggles." W



Teen leaders share dreams — and their sunscreen — at the conference.

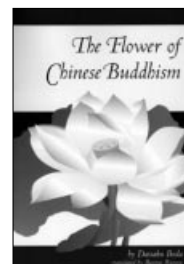
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Shin'ichi Yamamoto continued in a strict tone: "There are two kinds of leaders — those who are committed to working tirelessly for the members and those who seek only to exploit them for their personal advantage. The difference may not be apparent at a glance, but it becomes glaringly so as time goes by. Leaders of the latter type always cause problems of one sort or another for members in their area. They are disliked and invariably wind up leaving the organization of their own accord. It's a no-win situation for everyone concerned. Leaders have to cast aside all selfishness and vanity, becoming strongly determined to devote themselves fully to the members. This is the true, correct way to practice Buddhism.

"In any event, you have to decide to work for your fellow members and do everything in your power to enable them all to fully reveal their potential. This is what it means to be a genuine leader."

The kosen-rufu movement in Shikoku had been progressing rather slowly, lagging behind neighboring regions such as Kyushu and Chugoku. If kosen-rufu were to develop in Shikoku, it was essential that the core leaders grow in capability.

"Your first task in Shikoku is to unite," Shin'ichi said in closing. "Just like a table or chair is supported by four legs, the members in all four of Shikoku's prefectures should firmly unite and advance together toward a common goal. I will come to Shikoku again soon. Let's pool our strength and usher in a new era for Shikoku!"

Shin'ichi worked seriously to strengthen the Shikoku organization so that it would develop into a solid base for kosen-rufu.

The fifth memorial service for Josei Toda [marking the fourth anniversary of his death] and the long-awaited groundbreaking ceremony for the Grand Reception Hall were held at the head temple Taisei-ji on April 2. The sky was slightly overcast, but the cherry trees lining the pathways of the temple grounds had started to bloom. It was as if they wished to pay tribute to Toda.

A solemn memorial service got under way at the Grand Lecture Hall at 1:00 p.m. After everyone offered incense and several divisional representatives shared recollections of Toda, Shin'ichi addressed the gathering. His thoughts were filled with the heroic image of his mentor as he spoke:

"President Toda was a great teacher of propagation. First of all, I wish to report to him what we have achieved: President Toda, our membership at the time of your death, on April 2, 1958, was 817,000 households. Today, four years later, we have achieved a membership of 2,542,000 households through the activities of our members,

The New Human Revolution

BY HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 3

Acceleration

Translation of parts 18–23 of the 'Acceleration' chapter, as printed in the *Seikyo Shimbum*, 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.

who have arisen with a noble, selfless dedication to the Law, illuminated by the brilliant benefit of the Gohonzon."

Shin'ichi's clear voice rang powerfully through the hall.

Shin'ichi continued his report to his late mentor: "Through the momentous efforts of the disciples you fostered, our ranks have grown by 1,725,000 precious member households. This, I state with utmost humility and joy, speaks volumes to the greatness of your leadership.

"Day and night, with every fiber of our beings, we are earnestly pursuing activities toward achieving the goal of kosen-rufu in accord with Nichiren Daishonin's teachings. These noble efforts are free of self-interest, calculation or desire for fame and reputation. They are inspired solely by a fervent prayer for peace and the happiness of people in all strata of society — young and old, rich and poor — in Japan and throughout the world.

"At present, however, the Soka Gakkai is under fire from all sides. We are being showered with malicious criticism and abuse. But because

the Goshu teaches that 'when great evil occurs, great good will follow' (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 161), I am convinced that these events are a happy omen.

"As part of our commitment to build a peaceful, prosperous society based on Buddhist principles, we will be supporting a number of candidates — our members who have formed the Clean Government [Komei] Political Federation — in this summer's House of Councilors elections.

"It is certain that the more boldly we advance to create a new society guided by Buddhist ideals, the more rancorous the criticism and abuse will become. But

I vow to continue striding ahead courageously on the path to kosen-rufu, so that we may realize the happy and peaceful world for which you long."

In closing, Shin'ichi appealed: "Our mentor dedicated his life to human happiness and world peace. As his disciples, it is our mission to convey his spirit not only to our fellow Japanese but to all the world. Let us each proudly walk the path of a disciple and live the limited span of our lives as valuably, as meaningfully as possible, so as not to have a single regret."

Shin'ichi's words were greeted with resounding applause.

What pleased him most was attending this fifth memorial for President Toda with a sense of accomplishment as a disciple, proud that he was steadily fulfilling



each of the vows he had made to his mentor. He imagined his mentor's beloved face before him smiling broadly in approval.

After Shin'ichi's address and a short speech of thanks by Toda's son, Kyoichi, the memorial service ended with everyone joining in a chorus of "Song of Comrades."

After the service, Shin'ichi visited his mentor's grave. And at 3:50 p.m., he attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the Grand Reception Hall on the same site where the previous Reception Hall had stood.

Shin'ichi had, during his inauguration as Soka Gakkai president at the 22nd Headquarters General Meeting on May 3, 1960, pledged to undertake this project and complete it some time before President Toda's seventh memorial in 1964 [the sixth anniversary of Toda's death].

The construction of the Grand Reception Hall, an edifice to be dedicated to the prayer to realize kosen-rufu, had been one of President Toda's long-cherished dreams. He had instructed Shin'ichi to incorporate the finest materials from around the world in building it, including Canadian cedar, Taiwanese cypress and Italian marble.

It had also been decided that stones from around the world, symbolizing the global spread of the Daishonin's teachings, would be sealed in the building's concrete foundation. Shin'ichi had already begun to collect stones for that purpose from the countries he had visited in North and South America, Southeast Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Cherishing their mission for kosen-rufu, Soka Gakkai members gladly lent their full support to the project, pouring in sincere donations toward its construction. Shin'ichi knew that many of the members, far from being financially well off, had to cut back on their daily expenses to make a donation. The contributions from the members, regardless of their positions in the organization, were an expression of their strong desire to support the development of kosen-rufu and their immensely noble seeking spirit toward Buddhism.

Throughout the ceremony, Shin'ichi thought of the sincerity of these earnest, devoted members and offered heartfelt prayers of deep appreciation. After a ceremonial gongyo service, the groundbreaking took place, followed by speeches, including a progress report by Soka Gakkai General Director Koichi Harayama.

Rising to speak, Shin'ichi said, "I firmly believe that the construction of this Grand Reception Hall represents a light of hope, a new dawn and a source of joy for Japan and the entire world." It was Shin'ichi's conviction that the construction of a hall dedicated to prayer for kosen-rufu signaled a momentous step toward the goal of world peace and happiness for all humanity.

Many members wept with joy when they read the reports of the groundbreaking for the Grand Reception Hall in the *Seikyo Shimbum*. This project, made possible by their contributions, was at

PLEASE SEE ACCELERATION, NEXT PAGE

ACCELERATION, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

long last taking shape. When they thought how their efforts would beautify the head temple and tremendously boost the development of their movement to spread the Daishonin's teachings, they were elated and excited.

The walls of discussion meeting venues across the country were adorned with sketches of the planned structure clipped from the *Seikyo Graphic* and other Gakkai journals, or enlarged renderings drawn by some artistic hand. The subject of the groundbreaking ceremony was on everyone's lips.

At discussion meetings across the country, people rejoiced and celebrated at the news of the Grand Reception Hall groundbreaking. Everyone was very proud. One member declared how excited and moved she was that her small contribution would go toward a tatami mat or part of one of the structure's concrete pillars. Another said that those critics who labeled the Gakkai as a gathering of the sick and poor should take a look at the magnificent hall being built through the members' donations. All resolved to set in motion a new wave of propagation and create a dynamic rhythm of growth within the organization in tandem with the building's progress.

Many members were of very humble means. But they were filled with pride to be contributing to kosen-rufu. The Grand Reception Hall was truly a crystallization of their beautiful, unalloyed sincerity, a symbol of the hope and joy they felt in working to create an enlightened realm of lasting peace and happiness.

No one at the time could have imagined that, some 30 years later, a high priest named Nikken would summarily dismiss Shin'ichi — the very person who had contributed so greatly to the prosperity of the head temple — from his position as chief lay representative of Nichiren Shoshu. Nor would any have guessed that the same high priest would later issue a notice excommunicating the Soka Gakkai and order the Grand Reception Hall demolished. In his all-consuming jealousy and desire to assert absolute authority over believers, Nikken would not only betray the members' sincerity, but launch a campaign to destroy the Soka Gakkai, an organization working to realize the Buddha's will and intent.

Whereas his actions would constitute an ineradicable offense in light of the teachings of Buddhism, the pioneer members of the Soka Gakkai, who generously donated toward the construction of the Grand Reception Hall out of the wish to contribute to kosen-rufu, had made a cause that would elicit the eternal praise of the original Buddha, Nichiren Daishonin. The members' unstinting support and commitment to widely disseminate the philosophy and ideals of Buddhism infused their lives with immeasurable

good fortune, the brilliance of which could never be destroyed.

Shin'ichi devoted most of his time during the first half of April to offering guidance to members in Tokyo and the surrounding areas. On April 5, he attended a meeting with district leaders of Saitama General Chapter at the Saitama Community Center, lecturing on the Gosho "Reply to Lord Toki" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 962). On the 14th, he flew to the northern island of Hokkaido, where spring had yet to arrive. Shin'ichi's schedule there included attending a Hokkaido General Chapter Leaders Meeting on the 15th and then lecturing on the Gosho to a gathering of district leaders.

Toward nightfall on the 14th, the day of his arrival in Hokkaido, he planted a cherry tree in the garden of the Hokkaido Headquarters in memory of the late Hokkaido young women's division chief Haruko Arashiyama. He was fulfilling a promise he had made to the young women's division members at Arashiyama's funeral on Jan. 13.

Around 30 or 40 people — Soka Gakkai directors, Hokkaido leaders and young women's division representatives — joined Shin'ichi for the tree-planting. A beautiful sunset began to suffuse the sky.

With Shin'ichi presiding, the vice general directors, directors and young women's division leaders took turns shoveling dirt over the roots of a cherry tree sapling that was a little more than 10 feet in height. In time, this tree would blossom each year, bringing people joy and reviving fond memories of Arashiyama.

When the tree-planting was finished, Shin'ichi addressed the group: "Let's cherish and nurture this cherry tree as if it were Ms. Arashiyama herself. I am sure it will grow into a great, splendid tree. Ms. Arashiyama will always be with us.

Each year at cherry blossom time, I hope you will observe how her tree has grown and challenge yourselves to grow in like manner."

Time often dims the memory of the deceased in the hearts of the living. That is why Shin'ichi wanted to honor and perpetuate the achievements of this brave member who had devoted her life to spreading the Daishonin's teachings. He also hoped the tree-planting would help the young women's division members in Hokkaido rise above their grief over her death and make that day a starting point toward a bright, promising future.

At a meeting that evening of chapter chiefs from throughout Hokkaido, Shin'ichi gave guidance based on the

Gosho "On the Four Stages of Faith and the Five Stages of Practice" (MW-6, 211).

April 15, the day of the Hokkaido General Chapter Leaders Meeting, dawned fine and clear. Members from all parts of Hokkaido gathered in Sapporo's Nakajima Sports Center where the meeting got under way at 10:00 a.m.

Shin'ichi praised the Hokkaido members' great achievements and, citing the Gosho, addressed the slander and abuse being leveled at the Soka Gakkai, highlighting how spurious it was.

"The other day," Shin'ichi said, "General Director Harayama met with a certain well-known individual who asked, 'Don't Soka Gakkai members go around burning family Buddhist altars and stealing condolence money intended for bereaved families?' Harayama answered: 'Of course not! That's a completely distorted picture of our organization. We've never once told our members to burn people's Buddhist altars — nor have our members ever stolen condolence money.' Upon hearing this, the individual seemed extremely surprised and apologized for his misunderstanding.

"Just because a person is a respected leader in society does not mean that his or her words will reflect a correct perception of the Gakkai. And there are many cases, as we have seen, where individuals or groups who fear the Gakkai's growth deliberately spread lies about us."



Shin'ichi continued: "To undermine our credibility and hinder our progress, they spread baseless and malicious rumors, trying to convince an unsuspecting public that their assertions are true. Once they have planted a negative perception of the Gakkai in people's minds, they strive to manipulate public opinion, to turn it against our organization. This is one form that persecution takes in the present age.

"Our kosen-rufu activities, therefore, start with changing people's misunderstandings and prejudices about the Gakkai that stem from such erroneous preconceptions and then ac-

quainting them with the real Soka Gakkai and the true greatness of Buddhism. In other words, working to overcome misunderstandings and prejudices is a large part of our Buddhist practice in the Latter Day of the Law. Actively discussing and conveying the truth to others constitute the practice of *shakubuku*."

It is not easy to overturn an image or accepted belief once it has taken root. But a new, better age can only be brought about by breaking down such misconceptions and opening people's eyes to the truth.

Last, Shin'ichi explained why the Gakkai had formed the Clean Government Political Federation and was fielding candidates to run for public office. "There has been some public criticism as to why a religious organization like the Gakkai is backing candidates for government office on the local and national level," he said. "Today, I want to take this opportunity to clarify this.

"As Buddhists, we uphold the teachings of Buddhism. But we are also citizens, of Japan and our local communities, who have a duty to participate in government and take responsibility for our country's direction. We would be selfish and neglectful of our civic duty if we showed no interest in politics and instead concerned ourselves only with our personal happiness and benefit.

"Today's government turns its back on the weak and disadvantaged in our society and does nothing to aid the people in a true sense. This is what has prompted us to support for public office members committed to working for the people's happiness and welfare based on the compassionate principles of Buddhism. Such activities in no way constitute direct intervention in politics by a religious group, nor an ambition to govern for the Gakkai's benefit.

"In our ongoing efforts to fulfill our mission as Buddhists, we are actively addressing all kinds of issues to create a society where all can live happily and securely.

The fusion of the law of the ruler and the principles of Buddhism, which the Daishonin expounded, means achieving perfect accord between personal happiness and social prosperity. This, I want to emphasize, is why we support candidates for government office."

Shin'ichi had continued to press forward calmly amid the relentless barrage of criticism directed at the Gakkai. He had personally borne the full brunt of all attacks and energetically rebutted the detractors' charges. His sole concern — the objective of his brave, tireless efforts — was to encourage and inspire the members.

(To be continued)

WING LEE, DALLAS

Applying What I've Learned From the SGI

Starting off alone in the United States, Wing Lee finds that always asking, 'How can I best contribute to kosen-rufu?' leads him along the right paths.

I attended SGI meetings with my mother when I was growing up in Hong Kong, but I didn't care much about the practice. Although I had seen time and again how my mother changed situations and overcame tremendous difficulties through her sincere prayers, I never had the desire to find out for myself the meaning of practice. I just relied on her to practice for me.

After talking about this with the general director of the SGI-HK (Hong Kong), my mother made the bold decision to send me to the United States to pursue a college education and, more important, to learn to be responsible for my life. She entrusted her only child — me — to the Gohonzon and to the Gakkai.

That was 10 years ago.

During college, I was fortunate to practice with my fellow SGI-USA members in Oklahoma and Texas. As I could not count on my mother to protect me anymore and I had no friends or relatives in the States, I felt overwhelmed. Fortunately, the SGI-HK sent my contact information to the SGI-USA, and local members reached me. It was a significant turning point in my life: I finally started to learn how to practice for myself.

Through attending activities, studying Buddhism, learning from President Ikeda's guidance and writings, and the kind encouragement of the SGI-USA members, I learned how to be responsible for my life, developing both a sense of appreciation and, most important, an understanding of why I practice.

I started to appreciate my mother's hard work raising money for my college education. I worked on campus while carrying a heavier-than-normal course load so I could finish my education and not burden her further. I still vividly recall my first job as a janitor, cleaning dormitories — through my Gakkai activities I had learned to do my best, no matter what, while continuing to chant for jobs where I could apply what I was learning. Soon I got a job as a computer lab assistant, then as a teaching as-

sistant. I majored in information systems and management at the University of Texas at Austin, and earned a bachelor's degree in the fall of 1989 with a number of academic honors.

I received offers from several Fortune 500 companies before my graduation, despite my international student status and the economic slowdown. I had no prior work experience in the industry, so my decision was simply based on the question of "Where can I contribute to kosen-rufu the most?"

At the time, the SGI-USA had just purchased a beautiful culture center for Texas Joint Territory in Dallas. That helped me decide to take the position of systems analyst with a national retailer also located in Dallas. Later, I realized how protected I was when the recession of the early '90s led several companies I had talked with to lay off a number of employees.

Things were going well at work: I had supportive colleagues and was fortunate to be given different assignments that continued to broaden and deepen my technical horizon. Applying what I'd learned in the SGI, I always asked for more challenging work and, when given an assignment, exerted my best. Through my Buddhist practice, I learned to respect others, no matter who they were and how they might treat me. In the process, I made many new friends — some of them even attended SGI-USA meetings, culture festivals, exhibits and symposia.

I felt that becoming a U.S. citizen would enable me to better support the world peace movement, and I mentioned to the recruiter when I accepted the job that citizenship was one of my goals. After working there for two-and-a-half years, I thought that it was time to initiate my U.S. Permanent Residency application. To my surprise, the human resources department advised me that it would be unfeasible for them to carry out all the requirements to sponsor my application.

Disappointed, I told this to my mother (who was visiting from

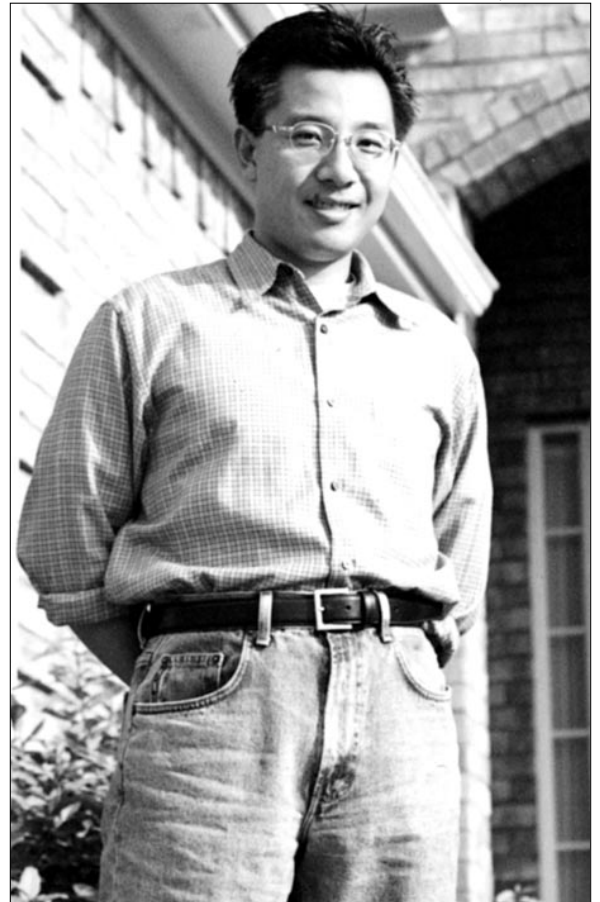
Hong Kong). She immediately reminded me that we had overcome too many obstacles to be discouraged by this incident — a widow since I was seven, she had been forced out of my father's family after my grandparents transferred all of my father's assets to themselves. Then she ran into a friend who was practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism. From that day, through her sincere practice, we had continuous protection and my mother started a small but thriving business.

Now we started to chant for a job that would not only let me excel but could also let me show actual proof and contribute further to kosen-rufu. Soon after we made this determination, I was introduced to several headhunters and presented with promising opportunities. After a series of interviews, I was hired by a telecommunications company.

After obtaining a written commitment to sponsor my U.S. residency (in addition to a decent raise), I turned in my two-week resignation at my old company. My manager was astounded and insisted that I let him work with senior management to appeal to the legal department. Although the legal department maintained its stance, I saw the results of my practice through the company's sincere efforts to retain me.

When I called my immigration attorney to advise him of my new job, he told me that I was supposed to have filed an application with the Immigration and Naturalization Service before any change. To make matters worse, the process would take about one month!

Since my resignation had been turned in and I was expected to report to the new company in two weeks, I found myself in a rather embarrassing situation. I chanted, then called my future and previous managers respectively. At the end of the first phone call, I was told that I could take as long as necessary to report to my new position. And at the end of the second phone call, I was asked to come back to work with full pay and benefits until I was ready to start



Wing Lee finds that 'by challenging myself to contribute as much as I can to kosen-rufu, by not using my hectic schedule as an excuse for not participating in activities, I can often be in rhythm and become more effective in tackling my day-to-day activities.'

my new job. What else could I ask for? Again, it was yet another actual proof of the practice.

Approval from the INS (to change jobs) came through at the end of the third week, and close to 40 people attended my farewell lunch. After exactly three years working there, I left the company with several awards and a letter of commendation from its president and CEO.

My new assignment was indeed exciting. My department specialized in the implementation of advanced distributed computing systems, and I was assigned to work in the technical architecture group — designing and creating components that form the foundation of large-scale distributed systems. It was a privilege to be assigned to this team, and I later found out that it was comprised exclusively of experts (with the exception of myself) in different fields.

I had to exert myself by spending many extra hours at the office to learn the new technologies and play catch-up. SGI President Ikeda has told us many times that youth is the time for building foundations.

Only by overcoming mounting challenges, he has said, can we show actual proof of this practice. I was glad to be presented with this opportunity to solidify my foundation. Again, through the practice, I was protected by my peers and seniors alike at work — they were patient and willing to mentor me. Continuing my efforts to apply President Ikeda's guidance in my life, I developed sincere friendships and mutual respect among my peers.

Since the work we do is pioneering, I have participated in various conferences and interacted with peers in the industry. Over the past two years, I have been invited to present our work at various highly regarded conferences in the industry and in colleges. In both instances, I found myself among much more senior speakers.

I was hired as a software engineer in the company. Over the course of the past three years, I have been presented with numerous awards and promoted to senior software engineer, then to lead software engineer. I am

PLEASE SEE APPLYING, 11

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TEMPLE ISSUE

How Are the Temple and the SGI Different?

SIGN POSTS

APPLYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS TO DAILY LIFE

Roll With It

By VALERIE THOMAS
SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE


The sutra...states, "It is difficult to sustain faith in this sutra. One who embraces it even for a short time...will be praised by all the Buddhas".... How encouraging! How reassuring! With this conviction, you should deepen your faith all the more. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 4, p. 95)

When I first read this passage, it made me feel better to know that the difficulty of sustaining faith was acknowledged by Nichiren Daishonin. In a way, I felt like it gave me permission to struggle with this issue. But I still had a question — why is it so difficult?

Recently I heard an analogy that helped me to think about this — life is like a roller coaster, going up and down, up and down, at ridiculous speeds. People pay a lot of money to ride roller coasters because the excitement of this motion gives them a thrill. Now, personally, I hate roller coasters. I like something like a nice, safe merry-go-round. And I always feel better when my life is not going up and down but is maintaining more of a steady course.

However, even though, in the moment, a roller coaster ride may seem dangerous, and even though now and then people do get hurt on roller coasters, for the most part when you get on you know the ride will finish safely and you will get off in a few minutes. (Or so people tell me.) Maybe your hair will get messed up, but there will be no greater damage than that.

But in life, when I face the big ups and downs, it often seems more dangerous. There is more at stake — my happiness. When I maintain confidence, however, that the outcome will be my Buddhahood, then it becomes easier — even exciting? — to keep moving forward in the face of difficulties. In *Learning From the Goshu*, SGI President Ikeda writes: "Faith is inextinguishable hope. The practice of faith is a struggle to realize our desires. And the basis of this practice is prayer. Through prayer, hope turns into confidence" (p. 91). With prayer, hope and confidence, I am learning to appreciate and enjoy the exciting ride that is my life. And maybe someday, I'll even enjoy a real roller coaster.

Or maybe not. 

Q What is the real difference between the temple and the SGI?

A The difference between the SGI and Nichiren Shoshu clearly can be seen in at least four key areas:

1) View of Equality

The Lotus Sutra is a teaching of absolute equality — it affirms that all people, regardless of station, gender or background, are potentially Buddhas.

Nichiren Daishonin reaffirms this in many places throughout his writings. To a lay believer named Abutsu-bo, he writes:

You, yourself, are a true Buddha who possesses the three enlightened properties. You should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with this conviction. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 30)

In another letter he writes:

There should be no discrimination among those who propagate the five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo in the Latter Day of the Law, be they men or women. (MW-1, 93)

While the SGI bases itself on absolute respect for the individual, and its activities focus on thorough dialogue with people on all levels of society, Nichiren Shoshu staunchly asserts that it is a "sin" to speak of the equality of priests and lay practitioners, as we can see in a letter to the SGI from the temple's chief administrator, Nichijun Fujimoto:

To talk about the priesthood and laity with a sense of equality are expressions of great conceit. In fact, they correspond to the five cardinal sins.... (Jan. 12, 1991)

Representative of such beliefs is the following comment from a priest's sermon at a temple in Japan:

A priest who wears this robe is special and different from lay believers. He is always seated with the Gohonzon behind him, but whatever the priest may do on other occasions and no matter how luxuriant his lifestyle, it is totally all right. You lay believers are confused about this point. These matters are of no account. (Seido Oyabu, at Horin-ji, January 1991)

Around this doctrine of absolute clerical superiority, it created an atmosphere in which the actions and intentions of priests can never be questioned; in which lay believers are obliged to serve priests, but priests have no obligation to serve the believers. Even funeral and memorial services are conducted with the expectation of receiving donations, and with undisguised dissatisfaction if those donations fall below par. This is in stark contrast

Key Points:

- The SGI and Nichiren Shoshu differ fundamentally in their action and commitment to kosen-rufu and their respect and support of ordinary believers.
- While the SGI advocates and practices the highest respect for the individual, the temple demands that believers place their highest respect in the priests.
- Nichiren Shoshu has twisted the Daishonin's teachings, interpreting them only from the standpoint of the assumed superiority and infallibility of the priesthood.

to the attitude of Nichiren Daishonin, which was one of appreciation, respect, service and support of the believers.

2) View of the Gohonzon

Nichiren Daishonin clearly indicates in the Goshu that the Gohonzon is a manifestation of his life as an enlightened human being, and that it is no different from the enlightened potential within all ordinary people.

He writes:

Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself. The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who embrace the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (MW-1, 213)

In another letter, he writes: "Abutsu-bo is the Treasure Tower itself, and the Treasure Tower is Abutsu-bo himself. No other knowledge is purposeful" (MW-1, 30). Later in the same letter, the Daishonin equates the "Treasure Tower" to the Gohonzon.

Nichiren Shoshu's position is that these teachings by the Daishonin are to be interpreted by priests only, not by lay believers. Their teaching on the Gohonzon is as follows: The Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is not inherent in all phenomena or in the lives of ordinary people. It exists only in the physical object of the Dai-Gohonzon and in the life of the current high priest, who has received it through a secret ceremony conducted with his predecessor. Only the high priest can empower a Gohonzon by personally conducting a special ceremony. Any benefit comes to the believer directly through the auspices and sanction of the office of the high priest. Temple publications state, "The sanctioning of the object of worship by the High Priest, who is the only person to be bequeathed the Daishonin's Buddhism, is what makes the attainment of Buddhahood possible" (from an NST publication, *Refuting the Soka Gakkai's*

Counterfeit Object of Worship: 100 Questions and Answers, p. 36).

The temple's stance is that believing the Law or the Gohonzon to exist within one's own life will send that person to hell.

Nichiren Shoshu's position on the Gohonzon stands in stark contrast with that of the Daishonin himself. The Soka Gakkai embraces the Daishonin's view that the Gohonzon is the embodiment of the Buddha's wisdom and compassion. The Daishonin inscribed it so that we can awaken the same wisdom and compassion within us. One's power of faith and practice to the Gohonzon enables him or her to tap the power of the Gohonzon within to which the Daishonin so adamantly refers. For the high priest or anyone to claim sole possession of the Law and control over the power of the Gohonzon is the basest form of exploitation of the Daishonin's teachings.

3) View of the "Heritage" of the Law

In his letter "Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life," Nichiren Daishonin clearly describes and defines what it means to receive the "heritage" or "lifeblood" of faith in his Buddhism:

Shakyamuni who attained enlightenment countless aeons ago, the Lotus Sutra which leads all people to Buddhahood, and we ordinary human beings are in no way different or separate from each other. Therefore, to chant Myoho-renge-kyo with this realization is to inherit the ultimate law of life and death. (MW-1, 22)

In addition, the Daishonin writes:

All disciples and believers of Nichiren should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with one mind, transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim. This spiritual bond is the basis for the universal transmission of the ultimate law of life and death. (MW-1, 23)

DIFFERENT, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

And:

Be resolved to summon forth the great power of your faith, and chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo with the prayer that your faith will be steadfast and correct at the moment of your death. Never seek any other way to inherit the ultimate law and manifest it in your life. (MW-1, 25)

Before 1991, Nikken himself supported the view of the heritage as expressed by the Dai-shonin in these passages, saying: "This lifeblood of faith is inherited not only by a high priest. It is also inherited by all priests and lay believers who inherit the true teaching. When these priests and lay believers carry out pure faith in the true teaching and practice accordingly, they unlock the pure water of the law within their lives and equally attain enlightenment through believing in and understanding the Law" (April 1987 *Dai-Nichiren*).

The priesthood today repeatedly refers to the exclusive transmission of the heritage of the Law to the high priest through what it calls the "Face to Face

Bestowal of the Living Essence of the Law," insisting that the nature of this bestowal is beyond the capacity of ordinary people to comprehend. In a section called "Absolute Faith in and Strict Obedience to the High Priest," we see the following passage:

When the priests and lay believers of the faith of Nichiren Shoshu have the occasion to be in the presence of the High Priest, with palms pressed earnestly together in sincere gratitude, we pay prayer-like reverence to him as the Master who embodies the Living Essence of the Body of the entirety of the Law of all existence.... In short, with perfectly sincere faith and self-imposed, strict obedience, we should hold the High Priest's instruction in deepest reverence—and we must realize that it is right there [sic] that the great, direct path of the true relationship of unfiltered, unrestricted faith between Master and disciple, which leads to ultimate enlightenment in this lifetime, is to be found. (*Dai-Nichiren, Special Edition: On the Soka Gakkai Problem (II)*, pp. 13–14)

The SGI firmly rejects this idea of the exclusive possession and bestowal of an intangible "essence" of all Buddhism to a single individual by virtue of his religious position. Not only does Nichiren Daishonin never mention such a rite, he clearly refutes it.

4) Attitude and Behavior

The most essential difference lies in the realm of commitment and action taken toward the accomplishment of kosen-rufu and the people's happiness, toward securing a peaceful world based on the spread of the Dai-shonin's Buddhism.

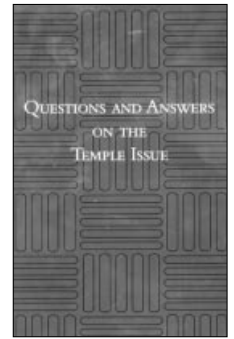
SGI members have continuously exerted themselves for decades to spread Buddhism, devoting their evenings and weekends to chant and work for the happiness of their friends. SGI President Ikeda, in particular, has met with one person after another, Buddhists and non-Buddhists of all nations and fields of society, to share his commitment to peace and engender an understanding of Buddhist humanism.

It is evident, however, that priests have played a far more

passive role, spending most of their time at the temple attending primarily to ceremonies and services. While many Gakkai members were at activities in the evenings, visiting and encouraging friends or studying Buddhism together, most priests remained at home. It also became clear that many were indulging themselves by joining expensive country clubs or frequenting night-clubs, lavishly and frivolously spending money earned from the members' donations.

Nevertheless, Nichiren Shoshu priests continued to maintain an air of superiority and even condescension toward hard-working Gakkai members. Their aloofness toward the laity is still evident in their relationship with Hokkeko or temple members. For example, at a May 1997 ceremony at a temple in Los Angeles after which the lay temple members held a pot-luck lunch in the parking lot, the dozen or so priests in attendance quickly exited to a separate room to enjoy their own catered feast. There was no exchange or interaction with the laity, other than with a few appointed representatives.

Four in a series



The SGI-USA has published a new pamphlet, Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue, which seeks to provide succinct information on this important issue. It is now available free of charge through the organization. The study page is reprinting each of the questions from the pamphlet as a service to our readers.

APPLYING, FROM PAGE 9

happy to report to you that I recently celebrated my third anniversary with my third promotion to lead architect. I am responsible for the strategic architectural direction and day-to-day functioning of the technical architecture group. Not only is the rate of my promotion pace-setting, but at the age of 29, I am also the youngest person in my rank.

Along with the promotions, my salary has more than doubled. Such financial benefits made owning a house feasible. I was very fortunate to share with my beloved mother the excitement of having my first house built. She came to the States to observe the groundbreaking and gave me invaluable input on its design and color coordination. It was indeed a gratifying experience for my mother, given the countless hardships she endured to raise me.

I have great neighbors, too: I recently traveled to San Jose for a week-long conference and found that my neighbor trimmed my lawn while I was away!

I am also very happy to report that in February 1996, I became a permanent resident of the United States.

When President Ikeda visited the United States in 1994, he mentioned that since America is so large, when it is not possible

to physically visit the members easily, we should use the telephone to stay in touch. I feel that the advent of telecommunications can have a positive impact on kosen-rufu and fostering world peace. I enrolled in a graduate program in telecommunications management and have been maintaining a 4.0 grade point average. In addition, my company is paying the tuition and expenses.

President Ikeda once said, "When dealing with others, we should make them feel like they are in spring weather, but we should treat ourselves with the strictness of winter."

It is easy to be overwhelmed by a hectic schedule. Maintaining a balance of activities, work and school often becomes an interesting balancing act.

However, I have repeatedly found that by challenging myself to contribute as much as I can to kosen-rufu, by not using my hectic schedule as an excuse for not participating in activities, I can often be in rhythm and become more effective in tackling my day-to-day activities. Cause and effect are indeed absolute.

Looking back, by putting the practice and kosen-rufu as my prime focuses, I realize that everything that has happened has contributed to the momentous progression of my life. Both my

A Visit to Hong Kong

By WING LEE
DALLAS

Most people know by now that at midnight on July 1, Hong Kong reverted to China after having been a British colony since 1842. I had the opportunity to spend three weeks in Hong Kong — my hometown, the place where I grew up — to witness the transition.

I am glad to report that it was very successful and the climate was that of a joyous celebration. In fact, the SGI-HK Fife and Drum Corps, Brass Band and Gymnastics Band were invited to perform in the official ceremonies, underscoring the trust that SGI President Ikeda has nurtured with the Chinese government.

Most of the discussions in Hong Kong revolved around the topics of economics and political shifts. Little light was shed on what, to me, was a significant milestone in history — for the very first time, a territory and its people were transferred from one sovereign to another without a shot being fired. However difficult and long-winded they were, dialogues and negotiations were used as the only methods to gain consensus. It was not easy for Britain to cede one of the world's most vibrant economies to China, and neither was it easy for China to be patient about waiting until 1997 for it to happen.

Today, Hong Kong stands as the economic

showcase of Southeast Asia while continuing its remarkable growth. But looking back in history, it has not been spared of mounting obstacles and challenges that could have easily swamped a colony that measured no larger than 1,010 square kilometers. Too many people have discounted its fate: As early as 1844, Hong Kong was declared by the British officials to be "a barren rock, producing nothing." It was proclaimed dead in 1939 during the Japanese Occupation. And as recently as 1995, *Fortune* magazine attempted to seal its fate with a cover story titled "The Death of Hong Kong."

Not only did Hong Kong survive, it thrived — it is home to the world's busiest container port as well as the fifth largest foreign exchange market. Its marvelous strength comes solely from its people, who can be best characterized as resilient and hard working.

I have learned in the SGI that it is our precious members who make our community centers magnificent. I have also learned that it is the people who determine the fate of a country. Hong Kong has indeed depicted this concept. In 1988, President Ikeda said that Hong Kong is Asia's gateway (in his poem "Let the Morning Sun of Happiness Shine Over the Harbor of Peace"). In Hong Kong he saw "the dawn of lasting peace for Asia — and the world." I am confident that the people of Hong Kong will live up to President Ikeda's golden words. ☐

mother and I are very grateful to President Ikeda for giving us the opportunity to practice the Dai-shonin's Buddhism and for pro-

viding the most wonderful organization in which to practice — the global family of the SGI. Without the sincere care and sup-

port from the members of the United States and Hong Kong, we simply could not be where we are today. ☐

To Develop Each Person

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (front row, center) with teachers at Taisho Normal Elementary School. A Soka University graduate recently discovered seven lost articles by Makiguchi. In one, Makiguchi explains how teachers and parents worked to protect him when authorities attempted to remove him as principal of this school.

First Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi would create an environment where people could say whatever they felt. 'Such is the world of the SGI,' President Ikeda explains.

SGI President Ikeda gave the following address at the SGI Executive Conference in Tokyo, April 17.

Offer the warmest of welcomes to all of you noble and worthy Bodhisattvas of the Earth, representatives from 56 countries and territories, who have gathered for the SGI Spring Training Course. Thank you for making the long journey here.

The other day, I received some exciting news from Toru Yamaguchi, a recent Soka University graduate, who also attended Kansai Soka Junior High School and the Tokyo Soka High School. He wrote that in researching his graduation thesis, he came across seven articles written by the first Soka Gakkai president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944), that are not included in any volume of *The Collected Writings of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi*. These articles are extremely valuable.

The energy and ability of young people are wonderful indeed. The academic advisor for Mr. Yamaguchi's thesis was Professor Shoji Saito, a leading au-

thority on Mr. Makiguchi and editor and compiler of his *Collected Writings*. Professor Saito, who warmly watched over his student's research, was delighted when he tracked down these articles.

Mr. Makiguchi was truly a great man. He might be described as a well supplied by an inexhaustible spring. His disciple, the second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda, was the pump that drew the water from that well. For my part, I have always regarded it as my mission and duty to be the one who uses that water to nourish the earth so that beautiful flowers may bloom.

Encouraging the Young

One of the articles Mr. Yamaguchi stumbled upon is titled "Memories of Maeda," which appeared in the May 3, 1923, issue of the educational magazine *Educational Realm* (Kyōiku Kai). The Maeda he refers to is Yoshio Maeda, a young teacher at the Taisho Normal Elementary School when Mr. Makiguchi was its first principal.

While an elementary school

teacher, Mr. Maeda passed the very difficult higher civil service examinations. He was featured in the magazine as a bright young talent in the world of Japanese education, and Mr. Makiguchi contributed an essay to the issue — an essay full of affection and high expectations for his former colleague.

Mr. Maeda later became the director of Tokyo's Tama Boys Reform School and a commissioner of the Ministry of Education, devoting himself to the instruction and moral education of children and teenagers.

At the time, Mr. Makiguchi had not yet embraced Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, but his sincere concern for the young people who worked under him was already integral to his nature. He valued all of their talents and strove to nurture them. For example, if they wished to attend college at night, he did whatever he could to make it possible. Some went on to become judges, prosecutors and attorneys. Mr. Maeda was one of these teachers. Mr. Makiguchi's determination to help

his young colleagues surpass him in their achievements was a sign of his personal greatness.

This essay on Maeda reveals just how earnestly Mr. Makiguchi worked to find and recruit young talent. For example, he writes, "We received as many as 150 resumes for the 26 available teaching positions [at the newly established Taisho Normal Elementary School] from applicants who had come to us using all possible connections at their disposal."¹ But even then Mr. Makiguchi wasn't satisfied. Determined to invite talented people from around the country to teach at the school, he actively solicited friends and acquaintances to refer bright and able candidates to him.

Mr. Makiguchi's criteria were, in addition to a serious commitment to teaching, the applicant's aspirations and a specialty.² He concentrated exclusively on finding and raising talented and capable individuals. In *The System of Value-Creating Education* (Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei), he writes, "The root of the difficulties we currently face in all areas of society is a lack of talented people."³

I am happy to report that a friend of ours from China lavished praise on the SGI recently, declaring, "Many peaches and damsons adorn your gateway" — meaning that our organization is rich and fragrant with many talented people. We are celebrating a springtime of capable people. How delighted Mr. Makiguchi would surely be!

An Atmosphere of Free Discussion

In this essay, Mr. Makiguchi encourages young people to make the most of their talents. He was a leader who inspired and energized the youth. I hope all of you, too, will be such leaders in your respective countries.

According to Mr. Makiguchi, no matter how bright and learned people may be, if they are forced to silently endure the harassment of ill-natured seniors, they will eventually lose their enthusiasm and interest; they will grow passive and cowardly.

Mr. Makiguchi was perfectly aware of this negative tendency of Japanese society. That is why he created, in a most natural manner, an environment where people felt comfortable discussing and debating ideas without reservation.

Such is the world of the SGI.

Mr. Makiguchi remarked that it was exhilarating to see youth engaged in frank and rigorous debate, energetically pursuing arguments based on logic and reason. Of course, when a debate grew too divisive and no solution was in sight, he was excellent at bringing the viewpoints together and, after listening to them all carefully, coming to a conclusion that all parties found convincing and satisfying.

Why? Because, as a teacher, Mr. Makiguchi was always committed to what was best for the children, for the students, and that commitment informed his judgment. It is here that we can see Mr. Makiguchi's superlative leadership.

I hope that, in the SGI organizations in your respective countries, you will keep your sight on the fundamental goal of working for the sake of the members and kosen-rufu, and advancing together firmly united in purpose. As long as we have that unity, we will never be deadlocked.

I add my hope that the youth division members will treat their

PLEASE SEE DEVELOP, NEXT PAGE

seniors in faith, who have fought hard and valiantly for many long years, with the highest respect and endeavor to learn from them.

Persecution Arising From Resentment

Suddenly, in 1919, authorities pressured Mr. Makiguchi, then in his late 40s, and the other teachers committed to operating an ideal school, as the authorities sought to drive Mr. Makiguchi from his post. It started when an influential local figure demanded that his child receive preferential treatment, and Mr. Makiguchi flatly refused. The man's resentment and the plotting of a major political figure in the Tokyo city assembly seem to have played a part as events unfolded. The incident was directly linked to what was later recognized as the corruption of the city government.

The political leader who persecuted Mr. Makiguchi came under fire as a major suspect in scandals that later surfaced, and he was forced to resign from office.

At this juncture, Mr. Maeda and the other young teachers banded together to defend Mr. Makiguchi, fiercely opposing moves to oust him. In the essay, Mr. Makiguchi describes their efforts:

[The youth] knew that if they conferred with me they would

only cause me further trouble, or that I would stop them. So without consulting me at all, they opposed my dismissal. They broke relations with one of the teachers [who was in league with the politician seeking to dismiss Mr. Makiguchi], and the remaining 25 formed an alliance and signed a petition of protest, giving the educational authorities a great deal of trouble.... Strongly united, all 25 of them handed in their resignations simultaneously, and there was nothing anyone could do to stop them.⁴

"If Mr. Makiguchi is fired, we quit, too!" The youth staunchly stood by Mr. Makiguchi. No one could quell their indignation at the wrong being done to their principal. The sincerity and commitment to justice displayed by the young teachers moved even their opponents. The parents of the students joined forces with the teachers and, to protest the attempt to dismiss Mr. Makiguchi, kept their children from school for three days. Here we see historical evidence of just how respected Mr. Makiguchi was by the youth, and how fervently the people supported him.

A 'People's Movement' Dedicated to Justice

Another noteworthy point in this essay is that Mr. Makiguchi uses the expression "people's movement." He says that the actions of the young teachers who



Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's home.

stood up against the oppressive measures of the authorities were, in spirit, "a small manifestation of the so-called people's movements that had sprung up everywhere after the World War [I] — representing resistance to the tyranny of the ruling classes and the oppressive governments of political

leaders who were subservient to them."⁵ Mr. Makiguchi was one of the first to spot this major new trend in the world, the rise of people's movements.

Despite his supporters' vociferous protests, Mr. Makiguchi was not allowed to remain principal of the Taisho Normal Elementary School.

Instead, he was transferred to the Nishimachi Normal Elementary School. It was there that he had his historic encounter with Mr. Toda in the spring of 1920.

Seventy-seven years have passed since then. Today, the Soka movement, forged from the brilliant alliance of youth committed to justice and truth, and carrying on in the footsteps of Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda, has spread magnificently throughout the world. Let us continue to boldly advance the great people's movement for peace, culture and education in the 21st century under the banner of Buddhist humanism.

This SGI training course brings together in one place the most noble and praiseworthy leaders of the people from around the globe. With a prayer from my heart that your stay in Japan will be enjoyable, pleasant, fruitful and productive, I close my remarks today. ☸

1. "Maeda-kun no Omoide" (Memories of Maeda), *Educational Realm* (Kyoiku Kai), May 3, 1923, pp. 98-101.
2. *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo*, ed. Seikyo Shimbun Editorial Committee (Tokyo: Seikyo Shimbunsha, 1973), p. 66.
3. *The Collected Writings of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi* (Makiguchi Tsunesaburo Zenshu), (Tokyo: Daisan Bunmeisha, 1983), vol. 6, p. 25.
4. "Memories of Maeda," pp. 100-01.
5. "Memories of Maeda," p. 101.

GLOSSARY

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

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

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

gongyo: Literally, "assiduous practice." In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, gongyo means to recite the "Expedient

Means" (2nd) chapter and the "Life Span of the Tathagata" (16th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo in front of the Gohonzon.

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

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

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

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

Latter Day of the Law: The period beginning 2,000 years after Shakyamuni's death, when his teachings lose their power and the essence of the Lotus Sutra will be propagated.

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

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

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

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

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

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

PREGUNTAS Y RESPUESTAS SOBRE EL ASUNTO RELACIONADO CON EL TEMPLO

¿Cuál Es el Asunto Relacionado Con el Templo?

Aunque este problema tiene sus raíces que van mas allá de los tiempos en que la Soka Gakkai fue fundada, localizarlas de una manera significativa requeriría un estudio sobre la historia de la Nichiren Shoshu, la "Escuela Fuji" del Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin. También sería necesario hacer un análisis sobre las condiciones de la sociedad feudal japonesa que a través de los siglos indujo a los sacerdotes budistas a desarrollar ciertas actitudes y tendencias hacia los creyentes laicos; las cuales podrían ser descritas como una mentalidad de "lord y súbdito".

A finales del año 1990, estaba evidentemente claro que el sacerdocio de la Nichiren Shoshu (el cual la Soka Gakkai siempre había apoyado desde que fue fundada) había conspirado ya sea para tomar control absoluto de la organización o desmantelarla. Este plan fue llamado "Operación C", que literalmente significa cortar. Dicho plan de ataque fue inspirado y dirigido por el sumo prelado de la Nichiren Shoshu — Nikken Abe.

Esto empezó con una serie de nueve preguntas en forma escrita a los líderes de la Soka Gakkai; acusando al presidente de la SGI, Daisaku Ikeda, entre varias otras cosas, de criticar al Sumo Prelado. El sacerdocio basó sus preguntas en una transcripción

inexacta y alterada de un "cassette" que contenía un discurso grabado del presidente de la SGI. Mas tarde, el clero admitió la inexactitud de la transcripción de dicho "cassette" de un origen sospechoso. En consecuencia, el sacerdocio retractó cuatro de sus preguntas. Las otras preguntas fueron tomadas completamente fuera de contexto y mal interpretadas grotescamente.

Por ejemplo, entre estas preguntas se criticaba al presidente Ikeda de haber sugerido que la parte coral de "Oda a la Felicidad" compuesta por Beethoven, fuera cantada en una reunión de líderes. El clero afirmaba que el hecho de que la letra de esta pieza musical (escrita por Friedrich Schiller) hacía unas referencias de tipo cristiano, la Soka Gakkai estaría promoviendo enseñanzas no-Budistas. Esta crítica fue hecha apesar de que generalmente se reconoce que el poema de Schiller es un honor al potencial mas grande del espíritu humano; una celebración de la razón, felicidad interna y libertad humana. Esto instó a que la Soka Gakkai solicitara un diálogo cara a cara para así resolver cualquier malentendido o mal interpretaciones. Sin embargo, el clero rehusó firmemente a dicha petición y exigió una respuesta a sus acusaciones en forma escrita en el lapso de una semana.

La actitud adoptada por el sac-

erdocio, la trivialidad de las acusaciones, junto a otra información que salió a la luz, puso muy en claro que la cinta grabada no era mas que un pretexto para justificar las acciones que el sacerdocio ya había planeado en contra de la Soka Gakkai. Ya que el sacerdocio había rehusado la vía del diálogo, la Soka Gakkai presentó sus propias preguntas a éste, preguntándole el motivo de sus acciones.

El sacerdocio continuó con una serie de medidas parciales, incluyendo revisar las ordenanzas de la Nichiren Shoshu para así poder destituir al presidente Ikeda de su cargo como representante laico al templo principal. Además se sumaron otras estipulaciones en aquellos reglamentos para así tomar acciones punitivas en contra de cualquier creyente quien "critique" al Sumo Prelado, ya sea en forma escrita o verbal, aunque no se especificó que querían decir con "crítica".

Poco antes de este anuncio, Nikken Abe se había reunido clandestinamente con Isao Dan, un periodista japonés de una prensa sensacionalista y quien tiene la fama de haber escrito artículos defamatorios y carentes de fundamentos acerca de la Soka Gakkai. Basado en este hecho, estaba muy claro que Nikken estaba preparando un ataque en contra de la Soka Gakkai, el cual incluiría ataques por parte de los medios de comunicación.

La trayectoria de hechos en-

Puntos Claves

- Esta cuestión con el sacerdocio tiene sus raíces en la historia del templo cuya actitud feudalista hacia los creyentes laicos es muy típica de la historia y cultura japonesa.
- Dichas actitudes se manifestaron a través de las acciones de la Nichiren shoshu y de Nikken Abe como su Sumo Prelado, quien trató de desmantelar a la Soka Gakkai en un plan llamado "Operación C".
- Para reforzar sus objetivos el Sumo Prelado conspiró con periodistas de prensa sensacionalista para difamar a la Soka Gakkai y a su presidente.
- Poco después de que la Soka Gakkai había pedido varias veces una audiencia para dialogar, el sacerdocio de la Nichiren Shoshu optó por excomunicar a la organización y a sus líderes en forma total.
- En vista de estos hechos, la SGI ha pedido la renuncia de Nikken y ha estado educando a las personas sobre la realidad e intenciones de la Nichiren Shoshu.

contra de la Soka Gakkai y la SGI por parte del sacerdocio culminó en una "orden de disolución" de la SGI, y finalmente en Noviembre de 1991 la notificación de excomunión.

Habiendo descubierto el carácter y personalidad de Nikken Abe, la Soka Gakkai ha pedido la renuncia de éste. Como respuesta a las mentiras propagadas por el sacerdocio, la Soka Gakkai ha estado tratando continuamente de aclarar la verdad de los hechos. Desde que empezó esta cuestión, muchos

acontecimientos se han dado a conocer y mucha información a salido a la luz; los cuales han profundizado la convicción fundamental de la SGI, de que estos ataques han ocurrido porque se esta practicando el Budismo de acuerdo con el espíritu de Nichiren Daishonin, dedicados a lograr el kosen-rufu. ❖

Traducción del panfleto "Preguntas y Respuestas Sobre el Asunto Relacionado Con el Templo", por el comité juvenil de traducción en Nueva York.

La Budeidad Yace en Triunfar Sobre Enemigos Poderosos

A continuación una excerpta seleccionada de un discurso pronunciado por el Presidente de la SGI, Daisaku Ikeda, durante la 96ava reunión para responsables de sede central en conmemoración del 96avo natalicio de Josei Toda, el 27 de enero de 1996, Tokio.

Nichiren Daishonin señala: "Cuando uno enfrenta grandes persecuciones, tiene asegurado el logro de la Budeidad, tal como dice un fragmento de un sutra: 'Disfrutan de buenas circunstancias en existencias futuras' (Sutra del Loto, pág. 99)" (Gosho Zenshu, pág. 825). Tener que superar graves obstáculos por la causa del Budismo, en esta vida, garantiza que

lograremos la iluminación. Y el hecho de librar batalla con los tres enemigos poderosos lo torna cierto para toda la eternidad; su aparición, es de por sí, clara prueba de ello.

En el "Ongi Kuden" (Registro de las enseñanzas transmitidas oralmente), el Daishonin afirma: "Uno debería pensar que el hecho de enfrentar obstáculos es una auténtica paz, sosiego." Uno se preguntará qué tiene de cómodo y pacífico el enfrentamiento contra obstáculos. Pero lo cierto es que cuando uno libra contienda contra las dificultades y logra vencerlas, puede transformar su destino y manifestar su Budeidad. Por lo tanto, cuando uno pone pecho a la adversidad está abriendo el camino

para sentirse a gusto y feliz.

Este proceso podría compararse con el erradicar las "celulas cancerosas" de las causas negativas que existen dentro de nuestra vida.

Aunque remontar y vencer los obstáculos parezca doloroso en su momento, cuando uno lo hace puede, de un solo plumazo, abrir el poderoso estado de vida de la Budeidad.

Como dice el Daishonin cuando habla de disminuir la retribución Kármica: "Los sufrimientos del infierno se desvanecerán instantáneamente."

En toda lucha seria y sincera, ya sea en la vida o en el deporte, siempre llega la hora de los enfrentamientos cruciales. Cuando aparecen esas "montañas," uno

tiene que escalarlas y llegar hasta la cima. para poder triunfar en la práctica budista, uno también tiene que enfrentar desafíos cruciales.

En esto consiste hacer frente a los tres enemigos poderosos. Si queremos concretar el kosen-rufu y lograr la Budeidad, tenemos que imponernos sobre esas montañas. De modo que sufrir duras persecuciones en bien del budismo es algo, en verdad, digno de celebrar.

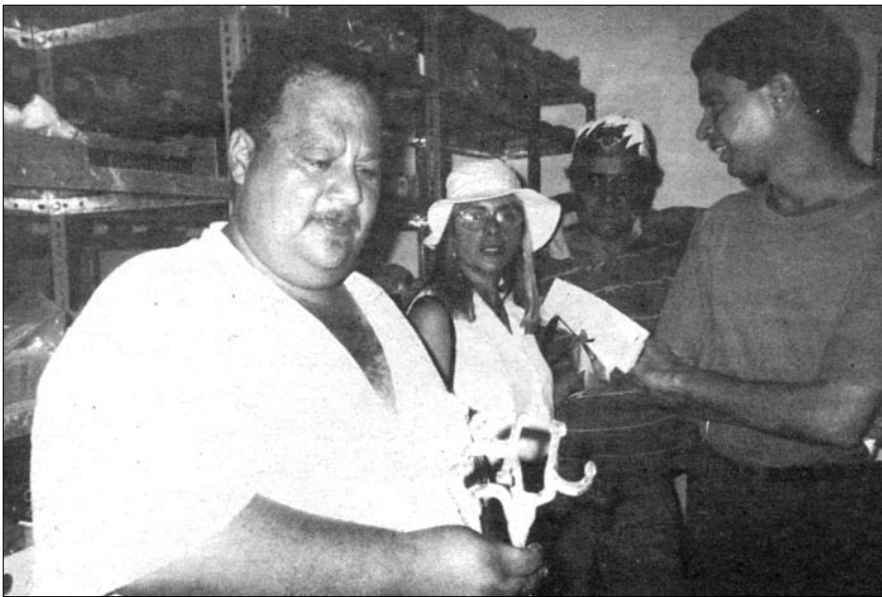
Pero con demasiada frecuencia, las personas tienden a sentir pavor y a emprender la retirada, no bien advierten que los obstáculos se aproximan. Claro que, si uno actúa así, jamás podrá lograr la Budeidad.

La vida de los presidentes

Makiguchi y Toda fue, en verdad, una gesta heroica; demostró que el Daishonin estaba totalmente en lo cierto al afirmar que las grandes persecuciones aseguraban el logro de la Budeidad en esta existencia y el beneficio de buenas circunstancias en las próximas.

Del mismo modo, como sucesores de ellos, nosotros también estamos avanzando de lleno por este camino de honor, por esta ruta directa hacia la concreción de la Budeidad.

Mientras triunfemos en esta resuelta contienda contra los tres enemigos poderosos, quiero decirles: "¡Esta es la oportunidad para que logremos la Budeidad! ¡Qué afortunados somos de estar viviendo en esta Época!" ❖



(Debajo) Miembros en la cueva de las Golondrinas (Manatí).
(A la izquierda) Carlos Ayés, arqueólogo con miembros en las facilidades del Departamento de Arqueología en Manatí.



Expedición Arqueológica e Intercambio Cultural

Por ALINA MARRERO
PUERTO RICO

Cuando en el distrito de Bayamón decidimos que íbamos a hacer para la Séptima Reunión Conmemorativa de la División de Damas, escogimos una conferencia ilustrada sobre arqueología. El hijo de nuestra compañera miembro Letty. Carlos Ayés, sentía una pasión ardiente por hablar del tema. En esos momentos no lo sabíamos, pero estábamos abriendo un importante camino hacia la "amistad mediante un diálogo sincero y un intercambio cultural" que culminaría en una visita a los tesoros del pueblo Manatí. Carlos es el arqueólogo oficial de este municipio.

En esta región del norte de la isla, las personas atienden con tal esmero los asuntos culturales, y el área es tan abundante en recursos naturales, que se conoce a Manatí como la Atenas de Puerto Rico. Esto lo comprobamos el segundo sábado de junio, cuando hacia allá dirigimos nuestros pasos.

La actividad comenzó con el

gongyo en la casa de nuestro encargado de distrito Ian Willoughby y Evelyn Rivera. Allí estábamos, miembros de todas las divisiones, dirigentes de sede ¡y hasta invitados!

Estudiamos una orientación del Presidente Ikeda donde se destacaba el espíritu de Maudgalayana, quien fue un discípulo de Sakyamuni que podía viajar alrededor del mundo en un abrir y cerrar de ojos. La fuente de su fortuna la debía a causas hechas en el pasado. No escatimaba distancias para escuchar al Buda. Después de discutir amistosamente sobre la orientación, nos sentimos muy motivados. Lo que íbamos a hacer era importante. En poco tiempo, estaríamos compartiendo con personas que no conocían la SGI.

Al llegar al Acrópolis de Manatí, centro cultural y recreativo dedicado a la preservación del ambiente, nos recibió nuestro amigo Carlos. Además, nos esperaba un pintoresco "trolley", cortesía del Honorable Alcalde Juan Aubín Cruz Manzano, que nos conduciría más tarde por gran parte de la aventura.

Inicialmente, Carlos nos invitó a entrar a las facilidades del Departamento de Arqueología en el Acrópolis. Allí, entre colecciones hermosas de imaginería popular y máscaras sudamericanas, sobresalen valiosos descubrimientos de yacimientos arqueológicos hechos por él.

Nuestra isla, cuyo nombre ancestral es Borinkén, que en dialecto taíno significa "tierra del gran señor," es históricamente reconocida como un importante centro poblacional de indios aruacos e igneri (250 AEC-600DEC) y de indios tainos (600DEC-siglo 16).

Sin embargo, al ver en el mapa de Manatí la cantidad de puntos que identificaban los yacimientos de indios arcaicos [conocidos en Cuba como los Siboney] (4010 AEC-60 DEC). No pudimos menos que sorprendernos y darnos cuenta de la importancia de sus descubrimientos, ya que en nuestra isla, hasta el momento, se han descubierto pocos yacimientos de estos indios.

"Puerto Rico fue un centro principal para los arcaicos," comentó Carlos, "esta será la aportación que, como arqueólogo, haga a mi pueblo," terminó diciendo con emoción en sus palabras determinadas.

Concluida esta parte de la visita, abordamos el "trolley" para continuar nuestra experiencia. Conocimos a nuestro guía, Alberto Rosario, quien resultó ser amigo desde la adolescencia de uno de los miembros. Dado que no se habían visto en veinte años, el encuentro fue motivo de mucha algarabía y emoción.

Alberto nos condujo a varios lugares de interés. Visitamos la Biblioteca Don Francisco Al-

varez Marrero, cuyas facilidades no tienen nada que envidiar a ninguna biblioteca moderna, el edificio Salón de los Poetas, la Plaza de la Historia, donde una gigantesca placa de mármol negro está escrita en letras de oro ¡de verdad! También visitamos la barriada La California donde nació la plena "Elena toma bombón"; el valle del Río Grande de Manatí donde estuvo la central azucarera Hacienda Monserrate, la finca La Esperanza del Fideicomiso de Conservación y la Playa Mar Chiquita. En esta playa nos detuvimos a descansar y a disfrutar de un almuerzo cortesía de Bin, como cariñosamente se conoce al alcalde.

Continuamos nuestra excursión con una visita a la Cueva de las Golondrinas, la primera cueva en Puerto Rico en ser estudiada y descrita para propósitos científicos. En las paredes de la cueva se destacan antiguas rocas carvadas taínas. Del techo cuelgan murciélagos y allí también vuelan golondrinas. Después nos dirigimos a la Playa Los Tubos, donde nos retratamos con la estatua de uno de los dos chupacabras que, junto a la figura de un manatí, reciben a los visitantes a la playa.

Frente a esta playa se impone el lago Tortuguero, nico lago natural de aguas dulces en Puerto Rico, donde residen sendos caimanes.

"Aquí se está comenzando a trabajar en un yacimiento arqueológico. Vendré el próximo lunes con unos jóvenes a excavar," nos dijo Carlos, mientras el "trolley" nos llevaba de regreso al Acrópolis y el guía describía los recursos naturales y todo el potencial de Manatí.

Manatí debe su nombre, bien sea al manatí en peligro de extinción de esta región, o al Río Manatubón. Este pueblo fue en realidad el primado de Puerto Rico.

Antes de fundar la granja del Toa, Ponce de León estuvo en sus playas (de Manatí) unos días. Por alguna razón no exploró más allá de cierto sitio y se fue de aquí sin saber todo lo que la región tenía que ofrecer, nos dijo Alberto sin esconder su orgullo de ser manatíeño.

Cuando regresamos al Acrópolis conversamos con Carlos y Alberto sobre la Soka Gakkai, ¡Y le enseñamos a Alberto a entonar daimoku!

Enviamos al alcalde nuestro mensaje de paz y amistad, y le hicimos entrega de literatura de la Soka Gakkai para el municipio.

De regreso a nuestras casas no hacíamos mas que pensar: ¡Qué maravilloso es tomar parte en las actividades de nuestra organización! no solo son divertidas sino también hacemos lo más importante de nuestras vidas, ¡kosen-rufu!

Después de una semana, nos volvimos a encontrar en la reunión de grupo. Letty nos informó que su hijo había recibido un gran beneficio. Encontró el esqueleto de un hombre taíno en su primer día de excavación. ¡Se imaginan! Sólo en raras ocasiones un arqueólogo tiene dicha de encontrar algo, aunque sea pequeño, el primer día.

Carlos es un gran amigo de la Soka Gakkai, quien apoya nuestras causas. Y, ¿quién sabe? puede que muy pronto comencemos a enseñarle gongyo. ¡Siempre nos sentiremos orgullosos y agradecidos de su amistad!

La Nueva Revolución Humana, vol. I y II



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vol. I: #0551; vol. II: #0552

Families First



By TERRY ELLIS
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

All over the world — across ethnic, cultural and religious divides — many people say having a happy family is a top priority. And yet these same people often see the important relationships in their lives slipping through their fingers like lost dreams.

That's what the Covey Leadership Center discovered in analyzing 125,000 personal mission statements from around the world, created in conjunction with training programs based on *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. That book, published in 1989, has sold more than 11 million copies worldwide and made Stephen R. Covey a household name in the corporate world.

Why do people have less and less time for the things that are important to them?

The answer: "Probably because they're not urgent. They aren't pressing. They don't act on you. You have to act on them," Covey writes in his 1994 book, *First Things First*. He offers the example of filling a jar first with big rocks and then fitting in gravel, sand and water. The point is not that with hard work you can fill in the gaps in your time-managed day. The point is that unless you put the rocks in first — the things that truly are important — you probably won't fit them in at all. And, if you try to later, you'll just make a big mess.

John Covey, who along with his older brother is about to publish a new book for families (*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families*, due out in October) says the key is to create your family mission

statement and then make time for one-on-one relationships, as well as family time.

Easier said than done? Perhaps.

"People get on a guilt trip about this," says John Covey. The fact is, he adds, that no business, sports team or other organization would start out with no plan. That you sometimes diverge from the plan doesn't mean the plan isn't important.

Covey continues: "We don't set up some ideal standard for people to follow.... We want people to keep the end in mind — to be proactive instead of victims or instead of scapegoating or feeling bad.... A lot of what's out there in society and the media is family fatal. We want to help the individual mother or parents or blended family to take leadership in the home and create a beautiful family culture where people learn, play and grow together." 