

World Tribune

No. 3155

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

SEPTEMBER 5, 1997

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

DATED MATERIAL: PLEASE DELIVER BY ISSUE DATE

Celebrating 50 Years

SGI President Ikeda wrote and dedicated the following three poems to all SGI members throughout the world to commemorate his 50th anniversary of embracing faith, Aug. 24, 1947.

For 50 years
I have advanced with a spirit
Of selfless devotion
At last fulfilling
The vow I made for this lifetime

You and I
Together we have scored
A resounding victory
Defeating and conquering
The three powerful enemies

May this unceasing procession
Proud and exuberant
Ten million strong
Forever win
In each and every endeavor

President Ikeda wrote and dedicated the following three poems to youth division members to commemorate his 50th anniversary of embracing faith.

Fifty years have passed
Since I first embarked
On my great struggle for the Law
Now finally triumphing
In a religious revolution

Gazing together
At Mount Fuji's lofty peak
In oneness of mentor and disciple
Persevere toward the future
With unshakable determination

Rise intrepidly
As great and heroic
Champions of faith
To you I entrust the future
On you I count to complete my work



Photo by JIM DREISBACH

The time to share thoughts and experiences is the highlight of the men's division conference in Florida.

Men on the Move

At a Florida conference celebrating Men's Division Day, men share how they strive to set an example.

By JIM DREISBACH
CORRESPONDENT

Aug. 24, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

The pulsing beat of the rock group Weeds mirrored the spirit that already rocked the room during a celebration of Men's Division Day at the Florida Nature and Culture Center today.

On the final day of a weekend conference that marked the 50th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda taking faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism, local Florida men joined the nationwide participants for a special meeting.

During and after the meeting, and throughout the weekend, the men shared how they put Buddhism into action. "I feel that I must set the example," Al Magee of Orange County, Calif., said. "By *set the example*, I mean I can't sit by and wait for anyone else to introduce people to the practice. So I've introduced a

friend and am teaching him gongyo. Since then, my members have gotten the spirit. Now I've realized how much my actions influence them. I've invited other members to come to my house to chant. First it was only two, then three, then five people attending. Now I try to have two or three of these activities at my house a week."

Ray Petty of New York is not only involved in his district but in the community. "I've been working with young people in

Happiness Comes From Working for Others

SGI Deputy President Einosuke Akiya wrote the following for the August 1997 Daikyakureng, the Soka Gakkai study journal.

How can people become truly happy? Neither material assets nor circumstances guarantee happiness. When there are problems in the home, for instance, even the wealthiest person can feel miserable. When two people face the same deadlock, one may resent the situation and become despondent while the other uses what may appear to be a setback as a springboard to advance. In fact, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, the first and second Soka Gakkai presidents, attained Buddhahood—the supreme state of happiness — while living under the harshest circumstances in prison.

Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism teaches that by embracing Nam-myoho-renge-kyo of the Three Great Secret Laws and carrying out the practice for oneself and others, one can attain a state of absolute happiness. No matter how bothersome our environment may be, we can change it into a land of pure joy. This is what it means to practice the Buddhism

PLEASE SEE MEN, 4

PLEASE SEE AKIYA, 4

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

As long as there's an organization of the Daishonin's followers practicing as the Goshu teaches, that's where you'll find me. I've broken through too many dependencies to backslide now and deny that I alone have the power to access my Buddhahood. How could a high priest even consider obstructing this privilege we each inherently possess? I exchanged the Nikken Gohonzon not because of his calligraphy but rather to stand up and support the movement and wonderful fellowship of believers called the SGI.

— RICHARD CASSELMAN,
West Hollywood, Calif.

I felt as if I was playing for two teams. I mean I was full force supporting the SGI, but then I still had the Nikken Gohonzon. I could not be part of both. One cannot be on good terms with good and evil at the same time. I know what's right for me.

— A.J. CASTANEDAS,
Fort Hood, Texas



Recently, members in my district were encouraging me to exchange my Nikken Gohonzon. I did not see the value in doing this exchange.

However, after chanting I realized that exchanging the Gohonzon would be a cause to stand up to Nikken. If I were to keep the Nikken Gohonzon I would be encouraging injustice. On July 2, I received the Nichikan Gohonzon. I have never felt so close and connected to my practice and to the SGI.

— ALICE WATSON,
San Jose, Calif.

In December 1990–January 1991, we witnessed in Japan the great difference of attitude between SGI members and Nikken's followers. For the very first time we felt that our true mentor was Mr. Ikeda, because he was struggling

against the evil, the hypocrisy and the ingratitude as Nichiren would have done. When the day came, we were happy and honored to receive the Gohonzon from the SGI, as we believed (and still believe) that Mr. Ikeda's policy in promoting kosen-rufu is the right one in accordance with the "26 Admonitions" by Nikko Shonin.

— STEFANO CIRELLI and
LUCIA BATTAGLIOLI, Milan, Italy



I exchanged the Gohonzon only after I had stated to my leaders what I truly felt about this issue, as my first reaction was of disbelief. I mean, I couldn't follow

the raw emotions that surfaced at first. Only when a senior leader told me to follow what was in my heart, not what people told me, did I convince myself to do it. Now, in hindsight, I deeply appreciate the whole episode as a moment where my practice was shaken to the core and I had to grapple with my fundamental darkness.

— FRANCISCO PALACIO,
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

When our priest said the temple issue began with SGI President Ikeda's speech against authoritarianism, my mind was made up. The temple continues to regard itself as superior to us. Too much suffering is caused with that kind of thinking. I also asked our priest what his concept of world peace was. His answer was that we should all center on the local temples. The SGI has spread this Buddhism like no one else ever has! I returned the Nikken-transcribed Gohonzon to let them know I want world peace.

— TESSIE METCALF, Wheaton, Md.

At first I was a little resistant to exchanging the Gohonzon. I thought, well since we have a choice, there is really no need. And since both Gohonzon

work, it doesn't matter. When I learned how Nichikan's spirit was to restore Nichiren Daishonin's teaching, I felt the eternal nature of that sincerity pulsate in our organization. By exchanging the Gohonzon, I would be casting my vote in the universe to get the negative influence of Nikken out of my life. I really feel that world peace is within our reach when we stand up for the dignity of the human being in this way.

— FREDERICK FRIEDLAND,
San Francisco

When the opportunity arose to exchange the Nikken Gohonzon for the Nichikan Gohonzon, I knew there was nothing wrong with the one I had had all that time because of the tremendous benefits I received during the first decade or so of my practice. However, I asked myself, if President Ikeda had a Nikken Gohonzon, what would he do? The answer was clear, so I traded mine in during the first chance offered. As long as we "rely on the Law, not upon persons," I really don't think it matters which one we chant to.

— LIZ CARTER, Denver

Nine years into my practice, in 1983, I received a Gohonzon transcribed by Nikken. Even though it had a gorgeous green-gold satin backing, I was immediately depressed by it and puzzled by my reaction. I hadn't felt this way before. Excommunication by Nikken spurred my desire to exchange this Gohonzon. Right away I felt a clear difference in chanting to the Gohonzon transcribed by Nichikan, a lightness and joy. Clear proof that the life-condition of the transcriber *deeply* affects those who chant to it. It has revolutionized my practice and helped me continue to chant.

— JANE DOUGLAS YOUNG,
New York

I participated in the Gohonzon exchange because I saw it as a special opportunity to breathe new determination and vital-

ity into my practice. I was experiencing many obstacles, my life-condition was low, and my practice was in a slump. Since receiving this beautiful new Gohonzon, I have overcome several significant obstacles, introduced a friend to the practice, challenged myself by teaching weekly "Goshu school" for new members, and improved my attitude toward my practice.

— AMY LATHECROW,
Bakersfield, Calif.



In the beginning, I incorrectly viewed the situation as a power struggle between President Ikeda and Nikken. But after I began a personal and group

study campaign, I started to understand the importance of having the Daishonin's spirit to stand up against injustices and to root out evil. Exchanging the Nikken-transcribed Gohonzon was a taste of true freedom.

— MAUDE O'DONNELL, Houston

After I had spent a few years in the temple movement, I saw how empty and threadbare it truly was. I returned to the SGI and began to feel how lifeless chanting to the Nikken Gohonzon was. I decided to make the choice for "life" — to receive the new Gohonzon. I feel refreshed and vigorous since then, and I have received many benefits.

— PATRICIA WOOLMAN,
Alhambra, Calif.

Returning the Nikken Gohonzon made me feel like finally I had a concrete course of action to take, in addition to daimoku, to fight against Nikken. To me, it was the ultimate rejection and act of finality — like saying, "I don't want you."

— CLAUDIA WELLINGTON,
New York

Thanks to all who responded!

NEXT MONTH'S QUESTION:

'What has been the biggest change in your beliefs since you started practicing?'

Please be specific and limit your responses to 50 words or less. All responses are subject to editing. Please send your responses and a face photo of yourself to: "Question of the Month," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, Calif., 90401. Fax: 310-260-8910. Or e-mail us at: SokaNews@aol.com. *Please do not fax photos.*

Deadline: Sept. 22

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**

Where Is Your 'Garden of Humanity'?

This is to respond to Joe Kostecke's letter (Aug. 22 "Mailbox") on the article "Stop! In the Name of Peace" (July 18 *World Tribune*) by Leslie Wines regarding the "safe little world to hide in" or "garden of humanity." I agreed with Mr. Kostecke that the realm of Buddhism is a "garden of humanity." It is the ideal that every one of us strives for. However, the article refers to the fact that the "kosen-rufu movement exists to rid the world of its misery." It is true that in the past a lot of us used Buddhist activities to hide our misery. Many of us got our awakening when SGI President Ikeda came in 1990 and liberated us! Even though we, leaders and members alike, knew the concept of "Middle of the Road," there were not many who practiced it. I can name more than a few leaders from my young women's division days.

What I do not agree with Mr. Kostecke about is that no matter what the circumstance(s), the bottom line is up to us. We can view our Gakkai activities as our "garden of humanity" or we can view EVERY DAY OF OUR LIVES as our "safe little world to hide in." It makes no difference where we are and what we do. Our sincere desire and hope will penetrate the walls of difference we (as Buddhists) need to face in the next millennium.

— KAREN ROACH, San Pedro, Calif.

An Artsfest Reflection

Myself, along with the rest of the SGI Boston members, friends and family, recently completed Artsfest '97. It was a weekend overflowing with art, creativity, love and caring. Our humble Boston Community Center was transformed into an art gallery, children and adult crafts center, sound stage, movie theater, puppet theater, coffeehouse and dance hall.

Observing what was going on around me, I realized that this is the way human beings are supposed to feel: happy, creative, free, reflective and filled with laughter and love. It reaffirmed my feeling that every day as a human being we should in some way connect to art and artists. Therefore, I want to propose that we celebrate art almost every day of the year, leaving one weekend free to have a ThreePoisonsfest, a celebration of greed, anger and stupidity, just to remind us of the way we used to feel before we made the Artsfest spirit part of our everyday lives.

— LARRY TISH, Boston

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).

Just Who's Disabled Here?

PERSPECTIVE

By IRLENE OWADA
DENVER

When I read about diversity in the *World Tribune*, I'm surprised that we haven't heard more from the disabled population. Many of us take for granted our ability to walk into a meeting and to see and hear all the wonderful things that go on there. Our organization has grown significantly, and we now have a wide range of disabled people whose needs are not always met. I see and hear about these needs and wonder what we can do collectively and individually to improve the situation.

When I was in my early 20s, I moved to Boston to study Oriental cooking in a commune. Each person in the commune had certain duties in preparing and serving the food. To my surprise, one of my duties was to help a woman get to the dining room. She was severely crippled from arthritis and diabetes.

I had never been around anyone in this condition. As long as she sat in her wheelchair and ate with the rest of the people, I didn't have any problem. But when I was told I had to get her out of bed, dress her and move her to her wheelchair, I suddenly felt appalled.

For a moment, I hesitated. I didn't want to do this. I had come to Boston to study cooking, not nursing. I had no experience in this area. But what could I do? Home was too far away, and everyone else in the center had done their turn. Now it was my turn. I decided I would do the best I could.

I went into her room, walked to her bedside and introduced myself. She told me her name was Mabel. She instructed me how to help her out of bed so she would feel less pain.

Her body was like a skeleton. She wasn't very old, maybe 50, but she looked many years older — like 90 or 100. She seemed closer to death

than to life. I dressed her gently. We didn't talk very much, and somehow I managed to get her to the dining room.

The next day I felt more competent. We talked more, and she shared stories about her life. Over the months I lived there, I found myself going back to her room not because I was supposed to help, but just to talk with her and tell her about my day. She was witty, intelligent and always willing to listen. Many young people came to her room to talk or read to her. In her quiet way, she reached the hearts of many people.

When she died a few years later, I was sorry I hadn't told her what a change she had made in my life. She had helped me overcome my fear, and I had learned a valuable lesson.

Many years later, I decided to go into the teaching profession. By this time, I had a number of years of chanting to help me challenge situations. A friend asked me to help her teach some emotionally impaired children. Here again, I had to challenge myself.

I spent the first day on the job with a pounding headache. I couldn't imagine how kids could behave so strangely. But with the aid of my Buddhist practice, I looked for and found the Buddha nature in each child. There were some who I had to chant a lot of daimoku for. For example, there was one boy — I'll call him Jake — whose charts described him as a feral (wild) child. That was putting it mildly. For this student I chanted intensely.

Then, one day, Jake came to class with a large, white, furry puppy. Although other students and teachers gathered around him to pet the puppy, he made a straight line across the room to me. He placed the puppy in my lap and said, "Mrs. Owada, this is my dog and her name is Snowflake." I knew at that moment my daimoku had touched him. This was Jake's way of letting me know that, in his book, I was OK.

That same year, I met a teacher who astounded me. At first I didn't notice anything un-

usual about her. She walked the crowded and bustling hallways much like the rest of us. It wasn't until she became my son's teacher that I noticed something missing: her hands. She had only two small, stubby fingers on each hand, yet she opened heavy doors and breezed into classes with an armload of heavy books and papers. It was much later when I heard her joking with a student about taking off her leg and saw, with a jolt, that she walked on plastic legs.

Later, after I got to know her better, I woke up one morning to chant an hour of daimoku with appreciation for knowing this woman! She was always so lively and enthusiastic, so full of hope. She had many physical challenges, but she seemed to sail through them. Although she was disabled and I was able-bodied, I felt that with my constant pessimism perhaps I was the one who was disabled.

I feel that our diversity issues in the SGI should include all of our special populations. I felt proud when I read that the organization was meeting these issues head on. We weren't just following some mandate; we were really trying to have a dialogue.

But sometimes for the disabled, it's hard to speak up. That's why it's my determination to be more aware of their special needs. If a community center is not equipped so that it is accessible or if there's more that could be done, I will take the initiative to speak up. And I hope by my example that others feel confident to do the same.

No one means to leave the disabled out, but those of us who are able-bodied don't always think in those terms simply because we don't have to deal with the issue ourselves. But to overlook the needs of the disabled, I believe, is to impair ourselves and our society.

I am determined to reach out, regardless of our differences, even if it's just to hold open a door for a disabled person and smile or ask about their day.

These people have a mission, too. ❏

What Do You Think?

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

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Happiness Comes From Working for Others

AKIYA, FROM PAGE 1

of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms. Through unrelenting determination we can completely transform our surroundings.

In a letter to his follower Shijo Kingo, the Daishonin says: "If you should fall into hell for some grave offense, no matter how Shakyamuni might urge me to become a Buddha, I would refuse; I would rather go to hell with you. For if you and I should fall into hell together, we would find Shakyamuni Buddha and the Lotus Sutra there" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd. ed.], pp. 237-38). This passage emphasizes that wherever Nichiren Daishonin and all the Buddhas and Buddhist deities gather, even if it is the realm of Hell, that place will immediately turn into a land of tranquil light and pure joy.

Buddhism's purpose lies in enabling us to develop the powerful

spirit to challenge and overcome even the most adverse situation and to establish an unshakable state of life characterized by the Buddha's four enlightened virtues — eternity, happiness, true self and purity. This is called revolutionizing one's state of life.

By participating in SGI activities, we can make a profound and lasting impact on

our state of life. By becoming involved in such activities and sparing no effort for the happiness of others, we can thoroughly polish our lives. Those members who choose not to engage in SGI activities are missing out on a golden opportunity to fundamentally change their lives.

Human revolution is accomplished by advancing and practicing with fellow members and exerting ourselves wholeheartedly for the Law and our communities. This is the great path of revolutionizing one's state of life.

Who has true faith? Those who wholeheartedly carry out activities within the organization are the most respectable; it is certainly not a matter of position or titles. In fact, the extent to which people can develop their lives and cultivate their humanity depends directly upon how joyfully they exert themselves for

kosen-rufu.

What do we need to do to attain an indomitable state of life? Fight against evil. By defeating great evil, we establish within ourselves an indestructible state of life of great good. "The *ku* of *kudoku* [benefit] means to extinguish evil, and *doku* means to bring forth good" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 762). Only by actively opposing evil can we defeat the inclination to remain passive observers, the negative tendency to tolerate or even accommodate evil. Through unflagging efforts to eradicate evil, we without fail positively transform our lives and experience a true revolution.

"If you light a lantern for another, it will also brighten your own way" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1598). If we are to revolutionize our state of life, it is indispensable that our Buddhist practice includes working for the well-being of others. This most obviously entails spending time with

friends and meeting new people. Only if we open up and engage in dialogue with individuals whose lifestyles, social status or even ways of thinking may differ from our own can we begin to forge a genuine understanding of others. This is also how we can develop bonds of mutual understanding. By conversing and em-

pathizing with others, we can expand and revolutionize our state of life. Therefore, SGI activities are the ultimate venue for human revolution.

The Human Revolution states, "A great human revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a nation, and further, will enable a change in the destiny of all humankind." The life of SGI President Ikeda, whose spirit is epitomized in this novel, can be regarded as an ideal model of a revolution in state of life. He has over the past 50 years been ceaselessly working to enable people to overcome their suffering, ultimately to establish world peace. While proudly advancing with President Ikeda, let us strive to dramatically revolutionize our lives while working for the happiness of others. ❧

By conversing and empathizing with others, we can expand and revolutionize our state of life.



Some 200 men from Florida join with their comrades from around the country, who are in town for a weekend conference at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. The Weeds rock group got people pumped up at a meeting celebrating SGI President Ikeda's 50th anniversary of taking faith.

Men on the Move Celebrate Men's Division Day

MEN, FROM PAGE 1

the community. I coordinate my company's large public works projects worth millions of dollars, so I have the expertise on how to put together these activities." He recently helped coordinate an African festival at the New York Culture Center that attracted 1,500 people, some 500

of whom were guests.

"I'm trying to encourage the young people in my community, the black community, because there is a crisis there," Mr. Petty says. "I'm trying to be a father and teach them things."

Ferris Jackson of Houston believes in the importance of being active within the men's division. "Whenever I have a

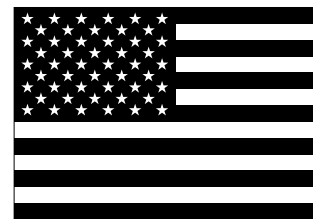
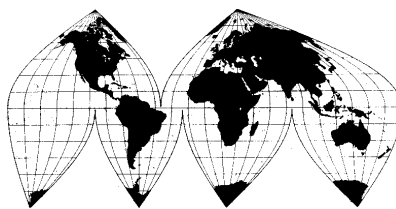
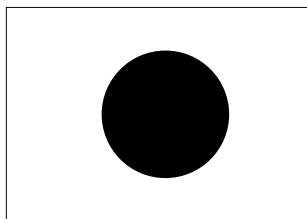
chance, I go to men's division meetings," he says. "There is so much experience and wisdom accumulated in the room. Just listening to the men talk, I gain so much. Though I have been practicing for 11 years, I feel that I can learn a lot more. Together, we gain so much more than we can individually. That's why I'm here." ❧

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 there 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.



Our Friends Are All Aboard!

Last month 88 Soka Gakkai youth visited three U.S. cities and made friends with many SGI-USA youth. Here are some stories of the friendships made:

Hirofume Inoue: This is a wonderful experience. I feel absolute freedom from the exchange. Last year, SGI President Ikeda gave guidance to the young men's division members that we should be strong. Don't worry about the system or authority, he said. I feel tonight there is total freedom in the San Francisco organization.



Photo by MIKE MULLEN

San Francisco — Jonathan Lakritz and Hirofume Inoue.

Jonathan Lakritz: This is the first time that I've been involved in an activity like this from beginning to end. At first, I was just involved without feeling the spirit of the activity. But I began to appreciate the creativity that had to occur to make this exchange happen. We really racked our brains to make it meaningful. The response from the members during the exchange was so sincere, and this validated all of the effort. Even though I may never see any one of the exchange members again, it is heartening to know that we are together in the world sharing the same mission and dream for peace.

Tomoyuki Kitazawa: Debra, you must come to Japan and dance for President Ikeda. When I watched you dance last night [at the Dallas Culture Center], I could feel the energy that came from deep within you. No words could express the feeling that came from you. I watched your face as you danced, and there was so much life and energy in your expression. It made me very happy. You must come to Japan and introduce your beautiful way of dancing to all those who cannot come to America. It is your duty to do this because your dancing has great power — it reminded me of a character in the Lotus Sutra, a bodhisattva who appears to dance and celebrate, spreading joy because Shakyamuni has given his teachings. You will make a great cause for everybody for kosen-rufu wherever you dance.



Dallas — Debra Weaver and Tomoyuki Kitazawa.

Debra Weaver: I used to cry because I was so unhappy, but right now I am crying because your words have made me so happy. You know, I used to dance out of desperation and frustration. I danced to escape — to be something I wasn't. Dancing was a way that I could deny my life and live in a fantasy world that belonged to the character I was portraying. But when I did this dance for the SGI, somehow, for the first time on the stage, I was myself, Debra, being who I truly am. That is what Buddhism is supposed to be for — to become one's true self. For me, that was the test of my practice. I am so touched by what you say because I see that I connected, heart to heart. Technically, I am nowhere near being able to dance as I once did, but nevertheless, I have discovered that I can communicate my happiness, I can share my joy and my real self, with the audience.

Akiko Kobayashi: In three seconds, the three of us were able to communicate our feelings to one another in a friendly way. When people talk with one another, looking into one another's eyes, they can communicate from their hearts. But why do we have many problems, such as war and discrimination? We, as youth, will have to talk with as many people as possible and build mutual understanding to make a peaceful future. I am firmly resolved to stand up for this cause.



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Los Angeles — (Left to right) Akiko Kobayashi, Nobuko Kobayashi and Junko Kanagawa.

Nobuko Kobayashi: Through this U.S.–Japan exchange I gained so much from the Japanese members. I heard about the youth activities that are currently going on in Japan and I felt a strong bond with my new friends, knowing that together we are fighting for kosen-rufu. These friends I know I will never forget. Junko Kanagawa is studying Russian. Her dream is to help with kosen-rufu in Russia. And Akiko Kobayashi wants to become a teacher. I was so impressed with these young women — they both had so much confidence in the Gohonzon, despite their young ages. I also noticed they had so much confidence and hope for the future. I really learned a lot from these young women. I gained so much from this exchange and learned so much from both the American and Japanese members. Words just aren't enough.

SIGN POSTS APPLYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS TO DAILY LIFE

Faith First

By REIKO GROSHELL
SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

Employ the strategy of the Lotus Sutra before any other.... The heart of strategy and swordsmanship derives from the Mystic Law. (The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 246)

I studied this Goshō recently because I needed to remind myself how important it is to “employ the strategy of the Lotus Sutra before any other.” As a young women’s division leader, I interact with many young women struggling with various aspects of their lives. They understand the Gohonzon works, but it can be hard for them to use the practice to solve their problems, to actually use faith first and “just do it.” And it’s sometimes equally hard for me to motivate them. So after much frustration and self-reflection, I wanted to once again study and develop my life with the Gohonzon so that I could convey what I have learned — not only with words but with my life.

Having faith first is not always easy for me, either. It seems much easier to dwell on my challenges rather than chant about them. However, time and again I have proven to myself that when I do go to the Gohonzon first, everything falls into place and I gain the courage to continue.

But why is it so difficult? Because sometimes I don’t trust that I truly have the power to change my situation. I think of strategies to “make things right.” I know the Gohonzon works, but I think maybe it won’t for me, or maybe it won’t work this time. I don’t doubt the Gohonzon’s power — I doubt my own powers of faith and practice. Unfortunately, it sometimes takes me quite a while to reawaken to my potential.

Commemorating SGI President Ikeda’s 50th anniversary of practicing Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism recently, I once again took the time to appreciate all his efforts, how he has exerted his whole life for others. It is easy now to see the results of his diligent efforts. But as we know from *The New Human Revolution*, he faced many difficulties every day in making today’s SGI. Thinking of my mentor’s example, I’ve redetermined to study more diligently, exert more effort and, no matter the difficulty, go to the Gohonzon first. That way, I can encourage others to do so, too. **W**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TEMPLE ISSUE

Is the Nichikan Gohonzon ‘Counterfeit’?

Q Why does Nichiren Shoshu claim that the Gohonzon issued by the SGI is “counterfeit”?

A This charge is an attempt by the priesthood to instill doubt and fear in members’ hearts, and to exploit their faith in the Gohonzon. The Gohonzon issued by the SGI are not the SGI’s own invention, nor are they counterfeit.

As mentioned before, in response to a proposal from Sendo Narita, the chief priest of Joen-ji, the SGI reproduced a Gohonzon transcribed in 1720 by Nichikan, the 26th high priest, and made it available to its membership. They are valid and authentic Gohonzon of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism.

The priesthood asserts that the Gohonzon issued by the SGI are “counterfeit” because: 1) they have not “been authorized by the high priest”; 2) they have not “received the legitimate ‘eye-opening’ ceremony”; and 3) they are “not issued by the head temple” (*NST News, Special Issue*, p. 9).

Nichiren Daishonin, in a letter known as “The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon,” 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-myōhō-renge-kyō. The Gohonzon is found in faith alone. As the sutra states, “Only with faith can one enter Buddhahood.” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 213)

Here, the Daishonin teaches us that it is our faith that taps the Gohonzon’s power, power that is located within us. Nowhere in his writings does Nichiren Daishonin state that we need sanction from a high priest to benefit from our practice. Not even the Daishonin himself advocated that his sanction was necessary to achieve benefit or attain Buddhahood, as he wrote in “Reply to Nichigon-ama”:

Whether or not your prayer is answered depends upon your faith; [if it is not,] the fault in no way lies with me, Nichiren. (MW-5, 305)

The significance of “eye-opening” lies in “opening the eye of the Buddha” within us — in other words, in recognizing and revealing the Buddha nature within us. To this end, Nichiren Daishonin stresses faith in the Lotus Sutra, that is, the Gohonzon. The priesthood insists that the high priest must perform an eye-opening ceremony over the Gohonzon to empower it. However, the ritual known as the eye-opening ceremony is nothing more than a formality passed down from provisional, esoteric Buddhism. It has no relation to the essential spirit or practice

Key Points:

- **The Gohonzon issued by the SGI is neither a counterfeit nor its own invention. It is based on a Gohonzon transcribed by Nichikan, the 26th high priest of Taiseki-ji. The temple’s claim that this Gohonzon is counterfeit is intended only to create doubt and fear in people’s hearts.**
- **We receive benefit through our practice to the Gohonzon, not through the high priest’s sanction or his ‘eye-opening’ ceremony. It is solely due to our faith and practice in accord with the Daishonin’s spirit.**

of the Daishonin’s Buddhism.

In some writings, the Daishonin refers to the eye-opening ceremony as applied to wooden and painted images, meaning Buddhist statues and the like. He is not talking about the Gohonzon in these passages and nowhere in his writings does he mention an eye-opening ceremony being necessary to empower the Gohonzon.

Most people in the Daishonin’s day believed that such ceremonies gave power to statues of Shakyamuni Buddha and other Buddhist objects. In actuality, it had already become a popular source of income for priests, who collected offerings for performing such ceremonies.

For example, in “Consecrating an Image of Shakyamuni Buddha Made by Shijo Kingo,” the Daishonin encourages Shijo Kingo, who has just offered him a statue of Shakyamuni Buddha:

In performing the eye-opening ceremony for painted or wooden Buddha images, the only authority to rely on is the Lotus Sutra and the Tendai sect. (MW-6, 161)

By the *Tendai sect* the Daishonin is referring to the principle of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms (*ichinen sanzen*), which explains that Buddhahood is inherent in all phenomena. By saying that the eye-opening ceremony must be based on the Lotus Sutra, the Daishonin debunks the idea that formal eye-opening ceremonies by priests are necessary and stresses faith in the Lotus Sutra, in other words, faith in the Gohonzon, as the key to summoning forth the state of Buddhahood.

He resolutely declares that our chanting daimoku with faith enables us to call forth the Buddha nature not only from within ourselves but from all phenomena. He further indicates that when it comes to the power of prayer, all people are equal, so long as they do not act against the intent of the sutra.

The priesthood’s claim that the Gohonzon issued by the SGI are counterfeit

because they are not issued by the head temple is unfounded. In the past, many Nichiren Shoshu branch temples reproduced Gohonzon transcribed by different high priests and issued them to their parishioners of their own accord, without the high priest’s permission or an eye-opening ceremony performed by him. The priesthood’s assertions are not only against Nichiren Daishonin’s teaching but also inconsistent with its own history. And yet, recently, it published a document that reads:

One should never worship anything as a Gohonzon that has not been authorized as such by the High Priest, who has inherited the Heritage of the Law, even if it was inscribed by Nichiren Daishonin himself. ... This has been a basic tenet of Nichiren Shoshu for seven hundred years. (From an NST-published translation of an article from a special issue of their Japanese-language publication *Daibyakuho*, c. Autumn 1993)

It is important to note that benefit from the Gohonzon derives neither from the high priest’s permission nor an eye-opening ceremony but from our faith and practice in accord with the Daishonin’s spirit.

Five in a series

Correction

In the pamphlet ‘Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue,’ from which these questions are taken, the key points listed for this question (p. 21) contain a typographical error. The above box is correct.

The pamphlet is available free of charge from SGI-USA community centers and can be downloaded from the SGI-USA web page (www.sgi-usa.org).

Though Shin'ichi Yamamoto spent only two days and one night in Hokkaido, he was active every moment he was there, using even mealtimes as opportunities to converse with local leaders.

In what little free time he had between commitments, he busied himself writing encouraging messages on the flyleaves of books and other items to present to members. Wherever Shin'ichi traveled around Japan his schedule was extremely hectic. He was determined to meet, encourage and inspire as many people as he could; he didn't want to waste even a second.

On his return to Tokyo, Shin'ichi attended the first youth division-sponsored judo and kendo¹ tournament, held in the Shinjuku Ward Gymnasium on April 17.

The road that lay before these youth, the leaders of the future, would be long and challenging. A strong mind and body would be necessary to traverse it.

The youth division members hoped the sports tournament would give them a chance to train and strengthen themselves mentally and physically. Shin'ichi sat watching the spirited competition — their intrepid forms conjured images of young eagles soaring into the skies of the coming century.

On April 20, Shin'ichi attended the completion ceremony for the Tachikawa Community Center in Tachikawa, the site of a U.S. military base on the outskirts of Tokyo. The Tachikawa members had been working earnestly to realize a peaceful world, not through military might but through the power of the human spirit. Shin'ichi was pleased that the Gakkai had established a center for their activities. He offered silent prayers for their continued endeavors.

The second anniversary of Shin'ichi's inauguration as third Soka Gakkai president was fast approaching. The 24th General Meeting was scheduled to be in the Nihon University Auditorium, in Ryogoku, Tokyo, on May 3. The members brimmed with the determination to celebrate the occasion with a great victory in propagation. Like a rising tide, the joy of sharing the Daishonin's teachings created an ever-growing surge of propagation.

Members brought guests to discussion meetings in an endless stream; applause for new members resounded constantly at meeting places throughout the country. These new members would then enthusiastically bring their friends to the next discussion meeting. A chain reaction of joyful propagation swept the country as the organization continued on its course of dynamic growth.

The Gakkai's directors were unabashedly overjoyed at the organization's great advance. When meeting with Shin'ichi, General Director Koichi Harayama or one of the others would make boastful statements like "Kosen-rufu has become the tide of the times! I

The New Human Revolution

By HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 3

Acceleration

Translation of parts 27–29 of the 'Acceleration' chapter, as printed in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. Ho Goku is the pen name of Daisaku Ikeda, who appears in the novel as Shin'ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1962.

never imagined such an amazing time would come. Now the Gakkai is rock-solid. Nothing can shake it."

Shin'ichi could only grimace at their simplistic and rather irresponsible optimism.

With the general meeting marking the second anniversary of his inauguration just around the corner, Shin'ichi thought back to all that had been achieved over the past two years. In that short time, he had opened a succession of new frontiers for kosen-rufu. While on the one hand it had seemed like an eternity, it had also felt like only a moment.

At 2.6 million households, the Gakkai's membership had almost doubled from 1.4 million two years earlier. In tandem with that growth, the number of chapters had expanded from 61 to 259. The youth division membership, meanwhile, had surged from 300,000 to 750,000.

Furthermore, this rising tide of kosen-rufu had spread to the world. Shin'ichi had made four trips abroad to encourage members living overseas, visiting a total of 24 countries and territories in North and South America, Southeast Asia, Europe and the Middle East. The seeds sown there had now sprouted: The Gakkai had established two general chapters and seven chapters overseas (excluding Okinawa).

Not only had the Gakkai's overall membership increased, but its Study Department had grown more than sixfold, from 17,000 members two years earlier to more than 110,000. Their enthusiastic devotion to Buddhist study marked the start of a broad grass-roots philosophical movement that would shape a new era.

It had unquestionably been a most successful two years. The movement for kosen-rufu was progressing in accord with the targets Shin'ichi had set. But he was constantly thinking about what kind of leadership would be needed to consolidate that progress and pave the way for ongoing development.

Many of the members, he reflected, had taken faith to overcome problems such as illness, financial hardship or family discord, and were earnestly striving to introduce others to the Daishonin's Buddhism. But the Soka Gakkai's movement

for kosen-rufu did not stop at solving personal problems; each member developing a broad social awareness and working to usher in an age of true victory for humanity was fundamental to its goal. Each individual's Buddhist practice had to contribute in some way to building a peaceful society based on Buddhist ideals and to the flowering of a humanistic culture around the world. A genuine religion doesn't concern itself only with personal spiritual salvation, but is committed to enlightening and empowering individuals — awakening them to their social mission.

Shin'ichi decided to use the general meeting as a forum to reconfirm with the members exactly what the Soka Gakkai's goal of kosen-rufu meant, and to start afresh with all sharing an awareness as key players in the shaping of society. He was confident that this would inspire them with new hope for the future and show them the course along which to advance.

Everyone looked excited and happy. Every face was glowing. The fresh leaves of the trees lining the street fluttered gaily in the breeze, as if sharing the members' joy.

In the early morning hours of May 3, 1962, long lines began to form near the Nihon University Auditorium. People began entering the hall at 6:20 a.m., filling it in no time. Eventually, members from the United States, Southeast Asia and Europe arrived. The auditorium thundered with applause as they entered.

At around 8:00, the chorus, Brass Band and Fife and Drum Corps launched into a vigorous round of Gakkai songs as the overcast skies cleared and bright sunlight flooded into the auditorium through its high windows.

Just before 10:00, as the entire audience sang the "Song of Indomitable Dignity," President Yamamoto and the Soka Gakkai directors entered the hall, preceded by the Soka Gakkai Headquarters flag. And so, the 24th General Meeting got under way.

After Youth Division Chief Eisuke Akizuki delivered opening greetings, Vice General Director Hisao Seki reported on the past two years of progress under President Yamamoto's leadership. Shin'ichi then presented chapter flags to the over-

seas chapters in Bangkok, Hong Kong and other areas. The participants keenly perceived how the Mystic Law was now steadily spreading throughout the world.

Next, Eiji Kawasaki, the central contact person in Europe, took the podium to offer greetings on behalf of the overseas members. Kawasaki exuded a dignity and maturity beyond that of six months earlier, when President Yamamoto and his party had visited Europe. It was clear that he had grown as a leader of kosen-rufu.

Filled with emotion, Kawasaki began: "It is an unsurpassed honor for me, as a representative of the European members, to attend today's significant general meeting, commemorating the second anniversary of President Yamamoto's inauguration.

"Also attending today's meeting are 126 members from the America General Chapter, six members from the chapters just formed in Bangkok and Hong Kong, and six members from Taiwan. All of us are ecstatic to be here.

"To be perfectly honest, most of us practicing overseas thought it would be a long time before President Yamamoto would visit our shores. But just five months after his inauguration, he traveled to North and South America. And in the past two years, he has journeyed from one part of the world to another, visiting Southeast Asia, Europe and the Middle East, encouraging members everywhere."

(To be continued)

1. Kendo: Japanese fencing with bamboo swords.

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SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech at the Chubu Representatives Conference, Chubu Culture Center, Nagoya, Japan, May 26.

All We Need To Do To Attain Enlightenment

Nothing makes me happier than talking with my wonderful friends in this great region of Chubu. Nothing is more memorable.

In his work *The Geography of Human Life* (Jinsei Chirigaku), first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi analyzes what he terms the “gravitational pull of cities,” the power that draws people to urban areas. He also discusses the gravitational pull of Nagoya.

Leaving aside scholarly analysis for a moment, I feel as though I have been, on my return from Shanghai, drawn first to Kansai, and then to Chubu by the gravitational pull of faith of all of you practicing here in solid unity with Chubu Chief Kazuo Ono and Women’s Division Chief Toshiko Koizumi.

Chubu has become a strong, undefeatable fighting force. It has truly become an unshakable bastion of kosen-rufu.

A Sublime State

What is the ideal state of mind a person of faith should strive for?

First, we mustn’t be afraid of anything. It is important to remain firm in our convictions. There is a great deal of scheming and duplicity in the world, but it is foolish to allow ourselves to be swayed by such things; they lead to unhappiness. The Mystic Law and Nichiren Daishonin are absolutely free of any falsehood. Therefore, to dedicate our lives to kosen-rufu is to lead the wisest possible existence.

In our practice of the Daishonin’s teachings, we may sometimes encounter unpleasantness from others; we may also exert ourselves twice as hard as others. But this is all part of our Buddhist practice.

The Daishonin teaches that we can attain Buddhahood in this lifetime. To do so, we have to pass through the trials of the three obstacles and four devils. Yet that’s all we need to do to attain enlightenment in this lifetime and enjoy boundless Buddhahood over eternity. So no matter what happens, it’s essential that we keep advancing joyfully and courageously, never succumbing to fear.

Second, we must live with vibrant hope. Nothing is stronger than hope. The Mystic



Photo by PHIL ROSENBERG

Dr. Jane Hurst (right) with students at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. Dr. Hurst teaches philosophy and religion using both voice and sign language for the hearing impaired.

President Ikeda shares the research of Dr. Jane Hurst on the temple issue. The Nichiren Shoshu priesthood has been unable to develop a global perspective, she concludes, while the SGI has moved beyond the limits of Japanese culture.

Law is itself eternal hope. Happiness belongs to those who never despair, no matter what happens.

Third, we need to cultivate a life where we thoroughly enjoy ourselves at all times. We should have such joy that, even at the time of death, we can declare with a happy smile: “That was wonderful! Where shall I go next?” This is the mind of a person with strong faith. Such individuals will be reborn without delay, and in a form and place exactly according with their desires.

Some of you might be unhappy with your relationships and think to yourselves, “What a detestable spouse I’ve chosen!” But it’s not as though you’re going to have to be together for 5,000 years! From the Buddhist perspective, this life is but a moment in the eternal course of existence. When you elevate your state of life, even the shouting of a spouse or partner can sound as nice as a jazz or pop tune!

Faith enables us to attain a generous, all-embracing state of mind where we can enjoy everything. As the Daishonin says, faith in the Mystic Law is “the greatest of all joys” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 788).

A Scholar Studies the Temple Issue

The day before yesterday [May 24], I received a significant report from Boston. A conference titled “Buddhism in America” was recently cosponsored by the Buddhist Research Forum of Harvard University, one of the world’s foremost centers of learning, and the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, which I founded. The conference was held at Harvard Divinity School — very close to where I twice spoke at the university.

At the conference, Dr. Jane Hurst announced her research findings in a talk titled “A Buddhist Reformation in the 20th Century: Causes and Implications of the Conflict Between the Soka Gakkai and the Nichiren Shoshu Priesthood.” Dr. Hurst is a professor of philosophy and religion at Gallaudet University, Washington, D.C.

Gallaudet University is the only institution of higher education in the world designed specifically for the hearing impaired. Dr. Hurst teaches philosophy and religion using both voice and sign language.

Dr. Hurst examined the split between the SGI and the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood in her speech, and Masao Yokota, president of the BRC, kindly forwarded me a summary. With the permission of Dr. Hurst, I will now briefly share her main points.

Parallels With the Protestant Reformation

Dr. Hurst is a prominent American Buddhologist, and is also well known for her studies on the psychology of the deaf and hearing impaired. She offered an insightful analysis of the priesthood issue based on her 24 years of research on Nichiren Shoshu and the Soka Gakkai.

Dr. Hurst explained that she watched the split between Nichiren Shoshu and the SGI with keen interest because she was struck by its similarities with the rift between the Catholic Church and Protestants in the 16th century — the Protestant Reformation. Giving some historical background, she pointed out that the late 15th and early 16th centuries marked the eve of the Industrial Revolution; that Europe was experiencing great

social, economic and technological change. Moreover, the “discovery” of the Americas opened the eyes of many Europeans to the world.

However, the Catholic Church, she said, was at that time unable to abandon its narrow, Rome-centered orientation. And its teachings, too, continued to reflect a largely self-centered, myopic worldview. In addition, she argued, the corruption of the Church, most famously in the sale of indulgences, led to widespread exploitation of the laity. These circumstances made it difficult for the Catholic Church to respond to the demands of a new age, allowing the Protestant Reformation to flourish.

Dr. Hurst noted that the latter half of the 20th century has been an age of thriving international exchange, a time when people need to consider the self and society from a global perspective. She pointed out that although Nichiren Daishonin had a global vision, aspiring for the worldwide spread of his teachings, the Nichiren Shoshu priests have been unable to break away from a Japan-oriented focus. This has prevented them from adapting to changing times. By contrast, she said that the SGI has developed a popular movement based on a global perspective.

Dr. Hurst clearly discerns the historic significance of our movement, calling it a “Buddhist Reformation in the 20th Century.”

Hierarchy Vs. Equality, Formalism Vs. Faith

Dr. Hurst analyzed the split in terms of the following key issues: 1) priestly authority vs. lay creativity; 2) hierarchical organization vs. egalitarian organization; 3) emphasis on sacrament and ritual vs. emphasis on individual faith; 4) a focus on tradition as the key to understanding scripture vs. a focus on scripture alone; 5) a view of religion that is local, conservative and mystical vs. one that is global, progressive and rational; 6) a spiritual focus that is otherworldly vs. one that is engaged with the world.

These are brilliant insights. I heartily agree with her on each point.

Benefits of the Split

Dr. Hurst also said that there have been important changes in the SGI since its split with the priesthood. As one example, she pointed to the growing global-

PLEASE SEE ATTAIN, NEXT PAGE

Photo by PHIL ROSENBERG

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ization of the SGI movement, that the SGI has moved beyond the limits of Japanese culture and tradition. Also, that the SGI is becoming more democratic she attributed to the elimination of an intermediary between individuals and the Gohonzon.

Dr. Hurst credited President Ikeda for a major contribution to this process. Choosing the moral high ground rather than succumbing to the temptations of authoritarianism, she said, the SGI president has worked to realize a more democratic organization. She pointed to the SGI-USA as an example of an organization that, as a result of President Ikeda's efforts to create a more democratic and open organization, is pervaded with a sense of equality and tolerance.

Dr. Hurst also pointed out that the SGI is actively developing intercultural and interfaith dialogue through the BRC and other SGI-affiliated organizations. She said that she did not expect to see the SGI go back to its former relationship with the priesthood, because the positive effects for the SGI following the split appear to be too great. In other words, Dr. Hurst said that we have benefitted from no longer being with the priesthood. It has been seven years since the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood embarked on its reckless course. In that time, we have reached the point where a perspective such as Dr. Hurst's — which repre-

sents the views of many leading thinkers and observers around the world — is being presented at a conference at Harvard University, an institution with a great scholarly tradition. This is an address of great historic significance. I want to see it handed down to later generations.

Faith Matters Most

Next, I want to confirm some important basic points in faith.

First, whether children with parents who are SGI leaders practice Buddhism or not is often determined by the mother's faith more than anything. This is according to presidents Makiguchi and Toda. If leaders can't inspire their children to embrace faith, they are doing a disservice not only to their children but to themselves.

Also, there is no need to show the children of leaders any special consideration. The SGI places highest importance on faith. In the SGI, those who are truly exerting themselves for kosen-rufu are most praiseworthy.

President Toda said: "Those who do not value the organization are practicing self-centered faith. With such faith, you cannot expect to receive the profound benefits of this practice." Working hard within the organization for people's happiness and welfare is itself noble Buddhist practice. Advancing kosen-rufu and defeating devilish forces — this arduous struggle that resembles scaling a sheer cliff — is the challenge of the



Gallaudet University is a unique institution — the only higher education facility in the world for the hearing impaired. Dr. Jane Hurst, who's done extensive research on the temple issue, teaches here.

Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

It is also important that leaders love the members as they would their own children. This is the spirit of a genuine leader. Often when he finished a lecture on the Lotus Sutra, President Toda would humbly express his gratitude to the participants, saying deferentially, "Thank you for listening!"

Remembering President Toda's sincere spirit, leaders should never behave arrogantly toward the members. And it is important that male leaders, in particular, absolutely refrain from acting in a high-handed, authoritarian way toward women. Men who

are despotic in the organization are often mice at home!

The SGI Continues To Flourish

It is clear that Nichiren Shoshu led by Nikken has begun to tumble down the dismal slope of decline, the fate that the Daishonin said lay in store for those who "despised the votaries of the Lotus Sutra" — who, "though they seemed to be free from punishment at first, eventually...were all doomed to fall" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 241).

In contrast, the SGI contin-

ues to shine all the more, with the radiance of a dawning world religion, into the next century, the new millennium, making a reality of the Daishonin's golden words: "Eventually kosen-rufu is certain to be achieved throughout the entire world" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 816).

We are following a diamond path, a global path, an eternal path, a victorious path. My friends of Chubu, I sincerely hope you will join me in advancing along this path and paving it with glory, with unflagging confidence and joy.

Thank you for gathering here today. You all have my deepest gratitude. ❖

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 Nichiren Daishonin's 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

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.



Make New Friends, But Treasure Old Ones

By ED FEASEL

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION CHIEF

More than 600 young people from around the country gathered to discuss faith and life at the Florida Nature and Culture Center this summer in four conferences — one each for the young men's division, young women's division, junior high and high school divisions, and Music Corps and Fife and Drum Corps. From what I witnessed and what I heard, the ideas and passions generated at these conferences are sure to ripple throughout the organization in the months to come.

I want to thank all those people who worked behind the scenes to make these meetings successful. Thanks, too, to all the participants for traveling so far and to the parents who made it possible for their children to attend. I wish everyone luck as you strive to live up to the determinations — and strengthen the friendships — you made in Florida.

I've been doing some thinking about friendship lately and how the organization's goals toward the end of the year deal with making and keeping friends. In June, the Central Executive Committee devised an "action plan" that focuses on increasing readership of the publications, completing the geographic reorganization, doing propagation and studying the essence of the temple issue.

Sharing this Buddhism with others equates to making new friends. Increasing readership of the publications, completing the geographic reorganization and helping our members understand the temple issue correspond to treasuring old friends.

As I was thinking about these goals, I remembered a motto SGI President Ikeda once shared from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first president of the Republic of Turkey: "Make new friends, but treasure old ones." President Ikeda suggested that we make this a motto of the SGI.

In the past I have tended to focus on only one part of this phrase at a time. There have been times when I may have focused on making new friends, or introducing others to Buddhism, but may not have paid as much attention to improving our organization or caring for members. At other times, I've been so focused on taking care of members that I've put propagation on the backburner.

I strongly feel that, through this motto, President Ikeda is urging us to do both. And I think the four goals of the action plan do just that.

Sharing this Buddhism with others equates to making new

friends. Increasing readership of the publications, completing the geographic reorganization and helping our members understand the temple issue correspond to treasuring old friends.

I've been inspired recently by James Herrmann, the YMD chief, and Reiko Groshell, the YWD chief. Working with them over the past months, I have seen the tremendous efforts they put forth in treasuring old friends.

But they also make efforts to introduce others to this Buddhism. Reiko has just introduced a young woman to the SGI, and she will be receiving the Gohonzon very soon. James chants every day to share this Buddhism with others; he told me how he introduced a clerk at a rental car company, and how this young man now attends meetings and has begun chanting.

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



Ed Feasel, SGI-USA youth division chief.

As youth, let's follow the examples of our YWD and YMD leaders and put our energy into living up to the motto of "Make new friends, but treasure old ones." Refreshed by our summer activities, let's focus on accomplishing our goals in the last four months of 1997. After all, it is our actions today that will determine what the beginning of the new century will look like.

Again, thank you for all your efforts so far this year, and congratulations on the great success of all our summer activities. ☸

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

The Plot Thickens

By CRAIG GREEN & JEFF FARR

LOS ANGELES

Despite the Soka Gakkai's bitter experiences with the priesthood in the late 1970s, the Soka Gakkai leadership was determined to maintain harmony between the priesthood and laity. Throughout the 1980s, aiming toward the 700th anniversary of the head temple in 1990, the organization continued to support the priests in hopes that Nikken would maintain a commitment toward achieving kosen-rufu.

Not only did the Soka Gakkai continue to build temples for Nichiren Shoshu, but members from around the world continued to support the priesthood financially. It was hoped that the egotism Nikken had shown in forcing the Soka Gakkai's apologies in 1980 would become a thing of the past.

However, remembering SGI President Ikeda's important guidance that the Soka Gakkai exists to make the common people happy, the Soka Gakkai leaders were also prepared to speak out if the priesthood ever went after the Soka Gakkai again.

And in 1990, soon after the 700th anniversary celebrations were completed, the priesthood did just that.

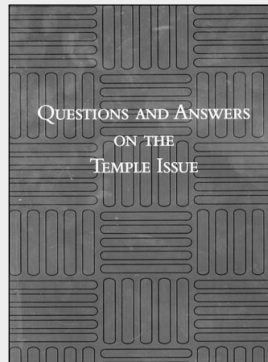
While the Soka Gakkai had spent the last decade doing everything possible to create cooperation between priesthood and laity, Nikken and his priests had been plotting to take control of the Soka Gakkai once and for all.

Nikken's desire to run the organization was at last crystallized in Operation C ("C" meaning to "cut" the Soka Gakkai).

No. 7 in a series

Educate Yourself!

A free pamphlet on the temple issue is now available through the organization. Request a copy from your leaders and learn more about this important issue to our faith. In 14 easy-to-read questions and answers, this pamphlet gives you a complete overview of the issue that everyone's talking about. Study it with your friends! It can also be downloaded from SGI-USA's website: www/sgi-usa.org.





The FNCC — Our Summer Home

Here all the staff have been supporting me and my practice. This weekend I realized what a huge debt of gratitude I owe to everybody here. Even if people feel like they haven't done anything to support me, they have, and I still owe them gratitude.

In the Goshu "Repaying Debts of Gratitude," Nichiren Daishonin says, "If one intends to repay these great debts of gratitude, he can hope to do so only if he studies and masters the Buddhist teachings, becoming a person of wisdom" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 4, p. 172). To me, that means standing up in the SGI, supporting all the members and sharing this Buddhism. That is exactly what I'll do when I get home.

— ALEX BARDALES,
San Francisco (junior high/high school conference)



The title of the YWD conference was "Strengthening Our True Identity." To me, this meant getting back to my roots by remembering what it's like to

experience the world through the purity of a child's heart. I truly feel that SGI President Ikeda wanted to create this atmosphere to remind us of how free and open it feels to be a child. I live in San Francisco, where I'm constantly looking over my shoulder, but at the FNCC I felt so safe that I could leave my things anywhere, ride a bike with no hands, and fall asleep at night with no worries.

This was such a wonderful opportunity to rediscover and, more important, to have the confidence in my true self. My challenge now is to never forget the spirit of kosen-rufu I feel in my heart. And to bring that spirit to my family, friends, members and community. This is my mission as a Bodhisattva of the Earth.

— MARGARET SMITH,
San Francisco (YWD conference)



Our YMD gathering at the FNCC was an extremely significant experience for me. I was so touched by the incredible level of intimacy and the

trust all the participants had for one another.

A big thanks to the 685 youth who participated in this summer's young men's division, young women's division, junior high and high school divisions and Music Corps and Fife and Drum Corps conferences! — The SGI-USA youth division

Never before have I been involved in an event, either within or outside the SGI organization, that provided such an open and honest environment where people could truly be themselves and open their hearts without hesitation.

And this conference really opened my eyes to how important our movement for peace is on the national level. I've always viewed things from a very local perspective, but from this conference I began to realize that all across the country there are so many of us, all struggling in our unique ways to create a peaceful and prosperous society. I am grateful to have so many beautiful friends across the United States with whom I share such a significant bond.

— DAVID EISENBERG,
San Francisco (YMD conference)



I was so encouraged by the study sessions and all of the moving experiences that everyone shared — especially in the panel discussion on the role of young women. Once again,

that study session reaffirmed for me that nothing is impossible when you trust the Gohonzon. I could relate to just about every experience that the five panelists shared.

My personal goal is to bring all the information that I received here back to the YWD members in Philadelphia to help them grow into strong, confident, capable leaders for kosen-rufu and make a big, positive change in society. This is a golden memory that I will always treasure and keep in my heart.

— RAYMONDE BEST,
Philadelphia (YWD conference)

I'm not an emotional person, but I was so touched by the members, especially in the group discussion about "Discussion on Youth" [a dialogue among

President Ikeda and youth division members currently being serialized in the *World Tribune*] and the impression I got from them that they had the courage to tell their problems and how they could break through with this practice.

— SWEET CHENG, Chicago
(junior high/high school conference)



We are treasure towers! We are Buddhas! The FNCC was out of this world. It was like living on the planet Peace, Love and Happiness for four days and three nights.

Most incredible was feeling my heart melt. I did get on the plane in New York very afraid, with deep feelings that I am not a bright YWD member — who will like me? But I have faith sisters all over America. I have begun my practice anew. Lots of YWD members are struggling with their jobs, money, boyfriends, sexual abuse issues or being a lesbian. Many of us are also very confident and breaking through.

We are not alone. The YWD members of America are not alone. We are sisters in faith together forever. That's what I discovered at the FNCC.

— KALEMI BAXTER, New York
(YWD conference)



Since last year, I've been chanting to wake up with the thought "Great! Another day I can fight together with President Ikeda!" — before I think about my

personal worries or struggles. At first it was very abstract. But since the YMD conference, it has been natural. For me, this conference was about reaffirming the nobility of dedicating myself to this movement, of helping other people break through and become happy.

And what reawakened that was seeing the lives of my fellow YMD members and their sincerity in the midst of the changes they are going through. This is a tough practice. A wondrous philosophy, but requiring a rigorous effort every day. And there's no way to continue without rock-solid friends in this practice.

I want to stop being a fair-weather bodhisattva and really start getting sopping wet in the rain, sharing the members' suffering alongside them, as President Ikeda says. At the FNCC, I thought these really are my brothers. Now I want to do my best so I can encourage them, so we can spur each other on. That's the whole purpose behind YMD activities.

— DAVID BOGOSLAW,
New York (YMD conference)

As everyone else did, I felt the strong bond of friendship. Throughout the conference, people greeted and talked to one another even though we were complete strangers. This does not happen often in our daily lives, like in high school. The conference also gave me a sense of mission and many new determinations.

— HIROMI IKEDA, San Francisco
(junior high/high school conference)



I've been so encouraged by the struggles of others whose relentless practice has enabled them to overcome their weaknesses and achieve victory in their lives.

I've learned that major changes don't happen overnight, and the longer and harder the struggle, the deeper the foundation of my true self will be. I am now ready to take the plunge and truly trust the Gohonzon with the most fragile aspects of my life. So many of these women have won — so can I!

— CATHY BERNIER,
Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (YWD conference)

I was impressed that everyone came up on stage and said something emotional. Everybody felt sad to leave and said that they had met some friends. And it's hard to say goodbye to your friends. Once you leave the FNCC, you always remember about the conference's talent shows and that you had a great time.

— JASON DOWDY, Houston
(junior high/high school conference)



Indian veteran freedom fighters meet with President K.R. Narayanan (left) during a reception at the Presidential Palace in New Delhi, Aug. 9, commemorating the 1942 Quit India Movement against British rule. As India celebrates its 50th year of independence, Narayanan is aware that the Mahatma's vision of democracy, his desire to 'dry every tear from every eye,' is far from realized.

An Uncommon Man

By **TERRY ELLIS**
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The country that gave birth to Buddhism celebrated its 50th anniversary as a democracy on Aug. 15. India. A country of 950 million people embracing five major religions and speaking 17 languages. A country that freed itself from British colonial rule through nonviolence.

A country that now feeds itself, but still struggles to meet the expectations of its own constitution — a document that aimed to abolish the 3,000-year tradition of Hindu castes.

In this 50th year, one of Mahatma Gandhi's dreams came to pass: For the first time, one of India's 150 million low caste people (previously called untouchables) was elected president. Kocheril Raman Narayanan now re-

sides in the hilltop mansion where the British viceroy once lived like a modern-day king.

But despite his advancement, Narayanan is more than aware that the Mahatma's vision of democracy, his desire to "dry every tear from every eye," is far from realized. Elected president by an overwhelming majority of India's national parliament members and state legislative assemblies, Narayanan called on the country's leaders to eliminate corruption and divisiveness and work for the people's welfare.

"That the nation has found a consensus for its highest office in someone who has sprung from the grass-roots of our society and grown up in the dust and heat of this sacred land is symbolic of the fact that the concerns of the common man have now moved to the center stage of our social and political life," said Narayanan.

Despite his widespread support from elected officials, voices arose from both the low and high castes to criticize him. As one writer put it: "Narayanan's lifetime

achievements were overshadowed by his caste. And that is pathetic."

Foreign reporters often describe Narayanan's role as largely ceremonial. But it's evident from his lifetime of words and work that he takes the role very seriously.

"Fellow citizens, India had entertained throughout its history a world vision," said Narayanan in his inauguration speech. "Our sages and seers had thought in terms of the happiness of the whole of humanity. We have a role to play in the world and a message to give to the world. We can do that effectively only if we are united and strong and in peace and friendship with our neighbors. As president of India it will be my endeavor to preserve, protect and defend the constitution in every respect, including the provision that India will 'promote international peace and security.'" **WT**

'We have a role to play in the world and a message to give to the world. We can do that effectively only if we are united and strong and in peace and friendship with our neighbors.'

— President Narayanan




Buffalo Boys and Girls Celebrate Dads

By SUSAN DiVINCENZO

Buffalo, N.Y.

The Boys and Girls Group spent a wonderful day together in June celebrating Fathers Day along with the mentor-disciple relationship. The plan for the day was to chant along with their fathers and discuss how important it is to follow our teachers and parents, as well as other mentors that we encounter in our daily lives. Some of the children spoke about how they're beginning to read SGI President Ikeda's guidance to young people.

A large table was the setting for the children to choose from a variety of beads, which they used to create necklaces for Fathers Day presents. The dads were beaming with joy, and the little artists were even happier.

All in all, it was a very successful day, with everyone looking forward to the next meeting. 

Philadelphia Sends Greetings!



Philadelphia boys enjoy a power snack after a DYNAMITE Boys and Girls Group meeting in July!

A Winning Poet

By ELIZABETH VON AARONS

Evergreen, Colo.

Aja Harbert, 9, from Wilmont Elementary School, won first place in the county in the National PTA Reflections Poetry Contest. Aja's poem, titled "It Could Happen," shows us that world peace is attainable in our lifetimes, especially when the SGI youth are involved.

Her poem encourages us to move ahead toward the 21st century.

When I asked her how she came up with the title, she said that it just came to her. That's how creativity works! Aja has acted in plays at her school and at her district meetings.

She also writes stories and does illustrations. She loves working with animals (she has two cats, two guinea pigs and a fish). We look forward to reading more of Aja's work in the future.



It Could Happen

Could it happen?
Friends of all colors
Guns put away
Respect for each other
No trash in our way.
All the children with homes
All the people with food
All the forests alive
All the creatures free to roam.
The people of the world must dance together
To the beat of world peace
Believing for all and forever that
It could happen.

Friend to Friend

Our study topic for October is *appreciation* — for others, for our surroundings, for our lives. Please send your thoughts (up to 50 words) with a photo of yourself to "Friends for Peace"

(c/o World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, Calif. 90401).

Due by Sept. 19

The Grain

Written by LuAnn Adam
Illustrated by Robin Racor

Once, long ago, there was an Emperor who was old and angry. As a young man, he had forced his people to fight in wars so that he could gain more gold, more treasure and more land. When disease, fires and floods ravaged his people, he did nothing to help them. He cared only about himself and about making sure that his palace continued to fill with treasure.

Years went by, and the Emperor's beard had grown long. Even though he was wealthy, he was alone and unhappy. One night, after screaming at one of his servants for giving a blanket to an old beggar, he had a dream. In the dream, a woman whispered to him, her voice and words sending shivers up his spine, "Cruel Emperor, you must change your ways or in your next lifetime you will suffer as you have made others suffer."

The Emperor awoke, shaking. "I must change my ways...but how? I am old — how can I change?" Actually, he did not want to change at all.

The next night he had the dream again and the woman whispered, "Wicked Emperor, you must change the poison in your life into medicine before it's too late."

"Poison into medicine," the Emperor thought. "Oh, now that is easy." The next morning he sent his servants to find the best magicians in his kingdom. "Surely they will be able to do this for me."

But even the best magicians in the land could only change blue water into red, or yellow into green. Not one could change poison into medicine. (Or, at least, no magician wanted a taste of his own medicine.)

Again, he had the dream. "Foolish Emperor, you must go into your kingdom. You must learn about peace. You must learn how to change deep sadness into happiness. Your time is short."

The next day, the Emperor decided to venture into his kingdom. He had never walked alone among his people. "I suppose I must try to look like one of them," he thought. So he went to the stables and found an old cloak. It smelled and itched, but

he wrapped it around himself. For many hours he walked. He passed families sleeping in doorways. He plugged his nose when he walked by men fighting over a piece of fruit discarded by a merchant. Then, along the side of the road, he saw a young woman trying to help an old woman who had fallen.

"Why are you helping her?" he asked. "She is old. She will die soon anyway."

Then he noticed that the young woman's legs were too thin to be used for walking.

"What happened to your legs?" he asked.

The young woman looked up at him with a gaze that pierced his soul. She spoke clearly as she pulled herself up on her crutches: "Years ago there was a disease that killed many in our land. I have seen death, and now I am learning about medicine. I must take this poor woman home, so she can heal in peace."

The Emperor watched as the two women, leaning on each other, made their way down the road. "Learning about medicine," he thought to himself. "Heal in peace."

He walked for a while, then stopped to rest on a bench. He found himself surrounded by a small but beautiful flower garden. The scents of the flowers floated on the breeze. A young boy in front of him was carefully pulling weeds.

"Boy," asked the Emperor, "where do the purple ones come from?"

The boy rose to face him. "Which are the purple ones?" he asked smiling.

"Why, the ones next to my feet! What's the matter, are you blind?"

"Yes," said the boy. "I know each flower by its fragrance, not by its color."

"What?! Why are you blind? And why, if you can't see the flowers, do you bother to grow them?"

"I'm blind," said the boy, "because of the fires. My house was here. I grow flowers because my



mother liked them. She said flowers made her heart feel peace." The boy had tears in his eyes. "Sometimes I can hear people smile when they sit on this bench. I hope they feel peace, too."

The Emperor got up and walked away. "Feel peace," he said to himself.

He was so lost in his thoughts that instead of entering his palace by the front marble steps, he walked through the back stables. At

"More valuable than treasures in a store of the body, and the treasures of the heart of all" (MW-2 [2nd e

the kitchen entrance, he saw a girl holding two large pails. The cook was filling each pail with food.

"Why are you taking all this food? Don't your parents feed you?" he stormed.

Startled, the girl turned around. The cook, recognizing the Emperor's voice, ran inside.

"I have no parents," said the

girl. "W
ents?
"T
"C
pero
mem
why
food
eat a

GRAIN OF SAND

LuAnn Adams, New York
Robin Racoma, Honolulu



asures in a storehouse are the treasures
asures of the heart are the most valuable
MW-2 [2nd ed.], 238).

a girl
cook
his
ed
ing
side.
the

girl. "No one feeds me but me."
"Why don't you have par-
ents?" he demanded.
"They died in the flood."
"Oh, yes, the flood," the Em-
peror said quickly, very dimly re-
membering the disaster. "But
why are you taking so much
food? Surely a small girl cannot
eat all this?"

"It is not just for me. There are
many children and old people who
have nothing to eat. Every night I
get food so we have something to
eat before we sleep."
"But why? Why feed them?"
The Emperor questioned and
moved closer.
"Because I can. It hurts to be
hungry and all alone."
The Emperor walked past the
girl and into the kitchen. His cook
trembled by the stove. He was
about to yell, but as he raised his

hand, he saw the huge dinner
that had been prepared for him.
It was an enormous feast, just
waiting to be carried to his royal
dining room. He paused, pointed
to his dinner and then to the girl's
buckets. Shaking his head, he
disappeared into his chambers.

That night he had the dream
again. The woman said, "Arrogant
Emperor, you have much more to
learn from the youngest heart."

The next morning he sent a
messenger to bring the girl to the
palace. So that he would not star-
tle her, he entered from a side
door, wearing his cloak from the
stables. While walking toward her,
he fell and rolled on the floor.

The girl laughed, for the old
man looked like a clown doing a
somersault.

Angrily, the Emperor rose,
ripped off his cloak and revealed
his royal robes. "How dare you
laugh at me! I have fallen because
I have sand in my shoe from walk-
ing around my kingdom. It is royal
sand, because it has touched my
royal foot. What could you possi-
bly know, what could you possi-
bly do, that would be worthy of even
one grain of my royal sand?"

Holding a grain of sand, he ad-
vanced toward the girl.

"Oh," she exclaimed. "With a
grain of sand, I would do...."

"Not something ordinary," said
the Emperor menacingly. "Not
something ordinary with a royal
grain of my sand?"

"No," said the girl, "it is not or-
dinary. It is really a miracle. My fa-
ther was a fisherman. He showed
me how to put a grain of sand
into an oyster. The oyster does-
n't like the rough sand next to
its soft body. But it makes
peace with the sand and covers it
until it turns into a smooth pearl.

"Every child I give food to, I give
an oyster. I tell them that the grain
of sand in the oyster is like the sad-
ness in their hearts. If they cover
their sadness with courage and
hope every day, they will grow up
to have strong and beautiful lives
like the baby pearls. My father told
me that pearls are the treasure of
the sea, and peace is the treasure of
the heart. So when you have peace
in your heart, you can be happy.
He said that if you wear a pearl

near your heart, it can help you to
have courage and make peace."

The Emperor saw a tiny pearl
on a necklace peeking through
the missing buttons on her dress.
As he was looking, she took a
small jar out of her pocket and
handed it to him, saying: "Many
years ago, my father put a grain
of your royal sand in this oyster. I
hope the pearl inside can help
you change your sadness into
peace and happiness."

The Emperor's eyes filled with
tears. As he opened the hard
shell of the oyster, his own heart
opened. Inside, he found the pre-
cious little pearl.

"Thank you," he said tenderly.
"Thank you. I know what I must
do. I cannot live my life as be-
fore, ignoring my people who are
hurt and suffering."

As he spoke, he felt something
wondrous growing in his heart.

"I have met children who are so
wise and giving." He thought of
the young woman with crutches.
"I must build hospitals and train
doctors for the people who are
sick. They need to heal in peace."

He thought of the boy who
was blind. "I must help my peo-
ple who are homeless and fill my
kingdom with beautiful gardens. I
must honor the memory of those
who have died."

Then, holding the precious
pearl, he knelt down and held the
girl's hands. "Most of all, I must
make sure all my people, especially
the children, have enough food
and can grow up with hope and
courage. I want them to have
strong and beautiful lives. I will
wear this pearl always, to remind
me of what I must do. My precious
little one, you have shown me that
peace and happiness begin in
one's heart. Please stay here in my
palace and help me take care of
the people in my kingdom."

That night, the Emperor fell
asleep holding the tiny peace
pearl next to his heart. As the
woman in his dream whispered
gently, he could hear her smiling:
"Dear Emperor, you have learned
— you have learned how to
change poison into medicine. But
most of all, you have learned
where peace and happiness must
begin."

The Basics of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism

Faith, Practice and Study

FAITH

Faith is to make goals, such as: good grades, having a great day, or whatever you want or feel you need. Faith is to chant and do gongyo as best as you can, and do whatever you can to contribute to meetings, your family and your community. When you take action for one of your goals, such as studying if you want good grades, you will see the effect or the result, which will be better grades! Then, you will naturally become more confident about the power you have to make your dreams happen, accomplishing all your goals.

PRACTICE

Practice is for self and for others. We practice to become happy ourselves, and to help other people become happy, too. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in our lives is very powerful. We can chant for our classmates to be happy. We can chant for our teachers to be great. We can chant for our entire family to be happy and healthy. We can even chant for our communities to be happy and safe. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is great, and when we chant it is like a song to the whole universe.

Practice for others means to teach others about the greatness of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and the Gohonzon so they, too, can realize the power inherent in their lives. By helping others become happy, we are making a great cause for our happiness.

Sometimes we may forget that we have a Buddha nature and that we each have great potential in our lives. We may even forget that every single person also has a Buddha nature inside his or her life and has great potential, too. That's why we chant (to remind ourselves) and we study.

STUDY

Study means learning more about this Buddhism and reminds us how great it is to have Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in our lives. When we study we also learn and become more confident about the power of our practice to overcome any obstacle we may encounter.

Sing Along!

The Ten Worlds

(Bring Out Your Buddhahood)

BY CLEVELAND HQ BOYS AND GIRLS GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

(Sing to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

1st verse: Hell, Hunger, Animality
are the first three worlds.
Chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo
to bring out Buddhahood.

2nd verse: Anger, Humanity, and then Heaven
are the next three worlds.
Chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo
to bring out Buddhahood.

3rd verse: Learning, Realization, Bodhisattva
are the next three worlds.
Chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo
to bring out Buddhahood.

4th verse: The tenth world of Buddhahood
is in the other nine;
So chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo
to bring out Buddhahood.

5th verse: We each can be in any world
at any time of day —
So chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo;
Bring out your Buddhahood.

Things To Look For On an Altar

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| water | Gohonzon |
| bell | candles |
| incense | fruit |
| greens | |

T	L	F	R	U	I	T	Z	W	A
O	N	K	D	C	A	R	U	A	C
P	M	S	T	C	V	T	D	T	B
Q	L	R	U	A	F	E	I	E	C
G	O	H	O	N	Z	O	N	R	L
R	K	H	G	D	G	H	C	P	Q
E	B	E	L	L	F	I	E	O	R
E	J	U	I	E	E	J	N	N	S
N	A	Y	X	S	D	K	S	M	T
S	A	X	C	B	V	L	E	L	U

What Is the Gohonzon?

By AUDREY CORRELL

Philadelphia

One of the children in Philadelphia asked: "What's the Gohonzon? It looks like a map." The Gohonzon is like a map, but it is more. Nichiren Daishonin described the Gohonzon as a mirror. Though our eyebrows are on our faces, we cannot see them. When we look into a mirror, we can easily see our eyebrows.

In the same way, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo (or our Buddha nature) is already in our lives, although we cannot see it. When we chant — that is, when we look in the mirror of the Gohonzon — we can "see" our Buddha nature.

The Gohonzon is in our lives to wake up our most powerful, happy self. Nichiren Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon so that we could make our lives absolutely happy, no matter what!