

World Tribune

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THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

OCTOBER 3, 1997

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Photo by JONATHAN WILSON

Members are finding support and encouragement in overcoming addiction at special meetings.

Buddhists in Recovery

Informal groups are meeting in cities across the country to help members learn to use their Buddhist practice to overcome addiction.

By PATTY JACOBS

LAS VEGAS CORRESPONDENT

Reggie, Frazier, Juan and Kathryn knew they were in trouble when they saw their life-conditions spiraling downward, out of control. As practicing Buddhists they thought they could "just chant" and get their

lives straightened out, but it didn't work that way. They were addicted to alcohol and drugs.

Each of these people, and many more, have recovered from their addictions through their practice coupled with guidance and professional help or, in some cases, by forming or joining an informal group of fellow recovering Buddhists.

Reggie lives outside Chicago and attends just such a gathering called the Lotus Group. "I was in and out of abstinence for four years," Reggie says. "I tried so hard to do it on my own. At one point I had about 18 months clean, but I started

drinking beer and it led me right back to drugs. I chanted and nothing happened. I really tried but I couldn't stay away from drugs. It was terrible but I just couldn't stay clean. I was very active in young men's division activities, and I know now that my practice was very superficial. After a while I couldn't chant, do gongyo or study. My life was crashing as if I were a fallen glass."

Reggie, who has been clean and sober for more than a year, credits his fellow Lotus Group members with helping him un-

PLEASE SEE RECOVERY, 5

Journalism Professor Lectures on Journalistic Reform

By JEFF FARR

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Santa Monica, Calif., Sept. 20

Innocent until proven guilty? Think again. Professor Kenichi Asano feels both the Japanese and U.S. press are forgetting this point.

In a lecture at the World Peace Ikeda Auditorium tonight, Professor Asano, a former journalist who now teaches at Japan's Doshisha University, expressed concern over the media's tendency to accuse innocent people of crimes before they've had their day in court.

Richard Jewell, who was made a culprit in the Olympic bombing case, is an example, said Professor Asano, who was in the United States for two weeks to share his views on Japanese media with editors of several major newspapers. Though never arrested or formally charged, Mr. Jewell was essentially tried by the media for three months last year.

In much the same way, Professor Asano, who is not a Soka Gakkai member, believes SGI President Ikeda is being unfairly judged by the Japanese media. Mentioning as an example of this the Nobuhira case — in which, despite all evidence to the contrary, weekly magazines have tried to portray President Ikeda as a rapist — Professor

PLEASE SEE JOURNALISM, 4



Photo by CLARE ASCANI

Drums lend to the lively atmosphere at the Imani festival in New York.

Festival Celebrates African Culture, Promotes Learning

By ARZU TITUS

N.Y. #3 JOINT TERRITORY BUREAU CHIEF

New York, July 13

It seemed like an ordinary day. But to the African American community of the New York joint territories, it was the beginning of a much-needed and long-awaited learning process. By the end of the day, 1,500 people of different cultures had attended the Imani festival, titled "Coming Home — Together."

(Imani is a Kiswahili word that means faith.) More remarkable than being the largest number of participants to ever attend a single activity at the New York Culture Center was the fact that 433 of the attendees were guests.

The celebration of African American cultures began with a ceremonial procession of drummers and dancers — both guests

PLEASE SEE IMANI, 4

? QUESTION OF THE MONTH: *What has been the biggest change in your beliefs since you started practicing?*

Before starting this practice, I believed happiness was found in the pursuit and attainment of personal goals: a good education, a satisfying job, interesting friends and the like. Through studying and practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I've come to understand the concepts of relative happiness (what I used to believe happiness was) and absolute happiness (true happiness based on a life dedicated to helping others become absolutely happy). The things I used to believe to be happiness were actually just components of absolute happiness.

— ELIZABETH PAGE,
Seattle

The biggest change in my beliefs since I started practicing is that my life is not separate from the universe but in fact is part of the great universe. That my life is Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and that the Gohonzon is my life itself, not outside my life. Most of all I still remain a kind, fun-loving and compassionate person with a passion for dancing, singing and working out at my local gym. What a beautiful state of life.

— DEBORAH NICHOLSON-
BENITEZ, Chicago



Changing my beliefs from believing in God to believing in myself has been the biggest change in my life since I began practicing about a year ago. Strengthening my faith in this Buddhism will help me to continue my lifelong journey of self-growth and happiness.

— JENNIFER TAVERAS,
Bronx, N.Y.

Before I practiced, I felt that I had no control over the things that happened to me. I was a victim of my circumstances and felt that I did not have the power to

make changes. Through many experiences with the Gohonzon, I know now that I have complete control over my life as well as what goes on around me.

— KIM BUTLER, Columbia, Md.

Since I started practicing, the biggest change in my belief has been the realization of the absolute truth of cause and effect. When I am not nice to other people or gossip about them and, in turn, get treated badly or am gossiped about, I see cause and effect at work. When I am nice to people, they are nice to me. Because of this realization, I am getting such positive results in my life.

— SANDY WINKLER,
Baltimore

The biggest change is now I know the only thing that holds me back in accomplishing something I set out to do is lack of confidence. Before I began this practice, I had no confidence to do anything. Coming from a very poor family, it was difficult to envision accomplishing my dreams for the future. I had no drive or motivation. Practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism made me feel good and gave me hope to at least try something. The more I succeeded in the little challenges, the more confidence I developed. Today, as I set out to accomplish something, the first thing I have is confidence, then I apply the principles of Buddhism to achieve whatever goal I set.

— ANTHONY WHITE,
Tacoma, Wash.

My beliefs changed 180 degrees. In my native Ghana, we offered libations to our ancestors every 48 days, asking them to intervene on our behalf. I believed every event in my life was destined, whether good or bad. There was nothing I could do but complain about the negative and rejoice about the positive. When I started chanting, I began to understand the law of cause and ef-

fect. I began to see for the first time that I could generate a positive charge in my life that gives me energy and insight to fight to resolve the difficult situations in my life. I also chant every day for my ancestors to be born into families with the Gohonzon, so that they, too, can make positive causes and experience positive effects.

— KOFI APPIAH-KUBI,
New York

I now see reason, consistency and oneness in life. I can change my destiny if I really determine so...though it seems to take forever! That not only is matter and energy conserved, but also the psychological. That there is only one rule in life: Have no regrets! I now view my problems as necessary challenges with important lessons I must learn at each step. If I do not overcome my difficulties, I will be caught in a Catch-22 until I do so. Complaining saps one's life force; sincere chanting and actions build it up. My happiness is the gradient of my determination, therefore I must be constantly making sincere efforts in favor of kosen-rufu in order to be happy. I learn within this life's bitter experiences the truth that in the end all that matters is heart — compassion. All depends upon my spirit, my determination.

— JAMES D. TRAILL,
Melbourne, Australia

All my life, I questioned everything — especially the meaning of my existence. Since I started practicing, I developed within me the belief in my sense of mission. I've come to believe that world peace begins within me, and I can make a significant contribution to world peace by fully developing my potential. This belief in my mission guides me and gives my life great meaning.

— VICKI MOKURIA, Dallas

Before I started practicing, I felt that I had limited control over my life. My

mode of dealing with life was to react to and cope with whatever came my way. Since I started chanting, I began to feel that I was in control of my life, and now, I know that I am the one who makes things happen in my life. I now fully believe that my life is my responsibility. To know this and believe this is both liberating and empowering.

— WENDY DeORE, Dallas



Before I started practicing Buddhism, I often felt I was at the mercy of whatever was happening to me. I would hope that some day I would be the person

I wanted to be and live the life of my dreams. After I started practicing and studying Buddhism, I began to believe that I had the ability to change anything, and that I could create the life I wanted. Based on my experiences with the practice, I still believe my belief in the power of my Buddha nature has made all the difference in my approach to problems. I now see them as opportunities to grow and create something positive.

— J. LAVORA PERRY
East Cleveland, Ohio

Four years ago, in Brazil, I realized we are not victims of the destiny — everything is cause and effect, so we better take personal responsibility for our lives. For me, that was the first step in the right direction.

— LOREN DAE, Florida

The greatest change for me is knowing that I am totally responsible for my actions, instead of having a Supreme Being guide the course of my life.

— BILL McCALL, Philadelphia

Thanks to all who responded!

NEXT MONTH'S QUESTION:

'At Thanksgiving time, what are you most thankful for?'

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.

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**WORLD TRIBUNE
MAILBOX**

AIDS Does Not Equal Death

I am writing to share my perspective about the HIV/AIDS article in the Sept. 19 *World Tribune*. I agree that this disease is affecting us all, just like authoritarianism is affecting us all. Mainstream medicine accepts the current HIV=AIDS model as true, and we base our actions on it. But what if everything you were being told about AIDS was wrong?

My ideas about HIV=AIDS=Death have evolved dramatically since my experience was published (Nov. 29, 1996, *World Tribune*). Through my practice, I have found the courage to open my mind to other possibilities regarding HIV and AIDS. After extensive studies of alternative literature, I have abandoned the mainstream HIV=AIDS model. I no longer believe that HIV is the cause of AIDS, that a drop in T-cell count is an indication of a loss in health, or that AIDS=Death. I agree with many doctors and scientists who conclude that the AIDS drugs — along with recreational drugs, stress and not taking care of your body — are killing people.

I share this as a point of deep confidence in the Gohonzon. Through my practice, I opened my mind and heart to research that has allowed me to find a direction for my life and health. This search has not been easy. I have struggled with my belief in a medical system that condemns people who are HIV-positive to an early death, to cruel prejudice and to a life of fear, viewing any slight illness as a cause for alarm.

My husband, Allen, and I were diagnosed HIV-positive in 1989. Allen took all the AIDS drugs. At that time, Allen and I considered it a major benefit that he was able to go on all the latest AIDS drugs while others had to wait. Against all odds and the doctors' prediction (Allen was given six months to live), Allen extended his life by six years. I now know that the drugs ultimately caused the decline of his health.

Since his passing, I have had to deal with my own life and feel that the HIV neon light was transferred ever so brightly to me. I was terrified when my T-cells began to drop and my doctor told me it was time to start taking the AIDS cocktails. I had no symptoms, no sickness, just a dropping T-cell count. He gave me no choices, just a prescription for AIDS drugs for the rest of my life — a prescription for a short life, victimized by AIDS, with no control. This prescription pushed me to do research that took me way out of my comfort zone and outside of mainstream thinking.

What I found shocked, stunned and amazed me: Dr. Peter Duesberg, a leading expert in retrovirology, completely rejects the HIV=AIDS=Death hypothesis along with 600 doctors who belong to the Group for the Scientific Reappraisal of the HIV/AIDS Hypothesis.

Unless our lives depend on it, there are many surprising facts most of us don't know: It has never been proven that HIV is the cause of AIDS. There is not one single medical study substantiating this concept. The AIDS cocktails, AZT and other treatments are killing people. Testing positive for HIV antibodies has nothing to do with having a disease.

What we're also not hearing about are all the people who are living happy, healthy, productive lives without drug therapy. I — who have tested HIV-positive — know, because I'm one of them.

It is extremely difficult to be open to this information and to have the confidence to live by it. Through this practice, I have the courage to do the research and have the confidence to trust my life and my health. The answers are not outside ourselves.

Billions of dollars have been poured into finding an AIDS "cure." Why have we made so little progress? It is because the basic premise is not true. What if everything you believed about AIDS were wrong?

If you want more information on alternative scientific perspectives, contact the HEAL (Health Education AIDS Liaison) chapter in your area. I know it is scary, but the truth will empower you. Please question AIDS. Please question authority.

— LONNIE MOGIL, Van Nuys, Calif.

I Won't Let You Fall

PERSPECTIVE

By **ANDREW GEBERT**
NEW YORK

We went to a jazz club in the Village the other night. Long narrow space a few steps down. Black lights and dark walls. Metallic objects behind the stage that you wouldn't want to see by light of day. Probably wouldn't want to see any of it by day, stripped of the fine mystery of this summer night.

The band was already playing when we sat down. Knew right away they were good. Tight but not constricted. They were throwing handfuls of bright yarn at one another. These would weave of their own accord in mid-air, then lay down soft. Living fabric of sound slipping and slicing into both brain and belly.

At the start of the next piece, the drummer-leader of the band introduced his players. Told us who would be taking solos. Name by name, giving us time

to applaud each. Spotlighting them all.

Thought it was a nice band, a nice sound. Until the long, exposed solos began. Supported only by the upright bass and drums, the sax takes off. He moves into it, gets behind it. Starts to lift it.

Thought it was a fine solo. Until I saw the drummer's eyes. Focused like a mother on her child, a father on his son. A clear, hot tractor beam that seemed like a solid presence in space. It radiated the message, it shouted silently: I will not let you fall.

And he was there, laying out rhythms for the sax, skipping stones across the vast smooth lake of sound. Here and here. Cross on this. On this. This and this and this. These are here for you. For your dangerous passage to the other side.


And we held our breath at the beauty. As sounds strung and threaded together. Floating like living tapestry in the air.

Again the drummer's eyes. There is more. There is more. I know you have more in you.

And we will find it, give it form. Together. I will not let you fall. This syncopation. The heated beam of my eye. Trust me I will not let you fall. Go there. Go there.

Inspired, it would seem, the sax went there. Taking us all along with him. And back down to Earth, guided by the same hot tractor beam.

In this drummer-who-happened-to-be-an-SGI-member, we saw a new leader, a new leadership. The first Soka Gakkai president, Tsunesaburo Maki-guchi, said that the essence of education is not to put something into students. The essence of education, he said, is to pull out what is already there. Echoes of another great educator, John Dewey: There is a world of difference between having something to say, and having to say something. Everyone has something to say. New paradigms of leadership are about making people feel safe — to say it, try it, do it. Safe even to fail.

Because they know you'd never let them fall. 



Florida Impressions

Remembering FNCC

*All of the best experiences of my childhood.
The opportunity to once again see
Me.
This was my experience at FNCC.*

*Encouraged by others' lives, my goals became clear.
No fear.
My child self gave me the confidence to commit
To the struggle for kosen-rufu all the days of my life.*

*I will never forget bike-riding alone and with friends.
So much love.
So many words of wisdom now
Embedded in my heart.*

*My deepest gratitude to
The Ice Cream Man
for making me feel as though
He thinks only of my happiness.*

*For sharing your heart,
Thank you, Sensei.
My pledge forever,
Peace.*



— Victoria Norman Brown, Louisville, Ky.

Photos by CLARE ASCANI

IMANI, FROM PAGE 1

and members — outside the New York Culture Center. The procession members, like many other attendees, were mainly dressed in extraordinary African and Caribbean outfits, with many women in floor-length scarf skirts in purple, pink, yellow, orange and other vibrant colors, and men in silk turbans, skull caps and beaded fezzes.

Children, some in straw skirts and matching straw armlets, entered first, followed by teens in lavender and blue African outfits, some with oblong drums strapped to their bodies. The dancers were barefoot and many carried beautiful beaded African dolls. As the procession members streamed through the door, they were greeted with *ujambo*, the Swahili word for welcome home.

As the group entered the main Gohonzon room on the second floor, about 30 participants took to the stage to dance and drum. A festive song was sung in Swahili that contained the phrases "All things are possible" and "There is nothing that cannot be done."

After a group dance by teens and numerous solo dances, the drummer led the group off the stage and out of the room, leaving the audience with the sense of having just attended a wonderful celebration in an African village. And this feeling of shared community and culture persisted throughout the extraordinary six hours of performances that followed.

One the most unforgettable performances was given by David Pleasant, who drove

home the stark psychic and artistic costs of slavery in the United States. "They took our drums away," he told the audience. He explained that the slave masters had felt severely threatened when they learned that Africans used drums to call a gathering. Mr. Pleasant made clear in his performance, however, that banning the drum did not destroy its power.

Instead, African American slaves learned to call out to one another by stomping their feet, tap-dancing, playing tambourines and beating on sticks. During his energetic performance, he played the harmonica while stomping his feet and slapping his hands rhythmically on his forearms, providing an unforgettable demonstration of the resilience of the human spirit.

New York, like the rest of America, is not alien to racism, and consequently, neither is the SGI-USA. Rather than pretend that this great evil and divider of peoples doesn't exist, a group of youth division members have taken initiative that any supporter of multiculturalism would applaud. About a year ago, in September 1996, some members of the African Diaspora representing the four New York joint territories unofficially formed the Imani Group. (*Diaspora* means the dispersion of any people of common origin, culture, etc. When used in the phrase "African Diaspora," it means those of African descent who have come to live in other countries such as the United States.)

They, together with members from other cultural backgrounds, came together to en-



Children play a part in celebrating African culture. The event at the New York Culture Center drew more than 1,500 members and guests.

courage efforts by all people to accomplish the following: promoting awareness, education and understanding within the SGI and our global society about people of the African Diaspora; building pride and leadership among all people through self-awareness study; and building respect through cultural ex-

change and dialogue.

"In a city like New York, where people identify with so many different cultural backgrounds, sharing cultural presentations allows us to appreciate the beauty of one another's culture," said David Kasahara, an SGI-USA senior vice general director. "In a sense, this was the

first such effort in New York. On Oct. 12, we will celebrate Latino heritage at the Corazon Latino culture festival at the culture center."

Needless to say, the Imani members have endured much resistance, primarily from people who insist the problem of racism does not exist and from others who at first did not understand the objectives of the group and mistook it for a separatist movement.

Gordon Skinner, Imani Group member and also a founder, said: "The Imani is not promoting the type of multiculturalism that is separatist, exclusive and celebrates one culture at the expense of another. On the contrary, we wish to celebrate all cultures by creating more opportunities to learn about each other."

Amelia Moran, New York #1 Joint Territory women's division leader, was impressed by the unity of all types of people working together to make the event happen. "People from all ethnic backgrounds participated and felt a part of it, including many, many friends of the SGI," she said.

The group's desire is to promote educational forums and cultural activities that bridge gaps and clear up misunderstandings. Their hope is to encourage members of all cultures to support the SGI and continue to "come home — together" now and in the future.

Judging from the enthusiastic response of the multicultural group who attended the day's event, the group has taken a very positive step toward realizing its dream. ❏

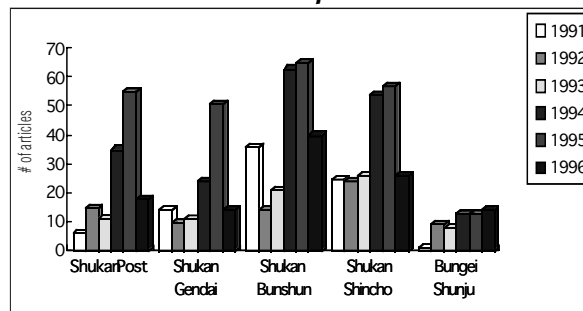
Journalism Professor Discusses Japanese Journalistic Reform

JOURNALISM, FROM PAGE 1

Asano revealed some of the major reasons why he feels the SGI president and the Soka Gakkai organization in Japan are so regularly berated by the press.

The first reason he gave is simply that President Ikeda is a religious person, that the Soka Gakkai is a religious organization — and the Japanese press is anti-religion, Professor Asano believes. "People working in the news media, generally speaking, don't have any religion, so they don't meet religious people at all," he claimed. "Without meeting Soka Gakkai members, they have preconceptions or prejudices toward the organization."

Next, the professor pointed



A graph showing the number of articles on the Soka Gakkai in five Japanese tabloids, 1991-96. Source: SGI Office of Public Relations and Information.

out that the publishing companies now attacking President Ikeda and the Soka Gakkai in Japan have a long history of depending on government authorities, which feel threatened by the Soka Gakkai's indepen-

dence, as their primary source of information. Especially the publishing companies Shinchosha and Bungei Shunju, which have been relentlessly attacking the Soka Gakkai, cooperated with Japanese militarist government

during World War II in trying to convince the citizenry that the emperor was a god — a god worth dying for in war.

These two companies survived, and in fact thrived, in the postwar era, which Professor Asano highlighted as much different than what happened in postwar Italy and Germany. In those countries, publishers who had cooperated with militarism were dismantled.

The professor also explained that the Japanese press is an elite — one that he sees as more in touch with the government than with the people. Most Japanese journalists are from prestigious universities, and 92 percent of the writers are male, he said. They cannot sympathize with the people's feelings, Professor

Asano argued, especially with marginalized or socially disadvantaged people.

"I call the Japanese media the lap dog of the establishment," he said, adding that this out-of-touch elite has undue influence on the Western press, especially foreign correspondents in Tokyo.

Finally, Professor Asano said that the Soka Gakkai troubles the Japanese press because it is one of the few organizations in Japan entirely independent from the government.

"Ultra-rightist groups or rightist groups and people who still believe the emperor is a god are afraid of the Soka Gakkai," Mr. Asano emphasized, concluding that he hopes "the Soka Gakkai will challenge this." ❏

RECOVERY, FROM PAGE 1

derstand how to use the practice to overcome his addictions. "My using wiped out all my relationships," he says. "I couldn't even see my children, and I ended up homeless and living under bridges. But Bruce and Al, my sponsors in the Lotus Group, never gave up on me. They always encouraged me to come to Lotus Group meetings, and when I finally chanted sincerely, with their help, I realized that my practice had to be inside me. Once that happened I knew what was meant by *human revolution* and *changing karma*," he says.

Robert Inatomi, Los Angeles #1 Joint Territory guidance staff, didn't have a substance-abuse problem, but his son did. Mr. Inatomi had seen his son try to overcome his addiction through various programs, including Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. When Mr. Inatomi heard Frazier, a men's division member, talk about his recovery from alcoholism at a district meeting, he encouraged Frazier and others to form a support group for Buddhists in recovery.

"I wanted to see them get on with their lives...to enjoy their lives without fear," Mr. Inatomi says. "I knew that people who share their recovery with others make their own recovery stronger." Mr. Inatomi's son has now been in recovery for 18 months, is working, married and has a baby boy.

Frazier was in and out of pro-



Just not drinking is not recovery, according to AA, because addiction is a disease of the spirit as well as the body.

grams for more than 10 years. He just couldn't seem to get any sobriety under his belt before he would use drugs and alcohol again. He lost everything, several times over — jobs, his wife, his self-esteem and, worst of all, his 8-year-old son.

He tried AA, and he knew it worked, but he never resolved the God question (One of AA's 12 steps to recovery is to give yourself over to God "however you conceive him to be") and found the AA program wasn't the total answer.

Nevertheless, he told his district last year that he had finally admitted that the obstacle to developing his faith was alcohol and drug addiction.

Once Mr. Inatomi urged Frazier to contact other members, he was so busy phoning people and making arrangements for meetings that he completely overlooked the fact that he was staying clean and sober. He had 35 people at his first meeting, informally also called the Lotus Group.

He always believed that the

12 steps of AA would work if he could just use them in a Buddhist context, he says. "The first step of AA [admitting powerless over alcohol] is the first step in an alcoholic's human revolution and, I believe, absolutely essential to recovery from any kind of addiction," he explains. As Buddhism teaches, recognizing a problem is the first step in overcoming it. Frazier now has been clean and sober more than a year.

In the early years of AA, alcoholism was not treated as a

disease but rather a lack of will power. Science has since discovered through intensive research that some people tend toward addiction because of their inability to properly metabolize chemicals. The AA Big Book (the text of the 12-Step Program) now states that alcoholism is a threefold disease: "a physical allergy, coupled with a mental obsession and a spiritual malady."

Just not drinking or using is not recovery, according to AA, because addiction is a disease of the spirit as well as the body. The spiritual answer in AA is a Power Greater Than Ourselves, which many Buddhists seeking recovery have had difficulty with, since it indicates that God or whatever other Power is outside ourselves, while Buddhism teaches that we each inherently possess the Buddha nature.

This is perhaps why informal Buddhist recovery groups are springing up around the country. Buddhists in recovery know they, too, need support groups. And sometimes even well-meaning SGI-USA friends or leaders, little experienced with the pathology of addiction, offer support that isn't helpful. Being among other Buddhists with the same problem, Buddhists in recovery can find the support they need.

Kathryn from San Francisco is another example, clean and sober for 12-and-a-half years and a practicing Buddhist for 13-and-a-half years. She tried

PLEASE SEE RECOVERY, 6

By SHALON MARTIN

PONTIAC, MICH., CORRESPONDENT

From Addiction to Mission

Shalon Martin's Buddhist practice helped her transform her suffering from addiction into her mission as a therapist.

I could not understand. Why was it happening to me? As an adolescent, drinking beer and smoking marijuana were acceptable. However, long after my friends stopped, I continued — on the road of addiction.

Early in my practice, I struggled tremendously with an addiction to crack and heroin. This was the very reason I began to chant. I was told I could change anything I wanted if only I chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Why not, I thought to myself as I sat and listened to members chanting those intriguing words.

Ten years later I am celebrating five years of sobriety and still enjoying the sound of those intriguing words. I now understand with the depths of my life what SGI President Ikeda is talking about when he says, "Unless you go through difficulties, you cannot empathize with others' hardships." Ten years ago, I could not have imagined that my mission in this lifetime would be as a substance

abuse therapist specializing in women treatment issues. But because of the sufferings I went through, I can better help my clients. Working with this population continues to allow me to bridge the gap among families suffering from the effects of chemical dependence.

As I have worked with chemically dependent women and their children, I have gained a deeper understanding of addiction and karma. Often, I adapt Buddhist principles and SGI President Ikeda's guidance in providing therapeutic services.

I sometimes encourage clients with President Ikeda's words: "It takes courage to become happy — courage to remain true to one's convictions, courage not to be defeated by one's weakness and negativity, courage to take swift action to

help those who are suffering. It is through such daily efforts that true identity will shine forth."

Courage is usually the key ingredient most clients lack. They are fearful of life and of taking responsibility. They tend to find it easier to blame others and the environment for their negative circumstances. So I try to help them understand the concept of cause and effect. Through compassion and respect, I empower them to understand they possess the inner strength to change their poisonous situations into medicine.

I am encouraged when, despite all obstacles, my clients move from being victims to accepting responsibility for the causes they have made. My job is most gratifying when I see a woman whose children have been placed in the system

regain custody and move toward having a value-creating family.

Addiction is often referred to as a spiritual, mental and physical prison that hinders a person's development. However, chemical dependence does not just affect the user but also the person's loved ones. Denial and co-dependence play a major role in the continuation of suffering for all involved.

I never realized the impact that my addiction had on my family until I began to study Nichiren Daishonin's writings. Now I clearly understand the concept of family karma. My addiction permeated their lives, but I am so appreciative that my practice has had an even greater impact.

Through my work, I am confident that I am forwarding the goals of kosen-rufu and peace as I help people overcome their addictions. And, just as important, encouraging clients to challenge their fundamental darkness helps me realize just how important it is for me to keep challenging my life and win no matter what.

TM

Buddhists In Recovery

RECOVERY, FROM PAGE 5

going to NA meetings but didn't like them. "There was so much talk about God and a power outside of myself," she says. "It just seemed to me that if the people who were Buddhists had their own group, we could go to the Gohonzon together and get the strength we needed to recover."

The San Francisco group was formed a little more than a year ago, and they have anywhere from five to 15 people at their meetings held every two weeks. Meetings are structured: gongyo, a half hour of chanting and a half hour of discussion.

Flowers and Seeds is the recovery group in the Minneapolis area. Tom, a Buddhist for 15 years, helped start the group two-and-a-half years ago. Clean and sober for five years, Tom felt there were others in the SGI organization who needed a support group. They meet once a month, and their meeting dates are published in the territory calendar.

Josefina from Sacramento, Calif., who has been sober a year and Buddhist for two years, was introduced to a 12-Step Program in Mexico City five years ago, but had trouble with the God concept once she became a Buddhist. She helped start the On Prolonging Life Group because she wanted to stop drinking. "I have gotten wonderful benefits, and I understand that recovery is not external. Buddhism is empowering," she says.

Of course, not everyone needs a special support group to overcome their addiction. Juan from New York had problems with alcohol for many years and credits Brass Band with helping him stay in recovery.

Although he managed to stay sober on his own for months at a time, he still ended up with drunken driving arrests.

"I only visited my mother to get another beer from her refrigerator, and I took advantage

of girlfriends, using their money so I could drink," he says. "The low point came in my life when I yelled at my mother to leave me alone about my drinking. The next day I told my mother I would quit drinking as a Mother's Day gift to her, and I haven't had a drink since 1990."

He sought guidance, and it

'It is important for people with addiction problems to seek help. I encourage anyone who even thinks they might have a problem to see a counselor.'

— Carolyn Newman, drug counselor

was suggested he seek professional help, chant and perhaps attend AA. "I didn't like AA with its emphasis on Christianity and determined to use the Gohonzon for recovery," he says.

Juan has been active in the Brass Band and credits this activity with helping him stay in recovery. "This experience is not only about how I quit drinking and changed my negative tendencies, but more of a realization of how I was able to pull my life out of a condition that is highly prevalent among young men my age," he says. "I have a much greater appreciation of President Ikeda and the SGI for the guidance I have received."

On the other hand, not everyone has a problem with the 12 steps. In Kansas City, Mo., Carolyn Newman, a Buddhist for

11 years, is a counselor for drug addicts and alcoholics and is very strong on 12-Step Programs. "I don't have any conflict between Buddhism and the 12-Step Program," she says. "When I counsel people I talk about spiritual principles. I want to find the best way for people to get into recovery and stay there. Each person has to find peace to stay in recovery. Many of the people I counsel know I am a Buddhist, but the main concern I have for addicts and alcoholics is for them to recognize their illness and know they will have to change their behavior." She is in charge of a recovery house for alcoholics.

In the end, the important thing is for people to be honest and admit when they have a problem. As Ms. Newman says: "It is important for people with addiction problems to seek help. I encourage anyone who even thinks they might have a problem to see a counselor."

According to Ted Morino, the SGI-USA Study Department chief: "Addiction is a life tendency in which the life-condition of Hunger, one of the lower six worlds, holds sway. This tendency stems from delusion innate in one's life, and Buddhism teaches the importance of tapping one's inherent Buddhahood or nature of the Law to shed light on this fundamental darkness within."

Since this is a disease, Mr. Morino states, it makes sense to get professional help. "Institutions like AA can function as Buddhist gods," he says. "We can capitalize upon techniques available in society to overcome our addiction. Ultimately, however, as long as we depend upon some force outside ourselves, we will not see the true solution. Buddhism focuses on how to generate the life-condition of the Buddha so that we can truly enjoy our existence in accord with the Law." ■■■

Are You an Alcoholic?

By PATTY JACOBS

LAS VEGAS CORRESPONDENT

One of the ways the Alcoholics Anonymous program encourages people to seek help is by offering a short 20-question self-test. If a person answers yes to three or more questions, he or she may have a drinking problem. The questionnaire can be modified to address any addiction problem.

1. Do you drink (use drugs, overeat, gamble) because you have problems or to face up to stressful situations?
2. Do you have blackouts — periods you remember nothing about?
3. Do you often prefer to drink alone, rather than with others?
4. Do you drink in the morning, before work or school?
5. Do you ever get in trouble when you are drinking?
6. Do you often get drunk when you drink, even when you do not mean to?
7. Do you gulp your drinks as if to satisfy a great thirst?
8. Do you avoid leveling with others about your drinking?
9. Is your job performance or are your grades slipping because of drinking?
10. Do you feel panicky when faced with non-drinking days, such as when you visit relatives?
11. Do you feel wittier or more charming when you are drinking?
12. Do you ever carry alcohol in your car, purse or pockets, or stash it in your desk at work or school?
13. Do you drive after you have been drinking, but feel certain you are in complete control of yourself?
14. Do you drink when you get angry with people, including your friends, spouse or parents?
15. Do you hide empty bottles and dispose of them secretly?
16. Do you invent social occasions for drinking, such as inviting friends for lunch, cocktails or dinner?
17. Do you become defensive when someone mentions your drinking?
18. Do you take an extra drink or two before leaving for a party even though you know alcohol will be served there?
19. Do you buy liquor at different places so no one will know how much you buy?
20. Do you think you could not possibly have a problem with drinking because you only drink wine and/or beer?

The various 12-Step Programs all have similar questions that deal with specific addictions. For instance, in the Overeaters Anonymous questionnaire, the question is asked, "Are you obsessed with food, diets, calories and weight?" The Alanon program, which is a 12-Step Program for relatives and friends of alcoholics, poses these questions, among others: "Do you tell lies to cover up for someone else's drinking?" "Have you been hurt or embarrassed by a drinker's behavior?" ■■■

Questions on Recovery

Do you have questions about addiction and Buddhist practice (how to use the practice to overcome an addiction, how to encourage someone else to use the practice to do so, etc.)? The World Tribune will publish an occasional column focusing on such questions. Please send any questions to Recovery, c/o of World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

June 7 was the day to file for candidacy in the upcoming Upper House elections. The nine Soka Gakkai candidates backed by the Komei Political Federation submitted their papers that morning.

Hiroshi Izumida (Soka Gakkai director and Tokyo No. 3 General Chapter chief) was running in the Tokyo district, and Seichiro Haruki (director; Kansai Headquarters chief) was running in the Osaka district. The other seven candidates, running in the single, nationwide district,¹ were Hisao Seki (vice general director; Tohoku Headquarters chief), Shunzo Jujo (director; Saitama General Chapter chief), Minoru Suzumoto (director; Ibaraki General Chapter chief), Kunio Shiroya (director; Chubu No. 1 General Chapter chief), Hiroshi Asada (director; Kansai No. 2 General Chapter chief), Bunji Nishimiya (director; Shikoku Headquarters chief) and Katsuharu Oniyama (director; Kyushu No. 2 General Chapter chief).

All of the party slates were nearly complete that first day, June 7. One hundred candidates were running for 51 seats in the nationwide district (including one seat that had become vacant midterm), making the ratio two to one. In contrast, the ratio was a little over four to one in the Tokyo district and three to one in the Osaka district. Once registered, candidates lost no time in campaigning toward the July 1 election.

Komei members then held nine seats in the Upper House. Three of those were now up for reelection; the other six were not affected. If all nine of the Gakkai-backed candidates were elected, it would bring the total number of seats held by the Komei in the Upper House to 15. Any party or group with more than 10 elected representatives in the Upper House earned an official legislative bargaining position, which afforded it much greater influence. This was because of the House requirement that bills could only be proposed with the support of a minimum of 10 councilors.

The Soka Gakkai members had witnessed the activities of the representatives they had elected thus far. For example, when Gakkai-backed councilors learned that Japanese agricultural emigrants to the Dominican Republic had been given rocky, barren land unsuitable for farming and were on the verge of starvation, they took up the problem, making the government's involvement an issue. In particular, they questioned the vague, faulty information the Japanese government had been providing prospective emigrants about conditions in that distant land and demanded that the government pay to repatriate the em-

The New Human Revolution

By HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 4

Rough Seas

Translation of parts 9–13 of the 'Rough Seas' 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.

igrants and provide them with aid once they returned.

Also, the Komei representatives began a campaign led by Katsu Kiyohara for the distribution of free textbooks for all students during their years of compulsory education. Eventually, a bill instituting that idea was passed.

Seichiro Haruki, representing the non-aligned parties and independent House members, questioned the government on the terrible train accident at Mikawashima. Criticizing the blatant disregard for people's safety so evident in Japanese society, he argued for a fair, honest resolution of the affair and elicited a response from the prime minister that he would do every-

In the previous Upper House elections, three years earlier, all six Soka Gakkai-backed candidates (whose seats were not up for election yet) had won easily in both the prefectural and nationwide districts. In addition, the Soka Gakkai's membership had increased substantially since then, and it was generally thought that the organization was strong enough to elect all nine candidates. But precisely because victory was such a strong possibility, the members knew they would have to begin their campaign with a struggle against easy optimism and complacency.

For the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, the Upper House election was a referendum on the performance of Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda's administration and cabinet, which had come into office two years earlier. For the progressive forces, an important issue was whether they could retain the minimum third of the seats (84 seats) in the Upper House essential to block any moves by the conservative LDP to change the constitution. For the Komei candidates, meanwhile, the election was a first attempt to establish credibility and independence as a third force in the Upper House, a force transcending political ideologies and dedicated to world peace and improving people's lives.

This was the first election since the Komei's formation in January 1962, so the Soka Gakkai members not only had to be familiar with the personal qualities and platform of the candidate they were campaigning for, but also have a clear grasp and ability to articulate the Komei positions and policies.

Earlier that year, in April, Komei had begun publishing a newspaper, *Komei Shimbun*. Gakkai members read it devotedly, using it to assist them in discussing Komei's policies and the government's shortcomings with friends and

acquaintances. Whenever they found themselves unable to answer questions, or when they heard specific requests, they immediately contacted the Komei Headquarters in Kamiosaki in Tokyo's Shinagawa Ward.

The Komei Headquarters valued this feedback from supporters and made positive efforts to reflect it in the association's policies. In other words, the Komei and its supporters worked together to promote candidates, unified in their purpose of bringing a new government to Japan that had the people's welfare at heart.

Through their campaigning, many Soka Gakkai members became extremely well versed in party policies and positions. For example, in discussing the housing problem, members showed a detailed grasp of the situation and could offer concrete solutions: They called for the nationwide standardization of housing policy, increased land set aside for residential development, and measures to ensure the fireproofing of multistory dwellings.

Filled with pride and a deep sense of purpose, they sought to revitalize Japanese government themselves, arguing in support of the Komei's policies with a powerful conviction, as if they, too, were running for office.

The women's division members were especially active in campaigning for the Komei candidates — despite the fact that married women in Japan were usually thought to have little interest in politics and government. It signaled the rise of a new, awakened grass-roots force, a new powerhouse in the movement to restore the reins of government to the people.

One question that they encountered frequently gave them particular trouble — was the Komei a conservative or progressive group? One day, when Shin'ichi was encouraging some women's division members visiting the Gakkai Headquarters, one of them asked him this question.

Shin'ichi responded: "Actually, I believe the Komei should respond to this question. But let me tell you what I think. The Komei is a middle-of-the-road political organization that defies conventional pigeonholing as conservative or progressive. By middle of the road, I don't mean that it is halfway between the two. It is not constrained or fettered by traditional political ideologies, whether capitalist or socialist. It is a free, unbiased organization that bases itself on bringing happiness to the people and peace to the world.

"It looks at people's happiness from a practical standpoint, seeking to further policies that benefit their welfare and seeking to oppose those contrary to their best interests. The Komei is a new kind of political association, one without precedent.



thing he could to make sure prompt, sincere efforts to provide relief and compensation were made.

This represented only a fraction of the Komei councilors' activities.

Soka Gakkai members had high hopes that if the candidates they were supporting were elected and acquired a legislative bargaining position, the Komei's influence would grow.

The election campaigns of the nine Soka Gakkai-supported candidates began under the gray skies of the rainy season. Since the seats of three Komei incumbents were up for reelection, a win by all nine candidates would mean a threefold increase for the Komei.

ROUGH SEAS, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"That may make it hard for some to understand, and it may be a bit hard for you to explain at times. But it is always difficult to create something new. Whenever we encounter a fresh problem or question, let's discuss it together — not only with our elected representatives and the Komei staff, but among ourselves as well. Together let's build and nurture a new kind of political organization."

The Komei was attempting to take a great leap forward in this election, as an organization supported by and grounded in the people, as exemplified by the ordinary men and women of the Soka Gakkai.

Shin'ichi continued to travel all over Japan, devoting himself to inspiring and encouraging members in every region as they made a fresh start toward May 3 the following year. On June 9, he attended the Chubu² Headquarters Leaders Meeting at the municipal gymnasium in Toyohashi, Aichi Prefecture, and afterward gave a lecture on the Gosho "Letter to Niike" for district chiefs. On the 10th, he attended the Kansai Headquarters Leaders Meeting at the Osaka Baseball Stadium.

Then, on June 12, he gave a rousing speech at that month's Women's Division Leaders Meeting at the Taito Gymnasium, Tokyo. At his proposal, such meetings had been held each month since April. Foreseeing the trend of the times, Shin'ichi was confident that women would be a major force in building a new society.

Shin'ichi's travels around Japan to meet with and encourage the members continued without interruption. On June 15, he gave a lecture on "Letter to Oi Shoji Nyudo"³ at a guidance meeting in Sapporo, Hokkaido. On the 18th, he attended a leaders meeting for Suwa Chapter in Okaya City, Nagano Prefecture, after lecturing on the Gosho "Reply to Lord Matsuno's Wife" to a group of Nagano leaders.

Then, on the 20th, he attended a Wakayama Chapter leaders meeting in Wakayama.⁴ He referred to two of the Daisyonin's writings — "How Those Initially Aspiring to the Way Can Attain Buddhahood Through the Lotus Sutra" and "Reply to Yasaburo" — explaining that faith was a contest between the Buddha and devilish functions. The next day, after a brief discussion with men's and women's division district chiefs, he visited the site where the new Wakayama Community Center was to be built.

From Wakayama, he flew to Kyushu, speaking to members in Omuta, Fukuoka Prefecture, on June 22, and then studying the Gosho "Letter to Niike" with local leaders. The next day he attended the Kyushu Headquarters Leaders Meeting, again lecturing on

"How Those Initially Aspiring to the Way Can Attain Buddhahood Through the Lotus Sutra."

He rushed from one place to another, day after day, literally without a moment's rest. He would be in Nagoya one day, then Osaka the next. And just when everyone thought he had returned to Tokyo, he was off again to Hokkaido. The other Soka Gakkai leaders were impressed by his hectic pace of activities — some wondered if there weren't four or five Shin'ichis rushing around at the same time!

Another thing that amazed the leaders working closely with Shin'ichi was his endurance and energy. He had been weak of constitution, but the harder he drove himself the stronger he seemed to become.

One day, one of the leaders accompanying Shin'ichi asked, "How can you work so hard and still be so full of energy?"



Shin'ichi smiled and responded: "That's the wondrous thing about Soka Gakkai activities. There are many people I have to encourage. They are all waiting for me. When I think about them, I can't rest. I find courage. And when I meet people, I think, 'I have to inspire courage and determination in this person' or 'I mustn't allow this person to be unhappy.' The strength of my determination then arouses a powerful life force within me.

"Praising and encouraging the children of the Buddha who spread the Mystic Law — the act of speaking about Buddhism — causes joy to well forth from the depths of your life and gives you strength. At such times, the strong life force of a bodhisattva or Buddha fills your entire being.

"That's why the harder I exert myself in Gakkai activities, the more energetic I feel. Working for kosen-rufu is my secret to health.

"Of course, I am only human, and sometimes I get tired. Buddhism is a rational teaching. We mustn't overlook the need for rest. But the tiredness that comes from giving your all to Gakkai activities is a satisfying kind of tiredness, one that you recover from quickly."

The leaders accompanying Shin'ichi listened intently as he continued: "On the other hand, there are those who seem to be exerting themselves energetically in Gakkai activities, but who always end up absolutely exhausted. This is because they are participating passively. As long as you feel somewhere in your heart that you have to do activities because you've been told to or are expected to, then you won't feel any real joy. Nor are you likely to have much energy and enthusiasm.

"To feel that energy, it's important to boldly take initiative in your activities. Set concrete personal goals and then strive to realize them. When you exert your utmost toward a goal and then achieve it, you will experience great joy and pleasure. Also, the wonderful thing about doing Gakkai activities is that they constitute compassionate action, which benefits others, members and non-members alike. Our involvement in such activities strengthens us.

"I once heard a story about a group of Japanese who escaped from a Soviet prison camp just after the war ended. On the verge of starvation, they continued their flight. However, the only ones to survive the ordeal were not the young men or women, who should have been at the peak of their physical strength, but a mother and the infant she carried. That mother knew that if she died, her child would most certainly perish. Her love for

her child is what gave her strength and enabled her to draw forth incredible mental and physical stamina.

"When I think of the Soka Gakkai and my fellow members, I can't allow myself to fall ill or be lazy. My commitment makes me strong and gives me energy. If, whatever your circumstances, you carry out your responsibilities in the organization and fulfill your mission for kosen-rufu, you too will enjoy increased strength and energy."

Shin'ichi's intensive efforts in every region of Japan strengthened the members' determination to work for kosen-rufu — the establishment of a peaceful society. With a growing awareness of their social responsibility as Buddhists, they devoted even further efforts to supporting the election campaigns of Gakkai-backed candidates.

There was a sharp rise in the threats and harassment directed at the Komei-backed candidates and the Soka Gakkai as a result. Some candidates of other parties, as they made the rounds giving speeches in their districts, spent all their time attacking the Soka Gakkai, without even mentioning their own positions or policies.

In not a few instances, the Komei candidates were subjected to catcalls and

jeers when they tried to speak. When Hisao Seki delivered an outdoor campaign speech in Otaru City, Hokkaido, someone even threw a stone at him, hitting him in the back of the head.

All over Japan, Komei candidates' posters were torn down. In Osaka, 2,200 posters for candidate Seiichiro Haruki disappeared. Other dirty tricks surfaced, including false claims that Soka Gakkai members had offered to buy votes for ¥1,000 each.

(To be continued)

1. The Upper House has a complex election system. Its members are elected for six-year terms, and seats are divided into nationwide and prefectural districts. Prior to major electoral reform in 1994, the Upper House had 252 seats — 152 for 47 prefectural constituencies, including Tokyo and Osaka, and 100 for a single, nationwide constituency elected by proportional representation on party lists. Elections for the Upper House are staggered so that half the representatives in each district are up for reelection every three years. Prior to 1994, this meant that 50 seats in the nationwide district and 76 in the prefectural districts were up for election each time.
2. The Chubu region, comprising Niigata, Toyama, Ishikawa, Fukui, Yamanashi, Nagano, Gifu, Shizuoka and Aichi prefectures. It's located in central Honshu, the largest of Japan's four main islands.
3. *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1377. Not yet available in English.
4. Capital of Wakayama Prefecture, located in the southwestern part of the main island of Honshu.

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APPLYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS TO DAILY LIFE

Good Times, Bad Times

By JEFF FARR

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

Do not expect good times, but take the bad times for granted.
(The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 242)


On the surface, this Goshō quote seems pessimistic, as if the Daishonin were saying: "Hey, life's rough. Just get used to it." I was wondering who would want to practice our religion if the first thing we said was "Don't expect good times here."

But what Nichiren Daishonin is pointing to is true happiness, which is something much more than experiencing good times or not experiencing bad times. The Atsuhara Persecution, which shook his followers, had just occurred when he wrote this letter. Nichiren Daishonin, using the example of his own 27 years of persecution, tries to wake up the believers to a larger view of happiness, encouraging them in this Goshō to become "roaring lions," to discover such a happiness that they're unafraid of anything.

It seems to me that often it's our shallow view of happiness that makes us unhappy. Sometimes, for example, I wonder why my life isn't more like the American Dream. (I'm not actually sure what the American Dream is, but I have a vague notion that I should be living in a house, have a lot of cars and kids and stuff.)

Then I wonder why I'm being stupid. Of course, the American Dream, whatever it is, can't guarantee my happiness.

And why did I start practicing anyhow? To live the American Dream? No. I started because I was miserable — I just wanted to become happy, even a little bit happy. And it worked: I have to admit that I'm happy now.

What the Daishonin means by "Do not expect good times, but take the bad times for granted" is that in practicing Buddhism we should seek the deepest, truest, most absolute happiness. I think this should be the new American Dream — not shallow happiness but the real thing. 

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TEMPLE ISSUE

Why Are Members Exchanging The Gohonzon?

Q Why are members exchanging their Nikken-transcribed Gohonzon for one transcribed by Nichikan?

A We should first examine Nichiren Daishonin's intent in inscribing the Gohonzon. Regarding one he inscribed for the family of the believer Shijo Kingo, he states in "Reply to Kyo'o":

The lion, king of beasts, is said to advance three steps, then gather himself to spring, unleashing the same power whether he traps a tiny ant or attacks a fierce animal. In inscribing this Gohonzon for her protection, Nichiren is equal to the lion king. This is what the sutra means by "the power of an attacking lion." (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 119*)

Through this passage, we can sense the intensity and depth with which Nichiren Daishonin poured his heart and soul into inscribing a Gohonzon for the family. Such profound compassion for his believers is vibrantly apparent in each of his letters.


In contrast, however, as is clarified in the answer to question 3 in this pamphlet, Nikken's behavior runs completely counter to the intent and compassion of Nichiren Daishonin. Instead, Nikken has been a driving force behind attempts to destroy the SGI's kosen-rufu movement for people's happiness. In terms of his state of life, Nikken has become the least qualified person to act on behalf of Nichiren Daishonin in transcribing the Gohonzon.

Key Points:

- Many members have exchanged their Nikken Gohonzon because knowing it was transcribed by Nikken and understanding his character and intent, they felt uncomfortable chanting to it.
- Both are transcriptions of Nichiren Daishonin's original Gohonzon, but since one's faith has a subjective aspect, it may bother those people who know what kind of person Nikken is, and thereby affect them emotionally.

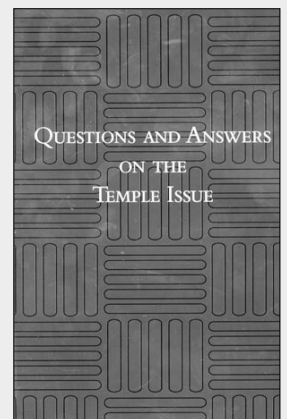
It is quite natural, then, that many members, in reaction to Nikken's conduct, have chosen to exchange the Gohonzon he transcribed for one transcribed by the 26th high priest, Nichikan, who struggled to restore the Daishonin's spirit and intent within the priesthood during the 18th century after it had been compromised by previous high priests.

On one level, we can state that any properly transcribed Gohonzon embodies the life of Nichiren Daishonin, and Nikken's transcription of the Gohonzon is technically correct. Yet knowing now that Nikken's intent and behavior are at complete odds with the profound compassion of the Daishonin himself, many have opted to receive the Gohonzon transcribed by Nichikan. This way they can chant to the Gohonzon without being reminded of Nikken's misdeeds.

An additional motivation for some exists in the fact, detailed in a previous answer, that the teaching Nikken is trying to disseminate about the Gohonzon — that he personally empowers the Gohonzon, and that only through his sanction can one derive benefit from chanting to it — is a clear perversion and slander of the Daishonin's teachings. By chanting to the Gohonzon transcribed by Nichikan and showing benefit and actual proof as a result, many feel they are refuting both this erroneous claim as well as Nikken's false contention that the Gohonzon of Nichikan is counterfeit. Buddhism teaches that refuting what is erroneous and unjust in terms of the Buddhist Law is a profoundly good cause. Since the Gohonzon is the essential crystallization of that Law, this may in part explain the tremendous joy and progress reported by many who have exchanged Gohonzon. 

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 the SGI-USA's website: www.sgi-usa.org.





GUIDANCE INTO ACTION

Winning In My Family Revolution

By ADIN STRAUSS

SGI-USA VICE YOUTH DIVISION CHIEF

If you continue to strive in faith..., growing as a human being and becoming a sunny presence overflowing with good cheer, wisdom, warmth and consideration, then your family will naturally come to approve of this Buddhism. Thus, to be loved and respected by your family is the first step to winning them over to this practice. (SGI President Ikeda, *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 201)

This is guidance I have tried to put into practice more than any other. And yet there are few other guidance passages that have been so difficult for me to live out.

I guess that the prevailing religion in my family was rationalism, as any inclination toward belief in a higher power or force of any sort had been squeezed out through the harsh

experiences my parents endured as Jews living in Nazi Germany, or during the Nazi era — experiences that made them cynical about justice in this world and contributed to a certain gloomy and cynical frame of mind. Added to this was the fact that my mother was stricken in the prime of her life with multiple sclerosis and that many members of my family struggled with depression (myself included).

I joined the SGI owing to the kindness of the people who were trying to introduce me to the practice and to their insistence that I could change my family's and my mother's situations with the power of Buddhism. I found it extremely encouraging and at the same time sort of frightening. The encouraging part was that it was within my grasp, within the realm of possibility, to change my family karma. On the other hand, it also meant that I had no excuse; to not exert myself to the fullest in practice would mean that I lacked compassion

for my parents and siblings.

My enthusiasm for the practice, my fervor for it, however, made a negative impression on my family, to say the least. I learned that emotional behavior and words do not help in the process of sharing Buddhism with your family members, the people who know you and your faults the best. Another obstacle was my lack of confidence, both in myself and the practice. Could I really do this? Last was my constant tendency to blame my family for my problems, as if my human revolution consisted of watching those around me change to fit my requirements.

It has been a long and arduous struggle, one that is far from complete even now. But I can say without doubt or hesitation that practicing Buddhism in accord with President Ikeda's guidance has been the key to a total family revolution. My siblings and I, who were not close before I started practicing, are now very close. We have all united around my parents to support them. The



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Adin Strauss

power of daimoku has extended my mother's life through a major episode of epilepsy and two bouts with cancer — she has joyously been able to see the birth of five happy and healthy grandchildren. At the same time, my father, at age 82, is still going to work every day and is in excellent health. Last, I have enjoyed seven wonderful years of marriage and have a great 15-month-old daughter. My challenge is never to slacken — to be faithful to the spirit of this guidance throughout my life. I want to be able to say, "I won in my family revolution!" when I reach an old age. ❖

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE The Final Cut

By CRAIG GREEN & JEFF FARR
LOS ANGELES

As 1990 marked the 700th anniversary of the founding of Taiseki-ji, and many SGI members prepared to celebrate the occasion, Nikken and other executive priests were planning something quite different. In July 1990, they devised a plot to forever change the relationship between Nichiren Shoshu and the SGI. Called Operation C, or more officially "The Operation to Cut Off the Soka Gakkai," its purpose was clear: to cut off the SGI leadership and restructure the organization as one completely obedient to Nichiren Shoshu.

The plan was composed of three stages: first, changing various rules of Nichiren Shoshu, opening the way for other aspects of the plan to take place.

Second, dismissing SGI President Ikeda from his position as head of all Nichiren Shoshu lay organizations and placing restrictions on the Soka Gakkai. (The demands included prohibiting the *Seikyo Shimbun* from publishing any of President Ikeda's speeches and replacing half the Soka Gakkai officers in Nichiren Shoshu with priests.)

And in the final stage, the plan called for the creation of a task force to implement the dissolution of the SGI. This task force would also be responsible for using the media to promote the "inherent justice of the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood."

If there were ever a doubt as to Nikken's true intent, the hatching of this plan and the events that followed would lay that doubt to rest.

Nikken wanted control. And he didn't have any patience left.

No. 8 in a series

By KEN SARAGOSA

PHILA. HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION CHIEF

YOUNG DAISAKU (6)

To Cross the Rubicon

Daisaku Ikeda formally joined the Soka Gakkai on Aug. 24, 1947. In retrospect, he feels that with his decision to follow Toda he "crossed the Rubicon." For him, religion was not of much interest; Daisaku sought much more than a form of worship. He sought a philosophy and some way of life that would enable him to create value out of the desperate circumstances of his life and the desolation of his society.

Consequently, the decision to join the organization Toda led, to take Toda as his mentor, was, he felt, a decision that would fundamentally alter the direction of his life. For Ikeda, at that point in his life, there was no alternative, although it was agonizing. "Swinging back and forth like a pendulum," he recalls, "I agonized over actual Buddhist doctrines and how to put them into practice."

The early days of his practice certainly were not easy. Before joining the Soka Gakkai, he felt spiritually alone, without friends who could understand his intense inner struggle. After joining, though, Daisaku's loneliness did not abate much. He worked as a clerk in a printing plant and occasionally attended Soka Gakkai discussion meetings. His tuberculosis seemed to affect him more intensely in the months following his conversion, and it was often all he could do to work each day amidst his fever and chills.

He recalls that on most days he would "enter his apartment without a word, lie down, open a book, or just rest to relieve the congestion of blood." Regardless, though, Ikeda's intellectual appetite was unquenchable. Despite his illness, he would study late into the night.

Ikeda also made the time, whenever he could, to attend Josei Toda's lectures on Buddhism. Each time he attended, he was convinced anew that Toda was a man of great character and conviction, and he began to appreciate what deeply profound insight Buddhism offered into the seeming chaos of the world.

As his understanding of Buddhism grew, so too did his awareness that the ideals of this organization were lofty, and that Toda's vision for the future was great. While inspiring, this understanding also left Ikeda wondering what he, beset with illness and lacking education, could really contribute. Fully committing himself to the Soka Gakkai under Toda "would require boundless effort in the future

because the objective was so great," he thought. And he didn't want to pursue such an objective only to fail because of his personal limitations. "If I am to escape," he thought, "now is the time, for afterward no repentance will mend matters."

As Daisaku agonized over his practice, though, a glimmer of hope began to shine in his life. The principles of Buddhism taught him that there was no problem that could not be solved, and through his daily efforts in Buddhist practice he began to understand this as a reality in his life.

Unbeknownst to Daisaku, Toda was quietly observing the sincerity and seriousness with which Ikeda approached his practice. He seemed to understand that Ikeda was not simply experimenting with Buddhism, and he observed patiently as Ikeda came to his determination to pursue a profound way of life. ❖



EXPERIENCE

Taking Control of My Life

By EMMITT CAMPBELL
RIVERSIDE, CALIF.

Everything in my life seemed to come so easily. I had very caring parents who were always there for me. Although I grew up in a sometimes hostile environment, where gangs were present and drugs were readily available, my family was always protected. I believe this was a result of my mother being a pioneer SGI-USA member.

But I think because I had it so easy, I began to take my life for granted. During my sophomore year in college, I hung around people who were doing drugs and were involved in illegal activities such as drug dealing and robbery. Also, I began experimenting with marijuana, and my grades dropped.

Strangely, at the same time, a young men's division leader visited me, encouraging me to become an active YMD member. I would listen, but I always came up with excuses why I couldn't. And I realized that I didn't want to go to college anymore.

It was at this point, when my life-condition hit its lowest, that my negative causes finally caught up with me. I was arrested and convicted of being an accomplice to several robberies!

While waiting for my sentencing date, my YMD leader continued to encourage me, and I chanted to change my situation. Also, a few YMD members in my area came over to chant with me. We chanted vigorous, heartfelt daimoku to change poison into medicine. These YMD members were so confident that

I would overcome this horrific obstacle. And they slowly but surely instilled their never-give-up spirit in me.

At the time of my sentencing, I vividly remember my mother chanting in the courtroom, praying for the best outcome — one that would exclude state penitentiary time. Our prayers were answered, and I received one year at a rehabilitation camp, a mere slap on the wrist considering the armed robbery charges.

There I started doing a consistent gongyo and chanting consistent daimoku. I introduced some of my fellow inmates to this Buddhism, and my life-condition began to elevate. All of my months in the rehabilitation center were incident-free; I was even chosen as a trusted ward to work at

different sheriffs' stations during most of my sentence. Again and again, various SGI members visited and supported me until my release.

I was released three months early, because of good behavior, in October 1983. My life-condition had changed 180 degrees. Immediately, I enrolled back in college. And I became an active member in my district. I began doing Gajokai, Soka Group and roller gymnastics.

In 1986, I graduated from California State University Los Angeles with a bachelor of arts in social welfare, earning a 3.5 GPA my junior and senior years. I have since received my teaching credential for elementary education and have been teaching for more than eight years. Ultimately, I hope to become a principal, and I'm



Emmitt Campbell

beginning the program next fall.

I find this all so incredible. It's amazing to have received a teaching credential considering my past record. I truly feel my mission is to be a role model for today's youth, using the guidance of SGI President Ikeda and the concepts of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism as my guides.

To all the SGI members who supported me and helped me gain control of my life: Thank you from the bottom of my heart. ☸

MY DISTRICT

Close Friends in Columbus District

By CRISPIN REEDY
DALLAS

When I first became a member of Columbus District two years ago, I had just returned to America after spending almost four years abroad. First I was in Thailand with the Peace Corps, teaching English to junior high school students, and later I was in China, teaching college-level English. After spending so much time overseas, I found myself with a severe case of "reverse culture shock" when I returned.

America seemed strange and unfamiliar. I found myself marveling at such mundane things as a Coke machine. The "average" American lifestyle seemed unbelievably luxurious to me, almost hedonistic. I had been a different person before I left for Asia! And try as I might, I could never be that person again.

Although I had been warned about this reverse culture



Crispin Reedy (left) with district members Kimberly Gapman and Shaker Arya.

shock, I still was not prepared to experience it firsthand. I had expected to feel welcome, glad to get home. After the initial excitement of my return had worn off, I found that no one was particularly interested in my experience. I was living at home with my parents, was working for a temporary agency, had no friends in Dallas and was full of stories that no one wanted to hear.

So when I walked into Columbus District and found a welcoming community, I felt I had come home at last. Every meeting was interesting — sometimes thought-provoking, sometimes fun, sometimes touching. At the time I joined, the district had a group of especially active, creative young women's division members, who helped make the meetings shine.

At the planning meetings, all the members would decide on the topic for the discussion meeting, and the young women would look for opportunities to contribute. We were very fond of skits. One time, to illustrate a Goshu, some of us made Japanese-style masks. One person played Shijo Kingo; another, the fearsome Lord Ema.

On another occasion, three young women each played one of the three presidents, reading his story as if she were the person. We wanted everyone to participate, so each young woman prepared interview questions that they distributed and then responded to in character.

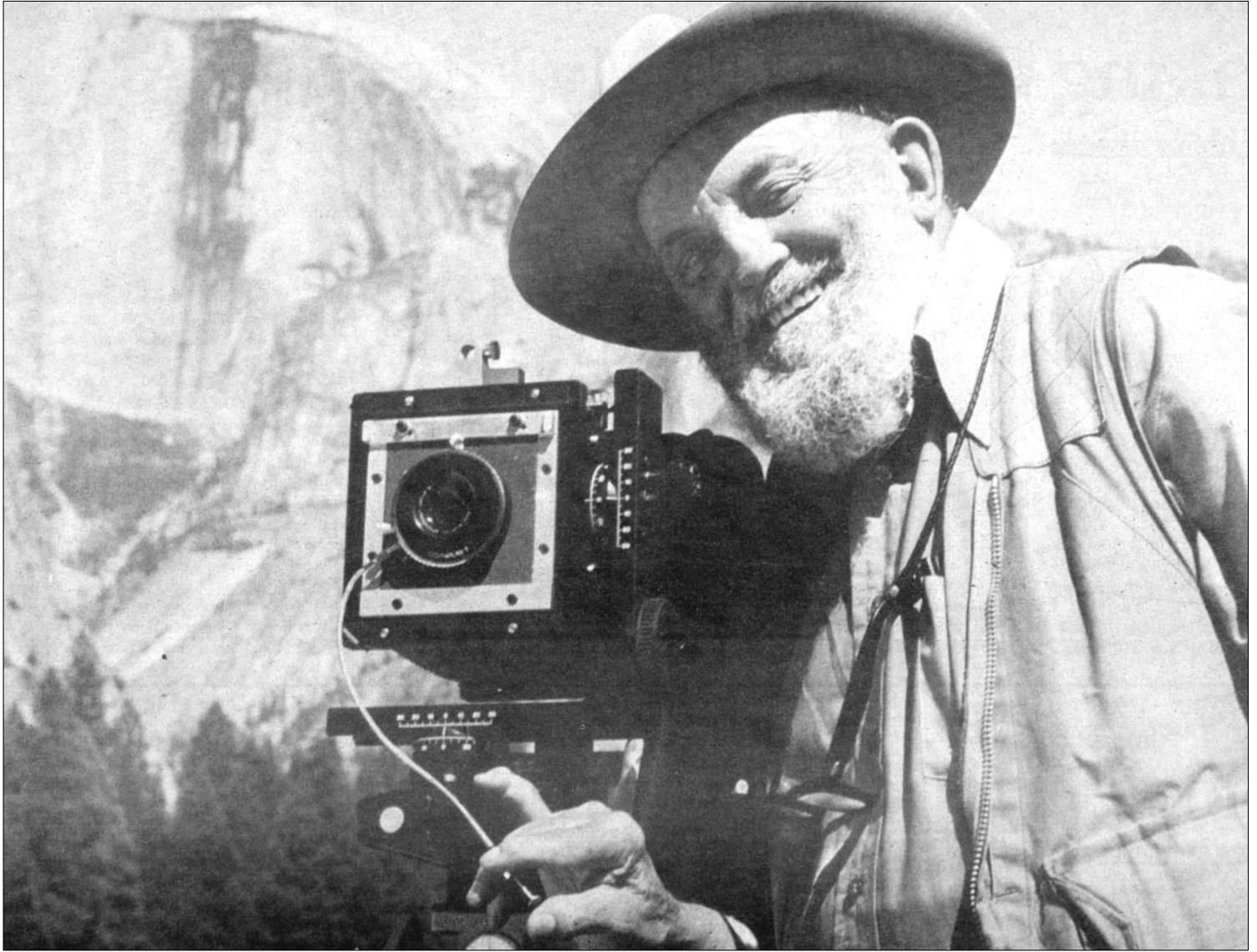
One of the young women, Melissa Pavier, had a talent for computer graphics. For one meeting, she was determined to create souvenir packets for the members — bookmarks with pictures of the three presidents, determination cards and daimoku charts. The meeting's theme was "Overcoming the Blahs," the intention being to

center on members' suggestions to one another for revitalizing their practice when they felt down. Melissa pulled together a nurse costume and a hilarious presentation. She gave each member his or her own "medicine cabinet" of "prescriptions" for beating the blahs — the souvenirs that we made together.

Most important, as we worked together our group of young women became close friends for kosen-rufu. Each time we met to work on a presentation, we chanted together, exchanged views, talked, ate snacks, laughed and, especially, encouraged one another. Since then, several of these young women have moved away, following their dreams as far away as Utah, California and even England. Others have graduated to the women's division, while still others are struggling with difficult work schedules that don't allow them to come to meetings very often. However, the bonds we formed as we worked together in Columbus District still endure. ☸

'Nature For Me Is Alive'

Courtesy of THE FRIENDS OF PHOTOGRAPHY



Ansel Adams in Yosemite National Park in 1980. 'Ansel Adams Legacy,' organized by the Friends of Photography, Ansel Adams Center for Photography, San Francisco, just ended at the Hunter Museum of Art in Chattanooga, Tenn. It opens Nov. 14 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art. In 1998, it will stop in Tampa, Fla., and Fort Wayne, Ind., before going to Japan.

By TERRY ELLIS
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Ansel Adams, one of the most famous American artists of this century, was obsessed with how human beings can live in harmony with nature. He chose the camera as his tool and produced images that, in the words of the curator of an Adams exhibit now on tour, "have passed beyond the man to attain mythic stature — they are iconographies of the American West and beauty in the 20th century."

Icons is an apt word, since alone in nature Adams experienced something best described as religious — a timeless joy in being alive. Just listen to his words, written from New Mexico in 1944: "It is very beautiful and magical here — a quality which cannot be described. You have to live it and breathe it, let the sun bake it into you. The skies and the land are so enormous, and the detail so precise and exquisite that wherever you are, you are isolated in a glowing world between the macro-

and the micro-, where everything is sidewise under you and over you, and the clocks stopped long ago."

And while he experienced that moment in his heart, he believed that other people could experience it, too. So his job as an artist was to capture the spirit and character of living mountains and water, sky and clouds, moonlight and sunlight, in the line and tone of photographs.

Adams could not understand the critics who labeled him an outdated romantic who excluded people from his artistic world any more than he could understand politicians who saw nature as something to be exploited, or religious fundamentalists who were more concerned about an afterworld than preserving this one. Adams bristled at the critics' accusations — he knew that his photographs had everything to do with people. As early as 1943, he wrote in a letter: "Nature for me is alive — just as alive as people. But my next phase will be people in relation to nature; I feel it coming. At present, I am engulfed in teaching, but this, too, is a phase. I can-

not force myself into subject matter which is not perfectly clear and justified; every time I have done so I have produced inferior work."

During the last 10 years of his life, Adams devoted himself to the darkroom. He worked to establish himself as "a photographer with a capital P," equal in artistry to a painter or sculptor, says Andy Grundberg, who selected for the current exhibit a broad cross-section of Adams' prints from this period, including his famous landscapes and other subjects less well known.

Even as he worked long hours to prepare a legacy, Adams continued to engage family, friends and the world at large. He was in his 70s and his health was declining, but he intensified his efforts on behalf of the environment and against nuclear weapons, writing and speaking out in hundreds of letters and dialogues. A little more than one month before his death in 1984 at 82, his last letter was published in the *New York Times*, calling on the next president of the United States to eliminate nuclear weapons. WVI



for Peace

Friends



SPECIAL PULLOUT SECTION

OCTOBER 3, 1997

Kansas Kids Hold Overnighter at Comm. Center

By **Theresa Bosch**

Overland Park, Kans.

To kick off the new school year and welcome new Boys and Girls Group members, a slumber party was held at the Kansas City Community Center the evening of Sept. 20.

Eighteen boys and girls, ranging in age from 7 to 12, participated. The overnight stay began with gongyo, followed by an icebreaker, then dinner.

The evening progressed with many activities to choose from, such as playing four-square outdoors, before-and-after glamour shots for the

girls, Twister, video games, karaoke and a movie.

The following morning, after cleaning the community center and doing gongyo together, the boys and girls created their own autograph/photo book to commemorate the great time they all had.

Some of the comments shared by the participants included:

"We got to know each other better and won't be shy anymore!"

"The icebreaker was great to get to know each other!"

"Glamour shots were fun!"

"It was fun to judge karaoke!"

Photos by **Cheryl Utley**



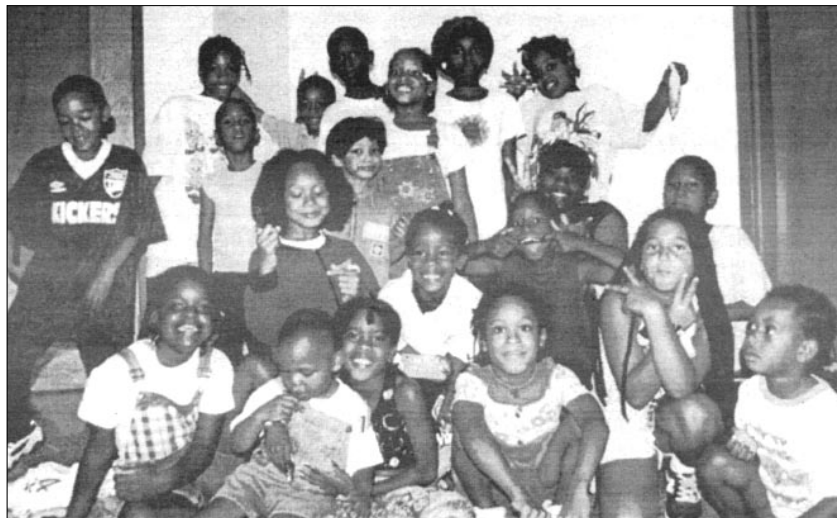
Midwest Joint Territory Boys and Girls Group members use sign language to communicate their greetings.

Friend to Friend

Our study topic for November is the history and important people of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism (including Shakya-muni, Nichiren Daishonin and the first three Soka Gakkai presidents). 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 Oct. 24

Philadelphia Children Sing It Strong!



On Aug. 23, Philadelphia boys and girls enjoyed singing two songs, 'Do Your Best' and 'Zip-a-dee-doo-dah,' in preparation for the next day, Aug. 24, when they performed both songs at Philadelphia Joint Territory's Family and Friendship Festival, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the day SGI President Ikeda took faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

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

Audrey Bartholomew, 9

Waianae, Hawaii

Aloha. I have been practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism all of my life. At the age of 4, I was going across the street to my friend's house when all of a sudden I got run over by a man on a moped. It dragged me over 25 feet. All the neighbors came out to help me. I went to the hospital. I was told that the only thing that was wrong was that my body was bruised and that the left side of my face was scraped. I was not hurt that bad because I had chanted with my mom that day.

Chanting works!



FP

Jasper Toliver, 11

Fayetteville, N.C.

I just graduated from elementary school. I have asthma and used to go to the emergency room once or twice a week. My dad encouraged me to start practicing, and my mom taught me how to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo on July 1, 1994, in Korea. Since then, I have never gone to the emergency room again.

I only go to the hospital for annual check-ups. The doctor was even surprised how much I improved.

When I chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, I also study about how to protect myself from asthma. Before, I didn't like to study and chant. I thought that games were more fun than anything else.

My parents encourage me to study. When my mom told me to study, she would sit next to me and study her English until I finished. I started getting interested in studying.

Sometimes I felt good after chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, but I didn't understand why my parents kept telling me to "chant daimoku and study." I started bringing A's home from school. My parents were very happy and encouraged me.

First they helped me to improve my math, and then I brought my grade up from an F to an A. And I was also bad at science and social studies, but I also brought them up to A. Since I started chanting daimoku, I have had 13 awards (straight A's, academics, terrific kid, perfect attendance, etc.). I've been learning a lot from the Goshu ("The Opening of the Eyes") and the *Daily Guidance*. Last year, I had a chance to send a letter to SGI President Ikeda with my determination.

I'm getting along good with all the neighbors we have. Now, I'm a healthy and brave and happy young man. I'm really thankful to the Gohonzon and my parents for teaching me to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. In the future, I'd like to become young men's division chief for Fayetteville Headquarters for kosen-rufu.



FP

Patience Dzigbodj

Philadelphia

I was born into the practice of Buddhism in Ghana, Africa. My mom was very serious at that time. My dad was determined to go to London. He also had an American dream. My mom was shocked about how determined he was. I just thought he was joking, but he wasn't. The day came when my dad said he was getting ready to leave for London, and he did leave.

When he left, I was determined to chant. I started to get a lot of benefits, but I did not know what to do with them so I decided to tell my friend about Buddhism. It was pretty simple. I am afraid to tell you a lot, but my friend started getting real good at school and I was having a good life. I even got a scholarship for school. Soon my mom won a lottery. She was not much into lotteries, because she was the secretary to the vice chancellor in Ghana.

The lottery prize was a trip to America! Oh my, I was shocked. My dad came right back from London. Soon we all came to America, and now we are in the land of happiness. When I go to school I get A's and B's. I am determined to chant for the rest of my life!



FP

Flynnie Kolb, 8

Burbank, Calif.

H! I have been chanting since I was 2. I appreciate the Gohonzon because it helped me not talk too much in school.

First, I was talking a whole bunch in school and getting in trouble, and I couldn't learn very well. My mom and I couldn't figure out what to do. Then I started chanting two minutes every morning and two minutes every night. Pretty soon I just stopped talking too much and, of course, I stopped getting in trouble.

I am really grateful because now I can learn more.



FP

"Friends for Peace" thanks everyone who contributed to this issue, including Anne Martin (Philadelphia) and Pam Plummer (Atlanta). Please send your experiences (around 150 words), comments, questions or news articles to: "Friends for Peace," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

APPRECIATION · APPRECIATION — FRIEND TO FRIEND — APPRECIATION · APPRECIATION

THINGS TO DO



Create a Boys and Girls Group “Appreciation Tree” which lists the activities you have participated in and some of the benefits you have received. You can use construction paper to make leaves of appreciation to describe the things you have experienced.

The leaves can then be glued to a piece of large poster board.



Make a “Thank-You Card” for someone you truly appreciate, and tell them why you appreciate them.



Make an “Appreciation Collage”: Cut out pictures and words from newspapers and magazines that symbolize acts of appreciation.

You can draw your own pictures and words to add to the collage. Decorate it with ribbon, glitter and string, and paint macaroni and other pastas onto the collage.



Make “Gift Tags”: Cut circles, squares, triangles and other shapes from colored paper. Punch holes in the top of the paper, and thread a ribbon or yarn through it.

The leftover hole-punch dots can be used to decorate the tag. Write messages on each tag and attach it with a gift, or give it just as it is to someone you want to appreciate.



Appreciation Activities

FOR DISCUSSION

Discuss each of the following quotes with your friends. What do you think the writer is saying? Can you think of examples? What things can you do based on each quote? Why is it important to have appreciation, and in what ways can we express it?

Topic: Having appreciation for the diversity of people around you:

“The Lotus Sutra embraces a philosophy that most highly respects, fosters and harmonizes human diversity. The Mystic Law is the source that enables us to manifest our unique bril-

liance against a backdrop of mutual understanding and appreciation of one another’s differences; to create a lush garden of ‘cherry, plum, peace and damson’ blossoms.” (SGI President Daisaku Ikeda’s *Addresses in the United States* — June/July 1996, p. 91)




Topic: Nichiren Daishonin’s appreciation for his followers (he began many of his letters by thanking them):

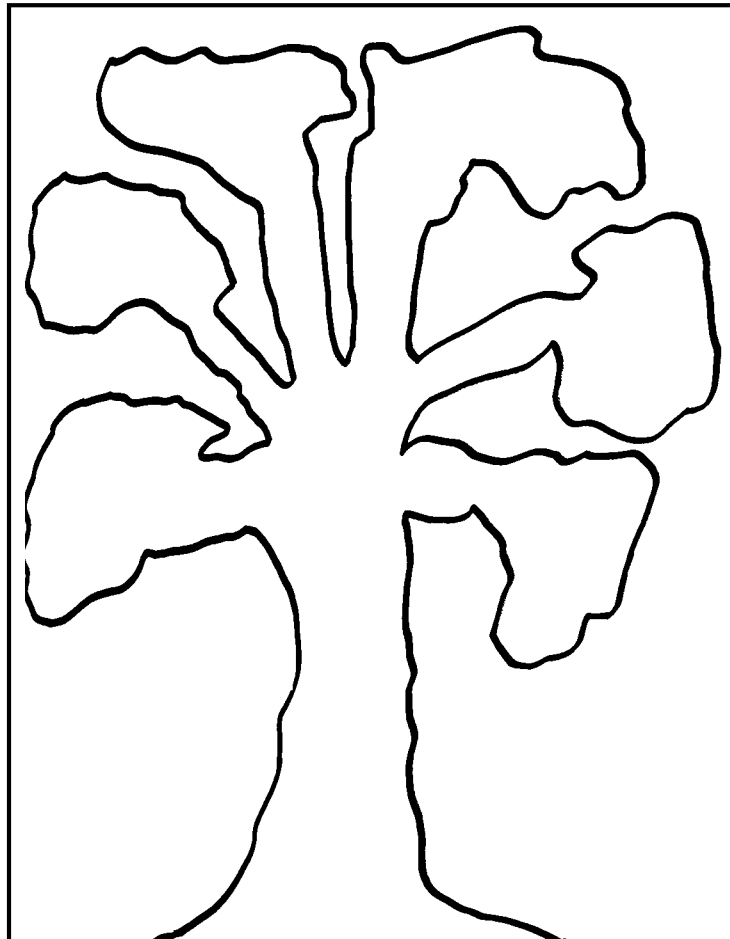
“Just when I was thinking that if at all possible I must somehow go and see you, you had a robe sent here to me. Your thoughtfulness was totally unexpected. Since the Lotus Sutra is the noblest of all sutras, I may yet gain influence in this lifetime. If so, rest assured that I will watch over your children whether you are living then or not. While I was in Sado and during my stay here, you sent your servant to help me. Neither in this nor future lifetimes shall I ever forget what you have done for me. I will not fail to repay my debt of gratitude to you.” (The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 151)



Topic: Feeling appreciation for our teachers and mentors (when we do our best, our mentors and teachers also reap rewards):

“Without earth, plants cannot grow. Nichiren is like the plant, and my master, the earth. I, Nichiren, am indebted solely to my revered teacher, Dozen-bo, for the fact that I have become the votary of the Lotus Sutra.... The rice plant flowers and bears grain, but its spirit remains in the soil. Therefore, the stalk sprouts to flower and bear grain once more. The blessings which I, Nichiren, obtain from propagating the Lotus Sutra will return to Dozen-bo. How sublime!” (MW-1, 217) 

Appreciation Tree





Low Tide Brings Adventure for Seattle Boys and Girls

By PAT WILLIAMS

Seattle

It was a perfect day: 79 degrees and clear. The tide was at its very low-est of the summer (-2.5). Seattle-area boys and girls met at the Seattle Culture Center at 10 a.m., did gongyo and headed for

the beach.

Besides starfish, there was an array of other wonderful creatures of the sea to enjoy and learn about. Adults carried the many live specimens back to the bulkhead and placed them in the home-made touch-tank, which really was a small swim-

ming pool. As the parents enjoyed a potluck lunch, the children delighted in watching their treasures move around the pool and even made pictures of them to display in the culture center.

It was a wonderful day among friends — a day to remember. **FP**



Loren (left) with his brother, Isaiah.

Loren Johnson, 9

Washington, D.C.

I was born into the practice of Buddhism. I am a third grader at Shepherd Elementary School. My teacher told my mom and dad that I was not doing my work in school, and that I and a few boys in my class always seemed to be getting into trouble. When my parents heard this, they became angry with me.

My mom encouraged me to chant to change poison into medicine. She told me that, in addition to chanting, I needed to work real hard in school. I started doing all the work I did not do in school and more! I stopped playing with the boys I had been getting into trouble with.

In the meantime, my dad decided that he and my mom should meet with the other boys' parents to talk about what they needed to do as parents to help the situation. When the parents met, I got a chance to meet with my friends, and we started to get along a lot better. The parents also met with our teacher and the principal.

Since I had to stay in the house during this period, I got a chance to chant a lot. A couple of weeks later, my teacher sent a letter to my parents telling them that I had made remarkable improvements in my schoolwork and my behavior. She said I was helpful to the other students, and I had "turned things around completely"! She wanted to use me as an example for the whole class and could not say enough good things about me! **FP**

Word Scramble

There are many words similar to appreciation. Can you find the words listed below?

consider esteem regard aware admire gratitude
grateful respect cherish thankful honor recognize

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



Seasons

By NICK ANDRE, 13

Lee's Summit, Mo.

Winter always turns to spring.
Never does spring turn into winter!
Summer follows spring.
Autumn leaves shed the summer trees.
Then falls winter snow.
Winter turns into spring.
The seasons repeat the cycle.