

World Tribune

No. 3159

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

OCTOBER 10, 1997

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Nikken Ordered To Testify in Libel Trial

By JEFF FARR

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Santa Monica, Calif., Sept. 30

After years of requests by Soka Gakkai lawyers, a Tokyo judge ruled Sept. 29 that Nikken Abe, high priest of Nichiren Shoshu, must testify in the "Seattle Incident" trial. Lawyers for the Soka Gakkai, the defendant in the case, have long sought to question Nikken about his contradictory statements regarding his actions in Seattle the night of March 19-20, 1963.

Soka Gakkai lawyers hailed today's ruling by Judge Shizuka Hamano of the Tokyo District Court as a major step toward re-

vealing the truth of the incident. "The recent decision by the court is only natural because Mr. Nikken Abe is the representative of Nichiren Shoshu, the plaintiff in the case, as well as the person alleged to be involved in the incident," said Morio Miyahara, the Soka Gakkai's lead defense attorney. Nikken's lawyers will question him on Dec. 22, the next session, followed by cross-examination on Feb. 2, 1998.

In 1992, when the late Hiroe Clow, an SGI-USA member, first shared her account of the incident, saying that Nikken was involved in a dispute with prostitutes the night in question, Nikken publicly

declared he never left his hotel room after a Gohonzon-conferral ceremony he had attended earlier that evening. But in September 1995, on the eve of Mrs. Clow's testimony in the current case, Nikken did an about-face, claiming he had left his hotel for a drink and a walk.

Soka Gakkai lawyers first requested that Nikken testify in February 1995. They believe Nichiren Shoshu has since tried to avoid Nikken's appearance in court because of his contradictory statements and the fact that two defense witnesses — Mrs. Clow and former police officer Ronald Sprinkle — have given matching

testimonies about the incident. A second officer, Victor Mayhle, has corroborated their accounts through a sworn deposition.

The Nichiren Shoshu Administrative Office released a response to Judge Hamano's decision today, claiming that only "for the sake of protecting the dignity of the heritage of Nichiren Shoshu" had Nikken's lawyers tried to keep him out of court. But now, according to the Administrative Office, Nikken has given his "gracious consent" to appear in court and "clarify the truth."

Because Japanese law requires

PLEASE SEE TRIAL, 4

Photos by LUCY ESTEPHANOS



Islanders Unite With Mainland Friends

Caribbean members share their experiences and histories at a friendship exchange at the Florida Nature and Culture Center.

By PHIL SIMPSON

ATLANTA BUREAU CHIEF

Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Sept. 11-14

The Florida Nature and Culture Center this weekend hosted its first international conference since its opening last year, with a distinctly Caribbean flavor. Members from 11 Caribbean islands joined with comrades from seven southern states for the Atlanta Joint Territory Conference and Caribbean General Meeting.

Simultaneous translation of several of the weekend's events allowed this diverse group, which speaks four languages, to laugh with, listen to and share stories with one another to their hearts' content. "This is the first time in my whole life to be able to listen to a lecture on the Goshu in Dutch, my language," said Consuelo Renfurm from Curaçao. "I was able to listen to

PLEASE SEE CARIBBEAN, 4

(Above) Members from Trinidad dance during a colorful display of Caribbean culture. Malvina Gumbs (right) of St. Maarten also entertains the crowd. Many of the performers dressed in costumes displaying their country's culture.



VOICES

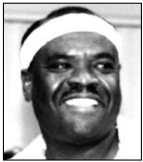
What is unique about practicing Buddhism in the Caribbean?

Members from the Caribbean Territory respond:



The important point for us right now is to get Caribbean unity. If we advance in our practice, the rest of the Caribbean islands will also. We want the Caribbean to advance politically, economically and in every other way.

— OSVALDO REYES, Puerto Rico



Because there is no single person who is very knowledgeable about Buddhism, we have to depend on intimate dialogue and thorough discussion to grow. But because of that, we grow together.

— WENDALL HARDING, Barbados



There are lots of different religions being practiced in Antigua. Also, there is mysticism. Lots of these influences tend to get into the practice of Buddhism, so we have to work at keeping our practice correct. Our biggest challenge is relating to one another because we have people from all over the world. So we are learning to build harmonious relationships together.

— PAOLO CALZOLARI, Antigua



We in the Caribbean had to struggle on our own for so long. We didn't have seniors in faith to go to. While studying abroad, I learned gongyo one page at a time and then taught it to my sister in St. Maarten over the phone. From that beginning in 1984, we now have more than 100 households with the Gohonzon.

— DAPHNE ILLIS, St. Maarten



The members in St. Maarten are very strong and have a lot of confidence and courage in their Buddhist practice. The guidance we get from reading the *World Tribune* and the various SGI materials allows us a direct dialogue with SGI President Ikeda and other members in general — it's like sitting down with the person

who is writing the guidance or experience and having a long talk with them personally. This serves as our "senior leaders" in many ways. So we naturally encourage each other and the people we meet to subscribe to and read the publications. The publications really keep us going.

It is becoming less and less hard to practice as more and more people on our jobs and in our neighborhoods are becoming aware of Buddhism. The first step we take is to tell them about it. Based on their reaction, we know how to proceed — whether to explain more, or just let our lives and experiences speak for themselves. Most of our members come from Catholic or Methodist backgrounds, yet most of their immediate and extended families fully support them in their practice, even if they don't join the SGI themselves.

— ELROY HUGHES, St. Maarten

Of Leaders and Beach Balls

EDITORIAL

Ever try to push a beach ball under water? You know what happens. It always pops back to the surface. Sometimes leaders are like that, too, SGI General Director Eiichi Wada said in an informal dialogue recently.

He said he notices that, despite his best intentions to stay on the forefront of the organization, he always tends to "pop" back up — meeting with leaders, holding planning meetings, etc. Just as with keeping a beach ball under water, he said, it takes concerted effort to stay immersed in the lives of individual members.

Forefront and *front lines* are the terms often used in the SGI to denote where our Buddhist philosophy encounters society. It's where the action is, so to speak. District or group discussion meetings are often considered front-line activities because that's generally where guests first learn about our philosophy and come to know about our organization's mission in society.

Headquarters, territory, joint territory, etc., leaders are continually reminded to go to these activities, not only to support the people in the districts, but so they won't forget what the most important activities are.

But Mr. Wada clarified where the real forefront is — the forefront of the forefront. Even discussion meetings or other district meetings are not the real forefront, he said. It is too easy for leaders to attend those meetings, say a few words, answer a few questions and leave without really getting to know even one person. The real forefront, the most important activity in the SGI, is talking to people one to one, giving courage, hope or insight to those who've lost heart, listening to how people feel about their lives and activities, sharing in their joys of experiencing actual proof.

As SGI President Ikeda often says, speaking in

front of large crowds is easy compared to consoling or revitalizing one person — or becoming a true friend. But it is at these things which we, as SGI-USA members, must excel.

A conversation in *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 6, among Shin'ichi Yamamoto, Mr. Ikeda's character, and two other leaders makes a similar point. The three are talking about the significance of the SGI's discussion meetings, praising such gatherings for their dedication to the people's happiness and the study of Buddhism.

"The most important thing of all, though, is giving personal guidance and encouragement," Shin'ichi says. "It goes without saying that we should encourage those who attend discussion meetings as much as possible, but I always tend to think of those who do not attend. That's why I've often visited such members, to encourage them personally. This is the most fundamental part of a leader's activities."

Developing this ability to give hope and confidence to others, one to one, is a major reason we practice this Buddhism. Through our prayers and our study, we can develop our compassion and wisdom to, like a real bodhisattva, remove another's suffering and bring joy.

If as leaders we — like red, yellow and blue beach balls — always bob on the surface, appearing only at planning meetings, etc., we'll miss out on a most rewarding aspect of our practice: helping another human being. The activities that epitomize the Gakkai are those that deal directly with encouraging the individual — whether it is visiting him or her at home, making a phone call, sending an e-mail or writing a note. Not that the other leadership duties aren't important, but the one-to-one connection is what keeps our peace movement afloat and moving full steam ahead. **W**

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: '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, or e-mail us at: SokaNews@aol.com.

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**WORLD TRIBUNE
MAILBOX**

Good News Newspaper

Once again I wish to commend the *World Tribune* for a job well done. I have been reading "Worldview" as well as the "Mailbox," and I have noticed an interesting development. The "Worldview" articles sometimes depict people and situations that may be controversial in some way, and the readers are responding by writing letters to the editor with further insights on these issues.... And I was very glad that people took the time to write about these issues for the readers' benefit. I hope this dialogue continues.

I also want to point out that in printing the "Worldview" column, your newspaper is providing a wonderful service to the public, without necessarily taking sides on political issues....

I have long dreamed that someone would publish a newspaper that reported good news on a regular basis. When you think about the subject matter that makes up most headlines in the U.S. papers, and probably most other nations as well, it is no surprise that social conditions don't seem to improve fast enough. I think the news media do an incredible job of filtering out the important news and focusing instead on the lower worlds — greed, fear, anger, prejudice and so forth. I think the *World Tribune* may be the answer to my prayers — a journal that reports the positive efforts that people throughout society and the world are making to bring out their greatest potential and happiness. I only hope that we continue to widen the scope of our newspaper so that it becomes a publication that anyone can enjoy reading, whatever their religious or political persuasion.

— PETER NATHEN BANNE, San Francisco

Keep Your Focus

The level of discourse in the *World Tribune* "Mailbox" has been a disappointment. Week after dreary week, the column is rife with whining that this person's point-of-view has been overlooked, or that person's cultural background has been inadvertently denigrated, or some other person has suffered some injustice. I thought that the purpose of practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism was overcoming one's "victimhood" by taking control and responsibility over one's life.

Undoubtedly, people can write whatever they want to the editors of the *World Tribune*, and the *World Tribune* can acquiesce and print all of these kind of letters. But it seems to me that letters which express such insular points of view have little appeal to the majority of members who would like to see their newspaper offer more encouraging materials. I, for one, am not interested in reading, for weeks on end, a debate about how a contributor to the paper was either racist, insensitive or sexist. I can get such kind of malarkey in the letters-to-the-editor column of my daily "unenlightened" paper....

The *World Tribune* is not a mouthpiece for anyone who has a point of view to express. The concept of openness and democracy cannot be interpreted to mean that the *World Tribune* editors have surrendered their editorial responsibilities.

In that regard, I believe that more discretion should be applied in deciding what should be published in the paper. I want to know about Buddhism. I want to know about the profound explanation Buddhism offers for life's phenomena. I prefer to see a dialogue in the paper that directly furthers my understanding of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. In sum, I think that the focus of the paper has been lost. What else can explain the fact that the letter headlined "For You TV Watchers" was published in the Sept. 19 issue?

— DAVID KADIN, Redondo Beach, Calif.

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

The Lesson of Thank You

PERSPECTIVE

By **ARTHUR HEAD**
HOMESTEAD, FLA.

My grandfather died a couple months ago, and I never told him thank you. Even after finding out he was terminally ill with cancer of the brain and lungs, I figured on plenty of time to wander over and express my appreciation for everything he'd done.

"He's a fighter," I thought. "He'll last a while."

I was wrong. After the radiation and chemotherapy weakened him, he caught pneumonia, and then he was gone.

I should have learned this lesson by now. Say thank you whenever and wherever possible. Say it loud and often. They are two very important words in any language. As a Buddhist, I should have known this. SGI President Ikeda exemplifies it wherever he goes.

Having had the fortune to work near him during his last three visits to South Florida, I witnessed time and again how he always made it a point to express his heartfelt appreciation to those around him. Consistently, I saw how this deeply and positively affected everyone he came in contact with.

Even after extremely long and arduous days, when anyone would be forgiven a little abrupt-

ness, he would still go out of his way to shake an outstretched hand, smile and say thank you. In any language. Being decidedly monolingual, as he puts it, this generous man can give thanks in many different languages. *Abri-gado. Gracias. Arigato.*

Nichiren Daishonin greatly valued expressions of gratitude, also. The *Gosho* is filled with examples of the Daishonin giving thanks for everything from the smallest gift of rice to shelter and protection. He understood that even a few heartfelt words could encourage others tremendously and strengthen spirits for long journeys or hardships. When one's hard work and sincere action are noticed and met with acknowledgment and gratitude, one's life can be brightened tenfold. This brightening, in turn, can affect family, friends and so on in an ever-widening circle. As we develop ourselves through chanting *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo*, we can likewise better our communities through expressions of gratitude.

I should have learned this lesson by now.

Not to say I haven't been trying. A few months before my grandfather died, I started keeping a gratitude journal, which is an idea I picked up from watching *Oprah* on a rainy day off. She had learned of this daily ritual from a book (I don't recall the title). To-

ward the end of each day, she sits with page and pen to reflect. She then writes at least five things she's thankful for from that day. Any five things will do, from the profound, like the awe felt when star-watching, to the seemingly unimportant, like a good sandwich. If she can't think of anything, she puts down "breathing."

Many people might think it a cliché to "count your blessings," but Ms. Winfrey claimed it has improved her life and helped her enjoy living in a profound way.

I gave it a try and soon realized she was correct. Keeping a gratitude journal gives fresh perspectives on seemingly bad days and opens my eyes to the constant creation of value and beauty around me. More important, it makes perfectly clear something we should already know as Buddhists: Giving thanks breeds things to be thankful for.

However, even with this knowledge fresh in my mind, I didn't take the time to express my appreciation to my grandfather. I know intellectually that through heartfelt *daimoku* I can still do so, but it seems incomplete.

So, Dean Jennings, wherever you are and whatever you're doing — thank you for building model railroads, thank you for teaching me how to fix a sliding glass door, and thank you for being my grandpa.

I hope you learn the lesson of thank you easier than I did. ☐



Florida Impressions

Everglade Impression, FNCC, June 21

Ripples dimpling this peaceful pond suggest the breath of something deep, like thoughts bubbling to the surface which perfectly reflects the sky, the clouds, a rush of rain, the sizzle of sawgrass shocked by white lightning and then the heat descends on alligators, egrets, herons, insect friends, everything searching for food. At night fat frogs the size of dogs croak cheerfully among the lily pads flicking their tongues, swallowing whatever their taste buds touch, transforming living matter into song to serenade the full white moon. Meanwhile, beneath the pond, a curious lungfish crawls out of the water onto the land, its eyes wide with wonder and delight, following a higher path evolving toward light.

— Terry M. Walker, Santa Cruz, Calif.

Tucson Men Shoot for 100

By DAN SUMMERS & BILL MANGELS
CORRESPONDENTS
Tucson, Ariz., Aug. 24

"Shoot for a Hundred!" This was the theme of a Men's Health Seminar sponsored by the Tucson Headquarters men's division, which took place today, Men's Division Day and the 50th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda joining the Soka Gakkai. When Mr. Ikeda visited Rocky Mountain Joint Territory in June 1996, one of the mottoes he shared was "Everyone healthy." In response, the Tucson men took on the challenge of their first seminar, open to the community, focusing on health issues affecting men.

Explaining the theme, Dan Summers said: "With medical advances and the flood of information available, we have the means to lead active lives to and beyond 100 years. Just imagine a century of fighting for kosen-rufu!"

Subjects of today's seminar ranged from updates on prostate cancer research to tips on the use of herbs in healing. There were presentations on holistic medicine, massage, fitness for life, and better communication with significant

others. Both speakers and participants talked intently on the various subjects — often beyond breaks and even through lunch. Speaking of lunch, the participants feasted on Indian food that was both delicious and healthy.

Several speakers expressed delight with the audience receptivity and asked to be included in future programs at the community center. Eighty-year-old Wen Zee, a visiting professor of traditional Chinese medicine at the University of Arizona, inspired his listeners as he gave a presentation on Tai Chi. His continued active lifestyle encouraged those present to remain vigorous as they advance in years.

One of the men, Phil Hardy, expressed the view of many when he said: "This has been a true eye-opening experience for me. I can see many things I want to work on in the future." As Mr. Zaitus mentioned in his Men's Division Day message, we should use the "roar of the lion" to create powerful lives. For the members of Southeastern Arizona, this seminar and their resulting determinations are a great start toward the new century, the Century of Life. WJ

TRIAL, FROM PAGE 1

any allegedly defamatory statement be proven a lie before it can be deemed libel, to win Nikken must present evidence that these three witnesses were not telling the truth. And if Nikken fails to appear on Dec. 22, the court will have no choice but to rule that the Seattle Incident did in fact occur and dismiss the suit, per the Japanese Code of Civil Procedures.

The Seattle Incident suit was initiated by Nichiren Shoshu in Japan in 1993 after the Soka Gakkai published Mrs. Clow's story in two of its newspapers, the *Seikyo Shimbun* and the *Soka Shimpo*. Mrs. Clow testified that a few hours after Nikken, then Nichiren Shoshu Study Department chief, conducted the Gohonzon-conferral ceremony, she was called by Seattle police to a downtown site where he had been detained for arguing with several women the police knew to be prostitutes.

The next day he was scheduled

to travel to Chicago, so she begged the police for his release, and the police agreed, she said.

Mrs. Clow kept the incident to herself for almost 30 years to protect the priesthood's reputation, she testified, but Nichiren Shoshu's excommunication of the Soka Gakkai in 1991, led by Nikken, who had become high priest in 1979, inspired her to let the truth be known about Nikken's character.

The outcome of the trial is considered significant because Nikken, who has often called Mrs. Clow a liar in speeches and in print, has promised he would resign as high priest if the Soka Gakkai's defense proves the Seattle Incident happened.

The current trial has lasted more than two years, 18 court sessions having been held. Nichiren Shoshu lawyers in March requested an early verdict in the trial, which was denied by then-presiding Judge Katsumi Shinohara, who was replaced in May by Judge Hamano. WJ



A simultaneous translation system lets members from seven Southern states and 11 Caribbean islands, like Cristina Martinez (left) and Sulem Echevarria of Puerto Rico, communicate with one another.

Islanders Unite With Mainland Friends

CARIBBEAN, FROM PAGE 1

it with my heart. I am so deeply affected."

Islanders shared their islands' histories and circumstances with the mainlanders. St. Maarten, an island ruled by two countries, France and Holland, has people of 72 nationalities living on it. SGI history began there with one woman, Valerie Giterson, bringing the Gohonzon there in 1984, followed by another, Violet Lake, in 1985.

They faced disaster in 1995 when Hurricane Luis devastated the island.

"The first night, I stayed in my home," Ms. Lake said. "But after that, I decided to go to one of the shelters. I could only reach as far as my neighbor's garage, however. We were there from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 the next morning.... Instead of sleeping, we chanted the entire 16 hours for our island and its people. I could not believe we survived. I want to thank all the members in the United States who sent food and supplies and prayed for our safety."

In fact, the Caribbean members wanted to hold this first general meeting in September, the most active month for hurricanes, to make a cause to change the islands' hurricane karma.

Hurricanes aren't the only problem on the islands. Christine Davis of St. Thomas spoke of her people's struggle to free themselves from violence. "True freedom is a spirit unfettered, like the human revolution



we experience in this organization," she said. "We have seen a time now in which our land has been invaded by violence and disharmony. It is very important for us to change this situation."

Reflecting on the history of the region, Consuelo Renfurm said: "At one time, the Caribbean islands were one unit and all the Indians lived in peace together. Then the Europeans came and said they wanted a piece of the pie.... But now the SGI has come to the Caribbean and we are united once again with one heart."

St. Croix members are sure that kosen-rufu will be soon achieved in the Caribbean. Paolo Calzolari from Antigua assured all, "We are one of the smallest countries in the world, but we want to inherit the spirit of SGI President Ikeda and become the first island in the world

to achieve kosen-rufu."

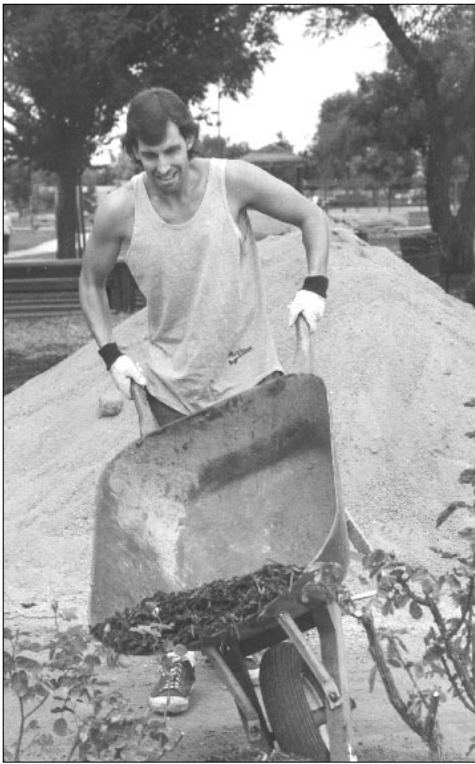
Unez Moore of Trinidad and Tobago, known as the Rainbow Country because of its many nationalities, reported that these most southerly of the islands have 150 members. And the men's division members in St. Lucia explained that they were determined to break down the gender barriers that exist on their island. Recently, their efforts seem to be reflected in society, as two women have been elected to government positions, which is unprecedented.

At the conference, sister city/country relationships were formed among the membership of the Atlanta Joint Territory and the islands. People have long wanted to have ongoing relationships with each other, and now with the friendships solidified at the FNCC, the members have gotten their wish. WJ

When There Are Things To Fix...



The renovated rose garden in Mount Eden Park in Hayward, Calif. Seventy-five SGI-USA volunteers along with interested citizens replanted the garden and built new pathways during a weekend in July.



Michael Reichle mulches roses as part of the crew.



Volunteers install aluminum edging for the new pathways, during stage two of the project.

By LINDA WELLS
CORRESPONDENT

Hayward, Calif., Sept. 14

"Turning this area into a garden is like human revolution," said Michael Reichle, who was one of 75 SGI-USA volunteers renovating Mount Eden Park's rose garden in July. "It's an ugly process; you've got to get dirty and fight with the roots, but eventually you end up with a beautiful thing."

Born of a desire to unite their headquarters and contribute to the community, Hayward Headquarters members joined with interested citizens to refurbish the run-down garden over one weekend. The project included removing old trees and rose bushes, grading, creating pathways, installing irrigation and planting new roses, cherry trees and annuals.

"It's better than sitting at home on a Saturday," said 13-

year-old Paul O'Neill. Paul's uncle, John Sweeney, said he brought along his nephew to let him see that when there's things in the neighborhood to fix, they should do it themselves instead of waiting for someone else to do it. "It's a good lesson not only for the kids but also for ourselves," Mr. Sweeney said.

The group called itself PEACE (People Engaged in Action for the Community and Environment). Darrell Jones, Mount Eden Park caretaker, supervised and assisted the replanting efforts. Afterward, he praised the group. "You guys are great," he said. "No one complained. I was surprised. It was a real group effort."

Seeing the work being done, neighbors caught the spirit of the volunteers and got involved. One, J.W. Brown, even donated

two cherry trees in memory of his recently deceased wife. "The people in this neighborhood will admire the SGI's work for many years to come," he said.

Local teenagers joined in, too. And Hayward Headquarters was invited to return next year to participate in the annual Hayward Pride Week, a week of volunteerism to improve the city.

On Sept. 7, city officials officially dedicated the park. Mayor Roberta Cooper expressed her appreciation, calling the day a special one, thanks to the members' efforts. General Director Zaitso sent a message and two books of photography by SGI President Ikeda. The local Brass Band and jazz band also supported the ceremony, which was attended by about 150 guests.

Photos by MIKE MULLEN



Laying sand and gravel on the new pathways. The weekend project involved removing four inches of soil for the new paths as well as old rose bushes and trees. An irrigation system was also installed.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TEMPLE ISSUE

Is It OK To Go to a Nichiren Shoshu Temple?

Key Points:

- In its attempt to mislead the faith of SGI members, the priesthood has, in effect, destroyed its own connection to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Therefore, there is no value in visiting the temple.
- The temple is committed to undermining the SGI's kosen-rufu activities; therefore, making contributions to the temple will further aid its efforts in this regard.
- To participate in 'tozan' — group pilgrimages to the Nichiren Shoshu head temple — requires making a financial contribution to the temple, and will subject one to slander of the SGI by priests and Hokkeko members.

SIGN POSTS

APPLYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS TO DAILY LIFE

Here and Now

By SHIN YATOMI

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as they are manifested in the present. And if you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 172)

Our past does not exist in a history book. Nor does our future exist in a crystal ball. Citing the *Shin-jikan* Sutra, Nichiren Daishonin here explains that our lives at this moment embody eternity — our lives exist nowhere but here and at no other time but now.

Oblivious to this, however, we often fancy ourselves living in the past or future. Some people are preoccupied with how their lives might have been different: "If I hadn't dropped out of high school, I wouldn't be living from paycheck to paycheck." Others only wish for something far-off: "I could make it big in Hollywood someday."

Living here and now does not mean to deny our past or give up our dreams, nor does it mean to fall into hedonism. It means to understand that the effects of our past and causes for our future exist in the present, to thus recognize the power of our present action to change our past and shape our future.

Shaping our future by changing our present is easily understandable, but how about changing our past? Of course, we cannot alter past events. But we can change their meaning. No matter what kind of mistakes we may have made, or sufferings or hardships we may have experienced, when we accept our past courageously and use it as a springboard for growth and happiness, we are changing the past. The past experiences that weighed us down become something different — experiences that drive us forward. The death of a loved one, for example, could fortify our resolve to live more meaningfully not only for our sake but for the sake of the deceased.

This Goshō passage tells us of the preciousness of the present moment and our ability to influence our past and future in the here and now.

Q I have been invited to visit a Nichiren Shoshu temple. Is it all right to go?

A To visit or not visit a Nichiren Shoshu temple is each individual's choice, but the SGI encourages its members not to because the temple has diverged from the Daishonin's Buddhism and is actually trying to destroy it.

On the surface, there may seem to be little difference between attending activities at a Nichiren Shoshu temple or an SGI-USA community center. The temple might even seem aesthetically more attractive to some — the large wooden Gohonzon with gold lettering, golden decorations and ornaments around the altar, etc. At both places, people gather to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and recite the sutra before the Gohonzon. But chanting to the Gohonzon alone is not all there is to the Daishonin's Buddhism — the philosophy that he espoused, which informs our prayer, is integral to correct practice. It is in this area that the priests and the temple have completely strayed.

The Daishonin writes in "The True Entity of Life," "If you are of the same mind as Nichiren, you must be a Bodhisattva of the Earth" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 93). To be "of the same mind as Nichiren" means chanting with the same spirit and understanding as the Daishonin's. It means summoning the courage to practice for oneself and for others — to strive for kosen-rufu.

There is no better place to gain this understanding of the Daishonin's passionate resolve to help all people than in the SGI. All SGI activities are based on the Daishonin's own words, as preserved in the letters he wrote to his disciples. In addition, our activities are based on his spirit of "practice for others."

The direct connection we in the SGI have with the Daishonin's teachings and spirit helps us to practice correctly and most effectively. Without this philosophical and spiritual backbone, it becomes difficult to pray powerfully and summon the wisdom and energy to win in our lives.

It is therefore also essential that we avoid supporting the temple's efforts dedicated to destroying our movement. In "On the Buddha's Behavior," Nichiren Daishonin warns:

Those who endeavor to practice the Buddhist Law and who care about what happens to them in future lives should know what a fearful thing it is to slander the Lotus Sutra. (MW-1, 198)

Since many temple activities are occasions where temple members and guests make financial donations, the SGI

encourages its members not to attend. If we make contributions to the temple — whether through physical, spiritual or financial support — it follows that we are supporting those who are slandering Buddhism, which means we ourselves are party to the negative cause they are creating.

In the past, SGI members made financial donations to the priesthood, trusting its faith and humanity. This act was definitely registered in their lives as a good cause. But the priesthood has now betrayed that trust and is using those funds to attack those who contributed them. The gravity of the negative cause committed by the priesthood is unfathomable. In any case, the sincerity shown all along by the SGI members will continue to shine in their lives as good fortune.

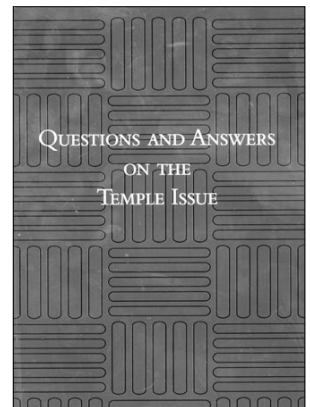
Temple members sometimes invite SGI members to participate in pilgrimages to the head temple in Japan, stating that they need not renounce their SGI affiliation to do so. Then, they say, they can see the Dai-Gohonzon, the Gohonzon inscribed by the Daishonin for all humanity. Those who have gone, however, have been approached by priests and others who vehemently denounced the SGI and SGI President Ikeda. In addition, they were required to offer a donation to attend.

There is no value to be created in seeing the Dai-Gohonzon if members must also financially support the temple's efforts to, in effect, destroy Buddhism. In fact, the priesthood has attempted to exploit its possession of this Gohonzon inscribed for all humanity, and the members' desire to see it, as a means to entice people to follow and support them.

The state of life Nichiren Daishonin manifested has been described as that of "The Buddha of Absolute Freedom." The Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon so that all people could awaken to this

absolutely free and unfettered state of life. It is therefore impossible to imagine that Nichiren Daishonin would expect us to be so constrained in our faith that we should feel we must blindly obey and kowtow to whomever might possess the Dai-Gohonzon, no matter how malicious or ill-intentioned they might be.

Nine in a series



The SGI-USA has published a pamphlet, Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue, which seeks to provide succinct information on this important issue. It is available free of charge through the organization and can be downloaded from the SGI-USA web page (www.sgi-usa.org). The study page is reprinting each of the questions from the pamphlet as a service to our readers.

Heavy pressure was also brought to bear on individual Soka Gakkai members. For example, members who were sub-contractors were told by larger companies, whom they worked for and depended on for their livelihoods, that unless they voted for the Liberal Democratic Party candidate, their contracts would be canceled. Other members, who belonged to labor unions, were told by union leaders that unless they voted for the Socialist Party candidate the union was backing, they would be removed from union rolls.

At the same time, elements in the media continued their relentless attack on the Gakkai. Most of the articles accused the organization of being a violent or fascist cult. In one Chubu region newspaper, there was an article that caustically declared: "Beneath the cloak of the Komei Political Federation, we glimpse the armed soldier-monks, the forces of Nichiren Shoshu and the Soka Gakkai robustly chanting 'Nam-myoho-renge-kyo'.... In this election, nine zealous gurus of propagation are after the votes of their purported 2.7 million benefit-seeking member households."

All of these reports were based on jealousy toward the Gakkai's burgeoning power and a desire to ridicule. But these attacks and insults backfired, only inspiring the members to fight harder. The members charged ahead dauntlessly through the fierce tempest raging around them.

The evening of June 25, six days before the Upper House election, that month's Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting was held at the Tokyo Gymnasium. There, the results of propagation activities for June were announced. Even though members had been busy — not only introducing others to the Daisyonin's Buddhism but also campaigning for the election — an amazing total of more than 58,700 new households had joined that month.

This was a clear indication that each member had firmly established a way of life dedicated to working for the happiness of both oneself and others, the most basic Buddhist practice, no matter what circumstances arose. It also meant that the members had begun to acquire the strength to win in any and all challenges.

Hiroshi Izumida, candidate for the Tokyo district, and Shunzo Jujo and Minoru Suzumoto, candidates in the nationwide constituency, took time from their busy campaign schedules to appear at the meeting. When they energetically declared their determination to win, loud applause rocked the gymnasium.

In his speech, Shin'ichi Yamamoto touched upon the elections and the need, in order to reform Japan's corrupt government, for all to throw their vigorous support behind their candidates in the remaining five days. He also called on everyone to meet again, after achieving a fair and resounding victory in the elections, at the special Headquarters leaders

The New Human Revolution

BY HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 4

Rough Seas

Translation of parts 14–18 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.

meeting scheduled for July 3, which would kick off the second half of the year.

All in attendance renewed their vow to achieve victory in the elections, to send their fellow members to office so they could create a government committed to the interests of the Japanese people. The Soka Gakkai had set sail on a journey to create a new society, plowing boldly, powerfully through rough seas toward its goal.

The day after the Headquarters leaders meeting, Shin'ichi began attending leaders meetings in each of the Tokyo headquarters to give encouragement and guidance.

At the meetings for the Tokyo No. 2 and No. 5 headquarters on June 26, he lectured on the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" (Ongi Kuden)¹ and "Questions and Answers on Embracing the Lotus Sutra,"² respectively. On June 27, he spoke at leaders meetings for the other three Tokyo headquarters, earnestly stressing the profound mission all Gakkai members shared to accomplish kosen-rufu. At the Tokyo No. 1 Headquarters he lectured on the Goshō "Hell Is the Land of Tranquil Light"; at the Tokyo No. 3 Headquarters on "Conversation Between a Sage and an Unenlightened Man"; and at the Tokyo No. 4 Headquarters on "Letter to Horen."³

Finally July 1 arrived, the day of the Upper House election. It rained throughout Japan that morning, except for the northern regions of Tohoku and Hokkaido. It had been feared that this would adversely affect the voter turnout, but the weather gradually cleared in Tokyo and other areas. The number of voters visiting the polls steadily increased.

When polls closed, an average nationwide voter turnout of 68.22 percent had been recorded — the second highest in a postwar Upper House election, exceeded only by the elections of 1950 (the second Upper House election after the new con-

stitution was introduced), when the turnout had been 72.19 percent.

Vote-counting began that evening for all 43 prefectural districts, except for the districts of Tokyo, Osaka and Saitama, where counting began the following morning.

From the morning of July 2, newspaper, radio and TV reporters gathered at the



Komei Headquarters in Tokyo's Shinagawa Ward. The news arrived at a little after 9:00 a.m. that Hisao Seki, who ran in the nationwide constituency, was certain to win, and excitement at the Headquarters rose. Seki made an appearance at 9:30 and spoke to the reporters.

Just then the victories of Komei candidates Minoru Suzumoto, Kunio Shiroya and Bunji Nishimiya were announced. Toward noon came the announcement that Hiroshi Izumida, a candidate in the Tokyo district, was also certain to win. Soon after it was reported that election was assured for Katsuharu Oniyama and Hiroshi Asada in the nationwide district and Seiichiro Haruki in the Osaka district. Finally, the victory of Shunzo Jujo was announced.

The Headquarters was rocked by a storm of applause and jubilant cheers as everyone celebrated this remarkable triumph. By dawn, July 3, the election of all nine Komei candidates was confirmed. With his win, 37-year-old Minoru Suzumoto became the youngest candidate to gain a seat in the Upper House in this election.

The vote-counting was completed the morning of July 3 — the seven Komei can-

didates running in the nationwide constituency had garnered a total of 4,124,267 votes. Hiroshi Izumida had racked up 529,575 votes in the Tokyo district race, giving him the second highest count among the five candidates elected in that district. Seiichiro Haruki in the Osaka district, with 428,604 votes, also came in second among the three winning candidates there.

As for how the other parties fared in the Upper House election, the LDP won 21 seats in the nationwide constituency and 48 in the prefectural constituencies. Totaled with their seats that were not up for election that time, this gave the LDP 142 seats in the 250-seat⁴ Upper House. The Socialist Party won 15 seats in the nationwide constituency and 22 in prefectural constituencies, which, combined with 29 seats not up for election, brought their House total to 66. The Democratic Socialist Party won three seats in the nationwide constituency and one in a prefectural constituency, which, with their seven nonrunning seats, brought their total in the House to 11.

Komei, meanwhile, had won seven seats in the nationwide constituency and two in the prefectural districts (in this case the Tokyo and Osaka districts). Combined with their six seats not up for election, their total strength rose to 15. Clearly, a change was coming to Japanese politics.

The morning of July 3, Shin'ichi offered deep prayers to the Gohonzon at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters, reporting to his late mentor, Josei Toda, the great victory Komei had achieved in the Upper House election.

Seventeen years earlier, on July 3, 1945, Mr. Toda had been released from two years in prison, after which he dedicated the rest of his life to struggling against the evils of authoritarianism and government oppression. By some strange coincidence, on that same date in 1957, Shin'ichi had been arrested by the Osaka Prefectural Police Headquarters for alleged violations of the election laws — charges of which he was completely innocent. The whole affair was a plot hatched by authorities fearful of the rise of a new popular movement. That incident had changed Shin'ichi's life; it had become a departure point for his lifelong struggle for human rights.

During that troubled time, Shin'ichi found strength and inspiration in the newly published book *The Human Revolution*, which Mr. Toda had written under the pen name Myogoku.

Shin'ichi was overjoyed that, at last, on this same, deeply significant date, July 3,

ROUGH SEAS, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

his fellow members who had run as Komei candidates had all been swept into office and would now set themselves to restoring the reins of Japan's government to the Japanese people.

As he chanted daimoku, Shin'ichi thought of the life of Josei Toda, who had built the base upon which this alliance of the people now stood. A strong determination arose within him: As Mr. Toda's direct disciple, he would write a sequel to *The Human Revolution* that would record for posterity the story of his mentor's quest for truth and justice and would perpetuate his legacy.

Shin'ichi also felt that the time to begin that task was fast approaching. "On the seventh memorial [sixth anniversary] of Mr. Toda's death, I will begin writing the continuation of *The Human Revolution*," he decided.

He had already settled on the pen name he would use, Ho Goku. Mr. Toda's pen name, Myo Goku, had come from his prison experience, during which he had awakened (*go*) to the essence of Buddhism, the mystic truth (*myo*) of nonsubstantiality (*ku*). In Buddhism, *myo* refers to the state of Buddhahood, while *ho* (Law or phenomena) refers to the other nine states of being. *Myo* is the original essence of being, while *ho* is all phenomena. By extension, *myo* is the mentor and *ho* is the disciple. As an expression of his absolute unity with his mentor, Shin'ichi had chosen the pen name Ho Goku.

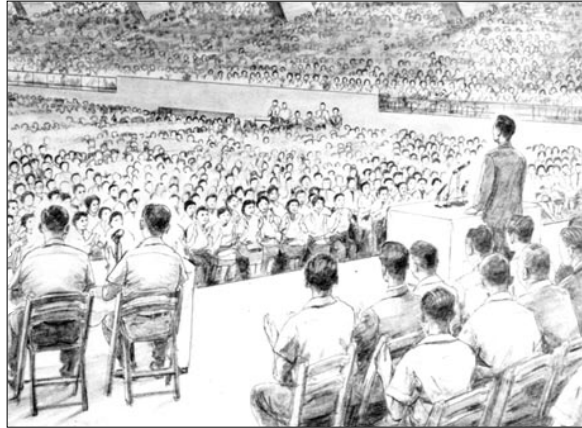
He was excited. He was ready to begin writing.

Since there were now 15 Komei representatives in the Upper House — nine newly elected and six previously elected — they fulfilled the minimum number of 10 members needed to present draft legislation before the House. So they announced the formation of an independent parliamentary group under the name the Komei-kai (Clean Government Group).

As a result of the elections, the progressive parties — the Socialist Party, the Democratic Socialist Party and the

Communist Party — no longer possessed the one-third minority of the 84 total seats needed to block any proposed changes being made to the postwar constitution by the ruling conservative majority. This focused attention on the new presence of the Komei-kai as a key to protecting the constitution.

In the midst of the celebratory atmosphere accompanying the electoral victories, the special July 3 Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting kicking off the second half of the year commenced at 6:00 p.m. at the Tokyo Gym-



nasium. When the nine winning candidates were introduced, the auditorium rocked with thunderous applause and cheers.

The members were filled with pride and joy at their success. With their support, a new political force dedicated to the welfare of the Japanese people had been born. The occasion served as a moment for them all to renew their awareness as key players in society, whose mission was to achieve peace and prosperity themselves.

Most of the members at that time were still poor. Families of five lived in a single shabby room, without even a bathtub, sleeping closely packed together. Women who had lost their husbands were working day and night to support three children. Young men labored long hours without break in small, cramped factories, getting covered in oil and grime. Some youth worked all day and then studied all night to complete their education.

People such as these had won this impressive victory, squeezing time from their onerous schedules to selflessly participate in the election campaign, to achieve a better government and society. The election vividly demonstrated to all the power of ordinary people awakened by religious faith.

At the meeting, Soka Gakkai Director Kazumasa Morikawa announced three activity guidelines for the second half of the year: 1) solidifying the organization; 2) advancing the study of Buddhism; and 3) promoting cultural activities. The first goal, solidifying the organization, was aimed at improving the organizational structure to support the rapid increase in membership. To ensure the growth and development of each member, new chapters and districts would have to be established and additional leadership appointments made.

As far as the second goal was concerned, promotional examinations sponsored by the Study Department were announced for November. With regard to the third goal, plans

were being made to hold sports and athletics meets in every local headquarters and to boost activities of the Education Department and Writers Department within the Culture Bureau.

Shin'ichi was the last to take the strum. He began by sincerely thanking all who had participated in the election campaign, and then he spoke on the basic stance the Soka Gakkai would adopt toward politics in the future:

"I join all of you in rejoicing at the formation of the Komei-kai. But we should remember that the Soka Gakkai is a religious organization. We share with the Komei Political Federation and with the Komei-kai the basic goals of bringing happiness to all people and peace to the world. But our first priority and primary mission as a religious organization is the propagation of the correct teachings of Buddhism.

"Therefore, from here on I leave all questions of government and political pol-

icy to the Komei Political Federation and the Komei-kai. I myself have no intention of entering politics.

"I will continue to concentrate on my Buddhist practice in my capacity as Soka Gakkai president and work with you, my fellow members, to lead humanity to happiness by widely spreading the elemental Buddhist teaching of Nichiren Daishonin."

Shin'ichi's declaration was meant to put an end to baseless rumors that the Gakkai had become involved in the political process because it wanted to take over the Japanese government and make Shin'ichi Japan's prime minister. The intent of such rumors was to make the Soka Gakkai appear to be some dark, sinister, power-hungry cult. Of course, Shin'ichi had never entertained such political ambitions for even the briefest moment, and he wanted to make that perfectly and publicly clear.

He continued: "It is my belief that all the Komei Political Federation and Komei-kai representatives are fine, upstanding people. And my sincere wish is that they will win popular support and gain a reputation such that all Gakkai members in office are seen as living up to the public's high expectations and faithfully serve the public interest. I hope they will always exert themselves as representatives dedicated to the welfare of all citizens. That is the true spirit of the Soka Gakkai.

"But if, at some future time, there should appear among the members we support for public office representatives who care more for their own welfare and prosperity than that of the people they represent, who forget why they were elected in the first place, they will undoubtedly incur the stern rebuke of Nichiren Daishonin. In addition, I think we should decide here and now that such people should be expelled from the Soka Gakkai. What do you think?"

Shin'ichi's proposal was met with approving applause.

(To be continued)

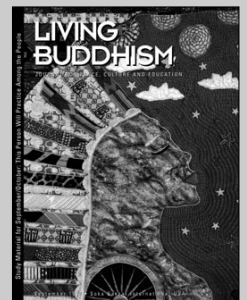
1. *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708.
2. *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 17.
3. MW-2 [2nd ed.], 207, MW-5, 41, and MW-7, 90, respectively.
4. Prior to 1965, the Upper House had 250 seats.

Discover *Living Buddhism*

The November issue of the monthly magazine *Living Buddhism* will feature an explanation of the Gohonzon as well as "Letter From Sado," which is the material for study meetings throughout November and December.

The December issue will contain study material for the SGI-USA Study Department Entrance Examination to be held nationwide in the spring of 1998.

You can subscribe by calling our Subscriptions Office at 1-(800)-835-4558.



TOM FISHER, LOS ANGELES

Now I Know — Nothing Is Impossible

I grew up in Berkeley, Calif. (that college town with lots of hippies and radicals). It was like growing up in a town next to a great mountain where every day I would see climbers on their way to scale this mountain. This mountain was the University of California at Berkeley.

Throughout my childhood, I had a dream that someday I, too, might climb this mountain and attend UC Berkeley.

As years passed, however, this dream faded. By the time I started practicing Buddhism, I was 19 and had not yet even graduated from high school. I had dropped out (before being kicked out) at age 15 and went on to attend two other schools, both of which I was eventually kicked out of (mainly for lack of attendance).

I basically just hated school, had trouble getting good grades and skipped so many classes that I lost all desire to continue. The first high school eventually let me back in, but I dropped out again two years later. I just wasn't interested in school and didn't see any value in it.

During this time I became kind of a troublemaker. I bought and sold drugs and did many wild things. Berkeley was a crazy community at that time, and my association with wild people progressed.

At one point my parents' house was burglarized and some very nice jewelry of sentimental value was stolen. My mom was so upset that I determined to get it back. Because of my wild friends, I was able to find out who had stolen the jewelry. I had, in some sense, established trust with individuals in the community, and as a result the precious jewelry was returned to my family.

The Berkeley police learned of this incident and started keeping tabs on me. Soon after that, I was myself arrested for stealing and was assigned a probation officer, a local cop. My punishment was to ride with this officer periodically during his night beat to be an informer — and to listen to all his advice. The police were always trying different ways to

influence us and to get information from us.

Despite their good influence, I got into more trouble. I spent short times in jail on probably 10 or 12 occasions. In fact, the last time I was there, Danny Nagashima (now SGI-USA vice general director) and Ed Feasel (now SGI-USA youth division chief) visited me. Mr. Nagashima told me, "Please enjoy every minute of this!" Danny then made me promise to never let it happen again.

Anyway, by age 19, my childhood dream to attend college was totally forgotten, not to mention completely unrealistic. However, as a direct result of chanting to the Gohonzon and because of the constant warm encouragement of many fellow SGI members, my desire for an education grew and I reawakened my childhood dream.

I deeply prayed to the Gohonzon to challenge my weakness in school and to become a capable person in society. After one year of junior college, I passed the units back to my high school and was given a diploma. After one more year of junior college, my dream was beginning to unfold — I was, miraculously, accepted by UC Berkeley into the physical education department (PE was the only major I was qualified to get into).

After one very difficult year, I was forced to drop out before being kicked out because of low grades. The course work was so demanding that I just could not imagine ever being able to handle it. I felt defeated after coming so far and then failing. It seemed like everyone there was just smarter than me. As time passed, however, I became deeply encouraged by SGI President Ikeda's words, "Nothing is impossible when one sincerely chants to the Gohonzon."

I kept these words in mind and decided to follow my heart totally. I started taking computer science classes at UC Berkeley through extension (an option allowing outsiders to take courses without anything ever going on record — risk-

free, so to speak). For some reason I started getting good grades, even though computer science was much more difficult than PE. I did this for two years while many counselors, as well as my parents, often tried to discourage me because none of the units or grades could ever be counted toward a degree.

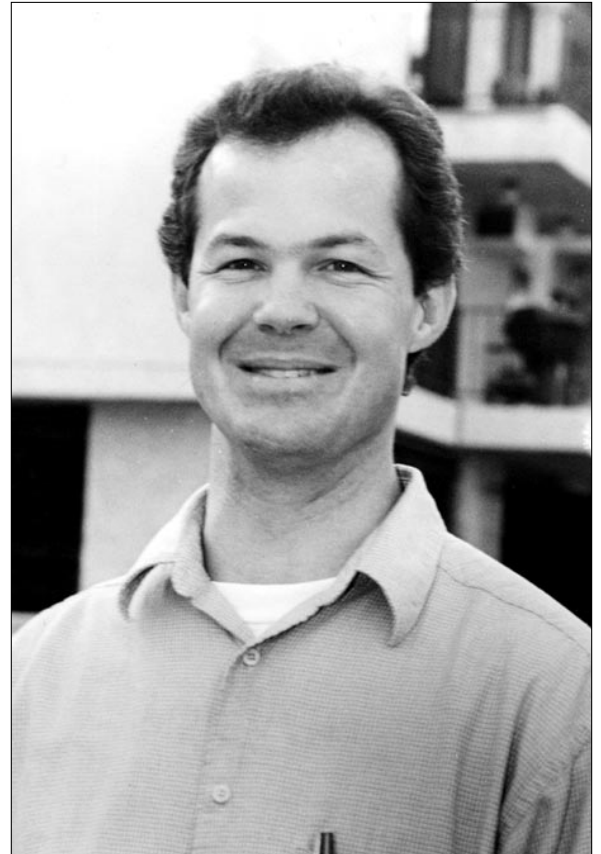
The key turning point came when I determined to the Gohonzon to create lasting value out of this unofficial two-year education. Soon after that, I got a summer job with a professor in the computer science department. This was a great victory.

However, after six weeks, it became clear that I could never be paid because I was not an official student. I went home that night feeling defeated again since I had done all this work and had had such a great opportunity but could not even pay my rent (which was then overdue). I deeply prayed to the Gohonzon to turn poison into medicine and to somehow change the situation.

To my amazement, the very next day I discovered that my boss was also the chairman of the computer science admissions committee. In short, because he liked my work, this professor, despite many complications, got me accepted into UC Berkeley as an official computer science student. The only students ever to get into this program were straight-A students direct from high school (not even transfer students were allowed) — which was the opposite of my background.

Also, the previous two years of course work that I had done through extension were unexpectedly recognized toward the degree. In addition, I was able to keep my job with the professor, earning enough money to cover both tuition and rent until graduation time. The amount of work, however, became so intense that I almost gave up the entire thing. So many obstacles came up for every assignment and for every exam.

Then, during the finals



SGI President Ikeda's words, 'Nothing is impossible when one sincerely chants to the Gohonzon,' supplied the encouragement Tom Fisher needed to persevere in his efforts for a college education.

week of my last semester, my only sister, Christine, was brutally murdered — raped and beaten to death. My family was devastated. Along with the loss of my sister, I saw all hope for any kind of a happy or secure future disappear from my parents' eyes. I deeply prayed to the Gohonzon and determined that I would do everything within my power to bring some kind of happiness and relief into my parents' lives.


As a result, I believe, of this determination, I was asked to speak at my graduation ceremony on the subjects of overcoming hardships and relating the study of computer science to everyday life. After the speech, I was unexpectedly awarded the 1990 computer science department Award of Recognition (for research activities during those two years). I couldn't help crying when I saw my parents' faces in the audience.

I became totally convinced of the power of the Gohonzon, and I had so much appreciation for many warm and understanding SGI-USA members. I became deeply determined to show proof of this practice in society toward the fulfillment of President Ikeda's great dream to establish

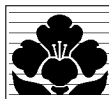
a world without violence.

Three years later, I moved to Los Angeles to attend graduate school at the University of Southern California. I completed a master's degree in computer science last year. Currently, I am still at USC and now working toward a doctorate. As a result of chanting daimoku for the best possible job while in school, I am now working for a company that has agreed to pay for the rest of my education. The company was recently started by Disney, and I work with many warm and understanding people every day. I don't believe I could ask for a better situation.

Just two weeks ago, because schoolwork has gotten so intense, I asked to work fewer hours at a reduced salary. My boss agreed to cut my hours by a third but kept my salary the same. As a result, I am determined now more than ever to show sincere appreciation at work.

I truly believe this practice of Buddhism can allow people to change the deepest aspects of their destiny. I will forever remember President Ikeda's words, "Nothing of value is ever accomplished easily." 

Buddhism and the Art of Medicine



Drugs and Medicines — Part 2 [27]

Participants in this installment include SGI President Ikeda, Soka Gakkai Doctors Division Vice Chief Yoshio Kanaya and pharmacists Hitomi Kodama and Yuriko Kato. Part 1 appears in the Sept. 12 World Tribune.

Ikeda: They say that medicine is a double-edged sword: It can be beneficial or harmful, depending on how it is used.

Kanaya: Yes. Side effects are a good example. Even drugs that are very effective can cause strong side effects in some patients.

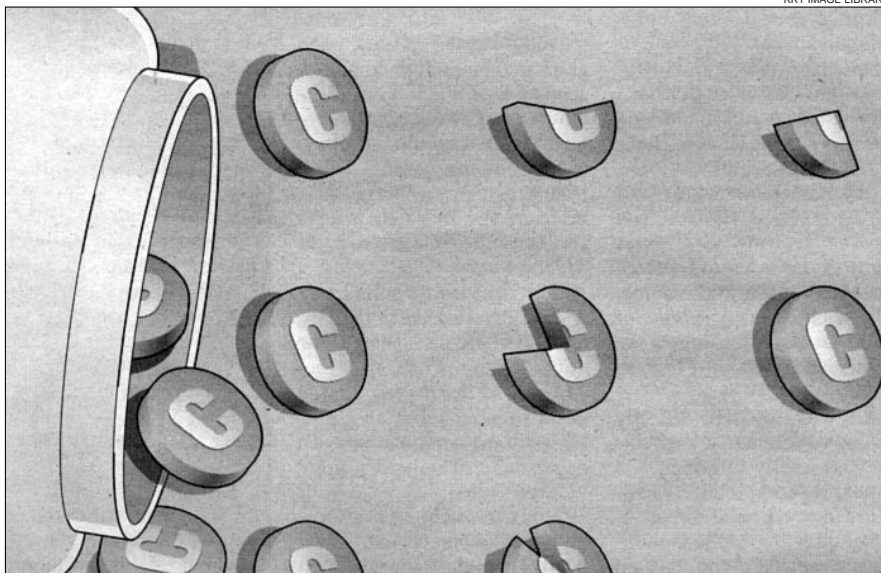
Ikeda: I guess it's a case of "One man's meat is another man's poison."

Kodama: Yes. Any drug is basically a foreign substance, as far as the body is concerned, and, in that sense, slightly noxious. If the drug isn't taken in the prescribed method or is taken in combination with some incompatible substance, it can become highly toxic to the body.

Ikeda: I've heard that a number of poisonous substances are used in certain drugs.

Kato: Yes, an extremely small dosage of poison is sometimes used for treating certain conditions. The amount has to be controlled with extreme care, because even the smallest overdose can prove fatal.

Kodama: A good example is aconite, a substance derived from the monkshood plant [in the buttercup family]. It has been used as poison and also as a pain reliever since ancient times and is still used in Chinese medicine.



Be proactive about the medicines you take, SGI President Ikeda and pharmacists agree — know what you're putting in your body, whether it's over-the-counter or prescription medicine.

Common Side Effects

Ikeda: What are some examples of common side effects?

Kodama: Stomach pain, constipation, diarrhea, drowsiness and loss of concentration.

Ikeda: Most doctors advise pregnant women to avoid even cold medicines. Is this because of possible side effects?

Kato: Yes. Side effects are a concern.

In addition, medication can harm the fetus. Special care to avoid all drugs should be taken, particularly during the first trimester of pregnancy.

Kanaya: Those who suffer from allergies or have liver or kidney problems are likely to be susceptible to side effects. Allergic reactions to drugs include hives, nausea and loss of appetite. In severe cases — though rare — the patient may lose consciousness.

Ikeda: How can side effects be avoided?

Kodama: First, let the doctor or pharmacist know if you are pregnant or suffer from allergies, as well as what other medications you are taking. After that, it is important to know about the medicine you will be taking and follow the directions concerning dosage.

Kato: Yes, it is important to be informed about your medication. Unless you fully understand what it is and how it works, you may forget to take it or stop taking it, which could result in your illness getting worse.

Kanaya: Whenever you receive a prescription, make certain to ask the doctor or pharmacist the name of the medicine, its effects, when it should be taken, what side effects to watch for and how you can prevent them.

Ikeda: Drugs have such difficult names, don't they? Those long, scientific names somehow make them sound so effective! Seriously, though, precisely because their names are not very revealing to the layperson, we must always be certain to re-

ceive a clear explanation of the drugs we take.

Kanaya: In April, a new pharmacy law took effect in Japan. One of its provisions is that pharmacists must inform patients how to properly use the drugs they receive. I think that in some cases in the past, hospital pharmacists have been too busy to give patients clear, full explanations about prescription drugs.

Ikeda: The attitude with which pharmacists address patients is important, too. Some pharmacists, I have heard, are bureaucratic or speak condescendingly to patients. When they are, the explanation, no matter how thorough it may be, isn't communicated properly to the patient. I hope all pharmacists will put themselves in the patient's shoes when they explain prescription drugs, doing so courteously and considerately.

Of course, patients mustn't receive information passively, either. They need to actively protect their health.

As we said before, drugs can

be highly toxic. There's no need to be overly nervous, but if you have questions about a certain medication, voice them unhesitatingly — make sure you understand and are completely satisfied with the explanation you get before using a medication.

Kato: Yes indeed. It is crucial to communicate with your doctor and your pharmacist.

Ikeda: Those who must advise or guide other people — not only in medicine and health services, but in every field — have a duty to explain themselves fully. And people have the right to be fully convinced before following that advice. To date, there has been all too little of this in Japanese culture, and I hope we will see a major change in this in the future.

This need for proper understanding and information is just as important when using over-the-counter remedies, right?

Kato: Yes. Again, the best thing to do is ask your pharmacist for a full explanation of the medicine. In addition, read the directions and description of the medicine. Many people just throw those away, but it's always a good idea to keep them as long as you have any of the medicine.

Ikeda: Although it may be less true now, in the past there were many suspicious medicines being peddled. There were also many unscrupulous, greedy doctors, who earned large profits selling different quack medicines. In Japan, this practice has been referred to as "ninefold medicine," meaning to profiteer by selling medicine for many times what its ingredients are originally worth. There is an Edo-period (1600–1868) novel by an anonymous author titled *Ninefold Medicine*, by the way.

Kodama: What kind of novel?

Ikeda: It's the story of a poor,

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convincing monk, who was trying to come up with a money-making scheme. He recalled that once, long before, when a fishbone had gotten stuck in his throat, he had dislodged it with a dose of flour and red dirt. So he struck upon the idea of that as "medicine," selling it as a cure for dislodging fishbones stuck in the throat. This "wonder" remedy was a big hit. The monk soon gained fame as a "doctor" and made a fortune.

Kato: Now that's a good example of the old saying "A priest always makes money on you — coming and going."

Kanaya: The fact that such a story was written during the Edo period shows that even then people thought priests venal and dishonest.

Ikeda: Is there any ninefold medicine still on sale today?

Kanaya: Not among official pharmaceuticals — nor, indeed, should there be!

Between 10 and 15 years are usually required to develop a new drug. Not only is a new drug tested rigorously for its effectiveness, safety and side effects, but strict quality-control measures are enforced in its manufacture after it is approved.

When we consider all the work that goes into producing a safe, effective drug, I think drug prices are reasonable.

Kodama: But I must say that many folk remedies and so-called health foods are expensive.

Following Instructions Carefully

Ikeda: As we briefly touched on earlier, it's important to follow the dosage instructions, isn't it?

Kanaya: Yes. Depending upon the disease being treated, taking too much or forgetting a dose can be dangerous.

Ikeda: Why are different drugs supposed to be taken at different times, like before a meal, after a meal or between meals?

Kato: These times are based on when ingesting the drug is safest and most effective. For example, drugs that may upset the stomach are taken after a meal. If a drug's effectiveness is reduced or absorption impaired by stomach acids, it is usually taken before meals.

Kanaya: As a rule, after meals means within 30 minutes from eating, and before meals means 30 minutes before eating.

Kodama: Drugs that help the stomach when it's empty, or are particularly difficult to absorb, should be taken between meals.

Ikeda: Between meals means when the stomach's empty, then?

Kodama: Yes. It's best to think of between meals as about two hours from the last meal.

Ikeda: When taking a drug prescribed for after meals, is it absolutely necessary to eat first?

Kato: You don't have to eat a lot, but to protect the stomach

it's best to eat a little something — a cup of thick soup, a cookie or a cracker will do.

Ikeda: Many people take their medicine with tea or juice.

Kato: Yes, but the safest way is to take it with lukewarm or cold water. The caffeine and tannin in tea and coffee can undermine the effect of many drugs.

Kodama: And juice and milk should both be avoided — especially when taking antibiotics. Milk reduces the effectiveness of antibiotics, and the acidity of orange juice and soft drinks may boost their effect.

Ikeda: What effect does alcohol have on drugs?

Kato: With any medication, alcohol is best avoided. Alcohol can strengthen or weaken the effect tremendously, depending on the drug, and may also cause adverse side effects.

Kodama: Those taking drugs for diabetes and high blood pressure must be especially careful, because alcohol can cause sudden drops in blood sugar and blood pressure.

Ikeda: What about the special needs of children and the elderly?

Kanaya: The dosages for over-the-counter drugs are often too strong for the elderly, who should get any drugs they need from a clinic, if possible. If they do use nonprescription remedies, however, it's probably a good idea to start with a half-dosage. For children, the direc-

tions on the package should be followed strictly.

Ikeda: Where should medicines be stored?

Kato: What's best is a cool, dry place, away from direct sunlight.

Kodama: The refrigerator is also good, except that children may mistake pills for candy and eat them. To prevent this, you can put the medication in a child-proof container.

Kanaya: When you have prescription drugs left over, don't keep them — throw them away. Prescription drugs are always for a specific person with specific symptoms. Never give them to anyone else.

When you no longer need the drugs, throw any remainder away. And, of course, never accept medicine prescribed for someone else — even if you seem to have the same symptoms.

Kodama: Nonprescription drugs have an expiration date stamped on the package. Never use drugs after that date. And if the drugs are discolored or show any other change, throw them away — even if the date has not yet expired.

Ikeda: This advice to discard old prescriptions once they are no longer needed seems related to the idea that we shouldn't become overly dependent on medication. A strong will to defeat one's sickness is important. On the other hand, it's a mistake to stop taking a prescription that you need, isn't it?

Kato: It certainly is. It's dangerous to arbitrarily stop taking a prescription, to decrease the dosage, or to pick and choose from among your doctor's prescriptions. Sometimes people take several varieties of drugs at once to reduce side effects.

Ikeda: The wrong combination of drugs can also intensify side effects, can't it?

Kodama: Yes. But most lay people don't know what drugs shouldn't be taken together. So I can't stress enough how important it is to let your doctor or pharmacist know about all diseases and health problems you are being treated for and the medication you are taking. The same holds true when buying over-the-counter remedies at the drugstore.

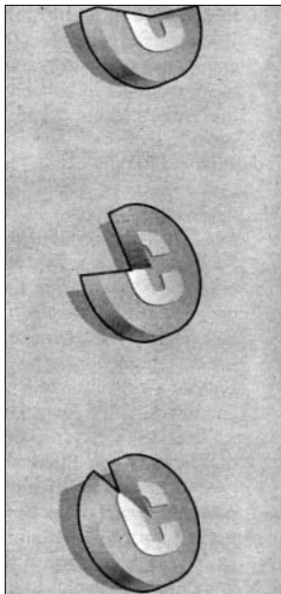
Kato: It's a good idea to jot down the names of the medicines you are taking.

Kanaya: I especially recommend keeping a medication notebook for those with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, or for the elderly who have been on a drug regimen for a long time.

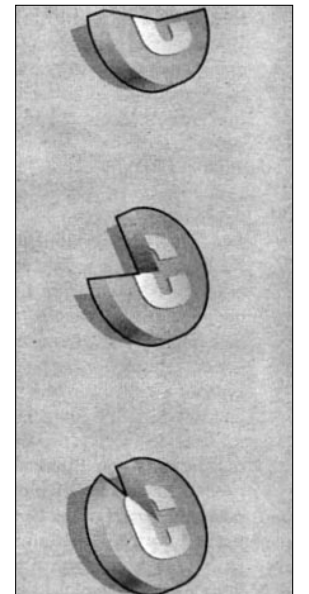
Ikeda: A medication notebook?

Kodama: Yes. Any ordinary notebook will do. Just record the drug, the disease or condition, the date you received the drug, and the name of the hospital, clinic or pharmacy where you got it. You should also jot down comments, particularly when a

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Between 10 and 15 years are usually required to test a new drug for effectiveness, safety and side effects. Ted Stone (left) and his son, Tom, utilize strict quality-control measures at Denison Pharmaceuticals in Pawtucket, R.I.



Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda...used to say that the human body is a great pharmaceutical factory. And Dr. Cousins said it's the best drugstore there is. Both were referring to the power of the body to heal itself. Dr. Cousins held that peace of mind, hope, and the desire to live stimulate the body's recuperative powers to the greatest degree. They also increase medicines' effectiveness. The word 'placebo' derives, I believe, from the Latin word meaning to please. In that sense, we can say that encouragement, which pleases and gladdens a sick person, is an all-purpose medicine. And peace of mind and hope stimulate a patient's life force.

— Daisaku Ikeda

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drug has caused a bad or allergic reaction. The record should include both prescription and nonprescription drugs.

Ikeda: So it's sort of a personal history of all the medication you've taken.

Kanaya: Yes, it is. In fact, we call it a medication history.

Ikeda: In any case, wherever you may be given medication — of any kind — acquainting the doctor with detailed information on your medication history is important.

Kato: Yes. For example, the fever-reducing drug you receive from an internist and the pain killer you receive from a dentist may have the same effect, even though they may have different names. If you take both at the same time, you are taking double what you need.

Ikeda: I also understand that while a medicine might work for one person, it might not work for another, right?

Kato: This is most common with nonprescription drugs. A large person, for example, may not be affected by the standard dose. The severity of the person's symptoms and his or her general condition can also play a role in the drug's effectiveness.

Kanaya: There's also the so-called placebo effect to consider — a placebo is a dummy medicine. For example, if you give a patient a little bit of flour and tell him or her that it is an effective drug, it may actually have a beneficial effect. This is the placebo effect.

Kodama: But if the patient doesn't understand the drug and feels anxious about its effects, he or she may claim that symptoms persist even when the drug is working.

Ikeda: It's important to know the drugs you are taking. Dr. Norman Cousins (1912–90), known as "the conscience of America," was also known for his research on the placebo effect.

Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, as I've mentioned before, used to say that the human body is a great pharmaceutical factory. And Dr. Cousins said it's the best drugstore there is. Both were referring to the power of the body to heal itself.

Dr. Cousins held that peace of mind, hope and the desire to live stimulate the body's recuperative powers to the greatest degree. They also increase medicines' effectiveness. The word *placebo* derives, I believe, from the Latin word meaning to please. In that sense, we can say that encouragement, which pleases and gladdens a sick person, is an all-purpose medicine.

Warm encouragement and support provide assurance and

strength, hope and self-confidence. And peace of mind and hope stimulate a patient's life force. Dr. Cousins was emphatic that the mind and body are one. And he sought to demonstrate this scientifically. His belief accords with Buddhist teachings.

For example, though a patient may be afflicted with a disease, if his or her mind is strong it can exert a positive influence on his or her physical condition. The strength and soundness of our attitude, of our inner determination to be well, are important. They comprise the secret to the lasting health of our life force.

No one can escape the sufferings of birth, old age, sickness and death. We all fall ill. We all have times when we're not up to form.

When we become ill, the important things are strong prayer and wisdom aimed at overcoming that sickness. We should strengthen our life force by chanting dynamic, resonant

daimoku, while seeking qualified medical expertise and sound treatment.

We shouldn't fall into the trap of thinking that just by praying everything will be all right. The full power of prayer is only manifested when accompanied by action. Buddhism is a teaching of reason.

Health is a daily effort — it's a combination of strong prayer and careful, practical action. I hope you will all live long, healthy lives. This is my deepest wish.

Please live your lives to the fullest. Doing so is a great challenge. Live long lives. No matter what happens, live vigorously — right to the end — so that you can look back over your life and say, "What a wonderful life I have had!" That is the true meaning of a healthy life. ☸

(This concludes the first series of "Buddhism and the Art of Medicine.")

GLOSSARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

By GAIL E. THOMAS-AMOS
CAPETOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

REPORT FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Never in My Wildest Dreams

When I started practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, members told me that through chanting I could expand my life and capability and fulfill my wildest dreams. In 17 years of practice I have found this to be true.

However, spending a year in South Africa, as I am currently doing, was not among my wildest dreams or something I initially chanted for.

I was very much opposed to and negatively impacted by South Africa's oppressive history of apartheid. I never wanted to visit South Africa. I recall becoming even more convinced of this when the late Arthur Ashe was denied entry into this country. I remember thinking, "How could such a gentleman and champion of sports and human relations be rejected simply because of the color of his skin?" I had dismissed the reality that this was once a part of American history as well.

In 1995, despite my earlier feelings, I accepted the invitation to travel to South Africa as a citizen's ambassador with the U.S. People to People program. During my visit to Johannesburg, I met an impressive young women's division member who had moved from the United States and had made a commitment to work for human rights and greater equality here. I felt her passion and was very encouraged by her commitment.

She made me realize that taking a proactive and positive approach to changing whatever does not please us is more effective than the negative, begrudging attitude I had adopted. In addition, SGI President Ikeda's guidance and encouragement that SGI members become global citizens forced me to reflect upon and discard my narrow view that as an American my major efforts should be toward America.

I chanted to expand my perspective, my life-condition and my capacity to work for world peace.

I began to investigate the possibility of living and working abroad, something I had not done before. A research employment opportunity through the Fulbright Program came directly into my path and would not let me pass! The program is designed to increase mutual understanding among American citizens and citizens of other countries.

I applied for a position at the



(Above, from left) Son Bradford Amos, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Gail Thomas-Amos and husband Emmett Amos — meeting Tutu was 'a highlight of my stay.' (Center) Bradford (second from right) stands with teammates from his primary school rugby team. (Below) SGI members from Capetown at a picnic with family and friends.



University of the Western Cape in South Africa, chanted extensively about it and was awarded the opportunity. Currently, my husband, 9-year-old son, Bradford, and I have been in Capetown for eight months and will remain here for another four months.

Our experience in South Africa has been educational, rewarding and a pleasant surprise. The country is racially and geographically diverse. It occupies 472,359 square miles at the southernmost tip of the African continent and is about one-eighth the size of the United States. Its 39 million people (1997 estimate) consist of four major ethnic groups: Africans/blacks (75 percent), whites (14 percent, primarily descendants of Dutch, French, English and German settlers), coloreds (9 percent, people of mixed race) and Asian (2 percent, largely of Indian descent). There are 11 official languages, and I am often overwhelmed by the variety spoken by just one South African. I am also reminded of President Ikeda's encouragement that we SGI members learn a language other than our own.

Among the many highlights

of our visit here was witnessing the signing of South Africa's new constitution by President Nelson Mandela. Its preamble is very moving (see box on p. 15).

Carving Out a Home in Capetown

Upon our arrival in South Africa, we were told that the best place for visitors of color and English speakers to live was in the southernmost suburbs. We were also advised that the "better" and more compatible schools for our son were in the southern part of the city. All my co-workers lived in the southern suburbs.

We soon learned that the northern suburbs were histori-

cally Afrikaner (South African whites, often of Dutch heritage), pro-apartheid and still very conservative. I chanted for the best school for my son and the best residential location for my family. We ended up in a northern suburb!

Our son attends an Afrikaans school where he struggles with two languages (Afrikaans, which is derived from 17th-century Dutch, and Xhosa, the dominant Bantu language), plus cricket and rugby. However, he has made some friends and is persistently challenging himself. By teaching English through art to non-English-speaking immigrant children and by working with other volunteer teachers,

my husband has also made friends in the township.

We have accepted our mission in the northern suburbs, and I am determined to introduce the people living here to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism before we return to the United States.

Meeting Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Another highlight of my stay was a recent opportunity to meet Archbishop Tutu. As a Nobel Peace Prize recipient, he is world-renowned for his persistent and compassionate efforts toward peace and social justice in South Africa and the United States. He is the chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission here, which investigates and conducts public hearings on human rights violations committed during apartheid throughout South Africa's nine provinces. The commission believes that "truth is the road to reconciliation."

In its November 1996 newsletter, Archbishop Tutu said that while reconciliation is not easy, "It is better to live in a country which is stable and peaceful, where people are reconciled, than in one which is torn apart by strife because people are angry and wanting revenge."

Thanks to a good friend, my family and I had the privilege to meet Archbishop Tutu and give him a book by President Ikeda. I am chanting that President Ikeda will visit South Africa and have great dialogues with the archbishop and Nelson Mandela.

President Mandela recently celebrated his 79th birthday with the children of South Africa.

He said that he loves all his country's children, and that the most important thing we can give them is our love. He held a Q-and-A session with some children on a local TV talk show. One child asked him why, after spending 28 years in prison on Robben Island, he was not angry.

Mandela responded, "When you have a mission to fulfill, there is no time or room for anger." I was very struck by that response.

Practicing Buddhism in South Africa

There are approximately 150 individuals practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism in South Africa. I continue to be impressed with their stand-alone and self-motivated spirit.

Many have extensive knowl-

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SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech to representatives from Kanagawa Prefecture and SGI organizations around the world at the Kanagawa Culture Center in Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan, Sept. 15.

Stand Up!

Congratulations on the great success of yesterday's World Youth Peace Music Festival in Kanagawa! This festival had unimaginably profound significance in terms of peace and culture. Our guests were deeply moved by the performances.

I have composed a poem expressing my heartfelt gratitude to all who worked so hard to make the event a wonderful success:

*A grand music festival —
the lofty strains
of peace and culture
reach even the heavens*

All I wish to say to the Kanagawa members today is essentially "Stand up! Speak out!"

Kanagawa is where Nichiren Daishonin waged virtually all his most momentous struggles for kosen-rufu.¹ The reason that I came to Kanagawa straight after I formally stepped down as Soka Gakkai president [May 3, 1979] was that I wanted to reflect on the significance of the Daishonin's struggles here. I want you to understand this.

Here the three obstacles and four devils and the three powerful enemies banded together and singled out Nichiren Daishonin for their relentless assault. All the enemies of Buddhism knew if they could just topple this one person, kosen-rufu would never be accomplished. In a sense, it was his enemies, even more than his allies, who understood his true greatness. And that was why they feared him.

Kanagawa is where the Daishonin, with the spirit of a lion king, battled alone amid great persecution. That's why Kanagawa holds a special place in my heart, and why I have always had great confidence and faith in my fellow Kanagawa members and expected them to undertake a struggle worthy of true disciples of Nichiren Daishonin.

Who in this day and age is advancing kosen-rufu — the movement dedicated to realizing world peace and human happiness — to all corners of the globe in accord with the Daishonin's wishes? The members of the Soka Gakkai and SGI, and I, myself.

Because I am spearheading these efforts, I continually bear



'You are...as young as your hope, as old as your despair' (from Samuel Ullman's 'Youth'). To have hope is the key.

Speak Out!

the brunt of the unremitting onslaughts of the three obstacles and four devils and the three powerful enemies, which the Goshu clearly states will harass the votary of the Lotus Sutra. The Kanagawa members, as befits true disciples of Nichiren Daishonin, know exactly how to distinguish themselves in our struggle.

You Cannot Simply Ignore It

The Daishonin repeatedly cites the Nirvana Sutra passage that says if a Buddhist practitioner sees people destroying the teaching and disregards them, failing to reproach them, to oust or punish them for their offense, then he or she is betraying the Buddha's teaching (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 186). In other words, if you see someone twisting or negating the Daishonin's teaching or trying to sabotage our movement to spread the Mystic Law, you cannot simply ignore it.

Someone who sees such destructive activities but fails to do anything is an enemy of Buddhism. The Daishonin teaches us to strenuously oppose and defeat negative forces.

For example, if we vociferously repudiate malicious lies as soon as they circulate, we can

crush the designs of evil-intentioned people. If we remain silent, we play right into their hands. Our timidity only makes them bolder.

Unless we speak out to set the record straight and ensure that truth prevails, we will not achieve kosen-rufu. The Soka Gakkai spirit lies in fearlessly stating the truth. This was the Soka Gakkai's strength in its early days; this is the reason we have succeeded in developing the kosen-rufu movement to the extent that we have. This spirit is needed now more than ever before.

The Daishonin also cites the words of Chang-an: "If one befriends another person but lacks the mercy to correct him, one is in fact his enemy.... One who rides the offender of evil is acting as his parent" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 186). Please engrave these words in your heart.

Cowardice is harmful. It delights the enemies of Buddhism and obstructs the advance of kosen-rufu. The fainthearted cannot savor the true benefit of faith — their ability to tap the power of the Buddha and the power of the Law is enfeebled.

What Will Happen to the Future of Kosen-rufu?

Nichiren Daishonin underwent great persecution solely for

the sake of ordinary people like us. Hence, the Daishonin writes:

Thoughtful persons should...realize that I have met these trials for their sake. If they were people who understood their obligations or who were capable of reason, then out of two blows that fall upon me, they would receive one in my stead. (MW-6, 233)

No matter what difficulties arise, I will absolutely never be defeated. I believe myself to be the foremost disciple of Josei Toda. I have also faithfully carried on the legacy of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, our founding president. To protect my sincere fellow members, I will endure every hardship and battle every persecution.

However, though I wage such a struggle, if my disciples are cowardly and unreliable, what will happen to the future of our kosen-rufu movement? According to the Goshu, those who fail to exert themselves at a crucial moment are actually enemies of Buddhism.

Since such an eventuality would be deeply distressing, I urge you now, Kanagawa members: "Stand up! Speak out!" I want you to generate a powerful momentum that will spread to Tokyo, throughout Japan and around the world.

A Buddhist must have a spirit as indomitable as a wall of solid

rock. Weakness is malignant and injurious to our cause. We must have the heart of a lion and a spirit as strong as steel.

At What Age Do We Start To Decline?

Today is Respect-for-the-Aged Day in Japan. With the sincere wish that each of you, without exception, may enjoy a rich and rewarding third stage of life, I will say a few words about old age today.

"You are...as young as your hope, as old as your despair"² — these words are from an ode to youth of which General Douglas MacArthur was particularly fond. To have hope — that is the key. As SGI members, we cherish throughout our lives and for all eternity the brilliant hope of achieving kosen-rufu.

All who steadfastly dedicate themselves to kosen-rufu naturally come to possess abundant energy and life force. The essentials for a long-lived society, one in which everyone leads an active, fulfilling life, can be found in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and the SGI. In the world of the SGI, the venerable Many Treasures Group members are playing vital roles.

There's much speculation about when a person's mental and physical abilities begin to decline. Is it at 50? At 60? The truth of the matter, I suspect, is that we can't peg a particular age. Someone once satirically proffered the hypothesis that "efficiency declines at the age of R [Retirement] minus 3, irrespective of the age at which R has been fixed."³

If so, it would seem that people's energy, stamina and mental powers begin to drop off three years before retirement. In driving a car, this might be compared to the way we would slow down if we see the road ahead leads toward a cliff's edge.

In faith, however, there is no such thing as retirement age.

We Decide

The workings of the mind are truly subtle. Many scientists have noted that, despite what is commonly believed, our memories don't necessarily deteriorate as we get older. Even supposing a certain degree of decline is inevitable, our acceptance as fact of assertions that memory function deteriorates actually causes us to become more forgetful. In reality, we can keep learning at any age.

This is true not just of our

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memory. The moment we decide "It's no good. I can't do it," this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. From that instant, we negate any chance of succeeding.

The ever-energetic, vigorous Many Treasures Group members are showing splendid proof of lifelong youthfulness.

The Common People Are Strong

In the summer of 1275, Ko Nyudo — an early forerunner of the Many Treasures Group members — undertook the long, arduous journey from Sado Island to visit Nichiren Daishonin in the distant province of Kai, present-day Yamanashi Prefecture. The Daishonin welcomed this sincere and intrepid follower with all his heart. And when the man returned to Sado, the Daishonin gave him a letter of warm encouragement for his wife, Ko-no-ama, who had stayed behind to take care of things in his absence.

The Daishonin always treated others with utmost fairness and impartiality. No matter how far away someone was, no matter how humble their station in life, he was in tune with even their smallest efforts and courageous struggles. I am confident that the Daishonin today most highly applauds our dedicated

efforts as SGI members.

In the letter to Ko-no-ama, the Daishonin writes:

During the more than seven hundred years since the reign of Emperor Kimmei [when Buddhism was introduced to Japan], no one has ever been so universally hated as Nichiren on account of either secular or Buddhist matters.... I underwent this ordeal not because of any fault of my own but solely because of my desire to save all the people of Japan. (MW-4, 140-42)

By rights, the Daishonin, who had so wholeheartedly exerted himself for his country, ought to have been treated as a national treasure. But rather than receiving praise or accolades, he was persecuted and maligned — malicious schemes were devised to do away with him. That is how the Daishonin was treated in Japan.

Seven hundred years have passed. Today, it is the Soka Gakkai and the SGI that are being persecuted and attacked for their commitment to widely spread the Mystic Law. This is exactly what the Goshu states is awaiting Buddhist practitioners in the Latter Day of the Law. Those who steadfastly practice together with the SGI, both in times of suffering and joy, are leading lives of supreme honor. They are accumulating unsurpassed good fortune and benefit in their lives.

The Daishonin continues:

While I was in exile there [on Sado Island], you and your husband Ko Nyudo, avoiding the eyes of others, brought me food by night. You were both ready to give your lives for my sake without fearing punishment from the provincial officials. (MW-4, 142)

The common people are strong. It was ordinary people who protected the Daishonin, undaunted even by state brutality.

Riding the rapids of society toward the 21st century, the SGI is powerfully advancing toward victory through the strong solidarity of just such courageous, ordinary people.

In closing, the Daishonin tells Ko-no-ama, who is unable to meet him:

Whenever you yearn for me, Nichiren, look toward the sun which rises in the morning and the moon which appears in the evening. I will invariably be reflected in the sun and the moon. In the next life, let us meet in the pure land of Eagle Peak. (MW-4, 143)

We will always be together, he warmly reassures her — in lifetime after lifetime, we will advance side by side. The elderly couple was childless, and the Daishonin no doubt intuitively sensed their wistful loneliness, which prompted him to

write these thoughtful words.

The Final Years

How can we make the third stage of our lives a time of fulfillment and satisfaction? In a rapidly graying society such as Japan's, this is an urgent question. According to a recent survey, 10 percent of Japan's population is now 70 or older; and 15.6 percent is over 65.⁴

President Toda often said that the final four or five years of one's life are decisive. No matter how good the preceding years have been, one's life ends in defeat and sadness if the final few are miserable. On the other hand, someone whose last four or five years are happy and filled with joy is a winner in life.

No matter what happens, even if we should fall sick, we must never grow discouraged or allow ourselves to be defeated. This is vital. As long as our spirits are undefeated, we are victors.

So it is important to live cheerfully. With a strong, optimistic spirit, we need to continually direct our minds in a bright, positive and beneficial direction — and help those around us to do the same. We should strive to develop a state of life where we feel joy no matter what happens.

Even famous or wealthy people, whom others might envy, have pain and anguish that they

keep hidden. Contrary to their outward appearance of glamour or self-assurance, many celebrities and public figures nurse a hellish suffering in their hearts.

Please be assured that there is no greater happiness, no greater source of fulfillment, than living one's life in the harmonious world of the SGI.

It is now 40 years since President Toda made his Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons here in Kanagawa Prefecture. Again, I sense that Kanagawa is a place of immeasurably profound significance.

Please convey my best regards to all those whom I could not meet today.

Overseas members, thank you for your tremendous efforts! 卍

1. Kamakura, Matsubagayatsu and Tatsunokuchi are all in present-day Kanagawa Prefecture.
2. Samuel Ullman's "Youth." The only available source of this poem is a Japanese book in which the poem is included in English: Osamu Uno and Munehisa Sakuyama, *Seishun to iu Na no Shi* (A Poem Titled Youth) (Tokyo: Sangyo Noritsu Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1986), pp. 10-11.
3. Northcote Parkinson, *Parkinson's Law; and Other Studies in Administration* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957), p. 101.
4. According to a survey conducted by Japan's Management and Coordination Agency, announced on Sept. 14.

SOUTH AFRICA, FROM PAGE 13

edge of their country and its history. They are actively involved in local activities to assist the massive process of social and educational transformation here. Many have lost comrades in the struggle and have a deep appreciation for life. Our discussion meetings are filled with joy and heartfelt dialogue, and are relevant to daily life.

Recently, friends and I experienced the joy of visiting a family practicing Buddhism in Soweto, the well-known township where massive protests, uprisings and violence occurred during the anti-apartheid era.

The father was the first chant. His wife noted with a bright smile that she never thought her husband could change so much for the better. Their teenage son said that after watching his father become happier, he just naturally wanted to follow his lead. All now practice the Daishonin's Buddhism.

I also went to Kampala, Uganda, to visit a research training project that I codirect for Texas A&M University's stu-



In Kampala, Uganda: (Above) Children, many of whom lost their parents to AIDS, attend a community school. (Below) Texas A&M University faculty and students work with The AIDS Service Organization to serve AIDS victims.



dents and faculty. The project is designed to investigate the massive prevalence of AIDS there, especially among women and children.

I never thought in my wildest dreams that I would be coordinating or conducting research in Africa, or that I would have visited all four corners of this con-

tinental. These experiences are actual proof to me that with the Gohonzon all is possible!

I am determined to expand my life and truly become a world cit-

izen, and I continue to be deeply grateful to President Ikeda for his warm encouragement, his great example and his efforts in showing me the way. 卍

An Excerpt From Act 108 of 1996

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

We, the people of South Africa, Recognize the injustice of our past; Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land; Respect those who have worked to build and develop a country, and Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

We therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to —

- Heal the division of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
- Lay the foundation for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;
- Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person;
- Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

May God protect our people.

American Soul



Bob Dylan performs in Bologna, Italy, Sept. 27, for an audience of some 350,000 people during a rock concert attended by Pope John Paul II.

By WILLIAM ROUTHIER
BOSTON CORRESPONDENT

Like no popular poet since perhaps Walt Whitman, Bob Dylan has both celebrated and questioned the American spirit in a way that has forever redefined our understanding of it. During the '60s, in both his social protest and personal songs, he sang to the young, searching generation about compassion for the abused, empathy for the misused, and his feelings of kinship with the confused. In the same way that Whitman declared, "Every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you," Dylan declared that he sang for "every hung-up person in the whole wide universe."

Paul Simon said of Dylan, "He made us feel at a certain time that it was good to be smart, good to be observant, that it was good to have a social conscience."

Bruce Springsteen said, "Elvis may have freed our body, but Dylan freed our soul."

And as Bob Dylan, now 56, continues to sing, he continues trying to help free the souls of a new generation. At his current shows, you're likely to see tie-dyed college students grooving alongside balding baby boomers. Bob sings the same truths to them both.

Dylan cites the strong influence of his songwriting predecessors. In a recent *New York Times* interview, he said: "My songs come out of folk music. I love the whole pantheon. To me, there's no difference between Muddy Waters and Bill Munroe. My songs, what's different is that there's a foundation to them."

The voice that sings these songs, cracked and often aching with emotion, isn't always an easy voice to hear — but it is an unmistakably real voice, one that belongs to a man who has trod the long, uneasy roads of America and come back to tell us what he has seen.

Dylan still tours regularly. When asked about the rigors of his schedule, he is humble, saying that while he

does about 125 shows a year, "B.B. King [who is 70] does 300." Earlier this year, Dylan suffered a serious heart infection, yet he's fully recovered and back on the road, recently performing for the pope in Bologna, Italy. Just another gig, another stage.

And after a seven-year period without any new songs, Dylan's regained his muse with the new album *Time Out of Mind*. *Time* magazine says the widely praised CD is "cathartic and ultimately hopeful: There is salvation, and it comes from within."

This December, Dylan will be honored for his lifetime achievement in the American arts by the Kennedy Center, which notes, "His songs remain forever young, irresistibly touching reflections of the American soul."

Dylan remains forever restless, forever yearning, forever questioning, forever striving to discover that which is essential and real.

And for that, we forever listen.

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