

World Tribune

No. 3164

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

NOVEMBER 7, 1997

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

DATED MATERIAL: PLEASE DELIVER BY ISSUE DATE

Winning in the Information Age

Refining wisdom will allow us to better use knowledge, SGI President Ikeda says in message to the Club of Rome's annual meeting.

The Club of Rome, an international group of leading academic, business and government intellectuals, for the first time held its annual

meeting in the United States, Oct. 23-25. The club chose the Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C., right behind the White House, as the setting to discuss this year's topic: the global information society. President Ikeda, who became an honorary member of the club last year, sent the following message, which was read by Bertrand Schneider, Club of Rome secretary general on Oct. 24.

Dr. Ricardo Díez-Hochleitner, president of the Club of Rome, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen:

On behalf of SGI members in 128 countries around the world, I offer my heartfelt congratulations on this annual conference of the Club of Rome.

I also want to express my most profound respect for the pioneering efforts of the distinguished Club of Rome members in tackling the key issues facing our age. I find it a singular honor

to add my efforts to your invaluable endeavors.

We live in rapidly changing times. Technological innovation in the field of information and communications is progressing at great speed today. And the so-called information revolution, which is the spirit of the new era, is expected to have an impact on our society rivaling that of the Industrial Revolution.

What effects will the advent

PLEASE SEE WISDOM, 5

Corazon Latino



Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

A young woman in traditional costume during a Panamanian folk dance entrances the audience. The New York joint territories held a Latino festival recently. Please see story, p. 4.

'Treasuring the Future' Exhibit Opens in New Jersey

By DAVID SHADOVITZ
PHILADELPHIA BUREAU CHIEF
Camden, N.J., Oct. 12

"Treasuring the Future: Children's Rights and Realities," an interactive exhibit featuring photos, art and information about the rights and realities of children around the world, opened a three-week showing at the Walt Whitman Culture Arts Center today.

More than 100 members and guests attended the exhibit's ribbon-cutting and opening reception. "We can make all the policies we want, but children are the ones who will take our place and someday run the world," said Dr. Terra Thomas, a pedi-

PLEASE SEE EXHIBIT, 5

Byakuren Reevaluate Mission, Structure

The group solicits suggestions for a new name as part of its progressive reassessment.

By LISA JONES
CORRESPONDENT

Los Angeles, Oct. 28

Quick quiz: What do Byakuren members do — aside from make their purple uniforms look good?

If you don't know off hand or haven't given it much thought,

that's an indication that the Byakuren members in your area are doing what they do so well: working tirelessly behind the scenes to protect the members and support the organization.

"What we do goes way beyond vacuuming the community center and cleaning the restrooms," says Leng Ho, national Byakuren chief. "We're fostering the development of young women, fighting for justice, striving to embody the mentor-disciple relationship."

As a group, the Byakuren is in the middle of a progressive reevaluation of its mission and structure.

"We're planning for the 21st century," Ms. Ho explains. "So it's healthy for us to revisit our basic assumptions and open a dialogue about who we are and where we're going."

For example, the Byakuren is revamping its handbook. "We're taking out all authoritarian lan-

PLEASE SEE BYAKUREN, 5

Seeking a New Name

- The Byakuren is looking for a name more descriptive of what it does.

- All members are welcome to send suggestions to: Leng Ho, SGI-USA Byakuren chief, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

? QUESTION OF THE MONTH: 'At Thanksgiving time, what are you most thankful for?'

I am most thankful for having the Gohonzon, the SGI-USA family and challenges. All of these have become a true mirror of myself, helping me to change internal and external negative causes to positive causes. These elements are helping me improve daily.

— VIVIAN G. FORD,
Marshall, Mo.



At Thanksgiving time, I am thankful for life itself, for my practice, the Gohonzon, the SGI and SGI President Ikeda.

The ability to chant to become happy and to help others do the same. The nurturing qualities of family and friends. And, of course, good food! To humanity, I give art.

— ROWENA PERKINS,
Cape Cod, Mass.

I am thankful for the SGI "family spirit." This year, I participated in activities in North Hollywood, West Los Angeles and Santa Monica, Calif., and in Southfield, Mich. Everywhere I visited, I was welcomed like a favorite relative. As long as a community center is close by, none of us is a stranger anywhere in the world.

— ANN PERRY, Ravenna, Ohio



At Thanksgiving time as well as every day, I am thankful for having the good fortune to practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

When I began practicing in 1985, I was unhappy, easily intimidated and full of anger. Today, I am happy, confident and eager to show actual proof. As a result, I'm a better mother, teacher, friend, sister, daughter, cousin, neighbor, etc.

— DENESE E. TURNER,
Detroit



My mother, because of her strong faith, determination and example, has shown me the way to practice this wonderful religion. Because of my strong practice, I

met my husband and we had our son, Seth. Because of our strong connection to each other, our connection to the Gohonzon and Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, kosen-rufu is happening in my family — right before my eyes! I am the most fortunate woman in the world and deeply thankful.

— CHRISTINE KENKELEN
LEVINE, Silver Spring, Md.



I feel so thankful that I can share this holiday with my family (parents, brother, sister-in-law and nephews). In fact, I couldn't be happier. I feel like a child again (fat chance — I'm 44 years old). This is so because, through my Buddhist practice (which my non-practicing parents support), I have come to appreciate and value my family as I've never dreamt possible.

— ANDY SANCHEZ,
San Juan, Puerto Rico

I'm thankful for my health and that of my family and friends, for waking up every day, for having the Gohonzon and for the undying support and encouragement of my leaders. But most important, for Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and my faith in this Buddhism.

— VIRGINIA GUERRA,
Temple City, Calif.

For the SGI pioneers who enabled me to appreciate in times of hardship the following words from SGI President Ikeda: "Viewed from the profound perspective of Buddhism, your suffering is like that portrayed by a brilliant, highly paid stage actress cast in the role of a tragic heroine. When the play is fin-

ished, the actress goes home to a life of ease and comfort. Your life is the same.... There is no need to worry. You will definitely become happy...."

— TESSIE METCALF, Wheaton, Md.

At Thanksgiving time I am most thankful for the opportunity to get up once again and to sit once again in front of the Gohonzon and chant. To have my family sitting together enjoying a wonderful meal, which is prepared by my husband.

— CYNTHIA G. GITTENS,
Pemberton, N.J.



I am most thankful for discovering this practice of Buddhism. I was introduced to this practice by Nathan Shulkin back in July. Ever since then I have raised my life-condition, and I am a stronger person. I am thankful for getting a chance to take charge of my life and happiness.

— LORRINE RIVERA,
San Jose, Calif.



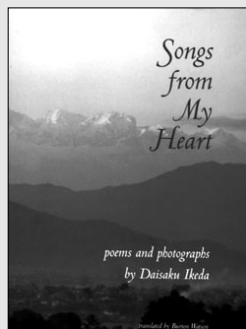
Thanks to all who responded!

What's

First printed in 1978, *Songs from My Heart* by Daisaku Ikeda is a collection of poems celebrating youth, change and progress.

The new edition is combined with more recent photos taken by the SGI president that express his deepest feelings and hopes for the future of humankind. Translated by Burton Watson with power and emotion true to the author. These genuinely are songs from the heart of Daisaku Ikeda.

Price: \$14.95 M/0#: 0346



NEXT MONTH'S QUESTION:

'As a Buddhist, how do you celebrate the holiday season?'

Please be specific and limit your responses to 75 words or less. All responses are subject to editing. Please send your responses and a face photo of yourself to: "Question of the Month," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, Calif., 90401. Fax: 310-260-8910. Or e-mail us at: SokaNews@aol.com. (Please do not fax photos.)

Deadline: Nov. 24

World Tribune

(ISSN-0049-8165)

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

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

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

Printed on 100% recycled paper

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**WORLD TRIBUNE
MAILBOX**

More On AIDS

I am writing to express my gratitude to Lonnie Mogil for sharing her experience regarding her struggle after being diagnosed HIV-positive ("Mailbox," Oct. 3 *World Tribune*)....

Is it possible that Ms. Mogil could lead a healthy, fulfilling life by refusing to acknowledge the so-called facts revealed through the ideology of Western medicine? I believe the answer is definitely yes! You see, I am one of the "600 doctors who belong to the Group for the Scientific Reappraisal of the HIV/AIDS Hypothesis" mentioned in Ms. Mogil's letter.... I (like Ms. Mogil) was "shocked, stunned and amazed" by what I learned. Everything I had believed about AIDS was wrong!...

Since I am not HIV-positive, it is relatively easy for me to espouse these seemingly unorthodox conclusions. However, I do take a risk. What if I am wrong and people who listen to my ideas suffer (or die) as a result? Within the strict realm of cause and effect, am I not creating negative causes for myself? On the other hand, what if I am right?... At present, I can only turn to my faith to find the wisdom to answer these questions, and this letter attests to the direction I have chosen.

Dr. Duesberg expressed to me his hope that someday a rational dialogue might ensue between those of opposing views in this controversy, and that further scientific studies might be designed to address unanswered questions. Unfortunately,...the need for a dialogue has been obfuscated by simply eliminating all funding for studies that might challenge the unproven HIV-causes-AIDS hypothesis.

I told Dr. Duesberg about the SGI-USA and expressed my belief that the seeds of such a dialogue (as well as other difficult topics important to humankind) might someday begin in our organization. I hope to report back to him someday, and I am indebted to Ms. Mogil's experience for renewing my hope.

— RODNEY M. RICHARDS, Louisville, Colo.

Century of Africa

In SGI President Ikeda's "My Recollections" (Sept. 12 *World Tribune*), the compassion shown by Hassan Gouled Apidon, president of the Republic of Djibouti, toward the people of the world, refugees and Kobe earthquake survivors was very uplifting. The part of the article that really shook me was when President Ikeda described the treatment that was inflicted upon the people of Africa by the so-called civilized world at that time. I could feel the suppressed rage he felt at the inhumanities heaped upon the people of Africa. After all, Africa has been proven by archaeologists to be the cradle of humankind and civilization.

I could also understand the resentment many people feel toward the descendants of the enslavers. Resentment and anger do not solve the problem, as President Ikeda expressed. Determination by us for the 21st century for Africa and its people to be on the vanguard of a new independence and humanity is the best way to funnel this anger. Thanks to presidents Hassan Gouled Apidon and Ikeda for their dedication to these issues.

— PHIL DORSEY, Madison, N.J.

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

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

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

The Wired, Wired West

PERSPECTIVE

By **JEFF FARR**
LOS ANGELES

I was curious to see how the Club of Rome would tackle the topic of new media. At the club's recent conference in Washington, D.C., this diverse body of the world's leading intellectuals, which has discussed so many of the challenges facing us at the end of the 20th century, focused its attention for the first time on how its members think the information age/revolution/economy, especially the Internet, will impact global society.

Like many driving down Bill Gates' "road ahead," I've often wondered where this road is really leading the world. I've had my doubts about where we're going.

The Club of Rome members, too, I found, have serious concerns about the information su-

being to foster such debate.

To the totally wired, like the MIT Media Lab experts who were guest speakers, the Internet and all things computer are a panacea that can solve many of the world's most pressing social problems. But representatives of developing countries, generally the wired-less, said that it will only reinforce the North-South split, surely putting them further behind, further out of the loop, further out of the know.

I was moved by these voices from Uganda, Colombia, the Philippines. Many people in our countries still don't have telephones, still can't read, still don't have clean water, they said. Can we have clean water before computers? The realities they reminded the club of contrasted with the conference's setting — the Renwick Gallery's plush Grand Salon, with idyllic paintings of the pre-industrial world lining the walls.

What surprised me was that many of these have-not coun-

are literally becoming Americans through the influence of the Net — they're trading in their own cultures for hip-hop and leaving for America the first chance they get.

Most of the Americans who responded said not to worry, that there were ways to wire the South and that the information age is nothing to fear — remember how wrong the people were who feared the introduction of the printing press.

I hope my fellow Americans are right, but I can't help thinking that more than 500 years after Gutenberg's invention, many, many people still can't read. So is it hard to imagine that 500 years from now many people still won't be wired?

SGI President Ikeda's message to the conference (see p. 1) was right on the money. He said he hoped the information revolution would "prevent knowledge and information from being monopolized by the few...." As Americans, we should take responsibility for this prevention, I thought, since we are largely the inventors, the adherents, of the new highway, and those who stand to benefit economically the most from it. Colonialism is a sad part of Western history, and I would hate to see us again running over indigenous cultures for economic gain — then just dragging what remains of them onto our superhighway.

The highway should be wide enough for everyone to drive on, and everyone should have the chance to learn how to drive on it. "Knowledge and information for everyone" — this Club of Rome conference led me to believe this should be our motto for the information revolution.

Another motto could be "Knowledge and information for wisdom," I thought, reflecting that, as President Ikeda also said in his message, all the information in the world won't make anyone happy unless it's coupled with wisdom. Information has, throughout human history, been manipulated to control people — information has started wars, killed people. It has divided and conquered.

What if we could make the information revolution a step toward a human revolution, a world revolution in our wisdom? This, I hope, is the road ahead. **W**



Photo by ROB HENDRY

The first-ever Club of Rome conference in the United States is held at the Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery, near the White House.

perhighway: They have great hopes for it, too, but these are coupled with what might be called an enlightened suspicion.

As a conference observer, I was fascinated to watch a sometimes emotional debate unfold over three days between the haves and have-nots of the information superhighway — the wired and the wired-less; voices speaking for the millions who are online and the billions who aren't. Ricardo Diez-Hochleitner, the Club of Rome president, told me afterward how happy he was that a real debate had emerged, the club's purpose

tries are, at this point, also decidedly *want nots*. They see the superhighway as booby-trapped. Taking the place of land mines are hamburgers and basketballs — harmless enough to us, but representative to them of all the dangers that come with Western culture. Getting on the highway equals submitting to the continued Westernization of their cultures, they said, and the potential death of their native cultures. The senior communication advisor to the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa told me that the brightest young minds in Africa

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Diversity Seminar Confronts Prejudices

Conference offers comfortable atmosphere to discuss uncomfortable topics. Participants find common ground.

By PATTI CONNORS & LEON JONES

CORRESPONDENTS

Santa Monica, Calif., Sept. 21

"I was taught to fear black people."

"I was prejudiced against Catholics."

"My daddy said not to hate people, no matter what they say."

Spontaneous confessions and dynamic group dialogue lit up the conference titled "Bridging the Gap of Ethnic Diversity Through Communication," sponsored by the Los Angeles #3 Joint Territory Culture Department.

"Some people feel that prejudice doesn't exist or isn't a problem," said Master of Ceremonies Rochelle Wilson. "The goal of this conference is to dispel denial and open up dialogue." Toward that end, the conference offered a comfortable atmosphere for speaking on topics that people often find uncomfortable or would otherwise avoid.

The process of the small group settings acted as a communication tool where by listening, participants learned how best to respond to differences and to speak respectfully on racism and other issues surrounding diversity.

Guest speaker Bonnie Boswell Hamilton, an SGI-USA member and co-host of the public access cable television show *Faith and Values*, challenged conference participants at the World Culture Center to examine issues of racism in themselves and in society. She pointed out that the concept of racial difference has neither scientific basis nor meaning in the biological world of DNA. Rather, race is a political construct.

Racism is, according to Ms. Hamilton, a system that manipulates base human emotions to sustain the unequal division of wealth and power along racial lines and maintain the distinction between the haves and the have nots. For example, many immigrants come to this country and, perceiving the relatively unfavorable position of African Americans, often distance themselves from that minority and seek to be accepted by the white majority. Racism is alive

and well in America, Ms. Hamilton warned, citing insurance redlining, police abuse and several other examples.

Ms. Hamilton also said that in terms of wealth and power, only 1 percent of the American population can be considered an elite, privileged class — then there are the rest of us. In most ways, ordinary people of all races are more alike than different.

In a skit, performers representing different backgrounds sat poker-faced on a public bus, not talking with one another. Their private thoughts were piped in from offstage: "Look how fat she is." "Look at those two guys walking down the street holding hands. It isn't natural." "Why don't you turn down that music and go back to your own country?" The point of the skit was to show the destructive impact of prejudice and demonstrate that respect for others is crucial.

Conference participants broke into small groups and wrestled with stereotypes and myths. "How can we challenge the attitudes and judgments that we silently entertain about others who are not like us?" was the question of the day underlying the group discussions. Participants listened to others talk about their feelings and got in touch with their own.

"A child's attitude about skin color is not inborn," one participant said. "It's learned." She told the story of an Asian American girl who described an African American girl as "the one with two pigtails and a red shirt." An adult asked the child, "You mean the little black girl?" The child insisted, "No, the one with two pigtails and a red shirt."

One participant told of his travels to the Far East and many other countries and concluded that on the most basic level, regardless of nationality, we're all human beings. To expand awareness of this, participants talked about the importance of meeting people from other countries and different ethnic groups.

Many participants echoed Ms. Hamilton's point that people are more alike than different. Engaging others in dialogue and recognizing human commonality is the key; no matter what social or political remedies are applied, from the perspective of Buddhism, continuous self-reformation is the way to achieve racial and ethnic harmony, many participants concluded. ❧



Children from New Jersey perform a folkloric Peruvian dance at a festival celebrating Latino culture.

Latino Festival Warms Hearts, Blends Cultures

By JOEL LOBENTHAL

CORRESPONDENT

New York, Oct. 12

Art, dialogue and infectious drum-and-maraca rhythms wove the rich tapestry of "Corazon Latino: The Latino Heritage Culture Festival" at the New York Culture Center today.

The festival celebrated the traditions and diversity of Latinos in the United States, as well as the challenges they face.

We sought to create a project that would unify — without homogenizing — the many cultures from which Latinos in the United States descend, said Norma Romero, SGI-USA member and organizer of the daylong event.

Attendees were treated to a performance by a children's chorus, cultural and historical exhibits, a multimedia presentation, authentic cuisine, and a puppet theater — they could even take a crash course in the tango.

The festival was designed to appeal to members and non-members alike. A panel of speakers emphasized the power of culture and education to integrate the individual within society as well as transform human perceptions of reality.

Poetry, Mozart and folk dance sought to show visitors that education and high culture, contrary to some popular opinion, are important to Latinos.

"I want people to know that everyone is equal," Master of Ceremonies E. Chachi Huesca said. "We are all Buddhas." ❧



A father and child at the Latino art exhibit enjoy a moment of closeness — an object of art in its own right. (Below) Sporting an authentic costume, Joan White greets guests with contagious good will.



WISDOM, FROM PAGE 1

of the multimedia society have on our future?

In addition to changing how information is distributed, it can be expected to vastly transform interpersonal communication. I thus believe that if we are to face up to the issue of this vast unknown quality, we must reexamine the relationship between man and technology.

The great leap forward in communications, represented by the Internet and satellite communication systems, has made possible the global transmission of information, carrying news instantaneously throughout the world.

A form of communication of hitherto unimagined freedom and flexibility is taking shape, and this is rapidly removing the barrier created by the concept of nation-states, which have long separated human beings — at least as far as technological communication is concerned.

However, it is also true that the increased potential for communication created by this technological advance does not necessarily bring with it an evolution of heart-to-heart communication among the people.

Instead, the newly created information media could be used as a means to amplify confrontations based on prejudice and hatred. There is also the risk that public opinion could be misdirected through the willful manipulation of information.

I cannot help recalling the deep concern that was expressed by the late founder of the Club of Rome, Dr. Aurelio Peccei, as we engaged in the dialogue later published as *Before It Is Too Late*.

He said that "much of our communication lacks communion, the personal touch, the warmth of the human presence and of mutual knowledge.... In other fields, people are becoming so accustomed to talking to trusted machines and getting quick pertinent answers from them that they no longer find need or pleasure in talking to other individuals, who may fumble or disagree."

As Dr. Peccei so aptly indicated, the key issue is how to make technology reflect the essential spirit of communication, which is conducted by the human being devoting his or her holistic personality. Technological progress that loses sight of the human being will not bring happiness to humankind in the end.

I am strongly convinced that the key to the impending multimedia society is a remodeling of our perspectives, placing priority on human interchanges of the

heart rather than on technology alone.

As our world becomes ever more interdependent, how do we guide it from friction to inspiration, from confrontation to harmony, from destruction to constructiveness? It is my firm belief that this is the path we need to follow if we are to bring to fruition the much-sought-after notion of a society of global neighbors.

Dr. Peccei advocated the development of wisdom to make the best use of available knowledge. It is naturally up to the individual who uses technology whether it will be to the best use. The Lotus Sutra, considered as the quintessence of the Buddhist scriptures, elucidates the concept of "awakening in all beings the Buddha wisdom, revealing it, letting all beings know it and enter into it." This reminds us that the fundamental objective of Buddhism lies in tapping human wisdom.

My mentor and the second president of the Soka Gakkai, Josei Toda, also stated that confusing knowledge for wisdom is the principal error in the thinking of modern humanity. I believe that the burning question of contemporary society rests in fostering a correct viewpoint, in developing a "spiritual eye" that will prevent humankind from becoming a victim of the machinations of the information society.

Even if one has knowledge and can collect information, the information will be worthless if one is completely swamped by an enormous flood of data. It is far more important to fully develop the wisdom that will allow one to make good use of that knowledge.

I strongly urge that we now concentrate on human education, which will nurture that wisdom, generating a sense of purpose, mission and responsibility in people. The great advantage of the information revolution is to prevent knowledge and information from being monopolized by the few, so that they can be shared democratically by many. Only when each individual who has access to knowledge or information has the wisdom to truly put it to use will it be possible to summon forth the vitality to surmount the various obstacles that humankind faces and to create an enduring solidarity of the people.

In closing, I express my most sincere prayers for the continued well-being of the distinguished Club of Rome members, who are dedicated to mapping out a great path of hope for future generations, to advancing with a global vision and profound sense of responsibility as pioneering sages. ❧

Nikken Fires Top Lawyer

By JEFF FARR

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Santa Monica, Calif., Oct. 29

The Nichiren Shoshu Administrative Office on Oct. 6 fired Yoshihiro Konagai, Nikken's lead attorney in the temple's libel suit against the Soka Gakkai in Japan, according to the *Kaikaku Jiho* (Reformation Times), a newspaper published by reformist priests. Temple members on the Internet have admitted Konagai left but not that he was fired, saying it's only natural in such a lengthy case that a lawyer

might have to leave.

Mr. Konagai has been the lead attorney in the case since it was initiated in 1993, and his dismissal comes at a crucial moment in the trial, a few weeks before Nikken's Dec. 22 court-ordered testimony. (He will be cross-examined Feb. 2, 1998.) The Tokyo District Court ordered Nikken to appear so he can answer questions regarding contradictory statements he has made about his actions in Seattle the night of March 19–20, 1963.

According to the reformist

priests' newspaper, Nichijun Fujimoto, general administrator of the Administrative Office, and Kotoku Obayashi, Overseas Bureau chief, informed Mr. Konagai of Nikken's decision.

Although the priesthood gave no explanation for the decision, SGI leaders have pointed out that the parting with Konagai came just a week after the court on Sept. 29 ordered Nikken to testify — a decision Konagai had tried to avoid through various legal maneuvers this year. ❧

Photo by JONATHAN WILSON



Carmen Stokes shows children an interactive part of the exhibition.

EXHIBIT, FROM PAGE 1

atic psychologist with the Children Seashore House in Atlantic City and a consultant to the United Nations.

After having a chance to walk around, visitors said they were extremely impressed by what they saw. "It helps people become more aware of what children are experiencing today," said visitor Greg Kaspin. "It made me reflect on how important it is to improve

the conditions of the environment where children live."

In addition to hosting the event, the Walt Whitman Culture Arts Center served as one of nine cosponsors. Others were the Camden Empowerment Zone, Educating Children for Parenting, Intercultural Family Services, Inc., the Museum of the American Arts of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the school district of Philadelphia, the office of the

associate provost of Rutgers University and the Women's Christian Alliance.

Many classes from area schools are scheduled to visit the exhibition before it closes on Nov. 2. Created and sponsored by the SGI-USA, the exhibit first opened in June 1996 in New York. It is slated to tour 15 cities.

With reporting by Wanda Peacock Flowers, Pat Daniels and Claude Lomden.

BYAKUREN, FROM PAGE 1

guage," Ms. Ho says. In addition, they're decentralizing their structure by creating local, three-member councils with decision-making power.

"The point is to create more opportunities for young women to take responsibility," Ms. Ho says. "We also want to attract more and younger members. We

can do that only if we're a fresh, vibrant group." There are currently 700 Byakuren members in the SGI-USA.

The group's revitalization initiative also involves the formulation of a new mission statement and a reassessment of its name; *Byakuren* is Japanese for white lotus. "We'd like to find a name that's more descriptive of what we do," Ms. Ho says. "If anyone

in the SGI-USA has a name they want to suggest, we'd like to hear it." Members can send their suggestions to: Leng Ho, SGI-USA Byakuren chief, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

"We won't change the name every year," says Reiko Groshell, SGI-USA young women's division chief. "If people want to keep the current name, we'd like that input, too." ❧

SIGN POSTS APPLYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS TO DAILY LIFE

An Assumption

By CRAIG GREEN
SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

More valuable than treasures in a storehouse are the treasures of the body, and the treasures of the heart are the most valuable of all. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 238)

A little less than three years ago, a friend of mine was killed. He was an active SGI member and someone whom other members looked to for a smile. He smoked too much, led a great gongyo, and had a great laugh.


When I heard the news of his death, I was in shock. I had known members who had died, but this was different. It was too close, too sudden, and I didn't know how to handle it.

I had made an assumption, an equation, if you will: practice Buddhism, go to a lot of meetings, and you'll automatically live to be old. That was a mistaken assumption. The reality is that none of us know what the next day will bring. None of us know what the causes we have made will uncover. None of us know if the next time we see our friends will be the last.

In this Goshu passage, Nichiren Daishonin is encouraging Shijo Kingo in his battle to win the respect and favor of his patron, Lord Ema. He encourages Shijo Kingo to stand firm in his convictions, to stay true to his honor. And he points out that material things can never equal the value of respect and friendship.

Just because we chant and belong to an organization that works for world peace does not exclude us from pain and loss. Reality is often very harsh. It was true in Nichiren Daishonin's time, as it is for us today. Losing a friend is painful. Saying goodbye to someone is not easy. But it's part of life.

I was glad to have had the chance to practice with my friend. I was glad to have had the chance to see him fight through difficult situations and try to win over his demons. He taught me to never take for granted that people will always be around. He taught me that even though friends may die, their friendships never fade.

It's a treasure I will have.
Always. 

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TEMPLE ISSUE

Why Don't the SGI and Nichiren Shoshu Just Talk?

Q Why don't the SGI and Nichiren Shoshu talk to each other?

A Dialogue is a Buddhist tradition — it is a nonviolent way of resolving conflicts and assumes the presence of frankness, openness and equality between the two parties involved. This may be why many sutras are presented in the form of conversation between Shakyamuni and his disciples, and why Nichiren Daishonin used dialogue as a literary framework for many of his important writings, such as the "Rissho Ankoku Ron." In accord with the importance Buddhism places upon dialogue, the SGI sought every possible opportunity to speak with the priesthood as the conflict arose toward the end of 1990. But, to the SGI's great disappointment, the priesthood refused to talk.

When the priesthood suddenly submitted its letter of inquiry at the regular communication conference on Dec. 13, 1990, demanding a written response within seven days, the SGI suggested that they discuss any unresolved issues through face-to-face discussion rather than exchanging documents. The priesthood officials seemed at first to agree with the SGI's suggestion, but four days later, the SGI received the same document in the mail. Though the SGI tenaciously communicated its desire to resolve any differences through dialogue, the priesthood adamantly refused.

On Jan. 2, 1991, only a few days after the priesthood's sudden and unilateral removal of SGI President Ikeda from the position of chief lay representative, Soka Gakkai President Akiya and General Director Morita went to Taiseki-ji only to be told by a temple official that they were "unworthy of receiving an audience with the high priest." Furthermore, at the end of 1990, the priesthood notified the SGI of a clause added to Nichiren Shoshu's rules that lay believers may be expelled if they, in either speech or writing, "criticize" the high priest.

In November 1991, the priesthood sent the SGI a letter ordering it to disband. And within the same month, the SGI received a notice of excommunication.

The SGI values dialogue with society as well as among its membership. However, we should always keep in mind that we promote dialogue as a means to achieve a deeper and wider understanding of such universal values as humanism and freedom, equality and the sanctity of human life. This is why the SGI will not hesitate to conduct dialogue with those of different faiths or creeds with regard to shared concerns for the happiness and well-being of society and the world. Yet, the SGI will never compromise its beliefs and goals. Likewise, within the context of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, the

Key Points:

- The SGI repeatedly sought to have a dialogue with the temple at the beginning of the issue, but the priesthood refused all opportunities.
- The priesthood neither views the laity as equals nor provides an opportunity for frank and open dialogue.
- The SGI is always open to the possibility for dialogue, but not at the expense of compromising Nichiren Daishonin's intent (kosen-rufu) or the integrity of his teachings.

SGI regards kosen-rufu as a foundation for dialogue.

Dialogue allows believers of the Daishonin's Buddhism to transcend their differences and unite for their mutual goal of kosen-rufu. It does not follow, however, that we compromise our beliefs just to have a dialogue.

Nichiren Daishonin writes: "All disciples and believers of Nichiren should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with one mind (*itai doshin*), transcending all the differences among themselves... When you are so united, even the great hope for kosen-rufu can be fulfilled without fail" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 23). Here he emphasizes the importance of the unity among believers as a means to achieve kosen-rufu, but never as a goal in and of itself. Obviously, it is backward to think that unity must be achieved even at the cost of compromising the Daishonin's spirit.

Also, some believe that the presence of priests is indispensable to the preservation and spread of the Daishonin's teaching, or assume Buddhism cannot survive without a priestly class. Yet, a priestly class is not an essential element of Buddhism; it is a tradition born out of the social and historical context of India, China and Japan as Buddhism migrated through these countries. Originally, the responsibility of the transmission and preservation of Buddhism rested with the *sangha* or Buddhist order. The *sangha* initially consisted of both priests and lay believers, but the priestly class eventually dominated.

Sangha came to denote the priestly class and became the etymological origin for the word for Buddhist priests both in Chinese and Japanese. The original significance is not the priestly class per se, but those who are deeply committed to preserving and spreading Buddhism in its purity, be they priests or lay believers. For this reason, in many writings, the Daishonin exhorts believers — priests and laity alike — to study and spread his teaching. The

SGI's splendid progress of kosen-rufu over the last seven years without the priesthood also attests that the priestly class is not a necessity in Buddhism.

There is no need to think it is essential to seek unity with priests who neither uphold nor spread Buddhism correctly. Such priests disqualify themselves as members of the *sangha*.

Judging from the present situation, the priesthood might consider dialogue based on their aforementioned conditions — that the SGI apologize for "slander" it did not commit and promise to disband. But that would be contrary to the promotion of kosen-rufu and contrary to the Daishonin's intent.

While the SGI has no official line of communication with the priesthood, it has been striving to express its views and reveal the reality of the current leadership of the priesthood to priests and lay believers of Nichiren Shoshu through publications and through individual members' discussion. The SGI also has a close relationship and ongoing dialogue with reformist priests who have seceded from Taiseki-ji.

In this sense, despite the temple's obstinate refusal to meet, the SGI has been continuing its efforts to communicate with it. While always open to the possibility of open and frank dialogue, the SGI will not compromise its goal of kosen-rufu nor its integrity just to create a cosmetic unity with a priestly class that does not share that conviction.

Ten in a series

The SGI-USA's pamphlet Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue 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.

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

Paving the Way for the Victory of the People

SGI President gave the following address at the 15th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, in conjunction with the 7th Tohoku General Meeting and the 3rd Shizuoka General Meeting, at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Sept. 25.

I have just received a certificate naming me an honorary citizen of the Province of Sorsogon in the Philippines. Gov. Juan G. Frivaldo, who traveled specially to Japan to make the presentation, once said, "Among all the governors of the Philippines, I am the oldest and the poorest, but I am proud to say that I am the one who listens most to the voice of the people and who has worked hardest for their happiness."

Gov. Frivaldo, who enjoys the overwhelming support of the citizens in his province, will turn 82 this October. Since 1955, he has served eight terms as governor.

Gov. Frivaldo has held office continuously from 1955 to the present, with the exception of nine years spent in forced exile in the United States during the Marcos regime, which lasted from 1966–86.

Unselfish and Active Concern for People's Welfare

Although Gov. Frivaldo has realized many important achievements for the people of his province during his terms in office, he has never built a house for himself. He says: "I don't own a home in Manila or in Sorsogon or in my hometown. My only home is the palm-thatched hut of my parents."

Gov. Frivaldo's numerous accomplishments include constructing a hydroelectric plant and an irrigation dam, establishing a tuberculosis sanatorium, completing a state dairy combine, improving the condition of national parks in Sorsogon Province and laying a network of paved roads.

Gov. Frivaldo is down-to-earth and unpretentious. He is a rare politician and deserves to be

commended most highly. He always makes a point of meeting with people one to one. "I go on my own two feet to visit and talk with the needy and disadvantaged," he says. He is steadfastly committed to the important work of grass-roots dialogue.

For a politician to actually make the effort to go out and meet individually with residents living in his or her constituency in this age of television and mass communications might sound extremely old-fashioned. Compared to the ease of presenting the public with a slick screen image, such laborious footwork might seem tedious and ineffectual. But Gov. Frivaldo says that long experience has shown him that his hands-on approach is actually the most practical and effective method of communication. And, indeed, through his patient efforts to go from house to house, Gov. Frivaldo has won the great support and trust of residents in his province.

So highly regarded is he, in fact, that one resident even proudly declared, "We will always vote for Frivaldo, even if he is dead."

The governor has twice been the target of assassination attempts. After the first attempt in 1971, during which he sustained a gunshot wound to the leg, he was offered shelter by a family who declared themselves ready to protect him from the assassins even if it meant risking their lives.

I have constantly stressed how important it is for leaders to personally go to the front line of activities, to see things for themselves, to meet with people. Wherever leaders have done so, there has been tremendous growth. Where leaders have grown arrogant and failed to make such personal efforts, however, there has only been stagnation.

Champion of Justice and Liberty

Moving along to South America, my dialogue with the philosopher-statesman Patricio Aylwin, the former president of the Republic of Chile, is now



Honorary citizenship of Sorsogon Province is conferred upon SGI President Ikeda on Sept. 25.

nearly completed and ready for publication.¹

Today [Sept. 25], incidentally, is the centennial of the signing of Japan's first treaty of friendship with Chile, our neighbor across the Pacific. I am delighted that Mr. Aylwin and I can mark this deeply significant anniversary with steady progress on our upcoming book, the crystallization of our heartfelt friendship.

In recognition of his contributions to world peace and efforts to foster friendship between Chile and Japan, the South American republic has to date presented President Ikeda with the Order of Merit of Chile in the Grade of the Grand Cross, and Santiago, the Chilean capital, has honored him as an Illustrious Visitor.

For 16 years from 1973, the people of Chile lived under a cruel and repressive military dictatorship. Some 2,500 people are said to have been murdered by the state on false charges. A thousand people simply "disappeared" and were never seen again. As many as 170,000 people were unjustly arrested and detained by the authorities, while some 300,000 people were forced into exile. What a tragic history!

There isn't anyone who can say with certainty that Japan will not one day veer off in this same direction. Any such ominous flow toward nationalism must be stopped at the source while it is still only a trickle.

Mr. Aylwin was a key figure in efforts to oust Chile's dreaded military regime and bring about the country's democratization through peaceful channels. With all objectivity, we can say that his outstanding leadership has had a

profound impact on the course of human history.

In the foreword to our dialogue, I have written:

I respect those who have struggled against tyranny. And I particularly respect the path in life chosen by one such courageous individual, Patricio Aylwin, a reformer who from his youth has championed the causes of justice and liberty.

There are many people who live ordinary and conscientious lives untouched by storms of hardship. While such an existence is noble in its own right, it is those who fight for justice at the risk of their lives to create a better society, a better future, a better way forward, whom I respect most highly and for whom I feel the deepest understanding.

A Clamor for Freedom

During our discussions, Mr. Aylwin recounted many precious, little-known episodes about Chile's recent past.

For example, in 1983, the Chilean people embarked on a very original way of protesting against the authoritarian regime. Any street demonstration or protest gathering was dispersed quickly and ruthlessly by the authorities, and participants were summarily arrested. People lived with the constant menace of government repression. Nevertheless, on a prearranged day at dusk, they stood in doorways, courtyards or at windows and started beating on pots and pans and other metallic objects as hard as they could, raising a tremendous din that lasted from 30 minutes to an hour. By sending out the clamorous sound of metal ringing through the city as evening set-

tled, they sought to give voice to their anger.

This is an example of wisdom — the wisdom of the people. Such wisdom is needed to win.

We, too, have to make ourselves heard. We have to speak out for what we believe in. When we, the people, boldly state our true convictions — never losing our optimism or sense of humor — the times will change. When it comes to speaking out for justice, there isn't any need for restraint. On the contrary, to be reserved or hesitant under such circumstances is wrong.

The participants in this first attempt to sound the bell of protest were relatively few. But the next time, several days later, when they again made their evening din, many more took part.

These efforts were a small courageous step forward that rose from the wisdom, courage and unity of the people.

Despite various setbacks, the popular will for change continued to grow stronger until in 1988 there came the day that the world will long remember: In a national ballot, the people of Chile overwhelmingly rejected the military government. "No more tyranny!" they declared.

It was a brilliant victory of the people.

Ingenuity and Resourcefulness

A question we must constantly ponder as SGI leaders is how we can generate fresh energy and momentum for kosen-rufu. That is our responsibility as leaders, and wisdom is essential for this task. Ingenuity and resourcefulness are important hall-

PLEASE SEE PAVING, NEXT PAGE

PAVING, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

marks of a leader. To simply go about activities — whether it be meetings or some other challenge — in the same old way, out of force of habit or laziness, is a disservice to everyone. There is no sense of freshness, and all progress grinds to a halt.

Currently, Japan and the world remain unable to formulate a bright vision for the 21st century. What is necessary for us to realize fresh progress and unleash new energy? The first step must be to take action ourselves; to begin something ourselves; to create some kind of drama. That is the only way. And those who take the initiative will be victorious.

The philosophy and approach to life expressed by Mr. Aylwin throughout our dialogue are most admirable and worth dwelling on. At one point, he says: "What is the purpose of life? My answer to this question is very clear. We don't exist to be served but to be of service to others." He's right on the mark. Leaders exist to serve the people. When people are made to serve the leaders instead, society is plunged into misfortune. The former Chilean president also says: "I think I can say I have always viewed life as work ahead, as a constant challenge to fulfill my vocation. For me, this vocation can be summed up by the word *justice*."

"Always set your sights on the future," President Toda would tell us repeatedly. "Life means eternal challenge. It is a never-ending struggle." Final victory, therefore, is true victory.

What is one of the most important qualities of a leader? According to Mr. Aylwin, it is to always be truthful. This attests to Mr. Aylwin's greatness. He cannot abide lies or deception. During the military dictatorship, he worked tirelessly to expose the human rights abuses of the authorities, who used the state-run media to cover up their actions with lies. And he succeeded in bringing the truth out into the light of day.

Mr. Aylwin declares: "Where lies reign, there is no peaceful coexistence — be it in the home, in a country, or the international community. Lies breed mistrust... Mistrust breeds hatred, and hatred engenders violence." He observes that lies are an "anteroom to violence" and stresses that the "reign of truth" is the foundation of democratic coexistence.

Refuse To Tolerate Tyranny

Mr. Aylwin has expressed concern over the consequences of

any resurgence of Japanese nationalism. He is also aware of Japanese intellectuals' sad tendency to remain silent in the face of the bullying and high-handedness of those in power. Even among Japanese who appear critical of such abuses, hardly anyone dares speak out to the point where it might place them under fire themselves. That is cowardice. As a result, many ordinary, unsuspecting people are led astray and victimized by those in power.

Mr. Aylwin says he fears what might happen if Japan's leaders were to embark on a course like the one that led to the unfortunate militarism of times past. For this reason, he has repeatedly expressed to me his profound trust in the Soka Gakkai, a body of people united for justice and truth. Please remember that there are outstanding intellectuals and leaders such as Mr. Aylwin in the world.

In our dialogue, we have discussed a wide range of topics, including the future development of the Pacific region and the post-Cold War world order. We have also exchanged views on such subjects as education, human rights, the environment and our expectations for today's youth. Both Mr. Aylwin and I have worked earnestly on this dialogue in the hope that it might provide some direction or useful guidelines for the 21st century and future generations.

Say What Needs To Be Said

I warmly welcome the members who have joined us here today from some 20 countries, including such distant places as Brazil and Italy! I know many of you must have worked hard and saved so that you could realize this visit. Each of you is infinitely noble.

Yet here in this tiny country of Japan, or even within a small community, there are those who will moan and complain about the "long distance" they have to travel to get to a meeting! One cannot carry out Buddhist practice with such an attitude. In fact, by complaining, such people only destroy their good fortune. Buddhist practice means taking action. We will be victorious only to the extent that we exert ourselves.

The first Soka Gakkai president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, declared that one of the most important factors in the Soka Gakkai's development is that "we propagate the Daishonin's teaching by speaking out forthrightly, saying what needs to be

said." When something needs saying, it is our duty to speak out. When something is right, we should say so. And when something is wrong or mistaken, we should likewise point it out. Cheating, lies or scheming should be denounced with alacrity. It is precisely because we have done this that the Soka Gakkai and the SGI have developed to the extent they have.

To say what must be said — that is the spirit of propagation and the essence of the Soka Gakkai and the SGI.

Victory Depends on the Power of Youth

This is the era of youth. Youth do not depend on anyone. Nor do they hang on someone else's coattails. "I will open the way myself. I will advance kosen-rufu. I will see to it that the SGI is victorious." This is the spirit of youth and the attitude of true successors who love and cherish the SGI.

In the early days of my Buddhist practice, I found that I just could not bring myself to like the Soka Gakkai as the organization then was. Many leaders behaved in an arrogant, authoritarian manner. I felt strong dislike for those leaders who not only neglected to practice earnestly themselves but failed to support or treat with respect those who were younger than them in faith. I could only conclude that these people utterly failed to understand President Toda's spirit.

President Toda knew how I felt. At one point he asked me, "If that's how you feel, Daisaku, why don't you make the Soka Gakkai into an organization that really appeals to you?" His advice was perfectly clear.

I fully exerted myself just as he directed. Because I had a strong sense of responsibility, I would occasionally come into conflict with people who had been longer in the organization or had longer experience in life than I. A young person should have such earnestness. Therefore, I call on the youth of the SGI: "Advance! Surpass your seniors! Accomplish kosen-rufu!"

Journeying for Peace Around the Globe

At present, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper, the *Seikyo Shimbun*, is featuring a second collection of essays I have written about my meetings with leaders in various fields around the globe.

The subject of the next installment will be former Japanese prime minister and Nobel laureate

Eisaku Sato (1901–75). In the installment after that, I hope to offer a more complete and detailed portrait of my friendship with former Chinese premier Zhou Enlai (1898–1976) than I have chronicled to date. That essay will conclude this second collection. I have, however, made a determination to embark on writing a third collection of essays in this series next year.

At this stage, I am contemplating doing pieces on the late Deng Xiaoping (1902–97), President Jiang Zemin and the late Communist Party Secretary Hu Yaobang (1915–89) of the People's Republic of China. I also want to write about His Majesty King Azlan Shah of Malaysia; President Kocheril R. Narayanan of India; former U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali; President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana; former President and Nobel Peace Prize-recipient Oscar Arias Sánchez of Costa Rica; President Carlos Saul Menem of Argentina; Brazilian poet Amedeu Thiago de Mello; Kyrgyz author Chingiz Aitmatov; former President Virgilio Barco of Colombia; President Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle of Chile; former President Lech Walesa of Poland; former President François Mitterrand of France; and many more of the finest leaders of contemporary times.

As a private citizen, an ordinary person, I have actively pursued dialogue with world leaders. My sole reason for holding candid discussions and forming friendships with such people has been a fervent wish to move the world in the direction of peace, toward the creation of a truly humane society. Many people around the world have observed my actions impartially and have extended their understanding and recognition.

Cut the Roots of Evil

In the Goshō, Nichiren Daishonin comments on the nature of the Japanese nation. He writes: "According to the Nirvana Sutra, the Buddha had enabled everyone to attain enlightenment by teaching the *Juryō* [Life Span] chapter of the Lotus Sutra. Yet, alas, when he illuminated the 136 hells underground, instead of finding them empty, he saw that the slanders of Buddhism who were people of incorrigible disbelief were still being confined there by the guards of hell. They proliferated until they became the people of Japan today" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 38). He also says, "If those priests who abuse me, Nichiren, should pray for the peace of the

country, they will only hasten the nation's ruin" (MW-3, 74).

Hence, it is absolutely essential to cut evil off at the root.

The Daishonin instructs his disciples: "Nichiren's disciples cannot accomplish anything if they are cowardly" (MW-4, 128) and "Do not expect good times, but take the bad times for granted" (MW-1, 242). He also tells us, "One should regard meeting obstacles as true peace and comfort" (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 750).

If we correctly practice the Lotus Sutra, just as the Daishonin teaches, difficulties are sure to arise. The very appearance of obstacles, however, is proof that we are genuine practitioners. In the modern age, the successive presidents of the Soka Gakkai have borne the full brunt of persecution for the sake of Buddhism.

I hope that each of you, too, will advance with the strong conviction that "many evil forces are vanquished by a single great truth" (MW-1, 154) and that "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is like the roar of a lion" (MW-1, 119).

Become Strong!

It has been decided that the Soka Gakkai's theme for next year will be the Year of the Victory of the People for the New Century.

President Toda once said gravely: "Nothing is more frightening than human jealousy. Nothing is more fearful than the evil and destructive forces that reside in the human heart. Therefore, develop and forge yourselves! Develop strong personal convictions so that you can live without any regrets." I sensed he wished to have this thought passed on for posterity.

The more tumultuous the times, the more important it is that each person develop greater ability and strength. Then each person will be victorious, and all collectively will triumph. That is the principle of the victory of the people.

Let's continue to bring forth the wonderful inner strength and energy of the SGI as we set our sights on the 21st century! Let us advance cheerfully and joyously!

Friends throughout the country and the world, please take care to stay well at this time of seasonal change. I look forward to seeing all of you again in high spirits and excellent health. Thank you! ☸

1. The dialogue is scheduled for publication only in Japanese at this time.

THE
Third Stage
OF
LIFE

There Is No Retirement Age

The first in a series of discussions about aging in contemporary society. Participants are SGI President Ikeda, Seikyo Shimbun General Editorial Bureau Senior Director Osamu Matsuoka and Vice Director Katsusuke Sasaki.

Ikeda: Now that we have entered a time when the average life expectancy has stretched into the 80s, it is important to think about how we can spend our senior years, the third stage of our lives, in the most fruitful, rewarding fashion. My beloved mentor, Josei Toda, second Soka Gakkai president, used to say that the last years of our lives are the most important. If the last few years are happy, we have had a happy life. The victories and achievements up to that time are all illusory. The person who wins in the end is a victor in the truest sense.

How should we face and deal with the issues of old age, sickness and death? I'm sure we will touch on many subjects in the course of our discussion. Let's go one by one.

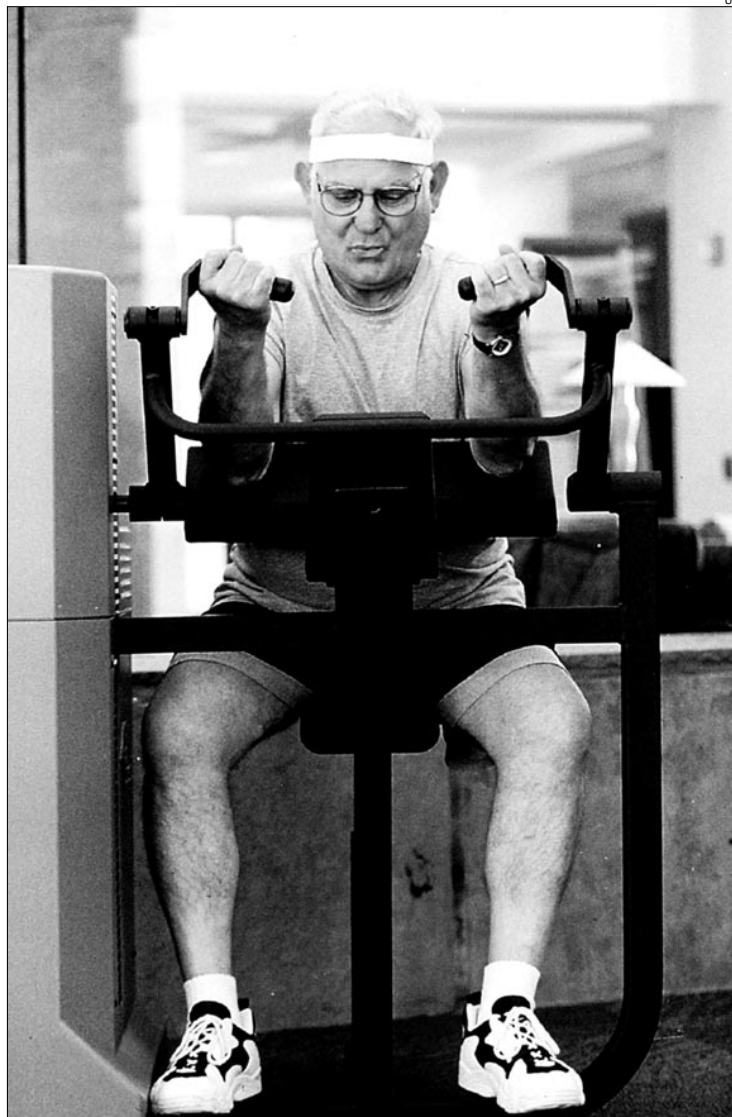
Matsuoka and Sasaki: We look forward to it.

Ikeda: Though we speak of the third stage of life, there is no set age that marks our entry into this period. The third stage basically means that we have reached an advanced age — the start of a chapter where we put the finishing touches on our development and bring our lives to completion.

Japan has recently become one of the world's leaders in terms of average life expectancy. How has life expectancy changed in Japan over the years?

Matsuoka: It was in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that the average life span for both men and women reached 40. It pushed upward to 50 soon after World War II. Today, it has stretched to 80.

Sasaki: In Japan today, one in seven people is over 65. But by 2020, it is estimated that that number will climb to one in four. Soon Japan will overtake Sweden as having the largest elderly population in the world.



Leonardo da Vinci said: 'Iron rusts when it is not used. Stagnant water loses its purity and freezes over with the cold; so, too, does inactivity sap the vigor of the mind.'

Looking to the Future

Ikeda: The senior members who comprise the Soka Gakkai's Many Treasures Group have devoted their lives to kosen-rufu, working for the happiness of their fellow human beings and for the sake of Buddhism and peace. As a result, they enjoy im-

measurable good fortune and the protection of all Buddhas throughout the universe. They are always youthful and energetic.

Though our bodies may age, through participating in SGI activities our hearts and minds remain as bright as the sun. We are youthful throughout our lives. Those who work for others' happiness

and for Buddhism remain vigorous and full of energy.

I am always praying for the noble men and women who have worked so hard, over many long years, to build the Soka Gakkai and the SGI. I pray for their health, their long lives, and that they may spend their last years filled with a deep sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. Let's dedicate this discussion series to these honorable members who have walked together with us since the pioneering days, always devoted to our cause and never seeking personal gain.

Sasaki: As a *Seikyo Shimbun* journalist, I have reported on many occasions when you introduced Buddhist teachings to people around the world. I am impressed by your great spirit to keep moving forward — facing each moment as a fresh challenge.

Ikeda: It is important to look always to the future, to have plans and aspirations. This is particularly crucial in making your last years fulfilling.

Matsuoka: In May, you were named an honorary professor of Shanghai University. During his speech at the presentation ceremony, University Senior Vice Chancellor Fang Minglun read a list of some of the distinguished figures you have met and held dialogues with over the years.

The Older They Get, the More Energetic They Become

Ikeda: Yes, I think he mentioned Zhou Enlai, Arnold Toynbee, Mikhail Sholokhov, Henry Kissinger, Aurelio Peccei, Norman Cousins and Nelson Mandela, among others. One thing that was true of all these individuals was that the older they got, the more energetically they devoted themselves to their chosen work. Age only made them more impressive. All were wonderful human beings who dedicated their lives to their missions. The lives of those who move forward with a sense of mission have true majesty and beauty.

AGE, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Sasaki: Between the two of us, Mr. Matsuoka and I have been fortunate to report on your dialogues with at least half of these dignitaries. In this discussion series, I hope you will share how those individuals serve as models for us.

Ikeda: Certainly. Please feel free to ask me anything. In the upcoming discussions, let us range far and plumb deep.

The da Vinci Spirit

Matsuoka: You once visited the chateau where Leonardo da Vinci spent his last years.

Ikeda: Yes, that was more than 20 years ago. After finishing my first dialogue with Dr. Toynbee in London in 1974, I flew to Paris, and in the short time left before I had to return to Japan, I visited the Loire Valley, the setting of the French Renaissance. It is about two hours from Paris by train. Ancient castles dotting the hilltops here and there slumbered peacefully in the spring sunlight. Lambs and calves gambled in the green fields. The pure waters of a rushing river cleansed rocky banks. And narrow trails winding through the forest were lined with iris and bright yellow mustard flowers.

Sasaki: The palace of the French king Francis I, who invited Leonardo to France, was in Amboise. The great Italian artist and inventor took up residence in nearby Cloux. There he spent his last years, and there he died.

Matsuoka: A quotation from Leonardo is engraved on a copper plaque in his bedroom there. I remember you looked at the plaque for some time, President

Ikeda, and then said: "These are excellent words. Please write them down."

Ikeda: I was impressed because they seemed to represent the very essence of Leonardo's life, the soul of a genius who epitomized the Renaissance.

*A full life is long.
Full days bring sound sleep.
A full life gives a tranquil death.*

Leonardo compares a sound sleep after a full day with a tranquil death after a full life.

Buddhism teaches that death is but an expedient means — that life itself continues. Our day begins with an invigorating awakening. And at night we lay our tired bodies down for their much-deserved rest. Refreshed by sleep, we wake again the next morning with renewed energy. Viewed in terms of life's eternity, death is the first step of the journey to a new existence.

Sasaki: The writer Yasushi Inoue¹ (1907–91), with whom you had a correspondence later published under the title *Letters of Four Seasons*, expressed a strong interest in these words of Leonardo. In a letter to you, he wrote:

Among the three impressive sentences you found engraved on a copper tablet in the chateau, the last moves me most deeply: "A full life gives a tranquil death." I am certain this statement is especially applicable to artists who have lived full lives. (*Letters of Four Seasons*, pp. 93–94)

Ikeda: Mr. Inoue went on to say that he wanted to visit the chateau where Leonardo lived.

Leonardo, who challenged himself throughout life, also wrote: "Iron rusts when it is not used. Stagnant water

loses its purity and freezes over with the cold; so, too, does inactivity sap the vigor of the mind."² I was also impressed that shortly before his death, he wrote the inspiring words, "I shall continue."³

Sasaki: And Dr. Toynbee's motto was "Laboremus!" [Let's get to work!], wasn't it?

Ikeda: Yes. At the start of our dialogue he said: "Let's get to work! Let's engage in this dialogue for the sake of humanity in the 21st century!" When I asked him — and he was 84 at the time — what the most fulfilling, happy time for him was, he answered with a smile, "When I am writing and reading."

He rose every day at 6:45 a.m. He and his wife prepared breakfast together. Then he made his bed and was sitting at his desk in his study by 9:00, starting to write. He still burned with a passion for knowledge, though he was well over 80.

Matsuoka: I reported on your dialogue with Dr. Toynbee at his home in Oakwood Court, London. I remember it well. Dr. Toynbee lived in a red brick apartment building, and you took an old-fashioned elevator up to the fifth floor. Dr. Toynbee was eager for your arrival, so he had come out to wait for you in front of the elevator. I remember how happy he was when the elevator doors opened. He greeted you joyfully, with a broad smile, shook your hand and ushered you into his living room.

Sasaki: Though the two of you were a generation apart, he seemed to have great respect for you as an equal.

Matsuoka: Each day the dialogue lasted for five hours, from 10:00 a.m. Tall, white-haired Dr. Toynbee participated with an intent expression on his face. He

frequently interjected with expressions of joy and approval. When the subject turned to the theory of life and Buddhist philosophy, he solicited your opinion earnestly.

Ikeda: Dr. Toynbee continued to study all his life. He lived up to everything I imagined one hailed as this century's greatest historian should be. He told me, "In my 84 years, I have never engaged in a dialogue of this caliber." It seemed with each passing year, his passion to learn and study grew stronger.

Issues That Concern Us Today

Matsuoka: After the first series of dialogues was completed, Dr. Toynbee turned to you and said with considerable emotion: "Speaking with you has been stimulating and moving. Talking so directly and openly with a person capable of discussing the truly important issues is of enormous value to me, and I have no greater joy as a scholar. What you have said is of great significance to human life — and not merely on the conceptual level, for you are also passionately committed to solving the actual problems we confront. This dialogue has allowed me to organize my studies."

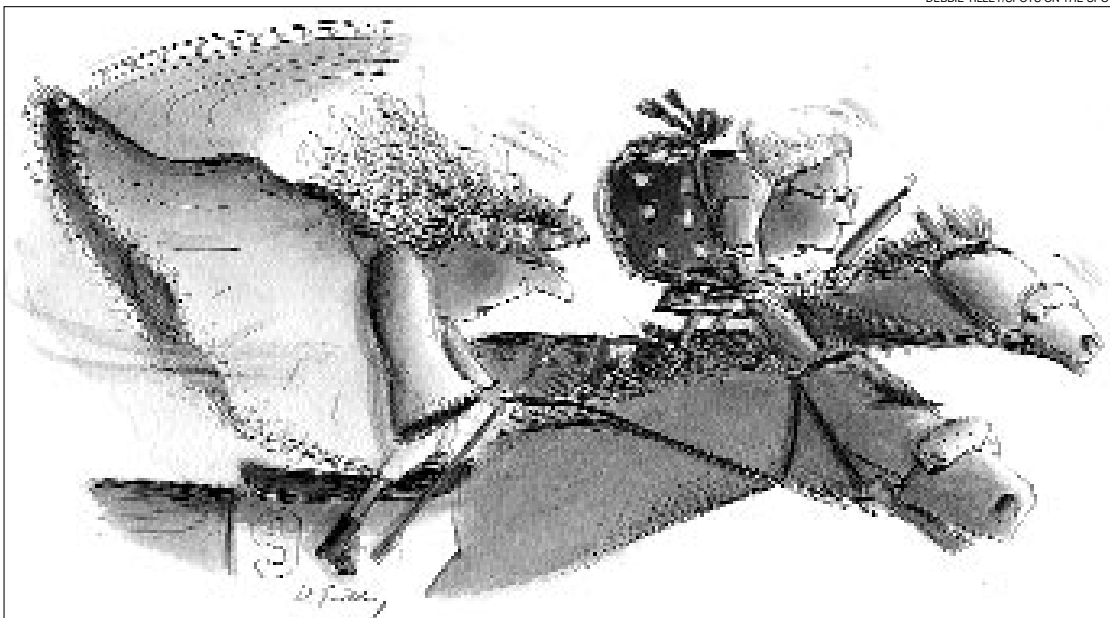
Sasaki: When you met Dr. Toynbee again for the second series, a year later, in 1975, one of the first things the two of you discussed was the pressing need to care for the aged in our modern industrial society.

Ikeda: Yes, we did. In response to a question I posed about the situation in the United Kingdom, Dr. Toynbee said that senior citizens, including himself, drew a national pension, and that many people lived in what were called old people's homes, including his wife's sister, who lived in one run by the government. Dr. Toynbee strongly advocated extended families, with grandparents, parents and children living under one roof. He also said that urban housing needed to be reconsidered to make that possible.

He was a pioneering thinker. Many issues that concern us today, he considered, such as the definition of death, the use of artificial life-support systems and the question of quality of life. I think we should discuss these issues again in future installments.

Matsuoka: Yes, we look forward to that very much.

Ikeda: People like Dr. Toynbee and Leonardo da Vinci teach us that there is no retirement. No retirement from the fulfillment and spirit of quest that make up life. No retirement from the challenges that life always presents us. ❏



DEBBIE TILLEY/SPOTS ON THE SPOT

'People like Dr. Toynbee and Leonardo da Vinci teach us that there is no retirement. No retirement from the fulfillment and spirit of quest that make up life. No retirement from the challenges that life always presents us.'

1. Prolific Japanese journalist and author, who gained wide renown for his historical short stories and novels.
2. Serge Bramly, *Leonardo: The Artist and the Man*, trans. Sian Reynolds (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1991), p. 401.
3. Ibid.



GUIDANCE INTO ACTION

No Blank Pages

By VALERIE THOMAS

SGI-USA STUDENT DIVISION CHIEF

You must not waste your invaluable youth in aimless pursuits. You must live your lives with all your might, to the fullest. You must not allow even a single blank page to appear in the diary of your youth. (SGI President Ikeda, *A Conversation with Youth*, p. 85)

I have always had a lazy nature. Before I started to practice this Buddhism, I would do just enough to appear to others to be working hard but on the inside not really challenge myself. I was definitely not living my life with all my might, to the fullest.

As I started to practice Buddhism, this concept of taking responsibility for my life became my main focus. Even though it seems like a pretty simple concept, I didn't know how to put it into action in my life. What really helped me to "get it" was to

watch the actions of other SGI members — how they put this concept into action.

And so I made the decision to go to graduate school and chose the best program in the best school for me. All of this seemed to come pretty easily.

I felt a great sense of accomplishment to have found a focus professionally and to have taken action to make it a reality. I felt like I was finally living my life to the fullest.

But when I started the graduate program, it was difficult — REALLY DIFFICULT. Not only the full-time classes but also my 20-hour a week internship, 20-hour a week job, responsibility as a joint territory junior high school division leader and trying to have a social life. Even though all of these responsibilities were the direct result of my dreams and practice, I was suddenly overwhelmed. It seemed all my greatest benefits had become my greatest struggles. I didn't think it was supposed to work that way.

If I looked at everything I was doing time-wise, there were not enough hours in a day to do it all. But from a faith perspective I was determined to do everything that I could. To my amazement, I found myself becoming much less lazy. I started to make much better use of my time and even found free time, which I enjoyed to the fullest.

When I received my master's degree after two years, I realized the true benefit of this experience. It wasn't the piece of paper I received at graduation but the deep sense of accomplishment and the belief that I could achieve all my dreams.

Even though I gained this greater sense of myself and confidence in my accomplishments, this was not the end of this experience. I then started to find myself in situations where I could use my experience from graduate school to

encourage others. Helping others to realize their dreams by sharing my struggle truly made everything I went through seem worthwhile.

Although I now understand on a deeper level the importance of challenging myself and my limits, there are still times when I find myself slipping into lazy mode. That's when I am most encouraged by President Ikeda's guidance to "not allow even a single blank page to appear in the diary of your youth." ❏



Photo by DENISE RAILLA

Valerie Thomas, student division chief.

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE Aftermath

By CRAIG GREEN & JEFF FARR

LOS ANGELES

Operation C was in some ways a misnomer. It wasn't just about cutting the SGI leadership and organization off from the head temple — its true intention was to get Gakkai members into the temple organization; to add rather than cut. But what a miscalculation it was. Instead of caving into demands and threats from the temple, members took Operation C as an affront and stayed with the SGI.

This left Nikken no choice but to continue the operation indefinitely, to take whatever further steps against the organization he could. Remember, the final stage of his plan was to dissolve the SGI — so Operation C, in Nikken's mind, will continue until that aim is reached. Nikken has made five major efforts toward this: the priesthood's order that the SGI disband, November 1991; the priesthood's excommunication of the SGI, also November 1991; the priesthood's expulsion of the SGI president, July 1992; the priesthood's request to the Ministry of Education that the government dissolve the Gakkai, November 1996; and of course the upcoming re-excommunication of all Gakkai members (Nov. 30 in Japan/Dec. 30 in the United States).

This is another clear difference between the temple and the SGI: Every step of the way it has been the priests who have sought separation and made it happen. It has been the priests who have tried various means to dissolve the SGI for seven years, not the other way around. With each action, the truly authoritarian, even desperate, nature of the priesthood has become clearer and clearer.

No. 9 in a series

STUDENT NEWS

L.A. Students Start To Meet

By JEFF FARR

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

No one knew who would come to the L.A. student division kickoff, held Sept. 21 at the World Culture Center. Because the L.A. organization has been going through a massive reorganization, communicating to students about the meeting was done mostly through fliers and e-mail. The meeting organizers were surprised by how many showed up — 150 students from 40 schools in the L.A. area.

Valerie Thomas, SGI-USA student division chief, began the meeting by announcing the participants had received a message from SGI President Ikeda sending his warm regards — plus juice and hamburgers from him. The hamburgers seemed to be especially appreciated.

Danny Nagashima, SGI-USA senior vice general director, gave the students some important encouragement: to make sure they graduate. After the formal portion of the meeting, students



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

L.A. students discuss student life at their kickoff meeting, Sept. 21.

broke into groups to discuss student life and student division activities, and even gathered by schools. This was often the first chance for students to meet fellow members going to the same school.

Now the L.A. students are starting to have activities by joint territory and by schools. On Oct. 26, L.A. #5 Joint Territory had its student division kickoff meeting in Santa Ana, organized by the #5 student division leaders, Adonis Van Campen, Lansil Choi and Lisa Crummett, who were appointed Nov. 2. Student division members in #5 are looking ahead to the 2001 opening of Soka University's Aliso Viejo campus, which is located in their joint territory, and the arrival of Soka students from all over the world. ❏

Inspired by the dream of one man, Kevin Flattery, the community of Kansas City, Mo., united to build a plaza for peace on the site where, 52 years ago, Harry Truman first announced that the United States had signed the U.N. Charter.

A People's Monument

By BARBARA FORD
CORRESPONDENT

Two years ago, on the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, Kevin Flattery was inspired. As president of the U.N. Association of Greater Kansas City, he shared his vision of a plaza dedicated to those who have given their all for the cause of peace. It would be a site where peacemakers would be invited to speak each year.

It was one man's dream, but it captured the imagination of Kansas City. And together the people made it happen. On the evening of Oct. 26, some 400 people gathered to celebrate the opening of Peace Plaza in Independence, Mo., a suburb of Kansas City.

It's a site touched by history. On Oct. 24, 1945, in San Francisco, President Harry S. Truman signed the U.N. Charter, a document he declared was "proof that nations, like men, can state their differences, can face them, and then can find common ground on which to stand. That is the essence of democracy — the essence of keeping the peace in the future."

But Truman didn't announce the news in San Francisco. The next day, he came to Independence — his hometown — to tell the world that the United States had become a signatory power on the Charter.

Originally, the opening ceremony was to be held in the plaza itself. But the first snowstorm of the season forced everyone indoors — across the street at the auditorium of the Reorganized Latter Day Saints, where Truman had made his 1945 announcement. Snow covered the plaza's garden and decorated the 12-foot bronze statue of a woman releasing a dove, by local artist Tim Corbin.

Attending the plaza dedication were many U.N. dignitaries. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson was scheduled to speak but was called away to the Congo at the last minute. His speech was read by Ambassador Victor Marrero, U.S. representative on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Also attending were Ambassador Alvin Adams, president of the U.N. Association, and Ambassador John Menzies, former ambassador to Bosnia.

Ambassador Menzies, who had witnessed the intense hostilities in Bosnia and also the heroic efforts of U.N. personnel stationed there, declared that U.N. personnel were "the real heroes of the conflict, putting their lives in jeopardy for the sake of peace." He added this warning: "Genocide is a threat to everyone," calling on the community to be vigilant against the evil side of human beings.

The ordinary citizens who gathered alongside ambassadors on a winter evening in Independence exhibited just such a vigilant spirit: a collective spirit to champion their people's monument. The words of one participant in the standing-room-only crowd rang true: "People who take a stand for peace will be the impetus for peace." ❧



GREG JAHANN



Minnesota Boys and Girls Say Thanks With Breakfast

By CAROL WEISS

Minneapolis, Minn.

This year, the Minnesota Boys and Girls Group will hold its third annual parent and adult appreciation breakfast. Each November, the children prepare a simple meal while the adults attend world peace gongyo. Everyone enjoys the meal after the meeting. This activity helps to give the children a way to express appreciation to the adults in their lives, gives them a "Thanksgiving" tradition of their own to celebrate, and gives the children the experience of planning and carrying out their own activity. The children plan the menu, make posters and invitations, and bring one food item from home. This year, we will add table decorations and "appreciative" drawings made by the children.

FP

Photo by KRISTINE PAPPONE



In Minneapolis, kids plan and prepare a thank-you breakfast as part of their Thanksgiving traditions.



Most of the gang on Edisto Island, S.C. (Right to left, row 1) Martha Williams, Amy Hatch, Melissa Pastor, Maria Kawaguchi, Sophia Kawaguchi, Nora Kawaguchi, Laura Kawaguchi. (Row 2) Samantha Thompson, Linda Pastor, Crystal Pastor. (In the kitchen) Kinuko Mizoguchi, Mark Tamitaka. (Not shown) Susan Hatch, Teresa Hatch, Shin Hatch, Tomo Kawaguchi.

South Carolina Kids Meet on Edisto Island

By MARIA KAWAGUCHI, 7; CRYSTAL PASTOR, 8; SAMANTHA THOMPSON, 11
Sept. 26-28, Cola, S.C.

Our Boys and Girls Group had a training meeting, our first on Edisto Island. Our theme was "Friendship and Our Noble Mission." We arrived on the island on Friday, Sept. 26, and it was a yucky day. We settled in and then discussed the weather and how — and if — we could change it. After our discussion, we made a determination to blow the clouds to sea. So we sat down and started chanting daimoku. We made our daimoku windy and powerfully strong. The room began to get brighter and brighter, and soon there was a small hole in the clouds and the sun was shining through.

We played a game called The *Doshi* (Leader) Game. Each one of us led daimoku with a big and strong voice for five minutes. We were delightfully surprised and happy that we were successful. The result made us feel more confident about solving the different problems we have through our practice.

We studied about the three ways of practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism (faith, practice and study). We had a rectangular table discussion, and each one of us got to say something. FAITH means making a determination and then taking action by chanting daimoku, so we can get the wisdom to do the best thing. This is also part of the PRAC-

TICE. We learned also that by telling people how great Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is, that's also PRACTICE.

And STUDY — that is what we were doing. It deepens our confidence and makes us have more courage.

The next part was the ten worlds. We learned the good side and the bad side, and that since we all have a Buddha nature, we can make good out of bad. We drew pictures as we discussed each world and then made mobiles to hang in our community center and then take home. Our moms said they could show us which world we were in when conflict occurs at home. We thought we could do the same with our moms and dads (*ha! ha!*).

We had a great time playing in the surf. We found conch shells attached to the jetties. We removed one and cooked it and ate the inside part. It was different-tasting but good. We had three or four visiting dolphins that played in the water at high tide. We found shark teeth and lots of great shells. This was a great training meeting!

P.S. We have only one family who practices on this island: Arlana and Chuck Black, who are teachers, and their 3-year-old Spencer. They came every day, and we appreciate them living there. They struggle hard for kosen-rufu. Mrs. Black teaches in a one-room school underneath the sheriff's home. Mr. Black teaches in Hollywood, S.C. Thanks!

FP

Friend to Friend

Our study topic for December is Conviction and Determination — believe in yourself, and never give up. Please send your thoughts (up to 50 words) with a photo of yourself to "Friends for Peace" (c/o World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, Calif. 90401).

Due by Nov. 24

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

Steven Chopyak, 9

Sacramento, Calif.

I am in the 4th grade, and I have been chanting since I was 4 years old.

When I was about 4 years old, I was diagnosed as having chronic asthma. During this time, I was in emergency care at least twice. The doctor told my mom that I might have to spend the winters in the hospital. I was also told to take medication.

At this time, I started learning to do gongyo. My parents did not want me to grow up an invalid, so I started playing soccer and going to karate classes. I enjoyed swimming lessons in the summertime.

My mother encouraged me to chant to get off medication. For the past one year, my health improved, and I did not miss school as I did in the first and second grades. This summer, my doctor said I could go off medication. I was taught to monitor my breathing. I have been feeling well, and I am enjoying the soccer season.

I continue to do gongyo and chant, and my goal is to be free of asthma. FP



Families Celebrate at West Palm Beach Picnic

Photo by LINDA ST. HILAIRE



Boys and Girls Group members from Palm Beach Territory in West Palm Beach, Fla., join the fun with a watermelon crush (with blindfold on) at a family picnic this summer.

Emma Gutelius, 10 Erica Gutelius, 14

Kansas City, Mo.

The Gutelius sisters, Erica and Emma, performed in the Gladstone Theatre Production of *The King and I*. The play included a cast of 100. Erica and Emma were among 75 young people playing the parts of the King of Siam's children. Erica and Emma chanted to pass the audition and were chosen out of 300 children for their parts. FP



George Smith

Bladensburg, Md.

Hi! I appreciate chanting because every time I chant for my favorite baseball team, the Baltimore Orioles, they win. Even when they don't win, if I chant I don't feel so bad about it. FP



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


IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN BUDDHISM — FRIEND TO FRIEND — IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN BUDDHISM

Significant People in the History of Buddhism

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi was a teacher and elementary school principal in Japan. He cared about his students, had a good sense of humor and believed that children could find happiness in school.

Mr. Makiguchi thought children were happiest when they did things that were fun and interesting and when they were allowed to discover their special talents. He said that children could become happy in school when what they learned helped them to realize their dreams for the future.

Mr. Makiguchi learned that the way to create the most value, to be truly happy and accomplish dreams, was to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. He applied Buddhism to teaching and to his daily life. He and Josei Toda were good friends, and they told many people about chanting. Because Mr. Toda and Mr. Makiguchi helped so many people find out about chanting the Gohonzon, we remember them in the fifth silent prayer when we do gongyo. 



Josei Toda (standing) and Tsunesaburo Makiguchi.

Josei Toda

Josei Toda was the second president of our organization. He was born in 1900 in a small fishing village in northern Japan. When he was 20, he went to Tokyo to study and fulfill his dream to be a teacher. It was there that he met Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and began teaching in his school.

Mr. Makiguchi was like a father to him. In 1928, both men were introduced to Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and began chanting and studying Buddhism.


In 1930, Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda established the Value-Creation Education Society. They wanted to help create schools where the happiness of the student was important and the subjects were related to daily life. The members of the new organization met to discuss ways to apply Buddhism and to share experiences.

In 1943, Japan was at war and the military was in charge of the country. The government said everyone had to worship in the Shinto religion. Mr. Toda and Mr. Makiguchi refused. Because they stood up for what they believed in, they were arrested and thrown into prison.

In prison, Mr. Toda realized the true purpose of his life: to spread Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism for the happiness of all people. He understood that all life possesses the Buddha nature.

Mr. Toda was released from prison in 1945. Even though he was sick and weak, in his heart he was strong and determined. He pledged to himself and his mentor, "I will rebuild the organization for world peace!"

Mr. Toda became the second president of the Soka Gakkai. In 1947, a young man named Daisaku Ikeda met Mr. Toda. This became an important relationship, like the one Mr. Toda had with Mr. Makiguchi.

The two worked side by side for many years. In 1954, Mr. Toda told the young Ikeda, "I will build a solid foundation for kosen-rufu in Japan, but you will pave the way for kosen-rufu throughout the world." Together they shared a dream — a world where ordinary people could become happy, a world without war. 

Daisaku Ikeda


Growing up in Japan with six brothers and a sister, Daisaku Ikeda struggled against sickness and poverty. During World War II, bombs fell on his hometown and many buildings burned. His house was destroyed and his eldest brother, sent to fight in Burma, was killed. He lost everything he owned and began to question the purpose of life. As a young man, he was searching for a way to live happily and for the world to be at peace.

When Daisaku was 19, a friend invited him to his first Buddhist discussion meeting to learn about Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Young Daisaku knew at once he had found what he was looking for. The man leading the meeting was Josei Toda, whom Daisaku felt immediately he could trust. Toda's words filled him with hope, and Daisaku responded with a poem.

Daisaku practiced very hard alongside his new teacher in faith, Josei Toda. Through their efforts, hundreds of thousands of people learned how to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

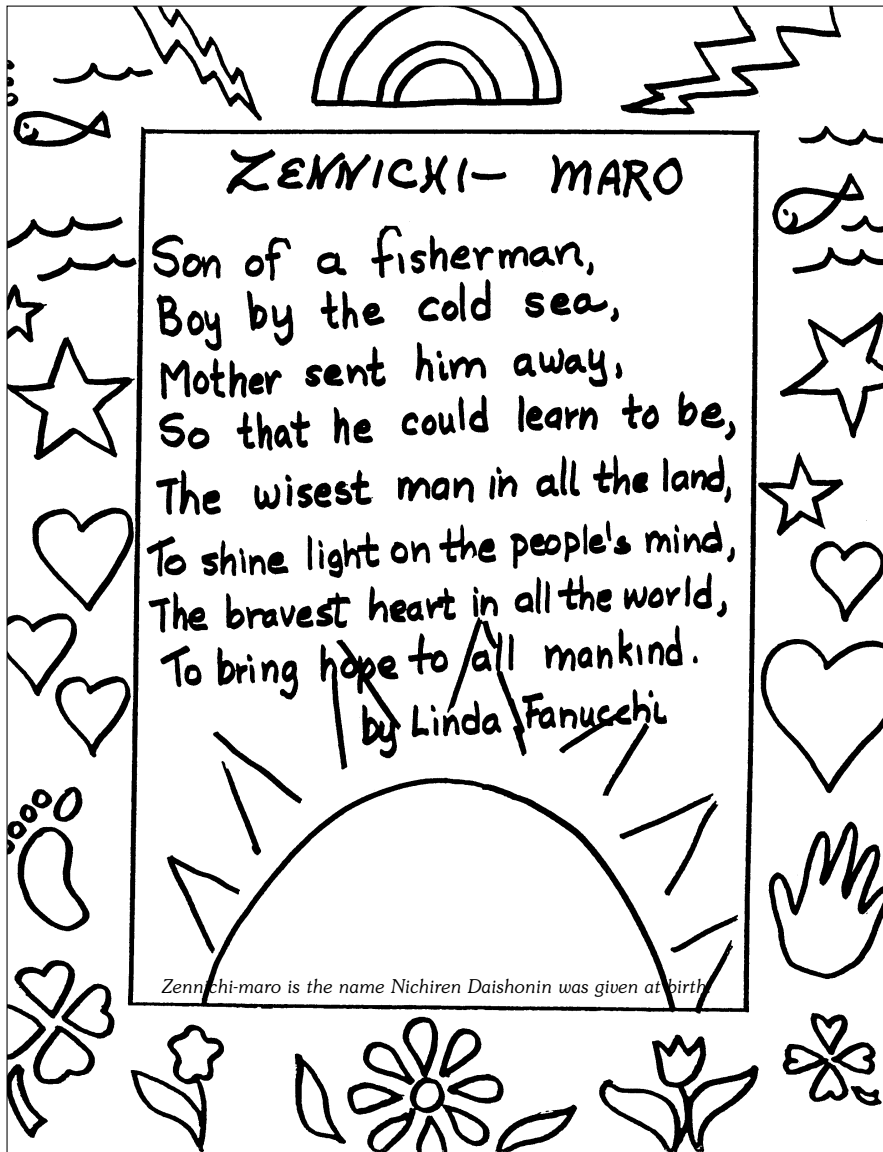
Before Josei Toda died, he encouraged Daisaku with a dream to travel the world and teach others about this great practice.

In 1960, Daisaku became the third president of the Soka Gakkai. Since then, he's traveled to more than 50 countries. Based on his prayers and actions for peace, millions of members now practice in more than 120 countries.

President Ikeda spends every day encouraging others to be happy through this Buddhist practice. He is a great writer of novels and children's books, a photographer and poet. 



SGI President Daisaku Ikeda



Poems

These poems were written by Sanjeev K. Jayaraman, who is in the 4th grade at Grahamwood Elementary School. He read them at the opening ceremony of the exhibit "Treasuring the Future: Children's Rights and Realities" in Memphis, Tenn., on Sept. 26.

The Homeless Man

The homeless man lives under a bridge
He puts out a sign while he looks so sad
He glances at the warm comfortable houses
He paces up to his little house under the bridge
In the winter he feeds a cat
Whom everyone neglects
He fed and loved the cat as his own child
Yet this morning I saw some people
Throw away his little house under the bridge

Mother Teresa and Diana

One was a royal
One was a saint
One had glamour
One had peace
One conquered the world with beauty and grace
Royalty and a touch of class
The other worked the gutter and the slums
There was no glamour only strength
Yet each stole the hearts of millions around the globe
Black, White, Brown and Yellow alike
With the magic touch of love and care

Children's Rights Exhibit Opens in New Jersey

The exhibit "Treasuring the Future: Children's Rights and Realities" opened at the Walt Whitman Cultural Arts Center in Camden, N.J., on Oct. 12.

There were lots of boys and girls present, participating in the ribbon-cutting and enjoying the exhibit. They were delighted to see the display of their artwork, along with art contributed from the Bache-Martin Elementary School and the Women's Christian Alliance. (From Anne Martin, Philadelphia)

