

World Tribune

No. 3166

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

NOVEMBER 21, 1997

Photo by JACQUELYN HARRIS

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What's Cooking? Someone's in the kitchen at the FNCC

By NIKKI AMDUR
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Conferences at the FNCC are a four-star delight: Members revel in the comfortable accommodations. They're stimulated by daily discussions. They gawk at the alligator wrestling on the off-site tour. And they really love the food!

And who wouldn't? Prepared by SGI members who are professional chefs, with constantly varying menus that include the freshest vegetables and most luscious fruits, the meals fortify both body and spirit.

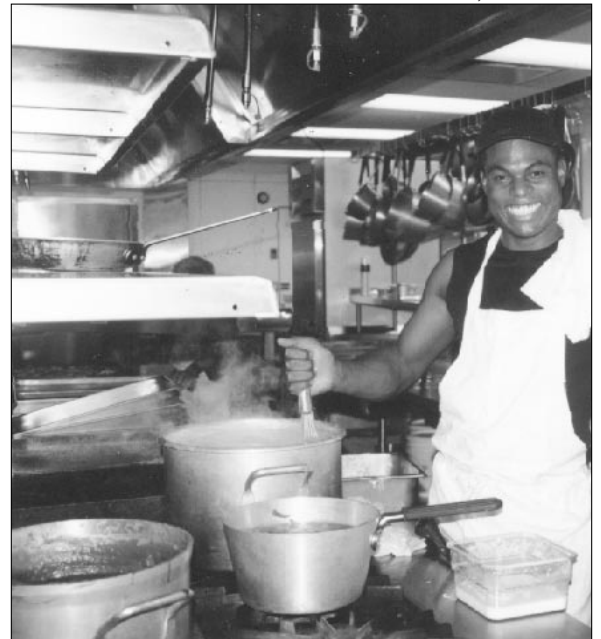
It may take a tough man to make a tender chicken, but Food Service Manager Richard

Kawai has a more mellow attitude toward running this successful enterprise. His three guidelines to the chefs are: Have a good time. Don't forget to smile. And remember to treat others the way you want to be treated.

Mr. Kawai's warm spirit permeates the comfortable wicker-furnished dining room and even spills out onto the patio, where many of the members enjoy their meals under umbrella tables overlooking Toda Lake.

The action heats up in the kitchen, too. Each week four chefs — volunteer professionals from a pool of 88 chefs from 19

PLEASE SEE COOKING, 4



Energetic Seattle chef John L. Williams, a graduate of the renowned Culinary Institute of America, used to watch the Galloping Gourmet on television as a preschooler. Owning his own catering service is a goal he has achieved through his Buddhist practice and a way he can 'touch people and become a part of their special occasions.' One day he hopes to expand the business to include a cooking school and a youth center.

Annual Contribution Forms Available

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

General Director Zaitu expresses appreciation for members' financial contributions. Funds support countless activities and facilities.

By DEBORAH GOODWIN
CORRESPONDENT

Santa Monica, Calif., Nov. 12

Annual contribution forms, on which members can make determinations for 1998 donations, are available through the joint territories in November and December.

In an interview, General Director Zaitu expressed his deep appreciation for the members and their contributions to the growth and expansion of our world peace movement in the United States.

"It's wonderful," Mr. Zaitu said, "that we were able to celebrate many activities, exhibits, conferences, training sessions and new construction projects this year." He praised the Amer-



An auditorium in San Francisco opened this year thanks to members' contributions. Two new centers will open in each of the next five years.

ican members' steadfast support, without which, he said, none of these accomplishments would have been possible.

For instance, members' contributions have made it possible for the organization to install computers for volunteers in each community center. And the SGI-USA plans to continue sponsoring events such as its children's rights exhibit, cur-

rently touring 15 U.S. cities.

The most recent facility opened was the San Francisco Ikeda Auditorium in February. The organization is also in the midst of a projected five-year plan to open two new community centers each year. In 1997, centers in New Jersey and Orlando, Fla., were approved and

PLEASE SEE CONTRIBUTIONS, 4

Annual Contributions

■ 1998 forms now available

■ Members can complete forms in November and December

■ Money goes to:

Operations
Asset acquisition
Administrative costs
Bookstore operations

■ Highlights from 1997

- New auditorium in San Francisco
- Two new community centers approved (New Jersey and Florida)
- Computers for volunteers in each center nationwide

VOICES

Through the course of your practice, how have you realized you held a prejudice of some sort, and how have you confronted it?

Members from L.A. #4 Joint Territory respond:



I have always felt a prejudice against practitioners of any organized religion due to my belief that the purpose of organized religion is to control people, not to support them, through tools such as fear and intimidation. Through my years of practice, as I have watched SGI President Ikeda travel from country to country, I have broadened my perspective. I have begun to understand the sincerity, love and respect people hold for the various religions that they practice and accept them as they are without judgment.

— KIM HAWKINS, Moreno Valley, Calif.



I've faced prejudice toward people who are conservative in their ideals — holding different political and religious views than mine. Through chanting and spending time with some of these people, I've had the opportunity to experience their Buddha nature. Before I began chanting, I would just sever relations and not try to overcome my prejudices. But thanks to President Ikeda's guidance and the example he sets through dialogues and friendships with people around the world, I have changed my attitude toward people who are different from me.

— CLARA GOOSENS, Moreno Valley, Calif.



Before I was a member of the SGI, I had a lot of prejudice against people. These stereotypes were reinforced during my job as a security officer, where you're trained to have stereotypical expectations of each race. However, through this practice I began to change my ways of thinking. Soon I began showing compassion for other people, other races. Through chanting Nam-myohorenge-kyo, I really appreciate people in their diversity — their different cultures and their different ways of thinking.

— LARRY RUBALCAVA, San Bernardino, Calif.



When I first began my practice, I had an experience with an inconsiderate SGI leader. My tendency was to hold a grudge against all leaders and thus the organization as well. But I continued to practice. Soon I realized that all of us, leaders or not, are human beings, vulnerable to making mistakes. Human nature causes us to do stupid things as well as good things. Now I understand that I must be a compassionate person, and I can understand these types of situations for what they are. After all, people are people — leaders or not.

— RAMON ORDAZ, Fontana, Calif.

If you have suggested questions for our "Voices" or "Question of the Month" columns, please send them to the address in the box at right.

Welcome. You've Got Mail.

EDITORIAL

Picture this... Nichiren Daishonin uses his last sheet of paper and his last bit of ink to write a letter. Freezing winds bite his fingers with each brush stroke. Hunger gnaws at his stomach and sleeplessness burns his eyes. Yet he writes warmly, passionately, earnestly responding to someone's question.

The letter clarifies the deepest mysteries of life and conveys a profound message of joy.

He rolls up the letter — an original, the only copy in existence — tucks it into a pouch and hands it to a messenger who travels on foot over miles and miles of rough terrain to deliver it...to you.

This may sound overly dramatic. But it's no exaggeration. Nichiren Daishonin's letters were written in dire circumstances, with urgency and for the sake of all humankind.

If you were to receive a personal letter from Nichiren Daishonin in the mail, you'd probably tear it open (carefully), devour its contents and call all your friends to share his message with them.

But in these days of information overload, it's easy to just let a volume of *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* gather dust on a bookshelf. It's easy to forget the sense of urgency with which the letters were written and lose that excitement to talk with others about Nichiren Daishonin's teachings.

At a recent meeting, General Director Fred M. Zaitzu stressed three points for recapturing that spirit and re-energizing our movement: daimoku, education and dialogue.

Prayer is the foundation of everything. SGI President Ikeda has repeatedly urged us to chant for all members to be happy, healthy, accident-free and financially secure.

In light of the temple issue, President Ikeda has recently talked about prayer from another perspective. Strong prayer to perceive and oppose injustice — wherever one encounters it — should

underlie all our prayers, he said. Nichiren Daishonin's whole life was, in one sense, the temple issue. He took a stand against secular and religious tyranny, teaching that religions must serve the people, not the other way around. Mr. Zaitzu thus emphasized educating ourselves and others about the essence of the Daishonin's teachings by studying the temple issue.

Many members have joined the SGI-USA since the temple issue arose seven years ago; it's our ongoing responsibility to educate ourselves and newer members about this issue so that everyone equally understands Nichiren Daishonin's heart, spirit and teachings.

Often, though, we feel the "urge to avoid." Sometimes it may seem best to avoid issues that bother us or pull away from people whose suffering or negativity overwhelms us. But the "urge to avoid" signals that we can benefit from having a dialogue about that particular issue or with that particular person. Dialogue is never a fruitless exercise. No one is a lost cause, a hopeless case. And more often than not, we run fastest and farthest from people who have something to teach us. By reaching out to all people — especially those beyond our comfort zone — we develop an expansive, generous life. Mr. Zaitzu specifically asked us to talk genuinely and openly with people who are no longer coming to activities or who feel separated or alienated from the organization.

To be tolerant toward people yet strict toward the law is one of Nichiren Daishonin's core teachings. To embody his spirit — embracing everyone but never shying away from the temple issue — let's read and re-read his letters as if they were addressed to us personally. Doing our best at prayer, study and dialogue, we can relay the Daishonin's message to the entire world. [VI]

Dialogue is never a fruitless exercise. No one is a lost cause, a hopeless case. And more often than not, we run fastest and farthest from people who have something to teach us.

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**WORLD TRIBUNE
MAILBOX**

Welcome Home, Doug

Other than a small fact-checking error that could have been avoided, I thought Bunny Adams' and Gabrielle Wise's article "Forum Focuses on Hope in the Face of AIDS" (Oct. 24 *World Tribune*) conveyed the spirit and reported the information of our HIV/AIDS forum here in New York quite well.

The SGI-USA member who spoke about HIV "being the best thing that ever happened to me" was me, Doug Ferguson. Jack Lambe, the speaker [cited in the article], was unable to attend that day because of health complications.

My disappointment actually arises from the fact that any readers who may have been encouraged to learn that I had returned to this practice after leaving the organization 17 years ago did not get the opportunity.

— DOUG FERGUSON, New York City

Buddhists in Business: Good News

Regarding the business group meeting in Chicago as reported in the *World Tribune* (Sept. 12): Given the cumulative effect of business activity on human welfare, the fact that such a group has been formed is good news. The organizers and participants are to be commended for their initiative. While there are any number of issues to be tackled, certainly those of environmental responsibility and fairness must be listed as priorities. The failure to date of the U.S. greenhouse gases initiative due in large part to an unexpectedly high level of business activity, the continuing abuse of third world workers due to the "realities" of the global marketplace, and the 37 million (the government's conservative figure) human beings living in poverty in the United States during a period of so-called prosperity are only a few of the problems that are heavily influenced by the activities of businesses.

While these issues have structural and systemic components, it cannot be denied that business people of all stripes are at best passive participants in an ideologically driven hyper-market system that is guilty of severe exploitation. SGI President Ikeda has clearly elucidated a Buddhist perspective on these issues in his peace proposals and other works such as his dialogue with Johan Galtung.

Increasingly, responsible business leaders, recognizing their culpability, have begun meeting, studying and seeking solutions, many under the rubric of sustainable development. I think any Buddhist business group worthy of the name will at the very least act as a forum to educate and inform its members concerning these issues.

— JOHN CARY, Chicago

Smile On

A special thanks for Chuck Gomez's personal "Perspective" (Oct. 17 *World Tribune*), sharing how he turned his morning commute on the A train into the "Fortune Express" by smiling.

The *World Tribune* is my morning companion every day on the subway to work. In the past, I folded the paper over several times, covered up headlines, experiences, etc. I was afraid to be judged a religious fanatic — but no more! Now I open it wide for all commuters to see.

Going public with reading my SGI publications wasn't easy at first. But now I figure, if anyone wants to read over my shoulder, hey, maybe they'll pick up a book on Buddhism and give the sports section a break.

As for Chuck's spontaneous public smiling — smile on!

— SEAN GROVER, New York City

Healing After the Holocaust

PERSPECTIVE

By **ROBIN TISH**
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Recently my mother came up from New York City to see us. She especially wanted to spend time with her granddaughter, our 2-and-a-half-year-old, Ana.

My mother is a Holocaust survivor. In 1938, the beginning of World War II, she was 10. One evening, as we were finishing dinner, my mother began to tell us what it was like growing up in Germany.

"I was from a happy home, where my parents loved each other, and life was enjoyable and simple," she said. "Then, one day, my favorite teacher in school was replaced by a Nazi, who made all the Jewish children sit in the back of the room. Our homework was taken, a line put through the page and returned to us without ever having been looked at. The Jews were never called on. I used to plead in the mornings with my mother not to have to go to school.

"Then, the segregation began. We had to travel on a train just for Jews and travel a long way to go to a school the Nazis designated for Jews only. My father had had a steel and metal business. It was taken over by a Nazi. My father had to pass it every day on the way to the only job he could find — in a woodshed. Personal bank accounts were also taken and an allowance given to each Jewish family from their own money that they had saved and worked for."

Ana was sitting on her daddy's lap directly across the table as my mother continued her horrifying experience. She told us of *Kristallnacht* (the Night of Broken Glass), which

she remembers as if it had happened yesterday.

"It was the night of Nov. 9 going into the 10th, 1938, when the Nazis burned all the temples and went from house to house beating the Jews in the middle of the night," she said. "At 4:00 a.m., the bell rang and a Nazi youth claimed it was the police. My father said to us, 'I've never had any dealings with the police.' They insisted he come down.

"When he went down, they began beating him with clubs until he was lying in the street in

and I on the other, we held him up as we walked to where the women were separated from the men. Soon the women and children were sent home, and the men were sent to the concentration camp Dachau."

As my mother was telling us this story, I was filled with grief and fought to hold back the tears. I didn't want to hear it, but I felt it was important to know my family's history.

She was about to continue her story when Ana, still on my husband's lap, put her hands together and started chanting *Nam-myoho-enge-kyo* loudly and would not stop, pausing occasionally to recite the prolonged *Namu-myoho-enge-kyo*.

Ana had chanted before, but never that much! She chanted and chanted, even though I broke into sobs. I could not believe my eyes or ears — my 2-and-a-half-year-old daughter healing us, comforting us.

My mother, who does not practice, began to cry also, not believing what she saw. "I don't believe this is a coincidence," she said. "Now, look at that, I am telling about this horrible horror that happened to our family, and it's as if she is trying to say: 'This is the way to heal. This is the way to peace.' She wants to send comfort."

Ana's great-grandfather was pulled from his home on *Kristallnacht* and beaten, almost to death, because he was a Jew. Now, almost 60 years later, his great-granddaughter is chanting the *daimoku* of the Lotus Sutra naturally, the sound bursting from her life like the rising sun.

Thank you, Nichiren Daishonin and presidents Ikeda, Toda and Makiguchi, for making it possible for Ana Tish to chant the Mystic Law, ensuring the happiness of her ancestors and the happiness of all humankind to come. **W**

As my mother was telling us this story, I was filled with grief and fought back the tears. I didn't want to hear it, but I felt it was important to know my family's history.

a puddle of blood. We could hear the screams. The Nazis must have thought he was dead.

"A little while later, my father was able to get himself up the stairs to the apartment. Buckets of blood poured from his head. His skull was split open. No ambulance would come for a Jew, so the family had to take him to a Nazi doctor, who stitched his head up without any anaesthesia and then bandaged it and sent him home.

"The next morning, the bell rang. It was the Nazis again, who said, 'Pack your bags and be ready to leave in one hour.' My mother pleaded with them because of my father's condition, but to no avail. With my mother on one side of him and my sister

Question of the Month:

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

Please be specific and limit your response to 75 words or less. All responses are subject to editing. Please send your response 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

Cutting-edge Cooking at the Florida Nature Center

COOKING, FROM PAGE 1

states — work 12- to 16-hour days (with a welcome break on Saturday to catch a few rays) preparing three squares for appetites piqued by days in the warm Florida sun. Recipes are selected democratically: When the chefs arrive, they all sit down with Mr. Kawai and decide what dishes to make based on each chef's talents and specialties. "You can do 10 different things with a flounder," explains Mr. Kawai. "Every person has their own style."

The type of cuisine may vary with each chef, but the challenge of preparing 150-200 meals three times a day is constant. And even that impressive goal pales beside the original one of making 800 dinners each day when the FNCC opened in June 1996.

With 21 chefs behind the burners, the enormous task was accomplished, thanks in part to SGI President Ikeda's encouragement. "He came right into the cafeteria to thank the people working there," recalls Mr. Kawai. "President Ikeda always talks about the importance of encouraging people working behind the scenes, and his actions are equal to his words." All the chefs' efforts came in handy back home: Four of those valiant 21 have opened restaurants since then.

Because most chefs work late hours, many don't have the chance to attend their district discussion meetings, which are often scheduled in the evening.

That's why working at the FNCC is a golden opportunity for them to be encouraged in faith by participating in a behind-the-scenes activity.

Some are concerned about being away from their restaurants so long, but most find that while the chef's away, business is booming. When Chef George Yamazawa called to check on things, he was happy to hear the buzz of satisfied diners in the background. Mr. Yamazawa has become so successful that he has built a personal community center with a 100-seat Gohonzon room for the members.

Mr. Kawai is always on the lookout for cutting-edge recipes, attending food shows at the Fort Lauderdale Convention Center and checking out local restaurants to get new ideas. Menus are customized to participants as well. For the junior high and high school division conferences, teen favorites like pizza, hamburgers and tacos are served.

Such attention to detail and consideration for the individual have resulted in a creative and smoothly functioning operation that people just can't stop talking about — and a tendency, alas, for appreciative diners to put on five pounds in a weekend. For Richard Kawai, seeing the members' life-conditions soar during their stay at the FNCC makes the long hours and many painstaking efforts worthwhile.

Now the big question: Does he himself like to cook? "No," he admits. "But I like to eat!" And, at the FNCC, so do we. ❧



Food Services Manager Richard Kawai (left, with Jesse Mitchell) makes sure that things don't boil over in the busy kitchen. Still, there are some surprises. Last year, at a men's division conference, the hungry gourmands wolfed down four days' worth of food in two days. Oops.



As vigorous in faith as she is in chopping the mountains of fresh vegetables used here every day, San Antonio chef Taeko Bishoff has practiced Buddhism for 35 years — quite a few of which she's spent in the kitchen, preparing sushi and dessert specialties. 'I myself get hope for my future through helping other people,' she says of the opportunity to volunteer at the FNCC.



LOOKIN' FOR COOKS

Interested in volunteering as a chef at the FNCC?

The FNCC is now looking for experienced chefs to help serve the members delicious food at next year's 36 conferences. All travel expenses will be paid.

Who's eligible?

- SGI-USA members.
- Cooks with minimum five years working experience.
- Those whose employment or personal finances will not be burdened due to time away from job.

When?

- Each conference requires four chefs from Wednesday afternoon through Sunday evening.

How?

- Interested persons should contact their joint territory office for details.

Annual Contribution Forms Available

CONTRIBUTIONS, FROM PAGE 1

will open in the near future.

Deep Appreciation

"These community and culture centers are an integral part of our advancement as an organization," Mr. Zaitzu said. "In these places, we assemble to pray for world peace, to conduct vibrant meetings and activities, to share with one another and hold study and dialogue sessions. These places are the epicenters of action based on Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism."

"Since the beginning of the American movement for worldwide kosen-rufu," he continued, "the members of our organization have consistently redoubled their efforts to contribute to the creation

of facilities that can be enjoyed and shared by all."

Again thanking the members, Mr. Zaitzu said he sensed in their

contributions an actualization of the spirit in this Goshu passage: "In the deepest sense, earnest faith is the will to understand and live up to the spirit, not the words, of the sutras.... Therefore, saints consecrate themselves by offering their own bodies, whereas

common mortals may consecrate themselves by the sincerity with which they give" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1,

p. 268).

He also stressed the significance of the coming year, the Year of Victory of the People for the

New Century. "I hope each member will show great actual proof of victory in his or her life, thus contributing in the most meaningful way to the progress of our movement," he said.

All contributions are tax deductible. Those who contributed in 1997 will get receipts in January 1998 as well as a new SGI-USA pocket calendar, a gift of appreciation. ❧

'Centers are an integral part of our advancement as an organization.'

In a clear, vibrant voice, Shin'ichi Yamamoto addressed the throng of members standing outside:

"During the Pacific War, Okinawa was sacrificed by Japan's military to forestall an Allied invasion of the main islands. And many Okinawans died as a result.

"But in the Soka Gakkai's struggle for kosen-rufu, not a single person will be sacrificed. Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism guarantees that all human beings will eventually find happiness. Let us work together cheerfully and gladly, enjoying to the fullest the happiness we achieve as we transform Okinawa into a haven of lasting peace and prosperity.

"Let's sing 'Heroes of Okinawa' together now. I'll conduct."

This was met with an immediate ovation. As he opened his fan and raised it high over his head, a strong, rhythmic clapping began below. Shin'ichi's movements were dignified and decisive. The voices of the Okinawa members rose clear and strong into the blue sky, in perfect time with Shin'ichi's motions.

*Now, as dawn breaks
On the spread of the True Law,
The once devastated islands of
Okinawa....*

The concrete of the roof of the new Headquarters was scorching hot in the Okinawa sun. Rivers of sweat began to pour from Shin'ichi's body as he led the song, but he continued his dance, graceful as a mighty eagle soaring through endless skies.

Tears shone on the sunburned faces of the members as they sang with all their hearts. They sensed in President Yamamoto's powerful movements his devotion to them and their cause. They knew he would fight for them with his life.

When the song had finished, Shin'ichi wiped his brow with his fist and addressed the crowd again: "Take care of yourselves, and let's meet again soon!"

It was impossible to calculate the effect that Shin'ichi's solemn dance had on the spirits of the Okinawa members, the energy and courage it had stirred in them. The sight of Shin'ichi on the roof was emblazoned forever in each of their hearts. Earnest dedication always strikes a chord in the hearts of others, creating a resonant symphony of human emotion.

That evening, the Soka Gakkai directors who had accompanied Shin'ichi to Okinawa from the Tokyo Headquarters split up to give Goshō lectures or attend meetings with local members in five different areas, including the main cities of Naha and Nago.

The next day, before returning to Tokyo, Shin'ichi visited the sites of some of the bloodiest battles fought in

The New Human Revolution

BY HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 5

Young Eagles

Translation of parts 7–11 of the 'Young Eagles' chapter, as printed in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. Ho Goku is the pen name of Daisaku Ikeda, who appears in the novel as Shin'ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1962.

Okinawa during the war. He also revisited the Star Lily Monument, which was dedicated to the Star Lily Corps' teenage nurses, who committed suicide in the face of Japan's defeat. Standing before the memorial, he seared the horror of the tragic war deep into his being, determined to launch himself on the vast journey for kosen-rufu, determined to realize Josei Toda's dream of world peace.

July 22. The westering sun brought a golden hue to the fountain in Tokyo's Hibiya Park as groups of young men and women — student division members — walked toward the Hibiya Civic Hall for the 5th Student Division General Meeting. The young men's crisp white shirts gleamed with a dazzling freshness.

Over the past year, the student division had grown phenomenally, doubling from 6,000 to 12,000 members. Now students who had gathered from all over Japan were waiting eagerly for their general meeting to begin. When President Yamamoto appeared on the stage just before 6:00 p.m., thunderous applause greeted him.

The general meeting opened with everyone joining in a rousing chorus of a Gakkai song, followed by a progress report highlighting the last year's dynamic growth. Experiences were given by a number of members and a research presentation on the relationship between religion and government was made. Next, the new student division song, "Young Reformers," was introduced.

At their May 23 meeting, President Yamamoto and student division representatives had decided to compose a new song, and it was now complete.

*Behold! Like a raging wildfire
Voices of reform fills the heavens
Morning has dawned after the long
night of waiting
And we gaze up at our scarlet flag
of revolution....*

It was a powerful song, evoking courage and ambition. It was perfectly suited to the student division, the mission of which was to blaze the trail to social reform. Laying the division's reputation on the line, Student Division Chief Goro Watari and other members



had worked long and hard to ensure that this song was ready in time for the general meeting.

Shin'ichi sat on the stage, nodding his approval and clapping his hands in time with the music along with the rest of the audience.

Next, new leadership appointments were announced. First, four young men and women were announced as standing secretaries of the student division. Then, the formation of 14 corps and the appointment of corps chiefs were announced.

The student division was led by a chief and vice chiefs, with the standing secretaries forming the core staff. It was further divided vertically into corps, groups and units.

But there were still many parts of the country in which a corps had not yet been organized. At this meeting, corps

were at last established in those areas.

Thus, there were now 22 corps for the young men's students and 13 for the young women's students, bringing the total number to 35. A secretariat was also established, as were five new committees dealing with organization, sports, public relations, publishing and the arts.

Behind the podium were the student division flags that Shin'ichi and the representatives decided on May 23 to have designed — one scarlet flag for the division overall and 35 navy flags for each of its corps.

Shin'ichi then formally presented these flags, handing the scarlet divisional flag to Goro and a navy flag to each of the 35 corps chiefs.

The scarlet flag and the navy flags bore the same design. In the center of each was a valiant young eagle holding a globe in its talons, its wings spread as if just about to take flight.

Across the top of the flag were the words *Soka Gakkai* and across the bottom, *Student Division*, all in white. The flag poles were painted black and capped by shining lance-shaped ornaments.

Division member and art student Akiyoshi Takashima had designed the flags at the request of Goro, who had asked him to come up with something fresh and stylish. Takashima had pondered the matter for some time. After chanting a great deal of daimoku about it, he settled on an idea. Since President Toda had stressed the importance of global citizenship and President Yamamoto placed great hopes in the student division propagating

Nichiren Daishonin's teachings throughout the world, he would make the theme of the flag "Soaring Boldly Into the World."

Takashima decided to incorporate planet Earth into his design, but wondered what he could use to symbolize this intrepid launching. He continued to chant daimoku about it, and as he did so recalled the Goshō passage "This sutra [the Lotus Sutra] is superior to all other sutras. It is like the lion king, the monarch of all creatures that run on the ground, and like the eagle, the king of all creatures that fly in the sky" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 249). He also remembered the lyrics of "Song of the New Century": "In the vast unfolding sky / young eagles soar...."

PLEASE SEE YOUNG EAGLES, NEXT PAGE

YOUNG EAGLES, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"That's it!" he thought. "An eagle! A young eagle!" He drew a globe and an eagle, which would stand out in white against the flag's background. But what color should the background be? After much experimentation, he narrowed his choices down to scarlet, symbol of passion and enthusiasm, and navy, symbol of intelligence and wisdom.

Student division representatives met to consider the design that he had produced in two separate colors. Everyone liked the concept of the young eagle and the globe, but they differed on which color was best for the background. Those who liked scarlet noted that this was the color of the flag in the Nagarjuna story and the best way to symbolize their passion for world peace. Those who preferred navy said that it was the most fitting symbol for the student division, since being a student meant pursuing knowledge and wisdom; they thought it more refined for a flag and would not concede.

The debate continued for some time, without any sign of resolution. Eventually, they decided to solicit the opinion of a top youth division leader. After examining the design in its two different versions, he said: "This reddish one looks like a labor union flag. I think the blue one is better." But the members who preferred scarlet were not convinced. Finally, they all decided to let President Yamamoto be the judge.

Goro brought the two flag designs to Shin'ichi for his opinion. When he heard Goro's explanation, Shin'ichi smiled and said: "I see. It's great that everyone was enthusiastic enough to have such a heated discussion, but now you've reached a point where you can't come to a decision. That sounds just like our opinionated student division, I must say."

Shin'ichi compared the two versions carefully, looking at each again and again. "I can see your problem," he said finally. "Each definitely has its strengths. It's hard to abandon either one entirely..."

"So, how about this: Let's have two flags — the scarlet one for the student division as a whole, and the navy flag will be for each of the corps across Japan. Combined, the student division will have

flags that represent both the passionate commitment of scarlet and the intellect and wisdom of navy."

It was a good solution. Goro's troubled expression gave way to a bright smile. "Yes, that's a great idea!" he exclaimed. "We'll do just that."

Shin'ichi continued: "You can see how hard it is to get people to agree on even such a simple thing as the color of a flag. Reaching a consensus among all the people of a big organization is no easy thing. I want the members of the student division to acquire that ability, because your mission is to be leaders of leaders — at the very forefront of our movement — who will shoulder the entire responsibility for kosen-rufu. I'll do everything I can to help foster the student division members."

Shin'ichi's words impressed upon Goro his great expectations for the student division.

And now on the Hibiya Civic Hall stage, Goro and the head of each student division corps received a flag from President Yamamoto. The flags were solid and heavy; in accepting them, the members sensed the weight of responsibility that the student division bore.

After the flag presentation, representatives from among the newly appointed leaders gave resolutions.

Then Goro rose to the podium, speaking of the high expectations that people both within and outside the Soka Gakkai had for the student division and announcing the doubling of the membership that year. Finally, he urged the student division members that "the time has come for us to take on a serious challenge. I propose that our goal for the next year be to reach a membership of 20,000, with all members firm and strong in faith and absolutely dedicated to their studies. Let us advance toward our goal of kosen-rufu with the youthful passion represented by our scarlet flag

and the intellect represented by our navy one!"

His words met an immediate burst of supportive applause.

After greetings by the youth division chief, the general director and other leaders, President Yamamoto rose to the podium for his lecture amid thunderous applause.

"Thank you all for coming today and sitting so patiently in this hot weather," Shin'ichi began. "I am the last speaker, so I hope you'll bear with me just a little longer."

Shin'ichi delivered his speech in an informal, intimate manner as if he were addressing a small gathering, honestly sharing his hopes for the development of the student division.

"The growth of the student division is the growth of the Soka Gakkai. The

to correct these misconceptions and create an understanding of the Soka Gakkai's real nature and the rectitude of the causes it champions.

As an example of such misconceptions, he said that some had claimed the Soka Gakkai was determined to make Nichiren Shoshu Japan's national religion. "At the young men's division general meeting four years ago [1958]," he said, "I clearly stated that the Soka Gakkai has no intention of making Nichiren Shoshu the national religion. To do so would be a violation of the most basic tenets of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

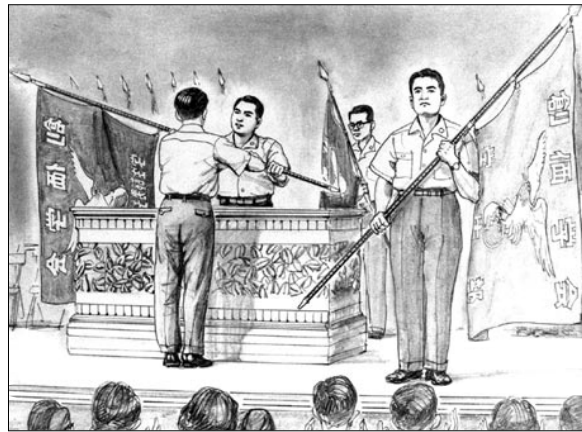
"The Daishonin's Buddhism is a teaching for the entire world. Nichiren Daishonin writes of establishing 'the supreme object of worship on earth' (MW-1, 81). The Daishonin never stated in any of his writings that his teaching should be made a national religion, nor have we in the Gakkai ever advocated such a thing. This is a completely baseless criticism.

"True religion is rooted in, directly linked to, the lives of the people. It spreads and develops among the people. If the government were to decree the Daishonin's Buddhism the national religion, it would be forcing people to accept a religion by means of state authority. The Daishonin's teachings would only be demeaned by such an action.

"His Buddhism is meant for all the world, for all humanity. If it were to be made the national religion of one country, the path of its worldwide spread would be blocked. In addition, any religion so designated would lapse into empty ritual and formalism, and no longer have the power to nurture true religious faith."

Shin'ichi then added lightly: "Besides, if the Daishonin's Buddhism became the national religion, we'd have no one left to introduce it to. It would then be hard to change our karma and accomplish our human revolution. We'd all be in big trouble!"

(To be continued)



progress of the student division is the progress of kosen-rufu and directly linked to the progress of peace in Japan and throughout the world," he declared. "I hope all of you will be aware of your great mission and move forward with profound confidence."

Shin'ichi went on to say that leaders in various sectors of Japanese society had come to look upon the Soka Gakkai in a negative light, influenced by slanderous attacks or biased, uninformed reporting by some elements of the mass media. He called on the student division members

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

GLOSSARY

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

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

gongyo: Literally, "assiduous practice." In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, gongyo means to recite the "Expedient Means" (2nd) chapter and the "Life Span of the Tathagata" (16th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myohorenge-kyo in front of the Gohonzon.

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

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

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

kosen-rufu: Literally, "to widely declare and spread (Buddhism)." To secure lasting peace

and happiness for all humankind through the propagation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

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

Nam-myoho-rengé-kyo: The fundamental component of Buddhist practice, which expresses the ultimate truth of life and allows each individual to tap his or her innate enlight-

ESTUDIO DE LOS ESCRITOS DE NICHIREN DAISHONIN (NOVIEMBRE Y DICIEMBRE)

Antecedentes

*Aliento desde la devastadora
Isla de Sado*

El 10 de octubre del 1271, el gobierno de Kamakura, exiló a Nichiren Daishonin a la isla de Sado, donde fue alojado en una choza arruinada, en un lugar llamado Tsukahara.

La habitación, de una estructura hecha de madera, apenas ofrecía refugio a quienes visitaban el cementerio adyacente, en el cual abandonaban los cadáveres de criminales y de los pobres.

El Daishonin tenía más de 50 años, y estaba acompañado por Niko, que tenía 26 años, y era el único discípulo a quien le habían permitido permanecer con él.

La choza estaba situada en las propiedades del magistrado que había sido responsable de la detención del Daishonin, Honma Shigetsuma, y sus guardias prevenían la llegada de las raciones que diariamente eran enviadas.

Apesar de los sufrimientos ocasionados por el frío, la escasez de alimentos y ropa, ellos sobrevivieron el invierno, y el Daishonin escribió esta carta el 20 de marzo del 1272, dos años y medio antes de ser perdonado del exilio por las autoridades.

Exactamente seis meses atrás. El 12 de septiembre del 1271, el Daishonin estuvo a punto de ser ejecutado en Kamakura, entonces la capital del Japón, debido a acusaciones de traición hechas por sacerdotes en alianza con oficiales del gobierno.

El sacerdote Ryokan del templo Gokuraku-ji y Hei no Saemon, jefe de la Policía y Oficina de Militares, que por mucho tiempo, habían tratado deshacerse de Nichiren Daishonin. Después de una sección de interrogaciones hecha por las autoridades oficiales, el Daishonin fue exilado a la isla de Sado.

Sin embargo, en vez, los enemigos del Daishonin, en la obscuridad de la noche, lo llevaron a la playa de Tatsunokuchi a ser decapitado.

Como él describe en sus propios escritos, al mismo tiempo que el verdugo levantó su espada, un extraordinario evento meteorológico ocurrió; iluminando la playa como si fuera el mediodía. Sobre este incidente el Daishonin más tarde escribió:

Carta Desde Sado

Quien asciende una montaña, tarde o temprano, tiene que descender. Quien desprecia a otro será despreciado. Quien calumnia a los de buen aspecto nacerá con una apariencia desagradable. Quien despoja a otro de ropa y comida sin duda caerá en el estado de Hambre. Quien se burla de los hombres nobles o de todo aquel que observa los preceptos nacerá en una familia pobre. Quien calumnia a una familia que abraza la Ley verdadera nacerá en una familia herética. Quien se ríe de los que atesoran los preceptos nacerá como plebeyo y deberá enfrentar la persecución de su soberano. Esta es la ley general de causa y efecto.

Sin embargo, los sufrimientos de Nichiren no pueden atribuirse a esta ley causal. En el pasado, desprecié a los devotos del Sutra del Loto y ridiculicé el sutra, a veces con exagerada alabanza y, otras, con desdén. He enfrentado estos ocho terribles sufrimientos por actuar, como he descrito, contra el Sutra del Loto, que es tan espléndido como dos joyas combinadas, como dos lunas que brillan juntas, como dos estrellas gemelas o como un monte Hua posado sobre otro. Por lo general, estos sufrimientos tendrían que atormentar a una persona a lo largo de muchísimas existencias, manifestándose uno por vez, pero yo, Nichiren, he denunciado a los enemigos del Sutra del Loto con tal severidad, que los ocho han caído sobre mí al mismo tiempo. Mi situación es como la de un campesino arrendatario que tiene pesadas deudas con su amo y con los demás. Mientras él permanece en las tierras, probablemente le difieran sus deudas de un año para el otro, en vez de acosarlo despiadadamente. Pero si intentase partir, todos se abalanzarían sobre él para exigirle el pago inmediato. Por eso, el Sutra dice: "Uno puede disminuir[...] su sufrimiento y su retribución debido a los beneficios que se obtienen al proteger la Ley."

The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, pp. 40-41 (*Los principales escritos de Nichiren Daishonin*, págs. 40-41; *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 960)

1. El estado de Hambre: El segundo de los más bajos de Los Diez Mundos, en el cual la existencia de uno está controlada y tormentada por unos deseos insaciables de riqueza, fama o placer. Los Diez Mundos son estados de la vida que manifiestan el aspecto físico y espiritual de todas las actividades humanas. Ellos son Infierno, Hambre, Animalidad, ira, Tranquilidad o Humanidad, Extasis, Aprendizaje, comprensión, Bodhisattva y Budeidad. Los diez están eternamente inherente en la vida y se manifiestan en la interacción de las personas con su ambiente.
2. Estos ocho: El Daishonin escribe en el pasaje que precede el impreso aquí: "Esto se debe a que nadie, salvo yo, Nichiren, ha experimentado los ocho sufrimientos descritos en el sutra: 1) ser despreciado; 2) poseer una apariencia desagradable; 3) carecer de ropas; 4) no tener comida; 5) buscar riquezas en vano; 6) nacer en una familia pobre; 7) nacer en una familia herética; 8) ser perseguido por el soberano" (MW-1, 40) (*Los principales escritos de Nichiren Daishonin*, pág. 40).
3. Monte Hua: Una de las cinco montañas más elevadas de la China.
4. El Sutra Hatsunaion: (Sutra de la nirvana final) Una de las varias traducciones del Sutra Nirvana. El pasaje completo dice: "Uno puede disminuir en esta vida su sufrimiento y su retribución debido a los beneficios que se obtienen al proteger la Ley."

"El verdugo cayó de bruces, ciego. Los soldados estaban aterrizados y pasmados de pánico" (MW-1, 181).

El verdugo y los soldados no pudieron llevar a cabo la ejecución y retornaron al plan original de llevar su prisionero a la Isla de Sado, situada en el Mar Nórtrico del Japón, en la que, raramente exiliados sobrevivían. Las autoridades esperaban que éste también fuese el destino del Daishonin.

En la capital, numerosos premeditados incendios y crímenes ocurrieron, los sacerdotes de las sectas Nembutsu y Ritsu culparon a los discípulos del Daishonin de estos acontecimientos, y el gobierno, sintiéndose amenazado por la creciente popularidad del movimiento del Daishonin, tomó esta oportunidad para lanzar una violenta campaña para infligir

castigos a los discípulos del Daishonin en Kamakura.

Refiriéndose a estas circunstancias que ocurrieron al final del 1271 y el comienzo del 1272, el Daishonin escribe: "Durante ese período, en Kamakura se produjeron siete u ocho incendios, y una interminable sucesión de crímenes. Los difamadores echaron a correr la voz de que los incendios eran causados por mis discípulos. Los oficiales del gobierno pensaron que podía ser cierto e hicieron una lista con más de doscientos sesenta seguidores míos que, a su entender, había que expulsar de Kamakura. Se oyeron rumores de que estas personas serían desterradas a islas remotas y de que los discípulos que ya estaban en prisión serían decapitados. Pero como luego se supo, resultó que

los incendios fueron obra de creyentes del Ritsu y del Nembutsu, con el propósito de involucrar a mis discípulos" (MW-1, 184) (*Los principales escritos de Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pág. 188). El también declara: "Además, mis discípulos, seguidores, y hasta aquellos que solamente han escuchado mis enseñanzas han sido sometidos a severos castigos y tratados como si fueran traicioneros" (MW-2, 96).

Este ataque del gobierno y el exilio de su maestro fue la causa que hizo que muchos de sus discípulos abandonaran su fe, y su movimiento religioso casi fue destruido. En una carta titulada "Respuesta a Nii-ama," él dice: "Cuando tuve el disgusto con el gobierno, hasta en Kamakura, 999 de 1.000 abandonaron su fe" (MW-3, 69).

Entre los que permanecieron, muchos abrigaban dudas sobre las enseñanzas del Daishonin. Muchos los criticaban, preguntándose "¿Por qué debo de encontrar tales obstáculos aun cuando abrazo el Sutra del Loto?" "Me habían dicho que los que crean en el Sutra del Loto serían protegidos. ¿por qué está mi maestro sufriendo persecuciones del gobierno?"

Así, aunque carecía de alimentos, ropa, albergue y materiales para escribir, y apesar de que algunos fanáticos de la secta Nembutsu en Sado estaban tratando de darle muerte, el Daishonin escribió esta carta para responder a las dudas de sus discípulos y alentarlos a continuar su fe apesar de sus penurias.

Al principio de esta carta el Daishonin escribe: "Esta carta está dirigida a Toki Jonin. También debe ser leída por Shijo Kingo, Tonotsuji Juro, Sajiki no Ama, y mis otros discípulos" (MW-1, 33). Era importante para él que su mensaje fuese comunicado ampliamente entre sus discípulos. El post scriptum de esta carta refleja las severas circunstancias en las que él se encontraba y la consideración que él extendía a cada uno de sus creyentes: "Hay muy poco papel con que escribir, aquí, en la provincia de Sado. Escribirles a todos individualmente me llevaría mucho tiempo. Sin embargo, si alguna persona quedase sin escuchar mis palabras, podría albergar resentimientos. Por lo tanto, deseo que todos los sinceros creyentes se reúnan y lean esta carta juntos, a modo de aliento" (MW-1, 42) (*Los principales escritos de Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pág. 42).

En un comentario sobre esta carta, el segundo presidente de la soka Gakkai, Josei toda dijo: "Lo que profundamente me conmueve cuando leo esta carta, es que el Daishonin extiende su amor a sus discípulos como si ellos fueran sus hijos, apesar de que él estaba viviendo en unas condiciones opresivas y su propia vida estaba en peligro" (*Nichiren Daishonin Gosho Kogi*, vol. 16, pág. 174).

*Antecedentes por el Depto. de Estudio de la SGI-USA.
Traducción del Living
Buddhism, Noviembre 1997,
por Cesarina Caro, Nueva York.*

Budistas en Recuperación

Foto por JONATHAN WILSON

Por PATTY JACOBS

CORRESPONSAL DE LAS VEGAS

Reggie, Frazier, Juan y Kathryn supieron que estaban en aprietos cuando vieron sus condiciones de vida descender velozmente, fuera de control. Ellos pensaron que como eran budistas tenían que "sólo cantar" y así arreglar sus vidas, pero no funciona de esta manera. Eran adictos al alcohol y las drogas.

Cada una de estas personas, y muchas más, se han recuperado de su adicción a través de su práctica, conjuntamente con orientación y ayuda profesional o, en algunos casos, formando o uniéndose a un grupo informal de compañeros budistas en recuperación.

Reggie, quien vive en las afueras de Chicago, asiste un grupo en recuperación que se llama el Grupo Loto. "Entraba y salía de la abstinencia durante cuatro años," dice Reggie. "Traté tan arduamente de hacerlo por mí mismo. Hubo un momento, que estuve limpio por dieciocho meses, pero comencé a beber cerveza y esto me llevó derecho a la droga de nuevo. Entonces daimoku y no pasaba nada. Verdaderamente traté, pero no me podía alejar de las drogas. Fue terrible pero sencillamente no podía mantenerme limpio". Estaba muy activo en la división juvenil masculina, y ahora es que vengo a saber que mi práctica era bien superficial. Después de un tiempo no podía entonar daimoku, ni hacer gongyo o estudiar. Mi vida se quebraba como si fuera vidrio que se hacía añicos."

Reggie, quien se ha mantenido limpio y sobrio por más de un año, reconoce que sus compañeros miembros del Grupo Loto lo han ayudado a comprender cómo utilizar la práctica para vencer su adicción. "Mi uso de drogas acabó con todas mis relaciones," dice él, "No podía ni siquiera ver a mis hijos, y terminé como deambulante viviendo debajo de los puentes. Pero Bruce y Al, mis patrocinadores en el Grupo Loto, nunca se dieron por vencido conmigo. Siempre me animaban a asistir a las reuniones del Grupo Loto, y cuando finalmente, con la ayuda de ellos, entoné daimoku sinceramente, me di cuenta de que mi práctica tenía que estar dentro de mí. En el momento que eso ocurrió, supe lo que quería decir revolución humana y cambiar karma, dice él.

Robert Inatomi, del Grupo de Orientación del Territorio Unido



#1 de Los Angeles, no tenía problema de abuso de sustancia, pero su hijo sí lo tenía. El Sr. Inatomi ha visto a su hijo tratar de vencer su adicción a través de varios programas, incluyendo Alcohólicos Anónimos y Narcóticos Anónimos. Cuando el Sr. Inatomi escuchó a Frazier, miembro de la división de caballeros, hablar sobre su recuperación en una reunión de distrito, animó a Frazier y a otros a que formaran un grupo de apoyo para Budistas en recuperación.

"Quería verlos continuar con sus vidas...disfrutar sus vidas sin miedo," dice el Sr. Inatomi. "Yo sabía que las personas que comparten su recuperación con otros refuerzan su propia recuperación." El hijo del Sr. Inatomi ha estado en recuperación durante 18 meses, trabaja, está casado y tiene un bebé varoncito.

Frazier, durante más de 10 años, entraba y salía de los programas. Parecía que tan pronto acumulaba un poco de sobriedad, comenzaba de nuevo a usar drogas y alcohol. Lo perdió todo varias veces — trabajos, su esposa, su auto-estima y, lo peor, su hijo de 8 años.

Trató en AA, y sabía que funcionaba, pero nunca resolvió la cuestión de Dios (uno de los 12 pasos para la recuperación es entregarse a Dios "como quiera que sea que lo concibas") y encontró que el programa de AA no era la contestación completa.

Sin embargo, dijo a su distrito el año pasado que finalmente había admitido que su obstáculo para desarrollar su fe era la adicción a las drogas y el alcohol.

Cuando el Sr. Inatomi exhortó a Frazier a que se pusiera en contacto con otros miembros, él (Frazier) estaba tan ocupado llamando personas por teléfono y haciendo arreglos para tener reuniones que se olvidó completamente del hecho de que

permanecía limpio y sobrio. Tuvo 35 personas en su primera reunión, informalmente llamado también el Grupo Loto.

Siempre creyó que los 12 pasos de AA funcionarían si sólo los usaba en un contexto budista, dice él. "El primer paso de AA [admitir impotencia ante el alcohol] es el primer paso en la revolución humana del alcohólico y, creo yo, absolutamente esencial para recuperarse de cualquier tipo de adicción," explica él. Como enseña el Budismo, reconocer que existe un problema es el primer paso para resolverlo. Frazier lleva limpio y sobrio ya más de un año.

Durante los primeros años de AA, el alcoholismo no era tratado como una enfermedad sino como falta de fuerza de voluntad. Desde ese entonces, la ciencia ha descubierto, a través de intensas investigaciones, que algunas personas tienen tendencia hacia la adicción debido a su inhabilidad de metabolizar los químicos apropiadamente. El Libro Grande de AA (el texto del programa de 12 pasos), ahora afirma que el alcoholismo es una enfermedad triple: "una alergia física, unida a una obsesión mental y a un padecimiento espiritual."

El simplemente no beber o no usar según AA, no es recuperación, porque la adicción es tanto una enfermedad del espíritu como del cuerpo. La contestación espiritual de AA es un Poder Más Grande Que Nosotros, algo con lo cual muchos budistas que buscan la recuperación han tenido dificultad, ya que indica que Dios o cualquier otro poder está fuera de nosotros, mientras que el Budismo enseña que cada cual inherentemente posee la naturaleza de Buda.

Quizás por esto es que grupos informales budistas de recuperación están surgiendo a través de todo el país. Los budistas en recuperación saben que

ellos también necesitan grupos de apoyo. Y, a veces, hasta amigos o encargados de la SGI-USA bien intencionados, con poca experiencia sobre la patología de la adicción, ofrecen apoyo que no es de ayuda. Al estar entre otros budistas con el mismo problema, los budistas en recuperación pueden encontrar el apoyo que necesitan.

Kathryn de San Francisco es otro ejemplo, limpia y sobria por 12 años y medio, y budista practicante por 13 años y medio. Ella ha tratado de asistir a reuniones de la NA pero no le han gustado mucho. "Se hablaba tanto de Dios y de un poder fuera de mí", dice ella, "Sencillamente me parecía que si las personas que fueran budistas tuvieran su propio grupo, podíamos ir juntos al Gohonzon y obtener la fuerza que necesitamos para recuperar."

El grupo de San Francisco se formó hace poco más de un año y asisten entre 5 y 15 personas a reuniones que se celebran cada dos semanas. Estas reuniones tienen estructura: gongyo, media hora de invocar daimoku y media hora de diálogo.

Flores y Semillas es el grupo de recuperación en el área de Minneapolis. Tom, budista por 15 años ayudó a comenzar el grupo hace 2 años y medio. Limpio y sobrio por 5 años, Tom sintió que había otros en la organización de la SGI que necesitaban un grupo de apoyo. Se reúnen una vez al mes, y las fechas de sus reuniones se publican en el calendario del territorio.

Josefina, de Sacramento, California, quien ha estado sobria un año y ha sido budista por 2 años, conoció un programa de 12 pasos en Ciudad México hace 5 años, pero tuvo problemas con el concepto de Dios cuando se hizo budista. Ella ayudó a comenzar el Grupo Sobre Prolongar la Vida porque quería dejar de beber. "He obtenido beneficios maravillosos, y comprendo que la recuperación no es externa. El Budismo confiere poder," dice ella.

Claros, y todo el mundo necesita un grupo de apoyo especial para vencer la adicción. Juan, de Nueva York, tuvo problemas con el alcohol durante muchos años y reconoce que la Banda de Metales le ayuda a mantenerse en recuperación. Aunque lograba mantenerse sobrio por cuenta propia durante varios meses corridos, aún así terminaba siendo arrestado ocasionalmente por conducir en estado de embriaguez.

"Visitaba a mi madre sólo para conseguir otra cerveza de su refrigerador, y me aprovechaba de mis novias, al usar el dinero de ellas para poder beber", dice, "el punto bajo en mi vida vino cuando le grité a mi madre que me dejara solo con la bebida. Al día siguiente le dije que dejaría de beber como regalo de Madres a ella, y no he tocado un trago desde 1990."

Buscó orientación, y se le sugirió que buscara ayuda profesional, que invocara daimoku y que, quizás, asistiera a AA. "No me gustó AA con su énfasis en el Cristianismo y determiné usar el Gohonzon para la recuperación," dice él.

Juan ha estado activo en la Banda de Metales y reconoce que esta actividad le ha ayudado a mantenerse en recuperación. "Esta experiencia no es sólo sobre cómo dejé de beber y cambié mis tendencias negativas, sino más bien en darme cuenta de cómo pude sacar mi vida de una condición que es sumamente prevaleciente entre hombres jóvenes de mi edad," dice él, "Siento un agradecimiento mucho mayor hacia el presidente Ikeda y la SGI por la orientación que he recibido."

Por otra parte, no todo el mundo tiene problemas con los 12 pasos. En Kansas City, Misuri, Carolyn Newman, budista por 11 años, es consejera de adictos a sustancias controladas y de alcohólicos, y apoya fuertemente los programas de 12 pasos. "No tengo conflicto con el Budismo y el Programa de 12 Pasos," dice ella. "Cuando aconsejo a las personas hablo sobre principios espirituales. Deseo encontrar la mejor manera de que las personas comiencen y se mantengan en la recuperación. Muchas de las personas que yo aconsejo saben que soy budista, pero la preocupación

¿Es Usted Alcohólico o Alcohólica?

Una de las maneras que el programa de Alcohólicos Anónimos anima a las personas a que busquen ayuda es ofreciendo un corto auto-examen de 20 preguntas. Si la persona contesta sí a tres o más preguntas, él o ella podría tener problemas con la bebida. El cuestionario puede ser modificado para reconocer cualquier problema de adicción.

1. ¿Bebe usted (usa drogas, come en exceso, apuesta) porque tiene problemas o para enfrentar situaciones de mucho estrés?
2. ¿Padece de amnesia — periodos de los cuales no recuerda nada?
3. ¿Prefiere, con frecuencia, beber solo en vez de con otros?
4. ¿Bebe usted en la mañana, antes del trabajo o de la escuela?
5. ¿Se mete en problemas cuando bebe?
6. ¿Se embriaga con frecuencia cuando bebe, aún cuando no tiene la intención de hacerlo?
7. ¿Traga rápidamente cuando bebe, como para satisfacer una gran sed?
8. ¿Evita sincerarse con otros sobre la bebida?
9. ¿Sufrir su ejecutoria en el trabajo o sus calificaciones en la escuela, a causa de la bebida?
10. ¿Le da pánico cuando confronta días de no beber, tales como visitas a familiares?
11. ¿Se siente más suspicaz o encantador cuando bebe?
12. ¿Lleva alcohol en su carro, cartera o bolsillos, o lo guarda en el escritorio en el trabajo o la escuela?
13. ¿Maneja usted después de beber, pero siente la certeza de que está en completo control de sí mismo?
14. ¿Bebe cuando le da coraje con otras personas, incluyendo sus amigos, cónyuge o padres?
15. ¿Esconde botellas vacías y las bota secretamente?
16. ¿Inventa ocasiones sociales para beber, tales como invitar amigos para almorzar, cocteles o cenas?
17. ¿Se pone a la defensiva cuando alguien le menciona la bebida?
18. ¿Se toma un trago extra o dos antes de salir hacia una fiesta, aún sabiendo que allí se servirá alcohol?
19. ¿Compra licor en diferentes sitios para que nadie sepa cuánto compra?
20. ¿Piensa que no es posible que tenga problemas con la bebida, ya que sólo bebe vino o cerveza, o ambos?

Los diversos Programas de 12 Pasos tienen todas las preguntas similares que bregan con adicciones específicas. Por ejemplo, en el cuestionario de Overeaters Anonymous (Comelones Anónimos) la pregunta que se hace es, “¿Está obsesionado con la comida, dietas, calorías y peso?” El programa Alanon, que es un Programa de 12 Pasos para familiares y amigos de alcohólicos, entre otras, hace la siguiente pregunta: “¿Miente para encubrir la bebida de otro u otra?” “¿Le ha herido o ha sentido vergüenza por el comportamiento de un bebedor o bebedora?”

PREGUNTAS SOBRE LA RECUPERACIÓN: ¿Tiene preguntas sobre la adicción y la práctica budista (cómo usar la práctica para vencer la adicción, cómo animar a alguien a que use la práctica, etc.)? El *World Tribune* publicará una columna ocasional que enfocará en preguntas similares. Por favor, envíe cualquier pregunta a Recovery, c/o World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401. ☐

PREGUNTAS Y RESPUESTAS SOBRE EL ASUNTO RELACIONADO CON EL TEMPLO

¿Por Qué Es Importante Saber Acerca del Asunto Relacionado con el Templo?

El asunto del templo manifiesta la esencia del Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin el reto para comprender este asunto es que cada uno de nosotros tome responsabilidad por su propia felicidad, entendiendo que este es el camino de una fe y una práctica correcta.

En pocas palabras, hoy en día la situación con el templo nos da la oportunidad de ser testigos de los principios que Nichiren Daishonin expuso hace 700 años. Por esta razón, debemos evitar ver el problema como un asunto del pasado o de un lugar ajeno, algo que no nos concierne. Hacerlo así significaría perder una oportunidad irremplazable de aprendizaje y perjudicaríamos a aquellos que ingresen a la SGI en el futuro: Si no entendemos y transmitimos las profundas implicaciones de estos eventos a las generaciones futuras, entonces aquellos que vengan luego podrían confrontar obstáculos similares sin tener el beneficio del ejemplo y entendimiento que nosotros podríamos dejar.

En muchos de sus escritos, Nichiren Daishonin nos advierte cuan vano es el practicar el budismo sin entender correctamente el significado de la fe. El Daishonin dice que sino entendemos el principio de nuestra fe, no importa cuanto tiempo dediquemos a nuestra práctica “[se] convertirá en una interminable, penosa austeridad” (MW-1, 4) y nuestro conocimiento del budismo “no nos evitará en absoluto los sufrimientos como un mortal común” (MW-1, 4). El llega hasta el punto de decir que sin un entendimiento de la fe “Sería inútil abrazar el Sutra del Loto [i.e., el Gohonzon]” (MW-1, 25).

“La fe correcta” en el Budismo de Daishonin significa ver las cosas tal como Nichiren Daishonin las enseñó.

Compartir sus convicciones, practicar y desarrollar nuestras vidas de acuerdo con este entendimiento. La cuarta pregunta de este folleto, muestra unos cuantos ejemplos de cómo la

Puntos Claves

- El asunto con el templo nos da la oportunidad de profundizar nuestro entendimiento básico del Budismo del Daishonin.
- Nos incita a preguntar, “¿Cuál es el significado de una fe y una práctica correcta?”
- Nos enseña acerca de nuestras vidas y de como profundizar nuestra fe.
- El entender este asunto nos puede ayudar a educar a otros y como resultado ayudarles a entender las maniobras del clero.

forma de ver ciertos asuntos de fe por parte del templo, difiere en forma significativa de la de Nichiren Daishonin.

En otro Goshō, él escribe:

Esta es la época cuando... lo verdadero y lo erróneo van mano a mano y cuando el Mahayana y el Hinayana se disputan sobre cuál es la enseñanza superior. Es ahí que uno debe dejar a un lado todos los demás asuntos y dedicar la atención de uno a refutar la herejía a la Ley. Esta es la práctica de shakubuku. (MW-5, 103)

Las opiniones erróneas en el budismo son a menudo expuestas, por aquellos bien estudiados en lo teórico, pero que fallan en comprender la esencia o espíritu del budismo, aquellos que carecen de una práctica compasiva.

El esclarecer lo verdadero y lo erróneo depende de aquellos quienes entienden la esencia del budismo. Como miembros de la SGI nos podemos preguntar si podemos explicar claramente este tema a alguien más, aunque sea alguien que no pertenece a la organización, o a alguien interesado en practicar por vez primera. Si nos preguntaran: ¿De qué se trata el asunto con el templo? o “¿Cómo puede usted decir que la SGI está en lo correcto y que la Nichiren Shoshu está equivocada?” “¿Podemos dar una respuesta convincente?”

Cuando podamos contestar estas preguntas a través de nuestro entendimiento y convicción, entonces, habremos comprendido algo importante para nuestra fe y

nuestras vidas. También comprenderemos los problemas fundamentales que afectan a la humanidad: La naturaleza de la justicia, las cualidades de un verdadero líder, la igualdad, la tolerancia y el propósito de la religión. El asunto con el templo nos da una excelente oportunidad de aprender acerca del Budismo del Daishonin, el cual después de todo se trata de nuestras vidas y de la humanidad.

No es ningún secreto que la intención de la Nichiren Shoshu es el disolver la SGI y destruir nuestro movimiento, negando a millones de creyentes la fuente de sustento para su fe y práctica. De esta forma deteniendo el progreso del Kosen-rufu. En un discurso reciente, en el templo principal, se dice que el administrador general de la Nichiren Shoshu, Nichijun Fujimoto dijo “este es el momento de aplastar a la Soka Gakkai”. Los esfuerzos, por parte de los sacerdotes y miembros del templo de los Estados Unidos, para convencer a los miembros de la SGI de abandonar la organización, creando dudas acerca del Gohonzon o esparciendo información falsa acerca de la SGI, están aumentando claramente.

El Daishonin escribe, “Simplemente invocar un verso de cuatro frases o entonar el daimoku, y proteger a quienes lo hacen se le llama la práctica esencial” (MW-3, 9). La mejor forma de proteger a nuestros miembros y a nosotros mismos de ser engañados es armandonos con la información y el entendimiento correcto, nuestro estudio sobre el asunto con el templo nos ayudará a lograrlo. ☐

RECUPERACIÓN, VIENE DE LA PÁG. 8

principal que siento por los adictos y los alcohólicos es que ellos reconozcan su enfermedad y sepan que tienen que cambiar su comportamiento.” Ella está a cargo de una casa de recuperación para alcohólicos.

Al final, lo importante es que las personas sean honradas y ad-

mitan cuando tienen un problema. Como dice la señora Newman: “Es importante que las personas con adicciones busquen ayuda. Yo animo a cualquiera que siquiera piense que pudiera tener un problema que vea a un consejero.”

Según Ted Morino, jefe del Departamento de Estudio de la SGI-USA: “La adicción es una

tendencia de vida en la cual la condición de vida del Hambre, uno de los seis mundos más bajos, tiene el agarre. Esta tendencia surge del engaño innato a la propia vida, y el Budismo enseña la importancia de conectarse al estado de Buda inherente o naturaleza de la Ley para arrojar luz sobre esta oscuridad fundamental interna.”

Ya que ésta es una enfermedad, afirma el Sr. Morino, tiene sentido buscar ayuda profesional. “Instituciones como AA pueden funcionar como dioses budistas,” dice él, “Podemos capitalizar sobre técnicas disponibles en la sociedad para vencer nuestra adicción. Sin embargo, finalmente, mientras dependamos de alguna fuerza fuera de nosotros,

no podremos ver la solución verdadera. El Budismo enfoca sobre cómo generar la condición de vida del Buda para que podamos realmente disfrutar nuestra existencia en acuerdo con la Ley.” ☐

Traducción del World Tribune, Oct. 3, por Andy Sanchez, Puerto Rico.

A continuación la experiencia de los señores Mario y Yolanda Vidal, que presentaron en La Reunión General de Latinos, Los Angeles, en Septiembre.

Mario:

¡Buenos días! Me llamo Mario y mi esposa Yolanda Vidal. Somos salvadoreños y tenemos once años de practicar este Budismo.

En nuestra adolescencia mi esposa y yo crecimos en un ambiente de guerra, la lucha de un pueblo sufrido sometidos por muchos años a una profunda pobreza e injusticia social por un gobierno militar y totalitario al servicio de una minoría. En este marco social, la sociedad salvadoreña se había polarizado entre ricos y pobres. Por supuesto mi esposa y yo como jóvenes estudiantes y responsables con el momento histórico nos aliamos a la lucha del pueblo, de la gran mayoría.

En 1980 Yolanda y yo fuimos capturados por el ejército, torturados y forzados a abandonar nuestro país. Familia, amigos y sueños todo quedó atrás; nuestro destinos fueron alterados para siempre.

Yolanda:

Después de haber vivido en diferentes países, tales como Guatemala, México y Canadá, llegamos finalmente a los Estados Unidos de América en 1984.

Nos quedamos en este país en contra de mi voluntad, y esto creó mucho resentimiento de mi parte hacia Mario y su familia, en ese tiempo me sentía muy insegura, amargada, deprimida y con mucha ira, mi corazón estaba lleno de celos, mi único escape era trabajar y trabajar.

Debido a todo esto y sin pensar en las consecuencias empecé a llevar una vida con la actitud de que no importaba nada y pensaba que entre menos tiempo pasaba en mi casa era mucho mejor para mí. La situación en la casa se tornó insostenible sólo era de pelear y pelear.

Mario:

Durante este período de crisis familiar, me sentía deprimido, sin

MARIO Y YOLANDA VIDAL, PANORAMA CITY, CALIF.

El Significado de Luchar por Nuestras Convicciones

Foto por LISA HOLLIS



(De izquierda a derecha) Gabriella, 6, Arlene, 15, Mario, 8; (al frente) Mario y Yolanda Vidal.

ningún espíritu o esperanza hacia el futuro, mi vida sólo era trabajar, comer y ver televisión. En esta condición fue cuando oí por primera vez de Nam-myohorenge-kyo. Nunca olvidaré esa primera reunión, habían pasado muchos años que yo no sonreía de felicidad, pero esa noche inexplicablemente estaba tan feliz que hasta la mejillas me dolían de tanto sonreír durante toda la noche.

El 28 de agosto de 1986 recibí mi Gohonzon, desde ese momento empecé a entonar Nam-myohorenge-kyo. Entonaba daimoku por

horas y horas, cada momento que podía, mientras trabajaba, manejando y hasta bañandome.

Los primeros indicios que tuve de que esta práctica trabajaba fue cuando noté que me sentía rejuvenecido, con ánimos de estudiar y trabajar, y con una nueva esperanza en mi corazón hacia el futuro. Así, con esta nueva esperanza y felicidad que sentía me inscribí en la escuela para mejorar mi Inglés y obtuve mi diploma de 'High School' (Escuela Superior) en un mes y medio. En mi trabajo me empezaron a salir trabajos de pagos a tiempo y medio- y en 6 meses pude ahorrar la cantidad de \$6.000.00 dólares. Los resultados eran tan evidentes y mi entusiasmo tan grande que no me cansaba de introducir a todo el mundo, amigos y familia a esta práctica. Así fue que mi esposa, madre, padre y muchos amigos recibieron el Gohonzon.

Yolanda:

Debido a que mi esposo y yo peleábamos tanto, yo tuve que recibir mi propio Gohonzon el

año siguiente, julio del 1987, sentí en mi corazón que era lo que yo siempre había buscado y aunque me sentía feliz de saber de esta maravillosa filosofía no me libraba de los efectos de mis acciones pasadas, y sufría incesantemente; Mario y yo, peleábamos muchísimo hasta llegar al punto de separarnos. Mi hija y yo nos fuimos de la casa sin saber a donde ir o que sería de mi vida. Por primera vez entoné Nam-myohorenge-kyo sincera y desesperadamente. A los dos días llamé a mi esposo y decidí volver a la casa esta vez con la determinación de probar el Gohonzon 100 por ciento y con el deseo de transformar nuestras vidas. Entre mis metas estaban: Tener una familia armoniosa y ser una buena madre para mi hija. Recuerdo que me levantaba a las cuatro de la mañana para entonar de 2 a 3 horas de Nam-myohorenge-kyo y participando en actividades tanto mi esposo como yo entendimos que solamente ayudando a los demás nos podíamos ayudar a nosotros mismos. En

nuestros corazones nació la esperanza y con ella la responsabilidad de proveer a nuestra hija el hogar que ella se merecía.

Mario:

Muy pronto fui nombrado líder de distrito de la División Juvenil Masculina y además de hacer Gajokai en el Centro comunitario también participaba en el grupo de gimnacias. Todas estas extras actividades demandaban de todo mi tiempo, pero lo hacía con gusto, pensando que luchar por kosen-rufu era una extensión de la lucha que mi esposa y yo habíamos comenzado en El Salvador; pero mi esposa acababa de dar a luz a nuestro segundo hijo y necesitaba más que nunca de mi apoyo y presencia, no la tenía, y esto me acarreó más problemas y peleas.

Yolanda:

Ahora puedo decir con absoluta convicción, que gracias a nuestra práctica hemos convertido el veneno en medicina a través de estos once años, y aunque todavía existen problemas, nuestra actitud hacia ellos y perspectiva hacia la vida es definitivamente diferente. Pero por ahora me siento una madre feliz, orgullosa y muy fuerte. Mi hija Arleen a sus escasos 15 años se ha convertido en una excelente hija, estudiante. Hermana y amiga. Es una muchacha honesta y de un gran corazón. Mis otros dos hijos a pesar de su corta edad 8 y 6 años, puedo ver y sentir que ellos van por el mismo camino. Mi esposo y yo hemos desarrollado una relación sólida, basada en un respeto mutuo y entendimiento y nuestra comunicación es mucho mejor, nos apoyamos el uno con el otro. También mis relaciones con la familia de mi esposo han mejorado dramáticamente; es sincera y siento mucho amor por todos ellos.

Mario:

Quiero aprovechar esta oportunidad para agradecer a los líderes de la SGI, y miembros en general por habernos brindado la oportunidad de compartir nuestra experiencia con todos ustedes en esta significativa ocasión y mandarle un saludo al Presidente Ikeda: Sensei día a día me esforzaré para mejorar mi práctica diaria de gongyo y daimoku así como también en mi vida diaria para poder así ser más efectivo y eficaz en el kosen-rufu. Y para unir mi corazón al tuyo en la lucha por el respeto a la dignidad humana y la paz mundial. Muchas gracias! ❖

La Nueva Revolución Humana, vol. I y II



Están pronto en venta en las librerías de los centros comunales. También pueden ordenar estos libros por correo a la SGI-USA Mail Order Center. Precio de cada libro: \$7.00 vol. I: #0551; vol. II: #0552

SIGN POSTS

APPLYING
NICHIREN
DAISHONIN'S
WRITINGS TO
DAILY LIFE

Protecting the Heart of the Lotus Sutra

By SHIN YATOMI

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

It is due to the blessings obtained by protecting the Law that one can diminish in this lifetime his suffering and retribution. (The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 40)

Today Nichiren Shoshu priests call the Gohonzon issued by the SGI "counterfeit," "the SGI's own invention," "a grave slander," "cause for the damnation to the hell of incessant suffering" and so on. The priesthood claims that the source of the Gohonzon's power lies in the high priest. But I find no basis for this claim in Nichiren Daishonin's writings. If the role of the high priest is so important, why didn't the Daishonin tell us? Instead, he repeatedly stresses faith dedicated to kosen-rufu as the source of benefit.

The Gohonzon embodies the essential principle and ideal of the Lotus Sutra, so President Toda called it "the Lotus Sutra of the Latter Day." If the Gohonzon issued by the SGI is a genuine Gohonzon, then the priesthood is committing a serious slander of the Gohonzon, that is, the Lotus Sutra of the Latter Day, or simply the Law. In this sense, at no time in the history of Buddhism has the heart of the Lotus Sutra been attacked so maliciously and vehemently as in the present day. Despite such slander, many SGI members are voluntarily exchanging the Nikken-transcribed Gohonzon for what the priesthood calls counterfeit. Their act of exchanging the Gohonzon shows their profound confidence in the Lotus Sutra of the Latter Day, which has been recently calumniated so severely, and their benefit proves its validity. In short, these SGI members are protecting the heart of the Lotus Sutra.

In the above passage, the Daishonin explains that by protecting the Law people can most profoundly change their negative karma. There is no doubt that these SGI members are thus fundamentally changing their negative karma. This is "the blessings obtained by protecting the Law." ❏

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON FAITH

How Can I Focus More on the Gohonzon?

By TED MORINO

SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT CHIEF

Q While I'm chanting before the Gohonzon, I notice that I have several nervous habits such as biting my fingernails and tugging at my hair. How can I overcome these habits and become more focused on the Gohonzon?

A In discussing the proper stance we should have in front of the Gohonzon, the most important point to bear in mind is that we should chant wholeheartedly — to the point where we enjoy chanting. In a sense, it can be like a warm, open-hearted exchange with a trusted, respected friend or mentor. The experience should be refreshing; it's not like going to boot camp.

Of course, this is a practice that we strive to do every day of our lives, so there is the same tendency to develop bad habits as in any part of our lives. And these can interfere with how we focus on chanting to the Gohonzon.

Our minds may begin to wander from time to time, or we may catch ourselves fid-

getting or squirming. When this happens, it is important that to the best of our ability we try to keep our mind on the right track.

Becoming aware of these negative tendencies is nothing to feel guilty about. The very nature of habits necessitates that we make conscious efforts to change them; recognizing an unwanted behavior is the first step in eradicating it.

If you were standing face-to-face with someone you held in high esteem, you would never allow yourself to bite your fingernails or tug at your hair. Think of world leaders meeting at an international summit: They greet each other confidently and with mutual respect, not biting their nails and tugging their hair. We should view our time in front of the Gohonzon similarly.

In February when SGI President Ikeda was in Hong Kong, he gave the following guidance about how to do morning and evening prayers, based on instructions from his mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda:

President Toda spoke on the essential practice of our faith, gongyo: "When you do gongyo in front of the Gohonzon, it is the

same as if you are sitting before Nichiren Daishonin himself. You should never have a careless or sloppy attitude, nor should you doze off or yawn while doing gongyo. Chant resonately and joyfully."

Mr. Toda is not saying that we have to be rigid and tense when doing gongyo. The Daishonin is "the Buddha originally endowed with the three properties" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 759), so we should just be ourselves in our "originally endowed" form, as if we were in his presence.

When we realize that chanting is the fundamental cause to awaken our "originally endowed" selves and develop the life force and wisdom to change any problem, we begin to settle down and fuse with the Gohonzon. We chant with a voice that is clear and sonorous, focused on our prayer. With conviction and hope for the future, sensing that we are clearing away doubt and worry. With the determination that "I will make this happen," tapping into the Buddhahood inherent within us. The challenge we face each day is to master the act of enjoying chanting in this way. Our earnest prayer when chanting is the source of all solutions. ❏

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TEMPLE ISSUE

What Will Happen in the Future?

Q How will the temple issue affect the SGI in the future?

A Buddhism is concerned with winning. To win in this case means to help as many people as possible understand what is at the core of this issue. This will prove the correctness of our practice and open the way for the humanism of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism to become accessible to all.

It is for the people's happiness — and for kosen-rufu — that we pray for Nikken's resignation.

In "On the Treasure Tower," the Daishonin writes:

In the Latter Day of the Law, there is no Treasure Tower other than the figures of the men and women who embrace the Lotus Sutra. It follows, therefore, that those who chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, irrespective of social status, are themselves a Treasure Tower and likewise they themselves are Taho Buddha. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 30)

Today, we are experiencing what has been called a Soka Renaissance, a result of our struggle against the priesthood's authoritarianism and regressive dogmatism. We no longer need to hesitate in

Key Points:

- We can pray for Nikken to vacate the office of high priest as he is the main source of negativity and misinformation that is misleading people.
- The temple issue has enabled the SGI to reveal the truth about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. In other words, the pure spirit of Buddhism has been revived through the SGI's effort in the temple issue.
- The SGI has proven through the temple issue that humanism — the dignity of human life — is the core of Nichiren Daishonin's teachings.

stating our conviction that all can become happy without exception, and that the SGI practices Buddhism exactly as the Daishonin taught.

We are entering an age when the truth of the Daishonin's Buddhism will be revealed. In one sense, that truth has been partially obscured behind the formalities and mystique of authority created by the priesthood. We can now re-examine which formalities are valuable and which are not.

While formality has a place in Buddhism, it should never be used to control people nor should it be allowed to block the progress of kosen-rufu.

Our prayer and efforts from now on will focus on bringing the teachings of the Daishonin's Buddhism to society so that it may become a world religion in the truest sense.

THE
Third Stage
OF
LIFE

Your Face Reveals Your Character

This is the second installment of a weekly discussion series featured in the Seikyo Shimbun, the Soka Gakkai daily newspaper. Participants in this installment are SGI President Ikeda, Seikyo Shimbun General Editorial Bureau Senior Director Osamu Matsuoka and Vice Director Katsusuke Sasaki.

IKEDA: In our later years, our faces reveal our true characters. The years have made their mark there, and we cannot hide them. Our eyes, in particular, eloquently reveal what kind of people we are. In the Goshō, Nichiren Daishonin writes, "The spirit within one's body may appear in just his face, and the spirit within his face may appear in just his eyes" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 222).

MATSUOKA: You have said that the face you most admire is that of the Russian author Tolstoy in his later years.

IKEDA: Yes. Tolstoy's face in his later years was marvelous. The lofty essence of a great life was distilled in it. His clear eyes shone with a light from deep within, his gaze fixed on eternity and penetrating the truth of all phenomena. A long, gray beard graced his noble and mature countenance, which was filled with an expression of love for humanity. A face such as Tolstoy's only comes from a life that has withstood the buffeting of the fiercest elements, a life of struggle for truth and justice.

SASAKI: I remember when you visited Tolstoy's home, which has been preserved as the Tolstoy State Museum, in Moscow, 1981. There was a statue of Tolstoy as well as a portrait. You gazed intently at both of them. And I remember you asking the museum's director many pointed questions about Tolstoy's life as she showed us around the displays.

IKEDA: The home of that great writer was extremely simple and plain compared to the gorgeous luxury of the Kremlin, symbol of the czars' power and authority in Tolstoy's day.

To the very end, surrounded by the Russian people whom he loved so dearly, Tolstoy dedicated his life to fighting against the authoritarianism of church and state.

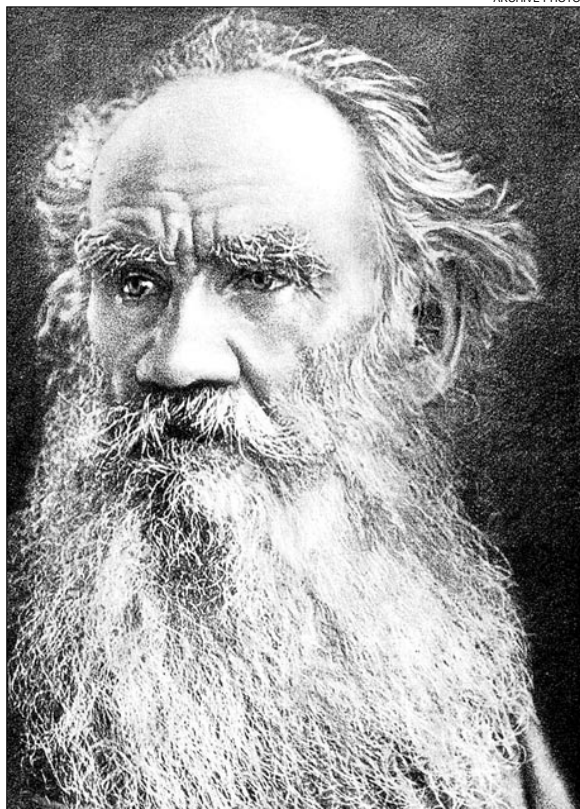
MATSUOKA: Tolstoy died at 82.

IKEDA: According to the museum director, even in his last years Tolstoy kept to a strict and rigorous schedule, writing every day from 10:00 in the morning to 3:00 in the afternoon, even on holidays. On the last journey he made just before his death, he continued to seek the meaning of life and an end to the spiritual turmoil that wracked him. He collapsed in an isolated country village in the midst of his travels. On his deathbed, he is said to have wept and asked those gathered around why they worried about him and not all the other millions who were suffering. He wept not for himself but for unfortunate people everywhere.

The statue of Tolstoy that graces the main entrance of the Soka University Auditorium has been placed there out of the cherished hope that students of the university will emulate this great individual and continue to develop themselves and fight for the sake of the people to the very last day of their lives.

Shape Your Happiness

SASAKI: The Nobel Prize-winning author Mikhail A. Sholokhov (1905-84), whom you met, was apparently from a Cossack region in Russia. He had an unusual inner strength and vitality. We were told that he was ill, but when you met him [in 1974], he was actually surprisingly well. I believe he was 69 at the time.



ARCHIVE PHOTOS

Tolstoy's face in his later years was marvelous. The lofty essence of a great life was distilled in it. His clear eyes shone with a light from deep within, his gaze fixed on eternity and penetrating the truth of all phenomena. A long, gray beard graced his noble and mature countenance, which was filled with an expression of love for humanity.'

IKEDA: Yes, that's right. He had very good color, and though he was white-haired and rather small-framed, there was a definite aura of the depth of spirit and mettle of a literary giant. He urged me again and again to share a drink of cognac with him. I can't drink, and I kept trying to refuse politely. Finally, I pretended to take a drink and then passed the glass to you sitting behind me.

SASAKI: Yes. I drank it for you. It was delicious. Thank you very much.

IKEDA: At any rate, I distinctly remember his spirited nature. He said to the effect: "You can't accomplish anything

worthwhile if you don't have a definite goal. We are all 'blacksmiths' who have to hammer and shape our own happiness. People of conviction, people who are spiritually strong, can exert a definite influence on the direction their lives take, even when fate takes an unexpected twist." In short, he believed that we each build our happiness. He was a person of great energy and insight.

MATSUOKA: At that time, you were 46, but now you are 69 — the same age as Mr. Sholokhov when you first met. In the intervening years, you have faced challenge after challenge, growing in strength and dignity and offering a model for how we

can all live the third stage of our lives to the fullest.

IKEDA: All who have devoted themselves earnestly to propagating the correct teachings of Nichiren Daishonin are models. It is wonderful and noble to take the lead in working to help others, to exert oneself tirelessly for others' happiness. As it states in the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," "The heavenly deities manifest themselves as ordinary men and women" (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 738). Those who work for kosen-rufu will enjoy the protection and support of all kinds of people in their environment.

SASAKI: At the beginning of 1975, you first met Dr. Henry Kissinger, former U.S. secretary of state, at the State Department in Washington, D.C. Snow had been falling lightly since morning, and the trees were blanketed beautifully in white.

IKEDA: I met with Dr. Kissinger on several occasions after that as well. We talked about many things, covering a broad range of topics from international crises to our philosophies of life. Eventually, our talks were published as a dialogue. When we broached the subjects of the meaning of death and how to spend our old age, something Dr. Kissinger said deeply impressed me. "I have always been impressed," he said, "by something the German statesman Bismark said. Bismark had been married for 50 years when his wife died. At her bedside, he said, 'It's only just started and now it's already over.' I think that is the poignancy of life with which everyone has to come to grips."

45 Years of Marriage

MATSUOKA: Bismark was married for 50 years, and you and Mrs. Ikeda celebrated your 45th

FACE, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

wedding anniversary on May 3 this year. In another five years, you'll have reached your golden anniversary.

IKEDA: Mr. Toda selected the day May 3 for our wedding. There actually should have been a big general meeting to celebrate the first anniversary of his presidency on that day, but he decided that it should be our wedding day. There was no Headquarters General Meeting that year as a result. I have never for a moment forgotten the deep love and warm support that Mr. Toda bestowed on us.

MATSUOKA: Eight years ago, you were interviewed by a Japanese women's magazine (*Shufu no Tomo* [Homemakers' Friend]) for its New Year's edition. One exchange I remember very well went as follows:

Interviewer: I have heard that you've been married for 37 years. Having met your wife, I can see what a warm and kind person she is. If, looking back on your years together, you were going to write her a letter expressing your gratitude, what would you say?

Ikeda: Now that's the toughest question you could have asked me! My wife is my dearest companion in life. She has been at times my nurse, my secretary, my mother, my sister, my daughter and, more than anything, my best and closest comrade in our struggle.

I don't really know what I'd say. If I were going to give her an award, I think it would be a "Smile Award".... My greatest hope is that we are both in good health to share our golden anniversary. Please allow me to make the content of my letter of appreciation my homework, due on that day.

SASAKI: But the interviewer persisted. She begged you to say something, even if it was brief and simple. You thought for a moment and said:

Hmmm. My wife knows the truth about me better than anyone else, and I think that I know her devotion and patience better than anyone else could. My marriage to her has been one of the greatest joys of my life.

So I think I would have to say, "When we are reborn, in the next life and the one after that, for all eternity: Please be there for me." But I suppose that's not

a letter of appreciation — it's more like a job assignment!

IKEDA: The interviewer was so persistent that finally she cornered me!

MATSUOKA: I want to ask if we can invite various experts to join us in this series, depending upon the topic. And I want to suggest that for our last guest we invite Mrs. Ikeda.

IKEDA: Well, that's something you'll have to take up with her. But for now let's just see how the series proceeds and think

about this later. Let's try to gauge what would be of interest and value to our readers; I'm sure there are many people and themes they want us to take up in our discussions.

SASAKI: Dear readers: Please give us all the support you can so that we can persuade Mrs. Ikeda to join us later in this series!

'Let's Hear From Our Readers'

IKEDA: Speaking of the wishes and opinions of our readers, I'm

sure that everyone has a different opinion about our aging society; everyone has a different way of dealing with old age, different problems and frustrations; and everyone faces different situations. I hope readers will contact us with their thoughts and experiences. Stories about people who are living productive, happy lives are fine, too. Let's encourage readers to send their input, and then we'll discuss those responses together.

SASAKI: After an article announcing this series appeared in

the *Seikyo Shimbun*, we received more than 200 letters from readers.

MATSUOKA: And many telephone calls, too. I thank all those who responded.

By the way, after your final dialogue together, I remember, Dr. Arnold Toynbee handed to one of your assistants a list of names he had prepared of people he hoped you would meet and pursue discussions with in the future.

IKEDA: That's right. He left the memo with my assistant, saying that he didn't wish to seem presumptuous or to put me under any obligation. I am still grateful for his consideration in giving me that kind memo.

SASAKI: One of those on Dr. Toynbee's list was Aurelio Peccei, co-founder and president of the Club of Rome. You first met him in Paris in 1975. It was May, when the first spring green had appeared, and you held your dialogue in the garden of the SGI community center in Paris.

IKEDA: The revolutions that humanity has experienced up to now — the industrial revolution, the scientific revolution — have all been external revolutions. We agreed that humanity's next revolution must be an inner revolution, the human revolution.

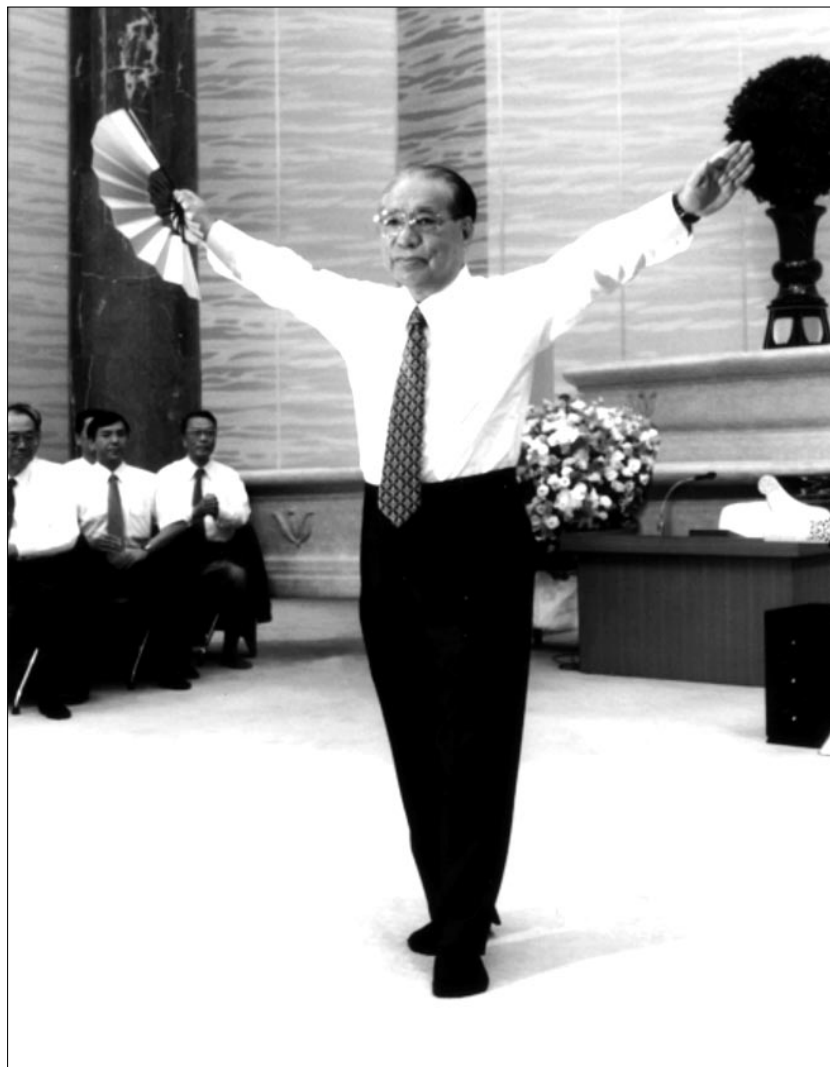
SASAKI: You met Dr. Peccei several times after that as well: in Tokyo, in Florence and again in Paris. Dr. Peccei had just returned to his home in Rome from London the day before your Florence meeting, but he drove his car for four hours to be there.

IKEDA: Yes, and he was 72 at the time. He had a very youthful spirit. All of the leading figures I have met seemed to grow younger as they aged and threw themselves more energetically into their work in their later years. This is the mark of genuine greatness. It is important to maintain a vibrant, progressive spirit.

All too often people lose the drive to move ahead as they grow older. But the decision to draw back or to take a step forward hinges on only a slight difference in one's attitude or resolve. In the final chapter of our lives, however, that slight difference can have momentous consequences. III

Ready for the New Year

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



SGI President Ikeda at a recent leaders meeting leads a Gakkai song with a traditional Japanese fan to express his determination to protect the people in 1998, the Year of Victory of the People for the New Century. Of next year's theme, President Ikeda says: '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.'

宗顯日自滅亡的日顯宗 徒檀製造謀圖規宗訂改 批判的出庭官司對內宗脫擺欲分明

日顯宗於九月二十九日，召開臨時宗會，改訂一部分宗規，聲稱現在所屬日顯宗以外的宗教團體者，若於今年十一月三十日之前，不解除與所屬宗教團體的關係，則將喪失權徒資格。

這也就是說，創價學會，創價學會如果不在十一月三十日之前，不解除與所屬宗教團體的關係，則將喪失權徒資格。

九月二十九日，東京地方法院在審理「西雅圖」官司之際，終於正式決定傳訊日顯宗本人。首先將擇期十二月二十二日與二月二日，進行訊問日顯宗。

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識破日顯宗詭計 大石寺今已形同身延 謗法滿沾 大聖人佛法正義嚴存學會

眾所周知，正如聖教新聞所報導，規說，學會如果不脫離學會，則將喪失日蓮正宗信徒資格。想邊以信徒除名為轉輪，邊圖謀製造權徒。我們早已跟違背大聖人的日顯宗訣別，時至今日，還說我們將不再是其時值先生入信五十週年，眼見惡貫盈盈的騙子法主，必須被迫出庭。從前日顯宗曾在法華講員的面前大言不慚地說：「要是真有那麼一回事，那我就馬上不幹了！真有那麼一回事的話，我還當得下去嗎？」

就照日顯宗自己如上所說的，現在正是逼日顯宗下台，剷除日顯宗禍根的大好良機。但是被官司打得走投無路的宗門，卻正在投遞垂死掙扎。竟然選在與西雅圖官司開庭的同一日，九月二十九日，緊急召開臨時宗會，改訂宗義。

首先第一項惡逆是「違背大聖人教義」。如今，大石寺已經自願與大聖人、日興上人敵對的身延同化，淪為完全「謗法之山」。正如「創價新報」所報導，日顯宗現在正跟那個大騙子、山崎正友，狼狽為奸。為了想和身延聯手，動作頻繁。

不用說，身延也就是指，不認為大聖人是未法本佛，貶稱大聖人為「日蓮大菩薩」，並且將本尊印在店面，當成「商品」陳列的大謗法之山。日興遺囑置文有道：「日興上人之立義，一有違先師之弘道。」日興上人決別了身為大聖人的弟子，卻於大聖人滅後與敵對的五老僧，離開了淪為謗法的身延山，創建了大石寺。不料，如今那些五老僧的末流、身延和

來說，對學會是毫無任何影響。例如，日顯宗寺院的墓地使用者，即使喪失信徒資格，就法律而言，寺方也不得要求墓地使用權的解約，索回墓地。而且，於埋葬遺骨之際，即使用寺方想強行儀式，使用者也可以拒絕。蠻橫無理的總講頭龍免之舉施行以各部代表會上，作了如下講話：

來，事過七年。邁向二十一世紀之際，學會在全世界有著光輝的前進。反觀日顯宗，竟然與身延派聯手等等，方也不得要求墓地使用權的解約，索回墓地。而且，於埋葬遺骨之際，即使用寺方想強行儀式，使用者也可以拒絕。蠻橫無理的總講頭龍免之舉施行以各部代表會上，作了如下講話：

第二點是日顯徹底主張所謂僧人在上，信徒居下的無人性「歧視主義」。信徒居下的無人性「歧視主義」。自己是一「活佛」，信徒是「奴隸」。信者就應乖乖聽話，這就是日顯的本意。

在斬除學會的時候，日顯也會說：「只要有二十萬跟過來就夠了！」所謂二十萬就是指，願意供養他們繼續過著揮霍奢侈生活的頭數。可見對日顯而言，信徒只不過是棵搖錢樹。

追根究底，日顯自認是與大御本尊「不二的尊體」，也就是以「法主本佛」此邪義為根本的。最近，八月二十八日，日顯在大石寺進行了八小時的說法，席上放言：

第三點則是日顯其破裂的「人格」。第一就是「異於常人」的火烈嫉妒。強烈嫉妒日興上人、池田先生的日顯，毫無正當理由，竟將出自當時會員一片赤誠所建立的大客殿摧毀，而建一座與身延山一模一樣的客殿。從前戶田先生說過：「嫉妒這兩個字，部首都是女子旁，其實換成男子旁也無妨，因為男子的嫉妒比女人更可怕。」日顯就是這類典型。

最後，第四點惡逆就是，因大發醋心與嫉妒，而迫害一片赤誠外護宗門的池田先生，犯下一破壞廣布」的大罪。池田先生自從一九六〇年五月三日就任第三代會長以來，不但捐建以正本堂、大客殿為首的總本山種種建築物，並且推動捐建多達三百六十間的寺院給宗門，無疑是廣宣流布的大功勞者。實可謂一念之內，盡億劫之辛勞，克盡外護大任。

一九九〇年，時值大石寺開創七百年，不但也進行重建總坊，修整本堂等工程，而且靜岡地區的青年部並準備舉辦文化季慶賀。

殊知此時，日顯卻在暗地裡，謀「作戰」，企圖斬除池田先生。把在二次大戰時，被燒毀的宮殿、大坊、以及荒廢不堪的貧窮寺院，整修得如此壯觀；同時不只推動日本，甚至拓展廣宣流布至世界一、二八國的大功勞者，也是池田先生。對這個大恩將仇報的日顯，我們是絕對不能原諒的。

有關日顯所說的「斬（Cut），意指「刺」、「切除」、「離開」。這個詞可以說將魔的本性表現得恰當無比。

佛法講慈悲，其教義是要人人廣結善緣，引導人人邁往圓融圓滿、幸福的方向。反觀，唯（Cut）是心、是圖、其與佛法慈悲背道而馳的日顯，不就是大魔、冷酷、無慈悲的本性嗎？

學會才是佛意佛教的團體。日顯其斬除此團體的大指導者之大罪，是永遠無法洗清的，我們絕對不能縱容他。身為弟子的，皆必報此仇而決。

這次西雅圖事件的官司，法院決定傳訊日顯出庭，此決定距離日顯發動過七年。（轉下頁）

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NOT A MATTER OF MILES

Zoe Koplowitz's 'lessons from last place' teach others that nothing is impossible.

Photo by JEFF JONES



Zoe Koplowitz finishes the 1997 New York City Marathon on Nov. 2 — in last place for the 10th consecutive year. Zoe decided to run her first marathon in 1988 at age 40.

By SARA ALGASE
NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT

Zoe Koplowitz has gained national attention as the world's slowest woman marathon runner. At 25, she was diagnosed with relapsing/remitting multiple sclerosis, a degenerative neurological disease with no known cure. For 24 years now, she has battled its unpredictable and debilitating symptoms, including profound muscular exhaustion, motor skill problems, and speech and vision impairments.

But Zoe has used her disability to prove to herself and others that nothing is impossible when you set your mind to it. She sees marathons as a metaphor for life.

"Most people run marathons every day of their lives, at their jobs, with their families," she says. "You can pursue your dreams with all their ups and downs, or you can fall by the wayside. It's not a matter of miles. It's a

matter of commitment and strength." Her new book, *The Winning Spirit — Life Lessons Learned in Last Place*, tells the story of her own trip down that road.

As she has for the past 10 years, Zoe challenged the New York City Marathon on Nov. 2. "It was hard this year," she says in her understated way. There was a torrential downpour that "seemed to last forever." New York's Guardian Angels had to ride alongside her to protect her through remote parts of Brooklyn in the early morning hours. Rain fell on and off all night and through the next morning. Zoe finished at 30 hours and 23 minutes — dead last.

"There is nothing particularly special about me, except that I'm a reminder that nothing in life is impossible," Zoe says. "If I can do something undoable, others can, too. And if I represent anything to people, it's the keeper of the dream." Zoe chose her own name while still in her 20s, on a quest for spiritual fulfillment — Zoe means life.

Her strong message about life has encouraged many

inner-city children. One school was so overwhelmed by her story from the *Today Show* that they helped raise money to buy two wheelchairs for two other marathon participants with MS.

Now Zoe visits more than two dozen schools to teach lessons about self-esteem and confidence. She also spends countless hours on the phone talking to people with MS and their families about coping with the disease. And she is the spokeswoman for the MS Society's annual MS walk, its largest single event to raise funds for further research and program services.

"I've become like a post-it note that someone can stick to their refrigerator that says, 'You can do it,'" Zoe says. "I feel the purpose of my soul is to tell my story. Everyone will take from it what they need. If I can achieve my own goals and do something that matters to other people, then I'm blessed twice." ❧

For information about the National MS Society, call their hotline at 1-800-FIGHTMS (800-344-4867).