

World Tribune

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THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

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INSIDE THIS WEEK

2

EDITORIAL

Hope is a matter of the heart, not the brain.

3

PERSPECTIVE

A son learns to understand his father.

5

INTERVIEW

With a survivor of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

6

HISTORY

'The New Human Revolution,' vol. 6, chapter 5, parts 12-14.

7

STUDY

Remembering the meaning of being Buddhist on Nov. 18.

9

FEATURE

A glimpse of the SGI in the Caribbean.

11

DISCUSSIONS ON YOUTH

SGI President Ikeda describes the value of understanding history and broadening our perspectives.

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SGI President Ikeda shares a light moment with Soka Schools alumni, Nov. 3, in Tokyo.

FOUNDING DAY POEMS

SGI President Ikeda wrote the following three poems to commemorate Nov. 18, Soka Gakkai Founding Day.

*Celebrating this Day of
Founding
With 10 million noble friends —
Comrades standing together
Through suffering and joy.*

*Triumphing over every
onslaught
With dignity and resolve,
We advance joyfully as one —
Members of the Soka Family.*

*Our happiness is
unsurpassed
For we perceive the profound
value
Of human existence.*

Similarities Between Buddhism, Psychiatry Noted

SGI President Ikeda's dialogue with Dr. Linus Pauling Jr. focuses on people's spiritual development.

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER
Tokyo, Oct. 12

Buddhism and psychiatry have much in common when it comes to nurturing people's spiritual development. This was one of the topics today when SGI President Ikeda talked with the eldest son of the late Nobel laureate Linus Pauling. The four means of salvation used by a bodhisattva are very similar to the approach used by psychiatrists,

agreed Linus Pauling Jr., a noted psychiatrist and chairperson of the board of trustees of the Linus Pauling Institute of Science and Medicine in Palo Alto, Calif.

A smiling Dr. Pauling greeted Mr. Ikeda, exclaiming that were his father alive, he would have been overjoyed to meet the SGI leader in Japan. Mr. Ikeda said he would forever cherish the memory of Linus Pauling's friendship, remembering how touched he was that the scientist had once driven a long way to meet him at the Soka University of America campus on the outskirts of Los Angeles.

Dr. Pauling said that he first became acquainted with the SGI leader after seeing several

Self-reliance and personal responsibility are also fundamental tenets of Buddhism.

volumes of *A Lifelong Quest for Peace—A Dialogue: Linus Pauling and Daisaku Ikeda* in his father's office.

His father explained, he said, that he kept them on hand to give copies to distinguished

guests he received.

The two first discussed today the four means by which bodhisattvas lead living beings to enlightenment, with President Ikeda suggesting these can be considered guidelines for fostering good human relations based on a fundamental respect.

The first means, he explained, is selfless giving, which can be divided into three categories: 1) giving wealth (supplying that which provides material sustenance); 2) giving principles (supplying that which provides philosophical and spiritual sustenance); and 3) giving freedom from fear (removing anxiety and offering

PLEASE SEE PAULING, 4

VOICES

How do you encourage people to subscribe to and read the 'World Tribune' and 'Living Buddhism'?

Members from Cleveland Headquarters respond:



Often I urge members to receive publications to give them the additional courage and support needed to practice and study, and thereby strengthen their faith. I tell them that not only will they be keeping abreast of activities going on within the organization nationally and internationally, but they will be able to read the many experiences shared by people from all walks of life and be encouraged to overcome their own overwhelming obstacles.

— DIANE HENDRICKS, Cleveland



We have started a neighborhood study group that meets every other Saturday. We study Nichiren Daishonin's writings found in *Living Buddhism* and other articles that interest us. Everyone likes to have a copy of the study material.

I often make a tape of the articles I like. I listen to these tapes as I drive around in my car. These give me a better understanding of Buddhism, and I can naturally share what I have learned with others.

— PATRICIA L. JAMISON, Mayfield Heights, Ohio



All the SGI Buddhist publications are wonderful. All the information I read is interesting, and sometimes I have to read some of the articles more than once just to be sure I understand. What I read in the publications keeps me thinking and re-evaluating my beliefs. If you are trying to find a "why" to life, love, peace, sorrow, happiness, yourself, then read, read, read the publications.

— DORIS DAVILLIER, Maple Heights, Ohio



For me, encouraging people to read and subscribe was sort of an accident. While reading the book series *The Human Revolution*, I learned the origin of the publications and realized presidents Toda and Ikeda's spirit and conviction. Their how and why opened the door of wisdom in my life to a deeper desire to propagate these necessary publications, which is my mission. Because of my revived enthusiasm, people became curious. That was my cue.

— DAVID PROROK, Canton, Ohio



Usually, I find during discussion meetings or when sitting and having an informal conversation, questions may come up about certain topics or problems. I generally can remember certain points or guidance that came from the *World Tribune* or *Living Buddhism* and from that encourage people to subscribe or at least to read them. I also give them older copies and later ask them what they found most interesting.

— RANDY LEWIS, Cleveland

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.

Hope — the Fuel for Faith

EDITORIAL

...Hopes set on tomorrow,
Aspiring to the rainbow,
Looking beyond our present
woes!

— SGI President Ikeda, "The Joy of Living"

Hope is a light inside that is gentle and bright by turns.

It can spur us forward, buoyant. It can keep our visions for the future dancing out ahead or dwelling softly inside. It is manna to the soul.

Without hope, every obstacle to our happiness would be perceived as insurmountable. Hope is the fuel for faith — we hope that embracing faith with all of ourselves, again and again, will lead us to become happy, capable people. Without that spark of hope, faith has little chance to flourish.

And developing a hopeful outlook, in the face of life's hardships, struggles and disappointments, is no small task to set ourselves to each day. We are surrounded by people and events that belie our hopeful intentions. Just snapping on the radio in the morning can immediately drain our hope. Catastrophes abound. One side of the country is burning, the other flooded. Someone trusted their child to a "professional's" care, and now the child is dead. Our political factions bicker and snipe at one another, while revolution erupts in a country where America's political influence proves futile. Sometimes simply waiting at a stoplight and glancing into another person's face will quickly tell you how desperate we are for the clear light of hope.

It is important in the face of all these things to recognize that hope is not the same as wishful thinking. Nor can it cover deep-seated negativity with a thin veneer of positive thinking. "Aspiring to the rainbow," in President Ikeda's words, is not meant to imply that we should be wishing things were somehow different from what they are — or using positive affirmations as a substitute for shouldering the responsibility for our happiness.

Alexander Pope's phrase "Hope springs eternal" suggests this differentiation, by the active verb

springs. This word qualified by *eternal* speaks of inner workings on a profound level. Learning to imbue our lives with hope, then, is engaging in an act of expansion — springing, as it were.

This, by definition, entails pushing the envelope of our very being. It entails moving the known borders out, up and beyond what we can at present conceive of. When we despair of ever changing any one problem or concern, or we become discouraged by what we perceive as a stalemate in our lives, rekindling hope is fundamental to our ability to take further action.

Hope can seem a whimsical, intangible, or wildly unscientific realm to inhabit. But it is actually a springboard for compelling life-discovery and the hare's breath between surrender to our inner darkness and the will to struggle on. Learning to hold fast to hope's expansive vision is the work of faith.

The experiences we accumulate in the process deepen our faith and teach us that remaining hopeful, no matter what the circumstances, is within our power if we "look beyond our present woes," as President Ikeda's poem urges, striving to make hope tangible not only for ourselves but for others.

When hope is ignited from within, we immediately feel ourselves relieved from the weight of whatever worry or sorrow is pressing us. These defining moments need to be recorded, etched in our spirit. Remembering that it is from our hearts, not our minds, that hope springs eternal, we can train our lives a little at a time to retain hope.

The moment hope swells within is a catalyst for prayer — for action. It is an impetus to study or seek out guidance or encourage someone else. We are sustained by the feeling that despite what we have failed to accomplish today, we can renew our determination to try again tomorrow. Without hope, tomorrow is a bleak prospect. In fact, without it tomorrow doesn't exist.

Hope is as necessary to the human spirit as oxygen and water are essential to our bodies. ❖

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Publisher Fred M. Zaitso
Executive Editor Ted Morino

Managing Editor Dave McNeill
Assistant Managing Editor Lisa Carter Kirk
Associate Editor Jeff Farr
Graphic Artist Don Sanders

Contributing Editors Nikki Amdur
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Terry Ellis

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**WORLD TRIBUNE
MAILBOX**

Cyberspace District?

How about "virtual meetings" at a "Cyberspace District"? These activities could extend the lifeblood of faith to guests and members in the following situations: people in remote areas; people without transportation, who do not live within driving distance of other members; guests who are initially too shy or ambivalent to come a live meeting; people initially housebound with agoraphobia or social phobia; and people who work the second shift plus weekends and aren't near any "morning-available" members.

The format could be a moderated chat room, real-time or delayed-time; delayed-time might be more convenient. Access could be for authorized members and guests behind a firewall. Authorization would prevent members who don't need it from using it as a way to avoid their human revolution [in a real district], and a firewall would save slanderers from making more bad causes for their lives....

The SGI-USA could encourage chapter leaders to distribute lists of local public libraries that have Internet-ready PCs, which could extend participation to otherwise qualified persons without their own PCs — especially if delayed-time conferencing is used.... Is there any chance that Cyberspace District will materialize soon? It would help a great many people!
— GERALD T. AITKEN, Walden, N.Y.

Walk in My Moccasins

I think one of the great things about the SGI is its tremendous ability to change. Any other organization that had gone through the tremendous changes it has in the last seven years would have collapsed within six months. I especially like the open dialogue in the "Mailbox" section. Although it does not express the opinions of all readers, to me "Mailbox" feels like a great opening to see diverse views of many members.

I had to laugh at the letter from David Kadin ("Keep Your Focus") in the Oct. 10 "Mailbox." At first I thought it was just a joke, but after reading it I felt great sadness. I wonder if Mr. Kadin has ever been discriminated against because of his color or sexual orientation. I wonder if he has ever been laughed at or made fun of because of a physical disability or mental impairment. I wonder if he has ever been in a war, saw his good friends die up close and had to carry their bodies out to the chopper.

To me Buddhism is about compassion and social change. The fact that [SGI members have] begun to talk about discrimination (which has existed in this organization as well as society), I think is a tremendous event that I congratulate this organization and the *World Tribune* on.

As for Mr. Kadin, I don't know your background, but if you really feel that the letters of discrimination you read in the *World Tribune* are "malarkey," and if you are tired of reading "whining that this person's point of view has been overlooked, or that person's cultural background has been inadvertently denigrated, or some other person has suffered some injustice," then I might very gently suggest to you that you might want to get to know some of "these people" that you talk about. If you were to do this, it may enlighten you, surprise you and possibly even shame you.

Part of my job duties is working with Native Americans. Remember the old saying that "You don't know who I am until you have walked in my moccasins for awhile." Well, Mr. Kadin, I suggest you run out and buy a pair of moccasins.

— CLINT WILLIAMS, Salem, Ore.

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

All the Difference in the World

PERSPECTIVE

By **TROY D. ROOTS**
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Daddy,

Through the years I have come to understand you and appreciate the difficulties that you encountered. I am now able to see beyond the problems that you and I had and am very glad to have you as my father.

As my eyes open more, I know that the relationship between you and me shall continue to grow and strengthen. I am also able to say something that I don't remember ever saying to you, and that is: I Love You Daddy. Hope your Father's Day was a good one.

Your son, Dwight

I found this card when we were cleaning my dad's apartment in Williamsburg, Va., a year ago February after he died suddenly, probably from more than 50 years of excessive drinking. I couldn't believe that he'd kept not only that card but others as well that I had sent over the years. We had a great relationship at the time of his death; we were really good buddies.

But it wasn't always that way.

From the age of 15, we were archenemies and fought regularly, because he was an alcoholic and an abusive father. For three years, I physically challenged him and oftentimes had to stay with an aunt because he swore he would kill me if I stayed at home. I usually had to stay away at least a week before it was safe to return home.

My parents separated in 1968, my senior year of high school. And I continued to have a sour relationship with my father. I disliked him so much that I never asked him for one thing the entire time I was in college. Didn't want his help. Didn't need his help. Didn't want his money. Didn't need his money.

It wasn't until after I had graduated that things changed. I was visiting some of Daddy's co-workers, when a lady said to me: "John Roots is sure proud of you. All he does is talk about that son of his who graduated from college."

I sat there not believing what I'd just heard. There was no way



Troy Roots (center) repaired his relationship with his father (left).

he could be proud of me, because we hated each other to the max. That statement was probably the turning point that led me to take the necessary steps to change our relationship from a cesspool of hate, anger and violence to one of understanding or, more important, to one of father and son.

It was in the '80s that I started visiting and talking to Daddy whenever I went home. I often would talk with him about why he drank so much and, after many years, concluded that he and men like him were products of their time. They grew up during the Depression and in a period when the social climate of America molded everyone's behavior. There were few good jobs for black men then, few social outlets, and segregation was in its heyday. Black men were not "allowed" to be total men. Therein lies, I believe, a major factor as to why so many men of my dad's era acted the way they did.

In the late '80s, Daddy retired. Shortly after, his sister and her husband died within six months of each other. After his sister's death, I convinced Bubbie Dee (one of my dad's nicknames) to go to California with me to visit his nieces and nephews. On that trip, I received the Gohonzon and made the determination to build healthy, strong and enjoyable relationships with all my family members. That trip became the oil that put our relationship on the fast track.

After visiting California, Daddy and I were always going someplace together. As time went by, it became noticeable to others that our relationship was changing. My sister told me that Daddy would call her after I'd been visiting, angry with her that I had stayed with her instead of him. She also mentioned that Daddy enjoyed the time we spent together.

When I learned about my father's new feelings about the two of us, I was shocked. I had been unaware and was taking for granted our newfound connection. We had grown from hating to actually caring about each other.

Daddy was rushed to the hospital on Sunday, Feb. 25, 1996, when he had trouble breathing. At first, I decided to wait until the following weekend to go home and see him. But a friend convinced me to leave immediately.

At the hospital, I sat at Daddy's bedside and chanted and recited the sutra. I stayed about an hour and then made my way back to Washington.

The next day, Feb. 26, I got the call that Daddy had died. I had no sadness or regret, because I knew I had been courageous enough to look at our relationship from a different perspective. I had taken the necessary steps to repair and polish our relationship that was once shattered and jagged. We had healed old wounds. I had changed. I had grown. I had gained a father and a friend. Ultimately, I had a real sense of joy.

SGI President Ikeda once said: "It is important to take personal responsibility, not to feel that 'Somebody else will get it done.' To wait for someone else to take action is to give away control of our lives.... When we take personal responsibility we can advance.... Without perseverance, nothing significant can be accomplished."

By taking responsibility, I changed our relationship. In doing so, I came to know the person John E. Roots, who was not just the alcoholic I had experienced earlier in my life. Through faith and perseverance, I gained a better understanding of why my father behaved as he did. And that for me has made all the difference in the world. ❧

Similarities of Buddhism, Psychiatry Discussed

PAULING, FROM PAGE 1

encouragement).

The second means is loving speech, in other words, engaging others in conversation and bestowing upon them kind, compassionate words. The third is the general practice of benefiting others, and the fourth is becoming one with others, that is, sharing others' problems as one's own and helping them overcome those problems.

Dr. Pauling, whose ongoing professional interest is in the education of children and youth, said that the four means Mr. Ikeda outlined are very important and have many similarities with approaches used in psychiatry. Treating each patient with respect as an individual, for instance, is crucial in psychiatric treatment, he said.

Taking the four means one by one, Dr. Pauling said that selfless giving — specifically in terms of relieving the patient's anxiety and teaching him or her how to deal with life — is an especially vital element of psychiatry. Dr. Pauling clarified, however, that in psychiatry the emphasis is very much on independence, on enabling patients to find the way themselves. Care needs to be taken by mental health specialists, he said, not to force a predetermined set of values on their patients but to instead guide them through various processes to develop their own sound set of values.

The SGI leader concurred, adding that self-reliance and personal responsibility are also fundamental tenets of Buddhism.

Dr. Pauling explained that when doctor and patient discuss and share their values and views on life, it can lead the patient to recognize what existing attitudes or values are hindering his or her growth and what alternative approaches or values might be adopted. In this process, he said, the second means of loving speech mentioned by Mr. Ikeda is indispensable. Dialogue has to be conducted with concern and compassion, free of criticism or negative comments, he maintained.

The third means, the practice of benefiting others, Dr. Pauling said, resonates with the aims of psychiatric treatment. The fourth means, becoming one with others, might correspond to something like group therapy where people with similar problems share their experiences and means of coping, he observed. President Ikeda shared that the

Linus Pauling Exhibition To Open

In this discussion with Linus Pauling Jr., SGI President Ikeda expressed high hopes for the success of an exhibition on the life of Pauling's father — winner of two Nobel prizes for his achievements in chemistry and peace — which is scheduled to be held in San Francisco next year. The exhibition is being jointly sponsored by Oregon State University, the scientist's alma mater, the SGI and the Pauling family. Mr. Ikeda had broached the subject of mounting such an exhibition with Linus Pauling himself at their last meeting in San Francisco in 1993.

SGI has a long tradition of members gathering to frankly discuss all manner of concerns.

Buddhism urges us to find good friends, or people who can have a positive influence on our lives, the SGI leader said. These are friends who share our joys and sufferings, who sympathize with us and support us unstintingly, he said. They help us erase fears and worries when they arise, save us from self-indul-

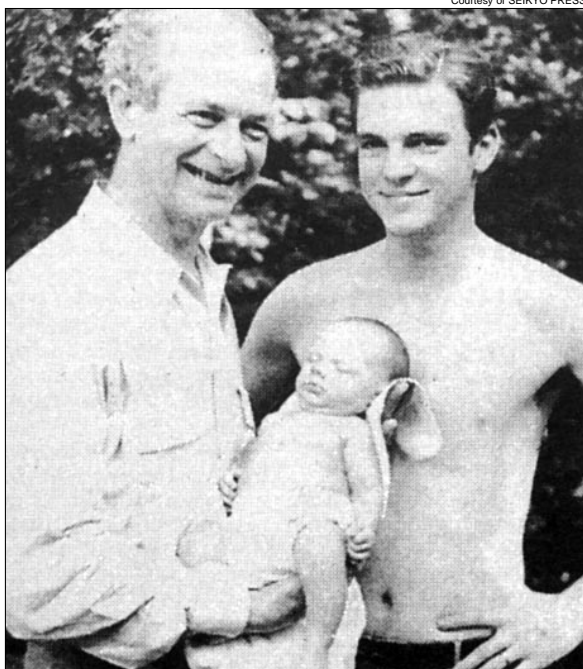
gence, and offer us sincere words of caution.

Mr. Ikeda stressed that children need to have such good friends and that parents and teachers should fulfill this role. This kind of nurturing environment enhances the child's potential for self-realization, he asserted.

Dr. Pauling suggested that the breakdown in communication between adults and children is one of the most serious problems of the modern age. As a result of the crumbling of traditional values, he said, parents are unsure how to deal with children who have different values from them. Because of poor communication, children are left to fend for themselves and make decisions on their own when problems arise. With no one to help them, he stated, they are filled with insecurity. And when they do make a decision, unfortunately it is often the wrong one.

Mr. Ikeda agreed that values have grown confused in today's society. Though we have access to more and more information and knowledge, he said, many people are still at a loss as to what to base their lives on.

**End of part 1.
In part 2, Dr. Pauling and Mr. Ikeda discuss the late Linus Pauling's social activism.**



Three generations of Paulings in a picture from 1949.

NEWS BRIEFS

HONG KONG

Exhibition of European Masters Opens

HONG KONG, OCT. 14 — The exhibition "Masterpieces of Western Oil Painting From the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum" opened today at the Hong Kong Museum of Art. The showing, consisting of works on loan from the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum, is jointly sponsored by the Hong Kong museum and the Hong Kong Urban Council. The 61 paintings on display — works by such masters as Monet, Renoir, Cézanne and Chagall — showcase 500 years of European art, spanning the Renaissance, the French Revolution and the 20th century.

At the opening, Tokyo Fuji Art Museum Vice Director Tatsuo Takakura read a message from SGI President Ikeda describing his joy at sending the exhibition as a "cultural ambassador of art and peace" in this significant year marking the territory's return to China and the 25th anniversary of normalized diplomatic relations between Japan and China. He said he hoped that this event would serve to solidify an eternal bond between the citizens of Japan and Hong Kong.

JAPAN

SGI President Meets With Brazilian Composer

TOKYO, OCT. 7 — SGI President Ikeda met with the internationally acclaimed Brazilian composer and concert pianist Amaral Vieira at the newly completed Min-On Culture Center today. Mr. Vieira, who was visiting Japan en route to China for a number of performances, presented Mr. Ikeda with the piano score and CD recording of his most recent composition, "The Snow Country Prince," which was inspired by the children's story of the same title written by the SGI leader.

Expressing his joy to meet with President Ikeda again, Mr. Vieira said that he had composed "The Snow Country Prince" out of a desire to convey in music the SGI leader's commitment to fostering young people as reflected in the children's tale. He said that he had endeavored in the composition to communicate the message that whatever sorrows we may meet, through our efforts we can turn them into joy.

Mr. Vieira said he feels his great purpose in life is to transmit Mr. Ikeda's ideals to people around the world through music. In fact, this is the sixth piece he has created based on the SGI leader's poetry and thought. In his latest composition, he said he intentionally strove for simplicity so that the score could be played with ease by even beginning musicians.

CHINA

Music School Honors SGI President

BEIJING — President Zhao Feng of the Central Conservatory of Music here informed President Ikeda by letter of the school's intent to name him an honorary professor. The decision was made in recognition of the SGI leader's long-standing contributions to the promotion of China-Japan friendship and his endeavors to cultivate music and academic exchange through such institutes as the Min-On Concert Association and Soka University, both of which he founded.

The conservatory, China's most prestigious music school, was founded in 1950 and is overseen directly by the Ministry of Culture of the State Council. Noted world musicians, such as Italian opera singer Luciano Pavarotti and Japanese conductor Seiji Ozawa, have visited the school. Violinist Yehudi Menuhin is also an honorary professor.

— Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER

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The Hiroshima atomic bomb weighed only one kilogram, the same as 15 eggs. And it instantly killed 140,000 people. This figure was reported by the Hiroshima City Office to the United Nations in 1976. But this was a rough estimation; we still don't have an exact number and never will.

”

The radiation remained in our bodies. Twenty minutes after the blast, the black rain started, containing the radiation. It was a heavy rain, and Hiroshima, which was on fire, was cooled down. The black rain remains in our bodies today in the form of radiation sickness.

Miyoko Matsubara is a survivor of the Hiroshima bombing who has made it her life's work to share her story and speak for nuclear abolition. Jeff Farr, World Tribune associate editor, spoke with her when she visited Soka University of America, Calabasas, Calif., Oct. 20.

INTERVIEW

The Bomb Is Still Exploding

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



Miyoko Matsubara

The black rain remains in our bodies today in the form of radiation sickness.

JF: Many Americans, when they think of the Hiroshima bombing, don't think of its long-term effects on survivors. I understand that you lost three family members to radiation sickness years after the bombing. And for you, in a sense, the bomb is still exploding.

JF: I heard that when the bombing happened you were 12.

MATSUBARA: Yes — almost 13. I was mobilized to the center of Hiroshima city, less than a mile from the target. During the war, every student had to, as you know, work for the government.

MATSUBARA: When I was in Germany, on my way here, many people asked about my health. In 1988 I had to take five months sick leave for breast surgery. I may look fine and healthy, but my old wounds still hurt — all the time. Last year I had to go into the hospital twice to have polyps in my stomach checked. I don't think I'll live much longer.

I was watching the airplane at that moment, so both hands were protecting my eyes and face. If I hadn't been holding both hands in front of my face, I would have lost my eyesight. Eight years later, when I was 21, I had plastic surgery 12 times. As a result, my eyelids could open and close. Until then, they were permanently open from the bombing. So, I was watching the bomb — I saw it. Then I saw a huge fire drop from the tails of the plane. I fell to the ground. At the same time I heard a deafening roar, which must have reached the bowels of the earth. What occurred to me was that the plane had aimed at me.

The Hiroshima atomic bomb weighed only one kilogram, the same as 15 eggs. And it instantly killed 140,000 people. This figure was reported by the Hiroshima City Office to the United Nations in 1976. But this was a rough estimation; we still don't have an exact number and never will.

When I regained consciousness, I had been blown five meters from where I had stood. Immediately, I wanted to cover my face — the smell was so terrible. I took a towel I had at my waist and covered my face, but when I tried to remove it, the skin on my face peeled off. Then I found the

The effect of the bomb came in three parts. Thirty-five percent was in the form of heat rays, 50 percent as blast winds and 15 percent as radiation.

The radiation remained in our bodies. Twenty minutes after the blast, the black rain started, containing the radiation. It was a heavy rain, and Hiroshima, which was on fire, was cooled down.

skin on my hands and legs was also peeling off. All that was left of my jacket was the upper part around my breast. My work trousers were gone, leaving only the waistband. Only my white underwear was left. As you know, black absorbs heat rays and white reflects them. Without my underwear, my whole body would have been completely burned.

I started to head back to my school. At a bridge I had to cross, many people were crying and shouting. Raising their arms in front of their chests, they cried: "Help me! Help me!" In the river, countless dead bodies were carried away on the current. Some sinking. Some floating. Some bodies had been thrown against the riverside and bridge. Their intestines had exploded.

Well, I jumped into the

water, because I was unbearably hot. Then someone called my name: "Miyoko? Miyoko?" But I couldn't recognize who was speaking to me. "I am Michiko," she said. My friend's facial features — eyes, mouth and teeth — were reduced to a pulp. Together we climbed up the other side of the river bank and headed toward school.

But I had to say goodbye to Michiko before we got there. We were unbearably hot, and she said: "Give me water. I am so thirsty."

But I said: "No. Everyone's at school, so we should go."

She said: "I cannot go any farther. Leave me, and tell them I am here. Tell my teacher I am here." Even though she said, "Please go away, go away," she pleaded with her eyes for me to take her with me. I had to say goodbye because big flames were coming. Three days later, her parents found out that she died.

Then the black rain started, for two or three hours in some places. I couldn't move. I was on the ground in the rain. And finally, when the rain finished, I rested under a tree. It was then that my neighbor came, looking for her daughter. I called to her. She was surprised. "Heh? Aren't you Miyoko?" she asked. She decided to save me instead of looking for her own daughter. She never found her daughter.

JF: You must have hated America.

MATSUBARA: At first I blamed America. When I graduated from high school, no one would give me a job because of my face. Sometimes I thought about committing suicide. Sometimes people wouldn't even sit next to me — they were afraid to catch radiation from my body. No one wanted to marry me! They were afraid of having deformed babies. I was so unhappy. And I never married.

One day a friend said, "Miyoko, shall we go to church?" So I started going to church. The members of my church eventually invited us to Osaka for plastic surgery. So, when I was 21, I went to Osaka and had the 12 operations, which took seven months.

In 1955, I also had the chance to come to America for plastic surgery, but I didn't join the program. Twenty-five young women from Hiroshima came to the United States for a few years to have surgery at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York. I couldn't do it because of what America had done.

Of those 25, only one became a storyteller. They don't like to talk about the Hiroshima bombing. They don't want to reveal their wounds to the public.

But I decided to be a storyteller. I went around the world telling my story. I was chosen to represent Hiroshima survivors at the United Nations. I came to the United States, I told my story, and I met Americans who showed me great sympathy. "Why are they so kind?" I wondered. Anyhow, I realized that if Japan had had the nuclear weapon, Japan might have used it. So, I do not hate Americans but war and those nuclear weapons. ❧

MIYOKO MATSUBARA'S MESSAGE TO SGI-USA MEMBERS

In July 1996, the International Court of Justice in the Hague announced its advisory opinion as follows: "The threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law."

In September of the same year, the U.N. General Assembly adopted the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and in December, it announced the adoption of a resolution to conclude the Treaty of the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. A wave of support for nuclear abolition has

been dramatically growing in international society. A time like this provides us the opportunity to raise once again the question, "Are nuclear weapons necessary?"

In this respect, Daisaku Ikeda, president of the SGI, has said: "A revolution within the lives of people is the only path to the abolition of nuclear weapons. And nations should never base their own security and welfare on the people of other nations."

Mr. Ikeda stated further that unless we set the revolution of human life in motion, human beings will never free ourselves from adherence to nuclear weapons.

Josei Toda, second president of the Soka Gakkai, stated in his Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons that atomic and hydrogen bombs are ab-

solute evils. The existence of nuclear weapons itself is an immeasurable threat to precious human lives, he said.

Mr. Toda thus singled out the evil spirit which is behind the desire to possess nuclear weapons. Striving to eradicate this evil in accordance with his mentor's declaration, Mr. Ikeda continues to speak out and take action toward that end.

Finally, we have to consider what we ourselves can do to eliminate nuclear weapons at the level of common citizens and take action toward the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world. So, everyone, please join me in building a solidarity of friendship and dedication to the creation of a peaceful world. Thank you very much. ❧

The New Human Revolution

By HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 5

Young Eagles

Translation of parts 12–14 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.

At the end of his speech, Shin’ichi Yamamoto made the following proposal: “I ask you of the student division to conduct a thorough investigation into which is superior, Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism or other philosophies and systems of thought such as existentialism and Marxism. Please do research that is bold, objective and dogma-free, comparing these philosophies in terms of which provides a complete picture of human life, which offers the fundamental solution to human suffering, which best addresses the realities of daily living, and which can be fully verified by fact.

“And if through your research you conclude that this Buddhism is indeed the greatest of all philosophies and the only true means for leading humanity out of misery and toward happiness, then I ask you to put that conviction into action. Wholeheartedly embracing Nichiren Daishonin’s magnificent teaching, please become friends and allies of the people, and devote your lives to helping those who are suffering find true fulfillment.”

Shin’ichi had absolute faith in Buddhism. He knew that if the student division members earnestly carried out such a comparative study of the Daishonin’s Buddhism and other philosophies, they would eventually come to realize which was the superior and most profound.

But many student division members at that time did not share the same unshakable faith. In the late 1950s and early ’60s, many Japanese youth, galvanized by the debate over revisions to the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty, had strong Marxist leanings. Although most student division members were beginning to recognize that without a human revolution or fundamental transformation in people’s hearts and minds such as that brought about through Buddhist practice, there could be no true reformation of society, many still felt that the road of human revolution was the long way around.

The reactions of the student division members to the frequent student demonstrations against the proposed treaty revision had been varied. Some had been sympathetic to the demonstrations because they had friends who participated, though they themselves refused to. Others, convinced that social revolution was the first priority, had participated in the demonstrations, including the storming of the Japanese Diet compound on June 15, 1960, in which some student division members had been injured.

But a newly revised Security Treaty was enacted in spite of their efforts, and university campuses around Japan were swept with a desolate feeling of futility. This made the time particularly ripe to declare Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism the pivotal philosophy for realizing positive social change. But most of the student division members, not

having delved fully into either Buddhism or the then-widely prevalent Marxist philosophy, were unable to assert the superiority of the Daishonin’s teaching with confidence.

Shin’ichi wanted the students to have a strong desire for knowledge. That was what it meant to be a student, he believed.

Without serious inquiry, one cannot fully appreciate the true value of the principles and philosophy of Buddhism. The more one studies and compares the Daishonin’s teaching with other religions and philosophies, the more one becomes aware of its excellence.

The 5th Student Division General Meeting concluded with a rousing rendition of the new division song, “Young Reformers,” led by Goro Watar, student division chief.

Stepping down from the stage, Shin’ichi headed toward the audience seating area and then exited the hall via one of the aisles, waving and calling out to the members as he went. It was a gesture expressing his desire to advance side-by-side with the student division members toward kosen-rufu.

The next morning, Goro went to thank Shin’ichi for attending the previous day’s general meeting.

“It was my pleasure,” Shin’ichi said. “And congratulations! It looks like the student division has made a fresh start.”

“Yes, I believe so,” agreed Goro. “Today, I’ve come to ask you again about lecturing us on the Goshō.”

“Don’t worry, I haven’t forgotten,” Shin’ichi assured him. “We’ll start soon. How about the end of August for our first lecture? Let’s aim for one lecture a month, and I think 40 or 50 members, men and women, would be a good size for such a gathering.

“Universities today are conducting education more and more like a mass production assembly line, and we don’t want that. The group can be made up mainly of the student division leaders who have participated in our informal meetings along with some representatives from Kansai and other areas.

“As for the Goshō we’ll study, let’s make it the ‘Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings.’ Seeing that the lectures will be for the student division, I feel we should study something a little

difficult.”

“Yes...uh, thank you!” Goro stumbled over his words, unable to conceal his surprise and reservation.

“Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings” is a vital collection of the most profound teachings of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. Goro was worried whether the members would be able to follow lectures on such a difficult subject.

Noting his expression, Shin’ichi said with a smile: “When you and others formed the Tokyo University Lotus Sutra Study Group and attended lectures on the Lotus Sutra by President Toda based on the ‘Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,’ you had only just joined the Soka Gakkai. Don’t worry! The student division leaders today are ahead of where you were then. They are all members of the Soka Gakkai Study Department. They’ll do just fine — you’ll see.

“Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings” represents the quintessence of all systems of thought and philosophy. It fully elucidates the principles of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism — its view of life, religion, the cosmos. The time has now come for the Soka Gakkai to apply those principles to realizing human happiness and prosperity in every realm, including government, business, education, art, literature and journalism. That is why I want the student division leaders to study the ‘Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings’ and gain a profound understanding of the matchless philosophy and principles of the Daishonin’s Buddhism.

“From among the student division members I personally train, I am determined to foster the Soka Gakkai’s successors and great leaders of society.”

Shin’ichi’s words deeply moved Goro.

Goro quickly related to the other student division leaders that President Yamamoto planned to lecture to them on the ‘Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings.’ They were overjoyed. Selection of the lecture series’ participants progressed under Goro’s direction.

Shin’ichi, for his part, spared no effort in preparing for the lectures. He pondered long and deeply each night, rack-

ing his brains over how to best teach and communicate the essence of this ultimate Buddhist scripture to the students.

He recalled being invited to sit in on what was President Toda’s final lecture on the Lotus Sutra to the student division’s Tokyo University study group on Sept. 27, 1955. Like the other participants, Shin’ichi had been determined to engrave every single word of his mentor in his heart and mind. When the lecture was finished, Toda had said to the whole group: “In the future, if there is anything you don’t understand,

just ask Shin’ichi here. All right?”

“Yes!” everyone answered.

“Good,” Toda continued. “Now, the next lecture will be my last in this series.”

But as it turned out, the next lecture never took place. That night was effectively his final lecture in a two-and-a-half-year series with the group.

Shin’ichi couldn’t help thinking of Toda’s words on that occasion as his wish for the future — something he was calling on Shin’ichi to fulfill after he was gone. Shin’ichi felt it his mission to carry on Toda’s work in giving lectures on the Lotus Sutra to the student division members, the next generation of Soka Gakkai leaders. He believed that his planned lectures on the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings” would serve that purpose.

Toda, who had awakened to the ultimate meaning of the Lotus Sutra while in prison, had lectured on the Lotus Sutra based on the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings” and had revitalized Buddhism as a fundamental philosophy of life in the modern age. Now, Shin’ichi, through his lectures on this key Goshō, hoped to reveal the philosophy of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism as a guiding principle that would shape a new era.

The times called for such a fresh guiding principle. The escalating Cold War, fueled by the opposing ideologies of East and West, had cast a dark pall over hopes for human harmony. Though many protested vociferously against nuclear weapons, the great powers raced to increase their arsenals. In Japan, the cost of its “economic miracle” was just beginning to be felt in the form of serious environmental pollution. At the same time, all aspects of Japanese life — government and education particularly — were beginning to reveal their defects.

Shin’ichi believed the time had come for the life philosophy of Buddhism, the principle of human rights and the ethos of peace, to be transmitted to the world. Such were the thoughts that occupied his mind as he spent his days studying and carefully preparing for the lecture series.

(To be continued)

Raise Your Voice on Behalf of Humanity

SIGN POSTS

APPLYING
NICHIREN
DAISHONIN'S
WRITINGS TO
DAILY LIFE

'Grown-up' Appreciation

By REIKO GROSHELL

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

With regard to the debt of gratitude owed to one's parents...it would be difficult to say to which parent one is the more indebted. But it is particularly difficult to repay the great kindness of one's mother.
(*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 251)

I pick up the Goshō periodically to inspire myself to keep studying and recently came upon this letter. After reading it through once, I went back and read it again and highlighted many points. I got excited about it and shared some of the points with my friend, who also got interested.

Nichiren Daishonin is responding to a letter from Sennichi-ama, Abutsu-bo's wife. He expresses that only the Lotus Sutra declares that women can be enlightened. He also says that because he was born a human being and encountered the Lotus Sutra, he is indebted to his parents. I was so moved by this. Nichiren Daishonin writes: "If, in desiring to repay it [one's debt of gratitude], one seeks to do so by following the outer scriptures..., he will be able to provide for his mother in this life, but he cannot assist her in the life to come. Although he may provide for her physically, he will be unable to save her spiritually" (MW-6, 251).

Now that I am a "grown-up," I can truly appreciate my mother for sharing with me this Buddhism. Even though I went through the regular process of not wanting to practice or thinking how embarrassing it was for me to be a Buddhist, having to belong to an organization and — *what!?* — introduce others, I have realized through study and actual proof how fortunate I am to have encountered all this. Although I try to support my mother as much as I can physically and materially, I realize that my contribution to her eternal well-being all comes from my prayer of appreciation for her. Knowing my mother very well, for she is my best friend, I know all she wants for me is to further my development and solidify my commitment to this practice. Through doing this for myself, I am in turn repaying my debt of gratitude to her every day. ☐

THOUGHTS ON NOV. 18

What It Means To Be a Buddhist

By TERRY ELLIS
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

I snatched myself a morning walk on the beach the other day — a retreat from my usually hectic morning routine. It was a perfect day, calling me to do the one thing that always gets left out (exercise). No excuses today: The Florida sun had mellowed, and a pleasant breeze was blowing in off the Atlantic. Thirty minutes for me, alone with the ocean.

Or so I thought. Linda was heading down to the sand at the same time, and our pace eventually brought us alongside each other. She made some friendly opening conversation, and soon we were getting to know each other.

Buddhism came out quickly and quite naturally as a topic of discussion related to keeping both physically and spiritually healthy. Turns out she had been introduced to Buddhism more than 25 years ago and still chants sometimes because she recognizes daimoku as a "strong centering force."

As our journey down the beach progressed so did our discussion, more and more frankly. By the time we turned back, she was telling me what turned her off about the old SGI-USA organization — that community of believers through which she had been introduced to Buddhism. To her eyes, it appeared hierarchical. People seemed almost co-dependent in their relationship to the leaders, she said. And there seemed to be little respect for the life-experience of people new to the philosophy; what they had to offer in the way of wisdom.

I acknowledged all that. So we talked about how difficult it is to create a religious organization which, while trying to share its point of view, doesn't fall back on the use of authority or position. I also was glad to explain to her that for the last seven years, the SGI has been struggling to establish for itself an identity separate from the extremely hierarchical priesthood, that we're on the path of building an organization free of those influences.

After all, as I explained to her, Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, from the beginning cautioned people to follow the Law, not the person. Even Hollywood shed light on this principle recently in the movie *Seven Years in Tibet*: At one turning point, we hear the youthful Dalai Lama caution his European friend not to follow him, to follow the Law. But for all practical purposes, the rituals surrounding Buddhism, even in this movie, seem to communicate a different message.

People keep seeing Buddhists praying and following something outside themselves. And Buddhists themselves have made the same mistake. But the fact remains that from the time of Shakyamuni to the present age, Buddhism has always been a struggle by individuals to awaken the Law in their lives. There are no short-

cuts, and there is no person who can guarantee that enlightenment. As a leader in the SGI-USA, I said to Linda, I always remind myself of that fact. But people also have to be ready to hear it and take responsibility for their lives.

There beside the ocean, I remembered it was almost seven years since I first realized I had joined a religion with a corrupt priesthood. ME — a person who had scorned religion for just that reason, but who had set aside reason because I believed I had found a true religion, one that would prevent such a thing from happening.

My reasoning was too simplistic. And looking back now, I see that I too easily laid aside responsibility for my life by believing in a special or secret "heritage of the Law" that could only be passed down among priests. In a sense, I let down my guard and turned my life over to someone else.

Since 1990, as I have studied Buddhism with a new passion, I have realized that I should not have been surprised by what has happened in recent history. After all, going back at least 2,000 years, it was monks who destroyed Buddhism in India. After Shakyamuni's death, those who had left their homes to follow him at first built stupas to hold his ashes in and commemorate his life. But within 500 years, they were carving and painting Buddhas that looked an awful lot like themselves. (It's no wonder that the most famous Buddhist in India after Shakyamuni was a lay leader, King Ashoka. He united India and ruled peacefully using Buddhist ideals — and protecting the religious freedom of all people.)

Like Shakyamuni before him, the great Buddhist teacher in China, T'ien-t'ai, was born into the secular world. He entered a Buddhist temple at the age of 18 to study soon after his parents died. He is said to have reached enlightenment at age 23 by studying the 23rd chapter of the Lotus Sutra. T'ien-t'ai's teachings spread to Japan, through priests like Dengyo, but his followers in China soon distorted the teachings. In Japan, too, Buddhist teachings became a tool associated with feudal power, and the spirit of Buddhism was lost until Nichiren Daishonin's appearance in 1222.

Understanding the history of Buddhism, Nichiren wisely inscribed the Dai-Gohonzon and told his followers that while this was the object of veneration — the heart of his teachings — it existed in faith alone. Each person still



Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

had to awaken to the Law through practice and study.

The history of the priests who followed Nichiren both while he lived and after he died shows that some understood this principle and some did not. It's thus clear to me why it was Tsunesaburo Makiguchi — a teacher concerned about the happiness of his students — who brought Buddhism back to life in this century. At that time of war, Nichiren Shoshu priests lacked the courage and conviction necessary to protect Buddhism from military authorities who demanded obedience to a nationalistic religion.

I realize that even the SGI, especially as it grows into a larger religious organization, isn't immune to corruption. For instance, given the personal greatness of someone like SGI President Ikeda, it's easy to think those who are closest to him are the most enlightened. But President Ikeda's greatness comes from his intense struggle to fuse his life with the Law — just as did the greatness of all Buddhists in history. If Shakyamuni and T'ien-t'ai and Nichiren couldn't guarantee enlightenment to anyone, wouldn't we be foolish to think our age is any different?

Just stopping at this, with all the facts of history in clear view, I ask myself why we're trying to build an organization at all. Why have Buddhists throughout history continued to build communities of faith despite the obvious pitfalls?

When my life-condition is high, I can feel the answer clearly in that image from the Lotus Sutra of jewels intertwined in a web, reflecting and magnifying one another's beauty. And I don't have to worry that I'll be sucked in and made insignificant. I feel this web growing to fill the entire universe and catch a glimpse of the wisdom of all Buddhas — that life itself is a joy. When my life-condition isn't so high, I feel like being alone with the Law, as I did when I went for that walk by the ocean. That's when someone usually comes along to reach out to me, and remind me what it means to be a Buddhist. ☐

Raise Your Voice on Behalf of Humanity



Rabindranath Tagore

SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech during the presentation of the 1997 Tagore Peace Award from India's Asiatic Society, at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in New Delhi, India, Oct. 23.

Namaste! First, please allow me to express my heartfelt gratitude for this solemn and splendid ceremony. I will never, for all eternity, forget this sublime and powerfully moving event.

Just now, we enjoyed a song that set to music the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore. This melody, this song of profound gravity and subtlety, dignified and beautiful, seemed to come from the heavens beyond, from the very depths of the soul.

As I listened, I was taken with a vision of an extraordinary poet, a man of greatness, traveling across desolate fields for the sake of humankind. At times, he is lit by the light of the moon, at times bathed in sweat beneath a brilliant sun. I picture him walking, solitary and dignified, by the edge of the ocean, on a mountain peak...such were the images conjured in my heart by this moving song, for which

I again express my sincere gratitude.

Respected Vice President Bhattacharji, respected Vice President Banerjee, respected General Secretary De, respected Council Member Chowdhury, esteemed professors and scholars of the Asiatic Society, respected Director Kumar of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, ladies and gentlemen:

It is an inexpressible honor to receive the first Tagore Peace Award of the Asiatic Society, the source of illumination for India's renaissance and a lofty spiritual palace of humanity.

I am particularly honored to be conferred an award bearing the name of this great poet of peace and son of the timeless land of Bengal, and from your society whose noble endeavors over the past two centuries have shared the cultural heritage of India, the great land of spirituality, with the entire world.

My heartfelt gratitude to all the members of this distinguished gathering who came today, despite the many demands on your time, in the open-minded spirit of friendship that Rabindranath Tagore so poetically describes in this passage:

"The meeting of Man in this inner chamber [of the spirit] is the true meeting. For many days many signs have appeared that the call has come to the Bengalis to open the door to this meeting" (from Stephen N. Hey's *Asian Ideas of East and West: Tagore and His Critics in Japan, China and India*)

Further, I share this great joy and honor with my beloved fellow members of Bharat Soka Gakkai and all our friends of the SGI in 128 countries worldwide, who join us in offering their wholehearted felicitations on the auspicious 50th anniversary of Indian independence.

My youth was passed in the company of the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore, his magnificent songs in praise of life's ineffable mysteries. In the chaotic years following Japan's defeat in World War II, I sought out his works in used bookstores, reading, reciting, committing passage upon passage to memory. They were for me an inexhaustible source of spiritual nourishment.

Tagore was indeed a renaissance master who towers alongside the likes of Leonardo da Vinci and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. He is Asia's pride, the world's treasure. The warm visage of his later years, in particular, radiates the sainted life-state of one who has surmounted innumerable obstacles and trials.

It is impossible to ascertain the full measure of the message and meaning of this august visionary of peace. If one were, however, to attempt to distill just three principles from that great life, the first would no doubt be: Take action! Go out to meet people, forging bonds of friendship with them!

Throughout a period marred by two world wars, Tagore embarked on travels for peace that forged connections with people throughout world, demonstrating that the power of the spirit is greater even than the conflicts of the mundane realm.

Long ago, Gautama Buddha urged his disciples to travel to neighboring countries in all four directions in order to bring happiness to vast numbers of people. It was Rabindranath Tagore who put this ancient cosmopolitan spirit into practice in the midst of a war-torn 20th century.

The first time I traveled to Calcutta, home to Tagore and the Asiatic Society, was during my first visit to India in 1961, the centennial of Tagore's birth.

As he stated, when one awakens to the eternal life that is shared in common by all humankind, "then alien there is none, then no

door is shut" (from Tagore's "Gitanjali"). In my travels around the world, the conviction that Tagore expressed so poetically is never far from my heart.

The second principle of peace Tagore teaches us might be expressed thus: Raise your voice on behalf of humanity!

As is well known, Tagore was one of the first to warn the world of the growing threat of Japanese militarism. Most regrettably, however, the intellectual and religious leaders of Japan, who should have been the first to respond to his call, were silenced by their cowardice. Silence was reprehensible enough; yet many acquiesced and lent their support to the ultra-nationalists.

This was the setting against which the first and second presidents of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, put their lives on the line by raising their voices for peace.

"Man's history is waiting in patience for the triumph of the insulted man" (from Tagore's *Stray Birds*). I am particularly fond of these words from Tagore.

To ensure a lasting victory over barbarian violence, we must forge solidarity among the world's peoples — we must enable the voices that speak for humanity's interest to resound far and wide. As Tagore puts it in one of his most moving poems (from *The Herald of Spring: Poems From Mohua*):

*The glory of the sun
Shines in the valour of man.*

Finally, the third lesson for peaceful action taught us by Tagore is: Plant the seeds of peace in the hearts of the young!

Tagore's fatherly compassion also found expression in his endeavors as an educator, as the founder of a university. It was his custom, upon returning from his travels, to share with the students stories of the people of character and justice he had met, ordinary citizens who had inspired his affection. In this way, he sought to inculcate a sense of the unity of humankind in these young lives.

As one who has also founded an education system that includes high schools and a university, I fully appreciate the powerful sentiments that moved Tagore. The focus of all our efforts must be the education of youth.

Yesterday, I had the privilege of meeting with President Narayanan and sharing thoughts on the future of India, 60 percent of whose population can be considered youth. As a land of great youth, India is a land of great

hope. In the power and passion of India's courageous young people, who are imbued with a profound philosophy, I see a limitlessly brilliant future.

Rabindranath Tagore's 80 years of life were marked by ceaseless struggle, as he exerted his every last measure of mental and physical energy to educate and foster youth, to awaken the common people, to realize the creative fusion of the civilizations of East and West, and to realize harmony between human beings and nature. As he wrote in *Wings of Death*:

*All that I had to give,
I have given utterly.*

I believe that these words — unhesitating, unrestrained — are a song of ultimate triumph in life.

I am likewise determined, so long as I live, to work, together with our distinguished friends gathered here today as representatives of India's finest intellects, to create value in the form of culture, education and peace.

I will continue to burn with the flame of passionate commitment. For this is the only means by which I can respond to the great honor and responsibility of being recipient of the first Tagore Peace Award.

I offer my heartfelt prayers for the continued flourishing of the Asiatic Society, as you continue to illuminate humanity into the 21st century with the great light of spirituality.

In closing, I'll recite this passage from Tagore's poem "Gitanjali," which I understand was deeply loved by Jawaharlal Nehru, many of whose courageous endeavors in building a nation were conducted in this very place.

*Where the mind is without
fear and the head is held
high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not
been broken up into
fragments by narrow
domestic walls;
Where words come out from
the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving
stretches its arms
towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of
reason has not lost its
way into the dreary desert
sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led
forward by thee into
ever-widening thought
and action —
Into that heaven of freedom,
my Father, let my
country awake.* ❧

No Laptops Allowed



A late afternoon hilltop view overlooking the Carambola Hotel Resort with the Caribbean Sea in the background.

By JONATHAN WILSON
PHILADELPHIA PHOTOGRAPHER

In the early fall, I was asked by the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper, to travel to the Caribbean on a photo assignment. I noticed a passenger on my flight pecking away at her Powerbook. Being compulsive about my work — and life in general — I wished I had brought my laptop along.

Robert Luke, the St. Croix young men's division chief, met me at the airport. Nonplused, I watched as he walked over to the young woman and, in a total deadpan, said that laptops were not permitted on the island because they prevented people from relaxing. It brought broad smiles. This way my first introduction to Caribbean culture.

Robert is a comedian, the co-host of the Virgin Islands' top-rated morning radio show, "The Breakfast Flakes." While I was anxious about my pictures and wanted to go directly to Dr. Cora Christian's office (Cora is a physician and head of the SGI organization in St. Croix), Robert had other plans: I was taken directly to the beach! Ah, Caribbean culture.

St. Croix is a thriving organization with a contingent of young people who, like Robert, embrace the organization and practice so naturally that the SGI appears to be an island institution rather than a new arrival.

Several days later I arrived in St. Maarten to photograph Valerie and Humphrey Giterson, the Caribbean Headquarters leaders as well as the island's chapter leaders. The island has two sides, Dutch and French, yet it was clear that the members from each side of the island interact seamlessly.

I was struck anew by the universality of this practice, how all our prayers are so similar. Our hearts share the same desires — the growth and happiness of our members and for SGI President Ikeda to visit at the earliest possible date!



Valerie Giterson addresses members at a chapter meeting on St. Maarten.

Photos by Jonathan Wilson



Physician and SGI leader Cora Christian examines a patient in her office in Frederiksted, St. Croix.



Comedian and morning show host Robert Luke carries on during a bit on the Isle 95 morning show, 'The Breakfast Flakes.' The show is the top-rated morning radio show in the eastern Caribbean. Newscaster Tony Williams is in the background.

JERI LOVE, PASADENA, CALIF.

Never Concede Defeat

I began suffering from chronic depression in 1971, right after my high school graduation, when my only sibling was killed in an accident in Africa.

I developed tremendous guilt about being alive, because I believed that my older sister was a much better person than I. Abusing alcohol and illegal drugs was how I coped.

Eventually, I was so tormented by this guilt that I dropped out of college for a time and attempted suicide. It took me seven years after graduating from high school to receive a bachelor's degree in journalism.

I became a quiet, trustworthy workaholic, who was professionally very successful. But after hours, I was a wild and crazy drunk and a drug addict. This lasted for 16 years.

My life hit rock bottom in early 1987, while I was living in New York. During an argument with a man I was dating, he pointed a gun at my head. Terrified as I watched my life flash before my eyes, I made a deal with the universe: If I survive this, I thought, I will change my life forever. He pulled the trigger.

And the gun jammed.

A year later, I was introduced to the Gohonzon. Six months after that, my sponsor became my husband.

As I started chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, I could see things I needed and wanted to change. And as I chanted and participated in kosen-rufu activities, I developed the motivation to change them. It was to be a journey of change that would last nine years.

Despite my professional success, I lacked self-esteem and belief in my abilities. The more I chanted, however, the more I began to believe in my potential. I began taking classes that re-ignited a smoldering dream to be a creative writer. In addition, I realized I wanted to live without the crutch of alcohol or drugs. As Nichiren Daishonin says in the Goshō "On Attaining Buddhahood":

Even a tarnished mirror will shine like a jewel if it is polished. A mind which presently is clouded by illusions originating from the innate darkness of life is like a tarnished mirror. But once it is polished, it will become clear, reflecting the enlightenment of immutable truth. (*The Major*

Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 5)

In 1991, three years after receiving the Gohonzon, I returned to school full-time to study play writing. I began my journey of sobriety the next day. I have been sober for more than six years and eleven months.

Two years into my sobriety, my husband and I separated, and I finally came face to face with the chronic depression that my alcohol, drug abuse and co-dependency had been masking for years. My leader encouraged me: Chant to be happy, to overcome your emotional suffering and to create value at your job, so that you can achieve your mission.

I had to drop out of school to return to work in public relations. I was also a women's division district chief. With daimoku and determination, I developed a reputation for being an accessible, helpful and compassionate manager and leader.

A new job brought me to Los Angeles in May 1994. However, I began to regret leaving New York. As my workload intensified, my depression deepened. Although I did morning and evening gongyo every day, because of increasing job responsibilities and worsening depression, my daimoku and participation in SGI activities became inconsistent.

In September 1995, my father-in-law, Herb Graves, died. He had more than filled the gap left by the death of my father the year before we met. Herb was also my first district chief. After his death, I began the worst tailspin of my life.

It hurt to talk to people about anything other than work, let alone about my suffering. I spent most of my weekends in endless crying binges, rarely answering my telephone at night. I stopped returning the calls of people who left messages. I also didn't open any of my mail, letting birthday and holiday cards accumulate for two years.

Even though I had money in the bank, my bills were always delinquent. I gained weight and developed a myriad of health problems. Worse, my desire to commit suicide returned, and I wrestled with those demons on a daily basis. I realize now that my life had absolute protection from the Buddhist gods during that period, and I have so much appreciation for surviving that world of Hell while remaining steadfast to my determination to stay sober.

The turning point for me came when I read the following

guidance from SGI President Ikeda, which appeared in the February 1996 *Seikyo Times*:

Being born as a common mortal is the karma we have taken on so that we may demonstrate the power of the Mystic Law. For that reason, it is inconceivable that we cannot overcome any of the problems that confront us. We are all leading players who have taken our place here in this trouble-filled *saha* world in order to act out the drama of kosen-rufu.

It was a lightning bolt that woke up my life. I made a determination to overcome my depression, so that I could prove the validity of the Law and get on with my mission.

Within a month, I found a wonderful, deeply compassionate and caring therapist. I chanted daimoku to have a life-to-life connection with her, so that I could learn what I needed to know to overcome my suffering. I also made a determination to be active in my district and reach out to the members with whom I was practicing.

The next nine months were a roller coaster ride between the worlds of Hell and Realization. I dealt with new flashbacks of childhood sexual abuse that I had buried deep within my subconscious; I agreed to my husband's request that we divorce and took responsibility for filing the papers; and I successfully navigated several crises at work. Through it all, I kept chanting.

And after overcoming each obstacle, a new spark of light appeared. Although the veil of depression remained, I was more hopeful that a total breakthrough was not only possible but imminent.

On New Year's Day 1997, I made three determinations: to overcome my depression once and for all; to leave my job and go back to being a full-time writer; and to re-establish a friendship with my former husband, with whom I hadn't talked in nearly a year.

I launched a daimoku campaign and increased my kosen-rufu activities. I went on home visits with my leaders. I also read everything I could find about depression and natural remedies.

I changed my diet, cutting out wheat products and taking super blue-green algae. That was the first time the physical manifestations of my depression abated,



Jeri Love

and I was excited. Next, I increased and regulated my exercise program, and another layer of fog lifted. Then, I gave up all caffeine products.

It felt like a breakthrough, but none of the results were long-lasting, and the darkness, although not as thick as before, kept returning. I continued to chant for total victory.

I accomplished important milestones in my life. I left my job in May, and I am now writing full-time again. And in July, my former husband and I had a heart-to-heart dialogue for the first time in three years.

The depression, now manageable, was still getting in the way of my creative work. I was having a hard time focusing; I was listless and felt a lot of anxiety.

Earlier this year, I participated in chanting sessions at my leader's home every morning for two weeks. After one session, a member shared with me some guidance she had received from SGI Women's Division Chief Yumiko Hachiya: "No matter how impossible your reality may appear, you must never concede defeat."

The next morning, I re-determined that I was going to break through my depression by the end of 1997, and I placed that "never concede defeat" guidance on my altar. Two weeks after the chanting sessions ended, I got very ill. The diagnosis was hypoglycemia.

I read everything I could get my hands on about this incurable but manageable disease. Also known as low blood sugar, hypoglycemia is the opposite of diabetes. In a book titled *The Low Blood Sugar Handbook* is a list of 60 symptoms related to hypoglycemia. The word *depression* jumped out at me as if it were flashing neon. Alcoholism, lack of focus, allergies, backache and muscle pain, anxiety and digestive problems — all conditions I have

suffered — were also on the list. I began to cry and immediately said Nam-myoho-enge-kyo three times with appreciation.

I've been negligent about taking care of myself in the past, so I made a determination in front of the Gohonzon to follow the nutritionist's directions and exercise daily, no matter what. Every obstacle in the world challenged me on that determination, and in less than one week, I failed to follow an important instruction — to eat regularly. The crash I felt was horrible. I had a raging, blinding migraine until the next day.

But by the end of the same week, I also had the breakthrough for which I had been chanting! For one day, my depression totally, completely and positively lifted. I am still trying to find the words to describe the deep, spontaneous and total joy I felt when I realized I wasn't depressed. For the first time in a very long time, I really *wanted* to be alive! That night, I chanted daimoku with MUCH appreciation for my breakthrough, and I re-determined that I would have both the life-condition and the courage to continue to be victorious every day in the fight to feel good and be healthy.

My heart is overflowing with gratitude and appreciation for President Ikeda. Because of his example, I am determined to be a writer and teacher whose work not only pays tribute to the sanctity of all life but also stands as a testament to the potential and power of the human spirit.

I encourage all of you today to stand up and do battle with the karma that you, as Bodhisattvas of the Earth, have chosen. Chant daimoku. Study and follow President Ikeda's guidance. Read the Goshō. Take action.

And most important: Never, never, ever concede defeat. ❧

DISCUSSIONS ON YOUTH

Knowing History, Knowing Yourself



Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

'Imagine yourself looking down from a high mountain. From an elevated vantage point, it is easy to pick out the road on which to proceed. History helps us see the direction in which our age is heading, how we can steer the times in the best direction.'

This is the 14th installment of a series of discussions on youth among SGI President Ikeda and Soka Gakkai high school division chiefs Hidenobu Kimura (young men's chief) and Kazue Igeta (young women's chief), representing the high school division members.

KIMURA: Today's theme is history. There are some who love to study history, who find it engaging. Then there are others who dislike it, finding history classes boring because of the emphasis on memorizing long lists of facts and dates.

IGETA: A lot of students are critical of their history classes. There are a few teachers, though, who give vivid, inspiring accounts of various historical episodes or use audiovisual presentations to try to make history come alive.

KIMURA: What can we gain from studying history?

IKEDA: One important thing is a broader point of view. If we're always looking at the ground when we walk down the street, we're likely to get lost. But by looking up, choosing

something big by which to orient ourselves, we can make sure we are heading in the right direction.

Another way of thinking of it is to imagine yourself looking down from a high mountain. From an elevated vantage point, it is easy to pick out the road on which to proceed.

The same is true of life. If you always have a shallow perspective and only pay attention to trivial things, you are sure to get bogged down in petty worries and concerns, and not be able to move forward. Even relatively minor hurdles or problems will seem insurmountable. But if you look at life from a broad viewpoint, you will naturally spot the solution for any problem you confront. This is true when we consider our personal problems as well as those of society and even the future of the entire world.

The second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda, always said that leaders should study and read history books. History helps us see the direction in which our age is heading, how we can steer the times in the best direction. The German poet Goethe wrote:

He who cannot be far-sighted,

*Nor 3,000 years assay,
Inexperienced stays
benighted,
Let him live from day to day.*

That's why I want to say: Don't get tied up in knots over unimportant things. The more problems you have, the more you should read history books. Studying history takes you back to the events and lives you are reading about. You meet passionate revolutionaries and base traitors. You encounter vainglorious tyrants and tragic heroes. You come to know people who sought only to lead peaceful lives but were forced to wander through the wilderness. You experience the brief moments of peace between seemingly endless stretches of war, like sweet shade from the burning sun.

You see large numbers of people sacrificed for what we now know was foolish superstition, as well as men and women of principle who gave their lives for the love of their fellows. You meet great people who pulled themselves up from the depths of suffering to make the impossible possible. You watch this unfolding drama from a distance, or view it as in its midst

— history is played out inside the human mind.

Watching this drama unfold in our minds, we naturally learn to see life from an expansive point of view. We can see ourselves riding the crest of the grand river of history. We see where we have come from, where we are, and where we're going.

History is our roots. Those who have studied history in depth have become aware of their origins, their heritage. Knowing history is knowing oneself. At the same time, the better one knows oneself and human nature, the more accurate picture one gets of history. This is how we acquire an insight into history.

KIMURA: Some say history repeats itself. Others say it doesn't. Which do you think is true?

IKEDA: History is a record of human probability, human cause and effect, and the science of human activity. We might call it the statistics of the human race.

For instance, though we can't predict the weather with complete accuracy, we can forecast weather trends based on statistics, on probability. The human heart is also unpredictable, but

if we look at history we see trends, probabilities in human actions.

The study of history, then, is the study of humanity. Although not everyone can be a professional historian, it is important to use history as a mirror to guide us in shaping the future. You are the protagonists who will write a fresh history.

Without a mirror, it's impossible for you to see your own face or full appearance. Similarly, armed with the mirror of history, you can see what needs to be done. It's interesting, by the way, that many Japanese works of history have been called mirrors — for example, *Okagami* (Great Mirror), *Imakagami* (Mirror of the Present), *Mizukagami* (Water Mirror) and *Masukagami* (Clear Mirror) [these are from the 11th–14th centuries].

Mr. Toda stressed the importance of history. He said it is a signpost helping us move with greater certainty from the past to the present, from the present to the future, toward the goals of peace and the harmonious co-existence of all humankind.

There is so much recorded history now that one person cannot absorb it all. That is why it is necessary to have a firm historical perspective, an understanding of basic historical principles, even if we can't know every single fact and detail. If we are aware, through our knowledge of history, of humanity's negative tendencies, we can be on the lookout for them and avoid a repetition of our dark, destructive history. Repeating history's abominations signals a failure to learn the lessons that history teaches.

IGETA: It is certainly true that if all you focus on is names, events and dates, history loses much of its interest.

IKEDA: It is important to master the basics of history, of course, but it is more important to use it to acquire the ability to see the truth. Napoleon described history as an agreed-upon story. That is true in some respects — the history that is recorded and passed on does not always accurately transmit the truth. Of course, we know the dates on which certain events took place. I am not talking about such unarguable facts and details. But the historical conclusions based on those dates are not so reliable. At times, the exact opposite of the truth becomes the recorded historical opinion. And far more im-

PLEASE SEE HISTORY, NEXT PAGE

Photo by MISA CRYSTALL

HISTORY, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

portant truths are not recorded or transmitted at all.

KIMURA: That reminds me of a passage in *A Youthful Diary*. "History in books is full of errors," you wrote. "But in one's own history, the history written only in one's heart, one cannot record a single falsehood or embellish anything" (June 15, 1950).

IKEDA: History is never definitive. It can be interpreted in many different ways, which is why we mustn't swallow everything that is written in history books.

For example, let's look at the Crusades launched by Western Christians against Muslim powers during the Middle Ages. European and Islamic accounts of the Crusades have almost nothing in common! And most of the world history we study in Japan derives from European accounts. Though it's natural if you think about it, Islamic history books don't even use the heroic-sounding term *crusaders* to describe the aggressors who invaded their lands.

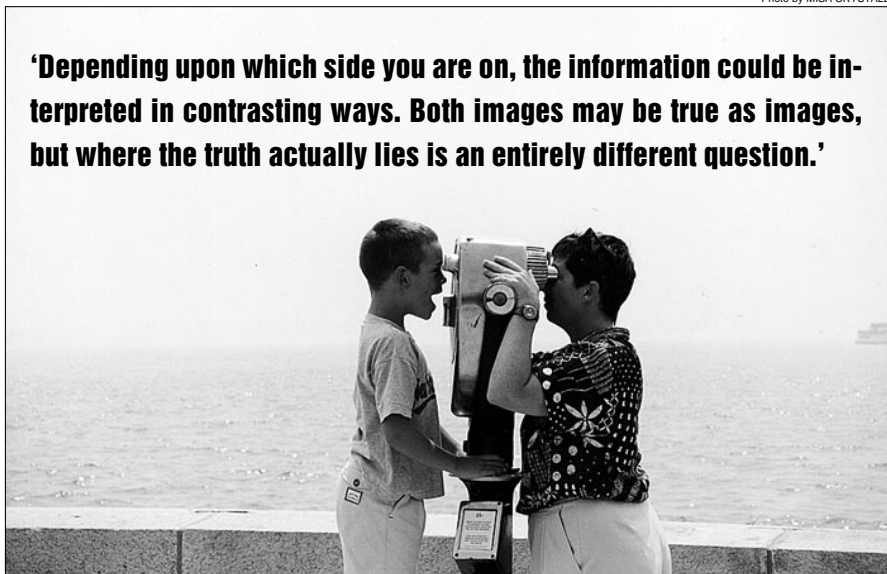
In fact, at the time, Islamic civilization was far more advanced than that of Europe. The crusaders invaded Islamic states, looting and pillaging, leaving a trail of destruction. At least that is how Muslims see it. Islamic histories record the horrible atrocities that the crusaders committed.

The true history of the Crusades is not simply a matter of the past, either. A strong prejudice against Islamic civilization persists today, casting a dark shadow over our chances for world peace. It is a problem of today. It is a problem of the future.

Another example: In the past, it was widely taught that Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas. But people were already living there long before. It was a discovery from the European perspective, but not from that of the Native Americans.

The problem is that the concept of discovery inherently devalues and discriminates against the Americas' original inhabitants. The conquerors of the so-called New World were so self-centered that they didn't even regard the indigenous peoples as human beings!

As Europeans moved from island to island, they slaughtered the inhabitants, rounding them up as slave labor, nearly wiping out entire populations. While the inhabitants had wel-



'Depending upon which side you are on, the information could be interpreted in contrasting ways. Both images may be true as images, but where the truth actually lies is an entirely different question.'

comed them with open arms and helped them, the European invaders repaid them with betrayal and violence. What can we say about this historical truth? The view that Columbus discovered America legitimizes the "discoverers." At the same time, it legitimizes similar actions by others. Within the word *discovery*, we can detect a self-righteous historical view, a view of humanity that justifies the subjugation of other peoples in one's own interests.

Perhaps we can call this the colonial viewpoint. This gave birth to tragedies the world over — not only in North and South America but in Africa and Asia as well — for 500 years. This is why one's view of history is important. From a history of "discovery" comes a future of subjugation. It leads to misery and tragedy.

This colonial view of history lay behind Japan's invasion of Asia as well. From the Meiji period, beginning in 1868, we Japanese were intent on catching up with Europe and aimed at becoming the Europeans of Asia. We treated our fellow Asians in the same way that the Europeans treated the indigenous peoples of America after Columbus' arrival. We became subservient and fawning to white people, and arrogant and cruel to all other races. This Jekyll-and-Hyde nature of the Japanese, which persists, comes from this historical viewpoint.

What we should have done, of course, was build friendly ties with our fellow Asians and work with them toward world peace. If the leaders of Japan had possessed such a view — and such a vision of the future — the recent history of Japan would have been entirely different.

One's view of history is crucial. Chancellor Wang Gungwu of the University of Hong Kong spelled it out clearly: "When leaders have a mistaken view of history, many decisively negative influences result, and they in turn push society in an even more mistaken direction."

IGETA: Columbus didn't discover anything, then. The people of Europe and the Americas simply met one another, that's all.

IKEDA: Yes. A view of history based on the idea of encounters is one in which all parties are equal. At the very least, it shows respect for one another. The reality in this case, however, was that the Europeans invaded the Americas.

KIMURA: So a single historical event can take on opposing meanings depending upon how it is interpreted or explained.

IKEDA: Not only historical events but current events as well. They all take on completely different meanings depending upon how they are viewed, what the viewer's agenda is.

For example, let's say that there is a demonstration in a certain country. The police try to stop it, and there is a fracas. If a TV camera is within the group of demonstrators, it will show the fierce faces of police officers swinging their nightsticks. Those who see the image will sympathize, naturally, with the demonstrators. But if the camera is on the side of the police, it may show the protesters as an unruly mob, angrily throwing stones and resisting police efforts to keep peace and order.

IGETA: Someone watching that image could decide it is a riot.

IKEDA: Depending upon which side you are on, the information could be interpreted in contrasting ways. Both images may be true as images, but where the truth actually lies is an entirely different question. Even the fact that a demonstration occurred cannot be understood without knowing why it took place, why it may have been suppressed. Knowing this background is essential in knowing the truth of the event.

KIMURA: We live in what we call the information age, but though enormous quantities of information are available, I think its quality is often questionable. Does the information come from the side of the people or the side of the authorities? In far too many cases, the intent behind the information is only to make money or create scandal.

IKEDA: Which only reinforces my point about how difficult it is to learn the full truth about past events. The history books are written by the victors, they say. Might makes right — the losers are portrayed as evil, as wrong. We must always be aware of this. And we must leave a record of true, correct history.

That is also why it is important for us not to lose in our struggle. We must create a history in which those who champion justice, truth and integrity prevail.

Both a solid historical perspective and insight are important. A pile of bricks is not a house, and you can't write history by just gathering a pile of facts. A history reflects, through

the way in which its combined facts represent reality, the perspective of its historian. We need to be aware of this.

In reading a work of history, you must cultivate your historical sense by always remaining critically aware, by searching for the truth. Sometimes you will agree with the writer, sometimes you won't. There is no simple method to achieve this sense of history.

The only way is to study many things, think about many things, and experience many things. And it is crucial to remain objective. You must always seek the facts, the truth, without succumbing to your personal biases or self-interest. Never accept a lie.

The way in which World War II is presented has long been a problem in Japan. Whatever shameful acts took place, it is extremely important for the Japanese people and the world that the truth be recorded and passed on. That period may be a single frame in the long reel of human history, but our view of history will be distorted unless the truth is recorded. Not only that: Falsified or incomplete history causes future misfortune.

Creating a true historical record is creating the road to peace and happiness for all humanity. History must not be warped and distorted. Fabricated history is no more than fiction. Hiding unpleasant things and only recording favorable achievements isn't history — it's no more than a forged résumé. History must be recorded objectively and accurately, based on formal evidence and reliable firsthand witnesses.

IGETA: In the former West Germany, it was recommended that 60 classroom hours be devoted to the study of the Nazi period, and visits to the concentration camps were also strongly recommended. In this, we can clearly perceive the German people's sincere determination to honestly face and learn from their past mistakes.

IKEDA: I once met the first president of the unified Germany, Richard von Weizsäcker [1991]. He was a great man. He made the well-known remark "Anyone who closes his eyes to the past is blind to the present" [in a speech at the West German parliament commemorating the 40th anniversary of Germany's defeat in World War II, May 8, 1985].

PLEASE SEE HISTORY, NEXT PAGE

HISTORY, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

KIMURA: Even in our personal relations, we don't trust someone who lies. So it is sad to hear the kinds of excuses Japanese officials give for Japanese schools not teaching students the truth about what the Japanese military did in World War II.

IKEDA: During the war, my eldest brother was sent to the front to fight, and I remember clearly that once, when he came home on furlough, he told us angrily that Japan was definitely in the wrong. "Japan's behavior is abominable," he said. "What we are doing to the Chinese is unforgivable." My brother died in the fighting in Burma [now Myanmar]. He was a fine person. It was a terrible waste.

The Japanese soldiers sent to invade Asia were also victims of Japanese militarism and imperialism. We must teach the unvarnished truth about the war to the next generation, so that such a tragedy will never be repeated.

As part of that effort, the Soka Gakkai has collected accounts of people's war experiences and published them in more than 100 volumes. The experiences of victims as well as remorse-stricken former members of the armed forces involved in the slaughter are documented. Our antiwar books have been published in English, French, German, Romanian, and in children's editions. We have also sponsored antiwar exhibitions that have toured the world.

IGETA: Because we have sincerely confronted and acted on this issue, the Soka Gakkai is trusted in Asia.

KIMURA: I was surprised to learn that the foreign students center at the University of the Philippines is called Ikeda Hall.

The Japanese forces occupying the Philippines during the war were incredibly brutal, and anti-Japanese sentiment is strong there. I heard that this was the first public building ever to be named after a Japanese.

IKEDA: Jose Abueva, the former president of the university, is a dear friend of mine. Both his mother and father were killed by the Japanese military. They were tortured, murdered, and their bodies were abandoned. Every Asian country has an infinite number of such unspeakable tragedies in its past.

Dr. Abueva said of the situation that continues in Japan decades later:

Japanese leaders still stubbornly refused to admit, and apologize for, the grievous wrongs they had committed in the countries they had invaded in World War II. Japanese history textbooks purposely concealed the truth or justified the wrongs. Fellow Asians were outraged by the insensitivity and dishonesty of the Japanese. How could they gloss over the sordid truth that so many had witnessed and endured, recorded and remembered? (From an unpublished account)

I will never forget these heartrending words.

IGETA: Let me share the opinion of a high school division member about the war:

What Japan did to the other countries of Asia was really terrible. Unless we sincerely apologize and make amends for those actions, relations between Japan and its Asian neighbors can never be healthy and strong. I wish our political leaders would realize that this is not a matter that can be solved by throwing money at it.

IKEDA: That is so true. The high school division members are astute. Remember, the hope for peace rests in your hands.

To have a true vision of history, one must have a true vision of humanity, of society, of life. It is important to rethink everything from the viewpoint of whether it is in the interest of the people, whether it contributes to their happiness or not.

Up to now, history has almost always been centered around the interests of the powerful, around politics and the state. We must rewrite history so that it is centered instead around the people and their lives, so that it reflects all humanity's viewpoint.

A few years ago, a textbook of European history written from a pan-European perspective was published [1992]. It was unlike any previous history textbook where the focus was on only one nation's story, where everything was viewed from a national perspective. This represents the beginning of a trend to abandon national histories for those written from a broader point of view.

I think the time has come to seriously contemplate writing a pan-Asian history textbook and, after that, a pan-human or global history textbook — one written from the perspective of all humanity.

KIMURA: President Ikeda, you were a pioneering figure in reestablishing official relations between Japan and China at a time when relations were still fraught with difficulty. I think that shows a visionary wisdom.

You also opened the way to personal friendships and ties with the former Soviet Union, even during the Cold War. You were one of the first to predict that the Soviet Union and China, their relations extremely frosty at the time, would once again be friends. And you acted on that vision. How have you acquired

the ability to read the future in this way?

IKEDA: I never lost my faith in the people. They are the main protagonists in history. In the long run, the people's awareness, their actions and wishes, are the strongest forces of all. Mahatma Gandhi once said: "When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and for a time they can seem invincible but in the end they always fall."

So the basic task of making history is changing the consciousness of the people. For example, as part of the civil rights movement, African Americans staged sit-ins at lunch counters. This kind of protest began in 1960 with four students at a North Carolina agricultural college. At the time, lunch counters and diners in the town refused to accept orders from African Americans. Then one day four African American students entered a retail store and, after buying a few small items, sat down at the lunch counter and ordered coffee and doughnuts.

The store manager came and an argument ensued. A crowd gathered. The students were called every name imaginable, were spat on and struck. But they refused to budge. They sat there through it all, and they kept up their nonviolent protest, staying until the store closed.

The next day and the next they came and sat at the lunch counter. Eventually white students from another university joined them. Of course, they weren't really there for coffee and doughnuts. What they were after was equal rights and social justice.

The movement they started began to spread and, by September 1961, more than 3,600 protesters had been arrested.

Some 70,000 black and white college students participated. As a result, discrimination at lunch counters began to fade all over the country.

KIMURA: We must take this as an example as we create history, too.

IKEDA: It is all up to young people. Political scientist and author Masao Maruyama declared that "Japanese history is the story of the passive resignation of the people to their fate." We must change this. To do so, we need the wisdom to distinguish truth from falsehood and the moral courage to publicly declare the truth.

Many years ago, I met the famous French journalist Robert Guillain, who was the Far East Bureau chief of the French newspaper *Le Monde*. He was in Japan during the war and observed the Japanese people close up. One reason, he concluded, that the Japanese could not call an end to the war was that, while they had physical courage, they had no spiritual courage. He also said that the Japanese lacked the important virtue of respect for the truth. As a result, they were easily manipulated by evil forces.

You, today's youth, are the new leaders of a new age. You must create a history of human unity for the dawning of this new age on our planet. Perhaps you think that there is little you can do as individuals. But "nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come." We are moving toward an ever-expanding humanism.

I am convinced that whatever twists and turns there may be along the way, that is the direction. You, my young friends, embracing a philosophy of humanism for which the world so hungers, are the front-runners who will lead the way. ❖

GLOSSARY

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

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

Gohonzon: The embodiment of the law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and the life of Nichiren Daishonin in the form of a mandala. *Honzon* means "object of fundamental respect"; *go* means "worthy of honor." The *Gohonzon* takes the form of a

paper scroll inscribed with Chinese and two Sanskrit characters.

Together, these characters represent life in its highest condition: Buddhahood. "Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nichiren" is written down the center of the Gohonzon.

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

karma: Sanskrit word meaning "action." The life tendency or destiny that each in-

dividual 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.

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-renge-kyo: The fundamental component of Buddhist practice, which expresses the ultimate truth of life and allows each individual to tap his

or her innate enlightened nature directly. Although the deepest meaning of Nam-myoho-renge-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; *renge* (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.

DIALOGUE

On Their Own

S.F.'s New Century Brass Band members share their thoughts and determinations.

KEN: With our present brass band chief leaving, it's a good opportunity for each of us to make a fresh start and consider what Brass Band training is. What is it that you all want to see happen with our band for next year and beyond?
ALEX: It's important that each

person make this an opportunity to try to take on more responsibility. Even though there are people who are taking care of things now, they won't be here forever.
BEN: In the drum section, sometimes we're too dependent on a particular person being here. We need to be strong enough to play on our own. That way we can also open up to more new, younger members.
KEN: Can you handle playing lead and learning tri-toms, Joji?

JOJI: Sure!
KEN: What do you think about traveling and performing like we did in Florida? We could go to Japan or Hawaii.
EUGENE: Sounds good!
NORI: Before we go anywhere, we need to each develop our life-

condition so that we can be encouraging. Otherwise, it would just waste time and money.
SHO: I think we should get some new music.
MICHAEL: I feel the important thing is to play music that displays the qualities of the Buddha, that we express qualities like compassion and courage and have people cry or feel chills down their spines.
JEWEL: I want to do new music, too, and perform for the public, not just for the SGI. Maybe at a San Jose Clash soccer game!

PETER: I want to play some Count Basie tunes.
SEIKI: I want to play songs that younger people can relate to.
KAZU: I think it's encouraging to hear pop songs or a song that you

know.
JIMMIE: Songs on the radio are OK, but music is more powerful when we know the story behind it.
BRANDON: I like anything that has a nice melody and a good beat, like "Shining Star" [Earth, Wind and Fire] or other '70s music. The important thing is that we continue to rely on and encourage one another. We have to expand [our membership] so that we can be even more encouraging and also show people that we'll do what we set out to do.

ROB: In the past we were basically told what to do. It's great that it's more democratic now, and we

can talk like this. We should appreciate this.
KEN: Yes. We've been working hard to open things up to everyone's opinion, as that was a major weakness in the past. From now, the band's progress will be determined by how much we develop and challenge our weaknesses, and how much we fight together to make the band, the SGI and the world match our ideals.



At a recent culture center open house.



Paul Bell Wallace (in cap) with the rhythm section.

May 10, Brass Band Day celebration.

San Francisco Youth...

This Band Had To Play On

San Francisco's Brass Band struggled in the early '90s, but the members' sense of mission to inspire others remained solid.

By **KEN TANAKA**

SAN FRANCISCO BRASS BAND CHIEF

San Francisco Brass Band activities began in 1967 with a handful of members practicing to perform for SGI President Ikeda's visit and temple opening in Southern California. The first parade in the United States for the Brass Band

and Fife and Drum Corps was in San Francisco the very next year. In addition to the many NSA conventions of the '70s, the Golden Gate Jazz Band lead by Hart Smith, who did the arrangement of "Forever Sensei" used throughout the nation, performed regularly on the U.C. Berkeley campus.

During President Ikeda's visit to San Francisco in 1980, the Brass Band was reorganized, along with the youth division organization, and went on to participate in the many NSA conventions of the '80s as a marching band.

Then came 1990. There was a lot of confusion after President Ikeda's February 1990 visit to the United States. Performances and practices were canceled, and the older band members taking responsibility at the time were all either reassigned or could no longer regularly participate. Yet a small number of members continued to bring instruments to Sunday activities whether or not they had practice.

After a couple of months of this, band representatives met with the young men's division leaders and were told it was no longer necessary to hold Brass Band practice if it was merely out of formality or force of habit. Each member expressed not only his desire to continue but also to create an activity that would connect young people to President Ikeda and Buddhist philosophy, and inspire everyone around them. Although the rhythm had changed in 1990, it was clear to the few members left that the importance and mission of the Brass Band still existed, and it had to play on.

"I know some of us were apprehensive, being young and having little experience running any organization, let alone a band," says one of those few. "We thought we might do something wrong, and the kids we wanted to help would end up hating SGI activities. But if we didn't do anything, there would be nowhere else they could go to in the SGI. We were confident that the pur-

pose of President Ikeda's guidance was not to eliminate Brass Band but rather to imbue it with heart and philosophy."

Each year since, the band has faced new challenges and fought together through both good times and bad. Ups and downs in participation, disagreements and misunderstandings among the leadership, and inconsistent music quality were problems that had to be addressed again and again. Gradually, this led to improvement in the band, a clearer identity and sense of purpose, and growth of the individual members.

The band performed for President Ikeda during his visit to San Francisco in 1993. It was on that day, March 14, that the junior high and high school divisions were formed. After the performance, a band member said that he wanted to get a name for the band from President Ikeda. Hearing this, a former Brass Band chief felt compelled to convey this wish and the efforts of the band members to President Ikeda, who responded by giving the band the name New Century Brass Band.

To live up to the new name, the

band members have continued to challenge themselves. They're striving to improve the quality of their performances, expanding their style and repertoire to allow for the greatest possible participation and fostering an atmosphere where teenagers, 30-somethings and people in between can discuss Buddhist philosophy as it applies to life and the band.

Their latest challenge is the departure of Paul Bell Wallace, first chief of the New Century Brass Band, who is leaving to pursue business opportunities in Japan.

"It was during President Ikeda's 1987 visit that I decided upon my path in life, to work to create a cultural bridge between Japan and the United States," says Mr. Wallace. "My many experiences in the Brass Band taught me to pray and never give up. Well, it was clear after our trip to the Florida Nature and Culture Center that it's time for me to move on. We became a close-knit group, and each participant now has a clear sense of purpose [of the band]. My dream for the band has been realized. I've received so much fortune from participating in the band. It's important that everyone else has this opportunity to grow as well."

The New Century Brass Band members say they are ready to face this new challenge, live up to their name and create a new era for San Francisco and beyond.

VISIT THE NEW CENTURY BRASS BAND'S WEBSITE:
www.sgi-siliconvalley.org/sfnccb/index.htm

My Rebellious Stage

Fife and Drum Corps activities helped Ashley Kibler to

raise her life-condition and graduate from the rebellious stage. What a relief for Ashley and her parents!

By **ASHLEY KIBLER**
SAN FRANCISCO FIFE AND DRUM CORPS

Ughhh, Mom, why can't I go? All my friends are going, and all their mothers let them do things they want to do and go where they want to go. It's just not fair. You know, sometimes you can be so

Just wait until my 18th birthday...." Sound familiar? If you were ever a teenager with a mother, you must have a feeling for what it is like to battle foolishly with your mother over petty things. Last year, Honestly, there wasn't a day we didn't quarrel at least once. I know I felt very trapped and bitter, and I imagine my mother must have wondered what bad causes she could have possibly made to deserve such a negative daughter!

I was going through my rebellious stage. I wanted to live my life my way and my way only. I was not up for compromise unless it was in

favor. Naturally, the only thing my mother could really do was deal with it and hope for this phase to blow over soon. I'd say it lasted almost a full year, and so much negative energy was exuded during this time. Sooner or later, I started attending Fife and Drum Corps meetings regularly and participating in as many activities as I could. I always found that when I returned home on Sundays after practice, I was much more easy-going, agreeable and positive, and my life-condition was so much higher than usual. My mother would even comment on this, and I could see the difference in my thoughts and behavior myself. So for about a year now, I have been attending practices and other local meetings in my area. I have since started the eighth grade, and things between my mother and me are much better. A lovely friendship has sprung up out of all of this, and we are learning to compromise and get along well. I am not half as negative as I used to be. I barely ever quarrel or fight with my parents anymore, and I have seen an all-around change in my life-condition. I can truly say that through my developing practice and faith in this religion, I am learning to be a better person. I have become more mature. My mother and I now have a wonderful thing in common, and I really appreciate that.



(Left photo) Ashley Kibler (left) and Stephanie Jewett (center) have gained much from practicing with their friends in the San Francisco Fife and Drum Corps.



... Love Playin' in the Band

Finally, Joy From the Law

Thanks to her faith and practice, Stephanie Jewett went from self-mutilation to self-appreciation and now works to see that others experience joy from the Law.

By **STEPHANIE JEWETT**
SAN FRANCISCO FIFE AND DRUM CORPS

The ocean, even when waves are crashing on its surface, is calm and unchanging in its depths. There is both suffering and joy in life — the point is to develop a profound, indomitable self not influenced by these waves. A person who does so receives the joy derived from the Law.

— SGI President Ikeda

It used to be that I was weak and could not find the courage within to be strong and indomitable. I wasn't happy, and I'm not sure if I wanted to be happy or not. I didn't know if I

wanted anything at all. And I couldn't break out of the state that I was in.

I got depressed easily and hated everything and everybody. I had uncontrollable and amazingly wild mood swings — constantly — and would mutilate my body in hopes of releasing my anger and pain.

At the time, I was a very active member in the San Francisco Fife and Drum Corps, which helped me see a lot of things that were important for getting better. As we would study articles and the Goshō, I would pick up little things that really stuck with me. I would hear other people's experiences with this Buddhism, and I would be amazed by everything that I was hearing.

I started to speak out more during practice and try harder in the group and in school. I started doing at least an hour of daimoku and full gongyo every day and began going to district meetings and being as involved with SGI activities as possible.

My whole attitude dramatically changed. Everybody saw it. I became more outgoing, more friendly with everybody. My mood swings stopped, and the self-mutilation lessened

slowly but surely. I never got depressed anymore, and I found myself being more optimistic. I started giving advice online to self-mutilators and depressed individuals. My whole life turned around.

Now that I think about it, my enjoyment of life was always there — I just didn't know how to find it.

All of that was always covered by my unhappiness and bad attitude. It's always easier to be negative and unhappy than to have fun; that's how it always was for me.

Now that I have experienced the "joy derived from the Law," I want everyone to. If I can do it, anyone can.

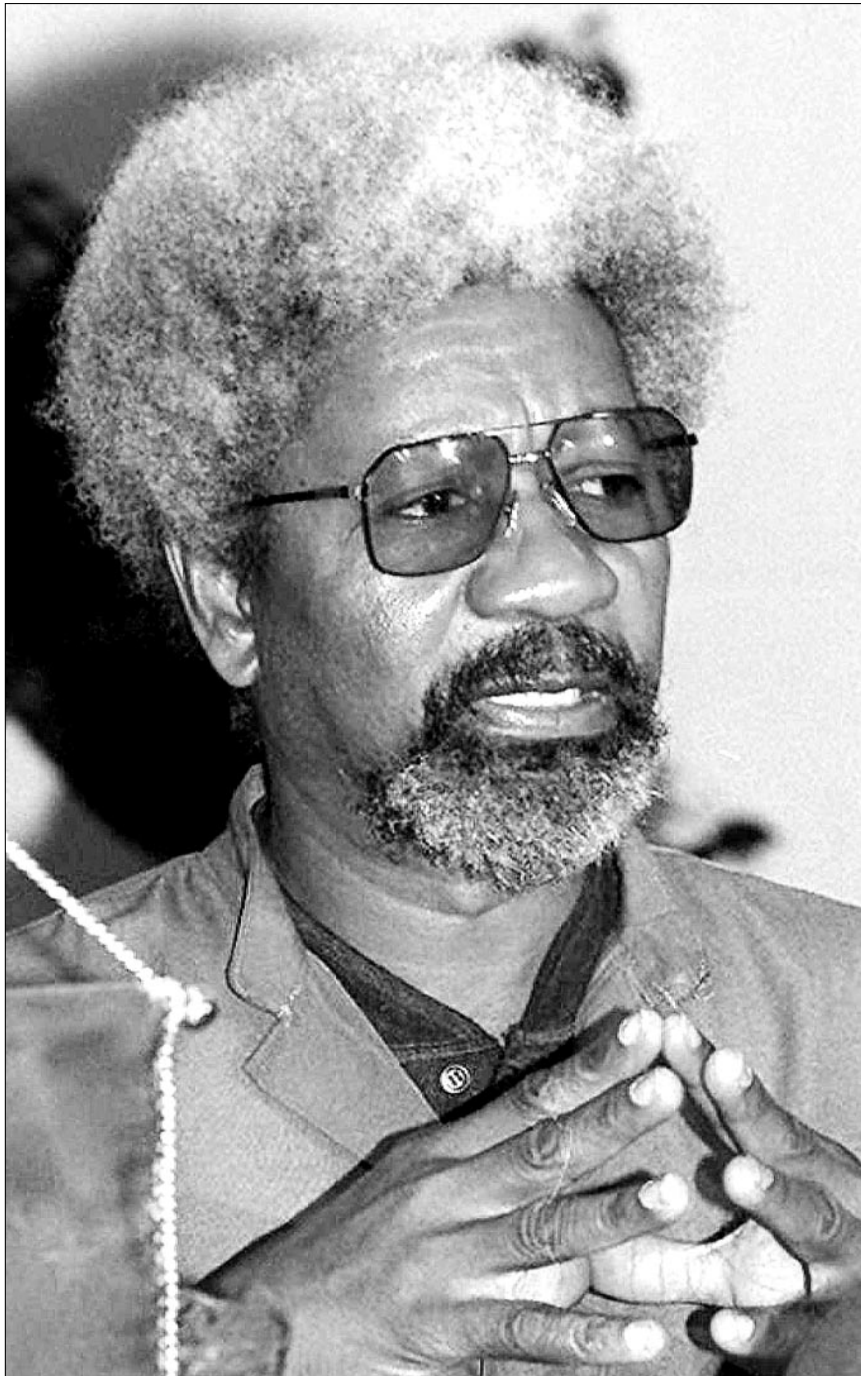
As President Ikeda says: "Faith in the Mystic Law is the wellspring of value creation. It enables us to turn everything in our lives — both our joys and sufferings — into causes for accumulating the values of beauty, benefit and good in still greater measure. When we base ourselves on this kind of faith, everything that happens to us is a benefit."

San Francisco Fife and Drum Corps Goals

- 1) To recruit at least 20 more girls by the year 2000.
- 2) To start the Flag Corps and keep it going.
- 3) To create stronger bonds among the Fife and Drum Corps members.
- 4) To unite as one and to help world peace come more quickly.
- 5) To make the Fife and Drum Corps grow (physically, emotionally, musically, etc.).
- 6) To help every member become happy.

Breaking the Mental Shackles

AFP PHOTOS



Wole Soyinka, winner of the 1986 Nobel Prize in literature, addresses journalists during a press conference at the European Council, in Strasbourg, France, Nov. 25, 1994.

By **TERRY ELLIS**
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Wole Soyinka, who won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1986, has been called Africa's most versatile writer — a poet, playwright, novelist and essayist. Today he's also an angry man. He sees the African leaders of Nigeria following in the oppressive footsteps of colonial leaders. He calls his homeland "the open sore of the continent." But he cannot turn his back. He speaks out. And so he has nurtured his creativity in prison and now in exile under charges of treason.

Soyinka continues to walk the high ground, convinced of the people's ability to create a different future for Africa and for the world. This fall when Czech philosopher-president Vaclav Havel hosted a global conference in Prague to study the need for a "change in the sphere of human conscience," Soyinka was one of those invited. He joined such global thinkers as the Dalai Lama, Elie Wiesel of the United States, Helmut Schmidt of Germany and Frederik de Klerk of South Africa.

At that time, Soyinka eloquently argued that what the world needs now is the mind's liberation: "If the fall of the Berlin Wall is to escape trivialization, [it must stand] as a permanent rebuke of closure and exclusion, a repudiation of mental shackles, and an affirmation of the virtues that stamp the human mind: a hunger for knowledge, for experimentation and discovery, and a refusal to accept orthodoxies as unassailable..."

While in exile, Soyinka continues to speak out in political forums. He testified be-

fore Congress in September, urging the United States to intensify political and economic pressure on Gen. Sani Abacha, Nigeria's military leader.

Soyinka's heart and thinking are grounded in the future — in a more peaceful and prosperous Africa for the next millennium. And for that, his opponents have criticized him as utopian.

Ultimately, he reaches for a world of harmonious communities, and he traces the divisiveness to those all too human, primal questions "Who am I?" "What am I?" "Why am I?" The

answers throughout history weren't necessarily the problem. It was the implied antithesis, he reasons. And religions have created some of the most powerful of these antitheses.

"I believe, therefore I am. You disbelieve,

therefore you are not; therefore you count for nothing. You are subhuman. You are outside the pale of humanity, outside the concept of community," Soyinka writes in his essay "The Credo of Being and Nothingness." "On our home front we have watched helplessly as this escalates to the periodic slaughter of 'infidels.'"

Soyinka points Africans to the roots of their own spirituality. Specifically, he notes, nowhere in the religious teachings of the Yoruba, his own people, are found divisive concepts of being.

"It is not weakness in the character of this religion, however, it is not even tolerance," Soyinka writes. "It is simply — understanding. Wisdom. An intuitive grasp of the complexity of the human mind, and a true sense of the infinite potential of the universe." W

We have watched helplessly the periodic slaughter of 'infidels.'