

World Tribune

No. 3168

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

DECEMBER 5, 1997

INSIDE THIS WEEK

MONTHLY QUESTION

How do you celebrate the holidays?

PERSPECTIVE

No more fear of death.

STUDY

How to learn more about the temple issue.

ESSAYS

Winners of the World Tribune's first annual essay contest. This week: open and high school categories.

YOUTH

An experience from the September youth training.

WORLDVIEW

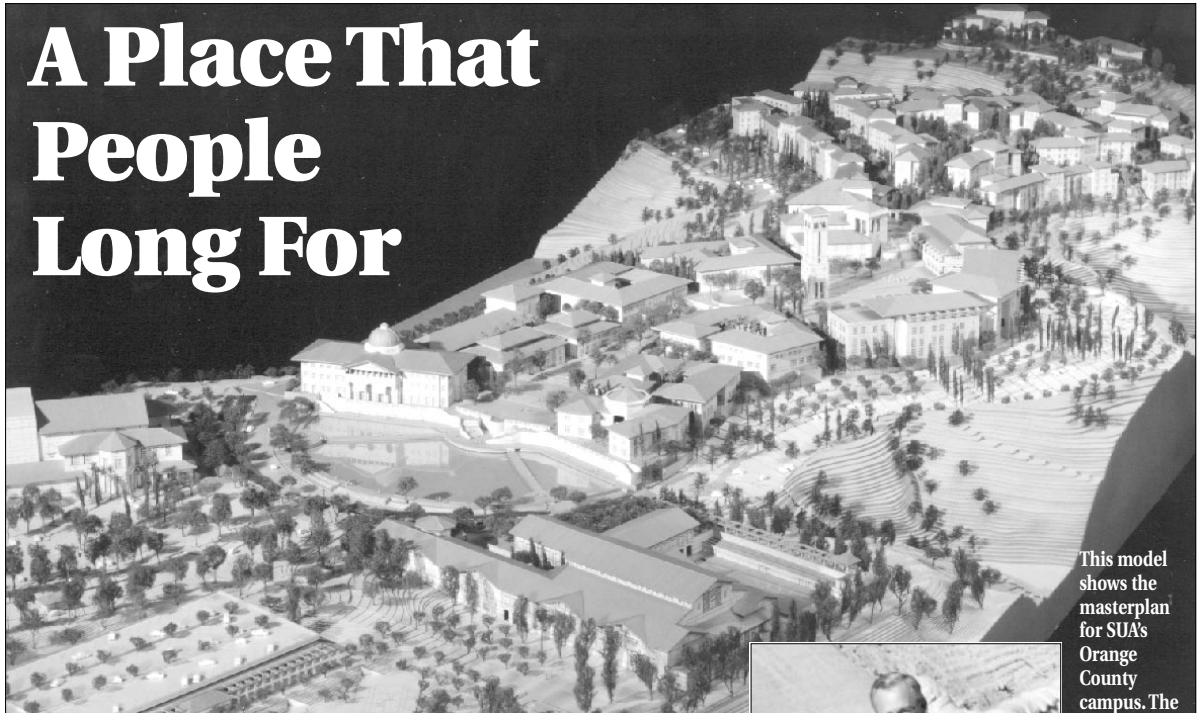
The NAMES program in Denver helps Native Americans cope with life off the reservation.

'FRIENDS FOR PEACE' PULLOUT INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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

DATED MATERIAL: PLEASE DELIVER BY ISSUE DATE

A Place That People Long For



This model shows the masterplan for SUA's Orange County campus. The first phase will be completed in 2000. (Left) SUA's Eric Hauber, on site during the grading, says SUA will be all about students.

Designers and administrators of Soka University of America are redesigning the university experience, creating a campus that focuses on the student first and foremost.

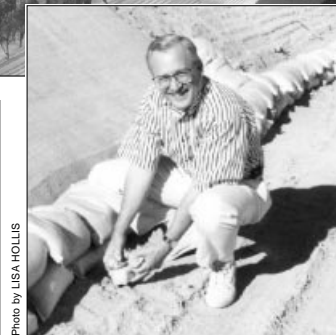


Photo by LISA HOLLIS

By LISA JONES
CORRESPONDENT

Aliso Viejo, Calif., Oct. 31

In architectural lingo, there are "30-year buildings," designed to last a few decades; then there are "100-year buildings," built to last for generations — the kind that people look at and sigh, "They don't make 'em like that anymore."

A team of Southern California consultants and contractors have a rare opportunity to work on structures of the latter type at Soka University of America's new campus, where everything from the buildings to the administrative policies are geared toward the next two centuries.

SUA — an independent, private, liberal arts university

based on Buddhist principles, located just east of Laguna Beach, Calif. — is designed to be student-centered. For example, seminar-style classrooms will be conducive to dialogue, with a 12:1 student/professor ratio. To reduce hassles and time spent standing in lines, students can electronically register for and add/drop classes, purchase

textbooks and access library reference materials — all from their dorm rooms, if they so choose.

SUA is the first new residential university to be built in the United States in 45 years, and upon completion, it will be one of the most technologically ad-

PLEASE SEE SUA, 4

Gorbachevs Visit Kansai Soka High Schools

Gorbachevs receive awards, share warm words with Soka students.

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER
Nov. 20, Osaka, Japan

SGI President Ikeda hailed former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev today for launching "the 20th century's greatest re-

form movement, which brought an end to the Cold War and dramatically changed the destiny of the world." At this special ceremony at the Kansai Soka High Schools, the Soka Schools bestowed an honorary professorship upon Mr. Gorbachev, while his wife, Raisa, received the Soka Gakuen Award of Highest Honor.

In a short speech, Mrs. Gorbachev emphasized how pre-

vious the period of youth is, describing it as "a time to take action, to cherish great hopes and to believe in yourself and your future." Comparing life to a fast-flowing river with many unexpected twists and turns, she called on the young students in the audience not to be discouraged if they should stumble and fall, but to get back up each time and keep striving for victory.

In his acceptance speech, Mr.

Gorbachev said that his wife's talk about falling down and picking oneself up again reminded him of the humorous episode that marked the start of his political career. He had just graduated from high school and was running as a candidate in a local election. At a gathering, he rose to introduce himself. About to sit back down, someone

PLEASE SEE GORBACHEVS, 5

? QUESTION OF THE MONTH: 'As a Buddhist, how do you celebrate the holidays?'

As a Buddhist, I celebrate the holiday season just as I do of the rest of the year — with great joy and happiness in my heart. Every day I am granted another 24 hours to make a difference is cause enough for celebration....

The benefit of my practice is to see clearly that friends and family tend to get caught up in the moment. Good cheer, merriment and the festive mood are expressed everywhere during the holidays, but once the season is over people return to the mundane life of just existing. As a Buddhist my greatest perception of the holiday season boils down to one important aspect — and that is the true value of every human life. And that is my greatest cause to celebrate, holiday or not!

Life is full of wonderful treasures, and Buddhism teaches me to see the beauty in life and how to appreciate it. It is so simple to me. I am so thankful for my practice and my SGI family, because I have the ability to be truly happy throughout the year. Not only does this celebration of life exist inside of me, but through my practice I have learned to open up my treasure chest and have the ability to share all my jewels with friends and family.

— GAY ALEXANDER,
Kentucky

I enjoy watching the many versions of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. The transformation of Ebenezer Scrooge following his visits by the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future makes me feel hopeful that each individual no matter how mean or selfish has an opportunity to change! To me this parallels our Buddhist view of human revolution and the eternity of life! I also spend time with friends and family feasting on the multi-ethnic foods that are served.

— JOANNE TACHIBANA,
Honolulu

While we strive to do things for others all year round, the holiday season is a great time to really reach out to our friends and families. As my wife says, "It is a time for caring, for sharing, for giving and for cherishing." Cherishing the supreme sanctity of life in ourselves and in the lives of all others is the basis for my special efforts to say a special thank you to those around me at Thanksgiving and through till the year's end.

— PHIL SIMPSON,
Atlanta

Most of family lives back East. Every Christmas, we all converge on my parents' house in Connecticut for a good old fashioned New England Christmas dinner. Every year I use this opportunity to chant daimoku and strongly pray for my family's health and prosperity. These family reunions seem to get better every year, because as my practice develops my prayers become stronger every year. After Christmas, I come back to Seattle and celebrate New Year's with my wife and my SGI family. Together with my friends at New Year's gongyo, we make a great determination for the coming year.

— BILL LAWRENCE,
Seattle

New York City looks magical, but it's also a desperately manic mass episode followed by just Hell and Hunger in the cold months when the bills come due. At our Thanksgiving, after a splendid dinner, we draw lots, the rule being that we are each allowed but one gift (for under \$50). On the Day, we dine and then gather in a circle, taking photos of ourselves savoring gifts.

— MARK ANTON, New York

The holidays have always been recognized as a family time. We love and appreciate this colorful season. This year only three out of six grandchild-



dren will be baking cookies to send to our family members and friends in far away places. This labor of love is our way of expressing the appreciation for the fortune experienced during our family's 30 years of practice. This year we are extending ourselves by sharing cookies and time at a rehab center for women and children of substance abuse.

— ELAINE RUCKER,
Fresno, Calif.

How to celebrate the holiday season has changed dramatically through the years of my practice. At first, I felt confused and didn't know what to do because my parents are Jewish and my husband is Japanese. Neither one of us celebrated Christmas as children. Even so, I will decorate a tree in the SGI colors of red, yellow and blue and light Hanukkah candles so my children do not feel alienated from American society.

— JACALYN NUMAGAMI,
Pottstown, Pa.

Last year, the Santa Fe SGI-USA members gathered together for a Christmas Eve gongyo and potluck and participated in the Santa Fe traditional *farolito* walk. The *farolito* walk happens only on Christmas Eve, on Canyon Road and surrounding streets, as traffic is rerouted and paper bags with candles (*farolitos*) line the unlit, small cobblestone streets with bonfires (*luminarios*) scattered throughout. These traditional fires are symbolic of the fires set to light the way so that pioneers on the Santa Fe Trail in days past could find their way in inclement weather. This is a truly beautiful event and is filled with community togetherness, as people from all walks of life come together to share this time on this one night of the year. This event last year was the best-attended "activ-

ity" for the local SGI community, and the unanimous consensus was that it was the best Christmas Eve we had spent in many years. This year, Christmas Eve gongyo will be followed by a visit from Santa Claus for the younger members, in addition to the smashing of a Santa Claus piñata and, of course, the *farolito* walk. Santa Fe members will also be hosting their first-ever New Year's gongyo at a local landmark hotel, with participants from outlying northern communities.

— KIM MELLOR, Santa Fe, N.M.

At this time of year, I take the opportunity to reflect on my actions of the past year, what I've learned from those actions and how I've grown. Then I make fresh determinations for my life and my mission for kosen-rufu.

The most important aspect for me, at this time of year, is when I see the worried, stressed and depressed faces of all the people running through the malls and shopping centers, most of whom are spending money that they don't have, thinking, "How am I going to pay my bills?" and feeling guilty if they don't buy something and guilty if they do — all in the name of a religion.

At this time, I feel an overwhelming sense of appreciation for Nichiren Daishonin, presidents Makiguchi, Toda and Ikeda and all the pioneers of the SGI for all of their painstaking efforts for the sake of the Law and kosen-rufu that have enabled me to have the Gohonzon, chant the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra and feel totally free from any guilt. To practice a religion that, instead of fostering guilt and judgment, lifts your life-condition as high into the universe as you want to go, to have all your wildest dreams actually attainable, is an invaluable gift to celebrate every day of your life.

— BRENDA MARSHALL,
Baltimore, Md.

Thanks to all who responded!

What Do You Think?

Please write to us and let us know your thoughts on the World Tribune. What articles do you like or don't like? Which types would you like to see more of, less of? Do you have ideas to make us better? Do you have questions you'd like answered? Would you like to get involved in your local area? We welcome all letters to:

Mailbox, World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd.,
Santa Monica, CA 90401

World Tribune

(ISSN-0049-8165)

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

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

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

Printed on 100% recycled paper

Copyright © 1997 by SGI-USA.
All rights reserved. Printed in the USA

Publisher Fred M. Zaitsu
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
Joel Drazner
Terry Ellis
Staff Translators Jeff Kriger
Shin Yatomi
Chief Photographer Gregory Nakasuji

Bureau Chiefs

Phil Simpson, Atlanta; Fletcher Dalton, Boston; Veronica Evans, Chicago; Terry Ellis, Florida; Joanne Tachibana, Hawaii; Dave McNeill, Los Angeles; Cheryl Utley, Midwest; Robert Taliaferro, New York; David Shadovitz, Philadelphia; Chuck Evans, Rocky Mountain; J.L. Henriques, San Diego; Ron Baird, San Francisco; Bill Lawrence, Seattle; Wendy DeOre, Texas; Jane Crystal Brown, Washington, D.C.

**WORLD TRIBUNE
MAILBOX**

Are You Wired?

Technology is good. At least in terms of how we utilize it. The Nov. 7 "Perspective," "The Wired, Wired West," talked about the debate between the "haves and have-nots of the information superhighway" at the recent Club of Rome conference. I think the answer is simple. Like money, electric power or anything else, it's a matter of how we use it — to support life or to harm life. In our SGI organization, I believe more of us should get wired and utilize computers to help advance our movement into the 21st century. For my chapter I keep an MSworks database of all my members and print out quarterly reports which my district leaders update. For the Elementary and Entrance Exams, I printed out accurate lists in minutes rather than searching through past exam result lists as I've had to do previously.

I can e-mail calendars, meeting plans and directions to leaders and members which would be otherwise difficult to do over the phone. We do quarterly statistics on-line. Other uses include composing attractive fliers, calendars, experiences and so forth. Many other multimedia avenues are being explored as well. My point is that when we are using computers and technology to support our activities of faith, then it is good. In the SGI we are equal, we work together and support each other. For those without cars or phones, we pick-up or visit them. No one who is wired is better or superior to anyone who is not. The SGI is setting this example for the world. The bottom line is that if we as an organization are more technologically enabled, it will give us more time for the really important things like home visits, discussion meetings and one-on-one dialogue.

— PHIL ORENSTEIN, Long Island, N.Y.

Along With All the Other Buddhist Gods....

The Nov. 14 "Voices" column asked how people deal with questions and comments about a supreme being. Here's an interesting take on the supreme being that most people refer to as God:

The One God that people are referring to is Yahweh, the ancient Hebrew god of Thunder and War. If you drop the name, you are talking about the same god as the Teutonic Thor, the Yoruba Shango, and also the Hindu god Indra.

Now this is interesting, because the name Taishaku (a Buddhist god — *shoten zenjin*) is actually a translation of Indra. So, if someone asked what we think about God (with a capital G), it is quite truthful to say that we acknowledge him every morning and pray for his protective power to be enhanced by our practice of the Law. And, depending on who you are talking to, it may or may not be appropriate to add, "Along with all the other Buddhist gods."

— MARK R. RICHARDS, Miami

Long-lasting Greens

In response to Shera Haynes request (Oct. 24 "Mailbox") for shrubs that are good for altar greens: I don't have a garden, but I have found a green called *Ruscus* or *Ruskus* leaves, which have lasted as long as six months on my altar (with changing the water daily). You can buy this green in many florist shops. So all members, even in the city, can have long-lasting, live greens.

— JOAN MAJEWSKA, Chicago

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

As This Chapter of Life Gets Under Way

PERSPECTIVE

**By S.D. YANA DAVIS
KNOXVILLE, TENN.**

It's one of those nights when sleep isn't easy.

One of our dogs is, without doubt, descended from Genghis Khan's dog. A cable channel recently ran a documentary on old Genghis, and there, among the Mongolian nomads of today, was a dog that looked just like Bandit. The narrator called it a Mongolian Shepherd.

Anyway, Bandit roused me and nearly roused June. Bandit and the other dog, a usually quiet, docile Border Collie, were fighting, whining and yelping, so I got them in from the deck.

They are happy now, having achieved their goal of getting into the house. And I am wide awake, sitting here writing.

Good. It's something I needed to do.

We moved to Knoxville a year ago, so that I could take a job with the local public radio station as development director. Three months ago, thanks to internal politics and my posting an e-mail message to a group by mistake, I lost that job.

Looking back, I know it's good to be for the good.

First, doing that kind of thing — saying or writing the wrong thing at the wrong time in the wrong place — has been one of my biggest obstacles in life, totally self-created, as many obstacles are. Lesson No. 1: I need to change something in myself.

Second, the environment was unhealthy. If, as it turned out, a valuable employee would be fired simply by voicing an opinion that did not sit well with another better-connected em-

ployee, then that's an unhealthy environment. Not just for me, for everyone there.

Third, the deeper level: changing poison into medicine. This relates to the first. On a deeper level, I have — we all have — some kind of innate poison or negativity we seek to overcome through our Buddhist practice; that central poison or negativity colors everything we think, say and do, and is the principal barrier to our happiness. Everybody has one, different for each of us. Mine is anger.

On the surface, I'm not an angry individual. But inside I store up those little moments, push them down and sit on them. Sooner or later, they collect and bubble to the surface, like a pocket of natural gas that floats up and ignites when it hits the surface. At those explosive moments, I do and say the most remarkably stupid things.

Realizing this — I mean really, really seeing it — has been a huge benefit.

I've had the chance to chant a good bit and do quite a few activities, more than I probably would have if I hadn't lost my job. June and I have gotten a lot closer, and worked through a number of things, and the entire family has gotten closer.

It's really true what SGI President Ikeda says about adversity strengthening your practice.

Am I confident of the outcome? Yes and no.

The yes: I am confident that whatever I am supposed to be doing will become apparent, that whatever enables me to spread Buddhism with my life will become clear. In *The New Human Revolution*, volume 1, Shin'ichi Yamamoto tells a Brazilian member: "Prayer in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism means to chant daimoku based on a pledge or vow. At its very

core, this vow is to attain kosen-rufu." This has been a large part of my daimoku in recent weeks and months.

The no: What I am not completely sure about is just how my mission will unfold at this point in my life. It looks very much, though, like writing will be my new career or at least a very important second career. I have a computer. I have e-mail. I have a telephone. I've found myself getting a lot of assignments from *Radio World*. While still at the radio station, I called to suggest a story to them. I didn't intend to write it, but by the end of the call, the editor had given me some freelance work. He's given me more and more as the months have rolled by.

Is the universe sending me a message? Not wanting to send the universe a busy signal, last week I went out and picked up a copy of *Writer's Digest*, a trade magazine for freelancers, novelists, screenwriters, etc. Turns out there's plenty of work available.

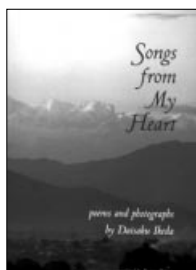
So, pardon the literary pun, as this chapter of life gets underway, I'm moving from the theoretical (writing for expression) to the actual (writing for expression and to earn a living).

Central to this for me is to make my writing somehow also spread Buddhism. Not by writing directly about it — which in most venues I couldn't do, anyway — but to somehow reflect the Gohonzon and the humanistic values of our faith. Hmmm.

Better get started. But it's 3:00 a.m. now. I should get a little sleep. Thanks to sitting down and just, well, writing it all out, I have a stronger determination about it all.

That daimoku earlier tonight helped a lot, too. And the dogs — well, I guess they helped, too. At least they're asleep now. III

New edition! New edition! New edition!



First printed in 1978, *Songs from My Heart* by Daisaku Ikeda is a collection of poems celebrating youth, change and progress. Contains recent photos taken by the SGI president that express his deepest feelings and hopes for the future of humankind. Translated by Burton Watson with power and emotion true to the author, these genuinely are songs from the heart of Daisaku Ikeda.

Price: \$14.95 M/O#: 0346



Common Questions About SUA

- **Has anything happened at the campus site yet?**
Grading of the land and dirt movement began in August 1996 and finished in September 1997.
- **What happens next?**
Burying utilities, laying roads and landscaping the perimeter will occur from November 1997 to January 1998.
- **When will building construction begin and end?**
Building construction on the first phase will begin in April 1998 and be completed in December 1999.
- **When will the campus open, and how many students will be in the first class?**
The grand opening will be on May 3, 2001, and the first class of 100 students will enter in September 2001.
- **What type of student will SUA accept?**
Admission standards have not been set yet. However, SUA will probably examine applicants' high school senior class standing, extracurricular activities, letters of recommendation and English language skills.
- **What majors and degrees will SUA offer?**
Because the number of students will be small in the beginning, SUA will offer the bachelor of arts degree with six majors: philosophy and religion; history and literature; government and politics; comparative and international studies; economics; and psychology. Additional majors will be added as the number of students increases.
- **What will tuition be?**
The level of tuition has not been set yet, but we are working hard to reduce overall costs, which will be reflected in the tuition.
- **How is SUA connected to Soka University in Japan?**
SUA is separately incorporated from Soka University in Japan and operates independently from it, reporting instead to its own Board of Trustees.
- **How is SUA connected to the SGI-USA?**
Just as with Soka University in Japan, SUA is separately incorporated from the SGI-USA and operates independently. The role of the SGI-USA is, of course, religious, while the role of SUA is academic. Rather than stressing religious teachings or practice, for example, SUA will emphasize the principles that the SGI stands for.
- **How is SUA being planned and developed?**
The SUA staff in Aliso Viejo develop many details of campus construction and operation based on SGI President Ikeda's general guidance and their interaction with a number of consulting firms. These ideas are then shared for feedback and advice with academics across the United States. Although current staffing is small, many voices of experienced people, both SGI members and not, are involved in all levels of discussion.
- **How can I contact SUA?**
The address is 101 Columbia, Suite 165, Aliso Viejo, Calif. 92656. The phone is 714-643-9500; the fax is 714-448-4137; an e-mail address is hauber@soka.edu.

SUA, FROM PAGE 1

vanced universities in the world. Still, the campus design emphasizes human interactions.

"We're using technology only when it's humanistic, appropriate and student-centered," says Eric Hauber, SUA's vice president for academic affairs. A sense of campus-wide community and appreciation of human diversity, says Dr. Hauber, is central to the Soka spirit.

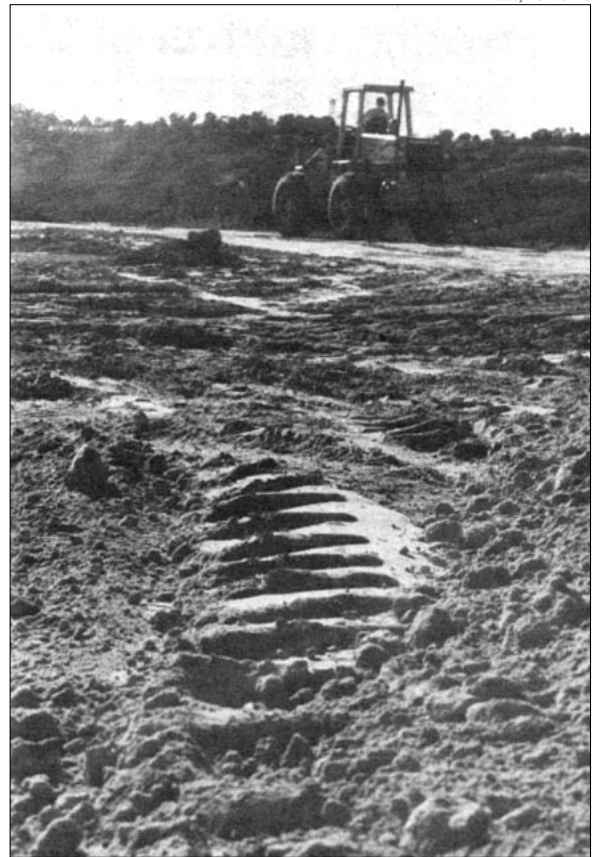
Soka means "to create value" in Japanese. The goal of Soka education is to foster people of character who continuously strive for the sake of peace.

Displayed on Dr. Hauber's desk is a photograph of a monument emblazoned with Japanese characters. "That's the sign in front of Soka University of Japan," he explains. "It says *Soka University* in Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's own hand. He wrote those characters and passed them on to Josei Toda, who passed them on to Daisaku Ikeda to fulfill the dream. SUA is the fruit of the mentor-disciple relationship."

Makiguchi, an educator and author, was passionately dedicated to reforming the Japanese educational system, which emphasized rote learning over critical, independent thinking. He strove to develop modes of education that would unleash the potential of the individual. In 1928, he committed himself to practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism along with a young teacher, Josei Toda. Both were imprisoned as thought criminals in 1943 by the Japanese militarist government for refusing to compromise their religious beliefs. Makiguchi died in prison. Mr. Ikeda met Mr. Toda at the age of 19 and practiced under his direct tutelage until Toda's death.

In 1971, Mr. Ikeda founded Soka University in Japan, which currently enrolls about 8,000 students and hosts the most diverse international student exchange program in Japan. SUA will ultimately enroll about 1,200 undergraduate and 200 graduate students. SUA's first class — of 100 students — will matriculate in 2001.

"I could compare SUA to prestigious institutions such as Claremont-McKenna," Dr. Hauber says, "but really, there's no comparison. We are not aiming to be the best of similars but a unique institution for the 21st century. From the ground up, we're re-designing the university experience. It's hard to anticipate what the future will bring in terms of technology.



Some 3 million cubic feet of earth were moved in the grading phase.

But we know for certain that you can't get wisdom from a machine — wisdom comes from people. SUA exists to develop outstanding human beings for the next 200 years."

The curriculum and university policy are being developed by a diverse committee comprised of educators, advisors from the arts community, business and legal professionals, Buddhists and non-Buddhists. While the curriculum has yet to be finalized, Dr. Hauber says that SUA's foreign language/internship abroad program will set it apart from other schools. Students will be required to take three years of foreign language courses, and in their third or fourth year of instruction, they will be placed in an internship abroad.

"Students will get the oppor-

tunity to use their language skills in a real-life work situation," Dr. Hauber says. "That's more challenging than merely studying abroad. Students who enroll in this type of program have to be very dedicated to functioning in the international arena."

It's hard to anticipate what the future will bring in terms of technology. But we know for certain that you can't get wisdom from a machine — wisdom comes from people.

— Dr. Eric Hauber

The 103-acre site of the future campus is atop a hill overlooking southern Orange County. On a clear day, students will be able to see mountains near San Diego to the south, the Saddleback Mountains to the east, and Mount Wilson and the San Gabriels to the northeast. Only three miles from the ocean and bordered almost entirely by protected park land, this is a site fit for million-dollar homes.

"We didn't go looking for this land," Dr. Hauber says, "It found us." Aliso Viejo devel-

PLEASE SEE SUA, NEXT PAGE

SUA, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

oper Steve Delson wanted to find someone to use the site in a way that would enhance the surrounding residential community. At the time, the Soka University campus in Calabasas, Calif., was in the news.

Mr. Delson investigated the university and the SGI and got approval from the Orange County Board of Supervisors to approach SUA with a proposal. "It was win-win," Dr. Hauber says. "Community leaders have welcomed us."

In the early planning phase of the new campus, Mr. Ikeda offered the directive "This should be a place that people long for." The designers and consultants have taken this to heart and produced blueprints and renderings of a campus with a classical ambience.

The terraced landscape will resemble a Tuscan hillside, planted with olive and cypress trees. Imagine: sloped lawns, lotus ponds, sculpture gardens, fountains and lakes, panoramic views, framed vistas, patterned stone walkways, covered arbors blooming with bougainvillea, an amphitheater, a ceremonial stair, textured stone buildings with tiled roofs and French windows....

Dr. Hauber admits: "Mr. Ikeda would be the first to say, 'Hey, they're only buildings — what goes on inside these buildings is what really matters.' We always



An aerial view of the campus shows Aliso Viejo, Calif., in the background. Parkland surrounds the campus on three sides.

have to keep this perspective. SUA is about the students."

At the site, construction crews have already moved 3 million cubic feet of earth, shaping and grading the land. "We'll be sitting on bedrock," Dr. Hauber explains. Soccer fields,

softball diamonds, a jogging track and tennis courts will occupy filled land.

Crews are busy making sandbag channels and putting up plastic retaining walls in preparation for the predicted El Niño rains. Several hundred trees have been

planted, but much of the site is exposed, yellow-gold clay dust.

At the southwestern edge of the site, the ground drops sharply into a canyon. "In the afternoons, a breeze off the Pacific comes through that canyon," Dr. Hauber says. "The wind hits this

bluff and creates an updraft." He squints up at a majestic bird in flight. "You can watch the hawks sail on the currents."

A warm gust scented with salt, sage and laurel lifts the bird higher.

This is the place to soar. ❧

GORBACHEVS, FROM PAGE 1

pulled his chair out from under him and he fell. Although everyone had a good laugh at his expense, he was still elected to the position. Mr. Gorbachev further said that he has encountered many challenges and trials throughout his life, but he has always faced them with the determination to win.

If one were to choose two central messages that are conveyed by Mr. and Mrs. Gorbachev's lives, President Ikeda said, they would be an unflagging belief in human potential and a commitment to achieve something of lasting value — irrespective of whether one's efforts are met with praise or censure.

The SGI leader then shared one of Tolstoy's fables about a young czar who is spoken to by three voices. The first declares that the czar's sole responsibility is to maintain the power that he now enjoys; the second tells him to cleverly evade his royal responsibilities; the third reminds him that he is a human being before he is a czar.



Mr. Gorbachev and Mr. Ikeda walk on the Kansai Soka High School campus.

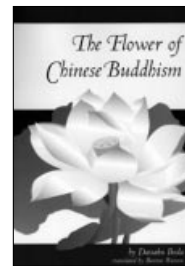
This last voice, President Ikeda explained, emphasizes taking action and alleviating people's suffering because it's one's duty as a human being. President Ikeda declared that Mr. Gorbachev is a leader who has indeed followed the third voice.

After the ceremony, Mr. and Mrs. Gorbachev enjoyed a leisurely walk around the school grounds with Mr. and Mrs. Ikeda,

during which they discussed their mutual concern for the environment.

The former Soviet president is currently the head of the International Green Cross, an organization that seeks to find global solutions to environmental problems. Established by Mr. Gorbachev in 1993, the organization today has expanded its network to 16 countries on five continents. ❧

Available in Paperback



The Flower of Chinese Buddhism
by Daisaku Ikeda

This fascinating book on the spread of Buddhism from India through China begins where *The Living Buddha* left off. An illuminating and well-told account of one of the most interesting chapters of world religious history.

Price: \$ 13.95 M/O#: 0329

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TEMPLE ISSUE

How Can I Learn More?

SIGN POSTS APPLYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS TO DAILY LIFE

Times Like These

By JEFF FARR

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

At such a time, one must set aside all other affairs and devote one's attention to rebuking slander of the Law. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 103)

It seems the trend in American society today is to avoid calling anything evil. There's this hesitancy to say what's good and evil, right and wrong, and those who do so are often labeled fanatics. But a society that's unable to recognize evil is cutting off its best defense against it, Buddhism teaches. The Daishonin says in this Goshō that "at such a time" — at a time when society is thus confused — we have to "re-buke slander," to clearly differentiate right from wrong.

Recently I faced my own predilection to take evil lightly. It happened in October when the Rev. Jisei Nagasaka of the New York Nichiren Shoshu temple authored a letter to all SGI-USA members. Similar to the head temple's re-excommunication letter to members in Japan, Nagasaka's letter said we all have to quit the SGI organization. When I read it, I laughed. Especially when I read that only if we practice with the priests can we "carry out the pure and genuine practice" of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Pure and genuine are the last things I would call the priests who are trying to destroy the SGI's movement for world peace.

But this funny letter, which the U.S. priests are now handing out and reading aloud at their meetings, wasn't so funny the more I thought about it. If an innocent person believed what it said, that pure faith is to be found with the temple, wouldn't evil be getting away with being evil? How potentially destructive the letter really is!

The Daishonin always tells us to beware evil friends who will try to destroy our mind of faith — that's what the letter is trying to do. Since I came to that realization, the thought of that letter has been fueling my prayers, now renewed, that no one will be swayed by what the priesthood says — and that I can deepen people's confidence that the SGI is right.

Q How can I learn more about the temple issue?

While we can only scratch the surface in this series in terms of details, many articles and publications about the temple issue have already appeared. Please consult with the leaders in your local area and have them assist you in finding the material you need. Some suggested readings are listed here.

As this is a historic issue and will be relevant to our Buddhist movement for a long time, there is no need to rush. Please proceed at a natural pace. The most important thing to keep in mind as you read is to think about which aspects of the Daishonin's Buddhism the temple issue concerns and how these aspects relate to your faith and practice.

As you start reading about the issue, you will most likely have questions. You may already have some after reading this far. Please ask anyone in the SGI whom you feel might be knowledgeable about anything you don't understand. No question about Buddhism is silly; nothing in Buddhism is taboo or secret.

Praising one of his followers for asking a question about Buddhism, the Daishonin states, "For you to ask a question about the Lotus Sutra is a rare source of good fortune" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 221). Asking a question is an expression of one's seeking mind.

Lastly, as you learn more about the temple issue, please share your understanding and feelings with others. Through dialogue, not only can you stimulate an interest about the issue in others, you can also arrive at new and deeper perspectives. Dialogue is mutually beneficial; we can learn from one another, so please don't feel you have to wait until you understand it all before you can talk about it.

Key Points:

- Read at your own pace. Some suggested material is listed here.
- Discuss what you have learned with others and don't hesitate to ask questions or share your insights. This process will lead all involved to deeper insights and conviction.

Learning about the temple issue is an ongoing process; it is part of the unfolding history of the Daishonin's Buddhism and kosen-rufu and certainly related directly to our study of the Goshō and Buddhism in general. Good luck, good fortune and best of health to you.

Suggested Reading

— A general introduction to the temple issue is "An Overview of the Priesthood Issue" (*Seikyo Times*, March 1992, pp. 26–35).

— *Issues Between the Nichiren Shoshu Priesthood and the Soka Gakkai*, volumes 1–5 (1991–92), provides a thorough background of the temple issue; especially volume 5, a translation of "The Soka Gakkai's Request for the Resignation of Nikken Abe as Nichiren Shoshu High Priest," presents a comprehensive view of the issue.

— The internal condition of the priesthood is explained in *Voices of Protest: Priests Speak Out for the Reformation of Nichiren Shoshu* (1993).

— Daisaku Ikeda's *Selected Speeches: On the Basics of Buddhism* (1993) provides various discussions on the "eye-

opening" ceremony, the meaning of the Gohonzon and the formality of gongyo.

— *Reaffirming Our Right to Happiness: On the Gohonzon Transcribed by High Priest Nichikan* (1996) is a reference issued by the SGI that provides a point-by-point refutation of the priesthood's allegations about the Gohonzon as well as the history surrounding its issuance.

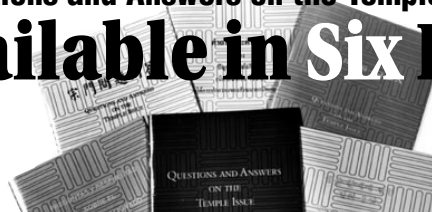
— Masahiro Kobayashi's "On the Transmission of the Heritage of the Law" (*Seikyo Times*, December 1992, pp. 26–39) highlights the historical facts that disprove the infallibility of the high priest and sheds light on the often-elusive concept of the "heritage of the Law."

— Detailed accounts of the priesthood's behavior during World War II — including the priesthood's acceptance of the Shinto talisman — can be found in "Demand for the Priesthood's Immediate Apology for Its Support of War" (*Seikyo Times*, October 1992, pp. 20–29).

— Also, please refer to Josei Toda's "History and Conviction of the Soka Gakkai" (*SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-Level Textbook*, pp. 105–20; *Seikyo Times*, June 1991).

This concludes "Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue"

Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue Now Available in Six Languages



The pamphlet *Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue*, which seeks to provide succinct information on this important issue, is now available in six languages — Chinese, English, Japanese, Korean, Spanish and Thai. It is available free of charge through the organization and can be downloaded from the SGI-USA web page (www.sgi-usa.org).

In this issue, we're happy to announce the winners of our first annual essay contest. The theme 'Diversity' brought dozens of responses in five categories. The open and high school winners are printed here. The elementary winners are in this week's 'Friends for Peace.' Next week, we'll print the winners in the college and junior high categories. We thank you for your support and hope you will enjoy reading the insights of this talented group of writers.

By JODIE APPELL
BERKELEY, CALIF.

Shared Breath

There is a disturbing trend in the suburbs. Teenage girls want to copy a certain movie star's nose or to acquire the same lips as their favorite fashion model. There is an increasingly narrow vision of what is held to be attractive in our culture, a circumscribed homogeneity that negates the beauty of our individuality as people.

The media bombards us with messages that you must look a certain way, buy particular products and live a certain kind of life in order to be happy. Differences are feared, and we feel thwarted by our imperfections. Even the world of art is dominated by mechanical reproduction. And now cloning reopens the horizon.

No wonder people feel diminished, alienated within themselves, distrustful of oth-



The more we uncover our true selves through human revolution, the more likely it is we will find the place of compassion that binds us together. There, we can begin to feel another's pain as our own.

ers. We reward super models for looking good on the outside, while artists and writers, people who radiate from the inside are barely compensated for the riches they create. We are not encouraged to find our individual voices, to be proud

of who we are with all our unique idiosyncrasies and strengths. Our world is torn apart by racism and intolerance, leading to bitterness, violence and war — glaring reminders of our inability to accept our apparent differ-

ences, whether racial, religious or cultural.

What is terribly wrong in this picture is that our survival as a human race is dependent on the diversity of our population, just as our ecosystem's health relies on the multiplicity of life forms

on earth. I'm reminded of Walt Whitman's passionate celebration of the individual voice: "I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear...each singing what belongs to him or her and to no one else...singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs" ("I Hear America Singing," *Leaves of Grass*). A chorus couldn't make beautiful music without the blending of individual voices. The building of a family or an organization or a society is contingent on the shared input of its individual members.

Buddhism encourages us to develop our true identities, instead of hiding who we are behind superficial walls. Working together in the SGI peace movement with people who are different from us helps us to transcend stereotypes, opening us to the most profound realization of all: that in our

PLEASE SEE BREATH, 9

Diverse Thought Strengthens Us

By LORI McDANIEL
CHICAGO

The SGI recently has placed great emphasis on accepting diversity, which is admirable. While much of the focus is on qualities such as race, ethnicity and sexual persuasion, little is said about acceptance of diverse thinking and ideas, particularly those related to the growth of the organization. This is equally important, as all diversity issues have at their roots certain mind sets that must be challenged in order for diversity to be truly accepted.

Tolerance of diversity, specifically diverse thought, is doubly important to us practitioners of Buddhism in the United States. First, we are not the mainstream religion; we are the diverse group in this country at present. Therefore, we cannot afford to

be hypocritical by being judgmental toward people who think differently than we do.

Second, this country's founding fathers — particularly John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson — were necessarily diverse in their thoughts and actions. They were labeled by some as treasonous and rebellious, but if it were not for their courageous ideas and persistence in putting them forth, this country would not exist as it does. The 13 colonies were the first in the history of the world to break away from their parent country. Revolution — of a country or an organization or a single person — can be beneficial. It does not, however, occur without some degree of initially diverse thinking and acceptance of new and different ideas.

Debate and discussion of diverse opinions cannot hurt anyone. Attempts to censor expression can. I returned to the SGI a few years ago, and I also prac-

ticed in the '80s, when we were to "follow without questioning" and "just say *hai*." The change in the organization during that 10-year interim still amazes and thrills me. I am proud of the organization's progress in this respect, and I do not mean to detract from that sentiment when I add that it still has a ways to go.

For example, ideas that were labeled as rebellious and dangerous as late as the early '90s have since become implemented in the SGI. One local member at that time was called a troublemaker when he suggested the organization abolish the white uniforms, move the organization's focus to the neighborhoods, and eliminate some of the tiers of leadership. Those diverse ideas, which have come to pass, originally were met with disagreement, which is fine. However, at times they were also met with fear, anger, resentment and even outrage.

One possible explanation for this, especially in light of the organization's excommunication, might be that people have their own doubts and insecurities with which to contend. Perhaps some members view diverse opinions

PLEASE SEE THOUGHT, 9

The Real Handicap

By GLYDE HART
SEATTLE



I have always thought of myself as an open-minded person, free from prejudice, free from the burdens of sexism and racism, tolerant of all religions. I was able to fully embrace Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism when it entered my life because the Gosho speaks to women with

great respect (a rarity in world religions!). I was able to join the SGI because I believed in its causes for kosen-rufu and saw the effects in the racial diversity of every meeting I attended. This is where I belong! Little did I know that, despite my "modern" view of the world, I was still intolerant of a portion of the population I chose to ignore: the handicapped.

I am teaching a directing workshop as part of my guest residency with the Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, Wis. — theatrical directing. Although I

have never taken a directing workshop before, I have been a prolific producer/director with a long list of credits to my name.

Here was the opportunity to examine my own methods and philosophies for the first time. I plunged into the challenge eagerly, burying my nose in whatever books I could find on the subject. I made a long list of interesting quotations and a full course outline: I was completely prepared for a high-powered, college-level semi-

PLEASE SEE HANDICAP, 9

OPEN
SECOND
PLACE

OPEN
THIRD
PLACE

OPEN
FIRST
PLACE

By JACQUELINE BARRIOS
WEST COVINA, CALIF.

And I Shall Ride on a Butterfly Wing

I traced the crayon along the edges: blue, green, yellow or "periwinkle," "cyan" and "canary," the edges of that butterfly wing. I was proud of my handiwork, neat and each color distinct, starkly delineated by my unerring crayon. I was Master

Color-Artist, follower of the one rule of coloring — stay inside the lines.

It is perhaps more than a rule of the coloring book.

Staying inside the lines is an instinctive tendency that spans all human endeavors. It is in part due to our need for boundaries, our insatiable need to classify and identify and pin down the unexplainable to several keynote absolutes. Life has an abundance that frightens, and so we strive for simplicity by designating the truths: Work, Money, Food and TV. Maybe Family Values, Insurance and Neighbors.

Man has sought to conquer diversity, to simplify and civilize his existence. Diversity is the savagery of the jungle, the essence of a rioting, untamed life. Diversity is a truth that tells us that nothing is simple, nothing is absolute, and makes us question everything that



To ward off the uncertainties of human diversity, we built fences, houses, society and made conformity our guiding principle.

we hold to be simple, absolute truths. And to question truths is fundamental to our growth as human beings. Diversity ensures that one race, religion, ethic, social system is not above the rest, and every idea will be challenged by another.

To ward off the uncertainties of human diversity, we built fences, houses, society and made conformity our guiding principle. But our cities expanded, and worlds once separated by fragile seas were thrown back into the ages, into a jungle of threatening differences. So we invented another, intangible boundary, one that stood longer than the mortar

and brick of our ancestors' fences. We invented race.

We needed to recognize, identify and understand our worlds so much that we feared the unknown. From this fear we developed my childhood coloring rule, to stay within the lines. Lines are the absolutes that define our lives in understandable monochromatic chunks. Lines are dual warnings with a message to those outside to Keep Out and those within to Keep In. From this first fear blooms the rank canker blossom of other fears, and we hesitate to try, explore, discover. Soon the fetid miasma stifles Life be-

cause it stifles its possibilities, its diversity.

And it grows and grows — this choking fear. So much so that we stand back and watch the criminals. While Hitler victimized 6 million Jews, millions of Germans watched. While the black child bore another day of ugly, gut-wrenching slurs to his mother, we watched. And it is an ugly fact that sometimes, somewhere, we have also participated in the crime.

And the lines entangle us — the sinuous, twisting vines of a darker jungle, whose savagery is unnatural as much as it is cruel.

The time has come that we savor life at its nascent purity, to

greet the mysterious, wonderful unknowns that unfold every day with innocent eyes, open hearts. We must all, at least once, try the suspicious thingamajiggers at the sushi bar, roll salty velvet caviar beads on our tongue and get slightly tipsy on champagne. We should wrap ourselves in yards of iridescent sari silks or feel the scalloped edges of a lace mantilla on our foreheads. We shall dance one day by the sun-bleached columns of the Parthenon or beat the tanned leather of a bongo drum. If we cannot travel, then we shall take flight with our own wings of curiosity and find the richness that was only a smile away.

Years have passed, and I look at my coloring books — and I damn the lines that taught me too early what a butterfly wing must look like. This is then my one plea to the coloring book makers of the world: Give children beautiful blank sheets — and set them free. Let them discover before it's too late the pleasure I finally found when I learned to mix "periwinkle" and "canary" to chance upon a yet undiscovered green, to fill the white space with polka dots and wavy lines, to defy the lines with undisciplined color.

And every day we add a new version to the butterfly wings of the world. VII

Tick Tock

By NANCY LIN
TAMPA, FLA.

Nature is a unity in diversity...a harmony blending together all created things...one great whole animated by the breath of life.

— Naturalist
Alexander von Humboldt

Like a clock, a community is made up of various parts which perform together to progress in a steady rhythm. Everything in our community is necessarily dependent upon one another. Parents entrust teachers to ingrain the fundamentals of society and the concepts of mannerisms necessary to their parts of society into the children. Schools edify everyone on

HIGH SCHOOL SECOND PLACE

how to develop their own individuality and encourage everyone to nurture talents and skills unique to everyone's interest. Our world is saturated with such exceptional diversity that it would be such a shame to try to squeeze unique and personal potentials into categories.

Cultures make people rich, the community sparkle, the world glow. One must respect diversity because we all have a certain role to perform and, when united to-



with the neighborhood children. People are social beings...not hermits. This simple statement of structure is telltale in the realization that we must have a good reason for our interdependency. If one job were abolished or abandoned, chaos and confusion

but doctors, what would happen if a water pipe burst and the whole community's water supply shut down? A million doctors wouldn't do one bit of good, and the community would fall.

Our interconnected world also forces us to share responsibilities.

We all need to overcome obstacles and realize that we are all human and need the same thing to survive: one another.

gether, formulate a whole organic movement which inherently perpetuates the process of living.

In a world deeply advanced in technology, where diversity plays such an important component in our economy, every job must be covered and maintained. The acceleration of technology allows more leisure time for families everywhere around the world. Instead of spending countless hours preparing meals, delivering mail or washing clothes, one's family can play a game of ball or picnic in the park

would quickly stir, handicapping the economic system.

When I asked my school counselor what types of jobs I should specialize in or which to pursue, she answered that the success of a career depended on passions of the individual. A plumber's job to fix clogged drains is connected to a civil engineer planning a city's water system. If the plumber got sick, he or she would need a doctor. If the doctor had a broken pipe, then he or she would need a plumber's good team. If an entire community consisted of nothing

We all need to overcome obstacles and realize that regardless of one's skin color, shade of eyes or hair texture, we are all human and need the same thing to survive: one another. Human diversity has always affected life-conditions. From mountaintops to river valleys, diversity has played a major part in everyone's life.

War, riots and many racial killings have been sparked because of an ignorance of human diversity and its necessary function. Many life situations teach us the consequences of what blind-

ness and prejudice can do. For example, they have the possibility of tearing whole countries into shreds of disaster (World War II). To strengthen and enhance ourselves and others of this world, everyone must try to keep an open mind and observe for themselves what problems exist and try to challenge themselves by making a difference in our community and in our world: by spreading the seeds of knowledge and understanding of human diversity. Everyone selfishly desires to advance in a big rush and to improve their own lives. But without realizing that this effort is impossible without holding hands and helping one another, such aspirations dwindle into forgotten thoughts.

The clock of our lives and our world moves at a continuous steady rhythm. Because of our eternal flame which burns to hear this rhythm and move alongside it, we can achieve innumerable ambitions. As we continue to guide and trust each other, and strive to learn from each other's creeds and beliefs, then the clock of our lives moves forward with a continuous beat. We should cherish our individualities, celebrate our talents and respect human diversity...because these are what make the world tick. VIII

BREATH, FROM PAGE 7

hearts we are the same. The more we uncover our true selves through human revolution, the more likely it is we will find the place of compassion that binds us together. There, we can begin to feel another's pain as our own.

I've thought a lot about the Heaven's Gate cult, whose members believed taking their own lives would open their

identities to a "higher" realm. For me, their philosophy mirrors the spiritual crisis we face as a species. They believed giving up their individuality would join them with a larger whole, that they would attain enlightenment through relinquishing their physical bodies.

This belief system saddens me. The expression of who we are in our daily lives in this world is itself what allows us to attain Buddhahood. It is a lifelong

process of manifesting our potential, not a mystical conclusion to a devalued life. Our uniqueness is displayed in small and beautiful ways in everything we do, from how we greet our children to the favorite music we like to dance to when no one is watching. To be yourself means to be willing to pursue your dreams. You cannot become a Buddha unless you feel it is important for you to be here, on the earth, at this time. After all, there

is only one of you who will ever exist, throughout eternity.

The paradox of people wanting to look or act like someone else, or of people or nations fearing someone who seems different, is that we are really so alike. We all want to live lives of dignity and value; we all want to love and be loved, to live in peace. All of us deserve these things. Scientists have discovered that when we breathe out, we share lung and heart cells. We are actually taking

in parts of each other, so we are really not so separate after all. This would have pleased Whitman immensely, who believed our individuality, our diversity, is what connects us to each other. I wonder if he knew his metaphor would resonate as a literal truth: "I celebrate myself, and sing myself, and what I assume you shall assume, for every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you" ("Song of Myself," *Leaves of Grass*). ❖

THOUGHT, FROM PAGE 7

and ideas about the organization as threatening and harmful. It is my hope that we can all advance courageously, arm-in-arm even with people with whom we disagree strongly, toward human revolution and kosen-rufu, recognizing the strength in diversity and individuality.

I know that we can do this because we have the Gohonzon as our tool and confidence that Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is more powerful than anything.

Consider the idea of disallowing diverse opinions about change in the organization. First of all, if this were the case, it never would have advanced as remarkably as it has in the last decade. And second, such thinking is characteristic of a cult. The

One local member at that time was called a troublemaker when he suggested the organization abolish the white uniforms, move the organization's focus to the neighborhoods, and eliminate some of the tiers of leadership. Those diverse ideas, which have come to pass, originally were met with disagreement, which is fine. However, at times they were also met with fear, anger, resentment and even outrage.

SGI is not a harmfully abusive, anti-social place. It is often, and can be even more so, a nurturing and compassionate place. Let us also care for and nurture those members and non-members who

might think differently than we do, so that we can move on, accepting of diversity, in unity.

Diversity (according to the *American Heritage College Dictionary*) is the quality of being dif-

ferent, of being an individual, of possessing distinct characteristics. When we join the SGI and practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, we do not forfeit ourselves, our perspectives, our belief

systems. In order to accept diversity and maintain unity, we simply need to remember two things.

1) Everyone possesses a Buddha nature, and every single human being is therefore deserving of respect. Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, like gravity, does not discriminate based on color, race, sexual orientation or personal beliefs.

2) It's OK for people to maintain diverse opinions, and it's even OK for them to state those opinions. That does not mean we must agree. Common sense and experience teach us it's not easy to make others think what we want them to think or be how we want them to be. Buddhism teaches us that the only way we can change others is by changing ourselves. ❖

HANDICAP, FROM PAGE 7

nar on the Art of Directing.

On the first day of class, I was shocked and disappointed to discover that my eight students were total novices: Only one of them had ever directed before. Five were still in high school. One was in college. One was deaf and physically disabled.

"This is just great," I thought to myself as I struggled along, trying to keep the discussion afloat single-handedly. After our first session, I was frustrated, angry, blaming my superiors for the disaster. Why hadn't they told me about the ages and capacities of those enrolled? The presence of the deaf girl, Jenny, made me especially angry, because she was clearly holding the class back with her simple questions and ridiculous non sequiturs. To top it off, she was hard to look at with her grotesque facial expressions and bizarre physical postures. "She is retarded!" I told my fiancée angrily.

I often use chanting to help me stop focusing on a "problem," so that I can try to find a solution instead. The next day, I approached my producer. "I would like to add an extra day to my workshop," I said enthusiastically.

"You will not get extra pay for this," my producer warned.

But that was OK. I didn't need the money.

So I called the students one by one and asked them if they would like to extend the workshop. They all agreed. Jenny called me back but got my fiancée instead. They communicated through a special phone service that involves a third party typing words on a computer screen for the deaf person to read.

"She's very intelligent," Michael said to me, quietly. "There's something about her..." He couldn't put his finger on it.

The next day in class, Jenny brought a 150-page manuscript out of her backpack and plopped it onto the table in front of me. It was titled *Jenny's Journal*. I thanked her and told her that I

would be delighted to read it, thinking: "I am so busy! When will I have time for this? What a waste of time!"

Eventually, I did open the cover and look inside. Chapter 1 was titled "Jenny's Journey B.C. (Before Crash)." Chapter 2 was titled "Jenny's Journal A.D. (After Damage)." With a

sick feeling in my stomach, I began to read about the 16-year-old athlete, scholar and homecoming queen who was driving home from a 4-H activity one evening with a couple of friends when they ran a stop sign. The two girls in the front seat were killed. Jenny lived for several months in a coma, sup-

ported artificially. Everyone thought that she would be a "human vegetable" if she survived at all. And here she was, walking up the three flights of stairs with a cane to participate in my workshop.

Suddenly my arrogance withered to shame. This manuscript was a testimony to the dignity and courage of this young woman. Again and again, she raged about the injustices against the handicapped — the abuse, the neglect, the ridicule. "I am not retarded!" she exclaimed with the clarity of the typewritten word.

I was supposed to be Jenny's teacher, but she has opened my eyes. We are working together to create a stage or screenplay of her story. Communication with her is difficult but far from impossible. The more arduous our struggle, the more I stand to learn.

Jenny's presence in my life is a gift from the Gohonzon. If anyone is handicapped in this relationship, it is surely me.... ❖

After our first session, I was frustrated, angry, blaming my superiors for the disaster. Why hadn't they told me about the ages and capacities of those enrolled? The presence of the deaf girl, Jenny, made me especially angry, because she was clearly holding the class back with her simple questions and ridiculous non sequiturs.



EXPERIENCE

My Trip to Japan

By BOBBIE STEMPLER

L.A. #1 JOINT TERRITORY
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CHIEF

The first day of the World Youth Training Course in September, we went to Soka University. I became excited when we were almost there. All the signs were in Japanese, but we knew they were about Soka University because they were painted with the three colors. We saw houses and shops with the three-color flag. Then we saw the Makiguchi Memorial Hall from the bus. Everyone jumped up to try to get a picture. It was so impressive and huge. We were told that SGI President Ikeda made it beautiful and grand because President Makiguchi had died in a small prison cell. President Ikeda said that Makiguchi Hall is a place for fighters for kosen-rufu.

When we chanted three times, I was kind of in awe because it was the first time that I had chanted with so many different people from so many different countries. I thought, we don't speak the same languages but in that moment we did. I thought it was really cool.

Our first training session was about the priesthood by the Soka Gakkai youth division study leader Masaaki Morinaka, who had just been in the United States with the youth exchange group in August. He said the temple issue could be called "The Tale of a High Priest Gone Mad." He explained that Nikken has lost the struggle with evil, and that this had caused him to

become jealous of President Ikeda and to try to destroy the SGI. Mr. Morinaka also said that we must become the Buddha's true disciples by rebuking evil. If we don't repudiate evil, we can't reveal the True Law.

After that we were given a tour of the building. The eighth floor where President Ikeda meets with dignitaries was like a museum. It was incredibly beautiful. We were also taken to a room where President Makiguchi's Gohonzon is enshrined. We chanted three times and saw personal items of President Makiguchi's and President Toda's.

Because of this experience, I feel differently about President Makiguchi and President Toda now. I hardly ever thought about them before, but now I can appreciate what they started. When we left we were given rice balls, bananas and tea on the bus. Everything was always prepared so that we would always feel comfortable.

The next day's first training session was reports on the priesthood issue by a few different countries, including the United States. The afternoon was a Q-and-A session by SGI Deputy President Einosuke Akiya. One question was from a member from Africa about overcoming political problems in his country. The main thing President Akiya said was that it must start with a single individual. One individual must resolve that he or she alone shall do it. Then another will stand up and then another.



Bobbie Stemple (center) learned about the temple issue and Soka Gakkai history on a training trip to Japan in September.

After that we went to exchange meetings we thought were going to be district discussion meetings. We didn't know that there would be hundreds of members there or that it was at a community center! All of us went to Kanagawa Prefecture, and from there my group went to Tsurumi. The preparations that went into the exchange meeting were incredible. They thought of every detail. The most touching thing was that when we arrived at the community center there were hand-painted posters with our names on them welcoming us. They worked so hard to make us feel welcome, and they treated us like we were special.

The next afternoon was the World Youth Peace General Meeting at the International Friendship Hall. President Ikeda, President Halim of the World Federation of U.N. Associations

and Dr. Ved Nanda of the University of Denver attended. Both guests gave speeches commending President Ikeda on his peace and nuclear abolition activities. I could see how much they respected and looked up to him.

I thought to myself that they love him just like we do. He looked just like a proud and happy father. When President Ikeda spoke, it was mainly about the activities of the WFUNA. The one thing which stood out for me was that he wants us to become as big as the Himalayas, just like an Indian farmer thought Gandhi was as big as the Himalayas when he met him once.


The next day was the World Youth Peace Music Festival in Yokohama. President Ikeda attended and it was incredible.

There were 1,300 performers — including two from the United States. The two of them danced and were really great.

Aric and Vincent were actually the youngest members to go on the trip from the United States.

They were in the front and center in the finale. It was the most touching finale. All of the performers were on the stage singing and dancing to the final song. You could feel their sheer joy, and I was reminded of my Fife and Drum Corps days and all those great memories.

When we were in the buses preparing to leave, we could talk to the people in the buses next to ours. They were from Malaysia, and it was wonderful how easy it was to make friends with people who couldn't even speak the same language.

The next day was our last day. We had the closing ceremony, and President Ikeda asked us to convey his best regards to all the members, the general director and the women's division chief of each country. 

STUDENT NEWS

A Look at 'Suffering in the World'

By JEFF FARR

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Some SGI-USA students at Glendale Community College in Glendale, Calif., wanted to meet other students who are members at their school. When all nine they could find finally got together, they decided

to hold a "Suffering in the World" exhibit on campus. Their display would share a Buddhist outlook on world problems with their classmates, they decided.


The exhibit, held Oct. 27, featured 38 photographs of human suffering the world over — images of war, famine, nuclear destruction, etc. — and introduced SGI President Ikeda's proposed educational solutions to this suffering. "We wanted to go back to the real purpose of learning — to end human suffering," Yumiko Kamie, one of the organizers explained. "We still have this kind of suffering going on in the world."

The school newspaper, *El Vaquero*, covered the exhibit, and a philosophy professor assigned all her students to view it and take notes. The SGI-USA students



Photo by JEFF FARR

Student organizers in front of their exhibit.

were happy that more than 50 students, many of them international students, volunteered to support their future projects on campus. 



GUIDANCE INTO ACTION

No Complaints!

By DAVID EISENBERG
SGI-USA SOKA GROUP CHIEF

A ship or plane can move forward due to the force of resistance. In a similar way, faith in the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin is almost always accompanied by difficulties. But you must never forget that you can develop your life-condition greatly when you meet hardships. — SGI President Ikeda, *Buddhism in Action*, vol. 1, p. 140

I seem to have a very hard time remembering and applying the above quote from President Ikeda to my life. What he is saying to me is that not only must I welcome challenges as an opportunity to grow and strengthen my faith, but I must understand that they are my benefit.

Lately, I have been realizing that it is my nature to complain a lot. Not always outwardly but in my mind or heart. I find myself thinking that because I spend many hours doing activities and trying to support the members, I should not have to endure struggles, or that they should be easily resolved. But whether I voice

these feelings or just think them, they are still complaints and ultimately prevent me from truly growing in my state of life.

In the late '80s and early '90s, when I was constantly doing Soka Group activities, I deeply grasped the meaning of supporting behind the scenes. No matter how long I had to stand outside in the rain, no matter how long the activities lasted, not only would I not complain, but I would cheerfully greet the members and do my absolute best to make them feel protected and at ease.

I was challenging my weaknesses and winning over them. Every moment spent supporting the members' efforts for kosen-rufu translated into great benefit for myself and my family. Activities such as Soka Group, Gajokai and Byakuren offer great fortune for the youth divi-

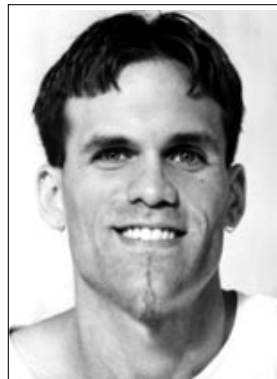
sion and a great opportunity for youth to develop their compassion and strength of character.

But as I moved on to other responsibilities within the organization, I feel that I began to forget the lessons I had learned and to fall back on my wimpy ways. It's a wonderful thing to share our struggles with one another, and we should always feel that we can be honest about how we feel. But there is a difference between that kind of heart-to-heart dialogue and petty complaining.

A whining attitude does nothing to encourage or motivate others.

As a Soka Group leader, I had always prided myself on my mental and physical toughness. I could do the longest shift; I could go without food or a break; I could stand alone at the farthest point from the activity center. And I would enjoy it! And I wouldn't complain! So

Lately, I have been realizing that it is my nature to complain a lot. Not always outwardly but in my mind or heart.



David Eisenberg has been doing Soka Group for several years.

how do I now rekindle that kind of life-condition?

For me, it is a battle of constantly reminding myself that my benefit, my growth as a person, is dependent on the challenges in life. What a boring existence I would lead were there no problems. My prayer must be to become a stronger person, one who is not afraid of the big battles, one who has such a powerful life force that the obstacles are afraid of me!

As I move forward into 1998, I am more determined than ever to be a great example of selfless hard work for the sake of others. And I will challenge myself every day to do my best with no regrets. My motto — "NO COMPLAINTS!!!"

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE Two Philosophies

By CRAIG GREEN & JEFF FARR
LOS ANGELES

The current dispute between the SGI and Nichiren Shoshu is not simply a conflict between two religious organizations. It's a struggle between two opposing ways of life. When Nichiren Daishonin began to propagate the Law, he made it clear that those who propagate this philosophy correctly will undoubtedly incur persecution and slander. The only organization that has fulfilled this criteria is the SGI. Nichiren Shoshu has never come close.

Instead of working together with the SGI, Nichiren Shoshu has, since 1990, conspired with other anti-Gakkai factions to bring down the organization, even going so far as to request that the Japanese government dissolve the Soka Gakkai. Spurred on by Nikken's jealousy, Nichiren Shoshu has excommunicated and re-excommunicated millions of members, threatening that they will not be able to attain enlightenment as a ruse to get them back into the temples.

Nowhere in his writings does Nichiren Daishonin point to the supremacy of a high priest or the inferiority of lay believers. Nowhere in his writings does he speak of excommunication. But today, these illogical theories have found a home in Nichiren Shoshu. The difference is clear: The SGI is basing itself on the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin. And the temple is wrapping itself in the security blanket of monastic ritual.

This concludes "Know the Difference"

Get the
World Tribune
every week
in your
mailbox

Call
1 (800) 835-4558

The Student Files

Name: Teresa Smith
School: Cal State University Northridge
Major: Physical therapy
City: Northridge, Calif.



It is a challenge being a student. And being in this physical therapy master's program has been like doing human revolution at microwave speed — it hasn't been slow cooking. But I have expanded my life tenfold by accomplishing my goals.

It was when I was diagnosed with an idiopathic disorder, ending up in the hospital with a blood clot in my brain, that I received my letter of acceptance into my program, which is a highly competitive one. I spent

my first year of school visiting the neurologist, hematologist and gynecologist, and had to have a cystectomy (major surgery to remove two cysts sitting on my ovaries) last summer. Today I am very healthy.

So there have been many obstacles along the way, and I appreciate every one of them for forcing me to expand my life and enjoy the process of education. I can truly say now that I enjoy getting my education.

These NAMES Won't Be Forgotten

THE DENVER POST/ANDY CROSS



Photo by JOE POWLOKA

Selina Lucero, a 21-year-old mother of two, is one of some 80 students enrolled at the Native American Multicultural Education School in Denver. For test-taking, she uses the 'lucky pencil' her mother gave her. (Right) Lynda Nuttall is director of the school, the only adult education school for urban Native Americans in transition from reservations.

Lynda Nuttall saved a school for Native Americans that helps adult students make the transition from reservation to urban life.

By JAN TYLER
DENVER CORRESPONDENT

Lynda Nuttall has a poetic way of describing NAMES, the Native American Multi-Cultural Education School, where Denver students who dropped out of high school become stars.

"It's a place where chaos dictates order, where laughter is the rule not the exception," says Nuttall, who has worked as school director for 10 years. "It's a place where it's OK to cry because life's not fair. And it's a place where testing is special." Students are tested to show improvement, she explains. "We look forward to that," she says.

Nuttall rescued the school from extinction last year after the Denver Indian Center, which ran the program for 20 years, was passed over for a Title 9 grant from the Department of Education. The school's 58 students faced an uncertain future.

"I cried — we all cried," says Evelyn Gutierrez, a 35-year-old mother of five. Halfway through her struggle to get her GED, the funds were suddenly

gone. "I felt like letting go of my dream. Lynda helped out," she says.

Evelyn and her older sister, Louise, easily could have slipped into their statistical place: More than half of the Native Americans who enroll in public schools in Colorado never graduate. Nationwide, one-third of adult Native Americans are counted as illiterate.

"I just couldn't let it happen," says Nuttall.

So she got busy. Within a month, she had raised \$1,980 and reopened the non-profit school in the converted storage area of a Denver church with donated books, furniture and two computers. Although she continues to struggle with fundraising, last May she graduated her first class of 15 students, each of whom received a handmade beaded Indian tassel.

Evelyn and Louise were among those in the first graduating class. Louise received a John Elway Scholarship to attend college plus additional money for supplies through friends of NAMES.


In each of these victories, Nuttall relives a part of her own struggle to adapt to life outside the reservation. Nuttall, a Cheyenne River Sioux/Cree, dropped out of high school in Billings, Mont. She had moved



off the reservation with her mother at age 16 and met a world in which she didn't fit the norm.

Understanding that sense of isolation, Nuttall aims to create an educational environment that affirms each student. Although the school filled a desperately needed niche — it's the only adult education school designed to meet the needs of urban Native Americans in transition from reservations — the doors are open to other students as well.

"At our school, we accept them for who they are and the skills they bring — what they have to share with us," says Nuttall. "We teach them that they are special, precious people in the universe, and that they don't have to worry what others are thinking of them. We are not full of stereotypes of who or what we should be.

"Education," she adds, "is what we have to do to make a difference for the next generation, for all cultures.... We are teaching them to walk in a world of many cultures." 



for Peace

Friends



SPECIAL PULLOUT SECTION

DECEMBER 5, 1997

Photos by TONY WILLIAMS



A three-legged race at Phoenix's backyard campout really brings kids together.

City Slickers Enjoy Campout in Heart of City

By DIANA DECKER

Phoenix
It was quiet at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 25. The stage was set for the Arizona Territory Boys and Girls Group 1st Annual Campout.

Tony and Jenny Williams had graciously turned their home into a lodge, their ample backyard into a tent village. Twenty-two tents of all sizes took up only half of the backyard, leaving lots of room for three-legged races and other games.

The kitchen was stocked with a tower of paper plates, cartons of juice boxes, bottled water, boxes of graham crackers, bundles of packages of hot dogs and buns.

Signs of the high degree of organization were everywhere. Small paper bags of toothpaste, one for each camper, stood ready by the sign-in tables. Colorful signs outside identified activity tables for pumpkin-carving, arts and crafts; the signs inside identified bathroom color-codes for the ages of intended users. Name badges, also color-coded according to age, were stacked neatly.

At 3:00 p.m., the quiet disappeared. Fifty-four campers, ages 3 to 12, and



Sean Brehm holds a fistful of 'gak' he made during the campout.

their parents began to arrive.

And the Williams' home blossomed with organized activity. The craft tables attracted youngsters who decorated paper vests with a variety of colorful items, built things with sticks, blew bubbles, made creations with playdough, and made "gak." Others bobbed for apples

and made caramel apples.

Dinner was delayed to allow for more craft time. After dinner, there were regular camp activities, including a talent show, campfire, singing with guitar accompaniment, roasting marshmallows and a game of flashlight tag. The special treats for breakfast included Japanese-style eggs.

A number of volunteers put in many hours before and during the campout to make it a success. At the campout, the "yellow people" — teen helpers, parents and other adults serving as camp counselors and dressed in yellow T-shirts — seemed to outnumber the campers.

"The campout is just the starting point," Tiffany Horne said. "I felt that in this organization, the focus has been on the adults. We hope to change that." □

Environment Day in San Mateo

By PENNY L. WILLIAMS

San Mateo, Calif.

SGI men, women, boys and girls all got together at San Mateo's Central Park to learn about life, or at least a big part of life — water.

Jim Barkenhaus, Jim Avant, Gayle Ciardi and Cheryl Davis of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission shared their views on watershed protection.

Jim Barkenhaus explained that San Francisco's water department supervises 23,000 acres of watershed, where rain is collected in streams that eventually flow into the ocean.

Jim Avant informed us that we're all still drinking the same water the dinosaurs drank. Water is the only resource that is finite, or limited. Water is constantly being recycled, and there's only so much water to go around. Six gallons of water are used to make one can of soda, and 2,500 gallons are used for one pound of beef.

Ms. Davis told the group that watersheds have to be protected from people and fires so they're not polluted. She said we are stewards of the land to protect it and the animals, especially endangered species.

A game of "Cause and Effect" was conducted: An effect was described, and the audience had to supply its cause. For example, the effect of good grades is caused by studying hard.

Robin Sohnen, Half Moon Bay women's division district leader, said Environment Day is part of the district's 10-year plan to reach out into the community. □



Stephanie Kasten

Stephanie Kasten: I liked the piñata and the games. I learned that there is a lot of water in my body.



Jen Klein

Jen Klein: I learned a lot about where water comes from and about the water cycle. I learned it takes a lot of water to make a pound of beef.



Jessica Bennett

Jessica Bennett: Environment Day was fun and peaceful. I learned that water is very important.

Photos by LLOYD CARLSON



Boys and Girls Group Winners of the 1997 World Tribune Essay Contest

In this issue, we're happy to announce the winners of our first annual essay contest. The theme was 'Diversity,' and the winners were chosen by a panel of four judges nationwide. We thank you for your support and hope you will enjoy reading the insights of this talented group of writers.

ELEMENTARY CATEGORY
First Place

Make the Diamond Cleaner

By JENNIFER KUBOTA

Blue Bell, Pa.

Diversity is the special difference between people. Everyone is special and unique; there are no two people that are the same. But sometimes there are people who don't understand this kind of special personality.

Last year, I went to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., with my family. I saw lots of horrible things that were done to the Jews. They were gassed, tortured, killed, chained, poisoned, starved and forced to live in small ghettos. I saw lots of photos with people dying and suffering, and I thought that it was unfair that the Jews had to be treated like this just because they were Jewish. I believe that the Jewish people who lived during the Holocaust had many vexing thoughts. One boy even wrote a journal about his sorrows and hardships just like Anne Frank. They both should be free and be able to live like ordinary people.

My grandfather said that he was held in concentration camps during World War II just because he was Japanese. And dark-skinned people were made fun of and kept as slaves just because they have dark skin and different cultures. I think that all people should be treated equally whether they are different or not.



I also had an experience that made me angry about prejudice.

One time, my friends made fun of my Japanese rice balls, which I like the best. Another time, my friends made fun of my religion. They made fun of it just because they never tried it or experienced it before and said, "I hate it" or "It is disgusting." I was so upset that I decided to chant about it. Then I felt much better. It helped me overcome the fears about people teasing me. I always wonder why people judge something they don't know before they try it. If they

tried it, they would really know what it is like, and they would also be able to understand other people's feelings.

When I think about people suffering and dying just because they have a different culture or a different race, I always remember what my grandmother taught me: "Everyone has a beautiful shining diamond in his or her heart. If you do something kind and generous, it is like polishing the diamond and making it and your heart better and cleaner. But if you do something selfish and unkind, it is like putting dirt and garbage on the precious diamond. So you should chant to make things better along with your heart." To make the diamond cleaner and to fill my heart with kindness, I chant every day trying to do my best at everything.

If you saw an ugly rock, and if you knew that it was really a dirt-covered diamond, then you would probably polish it and make it cleaner. It is the same with people. If you saw and understood a person's heart, then you would be friendly and kind to them. That is why I think if we all understand each other's heart, which is a beautiful shining diamond, then we could be able to understand the greatness of diversity. Then, we can spread peace and kindness throughout the world, so that the world can be just like a peaceful, shining place with many kinds of beautiful shining diamonds.

ELEMENTARY CATEGORY
Third Place

Building a Global Family

By JENNIFER NUMAGAMI

Pottstown, Pa.

Diversity is a wondrous, fascinating fact of life to me. I love being exposed to diversity, because from this, immense joy is cultivated and derived. Every day is an opportunity to accept others, learn from others and meet someone different than me. A lot of diversity flourishes within the SGI organization. I strive to develop respect for these differences, because it helps me to maintain a high life-condition. "A Global Family" is a perfect song to explain my feelings about diversity. Here are a few lines

from "A Global Family":

*We are building a global family
Starting with you
Starting with me
Welcome into our family
I'll show you my dance
Teach me your song
Together we'll learn how to get along
Learning to listen
Learning to share
Making new friends
Every day, everywhere
When you meet somebody
Who looks different than you
If you're nice and kind*

They'll reflect what you do

This song is special to me because it's about respecting others in daily life. I performed this song in Chicago at the U.S.-Japan Youth Culture Festival in the summer of 1995 with many SGI members. It was a joyful and thrilling experience I'll never forget!

I was born into diverse surroundings. My father was born in Japan. His company sent him to America when he was 26. I'm looking forward to visiting Japan in the future to meet relatives and friends and to learn and

ELEMENTARY CATEGORY
Second Place

Look Past the Differences

By ERICA BADIAL

Vacaville, Calif.



I have not celebrated this diversity yet, but when I do, I will feel very proud of myself, and I will also feel very happy and joyful. I will feel I have completed one of my missions. Of course, I will not do this alone. I will need everybody's

help through chanting. Until then, I will try to help stop discrimination by speaking up and not judging people.

When I meet someone different from myself, sometimes I'll feel shy, but then later on I become open-minded and become friends with them. Other times, when I first meet someone physically different from myself, for example, or someone with a broken arm, leg, nose, neck or foot, or someone with burns on their body, someone with a body part missing, it will go through my mind that "Gee, I wonder what happened to that person," but I wouldn't make fun of them. I would keep

We all need to look past our differences and look within our hearts to find the true person. We need to see people for who they really are.... We must look past the color, race or religion to see deeper. As human beings, we're all equal.

what I'm thinking in my mind to myself. I would just chant for the best for them.

I haven't faced any prejudices so far, but I have seen prejudices being used toward someone just because he was physically different. This boy was walking home from school one day when another boy on the bus saw him and started calling him names like stupid, ugly and weird, just because his head was shrugged into his shoulders and his shoulders were a little broad. The boy on the bus made another comment about his hair, that it looked like a big bush on his head. I didn't think the rude comments about the

boy were necessary.

The one making the rude comments was African American. I didn't understand why he was making fun of the other Mexican American boy. The African American boy had been made fun of by other kids because of his color. I don't understand why people have to tease other people just because they are a little different. I felt so sorry for the little Mexican American boy. Sometimes discrimination like that just makes me want to cry so much and makes me ask this question over and over again: "Why does it have to be this way?" I only hope our world can change. After all, aren't we all human?

I think we need to work together on getting along and understanding one another. We don't need to look so much at the color of our skin, our religious beliefs or if we smoke or not. We all need to look past our differences and look within our hearts to find the true person. We need to see people for who they really are. It doesn't matter if you're Buddhist, Christian or any other religion.

We must look past the color, race or religion to see deeper. As human beings, we're all equal. **WI**

GLOBAL, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

understand more of my father's culture. So I'm eagerly taking Japanese classes on Saturdays to become fluent in Japanese.

I remember when my Japanese grandparents came to visit America for vacation. They warmly mentioned how many things in America were different from Japan. This touched me and told me that there's so much to learn about them and their country — and anywhere else in the world!

Whereas, my mother is American and had been Jewish before being introduced to Buddhism. Since all of her relatives are Jewish, my family celebrates our holidays with them every year. I'm glad that I can learn new things from each of my parents' different backgrounds.

Last August, my father's job was relocated from our home in Hoffman Estates, Ill., to Pennsylvania. If you move, you'll notice different areas have different philosophies. I'm learning to accept a lot of differences in my school environment. Though I still can be the humanistic person I want to be.

Hoffman Estates was a diverse area with many people from different backgrounds, countries and cultures. My school classmates were very mixed — Japanese, Korean, Chi-

nese, African American, Italian, Polish, Irish, Filipino, Spanish, Indian, etc., just to name a few of more than 50 different nationalities within my school district. It was an accepting, bright, open-minded community. I felt accepted and glad to be with all the unique people.



However, in my new school I realized that there wasn't this kind of precious mix. Last year, there were only a handful of African American and Asian kids in the whole school. I felt as if something were missing, and worse, I felt prejudice directed at anyone different, including me, since I was different.

Learning the suffering that happens in a prejudiced environment strengthens me to become a more humanistic person. I know through my Buddhist practice, I will learn how to deal with people such as in my new environment.

Only with the principle of *itai doshin* (many bodies, one mind) can a harmonious world be achieved, without discrimination. In a sense, *many bodies, one mind* means each individual displaying their full potential and qualities and being truly united by the supreme goal of *kosen-rufu* (world peace) and faith in the Gohonzon. Nichiren Daishonin states, "If *itai doshin* prevails among the people, they will achieve all their goals, whereas in *dotai ishin* (one body, many minds), they can achieve nothing remarkable."

So everyone must fully express their inherent qualities, creating rich diversity, with one mind. The goal for our country to overcome discrimination will be achieved. It's a long process, and it begins in SGI activities as members sincerely chant together! As Nichiren Daishonin explains, "All disciples and believers of Nichiren should chant *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo* with one mind (*itai doshin*) transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim." **FI**

CONVICTION AND DETERMINATION — FRIEND TO FRIEND — CONVICTION AND DETERMINATION

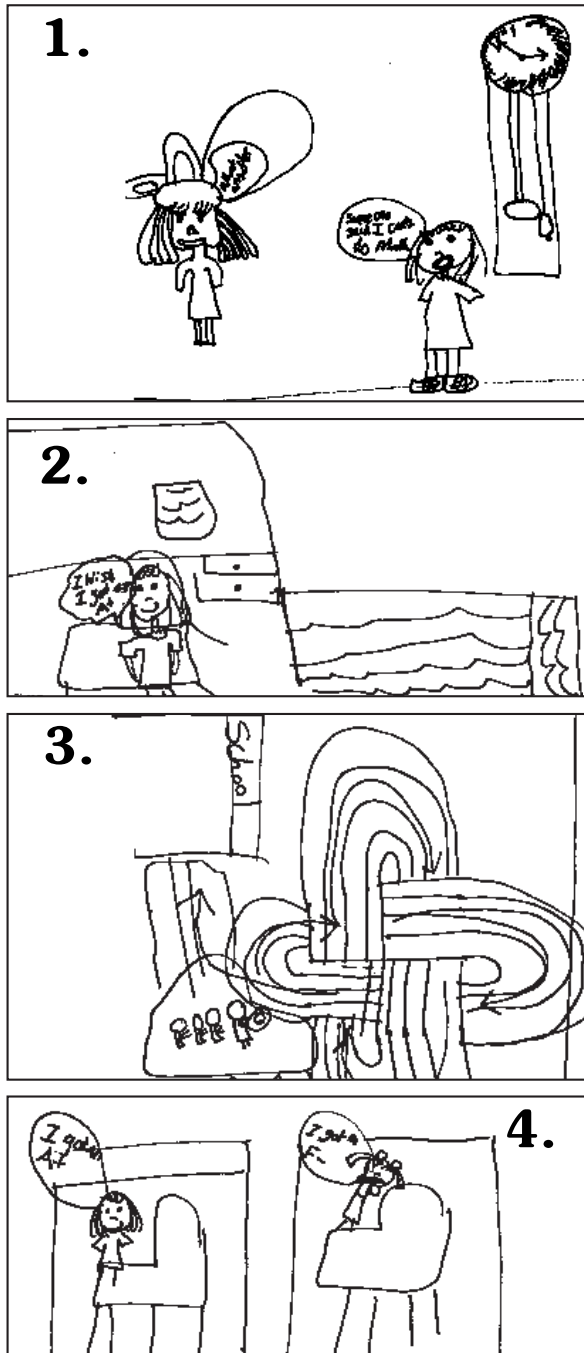
Janet's Horrible Day

STORY AND ART BY MELISSA HIRSCH, 7

New Orleans

Janet is in the 2nd grade. She was learning times tables. One day, when she came home, she said that someone was teasing her because she couldn't do math. Then she tried her best that night.

The next day, when she was at her desk, the teacher gave a math test. She made an A+! Janet changed her horrible day into a good day.



Activity Idea

This idea was contributed by Evelyn Johnson of Salt Lake City.

Write encouraging statements and short excerpts of SGI President Ikeda's guidance on slips of paper. Put these reminders in places where you will see them throughout the day (such as in your bedroom, on the bathroom mirror, inside the front cover of your school binder, in your desk at school, etc.). Statements could be things like: "Never give up!" "Remember: Determination + daimoku + action = victory." "You can do it!" "Believe in yourself."

A Kingdom of Dreams

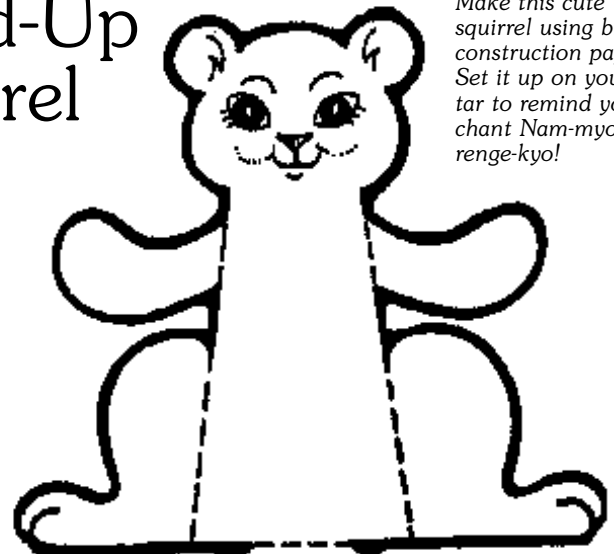
Excerpts from a speech SGI President Daisaku Ikeda gave at the Soka Primary School graduation on March 20, 1989.

What I want to talk about are the dreams of boys and girls that will change the world. As long as you continue to believe in and hold on to your great dreams, you will surprise everyone with your splendid accomplishments....

The most difficult time is the most important time. The most difficult time is the best opportunity to open a new road in your lives. Please never forget this. As long as you keep making efforts without allowing yourselves to be defeated, the tree of dreams will continue to grow in your hearts. Your effort is the nutrient for the growth of your dreams....

Stand-Up Squirrel

Make this cute squirrel using brown construction paper. Set it up on your altar to remind you to chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo!



Cut out the squirrel pattern and color it with crayons. Fold his arms and legs forward. Fold the squirrel's tail back and curl it around a pencil. Paste or staple the acorn to his arms.

This squirrel pattern can also be used as a name place card.

