

Happy New Year!

World Tribune

No. 3172

THE YEAR OF VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE FOR THE NEW CENTURY

JANUARY 2, 1998

INSIDE THIS WEEK

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE
From General Director Zaitzu.

PERSPECTIVE
SGI president's 70th birthday;
and creating a new world on
New Year's Day.

STUDY
Why do we face east during
morning gongyo?

SPEECH
SGI President Ikeda discusses
Dr. Linus Pauling's encounter
with Albert Einstein.

SPEECH
Examples of Gandhi's
leadership shared.

WORLDVIEW
Futurist Duane Elgin
advocates leading a simpler,
wiser life.

**'FRIENDS FOR PEACE'
PULLOUT
INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

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A NETWORK OF HOPE FOR THE NEW CENTURY

To celebrate the new year, SGI
President Ikeda wrote the following
poem to SGI members.

Harbinger of the new millennium
emerging from the folds
of the mountain that will be thrust
up
by the new century,
first comes light—
the sun is rising.

For 50 years I have lived
only to circle the globe in
travel,
to fill the skies with the light
of peace,
to erase with that light the
shadows of misery
on the face of the earth.

To you, who with me have
climbed
the mountains of this century
to you my friends around the
world
I call again, now—
it's time to take on the ridges
and ranges
of the new century.

Cast a network of hope over
the world
again, a thousand times again
in and around society, around
yourself.

I call to myself as I call out to you
again and again, wider and wider
to cast lines of hope to the world
and to all of you.

Going westward, traveling eastward,
I have met the ancient civilizations
and called upon the new cultures
for half a century.
I do not believe in the clash of
civilizations.

Rather, what I have found hidden in
the fissures
are gems in which multitudes have
found
that which charms them.
If sought, revealed and illumined
in the light of equality
that I believe is the wisdom in
Buddhist thought
they will glow once more

with new life's sheen
regardless of time or the distance to
be crossed.

And so believing, I have traveled.

Beyond the iron curtain,
the bamboo curtain as well,
behind the base rock of ideology—



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

SGI President Ikeda

if one searches one finds
the indigenous soul,
a universal light
sparkling on that which is human.

In the West and in the East,
at the crossroads where civilizations
meet,
whatever country, whatever people—
the ground on which their culture
stands
is underlain with a sparkling gem,
the cosmic spirit scintillating in
global time.

If the "mystic" of the mystic law in
which I believe
is to revitalize,
then to take each precious jewel
of the multiplicity that is our world's
cultures
and set them into a connected whole,
that they may interact and enrich
each other
in a network of values that work

toward the good of all—
that must be my lifework.

Such a network of values
is connected firmly and directly
by the trust and friendship
which you continue to spread around
the world.

In it are woven peace and
happiness for humankind.

Linking person to person and
thought to thought,
plying back and forth on the
streams of cultures,
bridging civilizations, the past
and the present—
these are our joint venture.

Over the network of hope
broadly threaded with Buddhist
love of humanity
is how dawn will arrive,
to usher in the new century in
which
suppression will change to
freedom,
separation will become fusion,
and confrontation will turn to
coexistence.

Seeking to meet friends and
fellow human beings
I will continue to travel around the
world
because my practice of faith means
to create
the mutual understanding between
human beings
that is the fulfillment of truth and
amity.

All this is ultimately the product of
dialogue,
and again dialogue.
Therefore, let's join together
in a last challenge to the mountains
of this century,
making our final approach to the
summit a happy one,
abundant in hope, as we continue
to engage in fruitful and rich
dialogue.

Jan. 1, 1998

(Courtesy of SGI Graphic)



The *World Tribune* is the weekly newspaper of the SGI-USA.

OUR ORGANIZATION

SGI-USA (Soka Gakkai International-USA) is an American Buddhist organization based on the philosophy of the Nichiren school of Mahayana Buddhism. The SGI exists in 128 countries and has its international center in Japan, where the organization was founded in 1930. In the *World Tribune*, you'll see news of our organization both in America and internationally.

OUR PURPOSE

The SGI-USA promotes peace and individual happiness based on Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Our position is that peace in the community — whether it be in a neighborhood or the world — is inseparably linked with individuals' happiness. SGI-USA members, through their faith, are seeking to become happier and contribute positively to society. In the *World Tribune*, you'll see experiences from members about this process, which we call human revolution.

OUR PRACTICE

Our basic practice is chanting the phrase Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the Gohonzon, our object of worship. According to Nichiren Daishonin, the workings of the universe are an expression of the law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. So chanting it allows us to be in tune with our environment and create the most value. The *World Tribune* carries many study articles to explain the practice in detail.

OUR HERITAGE

Myoho-renge-kyo is the title of the Lotus Sutra, which is the foundation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. This sutra, Shakaymuni Buddha's highest teaching, sets forth that the Buddha nature is inherent in all living things — all people have the potential to become Buddhas. Nichiren Daishonin, a Japanese priest who lived in the 13th century, championed the Lotus Sutra and introduced the concrete way of putting it into practice, the chanting and sharing of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. In keeping with the sutra's teaching that people are Buddhas, the SGI teaches that the heritage of this Buddhism is passed from generation to generation of the people.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the SGI-USA community center nearest you — there are more than 60 across the country. (You can look in the phone book or call our national headquarters at (310) 451-8811.) The community center can direct you to SGI-USA members in your town, so you can ask questions and find out more. Our website address is www.sgi-usa.org or you can e-mail the SGI-USA at sgiusa1@aol.com. You can e-mail the *World Tribune* editorial office at: SokaNews@aol.com.

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GENERAL DIRECTOR'S NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

Be An Example of Victory

By FRED M. ZAITSU
SGI-USA GENERAL DIRECTOR

Turning the calendar to the first day of the first month of a new year is a time to take stock and make plans.

In so doing, I first want to thank each of you for the efforts you've made in past years to advance our movement of peace, culture and education in this country. I am especially appreciative of the great efforts you all made last year toward our geographic reorganization. Thanks to you, the SGI-USA is now more rooted in communities across the United States.

And now as we look ahead to this year, the Year of Victory of the People for the New Century, our aim must be to foster a true victory in our lives as outlined in the three focal points we adopted this year. As you may recall, they are to have happy members; to nurture and develop the youth; and to strengthen our families.

It's one thing to think of these challenges as slogans and agree with them. It is an entirely different matter to make them a reality. How do we do that? What steps should we take?

This holiday season has given me an insight on that question. The holiday season begins with Thanksgiving and is the busiest travel period of the year. It is a time when people converge from all corners of America and the world to join family and friends for dinner. Children and grandparents. Cousins, uncles and aunts. Neighbors and best friends come together, sit across a table from one another and share their laughter and tears, their accomplishments and disappointments.

The many celebrations each year provide opportunities to repeat the experience of connectedness. In some parts of America, I understand that traditional meals are prepared as a way to celebrate the new year. In Japan, it is a tradition to give gifts on New Year's. Family members, perhaps for the only time in the year, sit down together in one place at one time and share. Perhaps one way to focus on our goals for the year would be to create as many opportunities as possible to have such conversations among our families, friends and neighbors.

This year my wife and I experienced a holiday season with one son out of the country and another son out of state. And as our children (who are no longer children) go about establishing their lives, the chances are we may not be together during subsequent holidays. We are aware that we can't wait

for the holiday season but must seek opportunities to maintain our connectedness. Seeking connectedness, after all, is the legacy of our organization.

When I think of this, the bonds that were formed between President Makiguchi and President Toda come to mind. And from the first time Mr. Toda met Daisaku Ikeda, he began to foster and raise the 19-year-old young man as if he were his own son.

On Jan. 2, SGI President Ikeda celebrates his 70th birthday. Yet his life, years after the death of his mentor, continues to resonate with the seeds planted through their deep "family" connection. This spirit was eloquently articulated by Federico Mayor, the director-general of UNESCO, when he said: "Nothing can replace the friendly words of a teacher, or the caresses and smiles of parents. The only real education is education by example...and love." In other words, as Nichiren Daishonin states, "Treasures of the heart are the most valuable of all" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 238).

To achieve this connectedness in our organization, I am depending on the passion and growth of our youth as the driving force. If we sincerely believe that each young person is part of our "family," I am also convinced that we will foster amazing youth eager to play their roles in the new century. If we do our work, we will, with great satisfaction and relief, be able to look into the eyes of our youth confident that the future is indeed in good hands!

"This is the era of youth," says President Ikeda. "Youth do not depend on anyone. Nor do they hang on someone else's coattails. I will open the way forward myself. I will advance kosen-rufu. I will see to it that the SGI is victorious." This is the spirit of youth and the attitude of true successors who love and cherish the SGI... Therefore I call on the youth of the SGI: Advance! Surpass your seniors! Accomplish kosen-rufu!"

I am convinced that we will achieve all our goals when we solidify the basics of our practice — abundant daimoku, practice for oneself and others, and a seeking mind to continually learn. At the last Headquarters Leaders Meeting of 1997, President Ikeda left us this motto: "Let's advance joyfully with the spirit to exert ourselves bravely and vigorously for kosen-rufu."

As we look forward to the days, weeks and months of 1998, I extend to each and every one of you and your family members my best wishes for a Happy New Year!

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**WORLD TRIBUNE
MAILBOX**

A Lesson in Faith From Zippy

My cat, Zippy, taught me something about faith today. Zippy is the only cat I ever owned who runs after a ball I throw, then brings it back to me for another throw, over and over again, just like a dog. This morning I threw Zippy's ball up the staircase and noted something about how Zippy goes after it. Zippy can't see the ball initially, because it's too high in the air. But Zippy has faith that I threw the ball up the stairs, and that once he gets to the top of the staircase, the ball will be right there, ready for him to snatch. Likewise, as a Buddhist, I should have faith that, even if I can't yet see the attainment of a goal or the resolution of a problem, right this instant, I should "run up the stairs" anyway, confident that my practice is making the Gohonzon work, and that the benefit or solution will appear at the proper time.

—GERALD T. AITKEN, Walden, N.Y.

One Good Book

In conjunction with SGI President Ikeda's mentioning of Japanese history books with *mirror* as part of the title ("Discussions on Youth," Nov. 28), it should be noted that one of the best recently published books on American history is titled *A Different Mirror*. Ronald Takaki presents an excellent overview of the experiences of racial ethnic and religious minorities from the time when Native Americans scared away Viking visitors, through the present day when we are still reevaluating our definition of *American*.

—PETER NELLHAUS, Denver

Take Action To Get Well

I, too, was very encouraged by Tamara Jenkins article on Oct. 31. For me, illness was unwelcome in the beginning but has become a terrific benefit.

Never one to balk at a good challenge, I realized six years ago something was very wrong with my health.... Down the road and many dollars later, I finally got to the right doctors....

It's difficult in this age of "strange" illnesses to find out the problem. In Buddhism, we're taught to take the offensive, that nothing happens at random. Don't wait for a cure to come to you — the fix me, doc, syndrome. We are here to challenge and co-create our reality with the Gohonzon and trust our own internal voice. The Gohonzon is the compass for my ship of the law to attract the best information, best support, best doctors/holistic health practitioners, and then it's up to me to take the appropriate course of action for my recovery. The Gosho kicks me in the butt, gets me outta my rut. President Ikeda's guidance always for me really puts life into perspective.

—LISA PRANGER, Bellingham, Wash.

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

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

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

Happy Birthday, President Ikeda

PERSPECTIVE

By KATHLEEN SLATTERY
LOS ANGELES

On Jan. 2, SGI President Ikeda celebrates his 70th birthday. I see him going forward with such vigor, so energized, as if to create another 70 glorious years. As I look forward to another year with him, a question of faith arises within me.

Am I ready to carry on the same mission?

My own father died on May 5, 1997, at the age of 77. Exactly 52 years earlier, my father received a near-fatal wound in the Philippines — May 5, 1945. He survived to give me life 10 years

later — a woman whose destiny it was to find the Gohonzon and a sense of mission with President Ikeda in this lifetime.

Thanks to President Ikeda's guidance, his example of humanity and my prayers to the Gohonzon, I discovered the love my father had in his heart for me before he died. In the moment when the light of life went out of him, I realized the thread that binds us through all our existences.

Since I have experienced the impermanence of life many times, I often feel like time is running out. I wish to live without regret. Someday the wind of impermanence will carry President Ikeda off into the future, so I feel that now, before he goes, I must learn as much as I can from his love for humankind.

I am an adult, 42, the next generation. President Ikeda has shown me how to live the best and richest of lives. Am I willing to advance with the courage to create a victorious life as he continues to do?

He has 50 years of vibrant faith and practice. I need to learn more from him. I must prepare myself for the future ahead, to live by his writings, to inherit and advance the vision that all our brave predecessors hold of planet Earth and the universe.

I am honored and grateful to have such a guide in my life. As I chant my way toward enlightenment with him, I wish to say:

Happy birthday, President Ikeda. I am with you in our discovery of the treasures of the heart.

A New Year, a New World

PERSPECTIVE

By PATRICIA FORD
KANSAS CITY, MO.

New Year's Day gongyo is typically an important part of celebrating the new year for many people in the SGI-USA. I look forward to it every year. But this year is a little different. I have lived in Kansas City since May after living in Arizona for almost eight years. I am bombarded with questions like "You don't celebrate Christmas?" from people here in what is referred to as the Bible Belt. This made me start thinking about why New Year's Day is important to us as Buddhists.

Mircea Eliade, in his book *The Myth of the Eternal Return or Cosmos and History*, discusses the significance of what he calls "the regeneration of time." In almost any culture, primitive or modern, he says, there is some kind of celebration of a new time,

whether it be a month, season, year, or observing a day of significance. One example he gives of a New Year's celebration is that of the pre-Judaic monotheistic Zoroastrians of Persia: "The Nawroz, the Persian New Year, is at once the festival of Ahuramazda (celebrated on the day 'Ormazd' of the first month) and the day on which the Creation of the world and of man took place," he writes (p. 64). Elsewhere, Eliade tells us, "It is interesting to note further that among the Fijians of the mountainous region of Viti Levu, the installation of the chief is called, 'Creation of the world....'" (p. 80).

Why is it significant to us as Buddhists? In the "New Year's Gosho," Nichiren Daishonin states, "The sincerity of making offerings to the Lotus Sutra at the beginning of the New Year is like

flowers blooming from trees, a lotus unfolding in a pond, sandalwood blossoming on the Snow Mountains, or the moon beginning to rise" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 272). It is important to me to express my gratitude to the Gohonzon as well as give thanks to friends and family through my

prayers on this day. By also thinking about how far I have come this past year, resetting goals that have been forgotten, as well as making new ones, I give myself a new start. I think this is why so many people

tend to make New Year's resolutions. Combine my objectives for the start of the year with daimoku, and I am sure to accomplish what I set out to do for the year ahead.

You might say I'm creating a new world.

*You might say
I'm creating a
new world.*

What Do You Think?

Please write to us and let us know your thoughts on the World Tribune. What articles do you like or dislike? Which types would you like to see more of, less of? Do you have ideas to make the paper better? Do you have questions you'd like answered? Would you like to get involved in your local area? We welcome all letters at: Mailbox, World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

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New Year's Poems From SGI President Ikeda

The dawning sun
Radiant in its powerful ascent
A mirror image
Of our dynamic alliance of Buddhas
...

Like a sea of billowing waves
Ten million flags of victory
Fly proudly in the hands
Of intrepid comrades
...

Friends near and far
Each one
A Bodhisattva of the Earth
Resolutely protected
By Bonten and Taishaku

*From the Seikyo Shimbun,
the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper*

Let us forge ahead
Into the new century
Proud and resolute
A grand assemblage
Brilliant in the morning sun
...

With confidence and dignity
Hold high life's banner
Of justice and truth
...

The warmth of friends
Indestructible bonds
The Soka family
Pillar of the World

*From the Daikyokurenge, the Soka Gakkai's
monthly study magazine*

The profound pledge
Of noble comrades
Determined to achieve
Total victory this year
...

My heroic young friends
Gallantly lead the way
For another brilliant year
Of triumph
...

Armed with passionate resolve
To secure peace and happiness
For all humanity
Vanquish all base and malign forces

*From the Soka Shimpo, the Soka Gakkai's
youth division journal*

Nikken Testifies in 'Seattle Incident' Libel Trial

Under questioning by his own lawyers, Nikken admits leaving hotel and getting drunk; denies Mrs. Clow's claims. Cross-examination set for Feb. 2.

By **JEFF FARR**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Santa Monica, Calif., Dec. 23

After years of requests by Soka Gakkai attorneys, Nikken finally made his first appearance in the "Seattle Incident" trial on Dec. 22 (Dec. 21 in the United States), testifying for an hour and 40 minutes.

Although only Nikken's own attorneys questioned him in this 19th session of the trial, Soka Gakkai attorneys were satisfied that at last their efforts to bring him to court had paid off. Nikken's attorneys had long tried to keep him out of court—even though this suit was initiated by Nikken and even after other witnesses to the incident had testified.

Soka Gakkai attorneys are scheduled to cross-examine Nikken on Feb. 2.

During the Dec. 22 testimony, Nikken, quoting from a previously undisclosed diary, said that he left his hotel and got drunk the night in question, March 19-20, 1963. The diary entry he introduced read:

In the evening, for the first time since I arrived in the United States, I took a walk by myself here and there, ending up with the whiskey glasses I longed for. Since I have not had any alcohol for such a long time, I got drunk.... Now I am going to

sleep. It's 1:00 p.m. now. [Nikken explained that he sometimes mixes up p.m. and a.m.]

Soka Gakkai attorneys have often pointed out that Nikken in 1992 publicly declared he never left the hotel that night but in 1995 began saying that he had after all. Until the Dec. 22 testimony, no explanation for this discrepancy was forthcoming from his side. Nikken claimed in court for the first time that in March 1995 his wife discovered the diary in a box when he was moving into a new residence in Setagaya Ward, Tokyo.

It was only when he read this diary, he said, that he remembered leaving the hotel. "This recollection came to me as a tremendous shock," he claimed.

The testimony also saw a significant change in Nikken's story from documents he submitted to the court in 1995 regarding the hotel where he stayed. It was not the Olympic Hotel, after all, according to Nikken's testimony—an assertion that puzzled Soka Gakkai lawyers.

"It is beyond our comprehension that the plaintiffs, who brought about this litigation, have made one change after another to crucial parts of their story," commented Soka Gakkai attorney Morio Miyahara.

Nikken also refuted the testimonies of Hiroe Clow and former police officer Ronald Sprinkle. He denied in court that he had any involvement with prostitutes, that Mrs. Clow had come to his aid, and that the police had ever picked him up.

After completing his testimony, Nikken reportedly sent a message to all temple members

thanking them for their daimoku and announcing that his appearance in court had crushed the "Soka Gakkai conspiracy."

SGI General Director Eiichi Wada also responded to the testimony: "Nichiren Shoshu will surely announce that Nikken's innocence was proven today. But, actually, the climax of the Seattle Incident trial will be on Feb. 2."

Attorney Morio Miyahara also expressed confidence about the Feb. 2 cross-examination, saying that "Nikken's testimony today was based on the contents of a diary that in no way could disprove that his altercation with prostitutes occurred." ❧



Nikken's lawyers question him in Tokyo District Court, Dec. 22.

The Student Files

Name: Fred Mayer
School: Drexel University
Major: Arts administration
City: Philadelphia



With strength and courage from chanting, I decided to reenter school in September 1995 — after being out for six years.

During my struggle to adjust to graduate school (while working full time), I took on an independent study to examine the issues of the Philadelphia Orchestra strike. My supervising professor was so impressed that I practiced Buddhism that he insisted I include a Buddhist perspective on labor relations in my final paper

and had me lecture one of his honors classes about the belief system of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

In April 1997 I started a part-time assignment with a nonprofit organization that works for humane conditions and humane treatment of prison inmates. Now I can actualize my Buddhist ideals as a program coordinator of art workshops in the prisons — the culmination of my prayers to the Gohonzon for the most meaningful way to contribute to society. ❧

International Chapter Helps Beach Clean-up

By DANIEL LUFKIN &
KAYOKO ASATO
GROUP LEADERS
Okinawa, Japan

The high school and middle school students from International Chapter of the Soka Gakkai here participated in the 5th International Coastal Clean-up recently. The clean-up was started by the Center for Marine Conservation in 1989 and has grown each year in size and support.

According to Kenny Ehman, a coordinator of the Okinawa Clean Beach Club: "In the 1970s and early '80s, marine biologists and researchers began reporting an increase in the number of marine life being killed because of entanglement in nets and fishing line and by ingestion of garbage, which was mistaken for food.

"Today it has become a common problem that affects dolphins, whales, seals, turtles, migrating birds and other mammals."

The students, called the



Many U.S. members in the military, along with their families, practice in Okinawa, Japan. Recently, these high school and middle school students, called the Napoleon Group, participated in a beach clean-up.

Napoleon Group, arrived at Zanpa-Misaki Beach on a beautiful day and set about the job at hand. Before getting started, the vice mayor of the local city thanked the youth members for helping with the environment.

The members collected trash and classified each piece on a data card. The data card will be

sent to the United Nations to help pass international laws and work on legislation or treaties concerning pollution.

After hot pizza and cold soft drinks at the local culture center, Rina Monroy, a high school freshman, summed up the feelings of most participants: "It felt so good and helpful." ❧



Florida Impressions

Have you ever felt truly cherished? We had all come to Florida with stress from our jobs, our families, our districts. We were tired from working so hard and in need of encouragement and renewed excitement about what we were doing. And it came so quickly. All of a sudden, I had a clearer vision and more energy and joy than I'd had in years.

It was happening to all of us. We felt we could do anything for kosen-rufu. I even volunteered to be a stand-up comic for the talent show that Saturday night. I was the opening act — can you believe it?

The altar in the Friendship Auditorium is awesome. The sound of gongyo there is deeply resonant, like a living organ with a thousand pipes.

The national leaders who were there were determined to do all they could so that none of us would leave with a question about our practice, or the organization, or a personal problem unanswered. They were down to



Anita Nevins Brown

earth, very gracious and incredibly generous with their time.

I regained a sense of joy and beauty about my practice. And as more of us go, it will be easier and easier for us to bring that happy, clear vision for world peace back home with us.

*Florida:
rainbow over Ft. Lauderdale
welcomes pilgrims.
Perfumed evening by the lake
lightens footsteps.
My mentor speaks,
I listen.*

*Gongyo:
a living organ, the ocean
Every member a vessel,
the poor woman's
lamp oil.*

*The lesson:
praising the Buddha
in all I meet,
raising the Buddha
inside of me.*

— Anita Nevins Brown, Sacramento, Calif.

NEWS BRIEFS

SOUTH CAROLINA

Capital Chapter Holds Open House

COLUMBIA, S.C., Nov. 16 — Capital Chapter welcomed more than 30 guests from the community today to participate in "Friends For Peace." Everyone who entered was welcomed warmly with a smile and were offered a "Friends for Peace" sticker. People were free to walk around and read the displays of SGI President Ikeda conducting dialogue with world leaders, see the awards and accomplishments of the organization, and watch a videotape that described the mission of the SGI.

The climax of the open house began with the reading of an essay written by Denise Thomas, one of Columbia Chapter's newest members, about nuclear weapons and their impact on our environment. Also on the agenda was a presentation from the Department of Health and Environmental Control, which urged each individual to become a "champion of the environment." There was also an open dialogue session that began with the question "What kind of action can you take to promote world peace?" Children and adults stood up to share their ideas.

— DENISE THOMAS and PEGGY WADE

CHINA

SGI President Meets Chinese Premier Li Peng

TOKYO, Nov. 13 — President Ikeda met with Chinese Premier Li Peng at the State Guesthouse today. During the meeting, the first in five years, the two discussed friendly China-Japan relations and the importance of cultural and grass-roots exchange. The SGI leader stressed that exchanges beyond the realm of politics and business are invaluable. A constant flow of grass-roots exchange creates constant waves of friendship, he said. If we compare politics to a ship and economic ties to the ship's cargo, President Ikeda suggested, then the waves of friendship propel the ship forward. And the force behind those waves is cultural exchange.

JAPAN

SGI President Reunites With Dr. Bryan Wilson

TOKYO, Nov. 10 — President Ikeda met today with Dr. Bryan Wilson, professor emeritus of Britain's All Souls College, Oxford University. The SGI leader asked Dr. Wilson why clergy in various religions tend to grow decadent over time. Such behavior, the British sociologist said, can arise when any group, not only clergy, gains a monopoly. Once they savor the heady taste of power, he said, they can't give it up.

Citing the example of the Catholic Church, he pointed out that various rituals and concepts such as Purgatory only came into existence around the 9th century. They were the invention of clergy who sought to make their believers' faith dependent on them, he said. Mr. Ikeda said that this predilection can be seen in Buddhism as well.

On the subject of education, Mr. Ikeda cited author H.G. Wells, who asserted that human history has become a contest between catastrophe and education, and philosopher Bertrand Russell, who insisted that education is the key to a new world. The SGI leader said that education is the only means by which we can create a genuine age of humanity. The British sociologist agreed that the future of the world depends on education, adding that it is never too late nor too time-consuming to focus on education.

— Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER

SIGN POSTS APPLYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS TO DAILY LIFE

Splendid!

By JEFF FARR

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

How can I describe your sincerity? In truth, it is splendid! ("The Person and the Law," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 264)

Nichiren Daishonin often praised his young disciple Nanjo Tokimitsu with words like these. In another Goshu, the Daishonin says Tokimitsu's faith is consistent like flowing water, while others' faith is short-lived like fire. In another, he says that Tokimitsu must have served "a hundred thousand million Buddhas in his past existences" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 260).

Why did the Daishonin praise Tokimitsu so much? It was because of Tokimitsu's commitment during the Atsuhara Persecution. When that persecution began in 1275 — a persecution in which practitioners of the Daishonin's Buddhism were not only arrested but executed — Tokimitsu took concrete steps to protect the community of believers. Various disciples, including Nikko Shonin, found refuge in Tokimitsu's home, while he spoke out against the alliance of priests and government officials behind the injustice. That persecution lasted seven years, from 1275 until 1281, and throughout Tokimitsu took responsibility for bringing an end to it.

I thought of this recently when the temple issue reached its seven-year mark on Dec. 27. "How can I describe your sincerity? In truth it is splendid!" — I believe that this praise for Tokimitsu also applies to all the SGI-USA members, who have been challenging the temple issue for seven years. Last month, when I attended the Central Executive Committee meeting, I was relieved by how all the leaders have united around the temple issue. And I was moved when I heard recently from many members in all parts of the country who were holding chanting sessions in relation to Nikken's Dec. 22 testimony. So I think everyone's doing a splendid job.

This Goshu passage gives me confidence that the Daishonin is praising all of us for the progress we've made and is looking forward to what we'll accomplish in 1998!

WHAT A CONCEPT
ON THE BASIC IDEAS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM

By LISA JONES

LOS ANGELES CORRESPONDENT

Understanding the Buddhist view of the reality of life gives us a deeper appreciation for our lives and the freedom we have to take off in new directions. The unseen or intangible nature of reality is called in Buddhism non-substantiality or formlessness (*ku*). Non-substantiality can't be defined in terms of existence or non-existence, nor can it be explained within the framework of time or space — which makes it hard to discuss.

Buddhism teaches that reality eclipses both existence and non-existence, both time and space. In "On Attaining Buddhahood," Nichiren Daishonin puts it this way: "Life is indeed an elusive reality that transcends both the words and concepts of existence and nonexistence" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 5).

Perhaps the best way to describe non-substantiality is to say *what it is not*, as Shakyamuni did in listing the 34 nega-

NON-SUBSTANTIALITY ('KU')

Trying To Describe Life

tions: "The entity is neither existence nor nonexistence; neither cause nor circumstances; neither itself nor others; neither square nor round; neither short nor long; neither rising nor falling; neither birth nor death...." He's referring here to the life of *Buddha*, which is synonymous with the essence of life.

By describing the essence of life in this way, Shakyamuni wipes out our preconceived ideas and makes it hard for us to form value judgments. In other words, he's leading us to reconsider the very nature of life. Non-substantiality, likewise, defies our customary methods of comprehension. And it's a concept that opens us up to wondrous possibilities.

Non-substantiality implies that phenomena have no fixed or independent existence of their own but arise and continue to exist only by virtue of their relationship with other phenomena. Potentialities and possibilities are *ku-ish*, as are memories.

For example, a whiff of perfume can recall a vivid memory of your grandmother, say. Or hearing a sentimental song can transport you back to the first time you heard it. These memories are in the state of *ku* until they arise in relationship to the phenomena of the perfume or the song.

Perhaps we've all had the experience of "completely forgetting" about something, until happenstance suddenly re-

minds us of it. It could be said that these memories exist and yet don't exist — they're in us somewhere but would never arise independent of other phenomena. Similarly, Buddhahood, although it's intangible, is in us somewhere and arises concurrently with our chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo to the Gohonzon.

In light of non-substantiality, our dreams and aspirations for the future are very much like memories — except that memories have already happened, and our aspirations have yet to be fulfilled. Remember, though, the first rule of *ku* is that it defies our concepts of time and linear progression.

In other words, the life that we can imagine ourselves living is no more real or unreal than the life that we can remember ourselves living. That's *ku*.

This concept illustrates that we have the freedom to take a hairpin turn in a new direction at any given moment in our lives. Always our lives have the potential to move forward. Our future is in *ku* — it's a potentiality that's not determined by our past but by the actions we take in the present. Non-substantiality sets forth that this is the essential dynamic of life. Mastering this dynamism leads to a thorough understanding of Buddhism and the reality of life.

One in a series

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON FAITH

Why Do We Face East?

By TED MORINO

SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT CHIEF

Q When we do the morning prayers, we face east for the first prayer, then turn to face the Gohonzon for the remaining prayers. But if the Gohonzon is on the east side of the room, which way do we face? And what is the significance of facing east, anyhow?

A In the first prayer, we offer appreciation for the protection of the Buddhist deities and prayer to strengthen their protective power. If you already are facing east when facing the Gohonzon, it is not necessary to change direction during this prayer. Buddhist gods are not fixed entities but forces innate in ourselves and the universe that protect us and our environment.

Nichiren Daishonin viewed the sun as the symbolic center of the universe and a representative of the Buddhist gods. Because the sun rises in the east, we face that direction during the first morning prayer to show our gratitude to all the functions in the universe that make life possible. By

reciting the sutra and chanting daimoku toward the east, however, does not mean that we worship the sun.

So while we sometimes say we thank the Buddhist gods or the Gohonzon for protecting us, it is most important to realize that such protective functions stem from our Buddhahood. We tap this protection from within our lives by chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

In this regard, Nichiren Daishonin states, "The fundamental nature of enlightenment manifests itself as Bonten and Taishaku [Buddhist gods], whereas the fundamental darkness manifests itself as the Devil of the Sixth Heaven" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 3, p. 279). Some of the Buddhist deities we refer to originated with Indian folklore, others with Japanese folklore and other religious traditions. Realizing that Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, the Mystic Law, is the source of all natural forces, the Daishonin incorporated these traditional gods, with which people of the time were familiar, into his teachings to represent these forces.

President Toda once explained it this way:

When we turn to the east and salute the Buddhist gods, then and there the Buddhist gods within our hearts appear in the universe around us. Then, when we face the Gohonzon during the second prayer, the Buddhist gods all take their seats behind us. If I were to salute the Buddhist gods right now, then, regardless of whether it were night or day, they would take their seats behind me and salute the Gohonzon. And these Buddhist gods would all start to work to fulfill my desires. This is how it works.

The important thing to remember is — regardless of what we call them — the ultimate factor that enables us to bring forth these forces, innate in life and the universe, exists within us. The protection of the Buddhist gods is a function of our own Buddha nature. Buddhism teaches that our life and our surrounding environment are one entity, not two separate entities. Therefore, our environment reflects our inner condition of life. Our inner, life-affirming conviction will manifest itself in our surroundings positively. So when we face east during morning gongyo, it's an affirmation of this Buddhist principle. **WU**

My Recollections



His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand

By SGI President Ikeda

Some say that His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand speaks with a country accent. The king admits that might be so, citing his repeated travels to tiny farming villages throughout his realm. "I think it comes from the many conversations I've had with citizens all over Thailand. I've listened to so many of our people speaking in their regional accents, talked with them and, in the process, perhaps, picked up a bit of an accent myself," he says.

King Bhumibol Adulyadej goes out among his subjects so frequently that, sitting side by side with them in rural hamlets, discussing their needs, problems and opinions, he has absorbed the rhythms of their speech. He spends seven months of the year traveling throughout Thailand, and he covers some 30,000 miles in the process. He makes his way by helicopter, by jeep, by train, by boat and even on foot.

Throw away the reports and really meet the people, insists the king: "In working out a program to help people, it is necessary that you know the people you intend to help.... There is no shortcut. One does not know a people by merely memorizing some research papers prepared by research centers. You must meet them and like them" (from *Thailand: King Bhumibol Adulyadej — The Golden Jubilee 1946–96*). He urges his staff to do so, and he sets an example for them to follow. He has visited all the provinces in his kingdom, traveling to remote places where no other member of the Thai royal family had ever set foot before.

King Bhumibol cuts a familiar and much-loved figure as he slogs through the mud in his high rubber boots, a camera slung around his neck and a map and eraser-tipped pencil in hand. Some say he behaves just like a father taking care of his children.

These are not ceremonial visits. They are practical planning and problem-solving sessions. First, the king puts the people at ease and listens to their wishes and hopes. Then he discusses with them what can be done to realize those aims. The number of royal projects that King Bhumibol has initiated in this manner is well over a thousand.

The people of Thailand are deeply moved by this very human, and humane, figure of their king, with beads of sweat on his brow as he devotes himself heart and soul to their welfare. People who felt they were a matter of indifference to those in power have experienced a profound change of heart when they met King Bhumibol. A soldier wounded by a land mine expressed his appreciation: "I lost one of my legs, but our king sacrifices his entire life for the sake of the country."

"This is the photo," I said as, on the occasion of my second audience [in 1992], I handed King Bhumibol a photograph I had taken in Boston the year before. I had visited Harvard University to deliver a lecture. In a square on the corner of the street in front of the John F. Kennedy School of Government, I came across a plaque commemorating the birth of King Bhumibol in that city on Dec. 5, 1927. The king smiled as he thanked me for the photo.

King Bhumibol's father, Prince Mahidol of Songkhla, is known as the Father of Thai Medical Science. At the time of King Bhumibol's birth, he was in his final year at the Harvard School of Medicine. Though of weak constitution himself — or perhaps precisely because of that — Prince Mahidol dedicated himself to improving the state of Thai medicine. He devoted himself day and night as a physician to treating the poor, and was so busy he rarely had time to spend with his family. He would unhesitatingly donate blood when a patient needed it. His achievements included instituting solid programs of medical, nursing and scientific education and the improvement of public health. King Bhumibol's elder sister, Princess Galyani Vadhana, once told me how their father continued with his superhuman labors even after the doctors told him he had only two years, and later only half a year, to live.

Prince Mahidol passed away in 1929 at the young age of 37; King Bhumibol was not yet 2 and Princess Galyani Vadhana was only 6.

The prince's credo had been to live with dignity and integrity. It was his belief that nothing could be accomplished if protecting one's name and position were all that mattered; one would be forced to remain silent. In taking



Throw away the reports and really meet the people, insists the king: 'In working out a program to help people, it is necessary that you know the people you intend to help.... There is no shortcut.'



action, he said, there is always the risk of casting aspersions upon one's honor.

Prince Mahidol founded a scholarship program for Thai students. Desiring to offer opportunities to individuals who were not merely academically outstanding but also earnest and hardworking, he stipulated that the selection criteria focus primarily on the applicant's character. Those who are bright but lack commitment tend to use their intelligence to be lazy, he said. Often you'll find this kind of person issuing orders from behind a desk. Those who are sincere and diligent are frequently more dependable. They are less likely to betray their friends or act dishonestly. This was the sort of person Prince Mahidol wished to assist financially.

His wife, the princess mother, passed on to their children his compassionate spirit to help the poor and suffering.

I have had the honor of an audience with King Bhumibol on three occasions, and I have always been impressed with his unflinching warmth of character as well as his radiant intelligence. When any topic comes up for discussion, he immediately focuses on the core of the issue. This is a feature of all people of first-class caliber. When I asked him what message he would give to young people, he said that he would remind them of time's incessant flow. Everything is changing;

nothing remains the same. Instead of worrying about the future, he continued, young people should do their very best in the present moment.

When our conversation turned to culture, King Bhumibol declared that science and other advances were meaningless in a society without artistic achievement. We also discussed his belief that it is vital to devote more energy to nurturing good people, so that society is not dominated and controlled by unscrupulous and ill-intentioned individuals.

As the father of four children, he also has definite opinions about education. He believes that children are born eager to absorb and learn, and that it is the task of parents and teachers to guide that energy in the best direction.

When his second youngest daughter, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, lost interest in the mathematics she studied in school, complaining that it wasn't useful, he created some practical math problems for her to solve. For example: A certain man borrowed money; he kept borrowing and borrowing, increasing his debt. What was his total cumulative debt? Or: A certain place was suffering a drought. Which will be cheaper, to repair the water reservoir or to bring in water from another place? The king's math problems emphasized not only calculation but logical thought and practical problem solving. By working with such problems, he hoped the princess would learn how to think on her feet, so that if she went to a village and the farmers asked her how they might start growing a certain new crop, she'd have the ability to work out a practical plan with them.

King Bhumibol is a firm believer in the "snowball effect" — that fully mastering one subject leads to proficiency in many others. He himself excels in a diverse variety of activities, including music, painting, photography and sports, and he is renowned worldwide as a cultivated ruler of the highest order. He has kindly responded to my request that we be allowed to make his artistic achievements even more widely known. We have sponsored exhibitions of his photographs in Tokyo, Los Angeles and London. The London venue of the exhibit was Taplow Court, the main cul-

ture center of the SGI-UK, and also where King Bhumibol's grandfather King Chulalongkorn (1853–1910) once resided for two months.

A special performance of King Bhumibol's musical compositions was also held at Soka University in Tokyo. It was an enchanting musical evening. The king's compositions have brilliance, serenity, power, depth, sophistication and ethereal beauty.

Last year, in commemoration of the 50th year of the Thai monarch's reign, we held a special exhibition of paintings by King Bhumibol and other members of the Thai royal family as well as many royal treasures, including the Royal Seal of his majesty the king, at the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum.

I will never forget the warm support shown by Princess Galyani Vadhana and Princess Chulabhorn, the king's youngest daughter, who respectively visited Japan for these events to promote cultural exchange and deepen the ties of friendship between our two countries.

I have always regretted that the main links between Thailand and Japan have been economic. I hoped to begin to build a friendship between our peoples, based on heart-to-heart ties.

Like the mighty Chao Praya River that winds through the golden land of Thailand to the sea, time flows, time rushes on. Nothing stays the same. Except for one thing: the existence of the people. That is why anything that is to last, to withstand the waves of drastic change that wash over all things, must be firmly rooted in the earth of the people. King Bhumibol's decision to devote himself to his people, I'm sure, is based on that belief as well. With a consuming passion for their welfare, he goes among the people and reaches into their hearts.

King Bhumibol shared his hope for world peace. Though we speak of peace and the world, he said, it all comes down to the individual. If we solve the problems of individuals, we will have solved the problems of the world.

This is a philosopher king, a humanist king speaking. The people of Thailand have universally agreed to honor him with the title Great King. ■■■

No Time For Standing Still

NEW YORK TIMES/ARCHIVE PHOTOS

SGI President Ikeda delivered the following address on the conferral of the title of honorary professor by China's Inner Mongolia University and the distinction of honorary advisor to the Chinese Association of Mongolian Literature, conducted at the 2nd Student Division Leaders Meeting, Oct. 6, at the Soka International Friendship Hall, Sendagaya, Tokyo.

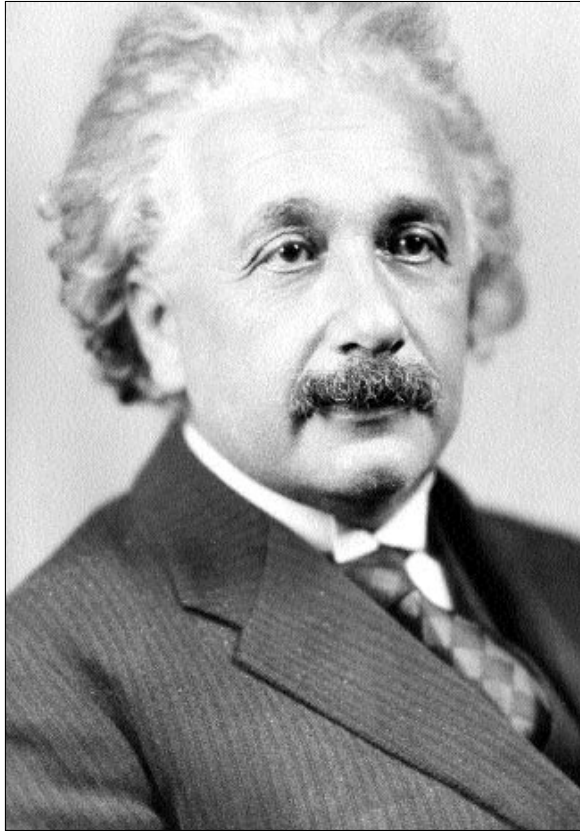
Honorable President Shorgan, esteemed professors and faculty of Inner Mongolia University:

Inner Mongolia University stands amid endless green plains in an ancient land under boundless blue skies, committed to fostering people of academic and human excellence. It is thus with deepest humility and gratitude that I accept the title of honorary professor you have conferred upon me today. Thank you very much. My deep appreciation, too, for the honor of being named honorary advisor to the Chinese Association of Mongolian Literature.

Student division representatives from 136 universities, successors to the SGI's peace movement, are gathered here today. It was also at a student division meeting, in 1968, that I first advocated the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan. Now, with these bright young students, I would like to open more new horizons for harmonious China-Japan relations and world peace.

Inner Mongolia University was founded in 1957, the same year the Soka Gakkai's student division was formed. Just last month, the university celebrated its 40th anniversary. In his speech at those festivities, President Shorgan voiced his gratitude to his predecessors who had pioneered the way for the university's development. Your fine institution's first president, Dr. Ulanfu, in particular, is renowned as a hero who fought intrepidly against Japanese militarism. I have the greatest respect and admiration for your university's far-reaching vision and its tradition of profound love and compassion for the people.

The direct and close involvement of Premier Zhou Enlai in the establishment of Inner Mongolia University is also well known. He arranged for 130 pro-



Albert Einstein, the renowned physicist, whose research had been instrumental in the development of the atomic bomb, feared he may have perpetrated a terrible wrong against human life.

fessors and lecturers from 12 existing Chinese universities, including Peking University, to teach at the new facility. He also stocked its library with more than 200,000 books and secured a generous supply of teaching equipment, furnishings and other essential items. This is because he knew that seeds sown in the soil of education would grow and flourish until they produced a rich harvest of golden fruit that would sustain the nation's future. I, too, believe that education is the most sacred of life's endeavors.

Zhou Enlai's niece, Zhou Bingjian, studied at Inner Mongolia University. After graduating from secondary school, she decided to go to Inner Mongolia and contribute to its development. Zhou Enlai and his wife, Deng Yingchao, were overjoyed at her decision and warmly encouraged her. They stressed to her the importance of seeing her

commitment through to the end, urging her to sink her roots alongside the people of Inner Mongolia and become an upstanding citizen of that region.

Zhou Bingjian entered Inner Mongolia University in October 1975, just three months before her uncle's death. From his sickbed, Premier Zhou offered her his final words of love and encouragement: "Your whole future is yet ahead of you."

Youth is a period of ceaseless growth and progress; there is no time for standing still, no time for complacency or resignation. To keep challenging toward a lofty ideal is the pride of youth and the life of a student. When youth have a noble sense of purpose to improve themselves, society and the world, their potential will flower and develop limitlessly.

In 1975, Soka University was the first Japanese university to officially receive exchange stu-

dents from the People's Republic of China. I will never forget the faces of those first six young students nor the eager light that sparkled in their eyes, communicating a passion for learning and a fervent desire to contribute to their country.

I am also reminded of the inspiring story of President Shorgan, an internationally respected biologist, who studied in Japan for two years. The attitude of many Japanese in those days was very condescending and arrogant toward Chinese. But Dr. Shorgan responded to those ridiculous, narrow-minded prejudices by vowing to produce research that would make everyone stand up and take notice. Night and day, he devoted himself single-mindedly to his work, eventually making history by achieving the first successful in vitro fertilization of a goat. Viewing time as his most precious resource, Dr. Shorgan pursued his research in great earnestness, careful never to waste a single moment. As a result of his tireless efforts, born of incredible perseverance and resolve, he won over prejudice and discrimination. I applaud his resounding victory.

The greater the baseless discrimination or criticism directed against us, the greater the inner resources and strength we must summon to conquer and triumph over it. I hope that all the students here today will forge boldly ahead with this spirit to score a brilliant victory in their youth. No matter what changes the times may bring, the key to unmistakable victory always lies in taking personal initiative to study, to gain greater capability, to develop self-confidence and fortitude.

Eventually, turning down ardent entreaties that he stay on and continue his research in Japan, Dr. Shorgan returned to his beloved homeland of Inner Mongolia. He was inspired by a lofty desire to serve his compatriots. But going home meant starting from scratch, with none of the advanced research facilities he had enjoyed in Japan. Nevertheless, with unshakable faith that he would succeed, he devoted all his energies to his research, and in 1989, five years after his return, accomplished in vitro fertilization of both sheep and cows in Inner Mongolia.

History is changed by the presence of such individuals — courageous people unconcerned by short-term setbacks, who are not afraid of hardship, who press bravely forward, whatever obstacles they may confront.

Strong are those who profoundly recognize the true purpose of learning. A life dedicated to benefiting one's fellow human beings knows no deadlock.

Ten years ago, when I first spoke with Dr. Linus Pauling (1901-94), one of the greatest scientists of this century, he spoke to me of a meeting he once had with Albert Einstein (1879-1955) that deeply impressed him. The renowned physicist, whose research had been instrumental in the development of the atomic bomb, confessed to Dr. Pauling that he feared he may have perpetrated a terrible wrong against human life. Albert Einstein later used that painful self-awareness as a springboard for his passionate and widespread activities for world peace. Dr. Pauling also believed that science must devote itself to securing peace and happiness for all humanity, and he remained a staunch antinuclear activist in the face of harsh opposition and oppression over the years.

In any age, those who take up the challenge of trying to create something of fresh, positive value to ensure a brighter future for humanity always confront a raging storm of obstacles. That is the greatest honor and tribute for a leader who is committed to the people and who works for their welfare wholeheartedly.

It is my hope that the Soka Gakkai student division members assembled here today will join in that admirable challenge and work to usher in a wonderful new era of human history. Let us all strive together to bring the sun of human revolution — a profound inner reformation in the hearts and minds of individuals — to illuminate the coming century of life with its radiant light.

In closing, I offer my sincere prayers that Inner Mongolia's beautiful "Green City," the capital, Hohhot, will flourish forever, and that the brilliance of Inner Mongolia University, shining jewel of the steppes, will endure for all eternity.

Thank you.

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Youth is a period of ceaseless growth and progress.

A Revolution in Our Leadership



AP/WIDEWORLD PHOTOS

Indian President R. K. Narayanan (right) greets outgoing Prime Minister I. K. Gujral outside the Presidential Palace in New Delhi.

SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech at the Soka Schools Alumni Gathering held at the Soka University Auditorium in Hachioji, Tokyo, Nov. 3.

I am so happy to see all of you again after so long! Congratulations on your wonderful celebration under these fine skies. Please relax and enjoy yourselves here again at your alma mater.

We have just presented awards to several representatives. I remember how, in my 20s, I received a silver medal from my mentor, Josei Toda. It was a small medal, but to me it was the most significant award, the best award there could be. I believe that the deep appreciation I felt on receiving that commendation was one of the causes leading to the many awards and honors that have been bestowed upon me from institutions around the world over the years. Everything in life is determined by one's sincerity, by one's heart.

In the Spirit of Gandhi

When I visited India in October, I had friendly talks with India's President Kocheril

Raman Narayanan and First Lady Usha Narayanan as well as with Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral and his wife, Shiela Gujral. They kindly took time out of their extremely busy schedules to meet with me. My meeting with President Narayanan took place on the evening of the day he had made a very difficult yet fair decision concerning serious political turmoil in one of India's state legislatures. The day after his decision, the newspapers trumpeted his achievement as epoch-making and praised him for saving Indian democracy. My meeting with Prime Minister Gujral, meanwhile, took place on the eve of his scheduled departure for a Commonwealth summit in Edinburgh, Scotland.

President Narayanan and Prime Minister Gujral have bravely taken up the leadership of India's 950 million people in the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi. A person with mentors is indeed fortunate. Without mentors from whom we can learn, it can be easy to lack solid guidelines and fall prey to self-centeredness, grow arrogant and bring unhappiness to others. Prime Minister Gujral said that my visit to his country was a re-

minder to the Indian people of their mission to spread the practice of Gandhi's spirit throughout the world. I found myself deeply humbled by Mr. Gujral's profound humility.

As I said in my address in India, I firmly believe that in the coming century, India, the United States and China will be the three nations that lead the world.

Treasured Encounters

President Narayanan treasures a meeting he had with Gandhi during his youth as one of the greatest moments of his life. Similarly, I remember each moment I spent with Mr. Toda as clearly as if it were a scene from a film unfolding in my mind; I will never forget a single word he said to me. As a newspaper reporter, the young Mr. Narayanan had gone to interview Gandhi. He was 24—the age of many of you gathered here today. Gandhi was 76.

When the cub reporter visited the father of his nation, he was understandably nervous. To make matters worse, he arrived while Gandhi was having lunch, and most of the leaders of India were sitting around him. Further complicating things, Gandhi

was observing a day of silence. Despite all this, Gandhi patiently and kindly answered all his questions by scribbling replies on a piece of paper.

It is important to treat young people with respect. Those who fail to do so are dominated by Animality, demonstrating their shortsightedness and lack of character. I will never forget how the late Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai addressed me, 30 years his junior, as "His Excellency." Leaders who look down on students and other young people and fail to address them courteously are arrogant. One of the great failings of Japanese people today is an inability to show proper respect to other human beings.

Thoughtfulness

When the young Mr. Narayanan concluded his interview, he made to leave the room, but someone stopped him and told him that the Mahatma had given instructions that he be given lunch before departing. Thoughtfulness of this kind is the very heart of humanity. Mr. Narayanan was deeply moved that Gandhi, the esteemed father of his nation, should demonstrate such kindness and com-

passion for an unknown youth. He knew he would never forget Gandhi as long as he lived. Recalling that experience, Mr. Narayanan wrote (in his book *Images and Insights*):

What exquisite thoughtfulness and consideration! Gandhi must have felt bad to have a lean and famished-looking young man ask him questions while he was eating his lunch. In fact, what captivated me was his magnetism and human generosity even more than the answers he gave me. Indeed Gandhi's appeal was to the heart. Perhaps the Indian people can be won over more by an appeal to the heart than by logic or power.

To appeal to people's hearts—surely this has been the gift of all true leaders, East and West, yesterday and today. Premier Zhou Enlai also won the hearts of the people. The fundamental qualification for any leader is this ability to reach people's hearts, near and far, not in the form of some sort of shallow popularity contest but with great sincerity and earnestness. The SGI's grass-roots movement can also progress enormously, exponentially, if every one of our leaders makes an effort to cultivate and demonstrate this genuine human power. The crucial issue, first and last, is the growth of our leaders. What we need today is a revolution in our leadership.

It Happened One Night

In response to the question "What has been the most constructive experience in your life?" Gandhi recounted an incident that happened when he was only 24. It was a night of insult and discrimination that he experienced in South Africa, where he was a young attorney. He was treated unfairly because of the color of his skin, subjected to verbal abuse and tossed off a night train for refusing to leave the first-class section at the conductor's order. Though Gandhi had a first-class ticket, only whites were permitted to travel in first-class cars.

Sitting up all night in a small dark railway station, shivering without a coat, Gandhi thought long and hard. He asked himself whether he should give up and return to India, his homeland, or whether he should stay put and fight for the human rights of all those suffering the same indignities (see Louis Fischer's *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*).

PLEASE SEE STANDING, NEXT PAGE

STANDING, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

If Gandhi had given up that night, history would have been very different than it is today. But the young man cast off the shackles of fear, and he decided to march forward; he decided to fight. That is what it means to be young. I hope you and all the Soka Schools alumni will follow Gandhi's example.

Up until this incident, the young Gandhi had been a shy person, unable to speak confidently before others. But from that night on, he allowed the boiling magma of courage that lay deep at the core of his being to gush forth. After that long, cold night, Gandhi made his first public speech, calling on his comrades to rise up and fight for their rights as human beings. This one incident was the beginning of Gandhi's struggle for human rights in South Africa, a struggle that he would carry on there for two decades.

Gandhi fought where he was. Perhaps many of you are drawn to the big cities, looking with longing at the exciting life you think goes on there. But that is nothing but an illusion. The battleground is where you are. Those who win where they are — they are the true victors.

If you are faced with the evils of oppression and discrimination and you aren't angered, don't speak out, don't act, you are like a dead volcano. Young people must be like active volcanoes, erupting when their strength and power are needed; they must speak up and fight for truth and justice.

You cannot hope to write a magnificent personal history if you content yourself with a life of ease and comfort. What is life for, after all? You have a voice, you have ears, you have a mouth, you have a brain. You can only reveal your true potential as a human being when you put all of your capacities to the fullest and best possible use.

Live or Die

In Gandhi's last years, just before Indian independence was achieved, he faced one of his most difficult and bitter struggles: to reconcile the Hindus and Muslims of his country. Tensions between the two groups were high, and violence was frequent. But Gandhi threw himself into the very midst of the struggle. He was attacked by Hindus and Muslims alike for his efforts, but Gandhi was determined to achieve peace. He knew it was a do-or-die situation, and he cared nothing

about the criticism and jeers directed at him.

Gandhi even sent his followers to live in villages in the troubled regions to try to assuage the religious tensions and open a way to a solution. One of his followers fell ill with malaria in the village he had been sent to, and he wrote a letter to Gandhi asking him to send a nurse to care for him. Gandhi, of course, cared for all his followers deeply. In most situations, he would have rushed to the person's side and cared for him himself. But in this crucial struggle, things were different.

Gandhi sent a compassionate yet strict letter reprimanding his follower. "Those who go to the villages," he wrote, "have to go there with a determination to live or die there. If they must fall ill they have to get well there or die there. Then alone could the going have any meaning" (see Louis Fischer's *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*).

Only because Gandhi knew that revolution was a do-or-die proposition, only because of his willingness to put his life on the line, was Indian independence achieved. And because his followers carried on his work with the same selfless commitment, India has achieved the prosperity we see today. Both the president and the prime minister of India are disciples of Gandhi, and both of them remain dedicated to the struggle.

The Soka Schools alumni, who have inherited the indomitable spirit of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the founder of *soka* education and a selfless crusader for justice who fought and died for his beliefs, must strive to be just as courageous and heroic as he.

Burning Fiercely

Today, many Soka Schools alumni are playing active roles in various spheres all over the world. One Soka University graduate is working as a teacher at a Japanese school in Paraguay, where an SGL-sponsored exhibition titled "Coexistence and Hope — The Amazon's Environment and Development" was held recently [September 1997] in the city of Asunción. The leading Paraguayan author Augusto Roa Bastos was kind enough to attend the opening. He related to one of the event staff that he has read my dialogue with Dr. Arnold Toynbee, *Choose Life*, and felt a deep resonance with the issues we discussed therein. The 80-year-old Mr. Roa Bastos has always, in his long career, championed the Paraguayan

people, as an invincible fighter who has endured more than 40 years of exile from his beloved homeland. He is a literary hero, who declares it his purpose to portray people's rebellion against all that suppresses human rights and jeopardizes the inherent dignity of life.

In one of his novels, he says that to live means keeping the flame within burning fiercely, to strive beyond what seems possible, to persist until the very end, to overcome hopelessness and despair, never faltering in determination (*Hijo de Hombre*). I hope all of you will make your way through life with an ever-brightly burning spirit. Those who possess energy, tenacity and strong life force will be the ultimate victors in life.

Zentaro Slope

Carrying on the wonderful tradition of their predecessors, students of Soka University and Soka Women's College are now holding their lively annual open-day festivals. I came to the Soka University campus [where both schools are located] three days before the events began to watch over the students' preparations and make sure that both festivals were a total success with no accidents or mishaps. On the eve of the festivals' opening day, I made a round of the campus by car to see how everything was going and arranged some refreshments for all the students working so hard on last-minute preparations. As many of you probably remember from your own time here as students, the day before the festivals is always far busier than the actual opening day. I know what tremendous effort goes into making these festivals a success.

Those of you who were students here are all familiar, I'm sure, with the hill right next to our campus, affectionately known as Zentaro Slope. It rises from the former site of Takiyama Castle to the Gate of Glory entrance to the campus. Whenever I drive up this hill or anywhere in the area, I always pray that our students will be safe from traffic accidents. How sad it would be to see a wonderful young life cut short by something so unnecessary and avoidable. Please, be very aware of safety.

Have you ever wondered where the hill got its name? Apparently it was named after an artist, Zentaro Kojima (1892–1984), who lived in nearby Tangicho. Mr. Kojima

PLEASE SEE STANDING, NEXT PAGE

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS SPEECH

The fundamental qualification for any leader is this ability to reach people's hearts, near and far, not in the form of some sort of shallow popularity contest but with great sincerity and earnestness. The SGI's grass-roots movement can also progress enormously, exponentially, if every one of our leaders make an effort to cultivate and demonstrate this genuine human power. The crucial issue, first and last, is the growth of our leaders. What we need today is a revolution in our leadership.



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In one of [Augusto Roa Bastos'] novels, he says that to live means keeping the flame within burning fiercely, to strive beyond what seems possible, to persist until the very end, to overcome hopelessness and despair, never faltering in determination. I hope all of you will make your way through life with an ever-brightly burning spirit. Those who possess energy, tenacity and strong life force will be ultimate victors in life.



Mr. Toda once said: "Difficulties make us strong. The presence of nasty people helps us develop our character and own state of life. Realizing that, we must live with strength and courage, facing all challenges with a positive attitude."

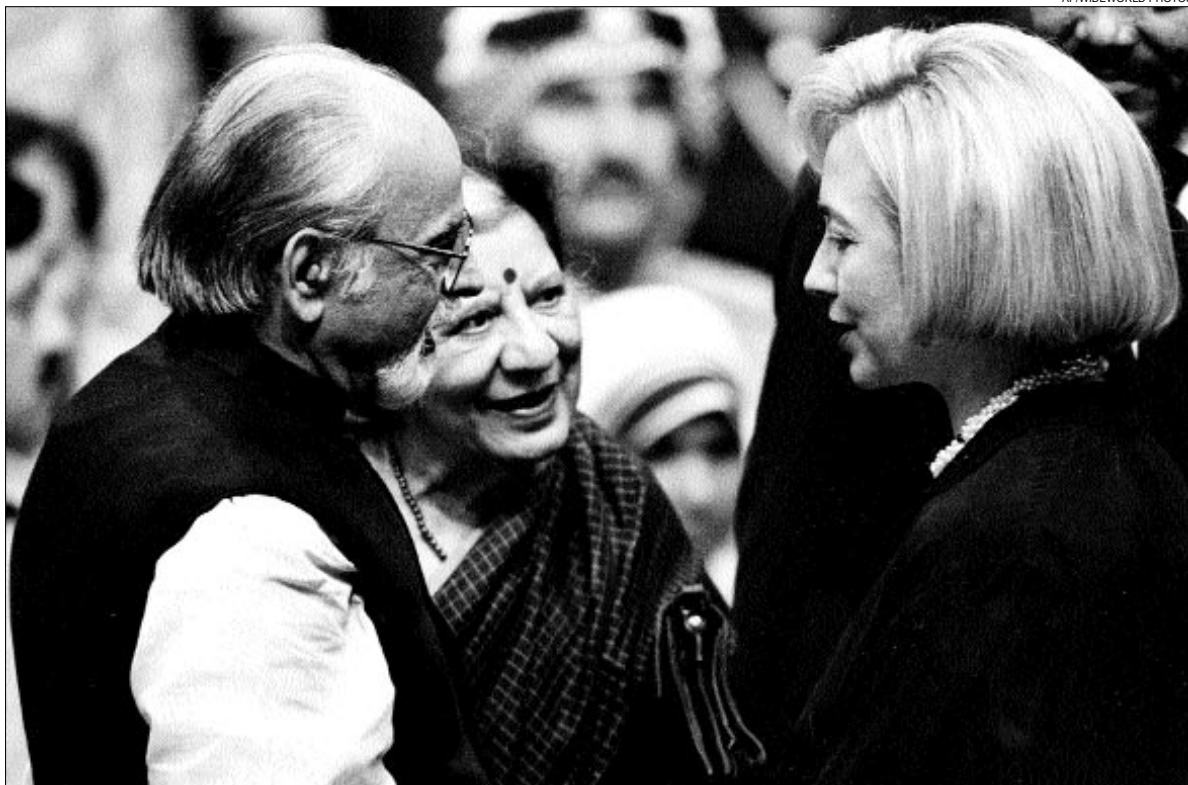
STANDING, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

was a Western-style painter, and he was one of the founding members of the Independent Art Association. He received several important prizes for his work, including the prestigious Nika Prize, and was a very well-known and successful painter.

Following the footsteps of such French painters as Jean-François Millet (1814-75) and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796-1875) who belonged to the 1830 Society, Mr. Kojima and a number of other Japanese painters who had also studied art in France formed the 1930 Society.

The year 1930, incidentally, is the year when the Soka Kyōiku Gakkai [Society of Value-Creation Education] was first formed.

Mr. Kojima lived here in Hachioji from 1932 to 1971. During those nearly four decades, he painted many beautiful works of art, including *The View from Takiyama, Spring in Kasumi Village* and *Village Children*.



Inder Kumar Gujral (left) and his wife, Sheila (center), speak to U.S. first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton before the funeral of Mother Teresa.

Hope Is Always Reborn

At one point in his youth, while enrolled at art school in Japan, Mr. Kojima hit a slump where he found himself unable to paint the way he wished. He lost confidence and grew deeply discouraged. Then, within the space of a few years from the age of 18 to his early 20s, he suffered the successive deaths of his parents and younger sister, and then fell seriously ill himself with acute appendicitis.

As the Lotus Sutra states, "There is no safety in the threefold world; it is like a burning house" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 69). Suffering and pain are unavoidable parts of life. Happiness must be won by battling with suffering and emerging victorious.

After leaving the hospital, he went to live with an aunt in Hachioji to recuperate, taking a break from art school. During that period, Hachioji became a second hometown to the youthful Mr. Kojima, a place where he could take stock and decide what he wanted to do with his life. The beautiful skies of Hachioji, the white clouds, the green trees and the scarlet sunsets were a soothing balm to Mr. Kojima, helping heal his pain and grief.

No matter how hopeless or bleak things appear, the moment always comes when suddenly the spirit is revived and hope reborn. That is why one must

never give up and certainly never attempt anything as drastic as suicide.

Mr. Kojima made a decision. He would not try to escape from reality. "Life's precious treasures can only be discovered through painstaking effort and hard work.... Isn't that also what learning to paint is all about? One can never learn to paint only looking at what one likes.... I will return to school. I will see it through. That must be the 'place of practice' where I establish myself," he wrote in his book *Wakai hi no Jigazo* (Self Portrait in Youth). Revitalized by his rest in Hachioji, he returned to school to meet once again the challenge he had set himself to.

We all need a place of practice where we can train and forge ourselves. Without such a place, we will never become a master in any field. We will never be the best we can. We will never achieve greatness.

Everywhere We Are

Nichiren Daishonin teaches us that our place of practice is here and now: "[There is no need] to leave here and go to some other place" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 781). When we know what we have to do and decide to do it, our place of work, our community, everywhere we are becomes the most meaningful place of practice there can be,

the place where we will triumph. Mr. Toda once said:

No matter how big or small a company or organization, there will always be some people who are unpleasant or spiteful. Problems are an inevitable part of life. Even supposing that there was some perfect, problem-free place, then — in accord with the cycle of formation, continuance, decline and disintegration — a downhill descent would be all one could look forward to.

In other words, difficulties make us strong. The presence of nasty people helps us develop our character and own state of life. Realizing that, we must live with strength and courage, facing all challenges with a positive attitude.

We grow by struggling with problems and difficulties. This is as true of nations as it is of individuals. China became a great nation because it had so many challenges to face. Japan, on the other hand, became rich, and then, failing to find a new challenge, lost its way and began to decline.

Mr. Kojima lived to be 91. Until just before his death, he would paint for eight hours every day, continuing his voyage of creative self-discovery without interruption or pause. I want all of you also to live long, healthy and fulfilled

lives. It is my most earnest wish. Shortly before his 90th birthday, Mr. Kojima said: "Character is the secret to painting. You must gain a certain maturity before you can paint successfully. It took me a very long time to realize that" (from an interview published in the Oct. 25, 1982, *Mainichi Shimbun*). Goethe said, "All depends upon this; one must be something in order to do something" (from Johann Peter Eckermann's *Words of Goethe: Being the Conversations of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*).

Our practice to develop ourselves and realize our potential continues as long as we live. Mr. Toda said that true victory belongs to those who win in the end. When I was 25, about the same age as many of you here, I wrote in my diary, "The person who continues fighting every obstacle to the very last is the ultimate victor." And the last words my mother spoke on her deathbed were, "I have won."

We have a choice: Will we take on the ascent and reach life's summit or will we slide miserably down life's slope?

When you climb Zentaro Slope, you reach the entrance to Soka University, the Gate of Glory. In the same way, I hope all of you will climb surely and steadily, a step at a time, the long hill of your life, at your own pace, with perseverance and

with joy. And may each of you reach life's final and supreme gate of glory, proud in the knowledge that you have fought to the end, have no regrets, and have triumphed.

Celebrating the New Century

Before I close, I would like to make a suggestion. Yesterday [Nov. 2], we held the groundbreaking ceremony for Soka University's new main building. The structure is scheduled to be completed in May 1999. The year after that, 2000, the Orange County Campus of Soka University of America will be completed. It will open on May 3, 2001. While Soka University in Japan was founded in 1971 on the centennial of Mr. Maki-guchi's birth, SUA's Orange County Campus will be completed on the centennial of Mr. Toda's birth.

In the year 2000, let us all reunite: the alumni of Soka University, Soka Women's College and, indeed, all the Soka Schools. Let us get together to celebrate the dawning of the new century! By that time, your numbers will be some 50,000 strong. Let us hold a glorious gathering of all alumni of Soka education!

I am always praying for your safety, health and long life. I am always thinking of you. Thank you for coming from so far away!

At the Heart of a Simple Life

By WILLIAM ROUTHIER
BOSTON CORRESPONDENT

It is an idea that winds through all of human history. Socrates spoke of a golden mean in which either the excess or dearth of material things weakens the soul and intellect. Shakyamuni's Middle Way similarly describes a sensible balance between what is necessary to sustain life and what is aesthetically pleasing. In America, the Puritans, Quakers and Transcendentalists all practiced variations of this same basic idea, the most famous of these experiments captured in the writings of Henry David Thoreau. Native American culture embodies profound respect for a balanced way of life in harmony with nature.

So it is considerably ironic that the notion of the American Dream has been turned into a bumpersticker that reads, "Whoever dies with the most toys wins."

Author, speaker and futurist Duane Elgin has been examining this phenomena of human consumption and our civilization's evolution for more than 25 years. His book *Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life That Is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich* finds signposts at which humanity must inevitably make a choice — to walk the road to a sustainable future or one of voracious want.

"Since World War II," Elgin says in an interview with Sarah van Gelder in *Yes! A Journal of Positive Futures*, "we've seen the most massive experiment that's ever been undertaken in programming the psyche of a civilization. The advertising culture has succeeded in creating a sense that our meaning in life depends upon the significance of what we consume."

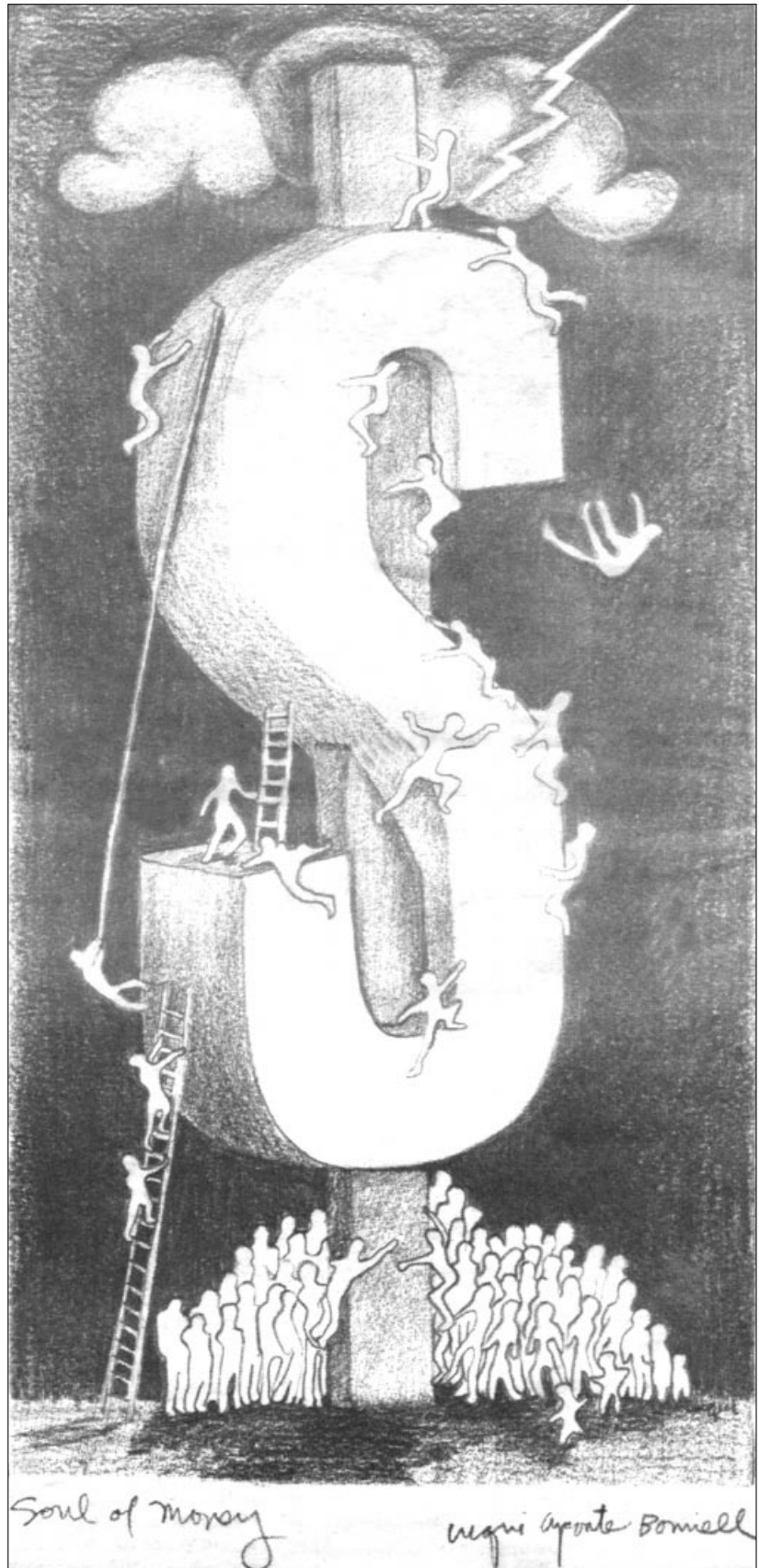
The problem is not simply that greed is an undesirable trait. Imbalance in the world today is largely tilting along consumer lines, between developed nations and "developing" ones: 1.2 billion people live in absolute poverty, while 1 billion people hold 83 percent of the world's wealth.

Elgin sees a great desire in Americans today to live a simpler existence — to have less and enjoy it more — and posits patterns of behavior that can help create a less adorned, more soul-satisfying life. While Elgin states emphatically that "there is no dogmatic formula for simpler living," he suggests that one might begin by consciously investing more time in family, children, friends, civic affairs, as well as in developing a more intimate, reverential connection with nature. Compassion and a sense of kinship with the poor and concern for social justice and equity in the use of resources can come, he says, from adopting a simpler lifestyle, as seen, for example, in Gandhi's life.

After another holiday season, with all its familiar pleasures and indulgences, the new year may be a good time to more soberly examine our behavior and responsibility as consumers.

As Elgin says: "We have to see we're being consumed by our consumerism, instead of being supported by it. We're in the watershed of the American Dream. We have the choice of discovering and building a sustainable, satisfying, soulful way of living upon the Earth."

Or not.



'Soul of Money:'

Illustration by CUQUI APONTE BONNELL

FRIENDS for Peace

JANUARY 2,
1998

A SPACE TRAVEL... Through the Ten Worlds

by Christine Massey
Dallas, Texas



A day in the life of—

Please fasten your seat belts. In the case of emergency, the beads will fall from the overhead compartment. Place on fingers so and begin chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo with three co-pilots, attendants and the Dancing Konga Snack Line from Houston.”

We were off!

The 2nd annual Dallas Joint Territory Boys and Girls Group General Meeting brought together 140 children from throughout Texas and Oklahoma, covering more than 1,200 miles.

Part A included lunch, gongyo and ten-world activities: a haunted house (staffed


by Dallas youth division members), ten world aerobics (a salute to the enduring Houston members), and Killeen members sponsored the Learning/Realization room with a special project for SGI President Ikeda. There was also a songfest led by chorus members, face painting, carnival games and a quilt project for Bryan’s House of Dallas (a haven for children and families affected by AIDS).

Part B was the Space Travel Presentation. Over a period of three months, each area studied the ten worlds and then concentrated on one world to pre-

sent through song, dance, skits and music with all of the props, backdrops and lighting of a musical performance.

As if things couldn’t get any more exciting, there were hundreds of balloons, candies and Silly String cascading on to all of the children as they sang: “For each child that’s born, a morning star rises and sings to the Universe who we are. We are One!”

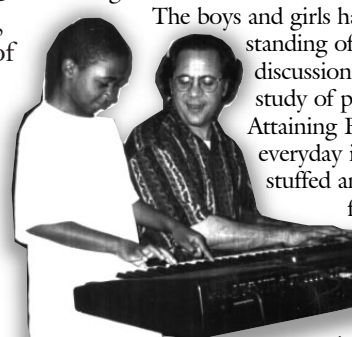
We are now officially authorized to travel throughout the ten worlds.

Watch out! FFP, we had such a great time, I hope we can do this every year. 


A SUCCESSFUL YEAR Activities in No. Virginia

by Juanita Maberry
Alexandria, Va.

Boys and girls in Northern Virginia are on the move, thanks to the support of the leaders and members throughout our area. We have had the support of the territory leaders and many, many members. Ann Sansbury invited her sister, who is a nonmember and Virginia State senator, to the Boys and Girls World Peace Gongyo meeting. They learned about lobbying on Capitol Hill from territory leader Jo Reed, and were told a story by Mike Curtis, also a territory leader. Headquarters leader-musician-music teacher Jeff Kaye performed for the children, gave a mini music lesson and told how the practice helped his music career. Equally exciting was a recent visit from a youth division member Kimberly Parks, who talked about her practice, what it was like for her when she was their age and what it’s like now.



The boys and girls have gained a deeper understanding of the practice through study discussions and our four-month study of portions of the Goshu “On Attaining Buddhahood.” We’ve used everyday items like mirrors and stuffed animals to help explain different parts. We made piggy banks to accompany the discussion and talked about the many ways of gaining fortune by practicing this Buddhism.

This year has been a successful year of activities and meetings where, more than ever, the children have participated in their Boys and Girls World Peace Gongyo meetings. They earned badges for a certificate for their contributions. The certificates will be handed out at the New Year’s Gongyo meeting. Their participation has included leading gongyo and daimoku, conducting craft projects and playing musical instruments. 


CHILDREN’S RIGHTS EXHIBIT

by Eric Kunimoto — Baltimore, MD

On Nov. 9, 1997, the children’s rights exhibit opened to the public in Baltimore. Eric Kunimoto, 11, who lives in Ellicott City, Md., gave the following speech:

The most important rights of children, in my opinion, are shelter, food and peace. Without food, we would not have the strength to survive. Shelter is important because if we did not have a place to live, we would not be protected from severe weather.

Peace, I think, is the most important right for children. Without peace, we would not have friends, we would have wars and everybody would be against each other. When I visited this exhibit yesterday, when I saw the pictures, I wanted to do something about the misery around the world.

The future is in our hands. We are the ones to change the world for the better. 

Eric Kunimoto speaking at the Baltimore opening of the children’s rights exhibit.



POETRY

THE FOUR SEASONS

By **Ronnie Shapiro, 10**
Kansas City

Winter is very cold,
when all the plants have died
Spring is when it gets warmer
And you can have a picnic outside.

Summer is very hot
You can get a sunburn
Autumn is when the leaves fall
And the weather takes a turn.



MY HEART IS REJOICED

By **Michelle Berger, 8**
Van Nuys, Calif.

My heart is rejoiced with the sweet
sound of bees humming. Butterflies
Flapping their wings through
the green grassy meadows.
The clouds look like
big puffy pillows and
the sky is a blanket.

If I were a bird I could see deer
hopping in the forest.
Little children running in the park.
At night I hear crickets
playing the violin
in my back yard and I think
how peaceful life is.



"**FRIENDS** for Peace" thanks everyone who contributed to this issue, including Ellen Brown (who did this smashing new design for "Friends for Peace"), Paula Hendry and Martha Lange (both of Washington, D.C., Joint Territory). Please send your experience (around 150 words), comments, questions or news article to: "Friends for Peace," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

THE LITTLE SUNFLOWER SEEDS

By **Crystal McDougall, 9**
North Hollywood, Calif.

First I helped to pull out the weeds.
Then I dug holes and planted the seeds.
My dad and I watered them each day.
Every day I looked, I hoped, I
prayed.

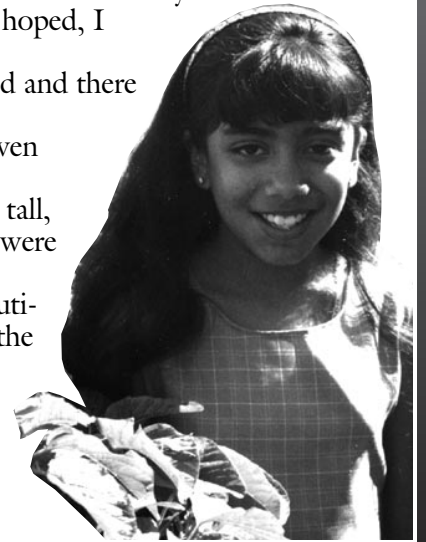
Then one day, I looked and there
they were.

Each day they grew even
more.

They were so big and tall,
From little seeds that were
so small.

The flowers were beautiful and bright as the sun.

I wish I could give
you all, One.

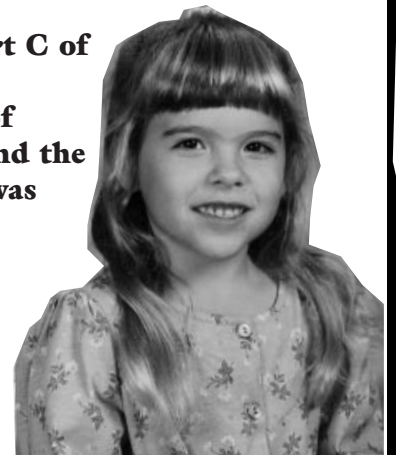


TARA HARVEY, 6

Fallston, Md.

Tara was facing some challenges at school. Her parents encouraged her to increase the amount of gongyo she was doing in the morning. After a few weeks, she said:

"I started doing part C of gongyo, and I got a whole bunch of friends at school. And the teacher said that I was listening well."



The Boys and Girls Group **TALENT**

by Alice Bush and
Jade Nobles
Alexandria, Va.



Alice and Steve

My name is Alice Bush. I am 13 years old. I was the head director and coordinator of the talent show. Jade Nobles is 11 years old. She was assistant director and coordinator. I got this idea when my school held a talent

show of our own. So I asked Linda Jimenez (territory Boys and Girls Group coordinator) if we could have a talent show. She said we had to ask the territory leaders, so we got the entire show on a roll. The territory said yes! We had a chanting session and planning meeting. Everyone was excited.

Then it was

Aug. 2. The night was finally here. Some of our performers included Alex Lee (played piano); Jennifer Lee (shared jokes and a song); Maira Bush (harp); Michael Parks (magic show); Monica Kelley (master of ceremonies and dance); Jade No-

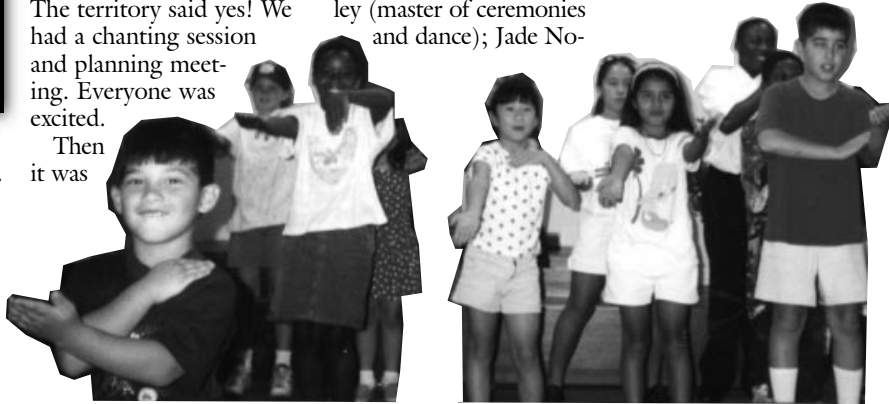
bles (recorder duet, saxophone/flute duet); Steve Smith (saxophone/flute duet); Okey Udumaga (poetry reading); Diana Wells (sang "By No Doubt"); David Chevalley (classical piano).

We had many compliments and requests from our performers to have another show again this year. We hope you can come to watch.

We couldn't have done it without our crew backstage: George Bush and Marcus Kelly.

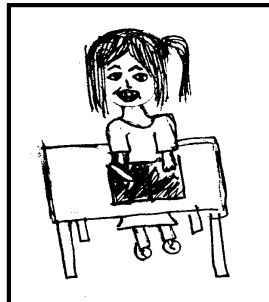
All in all, 89 people attended, not including performers. Twelve of the 89 were guests. They had their first visit to the community center. It was great encouragement for all of us.

But now that you know more about this, maybe you will come participate and watch our wonderful talent show.



A Story About Nicole's Determination

by Olivia Saito, 9
New Orleans, La.



Nicole was a new kid in the fourth grade. She never did her homework. She was bad in school. All she did was scribble on her paper.



Her mom didn't know what she was doing. She always told her mother she got a good grade, like an A+. When her mom asked where her test was, Nicole said it was on the wall at school. She actually failed from not studying.



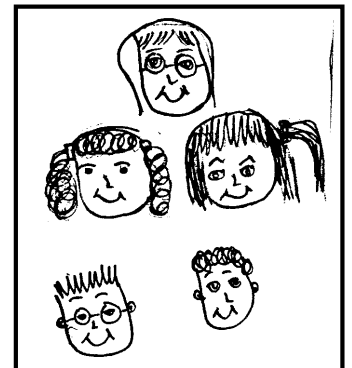
One day, all the kids started teasing Nicole, and she was sad. After that, she was determined to be good.



So Nicole tried harder.



After chanting and studying hard for one month, Nicole was the smartest kid in class



Everyone wanted to be her friend.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

by Ray and Teresa Bosch
Washington, D.C.


The holiday season can be a very enjoyable time of the year. It is a time when we have fun with friends and family members we haven't seen in a long time. We may eat lots of good food and exchange presents and, of course, kids get out of school for a few days. In November, we celebrated Thanksgiving. In December, people

were busy preparing for Christmas or getting ready for Kwanzaa. Your Jewish friends may be celebrating Hanukkah. A few months ago, they celebrated Yom Kippur. What do you like most about the holidays? Is there anything you don't like?

In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, New Year's Day is a very special holiday.

It is a day when we decide what we are going to do to improve our lives in the coming year. This is called making a determination. Some people call this a New Year's resolution. Actually, we should do this every day, but New Year's Day is an especially important day for doing this. Do you sometimes make determinations? What are

they? Do they help you? Nichiren Daishonin wrote a letter, called a Goshō, called the "New Year's Goshō." In it, he told a woman how to celebrate the new year. He said, "A person who celebrates this day will gain virtue and be loved by all." He also said, "Misfortune comes from one's mouth and ruins him, but fortune comes from

one's mind and makes him worthy of respect." (He means determination when he says "mind.") What do you think he meant? Do you have a New Year's resolution? Write it down on a piece of paper, fold it, and put it in a safe place. During the rest of the year, you can look at it to remind yourself of your determination and take action. 

WORD SEARCH

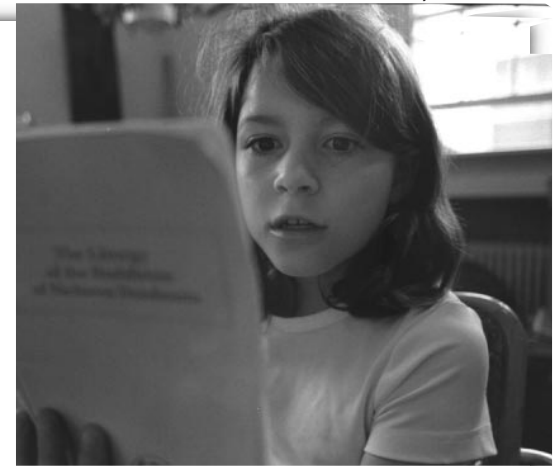
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S	T	R	I	V	E	F	B	N	H	F	O	R
C	H	A	L	T	F	A	I	L	P	T	R	E
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C	H	A	L	L	Y	C	U	M	P	O	P	Y
H	E	S	U	L	S	V	E	F	A	T	P	I

HOPE—VALUE—BENEFIT—DREAMS—SOLUTIONS—SPIRIT—POTENTIAL—TREASURE—CHALLENGE—ABILITY—EFFORTS—GROWTH—TRY—ACCOMPLISH—STRIVE—DETERMINATION

How many of the following words — all related to the concept of determination — can you find?

Thank you, Martha Lange, for sending us this puzzle!

Photo by KIRK CONDYLES



1998 THE YEAR OF VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE FOR THE NEW CENTURY FOR THE BOYS AND GIRLS GROUP MEMBERS

- 1 Study hard at school.
- 2 Try your best at gongyo and daimoku every day.
- 3 Cherish your friends!
- 4 Respect everyone in your family.
- 5 Believe in yourself! No matter what, never, never give up on anything!

Thank you so much! Let's have a fantastic and productive 1998!