

World Tribune

No. 3174

THE YEAR OF VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE FOR THE NEW CENTURY

JANUARY 16, 1998

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

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Gosho study material.

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

DATED MATERIAL: PLEASE DELIVER BY ISSUE DATE



Members at the World Peace Ikeda Auditorium in Santa Monica, Calif., celebrate the new year at a special gongyo meeting.

SGI PRESIDENT'S NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

To My Dear SGI-USA Members

To my dear, esteemed fellow SGI members in the United States, who are working so tirelessly for kosen-rufu, I wholeheartedly wish each of you a very, very happy new year!

It is my sincerest wish that you will each advance in your endeavors in the year ahead, enjoying the very best of health and brimming with unflagging enthusiasm and vitality. I pray that you challenge and surmount all obstacles with courage and a sense of exhilaration and emerge triumphant so that you

can lead lives of unsurpassed happiness and value.

Please be confident and utterly assured that the original Buddha, Nichiren Daishonin, is protecting us without fail, just as we are rigorously supported by all Buddhist deities — the protective functions inherent in the universe — and all Buddhas and bodhisattvas throughout the ten directions. So please enjoy your life and faith to the fullest. Forge a courageous practice; lead a courageous life.

Buddhism is concerned with

winning. Those who win attain Buddhahood. Those who lose taste only sorrow and defeat. It is essential that we win. Faith is the driving force for victory.

Nichikan Shonin said of the Gohonzon we embrace, "If you have faith in this Gohonzon and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo even for a short while, no prayer will go unanswered, no offense unexpiated, no good fortune unbestowed and no righteousness unproven."

I close my heartfelt message to you with my deepest prayers

that this year, too, will be:

- A year of dauntless composure!
- A year of high spirits!
- A year of total victory!
- A year of health and fulfillment!
- A year of conviction and optimism!
- A year of opening our hearts in friendship to one another!

Daisaku Ikeda
New Year's Day

INTERVIEW

From Theory to Action: I Will Do It!

SGI-USA Women's Division Chief Wendy Clark talks about the women's division theme and motto for 1998 and the spirit of the upcoming women's division commemorative meetings in February.

Q What is the SGI-USA women's division theme for 1998?

A It is "Actively Closing the Gap: Moving from Theory to Action." And our new motto is "I will do it."

It's been eight years since SGI President Ikeda's historic visit to the United States. We've made great progress in our faith and practice and built a strong

foundation.

As we stand at the threshold of the 21st century, I feel we need to take the next step to build on this foundation. America is looking for people who will act as true bodhisattvas, people who don't wait but say, "I will do it." The time for action is now. "Moving from theory to action" means taking full responsibility for our happiness and the people's happiness.

Q How does this theme relate to the SGI-USA's focuses for this year?

A In 1998, the Year of Victory of the People for the New Century, the SGI-USA is focusing on three major areas: supporting members' quests for happiness, nurturing youth and strength-

PLEASE SEE INTERVIEW, 4



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 devotion. 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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Looking for a Breakthrough? Something Has To Change

EDITORIAL

With the new year upon us, people are looking forward to 12 months of resolutions met and achievements made. There's something about the calendar flipping to a new year that gives us renewed hope that we'll be able to do this year what we haven't yet been able to do.

But can we?

There's a saying that goes, "If you want something you've never had before, you have to be willing to do something you've never done before." On the organizational level, General Director Zaitzu has called for us all to employ new thinking to achieve our goals. On an individual level, too, new thinking or a new attitude will help us go a long way toward the fulfillment of our desires.

Doing the same old thing in the same old way never results in something new. Breakthroughs occur when we take a novel approach or see something from a fresh perspective. In a word, to get the right job or perfect relationship or to overcome chronic illness demands wisdom.

And wisdom comes from faith. To quote SGI President Ikeda:

Faith is the source from which all solutions flow. Faith is the engine that propels us in the thrilling voyage of life, a life victorious and transcendent.

But even wisdom is not enough if we don't make steady efforts. It is not enough to simply chant lots of daimoku, believing idly that things will somehow work out. We chant to tap the Buddha wis-

dom we have within us, but based on this prayer and wisdom, we must then act consistently and persistently, with great hope for the future. There is no substitute for effort. And as so many people have proven, failure comes only to those who give up.

Recently, Raisa Gorbachev, speaking at Kansai Soka High Schools in Japan, made this same point to an audience of young people. "In our lives we may sometimes encounter painful experiences, leaving profound wounds in our hearts," she said. "It is also true that all of our dreams may not always be fulfilled. But there is always something that we can achieve. There is always a dream that we can realize."

"So those who will triumph in the end are those who get back on their feet and move forward no matter how many times they fall," she continued. "It is up to the strength of our spirit whether we can fight to the end. 'Death' comes to those who have stopped in mid-stride, not to those who are simply tired."

The way to practice Buddhism is with the "same mind as Nichiren." No matter what hardship he encountered, no matter how stunning the setback, Nichiren Daishonin remained focused on how to help people. He was hopeful and courageous because of his profound compassion for humanity. We are all capable of developing this depth of compassion.

Many of us expressed our determination at the start of this year with the words "Something has to change." More often than not the something that has to change is us.

Our change in thinking, our change in behavior, our human revolution will help us all do this year what we haven't done before.

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World Tribune

(ISSN-0049-8165)

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

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

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

Printed on 100% recycled paper

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**WORLD TRIBUNE
MAILBOX**

We All Need New Thinking

In response to the Dec. 19, 1997, *World Tribune* "Editorial," "Beyond the Usual," I must say I have nothing but praise. It was very encouraging to hear [SGI-USA General Director] Zaitzu say that new thinking is exactly what the SGI-USA needs. As a member of the "post-NSA era," I am sometimes frustrated with the lack of creative input from those senior in faith. I can understand that directions in the past were from senior leadership downward to the general membership. I also appreciate the fact that many cultures that make up the SGI-USA come from this type of structure. Since this is not how the SGI-USA is at the present, we all must come up with suggestions, opinions and comments to help Mr. Zaitzu, along with our local leaders. We must customize our local areas' structure and be flexible enough to accommodate the needs and desires of all members. While some may view this change as radical or unauthorized, I believe we will all benefit by each one of us contributing with our own unique and heartfelt input.

— KYLE THOMA, Palm Bay, Fla.

Supplements Are Needed

I have a comment regarding the installment of "Buddhism and the Art of Medicine," dated Sept. 12, 1997. I understand [SGI President Ikeda's] intent to use this dialogue to build healthier lives. As someone who has worked as a chiropractic doctor for the last 14 years, I applaud this, and in that same spirit would like to make the following observations.

It was mentioned regarding the use of nutritional supplements that none were needed (except in the case of fatigue or lack of sleep), because people could get all the nutrients they wanted from their diet. This came across as a fact but is actually a very controversial opinion and something I would disagree with for the following reasons:

- 1) The soils that the plants we eat get their nutrients from have steadily been depleted, especially in the past century. There is very abundant evidence that points this out.
- 2) People have to deal with an increasing amount of stress in this world that gets more and more fast-paced. Although as a 22-year SGI member, I well understand the value of our Buddhist practice in helping use stress in a positive way, still, there is much evidence showing that our bodies have a much greater need for nutrients (such as vitamins and minerals) than 100 or even 50 years ago.
- 3) Food becoming more depleted of nutrients combined with the fact we need more nutrients than in earlier years because of the stress and fast pace of our current age is an important reason why supplementation with the basic vitamins and minerals, in addition to what we can get in our foods, is so important.

In my years as a practicing chiropractor, I have had ample proof to see the benefits of nutritional supplementation, not only to assist the resolution of a wide variety of health problems but also on a daily basis to provide good health and prevent the onset of many potential problems. I appreciate your taking the time to listen.

— JOE CARR, St. Louis Park, Minn.

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).

There's More To Happiness Than Being Happy

PERSPECTIVE

The objective of our practice is not to be smiling all the time. Happiness is a condition we experience even when we're suffering what there is to suffer.

By **MICHAEL LISAGOR**
VIENNA, VA.

There is no greater happiness for human beings than chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. ("Happiness in This World," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 161)

Last week I attended a strict leaders meeting in Washington, D.C., where we heard about the new five-year plan for the SGI-USA. It was very encouraging and centered on the family and the members. I was concerned, though, with our use of the word *happy* in describing our goal of having 100,000 active happy members.

The word *happy* has numerous interpretations. Many people think of *happy* as meaning always cheerful, always in high spirits. But it is probably a misconception to expect to be in high spirits all the time just because we're practicing Buddhism. I was concerned that our use of the word might lead people to believe that if they chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo they will be happy in this sense all the time.

Perhaps we should find another way — a different expression — to define our goal.

When I joined the SGI-USA (NSA at that time), my wife and I were hippies. We had run away from home in 1969 seeking love, peace, happiness and, in my case, freedom from responsibility. After months of eating brown rice and lentils and living on a friend's porch, we realized that we couldn't just survive on our ideals. The SGI-USA seemed like the perfect solution.

We were told that if we chanted, we could become happy and all our dreams would come true. So we taught

ourselves gongyo while sitting every day in a West Los Angeles park and began to build a more constructive life together. After many years of practice, we built incredible fortune in our lives and acquired a deep sense of gratitude for the organization.

I rarely thought to ask what happiness was. I figured anything would be better than the severe depression and anguish I had suffered as a child and teenager.

Because of my intense desire to avoid depression, I developed an underlying belief that my true objective through my practice was to be happy all the time. That the enlightenment Nichiren Daishonin spoke about was somehow wrapped up in an unshakable condition of happiness, a total absence of pain. "Look at me," I would be able to proclaim. "Nothing can upset my positive, upbeat attitude."

And so I expended a tremendous amount of energy trying to maintain this condition. I actually got to the point where I knew exactly how much to chant each day to "stay happy." People came to expect and rely on my perpetual smile and good humor.

I was so frightened whenever I started to feel blue that I would do anything to get my smile back. Much of my chanting was centered (and self-centered) on staying in high spirits — as opposed to on more significant prayers. Deep inside I still had a lot of sadness and hurt. I had yet to understand what true happiness meant.

In retrospect, this misconception was probably exactly what I needed through my 20s and 30s to allow me to build a positive marriage, family and career. My unhappiness, like a strong ocean undertow, was a constant impetus to chant more Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and raise my life-condition. Because of it, I lifted myself above my unstable childhood. But, on a different level, I still needed to deal with the reality of my sadness.

Suffer what there is to suffer, enjoy what there is to enjoy. ("Happiness in This World," MW-1, 161)

About six months ago, with my wife's serious illness as an additional pressure, I found my-

self no longer able to contain my sadness. I couldn't keep it in its box. I became overwhelmed with grief. Fortunately, I sought professional help.

Through therapy and a reinvigorated study of Nichiren Daishonin's writings, I started to realize that it was important to allow myself to experience my sadness and anger. Much of my adult behavior was patterned after negative childhood experiences and realities that were no longer valid. What a relief to realize that it was OK to be sad sometimes. That the fact that I might not be feeling happy at a given moment did not necessarily indicate that my practice was weak or my faith shallow! I finally began to accept and love myself — for the first time in my life.

By happy, I think we actually mean something close to "the joy or sense of fulfillment that arises from the realization that we are truly living in the moment; the confidence that comes from our sense of mission as Buddhists; and the ability to enjoy what there is to enjoy and suffer what there is to suffer." Being happy is a sense of connectedness with everything around us.

Of course, my definition above is a lot to say every time we refer to our objective. Still, the words we use to describe major organizational goals are important. I realize we don't really expect to have 100,000 happy members in the sense of them always smiling and being cheerful. Perhaps the word *fulfilled* would be more appropriate.

I had a really bad cold last week. At the same time, I found myself filled with joy as my wife and I celebrated our 28th wedding anniversary. Was I happy last week? Not really. On a physical level I felt miserable. But on a deeper level I felt extremely fulfilled.

Anyway, I hope someone will suggest a different word for this life-condition, one that won't unintentionally confuse some people — and even cause them unhappiness. Such a word would make me very [insert word for happy].

If you're interested in contributing to this section, please call us at (310) 451-8811 or e-mail us at SokaNews@aol.com.

NEWS BRIEFS

CALIFORNIA

Bagpipers Win Civic Award

The SGI-USA Golden Eagle Bagpipe Band received plaudits and an award for its performance during the Skipper's Holiday Boat Parade, held in Marina Del Rey on Dec. 13, 1997.

Alan Viner, Golden Eagles leader, accepted the award for the best civic service/nonprofit entry in the annual event. Aboard the Los Angeles County fireboat, the SGI-USA group played such favorites as "Scotland the Brave" and "Highland Laddie" for two hours before "piping in" Santa Claus.



Alan Viner with the award.

The Golden Eagles' next venue is the Chinese New Year's meeting in February at the World Peace Ikeda Auditorium in Santa Monica, Calif.

— JOHN BATES

SOUTH KOREA

SGI President Honored by South Korean City

The Legislative Assembly of Pucheong presented SGI President Ikeda with a certificate of commendation and a key to the city in recognition of his global contributions to the development of peace, culture and education. Pucheong is situated next to Seoul and claims a population of 800,000. The conferment ceremony took place on Dec. 7, 1997, at the 5th Headquarters Leaders Meeting of the SGI of Korea. The International Association of Educators for World Peace also took this opportunity to bestow its World Peace Academy Award on the KSIG in praise of its long-standing efforts in society.

The citation states that the city assembly eternally commends President Ikeda for his devotion to securing peace for humanity and outstanding contributions to the development of culture and education. It further acknowledges the SGI leader's efforts toward the strengthening of friendship between South Korea and Japan as a diplomat of the people.

— Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER

MASSACHUSETTS

Culture Festival Marks Founding Day

New England Region celebrated Soka Gakkai Founding Day (Nov. 18) on Nov. 16, 1997, with a Culture Diversity Festival in Boston that featured performances from more than 10 cultures. After the performances, members and guests joined in an international food festival and cabaret that had people dancing and conversing late into the night. Some 900 people from all over New England attended.

"We overcame every obstacle," one person said. "There were times when I thought it might not happen. But we won over every difficulty." With a snowstorm hitting New England the day before, many young people braved the bad weather to put the finishing touches on the festival with a spirit to drive away the poor weather so that everyone could enjoy themselves. The weather the next day was enough to melt away any snow that might have hindered the event.

— GEOFF WESTROPP

INTERVIEW, FROM PAGE 1

ening families. I am encouraging each woman to embrace the "I will do it" spirit in these three areas. "I will do it" really means "I will be the one to make it happen."

Q How will the women's division support these focuses?

A To accomplish SGI-USA's focus on these three areas, we want to take action toward propagating this Buddhism. We want to help members practice the Daishonin's Buddhism correctly. In January, with the "I will do it" spirit, we will focus on reading and promoting the *World Tribune*. In February, toward the women's division commemorative meetings, our focus will be on propagation.

As many of us noticed last year, one year goes by so quickly. Without a plan of action, broken down month by month, time can just get away from us.

Just as I consider the members my family, I also have adopted the *World Tribune*. I try to make every effort to treat this child well, with love and care, to spend time "promoting" it in a way that will help it grow.

The *World Tribune* is our direct link to President Ikeda, a place where members can read and be encouraged by his guidance. President Ikeda's determination in naming the *World Tribune*, after all, is that it will become the voice of world peace. To actualize this is to say, "I will do it."

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



Wendy Clark

Q Are there any special plans for the 8th Women's Division Commemorative Meeting?

A On Feb. 27, 1990, a new era for the women's division began when President Ikeda presented us with the "clear mirror" guidance. We've held commemorative meetings every year since as opportunities for each and every one of us to renew our determination for our world peace movement.

While this guidance is our prime point, there may be many other materials that the members wish to use. The size of the meetings will be determined by each region, based on geography, size of the organization and the weather.

While we all focus on propagation, each region can decide how best to mark this important occasion.

We want to have 100 percent participation and for everyone to bring a friend. This is a great opportunity for us to bring guests and introduce them to

the practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

It's also a great opportunity to do home visits. Our organization begins and ends with human relationships. Buddhism is about encouraging one person at a time. I hope we can do lots of visits, particularly since we've just finished or are finishing our reorganization. Home visits will help members become acquainted with their new district family.

In conjunction with our home visits toward the February meetings, we can also support the youth division meetings commemorating March 16. Through friendly dialogue, we can find out who our members' children are — youth whom we can invite to the youth division's March meetings.

Q What spirit do you hope that members will keep in mind as they plan these meetings?

A As President Ikeda said in his New Year's message, seeking to meet friends and fellow human beings is the way to create mutual understanding. Dialogue is the key to building a network of joy and peace. More important than external trappings is a genuine atmosphere of conviviality. One-to-one dialogue is the only way to give our activities richness and depth. Each of us can weave irreplaceable threads in a beautiful tapestry of friendship.

It's our great joy that we have an opportunity to join with President Ikeda in his quest for peace. Let's have happy meetings! ☸

The Student Files

Name: Yuko Olson
School: University of Minnesota
Major: International relations
City: Minneapolis, Minn.



My major requires that I study a little bit of history, economy and political science, even though it emphasizes international political economy. I also like sociology. I sometimes get depressed because I feel like my participation in SGI-USA activities is lacking. I am easily overwhelmed by school pressures, too. Without the Gohonzon, I don't think I could have made it this far.

I need to balance study, my marriage

and activities — and it seems to be difficult at this moment. My husband, Blake, is also an SGI member and a student at the University of Minnesota. We got married and moved here more than three years ago.

Even though I haven't seriously introduced my classmates to Buddhism yet, I let them know about our activities and beliefs. Especially our activities to destroy ethnocentrism and establish a harmonious international society. ☸

In these installments, President Yamamoto continues his lecture to students on the 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings.' While giving a detailed background on certain passages of the Goshō, he emphasizes that halfhearted Buddhist study won't do anyone any good.

Though all the students at Shin'ichi Yamamoto's lecture had had a hard time understanding this passage when they studied it on their own, they found themselves gradually coming to grasp its intent as they listened to his explanation.

"However," Shin'ichi continued, "when we enter the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra, the True Cause, True Effect and True Land — when, where and how Shakyamuni originally became a Buddha — are elucidated. In other words, when, in the essential teaching, the principle of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms is expounded in terms of Shakyamuni's life and deeds, the means of attaining Buddhahood are revealed. That is why the phrase "revealed in the essential teaching" appears next to "the responsive wisdom of truth."

"From the perspective of the Daishonin's Buddhism, though, both the unchanging entity of truth of the theoretical teaching and the responsive wisdom of truth of the essential teaching of Shakyamuni's Lotus Sutra are still merely concepts, merely theoretical teachings. That is because even the essential teaching of Shakyamuni's Lotus Sutra cannot lead living beings to enlightenment today in the Latter Day of the Law.

"If we were to liken Nichiren Daishonin and the Gohonzon of the Three Great Secret Laws of the Latter Day to buildings, then the 28 chapters of the Lotus Sutra could be likened to the architect's plan or blueprint. A plan is needed to build a house, but in the end it is not the blueprint but the house itself that is important.

"In 'The True Object of Worship,' the Daishonin writes: 'Shakyamuni's practices and the virtues he consequently attained are all contained within the single phrase, Myōhō-enge-kyō. If we believe in that phrase, we shall naturally be granted the same benefits as he was' (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 64). The practice that led to Shakyamuni's attainment of Buddhahood and the virtues he accrued as a Buddha are all contained in the five characters of Myōhō-enge-kyō. That is, in the Gohonzon. Accordingly, if we chant daimoku with faith in the Go-

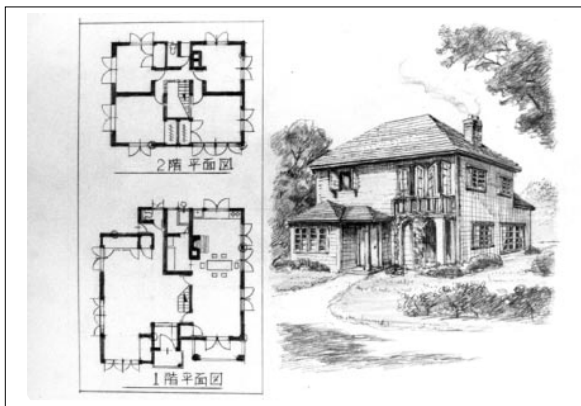
The New Human Revolution

BY HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 5

Young Eagles

Translation of parts 20–21 of the 'Young Eagles' chapter, as printed in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. Ho Goku is the pen name of Daisaku Ikeda, who appears in the novel as Shin'ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1962.



honzon, we will receive all the virtues that the Buddha received. That is why, when the Daishonin says, 'Devotion is Nam-myōhō-enge-kyō itself' (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 708), he is proclaiming that to attain true, absolute happiness, we must devote our lives to the Gohonzon.

"Next, let us turn to the passage 'A commentary says, "Both the unchanging and the responsive are encompassed in a life-moment; one tranquil and the other illuminating"' (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 708). The commentaries that the Daishonin cites in his writings are interpretations of passages from the sutras expounded by Shakyamuni Buddha by such great Buddhist teachers as T'ien-t'ai of China and Dengyo of Japan. In addition to such commentaries on the sutras, the Daishonin cites philosophical treatises on principles contained in the sutras by such Buddhist scholars as Ashvaghosha, Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu. The 'Treatise on the Sutra of the Perfection of Wisdom' and the 'Treatise on the Ten Stages' are examples of such works [both are by Nagarjuna].

"As part of your preparation for our lectures on the Orally Transmitted Teachings, I want you to look carefully into all the passages quoted

therein from sutras, commentaries and philosophical treatises, as well as what comes before and after the quoted sections. You won't be able to understand the Orally Transmitted Teachings correctly unless you do. In my studies of the Goshō, I have always referred directly back to the original text of any quoted scripture or work."

In this way, Shin'ichi instructed his students on the basics of Buddhist study.

Shin'ichi continued emphatically: "I want you to make 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings' the inspiration and the model for your faith, your thinking and your way of living for the rest of your lives. That is why I want you to study it thoroughly and delve into its meaning. When you dig a well, you have to keep digging until you hit a source of water, or else you'll have dug in vain. Buddhist study is the same. Halfhearted study has no power to advance your faith.

"From our next meeting on, I want each of you to look up all the passages from sutras, commentaries, and philosophical treatises mentioned in the text. From now on, my lectures will be based on the assump-

tion that you have done that, and that you understand them all, OK?"

All present indicated their unanimous agreement and resolve to comply with Shin'ichi's request. With that, Shin'ichi began to lecture on the passage that reads, "A commentary says, 'Both the unchanging and the responsive are encompassed in a life-moment; one tranquil and the other illuminating' (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 708).

"The unchanging and the responsive' again refers to the unchanging entity of truth and the responsive wisdom of truth," he said. "Life moment means life as it exists at each moment. Tranquil means a condition in which the mind is calm and serene — the static aspect of life. On the other hand, illuminating means the shining forth of the light of wisdom — the dynamic aspect of life. In other words, both the unchanging entity of truth and the responsive wisdom of truth are contained within Myōhō-enge-kyō, the entity of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms, and within our lives at each moment.

"For example, we identify water by the molecular formula H₂O. If we regard that as the unchanging entity of truth, then the way water changes in response to different circumstances — for instance, taking the form of ice, cold or hot water, or steam — represents the responsive wisdom of truth."

At just that moment, Shin'ichi happened to catch the gaze of a serious-looking, bespectacled young man sitting in the second row — Kaoru Tahara, a student in the Economics Department of Tokyo University. Shin'ichi decided to use Tahara as his next example.

"Here we have a human being known as Kaoru Tahara," he started. "Now he is here listening to this lecture, but at other times he also rides trains, eats and sleeps. He suffers, he feels anger, he experiences sadness and joy. But whatever he may be doing or feeling, he remains the same Tahara. There is an integrity to his being, or 'law,' that makes him who he is. This is also the unchanging entity of truth. His many different life activities, meanwhile, are the responsive wisdom of truth.

"The unchanging entity of truth and responsive wisdom of truth are simultaneously inherent in all things. This is the reality of life. And this is what is meant by the phrase 'Both the unchanging and the responsive are encompassed in a life-moment; one tranquil and the other illuminating.' Our mission is to bring forth the brilliance of our inner wisdom and, in accord with this principle of the Mystic Law, to create happiness and peace for all humanity."

(To be continued)



DEBTS OF GRATITUDE

We Owe It to Ourselves

SIGN POSTS APPLYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS TO DAILY LIFE

Examining My Gongyo

By MALINA MOORE
SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

Among the entire twenty-eight chapters, the *Hoben* chapter and the *Juryo* chapter are particularly outstanding. The remaining chapters are all in a sense the branches and leaves of these two chapters. Therefore, for your regular recitation, I recommend that you practice reading the prose sections of the *Hoben* and *Juryo* chapters. ("Recitation of the *Hoben* and *Juryo* Chapters," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 10)

In this passage, Nichiren Daishonin clarifies a basic of our Buddhist practice — doing gongyo. As many people do, this New Year's Day I made the determination that I would chant more daimoku this year and put all my effort into doing a powerful morning gongyo.

Last year, I was asked to lecture on gongyo — what it is, why we do it and what it means in our practice. I was referred to this letter, which was written as a reply to the wife of Hiki Daigaku Saburo Yoshitomo. In a letter to the Daishonin, the wife had asked which chapters of the Lotus Sutra should be recited daily (great seeking spirit, huh?), and this was the Daishonin's answer.

In my preparations, I reflected on my practice and examined what doing gongyo means in my life. I thought about the way I feel when doing gongyo, my attitude and the benefits of doing it. And I realized that when I do gongyo, I feel totally free. I often think of this feeling when I hear the term *absolute freedom*. It's the freedom to dream when dreams are too often trampled under the heavy feet of reality. It's the freedom to have hope when cynicism is all the rage. It's the freedom to be our true selves, with all our quirks and imperfections. It's the freedom to be happy when misery can be such an effective restraint. I think that SGI President Ikeda put it best in 1990 when he said that "Buddhism aims to make people free in the most profound sense; its purpose is not to restrict or constrain. Doing gongyo is a right, not an obligation.... If you want to develop a profound state of life, you should exert yourself accordingly." ❧

WHAT A CONCEPT

ON THE BASIC IDEAS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM

By LISA JONES
STAFF WRITER

Suppose you're buried under a mountain of debt, as many Americans are today. Mortgages. Medical bills. Student loans. In terms of emotional stress and revolving credit, let's say you're maxed out.

So you turn to *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, volume 4, for sustenance. Your gaze falls on this passage: "What can we say, then, of persons who are devoting themselves to Buddhism? Surely they should not forget the debts of gratitude they owe to their parents, their teachers and their country" (MW-4, 171-72).

You may be inclined to think that your burden of debt just got heavier.

From the standpoint of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, though, financial debt and debts of gratitude are two completely different things. And since the word *debt* is most often associated with red ink these days, it may be a useful ex-

ercise to differentiate between money and Buddhism. In terms of money, if you spend more, you'll have less — and if you spend more than you have, you'll get into debt. In our traditional way of thinking, debts of gratitude are like financial debts — someone has done something good for us or given us something, and now we're obligated to repay this debt in kind.

But in Buddhism, recognizing debts of gratitude implies that we live with a deep awareness of our interconnection with others. The four debts of gratitude are: the debts one owes to one's parents; to all living beings; to one's sovereign (in modern terms, this could be interpreted as society and its functions to protect the people); and to the three treasures of the Buddha (Nichiren Daishonin), the Law (Nam-myoho-enge-kyo), and the priest (Nikko Shonin and, more broadly, other Buddhist believers).

We may feel a natural sense of gratitude toward these people and beings — gratitude toward our parents for giving us birth, gratitude toward the three treasures for making it possible for us to practice Buddhism, etc. — but what exactly do we owe them?

To quote the Daishonin: "If one intends to repay these great debts of gratitude, he can hope to do so only if he studies and masters the Buddhist teachings, becoming a person of wisdom"

(MW-4, 172). It could be said, then, that we owe it to others — and to ourselves — to attain Buddhahood.

That is, we owe it to ourselves to appreciate and use the inherent value and potential we possess. And while we may have secular obligations, our most important obligation is to discover for ourselves the truth of Buddhism and to share it with others.

Nichiren Daishonin states: "If one hopes to study and master the Buddhist teachings, then he cannot do so without devoting time to the task. And if he wants to have time to spend on the undertaking, he cannot continue to wait on his parents, his teachers and his sovereign. Until he attains the road that leads to emancipation, he should not defer to the wishes and feelings of his parents and teachers, no matter how reasonable they may be" (MW-4, 172).

In this passage, the Daishonin teaches us that by practicing Buddhism correctly we can develop the wisdom to truly repay our debts of gratitude.

So, paradoxical as it may seem, debts of gratitude in Buddhism don't require one to give in to the wishes or judgments of others to whom one feels obligated. Rather, this very obligation necessitates that one find and follow one's own path, guided by Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. ❧

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON FAITH

Because Beliefs Have Consequences

By TED MORINO
SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT CHIEF

Q Why is it important to distinguish correct teachings from incorrect teachings in Buddhism?

A One of Nichiren Daishonin's greatest endeavors was to clearly distinguish between correct and incorrect teachings. Before the Daishonin took on this revolutionary task, Buddhist sects in Japan colluded with one another with the attitude "We are all Buddhists regardless of the differences in what we teach." They were satisfied with this pseudo-unity and hid their doctrinal shortcomings.

Sadly, this non-discerning attitude reflected the priests' indifference toward the happiness of the people. Strictly speaking, the priests of these sects had no genuine sense of responsibility to enable people to establish true happiness. Rather, they were more interested in preaching to and receiving material offerings from lay believers, and in their own secular prosperity.

These priests didn't want people to develop self-reliant faith because it would threaten their raison d'être. And they didn't care whether people would apply Buddhist teachings to daily life. So many Buddhist priests said what sounded sweet to the ears of their followers instead of elucidating the essence of Buddhism.

Buddhist sects that do not directly enable people to attain Buddhahood are incorrect, Nichiren Daishonin asserted. He demonstrated that people attain Buddhahood by basing their lives upon the True Law, or Nam-myoho-enge-kyo — not through the "special powers" or intercession of priests. In "On the Chanting of the Daimoku of the Lotus Sutra," he states, "You should discern what is right or wrong through the doctrines expounded, not through the teacher's special talents or occult powers" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 16). Priests felt so threatened by the Daishonin's clear-cut teachings that they enlisted the Japanese government authorities in a concerted effort to quiet and even persecute the Daishonin

to death and to harass his followers.

In the Daishonin's day, the True Law was buried under piles of distorted doctrine and superstition, which the priests used to attract followers and enjoy their subservience. To combat the entrenched hypocrisy of these religious authorities, the Daishonin was unyielding in his criticism, tirelessly pointing out the negative influences that unenlightened priests exerted in people's lives. In this same spirit, the SGI has taken a stand against the Nikken sect's distortions of the Daishonin's teachings. Because of selfish motives, Nikken has lapsed into doctrinal corruption, favoring form over substance, obedience over self-reliance, shallowness over depth, falsehood over truth.

Beliefs have consequences, and, ultimately, we each choose what we believe. By honing our ability to distinguish correct teachings from incorrect — and by discussing the teachings with others — we connect ourselves with the heritage and humanity of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. ❧

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ELIZABETH: On Nov. 8, 1996, Jim and I celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary. We decided to continue to celebrate until Jan. 7, 1998, the 25th anniversary of our practicing Buddhism together. We'd like to share what happened during this time.

JIM: First, I'd like to talk about our marriage. We met in Boulder, Colo. I was a hippie with a beard and love beads, and I was working in a broom factory. About two years earlier, I had gone through a very painful divorce and had left Chicago. When Elizabeth and I first met, we had almost nothing in common. Looking back, it seems strange that we married. We came to Los Angeles in December 1972, and within a few weeks we were both practicing this Buddhism.

About four years later, we separated and lived apart for exactly one year, then got back together again. At that time, I remember feeling strongly that something still had not really changed in our relationship.

The years passed. We lived together, had good times and bad, and practiced Buddhism hard. I think at that time we would both have said we had a happy marriage, but there was always something else — my karma — came to a head about eight or nine years ago. I went absolutely crazy and wanted a divorce.

We went for guidance several times, and I literally screamed and yelled, demanding a divorce. The leader was very strict with me and yet warmly took time from his busy schedule to stay close to me for about six months, during which time he kept encouraging me to chant through the situation, and that it would change — although I was telling him it would not.

Elizabeth was a bulwark of strength and faith, chanting tons of daimoku and utterly determined to win. Without her, I would not be here to tell you that gradually the karma did melt down and change. From that turning point, our real marriage has continued to this day to blossom and unfold into something extraordinary. We're still very different people, but we have something between us that is as strong and brilliant as a polished diamond.

This year, we celebrated our marriage with a trip to England and Scotland, ending up with a week in Paris. Also this fall, we realized another dream when we spent a week together at the height of the fall foliage in New England.

ELIZABETH AND JIM HILGENDORF, LOS ANGELES

After 25 Years — A Fresh Start



Jim and Elizabeth Hilgendorf celebrate their 25th anniversary with a sense of winning in their lives and their marriage.

The secret to achieving dreams and building a happy marriage? For Jim and Elizabeth Hilgendorf, it's never giving up.

ELIZABETH: I graduated from high school in 1963. It seems as if I needed to spend the next 34 years working out the problems that kept me from getting a college degree.

After high school, I entered a four-year women's college in Missouri, where I studied for two-and-a-half years until my sister died of cancer. Exhausted and emotionally spent from this family tragedy and my own lack of direction, I dropped out of school.

From 1966 to 1971, I attended one year at the University of Colorado as an English major and got all D's and F's, did a few drugs, got on the dean's academic suspension list — and met Jim.

When I first saw Jim, I immediately felt a very strong connection to him. We later discovered that we lived in the same boarding house, his room adjacent to mine.

After coming to California, I attended Santa Monica College, off and on, for several years. In

the spring of 1979, I made a determination to go back to school full time to major in pre-physical therapy at California State University Northridge, but I couldn't handle the physics. And I found out that I didn't really like physical therapy. By this time, I had accumulated 114 units of college credits.

From 1980 to 1995, I worked at various sales jobs, one of them with a Fortune 200 company as an account executive, a job I had campaigned hard in terms of my Buddhist practice to get. To my dismay, I got what I chanted for, then found that it wasn't what I wanted.

What I really wanted was to fill the hole in myself of not having completed my degree.

On May 29, 1997, I graduated from Cal State Northridge with a bachelor's degree in family consumer sciences and a minor in journalism. I was on the dean's honor list for the last three semesters and enjoyed the learning process and the school environment for the first time.

JIM: When I began practicing Buddhism, I made a list of all the jobs I'd had — about 75 jobs.

I secretly dreamed of making films. It seemed so ridiculous that I didn't even talk to anyone about it. I never had any training or experience in filmmaking. It wasn't until about six years ago that I decided to go for it.

My brother and I grew up in Indiana, and one day I said to him, "Let's make a beautiful film on Indiana."

I bought a video camera and began shooting and learning. During 1991, I traveled 10,000 miles around my home state, often living out of a car. I learned filming, editing and scripting. I composed the music. My brother and I ended the year with a one-hour film called *Indiana: A Tribute*, which included history, music and interviews with people, all in a very positive light. The film was reviewed in 26 newspapers throughout the state, and is now shown in almost all the schools in Indiana. We also sold a lot of

tapes through the mail.

With the profits, we went to St. Petersburg, Russia, and made a 50-minute film on that city, *St. Petersburg: A Tribute*, which the president of the Los Angeles-St. Petersburg sister-city association called the most beautiful film on the city he had ever seen. We also made a film on Los Angeles. In October 1993, Elizabeth and I went to St. Petersburg and, through a remarkable series of events, these two films were shown back-to-back all over Russia to about 80 million TV viewers as part of a friendship exchange between the two cities.

In 1997, my brother and I completed the taping of three more films — one on Mexico, one on New England and one on California. My goal is to use these films in schools and on television to build bridges of understanding and friendship among different peoples and countries.

ELIZABETH: I remember dreaming of a husband and a home — a home of our own — from the time I was a very young girl.

Jim and I have rented apartments galore over the last 24 years. We even lived in a 1969 Chevy pickup truck for a month because we had no money. Jim and I never quite felt we had a home or a place in a community other than the SGI.

This summer, I told Jim I finally felt that Los Angeles was our home, and I started looking for a house to buy. In October I saw a house that met all the criteria I had been chanting for: a fireplace, lots of good lighting, a flower and vegetable garden, hardwood floors, a nice kitchen and a large Gohonzon room. Jim and I moved into our dream house on Nov. 21.

There is a community feeling in the neighborhood of Westdale where our house is. I feel the SGI-USA's neighborhood reorganization parallels the reorganization going on in my personal life. There is a good feeling of being part of a community of friends in the SGI-USA as well as in the community where we now live.

Looking back at the ups and downs of our life together, I can see how all our Buddhist activities plus guidance and encouragement from fellow Buddhists allowed us to make the causes to change ourselves and keep on track to win in our lives and in our marriage.

Both Jim and I have big dreams for the future, and this is only the beginning. ☸

My Recollections



Zhao Puchu, President of the Chinese Buddhist Association

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



'Talking with him is like finding a kindred spirit,' says SGI President Ikeda of Zhao Puchu (left).

By SGI President Ikeda

Darkness and light — they alternated in my mind's eye as Zhao Puchu, president of the Chinese Buddhist Association, recalled the struggles of his youth.

"It was during the war," he began. "I was in Shanghai, trying to help the refugees and orphaned children. Hunger, cold and disease exacted a cruel toll. People were dying by the roadside. The great majority were infants and poor peasants. But there was nothing we could do for them."

Mr. Zhao shared his story with me as we floated in a boat on Lake Kunming, some miles northwest of Beijing — this was during my first trip to China in 1974. The grounds of the beautiful Summer Palace encircle the lake, with Longevity Hill and its tiered temples rising high in the background.

The Summer Palace is a vast park encompassing about 720 acres, three-quarters of which are Lake Kunming. The bright blue sky of early summer was reflected in the quiet surface, which seemed to stretch on forever. From where we sat, we could

hear happy voices of families enjoying a day's outing in the green grounds. Peace pervaded.

It was to make certain that peace and serenity endured that I visited China. My sole purpose was to build a bridge of friendship between Japan and China, for it was the Japanese military that created the darkness, the living hell, that Mr. Zhao described.

I told Mr. Zhao of the Soka Gakkai's firm, continuous opposition to militarism, which had started even before World War II. "Our first and second presidents," I explained, "were both persecuted by the Japanese military authorities and imprisoned. Our first president died in jail. The Soka Gakkai will forever champion the cause of peace. We will be the eternal allies of the people of Japan and the people of China. That, I believe, is the true spirit of Buddhism."

"Precisely," responded Mr. Zhao. "The fundamental spirit of Buddhism is to serve the people."

Mr. Zhao is the leading theoretician of Chinese Buddhism today. He is some 20 years my senior, with graying hair, a noble face and an ever-ready smile. He said: "Each day I still recite one volume of the Lotus Sutra." Mr.

Zhao's mentor, it turns out, was an ordained T'ien-t'ai priest, and Mr. Zhao devoted his life as a layperson to the revival of Chinese Buddhism.

He was born in 1907 at the end of the Qing dynasty, in Anhui Province near Shanghai. He was educated in literature, history and philosophy from a young age, first coming into contact with and beginning to study Buddhism while a student at Dongwu University (present-day Suzhou University, Jiangsu Province).

At that time, his homeland was being shaken by a violent tempest. The country was divided, in chaos. On the one hand, it fought to throw off the oppressive yoke of the European powers that had carved it into realms of influence. And on the other, it struggled to resist the invasion of the Japanese. Terrorism was widespread.

"Where are we to find light?" wondered Mr. Zhao. He sought an answer in the Buddhist scriptures while plunging into liberation activities for his country. Given the crisis China faced, he was driven by a desperate inner compulsion to study, to take action.

In 1937, Japanese forces invaded Shanghai. Low-flying aircraft, droning ominously as they approached, dropped bombs on the roofs of civilian residences, setting them on fire. Battleships shelled the city from the Huangpu River. Giant flames leapt wildly into the air left and right. People fled, panic-stricken. The sound of machine-gun fire rang out from street corners. Factories were destroyed. Houses burned to the ground.

Looting went on day and night, extending even to the refugee camps, which became the scenes of violence, murder, theft and the abduction of women. The destruction reached the outlying villages, where corpses floated in the fish ponds and paddies. The stench of death filled the air.

A dead body lying in the fields was so commonplace, it no longer even drew comment. Robbed of shelter due to the bombings, people slept on the streets, some freezing to death during the bitter winter nights.

"I worked desperately to save the refugees and orphans," Mr. Zhao continued. "I must have rescued several hundred lost, forlorn children and seen to it that they were cared for. But I was in

complete despair. The old regime produced infinite numbers of unfortunate people, and no matter how intense our efforts, there was no way we could stem the tide of suffering and misery."

He went on to speak of Chinese Buddhism at that time. "There is a tradition in Buddhism of labor and self-sufficiency, but in the long feudal period of Chinese history, it had become obscured," he said. "In the past, Buddhism had become allied with the ruling class and, from the Song dynasty [960–1279] in particular, it had entered a long period of decline. The priests became great landowners. But Buddhism was originally for the people. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, it has returned to its fundamental spirit."

In his book *Bukkyo Nyumon* (Introduction to Buddhism), Mr. Zhao wrote: "Historically speaking, the periods in which Buddhism flourished were not the periods in which there were the greatest number of priests. In fact, when there was an overabundance of priests, Buddhism was in decline." This was because many priests entered Buddhist orders for personal gain, rather than out of a sincere interest in religion.

"Genuine Buddhism is nothing so selfish; it exists to stop people's suffering," Mr. Zhao believed. His wish, first and foremost, has always been for peace — that the people have food, a place to sleep, clothing and peace of mind. And he noted calmly that the new Chinese republic provided the people with these basic necessities.

Nichiren Daishonin wrote that a person of wisdom practices Buddhism nowhere but in the reality of society (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 142). As examples, he cited T'ai-kung Wang [teacher and advisor to King Wen of the Chou dynasty], who appeared in the Yin dynasty's final years, deposed the Yin tyrant and put an end to the people's suffering; and Chang Liang [statesman and strategist who assisted Liu Pang], who helped overthrow a tyrant in the late Ch'in dynasty and assisted in the establishment

PLEASE SEE PUCHU, NEXT PAGE

PUCHU, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

of the Han dynasty, enabling the people to prosper. These men, said the Daishonin, lived before the introduction of Buddhism yet helped the people as emissaries of Shakyamuni. Though they may not have been aware of it, their wisdom in its essence incorporated the wisdom of Buddhism (MW-6, 143).

People may call themselves Buddhists, but if they bring suffering to others they are the worst heretics, declared the Daishonin. But anyone who works to improve the lot of the people, for their happiness, is in a sense a Buddhist. This is the spirit of Mahayana Buddhism as taught by the Lotus Sutra — a text that expounds the principle of the true entity of all phenomena and reveals that everything in the universe is a manifestation of the Mystic Law. For Nichiren Daishonin, the people's happiness was the most important thing.

Mr. Zhao has a profound grasp and understanding of the Lotus Sutra. If I say "body and mind..." he will immediately reply, "are one." Talking with him is like finding a kindred spirit. We have talked about many of the main themes of the Lotus Sutra: the ten factors of life; the parable of the phantom city; the oneness of life and its environment; and the one great reason for which all Buddhas appear in the world. Whenever we meet, we are never at a loss for stimulating conversation.

Mr. Zhao has worked hard to promote a human Buddhism — human in that it is a practical Buddhism dealing with the problems of everyday life. It is Mr. Zhao's firmly held conviction

People may call themselves Buddhists, but if they bring suffering to others they are the worst heretics, declared the Daishonin. But anyone who works to improve the lot of the people, for their happiness, is in a sense a Buddhist. This is the spirit of Mahayana Buddhism as taught by the Lotus Sutra — a text that expounds the principle of the true entity of all phenomena and reveals that everything in the universe is a manifestation of the Mystic Law. For Nichiren Daishonin, the people's happiness was the most important thing.

that Buddhism must not shun or turn its back on reality. Buddhism, he stresses, must entail striving diligently at the bodhisattva practice within society.

Buddhism, for him, must be a force that "creates a spiritual culture wherein people rejoice in willingly helping others and which benefits society and the nation" (*Bukkyo Nyumon*). It must never estrange itself from human problems. This is the sentiment of, the conclusion of, contemporary Chinese Buddhism, forged in the crucible of indescribable pain and suffering.

One day on my fourth trip to

China, in September 1978, Mr. Zhao accompanied me on a visit to the Ming Tombs (at Dingling, 30 miles northwest of Beijing). The stone-paved courtyard and pathways around the Ming emperors' spacious mausoleum were wet with rain.

As we strolled the grounds, Mr. Zhao and I again spoke of Buddhism. We had also met in Tokyo earlier that year. "On my recent visit to Japan," he said, "I saw a film of a Soka Gakkai culture festival. It overflowed with the enthusiasm and energy of the people. The fundamental teaching of

Buddhism is to go out among the people. I saw that spirit in the festival participants."

Our visit to the Ming Tombs coincided with the day of the harvest moon. I had hoped to view the moon over China, but unfortunately it was raining and the sky overcast.

That night, after I returned to my lodgings from a welcome banquet at the Great Hall of the People, my interpreter handed me a work of calligraphy from Mr. Zhao. Written in bold brush strokes was a series of three short poems reciprocating the short poem "The Moon's Wish,"

which I had presented to the Chinese scholar the day before. Mr. Zhao had composed the three after our visit to the Ming Tombs and before going to the banquet. One read:

*Now I reply to your poem
Let us talk freely of life's
mysteries
Though the mid-autumn
rain persists
The moon in our hearts
continues to shine.*

To shine though the rain persists — how that seemed to sum up the spirit of Mr. Zhao. During the Cultural Revolution, all religions were attacked, and Mr. Zhao was accused of being a counterrevolutionary. Several members of the Chinese Buddhist Association of which he was president were hounded to their deaths. But through everything, the moon of Mr. Zhao's heart shone brilliantly. After the Gang of Four was finally ousted, Mr. Zhao could declare that indeed "the future of Buddhism in China is bright as can be."

There was a short additional poem, a fourth, at the end of the calligraphy. After Mr. Zhao wrote the first three poems, the rain stopped and the moon appeared in the sky. This prompted him to pick up his brush once more. The words he wrote still glow warmly in my heart, like China's bright future:

*When I finished my poems,
the rain suddenly
stopped
I went outside to wait for
the moon to appear
Rejoicing with you
In the light it would shed on
the world.* ☐

From SGI President Ikeda:

* There is no real joy or excitement in a life without concrete goals or direction. In the realm of faith, too, we grow when we have clear goals — whether it be for propagation or study.... I want you to advance not as if carrying a heavy burden but joyfully and confidently as you earnestly apply yourself to the challenges ahead. To do so, wisdom and conviction are important. (Feb. 21, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 12)

* Anyone who has ever made a resolution discovers that the strength of his or her determination fades with time. The moment you feel that is when you should make a fresh determination. Say to yourself: "OK! I will start again from now!" If you fall down seven times, get up eight. Don't give up when you feel discouraged — just pick

**WORDS
TO THE WISE**

ON GOALS

"If you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present." (The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 172)

yourself up and renew your determination each time. The important thing is not that your resolve never waver, but that you don't get down on yourself when it does and throw in the towel. (Aug. 8, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 11)

* The greater the struggle, the more enriching the experience is for your life.

That said, if you immediately set out to climb a high peak without any preparation, the challenge could be beyond you. You may be forced to abandon your ascent, losing your way or suffering altitude sickness! It might be better to first attempt a goal suited to your level. (Nov. 14, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 13)

* President Toda declared: "It's perfectly all right for youth to cherish dreams that may seem almost too big. What we can achieve in a single lifetime is always but a fraction of what we would like to achieve. So if you start out with expectations that are too low, you'll end up not accomplishing anything at all." (Nov. 1, 1996, *World Tribune*, p. 10)

* [Nobel Prize-winning author Mikhail A. Sholokhov] said to the effect: "You can't accomplish anything worthwhile if you don't have a definite goal. We are all 'blacksmiths' who have to hammer and shape our own happiness. People of conviction, people who are spiritually strong, can exert a definite influence on the direction their lives take, even when fate takes an unexpected twist." In short, he believed that we each build our happiness. (Nov. 21, 1997, *World*

THE
Third Stage
OF
LIFE

Your Dedication Makes You Shine

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

IKEDA: Nine years ago, on my 60th birthday, Konosuke Matsushita (1894-1989), the brilliant entrepreneur and founder of Matsushita Electric, sent me a letter of congratulations. It read in part: "Please regard today as the start of a period of even greater and more fulfilling activity. I pray that you will enjoy lasting good health and strive with the spirit of creating a Soka Gakkai all over again as you continue to devote yourself to world peace and the happiness and prosperity of all humanity."

At the time he wrote that, Mr. Matsushita was 93. His frank good wishes struck a deep chord in me; I knew only too well the spirit in which they were written.

MATSUOKA: They are the words of a great pioneer. And they came true, didn't they? Through your tireless devotion to the development of the SGI, Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism has now spread to some 128 countries and territories, with members around the globe working for the happiness and prosperity of their local communities. Just as Mr. Matsushita said, you have created not only another but an even larger organization dedicated to peace, culture and education.

SASAKI: When Austregésilo de Athayde (1898-1993), former

president of the Brazilian Academy of Letters and one of the drafters of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, met you for the first time, he was 94 years old.

IKEDA: I was deeply humbled when I learned that this venerable champion of human rights had arrived

at Rio de Janeiro's Galeão International Airport to wait for my arrival two hours before my flight was due. One of our SGI representatives had urged him to rest in a special waiting room, but, implying he wasn't tired, he said with a smile: "I have been waiting for President Ikeda for 94 years. Another two hours is of no importance."

MATSUOKA: A *Seikyo Shimbun* photographer later described for me your first meeting with President Athayde. It was his first time covering one of your visits overseas. There were no senior photographers with him at the airport, so he was very nervous in the presence of President Athayde. The frail Brazilian activist had been standing with the support of two assistants on either side of him, but the moment you ar-

rived, President Athayde stood erect and walked unaided to greet you. It was a very moving encounter. Fortunately, the photographer captured that wonderful moment in a picture that later appeared in the *Seikyo Shimbun*.

IKEDA: President Athayde had the demeanor of a magnificent old lion who had won many battles. In the course of his life, he wrote more than 50,000 newspaper columns. He appeared on the radio weekly for 30 years and on television for 20. And he also gave lectures almost weekly for some 40 years.

While declaring "I have lived long enough, and so I have no fear of death," he promised not to die before our dialogue was completed. He kept working on it until just a week before he was hospitalized for the last time. A little more than six months after our first meeting, I received the news that this great luminary in the struggle for human rights had died [Sept. 13, 1993]. Yet his fiery declarations of truth and justice still echo in my mind.

SASAKI: Many have read your dialogue, which was published in Japanese as *Nijuisseiki no Jinken o Kataru* (Dialogue on Human Rights in the 21st Century.)

MATSUOKA: Last month, the Brazilian Academy of Letters, of which you, President Ikeda, are a nonresident member, celebrated its centennial with much pomp and splendor at its former headquarters in Rio de Janeiro. Soka Gakkai Vice President Hiromasa Ikeda attended the festivities on your behalf, and he had the opportunity to

speak with Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso and many other distinguished guests on that occasion.

Warriors for Human Rights

IKEDA: Next year [1998] I will be 70. Compared to President Athayde's age when we met, I am still a youngster! I plan to keep exerting myself with boundless courage and vigor.

Nelson Mandela spent more than 10,000 days behind bars. When finally released from prison, he was over 70, yet he continued his struggle to transform his country and took on the onerous responsibility of president of a new South Africa. I have met President Mandela. He is a man of great dignity, radiating the energy of one who has dedicated his life to the causes of freedom and equality.

MATSUOKA: When President Mandela came to Japan, he took time out of his busy schedule to meet with you at the *Seikyo Shimbun* head office in Tokyo.

IKEDA: My impression of him was of a towering and invincible warrior for human rights. A life dedicated to such noble ideals as his shines. When I think of the noble lives of our first two presidents, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, I cannot permit myself to stand still for even the briefest moment.

Mr. Makiguchi was 57 when he encountered and embraced faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism. He later wrote of his tremendous emotion when he took that first great step: "With indescribable joy, I transformed the way I had lived my life for almost 60 years. The anxiety of searching in the dark for life's answers completely evaporated, and my inborn reserve and diffidence disappeared. My goals in life became increasingly grander and loftier, and my fears dwindled."

Mr. Makiguchi was 59 when he founded the Soka Kyoiku



First and second Soka Gakkai presidents
Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (right) and Josei Toda.

SHINE, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Gakkai [Society for Value-Creating Education], the forerunner of the present Soka Gakkai, in November 1930. Today, someone that age would be on the verge of retirement. But what makes Mr. Makiguchi great is that at 59, he was just beginning!

From that time on, he held high the banner of value-creation and fought for the happiness of the people and for a peaceful society. He remained committed to his lofty ideals until his death at age 73 in prison, where Japanese militarists had confined him.

The indestructible starting point of the Soka Gakkai was built by Mr. Makiguchi's unceasing struggle in his final years. He carried out this great labor, his true goal and purpose in life, during the period we now call the third stage of life.

SASAKI: We all know how, in his last letter from prison, Mr. Makiguchi wrote, "I am avidly reading the work of Kant." To the last day of his life, he had a youthful spirit, dedicated to continual growth.

Accomplishing Something Every Day

IKEDA: Mr. Toda once said that, before going to prison, the elderly Mr. Makiguchi was astonishingly active. He commented with real feeling that if a three-month interval went by between the time you'd last seen Mr. Makiguchi, you'd find that he hadn't been standing still but had advanced three months. Mr. Makiguchi's life was based on the spirit of true cause, of advancing from this moment on. He fought unceasingly without ever retreating a single step. Nor did this spirit change in the slightest under the harsh conditions of prison life.

MATSUOKA: Mr. Toda died at 58, partly because his health was weakened by his nearly two years in prison.

IKEDA: To us today, 58 seems like a short lifetime. But brief as it may have been, in that time President Toda secured the foundation for the entire future course of kosen-rufu. His life was one struggle after another, up to the very last. And just before his death, he held a dress rehearsal for us youth [March 16, 1958], so that we would have a taste of what it will be like when kosen-rufu is achieved. He then entrusted the

completion of his mission to the youth division. He gave his life to kosen-rufu, up to the moment of his death. He was truly majestic in his commitment.

To achieve our supreme goal in the end, as the culmination and completion of our life's work — this is the aim to which we should aspire in the third stage of our lives.

SASAKI: Your life has also been a constant struggle to advance and then advance further still.

IKEDA: Since becoming Mr. Toda's disciple 50 years ago, I have never rested from my labors for even a single day. Objectively speaking, in that half-century, I could easily have collapsed at any time. I was fortunate to encounter Buddhism when I was 19, and then after Mr. Toda's death I devoted all my energies to carrying out the mission he bequeathed to me. My constitution was weak, and I had been told by my doctor that I would probably not live beyond 30. That I have remained active over all these years is a result of the tremendous beneficial power of my faith and practice of Buddhism.

And it was precisely because I didn't think I had long to live that I tried to accomplish everything I had to each



SGI President Ikeda recalls when he met Austregésilo de Athayde (left) for the first time, 'President Athayde had the demeanor of a magnificent old lion who had won many battles.'

day, never putting anything off. Life's uncertainty motivated me in my pursuit of the goal of kosen-rufu.

Back in the fall of 1985, I went into the hospital for 10 days for a heart checkup. But even then, I continued to direct activities for kosen-rufu from my hospital bed. I deeply felt at that time that my hospitalization was a manifestation of the

great compassion of the Daishonin, the original Buddha. I was convinced that it happened in order to show me that the time had come to rise up once again and begin the true culmination of my life's work. I was determined to work 10 times, no, 100 times harder than I had before.

It was the time to say what had to be said. It was the time to leave behind guidance on all subjects for later generations. And it was the time to thoroughly communicate to the world the truth about the Soka Gakkai and its wonderful significance and spirit. My feelings have not changed in the least to this very day.

MATSUOKA: We all see how selflessly you work day after day and the incredible struggle you are waging, and of course we worry for your health. I remember when you visited a forest in France's Loire region, and you took a deep breath of the air and said quietly to yourself: "What wonderful air! I know if I could stay here for just a little while, it would do wonders for my health. But I just can't...."

IKEDA: I'm afraid I just don't have the time for quiet recuperation. Anyway, my daily struggles for kosen-rufu have strengthened me physically, allowing me to enjoy good health. I am older than Mr. Toda was when he died. I passed the landmark age of 60, and the third stage of my life is just beginning. I am prepared to keep on going, with the spirit

that this is the most important period of my life.

As the lives of Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda so eloquently illustrate, what matters is that we continue to develop an ever more expansive state of life and greater human brilliance with each passing year. That is the model for the third stage of life that they have left for us to follow.

SASAKI: Yes. Life is a continuing series of changes and more changes. If confronted with some momentous problem or crisis, we should look at it as an opportunity for a new start and continue to move forward. The important thing is to devote ourselves fully to the present and the future and to live victorious lives filled with the joy of mission and a sense of accomplishment.

MATSUOKA: In the course of our lives, we will encounter many trials, challenges and crossroads. Our response and decisions at such times reveal our true mettle.

Each Time We Face a Trial

IKEDA: If we triumph at a crucial moment, then in accord with the Buddhist principle of consistency from beginning to end, we will enter a sure path of victory in life. In fact, doing so determines whether we enter the path of good fortune and benefit throughout eternity. It all depends on our resolve and determination to emerge victorious. Nichiren Daishonin writes, "The character *myo* [of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo] means to open" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 3, p. 13). Each time we face a trial in our lives, we must strive to further open and develop our state of life. By repeating that process through the years, we can experience an absolute and indestructible happiness.

The purpose of our lives, to the very last moment, is to achieve something of value. There is no life more noble than that of individuals dedicated to something they believe in and fighting for it wholeheartedly, who give their lives selflessly to their beliefs.

When you reach old age, you know in your heart if you are satisfied with your life. No one else can know this or decide it for you. The great challenge we face in our rapidly aging society is whether we can say honestly at the end our days on this earth that our lives were well spent. 卍

If confronted with some momentous problem or crisis, we should look at it as an opportunity for a new start and continue to move forward. The important thing is to devote ourselves fully to the present and the future and to live victorious lives filled with the joy of mission and a sense of accomplishment.

Disertación del Presidente Ikeda de la serie, Aprendamos del Goshō. La eterna enseñanza de Nichiren Daishonin.

Una victoria espiritual en medio de una terrible tormenta

Un cielo impecable, libre de toda nube; un firmamento de un azul interminable... Estas eran las imágenes que empleaba mi maestro, Josei Toda, para describir el estado de vida del Daishonin durante su exilio en la isla de Sado:

Si [nosotros hubiéramos estado en Sado] nuestra vida habría penado en los abismos del infierno. Pero, como se trataba del Daishonin, que era un hombre totalmente invencible y libre del mínimo temor, cada vez que examinamos su vida la vemos [inmensa y serena] como el océano o como la cúpula del firmamento.

En "La apertura de los ojos,"¹ Nichiren Daishonin dice: "Yo, Nichiren, soy el hombre más rico de todo el Japón actual. He dedicado mi vida al Sutra del Loto, y mi nombre será parte de la historia a lo largo de los tiempos venideros." (MW-2, pág. 151, 2da ed.)

En la época del Daishonin, los inviernos que azotaban la región de Sado eran mucho más crudos que los de nuestros días. Vivía en Tsukahara, en las ruinas de un santuario llamado san-maido. Socialmente era un exiliado; su vida se hallaba sujeta a peligros constantes. En tales condiciones y con el rugido de un león, el Daishonin expresó esta declaración con un auténtico soberano del espíritu.

Había llegado a Tsukahara el primero de noviembre de 1271. De inmediato, y con una energía inusitada, comenzó a redactar largos manuscritos; cuando pienso en ello, surge en mi mente la imagen de una catarata incontenible. En el segundo mes del año siguiente, envió a Shijo Kingo, por intermedio de un mensajero, un goshō destinado a todos sus creyentes. Se trataba de "La apertura de los ojos."

La convicción del Daishonin en la justicia de sus actos se mantuvo ardiente y viva, como una llama inextinguible, aun bajo las nevadas insidiosas de la isla. Por el contrario, lo que siguió brillando con fulgor cada vez más inmenso fue su deseo poderoso de guiar a todos los hombres a la felicidad.

En este escrito, quiso transmi-

MATERIAL DE ESTUDIO

(ENERO - FEBRERO)

Goshō: 'La Apertura de los Ojos'

tir a sus seguidores su estado de vida inmensurable. Quiso mostrarles que uno puede manifestar un estado de vida realmente inmenso cuando libra una gran contienda a muerte o a vida. Y se propuso dejar constancia de esta verdad en bien de todos los tiempos.

No se conserva el manuscrito original de "La Apertura de los Ojos," pero sabemos que tenía sesenta y seis páginas: sesenta y cinco correspondían al texto, y la restante era una página de cubierta donde se leía "Apertura de los Ojos."

El título se refiere a abrir los ojos, es decir, la mente, del pueblo del Japón. En vista de lo que enseñan los sutras, es evidente que el Daishonin fue un hombre con un sentido absoluto de la justicia. En este escrito, declara que es el devoto del Sutra del Loto y, por lo tanto, el Buda del Último Día de la Ley.

Espero que, al estudiar la parte final de este goshō, podamos aprender cuán imponente era el estado de vida del Daishonin

Pregunta: ¿Qué mérito hay en condenar, como hace usted, los males de quienes siguen las escuelas Nembutsu y Zen, si con ello se provoca su enemistad?

Respuesta: El Sutra del Nirvana afirma: "Si un buen monje ve a alguien destruir la enseñanza y actúa con indulgencia, sin refutar sus actos, sin expulsarlo ni poner en evidencia su grave falta, debe comprenderse que ese sacerdote es, en su fuero interno, un enemigo del budismo. Pero si lo amonesta, lo echa o expone su error, estará actuando como un verdadero discípulo [del Buda] y como un auténtico seguidor que escucha la voz."

Chang-an comenta este párrafo del siguiente modo: "Quien destruye las enseñanzas del Buda o provoca confusión en torno a ellas es interiormente un enemigo del budismo. Si uno se considera amigo de alguien pero no posee la misericordia necesaria para corregirlo, en verdad es su enemigo. Pero quien reprende y corrige al que actúa contra la Ley es un seguidor que escucha la voz y defiende las enseñanzas del Buda; es un auténtico discípulo. Quien libra

del mal al que comete una falta está actuando como un padre o una madre. Los que refutan los actos contra la Ley son discípulos del Buda. Pero quienes no amonestan a los que cometen graves faltas son, interiormente, enemigos del budismo."² (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2, pág. 186)

Si una persona comete una falta, refutarla es una cosa. Pero otra cosa muy distinta es que se ataque y se calumnie a la persona que lleva a cabo actos de bien, como tan a menudo nos toca presenciar. Es algo totalmente irracional, pero así se conduce la sociedad de hoy.

El gran escritor León Tolstoy dijo: "No se puede vivir sin enemigos. [...] y lo cierto es que, cuanto más dignamente uno vive, más enemigos brotan a su alrededor."³

Nunca hubo nadie en la historia que abogara por la justicia como lo hizo Nichiren Daishonin. Nunca nadie luchó con tal bravura por la felicidad de toda la humanidad. Como resultado, no hizo más que enfrentar persecuciones sin fin. Y además, se vio exiliado a Sado. Lo cual en su época equivalía a una sentencia de muerte.

Los seguidores del Daishonin también fueron blanco de la represión. Algunos fueron encarcelados. A otros, les confiscaron feudos y bienes. Y otros también sufrieron el exilio. Entre el grupo de creyentes que seguía al Daishonin fueron creciendo la incertidumbre y la confusión. Por miedo a ser perseguidos, muchos abandonaron la fe u optaron por hacer silencio total.

Incluso hubo discípulos que, con cara de dominar la materia, criticaban a su maestro y aconsejaban a los demás: "Si usted se muestra más flexible en su actitud de difundir las enseñanzas, no tendrá que sufrir persecuciones como las que padece nuestro venerado maestro."

En los "últimos fragmentos de 'La apertura de los ojos,'" Nichiren Daishonin se refiere a estas dudas y plantea una interesante pregunta: ¿De qué sirve refutar las enseñanzas erróneas al propagar la enseñanza, si con

ello uno provoca la enemistad de los demás? Cita un fragmento de los sutras y responde: El Sutra del Nirvana dice muy claramente que uno tiene que refutar a los que están destruyendo la Ley, que hay que expulsarlos y poner en evidencia sus errores, y que no se debe restar importancia a situaciones de esa naturaleza. ¿No dice acaso que a las personas se las debe refutar, expulsar o poner en evidencia cuando cometen un mal?

En esencia, tratar así a alguien que busca subvertir las enseñanzas es ejercer la misericordia necesaria para proteger al Budismo. Por lo tanto, aunque las personas que lleven a cabo esta práctica sufran persecuciones, sin falta tendrán abierto el acceso a La Budeidad. Y, dice el Daishonin, no puede haber mérito ni beneficio más grande que éste.

"Discípulos míos," exclama, "no tengan miedo." "Vivan con orgullo y dignidad, con el pecho erguido y la cabeza en alto, como leones soberanos." Su misericordia era tan inmensa, que quería transmitir a todos sus discípulos el deseo de que vivieran una existencia magnífica, que siguieran avanzando toda la vida por el camino de la fe que habían resuelto seguir.

El Budismo sólo existe en la acción. Mediante la acción concreta, comienza a resplandecer la Ley Mística inherente a nuestra vida. Las funciones protectoras del universo y todos los budas protegen a las personas de acción. Los que actúan solidamente en bien de la justicia conocen la verdadera felicidad.

Nichiren Daishonin fue más fuerte que cualquiera. ¿De dónde provenía su fortaleza? De su honesta preocupación y de su amor por el pueblo.

Pero, al parecer, la fortaleza del Daishonin suele ser objeto de malos entendidos. Frente a Hei no Saemon y a los sacerdotes corruptos, el Daishonin podía ser el oponente más terrible. Pero, sin embargo, enseñaba a sus seguidores que, al propagar las enseñanzas ante los demás, se comportaran en forma cortés, por ejemplo, aconsejaba a alguien que, al iniciar diálogo,

siempre hablara "suavemente pero con firmeza, en voz baja, con la mirada serena y con expresión compuesta." (MW-4, pág. 122.)

Nuevamente, en su histórico tratado "Risshō ankoku ron," redactado en forma de diálogo entre un viajero y su anfitrión, éste (que representa al Daishonin,) en ningún momento habla con expresiones airadas. Por el contrario, cuando el huésped se altera, su interlocutor lo contiene, sonrío animadamente y continúa el diálogo con tenacidad. El Daishonin decidió retratar al anfitrión de tal manera porque ésa era la forma en que él mismo solía dialogar.

Si examinamos el capítulo "Hoto" del Sutra del Loto, vemos que allí se reúnen Shakayamuni, Taho y los demás budas de las diez direcciones que son proyecciones del Buda Shakyamuni. ¿y por qué? Como dice el sutra, "Cada una [...] ha llegado a este lugar con el propósito de asegurarse de que la Ley perdure en los tiempos futuros." (*The Lotus Sutra*, cap. 11, pág. 177.) Shakyamuni, Taho y los demás budas quieren asegurar la propagación futura del Sutra del Loto, para que cada ser humano, cada hijo del Buda, pueda tener acceso a él en las épocas venideras. Esto nos enseña que su misericordia y su amor son mayores, incluso, que los de un padre o una madre al ver sufrir terriblemente a su único hijo. Sin embargo, Honen, indiferente al dolor de los hombres, cerró y trancó las puertas del Sutra del Loto en el Último Día de la Ley, para que nadie pudiese acceder a él. Induce a las personas a que descarten el Sutra del Loto, como alguien engañaría a un niño desvariado para que se deshiciera de un valioso tesoro. ¿qué forma tan desvergonzada de actuar!

Si alguien se propusiera matar a nuestros padres, ¿no trataríamos de ponerlos sobre aviso? Si un mal hijo embriagado por los efectos del alcohol amenazara dar la muerte a sus padres, ¿no intentaríamos detenerlo? Si un hombre perverso estuviera por prender fuego a templos y pagodas, ¿no queríamos impedirlo? Si nuestro único hijo estuviera gravemente enfermo, ¿no trataríamos de curarlo cauterizándolo con moxa [aunque ello le causara dolor]? Quien prefiere no actuar hace lo mismo que los que ven a los seguidores del Zen o del Nembutsu en el Japón y no intentan detenerlos. Como dice Chang-

POEMA DEL PRESIDENTE IKEDA

Crear una Red de Esperanza Hacia el Nuevo Siglo

El milenio nuevo se aproxima;
Se adivina en el fulgor de la mañana,
En el Sol resplandeciente
Que recorta el perfil de las montañas
Del siglo por venir.

Durante cincuenta años,
Recorrer el mundo fue mi único desvelo,
Atravesar de par en par el orbe
Para colmar los cielos con la lumbre de
la paz,
Para borrar con ella la penumbra del
dolor
Que ensombrecía la faz de la Tierra.

A ustedes, amigos míos del mundo,
Los que escalaron conmigo
Las cumbres del siglo XX,
Una vez más les digo,
Mientras nos disponemos a escalar
Las alturas y riscos del siglo que viene:

“Tiendan una miríada de redes de
esperanza,
redes que se extiendan alrededor de
ustedes.

Pero también es a mi mismo a quien
exhorto:

“Nuevamente y más que nunca,
tenderé innumerables redes de esperanza,
redes que se superpongan
hasta abrazar el mundo
y abrazarlos a ustedes.”

Puse proa a Occidente,

Y a Oriente me embarqué.
Durante medio siglo
Conocí las civilizaciones antiguas
Y salí al encuentro de las nuevas culturas.

No creo en el choque de las civilizaciones;
Por el contrario,
Lo que siempre hallé oculto en las
honduras,

Bajo la corteza de la diversidad
Fue una joya infaltable,
Capaz de cautivar a los pueblos
Con intensa fascinación.
Si salía a buscarla, si la iluminaba
Con la luz de igualdad,
Sabiduría del pensamiento budista,
Sabía que resplandecería
Con nuevo fulgor vital
Más allá del tiempo y de todas las distancias.

Con esa certeza, me dispuse a viajar.
Allende la cortina de hierro,
Más allá de la cortina de bambú,
Bajo el pétreo lecho de la ideología,
Lo que palpita es el alma autóctona de las
razas,

Que con su luz universal
Exalta la digna figura del hombre.

En Oriente y Occidente,
En la encrucijada donde se unen las
civilizaciones,
Sea cual fuere el país,
Sea cual fuere la raza,
La tierra que sostiene su cultura

Lleva, en las honduras,
Una joya reluciente;
El tesoro sin precio del espíritu,
Que es tan grande como el mundo y,
A veces, tan grande como el cosmos.

La ley Mística es una ley de
revitalización.
¿Por qué no tomar, entonces,
las múltiples joyas preciadas
de cada cultura
y unir las, una a una,
en círculos innumerables,
para que, al existir juntas,
unas a otras se enriquezcan
y beneficien al género humano?
Esta, diría yo, es la labor de mi vida.

Y cada red de valores que estoy
multiplicando
Se halla unida, en lazo directo y firme,
Con las infinitas redes
De confianza y de amistad
Que ustedes han tendido por el globo,
Tenaz impulso de la paz indestructible
Y causa de dicha para toda la humanidad.

Relacionar a los hombres entre sí,
Vincular pensamientos unos con otros
Y razas con razas,
Ir y venir por las corrientes de la cultura
Y tender puentes entre las
civilizaciones

Para unir el presente con el ayer:
Ésta es la empresa que nos une,

A ustedes y a mí.

Esta red de esperanza,
Inmensa y a la vez profunda,
Impregnada del noble humanismo
Que el budismo es emblema,
Anuncia el arribo de una centuria nueva,
Que convertirá la opresión en libertad;
El aislamiento, en integración,
Y la confrontación, en convivencia.

Alrededor del mundo seguiré viajando,
En busca de amigos,
En busca del ser humano,
Porque, para mí, practicar la fe
Significa crear el entendimiento mutuo
entre los hombres,
Salir a actuar por la amistad y confianza
Que cada persona me inspira,
Consciente de que esta red de esperanza
no existe
Sino en el diálogo abierto
Y de nobleza absoluta.

Emprendamos, entonces, con alegría,
Con esperanza incontenible,
El último desafío por las montañas de
este siglo,
Mientras recogemos la cosecha pródiga
de nuestro diálogo
Y estrechamos nuestros lazos con los ami-
gos del mundo.

1° de enero de 1998

GOSHO, DE PÁG. 12

an: “Si uno se considera amigo
de alguien pero no posee la mis-
ericordia necesaria para corre-
girlo, en verdad es su enemigo.”
(MW-2, págs. 186–87.)

Lo que más ansía el
Buda es salvar a
aquellos que más sufren

¿Con qué intención se re-
unieron en un mismo lugar
shakyamuni, Taho y las proyec-
ciones del Buda, los budas de
las diez direcciones, en el capí-
tulo “La aparición de la Torre
del Tesoro” (undécimo) del
Sutra del Loto? Su único deseo
era asegurar la propagación fu-
tura del Sutra del Loto, cercio-
rarse de que, en el futuro, el
Sutra del Loto estuviese al al-
cance de todos los seres
vivos, hijos del Buda.

El rey Ajatashtru había sido,
durante muchos años, enemigo
de Shakyamuni. Había tratado
de matarlo; fue, incluso, asesino
de su propio padre, quien era el
Rey [con tal de acceder al trono.]
Pero, a pesar de ostentar la
corona, interiormente poseía un
alma pobre y vacía. Y la infeli-
cidad de Ajatashtru despertaba

en Shakyamuni un profundo
dolor.

Un discípulo preguntó, en-
tonces, a Shakyamuni: “Si la
misericordia del Buda se dirige
a todos los seres por igual, ¿por
qué sólo te preocupas por
Ajatashtru?”

Shakyamuni respondió:
“Consideremos el caso de una
pareja que tiene siete hijos. Los
padres aman a todos por igual y
no hacen discriminaciones entre
ellos. Pero, si uno de los siete
cayera enfermo, ¿no se preocu-
parían más los padres por el hijo
convaleciente?”

“No abandonaré por ningún
motivo, no olvidaré jamás a la
persona que vive el peor sufrimien-
to. Por el contrario, trataré
de salvarla con todas mis
fuerzas.” Esta es la convicción
del Buda.

Nichiren Daishonin buscó
salvar a todo el pueblo del
Japón, aun a las personas que lo
habían perseguido y exiliado a
Sado.

El presidente Toda decía: “El
amor que sentía el Daishonin
por el pueblo era tan grande, que
no le importó afrontar de lleno
el embiste de los Tres Enemigos
Poderosos y no se inmutó ante
las tremendas persecuciones

que cayeron sobre él una y otra
vez.” El Daishonin, durante su
destierro en Sado, llegó a decir:
“Oro, ante que ninguna otra
cosa, para poder guiar hacía la
verdad al soberano y a todos
aquellos que me persiguieron.”⁴
¿Qué magnanimidad interior!

Desde el momento en que
declaró las bases de su enseñanzas,
el Daishonin no retrocedió un
solo paso en su grandiosa con-
tendencia altruista por el bien del
pueblo, a quien amaba como si
fuese su propia descendencia.
En “La apertura de los ojos,” el
Daishonin indica el derrotero de
sus pensamientos antes de fun-
dar su enseñanza, el 28 de abril
de 1253. Según afirma, tenía
plena conciencia de que, si no
hablaba [y si no proclamaba la
enseñanza budista correcta para
su época] sería un hombre “falto
de misericordia.” (MW-2, 95.)

Dar a conocer este Budismo
provocaría la aparición de
tremendos obstáculos. Si
cerraba la boca, podía tener una
vida segura y tranquila. Pero se-
mejante conducta sería una total
falta de misericordia.

Por muy altruista que alguien
pueda parecer, si no actúa es lo
mismo que si careciera de la
mínima benevolencia. En ver-

dad, quien no actúa no tiene mis-
ericordia alguna.

Lo contrario de la miseri-
cordia es la falsa amistad: es con-
fundir el significado de la palabra
“amigo.” Pero, lamentablemente,
esto ocurre muy a menudo en la
sociedad actual. El presidente
Toda proclamó: “La forma en que
hoy vive la gente evidencia una
total falta de solidaridad. [...] ¿No
diríamos que la falta de miseri-
cordia es la característica más
notoria de la época actual?”

Nuestra sociedad es muy
cruel, muy despiadada. En este
ambiente tan falto de empatía,
los miembros de la SGI están
trabajando para aliciar a las per-
sonas de su sufrimiento e in-
fundir auténtica dicha, para
proclamar la verdad desde lo
más hondo de su ser, inspirados
en un verdadero afecto por los
demás.

Con nuestra perseverancia en
el diálogo, con nuestras acciones
resultas, estamos transformando
esencialmente una sociedad que
carece de solidaridad y que pre-
gona un falso sentido de la amis-
tad. Estamos transformando el
destino de nuestra sociedad y su
tendencia a la discriminación y a
la falta de misericordia. Estamos
irradiando un sol primaveral en

un entorno congelado por el más
crudo invierno. Estamos deshe-
lando el corazón de los hombres
con una cálida corriente de
humanismo.

Tengo la convicción de que,
sin ninguna duda, el Daishonin
estará elogiando decididamente
a todos ustedes, por llevar a cabo
con pasión la práctica miseri-
cordsa de los bodhisattvas, como
“verdaderos discípulos” y
“seguidores que comparten mi
espíritu.”

1. “Kaimoku Sho” (*Gosho Zenshu*, págs. 186–237.) “The Opening of the Eyes” (MW-2, 59–188.) escrito en febrero de 1272, cuando el Daishonin tenía cincuenta y un años. Nota del editor: para no afectar la ilación del texto, en algunos casos la traducción puede diferir un poco de otras versiones que han sido publicadas anteriormente.
2. “Nehangyo Sho.”
3. Tolstoy, León: *Torusutoi nikkisho* (Diario de Tolstoy), trad. al japonés por Yoshitaro Yosemura, Iwanami shoten, Tokio, 1935, pág. 112. Traducción indirecta.
4. *Los principales escritos de Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pág. 117. Nota del editor: Este libro es la traducción del Gosho, volumen no. 1 de “Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin.” Por la SGI de la Argentina. Diciembre 1994.

SGI-USA 今年活動重點

財津理事長 聖人佛法的力量。其他重點是：對於去年十二月明確目標不斷挑戰的信仰，尋求信心的指導，以及負擔個人的廣布責任。達自然文化中，種活動計劃：

※研修：由於研修是堅強信仰的基礎，也是幸福的基石，今年內，研修部將扮演重要的角色。研修部已修正、改良研修計劃，預定今年四月舉辦少年、以及強入門考試，以幫助信徒瞭解艱深的佛法。此外，研修部準備改良研修書籍化家庭。

其一：支持、小冊以及CD等，以及講師訓練計劃。

其二：各區域與各部門應考慮採取下列措施：

※由於人與人之間的交流是幫助信徒強化信行的重要方法，然而許多幹部開會太多，今後盡量刪除非必要的會議，而多多安排與信徒的一對一對話。

※廣布活動與講習會：各地區自行研修折伏會，並且舉辦講習會，以便信徒陪同親友來分享佛法。

※教導他人：教學相長，而且廣布活動的開展，使我們教導更多人瞭解日蓮大聖人的佛法。

※研修宗門問題：推展草根性的研修宗門問題的活動。即使新入會的信徒也能夠瞭解，並且有信心與他人分享研修心得。

其二：培育青少年

其中包括很多活動：幫助年輕人瞭解信心與生活的相關性，並且使學會家庭關係指導書籍，以及池田會長的

能夠吸引年輕人的興趣，也就是說：協助青少年增強他們的使命感，啟發他們的熱情與創造力，以增加在學會中的影響力。

其他還有二項新措施，一是成立全國四部門特別小組，研究最佳培育青少年的方法。除了四部門的代表之外，還有從事青年活動的專家，例如教師和輔導員。在考慮中的新措施包括：重訂青年部年齡範圍，幫助男女子部轉入壯年部、婦人部的計劃，以及兒童部轉入青年部的計劃，青年導師計劃，青年的俱樂部等。另一是增加四部門的參與。壯年部和婦人部部員應該積極參與培育青年部，支援青年部的活動，家訪青年部部員，折伏青年入信，鼓勵青少年參與廣布活動等。

其三：強化家庭

信仰的根本原因之一就是創造幸福家庭。基於愛、尊敬、關懷的家庭關係，才能組成幸福的家庭，此種關懷不限於自己的家人，也延伸到其他人。

在有子女的家庭中，顯出實證的父母，確實能夠培育子女成為信仰的繼承人，學會活動是其中一個重要的角色。

以下就是一些具體的新措施：

※出版物：出版部門刊載更多有關家庭關係的文章，登載在世界聖報和活躍佛教月刊上。編輯兒童書刊，家庭關係指導書籍，以及池田會長的

池田SGI會長新年賀詞

我尊敬的、前進在廣宣布布大道上的美國SGI同志：

首先，向各位恭賀新禧！並對各位表示衷心的祝福！

在這新的一年裡，我由衷地祈願：每個人都身體健康、威風堂堂、愉快地歡渡充滿價值的人生；克服一切困苦、取得徹底勝利。

御本佛、日蓮大聖人必定在守護著我們。

十方之佛、菩薩、諸天善神，也必定儼然地守護著我們。

所以，請各位堅強又快樂地樹立「充滿勇氣的信心」和渡過「充滿勇氣的人生」。

「佛法重要的是分勝負」。

勝利，則為佛；失敗，則唯有悲哀。

我們必須獲勝。能獲取勝利的力量，就是「信心」。

日寬上人我們所信奉的御本尊有過這樣的教示：

「縱暫信此本尊，唱南無妙法蓮華經亦能求必應，有罪必消，有福必來，有理必顯也。」

我祈願今年也是定是：

悠然的一年！

明朗的一年！

絕對勝利的一年！

健康、充實的一年！

確信、愉快的一年！

維護他人、與他人同心協力的！

以上就是發自我肺腑之言。

一九九八年元旦
池田大作

書籍：「青年探討集」。

※研究委員會：成立全國研究委員會，研究如何將學會更趨向於家庭化。

行動計畫時，包含每月一次全家都能動的紀念日。(完)

至於各地區，考慮舉辦講習會，利參加數聚的活動，或將比較有意義的，用部員或親友的專門學識，舉行家庭紀念日，例如二月十六日、四月廿八日、十月十二日等，訂為傳統家庭活動。

池田SGI會長新年賀詩

聖教新聞

燦爛東昇
旭日之姿
恰似我等
佛之軍勢

千萬勇者
高舉勝利旗
乘風飛舞
色彩繽紛奪目

此朋彼友
人人皆地湧
梵天帝釋
毅然堅守護

青年英雄
託付廣布指揮棒
宏亮明朗
今年再奏凱旋曲

創價新報
今年斷然分勝負
與尊貴同志
堅定決意共鳴

既溫馨又強固
創價家族
定為世界棟樑
一九九八年元旦

儼然又悠然
高高揭舉
人生正義大旗
廣布同志

高舉廣布利劍
堅決擊敗
卑鄙邪惡鼠輩
一九九八年元旦 大作

齊心奔向新世紀
朝陽之下
偉大力量放光芒

昂首挺胸

大白蓮華

一九九八年元旦

二月御書講義

開目抄

池田SGI會長講解

晴朗無雲的天空？
清澈湛藍的大海！

有關佐渡流罪中日蓮大聖人的境涯，恩師戶田先生曾如此述說：

「大聖人縱使過著，若是凡夫會認為是最糟的地獄生活，大聖人還是泰然自若、不畏不懼，瞬間瞬間的生命境涯，就如大海、天空般寬闊。」

大聖人在開目抄中說示：

「當世日本國第一富者，日蓮是也。命歸法華經，名留後代。」

當時的佐渡比現在寒冷。塚原三昧堂又非常簡陋。而大聖人在社會，既屬流罪之人，處在不知何時會被奪

取性命的狀況。

在這樣的狀況下，大聖人以獅子吼

吼出身為「精神王者」宣言。

二七一年（文永八年）十一月一日，抵達佐渡塚原的大聖人，以猶如

大瀑布澎湃的氣勢，開始執筆長篇著作，開目抄即是隔年（文永九年）二月，託付四條金吾的使者，送給獄門

下的御書。

「我一人、正義」的火焰，即使在暴風雪中，也絕對不會熄滅。救濟民

眾的熊熊火焰更旺盛燃燒著。

想將此大境涯留傳我等門下。

唯有在攸關生死的大門爭當中，人

能打開大

境涯。並將

此真實永遠

留存。

雖未留存，

但此篇御文

據說是由六

十五張宣紙

和大聖人親

自書寫「開

目」的封面

一張，合計

六十六張所

構成。

所謂「開

目」是指開

啓日本國一

切眾生的心

眼。對照經

文可知，大

聖人是真正

的「正義之

人」。這篇

御書中，大

聖人自言自

身是末法法

華經的行者

、御本佛。

讓我們透

過本抄結尾

的部份，學

習大聖人崇高的境涯。

問云：貴彼等念佛者、禪宗等，徒

招其響，有何利益？答云：涅槃經云

：「若響比丘見壞法者，置不呵責、

驅遣、驅遣、驅遣，當知是人，佛法中怨。

若能驅遣、呵責、驅遣，是我弟子，

真聖聞也。」等云云。「壞法佛法，

佛法中怨，無慈許親，是彼怨。能糾

獄、有的人領地被奪、有的人被逐。門

門下人心惶惶，因畏懼迫害而捨棄

信仰，或默不敢言的人很多。

「如果更溫和地弘法，就不會招來

像師匠那樣的難了。」也有弟子一副

自以為是地批判師匠。

在開目抄的結尾，大聖人出疑問：

「折伏他人，被周圍的人憎恨，這到

底有甚麼利益呢？甚麼好處都沒有，

不是嗎？」

對此疑問，大聖人引用經文回答說

：「涅槃經中說，要呵責、驅逐、學

罪。絕不可對想要破壞佛法的人置之

不理，要呵責、驅逐惡，究明其罪。

總之，這是為了守護佛法的慈悲行

，因此，即使遇到難也必定會成佛。

大聖人說，這是最大的利益、功德。

我的弟子啊！不要畏懼，挺起胸膛

、自豪地、堂堂地活到底，如獅子王

一般。

這是大聖人對全體門下注以大慈悲

，「希望他們過更好的人生」、「期

待他們畢生走在既定的信念之道上」

佛法只存在於「行動」中，在「行

動」中，我們生命裡的妙法始能生輝

諸天、諸佛會守護「行動」之人。

堅守正義之人，才是幸福。

大聖人比誰都「強」，那一點強？

即是為民眾的「心」強。

但一般人好像都誤解大聖人的「強

處」。

大聖人對於平左衛門尉、惡僧非常

嚴厲，但在對人們弘教時，經常教導

門下要謙恭有禮、面如春風。

例如，與人對話時的態度，大聖人

說：「和顏悅色，徐為堅定道之」（

教行證御書）。意指要溫文、堅定地

和顏悅色，輕聲細訴。

在立正安國論裡，描繪客人與主人

的「對話」場面，從未見主人（大聖

人）嘶聲待客。反而是面帶笑容安撫

情緒亢奮的客人。

想必這就是大聖人平時的對話態度

。夫拜見法華經寶塔品，釋迦、多寶

、十方分身諸佛之來集，果是何心？

「令法久住，故來至此」等云云。推

量三佛之於未來弘揚法華經，欲給予

未來一切佛子之心，較之父母不忍於

其獨子之受大苦，猶為強盛。然而法

然不以為念，竟於末法堅閉法華經之

門，不使人入。如狂狂兒，使棄其寶

然！令人拋棄法華經，具見其居心之

險惡。人有欲殺我父母，不為奔救可

乎？惡子醉亂，欲殺父母，不為制止

可乎？惡人欲燒燬寺塔，不為制止可

乎？獨子重病，不為灸治，可乎？見

到阿闍世王的事呢？」

釋尊回答如下：「我想擁有七個孩

子的父母的情況吧？父母對七個孩子

的愛心都是平等的，沒有絲毫差別。

但是，只要其中一個孩子生病，父母

的心就會專注在這個孩子身上，不是

嗎？」

對最悲慘的眾生，非但不見死不救

、置之不顧，反而認為這種人纔是最

先要救濟的，這就是佛的心願。

大聖人對迫害自己，使他被處流罪

至佐渡的日本一切眾生，也是一心想

要救濟。

戶田先生曾說：「就因為大聖人深

愛日本的眾人，纔能不為好幾次的大

難所動，堂堂面對三類強敵。」

而且，大聖人在佐渡時甚至教示：

「迫害我的國主們，正是我最先想救

濟的。」（願佛未來來記，大意）

多麼寬闊的胸襟啊！

視民如子——大聖人這種慈悲的大

奮鬥，自立宗以來，一步也未曾退卻

的想法。

開目抄中記有二五三年（建長五

年）四月二十八日，大聖人立宗之前

的想法。

「一不說，又有何慈悲」（開目抄

）教示，弘揚此佛法必遭大難，不說

或許還能安穩，但那是慈悲。

再如何口說慈悲，若無行動，則一

似有無慈悲。結果等於是沒有慈悲

嗎？獨子罹患重病，能置之不予灸治嗎

？

眼見日本信奉禪宗、念佛者而不加

以制止，與此同理。誠如（章安）的書

中）所說：「並無慈悲心，卻裝作很

親切，而反成為對方的敵人。」

現代寫照嗎？」

冷酷的現代社會，殺伐氣重的社會

，在這種「無慈悲」的社會裡，是誰

在拔除人們的苦惱，給與人們真正的

喜悅呢？

是誰真的為對方著想，打從生命深

處告知如何謂真實？這個人正是學會

阿闍世王多年與釋尊為敵，企圖謀

害佛。也是一位殺害父王的逆子。

雖貴為國王，心卻貧乏、空虛。

釋尊一直認為阿闍世王才是最不幸

的人之一。

為彼除惡、即是彼親

有位弟子問說：「佛的慈悲應是平

等地普及一切眾生，為何釋尊您只想

我的弟子，直系的門下。」

各位的「對話」與「行動」，正可

從根本改變這「無慈許親」的社會。

由於各位，纔能轉換「岐視之心」、

「無慈悲之心」這日本人的宿命。並

為這寒冷蕭瑟的社會，照射春照，以

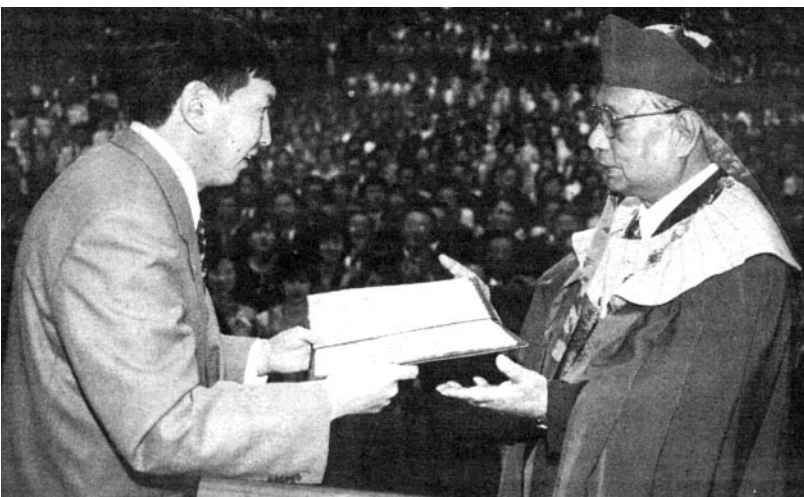
人類愛的暖流，溫暖人心。

我確信，大聖人也必對貫徹慈悲之

善隨行的各位，大讚說：「這才是我

的弟子，直系的門下。」

▲池田會長接受國立蒙古大學榮譽博士學位。





'Elijah Muhammad's Daughter, Ethel Shariff, in Chicago'

Photos by Gordon Parks

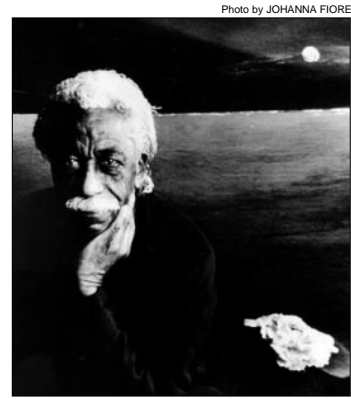


Photo by JOHANNA FIORE

'Portrait of Gordon Parks'



'Ingrid Bergman'

Just Say OK

At 86, photographer and filmmaker Gordon Parks feels he is just now ready to create art.

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Some bemoan the past and bitterly nurture memories of past injustices. Gordon Parks decided to use his childhood experiences of racism and poverty as a resource to create art that powerfully conveyed struggle and triumph, pain and love, hate and understanding. "I chose the camera as a weapon to challenge everything I disliked about America," said Parks following the opening of his retrospective here at the Corcoran Gallery of Art. "I was not about to let hatred or bigotry turn me around."

A 20th-century renaissance man, Parks was the youngest of 15 children born in Fort Scott, Kans., in 1912. After his mother died when he was 15, Parks moved to St. Paul, Minn. For the next 10 years, he held a series of odd jobs. While working as a dining car waiter he saw a photo essay in a magazine produced by the Farm Security Administration's Historical Section, an agency created to document social and cultural conditions across the country during the Depression.

Moved and inspired by what he saw, Parks purchased a pawn-shop camera for \$7.50 and started taking pictures while learning all he could about documentary technique. After his powerful photo essay on social conditions in Chicago was published in 1941, Parks won a prestigious fellowship and started shooting for the FSA in Washington, D.C.

In 1948, Parks was hired as a staff photographer for *Life* magazine and worked there until 1970. He became a master of the photo essay, evidenced by his poignant, searing images of a Harlem street gang. Included in the series was a photo of a gang member peering into the open coffin of a friend killed in a street fight.

In 1969, Parks was the first African American to direct and produce a film for a major Hollywood studio. *The Learning Tree* was adapted from the book he wrote about his childhood in Kansas. Parks also wrote the screenplay and the musical score for the film. His film *Shaft* (1971) made history by introducing an African American action hero to audiences around the world. He made eight other movies and last November was honored by the Producers Guild in Los Angeles for his contributions to film.

He recently spoke to a standing-room only crowd at Washington's National Museum of Art — a group that had braved a cold, rainy November day to attend a screening of *The Learning Tree*. He said that when Warner Brothers approached him to produce and direct the film, he replied, "I've never directed a film before, and Hollywood has no black directors." The studio head told Parks that he HAD to direct the film, and Parks replied, "OK."

Parks admitted he sometimes felt apprehension when starting a new project. "Then I'd just say OK," he added, and go about creating his works of art.

Parks plans to continue creating into the next millennium. "As I approach 86," he said, "I feel I'm just now ready to start." ■

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