

# World Tribune

No. 3176

THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

JANUARY 30, 1998

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# It's Never Too Late To Learn

## THE Third Stage OF LIFE

This is the fourth installment in this series. Participants in this installment are SGI President Ikeda, Seikyo Shimbun General Editorial Bureau Senior Director Osamu Matsuoka and Vice Director Katsusuke Sasaki.

**SASAKI:** Again this year [1997], Soka University's Division of Correspondence Education held a two-week, on-campus, summer course for its correspondence students. This program is now in its 22nd year, and more than 65,000 people have participated so far, traveling from all over Japan — from Hokkaido in the north to Okinawa in the south — and from as many as 13 overseas countries.

**IKEDA:** People who study while working, people who continue to pursue learning no matter their age, are praiseworthy. As university founder, I sent a message to the opening session of this year's course in which I said: "This alliance of people dedicated to learning, transcending the limits of age, is spearheading the way



Betty Wiegant gets some last minute adjustments to her cap and gown from daughter Shirley Northern before attending her high school graduation at Wilson High School in Santa Clara, Calif., recently. Wiegant, 84, waited 69 years to get her high school diploma.

toward a 21st century in which the third stage of life will be a period of boundless hope and fulfillment."

A number of years ago, I voiced my desire to enroll in a correspondence course at the university myself and study along with everyone else, but the university president refused to accept my application!

**MATSUOKA:** Of the approximately 4,000 correspondence

students enrolled at Soka University, nearly 10 percent, or 400 students, are over 50.

**IKEDA:** That's wonderful.

**SASAKI:** In Japan, there are only 14 universities, excluding the University of the Air [which broadcasts lectures over radio and television], that offer correspondence degree courses. Soka University's program is known for its high

graduation rate. A journalist who thoroughly investigated the program identified two reasons for this: the students' strong sense of purpose and a well-organized and administered study program.

**IKEDA:** That is most gratifying to hear. A fine tradition has been born and taken root at Soka University.

PLEASE SEE LEARN, 10

By **DEBORAH GOODWIN**  
LOS ANGELES CORRESPONDENT

**U**nmasking the evil that is racism — the evil that pains, frightens and destroys us — is James Baldwin's mission in his book *The Evidence of Things Unseen*. And although he structures his thesis around the landscape of racism in America, it is evil in its fundamental sense that he addresses: Who falls prey to evil, and who perpetrates it? What form does evil take, and where is it contained? These questions he weaves into parallels of every kind, from Atlanta police brutality and the African dictator to the corruption of public officials.

He illustrates how evil trickles down and runs through every

## UNMASKING EVIL

In this essay, Deborah Goodwin points out where we have to start fighting evil — in the 'eye of the storm, the core of our lives.'

current of our modern age and the fortitude that each of us must develop to withstand it. Baldwin writes: "The black man's first encounter with the West — by which I mean, mainly, the Christian church — brought him devastation and death. We are

only now beginning to recover, are beginning, out of the most momentous Diaspora in human memory, to rediscover and recognize each other. This is a global matter, and the denouement of this encounter will be bloody and severe; precisely be-

cause it demolishes the morality, to say nothing of the definitions, of the Western world."

Baldwin equates this revolution as both literally and figuratively coming about through an uprising of the human spirit. The human spirit that is at last prepared to do battle against great evil.

As Buddhists and SGI members, we are infinitely fortunate to perceive this uprising, this revolution, as one that takes place first and foremost through our inner reformation — not one brought about by force of arms, intellect or politics, but through the act of living. We are engaged in human revolution. The dynamic that takes place when we

PLEASE SEE EVIL, 7



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-enge-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-enge-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-enge-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-enge-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](http://www.sgi-usa.org) or you can e-mail the SGI-USA at [sgiusa1@aol.com](mailto:sgiusa1@aol.com). You can e-mail the *World Tribune* editorial office at: [SokaNews@aol.com](mailto:SokaNews@aol.com).

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# Cure the Apathy Epidemic

## EDITORIAL

It's up to today's youth to save America from imminent self-destruction, many people say. That's why so many volunteer organizations, including the SGI-USA, are focused now on nurturing youth — whether they call it mentoring programs, citizen service or, as we do, youth division activities.

In the SGI-USA, we're confident that the young people practicing this Buddhism are some of the best and brightest in our nation. Even so, some may wonder if it's wise to place such high expectations on youth — in our organization or our country.

After all, statistics suggest that young people are becoming increasingly apathetic. A recent survey by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California Los Angeles found that current college freshmen — the class of 2001 — care less about academics and politics than American students ever have. More than 30 percent are bored with school and skip classes. Only 26.7 percent are interested in the political process, this percentage only half what it was 30 years ago.

*Apathetic, unconcerned, indifferent.* It seems these words are unfortunately used more and more to characterize young people, and apparently there is evidence to back them up. (The *World Tribune* invites young people to write to us about apathy and how to cure it.)

But wait — maybe youth aren't the only apathetic ones here. Apathy is, after all, hardly something that can be quarantined to one age group or

one's problem. And if it's on the rise among youth, we're all probably affected by it.

In one of SGI President Ikeda's "Discussions on Youth," he explained: "People tend to lack willpower. To take the path of least resistance is human nature. Outstanding individuals...have disciplined themselves to overcome their weaknesses, conquering apathy and inertia to become true victors in life."

This, indeed, is the challenge of our times, the challenge for us all. To conquer apathy in ourselves and others, we have to make a conscious effort to care. Care about our lives. Care about others' lives. Care about the future. Just care. And it's by revitalizing this sense of caring about everything in our world that we can ignite sparks of enthusiasm in others, whether we're in our 70s or we've just turned 17.

Do we feel that people nowadays have no appreciation? That they don't want to remember how far we've come and how far we have to go? That they just don't care?

Then we have to be the first ones to care. To not care only perpetuates the apathy we see. A revitalized sense of caring is what everyone needs to create a time when *apathetic* isn't such a popular word to describe youth — or anyone else. Then we can offer America a cure for the apathy epidemic.

*It's by revitalizing this sense of caring about everything in our world that we can ignite sparks of enthusiasm in other people.*

## Study Program Announcements

- Entrance Exam study materials in Japanese, Spanish, Chinese and Korean have been revised based on the new study curriculum for 1998–2001. They will be available at all SGI-USA bookstores by early February.
- In the Dec. 19, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 8 (the Entrance Exam Sample Questions), under the heading "The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon," the questions referred to should read "Questions 35–36 are based on the following passage."

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## WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

### Opinions on the Death Penalty

I agree that the taking of human life is generating the heaviest of karmic seeds ("Study Perspectives," Dec. 19, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 11). To me, a correct understanding of life and death is the basis of this issue — suicide will not end suffering, nor will homicide.... [T]he taking of human life devalues all life. Buddhism posits that life is eternal — how shall all the parties to execution begin their next existences?

Our society wants crime to go away and does not want prisons, halfway houses or treatment facilities in its backyards, a decidedly ostrich-like posture, not based on the belief in cause and effect. At the same time there are, increasingly, flagrant examples of persons who are comfortable being an "institution man" and who will push for the last degree of privilege and leniency out of "the system," without any thought of ever being a contributor to society.... [T]he concept of oneness of person and environment could provide a penetrating look at the commission of crime as well as suggest more realistic plans toward the goal of rehabilitation.

When we realize — globally — that killing is not an option, we will be well on the way to a true and lasting peace.

— JUDI ASBY, St. Louis

One thing I have always liked about the organization of the SGI is that it has (historically) respected the difference of opinions among its members by not taking official stances on controversial political and social issues of the day. When I received the Gohonzon in 1986, I was told that it was up to individual members to chant and decide for themselves what positions they will hold on these issues.... However, I have been greatly disappointed by SGI President Ikeda's most recent pronouncement against the death penalty. With all due respect to his great wisdom, I must dissent from his taking an absolutist stance (as the pope does on numerous issues) that the death penalty is always wrong and that every society should abolish it.

Through my years of being a member of this organization, I have known numerous SGI members (including myself) who believe that some crimes are so heinous that justice requires the death penalty; that the ultimate crime must be met with the ultimate punishment....

Regarding the argument that the death penalty violates Buddhist principles, there are different interpretations of this. Many people understand this to mean that if a murderer like Timothy McVeigh winds up on death row, then he is simply reaping the negative effects of the causes he made (i.e., murdering 168 people)....

The issue of the death penalty (as with many other issues) is one about which reasonable people disagree. Why can't we leave it at this instead of creating a divisive climate within our organization? We value diversity among our members, and this should include a diversity of opinions and perspectives as well.

— ADALYN BRUGGER, Falls Church, Va.

*Editor's note: President Ikeda has not made a "recent pronouncement against the death penalty." The quotes Adalyn Brugger refers to in the World Tribune article come from two books published years ago: Choose Life, his dialogue with Arnold Toynbee, first published in 1976, and Human Values in a Changing World, his dialogue with Bryan Wilson, published in 1984. Both quotes represent his opinion based on his understanding of Buddhism, not a formal pronouncement that SGI members must automatically agree with. The SGI-USA has not taken any formal stand. We published the two perspectives and these two letters to stimulate study and dialogue among our readers. We invite all readers to write in and share their views about this controversial subject.*

# Sometimes the Worst Lies Are the Ones We Tell Ourselves

## PERSPECTIVE

By BERTHANIA CARSWELL  
CULVER CITY, CALIF.

**Lies erode sanity and distort common sense. Lies are the door to misfortune. They inflict a kind of violence.**

— SGI President Ikeda

I was preparing for a study meeting when this passage from *Learning From the Goshu* grabbed hold of me and wouldn't let go. These three sentences kept playing over and over in my head, like a song I just couldn't get rid of.

After a few days, a light bulb came on. I was walking to the bus stop when I got it.

I stopped in the middle of the sidewalk and stood with my mouth open. It was one of those inconspicuous benefits that change the way you practice this Buddhism from that moment on.

*Lies erode sanity and distort common sense....*

The worst kind of lies are those I tell myself, the ones no one else knows about. These are based on delusional thinking and are the kind of rationalizations I used as a child to make sense of a world in which I had no control. They guard my deepest, darkest fears.

Here's an example: All my life I've avoided conflict with the people closest to me because of a vague, paralyzing anxiety. Even my relationships with men only developed to a certain point, then fizzled, because I didn't have the courage to speak up, to confront whatever issues I had. I was afraid we would fight, so I kept silent until whatever bond we shared simply withered and died.

And that October morning, walking to the bus stop, I realized it was not the conflict but the drama surrounding it that made me afraid.

One of my clearest childhood memories is of my parents fighting, verbally and physically, and the police escorting my father out of my life. My young mind thus convinced itself that if I

confronted someone close to me about some issue I had with him or her, then that someone would leave me. And the pain of abandonment would be more than I could stand.

As I grew up, we became one, me and that lie. And there are others.

*Lies are the door to misfortune....*

Some lies came from the things my parents told me — half-truths or little white lies that seemed so innocent back then. Those lies helped me make the

*They inflict a kind of violence....*

As I stood in the middle of the sidewalk that morning, I saw clearly how the old script was, in fact, making me miserable. The defenses I learned so many years ago had become a straight-jacket, made of lead, pulling me down, wearing me out.

The thought of letting go of these lies was scary, but the alternative was to continue to disrespect my life. I had to change all those negative messages I was telling myself if I were going to become truly happy.

And that day, in the middle of the sidewalk, I decided to let go.

It has been so rewarding, because I can finally hear my voice — the same voice that told me right from wrong, the voice of the child that I silenced because it didn't agree with everyone else.

This voice knew the truth, even then. It was not afraid of not being liked. It was not afraid of being hit or hurt or violated.

And it no longer has to shut up and be quiet. Now, that voice can laugh out loud, shout when it feels like it, sing new tunes and speak foreign tongues. This

voice I know to be me.

*Lies erode sanity....*

This small voice has been talking to me all along, but I couldn't hear it until all the shouting and screaming and crying died down. All the drama, the noise that I used to keep me from hearing my thoughts, to keep the "peace," to not rock the boat, to just make it through the day.

This voice, my voice, was here all along, waiting for me to pay attention. And now I'm listening — no more brass, no more tears, no more drama. I'm recreating my truth with my prayers and watching my life unfold like the lotus flower. The door to misfortune has become the portal to my inner wisdom. And I'm not afraid anymore. Instead, I am quiet, trusting, listening. To me. ■

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



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

**Berthania Carswell let go of the lies she had been telling herself: 'I had to change all those negative messages.'**

right decisions, told me who my friends were, whom I should trust, what I should do. And they worked. For a while they helped me survive, to find my center in a crooked world.

But then I left home and saw things that didn't jibe with the script. What to do? Ignore what I saw and stick to the script, or change what I believed?

Unfortunately, most of the time I chose to ignore what I saw. I developed the script with the people I love: my parents, my family, my friends. To go against the script would have put me at odds with those people. And that would have been too uncomfortable to live with.

Nor would it have been easy. I would have had to change my belief system, my thoughts and the language I used inside my head. I would have had to correct the lies I told myself and change my actions. I would no longer have been able to go against my feelings.

NEWS BRIEFS

BRAZIL

### Toda's Declaration Commemorated

The São Paulo State Legislative Assembly convened for a special session on Nov. 28, 1997, to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Soka Gakkai second president Josei Toda's Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons. In conjunction, the Latin America Youth Conference was held. Five hundred representative SGI youth division members from Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Venezuela and Argentina were invited by the assembly to participate in the conference.

— Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER

JAPAN

### SGI President Meets With Russian Scholar

SGI President Ikeda and his wife, Kaneko, met with Moscow State University Associate Professor Leon A. Strijak and his wife, Irina, in Tokyo on Nov. 29, 1997. On President Ikeda's first trip to the Soviet Union in 1974, Mr. Strijak — who is a Japanese language and literature specialist — served as the SGI leader's interpreter during meetings with Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin, Nobel laureate and writer Mikhail Sholokhov and former Moscow State University Rector Rem V. Khokhlov. Mr. Strijak is currently teaching at Soka University as an exchange scholar.

— Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER

NEW MEXICO

### First New Year's Meeting Held in Santa Fe

Fifty-nine SGI-USA members and guests gathered at the Eldorado Hotel in historic downtown Santa Fe for a New Year's Day world peace prayer meeting. It was the first-ever New Year's meeting to be held in northern New Mexico, which includes Taos, Espanola and Nambé.

— KIM MELLOR and DELLA CHAVEZ

GHANA

### Construction Begins on Ikeda Garden in Ghana

A ground-breaking ceremony was held on Jan. 4 for the construction of the Dr. Daisaku Ikeda Garden in Kwabre District, Ghana. The park, which will occupy about 5.25 acres along both sides of the Aboabo River, is located near the city of Kumasi, where the second SGI-Ghana culture center is currently under construction. The decision to create a park bearing President Ikeda's name was made by the Kwabre District Assembly in honor of his international contributions to peace, education and culture. The assembly hopes the park, which is located in the Ashanti region, an area noted for its rich cultural tradition and abundant natural beauty, will aid in the preservation of the environment.

— Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER

If you have a short report of a special event in your area that you'd like to see in "News Briefs," please contact your local bureau chief or call us at (310) 451-8811 or e-mail us at SokaNews@aol.com.

# Why Don't They Ever Listen???

By SALLY MARKS McKEE  
MESA, ARIZ., CORRESPONDENT

You NEVER listen to me!" A moment later a door slams. A frustrated teenager flies through the air and lands on the bed. A pillow muffles sobs.

This familiar scenario is played out hundreds of times a day in homes across the United States, perhaps even the world. And even within the SGI-USA, where parents are tirelessly working toward creating a peaceful society, a war zone often exists between parents and their teenage children.

How does a parent bridge this gap and establish a peaceful co-existence with his or her teenage son or daughter? Ironically, during life's most exasperating days, many parents (including me) think it would be easier to chant and bring peace to Somalia than to live in a tranquil home where a teenager resides. No doubt, teenagers feel the same way about their living conditions and parents.

The two big "c" words come to mind as possible solutions to this — *chanting* and *communication*. It is probably a safe assumption that most of us reading a Buddhist newspaper know how to chant or how to find someone who will help us learn. But how many of us re-

**CLEARLY A Parent**  
A COLUMN ABOUT PARENTING

ally know how to communicate effectively?

For me, the talking, preaching, scolding and blaming part of communication has always been easy. I learned to talk early, and I practiced my skill long, hard and often. (I even talk in my sleep.)

I looked forward to having children so I would have a captive audience. Before my daughters were born, I thought about what I might say to them. While they were in utero I would have joyful conversations with them. Those were the good old days — they never talked back. Oh sure, once in a while my oldest daughter, Alicia, would give me an elbow to the rib cage. My youngest child, Brittany, enjoyed kicking my bladder like a football. However, for the most part, my fetal children listened dutifully.

Then they made their entrance in the world. And immediately came up with their own opinions on everything.

It took a while for my communication style to change. I

thought communication was like a tennis match: I would toss a command or piece of advice over my head and send it over the net to my children, expecting to score an ace. Instead my kids would counter my words and send a retort right back into my court. This was an exhausting battle, and the kids had youth and stamina on THEIR side.

"Why can't my kids just listen to me?" I'd ponder while gasping for air. *Boink!* A light went on over my head (just like in the cartoons; it was very cool) — cause and effect. Cause and effect. Maybe my kids don't listen to me because I don't listen to them.

When I started chanting to become a better listener and parent, the effects of that cause changed how we all communicate. We don't always agree on things, but we are better at listening to one another and trying to understand one another's points of view. It isn't always paradise in our home, but since the communication lines have been opened, a lot fewer doors — and hearts — are slamming shut. ❏

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



## Florida Impressions

Photo by KAY KOIKE



Marsha (right) with friend Rosalind Thompson went to the FNCC last March.

We were all treated with such respect at the FNCC! Like Buddhas! Of course, the release of human capabilities and depth that such a pervasive atmosphere of deep respect engendered is really impossible to catalog or describe. Gratitude for everything lay soft in the evening air. Some of us untangled old stories, old hurts. I quit smoking cigarettes — YES! And I actually wrote a poem....

*I will lift these heavy stones,  
I will study  
their weighted shadows for clues,  
I will find new treasures  
of joy in the ancient mud  
beneath my naked feet,  
and fling it to the heavens*

*where its sun-struck  
dust will sing  
like trillions of  
dancing stars.*

— Marsha Erickson, Waimea, Hawaii

# Have You Ever Heard of



Audrey McClure as MeeMaw and Stone Jackson as Eric in 'SLiM,' a play that explores the impact of AIDS on black men and women, written and directed by Stuart Litchfield (below).

# NAM-MYOHO-RENGE-KYO?

Telling a stranger about Buddhism opens up an opportunity for Audrey McClure's acting debut in a new play about AIDS.

By WENDY DeORE  
TEXAS BUREAU CHIEF

Sharing her Buddhist practice with a stranger at a bus stop led to the opportunity of a lifetime for Dallas member Audrey McClure. In spite of the blazing late-summer heat in Dallas and no reliable transportation, Audrey had been determined to attend the afternoon chanting sessions at the Dallas Culture Center.

On the way, she shared her faith with an affable stranger who turned out to be the director and writer for a professional theater group in Dallas called Soul Rep Theater Company.

The stranger's name was Stuart Litchfield. He was writing a play about AIDS in the African American community. He was already thinking of creating a character who becomes a Buddhist. Stuart had been living with AIDS since 1990.

Stuart went with Audrey to the culture center that day to learn to chant and continued to go nearly every day after that. He and Audrey became good friends. As a director, writer and actor himself, Stuart recognized the untapped talent that was waiting to be discovered in Audrey. He wanted Audrey to audition for a role in his play.

The play, *SLiM*, co-written and directed by Stuart and Anyika McMillan, explores the impact of AIDS on black men

and women. The title comes from the slang term for AIDS in Africa, where it was once thought that the only people who carried the virus were slim. The play is a powerful drama that also is intended to educate audiences about the reality of this disease and the people who live with it.

Since the death of her only son just a few years earlier, Audrey had struggled with her practice and her life. Still, through that tragedy, she never gave up. She continued to chant and attend activities and began to discover her love of storytelling. Audrey received invitations to tell stories at local schools and community centers, and she enjoyed bringing smiles and a taste of her cultural heritage to the children who would gather around to hear her. She wove African folk tales about "how the sky became so high" or "what happened to the greedy brother."

But Audrey had never acted before. What's more, the Soul Rep Theater Company is the resident company at the African American Museum in Dallas,

and all the performers in the company are seasoned professionals. Despite her anxieties, Audrey auditioned for the play and was cast in several roles.

"I was petrified to perform in this play," Audrey says. "The beginning rehearsals were just terrible. Two or three times I wanted to give up — but I knew that I couldn't do that. My practice was the only thing that kept me going. A few times at rehearsals, I just wanted to slap Stuart, but he made me reach down into myself and pull out what was there. I chanted so much. I had to succeed. I wanted to be



the best in the play so I could show actual proof. After all, I was the only one who had the Gohonzon." With the encouragement of her SGI friends and her husband, David, Audrey definitely hung in there.

The play presents a series of vignettes in the lives of Africans and African Americans who contract the disease. One character is a recovering addict named Coco, who is inspired to get off the streets by the music and the life of Tina Turner. She is encouraged to explore her

spiritual life by a social worker, played by Stuart, who helps her get off the streets and cope with her disease. A friendship develops between this gay white man and a black woman in recovery, both of whom are facing AIDS.

Later, with her hands pressed together in prayer, Coco sits alone on stage and chants Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, explaining to the audience that "If it worked for Tina, why not for me, too?" Coco becomes strong and self-reliant, eventually landing a job as a counselor for other women trapped in a life of addiction and prostitution.

Audrey plays several characters: the grandmother to a little girl dying of AIDS; the mother of a Ugandan woman who contracts the disease from her husband; a crazy street person who inhabits Coco's nightmare world of addiction; and the grandmother of a gay rights activist.

She is superb, an inspiration. She invited the company to perform the play at the Dallas Culture Center on Dec. 6, 1997. SGI-USA members, their guests and others from the community came together to watch this outstanding drama. The audience was moved, educated and ultimately uplifted.

The play was performed to rave reviews at the Dallas Public Library last fall, and the company is seeking funding to take the play on tour in the schools locally, statewide and nationally.

**President Yamamoto concludes his first lecture to students on 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings.' When he opens the floor for questions, one student's query about death leads to a surprising answer.**

Shin'ichi Yamamoto went on to discuss the Buddhist view of life, citing examples from a variety of disciplines, including psychosomatic medicine and bacteriology, to explain the Buddhist principle of the oneness of body and mind. In addition, he compared Kant's theories of time and space with the Buddhist concept of a life-moment, using this to reveal the profundity of Nichiren Buddhism's philosophy of life.

He also quoted from other relevant writings of the Daishonin, such as "The Entity of the Mystic Law" and "The True Object of Worship." He quoted widely and effortlessly from diverse fields of inquiry, capturing his listeners' minds and keeping them enthralled to the end.

Shin'ichi then returned to the Orally Transmitted Teachings and discussed this passage:

They [the Orally Transmitted Teachings] also state:

Nam-myoho-renge-kyo combines *nam*, which derives from Sanskrit, with *myoho-renge-kyo*, which derives from Chinese. Sanskrit and Chinese join in a single moment to form Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708)

"*Nam* or *namu* is a phonetic transcription of the Sanskrit word *namas*," Shin'ichi said, "while *myoho-renge-kyo* is the Japanese rendering of the Chinese translation — *miaofa-lianhua-jing* in Chinese — of the Sanskrit title of the Lotus Sutra. In other words, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo comprises the languages of ancient India and China.

"In the center of the Gohonzon are the words *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo* — *Nichiren*. And *Nichiren* is Japanese. In addition, among the various figures on the Gohonzon representing the ten worlds, the names of two guardian deities — Wisdom King Immovable and Wisdom King Craving-Filled — appear on the right and left sides of the Gohonzon, respectively, in Sanskrit letters [in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, Wisdom King Immovable represents the principle that the sufferings of

# The New Human Revolution

BY HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 5

## Young Eagles

Translation of parts 22–23 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.



birth and death are nirvana and Wisdom King Craving-Filled represents the principle that earthly desires are enlightenment]. This means that the Gohonzon, which is to be spread throughout the world, is written in the script of three countries: India, China and Japan. In the Japan of the Daishonin's time, this represented the entire world.

"Whenever I read the Orally Transmitted Teachings, I am deeply struck with the awareness that Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is not meant for one country or people but for all of Asia and, indeed, the entire world. I am also convinced that this passage demonstrates that kosen-rufu in Asia and the world can in fact be achieved.

"The task of realizing this goal falls to you, the student division members. I want each of you to seriously consider how we can spread the Daishonin's Buddhism across the globe and lead all humanity to happiness. I have great hopes for you. That is why I selected for our studies 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,' which contains the most profound doctrines of the Daishonin's Buddhism."

Shin'ichi concluded his lecture for that day after covering the section on Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Everyone was impressed anew at the profundity of the Daishonin's teachings and recognized how intimately connected they were to their lives. They felt as if a mist that had been obscuring their vision had parted. They were refreshed, exhilarated, as though an invigorating shower had cleansed their beings.

Let's now hold a Q-and-A session," Shin'ichi announced, opening the floor to the participants. "Please ask me anything you like."

Several hands shot up energetically. Most of the questions concerned passages from the Orally Transmitted Teachings Shin'ichi had just lectured on.

After several others had asked questions, Hisashi Masuyama, a recent graduate from Hitotsubashi University working for the Overseas Department at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters, asked: "In today's lecture, you explained the principle of the oneness of body and mind.

But how does this unity of the physical and spiritual aspects of life apply to what happens to our life, or the entity of our existence, after death?"

It was a question Shin'ichi might have expected from the student division, fond as its members were of exploring theoretical issues. Shin'ichi addressed his reply to the entire group:

"How to deal with the question of death is an extremely important issue. Particularly since becoming Soka Gakkai president, I have given the question of what happens to one's life after death much serious thought, seeking illumination on the matter in the Gosho and the sutras.

"I have also been chanting daimoku and exerting myself earnestly in faith each day, hoping to experience the answer for myself, in the depths of my life. As a result, I have come to gain an understanding of this issue.

"But to discuss it with you now, with the limited time available, wouldn't allow you to gain much of an understanding. It's not that easy to grasp. In fact, it isn't something that can be understood intellectually. Rather, it is something that we grasp through faith, that we come to appreciate and understand with our lives. As you accumulate experience in faith, you will gradually come to understand this.

"I want you, Mr. Masuyama, to reach your own understanding of life and death. Study the Gosho and contemplate it for yourself. Chant daimoku and gain experience in faith. That's how you will achieve a personal understanding of this matter.

"In addition, you can explore it from a philosophical perspective — and perhaps in the future you will give a presentation to all of us on your findings. I, too, will keep working to deepen my understanding. Let's study and research this together."

Shin'ichi's words warmed Masuyama's heart. Shin'ichi looked upon the participants as comrades and fellow envoys of the Buddha. They were younger than he was, but he never thought of their relationship as one between a superior and subordinates. He respected them all as equals, as individuals.

Shin'ichi could at times be severe. This was intended to spur the students on to greater efforts. But his fundamental attitude was that of studying with them, of them inspiring one another to grow. That was Shin'ichi's, and the Soka Gakkai's, basic attitude toward people. Shin'ichi also hoped that as each member encountered a new issue or question, that person would take the initiative to study and explore it carefully, and use the resulting insight to help open the way for others.



(To be continued)

## SIGN POSTS

APPLYING  
NICHIREN  
DAISHONIN'S  
WRITINGS TO  
DAILY LIFE

### Learn First, Then Teach

By VALERIE THOMAS

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

**You must not only persevere yourself; you must also teach others. Both practice and study arise from faith. Teach others to the best of your ability, even if only a single sentence or phrase. ("The True Entity of Life," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 95.)**

When I first started to practice this Buddhism, I was eager to share it with others. Because I lacked the confidence and understanding to share my practice in my own words, I memorized an explanation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and the SGI that I could give to anyone. But it didn't seem effective — no one was very interested.

Recently I spent time with my family in the town where I grew up. I had the opportunity at a party to see several of my parents' friends whom I had not seen since my childhood.

I was surprised when many people showed interest in my Buddhist practice and the SGI. One guest was interested in the comparison of Buddhism with Western religions.

Another guest wanted to know the differences among Buddhist sects. And other guests were interested in the diversity of the SGI membership, SGI's history in America, and why I had been drawn to this practice.

What I realized through this was that each person I spoke with was interested in a different aspect of my practice. I realized that having one memorized explanation, although it might feel "safer," does not fit the needs of every person and allow me to fully "teach others."

Developing my practice and study has definitely increased my ability to explain this Buddhism to others. I not only have deepened my confidence about my practice, but I also have developed a deeper pool of knowledge of Buddhism and other religions that I can draw on in any situation, at any opportunity to share my practice with others.

So I am more committed than ever, as Nichiren Daishonin teaches in this Goshō, to develop my practice and study, not only for my happiness but for the happiness of others. **III**

### EVIL, FROM PAGE 1

resolve to use our spiritual resources to meet life's thorniest questions head on and the questions raised act as catalysts for our growth and transformation.

Our spiritual resources are unlimited, a discovery we make each time we delve deeper for the strength and clarity to perceive the nature of our lives. This unlimited resource can be defined the wonder of life, as it defies description. It can neither be quantified nor contained. "Buddhism gives people the means to develop themselves thoroughly," SGI President Ikeda says in *Learning From the Goshō*, "and opens their eyes to the limitless power inherent in their lives."

Along with this power comes the attendant responsibility to live in accord with the Law. To ignore this fact is to in effect try to exist apart from one's life. As Nichiren Daishonin states: "Explaining the wonder of life is the prime objective of all the sutras [that Shakyamuni preached], termed the eighty-four thousand teachings.... We hold and embrace the eighty-four thousand teachings in our lives. To suppose that the Buddha, the Law, and the pure land of Eagle Peak exist apart from one's life and seek them outside is a delusion" (*Goshō Zenshu*, pp. 563-64).

It seems evident, then, that influences, overt or insidious, which strive in direct opposition to the wonder of life can be called what they are — evil. It must also be recognized that evil does not exist apart from one's life either.

It is at this juncture of recognizing evil that we can keenly observe how committed we are to the path of our individual human revolution. For it is at the eye of the storm, the core of our lives, that we must name evil, stand up to evil and thereby transform it.

Our lives are where this struggle has its roots, though evil will simultaneously appear as an "outside" entity. That authoritarian leader. That madman in the Middle East. The High Priest Nikken.

Evil thrives where there is silence, indifference, weakness and betrayal. In

every petty, negative thought or emotion we entertain individually. Every grudge and bias and judgment we harbor as a society. These are the causes for disunity and invite the presence and rise of evil.

Each time we witness or intuit a profound injustice and choose to slink away, leaving someone else to shoulder

tainted. Accordingly Nichiren Daishonin writes in the Goshō "On the Buddha's Behavior," "So long as a person does not try to depart from the cycle of birth and death and seek enlightenment, the devil will watch over him like a parent" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 186). And in the same way that peace cannot be defined as the absence of war, the perceived absence of evil does not mean that good is flourishing.

As Bodhisattvas of the Earth, it is our mission to be the voice of truth and the body of action for the happiness of the people. How can we hope to accomplish this if we hide from the evil in our own lives? If we choose the path of least resistance and forfeit our opportunity to stand toe to toe with evil, we are essentially turning our backs on the fundamentals of the Daishonin's Buddhism. Ultimately, we are robbing ourselves while abandoning those around us, those whom we have sworn to protect and serve.

Combating evil is, then, a function of our Buddha nature. We do not need banners, the cavalry or Steven Sager to take a stand. All we need is the practice of faith "to become genuinely aware," as Mr. Ikeda writes, "of the true entity of all phenomena and to manifest it actively in our own lives. Through faith, we can develop a great state of absolute freedom in our lives."

Absolute freedom, or enlightenment from the dark recesses of our delusions and false beliefs, is like a high beam exposing evil for what it is — enabling each of us to transform evil into a source of good, beauty and gain. Recognizing the evil within is essential to taking deep responsibility and action. Recognizing our own evil instructs us in the correct attitude to maintain in the face of the manifest evil we encounter without.

It is said that freedom requires eternal vigilance. The Daishonin urges us that if we can fully take personal responsibility, there is no evil that can eclipse our attainment of absolute freedom. **III**



ARCHIVE PHOTOS

Unmasking the evil that is racism was James Baldwin's mission in his book 'The Evidence of Things Unseen.' The acclaimed African American novelist emigrated to Paris in 1948 where he wrote two of his most renowned novels — 'Go Tell It on the Mountain' and 'Giovanni's Room,' the latter of which deals frankly with the author's bisexuality. Upon his return to the United States in the 1950s, Baldwin became an avid proponent of civil rights, a theme that can be found in much of his work that describes the African American experience.

reform, we are personally condoning and encouraging evil. This poisons the very source of our faith. If it is allowed to happen once, it will happen twice and 10 times and a hundred more times.

The more evil encroaches on the wonder of life, the more accustomed we become to it. We may find ourselves able to rationalize evil, but all the while, the life-spring from which we draw our faith will be slowly, systematically

## Now Available in Six Languages



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

In 1994, SGI President Ikeda told members in Italy, 'If you stay home, you cannot accomplish kosen-rufu.' His words inspired 15 Italian members eventually to make their way to the United States. 'For us, this is not just visiting,' one member told new friends in San Francisco....

# 'We're Moving Our Lives!'

By **RON BAIRD**  
SAN FRANCISCO BUREAU CHIEF

Fifteen members from Associazione Italiana-Soka Gakkai Internazionale (AI-SGI) arrived in San Francisco on Dec. 18, 1997, partly due to an invitation from local SGI-USA member David Frasca, who recently practiced in Italy. While in the Bay Area they stayed with local members and attended district meetings before proceeding to Los Angeles for a similar visit.

Many of the Italian members recall SGI President Ikeda's 1994 to Europe, and how he inspired them to have exchanges with other members around the world.

Several European countries have started kosen-rufu exchange meetings, including Austria and France.

Just as the SGI president has encouraged Japanese members

to learn various languages and to move around the world, he has also encouraged the members in Italy.

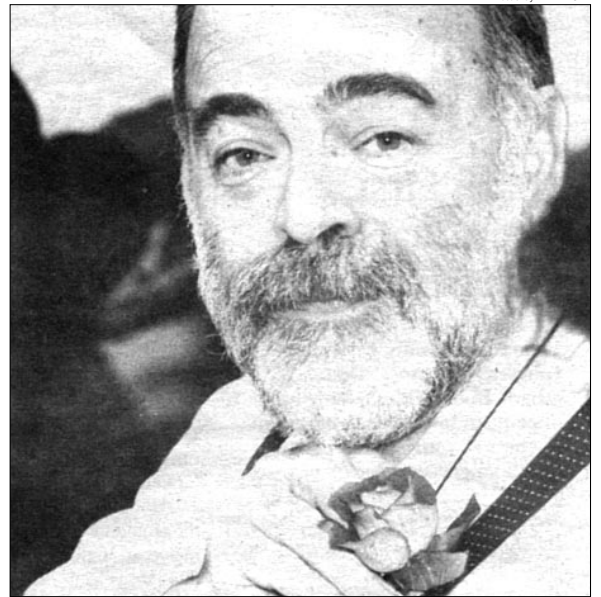
According to Mario Guareschi, engineering general manager from Parma, when the SGI president visited Florence and Bologna, he told the members, "If you stay home, you cannot accomplish kosen-rufu."

Mario added: "He encouraged us to move, to share our experiences, and to break the language barrier. For instance if I visit your home and you come visit my home, our relationship will grow stronger. If you really get to know people from other countries, then you don't want to fight one another."

Mario continued: "For us, this is not just visiting. We're moving our lives! We did so much chanting for the success of this trip.

"We chanted for the protection of the flight and when we

return we have arranged to make reports to the members. What we are doing is planting a seed. From our hearts, we say, 'Please come [to Italy]. It's not just words. When you come to Italy, you can spend several days in Parma, you can go to Florence, and to Milan or Rome. We are planning on welcoming all of you!'"



(Top) Mario Guareschi, from Parma, Italy, remembers the inspiration of SGI President Ikeda 'to move, to share our experiences, and to break the language barrier?' (Above) Italian members meet with San Francisco members.

CHIARA SOMENZI, CREMONA (NEAR MILAN)

## I Learned To Face Life in a Different Way

I have been practicing for a year and a half. I am very happy to be here in the United States. For me, it is a great opportunity to recount my experiences of practicing Buddhism.

I began my spiritual journey six years ago, when I was experiencing several negative things. My mother's store had been robbed, and the same day my boyfriend of three years left me. A few days later, my father was put in the hospital. At this point, I began to have many questions about my life. I asked why all this was happening to me, why I was so unfortunate.

I began reading books on spirituality and Buddhism. After, I felt the need to put what I had read into practice. But I didn't know how to do this because I did not know anyone with whom I could talk.

Then there was what seemed

like a series of coincidences. At an art and music fair, I met a person who offered me a job at an amusement park. That's where I met a person who practiced Buddhism, and he invited me to a meeting.

From that day forward, I have not stopped practicing Buddhism. My benefits are many, but the most valuable have been the inconspicuous ones. I used to be a pessimist — for me, everything was bound to go badly. Because of this, I always blamed others. After I started practicing and studying Buddhism, I realized that, when things go badly, it does not depend on others. It depends on me, on what actions I choose to take from that point. In this way, I learned to face life in a different way, looking

within myself and suffering less.

With time, I have become a more positive person, even though I realize that, in fact, my spiritual journey is long. We are

on this earth to transform our karma from negative to positive. We have a vehicle, the Gohonzon, and thanks to this we can harmonize with the universe, raising our spiritual energy to find the meaning of life.

Another significant benefit I have received concerns health. Ten year ago, I suffered from severe headaches. Doctors were unable to cure them, but I chanted a lot of strong daimoku. It is now two years since I have had headaches.

The power of the Gohonzon is limitless.

*The power of the Gohonzon is limitless.*

GIORGIO MARESCALCHI, FERRARA

## Overcoming My Arrogance

I started chanting in March 1984. At that time, I was very arrogant and believed that I didn't need to chant to live a happy life.

In November 1983, after many quarrels, I separated from my wife.

I remember one night I even grabbed her by her jacket and was to the point of throwing her down the stairs (I lived on the 4th floor). I was stopped just in time by my son Paolo, who was then 10 years old. He was watching us fight and was crying.

The first four months of my practice, I used to go to discus-

sion meetings not because I wanted to practice this Buddhism but because I wanted to convince my friends that they were only wasting their time. That's how arrogant I was.

During that time, my wife started chanting. One night — I remember exactly, it was July 8, 1984 — my friends invited me to a jazz concert. But first, they asked, did I want to go with them to meet an American musician at his hotel?

The musician's name was Buster Williams, and he had

PLEASE SEE ITALY, NEXT PAGE

ITALY, FROM PAGE 8

been chanting for a long time. He asked us to do gongyo with him. Without really understanding the practice, I knelt in prayer...and this is how I began practicing.

Almost immediately, my wife and I started to see each other again. One reason for that is that she was responsible for teaching me gongyo and how to practice in the correct way.

After practicing for four months, we decided to receive the Gohonzon together (that was Nov. 11, 1984). Our home became a meeting place, and we took responsibility for our group.

Our challenge was to rebuild our family for kosen-rufu. Thanks to the practice, we experienced great joy for the next eight years.

Nevertheless, at the beginning of 1993, our faith was put to the test. The misunderstandings between us — the same we had faced in 1983 — were back. I started chanting two hours a day because I didn't want my family to be divided again, but the more I chanted the more I argued with my wife.

At the end of October 1993, the firm for which I worked for 30 years closed, and I was dis-



Giorgio Marescalchi

***I felt my world falling apart.... But this time, my reaction was different. It was not a matter of arrogance any more, now it was a matter of confidence and faith in the Gohonzon. I was encouraged by SGI President Ikeda's guidance, in which he reminded us that the darker the night, the closer the dawn.***

missed. In November, my wife applied for a divorce.

I felt my world falling apart. I was living alone (my son Paolo, by then 19, chose to live with his mother). But this time, my reaction was totally different. It was not a matter of arrogance any more — now it was a matter of confidence and faith in the Gohonzon. I was strongly encour-

aged by SGI President Ikeda's guidance, in which he reminded us that the darker the night, the closer the dawn. Persevere on the path of our human revolution, he said, and don't forget that many are experiencing sufferings much greater than yours.

During the first days of 1994, I was asked to join the drivers group to help during President Ikeda's visit to Italy. With my heart full of joy, I accepted. I volunteered as a driver in Florence and Bologna for 15 days. At the end of this period, I came back home. Two days later, Paolo phoned to say that he wanted to come live with me.

I soon received a retirement pension from my former employer, and eventually my wife — now my ex-wife — succeeded in starting a new family.

I hope she is as happy as I am. She deserves it, as we all do. ❖



Chiara Somenzi: 'I have become a more positive person....'

PAOLO SMANIO, FLORENCE

Like the Kankucho

I started practicing this Buddhism in 1986 in Florence, when I was 21. Until that moment, my life had been very chaotic, and I felt insignificant. I never finished anything I started.

As Nichiren Daishonin writes in the Goshō:

throughout its life. The same is true of people. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 255)

I was like the Kankucho bird.

The first benefit of my practice was that I landed, within a few months, a secure job. A year later, I went back to evening school to pick up where I had left off.

That has been the rhythm to my life since I started to practice.

I still make mistakes, but now I have the confidence that I will do my best and accomplish my human revolution. ❖

Deep in the Snow Mountains lives a bird called Kankucho which, tortured by the numbing cold, cries that it will build a nest in the morning. Yet, when the day breaks, it sleeps away the hours in the warm light of the morning sun without building its nest. So it continues to cry vainly

PAOLA CASACCIO, FLORENCE

I Need To Repay My Debt of Gratitude

I began this practice when I was 18, at a time when I was feeling quite calm after a period of struggle. I had many family problems. Two of my brothers were involved with drugs. They later stopped, but my older brother was very depressed afterward and didn't talk with anyone for two years. I was depressed, too, because it was a very sad situation for my family.

When I began to practice, I felt a lot of joy, and I made a determination to develop my life. I started to attend school in the afternoons and worked in the mornings.

The first benefit I received was that I felt a lot of energy, which I didn't have before. Four years later, I graduated.

My brother is no longer de-

pressed. He talks frequently and is now married. My brothers have their own business together.

When I started practicing, I was the only member in my town and the surrounding towns. Now there is a chapter there. I have a job I really like working for a company that organizes conferences, including SGI training sessions. I have always made contributions, even when I didn't have much money, and my financial situation has improved every year. I even bought my own house six years ago and helped my parents pay off their house. This made me very happy.

I have received many benefits from this practice, and now I feel I need to repay my debt of gratitude. ❖



Paola Casaccio talks to members with an air of appreciation. 'I have received many benefits from this practice,' she says, and now it's time to respond.



Paolo Smanio, who describes himself as once being like the Kankucho bird that procrastinated and never finished anything, now feels the confidence to never give up.

**HIGHLIGHTS**  
FROM THIS DIALOGUE

People who study while working, people who continue to pursue learning no matter their age are praiseworthy. As [Soka University founder, I sent a message to the opening session of this year's [summer correspondence] course in which I said: "This alliance of people dedicated to learning, transcending the limits of age, is spearheading the way toward a 21st century in which the third stage of life will be a period of boundless hope and fulfillment."



Everyone has the right to learn. Learning is a beautiful thing — it is light. Through learning, each of us creates a brilliant legacy of our youth, our studies and our efforts that stays with us and enriches us forever.



I commend Mr. Takahashi [a 77-year-old Soka University correspondence student] for his vigorous efforts. President Makiguchi was a firm advocate of lifelong education. He began to study English after age 50. And even in his 60s and 70s, he continued to learn with more energy and enthusiasm than most young people.



Beethoven himself declared: "I shall seize Fate by the throat, it shall never wholly subdue me. Oh, it is good to live one's life a thousand times!" (*Beethoven: Letters, Journals and Conversations*). The life of a person who triumphs over fate is 10, a hundred, a thousand times more satisfying than one that succumbs to fate without a struggle. A triumphant individual grows more youthful and vigorous with each passing year.



The gentleman who wrote [that he feels he is growing senile] and others who share the same concern can, I think, take comfort in the fact that most people lucid enough to worry about whether they are growing senile are probably far from it. Essentially, I believe that our basic spirit as Buddhist practitioners should be to never be perturbed by anything that happens. People naturally tend to be pessimistic. I think it's important to make a conscious effort to look on the bright side.



LEARN, FROM PAGE 1

I have gone to observe some of the summer courses in years past. Not wanting to disturb the classes, however, I did so unobtrusively, just looking into the classrooms from outside.

I remember once seeing a middle-aged man sitting near the Pond of Literature during lunch break, lost in deep contemplation over some subject. It was beautiful to see someone engaged in such an earnest pursuit of learning. A little distance away, near the pond's bridge, a number of other participants lay on benches catching 40 winks — no doubt so that they would be refreshed for their next class. The whole scene was one of marvelous peace and tranquility.

**SASAKI:** Yes, one often comes across scenes like that on the Soka University campus.

**IKEDA:** I once presented the Division of Correspondence Education with a calligraphy that read, "The light of learning." I was inspired in my choice of words by one of Soka Gakkai founding president Tsunesaburo

PLEASE SEE LEARN, NEXT PAGE

ARE YOU GETTING READY FOR THE APRIL 19 ENTRANCE EXAM?

Where Is the Study Material?



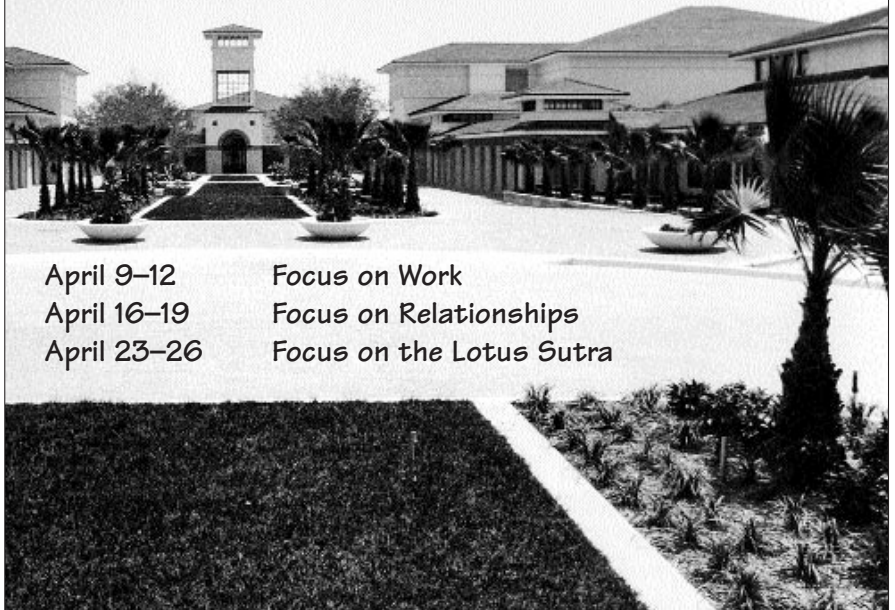
The Entrance Exam is just around the corner — April 19. So where can you find the study material for it? In *The SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-Level Textbook* and the December 1997 *Living Buddhism*.

(The material published in *Living Buddhism* is taken from *Learning From the Goshō: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 233–47; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 11–18, 56–78 and 83–115; and the pamphlet *Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue*, "Introduction" and questions 2 and 4.) Sample questions for the exam were published in the Dec. 19 *World Tribune*. The actual test questions will be drawn from the samples, so if you can answer the sample questions, you should do well on the exam.

**Good luck and happy studies!**

Spring at the Florida Nature and Culture Center

In April, the Florida Nature and Culture Center is the place to be. Work, relationships and the Lotus Sutra will be the focuses of three weekend conferences at the beautiful SGI-USA facility in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Contact your region offices today to make reservations.



April 9–12      Focus on Work  
April 16–19    Focus on Relationships  
April 23–26    Focus on the Lotus Sutra

**LEARN, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE**

Makiguchi's favorite mottoes: "Learning is light, and ignorance is darkness."

Everyone has the right to learn. Learning is a beautiful thing — it is light. Through learning, each of us creates a brilliant legacy of our youth, our studies and our efforts that stays with us and enriches us forever.

**SASAKI:** The oldest student attending this year's summer course was Masanori Kitazume, 78, from Gumma Prefecture. When asked why he enrolled in the program, he replied without hesitation: "For me, there is no tomorrow. There is only today. So I have to do it now. All President Ikeda's actions, too, are based on the spirit of no tomorrow."

**IKEDA:** That's so great. I hope Mr. Kitazume will continue to do his best.

Incidentally, since the summer course takes place during the full-time students' summer holidays, some of the correspondence students stay in dormitories on campus during the two-week course, don't they?

**MATSUOKA:** Yes. Takeshi Takahashi, 77, a victim of the Great Hanshin Earthquake, was one of those who stayed in the dorms. The regular students had put up a poster in the dormitory's hallway that said, "Good Luck to All the Correspondence Course Students!" Mr. Takahashi was moved by this show of support, and he left a note on his pillow that said: "I

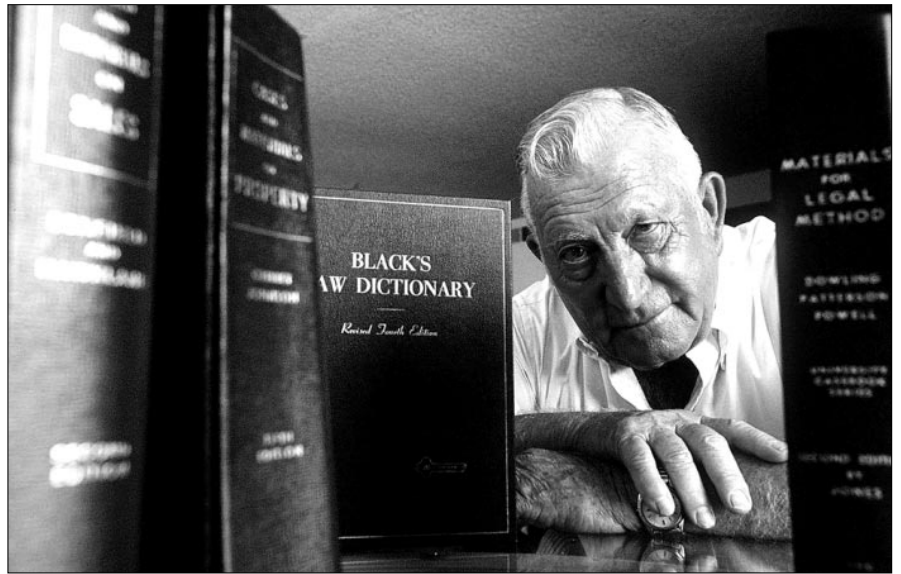
will never forget this kindness as long as I live. I am only here for the special summer course, but I will continue to do my best.... I apologize that I can do no more to show my appreciation than to leave this memo." His wife, Asae, 76, a retired nurse, accompanied him to Tokyo to support him in his studies during the course.

Mr. and Mrs. Takahashi have been living in prefabricated temporary housing for two years since they lost their home in the earthquake. Sharing with many others the pain and suffering of losing everything in that disaster, Mr. Takahashi decided to study for a law degree, wishing to open a free legal counseling service in his area for those in need.

**SASAKI:** Mr. Takahashi has been a member of the Kusunoki Chorus of the Hyogo Prefecture men's division for 21 years — since its founding. He is also a past winner of the long-running NHK [Japan's public TV network] amateur-talent show *I'm Proud of My Voice*.

One of our *Seikyo Shimbum* reporters who visited his home told me that Mr. Takahashi copies passages from the *Gosho* and from your speeches almost every day and pastes them all over the walls of his home. There's not even room left to hang a calendar!

Mr. and Mrs. Takahashi's home, which they generously allow to be used for their Soka Gakkai district activities, is always filled with the warmth and laughter of high-spirited members.



**Ben Roll, 74, a Newport Beach, Calif., great-grandfather, may be the oldest person to pass the bar exam and may practice with his son. Roll graduated from law school in 1990 and passed the bar exam after 14 tries.**

**IKEDA:** I commend Mr. Takahashi for his vigorous efforts. President Makiguchi was a firm advocate of lifelong education. He began to study English after age 50. And even in his 60s and 70s, he continued to learn with more energy and enthusiasm than most young people.

In the West, universities already play a leading role in providing adult or lifelong education. German universities have courses for the general public, and in the United Kingdom, there are educational institutes known as Universities of the Third Age — more than 30,000 of these students are past retirement age.

**SASAKI:** Each year Soka University receives many letters

from its correspondence students expressing appreciation for the opportunity to pursue their studies later in life.

**IKEDA:** I'm happy that the correspondence courses have been received with such enthusiasm. From the time I began to plan for Soka University's establishment, I wanted to include an active correspondence division. The gates to Soka University will always be open to those, irrespective of age, who have the spirit to challenge themselves and the desire to learn, including those who were unable to study in their youth for whatever reason.

**MATSUOKA:** I have personally seen how you always offer un-

stinting encouragement and words of support to those who keep advancing with the spirit to challenge themselves, especially those who forge ahead despite the daunting obstacles of fate or unfavorable circumstances.

There were several students with hearing disabilities among those participating in the special summer session this year. Some of the regular day students who are proficient in sign language volunteered to serve as their interpreters, staying with them throughout the course to convey the lectures and discussions to them.

PLEASE SEE LEARN, NEXT PAGE

## GLOSSARY

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

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

**Gohonzon:** The embodiment of the law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and the life of Nichiren Daishonin in the form of a mandala. *Honzon* means "object of fundamental respect"; *go* means "worthy of honor." The *Gohonzon* takes the form of a paper scroll inscribed with Chinese and two Sanskrit characters. Together, these characters represent life in its highest condition: Buddhahood. "Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nichiren" is written down the center of the Gohonzon.

**gongyo:** Literally, "assiduous practice." In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, gongyo means to recite the "Expedient Means" (2nd) chapter and the "Life

Span of the Thus Come One" (16th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in front of the Gohonzon.

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

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

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

**kosen-rufu:** Literally, to "widely declare and spread (Buddhism)." To secure lasting peace and happiness for all humankind through the propagation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

**Latter Day of the Law:** The period be-

ginning 2,000 years after Shakyamuni's death, when his teachings lose their power and the essence of the Lotus Sutra will be propagated.

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

**Nichiren Daishonin (1222-82):** The Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law. *Daishonin* literally means "great sage" and is used as an honorific title for Nichiren. He inscribed the Gohonzon and established the invocation of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo as the universal practice to attain Buddhahood.

**Shakyamuni:** Also known as Siddhartha Gautama. The first historically recorded Buddha, he is the founder of Buddhism.

**Soka Gakkai:** Literally, "Society for the Creation of Value." The name of the lay organization of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

**Soka Gakkai International (SGI):** The umbrella organization led by President Daisaku Ikeda, which includes organizations in 128 nations. It was established in 1975.

**ten worlds:** Potential conditions of life inherent in each individual. They are: Hell, Hunger, Animality, Anger, Humanity, Rapture, Learning, Realization, Bodhisattva and Buddhahood.

LEARN, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

This reminds me of the time you visited a school for the blind in India [1979].

**IKEDA:** That educational institute was attached to a fine comprehensive school in Narendrapur on the outskirts of Calcutta. The campus was shaded by huge green trees and graced with bright red bougainvillea blossoms. There were spacious playing fields, all kinds of garden plots, pens for domestic animals and dormitories. It was a wonderful facility that provided education for students from elementary school through the university level.

The principal was also blind. He showed me a manual training workshop where students were earnestly at work.

I was accompanied on that visit by K. R. Narayanan, who last month [July 1997] was elected India's new president. He was then vice chancellor of New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University, and we talked together at length.

**MATSUOKA:** I remember that a group of students brought you a bouquet of flowers. You embraced the students and patted them affectionately on their shoulders to encourage them.

**IKEDA:** Yes, I remember that well. Four students came to me with the bouquet.

**MATSUOKA:** You said to them in a resounding voice, "Despite the challenges you may face, I hope you will never forget to strive to live greater and greater lives, day after day!" You called out those words with boundless warmth

and affection. You also told them: "We all possess unlimited potential. What counts are the dreams you build for yourself and how bravely you strive to realize them. A person who is successful in this can be said to have triumphed in life!" The students seemed to absorb your words with their entire beings. Bright smiles lit their faces.

**SASAKI:** Soka University has developed its correspondence education to such an extent and led the Japanese educational world because it was supported by this boundless love for and commitment to the realization of each person's full potential.

I remember a quiet interlude on one of your overseas trips, when you visited Beethoven's home in Vienna [1981]. You said that although fate cruelly robbed one of the world's greatest musicians of his hearing — a fate akin to death for a musician — Beethoven was not destroyed by this loss.

**IKEDA:** Beethoven himself declared: "I shall seize Fate by the throat, it shall never wholly subdue me. Oh, it is good to live one's life a thousand times!" (*Beethoven: Letters, Journals and Conversations*). The life of a person who triumphs over fate is 10, a hundred, a thousand times more satisfying than one that succumbs to fate without a struggle. A triumphant individual grows more youthful and vigorous with each passing year.

**SASAKI:** President Ikeda, I hope you don't mind my introducing a question from one of our readers. An elderly gentleman writes: "Although I have been actively practicing Buddhism



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) declared, 'I shall seize Fate by the throat, it shall never wholly subdue me.' He stands as one of the most influential figures in music history, famed for his breathtaking and passionate piano improvisations and for the many enduring compositions he left behind. Among his best known works are his piano concertos and sonatas and his nine symphonies.

and participating in Soka Gakkai activities these many years, I feel as if I am slowly growing senile, and I am disturbed by this. What can I do?"

**IKEDA:** The gentleman who wrote this letter and others who share the same concern can, I

think, take comfort in the fact that most people lucid enough to worry about whether they are growing senile are probably far from it. Essentially, I believe that our basic spirit as Buddhist practitioners should be to never be perturbed by anything that happens. People

naturally tend to be pessimistic. I think it's important to make a conscious effort to look on the bright side.

This is a subject that I hope we can discuss in more detail in future installments. The fundamental solution lies in faith and our Buddhist practice. ❏

From SGI President Ikeda:

✱ (On finding time to read books:) It's a matter of setting your mind to it. Those who claim they have no time haven't really tried. If the desire to read is there, there is no way you can't find 10 or 20 minutes. . . . When you're head over heels for someone, for instance, you want to see him or her whenever and wherever you can — even if it's only a brief glance or just for five minutes, right? That should be our attitude toward reading. (Nov. 14, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 12)

✱ In what little free time [Shin'ichi Yamamoto] had between commitments, he busied himself writing encouraging messages on the flyleaves of books and other items to present to members. Wherever Shin'ichi traveled around Japan, his schedule was extremely hectic. He was

**WORDS TO THE WISE**

**USING TIME WELL**

**"Deep in the Snow Mountains lives a bird called Kankucho which, tortured by the numbing cold, cries that it will build a nest in the morning. Yet, when the day breaks, it sleeps away the hours in the warm light of the morning sun without building its nest. So it continues to cry vainly throughout its life. The same is true of people." (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 255)**

determined to meet, encourage and inspire as many people as he could; he didn't want to waste even a second. (Sept. 5, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 7)

✱ (When asked how he is able to do so much and still be so full of energy, Shin'ichi Yamamoto replies:) "That's the wondrous thing about Soka Gakkai ac-

tivities. There are many people I have to encourage. They are all waiting for me. When I think about them, I can't rest. I find courage. And when I meet people, I think, 'I have to inspire courage and determination in this person' or 'I mustn't allow this person to be unhappy.' The strength of my determination then arouses a powerful life force within me." (Oct. 3, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 8)

✱ The famed German playwright Johan Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) offered the following advice to children: Since one hour equals 60 minutes and one day is worth more than 1,000 minutes, there is ample time for children to do anything they please if they are convinced they can. (June 2, 1995, *World Tribune*) ❏

By HO GOKU

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY

# SHOWING OUR FAMILIES HOW TO LIVE



*In this new essay series, SGI President Ikeda uses his pen name Ho Goku — as he does in The New Human Revolution — to write the story-behind-the-story. This new series is known as "Thoughts on The New Human Revolution" in the Seikyo Shimbun, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.*

The Soka Gakkai's founding president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi died in 1944. In a letter written to his family from his freezing prison cell that January, Mr. Makiguchi said, "The three of you must not neglect your morning and evening practice of faith." The three he referred to were his wife, his daughter-in-law — who was staying with them, her husband off to war — and his 4-year-old granddaughter.

In another letter a few months earlier, he wrote to his wife and daughter-in-law: "Raise my young granddaughter with love. The most important thing is for both of you to unite and maintain strong faith."

These letters reveal just how deeply Mr. Makiguchi cared for his family, even in his prison cell. And particularly how much he prayed for his granddaughter to become a fine practitioner of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.



The World Peace Youth Music Festival held last autumn in Yokohama, Japan, was a brilliant success. I heard that the daughters of Mr. Makiguchi's granddaughter — that is, Mr. Makiguchi's great-granddaughters — performed in the festival. One is a young women's division vice chapter chief, and the other is a district chief. They are both wonderfully involved in their Soka Gakkai activities.

The grandson of my beloved mentor, Josei Toda, meanwhile, went on to complete a postgraduate course at Tokyo University and receive his doctorate. He is now an associate professor at Soka University. I am sure Mr. Toda must be overjoyed to see his grandson devoting his life to soka education.



In *The New Human Revolution*, volume 2, the "Banner of the People" chapter, I touched briefly on the education of my children. This was in response to a strong demand from readers, especially from women's division members. Our children learned the basics of faith in what is now called the future division. When I was serving as acting chapter chief of Bunkyo Chapter, my three sons joined in activities with our Bunkyo



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

Makiguchi's great-granddaughter performed in the Youth Music Festival in Japan last fall.

Chapter members.

When my eldest was in elementary and junior high school, he often went from our home in Ota Ward to meetings in Bunkyo Ward with his two younger brothers in tow. There were times, though, when he didn't want to take part in Gakkai activities.

My wife used to say to him: "When you are playing, you may enjoy yourself at the

time, but afterward you have nothing to show for it. It's different with Gakkai meetings. You may not want to go at the time, but afterward you're happy that you did." It seems our children learned for themselves that what she said was true.



My life has been defined by the per-

secution that always accompanies kosen-rufu. It is something I was prepared for and have accepted.

In 1970, for example, I was fiercely attacked and insulted by everyone. The only thing that troubled me about this was the effect it might have on my family.

But my wife was always calm and composed. "If you live according to the Goshu," she told me, "persecution is only to be expected." She always had a smile, even through the harshest times.

In 1970, my sons were 17, 15 and 12. The subject of the Soka Gakkai used to come up when they were at school. I would tell them: "People who try to live true to their convictions and accomplish great things in life invariably run into criticism and attack. I urge you not to be defeated by such persecution."

I always tried to show my sons the right way to live.



I remember when my eldest son was looking for his first job after graduating from university. He had offers from several companies.

When he asked his mother for advice, she answered without hesitation: "Working for a big, famous company is not the goal in life. The best life is one lived for the sake of kosen-rufu." My son felt the same way.

He began his adult working life by becoming a teacher at the newly established Kansai Soka High School. My second son became a member of the administrative staff at Soka University, and the third took the same course as my eldest.



Kosen-rufu extends horizontally through a network of friends. It extends vertically from parent to child, the inheritance of faith reaching from generation to generation. The future belongs to the young.

On my windowsill smiles the bright yellow spring adonis, which is known in Japan as a flower of happiness and jubilation. When the adonis feels the rays of the sun, it blooms, even from beneath the winter snows.

It is my deepest wish, every day of my life, that my friends and comrades will be the sons of their families, shining the light of the Soka Gakkai spirit on their children and their children's children.

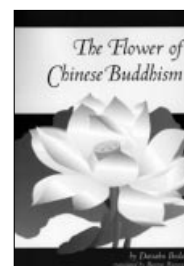


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# An Unending Experiment

People who work to transform society are persecuted by forces resistant to change, as exemplified by Gandhi's life, which he called 'an unending experiment.' But by withdrawing from this struggle, we allow the forces of good to be defeated by the forces of evil.

When asked, "Why did Mahatma Gandhi succeed?" Dr. N. Radhakrishnan, director of the memorial center Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, has a clear and quick reply: "Because he was afraid of nothing." His words echo my own conclusion. The name *Mahatma*, meaning Great Soul, was synonymous with great courage. Courage is contagious. Everyone who came into contact with Gandhi felt their spirits rise, their fear and sadness inexorably dissipate.

Once in the state of Kerala, at India's southernmost tip, a young man stood before an angry mob. It was a group of Gandhi's detractors, and the young man unflinchingly shouted them down. That young man was Dr. Radhakrishnan's father, Neelakantha Pillai. This happened in 1924 or 1925, about 10 years after Gandhi had returned to India from South Africa.

Gandhi described his life as an unending experiment. He boldly tried to transform the Indian people, calling on them to purify their hearts. He traveled all around India to spread his message. In Kerala, Dr. Radhakrishnan's home state, Gandhi also led a campaign protesting the treatment of the untouchable class, a group of Indians considered outside of the caste system and subject to dehumanizing discrimination. They were not allowed to enter the temples, homes or shops of Hindu people, to touch the belongings of others, or even to use public roads or wells.

Gandhi rose up to protest this inhumane treatment. "I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke," he said. "I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever." He would reform society from its foundations.

Changing human beings is the only way to accomplish this. Any change made without changing people's basic thinking and attitudes will not endure. The essence of Gandhism was a movement for inner transformation — a

Dr. N. Radhakrishnan,  
Director of the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti

## Recollections

By Daisaku Ikeda



Mahatma Gandhi's last footsteps on earth have been preserved here, where SGI President Ikeda walks with Dr. Radhakrishnan at the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti.

human revolution — at the grass-roots level.

It is never easy to overturn customs, practices and beliefs that have survived for thousands of years. Even some of Gandhi's comrades were taken aback by his unflinching courage. But Gandhi loved the people of the oppressed untouchable class. He called them the Harijan, or the children of god. It was his firm conviction that, irrespective of his or her social position, anyone who discriminated against the Harijan was guilty of great moral evil.

Gandhi once attended a meeting only to find the Harijan participants shunted aside in a corner of the hall. He immediately went to them and took a seat in their midst. He spoke to the crowd from there, transforming the outcast seats into the best seats in the house. It was his wish to do the same thing for society as a whole. He was a fearless revolutionary.

Dr. Radhakrishnan has said that Shakyamuni, widely known as Gautama

Buddha in India, fiercely challenged the caste discrimination of his age. Instead of simply being called a Buddha, he could also be described as a reformer, a teacher and a revolutionary. In a sense, Dr. Radhakrishnan said, Gandhi's struggle was a continuation of Shakyamuni's. He declared that Gandhi was a true bodhisattva.

Both Shakyamuni and Gandhi wanted to transform society; they were not reclusive sages who withdrew from the world. That is precisely why they were both persecuted by forces resistant to change.

Dr. Radhakrishnan's father, too, was a human rights activist. His native state of Kerala imprisoned him on several occasions. Altogether he spent some six years in prison. He was allowed to return to his home only after India gained independence in 1947. Dr. Radhakrishnan recalls of that time: "My mother did everything she could to support my father. She was raising young children, had no income and was always in danger of being

arrested herself. She endured a great deal, yet she never gave up."

Only six months after independence was achieved, Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated (Jan. 30, 1948). He was on his way to a regular prayer meeting. He was a little late in leaving for the gathering because he had guests. He was 78 and weakened by his age and his fasting, but he stepped briskly to the meeting, worried about the time, with two young women helping to support him as he walked. "If it is time to give medicine to a patient and one feels hesitant about it, the poor patient will die," Gandhi said. "So it is with prayers. It irks me if I am late for prayers even by a minute." Immediately after he said those words, three shots rang out. A fanatic Hindu had stalked and assassinated him.

For Gandhi, every minute counted. Up to the last moment of his life, the Mahatma was devoted to the service of the Indian people. His last step was a step into the midst of the people. His last words were inspired by his love and concern for the people.

At the time of Gandhi's death, Dr. Radhakrishnan was 4 years old. His parents and his mentor, Dr. Ramachandran, taught him Gandhi's spirit. After Gandhi's assassination, the nonviolent movement suddenly lost momentum. Many of the facilities founded in sympathy with Gandhian ideals were exploited by certain individuals for personal profit and fame.

But there were some who did not forget Gandhi's spirit. Dr. Radhakrishnan's parents founded a Gandhian Constructive Workers Home, sponsoring farming and craft activities. Despite their own financial difficulties, they also founded an adult education center, where people could better themselves.

They wanted to put into action their teacher's message: Serve the poor. They worked without rest. By insisting that their children pitch in and do their share of the work along with the other members of their community, Dr. Radhakrishnan's parents raised their seven children to know the honest sweat of physical labor.

When he was only 14, Dr. Radhakrishnan was arrested twice for his involvement in a student protest against the educational policies of the communist party-controlled state government. What he couldn't accept was that the communists had labeled Gandhi an enemy of the workers and an ally of the capitalists — the reason being, apparently, that Gandhi had been a personal friend of the famous Indian businessman and financier G.D. Birla. How could anyone dare call the Mahatma, who had devoted his entire life to the Indian people, an enemy of the workers?

Father and son alike were enraged. They would not compromise. The student

RADHAKRISHNAN, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

protest movement continued until the state government was ousted in elections.

"How easy it is to give up and find reasons to withdraw from the eternal 'battle' that confronts man at every moment of life," Dr. Radhakrishnan wrote in *Daisaku Ikeda: In Pursuit of a New Humanity*. But, quoting a great Indian epic, he asked, "Are we going to allow the forces of good to be defeated by the forces of evil?"

After completing his postgraduate studies, Dr. Radhakrishnan displayed a variety of talents, becoming a youth leader, a writer of great promise, and winning a Best Actor of the Year Award at a state-sponsored Festival of Arts and Drama. A bright future lay ahead of him, whatever path he might decide to pursue. His brothers, in particular, hoped that he might join the Indian Civil Service.

A turning point in his life came when he met the individual who would become his mentor. Dr. G. Ramachandran, who had been a close associate of Gandhi's, addressed the young Radhakrishnan at a meeting in New Delhi. The older man vividly remembered the youth's father boldly remonstrating with a crowd of Gandhi's detractors in Kerala many years earlier. He asked Radhakrishnan to be an instructor at an institution of higher learning he had founded in Tamilnadu. The

young man accepted. He taught at the Gandhigram Rural University and served his mentor for more than 20 years.

Dr. Ramachandran was a strict teacher. "He could be very demanding," recalls Dr. Radhakrishnan. "He wouldn't permit a speck of dust in the house. And he scolded me if I was even a minute late for an appointment." It seems that the rigorous training and discipline of Gandhi, who valued punctuality so highly in his own affairs, lived on in Dr. Ramachandran.

When the Indian government tried to institute mandatory military training on university campuses in the 1960s, Dr. Ramachandran vigorously opposed it. "I will never permit my students to take up arms," he said. "I will oppose this, even if I have to fight alone to the bitter end."

His late mentor Gandhi had called out to young people to be champions of non-violence. Dr. Ramachandran could never betray that ideal. He kept up his struggle until he was 90 years old. In his final words, he declared that though his body might die, his spirit would always be with his comrades. He would continue to fight alongside them and hoped that they, too, would persist in their cause, one in spirit with him.

My own mentor, Josei Toda, the Soka Gakkai's second president, was also extremely strict. "The relationship of mentor and disciple is only cemented when the dis-

ciple proves himself a good one," he said. "It all depends on the self-awareness of the disciple."

After his mentor's passing, Dr. Radhakrishnan traveled around the world as an emissary of Gandhi's teachings, calling on his father and his mentor to watch over him and his efforts. He was determined to create a great history by carrying on their work.

He worked with youth in both labor service and aid programs, living the life of a fighter for peace on the front lines as a member of the Shanti Sena (Peace Brigade). His life was threatened because of his efforts to continue Gandhi's struggle against discrimination.

In 1992, I visited the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, a memorial centering on the old Birla House where Gandhi spent his last 144 days. Dr. Radhakrishnan, as the center's director, gave me a tour. At the very back of the ground floor, there was a simple room with a bed and several utensils of daily life. Here the Mahatma carried out his last fast (of six days) as a protest against bloody conflicts among fellow Indians.

Many paid lip service to the Mahatma's greatness, but far too few of the Indian people really understood the heart of his message. Gandhi frequently recited a verse by the great Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore:

*If they answer not to thy call walk*

*alone,  
If they are afraid and cower mutely  
facing the wall,  
O thou of evil luck,  
Open thy mind and speak out alone.*

*If they turn away, and desert you  
when crossing the wilderness,  
O thou of evil luck,  
trample the thorns under thy tread,  
and along the blood-lined track travel  
alone.*

From the room a small path was visible. Gandhi's last footsteps on this earth — those he took on his way to that fateful prayer meeting — have been preserved there. I walked the path with Dr. Radhakrishnan.

The sky over New Delhi was a dazzling blue. Great trees with lush green foliage cast deep shade. The short path seemed extraordinarily long. I felt as if the Mahatma walked it still, directly into the heart of the people and toward the boundless future.

Even now his bold steps move forward with courage and determination. The Mahatma, the Great Soul, lives. For here is his second-generation disciple, his youthful counterpart Dr. Radhakrishnan.

When I left the garden of the Gandhi memorial hall, my friends from Bharat (India) Soka Gakkai were waiting for me, with smiles bright as the beaming sun. ☐

**Harriet Tubman** — Born a slave in 1821, Tubman created a network of black churches known as the Underground Railroad. She personally helped some 200 people escape slavery.

**Martin Luther King Jr.** — King credited the passive resistance techniques of Gandhi for his own strategies of nonviolent resistance. In 1964, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

**Benjamin Banneker** — Banneker, mathematician, astronomer and inventor, was appointed by George Washington in 1790 to work on the new capital of Washington, D.C.

**Whitney Moore Young** — Considered the father of affirmative action, Young used his position as executive director of the National Urban League to convince corporate leaders and philanthropists to help inner city poor.

**Jackie Robinson** — In 1947, Robinson became the first black player in major league baseball playing for the Brooklyn Dodgers. He proved to be one of the best players of the era.

**Scott Joplin** — Though popular, Joplin did not receive recognition as a serious composer until some 50 years after his death. In

1976, his 1911 opera "Treemonisha" won the Pulitzer Prize.

**Carter Godwin Woodson** — He originated Black History Week in 1926, which evolved into Black History Month. Woodson worked in West Virginia coal mines before earning his doctorate in history from Harvard.

**Mary McLeod Bethune** — Bethune built the Daytona Normal School for Negro Girls into Bethune-Cookman College. Under President Calvin Coolidge, and later Herbert Hoover, she became involved in the National Child Welfare Commission.

**Sojourner Truth** — During the Civil War, Truth traveled the country advocating the rights of all people to be free and for women to participate fully in society.

**Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable** — One of the first black frontiersmen to arrive in Michigan Territory, Du Sable has been credited with the founding of Chicago.

**James Weldon Johnson** —

American writer, educator, diplomat, and lawyer, Johnson was a founder and secretary (1916–30) of the NAACP. He was American consul (1906–12), first in Venezuela and then in Nicaragua.

**A. Philip Randolph** — Randolph organized the first all-black labor union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Randolph's efforts were essential to the formation of the first Fair Employment Practices Committee and the integration of the armed services in the 1940s.

**Ida B. Wells** — At the turn of the century, Wells led the anti-lynching crusade. A writer, she became part-owner of a newspaper, the *Memphis Free Speech*, and was a founder of the NAACP.

**Jan E. Matzeliger** — Matzeliger patented his Lasting Machine in 1880. Until then, a cobbler could produce about 50 shoes a day; with the machine, the number increased to at least 150.

**W.E.B. Du Bois** — A civil rights pioneer, historian author and ed-

ucator, Du Bois was a founder of the NAACP and edited the influential *Crisis* magazine.

**Percy Lavon Julian** — In 1935, Julian synthesized physostigmine from the calabar bean to treat glaucoma. Despite this, DePauw University denied him a professorship because of his race. Julian is noted most for his synthesis of cortisone, used to treat arthritis.

**Dr. Allison Davis** — Dr. Davis, social anthropologist and educator, challenged the cultural bias of standardized intelligence tests and fought for an understanding of human potential beyond racial class and caste. His work helped end legalized racial segregation.

**Bessie Coleman** — Coleman was denied admission to aviation schools in the U.S. because of her race and gender. In 1921, she earned an international pilot's license in Paris and returned to the U.S. where she gained fame for high-flying stunts.

**Ernest E. Just** — Just was known primarily for his work in marine

biology. Throughout the 1930s, he conducted research in Germany, France and Italy, and published 50 papers. He was one of the founders of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

**Benjamin O. Davis Sr.** — In a distinguished military career, Davis rose from private to become the nation's first black brigadier general.

*Not part of the Black Heritage Month commemorative stamps, these stamps also are pictured:*

**Paul Dunbar** — Born June 27, 1872, Dunbar was a poet of distinction. Also notable are his novel, *The Uncalled*, and a newspaper that he founded, *The Tattler*.

**Roberto Clemente** — Born in Puerto Rico, Clemente in 1973 he became the first Hispanic member of the Baseball Hall of Fame.

**Joe Louis** — Joseph Louis Barrow, "The Brown Bomber," did as much for blacks in the sport of boxing as Jackie Robinson did for baseball. Louis earned his place on top in June 1937.

**Duke Ellington** — Born Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington in 1899, he was a pioneering band leader and composer from about 1918 to 1974. ☐

## Black Heritage

Short bios of of the African Americans celebrated by the U.S. Postal Service.

See p. 16 for pictures of the stamps.

# TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

## The U.S. Postal Service Honors African Americans



The first stamp in the U.S. Postal Service's Black Heritage series commemorated Harriet Tubman and was issued in 1978. On Jan. 28, the post office will issue the 21st in this series, honoring Madame C.J. Walker, the nation's first female millionaire and cosmetic-industry businesswoman. These Americans not only made important contributions to our lives today, they did it in an atmosphere of discrimination and distrust, when few doors were open to them. Take a look at the other stamps issued to honor the contributions of African Americans. How many do you recognize? Do you know what their accomplishments included? You might be surprised. (See page 15 for brief descriptions of what made these Americans significant.)

COMING NEXT WEEK:

The Boys and Girls Group's 'Friends for Peace'