

# World Tribune

No. 3177

THE YEAR OF VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE FOR THE NEW CENTURY

FEBRUARY 6, 1998

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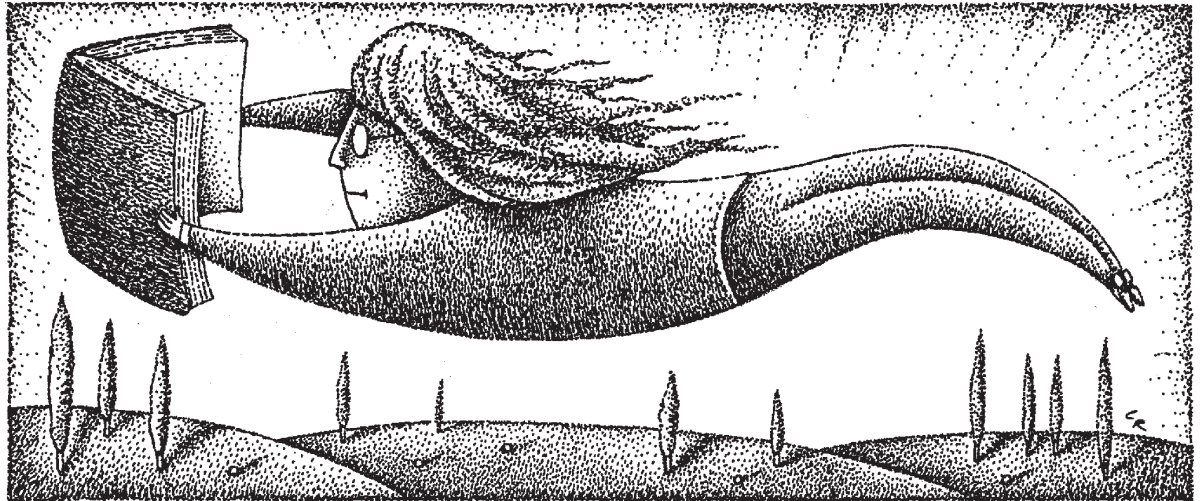
A woman repairs her reputation by practicing faith.

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

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## Discovering Great Literature

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More effort needs to be made to show people how wonderful it is to explore literature. Life is a quest.

This is the 18th installment of a series of discussions on youth among SGI President Ikeda and Soka Gakkai high school division chiefs Hidenobu Kimura (young men's chief) and Kazue Igeta (young women's chief), representing the members of the high school division.

**KIMURA:** Today we have some questions regarding literature. In an earlier installment, we talked about the importance of reading (Nov. 14, 1997, *World Tribune*). Many members were inspired by that discussion and now read with a passion.

**IGETA:** We often make excuses for not reading, such as being too busy, but actually, once we make a firm resolve to read, we

**We are always searching for the answers to the grand questions: What is it to be human? What is a good life? Literature is an excellent companion and guide on that quest.**

find that we do have time. One student said that our discussion on that subject gave her a new appreciation of how much fun reading can be.

**IKEDA:** Yes, literature is a very important subject, and it deserves to be talked about again in the hope that it may help high school division members to lead rich and satisfying lives, becoming personable young people who understand others' hearts.

In Japan today, great literature is far removed from most

people's daily lives. It is viewed as something to be read only for school exams. What a sad waste. More effort needs to be made to show people how wonderful it is to explore literature. Life is a quest. We are always searching for the answers to the grand questions: What is it to be human? What is a good life? Literature is an excellent companion and guide on that quest.

**KIMURA:** There are many ways to have fun, I think. For example, computer games are defi-

nately fun. But once the game is over, there's nothing to show for it. Many people have experienced this. But the feeling one has after reading a really good book lasts forever.

**IKEDA:** Yes. Playing something like a video game gives momentary pleasure, but reading has a far more enduring impact. Reading requires mental effort and perseverance — we have to use our imagination and make our way through a book word by word, line by line, page by page.

It may be difficult, but we cultivate our hearts and minds only to the extent that we challenge ourselves. Those who read great literature have more

PLEASE SEE LITERATURE, 9

### INTERVIEW

## March 16: Setting Your Own Goal

Ed Feasel, SGI-USA youth division leader, talks about the goal of gathering 10,000 youth for the March 16 commemorative meetings and inviting each one to have his or her own goal.

**Q** What is the youth division focusing on right now?

**A** We're supporting the organizational focuses that General Director Zaitzu outlined: developing our faith, nurturing youth and strengthening families. To nurture youth, we are now focusing on our

March 16 commemorative meetings. As you know, this March 16 will mark the 40th anniversary of the "dress rehearsal for kosen-rufu" that the Soka Gakkai youth held with Josei Toda, the Soka Gakkai's second president, in 1958. At that meeting the baton was passed to the next generation, specifically to young Daisaku Ikeda.

**Q** What are the youth planning for March 16?

**A** We discussed this thoroughly with the regional youth division leaders at the Central Executive Committee meeting last

PLEASE SEE GOAL, 5



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

### OUR ORGANIZATION

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

### OUR PURPOSE

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

### OUR PRACTICE

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

### OUR HERITAGE

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

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the SGI-USA community center nearest you — there are more than 60 across the country. (You can look in the phone book or call our national headquarters at (310) 451-8811.) The community center can direct you to SGI-USA members in your town, so you can ask questions and find out more. Our website address is [www.sgi-usa.org](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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# Love Is an Inside Job

## EDITORIAL

As Valentine's Day approaches, many of us may be thinking about chocolates, flowers and a candlelit rendezvous with our special someone. But others may be feeling the pangs of loneliness and despair more sharply than ever.

Some members have been chanting and making efforts for five, 10, even 20 years to create a fulfilling, romantic relationship — seemingly to no avail. Even if we have a sense of mission, a successful career, a nice home, good friends and good health, without someone special to share joys and sorrows with, we may feel that something important is missing.

When you're feeling lovelorn, there's almost nothing that another person can say to lift your spirits — except, maybe, "I love you and want to marry you." But even that may compound your misery, depending on who says it.

The bottom line is that love — like happiness — is an inside job. It's really about you and how you feel about yourself.

Nothing external, or outside ourselves, can bring us true happiness. Likewise, if we want love, we must give it to ourselves first rather than seek it from other people.

We can grow to love ourselves by coming to know who we are in the most fundamental sense: Bodhisattvas of the Earth. It could be said that when we deepen our appreciation for our life — deepen our understanding of and respect for our Buddha nature — our relationships with others will come to reflect this self-development.

But that's not to say that we love ourselves only so others will love us. And it's not to suggest that when we love ourselves, creating a happy relationship is a snap. Many painful obstacles can arise, from unrequited love to illness to the death of a spouse or partner.

The fact is, love and relationships aren't easy, no matter what your "love karma" may be. As Valentine's Day approaches, we'd like to take

this opportunity to reprint some of SGI President Ikeda's advice about love and relationships.

The following quotes were published in the Jan. 31, 1997 *World Tribune*.

• Real love is not two people clinging to each other; it can only be fostered between two strong people secure in their individuality. A shallow person will have only shallow relationships. If you want to experience real love, it is important to first develop a strong self-identity.

• [Regarding the poet Dante and his unrequited love:] Dante never stopped loving her. Ultimately, that love enabled him to strengthen, elevate and deepen the capacity of his heart into something truly noble and sublime.... I think there are many things to be learned from this great poet who stayed true to his feelings, whether they were reciprocated or not, and transformed them into his guiding inspiration in life.

• Please don't let a broken heart discourage you. Tell yourself that you're not so weak or fragile as to let such a minor thing bring you down. You may think there is no one who could possibly compare to that person [you love], but how will they compare to the next 100, the next 1,000, the next 10,000 people you will meet? You cannot declare with any certainty that there will not be others who far surpass him or her. As you yourself grow, the way you look at people will change as well.

• If there's someone you like, what's wrong with holding onto that feeling inside your heart for a while and resolving to polish yourself so that you can become the kind of person he or she, or anyone, would be proud to be with? Such a spirit of self-development is most admirable, I feel. Whether or not that person ever learns how you feel in your heart, with time those feelings will grow and mature like a fine wine.

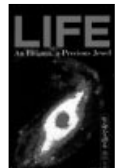
• Whether you are happy, sad or suffering, if you chant honestly to the Gohonzon with the feelings in your heart, your life will naturally proceed in the right direction. W

## Available NOW

**'Life – An Enigma, a Precious Jewel' in Paperback**  
by Daisaku Ikeda

First published more than 15 years ago, the SGI president explains in this book the meaning of life, the spirit, and existence after death in a style both passionate and comprehensible.

Price: \$ 12.00 M/O#: 1163



## World Tribune

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## WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

### Don't Forget Anyone

I was touched by the picture caption from the *World Tribune's* "Friends for Peace" issue of Nov. 7, 1997, in which people who were in the kitchen and those "not shown" but belonging to the group of Edisto Island were cited in the caption.... People who are not cited and are forgotten about will tend to feel like they don't belong to the group and not want to participate. It is important to treat everybody equally in a group.... Everyone has an equally important role for kosen-rufu, whether it be leading a discussion meeting, coordinating district activities, tending to a sick family member, propagating to neighbors, taking care of the time-consuming, work-related responsibilities or spending hours creating masterpieces for kosen-rufu. Whatever group or district we belong to, we must, each of us, not forget any one of our fellow members.... according them each the same care and consideration even if it is in just mentioning their names and lauding them for taking care of whatever they need to in their lives.

— MARC GINSBURG, New York

### Connected to the Real World

I stopped reading the *World Tribune* about five years ago. I had subscribed for years and years, but the paper became, in my view, numbingly repetitious and simple-minded. Recently, a fellow member gave me some recent back issues, and I can hardly describe my astonishment at the change. Quotes from the AA Big Book, references to therapy, opinion pieces that reflect a wide spectrum of concerns — this was unthinkable just a short time ago. The breadth and depth of the articles has really expanded. I'd like to congratulate the staff and the SGI membership in general for developing the *World Tribune* into a publication that's finally connected to the real world.

— ANN ANDERSON, Sherman Oaks, Calif.

### Another Thought on Happiness

In response to Michael Lisagor's "Perspective," "There's More to Happiness Than Being Happy" (Jan. 16), I am reminded of something SGI President Ikeda said in *Life, An Enigma, A Precious Jewel*. He said: "True happiness is not born of escape; ecstasy based on delusion does not continue. Enlightenment comes from seeing the truth, no matter how unpleasant it may be."

My understanding of chanting for someone's happiness and for their suffering to be removed means I am praying for their eyes to be opened so they can see what it is they need to see in order to fulfill their dreams.

Without getting caught up on what word to use for happiness, I find I am the most fulfilled when I am simply being myself and observing life without judgment.

— LAURA AVED, West Hollywood, Calif.

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

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

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

## A Tribute to a Friend

### PERSPECTIVE

#### A friend's battle with cancer and victory even in death inspired Teri Clayton to triumph over her depression.

By TERI CLAYTON  
COLUMBIA, MD.



Teri Clayton

Beverly was a member in my chapter. We did not know each other well, but she was a true friend in faith. I would see her almost every Sunday at the community center, sitting toward the back to be near where her children were playing. She was always smiling a bright, beautiful smile and chanting daimoku as if there were no tomorrow. Unfortunately for us, the day came for Beverly when there would be no tomorrow. She died Oct. 20, 1997, after a long battle with cancer.

My first encounter with Beverly was the day I was on the standby list to see SGI President Ikeda in New York. When I learned that there was no room and that I would not be able to go, Beverly and her bright, shining smile helped me through the disappointment. She helped me to see that I had won, that the benefit was in how much I had grown. Her conviction allowed no room for doubt.

The next contact I had with Beverly was after learning that her cancer had resurfaced and was spreading. Our district held several chanting sessions at her home to support her. I went to one such session feeling guilty that I had not made more of an effort to be supportive. I stayed to tell her that I was chanting for her and that I would come any time, day or night, to chant with her. I wanted to encourage her.

Well, I did eventually get to say all those things, but not until after Beverly, with her smile, spent almost an hour encouraging me to continue fighting for a safe and peaceful environment where I lived. We were both dealing with vandalism and juvenile delinquency within our communities. I was ready to give up, to move and leave it all behind (so I fantasized). Even my daimoku had taken on a de-

feated, escapist quality.

But not Beverly. "All you have to do," she said, "is say: 'Gohonzon, I am sick of this. It has got to change. I will do whatever it takes.'" This was her attitude of faith.

My third encounter with Beverly was at the community center. I, in the throes of depression, could barely keep myself in front of the Gohonzon and was leaving the meeting early. I stopped to say hello to Beverly, to tell her I was chanting for her. She said, "I'm chanting for you, too." And before I knew it she was encouraging me again: "Don't give up. Do the best you can, even if it's only five minutes. It's OK, you can do it." I could feel Beverly's daimoku supporting me.

My final encounter with Beverly was less than 48 hours before she died. When I went to visit her in the hospital, I was nervous. I didn't know what condition she was in. As I came around the corner, I heard the sound of daimoku emanating from her room. When I opened the door I was immediately struck by Beverly's beautiful face and her wonderful smile. Take away the oxygen and the IVs and you would never have known that she was sick.

We talked for almost an hour. She was very candid about her situation, and apologized in advance lest she should drift off to sleep while we were talking. Indeed, she said the doctor had told her that this was probably how death would occur, and that it could be any time. But Beverly was not afraid. She was 100 percent confident in the power of her faith.

"I told the Gohonzon," she said, "that I appreciate the lesson this [illness] has taught me, but I don't have time for this now. I have to go home; I have children to raise." I have worked in hospice a long time and have sat by the bedside of many terminal patients. Beverly was not in denial, but neither did she resign herself to death. She was fully, completely and beautifully alive. She epitomized doubt-free faith and was living proof of everything that Nichiren Daishonin taught in his writings, that President Ikeda is teaching us. All the causes we make, the benefits we receive — everything comes down to the moment of death. Beverly's life was a shining example of faith equals daily life.

The day that Beverly died I suddenly recognized the stark contrast between her life and mine. Here was a woman whose body was ravaged by a powerful

enemy, determined to take her life away. Beverly rallied her faith and defeated her enemy. True, the cancer succeeded in destroying the shell that was her body, but it could not take away her spirit. She was at peace, and her death was the ultimate benefit of her practice, her doubt-free faith.

On the other hand, I am in good health with every reasonable chance for a long and prosperous life. I have almost everything that is supposed to make us happy: a great job, a nice house, a decent income, good friends. Yet I struggle with an illness, depression, that saps the strength from my soul. While Beverly fought until the last moment of her life, I have been all too ready to give up my battle, to sink into the depths of despair. I have even contemplated taking my own life, that which Buddhism teaches us is so precious that even one extra minute is worth more than all the gold in the world.

Beverly's body was ravaged by cancer, but her spirit was strong. My body is healthy but my soul is being ravaged by the "cancer" that is depression.

With this realization came a determination. As my tribute to Beverly, I pledge that no matter what I will not let this beast that is my depression control my life. I will conquer this obstacle, move beyond it, grow and face new challenges. For Beverly, for me, for those I hope to encourage by my victory, I will summon the power of faith and fight for my life as she did for hers. Because, as Beverly would have said: "Gohonzon, I don't have time for this. There are things I have to do."

What a strong impact we can have on someone's life without even knowing it. Beverly and I were not close, yet my life was undeniably altered by our brief encounters. It reminds me that Buddhism is how we live, not merely how much we chant, how many meetings we attend, or how many people we introduce to Buddhism. It's what we do after we get up from in front of the Gohonzon. It's about being sincere, honest and respectable. Faith is the sum of our existence — it is what we believe, who we are, and how we live. Beverly was not perfect, but she was always true to herself and her faith. This is what we must strive for.

This is Buddhism. ☸

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

NEWS BRIEFS

JAPAN

### SGI President Meets With Canadian Cancer Specialist

SGI President Ikeda and his wife, Kaneko, met with Dr. René Simard, rector of the University of Montreal in Canada, and his wife, Françoise Yven, at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji on Jan. 6. Dr. Simard, a noted pathologist and expert on cancer, and Mr. Ikeda have engaged in an ongoing dialogue since they first met in December 1990.

The dialogue, which is being serialized, beginning in February 1998 in the Japanese magazine *Ushio*, is titled "Discussion on Birth, Aging, Sickness and Death." The serialized discussion will also include input from Dr. Guy Bourgeault, professor of education and bioethics at the University of Montreal and a close colleague of Dr. Simard. During the course of this, their fourth, meeting, the two men discussed such topics as the health of society, mental and spiritual health, the role of women in bringing more humanism to medical treatment, and the spirit to serve people as a requirement for doctors.

— Courtesy of SGI Newsletter

JAPAN

### SGI President Meets With Former Colombian President

On Jan. 12, SGI President Ikeda and his wife, Kaneko, welcomed Cesar Gaviria Trujillo and his wife, Ana Milena Munoz de Gaviria, to the SGI International Conference Hall in Shinanomachi, Tokyo. Mr. Gaviria, who served as Colombia's president from 1990 to 1994, is secretary-general of the Organization of American States.

During his term as president of Colombia, Mr. Gaviria promoted the democratization and modernization of that country by carrying out political and economic reforms, including the implementation of a new constitution. He was also instrumental in holding peaceful negotiations with guerrilla organizations and the enforcement of drug control. Mr. Gaviria said that President Ikeda is well known in South America for his commitment to peace and humanity and his efforts to create bonds of friendship between South America and Japan and among people throughout the world.

— Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER

WASHINGTON

### Music Group Performs at King Day Celebration

The Tacoma youth division Crescendo Group performed Jan. 19 at the Tacoma Community Center in celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. The members of the group — a rainbow ensemble of diverse races, ethnicities and ages — had pushed themselves to the utmost in preparation for the event.

— STEVE MCKNIGHT

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](mailto:SokaNews@aol.com).

## SGI President Proposes New Disarmament Initiatives

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSWIRE  
Tokyo, Jan. 26

The need to strengthen global systems of human rights protection is stressed in the annual peace proposal released today by the SGI and written by SGI President Ikeda. The SGI president also expresses his hope that the lessons of the recently signed land mine treaty will be reflected in disarmament efforts to control the proliferation of small arms and toward the eventual abolition of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Ikeda says that small arms are a leading cause of destruction and death in civil and regional conflicts throughout the world and calls for effective international controls on these weapons. The SGI also supports the Abolition 2000 campaign, which seeks the signing by the year 2000 of a treaty requiring the phased elimination of all nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework.

Noting that 1998 marks the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Mr. Ikeda proposes the establishment of a network of independent human rights agencies in each country that would promote — through reporting, public education and relief efforts — the implementation of existing human rights treaties.

These agencies would function based on the principle of transgovernmentalism, a shared sovereignty that avoids the limitations of both purely domestic human rights bodies and inter-governmental forums. These agencies would not only support one another's efforts but would



Nobel Peace Prize winner Jody Williams at a 1997 conference to ban land mines. Ms. Williams and her organization, the International Campaign to Ban Land Mines, was instrumental in winning ratification of an international treaty to eliminate the use of land mines. In this year's peace proposal, SGI President Ikeda said he hopes the lessons learned in that fight will be reflected in other disarmament efforts around the world.

also actively cooperate with different national and international non-governmental organizations active in the protection and promotion of human rights.

The basis for a new globalism must be the spirit to benefit both oneself and others, President Ikeda says. Pointing out that unbridled competition often leads people and countries to prey

upon those weaker than themselves, Mr. Ikeda suggests that a qualitative transformation in the nature of competition — toward what he terms humanitarian competition — is necessary.

He calls on the world's largest, most powerful countries to act with a renewed sense of responsibility for the welfare of all humanity.



Price: \$15.95

m/o: #0153

### NEW CHILDREN'S BOOK

In SGI-USA bookstores now, Daisaku Ikeda's book 'Kanta and the Deer' is a story about the value of friendship. Also available by mail order.

GOAL, FROM PAGE 1

December. We made a goal of gathering more than 10,000 youth across America. Of course, the commemorative meetings will be held locally, but it is our determination that collectively more than 10,000 youth will attend.

The men's and women's division members expressed their sincere desire to support us in whatever way possible toward this goal, which we deeply appreciate. Just as Mr. Zaitzu said when he introduced this year's focal points, the entire organization must nurture youth.



Ed Feasel encourages youth in San Francisco.

Recently, SGI President Ikeda explained the importance of our individual practice for accomplishing our goals. He said that every time we do gongyo and chant daimoku, it's like starting the engine in our lives. How much we can accomplish depends on the size of our engine.

If we have a small engine, it will be a struggle to challenge even small hills, or small goals. With a large engine the steep hills are no problem.

He went on to explain that the

we enlarge our engine is also through our consistent practice of gongyo and daimoku. Activities also provide a great opportunity for us to challenge ourselves to encourage others.

This bodhisattva practice, to encourage others, is very important. I know for myself, there are times when I feel overwhelmed with my own problems. At these times I feel trapped and my first inclination is to retreat and focus on my own narrow world.

However, when I instead reach out and encourage others, I find myself developing a much broader perspective. President Ikeda has encouraged us to break out of our lesser selves and develop our greater selves. Our efforts to encourage others allow us to do precisely that. Based on the law of cause and effect, all of our efforts to encourage others become a great cause for victory in life. So, with this awareness of practicing for ourselves and others, we can all challenge our goals through this March 16 campaign and create a great victory in our lives. 卍

and a member of the brass band. My seniors would often have to drag me out of bed to get me to attend practices and meetings. At some point this all changed, though, and I became eager to participate. The change was that I had developed a goal — I had a dream to go to one of the best colleges.

I believe that it was through brass band activities that I developed the fortune to get accepted to and attend Yale University on a scholarship. In the same way, I hope the youth can have concrete personal goals in this activity.

**Q How do activities help youth accomplish their goals?**

**A** I think that's an important question. Buddhism teaches us that it is important to practice for oneself and for others. Activities, like the March 16 commemorative meetings, allow us to strengthen both parts of our practice.

When we participate in activities, we often hear experiences and guidance that encourage us to develop our individual prac-

**Q How is each area preparing for these commemorative meetings?**

**A** We want to use these meetings to spur a thorough home visit campaign. One of the things I hope we can bring up during the visits is the value of our publications. With the recent shift to a direct-mail system, I think many youth might have slipped through the cracks and aren't aware how simple it is to subscribe to the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*. If we can take subscription forms with us when we meet youth, we can show them how easy it is and encourage them to renew. Also, the geographic reorganization that is happening in many parts of the country, along with the temple issue, makes it important for us to stay in touch with all youth and do our best to encourage them.

**Q What do you want youth to come away with from March 16?**

**A** While achieving the goal we have set is important, I think the most important thing is for all individuals to set their own goals to accomplish in their lives through this activity. I remember when I was in high school

**FOR WOMEN**

**Helping Others Is the Noblest Way of Life**



Introducing a friend to Buddhism, Kathy Olesky learns again how holding a lantern for someone else lights our own way.

By **KATHY OLESKY**  
NEW ENGLAND REGION  
WOMEN'S LEADER

**A**s Buddhists, our greatest hope is the happiness not only of ourselves and those nearest and dearest to us but also that of our friends and fellow members," SGI President Ikeda has said. "I want this person and that one to become happy. I want to enable all members to enjoy themselves' — there is no more noble way of life than praying for and exerting ourselves for others' happiness."

In November 1995, the New England Region completed its geographic reorganization. I was overjoyed because, for the first time since I had moved to Newton, Mass., there was a discussion meeting five minutes from home. I felt refreshed and determined to spread the Mystic Law throughout my community.

However, I soon realized that the reorganization did not guarantee that people from my neighborhood would come beating down our doors to learn about Buddhism. Some of the district members gathered once a week to chant for the district to grow.

In August 1996, I gave birth to my third child. That was one way of increasing the membership, but I began to feel I would never introduce someone to the practice. I was challenging a difficult postpartum recovery and hardly left the house.

One day in November, my friend Kathy came to visit me and my new daughter. We had been friends since our boys were in kindergarten. She literally stumbled into my Gohonzon room instead of the

nursery and exclaimed: "Wow, look at this — your own room dedicated to your spiritual practice! Did you ever tell any one else about this?"

From that day onward, Kathy began to practice. She seemed to naturally grasp the principles of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. She began chanting regularly, learned gongyo almost effortlessly, sent in her subscription to the publications and attended the discussion meetings. She received the Gohonzon this past October!

Our regular gongyo sessions have become the greatest source of encouragement



for my own practice as I watch her deepen her faith. As the Daishonin mentioned in one of his writings, "If one holds a lantern for another, his or her

way is illuminated" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1598). Furthermore, she has a tremendous spirit to introduce others to the practice and constantly brings her family members and friends to meetings.

I am determined to pray to bring one more person into the Soka family. "A Ship to Cross the Sea of Suffering" reads: "You must realize that it is because of a deep karmic relationship from the past that you can teach others even a sentence or phrase of the Lotus Sutra. The sutra reads, 'It is extremely difficult to save those who are deaf to the True Law.' The 'True Law' means the Lotus Sutra" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 9). Now, in February, the women's division is focusing on propagation. Let's bring our friends to our great annual event, the women's division commemorative meeting. 卍

**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)).

The first lecture on 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings' ends with Shin'ichi Yamamoto's answers to questions on writing for kosen-rufu and chanting daimoku in other languages.

Shin'ichi has a warm, informal dialogue with the students, even inviting them to a movie.

The next question came from Akira Usuda, a Tokyo University law student. "Earlier," Usuda began, "you explained the passage 'Kyo [of Nam-myoho-rence-kyo] represents the words and voices of all living beings' (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708). You said that kyo of Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, which literally means scripture, has a much broader meaning — that it refers not just to Buddhist scriptures but all the words and voices of all living beings in the universe. You also said that in the broadest sense it includes action and behavior, too. Does that mean that the articles and essays we write are also scriptures, or kyo?"

Usuda was an editor of the student division journal *Daisan Bummei* (The Third Civilization). Working for kosen-rufu in the sphere of journalism, he wanted to know more about the significance of his work in the light of Buddhism.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto replied: "Writing is a concrete expression of language — of words, remarks and statements. In addition, it is an action. So of course it is included in the meaning of kyo.

"Nichiren Daishonin's writings, the Gosho, are also kyo, or scripture. As a result, any article written out of a sincere wish to spread Buddhism is an example of 'the voice does the Buddha's work' (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708). Ideas, philosophies and principles are all communicated through writing. Communication is really the lifeline of kosen-rufu.

"Usuda, I want you to excel in the field of journalism, doing all you can to fight oppression and protect the people's rights. I'm really looking forward to seeing you do great things."

The members' earnest seeking spirit knew no bounds.

# The New Human Revolution

BY HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 5

## Young Eagles

Translation of parts 24–25 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.

The next question was from Masaya Ueno, who had graduated from Keio University that spring and was now employed by the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's newspaper. "I'd like to ask about the passage 'Sanskrit and Chinese join in a single moment to form Nam-myoho-rence-kyo' (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708)," he said. "When members in the United States chant daimoku, they do so in Japanese. They say, 'Nam-myoho-rence-kyo.' In the future, won't it be necessary to translate Nam-myoho-rence-kyo into different languages, so that members in other countries



lish in the United Kingdom, and so forth. And to explain the Gosho in those languages so that our members there will come to fully understand the meaning and significance of Nam-myoho-rence-kyo.

"But daimoku will be the same wherever it is chanted. Daimoku is a universal language that is instantly understood by Buddhas."

"The Lotus Sutra is called the *Saddharma-pundarikasutra* in Sanskrit, for example, but that doesn't mean we should chant, 'Nam Saddharma Pundarika Sutra' as the daimoku. It's a matter of sound and rhythm."

Everyone listened to Shin'ichi with great eagerness and enthusiasm. "For example," he continued, "each musical composition has a unique rhythm. Beethoven's works reflect his inner rhythm, which transcends the barriers of nationality, language and culture and affects all



can chant daimoku in their own language?" He seemed seriously concerned.

Shin'ichi replied without a moment's hesitation: "Nam-myoho-rence-kyo is an eternal and unchanging Law, the supreme invocation. It will never be chanted in translation.

"Of course, it is perfectly acceptable to translate Nichiren Daishonin's writings into German in Germany, into Eng-

who hear it. Nam-myoho-rence-kyo is a sound that creates unity with the law of the universe, the fundamental rhythm of the cosmos.

"Life responds to the vibrations of a voice intoning this sound. This is the marvelous property of daimoku. If Nam-myoho-rence-kyo were to be translated into other languages, its rhythm would be different from language to language. That's why it can't be translated."

After fielding as many as 20 questions, Shin'ichi brought the session to a close.

"Let's stop here today," he said. "Considering the time you will need to prepare, I want to schedule the next lecture for the end of October. Henceforth, our sessions will begin with you reading and commenting on that session's section of 'Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings.' After that, I'll lecture, and then we'll have a Q-and-A session, as we did today. Please study hard for our next lecture!"

Then Shin'ichi smiled warmly and said: "I'll bet you're all hungry. Today I'm going to treat you all to tempura on rice."

The students responded with pleasure and delight.

"I think it's almost ready, so please just relax and wait here."

Shin'ichi stretched his legs and looked at each person, one at a time. When he noticed a student who was rather wan, he asked, "Are you tired from working a part-time job?"

"No, I'm fine," the student replied. "Are you getting enough to eat?" Shin'ichi persisted.

"Yes," the student said. "All right, then," Shin'ichi said, "please try to look a little brighter and happier, if you can. You're making me worry!"

And then addressing everyone, he said: "The student division members should be serious, of course, but you also need to be lively and youthful. When you study, study hard. But take a break sometimes, too. Go see a movie or something. I wonder if any good films are playing right now? Let's all go see one together soon."

He then asked, "Are there any members from outside Tokyo here today?"

Several raised their hands. "You must be tired. Do you have enough money to get back home?"

Everyone felt Shin'ichi's warm concern. The discussion was friendly and intimate, like a conversation between an older brother and his younger siblings.

(To be continued)

## SIGN POSTS

APPLYING  
NICHIREN  
DAISHONIN'S  
WRITINGS TO  
DAILY LIFE

### A Year at a Time

By CRAIG GREEN

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

Carry through with your faith in the Lotus Sutra. You cannot strike fire from flint if you stop halfway. ("Earthly Desires Are Enlightenment," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 201)

When the new year began, I started considering the things that I wanted to accomplish in the next 12 months. The No. 1 goal was simple: I wanted to feel better. I wanted to feel that in some small way I fit in.

I am, by nature, somewhat pessimistic. I find it difficult to trust, difficult to look at situations positively, and difficult to believe in myself. I wanted to change that. It's one of the reasons I began to practice.


The above comes from a letter written to Shijo Kingo in 1272, when Nichiren Daishonin was in exile on Sado Island. Shijo Kingo had not only risked his life by standing with the Daishonin a year earlier, he had risked his life and reputation to visit Sado Island during the Daishonin's exile. When I go over this scene in my mind, I gain glimmers of hope.

If Nichiren Daishonin and Shijo Kingo could continue to hold fast to their beliefs during unbelievable trials, I can at least try to overcome my self-doubt.

Winning, no matter what the goal, is much more than wishful thinking. It is a decisive resolve to carry on. Everyone faces struggles. Everyone must endure difficulties. There is no avoiding them, no way around them. But you must continue. And sometimes that means continuing even when everything around you is telling you that nothing has changed, and your mind is telling you that it never will.

The key is to hold strong with the Gohonzon and never give in.

I often wish I could say that I have achieved all that I set out to when I began to practice. I wish I could say that I always feel the joy and strength that this practice gives us. I honestly haven't reached that point.

But I can say that I feel more confident than ever that I will realize my goals. Even if it's simply feeling better for a year. 

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON FAITH

# Should We Chant for Nikken's Happiness?

By GREG MARTIN  
& RICHARD YOSHIMACHI

SGI-USA VICE STUDY DEPARTMENT  
LEADERS

**Q** Should we chant for Nikken's happiness? My leaders have often told me to pray for the happiness of the people causing me trouble. Should we do that for Nikken?

**A** We have also received the same guidance many times in the past. It is very effective, as a matter of fact.

What happens when we pray for the happiness of someone who causes us trouble is that our own life-condition is raised. We begin to feel compassion for the other person.

This inner change of life is reflected in our behavior. Our action toward that person on a fundamental level thus becomes a change in our environment. It seems like the other person has changed — and he or she has, but in response to a change in our own inner realm.

What's most important to understand is that prayer without the action is insufficient. Compassionate prayer and courageous action — these are the agents of change.

This is consistent with the actions of Nichiren Daishonin, which we can read of in his letters. For example, he expressed appreciation for his enemies — including Hei no Saemon, who tried to behead him — saying that it was because of them that he could attain Buddhahood. This is consistent with not blaming one's environment and praying for our enemies' happiness, appreciating the role they play to push us to attain Buddhahood.

At the same time, though, the Daishonin was very strict with his enemies, especially heretical priests, saying that they should be feared, that they should be driven off, denounced and refuted. They were priests who twisted the Law and betrayed believers for their own sakes, the Daishonin said. The Daishonin often quoted Chang-an, T'ient'ai's successor, as saying that "if one befriends another person but lacks the mercy to correct him, one is in fact his enemy. But one who repri-mands and corrects an of-

fender is a voice-hearer who defends the Buddha's teachings, a true disciple of the Buddha" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 186)

So, then, what about Nikken, the man ready to do anything to stop the SGI's kosen-rufu movement? Should we pray for the happiness of a man who is fully functioning in a such a negative manner? In answering this question for ourselves, we first have to realize that the evil we are talking about in regards to Nikken's bad behavior is quite different from the evil of an ordinary person's bad behavior. While an ordinary person's behavior affects a limited number of people, Nikken's behavior, his actions to destroy the Daishonin's Buddhism, can affect the destiny of all humanity — even future generations.

Nikken's evil thus lies in a dimension different from secular evil; his is an ultimate evil that our Buddhahood alone can defeat. In this regard, the Daishonin says in "Letter From Sado," "When an evil ruler in consort with heretical priests tries to destroy true Buddhism and banish a man of wisdom, those with the heart of a lion will surely attain Buddhahood as Nichiren did" (MW-1, 35). This is the true practice of the Lotus Sutra, the "sharp sword that can sever the fundamental darkness inherent in life" (MW-3, 305).

Awareness of this naturally leads us to ask ourselves what we can do to protect the Daishonin's Buddhism. As Buddhists, we know that we have

So, then, what about Nikken, the man ready to do anything to stop the SGI's kosen-rufu movement? Should we pray for the happiness of a man who is fully functioning in a such a negative manner? In answering this question for ourselves, we first have to realize that the evil we are talking about in regards to Nikken's bad behavior is quite different from the evil of an ordinary person's bad behavior. While an ordinary person's behavior affects a limited number of people, Nikken's behavior, his actions to destroy the Daishonin's Buddhism, can affect the destiny of all humanity — even future generations.


to take rigorous action to stop any function from destroying the people's happiness — we can't just chant without doing anything. For instance, if a drug dealer is trying to sell to our kids, we don't merely chant for the dealer's happiness. We do what we have to;

we take measures to protect our kids and stop the dealer. We may begin with prayer about the situation, but, more important, our compassion leads us to say what we need to say and do what we need to do to protect our children. Prayer alone is not enough. There must be courageous action, based on our compassion for others, as well.

It's the same with the Nikken situation. Merely praying for his happiness, without a clear understanding of his nature and function and a determination to do something about it, is missing the point.

It is clearly in the interest of the members' happiness — both now and in the future — that Nikken's misguided intent and teachings be exposed for what they are. Refuting Nikken's teachings and calling for his resignation are the ultimate in compassionate behavior and are completely consistent with the words and teachings of the Daishonin.

Put another way, pointing out what's wrong with Nikken is actually the only way for him to become happy. Just being quiet about his destructiveness serves to block him from whatever chance at happiness he has left. It lacks mercy.

All in all, only when Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism prevails, only when the Buddha's forces win, will Nikken have the opportunity to reflect on his life. And only that self-reflection can start him on the road toward his happiness. This is prayer of the deepest compassion. 

## Subscription problems?

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KEDREN JONES WERNER, LOS ANGELES

# Practicing Faith

Kedren Werner's life soared to the heights of what she thought was success — then plummeted. Her climb back up is the real success story.

No matter how difficult your situation may be, as long as you base your life on daimoku, and devote yourself to practice for kosen-rufu, the walls of difficulty that stand in front of you will surely disappear to reveal actual proof of your victory. To make this happen, we practice faith.

— SGI President Ikeda



(Left to right) Marné (sister), Shirley (mother), Peter (husband) and Kedren. SGI President Ikeda's advice about practicing faith inspired Kedren to strive for another level in her understanding of Buddhism and her life.

Eight years ago, when I attended a meeting at which SGI President Ikeda spoke, the only thing I was happy about was that I had a clear view of the stage. My life had begun a free fall a year or so earlier, and I had hit bottom.

The first few years of my Buddhist practice were full of challenges and conspicuous benefits. I had fulfilled most of the things on my list of desires, which ranged from overcoming cancer to getting a new car. And I had become a high-profile leader within the organization.

My career in film was developing quickly. Often my jobs took me out of town and sometimes out of the country. I continued to spend time studying Buddhism and attending activities wherever I was, but I grew increasingly distanced from the spirit of President Ikeda. Before I realized this, it was too late. I learned, to my regret, that to merely study Buddhism without applying it, without living it, is almost useless.

I also found it increasingly difficult to be honest with myself about my choices. What's more, I no longer felt a need to do my human revolution — any problem that people had with me was theirs, not mine.

My life became a mess. My husband and I were divorcing; our house was to be sold. I resigned from all of my leadership positions within the SGI-USA and was then transferred to another area. I was fired from my job and was encouraged to change careers. Lost, and scared of what people thought of me, I realized that I had damaged something I had taken for granted — my personal integrity.

On New Year's Eve 1989, I sat up all night in front of the Gohonzon crying. My sister, Marné,

sat next to me chanting. I had not known such despair since the death of my father when I was a little girl.

The next few weeks were no better. I went to meetings where I felt unwanted, and I continued to interview for jobs that I didn't get because, as I found out, I had a terrible reputation in the film business.

My sister tried to encourage me by quoting Nichiren Daishonin: "Even a bad reputation will spread far and wide. A good reputation will spread even farther, particularly if it is a reputation for devotion to the Lotus Sutra" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 201). I didn't find this encouraging; I felt I could never change my reputation. My mother became so worried that, as she later told me, she would often sleep outside my house in her car "to make sure the lights came back on in the morning."

At this low point, I received an invitation to attend the meeting with President Ikeda. I had not been invited to anything in a long time, and I was so grateful and deeply appreciative of this consideration during my crisis. I felt certain that it was an expression of President Ikeda's compassion for me. I prayed that this meeting would be a turning point toward my happiness.

I participated in a planting ceremony that was the most

fun I'd had in a long time. Then President Ikeda began his lecture:

I am very pleased to meet with all of you promising young people of wisdom and passion, who are committed to the pursuit of your ideals. Because you are all important leaders whom I trust will shoulder the responsibility for the future of humanity, I would like to share my thoughts with you in a frank and candid manner. I deeply admire you for your invigorated seeking spirit. You are pioneers who are responsible for shaping the future course of humankind and society. Also, you are forerunners of the American kosen-rufu movement and are the true successors of [the SGI-USA]. You are in fact envoys of the Buddha who are contributing to the development of American culture and global peace. I hope that you will become leaders in various sections of American society.

*Through the obstacles I faced over the next few years, I realized the importance of being willing to change. I pushed myself to regain trust and responsibility in our organization and to be a part of its development, too.*

I thought: "I am in the wrong room. I have none of these qualities." But, as President Ikeda continued, I began to feel that he was setting a goal for what I could become. He spoke about common sense and how "harboring hatred and jealousy eventually can lead us to discarding

our faith." I realized that while I had never stopped practicing Buddhism, I had discarded my faith, its principles. My circumstances — my relationship with my husband, my work, the organization — reflected where my life was at.

It would be great to say everything was easy from that point forward, but it wasn't. I had to face myself everywhere I went. I had to see my suffering as solely my responsibility.

Albert Einstein once said, "The problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them." I had to raise my life-condition and practice faith. I participated in Buddhist activities with a commitment to be my true positive self and help others do the same. I had to admit my mistakes and share my weaknesses.

I continued to look for work and eventually got a job as one of the producers of a new TV series, *Northern Exposure*, which became successful. I worked with my husband and our lawyers to finalize our divorce.

I continued to study President Ikeda's guidance:

Even though you practice faith, you may encounter an unfortunate incident. But meeting with misfortune does not mean your prayer to the Gohonzon will not be answered. You may see something that makes you wonder why it happened, but as you persevere you will later see that everything is moving in a positive direction of your happiness within the protection of Myoho.

I prayed to live with confidence in these ideas.

Through the obstacles I faced over the next few years, I realized the importance of being willing to change. I pushed myself to regain trust and responsibility in our organization and to be a part of its development, too.

I have remarried with a wonderful man. He is a friend in faith, and we are district leaders together in a wonderful group of members with whom I share trust and appreciation. My ex-husband and I maintain a friendship to this day. And I have steadily advanced in my career.

At last year's luncheon for some of the Golden Globe award nominees, I sat with the cast of *The People vs. Larry Flynt*. I spoke with one of the cast members about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, who told me of her concerns about her reputation, and I shared Nichiren Daishonin's reputation quote with genuine confidence.

I'm currently president of a film company, and I interact with studio heads, top producers, writers, actors and agents. Recently my boss told me how much everybody with whom we work likes me, and what a good reputation I have.

This change has come about because I relentlessly challenge myself through prayer and practice to live up to the goals set for us in President Ikeda's encouragement in 1990. I'm constantly renewing my determination through faith. When I fail to meet those goals, I often think of President Ikeda, who writes poetry to encourage us in the midst of his own struggles. "Live true to ourselves and the law" he says, and "To be great is to be misunderstood." With President Ikeda as an example for my life, I keep going. WJ

LITERATURE, FROM PAGE 1

depth. If we make an effort to read, it will eventually become second nature and a source of enjoyment.

**KIMURA:** Whenever I read your *Youthful Diary*, President Ikeda, I am astonished by the incredible pace and scope of your reading. Even when Mr. Toda's business was going bankrupt and you were busy taking care of the company's affairs, your reading schedule never slowed down.

In your diary entry for Feb. 8, 1951, you write: "Fourteen young champions of religious reform gathered together proudly and joyfully under our mentor, Mr. Toda. Each participant expressed his thoughts and impressions on the book *The Eternal City*." The entry for Feb. 21 says: "Youth, arise! Youth, advance! Youth, take action! Forward, ever forward! Undaunted by towering precipices or raging waves! Like Rossi and Bruno. Like Napoleon and Alexander. Like Whitman and Dante!" The entry for Feb. 24 states: "Finished reading *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The grand plot skillfully portrays the subtleties of the human mind. It is a giant epic depicting the exploits of warriors and political leaders in a time of tremendous strife and chaos. It is packed with political intrigue, love, tears, ambition, power and moral lessons. The main character, Liu Pei, is a youth of revolution — a man of construction."

Although you were then going through the most tempestuous of times yourself, you continued to study, looking 10, 20 years ahead.

Your diary is filled with references to your love of literature. One day you write: "I read *The Count of Monte Cristo*. It made me think about many things." Another day you report: "I read *Scaramouche*." In yet another entry: "Was up late reading Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. I'll read more tomorrow." And again: "In the evening I went to Kanda and bought three books at a used-book shop. There's a mountain of books I want, but I can't afford all of them."

**IGETA:** I have heard that from the time you were a young man, President Ikeda, you knew you wanted to become a great writer. How did you come to be so fond of literature?

**IKEDA:** I suffered from poor health when I was young, so I couldn't participate in sports very much. Since one can read in bed or while lying down, I natu-

rally came to spend a lot of time reading. That was the first step.

**KIMURA:** One member said that he is a science major and has no interest in literature. He asked if he should make an effort to read anyway.

**IKEDA:** Well, that's certainly an honest question. Actually, contrary to what he may think, reading literature can greatly enhance his study of science. If science is all he focuses on, his mind will grow very mechanical. We are only fully human when we possess not only intelligence but also emotion and sensitivity. Literature is the oil that greases the wheels of the mind.

Because this has been forgotten, many tragedies have occurred. If national leaders know nothing but science, it may well be that they will think only of building weapons. A knowledge of great literature breathes life into our humanity. Literature derives from the human spirit.

**IGETA:** Speaking of science, wasn't Mr. Toda an expert mathematician?

**IKEDA:** Yes, mathematics was his specialty, but he also knew a great deal about literature. He declared that one could neither understand mathematics nor religion unless one read literature. And he always urged the youth division members to read a great deal. The last time that Mr. Toda asked me what I was reading, I responded, "Rousseau's *Emile*." I was reading this treatise on education because I was determined to found a school someday.

Literature is the study of humanity. It is the study of oneself and of the infinite realm of the human heart. Without an understanding of people's hearts, one cannot gain a profound understanding of any other sphere of learning or endeavor. Human culture is the product of the human heart and mind.

Actually, dividing things into the humanities and the sciences is itself odd. As long as so many of our political leaders and educators remain caught up in their specialties and unaware of the vital importance of literature, we will never create a better society. It will be very dangerous if our society is made up of people who, like robots, possess knowledge but have no heart or conscience.

**IGETA:** Every day, when I ride the train to work, I am disappointed by what I see middle-aged men reading. Almost all of

them have their heads in sensationalist magazines or trashy tabloids. How spiritually impoverished Japan is, I always sadly think. Even people who at least sample the works of world literature during their student days stop reading them as soon as they graduate.

**KIMURA:** I hope today's high school students will grow into different kinds of adults — the kind who will continue to read literature and learn from it all of their lives.

**IKEDA:** Does merely growing older make one an adult? No. What makes one a mature person is one's growth as a human being, one's richness of character and experience, and those are things that literature can indeed help us develop.

Learning languages allows us to expand our boundaries to encompass other nations and cultures. Reading literature further widens our horizons, enabling us to become acquainted with people and places all over the world. Sometimes an encounter with a great work of literature can entirely change the course of our lives.

Literature is the very pulse of life. Those who have learned to appreciate great literature during their youth are always vital and vigorous, because the pulse of literature beats in them. Those who haven't learned such an appreciation lack that vitality; their lives are spiritually drab and empty.

Looking up at the blue sky, for example, might be a different experience for someone who has read *War and Peace* than someone who hasn't, for that person who has may quite likely be reminded of the peaceful blue sky that Prince Andrei gazed up at in the midst of a terrible, bloody battle — one of the novel's climactic scenes. That same sky stretches above all of our heads at this very moment.

*Prince Andrei, who had carried the Russian flag in the attack against the French forces, lies wounded on the battlefield. He looks up at the blue sky: "Above him there was now only the sky — the lofty sky, not clear yet still immeasurably lofty, with gray clouds creeping softly across it. 'How quiet, how peaceful and solemn!... How was I did not see that sky before? And how happy I am to have found it at last! Yes, all is vanity, all is delusion except these infinite heavens. There is nothing, nothing but that. But even it does not exist, there is nothing but peace and stillness....'"*

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS DIALOGUE

**More effort needs to be made to show people how wonderful it is to explore literature. Life is a quest. We are always searching for the answers to the grand questions: What is it to be human? What is a good life? Literature is an excellent companion and guide on that quest.**



**Literature is the study of humanity. It is the study of oneself and of the infinite realm of the human heart. Without an understanding of people's hearts, one cannot gain a profound understanding of any other sphere of learning or endeavor. Human culture is the product of the human heart and mind.**



**Everything has a time. What you read when you are young is etched into your memory. It becomes a part of you. What you learn as a result becomes a valuable experience and asset for forming your own ideas and philosophy, and acquiring different ways of looking at things.**



**We often say that we don't have time, but all of us can spare at least five or 10 minutes now and then. Being a reader doesn't mean that you have to sit down for three or four hours and read straight through. In fact, I think that in many cases the things we read in brief spaces of time tend to stay with us longer. One method is to choose two or three types of books, like something easy and maybe a short story or an epic novel, and then read whichever one you want when you have a spare moment.**



Take also the example of a flowing river. Those who have read Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* may share the joy Siddhartha felt when, after a long regime of painful austerities, he regained his strength at the river's edge. A river flows endlessly, never ceasing for a moment. It is in constant motion, yet it is always there. It never changes, yet it is always new. In the same way,

the world itself is also whole and complete each moment, and we attain happiness here and now — not at some other place, in some other time.

Literature also helps us relate to people's characters and dispositions. In one person, we may detect something of Hamlet; in another, Don Quixote; in an-

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other, Moliere's hypocritical Tartuffe. We may know a person who resembles the proud Julien Sorel from Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*, or a person who, like Sydney Carton from Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, goes to the guillotine for the sake of friendship and love.

Similarly, a visit to the sea may remind one of the sea of obsession in Melville's *Moby Dick*, or the drifting sea of Homer's *Odyssey*, or the sea of sadness in Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie*. There is also the tranquil sea described in the *Man'yoshu* (Anthology of a Thousand Leaves), a collection of ancient Japanese poetry.

Reading literature allows us to view the incredible kaleidoscope of human behavior and emotion. It also gives us an insight into the vast, deep ocean of life existing beneath the countless rolling waves.

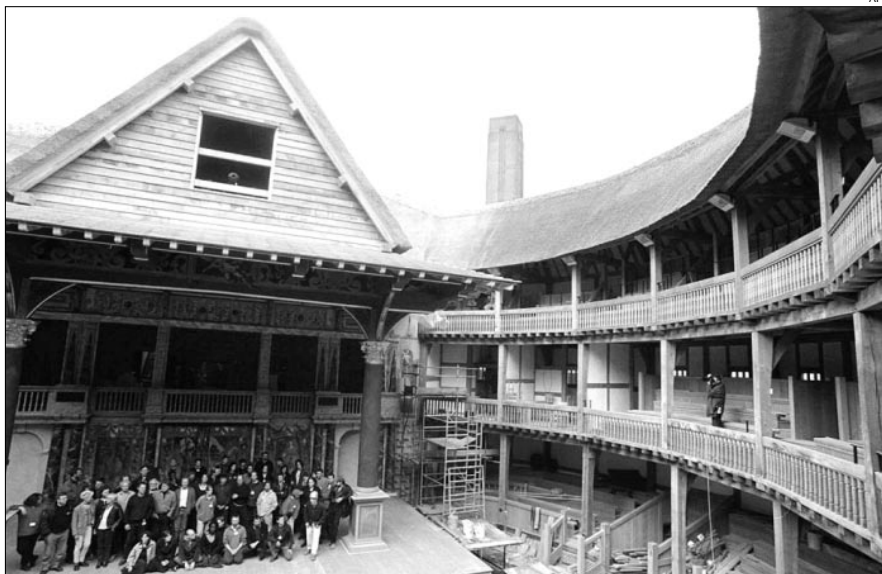
**KIMURA:** I was asked by one student if there is something to be gained from reading books when we are young that we won't be able to gain when we get older.

**IKEDA:** I would say there is. It is more of a challenge to read when you get older. You have to battle with busy daily schedules and sometimes even increasingly poor eyesight! And you may find yourself starting to forget what you have read. This might be hard for you to believe right now, but it's true.

Everything has a time. What you read when you are young is etched into your memory. It becomes a part of you. What you learn as a result becomes a valuable experience and asset for forming your own ideas and philosophy, and acquiring different ways of looking at things.

Only human beings have the ability to read. I'm sure that some of our readers are probably thinking that they'll start reading later in life when they have more time. But chances are that if you neglect reading during your youth, you won't read later on either. For that reason, it's important to get into the habit of reading while you are young — this will establish the foundation on which to build the rest of your life. I cannot stress this enough.

Leading figures around the world frequently cite works of literature. Quite a few individuals even have a cursory knowledge of Japanese literature. If you read literature while you are young, you'll be more familiar



Cast members in William Shakespeare's *Henry V* sit on the stage at the new Globe Theatre in London in May 1997. The original Elizabethan-style theatre was built in 1614 and torn down in 1644.

**Shakespeare's plays, at the time they were written, were popular entertainment. They were like today's movies.... Literature is a stage upon which many different realms of human experience are presented, such as philosophies of life, the relationship of the individual to society, war and peace, struggle, and love and death.**

with what those people are saying. I have talked about *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* [by Take-tori Monogatari] with the Russian minister of education, and about the *Man'yoshu* with Dr. Arnold Toynbee. With others I have talked about *Urashima Taro* [a sort of Japanese Rip Van Winkle]. Unlike politics or business, discussions about literature are beautiful; they don't cause arguments, and rapport is struck quickly.

Mr. Toda once encouraged a young woman to discuss not only the Goshu when traveling overseas, but also Japan's many fine novels.

**IGETA:** There's something very likable and attractive about people who have lots of things to talk about.

**IKEDA:** I hope our youth division members will have sufficient knowledge of the famed stories and novels of their homelands to relate them with great expression and feeling. Every country has its folk tales and legends. The spiritual legacy of the people is woven into most of them. Stories that

have been handed down through the generations have a value that has ensured their survival.

Time is the greatest critic. For that reason, I urge all of you to read literature that has stood the test of time.

**KIMURA:** One member, who is a huge fan of Japanese novelist Shugoro Yamamoto, said that he just can't seem to find anything appealing about non-Japanese literature.

**IKEDA:** Non-Japanese literature can be difficult to read, usually because of the translation. From my experience, most such books are rather hard going for about the first quarter of the way through. But if you can stick with it and get past that point, you'll find yourself quickly drawn in and carried along. For example, Balzac's *Le Père Goriot* begins with a long description of the inn where the novel takes place and is a little slow in getting started. Yet no novel depicts a father's love for his daughter as wonderfully as this one does.

Though translated literature

may be a challenge to get into at first, I hope you'll do your best to read such works. It's like hiking up a mountain — when you reach a certain height, the beautiful scenery begins to unfold all around you.

**IGETA:** Many students say that they want to read, but they don't have time. They are too busy with their studies, part-time jobs or extracurricular activities.

**IKEDA:** We often say that we don't have time, but all of us can spare at least five or 10 minutes now and then. Being a reader doesn't mean that you have to sit down for three or four hours and read straight through. In fact, I think that in many cases the things we read in brief spaces of time tend to stay with us longer. One method is to choose two or three types of books, like something easy and maybe a short story or an epic novel, and then read whichever one you want when you have a spare moment.

**IGETA:** Some say that they enjoy reading nonfiction but

have no interest in fiction.

**IKEDA:** Works of fiction are sometimes farfetched and inaccurate. That's why it's important to firmly establish and maintain your own critical awareness so that you are not taken in by everything you read. Truly great literature, however, is filled with the richness of forests, rivers, stars, the four seasons and the whole tumultuous panorama of human history.

Many of the novels that abound today tend to be limited in scope. Works that can be classed as great literature, on the other hand, take one on a journey of much greater depth and breadth. Those who have never savored that vast realm are most unfortunate. They are like people who have never seen the sea and think that the shallow stream nearby is all the water there is on earth.

**KIMURA:** Another student said that he hates reading. He struggles to read even one or two books a year, and as soon as he begins to turn the pages, he starts nodding off. He asked if there is any shortcut or secret method that he can use to become a better reader.

**IKEDA:** I'm afraid there's no shortcut. The only way to become a better reader is to make active efforts in that direction. As long as you are looking for an easy way out, you'll never progress.

The same is true with physical exercise. If you hate running and make no effort to run, you'll never be a fit runner.

So if you get sleepy when you read, then please get some sleep. But by the same token, please resume your reading when you wake up. Without effort, you can never hope to grow or improve, nor can you realize your true potential. You'll just grow old without experiencing the depth and wonder of life.

Having said that, I hope that those who haven't yet gotten into the habit of reading will take up the challenge. For starters, perhaps you can select a short, accessible book, and just dive in. That will be the first stone in the foundation of your reading capacity.

**IGETA:** It's a real shame never to experience the pure joy of reading.

**IKEDA:** Reading is fun. Shakespeare's plays, at the time they were written, were popular en-

PLEASE SEE LITERATURE, NEXT PAGE

LITERATURE, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

tainment. They were like today's movies. When the 11th century Japanese novel *The Tale of Genji* was written, people used to vie to borrow a copy and read it, much like people pass around comic books today. It's a mistake to think of the classics as musty, difficult and boring. There's no need to be awed or intimidated by them, either. Once you have come to really appreciate them for what they are, you will find yourself a richer human being.

**IGETA:** One student said that she can see the important influence literature has on our lives, and wondered how that is different from what music and art teach us.

**IKEDA:** All appeal to our senses in different ways. Literature by its very nature expresses thoughts and ideas in the written form. Without ideas, it would be impossible to write. Ideas are vast in dimension; they are unlimited. Ideas move us and change the way we think.

The Bible, the Lotus Sutra and the ancient Japanese chronicle *Kojiki* can all be considered literature. Literature occupies a very important place in the history of human thought. Its influence reaches into the depths of human experience. Humankind will suffer a tremendous loss if all we do is restrict ourselves and our concerns to the spheres of politics, business and science, without reading and pondering great literature.

Literature is a stage upon which many different realms of human experience are presented, such as philosophies of life, the relationship of the individual to society, war and peace, struggle, and love and death. Music and art can illuminate one part of that experience, of course, and it is religion that illuminates it fully and completely.

Upon the foundation of literature unfold other aspects of culture such as drama, theater, film and music.

**KIMURA:** There is a film of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, for example, and a musical based on Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. Some people come into contact with literature by first seeing such a film or musical, and then going on to investigate the original literary work.

**IGETA:** Reading gives us so much. Returning to your *Youthful Diary*, President Ikeda, I found this passage: "Gentle rain. Finished reading *The*

*Count of Monte Cristo* at the office. Reading supplies one with wisdom, knowledge and leadership ability, and it helps in studying the Goshō as well. Someone once said: 'Read throughout your life, even if only 30 minutes each day. In the course of a lifetime, this will add up to a tremendous amount of reading'" [Feb. 18, 1954].

**IKEDA:** Yes, I remember that time of my life fondly. Reading literature is an indispensable tool for understanding the Goshō. Both the Goshō and literature depict the human experience. We find in Nichiren Daishonin's words the profoundly compassionate wish to save all of humanity, a fierce anger toward evil and a warmth that enters into the hidden corners of people's hearts.

For example, to a follower who had first lost her husband and then her dearly loved son, the Daishonin had written, sharing in her grief, "It must be a dream, an illusion!" He goes on to say that if only her son had left word where she could meet him, "then, without wings, you would soar to the heavens, or without a boat, you would cross over to China. If you heard he was in the bowels of the earth, then how could you fail to dig through the earth?" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 7, p. 262). The Daishonin voices the mother's feelings for her son in his letter, empathizing with her pain.

**IGETA:** How comforted she must have been to receive that letter!

**IKEDA:** The Goshō contains innumerable descriptions of the human condition. The more experience you acquire in life, and the more great literature you read, the more you can appreciate the greatness of the Goshō. At the same time, by reading the Goshō you gain a deeper understanding of literature.

Literature portrays the complexities of the human heart. If you are determined to live your life as a true humanist, you must read literature. Cheap, carelessly written books or books that are solely for entertainment aren't literature, because they do not explore the meaning of life. Technical, nonfiction books are important, of course, and have their purposes, but literature is an irreplaceable lifeline for all humanity.

**IGETA:** The question has been asked, "What good is literature to a starving child?" Some say

that literature is just words; it can't really change things or help those who are suffering.

**IKEDA:** The most important kind of help we can give another is spiritual help. Only when spiritual help is provided first can monetary and material help really be put to good use.

Reading literature makes us think of others' situations and encourages us to address them with genuine concern and compassion. It is from such a sense of humanity that charity in its truest form emerges.

Great literature is a necessity both for the starving child and for those who are helping the child. Buddhism teaches, "The voice does the Buddha's work" (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 708). Our voices, our words, save people. Words that express a profound mind are in great need. The ability to express oneself well comes from an understanding of and a familiarity with literature. Because they lack this foundation, the words of most Japanese politicians are hollow and empty.

In his preface to *Les Misérables*, Hugo writes: "While ignorance and poverty persist on earth, books such as this cannot fail to be of value." Literature, one might say, is what nurtures the will to save the starving child; then, from that will, action is taken and material and financial assistance is

realized.

**KIMURA:** How would you describe "good writing"?

**IKEDA:** I think reading good writing is like eating good food: It is a pleasurable experience.

Mr. Toda told me to always read the preface and the afterword of every book I read. He said one should be able to judge the writer's ability to some extent in those sections of the book as well.

**KIMURA:** You have been designated a world poet laureate, President Ikeda. How do you write poetry?

**IKEDA:** I try to express my thoughts exactly as I think them, to put them into words exactly as they are.

When you read a lot of great literature, the words therein are naturally fused with your own. Then, when you see a beautiful scene, words come to you without effort. By reading a great deal, one's perception of nature changes. When animals see the beautiful green of the woods, for instance, they may not feel anything special. An artist, however, may be moved by its magnificence. And a gardener may see it as healthy and strong.

Imagine, for example, the moon shining on a beach. If you know the poem from the

collection of Japanese poetry, *Senzai Wakashū* (Collection of a Thousand Years),

*Moon on this autumn night:  
How you have transformed  
The sands of the vast shore  
Into a plain of jewels*

then, when you see a moonlit beach, its sands might immediately become a jeweled garden for you.

The Chilean poet Mistral, in "To the Clouds," has written:

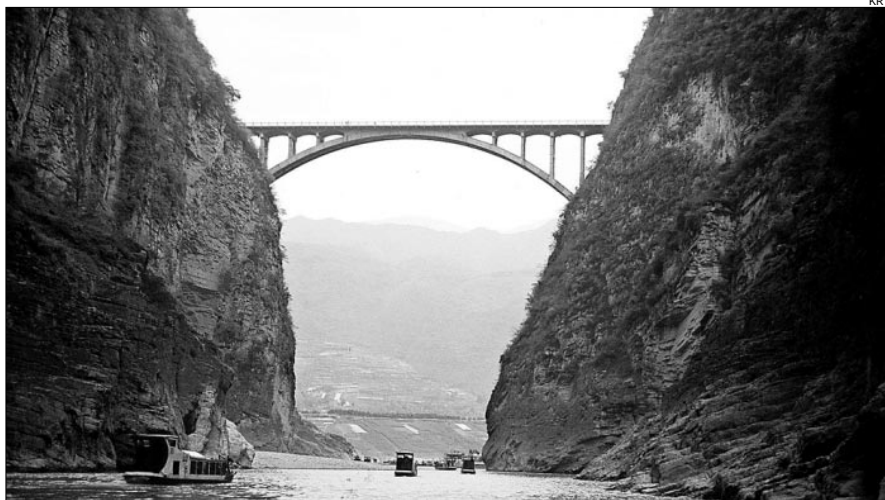
*Ethereal clouds,  
clouds like tulle,  
transport my soul  
through azure heaven.*

After reading that poem, you may find that now the clouds and the breeze arouse the keenest, deepest emotions in you.

Beautiful poetry isn't a bunch of fancy words and phrases. True beauty only comes from a beautiful spirit. I believe, too, that beautiful words come from a spirit that fights for humanity amid life's vicissitudes. Poetry is the product of trying to express in words the emotion we feel in everyday life. And so is literature.

All great literature, ancient and modern, is a bridge connecting one human being to another, one spirit to another. The quality of our lives is determined by how many of those bridges we can cross. ❧

**All great literature, ancient and modern, is a bridge connecting one human being to another, one spirit to another. The quality of our lives is determined by how many of those bridges we can cross.**



A bridge over China's Daning River in the Xilig Gorge.

# A Lot More Than Hot Air



**O**n Wednesday, Jan. 28, the *Breitling Orbiter II* (above) took off from Château d'Oex in the Swiss Alps — the latest attempt in the challenge to circumnavigate the globe nonstop in a hot-air balloon. The crew, Switzerland's Bertrand Piccard, Belgium's Vim Verstraeten and England's Andy Elson, has already overcome several accidents and weather delays since its original launch date in early January. They took off after lighting the burners with a former Olympic torch from the Olympic museum in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Another balloon team, the *Virgin Global Challenger*, was, at press time, scheduled to take off from Morocco the weekend of Jan. 31. Last November, Anheuser-Busch announced that it will award \$500,000 to the first successful team, and a further \$500,000 to a charity chosen by that team. "The quest to fly around the world is one of aviation's last great challenges remaining," said Tony Ponturo, vice president of Anheuser-Busch.

WT

**COMING NEXT WEEK:** Spanish-language study aids for the Entrance Exam.

## COLORADO KIDS Hold Annual Meeting

by Ellie Vesper  
Colorado Springs, Colo.



The Boys and Girls Group of Colorado Springs, Colo.



Boys and girls enjoy lunch at their meeting.



Boys and girls look at the individual accomplishments on display.

The Boys and Girls Group of Colorado Springs, Colo., held its second annual general meeting at the community center. More than 15 enthusiastic boys and girls performed in an ambitious undertaking — telling stories, singing songs and reading messages on chanting and cause and effect. Some of their individual accomplishments were on display for all to enjoy. After the meeting, everyone enjoyed a great lunch prepared by parents and other members.

## Boys and Girls Celebrate in Seattle

By Pat Williams  
Seattle

It was a "Victory of the People" New Year's celebration, marking the start of a new year for the SGI-USA in Seattle. Many boys and girls attending the gongyo meeting at the culture center supported in the audience, while 12 representatives announced the year's theme by holding up cards spelling out "VICTORY 1998." After, three individuals expressed their determinations for the new year:



Children at Seattle's New Year's celebration.

Ritchie, 7: "I want to be on my school's basketball team this year!"

Monica, 8: "I want to improve my addition and subtraction skills this year!"

Alena, 6: "I want to be in the Nutcracker ballet this year!"

With loud and appreciative applause from the audience, the children exited the stage to say goodbye and receive a special packet made just for them (with treats, a children's game book, the 1998 curriculum list, daimoku charts and their own pen to write on them with) from coordinators waiting behind the stage.



Boys and girls spell out this year's theme: 'Victory 1998.'

## I'M GONNA LET IT SHINE' in Oklahoma

By Hattie Bellcourt  
Oklahoma Boys and Girls  
Group  
Coordinator



On Nov. 15, 1997, the Boys and Girls Group from Oklahoma City, Okla., went to Sky View Nursing Center. The children were excited about going to visit the residents. This was the first time any of the children had been to a nursing home. The children had worked

very hard on both the song and cards they would present to the residents. The children performed the song "This Little Light of Mind (I'm Gonna Let It Shine)," which brought a smile to the residents' faces. After the song, the children presented each resident with one of the cards they had made.

## POETRY

### A Small Little Leaf

By **Riri Nagao, 8** *New York City*

One, two, three  
a small little leaf  
falling down from a tree  
yellow and bright  
nice and clean  
four, five, six  
a mixture of colors  
of the whole world  
seven, eight, nine  
a small little leaf  
a pretty leaf  
ten

The whole world is  
mixed with colors! 🌱

### Life Is Beauty That Happens

By **Jenna Kon, 8**  
*East Northport, N.Y.*

Flowers blossom  
trees grow...  
But we're the same  
after all.  
We grow every day...like trees  
Babies bloom out of  
mommies' tummies  
but they're different  
from us, too. Why?  
It's just life and  
it's all lovely in  
every way. 🌱



### MIKEY IWAMOTO, 6

*Mission Viejo, Calif.*

I am in the Boys and Girls Group, and I do part A and chant one minute almost every day. I have finished nine daimoku charts and got lots of prizes for them at Boys and Girls Group meetings.

One day I got really sick. My ear was hurting really badly, and I was crying because it hurt so much. I went to the doctor, but it still was very hurting. Then I went to bed. And my little brother, Ryan, said to my mommy, "I want to chant for Mikey to get well." So my mom and Ryan chanted a lot for me. My brother is 4 years old. He goes to Boys and Girls Group, too.



*Mikey (left) and Ryan.*

The next day I woke up, and I wasn't sick at all. I got well in one day! And I went on my school field trip to a nature walk. I saw horses there. My mom said that's the first time I got well so fast, in only one day. It made me happy.

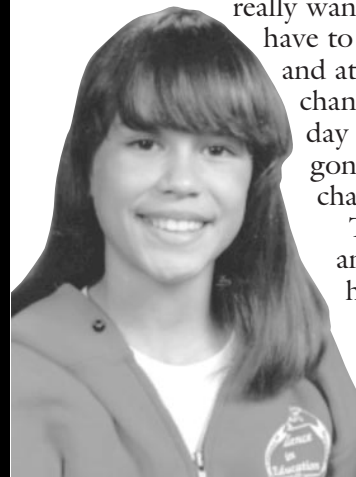
And I love my brother a lot. 🌱

### ASHLEY CASSANDRA TORRES, 10

*Downey, Calif.*

Just about maybe the day before Christmas, one of my neighbors gave me some candy. When I ate it, it tasted very old. The next day I woke up and found out that I had a sore throat. I was pretty sure it was that old candy. Still, I was a little dumb because every time my mom picked me up from camp at 6:00 p.m., I wouldn't have a sweater or a jacket on.

So, the days went by, and I got worse every day. Soon, I was so sick that I had a fever. My mom gave me some natural herbal teas. There was only one medicine that would cure everything, and that is the power of the Gohonzon. My mom told me that if I



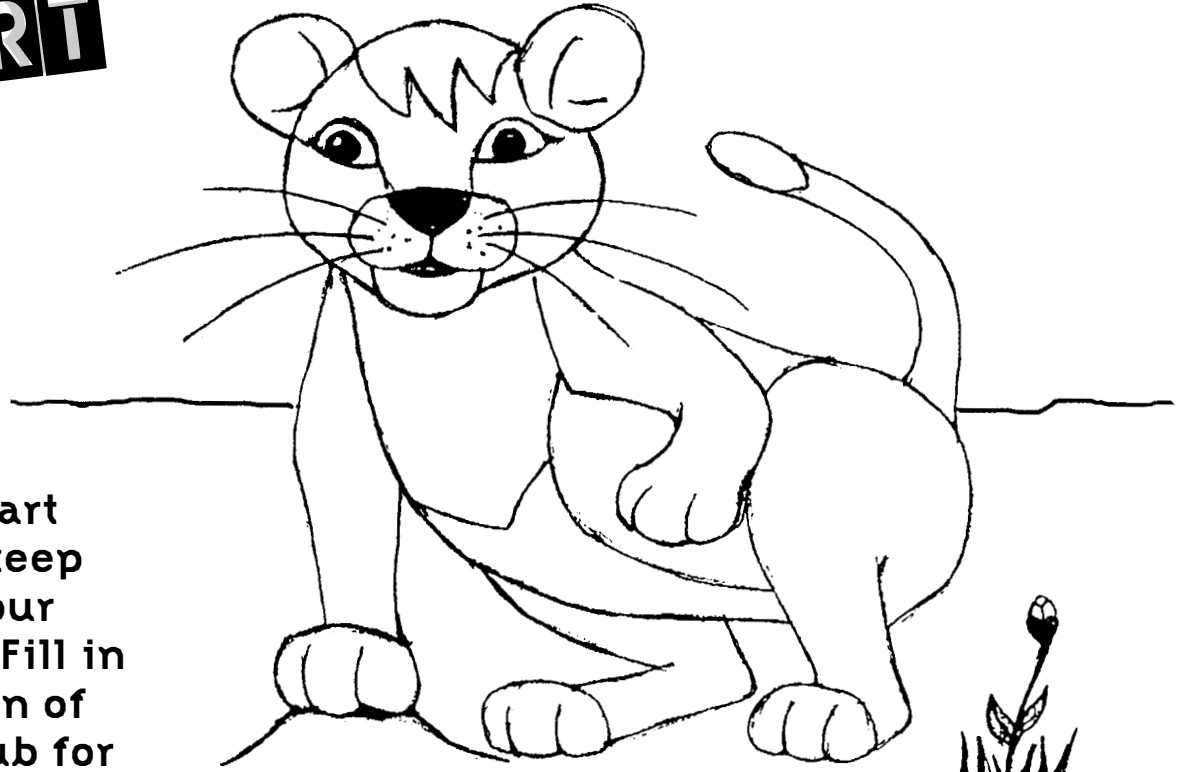
really wanted to get better, I would have to do gongyo once a day and at least five minutes of chanting every day. From that day on, I started doing gongyo once a day and chanted five minutes.

The next day, I woke up, and it was like as if nothing had happened! I gave the Gohonzon thanks with all my heart. At 10 years old is when I noticed the power of the Gohonzon. 🌱

"**FRIENDS** for Peace" thanks everyone who contributed to this issue. Please send your experience (around 150 words), comments, questions or news article to: "Friends for Peace," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

# DAIMOKU

# CHART



Use the chart below to keep track of your daimoku. Fill in one section of the lion cub for every minute or five minutes you chant. You can also list the things you are chanting about.



## Goals

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## So, You Want To Be a Correspondent for



If you want to report on activities and people in your areas, please fill out the form below and mail to us:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Area and Region: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

# COURAGE IS....

by Holly Basey  
Norman, Okla.

## FUN Activity STUDY Topic for FEBRUARY:

# Courage

From  
Tammy Schwolsky

**Materials:** magazines, glue stick, heavy construction paper and safe scissors.

**References:**  
*Seikyo Times*  
August 1995, p. 54;  
November 1996,  
p. 46. *World Tribune*,  
*The New Human*  
*Revolution*, Feb. 16,  
1997, p. 7.

*"THE COURAGE TO FIGHT AGAINST WRONG IS AN INDISPENSABLE COMPONENT OF COMPASSION. IF WE ALLOW INJUSTICE TO GO UNCHALLENGED, IT WILL COME TO HOLD SWAY, AND EVERYONE WILL SUFFER. SO I WISH TO STATE THAT FIGHTING AGAINST EVIL CONSTITUTES COMPASSION AND IS THE MARK OF A GENUINE BUDDHIST."*

- SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

**Activity:** Use reference materials to discuss courage (especially the concept of justice in relation to courage). Next, make a collage using the magazines. Find pictures that represent courage, cut them out, and paste them on the construction paper. After your collage is finished, discuss why you chose the pictures.

Courage is something you find in yourself. I feel by chanting, it brings your happiness and courage out. After I've chanted, I feel happy and good about myself, which gives me courage to succeed in tests, basketball games, school and other things. If you

chant every day, it helps you live through hard work that might get discouraging. It also helps you to have a better mood and outlook on things, and gives you courage to talk.

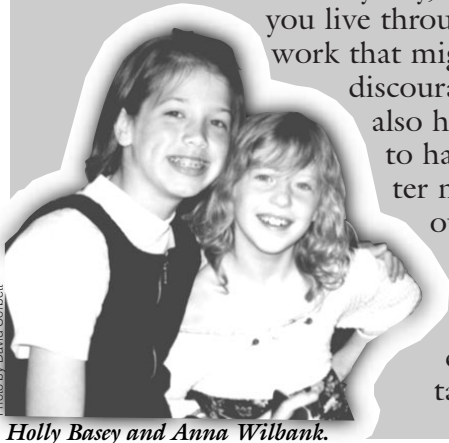
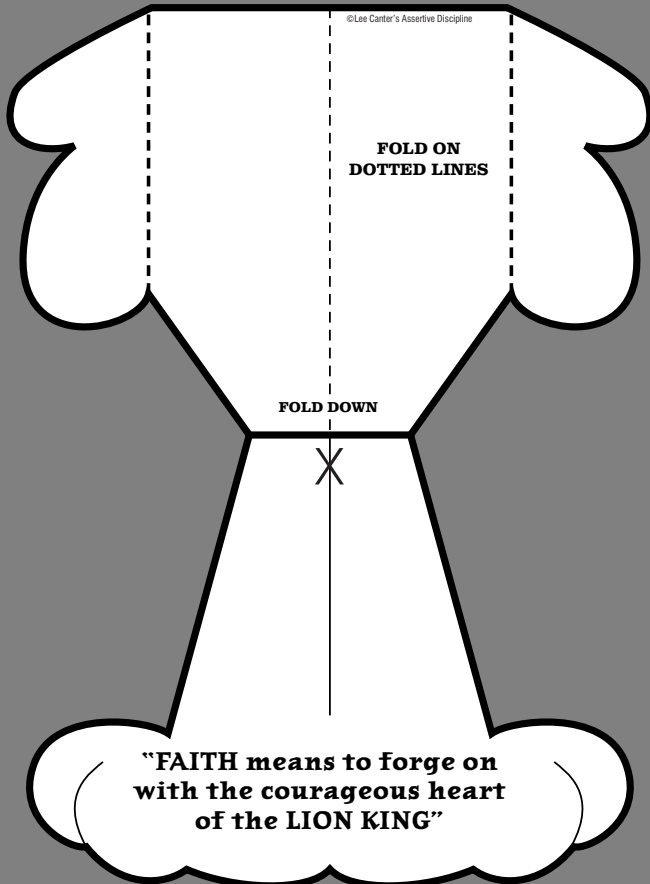


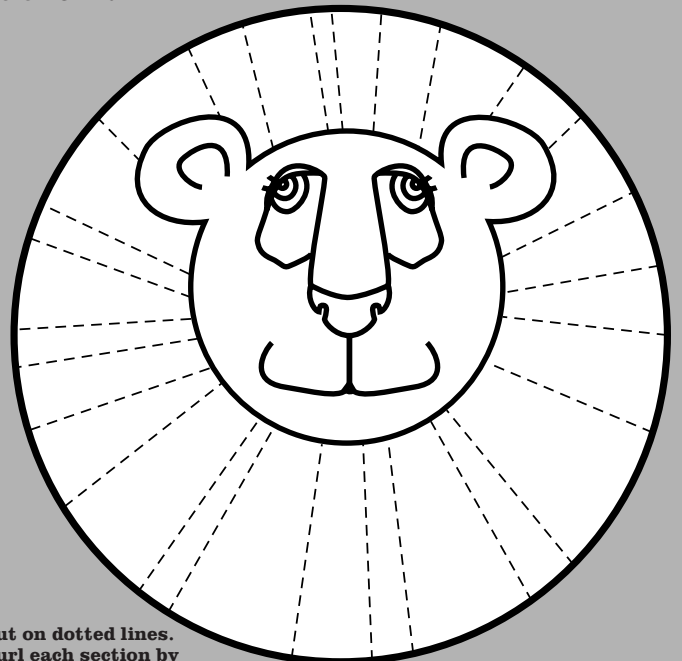
Photo by David Corbett

Holly Basey and Anna Wilbank.

# THE LION KING



1. Color the lion's head and body.
2. Cut out the head. Cut the lines to make the lion's mane. Curl the mane on a pencil.
3. Glue the head to the body at the X.



Cut on dotted lines. Curl each section by rolling on a pencil.