

World Tribune

No. 3178

THE YEAR OF VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE FOR THE NEW CENTURY

FEBRUARY 13, 1998

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Brave ^{A_ND} Vigorous

SGI President Ikeda gave the following address at the 17th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Dec. 9, 1997.

SGI President Ikeda describes a life of purpose as a youthful life. 'There is no happier life than this,' he says.

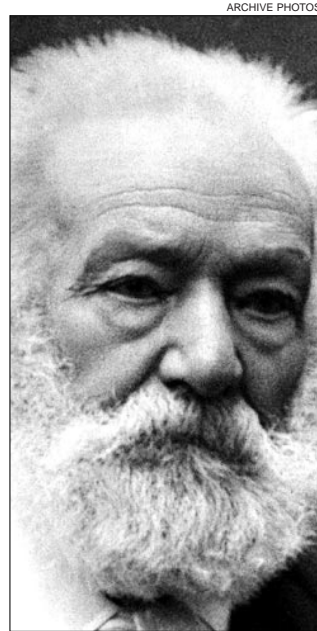
Once again this year, through the tireless efforts of members everywhere, we of the Soka Gakkai have overcome every obstacle, met every challenge and added another magnificent page of victory to the annals of our movement! I thank all of you from the bottom of my heart for your hard work.

A Happiness Beyond Compare

We savor true happiness. As Nichiren Daishonin writes, "There is no greater happiness for human beings than chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 161). There is no more joyous realm than the world of faith. Chanting daimoku is the key to attaining genuine happiness and fulfillment at the most fundamental level.

Worldly pleasures provide but momentary satisfaction destined only to fade and disappear. They are shallow and mere illusions.

As practitioners of the Daishonin's Buddhism, we know a happiness beyond compare. In



ARCHIVE PHOTOS

"The onward march of the human race requires that the heights around it constantly blaze with noble lessons of courage. Deeds of daring dazzle history and form one of man's guiding lights. The dawn dares when it rises."

— Victor Hugo, 'Les Miserables'

the depths of our being, we savor the singular joy of life, the joy of Buddhahood, that comes from genuine fulfillment.

The Daishonin also says, "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is like

the roar of a lion" (MW-1, 119). We who chant daimoku are unafraid. There is nothing for us to fear. Whatever happens, we can move forward with optimism and hope. There is no happier life than this.

Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is also the great Law of eternal life — life unaging and undying.

Nichiren Daishonin writes: "The time will come when... the Mystic Law alone will flourish throughout the land... Realize that the time will come when the truth will be revealed that both the Person and the Law are unaging and eternal" (MW-1, 101-02), and "If one considers the power of the Lotus Sutra, he will find perpetual youth and eternal life before his eyes" (MW-1, 120).

We who devote our lives to kosen-rufu remain forever youthful — our lives are unaging. Brimming with powerful life force, we know no deadlock. Throughout eternity, we vigorously pursue our mission — our lives are undying.

Next year [1998] I will be 70 years old, and I still feel as if the main thrust of my work lies yet ahead of me.

There is no deadlock in this faith. How truly fortunate we are! Let's continue working together side by side!

Sights Set on the Distant Future

The other day I received a letter from Philippe Moine, direc-

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Photo by MIKE MULLEN

Beverly Isegohi's travels have been a journey of human revolution.

BEVERLY ISEGOHI, OAKLAND, CALIF.

Out of West Africa

Her life as the expatriate wife of an affluent African prince was privileged but incomplete until she 'faced her fears and attacked her vulnerabilities.' Now she's thriving, independent and a light for others.

Explorer might be one word to describe me and my life. I went wherever curiosity led me. While in law school, I traveled to West Africa twice — once for research, once for a job interview. During my second visit, I met my future husband, a prince whose domain consisted of a small province in a West African country.

For many years, as the expatriate wife of an African prince, I enjoyed a privileged lifestyle and

PLEASE SEE EXPERIENCE, 11



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 or you can e-mail the SGI-USA at sgiusa1@aol.com. You can e-mail the *World Tribune* editorial office at: SokaNews@aol.com.

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Forever Young

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



SGI President Ikeda and his wife, Kaneko, pose for a photo on Mr. Ikeda's 70th birthday, Jan. 2. 'I still feel as if the main thrust of my work lies yet ahead of me,' Mr. Ikeda said.

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WORLD TRIBUNE
MAILBOX

'Happy' Is Just Fine

I appreciated reading Michael Lisagor's article in the Jan. 16 "Perspective" ("There's More to Happiness Than Being Happy"). While I've always found Mr. Lisagor's writings to reflect a sincere and compassionate viewpoint, I don't necessarily agree that we need to find a new euphemism for the word *happy*. Perhaps all we need to do is continuously remind ourselves and each other what *happy* truly means in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

Like Mr. Lisagor I started practicing in the old NSA when much of the promise of happiness was based on external "results." But I also know that from the beginning, with the help of the practice, I innately understood the real happiness that my life was seeking. After chanting for some months in California, I remember my ex-wife (in New York) telling me that our young daughter had grown from selfish and intolerable to a generous and happy individual. Knowing my practice had already impacted my child's life, I then thought — despite my extremely miserable situation — "If she is happy, then I must be happy, too." My daughter's change was a gauge that gave me hope and further reason to continue chanting. Though I desired some relative happiness to alleviate my immediate suffering, I knew that it was a permanent happiness my heart was truly seeking.

As SGI President Ikeda says: "Because we receive (the eternal joy derived from the Law) ourselves, our happiness does not depend on others.... Only by our own efforts can we become happy." Easier said than done. It's a struggle, but it's kept me going.

— ROBIN AZI, Richmond, Calif.

Disappointing 'Worldview'

I was very disappointed to see a photo of William Shockley in "Worldview," Jan. 23. He with others [John Bardeen, Walter Brattain] made advances in semiconductor technology. In later life, William Shockley pursued genetic studies to try to prove blacks were genetically inferior to whites. He wanted voluntary sterilization of those with low IQs and contributed to a genius' sperm bank in hopes of advancing the (white) human race. I don't admire the "genius" given to the likes of William Shockley. Accolades to those who have made advances toward human rights are much more pleasing to my sensibilities.

— SUSAN LOCKWOOD, Conifer, Colo.

Editor's note: Thanks for pointing this out. Since the "Worldview" focused on John Bardeen, we didn't know about this aspect of Shockley's life.

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).

Prepare for Death by Living Well

PERSPECTIVE

When Betsy Bell Ringer confronted her fear of death, she learned to love life.

By **BETSY BELL RINGER**
RICHMOND, CALIF.

To conceive of life and death as separate realities is to be caught in the illusion of birth and death. It is deluded and inverted thinking. ("The Ultimate Teaching Affirmed by All Buddhas of Past, Present and Future," *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 563)

I am alone. I don't remember how old I am, but I'm still a child, and I'm thinking about dying and how there's nothing I can do to escape it. I will have to die and nothing can erase the abject terror I feel. I have no one with whom to talk. I want to cry but don't.

As years pass, this scene is repeated. It never gets better. It's stark, and its reality renders me powerless with fear. I think about God and Jesus and the promise to be with them. It doesn't help, because thinking that way leads me to wonder if I can go to God with all the anger and hatred I feel toward people I'm supposed to love. I am a bad person.

death. The timid, sneaky, passive/aggressive folks were scared of everything.

Amid the demonstrations, riots, tear gas and police and civilian brutality of Berkeley in the '60s, I became totally disillusioned with the Christian church and began looking elsewhere for a sense of spirituality. I read Alan Watts. I explored the Hebraic Kabbalah. Nothing resonated. All I had for sure was my gut instinct.

And then a friend introduced me to Nam-myoho-rence-kyo. From the beginning, I felt a strong connection. I had some remarkable experiences, but most important to me were the answers I received each time I asked one of the questions considered unanswerable in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

It didn't happen overnight, but gradually I lost my fears. I

discovered passages like the following:

"[A]fter death, a thousand Buddhas will extend their arms and enfold us in their embrace" (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 3, p. 550).

"First study death; then study other matters" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1404).

"Avoidance of the issue [of death] is actually at the root of today's pervasive obsession with personal advantage, vanity and pleasure" (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 55).

And in *Learning From the Gosho*, SGI President Ikeda quotes French philosopher Blaise Pascal:

"This negligence in a matter where [people] themselves, their eternity, their all are at stake fills me more with irritation than pity; it astounds and appalls me" (p. 179).

In the same book, President Ikeda writes:

"[R]ather than trying to compare the relative merits of different views, it is far more fruitful to ask how a particular view influences people's lives in the present — whether it makes them strong or weak, happy or miserable.... [W]hen we polish and revolutionize our lives, then life is joyful — and death is joyful, too" (p. 180).

In another quote, this time from Tolstoy, President Ikeda directs us once again:

"Death is more certain than the morrow, than night following day, than winter following summer. Why is it then that we prepare for the night and for the winter time but do not prepare for death.

We must prepare for death. But there is only one way to prepare for death — and that is to live well" (p. 182).

Who knew that Pascal and Tolstoy were Buddhists? And we, who live in the Latter Day of the Law, who are fighting against the delusions being perpetrated by the temple, have access to one of the most brilliant minds of our time, President Ikeda — a man who can cull the wisdom of ancient philosophers and current thinkers to show us clearly and definitely that life is to be lived to the fullest and death is nothing to fear.



Betsy Bell Ringer realized that her fear of death merely disguised her fear of life.

Good person or bad, time moved on. I married, had kids, divorced and went back to college for a bachelor's degree. It was the '60s, and college was a swinging place to encounter new ways of thinking, but nothing eased my fear of death.

Then one day I heard a song on my favorite rock station. I think it was called "The Tree of Life," and one line opened my mind to a new perspective: "The fear of death is the fear of life." Man, did that make sense or what? I could SEE this in the people around me. The ones who were happy, bold, straightforward and vital didn't seem too concerned about

discovered what has become my favorite Gosho, "Happiness in This Life," especially the paragraph beginning "Just chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, and when you drink sake, stay home with your wife" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 162). There was something so comforting about that sentence!

Joining the Sophia Group, the women's division study group, fueled my desire to study, and I realized that, somewhere along the way, not only had my fears evaporated, they had been replaced with a sense of joy, even anticipation, for my

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NEWS BRIEFS

NORTH CAROLINA

Vocal Ensemble Performs at Cultural Festival

The SGI-USA North Carolina Vocal Ensemble began a new phase on Jan. 24, responding to SGI President Ikeda's call to bravely and vigorously create connections in the community. Its debut public performance was at the 13th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Cultural Festival in Raleigh, hosted by North Carolina State University's African American Cultural Center. The 17-member group represented four ethnic groups, in ages ranging from 5 to 50-plus. The audience was energized by a program that included reggae, blues, a freedom song and "What Can I Do, America?" accompanied by keyboard, congas and other percussion instruments.

—PADMINI SRINIVASAN HANDS

BRAZIL

Soka Gakkai Presidents Honored by Brazilian City

In a ceremony held Jan. 20 at the Municipal Council Building of Duque de Caxias, a city in Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil, Soka Gakkai first and second presidents Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda were honored for their achievements in building the foundation of the Soka Gakkai. City councilors Nivan de Almeida and Jorge Amorelli were on hand for the occasion along with Municipal Culture Secretary Stélio Lacerda, Vice Secretary Guttemberg Cardoso dos Santos, and President Francisco Ouixaba Sobrinho of the Duque de Caxias Academy of Literature and the Arts.

The decision to pay tribute to the Soka Gakkai's first two presidents was made during a council session on Dec. 3, 1997. Duque de Caxias, Rio de Janeiro state's second largest city, has now recognized three successive presidents of the Soka Gakkai, having presented Mr. Ikeda, the third president and current leader of the SGI, with a certificate of commendation, honorary citizenship and the Order of Duque de Caxias in 1996.

—Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER

BRAZIL

SGI President Recognized by Brazilian City

SGI President Ikeda was presented in absentia with a certificate of commendation from the Brazilian city of Macuco in the state of Rio de Janeiro in honor of his outstanding contributions to the welfare of humanity. The conferral ceremony was held at the Macuco Sports Club on Dec. 18, 1997, during celebrations commemorating the founding of the Brazilian city two years ago. Mr. Ikeda was one of several individuals acknowledged by the city assembly for their remarkable achievements. On hand for the event was Mayor Maurício Bitencourt, along with a number of state and city councilors.

—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.

Soka Gakkai Attorneys Question Nikken in Libel Trial

By JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Santa Monica, Calif., Feb. 3

For the first time since Nichiren Shoshu filed a libel suit against the Soka Gakkai in December 1993, Nichiren Shoshu High Priest Nikken on Feb. 2 faced questions from Soka Gakkai attorneys. Nikken's attorneys had tried for years to keep him from appearing in court for the "Seattle Incident" trial, but a ruling last September forced him to appear, first in December for direct examination and then on Feb. 2 for cross-examination. The presiding judge has also called for further cross-examination to be held May 18.

The two-hour session on Feb. 2 focused on inconsistencies in Nikken's accounts of his conduct on March 19-20, 1963, as well as a diary from that time, which Nikken suddenly produced at the court session on Dec. 22. Nikken claims that in 1995 his wife discovered the diary, which includes an entry for his Seattle visit. This is why he changed his story from "I never set foot outside the hotel that night" to "I stepped out for a few drinks," he said.

Defense attorney Hiroshi Sato showed that two colors of ink were used in writing the Seattle entry. The entry ends with "Now I am going to sleep. It's 1:00 p.m. now." Sato asked why the ink for "Now I am going to sleep" is in black and "It's 1:00 p.m. now" is in blue. Nikken's answer was that "after I wrote, 'Now I am going to sleep,' I went to sleep for awhile and got up again — maybe because of jet lag or something — and then wrote, 'Now it's 1:00 p.m.'" (Nikken testified previously that the entry should be "1:00 a.m." and that he sometimes confuses p.m. and a.m.)

The attorney then asked how Nikken could remember such a detail about writing this entry when he testified Dec. 22 that he was shocked at the diary's discovery and that he had no recollection of keeping it. "I'm not sure on this point," Nikken replied. Sato also asked where else in the diary Nikken had added the time he went to sleep after having gone to sleep and then waking again. Nikken, after a pause, said he thought that this

was the only such entry.

Nikken's account of leaving his hotel for drinks was also a topic of inquiry. When asked about the time he left his hotel, Nikken told the attorney: "It was around 7:00 or 8:00. Otherwise the bars would not have been open." Sato reminded Nikken that this would have been during the Gohonzon-conferral ceremony which Nikken had attended that evening. Nikken said that he must have forgotten the time.

Nikken testified on Dec. 22 that he had not stayed at the Olympic Hotel the night of the incident but at another hotel — the name of which he cannot remember and which he says is now demolished. (Throughout the trial

made. At press time, Japanese temple publications had not reported on the cross-examination.

SGI leaders, meanwhile, heralded the May 18 cross-examination as another opportunity to question Nikken's assertions and painted his Feb. 2 appearance as shaky at best. "Overall, his disjointed performance served only to undermine his past statements denying the truth of the incident," commented SGI Vice President Yuichiro Kitano.

Although the judge did not give his reasons for the May extension, Soka Gakkai attorneys felt that their questioning had created enough doubt about Nikken's credibility that the court wanted to hear more. "Nikken's testimony today has made it even more obvious that his previous testimony under direct examination was full of inconsistencies and loose ends," said Soka Gakkai attorney Morio Miyahara, promising that his team would reveal more of the truth in May.

The trial is likely to continue at least until year's end. At Japan's district court level, where the case is now being heard, the simplest of cases can often take three years.

This civil trial stems from SGI member Hiroe Clow's 1992 account, printed in Soka Gakkai publications, that Nikken was involved in an altercation with prostitutes after a Seattle Gohonzon-conferral ceremony in 1963. Nikken immediately denied her story, and the temple sued for libel a year later.

Testifying in 1995, Mrs. Clow said that she shared the incident to reveal the true character of this man who — while taking actions to destroy the SGI, and excommunicating all SGI members from Nichiren Shoshu in 1991 — attempted to maintain an air of saintliness. Mrs. Clow's account was corroborated, in testimony and deposition, by two police officers involved in the incident.

At the Soka Gakkai attorneys' request, Nikken on Feb. 2 repeated his well-known assertion that he would resign as high priest if Mrs. Clow's account were ever proven true, emphasizing that his determination to do so "has not changed in the least." ■



Nikken is questioned by Gakkai attorneys. Afterward, the judge called to continue the cross-examination on May 18.

Nikken's attorneys have maintained — in accord with Mrs. Clow's testimony — that Nikken stayed at the Olympic.) Sato asked for an explanation of this significant change in Nikken's story. Nikken blamed his legal team for this inconsistency, saying that "I left everything up to my attorneys. I was too busy to pay attention to such details." (Last October, Nikken fired his lead attorney, Yoshihiro Konagai, who had handled the Seattle Incident case from the beginning.)

The session ended with the judge's decision to continue the Soka Gakkai's cross-examination on May 18. Afterward, both sides called the session, the 20th in the trial, a victory. A Nichiren Shoshu notice to chief and assistant priests thanked them for chanting during the session and said that Nikken had "graciously expounded words of truth, with which he completely destroyed the Gakkai's persistent schemes." No details of the session were provided in the notice and no mention of the May continuation was

By HO GOKU

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY

THE SEASONS OF MY MENTOR'S VOICE



In this 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 series is published as "Thoughts on The New Human Revolution" in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the *Soka Gakkai's*

When I recall the voice of my mentor, Josei Toda, I am overcome by powerful nostalgia.

With an infinitely warm tone, he encouraged grieving friends and conveyed concern for the well-being of youth. With a voice like thunder, driven by powerful emotion and tough love, he rebuked those who had been remiss. With devastating eloquence, he vanquished negative forces that sought to obstruct the progress of our movement. With the commanding tones of a mighty general, he tirelessly inspired and roused his comrades to action.

His was the great lion's roar of one who had pledged to eradicate misery from the face of the earth. Mr. Toda's voice reverberated with passion, calm, coldness, warmth, severity, generosity, compassion. It was, if you like, a voice of the four seasons — biting winter cold, gentle spring breezes, hot summer days, cool autumn nights.



At the proposal of Shin'ichi Yamamoto [President Ikeda's character in *The New Human Revolution*], leaders gathered at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters on Jan. 1, 1959 — the first New Year's Day after President Toda's death — to listen to a tape of one of their late mentor's lectures. Shin'ichi lamented the fact that Mr. Toda's impassioned cry seemed to be fading from the Soka Gakkai.

When Mr. Toda's voice sprang from the tape, the atmosphere in the room immediately transformed. Everyone sat up straight, just as if Mr. Toda were in the room speaking to them. Many of them wept with emotion and vowed to keep striving fearlessly to

achieve his vision.



Soon afterward, Shin'ichi set about having phonograph records of his mentor's speeches and lectures made, so as to preserve his words for posterity. First he gathered every tape recording available of Mr. Toda's talks and lectures, more than 160 in all. Members all over Japan helped. He was grateful for that.

As a representative of all of Mr. Toda's disciples, Shin'ichi wrote the calligraphy for the title on the record jackets: *Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda's Teachings*. He knew his calligraphy was not great art, but it was heartfelt.

The first record, Mr. Toda's lecture on the Goshō "On Prolonging Life," was finished a little more than six months later in July 1959. In his diary, Shin'ichi wrote: "I am so happy. I have paid part of my debt of gratitude to my mentor."

Shin'ichi first had the idea of



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

Shin'ichi Yamamoto set about having phonograph records of his mentor's speeches and lectures made, so as to preserve his words for posterity. Members all over Japan helped.

making recordings of Mr. Toda's speeches in 1951. The inspiration had come from a novel, *The Eternal City* by Hall Caine, which he had read and studied under Mr. Toda. Many years later, in an essay Shin'ichi wrote in connection with *The Human Revolution*, he noted that through *The Eternal City* his mentor had taught him much about the adventure of revolution and the strong bonds of true comrades.



The Eternal City is set in Rome in 1900 — which, by co-

incidence, is the same year that Mr. Toda was born.

Mr. Toda taught with the passion of a mentor who wished to make each word an everlasting source of inspiration for his disciples.

There is one unforgettable scene in the book. One day a phonograph cylinder — the equivalent of today's record or compact disc — is delivered to the home of the hero, David Rossi. When Rossi winds up the phonograph and plays the cylinder, he hears the voice of his mentor, an old revolutionary, a teacher, parent and benefactor to him.

The recording was made from his mentor's place of exile — it contains his final words to his young successor, urging him to continue the struggle for justice. Hearing the voice of his beloved teacher, Rossi breaks into tears and vows to fulfill his mentor's wish.



As he and his fellow youth studied and discussed the noble ideals of kosen-rufu with Mr. Toda, Shin'ichi thought to himself that he wanted to record his mentor's rousing words for all time — perhaps in the form of a phonograph. At the time, Shin'ichi was only 23 and struggling amid great obstacles.



When Shin'ichi was the youth division chief of staff, he bore the brunt of Mr. Toda's regular scoldings.

The current Soka Gakkai general director, Kazuya Morita, once said: "No one was scolded as often by Mr. Toda as Sensei. I was only scolded a few times. We all used to call Sensei the breakwater."

As Mr. Toda's disciple, this is a source of pride for me. In my youth, I was favored to have the lion's roar of that great mentor infused in my life to an unsurpassed degree.



Nichiren Daishonin writes: "Suppose a lion has a hundred cubs. When the lion king sees its cubs attacked by other beasts or birds of prey, he roars; the hundred cubs will then feel emboldened, and the heads of those other beasts and birds of prey will be split into seven pieces" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 288).

As the successor of a lion king, I rose to my task a hundred times emboldened. And my efforts to fight for kosen-rufu are unflagging still today.

How could I claim to be a faithful disciple of my mentor if I failed to speak out for truth and justice?



"Be champions of kosen-rufu!" — this cry of his mentor is always with Shin'ichi. Even today.



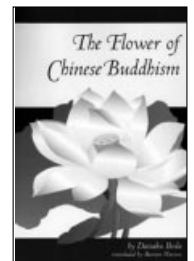
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It Should Be Natural

By REIKO GROSHELL
SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

One who recites even one word or phrase of the Lotus Sutra and who speaks about it to another person is the emissary of the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni. ("The Pure and Far-reaching Voice," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 143)

In this letter, Nichiren Daishonin is encouraging Shijo Kingo about the power of one person to influence an entire nation and that ordinary believers have the mission to protect and propagate this Buddhism.

As a young women's division leader, I am always encouraging members to share this Buddhism with others. Not for a mere numerical goal but, I truly feel, as a natural expression of faith. When we are challenging ourselves, chanting to achieve our goals and dreams and studying Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism to understand more about how to practice correctly, our life-condition will attract others to us. Because my actions and my philosophy of life stem from Buddhism — a philosophy of humanism, of empowerment — it seems natural to share it with others.

But in reality, at least for me, it is difficult to propagate this Buddhism. I'm not assertive enough, I'm not confident enough, opportunities slip right by me, or I procrastinate.

I feel, however, that if I'm to encourage members to share Nichiren Daishonin's teachings with others, I better take action myself — walk the walk before I talk the talk. I decided to chant specifically to introduce someone to this philosophy I love.

What surprised me was the fast response that I received from my environment. I didn't even have to approach someone about this practice — she approached me. I couldn't believe it.

We talked. I taught her how to chant. I introduced her to members. I encouraged her to read the publications. And now, she can't wait to receive the Gohonzon.

What was also amazing was the feeling that I had — an immeasurable joy from sharing this practice. It brought out my highest life-condition. It's a feeling I've had before, but somehow I'd forgotten. ☸

WHAT A CONCEPT

ON THE BASIC IDEAS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM

By LISA JONES
STAFF WRITER

The Daishonin's Buddhism teaches not that we should merely observe the true entity of all phenomena within our lives but that we should strive to make the reality of our lives and our environment shine as the true entity of all phenomena. It is a philosophy of change and improvement for causing all phenomena — our lives and society — to shine as the entity of the Mystic Law.

— SGI President Ikeda, Lectures on the 'Expedient Means' and 'Life Span' Chapters of the Lotus Sutra, vol. 1, p. 149.

The Chinese scholar T'ien-t'ai (538–97) was a historian of Buddhism and an enlightened observer of life. He compiled Buddhist teachings, arranged them and commented on them in a systematized, analytical way. To T'ien-t'ai, the chief purpose of studying Buddhism was to achieve a perfect understanding of reality — to have the correct perspective of life.

THEORETICAL VS. ACTUAL

Buddhism Can't Exist Without You

Nichiren Daishonin studied T'ien-t'ai's work and elaborated on its implications. The Daishonin taught that while it's crucial to understand reality — the ultimate reality, the universal truth — what is most significant is the extent to which we embody this reality in daily life, or attain Buddhahood in this lifetime.

T'ien-t'ai's teachings are known as the theoretical teachings, while the Daishonin's are actual teachings. All Buddhist concepts can be interpreted from both a theoretical point of view and, more important, an actual one.

If you want only to contemplate and debate Buddhism, these differing points of view make for highbrow entertainment, maybe. But if you want, as the Daishonin did, to change obstacles into a source of happiness and transform society for the sake of people's welfare, then there's only one way to look at Buddhism: from the standpoint of actualizing it.

As practitioners of the Daishonin's Buddhism, we study the theoretical teachings so we can gain a correct perception of reality, which is: Everything is an expression of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. Everything essentially has the Buddha nature. You, other people, trees, buildings, all life, all phenomena. To perceive this — genuinely, serenely — is to perceive the ultimate reality.

But all is not bliss. We have to take into account the three poisons of greed, anger

and foolishness. Fundamental darkness. Bad karma. The Daishonin teaches that these, too, are part of reality, part of living in the real world.

Although Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism enables us to perceive things correctly, fundamentally it's a philosophy of change, not a philosophy of mere observation. The Daishonin teaches that we can literally change the world by changing ourselves — and not only can we change, we must.

While our Buddha nature itself is unchanging and incorruptible, it is easily obscured by doubts, poisons and the innate darkness of life. In Buddhism, to change ourselves means to resolve our doubts, transform poison into medicine and illuminate the darkness. On a practical level, this means taking action: the actions of practice and study, of making efforts to relieve our suffering and the suffering of others, of speaking out against injustice, of appreciating our lives.

In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism there are two levels to every concept: understanding it and living it. Buddhist concepts can't exist only as theory — without people who are striving to actualize the teachings, Buddhism is a mere (albeit interesting) abstraction.

In other words, Buddhism can't exist without you.

Three in a series

What We Are All About

STANDS TO REASON

LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM THE WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN

By JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

If I do not call forth these three enemies of the Lotus Sutra, then I will not be a true votary of the Lotus Sutra. Only by making them appear can I be a votary. ("The Teaching, Capacity, Time and Country," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 4, pp. 20–21)

From May 1261 to February 1263, for almost two years, Nichiren Daishonin was exiled by the government — this was the Izu exile. Under the influence of Pure Land priests, government officials sent him to the Izu Peninsula, where Pure Land membership was heavy. And during this exile, the Daishonin wrote this letter clarifying how the three powerful enemies were providing the opportunity for him to prove his true identity.

He had been kicked out of Kamakura, but on the spiritual level, he made this exile a

great return — a return to the Lotus Sutra. He took solace in studying the sutra again, especially the "Encouraging Devotion" chapter. It's there that the three powerful enemies first make their appearance in the world. Actually, they aren't called the three powerful enemies in the Lotus Sutra (Miao-lo in his *Annotations on "Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra"* coined the phrase), but they're each clearly introduced there.

Restudying the sutra, the Daishonin reminded himself that only by making these powerful enemies come forth could he be a true votary, a true devotee to the cause of Buddhism. In the "Encouraging Devotion" chapter, it is the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, the votaries, who introduce the three powerful enemies and vow to Shakyamuni to call them forth in the future. These enemies' appearance was to the Daishonin the greatest proof that he was practicing Buddhism correctly — the greatest proof of who he was, what he was all about.

The Daishonin "called them forth" first by writing the "Rissho Ankoku Ron" in 1260, then through his vigorous propagation efforts in Kamakura. He knew he would infuriate the Pure Land sect this way, and that its arrogant priests would come to be his powerful enemies, trying to stop correct Buddhism. He knew he was risking his life, and he also

knew that, as a votary, he had to do it.

If we, too, consider ourselves votaries of the Lotus Sutra, Bodhisattvas of the Earth, those with courage and justice, we, too, need to face the three powerful enemies — and have the spirit to call them forth. SGI President Ikeda obviously has this spirit. He recently stated simply, "I have called forth the three powerful enemies just as the Gosho teaches."

Isn't the Daishonin suggesting in this letter that, just as for him, the three powerful enemies are deeply related to the identity of each of us who practice this Buddhism, to the mission we each have? From this can't we infer that the temple issue is part of our lives, part of who we are?

We recently celebrated the fifth anniversary of President Ikeda's poem "The Sun of Jiyu Over a New Land" (Jan. 27), in which he encourages SGI-USA members to seek our roots as true votaries — roots, he said, that are deeper than any other heritage we have ever had. Perhaps the most important way to seek these roots at the present time is by being involved in the temple issue, by facing the powerful enemies of the day, by calling them forth. In doing so, we're sure to find out more about what it means to be votaries. In other words, more about what it means to be Buddhists.

Three in a series

A mis queridos y estimados compañeros miembros de la SGI en los Estados Unidos, quienes están trabajando incansablemente por el Kosen-rufu, les deseo de todo corazón a cada uno de vosotros un ¡muy Feliz Año Nuevo!

Es mi más sincero deseo que cada uno de ustedes avancen en sus esfuerzos en el año venidero disfrutando de una excelente salud y rebozando de una vitalidad y entusiasmo inquebrantables. Ruego, para que reten y superen todos los obstáculos con coraje y regocijo, y que resurjan triunfantes para que así puedan llevar una vida de insuperable valor y felicidad. Por favor, estén plenamente confiados y seguros que el Buda Original, Nichiren Daishonin, está protegiéndonos sin lugar a dudas,

MENSAJE DE AÑO NUEVO DEL PRESIDENTE DE LA SGI

A Mis Queridos Miembros de la SGI en los Estados Unidos de America

así como también somos rigurosamente ayudados por las deidades budistas — las funciones protectoras inherentes en el universo — y todos los budas y bodhisattvas de las diez direcciones. Así pues, por favor, disfruten su vida y su fe al máximo. Forgen una práctica valiente, lleven una vida valiente.

El budismo está relacionado con el triunfo. Aquellos que triunfan obtienen la Budeidad. Aquellos que pierden sólo

experimentan la tristeza y la derrota. Es indispensable que ganemos. La fe es la fuerza que conduce a la victoria.

Nichikan Shonin dijo sobre el Gohonzon que nosotros veneramos: “si usted tiene fe en éste Gohonzon y entona Nam-myoho-renge-kyo aunque sea por un corto tiempo, ninguna oración se quedará sin respuesta, ninguna ofensa se quedará sin perdonar, ninguna buena fortuna sin otorgar y

ninguna injusticia sin probar.”

Termino mi cariñoso mensaje hacia ustedes con mis oraciones más profundas para que este año también sea:

*¡Un año de intrépida serenidad!
¡Un año de espíritus elevados!
¡Un año de victoria total!
¡Un año de salud y realización
¡Un año de convicción y optimismo!
¡Un año de abrir nuestros corazones a la amistad entre todos!*

Daisaku Ikeda
Día de Año Nuevo

Traducción del World Tribune del 16 de enero de 1998 por María Paniagua, Nueva York.

Nada Puede Igualar el Poder de una Persona con un Resuelto Afán de Consagración

A continuación se transcribe unas breves orientaciones que dio el presidente de la SGI Ikeda durante la ceremonia de Año Nuevo y partida del “Año de la Victoria del Pueblo hacia el nuevo siglo.” La reunión se realizó en el Centro en Memoria del Presidente Makiguchi en Tokio, el 2 enero.

El presidente de la SGI Ikeda manifestó la alegría de poder iniciar el “Año de la Victoria del Pueblo hacia el nuevo siglo” junto con los miembros de las SGI del mundo. Luego, agradeció profundamente a los amigos del mundo las innumerables tarjetas de saludo que le hicieron llegar, y presentó algunas de ellas. En una dice: “la perspectiva que ofrece el Japón es extremadamente sombría en todos los aspectos, sin embargo, la presencia de la Soka Gakkai constituye una fuente de esperanza.” En otro mensaje, un amigo de la organización expresa su deseo de que “la Soka Gakkai, como soberano del ámbito espiritual, guía a la sociedad.” El presidente Ikeda destacó que estas palabras reflejan la corriente de los tiempos y que las personas depositan expectativas cada vez mayores en los objetivos y los esfuerzos de la SGI. Agregó asimismo:

“Un famoso refrán afirma: ‘una persona con un resuelto afán de consagración es mucho más fuerte que una gran multi-

tud’. Definitivamente, lo que hace la fuerza no es la cantidad. Basta la presencia de una sola persona, un individuo con un firme sentido de compromiso. Lo que se requiere es un león. Un ser dispuesto a consagrarse totalmente, aunque esté solo, es mucho más poderoso que miles de soldados. Esta ha sido la determinación que animó mi existencia hasta el día de hoy, mi vida en sí atestigua la certeza de este proverbio.

“Cuando era joven sufría de tuberculosis, y mis condiciones físicas eran muy precarias. Aún así, luché batalla tras batalla. El presidente Toda dijo una vez, con lágrimas en los ojos: ‘probablemente Daisaku no llegue a tener más de treinta años.’ En otra ocasión se lamentó: ‘si Daisaku muere, la Gakkai no tendrá futuro.’ Llegó a decirme inclusive: ‘con gusto daría mi vida para que puedas continuar viviendo.’

Sin embargo, y a pesar de que toda ilusión de disfrutar de una larga vida era algo vedado para mí, viví y luché con todas mis fuerzas hasta el día de hoy. Per viví, y hoy celebro mi septuagésimo cumpleaños.

En mi juventud juré: aunque

sea el único no me importa. No dependeré de nadie. Soy un león; soy discípulo del presidente Toda; sus objetivos y aspiraciones serán los míos. Trabajaré, aunque esté solo, con tal dedicación para difundir los ideales y la filosofía del Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin en todos los rincones del mundo. Todo lo que he realizado y logrado es el resultado de este juramento.

He triunfado sobre los tres poderosos enemigos de los cuales habla el budismo, que se han empuñado en atacarme y derribarme. Pero todos sus esfuerzos han sido en vano. Jamás me he sentido más vigoroso ni rebozado de mayor vitalidad, tanto en lo físico como en lo espiritual.

El presidente Toda escribió en su Preceptos para la Juventud (1951) lo siguiente:

Nosotros no somos especialistas en el campo del debate político ni en los asuntos educativos. Sin embargo, mediante la fuerza de la religión más elevada, deseamos, sinceramente, lograr la revolución humana, librar a las personas del sufrimiento, permitirle a cada individuo construir



El presidente de la SGI.

una vida feliz y crear, así, la paz y la prosperidad en este país.

Estas palabras contienen un significado extremadamente profundo. ¿Qué es lo que el presidente Toda quiso transmitir? Su intención era hacer énfasis en la importancia de contribuir a la felicidad de las personas en el nivel más fundamental de su condición humana, al cual no pueden tener acceso los políticos, los educadores o los eruditos de la sociedad.

La grandeza del ser humano no la determina su posición social o los títulos académicos que posee. Las personas más respetables son aquellas que trabajan por el kosen-rufu como discípulos de Nichiren Daishonin. El último deseo y testamento del presidente Toda fue atesorar y valorar ante todo a estos individuos. Esto concuerda también con el espíritu del Daishonin. Los que fallan en mostrar respeto y cortesía por aquellos que se esfuerzan sinceramente por el kosen-rufu, están distorsionando las enseñanzas de Nichiren Daishonin. La clave de todo desarrollo yace en proteger y apoyar sinceramente a los miembros que se están esforzando para lograr el kosen-rufu. Mientras continuemos obrando de esta manera, el

kosen-rufu avanzará. En contraste, aquellos que explotan a la SGI y traicionan a los miembros, definitivamente recibirán una estricta retribución desde la perspectiva de la Ley Mística — la ley de causa y efecto. Si bien uno puede engañar a las personas, jamás podrá engañar a la Ley Mística.

El mundo de hoy tiene mucho de aparente y engañoso. Sin embargo, la SGI ha impulsado su movimiento para brindar la felicidad y paz a toda la humanidad, con gran sentido del compromiso y la motivación más sincera. Como resultado, la SGI se ha desarrollado hasta convertirse en una organización global; se erige con soberana majestuosidad en el mundo religioso.

El Japón, un país donde anidan los celos y la envidia, es pequeño y de mente estrecha. Pero el mundo es amigo y aliado de la SGI; y es allí donde está el escenario de la SGI.

Todos los días, a la mañana y a la noche, estoy orando desde lo más profundo de mi corazón por su salud y larga vida, y también para que todos puedan gozar la dicha de la prosperidad, felicidad y seguridad.

Este año una vez más, avancemos rebozantes de vitalidad e imbuidos en una gran alegría. ☸

Preguntas Modelo Para el Examen de Entrada

19 de abril, 1998

Las preguntas del examen estarán basadas en las siguientes preguntas modelos, las cuales se les provee para el beneficio de los disertantes, coordinadores de estudio y para quienes van a tomar el examen.

Los números de páginas en paréntesis al final de cada pregunta (con la excepción de cuatro preguntas) indican al lector donde puede encontrar la respuesta que le corresponde a cada pregunta en el libro de texto versión revisada *SGI-USA Material De Estudio Examen de Entrada (1998-2001)* que acaba de ser publicado y están en venta en las librerías de los centros comunitarios. Estos libros también pueden ser ordenados por correo al SGI-USA 'Mail Order Center' (tel. 800-626-1313, order #900).

La Vida de Nichiren Daishonin

P1:

¿Cuál fue la práctica que Nichiren Daishonin proclamó el 28 de abril, 1253? (pág. 32)

P2:

Describe el significado de la Persecución de Tatsunokuchi en términos de la identidad de Nichiren Daishonin. (págs. 36-37)

P3:

Después de que el atentado de ejecutar a Nichiren Daishonin en Tatsunokuchi falló, él fue enviado a un lugar frío y desolado del cual no se esperaba que regresara. ¿Cuál fue este lugar? (págs. 36-37)

P4:

En respuesta al desaliento de sus discípulos sobre su exilio, ¿qué les enseñó el Daishonin a ellos? (págs. 36-37)

P5:

El Daishonin completó la base teórica de sus enseñanzas durante su exilio en Sado. ¿Qué dos trabajos escritos durante este período establecieron la base teórica para la inscripción del objeto de veneración? (pág. 40)

P6:

En sus escritos Nichiren Daishonin repetidamente declaraba que un Buda es ¿qué? (pág. 36)

P7:

Nichiren Daishonin empezó a inscribir el Gohonzon después ¿de qué evento? (pág. 43)

P8:

¿Qué principio es elucidado por la inscripción en el Gohonzon de Nam-myoho-renge-kyo y Nichiren.? (pág. 43)

P9:

Siguiendo el consejo del proverbio Chino que dice: "Si las advertencias de uno son ignoradas tres veces por el soberano, uno

debería salir del país, el Daishonin se retiró al Monte Minobu y preparó la gran tarea de eternalizar su Budismo. Su retiro no significó una vida de lujo para el Daishonin. Durante ese tiempo, ¿qué tres cosas él hizo? (pág. 46)

P10:

Para desarrollar la fe de los discípulos que entrenaba en el Monte Minobu, el Daishonin dio una importante serie de disertaciones. ¿De qué se trataban estas disertaciones? Y bajo ¿Qué título fueron éstas compiladas por escrito por Nikko Shonin? (pág. 48)

P11:

¿Cuál fue la diferencia entre el comportamiento de los seguidores del Daishonin después de la persecución de Tatsunokuchi y Sado y el comportamiento de ellos después de la Persecución de Atsuhara?(pág. 51)

P12:

¿Qué actividad por los seguidores del

Daishonin hizo que las autoridades los persiguieran? (pág. 49)

P13:

¿A quién nombró Nichiren Daishonin como su legítimo sucesor? (pág. 56)

P14:

¿Por qué cinco de los seis sacerdotes principales abandonaron las enseñanzas del Daishonin después de su muerte? (pág. 58)

P15:

¿Qué actos de calumnia cometieron los cinco sacerdotes principales? (pág. 58)

P16:

¿Por qué Nikko Shonin deja al Monte Minobu y establece el templo the Taisekiji al pie del monte. (pág. 58)

P17:

¿Cuál fue el propósito de Nikko Shonin al escribir "Las Veintiseis Advertencias"? (pág. 59)



Photos by KIRK CONDYLES

Las preguntas 25-26 están basadas sobre el siguiente párrafo:

El Sutra Jomyo dice que la iluminación del Buda se encontrará en la vida humana, así pues enseñando que los mortales comunes pueden lograr el Estado de Buda y los sufrimientos de nacimiento y muerte pueden transformarse en el nirvana. Además, sostiene que, si las corazon de las personas es impuro, la tierra en que viven también es impura, pero que, si el corazón de las personas es puro, su tierra también lo será. No existen dos tierras que sean una, pura y otra impura en sí mismas. La única diferencia yace en el bien o mal de nuestro corazón. (MW-1, 4)

P25:
¿Qué principio budista es ilustrado en este párrafo? (págs. 10-11)

P26:
¿Qué significa "el bien o el mal de nuestros corazones"? (pág. 10)

P27:
¿Dónde existe la tierra del Buda? (pág. 10)

P28:
En el principio de "la mutuamente inclusiva relación de la vida y todos los fenómenos", ¿qué representa la vida? (El material de estudio para esta pregunta será publicado en la próxima edición de la 'Spanish Page' [páginas en Español] del *World Tribune*. 13 de marzo, 1998.)

P29:
En el principio de "la mutuamente inclusiva relación de la vida y todos los fenómenos", ¿qué representa los fenómenos? ('Spanish page,' *World Tribune*. 13 de marzo, 1998.)

P30:
De acuerdo a Nichiren Daishonin, ¿cuáles son las enseñanzas inferiores? (pág. 7)

P31:
¿Cuándo se podría considerar invocar Nam-myoho-renge-kyo todavía

como una práctica provisional? (pág. 7)

P32:
El Daishonin nos enseña que cuando entonemos daimoku al Gohonzon debemos "tener la profunda convicción de que _____." (pág. 9)

P33:
¿Cuál acción de la práctica budista es la que el Daishonin compara con pulir un espejo? (pág. 12)

P34:
De acuerdo a esta carta, ¿cuál es "el camino directo a La Iluminación"? (págs. 5-6)

'El Verdadero Aspecto del Gohonzon'

Jamás busque este Gohonzon fuera de usted misma. El Gohonzon existe sólo en la carne mortal de nosotros, las personas comunes que abrazamos el Sutra del Loto e invocamos Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. El cuerpo es el palacio de la novena conciencia, la realidad inmutable que reina sobre todas las funciones de la vida... El Gohonzon se encuentra solamente en la fe. Como el sutra declara, "Sólo mediante la fe uno puede ingresar al Estado de Buda". (MW-1, p. 213)

P35:
¿Qué es lo que Nichiren Daishonin nos insta a buscar dentro de nuestras propias vidas? (pág. 16)

P36:
¿Cuál es el significado del fragmento "El cuerpo es el palacio de la novena conciencia, la realidad inmutable que reina sobre todas las funciones de la vida"? (pág. 18)

P37:
En esta carta, Nichiren Daishonin se refiere al Gohonzon como "perfectamente dotado". ¿Por qué es que otros objetos budistas de veneración están incompletos al compararlos con el Gohonzon? ('Spanish Page' *World Tribune*, 13 de marzo, 1998)

P38:
Ninguna persona tiene una fe inamovible al comienzo de su práctica. ¿Cómo es que podemos definir la fe al principio de nuestra práctica? (pág. 19)

P39:
Cuando invocamos daimoku al Gohonzon experimentamos la interacción de los cuatro poderes. Dos de estos poderes son 1) el poder del Buda y 2) el poder de la Ley. ¿Cómo podemos activar el poder del Buda y el poder de la Ley en nuestras propias vidas? (pág. 17)

P40:
Shariputra, un discípulo de Shakyamuni, era considerado como el "más sabio de sus discípulos", sin embargo, ni siquiera él pudo lograr la iluminación a través de su propia sabiduría. ¿Cómo pudo él finalmente lograr la iluminación? ('Spanish Page' *World Tribune*. 13 de marzo, 1998)

P41:
A pesar de que las dudas son algo natural e inevitable, es importante esforzarse para tener una fe sin dudas. En vez de preocuparnos o atormentarnos, ¿qué debemos hacer cuando tenemos algún sentimiento de duda o insinceridad en nuestra práctica? (pág. 20)

P42:
¿Cuales son las dos acciones que expresan la fe en el Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin? (pág. 20)

'Sobre Como Lograr el Estado de Buda'

P18:
¿Por qué es que las enseñanzas del Daishonin sobre la Ley Mística difieren de las perspectivas de otras religiones? (pág. 6).

P19:
¿Qué significa "percibir la naturaleza de nuestra propia vida"? (págs. 7-8)

P20:
¿Qué está tratando de ilustrar el Daishonin al utilizar la analogía del hombre pobre que cuenta la riqueza de su vecino día y noche? (pág. 8)

P21:
¿Qué actitud nos conducirá a sentir que nuestra práctica es una "austeridad dolorosa"? (pág. 9)

P22:
De acuerdo a esta carta, ¿cuál actitud constituye la de los "no budistas"? (págs. 8-9)

P23:
¿Qué elemento clave de nuestra práctica budista enfatiza esta carta? (pág. 9)

P24:
¿Qué actitud no nos permite experimentar "alegría abrumadora" en nuestra práctica? (pág. 8)



P43:

¿En este escrito, qué nos trata de enseñar Nichiren Daishonin cuando cita los ejemplos del Emperador de Han y Li Kuang? (págs. 20-21)

P44:

Inscritos en caracteres chinos en a lo largo del centro del Gohonzon, están las palabras "Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nichiren". ¿Qué principio budista indica esto? (incluya las partes que componen este principio) (pág. 15)

'La Felicidad en esta Vida'

P45:

¿Cómo podemos elevar nuestra condición de vida? (págs. 22-23)

P46:

¿Por qué es importante elevar nuestra condición de vida? (págs. 22-23)

P47:

¿Por qué es que Nichiren Daishonin declara que "No hay mayor felicidad para los seres humanos que invocar Nam-myoho-renge-kyo"? (págs. 22-23)

P48:

¿Qué es lo que nos permite experimentar la "felicidad que proviene de la Ley"? (págs. 24-25)

P49:

¿Cuál es la diferencia entre "la felicidad que proviene de la Ley" y "la felicidad que proviene de los deseos"? (págs. 24-25)

P50:

¿Por qué es contradictorio a las enseñanzas del Sutra del Loto atribuirle a otra persona la causa de nuestra felicidad o infelicidad? (pág. 24-25)

P51:

¿Qué clase de determinación en nuestra práctica es la que contribuye a desarrollar nuestra condición de vida? (págs. 24-25)

P52:

¿Cómo es que la frase "disfrutar plenamente de la vida" se relaciona con nuestras vidas? (pág. 25)

P53:

¿Qué es lo que significa ser un Buda original o de libertad absoluta? (pág. 25)

P54:

¿Qué significa lograr "paz y seguridad"? (pág. 27)

P55:

¿Qué se entiende por "las dificultades de la vida" en el Budismo? (págs. 28-29)

P56:

¿Por qué Nichiren Daishonin instó a Shijo Kingo: "fortalezca su fe más que nunca"? (pág. 30)



P57:

¿Cuál es el significado del consejo de Nichiren Daishonin a Shijo Kingo: "solamente invoque Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, y cuando beba sake, quédese en su casa junto a su mujer"? (pág. 29)

P58:

¿Cuál es el propósito de nuestra práctica de fe? (pág. 22)

'Preguntas y Respuestas Sobre el Asunto Relacionado con el Templo'

Las preguntas desde la 59 a la 63 están basadas en la "Introducción":

P59:

¿Cuál es el punto fundamental del budismo que desafía a las personas que están interesadas en la pasividad y la obediencia total de sus creyentes? (pág. 60)

P60:

¿Qué párrafo del Sutra del Loto respecto a las persecuciones se aplica directamente a la SGI? (pág. 60)

P61:

¿Cómo es que el budismo caracteriza la oposición de la autoridad? (pág. 61)

P62:

¿Cuál es el significado de los obstáculos en nuestro movimiento budista? (pág. 61)

P63:

¿Qué es lo que significa para la SGI la oposición del clero? (pág. 61)

Las preguntas 64-66 están basadas en la pregunta número 2: "¿Por qué es importante saber acerca del asunto relacionado con el templo?"

P64:

¿Cómo podemos beneficiarnos cuando comprendemos el asunto relacionado con el templo? (pág. 63)

P65:

¿Qué quiere decir "tener una fe correcta"? (pág. 63)

P66:

Con una perspectiva hacia el futuro, ¿por qué es importante comprender el asunto

relacionado con el templo? (pág. 63)

Las preguntas 67-70 están basadas en la pregunta número 4: "¿Cuál es la verdadera diferencia entre el templo y la SGI?"

P67:

¿Cuál es la postura de la Nichiren Shoshu en relación a la igualdad entre los miembros laicos y el clero? (pág. 65)

P68:

¿Por qué es que la perspectiva de la Nichiren Shoshu sobre el Gohonzon contradice la perspectiva de Nichiren Daishonin? (pág. 66)

P69:

Nichiren Daishonin claramente describe lo que significa recibir la herencia o la fuerza vital de la fe. ¿Cuál es la diferencia entre la perspectiva de la Nichiren Shoshu y la perspectiva del Daishonin? (págs. 66-67)

P70:

¿Cuál es la diferencia esencial entre la Nichiren Shoshu y la SGI en cuanto a la acción y el compromiso para el logro del kosen-rufu? (pág. 68)

EXPERIENCE, FROM PAGE 1

moved in a circle of aristocrats and dictators' wives, holiday shopping in foreign countries. I traveled frequently, often aboard the Concorde, maintained a staff of domestic servants and owned palatial homes on two continents and an apartment in New York. As co-owner of a petroleum-related company and several other businesses I started with my husband, I decided when and how hard I worked.

But underneath all this, things were slowly falling apart.

Around this time, in 1985, I received the Gohonzon during a trip to New York. When I went back to West Africa, I did not take the Gohonzon with me. I did gongyo only when convenient, rarely chanted daimoku, and made no attempt to study.

I met an American member in the West African city where I lived, and she encouraged me to practice more consistently, but still I refused to study. I traveled bimonthly to the United States and could have participated in activities, but didn't. I was moving fast, but my practice wasn't going anywhere.

In the face of developing political unrest in my husband's country and fear for my personal safety, I had to face the truth. Something was wrong with my storybook marriage. The prince I married was descended from a king known for locking any one of his wives in a closet whenever she angered him. Though my husband outwardly rejected most tribal lore and displayed all the trappings of Western culture, there were traces of antiquated

social mores that festered in our relationship, including abusive words and manipulation. It was a wound I hid from family and friends, a wound increasing in its severity when I returned to the United States to live permanently.

I gave up our New York apartment, settled into our California home and kept the Gohonzon in my bedroom. I didn't realize to what extent, but I knew there were critical elements missing from my life. I needed to be whole. The wound on my inner self prevented me from going forward. If I were a diver, I would have been standing on the edge of the diving board afraid to take the plunge. I remained in a state of paralysis, unsure of what to do.

I increased the regularity of my gongyo but still resisted study. Deep down inside, I feared that if I held my Buddhist practice up to scrutiny I would find contradictions I couldn't explain.

My only link to the SGI was the woman who had introduced me to the practice. She encouraged me to establish a relationship with the community center in my area. I felt I didn't need it. I believed that if I accepted the Mystic Law as doctrine, then everything else would work itself out.

I continued with my gongyo and occasional daimoku, but, meanwhile, my emotions and finances were on a roller coaster. On a day when things seemed to come to a head, I contacted a local member because I knew I needed help. From that point forward, the SGI became the backbone of my life. Still, during this period, though I was deeply wounded, I maintained a facade of success as my visibility and

I began to study the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Daishonin's writings. President Ikeda's guidance now provides me with constant sustenance to move my life forward.

contribution to SGI-USA activities and local government increased dramatically.

But at home, my inner turmoil rose to a feverish pitch, straining my relationship with my children and my husband. I became impatient, bitter, resentful. I replaced loving hugs with cold-eyed stares. I responded to their questions with short, acerbic answers. My daughter would look at old photographs, see the look of happiness on my face, then ask, "What happened, Mom?" I, too, began to ask myself probing questions: What is the source of my faults; what's at the root of my inner suffering? I knew I had to take action.

I moved the Gohonzon out of my bedroom into a commonly

used family room — in essence, moving it into the center of my life. I began to chant vigorously to see my faults and remove them. I embraced my practice as if it was my source for air. I sought guidance from my district leaders. I wrote in my journal. I searched my soul for the reasons my life seemed disjointed.

I soon realized that fear and lack of confidence had been my stumbling blocks all along. I also had a fear of revealing my vulnerabilities. These fears had been reinforced throughout my childhood and into adulthood. For the first time in my life, I confronted these fears and made a conscious effort to remove them. I took action, just as I had had to do countless times before in my business ventures.

To overcome my morbid fear of speaking before groups, I took an acting class. I also reminded myself of SGI President Ikeda's guidance: "When you speak with sincerity, you will have the confidence to speak before any group." To gain financial independence from my husband, I reentered the work force as an interim measure until my own business could sustain itself. To overcome my technological illiteracy, I took computer classes, read computer manuals and accepted projects dependent on computer knowledge. To better hone my writing skills, I sought advice from writing instructors and read craft books. To remove those qualities that locked me into a position of servility when the situation required authority, I drilled myself in guidance received from a wide variety of sources. I forced myself to take command when needed.

While attacking my vulnerabilities, I envisioned where I wanted to be spiritually, intellectually and financially. I realized more than anything that I wanted financial independence from my husband. On paper, we shared everything we owned 50-50, but in reality, he stood to control every asset in his home country — a patriarchal society.

Determined to use my appropriate experience and my knowledge of the infrastructure of non-industrialized countries to further the cause of peace in emerging nations, I decided to write. My recent work, an essay about my cross-cultural experience, was published in an anthology entitled *Blackeyed Peas for the Soul* (Simon & Schuster, 1997). I have also written news articles.

I began to study the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Daishonin's writings. President Ikeda's guidance now provides me with constant sustenance to move my life forward. Enthusiastically, I look forward to sharing my difficulties and successes in my process of human revolution with my fellow district members in a non-judgmental atmosphere.

All this is the direct result of faith, practice and study, of all the causes I made when I took action to change my life. At work and at play, I am told by non-members that I exude a positive energy, a light. Behind the compliment, I see the question in their eyes: What is it? And at that point, I know I have an opportunity to share this Buddhism.

So, I continue to elevate my life-condition, to increase the light, to show actual proof through my own happiness. 卍

From SGI President Ikeda:

* If only large meetings were held, it would be difficult for all members to gain heart-felt understanding and make a deep determination in faith. The importance of giving detailed consideration to the situation of each person through one-on-one dialogue cannot be emphasized too strongly; giving individual encouragement should be our primary concern. The SGI has developed to the extent it has because we have steadfastly adhered to this principle. (August 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p.36)

* True concern for others manifests itself as unconditional friendship. To be considerate means that the more someone is suffering, the more love you show them. It gives you the courage to help another stand up. And it means recognizing another person's unhappiness for what it is, trying to understand and share his or her suffering.

WORDS TO THE WISE

CARING FOR OTHERS

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)

This will enable you to grow and at the same time help the other person become strong. Consideration is training ourselves in the art of encouraging others. (Aug. 15, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 10)

* Finally, leaders should be second to

none in taking action. We have to take the initiative ourselves, encouraging those who are suffering and visiting those who are unwell and need to be cheered. We have to spring to action quickly — with a light step, warmth in our voice and a friendly, down-to-earth

attitude. To the extent that we take action, kosen-rufu will advance in our local communities and the greater progress we will make in our human revolution. (Oct. 24, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 11)

* Even just a few words spoken with honesty by a person of pure faith can deeply penetrate another's heart. On the other hand, if one's words are vague and uncertain, they will lack the freshness and the power to move others. (Sept. 19, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 13)

* I have constantly stressed how important it is for leaders to personally go to the front line of activities, to see things for themselves, to meet with people. Wherever leaders have done so, there has been tremendous growth. Where leaders have grown arrogant and failed to make such personal efforts, however, there has only been stagnation. (Nov. 7, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 7) 卍

HIGHLIGHTS
FROM THIS SPEECH

We who devote our lives to kosen-rufu remain forever youthful — our lives are unaging. Brimming with powerful life force, we know no deadlock. Throughout eternity, we vigorously pursue our mission — our lives are undying.



Those who stand up to fight for people's freedom can savor a sense of genuine freedom in the depths of their lives. They are truly free.



We are free to attend Soka Gakkai meetings. We are free to talk to others about Buddhism. We are free to work for kosen-rufu. There is no greater happiness than this.



To remain focused and committed to the path you have chosen in life, to pursue it with all of your energy, and to be able to say at the end of your life: "I'm satisfied. I have no regrets," is to be a victor in life.



Youth who simply stand by in the face of injustice are cowardly and self-serving. Cowardice is the greatest enemy of justice. When something needs to be said, we must speak out loud and clear.



Unless religion serves people, serves society, it has no meaning. This is, in my opinion, the true teaching of Nichiren Daishonin.



A leader who simply makes ridiculous and irrelevant remarks will not win people's trust or respect. It is important for leaders to speak intelligently, using wisdom and prudence in what they say so that they can guide people in a positive and constructive direction.



Sun Yat-sen said: "If you believe in yourself, you can even move mountains and fill in the oceans; no matter how difficult the task, you will see the day when you succeed. If you do not believe in yourself, you will not be able to even lift your own hand or snap a slim twig; no matter how easy the task, you will never see success. This is how important the mind is. It is the origin of all things."

Brave and Vigorous Advance!

BRAVE, FROM PAGE 1

tor of the Victor Hugo House of Literature, a facility I founded in Bièvres on the outskirts of Paris. He wrote that a French news program had reported that the Victor Hugo House was the most important place to visit in Bièvres. It was a popular TV program with a very large viewing audience. It's such wonderful news that I wanted to share it with all of you.

Speaking of Victor Hugo, Professor Toru Tsuji, one of Japan's leading experts on the great French writer, lectured at Soka University during the school's annual festival last month [November 1997]. Dr. Tsuji is also the recipient of an honorary doctorate from Soka University. I fondly remember discussing many subjects with him at the conferral four years ago [November 1993].

As an avid reader of Hugo's works since my youth, I had always held a tremendous respect for Dr. Tsuji, who has translated many of Hugo's writings into Japanese. I had long wondered what kind of person he is, and then he visited Soka University and I had the opportunity to speak with him. I felt a connection between us.

He is, as I had thought he must be, a man of deep convictions. Dr. Tsuji has translated Victor Hugo's novels *Les Misérables*, *Ninety-three*, *Notre-Dame de Paris* [The Hunchback of Notre Dame], as well as a large body of the French writer's poetry. He is also the author of *The Life of Victor Hugo* and *Victor Hugo: The Man and His Thought* [both in Japanese]. Today he is 81 years old, and his love for literature and for young people has not changed in the least. He remains vibrant and active, delightfully young at heart.

Dr. Tsuji isn't interested in fame. The vagaries of public opinion do not concern him. He just carries on quietly with his studies for the sake of humanity. He is making steady efforts for the young people who will come after him. This is a sign of genuine character.

Similarly, my mentor, the Soka Gakkai's second president, Josei Toda, used to say, "We are fighting now for 200 years in the future." I share his determination. I don't care whether we receive immediate recognition for our efforts or not; my sights are set on the distant future.

I think that people such as Dr. Tsuji are Japan's treasures.

Once Mr. Toda spoke with great indignation of how the

Japanese military authorities had killed his mentor, Soka Gakkai founder Tsunesaburo Makiguchi — a person who was truly a most valuable treasure of Japan. He drew a stark comparison between this and the treatment that had been accorded the famous entomologist and educator Jean Henri Fabre (1823–1915) by the French government. The French education minister personally made a long journey to visit Fabre to pay his respects.

Mr. Toda referred to remarks made by Suketoshi Tanabe, a former lecturer of Nihon University, in a speech the latter made on the occasion of the publication of Mr. Makiguchi's Theory of Value. Mr. Tanabe had said: "When a French elementary school principal by the name of Jean Henri Fabre wrote his Entomological Souvenirs, the French education minister visited him on behalf of France, a country known for its culture, and personally expressed his appreciation. Now, in Japan, an elementary school principal named Tsunesaburo Makiguchi has announced his theory of value — a great theory of world importance. How will Japan repay him?"

Such behavior is the hallmark of a culturally advanced nation. In contrast, how did the Japanese authorities reward Mr. Makiguchi, a great educator and person of learning and culture? With prison and death.

I believe the cultural backwardness that caused such a tragedy remains unchanged in Japan to this day. Surely a country should go out of its way to search out the nameless citizens who voluntarily serve society at the grass roots and do all in its power to honor them.

Dr. Tsuji sounds strong words of warning about Japan's spiritual poverty. The habit of forging character and inner strength through hard work and self-discipline has disappeared from Japan, he says, and this is a reason why young people are weak-spirited and apathetic. I totally share his profound disappointment.

During his lecture at Soka University, Dr. Tsuji said the following about freedom: "The fundamental freedom that Rousseau and others called for was the freedom to stand up against tyranny and oppressive authority. In Japan today, freedom has become simply the right to indulge one's personal

whims. Freedom is being abused. This is a terrible shame."

True freedom is the freedom to bring down tyranny, the freedom to cut the chains of oppression with one's own hands.

Dr. Tsuji continued, "In Japan reigns a freedom without discipline, a freedom without convictions, a freedom without moral conscience." This criticism also applies perfectly to the current state of freedom of speech in Japan.

I spoke on the subject of freedom in the first installment of the second series of "Discussions on Youth," and I am of precisely the same opinion as Dr. Tsuji. In other words, those who stand up to fight for people's freedom can savor a sense of genuine freedom in the depths of their lives. They are truly free. This is Dr. Tsuji's view of freedom, and Victor Hugo's as well. It is also Nichiren Daishonin's view.

I can state without hesitation, therefore, that we are the busiest but also the freest of individuals — free in the truest sense of the word. We are free to attend Soka Gakkai meetings. We are free to talk to others about Buddhism. We are free to work for kosen-rufu. There is no greater happiness than this. Without freedom, we cannot do any of these things. Not to appreciate this fact and instead feel stifled and trapped by the organization is a sad mistake and only a cause for suffering.

A Room Without Books Is Like a Person With No Heart

Dr. Tsuji expressed another profound regret: "Japanese people today only watch television or read trashy literature. Young people in particular are not reading good books." It is true that young people of recent times don't read books. It's as if they have an aversion to the printed word. I also feel an urgency to encourage youth to read.

If we don't read books, our brains and our minds go uncultivated. Visual images alone are too transitory, too shallow, to cultivate our mental powers. On the other hand, if we do read books but only mindless ones, we will become mindless people. Making an effort to read good books is very important.

The other day a man who has been running a big book store in Shizuoka for 50 years said much the same thing to me. He

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



Ghana President Jerry Rawlings is greeted by SGI President Ikeda during the Ghanaian leader's visit to Japan.

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was especially lamenting the fact that nowadays even teachers don't read. "When teachers and other adults are not reading, how can they teach children to?" he asserted.

Reading builds character. When I was in my teens, I adopted the motto "A room without books is like a person with no heart." Mr. Toda used to say: "Read epics. Read the great novels of the world." He was very strict in insisting that I read a great many books. And I did. Sometimes I would read on the train, and sometimes, seeking peace and quiet, I even read in a cemetery. I didn't care about having the right place to read or enough time to read. I simply gave a hundred percent whenever the chance to get some reading in presented itself.

A life without the company of good books is shallow and all too sad. That is why I have striven to write so many books in the hope that they might serve as spiritual nourishment for young people. And I am determined to write more still. Dr. Tsuji has shown a deep understanding of my efforts in this direction.

You may be wondering how it was that Dr. Tsuji came to have such a profound appreciation of the Soka Gakkai. One of his encounters with our organization was brought about by Keiko Ichiki, a women's division vice district leader living in his neighborhood in Tokyo, who delivered the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper, to his house one day. We must never forget the work of such sincere and dependable women within the Soka Gakkai. Great are not those who give orders but those who take action. They are the ones who make kosen-rufu possible. They deserve the deepest gratitude, the highest respect, the utmost concern. This is a true realm of humanity, the world of Buddhism.

Incidentally, Dr. Tsuji's father was the famous Japanese Western-style painter and director of the prestigious national art association Nitten (Japan Art Exhibition), Hisashi Tsuji (1884-1974). His painting *A Calm Day at Suma* is displayed in the reception room of the Seikyo Shimbun building, where it welcomes our guests from all over the world. I acquired this painting soon after becoming Soka Gakkai president because I

wanted to present a small gift to adorn our headquarters.

Until Your Life Is Satisfied

Though the health of Dr. Tsuji's father deteriorated seriously from the age of 80, he still retained a passion for painting. Dr. Tsuji once asked his father, then already in his mid-60s: "You have been painting for more than 40 years now. Don't you ever get bored?"

His father replied sternly: "Don't be silly. I have never, since I began painting, created a single painting that I am satisfied with. I don't know when I'm going to die, but my greatest worry is that I won't paint a truly satisfactory painting before I do."

These are the inspiring words of a person who has mastered the art of life.

To remain focused and committed to the path you have chosen in life, to pursue it with all of your energy, and to be able to say at the end of your life: "I'm satisfied. I have no regrets," is to be a victor in life.

I should like all of you to lead a life such as this.

Each of us must win our own

happiness, through our own efforts. People may criticize us, but do those individuals have the power to make us happy? Do they have a solid philosophy by which to live? The fact is that in most cases such critics are themselves unhappy, dissatisfied people.

Once we understand this, it becomes clear just how foolish it is to be swayed by others. We have to create a life of happiness and great achievement through our own efforts. And faith enables us to do this.

Past 80, Dr. Tsuji still energetically pursues his lifework, seeing his writings on Victor Hugo translated into French, English, German, Italian and Spanish.

Our lifework as SGI members is kosen-rufu. Those who possess a great purpose are always youthful, always in the spring of life.

Let us continue to advance proudly with just such youthful vigor!

Deeds of Daring Dazzle

Here is a passage from *Les Misérables* that Dr. Tsuji quoted in his lecture at Soka University as his message to the youth:

The onward march of the human race requires that the heights around it constantly blaze with noble lessons of courage. Deeds of daring dazzle history and form one of man's guiding lights. The dawn dares when it rises.

The morning sun cannot be stopped. It rises inexorably. Today's SGI is just like the morning sun. The passage he quoted continues:

To strive, to brave all risks, to persist, to persevere, to be faithful to oneself, to grapple hand to hand with destiny, to surprise defeat by the slight terror it inspires, at one time to confront unjust power, at another to defy drunken triumph, to hold fast, to hold hard — such is the example nations need, and the light that electrifies them.

I hope the youth division members, too, will advance with such courage and acts of daring. I pray they will shine as a brilliant sun of hope by confronting all challenges with perseverance and determination.

Youth in particular must

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speaking up. As the Daishonin says, "The voice does the Buddha's work" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708). We cannot be emissaries of the Buddha if we remain silent. We cannot fight injustice.

Mr. Toda would never silently tolerate anyone hurting Mr. Makiguchi's good name. Once, as he was leaving a discussion meeting held at the home of the Makiguchi family right after the war, Mr. Toda bumped into the man renting the downstairs rooms of the Makiguchi house. He had heard how this tenant had been damaging the property and disturbing the peace of his mentor's precious family. So as soon as he set eyes on him, Mr. Toda roared at him in a voice so loud that it seemed the entire house might come crashing down around them. Not about to be beaten, the man shouted back just as vocally.

Mr. Toda had already put his shoes on, but he took them off, and, with an even louder cry of rage, marched straight into the man's room and planted himself down cross-legged on the tatami. He then proceeded to rake the man over the coals, going item by item through his transgressions. Finally, the man bowed his head and apologized.

Youth who simply stand by in the face of injustice are cowardly and self-serving. Cowardice is the greatest enemy of justice. When something needs to be said, we must speak out loud and clear. Ability to do so is also the emblem of a global citizen. Courage and daring are the traits of a person of true character and substance.

I would like all the members of the youth division to become courageous and daring Victor Hugos of the 21st century.

A Sad Path of Decline

This year [1997] we had many visitors from all over the world. There is a Mongolian proverb that "the person with an endless stream of visitors is happy." Mr. Toda also used to say that having many visitors was proof of lively development.

In that sense, those who make their homes available for discussion meetings are making a fundamental cause for the welfare and prosperity of themselves and their families. The more that people visit their homes, the more they will flourish. Similarly, those who actively go out to meet and interact with others lead lives that are always rich and open to new possibilities.



Sun Yat-sen's portrait dominates Tiananmen Square in Beijing as people line up to have their photo taken with it.

In the last seven years, the Nikken sect has been on a sad path of decline and dogged by dark rain clouds. The Soka Gakkai, in contrast, continues to go from strength to strength, our members irrepressibly high-spirited and confident of success. Buddhism is about winning, and I would like to announce here and now: We have won!

Recently, President Jerry Rawlings and his wife Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings of the Republic of Ghana visited Japan. On the very day of their arrival [Dec. 1, 1997] kindly called on the Min-On Culture Center and the Seikyo Shimbun building [both located in Shinanomachi, Tokyo]. They proudly celebrated the 40th anniversary of Ghana's independence.

The Ghanaian president and first lady attended the opening ceremony of the "Ghana at 40" exhibition commemorating the 40th anniversary of Ghana's independence at the Min-On Culture Center.

President Rawlings expressed delight that an SGI-Ghana culture center is going to be built. As you can see, the SGI has friends all around the world.

During my meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Rawlings, we discussed the first president and hero of modern Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (1909-72), and his belief in always placing the people first. It was people power, inspired by Dr. Nkrumah's leadership, that brought independence to Ghana in 1957 and heralded a dawn of hope for the entire African continent. From that time, I have been carefully observing Africa, and I have firmly come to be-

lieve that the 21st century will be the century of Africa.

Gongyo With a Lively Voice

Who did Ghana's champion of independence, Dr. Nkrumah, trust and care about the most? It was the ordinary citizens of Ghana, especially women. The university-educated elite and people concerned only with social position and rank were not the ones who worked hardest for independence. Nkrumah was well aware that the majority of such individuals were interested only in themselves and cared little for their country, that it didn't even occur to them to think of the welfare of the general populace. Ultimately, he found that it was the women of his country whom he could really depend on.

During the drive for independence, women went from village to village, house to house, talking to people. They spoke passionately to awaken their fellow citizens and spur them to action. They encouraged people to speak out and to work for the prosperity of their nation, to bring peace and to defeat the opponents of independence. They called on people to join them in the struggle to free their country from the yoke of oppressive rulers. Thousands responded to the women's impassioned cry. People began to take action, to unite. And singing rousing songs of liberty, they marched purposefully toward their goal.

"The voice does the Buddha's work." The Buddha's work of kosen-rufu only advances when we speak out energetically, when we actively use our voice toward this end.

The same applies to gongyo. I hope you'll do gongyo with a

lively voice filled with positive energy and joy, not a tired, lackluster, unenthusiastic voice. There is no greater happiness than chanting daimoku. A voice chanting the Mystic Law instantly reaches the farthest corners of the universe. The more we chant, and the more we teach others to do the same, the more we make it possible for ourselves to attain a state of life in which we can travel unhindered through the universe with perfect serenity and freedom. Daimoku is the source of good fortune and boundless life force throughout past, present and future.

Religion Should Serve People

The life of Dr. Nkrumah, leader of Ghana's independence struggle, was threatened on several occasions. Once, when the authorities were searching for him and other leaders of the movement, two women put their own lives on the line to shelter Dr. Nkrumah and help him escape to safety.

Let me share some of Dr. Nkrumah's axioms:

There is one power which no force of arms can overcome, and that power is the enthusiasm and determination of a whole people.

Let us remember always that in the final analysis the masses are the final arbiter. They will always choose freedom and justice, as against oppression and corruption.

There is no force, however formidable, that a united people cannot overcome.

Nothing can match the power of the people. Consequently, those who stand on the side of the people can never be defeated.

The Vietnam War demonstrated the power of the Vietnamese people. Likewise, China's victory over the invading Japanese forces before and during World War II was rooted in the power of the Chinese people, who were armed with a fierce determination to win. The Japanese military, failing to recognize the power of the people of the land they were invading, thought that they had won when they defeated what was then the southern Chinese capital of Nanking. But they were wrong.

The SGI stands eternally on the side of the people. We will forever work on their behalf. That is why our movement will remain solid and flourish for all time.

This commitment is also why I have been devoting all my energy to the development of youth division members — in the hope that they may one day grow to become great leaders of the people. I wish to create a youth division whose members inspire trust and confidence in everyone around them and who can be relied upon to carry on our movement, no matter what circumstances may arise.

Let us of the SGI move ever forward as a great alliance of the people.

I congratulate the SGI organization in Taiwan for its receipt of Taiwan's Social Organization of Excellence Award for the sixth consecutive year.

The Internal Affairs Ministry of the government of Taiwan confers the award annually on organizations that have made positive contributions to social welfare and public service activities in Taiwan. Of the 30 organizations honored this year, the SGI of Taiwan is the only one that has received the award six consecutive years.

Mr. Makiguchi questioned whether there can be any social justification for the existence of religion apart from working for the happiness of humanity and making the world a better place. Unless religion serves people, serves society, it has no meaning. This is, in my opinion, the true teaching of Nichiren Daishonin.

I'm sure that Mr. Makiguchi would have nothing but the highest praise for the contributions that our members in Taiwan, and indeed all over the world, are making to society.

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I particularly hope the members of the youth division will always advance fearlessly along the great path of humanism of the SGI.

We must never be cowardly. We who practice the Daishonin's Buddhism have nothing to fear. However, we must always be aware of the strict workings of the Mystic Law, the law of cause and effect.

We Must Use Our Heads

The great Chinese hero Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), who boldly proclaimed the sovereignty of the people, was always in exceedingly high spirits. One invariably finds that people who have firmly decided on the road they will take in life are positive and cheerful, that they are not in the least uncertain or afraid.

In 1905, Sun Yat-sen was in Tokyo working on the formation of the revolutionary coalition, the Alliance Society. One day, he and his colleagues called a preparatory meeting to mark the mobilization of a new force for change in China. During the meeting, something totally unexpected occurred. Was it raided by the police? No. Rather, what happened was that an unexpectedly large number of people turned up for the meeting, causing a portion of the floor in the rear of the hall to suddenly collapse under their weight.

The same thing actually happened to me once when I was involved in Gakkai activities in Tokyo's Bunkyo Chapter — the floor collapsed because we had so many people in attendance at our meeting! But let's get back to Sun Yat-sen.

No one was hurt by the accident, but they were startled and a little frightened. Many people at that time were still rather superstitious, and the floor's collapse seemed a very inauspicious beginning for the new movement. Sun Yat-sen nevertheless seized the moment and declared: "What a wonderful sign this is! It means we will crush our opponents underfoot!" Those few words completely transformed the atmosphere of the gathering. Everyone felt positive again, and they cheered and applauded.

We must speak out; we must use our heads. A few well-timed words by a leader can inspire confidence and hope in others, can transform people's mood and entire outlook. In the most positive sense, leaders must be clever in speech.

Of course, a leader who simply makes ridiculous and irrelevant remarks will not win people's trust or respect. It is important for leaders to speak intelligently, using wisdom and prudence in what they say so that they can guide people in a positive and constructive direction.

The prime movers of a revolutionary movement must never falter in their efforts, no matter what happens. If a dancer, for example, were to become upset by jeers and taunts from rude members of the audience and stop mid-performance, he or she could not deserve to be called a professional dancer. Similarly, we mustn't be overly sensitive and let the environment control our emotions. We should just press forward with a positive, resolute, optimistic outlook.

Decide What You Want To Do

Having chosen to spearhead a revolution, Sun Yat-sen's life was filled with ups and downs, but each time he was knocked down he rose again. No matter how many failures or setbacks he experienced — and there were many — he never gave up. Each failure only fanned the flames of his fighting spirit. He lifted himself up once more. He faced the challenge. He fought bravely. By repeating this process over and over, he finally triumphed.

Even when he failed, he made new friends and broadened his alliances. Most people lose their momentum when they are defeated, but Sun Yat-sen was different. I, too, have fought as Sun Yat-sen did. Every leader should possess such a spirit.

Sun Yat-sen said: "If you believe in yourself, you can even move mountains and fill in the oceans; no matter how difficult the task, you will see the day when you succeed. If you do not believe in yourself, you will not be able to even lift your own hand or snap a slim twig; no matter how easy the task, you will never see success. This is how important the mind is. It is the origin of all things."

Sun Yat-sen's view has much in common with the Buddhist teaching "Faith alone is what really matters" (MW-1, 246). He taught people about the power of faith, of the mind; he taught them the spirit of transforming their destiny. That's why he triumphed in the end. He would have never achieved that great revolution simply by teaching techniques and strategies.

That's why I am so deter-

mined to teach others the importance of faith and of the spirit of challenge.

Next year, it will be 1998. Forty years ago, the last New Year's message written by President Josei Toda appeared in the editorial of the January 1958 issue of the Soka Gakkai's study journal, the *Daibyakurenge*. A few months later he would die. This message, therefore, is truly part of his last will and testament to his successors. Its title was brief and to the point: "Brave and Vigorous Exertion." This is profoundly significant, I think.

Nichiren Daishonin, too, was a person of brave and vigorous exertion to the very end. He died on his way to the province of Hitachi (present-day Ibaraki Prefecture in central Honshu, the largest of Japan's four main islands). *Hitachi* is a homonym for a word that means sunrise, or the place the sun rises. It seems to be symbolic of the Daishonin setting out on a journey to illuminate the world. And I find this fascinating indeed.

Mr. Toda said in his message:

The Soka Gakkai has grown tremendously, achieving more than 700,000 member-households and attracting the attention of all in Japan. For that very reason, the attacks of the three powerful enemies are bound to intensify. But no matter how strong they may become, you mustn't fear them, you mustn't succumb to them....

Repeat to yourself morning and night the Daishonin's words "Do not spend this life in vain

and regret it for ten thousand years to come" (MW-5, 173) and exert yourself with faith that grows stronger day by day, month by month and year by year. This should be the basic spirit for all your endeavors in the coming year and throughout your life.

Start by deciding what you want to do! And once you've decided, push forward toward your goal bravely and vigorously!

Let's engrave these words of Mr. Toda in our hearts and press forward with courage and purpose!

If We Never Experienced Obstacles

In many of his writings, Nichiren Daishonin stresses that encountering obstacles and persecution for the sake of Buddhism is to be regarded as a matter for rejoicing since they offer an opportunity for us to develop our Buddhahood.

In other words, "One should regard meeting obstacles as true peace and comfort" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 750). To cite a few passages, the Daishonin declares:

If I do not call forth these three enemies of the Lotus Sutra, then I will not be a true votary of the Lotus Sutra. (MW-4, 20)

To seek enlightenment without repudiating slander is as futile as trying to find water in the midst of fire or fire in the midst of water. (MW-1, 165)

Should one but fail to denounce the enemies of the Lotus Sutra, one will be unable to attain the Way. (MW-6, 24)

We in fact dare to summon up persecutions so that we can fight against them. As votaries of the Lotus Sutra, we will become Buddhas without fail.

If we firmly establish the state of Buddhahood in our lives in this lifetime, we will be Buddhas for eternity. To do that, however, we have to endure some difficulties in this life. Some of you may experience hardships solely because you are SGI members.

But if we never encountered criticism or attack, we would never have the opportunity to challenge our Buddhist practice and develop ourselves. In the long term, you'll probably find that you've made a wide circle of friends and allies who empathize with the SGI's goals and aspirations and that you've developed a much higher life-condition — all thanks to these attacks.

I hope that all of you, as great actors on the stage of life, will fulfill your unique missions, your own starring roles, with courage and joy, opening your hearts in friendship to all around you.

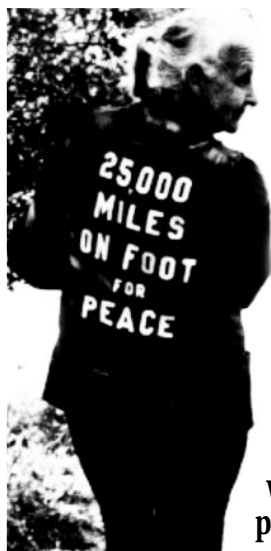
May you all welcome the new year in good health and high spirits. I pray with all my heart for the happiness and well-being of all our members around the world.

Let's make "Brave and Vigorous Exertion!" the rallying cry for our activities in the coming year!

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).

Courtesy of PEACE PILGRIM CENTER



Peace Pilgrim's message was simple: 'Overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth, and hatred with love. This is the way to peace.'

By AILEEN SMEDY
LOS ANGELES CORRESPONDENT

She walked more than 25,000 miles, crisscrossing the country almost seven times. She ate only when food was offered and slept wherever she could. Without any organizational backing or money in her pocket, she carried one message for everyone she met: "Overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth, and hatred with love. This is the way to peace."

For 28 years, from 1953 to 1981, Mildred Norman Ryder, who became known as Peace Pilgrim, walked the highways and back roads of America, talking to people wherever she found them, reaching them on a personal level, those the peace movement may have passed by. And what she talked about was the "whole peace picture — peace among nations, peace among groups, peace among people, and most importantly, inner peace."

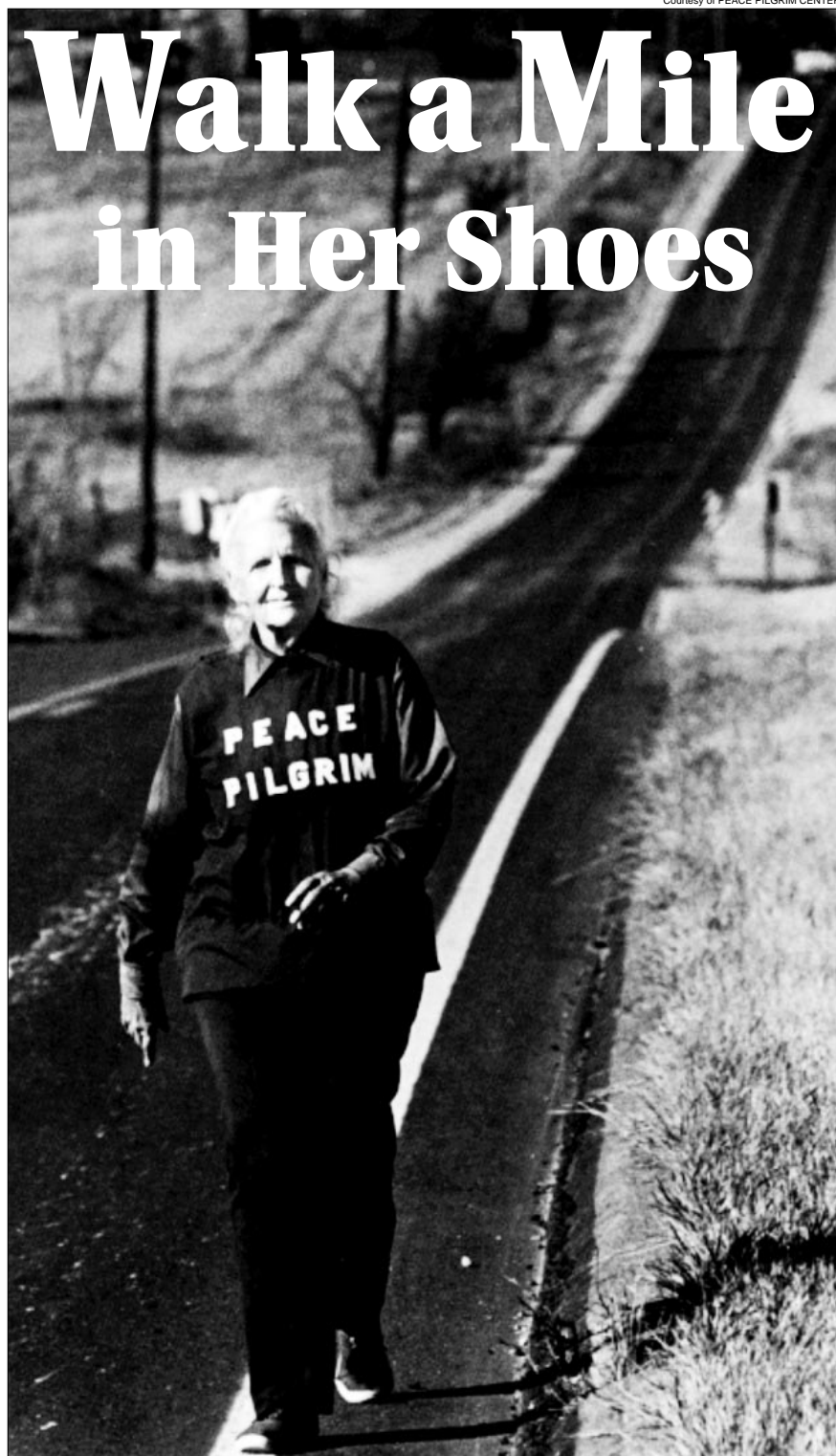
Peace Pilgrim's journey began when she experienced a spiritual revelation after having hiked the entire Appalachian Trail. She dropped her given name during the McCarthy era, after the FBI became suspicious of her message and investigated her family. From that point on, she never stopped — "I shall remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the ways of peace." Indeed, she walked her talk, encouraging thousands through heart-to-heart dialogue.

She was humble and ordinary. "She was like a best friend," said Ann Rush, a longtime friend and co-founder of the Peace Pilgrim Center in Hemet, California. "It was a joyful delight to meet someone so dedicated.... Those who met her were impressed by her intelligence, serenity, wit and genuine loving nature."

One admirer said: "I have never heard anyone express in a more beautiful and challenging way what it means to be a human being. And what is possible for each of us as a human being." Said another: "The greatest inspiration of all is that her life and her words were one. She was her message."

But Peace Pilgrim felt that she was no different than anyone else. If she could find inner peace, so could everyone.


"On foot and on faith," Peace Pilgrim taught people what she had learned. It wasn't a new message, she admitted, just the practice of it. "Only



Peace Pilgrim walked more than 25,000 miles in 28 years with the conviction of her message.

as we become peaceful will we be finding ourselves living in a more peaceful world.... Whenever you bring harmony into any unpeaceful situation, you contribute to the total peace picture. Insofar as you have peace in your life, you reflect it into your surroundings and into your world."

Today, her successor, Peace Pilgrim II, has left behind his own name and picked up where Peace

Pilgrim left off. Beginning in 1989 from Oregon, he has traveled across the country eight times talking to children, church groups, prisoners and the media, and addressing issues such as discrimination and conflict resolution. "Peace begins with me," he said. "When you come from a place of inner peace, there is no fear and you live your life more fully." 

COMING NEXT WEEK:

An interview with Professor Jane Hurst