

World Tribune

No. 3179

THE YEAR OF VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE FOR THE NEW CENTURY

FEBRUARY 20, 1998

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CHANTING

THE Engine OF Our Lives

In this installment of 'Discussions on Youth,' SGI President Ikeda talks about prayer, religion, gongyo and the wonder of the cosmos. Chanting fuses us with the universe, he says.

HIDENOBU KIMURA: Beginning with this installment, we want to talk about faith itself and ask you some questions from our members.

DAISAKU IKEDA: Faith is an issue of fundamental importance to us all. You can become a genuine successor of the Soka Gakkai or a great leader for the 21st century only by establishing in your life a firm foundation of strong, unshakable faith.

Everything is contained in

the single word faith. It encompasses truth, courage, wisdom and good fortune. It includes compassion and humanity as well as peace, culture and happiness.

Faith is eternal hope; it is the secret to limitless self-development. Faith is the most basic principle for growth.

KAZUE IGETA: How fortunate we are to possess such a priceless treasure!

PLEASE SEE ENGINE, 10



SGI President Ikeda visits the monument dedicated to José Rizal.

JOSÉ RIZAL, PHILIPPINE FREEDOM FIGHTER

Homage to a Hero

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER
Manila, Philippines, Feb. 9

In this centennial year of Philippine independence, SGI President Ikeda has begun a visit to Manila. Paying his respects to the hero of the Philippine independence movement, José Rizal, Mr. Ikeda today laid a wreath at the monument dedicated to him. Rizal is the freedom fighter whose writings helped ignite the flame of Philippine independence.

The Order of the Knights of Rizal, a cultural group that promotes Rizal's philosophy, has recognized President Ikeda in the past with their highest honor, naming him a Knight Grand Cross of Rizal for his exemplary achievements in promoting peace and human rights.

Speaking with representatives of the group after the cer-

emony, Mr. Ikeda shared his wish to let as many people as possible know Rizal's greatness and his hope that the members of the Order would continue to follow in Rizal's footsteps. Rizal believed in gradualist reform over radical reform, development through education and optimizing people's potential.

Later in the day, the Order gave the SGI leader its first Rizal International Peace Award, inaugurated this year. Mr. Ikeda is scheduled to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of the City of Manila and an honorary citizenship from the city of Tagaytay.

He is also scheduled to visit De La Salle University, an academic exchange partner of Soka University in Japan. (More coverage of his visit to the Philippines will appear in future issues.)

WTT



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, Shakyamuni 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.

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Striking at the Roots of War

EDITORIAL

Americans everywhere are concerned about the United States' threats to use military force against Iraq. What can we do to prevent Saddam Hussein from developing weapons of mass destruction and hurting innocent people? Is bombing — and the resultant loss of civilian lives — an acceptable alternative if "all else fails," as President Clinton says?

To listen to or read the news nowadays is to encounter all manner of argument for and against military action, all in the name of peace and security. Force is necessary to keep rogue states in check and in line with international will, some say. Others say that the lives of Iraqi citizens — "spillage," according to the Defense Department — are too precious to be sacrificed for such nebulous goals as slowing down Saddam's development of barbaric weapons. (The official U.S. line is that bombing cannot eradicate such weapons, only delay their development.)

Britain, Australia and Canada have publicly supported U.S. plans to use force. Other U.S. allies — Russia, France and China — have come out strongly against military force, pushing for a diplomatic resolution. Kofi Annan, the U.N. secretary-general, has also entered the fray, seeking a peaceful solution through dialogue.

What does Buddhism have to say? Beyond the politics, important points can be reiterated, principles upon which Buddhism and our world peace organization are based.

First, Buddhism values life above all and doesn't condone the taking of human life as the means to any end. War dehumanizes. It allows human beings, the most precious of entities, to become mere cannon fodder at the say-so of politicians who will perhaps never have to experience first-hand the horrors of the wars they initiate.

War stems from the four lowest worlds of Hell, Hunger, Animality and Anger. Opening a path to peace, to a world in which war is no longer an op-

tion for civilized people, is one of the main goals of the SGI.

Second, Buddhism seeks to alleviate the root cause of suffering and to provide lasting security. A practical example comes from a story about Shakyamuni. He once addressed the armed factions in a dispute over water rights. Bloodshed seemed inevitable. Shakyamuni said: "Look at those who fight, ready to kill! Fear arises from taking up arms and preparing to strike."

Commenting on this story, SGI President Ikeda said: "When Shakyamuni finally spoke, he addressed not the rights and wrongs of the immediate conflict but the primal terror of death. He spoke with power and intimacy on overcoming the foremost fear — our own inevitable death — and living a life of peace and security."

Peace and security do not lie in externals alone, Mr. Ikeda said, but in a "firm inner world, a robust sense of self that will not be swayed or shaken by the most trying of circumstances or pressing adversity. Only when our efforts to reform society have as their point of departure the reformation of the inner life — human revolution — will they lead us with certainty to a world of lasting peace and security."

As Buddhists, we can pray that decision-makers will weigh heavily the sanctity of all human life, no matter its country of origin, that all those involved will rely on the power of dialogue to solve their differences, and that there will be a peaceful outcome to this crisis.

And there's more we can do. Thoreau wrote, "For every thousand hacking at the branches of evil there is one striking at the root." Crises like the one now in Iraq point to the importance of a movement like the SGI's, which seeks to implant respect for human life in every human being.

From President Ikeda's efforts at international dialogue to all SGI members' equally important work to build a network of friends wherever they are — this is the work that strikes at the roots of war.

Shakyamuni spoke on overcoming the foremost fear — our own inevitable death — and living a life of peace and security.

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WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

An 'Unapathetic' Response

It's about a quarter to 3:00 in the morning, and I have just finished reading the last two *World Tribunes* from Jan. 23 and Jan. 30. And to show that I'm not one of your statistic "apathetic youth," I'm going to "Seize the Day"! Or rather the morning, I'm responding to the editorial in the Jan. 30 *World Tribune* ("The *World Tribune* invites young people to write to us about apathy and how to cure it.")

In my humble opinion, the problem with today's youth is that they lack vision. Namely, they lack immediate and long-term goals. Furthermore, if they do have goals (most youth do, however material), they lack the "seize the day" attitude that SGI-USA Youth Division Leader Ed Feasel expounds upon in the Jan. 23 issue of *World Tribune*.

To cure apathy (if a panacea actually exists), today's youth must define their goals and have the discipline to carry out their goals with the *carpe diem* attitude. This, of course, is not easy, otherwise everyone would do it. I believe, from my own experience, that the "Discussions on Youth" articles featured in the *World Tribune* provide the practical encouragement for youth to discipline themselves.

I wholeheartedly would like to see (and I am willing to work on it myself), when the discussions have ended, a book or handbook published (like the temple issue publication) and given out to all the youth division members and made readily available, even on-line. So there can be no excuse by one single youth division member — "But I lost the last 20 *World Tribunes*...." — to not have read it or have access to it.

— PAUL CHU, Claremont, Calif.

P.S. Kudos on the "Seize the Day" pullout. It Looks Great!! The format is pretty bomb. It looks really appealing and catches the eye immediately. The graphics and format make it "cool" for the youth division. Also, I like Greg Martin's article and Ed Feasel's introduction (because also he's the bomb), but that's probably because I'm a college student. You should probably have more articles not so philosophical, but practical (applying Buddhism to everyday-life issues of youth). And I just thought of something ironic, if you have an article about the apathy of youth, wouldn't they just be too apathetic to read the article???

Emulating Roberto Clemente

Whenever the *World Tribune* focuses on an article about the great Roberto Clemente such as the Jan. 9 article, I experience a feeling of pride in being a member of the SGI men's division. Somehow his humanitarian spirit comes through as that spirit that all men should and must take into each of our communities. With the determination to take the kind of action and risks that Clemente took in his straightforward effort to help the people, we can make similar efforts to help save our neighborhoods.

While I'm not saying that we should risk our lives as Clemente did, I do know that I, as one man, can stand up a hell of a lot better than I have in the past. I determine to do so in 1998. We can all do it!

— MIKE CAMPBELL, Jersey City, N.J.

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.

Pixie Dust and Peacock Feathers

PERSPECTIVE

Christmas brought Jennifer Gray five peacocks and a lesson in beauty in magical Scotland.

By JENNIFER GORDON GRAY
ABERDEENSHIRE, SCOTLAND

I am an American spending a particularly quiet and isolated winter at the foot of Mount Bennachie in northeastern Scotland. The light comes and goes fitfully here, with darkness taking over by 4:00 p.m. Sometimes we are honored by the northern lights, but they are rare indeed. Many native Scots say they have never seen them, but I saw a fleeting display my first week here — gone too soon.

But Bennachie remains a magical place. Although not even classified a *munro*, a mountain exceeding 3,000 meters, Bennachie is near and dear to the Scots of Aberdeenshire. And not only to recent residents. It's covered with ancient hill forts, standing stones and cairns, and even a place called Hosié's Well.

There are magical tales, too, of giants and even wee folk. A plowman and his friend were walking in these environs and were entranced by the sight of pixies dancing. One managed to pull himself away and escape, but the other was not seen by his friend until a year and a day later. The man was still standing, rooted to the same spot, watching something intently. His friend asked him to come along, but the man said he would rather wait a little while longer, and he has never been seen since.

Call me crazy, but I've seen places on Bennachie where I would live, if I happened to be a pixie.

But that is another story; and this is a different tale of magic.

I've been working on some pretty tough personal issues in this place, chanting copious daimoku, hiking and attending meetings with the very sincere Northern Lights District members.

Two weeks after my arrival here at Howeford Cottage, I,

along with other SGI members, suffered the loss of my long-time mentor, Jimmie Inaba. His death hit me hard and brought out all kinds of internal gunk. I decided this was my safe place to drag it all out for the last time, chant about it and finally heal. It's been painful but necessary.

First, I decided to pour my grief into re-editing *Jesse's Dance*, my first novel, still unpublished. I wrote it a year ago and dedicated to Mr. Inaba, and in it, I tried to honor our unusual relationship. The pages have now taken on a whole new life.

And second, I've been journaling. My fingers are about to



Jennifer Gordon Gray

fall off, but good stuff is happening here.

In this frame of mind, I looked out the window on Christmas Day to see a monster. It was bloody huge, mate! Upon closer examination, it proved to be a 20-pound peacock — NO! Five of them! Four hens and a male. (Yes, I know they're really peafowl — only the males are known as peacocks, but the story tells much better with "peacocks." I knew you'd understand.) I went out and gained their trust with slices of stale bread (animals go for that where humans never do). They turned their beaks up at the old bagels, but I figure the bunnies will eat those scraps later.

As in the case of wild horse herds, there was a hierarchy (pecking order, as it were), and the largest hen, the "Maude" of the group, seemed to be in charge. It was Maude who went first into uncharted territory and she who kept an eagle eye peeled for predators such as foxes.

I went back inside and sat in a window of my old stone cottage to watch. Old Maude led her female companions over to my window, where they craned their heads to look back at me through the glass. They left the cock to fend for himself, farther out in the yard looking for unlucky bugs.

He was pretty enough, I suppose, even without his elegant tail feathers, apparently shed for the season. He was covered in deeply hued turquoise, right up to the little sprigs pirouetting like fairies on his forehead. But he seemed, for all his beauty, to be a bad-tempered, miserable old sod, jealous of the hens' bits of bread and cackling as he tried to steal them out of their beaks.

For the most part, the hens seemed to ignore him.

Under my window, the hens gazed at me with their own cockiness. They didn't seem fearful of me, glass or no glass. I'd been told peacocks can be intimidating, like geese or turkeys, but these never threatened me. They were just curious, and crazed for stale bread.

Their feathers were muted — duns, ecrus, taupes, blacks. But high up on their necks, like iridescent ascots, were flashes of other tones — hints of color on some, more impressive on others. Even these were more muted than the male's, with lighter teals and paler turquoises. Because I had to look harder for the beauty of the hens, I appreciated it more. My hens were magnificent. They spent the whole day with me.

I'm always trying to appreciate and find lessons in nature. Sometimes it's my horses, sometimes it's dolphins. This Christmas it was five peacocks (not gold rings; oh, well). They were a gift from the cosmos — or were they? Maybe.

Or maybe there are pixies.

I lost my grandfather 16 years ago today. I dumped my mother's cremation ashes in a Minnesota river three years ago on Christmas afternoon. I lost one of my best friends a month ago. But today...well, today I got peacocks.

It was "chust sublime." ❏

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

NEWS BRIEFS

JAPAN

Soka Net Unveils Chinese Web Site

A Chinese page of the Soka Gakkai of Japan's Web site (Soka Net) went live on Feb. 11. Japanese and English versions are also available on the World Wide Web. The Chinese page offers basic information on the Soka Gakkai, and more in-depth information will be made available as it is translated. Soka Net is located at www.sokagakkai.or.jp.

UNITED KINGDOM

SGI-UK, SGI President Recognized by UNHCR

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees presented a Certificate of Appreciation to the SGI of the United Kingdom and to SGI President Ikeda (in absentia) at the 24th SGI-UK General Meeting in London on Feb. 2. Addressing the 2,500 local SGI-UK members who gathered at the Barbican Centre for the event, Hope Hanlan, representative of the UNHCR for the United Kingdom and Ireland, acknowledged the organization's constant support of the UNHCR. She thanked the group for extending a solid network of trust and joy throughout the country. SGI-UK General Director Ricky Baynes accepted the award on President Ikeda's behalf.
— *Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER*

SOUTH KOREA

South Korean City Recognizes SGI President

In commemoration of Jan. 26, the 23rd anniversary of the SGI's founding, the South Korean city of Pohang conferred a certificate of commendation upon SGI President Ikeda (in absentia) in recognition of his outstanding accomplishments in promoting peace for the sake of humanity. Pohang, with a population of 530,000, is well known for its steel industry. The city also presented the SGI of South Korea with a plaque honoring the organization's steadfast efforts to raise environmental awareness. The conferral ceremony took place on Jan. 24. Both awards were accepted by KSGI General Director Park Jae Il.
— *Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER*

TEXAS

Houston YWD Members Graduate to WD

Seven young women's division members joined the women's division during the Houston area's first-ever YWD graduation ceremony, held on Jan. 17. Speaking at the ceremony, Margaret Miller, the area women's division leader, emphasized the importance of women advancing together and striving to embody the spirit of compassion, wisdom and courage.
— *MAUDE O'DONNELL*

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, call us at (310) 451-8811 or e-mail us at SokaNews@aol.com.



The entrance gate to Soka University of America's Calabasas campus.

SUA's Calabasas Campus Closer To Expanding

By **JEFF FARR**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
San Diego, Feb. 5

After an eight-year battle, Soka University of America's plans for its Calabasas campus today came an important step closer to approval. The California Coastal Commission passed the first of two measures required for SUA to start work on its expansion plans. And the commission is expected to decide on the remaining measure at a March meeting in Monterey, Calif.

"This fight has dragged on

long enough," a *Los Angeles Times* editorial said on Feb. 4. "The proposal before the commission is the best possible, balancing the ecological needs of the Santa Monicas with the development rights of Soka. It deserves approval."

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, which originally opposed SUA, has also become a supporter of SUA's plans, as SUA will turn over nearly 400 acres of open land to the conservancy.

Currently, SUA in Calabasas

offers a master's degree in second and foreign language education, foreign language courses and English language classes to Japanese students. (The 3rd class of the master's program graduated last December.) The proposed plans would allow the campus to increase enrollment to 650 and thus further develop its academic programs.

SUA is also opening a full-scale liberal arts campus in the Orange County community of Aliso Viejo, Calif., that will enroll its first students in 2001. ☐



Florida Impressions

The excitement with which all the leaders (i.e., Vice General Director Sheilah Edwards and Senior Vice General Director David Kasahara) greeted us on the evening we arrived — and the enthusiasm with which they did kitchen patrol during the rest of the weekend, in addition to conducting the study seminars and personal guidance sessions (till 1:00 and 2:00 a.m.) — was amazing/inspiring/an awakening.

Really made me think and ask myself, "Am I doing all I can for kosen-rufu?"

— *Rochelle K. Melamed, Brooklyn, N.Y.*



“

The real issue to me is that each Soka Gakkai member has to ask, 'What is the best way that I can embody and practice and propagate Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism?' Even to ask that question from the priesthood view is wrong, right? Because the priests would tell you how. The moment you even ask that question, you're already not part of what the priesthood wants.

Dr. Jane Hurst, who teaches philosophy and religion at Gallaudet University, has studied the SGI-USA for many years. SGI President Ikeda introduced her paper "A Buddhist Reformation in the 20th Century: Causes and Implications of the Conflict Between the Soka Gakkai and the Nichiren Shoshu Priesthood" in a speech last year (Sept. 5, 1997, World Tribune). Last Oct. 22, she spoke with Bill Aiken, SGI-USA vice general director, Jeff Farr, World Tribune associate editor, and Yoshi Nagaoka, Seikyo Shimbun staff writer, at her office in Washington, D.C.

WT: Nichiren Shoshu has recently decided to re-excommunicate SGI members. The first excommunication was in 1991.

JH: From an outside point of view, this is just a legalistic, structural issue. For me, legally, they certainly have the right to decide who is in and who is out as a member. It is characteristic of religious groups that are more rigid to have stronger boundaries. So to want to have a very strong sense of who's in and who's out is important to them. The stronger that line, the more you know that there's a rigidity within the group.

And that rigidity may serve a purpose for them. If you look at groups like the Amish in America, who don't use electricity and live a very simple life, for them, they have to have a boundary to keep their organization together. From an outside point of view, why would you? From the inside point of view, it's understandable. I want to honor their desiring to do that.

But while in some ways it's just a legalistic issue, the real issue to me is that each Soka Gakkai member has to ask, "What is the best way that I can embody and practice and propagate Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism?" Even to ask that question from the priesthood view is wrong, right? Because the priests would tell you how. The moment you even ask that question, you're already not part of what the priesthood wants.

Their hope is that people will give up their freedom to make

that choice. But I don't think the excommunications have much relevance for Soka Gakkai members. It's just not an issue.

It depends on your attitude about what makes salvation. Is salvation being part of the right organization? Or is salvation devoting your life to a correct practice? Those are two different things. There may be some interlacing of those things, but they really are two different things. So for the members, they have to ask if this is what fits. And they can pray, and they can chant, and they can decide. And that's oddly the freedom of being outside the boundaries of the priesthood. In a way you couldn't have exactly asked the question that way before 1991. It's just funny, isn't it?

WT: If we were your neighbors, and you were trying to explain to us what the differences are between the two sides, what would you say?

JH: There are two organizations that share a dedication to the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin. However, they have radically different perspectives on how best to embody and practice and spread those teachings. One is a far more traditional and conservative and hierarchical view.

The other is part of what looks like, I hope, a movement toward global connection and understanding, and a more — every word you use that's the opposite of *conservative* wouldn't come out right — a more creative and more dynamic approach. The SGI is part of the modern world. When you look at the problems that we face as a world, it seems to be grappling with them on a broader

level than the priesthood. If you look at the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, it's amazing!

By now it's clear to me that if I were an SGI member I personally couldn't give up that freedom. But I've always been a rebel. I never liked tradition. You know, I always liked to smash tradition. That's the '60s thing still in me.

WT: How do you think this issue speaks to the future of religion?

JH: There will always be people who want to have hierarchical religion. My concern is not so much the hierarchy itself but that form. I am very willing to honor people who know more than I do, who have something to teach me, who are my betters in some way, who have something that I can get. And thank heavens they are a rung above me, so I can learn something. Then I am not stuck with what I already know.

But when that becomes a formal structure that also says, "And by the way, you're not as good as I am," then no! So if the priests are only priests by virtue

Their hope is that people will give up their freedom to make that choice. But I don't think the excommunications have much relevance for Soka Gakkai members.... It depends on your attitude about what makes salvation. Is salvation being part of the right organization? Or is salvation devoting your life to a correct practice? Those are two different things.

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INTERVIEW

Questions Everyone Has To Ask Themselves

Photo by PHIL ROSENBERG



Dr. Jane Hurst in her office at Gallaudet University.

of having a tradition behind them, if anyone who enters into that tradition is a priest, then no. Essentially we are all — *equal* isn't even quite the word — we are all citizens of this planet. And by virtue of that we are all equal.

Of course, some of us have different roles. But I don't like to make a hierarchy out of those roles in the ultimate sense. Maybe it's OK in the limited sense that somebody could teach me how to drive if I don't know how to drive. But in the ultimate sense, of course not. You just know how to drive, and I don't — that doesn't make you a better human being.

The priests can't imagine people having the free will to dedicate themselves to a cause from their own inner knowing. They think it has to be imposed from above. There are people who have no idea that you could sit, you could pray, and that your prayer could say, "This is how I must be," and you would follow that. There are people who just don't think that's how you do it. They think you tell people the right way, and then they do it the right way, and then everything's fine.

WT: In your paper, you mentioned a lot about the changes the SGI-USA has made since 1990. That part of the paper was encouraging to us, being people who are right in the middle of it and don't always see the bigger picture — like how far we have come.

JH: Well, this is funny, but — I said this to my class today, and it's so embarrassing — I was a cheerleader in high school. I got out there and yelled, "Go team!" And I think there's a part of me that, every time I see people who are courageously challenging

what someone else says is right with what their heart says, is impressed by that courage and wants to yell, "Go team!" I see that courage in the SGI. I see the courage to get beyond the original structure of the SGI, beyond the way the communities were organized, beyond the form of all those layers.

It's actually a kind of nice form of organization, but I admire the SGI looking again at the form to see what it's actually supposed to be doing. And enlivening that form — it's something that I didn't think would happen. I am glad I was wrong. I'm glad I was wrong.

Because it just seemed like that was going to be the way it was. And the progress now is the result of individual members taking it on. It's the courage of each person to ask those questions of him- or herself. In some ways the split is helpful, because each person has to ask, "Where do I stand?"

I do also want to say that I am very impressed with SGI President Ikeda's response to the dedication of the membership, because he has not made himself into the supreme object of worship. I've seen many a religious leader where that was not the case — leaders of all kinds of religions, of all kinds. And people find it very easy to worship the leader. That certainly is the way to avoid your own responsibility. "He's so great. I could never do that much." Then you never will.

So for SGI members to maintain both that admiration for him and that sense of personal responsibility, equal to his own — and which *he* would say is equal to his own — is very impressive. It's impressive that he has created that atmosphere, and that he's done that very gracefully, very graciously.

But I think the secret of it is that this wasn't hard for him. It seems to me that what he did is what every member does. He sat down and prayed. He said, "How should this be?" He spent hours, days, months and years chanting, and he's following the answer that he received. He couldn't do otherwise. It wouldn't even be a question to him of doing it otherwise. It just wouldn't be.

So I'm still a cheerleader, I guess. ❏

MARGARET JOHNSON, HONOLULU

SUA Program Teaches Student About Herself

Margaret Johnson gained not only an education but a fresh direction in life while completing Soka University of America's master's degree program.

I was born to a Japanese mother and an American father. I always felt confident about my identity as Japanese and American, as well as being Buddhist. However, I did not understand the significance of my practice of Buddhism.

Before graduating from high school, I was told by my career counselor that my chances of getting into college were slim. I wanted to prove her wrong. I was accepted at the University of Hawaii in the fall of 1989, but I took studying very lightly in my first two years. During this time, I was not participating much in SGI activities — I used schoolwork as an excuse.

After two years at UH, my GPA fell extremely low, and I was placed on academic probation. I realized that I was in college for all the wrong reasons. I wasn't there because I wanted to be there. So I dropped out for a year and a half.

While I was out of school, I realized that I had no sense of purpose in life. Gradually, I got

back into the flow of SGI activities and was working full time. I eventually realized how badly I wanted to go back to school to learn. This time I wanted to go back to school for myself, not to prove something to others.

With this conviction, I returned to UH. During my last two years, as busy as I was, writing paper after paper and my senior thesis, I also enjoyed being completely engaged in SGI activities and making lots of youth division friends. These years at UH were meaningful and exciting. I graduated in 1995 with a bachelor's in English.

I knew that the future was going to be awesome — I envisioned, upon graduating, the perfect job with great pay.

In the meantime, I applied for the JET [Japan Exchange Teaching] program where I would have taught at a high school in Japan without any teaching background. I thought that I would have no problem getting into this program because not only did I meet the qualifications, I also speak Japanese! I



(Left to right) Maggie Johnson with her friends and fellow students Saeko Nakagawa and Elizabeth Kuwahara. 'I can say without hesitation that my time at SUA has been the best ever in my life,' Maggie says.

figured I had the job already, so I didn't worry about it. I didn't chant about it at all. Life was flowing fine.

When I had not heard anything after a couple of months, I called the Japanese consulate to see what was going on. My application had been denied. I was absolutely crushed. I did not know what I was going to do with my life from there on. I went home and couldn't even tell my mother because I was so ashamed. All my life I had gotten everything I wanted. I had never been declined for anything at all.

When I told my mother that my application had been denied, I was totally crying. She said: "See! I told you to chant about it, but you said, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah!'" That's what happens when you get bigheaded." Then she said, "But, in Buddhism, everything happens for a reason."

I had two choices — to take this as a defeat and wallow in sadness, or take this situation as

a challenge and win.

There was nothing I could do but chant to figure out what I was going to do. While I was chanting, I made a decision. I applied to the graduate school at Soka University of America in Calabasas. I was accepted into the program in Second and Foreign Language Education with a concentration in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

I've gotten to know myself better than ever. One thing that I learned at SUA is how to create value in everything I do. Whether the situation be negative or positive, I can always figure out how the experience is valuable. At SUA I did so much human revolution with my environment and especially within myself. I was able to create very strong, golden bonds with my classmates, the staff and the faculty there. I can say without hesitation that my time at SUA — a year and a half — was the best ever in my life.

Being at SUA, not only did I get a clear direction in life, I also totally changed my life around. My last semester, I finally received my first 4.0 GPA and also got a job teaching English at Soka University in Japan for the next three years beginning this April.

All of this was not accomplished on my own. My classmates and I really struggled. First of all, the curriculum is very rigorous and intense. Second, the campus is out in a canyon where the buses don't run, and most of us didn't have cars. When in need of help, the staff and faculty were more than willing to help us out. Many people within the organization also supported and helped us.

A year and a half is very short. Within this short time, I learned more than just teaching English as a second language. I learned about friendship, patience, determination and perseverance. Most of all, I learned the meaning of creating value in my life. I learned to do things wholeheartedly: study 100 percent, play 100 percent, cry 100 percent, laugh 100 percent, struggle 100 percent, live 100 percent — this was my motto while I was at SUA.

My direction for life is clearer now, and I know what I want to accomplish. I still have a long way to go in accomplishing my dreams and goals, yet the future is really exciting.

It has been a long journey to get to where I am right now. I have deep appreciation for my parents, friends and leaders who never lost hope for me and have always encouraged and supported me.

An excerpt from the graduation message sent by the university's founder, Daisaku Ikeda, inspires me to keep going forward. He quotes from Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister: "The higher one goes the more laborious becomes the journey and the summit recedes into the clouds. Yet the climbing is worth the effort and has its own joy and satisfaction. Perhaps it is the struggle that gives value to life, not so much the ultimate result."

The founder then says: "So long as you struggle to advance, you will develop your strengths and abilities, even if you do not reach the peak immediately. It is exactly this training that releases your vitality and strength to take on the challenge of further ascent." WJ



Admissions Information

Now in its fourth year, Soka University of America's graduate school is accepting applications for its master's degree program in second and foreign language education.

Individuals seeking admission to the master's program must hold a baccalaureate or bachelor's degree with a minimum grade point average of 2.7 (B-) on a four-point scale. Applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a minimum score of 600.

Applications for the 1998-99 academic year are due by March 31, 1998. For more information, contact the Graduate Admissions Office at 26800 W. Mulholland Hwy., Calabasas, CA 91302. Telephone: (818) 878-3717; e-mail: grad_admissions@soka.edu.

SIGN POSTS

APPLYING
NICHIREN
DAISHONIN'S
WRITINGS TO
DAILY LIFE

Hot Water Into Cold

By VALERIE THOMAS

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

You may have tried to practice its teachings to some extent, but whenever you were persecuted, you ceased to live by the sutra. That is like boiling water only to pour it into cold water, or like trying to strike fire but giving up half way. ("On the Buddha's Behavior," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 176)

The new year is a time to make resolutions. We see evidence of this throughout society. For example, January sees the highest sales of diet pills, exercise machines, fitness club memberships and nicotine patches.

It makes sense that the sales rate would be high in January, but why so much higher than the rest of the year? My guess is that eventually people just give up. I've done it and I am sure others have, too. It's so easy to make resolutions, but so hard to follow through with them. Obstacles come up, and the reality of how much time and effort it takes to get the results we want makes it easier to just forget our resolutions. As Nichiren Daishonin describes in this letter, we often fail to move forward in the face of adversity.

I recently heard a member explain that she wasn't going to make any determinations for the new year, because her determinations for the years before had not been achieved. I could definitely relate to her frustration. Four of my five determinations for this year are carried over from years past.

But instead of not including them again on my list, the fact that they have not yet been reached made me more determined than ever to accomplish them THIS YEAR! Considering the efforts I have already put into them, I am not going to throw them away now.

As the Daishonin describes in this Goshō, that would be like throwing hot water into cold. SGI President Ikeda said recently, "The patience to wait wisely, steadily bringing the time and conditions to ripeness — this capacity holds the key to a life finally victorious." I will keep these words in mind as I work on my determinations for 1998. ❏

SIGNIFICANT DATE

By CRAIG GREEN

LOS ANGELES CORRESPONDENT

It's often said that March 16, 1958, was a "dress rehearsal for kosen-rufu." Actually, these were President Toda's own words. March 16 was his idea.

Toda, whose health was then worsening day by day, proposed early in March that a ceremony symbolizing the worldwide spread of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism be held with youth representatives when the prime minister visited the head temple. The prime minister canceled at the last minute, but March 16 became a turning point in the Soka Gakkai's movement: the last chance for Toda to meet with the youth he had raised; a "passing of the torch" from Toda to the youth, in which the responsibility for kosen-rufu became theirs.

At the head of the 6,000 youth who gathered was Daisaku Ikeda, then 30 years old, in whom President Toda placed overall responsibility for the movement from then on.

A couple weeks later, on April 2, President Toda died, his mission complete.

SGI President Ikeda has recently said, "I am convinced that I have lived to see this 70th year [he turned 70 on Jan. 2] because Mr. Toda shared a portion of his life force with me." Indeed, at this juncture of the 40th anniversaries of March 16 and April 2, we can clearly see how President Toda breathed his life into President Ikeda, into the Soka Gakkai youth and into the kosen-rufu movement — in a sense, into each of us.

March 16 is always about successors helping to raise the new generation — the teens and young adults — in our organization. Even though the SGI-USA considers me, gray hair and all, to be a youth, I consider the real youth of our organization to be these young persons 10 and 20 years younger than me.

Raising them to be better than me is the way to put into practice T'ien-t'ai's principle of a blue deeper than indigo itself, which President Ikeda based his 30th anniversary Kosen-rufu Day poem on. The Daishonin explains that this principle means "that something dyed repeatedly with indigo becomes even bluer than the indigo plant itself" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 209).

The SGI-USA is beginning to take steps toward supporting this new gen-

eration and passing responsibility on to them. The SGI-USA guidelines for 1998 include nurturing youth as a focus area and some concrete ideas about how to do that.

The *World Tribune* reported that a four-divisional task force will be formed, including professionals from fields dealing with youth, to consider such issues as re-defining the age range of the youth division and introducing mentoring programs for the youth. These are new ideas we need and must implement.

And we need more. General Director Zaitu pointed out that "we need to move beyond the usual to new ways of thinking, fresh ideas, clear definitions and renewed determination and prayer" — this is nowhere more important than in regards to the new generation. These young people aren't just new in terms of age. They have new ways of thinking. New ways of communicating. New ways of accomplishing their goals. New standards of trust.

If we are to help them, if they are to trust us, our new ideas are a prerequisite. March 16 is not just about commemorating an event that took place 40 years ago in Japan. It's about nurturing and supporting those that will take the lead in the years to come. ❏

'ICHINEN' (ONE MIND; THE LIFE-MOMENT)

Crashing Into Buddhahood

WHAT A CONCEPT

ON THE BASIC IDEAS
OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM

By LISA JONES
STAFF WRITER

According to an ancient Japanese creation myth, the Earth came into existence when two immense, willful beings collided. Whether this story is true, it expresses the idea that unfathomable energy is generated when two things come together. When ordinary people fuse with the Gohonzon through chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo — or when two people connect in dialogue — new worlds are born.

In a practical sense, *ichinen* is the sincere, pure determination that motivates one's collision with Buddhahood, or the ultimate reality. *Ichinen* is the intent or directionality of one's life.

Ichinen literally means one mind or single moment of life; it's synonymous with one's life or life-condition. The concept of *ichinen sanzen* posits that we can manifest one of 3,000 different life-conditions at any given moment — so the issue for us is how we can manifest and solidify our life-con-

dition of Buddhahood. Nichiren Daishonin teaches that one's ultimate *ichinen* is the realization that the present moment is itself the life of Buddha expounded as Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

Nichiren Daishonin characterizes his *ichinen* in this passage: "Single-mindedly desiring to see the Buddha, not hesitating even if it costs them their lives... I, Nichiren, have called forth Buddhahood from within my life by living this sentence [from the Lotus Sutra]." Further, he states: "Single-mindedly desiring to see the Buddha" also means to see the Buddha in one's own mind, to concentrate one's mind on seeing the Buddha, and that to see one's own mind is to see the Buddha" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 205).

Using the word *mind* may give the impression that this is an intellectual process, but it's not. *Ichinen* has more to do with our will than our brain.

In Buddhism, thoughts are like carbonation, air bubbles that float to the surface of consciousness and disappear. What's most consequential is one's heart, one's life-condition. (In the past, we have said that karma is created by one's thoughts, words and deeds, but thought is perhaps more appropriately translated as one's will or intent.)

The Daishonin teaches that when we

wholeheartedly, unreservedly chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo to the Gohonzon — when we willfully crash into Buddhahood — our heart becomes one with the Mystic Law. This elicits many great human qualities, including wisdom. Things become clear to us, and we act accordingly. Chanting in this way taps an area of our lives that can't be accessed through mere thinking or reading.

When we're living our ultimate *ichinen* — our Buddhahood — we're not necessarily evaluating it at every moment. For example, courageous people often aren't aware that they're being courageous; rather, they're acting out of strong, inner motivation. In retrospect, they may recognize that they behaved courageously, but in the moment, they're usually just doing what they feel they must.

In *Learning From the Goshō*, SGI President Ikeda explains *ichinen* this way: "It is the fundamental prayer on which we base our existence. A person's spirit is invisible but it becomes manifest at a crucial moment. Not only that, but it controls everything about a person, each moment of every day — it is the fundamental determinant of one's life.... One's heart is the designer, the painter, the sculptor and the architect of his or her being" (p. 128).

Four in a series

Shin'ichi Yamamoto lectures to the student division members on the Buddhist view of earthly desires. 'The greatest desires become the fuel for the greatest enlightenment,' he encourages them.

That evening, after the first lecture on "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," Shin'ichi Yamamoto began inscribing published copies of *The Threefold Lotus Sutra* with the names of each of the participants. He had already presented copies to several of them on an earlier occasion, but he wanted to make sure all the students had one as a keepsake of their participation in the lecture series.

Shin'ichi squeezed what time he could from his busy schedule to prepare the books. As he wrote a dedication in each one, he thought of each student and prayed for his or her growth.

He imagined the members eventually spreading their wings and taking flight into the vast skies of their respective missions, and his heart raced with joy. He didn't at all mind staying up late to prepare the books.

Several days later, when he had finished, Shin'ichi brought the books to Student Division Chief Goro Watari and asked him to present them to each study group member. When the students opened the books, a heart-warming surprise awaited them. "Presented to" and the date were written there in Shin'ichi's distinctively bold, vigorous hand.

In the upper left, he had written the student's name in large characters. In the lower right, in smaller characters, he had written his own name and imprinted his seal.

These gifts made a deep impression on the students. Inspired by Shin'ichi's sincerity, they vowed to study even harder.

The lecture series proceeded smoothly from the second session on. The participants made certain to check in advance all the scriptural passages and commentaries quoted. They would meet before the lecture and share their results, helping one another greatly.

Sometimes two or three of these preparation meetings, each lasting four or five hours, would be held before a lecture. The lecture format changed slightly to reflect this: After the reading and interpretation of the Goshō passages, the students now also reported to Shin'ichi the results of their research. Then Shin'ichi would lecture.

The students made remarkable progress in their grasp of Buddhist principles. They

The New Human Revolution

BY HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 5

Young Eagles

Translation of parts 26–27 of the 'Young Eagles' chapter, as printed in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. Ho Goku is the pen name of Daisaku Ikeda, who appears in the novel as Shin'ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1962.

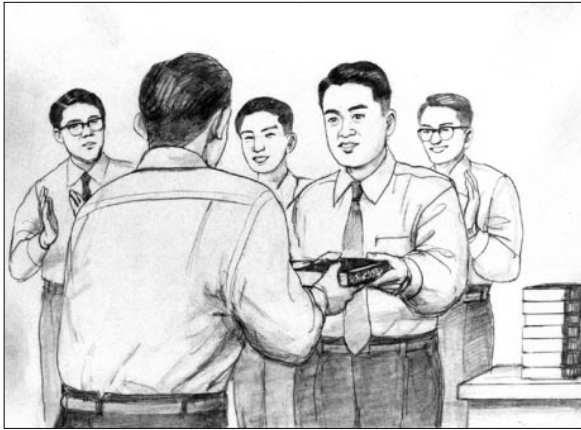
absorbed everything, just as parched earth absorbs every drop of falling rain. Through his lectures, Shin'ichi was trying to communicate the true philosophy of Buddhism — a guiding force for ushering in a new age for all humankind — and transmit the Soka Gakkai spirit to his young listeners.

On one occasion, for instance, Shin'ichi commented on the passage from the Orally Transmitted Teachings that

"This is the distinguishing feature of the Daishonin's Buddhism. True Buddhism by no means rejects desires."

Shin'ichi continued: "In the Hinayana teachings expounded before the Lotus Sutra, earthly desires were regarded as the cause of all the world's unhappiness, and the sutras taught that one should extinguish and eliminate all such desires. But human life cannot exist apart from desires, wants and aspirations. Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism teaches us how to use those yearnings and desires as a springboard to establish deep, lasting happiness.

"Your wanting to be at the top of your college class or to better yourself in life — these are earthly desires, worldly ambitions. An ardent wish to better our nation or realize world peace — these are also desires, noble ones. "When our desires are firmly anchored in faith, we can 'burn' them to our heart's content. In fact, the greatest desires become the fuel for the greatest enlightenment. That is the true spirit of



reads, "We burn the firewood of earthly desires and behold the fire of enlightened wisdom before our eyes" (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 710) ["Point 2. Concerning Ajnata Kaundinya (one of the five ascetics who heard Shakyamuni's first sermon)" from "Seven Points on the 'Introduction' Chapter (of the Lotus Sutra)"]. Shin'ichi explained: "Traditional Buddhism has viewed earthly desires — and the sufferings that arise as the results of deluded cravings — as something to be rejected and denied. But here the Daishonin tells us that burning the firewood of earthly desires will summon forth the enlightenment and wisdom of Buddhism.

peace — these are also desires, noble ones. "When our desires are firmly anchored in faith, we can 'burn' them to our heart's content. In fact, the greatest desires become the fuel for the greatest enlightenment. That is the true spirit of



Buddhism."

Shin'ichi then discussed a passage in "Point 1. Concerning the 'Expedient Means' Chapter" [from "Eight Important Points on the 'Expedient Means'"], which reads:

All phenomena in the universe contain 3,000 realms. This is called secret and mystic. *Secret* means strict and that all the 3,000 realms are present without exception in each phenomenon. There is nothing more wondrous than this. (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 714)

Going on to explain the strict law of cause and effect that governs life, Shin'ichi

said: "Here, the Daishonin states that *secret* of 'secret and mystic expedient' means strict. This passage is saying that the Mystic Law is the strict law of the universe, that which governs all things. This is because all phenomena in the universe are entities of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms and are without exception endowed with 3,000 constantly changing conditions.

"All of us, too, are entities of the Mystic Law. That's why if we exert ourselves in faith, we will definitely attain Buddhahood. At the same time, it is also why none of us are exempt from this unbending causal law of life.

"In other words, the causes that determine our future are made right here, right now, in this life-moment. Our future is determined by our life at this moment, by what we are doing right now — and with what attitude or inner resolve."

"Even though we have faith in and practice the Daishonin's Buddhism, the attitude and commitment with which we go about our day-to-day activities are extremely important. You can always fool others — whether they be your colleagues or your seniors in faith. No one knows what's going on in the deepest recesses of your heart, in your most private thoughts. *This is truly secret.*

"But we cannot fool the uncompromising law of cause and effect that governs all life. All pretense is in vain, since our present attitude and actions will become clearly manifest as future results. The reason I am so strict with you is that the Buddhist law of cause and effect is strict.

"For example, suppose a person lectures on the Goshō out of some sense of obligation, inwardly finding it a bothersome chore. While that person may appear to be in the world of Bodhisattva, in fact his or her mind is in the state of Hell. Giving the lecture becomes just an empty formality — simply going through the motions. The reluctant mind behind the lecture, the feeling of suffering, of having to perform an unpleasant duty, is the reality of the person's life or state of mind at that moment."

(To be continued)

FOR WOMEN

The Practice of Compassion and Courage



Beth Popper considers the importance of propagation and what 'I will do it' means to her.

By **BETH POPPER**
NEW JERSEY REGION WOMEN'S LEADER

Nichiren Daishonin in "The True Entity of Life" explains what it means to be a Buddhist: "Believe in the Gohonzon.... Forge strong faith...and study. Without practice and study, there can be no Buddhism. You must not only persevere yourself; you must 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 Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pp. 94-95).

In the beginning of my practice, it was difficult for me to introduce others to the practice because I was intensely shy, and because I had grown up with a strong feeling about the importance of respecting other people's beliefs.

For a long time, I either avoided or forced myself reluctantly to "teach others to the best of my ability." Because I loved to chant, however, I changed dramatically and felt happy for the first time.

Gradually, it became easy to talk to people and natural to bring up my Buddhist practice in conversation. Within a month I had many people interested in practicing and attending meetings. And within two

months three of them had received the Gohonzon. By the end of the three months, my personal problems became so insignificant that I wondered, "What is the big deal?" I started to challenge my problems courageously.

SGI President Ikeda encouraged us in his New Year's message to "forge a courageous practice, lead a courageous life." The key to accomplishing this is powerful daimoku, chanting with the awareness that courage already exists in our lives. And that sharing Nam-myoho-enge-kyo with others is the most compassionate thing we can do for them.

In a lecture on "The True Object of Worship," President Ikeda explains the relationship between courage and compassion: "Of course, the spirit of Buddhism is basically compassion, but the late

President Toda used to say: 'We are common mortals. Even though you talk about practicing compassion, it is easier said than done. Courage goes hand in hand with compassion. Courage leads to compassion.' Your courageous and imperturbable work for propagation, in the rough waves

which may assail you, is itself the practice of compassion."

To me, this is the "I will do it" spirit. ☐



'Courage goes hand in hand with compassion. Courage leads to compassion.'

Dialogue on Diversity:

— MORE THAN JUST TALK —



Gerry Hall explores how, with equality and

compassion as our foundation, discussions of human diversity can become a source of hope.

By **GERRY HALL**
SGI-USA CULTURE DEPARTMENT LEADER

Since 1996, there has been an awakening wave of interest within the SGI-USA on the subject of human diversity. There were voices of frustration and despair coming from within our membership that had to be heard. They eloquently expressed the need for honest and sincere dialogue that would lead to greater understanding among people.

Members began to discuss the topic of diversity. More often than not discussion has focused on racial and ethnic differences among people, but it also has included gender, sexual orientation, age and physical differences. Since there was no set agenda for such dialogues, there were many different kinds of dialogues and many differing reactions.

Some people expressed concern that members were becoming emotional or discouraged, or that nothing of value was being accomplished without a clear message of faith guiding the dialogues. Others felt that the dialogues provided a valuable venting of pressure and frustration, and that wisdom would be gained.

As challenging as it may be, diversity is something that we each must address. In 1996, when I talked with SGI Vice President Shigeo Hasegawa about this, he offered the following guidance:

Because we all chant, when we discuss difficult issues such as this, the result is that more wisdom comes out and hope is generated. Similar dialogues among those who do not chant can often bring out emotions or conflict. We are approaching the subject with compassion and equality as our basis, so whatever we discuss becomes a source of hope.

Race is such a vital issue. The SGI-USA is a miniature of society. If the SGI-USA can solve this problem we can make a great contribution to society.

My sincere hope is that the Culture Department and the top leaders of the SGI-USA, without avoiding the difficulty, will face these issues with courage.

You are making progress with the issues of race and ethnic differences step by step. But even if you have made a step forward, you may have to take two steps back. Then three steps forward and maybe run into a wall. Then retreat and then advance again.

But SGI President Ikeda asks us to be courageous. We can't afford to give up. We should not give up. It is not an option to give up. If we are cowardly and avoid such issues, no one else will be able to solve them. Repeatedly challenge such issues.

When we reach a solution through dialogue and everyone agrees, it is the Buddha's wisdom. Our motivation comes from compassion and from the heart.

In holding dialogues on human diversity, it's valuable to have some basic guidelines that reaffirm the Buddhist view of life. The following points and suggestions are based on experience gained from dialogues held in the SGI-USA during the past year. I offer them in a humble spirit as one who has just begun his own journey of awakening and understanding.

• **Preface the dialogue with a confirmation of respect for each person.** Dialogue is a common search for a deeper understanding of ourselves and others. If people are initially referred to simply by categories such as whites, blacks, Asians, Native Americans, Latinos, gays, senior citizens, handicapped, etc., there is often misunderstanding and a lack of trust from the start. People have their own self-identities and life-experiences; broad categorizations are rarely meaningful. Assert that all people are fundamentally equal and that everyone's expressions will be valued and listened to without judgment.

• **Re-state that all phenomena — all forms of life — are mani-**

festations of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. All people are profoundly connected on many levels. In our infinite lifetimes, each of us must have lived as a person of every possible combination of race, gender, sexual orientation and physical challenge. We appeared in this lifetime as we are to fulfill a particular mission — to save people who are suffering, whose hearts we alone can touch.

• **Assert that diversity is an absolutely necessary aspect of life and is a great treasure.** Although all life in the universe is one, it is infinitely varied. Nature creates beauty with diversity. Human affairs are also at their most beautiful when we have the wisdom to appreciate and harmonize our diversity. Diversity is a precious resource; this variety of talents, abilities and tastes enables us to meet the challenges facing humanity.

• **Re-affirm that injustice and discrimination have been a part of human history and are still present in our society today.** Often, our history is painful to look at; it can stir up rage and resentment. We have to keep in mind that our purpose is not to place blame or assign guilt; we are learning about our past and present in order to make a better future.

• **Clarify our understanding that the attachment to difference is one of the greatest causes of division among human beings.** Attachment to difference stems from a narrow or partial worldview that fails to grasp the unity of all life and the diversity of its manifestations. Most basically we need to learn the truth of life as taught by Buddhism, but there is no end to the lessons we need to learn about daily life and human relationships.

• **Clarify that Buddhism empowers individuals to challenge and change their circumstances, changing poison into medicine and hell into heaven.** At the same time, Buddhism raises our consciousness and compassion; it calls on us to stand up and fight injustice and discrimination wherever it occurs. ☐

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS DIALOGUE

Gongyo and daimoku represent a ceremony in which our lives commune with the universe. Gongyo is an activity in which, through our faith in the Gohonzon, we vigorously infuse the microcosm of our individual existence with the life force of the macrocosm, of the entire universe. If we do this regularly each morning and evening, our life force — our engine — is strengthened.



There are people who have powerful engines and people who have weak engines. The strength of our engine dramatically affects what we accomplish throughout the course of our lives. The difference can be huge.



The only way you can really awaken to the wonder of this practice is to experience it for yourself. We can understand neither faith nor life through theory or logic alone. Life is not an abstraction. It has to be lived and experienced.



Human beings have an undeniable instinct for prayer. Religion first came into being in response to this. Prayer did not come into existence because of religion; it was the other way around.



People instinctively wish for protection for themselves and their loved ones when faced with a sudden natural disaster or threat and at the most desperate and dire of times. When such a wish is powerfully concentrated, it becomes a prayer. It is not of the realm of logic or intellect. It transcends such things. Prayer is an act in which we give expression to the pressing and powerful wishes in the depths of our being and yearn for their fulfillment.



What people take as their object of devotion is a very important issue. In Japan, some people worship foxes [which in folk belief are thought to have spiritual powers]. But by making a fox one's object of devotion, one merely draws forth the state of Animality. This is because our lives commune with and respond to the object of devotion, attaining a state resembling that embodied therein.



'Religion is proof of our humanity. Of all the animals, only human beings have the capacity for prayer, a most solemn and sublime act.... Prayer in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism — chanting daimoku to the Gohonzon — directly fuses all of our diverse prayers with reality, based on the universal law of life.'

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KIMURA: I agree completely. Yet, oddly enough, in Japan, admitting to having religious faith tends to draw strange looks from many people. If anything, such an admission ought to suggest that a person possesses firm convictions and a solid outlook on life — qualities that I'd say are pretty admirable. What precisely does the word religion mean?

IKEDA: The Japanese word for religion (*shukyo*) is composed of two Chinese characters — one meaning basic or root (*shu*), and the other, teaching (*kyo*). In that sense, religion is that which attempts to teach the basics or fundamentals of life and the universe.

IGETA: Without being aware of these basics, our lives would be rootless and ungrounded.

IKEDA: Religion is proof of our humanity. Of all the animals, only human beings have the capacity for prayer, a most solemn and sublime act.

Nature's colossal and wondrous forces inspired people from ancient times to worship things in their natural environment, such as mountains, fire and the ocean. We can assume, therefore, that a mixture of fear, awe and respect toward the natural world and its phenomena — infinite, vast, majestic and filled with mysteries — led to the human expression of prayer.

For instance, people instinctively wish for protection for themselves and their loved ones when faced with a sudden

natural disaster or threat and at the most desperate and dire of times. When such a wish is powerfully concentrated, it becomes a prayer. It is not of the realm of logic or intellect. It transcends such things. Prayer is an act in which we give expression to the pressing and powerful wishes in the depths of our being and yearn for their fulfillment.

KIMURA: I think this is something that everyone can relate to.

IKEDA: Human beings have an undeniable instinct for prayer. Religion first came into being in response to this. Prayer did not come into existence because of religion; it was the other way around.

There may be many instances when you might feel like praying: in hoping to score well on a test, for example, or to have fine weather the coming day. Even those who consider themselves not to be religious pray for something. Just wishing for the good health of your children or resolving to improve yourself in some way also constitutes a prayer, even if you don't want to call it that.

Prayer in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism — chanting daimoku to the Gohonzon — directly fuses all of our diverse prayers with reality, based on the universal law of life.

In short, religion came into being out of the human desire for happiness.

IGETA: This helps us understand the significance of prayer. But there are many different religions in the world. Why?

IKEDA: Religion emerged out of the human instinct for prayer, but later in human history, various religions began to define or adopt different objects toward which to focus their prayers.

KIMURA: People seem to worship and venerate all sorts of things, depending on their religion.

IKEDA: What people take as their object of devotion is a very important issue. In Japan, some people worship foxes [which in folk belief are thought to have spiritual powers]. But by making a fox one's object of devotion, one merely draws forth the state of Animality. This is because our lives commune with and respond to the object of devotion, attaining a state resembling that embodied therein.

KIMURA: We also see great divisions within the world's major religions.

IKEDA: Yes, that is true. When we trace the various schools and sects of the major religions back to their origins, we arrive at the teachings of such founders as Christ or Muhammad, for example. There are many different kinds of Buddhism, as well. But ultimately they can all be traced back to Shakyamuni Buddha.

IGETA: How did teachings from a single founder split into so many different groups?

IKEDA: An important reason lies in people's exploitation of these original teachers for their own ends. As the religion developed, priests, scholars and others took advantage of the founder. They used that original teacher as a symbol with which to cloak themselves in authority and enhance their own prestige. Their self-interest became central, not their teacher. This led to splinter groups and sects. This is where all distortion begins.

IGETA: Basically, they forgot the spirit of their religion's original teacher or founder.

IKEDA: In Christianity, Martin Luther launched the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, calling for a return to the teachings of Christ. Nichiren Daishonin made a stand, appealing for a return to the teachings of Shakyamuni.

KIMURA: Now, the Soka Gakkai is forging ahead, calling for a return to the spirit of Nichiren Daishonin.

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IKEDA: In any event, Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is as vast and all-encompassing as the universe. It applies not only to this Earth. It is not just for the present. It is a fundamental law that can bring happiness to all life for all time.

Consequently, those of you who have encountered the Mystic Law, this sublime law of life, in your youth are the happiest and most fortunate people in the world. The question is whether you can fully appreciate this fact. The only way you can really awaken to the wonder of this practice is to experience it for yourself. We can understand neither faith nor life through theory or logic alone. Life is not an abstraction. It has to be lived and experienced. It is the history we write through our real-life efforts and struggles.

KIMURA: I think the foundation of faith is gongyo and daimoku.

Some people have told me that they do gongyo because their parents tell them to, but they don't really have a clear idea what benefit it has or the purpose for doing it. Others admit that they see no point in doing gongyo when they don't have a particular problem.

The Kanagawa Joint Prefecture young men's high school division chief, Shuji Sasaki, shared with me a comment of a student who had recently joined the Soka Gakkai: "Doing morning and evening gongyo somehow propels me in a positive direction. I'm happy with how my day goes; everything just seems to fall into place the way I hoped."

Would you explain the meaning and significance of gongyo and daimoku?

IKEDA: Gongyo is a daily activity in which we purify and prime our hearts and minds. It is starting the engine for our day. It's like grooming ourselves before we set out for the day.

There are people who have powerful engines and people who have weak engines. The strength of our engine dramatically affects what we accomplish throughout the course of our lives. The difference can be huge.

Diligently applying ourselves in our daily practice of gongyo and daimoku boosts the power of our engine.

KIMURA: When we do gongyo and chant daimoku, a strong life force comes welling forth. But why is this so?

IKEDA: Gongyo and daimoku represent a ceremony in which our lives commune with the universe. Gongyo is an activity in which, through our faith in the Gohonzon, we vigorously infuse the microcosm of our individual existence with the life force of the macrocosm, of the entire universe. If we do this regularly each morning and evening, our life force — our engine — is strengthened.

IGETA: Each of us is a microcosm — a mini-cosmos or universe unto ourselves.

IKEDA: Yes, that's what Buddhism teaches. We exist; we have life. In the same way, the universe is a giant living entity. Buddhism teaches that life is the universe and that the universe is life. Each of us is a living entity just like the universe; we are our own little universe.

A number of Buddhist sutras have stressed the oneness of our lives and the universe

by using the example of the human body itself. For instance, the roundness of our heads represents the celestial sphere. Our two eyes correspond to the sun and the moon. The opening and closing of our eyes are night and day. The hair on our heads represents the twinkling stars. Our eyebrows are the constellations.

KIMURA: That correlation of our bodies to the universe is really interesting. Are there other examples?

IKEDA: Our breath is likened to the wind: Soft breathing is like a gentle breeze blowing through a valley. The ragged breath of someone who is furious or agitated might be likened to a gale or typhoon!

As for the joints in our body, it is said that we have a total of 360 — which correspond roughly to the days in a year. Of the major joints, we have 12, corresponding to the months in a year.

IGETA: Is there some parallel for the four seasons?

IKEDA: The warmth of our stomachs represents spring and summer, while the cool hardness of our backs represents autumn and winter.

Our blood vessels, meanwhile, both large and small, correspond to rivers. A fissure in an embankment that leads to flooding might be likened to a burst blood vessel or a stroke.

Our bones correspond to rocks or minerals. Our skin and flesh are likened to the land. The hair covering our body is like the woods and forests. The list goes on and on to include our internal organs and such. Buddhist writings set forth in great detail that our body is itself a small cosmos.

KIMURA: The human brain is also often referred to as a miniature universe of its own because of its infinite potential.

IKEDA: That's right. The key lies in how to draw forth that potential.

When we look at the way our body functions, we could say it resembles a giant pharmaceutical factory. Our body produces its own drugs and medicines and has the ability to protect its own health and well-being. It is a truly wondrous microcosm.

The universe is composed of an incalculable number of essential particles: protons, electrons, neutrons, photons, as well as atoms composing the chemical elements, such as hydrogen, oxygen and calcium. These same particles and elements compose our bodies.

One scholar was prompted to observe that the human body is made of the same material as the stars, and called human beings "children of the stars." Our bodies are not only made of the same matter as the universe but are governed by the same basic principles of generation and disintegration and the rhythm of life and death as pervade the cosmos.

All physical laws, such as those of gravity and the conservation of energy, also affect and operate in the microcosm of each living entity.

It takes the Earth 365 days, five hours and 48 minutes to complete one revolution around the sun. There is a rigorous order to everything.

Our body is said to comprise more than 60 trillion individual cells. When they function each day in a well-ordered, systematic fashion, correctly carrying out their respective jobs, we enjoy good health. The complexity and precision of the human body are mind-boggling.

IGETA: Yes, even bodily functions, such as perspiration that regulates body temperature when it's hot, are pretty amazing when you think about them.

IKEDA: Great trouble would arise if our planet veered even slightly from its present orbit around the sun. And nothing short of catastrophe would result if the Earth's axis were to shift even minutely. All life on this planet would be threatened with extinction. Everything hangs in a delicate balance, governed by the strict principle that life and the vast universe are one. The same principle applies to each individual life — to each microcosm.

Science, for its part, is devoted to the investigation of real, yet invisible, natural laws. Such investigation has led to the invention of many machines and devices that apply those laws.



'The universe is a giant living entity. Buddhism teaches that life is the universe and that the universe is life. Each of us is a living entity just like the universe; we are our own little universe.'

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An understanding of the principles of water buoyancy, for instance, led to the development of seagoing vessels. Similarly, discovery of the laws of aerodynamics led to the invention of aircraft, and an insight into the workings of radio waves paved the way for the development of radio and television.

These natural laws I have just mentioned, however, are but partial laws. In contrast to

gongyo until now.

IKEDA: Gongyo is a solemn ceremony. When we do gongyo, we open wide the doors of the treasure storehouse within; we mine the dynamic wellspring of life force that lies dormant in the vast inner reaches of our being; we tap an inexhaustible source of wisdom, compassion and courage.

IGETA: Why is it that when we do gongyo, the microcosm of

IGETA: One student asked why chanting daimoku and reciting the liturgy of gongyo should bring about benefit even though she doesn't understand the meaning of what she's saying.

IKEDA: An infant drinks and benefits from its mother's milk but does so without knowing the milk's composition. The same principle is at work when we chant daimoku and recite the liturgy of gongyo.

Naturally, it's all the better if we come to understand the meaning — but only because it can help strengthen our confidence in the Mystic Law. If such understanding is not accompanied by practice, however, then it is ultimately meaningless.

It is difficult to grasp fully the profound meaning of the Mystic Law through purely theoretical means.

Looking at the animal kingdom, each species has its own unique means of communication or language. We humans cannot understand it, but birds, for example, clearly understand the language of other birds, and dogs, of other dogs.

Similarly, codes, abbreviations and foreign languages might be incomprehensible to those who are unfamiliar with them but are perfectly clear and intelligible to those proficient in them.

KIMURA: Yes. I guess even if we were to say the English phrase *thank you* without knowing what it means, an English speaker would still understand its meaning.

IKEDA: In the same way, our voices chanting daimoku and reciting the sutra during gongyo are communicated to the Gohonzon and unerringly understood in the realm of Buddhas and bodhisattvas. You might say that when we do gongyo and chant daimoku, we are speaking the language of Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

So even if you don't understand the literal meaning of what you are saying, your voices while doing gongyo and chanting daimoku to the Gohonzon reach all Buddhas, bodhisattvas and Buddhist deities throughout time and space — the protective functions within life and the universe. And unseen, the entire universe will be activated in fulfilling your prayers.

KIMURA: Some students have said that they have to get up so early to go to school that they simply find it impossible to do gongyo in the morning. Is it

OK in such cases to skip gongyo and just chant daimoku instead?

IKEDA: Just chanting daimoku in such cases is fine. To borrow the example of a meal, daimoku might be likened to the main course, while gongyo represents the side dishes, such as salad. Though one main dish might make for an adequate meal, we need to eat from other food groups as well if we want to have a nutritionally balanced diet. When we're busy, a purely carbohydrate meal, for example, can be fine and give us the energy we need, but a balanced meal is ideal.

IGETA: When you say *gongyo* here, do you mean a full gongyo both morning and evening?

IKEDA: Even just reciting the short "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" (A and C) portions of the sutra book is a perfectly respectable gongyo. Of course, it's preferable to do a full morning and evening gongyo. Gongyo is important, but essentially the most vital thing is that you continue to embrace the Gohonzon your whole life and never, ever abandon it. It is totally self-defeating if you practice passionately with faith like fire for a time and then just end up discarding your faith later on. Challenging yourself in small increments is fine. It's important that you develop faith like water that flows steadily and unceasingly like a river that gradually grows in size and converges with the vast ocean.

Allow me to point out, though, that the format of morning and evening gongyo — of five prayers and three prayers, respectively — is not specified anywhere in Nichiren Daishonin's writings but is something that was developed gradually over later generations by the Daishonin's successors. Therefore, if you genuinely don't have time to do a complete gongyo of five or three prayers, then a shortened gongyo is fine. Even just chanting some daimoku is quite OK, too.

IGETA: Some people feel really guilty when they can't do a full morning or evening gongyo.

IKEDA: As long as we have faith in the Gohonzon, we are not going to suffer punishment or negative consequences on such account. So please put your mind at ease. Nichiren Daishonin says that even a single daimoku contains limitless benefit.

KIMURA: Then a dozen daimoku must contain incredible benefit!

IKEDA: Yes, so you can imagine the immense benefit you will obtain when you earnestly continue to do gongyo and chant daimoku. Basically, you do gongyo and chant daimoku for yourself. Your practice of gongyo and daimoku is not an obligation — it is a right.

The Gohonzon will never demand that you chant to it. An attitude of appreciation in being able to chant to the Gohonzon is the heart of faith. The more you exert yourself in faith — in doing gongyo and chanting daimoku — the more you stand to gain.

The Daishonin also doesn't say anything in the Goshō about the specific amount of daimoku we should chant. It is entirely up to each individual's awareness and sense of responsibility. Faith is a lifelong pursuit, so there's no need to be unnecessarily nervous or anxious about how much or how little daimoku you chant.

IGETA: I know there are some people who can't chant or do gongyo unless they set themselves a concrete goal or target. It's fine, then, if they set a target for themselves that matches their situation or circumstances — resolving, for instance, "I'll challenge myself to do a short morning and evening gongyo and 15 minutes of daimoku everyday."

KIMURA: Or "I'll do a short gongyo on weekdays and a full morning and evening gongyo on the weekend."

IKEDA: As I said, there's no need to become anxious and put unnecessary pressure on yourself. Buddhism exists to free people, not to restrain them. Doing even a little bit every day is important. The food we eat each day turns to energy for our bodies. Our studies, too, become a valuable asset when we make steady efforts on a daily basis. Our life is created from what we do, how we live, every day. For that reason, we should strive to live each day so as to continually improve ourselves. The driving force for this is gongyo.

Simply offering prayers on a handful of occasions throughout the year — like the droves of Japanese who flock to Shinto shrines or Buddhist temples at New Year's to pray to various gods and Buddhas for protec-

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It is difficult to grasp fully the profound meaning of the Mystic Law through purely theoretical means. Looking at the animal kingdom, each species has its own unique means of communication or language. We humans cannot understand it, but birds, for example, clearly understand the language of other birds.

science, Buddhism is devoted to the investigation and exploration of the Mystic Law — the great law of life itself that is the essence and source of all other laws and principles in the material and spiritual realms.

The Mystic Law, too, is invisible. Nevertheless, it exists without a doubt. Nichiren Daishonin revealed the object of fundamental respect, the Gohonzon, in the form of a mandala so that we could tap and manifest the power of the Mystic Law in our own lives. That is why the Soka Gakkai's second president, Josei Toda, put it in the following easy-to-understand way: "I apologize for using such a simplistic analogy, but the Gohonzon can be likened to a happiness-manufacturing machine."

When we do gongyo and chant daimoku to the Gohonzon, the microcosm of our individual lives harmonizes seamlessly with the macrocosm of the universe.

KIMURA: I don't think I fully appreciated the significance of

our lives communes with the macrocosm of the universe?

IKEDA: The universe and our lives are manifestations of the Mystic Law, Nam-myōhō-rengē-kyō. The Gohonzon is also an embodiment of Nam-myōhō-rengē-kyō. Since all are entities of the Mystic Law, they are essentially one and indivisible.

Therefore, when we chant Nam-myōhō-rengē-kyō and focus on the Gohonzon, our lives and the universe merge like cogs in a machine meshing together with perfect precision, and we begin to turn in the direction of happiness and fulfillment. Then we can be in rhythm with the universe 365 days of the year — in spring, summer, autumn and winter — manifesting the vigor, wisdom and good fortune with which to surmount any problem or suffering.

When we rev up the powerful, revitalizing engine of Buddhahood, we can break through any impasse and boldly steer a course in the direction of hope and justice.

By HO GOKU

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY

THE ART OF WRITING



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 daily newspaper.

People often ask me how I mastered the art of writing. I never engaged in any special study to improve or develop my writing skills; I did not have the time. Nor do I feel my writing is particularly good.

What I have done, since my youth, is a great deal of reading of the literary works of many different authors. And while walking along the seashore or beneath the cherry blossoms, I would jot down my impressions and feelings. Those two things no doubt helped me build the foundations of my writing ability.

When I worked as an editor for a children’s magazine in Mr. Toda’s company, I also had to write poems or essays on the spur of the moment when our regular contributors failed to deliver their articles on time.



When the *Seikyo Shimbun* was established in 1951, Mr. Toda began to write his novel, *The Human Revolution* (under the pen name Myo Goku), which was serialized along with his regular column of pithy sayings titled “Epigrams.” He encouraged us, the youth division leaders, to write for the paper.

Having run a publishing company for so long, Mr. Toda was an excellent judge of writing. I still fondly remember his strict criticism of my writing: “This will not move people!” “Your point is unclear!”

He often used to pass me an installment of *The Human Rev-*

olution that was only half-finished and, after sketching the plot outline of the piece, say to me: “You write the rest. And if you see anything you’d like to change in what I’ve already written, go right ahead and do it.” It was an arduous challenge to say the least, and where my real training started. Upon reflection, how grateful I am for my mentor’s lessons.



When we were late in finishing our writing, Mr. Toda would frequently remind us of the story of the poem in seven steps, which appears in Eiji Yoshikawa’s *Sangokushi*, a Japanese version of the ancient Chinese classic *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

Two brothers, Ts’ao P’ei and Ts’ao Chih, fought over who would succeed their late father, Ts’ao Ts’ao. When the elder

brother, Ts’ao P’ei, ascended the throne, he threatened his younger brother, Ts’ao Chih, who was a gifted poet. “Compose a poem,” he demanded, “in the space of seven steps. If you fail, I shall kill you.”

Ts’ao Chih composed the following poem on the spot:

*They were boiling beans on a beanstalk fire;
Came a plaintive voice from the pot,
“O why, since we sprang from the selfsame root,
Should you kill me with anger hot?”*

Ts’ao Chih found a clever metaphor to express the sadness of strife between brothers. Ts’ao P’ei was moved by his plea and deeply regretted his actions.

“Speed is of the essence in the struggle to communicate the truth,” President Toda would say. “If you were Ts’ao Chih,

you’d be headless by now!” I still remember Mr. Toda’s face as he would roar with laughter.



I think the greatest writing practice I had was writing letters of encouragement and advice to my friends. Wherever I went, I carried stationery, envelopes and postcards. Whenever I had a few moments, between meetings or when riding a train, I would write words of encouragement to friends and fellow members.

In the short time I had, I would think long and hard what approach to take to best bring hope, inspiration and renewed energy to the people I was writing to. When I lifted my pen and moved it across the paper, I wrote with all my concentration, wanting to touch them with my very life and being.

Many of our friends are facing great obstacles or personal

struggles. Sometimes a single postcard can change a person’s life.

It was not some intellectual pastime. It was a spiritual struggle amid harsh reality, a struggle in which I focused on the task of drawing forth a thread of the most appropriate words to encourage and inspire each recipient.

Even while traveling overseas, I wrote dozens of letters and postcards each day. I also composed short poems on a daily basis and sent them to my friends, to cheer them and encourage them. Some years I have written nearly a thousand poems annually.



If I could, I would write a letter of appreciation and encouragement to every one of you. But I am only one person. There is a physical limit to what I can accomplish.

So instead every day I write an installment of *The New Human Revolution*. It is my daily letter to you all.

I am always embarrassed to read what I have written. I know there are many infelicities in *The New Human Revolution*. I can’t begin to measure my chagrin. I wish I had more time to polish and refine the manuscript to my full satisfaction, but I’m afraid the harsh demands of a novel written in daily installments won’t allow it.

Tokyo is blanketed in snow this eighth day of January. Hachioji has become a wonderland of gleaming white. Tranquility.

Ho Goku pushes his pen forward. Every day, another day of striving to perfect the art of writing. ㊦

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tion in the coming year — is just empty ritual and ultimately meaningless.

Exerting ourselves in the practice of gongyo each day amounts to what you might call a spiritual workout. It purifies and cleanses our life, gets our motor running and puts us on the right course for the day. It gets our body and our mind working smoothly and puts us in rhythm, in synch, with the universe.

IGETA: Yes, it’s really important to keep making efforts, however small, each day. The Hokkaido young women’s high school division chief, Kiyoko Oyane, said that many of her members find themselves unable to maintain a consistent practice. But all

seem to know that when they have problems, they should take them to the Gohonzon and chant about them.

IKEDA: The spirit to seat oneself before the Gohonzon is in itself very important. Those who have the spirit to continue to challenge themselves in this way are most respectable. You might decide, for example, “I’m going to chant some daimoku, even for just a few minutes,” or “I’m going to chant to the Gohonzon every day.” Buddhism teaches the principle of earthly desires are enlightenment. To explain this very simply, *earthly desires* refers to suffering and to the desires and cravings that cause suffering, while *enlightenment* refers to attaining a vast and expansive state of absolute happiness.

Normally, one would assume that earthly desires and enlightenment are separate and distinct — especially since suffering would seem to be the exact opposite of happiness. But this is not the case in Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism, which teaches that only by igniting the firewood of earthly desires can the flame of happiness be attained. As a result, our lives are infused with the light and energy of happiness. It is through chanting daimoku that we burn the firewood of our earthly desires.

KIMURA: I guess you could say that earthly desires are transformed into enlightenment by daimoku.

IKEDA: When we chant daimoku, all our problems and sufferings

are turned into energy for happiness, into fuel for advancement.

IGETA: So the greater our problems, the happier we stand to become.

IKEDA: That’s right. The wonderful thing about faith in the Daishonin’s Buddhism is its capacity to transform people’s lives from the direst suffering into the greatest possible happiness and turn the most daunting problems into a source of growth and a foundation for human greatness.

Problems come in all shapes and sizes. You may have some personal problem; you may be wondering how to help your parents live long and fulfilling lives; or you may be worried about a friend who is sick or depressed, wishing for

that person’s recovery. On a different level, you may be deeply concerned about the issue of world peace and its realization or humankind’s direction into the coming century. These are very noble concerns. With daimoku, you can turn all these worries and concerns into fuel to propel you forward — you can transform them into life force, into greater depth of character and into good fortune.

I hope you will seriously concern yourself with many things, chant abundant daimoku, and strive in your personal growth as you do so. Faith means setting yourself goals, working toward them and striving to realize each one. If we view each goal or challenge as a mountain, faith is a process whereby we grow with each mountain climbed. ㊦

如何鼓勵別人

SGI—USA 理事長財津光明

我們大多數人心中都有一個完美的佛道修行者的形象：宏亮有力地唱很多題目，從來不曾錯過任何動行的機會，勤快地研習佛理，和別人懷著深切行動，顯現實證，對別人懷著深切的責任感，而且總是鼓勵別人，帶給別人希望。

和這個理想人物相形之下，我們當中有些人可能會覺得很洩氣或疲乏，心想我絕對不可能符合標準。理想人物的重要性是為我們提供了一個目標，一個讓我們向自己挑戰的方向。

可是，比成爲佛教「教科書標本」更重要的是，成爲一個每天都充滿希望和喜悅的人。有這種精神的人才能鼓勵別人。

我希望美國創價學會永遠都是一個會員覺得坦然不作但又發揮自己能力的地方。爲了達到這個目標，今年的三個活動方針之一就是幫助會員獲得幸福。

因爲鼓勵別人是主要關鍵，我在此提出以下幾個要點和建議。

以身作則：佛法是積極的，成佛是一點點很容易的。有時候提醒別人的缺點是慈悲的表現，但絕對不要忘了慈悲的努力。

佛法以明確的因果法則爲本。行善的人，也是弘揚佛法，保護會員的人，自然會得到無限功德，你得到的幸福將和爲別人幸福所付出的努力一樣多。

大聖人說：「功德者，滅惡生善之意。」假如你被惡所動搖，不只有你不幸福，你的家人和朋友也會不幸福。相對的，假如你以勇敢的信心和行爲與惡奮戰，功德的實證會顯現在生命以及每天的生活。

根據佛經，功德就是獲得幸福。大聖人保證自覺地誦菩薩經弘揚妙法的使命的人，一定會達到無上的幸福境界。

本佛必定會守護在SGI裡從事自行化他的修行的人，那是本佛的本懷和旨意。向御本尊的祈求絕對不會不應驗的。

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爲了自己和別人而不斷努力改善生命品質的過程。即使你覺得並沒有顯現確實的或物質的實證，只要你持續愉快地向目標和理想挑戰，你就能激發別人同樣努力。以一個鼓勵的火花激發別人要比將義務的負擔加諸於人好得多了。

不要評判別人：評判往往是以假定的事物爲基礎，它們經常是不正確的，並且會使我們看不見每個人的特質。除非我們看到一個人的真實的一面，而不是以我們的標準認定他應該是某種人，我們如何能賞識和鼓勵那個人。

而且，我發現那些給我困難的挑戰的人往往也是那些把我的判斷徹底反過來，並幫助我出乎意外地看到人性的人。

發揮你的慈悲：發揮慈悲心的最初幾個步驟之一就是克制批評別人的衝動，我不知道有誰會從審判式的批評中得到鼓勵。看到別人有問題時說：「你的問題的原因就是你的弱點。」這是很容易的。有時候提醒別人的缺點是慈悲的表現，但絕對不要忘了慈悲的努力。

加強你的自信：在努力自我改進時，我們往往會把注意力集中在弱點而不是優點，修補我們認爲是錯的行動而不是建設性的行動。我們都至少有一個優點或長處。

雖然我們在其他方面或許會缺乏自信，但對自己的優點則充滿自信。認識自己的優點或長處是在其他方面建立自信的起點。我們不必在各方面都完美，只要盡最大的努力去去做。

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記得太陽：大聖人的佛法是太陽的佛法。太陽普照一切，包容一切，散發貫穿生命的溫暖，提升我們的精神，滋潤生命。我們也可以像太陽般閃耀光輝，照亮別人的生命。在爲鼓勵別人而唱頌時，想像南無妙法蓮華經的太陽在中心升起。

悲之心是：把別人的喜悅和痛苦當成自己的。這種感應不會就這樣出現，是需要培養的。當我們對別人知道更多時，我們也就更能了解和賞識他們的生命，從而發揮我們的慈悲。

傾聽——即使是讓你傷心的話：有人對我說，我太枯燥和本正經，他們感受不到我的心。這些話讓我非常痛苦，因爲我相信我對會員有很深、很親切的感情。我很難過我的感情不是一直很明顯地表現出來。但是我承認這是我的挑戰，我必須反省並且繼續唱頌祈求讓我能表達我的喜悅和感激。

會員給我們反應時，通常是爲我們好。如果我們能以充滿希望和自我改進的精神傾聽那些負面的反應，我們就能毫無怨尤地前進。

加强的自信：在努力自我改進時，我們往往會把注意力集中在弱點而不是優點，修補我們認爲是錯的行動而不是建設性的行動。我們都至少有一個優點或長處。

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春節賀詞

SGI會長池田大作

我衷心祝賀所有摯愛的SGI—USA美華友誼會友今天舉行春節聯歡會。我祈求今天成爲你們每一位最喜悅的一天，也感謝你們每一位每天的努力。

佛法以明確的因果法則爲本。行善的人，也是弘揚佛法，保護會員的人，自然會得到無限功德，你得到的幸福將和爲別人幸福所付出的努力一樣多。

大聖人說：「功德者，滅惡生善之意。」假如你被惡所動搖，不只有你不幸福，你的家人和朋友也會不幸福。相對的，假如你以勇敢的信心和行爲與惡奮戰，功德的實證會顯現在生命以及每天的生活。

根據佛經，功德就是獲得幸福。大聖人保證自覺地誦菩薩經弘揚妙法的使命的人，一定會達到無上的幸福境界。

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三月教學材料

新·人間革命隨筆

SGI會長池田大作

（新）新的一年。偉大境涯的旭日冉冉升起。

正月初二。在東京牧口紀念會館，和敬愛的吾友一道，向「民衆勝利之聲」出發。

此日是我七十歲誕辰。世界各地的會員爲我祝福，雖然不過是個人的事情。既慚愧，又高興。

小說「新·人間革命」第一卷的單行本也於當日發行。希望對大家有所鼓勵。衷心感謝爲出版操勞的有關人士及讀者們。

舊日記經常使我回想起過去的去片斷。在三十歲生日過後約一個月的某一天，我曾這樣寫道：「除了跟先生一同奮戰、前進、生存之外，我別無其他人生。要知道，有師才有我。」

因爲體弱多病，醫師說我可能活不到三十歲。對於如此虛弱的我，戶田先生比誰都關心，始終予以嚴峻而慈愛的指導。

激烈的法戰夜以繼日，疾病折磨，疲憊不堪。先生對我說：「這與三陣四陣的戰鬥。覺得辛苦就向御本尊哭訴吧，然後再鼓起勇氣奮力去解決一切。」（無論何時臨終，人生也要悠然、從容，秉持信心。）

貫通我生命的嚴父之聲。

他當時還說：「把我的生命給你！活下去，代替我堅決活下去！」

注入師的生命，戰勝病魔的宿命，迎來三十歲。感慨萬端，在日記裡寫下每十年的人生歷程和未來目標：

到十歲：在平凡的漁民家庭（紫菜製業業）渡過少年時代。

到二十歲：自我覺醒，和病魔搏鬥到三十歲：鑽研並實踐佛法，繼續搏鬥，戰勝病魔。

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入門考試

今年的入門考試訂於四月十九日在全美各地舉行，和往年一樣，試題分英、日、中、西四種語言。要參加這項考試的會友，請到各會館購買中文研習材料。無法在當地會館到中文材料的會友，請與副理長中林先生（Mr. Nakabayashi）聯繫，（310）261-9961。

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新·人間革命隨筆

(上接第一版) 長子也懷有同樣的心情。他到剛創辦不久的關西創價學園當教師，作為投身社會的第一步。次子成為創價大學的職員，老三也...

所謂廣宣流布，橫向是從友人到友人的友誼擴大，縱向是從父母到兒子、從兒子到孫子的信心繼承。

未來非寄託於年輕一代不可。窗邊，福壽草(劍金盞花)綻開金黃色的花朵。

福壽草沐浴到陽光，在雪中也頑強開放。

我天天祈念：友人啊，願你們成為家庭的太陽，把創價精神之光普照子孫萬代。

(3) 恩師的唱片

每每想起吾師戶田先生的聲音，我胸中就溢滿懷戀之情。

那是鼓動悲傷的友人、愛護青年的無比溫馨的聲音。

有時如雷聲齊鳴，是發自肺腑的嚴格又慈愛的斥責。

彈丸似的舌鋒，銳利地粉碎障礙；充滿大將的確信，不停地鼓舞友人。

是那獅子吼，要把不幸從世上掃而空。

那聲響，激、靜、寒、暖、嚴、寬、慈、：

又如嚴冬、春風、烈日、秋霜，洋溢著鮮明的四季光彩。

一九五九年，恩師逝去之後的第一個元旦，幹部們聚集在信濃町的學會本部，聆聽戶田先生的講義錄音帶。

發起人是山本伸一。他擔憂，先生的吶喊在學會中漸漸衰弱。

錄音機裡傳出先生的聲音，空氣為之一變。

彷彿恩師就在眼前，大家都肅然端坐，熱淚滾滾，立誓奮鬥。

此後不久，伸一著手把先生的「聲音」製成唱片，以遺留後世。

收集了先生講義、講演錄音帶一百六十餘捲。全國各地的會員也予以協助，感謝。作為弟子代表，雖然字跡拙劣，伸一在封套上題寫「創價學會會長 戶田城聖先生之教導」。

當年七月，第一張唱片「可延定業書」講義(問世。伸一在日記中寫下：「實在高興。報恩。」)

其實，伸一早在 一九五一年就立意

把恩師的「聲音」製成唱片。起因是時代起點讀了很多文學書籍，漫步海濱或觀賞櫻花，把感受記在筆記本上。或許這就打下培養寫作能力的基礎。

在戶田先生的公司編輯少年雜誌時，作家不能如約來稿，就自己寫詩寫散文。

一九五一年創辦「聖教新聞」，先生親自撰寫小說「人間革命」(妙悟空著和「寸鐵」(警備隊官，還讓我們也動筆。

先生長年經營出版社，是筆鋒犀利的批評家。

「這樣打不動人心！」「論點不清楚！」那嚴格的指責現今真令人懷念。

先生時常把寫一半的「人間革命」原稿交給我，講個大概，然後說：「後面你來寫。有想改的地方可以隨便改。」

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曹和曹植兄弟二人在繼承父親曹操地位的過程中，哥哥曹丕不獲即位，對天秉詩才的弟弟曹植施加壓迫：「七步中作詩，不成就殺了你！」

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那首詩很有名：「煮豆燃豆箕，豆在釜中泣，本是同根生，相煎何太急。」

曹植用巧妙的比喻抒發了兄弟之間你爭我奪的悲哀，使曹丕深感慚愧。

「言論戰以快取勝，如果你們是曹植，早就腦袋搬家了。」說罷，先生哈哈大笑。他的神情我迄今難忘。

至於我，最好的練筆說來也許是給友人寫鼓勵信。

無論去何處，我都帶著信箋、信封和明信片。開會間歇，或者在列車上，只要有點時間就寫信鼓勵會員。

怎樣說才能使對方湧起希望，振作精神，奮然而起呢？為把話語銘刻在對方生命之中，在有限的時間裡反覆思考，奮筆疾書。

很多友人苦惱重重，有時候一張明信片也能改變人生。

不是觀念遊戲，而是現實中的「精神格鬥」，操煉出昇華、凝縮一念的

(4) 我的文章修學

經常有人問：「怎樣才能寫好文章

說來我並沒有餘裕對寫作特別精磨，而且文章也絕不算好。但是從少年時代起就讀了很多文學書籍，漫步海濱或觀賞櫻花，把感受記在筆記本上。或許這就打下培養寫作能力的基礎。

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(4) 我的文章修學

經常有人問：「怎樣才能寫好文章

海外指導時也要每天寫多少封信和明信片。

並且吟詠和歌，天天書贈友人，以為鼓勵。年復一年，大概數量已多達上千首。

可能的話，我想給每一位會員寫信感謝、鼓勵。但是，所有的一支筆。所以每天懷著給所有的會員寫信的心情，埋頭撰著小說「新·人間革命」。

回頭重讀自己寫的東西，很不好意思。「新·人間革命」也非草率推拙，令人臉紅。真希望有時間進一步推敲，但報紙連載是步步緊逼。

一月八日，東京大雪。八王子也是一片銀白世界。靜寂！

每日淬煉，法悟空筆走龍蛇。

山本伸一就任第三任會長是一九六〇年五月三日。

舉行就任典禮的舞台是東京兩國的大講堂！

萬里晴空。學會震撼巨大的鐵架穹頂。仰望無限思念的吾師戶田先生的遺像步入會場，且且信誓，此刻想起那情景，恍如昨日。

眾所周知，日大講堂過去是大相模的國技館，但太平洋戰爭時曾被軍部接管，變成製造氣球炸彈的工廠，就不大為人所知了。

氣球炸彈是一種利用氣球的特殊武器。用和紙做的氣球，直徑約十米，把小型炸彈或燒夷彈掛在下面，用定時器控制降落。是打算讓它順著偏西風，飄到美國本土，進行轟炸。

戰爭末期，施放了九千多個氣球炸彈，但只有一成飄到美國附近。希望落空，只好作罷。

氣球炸彈和原子彈的對峙。在戰爭這「愚蠢行為的歷史」上曇花一現。

戰後被佔領軍接管，取名為「紀念廳」，用作過渡設施。一九五二年解除接管，但過去像補給站的圓形比賽場被混凝土填埋，不適合相撲活動了，於是改稱「國際體育館」，用於出租。一九五八年日本大學購入，改作講堂。

創價學會最初使用這個會場是一九五四年五月三日，召開第十屆總會。從正午入場到退場，總會長長達四個小時。會上，戶田先生吶喊：「重返大聖人時代！」

這是為人類幸福而起的宏偉宣言。

此日伸一是運作負責人。在日記中記下對歡慶從事清掃的青年們的感謝之情：「在心裡發誓，畢生絕對不忘在幕後辛勤工作的人們的心情。」

此後，學會召開本部總會、各部總會、本部幹部會等各種會議，到一九七七年日大講堂停止對外租借為止，約使用了二百八十回。

戶田先生去世後，伸一宣布，七個鐘頭「設想和發表創價(和平堡壘)創價大學計劃，都是在日大講堂。」

舉行具有歷史意義的第十一屆學生部總會，發表宣言，呼籲日中邦交正常化，也是在這個會場。今年適值值言三十年。

多少青年從這裡自覺了廣布使命，展翅飛向世界。

氣球炸彈製造廠變成和平與幸福的出發地，似乎在證明「三變土田」的原理。

如今日大講堂已拆除，建起辦公、居住用的大樓。

這座建築物要拆除時，當地會員費了一番周折，找到開會時使用的講台，買下來捐贈給學會。

他們說，要把伸一就任會長之目的決心作為自己的精神，而把這講台作為這精神的象徵，永遠保存。欣喜之至。

精神大河流經之處，必然盛開使命的花朵，永遠繁榮。

當日，伸一在恩師遺像前發誓：「作為戶田門下的代表，請讓我朝著化儀廣宣流布指揮前進！」

確實如此，我一直依照誓言，不斷廣宣流布創造歷史。

懷著學會精神，無所畏懼，永不屈服。

(6) 學會的救援活動

再過幾天就是一月十七日。又到了「阪神大震災」之日。三年來我一天都不會忘記受災地區阪神、災區的會員。每天祈念早日復甦，受災者幸福，罹難者安息。

那天早晨，聽到發生大地震的消息，我當即說：「全力以赴進行救援！」

關西和東京迅即成立對策本部。當地的會館作為避難場所開放。號召全國救援，並派出醫學部的醫生和護士。

我要去夏威夷(東西中心)演講，一再延遲出發，直到親眼看到救援活動上了軌道。在飛機上，不停地給受災地區的會員們唱題目。

夏威夷的主要活動，結束，就直奔關西。

在那裡又聽說了會員奮勇救援的行動，我大受感動，深懷謝意。

：由九百輛摩托車、近三千人組成的青年部摩托車隊，不顧道路封鎖，無眠無休地為受災的人們輸送物資。

有的會員帶傷救助負傷者，更有數不清的會員雖然自己也受了災，卻四處鼓勵他人。

最清楚倒塌的鄰家住了幾個人的，就是那些平日最新求左鄰右里幸福、致力於友好活動的婦人部會員。

世界上一些傳播媒體報導了學會的救援活動，盛讚不已。

所謂生命尊嚴，掛在嘴上很容易。論說社會貢獻或不也不費吹灰之力。但重要的是，人們面臨生命危機時，個人或團體實際做了些什麼。

關東大地震(一九二三年)之際，時為白金小學校長的牧口先生和六年級學生一起收集支援難民的救援物資。

那些參加者被稱作「小善會」。大概意思是孩子們能做的只是「微小的善行」。

一開始他們感到不好意思。但不知不覺之間臉上升起驕傲的神采。

看見處於困境的人，不能置之不理，這就是人類之道，佛法之心。

五年後，先生歸依大聖人佛法，走上「大善」之道。

在小說「新·人間革命」第七卷「掌舵」一章裡，寫到新海員乘坐的列車被大雪圍困的情景，意在把長岡會員奮不顧身地進行救援的「學會精神」說入史冊。

小說連時接到報告，救援的舞臺：宮內站當時的站長還健在。他曾為大家付出巨大的努力。現在八十九歲。當年目睹學員的誠實，後來一直對學會抱有好感，四年前入會。

我懇切寄語感謝，並送去「金獎章」。

利己主義相剋，人心隔閡：

在現代，希望人人幸福，為民眾和社會而獻身，締結這種真心的網絡，我們稱之為「廣宣流布」。

Viktor Frankl (right), author of the landmark 'Man's Search for Meaning,' is awarded an honorary citizenship of Vienna on Oct. 16, 1995. He is accompanied by Jorg Haider of Austria's Freedom Party. Frankl, one of the world's leading psychotherapists, died Sept. 2, 1997.



It's Not the Load, It's How You Carry It

By ANDREW BRUCK

JACKSONVILLE, FLA., CORRESPONDENT

What is now the third major school of psychotherapy — called logotherapy — in the world nearly perished amid the horrors of World War II. Its founder, Viktor Frankl (pronounced FRAHNkl), who died last year at 92, had only recently completed the manuscript for a book, *The Doctor and the Soul*, that outlined the school's thinking. Unlike Freud, who said that humans are essentially pleasure-seeking animals of two dimensions, body and mind, Frankl perceived a third dimension, spirit, that which a person *is* rather than possesses.

Ironically, his own spirit would soon be cruelly tested.

Despite the peril of being Jewish at the outset of World War II, Frankl's position as a doctor was deemed an asset by the

Nazis. This meant, he thought, that he and his family would be left alone. He refused a visa from the American embassy.

By 1941, however, the situation had deteriorated. He, his parents, brother and pregnant wife were arrested and sent to a Nazi concentration camp, where all but he would perish. He would also lose his unpublished manuscript, which his wife had sewn into his coat lining.

Camp life bore out his belief that someone with purpose can better withstand suffering; higher-spirited people would remind despondent ones of loved ones or plans awaiting them "after." At one point, disgusted with mundane thoughts such as the next scrap of food, Frankl envisioned teaching a course in surviving the concentration camp. Doing so cast his experience in a new light.

Sick with dysentery, Frankl knew that he risked collapsing his lung if he slept, so he would crawl around looking for

scraps of paper on which he slowly reconstructed his manuscript. Freed in 1945, Frankl finally published his book in 1946. He went on to write 31 more — two published in 1997, the year he died in Vienna.

According to logotherapy, meaning can be discovered by three ways: "1) by creating a work or doing a deed; 2) by experiencing something or encountering someone; and 3) by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering," Frankl wrote.

Today, logotherapy is officially recognized by, among other groups, the American Psychiatric Association. Robert Barnes, Ph.D., chairman of the Department of Counseling and Human Development at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, serves as director of the Viktor Frankl Institute of Logotherapy in Vienna. With affiliates in 22 countries, the institute offers certifi-

cation in logotherapy and also works to raise awareness of Frankl's insights.

Barnes believes that Frankl's theories will become dominant in the next century because people around the world are looking for meaning and also because logotherapy rehumanizes psychotherapy.

Frankl's signature work, *Man's Search for Meaning*, became phenomenally popular. A 1991 Library of Congress survey found it to be one of "the 10 most influential books in America."

In it, Barnes says, Frankl taught that as "human beings we need to recognize everything can be taken away from us: Our material possessions, our health, our loved ones — everything except one thing, our freedom to decide how we will respond to the circumstances of our life. Frankl teaches us that it's not so important what happens to us. What is important is how we respond. It's not the load we carry, it's how we carry it." ❧

COMING NEXT WEEK:

The Youth Division Pullout, 'Seize the Day'