

World Tribune

No. 3180

THE YEAR OF VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE FOR THE NEW CENTURY

FEBRUARY 27, 1998

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'SEIZE THE DAY' YOUTH PULLOUT INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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The Illuminating Spirit of José Rizal

SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech on the conferment of the first Rizal International Peace Award at the Philippine International Convention Center, Manila, Feb. 9.

Dr. José Rizal, world citizen, believed in the infinite potential of the human being.

It is indeed a great honor to be the recipient of the first Rizal International Peace Award. As I received this prestigious award, I was moved by a solemn sense of both its significance and of the weighty responsibility that attends it. I would like to express to those assembled today my deep appreciation and gratitude.

I am further profoundly grateful to His Excellency President Fidel V. Ramos, who found time in the midst of his pressing official duties to honor us with his presence today. Please accept my most sincere thanks.

I share this immense honor with my dear friends of the SGI Philippines who are daily striving to contribute to their society as responsible citizens and neighbors. I also share this joy with SGI members in 128 coun-

tries worldwide who join us in offering their heartfelt felicitations on the centennial of Philippine independence.

Earlier today, I had the privilege of visiting the beautiful, green Rizal Park and of laying a wreath at the foot of the magnificent statue of Dr. José Rizal that stands near the site of his martyrdom.

The heroes of war are commemorated with statues throughout the world. It is sad that there are far too few statues to honor the memory of the heroes of peace and humanitarianism.

It is for this reason that I firmly believe that efforts to share with the world the spirit of Dr. Rizal, conveying his message into the coming century, advance the cause of peace and



Philippine President Fidel Ramos gives SGI President Ikeda the Rizal International Peace Award for his efforts to further world peace.

the interests of humanity.

To our great joy, in November 1996 Soka University was presented with a superb bust of Dr. Rizal by the Order of the Knights of Rizal. I repeat here our promise to enshrine this bust

as one of the school's eternal spiritual treasures within the new Administration Building when it is completed next year.

Before us lies the vast path that Dr. Rizal pioneered at the risk, and finally the cost, of his life.

This path is first of all a path toward victory for ordinary people, for the common person. Dr. Rizal was a valiant hero who emerged from among those who had suffered most intensely through more than three centuries of colonial rule.

To revive and restore the "downtrodden rights of humanity" from José Rizal's *The Reign of Greed*, he raised his voice and acted with immense courage — the courage of a lion. "We must win freedom," he asserted, "by deserving it, exalting individual reason and dignity, loving the just, the good, the great, even dying for it."

What a brilliant, hope-filled statement of faith in his fellow citizens! In his words, we hear the invincible roar of a lion, stirring and rousing the soul of humankind eternally into the future.

He rejected violence, insisting that peace be attained through peaceful means. The stream of his visionary philosophy flows into the river of non-violent action in this century, led by Mahatma Gandhi in India and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the United States. More recently, the People Power Revolution of February 1986 was a

PLEASE SEE AWARD SPEECH, 4



A monument depicting José Rizal's execution by firing squad at the hands of the Spanish in 1896 in what's now known as Rizal Park.

JOSÉ RIZAL

A Man of Justice

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER

José Rizal (1861-96) was a physician, philosopher, author and human rights advocate, who remains today a national hero for the key role he played in inspiring his fellow Filipinos to rise and claim their independence from colonial rule.

In his 20s, Rizal traveled to Europe where he studied litera-

ture, medicine and philosophy. He went on to become a prolific writer who, armed with the power of the pen, fought for the freedom and self-determination of his country. Though his books were banned in his homeland, his message still reached the people, kindling within their hearts the flame for independence.

PLEASE SEE RIZAL, 5



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

OUR ORGANIZATION

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

OUR PURPOSE

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

OUR PRACTICE

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

OUR HERITAGE

Myoho-renge-kyo is the title of the Lotus Sutra, which is the foundation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. This sutra, 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-renge-kyo. In keeping with the sutra's teaching that people are Buddhas, the SGI teaches that the heritage of this Buddhism is passed from generation to generation of the people.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the SGI-USA community center nearest you — there are more than 60 across the country. (You can look in the phone book or call our national headquarters at (310) 451-8811.) The community center can direct you to SGI-USA members in your town, so you can ask questions and find out more.

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The Right Way To Chant?

EDITORIAL

Ever wonder how you're supposed to chant? What is the secret to successful prayer?

It's a safe bet we've all asked, at one time or another, "How do I chant for _____?" (Fill in the blank with "a job," "a relationship," "more money," "happiness," etc.)

But there really aren't different ways to chant for different desires. Over the years, many views have been shared, both in these pages and during personal guidance, about the most effective ways to chant. Some people emphasize connecting your desire to kosen-rufu (that is, "I want this job so I can show actual proof of the practice"). Others say we should chant for other people's happiness first. Still others that we should think about our desires; calm our mind; picture our Buddha nature; and so on.

These tips represent many people's wisdom gained from years of practice. And while they can be and have been effective for certain people at certain times, when it comes down to it, there is no one way to chant.

There is no secret formula.

The only rule, so to speak, is to be yourself. There are no shoulds or oughts. As SGI President Ikeda says in next week's "Discussions on Youth": "There is no set form or pattern for how we should pray. Buddhism emphasizes being natural. Therefore, simply chant earnestly without pretense or artifice, just as you are."

Some of us seek how-to-chant guidance when we feel deadlocked and that our prayers aren't being answered. But having faith means believing in our Buddhahood, being confident in our prayers and trusting the efficacy of chanting — all just as we are. As Nichiren Daishonin writes: "Faith alone is what really matters" (The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 242).

Faith aims to set people free. No one can dictate what is OK to pray for and what isn't. By honestly praying for our desires, our life-condition

naturally becomes broader, deeper, bigger. Nothing is off limits. The right way to chant is to share all your thoughts and to share all your thoughts and feelings freely with the Gohonzon; denying your true feelings is counterproductive.

Of course, if your intent is destructive — as in praying for someone's unhappiness — you're going against the Buddhist Law and will have to face the effects you're creating this way. But the bottom line is that freedom of choice in prayer is our modus operandi.

As Mr. Ikeda also says in next week's dialogue: "There's no need to pretend that you're praying for something really lofty when you're not. You're only fooling yourself when you do.... Of course, it's perfectly fine...to chant with resolve to become a bigger-hearted person or for the welfare of your friends and for kosen-rufu — the happiness and prosperity of all humankind. You are free to chant for whatever you wish. It's all up to you."

In Buddhism, we use the term absolute freedom, which can mean limitless joy. Through unhindered, honest prayer, we can develop an un-stoppable state of life that is free to enjoy everything life throws at us, free to always gain joy from the Law. Josei Toda used to say that he felt as if his life-condition were freely expanding into the sky, allowing him to go wherever and accomplish whatever he chose.

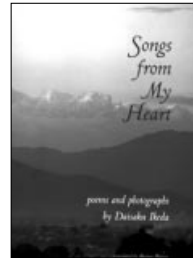
The power of our unrestrained, unreserved prayer can lead us all to the state where nothing can stop us. Where we may share in Walt Whitman's "Song of the Open Road":

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading
wherever I choose.

A Great Gift Idea!

First printed in 1978, Songs from My Heart by Daisaku Ikeda is a collection of poems celebrating youth, change and progress. Translated by Burton Watson with power and emotion true to the author, these genuinely are songs from the heart of Daisaku Ikeda.

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WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

More on the Death Penalty

In response to Adalyn Brugger's letter (Jan. 30 "Mailbox"): Adalyn states that the SGI has not taken stances on "controversial political and social issues." While the tenets of Buddhism encourage individuals to think for themselves, that is in no way contradictory with the SGI taking stands on important social issues. SGI President Ikeda has made strong statements against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, for the protection of the environment and for the rights of all individuals [to be free] from oppression. Buddhism should not and cannot separate itself from society....

I also disagree with Adalyn's statement that it creates a divisive climate to discuss such a topic. Dialogue is the pathway to understanding. If we fear discussing important social issues, how can we learn from each other?

— DIXON HAMBY, Bellevue, Wash.

While I agree with the spirit of Adalyn Brugger's letter as far as the right of members to make up their own minds and opinions about social/political issues, I can't for the life of me think of a single instance in Buddhist philosophy where it's been said that killing another human being in retribution is good or just. In fact, in every case, it's the opposite.

When did Nichiren raise a hand in retribution for all the attacks on himself and his believers? Speaking of those persecutors, in his "Letter from Sado" he writes: "They will be tortured in the depths of hell for a thousand aeons. I therefore pity them deeply and wonder what can be done for them" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 41). I'd call that compassion, which seems to me to be far superior to retribution, or "justice." He knew they would undoubtedly suffer plenty for their crimes, but his heart, his spirit was to save them.

— WILLIAM ROUTHIER, Boston

It's true that everyone in the SGI has a right to his/her own opinion. However, opinions may or may not be in accord with the teachings of Buddhism. Therefore, when discussing issues such as the death penalty, homosexuality, race, abortion, etc., I believe we need to make clear to our listeners the differences between our personal opinions and Buddhist philosophy, when such differences exist. Neglecting to do so could lead to gross misunderstanding of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and the SGI.

— AUGUST MARCH, Ravena, N.Y.

According to Buddhism, all life is fused at its profoundest depths with the life of the universe, the all-embracing fundamental cosmic life force. All life, no matter how momentarily deluded or ridden with karmic impediments, is on its most basic level oriented toward Buddhahood. This most basic desire to re-establish oneness with the universe — one's true self — is indiscriminately shared by all life, down to the minutest particle of dust.

To deny this potential in another human being, whoever they may be, however they may behave, is the same as denying it for oneself, for we are all indivisibly linked to one cosmic body. Anything that devalues life by denigrating its inherent, absolute dignity, such as the arbitrary and sanctioned murder of an individual by the authority of the state, is, I believe, antithetical to the goal of establishing a universe where life itself is given pre-eminence.

— MARK KORAL, Los Angeles

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.

Living Artfully in a Technological Society

PERSPECTIVE

Once crippled by self-imposed limitations, this dancer shines in a technologically and artistically enriched world.

By PAMELA SAXON
NASHVILLE, TENN.

Thirteen years ago, I had never heard of faxes. And computers to me were huge, gray machines with lots of blinking lights, just like on *Lost In Space*. OK.... Maybe I was slightly misinformed, but who cares? Back then, dancers didn't need computers!

After graduating from a performing arts college in 1985, I moved to New York to struggle alongside every other hopeful performer there. Within one month, I was dancing in a national tour! However, when the last day of my contract arrived, I had squandered most of my final paycheck on an ugly pair of clogs. Panic-stricken, I called...Mom and Dad!

To my chagrin, my parents refused to cooperate, sending me only money for food. I was forced to contemplate joining the "real" working world.

Fear crippled me. Able to shine like a star in auditions, I crumbled like a clump of dirt in job interviews. I had tons of dance training, but no sense of self-sufficiency! Should this have been something inborn? Did I have a genetic defect? Seeing no other recourse, I invested my remaining money into a word-processing course. BLECH...PHFFFT...PTOOEY!

Needless to say, I was pathetic. Having never turned on a computer, I found myself pitifully searching for the remote! Boy, was I angry! Who had time for this *&!%?

After barely passing the class, my friend Susan submitted my name as a temp to the securities company she worked

for. I thought *securities* meant the police force, not stocks and bonds. Beyond pathetic.

My first day was all about finding proper attire (I did not even have one pair of nylons). Not only that, but the closest thing to a briefcase I owned was my red, filthy, canvas dance bag. Better to carry nothing than parade that thing around.

Reluctantly, I stepped outside, sporting dance tights underneath the only skirt I owned, pumps with worn heels and a mismatched purse.

Fume-tainted snowflakes grasped at my eyelashes as I slushed downtown through rush-hour traffic. Suddenly, I understood the empty feeling of being cold and alone. The fear and longing of the homeless bore deeply into my heart. Focusing my efforts on locating the building, I was thankful it was in a nice part of town.

Inside, the popping of radiators comforted me. Now, where was Susan? Before I even had the chance to remove my coat, a supervisor escorted me to the "space" I would share with a million other temps. Couldn't I at least get a cup of coffee?

Then I saw it. Lying in wait on its demonic throne, its size magnified by the fear in my heart, the brutal beast crouched, motionless. My stomach gnarled into knotted rope as I struggled for breath, staring deeply into the creature's emerald eyes. If it had been a Steven Spielberg movie, that computer monitor would have been a T-Rex and John Williams' music would have underscored the action....

....BAM! Correspondence slammed onto the desk, and my supervisor yanked me back into reality, growling, "It's all yours." She had no idea how that lump in my throat was the only thing preventing me from emitting a deep, dark, colossal wail.

During my employment, I was barraged by "simple" assignments. Faxing correspondence was like a Jerry Lewis comedy routine. But with every task I gained increased confidence in myself and the world around me. Befriending that computer was the first step in what I called my life-expansion journey.

I only lived in New York City for three years before accepting a teaching job at an arts school near my home in Virginia. Within months of making my exit from New York, I encountered Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, thus marking a brand new beginning in my life.

Since then, my career path has twisted and turned into many unexpected areas. Striving to live my life artistically, one of the most profound things I have learned is that the art of living is the greatest art form known to humanity. It opens us up to all possibilities, allowing and encouraging expansion beyond our self-induced limitations through faith in the Lotus Sutra.

SGI President Ikeda urges us to stay informed of technological advances. Proudly, I can say that I now own TWO computers! Both with faxing capabilities! I also frequently surf the Net and have taught myself to do computerized layout and design. A big change, huh?

It took tremendous courage and love for my parents not to send me that money. But because of their decision, I can now adapt my career choices to the needs and demands of society, utilizing my skills and intelligence in ways that support me in my growth as an artist as well. Compassion means teaching our youth how to take care of themselves, under any circumstances, even if it means implementing tough love.

Before, my vision didn't extend past my nose. My present perspective, although not always global, strives heartily to be so.

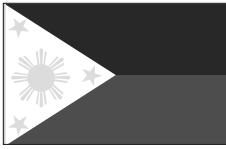
Technology can be good. I intend to use as much of it as possible by basing my daily life on the Lotus Sutra, in accordance with Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

Art is great. Art is necessary. But more so is living artfully, a way of life that calls for common sense and continuous education. ❖

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

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NEWS BRIEFS



*SGI President's
Visit to the
Philippines*

Soka University Honors Philippine President

A ceremony to confer an honorary doctorate from Soka University upon President Fidel V. Ramos of the Republic of the Philippines was conducted Feb. 12 in the Malacanang Palace in Manila. SGI President Ikeda and his wife, Kaneko, joined Soka University President Kinnosuke Komuro and other university officials for the presentation. Since his inauguration as president in 1992, Mr. Ramos has made education one of his foremost concerns in the ongoing development of his country.

In his acceptance speech, he said: "It is a great honor for me to accept this honorary degree from Soka University on behalf of my country and people. This special recognition affirms the bonds of friendship between Japan and the Philippines and the importance each country attaches to education and the future of its youth." He also paid tribute to President Ikeda's vision in founding Soka University as "an institution dedicated to developing capable and civic-spirited people with excellent judgment, a strong sense of purpose and a keen international perspective manifested by the promotion of peace for all of humankind, and a continuing exchange among educational, cultural and political leaders from around the globe."

SGI President Talks With Former Univ. President

At the SGI of the Philippines Executive Conference held in Manila, Feb. 12, SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda spoke with guests Dr. Jose V. Abueva, former president of the University of the Philippines, and his wife, Maria Socorro. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the signing of an exchange agreement between Soka University and the University of the Philippines.

Special on SGI President Airs on Philippine TV

A 30-minute television special titled "Knight of the Rising Sun — A Portrait of Daisaku Ikeda," was aired throughout the Philippines during prime time on Feb. 13. Highlighting the life and achievements of SGI President Ikeda, the documentary was broadcast in conjunction with the conferral of the first Rizal International Peace Award on the SGI leader earlier in the week.

SGI President Honored by Philippine City

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the promotion of culture on a global scale, SGI President Ikeda received an honorary citizenship from the Philippine city of Tagaytay on Feb. 14. Tagaytay, which is located about 30 miles south of Manila, is home to the SGI of the Philippines Grand Culture Center. SGI Vice President Hiromasa Ikeda accepted the honor on the SGI leader's behalf.

— Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER

The Illuminating Spirit of José Rizal

AWARD SPEECH, FROM PAGE 1

dramatic enactment of the ideals of Dr. Rizal. The Republic of the Philippines has experienced a renewal and today is making remarkable strides on all fronts under the outstanding leadership of President Ramos.

Here, also, we find the living pulse of Dr. Rizal's philosophy of hope, his unwavering faith in the infinite potential of the human being. Dr. Rizal clearly stated his understanding of our purpose in this life: to seek happiness for oneself and one's fellows by following the road toward progress and perfection. Indeed, this must be the object of all human endeavors, whether in the realm of science or politics, society or religion. We the common people must become wiser and stronger, so that we can advance, without hesitation or fear, toward the goals of peace and happiness. To this end, we must work to build the global solidarity of youth that Dr. Rizal pioneered.

Traveling extensively in Europe, Asia and the United States, Dr. Rizal was a world citizen filled with the spirit of youth and humanity. Through the power of culture and character, he forged bonds of friendship and solidarity wherever he went. His superlative poems and literary works continue to be loved by people throughout the world.

He also produced and published the first Tagalog translation of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, sharing its inspiring words with the youth of his homeland.

As is well known, his travels also took him to Japan, which he visited in February 1888, exactly 110 years ago.

In the decades that followed, however, Japan brutally betrayed the affection and friendship he had brought to her shores. In its madness, militarist Japan invaded and inflicted unspeakable horrors on his beautiful homeland.

To ensure that there is never a repetition of this cruelty and barbarity, we must create waves of friendship — a flowing river of peace that deeply and firmly binds together the hearts of our young people. It is my belief that cultural and educational exchange are the means to achieve this. I have devoted myself to this effort and will continue to do so. As President Ramos has stressed, a culture of peace is the greatest legacy we can leave to the next generation.

Dr. Rizal described youth as the "fair hope of this land of



The ceremony takes place at the Philippine Int'l Convention Center.

mine," and declared education of the people to be his "supreme aspiration." He was deeply concerned about the dangers of radical change, and chose instead the way of peaceful gradualism based on education.

Even in exile, he founded a school where he showered love and attention on the children of poor families. The golden record of his contributions in humanistic education continues to shine to this day.

Dr. Rizal's 35-year life was a succession of persecutions and trials. And yet he looked down upon these events as if from a great height. He declared that an honest man arouses the greatest hatred. The just and worthy must suffer so that their

ideas may be known and spread.

The Japanese educator Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944), who founded the movement that developed into the SGI, was a near contemporary of Dr. Rizal. Relentless in his criticism of Japanese militarism, he died in prison at 73. He was moved and inspired by convictions that closely parallel those of Dr. Rizal.

Through the great persecu-

tions they both endured, through their willing martyrdom for crimes of which they were innocent, each succeeded in lighting a spiritual flame that continues to burn as a passionate quest for justice.

Their struggles have been passed on and are continued

**We the
common
people must
become wiser
and stronger,
so that we
can advance
toward the
goals of peace
and
happiness.**

today by the young people in whom they believed so deeply, on whose growth and development they staked everything.

To live with the spirit of Dr. Rizal is to live in eternal youth.

Throughout my life, I will work with you, the direct spiritual heirs of Dr. Rizal, as we advance with the world's youth along the great path of peace.

In closing, I extend my earnest prayers for the continued good health and well-being of His Excellency President Ramos, of the distinguished members of the Order of the Knights of Rizal, and of all those who have so kindly attended today. Allow me also to voice my prayers for the lasting prosperity and glory of the Republic of the Philippines.

Malamin salamato! (Thank you very much!)

DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

Tragedy Fuels Desire for Peace

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER

On the campus of De La Salle University Feb. 10, SGI President Ikeda laid a wreath at a memorial to teachers and citizens killed by Japanese forces on the university site during World War II.

After presenting the flowers, the SGI leader stood before the statue, his hand over his heart, and bowed deeply.

Feb. 12 marked the 53rd anniversary of the massacre. The Japanese army invaded the Philippines soon after the outbreak of the Pacific War. As the war intensified, the school was opened to area citizens as a hospital and place of refuge.

Eventually, the Japanese army seized the school for use as a headquarters, but a number of teachers continued giving instruction in limited facilities. These teachers persevered in their work with the attitude that, the war notwithstanding, it would be unconscionable to allow the youth of the Philippines to grow up uneducated.

By January 1945, as the war drew to a close, they had to close the school; all but 18 teachers and a small number of local residents who had taken refuge remained.

As the tide of the war turned against Japan, fear and panic grew among the Japanese troops. Suspecting there might be spies or anti-Japanese resistance fighters among those liv-



Photos Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

Teachers of De La Salle University in Manila were massacred by Japanese soldiers during World War II. President and Mrs. Ikeda lay a wreath at a memorial honoring the victims, Feb. 10.

ing at De La Salle, on Feb. 12, 1945, the soldiers arrested three Philippine laborers on suspicion of being guerrillas.

Drunken Japanese troops massacred the teachers and evacuees at the school — men, women and children. Those who tried to escape were cut down with swords and bayonets. The following day, the soldiers returned to kill any who had survived. Of the 68 persons who had been at the school, 41 had been slaughtered, including 16 of the 18 teachers. The survivors were rescued by American troops on Feb. 16.

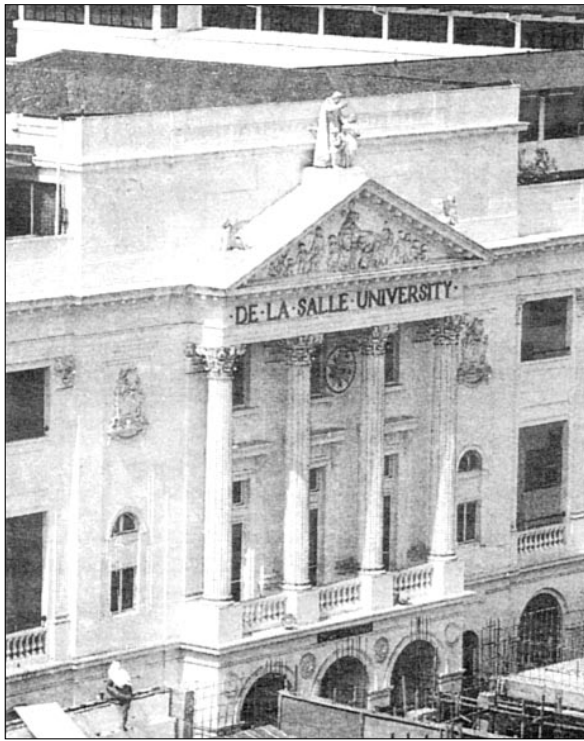
In the hearts of the members of the university community, this tragic history, rather than engendering hatred, has instead

fueled a solid conviction in the absolute necessity of peace.

De La Salle, which was founded in 1911, is named after the French educator Saint John-Baptiste de La Salle (1651–1719), a pioneer of modern education who devoted his life to the education of the poor.

Today, the school provides a comprehensive system of education, including elementary and secondary school instruction. It upholds the ideal of education that fosters well-rounded human beings.

With a student body of more than 10,000, De La Salle offers a broad range of courses of study, including one of the best programs for Japanese studies in the Philippines. WU



SGI President Ikeda visits De La Salle University, one of the Philippines' most prestigious institutions of higher learning, on Feb. 10. The university awarded the SGI leader an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters in March 1997. Mr. Ikeda, accompanied by his wife, Kaneko, is welcomed upon his arrival by university president Andrew Gonzalez and numerous representatives of the faculty and student body. Mr. Ikeda urges students to become exchange students in Japan.



SGI President Greets King and Queen of Spain

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



SGI President Ikeda offers his congratulations and respects to King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia of Spain at a ceremony conducted by the Order of the Knights of Rizal on Feb. 11 to confer the Knight Grand Cross of Rizal, the association's highest honor, upon the Spanish monarch. After the ceremony, the SGI leader presented the king with a long poem he had dedicated to him, titled 'Al Gran Rey de la Paz, Sol de España' (Great King of Peace, Sun of Spain). The poem pays tribute to the monarch's struggle to break through the tyranny of the Franco regime and usher in democracy.

RIZAL, FROM PAGE 1

Rizal was not only a citizen of his beloved homeland but also a global citizen. He was familiar with international affairs, spoke many languages, and urged his fellow Filipinos to open themselves up to the great cultures and ideas of the world.

Rizal endured persecution and exile, and was executed by the colonial authorities in 1896 at the age of 35 for his revolutionary activities. His martyrdom paved the way for the promulgation of the Declaration of Philippine Independence on June 12, 1898.

The Order of the Knights of Rizal, a civic cultural group



based in Manila, was established in 1916 to promote Rizal's philosophy and ideas. WU

Photos by MARK MANNING



Rick Dexter (right) helps Hugh Charles prepare to march with the band in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day parade.

Living the Dream

Their banner said it all for SGI-USA members in Dallas as they marched in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day parade.

By **WENDY DeORE**
TEXAS BUREAU CHIEF



The Dallas skyline frames SGI-USA members preparing for the parade.

More than 100 flag-waving, pompom-shaking, band-playing, rope-twirling, walking, singing, and smiling SGI-USA members proudly marched in the Martin Luther King Jr. parade sponsored by the City of Dallas on Jan. 17.

Their beautiful red and white banner, carried by several youth division members, boldly declared their message: "Living the Dream"!

The idea for SGI-USA participation in the parade came from Audrey and David McClure, two members who have made it part of their mission to reach out to the community of South Dallas, a predominately black and impoverished neighborhood.

For more than 20 years, it has been David McClure's dream that somehow, someday, SGI members would march

down Martin Luther King Boulevard in the heart of his beloved neighborhood.

His wife, Audrey, admitted that she used to listen and smile when he would talk about that dream, thinking to herself that he was a little crazy. However, in celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day — on the first sunny and dry Saturday morning that Dallas had seen for nearly two months — David saw his dream come true.

Enthusiastic support for the idea of participating in the parade seemed to spring from every division within the orga-

nization. The youth were especially revitalized by the idea, participating in all aspects of the planning, performing and logistics.

One member and participant, Gail Ferguson, said that the most exciting thing about the parade was the spontaneous support and unity that grew out of the event. "It was an idea that grew out of the membership and the districts as part of our desire to support the community," she said.

As white, black, Asian and several wheelchair-bound SGI members marched along the parade route, they were greeted with cheers, smiles and exuberant shouts of "Now that's what it's all about" and "That's living the dream."

SGI participation in events such as the Martin Luther King Jr. parade reflect one of the most important messages of the recent re-organization in Dallas: reach out to the community. ❧

Mommy, Do I Have an Angel?

CLEARLY A Parent

A COLUMN ABOUT PARENTING

By **NELDA GALLAGHER**
DALLAS CORRESPONDENT

Mommy, do I have an angel?

I was greeted with this question by my 5-year-old daughter, Emily, after she had spent the day with her best friend.

"Do you know what an angel is?" I asked.

"Yes. It's a fat, naked baby with wings and no pee-pee," she said confidently.

Trying to keep a straight face, but proud of her keen observation, I began to investigate her knowledge of angels. It was her understanding that God gives every person an angel that is with them all the time for protection.

Knowing that her family did not believe in God, Emily wanted to know if she qualified for an attendant spirit. I quickly prepared myself for a lengthy discussion on Buddhist deities, the protective forces of the universe.

Being very careful, I explained to her protection in a way that she would not feel invincible.

I read to her the first prayer in our sutra book, and then we began going over some of her recent experiences of protection. She eagerly began to point out the people, or in one case a dog, who stepped in at the right moment to keep her from hurting herself.

She even thought of a few cases where she was the protective force.

We discussed how even the weather can function to our benefit and that sometimes the bad things that happen protect us from something worse.

We then went back to that

first prayer and focused on the section that explains how we activate the protective forces in the universe by practicing the Law.

"But I can't do gongyo," she said with a worried expression.

"That's where Mommy and Daddy come in. We chant for the whole family, and when you learn gongyo, you will help all of us, too." She feels better.

We talked about other ways to practice the Law. Being kind to others, watching what we say and do, participating in the Boys and Girls Group, and most important, allowing Mom and Dad the opportunity to do gongyo and participate in meetings by being on her best behavior. (Couldn't pass that one up.)

This conversation caused me to think about a recent movie I had checked out titled *Michael*. Michael is an angel summoned to Earth by a woman desperate for divine intervention.

He has unhealthy vices, uses unsavory language and has an unkempt appearance. Despite his outer flaws, he is still capable of recognizing right from wrong and then uses his "power" to create an atmosphere or unexplained phenomena so things work for the better.

Sounds familiar.

I assured my daughter that people may use different names to describe their protective forces, and that's OK. Also, the next time she sees one of those fat, naked babies with wings, to remember our talk.

And when someone calls her an angel, to say, "Thank you." ❧

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

SIGN POST

APPLYING
NICHIREN
DAISHONIN'S
WRITINGS TO
DAILY LIFE

Just the Beginning

By JEFF FARR

SGH-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

If Nichiren's compassion is truly great and encompassing, Nam-myoho-enge-kyo will spread for ten thousand years and more, for all eternity.... ("Repaying Debts of Gratitude," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 4, p. 272)

It was a happy day for me Feb. 2 when the judge at Nikken's cross-examination decided to continue questioning by Soka Gakkai attorneys on May 18. As far as I was concerned, this was a victory: Nikken, who never wanted to appear in court, would now have to appear not once (last Dec. 22), not twice (Feb. 2), but three times (May 18)!

At the same time, I was reminded what a long haul this "Seattle Incident" trial is. I've been covering it for the *World Tribune* since August 1995 and, to be honest, I see no end in sight at this point. Feb. 2 wasn't the end; May 18 won't be either. There in fact might be many more sessions; there might be appeals; what we've seen so far might only be the *beginning* of this trial. Japan's legal system is notoriously slow — big cases like this have even taken 25 years to resolve.

After almost three years of this trial and almost eight years of the temple issue, I think one thing that we're all learning is patience: We have to have the determination to prove the truth, no matter how long it takes, and the wherewithal to wait — and even enjoy waiting — for that moment of truth.

Whenever I feel impatient about the trial or the temple issue (which is almost every day), I remind myself of Nichiren Daishonin's incredible patience and long-range view. "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo will spread for ten thousand years and more" — his dream was to create a people's movement that will last throughout the 10,000 years and more of the Latter Day of the Law. From his perspective, we're only at the beginning of that effort. If we really want to secure humanity's future through this Buddhism, I think we have to have the same kind of patience he did. (If he can wait 10,000 years, I can at least wait until May 18.)

In It for the Money

STANDS TO REASON

LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM
THE WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN

By JEFF FARR

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Law-devouring hungry spirits renounce the world to spread Buddhism only because they think that if they preach the Law, people will respect them. Seeking worldly fame and fortune, they spend their entire present lifetime trying to outdo others in everything. They neither help people nor attempt to save even their own parents. Such persons are called Law-devouring hungry spirits, or those who use the Law to satisfy their desires. ("The Origin of Urabon," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 4, p. 93)

In a 1271 letter to Shijo Kingo, Nichiren Daishonin details the psychology of "Law-devouring hungry spirits" — not the kindest thing to call the priests of his day. The Daishonin here criticizes the way priests of other sects handled believers' offerings, explaining how some secretly received offerings, using them only for themselves,

while others openly received them and still didn't share at all. He saw how his priestly peers were only in religion for the money.

This letter thus shows something of what makes powerful enemies tick — what they want, how they think, the predilections that make them into enemies of the Law. They preach the Law for respect, fame and fortune, the Daishonin says. And they never intend to save a soul.

Essentially, they are our enemies because they willingly abuse the Law.

This of course angered the Daishonin more than anything. He hated to see the people's spiritual aspirations manipulated for the self-gain of the few. It was a time of extreme religious and societal upheaval, one in which the various sects in Japan vied with each other for power against an unstable political backdrop. A huge audience of suffering, confused people, desperately seeking fulfillment through religion, was ripe for the priests to manipulate.

Nikken is also a Law-devouring hungry spirit. He, too, abuses the Law to gain power over people and get their hard-earned dollars. One could argue that it was in hoping to make more money that he devised his new teaching in 1990 — that he alone possesses true enlightenment, that only through association with him could we ever become happy. An important part of keeping this connection with him strong for

many temple members has been making financial donations to the priesthood. They're signing checks for funeral services and good luck tablets (*toba*), hoping this will pay off as happiness for their loved ones and themselves.

But the Daishonin never allowed his followers to even think that financial contributions to him would equal their happiness. And he never took on a luxurious lifestyle, paid for by his followers, as Nikken and friends have so infamously.

The term *Law-devouring hungry spirits* may seem harsh. And other things that the SGI has called the priests over the last few years may seem extreme. We know these priests are greedy, but *Law-devouring hungry spirits*? Isn't this just name calling?

No. The Daishonin's purpose in using such forceful words was to wake the people up — he didn't expect the priests to listen and suddenly change. The people, he declared, deserve something better than corrupt priests and should demand it.

The SGI's purpose in its war of words is the same today: to wake people up. We all deserve something a lot better than religious leaders who abuse the Law.

And now we're demanding it.

Four in a series

Shakyamuni: Awakening to Our Mission

ON THE GOHONZON

STUDYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S
INSCRIPTIONS ON THE OBJECT OF DEVOTION

By TERRY ELLIS

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The Ceremony in the Air, as we read it in the Lotus Sutra, is a wonderfully poetic narrative that describes an event that took place in Shakyamuni's life more than 3,000 years ago. It is a description of Shakyamuni's own awakening to the reality of life and his mission to propagate the Law. And it is an explanation of what we, too, can experience as we practice to the Gohonzon.

For that reason, it's not enough to say that when Nichiren Daishonin inscribed Shakyamuni's name on the Gohonzon his point was to honor a prince born in India who founded Buddhism. Historically, Shakyamuni was a man whose behavior was exemplary — the Daishonin often points this out in the Goshō. Shakyamuni gave up a life of power and wealth to seek the ways of human suf-

fering. He was a man known for his self-discipline, wisdom and compassion, who nurtured and taught his disciples for 40 years, then — unbelievably — told them to forget it all.

He then revealed the eternal aspect of his life — the function of Shakyamuni that appears on the Gohonzon.

SGI President Ikeda spoke of this point recently in "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra" (January 1998 *Living Buddhism*). He explained that the Shakyamuni who seated himself inside the Treasure Tower alongside Taho Buddha was Shakyamuni's true self.

Each day and evening, when we recite gongyo and chant daimoku, we have another opportunity to experience our own true, eternal self.

And first Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's experience in prison offers us an example of this. "We can think of President Toda's enlightenment in prison as the moment in which he connected with his 'eternal self' as the leader of the movement to propagate the Mystic Law," President Ikeda said in the same "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra." "That was the meaning of his experience of being present at the Ceremony in the Air. What he awakened to in that instant

was the unmistakable truth of life, the fundamental transcendent reality. Therefore, President Toda talked about the Ceremony in the Air as fact. And he said that all the members of the Soka Gakkai were also present there."

In "Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life," the Daishonin writes: "Shakyamuni who attained enlightenment countless aeons ago, the Lotus Sutra which leads all people to Buddhahood, and we ordinary human beings are in no way different or separate from each other. Therefore, to chant Myoho-enge-kyo with this realization is to inherit the ultimate law of life and death" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 22).

Usually, it's when we face a huge obstacle — when we chant to the Gohonzon as though it were the last moment of our lives, as the Daishonin says — that we experience our true, our eternal self.

That's also when we understand the true heritage of the Law, passed on to us through the power of our faith directly in a flow that has existed throughout eternity. This is our awakening to the reality of life and our mission to propagate the Law.

Two in a series

Shin'ichi Yamamoto answers the question 'What kind of life does Devadatta represent?' and starts new Goshō lecture series outside Tokyo.

The New Human Revolution

BY HO GOKU — ILLUSTRATED BY KENICHIRO UCHIDA

Volume 6, Chapter 5

Young Eagles

Translation of parts 28–29 of the 'Young Eagles' chapter, as printed in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. Ho Goku is the pen name of Daisaku Ikeda, who appears in the novel as Shin'ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1962.

The more Shin'ichi Yamamoto spoke, the more passion infused his words. "Also, when carrying out Soka Gakkai activities or facing the Gohonzon, our inner state of life, our attitude, is important," he said. "If we allow ourselves to become lazy and lapse into practicing Buddhism merely out of habit, or if we practice reluctantly or halfheartedly, we will never discover true joy or happiness. Nor will we attain Buddhahood.

"But if we are genuinely committed and dedicated to faith, our Soka Gakkai activities will bring us joy, we'll glow with health, and we'll bring greater wisdom and creativity to our work. Even though we may encounter obstacles or sufferings in life, we will confidently transform them into good — turning poison into medicine — and attain Buddhahood in this lifetime.

"And though things may be going well at the moment, if you lose your faith, ultimately your life will end in sad defeat. Success in life is apparent in how we live our last years, in whether we can face death with joy, dignity and peace of mind. That also determines whether we are on a course toward eternal happiness.

"While Christianity teaches of a 'last judgment,' Buddhism expounds that no omnipotent being judges humanity — rather, our future is determined by the law of cause and effect inherent in life itself. Heaven and hell are right here in our own lives. The Daishonin said of the sufferings of the state of Hell: 'Once one falls into such an evil state, even a throne or the title of general means nothing. He is no different from a monkey on a string, tormented by the guards of hell' (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 254).

"When confronted with the enormous suffering and pain of the state of Hell, rank, privilege and social position mean nothing. Subject to the tortures of this life state, one is indeed a monkey on a string.

"From the perspective of the eternity of life as well, whether our final years are marked by triumph is an important concern. That is why it is important to walk the supreme path of faith to the end."



On another occasion at one of the lecture sessions, Takao Harayama, a Waseda University student and son of Soka Gakkai General Director Koichi Harayama, asked, "What kind of life does Devadatta represent?" [Devadatta was a disciple of Shakyamuni who turned against him.]

Looking deeply into Harayama's eyes, Shin'ichi replied: "Mr. Toda used to say that Devadatta is a symbol of envy, particularly of the kind often seen in men. Envy or jealousy is at the root of all attempts to block the advance of the Soka Gakkai and stop kosen-rufu.

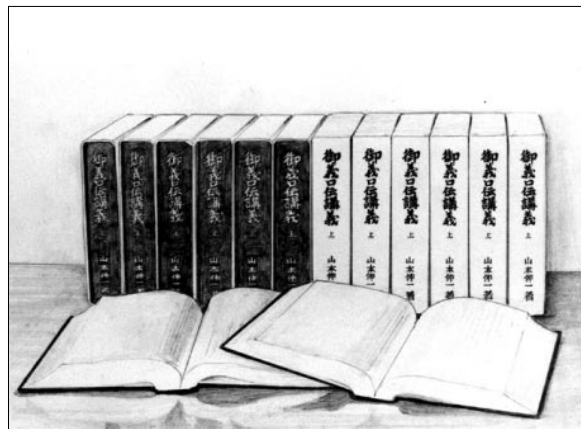
"Every human being has some of Devadatta inside. Buddhist practice is the way we fight against the Devadatta within. Faith is a struggle between the Buddha and our

inner negative forces. You must not lose."

Years later, Takao Harayama became the head of the Soka Gakkai's Study Department, but he allowed himself to be defeated by ambition and envy. He betrayed the Soka Gakkai and became a sad example of one who abandoned his faith.

The lectures on "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" proved a remarkable impetus to the student division's development. By the end of June the following year, 1963, the division's membership had grown to 20,000.

That growth was accompanied by reorganization, with the number of corps gradually increasing. Shin'ichi suggested that the chiefs of the new corps also participate in these lectures. Half-jokingly, he started calling the original



participants the 1st class and the new members who joined midway the 1st-and-one-half class.

The plan had been for the lecture series to continue a year. But with the new participants, it was extended through July 1964. By then, many of the original members had graduated from college and already had jobs. Shin'ichi, wishing to nurture the younger student division members, then decided that he would continue lecturing on the Orally Transmitted Teachings to a new, 2nd class of students.

His lectures to the 1st class covered the first volume of "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" and also the beginning of the second volume. The lectures on the first volume were recorded, the text edited, and after some additions and revisions by Shin'ichi, published on April 2, 1965, as *Lectures on "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,"* volume 1. A month later on May 3, immediately after the Soka Gakkai Headquarters General Meeting, Shin'ichi handed out certificates of completion to 44 members of the 1st class.

Shin'ichi had created the certificates with the intention that they indicate the qualification of these members to lecture on "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" wherever they might go in the world. All of the participants who had devoted themselves so intently to his lectures — lectures he had delivered with his whole heart and life — had grown and matured remarkably. Shin'ichi was deeply moved to see these courageous young eagles holding their new certificates, their pride in their accomplishment evident in their appearance and bearing.

In addition to his lectures in Tokyo, in September 1963, Shin'ichi began a yearlong lecture series for Kyoto University students on the Goshō "The 106 Comparisons." When those lectures came to an end, starting in November 1964, he began a lecture series on "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" for Kansai student division representatives. And in December of the same year, he began a lecture series on "The True Entity of Life" for Chubu student division representatives. It wasn't until Dec. 22, 1965, that he resumed his lectures in Tokyo on "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," this time to an entirely new class of participants, continuing from where he had left off with the second volume.

(To be continued)

SGI PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES

HIGHLIGHTS
FROM THIS SPEECH

Making Friends Is Kosen-rufu

SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech during the Philippines Executive Conference, Manila, Feb. 12.

I am truly delighted to see my wonderful family of friends here in the Philippines. During this visit, I have received many honors, including the first Rizal International Peace Award from the Order of the Knights of Rizal as well as an honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities from the University of the City of Manila. I am profoundly aware that these accolades are due in no small part to the tremendous contributions each of you has been making to society. They are honors bestowed upon me as your representative. Since I have accepted these awards on behalf of all of you, I hope you will rejoice and celebrate with me in their conferral.

Two very dear friends of mine, Dr. and Mrs. Abueva, for whom I hold great affection and respect, have joined us tonight. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Abueva, because it was through him that Soka University was able to establish an educational exchange with the Philippines.

I have had the opportunity on a number of occasions to discuss the life and works of the Philippine national hero Dr. José Rizal with Dr. Abueva. And when I spoke at the University of the Philippines seven years ago — in what remains a fond and precious memory for me — I concluded my speech with a poem by the great writer.

I am reminded that Dr. Rizal wrote the following in a letter penned while in exile: "Religions, whatever they might be, should not make men enemies of one another but rather brothers, and real brothers." These are wise words.

Religious strife must be avoided at all cost; under no circumstance should it be allowed. People may hold different religious beliefs, but the

With a completely free and unhindered spirit, we are deepening understanding with thinking people in society and broadening our circle of friendship, says SGI President Ikeda.

bottom line is that we are all human beings. We all seek happiness and desire peace. Religion should bring people together. It should unite the potential for good in people's hearts toward benefiting society and humanity and creating a better future for all. This was the spirit of Dr. Rizal, and it is the spirit of the SGI.

Crucial in this endeavor, too, is education, a universal value. Without education, religion becomes autocratic and confining.

The wisdom of the Lotus Sutra is intrinsically free and unhindered.

With a completely free and unhindered spirit, we are deepening understanding with thinking people in society and broadening our circle of friendship. We are creating infinite value as we strive to bring out the best in all things and situations and promote beautiful harmony. This is the path of the SGI.

I thus have great admiration and praise for the activities of the SGI of the Philippines and the solid efforts you are making to create bonds of sincere friendship based on the value of education. Making friends, spreading understanding and empathy for our aims, is in itself the expansion of kosen-rufu.

Dr. Abueva has said: "The human spirit is unconquerable, resilient, and potent against the forces that seek to destroy it." And the worthy people of the Philippines have shown the world the truth of that statement through the monumental victories they have won time and again with their invincible spirit.

As we move toward the 21st century, I hope that you, my dear friends of the SGIRP, will

Religious strife must be avoided at all cost; under no circumstance should it be allowed. People may hold different religious beliefs, but the bottom line is that we are all human beings. We all seek happiness and desire peace. Religion should bring people together.



Making friends, spreading understanding and empathy for our aims, is in itself the expansion of kosen-rufu.



As we move toward the 21st century, I hope that you, my dear friends of the SGIRP, will give free rein to the unlimited power of the spirit, the power of life itself, as you create the strongest network for peace and happiness in the entire world.



I am profoundly aware that these accolades are due in no small part to the tremendous contributions each of you has been making to society. They are honors bestowed upon me as your representative. Since I have accepted these awards on behalf of all of you, I hope you will rejoice and celebrate with me in their conferral.

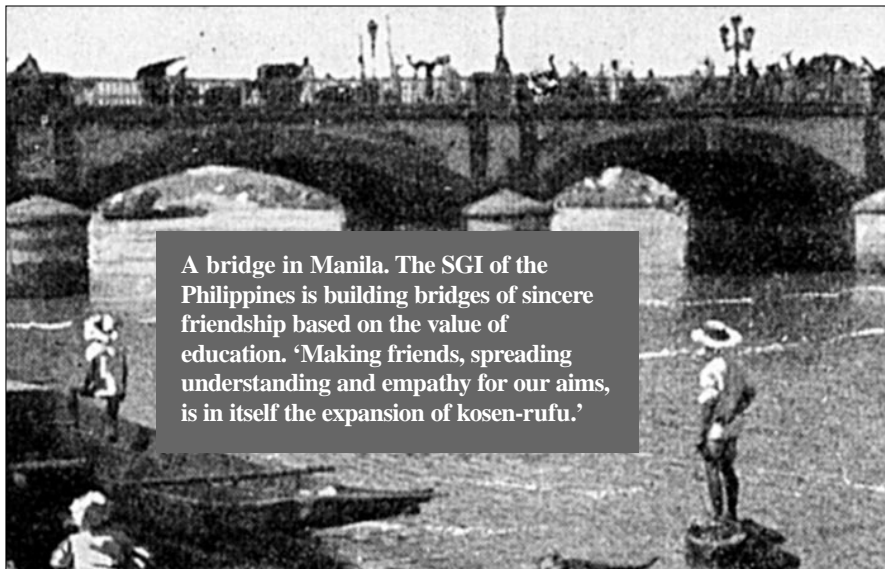
give free rein to the unlimited power of the spirit, the power of life itself, as you create the strongest network for peace and happiness in the entire world.

I offer my heartfelt prayers for Dr. and Mrs. Abueva and for

all of my dear friends in the Philippines.

With "Friendship and Harmony" as your motto, please lead wonderful, joyous and meaningful lives.

To all of you, *mabuhay* (long life)! ❖



A bridge in Manila. The SGI of the Philippines is building bridges of sincere friendship based on the value of education. 'Making friends, spreading understanding and empathy for our aims, is in itself the expansion of kosen-rufu.'

SGI PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES

The New Frontier Is Life Itself

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



The University of the City of Manila is the 48th institution of higher learning to award President Ikeda an honorary professorship or honorary doctorate.

On Feb. 11, the University of the City of Manila awarded an honorary doctorate in humanities to SGI President Ikeda, the first Japanese citizen to be so honored by the school, in recognition of his contributions to the education, culture and peace of Asia and the world.

Respected president of the University of the City of Manila, Dr. Virsely dela Cruz; distinguished members of the faculty; ladies and gentlemen:

It is my extraordinary privilege to have received the degree of Doctor of Humanities from the University of the City of Manila, a great citadel of humanistic education, its doors open to all citizens and the entire world. Thank you very much.

My heartfelt appreciation also goes out to His Honor Mayor Alfredo S. Lim for finding time, amidst the demands of his busy schedule, to send a

congratulatory message for this occasion.

Dr. José Rizal, the hero of Philippine independence, wrote to a comrade of his dream to build a school. The most talented youth will come to us, he said. He expressed his desire to devote his energy to the education of the people. I feel that Dr. Rizal's sublime spirit and determination live today in this city and this university.

I was impressed to learn that the University of the City of Manila was the first in Asia to offer tuition-free admission for talented young people in less privileged circumstances. What a hope-filled vision of society, in which all young people equally enjoy the right to study and learn!

Today, Feb. 11, is the most joyful day of the year for me — it is the anniversary of the birth of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, my mentor in life. He was born in 1900, just two years after the Philippines proclaimed its independence.

On the anniversary of Josei Toda's birth, SGI President Ikeda is awarded an honorary doctorate. In his acceptance speech, he talks about the power of life and the true purpose of education.

Living in an era of great turbulence and strife, Mr. Toda had the consistent, unchanging desire to bring the brilliant light of peace to the people of Asia. He was also an educator with an infinite love for young people.

When I met him, I had been struggling to study while working. For some 10 years, he tutored me every morning. It was at this "Toda University" that I received one-on-one instruction in the humanities and a wide range of disciplines.

This spring marks the 40th anniversary of my mentor's passing.

I offer the great honor I have received today to the memory of my mentor in gratitude for all that I received from him.

Mr. Toda's humanist philosophy was deeply rooted in an unyielding reverence for life. He remained unbowed by a two-year imprisonment at the hands of Japan's militarist government, and his conviction that the value of life itself is supreme and absolute became the basis

for the populist peace movement he later initiated.

Indeed, life contains the capacity, like flames that reach toward heaven, to transform suffering and pain into the energy needed for value-creation, into the light that illuminates darkness. Like the wind traversing vast spaces unhindered, life has the power to uproot and overturn all obstacles and difficulties. Like clear flowing water, it can wash away all stains and impurities.

And, finally, life, like the great earth that sustains plants and vegetation, impartially protects all people with its compassionate, nurturing force.

Mr. Toda therefore proclaimed that all meaningful action must start from the inner life, its exploration and development, and the resultant transformation of individuals.

It cannot be denied that the search for knowledge in our world has increased the comfort and convenience of human society. At the same time, however, increased knowledge has given rise to weapons of mass slaughter and brought about nature's destruction.

It would be regrettable if education were to be accompanied by a loss of empathy and the desire to contribute to the welfare of others. The future of a society whose educational system produces such cold-hearted egotists could not be bright.

Rather, we must find ways of ensuring that knowledge and information are directed toward

furthering the cause of human happiness and peace. It is essential that we bring forth the capacities of wisdom and compassion that exist within people's lives.

I am convinced that pioneering the greatest frontier of the 21st century — life itself — is the proud mission of humanistic education.

The educational philosophy of the University of the City of Manila is rooted in a profound faith in the precious treasures of life, those hidden within the young — in all young people — and a commitment to seek out, uncover and polish those treasures.

Indeed, your esteemed university, which is advancing proudly at the forefront of educational revolution, is of immeasurable importance to both Asia and the entire world, as your beautiful school song exalts.

I today pledge with you to uphold your school mottoes of "Wisdom," "Progress" and "Nobility," and to work alongside the distinguished faculty, staff and students of your university toward a new century of peace and prosperity for the human family.

In closing, I offer my heartfelt prayers for the continued health and well-being of President dela Cruz, and all those who have so kindly attended today.

Malamin salamat po! (Thank you very much!) ☸

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



A student chorus performs the Japanese song 'Here Is Happiness' at the conferment ceremony at the University of the City of Manila. 'We must find ways of ensuring that knowledge and information are directed toward furthering the cause of human happiness and peace,' the SGI leader said.

By HO GOKU

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY

WHEN THE ORIGINAL SPIRIT FLOWS STRONG



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.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto was inaugurated as the Soka Gakkai's third president on May 3, 1960. The inauguration took place at the Nihon University Auditorium in Ryogoku, Tokyo.

The sky was clear and bright. Rousing strains of Soka Gakkai songs echoed under the great metal dome of the hall. I remember that momentous meeting as if it were yesterday — and the feeling of determination that surged through my heart as I walked into the hall and gazed up at the portrait of my beloved mentor, Josei Toda.



Many know that the auditorium was originally a sumo stadium, but what not so many know is that, during World War II, the stadium was requisitioned by the military authorities and turned into a balloon bomb factory.

The balloon bomb was a special kind of weapon in which a small explosive or incendiary device was attached to a balloon made of Japanese paper about 33 feet in diameter. It was also rigged with a timer so that the bomb could be dropped automatically. The balloon was then launched on the prevailing westerly winds, the idea being that it would drift across the Pacific to the United States and then explode.

Toward the end of the war, some 9,000 balloon bombs were released, but only around 10 percent ever came close to the United States. The bombs were

deemed ineffective, and the release of further balloons was halted.

A battle between balloon bombs and nuclear weapons — one of the many idiocies that make up that most idiotic of human actions, war.



After the war, the stadium-turned-weapons-factory was appropriated by the Occupation forces. It was renamed Memorial Hall and became a place of popular entertainment. In 1952, it was returned to its original owner, but the bowl-shaped sports arena had been paved over with concrete and was no longer suitable for sumo. The facility was renamed International Stadium and, until its purchase by Nihon University

in 1958, was rented out as a public hall.

The Soka Gakkai used the hall the first time for its 10th General Meeting, May 3, 1954. The meeting lasted four hours from its opening at noon until closing ceremonies. President Toda cried out to our members, "Let us return to the time of the Daishonin!" It was a rousing call to all — a call to rise up and work for the happiness of humanity.

Shin'ichi was responsible for the organization and smooth running of that meeting. In his diary, he recorded his great appreciation for the efforts of the young people who worked hard to clean the hall after the meeting: "I am determined, as long as I live, never to forget the spirit of those who work hard behind the scenes."

From that day on, until 1977 when Nihon University stopped renting out the hall, some 280 Soka Gakkai meetings — Headquarters leaders and general meetings, and divisional general meetings — were held at the auditorium.

It was also where Shin'ichi announced his vision for the future based on the concept of Seven Bells after President Toda's death; where he announced plans to establish Soka University and make it a fortress for peace; and where he made his landmark call for the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and China at the 11th Student Division General Meeting, exactly 30 years ago.

From that auditorium, how many young people awoke to their mission for kosen-rufu and set out into the wide world to fulfill it? The old balloon bomb factory became a launching base for peace and happiness. Does not this demonstrate the principle of purifying and transforming the land as expounded in the Lotus Sutra?



Today the auditorium has been torn down, and offices and homes stand in its place. When notice of the building's demolition was posted, some of the local members searched for the original speaker's podium. They found it after great effort, were told they could have it, and presented it as a gift to the Soka Gakkai.

It was their wish, they said, that the podium be a lasting memorial to the powerful spirit and determination of Shin'ichi the day he became president — a spirit that they had tried to make their own. I was deeply touched by their sincerity.

Where the original spirit flows strong, magnificent dramas of mission unfold, and eternal development and prosperity are assured.

On May 3, 1960, Shin'ichi vowed under his mentor's portrait: "From this day I take leadership as a representative of President Toda's disciples and advance with you another step toward the substantive realization of kosen-rufu."

I believe I have kept my vow and have indeed made kosen-rufu a reality as I promised — fearlessly, dauntlessly, with the Soka Gakkai spirit in my heart.

From SGI President Ikeda:

* The first thing is to pray. From the moment we begin to pray, things start moving. The darker the night, the closer the dawn. From the moment we chant daimoku with a deep and powerful resolve, the sun begins to rise in our heart.

Hope — prayer is the sun of hope. To chant daimoku each time we face a problem, overcoming it and elevating our life-condition as a result — this is the path of "changing earthly desires into enlightenment" taught in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. (July 5, 1996, *World Tribune*, p. 17)

* When you purify your lives with daimoku, you will definitely develop an utterly indestructible state of absolute happiness that abounds with great fortune. In such a state of life, everything will become a source of joy. You will feel a deep sense of fulfillment even if you have neither worldly fame nor

WORDS TO THE WISE

THE POWER OF DAIMOKU

Though one might point at the earth and miss it, though one might bind up the sky, though the tides might cease to ebb and flow and the sun rise up from the west, it could never come about that the prayers of the practitioner of the Lotus Sutra would go unanswered. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 7, p. 46)

wealth. Each moment will be totally satisfying. Your heart will be filled with joy and all things will appear beautiful to your eyes. You can instantly discern the truth, distinguish between good and evil. You will think about the welfare of others in any circum-

stances. This is the state of mind you can develop through faith. (April 1993 *Seikyo Times*, p. 40)

* Once, when encouraging a member who had begun practicing Nichiren

Daishonin's Buddhism to change his angry nature, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda said: "You don't have to worry about changing your personality. All you have to do is chant daimoku and live the best you can. Then, very naturally, you will see the negative aspects of your personality disappear, leaving you with the positive ones." (Aug. 8, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 10)

* [Shin'ichi Yamamoto] would consistently chant earnest daimoku that those attending his lectures could savor the deep joy of faith and go about their activities with absolute conviction. This daimoku was infused with a powerful prayer, driven by a fierce determination to without fail bring forth the life force he needed to adequately convey the spirit and immense compassion of the Daishonin, whose goal was to save all humanity. (Aug. 15, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 8)

PHOTOGRAPHY AS HISTORY

To See the Real Thing



Photo by MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE, courtesy of LIFE MAGAZINE



Photo by MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE, courtesy of LIFE MAGAZINE

Margaret Bourke-White (1906–71) started as an industrial architectural photographer before developing the photo essay concept. She covered World War II for 'Life' magazine and later recorded the troubles in India, Pakistan and South Africa.

By LINDA ST. HILAIRE

WEST PALM BEACH, FLA., CORRESPONDENT

Just as birds migrate south during the winter months, so do people. Many begin to descend on Florida in January, and some stay as late as April.

Photographers are no different. Hence begins the season for the Palm Beach Photographic Workshop, a learning center and exhibit hall for both seasoned photographers and new generations discovering the camera. The season begins with Fotofusion, a week of workshops, lectures and field trips that bring together the forces of master photographers, professionals and students from across the country and world.

This year, the center in Delray Beach opened the season with an exhibition from the pioneering photojournalist Margaret Bourke-White, who rose to pre-eminence during 1925–53. Bourke-White began as a freelancer capturing vivid images of America's new industrial era. Her photos appeared in *Fortune*, and she became one of the first four staff photographers for *Life*. Her photo of Fort Beck Dam in Montana was the cover photo on the first issue of *Life* in 1936.

The editors got more than they bargained

for when they gave her the assignment. Instead of focusing on the construction of the dam, she focused on the lives of the builders and their families forced to live in temporary desert cities.

She was the forerunner of the photo essayist in documenting world news, going on to record a wide range of historic events — from the Depression in the American South to the German attack on Russia in 1941 and Nazi atrocities during World War II; from Gandhi's fight for Indian independence to the racial and labor unrest in South Africa.

Arnold Drapkin, an editor at *Time* for more than 40 years and now on the board of directors for the Photographic Workshop, said of Bourke-White: "Peggy was intensely curious about what was happening in the world around her.... There was no hardship she wouldn't endure to get her story and to get the job done."

Since newspapers and magazines were major forms of communication during the first half of the century, such images offered honest and timely stories about the atrocities of war, the difficulties endured by freedom fighters and the conditions under which people worked.

Bourke-White's images are a slice of life — the real thing. **WT**



Photo by MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE, courtesy of LIFE MAGAZINE

COMING NEXT WEEK:

Look for 'Friends for Peace'!



Photo by Gregory Nakasay
About 1,000 Los Angeles youth participate with Ed Feasel Jan. 11 in a kickoff toward their Global Family Festival to celebrate March 16.

Buddhism
IS ABOUT WINNING

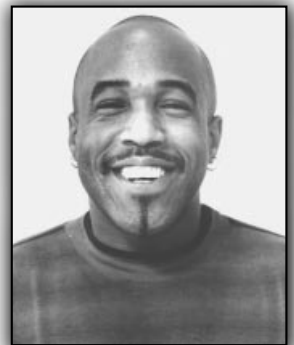
Message for the Fifth Anniversary

By VANNESS HARRIS
Junior High School Division Leader

March 14 marks the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the junior high and high school divisions. The past five years have seen remarkable growth among the younger generation in our organization. Enthusiasm and passion have fueled their desire to propagate Buddhism in an age of growing turmoil. Coupled with their individual goals to achieve prosperity, I have seen how they have developed a strong sense of responsibility.

At the establishment of the SGI-USA junior high and high school divisions, SGI President Ikeda said he hoped that "leaders responsible for these divisions as well as those of you who are seniors in faith will nurture these infinitely precious 'treasures of the future' with all your hearts." The new generation has indeed become the SGI-USA's responsibility.

Although our new generation may be facing severe difficulties and often become discouraged, the circumstances we are in now are perfect for our growth. Also in his March 14, 1993,



speech, President Ikeda said: "Life is a struggle. Reality is a struggle. Nichiren Daishonin... exhorts us to be victorious. So we must win in life. To embrace the Mystic Law is to grasp the sword of victory." This is his guidance to our new generation.

Toward the March commemorative meetings, let's redetermine to fight side by side with President Ikeda into the coming century.

NOW

IT'S

YOUR

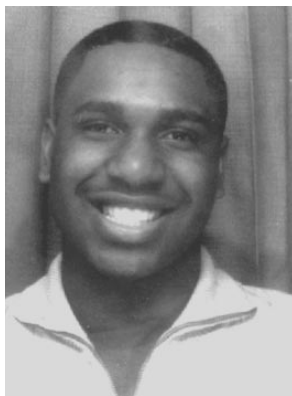
TURN

The youth division's goal is to gather 10,000 youth across the country for this year's March commemorative meetings. This March 16 marks the 40th anniversary of Kosen-rufu Day, the "dress rehearsal for kosen-rufu" that the Soka Gakkai youth held with Josei Toda, the Soka Gakkai's second president, in 1958. That's when the torch was passed on to the new generation — specifically to young Daisaku Ikeda. And March 14 is the fifth anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's formation of the SGI-USA junior high and high school divisions.

*Don't ask
Whether or not this mighty
flow of kosen-rufu
Will turn out to be a historical
necessity
Rather, always ask yourselves
Whether or not you carry the
passion of heart
To make kosen-rufu inevitable,
Through your own sweat and
toil.*

— SGI President Ikeda,
*"A Blue Deeper Than Indigo
Itself: To My Young Friends on
Kosen-rufu Day," March 1988*

Contact your local youth leaders or your nearest SGI-USA community center to find out about March commemorative activities in your area.



By MAIRONE DANIELS
San Leandro, Calif.

"Happy New Year's," I said reluctantly. That was how I started 1997. I was not happy or enthusiastic — I didn't even care about the new year. I hated high school, but I needed it in order to go to college. My personal life with my family was not interesting to me, and I disliked myself. I wanted to run away from my hellish life by any means necessary.

I felt this way until one day,

EXPERIENCE

**IT'S WHAT
YOU
MAKE IT**

walking down my high school's hallway, I came upon a sign: "Your High School Experience Is What You Make It." I realized suddenly that I was not in control of my life and my circumstances — *my life and circumstances were in control of me.* But Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism says that you can change your circumstances.

I determined to make my life the best. I started a one-hour vigorous daimoku campaign every day. I started practicing morning and evening gongyo every day. And I started feeling confident and happy.

So I decided to join the SGI-

USA hip-hop dance group Mystic Flavor, which I'm proud to say has "consumed" many of my ideas. I enrolled in my high school's Business Academy for Entrepreneurship and joined numerous clubs at school, one started by me — the Performing Arts Club.

And I decided to attend the University of California at Berkeley to major in computer technology and graphic arts. Why do one when I can do both?

My life is now filled with happiness I've never felt before. I've accepted myself and realized that I can change my circumstances.

SEIZE the DAY

Their hearts aflame with a sense of justice, youth should never fail to seize the moment, to stand up....

— SGI President Ikeda, Aug. 17, 1997.

Seize the Day," the SGI-USA youth division pullout, is published as a service for World Tribune readers, appearing in the third issue of the World Tribune each month. To subscribe to the World Tribune, please call us at (800) 835-4558 or e-mail us at SGI Subs@aol.com.

The SGI-USA (Soka Gakkai International-USA) has a strong commitment to youth — hence the SGI-USA youth division. This division supports young people in practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, in developing their lives and in contributing to society. Within the division are concentrated groups like the junior high and high school divisions, the student division (college students), musical performing groups, the young men's and women's divisions and service groups. To find out about youth activities in your area, please contact the SGI-USA community center nearest you or call our national headquarters at (310) 451-8811.

We want to know what you think of "Seize the Day" and need your ideas. Send your letters to the World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica CA, 90401. By fax to (310) 260-8910. Or by e-mail to SokaNews@aol.com.

Special thanks for this issue to Ed Feasel (youth division leader), Ellen Brown (design & layout), and Amir Kaspi and Bobbie Stemple (communicators). ♪

EXPERIENCE

9 Years in the Soka Group

By DAVID TEMPEST, Los Angeles

When I started doing Soka Group activities nine years ago, I was selfish, arrogant and lazy. And I think there are many other young men who share these same tendencies. These sabotage our success at work, in our relationships and ultimately in finding happiness.

By doing Soka Group, I had numerous opportunities to challenge my weaknesses and overcome them one by one. Soka Group enables us to not only see and challenge our weaknesses but also recognize and build upon our strengths. Also by helping the members, we can create fortune.

Through Soka Group activities, I did things I never thought I was capable of doing, and I expanded my capacity. Now I have a wonderful mar-



David Tempest feels his Soka Group training — supporting SGI-USA members behind the scenes at activities — led to his career as an investment advisor for a major investment company.

riage, a great, challenging career and a more fulfilling life than ever before. (I actually met my wife while doing Soka Group!)

Nowadays, many people spend hundreds if not thousands of dollars to take motivational courses to "unlock their potential." The investment firm I work for puts a lot of money into training and motivating us. But whenever I takes these courses, they remind me of things I learned in the Soka Group. Despite the value of these courses, I feel the Soka Group is more meaningful. And it's free. ♪

SOKA GROUP TREES TO BE PLANTED

By DAVID EISENBERG SGI-USA Soka Group Leader

On Jan. 11 in Tokyo, a Soka Group graduation and entrance celebration was held. In his message, SGI President Ikeda expressed his high expectations for the youth to take action burning with the soka spirit. "The 21st century is right before our eyes," he said. "It is your time. There is absolutely no time to spare."



Reading his message, I was struck by the great responsibility President Ikeda has placed on the youth division, particularly the Soka Group. I feel he is dedicating himself night and day to awakening in us a sense of urgency. We need to do our absolute best to create a beautiful, happy organization that can welcome and protect millions of members.

Also communicated at this meeting was his plan to plant Soka Group trees at 100 community centers in Japan and another 100 outside Japan, including 24 in the United States. The planting of these trees will include a ceremony at each location — this is our great opportunity to do our best to make a fresh departure for our Soka Group activities.

We must ask ourselves, as young men, how can we protect the members? How can we become a source of encouragement for the people who visit our activity centers? And, most of all, how can we stand up and lead the battle against those who oppress the people and attempt to destroy the spirit of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism? ♪

TEMPLE TRENDS

NIKKEN'S OTHER LEGAL PROBLEMS

By JEFF FARR SGI-USA Student Division Leader

Nikken has an array of legal problems besides the Seattle Incident trial. As Feb. 2, the date of his first cross-examination by Soka Gakkai attorneys, neared, there was increased attention in Japan and the international community on Nichiren Shoshu's legal resume to date.

Nichiren Shoshu has, since 1990, been involved in legal crises in Ghana, Brazil and South Korea. Each of these concerned the priesthood's less-than-legal attempts to strengthen the temple organizations in those countries through facility acquisitions. Nichiren Shoshu lost each of these cases. (In Ghana and Brazil, the priests tried to take over buildings owned by the SGI there. In South Korea, the priests illegally opened their own temple.)

And then there are Nikken's legal troubles at home. Nichiren Shoshu has been dealing with around 70 cases initiated by Soka Gakkai members involving the mishandling of ashes of the deceased. Due to the slow legal process in Japan, the first wave of these is just being resolved. On Feb. 19, a notable case ended when a priest who seceded won a libel suit against Nikken. (At a large meeting, Nikken had accused the priest of being paid by the Soka Gakkai to secede.) Although the verdict turned on a technicality, the court making no judgment on Nikken's statement, Nikken must pay the priest \$3,000 in damages. If this case sets the trend, more legal embarrassments await the high priest. ♪



NEXT SUMMER?

The youth division invites you to attend one of our conferences next summer at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. Refresh your faith over a long weekend at the beautiful FNCC campus in the Everglades.

Last summer, 685 youth from across the country attended four conferences. And this year there'll be six conferences to choose from.

The land package price for each conference is \$375 (airfare not included). This covers your sleeping accommodations for three nights (with assigned roommate); all meals from Thursday dinner through Sunday lunch; ground transportation to and from the Fort Lauderdale or Miami International airports (within a specified time frame); bus tour

(admission fees not included); and conference instructional and study materials. Payment must be made two weeks prior to the conference start date.

Because participation requirements vary from conference to conference, it's important to contact your appropriate region leaders as soon as possible to find out more. See you in Florida! ♪

JULY 9-12	<i>Young men's division</i>
JULY 16-19	<i>Young women's division</i>
JULY 23-26	<i>Junior high and high school divisions</i>
AUG. 6-9	<i>Student division</i>
AUG. 13-16	<i>Youth music groups</i>
NOV. 19-22	<i>Youth support groups</i>

WHAT ARE YOU DOING

EXPERIENCE

What Am I Doing in Bulgaria?

By SANJAY GAUR *Los Angeles*

When I was 17, I was a stoner who listened to Bob Marley and the Grateful Dead. Then I went to an SGI-USA meeting — and received the Gohonzon five days later. That was nine years ago.

A few months after joining, I got my first benefit. I was accepted as an exchange student in Malaysia for a summer. While there, I saw something I will never forget: dozens of wild monkeys up in the trees and below them garbage — human waste piled a foot high. That was when I questioned why people have such a lack of appreciation for our planet. That was when I realized that my mission in life was to focus on environmental issues.

After graduating from high school, I was accepted at the University of California Santa Cruz. I got both my bachelor's

and master's in environmental economics over five difficult years. After graduating, it was time to put my dreams into action: I applied to be an environmental volunteer with the U.S. Peace Corps and was accepted to go to Bulgaria.

Within the last seven years, Bulgaria, in Eastern Europe, has been in the process of democratization and privatization. This transition and the rising corruption there have caused many problems, like food and water shortages, bank failure, hyperinflation and political riots.

After three months of studying Bulgarian, I was placed in Stara Zagora, in the middle of the country. When I arrived, I had no office, no apartment, no counterpart from the host agency — and no direction. I



Sanjay Gaur, Peace Corps volunteer, with friends in Bulgaria.

waited for work, traveled and, of course, partied. I was slowly forgetting why I came. I was still chanting but without goals. Eventually I broke up with my girlfriend, my best friend there, and felt useless and restless.

So I started to chant to under-

stand my mission in Bulgaria and realized I could teach environmental studies there. A fellow Peace Corps volunteer agreed to let me use the basement of his office for classes.

Now I had work. And now I had goals, which made my daimoku more focused.


I attracted great 16- and 17-year-old students who became so inspired that they formed a club to do environmental activities.

The first major event that I helped them orga-

nize was Bulgaria's first Earth Day celebration. A local school agreed to play Bulgarian folk music and do traditional dance. A colleague agreed to buy drinks and food for the kids. Another helped us clean up the park where we held the celebration, providing the plastic bags, and an-

other acquired funds for microphones. A few weeks after our successful Earth Day, which was covered by television and the press, the chief of Global Affairs at the U.S. State Department wrote me a thank you letter.

Together with my students, I then wrote a grant for a water quality expedition, which was approved. The expedition, which I led, was a serious challenge. There were 18 high school students who loved to party and three biologists with state of the art equipment to do water testing.

After the trip, an exhibition of our findings was created, and it traveled to two Bulgarian cities. The thing I am most proud of is the students — they have started on the path of developing the leadership qualities and environmental consciousness so needed in Bulgaria and the world. 

I CAN HANDLE IT

By Barbara Lekes *New York*Barbara Lekes with 'Rebirth,' one of her oil paintings. Find out more about her artwork at her Web site: www.balartist.com.

When I was 23 years old, I set seven-year goals of what I wanted to do before I turned 30. Except for one, I accomplished everything I set out to do including moving to New York City to do my art.

I moved from California to New York six-and-a-half years ago to pursue my art degree. And after graduation, I decided to do my art and stay on here. Last February, my artwork was accepted into a group show at a nonprofit Soho gallery for the following month.

During the opening reception, I sold three out of four pieces. These were my first sales.

I turned 30 the end of last August, and I began to reflect on what else I want to accomplish in my life. On my birthday, I started writing down my 10-year goals — what I want to do by the time I hit 40.

Along those lines, a few months ago I determined to have my art in three more shows before the end of 1998. A couple of days later, with only two phone calls, I secured my place in a 15-person show next month in the same gallery

I exhibited at last spring. Since this gallery is a nonprofit and charges a fee, Eleanor, my boss at the nonprofit consulting firm where I work, agreed to sponsor me. Now I just have to do the work.

At a recent staff meeting, the president of our firm announced that we were in a fiscal crisis for the last quarter of 1997, and that he was working with the board to raise needed funds. This crisis weighed heavily on my mind.


I was further disturbed when I learned that the friend who originally got me this job was jumping ship. I called my mom, also a member, for encouragement. She said she was so proud of all my efforts and reminded me that the challenges we face in life are never more than we can handle.

Indeed, through my years of practice, I've found this to be true. And I've found that the surest way to win in life is to dedicate myself to Buddhist practice, both for myself and others. That's why I'm so excited about changing this situation at work along with

practicing in my neighborhood of Astoria, Queens. This is the borough where the New York temple is located, and I am taking the temple issue more personally now. (The temple also recently set up an annex in midtown Manhattan at Broadway and 56th Street.)

At a recent neighborhood meeting, a women's division member, Loretta, said that she has received not one but two letters from the temple accompanied by personal letters from two temple members. Loretta is very strong in her faith, and I know she is not swayed.

In a mystic way, I felt, these two people, a former neighborhood member and a close friend Loretta practiced with in Jamaica, will gain benefit from this exchange: Now Loretta has the opportunity to write to them and encourage them to disassociate from the temple.

I'm chanting for the happiness and protection of all Astoria members, in the temple and SGI-USA, and am determined to do whatever I can to foster the youth division. My art, my job, my neighborhood and the temple — these are all challenges I can handle. 

IT'S PRIESTS WHO DESTROY THE LAW

By GREG MARTIN
SGI-USA Study Department Vice Leader

Last month, I said that Nichiren Daishonin himself raised the important question of how we can correctly judge who are the enemies of the Lotus Sutra, an especially pertinent question today.

"But the evil monks who exist within the body of my Law — they are the ones who will destroy this Law...!" (The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 3, p. 167)

Immediately after the Daishonin's death, just as Shakyamuni predicted, evil monks within the

body of the Law — the senior priests — went to work destroying the Law. As a result, Nikko Shonin was forced to abandon Mount Minobu, protecting the body of the Law from this destruction. Those senior priests, like today's priests, qualify as evil monks, as enemies.

In the Hometsujin Sutra the Buddha speaks as follows: "After I have entered Nirvana, in the troubled times when the five cardinal sins prevail, the way of the Devil will flourish. The Devil will appear in the form of Buddhist monks and attempt to confuse and destroy my teachings...." (MW-4, 231)

A hundred, a thousand, ten

thousand, a hundred thousand times more than mad elephants, vicious horses, fierce bulls, savage dogs, poisonous snakes, poisonous thorns, treacherous bluffs, steep cliffs, floods, evil men, evil countries, evil towns, evil dwellings, bad wives, wicked children and malicious retainers, the people of Japan today should fear those eminent priests who keep the precepts and yet hold distorted views! (MW-5, 171)

Nichiren Daishonin gives us many warnings like these that the devil, or enemy of Buddhism, will appear as priests who attempt to confuse and destroy the teachings. The enemies of Buddhism do not ap-

pear as ordinary people but as priests who seem to keep the precepts but in fact hold distorted views.

Although individual priests, like Nikken, can certainly be troublesome, the Daishonin is really pointing out that it is distorted ideas held by such eminent priests that can destroy the Law. Distorted views lead to distorted actions. Distorted actions to distorted lives. That's why false ideas cannot be allowed to sprout, nurture, spread or bear fruit within the body of the Law, the community of believers.

Does this mean that all



priests are evil? If so, why would the Buddha entrust them with the Law in the first place? Indeed, not all priests are corrupt or hold distorted views. There are good and bad priests. We should respect the good ones and reject the bad. This should be as natural to us as wanting to eat fresh food and discard rotten food.

TWO IN A SERIES

What a WONDERFUL WORLD!

Read the *World Tribune* weekly to find out the latest goings-on in the SGI and learn more about this Buddhism. Our regular features include:

- SGI President Ikeda's newest speeches and most recent activities.
- 'Discussions on Youth,' a dialogue among the SGI president and young leaders on topics of interest to youth. Upcoming topics include: gongyo and daimoku, the purpose of having this organization, and human revolution.
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A SENSE OF MISSION Simple Yet Difficult

By CRAIG GREEN SGI-USA Youth Division Study Committee

Chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and urge others to do the same; that will remain as the only memory of your present life... ("Questions and Answers on Embracing the Lotus Sutra," The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 5, p. 38)

glory that you need seek in your present lifetime" (MW-5, 38), he's showing how our mission is simple by showing what it's not.

Although we may experience all kinds of victory in our lives — even becoming rich and famous — the only real glory is embracing the Law. All those other things are extras.

In one sense, our mission as Buddhists is simple. "Embracing the Lotus Sutra" — chanting and teaching others to chant — is everyone's mission.

Of course, we'll each have different things to chant for and different ways of teaching others. We'll each set our own example. But, fundamentally, we all have the same, simple mission.

When Nichiren Daishonin says in this letter that embracing the Law "is the only

Sometimes, though, the simplest things are the hardest. For instance, studying for school: It's simple, but we often make it so complicated. We can let a million other things go off in our heads, distracting us from what's right in front of us. And Buddhist mission is the same. It's simple — but not easy to stay focused on.

TWO IN A SERIES