

World Tribune

No. 3182

THE YEAR OF VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE FOR THE NEW CENTURY

MARCH 13, 1998

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The Best People We Can Be

'Faith enables us to secure ultimate victory,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'It enables us to live our lives with vigor and joy, and strive to improve ourselves — to become the very best people we can be.'

A general meeting was held Feb. 21 at the Hong Kong SGI Grand Culture Centre. SGI President Ikeda offered words of encouragement.

The fundamental teaching of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is that your heart matters most. You, my beloved friends of HKSGI, embody that spirit. You have shining hearts — they glow with your sincerity and blaze brightly with your courageous faith. There is not the slightest

doubt that such a noble spirit will bring boundless virtues and blessings, as well as lasting prosperity, to you and your families. It will crown you champions of life and good fortune.

All of you are so friendly and supportive of one another. You are all equal as the Daishonin's disciples — there is no dis-

SGI President Ikeda's speech on growing younger with each passing year begins on p. 11

crimination among you. You possess the strong, profound unity of true comrades linked heart to heart in your commitment to strive for kosen-rufu.

This unity is not forged by coercion or obligation. I wish to commend your efforts most highly by stating that Hong Kong's solidly united Soka family is a model for the entire world.

Throughout the Goshu, we see the Daishonin lauding the efforts of individual followers. I hope all of you will emulate

this spirit and offer distinct praise to your fellow members who exert themselves earnestly and valiantly.

And when something needs to be addressed or pointed out to someone, use your wisdom and compassion to guide them in the right direction. Please become exemplary leaders, so that everyone can advance even more joyfully and vigorously on the path of human growth and development.

It is especially heartening to

PLEASE SEE HONG KONG, 4



Members gather at the Hong Kong SGI Culture Centre to meet with SGI President Ikeda, who discusses how to live fully and without regret.

New Publication for Friends and Guests

Friends and discussion meeting guests frequently want to know more about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. And one great new way to supplement the invaluable personal attention you'll give them is *The Winning Life: An Introduction to Buddhist Practice*.

Just published by the SGI-USA, *The Winning Life* gives quick yet detailed information about practicing Nichiren Daishonin's teachings.

Using plain language that speaks to the heart of newcomers' questions, the convenient, 48-

page booklet is organized into four sections:

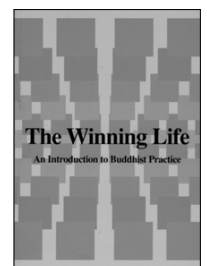
- what it means to have a winning life bolstered by the practice of Buddhism,
- an examination of the mechanics of practice,
- an explanation of core Buddhist concepts, and
- an overview of the organization and its history.

The Winning Life also includes a list of suggested further reading as well as the SGI-

USA Web site address.

The Winning Life is available now at SGI-USA bookstores, or can be ordered by calling (800) 626-1313 and asking for Mail Order #0105 (\$1.00 per copy).

True happiness or victory in life is having the tools to take on each hurdle, overcome it, and become stronger and wiser in the process. Inside each human being is a storehouse of all the necessary traits to tackle every problem that confronts us. Buddhism is the practice that allows us access to



this storehouse and unleashes our inherent power to take on all of life's challenges and win.

— excerpt from
The Winning Life



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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'Out There' and Back

EDITORIAL

Anyone who's looked through a telescope, read books on astronomy or simply gazed at the night sky can't help being awed by the vastness of the universe. You can't help but ponder humankind's place in the cosmos. The popularity of movies like *Contact*, NASA explorations of Mars, and UFO theories indicate human beings' ongoing fascination with what's "out there." This fascination could suggest the unconscious longing of our internal microcosm to find a connection with this outer macrocosm of space.

The exploration of both the outer and inner universes — both infinitely vast — is the subject of a just-published dialogue between SGI President Ikeda and noted Sri Lanka-born astronomer Chandra Wickramasinghe. *Space and Eternal Life* (soon to be in SGI-USA bookstores), covers everything from the origin of the universe and human life to science and religion, from creating a global civilization to the Buddhist mission for peace. In between they tackle AIDS, euthanasia, abortion, nuclear weapons, education and a host of other important topics — all coinciding with a Buddhist point of view.

Dr. Wickramasinghe, along with Sir Fred Hoyle, developed the idea that life originated in the cosmos and was carried to Earth on cosmic dust. They also are advocates of the so-called steady state theory of the universe, a theory at odds with the more popular Big Bang theory. Dr. Wickramasinghe and Mr. Ikeda discuss the scientific evidence and philosophical implications of each theory.

An individual's world view has much to do with which theory he or she ascribes to, according to Dr. Wickramasinghe. "The fact that

Big Bang cosmologies appear to be so deeply rooted in our modern scientific culture must, I think, be connected with the fact that such cosmologies were developed in the context of Judeo-Christian traditions where some form of a creation is 'required,'" he says.

The book also delves deeply into life and the nature of death, dealing with ethical questions that arise from technological advances such as in vitro fertilization. "In order to build a social consensus about this issue, it is necessary, I believe, that each individual, considering the profound meaning of giving birth to life, asks himself or herself the fundamental questions: 'Why do I wish to have children?' and 'For what purpose do I want children?'" Mr. Ikeda says.

Throughout the book, prevailing trends in science are questioned. As Dr. Wickramasinghe says: "In my view, science as a whole faces a crisis from being over-cluttered with dogma. The situation is so bad at the present moment that if facts go against a prevailing dogma, they are ignored. This is an exceedingly dangerous trend. Science must always respect empirical facts, and intellectual honesty must be paramount."

The dialogue is not completely about science, however. Anyone looking for Buddhist insights on life and crucial questions of the day can find them here. As President Ikeda says elsewhere in this issue of the *World Tribune*, "Through my continued dialogues with outstanding specialists in various fields, I hope to pass on precious jewels of wisdom for posterity."

Space and Eternal Life does that and more. ❖

Special Issue

The World Tribune is celebrating March 16, Kosen-rufu Day, with a special issue to introduce or reintroduce our newspaper to younger readers. Geared for young people, the four-page issue will be passed out free of charge at all March 16 commemorative meetings. Please look for it at your local community center.

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WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Speaking Out Against War

It was wonderful to read your anti-war editorial (Feb. 20). After all, as Buddhists aren't we dedicated to the abolition of war? I am proud to see the Tribune's motto, "The Champion of the People," being expressed in a concrete manner as our country marches deliberately toward war—a war that actually has continued seven years in the form of sanctions, which have killed, by United Nations and other independent human rights organizations' estimates, over 1 million Iraqis to date. The majority of casualties have been children who starve to death or die of preventable diseases. This is part of our collective karma as a nation, and we all bear some responsibility...

It is right that the *World Tribune* should speak out. The Goshu states: "If a practitioner of Buddhism should fail to chastise evil persons who slander the Law but give himself up entirely to meditation and contemplation, not attempting to distinguish between correct or incorrect doctrines,...but rather pretending to be a model of compassion, then such a person will fall into the evil paths along with other doers of evil" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 109). The doctrine of war is incorrect and the slaughter of human beings must be one of the greatest slanders of the Law...

Together, let's help change our country's arrogant and hypocritical tendencies with our voices.... Is it not our "true nature" as Buddhists to speak out against war, even if it sparks a debate with our fellow members who may support it?...

Neither peace nor kosen-rufu can happen unless we the people speak and act accordingly. Therefore, I pray the *World Tribune* continues sounding the rhythm of compassion and wisdom as the drums of war become more frenzied.

— CAROLYN TYNAN, Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Human Life Is Sacred

I believe the purpose of [the recent Ohio town meeting with the so-called ABC team, including Secretary of State Madeleine Albright] was to prepare the American people for a military strike against Iraq. In response to a question about civilian casualties, one top government official replied that every effort would be made to minimize such losses. Once again, as it has many times, the callousness of the military mind struck me painfully. Those casualties he described are not just numbers. They represent real people — people who feel love and pain and have hopes and dreams as real as our own.

Recently SGI members have written letters to the *World Tribune* regarding capital punishment. Even as a child, I could never understand how a democratic government would even consider taking the risk of executing an innocent person. Yet there have been documented cases in which a prisoner was executed after his innocence was proven because his attorneys missed a filing deadline. If that person had been your friend or relative, would you regard his loss as a necessary casualty in the fight against crime, since the death penalty may be a deterrent to crime? (A hypothesis, by the way, which has yet to be proven.)

If there is one political statement that we as Buddhists ought to make, it is against the taking of human life. I believe we need to set an example and to make our feelings known. The human race will always be at war, and violence against people will continue, until all nations of the world come to recognize the sanctity of human life. Either we consider it to be sacred or we don't. There is no gray area, and there are no exceptions. I believe that all the great religious leaders in history have tried to teach this lesson. Apparently, their message still falls on deaf ears.

— PETER BANNE, Pacifica, Calif.

A Love Letter to My Child

PERSPECTIVE

By MICHELE KATRIEL COHEN
MENLO PARK, CALIF.

I wrote this love letter about four years ago after the birth of my daughter. I wrote it for a naming ceremony we had for friends and family, and was fascinated when going back through my writings to see how closely related in philosophy it was to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

I have been chanting since November 1996, and received the Gohonzon on March 2, 1997. I have been working since 1995 to become proficient as a children's author for truthful, intelligent literature. When I met the Gohonzon, I realized that my writing for children and their parents was now for kosen-rufu.

For you, my child, I wish for you to be embraced by kindness, touched by gentleness, and loved by the most tender hearts.

I wish for you to strive for the truth, to trust it, to speak on its

behalf and to listen to what other people have to say.

I wish for you to do the right thing, even if it is easier not to. And to remember that there is plenty of everything good to go around. It is your job to be happy.

I wish for you to go the distance. To reach for the stars. To make lots of wishes in wishing wells. And to go to lots of birthday parties.

I wish for you to find happiness in giving your favorite bugs away, in sharing the candies and whipped cream on your hot fudge sundae, and in laughing and giggling until everyone else is laughing and giggling, too.

I wish for you to know that your heart will sometimes whisper in your ear. It will advise you about which direction to go. It is your job then to listen carefully.

Sometimes it will tell you to paint pictures of ladybugs, and sometimes it will tell you to go to the beach and watch the sun dive into the sea, and sometimes it will tell you to tell someone you love that you love them. Your heart is full of your dreams, and the bigger your heart, the more dreams you have to come true.

I wish for you to honor, re-

spect and care deeply for yourself and others, and to be devoted to that which is important to you. To dance on your tippy toes.

And to sing your unique song to the world.

I wish to remind you to make a new friend every day.

I wish for you to keep smiling, and if someone doesn't smile back, it doesn't mean that they don't like you—it just means that you need to smile again until someone does smile back.

I wish for you to always remember how loved you are...and if you forget, please let me remind you.

I wish for you to have many best friends and to be the best friend of many and to understand there is something to like about everyone.

I wish for you to stay close to people and connected to all living things. To experience the world as a safe, friendly and loving place, where you make a difference.

I wish for you to know yourself, and, most important, to be yourself.

Each time I hold you in my arms, I get more determined than ever to make certain that our world is a peaceful one. ❧

SPACE AND ETERNAL LIFE

A Dialogue between
Chandra Wickramasinghe
and Daisaku Ikeda

Journeyman

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Space and Eternal Life

A Dialogue between Chandra Wickramasinghe and Daisaku Ikeda

Space and Eternal Life is a dialogue between an eminent astronomer and a leading Buddhist scholar. The book probes some of the deepest aspects of our existence. As the dialogue unfolds, both the Buddhist viewpoint and an astronomer's view of the world are expounded, side by side, with interesting comparisons.

By no means does Buddhist philosophy lack the advantages of the empirical methodology of science. In its exploration of the physical world and its treatment of psychology, including the idea of many states of consciousness, it appears to be remarkably sophisticated in modern terms. And Buddhist ideas of cosmology are also seen to be in tune with modern scientific theories.

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NEWS BRIEFS

FLORIDA

First Language Group Conference Held at FNCC

The 1st SGI-USA Korean Language Conference was held at the Florida Nature and Culture Center, Feb. 26–March 1. It was the first conference held by a language group at the Fort Lauderdale facility. Three other language groups are scheduled this year — Spanish, Chinese and Japanese. The 187 participants gathered from throughout the country ranged in age from 24 to 81 years old. Two leaders from the SGI of South Korea also attended.

CHINA

SGI President Attends SGI of Hong Kong Meeting

SGI President Ikeda, on his first visit to Hong Kong since his return to China, attended an SGI of Hong Kong Conference held at the Hong Kong Grand Culture Centre on Feb. 15. President Ikeda said that Hong Kong's reversion to its homeland means that Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism now exists in China. The SGI has made a reality of the westward transmission of Buddhism, he said, which the Daishonin propheesied in the letter "Remonstrance with Bodhisattva Hachiman" when he said that the Buddhism of the sun is destined to emerge from the East and then illuminate the West.

— Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER

CHINA

SGI President Meets Macau Government Official

SGI President Ikeda met with Dr. Jorge H. Rangel, secretary for Public Administration, Education and Youth Affairs of Macau, at the Hong Kong Exhibition Centre in Wanchai on Feb. 17. Secretary Rangel has played a pivotal role in paving the way for the Portuguese territory's smooth return to China next year. Like Hong Kong, Macau will become a special administrative region after its return in December 1999. Located about 60 miles west of Hong Kong, Macau consists of two islands and a peninsula.

— Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER

CHINA

Soka University Confers Honorary Doctorate

On Feb. 19, SGI President Ikeda, along with Soka University President Kinnosuke Komuro, other university officials and SGI of Hong Kong members, welcomed renowned Chinese painter and calligrapher Madame Fang Zhaoling to the Hong Kong Grand Culture Centre for the conferral of an honorary doctorate from the university. The SGI leader congratulated the 84-year-old Madame Fang on recently winning the 1998 Louise Cartier Award of Excellence, a prestigious Hong Kong award for outstanding achievement in art and culture. He praised her for serving as a continuing source of inspiration for countless people with her unflagging energy and zest for life.

— Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER

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

Plotting Your Eternal Future

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Cemetery plots for SGI-USA members are now available in the Oasis of Eternity.

By LISA JONES
STAFF WRITER

Whether we view death as a graduation to look forward to or as a cause for sober self-reflection, we have to come to terms with it. For many of us, this may raise logistical questions regarding our physical remains.

There are no hard-and-fast rules in Buddhism about cremation or burial. It's up to us whether we want our remains to be interred in a family plot, flung into the ocean or sprinkled in a flower bed. And there are no prohibitions against donating our bodies for medical or scientific purposes.

Further, our enlightenment is not determined by formal ceremonies, financial offerings or special cemetery plots; rather, enlightenment and rebirth are determined by our faith and prayer.

For members who choose to be interred near other SGI members, the SGI-USA has made arrangements with Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier, Calif., to provide cemetery



The SGI-USA has made arrangements with Rose Hills Memorial Park in California to provide cemetery property and services for members. The granite grave marker features the SGI eight-petal lotus logo.



property and services.

The organization has purchased 100 plots to sell, and an additional 600 plots will probably become available in the future. The area, which was named Oasis of Eternity by SGI President Ikeda, will be demarcated by a special SGI-USA monument.

Each burial plot includes an underground vault that can hold the cremated remains of two

people. (No pets or other animals may be interred here.) The SGI-USA will conduct two formal memorial services annually for deceased members in the SkyRose Chapel on the cemetery grounds.

The package price of \$3,500 per plot also includes a specially designed granite grave marker with the SGI eight-petal lotus logo.

Plots are being sold on a first-come-first-serve basis. For more information, please call Tony Sugano at (310) 260-8981 or send your name, address and telephone number to Oasis of Eternity, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401-1403. ☐

Speech: The Best People We Can Be

HONG KONG, FROM PAGE 1

see the phenomenal growth of Hong Kong's youth division. HKSGI has developed a huge river of capable people.

The source of the SGI's progress, development and victory will forever lie in raising outstanding members. As the Daishonin writes, "Since the Law is supreme, the Person is worthy of respect; since the Person is worthy of respect, the

Land is sacred" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 264).

This lifetime will never come again; it is precious, irreplaceable. To live without regret, it is crucial for us to have a concrete purpose and continually set goals and challenges for ourselves. It is equally important that we keep moving toward our specific targets steadily and tenaciously, one step at a time.

Faith enables us to secure ul-

timinate victory. It enables us to live our lives with vigor and joy, and strive to improve ourselves — to become the very best people we can be. Moreover, faith enables us to walk through life with complete assurance and confidence, unafraid of anything.

In closing, I declare: Long live glorious Hong Kong! Long live all of you, my dear friends, Bodhisattvas of the Earth who have appeared here in Hong Kong! ☐

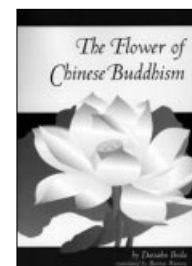
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The Flower of Chinese Buddhism

by Daisaku Ikeda

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WESLEY ZOSCHE, PLAINFIELD, N.J.

What a Difference!

When Wesley Zosche read Tina Turner's autobiography, he wanted to find out more about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. After a pit stop at the Nichiren Shoshu temple in Queens, N.Y., he eventually found his way to the SGI-USA — and immense good fortune.

In the fall of 1994, at age 25, I had undergone emergency surgery to remove my appendix. My career as a flight attendant and my favorite pastimes of weight-training and body-building had always kept my days busy. I could hardly accept the instructions from my doctor that I could not fly or workout for six weeks.

But instead of pouting about what could have been six weeks of utter boredom, I decided to use the time wisely and satisfy a desire I'd had for quite a while: I had been craving something spiritual in my life.

After growing up gay under the teachings of the Catholic Church, never feeling accepted, I was determined to find a religion where I could be myself, be accepted without stipulations and — for a change — feel spiritually complete.

After many hours at the library investigating different religions and their practices, I found myself going in circles, not sure which end was up. Out of frustration, I turned my back on the section where the books on religion were and headed for something more fun: the section on music, particularly my favorite — rock and roll.

And there she was! The woman who would be forever known to me as the first person to lead me to this Buddhism — Tina Turner. I read her autobiography, *I, Tina*, and subsequently saw the movie on her life. That was it! In this woman's story, I saw a religion that really worked.

I went on to investigate Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism, though I had not yet heard of the SGI. My interest led me to

the Nichiren Shoshu temple in Queens. I found an altar store there and began talking to the temple members in the store. I told them that I wanted to practice this Buddhism. The first instruction I received was: "Do not receive a counterfeit Gohonzon."

Mind you, I did not even know what the Gohonzon was, nor was it explained to me. Regardless, I bought an altar and accessories. There were no books available there to me on this Buddhism. The temple members gave me only a small pamphlet.

Before I left, I was asked to leave a donation to the temple so that the priest would know I was "sincere." Sincere?! I had taken a bus, a subway and a taxicab to get from my home in New Jersey to where the temple was in Queens! I did not leave a donation.

I walked away feeling uncomfortable about the whole thing. When I got home, I wrapped up the altar and packed it away in a closet, knowing in the back of my mind, however, that one day it would come out again.

In February 1997, almost



'My life is proof,' says Wesley Zosche, 'that faith and a seeking mind can take you anywhere.'

two-and-a-half years later, there she was again! Tina Turner talking about this Buddhism in a TV interview with Larry King. This time she mentioned a man called President Ikeda. She stirred my interest again — so, this time I set out

to find out who this President Ikeda was.

Back again at the library, the only entry in the computer under Daisaku Ikeda was "Soka Gakkai." From there, I picked up a New York City telephone directory and found the phone number and address of the SGI-USA New York Culture Center. I could feel that I was onto something big.

I called the culture center and spoke to Ethan Gelbaum. It felt right! I hopped on the bus to Manhattan and headed for the culture center, where I met David Kasahara, a vice general director, who hugged and congratulated me when I told him I knew about Nam-myohorenge-kyo and wanted to practice this Buddhism. He showed me the bookstore, and Ethan connected me to an SGI-USA group in Princeton, N.J.

What a difference between the warm welcome I received at the SGI and my initial experience with the temple! I left the culture center that rainy afternoon with a bag full of books, beads, candles and incense, and with my head feeling 10 times bigger than when I had arrived. I began chanting that night, un-

packing that altar and finally receiving the Gohonzon last Sept. 21.

Shortly before receiving the Gohonzon, I received in the mail a final warning from the temple not to join the SGI. I needed to practice to a Nikken-transcribed Gohonzon, it said, in order to practice correctly.

It went on to say, "Your faith alone is not enough." Perfect timing, as I had just read the Goshō "The Strategy of the Lotus Sutra," where the Daishonin writes, "Faith alone is what really matters" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 246).

In the literature I received from the temple, the priesthood clearly contradicted the Goshō. How could this not be obvious to the temple members?

My good fortune and benefit have been immense. Last fall, I found a beautiful new home and brought my life-condition up to a place where it can benefit others. I became an adult volunteer for a support group for gay and lesbian teenagers called Gay and Lesbian Youth in New Jersey. Besides working with the teens on weekends, I speak at high school diversity days throughout New Jersey about the group and about growing up gay.

I give many thanks to President Ikeda and the SGI-USA members in Princeton, who took me under their collective wing when I began practicing. And to the diva, Ms. Tina, for unknowingly inspiring me to practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

My life is proof that faith and a seeking mind can take you anywhere you want to be. ☸

GLOSSARY

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

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

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

gongyo: Literally, "assiduous practice." In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, gongyo means to recite the "Expedient Means" (2nd) chapter and the "Life Span of the Thus Come One" (16th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myohorenge-kyo in front of the Gohonzon.

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

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

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

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

Latter Day of the Law: The period beginning 2,000 years after Shakyamuni's death, when his teachings lose their power and the essence of the Lotus Sutra will be propagated.

Nam-myohorenge-kyo: The fundamental component of Buddhist practice, which expresses the ultimate truth of life and allows each individual to tap his or her innate enlightened nature directly. Although the deepest meaning of Nam-myohorenge-kyo is revealed only through the practice of chanting it, there is a literal definition for each of the component words: *nam* (devotion) means to fuse one's life with the universal law; *myoho* (Mystic Law) is the fundamental principle of the uni-

verse and its phenomenal manifestations; *rengō* (lotus flower) refers to the lotus, which blooms and seeds at the same time, symbolizing the simultaneity of cause and effect; and *kyo* (sutra, or teaching of a Buddha) broadly indicates all phenomena or the activities of all living beings.

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

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

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

APRIL 2, 1958 — PRESIDENT JOSEI TODA'S DEATH

WOW!

BREAKTHROUGHS IN UNDERSTANDING

Nothing Wrong With You

By LISA JONES
STAFF WRITER

Some of us equate human revolution with self-criticism. We suppose that we're deeply flawed or unworthy and must correct our shortcomings before we can be happy.

To me, that's a bastardization of this beautiful religion.

Sure, self-reflection and self-development are crucial, and we all have at least one troublesome character trait. As SGI President Ikeda says, "Each of us has 'one fundamental evil' — one basic fault — that stands in the way of our personal growth."

Even so, there's nothing intrinsically wrong with you — or me — no matter what circumstances we may be in.

If you don't believe me, try this: Take a breath. See what I mean? You can turn ordinary air into the treasure called life. You're a marvel, a miracle — we all are. To me, human revolution means to disabuse ourselves of thinking otherwise.

Josei Toda said: "Human revolution means a transformation of our views of life, of the world, and of society that we have held until now.... It means changing from a small or medium objective to a great objective, from a lifestyle of small or medium good to one of great good, and from a view of life's purpose based on an awareness of this lifetime only to establishing an indomitable, steadfast view of life based on one's awareness of life's eternity."

Human revolution is not about self-flagellation or addressing perceived inadequacies. It's about coming to see the Buddhahood that's right in front of — and behind — your nose.

Did you ever say "Wow!" after reading one of Nichiren Daishonin's letters, one of SGI President Ikeda's speeches or something else in our publications? In this column, share those Buddhist study moments where you saw everything in a new light. Keep it short — about 300 words — and then e-mail, mail or fax it to the World Tribune (see p. 2 for contact information).

SIGNIFICANT DATES

ON MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY OF THE DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM AND THE SGI

By JOHN KASAHARA
NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT

We often hear and read about the concept of the oneness of mentor and disciple but many times do not understand the true depth of this idea. This April 2, the 40th anniversary of the passing of the Soka Gakkai's second president, Josei Toda, is another chance to take a look at the relationship of mentor and disciple.

Born in 1900, Josei Toda lived to be 58. Although this may seem like an early age to die, each and every one of the seven years that he was the Soka Gakkai president he spent working for and realizing a grand dream. This was the dream of world peace based on Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, following the dream of his mentor, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the first Soka Gakkai president.

Toda was inaugurated the second president in 1951. His goal then was for the Soka Gakkai to introduce 750,000 households to the Daishonin's Buddhism before he died. The struggles that he and the young Daisaku Ikeda faced together in this campaign, as detailed in *The Human Revolution* novel, are unimaginable. But through what he learned from President Toda, young Ikeda led the campaign and helped Toda make his dream a reality — 750,000 did indeed join.

SGI President Ikeda has never spent a day without thinking of his mentor in life. He often speaks of how President Toda reprimanded him — but with the realization that it was out of his great compassion that he did so. Josei Toda found Daisaku Ikeda as a young man, taught him everything he knew about life and Buddhism, and educated him to become a world leader.

President Ikeda often talks about the power of a single disciple. He says: "Strength is not a question of numbers. One person of all-out commitment is enough." In building the organization, President Toda needed that one person. And Mr. Ikeda stood up to be that person.

There are many times in my life when I feel that like I am alone in my battle for victory. Those are the times when I need to engrave President Ikeda's spirit in my heart — that the one person must be me. I feel that I have to have the conviction, determination and dedication to fight under any circumstances, even if I must do it alone.

When we feel alone in facing our obstacles, we have to remember to boldly, courageously face the Gohonzon first and continue on the path we have chosen.

So, in commemorating April 2, I think of how Josei Toda was the foundation of the spread of worldwide kosen-rufu and how President Ikeda stood up and carried out his mentor's goal of spreading the Daishonin's Buddhism throughout the world. Now, 40 years later, I know that it's my turn to stand up and carry the torch that my mentor has kept so brightly lit, to take it into the next century.

President Ikeda says that "greatness as a human being is not determined by social position or academic credentials. The most respectable people are those who work for kosen-rufu as Nichiren Daishonin's disciples."

That's what I want to do.

Why Hate Buddhism?

STANDS TO REASON

LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM THE WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN

By JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Devil of the Sixth Heaven hates the Buddha's Law.... ("Conversation Between a Sage and an Unenlightened Man," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 119)

This 1265 letter, recipient unknown, is written in the Q-and-A format that Nichiren Daishonin often used. An unenlightened man meets a sage, ostensibly the Daishonin; they talk back and forth about this Buddhism, and, in the end, the man is convinced by the sage to try practicing.

After the man has made this decision, the sage asks him to practice for his whole life, warning him how hard it will be — about the "devils and demons" that will surely try to stop him (MW-5, 119). (This is similar to the Daishonin's warning I wrote about previously, that from the day you take faith, you should be prepared to face powerful enemies.)

One of the points the sage makes in this final encouragement/warning is that "the Devil of the Sixth Heaven hates the Buddha's Law..." (MW-5, 119). This is another evocation of the psychology of Buddhism's powerful enemies — why they want to destroy Buddhism, why they want to stop us from practicing. It's not merely that they want to abuse the Law, as I discussed last time, but that they *hate* the Law. They hate Buddhism.

As simple as this is, this also makes a lot of sense. They're enemies of Buddhism because they hate it.

The revered Ritsu priest Ryokan was a good example of this. I've talked about Ryokan using the Ikegami brothers' father to get at the Daishonin and conspiring with the Pure Land sect to accuse the Daishonin's followers of violent crimes Ryokan himself instigated. It was, obviously, hate that he felt toward this Buddhism. Where did it come from?

In 1271, when Ryokan prayed for rain at the government's urging, the Daishonin challenged him: If it rained within seven days, he'd become Ryokan's disciple, he announced. The Daishonin meant to show society that Ryokan's Buddhism didn't work, and, well, it didn't — in seven days it never rained once. Ryokan was humiliated, so it's easy to see, knowing his arrogant nature, why he then came to hate the Daishonin's teachings with such a passion (not to mention the Daishonin himself).

There will always be people who will hate this Buddhism, wanting to be greater than it — and who will hate us as its practitioners. Nikken is today's example, but in the future there's sure to be more of his and Ryokan's type. While this Buddhism allows us to set ourselves free, truly free, that's not what Nikken, Ryokan and company want. They hate for people to be free or to think for themselves. "Let us think for you!" they cry. "Don't practice that Buddhism! Practice *our* Buddhism!" If we want to be free, the price we must pay is to deal with people like this.

The starting point for this freedom is always, of course, our inner reformation. Recently, in the Philippines, SGI President Ikeda shared how "all meaningful action must start from the inner life, its exploration and development, and the resultant transformation of individuals." The internal world thus becomes action. Or, our inner freedom grows to where it *must* be shared, to where it must be expressed in the outer world as words, ideas, our ways of living. We cannot, after a point, hide how we feel — that would be impossible.

Once that freedom's put out there, once it's set in motion, it's sure to meet its enemies: people who hate freedom, who hate the Law.

There's no way around them when your destination is freedom.

Five in a series

'La Apertura de los Ojos,'¹ parte 2

Disertación del Presidente Ikeda de la serie, Aprendamos del Goshō, La eterna enseñanza de Nichiren Daishonin.

El Buda ilumina el mundo con la luz de las tres virtudes

La justicia es como el sol. Una sociedad donde no prevalece la justicia vive envuelta en la oscuridad. Nadie puede impedir que salga el sol. Nadie puede ocultar sus rayos indefinidamente. "Abrir los ojos" significa, justamente, hacer que reconozcan la existencia de ese sol de la justicia las personas que llevan el corazón sumido en la penumbra.

Yo, Nichiren, soy el soberano, el maestro, el padre y la madre de todo el pueblo del Japón. Pero los hombres de la escuela Tendai [que no tratan de eliminar el mal de la nación] son los grandes enemigos del pueblo. Como señaló Chang-an²: Quien libra del mal a quien comete una falta está actuando como si fuera un padre.

Quien no ha puesto su determinación en el Camino no puede liberarse jamás de los sufrimientos de la vida y la muerte.³

Nichiren Daishonin dice que es "el soberano, el maestro, el padre y la madre de todo el pueblo del Japón." Las tres virtudes las funciones del soberano, el maestro y los padres indican el estado de vida, brillante como el sol, de una verdadera persona de justicia.

Y esto trae a colación un fragmento del Goshō "Retribución por los favores recibidos":

Si la misericordia de Nichiren es realmente grande y amplia, Nam-myōhō-rengē-kyō se propagará durante diez mil años y más aún, por toda la eternidad, ya que posee el poder benéfico de abrir los ojos ciegos de todos los seres vivientes del Japón y de obstruir el camino que conduce al infierno del sufrimiento incesante.⁴

Nichikan Shonin interpreta que este fragmento se refiere a las tres virtudes del Daishonin. "Si la misericordia de Nichiren es realmente grande y amplia, Nam-myōhō-rengē-kyō se propagará durante diez mil años y más aún, por toda la eternidad" indica su inmensa misericordia, es decir, la virtud de los padres. "Posee el poder benéfico de abrir los ojos ciegos de todos los seres vivientes del Japón" alude a la facultad de abrir la mente de

MATERIAL DE ESTUDIO

(MARZO — ABRIL)

Goshō: 'La Apertura de los Ojos' (2)



La justicia es como el sol.

las personas, es decir, su visión interior, por lo cual representa la virtud del maestro. Y "obstruir el camino que conduce al infierno del sufrimiento incesante" habla de la virtud del soberano, que se empeña en que la población no padezca sufrimientos.⁵

"La apertura de los ojos" comienza con el fragmento "Hay tres categorías de personas a las cuales todos los seres humanos deberían respetar. Se trata del soberano, el maestro y los padres."⁶ El propósito de esta enseñanza yace en esclarecer las tres virtudes del soberano, el maestro y los padres. Y Nichiren Daishonin es quien posee estas tres virtudes en forma cabal y completa.

En sentido general y para expresarlo con términos modernos, podría decirse que el soberano, el maestro y los padres son tres atributos indispensables en todo líder.

La virtud del soberano consiste en proteger a las personas; esto corresponde a un sentido insobornable de la responsabilidad. La virtud del maestro yace en guiar a los hombres; esto se refiere a la brillante sabiduría que logra conducir a la humanidad por el camino de una

vida feliz. Y la virtud de los padres consiste en forjar a las personas con un corazón de amor sin límites; es decir, una misericordia cálida y a la vez rigurosa.

Sentido de la responsabilidad, sabiduría y misericordia. ¿No son éstas las cualidades más importantes que deben tener tanto los líderes como los hombres en general? Si tan solo un puñado de dirigentes más poseyeran estas tres cualidades, ¡qué contribución enorme se haría a la felicidad del género humano, cuántas tensiones más podrían disminuir! Pero lo cierto es que, hoy en día, hay demasiados líderes en el mundo que exhiben la tendencia opuesta.

La antítesis de la virtud del soberano es la irresponsabilidad. Hoy hay primeras figuras que se comportan de un modo altanero y ampuloso, pero que evitan cuidadosamente las cuestiones escabrosas, con el argumento de que "alguien ya se ocupará de eso" o de que "las cosas ya se resolverán. Se las pasan impartiendo "órdenes, sólo para eludir, luego, la responsabilidad que les cabe. Aunque exteriormente responden a la imagen de un líder, no poseen ningún requisito que les

haga merecer su posición, no tienen ninguna virtud que respalde sus privilegios.

El capítulo "Duración de la Vida de El Que Así Llega" (decimosexto) del Sutra del Loto explica las tres virtudes de la enseñanza esencial. "Esta, mi tierra, permanece a salvo y en calma"⁷ indica la virtud del soberano. Un líder trabaja resueltamente para asegurar la paz y la tranquilidad de la tierra y de la comunidad de las cuales se ha hecho responsable. "Constantemente vive predicando la Ley, enseñando y convirtiendo"⁸ corresponde a la virtud del maestro. Como lo indica el término "constantemente," es decir, sin descanso ni interrupción, un maestro continuamente utiliza la palabra, sin reservas, para ayudar a los semejantes.

La virtud de los padres queda expresada en la frase "Yo soy el padre de este mundo."⁹ Un padre es aquel que ama a las personas porque son hijos del Buda y, como tales, un día asumirán esta identidad real. Un padre es aquel que actúa por el bien de sus hijos.

Los líderes también deben poseer la capacidad de brindar capacitación, protección, orientación y enseñanza. Cuando

alguien tiene un problema, un líder debe ser capaz de brindarle cálidos consejos y de impartirle las pautas que necesita para poner fin a su atolladero.

Un verdadero líder protege a las personas cuando están cansadas y las nutre brindándole capacitación adecuada a su nivel de desarrollo. Si a una persona se le da una capacitación estricta cuando las circunstancias exigen afectuosa protección, terminará hundiéndose. Si la consentimos cuando necesita recibir aprendizaje, no crecerá.

En tal encuadre, si relacionamos los atributos deseables en un líder con las tres virtudes, el paralelo sería el siguiente: la capacidad de proteger correspondería a la virtud del soberano; la capacidad de dar orientación y enseñanza sería la virtud del maestro, y la capacidad de brindar pautas de capacitación o formación sería la virtud de los padres.

En una palabra, la determinación, la oración y la fortaleza de ayudar a las personas a ser felices sin falta resultan fundamentales para ejercer un liderazgo sobresaliente.

Habíamos visto que [en el goshō "Retribución por los favores recibidos" la virtud del soberano correspondía a "obstruir el camino que conduce al infierno del sufrimiento incesante." Al respecto, Nichikan Shonin observa: "¿Cómo podría quedar en manos de un vasallo la responsabilidad de abrir o de cerrar un camino? [Cuestiones de tamaño importancia deben recaer en un soberano.] La virtud del soberano consiste en obstruir los "caminos del mal" y en abrir "el camino del bien".

"Quiero cerrar todas las rutas que desemboquen en el infierno." Con este mismo espíritu, el maestro Josei Toda declaró su absoluta oposición al uso de las armas nucleares: "Todo aquel que amenace el derecho a la vida exhibe una mente demoníaca, un propósito satánico, una naturaleza monstruosa."¹⁰ En cambio, la virtud de un soberano y la responsabilidad de todo líder se encuentran en cerrar valientemente el camino a la guerra y en abrir de par en par las rutas que aseguran la paz.

La SGI, como auténtica heredera del Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin, abrió un camino de paz que hoy atraviesa el planeta entero. Hace veinte años, cuando la China y la Unión Soviética se hallaban en conflicto, cuando entre los soviéticos y los norteamericanos

LOS OJOS, DESDE PÁG. 7

sólo existía el vínculo de la "guerra fría," ¿quién podría haber imaginado el estado del mundo actual? La Soka Gakkai, a pesar de una avalancha de críticas, siguió actuando con total decisión para cerrar el camino de la confrontación y abrir un sendero de amistad.

"¡La Tercera Guerra Mundial jamás debe llegar a producirse!" Hemos orado y actuado con total sentido de la responsabilidad, para cerciorarnos de que no se perpetrara una calamidad semejante. Con este propósito, desarrollamos un movimiento de paz, cultura y educación basado en el Budismo.

Si hablamos en sentido general, la virtud del soberano también consiste en crear una tierra donde imperen la paz y la tranquilidad, como lo afirma el pasaje "Esta, mi tierra, está a salvo y en calma." La educación representa la virtud del maestro. Y la cultura se relaciona con la virtud del padre, en la medida en que permite cultivar y forjar el mundo interior del ser humano. Nosotros estamos extendiendo en todo el mundo este camino signado por las tres virtudes.

Estamos abriendo un camino. Una vez que quede abierto, los que vengan detrás podrán recorrerlo con tranquilidad y sin preocupaciones. Nichiren Daishonin, como Buda del Último Día de la Ley dotado de las tres virtudes del soberano, el maestro y los padres, abrió un camino hacia la iluminación de todos los hombres. Es algo que merece nuestra eterna gratitud.

La misión de los discípulos, por su parte, consiste en extender y ampliar el camino que, generosamente, abrió el mentor. La senda que trazó el Daishonin hoy recorre la faz del mundo. A través de la lucha de nuestros compañeros, los prodigiosos Bodhisattvas de la Tierra, esa "gran ruta hacia la felicidad" hoy se extiende por 128 países. El sol de la justicia ha comenzado a elevarse. Estoy absolutamente convencido de que el Buda original, Nichiren Daishonin, reconocerá con las mayores expresiones de elogio a los que se dedican a tan noble misión.

En el fragmento del goshō que estudiaremos esta vez, el Daishonin afirma que los seguidores de la escuela Tendai son los grandes enemigos del pueblo: por un lado, tienen plena conciencia de que el Sutra del Loto es la enseñanza suprema; por el otro, no sólo evitan luchar contra el mal, sino que también se alían con los que persiguen al

Daishonin.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, fundador y presidente de la Soka Gakkai, comentó: "De todas las escuelas Nichiren que hoy existen en el Japón, parecería que la Nichiren Shoshu es la que más se asemeja a la escuela Tendai en los tiempos del Daishonin."¹¹

Y tenía toda la razón. Los integrantes del clero de la Nichiren Shoshu, que tantas

La SGI, como auténtica heredera del Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin, abrió un camino de paz que hoy atraviesa el planeta entero. Hace veinte años, cuando la China y la Unión Soviética se hallaban en conflicto, cuando entre los soviéticos y los norteamericanos sólo existía el vínculo de la "guerra fría," ¿quién podría haber imaginado el estado del mundo actual?

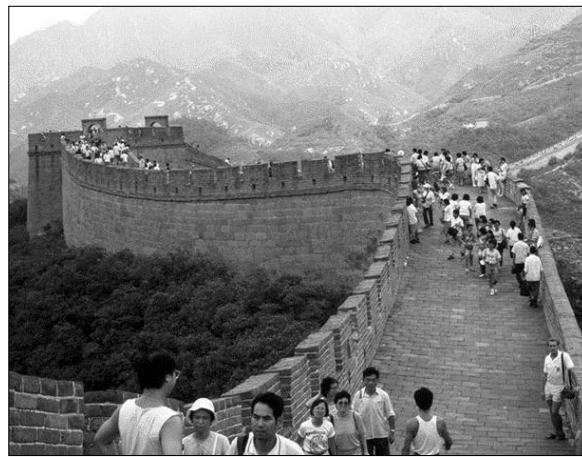
veces obstruyeron el kosen-rufu en lugar de apoyar esta sagrada empresa en bien de la felicidad humana, son "grandes enemigos del pueblo." La historia ha demostrado que sus actos coinciden con los que el Daishonin repudia en "La Apertura de los Ojos."

El máximo honor consiste en enfrentar las peores persecuciones

El buda Shakyamuni, maestro de las enseñanzas, fue insultado por todos los seguidores de las doctrinas no budistas y calificado como hombre de gran perversidad. El gran maestro T'ien-t'ai fue objeto de enconada enemistad por parte de las tres escuelas del sur y de las siete escuelas del norte. Tokuchi, del Japón, lo criticó por haber usado sus diez centímetros de lengua con el afán de destruir las enseñanzas de Shakyamuni y de destruir el cuerpo del Buda de un metro y medio de altura.¹² El gran maestro Dengyo fue despreciado por los monjes de Nara, quienes dijeron: "¡Saicho¹³ nunca ha estado en la capital de la China T'ang!" Pero todos estos insultos se perpetraron por causa del Sutra del Loto, y, por lo tanto, no representan ninguna deshonra para los hombres que debieron soportarlos. No hay vergenza más grande que ser elogiado por los necios. Ahora que he incurrido en la ira de las autoridades

[y me encuentro en el exilio.] los sacerdotes de las escuelas Tendai y Shingon deben de estar celebrándolo. Son hombres muy extraños y desvergonzados.¹⁴

La justicia siempre provoca persecuciones, tal como el sol siempre sufre el acoso de las nubes. Las dificultades son, en todo caso, prueba de rectitud. No puede haber máximo honor que hacer frente a las peores per-



secuciones.

Hasta Shakyamuni fue calumniado: decían que era un hombre de "gran perversidad." El gran maestro T'ien-t'ai recibió insultos a carradas de parte de lo que, en su tiempo, fueron las diez escuelas poderosas. Y doscientos años después, seguía siendo objeto de escarnios; el sacerdote Tokuchi, de la escuela japonesa Hosso, llegó a decir: "¡Qué tontería has hecho, Chih-i (T'ien-t'ai)! ¡Calumniaste las enseñanzas que Shakyamuni transmitió durante toda su vida y sembraste el mundo de confusión!"

El gran maestro Dengyo fue vilipendiado por las escuelas de Nara. Decían de él: "Saicho sostiene haber ido a la China, pero volvió enseguida sin haber visitado la Capital y luego de haber estudiado sólo un corto tiempo en las provincias."

T'ien-t'ai y Dengyo recibieron semejantes críticas porque habían defendido el Sutra del Loto, porque habían lanzado una proclama para regresar al espíritu del Sutra del Loto y de Shakyamuni. Los que nunca actúan jamás tienen que vérselas con críticas ni calumnias.

Por otro lado, los que creían estar criticando sólo a esos dos grandes maestros T'ien-t'ai y Dengyo en realidad estaban ultrajando la esencia de Shakyamuni. Pues cuanto más difama alguien a un devoto del Sutra del Loto, más está difamando al Sutra del Loto en sí. Pero, por otro lado, los que se entregan a

la difamación no se dan cuenta de la gravedad de sus actos. No puede haber gente más penosa ni más digna de lástima.

Los verdaderos tontos fueron los que se alegraron cuando la enseñanza correcta recibió ataques y cuando el Daishonin marchó al exilio, a pesar de ser un hombre de justicia cuya conducta reflejaba exactamente los principios del Sutra del Loto.

"No hay vergüenza más grande que ser elogiado por los necios." El presidente Makiguchi hizo de estas palabras su propia consigna. Fue perseguido por las autoridades militares y traicionado por el propio clero de la Nichiren Shoshu. Y, sin embargo, no dejaba que nada lo intimidase; todo lo tomaba con compostura. Cuando el presidente Toda disertaba sobre "La Apertura de los Ojos," decía:

Basado en estas palabras, el señor Makiguchi no creía que fuese ninguna deshonra el tener que enfrentar críticas o persecuciones por la causa del Sutra del Loto. Murió en prisión por sus convicciones, ya que dio a conocer Nam-myoho-enge-kyo de las Tres Grandes Leyes Secretas, esencia del Sutra del Loto, con la seguridad de que ser elogiado por los necios era la peor deshonra, mientras que ser alabado por el gran sabio [Nichiren Daishonin] era la gloria suprema. Creo que él fue un ejemplo sin parangón para todos los que abrazamos la fe en el Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin.¹⁵

Y, a los jóvenes, los exhortaba así:

En la contienda por la Ley, en esta época corrupta [llamada Último Día de la Ley], su deseo debería ser ganar la alabanza del Daishonin como brillantes y jóvenes luchadores. Para una persona de sabiduría, ser elogiada por los tontos es la peor de

las deshonras. Pero merecer la alabanza del gran sabio es, sin duda, el honor supremo en la vida.¹⁶

Estas palabras, que los presidentes Makiguchi y Toda llevaron en el corazón como consigna, son también el lema de la Soka Gakkai. Poner en práctica este mensaje de oro será el eterno espíritu de la Soka Gakkai.

¡Avancemos de un modo que cuadre dignamente a la SGI! Caminemos en línea recta por este camino, por la gloriosa ruta de la Soka Gakkai!

Si la gente quiere reír, que ría. Si la gente quiere entregarse a la calumnia, que así lo haga. Las personas que actúan de este modo, ¿podrían mostrarles a los demás una forma de ser felices? Y los que escuchan a la gente así, ¿podrían hallar alivio a su sufrimiento prestando oídos a sus comentarios? Creo que todos coincidiremos en que no.

La Soka Gakkai es un león, completamente libre del miedo. Es suficiente con que nos comportemos de tal modo, que merezcamos el elogio del Daishonin, Buda original. Las generaciones futuras, sin falta, celebrarán todo este esfuerzo que hoy estamos haciendo.

El Daishonin sentía un regocijo indescriptible, aun en el exilio

El buda Shakyamuni apareció en el mundo saha, Kumara-jiva viajó a la China de la dinastía Chih'i,¹⁷ y Dengyo fue también a este país [en bien del Sutra del Loto]. Aryadeva y Aryasimha sacrificaron su cuerpo. El bodhisattva Yakuo se quemó los brazos como ofrenda [al Buda] y el príncipe Shotoku se arrancó la piel de la mano [y transcribió el sutra sobre ella].¹⁸ Shakyamuni, cuando realizaba la práctica de bodhisattva, vendió su propia carne para hacer ofrendas [al Buda]. Y en otra oportunidad, cuando vivió con la identidad del bodhisattva Gyobo, utilizó uno de sus huesos como pluma [para dejar escritas las enseñanzas del Buda].

T'ien-t'ai ha dicho que "el método escogido debería concordar con la época." El budismo [en su modalidad de práctica] debería estar de acuerdo con los tiempos. Por lo que yo hice, merecí la condena al exilio, pero éste es un sufrimiento menor, que concluir en esta existencia y no merece un solo lamento de mi parte. En vidas futuras, disfrutaré de inmensa felicidad; y la sola idea basta

Material de estudio Examen de Entrada para contestar las preguntas número 37 y 40.

Mediante la fe, uno puede adquirir la sabiduría de Buda y lograr la iluminación.

El Gohonzon es llamado mandala, término sánscrito traducido al chino y significa “perfectamente dotado” o “racimo de bendiciones”. Aquí el Daishonin interpreta estas expresiones como que el Gohonzon está dotado con todos los Diez Estados. Como se mencionó anteriormente, las diferentes figuras inscritas a la derecha e izquierda

MATERIAL DE ESTUDIO PARA EL EXAMEN DE ENTRADA

Fragmento del Goshō ‘El Verdadero Aspecto del Gohonzon’

El estar “dotado con los Diez Mundos” significa que todos los Diez Estados, están contenidos sin excepción en el Estado de Buda. Es por eso que al Gohonzon se le llama mandala, término sánscrito que significa “perfectamente dotado” o “racimo de bendiciones”. El Gohonzon sólo se encuentra en la fe. Como afirma el sutra: “Sólo mediante a la fe uno puede ingresar al Estado de Buda.”¹

de “Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, Nichiren”, a lo largo del centro del Gohonzon, representan los Diez Estados de la vida del Buda original.

Por ejemplo, los Budas Shakyamuni y Taho representan su estado del Estado de Buda; los cuatro líderes de los Bodhisattvas de la Tierra así como

los bodhisattvas de la enseñanza teórica, tales como Fugen y Monyu representan su estado de Bodhisattva; Shariputra y Maudgalyayana, los dos ve-

hículos; los varios dioses budistas, el estado del Paraíso; el rey Ashura, el estado de la Ira; y Devadatta, el estado del Infierno. Todos los diez estados de la vida del Daishonin están presentes sin excepción.

Anteriormente en el Goshō, el Daishonin declara, “Iluminados por los cinco caracteres de la Ley Mística, ellos muestran la naturaleza iluminada que ellos poseen inherentemente. Este es el verdadero objeto de veneración” (MW-1, 212.). Los mandalas usados como objetos de veneración en otras sectas, tales como Shingon, representan solamente Budas y Bod-

POR FAVOR VEA GOSHO, 10

LOS OJOS, DESDE PÁG. 8

para motivar en mí el más profundo deleite.¹⁹

Shakyamuni escogió nacer en el mundo saha, un ámbito sembrado de sufrimientos, con tal de exponer el Sutra del Loto. Para traducir el Sutra del Loto, Kumarajiva viajó desde Asia Central hasta la China y debió soportar tremendas dificultades para llegar a destino. Y, para llegar a la esencia del Sutra del Loto, el gran maestro Dengyo cruzó los mares

traicioneros que rodeaban el Japón, rumbo a tierras chinas.

En cada uno de estos casos, la acción se vio generada por un inmenso sentido del propósito. Cuando un hombre posee un espíritu incontenible, sin falta lo traduce en actos concretos.

El bodhisattva Aryadeva y el venerable Aryasimha, ambos herederos de la enseñanza de Shakyamuni, amonestaron a los gobernantes corruptos y dieron su vida por la enseñanza. También se cuenta que el bodhisattva Rey de la Medicina (Yakuo) se quemó los codos como ofrenda al Buda y que el príncipe Shotoku del Japón se arrancó la “piel de la mano” para utilizarla como pergamino, sobre el cual copió los títulos de los sutras.

En una existencia anterior, cuando Shakyamuni se hallaba practicando como bodhisattva en busca de la iluminación, llegó a vender su propia carne para poder hacer una ofrenda al Buda. En otra existencia, con la identidad de Gyobo Bonji, utilizó la piel como pergamino, uno de sus huesos como pluma, y su sangre como tinta, para poder dejar testimonio de la enseñanza del Buda.

La forma que adopta la práctica budista difiere según la característica de cada época. El Budismo “concuera con los



La Soka Gakkai es un león, completamente libre del miedo. Es suficiente con que nos comportemos de tal modo, que merezcamos el elogio del Daishonin, Buda original.

tiempos,” pero el camino y el espíritu fundamental no cambian. El punto primordial es consagrarse con todo su ser a la Ley y a la felicidad de las personas.

La Ley verdadera ha sido transmitida gracias a los esfuerzos sinceros y altruistas de personas como aquellas. Se pudo transmitir gracias a una “cadena repetidora” de individuos que actuaron de acuerdo con la época en que vivieron. Esto, de por sí, constituye un gran logro en la historia del budismo.

Pero, según afirma Nichiren Daishonin, los que difunden la Ley Mística en el Último Día son mucho más nobles aún que quienes practicaban en los días Primero y Medio de la Ley. Todos ustedes son valerosas y

nobles personas dedicadas a su misión; están abriendo un camino allí donde sólo había espesura; están difundiendo la filosofía del Daishonin a través de una maraña de columnias y de obstáculos. El Daishonin no podría menos que admirarlos. Tengamos la convicción de que Shakyamuni, el buda Taho (Muchos tesoros) y todos los budas de las diez direcciones también estarán encomiando nuestro trabajo para propagar la Ley Mística de un modo que concuerde con esta época, el Último Día de la Ley.

El Daishonin concluye “La Apertura de los Ojos” con una nota exultante: “Por lo que yo hice, merecí la condena al exilio, pero éste es un sufrimiento

menor, que concluir en esta existencia y no merece un solo lamento de mi parte. En vidas futuras, disfrutaré de inmensa felicidad; y la sola idea basta para motivar en mí el más profundo deleite.” Esta es su grandiosa declaración de victoria, de victoria espiritual, que resplandecerá por siempre en la historia humana.

Era un simple exiliado; no tenía el menor espacio de libertad. Se hallaba confinado en una diminuta isla que, por sus características, constituía un presidio natural. El presidente Toda sostuvo, en una ocasión: “En los tiempos modernos, el exilio a Sado sería lo mismo que el destierro al Sahara.” Y, no obstante, el Daishonin exhibió siempre la postura de un monarca. Nadie podía encadenarle el corazón; para su alma no había grilletes. No había espada que pudiese hacer mella en su profunda convicción.

Encaramado en las alturas luminosas de kuon ganjo, él escuchaba con total compostura hasta la más violenta de las persecuciones.

El orgullo y la convicción de estar dedicando la vida a la Ley Mística son algo que nos permite, también a nosotros, adquirir semejante grandeza, ascender a una cumbre de gloria verdadera. En nuestro avance, nos envuelve la resplandeciente luz dorada que esparce, como una estela, la tremenda lucha espiritual del Daishonin.

Así concluye la disertación del presidente Ikeda sobre “La apertura de los ojos.”

1. *Kaimoku Sho (Goshō Zenshu, págs. 186-237.)* escrito en febrero de 1272, cuando el Daishonin tenía cincuenta y un años.
Nota del editor: Para no afectar

la ilación del texto, en algunos casos la traducción puede diferir un poco de otras versiones publicadas.

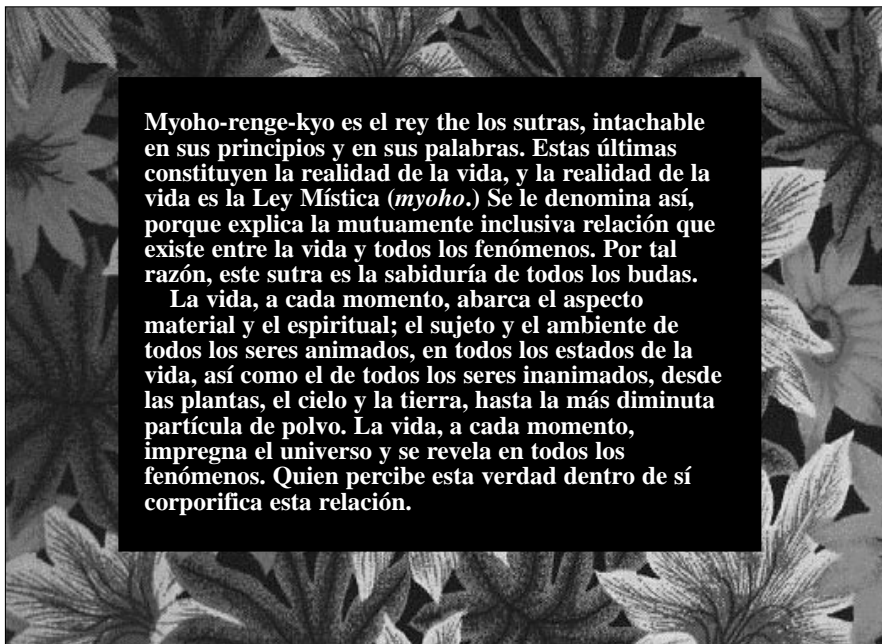
2. En sus comentarios sobre el Sutra del Nirvana.
3. *Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* (edición revisada,) vol.2, pág.187.
4. *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin.* vol.4, pág. 272.
5. Ho on Sho Mondan (Comentario sobre “Retribución por los favores recibidos,”) pág.438.
6. *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin,* vol.2, pág. 59.
7. *The Lotus Sutra* (El sutra del Loto,) trad. Al Inglés por Burton Watson, Editorial de la Universidad de Colombia, Nueva York, 1993, cap.16, p. ag.230.
8. *Ib.,* cap. 16, pág.229.
9. *Ib.,* pág. 231.
10. En la cuarta convención deportiva de la División de Jóvenes del este de Japón, realizada en el estadio Mitsuzawa, Yokohama, en 1957.
11. En la quinta reunión general de la Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Sociedad pedagógica para la creación de valores.) Precursora de la Soka Gakkai, en 1942.
12. Sus declaraciones figuran en el *Chuhen Gikyo,* citado, a su vez, en la obra *Shugo Kokkai Sho,* de Dengyo.
13. Saicho es otro de los nombres con que solía designarse a Dengyo.
14. *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin,* vol.2, págs. 187-88.
15. *Toda Josei Zenshu* (Obras completas de Josei Toda,) *Seikyo Shimbu,* 1985, vol. 6, págs. 459-460.
16. “Precepts para los jóvenes,” 1951.
17. Kumarajiva aceptó una invitación de Yao Hsing, rey de la dinastía Chih’I tardía, y acudió a la capital, Ch’ang-an, en 401. Allí participó en la traducción de numerosos escritos budistas, del sánscrito al chino.
18. Se halla una declaración semejante en el *Shotoku Taishi Den Shiki,* obra del sacerdote Ken Shin (1130-1192,) de la escuela Tendai.
19. *The Major writings of Nichiren Daishonin,* vol. 2, pág. 188.

A continuación el Material de Estudio para el Examen de Entrada para contestar las preguntas modelos número: P28, P29.

Nichiren Daishonin declara en el fragmento anterior que el Sutra del Loto explica “la relación mutuamente inclusiva que existe entre la vida y todos los fenómenos.” Aquí “vida” significa “esencia única” o la última realidad que se manifiesta a cada momento en las vidas de los mortales comunes. “Fenómeno” se refiere al mundo fenomenológico cambiante que percibimos a través de nuestros sentidos. El Sutra del Loto nos enseña que todos los fenómenos del universo entero están inherentes en el momento de vida, y que el momento de vida penetra y se revela a su vez en todos los fenómenos cambiantes. Esta relación está expresada en el segundo capítulo, “Hoben”, como “todo fenómeno manifestando el aspecto verdadero” *shoho jisso*. En contraste a otras enseñanzas que sostienen que la realidad ordinaria de los mortales comunes y la última verdad ocupan dimensiones separadas, el Sutra del Loto nos enseña que son inseparables y a fin de cuentas, es una. Esta relación sobrepasa nuestro entendimiento intelectual, debido a esto se le llama “mística”. Basándose en la enseñanza del Sutra del Loto, Tien-t’ái desarrolló este concepto de “la relación mutuamente inclusiva que existe entre la vida y todos los fenómenos” como el

MATERIAL DE ESTUDIO PARA EL EXAMEN DE ENTRADA

Fragmento del Gosho ‘Sobre Como Lograr el Estado de Buda’



Myoho-rence-kyo es el rey de los sutras, intachable en sus principios y en sus palabras. Estas últimas constituyen la realidad de la vida, y la realidad de la vida es la Ley Mística (myoho.) Se le denomina así, porque explica la mutuamente inclusiva relación que existe entre la vida y todos los fenómenos. Por tal razón, este sutra es la sabiduría de todos los budas.

La vida, a cada momento, abarca el aspecto material y el espiritual; el sujeto y el ambiente de todos los seres animados, en todos los estados de la vida, así como el de todos los seres inanimados, desde las plantas, el cielo y la tierra, hasta la más diminuta partícula de polvo. La vida, a cada momento, impregna el universo y se revela en todos los fenómenos. Quien percibe esta verdad dentro de sí corporifica esta relación.

principio de *ichinen sanzen*.

Nichiren Daishonin elabora sobre este concepto en el próximo párrafo del Gosho. Él explica que el momento de la vida se manifiesta como cuerpo y espíritu, como uno mismo y el ambiente y como seres sensibles e insensibles. Poseyendo los diez mundos dentro de sí

penetra el universo y a la vez está completamente contenido en una partícula de polvo. La naturaleza mutuamente inclusiva de nuestras vidas, a cada momento, es también ilucidada en el Sokamon Sho del Daishonin (Sobre las Enseñanzas confirmadas por los Budas a través del Tiempo).

Cuando examinamos la naturaleza de la mente no encontraremos un principio que requiera nacimiento, ni un final que requiera la muerte; en vez descubriremos la verdadera mente (esencia de la vida) la cual está libre del nacimiento y la muerte. Esta mente no se puede consumir por las llamas al final

del kalpa, ni se puede arrastrar por inundaciones. No se puede cortar con espadas, ni ser atacadas por flechas. Aunque cabe dentro de una semilla de mostaza, la semilla no se expande, ni la mente se contrae. Aunque llena la vasta inmensidad del espacio, el espacio no es lo suficientemente ancho, ni la mente demasiado pequeña. (*Gosho Zenshu*, pág. 563).

Con nuestros sentidos percibimos nuestras vidas limitadas en relación al tiempo y el espacio, separadas del gran cosmos. Sin embargo, desde la perspectiva del budismo, tal percepción no representa una visión completa.

Cuando “percibimos la verdad mística dentro de nosotros mismos”, nos damos cuenta que nuestras vidas abarcan el universo entero. Tal como en “El Verdadero Objeto de Veneración”, citando a Miao-lo, Nichiren Daishonin nos dice: “De acuerdo con este principio de (*ichinen sanzen*), cuando logramos el Estado de Buda, nuestra vida penetra el universo entero tanto física como espiritualmente.

Ichinen sanzen es complejo y no es fácil de captar. En esencia, podemos interpretar que significa que la vida en cada momento está dotada de la naturaleza de Buda.

El Daishonin se refiere a esto en el contexto de este Gosho, para enfatizar que no existe poder ni verdad alguna fuera de uno mismo; todo potencial se encuentra dentro de nuestra propia vida. ❏

GOSHO, DESDE PÁG. 9

hisattvas, reflejando así, la visión superficial e incompleta de que eliminamos los estados inferiores cuando logramos La Iluminación. Pero el Gohonzon está dotado con los Diez Estados.

El Daishonin enseñó que cada uno de los Diez Estados tiene todos los diez dentro de sí, lo cual significa que aún los llamados “senderos malvados” del Infierno, Hambre y Animalidad contienen el potencial de la iluminación. Los Diez Estados de la vida del Buda Verdadero están incorporados en el Gohonzon “iluminados por los cinco caracteres de Myoho-rence-kyo” y trabajan de una manera iluminada para crear valor y llevar a otros hacia la felicidad.

La gran diferencia entre el Daishonin y nosotros es que, dejados a nuestros propios medios, Nam-myoho-rence-kyo nunca estaría al centro de nuestras vidas. Una representación gráfica

de nuestras vidas podría mostrar al Rey Ashura en el centro, indicando Ira o el demonio Kishimojin, indicando Hambre. Nam-myoho-rence-kyo estaría en una esquina, por así decirlo. Pero mediante a la práctica del gongyo y daimoku traemos de regreso Nam-myoho-rence-kyo al centro de nuestras vidas.

Entonces, todos nuestros estados de vida inherentes desde el Infierno hasta el Estado de Buda serán iluminados por la Ley Mística, en vez de estar cubiertos por una falsa ilusión y estar en desarmonía unos con otros. En una forma similar a la de un pedazo de metal es magnetizado mediante el contacto constante con un imán, a medida de que continuemos entonando Nam-myoho-rence-kyo al Gohonzon, nuestros diez estados se alinean con los diez estados de la vida del Buda Verdadero, y comienzan a trabajar en la forma más positiva, beneficiándonos a nosotros y a los demás.

En su comentario sobre “El Verdadero Objeto de Ven-

eración” Nichikan Shonin, el vigésimosexto sumo sacerdote de la Nichiren Shoshu escribe: “Si uno sólo cree en el Gohonzon e invoca la Ley Mística, los diez estados de la vida de uno se convertirán en los mismos que están en el Objeto de Veneración”.

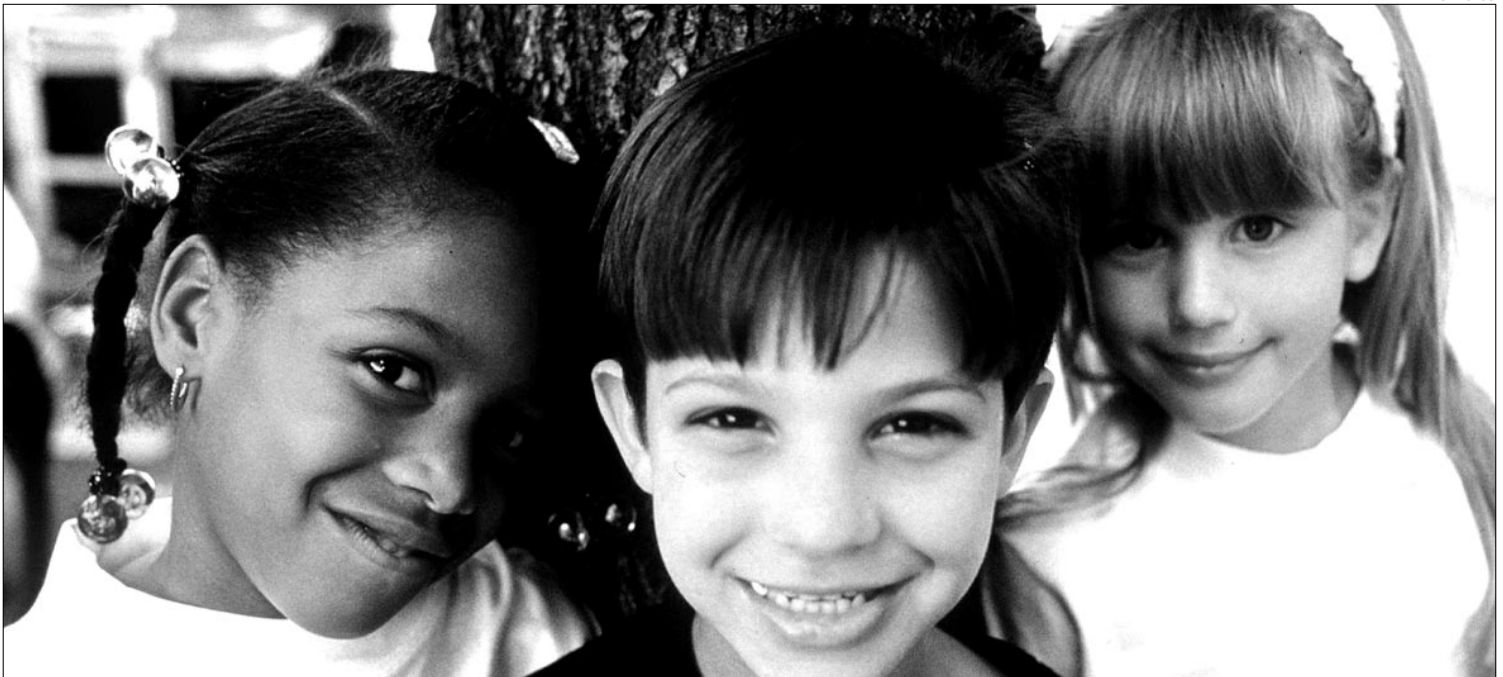
La fusión con el Gohonzon que permite emerger nuestra naturaleza innata de Buda es posible solamente mediante nuestra fe. Así el Daishonin amonesta, “el Gohonzon es encontrado solamente en la fe”. Sutrás provisionales, frecuentemente, enfatizaban el desarrollo de la sabiduría como la clave para obtener el Estado de Buda. Sin embargo, en el Sutra del Loto, la iluminación del Buda muestra ser tan profunda que ninguna sabiduría ordinaria podría comprenderla o abarcarla. El pasaje inicial del “Hoben” o segundo capítulo dice *Sho-but chi-e. Jinjin muryo. Go chi-e mon. Nange nannyu. Issai shomon. Hyaku-shi-but-su. Sho fu no chi*. (La sabiduría de todos los Budas es infinitamente profunda

e inmensurable. La entrada a esta sabiduría es difícil de entender y difícil de atravesar. Ni los hombre de Aprendizaje (*shomon*) ni los hombre de Realización (*engaku*) son capaces de comprenderlo— sin mencionar, por supuesto, los mortales comunes. Por consiguiente, el Sutra del Loto enfatiza la fe como la clave para alcanzar la iluminación. Aún Shariputra, el discípulo shomon más sobresaliente del Buda, conocido como el “primero en sabiduría”, solamente pudo lograr La Iluminación cuando aceptó la fe en las enseñanzas del Buda. El “Hiyu” o tercer capítulo dice, “Aún usted, Shariputra, en cuanto a este sutra concierne, ganó entrada mediante a la fe. “¿Cuánto más así los demás discípulos shomon!” Así el Sutra del Loto enfatiza, “Solamente con la fe puede uno entrar en el Estado de Buda”.

Nichiren Daishonin también enseña el principio de “ganar sabiduría mediante la fe”, que significa que mediante la fe, uno

puede adquirir la sabiduría del buda y lograr La Iluminación. Su Gosho “Shishin Gohon Sho” (Las Cuatro Etapas de la Fe y las Cinco Etapas de la Prácticas) declara, “Debido a que la sabiduría de un es inadecuada, uno gana sabiduría mediante la fe. La fe se convierte en la causa para la sabiduría” (MW-6, 216).

Desde otra perspectiva podemos decir que la fe en el Gohonzon es en sí una expresión de nuestra naturaleza inherente de Buda. Así como Nichiren Daishonin dice en “El Verdadero Objeto de Veneración”. El que mortales comunes nacidos en el Último Día de la Ley puedan creer en el Sutra del Loto se debe al hecho de que el mundo del Estado de Buda está presente en el mundo de la Humanidad. Y Nichikan Shonin dice en su “Sanju Hiden Sho” (La Triple Enseñanza Secreta), “Una fe fuerte en el Sutra del Loto es en sí el Estado de Buda.”



ABC PHOTOS

'The French philosopher Roger Garaudy suggests that while most people believe a person is born young and then ages and dies, in reality acquiring youth in the deepest sense is a very long and challenging process.... The German author Hermann Hesse (1877-1962) writes that the more one matures, the younger one grows.'

What Does It Really Mean To Be Youthful?

Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism allows practitioners to become truly ageless and spiritually strong, President Ikeda says. Working for the sake of the people allows us to live vigorous lives.

SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech at the 18th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held in conjunction with the 6th Women's Division Leaders Meeting and the 6th Chiba Prefecture General Meeting, at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Jan. 8.

What a memorable way to start the year by holding our first leaders meeting on such a snowy day! Congratulations to everyone. Allow me also to warmly welcome our friends from Spain, Taiwan, South Korea and elsewhere, who have braved the cold to join us here. My congratulations, too, to our admirable women's division on the holding of their leaders meeting and to the members of Chiba, that champion of the Kanto region, on their prefecture general meeting today.

Nichiren Daishonin says of his age, "We live today in a time of trouble, where the power of the people has grown weak" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 281). The same can probably be said of Japan today. In fact, the Japanese people are perhaps even more spiritually weak now than then.

The Daishonin's decree, I firmly believe, is to strengthen the power of the people, to inspire their enthusiasm, to support their activities and to put them in command of their own destiny. This is the only way to achieve social prosperity and kosen-rufu.

Japan's First Environmental Disaster

Modern Japan's first major environmental disaster was the Ashio Copper Mine Incident that occurred just before the turn of the century.

The disaster occurred as a result of arsenic and other toxins dumped into the Watarase River basin by the Ashio Copper Mine in Tochigi Prefecture, with serious repercussions on some 300,000 local residents.

The Soka Gakkai's second president, Josei Toda, often spoke about this incident. He always instructed and informed us with his deeply insightful perspectives. He was truly a great teacher.

When the disaster occurred, the noted politician and activist Shozo Tanaka (1841-1913) sprang to action.

Shozo Tanaka was a thinker and human rights activist who lived during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and who saw Japan's rapid transformation into an industrial society. He was born in 1841 to a farm family in Shimotsuke (the present city of Sano in

Tochigi Prefecture). As a young village headman, he protested the actions of a corrupt domain official. Though imprisoned and tortured, he was not daunted. In the end, he was released from prison and the corrupt official was dismissed in disgrace.

Later, while working as a prefectural official, Tanaka was imprisoned on false charges, spending approximately three years in jail. During that time he devoted himself to reading books and studying political science and economics.

In 1890, when he was 49, Tanaka was elected to the Diet in the first parliamentary elections held under the country's new constitution. For 10 years, Tanaka was an outspoken critic of the government for its failure to act to curtail the pollution caused by the Ashio Copper Mine. Disgusted by the stubborn refusal of those in power

to heed his pleas, Tanaka finally abandoned politics and went to live among the villagers who had suffered from the disaster. In 1913, he died while still carrying on his work among the people.

Shozo Tanaka said of the Japanese leaders in his day, "None of them cares a straw about the people." He angrily condemned their callous indifference. It was an outrage to him that government and business should actively collude to oppress the people and inflict suffering and misery upon them. It was as if the government were trying to wage war on the people, he declared.

In a far cry from the ideal of government as the people's servant, most of Japan's leaders privately believed that the government was far more important

PLEASE SEE YOUTHFUL, NEXT PAGE

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS SPEECH

The Daishonin's decree, I firmly believe, is to strengthen the power of the people, to inspire their enthusiasm, to support their activities and to put them in command of their own destiny. This is the only way to achieve social prosperity and kosen-rufu.



The French philosopher Roger Garaudy suggests that while most people believe a person is born young and then ages and dies, in reality acquiring youth in the deepest sense is a very long and challenging process. The "youth" of which he speaks refers to the spiritual strength not to stagnate or grow resistant to change but to stay ever open to new possibilities. It is the power of the spirit that refuses to succumb to complacency and strives to keep moving forward.



In the Soka Gakkai, we find that it is by and large those members advanced in years who prove themselves to be masters in the art of Buddhist dialogue. Many young people are no match for them, because they may lack the depth and length of life experience. By virtue of having thoroughly tempered their lives over many years, these masters of dialogue have a knack for interacting with new acquaintances in a very flexible and easy way. They also have wisdom and the ability to reach out and embrace everyone.



Shakyamuni proclaims, "People who are vigilant do not die; people who are negligent are as if dead." This is definitely true. Unremitting diligence — brave and vigorous exertion — in our Buddhist practice infuses our lives with the great life force of the eternal Buddha. In contrast, people who try to get by in life through cunning and deception enact a living death.



We must not be swayed by our environment. Even if we should be alone against many enemies, we should fight for what is right. That is living as a true disciple of the Daishonin. And when we do so, the Daishonin will protect us without fail. Crucial to this is our strong resolve, firm faith and the invincible Soka Gakkai spirit.

YOUTHFUL, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

than the people. Many of them had nationalist leanings and felt little compunction in using government authority to subvert justice and truth to promote their ends. Tanaka battled such leaders head on with a furious resolve to protect the people at all cost.

Similarly, in my own struggles, I have been motivated by the sole desire to protect my precious fellow SGI members.

Tanaka eventually resigned as a member of the Diet. Leaving his family to go and live in a modest dwelling among the villagers, he fought to the end of his life together with the victims of the copper mine disaster. He was a great humanist.

What was the root cause of this Japanese tragedy? According to Shozo Tanaka, it was that the country's leaders lacked spiritual fiber. They had neither religious faith nor spirituality, he asserted. This is a profound insight.

Tanaka lamented, too, that the Japanese people meekly allowed themselves to be herded about and treated like so much livestock. They just grumbled and complained, he said, but lacked the energy and courage of their convictions to vent their anger and rise up to change the situation. He deplored this tendency of his compatriots.

What could be done to change it? He was firmly convinced that the only thing that could save the Japanese people from their apathy and resignation was a fresh and vibrant religion, calling for a break with decadent, enervated religions and their corrupt, degenerate clerics.

At the time, Tanaka had found inspiration in Christian writings.

The Only Way To Revitalize Society

Tanaka ultimately concluded that political action, speech and practical efforts alone are ineffective in changing the way people think and behave. Only through religious reformation, he believed, could people's hearts and minds be revitalized. It was while striving to realize this aspiration that his life ended.

Today, Tanaka is regarded as one of Japan's greatest thinkers of the Meiji period (1868–1912). He is also remarkable for the fact that, long before anyone else, he predicted that ruin lay in store for Japan. As early as 1912, he prophesied in his diary:

"Japan will meet destruction, and from its ashes a sage will be born." Tanaka's prime objective was to develop new strength in the people.

I am confident that today the SGI's movement for religious reformation is actively invigorating and revitalizing the power of the people from within, at the most fundamental level.

In the years after Tanaka's death, Japanese nationalism intensified and countless people lost their lives in successive campaigns of military aggression, culminating in World War II. The victims of nationalism were the ordinary citizens.

Many today are worried that Japan is once again showing signs of embarking down a nationalistic path. The great tragedy of earlier decades must never be allowed to repeat. And it is our duty to ensure that it doesn't.

Let us advance with pride and confidence in our mission.

Acquiring Youthfulness

What is youth? The French philosopher Roger Garaudy suggests that while most people believe a person is born young and then ages and dies, in reality acquiring youth in the deepest sense is a very long and challenging process.

The youth of which he speaks is the spiritual strength not to stagnate or grow resistant to change but to stay ever open to new possibilities. It is the power of the spirit that refuses to succumb to complacency and strives to keep moving forward.

In this sense, babies and children do not possess true youth and spiritual strength. They yet lack the tempering of life experience so vital for the development of those traits. The same applies even to young adults — if their characters remain unforged, then they are actually old. Only a person whose spirit has been tempered and enlightened through long and varied struggles in the course of daily life can be said to possess real youthfulness and inner fortitude.

The German author Hermann Hesse (1877–1962) writes that the more one matures, the younger one grows. And certainly there are many people who, as they age, become increasingly vigorous and energetic, more broad-minded and tolerant, living with a great sense of freedom and assurance. It is important to remember that aging and growing old are not necessarily the same thing.

From its February issue on, the Japanese monthly journal *Ushio* will carry the serialization of a dialogue I am conducting with Dr. René Simard, rector of Canada's University of Montreal and an internationally renowned cancer researcher, on the subject of birth, aging, sickness and death. Dr. Simard and I recently had another opportunity for a wide-ranging discussion [Jan. 6] during his visit to Japan.

Through my continued dialogues with outstanding specialists in various fields, I hope to pass on precious jewels of wisdom for posterity. It is with this spirit that I have published nearly 30 dialogues. And I hope to continue these efforts.

While the people I talk with come from all different specialties, I can have deep conversations with them because I uphold the universal teaching of Buddhism. The purpose of these discussions is not simply to inform but to provide a substantive discussion of fundamental issues and principles. It is my wish to leave behind dialogues that shine with valuable insights on life and the world.

Grow Younger With Each Passing Year

Dr. Guy Bourgeault, professor of bioethics of the University of Montreal, is also participating in later installments of the *Ushio* dialogue. In one part, he describes his views on the meaning of true youth as follows:

I have often said that I felt "younger" at 30 years of age than at 20, younger at 40 than at 30.... I felt a greater freedom. I felt more than before "in possession of my faculties," more "in control" as we sometimes say. Richer experiences, themselves being more numerous and undoubtedly more diverse. More assured, taking into account this richness, and more open, more available for new encounters, new friendships, new confrontations, etc.

It seems awkward to me that we place openness and flexibility on the side of youth and closed rigidity and sclerosis under the seal of old age. In the concrete experience of life, which varies surely from one person to another, things are more nuanced. It seems to me that the same goes for institutions, societies and persons: the intransigence of youth impedes a lot of learning. In any case, openness and the welcome of the

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new seem to me easier at 40 years of age than at 20.

From my own experience, I would have to agree with Dr. Bourgeault's view. With age, he says, he has expanded the scope of his activities and his circle of friends and acquaintances.

In the Soka Gakkai, we find that it is by and large those members advanced in years who prove themselves to be masters in the art of Buddhist dialogue. Many young people are no match for them, because they may lack the depth and length of life experience.

By virtue of having thoroughly tempered their lives over many years, these masters of dialogue have a knack for interacting with new acquaintances in a very flexible and easy way. They also have wisdom and the ability to reach out and embrace everyone. I heartily congratulate all members who have achieved such profound character through many years of practice.

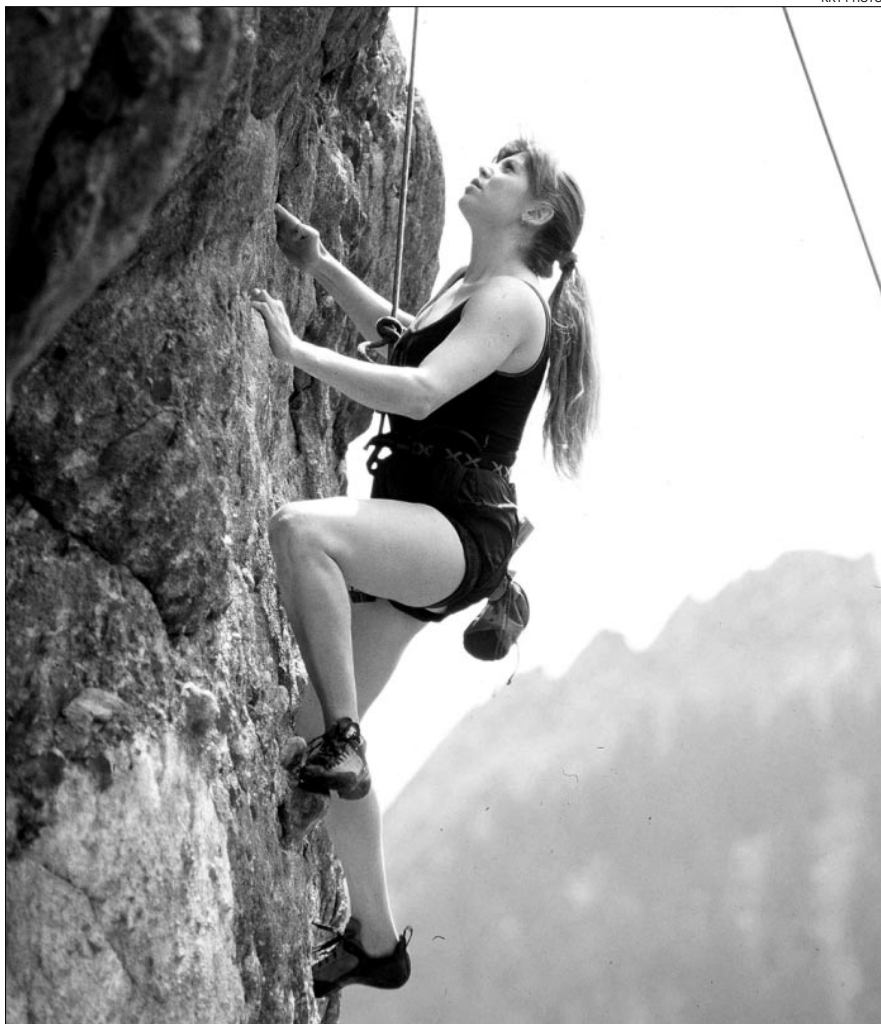
Nichiren Daishonin says of those who embrace the Mystic Law, "You will grow younger, and your good fortune will accumulate" (MW-5, 158). The Daishonin's teaching is absolutely free of any falsehood. The Lotus Sutra also promises perennial youth and eternal life, declaring that its practitioners "will know neither old age nor death" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 288). Surely this refers to a life that has been tempered and forged through unflagging Buddhist practice.

Shakyamuni proclaims, "People who are vigilant do not die; people who are negligent are as if dead." This is definitely true. Unremitting diligence in our Buddhist practice — brave and vigorous exertion — infuses our lives with the great life force of the eternal Buddha. In contrast, people who try to get by in life through cunning and deception enact a living death.

One perceptive observer said to me: "There are countless ageless people who have thoroughly forged their lives in the Soka Gakkai.... The life force that many of them exude gives one a palpable sense of life's eternal nature."

In addition to the young at heart, the SGI also has millions of admirable youth among its number. Nothing can shake our lively enthusiasm in the least.

With genuine youth and boundless life force, let us realize great victory in society, in activities for kosen-rufu and in our own lives again this year.



KRT PHOTOS

'A person who says "I'll do it," who is willing to take on a challenge even if he or she is the only one, is a true winner. The determination, the commitment to take action yourself is the force that leads to victory.'

Success Depends on Our Resolve

The efforts made by a single individual can be immensely important. Nichiren Daishonin repeatedly states that victory depends not on numbers but on a group or individual's attitude or resolve.

The Daishonin's words have profound meaning. He often speaks of his solitary struggle. In one passage, he writes: "Everyone in Japan, from the sovereign on down to the common people, all without exception tried to do me harm, but I have survived until this day. This is because, although I am alone, I have firm faith [in the Lotus Sutra]" (MW-3, 198). In other words, his strong faith enabled him to emerge triumphant, with his life intact, despite the harsh opposition and attacks of the entire country. I find this passage deeply moving.

We must not be swayed by our environment. Even if we should be alone against many enemies, we should fight for

what is right. That is living as a true disciple of the Daishonin. And when we do so, the Daishonin will protect us without fail. Crucial to this is our strong resolve, firm faith and the invincible Soka Gakkai spirit.

In the organization, too, if we let our numbers make us complacent and develop the lazy attitude that someone else will take care of it instead of taking responsibility ourselves, then we have already let ourselves be defeated, let decay begin to set in.

On the other hand, a person who says "I'll do it," who is willing to take on a challenge even if he or she is the only one, is a true winner. The determination, the commitment to take action yourself, is the force that leads to victory. As Buddhism teaches with the principle of 3,000 realms in a life-moment, our mind or attitude can change everything.

Please remember that a leader is not someone who takes it easy while getting others to do

the work. Being a leader does not give one the right to shout at others and behave arrogantly. A genuine leader employs sound judgment and wisdom to create an environment where everyone can practice and conduct their SGI activities in a way that creates the greatest possible value for all.

'I Am Merely the Son of a Commoner'

Nichiren Daishonin says of himself, "I was born in a remote land, and, moreover, a person of low station" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 94). Whereas Shakyamuni was born in a royal palace, the Daishonin was born in a remote village and had no particular standing in society.

The Daishonin also says: "I, Nichiren, am neither a resident of the capital, the center of the country, nor the son of a general on the frontiers. I am merely the son of a commoner and come from a remote province" (MW-5, 293).

Nichiren Daishonin is the

original Buddha, the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law. Shakyamuni and all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas throughout time and space are his followers. Yet the Daishonin proudly declares that he was born as a commoner in Awa Province [present-day Chiba Prefecture]. What a noble declaration this is! It is the quintessence of humanism.

Prestigious family background and social standing are ephemeral. One's worth as a human being is all that ultimately matters, not status, wealth or academic credentials.

Many friends have gathered here today from Chiba, the birthplace of Nichiren Daishonin, to hold their sixth general meeting. Once again, my heartfelt congratulations to you all.

The original Buddha, Nichiren Daishonin, was born as a person of the most lowly status. Why do you suppose that was?

The 26th high priest, Nichikan (1665-1726), offers two explanations. First, he says, it was "to clarify that [the Daishonin] was the votary of the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Day of the Law by calling forth the three powerful enemies." He elaborates: "Had the Daishonin been born to a powerful noble family, then even if he had exerted himself in propagation activities, it is unlikely that the three powerful enemies would have vied to attack him. Under such circumstances, how could he have revealed his true identity as the votary of the Lotus Sutra?" [*Nichikan Shonin Mondanshu* (Collected Commentaries of Nichikan)].

Shakyamuni predicted that the three powerful enemies would all descend upon the votary of the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Day. Had the Daishonin been on the side of the powerful, he would likely not have been severely persecuted. Thus, precisely because he was on the side of the people, he could actualize Shakyamuni's prophecies.

Calling forth the three powerful enemies and defeating them makes one a votary of the Lotus Sutra. It is only natural, then, when we advance upon the correct path of mentor and disciple originating with the Daishonin, we will encounter many obstacles. By battling the three powerful enemies, we become genuine disciples of the Daishonin. In that respect, the authenticity of the path of mentor and disciple followed by the first three presidents of the Soka Gakkai has been proven beyond doubt.

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An Expression of Great Compassion

The second reason Nichikan gives for the Daishonin's being born of low status is "as the ultimate expression of compassion whose highest ideal is to save people from the lowest status." The Daishonin was born not only as a commoner but of the lowest and most despised class of society so he could lead all people to enlightenment. This was a manifestation of his immense compassion.

It is often the case that people of very humble stations in life who are experiencing hardships and difficulties are more compassionate than people who enjoy privilege and high social status. Those who do not need to fight and struggle in life tend to grow cold-hearted and indifferent to the sufferings of others.

A Buddha is one who dauntlessly takes action for the people's happiness, who resolutely fights for the welfare of humanity, while enduring a storm of obstacles and persecution. The Daishonin's Buddhism fosters such individuals. In that sense, the adherents of the Nikken sect are definitely not disciples of the Daishonin.

How supremely noble and respectfully is the true identity of Nichiren Daishonin, born an ordinary person. As an indication of this, Nichikan identifies six virtues, or six areas, in which the Daishonin excels in nobility. These are his wisdom, his compassion, his vow to practice without begrudging his life, his conduct as a practitioner in battling the three powerful enemies, his true identity or state of life, and his possessing the three virtues. The three virtues are the attributes of sovereign, teacher and parent, which the Daishonin embodies and which could be described as the virtues of protecting, guiding and caring for the people.

In short, nobility is not a matter of status or position. Fundamentally, it is determined by our sincerity, our spiritual state, and the inner essence of life itself. This is Nichiren Daishonin's true spirit and Nichikan's teaching. Therefore, the notion that priests are categorically superior to lay people is absolutely foreign to the Daishonin's Buddhism.

Those who spread the Law are most noble. We must not allow ourselves to be swayed by such things as social standing or wealth. We must not be defeated by the eight winds of life's changing fortunes [prosperity, decline,



'With genuine youth and boundless life force, let us realize great victory in society, in activities for kosen-rufu and in our own lives again this year.'

disgrace, honor, praise, censure, suffering and pleasure]. Those who succumb to them are not disciples of the Daishonin.

The Significance of Priests' Robes

It is a well-established tenet in the Daishonin's Buddhism that priests wear coarse robes. One of the reasons that High Priest Nichikan cites for this is that "it represents the lowest status in the Latter Day of the Law" [Fuji Shugaku Yoshu (*The Selected Works of the Fuji School*), vol. 3, p. 222]. This refers to the fact that Nichiren Daishonin deliberately chose to be born a member of the lowest social class in Japanese society of the day so that he might teach the supreme teaching of the Latter Day, that is, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, to all people. The robes of priests were therefore by necessity extremely plain and simple, Nichikan said. They had to be if one truly wished to embody the Daishonin's all-encompassing spirit to lead others to happiness as an ordinary common mortal of the most humble station in life.

The purpose of priestly robes is not to enhance one's personal prestige or authority. To use robes as a symbol of authority goes completely against the spirit of the Daishonin and High Priest Nichikan.

High Priest Nichikan de-

scribes priests' robes as "work clothes" — that is, practical attire for carrying out propagation.

High Priest Nichikan says: "Since they are suited for carrying out the practice of propagation in the Latter Day,...they are called 'work clothes for practicing the way.' Are they not ideal for traveling far and wide and carrying out the practice of propagation?" [Ibid., pp. 222-23].

Priests' robes are work clothes that should become drenched with sweat from efforts to widely spread the Daishonin's teachings. They are definitely not garments designed for show or self-aggrandizement or for brandishing priestly authority. Priests who view their robes in such a fashion commit great slander by betraying the spirit of the Daishonin.

Treasuring Devoted Practitioners

In January 1280, amid the bitter winter cold of Minobu, Nichiren Daishonin writes, "I no longer shave my head, so I look like a quail, and my robe gets so stiff with ice that it resembles the icy wings of the mandarin duck" (MW-7, 208). While the original Buddha, he led an incredibly austere and humble existence. When I think of the circumstances he

was forced to endure, my heart aches.

Despite his own privations, the Daishonin sent a light-gray surplice to his follower Sennichijima, who was exerting herself for kosen-rufu on distant Sado Island. Nichiren Daishonin always treasured most highly his followers who were bravely propagating the Law.

The priests of the Nikken sect, decking themselves out in expensive robes and indulging in decadent, extravagant lifestyles, demonstrate a spirit that is the complete antithesis of the founder's.

We must take the enemies of the Buddha to task. We absolutely cannot remain silent when we see people distorting and corrupting the Daishonin's teaching. To speak out resolutely and clarify what is correct and what is erroneous is the Soka Gakkai spirit. If we simply try to be amiable and avoid making waves, then we will play right into the hands of people of malicious intent. Therefore, let us courageously speak out for justice as we did during the Soka Gakkai's early days.

Almost as if he were predicting his school's future degeneration into a body of priests like today's Nikken sect, High Priest Nichikan issued the following admonition: "Priests [neglectful of their Buddhist practice] who wear expensive robes and are fond of gorging themselves are as

numerous as the particles of dirt in the earth. My disciples, I urge you to reflect on yourselves three times each day" [*The Selected Works of the Fuji School*, p. 237]. He left these strict words behind for his fellow priests of later ages.

Today we also have a number of friends from the United States present. Welcome.

The year before last when I visited the United States, I attended an outdoor graduation ceremony beneath sunny blue skies at the University of Denver [June 1996]. On that occasion, as the recipient of an honorary doctorate in education, I wore the university's academic gown. I was impressed to learn then that this gown symbolizes the egalitarian spirit of learning. The gown covers all outward signs of social status and the like, indicating how, in the world of education, all people are equal. It isn't worn as a sign of status or honor but of equality.

The fundamental spirit of Buddhism, too, is that all people are equal. A person is not great simply because of his or her social standing, fame, academic background or position in the organization. In the world of faith, the truly great are those who spread the Mystic Law and strive for kosen-rufu, who actively work for the sake of Buddhism and the happiness of others. Supremely respectable are those who champion the cause of kosen-rufu.

Victory Through Perseverance!

To exert ourselves in accord with the Buddha's teachings is true Buddhist practice. This is the Soka Gakkai spirit. Only the members of the SGI are faithfully carrying out the Daishonin's teachings to the letter.

In the Goshu "On Practicing the Buddha's Teachings," the Daishonin speaks of "donning the armor of endurance" (MW-1, 101). A struggle is won through endurance and tenacity. Those who gird themselves in the "armor of endurance" and struggle tenaciously are certain to triumph in the end. True victors in life are those who gain ultimate victory.

Let's be determined to win without fail in all our challenges this year, demonstrating outstanding courage, confidence and wisdom as champions of widespread propagation, directly connected to Nichiren Daishonin. With solid unity of purpose and the Soka Gakkai spirit, let's once again give it our all.

I wish each of you a most meaningful year. Please take care of your health. All the very best!

WII

By HO GOKU

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY

OUR PUBLICATIONS ARE LETTERS FOR KOSEN-RUFU



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.

Recently, much snow has fallen on the Tokyo area. The first thing I check when I wake up is the weather report across Japan. If it's a nice day, I breathe a sigh of relief. But if it's raining or snowing, I worry about how the *Seikyo Shimbun* deliverers are doing. I hope that none of them have had an accident or fallen ill....

And on mornings when a heavy snow has fallen, a warm feeling glows in my heart when I pick up the newspaper. I know that they have delivered this paper I hold in my hands — they have picked their way carefully through slippery streets and made every effort to keep the paper from getting wet or soiled. On snowy days, they cannot use their bicycles, and it often takes them more than twice the usual time to finish. As I read the paper, in my heart I thank them deeply for their sincere efforts.



I was a newspaper deliverer myself — for three years, starting as a sixth grader. I wanted to have some spare money to buy something for my father, who was often ill, and my mother, who was working constantly. I raced through the cold, windy streets with the heavy newspaper bag digging deeply into my shoulder.

I will never forget one snowy day when I slipped, and my newspapers spilled onto the street. With tears stinging my eyes, I bent down and gathered them all up again.

At the same time, I remember being proud that I

worked harder than other kids my age.

One day, a couple to whose home I delivered the paper invited me in for dinner. The husband was a university professor. "It's wonderful that you are learning to work hard at such a young age," he encouraged me. "You will accomplish great things." How fondly I look back on that.

When you watch the sun rising in the glorious dawn — in that fresh, vibrant moment when morning first arrives — you feel a tremendous sense of triumph, as if you and you alone are embraced in an infinite, sparkling, jeweled realm.

Delivering newspapers also strengthened my weak constitution.



The valiant, exceptional efforts of many people are re-

quired to deliver the *Seikyo Shimbun* to our doors. When a large snowfall is forecast, the printing time is moved up to allow more time for delivery on city streets congested with snow. Not only the journalists but the proofreaders and copy editors have to rush to meet the earlier deadline. There are also added pressures placed on those who drive the trucks that deliver the papers to the local distributors.

And the local distributors, too, go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that the papers get to the deliverers as early as possible. To make up for delays caused by bad weather, they often enlist their entire families. The delivery hour approaches. Fighting the clock, they navigate the dark, hazardous streets, driving as carefully and cautiously as they can.

When the papers arrive, the deliverers then set out — the distributors' sincere expressions of encouragement and appreciation no doubt serving as the beacon that safely guides them.



The anchor position in the relay race to deliver the newspapers is held by the deliverers. They are the uncrowned heroes. Their ranks are varied, including members old and young — from the women's division, men's division, young women's division and young men's division.

A journalist once said to me: "There are times, when I have to work through the night to finish an article, that I think my job is hard. But when I think of our deliverers, the uncrowned heroes, I feel the

courage to go on. I know their job is much harder than writing articles."

Whenever journalists find themselves feeling a little too high and mighty, they should think of the newspaper deliverers. Their efforts are silent reminders of true dedication.



During the snowy winter of 1276, Nichiren Daishonin rejoiced at a letter from Konichima. "In these circumstances, your letter was particularly welcome," he wrote. "It seemed almost like a message from Shakyamuni Buddha or from my departed parents, and I cannot tell you how grateful I was" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 202).

Likewise, the Daishonin unmistakably would award the highest praise to the noble messengers who deliver the kosen-rufu letters that are the publications of our organization.

Today again, from the snowy north to the sunny southern islands, our uncrowned heroes work with tireless dedication as vital mainstays of our movement. They are the true messengers of the Buddha, the true treasures of the Soka Gakkai. Theirs is the road of human revolution. Theirs is the road of Buddhist practice leading to the accumulation of good fortune and benefit that will fragrantly adorn their existence for all eternity.

Without a doubt, a great rainbow signaling the joy and approbation of the Buddhist gods will always, always, shine above them. ❖

From SGI President Ikeda:

* True and lasting happiness only and always comes from our own efforts, our own wisdom, our own good fortune. This is a fundamental truth. Faith is the key to strengthening our efforts, wisdom and good fortune. SGI activities are the key to strengthening ourselves.... (March 29, 1996, *World Tribune*)

* There are those who seem to be exerting themselves energetically in Gakkai activities, but who always end up absolutely exhausted. This is because they are participating passively. As long as you feel somewhere in your heart that you have to do activities because you've been told to or are expected to, then you won't feel any real joy. Nor are you likely to have much energy and enthusiasm.

WORDS TO THE WISE

SELF-RELIANCE

Abutsu-bo is the Treasure Tower itself, and the Treasure Tower is Abutsu-bo himself. No other knowledge is purposeful. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 30)

To feel that energy, it's important to boldly take initiative in your activities. Set concrete personal goals and then strive to realize them. When you exert your utmost toward a goal and then achieve it, you will experience great joy and pleasure. (Oct. 3, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 8)

* Everything depends on our attitude or

inner resolve, on the kind of philosophy and conviction that we cherish. Our environment or circumstances are not the determining factors. When we advance resolutely based on this admonition, then all the hardships we experience will pave the golden path of our mission. (July 11, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 15)

* Mrs. [Rosa] Parks writes: "I have never allowed myself to be treated as a second-class citizen. You must respect yourself before others can respect you." (Oct. 17, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 15)

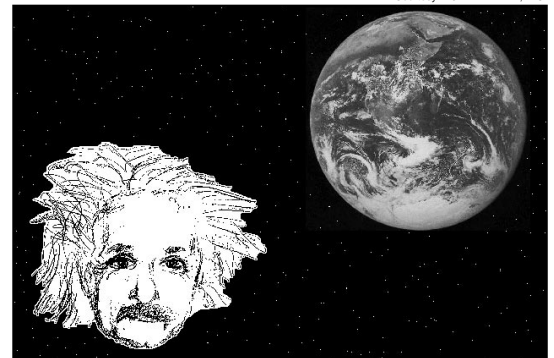
* Our faith isn't the kind in which you look to others for help. No, each of us has to carry out our own human revolution. We have to stand up on our own two feet and win through our own effort. If you depend on others, you're sure to lose.

No amount of money will change your karma, and unless you change your karma you will never be truly happy....

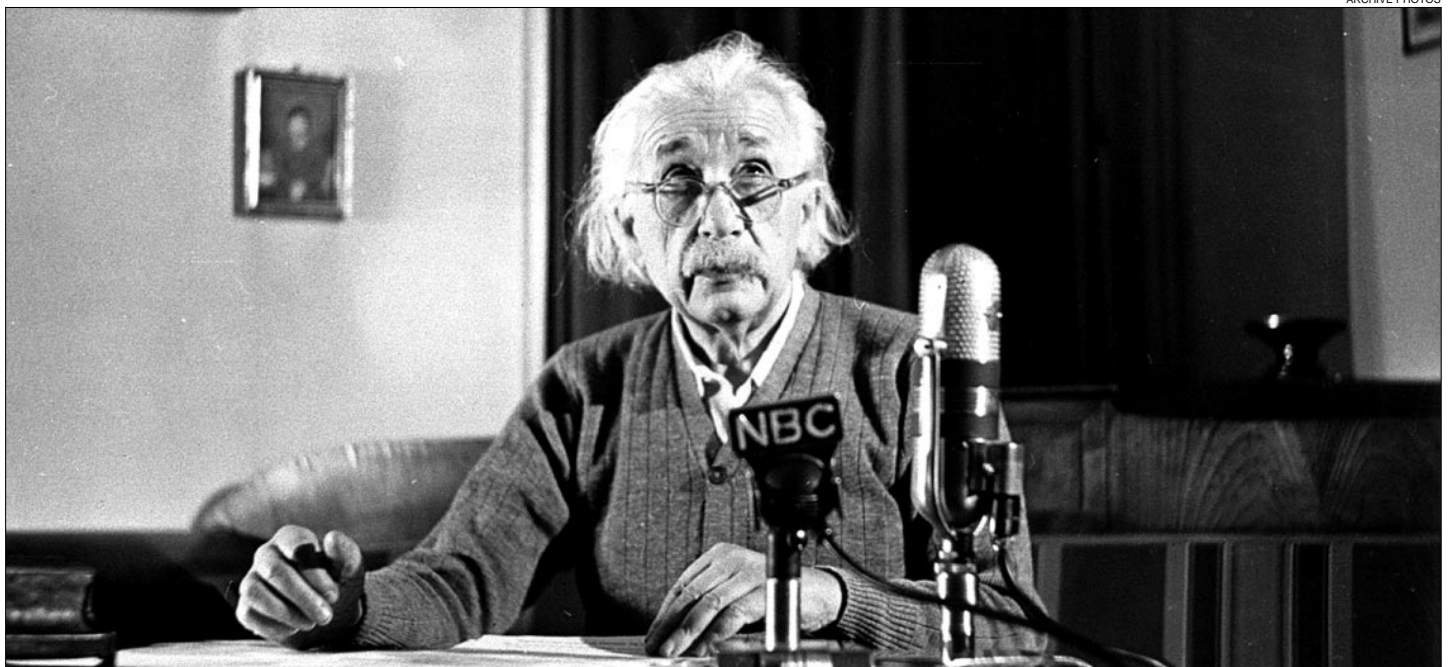
True faith has nothing to do with beseeching someone else for help. Each of us creates our own happiness.... The basic requirement for happiness is the determination not to be defeated, the ability to stand up and fight, no matter what the difficulties or odds. (Oct. 31, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 6)

One Stone and the Universe

Happy birthday to Albert Einstein: a lifetime of outrageous thinking.... But, then, it's all relative.



This Cybercard celebrating Albert Einstein's 119th birthday can be viewed at <http://www.clark.net/pub/wware/einstein.html>.



ARCHIVE PHOTOS

A 1922 Nobel Prize-winner for his work in theoretical physics, Albert Einstein (shown here in approximately 1950) almost single-handedly established the post-Newtonian world of relativity where time, space, light and mass were shown to be interrelated and in flux.

By **TERRY ELLIS**
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

On March 14, Albert Einstein would be 119, and Wendy Jessen's gifted students at Green Valley Elementary School in Boone, N.C., are celebrating. They'll share wonder in "Imagination Stations" and then dig into party goodies.

And they're not alone: Hundreds of Einstein admirers of all ages have picked up the same idea, which grew out of an online Cybercard that Jessen's students first signed in 1996.

Einstein's name means one stone. Or as Rachelle and Andy "One Family" Miller, who created the WonderWare Cybercard, point out, "one wondrous, enlightened, life-bearing stone among the interrelated pebbles of the Unified Universe." The birthday greetings on the card aren't quite that far-ranging, but they do cover Planet Earth: from Younes Benbouchais in Bangui, Central African Republic, to Jon and Carol Goh in Singapore; from Milan Boldizar in Kosice, Slovakia, to Alex and Natalie Pace in Sydney, Australia. Their messages speak of the in-

fluence Einstein has had on their convictions as well as their careers.


What did Einstein and other scientists who've had a major impact on the world have in common? Lillian Hoddeson, Ph.D., a science historian at the University of Illinois, summarizes it with two points: "The ability to think ideas that may seem outrageous within a particular time," and a respect for nature that leads them to "try very, very hard to ask meaningful questions that can be answered eventually through experimental or theoretical approaches."

Einstein, who was born in Ulm, Germany, in 1879, shaped modern concepts of the physical universe. Today, as witnessed by the Cybercard, even elementary school students recognize his famous $E=mc^2$, the equation that became the basis of our understanding of nuclear energy. But in the early part of this century, his ideas were revolutionary.

Einstein wrote his *Theory of Special Relativity* in his spare time while working for the Swiss patent office. Published in 1905, the theory — which was formulated mathematically — asserted the equivalence of mass and energy and the interdependence of time and space. That he should do such writing while iso-

lated from the support of an academic environment seems amazing. But it fits the image of the Einstein whose interests grew out of the wonders of a compass he received at age 5. By 10, he was educating himself in the sciences.

In 1919, British studies of a solar eclipse first confirmed Einstein's theory of relativity. Since then, dozens of experiments have verified other predictions he made based on the theory. But one challenge remains: identifying the gravitational waves that Einstein postulated would result from such cosmic events as the death of a star. That challenge has been waiting for instruments sensitive enough to pick up signals arriving from as far as 100 million light-years away. Now, scientists say, the wave detectors should be ready by the turn of the century.

For all of his scientific brilliance (and despite what could be called old-fashioned ideas about women), Einstein may be as respected today for his wisdom as for his theories. He once said: "When you sit with a nice girl for two hours, you think it's only a minute. But when you sit on a hot stove for a minute, you think it's two hours. That's relativity." 

COMING NEXT WEEK:  **A Look at Vegetarianism.**