

World Tribune

No. 3185

THE YEAR OF VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE FOR THE NEW CENTURY

APRIL 3, 1998

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Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

(Above) Dr. David Krieger meets with SGI President Ikeda in Okinawa. (Right) Symbolic sunflowers adorn the Okinawa Training Center.



Missiles Into Sunflowers

In Okinawa, Dr. David Krieger talks with SGI President Ikeda about the struggle for peace. Humankind will perish, he says, if we do not alter our mode of thinking.

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER

Delivering a lecture at a peace symposium sponsored by the Soka Gakkai youth division in Nagasaki, Japan, on Feb. 23, Dr. David Krieger, pres-

ident of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, declared that the only way to establish a nuclear-weapons-free world is through the power and solidarity of the people, not just political power. He called on young people to continue striving for peace until every last nuclear warhead is removed from the face of the earth.

Earlier, on Feb. 21, in a ceremony at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, a Soka Gakkai youth leader presented Dr. Krieger with boxes containing 13 million signatures collected from throughout Japan in support of the peace foundation's Abolition 2000 campaign. The campaign calls on governments to sign by the year 2000

PLEASE SEE ABOLITION, 4

ROBYN THAW, SAN FRANCISCO

The Long Search for Mr. Right

After 22 wonderful years of Buddhist practice, Robyn Thaw got exactly what she chanted for — the relationship of her dreams. She can now attest that in Buddhism no efforts are wasted, and true love is worth waiting for.

I've waited a very long time to have this experience, and it feels great to be able to share it finally. This is about that one chunk of karmic rock that never seems to budge over the years. For me, this rock was relationships — in particular, to find and marry the right person for my life, otherwise known as my soul mate. I determined every New Year's gongyo that this is the year I would change this. And then every following New Year's Eve I'd be home (alone) chanting in front of the Gohonzon to make a fresh determination. This went on for more than 20 years.

I maintained a strong Buddhist practice through the years and as a result changed my life. I also got to the point where I did not suffer over not finding someone to share my life with. I realized I was sharing my life with so many people I deeply cared about. I thought that "by now" I'd be married with kids, but I couldn't complain. I was happy and, despite bouts of loneliness, I had a wonderful life that included an exciting and fulfilling career that three years ago took me from Boston to San Francisco.

PLEASE SEE SEARCH, 6

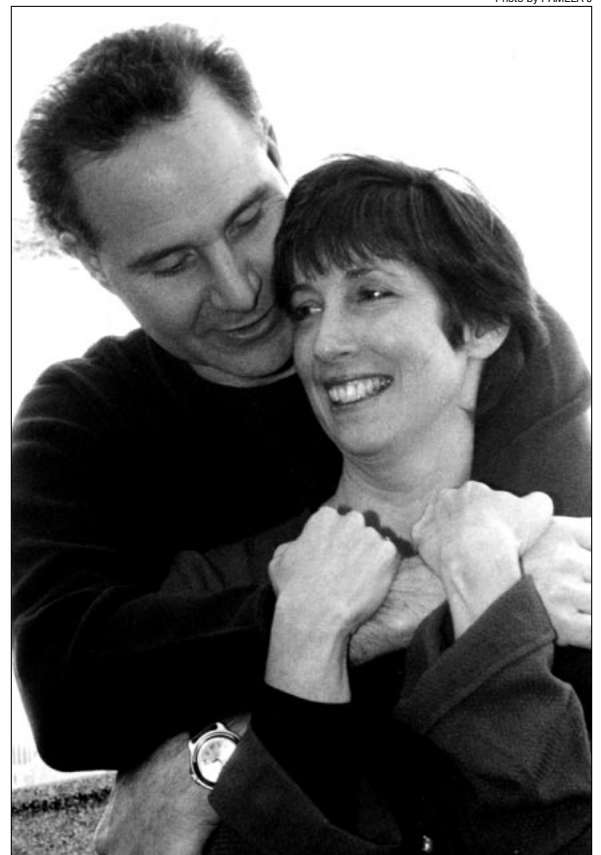


Photo by PAMELA J

Robyn Thaw (front) with her fiancé, Alan.



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

OUR ORGANIZATION

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

OUR PURPOSE

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

OUR PRACTICE

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

OUR HERITAGE

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

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Exploring Other Philosophies

EDITORIAL

Many teachings and philosophies seem a lot like Buddhism. If you find yourself watching a TV infomercial at 2:00 a.m., you might hear someone selling the secrets of how to unleash your personal power and succeed in life. You may think, "That sounds kind of like Buddhism — learning how to tap our innate Buddhahood to win in life...."

Except Buddhism doesn't come with a price tag.

You may also hear parables from other religions that sound very similar to Buddhist parables. Or you may admire someone like Gandhi, who found his spiritual sustenance in the Bhagavad-Gita. Even though he wasn't a Buddhist, he was an exemplar of compassionate action.

You may even feel, as many do, that all great religions, at their core, teach fundamentally the same thing.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote: "So much benevolence as a man hath, so much life hath he. For all things proceed out of this same spirit, which is differently named love, justice, temperance, in its different applications, just as the ocean receives different names on the several shores which it washes."

Indeed, it could be said that many great teachings, although we call them by different names, grow from a common spirit.

At the same time, though, Nichiren Daishonin was very strict about practicing Buddhism correctly and eschewing heresy. Considering this, what is the value of exploring other teachings?

A seeking mind is definitely a good thing. Religious tolerance is to be cultivated and cherished. Time and again, SGI President Ikeda has encouraged us to read widely and develop a broad understanding of the hearts and minds of others. So exploring other teachings can enhance our lives.

It's crucial, though, that we maintain a clear perspective.

First, as long as we are fully aware of the limits of other teachings, our exploration of them can be productive.

Second, it's important to recognize that practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism enables us to change even immutable karma. The Daishonin makes it clear that even seemingly unchangeable things such as our life span or our character are affected by prayer to the Gohonzon.

In a letter to the wife of Toki Jonin, the Dai-

shonin writes: "Today it is as natural for a woman to change her immutable karma by practicing the Lotus Sutra as it is for rice to ripen in fall or chrysanthemums to bloom in winter. When I, Nichiren, prayed for my mother, not only was her illness cured, but her life was prolonged by four years. Now you, too, have fallen ill, and as a woman, it is all the more timely for you to try believing in the Lotus Sutra and see what it will do for you" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 230)

Positive thinking and creative visualization, for example, may be beneficial practices, but it's doubtful that they can change immutable karma, which is created by causes embedded deep in our lives. The Daishonin boldly asserts that our prayers to the Gohonzon can transform even these deepest, darkest things within us. It's all up to our prayer and actions.

But our confidence in this truth perhaps doesn't always match the Daishonin's. Sometimes, our lack of confidence may prompt us to look elsewhere to find answers to our problems. But if we feel that we must look outside ourselves for the power to transform our lives, then isn't it all the more timely for us to try believing more deeply in the Lotus Sutra and seeing what it will do for us?

After all, the Daishonin vows to us that everything we seek exists within the practice of his teachings. He's not exaggerating, and he's not kidding.

The Daishonin evidences his confidence when he writes: "To mix other practices with this Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is a grave error. A lamp will be useless after the sun rises. How can dewdrops be beneficial once the rain falls? Should one feed a newborn baby with anything other than mother's milk? Good medicine works by itself; there is no need to add other medicine" (MW-3, 266).

This doesn't mean that we should never take medicine nor explore other teachings. Rather, the Daishonin is reassuring us that, indeed, faith in Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is unfathomably beneficial — you can't compare it to anything else.

When we talk about different teachings on a theoretical or philosophical level, we're likely to discover many similarities among them. But in terms of their application in daily life, they differ vastly in their power and influence. Firm faith in the Mystic Law gives rise to wisdom, which enables us to evaluate other teachings from the Daishonin's perspective.

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WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Apathy Is Everyone's Concern

Being a youth (age 23), reading your article (Jan. 30 "Editorial") on the youth apathy dilemma caused a range of thoughts to run through my mind. I know this problem you speak of and see the lack of enthusiasm generally displayed by the younger generation.

On one hand, I become discouraged and frustrated to see this as I am an "active" youth with activities ranging from work to college to my SGI activities. Therefore, it is insulting for me to be part of such an apathetic generation.

On the other hand I, too, sometimes have those feelings of apathy and understand why so many young people just don't care. With all of the turmoil that exists in the world, young people may feel helpless and hopeless. They may think, "No matter what I do, it won't help, so why do anything?"

That's where Buddhism comes in. Being a Buddhist has taught me that we do have the power to make changes in our lives and the lives of others enabling us to change the course of the history of humankind. As the oft-quoted phrase from *The Human Revolution* goes, "A great human revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of all mankind."

Though I am not sure exactly how this problem can be solved, I have an idea that the solution starts within each of us. As your article stated, "We have to make a conscious effort to care." By caring about others, they realize their own potential to care. If a parent encourages a child to achieve his or her dreams, that child will be willing to try. If one friend persuades another that he or she can get an A on that test, the friend will be more eager to study — and so on.

As John Popper in Blues Traveler sings, "Both parent and child cry apathy but everybody cares." Here, I find an important message: One person's apathy should be everyone's concern.

— LINDA SAELG, Bayville, N.J.

Peace Pilgrim Makes a Mark

I read with delight and rapt interest the "Worldview" article in your Feb. 13 *World Tribune* on Peace Pilgrim.

I met Peace Pilgrim 2, her spiritual heir, here in Calgary at a meeting sponsored by the Canadian Friends Services Committee and Project Ploughshares. Peace had just been to Toronto for the Evolution of World Order Conference, which was cosponsored by our SGI Caledon Centre for Peace and Education.

I was naturally very interested in Peace's impression of the conference and the center. Coincidentally, the day I met Peace Pilgrim 2 marked the start of my personal peace cyber-pilgrimage. That day I received an e-mail account and since then have been very active working for peace and the justice of the SGI electronically, in addition to my involvement with the SGI in Calgary.

— KEITH ROBINSON, Calgary, Canada

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

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

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You Only Have To Be Human

PERSPECTIVE

By FLETCHER DALTON
BOSTON

To an audience observing Martin Luther King Day in a suburb of Boston, a 15-year-old revealed a long-kept secret: that she has been HIV-positive for 14 years.

"As a person who is HIV-positive," Elizabeth Kaplan said, "I believe in equality for all people. Like Mary Fisher [who roused the 1992 Republican National Convention with a similar declaration], you would probably never expect me to have the virus. I am not gay or a drug addict. It just happened, the way people who are black were just born black.

"You only have to be human to be part of a minority — you only have to be human to get AIDS," she said.

As Buddhists, we can relate to this Newton North High School student's observation. We have learned through our years of practice that simply by being human we may fall prey to or be seriously affected by the many obstacles presented to us by the four sufferings: birth, old age, sickness, and death.

The factors of how, when and

where the suffering originates almost don't matter (in Elizabeth Kaplan's case, it was infected blood from a transfusion). But the lessons we learn, how we move ahead, and how we encourage others make all the difference.

Perhaps this is what makes us human.

In some sports, there is the concept of a handicap. One dictionary describes the term as "a race or contest in which advantages or compensations are given different contestants, according to their varied abilities or experience, to equalize the chance of winning."

When I visit the Florida Nature and Culture Center, I see all these happy people, apparently without a care in the world. However, upon getting to know them, the entire Pandora's box of human sufferings bursts open and revelations of all kinds are made.

It is obvious there, as elsewhere, that because we have brought the Gohonzon into the center of our lives, our chances of winning are equalized. SGI President Ikeda has written: "There is no such thing as a life without trials and tribulations. A life without obstacles is a weak one. One cannot depend on someone who has not had to overcome difficulties. A person becomes stronger and grows by persevering through adverse circumstances."

Like Elizabeth Kaplan and Dr. King, whose life she was celebrating, we can become long-time survivors of life's problems, dilemmas, trials, pains and limitations and simultaneously encourage others. Isn't this one aspect of our practice that gives us credibility as Buddhists, individually and collectively?

We needn't withhold information of our personal suffering for years and years. By acknowledging our own humanity and that of each member of our diverse organization, and by reaching out to share encouragement with one another as we go along, we will equalize our chances of winning and accelerate the arrival of kosen-rufu.

President Ikeda writes: "Nichiren Daishonin's is the Buddhism that benefits all living beings equally. It is therefore the highest of all philosophies, one that truly inspires people with a love for human beings. Now the circle of friends who embrace, study and practice this Buddhism is spreading across the world. Thus we may say that the Soka Gakkai is playing a major international role in promoting the peace of the world."

Saying it another way, we only have to be human to experience suffering, but by being truly human we can guarantee the peace of our world. ☸

Even a Thief Loves His Family

PERSPECTIVE

By LYNETTE YETTER
LOS ANGELES

"Never give up!" is the cry of the Buddha and of the fictional Hollywood producer played by Dustin Hoffman in *Wag the Dog*.

"That character a Buddha?" you might cry in dismay. "He was deceiving people with lies! He was producing a war!!"

According to the mutual possession of the ten worlds, the world of Buddhahood is found in the other nine, from Hell to Bodhisattva. Even a thief loves his own family.

As Buddhists we are practicing to take everything as an opportunity for learning and growth. So I took a look at the characteristics of the Buddha found in this film.

Dustin Hoffman's character meets every deadlock in his plan



Dustin Hoffman was nominated for an Oscar for his role in the movie 'Wag the Dog.'

with a vibrant creative spirit to "never give up!"

"You think this is hard? This is nothing!" he exclaimed again and again, even when they were stranded in a forest surrounded by the flaming wreckage of their plane and accompanied by a violent psychopath whose drugs had worn off.

"I remember standing in front of a group of producers after I'd been up all night on coke and hadn't even started to work on the treatment, and I pulled it off!" or

words to that effect. "This is cake!"

With his indomitable creativity and enthusiasm he found a way toward his goal. He was invincible in his resolve.

The character played by Dustin Hoff-

man showed that he has used even negative experiences as a springboard for growth, as SGI President Ikeda teaches us.

Yes, the producer was lacking in wisdom and compassion, but the courage aspect he had down pat and we can learn from that.

Without divulging the ending of the film, I'll just say that he plummeted into the lower world of Hunger and his plan went awry.

So, let's create the Buddha land with creativity and enthusiasm. And never give up. ☸

AIDS Dialogue Focuses on Spiritual Strength

Buddhist and Christian representatives find common ground in addressing the needs of those with HIV/AIDS.

By **DONNA PARTEN**
Sacramento, Calif., Feb. 16

How can Buddhism and Christianity offer hope to AIDS sufferers and their families? This was the subject of a dialogue between the Rev. Stephen Pieters, former field director for AIDS Ministry of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, Los Angeles, and Greg Martin, SGI-USA vice general director, at the 5th AIDS Interfaith Network conference today.

Mr. Martin and the Rev. Pieters, himself a person with

AIDS (PWA), began their dialogue weeks before the conference to prepare for their innovative keynote presentation, "An Interfaith Dialogue." Addressing the conference theme, "Tools for Survival — A Virus on the Run," the Rev. Pieters said, "As the demographics shift and as the prognosis for PWAs changes, so must the spiritual tools for survival."

The Rev. Pieters shared his experiences as a PWA and in his ministry, while Mr. Martin underscored his points with the Buddhist perspective. Their dialogue ranged across such profound and challenging issues as personal strength, spiritual transformation, compassion, respect for human life and victory in illness and death. Each remarked on the similarities in their beliefs. For example, both stressed the importance of not

judging those who are sick, who die or who survive.

"Death," the Rev. Pieters emphasized, "is not a failure. It doesn't mean that you blew it."

"To die with regrets is hell," agreed Mr. Martin. "To die without regrets is to die beautifully."

As treatment for HIV/AIDS improves, survivors and their families need tools, Mr. Martin continued. "Strength comes from purpose," he said. "One of the great roles faith can play is to inspire us with meaning: 'Now you have something to do.' There are not strong people and weak people. Each of us is strong in some areas and weak in others. Knowing there are options, that there are tools for winning, even in death, empowers us. For Buddhists, one tool is the recognition that we can achieve Buddhahood as we are — ill or well, gay or straight, and re-

gardless of our external situation.

"It is possible to do more than simply survive. It's important what we do with the life we have, including confronting our feelings about life and death and opening ourselves ultimately to a true understanding of the meaning of life," Mr. Martin said.

Faith can also help loved ones by guiding them through the most important acts of compassion: listening and praying, he continued.

Alluding to the five cycles of grief articulated by Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in her famous book, *On Death and Dying*, Mr. Martin said, "I would add a sixth stage — the stage of victory."

SGI-USA members in Sacramento have been part of the AIDS Interfaith Network for more than two years, even hosting one of the group's monthly meetings at the local community center. Roxanne

Rae, conference chair and SGI-USA Culture Department member, has played an especially active role in AIN. "Because a major goal of AIN is education, my work with them supports my goals in the community," she said. "I can best develop my own life and uphold the SGI charter by active participation in AIN toward the issues affecting families with a member who has HIV/AIDS."

Sister Mary Redempta, of Sisters of Mercy for the [HIV/AIDS] Affected Community, was very moved by the dialogue. "I was taken that both of them were saying things that I could take to my community of PWAs and their families.... In this day and age, we can no longer stand apart. We need to understand each other and be hospitable. If we want to cooperate and work together, we must sit down and talk first." ❧

ABOLITION, FROM PAGE 1

an international treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons from the world within a time-bound framework. In his speech, Dr. Krieger asserted that each signature represents a voice of hope that, when joined together, forms a chorus of hope that can move the world.

After visiting Hiroshima and Nagasaki — the two Japanese cities devastated by atomic bombings during World War II — Dr. Krieger met with SGI President Ikeda on Feb. 26 at the Okinawa Training Center in Onnason, Okinawa.

During their discussion, the SGI leader and Dr. Krieger stressed that one of humanity's priorities is to establish a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons — and that it is a goal that requires the concerted effort of ordinary people everywhere. They also agreed to continue their dialogue and publish it later in book form under the title *Choose Hope*.

Dr. Krieger said that the SGI and the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation share the same vision for peace. He added that he was most impressed to learn that the Okinawa Training Center — a center for peace — is built on the site of what was once a missile base. Dr. Krieger said he feels reassured that his foundation's antinuclear weapons campaign to "turn missiles into sunflowers" is indeed achievable.

President Ikeda said that it was significant to welcome Dr. Krieger and his wife, Carolee, to Okinawa, a prefecture whose

citizens possess a profound love of peace and culture. There was an anecdote, he said, of Napoléon Bonaparte expressing utter incredulity when he heard from an Englishman who had traveled to Okinawan shores in the early 1800s that the people of these islands did not possess weapons of any kind. The SGI

universe, often personified as the Devil of the Sixth Heaven, the SGI leader said that the struggle to achieve peace will only be successful if people stand up to the destructive forces rampant in the world today. Otherwise, he said, those negative forces will only grow more virulent. Equally important is keeping hope alive and

used only on the external realm of life. Only when a firm philosophy of life guides science and technology can they contribute to world peace. The SGI leader also said that the American scientist and peace activist Linus Pauling (1901-94) had avowed that the power of the human spirit is far greater than the evil power of nu-

self — how it is used depends on the good or evil in the hearts of those who use it. The question, therefore, is not how do we control science and technology, he said, but how do we change people's hearts. Humankind will perish, he said, if we do not alter our mode of thinking and our system of values.

President Ikeda noted that there is no appropriate way to dispose of plutonium safely. Dr. Krieger added that when governments dismantle nuclear missiles, in most cases is the plutonium is removed from the warheads and stored some place where it can be easily reused for military purposes at any time. He urged people to petition governments to find a way to eliminate nuclear weapons permanently.

Plutonium is not a naturally occurring substance, Dr. Krieger said. It is so toxic that exposure to even the smallest amount can cause lung cancer in a short time, and it also has a half-life of tens of thousands of years. Dr. Krieger said that, while he believes scientists will one day find a completely safe way to dispose of plutonium, the best method for now appears to be storage in retrievable containers.

Dr. Krieger explained that plutonium was created by the American nuclear chemist and Nobel laureate Glenn T. Seaborg and his team, and was named after the Greek god of the underworld, Pluto, who is also known as Hades. Mr. Ikeda said that Pluto seems to him very similar in nature to the Devil of the Sixth Heaven in Buddhism that he had mentioned earlier. ❧



People tend to forget that life is a precious treasure, Dr. Krieger (pictured) says. If they can appreciate this truth, then peace can surely be realized.

leader mentioned the Okinawan expression *nuchi du takara* (life is a treasure), and commented that it indicates a philosophy that cherishes the sanctity of life.

Dr. Krieger said that people tend to forget what a precious treasure life is. If they could appreciate this truth every moment of their lives, then peace could surely be realized. A society that forgets this, he said, is headed for ruin. He also said that Napoléon's reaction was typical of a military mind and also a common way of thinking in the modern world.

Explaining that Buddhism teaches the concept of fundamental darkness inherent in the

persevering to realize peace, he said. Hope is the key for human happiness and the destiny of our planet, President Ikeda continued.

Dr. Krieger affirmed that hope is a conscious choice: we can choose hope just as we can choose despair, cynicism or anger. People ought to cherish great hope that transcends small, egotistic desires, he said.

The SGI leader said that his mentor and second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda shared the belief that science and technology must not be used for destructive purposes. He said that Mr. Toda felt science would never bring happiness to people nor contribute to peace if it fo-

clear weapons.

Explaining the Buddhist principle that a single life-moment possesses 3,000 realms, Mr. Ikeda said that people have within their lives the potential to transform not only themselves, but also society and their entire nation. The SGI's peace movement focuses on unlocking that potential from within each person and then forging it into a united force. The solidarity of people awakened in this way constitutes a "new superpower," he said.

Dr. Krieger stated that technology can be used two ways: for good and for evil. But he has found that technology does not have dual purposes in and of it-

SIGN POSTS

APPLYING
NICHIREN
DAISHONIN'S
WRITINGS TO
DAILY LIFE

A Determining Factor

By JEFF FARR

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

What matters is one's heart.
("The Drum at the Gate of Thunder," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 289)

At the end of this 1278 letter to Sennichi-ama, the Daishonin explains that the greatest happiness is found in our hearts. Indeed, our hearts determine whether we can become happy — whether we can share our happiness with others and make a difference in the world. Our hearts decide everything.

Sometimes, though, when I hear "What matters is one's heart," my mind goes blank. I've heard the expression so many times that I sometimes forget what a profound teaching it is. So I have to keep reminding myself of the importance of "What matters is one's heart."

I always associate this expression with the first time I heard SGI President Ikeda speak. It was exactly 10 years ago, on April 4, 1988, at a dinner at Soka University in Japan. Calling it a family gathering, President Ikeda said that although the cherry blossoms were not in bloom, in his heart there were cherry blossoms in full bloom welcoming us. He then asked us to keep chanting for our happiness and for peace where we lived. They were simple but deeply moving words — words from his heart and about the importance of the heart. I will never forget them.

I began to realize that Buddhism's starting point is the heart, which is what I feel I'm realizing even more 10 years later.

How powerful just a few words from the heart can be! Seven hundred years ago, the Daishonin first said "What matter's is one's heart," and today millions of SGI members are touched by the warmth of his simple message. When President Ikeda said that night that the cherry blossoms in his heart were in full bloom, his words went straight to my heart and have stayed there. They're still echoing in there 10 years later.

So I want to keep developing my heart, to keep trying to express it in a simple way that will touch others. I guess that we all face this challenge — to live the principle that "What matters is one's heart." □

ON THE GOHONZON

STUDYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S
INSCRIPTIONS ON THE OBJECT OF DEVOTION

By TERRY ELLIS
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

(This completes a two-part article explaining the character on the Gohonzon representing the Buddha Many Treasures Thus Come One. Part 1 appears in the March 27 World Tribune.)

So what truth does the story of Many Treasures' emergence along with the Treasure Tower express? In "On the Treasure Tower," Nichiren Daishonin writes: "The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai explained the appearance of the Treasure Tower. He stated that it had two distinct functions: to lend credence to the preceding chapters and to pave the way for the revelation to come. Thus, the Treasure Tower appeared in order to verify the theoretical teaching and to introduce the essential teaching. To put it another way, the closed Tower symbolizes the theoretical teaching and the open Tower, the essential teaching. This represents the two principles of object (*kyo*) and subject (*chi*), or reality and wisdom.... In essence, the appearance of the Treasure Tower indicates that the three groups of Shakyamuni's disciples attained enlightenment only when they heard the Lotus Sutra and perceived the Treasure Tower within their own lives" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pp. 29–30)

A *Dictionary of Buddhist Terms and Concepts* also explains that T'ien-t'ai, a great Buddhist scholar in China, interpreted Many Treasures and Shakyamuni seated side by side in the Treasure Tower as the fusion of reality and wisdom (Jpn *kyochi myogo*), with Many Treasures representing the objective truth or ultimate reality and Shakyamuni the subjective wisdom to realize that truth.

T'ien-t'ai also concluded that Many Treasures Buddha represents the property of the Law, Shakyamuni the property of wisdom, and the Buddhas from throughout the universe the property of action. Taken together they represent the three properties of the Buddha.

In "Heritage of the Ultimate

Law of Life," the Daishonin reveals another aspect of Many Treasures that is important to our understanding of the Ceremony in the Air as not a parable but an event that actually took place in Shakyamuni's life (and, by extension, what happens in our lives as we practice to the Gohonzon):

No phenomena — heaven or earth, Yin or Yang, the sun or the moon, the five planets, or any life-condition from Hell to Buddhahood — are free from birth and death. Thus the life and death of all phenomena are simply the two phases of Myohorenge-kyo.... Shakyamuni and [Many Treasures] Buddhas, too, are the two phases of life and death. (MW-1, 21–22)



**'You, yourself, are a true Buddha,'
Nichiren Daishonin tells us.
'Wherever one teaches the Lotus
Sutra, this Treasure Tower of mine
will rise and appear before him.'**

In Los Angeles, the Watts Towers (pictured above) started as one man's personal endeavor and became a symbol for the entire community. Simon Rodia, an Italian immigrant and construction worker who settled in Southern California in the 1920s, reportedly spent 33 years — until he was 74 — on his mosaic masterpiece. He used household tools, decorative tiles, pottery bits and hand-drawn art to build these towers, the tallest of which is an estimated 99.5 feet.

Shakyamuni taught the Lotus Sutra during the final phase of his life: by accounts, during his last eight years. Up until that point, he had been teaching his disciples using "expedient means" rather than referring directly to the Law by which all Buddhas attain enlightenment.

His followers were in awe of his compassionate and wise life-condition, but they believed it was beyond their ability to also be Buddhas. As Shakyamuni approached death, he realized it was time to reveal the source of his wisdom and compassion.

It's interesting that after Shakyamuni's death, his followers built towers called stupas in which to house his relics and honor his memory — just as Many

Treasures had originally called on his followers to build a funerary tower after his death, in which he would appear, wherever the Law was taught.

But, as Shakyamuni predicted in the Lotus Sutra, it would be left up only to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth — those who would appear in the future — to reveal the essential Treasure Tower for the enlightenment of all people.

When we chant Nam-myohorenge-kyo to the Gohonzon, we can reveal from within our bodies the eternal Buddha, symbolized in theory by Many Treasures in the Treasure Tower. We then manifest the actual — the Treasure Tower itself.

And as the Daishonin says: "You may think you offered gifts to the Treasure Tower of [Many Treasures] Buddha, but that is not so. You offered them to yourself. You, yourself, are a true Buddha who possesses the three enlightened properties. You should chant Nam-myohorenge-kyo with this conviction. Then, the place wherein you dwell and chant daimoku is the place of the Treasure Tower. The sutra reads: 'Wherever one teaches the Lotus Sutra, this Treasure Tower of mine will rise and appear before him.' Faith like yours is so extremely rare that I will inscribe the Treasure Tower especially for you" (MW-1, 30).

In another sense, whenever we share experiences of faith, this is a function of Many Treasures, the verifier — our experiences verify the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. And when friends who don't practice Buddhism acknowledge the greatness of Buddhism that they see in us, they also function as Many Treasures Buddha to support us and protect Buddhism.

Four in a series

WOW!

BREAKTHROUGHS IN UNDERSTANDING

Treasure of the Heart

By LISA JONES
STAFF WRITER

In an oft-quoted line, Nichiren Daishonin urges Shijo Kingo: "From the moment you read this letter on, strive to accumulate the treasures of the heart!" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 238). Maybe this means to cultivate kindness, fond memories, and good relationships with others. But it also means to strengthen your determination.

Wishes, hopes and dreams are the stuff of the heart. And sometimes this stuff is unfocused and scattered, like carbon dust, if you will. When we chant, we consolidate this dust. We harden and hone it, transforming it into a diamond, a glittering gem of determination. As SGI-USA Study Department Chief Ted Morino once told me, when our determination is solid like a golf ball, we can sail high and far when we're hit with problems. If our determination is soft like a beach ball, though, we tend to drift and bounce around.

When I chant about my heart's desire, I concentrate on solidifying my determination. Otherwise, when I rationally contemplate my situation, I get depressed. Without going into detail let me just say regarding my prayer: my environment and my self-slendering inner voice are shouting, "No! Never! Ever!" But my heart says yes, however faintly. When I chant, I feed this little yes. I nurture and protect it. It's growing, becoming more concrete. I pray for it to be so strong that my environment echoes it back to me.

I can't say that I've read everything that the Daishonin wrote. Even so, I've never found a passage that says: "When your situation is completely hopeless, utterly impossible, I recommend that you change your prayer to one that is more likely to be fulfilled." As far as I know, he never said anything of the sort. Rather, Buddhism teaches that no prayer goes unanswered.

And yes comes from the heart. ☐

Did you ever say "Wow!" after reading our publications? Share that moment where you saw everything in a new light. E-mail, mail or fax it to the World Tribune (see p. 2 for contact information).

SEARCH, FROM PAGE 1

I decided I really didn't need to chant about this issue anymore. I knew that, as long as I continued to chant and practice for the sake of others, this area would be taken care of when the time was right. The Gohonzon is not outside my life, and I felt I didn't have to chant specifically about this issue for the Gohonzon to know my desire.

I spoke with SGI-USA Women's Division Leader Wendy Clark when she was in town. At the end of our conversation, I happened to mention my new way of thinking. She looked a little surprised. She asked me if I still wanted to marry. I said yes. She then asked why in the world I wouldn't chant about it. She said that sometimes it's OK not to chant about everything we want; as we devote ourselves to other people's happiness, our lives are flooded with benefit. But if there is a weakness or area in life that we are avoiding, a gap is created and that gap fills with doubt, which deepens with time. She said it was important for me to continue to challenge this area and make it happen — if it was something I truly wanted. I did.

A wonderful benefit followed. I went to Japan and was with SGI President Ikeda at the May 3, 1997, commemorative meeting at Makiguchi Hall. He talked about what it means to have true determination to win. He said that often our own determination is very shallow, but true determination lasts day after day, year after year, never faltering no matter what happens or how long it takes.

I realized that just having expectation for our dreams to come true without the determination to sustain those dreams is a shallow view of our Buddhist practice and one that can lead to doubt and unhappiness. For many years I had passively expected certain problem areas to change based on my strong practice instead of using my practice to challenge those areas — I had mistaken expectation for determination. While both are important, the difference became very clear. I felt exhilarated with tremendous gratitude and hope.

When I returned home I was truly determined to challenge many areas, including finding the right person with whom to share my life. My prayer was simple: to find someone who would love and cherish me and love and cherish the SGI. I felt I already had the result every time I chanted to the Gohonzon. Each time I gave an experience or talked with others, I would tell them that I knew I was going to find this person very soon. I had no doubt at all.

Two weeks later I met Alan. Eight months later, Alan asked me to marry him. I just celebrated my 47th birthday and this is my first marriage-to-be. So much for those statistics about a woman's chances of marrying as she moves past the age of 35!

I should mention what a wonderful man Alan is. We have the most incredible relationship, more than I could have ever imagined with anyone. There's mutual love, respect, passion, fun and deep friendship. He doesn't practice but supports me

in every possible way, including reading and talking about Buddhism in depth. We are soul mates. When people are with us, they often comment that ours is the kind of relationship they want.

Alan is the person I dreamed of my whole life. I truly appreciate that I had the tremendous fortune to wait — even though it didn't feel that way through the years. We met each other at the absolute right time in both our lives. I know, based on my own tendencies, that if I had married many years ago when I wanted to, I would not have been able to develop the strong practice and deep conviction I now have in faith. My sense of who I am and where my happiness lies would have remained shallow. Of this I am certain.

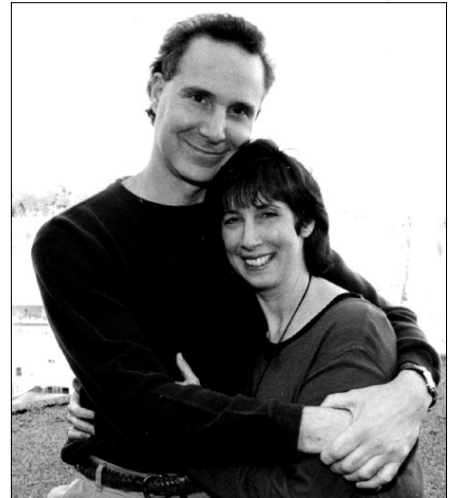
An SGI-USA vice president once told me a beautiful experience about meeting and marrying his wife. He said that when he was young, he decided to get married. He started chanting to find the right person for his life. He chanted and practiced strongly within the organization but years passed and still no wife. When he finally met her, he knew that she was the one — he felt a deep connection to her. The part of the story that touched me was that at the time he determined to find a wife, she was only 14 years old! Obviously, the time was not yet right, and he did not meet her for many years until she was older and ready to marry.

His waiting reminds me of what President Ikeda says in volume 1 of his *Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*: "There may be times when we think, 'What did I do to deserve this?' But we should not be swayed every time some such phenomena arise; for it is already certain that we will become happy in the end. We should regard everything that happens to us in our practice to reach the destination of happiness as our training. If we do so, then later on we will see the profound 'meaning' and 'intention' underlying each of these phenomena."

My experience of having this particular prayer answered is not a result of any one thing. I didn't suddenly hear the right guidance, or find that one area of weakness to change. It is not merely based on deepening how I care for others, changing one aspect of my practice, or being determined for the first time. It is a combination and accumulation of everything.

Clearly, I broke through because I never gave up. And this was not easy when my doubts would rise up year after year. President Ikeda writes: "The Daishonin says, 'If

'I know,' says Robyn (right), 'that if I had married years ago, I would not have been able to develop the deep conviction I now have in faith. My sense of who I am and where my happiness lies would have remained shallow. Of this I am certain.'



we do not harbor doubts in our hearts, we will as a matter of course attain Buddhahood.' Those who avoid succumbing to doubts no matter what happens are winners in faith. They are people who truly understand the Daishonin's intention."

I changed my circumstances because year after year, no matter how deeply I felt the doubt, what obstacle I was facing, or how I was feeling at any one time, I always returned to the Gohonzon and did my best for the sake of others within the SGI — without ever stopping. Even though there were times I did Buddhist activities for my own sake or from my own ego, it didn't matter. I always tried to be close to President Ikeda's heart, work on my own "stuff," and devote my life to helping my SGI friends practice. Because of this, I won. What incredible fortune we can accumulate living this kind of life day after day, year in and year out.

As wonderful as it feels being engaged to someone I love, I have to say that the true benefit actually has nothing to do with finding this person. The center of my joy is knowing with every cell in my life that the Gohonzon is true and that our practice for others truly brings benefit to our lives. I want to thank President Ikeda and so many SGI friends and leaders on both coasts who have been with me and encouraged me throughout the years. You are my treasures of the heart.

There is one last thing I should say. When I was in Japan in 1990, I received guidance from SGI Vice Women's Division Leader Yumiko Hachiya about how to break through and find the right person. She told me that my challenge was not to find a husband. My challenge was to develop a warm and open heart. Then I would attract the right person to my life.

One night Alan sat me down and said: "You have the most beautiful heart of anyone I've ever known. Will you marry me?"

Guess what I said. ☐

You can e-mail Robyn Thaw at springthaw@aol.com.

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

TODAY'S YOUTH

Photo by KIRK CONDYLES



Thank you all for traveling so far to be here today in spite of the cold weather.

I also express my heartfelt gratitude to Chin Chon County Chief Administrator Kim Young Wan, County Assembly President Cha Young Chul and the other representatives of Chin Chon here today. As one who ardently prays for friendship between South Korea and Japan, I regard the distinctions you have bestowed on me as a great honor. Thank you very much. I am determined to reply to your kindness with the deepest sincerity for the rest of my life.

Moreover, while by rights I ought to have traveled to your country to receive these honors, you have traveled all the way here to present them, despite your many official duties. I am humbled and grateful. And I am also delighted that I could receive you together with so many young people for whom, I know, you have great affection. I bid you a hearty welcome!

The Happiest Person in the World

Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda proclaimed, "The passion and power of youth will create the new century." I share the same sentiments.

Excitement fills my heart when I envision today's youth division members making magnificent contributions on the global stage as great leaders of the 21st century. I am swept by such unsurpassed joy that I believe I must be the happiest person in the world. As long as I live, I will continue to chant for you.

Chin Chon County is a picturesque area, known for its fragrant breezes and brilliant moonlight. A place of great natural beauty, the people's hearts there are also beautiful. Since ancient times, it has been considered one of the most hospitable areas of Korea. At present, under the vigorous leadership of Mr. Kim, the county has garnered attention for its innovative initiatives in the sphere of environmental protection and education.

I wish to share the honor I have received today from this lovely region with our esteemed friends of the SGI of Korea as well as with our members of Korean descent living in Japan —

indeed with all of the members of the youth division. For it is the youth division's mission to ensure that friendship between Japan and Korea continues to flourish in the 21st century and beyond.

There is an SGI training center located near a scenic lake in Chin Chon County. With this training center as the base for their activities, our friends in South Korea have been making unceasing efforts to contribute to the local community. They have undertaken a clean-up of the lake shore and organized a music festival and numerous other civic-minded projects and events.

SGI community centers have become centers of culture, friendship, peace and security in their respective areas. At the time of the Great Hanshin Earthquake [January 1995], the Soka Gakkai community centers throughout Hyogo Prefecture were opened to the disaster vic-

tims as emergency refuge centers and served as bases for the Gakkai's strenuous relief activities. This is well known to people throughout the world.

By contrast, the Nikken sect heartlessly closed the gates of its temples to the earthquake victims.

Going Out and Mixing With People

Buddhism teaches that life at each moment embraces all phenomena. This is the doctrine of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms, which is the Lotus Sutra's ultimate teaching and Buddhism's essence. Because of the profound way our lives interact with people around us, it is vital that we reach out to others, that we be engaged with our environment, with our local community. A self-absorbed practice or theory without action is definitely not Buddhism.

We need to go out and mix

with people every day. Making our local community the base for our activities, we need to forge ties of friendship with others and work with them to create peace. Staying connected in this way to our town, city, state or country is a practical manifestation of our lives permeating all things. We embody the doctrine of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms when we do our kosen-rufu activities.

I want to reconfirm with all of you today that the essence of this profound Buddhist doctrine is alive in our SGI activities.

One Person Is Enough

In the 7th century, the rallying cry of one courageous youth gave powerful impetus to the monumental unification of the three Korean kingdoms of Koguryo, Paekche and Silla. This was the famous Korean general Kim Yu Sin (595-673), who was born in what is today

Chin Chon County.

There are a great many episodes that attest to Kim Yu Sin's valor. In 629, for instance, his native Silla suffered a devastating defeat. Countless soldiers fell and the troops were completely demoralized. At this time of crisis, when the country's future hung by a thread, it was the young General Kim who gallantly strode to the fore.

"In a struggle, one must have courage!" he announced. "I'll deal the enemy a crushing blow!" He then mounted a horse and charged off alone. Moved by his heroism, the entire army stood up with new vigor and succeeded in completely turning the situation around.

One person is enough. Even the impossible can be achieved if there is one person of outstanding leadership.

In the great spiritual struggle of kosen-rufu, taking initiative at a crucial moment and securing victory make a great leader, a person of true leadership. For 50 years, I have exerted myself in every instance with just this determination. And I have won. I hope that all of you will do the same.

The irresolute and cowardly, those who fail to rise to the challenge at the decisive moment — no matter how pleasant or amicable they may be — are, ultimately, undependable.

Strictly speaking, they are the same as enemies.

Buddhism's Essential Focus

It was not until General Kim's 70s that he realized his earnest wish to unify the kingdoms of the Korean peninsula. His life was a succession of fierce battles.

What was the leadership philosophy that enabled him to triumph over so many adversities? For one, he possessed invincible conviction that those who are determined to fight to the death without begrudging their lives are sure to win.

General Kim appealed to his forces: "If one person takes on a hundred, determined to fight to the death; if a hundred take on a thousand, determined to fight to the death; or if a thousand take on 10,000 determined to fight to the death — any battle can be won."

PLEASE SEE LEADERS, NEXT PAGE

LEADERS, FROM PAGE 7

I, too, have often said that one person of firm resolve is stronger than the greatest multitude.

General Kim also knew well that those who unite in spirit are certain to prevail. One day, as he was preparing for battle, the emperor asked worriedly, "Isn't it far too dangerous for such a small company of soldiers to face such a large number of enemy forces?"

General Kim replied, point-blank: "Victory is not decided by numbers, but by people's resolve. We are now united in spirit and determined to live or die as one. Therefore, we fear nothing."

The essential focus of Buddhism, too, is the human heart. The Daishonin clearly states, "The heart is what really matters" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1192). A group will not muster any strength if its members are at cross purposes or are detached from one another. But if they unite in heart and mind, in purpose, their strength will be multiplied many times over. This is also true in sports and in achieving family goals.

The following words, attributed to General Kim, contain profound meaning:

At first it may appear that a successor is doing fine, but to follow through to the end is extremely difficult. It is truly painful to see accomplishments that are the results of generations of work destroyed in the bat of an eye. Therefore, you must understand that while it is difficult to achieve initial success, it is even more difficult to maintain those achievements.

He also said, "It is important to stay close to people of lofty character while keeping mean-spirited individuals at bay." In the realm of faith, we could say this corresponds to staying close to fellow members of sincere faith and integrity, while distancing ourselves from those partial to strategies and scheming, who fail to take any action themselves.

Construction vs. Destruction

Construction requires arduous effort. Destruction takes but a moment.

It is vital that we make unceasing efforts. The construction of kosen-rufu in the future will fall to those youth prepared to keep on striving with all their heart and being.

Those who make no effort,

who are simply interested in appearances, will only end up a hindrance.

There is a saying — "To start an undertaking is easy; to maintain it is difficult." Though creating something new may seem daunting, it is in fact easy when compared to the far more challenging task of carrying on an existing enterprise, to keep it going, to develop it further. When I met President Fidel Castro of Cuba [June 1996], I discussed this with him. I also asked him, "Now that Cuba has achieved stability, what are your

end, she cried out, "Long live independence!" At the tender age of 16, she died a martyr in prison.

Whenever she heard her comrades complain, she would chastise them, urging them to be brave. "How can you sigh like that!" she would say. "I know it's painful to be tortured, but isn't it better than standing by in silence while atrocities are committed on our people? Let's fight to the last!"

Her valor, conviction and commitment to the cause of justice live on eternally in the an-

the youth of all Asia and the world.

A little earlier, Mr. Kim mentioned the spirit of mentor and disciple that exists in the SGI. I am deeply gratified that he has discerned this most crucial point.

The mentor-disciple relationship is itself the essence of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and the foundation of the Soka Gakkai spirit.

In the famous letter "On Flowers and Seeds," the Daishonin writes: "It is said that if a mentor has a good disciple,

him like a shadow follows its body, even going with him to prison.

In my cell, I prayed solely for the safe release of my aged mentor, for I myself was still young. With this unchanging prayer in my heart, on Jan. 8, 1945, I was informed that Mr. Makiguchi had died in November the previous year. At that moment I cried out, "Who killed my mentor?" I then made a profound resolution to dedicate my life for the sake of the Mystic Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

Since I do not begrudge my life, no amount of slander or persecution directed against me matters to me in the least.

My feelings are the same. No matter what kind of stories people make up to smear me, it doesn't trouble me in the least. They are all pure lies.

The path that I walk is the solemn one of mentor and disciple that transcends life and death. It is the true path of Buddhism, the path of the Soka Gakkai. Unless we are prepared to devote ourselves with the spirit of not begrudging our lives, we will not persist in advancing along the path of true disciples.

It is now 40 years since the dignified ceremony of succession took place on March 16, 1958.

As the Soka Gakkai's third president, I have accomplished everything that President Makiguchi and President Toda set out to achieve. Alone, I have borne the brunt of persecution. I have persevered in the face of all obstacles. I have won. And this achievement is my great pride.

From here on, I entrust everything to the youth. There is no other way. My young friends in the youth division, from now on everything will depend on you! On that note, I conclude my speech.

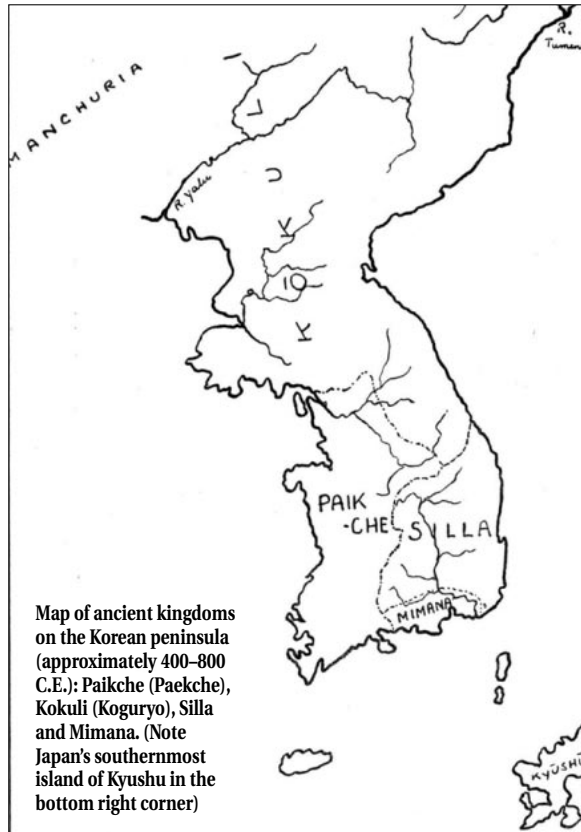
Let us advance vigorously again this year! Let us create a great history!

All of your struggles for kosen-rufu will become your personal history and win you the Daishonin's boundless praise.

I also express my heartfelt prayers for the successful activities of Mr. Kim and our other distinguished guests, and for the further development of Chin Chon County. Together with all of you, I pray for the unending glory of South Korea, a country of great culture. Let me once again reiterate my profound gratitude for the honors bestowed on me today.

Kamsahamnida (thank you very much). 卍

General Kim was in his 70s when he realized his wish to unify the kingdoms of the Korean peninsula. What was the leadership philosophy that enabled him to triumph over so many adversities? For one, he possessed invincible conviction that those who are determined to fight to the death without begrudging their lives are sure to win.



Map of ancient kingdoms on the Korean peninsula (approximately 400-800 C.E.): Paikche (Paekche), Kokuli (Koguryo), Silla and Mimana. (Note Japan's southernmost island of Kyushu in the bottom right corner)

thoughts on raising capable successors for the future?"

Everything depends on people, on capable successors. And our movement for kosen-rufu depends on you, my young friends. For that reason, I am determined to do all that I can right now to raise genuine successors in the youth division.

The Korean Joan of Arc

There is a famous Korean resistance fighter in the struggle against the Japanese occupation earlier this century, Yu Kwan Sun (1904-20). Known as the Korean Joan of Arc, she was a young woman of extraordinary courage. Though imprisoned and subjected to torture by Japanese authorities, she refused to capitulate. To the very

end, she cried out, "Long live independence!" At the tender age of 16, she died a martyr in prison.

Whenever she heard her comrades complain, she would chastise them, urging them to be brave. "How can you sigh like that!" she would say. "I know it's painful to be tortured, but isn't it better than standing by in silence while atrocities are committed on our people? Let's fight to the last!"

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Kamsahamnida (thank you very much). 卍

BRIGHT IDEAS

If we were to lose the spirit of presidents Makiguchi and Toda, the SGI would be in dire straits, SGI President Ikeda says in this speech about the importance of the mentor-disciple relationship.

The following is the second half of a speech by SGI President Ikeda at the 19th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held concurrently with the 4th Kanagawa Prefecture General Meeting, at the Soka International Friendship Hall in Sendagaya, Tokyo, Feb. 3 (continued from the March 27 issue).

Arrogance Denigrates the Law

Why has the world of Japanese Buddhism tended to be so corrupt and to deviate so significantly from the original teachings of Buddhism? Nichiren Daishonin clearly states that it is because disciples took their mentors lightly.

The Great Teacher Dengyo established the head temple of the Tendai school of Buddhism at Mount Hiei, which became a leading center of Japanese Buddhism for many centuries. However, Dengyo's successors were influenced by the growing popularity of the Shingon school and decided to incorporate its teachings into their own school [going against Dengyo's spirit and intent].

Describing one such priest, the Daishonin writes: "He felt that his teacher, the Great Teacher Dengyo, had not gone into the matter [of the relative merits of the Shingon and Tendai teachings] in sufficient detail, that he had not remained for an extended period in China and hence had acquired only a rough understanding of the Shingon doctrines" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 3, p. 153).

In other words, these later successors thought that they knew better than Dengyo, that they were more learned, and that their mentor had simply failed to

understand. These were their sentiments. It was a sign of the purest arrogance. And so, enthralled by the popularity of Shingon, they turned their backs on the instructions of their mentor, the Great Teacher Dengyo.

In fact, however, Dengyo was thoroughly acquainted with Shingon and had taught his followers to avoid it based on his knowledge. This is a key point. The Daishonin relates this history in the Goshō "The Selection of the Time."

Because the disciples did not understand the greatness of their mentor, Mount Hiei in effect turned into a center of the Shingon school, its priests ultimately becoming "archenemies of the founder Great Teacher Dengyo" (cf. *Goshō Zenshu*, p. 369). At the very time they should have been loudly refuting erroneous doctrines, Dengyo's disciples failed to act. Finding fault with their mentor, they justified their actions as right and proper, and so avoided confrontation and possible persecution. These disciples were cunning and self-serving.

Something similar had occurred in the Chinese T'ien-t'ai (Tendai) school, too. After the death of the school's founder, the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai, new sutras were introduced to China from India. Naturally, not having been familiar with these texts, T'ien-t'ai had not discussed or rejected them. His successors foolishly believed these sutras to be superior to the Lotus Sutra and

ended up embracing erroneous teachings.

The Daishonin writes: "Since this was a text that T'ien-t'ai had never seen, his followers in these later times, shallow as they were in wisdom and understanding, seemed inclined to accept this allegation [of its superiority over the Lotus Sutra]" (MW-4, 193)

The disciples were foolish and cowardly, and they were capable neither of understanding the greatness of their mentor nor of proving the validity of his teaching. As a result, the pure flow of T'ien-t'ai's teaching was sullied. The Daishonin explains this in the Goshō "Repaying Debts of Gratitude."

Unless You Fight Evil, You Will Be Overcome by It

While trading on their mentors' authority and veneration to win people's respect, these priests inwardly scorned their mentors and did nothing to challenge erroneous teachings. In fact, they were themselves thoroughly swayed by them.

Unless you fight evil, you will be overcome by it. Unless you fight the devilish nature of power, you will be possessed by it. The Daishonin clearly indicates this important principle in his writings.

I am not just talking about something that happened centuries ago in the world of Buddhism; we find ample evidence of the same corruption today. Therefore, I hope you will earnestly study the Goshō.

If we were to lose the spirit of founding president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and of Josei Toda, the SGI would be in dire straits. Kosen-rufu could not be achieved. This would be a betrayal of our mentors and an unpardonable desecration of the Daishonin's legacy.

With that in mind, I am exerting every ounce of my strength and being, determined to stay in good health as long as I can, so that I can continue to lead our movement and teach members about the spirit of mentor and disciple.

Disciples Who Betray the Mentor-Disciple Way

In Nichiren Daishonin's time, too, there were arrogant disciples. They criticized him, blaming the harsh persecution he encountered on what they

saw as an error in his approach to spreading his teaching.

The Daishonin writes: "Some of my disciples foolishly think, 'Our teacher says that he is spreading the Lotus Sutra. But not only does he fail to spread the teaching, he has encountered great persecution. This is because he says such things as "Shingon ruins the nation, Nembutsu leads to the hell of incessant suffering, Zen is the teaching of devils, and Ritsu is traitorous." This is like insulting someone during a reasonable discussion'" (Goshō Zenshu, p. 585).

These people failed to understand that the very fact that the Daishonin encountered great persecution, even though he was innocent of any wrongdoing, constituted proof of his identity as the votary of the Lotus Sutra. The Daishonin says that such people will suffer in a state of hell even longer than the followers of erroneous teachings.

He writes: "The pitiful thing is that these perverse people must suffer in the depths of hell even longer than the Nembutsu believers" (MW-1, 42).

Such is the gravity of betraying the path of mentor and disciple. The Nikken sect is guilty of this offense. Its adherents blatantly ignore the teachings of the Daishonin and his successor Nikko Shonin and other great predecessors. They are self-seeking. Buddhism no longer exists within the priesthood, which has cast aside the path of mentor and disciple. They have become archenemies of Nichiren Daishonin.

The Path of a Disciple

In November 1941, one month before the Pacific war began, President Toda gave a lecture titled "The Path of a Disciple." At that time, nationalism — like a torrent that has burst its banks and washed away everything in its path — had inundated Japanese society. We find indications of the same thing beginning to happen again in Japan today. Many people are concerned that Japan is now veering down the dangerous path of nationalism, with its democratic institutions becoming hollow.

For this reason, society stands in great need of a popular movement to empower people and put them in charge of their own future. Many observers view the Soka Gakkai as a champion of the spiritual

realm that is waging a battle against the corrupt forces of power. The very future of Japan, I submit, will depend on the success of our efforts.

President Toda described the path of a disciple as follows:

Nikko Shonin had not the slightest desire to surpass or better Nichiren Daishonin. Likewise, our duty is to faithfully follow, put into practice and manifest in our lives President Makiguchi's teaching.... Mr. Makiguchi is our mentor and we are his disciples.... What can we possibly hope to achieve if we merely try to imitate his manner of speaking? We would be casting away the precious essence of his spirit.

Disciples have to follow the path of a disciple. Both in word and deed, we have to reveal the mentor's teaching with our lives.

This is President Toda's injunction to us. While sounding simple enough, when great persecution arose, only Mr. Toda succeeded in carrying this out. Other disciples not only abandoned their faith, but cursed and abused President Makiguchi and Mr. Toda. The fickleness of the human heart is frightening.

Interested only in self-preservation, these followers denounced their mentor. This is bogus faith. It represents a life dominated by Animality.

There have also been many individuals who tried to make themselves appear important by imitating my speech and gestures. All of these people, however, eventually lost their bearings in faith.

The Gakkai Spirit Resides Here

While all Mr. Makiguchi's other disciples capitulated to the authorities, President Toda alone held to his convictions. Moreover, he felt such deep appreciation to his mentor that he could say:

In your vast and boundless compassion, you [President Makiguchi] let me accompany you even to prison. As a result, I could read with my entire being the passage from the Lotus Sutra, "Those persons who had heard the Law / dwelled here and there in various Buddha lands, / constantly reborn in company with their teachers" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 140). The benefit of this was coming to know the essential purpose of a Bodhisattva of the Earth, and to absorb with my

IDEAS, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

very life even a small degree of the sutra's meaning. Could there be any greater happiness than this?

He made this famous statement at the third memorial (second anniversary) of Mr. Makiguchi's death. What sublime and noble words! This is the Soka Gakkai's proud path of mentor and disciple and the path of Buddhism.

Mr. Toda declares that there is no greater happiness than undergoing persecution together with one's mentor. What a contrast to the attitudes of President Makiguchi's other disciples.

Encountering obstacles and persecution is an inevitable part of propagating the correct teaching of Buddhism. The "Encouraging Devotion" chapter of the Lotus Sutra states that the sutra's votary will be cursed and spoken ill of (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 193). The Daishonin reiterates this point time and again in the Goshō. And yet, once difficulties arise, there are always people who, fearing persecution, turn around and condemn the mentor to whom they are so deeply indebted. They use their mentor as a shield, and thereby seek to deflect and escape attack. What cowardly behavior!

My Treasures Are the Gohonzon, My Mentor and Sincerity

I, in turn, single-handedly protected President Toda. In every instance, I supported him.

The tradition of making February a month for propagation activities began from my determination to respond to my mentor's expectations.

It was 1952. Mr. Toda had been inaugurated as the second president the year before, but little headway was being made in the area of propagation. There were many senior members who had a high opinion of themselves, but who weren't taking any action toward achieving President Toda's goal. And so it was that President Toda resolved, "It's time to let Daisaku take the lead."

This was a stern directive from my mentor. Determined not to let him down, I made his purpose and vision my own and exerted myself with all my might. And I immediately succeeded in breaking through the deadlock, opening a way forward in our efforts to spread the Daishonin's Buddhism. From there, the great path of kosen-

rufu that exists today unfolded.

President Toda always said: "If I ask Daisaku to do something, then I know I don't have to worry." "When Daisaku's involved, victory is certain." This oneness of mentor and disciple is the essence of the Soka

particular.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the death of India's great independence leader Mahatma Gandhi (who was assassinated on Jan. 30, 1948). During the struggle to free his country from colonial rule,

sibly the greatest violence, certainly far greater than bloodshed and the like that generally go under the name of violence."

Gandhi prized courage above all, deeming it the most important spiritual requirement for a human being. Cowardice, ulti-

One and all, let us live vigorously and exuberantly, confidently overcoming every challenge that presents itself. Let us keep striving, realizing victory in every sphere. Let us lead long, brilliant, triumphant lives!

May each of you demonstrate magnificent actual proof of the power of genuine faith in your own life.

Good Fortune and Benefit in Lifetime after Lifetime

I will share one more point before closing.

All of you are contributing to the widespread propagation of the Mystic Law — the fundamental law of the universe. By doing so, you are creating in your lives the causes to be reborn as outstanding leaders in unlimited spheres of endeavor in lifetime after lifetime. This is borne out by the Goshō and the Lotus Sutra. Moreover, there are countless planets in the universe like the Earth. We may even be reborn on one of these and become great leaders of the propagation of the Mystic Law there.

Therefore, please be confident that all the efforts you are making or struggles you are undergoing at present are training so that you can become leaders of outstanding humanism in the future, and that you are also accumulating the greatest possible good fortune.

Buddhism elucidates the law of cause and effect. This is the strict law of life. Consequently, no effort is ever wasted in Buddhism. Please always remember that all of your efforts in faith will become the source of your eternal good fortune and benefit.

Since our lives are eternal, having neither beginning nor end, we are destined to be reborn again and again, appearing in different existences over eternity. Therefore, rather than having to remain repeatedly in a state of hellish suffering, it makes sense that we strive to make great causes in this lifetime. By applying ourselves to our Buddhist practice, we develop a state of being where we can dedicate ourselves to carrying out the Buddha's will and decree in lifetime after lifetime.

I am praying for your good health.

Our great youth division has risen! How happy this makes me. For you, my young friends, I will continue exerting myself to open a path to the 21st century.

Thank you very much for today!



Gandhi prized courage above all, deeming it the most important spiritual requirement for a human being. Cowardice, ultimately, debases and hurts us. We must not be cowardly; we must not succumb to fear.

Gakkai.

Nichiren Daishonin and President Toda are constantly in my thoughts. The Gohonzon, President Toda and sincerity are my "three treasures."

I have won through sincerity. Striving to lead the most upright life, while enduring the harshest criticism and abuse, I have won through faith. I have won as a human being. From the standpoint of Buddhism, from the standpoint of the three existences of past, present and future, I am confident that I am the greatest victor.

Buddhism is not about leading a self-centered existence. If we do not base our lives on the Law, we are not practicing Buddhism.

The great German writer Friedrich von Schiller writes, "The brave man thinks upon himself the last." This is analogous to the spirit of not begrudging one's life taught in the Lotus Sutra. This means treasuring the Law more highly than one's life. The Law and kosen-rufu are central. The SGI, therefore, is extremely important.

When you have the spirit of "I want to do something for kosen-rufu," benefit is forthcoming. But if there are those who think "I'm going to have the SGI do something for me," they are abusing the world of faith. They are in the life-state of Hell. This, indeed, was the mind-set of all who betrayed us in the past.

Appearances Alone Do Not Amount to Victory

I would like to talk further for the benefit of young people in

Gandhi traveled around the country on foot, visiting village after village.

This is similar to how we travel about to do home visits and share the teachings of the Daishonin with others.

For the sake of his country's future, Gandhi stressed to the Indian people the importance of self-reliance: "You are free the moment you cease to depend on others. This freedom, which is the only real freedom, none can take away from you," he said.

In other words, he was saying we should not depend on others. Gandhi taught people to live with lionlike courage, impressing upon them that they could not afford to leave things up to others, that they had to stand up for themselves and fight for justice.

Having practiced the Daishonin's Buddhism for 50 years, I understand what he meant. Ultimately, the only way forward is by developing self-reliance, forging a stand-alone spirit. That is the only path to victory. As President Makiguchi was fond of saying, "A single lion is worth more than a thousand sheep." I hope you will never permit appearances or rhetoric to take the place of action in our organization.

Gandhi proclaimed that to be dominated by fear is the most miserable and wretched of all conditions. Therefore, he urged people not to be afraid of anything. He declared his hatred of fear, and he questioned why people were intimidated by others. He also said, "Cowardice is perhaps the greatest vice from which we suffer and is also pos-

itely, debases and hurts us. We must not be cowardly; we must not succumb to fear.

Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is a teaching of courage. The SGI has developed to the extent it has because of the unflinching courage of its members.

'I Will Accomplish It'

Gandhi also stressed the importance of being resolute in one's determinations:

A man, who says that he will do something "as far as possible" betrays either his pride or his weakness, though he himself may attribute it to his humility. There is, in fact, not a trace of humility in such an attitude of mind.

In short, he asserts that someone who makes halfhearted pronouncements is either arrogant or cowardly.

President Toda often took people to task for prefacing their determinations with dubious, self-effacing remarks like "I don't have any real ability, but..." He would demand, "Why don't you just come out and say, 'I will do my very best,' 'I will really give it my all,' or 'I will stick with it to the end!'"

I think that this is what Gandhi was getting at. He was telling people that, first of all, they should declare, "No matter what difficulties it may entail, I will accomplish it!" That, Gandhi instructed his disciples, is the sign of strength.

There are now just three years until the start of the 21st century. Let us make the 21st century the Century of the SGI!

By HO GOKU

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY

A LOVE OF NATURE: THE SOKA GAKKAI TRADITION



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.

A snow-blanketed scene purifies the heart. Swans glide serenely on the lake. It is a beautiful sight to behold as they spread their wings in joy, lifting gracefully into the skies.

Lake Hyo in Niigata Prefecture is famous as the Lake of the Swans. This year some 5,000 swans are wintering there.

In May 1971, I stood on the shores of the lake with a group of friends. Most of the swans had already flown north, but one female swan was shepherding her cygnets quietly across the lake's surface.

Instinctively, I aimed my camera at them, filled with the wish to preserve for all time these swans, this beautiful natural environment.



Some members of our Swan Headquarters in the town of Suibara — many of them youth division members — responded to my wish to found the Lake Hyo Protection Group. Throughout the four seasons, they clean the area around the lake and engage in projects to protect the environment. The local people speak highly of them and appreciate their efforts. And last Nov. 3, Culture Day, Suibara presented them with an official letter of thanks.

Life is hard in the snow country. We mustn't forget the hardships of those who live there. But at the same time, when we see those white wings lifting, the poet's heart is carried away to the land of dreams. My chil-

dren's story *The Snow Country Prince* was inspired by such scenes.

I have visited Lake Hyo three times, and I have contributed a shelter for the care of sick swans and an island where they can rest.



My mentor, Josei Toda, spent his childhood and early youth in Hokkaido. In one corner of that northern island, there is a protected wilderness area called the Kushiro Japanese Crane Natural Park, or Crane Park, as it is called by locals. It opened in 1958; it celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. A year before its opening, there was a fund drive for the new park and its planned efforts to protect the Japanese crane,

which had been designated an endangered species.

When he heard of the fund drive, Mr. Toda said: "This is important. People may think they rule this planet, but they will wind up in big trouble if they destroy their natural environment. Protecting the environment is protecting humanity, too." These words expressed his firm conviction as a Buddhist that people and their environment are one.

Mr. Toda was one of the first to respond to the fund drive. He donated ¥500,000 — at a time when the average starting salary for a public servant was less than ¥10,000 a month.

On the brink of extinction when the park first opened, some 600 cranes now make their home in the eastern part of Hokkaido during the winter

months, delighting people with their beauty and grace.



The Soka Gakkai's founding president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, wrote about the intimate relationship between humanity and the natural world in his great work *The Geography of Human Life*.

The ideas of the oneness of humanity and nature, their interdependence and symbiosis, shine through his writings. A love of nature and taking action to protect and preserve it are part of the Soka Gakkai tradition.

On my first guidance trip abroad in 1960, I visited Brazil. This Soka Gakkai tradition I speak of has been passed on to our members there. In 1992, SGI-Brazil established the Amazon


Ecological Research Center, which has for several years been engaged in a joint research project for the reforestation of the Amazon rain forest with Soka University's Brazilian Institute for the Natural Environment and the State of Amazonas' Department of Environmental Science and Technology of the Amazon. Our SGI members are actively involved in these and many other projects to protect the environment, including awareness-raising exhibitions that have traveled in Brazil and throughout South America and reaped a positive response. The SGI has received awards and commendations for these efforts from several city and town assemblies, including Manaus, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

I know that Mr. Toda, who loved nature with all his heart, is rejoicing in these honors, wonderful symbols of the importance we place on environmentalism, which our members have received as exemplary world citizens.



The love and protection of our beautiful natural environment is a fertile ground for the cultivation of spiritual richness. And the purification of the human heart makes us appreciate the infinite beauty of birds, trees and all of nature even more.

When the snows finally melt, pairs of cranes will also dance in the marshland that we have preserved at our Hokkaido Training Center in Bekka.

Spring approaches. The heart of the poet dances. 

Renaissance Rising

In southeastern Virginia, the SGI-USA Renaissance Rising Chorus sponsored its first music festival. Performances included Panamanian folk dances, a steel drum performance, a tap routine, a Korean drum dance and choral presentations. Four men's division chorus members formed a special 'oldies but goodies' group and performed songs from the '60s. The festival took place in late January.

— Contributed by Phyllis Lowery

Photos by MIKE JONES



In the Hearts of Children

Photos Courtesy of SIDNEY L. GULICK III



To cultivate peace, Sidney Gulick initiated the Doll Messengers of Friendship in 1929. Today, his grandson, Sidney Gulick III, has picked up where he left off, opening a doll museum in Japan.

By LINDA WRIGHT

WASHINGTON, D.C., CORRESPONDENT

"We who desire peace must write it in the hearts of children."

So runs the inscription over the gateway of an American kindergarten built in France. And so begins the introduction to the book *Dolls of Friendship* by Sidney Gulick, the founder of an organization called the Committee on World Friendship Among Children.

The book was originally published in 1929. Upon returning to the United States after living in Japan for 25 years, Mr. Gulick wanted to find a way to foster better understanding between the two cultures. He determined the best way to accomplish this was to form ties among the youth.

He wrote:

If world friendliness is to be achieved, the children of the nations must know each other better. Children are naturally friendly. They are interested in the things that other children say and do. Unfortunately, this natural attitude often changes as they grow older, partly because of prejudices instilled by their elders, partly because no opportunity is given for the expression of the friendly thoughts they have for establishing normal contact with children of other races and countries.

To help cultivate those contacts, he initiated the Doll Messengers of Friendship program. In response to committee notices sent around the United States, nearly 13,000 dolls were col-

lected and shipped to Japan. To bring the project alive for the participating children, each doll was accompanied with a ticket and passport, as well as a letter of friendship for the young recipients in Japan. Schools, churches and youth groups around America got involved, studying Japanese culture, forming friendship message committees and holding farewell receptions for the goodwill doll ambassadors.

The Doll Messengers of Friendship were welcomed with great enthusiasm and warmth in Japan. And they were kept in the schools as a cherished symbol of peace.

But when World War II arrived, the hatred and evil of war forced the messengers into silence. Many of the dolls were confiscated and destroyed, but some went into hiding. So while the message was drowned out by the bombs, it was not destroyed.

Indeed, 300 of the original dolls have been rediscovered and documented in a recently published second edition, by Mr. Gulick's grandson, Sidney Gulick III, who teaches mathematics at Maryland University.

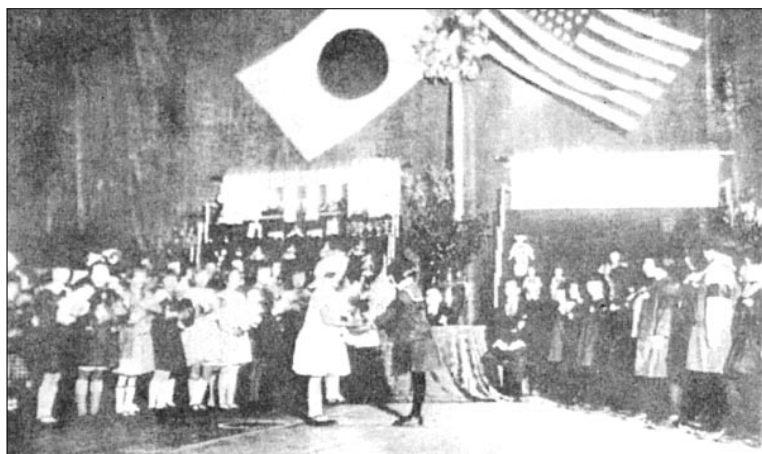
He got interested in his grandfather's work when officials invited his family to the opening of a doll museum in Japan in 1986.

During that trip he discovered that these old dolls continue to be treasured from generation to generation for the fond memories of friendship and goodwill they symbolize.

He also realized that his grandfather's goal to promote world friendliness was advanced with a simple, but powerful notion: that peace can be written in the hearts of children. **WT**



(Top) Mitsu Takami (left) and Mary Cavert, from the original printing of 'Dolls of Friendship.' (Below) The official welcome in Tokyo for the original dolls from America.



COMING NEXT WEEK:

Significant Date — A Look at May 3

SPECIAL
PULLOUT
SECTION

FRIENDS for Peace

APRIL 3,
1998

Nichiren Daishonin Visits South Carolina

by Samantha Thompson, 11 Columbia, S.C.

On Feb. 14, the Boys and Girls Group, along with the junior high and high school divisions, celebrated Nichiren Daishonin's birthday, Feb. 16, 1222.

It was a perfect day for a visit from the Daishonin (John Taylor). He came in and introduced himself. He was wearing a three-piece suit with a diamond earring in his left ear. He invited us to chant daimoku with him, and he told us that

our lives are Nam-my-o-ho-rengé-kyo. It's hard for us to understand.

The Daishonin encouraged us to continue chanting, and do our own individual best. As long as we feel it is our best, it is!!! THAT WAS ENCOURAGING!

The Hinesville District did a great skit on the Tatsunokuchi Persecution. The Blue Ridge Chapter did a game called Buddhist Concentration. That was Phat! And Capitol Chapter

had a game called Somewhere in Time With the Daishonin. They had these lovely game-show hostesses who assisted the Daishonin. All of these games we played were educational and a lot of fun!

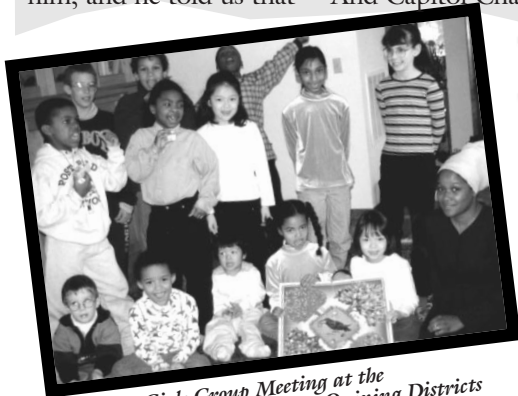
The Daishonin took us on a tour of his life back in the 13th century. We then had questions for the Daishonin (John Taylor). And he gave us great answers.

We had pizza, birthday cake, punch and

goodie bags that the Parents Group made for us. The tables were beautiful with sunflowers and French tulips. We really do appreciate all the divisions of the SGI. They chant a lot of daimoku for us and are always behind the scenes. Thank you for the GREAT day!



Two lovely game show hosts: Crystal Paster and Kazme Morts



Boys & Girls Group Meeting at the White Plains & Tarrytown-Ossining Districts

At our February Boys and Girls Group meeting, one of the parents adapted a board game to present the topic for the month: courage. The

BOYS AND GIRLS LEARN ABOUT COURAGE

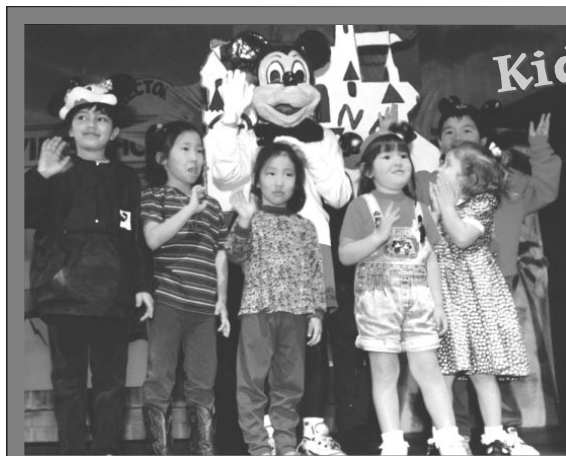
in New York by Sylvia Dare New City, N.Y.

title of the game was "Building World Peace" and the object was to pick the fruits of wisdom from the tree before the angry raven snatched them all. The game called for rolling the dice. Depending on what the child rolled, he or she either got to collect the fruits or had to answer a true/false question. With each play, the child got a "Words of Wisdom" card, which had Goshu quotes or guidance from President Ikeda relating to courage. The questions were fun and ranged in difficulty. (i.e., True or False: Daimoku is a Japanese dish. True or False: When you chant with confidence, there is no

problem that cannot be solved.)

The mother who created the game acted as the "Question Meister" and chose the question to match the player's ability. This enabled all the children, ranging in age from 3 to 11, to participate. We formed four teams of four, and the children took turns rolling the dice. When the child who rolled the dice didn't know the answer, the team "huddled" and came up with the answer. Everyone loved the game, especially the parents, and it held everyone's attention for the 45 minutes it took to complete.

Kids Celebrate MARCH 16TH



Children from Southern California perform in the Global Family Festival at the World Peace Ikeda Auditorium

in Santa Monica, Calif., March 14-15. The performance included a mural painted by boys and girls from the Greater Los Angeles area.



EXPERIENCES

RYAN POTOFF, 8

Boston

Before Young Lions (in Boston, we call the Boys and Girls Group "Young Lions") started, my mom asked me if I wanted to go to the Art Festival on Newbury Street.

I said, "No!"

Then I decided to sit down and chant. When I was done chanting, I had changed my mind and decided I wanted to go with my mom. She was surprised.

My chanting worked so well that I thought I might chant about something even better.

My mother said that I could chant about getting a little kitten. But my father is allergic to cats, so I had to chant about getting a kitten that he would not be allergic to. I chanted 5 minutes a day for about two weeks.

My chanting worked because today we have a beautiful, little kitten, and my father has not sneezed once!!! 🐾



AMBER LEWIS, 10

Houston

I am 10 years old and a fortune baby. My biggest benefit of all was when my parents took me to get braces.

Kids at school used to call me names like "bucktooth" because my teeth were so crooked and stuck out when I smiled.

The night before I went to the dentist, my mother and I chanted a lot. The next day

I had a really nice doctor and got my braces. He said that I would feel pain the next day, but I felt OK.

The bad news was I had four crooked teeth, and my face was swollen. I needed tooth surgery. I was so scared. He said come back in three months. My mom said: "Don't worry! We'll chant."

When the doctor looked at my X-rays, he was in shock. My teeth were straight again just like normal. Now I have lots of friends and no more name-calling.

I will keep chanting and going to meetings. 🐾



HARRIS FORSTATER, 7

Red Hook, N.Y.

When we get "Friends for Peace," I like to look at where people are from. I am very into geography. My parents got me an atlas of the world. It is very cool. It has mostly all the countries except the very, very little ones like Micronesia, Fiji, St. Kits and Nevis. But it has New Zealand, Monaco, San Tome and Principe islands and Rhode Island. It has all the continents, including Antarctica.

Last year, when I lived in Gettysburg, Pa., I chanted at a meeting. I also helped with the meeting. The next day I met a special friend who just moved to Gettysburg from Atlanta, Ga.

Mom chanted to find my library books, and I found

them. I like when people come to our house to chant; especially Mark. He plays the drums, and he is my buddy.

I like watching the "Introduction to SGI" video. I like seeing people in the different countries. 🐾



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

Why Do We Chant?

- TO HAVE FRIENDS?
- TO GET GOOD GRADES?
- TO DO WELL IN SPORTS?
- TO HAVE A HAPPY FAMILY?
- TO FEEL BETTER WHEN YOU'RE SICK?

Many times, our parents, teachers, coaches, doctors and friends try to help us accomplish these things. They definitely can help us, but getting better grades, doing well in sports, making friends, etc., all depend on you. How much you want to do these things is the most important step of all.

HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS

- 1 Make a goal or determination to do something (for example, to get better grades, feel better, make a friend, do well in sports, etc.).
- 2 Chant to bring out the parts inside you that can accomplish your goal, like courage, smartness or energy. Make a goal to chant every day.
- 3 Take ACTION to make your goal come true (study hard, be nice to others, practice hard at sports, take the medicine your doctor gave you, etc.).

The Gohonzon

By Audrey Correll Philadelphia, PA.

One member of the Boys and Girls Group in Philadelphia asked: "What's the Gohonzon? It looks like a map."

Well, the Gohonzon is like a map, yet it is more. Nichiren Daishonin described the Gohonzon to be like a mirror. Though our eyebrows are on our face, we cannot see them. When we look into a mirror we can easily see our eyebrows.

Nam-myoho-rence-kyo (or our Buddha nature) is already in our lives. When we chant, we wake up our Buddha nature and see it. It's like when we see an ice cream cone, it wakes up our hungry nature. Or say we see the McDonald's golden arches, our desire for French fries wakes up.

Seeing or receiving a new toy or game can wake up our excited nature, (rapture), then if the toy breaks this can wake up our angry nature. The Gohonzon is in our lives to wake up our most powerful, happy self. Nichiren Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon so that we could make our lives absolutely happy, no matter what, and accomplish our goals, no matter what! What a great benefit to have the Gohonzon in our lives and to share it with others!

The 3 Basic Practices Are:

FAITH, PRACTICE AND STUDY

By Audrey Correll Philadelphia, PA.

FAITH is to make goals, such as: good grades, having a great day, or whatever you want or need. Faith is to chant and do gongyo as best as you can, and do whatever you can to contribute to meetings, your family and your community. When you take action for one of your goals, such as studying if you want good grades, you will see the effect or the result, which will be getting **BETTER GRADES!** Then you will naturally become more confident about the power you have to make your dreams happen,

accomplishing all your goals.

PRACTICE is for self and for others. We practice to become happy ourselves and to help other people become happy, too. Nam-myoho-rence-kyo in our lives is very powerful. When we chant we can help ourselves and help others, too. We can even chant for our communities to be happy and safe. Nam-myoho-rence-kyo is great, and when we chant it is like a song to the whole universe.

Sometimes we may forget that we have a Buddha nature, and that we have

great potential in our lives. We may even forget that everybody also has a Buddha nature inside their lives, and they have great potential, too. That's why we chant (to remind ourselves), and we study.

STUDY is for learning more about this Buddhism and reminding ourselves how great it is to have Nam-myoho-rence-kyo in our lives. When we study we also learn and become more confident about the power we have through our practice to overcome any obstacle we encounter.

DO YOU WANT TO BE A CORRESPONDENT FOR

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

Name: _____

Area and Region: _____

Address: _____

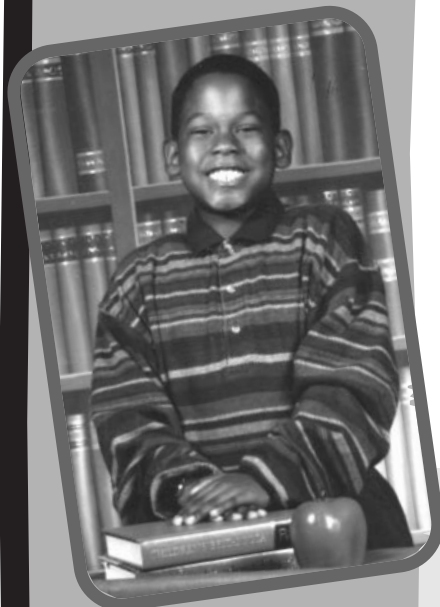
Phone: _____



ACTIVITY IDEA

SUBMITTED BY

Steve P. Stewart, 9



Houston

My idea is to start an SGI-USA Kids Club. We would meet once a month to plan community activities like: cleaning up trash in our areas and around the center, collecting clothes and toys for needy kids, and planning outings that are fun for kids.

The club would be made up of kids from all backgrounds. Members, friends from school and our neighborhood would be invited to join. When the Boys and Girls Group meets for video night, we could eat popcorn together, and do A & C of gongyo. 🌸

WORD SEARCH

- WATER
- GOHONZON
- BELL
- CANDLES
- INCENSE
- FRUIT
- GREENS

Things To Look for on an Altar

Here's a list of some items that some people may have on their altar. Can you find the words below?

T	L	F	R	U	I	T	Z	W	A
O	N	K	D	C	A	R	U	A	C
P	M	S	T	C	V	T	D	T	B
Q	L	R	U	A	F	E	I	E	C
G	O	H	O	N	Z	O	N	R	L
R	K	H	G	D	G	H	C	P	Q
E	B	E	L	L	F	I	E	O	R
E	J	U	I	E	E	J	N	N	S
N	A	Y	X	S	D	K	S	M	T
S	A	X	C	B	V	L	E	L	U

“The Engine of Our Lives”

“You can become a genuine successor of the Soka Gakkai or a great leader for the 21st century only by establishing in your life a firm foundation of strong, unshakable faith. Everything is contained in the single word faith. It encompasses truth, courage, wisdom and good fortune. It includes compassion and humanity as well as peace, culture and happiness.”

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

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

excerpts
from
‘Discussions
on Youth’
with SGI
President
Ikeda