

World Tribune

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THE YEAR OF VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE FOR THE NEW CENTURY

APRIL 17, 1998

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Youth Must Ensure Victory

Victory — reaching all our unreachable stars — is the most important thing, SGI President Ikeda says. The key to the SGI's success has been the united efforts of many people. And it is the youth who must ensure our continued victory and the happiness of the people in the coming century.

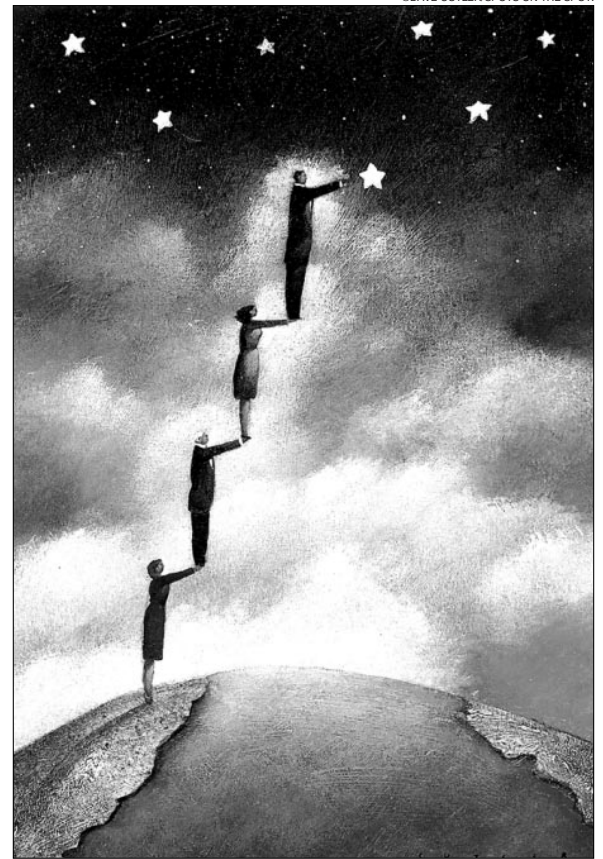
SGI President Ikeda gave the following speech at the Youth Division March 16 Commemorative Meeting at the Soka International Friendship Hall in Sendagaya, Tokyo, March 13.

March 16, Kosen-rufu Day. The spirit of this day lies not in magnificent ceremonies or high-sounding words. It lies in being victorious. That is the most crucial thing in all en-

deavors. In life and in kosen-rufu, we either win or lose. I would like you to be absolute victors in both. No matter what excuses we try to make, giving in to defeat brings misery and loses us the respect of others. I hope each of you without exception will adorn your life with indestructible triumph.

The Most Meaningful of Lives

Allow me to describe an incident that occurred 40 years ago,



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shortly before that famous ceremony on March 16. Commemorative pilgrimages to the head temple [celebrating the completion of the Grand Lecture Hall] were being conducted throughout the month. One day we received a report that a wanted murderer had been spotted heading for the temple grounds. We were told an elderly couple had been robbed and murdered in Izu in Shizuoka Prefecture (the same prefecture in which the head temple is located) and that the killer was now at large

on the head temple premises. We launched a thorough search, but by the time we found any trace, he'd already fled.

President Toda, who was in extremely poor health, was resting in one of the lodging temples. When I reported the incident to him, he said: "What a sad affair! I feel so sorry for the elderly couple and for their family. Please chant daimoku for them. I feel sorry for that young man, too. He'll suffer

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 10

Dai-Gohonzon Moved From the Sho-Hondo

By **JEFF FARR**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Santa Monica, Calif., April 7

The announcement many had anticipated for months came April 5. Nikken, during the last service of the spring pilgrimage to the head temple, revealed that, as suspected, the Dai-Gohonzon would be transferred out of the Sho-Hondo (Grand Main Temple). Just a little more than an hour after his announcement, at 4:00 p.m., the Dai-Gohonzon was moved from the Grand

Main Temple, where it has been enshrined for more than 25 years, to a close-by facility, the refurbished Hoanden.

Although the priesthood has in recent weeks claimed that the Main Temple is structurally unsound, in his April 5 sermon the only reason Nikken gave for the transfer was to "completely refute the great slander of [SGI President] Ikeda and others." He took the opportunity to blame President Ikeda and the SGI for recent earthquakes, volcanic

eruptions and tidal waves in Japan. The Main Temple, which was completed in 1972, was made possible through the leadership of President Ikeda and the financial contributions of 8 million Soka Gakkai members in Japan and overseas.

On Feb. 16, 1965, High Priest Nittatsu was the first to state that the Main Temple was to be the High Sanctuary described in Nichiren Daishonin's

PLEASE SEE SHO-HONDO, 4

Commemorative Contribution

To mark April 28, the day Nichiren Daishonin first chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, and May 3, Soka Gakkai Day, the SGI-USA will again be holding our annual May Commemorative Contribution. Contribution dates run from April 28–June 7. Please check with your leaders or your community center for more information.



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

OUR ORGANIZATION

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

OUR PURPOSE

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

OUR PRACTICE

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

OUR HERITAGE

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

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No Real Surprise

EDITORIAL

Nikken's latest slight of the SGI comes as no real surprise. His removal of the Dai-Gohonzon from the Sho-Hondo is really just another move in his ongoing campaign to shock and attempt to discourage SGI members. After all, it was mostly Gakkai members who, many years ago, donated the \$100 million to build the magnificent structure.

The absurdity of his reasoning reveals Nikken's true colors yet again. According to his statement (please see "Dai-Gohonzon..." p. 1), because the Sho-Hondo was SGI President Ikeda's idea, it is a slanderous structure, not suitable to house the Dai-Gohonzon. Moreover, he said that the SGI has become an "organization with which the great Law of Nichiren Shoshu must not be allowed to have any relationship."

What he leaves unsaid, of course, is that the Hoanden, the Dai-Gohonzon's new home, was also donated by the Soka Gakkai in 1955. And so were literally hundreds of other temples still in use by Nichiren Shoshu. Will these temples, too, be abandoned? Most of those were President Ikeda's idea, too.

To follow Nikken's reasoning further, is anything built or requested by a slanderer itself slanderous? Today there are many temples used by Nichiren Shoshu that were originally built by heretical sects — as far back as hundreds of years ago — and were then converted to Nichiren Shoshu. Wouldn't these have to be abandoned, too?

What's pretty clear at this point is that Nikken simply wants to cleanse the head temple Taiseki-ji of anything to do with President Ikeda and the SGI. How can anyone not now question his reasons for chopping down Gakkai-donated cherry trees (he said they were diseased) and for demolishing the President-Ikeda-inspired Grand Reception Hall (he said it was unsafe)?

Moving the Dai-Gohonzon to the Hoanden may not have surprised SGI members much — we've known all along Nikken was filled with jealousy toward the Gakkai and would do anything to spite us. But the sudden announcement of the transfer seemed to catch some of his own followers by sur-

prise. The tone of the memo sent to each temple seemed to indicate the Administrative Office expected that the move would be a "hard pill to swallow." "Every priest and lay believer of this sect is requested to understand deeply the instruction of his holiness, the high priest," it read. No questions seem welcome.

If questions were welcome, we might ask Nikken why he's betraying the intent of the previous high priest in moving the Dai-Gohonzon. From 1965, the 66th high priest, Nittatsu, started calling the Sho-Hondo the High Sanctuary. And on Oct. 11, 1972, when the Dai-Gohonzon was transferred from the Hoanden to the Sho-Hondo, Nittatsu clarified the significance of the new building: "I have decided that from now on, for all eternity, we will worship this Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary at this Sho-Hondo and pray for the believers' attainment of Buddhahood in their present forms as well as for their great desires of the present and future existences. Thereby, [the Sho-Hondo is] designated to be the great edifice to pray for world peace."

In his speech at the completion ceremony, President Ikeda also talked about the significant mission of this grand temple, emphasizing that what makes a building great is the people who use it — and what's in their hearts. "A religious building...no matter how physically magnificent, does not necessarily reflect the heart of the religion," he said. "The building is meaningless, and therefore useless, unless people visit it and actively share in it, offering their own prayers in perfect unity with the Buddha."

This latest development is certainly sad in some ways: Millions of sincere believers have been slapped in the face. We may have many great memories of the Sho-Hondo. But "nothing can shake our faith in the Dai-Gohonzon, wherever it is enshrined," as Mr. Zaitzu recently said.

Moreover, this brazen act might be just what allows people — in and out of the temple — to see Nikken for who he is and to take a personal stand. It might be just what it takes for more people to determine to fight for the justice of the SGI and strengthen their determination to spread the joy of Nichiren Daishonin's teachings.

Millions of sincere believers have been slapped in the face... But 'nothing can shake our faith in the Dai-Gohonzon, wherever it is enshrined,' as Mr. Zaitzu recently said.

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WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Chanting: Another Powerful Possibility

The letter from Lee Wolfson of Pittsburgh in the March 27 *World Tribune* inspired profound feelings of gratitude for my connections to this organization. "Chanting is more than prayer" was his criticism of the editorial titled "The Right Way To Chant" (Feb. 27 *World Tribune*).

My experience of praying has mostly been of asking for something, even if it is reasonably enlightened asking, such as to understand someone else. My chanting also has been mostly in the form of asking for something. I see now another powerful possibility. Asking when chanting assumes that there is something I don't have, and that I need to petition for it to come to me from somewhere outside myself. When I chant in the spirit of polishing the mind, I will do so out of belief that my Buddha nature with all its wisdom and compassion will shine through.

Thank you, Lee, and thanks to the editors of the *World Tribune* for helping me practice this Buddhism.

— DIANA F. COOK-PEARL, Los Altos, Calif.

Viktor Frankl: 'What Life Expects From Us'

I was so pleased to see the "Worldview" page about Viktor Frankl ("It's Not the Load, It's How You Carry It") in the Feb. 20 issue.

Mr. Frankl died the same week as Princess Diana and Mother Theresa, and thus did not receive the recognition he deserved as one of our great humanitarians. While his book *Man's Search for Meaning* has sold over 10 million copies, it was behind the scenes, literally behind the walls of a concentration camp, that he accomplished his greatest work.

As he watched prisoners succumb to depression so deep they couldn't move, wash, or be coerced to leave the barracks, Frankl saw how loss of faith led to giving up — to a kind of emotional death. He realized that helping fellow prisoners discover some meaning in their lives lent meaning to his own life, that his survival depended on enabling others to find strength to endure.

Frankl tried to prevent suicides by reminding prisoners of some treasure to hold in their hearts, a talent awaiting expression, some dream unfinished, a child who needed them. He helped them take mental photographs of cherished memories. He said they should not talk about food, which was scarce, but instead joke and sing with one another.

One had the freedom to choose his inner life-condition, Frankl believed. We were, he said, "those who were being questioned by life, daily and hourly." No one could take away one's internal freedom or the value of one's life, but one had to work hard to maintain them. "We had to learn ourselves and furthermore we had to teach the despairing men that it did not matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us."

— JODIE APPELL, Berkeley, Calif.

Kosen-rufu Is in Excellent Hands

Having just seen the Global Family Festival (see the March 27 *World Tribune*) performed by the SGI youth of Southern California and surrounding areas, I am proud to say that kosen-rufu is in excellent hands. The spectacular presentation with so many hundreds of young people participating was both uplifting and encouraging. The Mystic Law shines in their hearts, bodies and minds. I hope, as a member of the men's division, that I will not let them down.

— TOBIAS MAXWELL, North Hollywood, Calif.

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

We Built the Dream

PERSPECTIVE

Terry Ellis, who attended the 1972 Sho-Hondo opening, actually feels joy at Nikken's act of moving the Dai-Gohonzon.

By TERRY ELLIS
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

I heard the news Monday morning, April 6 — or, I should say, I read it as soon as I downloaded my e-mail: The Dai-Gohonzon had been moved on April 5 from the Sho-Hondo to the Treasure House (please see "Dai-Gohonzon...," p. 1).

A year ago, I would have been in turmoil over this event, the old fear, anger, helplessness washing over me. Today, I read it and simply see a chain of causes, like falling dominoes, that Nikken set in motion at least seven years ago when he first excommunicated the SGI. I actually feel joy, because I know how pointless this act of moving the Dai-Gohonzon is.

That said, I have to go back to the fact that even a year ago, I probably would not have been so confident. As I continued to strengthen my faith and study of Buddhism, I prepared myself for what I realized would be the probable outcome of Nikken's way of thinking. As odd as it may seem, dealing with the death of people close to me in the practice was a fundamental part of that process.

I was a person with a strong attachment to the Sho-Hondo. I associated it with all of the freshness and hope of the early years of my practice. For me, it was like a castle dedicated to my loftiest dreams — with all of the associated romance and beauty and spirituality. I was there 26 years ago in 1972, when the Dai-Gohonzon was moved from its small quarters in the Hoanden to what was to be its home for the next 10,000 years!

As a member of two years, I was awed by this great opportunity — my first trip to Japan and to see the Dai-Gohonzon. From the beginning of my practice I had heard that the completion of the Sho-Hondo signified the completion of the last of the

Three Great Secret Laws — the establishment of the true temple. I would actually be there, one of the first people to chant to the Dai-Gohonzon in its new home.

At that time, the dream of world peace based on Buddhism was something I had decided to dedicate my life to. But in reality I still harbored many doubts — the same cynicism that might have prevented me from even practicing Buddhism would appear often to question and doubt the circumstances around me.

On the morning of Oct. 7, we were awakened earlier than usual and asked simply to chant daimoku. The waiting, chanting, seemed to go on forever. My fear of being controlled was in full force, demanding to know JUST

scene is indelibly printed on my mind — with President Ikeda seated next to Nittatsu, enjoying a performance that I could only describe as otherworldly in its harmony and spirit.

Also stuck in my mind very deeply were the images on the wall of the priests' quarters, in a chamber directly behind the altar of the Dai-Gohonzon: two huge murals — one of the rising sun and the other of the SGI Fife and Drum Corps. As a member of that group back home in Washington, D.C., I was overjoyed to see it.

The next year, 1973, many of the early SGI members in the United States went back to Sho-Hondo for a convention. That time we recited a famous passage from the Gosho in front of the Dai-Gohonzon: "Ware nara bini waga deshi..."

"Although I and my disciples may encounter various difficulties, if we do not harbor doubts in our hearts, we will as a matter of course attain Buddhahood" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 180).

Today these words hold especially profound meaning for me.

I was challenged to dis-

cover for myself what is true Buddhism. I always disliked that word *true*. (Even President Makiguchi pointed out that truth should be replaced by value in reality, I would argue to myself.) Now I have my chance. All the vaneer and mystical allure created by the priesthood are gone. Any sense of deification of the Buddha has been stripped away.

I was left with something frightening at first — the common mortal, me. But from this deeply rooted vantage point, I know that even if Nikken destroys the Sho-Hondo he can't destroy the dream. After all, we created it.

Buddhism flows in the lives of people. It may be commemorated in buildings, but its essence lives in the eternal lives of Buddhas like you and me. Nothing Nikken can do will impede that faith — as long as he doesn't cause us to harbor doubts. Then again, if his actions do cause us to doubt, those doubts are fertile soil for practice and study, and even deeper confidence and faith. ☸

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

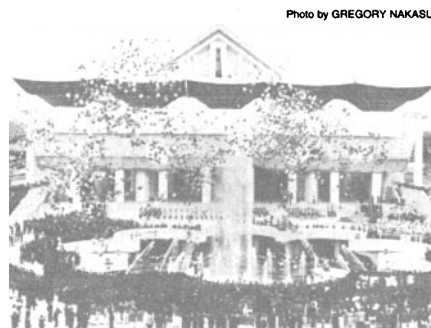


Photo by GREGORY NAKASUI

Balloons rise at the 1972 Sho-Hondo opening.

WHAT was going on! I felt ashamed of myself when then-General Director George Williams came in to announce that the Dai-Gohonzon was being moved earlier than expected for security reasons.

President Ikeda had a special request for the American delegation: that we stand at the entrance to the Sho-Hondo and protect the Dai-Gohonzon on its final leg of the journey to its new home. I vowed to myself once again to trust him. I knew that as a matter of course there would be other times when my own experience or vision or understanding of events would be limited.

I'll never forget the scene of President Ikeda and High Priest Nittatsu in this procession. I watched their progress intermittently through the line of young men's division members who faced us. Tears roll down the face of one young man: He couldn't see because his back was to the procession, but as the Dai-Gohonzon passed by he must have felt profound emotion.


The next few days of ceremonies were incredibly beautiful. After the actual opening day on Oct. 12, a group of 500 koto players performed. Again this

No Effort Is Wasted in Buddhism

SGI President Ikeda attended a conference with SGI representatives from eight countries and territories, including Taiwan, the United States, France and New Zealand, in Tokyo on March 10.

Expressing heartfelt appreciation for the sincere efforts of those present to promote the kosen-rufu movement in their respective communities, President Ikeda stated emphatically: "No effort is ever wasted in faith. All of your hard work will definitely come back to you tenfold or a hundredfold in the form of immense benefit, adorning not only your own life but extending to your children and grandchildren as well."

President Ikeda further stressed that in faith a person's heart is what matters most. He said that those who simply dismiss or seek to selfishly exploit the SGI — an organization devoted to kosen-rufu in accord with the Buddha's decree — are sure to incur the stern rebuke of the original Buddha and end up deadlocked. In contrast, he said, those who sincerely treasure, respect and appreciate the SGI will lead lives of triumph, benefit and good fortune. He urged the participants to have utmost confidence in this fact.

The SGI leader also voiced his wish for the happiness and prosperity of SGI members around the world, and praised the endeavors of the visiting representatives whose names will be eternally recorded in the annals of kosen-rufu. 



The Nichiren Shoshu priesthood recently removed the Dai-Gohonzon from the Sho-Hondo, a grand temple built to house it 25 years ago by some 8 million believers around the world.

Dai-Gohonzon Moved From the Sho-Hondo

DAI-GOHONZON, FROM PAGE 1

"Minobu Transfer Document," "Ikegami Transfer Document" and other Goshu. Nikken, then the Study Department leader of Nichiren Shoshu, is on record endorsing Nittatsu's view. The 8 million who donated approx-

imately \$100 million for the structure (¥35 billion at the 1972 exchange rate of approximately ¥360 per dollar) did so with the understanding that it was to be the High Sanctuary. It was in January 1991, after the priesthood launched its attacks on the SGI, that Nikken started refuting the position until then held by both the priesthood and the SGI.


Gohonzon's relocation at the end of the pilgrimage celebrating the completion of the priesthood's new Grand Reception Hall, a three-year project that involved tearing down the original hall donated by Soka Gakkai members in 1964. Many SGI leaders feel that Nikken is systematically destroying all remnants of the SGI's influence at the head temple, from the 300 cherry trees the Soka Gakkai donated to its largest contribution, the Main Temple.

Last November, rumors that the Dai-Gohonzon was to be moved and the Main Temple demolished began to circulate. *Kaikaku Jiho*, the reformist priests' newspaper, was the first to predict, in its Nov. 28 issue, that the Dai-Gohonzon would be transferred from the 6,000-seat Main Temple to the approximately 3,200-capacity Hoanden (which has no seats). Also, *Kaikaku Jiho* reported that a construction company had already given Nikken an estimate to level the Main Temple.

Toward the end of his April 5 sermon, Nikken indeed hinted at such plans, calling the Main Temple "a useless ruin of gigantic stature." He said that he would take "measures appropriate to the current circumstances" regarding the building and mentioned construction of a new temple, the Hoando, which will be "a far greater temple than the newly expanded Hoanden."

But the Jan. 16 issue of *Emyo*, a Nichiren Shoshu publication, responded that the Dai-Gohonzon would not be moved nor the Main Temple closed. *Emyo* also denied that any estimate for the temple's demolition had been made — at the same time, though, claiming that corrosive ocean sand had been used in mixing the temple's concrete; that the concrete was now weakening the structure's reinforcing bars; and that the roof might collapse at any time. Nevertheless, during the recent pilgrimage, temple members worshiped the Dai-Gohonzon again in the Main Temple.

SGI-USA General Director Zaitzu expressed his outrage that 8 million members have been betrayed, saying that "Nikken is again showing his true colors. He is going completely against the Daishonin's spirit to cherish the people's sincerity."

But, Mr. Zaitzu added: "Nothing can shake our faith in the Dai-Gohonzon, wherever it be enshrined. Destroying the Main Temple cannot destroy, or even influence, our faith. If Nikken does so, it will be a great crime. But he can never destroy the SGI. His destruction of a building cannot destroy our determination for kosen-rufu." 

Nikken announced the Dai-



Florida Impressions

There is no doubt as to the change in my practice since my visit. I have more consistency and sense of commitment to making a greater effort to bring true happiness to the youth of the SGI. I pray that all members, especially those in the youth division, experience the spirit of the FNCC as I had the fortune to do.

An Essential Gift.

In Florida, U.S.A., a gift has been presented to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

This is our magnificent fortune. We must go forth make the efforts required, toward the ultimate goal, in its most far-reaching definition, to bring happiness to all who dwell on this earth.

— Michael Schott, Michigan



Michael Schott

Soka Gakkai in Japan Faces More Media Attacks

By JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Santa Monica, Calif., April 8

The next three months will see Soka Gakkai members campaigning for Clean Government (Komei) candidates toward Japan's Upper House elections in July. The next three months are also sure to see an increase in politically motivated attacks from the tabloid press on the SGI.

The close relationship that exists in Japan between the tabloid press and political authority, especially the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, has led to hundreds of articles over the last few years — 500 in 1995 alone — accusing SGI members and leaders of everything from bribery to murder. Now that the coalition party New Frontier has disbanded, the Soka Gakkai is back to mainly supporting Clean Government candidates, which worries LDP leaders. All the Clean Government candidates fielded were elected in last July's Tokyo elections. As well, the party has been criticizing the LDP's economic policies at a time when Japan is experiencing a serious economic slump.

The political situation in Japan and the Soka Gakkai's involvement in it may seem far removed from our SGI-USA activities, but these tabloid articles continue to surface here on the Internet,



Campaigning for upcoming elections for Japan's Diet will most likely cause unfounded attacks on the SGI.

sometimes leading people to doubt the SGI. Translations of tabloid articles, which are generally done by a small group of temple members, may seem to come from authoritative sources when they appear on the Internet — few Internet users know the tabloid practices (no bylines, no attribution, no fact-checking) of magazines like the *Shukan Shincho* and *Shukan Bunshu*.

In the past, foreign correspondents in Japan have also been

duplicated by the tabloids. Respected publications like the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Time* and *The Australian* have all at times used tabloid articles as their sources for their reporting on the SGI.

In response, the SGI has made concerted efforts to reveal Japan's tabloids for what they are. SGI members have created several Web sites, like Clearing Up the Clearing House (the Clearing House being a temple-backed site), to explain how the tabloids work and to deny their allegations. In late 1996, the SGI Public Relations Office in Tokyo launched an advertisement campaign ("Should You Be Concerned?") targeting the tabloids' readership throughout Asia and the foreign media there.

The SGI has also challenged many of the tabloids' libelous articles in court, winning financial awards. A recent example, although not involving the SGI directly, concerns a Hokkaido Soka Gakkai member, Nobuyuki Shiroyama, who last month won a Supreme Court ruling against the *Shukan Shincho*. In September 1994, the magazine claimed that Shiroyama had killed a Nichiren Shoshu priest in a head-on traffic collision that July. But the police and an insurance company had already found the priest at fault for straying into oncoming traffic. Nevertheless, *Shukan Shincho's* headline read, "Soka Gakkai Leader Kills Taisei-ji Priest in Car Crash." The Sapporo District Court awarded Shiroyama \$7,600 (under Japan's weak libel laws, which allow for only small financial awards); Shinchosha,

the magazine's publisher, appealed to the High Court; the High Court again ruled in Shiroyama's favor; Shinchosha then took the case to the Supreme Court; and now the final appeal has been dismissed. The ruling mentioned, "The suspicion that the story was from the start intended as an attack on the Soka Gakkai cannot be overlooked."

The potential financial and political gains to be found for the Soka Gakkai's enemies in attacking the organization, though, far outweigh the potential penalties. While Shinchosha must now pay Shiroyama \$7,600, that's nothing compared to how much the company's made off the story from magazine sales.

Libel suits brought against publishers by the Soka Gakkai have even, at times, encouraged tabloids to publish further sensational stories on the libel suits themselves. This allows politicians to keep fabrications like Nobuko Nobuhira's in the public's mind during election time. When, in the *Shukan Shincho* in 1996, Nobuhira falsely accused President Ikeda of raping her three times over a 23-year period — and the Soka Gakkai didn't bring a libel suit against the magazine — Nobuhira and her backers, believed to include LDP members, sued President Ikeda to keep the story alive. (Mrs. Nobuhira has of late been trying to drag out the ongoing case by unsuccessfully appealing for a new judge.)

Another tactic of the tabloids, which we have also seen on the Internet, is to recycle and repeat anti-Soka Gakkai stories already proven false. A few years after a

Informative Web Sites

Various Web sites provide further information for those interested in learning more about this problem. And many of these Web sites are linked to other related sites:

SGI Public Information Web Site

<http://www.sgi.org/say/index.html>

Clearing Up the Clearinghouse

<http://www.clearingup.com>

Tabloids Attack SGI

<http://www.erols.com/miyoko/gakkai.htm>

Soka Gakkai, Yamazaki, Tabloids

<http://www.mindspring.com/~sonoda/index.htm>

Opinions of Asian Mass Media

<http://members.aol.com/fujikomine/sokagakkai/opinion/asia.htm>

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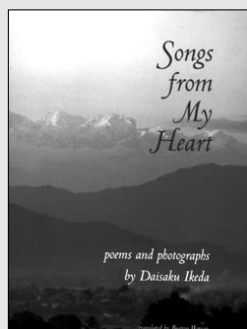
What's

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WISDOM

The Key To Living Wisely

WOW!

BREAKTHROUGHS IN UNDERSTANDING

We Need Problems

By ELIZABETH PAGE
SEATTLE CORRESPONDENT

In this practice, obstacles equal enlightenment. Our hardships are not in vain but, in fact, are opportunities to expand our lives. This all sounds neat and succinct in concept. Why, then, is it so difficult to understand this when obstacles are happening to us?!

I was talking with a fellow member last year who said that she began to doubt this practice when another member suffered some deep misfortune after years of practice and devotion to the SGI. "How could this happen after all those good causes she made?" my friend asked. We discussed it further, and I started to realize that we still didn't understand the meaning of obstacles very well.

I hardly want to consider myself fortunate when steeped in the difficulties of a big problem. Yet the Daishonin declares, "No life could be more fortunate than mine" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 198). It's not as though he were looking around at a luxurious castle, surrounded by gorgeous attendants and a buffet of food when he made this statement. He was living in hellish surroundings! People everywhere hated him.

I'm amazed by how the Daishonin not only refused to bend in his practice during such times but actually delighted in them. Instead of doubting the Gohonzon every time a problem occurred, he took it as proof that he was to attain Buddhahood. That's cool. Maybe I'll see things that way someday.

In *The New Human Revolution*, volume 5, Shin'ichi Yamamoto tells a member: "You've struggled and suffered far more than others. Because of this, you stand to gain incomparable happiness. You are supremely qualified to help others become happy as well. This is the teaching of Buddhism."

So there it is. We need our problems to initiate change within ourselves. And through this process, we become absolutely happy.

Did you ever say "Wow!" after studying something about Buddhism? 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).

WHAT A CONCEPT

ON THE BASIC IDEAS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM

By LISA JONES
STAFF WRITER

In most dictionaries, *wisdom* is defined as judging rightly and following the soundest course of action based on knowledge and experience. In Buddhism, though, Buddha wisdom comes from our life-condition of Buddhahood, not knowledge or experience alone. Experience is based on the past, while wisdom encompasses past, present and future. Knowledge is based on the external world and prescribed systems of logic, while wisdom comes from inside us and transcends logic. When coupled with wisdom, the value of our intellect and experience is enhanced.

According to Nichiren Daishonin, wisdom arises concurrently with compassion, and Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the source of Buddha wisdom. By chanting to the Gohonzon with compassion for ourselves and others — by devoting ourselves to faith,

practice and study — we tap our wisdom. Practically speaking, wisdom is the capacity to perceive the workings of cause and effect and thus see what to do or say at any moment to create value.

In the SGI, we encourage one another to chant and take action. *To chant* means to draw forth our wisdom, and *to take action* means to apply it. We can also reverse this — we can decide on a course of action, and then chant to execute it wisely. Wisdom is similar to intuition in that it's something we tap with our entire being, not just our intellect. Even so, if our gut feelings contradict the Daishonin's teachings, those feelings should not be mistaken for wisdom. Rather, by intensifying our practice and study we can truly manifest our wisdom.

The Daishonin teaches that the key to living wisely is faith. In this respect, he states, "Faith alone is what really matters" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 246). In a sense, faith means to abandon all attempts to manipulate your circumstances and surrender without reservation to, and thus become one with, the compassionate workings of the universe. In another sense, faith means to boldly follow your heart, based on Buddhist practice and study, with the expectation that you will continue to make breakthroughs in life.

The Daishonin writes: "As you crave food when hungry, seek water when thirsty, long to see a lover, beg for medicine when ill, or as a beautiful woman desires powder and rouge, so should you put your faith in the Lotus Sutra" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 257). Even if we're not sure what to do or say to create value, as long as our faith is steadfast, we will naturally move in the best direction. In Buddhism, this is known as substituting faith for wisdom.

SGI President Ikeda said recently: "Not to doubt the Gohonzon no matter what happens, to believe earnestly — this is enlightenment in the latter day. Faith in the Gohonzon itself equals enlightenment."

In fact, Josei Toda attained enlightenment through faith. Alone in his prison cell, Toda started digging right where he was, delving into the depths of his existence until he found within himself the foundation that all people share: the eternal life of the universe. He saw that the Gohonzon exists within our lives, and that faith means to believe, in essence, that our lives and the Gohonzon are one and the same. Therefore, it could be said that faith in the Gohonzon equals trusting our innate Buddhahood. And this faith is the well-spring of our wisdom. □

Seven in a series

Drinking Poison

STANDS TO REASON

LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM THE WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN

By JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai...has said that to accept and to put faith in the doctrines of evil teachers is the same as drinking poison. You must beware of this! (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 31)

It's thought that this letter was written in 1263, right after Nichiren Daishonin's exile to Izu ended (the recipient is unknown). The Daishonin had just returned to his old stomping ground of Kamakura when he wrote this.

Rather than go somewhere new, somewhere safer, to spread his teachings, the Daishonin decided to go right back to Kamakura — the place where he got into all the trouble that led to his exile. His propagation activities there incurred the wrath of Pure Land sect priests two years earlier, which led to the government exiling him.

Kamakura was the center of politics and was filled with the kind of priests who pined

for such power. With all those influential, bad priests gathered in one place, the Daishonin felt Kamakura the best place to continue educating the people on the difference between good and bad priests.

As this quote shows, the Daishonin felt that important to this education was warning everyone of the dangers of trusting bad priests' teachings. Later in this letter, expanding on T'ien-t'ai's analogy that bad priests' ideas are like poison, the Daishonin says that to believe in them means cutting off your path to enlightenment. In other words, it's like drinking a poison designed to kill your Buddha nature. "Once you leave the haven of inherent enlightenment," the Daishonin asks, "what is there that can bring you joy?" (MW-5, 38).

The Daishonin's emphasis on enlightenment as inherent is compelling. When today's priesthood talks of enlightenment, the emphasis is usually on enlightenment through Nikken — that you can only attain this state through being connected or associated with him. A temple pamphlet attacking the Nichikan-transcribed Gohonzon calls Nikken "the only person to be bequeathed the Daishonin's Buddhism" and says that his sanctioning of the Gohonzon "is what makes the attainment of Buddhahood possible."

The temple also says that you cancel your enlightenment through membership in any religious organization that does not agree

with whoever holds the position of high priest — never mind what the person's teachings are. If he's the high priest, he must be correct. No ifs, ands or buts. Hence, in their re-communication notice to SGI-USA members last October, the U.S. temples emphasized that: 1) The SGI is no longer connected to Nikken; and 2) That's why, if you stick with the SGI, "it will result in your loss of attaining merits (benefit). It will block your path to attaining enlightenment."

The Daishonin stresses in this letter, though, that you attain enlightenment through embracing the Mystic Law, through single-mindedly chanting and urging others to do the same (MW-5, 38). The only way you can close your enlightenment off, in the Daishonin's view, is through your own incorrect beliefs. For instance, through accepting the doctrines of evil teachers as your own.

To attain enlightenment or not is a decision, our own to make. And it's the most important decision we face in this life, says the Daishonin. Life is short — as short as breathing in and out just once, as he puts it in this letter — so why waste our lives being mistaken? Why waste our inherent enlightenment? With every breath we have in this life, we should, based on our faith, make something lasting. This is what the Daishonin urges us to do.

Seven in a series

BILL MAST, THORNTON, COLO.

PRACTICE WITH PASSION

Bill Mast made a list of everything he wanted to accomplish in 1997. He chanted with his whole heart for the realization of each goal. He still has the list — with every item checked off.

I've been practicing Buddhism to this great Gohonzon since the spring of 1974. At the time I joined, I remember hearing SGI President Ikeda talk about the Gohonzon as being a cluster of blessings given to us by Nichiren Daishonin. Today, I can say with all my heart that this is absolutely true. On New Year's Day 1997, I made a list of my goals for the coming year. I still have the list — with everything checked off!

One of the goals I made at the start of 1997 was a determination to leave behind all the pain of the divorce I went through in 1995. Part of this pain related to my relationship with my children.

My time with my children — whom I love very much and, until my divorce, had never been away from — was limited to sparse, court-ordered visitations. After dropping my children off at my former home, I

would return to the exile of my new home many miles away and cry and chant for hours.

At the beginning of 1997, I determined to chant with all my heart for my children's happiness, no matter what.

After chanting this way, I received one of my first benefits of 1997 with regard to my children. On May 18, 1997 — my deceased mother's birthday — two of my children, Candice and Jeremy, came to live with me. Two weeks later, my other daughter, Holli, also came to live with us. What a blessing. The Gohonzon's power is truly mystical. The fact that this happened touched my heart.

The year had still more in store for me. In May, I completed electrical school with "great honor of mention" for perfect attendance for the entire four years. I completed this program while working full time and experiencing the emotional upheaval of a divorce.



(Front) Bill Mast and his fiancée, Carol Ann Nicholas. (Back) Jeremy, Candice and Holli Mast. 'Giving up was never an option,' says Bill.

Then, on June 6, 1997, I took and passed the State Journeyman's Electrical Test. I cried all the way home. I reflected on the difficulty of my first years of study and the divorce. I realized that I could have easily given up at any time. Because of the Gohonzon, however, and the support of SGI-USA members, I accomplished something of which I could be proud. By coincidence, President Ikeda had been here in Denver exactly one year earlier — on June 6, 1996. Also, I had received the Gohonzon on June 6, 1974.

I still recall some of the encouragement that two of my first chapter leaders gave me: "No prayer goes unanswered," and that I should always practice with passion. Because of encouragement from leaders and friends in the SGI, giving up was never an option. What a benefit to belong to such an organization where I can chant to shine like a star for world peace.

The story continues...1997 was truly amazing! To allow my children to stay in the same schools with their friends, I had

to find a house in their school district. We found and bought the perfect house, the first one we looked at. We needed a \$7,000 down payment, and we got it! What's more, my father asked me to come to his home. He was tired of seeing me drive around in my rusty old 1979 Datsun king cab, so he gave me a Honda Accord LXI.

After Thanksgiving, just when I thought the Gohonzon's benefits were exhausted for the year, I met Carol Ann. Our relationship was a great benefit right from the start. Our spirituality was the same and, despite the newness of our relationship, it felt like we had been together forever. The love she has given me is so special that I am overwhelmed with joy.

On Jan. 25, Super Bowl Sunday, I asked Carol to marry me. She said yes! And of course the Denver Broncos won the Super Bowl, too. On that day, every time "congratulations" flashed on the TV screen, Carol and I felt as if it was a message to us.

My advice to the readers of the *World Tribune* is to make a list of your desires and practice with your whole heart. If you do, I'm sure you will win in your life. On my list for 1998 is: get married, go to Disney World, and take a cruise. It sounds so great, I feel like a movie star!

This experience would not be complete without thanking all my SGI leaders and friends with all my heart for their encouragement and daimoku. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

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

From SGI President Ikeda:

* The Austrian writer Stefan Zweig (1881–1942), who struggled against the totalitarianism of the Nazi regime, once wrote that for any school of thought to have a lasting impact on the world, it would have to produce people of conviction, what he called "witnesses" willing to give their lives for what they believed. Individuals of selfless dedication are the pride and honor of a religion. They are the foundation of any religious body. The death of religion begins when such a spirit is lost. (August 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 50)

* [Ralph Waldo Emerson] says, "Good nature is plentiful, but we want justice, with heart of steel, to fight down the proud." If people are merely good-natured, then those who are arrogant and high-handed will have free rein to carry on as they please. Only those

WORDS TO THE WISE

JUSTICE

[Chang-an says:] "One who destroys or brings confusion to the Buddha's teachings is betraying them. If one befriends another person but lacks the mercy to correct him, one is in fact his enemy. But one who reprimands and corrects an offender is a voice-hearer who defends the Buddha's teachings." (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 186)

who fight with "hearts of steel" are people of justice. All of us who are now striving for kosen-rufu with "conviction of steel" are in reality creating the 21st century, as well as the 22nd and 23rd centuries. Moreover, we

are engraving in our lives the causes to continue working for kosen-rufu then as well. (July 4, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 7)

* We must not allow ourselves to be deceived

by the pronouncements of so-called experts. We must follow the dictates of what our solid common sense as ordinary people tells us is right. The courage to do so is what will ultimately protect the people. (August 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 55)

* Unless we speak out, nothing will happen. When we proclaim the truth, actual proof will appear clarifying what is right and wrong. (Sept. 19, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 14)

* Unless we speak out to set the record straight and ensure that truth prevails, we will not achieve kosen-rufu. . . . Cowardice is harmful. It delights the enemies of Buddhism and obstructs the advance of kosen-rufu. The fainthearted cannot savor the true benefit of faith — their ability to tap the power of the Buddha and the power of the Law is enfeebled. (Oct. 10, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 14)

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI

'THE FLOWER OF CULTURE'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 3-4

Shin'ichi Yamamoto's emphasis on fostering members of the Education Department stems from his view that the true purpose of education is lost in postwar Japan. The rise of juvenile delinquency is but one symptom of this lack of respect for teachers and education, he says.



In September 1961, the lapel pins for the Education Department were completed. Shin'ichi Yamamoto made time on numerous occasions to personally present the new pins, sharing with those members his great hopes for them and their activities.

On one such instance, he said: "I hope you will become a pivotal force in education and spread throughout society an understanding of the need for humanistic education. If each of you can gather a circle of 10 other teachers who, like you, care about the happiness of their students and are committed to practicing humanistic education, it will have a tremendous effect on education in this country, and Japan will definitely change as a result.

"This pin is a symbol of the honor and the responsibility of individuals who are committed to working tirelessly for the people, for society and for Buddhism." His words resounded with his deepest hopes and prayer.

When Shin'ichi heard later from Education Department Chief Katsu Kiyohara that membership was increasing steadily, he said: "Each of our Education Department mem-

bers is immensely capable. They each possess an incredibly important mission. Mr. Toda often used to say that in our attitude toward education, we should learn from the Jewish people, because they respect teachers and education so highly.

"A story I heard shows this high regard. One day a rabbi visited a certain town and asked the mayor to show him the town's defenses. The mayor led the rabbi to the fort, where a platoon of soldiers was stationed.

"After reviewing the troops, the rabbi turned to the mayor and said: 'I still haven't seen this town's defenses. It is not soldiers who defend a town, but teachers. Why didn't you take me to the school?'"

"He maintained that teachers are the heroes with whom rests the true defense of a land or nation. I agree completely. Teachers defend not only their nation but, in fact, the future of all humankind. For this reason, I ask that you do your best to raise the precious members of our Education Department with unstinting devotion and earnestness. Whatever you do for them, you are doing for society, for Japan and for the

world. I am also planning to make education my life's final undertaking."

Shin'ichi was putting great effort into developing the Education Department because he had earnestly contemplated the country's future and decided that education was the highest priority. At the time, juvenile delinquency had become a major social problem in Japan. It had reached a peak in 1951, then eased for a few years, but from 1955 it had begun to climb again. In 1961, some 950,000 minors were arrested by police, and the problem had become very serious.

From that time on, juvenile delinquency continued to soar. It was distinguished by a significant drop in the age of juvenile offenders, an increase in delinquency among children of middle-class families, and an upsurge in gang activity. In the past, the main factor behind most juvenile delinquency had been poverty. But by the late 1950s and early 1960s, Japanese society had already entered its period of rapid economic growth, and the standard of living had risen markedly. In spite of this, however, juvenile delinquency was on the rise.

The government regularly talked about "producing educated citizens," but when the Ministry of Education issued a white paper titled "Japanese Growth and Education," it became eminently clear just what kind of "educated citizens" it had in mind. The report advocated the view that education was a highly effective form of investment in terms of its "contribution to economic growth." In all fairness, the paper admitted that this was merely one perspective and also spoke of "the necessity [for Japan] to have a clear vision of the kind of people it hopes to foster in the future and to consider the mission of education from a broad viewpoint." Yet it failed to elaborate any further on what that vision of future generations or education's mission might be.

Though it may have been only one perspective, the report revealed the sad reality of a Japan that put increased productivity and economic growth before all else, completely losing sight of where its true priorities should lie. The Japanese education system failed to ask the fundamental questions as to the true purpose of education and learning; all that mattered was producing a capable workforce for Japan's economic development. This, regrettably,

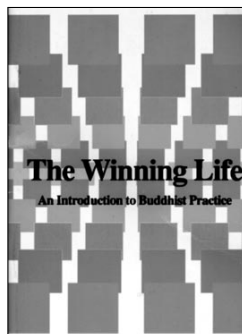
was the state of the Japanese education system.

The great Greek philosopher Socrates said that it is not enough just to live but that we must live well. Japanese society, which had placed supreme value upon economic achievement, however, avoided this most crucial of all issues and turned a deaf ear to questions of purpose and meaning. This was the greatest failing of postwar Japan, hidden beneath its surface prosperity. Before World War II, the role of education had been to produce citizens who would be "useful to the State." Though a democratic educational system had been instituted after the war, its main purpose soon became — as unintentionally revealed in the white paper — the production of citizens who could "contribute to the nation's economic progress."

Though the slogans may have changed, education was still designed to shape people to the needs of the state, whether military or economic. When education was viewed as no more than a means for assuring the prosperity of the nation, people, too, were simply reduced to a means to an end. No thought was given to what education meant to the children receiving it, and this very real flaw of Japan's postwar educational system was intimately related to the growing problem of juvenile delinquency.

To be continued

Ho Goku is the pen name of Daisaku Ikeda, who appears in the novel as Shin'ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1962. Illustration by Kenichiro Uchida.



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FOR WOMEN

Creating Indestructible Fortune



Amelia Moran shares a Korean woman's experience of building her financial foundation in the United States.

By AMELIA MORAN

BROOKLYN, QUEENS, LONG ISLAND
REGION WOMEN'S DIVISION LEADER

Nichiren Daishonin once wrote to Nanjo Tokimitsu, "Just as flowers open up and bear fruit, just as the moon appears and invariably grows full, just as a lamp becomes brighter when oil is added, and just as plants and trees flourish with rain, so will human beings never fail to prosper when they make good causes" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 7, p. 191).

Once again this year, we have an opportunity to make good causes by supporting the kosen-rufu movement in America through financial contributions.

In volume 4 of *The New Human Revolution*, Mr. Ikeda explains how in 1961 he went through an intense inner struggle over whether to expand the number of financially contributing members. To build new temples and community centers, more donations were required, but President Ikeda was of two minds over what to do.

On the one hand, he did not want to burden the members. On the other hand, he wanted them to have the opportunity to contribute and receive benefit from doing so. Through studying the Goshō, he realized that by supporting kosen-rufu activities, members could create indestructible fortune.

Indeed, innumerable members have gained great fortune through their causes for kosen-rufu, including monetary donations. An experience of a Korean woman encouraged me recently. When she first came to America, she worked as a masseuse. The work was

not steady, so she prayed to the Gohonzon for a better job and determined to change her financial karma. She found encouragement from her favorite Goshō, "Winter Never Fails To Turn to Spring." Based on her consistent practice to the Gohonzon and after making special efforts to increase her daimoku, she was offered a job as a sample patternmaker.

Three years later, however, she still had not received a raise. With a refreshed attitude, abundant prayer and unconditional trust in the

Gohonzon, she decided to challenge herself and joyfully increased her financial contribution. A year later, her hard work and dedication

were rewarded with a substantial raise, significantly more than that received by other staff. This experience reinforced her confidence in the Gohonzon.

Naturally, our attitude in making financial offerings is crucial. We make them out of appreciation and not simply so we'll gain conspicuous benefit. Moreover, the benefit we do gain from joyful, spontaneous offerings is immeasurable and manifests in various ways, not always monetarily.

The Goshō refers to the Shinjikan Sutra, which states: "If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as they are manifested in the present. And if you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 172).

Let's create indestructible fortune for the future through our offerings for world peace. W



Offerings From the Heart

In preparation for the May Commemorative Contribution, General Director Zaitzu talks about making financial contributions to the organization. 'Ultimately, all material offerings are expressions of one's heart,' he says.

By FRED M. ZAITZU
SGI-USA GENERAL DIRECTOR

April 28 and May 3 are significant dates in our practice of Buddhism. April 28 marks the date that Nichiren Daishonin first chanted Nam-myōhō-enge-kyō. And May 3 — Soka Gakkai Day — marks the anniversary of the inauguration of Josei Toda, 1951, and Daisaku Ikeda, 1960, as the second and third Soka Gakkai presidents respectively.

PRIME POINTS



By Fred M. Zaitzu
SGI-USA
General Director

Also, between April 28 and the first week in June, we hold the May Commemorative Contribution, an opportunity for members to make financial contributions to the SGI-USA at local community centers and activity centers.

In Buddhism, there are many different kinds of offerings. Material offerings such as water, fruit, incense and financial contributions can be considered "offerings of the body." Respecting and praising the Buddha, along with sincerity, purity, chanting and propagating the Law, are considered "offerings of the heart."

Ultimately, even our material offerings are expressions of our heart. Our heart creates fortune. Our heart enables us to attain enlightenment. By making contributions from the heart, motivated by our desire to see the Buddha in our lives and in the lives of others, there is no doubt that we experience great benefit.

With this in mind, I'd like to make a few points about the May Commemorative Contribution.

All contributions to the SGI-USA are significant.

First I'd like to thank all of you for all the contributions you have made to the SGI-USA. Offerings such as your time, dedication, sincere prayers and efforts to study, chant and care for one another are treasures. With all of your contributions, you are making great causes for your happiness. Financial offerings, too, are tremendous causes, and I can't thank you enough for these contributions.

Financial offerings are not charity. Nichiren Daishonin's followers made many offerings of food, shelter, clothing, medicine and money to him, even though many of them were experiencing severe economic hardships. In his writings, the Daishonin says that without these offerings, he would not have survived. It could be said that without the wide variety of contributions made by members, the SGI-USA would not exist.

Even so, it's important to point out that offerings to the Daishonin and the organization are not charity (though they are legally considered charitable contributions). Members do not give out of a feeling of pity, guilt, obligation or even kindness. Rather, in Buddhism, offerings reflect our deep sense of appreciation and the strength of our desire to attain enlightenment. What's most important is our joy at being able to make such contributions. As SGI President Ikeda writes in *The New Human Revolution*, "Such joy is the true spirit of offering and it is the wellspring of abundant good fortune" (vol. 4, p. 110).

Financial offerings do not equal financial fortune.

I've heard that some members feel they can improve their financial situation by challenging themselves to contribute more money to the organization. It's true that when you make offerings, you are making a cause to change your karma — just as it's true that when you chant, you are changing your karma. How this change in karma will mani-

fest, though, no one can readily predict. I have no doubt that when we make offerings we increase our fortune. That doesn't necessarily mean, however, that we increase our bank balance.

Offerings may result in benefit, but that's not why we make them. When we make offerings, if we think, "I'm going to donate \$100; then I'll get \$200 in return," then we need to re-evaluate the spirit with which we're making a contribution. Contributions are not like investments. There's a difference between having no doubt that contributions result in benefit and expecting benefit because we make contributions.

It's a paradox, I suppose: If we contribute with a purity of heart that expects nothing in return, that's when we reap the most benefit. Our heart is what matters most.

The Buddha praises our sincere offerings. In all of his personal letters to believers, the Daishonin mentions each person's offerings. Each letter includes words of praise and gratitude. The Daishonin's constant message to us is that when we make sincere offerings to the Buddha, the Buddha — that is, the entire universe — responds with praise and gratitude. The Daishonin writes: "In the deepest sense, earnest faith is the will to understand and live up to the spirit, not the words, of the sutras.... Therefore, saints consecrate themselves by offering their own bodies, whereas common mortals may consecrate themselves by the sincerity with which they give" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 268).

I hope that through home visits, dialogue and sharing our experiences, we can thoroughly explain to people the importance of offerings. Their understanding derived from such explanation — not from any kind of pressure — will naturally spur them to take joyful action. Please join me in encouraging everyone to participate in this year's May Commemorative Contribution! W

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



SGI President Ikeda salutes youth division members, the main players in our movement for peace in the coming century.

Youth Must Ensure Victory in the Coming Century

SPEECH, FROM PAGE 1

for what he's done for the rest of his life."

The fugitive was finally caught and arrested. His actions had inflicted great pain and suffering not only on his victims and himself but on his and his victims' families, friends and acquaintances. This is the state of Hell. Please never ever create such hell for yourself or anyone.

Buddhism is about bringing happiness, joy and fulfillment to all. It enables us not only to become happy ourselves but to make causes for the enlightenment of our ancestors seven-plus generations back and for the happiness and prosperity of our children, grandchildren and descendants throughout future generations. This is the great benefit of Buddhism.

Lamenting over the murder, President Toda said: "What a tragedy! The taking of human life is never permissible under any circumstances." I will never forget these strict words. We have recently seen a spate of incidents in the news where people casually inflict injury or take others' lives without any apparent understanding of the enormity of their crime.

It is absolutely vital that you,

my young friends, walk the correct path in life. Life is very precious. You are leading the most valuable and meaningful of lives. A youth such as yours is noble and happy beyond compare. A debased, decadent life that produces nothing of value or meaning, no matter how fun or cool it may seem on the surface, is empty and vain. It is a destructive and wretched existence. Please use wisdom and good sense in all things and lead wonderful, fulfilling lives.

A Century of Youth Has Begun

Commemorative events to mark March 16, Kosen-rufu Day, are being held by the youth division throughout Japan and around the globe. Everywhere, we can see the vibrant passion of youth determined to create a new age. The century of youth has begun, and I am watching your endeavors with great delight. The youth division has achieved remarkable development and growth. I commend you all on the outstanding job you have done. It further underscores that the age of the youth division is well and truly here.

I am reminded of the day the young men's division was

founded [1951]. The event took place in the cramped facilities of the old Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Tokyo's Nishi-Kanda. Whereas many other religious organizations at the time had fine facilities, the Soka Gakkai, champion of the highest Buddhist teaching, was headquartered in the most humble and run-down of buildings. Only around 180 youth attended that inaugural meeting.

President Toda said to the participants that day: "The next president of the Soka Gakkai will no doubt appear from among you who are here today. I am firmly convinced that he is here now.... I wish to offer that person my heartfelt congratulations." President Toda clearly foresaw the future.

Today, in turn, I say to you, the members of the youth division: "All of you are president of the Soka Gakkai. Please advance with this awareness."

We are no longer in an age when one person can shoulder everything. Today our great people's organization has grown into an international body of immense size and diversity active in all parts of the world. And we have achieved this phenomenal development independent of state protection or patronage, while enduring constant harassment and

attack. Such progress is not possible through the efforts of one or two people. It has been solely dependent on the united effort of our many members.

Of course, for the day-to-day running of the organization, someone will still be officially designated as president, but ultimately our future development hinges on every member having the commitment required of a Soka Gakkai president. With this spirit, this sense of responsibility, this leadership in your activities, may you always work for kosen-rufu and for the victory of the people. May you also build a Soka Gakkai where everyone can advance joyfully, a Soka Gakkai of undying progress.

Your mission is to ensure that this precious organization endures for all time, to create a Soka Gakkai that nothing can ever destroy. That is the only way to secure the eternal flow of kosen-rufu, our movement to realize lasting peace and happiness for all humanity.

You must never allow our organization to be thrown into disarray by people of ill intent who seek to exploit the Soka Gakkai for their own motives. You have to be able to see through their schemes.

What needs to be done to ensure that the Soka Gakkai lives on forever and the kosen-rufu movement is perpetuated? This is something that all of you talented young people yourselves will have to think about and work for.

This subject can be looked at from various angles. I would like to talk about one important aspect today in the hope that it might provide you with some food for thought.

Why Christianity Spread

Christianity spread widely throughout the world in what could be described as a momentous achievement. What made this possible?

The early Christians were relentlessly persecuted by the rulers of the Roman Empire, the most powerful authority of the day, many followers laying down their lives for their beliefs. Despite this intense opposition, Christianity ultimately became a force that shook the very foundations of the Roman Empire. After the empire's collapse, it continued to spread around the globe and become one of the world's major religions. Why was this?

I think we can say that Christianity triumphed over persecution and oppression because of its believers' willingness to give their lives for their beliefs. Christianity didn't compromise with the ruling authorities. Religions that capitulate to pressure from political authority ultimately become slaves to those powers, losing their integrity and committing what amounts to suicide. This is a strict lesson of history. Only religions that resist oppression can emit light and gain lasting strength. This is because, whatever their fortunes in society, they triumph in the realm of the spirit. That paves the way for the next phase of development. The spirit of believers to put their lives on the line for their faith is of fundamental importance.

Because our lives at each moment encompass all things (in accord with the principle of a life-moment possesses 3,000 realms), that spirit, that resolve to devote ourselves utterly, is the only way kosen-rufu can be achieved.

Christianity started out as a very small and impoverished community of believers. Nobody paid any real attention to them, or if they did, it was with scorn and contempt. How was it that Christianity, which began from such humble beginnings, spread so widely throughout the world as it has today? I discussed this with the great British historian Dr.

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Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975), who, incidentally, thought very highly of Mahayana Buddhism.

Christianity occupies a pre-eminent place in world history. Dr. Toynbee said that Christianity gained wide support because of its believers' unwavering commitment to stake their lives on their beliefs, and because it won the hearts of the masses. With his characteristic insightfulness, he maintained that Christianity's powerful appeal to the people lay behind its success in building a foundation that would not be defeated by the ruling authorities or by changing times.

Of foremost importance are the people — not celebrities, the powerful, the rich, scholars and others whom society deems great or praiseworthy. The purpose of all things must be the happiness of the people. Everything else should be but a means to that end. Those who fail to recognize this fundamental point and look down on the people and exploit them are thoroughly vile and contemptible; they are a hindrance to the people's happiness.

portant, each person's life is precious, each person has a soul. It didn't simply lump people together as "workers" or "the lower classes" but placed importance on the welfare of each person.

The Soka Gakkai has also always identified with and extended a helping hand to individuals who were suffering amid the harsh realities of daily life. Selfless members — like you and many of your older sisters and brothers, mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers — have striven earnestly to tell others about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, visiting one friend after another and lending a sympathetic ear to their problems and worries. The amount of time and effort spent in supporting and encouraging a single person is truly awe-inspiring.

By sharing with a friend that we once suffered too, or that we are going through a rough time in our personal lives now but that we're really challenging the situation, we can encourage him or her. Our own problems and struggles enable us to understand and empathize with others' pain and suffering and allow us to encourage them to overcome their prob-

Gakkai.

This same spirit of equality in faith was one reason why early Christianity found such tremendous support among the people.

Reaching Out to the Unfortunate

The second reason Dr. Toynbee offers for Christianity's appeal is that "it showed its consideration for them [the people] in a practical way by taking care of the widows and orphans, the sick and the aged, for whom neither the municipal governments of the city-states nor the ecumenical government of the empire performed any comparable services."

Christianity extended a helping hand to those who were suffering most — to those whom neither the local administration nor the central government took care of. The Soka Gakkai has also always gone out of its way to reach out to such people and to protect and fight for their welfare. Because of this, the Soka Gakkai was scorned in Japan for the longest time as a gathering of the poor and sick.

An international leader was indignant when he heard this, saying: "What ridiculous criticism! Isn't that what true religion is all about? Mercenary religious groups only treasure the rich. I assert that, in reaching out to the poorest of the poor, the Soka Gakkai only proves itself a religious group of genuine integrity."

For many religious groups, money is more important than people. The Nikken sect is a prime example. Such is the way of all fraudulent religious groups. The Nikken sect indisputably stands condemned by the Daishonin. Abandoned by the Buddhas and bod-

hisattvas of the ten directions and three existences of past, present and future — the protective functions of the universe — the Nikken sect is destined to ruin. The same principle applies to individuals who turn their backs on the people.

Sincere and Selfless Devotion to Faith

Dr. Toynbee's third reason for Christianity's popularity was that "it did all this [the aforementioned charitable deeds] disinterestedly, under the inspiration of Christian ideals and not with the ulterior aim of recruiting supporters."

The spirit of the Soka Gakkai is the same. It has no ulterior motive. It is driven simply by the lofty spirit to enable others to become happy, to enhance the country's cultural richness, to bring peace to the world. We of the Soka Gakkai are earnestly devoting ourselves to practicing the quintessential teachings of Buddhism. Our spirit is identical with that of the original Buddha, Nichiren Daishonin.

Never has it occurred to me to take advantage of the members. In fact, any increase in our membership only makes me the target of even greater jealousy and persecution from forces in society who oppose our movement. The more members there are, the more I am driven to support, encourage and protect them with my entire being.

Nevertheless, it is imperative that we keep striving for kosen-rufu. If we are to secure happiness for the people, we must continue promoting our movement. As Buddhists, we have no choice but to brave all obstacles, weather all hardships, and endure all in order to lead people to true freedom and enlightenment. This is the spirit of a genuine Buddhist.

Dr. Toynbee concluded: "The Christian church won the hearts of the masses because it did more for the masses than was done for them by any of the rival higher religions or by either the imperial or the municipal public authorities...." In other words, Christianity represented the only hope. People then could not rely on the government, politicians or wealthy citizens to help them.

This prepared the way for Christianity's rapid spread in the following period and the start of an era of mass conversions. This is how Christianity built the foundation for a new age.

The Soka Gakkai has always devoted itself to the people, and it continues to do so to this day. That is why it has won the people's hearts. There is no greater strength than this. Devotion to the people is what wins a religion widespread support — this formula will never change. I hope you will remember this lesson of history throughout your lives. It is this point that I especially wish to impress upon you today.

Noble Dedication to Kosen-rufu

Who is worthy of the greatest respect? It is the people, ordinary citizens. Though perhaps not boasting wealth or education, the truly great are found among the people. The three martyrs of Atsuhara, whose heroic behavior is a model for all who are dedicated to widely spreading the Daisho-

nin's Buddhism, were the epitome of the common person.

When we look at who is earnestly propagating the Daishonin's teachings, who is working with single-minded purpose to realize kosen-rufu, we find that it is ordinary people with no particular name or position in society — and more often than not it is women.

People who have fine-sounding titles tend to be so puffed up with vanity and self-importance that they are unwilling to risk everything they have to stand up for the cause of justice. What's great about a person like that? Viewed both in the light of Buddhism and human integrity, absolutely nothing. And what is more, such self-centered individuals even stoop to exploiting and manipulating our noble organization to realize their own lowly ambitions. This is a truly fearful thing. President Toda strictly warned against giving such persons important positions in the organization.

Today I have spoken about Christianity, not to engage in a doctrinal discussion but to look at why it spread so widely.

Ultimately, the religion that devotes itself most to the people is the one that wins the greatest popular support and makes the greatest contributions to humankind. The Soka Gakkai has developed in accord with this formula and is now laying the foundation for the next great stage of development — the foundation for the century.

The Buddhist Law is eternal. The Daishonin's Buddhism, moreover, has existed for 700 years, but only the Soka Gakkai in this century has worked wholeheartedly for the people's happiness based on this essential teaching. The priesthood has distinguished itself only by its arrogance and indifference to serving the people. That's why it never gained wide popular support for the Daishonin's teachings. The scope of worldwide kosen-rufu that we of the SGI have achieved today is the result of our tireless dedication day in and day out on behalf of the members' happiness.

For four, five decades, I have striven for the members' welfare each day from morning to night. The Gohonzon knows all of my efforts. I mention this fact not as self-praise but as a reminder for future generations. Because of these efforts, the Soka Gakkai has become the foremost organization in Japan and the world. Please never think that this was accomplished easily.

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Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



Dr. Arnold Toynbee said one reason Christianity gained wide support is because it won the people's hearts. Dr. Toynbee and President Ikeda spoke in the early 1970s.

This perversion is widely apparent in Japan. There are also many unscrupulous individuals who seek to take advantage of the Soka Gakkai. Unless this sorry state of affairs is rectified, there will be no victory of the people.

Sharing Others' Sufferings as Our Own

Now, why is it that Christianity had such appeal for the masses? Dr. Toynbee offered three reasons. First, he noted, Christianity treated people "not as proletarians, but as human souls." In other words, Christian-ity taught that each person is im-

ports as we ourselves have been doing or are resolved to do. There is nothing more noble than the openhearted and generous spirit of a person sharing and empathizing with the sufferings of others.

The Soka Gakkai is fundamentally different from those forces in society who regard the people as faceless masses and look down on them as the poor, laboring classes. No one is superior or inferior. At the most fundamental level of life itself, there are no distinctions of rich and poor. All are equal in the eyes of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. That is the world of the Soka

HIGHLIGHTS
FROM THIS SPEECH

Buddhism is about bringing happiness, joy and fulfillment to all. It enables us not only to become happy ourselves but to make causes for the enlightenment of our ancestors seven-plus generations back and for the happiness and prosperity of our children, grandchildren and descendants throughout future generations. This is the great benefit of Buddhism.



Because our lives at each moment encompass all things (in accord with the principle of a life-moment possesses 3,000 realms), that spirit, that resolve to devote ourselves utterly, is the only way kosen-rufu can be achieved.



The purpose of all things must be the happiness of the people. Everything else should be but a means to that end. Those who fail to recognize this fundamental point and look down on the people and exploit them are thoroughly vile and contemptible; they are a hindrance to the people's happiness.



[The Soka Gakkai] is driven simply by the lofty spirit to enable others to become happy, to enhance the country's cultural richness, to bring peace to the world. We of the Soka Gakkai are earnestly devoting ourselves to practicing the quintessential teachings of Buddhism. Our spirit is identical with that of the original Buddha, Nichiren Daishonin.



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To be trusted are the youth. Many people, as they age, tend to become more self-protective and timid, more given to doing things with the minimum expenditure of energy. Mr. Toda said, "I'll entrust the job of third president to a member of the youth division. I won't leave it to a disciple from Mr. Makiguchi's day. Why? Because they are too old." I feel the same way as President Toda. I will entrust the 21st century to none but the youth.

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Members Are the Guiding Force

If, in the future, there are leaders who sit back nonchalantly on the foundation that has been built by their predecessors, who maneuver their way skillfully to avoid hard work or responsibility, who are reluctant to devote every ounce of their energy to serving the members, then it will spell ruin for the Soka Gakkai. Indeed, I'm afraid that there are already such people in our organization. It is vital that you, youth division members, strictly remonstrate and take to task such negligent and self-complacent leaders. Mr. Makiguchi insisted that the constituent members of a body or organization must direct the actions of the leaders.

The most important things in faith are the Daishonin's teachings and the Soka Gakkai spirit. To protect them, you may have to strictly admonish people in senior leadership positions. There is nothing to be afraid of. When you reflect on the sincere commitment of the members in our great organization and how a single leader's directive can affect thousands or tens of thousands of people, any leader who takes lightly or abuses that grave responsibility is a disgrace and cannot be condoned. If such individuals come to prevail, then the very life and spirit of the Soka Gakkai will die, causing it to degenerate into an organization that betrays the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin. But as long as you, the youth division, are there, I am confident that this will never happen.

There was a person who quietly watched my devoted endeavors for the people. This was Chinese premier Zhou Enlai (1898–1976). He said: "The Soka Gakkai enjoys broad support among the people. We should pay great attention to this organization." Premier Zhou's focus was also always on the people. Our shared commitment to work for the people fused to create a golden bridge of friendship between Japan and China.

On my departure from Tokyo's Haneda Airport on my first visit to China in 1974, I declared publicly: "I have come this far with people who have been dismissed as the poor and the sick — without relying on power or money." Many people came to see me off, including officials of the Chinese embassy in Tokyo.

I want all of you to be proud of this spirit of the Soka Gakkai. Above all, religion must help the sick, the poor, those who are suffering the most. Wouldn't you

agree? To be valued and looked up to are not corrupt, arrogant individuals who despise the people. I want you to inherit my spirit — a spirit of ungrudging service to the people — and put it into magnificent practice in your lives.

The Sun and the Moon Shine in Your Sparkling Eyes

Tonight (March 13) we have a full moon. That March 16, 40 years ago, was a cold, fine day. A majestic Mount Fuji watched solemnly over the participants. Today, from high on in the heavens, a luminous full moon is watching over all of you, watching over us who share the profound bonds of mentor and disciple.

Until just a short while ago, the sky was overcast and the full moon hidden from view. I wholly presumed we were going to have cloudy weather or rain again today — following the tradition of big youth division events! But the sky seems to have cleared at last. Congratulations!

I can't help commenting on your sparkling eyes. In Buddhism, our eyes are likened to the sun and the moon. In fact, our whole body is viewed as a microcosm of the universe itself. For instance, the roundness of our heads represents the celestial sphere; the hair on our heads, the stars; our eyebrows, the Big Dipper (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 567). Whether the full moon is visible in the sky or not, your shining eyes are the most brilliant moon and sun one could hope to see.

In praise of the strong, pure faith of one of his followers, the Daishonin writes:

The sutra states that those who are possessed by demons are unable to believe in the Lotus Sutra, while those in whom Shakyamuni's spirit has entered are able to take faith in it. Just as the moon reflected in the water renders it clear, so the moon of Shakyamuni Buddha must be mirrored in the water of your mind. I find this most reassuring. (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1379)

This is an important teaching. Buddhism speaks of evil demons, or negative forces, taking possession of people (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 194), and when viewed from the recent state of the world, it appears that such demons have indeed taken over people's minds. Society today is disordered and polluted. Darkness prevails. People lack a source of genuine light and hope.

The demons, or spirits, that Buddhism speaks of refer to functions that disrupt the proper

rhythm and order of life and rob people of their vitality and benefit. These functions arise out of deluded and misguided thought and from acting counter to the Law. In the "Rissho Ankoku Ron," the Daishonin cites the passage from the Ninno Sutra: "When a nation becomes disordered, it is the spirits which first show signs of rampancy. Because the spirits become rampant, all the people of the nation become disordered" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 37).

People of evil intent, people who are driven by personal ambition rather than concern for the welfare of others, people who lie and deceive, people who abuse the organization for their own private ends — the likes of these are possessed by demons and find it impossible to practice correct faith.

In contrast, this Gosho passage states that Shakyamuni Buddha resides in the hearts of those with sincere faith. Read in terms of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, "Shakyamuni" here refers to the original Buddha, the Daishonin himself. The life essence of Nichiren Daishonin resides in the lives of genuine practitioners of his teaching. This is a truly wonderful thing. For this reason, it is important that we respect one another in the SGI.

Championing the Cause of the People

The other day I received a gift from the youth division members of France as an expression of their determination toward March 16. It was a book by the great French author Émile Zola (1840–1902). I humbly offered it to the Gohonzon with a prayer of deep appreciation.

I have spoken a number of times about Zola in the past. Today I'd like to share with you an impassioned letter he addressed to the youth, which is included in this book.

Zola ranks alongside Victor Hugo as one of France's great literary giants. A leading exponent of naturalist literature, his works such as *Drunkard*, *Nana* and *Earth* are well known in Japan.

Zola is said to be at his best in his starkly honest portrayals of the lives of the working class. He championed the cause of the common people throughout his life. I would like you to remember this.

It is the people who are all-important. Nichiren Daishonin was also one of the people. He wrote proudly, "I am merely the son of a commoner" (MW-5, 293). The majority of high-ranking priests in those days were from noble or

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titled families. Nevertheless, the Daishonin, the original Buddha, purposely chose to be born into the lowest social class of the times, into a family without money, title or position. This is profoundly significant.

To seek to embellish one's worth with titles and honors is a pretentious way to live. What is great about someone who lords it over others and discriminates against people of humble backgrounds? A genuine Buddhist pursues human greatness bare of all vanity or embellishment.

Zola's life was not all smooth sailing. He lost his father when he was 7. He failed his university entrance examination. His hopes of academic study dashed, he took a job at a publishing house and embarked on the road to becoming a writer. He had been hired to wrap and pack books and do other odd jobs, but he worked hard at this and, in his spare time, contributed articles to small newspapers and gazettes. As a result of his perseverance, he came to be known as the best-selling French novelist of the 19th century.

How Can We Remain Silent?!

In his later years, Zola involved himself with what was known as the Dreyfus Affair. The military authorities had accused a Jewish French army officer named Alfred Dreyfus of spying and had tried and sentenced him to life imprisonment on an island penal colony. The man, however, was innocent of the crime. This travesty of justice had been caused in no small part by the deliberate exploitation of existing anti-Semitic sentiment. Zola could not remain silent. Though almost 60, he stood up unhesitatingly to fight for the truth. For him, age was no barrier to speaking out for justice. As human beings, we are finished if we can no longer speak out. It signals spiritual death.

Exactly a hundred years ago in 1898, Zola published an open letter to the French president in the newspaper *L'Aurore* (The Dawn). The title shouted out from the page, "J'Accuse" — "I accuse!" Zola roundly denounced the injustice that had been perpetrated. His aggressive stand drew retaliation. He was persecuted and harshly criticized by the authorities. But he refused to budge or give in. Great people are not swayed from their beliefs.

There are two well-known proverbs: "Be still and have thy will," and "Cowardly dogs bark loudest." The more quiet and

earnest a person seems to be, the more wholeheartedly they tend to fight for their convictions when the crucial moment comes. Glib talkers and those who always make a lot of noise tend to crumble easily in a crisis.

Unfazed by the attacks on him, Zola continued to speak out. He called out to intellectuals, to the people and to the youth. Eventually, people, mainly youth and students in their mid-20s, rallied in response to his cry.

Zola's campaigning led to thousands of people signing a petition demanding a retrial of the Dreyfus case and served to raise public awareness about the affair.

Four years after Zola's death, Dreyfus was finally exonerated. It was a historic victory; Zola's victory. This towering human rights struggle is still talked about today.

Think of the Great Task That Awaits You!

To be trusted are the youth. Many people, as they age, tend to become more self-protective and timid, more given to doing things with the minimum expenditure of energy. Mr. Toda said: "I'll entrust the job of third president to a member of the youth division. I won't leave it to a disciple from Mr. Makiguchi's day. Why? Because they are too old." I feel the same way as President Toda. I will entrust the 21st century to none but the youth.

At the outset of his struggle, Zola lost no time in addressing the youth. In the letter dated 1897, which is also included in the book I received from the French youth division members, he cries:

Oh youth, I beg of you, think of the great task that awaits you. You are the workmen of the future. You will lay the foundations of the next century which, we firmly believe, will resolve the problems of fairness and truth that this waning century raises....

Youth! Be always on the side of justice. If ever the idea of justice should grow dim within you, you would be a prey to every peril. I am not talking about the justice prescribed by our Codes of law.... It [that justice] must be respected, of course; but the justice I mean is a loftier notion.

Our spirit in the SGI is the same. While striving to be exemplary citizens in our communities, we are working to propagate the supreme truth that is the Mystic Law. This is kosen-rufu. Those whose hearts blaze with the passion to champion justice and truth we call youth.



Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Thai, Cambodian Members Mark New Year

The first Thai-Cambodian joint general meeting in the Los Angeles area was held on April 4 at the World Peace Ikeda Auditorium to celebrate their traditional New Year's Day, which is April 13 in the current calendar.

In his message to the 700 participants, SGI President Ikeda quoted the Goshō: "Nam-myoho-rence-kyo is the greatest of all joys" (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 788). He then went on to say: "This faith enables us to enjoy our lives to the fullest, filled with

supreme happiness. Therefore, with this Buddhism, we can surmount the stormy seas of life and transform them into sources of goodness and happiness.

"I ask that each of you chant daimoku to make each day victorious. Please have confidence that your steady efforts will lead you on a brilliant course toward eternal happiness and triumph."

The meeting featured experiences, a song, a skit and various native dances including performances by children and non-members.



Zola implored of the youth: "Who will stand up and demand that justice be done — if not you?... you who can speak up in all purity and in all good faith?" There is no one. Only the youth. He continued:

Youth!... be on our side when we affirm that an innocent man is serving an appalling sentence and that our rebellious hearts burst with indignation.... Wherever there is a martyr crushed by hatred, is it not your dream to defend his cause and set him free?

Surely seeing a person of justice being persecuted, Zola declares, is reason enough to stand up and defend him. Our humanity demands it. It is the heart of humanism. This spirit is the complete antithesis of the insidious nature of authority that holds human life cheap. Zola further cried:

If you do not take the most sublime

of risks, if you do not launch into a superb and perilous cause, if you do not stand up to an entire nation, in the name of ideal justice, then who will? Don't you feel ashamed to see your elders, the old people, take up this cause today with ardour, carrying out the task...that should be yours?...

Where are you going, you young men, you students...? "We're going to the aid of humanity, truth and justice!"

I would like to present these words to you, the members of the youth division.

Youth must have the spirit to attack injustice, the spirit to refute that which is wrong, the spirit to spread the Daishonin's teaching. Just giving an appearance of promoting kosen-rufu and going with the flow, afraid of making waves, are the actions of self-serving

youth who are spiritually old and decrepit.

The Mystic Law, as I have already stated, is of supreme importance. The SGI is an organization dedicated to spreading the Mystic Law throughout the world. Consequently, supporting and solidifying the SGI will contribute to the true victory of the people. The victory of the people is the focus and goal of all our endeavors. Please always remember that I'm counting on you of the youth division to work all out for a magnificent victory.

Looking forward expectantly to March 16 next year, I would like to close my speech today with an expression of my deep appreciation for the phenomenal strides you have been making in your activities. Please know that I am chanting for your health and endeavors day and night. May you advance with complete confidence.

Thank you one and all.

逆境才是成長之道

蔡碧珠

一九七一年十二月二日早上上班途中，在五號高速公路，突然有一輛車子從出口衝出過來，眼看就要撞上我的車子，我一時心急，就向左轉，因為用力太猛，車子失去控制，我知道我會撞倒安全島時，心想這麼大的車子，這麼快的速度，我不是命喪黃泉就是變成殘廢，口中唸著「南無妙法蓮華經」，我便由一位日本信者折伏，祈求不要讓我成為廢人。

而開始唱頌。當時，一半出，迎著相反方向的來車停了下來。我好奇怪，我一個人過來幫我打開車門，然後問我好不好？我回答不知道，他說：「你最好坐在車子裡不要動，有人已經幫你報警了。」坐在車子裡從後視鏡中看到路旁停了很多車子，心想怎麼闖了這麼大的禍。

救火車、高速公路巡邏警察、救護車都來了。我被送到醫院的急診室，兩小時後，巡警到醫院找我，醫生告訴他我只受了些小傷，骨頭沒有折斷，當天就可以回家。

巡警告訴我說我很幸運，車子撞倒安全島之後又回到慢車道，而且和路上的行車相反方向，竟然沒有撞上路上的車子，真是奇蹟。我問他車子的情況，他回說車子沒有我幸運。他告訴車子的地點，然後就離開了。

我兒子來接我回家，途中他問我不是在上班的路上發生的。他說那個時候他突然有個預感，媽媽會出事。他心裡非常害怕，就開始唱頌，祈求御本尊保佑媽媽平安無事。我告訴他：「今天我們兩人的祈求都應驗了。我還好好的活著，完全是御本尊的功德。」



▲蔡碧珠說，題目使她凡事都往好處

我的獨子今年二十六歲，雖然在美國出生長大，而且有一半西方人的血統，他卻有很深的中國家庭觀念。自他父親去世後，我們母子就相依為命，感情非常深厚。

幸福的家庭，安穩的生活可以說是我修行的最大功德，在此要和各位讀者分享的是去年發生的一件事。

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次證明了題目的力量是不可計量的。學會前輩！因為我不但買了同樣的車子，除了顏色不同外，其餘一切都和原來的車子一樣，還剩下足夠的錢讓我參加三月底在佛羅里達州舉行的全美華語研習會。

這個體驗使我更確信大聖人佛法的正確以及題目的力量，我衷心感謝御本尊和所有幫助我在信心方面成長的

（接上頁）「莫忘春」——不要忘記自己應該開花的使命。

也許是回應了這首詩，傳說梅花從京都遠處飛到主人道真受迫害之地九州去，這是有名的「飛梅」的故事。

就是這樣地，「梅」花表現出「不變的心」、「不忘記主人的心」。只要有事情發生，放下一切馬上趕到那裡。那就是「紅梅」的心。「梅」花在中國也被稱為「王」，是花中的女王。

我的身邊也時常掛著「紅梅」的畫。

南無釋迦之西門·玻利瓦爾(Simon Bolivar)說：

「忘恩負義是人可能犯下的最大罪。」

背叛學會、出賣同志的人，其末路是嚴峻的。即使一時看起來如何風光，最後也會墜入苦惱的深淵。根據御書，將會生生世世不斷受苦。

相反，「貫徹誓約的人生」是明朗的。

無論如何看來是如何貧窮的樣子，為廣宣流布奮鬥到底的人生，一定會隨著歲月增輝、充滿永遠的福運。

信賴的各位紅梅會、常盤會會員，希望你們成為「一生為廣宣流布奮鬥到底」的模範，在佛教的不可思議的教團創價學會裡，創造出最高的人生歷史。

「境智行位」

學會的職位，在佛法上何有意義？

在釋尊的佛法上，有「六即」、「五十二位」等，詳細地評語菩薩的品位。

在日蓮佛法上，是受持即觀心、直達正觀，並無階段。

以此為前提，仍是有「境界成長」的階段。

要提高「境界」，具體上必須徹底履行自己「

雖然稍為艱深，有所謂「境智行位」的法門。簡單來說，「境」是應該獲得的真理。廣而言之，就等於客觀基準、客觀目標等。

以學會的職位來說，伴隨著那個職位的「應該實踐的使命」，就等於「境」吧。

為了達成那使命，竭盡自己的「智慧(智)、努力(行動)(行)」。由此決定作為結果的佛法上的「品位」，即定出生命的「品位」。

這就是「境智行位」。

因此，即使職位高，假如沒有實踐其使命，甚所以，單是看實際的「佛法上的品位」也低。低，卻對廣宣流布作出偉大貢獻。

因為這樣，由職位來看人，是重大的錯誤。但相反地，若輕視學位的職位，卻相當於輕視廣宣流布的組織。

自己盡自己本分，卓越地履行職位的「責任(境)」，決心留下自己自身偉大的歷史——這樣地竭盡「智」與「行」時，生命的「品位」便會提高。

「職位」的重大意義在於此。從這一點來說，職位是「人格上進的飛躍台」。

為廣宣流布而奮鬥

大聖人嚴厲地說：

「不論做出任何大善，即使是讀誦、抄寫法華經千萬部，悟達一念三千之觀念觀法者，若不謹實法華經之教，無法就此成佛。」

沒有與敵對抗的「為廣宣流布奮鬥的行動」，就沒有佛法，也沒有成佛。

苦思「該怎麼辦？」為廣宣流布煩惱、痛苦、奮鬥的人，最後會得勝。

這是我五十年來看盡一切人生軌跡所得的結論，

「堅強的百姓最能信賴」

是名人就了不起嗎？絕對沒有這回事。有地位和學歷的人就偉大嗎？絕對不是這樣。

踏實地、拼命為廣宣流布努力的無名百姓是最偉大的。

「廣宣流布」是日蓮佛法的基礎、根本目標。沒有為廣宣流布不惜生命，就沒有大聖人的佛法。學會活動正是遵照日蓮大聖人所言的行動。無論在過去或是現在，許多人往往一旦成名、高昇了，信心的「心」、「身」便墮落，失去不戰時中精神之時也是這樣。在戰後的戶田先生事業失敗的時候，也是這樣。

一直以來尊敬地稱呼「牧口先生、牧口先生」、「戶田先生、戶田先生」的人，翻臉變臉，謾罵「牧口那傢伙」、「戶田那傢伙」。

人心實在可怕。

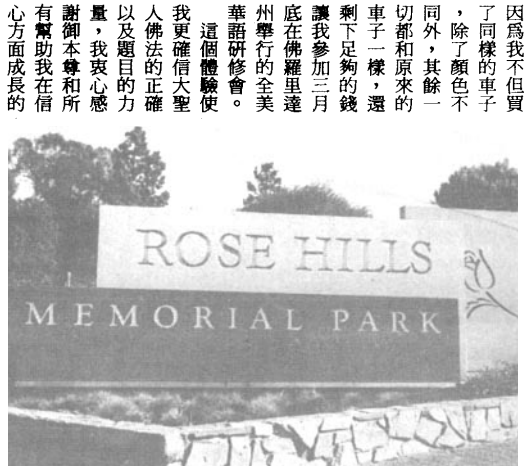
在那樣的環境下，唯有一人，只有戶田先生竭盡力奮鬥，取得了勝利，替牧口先生報仇雪恥。只有我拼命維護戶田先生、保護、支撐學會，使學會蓬勃地發展起來。戶田先生實在感到很高興，先生是幸福的。

有一次，戶田先生非常強調說：「所謂『偉人』不能信賴。在緊要關頭、因懦弱而逃避、卑鄙、奸詐的人很多。最能夠信賴的人是民眾，是以堅強的婦人部為首的無名百姓啊。」

在真正的信仰上，「世間的地位」並沒關係，那不過是幻影。信徒是「無冕帝王」。

宣弘正法的人，將生生世世成為生命的「皇帝」。

我想向各位說：「這個證明一定會在末世出現，並以這句話來結束今天的祝福講話。」



▲ SGI-USA已經喬安由加州玫瑰山紀念公園為會員提供墓地和服務。SGI的八瓣蓮花徽章是花崗石碑的特色。

John Smith
1960 — 1998

我們已購買了一百塊墓地，將來還會增加六百塊。這一片由池田會長命名為「永恆的綠洲」的墓地將會以塊特別的SGI-USA的墓碑劃界。

每塊墓地下都包括可以容納兩人的骨灰的拱形地下墓室。(寵物和其他動物都不許葬在此處。) SGI-USA每年在公園內的Sky Rose教堂為已故會員舉行兩次追悼會。

墓地的價錢是每塊美金三千五百元，包括特製的SGI八瓣蓮花徽章的墓碑。

這些墓地是以先訂先買的方式出售。詳情請洽Tony Segrano (310) 264-8981或將姓名、地址和電話寄至：Oasis of Eternity, 525 Wilshire Blvd, Santa Monica, CA 90410-1403。(譯自World Tribune 一九九八年三月十三日第二版)

永恆的綠洲

五月教學材料

辛勞是幸福的柴薪

SGI會長 池田大作

祝賀舉行東京、關東的婦女部代表會議。

信賴的紅梅會第十六屆總會、常盤會第二十五屆總會，恭喜！

在嚴寒中遠道而來，真是歡迎各位！

「沒有比這更尊貴的集會」

如今，在全國各地熱鬧地舉行婦女部總會。

戶田先生曾說：「如今，到底哪裡有真正為民眾憂慮、議論世界大事的女性呢？只有這裡。只有創價學會的女性。」

那是在女性的人才組(華陽會)聚會上的話。

如今，各位婦女部員也聚集起來，討論人生與佛法，祈願地域繁榮，為日本的將來憂慮，朝著二十一世紀，自由自在地綻放「對話之花」。

從凡夫的眼來看，也許是平凡、微不足道的集會。但是從佛眼來看，卻是最尊貴的集會。

因為那是「決心推進廣宣流布」的集會。

投入民眾之中、生活之中！關於廣宣流布，戶田先生曾這樣說

「無論在哪裡，也非投入民眾的生活之中不可。」

「難說世界廣宣流布，其根本仍然在一對一的對話和座談會中。」

扎根於當地的生活，並在社會上取得信賴，無論去哪裡，原則始終是座談會和「一對一」的對話。

各位踏實的行動，正是末法廣宣流布的「王道」、人生的「無上道」。

「種子不不會出軌」

而且，循著此大道奮鬥，能嚴然地建設起子孫、一家的「福德軌道」。

戶田先生也曾說：「廣宣流布活動，也是為子孫們設下綱領，使他們不會出軌的活動。」

先生的說話雖是概括而言，但在個別的家庭來說，如今也在創造使子孫一定會走在「幸福軌道」上的原因

大聖人說，妙法不但使自己能夠成佛，甚至使「上七代」、「上無量生佛」的祖先，以及「下七代」、「下無量生」的子孫也能得救。

與多人交戰時

宮本武藏的《五輪書》裡，論述了這樣的兵法。

「與多人交戰時，我方不可守候。即使敵人從四方八面來侵，我方寧可向一方反攻還擊之心抗敵。決不能等待。

因為那是野豬，不但毛硬，而且氣力十足。可是，結果如何呢？野豬越是磨擦，金山反而越是閃閃生光。這是龍樹的《大智度論》和天台大師的《摩訶止觀》裡所說的故事。大聖人在御書裡引用他教導弟子：「法華經行者越是遭遇障礙，越是發出光輝。」

所謂障礙，就是指三障四魔。不對抗三障四魔，就無法成佛。不經歷、跨越難的話，不能成佛。就像不參加考試、越過考試的難關，就不能畢業大學一樣。大聖人說這個世間是「第六天魔王所支配的世界」。因此，「善人」受到迫害，「惡人」橫行霸道。把這樣的顛倒的，從根本次元改變過來，就是廣宣流布。

「火」越是燃得旺盛，煩惱即菩提。因為有煩惱，所以才有成長。因此，並沒有「淨是幸福的幸福」。不幸的「柴薪」，才有幸福的「火燄」。因為有辛勞，所以也會有歡喜。紀貫之的《源氏物語》：「人心不知變未否，故里梅花香如舊，也是歌頌此心。」此外，菅原道真受讒言中傷，被流放到九州時，向著自己庭園的梅樹這樣吟詠：「東風起須把香送，梅花無主莫忘春。」(轉下頁)

御書裡有「豬指金山」(一種種種振舞御書)之語。在某個地方有座「金山」。那裡有一頭野豬，不喜歡「金山」金光燦爛，野豬心裡想：「哼！那樣的東西，我壓不起，一面把身體往金山指擦，想壓掉金光。」

跟合不來的人相處，自己才會被磨佛。何祈求的特定形式或準則。佛教強目標而祈禱，這樣做時，只是欺騙自己而已。(中略)當然啦，你可以下定決心，要成為心境寬廣的人，或為了你的親友與全世界人類福祉(廣宣流布)而祈禱。你可以自由地為何願望唱題。一切由你決定。

佛教有一名詞是「自受用」，意思就是無量歡喜。經由不受阻礙的真心祈禱，我們可以開展無止境的生命境界，自由自在地享受一切，自由自在地獲取法樂。戶田城聖會長曾經說過：他覺得他的生命境界可以自由擴展到天空，使他可以飛往想去的地方，並且完成他所選擇的目標。此種毫無限制、毫不保留的祈禱力量，可以帶領我們達到任何障礙都不足以阻止我們的境界。茲引用詩人惠特曼的「寬廣道路之歌」的一節作為結論：

歡欣徒步在寬廣道路上，世界在我面前展開，自在、健康，前面遙遠褐色路，引導我走向我所選擇的旅途。(譯自World Tribune, 一九九八年一月十七日第二版)

正確的唱題方法？

你有沒有想過應該如何唱題？有求必應的秘密是甚麼？

我們都會問過這樣的問題：如何為了(XXX)而唱題？空白處可以填入工作、人際關係、更多的錢財、幸福等。

然而對於不同的慾望，並沒有不同的唱題方法。過去幾年中，本報和個人指導，都會對唱題方法發表種種不同的觀點。有些人強調將你的慾望與廣宣流布結合在一起，(例如：我要這一份工作，以便顯示修行的實證)；另外有人說：應該先為他人幸福而唱題。更有人說：我們應該在唱題時，想到慾望：務求心靈平靜；想像我們的佛性等。

這些都是許多人多年修行所獲得的智慧，對某些人在某些時候可能有效，但追根究底，唱題並無特定的方式。唱題沒有秘訣。

說起來，唯一的規則就是順其自然，沒有應該或不應該。就如池田會長所說：「並沒有應該如你實際慾望並非如此時，並不需要假裝為崇高的」

當我們面臨僵局或有求不應時，有些人會尋求如何唱題的指導。然而信心的本質就是：相信我固有的佛性，對自己的祈禱，充滿自信，以及相信唱題的效力。這些全部是自然的。日蓮大聖人說過：「重要者祇此信心耳」(四條金吾殿御返事「法華經兵法事」)。

信心就是讓你自由自在。沒有人能告訴你什麼可以祈求，什麼不行。在誠實地達到慾望而祈禱時，我們的生命境界自然地變成更寬廣更加深作，沒有什麼是企及不了的。正確的唱題方法就是毫無保留地，將所有的思想、感覺向御本尊傾訴。先為他人幸福而唱題。更有人說：我們應該在唱題時，想到慾望：務求心靈平靜；想像我們的佛性等。

當然啦，如果你的意願是毀滅性的(例如為別人的不幸而祈禱)，這是違反佛法的作法，一定會面對因果律的後果。但是最基本的原則是：我們有選擇如何祈禱的自由。池田會長在最近的一篇對話文章中說：「如果你實際慾望並非如此時，並不需要假裝為崇高的」(譯自World Tribune, 一九九八年一月十七日第二版)

Driving Into the Future

By DORIS McCLOSKEY
CHICAGO CORRESPONDENT

Robert Derby is one of the millions of Americans who drives a sports utility vehicle. Along with small trucks, SUVs are closing in on cars as our country's preferred mode of transportation. No matter that it costs us more to keep filling 'em up. Not only do we like the outdoors four-wheel image, we've decided that when it comes to navigating the dangers of modern freeways, we prefer something a little sturdier.

But Derby is one of those drivers who still longs for better and cleaner gas mileage. And as marketing director for Epyx, he's doing something about it. His company is in the forefront of efforts funded by automobile manufacturers and the Department of Energy to develop a new generation of vehicles. Epyx's specialty is fuel cell technology, a system that converts fuel to hydrogen to make electricity.

"I drive a sports utility vehicle, but I'm really looking forward to the day when I can get 40 miles to the gallon compared to the 20 I'm presently getting," says Derby. "We [the public] will probably like the looks of the fuel cell and electric cars. We'll have the speed and power without the noise."

Epyx, a subsidiary of Arthur D. Little in Cambridge, Mass., worked with the Department of Energy, Plug Power of Latham, N.Y., and the Los Alamos National Laboratory to develop a fuel cell for automobiles. Demonstrated for the first time last fall, the cell is capable of generating electricity from a variety of fuels, including gasoline and natural gas, as well as renewable resources such as ethanol and methanol. Refueling will be as easy as pulling into your present-day gas station.

No one expects overnight change, but it's coming — and in

a variety of packages. Car manufacturers already are introducing cars powered by electric batteries. By the early part of the next century, the new fuel cell system will be available: "The public could see this technology on the market as early as 2004," says Steve Chalk of the Department of Energy's Office of Advanced Automotive Technology. "Consumers have to be enticed to change old habits."

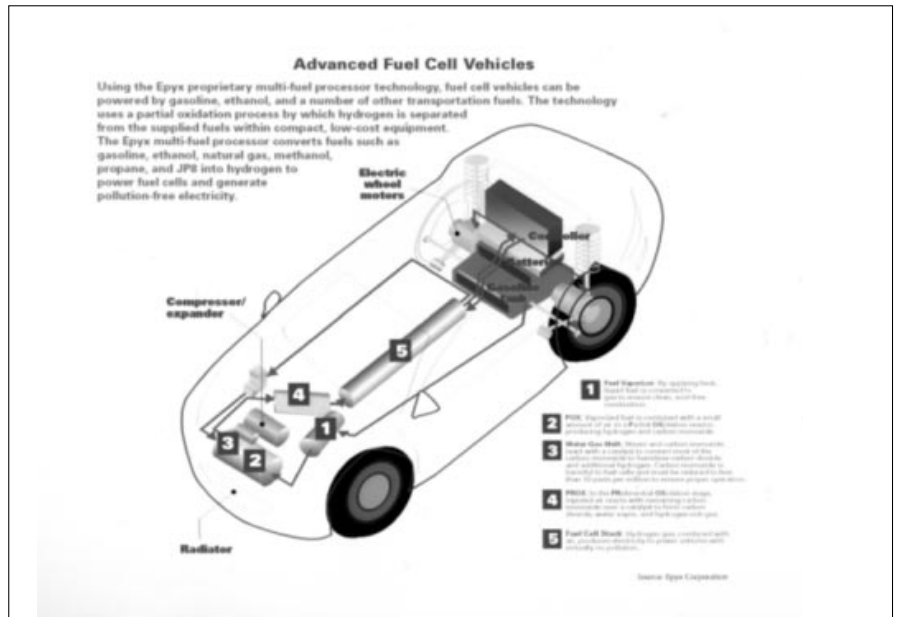
Manufacturers already understand some of those enticements. For example, Ford's new electric car is a high-end sports utility vehicle available in California. Cinerogy Corporation has designed its electric vehicle in the form of a Formula I race car, attracting attention and demonstrating top performance.

Meanwhile, Ford and Honda are developing a network of public charging stations in California designed to make driving electric vehicles more convenient. The expected development of "fast charging" batteries could make electric vehicle charging as fast as refueling today.

Epyx plans to introduce its new fuel cell technology to the public through small premium power devices for use in vacation homes, sailboats, emergency back-up generators and the like. "Once they discover how efficient and quiet these are with no smell from emissions," says Derby, "I think people will be more receptive to using the technology in cars."

However, there are a lot of us who still want to hear the vroom when we put the pedal to the metal. So, Derby agrees, the marketing plan for fuel cell automobiles may have to include an on-board sound system — to emulate our 20th-century gas guzzlers. ❖

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



Bill Mitchell, Epyx vice president of engineering, and the Epyx 50kW Multi-Fuel Processor used for conducting automotive-scale laboratory demonstrations. Epyx is just one of the companies developing alternative technologies for cars.