

World Tribune

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THE YEAR OF VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE FOR THE NEW CENTURY

APRIL 24, 1998

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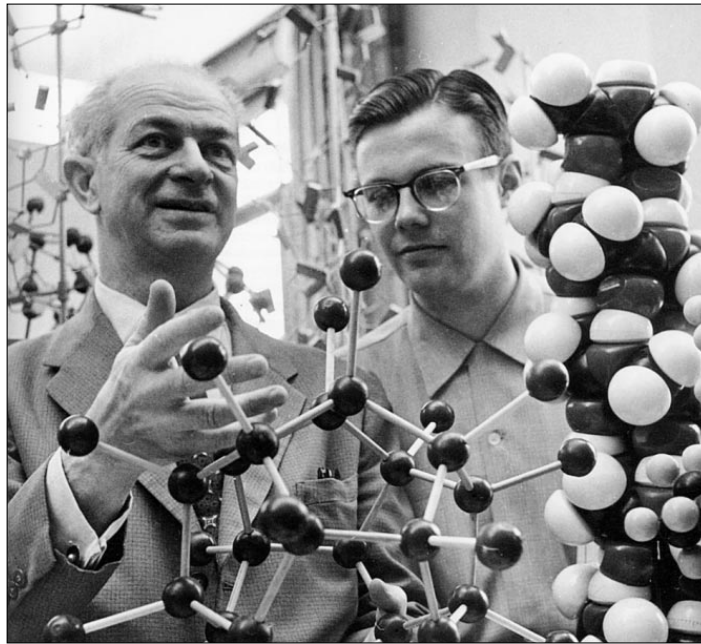
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DATED MATERIAL: PLEASE DELIVER BY ISSUE DATE

Linus Pauling (left), with a student at Cal Tech University, is the subject of an SGI-cosponsored exhibition. Developed in cooperation with the Linus Pauling Institute and Oregon State University, the exhibition will trace the life and accomplishments of this world-famous chemist, the only person to have won two unshared Nobel Prizes.



Linus Pauling Exhibition Planning Under Way

By LISA JONES
STAFF WRITER

"Linus Pauling and the 20th Century," a multimedia exhibition celebrating the life of the late Nobel laureate and humanitarian, will be held at the Herbst Pavilion in San Francisco's Presidio Sept. 19–Nov. 6. The exhibit will be cosponsored by the Linus Pauling Institute, Oregon State University and the SGI.

The Linus Pauling Select Advisory Committee, comprising supporters and colleagues of Dr. Pauling, met on the weekend of March 28–29 at the SGI-USA San Francisco Culture Center to finalize plans for the exhibition.

SGI-USA representatives Gary Murie and Mary Worthington presented a proposal for the exhibit, which will chronicle Dr. Pauling's remarkable life in three parts: his boyhood and college years in Oregon; his career as a chemist, including his Nobel Prize in chemistry in 1954; and his humanitarian accomplishments, including his Nobel Peace Prize in 1962.

Dr. Pauling (1901–1994) was a renowned scientist and dedicated peace activist. He is the only person to date to have won two unshared Nobel Prizes, although he felt that the peace prize should have been shared with his wife, Ava Helen Pauling.

SGI President Ikeda and Dr.

PLEASE SEE PAULING, 4

DISCUSSIONS ON YOUTH

Why Do We Have An Organization?

Organizations play an important role in coordinating the efforts of like-minded people and in helping develop each individual, SGI President Ikeda says. But the SGI is not perfect — it's what we make it.

Kimura: Let's talk about the role and function of the Soka Gakkai organization. Someone asked me "Why do we have an organization? Is there anything wrong with people just working individually?" Another commented, "I don't like group activities, so I'm uneasy with the word *organization*."

Igeta: Many members have expressed their joy at being a part of such a compassionate group as the Soka Gakkai.

At a meeting commemorating May 5, Soka Gakkai Successors Day, last year, you shared with us President Toda's statement that the Soka Gakkai is "the organization for kosen-rufu more precious than my life." We were all very moved by those words, and many of us

renewed our determination to cherish and protect this great organization.

Kimura: Most high school division members have been in the Soka Gakkai ever since they can remember. Each person's attitude to the organization varies depending on their personal experience and circumstances.

Ikeda: The word *organization* probably conjures certain images for some people, but the fact is, everything in this world involves some sort of organization. The human body itself is made up of more than 60 trillion cells, all working in concert. That's an amazingly efficient organization. There are all those cells and, yet,

PLEASE SEE DISCUSSION, 8

This is the 21st installment of a series of discussions on youth among SGI President Ikeda and Soka Gakkai high school division leaders Hidenobu Kimura (young men's leader) and Kazue Igeta (young women's leader), representing the high school division members.

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

OUR HERITAGE

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

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Alive and Well in the People

EDITORIAL

In India, during a 15-week festival some 10 million Hindus plunge into the Ganges River with the belief that the waters will cleanse their souls and free them from the cycle of birth and rebirth. In Saudi Arabia, 3.1 million pilgrims descend on the holy city of Mecca in the annual *hajj*, a requirement of all able-bodied Muslims who can afford the trip.

For many religions, the concept of a pilgrimage to a sacred place is an important aspect of faith. In the SGI, too, in years past, we looked forward to traveling to the Head Temple Taiseki-ji, where we could worship together with fellow believers from around the world. Herein lies an important criteria of so-called sacred places in our religion: people.

Places aren't sacred in and of themselves but derive their significance from the purity of the people practicing the Law. As the Daishonin writes: "Since the Law is supreme, the Person is worthy of respect; since the Person is worthy of respect, the Land is sacred" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 264).

With this month's news of Nikken removing the Dai-Gohonzon from the Sho-Hondo, the High Sanctuary of the Daishonin's Buddhism, many members are recalling fond memories of their trips to Japan to pray to the Dai-Gohonzon. One of the main purposes of these pilgrimages was for members to refresh their faith and make new determinations. In this sense, visiting the head temple in those days was a means to strengthen faith.

Such visits were not an end in themselves. No benefit ever accrued from merely being in the presence of the Dai-Gohonzon. As the Daishonin says, "A poor man cannot earn a penny just by counting his neighbor's wealth, even if he does so night and day" (MW-1, 4).

As the Daishonin teaches, it's through faith that we attain enlightenment. It was the seeking spirit and personal effort of the members themselves that brought about any benefit. In the Daishonin's day, a person who made such sincere efforts to visit the Daishonin was the elderly Abutsubo. By braving the treacherous journey to the remote Mount Minobu,

he earned the praise and gratitude of the Daishonin. Yet the Daishonin also made it clear that Abutsubo's wife, Sennichi-ama, who stayed behind, received just as much benefit by virtue of her strong faith.

A pilgrimage to see the Daishonin was therefore a great cause but not a requirement to attain enlightenment. Nevertheless, the temple today teaches that pilgrimage to Taiseki-ji is what allows people to "expiate their negative karma and attain fortune in this life and the next." For the priests, the place, and not faith, is what's most important.

In addition to praying to the Dai-Gohonzon, a course of study organized by the Gakkai was always a part of any pilgrimage to the head temple since the

days of second president Josei Toda. Studying the Goshu, sharing experiences, seeking guidance in faith — all these contributed to members' deepening their understanding of Buddhism and strengthening their determination to practice through the pilgrimage.

Today, in addition to our regular activities, we in the SGI-USA have opportunities to attend various special seminars within our regions and regularly scheduled conferences at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. Many people who have attended these conference note how their time at

the FNCC helped them refresh their faith and practice. Here, too, we see how the spirit of people coming together to seek the Law results in a positive and hope-generating experience. It's not the buildings or the Everglades or the balmy Florida evenings that make it happen. Though the beauty of the setting relaxes and rejuvenates, it is the beauty of the members' faith that most inspires.

Within the people, we find the Daishonin's spirit alive and well.

Ultimately, of course, the High Sanctuary is wherever the Gohonzon is enshrined and people chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo with faith. We need go no further than our own living rooms or local community centers. The blessings we attain depend solely on the strength of our faith, the sincerity of our spirit, and not on the place where we practice it. WJ

Places aren't sacred in and of themselves but derive their significance from the purity of the people practicing the Law.

World Tribune

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WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Chant for Nikken's Defeat

Rather than chanting for Nikken's happiness, as was suggested in the March 20 "Mailbox," I believe that we should unite to chant for his defeat in the Seattle Incident trial. On Feb. 2 of this year, Nikken once again asserted that he would resign if Mrs. Clow's account of his behavior in Seattle were proven true. By stepping down as high priest, Nikken would not be in a position to orchestrate wide-scale attacks on the SGI, which is a cause not only for his unhappiness in this lifetime but for countless lifetimes to come.

Nikken's resignation would also cause many temple members to reflect on their faith and practice. Some of these temple members would probably leave Nichiren Shoshu, thus removing themselves from an environment that promotes slander. This would be a cause for their happiness.

A defeat for Nikken in his libel suit might also weaken Nichiren Shoshu as a whole. This could slow down their efforts to prey on SGI members and bring them to the temple.

Individuals who practice with the SGI all have the potential for great happiness and to reach enlightenment in this lifetime. Individuals who practice with the temple have these options denied to them by the very nature of how they practice Buddhism.

Nikken will be cross-examined again on May 18. By chanting for the success of the SGI's attorneys and for Nikken's fastest defeat in this trial, we are making the best possible causes for the happiness of SGI members, confused temple members and even Nikken himself.

— ROB WEINSTEIN, Highland Mills, N.Y.

Another Okinawa

The article "Missiles Into Sunflowers" (April 3 *World Tribune*) noted that "Dr. Krieger...said...there was an anecdote...of Napoleon Bonaparte expressing utter incredulity when he heard...that the people of these [Okinawan] islands did not possess weapons of any kind.... Napoleon's reaction was typical of a military mind...." The Englishman in the early 1800s who told Napoleon the Okinawans had no weapons was mistaken. Okinawa is the birthplace of karate, which transformed people's hands, feet, knees, elbows and farming implements into a deadly arsenal of weapons.

The Okinawan people were driven to develop karate for self-defense when, in 1609, the Japanese Satsuma samurai clan occupied Okinawan, confiscated all conventional weapons like swords, and then proceeded to use Okinawan peasants for their swordplay target practice. The Okinawans responded not with pacifism but with a pragmatic, clandestine, comprehensive effort to rearm themselves.

If the *World Tribune* was looking to historic Okinawa for an idyllic example of a pacifistic society to support its contention that defenselessness is a tenable way of life, the *World Tribune* should keep on looking. On the other hand, I do agree with the article's main point, that a positive change in the human heart makes technology function for the good of humanity. Through my own Buddhist practice, I've changed the significance of my martial arts involvement to something positive; for example, my martial arts give me the discipline to do gongyo consistently.

— GERALD T. AITKEN, Walden, N.Y.

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A Writer for World Peace

Writer Gary Russell
wants to be a trendsetter



and take
responsibility
through his
writing.

Money is nice, he says,
but world peace is what
motivates him.

PERSPECTIVE

By GARY RUSSELL

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

I am a writer for world peace. That's what I tell myself when I stare at the rejection letters taped to my bathroom wall. When I stare at the file cabinet drawer filled with unpublished book, article and short story manuscripts, I shrug and say, "It's not the money that matters; it's being able to reach people through my writing."

But now and then that conviction goes out the window. I fantasize about being the next Stephen King or John Grisham, sitting up there in my big house, rolling around on my bed in oodles of money.

It usually takes little more than a chanting session or reading SGI President Ikeda's guidance to bring me back to reality. Sure, I wouldn't turn down a multimillion-dollar publishing contract. But when the writing is not from the heart, when it is without meaning, what good is it?

When Princess Diana died last year, I thought about this question as I pored over the sto-

ries that proliferated in the press. Especially stories that said she and the three others in the car that crashed in a Paris tunnel were being chased by photographers.

Voices in the community say that the media is going too far. The press argues that it is the tabloids, not the mainstream press, who hound celebrities. Celebrity photographers claim they are just doing their jobs.

Who is to blame? Apparently no one. Out of the countless published reports I have read, not one is willing to take responsibility. The only thing going on is finger-pointing.

I have to wonder, though. For every person who blames the press, how many purchased a tabloid or other publication that resorts to such practices as relentlessly hounding celebrities? For every "legitimate" publication that said it would never print a photo of the bodies, how many printed a front-page photo of the wrecked car? And as for the photographers who chase celebrities, how many know the meaning of responsibility and fairness?

Right around that time last fall, a *USA Today* headline read, "The Paparazzi Shoot Back: They Say Cameras Aim Where Public Points." In other words, they were saying, don't blame us for stalking celebrities. We're just giving the public what it wants.

It's easy to follow a trend. "Everyone else is doing it; why shouldn't I?" seems to be the common logic. Who will be the trendsetter instead of the trend follower? Who will give something fresh and positive to those who want it? Who will step forward and say, "Enough is

enough; it's time to take responsibility?"

In the August 1997 *Living Buddhism*, Takanori Endo said: "Much of the media today, because it is devoid of guiding principles, treats information simply as a commodity. The attitude seems to be that anything that attracts people's attention and boosts sales is printworthy." I should be the last to place any blame, but sometimes I catch myself doing just that. Then I take a good look in the mirror and ask, "Well, what are you doing?"

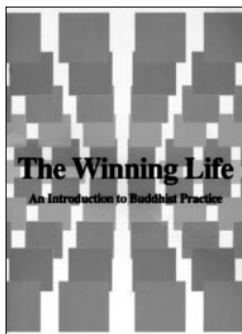
What am I doing? Working for a temp agency since my writing doesn't pay the bills. Yet. But that's OK. I'm making a living, so I can afford to write from the heart. I can write what I want, for the reasons I want: to inspire, entertain and encourage. Without sacrificing my integrity.

Sometimes people scoff at my chosen field. Why should he do something that he's not getting paid for and possibly never will? they wonder. Where is the reward?

I would be lying if I said I didn't want to make a living. But money — despite all my fantasizing — is not the key factor. Money is not what motivates my writing. The reason I am compelled to write is something, perhaps, the tabloid writers don't have or have forgotten.

I am a writer for world peace, and that is enough reward. ☐

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



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The Winning Life gives quick yet detailed information about practicing Nichiren Daishonin's teachings. This convenient, 48-page booklet addresses many of the questions guests frequently ask.

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It's Driving Me Crazy

CLEARLY A Parent

A COLUMN ABOUT PARENTING

By MICHAEL LISAGOR
VIENNA, VA., CORRESPONDENT

My younger daughter, Jamie, got her driver's license just last year. Now, I know what you're thinking...that this must be the same Jamie who has her own honorary wall of soccer injury casts at her doctor's office (she's had two since my last article!).

And, you're asking yourself, why would any rational, caring parent — a parent whose child-rearing philosophy is firmly grounded in Buddhist principles — allow such a child to approach an automobile, much less steer one? I can only claim temporary insanity (and the realization that eventually you have to let your children grow up if you don't want to lose them).

A ship may be exposed to violent storms and turbulent waves when it sails far out into the open sea. However, unless it continues on its course, overcoming these natural hardships, it cannot reach its destination.
(Daisaku Ikeda, Daily Guidance, vol. 4, p. 60)

Jamie's older sister, Megan, has been driving for four years. She once had a little problem I call "pedal non-differentiation." My wife and I, having had no prior experience teaching young folks how to drive, allowed her to chauffeur us to the train station near our home to drop off our visiting niece and her husband.

There is a very narrow lane called Kiss and Ride where people drop off their loved ones. Megan had just received her driver's permit and had only been behind the wheel twice. Realizing she was about to run into a very tall, very large, concrete lamp post, I calmly instructed her

to press the brake pedal. I did this in my usual warm, patient, fatherly voice: "MEGAN...OH, MY GOSH...HIT THE BRAKE PEDAL...EVERYONE DUCK...INCOMING!"

Megan promptly stomped on the gas pedal instead and drove right through the lamp post, which ended up staring at me from the other side of the windshield. Fortunately, no one was hurt. The front of our van, on the other hand, was nearly split in half.

We actually apologized to Megan for placing her in a position she was ill prepared for, and she learned an invaluable lesson about how destructive a moving automobile can be. Since then she has been a safe and thoughtful driver. Whenever we drive to the train station we refer to that special lane as Crash and Ride.

Jamie has also turned out to be a very responsible driver. My wife and I have switched from driving her everywhere all the time to worrying about her driving everywhere all the time. We wave to her in the morning as she drives off to school in her cute little Nissan Sentra singing songs with indecipherable lyrics from a tape made for her by her older sister. Then we collapse in each other's arms muttering Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and Buddhist prayers under our breaths.

I guess that's how a father's role changes. When the girls were younger, I could physically try to protect and guide them through life's difficulties. By this age, however, their values are more firmly set. So I have to maintain confidence in their character...in their ability and need to overcome problems on their own. Not easy...but absolutely necessary.

My wife and I are now using our faith to project an envelope of protection around both our children as they wind their way toward their own unique human revolution.

But I'd be less than honest not to admit that, at times, IT DRIVES ME CRAZY! ❏

SUA's Calabasas Campus Approved

By JEFF FARR

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Santa Monica, Calif., April 15

Soka University of America's plans to further develop its Calabasas, Calif., campus were finally approved on April 9 by the California Coastal Commission. The final decision, reached after an eight-year battle, will allow SUA to expand enrollment at the Calabasas campus to 650 students. The active campus will be situated on 52 acres, and 456 acres of the property will be preserved as open space. Also, 383 acres of the open space will be donated to the Santa

Monica Mountains Conservancy.

SUA supporters had hoped the plans would be approved on March 12 at a Coastal Commission meeting in Monterey, Calif.

But when the president of the California state senate, John Burton, faxed a statement just prior to the hearing opposing the plans, SUA officials requested that the final vote be delayed until the commission's April 9 meeting. Following four hours of debate in Long Beach on April 9, the plans were approved with a 9-2 vote.

SUA in Calabasas is now offering a master's degree in second and foreign language education, foreign language courses, and English language classes to Japanese students. In September, the 5th class of the master's degree program begins classes.

SUA is now considering its long-range academic plans for the Calabasas campus. Ideas range from a high school program to an expanded graduate school. SUA's main campus, in Aliso Viejo, Calif., will be a full-scale liberal arts school and will open in 2001. ❏

Planning Under Way for Linus Pauling Exhibit

Photo by MIKE MULLEN

PAULING, FROM PAGE 1

Pauling first met in 1987. Their dialogue, *A Lifelong Quest for Peace*, was published in 1992. In his message to the members of the advisory committee, President Ikeda said of Pauling: "It was truly an extraordinary privilege to be able to develop a friendship with this great man during the final years of his life, as he brought to full flower the ideas and commitments of a lifetime... He was a person of action, and we honor his memory most faithfully through our own actions for peace."

SU-USA member Larry Florin, working as a staff person to the committee, said: "My goal is to respond to President Ikeda, to fulfill the promise he made to Dr. Pauling. The promise is to expose a new generation to the values that Linus Pauling stood for, to educate people about justice and humanitarianism."



A model of the exhibition is presented to the advisory committee.

Attendees at the committee meeting included chairperson Linus Pauling Jr., M.D.; John F. Catchpool, M.D.; Kenneth W. Hedberg, Ph.D.; Zelek Seymour Herman, Ph.D.; Dudley Robert Herschbach, Ph.D.; Ramesh S. Krishnamurthy; Stephen R.

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HAVE YOU GOT A STORY TO TELL?

THEN TELL US!

Did you recently learn something new about your practice or your life? Share it in a "Perspective." Have you accomplished a cherished goal? Send us your experience. Have you been studying the Goshu and what it means to your life? Turn it into an essay or a "Wow!" column.

Or maybe you don't want to write, but you've got a great idea for a "Worldview." Perhaps you heard someone give a great experience.

Or maybe you just finished reading the latest issue of *World Tribune* and want to get something off your chest — send a letter to "Mailbox."

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GUIDELINES

Perspective and Worldview articles should be 600-900 words long;
Experiences and Essays, around 1000 words;
Wow! columns, 300 words;
Study articles, 500-600 words.

the new
**HUMAN
REVOLUTION**

A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI

'THE FLOWER OF CULTURE'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 5-6

In Shin'ichi Yamamoto's speech at the Education Department's first national convention, he pinpoints the difficulty of providing individual attention and guidance to each member of the Soka Gakkai. 'I look to you,' he tells the educators before him, 'to set an example' based on 'sound common sense and logic.'



By HO GOKU

What is the fundamental purpose of education? Tsunetsaburo Makiguchi declared, "The purpose of education is to enable children to live happy lives." He felt strongly that the happiness of children takes priority over national profits or agendas. Out of this belief, Mr. Makiguchi placed the focus of his value-creating education on developing in each student the capacity to attain happiness.

He said that happiness is founded on the pursuit of value, and he advocated beauty, benefit and good as the values human beings should seek to create in their lives. According to Mr. Makiguchi, the creation of value constitutes true happiness. The mission of education is to nurture many people capable of creating value in society and working toward their own and others' happiness.

In the foreword to *The System of Value-Creating Education*, he explained his passionate desire to present his theory of value-creating education to the world:

I am driven by the frantic desire

to prevent the present deplorable situation where 10 million of our children and students are forced to endure the agonies of cut-throat competition — perpetrated by the difficulty of getting into good schools, the "examination hell" and the competitive struggle for jobs after graduation — from continuing into the next generation. So I have no time to be concerned with the shifting vagaries of public opinion.

A deep compassion and love for children — for humanity — burns brightly in these words. This heart is the true spirit of education.

The application of value-creating education would require not only reforms in educational theory and teaching methods but a radical change in attitude and approach — in other words, a human revolution — in educators themselves. Since teachers are the single most important influence in a child's educational environment, it is essential that they continue throughout life to educate themselves.

Asserting that teachers are educational engineers, Mr. Makiguchi stated: "Education is a science and an art of unparal-

leled difficulty and can never be successful without teachers of the highest quality. The object of its concern is the most precious and irreplaceable treasure in the world — life itself."

He also described how he thought teachers should be: "Unless you have the courage to be an enemy to evil, you cannot be a friend to good. A person blinded by considerations of self-interest cannot distinguish between good and evil, and is not qualified to be an educator. And one who can make that distinction but does not have the strength to act on it is worthless as an educator."

It was the youthful Josei Toda who, in a free and dynamic fashion, put the spirit of value-creating education as advocated by Mr. Makiguchi into practice. Many youth of outstanding humanity and diverse talent graduated from his private school, the Jisshu Gakkan.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto wanted to pass on this legacy of the first and second presidents to the members of the Soka Gakkai Education Department. Observing the growing lack of direction in Japanese society, he couldn't help feeling how important the department's mission was.

A little more than a year after its formation in 1961, the membership of the Education Department was fast approaching 3,000. And 1,000 representatives gathered for the department's first national convention on Aug. 1, 1962. This marked a fresh beginning for the department toward the goal of actualizing value-creating education.

The convention began a little before 1:00 p.m. with a program that included experiences, greetings by Education Department Chief Katsu Kiyohara and guidance from a senior leader. Last was a speech by Soka Gakkai President Yamamoto.

"My sincerest congratulations to you on this significant day!" Shin'ichi began. "While sitting here listening to the other speakers, I thought how happy Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda would be if they could be here today to witness this fine gathering of educators. Mr. Makiguchi was a great pioneer in the field of education, and Mr. Toda was also a teacher.

"I, however, am not a teacher. In fact, I was always scolded by my teachers at school for not studying hard enough. I think you can imagine how embarrassing it is for me to be standing up here before so many teachers today!"

The audience roared with laughter.

Shin'ichi then proposed that the Education Department publish an educational journal that would feature its members' experiences as educators, their research on value-creating education and its practical application in the classroom, and other topics. The participants enthusiastically applauded the idea. Shin'ichi next touched on the role of Education Department members within the Soka Gakkai.

"Because the Gakkai is grow-

ing so rapidly," he said, "we occasionally see cases where, due to our difficulty in providing thorough guidance to each member, some people make extreme statements when they try to explain the Daishonin's Buddhism and as a result cause misunderstanding in society about our organization as a whole.

"Even in the family, it's often difficult for parents to give thorough guidance to their children. So you can imagine how challenging this is going to be in our organization, which has tens of thousands of new households joining every month.

"Nevertheless, I hope to see every member gain the ability to tell others about Buddhism or give guidance in faith in a way that is clear, reasonable and persuasive. I look to you, the Education Department members, to set an example for others by excelling in this. Buddhism is reason. Your speaking and interacting with others based on sound common sense and logic — and the positive response such an approach is bound to elicit — will encourage many members to follow your example, further contributing to the momentum of our movement to spread the Law."

Shin'ichi concluded his speech by wishing that each Education Department member become a great leader of Buddhism, a champion of communicating Nichiren Daishonin's teachings to others.

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.

Soon To Arrive in Your Mailbox

Here's some of what you can look forward to in future issues of the 'World Tribune.'

- A report on the 'career conference' at FNCC
- Goshō study material for May and June in Spanish
- A look at the spring training trip to Japan
- Readers' responses to our article on vegetarianism

By HO GOKU

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY

THE FLOWERS OF FRIENDSHIP



In this essay series, SGI President Ikeda uses his pen name Ho Goku — as he does in The New Human Revolution — to write the story-behind-the-story. This series is published as "Thoughts on The New Human Revolution" in the Seikyo Shimbun, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.

It was a dramatic change — from wintry Tokyo to the eternal summer of Manila. The tropical sun was bright, penetrating. The beautiful sunset on Manila Bay, famous the world over, lived up to its celebrated reputation. It was my first visit in five years.

The streets of Manila were neat and orderly, and the scenery was more breathtaking than ever. In every respect, the nation overflowed with a vibrant sense of pride and self-confidence that comes with victory and glory. The Philippines had indeed made remarkable progress.



On Feb. 9, the Order of the Knights of Rizal, inheritors of the ideals of the great hero of Philippine independence, Dr. José Rizal (1861–96), presented me with the 1st Rizal International Peace Award. It commemorates this year's centennial of Philippine independence. And I had the honor of being the very first recipient.

In spite of his busy schedule, Republic of the Philippines President Fidel V. Ramos made an appearance at the presentation ceremony, held at the Philippine International Convention Center, and offered his congratulations. I am deeply grateful for his kind consideration.

In addition, on Feb. 11, the birthday of my mentor, Josei Toda, the University of the City of Manila presented me with an honorary doctorate in the humanities. This is the first institu-

tion of higher learning in Asia to offer a system of free tuition, making quite a name for itself and setting a fine example as a university of the people.

All his life, Mr. Toda wished for the happiness of his fellow Asians. He composed this poem:

*To the people of Asia
Who pray for a glimpse of
the moon
Through the parting clouds,
Let us send them, instead,
The light of the sun.*

I am sure that Mr. Toda rejoices from the bottom of his heart at these honors bestowed on me. The night of Feb. 11, as if to celebrate Mr. Toda's birthday, a luminous, fairy-tale full moon smiled down on Manila.



The barbaric acts of the Japanese military during World War II

claimed many, many Filipino victims and left deep scars there. Yet during that terrible tempest of aggression, the Soka Gakkai's noble founding president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, and his successor, Josei Toda, remained adamantly opposed to the forces of militarism.

How noble they were. How great they were in fearlessly putting their lives on the line for their beliefs!

As a result, the Philippine people have shown great trust in the SGI, which was born from the brave conviction of Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda. The Philippine people have supported us warmly.

I express my deepest respect for their generous and perceptive understanding.



On the evening of Feb. 11, the Order of the Knights of Rizal

terms of nationality or to be bound by the past, keeping alive ancient hates and conflicts. They recognized the praiseworthy achievements of King Juan Carlos for what they were and honored them accordingly.

I see in this act the keen perception of the Philippine people, their profound spirit of friendship and forgiveness.



If the 21st century is to be a century of peace, a spirit of tolerance is indispensable. But tolerance and compromise are different. Compromise is the product of self-preservation, self-interest and a spiritual poverty. It results in compliance with evil. And, finally, in our own corruption.

Tolerance, though, is always founded on a clear understanding of the difference between good and evil. It is the product of strong personal commitment. Tolerance is the light of true humanity, forged through suffering and hardship. It is this light that fosters the growth of friendship.

We of the SGI are dedicated to the lofty cause of kosen-rufu. A vast realm of tolerance — of generosity and goodwill toward others — unfolds in our hearts. Happy smiles and animated dialogue, the flowers of friendship, bloom wherever SGI members go.

The pure white sampaguita, the national flower of the Philippines, smiles up at the sun, praising the fellowship of our friends in this lovely land and their future.



From SGI President Ikeda:

* True joy is found in working for kosen-rufu, in practicing and taking action for the happiness of oneself and others. The greatest joy is to be found in SGI activities. Our activities for kosen-rufu become memories that shine ever more brilliantly as time goes by. As SGI members, we help others overcome suffering while at the same time becoming happy ourselves. What way of life could be more wonderful? (Sept. 26, 1997, *World Tribune*, p.8)

* It's like a river. At a certain point the river's banks are pretty much fixed. In the same way, the identity of a person doesn't change much. But the quality of the water in the river can vary. It may be deep or shallow, polluted or clean, have an abundance of fish or none at all. The content, in other words, can change. It is the same with us. Our personality doesn't determine our happiness or unhappiness. Rather it is the substance of how we've lived that decides

WORDS TO THE WISE

HAPPINESS

There is no greater happiness for human beings than chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.... There is no greater happiness than having faith in the Lotus Sutra. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 161)

our happiness. The purpose of Buddhism and education, as well as all our efforts toward self-improvement and growth, is to enhance that substance. This is what life is all about. (Aug. 8, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 10)

* True happiness is not the absence of suffering; you cannot have day after day of clear skies. True happiness lies in building a self that stands dignified and in-

domitable like a great palace — on all days, even when it is raining, snowing or stormy. Attaining "peace and security in this life" doesn't mean having a life free from all difficulties, but that whatever difficulties arise, without being shaken in the least, you can summon up the unflinching courage and conviction to fight against and overcome them. (*Learning from the Goshō: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 241)

* Everyone without exception seeks happiness and peace. One person may pursue "treasures of the storehouse," while another pursues "treasures of the body" such as status or health. But true happiness lies in accumulating "treasures of the heart." And the substance of the treasures of the heart is a great state of life totally dedicated to faith....

[Nichiren Daishonin] exhorts us to "regard both suffering and joy as facts of life and continue chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo" (MW-1, 161).

This is not happiness that can be gained through the satisfaction of cravings or desires. It's a matter of "experiencing the boundless joy of the Law" — of freely receiving and enjoying the happiness deriving from the Law that wells forth from our lives. Each one of us can definitely attain such a state of peace and happiness. And because this peace and happiness comes from our own lives, it is enduring. (September 1997 *Living*)

WOW!

BREAKTHROUGHS IN UNDERSTANDING

One Realization After Another

By **TOBIE MARSH**
VACAVILLE, CALIF.

During a recent visit to Los Angeles, I ran into a fellow member at an SGI-USA community center. When I asked her how she was doing, her response was: "Do you want the short version or the long version? The short version — I'm doing great. The long version — I'm having so many realizations in my life."

When she mentioned "the long version," my mouth flew open. I told her how happy I was to finally hear someone express exactly what I've been experiencing the last few years: one realization after another. Often they are inconspicuous and happen in such quick succession, especially when I'm chanting, that I find myself in awe. As Nichiren Daishonin says: "What then does *myo* signify? It is simply the mysterious nature of our lives from moment to moment, which the mind cannot comprehend nor words express" (MW-1, 5).

Although my friend and I talked about how it was not always possible to express what we've been experiencing, the main point was how happy we are about the realizations we're having in every aspect of our lives, as a result of our Buddhist practice.

Since the beginning of my practice, I've heard that inconspicuous benefits are the greatest. Until recently, though, whenever I would read or hear that, I would think: "Well, that sounds great, and someday I'll probably feel that way, too. But for now I'll just take the conspicuous kind of benefits, if you don't mind."

While I continue to chant for those "relative happiness" benefits, especially the ones that come with dollar signs, I have to say that I have come to a point in my practice where I now truly believe that, indeed, inconspicuous benefits are the real treasures in my life. My experience has shown me that they come as a wonderful reward of continuing to practice, whether you initially thought you wanted them or not.

Did you ever say "Wow!" after studying about this Buddhism? E-mail, mail or fax your story to the World Tribune (see p. 2 for contact information).

ON THE GOHONZON

STUDYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S
INSCRIPTIONS ON THE OBJECT OF DEVOTION

By **TERRY ELLIS**
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The emergence of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth in the Lotus Sutra is a watershed event like the turning point in a drama. The scene is set when Shakyamuni turns down the vows to spread the Law offered by millions of bodhisattvas already present at the Ceremony in the Air.

Then the earth of the "thousand-millionfold countries of the saha world trembled and split open" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 213). And countless bodhisattvas emerged, their bodies all a golden hue.

These bodhisattvas, Shakyamuni goes on to explain, have been his disciples since the remote past. Among them are four leaders, whom Shakyamuni names: "The first was called Superior Practices (Jogyo), the second was called Boundless Practices (Muhengyo), the third was called Pure Prac-

tices (Jyogyo), and the fourth was called Firmly Established Practices (Anryugyo). These four bodhisattvas were the foremost leaders and guiding teachers among all the group" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 214).

They appear on either side of Shakyamuni and Many Treasures at the top of the Gohonzon. According to an interpretation by the T'ien-t'ai school, they represent the four virtues of the Buddha mentioned in the Nirvana Sutra: eternity (*jo*), happiness (*raku*), true self (*ga*) and purity (*jo*).

Amazingly, the first thing these bodhisattvas do after offering gestures of respect to Shakyamuni and the other Buddhas is to ask how Shakyamuni is feeling! "Are you comfortable, are you ill, are you worried?" "Are the people you're teaching giving you a hard time?" "Are you weary and spent from the effort?"

And Shakyamuni responds cheerfully that he's doing fine, and that his followers are accepting the teaching easily. That's because they've constantly received his instruction in past ages. They've also made offerings to the Buddhas of past ages, building up their good causes. The ones who have resisted, practicing the Lesser Vehicle, he adds, will listen now.

Bodhisattva Maitreya (Miroku), who has been watching this scene in astonish-

ment, verbalizes the questions on everyone's mind: Where did these unknown bodhisattvas come from? Who taught and converted them? "Regarding the causes that govern the beginning and end / of this multitude of bodhisattvas, / possessor of immeasurable virtue, World-Honored One, / we beg you to dispel the doubts of the assembly!" (*The Lotus Sutra*, pp. 217-18).

In "The True Object of Worship," Nichiren Daishonin points out that doubts about the legitimacy of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth raised in the minds of those assembled at the Ceremony in the Air were the most difficult they or people of the future would ever entertain. And the response to this greatest doubt was the Buddha's highest teaching, the Law revealed in the "The Life Span of the Thus Come One," chapter 16 of the Lotus Sutra, of which we recite a portion everytime we do gongyo.

By pointing out that he had been training the Bodhisattvas of the Earth since the infinite past — not just since his enlightenment under the bodhi tree in India — Shakyamuni revealed the original Law by which all Buddhas attain enlightenment.

Five in a series

(*The Bodhisattvas of the Earth, part 2, will continue this explanation.*)

Twisted Understanding

STANDS TO REASON

LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM
THE WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN

By **JEFF FARR**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

More than laymen or women, it is the priests with twisted understanding who are the Buddha's worst enemies. ("Letter to Niike," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 257)

Nichiren Daishonin's "Letter to Niike" (1280) was written two years before he died. The Daishonin's later writings were mostly letters of encouragement to his believers, who continued to write to him and visit him at Mount Minobu until the end. Niike of this letter's title was one of these sincere believers, a samurai of the Kamakura regime.

The Daishonin retired to Minobu in 1274 to eternalize his Buddhism — to take all the needed measures to make sure it would last. Isn't it telling that in the final phase of eternalizing his Buddhism, he wrote so much to his believers? He was also training priests at Minobu, but perhaps he intuited that the common peo-

ple would really be the ones to eternalize his Buddhism, not priests.

In "Letter to Niike," the Daishonin clarifies that the "worst enemies" of Buddhism will, in fact, be priests. SGI-USA Study Department Vice Leader Greg Martin explained this recently in his "Right From Wrong" series, stating that "the enemies of Buddhism do not appear as ordinary people but as priests who...hold distorted views" (Feb. 27 "Seize the Day").

After the Daishonin's death in 1282, it was indeed the senior priests who started entertaining distorted views, not the believers. The only senior priest who remained true to the Daishonin's spirit was Nikko Shonin — one out of six — and joining him were many of the believers.

It was an ordinary believer, Nanjo Tokimitsu, who protected Nikko when he left Minobu, welcoming him to the Tokimitsu estate (in the Fuji area) and helping him found the head temple near there. It was the believers who built the first building at the head temple. And it was the believers who were entrusted by Nikko, along with his successor, Nichimoku, to propagate the Daishonin's Buddhism into the future.

In short, the Daishonin's Buddhism would never have made it without the people. The temple often talks of how the priesthood has maintained its purity over 700 years, but the new series "The Un-

told History of the Fuji School" in *Living Buddhism* shows what a shaky history the priesthood actually has in protecting the Law.

When the Daishonin says that "priests with twisted understanding...are the Buddha's worst enemies," the flip side is that ordinary people — with healthy faith — are the Buddha's greatest allies. Later in "Letter to Niike," the Daishonin, using the example of one of his contemporaries, says, "Ryokan of Gokuraku-ji temple is believed to be a living Buddha, but men and women who believe in the Lotus Sutra should be seated above him" (MW-1, 257). Today, Nikken pretends to be a living Buddha; he lets his followers call him the "Daishonin of modern times." He deceives by saying that only through knowing him can we know happiness. As the men and women of the SGI, we are the people who are really upholding the Lotus Sutra. And we should be seated high above Nikken. We are the living Buddhas today.

The Buddha's worst enemies, priests, will always be first to wage war on what Buddhism teaches, the Daishonin suggests. And it is the worst sort of war that they wage: war that can capture our faith and twist it; war that can even twist us into adoring our enemies and, wittingly or not, despising what Buddhism teaches.

Eight in a series

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they are not just clustered together at random. Each cell has its own distinct role to fulfill. Some unite to form muscles, others to form nerves, and still others, our blood. The body functions as a whole because all these cells carry out their unique missions in harmony with others.

Kimura: It's truly a united effort.

Ikeda: Yes. Coordination is very important. Everything involves closely coordinated organization. This is true not only of human beings. All life functions in an organized way. From the tiniest plankton to the largest whales, all life forms on our planet are organized entities, or organisms. Even the molecules that make up these organisms themselves contain an organized structure of atoms. Our planet, too, is one great organization where all manner of sentient and nonsentient beings — animals, plants and natural resources — exist to form a coherent whole.

Igeta: From that perspective, the universe is also an organization.

Ikeda: Yes. That's true. The Earth is part of the organization known as the Solar System, which is itself part of the galaxy known as the Milky Way — a still larger system comprising some 200 billion stars just like our own sun. When several galaxies join together they form galaxy clusters or superclusters. The universe is a collection of an infinite number of such clusters. If we were to send a letter to a being on another planet, our return address would have to be appended to read something like the following:

Planet Earth
The Solar System
Orion Arm, The Milky Way
Local Galaxy Group, Local
Supercluster
The Universe

We can see the same kind of organization in human society. Countries, cities, towns, villages, businesses and schools — all are organizations. This is because close teamwork and interaction are necessary for them to function most effectively.

It is the same with sports. A soccer team is an organization. And even for individual sports like tennis, judo or fencing, practicing and competing with others, in a club, for instance, can be helpful in polishing one's skill and becoming a winner. Working closely with trainers, nutritionists and others can also be indispensable to success.



The Soka Gakkai sprang from the spirit to somehow encourage another person, SGI President Ikeda says.

Everything is an organization. When a couple unites to create a happy family, they are quite naturally forming an organization.

Then there is the invisible organizational framework that we find exists within our local communities, where communication has become a vital key in maintaining good relations with friends and neighbors.

You are in some way connected to everything around you — to society, school, your family, and so on. Everyone is part of some kind of organization. No one in today's world, except perhaps a hermit living on a remote mountain somewhere, is exempt.

It is only natural, therefore, when we seek to achieve a great objective or to develop ourselves so that we can make great accomplishments, that some sort of organization is essential.

The Soka Gakkai is an organization working to realize the great objective of *kosen-rufu* — of achieving peace and happiness for all humanity based on the principles and philosophy of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Such an objective cannot be accomplished through the efforts of one person alone. It becomes possible only when people in various spheres of society come together, organize themselves into a cohesive force, and work to achieve that goal.

Nichiren Daishonin had by his

side the six senior priests, and Shakyamuni had 10 major disciples. These, too, may be regarded as organizations. Both the Daishonin and Shakyamuni formed a network, or organization, through which they endeavored to spread the teachings of Buddhism as they raised and protected their followers.

Kimura: So organizations exist for a purpose.

Ikeda: Exactly. But it's important to note that there are both good and bad organizations. An organization that inflicts suffering on people and leads them down a path of destruction is nothing but evil. The war machines of militarist Japan and Nazi Germany during World War II are cases in point. In contrast, an organization that seeks to improve relations among people around the world, to work for a more positive, constructive direction for humanity, is a worthy and honorable organization. The SGI is such an organization.

Igeta: The world of the Soka Gakkai is one where people warmly encourage one another. A high school division member in Saitama related her efforts to support and encourage a fellow member who had stopped going to school. At first the person she wished to help refused to see her

when she visited, so she began to write letters about school, about her interests and hobbies, and also about faith and practice. She kept writing, and a year later, the member finally responded with a letter, stating that although she wasn't attending school she continued to chant every day. She also requested that the young woman continue her correspondence. With tears in her eyes, this young woman told me of the deep joy she felt knowing that her sincere concern had gotten through. Moved by her fellow member's spirit to challenge and not be defeated by her problems, she became all the more determined to continue growing and advancing herself.

Ikeda: That's wonderful. The organization of the Soka Gakkai emerged naturally from that spirit — the spirit to somehow encourage another person, to want to see others become happy. The Soka Gakkai didn't appear first and then become filled with people. People began forging bonds with one another, and then those ties of friendship spread, naturally giving birth to the Soka Gakkai organization. For that reason, we must be aware that the organization exists for people. People don't exist for the organization. Please never forget this point.

I hope that you will give your lives to being the staunchest

friends and supporters of those who are suffering or in distress. And I hope that you will cherish the Soka Gakkai, an organization of and for the people, that you will revere it, support it and work for its development. This is my heartfelt request of all of you.

Igeta: Chiharu Ota, the young women's high school division leader for the Chubu region, shared her gratitude for the Soka Gakkai. She said: "Through my activities in the Soka Gakkai, I am able to challenge my weaknesses. I feel tremendous appreciation to the organization for the simple fact that I've grown from a person who was overwhelmed by her problems into a person who is genuinely concerned about the welfare of her friends and chants for their happiness."

Kimura: Kazuhiro Kawakami, the young men's high school division leader of Fukui Prefecture [close to Kobe and Osaka] was one of the people who transported relief supplies by truck in the aftermath of the Great Hanshin Earthquake that struck Kobe, Osaka and the island of Awaji in January 1995. In response to the disaster, many youth division members worked tirelessly through the night, distributing to earthquake victims the numerous donated supplies, such as blankets and hand-warmers, that had been delivered to Soka Gakkai community centers in Kobe and Osaka from throughout Japan. That episode, Mr. Kawakami said, deeply impressed upon him the unmatched strength of the Soka Gakkai organization, a body of ordinary people united in a common cause.

Ikeda: Because those young people were united in their desire to do anything they could to help, they could make a powerful contribution. Our organization exists to mobilize such human goodness, people's desire to help and benefit others, and use it to create great value. You might say the Soka Gakkai is a body or organism that took form and came to life specifically to bring together the basic goodness of people's hearts, to further develop that goodness and strengthen it. Without the organization, there would be no cohesion or order to our efforts.

An organization dedicated to good enhances people's capacity to work for good and promotes unlimited growth and self-improvement. It does not hinder people's progress or lead them astray. It supports people's self-development, putting them on a sure course to happiness and personal

PLEASE SEE DISCUSSION, NEXT PAGE

DISCUSSION, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

growth. And it is for this purpose that our organization exists.

In that respect, the organization is a means. The end, meanwhile, is for people to become happy.

Kimura: Millions of people in Japan and throughout the world unhesitatingly state that because of the Soka Gakkai they have found a way to become genuinely happy.

Ikeda: The Soka Gakkai is a wondrous organization. There is without doubt no other realm as pure, genuine, warm and beautiful. Being young, you may be unaware of society's harsh and ugly side, and so may not fully appreciate just how great this organization really is. But let me assure you, there is none other like it.

For almost as long as our organization has existed, our members, including many of your own mothers and fathers who are practicing, have been ridiculed and insulted by arrogant people as they have worked with incredible patience and fortitude to build this great castle of the people.

There are people who criticize and attack our organization. But are they the ones who will teach others how to achieve absolute happiness? No, they are not. Those who recognized this encouraged one another to become happy and came together to help those who were suffering. And the result is the Soka Gakkai. This is a fact most solemn and sublime. The organization is the crystallization of genuine democracy, handmade by the people, for the people. It is the only body carrying out the widespread propagation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, which places the highest value on the dignity of the human being. It is the sun of hope for all humanity. That is why President Toda declared that the Soka Gakkai organization was more precious than his life. I feel exactly the same way.

Igeta: Some people have the impression that joining an organization means giving up their freedom or losing their self-identity, but the Soka Gakkai isn't like that at all.

Ikeda: Organizations that deprive people of their freedom and identity definitely do exist. They exploit people to achieve their own objectives. This is a negative aspect that organizations can have.

However, though you may dislike organizations, is remaining alone really a sign of freedom? Can you guarantee that you won't lose sight of yourself anyway? That's hard to say. Genuine freedom does not mean living self-

ishly and doing just as you please; it is traveling the correct path in life.

The Earth, for example, revolves around the sun. If it were to stray from its orbit even in the slightest, it would spell disaster. A spacecraft, if it assumes the correct course, can traverse the vast cosmos and reach its destination. This is the meaning of true freedom.

Kimura: If we depart from the proper orbit, we can wind up "lost in space."

Ikeda: That's true. Sports, too, have their own set of rules. There's a certain way of doing things. Does breaking these rules to suit your own convenience mean freedom? I don't think so. Making full use of your strength and skill while following the rules of the game is genuine freedom. To live without a goal or purpose, doing whatever you please whenever you please, makes for a reckless and self-destructive life.

Our organization is one of great human diversity. This acts as a stimulus for our personal growth. In many sports, it's hard to assess your real ability if you train or practice only by yourself. We develop and grow through contact with many other people. In Japan, the mountain potatoes known as taros are rough and dirty when harvested, but when they are placed in a basin of running water together and rolled against each other, the skin is peeled away, leaving the potatoes shining clean and ready for cooking. It's probably inappropriate to compare people to potatoes, but my point is that the only way for us to hone and polish our character is through our interactions with others.

Being on your own without having to see or think about others may seem very comfortable and hassle-free, but you'll find yourself locked in a world that is terribly small and limited. By avoiding belonging to any group or organization, you deprive yourself of contact with many people and, in the end, you are left wondering about the meaning of your existence.

A society without any organization whatsoever would be chaotic and disordered; there would be mob rule with everyone just doing as they pleased, regardless of the consequences. It would be like a ship sailing out to sea without a compass — either it will lose its way or end up wrecked.

In the realm of Buddhist practice, I urge you to find at least one trusted senior in faith with whom you feel comfortable discussing anything. President Toda gave the same advice.

Igeta: Yuko Nakaniwa, the young women's high school division leader of the Shikoku region, told me how she was nervous and afraid when she moved to Tokyo to begin her first year at a university. Her young women's division leader at that time, despite her own demanding schedule, visited her frequently. Ms. Nakaniwa said that she could talk about anything with this person and said that encounters with such seniors in faith are one of life's great treasures.

I personally will never forget the warm encouragement of my seniors in faith who were there for me when I was having a hard time struggling with university entrance exams or was facing some problem.

Ikeda: Developing personal relationships with people you can trust is important. Though we use the term *organization*, it is actually a collection of bonds among individuals. And this is the reason that the Soka Gakkai has and continues to cherish and support each member unstintingly. To forget this would lead to an organization that constrains and oppresses people.

Kimura: Some people insist that they don't need the organization to keep up their practice of Buddhism. They say they can do it on their own.

Ikeda: In reality, it's not so easy to do. And even if one could continue to practice Buddhism alone, it would amount to a self-centered practice, consisting of prayer and little action. Even if you were doing well practicing alone, for instance, what about others? How could you truly help others?

Nichiren Daishonin taught his followers to proceed in the spirit of many in body, one in mind. This was his clear guidance. True practitioners of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism are those who act in exact accord with his teachings.

In modern terms, *many in body, one in mind* means an organization. *Many in body* means that each person is different — that people differ in their appearances, standing in society, circumstances and individual missions. But as for their hearts — their hearts should be one; each person should be one in mind, united in faith.

On the other hand, with many in body, many in mind, there will be no unity of purpose. In addition, the concept of *one in body, one in mind* means that people are coerced into uniformity, made to think, look and act alike. This is akin to fascism, where people have

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS DIALOGUE

It is only natural...when we seek to achieve a great objective or to develop ourselves so that we can make great accomplishments, that some sort of organization is essential.



The organization of the Soka Gakkai emerged naturally from...the spirit to somehow encourage another person, to want to see others become happy. The Soka Gakkai didn't appear first and then become filled with people. People began forging bonds with one another, and then those ties of friendship spread, naturally giving birth to the Soka Gakkai organization.



There are people who criticize and attack our organization. But are they the ones who will teach others how to achieve absolute happiness? No, they are not.



It is the only body carrying out the widespread propagation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, which places the highest value on the dignity of the human being. It is the sun of hope for all humanity. That is why President Toda declared that the Soka Gakkai organization was more precious than his life.



In modern terms, 'many in body, one in mind' means an organization. 'Many in body' means that each person is different — that people differ in their appearances, standing in society, circumstances and individual missions. But as for their hearts — their hearts should be one; each person should be one in mind, united in faith.



Leadership positions in the organization are, after all, just a bunch of made-up titles. Faith is what is crucial. No matter what leadership position one may occupy, without faith, there will be no benefit.



Once you've been involved in planning a meeting yourself, you learn that, while it's easy to criticize, it's actually quite a challenge to hold an inspiring meeting. The most important thing is that, if you feel the organization or the meetings you're attending are boring and unproductive, you yourself make efforts to change things. The organization is a means, not an end; it is not perfect.

Photo by KIRK CONDYLES



'Developing personal relationships with people you can trust is important.'

DISCUSSION, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

no freedom; it ultimately only leads to a condition of one in body, many in mind, where people give the appearance of being united and committed to the same goal on the surface, but in reality don't go along with that goal in their hearts.

Kimura: The best kind of organization, then, is made up of members who are diverse in every way but are united in purpose toward achieving a shared lofty objective — in other words, an organization that exemplifies the spirit of many in body, one in mind.

Ikeda: Yes. *Many in body* means to allow each individual to give full play to his or her unique potential and individuality. *One in mind* means that everyone works together based on faith, sharing the same goal and purpose. This is true unity.

Many in body, one in mind can be likened to a bamboo grove where each stalk of bamboo sprouts up independently, yet their roots are firmly intertwined underground. The world of faith is the same: because we share the same "roots," because we share a common spirit and purpose, each one of us can grow limitlessly, reaching for the sky in our personal development and achievements. True unity is achieved when each person has the strength to stand alone — the conviction and fortitude to advance, even if you are the only one. Mutual dependency is not the answer.

The Earth rotates on its axis while revolving around the sun. This allows sunlight to bathe the entire planet, causing life to flourish. We, too, engage in a sort of axial rotation when we practice for ourselves by doing gongyo and chanting daimoku. Our connection and interaction with others and with society, then, constitutes our orbital revolution, like that of the Earth around the sun. The Earth's axial rotation and its revolution around the sun are interrelated. This is a universal law.

The function of our organization is similarly to enable us to support and encourage one another so that we each maintain the "axial rotation" of our personal practice and our broader "orbital revolution" of working with and for others, thus never veering from the proper orbit in life.

Igeta: It's sad to think that in our wonderful organization there are still people, including leaders, who stop practicing.

Ikeda: I hope all of you will surpass those seniors in our movement who have turned cowardly, lost their faith and betrayed the trust of members. Other people are other people; you are you. The important thing is for you to grow into a fine person yourself, never letting yourself be influenced by those who would turn their backs on their fellow members.

Even in the Daishonin's time, numerous followers abandoned their faith, and after his death, too, many priests practicing under Nikko Shonin, his direct successor, also abandoned the Daishonin's teachings. Even those who were revered by lay believers as venerable priests discarded their faith.

In the Soka Gakkai, as well, most of the leaders were quick to give up their faith when President Makiguchi was imprisoned for speaking out against Japanese militarism during World War II. And even during President Toda's day, there were many members who simply quit their practice because they were worried about the negative reputation the Soka Gakkai was gaining due to its broad and rapid development.

Those who persevere in their Buddhist practice throughout their lives are true followers of Nichiren Daishonin. Those who embrace the Gohonzon and never abandon their practice no matter what difficulties lie ahead are the Daishonin's genuine disciples. This describes perfectly the members of the Soka Gakkai.

Compared to the past, people in

society today have grown very self-centered, irresponsible and undisciplined. To maintain a steadfast commitment to one's Buddhist practice in this directionless age is truly noble.

There are some who gave up their practice, influenced by the barrage of abuse and criticism hurled at our organization. But Nichiren Daishonin declared that our faith mustn't be like fire, flaring up one moment and burning out the next, but rather it should be like flowing water, moving forward unceasingly (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 250). What's important is having faith strong enough to continue chanting daimoku and advancing toward kosen-rufu, no matter what our environment, circumstances or the conditions of society.

Igeta: One student said that she was extremely disappointed when she met certain senior leaders who were very arrogant and full of their own self-importance.

Ikeda: President Toda fiercely scolded arrogant leaders and those who tried to use the Soka Gakkai for personal gain or gratification. He said that leaders should think of themselves as the members' servants and that arrogant or haughty leaders ought to be expelled from the organization.

Leaders are there to serve the members. It is their job to work for the members' happiness. A leader who has forgotten this responsibility has already lost the vital spark of faith and is headed on a downward spiral toward abandoning his or her practice altogether.

The Soka Gakkai is not about vertical relationships between leaders and members. A leader is merely one who takes responsibility and plays a central role in keeping things together.

Leadership positions in the organization are, after all, just a bunch of made-up titles. Faith is what is crucial. No matter what leadership position one may occupy, without faith, there will be no benefit. It is the same as quitting one's practice. Such leaders are simply taking advantage of the Soka Gakkai and the members' sincere faith. The Daishonin would surely condemn such a person.

Igeta: What would you say to someone who asks if it's necessary to attend meetings that are clearly being held out of formality as opposed to meetings that have real substance and value?

Ikeda: I feel sorry for all those who attend meetings that lack sub-



Josei Toda, the Soka Gakkai's second president.

40th Anniversary of Josei Toda's Death

On April 2, the 40th anniversary of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's death, memorial gongyo services were held at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters and at centers around the world. To commemorate this significant anniversary, SGI President Ikeda composed three poems.

For 40 years
Since my noble mentor's passing,
I have continued my struggle
Without rest.

*

With an indelible memory
Of my mentor's boundless compassion
Deep in my heart,
I hold high the jeweled sword
Of kosen-rufu.

*

Razing the ramparts of evil,
My gaze ever on my mentor,
I vow to achieve eternal triumph.

April 2

stance or are led by a complacent or overbearing central figure. The responsibility for that, of course, rests on the shoulders of those involved in the planning and preparation of the meeting.

However, it's important to remember that everything is up to you. If you are determined to absorb everything you can, you will most likely learn something from any meeting you attend. If you were to make the effort to attend a meeting but return home without having gained a thing, that would be your loss.

In addition, once you've been involved in planning a meeting

yourself, you learn that, while it's easy to criticize, it's a challenge to hold an inspiring meeting. The most important thing is that, if you feel the organization or the meetings you're attending are boring and unproductive, you yourself make efforts to change things. The organization is a means, not an end; it is not perfect.

In the early years of my practice, I wasn't happy with the Soka Gakkai organization. Back then, we weren't particularly cultural or involved in any cultural activities, and I just couldn't bring myself to

PLEASE SEE DISCUSSION, NEXT PAGE

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like the organization as it was. Sensing this, President Toda said to me: "If that's how you feel, then why don't you create an organization that you truly like? Work hard and devote yourself earnestly to building the ideal organization through your own effort!"

Igeta: That's so inspiring!

Kimura: I can sense President Toda's great broad-mindedness in encouraging you in such a way. It is so impressive to see how you immediately set about putting his suggestion into practice.

Igeta: Since this Buddhism teaches the importance of having a stand-alone spirit, I guess we should each do our best to try to change things for the better.

Ikeda: This also applies to your stance in organizations such as your school or family. As a member of the organization known as school, you need to be committed to making it a better place. As a member of the organization that is your family, you need to make efforts to create the best possible environment. That spirit is vital.

It is also common sense, and Buddhism accords with common sense. The correct way to practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is to have the attitude that "I will be the driving force for change!"

Our organization dedicated to kosen-rufu was created so that we can deepen our understanding of the Daishonin's teachings and also share it with others.

Igeta: There are many students who say that they would like to tell their close friends about their Buddhist practice but aren't sure how they should go about it.

Ikeda: Just do what comes naturally. Religious freedom belongs to everyone, and no one can prevent us from talking about faith with others if we want to.

We have to keep in mind, however, that there is an appropriate time for everything. If you sat down to a formal dinner, for example, and were immediately served the main course, you might be a little surprised, since it's usually customary to serve an appetizer or salad first. When you visit someone's home, you don't just barge into the house; you wait until the host opens the door and invites you in.

Similarly, if you wish to talk to someone about Buddhism, there is a proper way to go about it. To friends, you might say something like: "I practice Buddhism. It's a profound philosophy that teaches

us many important things, such as the nature of life and the universe. Through Buddhism, you can come to understand things that are not taught in school, things that are more fundamental and profound. It is a philosophy that has deep value and significance for our lives. Would you like to talk about this life philosophy of Buddhism sometime? Or would you like to read about it?" Even if they say they're not interested, through you they have made a connection to this Buddhism and will surely come across it again. We should use the same natural approach when encouraging our fellow members.

There's no need to be impatient. Faith is a lifelong process, spanning the three existences of past, present and future. What's important is to make plenty of friends and work at solidifying those relationships. Introducing others to Buddhism and striving for kosen-rufu are extensions of the spirit of friendship that wishes to see those we care about become happy.

Kimura: Some students say that they're apprehensive about sharing Buddhism with others because they don't want their present condition or circumstances to give a negative impression of the Soka Gakkai. They want to wait until they've fixed up their lives or become shining models of faith.

Ikeda: It's up to the individual. Just as these students seem to recognize, the main thing is to show actual proof of faith in one's daily life. But that doesn't mean that you should pretend to be something that you're not. It's perfectly fine for you to speak about Buddhism from the heart, in your own words, in a very natural way, just as you are. The purpose of faith is not to make yourself look good in the eyes of others. To have compassion for others means sincerely praying and working for others' happiness, no matter how they may regard you. They may not appreciate your sincerity at the time, but if you are genuine in your efforts, at some point they are bound to recall the friend who once encouraged them or who helped them through a difficult time. Surely this is a most worthy way to live.

Kimura: Some students have said that they are so busy with their studies and extracurricular activities that they don't have time to participate in Gakkai high school division activities.

Igeta: There are also some students who are busy with part-time jobs to pay for their school tuition.

Ikeda: All of these things are important. The challenge is to work hard and try to do the best you can in each of them. If everything were easy, there would be no challenge. The greater the challenge, the greater our exhilaration and sense of accomplishment when we succeed. By striving to do our best, we can become winners; we can become people of great substance. When plants are exposed to strong winds, their roots grow deeper. Everything works this way. Without challenges, we would grow lazy and decadent; our lives would be empty and barren. And emptiness means unhappiness.

Igeta: Some students believe that because study should be their main priority at this time in their lives,

and engage in faith-related activities, if you do not challenge yourself in your studies, you will be like a stalled car that is going nowhere.

Simply put, for those of you who are students, faith is your foundation and study is your priority.

Kimura: So, while basing our lives on faith, it's vital that we work hard in our studies.

Ikeda: Yes. And what is the purpose of study? It's to enable us to gain some practical ability or knowledge so that we can contribute to society and to the happiness and welfare of many people. What's the purpose of faith? It's so that each of us can become truly happy and enable others to do the

have worked with a powerful resolve to help those they have some connection with become truly happy. I hope you will always remember this spirit of the Soka Gakkai.

Perhaps when you were younger, your parents went off to do activities for kosen-rufu while you stayed at home, and you felt lonely. I'm sure your parents would have found it much more relaxing to stay at home with you. Instead, feeling it would be selfish to think only of their own and their family's happiness and comfort and ignore others' suffering, they were always out working tirelessly to spread the Daishonin's teachings. A mature person is someone who can understand and appreciate this fact.



Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

'Our organization dedicated to kosen-rufu was created so that we can deepen our understanding of the Daishonin's teachings and also share it with others,' SGI President Ikeda says.

it isn't necessary to exert themselves in faith. But I don't think that's true, is it?

Ikeda: What is important — study or faith? The answer is both. They are important in different ways. Faith is our very foundation, our roots. From the roots grow a trunk, branches, leaves and flowers — these represent the various activities of human life. For all of you, the members of the high school division, your studies are your trunk — your first priority. Everything else — the branches and so on — comes next.

Faith is the engine that powers our growth throughout life. But without making concrete efforts to advance, that engine won't work. For students, advancement means studying. Even if you chant

same. Faith is the driving force that lets us apply what we gain from our studies to genuinely serving people.

Simply becoming university professors or lawyers does not automatically make people great or worthy of respect. The question is what have they done since acquiring that position; how much have they helped others?

A great person is someone who encourages many people and helps them become happy. In this sense, those who are playing an active role in the Soka Gakkai for the realization of kosen-rufu are the most honorable of all. Those of your parents who are devoting themselves to this cause are far more respectable than any famous celebrity or political leader. The members of our organization

My dream is that all of you will enjoy a brilliant future, playing leading roles in all fields of society and throughout the world and fully revealing your potential.

That said, however, if you only seek and gain fame and status, you will be no different than the leaders the world has seen until today. Therefore, it's crucial that you become leaders who possess the spirit to do whatever they can to serve the people. When our world is illuminated by vast constellations of such outstanding, humanistic leaders, the time of kosen-rufu will have arrived. That will be an ideal society. The only way to truly develop this spirit is through faith — by perfecting yourselves and honing your character within the organization of the Soka Gakkai.

Take Steps Against Child Labor

AFP PHOTO/SAEED KHAN

By AILEEN SMEDY

LOS ANGELES CORRESPONDENT

It's estimated that 250 million children around the world are forced to work in factories, mines, prostitution, domestic work and agriculture every day. Some are sold by their families while others are abducted and forced into servitude. Some are as young as 5.

In June, representatives from almost every country in the world will convene in Geneva for the International Labor Organization's Summit on Child Labor.

The intent of the ILO's conference is to write and adopt new international laws to eliminate the most extreme forms of child labor. To attract attention to this issue, the Global March Against Child Labor began in the Philippines on Jan. 17. A core group of marchers, including children, human rights activists, celebrities and several former child workers, are simultaneously making their way across four continents — Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas — before meeting in Geneva.

What began as a group of 27 people from 17 countries in February last year has grown to a coalition of more than 800 major human rights and social organizations, trade unions and NGOs in 99 countries representing well over 200 million people. Many heads of state and government officials have welcomed the march, and local residents have turned out to join marchers along the way.

"The response has been overwhelming," said Pharis Harvey of the International Labor Rights Fund, one of the founding organizations. "Once you talk with people, you find that they are desperate to find something better for their children."

Most people are against child

labor, and most countries have laws protecting children. The problem, however, exists in the enforcement of these laws. "In Indonesia, for example," said Harvey, "it's illegal for children under age 15 to work, except if they come from poor families. That's the loophole, the rich don't send their children to work."

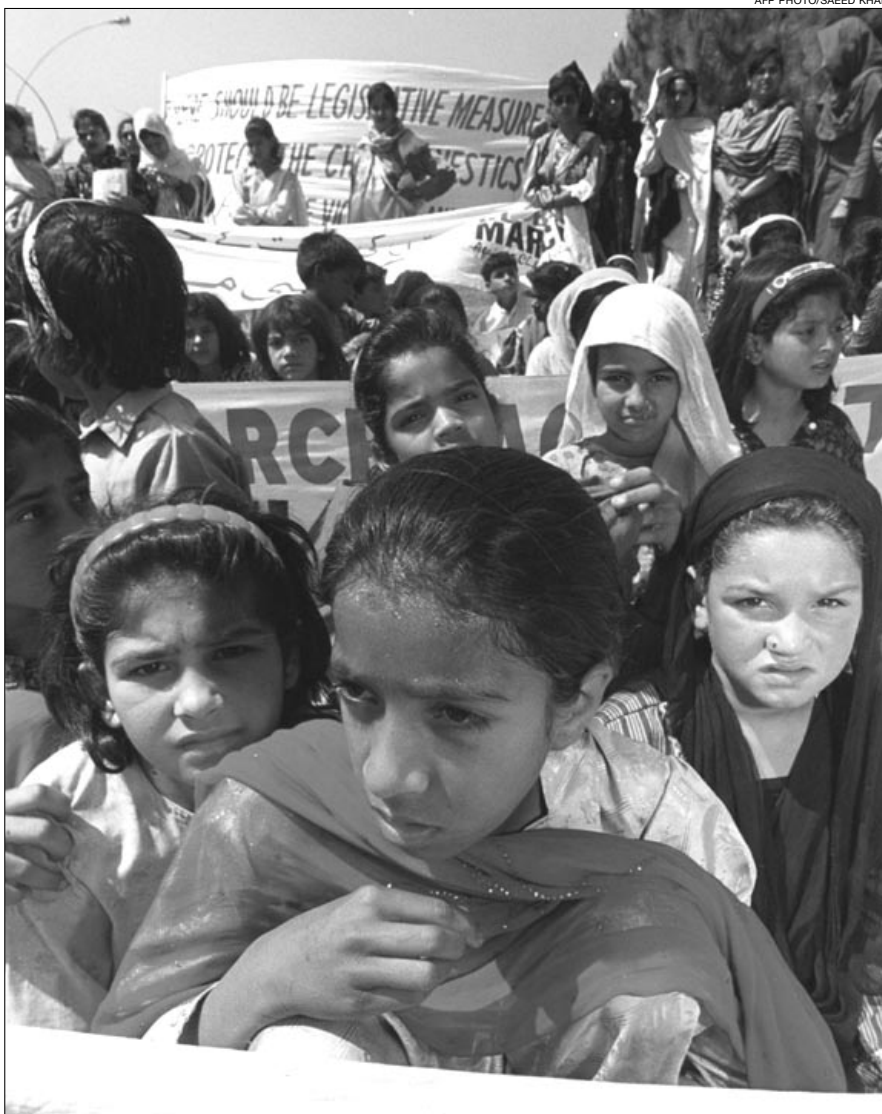
The marchers have been speaking to local groups, addressing the media, rallying, and even running as they did last month in Beaufort West,

South Africa. Said one reporter, "The energy and vitality of the children was visible and seemed to be infectious as the elders joined in the run as well." In the town of Mendoza, Argentina, marchers were honored with the title Illustrious Visitors upon their arrival. Communities along the route have welcomed the marchers with concerts, plays and traditional dances.

The march will enter the United States on May 2 in Los Angeles, then continue across the country to Washington, D.C., before leaving for Geneva on May 28. For those too young or unable to march, but who want to support, the Kids Campaign To Build A School for Iqbal and the Robert F. Kennedy Center are hosting a Young People's Online March Against Child Labor. They hope to get 3,000 online messages against child labor collected to represent a symbolic 3,000-mile march across the United States. Already they have received more than 2,000 messages.

The address to walk a virtual mile against child labor is <http://www.globalmarch-us.org>. The international Web site with updates and locations is located at <http://www.globalmarch.org>. ☐

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

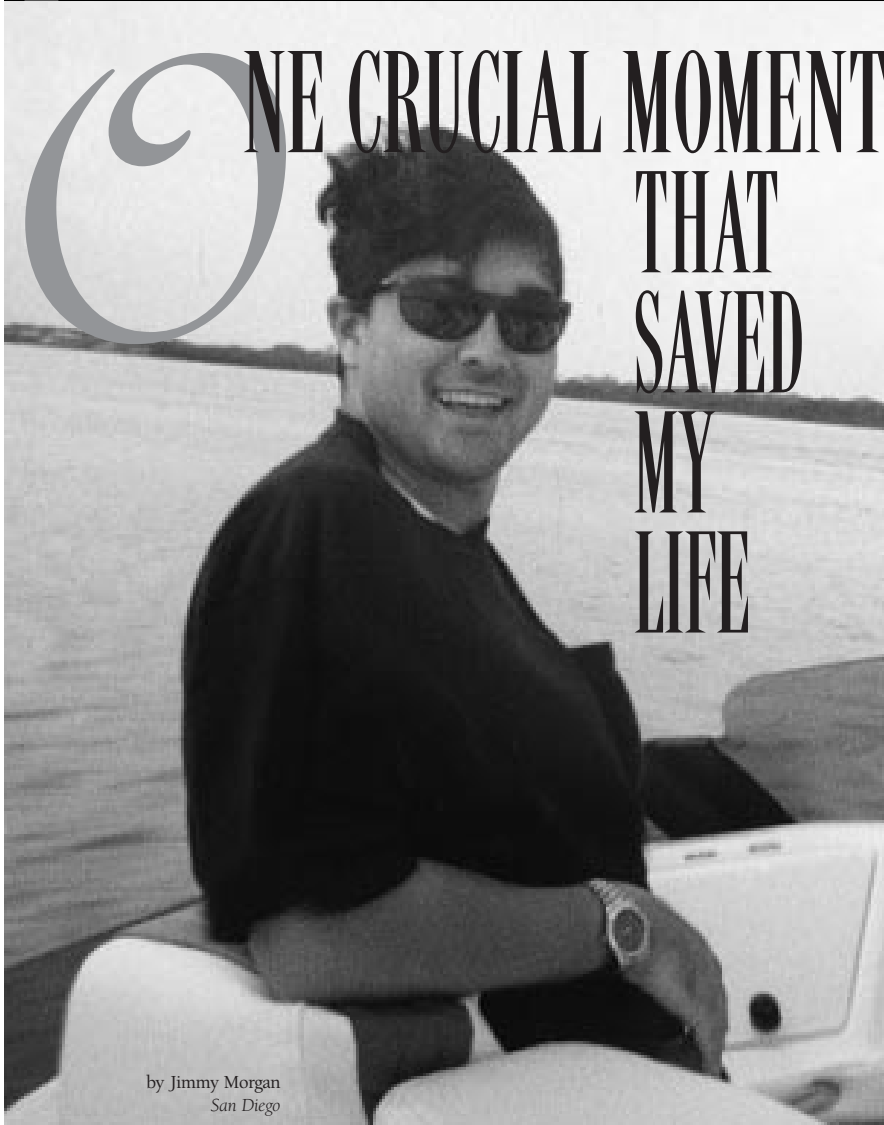


Children belonging to poor neighborhoods of Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, sit in the open after a march against child labor, April 13. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) organized the march in connection with the Global March Against Child Labor. Similar marches are happening simultaneously on every continent.

'Once you talk with people, you find that they are desperate to find something better for their children.' — Pharis Harvey, International Labor Rights Fund

COMING NEXT WEEK:

The Boys & Girls Group's 'Friends for Peace'



by Jimmy Morgan
San Diego

**ONE CRUCIAL MOMENT
THAT
SAVED
MY
LIFE**

I was very young (about 3) when my parents joined the SGI, so I have always been around the organization and Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. This made it difficult for me to practice. I had, of course, always been involved in activities, but I didn't really understand this practice and my faith until one crucial moment.

From the early 1990s, I quit practicing for about five years, thinking that the practice was a crutch, that I would never practice again. Never. I didn't realize that all the good fortune I had was due in large part to my parents' sincere

practice. I had even begun to dislike my mother, feeling I was not important to her, that I was secondary to Buddhism.

There had been periods of my life where I felt low-down and depressed, and now it got so low that at some points I wanted nothing more than to end it all. When I was 18, I took my gun — a .44 Magnum Smith & Wesson — loaded it with bullets, put the barrel in my mouth, cocked the hammer and began to pull the trigger. For some reason, I couldn't pull it; it wouldn't move. So I put it away and continued suffering in my daily life.

And there were other times I tried to end everything. Once,

I had broken up with a long-time girlfriend and bought two bottles of sleeping pills. I was laying in bed, holding the contents of both bottles in my hands, getting ready to wash them down, when I realized that I had no water. I didn't want to get up, so I canceled my suicide. When we broke up again, I tried again to end my life with sleeping pills but, again, forgot the water.

This time was really the end of that relationship, so the next day I met a new girl — and married her two weeks later. I had still not figured out just what I was doing or why. Well, two years and a child later, I couldn't handle what I

had gotten myself into. I left my wife and became so lonely and sad that I decided again to kill myself. I figured I had to be good at it by now, since I had had a lot of practice. Well, I went to the store and bought some sleeping pills, the kind that come in bubble sheets. Removing the pills, I got tired of it and went to sleep. Too lazy. I failed to do it again.

When I woke up that time, I realized I needed help and began psychological therapy. One month into therapy, my doctor told me that I had been in a deep depression probably since I was 5. He wanted me to start taking a medicine called Paxil, which chemically shuts off all your intense emotions. You become like a robot, handling all issues and problems with computerlike logic. It keeps you from feeling too sad, but also keeps you from feeling too happy. I was on this medicine for about seven months and was supposed to continue for at least another year when I missed a dosage, then another and then decided to stop.

I immediately fell into a deep depression. Thoughts of suicide returned threefold. At that crucial moment, though, I got my prayer beads out of mothballs and went to the community center. I sat in front of the Gohonzon and chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo for 15 minutes. When I finished, I thought to myself: "I feel good. I actually feel happy."

No matter how much therapy I did, no matter what actions I took without the Gohonzon, nothing compared to the feeling I got when I chanted. So I began practicing again, receiving the Gohonzon on Oct. 12, 1997, and have not looked back since. I still face depression sometimes, but now I'm winning. Best of all, my mom and I are now good friends, practicing joyfully together and eating good food together all the time. ♪



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

- SGI President Ikeda's newest speeches and most recent activities.
- 'Discussions on Youth,' a dialogue among the SGI president and young leaders on topics of interest to youth.
- *The New Human Revolution*, the SGI president's serialized history of the SGI.
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SEIZE the DAY

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

— SGI President Ikeda, Aug. 17, 1997.

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

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

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

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



LONG LIVE THE YOUTH DIVISION!

Thank you for being a part of March 16! Across the country, 12,500 youth participated in the March commemorative meetings, including 4,000 guests. The youth division thus surpassed its goal of having an attendance of 10,000. Congratulations to everyone. SGI President Ikeda, in his March 16 message, said:

I ask that each of you, the young leaders of the new century, please realize that now is the time to develop yourself. So please journey boldly along your chosen course of magnificent

humanism, surmounting all billows and swells so that you may establish the immortal castle of happiness in your heart.

The dawn of the 21st century is now at hand. Filled with infinite hope for the success and victory of each of you upon whose shoulders rests the mission of worldwide kosen-rufu, I am cheering you on and sending you my utmost support. I am also praying from the bottom of my heart for all of you to live each day in excellent health and advance valiantly toward kosen-rufu.

May there be glory upon the youth division of the world! Long live the youth division of the world!



TEMPLE TRENDS

HOW U.S. PRIESTS EXPLAIN THE NEW GRAND RECEPTION HALL

By JEFF FARR SGI-USA Student Division Leader

April 2-8, about 60 U.S. temple members participated in a pilgrimage to the head temple. News that the Dai-Gohonzon was transferred during this time has overshadowed news that this pilgrimage celebrated the opening of the new Grand Reception Hall, replacing the original Grand Reception Hall, which was recently demolished by the priesthood. The original facility was donated by 1.4 million Soka Gakkai members worldwide, including many American members, in 1964.

What the U.S. priests have been telling temple and SGI-USA members about the reasons for the hall's demolition is far from the truth. They continually cite structural problems, which has been their line of reasoning ever since Nikken announced the demolition in August

1995. Architects and seismic experts, however, protested his decision, sharing extensive evidence that the Grand Reception Hall was sound. The U.S. priests have also been saying that the original hall didn't look enough like a temple, that it was an inappropriate facility for the high priest to hold meetings in. Perhaps this is a reflection of the priesthood's emphasis on Buddhist traditions and formalities that have little to do with Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

The main pilgrimage this year for U.S. temple members will be Aug. 19-24. Nikken is calling this the 2nd Overseas Believers General Pilgrimage. The six temples in the United States have, since the beginning of the year, been heavily promoting participation in this August trip.



By GREG MARTIN
SGI-USA Study Department Vice Leader

BE WARY

of Those Who Reject Open Dialogue

same. It is the substance of one's doctrinal position that should be critically examined, not the formality of the person's position in the world.

So a good teacher can be anyone. We can say that a disciple who has faith in, studies and teaches the Daishonin's Buddhism is a true priest.

This might seem confusing since I've previously talked about how the Daishonin says that the enemies of the Lotus Sutra appear as priests. If ordinary people can be considered priests, can they also then become enemies of the Lotus Sutra? Yes, if they become what the Daishonin calls false priests — if their words and behavior violate the teachings. We each have the potential, then, to become Buddhism's enemies.

This is why the Daishonin encourages us to follow the Law, not the person. At the

same time, the Law does not teach itself. Thus, in deciding between a good teacher of the Law and a bad teacher of the Law, it is the Law that is the standard.

The Japanese term for priest, so, comes from the Sanskrit word *sangha*, which means a gathering or a Buddhist order. Today it means the harmonious gathering of people who uphold and spread the Daishonin's Buddhism, who lead others to happiness and realize peace.

“Because you asked me to specify which teachers were in error, I mentioned those whose teachings contradict the sutras and treatises. But now you suddenly have reservations and refuse to discuss the matter. I think that you merely perceive your own dilemma. In matters of doctrine, to fear oth-

ers or stand in awe of society's opinion, and not expound the true meaning of the scriptural passages in accordance with the Buddha's teaching, is the height of foolishness. You do not appear to be a wise man. As a priest, how can you not speak out when evil doctrines spread throughout the land, when the people fall into the evil paths and the country stands on the brink of ruin? That is why the Lotus Sutra reads, ‘We do not hold our own lives dear,’ and the Nirvana Sutra says, ‘...even though it may cost him his life.’ If you are a true sage, how can you begrudge your life in fear of the world or other people?” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, pp. 213–14)

nin reveals something interesting. He wonders if the knowledge of Buddhism's strict requirement to be consistent with the sutras hasn't placed the person he's talking to in this letter in a dilemma. If the individual continues this debate, he may already know that he will be defeated. Therefore, he may choose not to discuss the matter rather than risk exposure; he may decide to discontinue the debate altogether. Here the Daishonin warns us to be wary of the motives of those who reject open dialogue. Perhaps, he suggests, they already know that they cannot win. The Nichiren Shoshu priesthood's consistent refusal to discuss matters with SGI leaders certainly becomes suspect in light of this guidance.

This quote from the Daisho-

Four in a series

Obedience, Subservience and Groupthink

Thoughts on a Religious Revolution

By LISA JONES
Los Angeles

I don't like being told what to do or how to be. Friends of mine who know how contrary I am think it's odd that I practice a religion. They, like many people, feel that religion is about obedience, subservience and groupthink. But if they knew what a rebel Nichiren Daishonin was, how radically emancipative his teachings are, they'd probably feel different.

The Daishonin wrote, “If you wish to free yourself from

the sufferings of birth and death you have endured through eternity and attain supreme enlightenment in this lifetime, you must awaken to the mystic truth which has always been within your life” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 3). Consider: “If you wish to” — you're not obligated to; “free yourself” — this is the goal; “you must awaken” — he doesn't say, “You must obey” or “You must become someone you're not” or “You must

rely on someone or something outside yourself for salvation.” If we wish to free ourselves, we must awaken.

That's my kind of religion. Some people, though, don't reject religion so much as they reject religious organizations. They feel that organizations demand conformity and thus curb freedom. This is one of the pitfalls of all groups, be they churches, corporations or government agencies. One thing that's revolutionary about the SGI

is the unofficial motto of its youth: “If you don't like the organization, change it.” Most groups, though, like Nichiren Shoshu, take a love-it-or-leave-us stance.

To which I can only say...bye.

Two in a series



THE SUMMER OF YOUTH

AT THE FLORIDA NATURE AND CULTURE CENTER

The summer of youth had come. The golden sun rose in the sky, casting off the rainy season's gray. Bright, fluffy white clouds floated in the blue sky, and the fresh green of the trees glistened luxuriant in the sunlight.

— *SGJ* President Ikeda
The New Human Revolution, volume 6

The youth division invites you to attend one of our five great conferences this summer at the FNCC. Refresh your faith over a long weekend at the beautiful FNCC campus right in the Everglades.

Last summer, 685 youth from across the country enjoyed the youth conferences — this summer there are 900 spaces available!



Young Men's Division Conference

Ensuring Victory: The 2nd YMD Leadership Conference
THURSDAY–SUNDAY, JULY 9–12
Contact your local YMD leaders

Young Women's Division Conference

Seize the Day: The 2nd YWD Conference
THURSDAY–SUNDAY, JULY 16–19
Contact your local YWD leaders

Junior High and High School Division Conference

The 3rd Junior High and High School Division Leadership Conference
THURSDAY–SUNDAY, JULY 23–26
Contact your local junior high and high school division leaders

Student Division Conference

Student Fest '98: Dreams Into Reality
THURSDAY–SUNDAY, AUG. 6–9
Contact your local student or youth division leaders

Youth Music Groups Conference

Vanguards of Kosen-rufu: The 3rd Nationwide Music Groups Conference
THURSDAY–SUNDAY, AUG. 13–16
Contact your local Fife and Drum Corps, Music Corps and Youth Band leaders

The land package price for each conference is \$375 (airfare not included). This covers sleeping accommodations for three nights (with assigned roommate); all meals from Thursday dinner through Sunday lunch; ground transportation to and from the Fort Lauderdale and Miami International airports (within a specified time frame); bus tour (admission fees not included); and conference instructional and study materials. Payment must be made at least two weeks prior to each conference start date.

AND DON'T FORGET! Coming this November — the Youth Support Groups Conference (Nov. 19–22). Contact your local Byakuren, Soka Group and Gajokai leaders for more information.