

EXPERIENCE

What if you chant with all your heart for something and it doesn't happen? Doris McCloskey faces a crisis of 'no faith.'

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FEATURE

Follow our photo editor on a snapshot tour of the California AIDS Ride — a 560-mile bike ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles — in 'The Ride of Her Life.'

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No. 3198

July 3, 1998

Newspapers Shape the Age

In remembering how the 'Seikyo Shimbun' got its start, SGI President Ikeda talks about the power of the printed word through newspapers. They belong to the people, he says — newspapers should be the conscience of world society.

By HO GOKU

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S PEN NAME

Newspapers shape the age. Newspapers crush evil. Newspapers rouse courage.

Napoleon declared that it was not Voltaire or Rousseau who brought an end to the old regime; newspapers did it. Victor Hugo said that without newspapers, the French Revolution would never have occurred. In any age where people come to the fore, you will find newspapers providing the impetus.

"Let's start a newspaper, a Soka Gakkai organ. We are en-

tering an age of mass media."

Mr. Toda said this to me with great determination in December 1950, a time when his business was in serious financial circumstances. We were sitting in a little restaurant near Shim-bashi Station in Tokyo. Despite the personal troubles that beset him, he was always thinking of the future of kosen-rufu.

Then, one cold night in February 1951, he said to me: "Let's get started on the newspaper now. I'll be the president, and you be the vice president. Let's give this our all!"

I will never forget his brave countenance as he asked me to accept this new challenge.

PLEASE SEE ESSAY, 5



Poems to America

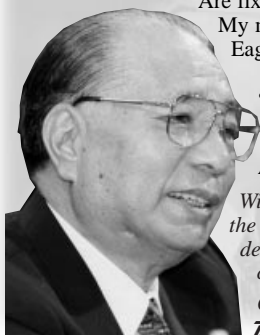
• The eyes of the whole world
Are fixed upon you,
My magnificent American friends,
Eager to see your splendid work.

• Forge your solidarity
And advance in triumph,
Creating in America
A paradise of benefit and victory.

*With my palms together in prayer for
the excellent health and successful en-
deavors of my supremely beloved,
cherished American friends.*

On the morning of June 17

Daisaku



RETURN POSTAGE
GUARANTEED

POEM

In a special poem to the world's youth, SGI President Ikeda commemorates July 3, Day of Mentor and Disciple.

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STUDY

Leigh Kennicott explores the significance of the 'World Tribune' as it marks its 34th anniversary.

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CHILDREN

This month's 'Friends for Peace' pullout section features experiences from the Boys and Girls Group.

pullout section

Hitting the Wall

By LISA JONES

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

To put this simply, if one strikes at the air, his fist will not hurt, but when he hits a rock, he feels pain. ("Letter to the Brothers," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 133)

Committing a serious misdeed is like striking at thin air, Nichiren Daishonin says. But abandoning your faith in the Lotus Sutra is like hitting a rock. This passage has personal significance for me... For the past six years, I've been struggling with a mortgage. For me, condo ownership has involved a fire, a lawsuit, a stint in tax default, a discovery that my deed was invalid and more — one battle after another. In January,



In My Life

NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS IN ACTION

when my new job brought with it a steep drop in my income, my first impulse was to sell everything and go live in a tent. But I pledged, "I will fight to keep my home."

About a month ago, I started to re-finance the place. Nothing related to the word *finance* goes smoothly for me, despite my years of chanting about it. This re-fi stirred up all my anxieties and amplified my years of financial frustration. I was convinced: "I'll never win! I'm actual proof of failure!" Then I punched one of my walls. (I was desperate to break through *something*.) The wall was fine. The knuckles of my right pinkie and ring finger, however, swelled up like blue walnut shells. As I cradled my throbbing hand, I realized that my biggest problem was that I had no faith that my prayers would ever be answered.

But prayers, like punches, aren't ethereal. Rather, each Nam-myohorenge-kyo I chant has a solid impact, and, eventually, a visible consequence. As the days passed, streaks of purple and blue seeped up my fingers and across the back of my hand. My bruise turned red, pink, then yellow, like a sunrise, as it healed. I came to see it as the mark of a hard-won lesson in faith: Don't flip yourself out with worry. Just continue chanting wholeheartedly to fulfill your great expectations.

Otherwise, well... It hurts. Anyway, my re-fi was subsequently approved without further trauma. ☐

Submitting to the System

STANDS TO REASON

LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM THE WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN

By JEFF FARR

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Life itself is the most precious of all treasures. Even the treasures of the entire universe cannot equal the value of a single human life. ("The Gift of Rice," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 267)

We don't know when or to whom Nichiren Daishonin wrote this letter, but we do know that the recipient sent him the simplest of gifts — some rice. "I have received the sack of rice..." the Daishonin begins (MW-1, 267). It wasn't easy living on Mount Minobu, and the Daishonin appreciated gifts like this, plain as they were, with all his heart.

Perhaps Minobu wasn't the best place for the Daishonin to have retired: It was very cold; there was little food; it was far away from everything.

All this harshness made a dramatic backdrop to the close relationships that developed between the Daishonin and

disciples who lived great distances away. They knew that his living situation was much worse than theirs, that all his letters were written amid the most trying circumstances, the most intense struggles. They knew how genuine was his appreciation.

In this letter, the Daishonin starts with a close-up on this precious gift of rice and then zooms out to show what he considered most precious of all: human life. "Even the treasures of the entire universe cannot equal the value of a single human life" — the Daishonin valued individuals one by one. More than anything else.

This was the Buddhist teaching, he believed.

The SGI's and the temple's interpretations of the Daishonin's humanism clash, though. The temple says that integral to his humanism is the sharp distinction he supposedly makes between priests and lay believers. The temple pamphlet *100 Questions and Answers* (Question No. 32) claims that: 1) Nichiren Shoshu agrees with the idea that all people are equal; 2) but maintains that some people, namely lay people, just have heavier karma than "others," namely priests.

It is a form of retribution to be an ordinary believer, an ordinary person.

"Even the treasures of the entire universe cannot equal the value of a single priestly life," the priests want to say. How convenient for them!

To truly value human beings, one by one, means to do away with any notions of hierarchy. There is no system of ranking into which people can be placed. Any ranking is based on something completely imaginary.

Perhaps today's society operates by creating distinctions among people — in this century, many a power broker has encouraged the formation of classes and other distinct groups in society so as to set himself atop them. If the people are so divided, there's less chance that they'll unite. That makes it easier for the powerful to keep the power.

The Daishonin was against this system. If he thought that people should be ranked and divided, he would have said so. He always said things straight.

It's amazing that people submit themselves willingly to the temple's ranking, ostensibly accepting the brand of inferiority. The priesthood says that visiting the head temple this August for the overseas believers pilgrimage is a great chance to see the Dai-Gohonzon, but it's a trap: To see the Dai-Gohonzon, you have to get with this program; you have to purposefully disrespect the Daishonin's spirit with which he inscribed the Dai-Gohonzon and purposefully disrespect yourself.

"I am inferior," you have to say. Isn't it sad that people want to do this?

Thirteen in a series

AUG. 15, 1964: THE FIRST 'WORLD TRIBUNE'

New Ideas Dancing in My Head

SIGNIFICANT DATES

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

By LEIGH KENNICOTT

LOS ANGELES

On a hot night almost 30 years ago, in August 1969, I volunteered to proof-read the *World Tribune* at the plant on Second Ave. in Los Angeles.

It happened to be the Aug. 15 issue celebrating the fifth anniversary of publication.

Staff member Joanne Murad showed me the ropes and told me of the newspaper's purpose: to serve as a diary of kosen-rufu in America, recording the events, dreams and accomplishments of individual members and providing them with clear and concise explanations of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

As I read the paper, Mrs. Murad and I discussed the viability of words or phrases, which led to deeper philosophical discussions that lasted into the night.

I left at 1:00 in the morning, exhilarated from the many new ideas dancing in my head.

As we celebrate the 34th anniversary of the *World Tribune's* founding — on Aug. 15, 1964 — it's a time to reflect on the maturation of the SGI movement for peace in the world as seen through our newspaper.

Former editor-in-chief George M. Williams recalls that SGI President Ikeda first suggested the newspaper in May 1964 while visiting Australia en route to India and Sri Lanka: "President Ikeda said the timing was right for an English-language publication in the United States as a vehicle to educate the people on the importance of kosen-rufu, the meaning and greatness of Buddhism, and the greatness of the Gohonzon," Mr. Williams said. President Ikeda was even involved in deciding on the name *World Tribune*, which indicated the newspaper's purpose to serve as a champion of the world's people.

The first issue was produced on the significant anniversary of the cessation of hostilities with Japan that ended World War II, another indication of the newspaper's function to unite people everywhere to the common cause of peace.

Printed as a four-page tabloid and set in old-style hot type, the newspaper had a first run of 3,000 copies. In his message for the first issue, President Ikeda expressed his wish that the *World Tribune* would grow to be the greatest newspaper in the world.

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the *World Tribune* and its 3,000th issue in 1994, President Ikeda said: "The number 3,000 is profoundly significant in light of Buddhism.... The figure 3,000...denotes the entire world and universe as they appear in the Buddhist term 3,000 worlds."

In the last several years, the *World Tribune* has taken giant steps in transforming itself into a true newspaper for the common people. With a variety of pages and special features, it has strived to become a newspaper that celebrates diversity, recognizes accomplishments both in and outside of the organization, and transcends differences in age, language and region.

Responding to the voices of people, the *World Tribune* continues, as President Ikeda described, "our challenge...to harmonize strictness toward the Law with a tolerance toward humanity." ☐

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



On his first trip to the SGI headquarters in Seoul, President Ikeda unveils a statue of Gandhi. 'Armed only with the power of the written word, [Gandhi] walked the length and breadth of India to lay the foundation of peace,' he said.

'A Truly Monumental Figure'

SGI President Ikeda speaks on Gandhi as a statue of the Indian leader is unveiled. In his last years, Gandhi revered the Lotus Sutra and is said to have found in it 'the universal spiritual home of humankind.'

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER

On May 18, at the SGI headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, SGI President Ikeda attended the unveiling of a statue of Mahatma Gandhi depicted in trademark dhoti and shawl and walking resolutely with stave in hand. In his remarks, the SGI leader said:

"Gandhi waged his struggle through a commitment to non-violence. Armed only with the power of the written and spoken word, he walked the length and

breadth of the vast land of India in order to lay the foundations for peace.

"Shakyamuni Buddha also traveled on foot throughout the land until the last moment of his life. All of you, too, have been venturing forth tirelessly for the sake of peace.

"This is a statue of Gandhi walking. May you look at it and think: 'Yes, Gandhi was active and traveling the country even in his old age. I'm going to do my best, too.'

"I hope it will serve as such a

bright source of hope and inspiration. Gandhi stands as a truly monumental figure in human history.

"In his last years, Gandhi revered the Lotus Sutra. He is said to have found within it 'the universal spiritual home of humankind' and to have included the daimoku, Nam-myohorenge-kyo, in his daily hymnal. Korea is the great benefactor who transmitted the Lotus Sutra to Japan. We of the SGI are practicing the very quintessence of nonviolence."

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."

Call your region bureau chief or contact the *World Tribune* directly:

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E-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org

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.

NEWS BRIEFS

Brazilian City Commends President Makiguchi

In commemoration of June 6, the 127th birthday of the Soka Gakkai's first president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the Brazilian city of Campinas in the state of São Paulo commended Mr. Makiguchi and honored SGI President Ikeda and his wife, Kaneko. On behalf of Council President Francisco Sellin, city councilor Luiz Carlos Rossini and his wife, Marta, traveled to Japan to bestow the awards. Mr. Rossini lauded Mr. Makiguchi's commitment to human rights, conferring upon him a Plaque of Commendation. President Ikeda was presented with a Certificate of Honorary Citizenship, the Campinas City Council Medal, the Flag of the City and the Carlos Gomes Medal, the city's highest distinction in the field of arts. Mrs. Ikeda also received a Plaque of Commendation in recognition of her invaluable contributions to world peace through her continued support of Mr. Ikeda.

— *Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER*



Midwest Region youth enjoy an outing on the lake as part of their weekend camping trip in Minnesota.

Midwest Region Youth Think About Unity

More than 150 Midwest Region youth met in Minnesota the weekend of June 13–14. The theme: "Let's Create a Powerful Flow of Unity for Peace." Members from all divisions throughout the region united during the weeks of preparations, and youth traveled up to 14 hours by bus, van and car.

Each youth made a fresh determination toward the future. Below are a few new insights gained by youth members:

Masaki Hiraguri, Minnesota: "To me unity means harmony of many kinds of people, not just one style, but rather many people who have their own character and ability. Those people work together for one purpose, which is world peace."

Sandi Harvey, Kansas: "I learned unity means that I have to stand alone. Cherish your moment here today and on, because you'll be able to share it."

Elizabeth Gross, guest, Minnesota: "[Unity to me means] accepting other people, accepting that they're different, and that they're happy with that."

— *SUSAN POEHLER, Minnesota Correspondent*

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

DORIS McCLOSKEY, CHICAGO

No Regrets

When her mother was stricken with cancer for the second time, Doris McCloskey says: 'I thought what I was facing was my own fear of death. But I quickly discovered that what I was truly facing was the fear of no faith.'



'This experience made me dig deep in my life for answers,' says Doris McCloskey (right), with her mother, Emma.

My mother, Emma Jean Gilles, was an incredible person. Forty years ago she was doing yoga, lifting weights and riding a Harley....

The minute I saw her when she arrived in Chicago — in June 1996 — I knew that her breast cancer of five years earlier had returned. Back then, she underwent a radical mastectomy. I had chanted — successfully — to extend her life for these five years.

But now, I felt grave doubt and confusion. I was frightened and angry. I received guidance, but I was angered by the guidance and disappointed in my seniors who basically told me to chant that she experience no pain and that whatever time she had left was spent valuably.

Well, of course, you ninny, but that wasn't enough.

That wasn't the guidance I really wanted from the universe. I couldn't see myself compromising and having to rationalize it. Rather, I needed to put all my chips on the table

and chant for what I truly wanted: to again extend my mother's life. Not to avoid the suffering of aging and death — but to triumph over it.

Mom's breathing was labored. Her cough was frightening. She had trouble eating, was rapidly losing weight, and, of course, was very weak.

At first, I thought what I was facing was my own fear of death. But I quickly discovered that what I was truly facing was the fear of no faith.

What if I chanted with all my heart for my mother to survive and she didn't? I've never been able to pretend, at least not for any reasonable length of time. Would I be able to continue chanting?

After two weeks, I discovered that, yes, I would continue to chant, but I would not be able to continue as a leader in the SGI-USA. That would just be too hypocritical.

Every day was a challenge: the pain of watching the toll on my mother's physical condition — she aged 10 years in

two months; the rigors of chemotherapy; the developing complications; the exhaustion of caring for someone 24 hours a day. My wonderful husband, Guy, and my children enabled me to continue my work and activities.

One day, Mom said to the doctor, "So, you think I'm going to die soon."

He said, "Yes, that's right." Mom said, "You doctors don't know everything."

She didn't want to know how long the doctors expected her to live. But they told us: one week at the most.

We brought her home. She weighed 98 pounds, was on 24-hour oxygen and two forms of morphine. The next week the house was filled with many of her brothers and sisters from Arkansas. She spoke to each one individually about her life, her death and their relationship. She introduced each one to the Buddhist perspective on life and everyone left light-hearted and uplifted.

At the end of the month she was getting out of bed for

meals and only using the oxygen at night. She was getting stronger. She joked about having to get better for the doctor's sake — because he doesn't get much encouragement, she said.

Through all of this Mom never complained. She was the best patient and took every opportunity to encourage everyone she encountered. Even the hospital staff had asked her to talk with other patients and share her understanding of death.

My sister, Tina, and the rest of my family talked about everything. We studied about death and examined our understandings and fears. We laughed, some of us cried, but Mom always said there was nothing to cry about. Early on, at Guy's instigation, we all made the determination to have no regrets.

The second time around, Mom began responding to treatment. The fluid around her heart became minimal, her liver cleared completely, and her bones began to regenerate. In August 1997 she hit a plateau; she was no longer responding to chemotherapy. But the cancer was not in remission; it was expected to return.

To continue our campaign of no regrets, we packed and went to Paris, my mother, my mother-in-law, my husband, children and me. We went first class (well, business class), stayed in the best hotels, did what we wanted to do and generally had a ball.

Mom returned to my sister's home on the Pala Indian Reservation in Southern California. My sister was having her sixth baby and my mom wanted to be there. She also missed her other five grandchildren (ages 4 to 13) terribly.

She did well until recently when the cancer became aggressive and went to the brain causing dementia. The process was relatively speedy, and the morphine dose was still fairly low. Even the dementia was beneficial; the confusion caused her to feel that we were always with her.

When I saw her last she weighed 120 pounds, had a full head of hair and no trouble breathing. She always recognized my sister and me and found a way to communicate with us. Even the last days on the telephone when she couldn't talk to me, I would chant and she would begin chanting.

Tina called from the continuing care facility at 12:30 a.m. on Mother's Day. They didn't expect Mom to make it through

the night. Guy and I chanted until 2:30 a.m. It was the most incredible experience I have had in 34 years of chanting. There was no separation, no fear, no tears — only great joy, great appreciation. I began to hear the most beautiful sound I have ever heard. I still am at a loss to describe it. It was something like a cross between musical instruments and beautiful voices.

I think this must be the origin of Gabriel's Horn, or the singing of angels. But I think it's the actual sound of the universe. Chanting must be the closest emulation of that sound. Many people nearing death have told me that Nam-myoho-enge-kyo truly is the most beautiful sound in the universe — and that that's what they want to hear.

My mother died at 11:25 a.m., May 10, Mother's Day, in Escondido, Calif. She entered the latent phase of life peacefully after accomplishing everything she set out to do.

As deaths go, it was a good one.

This experience made me dig deep in my life for answers and made me examine my understanding of everything. The effort to define and harness the power in Nam-myoho-enge-kyo much of the time diminishes it. We, individually, need to dig into our own lives for the answers — no one can explain the Mystic Law for us. I feel that, through this experience, I have won a deeper understanding of faith.

To all my family, immediate and extended, Buddhist and secular: Thank you so very much for all of your support and your prayers. **WT**

If you're interested in contributing to this section, please call us at (310) 451-8811 or e-mail us at wt@sgi-usa.org.



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Newspapers Shape the Age

ESSAY, FROM PAGE 1

The first issue of *Seikyo Shimbum* came out two months later, on April 20, 1951. Initially a single sheet of newsprint printed on both sides, it was published once every 10 days with a run of 5,000 copies. Today, of course, it is a daily paper with a circulation of 5.5 million. When I think of this phenomenal growth, those early days seem like another lifetime.

Starting the newspaper may have been a small step, but Mr. Toda's vision for it was grand. When we were discussing what to call the paper, there were several candidates: the *Bunka Shimbum* (Culture Newspaper), the *Soka Shimbum* and the *Sekai Shimbum* (World Newspaper). Mr. Toda suggested with a laugh, "Let's think of its future potential and call it the *Uchu Shimbum* (Universe Newspaper)!"

tory, including Lord Byron, the English poet of revolution and passion; Beethoven, the great musician who struggled with destiny; and Napoleon, the hero of youthful advance.

I also remember with nostalgia how, as the head of the Public Relations Department, I wrote many hard-hitting articles, full of youthful passion, to correct the mistaken reporting on the Soka Gakkai by other newspapers. We were all determined that the *Seikyo Shimbum* would always report the truth.

Mr. Toda poured his life into writing articles for the paper, regarding them as personal letters to his beloved fellow members. I have always felt exactly the same way.

Mr. Toda used to say that he wanted the people of Japan and

myself to realizing those ideals, never hesitating to fulfill his wishes.

Mahatma Gandhi, the great human rights champion of the East, continued to publish his newspaper even when he was incarcerated. The autobiography that he began to write while in jail was published in the newspaper, and tens of millions of Indian readers hungrily devoured every installment. It was through the newspaper that he articulated his belief in nonviolent protest, that he roused the people's support.

We have likewise used the *Seikyo Shimbum* to speak out, in spite of all obstacles, for justice and truth, and to spread our movement throughout the world for a new humanism based on the Daishonin's Buddhism.

One of the women's division members received a phone call out of the blue from an old friend saying that she wished to subscribe to the *Seikyo Shimbum*. This friend received a complimentary copy from this member many years ago — and used it to wrap something for storage. Recently, she came across that old newspaper, now somewhat yellowed with age, and an article caught her eye. She read it and was deeply moved, hence prompting the phone call.

Many thinking people in Japan assert that the Soka Gakkai and the *Seikyo Shimbum* are today the conscience of Japan.

This is due solely to our members' noble efforts.

On April 20, the *Seikyo Shimbum* celebrated its 47th anniversary. The 50th anniversary will fall, auspiciously, in 2001 — the first year of the new century. Today our world is dark and clouded by the travails of the century's close. Lies and misinformation run rampant. Our society seems lost in a maze, without any guiding philosophy.

Against that background, it is the mission of the *Seikyo Shimbum*, a paper dedicated to speaking out for truth and justice, to rise like a sun of hope and illuminate the 21st century.

I will write. I am determined to continue writing.

Let us all join forces to nurture this magnificent bastion of free speech.



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Then-General Director George M. Williams (left) helps out during a press run of the newly established 'World Tribune,' circa 1964.

Eventually we decided on the *Seikyo Shimbum* (Sacred Teachings Newspaper), after the term that is used to describe Nichiren Daishonin's teachings. It was Mr. Toda's wish to create a newspaper that communicated the essence of the Daishonin's Buddhism — the fundamental Law underlying all things in the universe — to people throughout the world.

The first issue started with an article by Mr. Toda titled "What Is Faith?" It also contained an installment of his serialized novel *The Human Revolution*, and his column "Epigrams." In issue after issue, he continued to make many contributions to the paper.

I later wrote a column introducing great figures from his-

the world to read our paper. From the beginning of 1956 — the year in which the paper would celebrate its fifth anniversary — he began to present the paper to Asian leaders, 10 in all, including: Jawaharlal Nehru, the prime minister of India; Ramon Magsaysay, the president of the Philippines; Mao Zedong, the chairman of the People's Republic of China; and Zhou Enlai, China's premier. In an accompanying letter, he wrote, "It is my hope that this newspaper may prove useful in deepening your understanding of Buddhism in some small way and thereby contributing to your even greater endeavors for the development of Asian civilization."

Mr. Toda regarded the *Seikyo Shimbum* as a means of making a first step toward friendship and peace in Asia. Many laughed at his efforts. But I have devoted

FOR WOMEN

My Mission & the 'World Tribune'



Sandra Knobloch discovered that her life's work and her activities were equally important. The 'World Tribune' helped her at the time.

By SANDRA KNOBLOCH
TEXAS REGION WD LEADER

In 1987, after 10 years of a successful career in early childhood education, I quit my job. The bureaucracy and paperwork were exhausting, and it was diverting my focus from the children. I also decided that I could be a better SGI-USA leader if I weren't so tired all the time. I took a job working as an administrative assistant and increased my involvement in SGI activities. But while working with adults, I realized that both my real strength and real mission were working with children. I missed being in the classroom and made a determination to return.

I have to confess, making that decision was scary — I knew that I would have to start from scratch. Before leaving my first job, I was recognized as an innovative, creative educator, but none of that mattered now; it was both humbling and humiliating as I went door to door looking for teaching work.

I initially could only get work as a substitute teacher. To pay my bills, I also taught adults at night school. During this period, I found fortification by chanting heartfelt daimoku and reading SGI President Ikeda's guidance in the *World Tribune* — especially when I had little food in the refrigerator. Having access to his encouragement never to be defeated was the catalyst I needed to persevere.

Although I had read the *World Tribune* throughout the 25 years of my practice, it was through this experience that I developed a clearer understanding of the link between the *World Tribune*, the quality of my practice and joy in my life. When the newspaper arrived with President Ikeda's guidance, it was as if a friend had

come to visit. I felt as if I could sit down and communicate with this friend who, no matter what my circumstances, always knew my heart. It always helped me focus on my mission, and it imbued me with a sense of purpose and identity. All of my crises of the moment were put into perspective; I felt renewed and clear-minded again.

Recently, President Ikeda wrote: "The SGI is not in pursuit of some abstract intellectual doctrine but a complete, real human revolution — one in which people change their fundamental attitudes and ways of thinking and focus their minds, their actions and their lives on the highest good."

"Essentially, this revolution takes place when our lives are in the state of Buddhism. When we fuse our lives with the enlightened life of the Buddha, we can tap the power within to fundamentally change ourselves."

This was the type of spiritual nourishment with which I weekly renewed the courage and confidence I needed to persevere until I achieved my goal.

Through my connection to President Ikeda via the *World Tribune*, I changed my attitude, which led to me getting my life back on the path of my mission in the classroom. Today, I teach a pre-kindergarten program for children with special needs. I love going to work every day, and I know I'm making a difference in my students' lives.

The same day I signed the contract for my job was also the day I was appointed women's division region leader. It was a reminder to me that both my life's work and my SGI-USA activities are of equal importance, and it was in both areas that I needed, as President Ikeda had encouraged me, to have victory in my daily life.





This is my friend John Tierney and me at camp one morning. Three months earlier John lost Ron, his lover of eight years, to complications related to AIDS. John's friends encouraged him to challenge the Ride (his first) to put his energy into something positive and get through his grief.



Along the route, kids at churches and schools come out to greet and cheer the riders. When the Ride comes through town, it's the first time that most of these kids ever hear about AIDS, so it's an opportunity for teachers and parents to educate children about the disease. I met these kids at their school, which was in the middle of an artichoke field. I remember in one town there was an 8-year-old boy at a Presbyterian church — his mother and sister had died of AIDS — and he wanted to do something to support the riders. He set up a station along the route where he put peanut butter on crackers and handed them to the riders as they coasted by. My eyes welled up with tears when I saw how dedicated he was to supporting us.

These riders are cheering other riders as they climb Agony Grade, a four-mile uphill ride. Between San Francisco and Los Angeles, there are lots of hills. The really strong riders would turn around and go back to the bottom of a hill so they could ride alongside slower riders who were struggling. They'd shout encouragement and provide moral support. They'd just keep riding up and down the hill until everyone got to the top. In different ways, everyone involved in the Ride was struggling so much. When people are genuinely fighting hard for a noble thing, pettiness goes by the wayside. Even though I was pushing myself beyond all limits, I felt safe. The AIDS Ride moved my life like nothing had ever done before. It was a living, moving example of what can be accomplished when people work together toward a common goal.



The Ride of Ron

Lisa Hollis takes a camera along on the California AIDS Ride, a seven-day, 560-mile bicycle ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles to raise a million to provide health care for people with AIDS.

By LISA HOLLIS
PHOTO EDITOR

In 1995 I drove my friend and her bike to San Francisco. She was participating in the California AIDS Ride, a bike ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles to raise money for the treatment of those with HIV/AIDS. She had lost most of her friends to AIDS, and this was her way of defeating a disease that had changed her life.

She had pledged to ride every year until a cure is found. I watched her go on training rides every weekend, work out at the gym, and spend months fundraising in order to raise the \$2,500 in contributions necessary to go. I admired her commitment. At the end of the week, when the riders rode into Los Angeles after completing the 500+ mile journey, I saw triumphant gleams in their eyes. Granted, they looked sunburned, banged up, Ace-bandaged, and completely exhausted; as if they were returning from a war. But the power that emanated from those 2,500 bike riders moved me to tears.

At that moment I knew this was something I had to do. I'm not a cyclist by training or temperament, but I wouldn't miss California AIDS Ride 5, held this year from May 31 to June 6.

I was on my bike from sunrise to sunset, through farmland, hills, mountains and along the shore. I chanted as I climbed steep grades...and when I was bored...and when I was sure I couldn't peddle anymore. I did gongyo on the road, reciting

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Ride My

ng on the California AIDS Ride — a grueling
m San Francisco to Los Angeles, which raises \$10
h care for people with HIV and AIDS.

the sutra to the wide-open, deserted landscapes. I carried the Gohonzon with me, my *omamori* (small Gohonzon) on a chain around my neck.

Spending that much time on a bike, I became very aware of my inner voices — the ones that say, “you can’t do this” and “who do you think you are?” — the voices of my own negativity. I learned that I can listen to these voices and let them defeat me. Or I can find the place inside of me that goes beyond negativity, beyond my doubt, fear and discomfort. On a bike in the middle of nowhere, these voices become very strong. Ultimately, the Ride, for me, meant doing battle with these voices.

The daily average was 90 mountainous miles. There’s a “sag truck” that follows the riders and makes sure no one falls behind. If you go too slow, you’ll get sagged; that is, the truck picks up your bike and drives you to the next camp. One evening the driver told a group of us, “Unless you get going, you’ll be sagged in five minutes.”

Part of me just wanted to climb on that truck, I was so exhausted. But it was a matter of heart — I was determined to ride each mile. There were other riders who were HIV-positive who needed medication every four hours — they had every reason to sag, but they refused to give up. I realized that for me, giving up isn’t a matter of my body being unable to continue, it’s about mentally losing the will to go on. So when I felt like quitting, I would think about why I was there: I was doing it because someone in a hospital bed somewhere needed me to do it; because every mile I rode



These bikes, belonging to two women, were parked at a rest stop. Many of the riders ride in memory of those who have died or in support of specific people living with HIV and AIDS. I was really struck by how many names were listed here. Seeing this kept me going. I remember one time I was out in the middle of nowhere, and I was so tired. I wanted to quit. Then I went around a curve and, in the distance, I saw a bus parked by the side of the road. As I got closer, I saw about a dozen people in wheelchairs, waiting. As I went by, those who could clap, clapped for me, and those who could only move their heads, nodded and smiled. I was so moved and so inspired to pedal with all my might. In another place, an old woman stood on the road next to her chauffeur-driven Mercedes for six hours and applauded every single person on the Ride. Her son had died of AIDS.



This is Sally from Oregon. We were both relatively slow riders, so we rode together when we could. Sally and I always seemed to run into each other at our low points, and we’d encourage each other. One day, I saw her crying. ‘Who am I kidding?’ she said. ‘I can’t do this ride!’ But she *was* doing it — she was winning over her own negative voices. I used to think that only Buddhists could encourage one another and find the strength to continue despite unbearable pain. But it’s part of being human, I learned, not just being Buddhist.



Here I am after riding 103 miles in one day...and I didn’t die. There were 2,600 riders and 600 support volunteers who made the Ride happen. Riders were responsible for setting up and breaking down their own tents, and the volunteers did practically everything else: They fed us; packed, moved and re-constructed the camp each day; set up showers and toilets; stood on the road and gave us directions...all on less than four hours of sleep each night. It gave me a new understanding of behind-the-scenes support.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S POEM

Into the Storm

President Ikeda wrote this poem for the youth division members in commemoration of July 3, the Day of Mentor and Disciple. July 3 is the day on which second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda was released from prison in 1945, after being held for opposing Japanese militarism, and the day on which President Ikeda, then Soka Gakkai youth division chief of staff, was in 1957 arrested and detained for questioning on false charges in connection with the Osaka Incident.

— Dedicated to our successors, my beloved youth division members, who are the treasures of the SGI.

*Fierce winds, blow!
Angry waves, surge!*

*I am a youth,
I am the scarlet banner waving in the storm —
Nothing daunts me,
Nothing defeats me.*

*Here where I stand
Is the headland from which I set forth;
Today, this moment,
Ever a fresh, new campaign —
When I think of my future,
Boundless strength and courage
Well up in my heart.*

*Wind! Waves!
As an indomitable youth,
I will bravely battle
Your relentless onslaughts.*

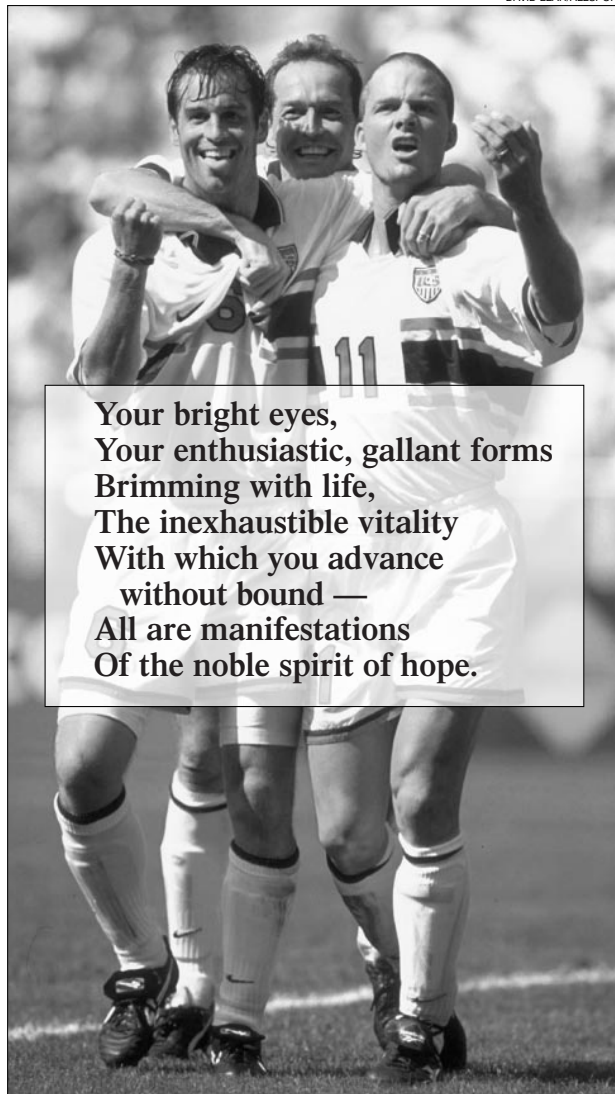
*My friend, you go by sea;
I'll go by land.*

*I will rise resolutely
To champion the goal
I have chosen in life;
I will embark
With unswerving determination,
Cherishing a sublime mission.*

*I am a youth
Flying into the storm
On glorious wings of freedom
That take me higher than any aged national leader,
That make me wiser than any self-serving politician.*

*Such is the preeminence of youth
That nothing can destroy.
We embrace the star of our eternal destiny
And shine —
Such is our youth
Played out on a global stage.*

*For that reason,
The youth are the treasure of the world,
The youth are the verdant fields of peace.
When we unite in common purpose,
A deafening thunder resounds,*



American soccer players celebrate a goal during a recent match.

**Your bright eyes,
Your enthusiastic, gallant forms
Brimming with life,
The inexhaustible vitality
With which you advance
without bound —
All are manifestations
Of the noble spirit of hope.**

*Condemning the abuses of arrogant powers.
Your bright eyes,
Your enthusiastic, gallant forms
Brimming with life,
The inexhaustible vitality
With which you advance without bound —
All are manifestations
Of the noble spirit of hope.*

*Such youth are undeterred
By sorrow, pain or obstacles.
Toasting each other cheerfully
And striving for the Arch of Triumph
Of their life —
There, the brilliant, scarlet banner of victory
Waves fearlessly.*

*I will advance without fail!
For this will be my proof in this lifetime
Of an unsurpassed youth.*

*“For what purpose?” —
Seeking the answer to this question,*

*I fight without end.
On nights when storms rage
Or waves crash with savage fury,
I will keep pressing onward undaunted,
Looking forward to the morning sun
That will rise majestically once more
In the eastern sky.*

*Youth!
Dear friends!
With astute perception,
Look closely, speak out, forge ahead!
And remember that
Beyond the distant horizon,
Countless successors will follow,
Longing for the sun's timeless light.*

*My young friends,
Prepare to mount your white horses!
Positioning yourselves gallantly
At the vanguard of the people,
Devoting yourselves to the mission
Decreed by the Buddha,
Gallop forth bravely!*

*Cross mountains and valleys,
Advance joyfully,
Transcending all obstacles
With exhilaration and delight,
Along with fellow members
Throughout the world.*

*Ride on through the darkness —
For all your priceless sweat and effort
Will lead to the golden stage of the new era
All of us have dreamed of.*

*Youth!
Hold your heads high,
Stand tall.
My friends!
Take the lead in all struggles
And make your presence known.*

*Youth are never defeated
By anything or anyone —
For never giving in
Is what victory is all about.*

*Youth are never discouraged —
For if you are never downcast
By even the direst adversity,
A brilliant stage awaits you.*

*Watch me!
When I awake,
When I unleash my true potential,
A new age will be born,
A revolution will dawn.*

*I am the eyes that reflect the future,
I am the flash of spirited eloquence
That separates lies from truth,
I am the keen blade of justice
Cutting through evil,
Striving eternally to awaken society —
This is youth.*

*Therefore,
May light shine in the eyes of youth,
May strength reside in the hearts of youth.*

DAVID LEAH/ALLSPORT

Century of carnage and bloodshed
Now drawing to a close —
What sorrowful wounds you have inflicted,
How bitter your legacy of grief and fear!
Humanity has trembled in the shadow
Of demonic weapons,
Shuddered at the dark clouds
Obscuring the horizon —
The oppressive gloom of the fin de siècle
world.

The musical score of the old century
Is scattered with the sounds of destruction,
Of gunfire and bomb blasts,
The heartrending screams of mothers and children
Running desperately for cover.

“O friends, not these sounds!”
As Beethoven implored.

The powerful song of youth
Will revitalize history,
Too long one of human suffering.

When a truly new age arrives
A brand-new procession of youth
Will conduct a colossal symphony
That will reverberate throughout the universe.

My friends,
Sing, dance and rejoice together!

The curtain has risen on
A grand, dignified overture —
The performance
Of a towering symphony orchestra
Of heroic youth
Has already begun.

The departure bell has sounded —
Set the sails!
Raise the anchor!
It's time for the youth to embark
On their great, unending journey,
Bathed in the brilliant light of the stars.

Comrades throughout the three existences!
Are you well prepared for victory?
Never neglect the smallest detail,
But once you leave the pier,
Don't look back.

Get ready now!
Carve your way through the
water
Like majestic orcas,
Regard the tossing waves
As the soothing rocking of a
cradle,
Remember that bravery and
daring
Are vital for victory and
success.

Each of you, young comrades!
Work to enable everyone,
Friend and foe,
To reach the shore
Of peace and happiness
Without fail,
Without exception.

Sometimes
Be the ship's bow
Always first to brave
The wind and waves,
Sometimes
Be the ship's booming engines

Or its propellers,
And sometimes
Labor day and night in the engine room,
Covered in oil and grime.
Each of you, my friends!
Cross the stormy seas
With energy and enthusiasm
On a journey of self-development,
Setting a course for an uncharted realm,
Overgrown with untraversed jungle,
And go courageously ashore.

Life is a struggle,
Life is a battle to the very end
That none can escape,
That none can avoid.

I am a valorous warrior
Of stand-alone spirit,
My heart is always
On the battlefield
That knows no rest.

I am on the stage
Upon which a fierce struggle is waged
Between the opposing forces of
Hope and despair,
Courage and cowardice,
Challenge and inertia.

Whether I'm forced to eat dirt
Or hang by my nails at the edge of a cliff,
I will move forward,
Even if just an inch or two,
Determined to break through adversity.

My friends,
May you, too, fight with
A noble, heroic spirit,
Remembering the Daishonin's admonition:
“Nichiren's disciples cannot accomplish anything
If they are cowardly,”
And that of his successor, Nikko:
“Until kosen-rufu is achieved, propagate the Law
To the full extent of your ability
Without begrudging your life.”

You, my young friends,
Who know an indeed profound philosophy,
Do not be deceived by hypocrites,
Do not be fooled by glossy illusions —
Unsheathe the spiritual sword of justice

And fight until the last tyrant falls.
Let blow the winds of courage,
Boldly sound the bells of advance each day,
Let forth the thunderous roar,
Of comrades united and strong.

Fear not the howling of wolves,
Let them hear the lion's roar!

We live in a world
Defiled by the five impurities —
So keep advancing,
Unlocking the floodgates of our indignation
Toward those who would destroy justice;
Making them aware of how bitter will be
Their everlasting regret.

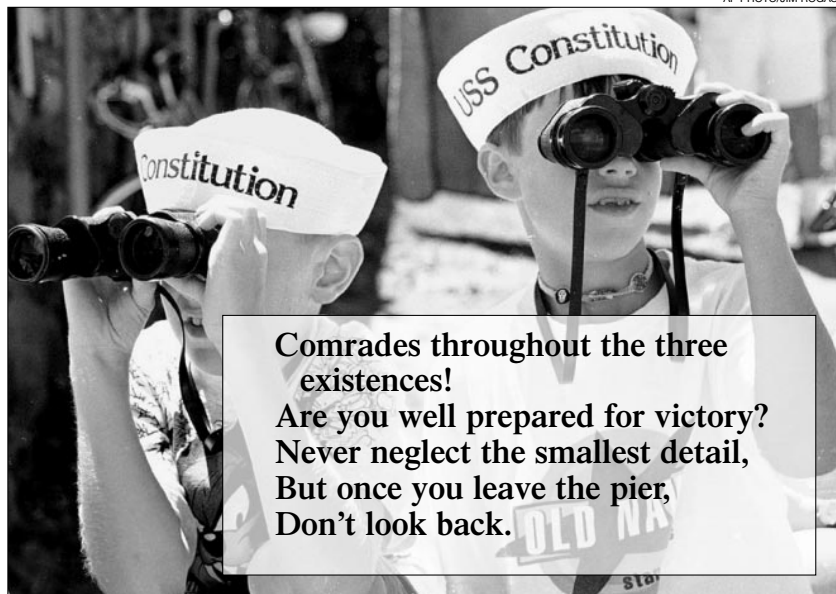
Let's win
And together weep tears of joy;
Never bow down
To frauds and oppressors.

Youth!
In the course of our struggle,
Topple every enemy of the Buddha
Without fail,
And become the sun
Whose brilliant light
Will free all people from fear.

In Hall Caine's famous novel
The Eternal City,
Rossi and Bruno,
Two youthful comrades
Bound by mutual trust,
Firm and unafraid in their cause
Even under threat of death,
Fight to the limits of their being
And build an eternal city of the heart.

My young friends,
With united purpose
And shared commitment
Surpassing even theirs,
May you create your eternal city,
One that endures across the three existences
Of past, present and future —
This is kosen-rufu.

Until that is accomplished,
Solidly unite
And continue to advance.



AP PHOTO/JIM ROGASH

**Comrades throughout the three
existences!
Are you well prepared for victory?
Never neglect the smallest detail,
But once you leave the pier,
Don't look back.**

There are countless youth,
Untold noble comrades,
Who share this philosophy of
peace,
Not only in Japan,
But in North America,
Central and South America,
Europe and Africa,
Throughout Asia and Oceania,
In every corner of the world.

Joining hands
With youth around the globe,
Create an untrammelled network;
Working in concert,
Build an eternal city,
A realm of indestructible
brilliance
In the 21st century.

July 3

— Commemorating the day of
my mentor's release from
prison and the day that I
was imprisoned.

The Greatest Paper in the World

EDITORIAL

By DAVE McNEILL
MANAGING EDITOR

I am continually inspired and challenged by SGI President Ikeda's vision of the *World Tribune*. His 1994 message for the paper's 30th anniversary is replete with phrases that make me, the editorial staff and the volunteer correspondents and photographers pause and reflect on our efforts thus far. His message urges in part that the *World Tribune*:

- explore the inner universe of the human being,
- become the eyes, ears, voice and heart of his American friends,
- nurture global citizens,
- revitalize the glorious tradition of American democracy,
- cultivate a peaceful future,
- send a message of courage and hope, and
- take as our theme strictness toward the Law and tolerance toward humanity.

In *The New Human Revolution*, too, speaking about the mission of our sister publication in Japan, the *Seikyo Shimbun*, he writes that the organization's newspaper should be a textbook of faith as well as address the concerns of society and provide answers based on Buddhist thought.

Newspapers are alive, it's been said, and since they are living things they must change and grow — or die. Without a constant search for excellence, a newspaper may just as well wrap fish.

To keep from falling into any ruts — and in honor of July 3, the Day of Mentor and Disciple — we've changed a few things. We have a new logo and a new look for the front page, including an easier-to-read index of what's inside. On page 2 each week, you'll find our study page. An expanded letters and Perspective space now anchors the inside back cover. Editorials, when we have them, will be signed, so you'll know exactly who's talking. In coming weeks, you'll notice more

changes. Please let us know what you think.

We're also looking for other ways to serve our readership. We're in production of a searchable CD-ROM containing all 1997 issues of the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*, and we're in the discussion stages for a *World Tribune* web site. We realize that in this age of instant information, we can't be left behind (for much longer, anyway).

These changes don't change the fact that the *World Tribune* will always be dedicated to kosen-rufu — full of clear explanations of Buddhist philosophy, inspiring guidance from President Ikeda, powerful experiences of faith, and informative reports on your activities, etc.

At the same time, we want to become better at reaching the broader SGI-USA community, including our friends of the SGI who may not practice Buddhism. Through inclusive, invigorating language, as well as insightful articles on general topics of interest, we hope to be-

come a better tool to spread the life-affirming and hope-filled message of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism to society as a whole. As President Ikeda writes in *The New Human Revolution*, "It is important to express the universal philosophy of Buddhism — which upholds the equality of all people — in a way that is fresh and easy to grasp and that accords with society and our modern age. We have to discuss Buddhism in terms that are accessible and comprehensible to all people" (vol. 1, p. 216).

To accomplish these things, we need your help. Whether it be through a letter or e-mail (my personal e-mail address is dmcneill@sgi-usa.org), an experience, Perspective or news report, we rely on your contributions. Volunteer bureau chiefs in each region welcome your involvement. You can also, of course, contact us directly. This is your newspaper. Together we can make it, as President Ikeda envisions, "the greatest newspaper in the world." ❧

Bloomin' in America

PERSPECTIVE

By ALLANA BOURNE
SEATTLE

My youngest daughter, Shayna, graduated from high school last week. Emotional enough as an event, even more imposing is the fact that she's leaving next week for Los Angeles to start her career as a filmmaker. (I'm sure she doesn't see it that way, but I do.) I think we're both still in shock over it.

I don't claim to be a movie reviewer. I just love movies. All nationalities. All genres. All. (Even the bad ones.) So, of course, it's not a big surprise that this rubbed off on my offspring. Her first movie was *E.T.* (she was 3). Her last (last week) was the *X-Files*. The wonder has never worn off her face.

In the 1993 poem, "Sun of Jiyu Over a New Land," which I recently reread, I was struck by the phrase "In America, new winds blow from the west." In the very next stanza, SGI President Ikeda says of Hollywood that it's the deliverer of "bountiful gifts of romance and dreams to the world." Influenced by a certain negativity in some elements of our culture, I always hid my feelings about

Hollywood. It was President Ikeda who helped me understand that my deep love of movies and moviemaking was a positive thing, even a good thing.

This leads me to the point of why I'm writing this. Talkin' about dreams. For several months, I've been mesmerized by a book called *Anthem: An American Road Story*, written by two young women who crisscrossed the country to film their own movie. I missed the movie when it came to town last summer. But, luckily, they wrote a book about it. They chased down people like James Redfield of *Celestine Prophecy* fame, Ben & Jerry of ice cream fame, Studs Terkel, Hunter S. Thompson, George McGovern and others, famous and non, just to ask them, "Is there hope for the American Dream?" That's all they wanted to know. But the one they wanted most to ask and the one they chased the hardest was their hero (they called him the Holy Grail), Robert Redford. They said he was the person responsible for them believing they could make a film at all.

They chased him for a year and when finally they succeeded, right at the point they'd given up, they asked, "Is there something specifically you value most about being an American — anything that sets us apart or makes us unique?"

His face changed completely at that moment — it became very soft. And he said: "I sure do. I do. I'm extremely patriotic. I really am, but on a very, very deep, almost spiritual level. This is the best country to be in.... I still say there's no greater place physically. And the fact is we still can...boast the one ingredient that would make me say always this is the best place to be — and why I like to be here — and that's freedom."

When Mr. Zaitzu wrote his booklet on the poem "Sun of Jiyu" in 1993, he said, "I have been pondering why President Ikeda likes the United States so much." He concluded it's because President Ikeda feels "it's in America that Buddhism will really bloom."

How is Buddhism going to bloom in America? It's a question been on my mind (I'm-sure-I'm-not-the-only-one-who's-asking) for a long, long time. Those two who made the movie and wrote the book *Anthem* didn't make it because they were rich or even to become rich. They made it out of a passionate desire to express something deep and rich about America to their own generation, and it breaks your heart — their purity of intent.

"We grew tired of the broadcast version of this country," they said. "We were not convinced that ours is a time defined only by po-

litical apathy, declining opportunities, and the general malaise that has become synonymous with our generation — a generation identified only by a letter, nondescript and clandestine." The same generation my daughters are part of.

We're the Boomers. They're the Bloomers.

My youngest has this dream of making a movie about the hero she found in American lore, Jack Kerouac. Two years ago we made a pilgrimage to City Lights bookstore in San Francisco. Only 16 years old at the time, she was shaking as we approached it. I still cry when I think about it.

A year ago a group of us climbed to Desolation Peak in the North Cascades, where Kerouac once spent the summer. My daughter alone made it to the top. (All I can do is take her there. She's the one gonna make it.) She's got something so deep in her heart. I think it's called the American dream. When the *Anthem* duo interviewed author, poet and NPR commentator Andrei Codrescu, he said, "[T]he future of the American experiment is the future of the world.... The millennium will happen as a result of where we go from here — this place. That's just a fact."

Here's to you, Shayna, Millennium Girl! ❧



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The *World Tribune* welcomes reader submissions. If you are interested in contributing an article or photograph, please contact us for guidelines. Together we can make a better newspaper.

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Toward Change

I am sitting here at work reading my *World Tribune*. I was seeking encouraging articles to help me stay strong and focused. I am 25 years old and currently going through a divorce.

This article ("Falling Short" by Karen Morono, May 15 issue) really struck my heart deep down. During my marriage, I was physically and mentally abused. That has greatly affected my self-confidence and self-worth....

After trying many, many times, I finally left him.... Since then I have been deepening my faith and developing a better relationship with my son....

I am just trying to say that this article inspired me. I am always comparing my life with others' and feeling sorry for myself for my worries in life. I would make the determination to leave the marriage and would fall before the finish line. Because my practice is now consistent and sincere, I can look ahead toward change instead of backward. I read this after morning gongyo:

"Buddhism is the excellent medicine that heals the wounds of human karma and suffering. There are no deadlocks in faith. We encounter problems and hardships so that we may grow and mature. We experience grief and sadness so that we may savor greater happiness. In the realm of Buddhism, even that which already seems to have improved will continue to become even better. When we think we have reached the highest limit, we go higher still. This is the Mystic Law" (SGI President Ikeda, *Daily Guidance*).

Thank you for your time. It feels good to vent.

— SUMI YOUNG,
via e-mail

Deep Impact

The movie *Deep Impact* is about a comet heading straight

for earth causing imminent disaster.... I was struck by the universal chord resounding within when the president, beautifully played by Morgan Freeman, states that "hope will survive...."

Knowing the director, Mimi Leder, on a personal level (she is my cousin), made a deep impact on my life. Even as a young teen, I was impressed by her courage and warm-heartedness. She was fierce and fearless. The way she drove her Volkswagen Beetle on the Santa Monica Freeway proved this! She was and is a great model for me and women in general, for she is pioneering the way for future female directors in a male-

dominated industry. Way to go, Mimi!

— LYNETTE BRAWER,
Arlington, Va.

Connections

I feel such tremendous connections to our organization, especially when I read the editorial entitled "Get Involved" in the May 15 issue of the *World Tribune*. This article mentioned the book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Steven Covey.... I was not surprised to come across this book title in our organization's newspaper, because both remind us to keep self-improvement as a goal.

It is good to know that our organization touches on all seven points mentioned by Mr. Covey, which I would love to share if I had enough room.... Before I began practicing true Buddhism, other books of a similar nature and dealing with this same concept seemed to possess unobtainable goals. I often forgot what I had read and easily went back to feeling bad about myself.

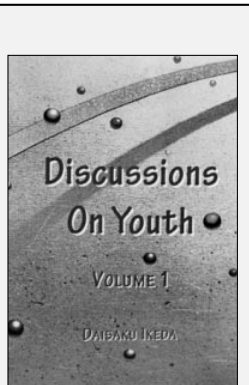
Now I see myself on the path, as described by Mr. Covey, of where I want to be. All of the unique characteristics and traits a successful person should possess have been realized from within through practicing this true Buddhism. I believe that many members in our organization will definitely come upon a similar realization.

— SHIRLEY CHEN,
Naperville, Ill.

Inclusiveness

Thank you for "Pride and Prejudice" (June 19 "Worldview"). Commentaries such as these demonstrate the inclusiveness of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Ours truly is an open and affirming faith, one that celebrates diversity in all of its forms.

— CYNTHIA CASE,
Claremont, Calif.



Discussions On Youth

This compilation of dialogues among the SGI president and high school division leaders of the Soka Gakkai was published to commemorate May 3, Soka Gakkai Day.

Topics explored: love, dealing with hardships, friendship, the importance of reading literature, finding happiness at school and in the workplace, and how to bring out the best in oneself.

Price: \$5.00 M/O#: 0110

Letters printed here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the SGI-USA or the *World Tribune*. In the "Mailbox," we will publish members' comments, suggestions and questions as they pertain to the *World Tribune*. Because of volume, not all letters can be printed, but they are all read. All letters are subject to condensation.

Please include signature, mailing address and telephone number. Pseudonyms and initials will not be used. Send letters to "Mailbox," *World Tribune*, 525 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90401; or e-mail at wt@sgi-usa.org.



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

OUR ORGANIZATION

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

OUR PURPOSE

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

OUR PRACTICE

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

OUR HERITAGE

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

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THE Fine Print

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GREETINGS

To Romain McGown, Carson, Calif.: Mom, I don't think I ever thanked you for your true "seeking spirit" — because without that, you never would've found out about Nam-myoho-rence-kyo — and the courage to bring it home and share it with us. Even though you and I are the only two practicing, together we can change our immediate family karma and reach our descendants. You ready? I am! Let's continue to chant, fight and win, **NO MATTER WHAT!!**
I love you. Your daughter, Lisa

I want to thank my dear, beloved members of Hyattsville (Maryland) District.... Universal Group, especially, for the wonderful 40th birthday party! Thank you!!! I hope we all have many more to come...and let's keep dancing, chanting and shakubuku-ing....
Love, Cathi King

To Tina Turner:
Thank you, Tina, for your unceasing efforts to promote kosen-rufu. Those efforts include the movie *What's Love Got To Do With It?* as well as your various interviews wherein you again and again explain our practice, taking the interviewer deeper and deeper into the heart of the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren's teachings. The difficult task of propagation is much easier when your message has already been heard. Thank you again.
Judy Stelljes, Lincoln, Neb.

Salutations to my SGI friends in New York City! I will be attending the University of British Columbia in Canada for an MFA degree in theater directing this September.
Warmest wishes and peace,
Gregory Berry

Sr. Martin Adachi —
Muchas gracias.
Roberto Calderon,
Bellevue, Wash.

Hello, Buffalo, N.Y. I miss you all: mom, sis, jess, guy, becky, chris, dawn, nicky, sis, an-nise, maddie, ellie, ben, sis, and dave. Did I forget to say sis? Congratulations Mary and Tim. Yo, tell me what you want, what you really really want, Suzy Spice. Go, John B.! And to ALL my friends in the SGI, fairy tales can come true. Keep chanting!
Love, Stephanie

AWARDS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Until I can contact each of you in person, I want to let my dear friends in the SGI know that the results of the N.Y. Bar are out: the highest failure rate ever — 53 percent did not make it. But THIS TIME I DID! I passed. Thank you ALL for your constant daimoku and support.
Nancy E. Kennedy, Rye, N.Y.



Photo by LISA HOLLIS

'Never Give Up' was the motto of the California AIDS Ride. Please see the photo essay on page 6 of this issue.

I would like to congratulate Larry Frazier for receiving his diploma at Lampasas High School in Lampasas, Texas. He graduated on May 29. On May 30, Amy O. received her diploma at Killeen High School as well. Congratulations to Larry and Amy!! You made it!
Barbara Frazier, Killeen, Texas

On May 12, SGI member Lynda Christopher of Tucson, Ariz., was issued a U.S. Patent Des. 394,177 Toilet Paper Dispenser. The new design was created in hopes of replacing the one currently used in homes and hospitals across the nation, shielding toilet paper from contamination by airborne materials. Congratulations.

Congratulations to Diane Friese of Lake Zurich, Ill., for receiving her master of arts degree from DePaul University on June 13 with the 100th graduating class of that university. From this moment on.... Go, Mom, you rock!
Love, Ari

Congratulations to graduating high school seniors: Cheryl Yiadom, Monica McDuffie and Kimberly Parks! You DID it!!! And we are so proud!!!! You are the shining stars of your class, and the world is yours! Never forget your dreams; focus on daimoku, and you'll ALWAYS win!
Peace and love, Ariana,
Washington, D.C. Region

I would like to congratulate the Killeen Chapter's YWD for a wonderful general meeting on June 13 & 14. We did a really good job and everything for the

meeting! I would like to express my thanks to Robin Parsons, Joni Jordan, and Una Robinson on a job well done!!
Thanks, girls! Barbara Frazier,
Killeen, Texas

Congrats, Sue Hutchins (Artist!) on your opening reception at Santa Monica Fine Art Studios! You rock (especially Stonehenge)....
<http://www.pureartmtk.com/pureart-gallery/susan>

MILESTONES
Linda and Rob Stormont (Linda's maiden name is Fastner) have had an addition to their family! Little fortune baby Siubhan Susan Stormont was born on April 27 at 7:14 a.m. in Chicago.

To Mr. and Mrs. Profoundly Fabulous of Littleton, Colo.: Happy 36th anniversary on July 24! Thank you for being such wonderful parents.
Love, your (other) daughter, Lisa

Joseph Pejovic joyfully welcomes his new brother to the world! Daniel Sasha Pejovic was born May 19 in Seattle. He was 9 pounds, 21 inches. Proud parents are Ivko and Debbie of Edmonds, Wash.

In memory of Christina McBee from Riverside, Calif., who passed away June 10, 1997, after a brief interlude with cancer:
She had been a longtime member of the SGI, devoting more than 20 years to helping members, assisting senior leaders, and following SGI President Ikeda's guidance. She worked hours on end for kosen-

rufu.... She believed in Nam-myoho-rence-kyo with all her heart. I don't remember ever hearing her complain...however, I do remember her constant encouragement.... She was a true Buddha, in every sense of the word. I miss her, but her smile lives on in my memory of her.
Thank you, Jaci Kasperski

LOST & FOUND
Hamjambo watu wote waliojikaza kwa kosenfu ya Tanzania? (How are y'all who are exerting yourselves to Tanzania kosen-rufu?) Let's make contact with each other for the future of Tanzania kosen-rufu.
Please send your message to George Sakurai, 3410 Taft Blvd. #12005, Wichita Falls, Texas 76308-2095, telephone (940) 767-7351 or e-mail iwao.sakurai@mohican.mwsu.edu.

I am looking for Maria Marsh. We began our practice in Redwood City District, Redwood City, Calif. I am so sorry we lost touch. Please write or contact me at catfur@pacbell.net or call (650) 369-8281.
With love, Margie Clark

Mahalo (thank you) to Karen Dennis of Detroit, who introduced me to this wonderful, eye-opening way of life during the 1975 Hawaii convention. Where are you? Aloha to Margaret Bird, my first shakubuku living somewhere in Canada. Please, ladies, contact me. *Me ke aloha pumehana.*
Dani Settle, 1543 Pele Street,
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813,
(808) 524-6798

To Lanis Blythe: Where are you now? I would love to be in touch with you again. How is Utah? Please e-mail me at GDImock@aol.com or call (703) 922-4526.
Love, Gioia

I used to be part of Silver Lake District. What a great district and chapter we had, composed of great members and leaders and good bodhisattvas all around. My best memories are from Silver Lake District, and although I am still in touch with some of the members, some just don't seem to be found. I want to give thanks to the

World Tribune staff for the column of 'Lost & Found.' Hopefully now I can get back in touch with some of the Silver Lake folks.

Thank you, 'Chichi' Castanedas (254) 519-7863; Acasta6887@aol.com

EVENTS
In San Francisco: The Bay Area-SGI sponsored a contingent in the Gay Pride Parade, held June 28. Members crossing all divisions and affiliations marched to kick off a new propagation campaign, expecting more than 500 guests at an introductory meeting on July 12. All SGI members are welcome July 12! Call (415) 270-4068 or e-mail delrod@ix.netcom.com for more info.

SPANISH MEETING: Distritos Unidos Universal. July 20, 7:00 p.m. at the Long Beach Community Center, 3545 Long Beach Blvd., Long Beach, Calif. 90807, (562) 424-7777. For more information, please contact Arnald Alvarado at (310) 516-2073.

The Rainbow Lotus Group in San Diego is hosting a Culture Revue, featuring performances by members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community, Sunday, Aug. 16, at Kearny Mesa High School. For more information, please contact Mary Rodriguez at (619) 482-0114.

COMMENTS
The sudden death of Phil Hartman was a shock May 28. He wasn't an SGI member, and I don't know if he knew of the Gohonzon, but he got me to think about my life and to appreciate my normal 9 to 5 job and the good health I enjoy with my family and self.... His humor will be remembered.
Philip Ray, Ventura, Calif.

Can we please stop talking about leaders and members and just see everyone as a human being?! Why are leaders so attached to titles? Also, can we stop referring to young men as YMDs and young women as YWDs? We're individuals, NOT organizational divisions! I'm tired of a lot of the BS in our SGI-speak.
From Steve in Denver

SEND IT TO FINE PRINT!

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• To be considered for publication, you must send your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address (if you have one) along with your message.

• Send your message to Fine Print, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401, or e-mail fineprint@sgi-usa.org.

Ad space is offered free of charge. No dating or pen pal ads. No advertising for products, services or commercial transactions. Please keep in mind that we can't guarantee a specific publication date for your message.

SPECIAL
PULLOUT
SECTION

FRIENDS for Peace

JULY 3, 1998



'GOOD HEALTH' from NEW JERSEY!

At a recent Boys and Girls Group meeting in New Jersey, the kids all helped to make a fruit salad. And then they ate it! 🍌



A HAND-SHAKE in ORLANDO

In Orlando, Fla., (left to right) Chelsea Palmer, Nissa Askins and Katie Pesante show off the daimoku charts they made with the outline of their hands. 🍌

ASK AMANDA



Dear Amanda,

I have a friend whom I've known since kindergarten. He has not only been my neighbor but my best friend ever since we moved to Colorado. All of a sudden our friendship has become, "Houston, we have a problem." We don't get along as we used to, and we fight a lot more. I don't really know what's wrong, so I'm writing for some advice. What should I do?

— Desperate in Denver

Dear Denver,

Friendships don't always stay the same. Just like people, friendships are living, breathing things that are always growing and changing. They can hit road-blocks, too. This obstacle of "not getting along" is a challenge to you to take your friendship to the next level. It's easy to be friends with someone when everything is going along well. It's much harder to ride through the rough parts and still see your friend's Buddha nature. But there is a reason why you became friends in the first place, and there's a reason why you've stayed friends for so long. You owe it to yourself and him to get deeper into the dirt of why you are fighting so much. It may not be pretty. In fact, it may be pretty ugly. But the only way to lift that dirt is to look at it and talk about it, and then figure out what to do with it. Sometimes, the most important things to do are the most difficult. Some of my closest friends didn't become really close until after a fight so big I thought it was our "last fight." Let your friend know that you miss him, and you want to be good friends again. A good talk can clear the air and make it easy for you to once again communicate in a clear and honest way. That kind of communication can deepen your friendship in the long run.

— Amanda

Thanks to Sara Algase, Amanda's friend in New York, for sending us her answer.

Hey, kids, what's on your mind? Ask Amanda. She'll share a little Buddha wisdom with you to put in your backpack. Send letters to:

"Ask Amanda" c/o "Friends for Peace"
525 Wilshire Blvd.

Santa Monica, Calif. 90401

Don't forget to include your name (and what name you want Amanda to use), age, phone number and address.



Hi From OAKLAND!

Boys and girls send greetings from Oakland, which is very near San Francisco. 🍌

EXPERIENCES

RYAN HARVEY, 8

Fallston, Md.

I love sports. One recent Sunday I had two baseball games scheduled. That morning I felt kind of lazy and decided not to chant as much as I usually do. The first game went very badly for me — I struck out twice and our team lost. I only had a few minutes between games, but I went home and chanted again that I would do better the second game. On my first pitch, I hit a double and drove in two runs! Then I got a walk and then a single. Our team won 14-7. Since then, I've been chanting much better in the morning as well as practicing hard on my swing!



MICHAEL CARROLL, 6

Washington, D.C.

My experience takes place when I asked my mommies for a dog. They said, "No, no, no — dogs are too much trouble, and they stink!"

So I chanted for a dog. I asked them again, and they still said no. But this time they said I could have dog when I was 10 years old. Then I could take care of it myself.

I chanted again, and this time they said YES!

Now we have a wonderful dog named Miko.



POETRY

SEA STORM

by Chance Brooks, 10
Scottsdale, Ariz.

Wave a rolling by the minute
never ending
storms a brewing on the rolling waves
pounding shores like big and little hammers
50 minutes, 5 minutes, 1 minute
that is the question on the tide



YOUNG WINNERS IN EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

by Barbara Terao
Evanston, Il.

Every year in Evanston, a city just north of Chicago, one student is chosen from each elementary school for a Justin Wynn award honoring the students' leadership,

sportsmanship and citizenship. Selected by teachers and principals, the students are recognized at a banquet of 500 people where the mayor of Evanston presents them with their gold award and a scholarship for summer camp.

During the last two years, two of the recipients of the award have been SGI members. Coincidence? The members of Evanston District (Great Lakes Headquarters) don't think so. It is no surprise to see children raised with Buddhist values become humanistic leaders, even in the fourth grade.

Fourth-grader Avery Scurlock of Lincoln School received his award on May 17 of this year. Stephanie Terao of Kingsley School (now in Haven Middle School) received the award in 1996 and is part of the Justin Wynn Leadership Academy, taking initiative in the community, which Avery will now join as well. Both young people practice Buddhism with their families in Evanston District.

Whether born into the practice as Stephanie was, or learning about Buddhism in the last year alongside his mother as Avery has, these young people show actual proof of the beauty of this practice for all of us.

At the May discussion meeting where Avery and Stephanie gave their experiences, their mothers made the additional point that Buddhist practice has helped them be better parents in order to nurture future leaders.

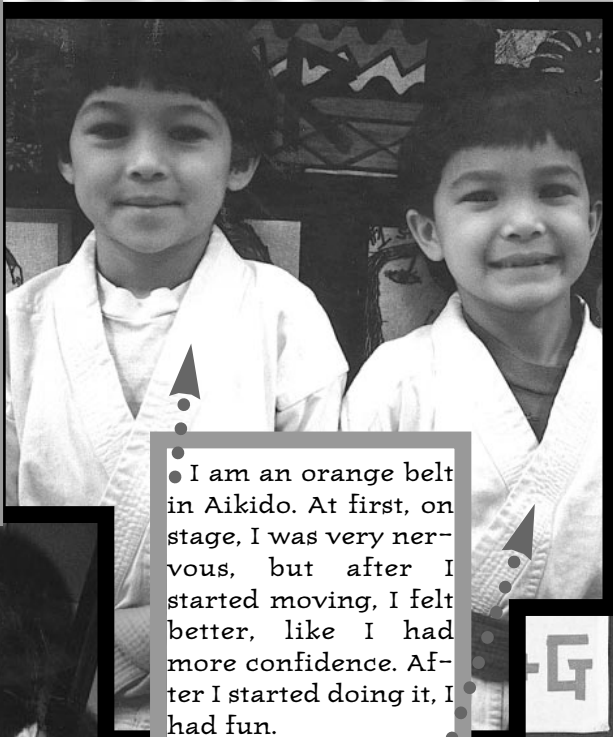


"FRIENDS for Peace" thanks everyone who contributed to this issue, including designer Ellen Brown. Please send your experiences, essays, questions or news article to: "Friends for Peace," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.



WINTERFEST *in* SEATTLE

IN FEBRUARY, THE SEATTLE BOYS AND GIRLS GROUP MET AND LEARNED ABOUT NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM AND SHARED SOME OF THEIR MANY TALENTS, INCLUDING A DRAMATIC READING OF *WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE* BY ELENA CHAPMAN, 7, AND AN AIKIDO DEMONSTRATION BY TYKO AND DYLAN SHOJI.



I am an orange belt in Aikido. At first, on stage, I was very nervous, but after I started moving, I felt better, like I had more confidence. After I started doing it, I had fun.

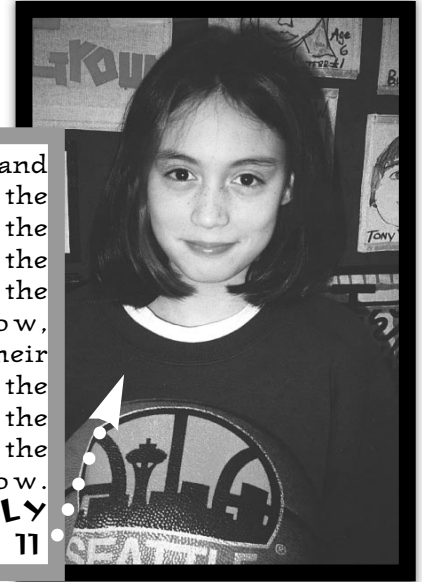
- TYKO SHOJI, 8.

In Aikido, the roll is very important because if you do it wrong, you can get seriously injured.

- DYLAN SHOJI,

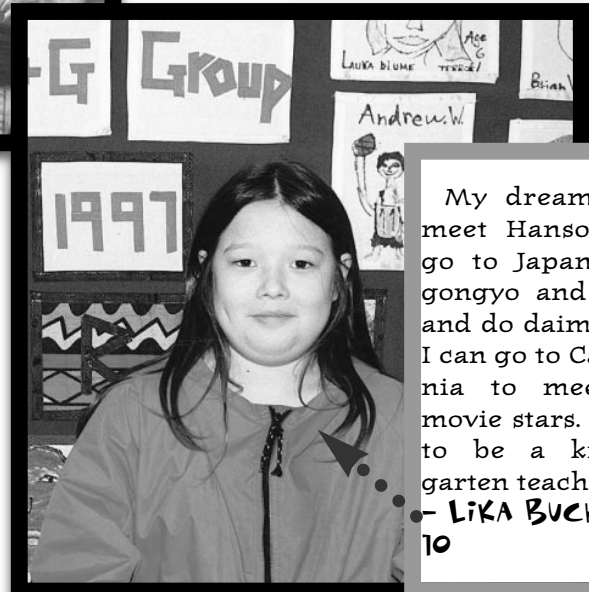
Boys and girls of the SGI are the kids at the end of the rainbow, and their work is the place at the end of the rainbow.

- EMILY RING, 11



I liked when she read *Wild Things*. I liked the performances and when they played the piano.

- DANTE GARCIA, 7



My dream is to meet Hanson and go to Japan. I do gongyo and chant and do daimoku so I can go to California to meet the movie stars. I want to be a kindergarten teacher.

- LIKA BUCHANAN, 10

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN...?

GROWN-UPS ACTING LIKE KIDS? On the last weekend in May, a lot of parents and adults who work with the Boys and Girls Groups met at the Florida Nature and Culture Center to learn ways to help kids have fun at meetings and learn more about Buddhism. And they had to act just like kids! Do you see any faces here of

people you know? They're all saying hi to YOU, and they have a message for you:

YOU ARE ALL VERY IMPORTANT!



THE WISE MASTER

by Heather Forest

There once was a teacher who lived with a great number of students in a run-down temple. The students supported themselves by begging for food in the bustling streets of a nearby town. Some of the students grumbled about their humble living conditions. In response, the old master said one day, "We must repair the walls of this temple. Since we occupy ourselves with study and meditation, there is no time to earn the money we will need. I have thought of a simple solution."

All the students eagerly gathered closer to hear the words of their teacher. The master said, "Each of you must go into the town and steal goods that can be sold for money. In this way, we will be able to do the good work of repairing our temple."

The students were startled at this suggestion from their wise master. But since they respected him greatly, they assumed he must have good judgment and did not protest.

The wise master said sternly, "In order not to defile our excellent reputation by committing illegal and immoral acts, please be certain to steal when no one is looking. I do not want anyone to be caught."

When the teacher walked away, the students discussed the plan among themselves. "It is wrong to steal," said one. "Why has our wise master asked us to do this?"

Another retorted, "It will allow us to build our temple, which is a good result."

They all agreed that their teacher was wise and just and must have a sensible reason for making such an unusual request. They set out eagerly for the town, promising each other that they would not disgrace their school by getting caught. "Be careful," they called to one another. "Do not let anyone see you stealing."

All the students except one young boy set forth. The wise master approached him and asked, "Why do you stay behind?"

The boy responded, "I cannot follow your instructions to steal where no one will see me. Wherever I go, I am always there watching. My own eyes will see me steal."

The wise master tearfully embraced the boy. "I was just testing the integrity of my students," he said. "You are the only one who has passed the test!"

The boy went on to become a great master himself.

Reprinted with permission from *Wisdom Tales From Around the World*. For information on this and other books, contact August House publishers at info@augusthouse.com.

About the Mentor and Disciple Relationship

WHAT MAKES SOMEONE A HERO?

Heroes are artists, scientists, doctors, nurses, athletes, politicians and teachers. There are lots of stories and myths about heroes from around the world. One thing that all heroes have in common is: **Each hero makes a unique and lasting contribution to the lives of those who surround and follow him or her.**

WHAT IS A MENTOR?

A dictionary definition of *mentor* is "a wise and trusted leader." Speaking about his mentor, Josei Toda, SGI President Daisaku Ikeda states:

Most of all, however, I learned from his example. The burning commitment to peace that remained unshaken throughout his imprisonment was something he carried with him his entire life. It was from this, and from the profound compassion that characterized each of his interactions, that I most learned. Ninety-eight percent of what I am today, I learned from him. (*SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's Addresses in the United States, June/July 1996*, p. 70).

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

A dictionary lists *disciple* as "a person who accepts the teachings of a leader and helps to spread them."

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA SAYS:

The mentor-disciple relationship, in fact, forms the crucial foundation in Buddhism. We might say that everything is determined by whom a person chooses as a mentor in life. The future is also determined by the kind of disciple the mentor has. (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 2, p. 223)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1) What do you think President Ikeda learned from President Toda?
- 2) What do you think you can learn from President Ikeda?
- 3) How are a hero and a mentor alike?
- 4) What does having a mentor mean to you?
- 5) Do you have a mentor? What can you learn from him or her to help you?
- 6) Can you become a mentor?
- 7) What does being a disciple mean to you?

A MENTOR QUILT/SONG/POEM/FLAG/SCULPTURE ACTIVITY

Think of someone you admire, someone you feel contributed something of value either to your life personally or society. This person may be a friend, a family member or someone you have heard of but never met.

Create a portrait or bring a picture of that person, and write a label describing who that person is and what he or she has done. Use this picture/portrait and make a collage or quilt. If each person in your Boys and Girls

Group made his or her own 8-inch or 10-inch square, you could put them all together in a giant quilt.

Try creating a different type of tribute to your mentor. For example, a sculpture, flag, quilt square, poem or song.

While working on your project: Share with one another what you have learned from your mentor. Discuss what all mentors have in common.

HEY KIDS

Do you want to be a correspondent for



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

Name: _____
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