



**DIALOGUE**  
SGI President Ikeda and others discuss the importance of challenging ourselves to learn and grow throughout our lives.

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**EXAM**  
The Elementary Exam is scheduled for Oct. 25. Here are the questions from which the exam will be compiled.

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No. 3200

JULY 17, 1998

MURRAY SINGER, CLEVELAND, OHIO

## The Chance To Enjoy Life

The last thing Murray Singer wanted was a mission. So no one was more surprised than he when he found it working with inmates at Grafton Correctional Institution.

By TERRY ELLIS  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Murray Singer has found a mission somewhere most people avoid — behind prison walls. Not that he wanted this or any mission. He wasn't looking for one; in fact, the concept of mission made him angry. All he wanted was to be happy. Then a fellow SGI leader in Cleveland, who'd always been a good friend, asked him to substitute on a visit to Grafton Correctional Institution.

"I owed him big-time, so how could I refuse?" says Mr. Singer. "I really did not want to go. I grew up in a tough neighborhood in the Bronx. I struggled to get away from the streets. I didn't want to associate with criminals. Entering prison for the first time was a real jolt to my senses.... The tension was almost overwhelming."

He was scared and nervous, but by the time he left he felt revitalized. He determined to go back again. "I had found my mission. Or my mission had found

me," he says.

As he speaks, Murray Singer's voice is confident without being inflexible. And there's an undertone of humor. (Being able to laugh is something he attributes to his Buddhist practice.) It's a voice of strength that comes from living life in all its different shades.

Mr. Singer may never have wanted a mission but was always a driven man: He knew what he wanted to accomplish before he died, and he expected to be dead by the time he was 47. Both his parents had died in their 40s. When he reached that point, Mr. Singer appeared to have accumulated all the trappings of happiness — home, family and job. But he lived in an internal prison plagued by recurring depression. "I had accomplished all of my goals — except to be happy. I never dreamed of that," says Mr. Singer.

Then, 10 years ago, he discovered this Buddhism. Now 57, he has recovered a joy in living that affects everyone around him, including people sentenced to prison terms in Ohio.

An engineer by training, he works for an executive recruiting firm in Cleveland. "This practice has been a learning experience for me. I used to see everything in a negative light, and I was always angry," he says. "I've learned to take everything in a positive way. Everything that

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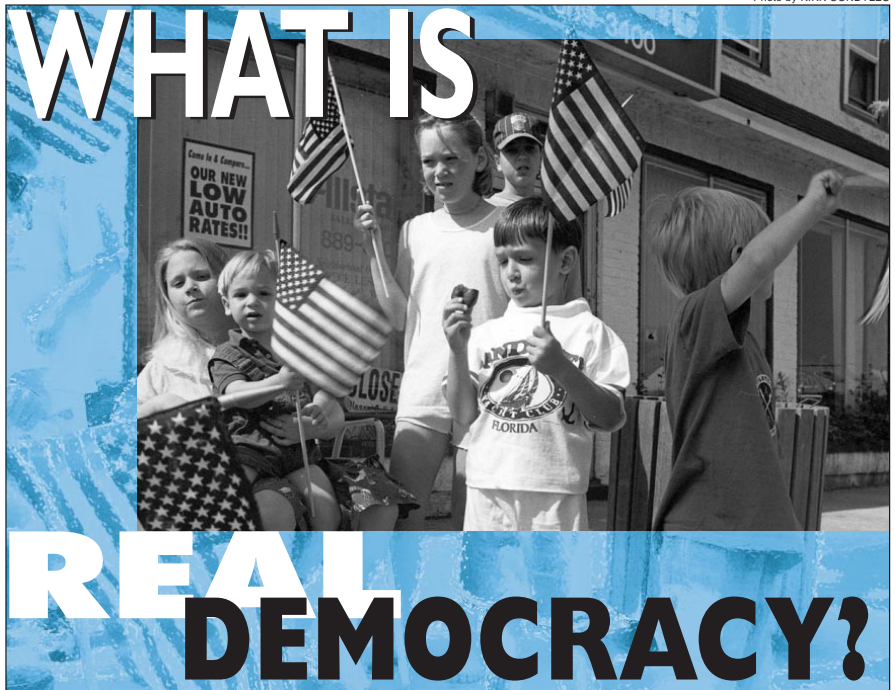


Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

The age of the people will be an age when we are strong, wise and are the true leaders of society, says President Ikeda in this essay. 'We of the Soka Gakkai have built a movement for a true grass-roots democracy,' he declares.

By HO GOKU

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S PEN NAME

Does true democracy exist in Japan? What has the response of our government been to the recent financial crisis? To protect big, powerful concerns at the expense of the small

and defenseless.

What is the bureaucracy's attitude? It completely lacks the spirit to serve the people and tends to regard itself as superior. And the people, inferior.

And our politicians? They say one thing and do another, paying lip service to the sovereignty of the people when election time rolls around — when, in fact, they couldn't care less about the public benefit. All that really interests them is personal gain.

What about the media? A certain sector of it is shameless, cozying up to those in power and spreading, without the slightest moral compunction, fabricated news that violates human rights.

Surveys show that nearly 70 percent of Japanese think that Japan is heading in a negative direction. Yet society is pervaded

with a sense of powerlessness and resignation — the feeling that, no matter what one says or does, nothing will change.

Seven hundred years ago, Nichiren Daishonin wrote, "We live today in a time of trouble, where there is little that ordinary people can do" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 281). Those words apply to contemporary Japan.



In 1946, immediately after the war, Mr. Toda's publishing company, Nihon Shogakkan, published one of the first books in Japan on democracy, the first volume of a work entitled *A Comprehensive Course on Democracy*. The word democ-

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### STUDY

What is faith anyway? Lisa Jones tackles this question.

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### CHINESE

Gosho study material for August — 'Letter to Ko-ama Gozen.'

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### PHOTO ESSAY

A pictorial look at the New York Boys and Girls Group's graduation exercises.

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## Opening Doors

By MARK KAPLAN

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

**“All scriptures or teachings, from whatever source, are ultimately the revelation of Buddhist truth. They are not non-Buddhist teachings.” (“The Gift of Rice,” *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 269)**

If, as the Nirvana Sutra passage here quoted by Nichiren Daishonin says, all scriptures or teachings whatever their source reveal Buddhist truth, then I feel it is up to us as Buddhists to uncover this Buddhism in other people’s teachings; to create a door, if you will, into other people’s belief systems that will lead to Buddhism.



### In My Life

NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS IN ACTION

I recently visited with my brother who, after a rather coercive introduction to the SGI in 1986, wanted nothing to do with it. When I visited, he had just read a Christian book that said people choose their circumstances and problems so that they can grow.

Therefore, shrinking from difficulties is pointless and impossible.

My heart leapt for joy. I couldn’t imagine a more Buddhist perspective on Christianity. He was showing me the door in his belief system that led to Buddhism.

A similar thing happened with my dad. When I visit my family, Buddhist concepts inevitably weave their way into the conversation, usually without Buddhist labels that would lead to their immediate rejection. I didn’t realize the effect these conversations were having until one night, at a recent Passover dinner, my dad asked, “So Mark, what does our Buddhist scholar have to say?”

After I had finished saying something Buddhist and scholarly, he said with a mischievous smile: “Well, that’s Judaism.”

“In my opinion, we have to abandon the tendency to judge people based on their religion,” writes SGI President Ikeda in *The New Human Revolution*, volume 5. I’m convinced that our respect for an individual’s sincere desire to grow and be happy will naturally lead us to see Buddhism in their religion or beliefs. ☸

## FAITH

# Entirely Different

WHAT A

## Concept

ON THE BASIC IDEAS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM

By LISA JONES

STAFF WRITER

Faith is the most fundamental concept in Buddhism and perhaps the most difficult to define. In his writings, Nichiren Daishonin repeatedly stresses the primacy of faith. For example: “Faith alone is what really matters” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 246); “The Gohonzon is found in faith alone” (MW-1, 213); and “Faith is the cause for wisdom” (MW-6, 216).

It could be said that the Daishonin’s utmost desire is for us to have faith in the Lotus Sutra — that is, the Gohonzon, according to the Daishonin’s teachings — and in our own potential for Buddhahood.

But what is faith? A belief? A hope? A conviction?

In a sense, it’s all of this and more, including a will to trust, a desire to become absolutely happy and the underlying motivation of our every thought, word and

deed. In his writings, the Daishonin uses for *faith* the word *shin*, a noun that means belief, trust or faith. He doesn’t analyze the word itself, which implies that he and his readers shared a common understanding of the term.

Generally, the Daishonin talks about faith in two ways: its function and its expression.

As a function, faith is the fundamental cause (and effect) of attaining Buddhahood. The Daishonin writes: “The one word — *faith* — is the seed of enlightenment” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 725); “The word *faith* is a sharp sword to cut the fundamental darkness” (*ibid.*); “Faith is the source of the way” (*ibid.*, p. 97); “Faith is the mother of benefit” (*ibid.*).

He also asserts: “‘Knowledge without faith’ describes those who may be knowledgeable about the Lotus Sutra but do not believe in it. These people will never attain Buddhahood. Those of ‘faith without knowledge’ may lack knowledge but believe, and can attain Buddhahood” (MW-1, 260). This suggests that faith isn’t an intellectual exercise so much as a function of one’s heart. At the same time, Buddhism teaches that faith can be deepened through practice and study, suggesting that we can enhance our faith through intellect and conscious effort.

Ultimately, faith is developed through experience — by continually challenging ourselves and our circumstances, ever-deepening our understanding of and trust in the Gohonzon and our own Buddhahood.

In Buddhism, faith is expressed through human behavior. The Daishonin writes that “what we call faith is nothing extraordinary. As a woman cherishes her husband, as a man will give his life for his wife, as parents will not abandon their children, or as a child refuses to leave his mother, so should we put our trust in the Lotus Sutra...and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. This is what is meant by faith” (MW-5, 303). In other words, faith is not something supernatural that has to be bestowed on us by a religious authority, nor does it involve blind obedience.

Rather, faith can be understood in terms of ordinary human emotions and relationships. Further, one could say that faith in the Gohonzon is expressed through bodhisattva action — and where there’s bodhisattva action, there’s faith. While faith is, in this way, a simple thing, at the same time it’s perhaps too complex to address in 600 words.

As Josei Toda used to say, “To understand something intellectually is easy; but to grasp it through faith is entirely different.”

Thirteen in a series

## Don’t Look Down on Us

### STANDS TO REASON

LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM THE WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN

By JEFF FARR

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**Do not look down on my disciples!... Do not despise them! Do not look on them with contempt!** (“On the Four Stages of Faith and the Five Stages of Practice,” *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 225)

How can I change my karma from the past? A question many of us sometimes ask. This was the main question in a list of questions that the believer Toki Jonin asked Nichiren Daishonin, leading to this answer in letter form, written probably in 1277.

The year 1277 was a crucial one in the Daishonin’s life: Some of his staunchest supporters were being persecuted for their faith, for their support of him, and he was doing his best to encourage them all. Shijo Kingo was having serious troubles with his

boss, Lord Ema (Kingo’s peers had a smear campaign going against him, which influenced Ema). Munenaka Ikegami was being disowned (for the second time) by his father, a Kamakura government official under Ryokan’s influence. And the Daishonin was telling all his followers to keep chanting in the face of all persecutions, to keep changing their karma through perseverance.

To their persecutors, his message was also loud and clear: “Do not look down on my disciples!” The Daishonin wanted to say this to everyone in Japan.

More than 700 years later, Nikken’s demolition of the Grand Main Temple is a modern example of a powerful person looking down on the Daishonin’s disciples and persecuting them. Eight million disciples contributed the funds for the temple’s construction, and Nikken now says that (almost all of) these 8 million have become slanderers. Thus, the building has to be torn down.

In a letter to a U.S. congressman who protested the demolition, Nichiren Shoshu Overseas Bureau Chief Kotoku Obayashi says that the SGI members have “tainted” the high sanctuary; we have “perverted” it. “Purity” must be restored through the demolition.

What?!

If Nikken believed that we were Buddhas or would become Buddhas or even had the potential to become Buddhas, wouldn’t it be difficult for him to just throw away the magnificent temple we gave to Taiseki-ji? Or to excommunicate us twice, telling us that he was shutting our door to enlightenment? When the Daishonin says in the same letter that his disciples “are like an infant emperor wrapped in swaddling clothes, or a great dragon who has just been born” (MW-6, 225), he asks us to see human beings not only for what they are today but for what they will become someday. In essence, we *are* Buddhas. We and our descendants will prove Nikken wrong.

Throwing away the donations of millions of disciples. Excommunicating the millions. Deeming the millions who do not agree with you to be slanderers. Writing them off — forever. Looking down on them. They “cling to grandiose edifices and begrudge money they gave long ago as offerings,” Obayashi writes.

If religion is to serve the people, what kind of a religion is it that views the people this way?

A non-religious religion.

A religion not worthy of support.

Fourteen in a series

# Citizens Cope With Northern Florida Wildfires

**Almost completely surrounded by Florida's fires, an SGI-USA family joins the exodus of evacuees. 'Material things you can replace,' says Carmen Nazario, 'but life...that's irreplaceable.'**

**By TERRY ELLIS**  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Palm Coast, Fla.: Joshua Cummings, 7, was watching television around 6:00 p.m. on July 2 when the news was interrupted by a loud noise and a blank screen.

"They said nothing was wrong with the television," Joshua reports. Nothing like this had ever happened in his history of TV watching, but Joshua wasn't scared. Then a serious voice announced that his neighborhood was under a mandatory evacuation order.

The worst fires in Florida history have charred more than 450,000 in northeast and central Florida since Memorial Day, forcing the evacuation of some 120,000 people.

When the television went blank, Joshua's grandmother, Carmen Nazario, was moving around the house already, packing essentials into the family



Firefighters scramble as a firewall approaches their truck and a home in rural Scottsmoor, Fla., July 2. SGI-USA members were among the many citizens who supported local relief efforts.

van. For several weeks she had lived with an ominous, "depressing" cloud of smoke and falling ash. Other neighborhoods near her Palm Coast home already had been evacuated, and she wanted to be ready.

For her, the essentials included the Gohonzon, a few articles of clothing, memories captured in photographs, and pans to bake a wedding cake for a friend. Mrs.

Nazario, a cake decorator at a local Publix grocery store, wasn't about to stick it out as some of her neighbors were doing.

"Fires were already burning in other parts of the county, to the north, west and south of us. We were almost completely surrounded. It was very, very scary," says Mrs. Nazario. "Some people stayed to sleep, until they were forcefully removed. That's fool-

ish. Material things you can replace, but life—your pets and the people in your life—that's more important. That's irreplaceable."

An SGI-USA member for one-and-a-half years, Mrs. Nazario took time to call Luisa Moore, her group leader. There was no answer. Then the phone rang, and it was Luisa. She already had left home and was staying in a hotel in St. August-

ine. She wanted to make sure Mrs. Nazario and her family also had somewhere to go.

They did. After a night stopover in Jacksonville, Mrs. Nazario, her family and other relatives took a caravan of four cars for the seven hour trip to Alabama to an aunt's house. Along the way, Mrs. Nazario and her mother chanted.

"Until we got to Jacksonville there were other fires [along the road]," says Mrs. Nazario. "We were in awe looking at the glow of that fire."

The next day, the remaining residents of Flagler County — some 40,000 people — were evacuated. As firefighters from around the country mobilized, local SGI-USA members supported with financial donations, as well as food, clothing and necessities such as towels, eye drops and food packing materials. Others cooked hot meals for the firefighters. Everyone offered prayers for the safety of all residents in the area. While 45-50 homes were burned in Flagler County, no deaths have been linked to the blazes.

When Mrs. Nazario and her family returned to their home on July 6, the only damage they found was to the air conditioning — caused by internal temperatures rising to 98 degrees. Luisa's house, too, was unscathed.

*With reporting by David Rubin*

# Local Chapter Supports Community Play

**By LYNETTE YETTER**  
LOS ANGELES CORRESPONDENT

What does it mean to take our Buddhist practice into the community?

In Los Angeles, about 50 SGI-USA members from several cities threw every ounce of their energy and commitment into supporting Hathaway Family Resource Center in the successful production of the play *Isis and Osiris*. The message of the play is that every individual is unique and precious, and that all members of the human family need to work together.

The Hathaway House is a well-known community association that provides day care for low-income children, alcohol and drug counseling, and after-school activities, among other services.

The play was performed on June 6 in San Pascual Park in Highland Park. This Latino



General Director Zaitso receives one of many certificates for the SGI-USA.

neighborhood is better known for violence, gangs and poverty than for cultural events.

Tattoos on some of the more than 60 young actors peeked out from under their elaborate, satin Egyptian costumes. The stage was an imaginary River Nile that

ran across the park. The audience eagerly followed the actors as the action of the bilingual play moved from site to site. Pride and an increased sense of self-worth could be felt in the air.

The production had been in

danger of being canceled due to lack of support before SGI-USA volunteers swept in with high spirits. Beginning with one person, member after member of Glen Rock Chapter volunteered to help, becoming a tidal force that touched the searching hearts of neighbors. Copies of the *World Tribune* were snatched up like hotcakes at the SGI information booth at the accompanying festival.

To express their appreciation, the City of Los Angeles and the California State Assembly honored the SGI-USA, several members and other volunteers at an informal dinner on June 30.

The determination of the Glen Rock Chapter members is that, through continued involvement in the community, Highland Park will be transformed from one of the scariest places to live into one of the most desirable: Lotus flowers will burst out of the muddy pond.

## TEMPLE ISSUE HOTLINE

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By HO GOKU

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY

# WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY



**SGI President Ikeda shares the experience of Ken'ichiro Uchida — how he became a successful artist through his great willpower. As illustrator for 'The New Human Revolution,' Uchida's determination is to record the golden history of the Soka Gakkai. 'We are all artists,' President Ikeda explains. 'Great artists of kosen-rufu.'**

To date, I have written more than 1,300 installments of *The New Human Revolution*. The illustrations to the unfolding novel have been very well received. Ken'ichiro Uchida, the illustrator, is 50; he paints in the Western style, as does his wife, Fumiko.

I asked Mr. Uchida to illustrate this essay series as well [in the *Seikyo Shimbun*], and it seems that his wife has helped him a great deal in making these illustrations different in feeling from those he is creating for *The New Human Revolution*. Mr. Uchida's style is rather abstract, but his illustrations for the novel are realistic.

The reason for this, he explained, is that *The New Human Revolution* begins in the 1960s, a period very different from the present in many respects. The streets, the stores and houses, people's clothing and other aspects of daily life have changed considerably since then. Many of today's younger readers hadn't even born yet.

Mr. Uchida felt that for readers to gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of the narrative, he needed to depict each installment's setting and background details as accurately and completely as possible. To do that, he decided to adopt an easily accessible, highly realistic style, capturing ordinary, everyday items such as street advertisements or table ornaments with painstaking clarity and detail.

He also chose to use pencil rather than pen. He believed that the softer, subtler lines of pencil sketches were ideal for depicting the warmth and friendship portrayed in the novel.



Mr. Uchida, born into a Soka Gakkai family, grew up in Kokura, Fukuoka Prefecture. His mother passed away when he was in his last year of junior high. Her love for paintings rubbed off on him, and he aspired to become an artist.

The first installment of *The Human Revolution* was published in the Jan. 1, 1965, *Seikyo Shimbun*, the year he entered high school. When he saw the illustrations, he wished that he might one day become an artist accomplished enough to illustrate such a novel. A dream took root in his youthful heart.

He went to Tokyo and took



Illustration by KEN'ICHIRO UCHIDA

the entrance exam for the Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music but didn't pass. He returned to Kokura, where he found a job in a company.

But he never abandoned his dream of becoming an artist. He went to Tokyo again at age 27 and began to study painting on his own. Taking a job to support himself, he painted in his spare time and eventually began to win awards in national exhibitions. He twice won the top prize in the Western-style painting division of The Third Civilization Exhibition.



When it was decided to publish *The New Human Revolution* in installments in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the editorial depart-

ment had a difficult time deciding whom to ask to contribute the illustrations. There were dozens of candidates.

Although Mr. Uchida was not a well-known painter, his work overflowed with the Gakkai spirit. Finally, he was selected. I had great faith in the promising potential he showed.

As the saying goes, where there's a will, there's a way.



Soon after Mr. Uchida was chosen to illustrate *The New Human Revolution*, he presented me with one of his oil paintings, *Launching an Age of Great Voyages for Peace*. It depicts me standing in front of the statue of Christopher Columbus on Telegraph Hill in San Fran-

cisco during my first visit to the United States.

Mr. Uchida said that the painting came from his ardent wish to record the golden history of the Soka Gakkai. I appreciated his sincere gesture and designated his gift an important treasure of the Soka Gakkai.

I composed a poem for Mr. Uchida and inscribed it on the opening leaf of one of my collections of photographs, which I then presented to him:

*Throughout eternity  
Together  
Artist and writer*



Prior to *The New Human Revolution*, Mr. Uchida had never done this kind of illus-

tration. At first, he sometimes had to redraw a single illustration as many as 20 times before he was satisfied with the result. Even now, he spends an average of seven to eight hours drawing each illustration. I deeply appreciate the earnest effort he makes to illustrate the novel, searching for the perfect way to present each installment visually.

Each day when I see his illustrations, I am filled with gratitude and offer a prayer for the health and prosperity of Mr. Uchida and his family.



Everyone who has gathered in the garden of the Soka Gakkai, cherishing the dream of realizing kosen-rufu, has a noble mission. But without diligent effort, that mission cannot be achieved.

The great Japanese artist Hokusai Katsushika remained active and passionate about his work into his old age. Describing his goal to keep improving himself, he said, "By the time I'm 110, I hope to be able to draw a picture that seems truly, fully alive in every respect."

Fulfilling our mission hinges on having an ever-fresh spirit of challenge. We are all artists — artists painting a masterpiece of human revolution, a vast canvas of happiness and peace for all.

My dearest wish is that every single one of you, as great artists of kosen-rufu, will continue painting an immortal masterwork of life. Today, tomorrow and forever after. ☸

In this essay series, SGI President Ikeda uses his pen name Ho Goku, as he does in *The New Human Revolution*. This series is published as "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*" in the *Seikyo Shimbun*.

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The page numbers that appear in parentheses after each question direct the reader to where the answer can be found in the SGI-USA Study Program Elementary-Level Textbook or the August 1998 issue of Living Buddhism. (The material published in Living Buddhism is taken from Learning From the Goshō: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 73–94, and Lectures on the “Expedient Means” and “Life Span” Chapters of the Lotus Sutra, volume 1 (55–43; 53–83; 133–40).

Most of the Oct. 25 exam questions will be in a multiple-choice format. Correct answers need only be selected from among several possibilities. Therefore, this sample test is more difficult than the actual exam will be. It is not necessary to learn the Japanese-language version of terms or principles. Also, of these sample questions, only 40 to 50 percent will appear on the exam, which is expected to consist of 30-some questions.

The Spanish, Korean and Chinese versions of these sample questions will be available soon either through the organization or in future issues of the World Tribune. The Japanese version of the sample questions will differ slightly from what appears here and will be available through the organization in August.

We hope this information will assist you in preparing for the exam.

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- Q 33–47 Lectures on the “Expedient Means” and “Life Span” Chapters of the Lotus Sutra
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**“Letter to the Brothers”**  
**SGI-USA Study Program Elementary-Level Textbook (pp. 6–13, 22–25, 31–51 57–61, 67–74, 80–84, 89–104)**

1. What was the crisis in the brothers’ lives that prompted Nichiren Daishonin to write this letter? (pp. 22–25)
2. According to this Goshō, what are the three reasons believers meet difficulties? (pp. 22–25)
3. The Daishonin states: “The three groups of men of Learning, however, had to suffer through the period of *sanzen-jintengo*, and the great bodhisattvas, through that of *gohyaku-jintengo*, because of the sin they committed by discarding the Lotus Sutra.” This shows what an unimaginably terrible sin it is. Why is it such a terrible sin to discard the Lotus Sutra? (pp. 31–34)
4. In the quote, “It is even more difficult than for a one-eyed turtle to find a piece of floating sandalwood or for someone to dangle Mount Sumeru from the sky with

**STUDY DEPARTMENT**

# Elementary Examination Sample Questions

The SGI-USA Study Department Elementary-level Examination will be held on Oct. 25. Actual questions for the exam will be based on these sample questions. These sample questions are provided for the benefit of lecturers, exam proctors and those who will be taking the exam.

Photo by CAROL BARNSTEAD



a fiber from a lotus stem,” what does *even more difficult* mean in a broader sense? (pp. 34–35)

5. The Daishonin uses many examples in this Goshō to point out the effects of following an erroneous teacher. One is a quote from Dengyo about the Great Teacher Tz’u-en, which states, “Even though he praises the Lotus Sutra, he destroys its heart.” Explain how someone destroys its heart. (pp. 35–38)
6. In the passage “If one befriends an evil person, he will lose his mind,” the Daishonin stresses the importance of not tolerating evil, because it will lead to abandoning faith. According to this Goshō, what do evil persons fool others into believing? (pp. 38–40)
7. In our lives we possess both fundamental darkness and fundamental enlightenment. The fundamental darkness can manifest itself as the Devil of the Sixth Heaven, which is the source of evil in bad friends. This force can also manifest itself internally as greed, anger and ignorance, which distort our understanding of the correct path of faith. According to this Goshō, what attitudes and actions will help us win in this battle against our fun-

damental darkness? (pp. 54–61)

8. The Daishonin uses the story of Shariputra offering his eye to the Devil of the Sixth Heaven who was posing as a Brahman to emphasize the importance of never abandoning our faith. Why did Shariputra renounce his bodhisattva practice? (pp. 57–61)
9. In the Goshō, the Daishonin encourages the husbands and wives from different perspectives. To the husbands he says: “Women are faint-hearted, and your wives have probably given up. Yet you must grit your teeth and never slacken in your faith.” To the wives he says: “You two wives should have no regrets even if you are harmed by your husbands because of your faith in this teaching. If you both unite in encouraging their faith, you will follow the path of the Dragon King’s daughter and become the model for women attaining enlightenment in the evil Latter Day of the Law.” What is he teaching them about the attitude an individual should have in the midst of hardship? (pp. 80–84)

Answer questions 10 and 11 based on this quote from the *Maka Shikan*: “As practice progresses and understanding grows, the

*three obstacles and four devils emerge, vying with one another to interfere.... You should be neither influenced nor frightened by them. If you fall under their influence, you will be led into the paths of evil. If you are frightened by them, you will be prevented from practicing true Buddhism.”*

10. From where do the three obstacles and four devils originate? (pp. 94–100)
11. Explain why obstacles are confirmation we are progressing toward enlightenment? (pp. 94–100)
12. Although our happiness or enlightenment depends solely on our own efforts, not the actions of others, the Daishonin states: “When a husband is happy, his wife will be fulfilled. If a husband is a thief, his wife will become one, too.” Explain the meaning of these statements. (pp. 100–02)
13. In the passage “One should become the master of his mind rather than let his mind master him,” what does *mastering one’s mind* mean? (pp. 102–04)

**“The Person and The Law”**  
**SGI-USA Study Program Elementary-Level Textbook, pp. 107–27**

14. Through the story of Tokusho Doji and his mud pie, Nichiren Daishonin is making two points about offerings. What are they? (pp. 115, 119)
15. Generally speaking, offerings to the Gohonzon take two forms. Explain them. (pp. 118–19)
16. In commending Tokimitsu’s support over the years, the Daishonin writes, “[O]ne who makes offerings to the votary of the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Day of the Law for even a single day will gain incomparably greater fortune than he would by offering countless treasures to the Buddha for one hundred thousand aeons.” Explain the reason for this, comparing the teaching expounded by “the votary” with that by “the Buddha.” (pp. 115–18)
17. Explain why we call Nichiren Daishonin “the original Buddha”? (p. 116)
18. What is the difference between Buddhahood as revealed by Shakyamuni and Buddhahood as revealed by the Daishonin? (pp. 116–17)

Answer the following questions based on this passage: “Although I live in such a forsaken hovel, deep in this mortal flesh I preserve the ultimate secret Law inherited from Shakyamuni Buddha at Eagle Peak. My heart is where all Buddhas enter nirvana, my tongue, where they turn the wheel of doctrine; my throat, where they are born into this world; and my mouth, where they attain enlightenment.”

19. “I preserve the ultimate secret Law inherited from Shakyamuni Buddha at Eagle Peak.” What does this statement refer to? (p. 121)

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS, FROM PAGE 5**

20. What does the Daishonin mean by "the ultimate secret Law"? (p. 121)
  21. "My heart is where all Buddhas enter nirvana; my tongue, where they turn the wheel of doctrine; my throat, where they are born into this world; and my mouth, where they attain enlightenment." What does Nichiren Daishonin reveal by this statement? (p. 122)
- Read this passage and answer the following question. "Since the Law is supreme, the Person is worthy of respect; since the Person is worthy of respect, the Land is sacred."*
22. Explain this passage in terms of the life of Nichiren Daishonin. (p. 123)

**Ichinen Sanzen (A Life-Moment Possesses 3,000 Realms); SGI-USA Study Program Elementary-Level Textbook, pp. 128-60**

23. The figure *three thousand* is derived from *ichinen sanzen's* component principles. Name these principles. (p. 131)
24. When T'ien-t'ai writes, "Life at each moment is endowed with the ten worlds," he means that within a single moment of life there exists the potential for ten conditions. List the ten worlds. (p. 135)
25. Explain the concept of the mutual possession of the ten worlds. (p. 135)
26. List the ten factors. (p. 136)
27. Explain the difference between the *ichinen sanzen* (a single moment possesses 3,000 realms) of Nichiren Daishonin and that of Shakyamuni. (p. 138)
28. Contrast the six lower worlds with the four noble worlds in how they become manifest. (pp. 144-45)
29. Explain the major differences between the world of Bodhisattva and the worlds of the two vehicles? (p. 146)
30. The factor of "consistency from beginning to end" explains that both the beginning and end are inseparable. What is the "beginning" and what is the "end"? (p. 156)
31. What does the fact that "living beings are no more than a temporary union of the five components" tell us about how we should view our relationship with other "living beings"? (p. 159)
32. The realm of the environment also possesses the ten worlds. What is the difference between the environment and "living beings"? (pp. 159-60)

**Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra volume 1, pp. 5-43, 53-83, 133-40**

33. What are the different expressions of this

34. "manifold Lotus Sutra"? And, what do they have in common? (p. 9)
35. "Votaries of the Lotus Sutra" refers to what people? (p. 12)
36. How did the Daishonin read the Lotus Sutra with his life? (p. 14)
37. What is the benefit of reciting the sutra? (pp. 16-18)
38. What are we praising when we do gongyo? (p. 21)
39. What four conditions must be met for a Buddha to expound the Law? (p. 30)
40. What is the crucial element in creating rengo-kyo? What is the importance of asking such questions? (pp. 73-74)
41. Explain what the concept of the six difficult and nine easy acts means in terms of our practice. (pp. 75-76)
42. Nichiren Daishonin states in this Goshō that "This is a sure indication that if you embrace the Lotus Sutra, you will certainly attain Buddhahood in your present form." Explain in terms of the three properties of the Buddha what it means to attain Buddhahood in your present form? (pp. 77-78)
43. What is the basis for attaining Buddhahood in your present form? (p. 78)
44. Nichiren Daishonin explains that "Nam-

What shouldn't we doubt and what encouragement does the Daishonin give us to back up his statement that we shouldn't doubt? (pp. 89, 91-93)

**Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue (pamphlet)**

60. Nichiren Daishonin warns us that to fail to understand the fundamental principles of faith will make our practice an "endless painful austerity," and that without correct understanding, it would be useless to embrace the Lotus Sutra. In light of the priesthood issue, what constitutes correct faith? (pp. 9-10)
61. "You, yourself, are a true Buddha who possesses the three enlightened properties. You should chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo with this conviction" (MW-1, 30). How is this different from what the Temple teaches? (p. 13)
62. "Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself. The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who embrace the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo" (MW-1, 213). What does Nichiren Shoshu say about this concept? (p. 14)
63. How does the Nichiren Shoshu sect define the master-disciple relationship? (p. 15)
64. The most essential difference between the SGI and Nichiren Shoshu lies in the area of attitude and behavior. Describe that difference specifically. (pp. 15-16)
65. What prompted Makiguchi and Toda to question and defy the high priest's instructions? (p. 18)
66. What are two of the three reasons why the temple claims the Gohonzon issued by the SGI are counterfeit, and why are those reasons not valid? (pp. 21-22)
67. Explain why the Gohonzon issued by the SGI is not counterfeit. (pp. 21-22)
68. Explain why members are exchanging their Nikken-transcribed Gohonzon for one transcribed by Nichikan, and if this means that there is a difference between these Gohonzon. (pp. 23-24)
69. Why shouldn't we visit a Nichiren Shoshu Temple? (pp. 25-26)
70. How should we view the continuous persecution of the SGI and President Ikeda that has been instigated by Nichiren Shoshu? (pp. 27-28)
71. Why don't the SGI and Nichiren Shoshu talk to each other? (pp. 29-30)
72. Is the unity of priesthood and laity essential? If so, why? If not, why not? (p. 30)
73. What effect will the priests' errors have on those who follow them, and what can we each do for those people? (pp. 31-32)
74. How will the temple issue affect the SGI in the future? (p. 33)



Photo by CAROL BARNSTEAD

45. "that time?" (pp. 32-33)
46. What does *wisdom* mean? And how can we obtain it? (pp. 40-42)
47. What practice represents the quintessence of the Daishonin's Buddhism? (pp. 56-57)
48. What is the most difficult undertaking there is? (p. 62)
49. What was the Daishonin's sole intention? (p. 72)
50. Where does the world of Buddhahood appear? (p. 83)
51. What must be understood in order to grasp the vastness and profundity of life in its entirety? (p. 137)
52. What is "the eye of the Buddha"? (p. 138)
53. From the standpoint of the Daishonin's Buddhism, what does the true entity of all phenomena mean? (p. 140)
54. myoho-enge-kyo is only one phrase, but it contains the essence of the sutra." Explain what this quote means. (pp. 78-79)
55. Why does everything become a source of value when we base ourselves on daimoku? (pp. 78-81)
56. What does it mean to "ceaselessly chant daimoku" in terms of our practice? (pp. 84-85)
57. With what spirit should we read the Goshō and what is one indication that we are deeply reading the Goshō? (pp. 84-86)
58. The Daishonin states, "A candle can light up a place that has been dark for billions of years." This phrase explains two important principles of faith. Name these two principles and explain them. (pp. 89-90)
59. In his lecture President Ikeda explains that "It is precisely when faced with challenging circumstances that we need to pray." He also explains what the nature of our faith and prayer should be. Explain what attitudes keep us from realizing our dreams and what will lead us to our dreams. (pp. 91-92)

**"The One Essential Phrase" I & II (Learn- ing From the Goshō, pp. 73-94)**

48. According to Nichiren Daishonin, what was the significance of Lady Myoho-ama asking the question "Can one attain Buddhahood just by chanting Nam-myoho-
58. Explain the relationship between prayer and action. (pp. 92-93)
59. At the end of this letter, Nichiren Daishonin states "Do not doubt this in the least"

the new

# HUMAN REVOLUTION

A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI

## 'THE FLOWER OF CULTURE'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 23-25

**'The world was gripped with tension.' As the Cuban Missile Crisis unfolds, Shin'ichi Yamamoto pours his whole life into chanting for peace.**



By HO GOKU

Cuba lies only about 90 miles from the United States, off the southern tip of Florida. President Kennedy now made the shocking announcement that the Soviets were in the process of building missile sites there. The purpose of these sites, he said, was to provide the Soviets with the capacity to mount a nuclear attack on the Western hemisphere. Not only could missiles launched from Cuban sites strike Washington, D.C., the Panama Canal and major cities in the southeastern United States, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, but it was also likely, he suggested, that intermediate-range ballistic missiles capable of traveling greater distances would be deployed there.

To prevent the use of such missiles and to see that the sites were dismantled, he ordered a naval blockade on the shipment of all offensive weapons and related matériel to Cuba. This was the beginning of what came to be known as the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Kennedy further stated: "We will not prematurely or unnecessarily risk the costs of worldwide nuclear war in which even

the fruits of victory would be ashes in our mouth — but neither will we shrink from that risk at any time it must be faced."

Seventeen years had passed since the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Amid a power balance forged from the mutual fear of nuclear annihilation, the Cold War had continued and a tenuous security had been maintained. Now, the Cold War was heating up. A situation had unfolded that could lead to all-out nuclear war.

The world was gripped with tension. President Kennedy's speech was broadcast at 8:00 a.m., Oct. 23, Japan time. Twenty minutes before the broadcast, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Edwin O. Reischauer paid a visit to the private residence of Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda in Shinanomachi, Tokyo, to deliver Kennedy's personal message explaining the situation. It sought Japan's support in advance for measures the United States had decided to take and asked for Japan's backing in the United Nations.

After Kennedy's speech, Japanese television, radio and newspapers immediately gave broad coverage to this serious development. When Shin'ichi Yamamoto heard it, he was stunned and deeply troubled.

Nuclear war must never be allowed to happen! From that day, he prayed with even greater fervor, pouring his whole life into chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

President Kennedy's speech heightened anxiety among Americans that they were on the brink of nuclear war. Indeed, the threat of war loomed not only over the United States but the entire world.

One of the causes of the crisis, of course, was the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. After World War II, the two nations had been engaged in a fierce nuclear arms race. The United States was the first to develop the atomic bomb in 1945; the Soviet Union built its first atomic bomb in 1949; and after the Americans tested their first hydrogen bomb in 1952, the Soviets followed with their hydrogen bomb in 1953.

In 1957, the Soviets developed the intercontinental ballistic missile and also launched the first artificial satellites, Sputnik 1 and Sputnik 2. This meant that the Soviet Union now had the technology to attack U.S. targets with nuclear missiles. It also meant that the Soviet Union

had suddenly overtaken and surpassed the United States in the nuclear arms race.

This was an enormous shock to the United States, spawning an atmosphere of impending danger. The Soviet Union also took every opportunity to display and boast of its nuclear might. In order to confirm whether the Soviets really had the destructive capacity they claimed, the United States began to employ U-2 spy planes to fly reconnaissance missions over the Soviet Union. These activities led to the shooting down of a U-2 plane over the Soviet Union in 1960, an incident that plunged the slightly thawing U.S.-Soviet relations then to an all-time low.

Nevertheless, the United States continued its surveillance using reconnaissance satellites and learned that the Soviet Union had greatly exaggerated its nuclear arsenals; the United States was actually still in the lead. Now it was the Soviet Union's turn to feel threatened, spurring it anew to establish military superiority over its arch rival. All this led the Soviet Union to try to place missiles in Cuba.

Later, however, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev insisted that his country's only aim was to strengthen and support Cuba, which was threatened by the United States. He claimed that the Soviet Union had no intention of starting a war; its only aim was to protect Cuba and the interests of the socialist world.

Whatever the expressed reasons, the explosive situation was the result of the endlessly escalating nuclear arms race that the two superpowers had become mired in, out of mutual fear of an illusory enemy.

Another contributing factor behind the crisis was the Cuba-U.S. relationship. Cuba had been a Spanish colony, but from the second half of the 19th century, a liberation movement arose there, including the Ten Years War for independence (1868-78). With each uprising, Spanish rule became harsher and more oppressive. But the Cuban people's drive for freedom only grew stronger and more determined.

Under the leadership of the great hero of Cuban independence, José Martí, who declared that people must fight for their right to self-determination and not rely on others, the Cuban war for independence was launched anew in February 1895. Just months

later, on May 19, Martí died in battle at age 42.

But the revolutionary forces inherited his resolve, and the war turned in their favor. Independence seemed only a matter of time.

At this juncture, the United States intervened. Already, the United States exerted a powerful economic influence on Cuba. According to statistics, 83 percent of all Cuban exports in 1895 went to the United States. Sugar was the major export.

Spain, however, took the step of blocking American exports to Cuba. In 1898, in the final stages of Cuba's independence war, the United States declared war on Spain, claiming that the colonial power had violated the Monroe Doctrine, which stated that no European powers could interfere with the nations of North or South America. This war became known as the Spanish-American War.

This move was in part motivated by the U.S. desire to sustain and increase its influence in Cuba. The United States won the war and secured Spain's withdrawal from the island. U.S. troops then occupied Cuba, pending the establishment of full independence.

In 1902, the dream of Cuban independence was at last realized. However, a clause called the Platt Amendment was inserted into the new Cuban constitution granting the United States the right to intervene in Cuban affairs and establish naval bases on Cuban soil.

Cuban independence was largely brokered by the United States, and even after it was achieved, Cuba's economy rapidly became dominated by American interests; U.S. investment poured into the country. Sugar production was virtually Cuba's sole domestic industry, and the majority of the Cuban population was engaged in the backbreaking work of planting, cultivating and harvesting sugar cane. The Cuban people were also induced to buy various goods, starting with daily necessities, from the United States.

*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.

THE  
Third Stage  
—OF—  
LIFE

# No Room for R

*This is the eighth installment in this series. Participants are SGI President Ikeda, Seikyo Shimbun General Editorial Bureau Senior Director Osamu Matsuoka and Vice Director Katsusuke Sasaki.*

**IKEDA:** In the last installment, we talked about the secret to long life. We've since received many letters from readers on that subject, haven't we?

**MATSUOKA:** Yes. Let me read from a letter by Mr. Toshio Takahashi, a 77-year-old barber in Tochigi Prefecture:

Barbers work with their hands and have to concentrate. In our conversations with customers while we are working, we get glimpses into other lives, which are always stimulating. In the nearly 500 barbershops in our city, fewer than 10 elderly barbers have shown any symptoms of senility. I am grateful that I chose this pro-

fession, and every day during my morning and evening gongyo I thank my parents, who were also barbers.

**SASAKI:** Last year, Mr. and Mrs. Takahashi celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. They are both still happily working, and they are also still active in the Soka Gakkai — Mr. Takahashi serves as a vice chapter leader.

**IKEDA:** What an encouraging example. I have heard that the barber's profession and the art of medicine are closely linked. Long ago, barbers actually served as surgeons. The twisting red-, white- and blue-striped barber pole is symbolic: Red is the arteries, blue is the veins and white is bandages. Both doctors and barbers wear white coats.

I'm sure that the concentration demanded from barbers has helped Mr. Takahashi stay healthy and active to such a wonderful age.

**MATSUOKA:** The need to stay alert and to concentrate does keep people young.

**IKEDA:** Dr. Shuhei Morita, the Soka Gakkai doctors division leader, once told me that when he was head of surgery at the Yokohama Red Cross Hospital, he never felt tired when he was performing surgery — even though he was sometimes on his feet in the operating room for 11 hours straight. But one hour on a crowded train doing nothing but hanging onto the hand strap, he said, exhausted him. I think this is a perfect example of the way that serious engagement in some kind of focused task can tap unlimited reserves of hidden potential.

**SASAKI:** The more we make use of our abilities, the more we can develop and hone them.

**IKEDA:** A noted American gerontologist, Dr. Belle Boone Beard, spent two decades study-

ing centenarians. She concluded that when people continuously make use of their powers of memory and concentration, those abilities do not decline. In other words, "Memory shows no upper age limit" (Morton Puner, *To the Good Long Life*).

**MATSUOKA:** Speaking of memory, I am always astounded by yours. You remember things that happened 20 or 30 years ago with incredible clarity. People are always amazed at how vividly you manage to recall things — things that they had long forgotten or, on occasion, hoped you wouldn't remember!

**SASAKI:** You have written tens of thousands of poems to encourage and inspire members. Of course, I am astonished that you can produce such moving, beautiful poetry on the spur of the moment. But I am even more surprised by how you often suddenly want to edit a poem you wrote a week earlier — but

which you recall perfectly, without any notes or memos.

**MATSUOKA:** SGI members are at all hours at work somewhere in the world, and as SGI president, you never have a moment's rest. Yet even in the midst of your busy schedule, you somehow find the time and the mental energy to be thinking about a poem you have sent to a friend. It's staggering.

**IKEDA:** It's one thing to know, on an intellectual level, that each moment may be your last. But it's much harder to actually live and act, on a practical level, based on that.

I have lived these last 50 years with an absolute determination to triumph. Whenever I meet one of our members, I try to extend myself to the utmost — for that may be our last encounter. I never leave room for regret.

That is why each encounter I have remains vivid and fresh in my mind forever, transcending the passing of the years. I concentrate my entire being, an eternity of thought and feeling, in each moment of each encounter.

**SASAKI:** I am impressed by the seriousness with which you regard even the briefest encounter. The challenge we face is to take the limited span of years that we have and, instilled with hope and optimism, do our very best.

**IKEDA:** Dr. Norman Cousins, with whom I conducted a dialogue, declared that hope was his secret weapon. "Death is not the greatest tragedy that befalls us in life," he told me. "What is far more tragic is for an important part of oneself to die, while one is still alive. There is no more terrifying tragedy than this. What is important is to accomplish something in life."

**MATSUOKA:** No matter how old we are, we must never lose the spirit to rise to a challenge.

**IKEDA:** When Dr. Anatoli Logunov, the Russian nuclear physicist and director of the In-

stitute of... was Mr. rector, w his fam years. I gunov, I childre son and Mr. Lo. joyed w youth. 7 50, the youth. He w that our are alw

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Photo by KIRK CONDYLIS

**'I hope that everyone can experience a third stage of life that's like a third youth. Youth is not something that fades with age. Our attitude toward life is what makes us young.'**

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

# Regret



**'I have lived the last 50 years with an absolute determination to triumph. Whenever I meet one of our members, I try to extend myself to the utmost — for that may be our last encounter. I never leave room for regret.'**

stitute of High-Energy Physics, was Moscow State University rector, we spoke about the way his family had evolved over the years. According to Dr. Logunov, his family changed as his children grew older. When his son and daughter became adults, Mr. Logunov and his wife enjoyed what he called a second youth. Then, after reaching age 50, they experienced a third youth.

He wanted to make the point that our lives are never static. We are always changing. And we

must always pursue self-development and self-improvement.

**SASAKI:** When you began your dialogue with Dr. Logunov in the dignified atmosphere of the rector's office, Moscow State University was enveloped in the beautiful green cloak of spring. It was May 1981.

**IKEDA:** A large tapestry that had been presented by Beijing University to commemorate Moscow State University's bicentennial adorned one

wall. Depicting Moscow State University in its entirety, the tapestry remained in place even during the height of political tension between the Soviet Union and China. This was a wonderful sight, I thought, a fine example of how the world of learning transcends political conflict.

**MATSUOKA:** It's interesting that Dr. Logunov used the expression *third youth*.

**IKEDA:** Yes. I hope that everyone can experience a third stage of life that's like a third youth. Youth is not something that fades with age. Our attitude toward life is what makes us young.

As long as we have a forward-looking, positive attitude, a spirit to take on challenges, we will gain depth as people. Our lives will shine with a brilliance that is ours alone.

Dr. Logunov quoted these lines of the Russian poet Aleksandr A. Blok: "Life is a continual struggle / rest comes only in our dreams." To this Dr. Logunov added that "life is good to those who are dynamic, sensitive to the pulse of the times, and who make an effort to align their lives with its rhythms." Life itself is the greatest ally of those who make their later years a third youth.

**SASAKI:** The day before that meeting with Dr. Logunov, you visited Lyudmila Gvishiani, the late Soviet Premier Aleksey N. Kosygin's daughter and director of the National Library of Foreign Literature in Moscow. I remember that very well.

**IKEDA:** Ms. Gvishiani waited for me at the entrance of the National Library. I was immediately reminded of her late father. She had the same wise, clear blue eyes. She was a fine woman with a distinct air of intelligence and refinement.

**SASAKI:** She recalled for you how, returning home from work one day, her father had exclaimed to his family: "Today, I met an extraordinary, extremely interesting Japanese. Though we touched upon very complex issues, I was happy that our discussion was most satisfying." He was speaking of his first encounter with you. That was on your first visit to the Soviet Union in September 1974.

**MATSUOKA:** Ms. Gvishiani said that these words made an impression on her, because her father rarely spoke to his family about his work.

**SASAKI:** Yes. Ms. Gvishiani said she appreciated your expression of condolences upon her father's death, your visit and your conversation with her. She said her family had decided to present you with some mementos of her father.

**IKEDA:** She presented me with a cherished crystal vase, engraved with her father's portrait. It had been bestowed on him at age 60, upon receiving the high Soviet honor, Hero of Socialist Labor. She also gave me two leather-bound books, his last works, which lay in his private library up to the moment of death.

"The warmth of my father's hands still clings to them. I offer them to you in his stead," she said, her eyes filling with tears.

**SASAKI:** Yes. It was a moving moment. The interpreter, too, was overcome with emotion. With her eyes cast down, Ms. Gvishiani went on to say that she regarded her father as a true friend. Every day as the sun set, she felt a strong sense of loss. You comforted her, saying that her father lived on in her heart. She nodded silently in agreement.

**MATSUOKA:** In one corner of the National Library of Foreign Literature was a large Soka Gakkai

Corner, filled with your books. Ms. Gvishiani was deeply attached to her father, and I know that she found her meeting with you, who had engaged in such fulfilling, warmly communication with him, unforgettable.

**IKEDA:** The bonds of parent and child are strong. A parent's way of life is deeply engraved on the child's life.

I think that we can say that one of the most important aims of our third stage of life is to be true to ourselves to the very last. To become an inspiration to those around us. The memories a person leaves behind, the example he or she sets, can be a great source of encouragement and strength to those who survive.

**MATSUOKA:** A 49-year-old men's division member sent us a letter [see "A Letter From a Reader," this page] about his father and mother, who live in Nagano and have dedicated their lives to the Soka Gakkai movement. He said he eventually became aware of the nobility of his parent's lives and is grateful for the example they have provided. His father is a vice chapter leader and his mother is a district women's leader. The son is also involved in the forefront of Soka Gakkai activities.

It's a wonderful letter that brings up many stimulating points, and I want to share it with our readers.

**IKEDA:** It is fathers and mothers such as they who have built the Soka Gakkai. I am always praying for their happiness and well-being.

What can we contribute? What can we leave as a legacy for others in our third stage of life?

After all is stripped away — our wealth, fame, social status — the one thing that remains after death is the example we set of a life lived with purpose, dedication and dignity. ■

## A Letter From a Reader

**Reading this series on the third stage of life, I decided to look back over the lives of my parents. My father is 80, and my mother is 79. Since finding faith in the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin in 1959, they have completely dedicated their lives to it. My father doesn't drink or gamble. The only things I can remember my father doing are reading the *Seikyo Shimbun* or the Daishonin's writings, going out to spread the Daishonin's teachings and sitting before the Gohonzon and chanting. He has always been completely devoted to his faith and never indulged in personal pleasures or hobbies. When I was young, I used to think his life was dull.**

**But later, I came to realize just how wrong I was.**

**At one time in my life, I took a wrong turn. I am sure that both my father and mother were deeply troubled as they watched me. I'm sure that I made them weep in their hearts. But my father only said one thing to me: "You have given me the opportunity to chant daimoku...." I felt inexpressible shock at his words. And I couldn't understand why he thought as he did.**

**Today I walk forward, looking fondly at the example of my parents ahead of me on the road of life. Neither of them seem old to me at all. They have the strength of people who have always fought for their cherished beliefs. Having dedicated their lives to kosen-rufu within the Soka Gakkai, they are not spending their last years helpless and dependent on others. They are still fighting and living their third stage of life to the fullest.**

— Ichiro Tomatsu, 49

EXPERIENCE, FROM PAGE 1

happens has a purpose.”

This understanding of unshakable happiness within serves Mr. Singer well as he works with prisoners, who often feel overwhelmed and victimized by their environment. His message is a firm, compassionate reminder of the Buddhist principle that individuals and their environment are interrelated. In this Buddhist perspective, an individual’s own heart and actions are most important.

Of course, acting on this principle of personal responsibility in any environment is difficult. In prison, the conditions are difficult enough to make it seem impossible. The system is, by definition, a place that epitomizes failure of both individuals and society.

This last resort also has an expensive price tag: some \$78 billion a year and countless heartaches. Crime and the stories behind it have become the fabric of our TV culture, while in the political arena the talk is to get tough.

Between 1985 and 1996, the state and federal prison population more than doubled. Much of the dramatic rise resulted from drug-related convictions and sentences. Some 1.2 million people are now in state prisons. Another 3 million are on parole, and their chances of ending back in prison are high. Almost 40 percent of all parolees are revoked at some point. And the highest recidivism is among those under 18: a whopping 46.5 percent return to prison. As the system struggles with overcrowding, the fact that more than half of those incarcerated are defined as racial and ethnic minorities further builds up an environment of conflict.

Handed all these challenges, prison officials are taking a new look at religion in rehabilitation. They’re experimenting with new approaches, and they’re seeking a broader mix of religious leaders who minister to those in prison.

Murray Singer’s introduction to the world of religion behind prison walls came in a state with one of the more progressive models, says the Rev. Marloe Karlen, who’s in charge of religious services for the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections. The Rev. Karlen has been with the department for 21 years.

“It’s not all rosy,” he says, “but I wouldn’t be a reverend if I didn’t believe in it.”

For almost 30 years, Ohio has always had two “generic chaplains” to staff each prison. The job requires an open-minded

REGRET, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Photos by DARRYL POLK



**Chaplain Jerry Au (left) says Murray Singer ‘was the one who really sat down and talked, shared on a personal level.’**

**That personal interaction convinced him that the two were working toward the same goal: rehabilitation.**



person who is ecumenical, rather than sectarian, in approach.

States such as Texas, which until two years ago hired a limited number of chaplains to serve specific denominations, run the risk of legal problems. When Texas prisoners from various religious backgrounds sued, saying their right to worship was denied, the courts agreed. In other states, such as Georgia and Colorado, governments avoid this problem by hiring no chaplains, instead relying on volunteers.

“This makes it difficult to conduct a dynamic religious values and ethics program or to run developmental programs for the entire prison community, which require staff,” says the Rev. Karlen.

Mr. Karlen has been a force behind creating a broad-based religious culture in Ohio’s 30 prisons. While chaplains take care of the overall religious program, volunteers and contract chaplains conduct religious services and study groups for spe-

cific denominations. Proselytizing is against the rules. Today, thousands of volunteers are involved, the Rev. Karlen says. Murray Singer fits the profile of a successful volunteer.

“He’s compassionate, and he can be very firm,” says Mr. Karlen. “It’s the right kind of mix to work in this environment. He also focuses on the essence of the religion rather than the formalities.”

Since in-house rules often make it difficult for prisoners to conduct their religious services the way they would in the outside world, this is a plus. For example, even prayer beads could be viewed as weapons.

Chaplain Jerry Au has worked with Mr. Singer for four years at Grafton. He appreciates that Mr. Singer asks questions and seeks to understand the rules and regulations of the system before jumping into action. Although he had met Buddhists before in the prisons, Chaplain Au says Mr. Singer “was the one who really sat

down and talked, shared on a personal level.”

That personal interaction convinced him that the two were working toward the same goal: rehabilitation. And for him, this means “an actual change in the individual, inside the individual, rather than the system making a change. They realize there is a higher power, and they can’t do it on their own. The ultimate test is whether they can carry it [this change] out with them into society.”

“A lot of times from the prison statistics, it seems like there’s no hope,” says Chaplain Au. “But I’ve seen guys change. It’s intangible, not something you can measure. You can’t measure spirituality.”

Staff and volunteers working together means a chance for a significant number of prisoners to turn their lives around, says the Rev. Karlen. Many, when reached early enough in life — particularly those who have committed non-violent crimes such as drug-related or white collar crimes — are changed by

the valuable message offered by religion.

Although research in this area is slim, one study published in 1990 by Baltimore clinical psychologist John Gardner showed a significant drop in parole violations among prisoners who received religious training in prison. The Rev. Karlen is working on a mentoring program that would release prisoners on parole into their religious communities to help break the cycle of parole violations.

From that first meeting at Grafton, Murray Singer’s role in this process has expanded. The SGI-USA community center in Cleveland has become the official source of information on Buddhism for chaplains throughout the state. And next fall, Mr. Singer will conduct a full day of instruction on Buddhism during the statewide chaplains seminar.

He’s now working with Buddhist groups at four institutions in Ohio. At the North Central Correctional Institution in Marion, he officially represents not only SGI members who transferred from Grafton but six Zen and Pure Land sect practitioners. And he’s networking with SGI members helping prisoners in Pennsylvania, Illinois and Georgia.

His personal sense of reward also continues to expand: “They think I help them a lot. In reality, they help me. Every time I go, they encourage me. When I first went to Grafton, there was a tremendous sense of racial barriers. Now, they’ve become the tightest bunch of people who watch out for each other, protect each other. It’s amazing, fantastic.”

Ian Singer, the elder of Murray Singer’s two sons, isn’t surprised by all this. He says community service is something that his parents always valued highly. But he sees a dramatic change in his father’s attitude toward life. “The change now is that he loves life,” says Ian. “I wish he had picked the practice up years ago. Buddhism is sustaining his life.”

Ian, who continues to practice Judaism in the spirit with which he was raised, appreciates the sense of “fair play and the high moral code” his father instilled in him. After studying history and philosophy in college, Ian went on to law school and now works with a legal and financial research firm in New York. “He taught me to work hard and not to expect anybody to give me something,” Ian says of his father. At the time, the strictness and anger were hard

PLEASE SEE EXPERIENCE, NEXT PAGE

EXPERIENCE, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

to swallow, but looking back now he can appreciate his father's evolution as a human being and the hardships of life he weathered.

"I love my father," he says. This feeling of affection is something that sticks with young prisoners, too. One young man even thanked Mr. Singer, saying that if he'd had a father like him, he wouldn't have ended up in prison.

"I tell them to take responsibility for being here, and let's move forward," says Mr. Singer. "I put the responsibility on them by being strict with them about this. I'm constantly stressing that at meetings. You and your environment are one. If you allow your environment to depress you, get you down, force you to get combative, then you've lost."

Michael Baker, an SGI-USA member who's been incarcerated for 11 years, explains: "One of the things I've noticed about people who are incarcerated is that there is a great need for them to realize the inherent dignity of their lives. Even the best rehabilitation programs don't reach deep enough into the core of people's lives to allow them to make the kind of quality changes needed that lead to real rehabilitation." He enjoys the challenge Mr. Singer gives the members in Grafton to do their human revolution and try using



Michael Baker

soft power with the people in their environment. "Lots of people want to contribute constructively to society, but they don't have the power in their lives to reach their goals," Mr. Baker reflects. "I know deep in my heart that Buddhism has the philosophy, power and practice that is the foundation of true rehabilitation."

"You can change your environment," Mr. Singer sums up. "Buddhism gives tremendous confidence in this principle. That's what life is all about.... That's the intent of what we're trying to do. We don't chant to a magic scroll and ask for things. Rather, we recognize that the wisdom, courage, compassion and conviction are inside us. We can take the proper action instead of waiting for the lottery to drop on us. It's all about having the chance to enjoy life." ❧

Photo by DARRYL POLK



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*True democracy is based on philosophy that elevates and ennobles*

FROM PAGE 1

racy was then on everyone's lips in Japan. Everyone was proclaiming its virtues and placing great hopes in what it could do for the country.

But there was no true understanding of the concept of the people as sovereign. And the term *democracy* took on an abstract life of its own, divorced from Japanese reality.

Mr. Toda knew that unless the people were well informed and well educated, democracy could degenerate into rule by an ignorant mob, resulting in a society that violated human rights. In his *Republic*, Plato described five different types of government, starting with the rule of the philosopher-king. He gave democracy a low ranking, second from the bottom, because if the individuals who made up the democratic state lacked self-discipline and personal cultivation, democracy could, in the name of freedom, end up turning the people into slaves to their desires.

Mr. Toda was deeply concerned about that possibility. He thought long and hard about how to ensure that Japanese democracy would be real and lasting. Thus, he decided to publish *A Comprehensive Course on Democracy*.

The first volume deals with the principles and history of democracy. In one of the essays, titled "Democracy in the United States," a university professor writes, "Genuine democracy is based on a belief and commitment that are essentially religious in nature." A sharp insight.

True democracy is possible only with a philosophy that refines, elevates and ennobles each individual. And then unites all these independent individuals in the common cause of mutual welfare.

Mr. Toda used to frequently say that the Daishonin's Buddhism was the supreme form of

democracy. The Daishonin emphasized the primacy of the people, saying that "the king regards the people as his parents" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1554) and telling those in power to act as "the hands and feet of the people" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 171). The spirit of Buddhism is to see the noble Buddha in the people — in fact, in each individual.

A month after the publication of this first volume, the author of the above-mentioned essay gave a lecture at Mr. Toda's request at the head temple — at an instructors study session for priests. Mr. Toda made earnest efforts to ensure that Nichiren Shoshu priests would not be left behind the times.

Soon after the war, High Priest Nichijun, too, had written on democracy and religion, strongly criticizing, as an enemy of democracy, "any religion that insulted the dignity of the individual and sought to delude the people." However, far from heeding

the words of the high priest, the majority of priests did exactly what he had heartily condemned.

Shamelessly proclaiming absolute superiority of priests over lay believers and scorning hardworking people who strive tirelessly to propagate the Daishonin's teachings for the peace and happiness of all, the Nikken sect is clearly nothing more than the enemy of democracy that High Priest Nichijun referred to.

Over the years, the Soka Gakkai has continued to spread the Daishonin's philosophy of happiness to people dwelling in the most abysmal, destitute reaches of society, people who have endured illness, poverty and indescribable suffering. The Soka Gakkai has brought them the light of hope and courage. And these friends, awakened to their mission through faith, have gone on to make great

contributions to society as the builders of a new age.

The age of the people will be an age when the people are strong and wise. When the people are the true leaders of society. In this age of democracy in name only, in today's Japan, we of the Soka Gakkai have built a movement for a true grass-roots democracy.

That is why the powers who wish to control the people will do anything to discredit the Soka Gakkai, why they scheme to bring about its downfall. But don't they realize that they are trying to topple the very pillar of Japan? In recent years, we have seen signs in many areas of Japanese life of a return of nationalism, the belief that the people exist for the sake of the nation-state. We must never forget that Germany's Nazi regime grew out of the democratic Weimar constitution. Democracy without a humane philosophical base is extremely fragile.

The Soka Gakkai must triumph. ❧

八月御書講義

# 國府尼御前御返事(下)

## 池田SGI會長講解

佛法以苦惱者為友。  
貧窮的人、悲哀的人、認真為人生奮鬥而疲累的人、痛苦的人、信佛的人要成為這些人的良友。

創價學會正因為貫徹此點，所以強大。無論再怎樣的大難接踵而至，只要貫徹這份信心，創價學會永遠勝利！

日蓮大聖人的勝利，也絕不是仰仗權力者。剛好相反，是在大難中，愛護民眾、為民眾盡力，以民眾為友而致勝。

夫日蓮為日本第一之佛者。其故，天神七代謂之，地神五代亦謂之。人王神武始，至當今九十九代，由欽明起七百餘年間，即世間、即佛法，無有如日蓮之普受慈愍者。守應之靈寺塔，潰盛入道之火燒東大寺、興福寺，彼等之一類未嘗不憤。將門責任作朝敵，傳教大師為七寺所仇，然後等猶未受日本一州之比丘。比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷之四眾所憎。而於日蓮、父母、兄弟、師匠、同朋，上由一人，下及萬民，不遺一人，悉願如父母之仇，勝於謀反強盜，無有不加敵視者。是以有時或受數百人之罵罵，或受數千人之圍困而有刀杖之大難，逐出家園。終則受國王罪責者二度，一度是伊豆之責，此度是佐渡之責。既無是伊豆之責，亦無佐渡之責。而見我之流放北海之島，此國之道德，其加惠於我，更甚於彼相州之男女。妻妾野中，冰雲加身，摘草以雜糞。命。彼蘇武受辱於胡國者十九年，以雲為食。李陵屈居北海嚴霜者六載，其苦也，今我以身當之。此事非由於我身之有失，為恩作日本國之助而致此者也。

（通解）  
日蓮是日本第一之佛者（惡名彰彰、無用之人），其理由由是，姑且不論（日本神話的）天神七代之時代，或不問地神五代之時代；自人王九代之神武天皇起，至今之天皇正之十九代；從欽明天皇的時代（佛教傳來）以來七百餘年間；不管從世間事，或佛法來看，沒有比日蓮更廣受人情恨者！

物部守屋（想要排斥佛教）燒毀寺塔；平清盛人道燒盡東大寺、興福寺，彼等一族卻不恨他。  
平將門、安倍貞任與朝廷為敵，傳教大師為南都（奈良）七大寺所憎，但他們卻未受到日本全國比丘、比丘尼（出家的男女）、優婆塞、優婆夷（在家的男女）一切四眾所憎恨。

日蓮豈止被父母、兄弟、師匠、修行的同志所憎，被上至一人、下至萬民，視如父母之仇敵，所愛迫害尤甚背叛者、強盜。

因此，有時連數百人叫罵，有時受數千人圍困，遭刀杖之大難。還有被逐出居所、驅逐出境。  
終受國王兩次的罪責（受權力的處罰），一次是（放逐到）伊豆國，這次是（流罪到）佐渡島。

此地，既沒有維持生命的糧食，也沒有可掩身的粗衣。  
被放逐到北海之島後，方知佐渡的出家、在家，遠比相模國（約今之神奈川県，指鎌倉）的男女還要憎恨我。被丟棄在荒野上，身任風雪吹打，插草以雜糞。

彼蘇武（中國武將）在北方的匈奴國，十九年間飲冰雪雜生。（相同的）李陵被監禁在北海的岩窟中六年。我以此身體驗了他們所吃過的苦。

這些難，絕非因我有過失而招致的，而是為了想救日本國所獲的結果。  
戶田先生常說：「想到大聖人在左渡所曾受之苦，我們再怎麼辛苦都不算一回事。」

牧口先生也曾說：「我們所受的災難，跟大聖人所受的難比起來，不過是九牛一毛！」如此在獄中忍受煎熬。

為後代的門下，大聖人特意追求極限的辛苦。掀起難、超越難，為的是構築廣宣流布不朽的原點。  
「良藥苦口」。法華經壽量品有「良醫病子」之譬喻。大良醫（佛）為救助誤飲毒藥的孩子（眾生），特施予良藥（妙法），但毒性已蔓延全身的孩子（顛倒的眾生）卻不想喝這帖

可解救自己的良藥。  
大聖人一心「救助日本國」，可不足，遭回了幾位弟子。  
是傲慢的當權者及人們不但不願服用良藥，還想迫害大聖人、除掉大聖人。分明是「毒氣深入」。

「日蓮是我日本第一之佛者」——沒有比日蓮我更惡名遠播了。  
這句話中，含有大聖人對「顛倒的日本」所發出的悲哀、憤怒之情，但仍有大聖人想救助日本的大慈悲，並秉持大確信，悠然前贈廣宣流布的未來。同時也令我們感受到「我才是法華經行者」，「唯有我獲受了如經文所說的「大難」此大聖人的自來。」

是客觀審視自己，拋開自我的表現。從句中也可感受到，大聖人開懷大笑，俯視不知去向何處的人間萬象之大境界。

「迫害才是光榮，我定獲勝」。  
而尼御前及入道殿，於彼地有時難避人目，於夜中送食。有時不憚官責，是欲捨身為日蓮之護者也。

（通解）  
即使處在這樣的情形下，尼御前與（丈夫國府）入道於我在佐渡時，避人耳目，趁半夜送食物給我。有時甚至不畏國家責責，心抱欲成日蓮普救人類所遺忘，必定受到讚揚。

他們心想：怎能只讓師匠受苦呢？師匠的難，由我來承擔！多麼不可思議的人啊！大聖人說：「永世不忘！」

師和弟子都心想：「讓我來承擔勞苦吧！」彼此互相扶持。  
國府入道等人的榮耀是永遠的。至末法萬年壽末來際為止，絕不會為全人類所遺忘，必定受到讚揚。

弟一起。但過了幾週後，因為糧食不足，遣回了幾位弟子。  
移至「一谷」後，仍與弟子一起靠些許食物充飢。  
在這當中，阿佛房和國府入道仍在半夜背負食糧，竭盡服務之誠。若被念佛者、官差看見就遭殃，這些人日夜都站在大聖人庵附近監視。若被他們發現不會被放逐，就是入獄。  
事實上，三次偽稱幕府的命令書造謠說：「與日蓮為友者，應放逐、入獄」（種種御振舞御書，大意）  
以路經庵室為由逮捕入獄，或以資助大聖人為由放逐，或逮捕其妻子。阿佛房夫婦也曾被放逐、沒收家產、被褫削金。

即使如此，阿佛房夫婦與國府入道夫婦並不畏懼。有時甚至想代替大聖人受苦。

「水濁者再清，月撥雲而再現。」  
（中興入道消息）  
「二七四年（文永十一年）三月八日，幕府的赦免狀遞交身為流人的大聖人。這天終於過了大聖人的清白時值春天，節令的花架競相開放。當然，這並非表示大聖人已毫無危險，但對隨行弟子而言，回鎌倉的道路有如遊行「凱旋街道」般的光榮。

不過，大聖人卻捨不得與佐渡的門下分開，因為他們曾是生死與共的同志啊！或許再也無法相見。  
慶幸大聖人獲救的佐渡門下，依依不捨之情，想必也與日俱增吧！  
當然，歡喜之情難掩，再也無須在「渡的門下」，皆在大難之中堅持信仰。心到底，所以是真實的人，大聖人也舞足蹈，一則高興大聖人獲救，一則特別信賴他們。大聖人曾說阿佛房一為即將離別而哭泣。大聖人、日與上莫非是淨行菩薩再世？」（轉下頁）

問：我聽師說：「你的宿命就是你的使命。」我不太確定這話的意義……  
答：宿命或命運讓我們看見過去行為的總帳，此刻的我們就是我們如何生活為人的最終結果，但這種看法只會造成往後回顧的傾向。有些人甚至說，控制生命的是命運，不是智慧。這種說法不僅導致後顧的傾向也是悲觀的，並容易造成凡事漠不關心的心態。  
佛法闡述命運的最初目的是教導人認識因果法理的嚴格，使人更注意自己的言行和意念（身口意），而不是使我們灰心或恐懼我們。實際上，那是佛為了幫助人們珍惜現在所表現的慈悲和智慧。佛法也有顯業於業的說法，人自己選擇帶著某種特別的業出生，以證明佛法的偉大。戶田先生曾說：「假使我們的生活各方面都完美無缺，我們可能會很

今天，我們正在世界上建設末法萬年廣布的基礎。不是執著眼前，創價年十一月學會前贈萬年的未來而採取行動。現今、此時，一起拼命奮戰到底的這兒就好了。」當時的情景，也許是人是和數名現一幅情景，那就是「一百年後、兩百年後，子孫會驕傲地說：『看啊！我的祖先曾在此地將一生貢獻給廣宣流布！』」  
雖然辛酸之佐渡之國，及我之離，而欲進還止，依依不捨之情，亦不能自己也。  
（通解）  
因此，佐渡雖是痛心之地，但（獲）得救免，離開時，向前跨的步伐又踏回原地，依依不捨的心情，自己無法控制自己。  
別離佐渡，不但沒有憎恨、怨言，反而宛如要告別自己的故鄉，依依不捨。大聖人將這片殘酷的流放地，也變成充滿人性互動的慈光上。  
是何等眷戀乎？正是他不可思議時，忽然之間，又見這如此珍重之尊夫人入道殿來此。夢耶？幻耶？雖未得見尼御前之慈容，專心是實寄於此者矣。

（您夫妻之間）是結自過去為何緣？正敢不可思議之時，想不到這度快您卻派遣心意的丈夫為僕從者，來到身延這裡。是夢？是幻？雖不見尼御前您身影，但您的心已至此。  
佐渡的門下，皆在大難之中堅持信仰。心到底，所以是真實的人，大聖人也舞足蹈，一則高興大聖人獲救，一則特別信賴他們。大聖人曾說阿佛房一為即將離別而哭泣。大聖人、日與上莫非是淨行菩薩再世？」（轉下頁）

「雖然辛酸之佐渡之國，及我之離，而欲進還止，依依不捨之情，亦不能自己也。」  
雖是短促的一節，文中卻充滿大聖人的情懷，傾聽此節的國府尼御他們，想必腦海裡也浮現昔日令人懷念的情景。  
別離佐渡，不但沒有憎恨、怨言，反而宛如要告別自己的故鄉，依依不捨。大聖人將這片殘酷的流放地，也變成充滿人性互動的慈光上。  
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## 宿命與使命

Ted Morino (SGI-USA 教學部長)

「宿命」與「使命」是兩個不同的概念。宿命是命運，是命運讓我們看見過去行為的總帳，此刻的我們就是我們如何生活為人的最終結果，但這種看法只會造成往後回顧的傾向。有些人甚至說，控制生命的是命運，不是智慧。這種說法不僅導致後顧的傾向也是悲觀的，並容易造成凡事漠不關心的心態。佛法闡述命運的最初目的是教導人認識因果法理的嚴格，使人更注意自己的言行和意念（身口意），而不是使我們灰心或恐懼我們。實際上，那是佛為了幫助人們珍惜現在所表現的慈悲和智慧。佛法也有顯業於業的說法，人自己選擇帶著某種特別的業出生，以證明佛法的偉大。戶田先生曾說：「假使我們的生活各方面都完美無缺，我們可能會很

大聖人佛法的最大特色就是御本尊上所寫的「現當三世」（為現世和來世而活）。修行佛法是為了開展生命境界，以便能夠帶著自生命中湧出的喜悅說：「我要用我的生命，我的命運廣宣流布。」如此，命運最後還是顯現為非常積極的東西，也是歡喜的最大泉源。（譯自世界聖報六月十九日）

# 在妙法中蘇生

曾金龍(夏威夷)

「不用退，在我懷裡過世。兒子逝世的樣相給我題。經歷過喪妻喪子之痛，讓我體會地區部長，我要為死去的太太和孩子回，暫時很大的安慰，臉色紅潤胖乎乎的樣子，我人生的無常，和生命的可貴。也讓完成他的使命。池田會長在新人間幫我保命和思此病去世的人，變得又黑又瘦，我確信，我們受持御本尊的人，無論革命裡指導：「夫妻父母親子的關係，要求我，我不同。我感很感謝兒子以他臨終的樣相，讓很慶幸自己沒有離開御本尊，也寫信人過得很幸福，逝去的親人就可以成每天到她家唱題，我看到題目力量。令我感動的是，感謝池田會長在孩子病危時，送給我佛。」我在妙法中蘇生，也要一生為並親自到學會的溫暖，喪禮上很多會友前來唱題們「健康」二字。現在我是夏威夷的廣宜流布團。

我在一九八六年歌頓御本尊入信，由於折服的人沒有指導我正確的修行方式，自己每天只有忙著生意，不會動行也沒有參加集會活動，但是還是一直有功德「生意好轉、買房子、母親和妹妹也移民來夏威夷幫忙生意，人生看起來順心如意。一九八七年父親在越南過世，自己因為傷心過度腦血管爆裂，卻憑著唱題而不藥而癒，但是對於信心並沒有進一步的瞭解或感謝。不料宿命的風暴，已經一步步悄悄向我靠近。

一九九三年底兒子常覺得不舒服，發燒吃不下東西，看醫生吃了十天藥燒也不退。醫生推薦到專科檢查，孰料竟得了急性血癌，只有三個月生命。醫生建議我們緊急尋找骨髓移植，但是有個案顯示，在四萬人當中也找不到一個合適的骨髓，我只有向御本尊認真祈禱，結果發現兩歲的女兒的骨髓，和哥哥完全吻合，於是我們一家四口動身前往洛杉磯 UCLA 進行移植手術。

但是，一年後，她漸漸的衰弱，我帶著她去旅行，也買好墓地，她知道自己不久於人世，臨終前流著淚鼓勵我，一定要堅強。她說身為一個女人，這十多年來擁有一個幸福的家庭，她已經很滿足了，發生這樣的事也命運的安排，如果我再結婚，她也不會埋怨。而我的很不甘心，覺得老天這麼無情，硬要把我們分開。

一九九五年三月二十三日她用最後一口氣，叫我不離開她，就這樣在我懷裡過世。這是我有生以來最大的悲哀，因為她對我太重要了！葬禮冷冷清清只有十幾人參加。四月份我整日關在房裡，足不出戶，刺刺問自我的心頭在我心頭掠過，但是想到一兒一女，我決定退還御本尊。

當時一位日本籍的婦人支部長，聽到消息來拜訪我，她一進家門，我就彷彿感受到她的力量，她說「御本尊動搖，九月二十八日清晨孩子安然的。」

（接上頁）即使大聖人入身延，門下仍遠從佐渡來訪。不僅阿佛佛、國府入道，還有阿佛佛的兒子藤九郎守綱及中興入道也來訪。僅一週就令人難以消受，但於思慕大聖人，卻願數度造訪。若以現在來比喻，這段路有如自日本到南美，不！或更遠，更艱難。

我和我太太如釋重負，我們有如在地獄的邊緣，把兒子從死神的手中奪回來，時時刻刻活在驚慌中。這段期間，我太太因為過度的擔憂，每天守著孩子守步不離，不斷的掉眼淚。有時護士看不過去勸她出去走走，她也不聽。有一天醫生進來例行檢查，看到我太太氣色不好，勸她順便再在醫院接受檢查。但她堅持回夏威夷再說，終於第四十二天我們回到夏威夷，我太太到醫院檢查，結果不幸的是，她得了肝癌。

「是日御書」中記載著，也有佐渡的門下在身延停留長達一個月，每天摘菜汲水、砍柴等，侍奉大聖人。大聖人眼門下之間，是心心相連。當獲知傳染病擴大蔓延時，大聖人非常擔心說：「佐渡的弟子是否無恙？」

當時，大聖人見到來訪的阿佛佛，隨即探問：「你夫人好嗎？國府入道怎樣呢？」大聖人聽到他們無恙才放心。

自認「不可能再直接見到大聖人」的那種寂寞心情。

「你人雖在佐渡，心卻已來到身延！這和見面是一樣的！」、「我們能在靈山見面，這是不值得期待的事嗎？」、「只要望著太陽或月亮，隨時都與我相會！」

「爸爸還無法跟你見面，但我想跟你約定。早上幾點都可以，只要你方便的時間，向御本尊唱百遍的題目。那時，爸爸也會在同一時間唱念百遍題目。如此，「兩人的心」就會如無線電般相通，也能藉此時互訴，就將此事定為父子同盟，也可以讓媽媽、祖父、祖母加入。」

這是我一生中最大的打擊，一波未平，一波又起，我真的無語問蒼天，而這一次我再也無力對宿命反抗，也放棄了唱題。醫院成爲我第二個家。我帶著她到三藩市嚐試中西藥並用。

若關懷、思念日進，則可常在太陽升起、月亮出來時禮拜。我是隨時現身影於日月之身。又，來世一同去詣靈山淨土，在那兒見面吧！南無妙法蓮華經。

六月十六日 此致佐渡國之國府尼御前 大聖人總是趁丈夫們從身延回佐渡時，寫信託他們帶回給夫人們。這是為了稱讚夫人鼓勵丈夫來身延的信心。大聖人比任何人都能體會，那些高齡婦人子，說：

「你人雖在佐渡，心卻已來到身延！這和見面是一樣的！」、「我們能在靈山見面，這是不值得期待的事嗎？」、「只要望著太陽或月亮，隨時都與我相會！」

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總之，大聖人與門下之間並不是靠權威而結合，也不是因利害關係而結合，而是以「心」相通。所以堅韌不會瓦解。所以能充滿功德，崇高且永遠。

## 國府尼御前御返事(下)

「你人雖在佐渡，心卻已來到身延！這和見面是一樣的！」、「我們能在靈山見面，這是不值得期待的事嗎？」、「只要望著太陽或月亮，隨時都與我相會！」

「你人雖在佐渡，心卻已來到身延！這和見面是一樣的！」、「我們能在靈山見面，這是不值得期待的事嗎？」、「只要望著太陽或月亮，隨時都與我相會！」

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## 財津理事長之信

致我親愛的 SACSA 會友：很高興在此向各位報告，五月紀念捐款又獲得大成功。我由衷感謝各位支持我們這珍貴的組織，並努力向別人解說供養在佛道修行中所具的重要性。不僅金額顯著增加，更重要的是欣然付出的人數增加了。我相信這些都顯示組織正確地建在美國社會中擴展。

今天，只有 SACSA 的會友在美國弘揚大聖人的充滿希望的傳佈法並重視人的精神，我們一起努力建立一個能夠最有效地支持佛事的組織。

我們支持組織的所有誠摯的努力！自祈禱至修行活動以致於捐款，都會使自己和家人得到無量的福德。正如大聖所說：「釋迦佛言：『雖以無量珍寶，於億劫之間供養於我，而一日供養末代法華經行者之功德，勝於百千萬億倍。』」（御書選集七，第二六頁）

款賑災或協助社區計劃。我們的基金沒有撥給日本創價學會或美國的創價大學。

謹此祈求各位幸福、健康、安全 and 成功，並再度感謝各位慷慨的奉獻。我們將一起創價一個偉大的 SACSA，而對美國有所貢獻。

財津光明  
（譯自世界聖報六月二十六日）

# A Paradise of Benefit and Victory

## EDITORIAL

By TED MORINO  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

A poem by SGI President Ikeda and dedicated to all SGI-USA members on June 17 (July 3 *World Tribune*) reads:

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

I'd like to share my thoughts on how we can create this "paradise of benefit and victory."

**First, it's important to challenge ourselves to truly realize that the greatness of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is found in changing our life-condition and even our destiny through practicing it.** This Buddhism is not mere idealism. As President Ikeda says: "When viewed from

the deep perspective of Buddhism, the fundamental source of all change lies in our inner determination as we chant daimoku to the Gohonzon. As we continue to chant daimoku consistently, we will strengthen and solidify our basic life-condition directed toward Buddhahood."

Nichiren Daishonin writes that "benefit means attaining Buddhahood as we are. It also means the purification of our six senses" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 762). In other words, by purifying our life-condition through our daily Buddhist practice, we can make a good cause at a fundamental level in our lives. This will be manifested in the form of our positively changed environment. This is what is meant by the saying "Buddhism is concerned with victory."

**Second, in practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism, we need to have a specific goal and strong prayer.** And we have to decide to reach that goal regardless of the obstacles that will inevitably arise in our pursuit of it. This decision, then,

must be bolstered by prayer — our strong prayer that affects the environment to function in our favor. In this vein, the Daishonin says, "Whether or not your prayer is answered depends upon your faith; [if it is not,] the fault in no way lies with me, Nichiren" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 305).

**Third, a crucial element to ensure benefit and victory is practicing for others.** In this regard, the Daishonin states, "By making offerings to others, we can help ourselves" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1598).

Even though I am convinced that through chanting daimoku there is an internal upsurge of life force, it is actually when a person I've encouraged in faith starts showing renewed vitality in his or her existence that I feel something noble within me functioning. In other words, through the changes I see in others, I can perceive my life as a vast source of great energy. This, I believe, is what Buddhism refers to as Buddhahood.

When people re-ignite a sense of passion in their faith — which allows them to tap something new within their lives — the power of their daimoku changes dramatically. Witnessing this so many times in others' lives has been the catalyst for my making major breakthroughs in heretofore difficult areas. This is mainly how I continue to learn that the Daishonin's Buddhism is a living teaching rather than a dead one — it's an actual teaching that enables us to change reality. And it has always been President Ikeda's words that have ensured my revitalizing my life and continuing to be on the right track of faith.

Through the principle that faith equals daily life, we can each live up to the heart of President Ikeda; that is, each member's tenacious determination to show actual proof of growth and happiness — a happiness inextricably linked to the happiness and well-being of others — is what makes the SGI-USA a paradise of benefit and victory. And this is what will make all of America a paradise, I believe. **W**

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ARCHIVE PHOTOS

## Until We Meet Again

### PERSPECTIVE

Irene Owada says goodbye to one of her heroes — a man who 'really believed in all those things,... truth, kindness, decency'

By IRENE OWADA  
DENVER

Heroes are hard to come by, especially ones in the spotlight. I lost a hero the other day. He was a childhood hero. Roy Rogers died July 6.

It may sound trite to say that a Western folk singer and movie star was my hero, but he was. What was his attraction? The white hat, the fact that he always got the bad guy — without having to shoot him — or maybe that people used to tell me that he looked like my dad.

I think it was also his compassion. SGI President Ikeda always says that we should look at a person's behavior. Roy Rogers lived the way he believed — he was true to himself. His longtime sidekick, Pat Brady, once said, "Roy really believed in all those things,... truth, kindness, decency, and he lived that way as near as a man could."

As I combed the Web for arti-

cles about him, I found a few things that I didn't know. That he bought his first house in 1939, when he was finally beginning to make some money as a struggling musician. But he didn't buy it for himself; he bought it for his parents. And he refused to allow the movie industry PR machine to capitalize on that.

I found a few quotes from him that I hadn't heard before, like "When I was a boy, our parents taught us that hitting below the belt was a cowardly thing." And my favorite: "Today, there are some movies I wouldn't take Trigger to see." He prided himself on the fact that he made movies without sex or violence. In fact, he claimed that he never even kissed anyone on screen.

I still have, believe it or not, old pictures of Roy and Dale, their horses, Trigger and Buttermilk, and their dog, Bullet. But the picture I like best was of them with their children. They had nine altogether.

When he died at age 86, he was survived by six children, 15 grandchildren and 33 great-grandchildren. And many, many "Buckaroos" like me.

I was one of those who grew up watching television in the '50s, who was influenced by his behavior. I would save my money to send in and buy his autographed pictures.

I would look at the picture of his family, all sitting on the fence in their cowboy outfits. I would read how he and Dale had adopted a Native American child and a child with a Korean background. And I would think: "Someday, I'm going to have a family like that. I'm going to have a family like the United Nations!"

I followed that dream and adopted two children from Korea. But I stopped at two.

And fortunately, I found the Gohonzon and the SGI-USA, where I found a new family. Mysteriously, the district that I practice in has had, and still has, many students from various nationalities, backgrounds and experiences. Some of "my students" from 10 years ago still call me Mom, even though they are married with kids of their own.

I read something interesting recently in "Friends for Peace" (July 3 *World Tribune*). In answer to the question "What makes someone a hero?" it says that "Each hero makes a unique and lasting contribution to the lives of



Roy Rogers (right) with his wife, Dale Evans, and his horse, Trigger, 'smartest horse in movies.'

those who surround and follow him or her." Like it or not, Hollywood does influence our youth. I guess I was fortunate to have been influenced by one of its best.

We also have the power to influence others. Every day, we come in contact with people, members, their children and their children's friends. You never know the impact that you are going to have on someone's life by your behavior.

So, to Roy: Thanks.

Thanks for having the courage to remain true to yourself, for doing what you believed in. And...happy trails to you.

Until we meet again. **W**

# WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

## We Cannot Be Indifferent

A few weeks ago a heinous crime was committed in Jasper, Texas. In this small, southeast Texas town with a population of just under 7,000, three men stand accused of chaining another human being by his ankles to the back of their truck. His remains were found scattered along a three-mile stretch of dirt road.

What I cannot stop thinking about is the terror that this man must have felt during the ordeal of being chained to the back of that truck. How, as the truck began to move, he must have clinged to hope that it would stop. The pain that he must have gone through as the dirt and gravel cut into his skin, as his body began to bounce off the surface of the road.

I am compelled to ask myself: What cause did this man make to be chained to the back of a truck and dragged down a dirt road? What cause did those three men make to drag a man down a dirt road? What cause did the community of Jasper make to be the stage for such a crime?

But the most important question is: What happens next?

I have chosen to see these four men as functions to awaken the people. To awaken me. I believe that to meet the cruelty of this crime with our indifference only perpetuates the crime.

Crimes similar to this happen all too often. The targets are African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, gays and lesbians — anyone who is perceived as different. And most of us do nothing, say nothing. Or if we do say something, it is along the lines of "They [the victims] must have provoked it." But most of us just turn away, shut our eyes. It's not our problem.

My sincerest prayer regarding all of this is that what happened in Jasper will be a turning point for all humankind, and that somehow we will all learn to be more accepting of our differences. That we can enhance people's sense of humanity before they become victims, before they chain someone to the back of their truck. That's why I practice. That's why I tell others about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

As George Bernard Shaw writes, "The worst sin toward

our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them: That's the essence of inhumanity."

— PRESTON RICHARDS, Dallas

## A Father's Letter

This is for Michael Lisagor ("Perspectives," June 26): I didn't have a father who chanted, nor one who was concerned with me except as a mirror to himself. I also had a mother who was immature and enraged and not nurturing. I have suffered throughout my lifetime trying to overcome feelings of great despair. Chanting helps. But the feelings are deep, the karma is deep. The fight goes on. I say this because I had a very difficult night and morning and then read your letter. This letter helped me because it is the words and feelings of a wise and caring father. It is fatherly in a way I have not experienced. It made me cry. I'm sure I will read it and reread it.

You covered a lot of bases, and it shows your own emotional growth.

Thanks for the gift.  
— BARBARA BOTTNER, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

## Touching Experience

Thank you [Doris McCloskey] for the wonderful experience (July 3 *World Tribune*).

I am 33 yrs old and have been practicing 10 years. I just went through a similar experience, losing my mother to cancer three months ago. I think I may still be going through a "fear of no faith," as I have lost my momentum for my practice.

All I can say is what you've experienced is where I hope to be someday. It seems that I am stuck because I did not get the result that I wanted. It's hard to contemplate so many people losing such an important person — I feel all seven children lost their best friend, let alone watching my father contend for himself at the age of 75. It's painful.

I found your experience very inspiring and hope I can rejuvenate my faith soon.

Thank you!  
— SHARON DODDS, Minneapolis, Minn.

I was really moved to tears by

Doris McCloskey's experience about the death of her mother. It was so beautiful and filled with the shining light of Buddhist practice, and I could relate to it 100 percent. Two-and-a-half years ago my mother passed away after a three-year battle with lung cancer. My experience during that time, after 20 years of practice, was very similar to Doris', and when my mother did slip away, she was on no medication and in no pain! The night she died we happened to have planned a discussion meeting at my apartment, which we indeed did have. Part of the meeting was a memorial for my mother, with everyone chanting for her and offering incense. I was able to give my experience in faith regarding my mother's illness and eventual death. I know it was so encouraging to the members, and it really was to me. Thank you, Doris, for sharing your experience.

— PAT WINTER, New York

## Propagation and the Newspaper

Because of my circumstances, I have only seen my oldest sister, Joanne, five times in the last 32 years. I write to her regularly and all of her responses have been upbeat, so I had no reason for concern.

On her 60th birthday, I called her and we had a long talk. It became evident to me that she has been suffering for many years and is now at a low point in her life. I asked if she

remembered that I am a Buddhist, and if it would be OK for me to respond to her evident anguish. I was very surprised by the response I got.

"Do I know that you are a Buddhist?" she said. "Of course I do! Don't you remember that you sent me that newspaper for years? Didn't I ever tell you that, when I was struggling, your newspaper seemed to be the only hope in my life?"

I told her that, although I had sent her the *World Tribune* for five or six years, and had referred to Buddhism in our correspondence, she never once said that she enjoyed it or gained encouragement from it.

She said I had never asked that question.

Dumb me! I had stopped sending her the *World Tribune* more than 10 years ago, because I guessed that she wasn't reading it.

I could kick myself in the head right now. This printed word that I take for granted had been missed by someone very important in my life. With my birthday card to my sister, I enclosed an article from the *World Tribune* in which SGI President Ikeda discusses the third stage of life. In that dialogue, he talks about a woman who did not join the Soka Gakkai until she was 63 years old. She retired from designing at age 98 and is now 103. Her life seemed to start anew at age 63.

I hope the article helps my sister, but more important, I am determined to send her the *World Tribune*, not take the *World Tribune* for granted, and recommit myself to propagating this Buddhism.

In the July 3 issue, President Ikeda discusses the power of

the printed word. How right he is. My sister told me so.

I'm glad I called Joanne. She reawakened in me how important the *World Tribune* is, and also that as a member of the SGI-USA, propagation is at the essence of my practice.

As a 30-plus-year member, you would think that I would have this inbedded not only in my brain, but also my heart. It took a non-member — my sister — to make me realize how important the *World Tribune*, *Living Buddhism* and propagation really are.

I'll send Joanne the *World Tribune* because it gives her hope. I will chant for my sister, because deep in her heart she wants me or someone to lead her to the Gohonzon.

You never know when something important is about to happen. I called to wish Joanne "happy birthday," and hung up learning much more.

— DENNIS RISSLAND, Victorville, Calif.

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

*In the "Mailbox," we will also publish member comments, suggestions and questions as they pertain to the World Tribune. Because of volume, not all letters can be printed or acknowledged, 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 via the internet: wt@sgi-usa.org.*

# 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."

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

**Address:** 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, Calif. 90401  
**Telephone:** (310) 451-8811  
**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.



# Moving Up

New York Boys and Girls Group holds graduation exercises during their June 21 general meeting — on Father's Day.



Photos by Kirk Condyles

A Boys and Girls Group member reciting the Lotus Sutra.



Amelia Moran gives Athen White her diploma during the 'Moving Up' ceremony.



Spending Father's Day with Dad at the Boys and Girls Group General Meeting.

**COMING NEXT WEEK** ▶ **The youth division's 'Seize the Day'**