



YOUTH

In this month's 'Seize the Day,' new leaders revitalize the SGI-USA's committee for social action.

pullout section



PROTEST

The Sho-Hondo demolition sparks more expressions of outrage.

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INVINCIBLE Beauty

The SGI president encourages young women to seek happiness not in outward appearances but in their own wisdom. He quotes Josei Toda: 'Youth itself is beauty. You must never forget that all young women are beautiful, just as they are.'

By **DAISAKU IKEDA**
SGI PRESIDENT

In July, which marks the founding of our young women's division (July 19, 1951), I want to share some of President Toda's guidance to young women and to record my thoughts as well.

President Toda often told the young women's division

members: "All of you have embraced faith in Buddhism while you are still young. You are practicing now so that you may live happy lives. Your true victory in terms of happiness, however, will only really start to be apparent from your 40s on."

Even if you are happy and well-off in your teens and 20s, there's no telling what your life will be like later on. Be it marriage, children, work, the challenges of life in general — all are harsh realities.

In order to enjoy health and good fortune in your 40s and 50s, in order to feel a sense of purpose and success in your daily endeavors, it's vital that you build a firm foundation for your life through Buddhist practice while still young.

Anything that is built on a weak foundation will only crumble.

PLEASE SEE BEAUTY, 3



Photo by KIRK CONDYLES



A NEW STAGE

The SGI-USA will hold a nationwide culture festival and general meeting in 1999 to celebrate 10 years of 'the new SGI-USA,' which started in February 1990. The event will also herald the year 2000, which will mark the 40th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's first trip to the United States to launch the worldwide kosen-rufu movement. For more information, please see 'Prime Points' on page 7. (Left: The 15th SGI World Peace Youth Culture Festival, Carnegie Hall, June 1996.)

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Gosho study material for July and August.

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WOW!

BREAKTHROUGHS IN UNDERSTANDING

Owning a Big Heart

By ANTHONY D. DAVIS
CHICAGO

If I am having tremendous difficulties and not showing signs of overcoming them, then how can I confidently share the Mystic Law with others or be effective as an SGI leader? Am I showing "real" actual proof in my life, or am I just giving lip service to the great wonder and power of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism?

I have spent a lot of time asking myself these questions. Sometimes I have even thought that I probably shouldn't be a leader for fear of being a hypocrite and actually discouraging the members I am trying to encourage. I mean, I have to be OK before I can really help anybody else, right??

A few words spoken by SGI President Ikeda here in the United States in 1993 profoundly changed my views, as I was struggling with a barrage of serious health, financial and other problems — while challenging my leadership responsibilities. He said: "Those who make efforts to bring joy to others even though they may be suffering themselves are bodhisattvas.... Such is the kind of big-hearted person I hope you will become.... This is the purpose of Buddhist practice. When we climb the mountain of this practice, we accumulate solid good fortune in our lives without fail."

Reading this sent a blast of clarity to the core of my recurring confusion. I recalled how second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda encouraged members suffering with poverty, while he battled severe financial problems of his own — how President Ikeda encouraged members suffering with illness, while his own body was racked with fever, weakness and nausea.

At the center of this effort to bring joy to others though personally suffering is a big heart. Getting a big heart is the purpose of Buddhist practice. I now definitely know that I can own a big heart, too!

Did you ever say "Wow!" after studying Buddhism? E-mail, mail or fax your story to us (see p. 14 for

WISDOM KING IMMOVABLE AND WISDOM KING CRAVING-FILLED

Facing Our Desires — Facing Suffering

ON THE
GOHONZON

STUDYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S
INSCRIPTIONS ON THE OBJECT OF DEVOTION

By TERRY ELLIS
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

In the second chapter of the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni explains that after he attained enlightenment, he pondered how to share the great Law with common mortals. His thoughts turn to the Buddhas of past ages, who used expedient means to save the people.

Because people have difficulty believing they are potentially Buddhas — and therefore have a hard time embracing the Law that can lead them directly to their Buddhahood — Shakyamuni decides on the same strategy. For infinite kalpas, for instance, he speaks of the "Law of nirvana ending the long sufferings of birth and death" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 44). Of course, Buddhism does not end the sufferings of birth and death; it teaches us how to overcome them, how to find joy in them. But Shakyamuni first taught the Law of nirvana as expedient

means to lead people toward this understanding.

Sufferings over our desires and sufferings over death have thus long been a topic of Buddhism. These are at the heart of what motivated Shakyamuni on his quest: He sought a solution to the dilemma of birth, old age, sickness and death.

Nichiren Daishonin, too, instructed his followers to first understand death. Then, he said, everything else will follow.

Two characters on the Gohonzon, written in the medieval Sanskrit orthography called Siddham, show at work in our life these two principles for transforming suffering. On the right side of the Gohonzon is Wisdom King Immovable (Skt Achala) and on the left, Wisdom King Craving-Filled (Skt Ragarja). (These two are placed in between the Four Heavenly Kings, which are at the four corners of the Gohonzon.)

Wisdom King denotes a king wise enough to defeat devils; this signifies the Mystic Law enabling any person to overcome sufferings over desires and sufferings over death.

In the images of provisional Buddhism adopted after Shakyamuni's death, Wisdom King Craving-Filled carries a bow and arrow. His role is to put an end to people's earthly desires and their making of

bad causes. In the Daishonin's Buddhism, as in the Lotus Sutra, enlightenment does not exist apart from desires, just as life cannot be separated from death.

Wisdom King Immovable, who carries a sword in his right hand and a rope in his left, indicates the principle of the sufferings of life and death in themselves being nirvana. When Shakyamuni began to introduce the Law in the "Expedient Means" chapter, he made clear that the goal of nirvana, ending the sufferings of life and death, was an expedient teaching. By practicing to the Gohonzon, the Daishonin taught, this promise comes alive through revealing our eternal Buddhahood just as we are, as common mortals, even in the face of death.

One might ask, regarding the Wisdom Kings, why the Daishonin chose to write their names in Sanskrit. It is recorded that the Daishonin was anticipating the translation of his teachings into Sanskrit and Chinese in the future. This indicates that the Daishonin was thinking of Buddhism as a world religion. It was this thinking that also motivated him to use *nam*, which stems from a Sanskrit word, to indicate devoted practice of the Law, Myoho-enge-kyo.

Nine in a series

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON FAITH

How Do the Ten Worlds Work?

By TED MORINO

SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT LEADER

Q How do the ten worlds work in our daily lives?

A What we call the mutual possession of the ten worlds speaks to the changeability of our lives.

Buddhism sees in each human life the same potential for revealing Buddhahood from within. This is expounded in Buddhism as a life-condition free from the limits of the lower nine worlds: Bodhisattva, Realization, Learning, Rapture, Tranquility, Anger, Animality, Hunger and Hell.

However, this does not mean that Buddhahood exists apart from the reality of these other nine worlds.

Nichiren Daishonin inscribed his life as the Buddha in the form of the Gohonzon. Down the center of the Gohonzon is written "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo — Nichiren." And written alongside it are the names of representatives of all ten worlds. This indicates that all ten worlds, illuminated by the light of the Mystic Law inscribed down the center, can display their inherent nobility through Buddhism. This point is fully explained in the letter "The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 211).

Once our innate Buddhahood is solidified enough through our daily Buddhist practice — or once our Buddha nature actually becomes our basic life-condition — all the other nine worlds start functioning to create happiness.

For instance, Hell is considered the worst life-condition; it is characterized by rage toward others with resultant sufferings as retribution. In Buddhism, though, what matters is the content of one's rage. Some may be enraged because, controlled by materialistic and/or selfish desires, they feel dissatisfied at not getting what they want. But others may be enraged because, empathizing with the suffering of others, they are exhausting their energies to find solutions to others' problems. This is rage illuminated by the Law. The Daishonin says that such "anger leads to either good or evil" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 584).

So, even the terrible life-condition of Hell, when based on the Mystic Law, can be an aspect of Buddhahood. Experiencing Hell has a significant role to play in furthering our happiness; we can't know the greatest happiness unless we know the greatest unhappiness. If Buddhas never experienced the pain of Hell, they would never understand others' sufferings, let alone be able to help others work toward solutions. It is a limited Buddha

indeed who can relate only to certain types of people.

This principle, of course, applies not only to Anger and Hell but to all the other worlds as well. It's because the lower nine worlds are inherent in Buddhahood that Buddhas can express their full potential to guide untold numbers of people to happiness. All in all, the lower nine worlds take on their true significance when based on Buddhahood.

Take the suffering that accompanies the death of a loved one: People who base themselves on the world of Buddhahood can turn all their sadness into prayers for their loved ones' repose; they can encourage others by courageously facing their loss. Other people in the same situation might be defeated by this loss. The practical application of the ten worlds is that we can create something positive no matter the situation that we find ourselves in.

When we chant, basing ourselves on the Mystic Law, it can be said that our nine worlds equal Buddhahood, and that Buddhahood equals our nine worlds. The Daishonin teaches that when our innate Buddhahood is fully developed — through Buddhist practice for ourselves and others — everything that we do when we're in our lower nine worlds will help us blossom spectacularly as human beings. ☸

Youth Training Course in Japan

In September, 24 young leaders from throughout the United States will be attending the SGI World Youth Training Course in Japan. Participants must be at least 18 and at least a district-level leader. Interested people are asked to contact their youth division region leaders immediately.

The course, which includes various meetings and exchanges, is scheduled for Sept. 18–24. The exact cost has not been determined, but participants should expect to pay \$2,000–\$2,500, which would include personal expenses, such as meals. Please contact your region youth leaders for an application and more details.

Since the allotment is limited, each region will submit the names of one young man and one young woman from among their applicants to the national headquarters by July 31. From these lists, the national youth leaders will make the final selections.

SGI President's Essay: Invincible Beauty

BEAUTY, FROM PAGE 1

Happiness is not determined by outward appearance, beauty, wealth or possessions but by your ability to change your karma and by the amount of good fortune you have accumulated.

Mr. Toda used to say, with the tone of a compassionate father: "Youth itself is beauty. You must never forget that all young women are beautiful, just as they are."

Mr. Toda also taught the young women's division members that gaining a solid grounding in Buddhist study would make them philosophers. Essentially, philosophy is the wisdom that helps us lead better lives. When we acquire that philosophy, that knowledge, through Buddhist practice, it becomes a source of boundless strength. We can tap it freely to respond to life's diverse challenges. And we come to see that we are advancing on the road toward genuine happiness and fulfillment.

I hope you will always remember that.



Please be confident, therefore, that those who persevere in their faith always triumph in the end.

It is petty to feel embarrassed about people knowing that you're an SGI member or to be afraid of being ridiculed on that account. Undergoing hardships in youth enables you to forge a strong, invincible self, one that shines with eternal good fortune. It would be awful to end your life in disgrace or debilitated by illness and financial distress. That's why it's crucial that you don't squander this important time of your youth.



Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai once narrowly escaped an as-

sassination attempt. When his wife, Madame Deng Yingchao, learned of this, she immediately wrote to him, stating to the effect: "As the situation stands, you must fight and vanquish your enemies. I am not the kind of person to fall apart when danger threatens. When I think of the good of the people and that we are engaged in a great, glorious task unprecedented in his-



Photo by CAROL BARNSTEAD

A solid grounding in Buddhist study leads to wisdom to help us lead better lives, Mr. Toda said.

tory, I can face this threat with calm."

We of the SGI, too, cherish a noble objective: our great dream of kosen-rufu — the widespread propagation of the principles and ideals of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism for the peace and happiness of all humanity.



Many young women mistakenly think that marriage is the only way they can become truly happy. Of course, marriage is a perfectly natural part of life, but many women have wept bitter tears of pain and regret over throwing themselves into disastrous relationships against the best advice of family and

friends. Some have been so blinded by love that they unthinkingly discarded their faith. I want you to bear this in mind.

No one is an island unto herself. We can only uncover and reveal our wonderful potential when we have many good people around us — trusted friends supporting us and respected seniors to whom we can turn for sound advice!

For this reason, please cultivate wisdom. This is the purpose of faith.

I hope that you will always remember the importance of practicing with the SGI, an organization of harmonious unity.



President Makiguchi frequently offered encouragement and advice to young women's division members on the train home after discussion meetings. He would say: "You can teach people at your workplace the greatness of Buddhism by the example you set. Be especially kind to employees younger than yourself."

How overjoyed Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda would surely be if they could see the beautiful achievements of our young women's division members in Japan and throughout the world.



The Daishonin writes, "Only in the Lotus Sutra do we read that a woman who embraces this sutra not only excels all other women but also surpasses all men" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, pp. 156–57). I hope that our young women's division members will make a conscious effort to live these years of their youth — and their entire lives — with wisdom and integrity, heading always toward true happiness. ☸

NEWS BRIEFS

Photo by GEORGE FUJIOKA



Members sign a petition to be sent to High Priest Nikken.

Members in Hawaii Rally To Save the Sho-Hondo

The voices of hundreds of Hawaii's SGI-USA members rang out loud and clear in protest: "Don't destroy the Sho-Hondo!" The rally, held June 14 at the Hawaii Culture Center, was a point of departure as Hawaii took the lead in hosting the first summer rally to express indignation over Nikken's demolition of the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo).

A stirring slide presentation depicted the history of the Sho-Hondo and historic events held there. Members spoke about their experiences regarding the Sho-Hondo and the sincerity of the millions of members who contributed funds to construct the Sho-Hondo, which was meant to last for centuries as a place for people worldwide to work for world peace.

— MINAKO NAKAJIMA & JOANNE TACHIBANA, Correspondents

Women's Symposium Held in Louisiana

At the June 28 North Louisiana Women's Symposium, more than 30 women encouraged one another with great experiences of personal victory and two wonderful presentations (on relationships and the ten worlds). The participants made a fresh determination to address life's challenges through the practice of Buddhism, instead of giving in to the notion of "I've fallen into Hell, and I can't get out!"

An impromptu dance session to "We Are Family" ended the occasion, leaving members with enough *jote de vivre* to dance and carry on the entire way back to Leesville.

— KIM THOMPSON, Correspondent

SGI President Meets With Brunei University President

On June 30, SGI President Ikeda met with University of Brunei Darussalam Vice Chancellor Abu Bakar at Soka University in Tokyo. The University of Brunei Darussalam and Soka University signed an educational exchange agreement in 1995.

On this, his second meeting with Vice Chancellor Abu Bakar, Mr. Ikeda entrusted his guest with a new poem he composed for Sultan Hassanal Bolkia, who has worked for peace in his country and throughout Asia for the more than 30 years since his accession to the throne at age 21.

Noting that the former sultan, father of the present sultan, Sir Muda Omar Ali Saifuddien, was a highly acclaimed poet, President Ikeda recited some lines of the late sultan's poetry and expressed his deep sympathy with their message that hard work and persistence are important.

— Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER

Statements of Protest

The following are excerpts from the international architectural community protesting Nikken's demolition of the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo), which was donated by SGI members:

PART OF OUR mission [at the National Building Museum] is to bring to public attention the great landmark buildings in this country and abroad that are worthy of preservation. Based on the interest of our members and visitors, I believe the general public would be outraged to learn of the pending destruction of a building that is not only an important religious site, but also an important representation of a unique architectural style.... Sho-Hondo should be saved and maintained to reflect its beauty and the faith that made it possible.

— SUSAN HENSHAW JONES,
president and director, National Building Museum,
Washington, D.C.

RARELY HAS A building of our own time so pervasively overcome limits of culture and place to speak to all humanity. Perhaps this extraordinary accomplishment has contributed to its proposed undoing, for great accomplishments have, throughout history, excited opposing forces of envy and fear. Sho-Hondo transcends conventional questions of fashion and taste — these are but superficial qualities, at best — and speaks of larger, more spiritual issues. Do not deny later generations the right to experience this creation.

— DAVID G. De LONG,
professor of architecture, University of Pennsylvania

I AM MYSTIFIED as to why some Japanese place so little value on their magnificent architectural heritage, when, as a visitor, I find the destruction of such beauty an outrage, not only against Japanese culture and achievements but...for all humankind. How much more should you [Nikken], therefore, as someone who has been given the special task of preserving this great Japanese aesthetic tradition, feel an inner wound at the proposal that the Sho-Hondo temple should be torn out of the very centre of the Japanese soul. I implore you to think of future generations....

— PHILIP DREW,
architectural historian and author, Annandale, Australia

THE FACT THAT it is a beloved place of so many speaks to its need for continued service to Japan and the world. Every historical building does not, by its longevity, automatically warrant preservation. The Sho-Hondo exceeds any definition of a building worthy of preservation. It is a remarkable example of the great heritage of the post-war modern buildings.

— DAVID H. GRUBB,
chairman of the board, Swinerton & Walberg,
San Francisco

[THE SHO-HONDO] SYMBOLIZES the oneness of technology and art.... I believe that architecture is a natural outcome of a country's civilization and culture — the greater the progress of its people, the greater its architecture. To me, Sho-Hondo is an example of the greatness of Japanese culture. To destroy it would be a sad event indeed.

— SUMITA SINHA, architect, London

New Sho-Hondo Web Site

The International Committee To Save the Sho-Hondo has a new Web site. You can view it at:

www.save-shohondo.com

Legal Ramifications of Religious Freedom Discussed

New York SGI members take an updated look at the First Amendment and discuss legal issues related to the temple issue.

By **LESLIE WINES**
NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT

Ever since the First Amendment was adopted, the United States has defined itself as a land prizing religious freedom and debate. The U.S. Constitution, with its exceptional emphasis on unrestrained spiritual expression, provides important freedoms to SGI-USA members as they now contend with the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood, a religion masquerading as Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

Recently at the New York Culture Center, Culture Department legal division members presented "Religious Freedom in America," a panel discussion exploring how U.S. law aids SGI members as they speak out against the priesthood's injustices. The discussion was made poignant by the fact that it took place against the backdrop of Nichiren Shoshu's demolition of the Grand Main Temple. The SGI is investigating various legal options to preserve the Main Temple, an architectural masterpiece in Japan that housed the Dai-Gohonzon and was built primarily with funds from SGI members. During a Q-and-A period, members asked panelists about the possible legal remedies. Audience members also noted that the priesthood now controls Myosetsu-ji temple in Queens, completed in 1984 with funding from SGI-USA members.

Although the session produced no immediate legal plan of action for retaking either of these structures, the questioners' sense of outrage vividly illustrated why the SGI has taken a stand, as well as why the U.S. Constitution guarantees the broadest forms of religious expression.

The first panelist, Manhattan attorney Roger Algase, noted that the United States' first settlers were fugitives from religious persecution. Mr. Algase also explained why U.S. courts traditionally have not examined religious doctrines in deciding property disputes involving churches and temples.

He noted that in the England the settlers left, church property disputes were generally settled by

the courts, with judges analyzing both real estate property claims and doctrinal differences. The U.S. Constitution's framers, however, crafted the First Amendment to prevent judges from acting as authorities on matters of faith. This forced the courts to consider only points of real property law when two or more conflicting religious factions laid claims to the same church or temple.

"At first, it might sound great for the SGI-USA members," Mr. Algase said. "If the temple dispute had happened under old English law, we might have used it to reclaim the Queens temple."

But the First Amendment specifically restricts judges from reviewing doctrinal differences so as to protect citizens from the abuses of authority that might

wanted to ensure that religion is debated in religious terms, and that religious debate cannot be controlled by the manipulations of authorities."

He added that the Daishonin and the successive SGI presidents have always called for vigorous yet respectful and nonviolent debates on religion. While legal avenues will be pursued, religious discussion will continue to play a stronger role — stronger than judicial decisions or authoritative mandates — in guaranteeing the future of the Daishonin's Buddhism, he said.

As befits a free religious discussion, audience members left holding a variety of views. Some noted that U.S. law and its application are somewhat elastic. They suggested that both U.S. and Japanese law could be altered to allow claims against the priesthood. Such claims might lead to the preservation of the Main Temple, as well as the return of Myosetsu-ji to the members who in large part paid for it, they said.

Other members took a different perspective, mentioning that although the priesthood's control of the Main Temple and other temples built with lay believers' funds is profoundly unethical, their struggle against the priesthood has loosened their attachment to a specific location or structure.

These members said that they have experienced a deep form of religious revolution, which has left them confident that the principles the Daishonin expressed in the Dai-Gohonzon exist in their hearts and can be tapped from any location where they chant sincerely. Such a realization constitutes the ultimate freedom from religious authorities and is the great benefit of their struggles in this decade, they said. **WT**



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

The Grand Main Temple, built with donations from 8 million people, is being torn down by the priesthood.

have occurred if judges acted as religious experts. Mr. Algase emphasized that the courts were restrained from acting as religious experts to protect the freedom of all to speak out on spiritual matters.

"So let's speak out about what the temple has done," he said.

Another panelist, SGI public information officer Andrew Gebert, said that the Daishonin's Buddhism also places heavy emphasis on religious freedom from state interference. "After his exile to Sado Island, Nichiren Daishonin was offered a deal: The government offered him a temple — if he would stop refuting erroneous religions," Mr. Gebert said.

"The Daishonin said no, because if he had stopped criticizing other religions it would amount to a denial of religious freedom," Mr. Gebert said. "The Daishonin

The World SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

(ISSN-0049-8165)

The *World Tribune* (692-720) is published weekly by the SGI-USA, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401; (310) 451-8811; FAX (310) 260-8910; E-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org. Subscriptions Office: (800) 835-4558; FAX (310) 260-8970; E-mail: SGIsubs@aol.com.

Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA, and at additional mailing offices.

Subscription Rates (subject to state taxes) \$15 for Three Months; \$28 for Six Months; \$50 for One Year; \$85 for Two Years; \$110 for Three Years.

Printed on 100% recycled paper

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the new

HUMAN REVOLUTION

A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI

'THE FLOWER OF CULTURE'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 26-27

The Cuban revolution, led by the young Fidel Castro, sets the stage for tenuous relations with the United States. The Cuban missile crisis arises from growing U.S.-Cuba tensions over Cuba's relationship with the Soviets.



By **DAISAKU IKEDA**
SGI PRESIDENT

The U.S. intervention against Spain was no doubt motivated in part by the desire to help the Cuban people attain freedom. But it is a sad fact that, after the war for independence, Cuba became much like a U.S. colony. Forced into poverty under these circumstances, the Cuban people could not help but harbor anti-American sentiments.

After World War II, Fulgencio Batista, a military officer and former Cuban president, seized the reins of power in a 1952 coup. He installed himself as a dictator and for seven years oppressed and tyrannized the Cuban people —

while lining his pockets at their expense.

This ill-famed regime was finally toppled in the Cuban revolution led by Fidel Castro. On Jan. 1, 1959, Batista fled the country, and Castro and his revolutionary forces, greeted by the joyous cheers of the citizens, entered the capital of Havana.

Castro was only 32 years old. He had devoted seven years to the anti-Batista revolutionary movement. He was a committed revolutionary who had survived armed insurrections, imprisonment, exile and guerrilla warfare in the mountains. Winning the people's support, he had now succeeded in ousting the Batista dictatorship.

In the beginning, the key cabinet posts of the new revolutionary government were occupied by moderates, and there wasn't a great emphasis on socialist revolution. The U.S. administration under President Dwight D. Eisenhower quickly recognized the new government. But when Castro became the country's premier in February, he began to emphasize a popular socialist revolution, focusing primarily on labor and farm workers. In order to close the enormous gap between the nation's rich and poor, this perhaps was unavoidable.

In May, the First Agrarian Reform Law was passed, and huge estates were confiscated.

In 1960, when three American oil companies refused to refine petroleum that Cuba had imported from the Soviet Union, the Cuban government nationalized the refineries. From that point on, the relationship between Cuba and the United States plummeted.

America responded by drastically cutting its imports of Cuban sugar. It also banned exports of most U.S. products to Cuba, leading to the island's isolation from much of the world through external trade restrictions and economic sanctions.

Cuba would starve unless it could export its sugar — and the Soviet Union presented itself as a buyer. This inevitably led to the strengthening of Soviet-Cuban relations.

The institution of socialism in Cuba proceeded rapidly, and more and more large corporations and private land holdings were nationalized. One source suggests that by the end of 1960, some \$1 billion in U.S. assets in Cuba was nationalized.

Naturally, this led to a steady worsening of relations between the two countries, and on Jan. 3, 1961, the United States severed diplomatic relations with Cuba. When John F. Kennedy was inaugurated as the 35th U.S. president on Jan. 20, the two nations were already locked in an antagonistic standoff. It came to a head with the Bay of Pigs invasion a few months later, on April 17.

This was an abortive invasion of Cuba by a force of anti-Castro Cuban exiles, but in fact the CIA was deeply involved in both its planning and execution. The intelligence reports supplied to the U.S. leaders at the time concerning anticipated Cuban response suggested that once the Cuban exiles landed, anti-Castro forces in Cuba would rise with them and overthrow the government with little resistance. But exactly the opposite happened.

The exiles were driven back by Cuban armed forces in a mere three days. And, instead of inciting a rebellion against Castro's government, the invasion further cemented the Cuban people's unity.

President Kennedy received strong domestic and international criticism for this debacle. Actually, a short time before announcing his presidential candidacy, Kennedy referred to Castro as an intellectual heir to the legacy of Simón Bolívar, hero of South American independence. He also adopted a more flexible posture toward Cuba and other Latin American nations, to better understand the heavy burdens borne by those countries and the revolutionary ideals of their peoples. That Kennedy would approve the Bay of Pigs invasion, which appears to have been the brainchild of the previous administration, remains one of the great historical ironies of that era.

At this time, Castro declared the Cuban revolution to be a socialist one. To Cuba, the United States was seen as a powerful, threatening giant in the north. The Bay of Pigs incident produced in the Cuban people a sense of crisis and the fear that the United States might invade at any moment. It was also a major factor in driving Cuba further into the arms of the Soviet Union.

In 1962, Cuba signed a trade agreement with the Soviets. This resulted in the expulsion of Cuba from the Organization of American States and a complete U.S. embargo on all trade with Cuba.

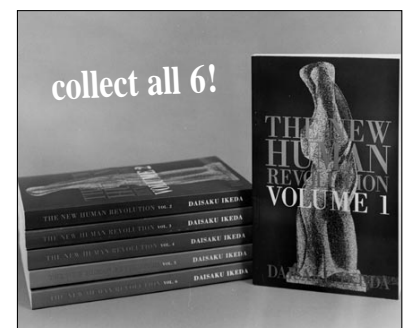
To be continued

Daisaku Ikeda appears in the novel as **Shin'ichi Yamamoto**. The events take place in 1962. Illustration by **Ken'ichiro Uchida**.

Our faith isn't the kind in which you look to others for help. No, each of us has to carry out our own human revolution. We have to stand up on our own two feet and win through our own efforts. If you depend on others, you're sure to lose.... (The New Human Revolution, vol. 6, p. 245)

Volume 6 of *The New Human Revolution*, SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai's world peace movement since 1960, contains Shin'ichi Yamamoto's travels to the Middle East, the contribution campaign to build the Grand Reception Hall, the Mikawashima train crash, early Komei elections, advice to the student division and more.

Available in all SGI-USA bookstores. The price is \$10.00. Mail orders may be placed by calling (800) 626-1313.



IT'S UP TO YOU, NEW YORK

District representatives meet to discuss the 'New' New York.

By RIC ORNELLAS AND
LESLIE WINES
NEW YORK CORRESPONDENTS

Photos by JEFF JONES

In June 1996, when SGI President Ikeda last came to New York, he asked the members here to create a "New" New York. On a recent Sunday afternoon, district representatives from the New York East Region — starting from downtown, through Chinatown, up the Eastside (including the United Nations) and along the East River, through Harlem and ending in the Bronx — met at the New York Culture Center to discuss the "New" New York. Participants included Philip Bonds, Diana T. Cruz, Lucrecia Evans, Mark Godwin, Keewon Chung, Albert Lee, Ken Ferrara, Priscilla Crowell and Jeannette Emarco. Alan Ellis moderated. Following are excerpts from their discussion.

Ellis: In light of your experience as a district leader, what do you feel President Ikeda meant by a "New" New York?

Bonds: I think President Ikeda wants us to speak from the heart and become a family, a dynamic family!

Cruz: I feel there needs to be a bringing together of our organization with the diverse society that we live in. We need to work together on common goals like education, health and culture — concerns to all.

Evans: I feel President Ikeda meant for us to realize the importance of propagating Buddhism and actually living every moment as a bodhisattva.

Godwin: It's been two years since President Ikeda's visit, and I'm just beginning to really ponder his vision for New York. I think he is always asking us to create greater unity among our district members, making it easier for them to achieve their goals and giving them time to focus on showing greater actual proof in daily life.

Chung: In Korea, where I'm from, the mem-

bers weren't allowed to meet in public because of the government's suppression [in the past]. The SGI is now recognized in [Korean] society, and their activities — they often sponsor community cleanups — are valued. We need to do the same in New York.

Lee: In 1996, I was a driver in President Ikeda's carpool. I

was with him when he stopped one day at a park on the Westside Highway. He remarked on the many different kinds of people there, and immediately he went to speak to the children. I felt this was the "New" New York — our youth and our diversity.

We have so many young people in Chinatown, and they are full of energy. But

they don't like to go to discussion meetings. Their parents bring them, but they are bored. I've noticed that there are many churches in China, and they're always having out-

ings in the summertime for the kids and they love it. So that's what we're planning for our youth division: outings!

Ellis: What actions have you taken toward the realization of a "New" New York in your district?

Chung: In our district right now we're going through growing pains. Most of us never practiced together before. We're just getting to know one another through district activities like the monthly discussions meetings, planning meetings and home visits.

Godwin: We're new to one another. You want to have the same deep bonds, maybe even deeper bonds than before, but first you have to get to know one another. The recent reorganization has thrown us into a new stew, and it is all churning and cooking. It really is like culture

shock.

Bonds: I think we should go back to the basics in our districts — chanting together, dialogues, gongyo practice, home visits — so the members are filled with joy. Then they take that joy from the district back to the community.

Ferrara: I've had more fright than joy by this reorganization. I've practiced for many years, and prior to 1990 we had many guidelines and leaders who told us what to do. I like rules and regulations because it makes it easier to practice and to tell the members what to do. I like being correct — but this is more challenging.

Godwin: I used to feel frightened when we first reorganized, too! Not anymore. The other dis-

trict leaders are making the same transition that I am, and they're so committed that they inspire me forward.

Cruz: In my district I tried to open up to the members. It was a big personal step for me because I was raised to be wary of others. But I'm glad I did because I feel more trust from the members.



Ken Ferrara



Lucrecia Evans



Diana T. Cruz



Albert Lee

is communication. This is New York, and everyone is so busy. It is a challenge.

Ferrara: My intense challenge in the reorganization has been that the members wanted to be sure the reorganization was not a carbon copy of the old one. They didn't want a "top-down" organization but a "member-up" district.

Chung: In my former district, the district leader's motto was "Serve the Members," so we trusted her. I feel that as a district leader I have to gain the members' trust, and that is difficult.

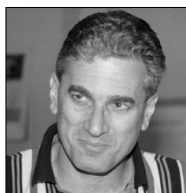
Cruz: My challenge has been to stop talking. I like to talk. I have to stop myself and let the members talk. When they do, their ideas are really good and fresh.

Ferrara: The former leaders of the district I work with were very considerate of the members' needs. When I wasn't the same way, there was tension. I find it difficult to let go of my role as a district leader and be a friend. I feel like I'm losing control.

Bonds: Learning how to guide and not control is difficult.

Evans: I understand what the others are saying, but I have the opposite problem. My members seem to sit back and want someone to tell them what to do. I really have to encourage them to bring out their own ideas.

At the end of the dialogue, David Dalessandro, New York East Region leader, thanked the district leaders for participating. He quoted from President Ikeda's June 15, 1996, speech: "I would therefore like the organization in New York to be a gathering of lions — each one, a person of truly outstanding ability and caliber. Each individual is important. Everything starts from treasuring just one person. This is the eternal formula for the development of kosen-rufu."



Alan Ellis



Keewon Chung



Mark Godwin



Jeannette Emarco



Priscilla Crowell



Philip Bonds

Putting Art Into Our Lives

As planning gets under way for the 1999 American culture festival and general meeting, General Director Zaitso offers some thoughts on the purpose and spirit of such special events hosted by the SGI-USA.

As many of you may know, a culture festival and general meeting are being planned for the fall of 1999 in Los Angeles.

Many members have questions regarding the specifics, but since we're still in the early planning stages, there aren't any details I can offer. I would like to assure you, though, that regular updates will appear in future issues of the *World Tribune*.

PRIME POINTS



By Fred M. Zaitso
SGI-USA
General Director

My overall determination is that this event will prove to be spiritually enriching for each individual member of the SGI-USA, and will also create a profound sense of unity within our organization. Further, I'm determined that (through all of our endeavors) we will bathe American society in warm waves of joy.

Festivals and conventions are common in America, of course. The Republicans and Democrats hold political conventions every four years, for example. And we've all heard of religious rallies hosted by different groups.

There's value, I believe, in bringing people together to celebrate their most noble beliefs and to share a vision for the future.

Our upcoming festival promises to be something unique, something truly wonderful—but, as in all our activities, success or failure hinges on our faith and our sense of mission. With this in mind, I'd like to offer some thoughts regarding such cultural events.

• **Culture festivals are integral to the SGI's goal of securing world peace.** We all know that hatred and ignorance breed war. Culture and education, on the other hand, cause peace to grow. By *culture*, I don't mean anything snobbish or exclusionary. Rather, I mean a broad expression of our shared humanity.

President Ikeda once described culture as "an exquisite flower

nurtured by the inner power of the human spirit." And he has said that culture acts like a magnet, drawing people together, transcending ethnic, national and ideological differences. It could be said, then, that culture festivals are blossoms of joy and harmony—dress rehearsals for world peace, so to speak.

• **A culture festival is a means, not an end in itself.** In a recent installment of *The New Human Revolution*, President Ikeda states that the reason he originally proposed holding culture festivals "was because the arts must return to the people.... Without the participation and appreciation of the people, culture and art are empty, meaningless.... When

humanity and the human spirit triumph, they lead to a brilliant cultural flowering and the appearance from among the people of truly great artworks."

So, in one sense, a culture festival is a means for putting art into the lives of ordinary people. In another sense, such festivals are a means by which each participant can polish his or her life; it's an opportunity to challenge ourselves through faith, practice and study, using our bodies and minds.

If you've ever been on the field in a crowded stadium or on stage in a concert hall, you know that there's tremendous energy and excitement generated by a unified audience. In the same way, a culture festival builds unity, and makes us feel that we are part of something bigger than ourselves. We're each small eagles, so to speak, but the festival gives us a sense that together we're a huge, soaring eagle.

• **Culture festivals are pure expressions of joy, praise and mission.** Nichiren Daishonin wrote: "Bear in mind that the twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra contain only a few passages elucidating the truth, but a great many words of praise" (*The*

Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 5, p. 203). It could be said that the Lotus Sutra praises life itself. Similarly, culture festivals are an opportunity for us to express the sheer joy of life.

Further, this expression of joy is part of our mission as practitioners of Buddhism. President Ikeda once explained that "while violence and war are threats to our existence, the arts express the joy of life. Wherever the correct Buddhist teachings spread, there will be jubilant poetry, song and dance. Joy is sublimated into art. As a result, wherever we who practice the Daishonin's Buddhism go, splendid flowers of art will bloom. Our mission is to link people's hearts with this blossoming of life's joy and to create a beautiful garden of peace on earth."

• **One question I hear frequently when such events are being planned is: Will SGI President Ikeda be there?** Recently, many members have asked me: "When will President Ikeda be coming to the United States? Will he come next year or the year after?" So I let them know that I do not currently have any schedule of President Ikeda coming. I remember I asked President Ikeda the same question a couple of years ago. I said, "Please come to the United States soon!"

He replied, "When you are ready, I'm ready."

In other words, our challenge is to make the organization ready to welcome President Ikeda at any moment. We will make this happen through our expansion movement, our fight against the evil function of Nikken and his priesthood, by continually challenging our personal goals and dreams each day, and by helping each member to become happy and fulfilled.

I'm looking forward to the upcoming festival and am determined to work toward its success with all my heart.

FOR WOMEN

The 'World Tribune' Always in Hand



For Naomi Sasaki, the organizational newspaper became her 'bridge across the barriers of language, culture, race and gender.'

By NAOMI SASAKI
L.A. #1 REGION WD LEADER

In the early, formative days of the SGI-USA, there were no publications or other resources for non-Japanese speaking members to learn about the greatness of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. And because of the language barrier, the pioneer members had a difficult time inviting Americans to discussion meetings. Consequently, they more often befriended other Japanese with whom they could communicate comfortably.

To these pioneer members, it seemed as if the seeds of kosen-rufu would take a long time to flourish in the United States.

The few Americans who began to meet with the Japanese pioneers initially had a hard time understanding Buddhism. Of course, they chanted and received many benefits. But they wanted to study and learn more.

Recognizing the need to fill this void—so that kosen-rufu could spread throughout the United States—SGI President Ikeda established the *World Tribune*. Its first issue was published in August 1964. The pioneer members were happy to use this new publication, calling it the missile of American kosen-rufu.

I remember the first sentence I learned in English after I arrived in the United States: "How would you like to come to our life-philosophy meeting?" I would always have a copy of the *World Tribune* in hand. It became my bridge across the barriers of language, culture, race and gender; my wedge

to open doors, develop new relationships and create lasting friendships.

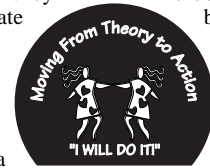
Today, I still have two subscriptions to it—one for myself, to keep in my scrapbook, and the other to share.

Close to 10 years ago, my family and I moved into our current home. I made a determination then that I would somehow use the *World Tribune* to reach out and get to know our neighbors. Over the course of time, we established a friendship with an

older couple on our block. Whenever I see a *World Tribune* article that I think may be of interest to them, such as President Ikeda's dialogue "The Third Stage of Life," I give them a copy of the paper.

Last year, the husband was hospitalized. I found articles about health to share when my family and I went to visit him, and we encouraged him to chant. When the Global Family Festival was held here in March, we invited the couple. They attended and really enjoyed the event. My next goal is to invite them to a discussion meeting!

I think of the *World Tribune* as an invaluable resource for information on how to live life; President Ikeda's guidance is an instruction manual on how we can become happy human beings. I want to share this resource not only with my members but all people with whom I come in contact. Through my experience of sharing this publication with my neighbors, I am beginning to understand the importance of planting the seeds for kosen-rufu beyond my own, familiar backyard.



A Vote of Confidence

PERSPECTIVE

Sally McKee takes a closer look at the political figure she hated (and even razzed!) — and finds a man worthy of respect.

By **SALLY MARKS MCKEE**
MESA, ARIZ.

I was taught to hate Barry Goldwater. As a young girl growing up in Arizona, I would delight in blowing raspberries at his campaign TV ads when he ran against Lyndon Johnson for president in 1964. My younger brother, Terry, and I vehemently booed and hissed every time we saw Mr. Goldwater's picture in the newspaper.

I came from a family of staunch Chicago democrats, and even though we migrated to Arizona two years before the election, my parents' political views never left the Windy City. Both my mom and dad saw the venerable Arizona senator as a dangerous man whose hawkish stance on the Vietnam War could only result in nuclear annihilation.

Of course, I knew this was



Barry Goldwater

true because I had seen the images on the television that showed a little girl innocently picking flowers in a field and the dramatic shot of a nuclear mushroom cloud. It scared the heck out of me.

Through the years, however, my attitude changed. My boss, Rosemary, worked on Goldwater's senate campaign, and she missed an opportunity to have her photo taken with him. When the senator heard of Rosemary's disappointment, she received an invitation to come to the Goldwaters' home to have a photo taken together. Rosemary knew my husband, John, was a good photogra-

pher, and she asked if he would take the photograph.

The photo session was a success, and John came back a changed man. He hadn't exactly blown raspberries at Goldwater's picture like I had (oh, OK, I admit it — I did it a few times as an adult, too), but John was no Goldwater fan either.

But something changed that day. My normally skeptical husband related how warm and friendly the senator was, and he strongly believed this to be the real man, not a political, baby-kissing ploy. John sensed a humanitarianism in the conservative revitalizer of the Republican Party that I never thought existed.

And then we started hearing about the humanistic side of Barry Goldwater, and about how he stood up for his convictions. We heard how he befriended and worked for Arizona's Native Americans, contributed money to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and desegregated his department store and the Arizona Air National Guard many years earlier. Many of his dear friends had political views that were diametrically opposed to his, but he didn't let that distort his view of their character.

He spoke out against opponents of President Clinton's plan

to lift the ban against openly homosexual military service members and pooh-poohed the compromise offered by Sen. Sam Nunn (D.-Ga.), saying, "The compromise doesn't deal with the issue — it tries to hide it." Opposition to lifting the gay ban was, he said, "just plain dumb."

He was also one of the founders of Project Vote Smart, comprised of individuals from a variety of backgrounds dedicated to getting out accurate information about political candidates' voting records, campaign finances, position statements, backgrounds and the evaluations done on them by more than 80 competing special interest groups. No rhetoric, no character assassinations or mudslinging — just the information voters need to make an informed decision.

I've been a registered voter since I was 18, and during the many times Barry Goldwater entered the senate race in Arizona, I never cast a ballot for him. But I admire him for his honesty, his dedication to his friends — regardless of their ethnicity, political views or religion — and his humanitarian efforts. He may not have received my vote, but he will always have my respect.

And, somehow, I think he would've preferred the latter. ❖

The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

Publisher
Fred M. Zaitsus

Executive Editor
Ted Morino

Managing Editor
Dave McNeill
dmcneill@sgi-usa.org

Assistant Managing Editor
Lisa Carter Kirk
lkirk@sgi-usa.org

Associate Editor
Jeff Farr
jfarr@sgi-usa.org

Staff Writer
Lisa Jones
ljones@sgi-usa.org

Graphic Artists
Don Sanders
dsanders@sgi-usa.org
Ellen Brown

Contributing Editors
Nikki Amdur
Joel Drazner
Terry Ellis

Staff Translators
Jeff Kriger
Shin Yatomi
Yoshiko Nakamura

Chief Photographer
Gregory Nakasuji

Photo Editor
Lisa Hollis
lisahollis@earthlink.net

Bureau Chiefs
Phil Simpson, Atlanta
Fletcher Dalton, Boston
Veronica Evans, Chicago
Terry Ellis, Florida
Joanne Tachibana, Hawaii
Dave McNeill, Los Angeles
Cheryl Utley, Midwest
Robert Taliaferro, New York
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Bill Lawrence, Seattle
Wendy DeOre, Texas
Robin Meader, Washington, D.C.

Foreign Language Pages
Chinese: Ingrid Yeh
Korean: Charles Lee
Spanish: Cesarina Caro

READERS COMMENTS

Send to:
Mailbox
525 Wilshire Blvd.
Santa Monica, CA 90401
or e-mail:
wt@sgi-usa.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS
1-800-835-4558
or e-mail:
SGISUBS@aol.com

FRIENDS FOR PEACE
ffp@sgi-usa.org

SEIZE THE DAY
seize@sgi-usa.org

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

From SGI President Ikeda:

- ✧ Even just a few words spoken with honesty by a person of pure faith can deeply penetrate another's heart. On the other hand, if one's words are vague and uncertain, they will lack the freshness and the power to move others. (Sept. 19, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 13)
- ✧ True concern for others manifests itself as unconditional friendship. To be considerate means that the more someone is suffering, the more love you show them. It gives you the courage to help another stand up. And it means recognizing another person's unhappiness for what it is, trying to understand and share his or her suffering. This will enable you to grow and at the same time help the other person become strong. *Consideration* is training ourselves in the art of encouraging others. (Aug. 15, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 10)
- ✧ Let us make each day and each year one of growth and fresh, exciting

WORDS TO THE WISE CARING FOR OTHERS

Friends enjoy the cherry blossoms together on spring mornings and then they are gone, carried away like the blossoms by the winds of impermanence, leaving nothing but their names. Although the blossoms have scattered, the cherry trees will bloom again with the coming of spring, but when will those people be reborn? ("Letter to Niike," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 255)

possibilities. One important way to do this is by meeting with our fellow members, speaking with and encouraging as many people as we can. Our spirits are lifted when we do so; we are invigorated and rejuvenated. Limitless benefit and good fortune adorn those who cherish the members above all, who, rather than meeting the fa-

mous or powerful, would happily meet sincere members. (July 4, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 8)

- ✧ Our movement's history is one of extending a helping hand to those suffering, those lost and forgotten. To people exhausted by sickness and poverty; people devastated by destructive rela-

tionships; people alienated and forlorn as a result of family discord or broken homes. We have shared people's sufferings and risen together with them. (Oct. 17, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 12)

- ✧ Genuine leaders work with tireless devotion to support and encourage the members, make regular efforts to visit others and engage them in dialogue. This is a point I want you to clearly understand. (Sept. 19, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 14)

- ✧ If only large meetings were held, it would be difficult for all members to gain heartfelt understanding and make a deep determination in faith. The importance of giving detailed consideration to the situation of each person through one-on-one dialogue cannot be emphasized too strongly; giving individual encouragement should be our primary concern. The SGI has developed to the extent it has because we have steadfastly adhered to this principle. (August 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 36)

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

New Logo Not a Hit

I understand that change is a natural function of life. The fact is, everything in life changes. Nothing stays the same. Nonetheless, even change can be more trendy than necessary. Sometimes change is not necessarily good.

My point or question is — why change the *World Tribune's* headline? It looks cheap and not befitting such a quality publication.

— CHARLES BATEMAN,
Newark, N.J.

First, many thanks and my deepest respect for the continuing efforts to improve the publications. I am a magazine editor myself, and I know how much work goes into every issue.

However, I must express my reaction to the *World Tribune* logo re-design. I do NOT NOT NOT like it at all. (No offense to the designer. It's fine in itself, graphically.) It's just that the previous, long-time logo, has a nobler, more "newspaper-like" appeal. The new logo looks cartoony. It makes the *World Tribune* look like a local neighborhood paper.

I'm reminded of the infamous Coca Cola logo re-design. If it ain't broke, don't fix it....

Anyway, keep up the good work, but I'm beggin' ya, please give us back the old logo. (Note to Logo Designer: It's a thankless job.)

— VALERIE KURITA, New York

The NEWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW! *World Tribune* is GGGRRR-EEEEAAAATTTTTT! I really like the changes, and it is starting to look like a modern newspaper.

— RICHARD C. WISEMAN,
Columbus, Ohio

I received the latest *World Tribune* in the mail last night, and I was appalled. First, I did not immediately recognize it and almost threw it away with the junk mail, which I never read. Additionally, I think your "new look" actually looks more like some of the efforts I have gotten in the mail from some of the Christian outfits, photography companies and sporting goods dealers.

Some facts you need to keep in mind are that we are a mature organization. As

such, we do not need to be consistently changing things, such as the masthead of our newspaper, just to keep from falling into any ruts. In fact, our newspaper front page should be consistent and immediately recognizable to anyone as the voice of the SGI-USA.

Whether or not we like it, we are judged by appearances. This is especially from the people we want to appeal to — non-members. All the members already know the importance of the *World Tribune*.

Our masthead should be dignified, look professional and be immediately recognizable as what it is (the *World Tribune*). It should also immediately reflect the importance and dignity of our practice to non-members. I believe that you should immediately return to the previous masthead, which fits these criteria — simple, direct, dignified and immediately recognizable.

I would suggest that you replace the slogan which appeared under the *World Tribune* name, "The Year of Victory... New Century," with a permanent slogan, to appear where the other did: "Supporting the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin in America." We need to remember that we know we are Buddhists, and our paper should immediately tell people what we are.

Your easier-to-read index is not easier to read. In fact, it could be confusing. Your previous index, "Inside This Week," was simple and straightforward. This new one simply looks cluttered.

I have been reading the *World Tribune* for a number of years now, and I still think the best format — easiest to read and most usable — was the format used in the late 1970s. I would also suggest that the *World Tribune* consider once more running some advertisements. Perhaps from Buddhist-related suppliers such as altar makers. This would serve two purposes: One is that it would let us members know where to find such people, and second you could use the money for better paper and ink....

— WILLIAM COWELL, Jessup, Md.

Some of the changes to the *World Tribune* have been good, but I must say that this new logo is not very good. As it is now, the

masthead looks more like a tabloid.

If the subject of redesigning the logo has been up for discussion, why not hold a contest and open it up to all the members?

— DEBRA WILLIAMS, New York

New Attitude

Regarding the article "Looking Into the Hearts of Another's Faith" (June 19 "Perspective"): At last and finally, the *World Tribune* and a member talk about the arrogance that has been predominant in the SGI about other people's faiths and ways of achieving world peace.

The SGI alone cannot achieve world peace. There are many people in this world who have taken spiritual paths different than ours, who are just awesome, and have made a positive difference in this world, whether they chant or not.

Let's work on correcting this prevalent attitude in our fellow SGI members. It's the best way to achieve kosen-rufu.
— MARIA LOVALVO, San Francisco

Yashiro, the Martyr?

I have difficulty in believing that Nichiren Daishonin inscribed the Dai-Gohonzon with an ideal, fictitious person in his mind (June 19 "Mailbox"). Let me introduce the account I learned during my practice in Japan.

It is possible that Yashiro was one of the three martyrs of Atsuhara. The three brothers who were beheaded are known as Jinshiro, Yagoro and Yarokuro. Traditionally, however, brothers would often have the same sound in their names — "ya" in this case — followed by consecutive numbers such as *shi* (four), *go* (five), and *roku* (six). So "Yashiro" may have been the original name for the oldest of the Atsuhara brothers. Honoring his courage and firm faith, [the prefix] "jin" (meaning god) was given to him, thus he was called Jinshiro.

According to the *Gosho Jiten* (Gosho Dictionary), there was another believer with the name of Yashiro in Atsuhara. He was assassinated by warriors who were associated with a local

priest shortly before the executions of the three brothers.

Given the fact that this Atsuhara Persecution convinced the Daishonin that the time had come to inscribe the Dai-Gohonzon, it makes much more sense to me if he had chosen either one of these martyrs, not a fictitious person, as a representative of all his believers.

— KATSUMI SOHMA, Boston

Editor's note: These two are common theories of Yashiro Kunishige's identity. Yet another one is that Yashiro was the donor of the camphor wood upon which the Dai-Gohonzon was inscribed. Josei Toda was aware of these theories but personally believed (according to The Collected Works of Josei Toda) that the Yashiro Kunishige on the Dai-Gohonzon was a fictitious person, an ideal believer, who existed in the Daishonin's heart and represents all believers of the Daishonin's teachings.

Like the Moon

I feel it's great that the *World Tribune* "Mailbox" features a wide variety of opinions and comments. What bothers me is when letters are cruel, attacking the writers of previous letters or articles.

Like the moon, that great body of work in the sky, some writers illuminate others, but others seem to only create darkness. Even when the latter speak the truth, it is only an eclipse.

As a disciple of Nichiren Daishonin, I will always strive to be the kind of person who illuminates the world.

— DON HANSBROUGH, Seattle

Encouraging Rays

I have been an SGI member for three years, and I have been struggling personally to keep my head above water with my practice. With the encouragement from an extraordinary leader, Ms. Ingram, I am making it through. Reading [SGI President Ikeda's speech] "A Ray of Light" (July 10) really moved me and actually made a difference in the way I view my practice. Thank you for the encouragement and keep up the good work.

— KAREN ST. HILAIRE, Brooklyn, N.Y.



For more information, contact the SGI-USA community center nearest you or call (310) 451-8811.

Our Purpose: The SGI-USA (Soka Gakkai International-USA) promotes peace and individual happiness based on Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Peace is inseparably linked with each individuals' happiness; SGI-USA members, through their faith, seek to become happier and contribute to society. The SGI exists in 128 countries and was founded in Japan in 1930.

Our Practice: The basic practice is chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the Gohonzon, our object of devotion. According to Nichiren Daishonin, chanting this phrase allows us to be in harmony with the universe and create great value. Faith in this principle is gained through practical experience.

Nichiren Daishonin, a 13th-century Japanese priest, championed the Lotus Sutra, which teaches that the Buddha nature is inherent in all living things — thus, all people can become Buddhas. He introduced the practice of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, which is the essence of the Lotus Sutra. The Gohonzon is the mandala expressing this essence.

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PEGGY NAHAS FOSTER, BELLINGHAM, WASH.

KICKED OUT OF HER COMFORT ZONE

Photo by WAYNE GREENOUGH



For Peggy Nahas Foster, being laid off from her job of 13 years is one of the toughest yet most rewarding challenges she has faced. She gains the courage to face an even greater challenge: losing weight.

Last December, I found myself standing in the unemployment line for the first time in my life. After 13 years of full-time employment, the lawyers I worked for dissolved their partnership, and I was laid off.

I felt lost. I'm not big on change. In fact, I loathe change.

I had no idea how to manage my time when not devoting every iota of mental capacity to working. And I had no idea how to be a stay-at-home mom. Although my tenure as a legal assistant had been draining and had squelched my creativity, it was a nice, safe routine, without challenge — and was, definitely, unchanging.

My husband, Dennis, and I had just reached that elusive income bracket known as "comfortable." We had signed papers to buy our house a month earlier and had taken a sizable second mortgage to finish some much-needed renovations.

But without a job, I lost direction in my daily life. I became depressed and fretful. I struggled to recite the sutra every day and chanted simply for the sake of chanting — because it was routine, because it was normal. (I couldn't let every part of my life change!) I chanted to have life force, wisdom and victory, things I always chant for when I can't concen-

trate on other concerns or goals.

I was staying awake like an owl all night. My whole world seemed to be collapsing around me. "If you have time to worry, you have time to chant," a young women's division leader once told me. Well, I was worrying all right. I was tormenting myself with feelings of inadequacy. I felt valueless.

Also, I have always told myself that no one will take me seriously because of my Rubenesque physique. This is how I imagined closed-door discussions would go after interviewing me for a position: "She's so lazy." "Fat people can't even take care of their own bodies and health. Just imagine how ineffective an employee that fat girl would be!"

It was about a month later that I began pulling myself up out of the pit of despair and was able to discuss my situation with a women's division leader. She said that when she was feeling depressed, she called or visited members. I didn't feel like calling or visiting members. But I chanted for them to come to me. And they did! One former member, two longtime friends of the SGI-USA (my cousins!) and one friend all starting practicing with me at the beginning of the year.

It was during this "coming to the end of the dark, nasty tunnel!" phase that I found myself itching to do something productive. The

most amazing thing was happening: The "brain cramp" I had lived with for 13 years was relaxing, releasing a surge of creative juices...all over my house! I became quite manic about decorating. I attacked our house with a glue gun and paint. I had never realized that I was capable of creating decorative art, but suddenly, I had the time, energy and brain capacity to unleash my hidden talent on the world.

It reminded me of something SGI President Ikeda said in *Daily Guidance*, volume 2: "Remember that for one who chants Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, even in the midst of pitch-black anguish, the lotus blossom, the Law of the lotus that is the flower of supreme satisfaction, can be made to bloom and send forth its fragrance."

Well, *I was blooming*. Twice every weekday I watched a home-improvement show called *Interior Motives* on the Discovery Channel. Watching those first episodes, I was filled with enthusiasm. I remember saying over and over: "I can do that. I can do that." The motto of *Interior Motives* is "Where there is fear, there is no creativity."

I transformed our house from Spartan and utilitarian to an oasis of light, fabric and color. Day by day, as I transformed the house, I found that I was changing, too.

For one thing, I was losing weight — partly because I was no longer snacking at my desk. I was yelling at my daughter a lot less, and Denny and I were getting along better than ever. My family *liked* having me at home.

But the state requires those who collect unemployment to look for work. Whenever I thought of looking for a job, my old feelings of inadequacy would jump right in.

Even so, I applied for one job and was called for an interview. I encountered an obstacle that I hadn't expected: stairs. The interview was held on the second floor of a building without elevators. Huff, puff. It was all I could do to not let the interviewers see my exhaustion after climbing 30 steps.

The panel asked me about my attitude toward working with children, which has been nurtured by active participation in the SGI-USA. Our organization is an incredible venue to learn how to deal with people of all ages and temperaments. My positive attitude and strong secretarial skills landed me the (dreaded) new job...as a substitute secretary and instructional assistant at a local school.

This was a big move for me. Well, because I had to move. All of my fears of being discriminated against because of my size proved unfounded. For example,

I moved with purpose to take appropriate action when a student was injured by a basketball. I stopped fist fights, mediated minor disputes and gained the respect of the school administrators.

Recently, a long-term substitute secretarial job opened up. It needed to be filled by someone with strong secretarial skills, and the director of Special Education asked for me. ME!

I now climb about 60 steps four times a day — I'm grateful for the exercise, especially since a recent medical examination indicated that I'd better lose weight, and fast. Size acceptance will always be an issue I take a stance on, but not if I'm so unhealthy that I can't speak out. I am determined to keep losing weight. And without grumbling about it.

Since I lost my old job, my life has blossomed (right out of the mud, like a lotus flower) — even after losing a good salary and having to face challenges I never thought I was ready to handle.

Where there is fear, there is no creativity. Life force, wisdom and victory had always been at my fingertips...I just had to be kicked out of my comfort zone to realize it. ❏

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

COMING NEXT WEEK

'Third Stage' dialogue series continues

GET REAL

By COLLEEN BACHMAN *High School Division Leader*

In talking to young people across the country, there is one issue that comes up frequently — especially when I speak with young women. It's their concern with their physical appearance and, more specifically, with their weight.

The media is filled with examples of how society says that women are supposed to look.



Here's
LOOKING
AT YOU

many young women are suffering to attain is often not even real.

One modern psychologist writes: "Beauty is the defining characteristic for American women. It's the necessary and often sufficient condition for social success. It's important for women of all ages, but the pressure to be beautiful is

most intense in adolescence. Girls worry about their clothes, makeup, skin and hair. But most of all they worry about their weight."

I, too, often struggle with this pressure, especially since I live in Los Angeles and work in the entertainment industry. For many years, this was the most troubling issue for me: I

thought that if only I were a little prettier or thinner, I could finally accomplish my goals. Many times, I felt so self-conscious that I was uncomfortable meeting with people; I couldn't get the kind of respect that I so desperately wanted.

There is a particular passage from one of SGI President Ikeda's speeches that often encourages me: "All you need to do is just keep on polishing and training yourself as you steadily advance toward your goal. After all, you are you, not someone else. There is no need for you to compare yourself with others; your life belongs to no one but you. The important thing is, what do you really feel in the depths of your life?"

It wasn't until recently, however, that my attitude toward myself finally changed. This spring I achieved my long-awaited goal of visiting Japan. I asked a women's division leader there how I could encourage young women about this issue.

She said that Nam-myohorenge-kyo is so powerful that there is nothing we cannot achieve through chanting. It brings out inner beauty that you cannot get from a salon or

plastic surgery, she said. This inner beauty is a light that comes out of your life.

I was also fortunate to attend a meeting with SGI President Ikeda. He looked so confident, so strong — so unstoppable. Then it occurred to me: I'd been asking myself all the wrong questions. Instead of asking myself how I could change this or that about myself, I began to ask myself: "For what purpose was I born? For what reason has everything that has happened to me occurred? For what mission am I everything that I am?"

The truth of the matter, I realized, is that every cell and fiber in your body exist for a profound reason — so that you can fulfill your mission. Everything that happens to you happens for the same reason. This is more important than any superficial concern could ever be.

As President Ikeda also says: "Always base your lives on faith, whether or not other people recognize your efforts. Those who strive in this manner are the most beautiful and respectable; they live the most noble and admirable lives."

Two in a series

RUNWAY TO THE 21ST CENTURY
ESSAY CONTEST

The 1st Annual 'Seize the Day' Essay Contest

THEME:

The role of youth in improving the world these last couple of years before the 21st century

CATEGORIES:

Junior High School

High School

College

General Youth

DEADLINE: Oct. 2, 1998

"Seize the Day" invites all youth division members to share their thoughts on the social responsibilities of youth in these last couple of years until the 21st century.

These years have been likened to a runway to the next century. How can the power of youth change our

world for the better as we rush down this runway?

Be as specific as possible about *what* you think youth need to change, and *how* you think that they can do it.

The length is 900–1,200 words, typed, double-spaced. A special committee will judge the essays on the

quality of writing, the depth of thought, originality and whether you include concrete examples. The top three finishers in each category will have their essays published in "Seize the Day" in 1999.

To enter: Send your essay and a photo of yourself to

"Seize the Day," 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401 or seize@sgi-usa.org. Indicate which category you are entering and include your return address, phone number and e-mail address (if you have one). All essays become the property of "Seize the Day." ✎

SEIZE the DAY

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

— SGI President Ikeda, Aug. 17, 1997

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

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

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

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

RETURN of the YPC

By YVETTE EDMOND and DARIN NELLIS
Youth Peace Committee Leaders

The Youth Peace Conference is back with a new organization, new name and exciting new projects!

The SGI-USA YPC was created by SGI President Ikeda in 1991 to harness the passion and power of youth toward the realization of the SGI's goals of 1) supporting the work of the United Nations in building a peaceful world and 2) fostering youth who will exercise real leadership in the 21st century.

You may recall reading about or participating in past YPC seminars like "Human Rights, Human Responsibilities" (New York, 1991) and "Environmental Security: A Basic Human Right" (New York, 1992) or other YPC projects like Books for Africa (1993), the U.N. Reform Research Group (1993), UN50 Renaissance activities (1995) and the "Treasuring the Future: Children's Rights and Realities" exhibition (1995-present).

NEW YPC ORGANIZATION

The new YPC has changed its name to the Youth Peace Committee and has been reorganized with two national coordinators in Los Angeles, Yvette Edmond and Darin Nellis, working with regional coordinators: Sandy Wolf and Alex Lickerman in Chicago, Yasuko (Coco) Ikeda and Jonathan Lakritz in San Francisco and Denise Royal and Hiro Sakurai in New York. You may contact the regional coordinators through the culture centers in their cities.

OUR MISSION, VISION AND PURPOSE

The YPC will develop and support activities that promote humanistic values, that are global in scope and that foster the passion and power



of youth. As part of this, the YPC is determined to support the realization of President Ikeda's annual peace proposals. To effectively carry this out, the YPC will focus its efforts on two levels: 1) responding to the most timely and important global issues of the day; and 2) engaging in dialogue and activities that address the causes underlying global problems and promoting mutual understanding and awareness among people.

Responding to President Ikeda's declaration that "the role and responsibility of individuals, as the protagonists who shape history, are destined to grow," the YPC is determined to accomplish its mission through the united efforts of individual youth around the world. By creating a global grass-roots network of youth and youth organizations — both Buddhist and non-Buddhist — we can re-

spond to global problems and promote understanding and awareness with one powerfully united voice.

Imagine if individual youth and youth organizations around the world worked together to prevent human rights abuses or to promote greater awareness and appreciation for the environment. This type of united action would shift the power out of the political arena and into the grass-roots arena of the people. This is the type of global youthful power for which the YPC seeks to be a catalyst.

PROJECTS

Our goal is to participate in projects that will lead to change in people's behavior, relationships and understanding about global issues. Projects that reflect the YPC's determination to respond to global issues may

include participation in environmental, anti-nuclear, biological weapons and other humanitarian campaigns or initiating action for U.N. support and/or reform. Projects designed to promote greater understanding among all people may include cross-cultural exchange programs, global youth summits and mock U.N. activities. Through these activities, we hope to create alliances with other youth and youth organizations around the world and even produce scholarly papers and studies.

The YPC is currently completing its Nonviolence Project, which was developed by New York youth division members. The project will include a nonviolence video and information kit and will be available to the general public and distributed throughout the SGI-USA at the district level. The information kit will include group exercises, topics on violence and conflict resolution and a detailed list of resources.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH YPC ACTIVITIES

In his 1998 peace proposal, President Ikeda says that "all people should actively strive to confront issues that threaten the survival of humankind and the sanctity of human life."

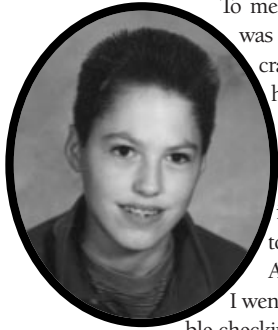
The YPC wants to encourage all youth to be involved in global issues that affect each of us. The YPC will solicit support on a project-by-project basis from the youth division.

Please contact your closest YPC coordinator or call, write or e-mail Yvette Edmond (yedmond@sgi-usa.org) at the World Culture Center for upcoming YPC activities and any questions regarding the YPC. ♪

Study Department Entrance Exam

Three young men from Seattle decided to challenge the SGI-USA Study Department's Entrance Examination in April. They found out that the test wasn't all about memorizing the answers: They learned more about this Buddhism and strengthened their practice. Studying Nichiren Daishonin's writings and the temple issue gave them a whole new perspective on the practice.

Weston Pratt, 14



To me, studying for the Entrance Exam was harder than the actual test. I crammed the 70 questions into my head, memorized them and the answers, and went into the test room nervous. I was asking myself all kinds of questions such as: "What if I don't pass?" "How come I have to take this test?"

As soon as I went through the test, I went over all the questions again, double-checking them. As I left the test room, a

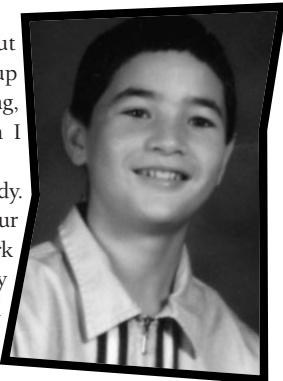
mega happy "high" hit me about my practice and strengthening it. Hopefully, I had just aced the Entrance Exam.

Brandon Peterson, 14

My experience is about how chanting and the Entrance Exam have helped me do better in school. From the time I started school, I could never get good grades. Since starting to practice Buddhism in 1994, when I was in the fourth grade, I have gradually improved my grades.

But this did not happen without a lot of effort. I started getting up early to do gongyo every morning, and I do evening gongyo when I get home from school.

After, I begin the routine of study. I usually average three to four hours a night to get all my work done. During the spring, I play baseball. So some evenings, I have no time to study and have to make it up on other nights.



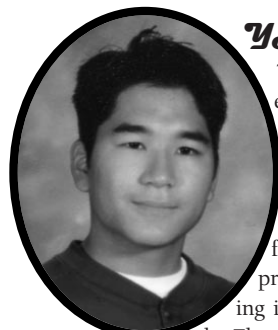
During spring break there was no school! No homework!

However, I found out that the Entrance Exam was being given for people who had never taken it. My junior high school division leader called to ask if I wanted to come to a study session/pizza party. Of course, I said yes — to pizza, that is. Anyway, I ended up studying for one or two hours a day during spring break and taking the exam. It was fun taking it, and I felt I did pretty good.

I also now know a lot more about Buddhism.

One benefit was when I received my report card, I had higher than a 3.0 GPA for the second quarter in a row.

Yoji Konno, 15



The Entrance Exam was a strange experience.... The study sessions before the exam really prepared me for it, and when I finally took it, I knew all the answers.

I am grateful for the support of friends, family and my district in preparation for this test. After taking it, I look forward to studying for the Elementary Exam next year! ♪

EXPERIENCE



OUR DREAM SKATING

By STEVE GARCIA
West Covina, Calif.

I've been a member of the SGI since I was born. But I really didn't practice until about six years ago, when my mom got me involved in youth division activities.

I have been an avid skateboarder for about two years. My dream is to one day become a professional skateboarder. But being a skateboarder can be difficult. People sometimes look down on you and say things like "Skateboarding isn't really a sport." But it is.

Also, it can be hard trying to find a place to skate. There are people who'll call the police on you just for skateboarding.

I got my hopes up when I heard rumors about a skate park being built by West Covina. But the city just talked about it for a while, and I started to think they probably weren't going to build it.

Meanwhile, over the last few months, the members here were preparing for the 75th anniversary of the city. The SGI-USA offered to help coordinate the weekend celebration along with the city.

One day, while the youth division members were practicing for the event, I heard that the mayor of West Covina was going to come by to watch. I had been coming every week to the community center to help out in preparation for the event. I knew that I had to ask the mayor about the skate park that afternoon.

But that afternoon, he brought up the issue of the skate park to us — he said that he needed our help to get the city council to approve the plans. He asked if there were any people there interested in skateboarding. Of course, I approached him after the meeting. And he encouraged me to come to the city council meet-

ing scheduled for that next week.

The mayor was, like, behind me all the way. He said that I just had to convince the city council members. Of course, I chanted before I went.

I'm still at the stage in my practice of this Buddhism where I don't understand everything. I know there's something to it, but I don't understand exactly what it is. When I need something — for instance, when this skate park issue came up — I start chanting. I always chant when I'm in trouble or when I'm trying to get out of something. Or sometimes I chant for other people like my friends.

Anyhow, I got together a group of about 15 of my friends from two of the local high schools, and we all went to that council meeting. I told the council that I and a couple of my other friends are at the stage where, if we keep skating like this, in another seven years we can actually turn pro.

And I told the council that not building the park was like taking away our dream of skating, because we don't have anywhere around here to skate. Every time we see someone playing basketball inside the school (even though signs say "No Trespassing"), nobody bothers them. But if they see us skating, that's a big old problem.

I told the council straight up that we need a skate park bad. Everywhere we go, anything we try to do, even on the street — even on our own street — we can't skate there.

I found out that the city council approved our skate park! It should be finished within the next year. I think that when I told them about my dream, they were inspired.

As told to GINA JONES, L.A. #4 Region Bureau Leader ♪

NO DISTINCTIONS?

By GREG MARTIN
SGI-USA Study Department Vice Leader

One of the phrases the priesthood uses to bolster its argument that the Treasure of the Priest means just the successive high priests is a quote from Nikko Shonin's "The Seven Important Things About the Transferal of the Gohonzon": "I proclaim that each successive high priest shall possess the same function as Nichiren."

Clearly, this statement means that each high priest *should* have the same mind as the Daishonin — or else he shouldn't be high priest. Nikko Shonin here is setting up an ideal, not some kind of guarantee. An ideal of which successive high priests have, unfortunately, all too often fallen short.

Yet the priests believe that statements like these in the writings of the Daishonin's Buddhism mean that by virtue of a Japanese man's position as high priest, he is automatically endowed with the same heart as the Daishonin. Claiming that the phrase in question means that any high priest is equal to the Daishonin and Nikko Shonin, that only the high priest can inherit the lifeblood of the Law, they interpret all Buddhist doctrine from this warped perspective.

Conclusions drawn from this premise include that priests are superior to laity, that criticizing or speaking to priests as equals is arrogant — even slanderous — and that the high priest cannot make a mistake about the Law since by definition he is the Law.

In the same section of "The Seven Important Things About the Transferal of the Gohonzon" asks, "What is the reason for [the high priest] signing the seal [signature] of Nichiren [on the Gohonzon]?" Nikko Shonin's answer is that "the Master [the Daishonin] said that the title [Nam-myoho-renge-kyo], Shakyamuni, Taicho, Jogyo, Muhengyo, Fugen, Monji, Sharihotsu, Kasho, Bonten, Taishaku, the Four Heavenly Kings, the sun, the moon, Kishimojin, Jurasetu, Tensho and Hachiman are all are functions of Nichiren."

High Priest Nikko then clarifies that "the four kinds of believers who embrace this sutra [priests, nuns, laymen and laywomen]" are also functions of the Daishonin. The point is that the Daishonin saw these distinct groups — priests,

nuns, laymen and laywomen — as one. He considered them all functions of the Daishonin, i.e., Buddhas, just as he considered the Four Heavenly Kings, Shakyamuni, Taicho, etc., as Buddhas.

Taken in this context, "Each successive high priest shall possess the same function as Nichiren" cannot mean that only the high priest is equal to the Daishonin and Nikko Shonin or that only the high priest can inherit the lifeblood of the Law. Using this passage to justify the superiority of the high priest is, then, a distortion. It has been taken out of context and cannot provide a doctrinal basis for the priests' assertions.

As I said in the last installment, if the priesthood's interpretation of the Treasure of the Priest is false, then every posi-



tion it has taken since 1990 crumbles. The SGI, based on Nichiren Daishonin's, Nikko Shonin's and 26th High Priest Nichikan's writings, is correct in saying that the Treasure of the Priest is, in the broadest sense, the entire body of believers — high priest, priests, laity, *all believers*. The high priest is the Treasure of the Priest in the same way that priests and lay believers are, too. In the same way that you and I are.

Six in a series

WHO'S INTOLERANT?

Thoughts on a Religious Revolution

By LISA JONES
Los Angeles

Many religions demonize gays and lesbians, saying that they're possessed by evil. To me, that's ridiculous; any religion that makes such a claim instantly forfeits credibility. Some people feel, though, that the SGI has similarly demonized Nikken by saying he's evil. But while religious condemnation of gays and lesbians is rooted in ignorance and intolerance, the SGI's view of Nikken is actually rooted in compassion.

Emerson wrote: "Good is positive. Evil is merely privative, not absolute: It is like cold, which is the privation of heat. All evil is so much death or non-entity. Benevolence is absolute and real."

I believe that compassion is absolute and real, and that evil is the absence of compassion. Nichiren Daishonin's compassion opened the door to enlightenment and absolute



freedom for all living beings. And Nikken is trying to close and lock the door by teaching that if people want to access Buddha wisdom, they have to go through him first. The SGI is fighting to keep the Daishonin's Buddhism open to all people, with no

authoritarian gatekeeper.

It's clear to me who has compassion and who doesn't.

When people say that the SGI is intolerant because it recognizes the evil of Nikken, I apply my own Tolerance Litmus Test: Are women allowed to become priests? Are non-Japanese people? Are people who are openly gay or lesbian...? You get the point: The answer is always *no*.

So *who's intolerant?*

Four in a series

TEMPLE TRENDS

THE COURTROOM BECKONS

By JEFF FARR

SGI-USA Student Division Leader

In the February "Seize the Day," I reported on Nikken's array of international legal troubles beyond the Seattle Incident trial. There's more to report now, five months later:

- In April, a Nichiren Shoshu priest, Yukan Sasaki, was deported from South Korea for engaging in propagation and collecting donations there — both activities that his visa did not allow.

- In May, the Sao Paulo District Court issued an interim order returning control of Ichijo-ji temple to SGI-Brazil. (A Supreme Court appeal is still pending, but this decision was a major blow to the priests' six-and-a-half-year campaign to steal the temple that SGI-Brazil members rightfully own.)

- Also in May in Japan, the Nagoya District Court dismissed Nichiren Shoshu's attempt to re-

gain Hoshin Nakajima's temple, Myodo-ji (Nakajima has been a reformist priest since 1992).

- And then, a high-ranking priest, Shinwa Goto, was arrested twice: in May for having sex with minors — two junior high school girls he met through a telephone dating club — and in June for abducting and raping a 16-year-old girl.

Nikken must have a headache with all these legal troubles for his brethen.

You won't hear about any of these cases in *Nichiren Shoshu Monthly* or at temple meetings, though. The U.S. temples are very hush hush about all these developments — including even the ongoing Seattle Incident trial. (By the way, at press time attorneys for both sides in that trial are to meet for another closed-door session July 24, with the next regular session expected in September.)