

## ESSAY

**SGI President Ikeda writes about Dr. Pérez Esquivel, who survived 14 months of imprisonment under Argentina's military dictatorship.**

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## EXCERPTS

**A collection of comments on the spirit of sharing this Buddhism with others.**

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No. 3204

AUGUST 14, 1998

Photo by JONATHAN WILSON

After you retire, nutrition for the spirit becomes more important than ever. In this dialogue, SGI President Ikeda gives some interesting ideas—from dancing to working—on how to care for your spirit, how to stay healthy, no matter how old you are.



*Participants in this discussion on the 'Third Stage of Life' are SGI President Ikeda as well as Osamu Matsuoaka and Katsusuke Sasaki of the Seikyō Shimbun.*

**MATSUOKA:** This series has stirred a strong reader response. Recently, one of our readers sent us some materials he had collected on the factors believed responsible for the

long life spans of people who live in Okinawa.

**IKEDA:** Yes, Okinawa has the longest average life expectancy in Japan, doesn't it? And since

Japan has the longest average life expectancy in the world, the longest within Japan means the longest in the entire world.

PLEASE SEE THIRD STAGE, 6

## KEEP ON *Praying*

SGI President Ikeda explains in this speech why sometimes our prayers seem to not be answered. "This is a manifestation of the Buddha's wisdom—so that we can deepen our prayers, become stronger people, live more profound lives and secure deeper, more lasting good fortune," he says.

*This is part 2 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 23rd Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, June 16. Part 1 appeared in last week's issue.*

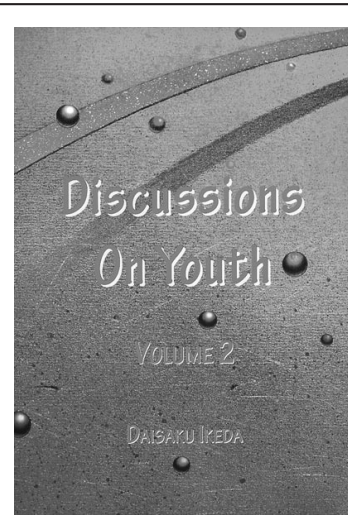
Recently, Ushio Publishing Company published *Beloved Wife!* by Yoshiyuki Kono.

*Mr. Kono was a victim of the sarin gas-poisoning incident in Matsumoto, Japan, about 125 miles northwest of Tokyo, on June 27, 1994. The Matsumoto Incident claimed seven lives, injured hundreds of others, and left Mr. Kono's wife, Sumiko, with*

*massive brain damage. Though the nerve-gas poisoning is now known to have been carried out by members of the Supreme Truth sect (Aum Shinrikyo), the mass media initially treated Mr. Kono, who was first to call for an ambulance for his wife, as the perpetrator.*

In his book, Mr. Kono writes: "I married my wife, Sumiko, in October 1976, and we lived a very ordinary life together until the night of June 27, 1994, when the chemical-weapon nerve gas,

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 8



## JUST PUBLISHED

Daisaku Ikeda's dialogue continues with *Discussions on Youth*, vol. 2. Topics include: human rights, the benefits of reading, knowing history, the importance of art, our integral relationship with nature, the fundamentals of faith, the purpose of the SGI and world peace.

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## STUDY

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## Real Debt

By JAMIE LIPTAN

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

As for my parents in this lifetime..., they not only gave me birth, but made me a believer in the Lotus Sutra as well. Thus I owe my present father and mother a debt far greater than I would had I been born into the family of Bonten, Taishaku, one of the Four Heavenly Kings or a wheel-turning king... ("The Four Debts of Gratitude," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 8)

I have enjoyed the tremendous fortune of being born an SGI member, but even as I type these words I realize that I have no idea how important this fact is in my life.

It impacts absolutely everything I have been and will become, though as the rebellious young man that I am I have often rejected the notion.

My ability to grow in life with the Mystic Law at my immediate disposal has been at once empowering and inebriating. I have felt, at times, "drunk" with my own ability to be rescued by my fortune — fortune I essentially inherited from Mom and Dad.

Recently, I have been struggling to repay an actual debt to my parents. You know, the money kind. For much of this almost inexplicably difficult struggle, I have been unable to ascertain what the heart of the issue was, why I couldn't "get over the hump." Why was it so hard for me to just do this?

In studying this letter, I have begun to see the depth of my real debt to them. And perhaps I have been unable to perceive the true value of my life as a Bodhisattva of the Earth. If I truly felt that I could attain the highest level of life available to a living being, how could I possibly be anything but ecstatic about doing everything I could to repay them, financially, cosmically or otherwise?

One great thing about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is that all I have to do to repay my karmic debt to Mom and Dad is become a great person with lots of fortune. Cool. I was planning on doing that anyway. WTT



In My Life

NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS IN ACTION

# A Simple Inheritance

STANDS TO  
**REASON**

LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM  
THE WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN

By JEFF FARR

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Shakyamuni who attained enlightenment countless eons ago, the Lotus Sutra which leads all people to Buddhahood, and we ordinary human beings are in no way different or separate from each other. Therefore, to chant Myohorenge-kyo with this realization is to inherit the ultimate law of life and death. ("Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 22)

**H**eritage: Something handed down through the ages. It could be a culture. A tradition. A building. A law.

The whole idea of heritage has been at the core of contentions between the SGI and the temple: How do we inherit the Law? Is it through the lineage of the priesthood, supposed to be "maintaining" the Law's purity? Or is it through our pure faith, directly connected to the Law?

The SGI and the temple have opposing takes on this.

Sairen-bo, one of Nichiren Daishonin's Sado Island converts, a former Tendai priest, wondered about this and sought an explanation directly from the Daishonin. In this 1272 response, the Daishonin makes it clear that we inherit the Law simply through the act of chanting Nam-myohorenge-kyo — through our own action in faith. He says nothing about a priest being the middle man in this inheritance process.

But the temple, in *100 Questions and Answers*, argues that we do need a middle man — a big middle man named the high priest. In the temple's view, the Law is inherited by just one person at a time, and that person is *always* high priest.

One high priest hands down the Law to another high priest and another and another. If we obey whoever is high priest — and the temple does use the word *obey* a lot in its literature — then and only then can we, too, inherit the Law.

Besides the fact that in Nichiren Shoshu's history, the Law was *not* always handed down so smoothly (see the current *Living Buddhism* series "The Untold History of the Fuji School"), the whole idea is *wrong*. Again, it's not written in any of the Daishonin's letters that the high priest is this kind of a mystic go-between. What is written about the heritage is clear: Chanting with faith is it. We are the inheritors. We are it. This is the SGI's position.

The whole point of the Daishonin's Buddhism, after all, is that the Law exists in each of us. Through chanting with faith, we bring it out. That's why elsewhere the Daishonin says to "never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself," that "the Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people" (MW-1, 213). That we should seek it through the high priest is a priestly invention. A bad invention.

The Nichiren Shoshu temples today remind me of silence, a deep silence: In the temple, we're basically all supposed to be quiet. No questions. Nothing to say.

We need the high priest to whisper in our ears to even come alive. Then, though, we *still* have to be silent. We have to obey him. We always have to listen to him, he doesn't have to hear us. "Children should be seen and not heard."

I imagine that if you believe what the priests say, if you follow their "teachings" long enough, a pervasive silence eventually steals over your entire life. You become like a deserted town on a holiday: The shops all closed, the playgrounds empty, no one home.

Silent. And sad.

That's the kind of town few of us would want to visit, the kind of town most of us would want to leave as soon as possible.

*Sixteen in a series*

SEPT. 12, 1271: THE TATSUNOKUCHI PERSECUTION

## No Turning Back

SIGNIFICANT  
**DATES**

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

By LISA JONES

STAFF WRITER

**Y**our home is stormed by soldiers. They tear up floorboards, rip apart walls. Looking for weapons, they say. Why? Because you practice Buddhism, they believe you're a terrorist, an enemy of the state. Today, this would be as Kafkaesque, as frightening, as it was on Sept. 12, 1271, when Nichiren Daishonin's home was raided by warriors. He had been forthright in his criticism of the militarist government and had publicly rebuked religious leaders who exploited the people's hopes and fears. Consequently, he had made enemies in high places. The Daishonin had no weapons, of course, except for his faith. And the only thing he had up his sleeve (literally) was a heavy scroll on which a Lotus Sutra chapter was written — the chapter predicting that the votary of the Lotus Sutra would be attacked. One

warrior hefted the scroll and batted the Daishonin across the face with it.

The Daishonin was arrested and charged with treason. Later, around midnight, a squad took him to the beach at Tatsunokuchi, or Dragon's Mouth, an execution ground. Some people speculate that the Daishonin went gladly to his execution, happy to give his life for Buddhism. I think that's true, but I doubt he was light-hearted or cavalier.

Rather, I imagine the Daishonin felt unshakable conviction, a profound sense of purpose. He had seen the power of Nam-myohorenge-kyo, of Buddhahood. And he was concerned only with fulfilling the Buddha's wish to free all beings. His sole motive was compassion.

His hands unbound, the Daishonin seated himself in front of his executioner. He is said to have chanted Nam-myohorenge-kyo several times, then stretched his neck so that the executioner's sword could sever his head in one stroke. No turning back, no future — the Daishonin's whole life came down to this moment.

To me, this is the spirit of Tatsunokuchi: entrusting everything to faith. I'm at a point in my Buddhist practice where I don't think that I'll ever quit practicing. So I ask myself, how should I continue? The only way is with full, life-on-

the-line commitment, I feel. That doesn't mean being reckless or fanatical. It means to make my entire life — everything I say, do and will — a prayer of compassion, a prayer worth dying for.

As the Daishonin sat, awaiting the cold sweep of the executioner's blade, a blazing ball of fire tore across the night sky.

It lit up the beach like a flash of noon-day sun.

Soldiers hid in fear. They were too spooked to carry out the execution. The Daishonin lived — to be exiled to Sado Island, which was a different kind of death sentence in those days.

In his later writings, the Daishonin spoke as if he had died at Tatsunokuchi — and been reborn there. He had "discarded the transient and revealed the true." That is, Nichiren, the common mortal, gave up his life (metaphorically), but the Daishonin, the true Buddha, emerged.

To me, Tatsunokuchi represents a major impasse — a problem that can be solved only through faith. Until we come up against such an impasse and can rely only on faith for a solution, our Buddhist practice could be said to exist on a theoretical level. Our practice becomes actual, our Buddhahood is revealed, when we stake everything on the power of our faith. WTT

## One-Volume Collection of Nichiren Daishonin's Writings To Be Published

By **FRED MAYER**  
CORRESPONDENT

Santa Monica, Calif., Aug. 8

A single-volume edition of the existing seven volumes of *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* will be available early next year. Final preparations are now being made toward publication on Jan. 26, 1999 — SGI Day. Titled *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, this 1,000-plus-page collection will be the first in English to present his writings in a comprehensive format and in chronological order.

The collection will feature all 172 of those writings of Nichiren Daishonin that have been already published in

English, out of his more than 400 extant writings. In addition, it will include a foreword by SGI President Ikeda and a detailed glossary to assist readers in understanding many terms and concepts commonly mentioned in the Daishonin's writings.

The book is being published jointly by the Soka Gakkai, NSIC and the SGI-USA.

It is hoped that combining the existing volumes into one book will make the writings of Nichiren Daishonin more portable and accessible, not to mention available at an affordable price. The publication of a CD-ROM edition is also being discussed.

In this one-volume compilation, much emphasis has been placed on further clarifying the text for English-speaking readers while fully maintaining the intent of the original writings.

According to Ted Morino, SGI-USA Study Department leader, the current project is extremely significant due to its timing. "We might say that this is the most important project for the global communication of the Daishonin's teachings to be completed within the 20th century," he said. "This book will definitely open a new era for the advancement of worldwide kosen-rufu in the 21st century." 

## NEWS BRIEFS

Photo by MIKE MULLEN



Buddhists and Presbyterians work to beautify Hayward, Calif.

## Northern Calif. Members Work for PEACE

For the second year, SGI members participated in Hayward Pride activities through PEACE (People Engaged in Action for their Community and Environment). The city of Hayward, just across the bay from San Francisco, annually sponsors a week of activities promoting volunteerism, which culminated in citywide events on Saturday, May 30. SGI

members participated in renovating the landscape at the Family Resource Center. Volunteers trimmed shrubs, removed underbrush, collected garbage, tilled soil and planted flowers and three cherry trees. After the work was done, volunteers from throughout the city met for a barbecue.

— LINDA WELLS, correspondent

## Opening Focuses on Children

By **CARMEN ROBERTS**  
CORRESPONDENT

The St. Petersburg, Fla., showing of the SGI-USA's "Children's Rights and Realities" exhibition closed on July 31 after a successful three-week stay. Four groups co-sponsored the event: The National Conference for Community and Justice, The Pier (site of the showing), the St. Petersburg International Folk Fair Society, and the Tampa Bay Chapter of the U.N. Association-USA.

The opening date, July 12, was declared Children's Rights and Realities Day in the city, and the opening ceremony focused on children in every way, from a chorus, a local children's dance group and two young masters of ceremonies Lauren Frallicciardi, 10, and Ingrid Brown, 11, share their experiences.



Photo by VINCE CIARDI

Everything about the opening ceremony for the St. Petersburg, Fla., showing of the 'Children's Rights and Realities' exhibition put children in the limelight, including the MCs, Lauren Frallicciardi and Ingrid Brown.

**Lauren:** Being the MC was not as easy as I thought it would be. I practiced and practiced until I got most of it down, and I chanted to be clear and not to be nervous. Then I found myself at the big day waiting for my cue. Everything was going well, until I made one mistake by speaking too soon. That is when I found out that making a mistake is just part of learning.

The exhibit was very nice and I think it touched a lot of people and made them realize how kids are being treated around the world. It is depressing and makes me feel how lucky I am to have such a good life. I think people really got the exhibit's message — that kids have rights,


too. I feel the people who saw the exhibit will try to help children have better lives.

**Ingrid:** People asked me if I was scared, but I was not. My mom was always telling me to practice my lines and chant daimoku, but I already knew my lines. I could almost say them without looking at my paper. I chanted not be afraid and to have fun.

On the day of the opening, I thought I was completely ready and that I would not get scared, but when we got to the exhibit location, there were lots of people — more than I expected. When I stepped out in front of that big crowd I was a little ner-

vous, but I got through it and I had a lot of fun.

After the ceremony, I received lots of compliments from strangers. I really liked meeting the SGI-USA's general director, Fred Zaitso, and all our VIP guests.

This was a great experience for me, and I thank everyone who made this exhibit possible, not just for me but for everyone who can see it and learn about children around the world. There is one part of the exhibit that I really liked. It is a drawing of a child, but the face is a mirror. You can put your face in the mirror and see what you would look like in that child's world — to feel a bit like that child. 



A Mexican dance is one of the multi-ethnic performances at Orange County Region's Cultural Friendship Faire.

## Culture Festival Celebrates Ethnic Diversity

A cultural friendship fair sponsored by the SGI-USA student group at the University of California, Irvine, was held at the university's Aldrich Park on Sunday, July 26. More than a thousand people attended. Christina Shea, mayor of the City of Irvine, opened the event, welcoming participants on behalf of the city. She also presented SGI-USA General Director Fred M. Zaitso with a proclamation declaring

July 26, 1998, as SGI-USA Cultural Friendship Day.

In addition to performances by members of local ethnic communities, many dignitaries from religious and ethnic organizations throughout Orange County were introduced. Children participated in activities including face painting, games and arts and crafts. Local artists displayed their works.

— KATE LLEWELLYN,  
correspondent

By **DAISAKU IKEDA**  
SGI PRESIDENT

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY

# HE HAD A MISSION TO FULFILL



**The winds of praise and censure are always blowing. But Admiral Yi Sunsin, the 16th-century Korean hero, was never swayed. He went straight for his mission, and he achieved it.**

I recently met again with President Chung Jong Taek of South Korea's Chung Cheong College [July 4]. Previously Dr. Chung served as minister of the environment, and many people hoped that he would continue to be active in government, making use of his cabinet-level experience. But President Chung believes that education is the most sacred and noble of all professions, the one to which he wished to give the rest of his life. He decided to return to a private university in his hometown and devote his energies to educating the next generation, the youth who will shoulder the future.

Surely the saying "The great are selfless" applies to Dr. Chung.



My contact with Dr. Chung, with his integrity and purity of heart, reminds me of the great hero who saved 16th-century Korea, Admiral Yi Sunsin. He was the brilliant naval commander who stopped the Japanese military ruler Toyotomi Hideyoshi's savage invasion of Korea (1592-98). This year marks the 400th anniversary of Chung's death. His name is known to everyone in Korea, but most non-Koreans have never heard of him.

I will share his story to help further our understanding of the Korean people and their history.



Admiral Yi was 47 when the battle with Toyotomi's forces

began. At the time, he was no more than a regional navy commander. But as soon as he learned that the Japanese forces were advancing, he called the naval officers under his command for a strategic council. At this early stage, the Japanese forces had a strong advantage, their attack taking the Korean defense forces by surprise.

The majority of naval officers at the emergency meeting were reluctant to engage in any action. Many argued that the region they were responsible for defending had not been attacked, and that it was sufficient that they simply protect their own area.

Admiral Yi blasted them roundly: "When your country is in danger, how can you foist the responsibility of defense on the officers and troops of other regions!"

Not wanting to take responsibility is one of the deplorable traits of bureaucratism. Admiral

Yi's fight began with trying to transform his colleagues' attitude. He insisted that it was the duty of each and every leader to stand up and bear full responsibility for victory or defeat.



The naval troops under his command were remarkably successful. The ironclad vessels known as Turtle Ships, built according to his specifications, were particularly impressive. These were covered with heavy metal plates, like tortoise shells. Not only did they deflect the enemy's arrows, they were designed so that guns and cannons could be fired from them.

While military leaders in other regions sat back, convinced that a Japanese invasion could never happen, Admiral Yi set about carefully preparing a strong defensive force.



The farsighted admiral was subsequently given wide command over Korea's naval troops. But in 1597, he became the victim of a plot hatched by those jealous of his achievements; he was imprisoned. The person who had worked hardest for his country was falsely branded a traitor. This infamous scheme, fueled by envy, sought to topple the very pillar of Korea.

Admiral Yi, however, was undaunted. When his jailer urged him to pay bribes to win his freedom, he refused point-blank: "I do not seek to prolong my life by wrongdoing."

The Korean people loved the admiral and are said to have gathered outside the prison gates. They were his true allies.

And without Admiral Yi at the helm, the Korean navy reeled from one harsh blow after another. At last everyone realized that his leadership had made the navy what it had been. Even those who plotted his downfall had to admit that Admiral Yi was their only hope.

The winds of praise and censure always blow. But Admiral Yi didn't let such things disturb him; he resumed his position as commander; he knew he had a mission to fulfill.



The war had taken a turn for the worse, and the navy, which had prided itself on being invincible, had only 12 ships left. The enemy forces, meanwhile, boasted more than 10 times that number. No one thought the Korean forces stood a chance of victory.

But the losers in any struggle have already allowed themselves to be defeated before the battle even begins. They have lost to the insidious workings of resignation, cowardice and lethargy in their own hearts.

Admiral Yi called out to the

Korean people, "As long as I am alive, I promise you, I will not permit our foes to have their way!" It was a resounding declaration of utter confidence, of his triumph.

The strength and conviction of his words drove the defeatist attitude from his men's hearts and roused them to fight. "If we fight at the admiral's side, we are sure to win!" they thought. The valorous struggle of the admiral and his troops, burning with the passionate desire to win at all costs, eventually led to the crushing defeat of the enemy fleet.



Admiral Yi did not fight for the sake of power or wealth. His was a battle for what was right, a selfless struggle to protect and save his people and his country. That was the secret of his nobility and strength.

People have often ridiculed us, saying things like, "Only the wind, earthquakes and the Soka Gakkai work for free." But such comments actually come from their astonishment at the power generated by people selflessly working together for the benefit of society and their fellow human beings in this world dominated by self-profit and self-aggrandizement.

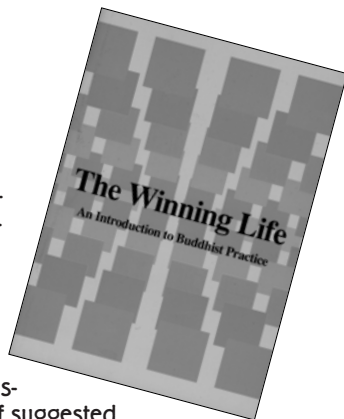
A strong alliance of people working for the good of all, for truth and justice, without self-interest — this force will raise the curtain on a new century of humanity.

There is no greater strategy than the Mystic Law. The power of the champions of the people, working to achieve the grand ideal of kosen-rufu, is limitless. ❧

This series is published as "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*" in the *Seikyo Shimbun*.

## For Your Friends and Guests

Using plain language, this booklet gives a quick yet detailed introduction to the practice of Nichiren Daishonin's teachings. It contains four sections covering the meaning of a winning life, the mechanics of the practice, explanations of some basic Buddhist concepts, and an overview of the organization and its history. The booklet also includes a list of suggested reading for the newcomer.



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# The Spirit of Propagating Buddhism

You don't have to be impatient at all in promoting our movement of worldwide kosen-rufu. I sincerely hope that you will steadily advance with common sense and with strong confidence in the glorious progress of our movement in the United States. (April 1987 *Seikyo Times*, p. 63)



Now is an age when it is vital to communicate an understanding of Buddhism deeply and broadly among all classes of people. For that reason, in the propagation of the Mystic Law, clear logic and persuasive power marked by abundant good sense are indispensable. I hope you will develop a state of life so profound that you can cause those with whom you speak to feel convinced from the bottom of their hearts, thus winning greater understanding of the Daishonin's teaching. (April 1987 *Seikyo Times*, p. 77)



[First Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo] Makiguchi said, "Nichiren Shoshu may be small at present, but in the future, the time of kosen-rufu will surely come." As this statement indicates, even though there may be few people at present, if there is someone of courageous faith, then the great task of kosen-rufu can be achieved. In this sense, first of all, I want all of you to become lions of kosen-rufu. Your own growth is like a single wave that will bring about the 10,000 waves of others' development, eventually forming a great river of kosen-rufu. (April 1987 *Seikyo Times*, p. 82)



In the natural course of events, you may have occasion to talk about the Buddhism of sowing. However, you should never get into emotional arguments with anyone about religion. Your sincere desire to lead them to faith is itself respectable, but it is a mistake to be impatient or inflexible in discussing Buddhism. Once you have brought someone into contact with Buddhism, without fail, in due course his or her ties with the religion will begin to develop and eventually bear fruit. (July 1989 *Seikyo Times*, p. 32)



The Gohonzon is the concrete manifestation of the very exist-

tence of Nichiren Daishonin, who taught kosen-rufu. Because of that, if you only practice gongyo and chant daimoku and don't take any other action for the sake of kosen-rufu or improving your own life, the Gohonzon will not have its true, full effect.

If, however, you take actions to achieve kosen-rufu, they will serve as that extra push for your own life and help you leap to higher states of mind in your gongyo and chanting as well. (March 1990 *Seikyo Times*, p. 39)



Propagation is a practice that we carry out on the direction of Nichiren Daishonin. Whether people to whom you explain Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism decide to take faith depends mainly upon their life tendency and their capacity to understand and believe in Buddhism. In any case, whether a person determines to take faith in Buddhism after listening to an explanation (*hosshin geshu*) or listens to the teaching and does not decide to take faith in it (*monpo geshu*), the benefit that the believer receives is the same. (March 1990 *Seikyo Times*, p. 70)



Propagation includes all Buddhist practices; and nothing is more beneficial for promoting human growth. Therefore, if you desist in this fundamental practice, you cannot train yourself. Unless leaders themselves grow, they will come to depend solely on the power of the organization; and this type or situation will give rise to many organizational evils. Propagation is the lifeblood of Buddhism. This is what Shakyamuni taught, and moreover, this is the direct path to attaining Buddhahood that Nichiren Daishonin risked his life to follow as a model for his disciples. (July 1990 *Seikyo Times*, p. 15)



To proceed through your life without an objective—just going along aimlessly until you encounter some resistance and then stopping and changing direction—is simply living by instinct. In any situation, it is important to have goals. Just as we have targets in promoting kosen-rufu activities, such as in propagation efforts and in the Friends of the SGI campaign, children may have targets for their grades in school, and you may have



Excerpts From SGI President Ikeda's Guidance

targets for personal or family savings. Progress lies in setting a goal and then making steady efforts toward its realization. (January 1994 *Seikyo Times*, pp. 20–21)



It is a great mistake to suppose that *shakubuku* means trying to force someone to take faith. Doing *shakubuku* essentially means speaking the truth. Since the Lotus Sutra explains the truth, it is called the "sutra of *shakubuku*."

Now, in the Latter Day of the Law, all our efforts to tell people about and spread Nam-myohorenge-kyo—the essence of the Lotus Sutra—constitute *shakubuku*. In house-cleaning, for example, it doesn't matter whether one cleans vigorously or at a leisurely pace as long as the main objective of the house becoming clean is realized. (February 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 28)



[President Toda once said:] "It is important to share Buddhism with a spirit of compassion. It's almost like being in love."

President Toda certainly had a way of putting things! When people are in love, they go all out. They waste many sheets of stationery writing and rewriting letters. They stay up all night thinking about the words they will use to invite the other person out on their next day off. If everything goes well, they might decide to get married. However, unlike marriage sometimes, *shakubuku* will never cause one to have regrets! (February 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 28)



We invite a friend into a compassionate life-space and warmly embrace them; we sit down in the

same room and discuss life as equals. We discuss things and learn from one another as fellow human beings, and together we strive to improve our lives. Creating such a warm and welcoming space for dialogue and exchange is in itself *shakubuku*. (February 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 30)



In seeking to propagate Buddhism after the Buddha's passing, difficulties are inevitable. Therefore, it is necessary that we have a spirit of forbearance and patience. We need a spirit to endure. Enduring is neither retreating nor conceding defeat. We have to persevere and win. No matter what happens, we must not become disheartened. Kosen-rufu is a struggle of the spirit. Those who allow themselves to be inwardly defeated cannot be said to possess forbearance. (February 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 31)



A person of selfless dedication is one who can help others. I once asked President Toda, "When we do *shakubuku*, are we in a sense doing *shakubuku* to ourselves?" He replied: "The point is that Nam-myohorenge-kyo is the very wellspring of our lives. Unless we have that realization, we cannot do true *shakubuku*. There isn't any special technique or method for doing *shakubuku*. In the Latter Day, *shakubuku* is a matter of determining: 'Nam-myohorenge-kyo is the sum and essence of my being!'" (February 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 33–34)



It comes down to authenticity. Eloquence is not what matters. The important thing in propaga-

tion is genuine sincerity. President Toda often said, "When you do *shakubuku* you create lasting trust." (February 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 35)



"Basically," replied Shin'ichi, "all of society, all phenomena and events are Buddhism, so that whether discussing history, politics or life in general, I can't help expressing the Buddhist point of view."

If you really make Buddhism and faith the bases of your life and have pride and confidence in that, your discussions will just naturally become dialogues on Buddhism. If you find yourself unable to do so, it is because you have somehow built a fence around Buddhism in your mind. It hasn't permeated every aspect of your life and thought.

If every time you talk about Buddhism you become defensive, tense up and look severe, people won't be receptive to what you say. For us, Buddhist dialogue is the most natural, effortless expression of our humanity." (July 4, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 5)



Even when we are spreading the Law "without concern for our lives," we absolutely must not do anything that would reflect badly on the Law. Because we have the highest concern for the Law, we need to fully exercise our wisdom in propagating it.... While teaching his followers the *shakubuku* spirit of not begrudging one's life, the Daishonin emphasized the importance of showing people genuine courtesy and respect, and of conducting oneself with wisdom. (September 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 34)

## THIRD STAGE, FROM PAGE 1

I first visited Okinawa just two months after I became the third president of the Soka Gakkai on May 3, 1960.

**SASAKI:** The day you arrived in Okinawa, July 16, 1960, was the 700th anniversary the day that Nichiren Daishonin submitted the "Rishso Ankoku Ron" to Japan's rulers, remonstrating against their support of erroneous teachings.

**MATSUOKA:** Screenings of *Sunrise Over Hong Kong*, a film of the 16th World Peace Youth Culture Festival held in the former British territory in February 1997, are now being held all around Japan. Twenty members of the Okinawa young men's division represented Japan at the festival, performing the traditional Okinawan dance, the Kachashi, to great acclaim.

**IKEDA:** Yes, that's right. The Hong Kong members' performance and the traditional drum-and-dance performance of the South Korean members were also spectacular, but the Okinawan dance really stole the show. Okinawa has an international atmosphere, located at a key point along the maritime Silk Road, which has made it a melting pot of Asian culture.

**SASAKI:** The festival was held in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center, where the ceremonies for Hong Kong's return to China were later held. After the festival was over and you and your guests had retired, Mr. Matsuoka and I remained. When your message declaring the festival a great success was conveyed to the participants in English and Cantonese, a great roar of joy went up through the hall.

**IKEDA:** The term *Kachashi* means to mix. The dance remains firmly rooted in daily Okinawan life, and it is performed regularly at all kinds of parties and gatherings. Everyone just gets in a circle and dances. There are no fixed steps. Each person just improvises as he or she steps into the dancing ring.

**MATSUOKA:** The Okinawa youth division members visited the Hong Kong Soka Kindergarten with a group of SGI members from all parts of the world before the festival began. They lost no time in teaching the eager kindergarten students to dance, and the Kachashi wound its way from classroom to class-



"Whenever I report on elderly people, I am struck by the strength they have. It is a strength that has allowed them to survive the hardships of war and poverty."

room, picking up more dancers along the way.

**IKEDA:** Yes. Once you start dancing, all barriers of age, gender, nationality and race melt away. Dance is a great equalizer. That equality is the Okinawa spirit, a spirit that we can also see in how the elderly are treated with love and respect there.

At the festival, our friends from around the world found themselves captivated by that Okinawan rhythm and joined together as one. The barriers between audience and performers disappeared.

**SASAKI:** Hifumi Kinjo, a young men's division headquarters vice leader, played the *shamisen* [a traditional Japanese three-stringed instrument] for the dance. The Okinawan word for *sun* is *tida*. Mr. Kinjo and his

friends have formed a pop group they call Tida Company, which uses traditional Okinawan instruments and musical influences in their songs and is very popular there. They appear on television and have many fans.

**IKEDA:** I'm so happy that they're doing well. Mr. Kinjo also performed at the 1994 Asia Youth Peace Music Festival at the Fukuoka Dome in Kyushu, Japan, and he received enthusiastic applause.

**SASAKI:** Yes. His mother, Hideko, is 80 years old. She has two older sisters, Toyo Kohagura, 96, and Tooyo Oshiro, 93.

**MATSUOKA:** All three of these long-lived sisters first encountered Buddhism and joined the Soka Gakkai during the great wave of propagation that took

place around the time of your first visit to Okinawa.

**SASAKI:** Toyo Kohagura is now in a nursing home, but she is healthy. Every day she reads the *Seikyo Shimbun*, from cover to cover, without glasses.

Her 93-year-old sister rises every morning at 5:00. After taking care of her housework, she goes out to work in the fields. Her daughter, who lives with her, tries to stop her, but she says: "It's no fun sitting in the house watching television with the fan on. I'd rather be out weeding."

**IKEDA:** One of Rome's great wise men once said that work is the best nutrition for the spirit, and that is true. It's well known that many people age very quickly after they retire and lose the excitement and interest that

work provided them. Most of Okinawa's elderly citizens are hard workers.

It is also the local custom to treat elderly people well, and they have a distinct role to play in society. That is wonderful. Having a forum to work and be productive contributes greatly to their health.

**MATSUOKA:** Whenever I report on elderly people, I am awed by their strength. It is a strength that has allowed them to survive the hardships of war and poverty, an invincible spirit that I don't find in Japanese people born after World War II.

**IKEDA:** Yes, I think that's true. Okinawa in particular suffered in World War II. It was the only part of Japan in which a ground war was fought, and the islands were bombed so fiercely, it was called a storm of steel. The attack even changed the island's topography, blasting away mountains and valleys, and killed many innocent civilians.

Today's elderly Okinawans are the people who rose from the ashes of that devastated land. Okinawa was not rebuilt by the government or the military. It was rebuilt by the Okinawan people.

This effort was a true battle. That, no doubt, is what instilled in the depths of their hearts the keen awareness of the meaning and nobility of life and work.

**SASAKI:** The younger brother of Hideko Kinjo, feeling it would be unpatriotic to do otherwise, joined the army and was killed when still in his teens.

**MATSUOKA:** The Okinawans experienced the terrible inhumanity of the Japanese forces fighting on their islands, and they also always had a deep suspicion of mainland Japan. In the early days of Soka Gakkai activities on Okinawa, those who accepted faith in the Daishonin's teachings were often ostracized for "worshipping mainland gods."

**SASAKI:** Tooyo Oshiro was the first member to embrace faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism in her region. Her two sisters followed suit, and all three have lived long lives devoted to faith.

**IKEDA:** Their long lives demonstrate the greatness of Buddhism. Living out our lives fully and surviving the vicissitudes of life is what faith and our activities for kosen-rufu are all about. These noble sisters of

## THIRD STAGE, FROM PAGE 6

Okinawa have fought alongside me over the years, praying for the happiness of their friends, even when many still derided the Soka Gakkai as a gathering of the sick and the poor. Without doubt, they are advancing on the path of eternal good fortune and benefit.

**SASAKI:** Shortly before the Vietnam War, Hideko Kinjo was destitute — so poor that she didn't know where her family's next meal would come from. She made necklaces out of shells she picked up on the beach and walked to the town of Kincho to sell them to American soldiers.

When she found that she was pregnant with her sixth child, she seriously considered having an abortion. But a friend said to her, "You don't know what great mission this child might have." These words touched a core deep inside and, weeping, she offered prayers of apology and gratitude to the Gohonzon. This child turned out to be Hifumi Kinjo, who performed at the culture festival.

**MATSUOKA:** When a child, Hifumi and his family were ridiculed because they lived in a house missing half its roof, but four years ago he managed to build a new, three-story house for his mother. The second floor is the central meeting place for Onna Chapter's Tancha District members, and they have had the concrete wall surrounding the water tank on the roof painted in pastel shades of the SGI tricolor flag — blue, red and yellow. Against the deep blue tropical skies, it shouts out "Here's the Soka Gakkai!"

**SASAKI:** The Okinawa Training Center, a fortress of peace built on the site of an old nuclear missile launching pad, is located in the same district. The area where the three sisters worked so hard for kosen-rufu has now been transformed into a region of peace and prosperity visited by SGI members from all over the world.

**IKEDA:** It was in Okinawa some 33 years ago, on Dec. 2, 1964, that I first took up my pen to write the novel *The Human Revolution*. Visiting the islands, I could not help but cry out: "War is barbarous and inhuman. Nothing is more cruel, nothing more tragic."

My undying hope for Okinawa is that, as a place that has experienced the cruelest pain and suffering, it become a place of supreme happiness and joy. I can't begin to express how

happy I am that our Okinawa friends are living such long, healthy lives.

**MATSUOKA:** The "mother of kosen-rufu" in Okinawa, Tamae Nakama, the first women's division leader there, is now 71. She is a perfect example of someone making the most of the third stage of life.

**IKEDA:** Yes. She has really worked hard for kosen-rufu in Okinawa.

Faith means courage and taking action. She has said: "The struggle can't be won unless you keep taking action, unless you keep moving forward, going round to visit people until your legs ache and become hard as iron. You have to walk and walk and walk until you develop those iron legs." She is a wonderful example for us all.

Her husband was born in Okinawa, but he was educated in Hawaii and then moved to Tokyo, where he met her. After they were married, Mr. Nakama decided to go back and settle in Okinawa. The couple arrived there together by boat on New Year's Day 1956. Mrs. Nakama was born and raised in Tokyo.

**MATSUOKA:** During your first visit to Okinawa in July 1960, the Okinawa Chapter was established, and Mrs. Nakama was appointed as the first chapter women's division leader. The day before the inaugural chapter meeting, you visited Mr. Nakama to pay your respects and confirm her appointment with him. He told you that he would fully support his wife in her new responsibilities.

**SASAKI:** That night, Mr. Nakama said to his wife: "We're involved in a revolution, so I want you to devote your full energies to your Gakkai activities. I promise not to complain if one of my shirts is missing a button or my shoes aren't polished. Give it all that you've got. Work hard together with President Ikeda. You promised him that you would."

**IKEDA:** It was at the height of the July heat, but Mr. Nakama, with his strong eyebrows and handsome face, was wearing a necktie. When I said that I wanted to ask his wife to take on the position of Okinawa's women's division leader, he replied, "My dear wife will be working for the Okinawan people, and I will support her in any way I can." I met him the following year and the year after that, each time offering my thanks for his cooperation.

**MATSUOKA:** Before she started practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism, Mrs. Nakama was very sick and weak. She used to spend about half of every month in bed. But sensing that her mission lay in helping the Okinawan people, she became a hardworking woman with legs of iron and continued her ceaseless efforts to promote our movement to this day.

**SASAKI:** Her husband died in 1970, leaving her a widow at only 43. His last words to her were "Work for kosen-rufu with President Ikeda."

**IKEDA:** Mr. Nakama was hospitalized in Tokyo, and I sent my greetings to him several times. I

told Mrs. Nakama that everything would be fine in Okinawa, and she should spend her time taking care of him — but she couldn't bring herself to stay away from Okinawa too long. That is how devoted she was to her adopted home.

Kosen-rufu is a revolution. Without selfless devotion, without the ungrudging spirit of individuals such as her, this revolution cannot be accomplished.

**SASAKI:** Nevertheless, she loved and respected her husband and was deeply grateful to him. In the almost 30 years since his death, she has never failed to carry out his last instructions to her, working day and night for kosen-rufu. She cares nothing for her own comfort, only for that of others. When she sees young members working late at the community center, for instance, she'll fix them a snack of some kind, like hot miso soup with fresh fish.

**MATSUOKA:** As I said earlier, she is a model for how one can be productive and fulfilled in the third stage of life. "I have decided that I will continue to work for kosen-rufu all my life," she has said. "That is how I will end my days. As long as President Ikeda is still healthy and devoting himself tirelessly, I am determined to do so, too. I want to repay President Ikeda for making Okinawa a land of peace."

**IKEDA:** The Daishonin writes, "Whatever trouble may occur, consider it as transitory as a dream and think only of the Lotus Sutra" (*The Major Writ-*

*ings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 147). When all is said and done, those who dedicate their lives to kosen-rufu, just as the Daishonin instructs, will triumph. He also says, "You will grow younger" (MW-5, 158).

If you continue on the path of kosen-rufu, a strong life force will naturally well forth from the depths of your being. As the years pass, you will grow younger and younger and live to the end of your days filled with vitality. That is what Buddhism teaches us, and that is what so many of our worthy seniors and comrades in faith have shown us through their lives.

**SASAKI:** More than 40 years have passed since Mrs. Nakama left Tokyo to settle in Okinawa, so I felt it was worthwhile to ask her the Okinawan secret to long life. She said it was because Okinawans are essentially good-natured people. They are broad-minded. The pace of their lives is relaxed. And they care about others, placing great value on human relationships. Those, she suggested, were the secrets to their long lives.

She said that when she comes to Tokyo, the city is too fast-paced, and she doesn't feel comfortable anymore.

**IKEDA:** I see. Being a good-natured person is the secret to long life. I suppose that is true. A person who cares for others is treasured by others. I think that tradition is alive and well in Okinawa.

In our next installment, let's talk about the secret to the Okinawans' long life from a medical perspective. ❧



Photo by JONATHAN WILSON

'One of Rome's great wise men once said that work is the best nutrition for the spirit....Having a forum to work and be productive contributes to their health.'

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



President Ikeda pre-  
sents a flower lei to his wife  
at the meeting.

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#### SPEECH, FROM PAGE 1

sarin, suddenly invaded our home. Four years have passed since then. Every member of my family was harmed by the gas, and Sumiko remains in a vegetable state to this day. Our two pet dogs died trying to warn us of the gas.

“The mass media quickly labeled us ‘the murderer and his family,’ as it dragged us into the mill of false accusations,” he writes. “No matter how much I protested and declared my innocence, I was powerless against its staggering force. After the incident occurred, society at large treated us as criminals.”

Japan is a terrible nation. We Japanese are, as far as human rights are concerned, uncivilized barbarians.

Mr. Kono continues: “But from the beginning, I did not become upset, no matter what happened. I knew that this was a part of my life, and I came to terms with it.... I didn’t cry or rant, I didn’t complain.... I never once thought about how terrible it was, or that I was hard done by. I knew that happiness was a matter of how you think, your attitude toward life. It all comes down to your perception of things. No matter what the circumstances are, if you think you’ve been hard done by, you’ll feel miserable. And if you think you’ve been very lucky, then you’ll feel very fortunate.”

“I had always done what I wanted to do, at my own pace, when suddenly this incident occurred,” he goes on. “However, I

just see it as one act in the drama of my life. I am the one living my life, and I feel fortunate to be doing so. I believe in seeing things in a positive light. By doing so, you will always have a sense of hope.”

#### A Cry for Ethical Journalism

Mr. Kono also writes of the lessons Japan must learn from how the media covered the Matsumoto Incident and subsequent sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway system [March 20, 1995]: “There is an urgent need to institute in Japan a system that upholds and promotes journalistic ethics, like the press councils and ombudsman systems of Europe and the United States, so that individuals can defend themselves against unfair media reporting. The individual is small and puny in the face of the overwhelming power wielded by the media. I know this from bitter experience. No matter how strongly you state the truth and insist on your innocence, your voice simply isn’t heard. I believe the need for such a system will continue to grow — a system that would provide an official, objective channel for hapless media victims to have their voices heard, that enables them to file suits against incidents of the inaccurate, fraudulent and libelous reporting that invades people’s privacy and oversteps the bounds of ethical journalism.”

Human rights are the foundation of democracy. I have introduced Mr. Kono’s thoughts be-

cause I think he brings an important problem to our attention.

#### Where We Can Discuss Anything

On July 3, 1278, Nichiren Daishonin wrote a detailed, considerate response to the questions of a follower.

Leaders should always try to respond to any questions people have with patience and consideration. It is wrong to reply casually or thoughtlessly or in a patronizing or surly manner — as if you were superior and couldn’t be bothered. It is a sign of deplorable arrogance.

The follower who asked the Daishonin a question was Myoho-ama, who was practicing with an earnest seeking spirit toward Buddhism, at the same time nursing her sick husband. She was the equivalent to one of our women’s division members today.

The first thing the Daishonin does is praise her highly for asking about Buddhism. Such was the great compassion of the original Buddha: He had the generosity of spirit to listen warmly to everything his followers had to say and every question they wanted to ask.

Let us do our utmost to sustain the wonderfully warm atmosphere of the SGI — an atmosphere where members feel free to discuss whatever is on their minds. Unless we do so, our organization will stop growing, stop developing.

An organization run by orders from above is bound to sink into bureaucracy. It will become rigid

and so will its members. We must not allow that to happen.

The SGI is a world of humanity — of the heart, of faith, of compassion. It is a world of unity and mutual inspiration. That is why it is strong.

If we continue to value and promote these qualities, the SGI will continue to grow and develop forever. I want to declare here and now this atmosphere where we can discuss anything is fundamental to the SGI.

The Daishonin, referring to the six difficult and nine easy acts, wrote: “In this age of the Latter Day of the Law, those who ask about the meaning of even one phrase or verse of the Lotus Sutra are much fewer than those who can hurl great Mount Sumeru to another land like a stone, or those who can kick the entire galaxy away like a ball” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 221). It is more difficult, he says, to earnestly seek the Mystic Law than to kick a star system about as if it were a soccer ball. If that’s so, then how noble is the activity of propagating Buddhism in which all of you are engaged!

The original Buddha, Nichiren Daishonin, would surely praise your efforts. You are incomparably more worthy than those who care only about fame and social status, and strut about arrogantly filled with self-importance.

#### The Members Always Come First

In the same letter, the Daishonin goes on to say: “This is a

sure indication that if you embrace the Lotus Sutra, you will certainly attain Buddhahood. Since the Lotus Sutra defines our life as the Buddha’s life, our mind as the Buddha’s wisdom and our actions as the Buddha’s behavior, all who embrace and believe in even a single phrase or verse of this sutra will be endowed with these three properties. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is only one phrase, but it contains the essence of the entire sutra” (MW-1, 221–22). The Daishonin states clearly that those who embrace the Mystic Law will attain Buddhahood.

All of you have your own problems and difficulties, yet you plunge intrepidly into a society mired with lies and corruption to work for kosen-rufu, for Buddhism, for your fellow human beings. How admirable you are! Seeking no reward for yourselves and enduring criticism and slander, you diligently keep advancing the cause of kosen-rufu a little further, day after day. In light of the Daishonin’s writings, you are bodhisattvas, you are Buddhas.

Those who criticize and attack us and the SGI will incur negative effects and consequences in accord with the uncompromising workings of the Mystic Law, of the strict Buddhist law of cause and effect. Some have said that the hard times Japan is now suffering are part of those adverse consequences.

When we work for kosen-rufu, the vibrant life force and wisdom of the Buddha well forth in our lives.

As SGI leaders, it is important that you know the best, most pro-

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ductive action to take in each situation. And what will bring the greatest joy and benefit to the members. Please pay close attention to every aspect affecting the members — down to the time a meeting ends — responding to their needs and situations flexibly. The members always come first. You are leaders only because there are members.  
I hope that you will always treat your fellow members with utmost respect and courtesy, greeting them pleasantly and thanking them sincerely for taking time out of their busy schedules to participate in meetings or other activities. The mark of a successful leader is when all who meet him or her say: "He's really a wonderful person." "She's always so supportive." The members' gratitude and love are proof that you're doing your job.  
Above all, you must never be arrogant. As leaders, you must always resolutely oppose corruption and evil, and sincerely work for the happiness of your fellow members.  
**Problems Are Proof That We're Alive**  
The SGI members have worked tirelessly to spread the Mystic Law and the Daishonin's philosophy and ideals throughout the world. We are responsible for worldwide kosen-rufu. We are the first and only ones to achieve this in the 700 years since the Daishonin's passing and the 3,000-years history of Buddhism.  
It wasn't famous people or learned scholars or professors

who achieved this feat. And it certainly wasn't the priests. It was all the work of ordinary people. It was the result of our persistent daily efforts and the power of faith — especially the women's division members'.  
Immense benefit definitely accrues to such sincere efforts. This benefit, this medal of honor that adorns our lives, is adamant, indestructible, eternal and everlasting. Each of you has made remarkable contributions to the widespread propagation of Buddhism. You can walk proudly with your head held high.  
Only the SGI is faithfully carrying out the Buddha's will and decree. Let's advance with the certainty that no other organization is as sublime.  
With all of us firmly united in faith — many in body, one in mind — let's go on to create an eternally victorious, immortal history! It feels good to win, and it is vital that we win in life. Failure is so sad and miserable.  
The same is true in kosen-rufu. Only if we succeed can kosen-rufu be realized.  
Mr. Toda once said: "Because we have taken faith in the Mystic Law, we have gained entry to the state of Buddhahood within the world of Humanity. Although we are beings of the world of Humanity, having entered the Buddha way means that we must carry out bodhisattva practice." Even when people attain Buddhahood, the actions they undertake in society for others' benefit are as bodhisattvas. Our SGI activities are the modern equivalent of bodhisattva practice.  
By devoting ourselves earnestly to SGI activities, we gain the ability to turn all difficulties and obstacles into benefit, recognizing that earthly desires and delusions are enlightenment, and that the sufferings of birth and death are nirvana. No matter how unpleasant the circumstances we find ourselves in, we can transform them into hope and good fortune — into eternal happiness. How incredible this is!  
Life is a series of sufferings and problems. Struggling with problems is the essence of life. This never changes, no matter how much good fortune we accumulate or how amazing the benefits we receive. It may seem that a life without problems or conflicts would be ideal, but it would actually be empty. We wouldn't be fully alive.  
Problems are proof that we're alive. They're also the source of all our growth and progress. We have to use our problems and suffering as the energy or fuel to propel us toward even greater happiness in the future. The ability to do this is the wonderful thing about a life dedicated to SGI activities.  
**Keep Praying Until You Get Your Answer**  
Nichikan Shonin, the renowned restorer of the Daishonin's Buddhism, assures us: "If you have faith in this Gohonzon and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo even for a short while, no prayer will go unanswered, no offense unexpiated, no good fortune unbestowed and no righteousness

unproven (*The Essential Works of the Fuji School*, vol. 4, p. 213). We must never forget to have absolute conviction in this.  
Yet, why is it, then, that sometimes our prayers seem to not be answered? This is a manifestation of the Buddha's wisdom — so that we can deepen our prayers, become stronger people, live more profound lives and secure deeper, more lasting good fortune. If our every, slightest prayer were answered immediately, we'd become lazy and degenerate. And we couldn't hope to build a life of great dignity and substance.  
You don't normally receive your paycheck at the end of your first day at work. The sapling you planted today isn't a mighty oak tomorrow. If our prayers were automatically answered, with no true, deep prayer on our part, without a desperate life-or-death effort, we would become spoiled and useless. If that's how it worked, our Buddhist practice wouldn't make us into outstanding people — it would destroy us.  
There are many other elements involved in a prayer being answered, but the important thing is to keep praying until it is. By continuing to pray, you can reflect on yourself with unflinching honesty and begin to move your life in a positive direction on the path of earnest, steady effort.  
Even if your prayer doesn't produce concrete results immediately, your continual prayer will at some time manifest itself in a form greater than you had ever hoped. It will also protect you.

For example, you may pray about something at work, and your continual prayer about that one area of your life will eventually place your whole life, every aspect of it, on the road to happiness — on a much broader scale than your original wish.  
You will look back on what happened and realize that your prayer was indeed answered. And you will be completely satisfied with the result.  
The essence of it is this: If what you are praying for will truly contribute to your happiness and to your becoming a better person, it will be answered without fail. Even if you don't see the result immediately, it will in time become apparent.  
Let us all set our sights on leading great lives dedicated always to truth and move toward that goal in good health, brimming with hope. Let us live our lives boldly, without regret, advancing with patience, enthusiasm and a genuine spirit of friendship and camaraderie.  
See you again in mid-July at the next Headquarters Leaders Meeting!  
I am praying for your good health and successful endeavors. Stay well!   
*Part 2 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 23rd Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held in conjunction with the 7th Women's Division Leaders Meeting, at the Soka International Friendship Hall in Sendagaya, Tokyo, June 16. Part 1 appeared in last week's issue.*

# Think Critically and Spot Injustice

**Dr. Pérez Esquivel, who survived 14 months of imprisonment under Argentina's military dictatorship, challenges youth to 'become the shapers of history, to have the critical discernment to spot injustices when they happen, to take action and forge support and unity among people.'**

By DAISAKU IKEDA  
SGI PRESIDENT

**U**nder Argentina's military dictatorship [1976-83], 30,000 people were murdered. They were abducted and tortured to death."

The Soka University students in Tokyo listened transfixed to this gripping testimony of Dr. Pérez Esquivel [June 1994]. Could such a terrible thing have taken place in this day and age? Even for those aware of this tragedy, the words of one who had experienced it were shocking.

"Of course, all 30,000 were not killed at once," Dr. Pérez Esquivel went on. "They disappeared one or two at a time. Though the number of victims rose to five, 10, 100, there was no cry of protest from society. And that is why 30,000 people died."

A husband, a wife and a child would one day simply disappear. The military authorities were cunning in making people seem to vanish without a trace. Today, when no country can easily afford to ignore international opinion, it is not acceptable to oppress people too conspicuously. But if it can make "troublemakers" simply "disappear" quietly — inconspicuously, a little at a time — the government can easily deny involvement. The secret is to rob the protesters of their power to resist or to inflict irreparable damage on them and their cause, however ruthless the means.

Dr. Pérez Esquivel has written: "The authorities believed that they held the power of life and death in their hands.... Mothers, grandmothers and relatives knocked repeatedly on the doors of the churches, labor union offices, local and central government [looking for help finding their missing loved ones]. But the response was always the same: 'We have no idea where they are. They must have had a reason to disappear. No doubt they did something wrong.'"

Those missing, the victims in this scenario, were simply dismissed as criminals. And those who did not know them personally were willing to believe this.

Indeed, they were made to believe it. The government manipulated the mass media to drive its message home at every opportunity. Dr. Pérez Esquivel calls this the "shutting down of the conscience." The people, robbed of the spirit to think critically, convinced themselves that the government line was the truth. Since everyone said those missing were criminals, it had to be true; there must be a reason for their disappearance. Instead of speaking out

Adolfo Pérez Esquivel —  
Nobel Prize-Winning Argentine Human Rights Activist

## Recollections

By Daisaku Ikeda

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



Dr. Adolfo Pérez Esquivel meets with SGI President Ikeda.

with principle and conscience, they decided to remain silent, to not get involved.

But Dr. Pérez Esquivel could not remain silent. He contacted the families of those who had disappeared, and he marched at the front of demonstrations of mothers demanding their loved ones' return. Dr. Pérez Esquivel had already been campaigning against human rights abuses across Latin America. As a Christian, his beliefs also led him to the conclusion that action was the only path available.

**I**n 1977, Dr. Pérez Esquivel was suddenly arrested without a warrant or a hearing. He was thrown in prison, cast into a world of violent words and violent deeds. There, the false face that the government showed its people was stripped away, and its true brutality was revealed in its rawest form. His cell was tiny, hardly large enough in which to take even four paces. It was freezing cold. He tried to keep the wind and rain out by covering the missing window panes with old newspaper and slapped himself to keep warm. Sleep was almost impossible. What's more, his jailers woke him every two hours.

Their only aim was to destroy the resisters, physically and mentally. One jailer said: "Here you are only a convict. Not even God can help you." Some prisoners had cigarette burns all over their bodies. Others were left with permanent marks across their face from the blindfolds they were forced to wear over long periods. Many suffered lasting psychological damage. Dr. Pérez Esquivel was even subjected to electric-shock torture. During all this, he constantly told himself not to be defeated, resolving to endure and be strong.

When we met [December 1995], Dr. Pérez Esquivel said to me: "In prison, I gained the strength to survive under extreme conditions, the strength to resist. That strength is mental and spiritual. In prison, one is denied physical freedom. But the mind is free. The mind cannot be imprisoned."

Sustained by prayer, Dr. Pérez Esquivel endured prison life. The hardest thing to bear was the sound of others being beaten — the continual cries of pain and anguish. The authorities had no ears for human suffering; they looked on their prisoners as faceless numbers.

How dangerous is a society that has lost all sense of right and wrong.

Recently in Japan, a young boy committed suicide; he was unable to endure the pain of being a victim of schoolyard bullying any longer. Without any sense of inappropriateness, one of his classmates, expressing his sadness, said, "Now I have one less rival to worry about." It is easy to decry such callousness, but who has the right to condemn this youth alone when the leaders of our society shamelessly, with no moral or ethical standards, pursue nothing but their own gain?

At every opportunity, Dr. Pérez Esquivel calls out to youth not to be bystanders. He urges them to participate, to become the main actors in the human drama unfolding around them. He challenges them to become the shapers of history, to have the critical discernment to spot injustices when they happen, to take action and forge support and unity among people.

To wait for someone else to do something is irresponsible and represents spiritual self-defeat.

Social consciousness is important, says Dr. Pérez Esquivel. We must rebel against injustice, he urges. How true! When stones are cast at good people, when the rights of honest, hardworking people are trampled, we should be angry! When anyone anywhere in the world discriminates against another, we should burn with indignation! All good people must rage against injustice! Raise your voices! Drown out the loudspeaker lies of the oppressors with a resounding no! Nothing suits the authorities better than the people's apathy, than their feeling of powerlessness and their acceptance of human rights violations.

Through his sufferings in prison, Dr. Pérez Esquivel acquired a keen personal understanding of what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said: It's not the repression by the bad people that hurts — it's the silence of the good. When moral apathy spreads throughout society, when people don't want to get involved, bad people are free to do as they please. As a result, the good who remain silent and apathetic become accessories to their crimes.

When first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi was imprisoned for his beliefs during World War II, he asked his fellow prisoners: "Is doing evil the same as not doing good? Or are they different?" They are the same. Mr. Makiguchi knew that there was no middle ground between good and evil.

After 14 months, Dr. Pérez Esquivel was released from prison, but the authorities continued to keep him under strict surveillance.

**O**ne person who champions the cause of justice, who stands up for what is right, is more powerful than the apathetic masses.

Dr. Pérez Esquivel is a highly acclaimed sculptor and painter. He has always believed that an artist feels the joy, the sadness and the suffering of the people and gives them voice and form.

I said to him and his wife, the musician Amanda Guerreño: "If the two of you had simply remained artists, your lives might have been quiet and peaceful. But you dared to cast your lot with the struggle for human rights. You stood up to save those who are suffering. When you stand up for a cause, you expose yourself to criticism and attack. Knowing this, you still chose to walk the thorny path. What a magnificent life you have led! A life dedicated to fighting oppression shines with golden brilliance."

In 1980, Dr. Pérez Esquivel was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. It gave an enormous positive boost to the struggle for human rights around the world.

I asked him, "Weren't the military authorities who persecuted you the most displeased by your award?"

"Most assuredly yes," he replied. "They opposed and protested the award more than anyone."

He said that the Argentine mass media remained silent on the true merit of his activities and the international recognition he received. If they did write about him, it was to distort the facts.

The day he left Japan, Dr. Pérez Esquivel sent me a message: "When someone I have great faith in is attacked, insulted and persecuted, I will say nothing to him. But when that person ceases to be criticized, then I will express dissatisfaction — because that means he has given up the fight. There is a passage from Cervantes' classic novel *Don Quixote*, where it is observed that the yapping of dogs is proof that we are proceeding on horseback."

These are inspiring words indeed, words from a committed crusader for justice. ❏

# the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI

## 'THE FLOWER OF CULTURE'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 32-33

**Suspense builds as Soviet ships approach the U.S. blockade of Cuba. 'Everything hinged on the next few minutes or perhaps only the next few seconds.' The whole world comes to a crucial moment.**



By **DAISAKU IKEDA**  
SGI PRESIDENT

President Kennedy received reports that Soviet ships were heading toward the line of quarantine interception. There was no guarantee that they would stop and submit to inspection by U.S. forces. If they chose to break the blockade, the Americans would fire on them, and the Soviets would no doubt retaliate. The great fear was that this exchange of fire would escalate, finally developing into a full-scale nuclear confrontation.

As U.S. planes patrolled overhead, the Soviet ships approached the barrier. The fateful moment fast approached.

How must President Kennedy have felt as he listened to updates on the ships' movements? He had made his decision, and now there was no retreating. The die was cast. Everything hinged on the next few minutes or perhaps only the next few seconds. He must have held his breath and felt the enormous weight of his responsibility pressing down on him. The fate of the world rested in his hands.

Then he received news that some of the approaching ships had suddenly come to a stop. Then another report: They had changed course and were turning back. The air of extreme tension subsided somewhat. The entire room seemed to breathe a sigh of relief. The im-

mediate crisis, at least, had been averted.

Premier Khrushchev may also have been shaken by this close call. In *Khrushchev Remembers*, published many years later, he wrote, "We didn't want war." There is every reason to believe he was speaking the truth.

But he also explained that, because of the Cold War rivalry between the two superpowers, the Soviet Union deployed missiles in Cuba to "rouse America and its leadership to realize that they were at the brink of war." In these statements, we glimpse the conflicting thinking of the leaders of the Cold War superpowers — not wanting war on one hand, yet having no inten-

tion of eliminating it on the other.

The United Nations was also energetically involved in averting this crisis. That very day, Oct. 24, U.N. Acting Secretary-General U Thant had sent messages to both Kennedy and Khrushchev seeking to settle the confrontation and had made a statement in the U.N. Security Council.

U Thant, a citizen of Burma (present-day Myanmar), had assumed the post of U.N. acting secretary-general the previous year when Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld was killed in a plane crash. Since then, he had worked hard to fulfill the heavy responsibilities of his post. In his statement before the Security Council, he said:

"Today the United Nations faces a moment of grave responsibility. What is at stake is not just the interests of the parties directly involved, nor just the interests of all Member states, but the very fate of mankind. If today the United Nations should prove itself ineffective, it may have proved itself so for all time.

"In the circumstances, not only as acting secretary-general of the United Nations but as a human being, I would be failing in my duty if I did not express my profound hope and conviction that moderation, self-restraint and good sense will prevail over all other considerations."

U Thant's statement brimmed with his sense of duty as a member of the human race to avoid nuclear war at all costs. At the urging of many non-aligned nations of Asia and Africa, he assumed a mediating role in the crisis; the United Nations was about to enter a new era.

The following day, Oct. 25, Khrushchev welcomed the proposal that U Thant had sent to both superpowers for reaching an agreement. Kennedy, while praising the effort, announced

that the first step toward a resolution would have to be the removal of offensive weapons from Cuba.

At the Oct. 25 session of the U.N. Security Council, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Adlai Stevenson and his Soviet counterpart, Ambassador Valerian Zorin, engaged in a heated exchange over the situation. Zorin criticized the United States, stating that the existence of missiles in Cuba had not been proven. Stevenson asked him whether he denied that missile launching sites had been built there, and Zorin replied that he did not have to answer. Stevenson produced blowups of aerial photographs showing the Soviet bases under construction and demanded an explanation.

Despite these confrontations, mediations continued, with the United Nations playing a significant role. Acting Secretary-General U Thant made further proposals to the Soviet Union and the United States, as the leaders of both superpowers began to work to avert war.

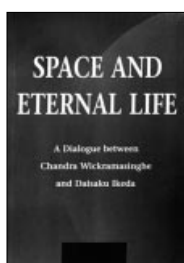
The evening of Oct. 26, Kennedy received a letter from Khrushchev saying that if the United States pledged not to attack Cuba, the Soviet Union would dismantle its bases there. In this, American leaders glimpsed a first ray of hope.

But the following morning, a second, extremely formal letter from Khrushchev arrived. He now demanded that, as a condition for the Soviet withdrawal of missiles in Cuba, the United States promise to simultaneously withdraw its missiles from Turkey.

*To be continued*

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

### Space and Eternal Life Space and Eternal Life Space and Eternal Life



**'Buddhism teaches that the Earth itself, including not only animate things but also trees and grasses, mountains and rivers, is a single living organism....' p. 89**

This dialogue between Chandra Wickramasinghe and Daisaku Ikeda probes some of the deepest aspects of our existence. Both the Buddhist viewpoint and an astronomer's view of the world are expounded, side by side, with interesting comparisons.

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Los números de páginas en paréntesis al final de cada pregunta indican al lector donde puede encontrar la respuesta que le corresponde a cada pregunta en el libro de texto versión revisada SGI-USA Material De Estudio Examen Elemental (1998-2001) o en el panfleto "El Asunto Relacionado con El Templo" para las preguntas modelos Número 60-74.

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## 'Carta a los Hermanos'

1. ¿Cuál fue la crisis que enfrentaron los hermanos qué hizo que Nichiren Daishonin escribiera esta carta? (págs. 8-9)
2. De acuerdo con este Gosho, ¿cuáles son las tres razones por las que los creyentes se encuentran con obstáculos? (págs. 8-9)
3. El Daishonin establece: "Los tres grupos de hombres de Aprendizaje, tuvieron que sufrir a través del período de sanzen-jintengo y los grandes bodhisattvas a través de gohyaku-jintengo, por la causa de descartar el Sutra del Loto." Esto demuestra cuán grave es esta causa. ¿Por qué es que se considera una grave causa descartar el Sutra del Loto? (págs. 9-11)
4. En su cita, "Menos difícil sería que una tortuga tuerta encontrara un fragmento de sándalo a flote en el agua o que alguien suspendiera el Monte Sumero desde el cielo con una fibra del tallo de un loto." En un sentido más amplio, ¿qué es lo que sería más difícil? (pág. 11)
5. El Daishonin en este Gosho, usa muchos ejemplos para señalar las consecuencias de seguir una enseñanza equivocada. Uno es un pasaje de Dengyo acerca del Gran Maestro Tz'u-en, que establece, "Aunque alaba el Sutra del Loto destruye su corazón." Explique cómo alguien puede destruir su corazón. (págs. 11-13)
6. En el pasaje "Si entabla amistad con alguien perverso, su vida se corromperá," el Daishonin enfatiza la importancia de no tolerar la maldad porque nos llevará a abandonar nuestra fe. De acuerdo con este Gosho, ¿cómo engañan las personas perversas a los creyentes? (págs. 13-14)
7. En nuestras vidas poseemos tanto la oscuridad fundamental como la iluminación fundamental. La oscuridad fundamental esta representada por el Demonio del Sexto Cielo, que es la fuente de la maldad en los malos amigos. Esta fuerza

## DEPARTAMENTO DE ESTUDIO

# Preguntas Modelo Para el Examen Elemental

El examen de nivel Elemental del Departamento de Estudio de la SGI-USA se llevará a cabo el 25 de octubre de 1998. Las preguntas del examen estarán basadas en las siguientes preguntas modelos, las cuales se les provee para el beneficio de los disertantes, coordinadores de estudio y los candidatos que van a participar en el examen.



también puede ser manifestada como la avaricia, la ira y la estupidez la cual distorciona nuestro entendimiento de lo que es el camino correcto de la fe. De acuerdo con este Gosho, ¿cuáles son las actitudes y acciones que nos ayudarían a ganar la batalla contra nuestra oscuridad fundamental? (págs. 21-23) (NOTA: Para la respuesta de la pregunta NO. 7, además de las págs. Indicadas NO. 21-23, vea suplemento de estudio en las páginas en Español de septiembre.)

8. El Daishonin usa la historia de Shariputra ofreciendo su ojo al Demonio del Sexto Cielo quien actuaba como un Brahmán para enfatizar la importancia de no abandonar nuestra fe. ¿Por qué Shariputra renunció a su práctica de bodhisattva? (págs. 21-23)
9. En el Gosho, el Daishonin alienta a los esposos y esposas desde diferentes perspectivas, a los esposos les dice: "Las mujeres poseen determinación débil; probablemente sus esposas ya se hayan rendido. Pero ustedes tienen que apretar los dientes y no dejar que su determinación se debilite." A las esposas les dice: "Ustedes dos, esposas, no deberían lamentarse, aun si sus esposos las hostigaran a causa de su fe en esta enseñanza. Si ambas se unen para alen-

tar la fe de ellos, seguirán el camino de la hija del Rey Dragón y serán un ejemplo de mujeres que alcancen la iluminación en el corrupto Último Día de la Ley." (MW-1,146) ¿Qué les está enseñando sobre la actitud que debe tener un individuo cuando se encuentran en medio de las dificultades? (págs. 28-30)

Conteste las preguntas 10 y 11 basada en esta cita del Maka Shikan: "Mientras más avanzamos y crecemos en nuestro entendimiento, los tres obstáculos y los cuatro demonios aparecerán para interferir.... Usted no debe dejarse influenciar ni asustarse de ellos. Si ustedes caen bajo su influencia, serán guiados hacia los caminos del infierno. Si se asustan se privarán de practicar el Budismo verdadero."

10. ¿De dónde se originan los tres obstáculos y los cuatro demonios? (págs. 33-36)
11. Explique por qué los obstáculos son la confirmación de nuestro progreso y el camino a la iluminación? (págs. 33-36)
12. Aunque nuestra felicidad y nuestra iluminación depende solamente de nuestros esfuerzos, no de las acciones de otros, el Daishonin establece: "Cuando un esposo es feliz, su esposa se siente col-

mada. Cuando un hombre es ladrón, su esposa también termina en serlo." Explique el significado de estas afirmaciones. (págs. 36-37)

13. En el pasaje "que uno debería ser amo de su mente, en lugar de dejar que su mente lo dominara." ¿Qué es lo que significa ser el amo de nuestra mente? (págs. 37-38)

## 'La Persona y la Ley'

14. Por medio de la historia de Tokusho Doji y su torta de barro, Nichiren Daishonin presenta dos puntos sobre las ofrendas. ¿Cuáles son? (págs. 43-46)
15. Por lo general, las ofrendas al Gohonzon, son hechas de dos formas. Explíquelas. (págs. 45-46)
16. Al elogiar el apoyo [recibido] de Tokimitsu a través de los años, El Daishonin escribe: "La persona que hace ofrendas al devoto del Sutra del Loto en el Último Día de la Ley, aunque sea por un solo día, obtendrá una fortuna incomparablemente mayor que la que acumularía ofrendando incontables tesoros al Buda durante cien mil eones." Explique las razones de esto comparando las enseñanzas expuestas por el "devoto" con las expuestas por "el Buda." (págs. 43-45)
17. Explique por qué, a Nichiren Daishonin, le llamamos "el Buda original." (pág. 44)
18. ¿Cuál es la diferencia entre la Budeidad como es revelada por Shakyamuni y la Budeidad revelada por el Daishonin? (pág. 44)

Conteste las siguientes preguntas en base al siguiente párrafo: "Aunque yo vivo en una choza abandonada, en lo profundo de este cuerpo mortal preservó la suprema Ley secreta heredada del Buda Shakyamuni en el Pico del Águila. Mi corazón es el lugar donde todos los budas entran en nirvana; mi lengua, donde ellos hacen girar la rueda de la doctrina; mi garganta, donde nacen en este mundo, y mi boca, donde logran la iluminación."

19. "Yo preservó la Suprema Ley secreta heredada del Buda Shakyamuni en el Pico del Águila." ¿A qué se refiere esta afirmación? (pág. 46)
20. ¿Qué quiere decir el Daishonin con la expresión "la suprema Ley secreta." (pág. 46)
21. "Mi corazón es el lugar donde todos los budas entran en nirvana; mi lengua, donde ellos hacen girar la rueda de la doctrina; mi garganta, donde nacen en este mundo, y mi boca, donde logran la iluminación." ¿Qué es lo que revela Nichiren Daishonin con esta afirmación? (pág. 47)

Lea este pasaje y conteste la siguiente pre-

ELEMENTAL, DE PÁG. 12

gunta: "Puesto que la Ley es suprema, la Persona es digna de respeto; como la Persona es digna de respeto, la Tierra es sagrada."

22. Explique este párrafo en términos de la vida de Nichiren Daishonin. (págs. 47-48)

**'Ichinen Sanzen' (cada instante de la vida posee tres mil aspectos posibles)**

23. La cifra 3,000 deriva de la multiplicación de los componentes principales de ichinen sanzen, ¿cuáles son estos componentes principales? (pág. 52)

24. Cuando T'ien-t'ai escribe: "La vida a cada momento está dotada con los diez mundos," él indica que en un instante de la vida existe el potencial para poder manifestar diez condiciones. ¿Cuáles son éstas? (pág. 54)

25. Explique el concepto de "la posesión mutua de los diez mundos." (págs. 54-55)

26. ¿Cuáles son los diez factores? (pág. 55)

27. Explique la diferencia entre el *ichinen sanzen* de Nichiren Daishonin y el *ichinen sanzen* de Shakyamuni. (pág. 56)

28. Cuál es el factor común que motiva a las personas manifestar las seis condiciones más bajas en contraste con el factor que motiva a las personas de los cuatro nobles caminos. (pág. 59)

29. ¿Qué importante característica difiere el mundo de Bodhisattva del mundo de los dos vehículos? (pág. 60)

30. El factor de "la consistencia desde el principio hasta el fin" explica la inseparabilidad entre el principio y el fin. ¿Qué es el "principio" y qué es el "fin"? (pág. 65)

31. "Los seres vivientes no son más que la unión temporal de los cinco componentes." A la luz de la realidad expuesta en este párrafo explique como debemos considerar nuestra relación con otros "seres vivientes." (pág. 66)

32. El reino del medio ambiente también posee los diez mundos. ¿Cuál es la diferencia entre el medio ambiente y "seres vivientes"? (pág. 67)

**Disertación Sobre los Capítulos 'Medios Hábiles' y 'Duración de la Vida' del Sutra del Loto**

33. ¿Cuáles son las diferentes expresiones de este "Sutra del Loto múltiple"? Y, ¿qué poseen ellas en común? (pág. 71)

34. ¿A qué personas se refiere la expresión "Devotos del Sutra del Loto"? (pág. 72)

35. ¿Cómo fue que el Daishonin leyó el Sutra del Loto con su vida? (pág. 73)

36. ¿Cuál es el beneficio que el recitar el



Foto por CAROL BARNSTEAD

sutra nos brinda? (pág. 75)

37. ¿Qué es lo que estamos alabando cuando hacemos el gongyo? (págs. 77-78)

38. ¿Cuáles son las cuatro condiciones que deben existir para que un Buda exponga la Ley? (pág. 82)

39. ¿Cuál es el elemento crucial para crear "ese momento"? (pág. 83)

40. ¿Qué significa sabiduría? Y, ¿cómo podemos llegar a tenerla? (págs. 87-89)

41. ¿Cuál práctica representa la quintaesencia del Budismo del Daishonin? (págs. 91-92)

42. ¿Cuál es la empresa más difícil que se puede emprender? (pág. 95)

43. ¿Cuál fue la única intención del Daishonin? (pág. 101)

44. ¿Dónde aparece el mundo de Budeidad? (pág. 107)

45. ¿Qué es lo que se debe entender a fin de poder captar la amplitud y profundidad de la vida en su totalidad? (pág. 110)

46. ¿Qué es "el ojo del Buda"? (pág. 111)

47. Desde el punto de vista del Budismo del Daishonin, ¿qué significa la verdadera entidad de todos los fenómenos? (pág. 112)

**'Sobre la Única Frase Esencial' I & II**

48. De acuerdo con Nichiren Daishonin, ¿cuál es el significado de la pregunta hecha por Myoho-ama "¿Puede uno lograr la Budeidad con sólo invocar Nam-myoho-renge-kyo?" ¿Por qué esta pregunta es importante para nosotros? (págs. 113-14)

49. Explique qué significa en nuestra práctica el concepto de los seis actos difíciles y los nueve actos fáciles. (págs. 114-15)

50. Nichiren Daishonin afirma en el Goshō que "Esta es una indicación clara de que, si abraza el Sutra del Loto, sin falta

logrará manifestar la Budeidad sin abandonar su identidad actual." Explique lo que significa manifestar la Budeidad sin abandonar su identidad actual en relación a las tres propiedades del Buda. (págs. 115-16)

51. ¿Cuál es la base para manifestar la Budeidad sin abandonar su identidad actual? (pág. 116)

52. Nichiren Daishonin explica que "Nam-myoho-renge-kyo es sólo una frase, pero contiene la esencia del sutra entero." Explique el significado de esta cita. (págs. 116-17)

53. ¿Por qué todo se torna una fuente de valor cuando nos basamos en el daimoku? (págs. 117-18)

54. ¿En nuestra práctica, cuál es el significado de "invocar daimoku incesantemente"? (págs. 119-20)

55. ¿Con qué espíritu debemos leer el Goshō? Y, ¿cuándo nos damos cuenta que lo estamos leyendo profundamente? (pág. 120)

56. El Daishonin afirma, "Una vela puede iluminar un lugar que ha estado sumido en la oscuridad absoluta por billones de años." Esta frase explica dos principios importantes de la fe. ¿Cuáles son ellos? Y también explíquelos. (págs. 122-23)

57. En su disertación, el Presidente Ikeda explica que "Es precisamente cuando confrontamos circunstancias adversas que necesitamos orar." Él explica también cómo debe ser la naturaleza de nuestra fe y oración. Explique cuáles actitudes nos impiden realizar nuestros sueños y cuáles nos llevan a realizarlos. (págs. 123-24)

58. Explique la relación entre la acción y oración. (págs. 124-25)

59. Al final de esta carta, Nichiren daishonin dice: "No dude de esto en absoluto." ¿Qué es lo que no debemos dudar y qué consejo nos da el Daishonin para apoyar su afirmación de que no debemos dudar? (págs. 122, 123-25)

**Preguntas y Respuestas Sobre el Asunto Relacionado con el Templo (Panfleto)**

60. Nichiren Daishonin nos advierte que el hecho de no entender los principios fundamentales de la fe, harán de nuestra práctica una "interminable y dolorosa austeridad," y que sin una comprensión correcta, sería inútil abrazar el Sutra del Loto. A la luz del asunto del sacerdocio, qué es lo que constituye una fe correcta? (págs. 9-10)

61. "Usted mismo es un Buda verdadero, dotado de las tres propiedades iluminadas. Debe invocar Nam-myoho-renge-kyo con esta convicción." (MW-1, 30) ¿Cómo se diferencia esto de lo que enseña el templo? (pág. 13)

62. "Jamás busque este Gohonzon fuera de usted misma. El Gohonzon existe sólo en la carne mortal de nosotros, las personas comunes que abrazamos el Sutra del Loto e invocamos Nam-myoho-renge-kyo." (MW-1, 213.) ¿Qué dice la Nichiren Shoshu sobre este concepto? (pág. 14)

63. Cómo define, la secta Nichiren Shoshu, la relación entre maestro y discípulo? (pág. 15)

64. La diferencia esencial entre la SGI y la Nichiren Shoshu yace en la actitud y el comportamiento. Describa específicamente esa diferencia (págs. 15-16)

65. ¿Qué fue lo que impulsó a los Sres Maki-guchi y Toda a cuestionar y desafiar las instrucciones del sumo sacerdote? (pág. 18)

66. ¿Cuáles son dos de las tres razones por las que el templo afirma que el Gohonzon entregado por la SGI es falso. Y por qué esas razones no son válidas? (págs. 21-22)

67. Explique por qué el Gohonzon entregado por la SGI no es falso. (págs. 21-22)

68. Explique por qué los miembros están entregando los Gohonzon transcritos por Nikken e intercambiándolos por el [que fue] transcrito por Nichikan, y si eso significa que haya diferencia entre estos dos Gohonzon. (págs. 23-24)

69. ¿Por qué nosotros no debemos visitar un templo de la Nichiren Shoshu? (págs. 25-26)

70. ¿Cómo debemos ver las continuas persecuciones instigadas por la Nichiren Shoshu a la SGI y al Presidente Ikeda? (págs. 27-28)

71. ¿Por qué la SGI y la Nichiren Shoshu no se hablan? (págs. 29-30)

72. ¿Es esencial la unidad del sacerdocio y los laicos? Si lo es, ¿por qué? Si no lo es, ¿por qué no? (pág. 30)

73. ¿Qué efectos tendrán los errores de los sacerdotes sobre quienes les siguen, y qué podemos hacer, cada uno de nosotros, por esa gente? (págs. 31-32)

74. ¿Cómo afectará el asunto del templo a la SGI en el futuro? (pág. 33)

# The Simple Answer Is the Hardest

## PERSPECTIVE



**She was, she discovered, her own obstacle in achieving her dream to write. The answer? Just do it.**

By **ALLANA JOY BOURNE**  
SEATTLE

I've wanted to be a writer since I was 7 years old, when I wrote my first short story. I attempted my first novel at 12, but don't get too excited, it was only 12 pages long. I tried two more times, and by age 23, was up to about 23 pages. One page for each year I managed to stay alive. It's hard to say which was more difficult.

I found a study recently about creative writers, which gives them certain core personality attributes, among them: independence, nonconformity, risk-taking, introversion, intensity and a strong tendency to suffer from depression. Another study took

that a step further, saying that writers tend to be schizoid, hysterical and psychopathic — in other words, "markedly deviant" from the general population. Anyone who knows me well knows this to be accurate enough.

I was seriously suicidal by 26 (after reading biographies of Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath, who wouldn't be?). I can never forget that my fortune lies in having found the greatest writer and mentor in the world. So, I was deeply moved when I read an essay by SGI President Ikeda Feb. 20 *World Tribune* on "The Art of Writing": "[P]eople often ask me how I have mastered the art of writing.... I have never engaged in any special study...to develop my writing skills...nor do I feel my writing is particularly good.... I am always embarrassed to read what I have written.... I can't begin to measure my chagrin."

His great humility in the face of how powerful, how very important — in fact, nothing short of life saving — his writing has been to me, is overwhelming. On the other hand, I said to myself, if he also sincerely feels that way, maybe I should keep trying.

I went recently to the publications conference at the Florida

Nature and Culture Center. I went because I was chanting about my writing, and how I could, once and for all, believe in myself as a writer. One thing I had to face up to was my fear.

On the way to the FNCC, I had a powerful realization: The only thing stopping me from being respected as a writer and fully developing my potential as a writer is — you've guessed it — ME! While in Florida, I chanted to break through what's keeping me from fulfilling my greatest desire. Even my mother, who's never supported me in this (in my family, you were only honored if you wanted to be an actor when you grew up) snuck into my office while I was gone, read some of my writing, and declared when I returned (as only a mother can): "You're a great writer! This is what you SHOULD BE DOING!"

*Sheesh.* If only I'd known.

General Director Zaitzu's Goshu lecture at the FNCC on "On Attaining Buddhahood" made the point that, as people who write for our organizational publications, we serve as a bridge between our organization and our society, a very important bridge. It requires a high life-condition to

ensure that our bridge is solid and safe for transporting our message to the world. As President Ikeda said in his essay on writing: "Writing is not some intellectual pastime. It is a spiritual struggle amid harsh reality." His struggle to find the most appropriate word with which to encourage and inspire and provide nourishment for members, for friends of the SGI, and for all the as-yet-unborn-future SGI members and friends of the SGI is awe inspiring. I've found a renewed sense of appreciation for that struggle.

In another essay on writing, President Ikeda says: "While I am writing...I sometimes walk around in my room to refresh myself. At times, I see Gakkai members out my window who are visiting the headquarters building or the community center. Each time I see them, I am driven by the thought that I must not stop writing even for a day. Then, I gather up my thoughts and start writing again."

OK, so if I'm going to be a great writer, not for myself alone, but for the sake of my country, I need to keep writing. Sounds simple, doesn't it? But I really have to tell myself that every day.

At least, now, I am. W

# Still Magical After All These Years

## PERSPECTIVE



**Sometimes we make mistakes.... And then we find a way to turn them into fireworks.**

By **JENNIFER GORDON GRAY**  
SALT LAKE CITY

Sometimes a person makes mistakes in life, serious mistakes, regretful mistakes, and wonders, if one is a Buddhist, how to change poison into medicine.

Sometimes a person just needs to burn with passion until there is nothing left but "pure white ash." I am one of those persons. I need to follow my heart.

Sometimes I chase my fortune and end up in a mess. Such was the case this spring-turns-into-summer, when I foolishly deposited myself in Salt Lake City.

I was hoping to find love. Instead, I hated myself. The only

job available to me was temporary. The only living quarters I could find were also temporary and with strangers. The love melted with the snow on the Wasatch peaks.

But I did find a voice — the voice of the bodhisattva. I found myself telling everyone about Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, even at those times when I doubted myself the most. On the inside, I felt insecure and incredibly stupid. I kept trying, though; I kept sending out resumes and telling people about the practice.

In this predominately Mormon town, I found myself working alongside three Christians. And although they believe just as strongly in their creed as I do in my 24-year practice, we supported one another, as we all shared rough times and times of self-doubt. We became friends and that kept me going, along with long, slow hikes in the mountains. Still, I was lonely.

Last Friday I found myself going the half-hour distance to the downtown SGI community center to chant with other members. "Somewhere," I thought, "there must be somebody in this

town like me." For in all this time, even considering my co-workers, I had not found anyone who truly seemed like, looked like, felt like me. I chanted on my drive to tightly connect with someone. I clung to that hope like my tires clung to the torn-up asphalt.

But when I arrived at the community center, the door was locked, the lights were off, and no one was home. I sat in my car in disbelief, berating myself once again. I had desperately needed the company of members, but it appeared the plans were off.

And then — along came Mary. She cruised into the parking lot, looking at the empty spaces and me sitting there, the Lonely Ranger. "Join me," I asked her.

She sat with me in my car and eventually reached out to touch the spurs that hang from my rear-view mirror. "Do you ride horses?" she asked.

"Yes."

"What kind of riding?"

I hemmed and hawed — it has been my experience that more horse people in Utah are into ropin' and wranglin' cows than dressage. But I uttered the D word.

Mary gaped at me, "I ride dressage, too!"

Not only did I find possibly the only other American Buddhist/dressage rider, but the woman hikes, too! We drove over to her house to chant and talked about Buddhism and horses until after 11 p.m. Heaven.

Which brings us to Saturday night — the Fourth of July. Joined by her husband and another member, we climbed the nearly 9,000-foot Grandeur Peak to watch fireworks explode over Salt Lake City. Homemade burritos and red wine, too. Good company. New friends.

And yes, people like me!

Who says there's no magic in this universe?

I won't be staying in Utah. But now I have a wonderful memory to take away with me.

Thanks, Mary. You were there when I needed you.

Sometimes we make mistakes. They're part of life (at least my life). But sometimes we can turn poison into fireworks, or loneliness into a cup of wine on top of a mountain. I'm so glad I chant and can still feel the magic after all these years. W

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

# WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

## Festival Idea

I think the idea of a culture festival is great (July 24 *World Tribune*)! I have two suggestions: First, how about giving it a theme, "Break Forth With Joy!"? That happens to be the title of a movement from Handel's *Messiah*. Since we are working with like-minded people of other faiths to create world peace, I think nothing could be more appropriate. Could that musical movement be sung at the festival by a chorus of members? "Break" could mean breaking the evil of the Nikken sect, breaking through our own personal problems, breaking through another person's suffering, breaking through to create positive connections with others who are different from us, etc.....

My second suggestion is, how about a live, moderated Culture Festival Web Site, like the Democrats and Republicans had at their most recent conventions? That model could be studied closely to provide a guideline. It would really help house-bound members, members with small incomes, members with schedule conflicts and interested friends of the SGI to participate also.

— GERALD T. AITKEN,  
Goshen, N.Y.

## Full Expression

I greatly appreciated Cathy Robinson's comment "Too Repressed" in the July 10 *World Tribune* ("Mailbox"). Ms. Robinson suggested that the SGI organization needs to appreciate the healthy view of people expressing their feelings and emotions. I was particularly provoked by this comment because on the opposite page was a "Perspective" by Chrys Cohen, who wrote of children as emissaries of the future who would change their parents' lives by bestowing on them an undaunted love.

Ms. Cohen writes that "no matter how much we [children] are shushed, sent to the back of the room, made to feel unwelcome or likened to devilish functions, we will continue undaunted, because we understand that anger comes from the pain of their past." This comment speaks directly to the amazing and pristine resilience that children

maintain as they live through the early years of their lives. I have often been amazed at how this innocence is maintained amidst the most tragic circumstances of physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

However, the unfortunate part of this common story is that the child who prevails against these circumstances and remains resilient throughout his or her life is rare. Neglect and anger from one's parents usually manifest in an abused child's later relationships, because patterns set in the child's early years were so innocently received that they become hard to recognize from a critical perspective in the future....

Perhaps parents also need to understand the sadness, anger and fear that they created in the lives of their children who undyingly return feelings of love and joy to them. I believe that healing the wounds of our parents and ourselves involves pioneering a new kind of "enlightened relationship" where all those involved in the relationship take full responsibility for their feelings and express them openly and freely so that each of us becomes aware of how our actions in the past hurt the people we loved.

While the expression of undying love is one important feeling, it is only one feeling that deserves the right to expression. Without understanding and experiencing the other feeling that we have toward our parents, we suppress them, and often despite our awareness of these feelings, they are then more likely to emerge in our relationships with our own children in the future.

— BREENA HOLLAND, Chicago

## Thanks for the 'Chance'

Thank you very much for your article "The Chance To Enjoy Life," which appeared on the front page of the July 17 issue.

I've been incarcerated since Oct. 29, 1993, with a 15-life sentence. I was introduced to this practice by my mother, a practitioner of 11 years. It was in early 1994 when facing 50 years in prison that I embraced the Gohonzon and

chanted sincerely for the first time.

Since then, the benefits have been many and the obstacles few. Chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo has helped me over many a rocky road.

My mom is always giving me guidance to write you with my story, but I always thought being where I'm at is not a suitable place to tell it from. The article about Murray Singer has shown me, though, that the SGI-USA has respect for all its members and has given me new hope for the future. I cannot begin to tell you how vast the amount of benefits have been so far, but I can say receiving the *World Tribune* weekly is one of them. Hopefully, one day I will build up the confidence to tell my story. For now I will content myself in knowing I finally made a first step in that direction....

— SEAN ANDRE, Auburn, N.Y.

## Robeson's Legacy

I second Mark Anton's response (July 10 "Mailbox") to Stan Klemanowicz's perspective (June 19 "Mailbox") on Paul Robeson and offer these additional comments. The superlative and collective talent of Mr. Robeson has yet to be duplicated. He excelled as a dramatist, vocalist, actor, scholar and athlete despite the social and legal constraints placed upon him as an African American, being treated as a second-class citizen. Robeson's involvement in communism must be examined from multiple angles: first, as a part of his unquestionable passionate pursuit of the ideal and second, as a rational response to the irritating issues of his generation.

Eric J. Sundquist's 1995 literary criticism *Cultural Contexts for Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man* explains that "[f]rom the 1920s through the 1940s, many black political leaders placed their faith in communism because it often seemed the only predominantly white organization willing to fight for racial equality." The shortcomings of the Communist Party were revealed soon enough for many leaders to sever any allegiance; however, many also bore the brunt of economic and social

sanctions, as did Robeson, for this short test of an alternative system to achieve a better daily life.

The number of current commentaries suggests that there is a resurgent interest in Paul Robeson. In addition to the recent *World Tribune* article, the triumphs and tragedies of Robeson's life are recounted in "The Stormy Life of Paul Robeson," published in the quarterly magazine *American Legacy* (Summer 1998, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 32f.). The following extract from President Ikeda's poetic guidance "The Sun of Jiyu Over a New Land," also explains the spirit of Robeson's philosophical pursuits.

*First you must break the hard shell of the lesser self.  
This you must absolutely do.  
Then direct your lucid gaze toward your friends, fellow members.*

In my opinion, Robeson's legacy demands that we ask this question: To what have I made a serious commitment in which I will achieve personal excellence and make an incremental contribution toward the elimination of ignorance, injustice and inequality. There is now a stronger tool, human revolution, that was unavailable to Mr. Robeson. We who pursue human revolution should have a firmer grasp of this question and be on the forefront, like Robeson, in trying to pass the baton of his unfinished quest for the happiness of the common people.

— JOYCE LAW, Augusta, Ga.

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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 individual's 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-enge-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 reformer, 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-enge-kyo, which is the essence of the Lotus Sutra. The Gohonzon is the mandala expressing this essence.

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SGI-Brazil member Jailson Perreira Leite (right) with Joyce Ronkowinski, his English-speaking chaperone, at the New York Culture Center in June.

**Brazilian SGI member Jailson Perreira Leite, who lost his right hand in an industrial accident, visits with members in New York. At his darkest hour, he says, the Gohonzon and many SGI-Brazil members supported him.**

By BILL BLACKARD AND RIC ORNELLAS  
NEW YORK CORRESPONDENTS

**H**is screams filled the air of the Brazilian factory. It was a pain no human should know. In one blinding moment his 22-year old life was redefined forever as his mangled right hand was pulled from the whirling machine.

Two years after the 1996 accident, Jailson Perreira Leite visited the New York Culture Center with his chaperone and English interpreter, Joyce Ronkowinski. A New Jersey native, Mrs. Ronkowinski has lived in Brazil for two decades, where she raised two sons. She teaches English to corporate executives and interested Brazilians.

"Brazil is a Catholic country," says Mrs. Ronkowinski, "so when Jailson told me he was a Buddhist, I was a bit shocked but intrigued at the same time." It was Jailson's insistence after a month of tests and treatment at New Jersey's Kessler Institute for an artificial hand replacement that Mrs. Ronkowinski agreed to venture across the Hudson River from their Livingston, N.J., hotel to locate the culture center.

Jailson is very devoted," she says. "I see him chant every day and how seriously he takes his religion."

To meet Mr. Leite is a blurring moment of ritual handshake becoming wrenching reality. Mr. Leite favors his left side to distract focus from his right arm. When he quickly thrusts his left hand in greeting, a stranger invariably looks to his right arm with its molded hand, even as his left takes a firm grip.

It has been said that eyes are windows to the soul. Although Mr. Leite has known searing suffering, it is not apparent in the amber eyes that shine luminously from his clear, open face. Non-English-speaking, Mr. Leite's eyes survey a speaker's face closely while he smiles shyly. He seems to try to comprehend what language cannot convey. Only when stumped does he turn to Mrs. Ronkowinski.

Mr. Leite was a teenager growing up in Jo Carei, São Paulo, Brazil, when his parents divorced. His father cut off all financial support to the family — his mother, two sisters and Jailson — and they were unable to find employment. Mrs. Leite had been invited to SGI-Brazil meetings for five years by a friend but she had adamantly refused to attend. Finally, with their desperate financial situation, in 1992 Mrs. Leite and Jailson attended their first meeting.

They began to practice Buddhism immediately. His sincere prayers landed him a job in 14 days. His mother found work within 20 days; one sister in 30 days; and his second sister in 35 days. Their financial fortune increased rapidly and they moved twice into larger houses until they finally purchased their own home for the entire family.

They immersed themselves in Buddhist activities and enjoyed their practice. Four years later Mr. Leite endured the horrific accident.

His company immediately flew Mr. Leite to São Paulo's Albert Einstein Hospital for special surgery to attach his right hand. The operation was unsuccessful. He was fitted with a prosthetic hand. But his employer, with one of the highest safety records in Brazil, wanted to compensate Mr. Leite, whom they regard as a valuable employee. After researching extensively throughout South and North America, the company paid for him, along with an English-speaking chaperone, to travel to the United States for the most advanced medical treatment. When Mr. Leite returns to Brazil the company will retain him as an office worker instead of on the factory floor. Mr. Leite also plans to begin his college education.

Jailson is the young men's district leader, caring for eight young men in his district of 23 families.

Mrs. Ronkowinski says: "Jailson wants SGI-USA members to know that when this accident first occurred he was devastated. But at his darkest hour, the Gohonzon and many SGI-Brazil members supported him. He is very grateful for their efforts. Jailson now feels that overcoming this daunting obstacle, losing his right hand, will help him to lead many young people to take faith in the Gohonzon."

When Mrs. Ronkowinski explained to Mr. Leite that his experience would be read by thousands of SGI-USA members, his translated response was, "How marvelous!"

COMING NEXT WEEK

**SGI president's essay to the future division**