



## VIEWPOINT

The movie 'Lawrence of Arabia' reminds Fred Mayer that with sufficient resolve he can accomplish anything.

page 10



## YOUTH

Experiences from youth conferences held in Florida this summer. Plus, a new take on human revolution.

pullout section

# WHAT IS TRUE FREEDOM?

We all may have different ideas about how to define the word 'freedom,' but SGI President Ikeda says in this dialogue that 'real freedom ultimately hinges on what you decide to dedicate yourself to with all your heart.' It has nothing to do with having a good time, spending a lot of money or going on vacation, he adds.

*This is the first installment in a new series of "Discussions on Youth." SGI President Ikeda talks with Soka Gakkai high school division leaders Hidenobu Kimura (young men's) and Yoshiko Ueda (young women's).*

**KIMURA:** President Ikeda, thank you for making time to hold this second series of "Discussions on Youth." We appreciate how busy you are, and we're deeply grateful. I know that all of our members are eagerly looking forward to the start of this new series.

**UEDA:** Yes, thank you so much, President Ikeda. I am personally determined to use this opportunity to grow and to learn as much as I can.

**IKEDA:** On the contrary, please allow me to thank you. Let's embark together on a journey of heart-to-heart exchange. I am always delighted to do anything I can to bring joy to you, the young men and women who are the future leaders of our movement.

PLEASE SEE YOUTH, 6



Heavenly King Shakra and Great Heavenly King Brahma

## Our Relationship to the Whole Universe

By TERRY ELLIS  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

As large as the Treasure Tower appeared in the Lotus Sutra, Mount Sumeru rose even higher. Above the Four Heavenly Kings, watching from the mountain summit, were the gods of the Trayastrimsha Heaven led by Shakra Devanara Indra (Jpn Taishaku).

On the Gohonzon, Heavenly King Shakra appears in the second tier of characters, directly below Shakyamuni Buddha.

The gods were filled with joy at the prospect of Shakyamuni revealing the Law. So, when the Treasure Tower appeared, they made fragrant red Mandarava flowers rain down as an offering (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 171).

In his lectures on the Lotus Sutra, Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, explained that the Mandarava flowers falling from heaven, which are frequently referred to in the Lotus Sutra, are the benefits we receive through our practice of the Law.

As SGI President Ikeda points out: "These flowers of good fortune and benefit fall equally upon

PLEASE SEE GOHONZON, 2

## STUDY

With a strong spiritual bond, we inherit the law. But Nikken has a different story.

page 2

## NEWS

Soka University of America in Orange County, Calif., holds a road-naming contest.

page 3

## KOREAN

'Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra' installment and sample questions to aid in studying for the Oct. 25 Elementary Exam.

pages 8-9

# Squandered Wealth

By DAVID TEMPEST  
SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

**They squander their wealth without a qualm on meaningless trifles but begrudge even the smallest contribution to the Buddha, the Law and the Priest. ("Letter to Niike," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 255)**

The above passage is pertinent to today's society, especially in the United States. We live in an affluent society with a huge amount of wealth being squandered on "mean-




In My Life

NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS IN ACTION

ingless trifles" and only a small portion being used for society's betterment. Whenever I turn on my radio or television or open a magazine, I am bombarded by pitchmen extolling the virtues of their newest tennis shoe/toothbrush/detergent/sports drink, etc., etc. Clearly, most of modern society translates the word *democracy* to mean the freedom to be ruled by our desires.

I work as an investment advisor, and much of my time is spent discussing money and finance. Money has no inherent value. It is only the application of money that can create either value or anti-value. When working with investors, I am saddened that so few of them want to accumulate wealth toward contributing to society's betterment.

However, I am not discouraged. I know of many fellow members who carefully save and budget so that they can contribute to the SGI. The SGI is in turn building community centers, culture centers and other wonderful facilities around the world that ultimately contribute to improving our society. I also look to SGI President Ikeda as a great example of someone who uses his own money to bring joy to people in many ways.

I am determined to defy my television's encouragement to squander my (currently small) wealth on meaningless trifles. I hope that all of us can develop the kind of fortune where we can freely enjoy life without financial worries. And we can use that wealth to create value and bring joy to our fellow human beings. 

## ON THE GOHONZON

STUDYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S INSCRIPTIONS ON THE OBJECT OF DEVOTION

GOHONZON, FROM PAGE 1

the Buddha and all people. There is no discrimination...the Buddha and the people dwell in the same *saha* world" (*Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*, vol. 3, p. 149). From this perspective, it's important to realize that the Gohonzon as we see it does not represent a hierarchy from top to bottom but a series of relationships between functions of the Law existing both inside and outside our lives.

For example, the Four Heavenly Kings appear in large bold characters framing the Gohonzon, while Shakra,

their leader, is much less conspicuously placed. Shakra held a prominent place in Indian mythology, originally as the god of thunder.

"In ancient India, thunder was regarded as the joyful music of heaven announcing a merciful rainfall," President Ikeda explains (*Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*, vol. 3, p. 147). Thus Shakra was seen as a protector of the world.

But in Indian philosophy, he didn't have the last word.

Above him, in still another heaven, lived Great Heavenly King Brahma, who was said to rule the *saha* world, so called because human beings who lived there needed endurance. Brahma was regarded as the personification of the fundamental universal principle.

In the Lotus Sutra, many different Brahma kings appear who had attained su-

premacy in their own particular universes. On the Gohonzon, Great Heavenly King Brahma is also located in the second tier of characters, directly below Taho Buddha.

The point is that, in the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni shows a relationship of respect between Buddhism and the gods embraced by the people of India. Rather than ignore what people believed, he led them to understand the world from a new perspective in this way.

Nichiren Daishonin demonstrated the same embracing mind when he inscribed the heavenly kings Shakra and Brahma on the Gohonzon.

Since the Gohonzon embodies the enlightened life of the Buddha, it includes our relationship with all of nature and all of the universe. Through our practice, we aim to make this relationship one of joy and appreciation.

Ten in a series

# A Strong Spiritual Bond

## STANDS TO REASON

LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM THE WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN

By JEFF FARR  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**All disciples and believers of Nichiren should chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo with one mind (*itai doshin*), transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim. This spiritual bond is the basis for the universal transmission of the ultimate law of life and death. ("Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 23)**

This letter to Sairen-bo never ceases to amaze me — Nichiren Daishonin discusses the crucial topic of the heritage of the Law in the wisest way here. He knows how important it is to fully clarify his view for the future, so he shows the issue in all its dimensions. His answer is meant to satisfy, to leave no room for doubt.

And we're lucky to have it, now that the temple issue is happening.

After pointing out that the main way to inherit the Law is through chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and having faith, the Daishonin emphasizes the "spiritual bond" among those who chant. Keeping this bond strong is also inheriting the Law, he explains. When we unite, we inherit the Law.

Nichiren Shoshu, though, has a new interpretation of this passage: The Daishonin actually meant, according to the priests, that the heritage "would never flow without believing in and obeying the High Priest.... The lifeblood of faith flows when one respects the High Priest as one's Buddhist master..." (*100 Questions and Answers*).

What happened to "transcending all differences" and uniting? What happened to the spiritual bond? The priesthood's definition sure doesn't sound like the bond that the Daishonin is talking about — it doesn't match his words at all.

The whole idea that the high priest is the lifeblood of the Law is a weak attempt on the priests' part to lend Nikken and themselves legitimacy where, based on what the Daishonin set down in writing, they have none.

The spiritual bond espoused by the Daishonin is a celebration of humanity, of people uniting, of the transcending of

differences among us. Not of one man with special powers, not of any authority figure.

Apparently, it's a celebration to which the Nichiren Shoshu priests are not invited, or to which they've uninvited themselves. They only want to come if they're the guests of honor.

After all, the priesthood looks down on SGI members — as if we were insects to be caught and kept in a bottle. This mind-set lets them maintain their feeling of superiority; thinking this way, they try to keep themselves from having to face their nagging self-doubt.

Insects, though, are resilient. T.S. Eliot once feared a spider surviving a shipwreck and himself drowning. "If the ship goes down," he wrote, "[the spider] is prepared and will somehow persist...."

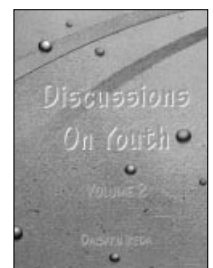
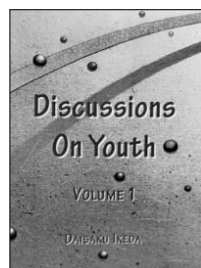
There must be within the priesthood today something of the same fear: That the priests are sinking, while the SGI members whom they discounted are sailing away safely. That the 1,000 Nichiren Shoshu priests have no heritage of the Law — have nothing, in fact — to pass on to the future, while the millions of SGI members have captured the lifeblood of faith through their strong spiritual bond and will continue to take responsibility for the future of the Law.

Seventeen in a series

## Two More Reasons To Study

A compilation of dialogues among SGI President Ikeda and high school division representatives on a variety of subjects are available in *Discussions On Youth*, vols. 1 and 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, love, dealing with hardships, friendship, finding happiness at school and in the workplace, and how to bring out the best in oneself.

Available at SGI-USA Bookstores or call (800) 626-1313; mail order #0110 (vol. 1) and #0111 (vol. 2). Price: Just \$5.00 each.

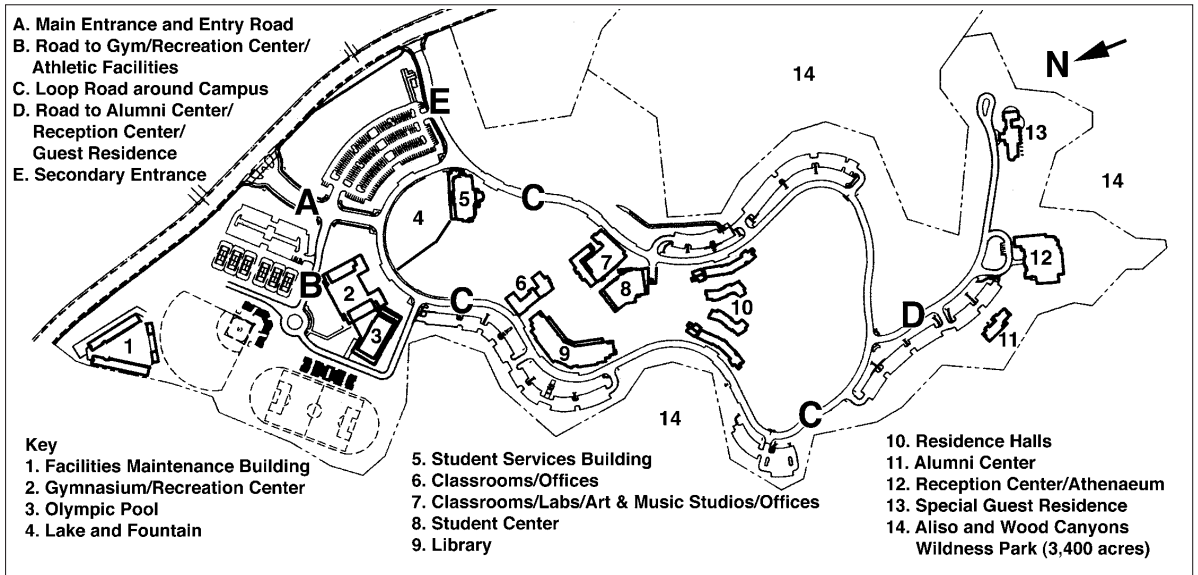


# Name the Streets at Soka University

Soka University of America is holding a contest to solicit names for the new streets on its Aliso Viejo, Calif., campus, which will open in 2001.

Send your suggestions, along with your name, address, school (if applicable), school address, grade, age, e-mail address, and a brief explanation of why you chose your suggestion. All entries must be written in English and be postmarked by Sept. 30. Entries may be faxed to (949) 472-3051, or mailed to:

SUA Naming Contest,  
85 Argonaut, Suite 200,  
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656



The Aliso Viejo campus of Soka University of America. Streets are designated A, B, C, D and E.

## SGI President Meets With Former U.N. Leader

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER  
Tokyo, July 29



President Ikeda meets with former U.N. leader Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

SGI President Ikeda and former U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, meeting at the Seikyo Shimbun Building today, discussed the outlook for the 21st century in light of two conflicting currents: the trend toward globalization and the rise of a new isolationism. Dr. Boutros-Ghali emphasized the importance of recognizing the connection between oneself and global issues, while the SGI leader stressed the crucial role that education can play in raising people's awareness.

Dr. Boutros-Ghali, who completed his term as the sixth U.N. secretary-general in 1996, currently serves as the first secretary-general of La Francophonie, an organization made up of 52 French-speaking countries.

During their talk, President Ikeda expressed wholehearted agreement with comments made by Dr. Boutros-Ghali when he was interviewed on Japanese television last year. At that time he asserted that perseverance, patience and time are the three necessary ingredients for resolving international conflicts.

The SGI leader recalled that, when they first met five years ago, Dr. Boutros-Ghali said that in his youth he was fond of reading the histories of Napoleon and Alexander the Great. Alexander once said that to do good for others and yet be vilified is common to kings, Mr. Ikeda said.

Napoleon once proclaimed that historical facts speak out, burning as bright as the sun. Mr. Ikeda said he believed that Dr. Boutros-Ghali's achievements would shine brilliantly in the future.

President Ikeda then paid tribute to Dr. Boutros-Ghali's work during his tenure as secretary-general to realize peace amid the international conflicts that arose in the aftermath of the Cold War. He cited the former U.N. leader's advocacy of "preventative diplomacy"; his efforts to challenge bureaucracy and to streamline the organization by reducing the number of high official posts; and his proposal to strengthen the international body's role and activities in the areas of development, human rights and the environment. The SGI leader further hailed his guest for working steadily to forge a path for humankind, undeterred by praise

or criticism.

Thanking the SGI leader, Dr. Boutros-Ghali turned to the role democracy will play in the future. He commented that while there are many books and publications on the topic of democracy, they tend to focus only on democracy on a national level, and not among nations. The failure of this approach, he observed, is evident from the fact that we have so far not been able to avoid wars despite the existence of many democratic countries in the world. Asserting that a framework for international democracy must be constructed during the first two or three decades of the next century, the former secretary-general said that such a framework must stem from the citizens of the world, otherwise it will become hierarchical and undemocratic. President Ikeda concurred with his guest, affirming that to es-

tablish true democracy on an international level, we must change the continuing trend of nations to forcefully and undemocratically impose their policies upon others.

The SGI leader emphasized that in all areas, whether politics, economics or peace, there is nothing more valuable than education and that the utmost energy ought to be poured into that endeavor. He noted that Dr. Boutros-Ghali has urged young people to take an interest in world affairs and to strive to accomplish a great goal while deepening friendship with one another as members of the same global family.

Dr. Boutros-Ghali asserted that, as problems facing the world become increasingly global in nature, the ability of a single nation to tackle such is-

sues as the environment, the economy or public health, is waning. He predicted that in the 21st century domestic issues will prove intractable unless they are taken up on the international level, and for that reason it is vital that people become concerned with not only their respective countries but with the global situation as a whole. Despite this fact, Dr. Boutros-Ghali said, we see a growing trend among people to withdraw into familiar territory out of fear, further separating themselves from people of other nations.

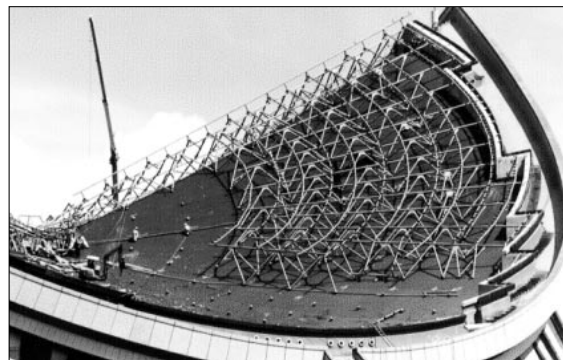
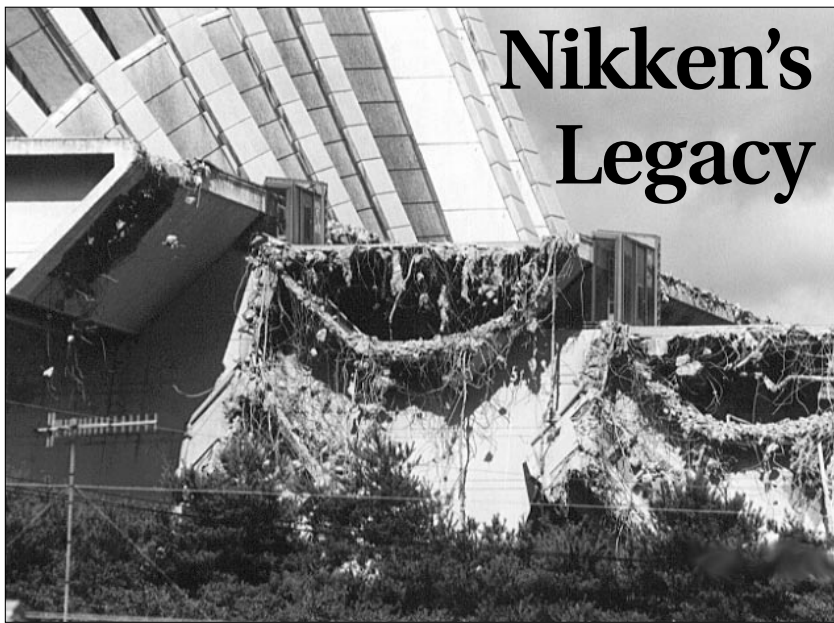
This tendency toward isolationism, or secessionism, President Ikeda said, is also a deep concern of his, and he asserted that the advance of humanity must keep pace with the changing times. That is why education is vital, he affirmed.

## Foreign Language Study Booklets

- SPANISH
- CHINESE
- KOREAN
- JAPANESE

Revised and updated study booklets for the Elementary Examination have just been published in four languages. They contain all the material necessary to prepare for the upcoming exam, except for the booklet 'Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue.'

Now Available in SGI-USA Bookstores  
\$4 for Chinese; \$5 other languages



The demolition of the Grand Main Temple makes a sad backdrop to the 2nd Overseas Believers General Pilgrimage, Aug. 19-24. Temple members from the world over are witnessing for the first time the startling reality of the Main Temple's demise. Meanwhile, SGI-USA members continue protest rallies and other protest activities. To date, 10,000 Americans have signed petitions against the demolition, and more than a thousand have sent letters directly to Nikken. As General Director Zaitzu says, 'The Main Temple stood as a monument to the sincerity of the SGI members, but Nikken's act of destroying it will stand forever as proof of his true nature.' (Above: The roof is dismantled. Left: The structure in front of the Main Temple is torn down.)

**NEWS BRIEFS**

Photo by ELLEN NOON



Molly Fumia (left), author of books on grief, signs her book after speaking at the Aug. 2 women's luncheon in San Jose.

**San Jose Women Celebrate**

San Jose women's division members hosted a lunch Aug. 2 at Bellarmine Preparatory College. Originally envisioned as a gathering for about 200 women, the final attendance was 390, including 115 guests.

Molly Fumia, author of three books about grief, shared her thoughts with the audience: "I look out into this audience, and I am overwhelmed by the...kaleidoscope of faces." She urged the women to "use the power of your heart. Never let anyone

discredit your emotions."

Wendy Clark, SGI-USA women's division leader, spoke about diversity and the power women have to break down barriers: "Sustained engagement requires us to continue the dialogue with another [person] when every part of our being wants to run away...."

"By doing so, we not only learn something about others, but about ourselves as well."

— SUSAN MOLING, correspondent, and others

**SGI President Meets With Peruvian Educators**

COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER  
Tokyo, July 24

SGI President Ikeda, founder of Soka University, and his wife, Kaneko, met this evening with guests from Peru's Ricardo Palma University at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall. Rector Iván Rodríguez Chávez, Office of University Extension and Social Advancement Director Manuel Pantigoso Pecero, Office of University Relations Director Alfonso Jaguande D'Anjoy and Professor Margot Santa Cruz Oré traveled from the South American country to present the SGI leader with honorary doctorates from Ricardo Palma University and the Association of Doctors of Education of Peru.

Rector Rodríguez mentioned that the "Nuclear Arms: Threat to Our World" exhibition, cosponsored by Ricardo Palma University and the SGI this past June, attracted an unprecedented 60,000 viewers during its one-month showing at the Lima school. Dr. Pantigoso, a poet, leading literary critic in Peru and member of the Peruvian Academy of Letters, commented that while he himself is a poet of words, Mr. Ikeda is a poet of action.

Meanwhile, Dr. Jaguande expressed his desire to begin lectures at Ricardo Palma University based on the ideals put forth by the SGI leader, saying that he would like to have as many people as possible know about the latter's philosophy. He is cur-

rently writing a book about President Ikeda.

Turning to the Inca Empire, the group discussed the ancient fortress city of Machu Picchu in the Andes Mountains northwest of Cuzco. Remarking that the Incas were technologically advanced, President Ikeda observed that their civilization, which began in the 13th century, expanded rapidly because of their policies of compensation and redistribution. The university rector confirmed that the Incas advanced peacefully, negotiating with neighboring tribes. Consequently, in only 50 years, their civilization reached across the entire Andes region. He also said that the Incas highly valued young people.

In response to Mr. Ikeda's question on the effects of the Spanish conquest of the Incas in the 16th century, Dr. Rodríguez explained that Spanish control brought dramatic changes to the Andean region, as it forced the Incas to adopt a new culture, religion and language. During the 300 years of Spanish rule, the native population of Peru declined by as much as 90 percent. On the other hand, the university rector continued, the mixing of the native Peruvians with the Spanish created the mestizo, resulting in a new culture that has thrived for some three centuries.

The SGI leader then brought up the Nazca Lines, a gathering of giant animal figures and geometric forms scratched into the surface of several desert mesas

north of Nazca in southern Peru. The figures, which include straight lines, triangles, spirals, a bird, a monkey, a spider, and flowers, are hundreds of feet in length and therefore cannot be discerned from ground level, but are visible from the air. When and why they were created remain a mystery. There are many theories regarding their purpose. Dr. Rodríguez believes that they probably served as a calendar, while Dr. Jaguande commented that the lines suggest a culture that loved peace and strove to live harmoniously and joyfully.

Confirming that there is a long history of friendship between Peru and Japan, President Ikeda expressed his hope that these two "neighbors of the Pacific" would develop a bond as great as the ocean that connects them. **W**

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# the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI

## 'THE FLOWER OF CULTURE'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 36-37

**The Cuban missile crisis drives home to members just how pressing the issue of nuclear war really is, making them deeply aware of the tremendous importance of their mission. This awareness spurs them to even greater efforts to spread Nichiren Daishonin's teachings.**



By **DAISAKU IKEDA**  
SGI PRESIDENT

On Oct. 28, Shin'ichi Yamamoto attended a nationwide leaders meeting held at the head temple. Afterward, he met with leaders from each headquarters to offer guidance. At these meetings, convened separately by headquarters at the different lodging temples on the head temple grounds, Shin'ichi again spoke about the Cuban missile crisis.

At one such gathering, he said: "I understand that members have been directing questions to you about the Cuba situation, asking, 'What is going to happen?' or 'Which side does the Gakkai support, the United States or the Soviet Union?' This is only natural. The basis

of our response to this grave issue is our powerful prayer that war cannot and must not be allowed to break out. Our world today is divided into opposing camps, East and West. But the Soka Gakkai leans neither toward the political right nor left, nor does it side with either the United States or the Soviet Union. We believe in global humanism. Our position is to lead all the world's people in the direction of peace.

"The present confrontation has only underscored our conviction that Buddhism is an absolute necessity for our age. The people of the United States, the Soviet Union and Cuba all cherish a desire for peace. They all want to enjoy their lives. Common people and concerned leaders the world over are be-

ginning to seriously consider what can be done to eliminate war, how to solve the problem at its root, and what philosophy is needed to achieve that.

"Yet despite this desire for peace, nations succumb to mutual distrust and regard one another with hatred and hostility. This is the reality of our world. How, under such circumstances, can we eliminate all possibility of nuclear war? Buddhism holds the only true solution.

"Buddhism teaches that all living beings are Buddhas. It reveals that all people possess the Buddha nature, that oneself and others are inherently endowed with the life force of the Buddha. The life philosophy of Buddhism is a magnificent system of thought firmly based on respect for the dignity and sanctity

of human life. When this teaching spreads around the world, it surely will act as the most powerful force for preventing war.

"In addition, all those who strive in Buddhist faith and practice will cause the life force of the Buddha to well up from within them. With this, they can crush the negative impulses to destroy and slaughter that may exist within their lives. The disaster of nuclear war arises solely from fundamental darkness, the most basic delusion inherent in life. Many negative and evil states of mind arise from that fundamental darkness, including distrust, hate, jealousy, the desire to dominate others and the impulse to kill.

"Nam-myoho-renge-kyo cuts this fundamental darkness off at the root and allows the light of true wisdom — that is, fundamental enlightenment or the inherent Buddha nature — to illuminate our lives and thus transform hate into compassion, destruction into creation, and distrust into trust. We also call this human revolution."

Shin'ichi continued to emphasize how the Daishonin's Buddhism could function as a powerful force in preventing nuclear war and building a lasting peace. Through their daily activities, the members had come to keenly recognize this truth, but many were unable to explain clearly why it was so. Shin'ichi's words confirmed their deepest intuitions, dispelling their frustration.

Shin'ichi continued: "The preamble of the UNESCO Charter opens with the famous declaration, 'That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.' This is an extremely important observation. How, then, do we build defenses of peace that are truly lasting?"

"Buddhism makes such construction possible, and this is what the Soka Gakkai has been doing in actuality. By sharing the great life philosophy of Buddhism with others through one-on-one dialogue, haven't we been building strong and unassailable defenses of peace in the heart of

one individual after another? The road to our goal of kosen-rufu may seem incredibly long, but in fact it is the most direct way to the establishment of enduring peace.

"By passing the great Buddhist message of compassion and peace from one friend to the next, we can absolutely guarantee that nuclear war never happens. That is our mission."

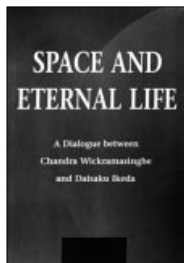
The Cuban missile crisis had driven home to members just how pressing the issue of nuclear war really was, making them deeply aware at the same time of the tremendous importance of their own mission. This awareness spurred them to even greater efforts to spread the Daishonin's teachings.

At the time, hardly anyone appreciated the fact that the Soka Gakkai, with its goal of building defenses of peace in the hearts of people around the world, was at the cutting edge of the movement for humanity's dream of lasting peace.

The Cuban missile crisis reconfirmed for Shin'ichi the importance of his vision to engage world leaders in dialogue. The exchange of letters between President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev forestalled the worst of all outcomes, a full-scale nuclear war. If the leaders of nations around the world could forge bonds of genuine empathy through sincere dialogue, Shin'ichi was certain, the road to peace would be opened. He also firmly believed that it was necessary to put more effort into cultural exchange among the world's peoples to foster mutual understanding. Based on that conviction, Shin'ichi lost no time in taking the first step in that direction by establishing an association for the promotion of music and the performing arts.

*To be continued*

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



**'The shortcomings of today's high consumption-oriented society are apparent everywhere... a truly humanistic and affluent society is one that is endowed on the spiritual side as well as with abundant powers of development...' p. 193**

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.

MO #1169 — Price: \$14.95 — Tel. (800) 626-1313

Photo by JONATHAN WILSON



'As the season of growth, youth is both a time of great joy and great suffering.'

#### YOUTH, FROM PAGE 1

As you just mentioned, the title of this series is "Discussions On Youth." Would you happen to know, incidentally, the origins of the Japanese word for youth (*seishun*)? It is written with two Chinese characters meaning "green" and "spring," respectively. In ancient China, the color green was identified with spring. Red, meanwhile, was associated with summer, white with autumn, and black with winter.

These colors aptly capture the different moods of the four seasons. In terms of our own lives, the time of infancy and childhood might be likened to the black winter, the season when all things are at rest and plants store their energy beneath the earth's surface for the coming of spring. When the time is ripe and spring finally arrives,

all life stirs with the determination to sprout, to bloom. In English, the word *spring* also has the meaning of a coiled spring, full of bounce and impetus. In Japanese, too, the word *spring* (*haru*) connotes energy welling up from inside.

According to the ancient Chinese view of the universe, the green spring is associated with the east direction — in other words, the direction from which the sun rises. (The direction of the red summer is south, the white autumn is west, and the black winter is north.)

The green spring of life — our youth — is meant to be lived with our faces turned toward the sun. As the season of growth, youth is both a time of great joy and great suffering. It is filled with all kinds of problems and worries. But it's important not to run away from them. The key is to keep seeking the sun, to keep

moving in the direction of the sunlight, as we challenge the pain and agony that are part of youth and growing up. Please never give in to defeat. For a seed to sprout, it must exert tremendous effort to break out of its hard outer covering. To reach outside to view the blue sky above, that sprout must then valiantly push its way up through a thick layer of soil.

The hardships you come across now will all contribute to your growth. Problems are part and parcel of the growing process. Therefore, the important thing is to keep pressing forward, no matter how tough or painful the going may get. Youth is the spirit of persistence — to keep making an effort to grow and to become more capable despite all obstacles. Those who keep striving for improvement remain youthful, no matter what their age. Conversely, those who

fail to do so, even if they are young in years, will be old and weak in spirit.

**KIMURA:** I see what you're saying.

The theme for today's discussion is freedom. When asked about how much freedom they have, the majority of high school students say they sometimes feel as if they have no freedom at all.

**UEDA:** Many students complain that school rules are too restrictive. They aren't allowed to carry beepers, they can't dye their hair, they can't wear their socks the way they want to, they can only carry a regulation book bag and, in the case of girls, their school-uniform skirts must cover their knees. They say they don't like attending schools with such strict rules.

**KIMURA:** Others have remarked that they don't like their parents being so nosy. When they get a phone call at home, their parents ask them who it's from. When they leave the house in the evening, their parents continuously page them on their beepers even though they've told them where they're going. Some students comment, "They say it's because they love us, but they really go overboard sometimes!"

**UEDA:** Still other students complain that they have no time for themselves or the things they want to do because they are so busy with their studies and extracurricular activities during the day and then have to attend cram schools in the evening.

**IKEDA:** They sure have a long list of grievances!

I understand what they're saying, though, and I think they're right. No one likes to be controlled by others, and it's only natural to wish that we could do our own thing without people hassling us all the time. I'm sure there are students who dream of what freedom they would enjoy if there were no rules, and if they had plenty of money and time and no parents nagging them. But that is a very shallow view of life, a very superficial perspective of human society.

There are wealthy people who seem free of all constraints because they can travel around the world and buy whatever they want without having to work. But appearances can be deceptive. While their lives may seem enviably unfettered, many suffer feelings of emptiness and lack of fulfillment. The freedom they enjoy is only superficial, and they feel boxed in and restricted.

An American businessman and his wife once said something very interesting. They remarked that they knew some of the richest people in the world, but they had seen many people whose lives were really very sad: widows who had lost all sense of purpose after their husbands died and people who felt hollow and without purpose even though they had amassed huge fortunes and achieved all their ambitions.

Real freedom ultimately hinges on what you decide to dedicate yourself to with all your heart. It doesn't mean loafing around with nothing to do. It isn't spending money like water. It isn't having all the free time in the world. It isn't taking long vacations. Doing only as you please is not freedom; it is nothing more than self-indulgence. True freedom lies in the ongoing challenge to develop yourself, to achieve your chosen goal. This path is paved with the glittering gold of freedom.

**KIMURA:** It's true that we tend to think of leisure as freedom, but the two are quite different.

**IKEDA:** Actually, it's only because you enjoy great freedom that you can study and attend school, that you can do gongyo and participate in high school division activities. Regarding these things as unpleasant chores that keep you from doing what you want is a terribly misguided way of looking at life.

Do you look at going to school as a right or something that you're being forced to do? Do you see school as liberating or stifling? It all depends on your personal philosophy, on your wisdom. If you're passive, you'll feel trapped and unhappy in even the freest of environments. But if you take an active approach and challenge your circumstances, you will be free, no matter how confining your situation may actually be. As Nichiren Daishonin writes: "Each character [written word] of this [Lotus] sutra is without exception a living Buddha of supreme enlightenment, but we ordinary people, viewing the sutra with the eyes of common mortals, see it as a mere succession of characters. Hungry spirits perceive the Ganges River as fire, human beings perceive it as water, and heavenly beings perceive it as *amrita*. The water itself is the same, but it appears differently according to the karmic capacity of individuals" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 163).

Children who are suffering from serious illnesses or living

PLEASE SEE YOUTH, NEXT PAGE

YOUTH, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

in war-torn countries can't go to school even when they want to. On the other hand, many children in more fortunate circumstances who *do* have the opportunity to attend school don't appreciate how free they really are. Being able to go to school is in fact a sign of the most incredible freedom. And it's a mistake not to realize it.

**UEDA:** Being able to go to school is truly a great fortune, isn't it?

**IKEDA:** Yes. In the United States there was a young man with multiple myeloma, a disabling and painful form of bone cancer. In the last two years of his life, with his entire body encased in a cast because of multiple bone fractures, he visited local high schools in his wheelchair to talk about the terrible effects of drug abuse. He would say to the students: "You want to destroy your body with nicotine or alcohol or heroin? You want to smash it up in cars? You're depressed and want to throw it off the Golden Gate Bridge? Then give me your body! Let me have it! I want it! I'll take it! I want to live!" [For more information, read Julius Segal's *Winning Life's Toughest Battles: Roots of Human Resilience*.] His words are said to have made the audience shiver.

And during the war in the former Yugoslavia, children talked about their dreams. One said, "I had many dreams, but the war robbed me of all of them." And another said, "Our dream is to live an ordinary life with our friends, to be able to go to school."

Recently, in Rwanda in Africa there has been a bitter and cruel civil war. In one particular family, the children lost both parents; only they and their grandmother survived. Somebody had to work to support the others. Ultimately, one of the older boys dropped out of school to care for the rest. He was so sad that he couldn't attend school anymore that he often cried all through the night. Today, his other siblings who are still in school share their lessons with him when he comes home from work in the evening.

**KIMURA:** Compared to children in these and many other countries, Japanese high school students have a great deal of free choice.

**IKEDA:** Exactly. But if that was the whole story, we'd have to conclude that everything depends completely on our environment. That's not the case. The human condition and life aren't



'I slip back many times. I fall, I stand still, I run against the edge of hidden obstacles, I lose my temper and find it again and keep it better. I trudge on, I gain a little, I feel encouraged, I get more eager and climb higher and begin to see the widening horizon. Every struggle is a victory.'

— Helen Keller (left, with her teacher, Anne Sullivan)

so simple. In Buddhism, true freedom can be correlated to one's life-condition. Someone with an expansive life-condition is free even if confined to the most restrictive prison on earth.

Argentine human rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel once told me that prison taught him to have a conscious appreciation of freedom.

Natalia Sats, the late president of the Moscow State Musical Theater for Children, who fought against oppression, also turned her prison cell into a place of learning. She encouraged her fellow prisoners to share their special knowledge with one another. One could lecture on chemistry, another could teach medicine. Mrs. Sats, who herself was a singer and entertainer, sang songs and recited poetry by the Aleksandr Pushkin, striving to infuse everyone with courage and hope.

The same was true of the Japanese educator Yoshida Shoin (1830–59; Japanese scholar, teacher and writer whose students later played key roles in the Meiji Restoration), who was active to-

ward the end of the Edo period. When he was arrested and incarcerated one time for opposing the policies of the military government, he presented lectures to the other prisoners, raising their spirits. In the end, even his jailers came to hear him speak.

And we can see the same spirit in the first and second presidents of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda. Championing the causes of freedom of religion and peace, neither leader would give in to the forces of oppression, even if it meant imprisonment. Each possessed a state of mind of complete freedom, expressed in the Daishonin's words: "Since I have been born in the ruler's domain, I must follow him in my actions. But I need not follow him in the beliefs of my heart" (MW-3, 171).

**UEDA:** Those who refuse to be defeated by circumstances, no matter how harsh, are truly free.

**IKEDA:** Yes. I'm sure you know the story of Helen Keller (1880–1968). At the age of 18 months, she lost her sight and

hearing. Her deafness also made it difficult for her to speak. But by working together with her teacher Anne Sullivan, she eventually learned to read, write and speak, and graduated from Radcliffe College in Boston.

Surely no one could have been as restricted as she was—unable to speak, hear or see. Her world was one of darkness and silence. But she drove the darkness out of her heart. At 9 she finally spoke her first sentence: "It is warm." She never forgot for the rest of her life the astonishment and joy she experienced at that moment. She had succeeded at last in breaking out of the prison of silence that confined her.

As a result of unimaginable hard work and effort, she later went on to travel the globe to lecture and offer encouragement to other people with disabilities. She came to Japan several times. She brought courage to the entire world. She refused to be beaten. She always turned her face to the sun, seeking the bright light of hope.

Being human, however, at times she would feel forlorn and disheartened by the long hours she had to spend study-

ing, having all of her textbooks painstakingly spelled into her hand, while other students were singing and dancing and enjoying themselves. She wrote: "I slip back many times, I fall, I stand still, I run against the edge of hidden obstacles, I lose my temper and find it again and keep it better. I trudge on, I gain a little, I feel encouraged, I get more eager and climb higher and begin to see the widening horizon. Every struggle is a victory."

**UEDA:** "Every struggle is a victory." Those are very moving words.

**IKEDA:** She also wrote, "In the wonderland of Mind I should be as free as another." This was Helen Keller's declaration of victory. She reached the summit of freedom, liberating herself through her own arduous struggle.

**KIMURA:** She lived with incredible strength and courage.

(Part 2 will continue in next week's issue.)

# 法華經의 지혜

## 제28회 테마: 여러수량품 ③

### 안내 말씀

을 10월 25일에 있을 초급 시험을 위하여 교재(개정판)가 각 지역 회관에서 판매하고 있습니다. 가격은 \$5입니다. 초급시험에 포함되는 '중문 문제'에 관한 질의 응답은 포함되지 않습니다.

**사이토 교학부장:** 장대한 우주의 움직임을 생각하면 지금 여기에 있는 「자기」란 대대케 어떤 존재인가 절실하게 생각하게 됩니다. 아마 많은 사람들이 그렇지 않을까요.

**이케다 SGI회장:** 모두들 의외로 낭만주의자들이군요. (웃음)내한교와 교학부도 필요하지만 때로는 별을 보기도 하고 달을 보기도 하며 한 구절이라도 읊어보는 마음의 여유가 중요하합니다. 마음을 크게 열고 대우주를 동시한다는 것은 자기 인생을 바라보는 것이 되기도 합니다.

**스다:** 네. 일상생활에 쫓기고 있으면 대우주 속의 자신이라는 스승의 케일을 자신을 들여다 볼 기회가 좀처럼 쉽지 않습니다. 작은 일로 번민하는 자신, 오늘 내일의 일로 틀에서 벗어나지 못하는 자신...아무래도 좁은 틀에서 벗어나지 못합니다.

**SGI회장:** 그렇기에 신앙이 필요 합니다.

**앤도:** 네. 지난 회는 수량품의 발전현본의 의에 대하여 이케다 선생님의 말씀을 들었습니다. 석존은 「영원한 법」 즉 「영원한 부처」를 스승으로 하여 부처가 되었다. 석존이 스승으로 삼긴 것과 똑같은 「영원한 법」 즉 「부처」를 스승으로 삼아라고 제자들에게 설명하는 것이 발전현본입니다. 거기에는 「인간 석존으로 돌아가라! 그리고 석존을 부처로 만든 근원을 직달하라!」는 힘찬 메시지가 담겨져 있었다. 이러한 말씀에 저의 시야가 열렸습니다.

**사이토:** 이 영원한 법이란 南無妙法蓮華經이며 영원한 부처란 南無妙法蓮華經 여래 즉 구원원초의 지수유신이군요.

**SGI회장:** 그렇습니다. 南無妙法蓮華經은 법이며 동시에 불신입니다. 인법일개입니다. 이것이 중요합니다. 법이라 해도 인(人·부처)을 벗어난 법의 존재는 이(理)일 뿐입니다. 실체로서는 사(事) 위에서는 부처의 지혜를 벗어난 법은 없는 것입니다. 구원원초의 부처-우시무중으로 상주하는 부처는 우주 생명 그 자체이며 일순의 정제도 없이 언제나 부단하게 일체 중생을 구제하고자 활동하고 계십니다. 그 부처와 자신이 실은 일체이며 자신이 구원의 옛날부터 사람들을 구하기 위하여 광선포토를 위하여 일해 왔습니다. 지금만 그런 것이 아니라-그렇게 자각하는 것이 수량품의 마음입니다. 눈앞의 일만이 아닙니다. 영원한 우주적인 스케일로 금세의 인생을 바라보고 깊고 깊은 생명을 자각하는 것입니다. 석존도 영원한 부처와 일체된 자신은 깨달았습니다. 그것을 석존은 「불사」의 경지라고 말했다는 것입니다.

**앤도:** 이 불사의 경지와 최상의 진리는 같은 것이군요.

**SGI회장:** 그렇습니다. 단적으로 말하자면 모두 일념삼천을 말합니다. 이 일념삼천을 석존은 여러 경전에서 일부분 일부만 설했습니다. 그러나 법화경 이전의 경에서는 불충분했습니다. 「개목초」 즉 유명한 어문이 있었지요.

**스다:** 네. 여기요. 대성인은 이렇게 말씀하십니다. 화엄·대지·반야·대일경 등은 이승살을 숨길 뿐 아니라 구원실성을 숨기고 설하셨느니라. 이러한 경들에 두 가지의 허물이 있으니, 일(-)에는 행포가 있는고로 아직도 권을 열지 않았다고 하여 적문의 일념삼천을 숨기었습니다. 이(二)에는 시성을 말하는 까닭에 아직도 적문을 열지 않았다 하여 본문의 구원을 감추었습니다(어서 197쪽)이 전경에서는 이승작불이 구원실성을

을 설하지 않는다. 이승작불이 없다는 것은 「행포가 있다」가 된다. 행포란 행렬해포를 말하며 차별이란 의미입니다. 이승은 성불할 수 없다고 차별하고 있습니다. 차별이 된 평등관은 아닙니다. 이것이 두 개의 실(失: 결결, 허물) 가운데 하나입니다. 또 하나의 실은 시성정각을 설하고 구원실성을 설하지 않는다-발전현본이 없다는 것입니다.

**사이토:** 그부분은 이렇게 언급하시고 계십니다. 「적문 방편품은 일념삼천과 설하여 이전 두가지 허물 중에서 하나를 벗었습니다. 그러령기는 하지만 아직도 발전현본도 설하지 않았으므로 참된 일념삼천도 나타나지 않았고 이승삼천도 정해지지 않았으니, 마치 물 속의 달을 보는 것과 같고 뿌리없는 풀이 물결 위에 떠 있는 것과 같다(같은 쪽) 여기서 어려운 것은 왜 발전현본이 설하지 않으면 참된 일념삼천이 나타나지 않는가 하는 것입니다. 왜 뿌리없는 풀인가.

**SGI회장:** 순서대로 생각해 봅시다. 우선 적문의 일념삼천이란 무엇인가. 이미 방편품을 다루면서 언급했지만 다시 한번 정리해 봅시다.

**사이토:** 네. 방편품의 제법실상 심여시의 글을 근거로 천태가 세운 것이 일념삼천입니다. 제법실상이 설해짐으로써 이전경과 말본적으로 달라진 것은 불계와 구계의 단절을 없앴다는 점입니다. 이전경에서는 지옥계에서 불계까지 심계 중생이 파르다로 떨어진 존재로서 설해졌습니다. 부처와 구계의 중생은 사는 국토조차도 제각기라고 했습니다. 그러나 법화경 방편품에 이르러 부처도 구계의 중생도 평등하게 심여시(十如是)에 의하여 서립된 생명이며 밝혀진 것입니다. 이것으로 이전경의 행포(차별)를 없앴는 것입니다.

**SGI회장:** 심여시는 심여실상이라고도 합니다. 실상의 체는 실은 妙法蓮華經 그 자체인 것입니다. 심여시의 여시인, 여시와도 일순의 생명에 인과구시로 갖추어져 있습니다. 인과구시이니 불가사의한 「연화」의 법입니다. 일체중생의 당체화를 설하는 것입니다. 제법실상의 제법이란 실계를 말합니다. 우주의 사라만법은 무한이라고 하나 모두 세계의 의정(依止, 의보, 정보)에 포함됩니다. 이 세계계법이며 모두 실상 즉 묘법의 당체라는 것이 제법실상입니다.

**앤도:** 제법실상에 대하여 방편품의 말로는 다음과 같이 논합니다. 부처의 깨달음에서 본 생명의 진실된 세계는 일체가 평등하며 무체와 객체, 자신과 타인, 마음과 신체, 마음과 사물 등이 일체의 차이, 차별을 초월합니다. 시작도 없으며 끝도 없습니다. 세계의 차별도 초월한다. 광대한 너비를 가진 「영원한 생명」의 세계라고 합니다.

**SGI회장:** 그렇지요. 무시무중으로 활동해 마지 않는 역동적인 우주 생명의 실상을 지향하고 있는 것입니다. 제법실상에 의하여 세계의 인도는 중생일라도 평등하게 성불할 수 있는 법이 밝혀졌습니다. 이것이 적문의 일념삼천입니다. **스다:** 그렇게 들으면 일념삼천은

적문에서 완벽하게 완성되었다고 생각됩니다. 왜 석존 자신이 발전현본하지 않으면 일념삼천은 뿌리없는 풀일까요. 그것은 「적문에서는 이승작불에 의해 구계중생에게 밝혀졌지만, 아직 불계중생에게는 밝혀지지 않았다는 것일까요. 대성인이 일념삼천은 세계호구로부터 시작되었는지(어서 189쪽)고 말씀하시듯이 일념삼천의 중핵은 세계호구입니다. 그러나 구계중생과 불계중생의 양면이 밝혀지지 않으면 세계호구로 되는 되지 않습니다. 시성정각과 대대로된 법부(구계)인 석존이 19세에 출가하여 불도수행하여 부처가 되었다는 것은 이른바 구계중생에게의 측면일 뿐입니다. 거기서 불계중생들을 나타내기 위하여 발전현본했다...

**앤도:** 그렇게도 말할지 모릅니다. 이론상으로는 적문의 제법실상의 설법이 일단 세계호구는 성립된 것이 아닐까요. 세계 모두가 묘법의 당체로서 평등하며 일체이기 때문에 불계가 갖추어져 있음은 물론 불계에도 구계가 갖추어지게 됩니다. 구계의 중생은 성불시키는 것이 주안점이나 적문에서는 이승작불-구계중생들이 표면화됩니다. 그러니까 이론뿐이었던 불계중생에 석존의 제법이 실제로 실현된 것이요, 이야기하고 증명했다는 데서 발전현본의 한 의 미가 있었던 것이 아닐까요.

**SGI회장:** 모든 사람의 의견이 같지 않을 정도로 어렵군요(웃음). 의의도 분명하지 않은 점입니다. 불계 제법실상의 설법은 구계중생, 불계 중생이라는 생명의 진실된 세계를 그치는 열쇠가 되었습니다. 그러나 그것을 설하는 석존의 시성정각인 체라하면 이 제법실상의 설법과는 큰 모순이 나타나입니다. 바꾸어 말하면 제법실상의 설법은 무시무중한 부처의 크나큰 생명의 세계를 곧바로 지향하고 있습니다. 석존이 스승으로 삼긴 구원원초의 세계를 지향하고 있습니다. 다시말해 「구원의 묘법」 즉 「구원의 부처」의 세계를 어렵게 설한 것이 방편품의 설법입니다.

**사이토:** 그 이유는 그것을 설하는 석존이 시성정각인 체라면 설해진 법과 설한 사람이 일치하지 않았을 것이라는 것이요. 일치하기 위해서는 제법실상이 지향하는 구원의 부처의 세계를 보여줄 수밖에 없습니다. 즉 발전현본은 제법실상의 필연적인 귀결이며 제법실상을 실증하는 것이었지요.

**SGI회장:** 그렇기에 사리불은 제법실상의 설법을 듣고 곧바로 그것이 지향하는 석존의 본지를 깨달았을 것입니다. 그 본지인 부처를 대성인은 「제법실상의 부처(어서 714쪽)라고 부르시고 계십니다. 더욱 명백하게 하기 위하여 여기서 「개목초」로 되돌아가 발전현본에 대한 대성인의 지남을 배정해 봅시다.

**앤도:** 네. 대성인은 다음과 같이 말씀하셨습니다. 「본문에 이르러 시성정각을 깨나 사교의 과도 깨지고, 사교의 과가 깨지니 사교의 인도 깨졌느니라. 이전적문의 세계의 인과를 타파하고 본문의 세계의 인과를 설해 나타냈으니, 이는 본인본과의 법문이니라(같은 쪽)

여기서 말하는 세계의 인과란 성불의 원인과 결과-불인 불과를 말합니다. 즉 구계의 수행에 의하여 불계의 깨달음을 얻는다는 성불의 계라고 말할 수 있습니다. 그러냐 같은 세계의 인과라고 발전현본하기 전과 후는 전혀 다르군요.

**스다:** 발전현본하여 시성정각의 입장이 부정됨으로써 우선 사교의 과가 타파되었다고 말합니다. 사교의 과란 그때까지의 종교, 통교, 종교, 원교의 사교 즉 이전, 적문의 과의 가르침으로 설해 가리켜 중종의 성불을 말합니다. 이를 불교는 전부 시성정각을 전제로 합니다. 그것이 법화경 본문에 와서 근본적으로 뒤엎어졌습니다.

**앤도:** 참된 부처의 경에 관한 그런 게 아니다라며 석존 자신이 그때까지의 성불관을 부정한 것이군요.

**사이토:** 또 그것에 의하여 사교의 인을 타파하게 되었다는 말씀입니다. 결과로서의 부처의 경에를 부정했기 때문에 거기에 이르는 것을 지향한 인-수행도 진짜가 아니게 되었습니다. 이리하여 본문에서는 이전-적문의 세계의 인과가 전부 부정되고 말았습니다.

**앤도:** 대단한 무대의 전환이군요.

**사이토:** 거기서 지금까지의 인과를 타파하여 근본된 불인과 불과-본인본과가 밝혀졌던 것입니다. 그 내용에 대하여 「개목초」에서는 이어서 이렇게 말씀하십니다. 「구계도 무시의 불계에 갖추고 불계도 무시의 구계에 갖추어져서 참된 세계호구-백계천여-일념삼천이니라(같은 쪽) 수량품의 발전현본에 의해 무시의 불계, 무시의 구계가 호구하고 있는(서로 갖추어져 있는) 실상이 밝혀지게 되었다. 그것에 의하여 참된 세계호구-백계천여-일념삼천이 확립되었다고 합니다.

**스다:** 무시란 문자 그대로 시작이 없다는 것이나 영인이라고 하겠군요. 반면 시작이 있다는 것이 유시입니다. 시성정각은 문자 그대로 「처음으로 이루어진다.」이니까 유시가 됩니다.

**SGI회장:** 여기서 포인트가 되는 무시의 불계, 무시의 구계란 각기 수량품의 경문에서는 어디에 해당할까요.

**앤도:** 우선 무시의 불계란 「내가 실로 성불한 이래 무량무백천만 억니유타집이니라...」(개결 496쪽)입니다. 부처가 되고 나서 무량한 시간이 지나고 있다는, 실로 구원실성의 글입니다.

**스다:** 또 「내가 성불한 이래 아주 오래 구원이니라. 수명 무량아승기 겁이니라. 상주하여 멀하지 않고(개결 500쪽)도 같은 취지이군요.

**사이토:** 대성인은 이들 경문에서 부처의 생명을 무시라고 말씀하십니다.

**앤도:** 무시의 구계는 「나는 본디 보살의 몸을 행하여 이론 바의 수명 지금 더욱 아직 다하지 않았노다. 더욱이 앞서의 숫자 배이니라」(개결 500쪽)입니다. 구계(보살계)의 생명도 영원히 계속된다는 뜻의 경문입니다.

**SGI회장:** 이것도 일거에 무시의 경자를 말하고 있다. 구계도 무시의 불계에 갖추고-갑자 나타난 불계는 아니다. 본유의 불계입니다. 불계도 무시의 구계에 갖추어져서

-갑자 나타난 구계도 아니며 언젠가 사라져야 하는 구계도 아니다. 불계와 함께 영원한 구계이다. 이와같은 세계(제법)의 진실된 모습(실상)을 여실지견(如實知見, 실체와 같이 지견하다)하는 것이 수량품입니다. 무시도 아니며 본유상수도 아니다. 본무금유(本無今有: 근본은 없고 지금은 있다)가 되고 만다. 바로 뿌리없는 풀입니다. 이 무시의 불계, 무시의 구계가 밝혀졌기에 비로소 구계와 불계가 「즉」하게 됩니다. 인(국제)과 과(불계)가 인과구시가 되기 때문입니다. 그래야 참된 세계호구입니다.

**스다:** 이런 것일까요. 시성정각에 비로소 획득되는 것이 본무금유입니다. 인과로 말하면 먼저 불인(구계)이 있고 난 다음에 불과(불계)가 있다는 인과이시입니다. 그래서 본명 불과를 얻기까지의 생명에는 본명 불과를 얻기까지의 생명에는 구계밖에 없고 구계 「즉」 불계는 아닙니다. 불과를 얻고 나서는 불계밖에 없고 구계 「즉」 불계는 아닙니다. 불과를 얻고 나서는 불계밖에 없고 불계 「즉」 구계는 아닙니다. 불과를 얻고 나서는 불계밖에 없고 불계 「즉」 구계는 아닙니다.

**SGI회장:** 그렇지요. 그래서 참된 세계호구가 되지 않습니다. 세계호구가 되지 않으면 일념삼천이 되지 않습니다. 적문의 세계호구-일념삼천을 「뿌리없는 풀」, 「물속의 달」이라고 말씀하시는 까닭입니다. 대성인은 적문의 세계호구를 시각의 세계호구, 본문의 세계호구를 본각본유의 세계호구라고 부르시며 근본적으로 다르다고 말씀하십니다. 그 포인트는 무시무중의 구원의 본분을 아는가 모르는가입니다.

**사이토:** 확인해 보면 무시라는 영원한 시화에 의하여 비로소 구계와 불계가 참되게 「즉」하게 된다는 것이군요.

**앤도:** 발전현본하지 않으면 그러한 인과구시의 세계는 나타나지 않는다는 것이군요.

**SGI회장:** 그 인과구시의 법이란 무시의 본불인 南無妙法蓮華經의 생명입니다. 이 구원의 묘법을 수행하는 것이 본인이며 수행하여 얻지 못할 수 있는 불과가 본과입니다. 본인본과의 법문이란 이 일법을 보여주는 것입니다. 발전현본의 목적이기도 합니다. 본인이란 거기에 일체의 수행을 포함하는 성불의 근본적인 인이라는 의미가 담겨져 있습니다. 이 본인을 수행하려면 역급수행을 할 필요는 없습니다. (리빙 부디즘 98년 4월 법편 97년 7월)

# SGI 초급시험 예상문제집

## “형제초”

1. 이케가미 형제의 생활에서 어떤 위기가 일어나서 니치렌 대성인께서 이 어서를 쓰셨습니까?
2. 이 어서에 의하면, 신심을 하는 사람들이 어려움을 만나게 되는 세가지 이유는 무엇입니까?
3. 대성인께서 말씀하시기를 “그런데 법화경을 버린 죄로 인하여 삼주의 성문이 삼천진절집을 경과하였고, 제대보살이 오백진절집을 경과한 것은 엄청나다고 생각되느니라.” 법화경을 버리면, 상상할 수 없을 정도의 죄가 되는데, 왜 그렇습니까?
4. 가령 일인의 거북이가 부목을 만들지언정 연사를 가지고 수미산을 허공에 걸지언정 법화경과 경을 같이 실하는 사람을 만나기는 어려우니라.” 위의 어서에서 넓게 보아서 무엇이 더 힘들다고 말하는 것입니까?
5. 대성인께서는 이 어서에서 그릇된 선생을 따르는 것의 영향에 대해서 많은 예를 열거하셨습니다. 다음 인용문은 어떤대사에 대한 전교대사의 말씀입니다. “법화경을 칭찬한다고 하지만, 이가 가리키는 바는 법화경을 죽이는 사람이 되었느니라. 어떻게 누가 법화경의 간심을 죽이는지 설명하십시오.”
6. “만약 악유를 만나면 즉 본심을 잃는다.”라는 구절에서 대성인께서는 악을 용서해 주는 것이 신심을 버리게 하므로 악을 용서하지 말라는 중요성을 강조하십니다. 이 어서에 의한 것 같으면 악한 사람은 다른 사람으로 하여금 어리석게 하여서 민계끔 하는데 어떻게 합니까?
7. 우리들의 생명 속에서는 원품의 무명과 원품의 법성이 들어있습니다. 무명은 육천마왕으로 나타나는데, 그것은 악지식의 원천입니다. 이것은 또 내적으로 욕심, 분노와 무식으로 나타나서 신심의 올바른 길을 이해 못하게 합니다. 이 어서에 의하면, 무명에서 벗어나려면 어떠한 자세와 행동이 필요합니까?
8. 대성인께서는 신심을 포기하지 않는 것이 중요하다고 하시면서, 브라만과 가장한 육천마왕에게 눈을 공양한 사리불의 이야기를 하십니다. 왜 사리불은 보살행을 그만 두셨습니까?
9. 이 어서에서 대성인께서는 남편과 부인들을 다른 관점에서 격려하여 주십니다. 남편들에게는 “여자들은 마음이 약해서 두 분의 부인들은 신심을 포기하는지 모르지만, 두 분께서는 이를 악물고 신심에서 마음이 약해져서는 안됩니다.”라고 하였고, 부인들에게는 다음과 같이 말씀하셨습니다. “이 법문 때때물리러든 후사 지아비에게 살해당할지라도 회회하지 말지어다. 일동으로 지아비의 마음을 간한다면 용녀의 뒤를 이어 미래에 악세의 여인성불의 도모가 되리다.” 대성인께서는 각자가 난을 만났을 때, 어떠한 자세를 가져야 하는지를 가르쳐주고 있습니다?

- “불법을 이해하는 것이 성장하면 삼장사마가 본연히 다루어 입어한다. 내지 따르지 말지며 두려워 말지이다. 이에 따르면 바야흐로 사람으로 하여금 악도에 항하게 하고 이를 두려워하면 정법의 수행을 방해하느니라.”를 이용하십시오.**
10. 삼장사마는 어디에서부터 생겨났습니까?
  11. 왜 난이라는 것은 우리가 성불을 하고 있는 중이라는 것을 확인하여 줍니까?
  12. 우리들의 행복과 성불은 다른 사람의 행동에 달려있지 않고, 오로지 우리들의 노력에 달려 있지만, 대성인께서는 “지아비가 출거우면 아내도 변명하고, 지아비가 도둑이면 아내도 도둑이 되느니라.”라고 말씀하셨는데 이 말씀의 의미를 설명하십시오.
  13. “마음의 스승이 될지언정 마음을 스승으로 삼지 말라.”라고 대성인께서 말씀하셨는데 마음의 스승이 되라는 말은 무엇을 의미합니까?
- “난조 전답서” (어서전집 1578쪽)**
14. 덕승동자와 그의 흠뻑 공양 이야기의 통해서 대성인께서는 공양에 대해서 두가지 요점을 말씀하셨습니다. 그것은 무엇입니까?
  15. 일반적으로 어본존 공양에는 두가지 형식이 있습니다. 그것을 설명하십시오.
  16. 수년에 걸친 도키미쓰의 공양을 칭찬하시면서 대성인께서는 “부처를 무량의 진보로서 억겁동안 공양하는 것 보다는 말법의 법화경의 행자를 하루일지라도 공양하는 공덕은 백천만억배 뛰어나다.”고 설하셨습니다. 말법의 법화경의 행자가 실한 가르침과 석가 부처가 실한 가르침을 비교하면서, 위에 말씀하신 것에 대한 이유를 설명하십시오.
  17. 왜 우리들은 니치렌 대성인을 본불이라고 부르는지 설명하십시오.
  18. 석가모니 부처가 하신 성불과 대성인께서 하신 성불의 차이는 무엇입니까?
- 다음 어서를 읽으신 후에 아래의 질문에 답하여 주십시오. “이곳은 무척 쓸쓸한 유골이지만 교주 석존의 일대사의 비범을 영추산에서 상전 받아 니치렌의 육단의 흥중에 비장하여 숨겨 가졌노라. 그러므로 니치렌의 가슴 속은 제불입정의 곳이니라. 허의 위는 전법룡의 곳, 목은 탄생의 곳, 입은 정각의 곳이다.”**
19. “교주 석존의 일대사의 비범을 영추산에서 상전 받았노라.” 이 말씀은 무엇을 뜻합니까?
  20. “일대사의 비범”이란 무엇입

- 니까?
21. “니치렌의 가슴 속은 제불입정의 곳이니라. 허의 위는 전법룡의 곳, 목은 탄생의 곳, 입은 정각의 곳이다.” 이 설법에서 니치렌 대성인께서는 무엇을 말씀하시려고 하셨습니까?
- 다음 어서를 읽으신 후에 밑에 있는 질문에 답하여 주십시오. “법이 묘하기 때문에 사람이 존귀하기 때문에 주처가 존귀하니라.”**
22. 위의 어서를 니치렌 대성인의 입장에서 설명하십시오.
- “일념삼천”**
23. 삼천이란 숫자는 일념 삼천의 구성원리에서 나왔습니다. 이 일념 삼천의 원리를 설명하십시오.
  24. 천대사는 일념을 심계로 구라고 하셨는데, 일념 속에는 심계가 들어 있는데, 심계가 무엇인지 설명하십시오.
  25. 심계호구란 무엇입니까?
  26. 심어시를 설명하십시오.
  27. 니치렌 대성인의 일념 삼천과 석가모니의 일념 삼천의 차이를 설명하십시오.
  28. 육도(여섯가지 낮은 생명계)와 사성(네가지 높은 생명계)을 비교하면서 그것들이 어떻게 나타나지는지를 설명하십시오.
  29. 보살계와 이승계의 주요한 차이를 설명하십시오.
  30. 여섯본말구경등은 처음과 끝이 다른데 둘 다 서로 떨어질 수 없다는 것을 말하는데, 처음은 무엇이며 끝은 무엇을 말합니까?
  31. 삼중비전초에 “오음이 입시로 화합함을 이룸하여 중생이라 하느니라.”라고 대성인께서 말씀하셨는데, 다른 중생과의 우리의 관계를 어떻게 보아야 하는지에 대해서 무엇을 우리들에게 말하여 주십니까?
  32. 국토세간은 심계를 갖고 있습니다. 국토와 중생사이의 차이는 무엇입니까?
- “이케다 SGI회장의 법화경 방편품 수랑품의 강인”**
33. 이러한 각종의 법화경은 무엇이며, 그리고 각종의 법화경에 공통되는 것은 무엇입니까?
  34. 법화경의 행자들이 누구를 말합니까?
  35. 대성인께서는 어떻게 생명으로서 법화경을 읽으셨습니까?
  36. 법화경을 독송하는 공덕은 무엇입니까?
  37. 우리들이 근행할 때 무엇을 청송합니까?
  38. 부처께서 설법을 하실 때는 네 개의 조건이 갖추어져야 하는데, 그 네가지 조건은 무엇입니까?
  39. “그때”라는 것을 말할 때 가장 중요한 것이 있는데, 그것은 무엇입니까?

- 었습니까?
40. 지혜란 무엇을 말하는지요. 그리고 그 지혜를 어떻게 얻을 수 있습니까?
  41. 대성인의 불법에서 가장 중요한 불도 수행은 무엇입니까?
  42. 말법의 불도 수행 중에서 가장 어려운 일은 무엇입니까?
  43. 대성인님의 의취, 즉 어본불의 진의는 무엇입니까?
  44. 불계는 어디에 나타납니까?
  45. 생명의 넓이와 깊이를 포착하기 위해서는 무엇을 이해하여야 합니까?
  46. 부처의 눈(불안)이란 무엇입니까?
  47. 대성인의 불법의 입장(문처의 입장에서 볼 때 제법실상이란 무엇을 말합니까?
- “묘호니 부인 답서”**
48. 니치렌 대성인에 의하면, 묘호니 부인이 대성인께 “남묘호령이 계교라고 부르는 것만으로 성불할 수 있습니까?”라고 질문하셨는데, 그 질문의 중요성은 무엇입니까? 그리고 그러한 질문은 우리들에게 왜 중요합니까?
  49. 육단 구이의 법문은 우리들의 신심수행에서 무엇을 가르치는지를 설명하십시오.
  50. 니치렌 대성인께서는 이 어서에서 “만약 법화경을 수지하시면 현재에 반드시 성불합니다.”라고 말씀하셨습니다. 즉신 성불이란 무엇인지 삼보로 설명하여 주십시오.
  51. 즉신 성불의 기본은 무엇입니까?
  52. 니치렌 대성인께서는 “남묘호령계교란 일구일계지만 법화경의 간오입니다.”라고 말씀하셨습니다. 이 구절은 무엇을 의미하는지 설명하십시오.
  53. 우리들이 제목을 근간으로 할 때 모든 것이 가치있게 됩니다. 그렇다면 어떻게 합니까?
  54. 우리들의 신심수행에서 “태만하지 말고 제목을 부른다.”라는 것은 무엇을 의미하는 것입니까?
  55. 어떤 마음 자세로 어서를 배독하여야 되며, 어서를 깊이 배독할 때 무엇을 느낍니까?
  56. “백천만동안 어두운 곳도 등불을 넣으면 환순간에 밝아진다.”라고 대성인께서 말씀하셨습니다. 이 구절은 신심의 두가지 중요한 원리가 들어 있습니다. 이 두가지 원리란 무엇인지 설명하여 주십시오.
  57. 대성인의 묘호니 부인답서 어서를 강의하면서 이케다 회장님은 “도전할 환경에 처 있을 때 기원을 하여야 합니다.”라고 말씀하셨습니다. 그리고 신심과 기원의 마음 자세가 어떠한가 하는지를 설명하셨습니다. 어떤 마음 자세가 꿈을 실현하는데 방해해 하며 그리고 꿈을 실현하는데 우리를 인도합니까?
  58. 기원과 행동의 연관성을 설명하십시오.
  59. 묘호니 부인 답서의 마지막 부분에서 대성인께서 “의심이 있어서는 안됩니다.”라고 말씀하셨습니다. 무엇을 의심하지 않아야 하

- 며 우리들의 의구심을 풀어 주시려고 어떻게 우리들을 격려하여 주십니까?
- “종문 문제에 관한 집의 응답”**
60. 신심의 기본 원칙을 이해하지 못하면 우리들의 불법수행은 끊임없는 고통스러운 수행이 되고, 또 홀바로 이해하지 못하면 법화경을 수지하는 것은 소용없는 것이라고 니치렌 대성인께서는 우리들에게 경고하셨습니다. 종문문제에 관해서 홀바로 신심이란 어떠한 것을 말하는지요?
  61. “자신이 삼신즉일의 본각이며 여래이니라. 이렇게 믿으시고 남묘호령계교라고 봉창하십시오.” 위의 대성인의 말씀은 종문에서 가르치는 것과는 어떻게 다릅니까?
  62. “어본존님을 결코 타처에서 구하지 말지이다. 다만 우리 중생이 법화경을 수지하고 남묘호령계교라고 봉창하는 흉중의 육단에 계시느니라.” 위의 대성인의 말씀에 대해서 종문에서는 무엇이라고 말 합니까?
  63. 스승과 제자의 관계에 대해서 종문에서는 어떻게 규정을 합니까?
  64. SGI와 종문의 가장 본질적인 차이는 태도와 행동 면에 있습니다. 그 차이를 좀더 자세히 설명하십시오.
  65. 무엇 때문에 마키꾸지 회장과 도다회장께서는 법주의 지시를 따르지 않으셨습니까?
  66. 종문에서는 SGI에서 발행하는 본존님이 가짜라고 주장하는 3가지 이유중의 2가지는 무엇이며, 그리고 그러한 이유가 왜 타당하지 않습니까?
  67. SGI에서 발행한 본존이 가짜가 아닌 이유를 설명하십시오.
  68. 닛텐이 서사한 본존님을 니치렌 법주께서 서사한 본존님으로 화원들이 바꾸는 이유를 설명하십시오. 그리고 이 두 본존님 사이의 차이가 있는지에 대해서도 설명하십시오.
  69. 왜 우리들은 일련정종의 사찰을 방문하지 않아야 합니까?
  70. 종문에서 SGI와 이케다 회장님에 대해서 계속적으로 박해를 하고 있는 것을 우리들은 어떻게 보아야 합니까?
  71. 왜 SGI와 종문이 서로 대화를 하지 않습니까?
  72. 종문과 SGI의 신도사이에 단결은 필요합니까? 필요하다면 그 이유는? 그리고 필요하지 않다면 그 이유는?
  73. 승려들의 잘못이 승려를 따르는 사람들한테 주는 영향은 무엇이며, 그리고 우리들 각자가 그러한 사람들을 위하여 무엇을 할 수 있습니까?
  74. 어떻게 종문문제가 미래에 SGI에 영향을 주겠습니까?

문제 10과 11은 마하지관을 인용하신 “불도수행에 힘쓰고

# Write Your Own Destiny

## PERSPECTIVE



The movie 'Lawrence of Arabia' reminds Fred Mayer

that with sufficient resolve he can accomplish anything and be, as Major Lawrence was, 'He Who Writes On the Wind.'

By FRED MAYER  
PHILADELPHIA

Faith in this sutra means that you will surely attain Buddhahood if you are true to the entirety of the Lotus Sutra, adhering exactly to its teachings without adding any of your own ideas or following the arbitrary interpretations of others. ("Letter to Niike," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 259)

In the movie *Lawrence of Arabia*, Major Lawrence — a British officer in charge of Arab troops in a battle against the Turks — decided to try a unique strategy. The Turkish stronghold was a city bordered by the sea, and a large artillery cannon rendered attacks by boat virtually impossible. Lawrence's plan was to cross the desert on the opposite side of the city. He knew that the cannon could not be turned around, and the Turks would be hard-pressed to defend their position.

Why was this strategy unprecedented? Simply because his proposed convoy across the desert had never been successfully completed. Many considered it suicide to even attempt such a crossing. There were no sources of water along most of the stretch, and it required a perfect management of time and resources. At one point in the trip, even if the supplies didn't run out, it was certain the camels would perish from the heat within two days' time if they didn't keep their strict schedule.

According to the film's portrayal of this historic event, the Arab soldiers, although respectful of Major Lawrence, opposed the plan. Out of a combination of fear, superstition and first-hand knowledge, they were

quick to point out that it was impossible for human or beast to cross in safety. "It is written on the wind!" they passionately declared. Persuaded by his iron-clad resolve and leadership, however, they agreed to venture forth.

Most of the traveling was done at night to conserve strength and to avoid the harsh desert sun. During one of the nightly treks, an exhausted soldier fell off his camel. His absence was not discovered until the next day. Major Lawrence didn't hesitate to go back to save the soldier, even though the odds of finding him, let alone surviving the trip back, were grim.

In this story, the desert could probably be considered the universal symbol for the expansive, infinite nature of life. Viewing the profundity and richness of

life, I am sometimes intimidated as well as awed. Imagine how these travelers must have felt as they saw the search party backtrack over the vast plains stretching out before them, miles upon miles in every direction.

"The slightest diversion could spell death." This feeling was based on their experience and beliefs but not necessarily the true nature of the situation — the true nature of their lives. For instance, the same view was very different to Major Lawrence. Where they saw doom, he saw possibility; where they saw defeat, he saw victory. His confidence and purpose were so solid, in fact, that he was willing to retrace his steps without fear of backsliding.

How do we view life: Would we rather stay close to the

places we know for fear of getting lost? Do we purposely leave behind the people and places we know in search of some "oasis"? Or, are we focused on getting to our destination, come what may?

At this point in my life, I feel I am about to embark on a new journey. I am fighting the negativity that berates me by saying, "You'll never get a good job," "That last relationship was your last chance for a meaningful romance," and "Your health will only get worse." It's a daily battle against my fundamental darkness, the aspect of my life whose motto is: "You have not changed — things are going to be this way forever!"

Although these feelings are not new to me, the "journey" is. Through my practice I can determine that I will choose my own destiny. Through faith, suddenly life's seemingly endless directions and possibilities are a source of comfort and passion instead of a cause for fear and hesitation. Sometimes I get caught up in the quest for the ultimate accomplishment that will really show proof to myself and others. But what is actual proof?

My job, my relationships and my health, of course, reflect where my life is at in some regard but my determination, my unshakable conviction to achieve my dreams, is the real proof of this Buddhism. It is just as SGI President Ikeda points out, "To advance toward our dreams cheerfully, to courageously work toward achieving them — this is what gives the most sublime meaning and value to our lives" (July 31 *World Tribune*, p. 8).

When Major Lawrence returned with the fallen soldier in tow, the troops rejoiced. They anointed him 'He Who Writes On the Wind' in reference to his steadfast determination and his ability to seemingly change destiny. He would not allow people's opinions or his own misgivings to deter him from his purpose. We, too, can write our own destiny.

Correct practice guarantees our victory. When traveling, I'm the one who picks the destination — should I blame my car if I am driving around in circles? With this practice, I am in the driver's seat.

Just like the traveler in the desert or the driver on the road, we each decide how far we want to go. WII



T.E. Lawrence (1888-1935) is perhaps best known as Lawrence of Arabia.

Where they saw doom, Lawrence saw possibility; where they saw defeat, he saw victory. His confidence and purpose were so solid, in fact, that he was willing to retrace his steps without fear of backsliding.

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# WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

## Buddhism in America

I really appreciated seeing Joe Newman's "Perspective" on "Buddhism American Style" (July 31). It was nice to see in print what I have been feeling ever since I joined the SGI. I am a relatively new member, so sometimes I wonder if I just have not "got it" yet — maybe I haven't. But I want to express my opinion.

Part of me learns a lot by experiencing another culture, especially since the members really demonstrate the most positive aspects of their culture. But part of me has a hard time sitting still through some meetings. I have to keep reminding myself that I am experiencing a different culture — at times I feel uncomfortable bringing friends to meetings, because I am not sure that they will understand the cultural context.

Sometimes I think it is a good thing, that I am learning different ways to view the world and tolerance for new ways. But sometimes I just do not want to be there. I wish there was more awareness of this on the part of the organization, and I wish that there was more exploration of what Buddhism is about at its core, and how it relates to a North American perspective.

I suppose that what I really long for is more questioning, more disagreement, more discussion and less acceptance that whatever the leaders/the books say is necessarily right.

— ALISON HOPKINS,  
Queens, N.Y.

[Re: Joe Newman's "Perspective"] Yeah, Joe. It's about time that someone said what I always thought. Remember having to take off your shoes at the community center or having to kneel or sit on the floor during the world peace prayer meeting?

The Daishonin's Buddhism, though, is neither Japanese nor American. Isn't it a universal religion for all people? If so, maybe, just maybe, we should focus on the best of both American culture and Japanese culture. Maybe we should take the BEST of both worlds. It's funny how Buddhism's Middle Way works for us.

Thanks, Joe, for giving me this opportunity to think for myself.

— MURRAY I. SINGER,  
Cleveland

After reading Joe Newman's article "Buddhism American Style" (July 31), I find myself unable to agree with his classification of cultural values into neat ethnic compartments such as Japanese and American.

Although I share his desire to find a way to speak directly to the hearts of more Americans about Buddhism, I don't see how we can say that values such as directness and self-reliance do not exist in Japanese culture or that Americans do not some way emphasize conformity (if this is what the article implies).

Studying our American philosophers is a great idea because theirs is a universal one. In talking directly with Americans, we will find a wide range of values both specific to and overlapping many different cultures and nationalities. Many people choose the best from different cultures and this is part of who they are that transcends national labels. I think there is beautiful wisdom in this.

As a Buddhist, I believe being influenced by Japanese values is unavoidable and even desirable as long as we don't approach it arrogantly or in an attempt to become someone other than who we really are. In fact, I am convinced that by embracing certain positive Japanese and foreign values, we actually become more American.

My personal experience is that through an association with many people from Japan and other countries, values such as a strong work ethic and a deeper understanding of family loyalty and respect were sort of brought back to me. These cultural values, which can also be described as American, were ones with which I had lost touch.

— TOM ROONEY,  
Cottage Grove, Minn.

## Gay Pride

As one of the fortunate members asked to assist with the Gay, Lesbian and Friends Group here in Seattle, I was pleased to see the mention of the participation in the gay pride parade in San Francisco.

As difficult as it must be, I feel we here in Seattle have received tremendous support, especially from our leaders, in our efforts to bring Buddhism to the gay community. Someday, sexual orientation will truly be a non-issue, both in our organization and in daily life. Of course, we have to be the first to reach out and not wait for the "majority" to do the reaching.

Here in Seattle, we are trying to reach both directions. Thanks for letting us know we are not alone.

— RUTH ROSS, Seattle

Thanks for printing an article on our contingent in the San Francisco gay pride parade, the largest in the nation if not the world. I'm wondering if this was the first SGI contingent in a gay pride parade?

It was a great experience. With all the support of straight members in the Bay Area it really made me feel proud to be Buddhist!

— ROB VOGT, Dublin, Calif.

I was pleased to see the short article and photo in the most recent *World Tribune* regarding the Freedom Day Parade held here in San Francisco. It truly was an uplifting event, but your tiny article couldn't even begin to portray the electric *ichinen* that went into this phenomenal day! Diversity was the theme, and it was a joyous event to walk with such a fantastically diverse group working together for kosen-rufu.

I would have liked to have seen more photographs and maybe some interviews.

— DAVID FRASCA,  
San Francisco

It's good to see gay-related articles in the *World Tribune*. I think that they will help to dispel some of the prejudice against gays and lesbians that exists even within the SGI. It is very easy to retain your prejudice against people of a different country or race or sexuality. But it is less easy to do so when you know more about them and their hopes and fears.

As we all know, but sometimes forget, everyone has Buddhahood and all can attain Buddhahood in their current lifetime regardless of the circumstances of their life. Keep up the good work in educating us about the differ-

ences that exist in society and that are reflected in the SGI.

— CHRIS TILLEY, San Francisco

## A Mouse Story

It is a well-known fact that when you have a pet, you have to feed it food. Some animals eat pellets while others eat other animals because that's all a part of life. One of the most common "feeder animals" (a feeder is an animal used for food) is mice, which this story is about.

When Barbara Brice, a women's division member, got a job at a local pet store, she loved all of her job except giving away the mice for food. Being smart, she quickly found a solution.

Whenever anyone wanted to buy the mice, she would ask if they were for pets or feeders. If the person answered feeder, she would chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo three times to the mice so they could have a better life next time.

A few months after Barbara got her job, my sister, Alicia, got a job there as a cashier. One day, someone brought the mice to the checkout counter to buy, and my sister commented on how cute the mice were. Then she asked if they were for pets or feeders. The person said, "Feeders, and don't be praying over them, because the last three I got that were prayed over got away!"

So that ends the story of the true mouse benefit.

— BRITTANY McKEE (age 13),  
Mesa, Ariz.

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

*Because of volume, not all letters can be printed or acknowledged, but they are all read. All letters are subject to condensation.*

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**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.

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

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When he was 9, Yuichi Ono fled from his abusive father with his mother and sisters. As social outcasts in Japan, they endured poverty and hunger. Yuichi became a very unhappy boy, fighting with other kids and doing poorly in school. Today, he is a doctoral candidate at Kent State University — Buddhist practice and his mother's determination are what turned his troubles into assets, he says.



I will never forget the cold evening 22 years ago when my mother, two younger sisters and I left our home. I was 9, and my sisters were 8 and 7. We got into a taxi, and as it pulled away, I watched through the rear window as my home disappeared into the distance. I thought of my friends, that we would never play together again. I wished I could have said good-bye.

But we had to get away from my father.

We lived in Japan, and my father was raised in a good, traditional family. He was highly educated, sensitive and once dreamed of being a writer. After marriage, though, he began to feel a gap between his dreams and reality.

My mother had been practicing Buddhism for several years, but my father refused to chant. He drank a lot to forget his disappointments. And he started beating my mother when he got drunk. He beat my sisters and me, too.

My middle sister was abused so badly that as a child she was afraid of everything. She became a slow learner and could not speak well, always crying.

My mother had to hide the Gohonzon during the night because my father hated it intensely. While he was at work, she chanted to change her negative karma and improve our situation. Then one evening, my father took a knife and threatened to kill my mother. She could not move because she was paralyzed with fear, and so was I.

My middle sister, suddenly, at the crucial moment, stood up and stopped him. Because of this incident, my mother decided to leave him.

So we moved to a small apartment. We could not go out for a while because we were afraid that my father was going to find us and maybe kill us. We faced severe poverty. We were always hungry.

My mother worked very hard, getting up early to distribute newspapers, working as a traffic inspector and an insurance saleswoman — as well as taking care of us. She chanted and taught others about Buddhism. Despite hard times, she bought us books by great writers and famous classical music records.

The most effective education for us, though, was to see her studying at night after a long, stressful day.

Later, my parents faced each other in divorce court. Father wanted custody of me. If Mother had given me up, she would have received a lot of money from my father — she would never have had to worry about money. But she protected me because she cared about my future, and because she was determined to raise me to strive for kosen-rufu.

Japanese society did not accept divorced women, and many people, including our relatives, spoke ill of us or ignored us. Mother sometimes felt hopeless.

One cold night, she took our hands, and we walked and walked without any direction in the dark. Then Mother said, "Let's die together by walking in front of a moving train." She led us to the railroad. My sisters and I could only cry.

But then Mother remembered her favorite quote from Nichiren Daishonin: "Those who believe in the Lotus Sutra are as if in winter, which never fails to turn into

spring" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 150). This one short phrase saved our lives. Mother renewed her determination to endure our "winter" and to change our karma.

At school, I was having other problems. It was a special school for wealthy people that my father had wanted me to attend. One day I invited my friend to our apartment. I thought we had a good time, but the next day I heard another classmate say, "Yuichi lives in a dirty place." I used to be a friendly, nice boy, but my smile then disappeared from my face. I started fighting with classmates. This was my revenge on society.

By the end of elementary school, I became the worst student ever at my school. I played tricks on my classmates. I stole snacks from stores. I was scolded by teachers at least once every day. I really needed help.

One day a teacher shouted, "You do not deserve to be in this school!"

I said: "I did not choose to be here. My father did!" There were no teachers who could understand me, listen to me or help me.

The only one place where I could go back to being a normal child was the future division of the Soka Gakkai. The Soka Gakkai people were not fake. They encouraged me with SGI President Ikeda's guidance: "Never, ever give up! Facing your difficulties will be your asset in the future, if you continue practicing Buddhism! The world is waiting for you. The 21st century is your stage. For that, you should study hard now. Polish yourself!"

So I started chanting.

One year passed, then two years. I saw progress.

But in ninth grade, I was chanting to win any and all fights. Then I got into a fight with the Yakuza, which is a kind of Japanese Mafia, and I lost. I was bleeding badly, had bruises all over my body, and was hospitalized.

When I saw Mother appeasing the Yakuza with money, I regretted what I had done and could not stop my tears. "I am just like my father, causing a lot of trouble for my mother," I thought.

My mother did not scold me, but she looked so sad. I deeply determined that I would be a good son of whom she could be proud, and I quit fighting with people.

Instead, I started fighting myself, challenging myself, like President Ikeda said. I chanted seriously. It was not at all easy, but I studied as much as I could, spending more than seven hours a day to catch up on my studies. At times I was depressed, feeling that I wasn't smart. But then I would think of my mother. "She is selflessly struggling for me," I would say to myself. "I am her hope. I cannot betray her!"

When I had a hard time studying, I would chant, read President Ikeda's poetry, then study again. Several months later, my grades started going up. My classmates saw that my attitude was also improving. People said that I had changed. My sisters' grades also improved.

Our neighbors and my classmates no longer spoke ill of us. Some of them were, instead, even jealous. This is the human world: When we are in bad circumstances, people speak ill of us. When we are in good circumstances, people become jealous. I learned that their evaluations of me were nonsense and that I

should seek a higher standard for my life.

As a family, we overcame each problem, one by one. My mother married again recently. She turned 55 this year and is living happily in Japan. She does not have to work anymore — she is actually a millionaire now. She enjoys playing with her grandchildren. She has built up an invincible, high life-condition based on Buddhism.

My middle sister, who used to be a slow learner, graduated from her school with honors and became a nurse. My youngest sister was accepted by one of the most competitive universities in Japan and graduated with honors. I am very proud of my sisters because they always care for others, even if they are struggling themselves.

I continued to practice Buddhism and studied hard to receive my master's degree. In 1994, I was accepted to the doctoral program at Kent State University in Ohio, studying geography. My mission is to save people from natural hazards, especially in developing countries. My current project is to mitigate tornado hazards by adapting underground tornado shelters in Bangladesh. I am confident that it will save a lot of lives.

When I look back over this 22-year period, I feel that President Ikeda's words that I heard when I was little are absolutely true — all my troubles have become my assets. Now I believe the reason why I was born into a poor, suffering family was to prove the power of Buddhist practice, so that I could encourage even one other suffering family — through my own experience — that there is hope for a happy, fulfilling future. **W**

The Prometheus Group meets at the San Francisco Culture Center.

**ON HUMAN REVOLUTION**

By THE PROMETHEUS GROUP

The Prometheus Group is a study group for the junior high and high school division members of the San Francisco regions. It began in the summer of 1996 by studying SGI President Ikeda's 1991 Kosen-rufu Day message, which contains an in-depth anecdote about the ancient Greek mythological character Prometheus. In honor of the spirit of Prometheus, who stood up against the authority of the Greek gods to help the common people, we named ourselves the Prometheus Group.

After having studied Buddhism for about a year, the group decided to pursue a project that would both allow us to share what we had been learning and to demonstrate our conviction in Buddhist faith. This project would turn out to be a book, written by the members, on the subject of human revolution. For all that we have been studying and learning, for all that we have been encouraged by, it is only natural that we share the fruits of our ongoing dialogue with all of you. In this way, we are serializing the book as we write it, so that it can appear in "Seize the Day." What



Photo by WENDY SCHRADER

you are about to read is the introduction to the book, which we hope will clearly show our dedication to the path of mentor and disciple.

**HUMAN REVOLUTION — AN INTRODUCTION**

Although our dear planet — pleasant as the roses in May — has beauty and power beyond the imaginable, it is obviously not in its optimal state. It cannot remain stand-

ing for long if it is constantly being assailed.

And just as dear, there is the human race, which also does not seem to be functioning properly. The human race is acting against all logic.

The number of people suffering from problems with friends, finances or sicknesses appears to be growing constantly. We, the human race, are not only harming ourselves, but are harming our great planet Earth. People

harming the planet won't understand the gravity of their actions until they see what they have destroyed, much like a child who disregards his parents and doesn't understand the error of his actions until his parents have passed away. Slowly but surely, humanity and compassion are being driven out of the planet, supplanted by delusion and darkness. In Buddhism, the source of humanity's suffering is called

the fundamental darkness.

Fortunately, there also exist millions of people around the world who are working to stop humanity's degeneration and bring health and happiness back into everyday life. And on top of that, we, the members of the SGI, are making ceaseless efforts — efforts like the mighty flow of a vast river — to reveal the fundamental, enlightened nature of everything, of life itself.

Regarding the importance and urgency of the human race's collective challenge, the second president of the Soka Gakkai, Josei Toda, once said: "People may think they rule this planet, but they will wind up in big trouble if they destroy their natural environment. Protecting the environment means protecting humanity, too."

David Kreiger, president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, has also said, "Humankind will perish if we do not alter our mode of thinking and our system of values."

Such a complete world transformation can only occur when people transform their individual lives. Likewise, those who think happiness means merely avoiding work and challenges will never come to know true joy.

One in a series

**RUNWAY TO THE 21ST CENTURY**  
**ESSAY CONTEST**

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**THEME:**

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

**CATEGORIES:**

Junior High School

High School

College

General Youth

**DEADLINE:** Oct. 2, 1998

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

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

world for the better as we rush down this runway?

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

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

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

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

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

# SEIZE THE DAY

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

— SGI President Ikeda, Aug. 17, 1997

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

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

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

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

# Chicago Student Seminar

# A HIT

## Student News

Students traveled from as far away as Michigan, Indiana and Ohio — some driving up to seven hours one way — to attend the Chicago student division's seminar on June 20. The students discussed the temple issue and came up with a new Chicago student division mission statement, agreeing to focus on what they're calling the three S's: study, self and society.

### AVINASH SRIVASTAVA

As the various members shared their experiences and views on how to balance all their activities — from study



to SGI to sleep and all the other zillion things in between — I could not help finding com-

fort in that there was so much we all had in common. Particularly useful were discussions on how to break through our shallow existence in the lower worlds by compassion and action for others. But at the same time, how to have the courage and wisdom to take care of our own interests and avoid others taking advantage of us.



### HIDEO OZAKI

I am struggling with balancing activities and study, and it was encouraging to meet others doing the same. I felt that we are sharing the same experience and determined together to make further progress in both SGI activities and study. Three other members from southern Ohio attended the

meeting with me. The four of us have to work hard!



### AKEMI WOGD

The minute I arrived in Chicago, my spirits were uplifted. Just seeing the skyline of the city brought a smile to my lips. And it was a relief to get out of the car after the seven-hour drive. The culture center was a sight for sore eyes, so to speak. The meeting was great and exalted my spirits even further. Our main topic of discussion was the temple issue: what we, as young adults, can do about it.

When I came home and spoke with my mother about the meeting, I told her it was the best thing that she ever did for me — to push me to go to this meeting. I came away with a renewed spirit. A new strength for what I want out of my



### MELANIE REISER

At first, I debated whether I wanted to go to Chicago, but I'm glad I went. One of the reasons is that, during the five-hour drive there and back, I got to know the other student division members from Michigan. And it was really nice.

At the meeting, I noticed (especially during gongyo) the diversity of the members. There were students of all ages and interests — truly a microcosm of the world — and yet we all had a lot in common.

I was also encouraged by people's big dreams; there were so many people with huge dreams and goals. There was also a lot of laughter during the meeting, which made it fun.

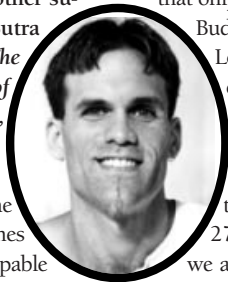
practice. And a new strength for what I can do to make myself happy again. ♪

## A Sense of Mission

By DAVID EISENBERG  
SGI-USA Soka Group Leader

This [Lotus] sutra is superior to all other sutras. ("The Sutra of True Requitall," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 249)

The Lotus Sutra is the only sutra that teaches that all people are capable of attaining Buddhahood and can do so in their present form in this lifetime. Because of that, Nichiren Daishonin confidently proclaims that it's superior. All prior sutras taught that a



person had to practice for lifetime after lifetime to attain enlightenment. They also taught that only men could attain Buddhahood! But the Lotus Sutra is for all of us.

As discussed in the most recent installment of this series (March 27 "Seize the Day"), we are Bodhisattvas of the Earth born into this world to enjoy our lives and help others become happy. Sometimes, the sufferings we experience make us feel like we'll never attain that happiness.

# WE HAVE

But when we chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we can see the opportunity for growth in the midst of those struggles, reveal our full potential and overcome our problems. It doesn't matter who we are or how bad our problems may be.

We have the great opportunity to change our karma

through our Buddhist practice. But nobody can make us chant or interact with other members. We have to do it ourselves, and a good place to start is by realizing just how wonderful it is that we have the chance.

Four in a series

# THE CHANCE

# SEIZING the DAY **Finally!**

## YWD CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE



Michiyo Kakegawa realized her dream this year of working for the United Nations Development Programme in New York.

By MICHIOYO KAKEGAWA  
New York

I am so happy and grateful that I could attend the 1998 Young Women's Division Conference, which took place at the Florida Nature and Culture Center, July 16-19. During the conference, we all had the opportunity to exchange our experiences. I was so encouraged by other members — to learn how they also had to challenge their problems in life and overcome them. Now, we are all deter-

mined to challenge any difficulties, to develop ourselves and to help others become happy.

The theme of the conference was "Seize the Day," and we studied Nichiren Daishonin's letter "Happiness in This World," which is one of my favorites. How can I forget the days when I was so disappointed about myself, almost four years ago? At that time, I was encouraged by one of the YWD senior leaders in London. She used the following passage from the same letter: "Suffer what there is to suffer, enjoy what there is to enjoy. Regard both suffering and joy as facts of life and continue chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, no matter what happens. Then you will experience boundless joy from the Law. Strengthen your faith more than ever" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pp. 161-62).

It was almost four years ago that I did not get the position I wanted in the U.N. Development Programme. This was after I had

studied international relations at Soka University and environmental management and economic development at the London School of Economics and Political Science. At that time, I had to overcome disappointment and even some doubts about the Gohonzon.

But I had to believe in the Gohonzon and myself — there must be a meaning to this result. I also had to accept the reality of not getting the job I wanted at that time. After returning to Tokyo from London, I found a good job in a training and research institute closely affiliated with Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

Ministry of Education, and I enjoyed working there. I tried to gain more experience related to international organizations and overseas development assistance and looked for an opportunity to work overseas.

Three-and-a-half years later, I finally got the position with the UNDP in New York. I started to work here in April! I work for a small unit called Capacity 21, which was founded after the Rio Summit in 1992 to assist developing countries in building their national capacity so they can formulate national development policies or strategies to achieve sustainable

development. As a program specialist, I am managing our programs in Asia, the Pacific, Eastern Europe and CIS regions. The work is very exciting and challenging, because I have to keep finding what the needs and difficulties of these countries are — and I have to respond quickly to them by providing support, including workshops, training, sending advisors and so on, to help improve their situations.

I truly believe that I got the right job at the right time, based on faith.

Through the YWD conference, I strengthened my conviction that "If we have a truly high state of life, then even when unpleasant things happen, we view them as making life all the more interesting," as SGI President Ikeda says in his lecture on "Happiness in This World" (*Learning From the Goshu*, p. 236).

As the conference ended, I was determined to share my joy and experiences in faith with as many people as possible. ♪

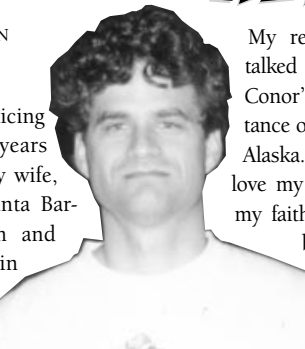


Young women from across the country study 'Happiness in This World' at their July conference.

## YMD CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

By TODD MCGOVERN  
Eagle River, Alaska

I've been practicing for nine years along with my wife, Lili — first in Santa Barbara, Long Beach and Orange County in California and now in Alaska, where we've been for almost four years. My visit to the Florida Nature and Culture Center the weekend of July 11, the anniversary of the founding of the young men's division, was also my son's first birthday. Lili and I are very appreciative that Conor is such a healthy, happy 1 year old. We had a miscarriage about six months before conceiving our son and found it remarkable that this temporary set-back ended up allowing us to have Conor, a very energetic, proud boy, on YMD Day in 1997.



My region men's division leader talked to me several months before Conor's birth concerning the importance of standing up for the youth of Alaska. He emphasized that if I really love my wife and son, strengthening my faith and practice were the very best things I could do for them. Several of my previous attempts to stand up and take responsibility had produced little success due to difficulties I had balancing activities with my career, hobbies (like skiing and hiking) and other business interests.

It became obvious to me that I must again focus my energy on SGI activities and this time succeed in them for my wife and son. This is also why I had absolutely no regrets about being away from home on my son's first birthday. I called from an FNCC pay phone to sing him "Happy Birthday" while Lili held the phone to his ear as he was waking up.

Approximately two months before the

conference, the Alaska youth division held a very successful graduation ceremony for the Boys and Girls Group and the junior high and high school divisions: We had 50 youth in attendance, the most youth gathered at a single SGI event in recent Alaska history. I came to the FNCC celebrating our success of the last year and planning to renew my spiritual energy toward keeping the same momentum going into next year.

As an engineer and contractor, I spend a great deal of time in a conservative scientific and business atmosphere. While listening to my fellow YMD members at the FNCC conference, in an atmosphere where everyone was sharing their hearts, I realized that I really need to open my heart more. I realized that I could be accomplishing even more if I'm more sincere during chanting, and that it is imperative to share this practice and our organization with the people in my life. I thank all of the YMD members who attended for sharing their hearts.

I feel that the YMD members' collective efforts reverberate with SGI President Ikeda's new poem for the youth division, "Into the Storm" (July 3 *World Tribune*). After we studied this poem at the conference, I felt that it described the YMD members' united, powerful efforts to pilot the ship for kosen-rufu. One of my favorite parts was "Labor day and night in the engine room, / Covered in oil and grime."

Amazingly, two days after returning from the FNCC, I had the incredible opportunity to get covered in dirt and grime amid the deafening roar of fighter jets practicing "touch and go" and amid the blasting of a high pressure washer. I was suited up in protective clothing from head to toe, working on the decontamination of an old metal-plating shop at the local Air Force base! It reminded me of President Ikeda's encouragement, and that I should be working 10 times harder for kosen-rufu! I did rejuvenate my spiritual energy at FNCC! ♪

# READY FOR MORE OIL & GRIME

# I CARE ABOUT MY COMMUNITY

By MELANIE SARCEDA  
Highland Park, Calif.

EXPERIENCE

I have lived in the inner city of Highland Park most of my life. Although I could have lived a sheltered life, my rebellious attitude allowed me the opportunity to see, firsthand, the lifestyles of many individuals within my community.



Photo by YVONNE SARCEDA

Within five years, five of my friends have died. All of these were Highland Park gang members under age 25. A mother lost her only two sons and will never have grandchildren. One of them was my best friend. Two other homeboys were shot to death. The last person killed himself. This year, a 16-year-old girl was

shot in broad daylight — the bullet entered just below her heart and went out her arm. She had been to an SGI-USA meeting at my house a month prior; somehow she is still alive.

On April 1, my boyfriend, Carlos, was involved in a crossfire shooting. Now he is incarcerated, facing charges of attempted murder. At a crucial moment, he made the wrong decision.

Carlos has always been very supportive of my practice, although he never used to chant. He went to most meetings with me and made sure that I did morning and evening gongyo every day. In the time we've been together, more than a year, he has helped me realize things about myself. He helped me change, as I helped him. The changes he made were not spiritual ones, though; he stopped himself from gang-banging and hanging out with the homeboys. But the change was with his mind, not his heart!

It's not about the school you go to, because Carlos graduated from a private school and was attending college to become an electrical engineer. It's not about the way your parents raise you, because his mother loves him very much. It's not about any external

thing: No object. No person. No activity. It was about him. How he felt in his heart at that crucial moment.

This had to happen for him to understand what Buddhism is about. Carlos now chants, every morning, every evening, for hours on end. He has found faith in Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and has told me that he never felt this happy in his whole life. He changed something in his heart; he knows now that he has a mission to help others understand the importance of not joining gangs and the consequences of being in them. On May 3, Soka Gakkai Day, he committed his life to kosen-rufu.

I, too, have realized that Buddhism is humanism. It's about helping other people to help themselves. It's about introducing people to Buddhism with our lives. To help

the people who need the help, we must take action.

A feeling of ultimate bliss permeated the World Culture Center in Los Angeles on March 14 and 15 during the Global Family Festival. Why don't we share this feeling? I don't think that a lot of people outside the SGI know this feeling. Now is the time to help people.

We need to make a good name for the SGI. A good name. We need to be known as an organization that responsibly helps people — from the heart. Because I live in Highland Park, I choose to make this cause. I sincerely care about the people within my community. I have dedicated my life to kosen-rufu here. To me that means every day, no matter where I am at, no matter what the circumstances. Because I care. To me, NOW IS THE TIME. ♪

# MAKING THE ORGANIZATION OUR OWN

## Thoughts on a Religious Revolution

By LISA JONES  
SGI-USA Youth Division Study Committee

Some members feel that it's inappropriate to criticize anything about the SGI-USA. Then again, there are members who are so critical of the organization that one wonders why they even continue to call themselves members.

My point of view falls somewhere in between these two extremes. The difference between constructive criticism and mere complaint lies in one's intent, I believe.

The SGI-USA isn't perfect. That's why it's important to think critically and remain engaged in the work of creating any organization of, by and for the people. To me, that's what taking responsibility in the or-

ganization entails.

Thomas Jefferson once said that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance. Responsible citizenship, like responsible membership in the SGI-USA, requires eternal vigilance — speaking out and taking action rather than assuming that the government or any administrative body is going to take care of us. Unless we fully participate in our democracy (and our organization), it will give way to despotism.

SGI President Ikeda once said: "In 1800, when Jefferson was 57 years old, he wrote in a letter, 'I have sworn...eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.' I am of the same belief. Freedom is something that you must fight for and gain by and for yourself. It is not something

that is handed over on a silver platter."

Sometimes I feel that the administrative bodies within the SGI-USA, like the Central Executive Committee or the group of leaders in my region, can be likened to a government. The decisions and policies of the government may not always reflect the true sentiment of the governed — but ultimately, the two are inseparable. The ideal, of course, is that the government and the people function in perfect accord. That's not always the reality, but that's what we're shooting for.

Personally, I didn't join the SGI-USA because I wanted to belong to an organization. Rather, I saw that a person can do amazing things with the Gohonzon; I was drawn to the philosophy and prac-

tice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

I've come to see, though, that you can't have one without the other.

(Likewise, I dare say that most immigrants come to America seeking freedom rather than involvement in the U.S. government. Per Jefferson, though, without one, the other is imperiled.)

I know that there are many members who disagree with some aspects of the organization. And that's all the more reason for them — and all of us — to deepen our sense of ownership.

This is *your* organization as much as it's mine or anyone else's.

The degree to which we abdicate our responsibility for the organization or fail to invest



ourselves in it is the degree to which authoritarianism will take root in the SGI-USA.

I don't think that the SGI-USA will ever be all things to all people. Rather, it's a work eternally in progress, eternally dependent upon our unre-served participation. To me, that means living with faith in the principle that one person can change the organization and the world for the better — and resolving to be that person.

Five in a series