



FRIENDS
The Boys and Girls Group's 'Friends for Peace' is here.

pullout section



DIALOGUE
'Recoiling from effort or just doing what you please is not freedom,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'It is simply irresponsible and self-absorbed.'
pages 4-5

No. 3207

SEPTEMBER 4, 1998

A Partnership for the People



IN THIS INSTALLMENT OF 'THE THIRD STAGE OF LIFE,' KANEKO IKEDA JOINS THE DIALOGUE (AFTER REQUESTS FROM MEMBERS) AND SHARES HER MEMORIES OF PRESIDENTS MAKIGUCHI AND TODA, AND HER LIFE WITH HER HUSBAND.

Participants in this installment are SGI President Ikeda, Kaneko Ikeda, Seikyo Shimbun General Editorial Bureau Senior Director Osamu Matsuoka and Vice Director Katsusuke Sasaki.

MATSUOKA: After we broached the subject, earlier in this series, of Mrs. Ikeda being a guest participant, we were deluged with letters expressing enthusiastic approval of our proposal. Now our wish has come true, and Mrs. Ikeda has joined us.

Thank you both very much for making this possible.

D. IKEDA: Don't thank me. It was entirely up to my wife. She

finally decided that if she could be of any help, she'd be glad to participate.

SASAKI: Thank you again, Mrs. Ikeda.

K. IKEDA: I really don't know if I have anything useful to contribute, but I'll do my best.

A Visit From the Thought Police

MATSUOKA: The two of you were married on May 3, 1952, and this year you celebrate your 46th wedding anniversary. I express my most deep-

felt gratitude for the utterly selfless dedication and commitment with which you have worked together for the progress of kosen-rufu, the development of the Soka Gakkai and the happiness and welfare of the members over those long years.

SASAKI: In a poem you dedicated to members in Tokyo's Ota Ward, where you were born and raised, President Ikeda, you related the story of how Mrs. Ikeda, when she was still a young girl in pigtailed, went to meet Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the Soka Gakkai's founder, at Ota's Yaguchi-nowatashi Station and guide

him to a discussion meeting at her home. That story points to the long history of Mrs. Ikeda's faith.

K. IKEDA: Yes, I was an elementary school student at the time. I went with my mother to meet Mr. Makiguchi at the station. He patted me on the head and said: "How nice of you to come to meet me! Thank you!"

In those days, there were only a few little shops in front of the station. There were so few houses that you could see the banks of the nearby Tamagawa river from the station.

PLEASE SEE PARTNERSHIP, 6

ANNIVERSARY POEMS

SGI President Ikeda composed the following poems, dedicated to all SGI members, to commemorate his 51st anniversary of joining the Soka Gakkai, Aug. 24. (More poems on page 3.)

**Fifty-first anniversary
Of taking faith
My spirits soaring high
as ever**



**Celebrating the anniversary
of my faith
Together with
Ten million comrades**



**I want to shout for joy
On this anniversary
Of joining the Soka Gakkai
For the cause of kosen-rufu**



NEWS

A Linus Pauling Web site; relief for flood victims; celebrating SGI-USA pioneer members and more....

page 3

ESSAY

The Soka Gakkai has always tried to be a good neighbor and make its facilities hubs of peace and prosperity.

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PROFILE

Maurice Mimes, facing a life without sight or hearing, embraces the challenge and opportunity.

page 9

WOW!

BREAKTHROUGHS IN UNDERSTANDING

The Source of Benefit


By DWAYNE WILSON
NEW YORK

I have been practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism for 10 years. However, I have only recently begun to understand the concept of benefit in this practice. In the past, I really wasn't concerned about the source of conspicuous benefit — all I knew was that I wanted results, and I wanted them often.

It wasn't until the beginning of this year, when I was asked to present the concept of human revolution at my district discussion meeting, that I discovered I had often been basing my happiness on something outside myself.

The term *human revolution* was used for the first time by President Toda in reference to the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice; human revolution is the reformation of one's life. I sought further explanation in reading *Fundamentals of Buddhism* and learned that if you observe a person's life, you will discover his or her basic tendency or strong inclination toward one or more of the ten worlds from Hell to Buddhahood. Thus, the term *human revolution* indicates the gradual elevation of our basic tendency.

The visible results of our inner changes are called conspicuous benefits. The inner changes themselves are inconspicuous benefits and are, to me, the most important. There have been crucial moments in my practice — moments that required me to make things materialize in my daily life — and by chanting I have gotten the conspicuous benefits I've needed. But through my study of human revolution, I have realized that the changes that I've made in the depths of my life over the past 10 years are the *real source* of all my conspicuous benefits.

Don't get me wrong. I still chant expecting visible results. But now I'm not so concerned with conspicuous benefits and am more focused on my inward determination to fulfill my mission in life. WOW! 

Did you ever say "Wow!" after studying Buddhism? Send us your story (see p. 10 for contact information).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON FAITH

What Is 'Consistency From Beginning to End'?

By TED MORINO

SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT LEADER

Q What does *consistency from beginning to end* mean? How does it apply to my practice?

A You have probably heard many times that your determination (*ichinen*) can change everything. The tenth of the ten factors, consistency from beginning to end sheds further light on this Buddhist teaching.

Consistency from beginning to end links the other nine factors: appearance, nature, entity, power, influence, internal cause, relation (auxiliary cause), latent effect and manifest effect. All of these are elements that make up life in general — and your individual life. And all of them are interrelated.

The point of consistency from beginning to end is that your will can influence all the elements of your life, every aspect of your life.

Consistency from beginning to end explains that the first three factors, appearance through entity (representing phenomena, like a person's physical

characteristics), and the remaining six factors (functions, like a person's behavior) affect one another. They constitute a whole.

"Each of us lives within the framework of the ten factors," SGI President Ikeda explains in *Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*, volume 1. "There is consistency among all factors, and together they make up the irreplaceable totality of your being," he adds (p. 136).


The well-known concept of the ten worlds is related to the ten factors: Each of the ten worlds embodies the ten factors. Four factors in particular — internal cause, relation (auxiliary cause), latent effect and manifest effect — are the mechanisms by which your life winds up in one of the ten worlds. When Nichiren Daishonin says that rage is the cause of Hell, greed is the cause of Hunger, foolishness is the cause of Animality and beligerence is the cause of Anger, he is pointing to the factors in your life that add up to you being in one life-condition or another.

It's important to understand that however the factors are at work in your life

or whatever the life-condition you are manifesting, it's all temporary. There is nothing fixed about your life, nothing set in stone.

And the ten factors and ten worlds all come from you. When your life-condition changes, they all change as well. Every aspect of your life depends on the actions you take, on the state of mind you can develop.

The practitioners of T'ien-t'ai's Buddhism aimed to correctly observe life: This was the ultimate purpose behind their practice. In contrast, the Daishonin's Buddhism is not merely interested in observation of the truth but in allowing people to change the core of their existences — we strive to make all aspects of our lives shine by polishing our innate Buddhahood.

The bottom line with consistency from beginning is that changing our lives — every aspect of them — is *always* possible. And since the ten factors are components of every human life, consistency from beginning to end also teaches, as does the concept of the ten worlds, that everybody equally has this opportunity to better their lives. 

THE MIDDLE WAY

Transcending Extremes

WHAT A

Concept

ON THE BASIC IDEAS
OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM

By LISA JONES

STAFF WRITER

Buddhism is known as the Middle Way because as a practice and collection of teachings it's humble and all-inclusive, yet it makes strong, decisive assertions based on an awareness of reality. Further, Buddhism neither advocates worldly indulgence nor rigid self-denial but harmonizes these extremes.

In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, the Middle Way denotes Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, which is the essence of the body and mind of human beings. Further, it could be said that the Middle Way is both Buddhahood and life itself. Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, Buddhahood and life itself are neither born nor do they die — therefore, they can't be defined by the extremes of either birth or death. They exhibit qualities of both, but neither alone can fully express Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, Buddhahood or life.

So the Middle Way includes two polarities as well as a third *something*. This third something can be explained in terms of what Buddhism calls the three truths, three perceptions, or *ku ke chu*. The first truth is that all things are *ku* (formless or

non-substantial in nature), which means that things and phenomena have no fixed existence of their own but exist only as potentialities.

But while all things are *ku*, they nevertheless have a provisional or temporary form (*ke*), which is in constant flux. *Chu* (the Middle Way) is the truth that all things are characterized by both non-substantiality and temporary form yet display the ultimate reality.

These three views of truth are like the three sides of an equilateral triangle; all three are equally enlightened, equally valid and essentially inseparable from one another. The Buddhist view of truth, then, is invariably the broadest possible view, denying nothing.

Based on this view of truth, Buddhism makes decisive statements about what is correct or incorrect in terms of practice. For example, we can say that the Gohonzon is in *ku*; it exists in faith alone and is not in essence a fixed existence. At the same time, the Daishonin depicted the life-condition of Buddhahood in the form (*ke*) of a paper scroll that we call the Gohonzon. Recognizing these two truths, we can make the assertion (*chu*) that the Gohonzon is a thing that embodies the Law of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. The *chu* in this case is to say that the Gohonzon is the true object of devotion and that chanting to the Gohonzon enables all people to manifest their Buddhahood.

While the Chinese character *chu* literally means middle, the Daishonin emphasizes that the character also means to tap,

as in to tap our innate Buddha wisdom. This wisdom, which is rooted in our lives at the most fundamental level, allows us to harmonize polarities and at the same time give them direction.

To illustrate, the Daishonin compares the Middle Way to the mast of a ship in "The Ship to Cross the Sea of Suffering." This mast is like our Buddhahood. Even though the winds of formlessness (*ku*) blow, and the sea of *ke* is in constant flux, the Middle Way (*chu*) stands firm. Faith, practice and study are like sails on this mast, allowing us to use both *ku* and *ke* to move forward.

SGI President Ikeda once wrote: "It is extremely important to understand that we are talking about one reality viewed from three different standpoints, not three separate entities. The Middle Way sustains the tangible and the intangible, *ke* and *ku*, but that is not the whole story of the nature of life. The Middle Way appears in the tangible, and it exists in the *ku*. The three work together to produce a single life. The complete interexistence and interfusion of the three perceptions into one is the ultimate principle of the Lotus Sutra."

On the most practical level, living the Middle Way means chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. Chanting wholeheartedly enables us to develop the flexibility to examine reality in a variety of ways or contexts. It also harmonizes body and mind, self and environment — and propels us forward.

Seventeen in a series

Poems to Youth

SGI President Ikeda composed the following poems to commemorate his 51st anniversary of embracing faith on Aug. 24. (See page one for more poems celebrating this day.)

Dedicated to the young women's division:

*Holding fast
To this great philosophy
Live your youth without regrets
Aiming for brilliant triumph*

*

Dedicated to the youth division:

*To you I entrust
The magnificent completion
Of the great work of kosen-rufu
Please take the lead!*

*

*The unshakable oneness
Of mentor and disciple
You and I*

*

*I ask you
To achieve final victory
Clear and decisive*

May Peace Prevail on Earth

Photos by KIRK CONDYLES



At the Aug. 5 Hiroshima Day Commemoration organized by SANE/Peace Action in Great Neck, N.Y., SGI-USA members came out in support of Abolition 2000, a resolution calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000. Maggie Yamamoto, Glen Cove District leader, led her Japanese language students in making and hanging a peace crane wreath on the peace pole, which was inscribed with 'May Peace Prevail on Earth' in English, Hebrew, Japanese and Spanish. — Sue Wisner and Maggie Yamamoto, Glen Cove, N.Y.

SGI Members Help Flood Victims

From Aug. 5-19, SGI members in Hong Kong and Japan donated a total of \$132,000 to aid flood victims in China. Soka Gakkai International of Hong Kong, in a donation drive initiated by its youth group members, raised \$28,000, and the Soka Gakkai in Japan delivered a total of \$104,000.

The Yangtze River area of China is presently suffering from its worst summer floods since 1954. Two thousand peo-

ple have died so far and more than 14 million are reported homeless.

On Aug. 17, a donation was also made to *The Chosun Ilbo*, a Korean newspaper company collecting contributions for the Korean Red Cross for emergency aid to flood victims in South Korea.

South Korea has also been experiencing heavy torrential rains since early August, and flooding throughout the coun-

try has left approximately 150,000 people homeless and more than 230 dead.

The Soka Gakkai-donated funds are to be directed toward food, shelter and medical supplies for the flood victims. The organization has long been involved in humanitarian relief activities, and in recent years it has provided refugee and disaster aid to India, Nepal, Iran, Peru, Cambodia, Rwanda and Somalia, among other places. ☐

NEWS BRIEFS



Honolulu Council Chairman Mufi Hannemann (back row) and councilmembers Jon Yoshimura (second from left) and Rene Mansho (front, fourth from right) present certificate to General Director Zaitusu.

Honolulu Lauds SGI Leader

A certificate honoring SGI President Ikeda was presented by the Honolulu City Council in a brief ceremony on Aug. 19. Councilmember Jon Yoshimura offered his congratulations to the SGI leader for his work in peace, culture and education, and for his 51st anniversary with the Soka

Gakkai. Council Chair Mufi Hannemann and Councilmember Donna Mercado Kim added their congratulations. The certificate commends the SGI leader for "his exemplary actions and achievements for world peace."

— JOANNE TACHIBANA,
Bureau Chief

Exhibit Web Site Is Launched

The official Web site for the national touring exhibition "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" was launched Aug. 12 at www.paulingexhibit.org. The site explores the life of two-time Nobel laureate Dr. Linus Pauling and will provide a cyber-tour of the exhibition. Opening free to the public on Sept. 20, the exhibition will run through Nov. 7 at the Herbst International Exhibition Hall at San Francisco's Presidio.

"As a co-sponsor of the 'Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century' exhibition, we wanted to create a Web site that would connect people throughout the world to

Linus Pauling's extraordinary legacy in science, health and peace," said Linus Pauling Jr., chairman of the Linus Pauling Exhibition Advisory Committee.

The exhibition and the Web site are co-sponsored by the Linus Pauling family; Oregon State University, which has loaned photographs, diaries, molecular models and historical artifacts from its Special Collections of Ava Helen and Linus Pauling Papers; and the SGI, with which Dr. Pauling was close until his death in 1994 at the age of 93.

— DIANNE DOUGLAS,
Correspondent

San Diego Salutes Pioneers

"I really felt the appreciation," said Dorothy Poe, a pioneer member of 36 years. "People always talk about how much they appreciate the pioneers, but today I really felt it."

San Diego Region's Southwest Area members celebrated a recent world peace prayer meeting with a special tribute to their pioneer members. "The meeting was simple yet so powerful," said Peggy Clark, a member of 22 years. "I'm glad they recognized the pioneer members. The Japanese ladies had no English but they [introduced us to Buddhism]. Had it not

been for them, we wouldn't be here today."

The idea of Chula Vista Chapter members, the pioneer appreciation included a proclamation that assured the pioneers that their work would continue: "People in future generations will surely be as thankful as we are today. So we say thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Because no matter how we look at it, ultimately we owe our happiness to your warmth and humanity.... We fear nothing.... No one can destroy what you built. We promise."

— NORA READ,
Correspondent

WHAT IS TRUE FREEDOM?

Photo by JONATHAN WILSON, PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

This continues the first installment in the 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). (Part 1 appeared in the Aug. 28 World Tribune.)

KIMURA: One of our readers has a question: "I want to do my best, but the combination of school, family responsibilities and high school division activities wears me out. What should I do?"

IKEDA: You need to develop strength. The stronger you are, the freer you will be. Someone without a lot of stamina may have a very difficult time climbing even a small, 1,700-foot mountain. And a person who is sick might not be able to manage it at all. But a strong, healthy person can do it easily with zest and enjoyment. That's why it's important to develop your strength. You must build a self strong enough so that you can be active in school, in club activities and in your Soka Gakkai activities. If you possess strength and capability, you will have freedom.

The same is true of sports and music, too. To play your chosen sport or instrument with complete mastery and ease, you have to gain an adequate level of proficiency and skill; you have to be prepared to make some sacrifices to practice with all your might.

Recoiling from effort or just doing as you please is not freedom. It is simply irresponsible and self-absorbed.

KIMURA: The mass media often cites "freedom of expression" in justifying sensationalist and damaging reporting. But such journalism is irresponsible and violates the freedom and human rights of others.

UEDA: When will they realize that freedom of expression does not mean freedom to lie?

IKEDA: Freedom exists within self-restraint. In human society, there are rules and a structured order by which we live and work. There is rhyme and reason, direction and purpose.

This is evident in the natural world, too. The sun rises at dawn and sets at dusk. The stars shine at night. They each have their role. They each follow a certain rhythm



'You need to develop strength. The stronger you are, the freer you will be....You must build a self strong enough so that you can be active in school, in club activities and in your Soka Gakkai activities. If you possess strength and capability, you will have freedom.'

and order. They do not appear at random or on a whim; so, in a sense, their activities are restricted.

As high school students, your daily rhythm right now is getting up each day, going to school and regularly participating in high school division activities. I feel it is an extremely important rhythm for you to maintain. If you neglect such efforts, if you fail to develop your potential and strength, you won't be able to enjoy true freedom.

There are all kinds of assets that can contribute to our sense of freedom — intellectual ability, good health, physical stamina, mental and emotional strength, the ability to take care of ourselves and support ourselves financially. But the greatest asset of all is our spiritual state, our state of mind.

KIMURA: In other words, running away from responsibilities is not freedom.

IKEDA: You can run away, of course. That freedom exists. But it is a very small, petty freedom. It only leads to a life of great hardship, a life in which you are powerless, weak and completely frustrated.

Alongside this small freedom, however, exists a much greater freedom. The well-known Japanese novelist Eiji Yoshikawa (1892–1962) writes, "Great character is forged through hardship." Only by polishing

yourself through repeated difficulties can you build a self that sparkles as brightly as a gem. Once you have developed such a state of life, nothing will faze you. You will be free. You will be victorious.

Once you realize this truth, even hardships become enjoyable. Daring to take on tough challenges — that in itself is immense freedom.

The sea and its waves make it possible for ships to sail from one place to another. Air resistance produces the lift that makes it possible for planes to fly through the sky. Hunger makes food delicious.

Freedom is a relative thing. It is impossible to have absolutely everything go our way all the time. In fact, if it weren't for the various restrictions and obstacles life presents us with, we probably wouldn't appreciate what it is to be free. After all, planes can't fly in a vacuum; they need air resistance to stay aloft. On the flip side, if we didn't seek freedom, we wouldn't know what it means not to be free.

You may run away from hard work and effort, declaring yourself a free spirit, but you cannot run away from yourself — from your weaknesses, personality and destiny. It is like trying to run from your shadow. It is even more impossible to escape from the sufferings of birth, aging, sickness and death inherent in the human condition. The more you try to avoid hardships, the more doggedly they pursue you, like so many relentless hounds chasing at your heels. That's why it's important that you turn and face your troubles head-on.

Life is a battle to win ultimate and unlimited freedom. Faith in Buddhism allows us to

PLEASE SEE YOUTH, NEXT PAGE

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YOUTH, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

use our karma and the sufferings of birth, aging, sickness and death as springboards to happiness. The purpose of faith is to forge that kind of self. Faith enables us to attain a state of unsurpassed freedom.

UEDA: I have a friend who is a specialist in her field and is fluent in English. She has many friends and is actively involved in Gakkai activities. Now, she's even cutting back on her sleep to study for a state examination. I was deeply impressed when she said to me, "The toughest times are the happiest times."

IKEDA: That's a very nice way of putting it. Freedom and lack of freedom are two sides of the same coin. The busiest people may seem to have the most constraints and demands on their time, but they often actually enjoy the most freedom.

Freedom cannot be measured in terms of time — the amount of "free time" we have has nothing to do with the amount of "freedom" we have. It's what we do with our time that counts. Two people with the exact same amount of free time will use it differently: One might savor it, while the other might complain because he or she finds it either burdensome or too short. Similarly, you can spend the same hour watching television, the time passing by in a flash without anything to show for it, or studying, feeling a satisfying sense of achievement when you finish. That one hour can be a turning point in your life. Freedom is determined by your values, by what you place importance on in life.

When the great Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821–81) was a young man, he was arrested for participating in revolutionary activities and sentenced to death by a firing squad. He was taken to the execution place, where he saw his fellow prisoners tied to posts and rifles aimed at them. He thought he would be killed momentarily, but he was given a last-minute reprieve.

Later, Dostoyevsky described this episode in one of his novels. The character being sentenced to death realizes that he has only five minutes to live and suddenly perceives those five minutes as a great treasure. He thinks: "What if I had not had to die! What if I could return to life — oh, what an eternity! And all that would be mine! I should turn every minute into an age, I should lose nothing, I should count every minute separately and waste none!" [from *The Idiot*].



Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

'I think the best course is probably for each of you to make your own goals and take responsibility for achieving them. It is important that you work hard with your own sweat and effort and choose the path that you will follow — one that you feel will be right for you and not be the cause for any regret — and then pursue it with all you've got.'

Dostoyevsky's experience was an extreme one, but it reveals a universal truth: Whether we have five minutes, five years, or 50 years to live, we should cherish and value each moment.

When all is said and done, freedom is determined by our values — it depends on our mental outlook, our state of life. There are certainly cases in which we may actually have great liberty but fail to appreciate it and instead feel trapped and confined; whereas others in precisely the same situation may experience tremendous freedom. And two people may use the same freedom in entirely different ways: one may use it to create wonderful value, while the other may fritter it away without a care, producing nothing of lasting value or significance. There are also people who brandish the word *freedom* but actually undermine and destroy it.

Freedom includes value and non-value. In the end, those who can exercise self-control are truly free. The wise are free; the deluded are not.

UEDA: Going back to the subject of school rules, I agree that some kind of guidelines or regulations are necessary, but at the same time I feel that some schools do go overboard. The rules get so picky and detailed that it's hard to believe they serve any real purpose.

IKEDA: It's true that no one likes to be unnecessarily restricted.

There was an American educator named William Smith Clark (1826–86), who taught at the Sapporo Agricultural College (now a part of Hokkaido University) in the latter part of last century. He is remembered

in Japan for his famous words, "Boys, be ambitious!"

When the administrators of the men's college where he was teaching were about to institute a long list of rules, he declared: "You will not raise people with those rules. At this school, all we need is one rule: 'Be gentlemen!' That says everything." Dr. Clark explained that a gentleman strictly observes the rules, not because he is bound by them, but because he always acts in accord with the dictates of his conscience.

I agree. And no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in, our hearts can be free; we don't have to let our spirits be shackled or confined. We need to have the strength to soar on inner wings of hope and freedom and never be defeated by anything.

UEDA: Some of our readers say that their parents don't understand their dreams for the future. They say that it's their future, and they should be able to decide what they will do with it.

IKEDA: This is a matter that can only be judged case by case. There are situations in which parents, because they have more experience and a better understanding of society, can see things more clearly. It is often wise for the inexperienced to seek advice and guidance from those who are more experienced, in order to choose a safer and more productive direction in which to proceed. That is an especially strong tendency in Eastern thought. And in most cases, doing what one's parents say works out very well. But there is also sometimes a danger that parents — perhaps because their thinking is a little too old-fash-

ioned or because their love for their children makes them domineering — may end up forcing their children in a direction that causes resentment and rebellion.

Things change with the times, however, so ultimately I think the best course is probably for each of you to make your own goals and take responsibility for achieving them. It is important that you work hard with your own sweat and effort and choose the path that you will follow — one that you feel will be right for you and not be the cause for any regret — and then pursue it with all you've got.

I say this because life is long. You are the one who has to live your life, fight your battles and win your victories. Your parents won't always be there. I think the best way for both children and parents to be happy is for parents to support their children in the path they have chosen.

It is also up to you to prove to your parents and those around you that you are responsible and know where you're going. If you find your chosen path blocked by their opposition, you have to convince them of your determination and commitment, and let them see how earnestly you are grappling with the challenges in front of you. Those who try to avoid dealing with problems and challenges will try to avoid them in the future as well. If that is the case, you will not convince anyone that you are serious or responsible.

KIMURA: University entrance exams in Japan are fiercely competitive. Each university has a limited number of places, and everyone is vying to get in. If you win a place, you have pushed someone else out of one. One of our members has asked

whether freedom includes succeeding at the expense of others.

IKEDA: I think the answer to that question would have to be yes. Life is a struggle. We live in a harsh world. Freedom is not gained by being idle or passive. Whether we like it or not, ours is a dog-eat-dog world.

All people are of course essentially equal; all deserve equal opportunities for freedom and happiness. This is the spirit of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and also the spirit of Buddhism. But people are not robots. Everyone's thinking, personality, character and karma are different. Therefore, succeeding or getting ahead at the expense of others remains, unfortunately, a persisting aspect of human karma.

That's where our laws, our governments and our education systems come into play. It's sad to say, however, that we haven't done enough in these areas. Human society today is very far from the ideal. But the most fundamental way to approach that ideal is the SGI's movement of human revolution. We are promoting a way of life in which people pray for and create happiness in a world filled with contradictions.

Getting ahead at the expense of others is symptomatic of the state of Animality. Human revolution means becoming a person who works for the happiness of both oneself and others. For that reason, we must strive to create a society supported by the human revolution of each individual. In one sense, none of us can attain true happiness unless all others are happy. Basing one's life and actions on this awareness is what Buddhism calls the way of life of the bodhisattva.

Similarly, we cannot enjoy true freedom unless all others are free. In our world today, far too many people are bound in the chains of poverty, oppression, fear and ignorance; far too many people are robbed of their freedom by war and discrimination. One who stands up to fight for the freedom of such people is truly free. I hope each of you will become that sort of person.

It is therefore important that you squarely face and challenge the tasks that lie before you, and complete them successfully. Then, just as a tree grows, blossoms and bears fruit by sending down roots and extending its branches to the sky, you will naturally come to know greater and greater freedom. For that reason, may you always advance toward the sun of hope. ☸

A Partnership for the

Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

Sometime after the discussion meeting began, three members of the Special Higher Police arrived and stood in the hallway facing our garden to observe the meeting. Suddenly, in the middle of Mr. Makiguchi's words, they shouted: "Stop right there! That's enough!"

I recall that they interrupted him just after he had denounced the policy of forcing all Japanese to accept the Shinto talisman that was part of the militarist government's drive for "thought unification" to strengthen the war effort.

I remember being frightened at that moment. But when I asked my mother later, she said that she wasn't the least bit afraid because Mr. Makiguchi was so dignified and unwavering in his convictions. By the time the discussion meeting came to an end, the Special Higher Police had disappeared.

— Kaneko Ikeda



'Makiguchi believed that education's foremost goal is the happiness and welfare of children.'

PARTNERSHIP, FROM PAGE 1

As we walked toward our home, I remember thinking that Mr. Makiguchi was very old. But the moment he arrived at the discussion meeting, he was transformed. He sat up straight and spoke in ringing tones. He had tremendous authority and dignity.

D. IKEDA: That's the mark of a true leader. When the time comes to exercise leadership, a leader acts with confidence and strength. The more responsibility a leader bears, the more youthful and energetic he or she becomes.

It's important to note that right up to the time Mr. Makiguchi was arrested for alleged violations of the notorious Peace Preservation Law, he was active everywhere, even in places like Yaguchinowatashi, on the fringes of Ota Ward. To the very last, he was among the people, indefatigable in his efforts to meet and talk with others about the Daishonin's Buddhism.

This is the spirit from which the Soka Gakkai springs. It offers us a model for all eternity.

K. IKEDA: Sometime after the discussion meeting began, three members of the Special Higher Police arrived and stood in the hallway facing our garden to observe the meeting. Suddenly, in the middle of Mr. Makiguchi's words, they shouted: "Stop right there! That's enough!"

I recall that they interrupted him just after he had denounced the policy of forcing all Japanese to accept the Shinto talisman that was part of the militarist government's drive for "thought unification" to strengthen the war effort.

I remember being frightened at that moment. But when I asked my mother later, she said that she wasn't the least bit afraid because Mr. Makiguchi was so dignified and unwavering in his convictions.

By the time the discussion meeting came to an end, the Special Higher Police had disappeared.

D. IKEDA: The struggles of Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda in prison are what made today's Soka Gakkai and the miraculous progress we have seen in the kosen-rufu movement possible. Giving one's life for one's beliefs is the greatest honor for a person of faith.

I, too, have devoted myself completely, exerting myself unceasingly, without any thought for my own well-being, all for the sake of our movement. I want to bestow the highest praises on those members who have fought valiantly alongside me.

Praying To Get Sick

K. IKEDA: We have never really enjoyed a private life or the pleasures of ordinary domesticity. When we were married, Mr. Toda looked at me

solemnly and said with deep earnestness: "I'm counting on you to support Daisaku. The future of the Gakkai depends upon it." Since that day, I have done everything I could to help and support my husband.

D. IKEDA: I remember once at a New Year's celebration, Mr. Toda wept openly, tears streaming down his face. "Your life is bound to be short," he said to me. "What will become of the Gakkai?"

On another occasion, he said that he would gladly give me the remaining days of his life so that I might live on for my mission. It was really a strict injunction and impassioned plea on the part of my mentor — who knew that his life was ebbing way — that I improve my health and get well and strong.

Since that time, I have always tried to pay attention to my health, but in the endeavor to establish a firm foundation for kosen-rufu I have found myself working and traveling day and night, around the clock, without much time to think of my own needs.

I am deeply grateful to my wife, whose unflinching support has made my work possible. Thank you.

K. IKEDA: My, my. I don't know what to say. You're very welcome. Thank you.

Having heard Mr. Toda say that my husband wouldn't live very long, my mother was beside herself with worry when he became the Soka Gakkai

president. She fretted over what would become of us, his wife and children, if he should die young.

I responded to this by doing everything I could think of to help him stay well and healthy. Then, some time later, my mother told me that I was taking too good care of him, that I was spoiling him!

Our room was very small, so sometimes when he was really exhausted, I insisted on putting my futon in the hallway and sleeping there, so as not to disturb him when I got up early in the morning.

MATSUOKA: I heard that on one occasion, when you saw President Ikeda hard at work despite his deep fatigue, you prayed that all his sickness might be yours instead.

K. IKEDA: It was a difficult time for the Soka Gakkai. I was healthy, and I wanted to do anything I could to lessen my husband's sufferings. That was my prayer.

D. IKEDA: Yes, and after that she came down with something and had to stay in bed! I wrote her a letter while traveling, chiding her gently that she had only made me worry more, and that she shouldn't be so foolish as to pray for ill health again.

K. IKEDA: I had never been sick until then. When I did become ill, I realized that I had never really appreciated how bad he must feel all the time, suffering as he did in those days from extremely poor health and a nagging fever. It was a good lesson for me. From then on, I have always prayed for both of us to be healthy.

One thing that I have learned over the years is that there is nothing more wonderful than sitting before the Gohonzon as husband and wife and praying together.

Mr. Makiguchi Still Introduces New Members

SASAKI: When I attended a discussion meeting of the Takanawa Chapter in January this year, a former pupil of Mr. Makiguchi's had just joined the Soka Gakkai — an event that was celebrated with great enthusiasm at the meeting. The name of this new member is Kiyoo Sudo, and she is now 78.

She enrolled in Shirokane Elementary School — where Mr. Makiguchi was principal — in April 1927. She recalls from those days that Mr. Makiguchi was a dignified man with a commanding presence yet also warm and

gentle.

She was a school teacher when Mr. Makiguchi was grieving for his children, who were

MATSUOKA: Soka Gakkai members have always been members of the Soka Gakkai.

K. IKEDA: These young people bring to the Soka Gakkai

MATSUOKA: That Mr. Makiguchi was from Meiji when he was young, they have

At the Soka Gakkai, we have a stack of handkerchiefs for students who couldn't

These young people bring to the Soka Gakkai

D. IKEDA: Mr. Makiguchi's foremost concern was the welfare of

Mr. Makiguchi's hours of work were far from ordinary and it's

That's why

K. IKEDA: Lot later, I was in a errand in the city, you to see that

every year, your life, Culture side part

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She enrolled in Shirokane Elementary School — where Mr. Makiguchi was principal — in April 1927. She recalls from those days that Mr. Makiguchi was a dignified man with a commanding presence yet also warm and

gentle.

She remembered him once going on a school field trip with the students to Hibiya Park. This was in 1929, a time when Mr. Makiguchi was certainly still grieving over the loss of his own children, who had died one after another.

MATSUOKA: Mrs. Sudo joined the Soka Gakkai when she learned from her hairdresser, a women's division member, that Mr. Makiguchi was the organization's founder. Mrs. Sudo had always loved and respected Mr. Makiguchi, so she decided to become a member without a moment's hesitation.

K. IKEDA: That is amazing. After all these years, Mr. Makiguchi continues to bring in new members!

MATSUOKA: Mrs. Sudo remembers that Mr. Makiguchi always walked from Meguro Station to the school, and when he encountered students on his way he would lift his hat and greet them pleasantly.

At lunch time there were always a stack of lunch boxes wrapped in white handkerchiefs left in the school office for students who, for family reasons, couldn't bring their own lunch.

These had been provided by Mr. Makiguchi out of his own pocket, she said.

D. IKEDA: That's just like Mr. Makiguchi. He believed that education's foremost goal is the happiness and welfare of children.

Mr. Makiguchi paid close attention to his health, too, it seems. I often walked from Meguro Station to Mr. Toda's house, on call as I was at all hours of the day and night. It was not far from Shirokane Elementary School, and it's a brisk 15-minute walk.

That was Mr. Makiguchi's walk, too.

K. IKEDA: You've also been walking a lot lately, haven't you? Your hectic itinerary in the Philippines didn't permit you to get much exercise while we were there, but in Hong Kong you took every opportunity to go and stretch your legs on the grounds of the Grand Culture Centre and in the nearby seaside park.

Later, we flew to Okinawa, arriving there in the evening. The next day was a Sunday and from 9:00 in the morning you were outside chatting and walking around the grounds of the Okinawa Training Center with local members, soaking in the view of the emerald sea.

How We Live

SASAKI: Mrs. Sudo showed me an old photograph she has of herself and her classmates with Mr. Makiguchi when they were in the second grade. Now, four from the class are Soka Gakkai members. One of them, her best friend in those school days, Sadako, later married Mr. Makiguchi's third son, Yozo. Sadako was overjoyed when she learned that her old school friend had recently joined the Soka Gakkai.

MATSUOKA: The other two classmates who are Gakkai members are Sumiko Miki and Mitsuko Asao. Mr. Makiguchi resigned as principal of Shirokane Elementary School when Mrs.

Asao was a third grader, but she still remembers him vividly. Mrs. Miki is a women's division vice leader of Tokyo's Koto Ikeda Ward.

How you have continued to honor Mr. Makiguchi, she says, is a tremendously moving example of the solemn path of mentor and disciple.

D. IKEDA: The way that we live determines the way that we are spoken of and remembered in the future. That is, in a sense, how we live in this world after our passing.

Having turned 70, I have resolved to work even harder than I have until now. Looking back, when I was young I worked with single-minded intensity but sometimes wasted energy because of overzealousness.

After reaching 60, however, all my efforts have been productive and fruitful. There is no wasted energy. I believe that I work as hard and effectively now in one year as I did in five in my youth.

Giving earnest thought to the future is the world of Humanity. Living only for the moment is the world of Animality.

My foremost concern now is leaving the future of our movement in capable hands. And fostering and educating youth is the only way to ensure this.

What kind of example can I leave for them as Mr. Toda's disciple? All I can do is dedicate myself to kosen-rufu to the last moment of my life.

(To be continued)

MY BEST SHOT

Photo by ALL CAPS



Daybreak — Avon, Colo. Everywhere I look this sunny morning, a majestic photograph, an uplifting slice of time. Determined balloonists defy the laws of gravity as the sky fills with colorful inspiration. The hot air balloon festival is under way. I took this photo in the summer of 1986, when I lived in Colorado, working as a freelance photographer. Watching the sun rise and the balloons fill up was like another world, and I was overwhelmed by the magnitude. — KATHI OSMONSON, Anoka, Minn.

By **DAISAKU IKEDA**
SGI PRESIDENT

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY



For 45 years, the Soka Gakkai has supported its neighbors in Shinanomachi, home to its headquarters. From helping install street lamps to providing meeting spaces for local groups, the Soka Gakkai has always tried to be a good neighbor and make its facilities hubs of peace and prosperity for all in the community.



A traditional community festival — Bon dancing — is held in front of the Seikyo Shimbun Building in Shinanomachi, Tokyo. Hosting events like this is one way the Soka Gakkai supports its neighbors.

It will soon be 45 years since the Soka Gakkai Headquarters moved to Shinanomachi, Tokyo, and 35 years since we built the present building.

I am always deeply grateful for the warm support of the local Shinanomachi residents. Members visit our headquarters here in great number, and I'm sure that there are times when it must cause some inconvenience to our neighbors. But despite that, they have always treated us warmly.

On our 60th anniversary, in 1990, the storekeepers' association in the area hung a congratulatory sign at Shinanomachi Station, joining us in our celebrations. And when the Soka Senior High School baseball team made it to the national high school baseball championships, held each year at Koshien Stadium in Osaka, the association members placed congratulatory stickers and posters in their shops.

This neighborly warmth has meant a great deal to our members from all over Japan and the world who visit the Soka Gakkai Headquarters here in Shinanomachi.

I have always taken great pains to stay in close communication with our neighbors and to make a positive contribution to the local community. Buddhism must be practiced in society. Sure progress in propagating Buddhism depends upon nurturing relations of trust and friendship with our neighbors and working actively for the development of our local community.

When I became the third president of the Soka Gakkai, I visited our neighbors and introduced myself to them. I remember calling on the home of then Minister of International Trade and Industry Hayato Ikeda (later prime minister of Japan), located a short distance down the road from the headquarters. When Mr. Ikeda came out to greet me — remember, I was only 32 at the time — he looked at me and remarked humorously: "You've become the new

president? Of the local youth club?" We both had a good laugh.

Communication makes people comfortable with one another and brings them together.

Once, in the past, there was a problem with the street lights in Shinanomachi. They were too dim, and there were several incidents of people being attacked late at night. The neighborhood association planned to replace the lights with bright mercury-vapor lamps, but the expense made its early realization most unlikely.

When I heard about this, I brought the matter up at the Soka Gakkai's executive conference, suggesting that we look into whether we could assist in some way. We eventually decided to contribute to the project, and the new lights were duly installed.

I remember another occasion, a little more than 13 years ago. I had stopped in at a coffee shop near the headquarters, and the owner began to tell me about the traditional summer celebration, the Bon dancing, that they used to hold in Shinanomachi.

It had started soon after the war. Life was hard and bleak, but one night each summer the people in the neighborhood would gather in an empty, burned-out lot on the Keio Hospital grounds (just across the road from Shinanomachi Station) and hold a rousing Bon festival.

But as the neighborhood was gradually rebuilt, there were fewer and fewer open spaces for the festival, and eventually it was discontinued. The local residents very much wanted to revive this popular annual tradition, however.

The coffee shop owner asked me, "Is there some area that the

Gakkai could let us use for the festival?"

I replied on the spot: "That's a great idea. After all, I'm a Shinanomachi resident, too." I'll never forget the smile of delight that lit the coffee shop owner's face.

On Aug. 9, 1985, the sound of drums accompanying the Bon dancing rang out from the open area in front of the Seikyo Shimbun building. The first "Shinanomachi Hometown Bon Dancing Festival," sponsored by the Shinanomachi Storekeepers' Development Association, had begun. This is the 14th year of the festival, and over the years it has become a beloved summer event in Shinanomachi — one that keeps getting better and better.

I wrote a poem for the festival two years ago:

*Bon dancing
So many memories
Scenes of peace*

The presence of Soka Gakkai culture and community centers has drawn appreciation from local residents in regions around Japan.

Our members always make utmost efforts to avoid any inconvenience to the neighborhood when we hold meetings. Furthermore, in many areas we have set aside Sundays as a day when teams of members go out to collect trash and clean the streets leading from our facilities to the nearest train or subway station.

We also make our centers available for use by local groups, at their request. In addition, these facilities are designated as emergency evacuation centers and play an important role as bases for relief and rescue efforts in cases of natural disasters.

Buddhism teaches the oneness of our lives and the land in which we dwell. We are one with the physical environment and the community we live in.

The smiling faces of Gakkai members cannot fail to cheer and brighten their communities. Where the Mystic Law flourishes, the region does, too. It is the mission of every Buddhist to make this happen.

Our greatest wish is that the communities in which we live become centers of peace and happiness, capitals of prosperity. ☸

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

MAURICE MIMES, DENVER

Life Is To Be Lived

Growing up blind, Maurice Mimes was always taught to do everything, to live fully. But when his confidence faltered in college, he sought out Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Today, his Buddhist practice fuels his activities to help deaf and blind people throughout the country as vice president of the Blind/Deaf Division of the National Federation of the Blind.

By TERRY ELLIS
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Soon after Maurice Mimes was born, doctors pumped oxygen into his body to counter the effects of a lung infection that hampered his breathing. In the late '50s and early '60s, this was a common emergency medical treatment, and doctors didn't realize that an excess of oxygen could cause irreparable brain damage. In Maurice's case, the effect was blindness.

It's an effect that Maurice has lived with for the last 31 years, and one that he has challenged by trying to be of service to others. Not even the progressive loss of his hearing, which has declined sharply since 1996, has stopped him. This past July, he was elected vice president of the Blind/Deaf Division of the National Federation of the Blind.

"What I'm primarily responsible for is communicating with those statewide officials who have blind persons in their state who could benefit from the work of the division," says Maurice. This work ranges from personal encouragement to advocacy work.

For example, Maurice said, the division is now helping a government worker in Washington, D.C. "She's slowly being forced out of her job after six years," he says. "We're trying to educate her employer on deaf and blindness issues. What she needs is some adaptive equipment and special training."

Despite the work of such pioneers as Louis Braille in the 1800s and Helen Keller at the beginning of the 20th century, many emotional and physical challenges still face deaf and blind people. For instance, just as Anne Sullivan, Helen Keller's teacher, first had to convince Helen's parents that they should expect much more from their daughter, many parents of blind children try to shelter them from the world. The simple act of pardoning a blind child from the household chores expected of other siblings may send a message that leads to dependency.

In Maurice's case, he experienced both worlds. "My mother was a little overprotective off and on, as sometimes mothers can

be," he says. "On the other side of it, my father said, 'I expect you to get out there and do everything.'" His grandmother also always encouraged him that he could do whatever he set out to accomplish, "as long as he didn't get too wrapped up in himself."

He made his way to college at the University of Washington in Seattle, where he studied political science. And he took leadership in student government, through the regional association of residence halls, lobbying for rules that prevented isolating disabled students.

But by 1993, when he was introduced to Buddhism by a blind student from Japan, he was beginning to lose his confidence. A favorite aunt who worked in healthcare died suddenly of a massive heart attack at 39, and he was diagnosed with high blood pressure.

"I was searching for something," says Maurice. "I began to wonder about how finite life is. Then a friend's father passed away suddenly. I felt like my life was a comedy of disaster."

"When I first started to practice, the many problems I was experiencing as I entered my senior year at the University of Washington didn't seem so bad," says Maurice. "Indeed, despite my problems, my blood pressure began to drop."

Still, his grades slipped, and he moved out of the residence hall because of financial problems. But his friends in the SGI-USA helped him through this difficult time, as he established an independent life and successfully graduated from college in 1994.

Looking back on that time in his life, "the key benefit was making a successful transition from academic life to job seeker," he says. "I volunteered my time with both members and non-members, teaching computers. Then, finally, I got a job with a private university in Seattle, helping their information systems department, where I worked for two years."

In late 1995, doctors told him that his auditory nerve was apparently dying. His computer job required no travel or interaction with people, so the reality of this loss of hearing didn't impact him at first. "The first thing I noticed was that I began to have

difficulty getting to SGI meetings on my own," says Maurice. "I was too scared of traffic because I couldn't hear well enough."

A longtime friend, Doug Trimble, encouraged him to come to Denver for special training. Blind himself, Mr. Trimble is a travel instructor at the Colorado Center for the Blind, one of three special training centers founded by the National Federation of the Blind.

Uprooting his life in Washington was a serious and difficult choice. "I chanted to make the decision," says Maurice. "I had to chant sincerely to understand what Doug was trying to get across to me and have confidence that the center could help. My final decision was to go. I had already seen plenty of negative aspects of my life — it was time to start fixing it."

At the Colorado Center, most of the staff is blind, and the working philosophy is that blindness is a limitation to be overcome with wisdom. "For example, life is to be lived not seen," says Eric Woods, another instructor at the center. One of the first challenges he helped Maurice face was the trip to the SGI-USA Denver Culture Center, which is located on one of the city's busiest streets.

Even the Helen Keller teaching methods say that people who are both blind and deaf shouldn't travel alone. Mr. Woods' job is to move his students toward this independence. Imagine trying to get across a four-lane highway, with turning lanes governed by separate signals, when you can't see or hear the cars. After examining the options, one of Woods' solutions might take a little longer, but it works: Ride the bus down and back up the route, so that you can get off on the side of the road you want.

"Our belief is that a blind person, given the right training, can compete on equal terms," says Woods. While the public perception is that blindness is a tragedy, he views it simply as a challenge or limitation — which, in various forms, all human beings have.

"You play the cards you're dealt," he continues. "You have to find out realistically what those limitations are.... One of the

biggest stumbling blocks is admitting to a realistic degree what the problems are. Once you acknowledge 'I'm this way,' you can start doing things differently."

That doesn't mean, of course, that you can't do them. "We go rock climbing, white-water rafting, skiing," says Woods. "We have a woodshop with power tools off the showroom floor.... Blindness is a challenge, but it's not necessarily disabling."

Diane McGeorge, executive director of the center, echoes this: "Just like you, I raised two children, held a job and managed a household," she says, after hearing my two children making noise in the background during a phone interview. "As a blind woman, I use different techniques...but I did what you're doing." She says this in a calm, gracious voice, which assures me that what I — a sighted woman — am doing is no more or less difficult than what she did.

The most difficult thing that blind people face, she adds, is countering the negative attitudes that surround them in society. "I don't permit that thinking to affect me," she says.

Maurice uses his Buddhist practice to keep challenging both his external and internal negativity.

"While going through the program at the Colorado Center for the Blind and now going through college for the second time, my practice and those who also practice around me, seem to allow me to push myself onward, to never settle for second best — never selling myself short," says Maurice, who graduated from the Denver center Aug. 14. His next step is to complete a degree in information systems, which will academically certify many of the computer skills he has already taught himself.

"My practice feeds what I do, both as an SGI-member and in my work in the National Federation of the Blind," he says. "I want every member of the deaf and blind division to have a good job. It starts with me. I want to give back to all those folks who helped me...."

"And I want the American dream: I want to find Mrs. Right and have a family," Maurice adds. "I believe those things are important." ■



Maurice Mimes (left) with instructor Eric Woods of the Colorado Center for the Blind. 'Our belief is that a blind person, given the right training, can compete on equal terms,' Mr. Woods says.

Photo by PETER NELLHAUS

One Person, One Mile, One Smile at a Time

PERSPECTIVE



Moving from a large city to a small town might mean

losing a lot of conveniences — or it might mean remembering what's really important and remembering how kosen-rufu is accomplished.

By LISBETH GANT-BRITTON
KALAMAZOO, MICH.

Iwould do more, if only.... Sound familiar? How many times have we found ourselves facing a challenge that stands in the way of our working for kosen-rufu or doing something to help someone?

Because of my new teaching position, last December, my husband, Glenn, and I moved from Los Angeles to the small mid-western city of Kalamazoo, Mich. We left a huge metropolis with many community centers and the World Culture Center and went to one where the Chicago Culture Center and Detroit Community Center are each two-and-a-half hours away.

To the north of us, even after geo reo (geographic reorganization of the SGI-USA), members in Michigan's northern peninsula still have to drive into Wisconsin for large meetings. By the time the wind chill dipped below freezing in Kalamazoo and it got dark at 4:00 p.m., I knew that I was going to have to get my pioneer spirit back in gear.

It was then that I remembered getting together last fall with longtime friend and fellow member Kathy Grant, who practices in North Carolina. Kathy told stories of hitting the highway several times every week to visit members and do activities.



Women gathered from all over West Michigan to attend the 1998 women's division meeting, held in Grand Rapids, Mich. Lisbeth (third from left, second row from the front) drove for about an hour to get there.

In Michigan, I talked with headquarters leaders Lyn and Bernie Sawicki. Lyn, who has logged countless miles visiting members in this heartland state despite a job that requires her to work very long hours, e-mailed this message to me: "The two most important things, I think, besides chanting, are to study and to connect with fellow members. Also, if we are to accomplish something great in Michigan, it will be because we have people exerting their unique capabilities while springing from one mind of faith."

That got me to thinking: Each one of us has our own geo reo to contend with, be it with distance, time or maybe just plain attitude ("Why should I have to do that home visit, anyway? And with her?"). Sometimes the issue is one of fatigue or fear.

Another of my new role models is Gwen Preston, Kalamazoo/Battle Creek District women's division leader (who lives two cities over, a 40-minute drive, by the way). Even though these two towns have more churches on every corner than filling stations, several years ago she made a determination to tell 100 people about Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. "I constantly have to battle my tendency to be fearful," she recently observed. But she decided to propagate this Buddhism anyway.

Speaking of fear, recently the Ku Klux Klan managed to hold a small white supremacist rally near city hall in downtown Kalamazoo. After the event, as Glenn and I watched a sneering youth who'd had too much to drink, I muttered to myself: "Oh, boy. Would I have the nerve to introduce him to Buddhism?"

But, in a way, that's just what our intrepid district leader, Dale Anderson, did. As soon as he found out the rally was to take place, Dale wrote an eloquent letter to the city newspaper about human understanding,

which was published. Dale is also the man who told me, after a hard day's work with his lawn-care business one sweltering summer evening, "I'll pick anybody up, anywhere, who wants to go to a meeting."

So there you have it: one small Michigan city that's a microcosm of all the challenges Bodhisattvas of the Earth have to face.

And what are yours? What do each of us confront in our sincere efforts to make one more cause for world peace, for peace in the workplace, school or our homes?

As SGI President Ikeda said once: "In the organization, on the job and in human relations, it is only natural that we'll experience worries and deadlocks from time to time. But it is precisely at such times that we must break through. There is no alternative other than to advance and realize victory through our efforts."

This article is dedicated to Cheryl, who took the Entrance Examination despite her all-night job and double shifts; to Connie, who makes it to meetings, even with four kids; to Mary, who encouraged others even when she didn't have a home phone; to Laurie, who hates to drive in the snow but does it anyway; to our other Dale, who has to work many evenings as a musician but manages to get to activities on the weekends; to Young Park, his wife; to Glenn, who must study late into the night; to Kim, who comes out when she can; and to Kathy, who is always cheerful and patient, no matter how late I call.

You are all kosen-rufu. We can make a difference — one person, one mile, one smile at a time.

(To *World Tribune* readers: Please feel free to fill in the names of your fellow pioneers. And don't forget to add your own name. I salute you all.)

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SEIZE THE DAY
seize@sgi-usa.org

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

**THE POWER OF THE PEN!
DEADLINE: OCTOBER 2, 1998**

The 1st Annual 'Seize the Day' Essay Contest

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

CATEGORIES: *Junior High School
High School
College
General Youth*

"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."

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Page One Experiences

Thanks for putting the Reggae Sunsplash experience on the front page! (Aug. 7). I think that's where the experiences should always go. I also think it would attract more non-members. I, like many other members, look for the experience as soon as I open my *World Tribune*. The personal stories of members is what drew me to this practice, and I think that it would for others as well. Keep up the good work!

— VERONICA BAILEY
Jersey City, N.J.

Rubbing Beads

I want to let you know how comfortable I feel with the Tribune. Lately, there have been so many great things. If you have a chance, please relay to Richard Yoshimachi my appreciation for his article on the beads (Aug. 21). It was just exactly the way I want to explain them to my members but can't, because I don't have the historical facts. The balance between not being a necessity for practice and why we continue to use them was really great.

— RALPH E. HICKEN,
Omaha, Neb.

Buddhist Terms in Japanese

I know the publications have been avoiding all those wonderful Japanese terms we memorized in the '80s (*shiki shin funi*; *esho funi*, etc.). [Editor's note: We generally use only the English-language equivalent.] This has always bothered me (that they're being phased out), and now I think I know why.

I joined in Switzerland. At my first meeting, the languages were French, Italian, Japanese, Arabic and English (me). I have traveled in a number of non-English-speaking countries as a member since then. While I speak a bit of three foreign languages, communication for me is not easy in those languages. Still, I find often there are always two areas where I can share language with my non-English-speaking SGI friends: when doing gongyo and when referring to Japanese Buddhist terms. You can't even

discuss the organization in other countries, because the structure is different and the positions often don't correlate.

The same is true of complex Buddhist theory, as represented so concisely in those wonderful Japanese terms. As anyone with two-plus languages understands, language is not a code that has corresponding equivalent words; it is complex, and ways of expressing ideas and explanations vary dramatically from language to language.

The United States is notoriously isolationist.... Few of us learn foreign languages beyond some schoolroom experience, if that. The United States is our whole universe. But Buddhism sees the world as a much more unified place. It is my feeling that in the interest of international communication, we SHOULD continue to teach, learn and refer to the Japanese Buddhist terms, though an English gloss is, of course, wise.

— LIZ CARTER, Denver

Discontinue the 'Mailbox'

As a reader of a daily newspaper, I get my fill of bad news. Killings, rapes, ethnic cleansing, automobile accidents, arguments pro and con on every conceivable issue. It is there on a daily basis for our pleasure or non-pleasure, depending on our viewpoint on any particular subject.

In 1951, the *Seikyo Shimbun* was first published. President Toda wanted it to be the greatest newspaper in Japan. Later, the *World Tribune* was launched, I suspect with the intention of being the best newspaper in the world. Articles about people overcoming obstacles, uplifting experiences, Buddhist wisdom, SGI President Ikeda's speeches — all great reading. In the few years that I have been a subscriber, I have always felt encouraged and refreshed when I finished reading all the articles. Until recently.

Lately, some of the letters in the "Mailbox" section have been very unencouraging. They read like letters to the editor in my daily newspaper: people tossing barbs and insults at one another

because they disagree on some topic. In a daily newspaper, that is understandable because most people have no way to express their opinion other than through this medium. I've even written my share. Fortunately, as members of the SGI, we have discussion meetings to work out any differences of opinion. We do it with dialogue.

To avoid censorship of letters, may I suggest this column be discontinued (readers, please don't attack me) and replaced with something encouraging and uplifting, as was the original intent of the distinguished founders of this wonderful newspaper. When this column was started, I thought it was a great idea, but alas, all things do not work out exactly as we hope.

— DALE C. ANDERSON,
Portage, Mich.

Appreciation

Logo or no logo, I appreciate the *World Tribune* and our SGI organization more than ever. I have battled depression and challenged hopelessness my entire life (without medication). This despite and often concurrent with wonderful opportunities and benefits. It is my battlefield, where I have chosen to sow the seeds of Buddhahood. Clearly over the past 23 years of consistent practice, my life-condition has changed tremendously and my bouts of depression are significantly shorter in duration. I think the most meaningful shift, however, is that I no longer begrudge even these little "attacks." I am coming to treasure every aspect of my life.

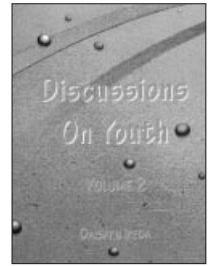
This year two new friends of mine received the Gohonzon, and I bought a beautiful home....

I am determined to chant more quality daimoku and to move through all my fears until I have totally won over myself.

— RICHARD CASSELMAN,
Los Angeles

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

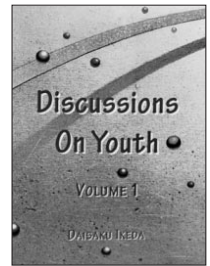
Because of volume, not all letters can be printed or acknowledged, but they are all read. All letters are subject to condensation.



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.



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

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

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

Nichiren Daishonin, a 13th-century Japanese 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-renge-kyo, which is the essence of the Lotus Sutra. The Gohonzon is the mandala expressing this essence.

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GREETINGS

My dearest members (past and present) of Vail District, I miss all of you. I want to thank each and every one of you for affording me the benefits I have received in Oregon. I pray constantly for your health, happiness and continued growth. Remember *itai doshin* is the key to so many strong members in one area! My love to each of you! Cathy

To Chris Watkins from Ron Ricks: I'm in the Bay Area now. Doing much better now, I'm practicing again. Also, I got married. My wife is a member now, too! Say hi to Mr. Levy and your family. Then call me at (510) 223-6599 or e-mail me: rlricks@aol.com.

Thank you to the members of Los Angeles Headquarters and Long Beach Headquarters for being an important part of my life. I moved to New York to start a new life working in computers. I especially must thank William Brown, Guy Mitchell, Marty Jordan and Nick Lewis. You all were always there when I needed you. I'm looking for some people I lost contact with in New York. Neetra, a YWD member that was in the [Fife and Drum Corps] back in the mid '80s, and Ben Lawson, a YMD member who was a professional model from Chicago. If anyone knows how to contact these people, please contact me by e-mail at RobertWilliams@Corporate.GE.com or at (888) 724-3212 pin#301945. Thank you, Bryant Williams aka Bryant Bunn aka B-Man

Congratulations, Tanya Nelson, on your new appointment as Diamond District YWD leader! ROCK ON! Trish, John, June and Beth

Hello from Brazil! My name is Margo, and I live part of the year in New York City with my husband, Frank (a musician with the Manhattan Transfer Band). We have been practicing this great Buddhism since 1986. I spend the other part of the year in Rio de Janeiro where, along with my sister and brother, I own and administrate a private school and a small university. Our university, the Faculdade Integradas de Jacarepaguá, has just completed the construction of a new high-tech library, which will be officially inaugurated this month as the Daisaku Ikeda Library. For this event, we have invited and expect the presence of SGI-Brazil leaders from São Paulo, Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro. Let's continue to chant and do our best for kosen-rufu! Margo Colón: <http://idt.net/~fcolon/fij2.html>; <http://idt.net/~fcolon/colonhan.html>

I want to say hi to the Newport News Chapter, Hampton, Norfolk and Virginia Beach members. I am still practicing

here in Albany, Ga. Thanks for your patience and understanding. Thank you, Setsuko Gibson, for your encouragement and guidance by telephone, even though we live 750 miles apart. Becky Webster

To my SGI *ohana* on Maui... Thank you all for your support and aloha! Being the only member in Jackson, Wyo., has made me realize how important members are. My mission is here, and I'll rise to the challenge of building a good SGI organization in Jackson! I'm sharing with others to the best of my ability. Thinking of the strength and courage we shared, I will strengthen that stand-alone spirit! Miss you all! A *hui hou!* Love, Lisa Agdeppa

ATTENTION ART BELL FANS! Anyone interested in sharing thoughts on the various topics featured on his talk radio show (from a Buddhist perspective...). Please send comments to L.N., 2948 Old Gravenstein Hy. S., Sebastopol, CA 95472

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Brookfield District Women's Division Leader Mary Robin Roth/Kaiharu is starring as Angie in *Queen of the Stardust Ballroom* at Marriott Lincolnshire Theatre in Chicago. This will run through Oct. 4.

MILESTONES

To celebrate the life of Julie Gossman (Bellaart), a memorial service was held in Kansas City, Mo. She passed away July 26. She was a 10-year member who was introduced to Nichiren Daisshonin's Buddhism in Honolulu in 1988. She practiced the last five years of her life in Kansas City. Julie was a creative and artistic person and an inspiration to the members who practiced with her. She felt that people should not be judged by their outward appearances or superficial characteristics. She believed that a person's beauty was based upon his or her values and beliefs and respecting another person's individuality and uniqueness. Julie's mission was to show us the true meaning of beauty and to help us see people based upon the internal qualities that each person possesses. Thank you, Cheryl A. Utley

Colorado youth are growing! Announcing the birth of Joie Amelia Flores, daughter of Marina Martinez-Flores and her husband, Joe. And the birth of Daniel William Aragon, son of Duemece Martinez-Aragon and her husband, Daniel. Marina and Duemece are SGI members in Pueblo, Colo. Best wishes for good health and good fortune for the new arrivals from family and friends.

My dear friends Reagan Leonard and Jon Bongiorno gave birth on July 1 at 11:45 a.m. to a beautiful baby girl named Karas McCool Bongiorno. They have been a great inspiration to me and many others! Bettina Skye, New York

To the friends of Ben Irizar: On Sunday, July 5, Benjamin Irizar passed away peacefully at his home after a brief but courageous battle with cancer — never wavering in his commitment and faith. I feel honored to have stood together with him as his wife, friend and comrade in faith for more than 30 years. Ben's last few days of life at home were full of love, victory and humor. This was undeniable proof that chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the greatest of all joys. And as a result, I am inspired by the benefits of our faith. Our ultimate mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth is to show actual proof of the Gohonzon's power, no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in. The victory of Ben's life in its final days convinces me that he had indeed fulfilled his mission and attained Buddhahood. Of this, I have no doubt. I also rejoice at the prospect of meeting my dear husband again and again in lifetime after lifetime, together with all his friends, and sharing a great mission for kosen-rufu. With this knowledge, I am consoled. Thank you all for your support, cards, messages, flowers and other expressions of love and friendship. Love, Kim Irizar, Wharton, N.J.

We are excited to announce the arrival of Pedro and Cheryl Tadeo's new baby girl! Born: Aug. 17; 7 pounds, 7 ounces.; Rebecca Jane. Little brother, Joaquin, 4, chanted for her, too! Go Paradise Group! Magalia, Calif. See, we are growing! Rick and Nancy Owens

Jean Brook and Stan Horspool announce their new fortune baby boy, Cameron Abbott Koji Horspool, who was born at home on April 20 in Redwood City, Calif., weighing 9 pounds, 4 ounces and measuring 21-3/4 inches. Cameron's adoring siblings are 5-year-old "Big Brother" Brian and 17-year-old Naomi Dicus (who's starting college next week!).

Your daimoku and prayers are greatly appreciated by the Keding family: Rose, 32-year member, Daniel and Bobbie (parents) and Paul and Cindy McDonald (step-parents), for Joshua James Keding, 19, who passed on into a new life, on Aug. 7. "Josh" was a wonderful person with a big heart and was an avid student, golfer, fisherman and hiking/camping enthusiast. Renaissance Chapter, thank you for your prayers and support at this time. The Keding Family

LOST & FOUND

I am looking for Alison Chassis or Susan Mancini (sisters). It has been since August 1985 that we were in contact. Please write to Roberta Di-Criscio, J1003 Britton Pl., Voorhees, NJ 08043; (609) 770-1585.

Linda Myring...I'm looking for Linda Myring! Dear ex-roommate, please call or write Julie Evans, Box 1702, Saratoga, WY 82331; (307) 326-8109.

I lived near Highland Park, Calif., in 1987. Cheryl Saliscente, Fred and Shinko Lin, Janet Kiehl, the incredibly compassionate Yvie, my group chief who called me every single day just to encourage me — I wonder what you are doing? If you can, please e-mail me at Chinathink@aol.com, and tell me your news. You all provided the only sanity I had that year! It was a dark period, with my husband going on beating and screaming rampages.... My life has regained strength and dignity since then. You are always, always in a very special place in my heart. Leila Stuart Chan, Houston

I am looking for Larry Pierson from San Diego, my old pen pal buddy from the first junior high and high school meeting at the FNCC. I have lost your recent address and received postcards without a return address on them. Please write me again. Your friend, Jun Munkata, 8511 Coolwater Ct., Antelope, CA 95843; junm@cwiw.com

COMMENTS

I am finding that cyberspace is a great place to share Buddhism with others. I have told more than 10 people in three days about our practice, and we are having continuing dialogue! Dedicated

SGI-USA members are hosting on-line discussion meetings. I am meeting guests to bring! Charlotte A. Madlock, San Diego; e-mail: Charsan@aol.com, WinDaily25@aol.com

MESSAGE TO A FAMILY: Brighter than the sun is to us is your torch lit up by night to the suffering. Running. Pounding in the night. A pounding heart. Raise your light upon the pounding of construction of a grand stage! Ring the bell to reach... the sun to tug open the sky's eyelid, the curtain of your stage. The dance of your eyes, and voices, of joy give sight to the people. Now, let's move! Upon that stage! Phil Andermann

EVENTS

The 'Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century' exhibition will be open from Sept. 20 – Nov. 7 in the Herbst International Exhibition Hall in the Presidio of San Francisco. Co-sponsored by the Linus Pauling Family, Oregon State University and the SGI, the exhibition is free of charge and designed for all ages. For more information, please call (415) 255-4687 or visit their Web site: www.paulingexhibit.org.

The SGI-USA's children's rights exhibition — *Treasuring the Future: Children's Rights and Realities* — is continuing its nationwide tour with a showing at the Minneapolis Public Library, Sept. 14 – Oct. 5. For more information, call their events hotline at (612) 645-3133 or visit their Web site: www.sgi-mn.kidsrights.org. Free admission.

The children's rights exhibition moves to Colorado Springs, Colo., from Oct. 14 – Nov. 1 at the University of Colorado. For more information call the local SGI-USA community center: (719) 635-8968. Free admission.

SEND IT TO FINE PRINT!

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

SPECIAL
PULLOUT
SECTION

FRIENDS for Peace

SEPT. 4, 1998

D.C. KIDS GO CAMPING

Photos by Blake Lange



Everyone helps a boy accomplish the "Blind Walk."



Alex Lange takes the plunge from the diving board.



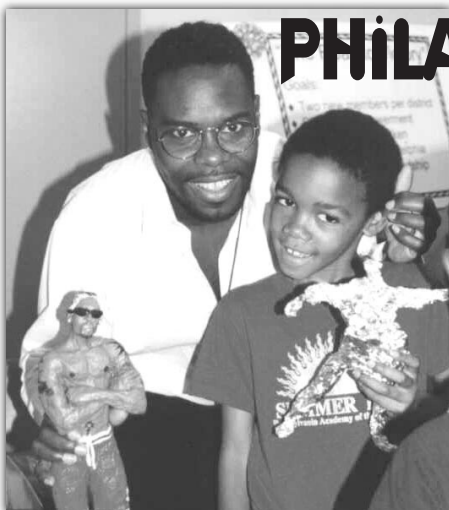
Justin Kunimoto on the rope walk.



Canoeing on James River: (Front to back) Linda Morris, Alex Lange, James Goodspeed and Martha Lange.

PHILADELPHIA

boys and girls meeting



In July, Osman Hayes was a guest at the Philadelphia Boys and Girls Group meeting and showed everyone some very impressive sculptures that he created. Zakee Correll was especially excited because Osman is his uncle (left). "I was proud to have Osman show us his figures!" he said.

Ashley Parker, a new "Friends for Peace" correspondent, had this to report about the meeting: "I learned how to use my imagination with foil. And to chant when things don't go well. And I learned my first and second prayer."

HEY KIDS! SEND US YOUR T-SHIRT DESIGN IDEAS!

WE'RE GONNA MAKE T-SHIRTS JUST FOR US! SEND US YOUR IDEAS AND/OR YOUR ARTWORK BY OCT.

15. BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME, AGE, ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER.

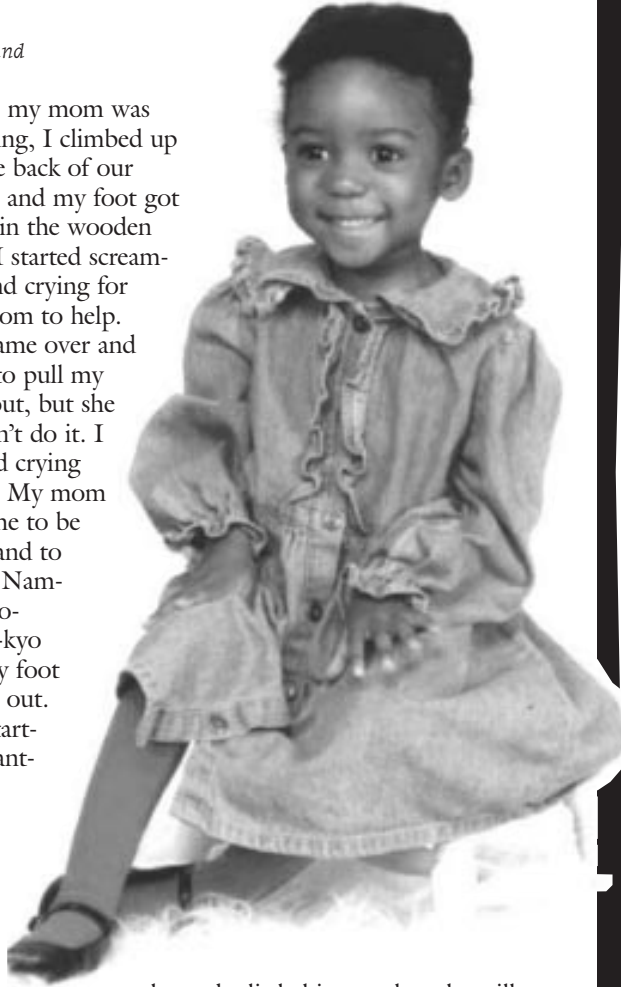
SEND TO:
"FRIENDS FOR PEACE"
525 WILSHIRE BLVD.
SANTA MONICA, CA
90401

EXPERIENCES

NIA PERRY-RICHARDSON, 3

Cleveland

While my mom was chanting, I climbed up on the back of our couch and my foot got stuck in the wooden part. I started screaming and crying for my mom to help. She came over and tried to pull my foot out, but she couldn't do it. I started crying again. My mom told me to be calm and to chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo for my foot to get out. She started chanting, and I



chanted a little bit, too, but she still couldn't get my foot out, so I said, "We're going to have to wait until Daddy comes home to get it out."

But Mom said: "It's going to be a long time before Daddy comes home. You and I are going to have to get your foot out, and you need to keep chanting."

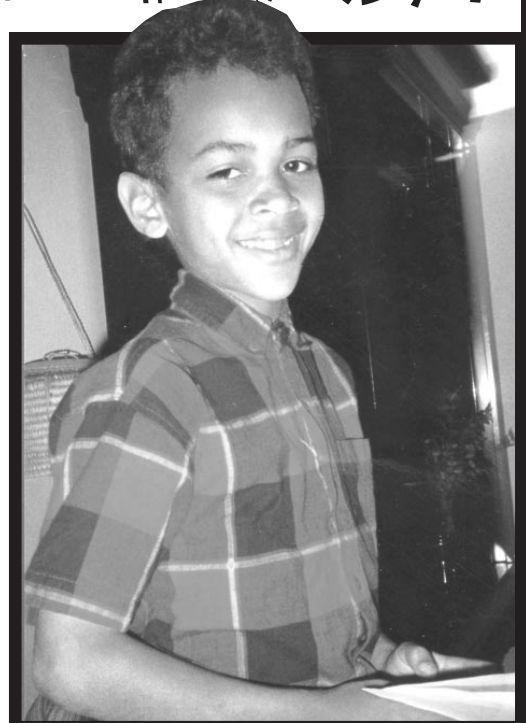
I cried a little bit more, then I chanted again with my mom. Then she slipped my foot out of the couch! I was so surprised that I smiled a big smile.

My mom asked me, "See what can happen when you chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo?"

ANTONIO HOWARD, 7

Seattle

I have been chanting for almost four years, and I have been doing gongyo for one year. I chanted and chanted to find a new school. A week later, I got a new school and I was very happy. I also did back flips for the April 28 Boys and Girls Group meeting, and planted flowers at the Seattle Culture Center.



RITCHIE MEYERS, 8

Seattle

One time, I got very frustrated over a piano piece. I was sick with a cold. My mom said I should chant, so I did. The next morning I felt better, and I was able to do better on the music piece. (Shown here with his brother Charlie, 3)



Send Us Your Questions

What would you like to ask about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, about chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, or about the SGI? Send us five questions by Oct. 1 for an introductory brochure we're making. We need your suggestions! Send them to "Friends for Peace"

525 Wilshire Blvd.
Santa Monica, CA 90401

"**FRIENDS** for Peace" thanks everyone who contributed to this issue. Please send your experience, comments, questions or news article to: "Friends for Peace," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.



CANDIE DUBOISE, 11

North Hollywood, Calif.

Since I was little, I wanted to be a princess.

When I was 5, I entered a pageant. If I won, I would be Miss Southern California Princess. I really thought I was going to win. I was so excited.

My mom told me that if I really wanted to win, I should start chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo to the Gohonzon, then wish to win the pageant. My mom and dad told me with the Gohonzon I can make anything possible.

I chanted for five minutes every day, and then wished to win the pageant. In the summer of 1992, I went to Palm Springs, Calif., to compete with more than 200 little girls who wanted to be a princess, just like I did. Since I had never been to a pageant, it was a disaster, but I really thought I was going to win because I thought I was the cutest girl and I had the Gohonzon.

But I didn't win.

I was very sad. I cried and asked my mother why I didn't win. My

mom told me: "Just because you didn't win doesn't mean your dream won't come true. You can try again next year."

I got happy and said, "OK."

I kept chanting and entered the pageant again the next year. This time, I wasn't the poor little girl who got lost in the middle of the stage. I was so self-assured, and I was really convinced I was going to win, but I lost again. I wanted to cry, but I told myself: "There's next year. Don't give up, Candie."

Even though I failed twice, I kept chanting and kept my dream. I wasn't going to give up until I accomplished my dream.

In 1994, I entered

again. This year was my last because I was getting too old for the princess title. So I only focused on doing the best I could.

I finally won. I was very glad. So were my mom and dad.

Winning the state title meant I had the duty to compete in the nationals. Quickly, I made a new determination and wished to the Gohonzon to be Miss American Princess. For seven months, I chanted one to two hours and worked on my pageant walk and turn, dance, speech and acting. I tried very hard.

When we got to Florida, there were so many girls from all over the United States. I started to make new friends. I love to make new friends. To me, these girls weren't my competition. I only had one competitor — me.

I needed to win over my fear and nervousness. I thought, if I can do this, I'm a winner, even

if I don't win the title.

After five long days of competition, it was the final day. I don't have any regrets — I did well even on the interview, and interviews are my weakest point. I felt like the Gohonzon was with me the whole time. I was placed in all of the optional categories.

Then it was time to call the winner. I was one of the semi-finalists. We all were nervous, but I was the most nervous. I could only think of one thing: I wanna win, win, win, win, win. I didn't hear anything until the MC said, "The 1995 Miss American Princess is Miss Southern California, Candice Duboise."

I was so happy. I got a beautiful tiara and sash and a rose bouquet.

After the pageant, I was told I was the most highly scored winner in their history. And my mom and dad told me I proved the power of daimoku and the Gohonzon

through this experience.

I learned to keep a never-give-up spirit because dreams come true when you do this and chant.

Now I have a new dream. I'm a dancer and an actress. One day, I'm going to own and perform in my own troupe, which will travel all over the world.

I want to name it Kandie Tribe after my idol, Josephine Baker, and her Rainbow Tribe. I'm going to finish and carry on what she tried to accomplish.

I believe through art, music and dance, I can bring people of all colors together.

Josephine didn't have the Gohonzon, but I do. I can chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and do kosen-rufu with SGI President Ikeda and the SGI family.

I know that with the power of the Gohonzon, I can become anything I want to be.

As long as I never give up. 🌸

ASK AMANDA

Dear Amanda,
I have a problem with this girl who is very mean to me every morning. She hurts my feelings, and I don't like it. I want her to be nicer. What should I do? — Sad in New Jersey

Dear New Jersey:
You can never control other people or make them behave the way you want them to. The only

person you can control is yourself. But you can have a high life-condition that will influence the other person. Buddhism teaches the "oneness of life and its environment." If you determine to have a strong and happy life-condition around this girl, you'll naturally end up treating her with kindness and respect. I think you'll see that this will influence her to treat you in

the same way. Even if she still acts mean, you'll have such a strong life-condition that her behavior won't ruin your day. How do you have a high life-condition? Chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is a good way to raise your state of life. Studying Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism will also help you better understand other people. Chant with



compassion for this girl. If she insists on being mean to you, she must be suffering. If you chant for her happiness, you will definitely affect her life in a positive way. — Amanda

Thanks to Sara Algase, Amanda's friend in New York, for sending us her answer:
Hey, kids, what's on your mind? Ask Amanda. Send your questions to: "Ask Amanda" c/o "Friends for Peace" 525 Wilshire Blvd. Santa Monica, Calif. 90401

HAVING A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Do you sometimes have conflicts with others?

Have you ever felt wrongly accused?

Do you feel responsible for your environment?

Share your experiences in a group discussion about taking responsibility to solve problems.

In a letter Nichiren Daishonin wrote to encourage one of his followers, he stated: "As human beings, we have the unique ability through our own efforts to raise our life-condition. We are the ones to take the responsibility to change ourselves; to strengthen our own life-conditions and thereby have an impact on everything around us" ("The Gift of Rice," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 267).

Lessons from the



HAVING A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Here's what SGI President Ikeda says:

As a far more successful type of organization, the [authors of a book on organizations] propose a model based on the image of a flock of

geese. The flock they envisage flies in a "V" formation, with the role of lead goose changing frequently as different geese take turns. It is a model in which everyone takes responsibility, everyone is equal and everyone unites

solidly for a shared objective. An organization of this kind, the authors argue, will succeed in the changing times in which we live. (SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's *Addresses in the United States*, June/July 1996)

FACT: As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird behind it. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

LESSON: People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

FACT: Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone. It quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front.

LESSON: If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed where we want to go.

FACT: When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies at the point position.

LESSON: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. People, as with geese, are interdependent with one another.

FACT: The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

LESSON: We need to make sure our "honking" from behind is encouraging, not something less helpful.

FACT: When a goose gets sick or wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation to follow him down to help and protect him. They stay with him until he is either able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out on their own with another formation or catch up with their flock.

LESSON: If we have as much sense as the geese, we will stand by one another.

HEY KIDS

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