



**THIRD STAGE**  
SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda share recollections of raising their children.

pages 6-7



**YOUTH**  
What is individuality, and why is it so important?

pages 8-9

Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

# STILL HIGHER STILL FURTHER

**WE SHOULDN'T RUN AWAY FROM OUR MISSION, SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA SAYS IN THIS SPEECH — WE SHOULD ADVANCE HIGHER AND FURTHER. 'DON'T YOU AGREE', HE ASKS, 'THAT IT'S FAR MORE SATISFYING AND EXHILARATING TO WALK OUT INTREPIDLY ONTO THAT STAGE, FIRED WITH THE RESOLVE TO DO OUR BEST, TO ACHIEVE SOMETHING OF VALUE, TO TOUCH AND INSPIRE OUR AUDIENCE?'**

*Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 26th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Sept. 22.*

I have a proposal: Fellow members from 50 countries outside Japan have made the long journey to be with us today; I propose that we erect a bronze plaque engraved with their names and their respective countries as an eternal tribute to them in a suitable spot in the soon-to-be-completed Main Building of Soka University's Tokyo campus.

### That Day Is Past

Dr. Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Argentine human rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, has said to me: "The next millennium will definitely be an age of women. We will see a decisive change in the times."

He also said: "In the future, we will see an age of people who possess spirituality. The world cries for such an age."

He asserted that the day is past when society's direction could be dictated by arrogant men, despots, the famous or authoritarian academics. He is clearly of the opinion that unless we usher in an age of women, an age of the people, we and our planet will find ourselves at a serious impasse. I fully agree with him.

*President Ikeda then asked SGI Women's Division Leader Eiko Akiyama, as a representative of the women present, to lead the audience in three cheers for the women's and young women's divisions. This was followed by award presentations, the Gloria Brass Band's performance of a medley of Soka Gakkai songs and some 250 visiting SGI members' resounding chorus of "March Toward the 21st Century."*

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 10



**CHU FALLINGSTAR, SIMSBURY, CONN.**

## Stamp of Success

As the new postmaster of Simsbury, Chu Fallingstar relies on her Buddhist practice for strength and courage.

By **PETER ROTHFARB**  
CORRESPONDENT

In 1982 Chu Huang arrived in the United States from Taiwan speaking no English. On June 26, 1998, she was sworn in as the postmaster of Simsbury, Conn.

At the swearing-in ceremony, the stage was bedecked with red, white and blue bunting. An honor guard stood at attention. Seated on stage were selectmen of the town, the head of the historical society, Congresswoman Nancy Johnson of Connecticut's Sixth Congress-

PLEASE SEE PROFILE, 11

### STUDY

At the heart of this Buddhism is the desire to clear up spiritual confusion.

page 2

### ESSAY

On the history of China-Japan relations.

page 4

### CHINESE PAGES

SGI president's guidance from Aug. 27.

pages 12-13

# WOW!

BREAKTHROUGHS IN UNDERSTANDING

## Eagle Peak Is Here

By M. LAVORA PERRY  
EAST CLEVELAND, OHIO

I have amazing reasons to appreciate life right now. I look into my 3-year-old daughter's eyes and relive the magic of her age. I watch my 16-month-old zoom through his world and wonder where his boundless energy comes from. I feel the new life growing inside of me and marvel that through me a whole 'nother person can emerge from the state of latency. I look into my husband's eyes and see all of me — the parts I admire and the parts I'd rather deny.

"The Drum at the Gate of Thunder" is definitely on my top 10 list of Nichiren Daishonin's great writings. In it, he tells his elderly, devout follower, Sennichi-ama: "Merely seeing each other's face would in itself be insignificant. What matters is one's heart. Someday let us meet on Eagle Peak, where Shakyamuni Buddha dwells" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 289). Time and again Sennichi-ama stayed home while sending offerings along with her husband, Abutsu-bo, who made the treacherous journey to Mount Minobu to visit the couple's beloved mentor.

I'm so glad that the Daishonin wrote this letter, because with my juggling-act schedule these days, Eagle Peak — right smack in front of the Gohonzon (or in front of the one I envision in my mind when I'm not at the altar) — is where I get to chant for my family when we're apart, and for the happiness of the participants of an SGI activity that I cannot physically attend.

Sometimes a day of just hanging out with my husband and children is my choice over an SGI meeting. Other times I relish participating in an SGI activity without my kids in tow, because I need some personal Buddhist-community recharge. And most of the time it simply feels good to have the Daishonin's assurance that, where ever I am, what matters is my heart.

*Did you ever say "Wow!" after studying Buddhism? Send us your story (see p. 14 for contact information).*

## WHAT A Concept

ON THE BASIC IDEAS  
OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM

By LISA JONES  
STAFF WRITER

**S**hakubuku literally means to break and subdue — which doesn't sound very...uh...friendly. In general SGI parlance, though, *shakubuku* means to introduce others to the practice of chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, to encourage people to overcome their difficulties and pursue their dreams — which is a friendly thing to do.

So it's important to recognize that when we do *shakubuku*, we're not breaking and subduing other people. By introducing others to the practice of Buddhism, our aim is to break and subdue the egotism or shallowness in ourselves and others.

Shakyamuni Buddha sought to break the illusory attachments that people had, such as cravings for material comfort or attachments to ascetic practices of self-denial. Nichiren Daishonin similarly sought to break people's attachments to false teachings. In the Daishonin's day, many people believed that their happiness existed only in an afterlife or distant "pure

land." Therefore, they needed simply to obey priests and government authorities throughout their lives to be reborn in paradise, they thought.

To believe these things, the Daishonin taught, was to slander the Lotus Sutra. The sutra teaches, as did the Daishonin, that people can attain Buddhahood in this lifetime through their own faith. But many of the Daishonin's contemporaries found this view offensive and preposterous, which necessitated the Daishonin's hard words, inexhaustible religious debates and unrelenting criticism of his detractors.

In the "Rissho Ankoku Ron," the Daishonin draws a clear connection between belief in erroneous teachings and misfortune. He writes: "When we examine this wide variety of sutras, we find that they all stress how grave a matter it is to slander the Law.... How could we not grieve? How could we not suffer? Therefore you must quickly reform the tenets that you hold in your heart and embrace the one true vehicle, the single good doctrine [of the Lotus Sutra]" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 40). The Daishonin emphasizes that the goal of *shakubuku* — to reform the tenets in our hearts — is to allow people to live in safety and enjoy good fortune.

Today, though, many people express beliefs that are in tune with the Lotus Sutra. Positive thinking, believing in oneself, caring for others and creating peace

are mainstream ideas. And it seems that today's problems are so complex and global that to urge people to "just chant and be happy" sounds, to some people, fatuous and superficial. In this atmosphere, it could be said that the shakubuku movement of the SGI is an education movement. Its emphasis is on helping SGI members and all people reflect on themselves and develop a clearer understanding of the nature of their lives. In a world in which, despite much positive thinking, cowardice, fear, indifference, indulgence and attachment still hold sway, *shakubuku* means to awaken people to a sublime sense of purpose or mission and to revitalize one another, breaking the shackles of inertia and frustration, so we can each live fully.

A much-quoted passage from SGI President Ikeda elaborates on this idea: "First you must break the hard shell of the lesser self. / This you must absolutely do. / Then direct your lucid gaze toward your friends, fellow members. / People can only live fully by helping others to live."

*Shakubuku* begins with each of us having a willingness to change our lives and the lives of others for the better. By breaking and subduing our own darkness and negativity, we begin the revitalization of our lives, communities, country and world.

Twenty in a series

## Clearing Up the Confusion

### STANDS TO REASON

LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM  
THE WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN

By JEFF FARR  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**It is a time when...truth and error stand shoulder to shoulder.... At such a time, one must set aside all other affairs and devote one's attention to rebuking slander of the Law. (MW-5, 103)**

**W**ritten in a Q-and-A format, this 1265 letter imagines a conversation between a sage and an unenlightened man that leads to the man saying he'll devote himself to Buddhism. Nichiren Daishonin's warning to the man, though, is that "devils and demons" will surely try to stop him from completing his new resolve (MW-5, 119).

On the one hand, this is a sort of encouragement to any new member: Be prepared for the obstacles that come in tandem with Buddhist practice, the Daishonin is

saying. At the same time, he's explaining why he spent so much of his time and effort on "rebuking slander of the Law."

At any time when "truth and error" are confused, he teaches — at any time when correct and incorrect versions of Buddhism are out there competing for people's hearts — you have to concentrate on this problem. As someone who knows the correct practice, you have to take responsibility for distinguishing it so for others.

There are many opinions within the SGI-USA about the strong focus that we have placed on the temple issue in recent years. Some members, certainly, feel that it has been too much. We have to remember, though, that clearing up religious confusion was the Daishonin's main focus. This was, in fact, his impetus for seeking the correct Buddhist practice and introducing it to the world in 1253.

Presidents Makiguchi and Toda had the same determination in founding the Soka Gakkai: to clear up the spiritual confusion that they saw. Rebuking slander is, in this sense, what gave birth to the Soka Gakkai and then the SGI. It is our spiritual foundation as an organization.

To think that our strong stand against Nikken's slander is even in the slightest disconnected from what our organiza-

tion is all about is to send ourselves away from our religious roots.

In America today, there is the danger that the U.S. priests will fool people who know neither side of the temple issue into believing that Nikken's Buddhism is the Daishonin's Buddhism. We find ourselves thus at a new crucial moment.

One of my favorite Martin Luther King Jr. speeches is from one of his crucial moments: During the 1963 Birmingham, Ala., movement, there came a point where many of his followers lost hope; they felt betrayed. Calling this moment "the midnight of oppression which we had believed to be the dawn of redemption," King said that they were facing "an extreme situation, and therefore our remedies must be extreme." They just had to try harder, King meant — it was, indeed, midnight.

The "extreme situation" of religious truth and error being so utterly confused in the Daishonin's day necessitated the strongly worded refutations of slander that he became known for. Today's similarly extreme situation — our temple issue — is no different.

It's midnight. We have to bring about dawn.

Twenty-one in a series

# Las Vegas Mayor Thanks Members for Community Participation

By **BOB HASEGAWA**  
CORRESPONDENT  
Las Vegas, Oct. 4

Las Vegas Mayor Jan Jones visited the Las Vegas Community Center today to thank local members for supporting two important city programs, Adopt-A-Block and the Gateway Arts and Music Festival.

"Thanks to the SGI Buddhists, the Adopt-A-Block program is off to a great start. Now, over 40 groups have signed up," said Mayor Jones. "But the SGI will be remembered as the first group to stand up for a better neighborhood." On Sept. 13, 250 SGI-USA volunteers worked to clean sidewalks, vacant lots and landscaped areas on 16 blocks around the community center. More than five tons of trash were bagged.

"The city's first Gateway Arts and Music Festival was success-



Mayor Jan Jones talks with some of the youth who were among more than 400 members who welcomed her to the Las Vegas Community Center.

ful largely due to the SGI Buddhists working behind the scenes and on stage," said Mayor Jones. Many of the performers were also Buddhist, including New York jazz guitarist Larry Coryell.

Mayor Jones also made a strong appeal for breast cancer awareness. A survivor of breast

cancer herself, she feels that silence can be deadly. "Talking about breast cancer is the first step; knowing your options is the second," she said.

Mayor Jones also presented a proclamation naming Oct. 2 as SGI-USA World Peace Day in Las Vegas. WJ

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

## NEWS BRIEFS



### San Diego Taiko Drummers Make the Scene

The SGI-USA Taiko Drummers joined musicians from around the United States on Sept. 10 and 11 in San Diego's Street Scene Festival, held in the historic Gaslamp District.

Colleen Griffin, a new addition to the group, was proud to represent the SGI. "When we play," she said, "I feel like we're showing them freedom; helping them to truly feel free."

"The support of the members and leaders," drummer

Hope White said, "as well as the process of preparing for the event, deepened my faith much more than simply performing. The playing created a unity between us in a way that hadn't existed nearly as much before."

Natalie Creek, the group's leader, said: "For this activity, I was forced to challenge and overcome my internal obstacles. It forced me to have a newfound confidence in my daimoku."

— ALESANDRA RAIN

## SGI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# An Era of Friendship

The following is SGI President Ikeda's message to various dignitaries upon the opening of the Los Angeles Friendship Center, Sept. 21.

I express my sincere thanks to you for finding time amid your many important commitments to attend the opening of the SGI-USA Los Angeles Friendship Center.

I was deeply moved to learn of the important recognitions that have been bestowed upon this new center, upon our organization and upon my efforts to promote friendship, understanding and peace:

The proclamation by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors declaring today Soka Gakkai International Youth Day, presented by Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite-Burke. The proclamation by the City of Los Angeles to me, presented by Los Angeles City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas.

The Congressional Proclamation sponsored by Congressman Esteban E. Torres declaring today Daisaku Ikeda — International Cultural Ambassador Day, presented by Mr. Jamie Casso on Congressman Torres' behalf. And U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer's Excellence in Education Award presented on Senator Boxer's behalf by Ms. Vera deVera.

These are truly profound honors and reflect the deep sin-

cerity of those who presented them. On behalf of all SGI members, I accept these honors with the strong determination to further contribute to this community and to the City and County of Los Angeles. I share this joy with my friends in Los Angeles and with all the SGI members in 128 countries worldwide. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Since the first time I traveled to Los Angeles, in October 1960, at age 32, I have visited your fair city on numerous occasions and feel a special bond with Los Angeles and her citizens. It is thus a great joy for me personally that this center has opened here.

I hope and expect that this will be a center for friendship. I hope that members of the local community and their various events and activities will find warm welcome at this center.

I also hope that this friendship center will be the site of open discussion on such issues as education and culture, and that such dialogue will help foster mutual understanding and respect. It is my belief that so long as we keep sight of the goal of human happiness and a sense of reverence for the dignity of human life, empathy and understanding are always possible. This has been my consistent belief over the years.

Rosa Parks wrote these words in the foreword to the Japanese

edition of a book of hers: "As human beings who desire peace, we can overcome any racial or religious differences through friendship and spiritual exchange and create great value together."

It is my determination to respond to the expectations inherent in the honors that we have received today. For the sake of the young people whom we treasure, we must make the 21st century an era filled with friendship. Toward that end, I intend, together with our friends here today, to continue to create new ripples of constructive dialogue for peace so that these waves may grow and spread.

I conclude by sharing some lines from a poem I once wrote to my friends in Los Angeles. And I extend my heartfelt prayers for the continued excellent health and well-being of those in attendance today.

*This rich spiritual soil,  
this great earth alive with  
the diversity  
of peoples and traditions —  
giving rise to a new culture,  
a new humanity.*

*Los Angeles is a city  
pregnant with future,  
a bridge linking East and  
West*

*Los Angeles will be  
the eastern capital  
of the Pacific region  
in the 21st century.* WJ



### Golden Eagle Bagpipe Band Takes Flight Again

Back in the '70s and '80s, on any given Sunday morning, the powerful sounds of Scottish pipes could be heard rehearsing in Los Angeles. This July, Golden Eagle Bagpipe Band members held a meeting at the Santa Monica Community Center that was both a reunion and a kickoff. The formerly all-men band

opened its doors to new members from all four divisions and also agreed to expand its repertoire to include an innovative mix of jazz and traditional Scottish tunes.

A few weeks later, band members participated in South Pasadena's Ostrich Parade.

— EMILE BARTRUM

By DAISAKU IKEDA  
SGI PRESIDENT

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY

# CHINA AND JAPAN: TOWARD AN AGE OF PEACE



*SGI President Ikeda remembers how, 30 years ago, he called for the normalization of China–Japan relations. ‘To break down the walls of mistrust and unreasoned hatred,’ he writes, ‘someone needs to be the first to speak out, to take the initiative.’*

The Soka Gakkai's greatest commitment is to move the world from an age of war to an age of peace. That is why Josei Toda made his Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons on Sept. 8, 1957.

On that same day, 11 years later in 1968, seeking to pave the way to peace, I made a proposal at the 11th Student Division General Meeting calling for the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan. This year marks the 30th anniversary of my appeal.



China is Japan's neighbor, a country to which we Japanese owe a great cultural debt — including the transmission of Buddhism. Mr. Toda was deeply concerned about the happiness of the Asian people; while discussing his ideas for achieving world peace, he would often say to me, “China will play an increasingly important role in world history, and friendly relations between Japan and China will be most vital.”

After Mr. Toda's death, I was determined to carry on his vision and build a golden bridge of friendship between China and Japan.



But that was during the Cold War. The Japanese and U.S. governments viewed China as an enemy. Refused membership to the United Nations and with the Cultural Revolution in full swing, China was isolated internationally.

At that time, anyone who suggested the idea of Japan normalizing relations with China was

regarded as left-leaning and had to be prepared for attacks from all sides — and the real risk of being in personal danger. Inejiro Asanuma, head of the Japanese Socialist Party, sought to restore relations between the two countries and was stabbed to death at a political rally in 1960.



Yet even under these circumstances, there were people working hard to normalize ties. One was the businessman and former Minister of International Trade and Industry Tatsunosuke Takasaki. When he met Premier Zhou Enlai in China in the early 1960s, he told him about our organization, saying: “There is a group that, although it may not be a big force in society, is winning support among the people. It is called the Soka Gakkai.”

Mr. Takasaki lived near Shinanomachi. Just six months be-

fore he died, he presented me with a painting of Mount Fuji to commemorate the completion of the new Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Shinanomachi in September 1963.

In our conversation on that occasion, I sensed his strong desire for the restoration of diplomatic relations between China and Japan, as well as his expectations for me. I will never forget his warm handshake as I made a silent pledge to fulfill the mission with which he had entrusted me.



It is wrong for people to be separated from one another by ideology. Peace begins with communication and exchange among people. To break down the walls of mistrust and unreasoned hatred, someone needs to be the first to speak out, to take the initiative.

I decided, based on my Buddhist beliefs, to make a declaration, to say what had to be said. I was determined to offer new ideas to change existing public opinion, to help create a new age — even at the risk of my life.

I also believed that our student members would follow my lead and advance bravely along the great path of friendship.



My declaration calling for

normalization stirred a tremendous reaction. There were even threatening telephone calls and letters. Cars with speakers attached to their roofs kept up a continual verbal assault.

Detractors asked, “Why is a religious leader suddenly donning a Red necktie?” I was also

***China is Japan's neighbor, a country to which we Japanese owe a great cultural debt — including the transmission of Buddhism. Mr. Toda was deeply concerned about the happiness of the Asian people.... After Mr. Toda's death, I was determined to carry on his vision and build a golden bridge of friendship between China and Japan.***

criticized for interfering with the Japanese government's foreign policy.

I knew that this would happen, but I also knew that history would be my true judge.

And at the same time, many who cared deeply for Japan's future praised my declaration. The political leader Kenzo Matsu-

mura, who had worked hard to improve China–Japan relations, paid me a visit, even though he was then 87.

“Will you come to China with me?” he asked. “Given my age, this will probably be my last visit. I want to introduce you to Premier Zhou as the person to whom I entrust the task of normalizing relations. For the sake of Japan....” Unfortunately I could not accompany him, but I did continue to make every effort to build a bridge between China and Japan.

And the times began to change.

In 1972, Japan and China issued a joint communiqué restoring diplomatic relations. In 1978, the two nations signed a peace and friendship treaty.



I first visited China in May 1974. On my second visit, in December 1974, I met Premier Zhou at the hospital where he was receiving medical treatment.

I have now visited China more than 10 times. And since that first trip, many Soka Gakkai members, not the least those of the youth division, have paid goodwill visits to China as well.

The first, tentative bridge that we built has become a strong, golden bridge of friendship that will endure for generations.

Let us be courageous and live according to our beliefs, always following the path of friendship. The great humanistic movement of the Soka Gakkai is just this: building bridges to link the hearts of people, in every region, all across the globe. **WT**

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Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

SGI President Ikeda walks with Madame Deng Yingchao, widow of China's Premier Zhou Enlai, during one of his many visits there.

# the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI

## 'THE FLOWER OF CULTURE'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 44-45

**As 1962 begins to wind down, it's announced that President Shin'ichi Yamamoto will travel to the United States and Europe in the new year. 'Let us prepare again to march toward our goal of kosen-rufu — for the happiness of the people, for the sake of the Law, for the benefit of society,' Shin'ichi says.**

After a short address by Study Department Leader Chuhei Yamadaira, Soka Gakkai General Director Koichi Harayama announced the goals for the coming year, which included achieving an additional 400,000 member-households and strengthening Buddhist study in the organization. He also announced that at the beginning of the year, President Shin'ichi Yamamoto would travel to the United States and Europe, providing guidance to members around the world.

Many U.S. members were attending the Headquarters Leaders Meeting and, when they heard this news, they cheered and applauded loudly.

In his speech that day, Shin'ichi expressed his deep gratitude to all who worked to achieve the goal of 3 million member-households. He said: "You all know the famous words of the Daishonin's writings, 'Those who believe in the Lotus Sutra are as if in winter, which never fails to turn into spring' (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 150). The first part of the sentence, 'Those who believe in the Lotus Sutra are as if in winter,' refers to this being the evil age of the Latter Day of the Law,

and that, as a consequence of this time, we who uphold the Mystic Law encounter persecution and oppression. It also refers to the sufferings we undergo as a result of various kinds of karma.

"The second part of the sentence, 'which never fails to turn into spring,'" he went on, "represents Nichiren Daishonin's absolute assurance, his promise, that through the wonderful power of the Gohonzon and our own power of faith and practice, we will never fail to achieve happiness and attain Buddhahood in this lifetime.

"The history of the Soka Gakkai, too, is a history of advancing undauntedly through fierce storms of persecution and obstacles," he said. "There is no other organization in our times that has been as maligned and defamed as ours. Undeterred, we have made the exceptional progress that we celebrate today and have become a supporting pillar of the Japanese nation. This is evidence that winter is at last giving way to the sunshine of spring. I am also certain that the time has arrived for us to let the entire world see just what a wonderful organization the Soka Gakkai really is.

"Next year we will have a fine new Headquarters Build-

ing," he continued, "and the year after, a beautiful new Grand Reception Hall, which is to be one of the world's foremost architectural works, at the head temple. These are all proof that the Soka Gakkai's spring has come. I am certain that our progress means that a new morning, illuminated by the gentle light of spring, will dawn at last over the nation of Japan, which has suffered greatly."

This momentous declaration of victory in the struggle for kosen-rufu was met with huge applause. Every face in the auditorium was shining with joy.

Shin'ichi stated, "Let us prepare again to march toward our goal of kosen-rufu — for the happiness of the people, for the sake of the Law, for the benefit of society."

Shin'ichi commended the members again on their tremendous efforts, and then concluded: "Please give my best regards to all the members in your chapters who were unable to attend today's meeting. I look forward to seeing everyone in high spirits once again at next month's Headquarters Leaders Meeting."

He deliberately kept his greetings brief. Having worked

together, united in a single purpose to propagate the Daishonin's teachings — and thus having together scored this magnificent accomplishment — few words were needed to communicate the joy he shared with them. Their spirit of oneness and seamless teamwork had been the secret to achieving a membership of 3 million households.

On Nov. 28, the following day, Shin'ichi traveled to the head temple and there visited his mentor Josei Toda's tomb to report on the Gakkai's milestone achievement.

The 10th Young Women's Division General Meeting was held Dec. 2, while the 11th Young Men's Division General Meeting was convened on Dec. 9 — both at the Nihon University Auditorium.

At the YMD meeting, new leadership appointments were announced, with Kenshiro Ishikawa replacing Shoichi Tanida as division chief. With energy, enthusiasm and resounding cheers, the young men's division made a fresh start toward the new year.

In mid-December, with the general meetings of the young women's division and young men's division concluded, Shin'ichi left Tokyo for a guidance tour of the Chubu and Kansai regions. Intent on further strengthening and expanding the Soka Gakkai's great cultural movement, he attended the inaugurations of the 1st class of Kansai's Academic Department and Arts Department, respectively.

The last major Headquarters activity for 1962, the Year of Victory, was the Headquarters Leaders Meeting on Dec. 22. This gathering was to serve as a dynamic kickoff toward the coming Year of Study, 1963. Unlike previous Headquarters

Leaders Meetings, which had been held at such venues as the Taito Gymnasium and the Tokyo Gymnasium, this final meeting of the year was convened at the much larger Nihon University Auditorium where the Gakkai usually held only general meetings and special conventions.

The results of the Nov. 23 Study Department Promotional Exam for assistant professors seeking to become full professors were announced, with 43 candidates being promoted to the rank of professor. A new rank, associate professor, was also established, and 122 assistant professors were promoted to that position.

With the new rank, the Study Department was now organized in ascending order into these positions: assistant teacher, teacher, assistant professor, associate professor and professor. It was also announced that more than half a million members had applied to take the Study Department Entrance Exam scheduled for Jan. 6.

Now, 700 years after the Daishonin's time, an unprecedented movement based on the profound life-philosophy of the Daishonin's Buddhism was spreading deeply, quietly and steadily throughout society. Promoted by ordinary men and women, it was gradually stirring a new renaissance of the human spirit.

### To be continued

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

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

**MATSUOKA:** (Addressing Mrs. Ikeda) Actually, you are a great friend of the editing staff of the *Seikyo Shimbun*. On important occasions when President Ikeda is meeting with visiting dignitaries, you often take notes in the place of reporters, and we are frequently indebted to you when it comes to writing our articles.

**K. IKEDA:** Thank you. My role is simply to help and support my husband. Our relationship is like the sun and the moon. I am merely the moon that shines in the sun's light.

**D. IKEDA:** We both have different roles. There are times when the burning intensity and power of the sun are called for, and times when the soothing luminescence and serene wisdom of the moon are needed. A complementary relationship in which the partners work together is a beautiful thing.

I remember Premier Zhou Enlai of China and his wife, Madam Deng Yingchao. Even after the premier's death, Madame Deng carried on their joint struggle, working to serve the people as a fellow comrade. Sharing the same goals is so important.

**K. IKEDA:** I think she provided a wonderful, noble example, the way she kept alive the memory of her husband, with whom she had worked so hard for so long, and continued to devote herself to their shared ideals.

When Premier Zhou died, mourners sent many, many floral tributes, of course. Among them was a small wreath with the note, "To my comrade-in-arms Enlai — from Little Chao." "Little Chao" was Madame Deng's nickname. I couldn't help feel that her overflowing emotions were distilled in that term "comrade-in-arms."

Incidentally, since we were just talking about the moon, I fondly recall a poem I received from President Toda:

*May you possess both  
The gentleness of the  
moonlight  
And the strength of the  
Mystic Law.*

Rather than needlessly compete with one another, I think both men and women should de-

THE  
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# A Family Committed To Serving the Members



'We both have different roles,' President Ikeda says of his wife. 'There are times when the burning intensity and power of the sun are called for, and times when the soothing luminescence and serene wisdom of the moon are needed.'

vote their energies to working for the sake of others and for Buddhism. At the same time, I feel it's only natural that different people will play different roles in their efforts to realize this shared commitment.

**MATSUOKA:** Speaking of the moon, the first series of pho-

tographs you took, President Ikeda, were of the moon. As I recall, that was some 28 years ago.

I vividly remember how sometimes you would set up your tripod and use many different lenses, from wide angle to zoom, to take photographs. Now you take photographs in a much freer fashion, don't you?

**SASAKI:** That reminds me of an incident in Moscow more than 20 years ago. We were boating on the Moscow River at the invitation of Soviet Minister of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education V.P. Elyutin and discussing the subject of education.

At one point you said, "Please wait just a moment," and

went to the bow of the boat, where you took several photographs of the beautiful spring greenery. You said that you would never see this scene again, and that you wanted to record it forever in your heart. This is photographing with the heart, you said.

**D. IKEDA:** Yes, I take photographs with the heart. I think that if your sensibilities are rich and refined, you can capture the richness of nature's beauty. People's hearts are fickle, but Nature never rejects us. Nature is all-accepting and all-embracing.

## Not To Waste a Moment

**MATSUOKA:** When you take photographs now, you just click the shutter without even looking through the viewfinder. A well-known photographer has described your work as the art of "capturing the moment with the eye of the heart." Jun Miki, longtime president of the Japan Professional Photographers Society and a great admirer of your photography over the years, once told me that many photographers lose the best moment to click the shutter because they spend too much time looking through the viewfinder. He said that you, on the other hand, always seem to capture the moment perfectly, which is one of the reasons your photographs are so good. It's very difficult, he commented, to take photographs that reveal the depth and breadth of vision that you do.

He also said: "President Ikeda's photographs are without affectation. I think the best way to describe them is 'artlessly beautiful' and 'effortlessly natural.' When you view them, you are struck by the infinite expanse of the photographer's spirit."

**K. IKEDA:** I think it's also important to remember that my husband isn't traveling around the world just to take photographs. He only manages to take photographs in the midst of an extremely demanding schedule.

**D. IKEDA:** I can't bear to waste a single moment. And sometimes my photographs serve to encourage and inspire our members. If the traveling exhibition of my photographs, "Dialogue With Nature," provide an opportunity for me to share with members a broad and expansive vision of the world around us,

PLEASE SEE FAMILY, NEXT PAGE

## FAMILY, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

nothing makes me happier.

**K. IKEDA:** We must never lose our sensitivity to beauty, our ability to appreciate fragrant flowers, beautiful music or lovely paintings.

### Never Give In to Defeat

**SASAKI:** May I ask, by the way, what your motto is, Mrs. Ikeda?

**K. IKEDA:** It's basically: "You may not always win, but never give in to defeat. Live in such a way that you are not defeated, no matter what the circumstances."

**D. IKEDA:** That's a crucial point. I am always emphasizing to the students of our Soka schools the importance of not letting themselves be defeated. As long as you're not defeated, you can always look forward to another opportunity for success in the future. The key is not getting down on yourself. You have to remember to value and treasure yourself.

**MATSUOKA:** When you were raising your children, Mrs. Ikeda, what did you try to keep in mind as a mother?

**K. IKEDA:** How my own stress and tension, due to demands on my time, might adversely affect my children. We live in a world of relentless competition — not only in the adult world but even in the realm of children. That's the kind of age we live in. As a mother, I tried to keep some inner latitude in reserve so that I could create an atmosphere of emotional warmth and security for my children.

I think that the maternal instinct is the human emotion closest to nature. Nature is extraordinarily accepting, and I think mothers must be the same. If a mother is concerned only with her ambitions for her children — for example, that they get into a good school or earn good grades — her relationship with them will be cold and unfeeling. I think we should have a warmer, more relaxed attitude. Even if our children don't get top grades, for example, we should be happy and grateful that they are strong and healthy.

### Teaching Children About Faith

**SASAKI:** I hope you don't mind our endless questions, Mrs. Ikeda. Our readers have been eagerly waiting for your participation in

this discussion and have sent us so many questions.

If I may ask, how did you teach your children about faith?

**K. IKEDA:** The same as in any other family, I'm sure. Gongyo is the basic practice in a Soka Gakkai family, and I started teaching them to do it by reading it together, one word at a time. I discussed how we should instruct the children with my husband, and we both agreed that we should be neither too strict nor too lax. He said, "It all comes down to the mother's faith in the end."

Morning gongyo is the way we start our day, so of course it's very important, but there were times when the children were running late for school. On those days, instead of making a fuss as they went out the door — which would probably have had the reverse effect I hoped for — I would see them off with a smile and say reassuringly: "Don't worry. Today, I'll do gongyo for you."

**D. IKEDA:** You have to use your head when teaching children about faith. But I have seen many, many families over the years, and I think I can say that the faith of the children really *does* depend on the faith of their mother. Not that I'm letting fathers off the hook!

**K. IKEDA:** Our eldest son, Hiromasa, was born on April 28, 1953, the anniversary of the day on which Nichiren Daishonin publicly declared the teaching of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo (in 1253). My husband was away from Tokyo attending a youth division meeting with President Toda.

Mr. Toda was overjoyed when he heard the news of our son's birth. Using a calligraphy brush, he wrote a poem on the folding fan he was using: "On the birth of your child / how I rejoice / under the spring moon." That fan is one of our family treasures.

I often took Hiromasa along with me to Gakkai activities from the time he was little. He even came along with me to many of the general meetings, leaders meetings and lectures on the Goshu led by President Toda.

When my husband became president, Hiromasa was a first grader. From that time on, he always attended the annual Headquarters Leaders Meeting as a member of the Ikeda family. Through that early involvement, he grew into a person who really loved the Soka Gakkai. He made his own file of clippings from the *Seikyo Shim-*

*bun* when he was a boy.

**MATSUOKA:** You and President Ikeda had three children — all boys.

**K. IKEDA:** Yes. Two years after Hiromasa, our second son, Shirohisa, was born. By that time, my husband was incredibly busy with Gakkai work. Our third son, Takahiro, was born on April 11, 1958, just nine days after the death of President Toda on April 2. I was not able to participate in the ceremony passing on the mission of kosen-rufu held on March 16 because I was so close to giving birth to Takahiro. But Mr. Toda asked me to visit him at the head temple where he was staying that month, and I went there on March 18. I could see that his condition was very serious. That was our last meeting.

The period after Mr. Toda's death was a very difficult one for the organization. Many people predicted that the Soka Gakkai would disintegrate and disappear, so my husband was rushing all over Japan to encourage the members and was hardly ever home. The boys used to wait for him to return from his trips, looking forward eagerly to the little gifts they'd made him promise to bring back for them. He'd dash out the door saying: "Don't worry! I won't forget!" but I knew that he'd be so busy it would be impossible for him to find time to look for presents.

What I'd do is buy little gifts for the boys myself and put them away so that he could give them to the children when he returned from his trip.

**MATSUOKA:** I can just see the heartwarming scene you are describing. How was President Ikeda's health in those days?

**K. IKEDA:** He tired very easily and in general was not in good health. He often woke up at night and wanted something cold to drink. I'm sure he had a fever. Even during winter, he always had night sweats, and when he woke in the morning his face was flushed.

I've always felt that my mission in life has been to protect my husband's health, so I am overjoyed to see how unbelievably healthy he is now compared to his condition then.

**SASAKI:** I'm sure every member of the Soka Gakkai feels the same way.

**K. IKEDA:** I thank them all for their good wishes.

As our three sons grew older,

each gradually gained his own appreciation of faith and began to apply himself to the practice and Gakkai activities. I remember once, when our youngest son, Takahiro, was a high school student, he wanted to go on an astronomy field trip to Ogasawara (an island located some 550 miles south of Tokyo). I told him that he really should be attending a meeting of the future division that was taking place at the same time, but he said he had promised his classmates well in advance, and he couldn't back out.

I discussed the matter with his father, who said: "Our faith is something that we are involved in for our entire lives. Let's take the long view and allow him to go to Ogasawara. The important thing is that he sticks to his faith for the long haul." I confess that I, too, was relieved to hear him say those words.

As they matured into adulthood and their understanding of faith deepened, our children began, on their own initiative, to approach their father about Gakkai activities and efforts for kosen-rufu not only as a parent but as a mentor.

**MATSUOKA:** Even to us outsiders it's apparent that there's a mentor-disciple relationship between President Ikeda and his sons. It's very inspiring.

**K. IKEDA:** Our second son, Shirohisa, died at the age of 29, and like any parent, I was deeply grieved. I experienced the greatest sorrow and suffering that a person can know. Until you go through something like that yourself, you can't really relate to other people's pain and suffering. Everything in life is a lesson; such experiences, painful as they may be, make us who we are.

**SASAKI:** When I met Shirohisa's son and your grandson, Takahisa, the other day, I was surprised at how he'd grown. He's quite a young gentleman. [This past April, he started university.] I remember seeing you once, Mrs. Ikeda, talking happily with Takahisa and his mother. It was a wonderful sight. You looked so happy as you walked along holding hands with your grandson. I'll never forget it.

**K. IKEDA:** When Hiromasa graduated from university (Keio University) and was looking for a job, he received offers from many companies. But perhaps because he had

seen how dedicated his father was to education, he decided to become a teacher and went to work at Kansai Soka Junior and Senior High Schools.

Over the years, however, as my husband's exchanges with individuals and organizations outside the SGI have grown, Hiromasa has increasingly helped out by acting as his father's representative. I sincerely pray that he may always serve the members to his utmost.

Takahiro graduated from Soka University and also decided to become a teacher. He took a post at Kansai Soka Elementary School. But lately we've been so busy that he's often acting as an assistant to his father as well.

**MATSUOKA:** I heard from President Ikeda that when Takahiro was thinking about what to do when he left school, you advised him, Mrs. Ikeda, to become an elementary school teacher rather than a university teacher, especially given the importance of elementary school teachers in shaping their young students' lives.

**K. IKEDA:** Yes, I did say that. Both Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda were elementary school teachers, after all. The Soka Gakkai (Value-creating Society) has its proud beginnings in the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Value-creating Education Society).

**D. IKEDA:** I make a clear distinction between my public and private lives, and so I haven't talked much about my family in the past, but our discussion in this installment has revealed all our secrets!

**MATSUOKA & SASAKI:** Thank you so much. We had so many requests from our readers.

**D. IKEDA:** As Mr. Toda's disciple, I will devote myself to kosen-rufu as long as I live. My entire family is at the service of the Soka Gakkai, of our members. When I accepted the post of SGI president in Guam in 1975, I said to representatives from around the world: "I hope you do not seek after your own praise or glory, but instead dedicate your whole lives to sowing the seeds of the Mystic Law for the sake of the peace of the whole world. I shall do the same thing." And that resolve will remain the same until the last day of my life.

(To be continued)



Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

'Each of us is different, but we are all alike in that we possess tremendous potential. The truth is, you can do almost anything if you set your mind to it. The worst thing is to lose confidence in yourself and limit your own potential.'

# What Does Individuality Mean?

What is individuality? It's your uniqueness — your unique mission. 'Life is about expressing and developing that individuality as fully as possible,' says President Ikeda. 'In other words, it is about self-realization.'

*This is the second installment in the new series of discussions on youth among SGI President Ikeda and Soka Gakkai high school division chiefs Hidenobu Kimura (young men's chief) and Yoshiko Ueda (young women's chief), representing the high school division members. (The second half of this installment will appear in next week's issue.)*

**KIMURA:** Today's theme is "individuality." When we asked our members "What kind of person would you describe as having individuality?" we got various answers: "A person who isn't afraid to dress or look different from others." "An interesting person, someone who does the unusual or daring." "Someone who knows how to be themselves, who isn't influenced by others." And "It isn't a matter of their appearance but an air or quality they exude."

People have their own ideas about what individuality is, but I think most would agree that it is a good quality. It seems contradictory, then, that there is a tendency in Japanese society to pick on those who do not conform to the "norm." People who dress or look different or who don't own the "right" or "in" things are often treated as outsiders. Consequently, they become afraid to express their individuality. This, at least, seems to be the situation in Japan today.

**IKEDA:** Individuality has been described as a unique treasure that we each possess. Just as no two people have exactly the same face, we all have our individual characteristics. We each have a treasure that belongs to us alone. We have a mission that only we can fulfill. Everyone has his or her unique character, his or her identity.

Because of our individuality, we have a way of life and mission that are ours alone. Our individuality is something special and singularly our own; no one else can possess it. It is part of our very being, something we exude naturally, without thinking about it.

Life is about expressing and developing that individuality as fully as possible — in other words, it is about self-realization. In the SGI, we call this *human revolution*.

The fact that we have been born into this world means that we each have a unique mission to fulfill. If we didn't, we would never have been born. The universe does nothing in vain. Everything has meaning. Even plants that we spurn as weeds have a function to fulfill. Each living thing has its unique identity, role and purpose — the cherry as a cherry, the plum as a plum, the peach as a peach, the damson as a damson.

**UEDA:** You're referring, of course, to the well-known Buddhist principle of cherry, plum, peach and damson.

**IKEDA:** Yes. There's no point in a plum trying to be a cherry. The plum should bloom like a plum, revealing its unique potential to the fullest. Not only does doing so accord with reason, but it is the right path to happiness and fulfillment in life. Each of us has a distinct identity — that's what makes life interesting. How dull things would be if we were all alike!

**KIMURA:** Yes. Human society is filled with diversity. There are people who are logical, intuitive, scholarly, athletic, scientific, humanistic. There are eloquent people and quiet people, impatient people and easy-going people. There are those who are highly methodical and those who are very casual. There are those who are impulsive and those who are cautious, those who bloom early and those who bloom late. Everyone has different talents and aptitudes, too.

## Believe in Yourself and Work Hard

**IKEDA:** That's absolutely right. But there is also an important thing that we mustn't forget. True individuality never comes to full flower without hard work. Therefore, you're making a big mistake if you think that who you are right now represents all you are capable of being. Also, it's natural, especially in your teens, not to have a clear idea of who you are.

We are always changing. If you decide passively, "I'm a quiet type now, so I'll just go through life being quiet," then you won't fully realize your unique potential. On the other hand, you can challenge yourself to become someone, who, though quiet and reserved by nature, will nevertheless say what needs to be said at the right moment, clearly and completely, someone who has the courage to speak out and stand up for the truth. Through such effort, you'll come to develop your distinctive way of communicating that is refreshingly different from your more talkative peers. That is what is meant by individuality.

The same can be said about study. Simply deciding from the outset that you're not good

at studying, without making any effort, is nothing but escapism.

Each of us is different, but we are all alike in that we possess tremendous potential. The truth is that you can do almost anything if you set your mind to it. The worst thing is to lose confidence in yourself and limit your potential.

Generally speaking, one person is about as smart as the next. Your grades at school right now are not a measure of your full potential. They don't define you. No matter how tough things get, it's important to remember that, if others can do it, so can you, and to be determined to challenge the limits of your potential. You have to believe in yourself 100 percent. Constantly comparing yourself to others, swinging between feelings of inferiority and superiority, is a sad way to live.

Only those who are determined to give their all, to try their very best and make effort upon effort, sparkle with true individuality. Such people can also respect and appreciate others' individuality. They never try to sabotage others' success or pick on people because they're different.

## The Character and Strength To Help Others

**UEDA:** One of our readers writes: "I have many friends who excel at sports or studies and the like and show a lot of individuality. But I'm not particularly good at anything and think I'm really boring. Is individuality dependent on one's talent?"

**IKEDA:** Talent and individuality are two different things. Our individuality is an indivisible part of us that we nurture and develop throughout our lives. It encompasses our whole self, including our character and our way of life. It is developed and refined as we struggle against the surging waves of life and society. By living true to ourselves, our individuality shines and grows stronger.

People who are good at sports or bright at school tend to get all the attention, while those who work hard but don't achieve spectacular results tend to go unnoticed. But in their persistent efforts, the individu-

ality, the special shine of the latter shines.

Faith in the individuality in ourselves enables us to choose our direction. Those who are the most lofty people who have the most interest to dedicate themselves wholeheartedly; people who seek happiness of human beings and society and the Mystic Law, whether they are for their efforts or for their efforts of character development, are the most valuable.

True individuality is not superficial, extroverted, shallow, and an imitation of the mass. Individuality, in the word, is a character, a personality. A person's individuality is not a well-rounded working for the humanity and the world.

## Does Individuality Mean Eccentricity?

**KIMURA:** When a person having individuality often has an eccentric person who is eccentric, it often comes out from the fact that our readers say that they think of able people of business. But as pointed out, the definition of individuality is

**IKEDA:** True, not something artificial and to be different from something the depths of the result of discarding the element to shallowness and devoting to achieving value.

As the German philosopher Friedrich Schlegel (1797-1832) says, "The individual is a person who is not servable, and as much as possible, he is everywhere." There is the desire to show advantage, now effort to make servant to the

People who serve to be of

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People who are good at sports or bright at school tend to get all the attention, while those who work hard but don't achieve spectacular results tend to go unnoticed. But in their persistent efforts, the individu-

ality, the special qualities, of the latter shine brilliantly.

Faith in the Mystic Law enables us to channel our individuality in the most positive direction. Those who possess the most lofty individuality are people who cast aside self-interest to dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to serving others; people who work for the happiness of their fellow human beings, the welfare of society and the propagation of the Mystic Law, indifferent to whether they are recognized for their efforts. Their greatness of character makes such actions possible.

True individuality is not a superficial, external phenomenon. That kind of individuality is shallow, an ephemeral creation of the mass media. Individuality, in the best sense of the word, is synonymous with character, with human integrity. A person of true individuality is not self-centered but a well-rounded individual working for the benefit of humanity and the world.

**Does Individuality Mean Eccentricity?**

KIMURA: When we speak of a person having "individuality," it often has the nuance of a person who is eccentric or stands out from the crowd. Some of our readers said that it makes them think of trendy, fashionable people or people in show business. But, as you've just pointed out, that's a superficial definition of individuality.

IKEDA: True individuality is not something as superficial and artificial as merely *trying* to be different. Rather, it is something that shines from the depths of your life as a result of discarding your attachment to shallow pretensions and devoting all your energies to achieving something of value.

As the German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) said: "Each one tries to make his own Self observable, and to exhibit it as much as possible to the world. This false tendency is shown everywhere.... Everywhere there is the individual who wants to show himself off to advantage, nowhere one honest effort to make oneself subservient to the Whole."

People who allow themselves to be controlled by ap-

pearances, popularity or fashion don't have a strong sense of self. They lack individuality in the truest sense of the word. Being obsessed by such things can make for an empty kind of individuality.

Someone in the entertainment industry once said that some big-name actors treat people like dirt, and that some glamorous stars of stage and screen don't even have a single real friend to invite to their weddings.

Appearances are deceiving; it's reality that counts. Individuality is not a matter of how you look but what you really are inside.

UEDA: Another reader writes: "In Japan, the media defines the image of high school girls as having dyed hair, wearing trendy loose socks, Ralph Lauren sweaters, and carrying Hello Kitty mobile phones. They try to stereotype us, and I think that's wrong. I feel like we're being manipulated by the media."

IKEDA: The influence of the commercial media is indeed very powerful. Fads are often engineered and then launched on the public. In that sense, sporting the latest fashions or must-have items is really the opposite of individuality.

Naturally, everyone should be free to wear what they wish. It's only normal for people to want to look nice and to be attractive. I'd like to stress, however, that youth has its own radiance: all of you are already beautiful without wearing a lot of makeup and faddish clothes.

During a visit to Japan, Natalia Sats, the founder of the Moscow State Children's Theater, went out to do some shopping in a department store. When she came to the jewelry department, she turned to the Japanese interpreter accompanying her and said in jest: "You are still young. You are beautiful just as you are, without wearing such expensive things. But I am no longer young, and the beauty of youth has gone, so I have to compensate by wearing beautiful things!"

The point is, true individuality has nothing to do with how we dress or look. It is something we emanate from inside.

**Scolded for Dressing Loud**

UEDA: Another of our readers has written to us: "I want to be free to express my creativity through music and fashion, and in the future I'd like to work in one of those areas. But whenever I wear clothes that are a bit loud or unusual, my parents say, 'You're a Soka Gakkai member, so please dress more appropriately.' I appreciate their point of view, but I just can't agree with them."

IKEDA: There are various reasons why parents might react this way. Sometimes it could be because they lack understanding or are worried about what other people will think or are genuinely concerned for their child's best interests.

I can well imagine that you might feel your individuality is being suppressed if you are forced to do what others tell you. However, expressing your individuality and simply rebelling for rebellion's sake are two different things all together.

As part of a larger whole — be it a family or social group — it's important for us to have the spirit and wisdom to harmonize and get along with others. The ability to be flexible and to accommodate different views is itself a sign of a solid sense of self. We should neither be lazy, blindly following the crowd, nor self-centered, blindly rebelling against it.

Rather, we should seek balance and harmony. Being able to demonstrate such wisdom shows a strong self-identity.

We mustn't allow ourselves to become self-absorbed and insensitive to those around us. No one is an island. We live surrounded by our family, our friends and the rest of the world. We are all connected. The key is to display our individuality within that web of relationships.

True individuality is not self-centered. It is a way of life, a way of being, that leads ourselves and others in a positive direction in the most natural of ways.

**Respecting Others' Individuality**

KIMURA: Some people care a great deal about keeping up with the latest fads and fashions and others don't. The problem is that there is the tendency for people to be singled out for criticism and attack if they are different from the rest. Several of our readers have commented that there is strong peer pressure to conform. If you don't dress like everyone else or hold the same opinions as everyone else, you end up as the target of general disapproval.

IKEDA: This is a deep-rooted problem in our society. For better or for worse, Japanese people have traditionally placed great value on conformity. This

sets us worlds apart from Western culture. The Japanese viewpoint on individuality and the individual is completely different. This national character of suppressing individuality has greatly hindered Japan's progress.

What we see at work here is so-called group fascism, where people's actions are curtailed as if they were prisoners, the purpose being to deprive them of their individuality. It is a truly tragic abuse of human rights. In truth, if we respect and treasure the individuality of others while at the same time working to develop our own individuality, we can realize valuable progress for both ourselves and others.

To judge people by their appearances is an insult to humanity. It is the exact opposite of the spirit of treasuring individuality.

Rosa Parks, one of the pioneers of the American civil rights movement, is an esteemed friend of mine. She is very gentle and kind, but she also has amazing inner strength and determination. Mrs. Parks said: "[My mother] taught me not to judge people by the amount of money they had or the kind of house they lived in or the clothes they wore. People should be judged, she told me, by the respect they have for themselves and others."

*To be continued next week*



Rosa Parks (shown here during a visit to the SGI-USA World Culture Center), a pioneer of the American civil rights movement, says, 'People should be judged...by the respect they have for themselves and others.'

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS SPEECH

**Training is important. People who have received training are strong. They are reliable, never crumbling under pressure. Dr. Yamazaki agrees that nothing can surpass the training we receive in the course of our Soka Gakkai activities.**

**Up until now, history has been for the most part dominated by leadership intent on making the people its servants. This is where the fundamental flaw of today's Japan lies. Efforts and initiatives that serve the people must be the main thrust of 21st century leaders. I proclaim that the SGI is promoting and conducting just such activities.**

**To start is important in life. If we just spend our time demurring from our mission, if we hesitate and run back into the wings, our lives will be lackluster, unfulfilling. Don't you agree that it's far more satisfying and exhilarating to walk out intrepidly onto that stage, fired with the resolve to do our best, to achieve something of value, to touch and inspire our audience?**

**At a time when everyone was filled with despair and could find no glimmer of hope for the future, Mr. Toda began his lone struggle. His spirit was "I have no money. I have nothing of worldly value at all. But I have the Mystic Law. I shall give people the Mystic Law that is infinite hope, the Mystic Law that is the treasure of the universe. For there is no greater treasure than this. I will summon my courage and get to work on this effort right away."**

### SPEECH, FROM PAGE 1

Thank you! Thank you very much! Is there any realm as high-spirited and lively as this? The SGI is an amazing organization. That's because it is an organization of the people. It is an organization of ordinary people of tremendous perception and wisdom.

### With Marvelous Speed

I recently received a heartwarming report from Dr. Katsuhito Yamazaki, the Soka Gakkai doctors division leader for Hyogo Prefecture in the Kansai region. He related an episode that took place on Sept. 15, as Kansai doctors division members were making their journey home by Bullet Train after attending the division's general meeting in Tokyo.

It seems that a little girl had injured herself while playing on board. She was bleeding

profusely and her condition appeared serious. The conductor made an appeal over the P.A. system for any doctor on the train to come immediately to Car 10, where an injured child was in urgent need of medical assistance.

The doctors division members were all seated in different parts of the train, but within one or two minutes, eight Kansai doctors division members, including division leader Dr. Akihiko Nakaizumi, rushed to the child's side. Using the expertise of their respective fields, surgeon Dr. Hiroji Nakagawa, pediatrician Dr. Kimiko Tahira and orthopedic surgeon Dr. Keisuke Inoue swiftly treated the patient. Their teamwork is said to have been magnificent.

At first, the child's mother was terribly upset and beside herself with worry, but gradually her expression relaxed as she saw their competent ef-

forts. She was astonished by the large numbers of doctors who rushed to the scene to assist. I can imagine that such an event must be quite rare.

When the doctors division members had taken care of the wound and returned to their seats, the conductor came on the P.A. system again and announced that the child's injuries had been successfully treated by doctors on board, and that she would continue on her journey to Kyoto. He thanked the doctors and the other travelers for their concern.

I was deeply moved by this. I thought: "What marvelous speed! What superb teamwork! How like Kansai! How like the doctors division!"

### Servant Leadership

Dr. Yamazaki's wonderful report stated: "The conductor's lavish thanks to the doctors were a bit disconcerting. The reason we could actually respond so swiftly to the emergency and have each doctor do his part was because of our Gakkai training. We Kansai doctors division members have received a lot of diverse, practical training by offering medical support at Gakkai culture festivals and participating in Gakkai-coordinated relief efforts after the Great Hanshin Earthquake of January 1995. This is what enabled us to be of service in this instance."

Training is important. People who have received training are strong. They are reliable, never crumbling under pressure. Dr. Yamazaki agrees that nothing can surpass the training we receive in the course of our Soka Gakkai activities.

The times we live in are what Buddhism describes as an evil age defiled by the five impurities. These are deplorable times. The Lotus Sutra assures us that in such times, the Bodhisattvas of the Earth will outshine all others and work for the welfare and prosperity of the people and the country. This teaching forms the core of Nichiren Daishonin's writings.

Who, then, is fulfilling the role of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth today? It is none other than you and I, the SGI members, devoting ourselves to realizing kosen-rufu. There is nothing more admirable.

Just as the Daishonin states, you are noble, respectable individuals. It is a grave offense to look down on or despise such people. Arrogant individuals who do so will unquestionably receive strict retribution in accord with the workings of cause and effect. This is the Lotus Sutra's teaching.

The world-renowned futurist and activist Dr. Hazel Henderson expresses great joy at walking the path of servant leadership — that is, leadership dedicated to serving the people — together with the SGI members. The expression *servant leadership* is most apt.

Up until now, history has been for the most part dominated by leadership intent on making the people its servants. This is where the fundamental flaw of today's Japan lies. Efforts and initiatives that serve the people must be the main thrust of 21st century leaders. I proclaim that the SGI is promoting and conducting just such activities.

### To Start

Let's go back now and take a look at what happened on this day, Sept. 22, in 1945. It was about a month after the end of World War II and two-and-a-half months after Josei Toda's release from prison. Mr. Toda's mentor, Tsunesaburo Maki-guchi, was dead. The Soka Gakkai organization was in tatters. Mr. Toda's businesses were heavily in debt.

Tokyo and many parts of the country were reduced to charred rubble. Confusion and desperation reigned. People lacked both physical and spiritual sustenance, bereft of ways to make a living and without a spiritual foundation to base their lives on. They were chaotic, desolate times.

Against this harsh backdrop, Mr. Toda wrote serenely in his journal on Sept. 22, 53 years ago: "Faith in Nam-myohorenge-kyo means advance. Unlimited advance. In the morning, I think of the growth I will achieve in the day ahead, and I thoroughly throw myself into enjoying it. In this way, I advance limitlessly.... The Law enables us to advance still higher, still further."

He was filled with invincible conviction: "Today I will achieve tremendous growth. I will live vibrantly. I will live with joy. Faith — Nam-myohorenge-kyo — enables us to advance without end." This was his spirit.

At a time when everyone was filled with despair and could find no glimmer of hope for the future, Mr. Toda began his lone struggle. His spirit was

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 11



'Mr. Toda pondered how to best go about his task of propagating the Daishonin's teaching.... He decided to begin with one-on-one dialogues. This evidences his wisdom and compassion. He focused his energies on talking to one person at a time.'

**SPEECH, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE**

"I have no money. I have nothing of worldly value at all. But I have the Mystic Law. I shall give people the Mystic Law that is infinite hope, the Mystic Law that is the treasure of the universe. For there is no greater treasure than this. I will summon my courage and get to work on this effort right away."

To start is important in life. If we just spend our time demurring from our mission, if we hesitate and run back into the wings, our lives will be lackluster, unfulfilling. Don't you agree that it's far more satisfying and exhilarating to walk out intrepidly onto that stage, fired with the resolve to do our best, to achieve something of value, to touch and inspire our audience?

**One Person at a Time**

Mr. Toda pondered how to best go about his task of propagating the Daishonin's teaching. He had no meeting place, no money. So he decided to begin with one-on-one dialogue.

This evidences his wisdom and compassion. He focused his energies on talking to one person at a time. People would tell him about their problems and sufferings, and he would speak to them ardently about the Mystic Law, concentrating his entire being on helping each person become happy.

He would often declare: "Numbers are not important. Cherishing each person is what matters."

Mr. Toda once encouraged someone suffering financially, humorously telling him: "You will definitely become happy before you know it. You don't have to worry. I guarantee it. The benefit of doing the Buddha's work is great. That benefit will come spilling out when you need it. It's like a water faucet. You normally turn the tap off when you're not using it so as not to waste money. Benefit is like that. When the need arises, you just turn on the tap. Rest assured that you'll attain a state of life endowed with such a vast reservoir of benefit."

To another person, Mr. Toda said: "This Buddhism guaran-

tees that, no matter what you may go through, in the end you will attain a state of life where you'll be so happy that you won't know what to do! If everything were to improve and reach such a high point right away, then you would as well figure that your time on earth was just about up! It's far better to experience many hardships when you're young. In the end, you will definitely attain a life of unimaginable happiness and joy. The Mystic Law enables us to adorn our lives in this way. It is the benefit of our Gakkai activities."

It is just as he says. I have seen countless people's experiences of this in my 51 years of Buddhist practice. You will definitely attain a state of life "where you'll be so happy that you won't know what to do." If you're still undergoing problems and obstacles, Mr. Toda says humorously, there's no fear of you dying any time soon. But when you want for nothing and savor complete freedom and fulfillment — that's when you've slowly got to start worrying. As long as you've got problems, you can

rest at ease; you're going to be around a while longer.

Because we experience various hardships, we can savor great joy when we overcome them. And because we surmount them through faith, we solidify our good fortune and grow as human beings.

**Especially When We Are Young**

While it may seem ideal to have any and all prayers answered automatically — without any hard work or effort on our part — that would be similar to eating nothing but sweets day in and day out. Without some kind of challenge, some real nourishment, we cannot hope to develop and forge ourselves nor gain a profound understanding and appreciation of faith. It's far better to undergo hardships — especially when we are young.

The Japanese author Eiji Yoshikawa once said to a well-to-do young man: "You are most unfortunate. From a young age, you have tasted too much fine food, seen too many beautiful things. There

is no greater misfortune than this. It is truly regrettable for a youth to gradually lose the faculty to savor real joy."

Those ex-members who have betrayed the Soka Gakkai and their fellow members — after gaining power and prestige thanks to the sincere support of the very members they betrayed — were all individuals who avoided any strenuous exertion for the sake of kosen-rufu and instead sought only personal comfort and luxury. Ultimately, the causes they have made will bring them only misery. Mr. Toda warned that those who betray the Soka Gakkai cannot hope to die peaceful deaths — they will unfailingly receive strict karmic retribution for their deeds, he said.

By contrast, our hard work and efforts for the sake of kosen-rufu will shine all the more brightly as time goes by, becoming precious treasures for our lives. At the same time, they will lead to lasting happiness not only for ourselves but our entire families.

*To be continued next week.*

**PROFILE, FROM PAGE 1**

sional District and Chu's hero, famed forensic scientist and now Director of Public Safety for Connecticut Henry Lee. Her husband, Blaise Fallingstar, sat by her side.

SGI New England Vice Region Leader Edward Pettit spoke at the ceremony and held the copy of Nichiren Daishonin's writings on which Chu placed her hand as she recited the oath of her position.

The hall was filled with friends, townfolk and postal employees on a hot day that saw summer flowers in bloom everywhere in Simsbury. Ed Pettit told the audience that everyone wants to be around a person with fortune, and Chu was definitely a person of fortune.

Dr. Lee said that most people, when given a difficult task, decide that it is impossible; it can't be done. But when Chu is given a difficult task, she says, "Yes, it is impossible, but let's try to find a way to do it, anyway." He summarized his thoughts by saying that she should change her name from Fallingstar to "Risingstar."

Chu remembered the day she was first interviewed for a job in the post office, a clerk's position. Her interviewer asked her if she had a goal.

"Yes," she said. "Someday I want to be postmaster."

After the ceremony Chu reflected on the role her practice of

Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism played in her success story. "It gave me the strength and the courage to fight for justice," she said. "As a woman and an immigrant to the United States working in the post office, to become a candidate and to attain this position was either win or lose. That's how I approached my career, the same way I try to practice. That's how I got to be here today."

But is that never-say-die spirit a natural part of her character?

"No," Chu says. "I remember watching the movie about Tina Turner's life. In it she said, and you could feel from her, that nothing is impossible. I took that truly to my heart. Anything I want to accomplish through this Buddhism I can do. There are no limits. I thank Tina Turner for that inspiration. Through chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and my experiences I began making goals and determinations for every year, every month, toward something I wanted to accomplish."

There must have been some bumps along the way. How did she deal with those?

"Being a manager is not an easy job," she says. "Many times I would leave work and head home with tears in my eyes. And then I would start chanting. One part of me was saying, 'I don't have to deal with this!' But through my daimoku another part of me was saying: 'I can do it. I can change this situation. I



Chu Fallingstar (center) shakes hands with one of her heroes, forensic scientist Dr. Henry Lee.

can change poison into medicine. All I need to do is make a stronger determination.' Instead of bringing donuts to work, I brought my Buddha nature to work. That helped me a lot. Also, understanding that every human being has a Buddha nature, I would work to bring that out of people. That helped me greatly to do my job."

She is also responsible for diversity within the Postal Service in Connecticut. "We work on bringing recognition and understanding of different cultures to

people," Chu explains. "For example, being Chinese, I know people don't understand our background and culture. That is my role. We have stamp dedications to bring recognition to people of many different cultural backgrounds. We try to make sure that the public understands the reasons behind the stamp."

"In our stamp education programs we link the culture to the stamp," she says. "For example, on May 5 we had presentations about the history of Cinco de

Mayo and Mexican culture. We also incorporate programs to make postal employees and management more aware of ethnic and cultural diversity. The objective is how we can all understand, appreciate, get the best out of and promote people of many different backgrounds in the Postal Service."

What advice would Chu give to others who have dreams that seem far from their current reality yet really matter to them?

"Never give up," she says with conviction. "Never give up." ❧

Photo by PETER ROTHFARB

# 勇氣

## SGI會長池田大作

(接上頁)

### 實現母親們的夙願

在人類歷史中，崇高的母親們有無數未能實現的願望。繼承實現這些夙願，正是創價學會運動的目標之一。我們如何達成這個目標呢？首先要在自己負有使命的地方取得絕對勝利。與其誇口說大話，不如在自己腳下的地方踏實地獲取勝利。這是世界民眾的勝利和光榮之道。把所在之處變成有常住的常駐光土，這就是廣宣流布的根本原理。我要對各位男士說：「在自己所屬地域紮根！成為地域改革的先鋒！」各位女士，請務必加以監視。希望大家團結支持，一同和睦、愉快、開朗地推進地域改革。

最後我想介紹幾則寓言。

喜劇泰斗卓別林說：「讓我們向不

可能挑戰！記住，歷史上的偉業，全都是征服了看來不可能的事。」敢向不可能，不服了，辦不到等等難關挑戰，才能成就偉業。

印度詩人泰戈爾說：「黑暗，豈能傷害我！岩石，豈能傷害我！」這世上有何可怕！只要有勇氣、信心，有甚麼值得畏懼？

法國雕刻家羅丹說：「熱情地愛你們的使命吧！沒有比此更美好的事情。」好一句意味深長的話。

以「玩偶之家」聞名的挪威劇作家易卜生說：「我們真正需要的是精神革命，而你必須是其中一個領頭前進的人。」重要的是人性的改革，這和學會精神深深共鳴。

有名的瑞士哲學家希提說：「人所有的本質之中，嫉妒最醜陋，虛榮心最危險，擺脫心中這兩條蛇，是美好愉快的事情。」所謂人格高尚的人，就是從心中驅逐了這兩條蛇的人。

甘迺迪總統呼籲：「同胞們，莫問祖國能為諸君做些甚麼，問問自己能為祖國做些甚麼。」那些脫離學會的

### 精神訓練

人，有些曾經是學會高級幹部，有些成為社會名人，一味地都只想著學會為自己作些甚麼。

世界第一人愛默生說：「這世界上一惟一具有價值的東西就是運動的靈魂。」運動的靈魂就是奮鬥的靈魂。訓練，也無法從事精神工作。一「精神運動的靈魂看到絕對的真理，並談話的訓練就是信心。如今放眼四週，缺

乏精神訓練者比比皆是，因此，不能從事精神工作。

最後，我要引述蘇格拉底的門生斐多說的話：「正如肉體不加訓練，就不能從事肉體的工作，精神不加訓練，也不能從事精神工作。一精神運動的靈魂看到絕對的真理，並談話的訓練就是信心。如今放眼四週，缺

「本末究竟等」將其他九個如是串連起來：相、性、體、力、作、因、緣、果、報。這些都是就大體而論所有生命以及你個人生命的組成份子，而且它們都互相關連。

「本末究竟等」的意思就是，你的意志可以影響生命的所有成份，生命的每一方面。

「本末究竟等」說明前三個如是，相至體一代表現象，就像人的身體的特質，以及其餘六個如是（作用功能，就像人的行為）彼此相互影響。

池田會長在「法華經方便品講義」中說：「無論是或我或各位，都是依著十如是這原則來生存；十如是皆是一貫（本末究竟等），構成你

# 佛法問答

## SGI-USA 教團部長 Ted Morino

### 何謂「本末究竟等」？我如何應用到我的修行上？

你可能會聽過很多次，你的一念可以改變一切。十如是中的第十個如是進一步說明這個佛法教導。

「本末究竟等」將其他九個如是串連起來：相、性、體、力、作、因、緣、果、報。這些都是就大體而論所有生命以及你個人生命的組成份子，而且它們都互相關連。

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自身寶貴的生命。」（七十四頁）

眾所週知的十界和十如是息息相關：十界的每一界都有其相對的十如是。其中四個「因、緣、果、報」更是使生命呈現某一境界的因素。當大聖人說顯念地獄界之因，貪婪是餓鬼界之因，愚昧是畜生界之因，好鬥是修羅界之因時，他指的是，導致你顯現十界之一的你生命中的如是。

不管十如是在你生命中如何起作用，不管你呈現的是那一個境界，它們都是暫時的，了解這一點是很重要的。你的生命中沒任何東西是固定的，沒有任何東西是不能改變的。

十如是和十界都來自於你。你的生命境界改變，它們也都改變。生命的每一方面都由你的行動，你能展現的心態決定。

天台的佛教以正確地觀察生命為目標，這是他們修行的終極目的。相對的，大聖人的佛法不僅著重於觀察真理，還能夠讓人改變生命的核心。我們努力以磨拭本有的佛性，讓生命的一切都閃耀著光芒。

十如是的基本原理就是改變我們的生命！它的每一方面！永遠是可能的。既然「十如是」是每一個人類生命的成份，正如十界論，「本末究竟等」還教導我們，每個人都同樣有改善自己生命的機會。

# 戰勝癌症

## 德州李乙添

「人生總會遇到難關。覺得走到窮途末路的時候，有信心的人，無需畏懼。題目是最好的利器，只要積極面對，絕對確信妙法，一定可以藉自身湧現的無限生命力，變毒為藥，悠然超越人生的波瀾。」

這是我在印尼時，前輩給我的指導，也是我信心二十一年來，一直遵循的指標。以題目為根本，勇敢地向前邁進。

我是印尼華僑。一九九七年由太太和妹妹折伏入信。當時經濟窘困，無力買車，但我自告奮勇，接受地區幹部的職務。每月分發行事曆給會員時全靠雙腿，從早上九點走到下午三點才能發完，鞋子都磨破了。哥哥罵我是瘋子，但我確信真誠為別人的幸福奮鬥，更能改變自己的宿命。果然，一年後我如願地克服經濟困難，開始以車代步。

印尼的經濟一直很不穩定，絕大多數的印尼人信奉回教、排斥華人。一九八八年長女嫁美國後，我也萌發了移民美國的念頭。我和太太立下決意每天三小時的題目，祈求能有最好的安排。

經過了三年唱題的挑戰，終於在一九九六年十一月，順利的將所有的家業結束轉售，以依親的方式移民美國。感謝御本尊巧妙的安排，使我幸運的避開了印尼的經濟風暴，以及印尼群眾攻擊搶劫華人的事件。我深深確信，以御本尊為根本的祈求和為廣布獻身的行動，必定會讓我們祈願實現，得到諸天善神的守護。

離開印尼之前，我到一位小學同學家辭行，正好他是一位醫生。他看我臉色蒼白，身體瘦弱，便強迫我接受檢查。結果發現我的血液有問題，白血球過高，紅白血球過低。當時由於臨行匆匆，他建議我到美國後一定要詳細檢查。

但是初到美國，人地生疏。既沒有健康醫療保險，也沒有多餘的預算做檢查，更何況在印尼時，我不曾生過病。一九

九七年五月，我發覺自己愈來愈虛弱，連起身都困難。此時在女兒的陪同下，到西休士頓醫學中心，由血液專科醫生診斷，才發現我得了血癌。

信仰御本尊是為了「一生成佛」，構築一生也歡喜，死也歡喜的境界。我想起御書中的教導：「祈求臨終正念，生死一大事，此外全不可求。」現在正是我加強信心，以超越生死的一念唱題的時候。池田會長在「健康的智慧」一書中說：「生命中原本就具有『將壞的轉變為好的』的不可思議力量。根本在於自身的『心』，一念，去展開自己的轉念。」

我每天唱題二小時，並且安慰我的孩子們：如果我我一直唱題到死亡，前去靈鷲山和大聖人會面，應該要感到高興才對，不要難過！

過了幾天，感謝諸天善神的守護，在女兒的朋友協助下，我以護照申請到醫療金卡，使我順利進入休士頓醫院住院治療。由一位資深的老教授和五位實習醫生組成的醫療小組為我診治，並進行化學治療。

七天七夜的治療過程中，我心中時刻刻刻唸題目，太太小孩不僅一齊在家中唱題支持我，也不斷的鼓勵我，一定要好起來，一定要到休士頓會館拜見御本尊，更要去日本參觀學會！在親友的鼓勵和支持下，我展現強韌的生命力，在治療的過程中絲毫沒有一點副作用，連主治醫生都覺得驚訝，而藥物治療也僅維持了四個月。現在只要每個月到醫院追蹤檢查即可，我克服癌症！

一九九七年十二月二十九日，我突然感覺右下腹疼痛不已，以為服用止痛藥就會好了。過了兩天，疼痛有增無減，恰逢新年期間沒有及時就醫，拖延到一月二日，我幾乎陷入昏迷狀態。緊急送醫後，發現是盲腸炎，而且已經破裂。

當我醒來時，手術已經結束。醫生擔心會引發腹膜炎，所以長達三英吋的傷口，並沒有縫合。以我的年齡，和剛克服血癌的身體狀況，傷口在二個月內自然癒合，我深覺自己又再一次受到守護。

經歷過兩次生死關頭的病魔考驗，我相信是正確信仰的力量，使我一次又一次的消滅罪障，把不好的業轉換過來。也使我更確信，自己負有很大的使命，才會來到美國。以印尼的醫療水準加上世局的混亂，也許早已不在人世了，而我很幸運，竟然健康地活著，並且在醫院所積欠的巨額費用，也在院方的特別通融下，以每月一百五十美元的方式慢慢償還。

現在我以六十七歲的高齡，決定展開美好青春第二期的努力。我一定要學好英文，為美國的廣布奮鬥。更期待青年的一代，能好好的為廣布奮鬥，透過信心的磨練，締造人生絕對的幸福。更希望我們都能銘記池田會長指導：「除了為自己的煩惱祈求外，也要超越小我，為廣宣流布認真祈求、奮戰，獲得人生的大勝利。」



▲李乙添以勇氣和堅定的信念改變病業

## 談

## 驗

## 風

多餘的預算做檢查，更何況在印尼時，我不曾生過病。一九

勇氣

SGI會長池田大作

以下是池田會長於八月二十七日的...

美國總統甘迺迪最重視的德性是甚...

真勇氣與假勇氣的比較

我原已安排與甘迺迪總統會面，但...

朝向太陽

今天八月二十七日是以辦證法著稱...

每個人都有發言權利

歌德說：「在今天的時代中，誰也...

嚴厲的報復

當時企圖報復日本的支柱日蓮大聖...

越努力奮鬥，越快出現現證

佛法論勝負、現證。牧口先生指出...

永恆的模範

在獨立戰爭之際，這個美好的高原...

創價學會的哲學是廣宣流布。只要...

創價學會的哲學是廣宣流布。只要...

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失敗就是失敗

創價學會的哲學是廣宣流布。只要...

不要忘記原點

歌德說：「忘恩往往往是軟弱的表...

我的心是我唯一的榮耀

黑格爾和歌德的結論是甚麼？我認...

周恩來說：「方向和目标都確定...

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# Confessions of an Ex-Complainer

## PERSPECTIVE



**'Until I contemplated my own life tendencies and took responsibility for my life-condition,' says Sean, 'my practice was only formality.'**

By SEAN GROVER  
NEW YORK

*"Every time you complain, you choose to be helpless. You send a message to the world, 'I'm helpless and only interested in staying that way.'"*

— Dr. Louis Ormont,  
Director of the Center for the Advancement of Group Studies

My mentor, Dr. Ormont, said these words to me, and I experienced that stinging, numb feeling: face to face with my own karma. Nowhere to hide. I felt like I'd just discovered a part of myself I'd rather not see: a self-defeating life tendency that keeps me from growing.

Is it true? Me, a complainer? But SGI President Ikeda says complainers are cowards. I took a survey, asked my wife, close

friends, etc. The results came in: It was true. I'd rather complain than take action. One friend even noted, "You do have a tendency to whine."

Ahhhhh! When did it happen? Have I always been this way? How do I break free? What's more, how do I slay this beast of my own creation?

I have learned through my practice of Buddhism that complaining is a result of arrogance, fear and a lack of appreciation. To complain is merely to find fault, to point the finger of blame — and that only perpetuates the problem.

Though I chanted and did activities, it was the relationship with my mentor in my field that opened my eyes. Without Dr. Ormont I may never have recognized this pattern in my life and continued to destroy my fortune by complaining.

For years I had this quote hanging over my desk at home: "Misfortune comes from one's mouth and ruins him, but fortune comes from one's mind and makes him worthy of respect" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 272). How little it meant until I realized it in my own life. What's worse, each time I complained, I weakened my life.

I quoted President Ikeda, studied the Goshu, but until I contemplated my own life tendencies and took responsibility for my life-condition, my practice

was only formality. President Toda said, in effect, that without faith the sutras are just books.

It was the role of my mentor that brought on this realization. That's what mentors do. They hold up crystal-clear mirrors and force us to look. They show us the obstacles we create and reveal to us our resistance to growth. They dare us to dream. We see limits, they see potential. Identifying external obstacles to our happiness is easy but absolute happiness only comes from recognizing and overcoming our own internal demons.

Did Nichiren Daishonin complain (and boy, did he have things to complain about!)? Even with little paper available, he found ways to write letters of encouragement to his followers. Attacks on his life, banishment, constant criticism by society — he overcame all these obstacles. Yet I complain about the air conditioner being too strong at the Florida Nature and Culture Center.

Rather than complain, the Daishonin took action. He not only expected obstacles, he treasured them. In speaking with Dr. Ormont he said, "Every time you have the impulse, instead of complaining, identify what you want and go for it."

Supported by faith, practice and study, there is no life tendency that can't be changed, no obstacle that can't be overcome. To do this

is to "perceive the nature of your own life" (MW-1, 4). For me, to complain is to turn away from myself, avoid self-examination, and that's equal to investing in a delusion. And since all beings possess the Buddha nature, why should I invest in a behavior that only weakens my life-condition? Why should I continue to create obstacles for myself?

The Lotus Sutra teaches, "Phenomena have no fixed nature, the seeds of Buddhahood sprout through causation" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 41). That means my life is nothing but the effect of my causes. And since phenomena have no fixed nature, to change myself I need only to change the causes I make. My complaining nature is not fixed — "the seeds of Buddhahood sprout through causation." Better causes, better life!

While President Ikeda will always be my mentor in life, having a mentor in my field of work is one of my greatest joys. Especially when he reflects to me parts of myself I'd rather not see. Only then was I able to challenge myself and grow.

So all you fellow complainers out there (and you know who you are), you have a choice: You can continue to weaken your life and be a victim of your environment, or you can join me in saying: "The complaint department is closed." ❧

## Learning To Love Myself

## PERSPECTIVE

**The road to self-esteem is arduous. But perhaps it's the only journey worth undertaking. The good part? 'It's all there,' says Theresa Wright, 'all the love we need' is already inside us.**

By L. THERESA WRIGHT  
WARWICK, GA.

Learning to love myself was a very difficult thing to do. Raised in an environment of ignorance, sexual abuse and mental abuse contributed greatly to my low self-esteem. As a teen, I tried to commit suicide various times. At 19, I became pregnant and was physically and verbally abused for the next four years.

After the birth of my second

child, I did muster the strength to leave the relationship. Shortly after that, in 1985, I was introduced to this practice.

Still unable to love myself or even understand this concept, I continued to make bad emotional choices. I would pour out my heart and soul on my mate without asking or getting anything in return.

Never able to find the love I needed, I soon became addicted to crack cocaine, and all my self-loathing came out.

I would do anything for anybody to get crack! I hated myself more than ever but was still unaware of the concept of self-love. I could find nothing about myself worth liking, let alone loving.

Faced with certain death from drugs, I moved myself and my children to the country and chanted to end my misery and change my life. Occasionally, I would have a set back on drugs and be high at least four hours. I determined to sit in front of the

Gohonzon, until I was no longer high.

As a result, I ended one addiction. But a year later, I became very depressed.

In 1995, I began being treated for depression. Even though I was feeling better, I had not learned to love myself any more than before.

After a recent painful breakup with someone special, I became determined to love myself and put myself first. I look in the mirror and give myself pep talks, telling myself, "I can do it!"

I have never had anyone in my immediate environment to tell me of my self-worth, so I must do it myself. In my mind, when I feel negative thoughts, I chant in my mind to push those negative thoughts away. I have started walking one hour every morning, followed by one hour of determined prayer. I do this for my self-esteem. I really want to love myself, so that I will not allow myself to be treated in de-

grading ways.

SGI President Ikeda has always made me feel worthy of love. Now I must constantly and consistently tell myself I am worthy of love. If any person treats me in a degrading way, then I must leave that situation and continue to encourage myself.

I want to help others to love themselves, to have great self-esteem, and I cannot do it if I lack self-esteem. I chant daimoku to love myself, to bring out all the love I can from inside myself.

It's there, it's all there, all the love we need to elevate our lives and our self-esteem. All we need do is consistently, constantly and sincerely bring it out. Then we will never rely on dysfunctional, co-dependent, empty relationships or drugs to fill any emptiness we may be feeling.

Faith in our chanting is the key. I am convinced that true happiness comes from learning to love myself. ❧

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# WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

## There's No PC Way

I have read the opinions of many members who feel "uncomfortable" about the SGI's backing of the contingent in the San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade or questioning whether this is the "proper" way to propagate Buddhism, or that the SGI should not endorse or promote any particular group.

The SGI was originally created to support educators, later it was instrumental in the formation of a political party in Japan. "Faith equals daily life"; how can we as an organization not involve ourselves in every aspect of society if we are to remain faithful to that statement? SGI President Ikeda is constantly challenging us to speak out for justice; how can we do that if we limit the scope of our participation in the world around us to activities that won't "rock the boat" or draw the line on individuals or groups that don't fit our picture of "proper" Buddhist practice?

I have to point out that one should question what about that event made you feel "uncomfortable"? I am sure that Rosa Parks made a lot of people on the bus she was on uncomfortable when she refused to give up her seat to a white person. Pure Land practitioners didn't particularly like the way the Daishonin insisted that their religion led to the hell of incessant suffering.

I participated in an event that made me proud to be part of a humanistic organization, when just about every other religion in the world condemns me for who I am. It brought great hope and joy to a lot of people who are misunderstood and hated, many times by their own families. It was a great

joyful cause to spread the Daishonin's teachings, and that is the bottom line.

There is no such thing as a "politically correct" way to spread the Daishonin's Buddhism, no way to avoid "rocking the boat" as the Lotus Sutra itself asserts, just a sincere desire to bring happiness to others and fight for a just society.

— SAM PIZALATO,  
San Francisco

## A Mission To Propagate

Members who have joined in the last 10 years may not understand how we practiced in the United States when we called the organization NSA (Nichiren Shoshu Academy, Nichiren Shoshu of America, or Nichiren Shoshu Soka Gakkai of America). But I still defend those days as a necessity in order to establish what we enjoy and have today.

Where else in the world is there a lay society so devoted to eliminating human suffering? Who else embraces a strict but compassionate doctrine, a law of causality that encompasses three virtues of parent, teacher and sovereign? And where are the people who pray daily for their deceased ancestors and fellow comrades now gone and offer appreciation and prayer for the realization of peace throughout the world and the happiness of all humanity? Besides the monks who isolate themselves in monasteries,... most common individuals worry only of their own survival.

I'm not a man of numerous academic credentials or well traveled. But I do know,

in history, in any revolution, many

mistakes were made during its infancy. I believe we are pioneers still blazing the trail for future generations. So where is the manual other than the Gosho to establish kosen-rufu?

I feel deep gratitude for the fortune to be introduced in this lifetime to the teachings of Nichiren Buddhism. We of the Soka Gakkai International are unique as we have finally set the momentum to fill the dreams and realizations of those famous and renown statesmen, philosophers and poets. As the Daishonin states: "If one uses the Lotus Sutra to pray for the welfare of the land, it will prove to be a Great Pure Law for the safety and protection of the nation, insuring joy and prosperity to everyone from ruler on down to the common people" (MW-6, p.190).

So our only real mission of worth is to propagate this teaching. I envision 1 million members by 2005 in the United States alone. How easy it is to become complacent, unaware of valuable time passing in an instant,... only to find deep regret that more effort was not done. We are constantly warned not to end our lives with deep regret.

When I read from President Ikeda's encouragement, "Ours [revolution] is the crystallization of man's noblest endeavor, a universal, eternal revolution carried on to benefit all people on earth." How can one hesitate and not share this great teaching with his fellow man? "Their struggle brings about their own human revolution, and the circle of unity they form is the Soka Gakkai [International]."

— DENNIS HALL,  
Seattle

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The *World Tribune* is seeking study articles around 600 words long. Please feel free to explore any topic of interest to you, such as a favorite concept, a question that you or others have asked about Buddhism or an event/person relevant to Buddhism. Please mail your article to the address on the opposite page or e-mail us at wt@sgi-usa.org.

## Correction

In the Oct. 2 issue, on p. 12, we listed upcoming significant dates and incorrectly identified two dates. The correct designations are: Oct. 2, World Peace Day, and Oct. 5, SGI-USA Day. We regret any confusion we caused.



For more information, contact the SGI-USA community center nearest you or call (310) 260-8900.

**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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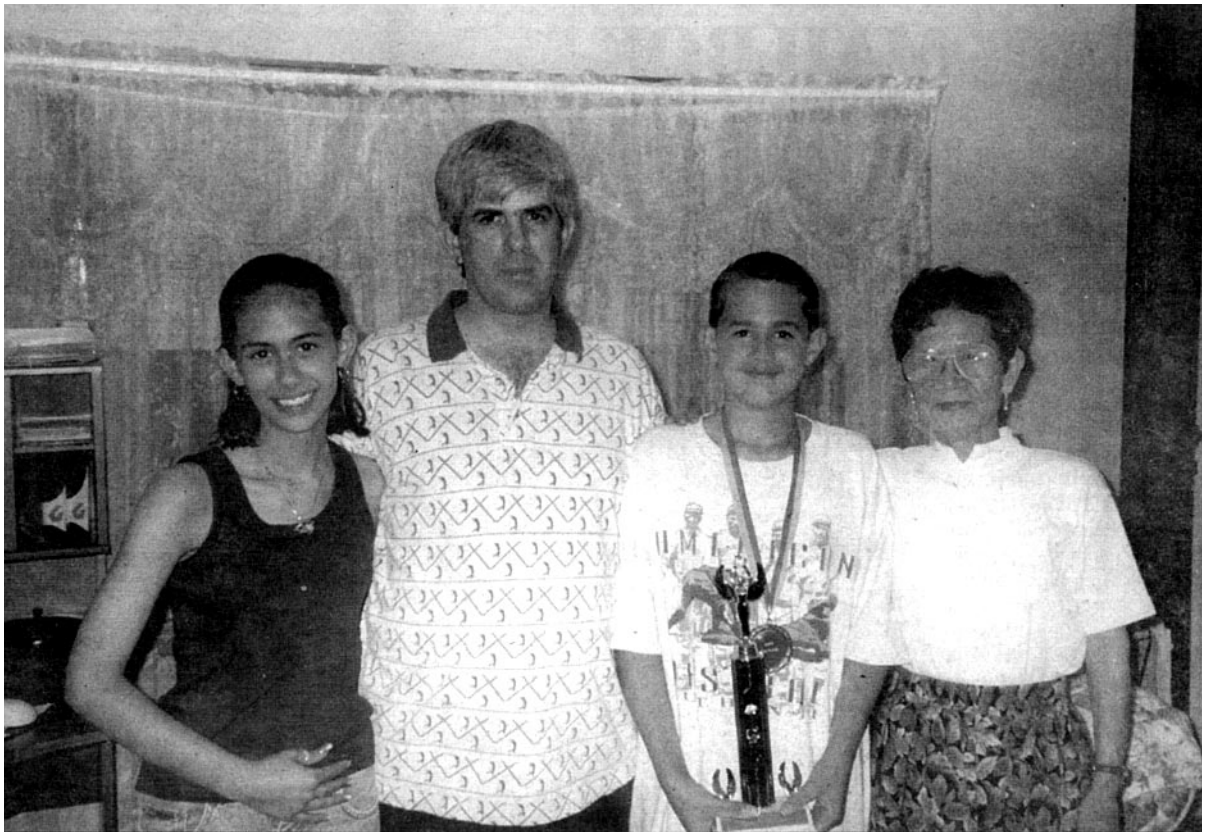
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Sean and Shannon Sears, twins, both participate in the Future Problem Solving Program at their school in Massachusetts. They find that being in the program leads to higher expectations, and those expectations coupled with their Buddhist practice helped bring out capabilities they didn't realize they had.



(L-r) Shannon, Tom and Sean Sears with the children's grandmother, Fumi Clarke. Sean is displaying his awards from the international competition.

SEAN AND SHANNON SEARS, CHICOPEE, MASS.

# Future PROBLEM solvers

By PETER ROTHFARB  
CORRESPONDENT

Sean and Shannon Sears, students at Bellamy Middle School in Chicopee, Mass., are not only brother and sister, they're twins, born 13 years ago. And, although they have very individual opinions and preferences, they also have quite a bit in common. They are both very active. Sean likes basketball, soccer and candlepin bowling (best score 132), while Shannon is an avid and accomplished dancer (tap, jazz and ballet) and also likes roller skating, basketball and bowling (best score 115). Sean loves math, Shannon science. They do gongyo every day with the warm encouragement of their grandmother, Fumi Clarke.

Another important activity they share is participation in the Reach program in school, Chicopee's implementation of the international Future Problem Solving Program. The FPSP was founded in 1974 by Dr. E. Paul Torrance of Athens, Ga. The program challenges young people to think creatively and develop an interactive interest in the future by working cooperatively in teams to solve difficult problems related to the future or their communities.

The program uses a six-step process to develop creative thinking: brainstorming topic-related problems; identifying an underlying problem; brainstorming potential solutions to the underlying problem; developing criteria to judge solutions; evaluating all solutions to determine the best solution; and describing the best solution to develop an action plan.

Shannon worked on a problem about housing of the future. They studied issues like affordability and handicapped access, creating models of homes out of a variety of materials including toothpicks and marshmallows. They created a game, Home Jeopardy. They discovered that in California someone had built a home entirely of materials made from compacted trash. For the competition they created a large display with all their projects. They won first place in the state and fourth in the nationals.

Sean worked on a community problem; the local dog shelter in Chicopee. Not many stray dogs were being brought into the shelter. As a result, many dogs were roaming the streets with little to eat and exposed to the dangers of traffic. On the other hand, once dogs were brought to the shelter and made available for adoption, if they were not adopted within six weeks they would be put to sleep. Only 42 per-

cent of the dogs were being adopted. Not many people knew about the shelter.

Sean's team met with the owners of the shelter about their operations. They then made 11 TV commercials, shown on the local cable channel, which featured the dogs while explaining how the shelter operated and their adoption policies. They also wrote reports about various aspects of animal shelters for their project. Sean wrote about strays. As a result of their efforts more dogs were brought to the shelter and 28 percent more dogs were adopted.

Their team finished first in the state and went to the nationals where they finished in the top three. They then went to the international competition held at the University of Michigan, which included teams from the United States, Canada and Australia. Part of the competition was in-depth interviews by judges. Sean would chant silently during the process. Their team finished second. The City of Chicopee also recognized them for their contributions.

Both Sean and Shannon speak glowingly about their experience. They found that being in the program led to higher expectations, and those expectations and their Buddhist practice helped bring out capabilities they didn't realize they had. W