



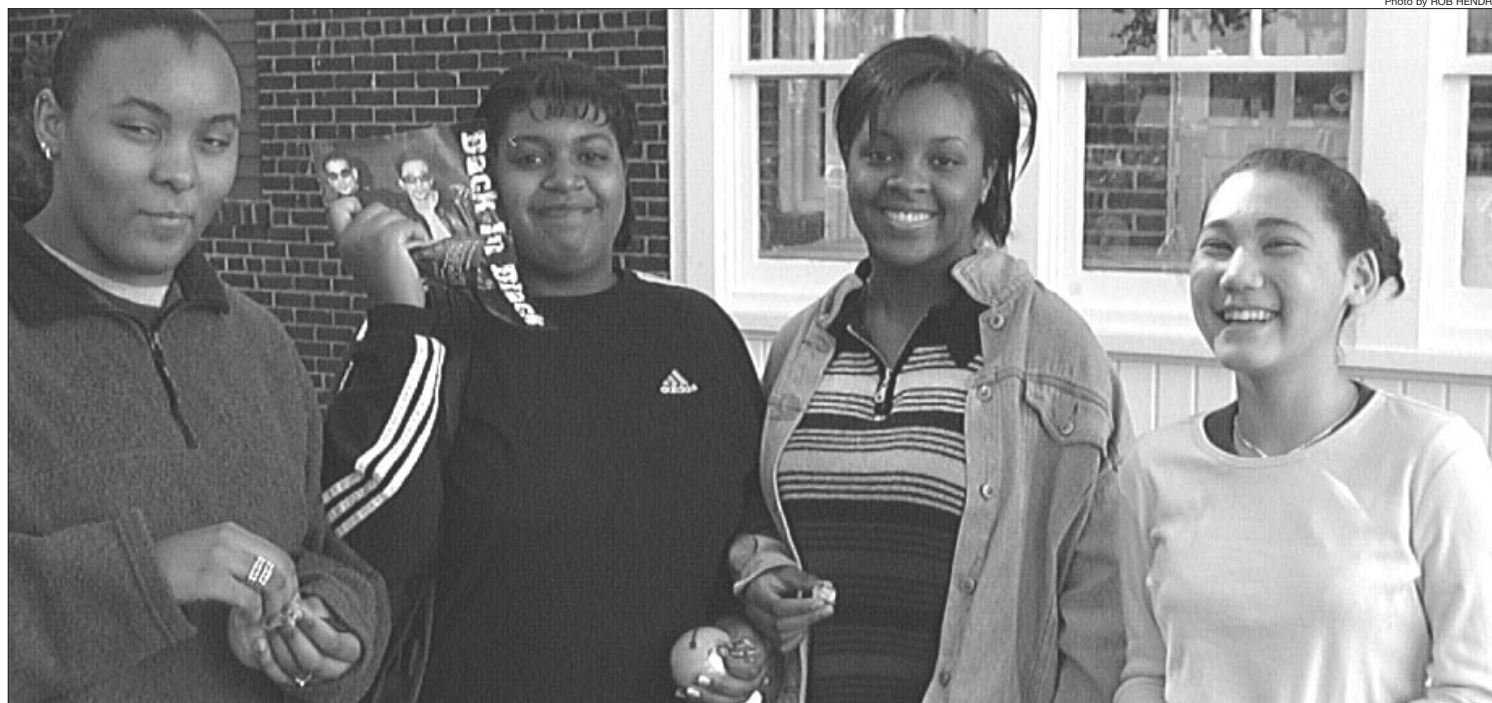
SPEECH
In the conclusion of his Sept. 22 speech, SGI President Ikeda discusses the message of the Lotus Sutra.

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YOUTH
In this month's 'Seize the Day,' a new youth study series makes its debut.

pullout section



Youth, says SGI President Ikeda in the conclusion of this dialogue on individuality, is the time in which character and self-identity are forged. 'It's impossible to nurture our individuality without learning from others,' he says.

A Time for *Self-Discovery*

This is the conclusion of the second installment in the second 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). (The first half of this installment appeared in the Oct. 16 issue under the headline "What Does Individuality Mean?")

UEDA: A future division leader remarked to me: "Nowadays when students improve their grades, their classmates aren't

happy for them. The atmosphere of competition is fierce, especially among students preparing to take university entrance examinations. That's why at our meetings we always try to introduce members by pointing out some area of special interest or ability they possess. For example, we introduce a member who knows a lot about flowers as 'our flower expert' and a member who loves books as 'our book wizard,' and get someone who loves music to talk about the latest hit CD. We try to focus as much as possible on their individuality."

KIMURA: One of our members, who recently returned to Japan after having lived in the United Kingdom since he was a small child, said: "If I behave the way I did in the United Kingdom at school here in Japan, I stick out like a sore thumb." He says that Japanese schools give lip service to providing education "that respects the student's individuality" but, in reality, conformity rules and everyone looks the same.

I think the tendency to dissolve one's individuality into a group, to seek strength in numbers, to follow the crowd, is a negative feature of Japanese society.

IKEDA: The purpose of education is not to suppress individuality but to cultivate and develop it. The most fundamental principle of government, of science, of all cultural activity, is respect for people's individuality. That is what we mean by human rights.

The reality of Japan's educational system, however, is that it is bureaucratic and conformist, and it judges students in a strict hierarchy based on grades alone. Many students voice their dislike of the system and wish they could escape it. Some decide not

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NOVEMBER 18

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SGI President Ikeda talks about sharing Buddhism with others.

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SGI President Ikeda's Aug. 27 speech.

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The Buddha's Work

By TRICIA FORD

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

If there is someone, whether man or woman, who in the time after my passing secretly teaches to one person even a single phrase of the Lotus Sutra, let it be known that he is the envoy of the Buddha, sent to carry out the Buddha's work. ("The Pure and Far-reaching Voice," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, pp. 142-43)

Nichiren Daishonin quotes the Lotus Sutra in this letter written to Shijo Kingo, one of his key disciples. He wrote to Shijo Kingo while he was exiled on Sado Island,



In My Life

NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS IN ACTION

explaining in the beginning of the letter that the impact of one person can be immeasurable, like the impact of a ruler on a country. He also states that a ruler's support can greatly affect the prosperity of Buddhism.

How does this concept of one

person's impact apply to my life? Years ago, I introduced a friend to Buddhism. She started to chant but said that it didn't work for her. Consequently, she has remained slightly negative about the practice since that time. I became hesitant to talk about Buddhism to friends.

Flash to three years later. Things have changed. I am now a graduate teaching assistant in the religious studies program at the university I attend. I help teach a class called Living Religions of the East, where we explore religions of Asia, such as Buddhism in India, China and Japan, including Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. The students are very open to Buddhism — and I have let my Buddhist beliefs be known to help them understand the material.

I have used my voice to teach these students about Buddhism in a compassionate way. And I've realized that whether the others listen or not, that shouldn't stop me from teaching them about this wonderful practice. We don't teach Buddhism for the result but because it's the right thing to do. This is the spirit of the Buddha, as the Daishonin explains in this passage. □

Doing Nothing Is Dangerous

STANDS TO
REASON

LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM
THE WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN

By JEFF FARR

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

If one sees a misguided priest sending others into hell with his evil teachings and fails to reproach that priest and expose his errors, then he himself is an enemy of Buddhism. ("Letter of Petition From Yorimoto," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 216)

Yorimoto of this 1277 letter's title was Shijo Kingo (his full name being Shijo Nakatsukasa Saburo Zaemon-no-jo Yorimoto!). The Daishonin sent this letter to Lord Ema, Shijo Kingo's boss, petitioning for his understanding, writing as if he were Shijo Kingo.

I mentioned previously how 1277 was a crucial year in the Daishonin's life (see the July 17 *World Tribune*): Some of his staunchest supporters were being persecuted for their allegiance to him. And so it was with Shijo Kingo. Lord Ema had heard false accusations from fellow

samurai jealous of Shijo Kingo; he had supposedly disrupted a debate between a Tendai sect adherent and the Daishonin's follower Sammi-bo Nichigyō.

Thus, as if he were Shijo Kingo, the Daishonin assures Lord Ema in this letter that he has done nothing wrong — and takes the opportunity to fully explain the stance that this Buddhism takes toward slanderous forms of Buddhism.

In other words, the Daishonin explains here why he and his followers would even think of debating with or reproaching priests of other sects. The Daishonin, in giving this explanation, makes a bold statement: In failing to reproach a misguided priest, you become an enemy of Buddhism. In failing to reproach, you become anti-Buddhist.

For eight years, the SGI has been protesting the new teachings of Nikken, relentlessly so. Considering that the SGI membership is much larger than the temple membership, this may seem to some like bullying on the SGI's part. But trying to re-guide the misguided has nothing to do with the number of people on either of the two sides; it has everything to do with what is Buddhist and what is not.

The SGI protests against Nichiren Shoshu because, plain and simple, it's now a misguided sect seeking to misguide people. It only pretends to be Buddhist. If the SGI had not done anything when Nikken started to introduce his un-Buddhist teachings in 1991, the SGI

would have become an enemy of Buddhism in the Daishonin's eyes.

Buddhism is all about engaging the misguided, the confused, the suffering, in frank conversation about the true way to happiness. It's about trying to save people from the hell that their following of erroneous teachings creates for their lives.

To ignore the temple issue is to forget about many, many people. These are, needless to say, *real* people. Their suffering is real.

Think of all the innocent people who might be influenced by Nikken in the future, like all our fellow Americans who do not yet know either the SGI or the temple!

When I look at photographs of family members or friends, I sometimes wonder if any of them will ever meet up with the temple. If I forget that all these loved ones are potential future temple members and think that I don't have to tell them anything about the temple issue...then, I think, I become their enemy.

The same goes for all those people out there whom I don't know, all those people yet to meet the SGI or the temple, Nikken's potential future audience. If I forget that this temple issue is about real people and their real suffering — about putting a stop to that suffering — I think that I then become the last thing that I would want to be: an enemy of Buddhism.

Twenty-two in a series

MANY IN BODY, ONE IN MIND ('ITAI DOSHIN')

What an Un-Concept

WHAT A
Concept
ON THE BASIC IDEAS
OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM

By LISA JONES

STAFF WRITER

Surprise! *Itai doshin*, often translated as many in body, one in mind is *not* a Buddhist concept. Rather, it's a Chinese/Confucian/Taoist concept that Nichiren Daishonin adopted to encourage his followers and clarify his teachings. *Itai doshin* can also be translated as different bodies, same heart, and denotes the strategy by which individuals as well as groups can be victorious in any endeavor.

The Daishonin wrote the letter "On *Itai Doshin*" to one of his followers after the Atsuhara Persecution, during which three of them had been killed. His followers were outnumbered by adversaries, yet the Daishonin encouraged them to develop a unity that no outside force could disrupt. He wrote: "Even an individual at cross purposes with himself is certain to end in failure. Yet a hundred or even a thousand people can definitely attain their goal if they are of one mind" (*The Major Writings of*

Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 153).

It's important to note that *one mind* means one intent or one cherished, shared goal rather than everyone thinking the same thing. An individual may appear to be one "unified" being, yet he or she may have ambivalent thoughts and feelings that stand in the way of his or her wholehearted devotion to a purpose. Further, *many in body* implies that even though a group may appear at first glance to be disorganized or discordantly diverse, it may, in fact, be profoundly unified because each person shares a fundamental sense of mission.

When the Daishonin emphasizes unity, then, he means it on the individual level as a unification of one's heart, mind and body — or thought, word and deed. On another level, individual unity could be summed up as the conviction that your life, the Daishonin's life and the Mystic Law are of the same nature. On the group level, *itai doshin* implies a sanctuary of shared trust, so to speak, in which each member of the group is free to fully express his or her individuality.

In "Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life" the Daishonin writes: "All disciples should chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo with one mind (*itai doshin*), transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim. This spiritual bond is the basis for the universal transmission of the ultimate

law of life and death. Herein lies the true goal of Nichiren's propagation" (MW-1, 23). In other words, the concept of *itai doshin* illustrates the most important Buddhist teaching.

There's a story in which Shakyamuni's followers have gathered and are talking openly about the practice of Buddhism and the greatness of the Law. One of the practitioners turns to Shakyamuni and asks, "Is all of this talking part of Buddhism?" Shakyamuni replies, "It is the entirety of Buddhism." The essential teaching, then, is that Buddhism exists only in heart-to-heart exchanges. Only through such spiritual bonds is Nam-myoho-enge-kyo transmitted. The lifeblood of Buddhism, then, is harmonious unity.

In music, harmony doesn't mean that everyone plays the same note but that two or more tones sound simultaneously. And unity does not mean uniformity. SGI President Ikeda underscores this point when he writes: "Now is the time for you to realize that through relations mutually inspiring and harmonious, the 'greater self' is awakened to dynamic action...blossoms in delightful multitude exude the fragrance of each person, each ethnicity, in precise accord with the principle of 'cherry, plum, pear and damson.'" □

Twenty-one in a series

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

SGI-USA Focuses on Nov. 18 Commemorative Meetings



Renu Jiandani



Wendy Clark



James Herrmann



Richard Sasaki

Why are we holding meetings commemorating Nov. 18?

Richard Sasaki, SGI-USA men's division leader: It was on Nov. 18, 1930, that Tsunesaburo Makiguchi established the Soka Gakkai. An educator and pacifist, he was imprisoned during World War II for his opposition to the war and his unwavering commitment to religious freedom. He died in prison on Nov. 18, 1944. His disciple, Josei Toda, also went to jail and emerged from prison just before the war ended to rebuild the Soka Gakkai as its second president. By the time of his death in 1958, Mr. Toda had seen the Soka Gakkai grow to more than 750,000 households. His young disciple, Daisaku Ikeda, became the third president and led its growth internationally to its current state with more than 12 million members practicing in 128 countries.

Nov. 18 has become the day when we celebrate this great history of the Soka Gakkai, an organization that has stood on the side of the common people and resolves to live up to the tradition of the three successive presidents.

I think it is appropriate that we commemorate Nov. 18 in our districts, for the district has been the center stage for all SGI activities. Throughout its history, the district has been the place where members gather to encourage one another and share this Buddhism with their friends. In *The New Human Revolution*, SGI President Ikeda stressed the important tradition of the discussion meeting, writing: "It was at the discussion meeting, too, that presidents Makiguchi and Toda shared the suffering of those in the poorest and most abject circumstances and launched the struggle for the widespread propagation of the Dais-

honin's Buddhism. This grassroots movement has been the most essential underpinning of the Soka Gakkai until today."

Of course, some areas will choose to have meetings by group or chapter, etc. In any case, I hope we can have successful commemorative meetings across America where we can refresh our spirit to work for the benefit of others and carry on the proud tradition of the SGI.

Why is it important for youth to participate in these activities?

Renu Jiandani, SGI-USA young women's division leader: When I first joined, I didn't fully understand what a district was and why it was important for me to attend district activities. However, I was warmly encouraged by the men's and women's division members, especially the women, to participate in presentations and take part in district activities. Among the very first presentations I did was one on the three treasures. I vividly remember my district leaders working with me all week, preparing dinner for me, chanting with me, and having stimulating discussions about my presentation.

At that time, being new to the practice, I was chanting solely for material benefits. But thanks to this presentation and the discussions and study it entailed, I came to understand that besides material things, treasures of the storehouse, there were two other treasures, those of the body and those of the heart. And I grasped that the treasures of the heart are the most important. Understanding this point, my entire perspective about my life changed at an early stage in my practice as I strove to develop the treasures of the heart.

Although youth activities inspired and motivated me, I learned the basics of faith, practice and

study through my participation in district activities. I also developed close bonds with all the members there. Even though some have moved away, we still share this bond today. I realized that I have so much to learn from the men's and women's divisions and their wealth of experience.

Through my experience, I can clearly see the value of participating in district activities and the direct correlation this has to developing the basics of practice, which we can all apply in every aspect of our lives.

James Herrmann, SGI-USA young men's division leader:

President Ikeda often stresses the importance of youth involvement in the district. In a recent essay, he referred to the front line of our organization as the "true battleground for kosen-rufu, the true place of Buddhist practice." From my experience, I feel it is also the true battleground for self-development.

The growth and development I experienced through my participation in the district have become great assets for my daily life. In my former profession as a registered nurse, communication with patients was a very crucial part of my job. Thanks to my efforts in the district to encourage and inspire others, I became a more effective nurse, helping my patients and their families through difficult illnesses.

By participating in the district meeting, I feel we can all learn and reinforce the basics of faith, practice and study. By actively participating, we develop our ability to carry out effective dialogue and learn how to care for others.

We often talk about creating a new era of development in the United States. The key to making this a reality, I honestly feel, weighs on our ability to develop ourselves in the district. SGI President Ikeda writes: "The youth are the hope and the life

of the district. 'This young person is the pride of our district.' 'Our district is solid because of this person's presence.' Those who are valued in this way by the men's and women's division members may be called the true leaders of the next generation."

I feel that the best measure of whether we are successful as youth in creating a new era is how effective we are in creating joyful district meetings. Becoming the kind of person who is valued in the district is the surest way to develop the ability to become true leaders of the next century.

How can we create a successful district meeting?

Wendy Clark, SGI-USA women's division leader:

The district meeting is the place where all members can go to become refreshed after facing all the hardships of daily life. As President Ikeda writes in *The New Human Revolution*: "The discussion meeting is a miniature portrait of the Soka Gakkai. It might be described as an oasis in today's world where people from all walks of life, young and old, men and women alike, encourage one another and discuss the means for attaining happiness."

From my own experience, I think there are five important points we need to think about to create a successful district meeting.

The first point is district unity—it's important to include everyone in the planning. Ideally, it's great if the planning can be based on four-divisional unity. However, if there aren't four divisions in the district, it's important to try to get as many people involved as possible, especially youth.

The second point is preparation. The kind of preparation we make toward the district meeting will determine its success. That's

why we have to begin our planning process with a prayer in front of the Gohonzon for the success of our meeting.

The third point is clear, advance communication. Given the busy pace of our lives, it is important that we let our members and guests know when the district meeting is going to be held as soon as possible. Closer to the date, you can follow up with reminder telephone calls. When we reach out to our members through telephone calls and home visits and share the plans for the meeting, we can encourage them to attend based on the details that have been developed. We can also use this as an opportunity to reach out to members we haven't seen in a long time, our friends, family or associates whom we may want to invite to the discussion meeting.

Fourth, youth participation in the district meeting adds an exciting, creative spirit. President Ikeda says: "Youth are more precious than any treasure. Let's foster youth and live with a youthful spirit. That's how to open up the future and make great development possible."

Fifth, it's very important to create an environment at the district meeting where every member and guest will feel welcome, can openly express themselves, sharing their struggles as well as their passions. We do this by having open dialogue and also by having our members share their personal experiences of joy in practicing this great Buddhism.

The success of each discussion meeting lies not only in the efforts of the leaders but in the efforts of all the members who participate. Through our prayers for the success of our district meetings and our actions to make it happen, we can create the type of joyful and encouraging meetings that inspire each of us to become happy and help others become happy as well. ❖

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the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI

'THE FLOWER OF CULTURE'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 46-47

Shin'ichi Yamamoto receives a request from President Kennedy that they meet in the United States. Surprised by the request, Shin'ichi thinks carefully about his decision.



By **DAISAKU IKEDA**
SGI PRESIDENT

Around the time of the last Headquarters Leaders Meeting for 1962, Shin'ichi Yamamoto's life was suddenly thrown into turmoil. President John F. Kennedy, who had recently weathered the Cuban Missile Crisis, had asked to meet with Shin'ichi. A well-known private individual paid a visit to Shin'ichi and informed him of President Kennedy's request.

"I am here today as a messenger of the U.S. State Department," he said. "I know this is sudden, but President Kennedy has expressed his wish for a personal meeting with you. I have been asked to inquire whether you would agree to such a meeting. Please let me know your response."

For a moment, Shin'ichi found it difficult to reply. He couldn't immediately judge what was behind this request. His mind raced. The Soka Gakkai now had 15 members with seats in the Japanese Upper House, and they had united to form the parliamentary Clean Government Group. With a membership of more than 3 million households, the Soka Gakkai was now effectively Japan's largest reli-

gious organization. Moreover, as an organization that had sprung from and was organized and led by ordinary people, it was a completely new social force. These facts alone were reason enough for President Kennedy to have developed an interest in the Soka Gakkai.

Also, the Soka Gakkai represented an important segment of Japanese society; the president may have wanted to ascertain whether the Gakkai would support the Japanese right or left. As a world leader, he would naturally want to know. Shin'ichi, however, did not wish a meeting with President Kennedy to be a political encounter.

He had no intention of aligning himself or the Soka Gakkai with either East or West. In his view, the choice between socialism and democracy was essentially a question of social systems. Unless a true spirit of humanism prevailed, socialism could turn into an apparatus for oppression, and democracy could lead to degeneration. The Soka Gakkai's goal was to promote just such a spirit of humanism, of global citizenship, that transcended distinctions among political and economic systems.

Still, Shin'ichi felt meeting the leader of the Western world

and having a frank discussion with him — in the interest of avoiding nuclear war and bringing an end to the Cold War — a necessity. In addition, a correct understanding of the Soka Gakkai by President Kennedy would be important as propagation activities proceeded in the United States. Shin'ichi wished to avoid any friction that might arise from misunderstandings.

After several seconds of silent thought, Shin'ichi quietly replied, "Please tell President Kennedy that I will be glad to meet him."

The practical details of Shin'ichi's meeting with President Kennedy were gradually worked out. In consideration of Kennedy's schedule, the meeting would take place in February, and Shin'ichi would travel to Washington, D.C.

From Jan. 8 through the 27th, Shin'ichi would be visiting Europe and the United States on a guidance trip. Soon after returning to Japan, he would fly again to the United States for this meeting.

Thinking of the Soka Gakkai's future, Shin'ichi wanted the young men's and young women's division leaders as well as the student division leaders to join him

in the meeting. He also gave careful thought to the gift he should bring President Kennedy. He finally settled on a Japanese sword of fine craftsmanship, a symbol of traditional Japanese culture. His wife, Mineko, would present a pearl necklace to Mrs. Kennedy.

Shin'ichi's daily guidance and encouragement to leaders and members continued without pause. Finally, on one of the last days of the year, after the year's work at the Headquarters had ended and the official New Year's holiday period had begun, he took a stroll near the Meiji Shrine Outer Garden.

The bare branches of the ginkgo trees lining the avenue spread into the clear skies. This place held many unforgettable memories for him; his beloved mentor Josei Toda's funeral procession had passed this way.

As he walked over the thick carpet of fallen leaves, Shin'ichi reflected that this had been another year of complete victory, a year throughout which he had fought with all his might. He had achieved the goal of 3 million member-households one year and several months before the 7th memorial (6th anniversary) of Mr. Toda's death, establishing a strong base for further growth.

At the same time, Shin'ichi knew that his real struggle lay before him.

He thought about what he would have to achieve in the coming year: "Next year, I must

start building a firm basis for our worldwide growth. To bring forth a beautiful flowering of culture, I will put special effort into fostering the Arts Department and the Academic and Education departments.

"Next year I will work five times, 10 times as hard as this year," he thought. "It is my absolute responsibility to achieve continuous victory for our movement! If we should lose the struggle to achieve kosen-rufu, our members will be saddened. Everyone will be unhappy. People often say that we should turn the disappointment of defeat into fuel for future victory. But isn't that accepting and, in a way, justifying defeat? I will not permit myself to think like that!"

"I will rack my brains and undergo whatever suffering I have to in order to ensure victory," he went on. "I will win without fail, and I will use the joy of that victory to advance the Gakkai even further toward its goal!"

This he pledged with fierce resolve.

The north wind made the fallen leaves dance, and a bird flew up through the branches of the ginkgo trees, rising into the heavens, sun glinting on its wings.

A smile shone on Shin'ichi's face.

(This concludes "The Flower of Culture," chapter 1 of volume 7 of The New Human Revolution.)

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DIALOGUE, FROM PAGE 1

to think about it and just try to concentrate on getting through the day without too much discomfort.

This is a serious problem for Japan. It is a place where creativity and originality are nipped in the bud with tragic frequency. A nation whose citizens lack those qualities will be left behind by the rest of the world. A lack of creativity and individuality also means a lack of character.

People are not all the same. The enforcement of conformity ignores basic human rights; it is an injustice that destroys individuality. In its ultimate form, it is tyranny and fascism.

KIMURA: Under such circumstances, many people lose their self-confidence, becoming servile, nihilistic or violent.

IKEDA: Everyone wants to realize their unique potential. When that natural desire is obstructed, people either become totally apathetic or destructive. That also sows the seeds for bullying and fascism.

That is why it is so important for you young people not to be defeated by your environment. You mustn't lose faith in yourself. Each of you has a mission in this lifetime that only you can fulfill. Each of you has a life that only you can live and from which you can create something of value. Whatever else you may doubt, I hope you will never doubt this.

Even should someone look upon you as a lost cause, you must never look upon yourself that way. Should someone berate you as having no talent or ability, you mustn't succumb to the negative message of their words. Unperturbed by others' negativity, grit your teeth, keep believing in yourself, chant daimoku and face your challenges with all your might.

Who Am I?

UEDA: How can we gain confidence in ourselves? Many people say that they have a hard time being themselves, that they don't know how.

IKEDA: Daimoku is the key. Daimoku is the mother bird that warms and hatches the egg of potential that is you. The inside of a bird's egg is liquid. Just looking at it, you would never guess that it could ever become a bird. But when the egg is warmed by the mother bird, slowly from this liquid a beak forms, then eyes, then wings, until eventually a fine

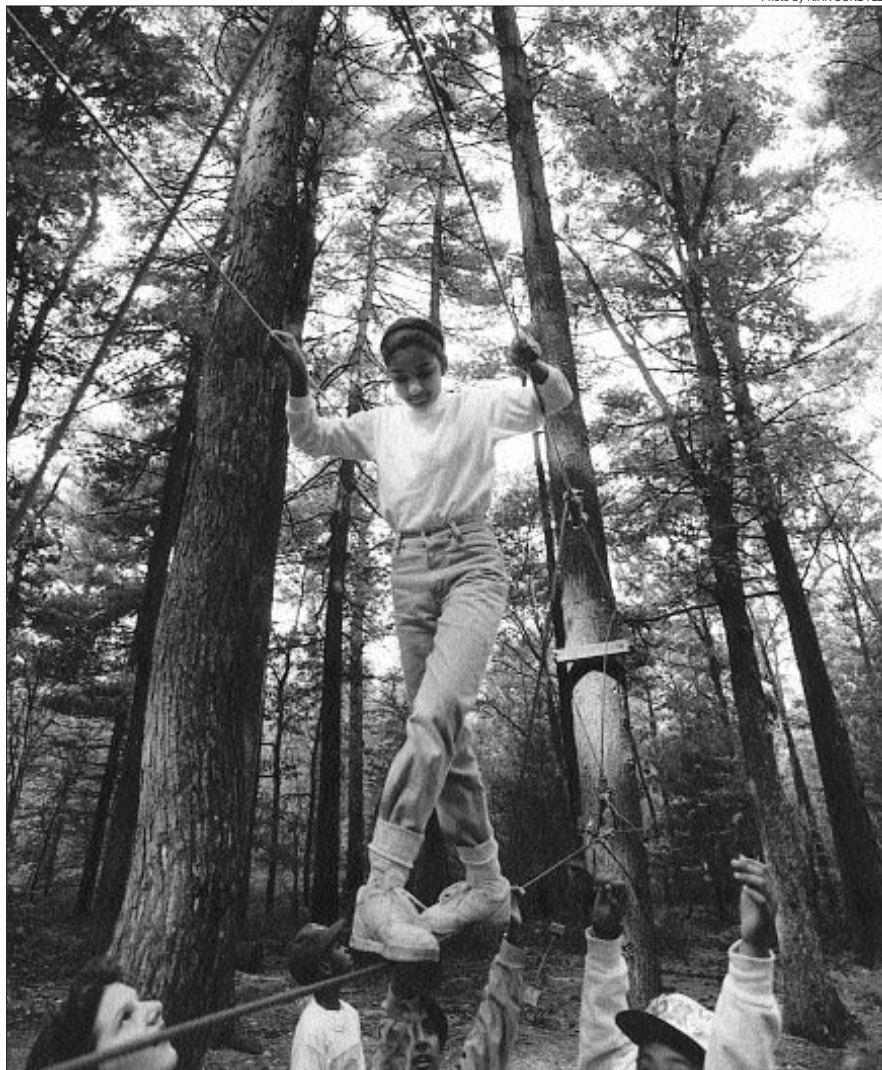


Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

'Youth is a time for self-discovery.... You are young. Show independence of mind, take up a challenge, any kind of challenge, and throw yourself into it with all your energy.'

bird emerges that can soar high into the sky.

UEDA: I think it's true that in our teens we are still like eggs, and most of us have no idea what we will hatch into.

IKEDA: The same can be said of our individuality. When we're young, we don't fully understand what the term means, and that's perfectly normal. In fact, many young people who make bold statements about their individuality are often just copying others — "borrowing" someone else's image.

Goethe once said that young people are like fountains. A fountain does not spout water from a source all its own but recirculates and spouts water taken from its surroundings. Similarly, young people are really just incorporating the ideas and fashions around them, but they are under the delusion that those borrowed ideas are their own, that they are an expression of their unique individuality.

KIMURA: We have to take time to develop ourselves, to establish our identity and realize our potential.

IKEDA: It was Nichiren Daisan who said that daimoku is the mother bird that warms and eventually hatches the egg of potential (MW-1, 259-60).

When we speak of a Buddha, of someone attaining Buddhahood, we mean a person who has developed his or her individuality to the highest level possible, someone who has realized his or her fullest potential and undergone human revolution.

Chanting daimoku can also be compared to flowers — cherry, plum, peach and damson — turning their faces to the sun or spreading their roots in the life-giving earth.

As for self-confidence — self-confidence comes from hard work and effort. You're deluding yourself if you think you can have self-confidence without it. Only those who strive to challenge some goal and work toward

it at their own pace and in their own way, only those who keep trying, no matter how many times they may fail, can develop unshakable confidence in themselves. Self-confidence is synonymous with an invincible will. You cannot be said to have true self-confidence if your opinion of yourself seesaws from high to low every time you compare yourself to others. A life spent judging yourself by others will only end in frustration and deadlock.

The Courage To Be Your Own Person

UEDA: The key, I guess, is learning to be true to ourselves. It takes a lot of courage to be ourselves, doesn't it?

IKEDA: Youth is a time for self-discovery. The well-known Japanese novelist Natsume Soseki (1867-1916) journeyed in search of himself. Interested in English literature, he went to study in London. There, he ex-

perienced such culture shock that he developed a powerful inferiority complex and even had a nervous breakdown. After a long period of inner turmoil and self-reflection, he finally arrived at an answer to the question that had plagued him, "What is literature?" He realized that the only solution was to come up with a definition of what literature was through his own efforts. Recognizing that he had allowed himself to be overly swayed by others, he decided from then on to listen to his own voice and be his own person.

Later, Soseki addressed the following words to young people: "Here is the path I am meant to follow! I have found it at last! When you can exclaim this from the very depths of your being, your heart will know peace for the first time. And with that cry, a hardy self-confidence will show itself."

You are young. Show independence of mind, take up a challenge, any kind of challenge, and throw yourself into it with all your energy.

The Mirror of Others

KIMURA: In the journey of self-discovery, I think it is also important to listen to the opinions of others, because it can sometimes be difficult to see ourselves clearly.

IKEDA: That's true. There are certainly instances when you think you are one way, while the people around you think you are just the opposite. Other people can often see things about you that you can't. It's just like not being able to see your face without a mirror: the people around you can serve as a mirror to let you see yourself. Your friends or your parents may at times see you more clearly than you do.

The comments of people close to you can help you focus your individuality in a positive direction. The education, guidance, advice, warnings and even rebukes that you receive can all be used constructively to steer you along the right path. On the other hand, refusing to listen to others' advice, doing only what you want, cannot be described as individuality. That's just being stubborn, and it doesn't benefit anyone.

Even famous people are sometimes taken to task and scolded by members of their family. I'm sure your parents read the riot act to each other sometimes, too! No matter how influential or important someone

Part 2 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 26th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Sept. 22. (Part 1 appeared in the Oct. 16 issue.)

A Microcosm All Its Own

Nichiren Daishonin declares with unswerving confidence, "There is no greater happiness for human beings than chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 161). I want you to feel this with the deepest certainty in your lives.

In the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," the Daishonin says: "[With regard to the five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo,] our head is *myo*, our neck is *ho*, our chest is *ren*, our belly is *ge*, and our legs are *kyo*. Our five-foot body is the five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 716).

Buddhism teaches that our body itself is a manifestation of the Mystic Law and a microcosm all its own. According to the Daishonin, our eyes correspond to the sun and the moon, and the hair on our heads, the stars. (If someone asks you what urine corresponds to, just tell them it's hot springs...and if they want to know what excrement is, just tell them it's lava!)

Seriously, however, *myo* represents the world of Buddhahood, and *ho* represents the nine worlds. Life and the universe together, as a whole, make up *myoho*, the Mystic Law.

No Buddhism Without Action

The passage I just cited from the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" states that *kyo* of Myoho-renge-kyo corresponds to our legs. What this means is action. Without action, there can be no Buddhism.

Your gathering here for this meeting is action. Your teaching others about Buddhism is action, too.

The words of individuals who do not take action themselves, no matter how fine-sounding they may be, are not worth listening to. Their words are abstract and empty, having no foundation in actual experience.

In the worst sense, such people can be called robbers of the Law. The most respectable people are those exerting themselves in the real world.

The Only Solution

Japan suffered defeat in the last world war. Many people are now

The Final Message of the Lotus Sutra

What is the final message of the Lotus Sutra? President Ikeda explains in the conclusion of his Sept. 22 speech that it's this: 'We should treasure those striving earnestly for kosen-rufu in accord with the Daishonin's teachings and show them the same respect we would a Buddha.'



SGI Women's Division Leader Eiko Akiyama leads the audience in three cheers for the women's and young women's divisions at the Sept. 22 meeting.

describing the deplorable state of affairs in Japan as a second defeat. The economy is in recession, and there has been a serious downturn in consumer spending and business activity. The country is also deadlocked on many other fronts. Someone observed that the only group flourishing and doing well is the Soka Gakkai.

Myo of Myoho-renge-kyo has the meanings to open, to be endowed and perfect, and to revive. The Mystic Law enables us to tap life's supreme power.

In Japan's harsh environment, which resembles the postwar period in which President Toda conducted activities, let us be determined to impart confidence, courage and hope to all around us.

The Mystic Law is the only solution. The Soka Gakkai, the only hope.

All These Honors

The honorary doctorates and professorships that I have received from academic institutions around the world now total 55. I have been advised of the bestowal of several more such honors in the near future, which will bring the number to well over 60.

All these honors are received on your behalf; I always accept them as your representative. When I receive these awards, the

world is actually paying tribute to your efforts. I hope you will be proud of this. I have absolutely no doubt that this good fortune and benefit flows directly to you and your descendants.

The Mountain in the River

I want to introduce some more ancient words of wisdom for your spiritual development and growth.

The Chinese Southern Song-Dynasty philosopher Zhu Xi said, "Be fearless whatever happens, like the mountain stands firm in the river's flow."

Some people might have a hard time fathoming the sayings of the ancients, but as leaders, it's important that we study widely. Leaders of ages past memorized such maxims.

These words of Zhu Xi refer to the courageous spirit of a person who stands alone. He calls on us to stand resolute like the mountain that once stood indomitably in the middle of China's Yellow River. The underlying meaning is that, even if you are given a big responsibility, you must challenge it with conviction and never be afraid of encountering difficulties.

The *Analects* of Confucius contain the words "The wise are without perplexity; the good are without sorrow; the brave are without fear." Our human revolu-

tion enables us to develop such indomitable selves.

See Through Evil

Another Chinese saying goes "Being with the good is like entering a room fragrant with irises and orchids." The Daishonin, too, refers to "a friend in the orchid room" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 36). The implication of both expressions is that, just as one is gradually penetrated by the fragrance of flowers — without even noticing it — when we associate with people of excellent character and integrity, their beautiful virtue penetrates our lives. We are positively influenced and improved by our association with them.

That's why it is so important to associate with good people. We mustn't associate with evil, corrupt individuals. We have to discern evil and wrongdoing, and that includes seeing through individuals out to take advantage of the members' faith for personal profit. A Lotus Sutra passage cited in the Daishonin's writings says, "Part with bad friends and seek out good ones" (MW-1, 213).

Straying From Humanity

Meng Jiao, a Chinese poet in the Tang dynasty, left the following words about remaining true to

one's good friends: "How should one repay a good friend? With undying constancy and loyalty." Those who betray their friends and forget their debts of gratitude have strayed from the path of Humanity and tumbled into Animality.

The Daishonin writes: "Buddhism teaches that encountering hardships in life is a common, normal occurrence. Persecutions become the flowers of prosperity of saints and sages" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1020). The just invariably encounter persecution and attack — and this is proof of their correctness.

By contrast, there are people only concerned with appearances who try to maneuver their way through life so that they always come out looking good. These people are dishonest and corrupt.

Let's always advance with the spirit that obstacles and hardships are our greatest pride, our most magnificent flowers of glory.

Summation of the Lotus Sutra

In the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," the Daishonin says, "Shakyamuni condensed the essence of the Lotus Sutra, which he taught for eight years, into eight Chinese characters and bestowed them upon the people of the Latter Day of the Law" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 781). What are these eight characters, which constitute the quintessential message of the Lotus Sutra? They comprise the instruction in the last chapter of the Lotus Sutra: "[If you see a person who accepts and upholds this sutra,] you should rise and greet him from afar, showing him the same respect you would a Buddha" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 324).

Stressing that this is the summation of the Lotus Sutra, the Daishonin calls this passage "the ultimate transmission" of Shakyamuni Buddha. I have spoken about this before a number of times.

What this means is that we should treasure those striving earnestly for kosen-rufu in accord with the Daishonin's teachings and show them the same respect we would a Buddha.

There are, however, members who gain power and position in society and then let it go to their heads. Later, they treat their fellow members working hard for kosen-rufu with contempt. There are also members who let hunger for money destroy their faith and then betray the organization. Such individuals betray the Daishonin. Their actions are unforgivable.

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, NEXT PAGE

DIALOGUE, FROM PAGE 5

may be, they too have to heed warnings, advice and recommendations as they carry out their work.

When people point out your faults, remember that it's just part of the process of forging your individuality. Refusing to listen to advice is foolish.

Rebelling when someone says something to you and making things unpleasant for everyone is to no one's advantage. It's important to be wise. Having people point out your shortcomings and help you weed out your bad habits at the root is, in the long run, a great help to you. If the roots of those bad habits remain, they will gradually affect your life more and more adversely, moving you in a harmful, destructive direction.

UEDA: In other words, individuality does not exist apart from society and other people.

IKEDA: True individuality is realizing oneself fully within the structures of society, while working on behalf of others. We es-

tablish our own value as individuals within society, using the practical wisdom we possess.

Therefore, observing society's rules is also an indispensable part of letting our individuality shine. In society, actions that violate the agreed-upon rules make one an outcast, thus depriving one of the very place in which to exercise individuality. If, for example, you break your school rules out of sheer willfulness, it is likely that you will have problems fitting into society when you graduate from school or as you grow older.

People who are secure, who have a strong self-identity, are always willing to listen to the opinions of others. They have that strength and capacity. By comparison, those who refuse to listen to others tend to be rather weak.

Good Role Models, Good Books and Good Friends

KIMURA: One reader writes: "When I try to bring forth my individuality, I always end up imitating someone else I look up to, some ideal. Is that all right?"

SPEECH, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

President Toda cherished the spirit of the Lotus Sutra, warmly embracing each member. He once said, "At Gakkai meetings, even if there are only one or two participants, it's important that we treasure those people, teach them about Buddhism and seriously engage them in dialogue with a sense of delight and appreciation."

President Makiguchi was of the same mind.

Those who look down on small discussion meetings and gatherings are arrogant.

In the Midst of Diversity

Mr. Toda placed great emphasis on discussion meetings and would always thoroughly prepare for them with the other central figures. "Who will be the master of ceremonies?" "What shall we put on our program?" "I'm going to talk about this, so you talk about that" — he went over every detail.

It's important that those involved in organizing a meeting rack their brains and make careful preparations to ensure that it will be satisfying for all who attend. Such groundwork lays the path to victory.

No matter how times change, we mustn't neglect the basics. Mr. Toda was generally broad-minded and easygoing, but he always made sure to plan thoroughly for even the smallest meeting.



'None of you have forsaken faith, irrespective of the obstacles you have encountered. You have won.'

When a meeting was under way, he would pay close attention to the audience, watching the people's reactions and trying to discern whether they were happy with the meeting and were enjoying it. "There is no need to be overly concerned with the format," he said. "I feel we have to create an environment at our meetings that will leave even first-time participants saying that they enjoyed the meeting and learned something valuable about Buddhism. I feel sorry for the participants if we offer them anything less."

Small meetings with only a few participants are the greatest challenge. And they are of vital importance.

IKEDA: It's impossible to nurture our individuality without learning from others, just as it's difficult to run a race without fueling our bodies with nutritious food. Learning, it is widely accepted, begins with imitating. Children learn how to live and behave by observing and imitating their parents. The same can be seen in the animal kingdom. All great men and women, all excellent people, all people of action, have developed their outstanding individuality by learning from and emulating others. That's one reason for reading the biographies of exceptional people. You will learn much from them. On the other hand, reading books that carry base and negative messages will only lead you to unhappiness.

Nichiren Daishonin cites the passage from the Nirvana Sutra: "Bodhisattvas, have no fear of mad elephants. What you should fear are evil friends! Even if you are killed by a mad elephant, you will not fall into the three evil paths. But if you are killed by an evil friend, you are certain to fall into them" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 13).

Currently, high-spirited general meetings at the chapter or district level are being held around Japan. Some people may go to these events reluctantly. Those who have been instrumental in getting them to attend also deserve high praise!

Buddhism expounds the doctrine of the mutual possession of the ten worlds, so there are people with all sorts of life-conditions. Trained and forged in the midst of such diversity, we become great leaders. For a sumo wrestler to win the title of grand champion, he has to compete against many different kinds of opponents. The principle is the same.

What's important is to decide that the most mundane efforts are your most crucial struggle, and then exert yourself in your activities with all your might. That is the key to true victory. The areas that are strong are those where the leaders do painstaking groundwork and keep making consistent, tenacious efforts.

I hope that you will always remember this basic formula for victory.

The Fickle Heart

I want to quote some further passages from the Daishonin's writings:

"There are also those who appeared to believe in Nichiren but began doubting when they saw him persecuted. They have not

Positive stimuli contribute to the positive development of your individuality. While shaped by such things as education, family environment and your own efforts, your individuality and its development ultimately depend on your consciousness. It's important to read good books and have good friends.

Youth is the time when you're still unsure about which is the best way to proceed — uncertain about which direction is beneficial and which is not. By acquainting yourself with the lives and achievements of courageous and admirable individuals, you will gradually get an idea of the direction you would like to follow. You will begin to get an idea of who you are.

Your Worth as a Person

IKEDA: In any event, it is important to remember that your worth as a person is not based on your profession. It is not based on wealth, fame or academic credentials. What counts is how hard you have striven in your chosen path, how much good you have accomplished,

how earnestly you have devoted your energies to it. It is your spirit of devotion, your sincerity, that determines your true worth. For that reason, our individuality constitutes the basis for leading a life of dignity and meaning as a human being.

When you spend all your money, it's gone. Material things break, and they can't enrich you in any real, lasting sense. But the more you cultivate your innate individuality, the richer it becomes; the more you use and give expression to it, the richer it becomes. It never diminishes or disappears. Each of you possesses this wonderful treasure. Life is the struggle to make that precious treasure shine.

Your success or failure in life is not decided by your achievements and results in high school. To win true victory in life requires that you keep polishing the unequalled jewel of your unique potential as you make your way through life, bringing it to shine with supreme brilliance.

To be continued

only forsaken the Lotus Sutra but actually think themselves wise enough to instruct Nichiren. The pitiful thing is that these perverse people must suffer in the depths of hell even longer than the Nembutsu believers" (MW-1, 42).

"Persons who have been helped by me, not only in religious matters but in secular affairs as well, fearful of the eyes of others and hoping thereby to put an end to talk, make a show of condemning me, though I do not think they do so in their hearts" (MW-7, 115).

"When I incurred the displeasure of the government, even in Kamakura 999 out of 1,000 discarded their faith" (MW-3, 69).

The Daishonin clearly perceives the workings of people's hearts.

None of you, however, have forsaken faith, irrespective of the obstacles you have encountered. You have won! The Soka Gakkai has won! The Daishonin would surely praise you.

The Daishonin knew how fickle the human heart can be. He was well aware of this human weakness, this frightening aspect of the human heart.

He strongly encouraged his followers, telling them: "Never let life's hardships disturb you. After all, no one can avoid problems, not even saints or sages" (MW-1, 161).

I believe that he's saying: "One is not necessarily the tar-

get of slander and criticism because one has done something wrong. On the contrary, even saints and sages are maligned and abused. Sometimes, people's greatness is the very thing that makes them the target of persecution. We shouldn't let it worry or perturb us."

This Jealousy-Ridden Society

In "Letter from Sado," the Daishonin declares that the most incorrigible slanderers of Buddhism proliferated until they became the people of today's Japan (MW-1, 38). Someone remarked that this explains the malicious jealousy that seems to be evident everywhere in Japan. The Daishonin stood up alone to try to transform this benighted country for the better.

It is crucial that all genuine disciples, all youth division members, join in this struggle. Victory is the hallmark of youth. It is your mission to rectify the perversions created by this jealousy-ridden society. I believe that you, the youth, will succeed in this.

In closing, allow me to thank everyone again for making the long trip to be with us today. My deep appreciation especially to the visiting SGI members from overseas.

Thank you very much.

This is the final installment of this speech

SGI 초급시험 예상문제집

“형제초”

1. 이케가미 형제의 생활에서 어떤 위기가 일어나서 니치렌 대성인께서 이 어서를 쓰셨습니까?
2. 이 어서에 의하면, 신심을 하는 사람들이 어려움을 만나게 되는 세가지 이유는 무엇입니까?
3. 대성인께서 말씀하시기를 “그런데 법화경을 버린 죄로 인하여 삼구의 성문이 삼천전정경을 경과하였고, 재대보살이 오백전정경을 경과한 것은 염청나다고 생각되나, 법화경을 버리면, 상상할 수 없을 정도의 죄가 되는데, 왜 그렇습니까?”
4. “가령 일단의 거북이가 부목을 만날지언정 연사를 가지고 수미산을 허공에 걸지언정 법화경을 경과 같이 설하는 사람을 만나기는 어려우니라. 위의 어서에서 넓게 보아서 무엇이 더 힘들다고 말하는 것입니까?”
5. 대성인께서는 이 어서에서 그릇된 선생을 따르는 것의 영향에 대해서 많은 예를 열거하셨습니다. 다음 인용문은 자은대사에 대한 전교대사의 말씀입니다. “법화경을 칭찬한다고 하지만, 이가 가리키는 바는 법화경을 죽이는 사람이 되었느니라.” 어떻게 누가 법화경의 간심을 죽이는지 설명하십시오.
6. “만약 악우를 만나면 즉 본심을 잃는다.”라는 구절에서 대성인께서는 악을 용서해 주는 것이 신심을 버리게 하므로 악을 용서하지 말라는 중요성을 강조하셨습니다. 이 어서에 의할 것 같으면 악한 사람은 다른 사람으로 하여금 어리석게 하여서 민게끔 하는데 어떻게 합니까?
7. 우리들의 생명 속에서는 원뿔의 무명과 원뿔의 법성이 들어 있습니다. 무명은 육천마왕으로 나타나는데, 그것은 악자식의 원천입니다. 이것은 또 내적으로 욕심, 분노와 무식으로 나타나서 신심의 올바른 길을 이해 못하게 합니다. 이 어서에 의하면, 무명에서 벗어나려면 어떠한 자세와 행동이 필요합니까?
8. 대성인께서는 신심을 포기하지 않는 것이 중요하다고 하시면서, 브란담이 가장한 육천마왕에게 눈을 공양한 사리불의 이야기를 하십니다. 왜 사리불은 보살행을 그만 두셨습니까?
9. 이 어서에서 대성인께서는 남편과 부인들을 다른 관점에서 격려하여 주십니다. 남편들에게는 “여자들은 마음을 약해서 두 분의 부인들은 신심을 포기할는지 모르지만, 두 분께서는 이를 악물고 신심에서 마음이 약해져서는 안됩니다.”라고 하였고, 부인들에게는 다음과 같이 말씀하셨습니다. “이 법문 때문에 이라든 설사 지아비에게 살해당할지라도 후회하지 말지마라. 일동으로 지아비의 마음을 간한대면 용녀의 뒤를 이어 말대 약세의 여인성불의 모범이 되시라.” 대성인께서는 각자가 난을 만났을 때, 어떠한 자세를 가져야 하는지를 가르치시고 있습니까?

용하신 “불도수행에 힘쓰고 불법을 이해하는 것이 성장하면 삼장사마가 본연히 다루어 일어난다. 내지 따르지 말지며 두려워 말지마라. 이에 따르면 바야흐로 사람으로 하여금 악도에 항하게 하고 이를 두려워하면 정법의 수행을 방해하느니라.”를 이용하십시오.

10. 삼장사마는 어디에서부터 생겨났습니까?
11. 왜 난이라는 것은 우리가 성불을 하고 있는 중이라는 것을 확인하여 줍니까?
12. 우리들의 행복과 성불은 다른 사람의 행동에 달려있지 않고, 오로지 우리들의 노력에 달려 있지만, 대성인께서는 “지아비가 즐거우면 아내도 번영하고, 지아비가 도둑이면 아내도 도둑이 되느니라.”라고 말씀하셨는데 이 말씀의 의미를 설명하십시오.
13. “마음의 스승이 될지언정 마음을 스승으로 삼지 말라.”라고 대성인께서 말씀하셨는데 마음의 스승이 되라는 말은 무엇을 의미합니까?

난조 전답서 (어서전집 1578쪽)

14. 덕승동자와 그의 흙떡 공양의 이야기를 통해서 대성인께서는 공양에 대해서 두가지 요점을 말씀하셨습니다. 그것은 무엇입니까?
15. 일반적으로 어본존 공양에는 두가지 형식이 있습니다. 그것을 설명하십시오.
16. 수년에 걸친 도키미쓰의 공양을 칭찬하시면서 대성인께서는 “부처를 무망의 진보로서 억집동안 공양하는 것보다는 말법의 법화경의 행자를 하루일지라도 공양하는 공덕은 수천만억배 뛰어나다.”고 설하셨습니다. 말법의 법화경의 행자가 설한 가르침과 석가모니 부처가 설한 가르침을 비교하면서, 위에 말씀하신 것에 대한 이유를 설명하십시오.
17. 왜 우리들은 니치렌 대성인을 본불이라고 부르는지 설명하십시오.
18. 석가모니 부처가 하신 성불과 대성인께서 하신 성불의 차이는 무엇입니까?

다음의 어서를 읽으신 후에 아래의 질문에 답하여 주십시오. 이것은 무척 중요한 일입니다. 교주 석존의 일대사의 비법을 영추산에서 상전 받아 니치렌의 육단의 총승에 비장하여 숨겨 가졌노라. 그러므로 니치렌의 가슴 속은 재물 일정의 곳이라. 혀의 위는 전법륜의 곳, 목은 탄생의 곳, 입은 정각의 곳이다.”

19. “교주 석존의 일대사의 비법을 영추산에서 상전 받았노라. 이 말씀은 무엇을 뜻합니까?”
20. “일대사의 비법”이란 무엇

입니까?
21. “니치렌의 가슴 속은 재물 일정의 곳이라. 혀의 위는 전은 법륜의 곳, 목은 탄생의 곳, 입은 정각의 곳이다.” 이 설법에서 니치렌 대성인께서는 무엇을 말씀하시려고 하셨습니까?

다음 어서를 읽으신 후에 밑에 있는 질문에 답하여 주십시오. “법이 묘하기 때문에 사람이 존귀하기 때문에 주체가 존귀하니라.”

22. 위의 어서를 니치렌 대성인의 입장에서 설명하십시오.

“일념삼천”

23. 삼천이란 숫자는 일념 삼천의 구성원리에서 나왔습니다. 이 일념삼천의 원리를 설명하십시오.
24. 천태대사는 일념을 심계호 구라고 하셨는데, 일념 속에 무심계가 들어 있는데, 심계가 무엇인지 설명하십시오.
25. 심계호구란 무엇입니까?
26. 심여시를 설명하십시오.
27. 니치렌 대성인의 일념삼천과 석가모니의 일념삼천의 차이를 설명하십시오.
28. 육도(여섯가지 낮은 생명경계)와 사성(네가지 높은 생명경계)을 비교하면서 그것들이 어떻게 나타나는지를 설명하십시오.
29. 보살계와 이승계의 주요한 차이를 설명하십시오.
30. 여시본말구경중은 처음과 끝이 다른데 둘 다 서로 떨어질 수 없다는 것을 말하는데, 처음은 무엇이며 끝은 무엇을 말합니까?
31. 삼중비전초에 “오음이 임시로 화합함을 이룸하여 중생이라 하느니라.”라고 대성인께서 말씀하셨는데, 다른 중생과의 우리의 관계를 어떻게 보아야 하는지에 대해서 무엇을 우리들에게 말하여 줍니까?
32. 국토세간은 심계를 갖고 있습니다. 국토와 중생사이의 차이는 무엇입니까?

“이케다 SGI회장의 법화경 방편품 수량품의 강요”

33. 이러한 각종의 법화경은 무엇이며, 그리고 각종의 법화경에 공통되는 것은 무엇입니까?
34. 법화경의 행자들이란 누구를 말합니까?
35. 대성인께서는 어떻게 생명으로서 법화경을 읽으셨습니까?
36. 법화경을 독송하는 공덕은 무엇입니까?
37. 우리들이 근행할 때 무엇을 칭송합니까?
38. 부처께서 설법을 하실때는 네 개의 조건이 갖추어져야 하는데, 그 네가지 조건은 무엇입니까?

39. “그때”라는 것을 말할 때 가장 중요한 것이 있는데, 그것은 무엇입니까?
40. 지혜란 무엇을 말하는지요 그리고 그 지혜를 어떻게 얻을 수 있습니까?
41. 대성인의 불법에서 가장 중요한 불도수행은 무엇입니까?
42. 말법의 불도 수행 중에서 가장 어려운 일은 무엇입니까?
43. 대성인님의 의취, 즉 어본불의 진의는 무엇입니까?
44. 불계는 어디에 나타납니까?
45. 생명체의 넓이와 깊이를 포착하기 위해서는 무엇을 이해하여야 합니까?
46. 부처의 눈(불안)이란 무엇입니까?
47. 대성인의 불법의 입장(문자의 입장)에서 볼 때 제법실상이란 무엇을 말합니까?

“묘호니 부인 답서”

48. 니치렌 대성인에 의하면, 묘호니 부인이 대성인에게 “남묘호렌게교라고 부르는 것만으로 성불할 수 있습니까?”라고 질문하셨는데, 그 질문의 중요성은 무엇입니까? 그리고 그러한 질문은 우리들에게 왜 중요합니까?
49. 육난 구이의 법문은 우리들의 신심수행에서 무엇을 가르치는지를 설명하십시오.
50. 니치렌 대성인께서는 이 어서에서 “만약 법화경을 수지하면 현세에 반드시 성불합니다.”라고 말씀하셨습니다. 즉신성불이란 무엇인지 삼보로 설명하여 주십시오.
51. 즉신성불의 기본은 무엇입니까?
52. 니치렌께서는 “남묘호렌게교란 일구일제지만 법화경의 간유입니다.”라고 말씀하셨습니다. 이 구절은 무엇을 의미하는지 설명하십시오.
53. 우리들의 제목을 근간으로 할 때 모든 것이 가지치게 됩니다. 왜 그렇습니까?
54. 우리들의 신심수행에서 “태만하지 않고, 제목을 부른다.”라는 것은 무엇을 의미하는 것입니까?
55. 어떤 마음자세로 어서를 배독하여야 되며, 어서를 깊이 배독할 때 무엇을 느끼니까?
56. “백천만년동안 어두운 곳도 등불을 넣으면 순간간에 밝아진다.”라고 대성인께서 말씀하셨습니다. 이 구절은 신심의 두가지 중요한 원리가 들어 있습니다. 이 두가지 원리란 무엇인지 설명하여 주십시오.
57. 대성인의 묘호니 부인답서 어서를 강의하시면서 이케다 회장님은 “도전할 환경에 처해 있을 때 기원을 하여야 합니다.”라고 말씀하셨습니다. 그리고 신심과 기원의 마음자세가 어떠하여야 하는지를 설명하셨습니다. 어떤 마음자세가 꿈을 실현하는데 방해할 하며 그리고 꿈을 실현하는데 우리를 인도합니까?
58. 기원과 행동의 연관성을 설명하십시오.
59. 묘호니 부인 답서의 마지막

부분에서 대성인께서 “의심이 있어서는 안됩니다.”라고 말씀하셨습니다. 무엇을 의심하지 않아야 하며 우리들의 의구심을 풀어 주시려고 어떻게 우리들을 격려하여 주십니까?

“중문 문제에 관한 집의 응답”

60. 신심의 기본 원칙을 이해하지 못하면 우리들의 불행 수행은 끊임없는 고통스러운 수행이 되고, 또 올바르게 이해하지 못하면 법화경을 수지하는 것은 소용없는 것이라고 니치렌 대성인께서는 우리들에게 경고하셨습니다. 중문문제에 관해서 올바른 신심이란 어떠한 것을 말하는지요?
61. “자신이 삼십삼일의 본각이 며 여래이니라. 이렇게 믿으시고 남묘호렌게교라고 봉창하시라.” 위의 대성인의 말씀은 중문에서 가르치는 것과는 어떻게 다릅니까?
62. “어본존님을 결코 타처에서 구하지 말지마라. 다만 우리 중생이 법화경을 수지하고 남묘호렌게교라고 봉창하는 홀종의 유단에 계시느니라.” 위의 대성인의 말씀에 대해서 중문에서는 무엇이라고 말할 합니까?
63. 스승과 제자의 관계에 대해서 중문에서는 어떻게 규정을 합니까?
64. SGI와 중문의 가장 본질적인 차이는 태도와 행동에 있습니다. 그 차이를 좀더 자세히 설명하십시오.
65. 무엇때문에 마키부처 회장과 도다회장께서는 법주의 지시를 따르지 않으셨습니까?
66. 중문에서는 SGI에서 발행하는 본존님이 가짜라고 주장하는 3가지 이유중의 2가지는 무엇이며, 그리고 그러한 이유가 왜 타당하지 않습니까?
67. SGI에서 발행한 본존이 가짜가 아닌 이유를 설명하십시오.
68. 님께서 서사한 본존님을 니치렌 부인께서 서사한 본존님으로 회원들이 바꾸는 이유를 설명하십시오. 그리고 이 두 본존님사이의 차이가 있는지에 대해서도 설명하십시오.
69. 왜 우리들은 일련정종의 사찰을 방문하지 않아야 합니까?
70. 중문에서 SGI와 이케다 회장님에 대해서 계속해서 박해를 하고 있는 것을 우리들은 어떻게 보아야 합니까?
71. 왜 SGI와 중문이 서로 대화를 하지 합니까?
72. 중문과 SGI 신도사이에 단결은 필요합니까? 필요하다면 그 이유는?
73. 승려들의 잘못이 승려를 따르는 사람한테 주는 영향은 무엇이며, 그리고 우리들 각자는 그러한 사람들을 위하여 무엇을 해줄 수 있습니까?
74. 어떻게 중문문제가 미래에 SGI에 영향을 주겠습니까?

SGI 초급시험 예상답안집

- 1. 두 형제의 아버지인 아쓰미씨는 울종의 거두인 "료강"의 열렬한 신자였으며, 료강의 지시대로 장남인 무데나카를 의절하여 두 형제 사이가 멀어지게 되게 회책하였다.
- 2. 첫째, 강성한 신심에 의해 과거의 숙업을 끌어내어 죄를 소멸하는 것 둘째, 채천선신이 신심을 시험하는 것 셋째, 재육천의 마왕이 그들의 부모나 그 밖의 장애물이 되어 신심을 방해하는 것
- 3. 법화경을 버리는 것은 각자의 불성의 존재를 부정하고 용현할 기회를 잃는 것과 같습니다.
- 4. 이것은 법화경을 올바르게 수행하는 사람을 만나기가 힘들고 그리고 만나면 많은 공덕을 받을 수 있는 것을 설명하여 줍니다.
- 5. 계종의 조사가 아무리 법화경을 찬탄하는 것 같이 보일지라도 자기들의 교의에 집착해서 법화경의 진의를 모르는 고로 법화경을 제경과 동등 혹은 낮추어서 찬탄한대 불교하다. 따라서 모두가 법화의 마음을 죽이고 있는 결과이다.
- 6. 절대적으로 무너지지 않는 행복의 근원을 악한 사람들은 본존님 밖에서 찾아야 한다고 하거나, 아니면 종교 권위자들에게 구제를 청해야 한다고 한다.
- 7. 근행과 창제, 그리고 타인의 행복을 위해 끊임없이 노력함으로써
- 8. 사리불의 눈을 받은 나찰은 고마운 마음은 전혀 없고 오히려 눈을 땅에 던져 버린 것 같았다. 이때 사리불은 이런 '생명은 절대로 성불할 수 없으며 구제불능'이라고 단정해 버렸다. 사리불은 모든 생명이 다 불성이 있다는 것을 의심하고 타인을 돕겠다는 것을 포기하게 되었다.
- 9. 대성인께서는 난을 만나면 홀로 설 수 있는 강한 신심을 가지는 것이 중요하다는 것을 가르치십니다.
- 10. 그것은 원품의 무명에서 생깁니다.
- 11. 난은 우리들이 정법의 수행에 정진할 때 나타납니다.
- 12. 자신의 행복과 성불은 각 개인의 노력과 일념에 달려있지 타인이 갖다 줄 수가 없다. 그러나 부부사이 같이 친근한 관계에는 상대의 행복이 내 자신의 행복과 직결된다. 그러므로 부부가 서로의 행복을 위하여 최선을 다했을 때 서로가 참된 행복을 누릴 수 있다.
- 13. 마음의 스승이 된다는 것은 우리들의 생각, 말, 행동을 불계에 기반을 두고, 계목을 통하여 불성을 용현하는 것을 말합니다.
- 14. 공양을 함으로써 오는 공덕

- 은 가르침의 위대함과 공양을 받는 사람의 위대함과 정비례합니다.
- 15. 공양에는 제공양과 범공양이 있습니다. 제공양은 초, 향, 목, 과일등을 본존님께 공양하는 것이며 범공양은 조석으로 근행 창제하고 광선유포와 본존님에 대한 신심을 격려하는 노력등이다.
- 16. 말법의 법화경의 행자란 니치렌 대성인이시며, 법화경의 간심, 즉 묘법을 완벽하게 나타내신 니치렌 대성인 불법에 비해 석존의 불법은 부분적인 관점을 나타내었다.
- 17. 대성인께서는 모든 부처가 성불하신 우주에 잠재하고 있는 본래의 법을 직접적으로 나타내셨습니다.
- 18. 석존은 오백전점점이라는 아득한 과거에 성불했고 그의 가르침은 성불은 어떤 특정한 시간에 얻는 것이라 하였다. 그러나 대성인의 가르침에는 불계는 생명 안에 원래 갖추어져 있다 하셨습니다. 결국 우리는 불계를 얻는 것이 아니라 우리들 안에 있는 불성을 깨닫는 일이라 하셨습니다. 그래서 대성인께서는 부처와 범부를 차별하는 생각을 단숨에 없애보이시고 모든 사람들이 성불할 수 있는 길을 열어주셨습니다.
- 19. 석가모니는 지용의 보살의 지도자인 상행보살에게 법화경을 진수를 이전하였고, 말법에서 유포를 상행보살에게 맡겼습니다.
- 20. 일대사의 비법이란 일념삼천의 본체 또는 대성인께서 대이 본존으로 도현하신 삼대비법의 남묘호렌계교입니다.
- 21. 대성인께서는 신력에서 어느 곳이든 법화경을 수지하는 곳에 대해 "마땅이 알라, 이곳이 곧 도량이니 제불이 이곳에서 아 녹다라 삼야 삼보리를 얻어시며 제불이 이곳에서 범륜을 굴리시며 제불이 열반 하시도다"라고 했다. 대성인께서는 "이곳"을 그의 몸에 비유하시어 대성인의 내증의 법이 즉 모든 부처의 불인이라 하셨습니다.
- 22. 대성인께서 비법을 나타내셨기 때문에. 존귀한 존경을 받을 가치가 계시고, 대성인께서 사시는 곳은 정도와 같은 곳입니다.
- 23. 심계의 각각이 심계가 갖추어져(심계호구) 백계를 이루고 백계의 각각에 십여시(생명의 움직임, 기능)가 갖추어져 천여시, 천여시에 삼계간(오음, 중생, 국토)이 갖추어져 삼천세간.
- 24. 지옥계, 이계, 축생계, 수라계, 인계, 천계, 성문계, 연각계, 보살계, 불계.
- 25. 심계의 어느 생명경애의 생

- 명도 그 속에는 다른 모든 생명경애가 포함되어 있습니다. 어느 생명경애의 사람도 다른 구계의 생명경애를 나타낼 잠재력을 갖고 있습니다.
- 26. 여시성, 여시성, 여시체, 여시력, 여시작, 여시인, 여시연, 여시과, 여시보, 여시분말구경중
- 27. 석가모니 부처는 어떻게 성불했는지 원인을 나타내지 않았지만 니치렌 대성인께서는 석가모니 부처를 포함한 모든 부처의 성불의 원인인 구극의 법, 묘법인 남묘호렌계교를 나타내셨습니다.
- 28. 육도는 환경에 수동적으로 반응하고 경험하려고 노력을 하지 않지만, 사성은 노력을 통해서 서만 달성할 수 있습니다.
- 29. 이승계 사람들은 지식의 수준이 자기들만큼 되지 않는 다른 사람들을 경시하는 경향이 있지만, 보살들은 성불하려고 노력할 뿐만아니라 다른 사람들도 성불하도록 도와줍니다.
- 30. 처음 삼여시는 체(본)이고, 다음 육여시는 그것의 작용(말)입니다.
- 31. 다른 중생과 끊임없는 상호 관계와 상호 의존 상태에 산다.
- 32. 국토 세간은 독립된 생명경애를 갖고 있지는 않지만, 그곳에 살고 있는 중생의 생명경애에 따라서 심계의 어떤 생명경애를 나타냅니다.
- 33. 이 각종의 법화경은 각자가 성불할 수 있는 잠재력을 동등하게 갖고 있다는 것을 가르칩니다.
- 34. 중으로 말법만던 횡으로 전 세계의 민중을 구제해 가는 사람
- 35. 자신을 아끼지 않는(불식심명) 마음으로 읽으셨다.
- 36. 정행의 공력을 늘리고 촉진함.
- 37. 우리들은 「남묘호렌계교」의 법과 우리들 속에 있는 불성을 찬양합니다.
- 38. 시, 용, 기, 법 가르침을 구하는 중생의 기에 응하여 부처가 출현하여 법을 설하는 때, 즉 부처와 중생이 만나는 때
- 39. 나의 일념
- 40. 지혜란 행복을 위한 길이며 남묘호렌계교의 지혜는 신심을 통하여 얻을 수 있다.
- 41. 묘법을 수지하는 속에 성불하고 현실 속에 뛰어들어 이 경애에 선 기쁨을 끝까지 말해가는 실천
- 42. 정법을 말법에 호통하는 것
- 43. 그의 진의는 법을 널리 유포시켜 모든 사람들이 성불을 이룰 수 있게 하는 것임
- 44. 구계의 중생들이 남묘호렌계교의 제목을 올릴 때 나타남

- 다.
- 45. 제법의 있는 그대로의 실상
- 46. 바뀌어가는 현상에 입각해 그 진상을 깊고 예리하게 보아가는 눈
- 47. 어본존
- 48. 이 질문은 육난(여섯가지 어려운 일)중의 하나이며, 매우 드문 일이고 복운의 원천이 된다.
- 49. 「구이」는 아무리 난사인 것 같아도 대부분은 물리적, 외면적인 것이었거나 신통력이라고 하는 지금으로 말하면 초능력에 관한 것이다. 그런 「기적」을 실현하는 것보다도 올바른 법에 의해서 「자기 자신의 생명을 변혁하는 일」이 얼마나 어려운가
- 50. 묘법을 수지하면 「우리들의 몸」이 법신, 「우리들의 마음」이 보신, 「우리들의 행동」이 응신으로 되어 즉신성불을 이루게 됩니다.
- 51. 현세에 성불을 이루는 기본은 「남묘호렌계교」의 제목을 부르는 일이다.
- 52. 남묘호렌계교 일구는 우리들로 하여금 자신 속의 불성을 일게 할 수 있는 열쇠이다.
- 53. 왜냐하면 우리들의 모든 신, 구, 의가 성불된 생명경애에서 비롯되기 때문입니다.
- 54. 일생을 통하여 제목을 불러나가는 것을 뜻한다.
- 55. 어서란 진실을 설해 밝히신 것이기에 「예, 바로 그렇습니다」라고 읽어야 하며, 어서를 깊이 배독함으로써 감사한 마음을 느끼게 된다.
- 56. A) 기원한 그 순간부터 생명의 암흑은 사라지는 것이다. 인과구시이다. B) 기원은 눈에 보이지 않는다. 그러나 투철한 기원이면 머지않아 눈에 보이는 모습으로 나타난다. 제법실상이다.
- 57. 확고한 기원과 결과를 불태까지 실천을 통하여 우리들은 우리의 꿈을 깨달을 수 있다.
- 58. 진실된 기원은 실천으로 옮겨진다.
- 59. 일생성불(즉신성불)을 의심하지 않아야 하며 대성인께서는 여러 경문을 인용하시어 우리들의 의심을 풀어주셨다.
- 60. 올바른 신심이란 니치렌 대성인께서 가르치신대로 사물을 인식하고 그의 확신을 같이 나누어 수행하는 것이다.
- 61. 중문에서는 A) 승려가 절대적으로 우의라는 주장 B) 중문에서는 일반신도들이 중도와 평등하다는 말 그 자체를 죄악시하며 C) 일반 신도들은 법주를 통해서만 성불을 이룰 수 있다.
- 62. 중문의 자세는 묘법과 어본

- 존이 모든 사람들의 생명속에 있다고 믿는 것은 오만한 생각이며 끊임없는 지옥의 고통을 당한다고 말한다.
- 63. 중문에서는 법주를 통해서만 혈맥상승할 수 있기 때문에 순수한 마음이짐과 엄한 복종으로 법주의 지도를 받들어야 한다. 그리고 그 곳에서 사제의 관계를 찾을 수 있다고 한다.
- 64. SGI 회원들이 불법을 종교하기 위해 수십년 동안 지속적으로 헌신해 온 것에 비해 승려들은 소극적으로 주로 예식들과 장례식에 참여하는데 거의 대부분의 시간을 보내고 있습니다.
- 65. 법주의 지시가 니치렌 대성인의 가르침에 위배되었기 때문에
- 66. 1) 법주에 의하여 인가를 받지 않았다. 2) 합법적인 개인 공양식의 절차를 밟지 않았다. 3) 대석사로부터 발급된 것이 아니다.
- 67. SGI가 하부하는 본존님은 일련정종 26대 법주이신 니치렌 상인께서 도현하신 본존님이시기에 가짜가 아님
- 68. 많은 SGI회원들은 닛겐의 의도와 성격을 알고 있기 때문에 닛겐이 복사한 본존님께 제목 올리는 것이 마음에 부담이 되어 니치렌 법주님의 본존님으로 교만하고 있습니다.
- 69. 중문이 대성인 불법에서부터 이탈하고 또한 불법을 파괴하려고 하기 때문
- 70. 불법의 가르침대로 강한 신심과 성장에서 오는 자연적 현상의 결과
- 71. SGI는 중문문제가 시작된 후부터 지금까지 대화의 길을 찾아왔으나 중문은 언제나 완강히 거부해왔음
- 72. 광선유포를 위한 목적이라면 단결이 필요하지만 승려계급이 불교에서 필요한 조건은 아님
- 73. 방법을 저지르고 있는 중문 승들을 따르는 사람은 자신도 방법을 하는 것이 되며 결과적으로 고통을 받게 된다. 불행의 길을 걷고 있는 단도회원들에게 자비와 함께 진정한 이해와 용기를 주면서 그들의 행복을 위해 진심으로 우리들은 진지한 말과 행동을 보여서 중문의 조직을 떠날 수 있도록 인도해 주어야 합니다.
- 74. SGI는 중문문제를 통하여 니치렌 불법의 진의인 인간 존엄성을 바탕으로한 인류주의적이라는 것을 입증해 냈습니다. 그 결과 우리는 지금 창가 르네상스를 만들어가고 있습니다.

By DAISAKU IKEDA
SGI PRESIDENT

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY



SHARING OUR FAITH

Conviction and sincerity will open our friends' hearts, SGI President Ikeda tells us. 'The important thing is to be determined, positive, optimistic, and to never stop challenging ourselves,' he says, 'no matter what the circumstances. Let's be invincible optimists!'

Propagation is the lifeblood of religion. A religion without propagation efforts has abandoned the basic function of religion — to reach out to people and help them. President Toda declared that the Soka Gakkai is an organization for propagating Buddhism. In doing so, he was declaring the Soka Gakkai's mission: to spread the principles of true humanism and to realize happiness for all humankind and peace on Earth.

How Can I Teach Buddhism to Friends?

When I visited Soka University last autumn, I had an opportunity to talk at length with some of our student division members. One of them said to me, "I am having a hard time introducing Buddhism to my friends." He was deeply troubled by this, and I was impressed by his seriousness. Here he was worrying about how he could teach Buddhism to his friends and thereby plant the seed of happiness in their lives. What a fine, noble thing to be concerned about!

With the greatest respect for him, I encouraged him with all my heart: "Everything is hard in the beginning. This is only more true of propagating Buddhism, which the Goshō describes as the most difficult of all difficult things.

"When I was young, my efforts were really just trial and error, but they became the foundation for future success. The important thing is to be determined, positive, optimistic, and to never stop challenging ourselves, no matter what the circumstances. Let's be invincible optimists!"

I will never forget his face as he nodded with a smile.

Five months later, he reported happily that he had been successful in introducing another person to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. I was so happy to hear that; I was happy because of his sincerity.

Resolve To Bring One More Person to This Faith

When I look back, the first person who began to practice the Daishonin's Buddhism through my introduction was a teacher at an elementary school in Ota Ward. This happened just a short while after I began working at Mr. Toda's company. Up to then, I had spoken about Buddhism with several of my friends. Mr. Toda had even met with one of them and talked with him about

Buddhism. But so far none had taken faith and begun to practice.

I was so frustrated that I searched very hard for the best ways to talk about Buddhism with others. I prayed wholeheartedly, and I continued to propagate the Daishonin's teachings, each time with the firm resolve to bring one more person to this faith. I can't begin to measure what valuable experience and training this gave me.

How overjoyed I was when I finally convinced someone to embrace the Daishonin's Buddhism! I could never describe

How overjoyed I was when I finally convinced someone to embrace the Daishonin's Buddhism! I could never describe my elation in words. I decided that I would thoroughly look after that person and make sure that my friend triumphed in life.

my elation in words. I decided that I would thoroughly look after that person and make sure that my friend triumphed in life. I had the elementary school teacher come to my home every morning, and we did gongyo and read the Goshō together before going to work. I also remember how I used to stop by after work to teach my friend gongyo.

The advancement of kosen-rufu lies in the repetition of patient, painstaking efforts to awaken one friend after another to faith in Nichiren Daishonin's

Buddhism. This is true Buddhist practice.

When Mr. Toda became the second president of the Soka Gakkai and made his vow to attain a membership of 750,000 households, I pledged: "Mr. Toda is my mentor in propagation. As his disciple, I vow to become a true champion of propagation." And having made that pledge, I threw myself wholeheartedly into this challenge, creating the groundswell for unprecedented propagation in Kamata, in Bunkyo, in Osaka, in Yamaguchi.

I remember one discussion meeting at which all of the seven or eight young men in attendance decided to join the Gakkai. I told them that Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism was the only way to absolute happiness, and I earnestly assured them that I wanted them to accept those teachings only because I wanted each of them to have the best lives possible.

Such conviction and sincerity will open our friends' hearts and make them receptive to our message.

Today, True Dialogue Is Lacking

Propagation must always take place in the context of deepening friendship and earning the trust of others. Today we live in an age in which there are superficial discussions, but true dialogue is lacking. Propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism, however, is a true dialogue — a stimulating sharing, based on consideration and concern for our friends, as we invite them to walk with us on the path of true and complete happiness.

Genuine Buddhist dialogue is discussing such crucial matters as the true values of life, what is right and wrong, based on our daily lives and our personal experiences. This is the ultimate practice of humanism, and this is propagating Buddhism. At the same time, propagating the Daishonin's

Buddhism, which involves teaching others the most fundamental solution to sufferings, is the ultimate act of altruism as well as the fastest way for us to do our human revolution and break out of the shell of our ego.

Propagation Is Our Noble History and Joy

Those who propagate Buddhism are the true disciples of the Daishonin, those who have inherited his spirit. Nikko Shonin praised all who courageously propagated the Daishonin's teachings, declaring: "You should revere a teacher of the Law who engages in its propagation as a sacred priest, even though he may be your junior" ("Twenty-six Admonitions of Nikko," *Goshō Zenshu*, p. 1618). And the benefits attained by those who propagate the Law are boundless and immeasurable.

Out of our single-minded concern for the happiness of others and our ardent desire to attain world peace, we have held high the banner of kosen-rufu and continued to shed the compassionate light of Buddhism throughout the world, undeterred by slander or abuse. This is the proud and noble history of the Soka Gakkai. In the "Song of Indomitable Dignity," there are the lines: "Today and again tomorrow / The march of propagation advances / Our ardor surges." How true. Here, unbeaten by any trials or tribulations, lies the pulse of momentous vitality, the source of supreme joy.

Today once more, our great and lofty dialogue to propagate the Daishonin's Buddhism rings through the clear autumn sky. W

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

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

What's in a Name?

No one asked me, but...I think Soka University of America in Aliso Viejo, Calif., should name the baseball diamond Orlando Cepeda Field and the soccer field Roberto Baggio Field! In honor of two world-famous SGI members.

— RICHARD L. JOHNSON,
San Rafael, Calif.

Overcoming Racism

The *World Tribune* is my lifeline to SGI President Ikeda and one of the great benefits of the SGI-USA. I am contributing my thoughts on the presentation of experiences on overcoming racism.

When I read experiences of European Americans who have through this practice overcome their fear and hatred of black people, I am encouraged. However, I am left with a sense of unease at the nature of their racial enlightenment. The experiences of European Americans are often portrayed against a backdrop of a horrendous personal attack by African Americans, which provides the false impression that racism is the byproduct of a justifiable response of whites in retaliation for black aggression.

According to *Historical Statistics of Black America*, European Americans are more often assaulted by European Americans, while similarly, African Americans are more often assaulted in non-bias crimes by other African Americans. However, African Americans and other people of color in this country continue to experience an increasing and horrendous number of physical and psychological attacks at the hands of European Americans....

It would encourage me and most likely others to read experiences of European Americans who have overcome their racist

tendencies without having been personally attacked. Please include the day-to-day struggle and actions taken by these members to maintain their humanistic views under the onslaught of our white dominated society.

— MARTIN POLK,
New York

No Skipping

Way back in the late '70s, when I first took faith in the Gohonzon, there was a slogan for a pasta sauce that went something like, "No skipping on the old family recipe." The way my mind works is that I immediately adopted that slogan as meaning the recipe of "faith, practice and study."

Recently, this slogan has popped into my head again. This time I am taking it to mean, what can I put into my practice so that I can get the maximum benefit and value-creation out of it? My list of ingredients looks something like this: joy for the opportunity to encounter and take faith in the Gohonzon; appreciation for being alive as a human being; pride for being a part of the SGI-USA family; humble, sincere gratitude for the ability to associate with Bodhisattvas of the Earth; quiet confidence and strong conviction in the Buddha's will for kosen-rufu and the happiness of all people; determination, energy, passion, stamina, tolerance, compassion and empathy for fulfilling my own unique mission in this greatest of undertakings.

While it's true that I sometimes observe gongyo and chant daimoku out of a sense of habit and discipline, lately (since my return from the Florida Nature and Culture Center), I find myself really meaning every word of the

fourth silent prayer, "that the great desire for kosen-rufu be fulfilled and that the Soka Gakkai International develop eternally in this endeavor." When I conclude gongyo, then, I use another slogan to check myself on my ingredients: "They're in there!"

— JUDI ASBY,
St. Louis, Mo.

More on Organizational Reform

We can learn from the priesthood issue that it may be dangerous to rely on the deep faith and purity of leaders generations into the future. Institutional structure must protect against the abuse of power, independent of the character and wisdom of those who are at its head.

It may be that the most important long-term protection against misuse of power lies in the preservation of a democratic structure. SGI President Ikeda, in his dialogue with Bryan Wilson, wrote: "In the Soka Gakkai, we have until recently adopted the traditional pyramid pattern. Nevertheless, in keeping with fundamental Buddhist egalitarianism and in harmony with prevailing social trends in Japan — especially among younger people — we are in the process of shifting to a basic circle system of organization, ensuring total equality and solidarity" (p. 116). While he insists that not all country organizations need follow this example, the United States, with its long democratic tradition, would be an obvious candidate for a democratic SGI structure....

Within the realm of organizational structures there are alternative paradigms to the standard pyramidal structure with its vertical hierarchies.

As one example, Alcoholics Anonymous has a relatively small paid staff, responsible for coordinating information and publications. Everyone else is just a member. Some are longtime members who feel a deep sense of gratitude and responsibility to the organization and to fellow members. Others are half-hearted. While most committed members may be valued by others for their wisdom, they have no special organizational status. Similarly, the staff has no power over members but merely serves to facilitate communication....

Despite significant differences between the aims of the SGI and Alcoholics Anonymous, there may be value in our studying such an egalitarian structure.

— KEN FRIEDMAN,
Nederland, Colo.

A Choice Experience

Thank you for Bethany Wild's touching experience (Sept. 11) about finding her birth mother. It will be so encouraging when I share it with my friends at the Life Center, an organization that helps women in crisis pregnancies, where I find myself the lone Buddhist in a crowd of Catholics.

I hope Bethany's mother reads the *World Tribune* now, because I would like to join Bethany in thanking her birth mother for "the treasure of life" she gave not just to Bethany, but to all of us. Because she chose to nurture the seed that was growing in her body and allowed it to be "transplanted" through adoption, Bethany grew and developed into a self-proclaimed "blossoming flower," determined to make all her dreams come true.

While it is clear from her experience that Bethany is the product of an unplanned and

unwanted pregnancy, it is not clear how much of a choice her mother had.... An abortion may or may not have been readily available. Nonetheless, I agree with Bethany when she says that her mother "had done the right thing"....

— KIM HAWKINS,
Newbury Park, Calif.

Letters printed here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the SGI-USA or the World Tribune. In the "Mailbox," we will publish members' comments, suggestions and questions as they pertain to the World Tribune. Because of volume, not all letters can be printed, but they are all read. All letters are subject to condensation. Please include signature, mailing address and telephone number. Pseudonyms and initials will not be used. Send letters to "Mailbox," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90401; or e-mail at wt@sgi-usa.org.

Corrections

• In the story of the Los Angeles Friendship Center opening in the Oct. 9 issue, we incorrectly stated that "the SGI president donated the funds" for the land and construction. Rather, he proposed the gift, which the Soka Gakkai in Japan approved and then made. The SGI-USA will be responsible for all maintenance.

• Boy, are we embarrassed. It just came to our attention that, back in our Aug. 14 issue, we misquoted Gerald T. Aitken in his letter when he referred to a movement from Handel's *Messiah*. The correct title of the movement is "Break Forth Into Joy!" We apologize.



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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Photo by LISA HOLLIS



KATHLEEN SLATTERY, LOS ANGELES

A Strong Heart and Mind

Kathleen Slattery's brother and aunt suffered mental illness — and she, too, has struggled with it in many ways. Today, she works as a clinical therapist at a lively psychiatric hospital in Hollywood. She hopes to help merge Buddhism and psychology in practical application.

Brian! It's us. Open up! Brian, we love you. Open up!" My mother and I shouted up to my brother's apartment window from the street below. We were knee-deep in snow left by one of Chicago's blizzards in the 1970s. In the storm, we attracted the glares of bundled-up passersby. I, embarrassed, angry and scared, shouted at them "What are you staring at!" My mother was frantic and near tears because my brother was having another nervous breakdown.

This time he'd locked himself in his apartment for days, wouldn't answer the phone, wouldn't let anybody in. Eventually, we got a call from the police. They had arrested him for walking into traffic — naked except for his winter overcoat. My mom said his arrest was a blessing to us. Later, when his mind was sane again, he told us he had been seeing Mother Theresa and the Devil in his apartment walls. He was crouched in the corner of his living room, hearing voices. When we were begging him to let us in, he thought we were out to get him.

I've been around mental illness all my life. My dad's sister — my aunt the nun — also hears voices. She has been mentally ill since her mid 30s. The illness just took over one year, and she stopped being her witty, fun, tomboyish self. Someone found her standing on a Michigan country road in her nun's habit hitching a ride to Rome to see the pope. I was always afraid I was going to crack up like my aunt did, at the peak of success — or like my brother, right after he passed his exams to be certified in respiratory therapy. Even when I was in graduate school to become a counselor, I was afraid to study about mental illness and started imagining that I had symptoms.

But real symptoms (such as overwhelming anxiety and feeling as if I were falling off the edge of a cliff) started to come out one night after seeing the movie *Thelma and Louise*. Strange, huh? Something about that movie triggered something in me. Fortunately, I was practicing Buddhism at the time. I went home and recited gongyo twice that night and chased it away...for a while. One SGI leader and friend helped me during scary times. She said: "There's no need to fear your mental illness coming out. It has to come out to leave your life. That's your benefit of your years of practice. Just chant more during those times."

Today, I work as a clinical therapist at a lively psychiatric hospital in Hollywood. As the crisis intervention coordinator, I oversee four units: the geriatric patients who can no longer care for themselves; the mentally ill with drug addictions; suicidal patients; and homicidal patients.

The dynamics of the hospital are thought-provoking in every way, sad and passionate. I'm working with people like my brother. He trained me. My boss remarked how good I am with the patients. Because many

of the patients are on the edge of life and death, conversations with colleagues and patients often turn to spirituality. Part of my job is to ask patients if they have a religion they practice.

There is a young homeless man dying of AIDS, and he is wheelchair-bound because of multiple sclerosis. I'd been chanting for an opportunity to teach him to say Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. I don't think he has long to live, and I just couldn't let him die without having Nam-myoho-enge-kyo to take him on his journey. Just the other morning, he chanted...and then he found a home for the first time in years. I don't know if I'll see him again, but he has a roof over his head for the first time in a long time, and my prayer is that he dies with dignity.

He reminded me so much of my brother, who struggled all his life with his illness and his homosexuality. My brother died of AIDS at the age of 34. He didn't have the Gohonzon in his lifetime. I told this young man about Buddhism to repay my brother, with the hope that they will both have the Gohonzon in their next lifetime.

I've always had a death wish, felt like a late bloomer, that I had screwed up my life and there was no fixing it. The other day, I shared my personal story of wanting to die with a suicidal patient. He said aloud the same words I used to think before finding the Gohonzon: "I wish I'd die and start life over." I told him how I found a philosophy that allowed me to create a new life without dying.

In 1990, SGI President Ikeda said: "Lives that are full of the pain of Hell, lives that are in the state of Hunger, lives warped by the state of Anger — such lives, too, begin to move in the direction of creating their own personal happiness and value. Lives being pulled toward misfortune and unhappiness are redirected and pulled in the opposite direction, toward good, when they make the Mystic Law their base."

In the course of almost nine years of Buddhist practice, with the Gohonzon and the SGI, I have been redirecting my life toward good and happiness, embarking upon the creation of a new and joyous life. I feel — to the marrow — that I was given a new life without having to die first when I found the Gohonzon.

My creativity took off, and I wrote about my brother's life. I wrote about him in a screenplay and a play about a large family left with a crazy brother when Mama dies. I produced and starred in a one-act autobiographical play about the relationship between a sister and brother as he experiences the final stages of AIDS and dying.

As a Bodhisattva of the Earth, I chant for the wisdom to understand the patients' lives and to respect them. When I began working here, I'd freak out — I would want to cry at the sight of some patients and be afraid. Or laugh un-

controllably. Some patients would really scare me and cause my mental idiosyncrasies, such as paranoia, to emerge. I thought the job would do me in, and it would be only a matter of time before they checked me into the hospital. But my leader and friend advised me to reach my patients' Buddhahood with my life, and that Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is flowing through my body. I am Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, my friend said, so I'm my patients' connection to the Gohonzon. I chant every morning with this intent and to understand my patients and respond to their needs.

My peers say I have a calming effect on the patients. And in the last three months, the percentage of patients wanting to interrupt treatment and leave the hospital has been the lowest in the hospital's history. Through my personal and work experience, I'm developing theories based on Buddhism about mental illness. I want to help merge Buddhism and psychology in practical application.

I'm not afraid of going mad anymore. My life has endured so much stress and anxiety. I have developed a more expansive capacity to embrace each challenge because of it, and I continue to forge a strong heart and mind.

I'm working toward my license as a psychotherapist, and I've earned more than half of the clinical hours required. I work four days a week at the hospital and write the other three now. I've begun working on a one-woman stage play about a therapist and her patients in a psychiatric hospital — with the idea of playing all the characters myself. Working at the hospital has also inspired one series idea and two screenplays.

I owe all my development to the Gohonzon and the SGI. Through my volunteer efforts with the SGI-USA publications, I've developed my capabilities and fortune and created a new career. (The publications staff and supportive leaders and fellow members believed in me long before I thought I could do any of it.) Through my volunteer efforts in writing and leadership responsibilities all the years of my practice, I continue redirecting my life toward happiness in all ways.

I still panic with moments of doubt and regret and wanting to die creeps back in like an old bad habit, but it's fleeting and less frequent now. I keep taking the medicine of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

At a recent correspondents' training session at the Florida Nature and Culture Center, a national leader shared privately with me one of her thoughts that gives her hope and appreciation. "Whenever I think I'm really screwed up," she said, "I remember I must be doing something right, because I was born as a human being, because I found this Buddhism, and because I practice in this lifetime alongside President Ikeda." ❖

COMING NEXT WEEK

What's so important about Nov. 18?

All These Things Will Change – FOR THE BETTER

By VICTORIA KRAUS
Baldwin Park, Calif.

EXPERIENCE

I'm an amateur boxer. I've been boxing for a little more than two years and have had about five bouts altogether. That's not a lot, but because I'm a 15-year-old girl, it is really hard to find someone in my weight, class and division. My record is 2-3, which isn't great. But I've won two titles: the 1997 Junior Olympics and the 1998 Regionals for the Silver Gloves. At the 1998 U.S. Women's Nationals, I got the silver!

Before my first bout, I trained hard and chanted every day to do my best at the fight. I won my first fight, and I was very happy! Then eight months later, I lost my bout at a local show. I have to admit that I was not ready, and

that's why I lost. Toward my third bout, again I chanted and ended up winning. But by the fourth bout, I wasn't ready — I wasn't doing gongyo and wasn't in good shape. I lost. Then, for my most recent bout in May, I trained hard and did gongyo every day, but I still lost. On the day of the fight, I was really negative and

fighting with my family and coach. I was upset because I knew that I could have done better.

Right now, my goal is to be in the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia. A lot of things started to become really hard in my life this year, mostly family problems. This is also probably why I lost my last bout.

I have been doing consistent gongyo and daimoku, and I am trying hard to deal with everything and keep my eyes on my goal. Since May 1997, when I began seriously chanting a lot, some things have gotten worse: I lost the fight of my life; my parents were splitting up; I had to move out with my mother and brother; I left my coach; my training was going downhill; and to top that off, I am going to a new school where I don't know anyone.

But I know all these things will change for the better. My determination is to chant harder than ever. I want to use all my challenges as opportunities to grow and make it to the Olympics. It's a big goal, but I will continue to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, do gongyo and read SGI President Ikeda's guidance to make my dream come true.

I'm a sophomore this year. I play percussion in the Los Angeles Fife and Drum

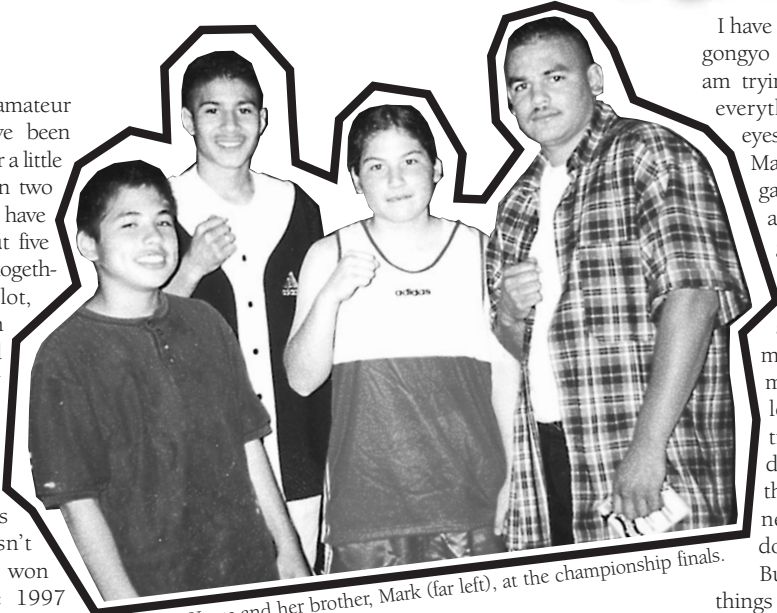
Corps, and I practice in Los Angeles "4-SIDE," the most jammin' region in the world. I also play for band at school. I can speak two other languages, Japanese and Spanish. Well, that's it about myself.

What really inspired me to write this was an article that appeared in the *World Tribune* last year on Lucia Rijker (Oct. 17, 1997). I personally think that she is a better boxer than Christy Martin. The first time that I saw her fight, she just totally opened up my eyes. She had the best skills, the hardest punch, and she was hungry in the ring.

When that fight was over, the announcers started talking about her. They mentioned that she was a Buddhist. I was so shocked because finally I knew another boxer who was also a Buddhist! I thought that was so cool.

Since then, whenever I go to big meetings, I always look for her in the crowd, and I hope to meet her someday.

See you at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney! ♪



Victoria Kraus and her brother, Mark (far left), at the championship finals.

YWD CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

I Am a Butterfly

By JEE MOON
Phoenix

On the first night of the young women's division conference in July, 160 young women gathered in a room for the orientation. As I gazed around the room, I noticed that every one of us was different looking. We were 160 women of all different shapes, sizes and hairdos. Not even the tattoos and the body piercing were alike.

It was Vice General Director Sheila Edwards' turn to speak. She walked up to the microphone, paused, then shouted, "You are a butterfly!" She re-

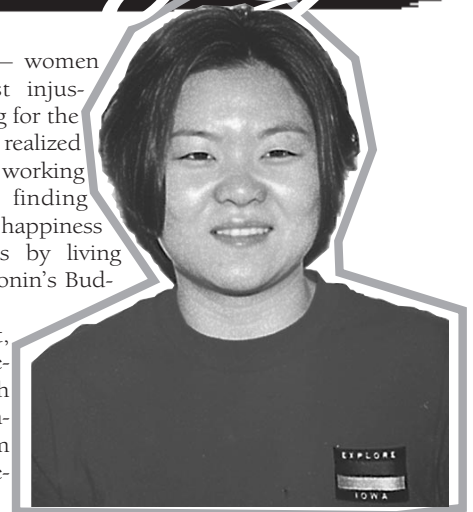
peated herself: "You are a butterfly!" as if to allay our skepticism.

It's hard to think that I'm perfect like a butterfly, when society tells me otherwise. I always feel that I'm missing that one important ingredient in my life that prevents me from being the woman I aspire to be. I am my biggest enemy when I tell myself, "I'm not pretty or smart enough."

It was so encouraging to hear experiences at the conference from numerous young women who, by empowering and fortifying their lives through chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, overcame countless adversities. It was fun and energizing to have dialogue about the

temple issue — women fighting against injustice and fighting for the microphone! I realized that we are all working toward and finding ways to bring happiness to others' lives by living Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

I am perfect, just as I am, I realized. Even with all my many imperfections. I am a butterfly. I believe it. ♪



SEIZE THE DAY

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

— SGI President Ikeda, Aug. 17, 1997

IT'S TIME TO SHARE YOUR STORY

It's your turn to seize the day! Share your experience of doing human revolution with all the "Seize the Day" readers across the country. What struggles have you been through? What victories have you achieved? Write it all down — get a friend to help you, if you want — and send it in to "Seize the Day." Experiences for "Seize the Day" should be around two pages, double-spaced (approximately 600 words).

SEND YOUR EXPERIENCE and a photograph of yourself to:

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DISCUSSIONS ON YOUTH

To study human rights we must study philosophy. We must study Buddhism. But just as important as philosophy is the willingness to stand up for our beliefs and take action. Human rights will never be won unless we speak out, unless we fight to secure them. Even if human rights are protected and guaranteed by law and government policy, ceaseless efforts are necessary to ensure that they are indeed upheld; otherwise those rights will become empty, a reality in name only.

Why is that? Because power is a demonic force that despises human rights, whether that power be the power of national govern-

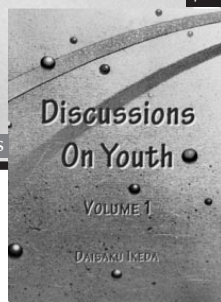


SGI President Ikeda on Study for Human Rights

ments or any other institution or organization. Securing human rights protects the individual, based on the awareness that each person is precious and irreplace-

able. (*Discussions On Youth*, vol. 2, pp. 19–20)

Volumes 1 and 2 Now Available



Compilations of dialogues among SGI President Ikeda and high school division representatives on a variety of subjects are available in *Discussions On Youth*, volumes 1 and 2. Topics include: human rights, the benefits of reading, knowing history, the importance of art, our integral relationship with nature, the fundamentals of faith, the purpose of the SGI and world peace, love, dealing with hardships, friendship, finding happiness at school and in the workplace, and how to bring out the best in oneself. Available at SGI-USA Bookstores or call (800) 626-1313; mail order #0110 (vol. 1) and #0111 (vol. 2). Price: just \$5.00 each. ♪

A New Effort in Study

With this issue of "Seize the Day," we begin a new monthly study series for youth (see p. C). During the last Central Executive Conference, region leaders from throughout the country discussed the importance of study in our youth activities and of using our publications in these study efforts. Based on that discussion, we are launching this new series, which will focus on the study of Nichiren Daishonin's writings. It is our hope that in every region of the country, you will hold fresh, exciting youth study meetings where each youth can bring his or her copy of the *World Tribune* containing the study material. In this way, we can both promote youth subscriptions to the *World Tribune* as well as advance our study efforts throughout the organization.

The SGI-USA Youth Division Study Committee has agreed to prepare the monthly material for this series. This national committee was created in 1995 to advance study among the youth division members

of the SGI-USA, and just recently a second group of youth from across the United States has taken responsibility for the committee. They are: Shin Yatomi, Lisa Jones and David Tempest (Los Angeles); Mark Kaplan (San Francisco); Patricia Ford (Midwest); Ulisse Gallo (Chicago); Ken Saragosa (Philadelphia); Naoko Miyauchi (Atlanta); Jamie Lip-tan (Seattle); and Chuck Gomez and Maia Guest (New York). They have been working hard on preparing the material, and I'm sure you will notice their fresh perspective. I want to thank them for their efforts.

Recently, SGI President Ikeda wrote an essay on why it is important for youth to study the Daishonin's Buddhism. He mentioned three reasons:

- 1) Buddhist study deepens faith;
- 2) Study gives impetus to advance kosen-rufu; and
- 3) Study is the key to establishing a new humanistic philosophy.

When I look at my own study efforts over the years, I can see very concretely how study has helped me advance

these three points. I have also come to see that even though the Daishonin wrote these letters more than 700 years ago, they are directly relevant to our lives today.

Nowhere is this more clear than in the case of the temple issue. By returning to the writings of the Daishonin, we can clearly see the erroneous nature of the claims that Nikken and his followers have made. There is no doubt that as we advance in our study and understanding, we will not only help ourselves but also be able to share this wonderful philosophy with others.

Recently, I was reading one of President Ikeda's speeches in which he spoke of the important mission that youth have in society.

He mentioned that Shakyamuni was only 30 when he attained Buddhahood, and that his disciples were in their teens and 20s. Similarly, the Daishonin was only 32 when he established this Buddhism. And many of his disci-



By ED FEASEL
SGI-USA Youth Division Leader

ples, including Nanjo Tokimitsu and Nikko Shonin, were all very young, in their teens or 20s.

President Ikeda said that from the viewpoint of history, it is clear that youth have always been the driving force for the salvation of humankind, the propagation of religion and the establishment of civilization.

As the youth of the SGI-USA, let's study with the awareness that we must be the ones to establish a century of peace based on the humanistic philosophy of the Daishonin's Buddhism. ♪

YOUTH STUDY FOR NOVEMBER

THE EIGHT WINDS

A truly wise man will not be carried away by any of the eight winds: prosperity, decline, disgrace, honor, praise, censure, suffering and pleasure. He is neither elated by prosperity nor grieved by decline. The heavenly gods will surely protect one who does not bend before the eight winds. But if you nurse an unreasonable grudge against your lord, they will not protect you, not for all your prayers. ("The Eight Winds," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 206).

BACKGROUND

By CHUCK GOMEZ
New York

In 1277, Nichiren Daishonin wrote this letter to Shijo Kingo, one of his loyal disciples. The Daishonin was 56, living at Mount Minobu at the time. Kingo's skill in martial arts and medicine had earned him the trusted position as a retainer of the Ema family in Kamakura, the seat of the shogunate government.

In September 1276, Lord Ema had ordered Kingo to move from his estate near Kamakura to the distant province of Echigo. Kingo's boss asked him to move because of unpleasantness that arose as a result of his faith in the Daishonin's teaching. Lord Ema was a follower of the priest Ryokan, a chief instigator of many persecutions of the Daishonin and his followers.

In this letter, the Daishonin cautions Kingo to be appreciative of his lord and remain in his good graces, reminding him that Lord Ema had protected him during the Tatsunokuchi Persecution in 1271. He then urges Kingo to stand unswayed by his changing circumstances.



DO NOT BEND BEFORE THE WINDS

By MAIA GUEST
New York

The variance of life is enticing. Change keeps things interesting and provides fuel to your emotions. It makes you feel alive, but it can sometimes be deceiving, this roller coaster ride.

The Daishonin, in "The Eight Winds," addresses this issue. He defines a *truly wise man* as a person who is not easily swayed in faith by the eight winds. The eight winds encapsulate the ups and downs of life, our ever-changing emotions, the varying actions and opinions of other people and our environment, which is in a constant state of flux. To base our confidence on these outside forces can only lead to self-doubt.

Sometimes we end up giving other people or situations an undue amount of power over our lives. Like when we place too much value on their opinions and actions. This can easily lead us to resenting or begrudging them: "If only they would hire me..." "If only I had more money..." "Why is this happening to me?" "If only I looked a certain way..." "If only they would change...then I could be happy."

It would be easy for Kingo to believe Lord Ema is the source of his unhappiness and thus resent him.

But the Daishonin is quick to point out here that this resentment, this reluctance to take responsibility for his own happiness, is a form of self-inflicted tyranny. The Daishonin encourages Kingo to change his begrudging attitude to one of gratitude and to see this seeming obstacle as an opportunity to strengthen his faith. Often our greatest sources of pain and struggle are our greatest friends in faith.

Wisdom is an understanding of the self, humanity and the workings of the universe. When we base our lives on this profound philosophy, the Lotus Sutra, and articulate its teachings both in our intellectual mastering of it and in our actions, we create the causes for lasting happiness.



PHOTO BY KERK CONDYLES

BUILDING THE PALACE WITHIN

By ULISSE GALLO
Berwyn, Ill.

Things don't always have to be going poorly for us to question our faith. When things are going well, and we are not struggling with jobs or family situations or finances, we consider it a benefit, as well we should. Yet there is that tendency to act as if having no obstacles were a blessing — that we have reached our goal and are truly happy. Things are "perfect" for now, so why mess with them? So we often think.

But the concept of the ten worlds explains that our state of life may shift at any moment from joy to misery. We cannot assume that just because our situation appears to be on cruise control that we can leave things alone, while we focus on other matters. If it were that easy, then we could easily take things for granted and not worry about them.

In this letter, the Daishonin explains to Kingo how easy it is to be influenced by our ever-changing thoughts. He understands that Kingo is hot-tempered and urges him to look at the true nature of his current problem. He uses the idea of the eight winds to show that these influences are always at work.

The Daishonin divides the winds into two categories: the four adverse winds — decline, disgrace, censure and suffering; and the four favorable winds — prosperity, honor, praise and pleasure.

These two categories of winds or our changing circumstances show us that our practice may falter when things either go or don't go as we had hoped.

By not just focussing on the four adverse winds but also mentioning the four favorable winds, the Daishonin was explaining to Kingo that even when things turn in his favor, his faith should not waiver. ♪



SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) Define these eight winds for yourself and relate them to your own practice. How do these winds motivate or sway you from your attitude in faith?
- 2) How do you see your peers, family and leaders affected by these eight winds? What effects, positive or negative, do they have on contemporary American society?
- 3) How do the eight winds play a part in your experience and knowledge of authoritarianism, specifically with regard to the temple issue?

IS OUR ENVIRONMENT

By THE PROMETHEUS GROUP
San Francisco

On Human Revolution

Although challenging daily life and developing an understanding of true joy are hard work, we can continue to advance toward joy each day because we have encountered this Buddhism, a "wish-granting jewel." While working for the happiness of our friends and ourselves, we can resolve to overcome any obstacles that arise in our environment. To increase one's determination to become happy is to strengthen one's faith.

Many people tend to be defeated by obstacles within their environment. Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, however, teaches that life and the environment are inseparable. We therefore can

change our environment from a source of suffering to a source of benefit.

By transforming our environment from a source of suffering to a source of benefit, we can also transform our lives to ones of absolute joy and accomplishment. In contrast to many other philosophies, which place control of people's lives outside themselves, the Daishonin's Buddhism teaches that whether people enjoy life is up to them.

As SGI President Ikeda has said: "Everything depends on our attitude or inner resolve, on the kind of philosophy and conviction that we cherish. Our environment or circumstances are not the determining factors."

Each time that we feel overwhelmed by our circumstances, we should determine again to become victorious through faith. Our growing strength and wisdom to overcome obstacles

that we experience as we practice this Buddhism is one aspect of enlightenment. This gradual process, called human revolution, is the basis of our Buddhist practice.

Throughout our recent history, the most common means for social change was often violent political revolutions. Tired

of suffering, the masses would overthrow corrupt government officials and institute a new government — a "people's government." If the ex-officials were lucky, they were ostracized. If they were unlucky, they were tortured and killed.

Although killing to bring about peace is obviously based on flawed thinking, it happened nonetheless.

Usually, after everything came to pass and the new people's government was established, the same bloody tendencies were characteristic of the new "reformed" government. History is witness to this. Strictly speaking, the French Revolution and the revolution in pre-Communist Russia, for

reflected in daily life. For example, children who dislike how they were raised often end up making the same mistakes their parents did. This is because people incorrectly view the environment as an entity separate from themselves. And although on the surface the government as a

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example, both ended up the same as what they tried to dissociate from. Even the leaders of America's revolutionaries for independence showed characteristics of English aristocracy.

This same tendency is also

whole sometimes seems to be an entity functioning apart from whatever conditions may exist in the hearts of the people, closer examination reveals that they are ultimately connected.

Two in a series

FROM US?

TEMPLE NEWS

THE LATEST PILGRIMAGE

By JEFF FARR
SGI-USA Student Division Leader

What was the overseas believers' pilgrimage in August like?

From the beginning of the year, Nikken and all the overseas priests heavily promoted the 2nd Overseas Believers General Pilgrimage. And in August, more than 500 temple members from the United States traveled to Japan to spend a few days at the head temple with the high priest.

So what was it like to go on this trip?

Here's the schedule that they had: The participants left the States Aug. 19, arriving at the head temple on the 20th — just a couple of hours before the curfew and lights out that came every night at 10:00.

On Aug. 21, there was nothing scheduled; members were free to walk the temple grounds while all the noise being created by the ongoing demolition of the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo) traveled throughout Taiseki-ji.

On Aug. 22, there were three items on the schedule: an audience with Nikken, a memorial service and the members' first opportunity to chant to the Dai-Gohonzon.

On Aug. 23, there was another chance to visit the Dai-Gohonzon and a four-hour-plus general meeting. (The members sat on tatami mats the entire time.)

Aug. 24 was an early departure to Narita International Airport, and that was it — that was the complete pilgrimage schedule.

Some participants commented on the dearth of

chairs, bathrooms and sheets available to them. First, there were no chairs in the Hoanden or the new Reception Hall, where all the activities were held. (The Dai-Gohonzon is now enshrined in the Hoanden.)

If unable to sit on their knees, the members were told that they should sit at the back of the room — but that they still had to sit on the floor.

There were also, as with the April pilgrimage, no bathrooms in the Hoanden or the Reception Hall.

Futon sheets were also scarce (sometimes only one per person). And although they were not cleaned during the members' stay, everyone was still asked to make financial donations for their use. It was even suggested that this amount be comparable to

what they would regularly pay for a hotel room.

Some temple members also found it tiresome having to wake up early every morning, especially if they decided to participate in either of the two *ushitora* gongyos held during their stay. (*Ushitora* gongyo is always at 2:00 a.m.)

Wake-up was 7:00 on the 21st and 22nd, 5:30 on the 23rd and 5:00 on the 24th, the morning of departure.

Despite some complaints about these aspects of the pilgrimage, temple members appear to remain committed to the temple organization. (Perhaps they were not expecting to be treated well when they went to the head temple, anyhow.)

Now that they are back from their trip, their focus is again on increasing their member-



ship.

There's something different about their campaign as opposed to a year ago, though: They are no longer concentrating on getting SGI-USA members "back." The new trend is actually for the U.S. priests to tell temple members to *avoid* SGI-USA members.

The temples are, then, starting to think more about converting Americans who don't know either side of the temple issue story — brand new people to help the temples expand their roots in the soil of America.

Seven in a series