



NEWS

Filmmaker Dan Arden's documentary about SGI President Ikeda wins a special award.

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CHILDREN

The Boys and Girls Group's 'Friends For Peace' is full of fun.

pullout section



DARLENE RIFFERT,
MUNCY PRISON, PA.

Each of Us Has a Choice

When I arrived here at Muncy Prison back in November 1986, I was without spirituality, ethics, goals or initiative. I had a five-10 year sentence for a robbery committed in Philadelphia. The parole board gave me an additional nine month hit for violating parole.

All my life, I failed to plan, thereby planning to fail. I was hopelessly dwelling in a comfort zone, where blaming everyone else for my circumstances or situations was much easier.

Then someone entered my life, Crystal Sanders, an inmate who took the time to teach me about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Each day she instilled in me the teachings of this profound religion.

While adopting this new way of life, I was arrested here for selling drugs. I was

PLEASE SEE EXPERIENCE, 9

THE
Third Stage
OF
LIFE

Life Itself

Is the Greatest Joy

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

K. IKEDA: When we visited the Philippines this year, the sunsets over Manila Bay were as spectacular as their reputation. As I watched the solemn majesty of nature in all its glory, I thought to myself that our third stage of life should be just as magnificent and beautiful.

D. IKEDA: Mr. Toda used to say that one's last years should be like a golden sunset. I absolutely agree, don't you?

They are the words of a master of life. As the sun sinks below the horizon, it colors the world scarlet, announcing the end of one day and promising the brilliant arrival of the next.

MATSUOKA: During your visit to the Philippines, you met King Juan Carlos I of Spain. You con-

veyed your congratulations to him for receiving the title of Knight Grand Cross of Rizal.

SASAKI: King Juan Carlos is respected in Spain and through-

The joy of being alive is the greatest joy of all, Buddhism teaches. SGI President Ikeda and Mrs. Ikeda share experiences of family members who ended their lives in great victory — loved ones who taught them this important lesson.

out the world for facilitating his country's transition from a fascist dictatorship to democratic rule.

D. IKEDA: Because of a military coup, his family fled to exile in Portugal. And when he was 10 years old, he was sent back to Spain as a virtual hostage to the military regime.

He underwent many hardships, but his father taught him well. His father told him that a royal family must love their country and instructed him to travel in Spain, so that the people would come to know him. He urged his son to stay in touch with people, so that they could learn to know and understand each other and finally to love each other.

And that's just what he did. The young prince traveled throughout the country, from village to village. His situation was very uncertain. At any moment, he might be presented with the jeweled crown of his ancestors or an arrest warrant from the security forces. Walking a fine line between glory and destruction, he carefully listened and watched. He spent 20 years quietly biding his time.

Soon after becoming king, he started his country toward democracy. He withstood a

coup d'état in 1981, winning at the same time his people's strong support. All of this is well known the world over.

K. IKEDA: It was the suffering he experienced as a youth that made him the great leader he is today. What ultimately decides our course in life, after all, are the struggles and hardships we undergo and surmount. Many years of experience have taught me that.

D. IKEDA: Yes, that's so true. My wife and I are like bow and arrow, like the *hiyoku* bird [a mythical bird with one body and two heads], like intertwined branches. We are companions and comrades-in-arms. We have fought almost half a century together in a fierce struggle — so fierce at times that we were uncertain whether we would live or die.

SASAKI: We introduced this at the beginning of this series, but when you were interviewed by the editor of a women's maga-

PLEASE SEE DIALOGUE, 6

STUDY

A new basics series debuts with 'A Prayer Is Answered.'

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ESSAY

The purpose of monthly Headquarters Leaders Meetings is to instill hope.

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PERSPECTIVE

Sanjay Gaur writes about appreciating our planet — every day.

page 10

Offering My Life

By **KEN SARAGOSA**
SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

Since nothing is more precious than life itself, those who dedicate their lives to the Buddhist practice are certain to attain Buddhahood. If they are prepared to offer their lives, why should they begrudge any other treasure for the sake of Buddhism? On the other hand, if one is loath to part with his material possessions, how can he possibly give away his life, which is far more valuable? ("Letter from Sado," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pp. 33-34)

I have read this passage in different ways in my life: as encouragement that dedication in faith will lead to enlightenment; to explain



In My Life
NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS IN ACTION

that making a financial contribution in support of kosen-rufu is to offer our own livelihood for the sake of our fellow members. Lately, however, reading this passage leads me to think about what it means to "offer our lives."

"Letter from Sado" was written by Nichiren Daishonin in March of his first winter on Sado Island. We have heard about the extreme difficulties he faced without adequate food, clothing or shelter. Receiving offerings was life-sustaining for him. They enabled him — and Buddhism — to survive.

But in this same letter, the Daishonin asks his followers for books, not food or money. He's also clear that how we "offer our lives" depends on the age and the circumstances. To someone hungry, food is valuable; someone studying needs books. The significance of what we offer depends on the circumstances.

In my new professional situation, I don't have difficulty contributing financially to the organization, but I have demands on my time that are taxing and emotionally draining. Spending time talking and sharing with members is an emotional expenditure that I am finding quite difficult now. But, despite my resistance, "offering my life" right now means to extend myself in this way to my fellow members. **WT**

BUDDHIST BASICS

A Prayer Is Answered

By **LISA JONES**
STAFF WRITER

This new series uses various stories to illustrate points about Buddhism.

In his *Just So Stories*, Rudyard Kipling tells the tale of a gray, four-legged animal in Australia who wanted to be different and wonderfully popular.

So he went to the Big God Nqong and said, "Make me different from all other animals."

At first, Nqong said he would grant this wish. But then, to the animal's surprise, Nqong turned his hungry dog, Dingo, loose on him.

The animal ran — because it had to. Dingo chased him all over Australia. He ran and ran, and his hind legs grew stronger and larger. Then he began to hop to stay ahead of Dingo. And, as he hopped across Australia, he was transformed into a kangaroo.

When Dingo got tired of running, he and Kangaroo stopped to catch their breath. Nqong asked Kangaroo: "Aren't you grateful to Dingo? Why

well as to make you truly sought after?" "Yes," said Kangaroo. "But I wish that I hadn't. I thought you would do it by charms and incantations, but this is a practical joke."

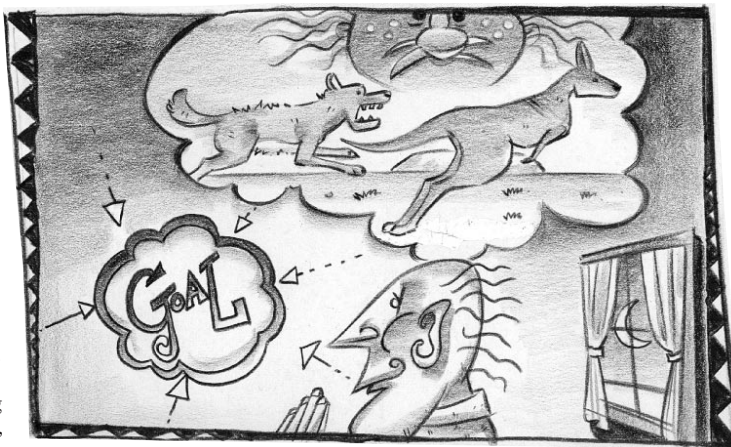
Actually, Kangaroo got exactly what he wanted, just not in the way he had expected.

Sometimes, the harder we practice Buddhism and chant to achieve something, it may seem as if we're moving farther and farther away from our goal. But the important thing is to keep going no matter what. In the end we'll see that our prayer has been answered and that we've been transformed in the process. Our struggles and "dingoes" can help us become

the people we want to be — so why not be grateful for them?

One in a series

— Illustration by Ed Lee



don't you thank him for all he's done for you?"

But Kangaroo was mad, not thankful. So Nqong said, "Perhaps I'm mistaken, but didn't you ask me to make you different from all other animals, as

Unhappy Nations



By **JEFF FARR**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Errors in Buddhism will doubtless destroy the nation, just as a great wind and great waves destroy a small boat. (Gosho Zenshu, p. 1521)

Nichiren Daishonin never experienced living in a stable society.

The Kamakura government of his time was always staggering toward chaos. Cliquish and contentious were the power-hungry samurai who made up that body. At the same time, the Daishonin saw Japan attacked twice by the Mongols.

Peace and stability for Japan were still far off when he died in 1282.

The Daishonin often addressed public figures, like the retired regent Hojo Tokiyori, with his view that the root of these problems was the spread of incorrect Buddhist practices throughout Japan — practices that made the people subservient to religious authority, that taught them to look for their happiness in someone else's hands and somewhere far away.

So here's another reason to do something about slander: If you don't, the Daishonin says, your country will eventually fall to pieces. Slanderous teachings let loose in any country will eventually lead to this. The Daishonin's long study of Buddhist scripture, especially the Lotus Sutra, taught him this.

To the Daishonin, incorrect, erroneous teachings were like a hurricane and any country on whose shores they arrived like a small boat caught in the storm. Bigger than any country, to the Daishonin, was, for better or worse, the spiritual life of its people. Spirituality drives the nation.

I believe that he would see America today, like the Japan of his day, as caught in a great religious storm. And that he would see the temple issue as being a major part of this. Nikken's teachings are the antithesis to Buddhism; their potential spread in America would be the Daishonin's prime concern. Wouldn't he urge us, out of love for our country, to protest the "great wind and great waves" of Nikken's slander in America?

One of young Daisaku Ikeda's questions when he first meets President Toda in *The Human Revolution* is "What is a true patriot?" Toda answers that "a patriot...is one who believes in the Mystic Law. The reason is that a believer in true Buddhism can lead individual lives to

happiness for eternity and be the driving force for reconstructing an unhappy nation...."

Toda adds his determination that "a society based on the Buddhism of the Mystic Law must emerge in the future."

To many of us, thinking of the future is sometimes unsettling. We're not sure how everything will turn out. We don't want to die before experiencing happy endings — not before accomplishing our missions and not before seeing our country and the world improve.

We want to do something with our lives, make something happen, leave something lasting behind — something that will positively contribute to humanity's distant future.

Toward this dream, what we believe, what we keep in our hearts, is the great determining factor. This is an important lesson of the temple issue. Spirituality drives us, spirituality drives the nation, spirituality drives the world, spirituality drives the future.

But a "spirituality" like Nikken's, a spirituality that denies the Mystic Law within each of us, can only drive our world toward destruction. A society based on revealing the Mystic Law within each of us *must* emerge, and seeing to this is our responsibility.

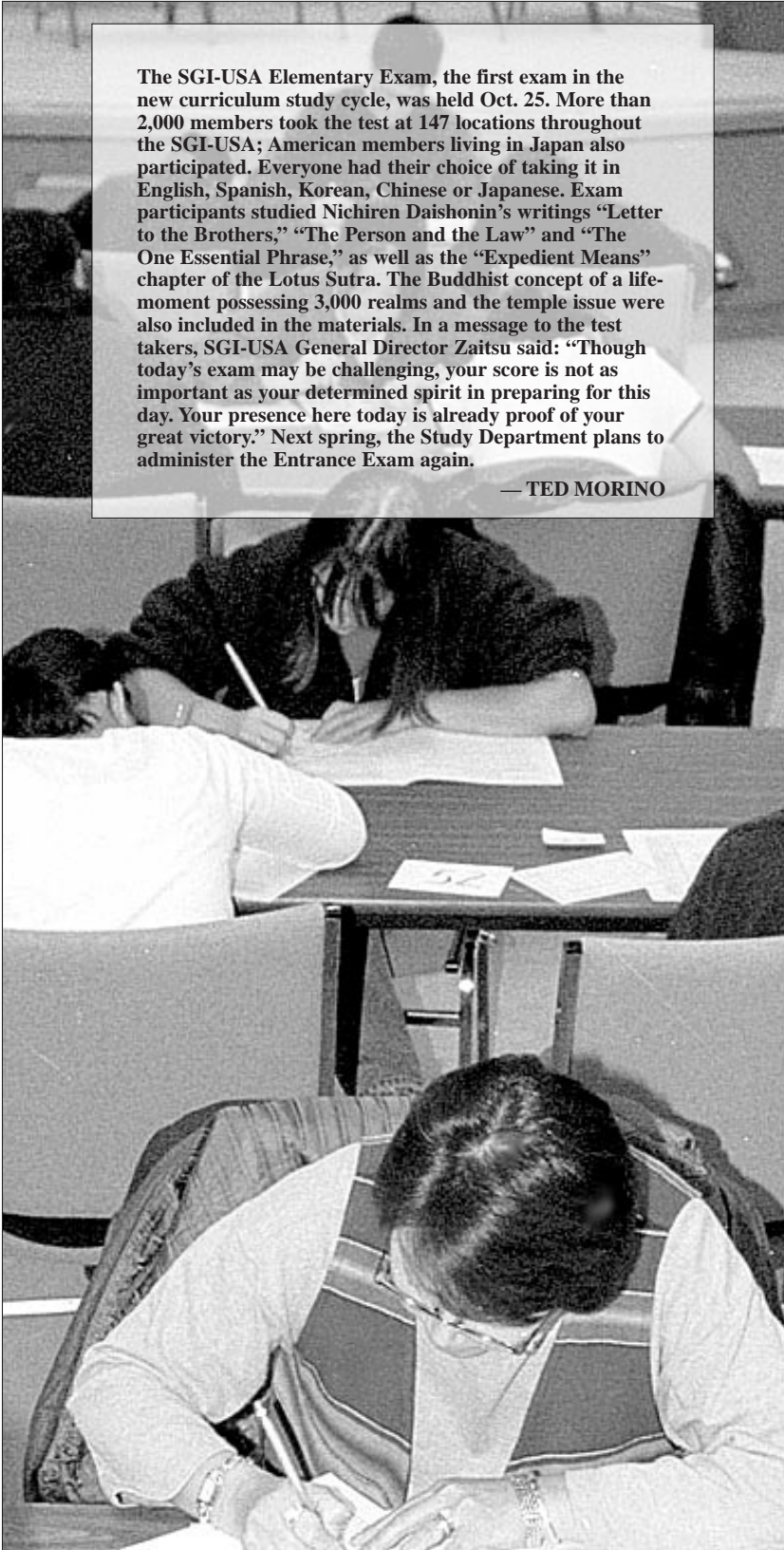
Twenty-three in a series

Elementary Exam Held Nationwide

Photo by DIXON HAMBY

The SGI-USA Elementary Exam, the first exam in the new curriculum study cycle, was held Oct. 25. More than 2,000 members took the test at 147 locations throughout the SGI-USA; American members living in Japan also participated. Everyone had their choice of taking it in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese or Japanese. Exam participants studied Nichiren Daishonin's writings "Letter to the Brothers," "The Person and the Law" and "The One Essential Phrase," as well as the "Expedient Means" chapter of the Lotus Sutra. The Buddhist concept of a life-moment possessing 3,000 realms and the temple issue were also included in the materials. In a message to the test takers, SGI-USA General Director Zaitzu said: "Though today's exam may be challenging, your score is not as important as your determined spirit in preparing for this day. Your presence here today is already proof of your great victory." Next spring, the Study Department plans to administer the Entrance Exam again.

— TED MORINO



Exam participants in Seattle were among more than 2,000 participants nationwide.

NEWS BRIEFS

Photo by DAVID BALDSCHUN



SGI-USA General Director Zaitzu, on behalf of SGI President Ikeda, presents Dan Arden with the SGI Italy Award.

Documentary on President Ikeda Wins Film Festival Award

The Religion Today Film Festival, held in Bologna, Italy, recently awarded a Special Mention to *Knights of the Rising Sun — A Portrait of Daisaku Ikeda*, a documentary film of the SGI president's life by Los Angeles member Dan Arden. The documentary, one of only five films honored out of 128, was broadcast on Philippine television in February. Produced by Dan Arden's production

company in cooperation with the Philippines' Order of the Knights of Rizal, the film focuses on how Mr. Ikeda became inspired to devote his life to peace. Festival judges said that they honored the film for offering fresh perspectives on socially engaged Buddhism. On Oct. 20, Mr. Arden received the SGI Italy Award from SGI-USA General Director Zaitzu, acting on the SGI president's behalf.



Yasuko Ikeda and Jonathan Lakritz, YPC representatives, at San Jose's KKUP radio station.

Youth Peace Committee Active in San Francisco

On Oct. 7, SGI-USA Youth Peace Committee leaders Yasuko Ikeda, Yvette Edmond and Darin Nellis participated in a series of activities to create greater awareness of the YPC, which promotes humanistic values in society, throughout the San Francisco area. Set up by Yasuko Ikeda, these included a live interview on the San Jose public radio station KKUP and book donations to the San Jose Peace

Center and Mission College. During the radio interview, the YPC leaders answered questions regarding the purpose, mission and vision of the YPC, the ongoing YPC Non-Violence Project, the soliciting of support from other youth groups interested in working with the YPC and the "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" exhibition in San Francisco.

— YVETTE EDMOND

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

a novelized history of the soka gakkai

'FRESH GROWTH'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 3-4

On Shin'ichi Yamamoto's second visit to Hawaii, he finds things have changed — everyone is now high-spirited. 'Those aware of their mission have a certain radiance,' the author writes. 'Those who dedicate their lives to their mission know joy. In this awareness and dedication, they find the wings...to soar high into the expansive skies of happiness.'

By **DAISAKU IKEDA**
SGI PRESIDENT

Two years and three months had passed since Shin'ichi Yamamoto first visited Hawaii, in October 1960.

After his party cleared customs, they entered the airport lobby, where a throng of members waited to welcome them. There was a burst of applause, and a lei was placed around the neck of each arriving visitor.

"Thank you for coming to meet us,"

Shin'ichi said as he waved to the well-wishers.

The crowd then burst into a chorus of "Song of Indomitable Dignity."

On Shin'ichi's last visit to Hawaii, a mix-up about their arrival time had resulted in just one person, a youth named Tony Harada, being there to welcome his party at the airport.

There also had been only about 30 or 40 participants at the discussion meeting Shin'ichi attended then, and most of them had worn looks of gloom and despair. This time, the members who came to meet them numbered more than 50, and their faces glowed with joy. Their voices resounded with vigor as they sang.

Shin'ichi was concerned about the disturbance their late-night singing might cause others at the airport. Fortunately, hardly anyone else was there.

The members probably felt that singing a Gakkai song was a perfect way to express their sense of elation at welcoming President Yamamoto to Hawaii for a second time and their determination to redouble

their efforts for kosen-rufu. Smiling warmly, Shin'ichi listened to their heartfelt chorus.

Among the members there were Nagayasu Masaki, vice leader of the America General Chapter, and Tony Harada.

Also present was Hiroto Hirata, who had been appointed the Hawaii District leader during Shin'ichi's last visit. It was Hirata's wife, Tatsuko, who presented Shin'ichi with a Hawaiian lei.

Shin'ichi also recognized Mitsuru Kawakami, whom he recalled asking a question at the previous discussion meeting, and Emiko Haruyama, who had moved to New York in July, the previous year. She was the younger sister of Dr. Eiji Kawasaki, the central contact person for the Soka Gakkai in Europe.

Haruyama had joined the Soka Gakkai in 1955. While in Japan, she had been active as a Planning Department staff of the young women's division and the leader of the YWD Chugoku No. 3 general corps.

Married in 1961, she had moved to New York when her husband, Tomio, was posted there by the trading company that he worked for.

Upon their leaving Japan for New York, Shin'ichi had congratulated the couple on the bright future that awaited them, presenting them with a poem:

*As husband and wife,
Cause the flowers of benefit
To blossom,
And implant deeply in your
lives
The treasures of the Mystic
Law.*

At that time, Shin'ichi had appointed Emiko Haruyama to the dual positions of America General Chapter vice women's division leader and leader of the YWD America general corps. Shin'ichi had great hopes for this young woman who had long played a key role in the young women's division in Japan.

Shin'ichi waited for the song to end and then said: "Mrs. Haruyama, how kind of you to come all the way from New York to Hawaii to meet us! This is totally unexpected. Thank you very much."

He and his fellow travelers continued exchanging greetings with the members who had come to welcome them.

Katsu Kiyohara asked a woman who had been beaming since their arrival, "Weren't you the one who couldn't stop crying during the discussion meeting when Sensei was here before?"

"Yes, that's right," the woman replied.

"How wonderful you look!" Kiyohara said, and then added — in English — "How are you?" The woman smiled brightly as she clasped Kiyohara's hand.

In fact, people's expressions and the whole atmosphere had entirely changed from Shin'ichi's last visit. Everyone was now high-spirited and energetic; they seemed like totally different people.

Those aware of their mission have a certain radiance. Those who dedicate their lives to their mission know joy. In this awareness and dedication, they find the wings to escape from the prison of sorrowful, painful karma and to soar high into the expansive skies of happiness.

After sincerely thanking the members for their warm welcome, Shin'ichi and his party made their way by car to the hotel. The moon shone bright and countless stars glimmered in the sky. Beyond a row of coconut palms, the ocean, its waves bathed in golden moonlight, stretched endlessly.

Mitsuru Kawakami, who was at the wheel, said: "It rained really hard today. But just before your flight arrived, the storm suddenly broke, leaving the city fresh and clean."

As with their first visit, they stayed at the Kaimana Hotel just beyond Waikiki Beach.

After they checked in, Shin'ichi and his colleagues gathered with around 10 leaders of the Hawaiian

organization in Shin'ichi's room, and an amiable discussion ensued.

Shin'ichi explained: "The Soka Gakkai has now reached a membership of 3 million households. We have entered an age where the leaders of Japan and the world are paying close attention to what we are doing.

"Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor plunged the entire Pacific Region into the tragedy of World War II," he said. "But now, as an emissary of happiness and peace, the Soka Gakkai is building a bridge of friendship between the United States and Japan. Tomorrow, toward that end, I want to form a Soka Gakkai chapter here in Hawaii. Is that OK?"

Shin'ichi's proposal was greeted with enthusiasm. But a few of those present simply looked bewildered — they didn't understand Japanese.

On his previous visit, Shin'ichi had been able to communicate with everyone in Japanese — all the Hawaii members had either been Japanese or of Japanese descent. But now, with an increasing number of Americans beginning to practice, the situation had changed dramatically.

This in itself said a lot about how much the organization in Hawaii had grown.

To be continued

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By **DAISAKU IKEDA**
SGI PRESIDENT

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY



LOOK TO THE FUTURE

The SGI president explains the monthly Headquarters Leaders Meeting held in Japan. 'What is important is to instill hope in the members' hearts,' he says. 'Isn't that the true purpose of a Headquarters Leaders Meeting?'

When activities have a definite rhythm, they are dynamic, hopeful and sustained. Kosen-rufu is a journey that will continue for all time, for eternity. That's what makes regular, monthly progress important. The pivot that establishes that all-important rhythm for victory in Japan is our monthly Headquarters Leaders Meeting.

In March 1958, just a short time before President Toda passed away, the Soka Gakkai held a busy program of events celebrating the completion of the Grand Lecture Hall at the head temple. At that time, the top Soka Gakkai leaders discussed whether or not the normal monthly Headquarters Leaders Meeting should be held. Finally, they decided to cancel it.

Mr. Toda was confined to his sickbed, but when he heard of the cancellation he was enraged. "What are you thinking?!" he exclaimed. "The Headquarters Leaders Meeting is the culmination of the month's activities and the gathering where we make a fresh departure for the next month! It provides a vital rhythm for our advancement. I always give my entire being to it."

His vehemence drove home anew to the top leaders the importance of the Headquarters Leaders Meetings.

.....
'The Headquarters Leaders Meeting is the culmination of the month's activities and the gathering where we make a fresh departure for the next month!'

A March Headquarters Leaders Meeting was then scheduled after all — on April 3, slightly later than usual, at the Toshima Civic Hall in Tokyo. With Mr. Toda's death on April 2, however, the meeting became the public announcement of his passing. Naturally, the entire program had to be changed at the last minute.

When it came my turn to speak, I fought back my sorrow to encourage the grief-stricken members. "I believe," I said, "that President Toda lives on eternally in the Soka Gakkai, in the heart of each of us, his disciples."

What is important is to instill hope in the members' hearts. Isn't that the true purpose of a Headquarters Leaders Meeting? Those were the thoughts that I kept repeating to myself as I called on our members, with every ounce of my being, to look

toward the future.

.....
 We started numbering the Headquarters Leaders Meetings after I became the third Soka Gakkai president in 1960. This sprang from my determination to carry on the tradition of the meetings that President Toda had poured his heart and soul into and to make each a vital source of energy for everyone's advancement. I earnestly devoted myself to the success of each meeting, and eventually all of the Headquarters staff came to share my spirit.

On the day of a Headquarters Leaders Meeting, the Soka Gakkai Headquarters staff members are very busy. It became a tradition for several years, beginning in February 1971, for the Headquarters cafeteria to serve rice and curry on this particular day. It's quick to prepare and quick to eat; I remember fondly how everyone would finish their meal speedily and rush off to the meeting.

.....
 In December 1987, we reached our 339th Headquarters Leaders Meeting. We decided then to renew our commitment to the meetings symbolically by starting our numbering over from 1 at the January 1988 meeting. In May 1996, we reached the 100th meeting, and once again started from number 1 in July 1996. Our August 1998 meeting was No. 25.

.....
 Over the years, the venues we have used for our Headquarters Leaders Meetings have grown in size. We started meeting in the Taito Gymnasium and the Tokyo Gymnasium. From there, we moved to the Nihon University Auditorium, the Budokan and the Soka University Central Gymnasium.

But with the continued, momentous development of our kosen-rufu movement, it became more and more difficult to gather all our leaders under one roof. At one point, we distributed audio tapes of the Headquarters Lead-

ers Meetings to be played at regional leaders meetings. We also began simultaneous audio broadcasts of the meetings, so that everyone could hear them live.

.....
 The present system of satellite video broadcasts was introduced at the 1st Tokyo General Meeting in August 1989. This August marked nine years of satellite broadcasts.

Using this means, we bring the Headquarters Leaders Meetings to all our fellow members striving hard on the front lines of activities around the country, allowing us all to be unified and in rhythm as we make a fresh start each month.

This is all made possible by

the staff of the Soka Gakkai's satellite network and the members responsible in each region for receiving and broadcasting the transmissions at designated community centers. I am grateful for their valiant efforts.

.....
'Each Headquarters Leaders Meeting is a milestone marking the distance we have travelled.'

The gathering of millions of our members across the country at Soka Gakkai community centers for the satellite broadcasts of the Headquarters Leaders Meetings — an occasion where members

renew their pledge to work for kosen-rufu — is much like the gathering of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, numerous as the sands of the 60,000 Ganges Rivers, at the Ceremony in the Air. As a passage cited in the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" states, "The assembly at Eagle Peak has not yet dispersed" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 757).

I have always given my all to the Headquarters Leaders Meetings, determined to make each one an eternal source of courage and joy. In my speeches, I have always striven to reach out to the members and address them as if I were speaking to each one individually. Whenever I thought it might please and inspire my fellow members, I have taken up my fan and led them in Soka Gakkai songs.

This month and again next month, let us continue our joyous advance on the path of our mission. Each Headquarters Leaders Meeting is a milestone marking the distance we have traveled, as we set our sights on the hopeful summit of kosen-rufu in the 21st century. ❧

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

Bolivian University Praises SGI President

In a ceremony Oct. 1 in Tokyo, SGI President Ikeda was honored by Bolivia's Del Valle University for his untiring efforts for peace, culture and scholarship. University founder and rector Gonzalo Ruiz Martínez also spoke with President Ikeda on education, the ancient civilizations of Bolivia, and Simón Bolívar, the great leader of South American independence (after whom Bolivia is named). Bolívar was constantly plagued by the ingratitude, corruption and betrayal of his former comrades-in-arms. Unlike Bolívar, his comrades succumbed to the temptations of power, President Ikeda said. Bolívar challenged their abuses, but they maligned him in the press, thus leading to his famous words, 'There is no greater offense a human being can commit than ingratitude.' President Ikeda praised Bolívar for placing the highest trust in the people and the youth, and for making the education of both the focus of all his efforts.



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

‘Those who remain steadfast in their faith and work for kosen-rufu throughout their lives will, without fail, experience a happy, dignified death. I have come to this firm conclusion after years of experience with many, many people.’

DIALOGUE, FROM PAGE 1

zine, President Ikeda, she asked you what kind of an award you would present to Mrs. Ikeda. You said how grateful you were for your wife’s smile, and that

you would give her the “Smile Award.” You said, “When we are reborn, in the next life and the one after that, for all eternity, please be there for me.”

What was your reaction, Mrs. Ikeda?

K. IKEDA: My, my, I don’t know what to say. Meeting my husband has been my greatest good fortune, the decisive event in my life. In Buddhist terms, I think that you could say that it

was due to fortune accumulated in my life from past existences.

But I must continue to accumulate good fortune in this lifetime, or I will simply roll backward like a stone down a hill. I therefore make an effort to do what I can each and every day to build the causes for future good fortune.

MATSUOKA: Just the other day we were speaking with your mother, Mrs. Ikeda. Though she’s more than 90, she’s full of energy. She told us about the morning that President Ikeda was inaugurated as the third Soka Gakkai president.

K. IKEDA: At that time [1960], we were living in a small house in Kobayashicho in Ota Ward [Tokyo]. That day, my mother came to help me get my husband ready for his inauguration. My mother was attending the Headquarters General Meeting, too, but first she went to Kamata Station and found a taxi that would come and take my husband to the meeting. Then she got herself ready and rushed to the meeting by train.

D. IKEDA: Yes. On that day, I remember taking a taxi to the Nihon University Auditorium in Ryogoku [Tokyo], where the inauguration was held. You see, I rarely took taxis in those days. Even after becoming president, I commuted to the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Shinanomachi by train each day. I rode my bicycle to Kamata Station and took the Keihin Tohoku Line to Tokyo Station. There I transferred to the Chuo Line, then got off at Yotsuya and transferred again to the Sobu Line, which stopped at Shinanomachi. Ah, I was young!

And the Soka Gakkai didn’t own any cars then. We had very few facilities for our members. In fact, we had almost nothing.

SASAKI: At that time, I had just come to Tokyo from Yamagata Prefecture, and I was attending a private cram school in Ichigaya. When I transferred to the Sobu Line at Yotsuya Station one day, I saw you standing on the platform, reading a book and waiting for your train. I introduced myself and told you that I was studying for my university entrance exams, and you encouraged me. “Do your best!” you said.

D. IKEDA: Is that right? I met so many Soka Gakkai members on the train and on the platform. Some days, I worked so hard that I wore myself out and had to take a taxi home. My wife or someone would go to Kamata Station and pick up the bike I had parked there in the morning, so that I could use it to get to the station again the next morning.

MATSUOKA: The evening of the day you became president, a couple from Kansai, close acquaintances of yours, went to your house in Kobayashicho to congratulate you and celebrate. When they arrived, the house was quiet. As they opened the door to the entranceway, they saw it had been cleaned and sprinkled with fresh water in anticipation of guests. You came out and said: “I wonder if everyone is hesitating, because now I’m president? Nobody has come to see me!” Then you invited them in.

SASAKI: When Mrs. Ikeda brought them tea and served it, you pointed to your wife and said with a smile: “We haven’t had any celebrations here today. I was expecting a festive treat of rice with red beans, but she didn’t prepare it! She didn’t so much as say congratulations.”

You had implored her, “At the very least, cook us some rice with red beans!” But your wife had replied: “I’m sorry, but I think of tonight as the funeral service for the Ikeda family. That’s why I didn’t prepare rice with red beans. There’s no sea bream to celebrate, either.”

MATSUOKA: The couple were surprised at how different from usual both of you seemed that night. They noticed that you in particular, Mrs. Ikeda, were not your usual smiling self but seemed somber and reserved. In your unsmiling presence, they said they sensed a strong determination and resolution — as if you were steeling yourself for what lay ahead.

K. IKEDA: I was resolved to face whatever happened from the moment I married my husband. But it was certainly true that when he became president our private life underwent a complete transformation. His public role and duties continued much as they had before, but now my private life, too, completely disappeared.



SGI President Ikeda greeting King Juan Carlos and the Queen of Spain (Manila, Feb. 11).

MATSUOKA: once i Ikeda’s years a home a ourselv reporter tatami together greeting tetsy: “ ing Da continu

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MATSUOKA: Mr. Sasaki and I once interviewed President Ikeda's mother, Ichi, some 20 years ago. We went to her home and, after we introduced ourselves as *Seikyo Shimbun* reporters, she knelt on the tatami and, placing her hands together in a gesture of formal greeting, said with great courtesy: "Thank you for supporting Daisaku. I hope you will continue to do so in the future."

SASAKI: We were surprised, even embarrassed. We were young and unimportant. Her action gave us a precious glimpse of the kind of family that you grew up in. She emanated a most natural, refined dignity.

D. IKEDA: From the time I began my apprenticeship with Mr. Toda, I hardly had the chance to see my mother. But she was always my mother, and she was always concerned about my health. She lived to be 80. Just before she died, she said to me with a smile: "I have enjoyed my life. I have won."

MATSUOKA: Mrs. Ikeda, I wonder if you could tell us a little about the last years of your father, Shigeji Shiraki. He was so well loved by the members. They used to call him Grandpa Shiraki. He joined the Gakkai before the war and was greatly trusted by Mr. Toda for his steadfast faith. Mr. Toda wrote a poem for him:

*As long as you are in
Jonan [southern Tokyo]
I am confident
Our citadel is safe
On its solid foundation*

K. IKEDA: He lived to be 85. About a year before he died, he caught a cold and from then on occasionally was confined to his bed. One day I had a call from my mother: "I'm worried," she said. "Your father is acting strange. He's saying things like: 'This coverlet is as soft as silk.' 'I'm in a beautiful forest.' 'It's a palace.'"

D. IKEDA: Yes. I was very busy at the time and couldn't visit him for awhile. When I finally managed to see him, he was resting underneath a cotton coverlet in a small room in his home. He conversed normally and seemed to be alert and in his right mind. Explaining what he had been saying with a satisfied smile, he said that sometimes he felt as if his surroundings were transformed.

"This bedding is so comfortable, just as if it were a

nobleman's silver-and-gold-silk-brocade quilt," he said. "And I can see a wonderful world — a field covered with flowers and a beautiful forest glade filled with the sound of an ineffably beautiful melody. It's as wonderful as if I were in some sort of palace."

MATSUOKA: I remember his kind, smiling face.

D. IKEDA: I told my wife and mother-in-law not to worry: "He may be remembering something from a past existence or enjoying something that awaits him in the future," I said. "Perhaps he's experiencing the great joy he'll know in the future as a result of the great good fortune and benefit he has accumulated from the past and in this existence. It's as if he were dwelling in the state of Buddhahood."

As Nichiren Daishonin says: "When you climb the mountain of wondrous enlightenment and gaze around you in all directions, then to your amazement you will see that the entire universe is the land of Tranquil Light. The

ground will be of lapis lazuli, and the eight paths will be set apart by golden ropes. Four kinds of flowers will fall from the heavens, and music will resound in the air. All Buddhas and bodhisattvas will be present in complete joy, caressed by the breezes of eternity, happiness, true self and purity. The time is fast approaching when we too will count ourselves among their number" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 3, pp. 216–17).

K. IKEDA: My mother, who thought my father was losing his wits, was tremendously relieved by my husband's words of encouragement. For about the last 10 years of his life, each time he finished gongyo my father used to open the Gosho and read the passage "Although I and my disciples may encounter various difficulties, if we do not harbor doubts in our hearts, we will as a matter of course attain Buddhahood" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 180). My mother joined the Soka Gakkai because her health was poor, but as we

mentioned earlier, she's still healthy and active today.

SASAKI: Their stories give one a sense of the wondrous flow of life from past to present to future. And of the indestructible state of being that those who have persevered in faith all their lives attain without fail. Thank you for sharing them with us.

K. IKEDA: I have been a member since I was an elementary school student. When I look back on my life, I feel deeply, every day, just how wonderful Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is. It has the power to transform sadness into joy, pain into gladness. It gives us the confidence to overcome whatever difficulties we may face.

D. IKEDA: Mr. Toda often used to say that Buddhism enables us to savor life itself as the greatest joy. I think he was 100 percent right. Those who remain steadfast in their faith and work for kosen-rufu throughout their lives will, without fail, experience a happy, dignified death. I have

come to this firm conclusion after years of experience with many, many people.

SASAKI: Power, wealth, fame and learning are all powerless in the face of death.

D. IKEDA: Yes. As Victor Hugo said, "We are all under sentence of death, but with a sort of indefinite reprieve."

We all want to face our final moments calm and composed — and in triumph. That's what our faith is for.

To die in sadness and sorrow, filled with regret — that is death as defeat. I hope all our members will persevere in their faith and live so that in the end they can say with pride and confidence, "I have triumphed."

MATSUOKA: President Ikeda, Mrs. Ikeda, thank you both for allowing us to realize this series. We also must express our appreciation to the readers for their support.

SASAKI: Yes, thank you very much.

(This concludes "The Third Stage of Life" dialogue)



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

"I hope all our members will persevere in their faith so that in the end they can say with pride and confidence, "I have triumphed.""



THE Fine Print

fineprint@sgi-usa.org

Lost and Found

I am seeking Weston Mays. We practiced together 11 years ago in Denver. Weston, Samuel is taller than me now! Since I finally got that big house I was chanting for, please write to me at 1385 Elizabeth St., Denver, CO 80206. Love ya, Elisa Townshend

Desperate in S.C.! I moved here from New York, where I had the Manhattan SGI. I can't find any discussion groups. No one seems to know. Please I need your help. Thank you. Katherine Christian, 225 Summer Meadow Trail, Campbello, SC 29322.

Ruth Chamberlain, Elaine Johnson, Jack Banks, Dave Chappel, Jonathan Doskow — where are you? Wendy Shure, 4 Midland Gardens, apt. 5K, Bronxville, NY 10708; (914) 337-0801

I am looking for Lena James who introduced me to this beautiful practice in 1974. I have been living in Phoenix, Az., since 1993. My address is 11821 N. 28th Dr. #182, Phoenix, AZ 85029. Regards, Deborah Rushing Ellis

I would like to connect with any members who are homeschooling — to share ideas and experiences and create a support network. Please contact me if you want to create a support network or if you know one that already exists. My email is Matthews_B_T@classic.msn.com or call (502)793-9097. Thanks, Thea Matthews, Bowling Green, Ken.

I am the chairperson for the Waukegan, Ill. Lotus Group (a drug and alcohol support group.) I am seeking other Lotus or similar groups to contact me in order to exchange ideas. I also have written and taped information on how to start a Lotus Group. For more information, please contact Raymond F. Morris, 3055 Arthur Ct. Apt. B-5, Waukegan, Ill. 60085. (847) 263-1812.

Greetings

A quick "long time no see" to all my friends in L.A. Especially to the Soka Group and Newberry members. I cherish the times we spent together, and I'm planning on another trip in January. I'll see you all then. Hello, Mitsuko. Until then, let's promote harmonious healthy relationships with every one we meet. And let's embrace the Mystic Law with everything we have. David Stuart

Hi to New York's Voyager District, from Wellington, New Zealand. I often think of you all and wonder how you are. I'm using all my Voyager training to be a group chief in Wellington and to support the women's division. I hope to meet you at a training course some day. Fond regards, Beverley Burnett

Hi/bye friends! I've left Colorado, my home of 5 years, and wish to thank all my many friends there, especially: Chuck, Sharon, Rod, Brian M, Joe B., Rita, Mrs. Birch, Sue, and of course Kari & Mike. Thanks for your support & keep in touch! Moved to Mass. Ave in Cambridge — old friends from Boston, look me up! Liz Carter (My new email: antiboo@cybercom.net)

To my friends in SGI in Hawaii, Florida, Texas and Japan. We thank all of you for being most supportive while we were practicing together in the past ten years. We are now stationed at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey. This fine print column is our life line and we hope we can continue to communicate and work together for peace around the world. Mahalo from Ken Gwen and Kellyann Siu. Your messages will be most appreciated. siuken@hotmail.com

This is for Sumie Reker, SGI pioneer in Fort Collins, Colo., on my 5th anniversary of practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism (October 23, 1993). She has been in my prayers of thanks for her support through the years. Tou-tu-ganashi. Harold "Daki" Briggs, Kagoshima-ken, Japan

I want to thank Lynn and Cleve Ford. As Lynn travels globally making thousands of people happy with her exquisite works of art, her husband is on the front lines of kosen-rufu. His love and support for my family has encouraged me how to practice with appreciation for my hardships and to develop tolerance and patience to know that winter will turn to spring. Love, Constance Dozier and family

Mike Mattox and Amy O'Donnell moved from Metairie, La. (New Orleans HQ) to Houston, Tex., where we are now in Community District. Please stay in touch. Our new address is 5401 Chimney Rock, #988, Houston, TX 77081-2040; phone, 713-666-2036. Our e-mails are the same: amystuff@juno.com and mike-mattox@juno.com. I would also love to receive e-mails from any members I practiced with in 29 Palms, CA from 1986 to October 1988. I made 12 years this October. Thank you, Amy O'Donnell ("Amy The Redhead")

Milestones

It is with great joy and appreciation that Bill and Amy Morgante, and big brother Lewis, welcome to our family beautiful Alana Rose Yoshimi. Her arrival on August 6th proved, once again, that no prayer goes unanswered. Many thanks for the great support and encouragement from all our SGI friends. Best wishes, Amy Morgante

Proud, happy, excited and tired new parents Martin Appelbaum and Anna Cole of St. Paul, Minn. welcome their

newest member to Aurora District! Fortune Baby Allyson Paige (7 lbs., 11 oz. & 21 1/2 inches) was born Tues. Sept. 22, 1998, right in the midst of SGI Minnesota's 3 week run of the "Children's Rights and Realities" exhibit. Great benefit!

On Sept. 29, the former Mayor of Los Angeles Tom Bradley died at 80 years old. He was a friend to the SGI for as long as I have been a member. His support was appreciated and will be missed. Goodbye to a great man. Phillip Ray, Ventura, Calif.

Your daimoku and prayers are greatly appreciated by: The Keding Family (Rose, 32 yr. member, Daniel & Bobbie (parents) and Paul & Cindy McDonald (step-parents) ,for: Joshua James Keding, 19, who passed on into a new life, on Aug. 7th, 1998. "Josh" was a wonderful person with a "Big Heart" and was an avid student, golfer, fisherman, and hiking/camping enthusiast. Renaissance Chapter thank you for your prayers and support at this time. The Keding Family

Santa Barbara members celebrated the life of Keiko Mia Inoue with a gathering at Las Positas Friendship Park on September 20. Keiko was loved by hundreds of members and had friends throughout the USA and the world. She was a member and leader of the SGI for over 26 years. The event was well attended. She is sadly missed and our hearts are full of wonderful memories...thanks Mia for your love and devotion. Lucy Looker

In memory of Gloria Yvone Frazier Dean, who dedicated her life to the propagation of world peace through shakubuku and continuous encouragement to all members. Gloria, I will always love you and I'm proud to have been your daughter in faith. Thank you so very much from the bottom of my heart. Sincerely, Autry Harris.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Dana Asque Williamson! Dana, you passed the NASD's Series 7 test and you now have a general securities license. You chanted a lot of daimoku, fulfilled your responsibilities as a junior/senior high school regional leader, and studied hard and consistently. I am proud of the way you rose to this challenge with confidence, courage and persistence. Lots of love, your mother, Marva A. Williamson, Chicago.

I would like to congratulate William S. Strong III for receiving the Gohonzon on Oct. 4, 1998. William and many other members in the Killeen Chapter had also either received or exchanged

Upcoming Significant Dates

Nov. 11 — Komatsubara Persecution

In 1264, Nichiren Daishonin is attacked by swordsmen led by the lord of the Komatsubara region in Japan. He receives a slash on his forehead and has his left hand broken, but his followers repel the attack, allowing his escape.

Nov. 18 — Soka Gakkai Founding Day

In 1930, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi founds the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Value-Creating Education Society), which eventually grows into the SGI.

Jan. 26 — SGI Day

The Soka Gakkai International is established in 1975, with Daisaku Ikeda as president, at a gathering of 158 representatives from 51 nations on the island of Guam

Feb. 16 — Nichiren Daishonin's Birthday

Nichiren Daishonin, founder of the Buddhism practiced by the SGI, is born in 1222 in Awa Province, Japan, to a fisherman's family.

the Gohonzon! Congratulations to all!!! Barbara A. Frazier

Congratulations to the Boys and Girls Group of Texas and Oklahoma on their successful festival which brought children and adults from San Antonio, Killeen, Houston, Austin and many other areas to Dallas to learn about Buddhism and the SGI, braving forbidding weather. Great food, thoughtful educational sessions and theatrical performances filled the day for the young and young at heart. Thanks to all who gave their support and encouragement.

Events

Do you recognize these ZIP codes: 90277, 90278, 90254, 90266? Do you

live in Redondo Beach, Hermosa Beach or Manhattan Beach? If you do, come to the Surf City District Commemorative Meeting on November 21, 1998 at 4:00 p.m. It's going to be held in the Clark Building located at 861 Valley Dr. Hermosa Beach, CA. For further info call Diana at (310) 376-9980. See ya there!!!

SGI Santa Barbara Boys and Girls Group (Kids Scene) 4th Annual Halloween Party was a huge success. This event was a big friendship celebration in the Santa Barbara community. Thanks to all who attended and to all who supported the event. A special thanks to the Dads who worked so hard on the HAUNTED HOUSE...yes, dear Dads, this year's was really scary! Lucy Looker

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EXPERIENCE, FROM PAGE 1

brought to trial and received another 15–30 years, bringing my total minimum sentence to 25 years.

Crystal helped me to realize the terrible causes I had made. I had accumulated so much bad karma. I realized that I had to develop my spirituality, to make the commitment to practice and incorporate this new way of living into my life. I knew that by chanting Nam-myohorenge-kyo, I would make the necessary changes within to develop into a caring, responsible human being.

The first major change was that I finally took responsibility for my behavior. Buddhism taught me that ultimately I'm in charge of my destiny. I create, I make, my own karma. Once I understood this, I was ready to reach out and seek the help to address the other aspects of my life.

Immediately, I became involved in every drug abuse program available. I've participated in every therapeutic program offered here at Muncy. I have challenged myself with educational and vocational programs as well.

For 10 years, I was fortunate to work at the institution's greenhouse. Germinating seedlings, nurturing them into full bloom, was such a benefit for me.

I attended Penn State University classes at the prison and have earned 24 credits to date. Now I am enrolled in a caning and wood refinishing apprenticeship program. Upon completion, I will earn a license.

At the beginning of my practice in 1986, there was only Crystal and me who chanted daimoku here. On the weekend, we would sit in a corner of the TV room and do gongyo together, since the administration here at Muncy Prison did not offer any place for us to meet and pray. However, through our combined efforts and some serious chanting, we have now grown into a real Buddhist community.

Crystal was released from prison years, but she would be so proud to see what has blossomed from the seed that she planted within me. I look back at my almost 12 years of practice and recognize the numerous benefits in my life. I am eternally grateful to the Gohonzon that exists within my life.



'I chant to make this time, this environment, my sanctuary,' Darlene Riffert says.

In 1997, the prison's chaplain located an outside SGI-USA member who willingly comes and chants with us once a month. Imagine my tears of joy when my eyes finally gazed upon the Gohonzon for the first time!

How very fortunate I am! I want to be a drug counselor and help change poison into medicine with those in need. I have 11 years remaining on my minimum sentence. I am chanting and doing all that I

can so that some of this sentence can be alleviated.

Looking back, I realize how the prison environment could have been the world of Hell for me — or the Buddha land. I chose to make this time, this environment, my sanctuary. I encourage other women to challenge themselves. Each one of us has a choice, a purpose and, yes, a mission to complete while here on earth.

I now face my obstacles with courage, believing in myself and chanting Nam-myohorenge-kyo. The Mystic Law of cause and effect is absolute. With this in mind, I now care about my actions toward other people, how I speak and even how I think. I make a conscious effort to treat everyone with dignity and respect.

My proudest moments are every week on Monday afternoons when our Buddhist community of around 10 gathers to perform gongyo and encourage one another. I love each member and appreciate her determination to learn and develop into a great Soka Gakkai member. I look upon each member as a wonderful benefit in my life, to help me work toward the attainment of kosen-rufu. Thank you. ☐

JANETTE L. STEWART, WILLIAMSPORT, PA.

Supporting the Muncy Group



Janette Stewart is the Williamsport District leader in Pennsylvania.

For about a year now, I have been conducting monthly discussion meetings at the State Correctional Institution at Muncy Women's Prison. I am the Williamsport District leader in Pennsylvania. In the Muncy Group, we chant to my small, portable Gohonzon, study and share experiences. This is a first at the Muncy Prison.

The prison chaplain, Joanne Torma-Kelly, through her belief that all religions should be properly represented in the prison community, has enabled the SGI-USA to hold weekly meetings. Darlene Riffert, an inmate for 12 years, has been taking responsibility for the propagation and growth of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism here without ever receiving the Gohonzon. The chaplain felt it would be beneficial to connect this group with some

sort of guidance and thus opened her heart and the facility to me as a representative in faith.

Williamsport District has 25 members and is geographically isolated from any community center and most other members. (We are about four hours away from the nearest community center.)

It has been my pleasure and tremendous fortune to have this opportunity to encourage people to chant — especially women who, for one reason or another, have not been able to function productively in society. I leave these prison discussion meetings with new vitality, inspired by the sincerity and freshness of women who have discovered that they truly can change their incredibly deep karma. ☐

Virtual Tour

You may have missed visiting the "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" exhibition in San Francisco (it ends Nov. 7), but now you can *virtually* visit it. A virtual tour has been completed and added to the official exhibition Web site, www.paulingexhibit.org. While the virtual tour uses text and images from the exhibition, it's designed for an optimal Web experience and doesn't simply duplicate the actual exhibition space. For the last three months, Internet users have been enjoying this Web site, which, like the exhibition, introduces the life and times of Linus Pauling, the father of modern chemistry. It also explains the story behind the creation of the exhibition. The Web site is a joint project of the Linus Pauling family, Oregon State University, his alma mater, and the SGI. Plans are underway for the *actual* exhibition to travel to more cities next year, but firm dates and locations are still to be set. ☐

Appreciating Our Planet — Every Day

PERSPECTIVE

How can we be more thoughtful toward our planet each day? Sanjay Gaur has some concrete ideas.

By SANJAY GAUR
LOS ANGELES

The wise may be called human, but the thoughtless are no more than animals. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 240)

As an SGI member, I have heard much about environmental problems from SGI President Ikeda's speeches and dialogues with dignitaries, and exhibitions that have been sponsored by the SGI. Yet I feel that the current environmental crisis that we are entering needs further discussion; it needs our wisdom.

There are two major sources of environmental problems, the first being overpopulation. This is a popular issue in the United States, since this is *not* an issue for us — but it is an issue for "developing" nations. For instance, Bangladesh has a population growth rate that is twice as high as the U.S.

growth rate. We too easily blame other countries for all the environmental degradation, saying that is caused by overpopulation.

This problem is just one side of the coin; the other side is consumption. The World Bank estimates that a typical American over his lifetime will consume and pollute the same amount as 29 people in Bangladesh. Since the United States has a population of 270 million people, the U.S. consumption level is equal to 7.8 billion Bangle.

This also points to the huge disparity between the "developed" countries and the "developing" countries. The United Nations states that 20 percent of the world's people in the high income countries account for 86 percent of total private consumption expenditures; the poorest 20 percent a minuscule 1.3 percent. This is not a popular issue in the United States, since our whole economy is based on us consuming as much as possible.

President Ikeda has addressed this issue before, but I feel that the SGI-USA must start to look at

ways to encourage members to be more thoughtful about how our individual actions affect the planet. For instance, think about how many things in one day we throw away. Or better yet imagine if we had to carry all the things that we throw away! Just think how big this amount

would be by the end of the day.

We talk a lot about being examples in our society, about being willing to take responsibility. Yet how often do we talk about being people thoughtful of how our daily actions affect our planet? To discuss that there should be no racism is nice, but to discuss how we can overcome our racial tendencies is a step much deeper. In the same spirit, we need to start discussing how we can show appreciation of our planet every day.

The United Nation has made five guidelines on how to solve the problems associated with consumption: 1) encouraging greater efficiency in the use of energy and resources; 2) minimizing the generation of wastes; 3) assisting individuals and households to make environmentally sound purchasing decisions; 4) exercising leadership through government purchasing; and 5) moving toward environmentally sound pricing. The first three are directly related to individual action. These along with open discussion are the first steps needed for us to start a life where we're more thoughtful on a daily basis toward this wonderful planet we live on. **W**



Fruit Salad?

Is it cherry, plum, pear and damson? Or cherry, plum, peach and damson? And what's a damson, anyway?

My recent study article "What an Un-Concept" (Oct. 23) cited a passage from SGI President Ikeda's poem "Sun of *Jiyu*," in which he refers to the principle *o bai to ri*. In that article and in the 1993 book *My Reflections* — as well as some other sources — *o bai to ri* is translated as cherry, plum, pear and damson. The correct translation, however, is cherry, plum, peach and damson.

The principle of *o bai to ri* illustrates that different kinds of trees blossom and bear fruit in unique ways. Likewise, human beings develop their unique talents and capabilities and "blossom" in many different ways.

SGI-USA General Director Fred M. Zaitso once wrote that "with a foundation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, diversity can work. As everyone makes efforts to improve themselves, to develop their greater selves, *o bai to ri* is revealed. In our best, we all take pride in our unique heritages, trying to do our best, appreciating those of other ethnicities."

So what's a damson? *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines it as "a variety of small, purple plum; bullace," and *bul-*

lace is defined as damson. Secondly, it means muscadine, "an American grape...with small leaves, simple tendrils, and small clusters of large, spherical, musky, purple grapes."

In the sense of *o bai to ri*, though, damson means a kind of plum — but the translation cherry, plum, peach and plum wouldn't express much diversity.

In translations of portions of Nichiren Daishonin's "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," the word *apricot* is used instead of *damson*: "Cherry, plum, peach or apricot blossoms — all, just as they are, are entities possessing their own unique qualities. Coming to realize and see this [in each living entity] is what is meant by the word *ryo*, meaning to measure or to estimate" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 784).

Translation issues aside, the principle of cherry, plum, peach and damson conveys the profound value and uniqueness of each human life. And if you ask me, that point could be made just as well with apple, orange, fig and lime.

— LISA JONES, Staff Writer

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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

The Right Move

The *World Tribune* was a publication I was unaware of — until a couple of months ago. Until that time, I was a member with the Nichiren Shoshu temple in Chicago. After subscribing, I realized that the SGI is not a cult like the temple suggested, but an actual educating system of the Daishonin's true intent for this wonderful Buddhism we all practice.

I realized after reading the *World Tribune* that people out in society practicing and chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo seem to be some of the most vibrant people, and helping others to grow. After also visiting the culture center in Chicago and visiting with SGI members in Madison, I am thoroughly convinced that this was the right move.

However the most important aspect that I have seen is in the Mailbox in the *World Tribune*. Why? Unlike the temples, there is the freedom to express how we feel, and be able to question our peers...

I have not seen such range of topics or views related in such a way to one purpose. That purpose: to teach others the magnitude of life and the chanting of

the Mystic Law (Nam-myoho-enge-kyo).

—ARCHIE DURAND,
Chicago

Courage Is the Key

I was touched by the experience "Thirty Years of Growth" by Lloyd Fischel (Oct. 9). It came on a day that I was feeling depressed. I have been practicing for 24 years and I can absolutely relate to what he is saying. I needed to be reminded that we do indeed create our karma, which is why we experience the good, bad and evil. I have been struggling with my own demons, which causes me to forget that I have this wonderful practice. I got so caught up in my misery that I lost sight of how to take on my problems through my Buddhist practice.

President Ikeda says, "All you need is courage." The Daishonin says, "A coward cannot have any of his prayers answered." Your prayers will not be fulfilled if you are a coward. Victory and glory are both born from courage.

Thanks again for sharing your beautiful experience.

—MARY REEVES,
Virginia Beach West, Va.

Tips on Preparing an Experience

• An experience, or testimonial in faith, is your opportunity to share with others the story of how you've grown as a result of practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Experiences share your feelings and thoughts — bad and good, positive and negative — and usually include a relevant quote from the Daishonin's writings and other words that have inspired you.

• What is the essence of your faith experience? Readers or listeners should be absolutely clear. They will be if you are.

• Many great experiences are dramatic. Be aware of how your story might follow a narrative line. Here are some questions that you can ask yourself to discover the narrative line of your story: What was the initial problem or difficulty? What strategies did you use to fix the problem? Did things get worse? How did you struggle? When did you become aware of the power of your Buddhist practice with regard to your problem? What was your crucial moment, your "do or die" situation? What breakthrough or realization did you have? How did this deepen your faith? Did you feel appreciation? What are you going to do now?

• Benefits are not miracles. External benefits result from internal changes. An overemphasis on conspicuous or mirac-

ulous benefits can give the wrong impression about Buddhism. Be careful to always explain the workings of Buddhism, how a person's internal change resulted in a benefit.

• It is a person's powers of faith and practice which bring forth the powers of the Buddha and the Law in the Gohonzon (the four powers). Therefore, rather than say the "power of the Gohonzon" or the "Gohonzon changed my life," talk about the "power of my faith and practice to the Gohonzon" or how "my practice to the Gohonzon changed my life." In this way the relationship between one's efforts in faith and practice and the power of the Gohonzon is made clear each time.

• There are many phrases we use in the SGI that can be understood only by us. In experiences especially, such phrases should be avoided or explained so anyone can understand them. For instance, what does "I fused with the Gohonzon" really mean? "I chanted abundant daimoku" doesn't really say anything. *Abundant* is a relative term. How much did you chant?

• Chanting sincere daimoku for your experience to encourage others is crucial. The purpose is not to congratulate yourself but to encourage others in their faith. A great experience comes from the heart to touch others' hearts.

WTT

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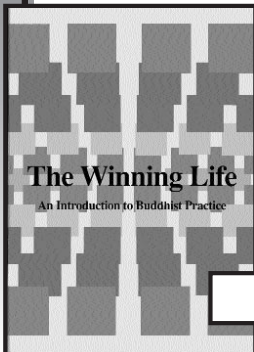
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PHOTO ESSAY – GREGORY NAKASUJI, CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER



LIFE in Motion

SGI-USA members of Los Angeles Area recently brought a new breeze of hope, celebration and harmony to the community of Watts. In the summer of 1965, Watts was the focal point of one of the deadliest episodes of civil unrest in the nation's history. On Oct. 18, 1998, it became the gathering place for a multi-ethnic fusion of theater, dance and music held for the first time in SGI's history in the heart of South Central Los Angeles. This Inner City Culture Festival took place at Markham Middle School with the theme "Transforming Discord into Harmony for the New Century."

The festival began with a series of exhibits in the school's lobby. Inside the auditorium, community residents who have made a difference were presented with certificates of recognition in front of an audience of 400.

The centerpiece of the festival was a touching and lyrical play titled *Life in Motion*.

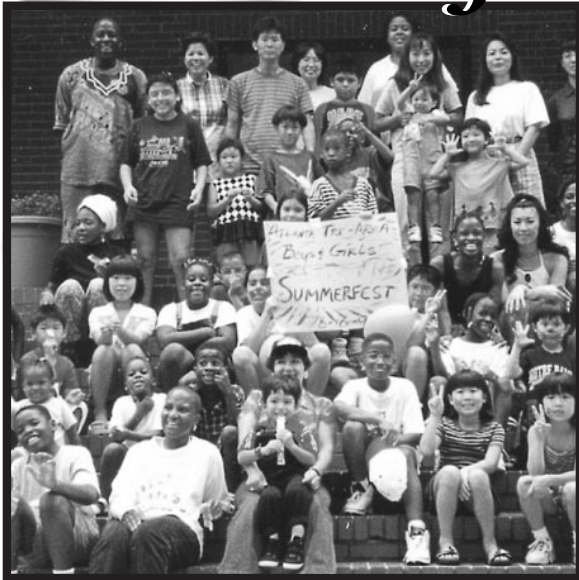
— LEON JONES



SPECIAL
PULLOUT
SECTION

FRIENDS for Peace

NOV. 6, 1998



Atlanta Kids Hold fun fest

By Pamela Plummer, Atlanta

See the gold, happy butterfly
and the balloon fly down and up the hill
and over the purple sea
where flowers open like friends
and small stars light up the cloud.

— written by Atlanta Tri-Area Boys and Girls Group, Aug. 16

This poem and many other treasured memories were created at the Atlanta Tri-Area Boys and Girls Summer Fest on Aug. 16 at the Atlanta Community Center. The festival featured a magic show, poetry writing, exercise, facing painting and indoor and outdoor games and activities.

"My mom painted faces, and I was in the big group picture," beamed Cherie Taylor.

"My mother was watching me [during the fest]," said an assured Crystal Green.

Outdoor games were hand-designed by Boys and Girls Group Coordinator Lisa Snyder.

"I liked throwing the bean bags inside the clown's mouth," said Sheena Davis.

"I hit down nine cans," chimed her brother, Justin.

Many youth were glad for an opportunity to experience something a little different at the community center.

"I got to play ping pong!" said an excited Khalilah Gardner.

ESSAY Contest

Looking to
Families for
Peace and
Happiness
in the
21st Century

THEME:

How the happiness of my family affects the peace and happiness of the world.

TOPICS:

- **What** I like about my family.
- **What** I learn about peace and happiness from my family.
- **How** I contribute to my family's happiness through chanting.

CATEGORIES:

- 5-6 years old
- 7-9 years old
- 10-12 years old

DEADLINE:

Jan. 31, 1999

One of the SGI's eternal guidelines is for its members to create happy and harmonious families through faith. Happy families are the building blocks for a happy and peaceful world.

SGI President Ikeda encourages us:

"Families that share bonds of closeness based on day-to-day efforts are ones in which the members feel comfortable and at ease with each other, no matter where they are or what they're doing."

Think about how the happiness of your family will affect the peace and happiness of the world in the coming 21st century. Then choose and share your thoughts with us about one of the above theme topics.

The length is no more than two pages, double spaced. A special committee will judge the essays on the quality of writing, the depth of thought, originality and whether you include actual (real, concrete) examples to explain your thoughts. The top three winners in each category will have their essays published in "Friends for Peace" in 1999. Essay participants receiving Honorable Mention will be announced.

To enter: Send in your essay and a photo of yourself to Friends for Peace, P.O. Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406. Indicate which category you are entering and the theme topic you have chosen. Please include your name, address and telephone number. All essays become the property of "Friends for Peace."



By Diana Decker
Phoenix

The Phoenix Culture Center welcomed 96 guests from the Interfaith Action Coalition at a worship service and dinner on Sept. 26. The coalition sponsors get-togethers at a different place every six weeks.

One of Saturday's highlights was a skit about "The Boy Who Cried Wolf," performed by the Boys and Girls Group. An unusual spin on the tale had the vegetarian wolf become a good friend in the end.

Phoenix BOYS AND GIRLS "Cry Wolf"



EXPERIENCES

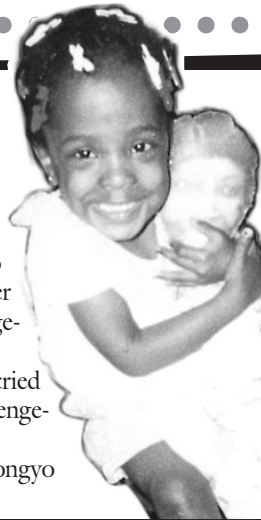
J.Y. QUEEN MACEY

Philadelphia

I am a foster child. I have been chanting for one-and-a-half years. I wanted to see my mom and sister. I used to cry all the time. My new mom told me to sit with her mornings and do gongyo and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

I did chant, and I chanted for a long time. I cried and cried forever. I kept on crying and chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Then, a long time later, I saw my mom and sister!

I still chant all the time. I am even learning the gongyo book.



POETRY

THE QUIET LOVELY MEADOW

By Kate Weiskopf, 11 Encino, Calif.

The quiet lovely meadow glistens with dewdrops at sunrise.

The wind whispers as it plays with my hair.

The yellow daisies dance in the breeze

The bubbling brook makes music that makes me laugh

The robin chirps a lovely song that sings along with the brook.

Under the clouds and sky, I feel like I am part of the meadow



NAOMI LYNE HOPE LEHMAN, 6

Spencer, S.Dak.

I started first grade this September. Before I started school, I wanted to do something good for people. I chant and chant daimoku with my mom, Grama and my little sister, Nikkita. Afterward, we discussed the plan for our town, Spencer, which recently had a natural disaster.

Many people lost everything. We thought about how we could help. Then we collected cans for one month. My grampa's brother and his friends also helped. Grama and I brought everything to the recycling place. We got \$40 and donated it to the Red Cross in Rapid City for Spencer. The Red Cross person said, "How sweet of your heart." My heart was so happy, and Spencer's kids will get some school things.

Now I try my best to chant and chant. I now enjoy school, and I'm making a lot of friends, and I have kind teachers. Gohonzon and the SGI are my treasure!!



Dear Amanda,

There is a boy in my class. I like him a lot, but my girl-friend gets more attention from him than I do. I would like him to notice me better. Dear Amanda, please help. — Your friend in Florida

ASK AMANDA



Dear Friend in Florida,

No one can explain why certain people are attracted to each other. That's not something you can control. But try not to base how you feel about yourself on what this boy thinks of you. Be aware that you have the Buddha nature inside, and that's a precious and beautiful thing.

Not everyone is going to realize the jewel within you. Of course, it's always more fun to be liked. But the reality of life is that some people will appreciate you and some won't (no matter what outrageous things we try to do to get their attention!). You should know that your life has great value, and someone with the wisdom of the Buddha will appreciate that.

Who knows? Things may change. This boy may start to notice you. Maybe he won't. But the important thing is that you know you are a great and precious person. Eventually that knowledge will manifest in your environment, which means it will show up in your life with the effect of a boyfriend who thinks you're terrific. If this certain boy doesn't have the good sense to recognize all the great things within you, that's his loss. Be confident that as long as you keep doing your best to improve yourself and fight to realize every last one of your goals, the right people will be attracted to your life.

— Amanda

Thanks to Sara Algase, Amanda's friend in New York, for sending us her answer. Hey, kids, what's on your mind? Ask Amanda. Send your questions to:

"Ask Amanda" c/o "Friends for Peace" 525 Wilshire Blvd. Santa Monica, Calif. 90401

ERIKA CLUGSTON, 6

Albuquerque, N.M.

I attend Corrales Elementary School. Our class has a mascot named Arthur — he's like on television when you watch the show Arthur, which I like. He has brown ears and wears brown glasses and has a yellow shirt and blue pants. I was chanting to take Arthur home, and a few days later it happened.

They have this can, and you reach down inside of it and grab a name. Whoever's name gets drawn gets to take Arthur home for the night. My name got drawn, and I got Arthur like I wanted.

I also chanted for Adam to stop chasing me at school, and it's starting to stop.



"FRIENDS for Peace" thanks everyone who contributed to this issue. Please send your experience (around 150 words), comments, questions or news article to: "Friends for Peace," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

FRIENDSHIP DECEMBER STUDY TOPIC

(Based on excerpts from *Discussions on Youth* by SGI President Daisaku Ikeda.)

What is a friend? A friend is a person you know, like and trust. A friend can be your neighbor, brother, sister, mom, dad, school buddy or teacher. How do you know who to make friends with?

“Sometimes your friends can have a stronger influence over you than your parents or anyone else. So if you make good friends — friends who are interested in improving and development themselves — you will move in a positive direction as well.”

What if you don't have any good friends?
“But if some of you feel that you don't have any

close friends right now, please don't worry. Just tell yourselves that you don't have any now so that you can have wonderful friends in the future. Concentrate your energies now on becoming fine people.

“I'm sure that in the future some of you will have friends all over the world.”

Sometimes we try to become friends with someone, but we may feel ignored or slighted. What do we do then?

“If you feel hurt or betrayed by someone, isn't it better to make a new friend, rather than stop trusting people altogether? No matter how other people are or what they do, it is important that you walk your own path, believing in

yourselves. If you remain constant and stay true to yourselves, others will definitely come to understand your sincere intent one day.

“More importantly, all of you have the power of daimoku behind you. I have heard many experiences in which people have recounted that they were victims of bullying, but after chanting sincere daimoku, they suddenly found one day that the bullying had ceased. By chanting about your problems, you will find yourselves quite naturally overcoming all hardships and sufferings, almost without your even being aware of it. When you look back later, you will clearly appreciate this fact.”

What does the concept of zenchishiki (good friend) in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism mean to you?

“In any event, it's important to understand that friendship depends on you, not on the other person. It all comes down to your attitude and contribution. I hope you will not be fair-weather friends, only helping others when circumstances are good and leaving them high and dry when some problem occurs; instead, please become the kind of people who stick by their friends with unchanging loyalty through thick and thin.

“It is also important that you chant for your friends. This is a sign of true friendship.”

HAPPINESS

Words & Music by Carol Simpson
© 1996

HIP HOP Ab/Eb Bb/F C5 Bb/D Ab/Eb Bb/F C5 Bb/D

VERSE I C5 Bb/D

Peo - ple look - in' for an an - swer, They're look - in' ev' - ry - where

Ab Bb/F

Ev - ry - bo - dy wants to: to find the key to hap - pi - ness

C5 Bb/D

Feel - in' like there's no so - lu - tion, How to end life's con - fu - sion?

Ab Bb/F

Just free your mind and; and let us lay a se - cret on you

CHORUS C5 Bb/F

Hap - pi - ness, It's your self - less - ness, your vi -

Ab/Eb Bb/F

tal - i - ty! Your hope for hu - man - i - ty

C5 Bb/F

Hap - pi - ness, It's your world with - in just

Ab/Eb Bb/F To Coda

shin - ing out! It's what life is all a - bout!

VERSE II C5 Bb/D

1. There's no need to be un - hap - py. Just look in -

2. RAP*

Ab/Eb Bb/F

side your self and you will find that this is all you need

C5 Bb/D Ab/Eb

Life is so much bet - ter ba - by, when you seek the pow - er... the

Bb/F Bb/F 2. D.S. al Coda

pow - er of your hap - pi - ness You've got what it takes so just be happy!

CODA C5 Bb/D

Hap - pi - ness! So hap - py ba - by... I'm hap - py

Ab/Eb Bb/F N.C. C5

ba - by... I'm hap - py ba - by... Hap - pi - ness

People lookin' for an answer; they're lookin' everywhere
Everybody wants to; to find the key to happiness!
Feelin' like there's no solutions; how to end life's confusion?
Just free your mind, and let us lay a secret on you

CHORUS:
Happiness, it's your selflessness, your vitality!
Your hope for humanity. Happiness, it's your world within, just shining out!
It's what life is all about. There's no need to be unhappy,
Just look inside yourself, and you will find that this is all you need

Life is so much better, baby, when you seek the power
The power of your happiness
You've got what it takes, so just be happy!
Happiness! So happy baby...So happy baby...So happy baby...Happiness

It's your happiness. Just look inside yourself and you will see
Inside of you is everything you'll ever really need
Just liberate your mind, pretty soon you'll find
That it ain't hard for you to be happy

You say you want to be down, then you need to see
That there's much love between you and me
You've got to give it up and live it up, and it will lift your spirit up
You've got what it takes, so just be happy

SING FOR JOY!
Here's a new song called "Happiness" written by
Carol Simpson in Los Angeles just for the Boys and
Girls Group.