



NEWS
'Treasuring the Future' exhibition visits Colorado.

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INSIGHTS
From a recent message by the SGI President, in which he shares the first woman cosmonaut's story.

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Photo by ETHAN MILLER



Annabella Lwin performs in Las Vegas for the first time, Oct. 28.

Annabella Re-Emerges

IN THE '80S, ANNABELLA LWIN WAS THE STAR OF THE ENGLISH ROCK BAND BOW WOW WOW. WHAT'S IT LIKE TO GET A BIG TASTE OF FAME IN YOUR TEENS, THEN LOSE EVERYTHING (TWICE), FIND NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM, AND FINALLY REALIZE THAT SINGING ISN'T JUST YOUR CAREER — IT'S YOUR MISSION? ANNABELLA TELLS ALL. SEE 'PROFILE,' PAGE 6.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S OCT. 22 SPEECH

A Future Religion?

SGI President Ikeda recalls his dialogues with Dr. Arnold Toynbee. The British historian was adamant about battling evil and establishing 'a future religion,' one which would enable humankind to overcome the evils that threaten its survival. Toynbee said, 'The most formidable of these evils are the oldest: greed, which is as old as life itself is, and war and social injustice, which are as old as civilization.'

I always like to speak in an informal manner. I like to speak in a way that will make everyone feel relaxed and at ease. I don't like to see people tense or stiff. There's no need for stuffy formality in the Soka Gakkai. I want everyone to be natural, free to be themselves. This is what our humanistic realm of the Soka Gakkai is all about.

To date, I have been awarded a total of 55 honorary degrees and professorships from educational institutions around the world. And earlier today, I was notified of the planned conferral of another such honorary title. When scheduled conferrals are added to the degrees already bestowed, the number now comes to 71.

Since I receive these honors as your representative, I wish to humbly report this to you. It is the same as if these awards were being bestowed on you.

Today, Oct. 22, is the day that Dr. Arnold J. Toynbee died in 1975. He was 86. Our dialogue was conducted in 1972 and 1973 for a total of about 10 days.

Dr. Toynbee was happy to talk with me. We shared our views

with great seriousness each day from morning till early evening. In the afternoon, we'd have a break for tea time. His secretary would unobtrusively bring in some afternoon tea.

How delightful those quiet interludes with Dr. and Mrs. Toynbee were.

Sometimes Dr. Toynbee and I would carry on our conversation, while we took a walk. I vividly remember him saying to me on one occasion, at the front door to his apartment: "You're going to receive honorary doctorates from around the world some day. Perhaps even more than I've received."

In the course of our wide-ranging discussions, there was one incident where Dr. Toynbee's voice rang with exceptional harshness. The subject turned to the Holocaust — the genocide of the Jewish people perpetrated by Hitler.

When Hitler was at the height of his power, Dr. Toynbee wrote a journal on world current events for the Royal Institute of

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STUDY

A new series debuts: 'Gems.' Jeff Kriger explores the identity of Bodhisattva Jogyo.

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Have people forgotten the meaning of kindness?

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EDITORIAL

In the spirit of forbearance, some things are better left unsaid.

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Trusting My Own Heart

While deluded, one is called a common mortal, but once enlightened, he is called a Buddha. (“On Attaining Buddhahood,” *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pp. 4-5)

By ULISSE GALLO

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

In June of this year, I attended the Study/Public Relations/Publications Conference at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. I had heard



In My Life

NICHIREN
DAISHONIN'S
WRITINGS IN
ACTION

members talk about their experiences at the FNCC— how they left feeling renewed and excited about challenging their problems to become happy, or how they had overcome an impasse in their practice.

In fact, in the back of my mind, I was expecting my own revelation when I went!

I participated in the meetings, made new friends, learned new things and had a great time. Yet, I couldn't help but feel that somehow my experience at FNCC wasn't as earth-shattering or significant as those of other attendees.

My last morning there, I took a breather from all the activities and watched the sun rise over Toda Lake. As I reflected on all the expectations that I'd had of the conference, I realized that I had not been honest about how I truly felt.

The truth was that I had been afraid that my experiences and feelings weren't important. I realized, however, that my memories, my experiences, were as real and as important as anyone else's. I didn't have to lessen them.

I remembered what Nelson Mandela said in his 1994 inaugural address: “It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be?”

Through my practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I can challenge the deluded thinking that causes me to suffer and begin to trust my own heart! **W**

A Person of Wisdom

By JEFF KRIGER

SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT VICE LEADER

Buddhism can be correctly propagated only by a person of unsurpassed wisdom. This is why Shakyamuni, after expounding all the sutras, entrusted the Hinayana teachings to Ananda and the Mahayana teachings to Monju, but refused to transfer the ultimate principle of the Lotus Sutra to any of his immediate disciples. Shakyamuni instead summoned Bodhisattva Jogyo, his disciple from ages past, and entrusted it to him. (“Propagation by the Wise,” *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 169)

The ultimate philosophy of Buddhism, the Law of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, great and powerful as it is, can accomplish nothing on its own. Without people who can put it into practice, share and spread it, this wonderful philosophy will remain a mystery, unable to benefit humanity.

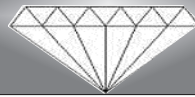
And according to this passage, the person who spreads this teaching must be a person of wisdom. Opinions may vary as to what qualifies someone as wise, but *person of wisdom* here means someone who deeply understands which teaching, when accepted and applied in the present age, will release people from misery and lead them to lasting fulfillment. It also indicates those who have practiced, applied and fully expressed that teaching in their lives and actions.

For this reason, the Daishonin points out that in the case of the ultimate teaching of the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni “summoned Bodhisattva Jogyo (Superior Practices), his disciple from ages past, and entrusted it to him” alone. The Buddha left the spread of his most profound teaching, the teaching applicable to our times, only to a person of correspondingly profound capacity and wisdom.

Nichiren Daishonin and Bodhisattva Jogyo

In “Emerging from the Earth” chapter of the Lotus Sutra, bodhisattvas who had gathered from other worlds ask Shakyamuni Buddha for permission to propagate the Lotus Sutra in this world after the Buddha's death. But Shakyamuni refuses: There are already bodhisattvas here to carry out the task, he declares. At this moment, the earth trembles and a great multitude of bodhisattvas suddenly arise from the space beneath it. They are resplendent in appearance and dignified in bearing. Each

GEMS



FROM NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS

possesses a golden body and the thirty distinguishing features of a Buddha. They are led by four great bodhisattvas — Superior Practices (Jogyo), Boundless Practices (Muhengyo), Pure Practices (Jyogyo) and Peaceful Practices (Anryugyo).

In many of his writings, Nichiren Daishonin equates his own propagation of the Lotus Sutra to the practice of Bodhisattva Jogyo. He had good reason: With no thought for his own welfare, the Daishonin alone had been spreading the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Day of the Law, as the Buddha had entrusted Bodhisattva Jogyo and the Bodhisattvas of the Earth to do. And he alone was being vilified, attacked, exiled and scorned because of it, exactly as the Sutra predicted its votary would be. In this sense, this passage expresses the Daishonin's conviction that he himself possesses the wisdom necessary to propagate Buddhism correctly in the Latter Age. The person of unsurpassed wisdom, therefore, is Nichiren Daishonin himself, and that wisdom, more expressly, is the wisdom of the Buddha of the latter day, the Daishonin's true identity.

But what gives rise to such wisdom, and what does it mean to us?

Bodhisattva Jogyo means true self, passion and joy.

In his “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings” and elsewhere, the Daishonin attributes to Jogyo several important qualities.

First, of the “four virtues” — eternity, happiness, true self, and purity — which the four Bodhisattvas represent, Bodhisattva Jogyo embodies “true self” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 751). The Daishonin also states that “[true] self is Buddhahood” (GZ 756), and elsewhere that enlightenment and happiness lies in a deep awareness of the true nature of our own lives.

Second, he equates the four bodhisattvas to the four elements of earth, water, fire, and air, and specifically, Bodhisattva Jogyo to the function of “fire” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 751). In this regard, President Ikeda has said: “Bodhisattva Jogyo kindles his earthly desires to radiate wisdom, which illuminates the world. He leads others, alighting the flame of courage and passion in all, as a guide to point out the direction in which people must advance.” Jogyo, therefore, exemplifies passion and compassion.

Third, the Chinese character for emerging in the phrase emerging from the earth also means to leap or dance. While in the midst of severe persecution, the Daishonin wrote to a follower, “When Bodhisattva Jogyo emerged from the earth, he leapt forth joyfully” (MW-5, 161). Bodhisattva Jogyo, then, also embodies a state of sublime and unrestricted joy, joy that is unperturbed by trials or obstacles.

Buddhist practice is the way to spark our wisdom.

Someone may ask, “What if I lack these qualities of true self-awareness, passion and joy? Aren't I, then, unqualified to spread Buddhism?” But there is no need to worry. Nichiren Daishonin perfectly brought these qualities forth, and left for us the Gohonzon and his writings so that we may chant, study and spark them in ourselves. And the successive leaders of our movement — presidents Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda — have displayed these qualities, spreading the Daishonin's Buddhism broadly in our age and setting an example for us all.

Furthermore, the “Emerging from the Earth” (fifteenth) chapter likens the Bodhisattvas of the Earth to “the lotus flower in the water” (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 222). They are like lotus flowers that arise from the pond's muddy bottom to blossom beautifully. The bodhisattvas' and the lotus' emergence from the soil signifies the welling forth of our Buddha nature and its wisdom from our ordinary lives.

Our current capacity aside, when we chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo with a solid pledge to lead our friends to happiness and work to support one another in our SGI activities to this end, true self-confidence, passion and joy will emerge and flow from our lives. These qualities — this wisdom — will not only serve us well in sharing Buddhism, but in everything we do.

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NEWS BRIEFS



Yong Seek Choue



Vito Perrone

Educators Receive Global Citizen Awards

Two educators who have made towering contributions to contemporary education were honored Oct. 10 by the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century. This year's Global Citizen Award recipients were Yong Seek Choue, founder of Kyung Hee University in Korea, who has advanced international education, and Vito Perrone, director of teacher education at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, who has advanced peace studies. In his message to the awards ceremony, SGI

President Ikeda, founder of the Boston Research Center, said that it was "extremely significant that this year's Global Citizen Awards should be conferred on two outstanding, visionary educators. It is my firm conviction that education represents the most certain means by which to effect the historical transition that confronts humankind: to move from a 20th century filled with war and violence to a 21st century of peace and coexistence."

—FLETCHER DALTON

New Healing Arts Division Leader



Dr. Alwin Harding of Washington, D.C. is the new national leader of the Culture Department's healing arts division (the equivalent of the doctors division in Japan). Dr. Harding was born in Barbados. He received his bachelor's in mathematics at McGill University, his master's and doctorate in biochemistry

(with an emphasis on neurochemistry) at Howard University. He then completed his residency in family medicine in 1977. It was during his graduate studies that he began practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and became an SGI-USA member. At present, he conducts a private practice and is the chief medical officer in a correctional facility. He is also a diplomate of the American Board of Forensic Medicine. In the SGI-USA, Dr. Harding is coordinating men's division activities in Washington Area and is also the healing arts division leader for his area. Dr. Sheila Chapman, national healing arts leader since the division's inception in 1990, will now serve as senior advisor. **WT**

Colorado Springs Welcomes 'Treasuring the Future'



Photos by ELLIE VESPER

Local SGI-USA members and guests enjoy the exhibition opening.

Colorado Springs, Colo., hosted SGI-USA's exhibition "Treasuring the Future: Children's Rights and Realities" from Oct. 13–Nov. 2. Many local agencies participated in the Oct. 13 opening at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.

The university chancellor, Linda Bunnell Shade, presented SGI-USA General Director Zaitzu with gifts and a

plaque for SGI President Ikeda, honoring Mr. Ikeda's continuous efforts to promote peace, culture and education worldwide. President Ikeda sent a message with his best wishes for the exhibition.

The Colorado Springs mayor, Marylou Makepeace, also proclaimed October the Month for Rights of the Child in the city.

Magistrate T.J. Cole, the keynote speaker, called the

world's children "messengers of the future." He urged the audience to raise children with this awareness, concluding that "it only takes one person, who, in spite of those who say it can't be done, does it anyway."

The Pike's Peak Elementary Choir, a chorus of elementary school students who performed at Carnegie Hall recently, were the finale to the exhibit.

—ANITA EDWARDS



University Chancellor Linda Bunnell Shade presents General Director Zaitzu with a plaque for President Ikeda, praising the SGI president's longstanding work for children's rights, education and world peace.

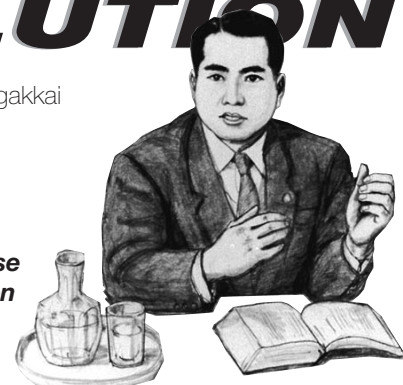
the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

a novelized history of the soka gakkai

‘FRESH GROWTH’

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 5-6

The majority of members in America in 1963 were Japanese women. Most of them had met and married American servicemen in Japan, then moved to the United States. They tried to adjust to a new life: a new country, a new language, a new culture.



By DAISAKU IKEDA
SGI PRESIDENT

When Nagayasu Masaki translated Shin'ichi Yamamoto's words into English, those members who didn't speak Japanese also greeted the news of the new chapter with cheers and shouts of joy.

Shin'ichi next said: "Because people around the world are watching the Soka Gakkai, it is important that each of you receive benefit from your Buddhist practice, become happy and contribute to society. Each of you is a representative of the Soka Gakkai.

"The course of history is determined by the people," he said. "When we each challenge our limitations and give full play to our unique potential, becoming the protagonist in the drama of our life and sphere of endeavor, the door to the new era for humanity definitely opens. And as you each act out your grand drama of kosen-rufu, please work together to build an ever more peaceful, prosperous Hawaii."

Shin'ichi then pulled from his luggage a paper bag full of chestnuts.

"I've brought these chestnuts with me as a small gift for all of you," he explained. "They're a tasty reminder of Japan. It looks like I have enough to give five to each person."

As Shin'ichi distributed the chestnuts, the members began to share recent news and developments in their lives. One Japanese woman introduced her American hus-

band. Everyone had been eagerly looking forward to meeting and talking with Shin'ichi.

Afterward, Shin'ichi's party withdrew to another room with some of the key Hawaiian leaders to discuss particulars regarding the new chapter to be formed. Shin'ichi asked Nagayasu Masaki and Emiko Haruyama to stay with him. He wanted to talk to them about leadership appointments for the America General Chapter.

It was Haruyama's first meeting with Shin'ichi in about six months, having seen him last just before her departure for the United States. She had many things she wanted to discuss and receive guidance about.

She had come to America in high spirits and a positive frame of mind, firmly resolved to pioneer the way for kosen-rufu in the United States. But the challenges of actually living in an unfamiliar land frequently left her at a loss. She felt constantly overwhelmed.

Although the membership was increasing gradually, the organization was still very small. Visiting members at their homes to offer encouragement or guidance often meant having to get on a plane or bus and traveling many hours. Moreover, the majority of members were Japanese women, who had met and married American servicemen in Japan, then moved to the United States with their husbands. The hardships of trying to adjust to life in a new country with a different language and culture were often compounded by marital discord, leaving many of the women deeply distressed.

Some had married and come to America only to have their new in-laws adamantly oppose their son's marriage — to someone from a country they looked upon as the enemy — and pressure them to divorce. There were also women who had come to America only to learn that the man whom they thought they

had married already had a wife and children. Wracked by inexpressible suffering, some even contemplated suicide.

Emiko Haruyama had graduated from Rikkyo University in Tokyo with a degree in English and American literature. Still, she had worried whether her English would be adequate to encourage American members. As it turned out, there had been almost no need for her to use English to give personal guidance; virtually all the members she met were Japanese women who spoke only Japanese.

Now, more than language deficiency, Haruyama was acutely aware of her lack of general ability to guide and encourage the members. The women she now encountered were facing problems of a completely different kind than the young women's division members she had given guidance and encouragement to in Japan. Most were in such desperate straits that they were asking themselves if it was worth living.

This was totally different from standing at a microphone and offering guidance to many people at a meeting. And while she urged her fellow members to study the Daishonin's writings, there were some who had never read even one of his writings.

Imparting courage and hope to friends in such circumstances is the true meaning of guidance in faith and dialogue in the Soka Gakkai.

Rallying her optimism and determination, she put all her energy into encouraging others. Yet, while she succeeded in supporting a few members scattered here and there around the country and helping them stand up in faith, it was a far cry from the picture of kosen-rufu she had painted in her mind. She felt deeply frustrated and impatient, the task ahead seeming almost

as daunting as scooping out all the water in the Pacific Ocean with a spoon.

Fretting over how slow things were moving, despite all her hopes and expectations, she began to blame herself and gradually lose confidence. Even if she wished to receive guidance, there was no one nearby she could talk to. She felt isolated, alone. When she thought of those happy days doing activities in Japan with the warm support of many seniors, she grew sad and nostalgic.

Just when she wished with all her heart that she could meet and receive guidance from President Yamamoto, she learned that he would be visiting the United States. Although she was several months pregnant, she did not hesitate to fly to Hawaii to meet him.

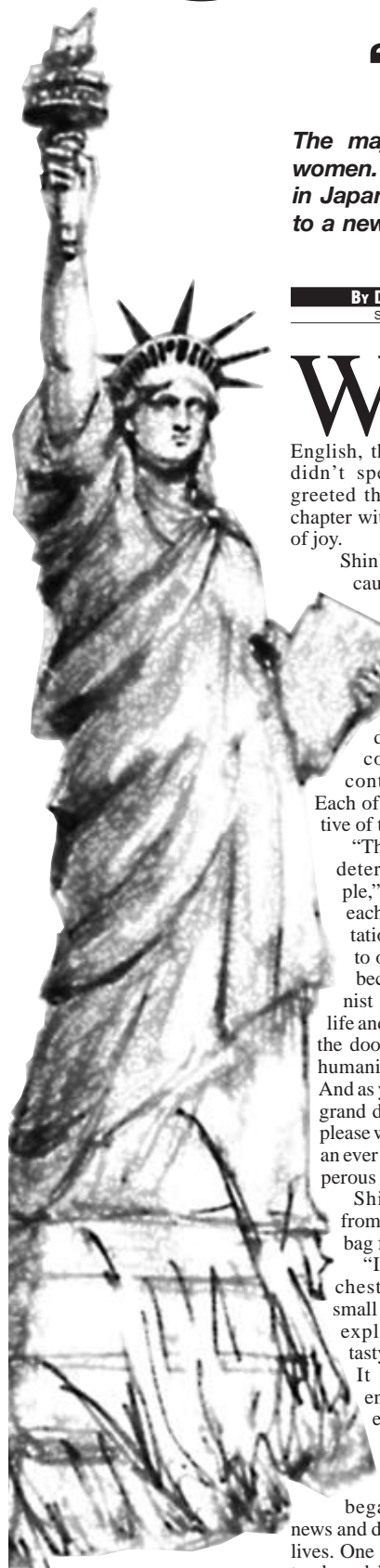
Haruyama's mind had been filled with things she wanted to report and discuss with him, but when she actually sat face-to-face with him, she found herself at a loss for words. Seeing the difficulty that she was having, Shin'ichi asked, "So, how are things in America?"

Haruyama had no idea how to respond, but a moment later she found herself blurting out, "Sensei, America is a very big country...."

These words articulated Haruyama's feeling that, no matter how much she had exerted herself or traveled around the country, none of her actions or efforts had produced any visible results.

To be continued

Daisaku Ikeda appears in the novel as Shin'ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1963. Illustrations by Ken'ichiro Uchida.



By DAISAKU IKEDA
SGI PRESIDENT

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY



WHAT IS KINDNESS?

Kindness is in decline these days — yet it's exactly what humanity needs to cultivate. 'Kindness is a universal language,' President Ikeda writes. 'It links hearts in every society and culture around the globe.'

During World War II, when I was only 16 or 17, I worked at the Niigata Steelworks in Kamata, Tokyo. I was suffering from a serious chest condition, but my older brothers were all drafted into the army; it was up to me to take care of our family, so I had no chance to rest and recover properly.

Even if I could have afforded to, it wouldn't have been permitted in those days. The factory doctor told me right from the start that no sick days would be permitted.

I pushed and pushed myself. Sometimes I even went to work with a fever of 102. Finally, I collapsed one day during the military drill practice held under the hot noonday sun. In addition to having a high fever, I began coughing up blood. I was sent to the factory's dispensary.

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During the war, people were in desperate straits, which made me appreciate kindness even more.
.....

When the nurse on duty saw how gaunt and weak I was, in a worried voice she said: "Oh my! This is terrible! We don't have any decent medicine here. Let me take you to a proper hospital."

I hesitated, but she paid me no attention and briskly set about getting me permission to take the rest of the day off. I remember that she was in her mid-40s, a small woman. Yet she accompanied me all the way to the hospital, supporting me as I made my way on unsteady feet. She kept encouraging me: "Are you all right? You're still young. I know that you'll make it!"

During the war, people and society as a whole were in desperate straits, which made me

appreciate her kindness even more. I thanked her over and over again, with great emotion, bowing my head. "Don't be silly," she said, "I'm only doing what anyone would do."

I regret that I no longer remember her name, but I will never forget those kind words.

.....
Far too many people have fallen into a self-defeating pattern of selfishness.
.....

One hundred years ago, Lafcadio Hearn, also known by the Japanese name Yakumo Koizumi, introduced Japan to Westerners in his book *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*. In it, he described the Japanese character: "Their simple politeness is not an art; their goodness is absolutely unconscious goodness; both come straight from the heart." It is true that in the old days, Japan was a land of considerate people. The idea that kindness to others was the proper way to behave was widespread.

But far too many people today have fallen into a pattern of selfish behavior, concerned only with their own interests. They ignore people in trouble as if they didn't exist. Worse, this tendency is prevalent from

adults down to children. The problem of bullying, rampant in our schools, is also a product of this spiritual climate.

To what can we trace this decline in kindness? We used to frequently hear the expression "*Nasake wa hito no tame narazu*" ("Kindness is not for the sake of others"). Its true meaning is similar to the English proverb "Kindness is its own reward," meaning that an act of kindness eventually returns to its doer, rewarding him or her. The Japanese proverb reflects the Buddhist concept of karmic reward or retribution for one's deeds, a concept that fostered an appreciation of kindness, of extending a helping hand to our fellow human beings.

Nowadays, however, this same proverb is often interpreted in an entirely different way — as if it were "Kindness is not in the best interests of others." Or "Being kind to people doesn't help them."

.....
Sadly enough, humanistic proverbs are now on the verge of being forgotten.
.....

There is another interesting saying in Japanese, "*Sode fu-*

riau mo tasho no en" ("The merest brush of kimono sleeves is the product of karmic links of many lifetimes"). In other words, "Even chance meetings are the result of karma." This is expressed by the image of the kimono sleeves of strangers brushing against each another as the stranger pass on the street; even such a fleeting encounter is not an accident or coincidence, but the result of deep karmic links from past existences.

This, too, is based on the Buddhist idea of cause and effect. It emphasizes the profound significance of our relations with others. It teaches us how important it is to value those relationships.

Among many young people today, however, the proverb is frequently understood quite differently. They think that the Japanese word *tasho*, which actually means many lifetimes, is another word that sounds exactly the same but means a slight amount. So for them the proverb means, "The merest brush of kimono sleeves is the product of a trifling karmic link."

Sadly, such deeply humanistic proverbs are now on the verge of being forgotten. This attests to the collapse of Japan's spiritual foundation. And this disintegration, I believe, lies at the root of the lack

of consideration for others that we see today.

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Our lives exist to help others — this is the most fundamental energy source for nurturing true kindness.
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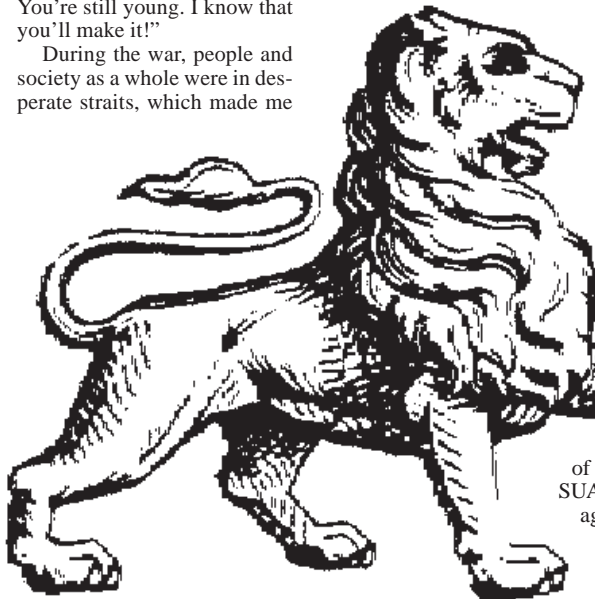
Nichiren Daishonin regarded the sufferings of all human beings as his own. With great compassion and an awareness of the persecution he was bound to suffer, he rose up to free them from misery and delusion. He also taught us that all people are originally Buddhas and have an inalienable right to become happy. And, at the same time, that we are all Bodhisattvas of the Earth charged with the mission of leading the suffering to true fulfillment.

This philosophy — that our lives exist to help others — is the most fundamental energy source for nurturing a vigorous kindness.

Today, the contributions of our SGI members to their respective communities and areas are valued and praised the world over. This is the inevitable result of our altruistic way of life as Buddhists devoted to achieving happiness for both ourselves and others.

Kindness is a universal language. It links hearts in every society and culture around the globe. The spread of our kosen-rufu activities is cultivating a rich field for the growth and expansion of just such humanistic spiritual values.

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



Help SUA Roar!

Soka University of America's new official mascot is the lion, symbol of courage and strength. But SUA needs to find the right images of the noble beast to represent the university. Can you help?

If you have ideas for

representing the new mascot, please submit your original artwork to Search for the SUA Lion Contest, Soka University of America — Aliso Viejo, 85 Argonaut, Suite 200, Aliso Viejo, CA 92692. Include your name, age, address, phone number, e-mail address and a brief signed statement certifying that the artwork is original, and that you are giving SUA unrestricted use of the artwork for all purposes,

including advertising, promotion and trade, in any and all media. (If you are a minor, your statement must also be signed by your parent or guardian.)

Artwork may be in any format (gif files welcome!) and in any media — but all artwork must be original.

SUA thanks all participants in advance for this generous gift of time and talent to help promote SUA.

PROFILE

The Re-Emergence of Annabella Lwin

By JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

When I was a teenager in 1980, the band Bow Wow Wow was a happy surprise. My friends and I, listening to the punk band the Sex Pistols *all the time*, had just about brainwashed ourselves into thinking that we were angry British kids (we lived in Arizona). The Sex Pistols said that there was "no future" — and they had almost convinced us.

Then from England came Bow Wow Wow, put together by manager Malcolm McLaren, also the Sex Pistols' manager: This was a big change of pace. With its beautiful 14-year-old lead singer, Annabella Lwin, the band had all these funny (even hilarious) songs about the joys of being young: "Golly! Golly! Go Buddy!" "Go Wild in the Country," the MTV hit "I Want Candy." Annabella wasn't angry; she seemed, strangely enough to us, to be...happy.

Eighteen (!) years later, two more happy surprises: I learn that Annabella is now an SGI member of eight years, and she has reformed Bow Wow Wow. (The band broke up in the early '80s.)

When I interviewed her recently, I wanted to hear her perspective on the Bow Wow Wow story and, most of all, how it related to her experiences in faith.

"The positive energy came from the music being so up tempo and very heartbeat-oriented, i.e., tribal," Annabella remembers of Bow Wow Wow's beginnings. "For the rest, I just used my imagination and went with how I felt. I wasn't really a singer at first — I was more of a screamer and shouter. When we were on stage, I always felt very happy and enthusiastic, and I felt that we were quite unique."

Bow Wow Wow was indeed original, their sound a crazy amalgamation of fast Latin, African, surf and punk styles, with Annabella belting it out over the top of everything. But after a grueling worldwide tour and some serious blunders by management, Bow Wow Wow's uniqueness wasn't enough to keep the band together. On returning to England, Annabella awoke one day in 1983 to read in

the music papers that she had been fired from the band. She was 17 then and heartbroken at the news; the brakes had been put on all the promise of her career.

"I was very naive, very stupid and didn't have a clue about what the music industry was all about," Annabella, now 33, admits. "When I was 14, I think that I was protected a lot, because I never got into the sex and the drugs and the rock and roll. But I was very disturbed at that time — I was a girl coming away from her family and friends, leaving everything behind and joining this rock group that was like *The Muppet Show* almost. It was a very lonely and distraught and distressed kind of lifestyle on the road." In one song, "Chihuahua," Annabella confessed, "I'm a rock and roll



"Why am I here?" "Why I am doing this?" I was asking myself all these profound questions that we all ask at one point or another in our lives."

father — who cut themselves off from society, who lived in temples, who prayed day and night, who had no worldly possessions. (Her father had tried to teach her that women could not attain enlightenment, a provisional Buddhist teaching, but she had always disagreed with him.)

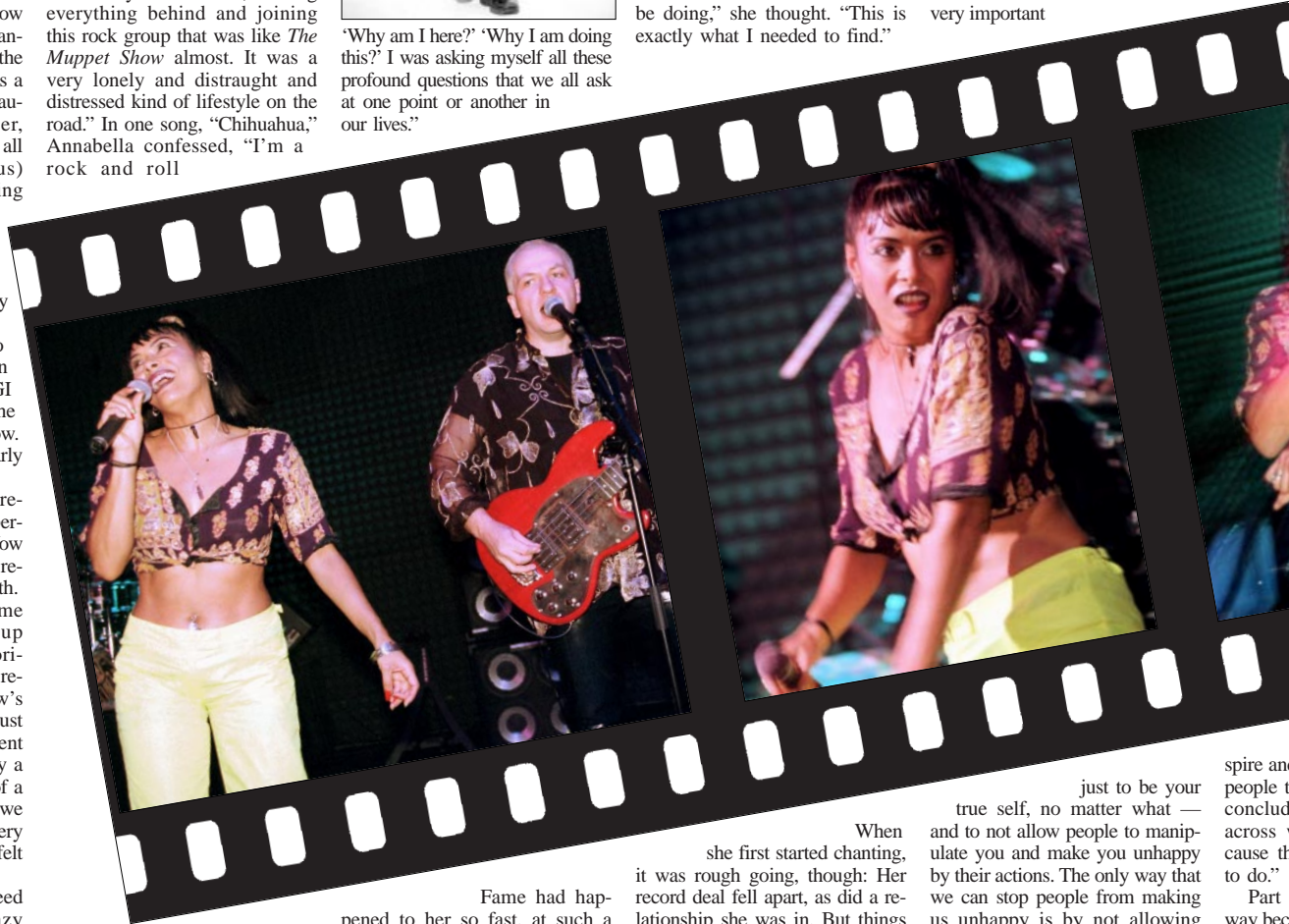
At her first SGI meeting, when she met the wonderful people there who shared how they practiced Buddhism in the real world, she was convinced that this religion was for her, too.

"Yeah! This is what I need to be doing," she thought. "This is exactly what I needed to find."

live, no money. I had friends, but even my friends then weren't really friend-friends.

"But something that Malcolm McLaren said to me a long, long time ago came back to me when I was going through this," she recalls. "It was the first thing that he ever said to me, in fact: 'Annabella, you've got to learn that you either sink or swim. Don't ever change who you are.'"

"Having been in the public eye so long, Buddhism brought home for me the superficiality of it all," she continues, "and how it's very important



puppet / in a band called Bow Wow Wow."

Struggling for a long time post-Bow Wow Wow to get a solo career started, Annabella eventually found herself in an identity crisis — not just about her career but about her whole life.

"I wanted to find my direction and my path," she says. "I wanted to get back to me, to who I was.

Fame had happened to her so fast, at such a young age; now she was just starting to make sense of everything.

During this period, Annabella met an SGI member, who told her about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

At first, Annabella couldn't believe that the member was really a Buddhist. In Burma, where she was born, Annabella knew only Buddhists — including her

When she first started chanting, it was rough going, though: Her record deal fell apart, as did a relationship she was in. But things going so bad were symbolic of the big internal changes she was making, she believed. She had started to realize how angry she was at the world — and to change that anger into something positive, into a new determination.

"Losing everything actually happened to me a couple of times," she says. "I had nothing, absolutely nothing. Nowhere to

just to be your true self, no matter what — and to not allow people to manipulate you and make you unhappy by their actions. The only way that we can stop people from making us unhappy is by not allowing them to do it; by being our true selves, you see.

"That is the simplicity of it," she emphasizes. "I think that human beings tend to complicate their lives a lot. The Daishonin taught that 'one should become the master of his mind rather than let his mind master him' (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 146). This is very, very true."

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Mastering her anger with this perspective led to her realization that music was her true mission.

"Having gone through a lot of karma, a lot of crap, a lot of learning, understanding and realization," she says, "and having met Buddhism and spirituality and having opened my mind, heart and soul to what I was doing back then, and what I was continuing to do — it made me realize that as artists we should feel fortunate that we can perform for people. We're doing something we love doing. We're connecting with people. If we manage to make people smile and be happy, then that's what we're here to do. It's not to be up there posing around and pretending we're something special, because we're not."

was, "was that there was such a broad range of ages. There were 14-year-olds to 70-year-olds, which was fantastic! There were people from all over the place. I realized that our music had obviously touched a lot of people. But what was *really* amazing was the young kids, who would say: 'My brother was playing your records, and my big sister and my mom were.' 'You were so positive.' 'We've really missed you.'"

In the '80s, Annabella had little control over her career; now she's in charge. "Originally with Bow Wow Wow," she explains, "I didn't have any say or any involvement — or was not given any involvement — in what went on in the

band to write my own lyrics and melodies and start to come to grips with what it was that I wanted to say."

Not everyone in the business was ready for this new Annabella, though. "I started telling people, 'This is what I want to do, and this is how I want to do it,'" she remembers. "And from there it kind of got easier and easier — but it started off quite hard. People were just starting to realize that they were dealing with an adult now as opposed to this little girl."

One of her new songs, the exotic "1,000 Tears," will soon appear as a Bow Wow Wow track on the soundtrack for *Desperate But Not Serious*

record for study purposes; he thought that it would help her to get the idea of singing to her own age group. The first time he ever heard her sing was when he went to meet her mom, just after she had passed the Bow Wow Wow audition; Annabella performed Gloria Gaynor's disco hit "I Will Survive" for him. "Yeah! Very interesting," he said. "But why are you singing a song by an old woman? You're only 14! You've got to be doing things that are more relevant to your age group." Thus, the Ronettes became an inspiration.

Photos by ETHAN MILLER



"Sometimes people say that this practice is difficult," Annabella reflects, "because it requires a lot of discipline. That's true to a certain extent, but I think that they also forget that it's not about disciplining yourself to do prayers because you *have to*, but because you *want to*. It's not like sitting there and offering flowers and fruit to a statue, because at the end of the day it's about us all having Buddhism within us. We all have a higher self. It's about connecting with that and bringing it out."

"A lot of us forget that we're very special beings," she sums up. "To be born a human being is a very, very precious thing, because we can change life, we can change people's attitudes — the way that they look at things."

Finally, Annabella shares some advice for all young women who also dream of becoming singers or performers: "Don't look for fame," she says. "Do it because you truly love it. And just be yourself when you do it."

When I saw Bow Wow Wow recently play Las Vegas, Annabella was clearly setting an example of exactly that — her love for inspiring people through music was for real.

And as she jumped around the stage and joked with the audience, as she screamed, shouted and sang, I thought of all she's been through. She's a survivor. Her life and music share a message: Survive and thrive. Be yourself. Don't sink — it's a lot more fun to swim!

Photo by LISA HOLLIS



Annabella tapes a song for the music channel VH-1 at the World Culture Center in Santa Monica, Calif.

band.

They didn't even like it when I talked very much on stage. They used to get funny with me if I said anything more than 'The next number's called...'

"I suppose my confidence now comes from being in the business for 18 years," she adds. "And being a writer now. I think I've done my apprenticeship."

Near the end of the first Bow Wow Wow, Annabella started writing her own songs, including one of their biggest hits, "Do You Wanna Hold Me?" But especially in recent years, beginning around the start of her Buddhist practice, Annabella has been constantly writing. She says that "if I wanted to do well at this and do this the best way that I knew how and my own way, I

(a comedy film in which Annabella has a role).

Many of the women who have proven that they weren't just "little girls" in the male-dominated music industry have had strong women role models in the business to look up to, and this has been true of Annabella. Tina Turner is a favorite.

"My first-ever live performance that I saw was Tina Turner," she says. "That was at the Ritz in New York, when Bow Wow Wow was on tour all those years ago. I was completely blown away by her act and the way she was and everything. She made me realize that when I get to be 50, I can still be doing this!"

Annabella's also fond of the classic girl group the Ronettes. In the early days of Bow Wow Wow, McLaren gave her a Ronettes

"We're here to inspire and support and give love to people through what we do," she concludes. "I hope that comes across when I'm on stage, because that's really all I'm trying to do."

Part of inspiring people this way became the return to her Bow Wow Wow roots. Last year, Annabella and the band's original bass player, Leigh Gorman, put a new four-piece together and toured America. (The results will soon be heard on *Wild in America*, the band's new, live CD.)

Annabella and Leigh decided to stay after every show and meet their fans face to face. "What I was really amazed about," she

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SPEECH, FROM PAGE 1

International Affairs in London. The institute required that its publications be scientific — unemotional, unbiased, impartial. But when it came to the issue of Hitler's genocide of the Jews, it was a completely different matter, Dr. Toynbee declared. He felt that it was impossible to remain impartial about this crime. If he were to write on the genocide as unemotionally as if merely giving a weather report, he said, it would not constitute a fair, just record of the atrocities. To ignore the moral issue would be tantamount to tacitly condoning the annihilation of the Jews, he asserted.

Therefore, Dr. Toynbee angrily condemned the Nazis' evil.

Evil is evil. To firmly assert this is true humanism, true compassion. "For me, condemning evil," Dr. Toynbee explained, "was the middle way." The middle way equals humanism. Dr. Toynbee was a great individual.

This is something proven more and more as time goes by.

The Price of Civilization

Why did people let the Nazis commit their atrocities? There is a lesson to be learned here. Dr. Toynbee says: "The moral is that civilization is nowhere and never secure. It is a thin cake of custom overlying a molten mass of wickedness that is always boiling up for an opportunity to burst out. Civilization cannot ever be taken for granted. Its price is eternal vigilance and ceaseless spiritual effort."

In other words, the tendency to be attracted to evil of the likes of Hitler resides within human beings. So things must not be left to develop with abandon, without moral restraint. We must be constantly alert for the presence or appearance of evil people. Without such effort and engagement, civilization cannot be sustained, cannot grow and prosper. This was Dr. Toynbee's conclusion.

It is therefore vital, he said, that we have the courage to state our own opinion and never to hesitate when it comes to opposing evil. This, according to Dr. Toynbee, one of this century's greatest historians, is how civilization remains sound and healthy.

I will proudly state that the Soka Gakkai has been following this correct path throughout its development.

Dr. Toynbee also said, "Every human soul...is a spiritual battlefield in which good and evil are perpetually con-

tending with each other for mastery...." A battlefield where good and evil wage combat — this is the human heart, he says. This is an insight that strikes a deep resonance with Buddhism, which expounds our eternal struggle between the Buddha nature and devilish functions.

It is important for us to triumph over destructive forces. We are not practicing faith if we allow ourselves to be defeated by them.

We practice this Buddhism to win.

What Kind of Religion Can Start a New Civilization?

During our dialogue, Dr. Toynbee and I discussed what a religion of the future, one that would give birth to and support a new civilization, would be like. Dr. Toynbee said: "A future religion that is to bring into being, and to keep in being, a new civilization will have to be one that will enable mankind to contend with, and to overcome, the evils that are serious present threats to human survival. The most formidable of these evils are the oldest: greed, which is as old as life itself is, and war and social injustice, which are as old as civilization."

That was the kind of religion he hoped for, a religion committed to fighting injustice, a religion that refuses to compromise with evil and prevails over it. Such a religion will give rise to a new civilization.

Dr. Toynbee's initial interest in the Soka Gakkai was over its ideals and initiatives, our movement to establish a third civilization.

I received a request from him to have an opportunity to meet and talk with me, someone whom, he said, he regarded as a genuine practitioner of Mahayana Buddhism. I was still quite young and had already been made the brunt of countless attacks by biased critics. But, as I have outlined, one of the world's leading historians and thinkers saw me with clear eyes.

The Soka Gakkai is propagating a world religion of supreme validity and necessity for the 21st century. Let us advance in our endeavors with that proud conviction.

Better Off Without Them

Dr. Toynbee quoted the words of the Roman poet Lucretius:

*In doubtful perils — mark him as he is
Amid adversities; for then*



Arnold J. Toynbee is escorted by President Ikeda as they take a stroll in Dr. Toynbee's garden in London, 1972. It was on the occasion of a four-day dialogue.

*alone
Are the true voices conjured
from his breast,
The mask off-stripped,
reality behind.*

The 21st century is almost upon us. We are at a turbulent time of transition that will sort the genuine from the frauds. It's important that we ensure that no corrupt individuals remain in our organization. Nichiren Daishonin warned against keeping on bad disciples and associating with bad friends. And his suc-

cessor Nikko Shonin cut off ties with the five renegade senior priests, who turned their backs on the Daishonin's teaching.

This is the only way to protect the true teaching. Otherwise, it won't be possible to widely open the great path of kosen-rufu.

It's the same with people. When the times are toughest, at their most trying, those who are corrupt, self-serving or have no faith will gradually surface. Such individuals eventually find it impossible to remain in the

pure world of the Soka Gakkai and depart of their own accord. And we are much better off without them.

Let us continue to stride forward cheerfully as proud exponents of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 27th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Oct. 22. Part 2 of this speech will appear in next week's issue.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INSIGHTS

Never Give Up On Your Dreams

SGI President Ikeda's comments excerpted from a recent message to the Nurses Group in Japan.

● On June 16, 1963, at 12:30 in the afternoon, Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman to travel into space.... Before becoming an astronaut, Ms. Tereshkova was an ordinary young woman who worked in a textile mill. Only by courageously challenging all the hurdles before her and enduring the rigorous physical training was she finally able to become an astronaut and realize her dream of flying into outer space.

A weak, defeatist attitude of simply giving up if things didn't work out was alien to her. She confessed that she was never one who could bear to sit on the beach waiting idly for good weather; she believed that you had to fight for the future and bravely overcome all difficulties.

● I am certain that all of you face many challenges in your daily lives.... However, I am confident that all of your present hardships and exertions — though perhaps many times in excess of those of the average person — will all definitely become a source of compassion and strength that will enable you to warmly embrace and work for the happiness of many others.

● When you perform morning and evening gongyo, you access a vast and lofty life-state of freedom — one that could be likened to traveling unhindered throughout the universe and commanding a breathtaking view of its infinite expanse. By working together harmoniously with your fellow members dedicated to realizing the Buddha's will and decree, you are all moving along the great orbit of eternal happiness and tranquility, for yourselves, for your families and for all humankind.

Empowering the People

● Kosen-rufu is a movement to awaken and empower the people, and to make them the protagonists of society. It is a truly democratic movement. Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai once remarked, "The reason I place such importance on the Soka Gakkai is that it was born from the people and makes the people its foundation."



Valentina Tereshkova, the Soviet Union's first woman cosmonaut, became the first woman in space on June 16, 1963, when she was launched into orbit in the Vostok VI spacecraft. Only 26 years old at the time, she orbited the Earth 48 times before her successful return.

The people must watch over and direct the actions of their leaders. If they cannot unite and act together for the good of the country, democracy will most definitely come to an end. In other words, the development of the people holds the key to everything.

● In the letter "The True Entity of Life," Nichiren Daishonin writes: "When praised, one does not consider his personal risk...Such is the way of common mortals" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 92). In another letter, he states, "The more one praises the blessings of the Lotus Sutra, the more his blessings will increase" (MW-5, 203).

Encouraging others is especially important, since Buddhism teaches that "the voice does the Buddha's work" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708).

● In his book *The System of Value-Creating Education*, President Makiguchi declared, "The root of every deadlock in society and all spheres of endeavor comes down to a lack of capable people." The same can be said about the confused state of the world today.

● In "The True Entity of Life," Nichiren Daishonin

writes: "There should be no discrimination among those who propagate the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo in the Latter Day of the Law, be they men or women. Were they not Bodhisattvas of the Earth, they could not chant the daimoku. Only I, Nichiren, at first chanted Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, but then two, three and a hundred followed, chanting and teaching others. Likewise, propagation will unfold this way in the future. Doesn't this signify 'emerging from the earth'?" (MW-1, 93)

Infinite numbers of new, talented individuals joyfully appear in order to work together to propagate the Law — literally, as if they were "emerging from the earth." In accord with this principle of the Lotus Sutra, let us continue to build an indestructible path for our SGI movement with courage and pride, never allowing ourselves to be swayed by anything.

The Flaw of Apathy and Indifference

● In a [recent] speech, Philippine President Fidel Ramos referred to the belief of his country's national hero, Dr. José Rizal, that the development of the government depends greatly upon the de-

velopment of the individual citizen. Mr. Ramos quoted the freedom fighter as saying: "People and governments are correlated and complementary: a fatuous government would be an anomaly among the righteous people...*Tal Pueblo, Tal Gobierno*. (Like people, like government.)" In other words, everything is determined by the people.

Just as Rizal asserts, unless the caliber of the people themselves changes, nothing will change.

● At the end of World War II, the phrase *they deceived us* was suddenly in vogue in Japan. Everyone declared that they had been deceived. Private citizens felt they had been tricked by the military and the bureaucracy. At the same time, the military and bureaucracy felt they had been deceived by their senior officers. If one were to speak with those senior officers on this matter, they would answer that they had been duped by those above them.

However, the well-known Japanese screenwriter and film director Mansaku Itami, objected to this state of affairs. To paraphrase an essay he wrote, Itami asserted to the effect: No matter how many deceivers

there may have been, if nobody had let themselves be deceived, this war would never have happened. To allow oneself to be deceived is in itself already blameworthy.

So profoundly had people lost their power of judgment, their ability to think for themselves, and their own personal convictions that they were led astray as easily as they were. They simply blindly followed whatever orders they were given like so many mindless cattle.

The fundamental fault lies with the cultural flaws of the entire nation, which are characterized by apathy, indifference, irrepentance and irresponsibility....

This is also closely related to the slavish mentality of the Japanese people who allow their rulers to oppress them. This is an insult to the dignity of the individual, an abandonment of the self, and a betrayal of the human spirit. It is indicative of an indifference to questions of morality and an absence of outrage toward injustice.

Without seriously reflecting on this weak national character and just calmly saying, "We were deceived!" without doing anything about it, the Japanese will probably be deceived again and again in the future.... ❧

Trying To Be One Who Can Forbear

EDITORIAL

By LISA JONES
STAFF WRITER

I'm a verbal person, I suppose. Some people — my mother, specifically — claim that I have a knack for saying the right thing in the right way. She's also quick to remind me that my words can cut and blister, even if what I'm saying is true.

Once, while talking with a friend who tends to echo my mother's wisdom, I was about to make a trenchant remark about an annoying situation. Before I could say anything, though, he said, "To lead people to the truth without ever saying or implying that they are wrong is one of the meanings of forbearance."

It occurred to me that I didn't understand forbearance. I always thought that *to forbear* meant to endure. But in addition to endure and tolerate, *Webster's New World College Dictionary* offers the meanings "self-con-

trol; patient restraint...to keep oneself in check; control oneself under provocation."

From a Buddhist view, forbearance can mean to bear up patiently under all opposition and hardships that arise to obstruct our Buddhist practice.

As SGI President Ikeda says, "In an age that has lost sight of humanity, it is no easy undertaking to campaign for a restoration of humanity." For this reason, difficulties and outright attacks are in store for people who practice Buddhism.

Therefore, in our practice we strive — as Shakyamuni Buddha says in the Lotus Sutra — to clothe ourselves in the "robe of gentleness and forbearance." This robe implies inner fortitude and so much patience that we're impervious to the malice of others. Hurtful words, then, don't enter our hearts; rather, they return to the people who spoke them, causing them to suffer.

The point, though, is not to make mean people suffer. Forbearance is based on the conviction that we can endure any dif-

ficulty if we are determined to shoulder and transform all the suffering of this world. In other words, forbearance is rooted in compassion. When viewed as integral to our compassionate mission, no hardship is unbearable.

Further, Nichiren Daishonin writes that "Shakyamuni Buddha entered this *saha* world of ours with the title *Nonin*, 'He Who Can Forbear.' He is so called because he does not berate its people for the slanders they all commit but shows forbearance toward them" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 4, p. 68). "This *saha* world" generally means the ordinary world in which we live, and in which we all endure suffering.

Both Shakyamuni and Nichiren Daishonin were forthright in pointing out incorrect views and challenging authoritarianism. Yet they were both teachers. They knew that to berate people for their slanders and missteps usually fosters resentment or hopelessness rather than understanding.

It seems to me, then, that forbearance involves wisdom:

knowing when to speak out eloquently for the sake of truth and to condemn evil — and when to exercise self-restraint and withhold judgment.

In the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," the Daishonin writes: "The exercise of the great power of forbearance by the bodhisattvas of the essential teaching in proclaiming and propagating Myohorenge-kyo is known as *saha*. Forbearance means the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light. This mind of forbearance is called Shakyamuni Buddha" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 771).

Forbearance is one of the qualities of the Buddha. To me, this means that I can develop my own power of forbearance by coming to understand the Buddha nature that I and all others possess.

It has been said that the battle for *kosen-rufu* is waged through the written and spoken word. Based on the principle of forbearance, I feel that words wisely left unspoken are just as important. **WJ**

WHAT ABOUT...?

Bell, Book, Candle and Saxophone

When Nichiren Daishonin first established the chanting of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, he prescribed very few — if any — formalities in association with Buddhist practice.

There were almost no "shoulds" or "should nots." In fact, it could be said that the Daishonin rescued Buddhism from the superfluous formalities, superstitions and social customs that had become incorporated into Buddhist practice as Buddhism spread through India, China, Korea and Japan. The Daishonin was a reformer, determined to propagate the clear, pure message of the Lotus Sutra.

But over the centuries — as the Daishonin's Buddhism was barely maintained by Nichiren Shoshu — many formalities crept in. In spreading this Buddhism from Japan to the rest of the world, SGI members simply followed formalities in the tradition of Nichiren Shoshu. Now it's sometimes hard to tell the difference between what's really Buddhist practice and what are mere customs having little or nothing to do with Buddhism.

For example, some SGI-USA members feel that they must put

candles on their altars and only white candles at that. The purpose, however, of putting candles on one's altar is symbolic: to offer light to the Gohonzon.

In an age in which electric

lights serve that purpose, candles are not a practical necessity. Some people feel that candles are aesthetically pleasing on the altar, but it's a matter of individual choice. If you don't like candles or think that they're messy or pose a fire hazard, there's no Buddhist rule that says you have to have them. Likewise, if you want candles (or just one candle), you can choose whatever color or fragrance

you like, not just white and unscented.

In another example, some members feel that it's wrong to put a sutra book on the floor.

This belief probably has its origins in Japanese culture, where respect for books means protecting them from dust, from dirt and, therefore, from the ground. In Japan, it's customary not to put precious things directly on the floor. Many Americans, though, have no qualms about putting books wherever they think it's convenient. With regard to all aspects of your Buddhist practice, it's not a good idea to be careless or sloppy, but putting your book on the floor is not a big issue.

Some members also wonder about bell etiquette: Do you have to ring the bell a prescribed number of times between the prayers in gongyo? And is a big bell better than a small one?

The reason we ring a bell is to offer beautiful sounds to the Buddha — or Gohonzon, in this case. Some people feel that a bowl-shaped bell makes a perfect tone — but size doesn't matter. In essence, there's not a strictly prescribed number of rings or dings between prayers; it's up to your discretion.

Suppose, though, that bell-ringing annoys you or evokes an odd Pavlovian response — is it OK *not* to ring it? Or to substitute some other tone? The point is to offer pleasant sounds to the Gohonzon, so if a sound is unpleasant to you, then why offer it? It's OK not to, and in theory it's OK to substitute chimes, a gong or even a saxophone if you're so inclined. (But heavy brass or woodwind instruments may prove too cumbersome in the long run...better to stick with a bell.)

Overall, the most important thing is the sincerity of your offerings and Buddhist practice.

— 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

About the Spanish Pages

Hello! I am a young men's division member living here in Tokyo (Hachioji), Japan. I am always very happy to see that your Spanish pages are getting more sophisticated, longer, more interesting and even a little easier to read.

Here in Japan there are many South Americans who are SGI members. They are always happy to see that the SGI-USA has publications in Spanish. This makes me very proud, and it really makes the *World Tribune* an international newspaper.

Muchas gracias!!
—DAVID QUINTERO,
Hachioji, Japan

More on Pride

I have been appreciating the discussion in the "Mailbox" regarding the SGI-USA's participation in the Gay Freedom Day Parade in San Francisco. Thank you for printing such thought-provoking letters.

I am a heterosexual, happily married mother of two boys ages 5 and 7. We have marched in the Freedom Day Parade in San Francisco many times through various affiliations. I describe the event to my children as a

"celebration of people's right to love whomever they want."

People who have never been to the Freedom Day Parade have no idea what a beautiful, emotional event it is. First of all, the entire city of San Francisco turns out for the event...gays, straights, young, old, everyone with bright and excited faces. In San Francisco the parade stands for what San Francisco stands for: the freedom to BE WHO YOU ARE. By marching in this parade, we support people's rights to live their lives and be happy....

I'm confident that our participation in this parade, and the many shakubuku meetings that have come from this will create waves of positive causes forever. It is truly kosen-rufu in action.

—JAMIE LEE SILVER,
San Francisco

Appreciates Experience

Thank you for Kathleen Slatery's experience in the Oct. 23 *World Tribune*. For 13 years on and off again, I have dealt with mental illness with a family member. Through Buddhism and medication, my situation has turned around.

—PHILIP RAY,
Ventura, Calif.

WHAT ABOUT...?

Misogyny in This Buddhism?

Q I've heard that other schools of Buddhism teach that women cannot attain enlightenment, but that the Lotus Sutra teaches that they can. But I read a few passages in the writings of Nichiren Daishonin that made me wonder if there's prejudice against women in his teachings. One passage states: "Women are fainthearted and your wives have probably given up. You must grit your teeth and never slacken in your faith" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 140). How should I interpret this?

A First, I've talked with some women who say they're willing to forgive what they perceive to be "a little" prejudice against women in their religion because such attitudes are so pervasive in other religions and in society in general. But I'd like to stress that there's no prejudice against women in the Daishonin's teachings — not even a little.

The Daishonin's statement about women being fainthearted was made to particular individuals facing specific obstacles in faith and probably reflects the prevailing attitude toward women of that era and culture. In his effort to encourage the Ikegami brothers to take full re-

sponsibility for their lives and faith, he stated what they most likely already had heard or believed. But is this the view of women in the teachings of the Daishonin? I don't believe so.

Nowhere in the history of Buddhism — or any other philosophy — is the equality of all people more firmly stated than in the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Daishonin. Our perspective of the above statement should be based on our confidence in the absolute equality which the Daishonin upheld.

Knowing that the wives of the Ikegami brothers would read what he had written, he may have been trying to stir them to not be fainthearted. He later tells the wives to have no regrets about the persecution they were facing from their father-in-law due to their husbands' and their own practice of Buddhism.

The message is not about how women and men are. Rather, the Daishonin's teaching is: Do not rely on others, even your spouse, in matters of faith. I think it's safe to say the Daishonin understood that faintheartedness is something to which all human beings are susceptible and that we should each resolve to live with courage.

What's more, the allusion to faintheartedness can be juxtaposed with other statements

made by the Daishonin. For example, to Nichigen-nyo, he wrote: "A woman who embraces this sutra not only excels all other women but also surpasses all men" (MW-5, 157). And to Senn'ichi-ama he wrote: "Your faith is weightier than the great earth, deeper than the great sea" (MW-6, 256).

The Daishonin sometimes cites the prevailing societal view of women, while tempering such views with the teachings of equality elucidated in the Lotus Sutra. It was an expedient for him to embrace the culture of the people he was talking to and then take them to the higher level of the Lotus Sutra.

It would be a mistake to take isolated passages and generalize about the entirety of his teachings based upon them. If we look at them in the larger context of his philosophy (and his other statements regarding women), it is clear that they are not indicative of his beliefs.

In "The True Entity of Life," he states: "There should be no discrimination among those who propagate the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo in the Latter Day of the Law, be they men or women" (MW-1, 93).

—DAVE BALDSCHUN,
SGI-USA Study Department Staff

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PHOTO PERSPECTIVE — KIRK CONDYLES, NEW YORK

A Day in the Life of a Photographer

Oct. 19 began with my morning prayers. I had not made plans for the day nor had I any goal. After finishing chanting, things began to move. I recalled there was an exhibit at the local library about



Anne Frank, and that elementary school students would be visiting. The work I would do that day became even more clear when I learned of a vigil to be held in Manhattan for the murdered student Matthew Shepard, who was targeted in a hate crime because he was gay.

I sometimes feel my camera is a light and, having been deeply affected by Matthew's murder, I wanted to shine it on the vigil held to remember him and the manner and reason for his death.

First, though, I went to the Anne Frank exhibit and watched a short film about her and the Holocaust with a class of fifth graders. I was deeply moved, and the room was very quiet after the screening. I listened as the guide spoke and explained how the Nazis unleashed the power of prejudice.

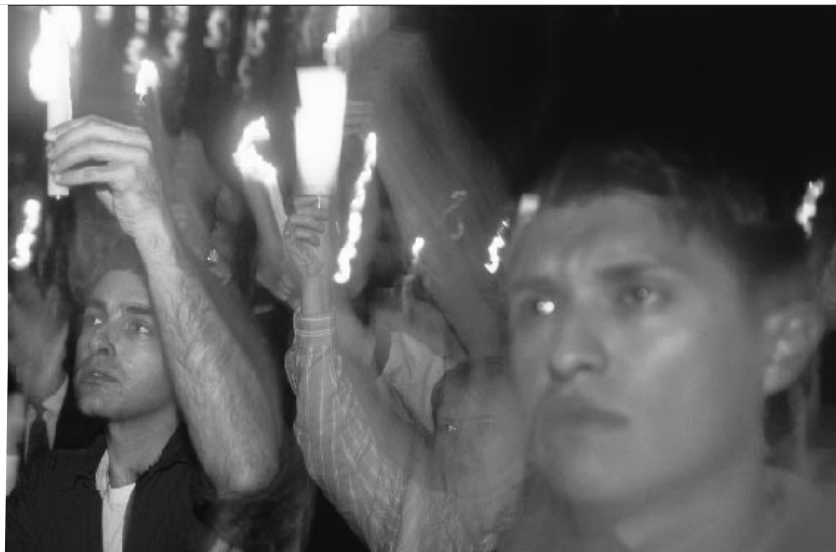
One student showed me a poem she had written about Anne Frank: "Anne Frank's life was difficult / Her life was torn apart by the Nazis / She and her family hid from them for two years, without speaking aloud, or going to school, or even going outside / She was tortured by the Nazis, and died before the war had ended / Anne's life was a struggle, not without hope, a struggle." A poem from a 10-year-old, who told me Anne was killed for being different.

After that, I went into town for the vigil. What began as a simple memorial march had grown into a crowd of about 8,000 people. No one was prepared for such an outpouring. Marchers began to move down 5th Avenue toward Madison Square Park, where the vigil was intended to end. Police motorcycles came roaring through the crowd, racing ahead to block the street. Wearing riot gear and carrying night sticks, police marched straight into the crowd. A club was shoved into my stomach. I was pushed back as I held my eye to my camera.

I have witnessed many civil disobedience actions, however this demonstration made a strong impression on me. The contrast between my morning at the library and the evening demonstration left me wanting and wondering. I had gone from hearing words that taught tolerance to witnessing violent actions of what I felt were intolerance. The events forced me to see firsthand how desperately we need to communicate with each other — to build bridges, to use common sense, to act with respect, to realize that we are all human.

The importance of chanting each day to take responsibility for this has been demonstrated to me over and over. As a photographer, I try to reflect on the realities of society and on the promise of our potential. The experience I had on Oct. 19 brought these two points clearly home to me.

The next morning, I noticed two small white drops of wax on the black bag I use for my cameras: two drops from a memorial candle. I thought about who might have been holding the candle and how and when the wax had marked my bag like two tears.



COMING NEXT WEEK

October leaders meeting, part 2