

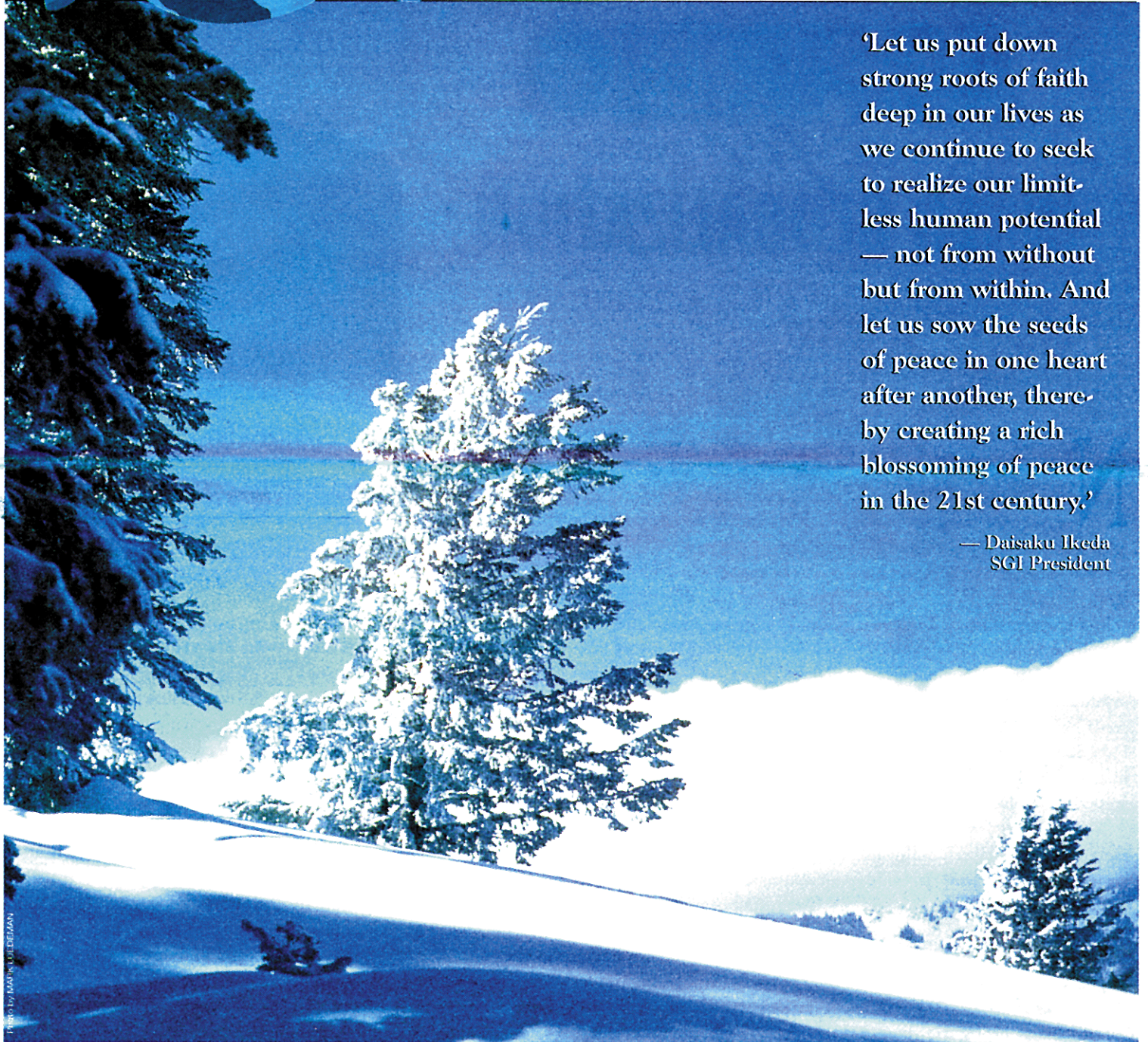
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# World TRIBUNE

# Happy NEW YEAR!

No. 3223

JANUARY 1, 1999



‘Let us put down strong roots of faith deep in our lives as we continue to seek to realize our limitless human potential — not from without but from within. And let us sow the seeds of peace in one heart after another, thereby creating a rich blossoming of peace in the 21st century.’

— Daisaku Ikeda  
SGI President

PHOTO BY KEVIN W. LUDWIG

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## MESSAGE

The SGI president's New Year's message.

page 2

## EXPERIENCES

See our special experiences section.

pages 5-10

## FINE PRINT

New Year's messages from members nationwide.

pages 14-15

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*SGI President Ikeda's*  
**NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE**

**ASPIRING**  
*for*  
**INNER GLOBALIZATION**



*Daisaku Ikeda, SGI President*

**N**ew Year's Day 1999 — the door of history is about to close on the old century and open on the third millennium — the vast stage of a new century, a new civilization.

People shape history. Ordinary citizens must be its protagonists.

Why did the "people power" revolution of the Philippines succeed? Former Philippine President Fidel Ramos stated unhesitatingly that it was because the people trusted themselves and had faith.

Toward an age when the people are the key players... Toward a world where there is widespread communication among its diverse citizenry... This direction, I believe, will be of prime importance for human society in the 21st century.

How many people are there, I wonder, who truly believe that we can change the world through the power of spiritual value?

Uniting philosophy and the people — this is the unparalleled significance of the popular movement

of the SGI, which has now spread to all corners of the globe.

Let's look at the world for a moment:

There are so many places and communities on this planet — with its forests, mountains and deserts — that we know very little about. Places and communities that have given birth to unique cultures, religions and peoples.

What is it that links and unites, at the very deepest level, this myriad diversity that almost seems to defy cohesion?

It is none other than our shared identity as human beings.

Everything begins from having respect for human dignity and appreciating the inherent value of each person's life and the wonder of human existence.

Let us so begin our inner quest. "How should we live our lives?" "What are life's true values?"

"What is the purpose of our existence?"

We have to say good-bye to a world that deems such questions

pointless.

The humanistic teachings of Buddhism forge self-reliant, independent-minded citizens.

Good citizens are those who love both their own country and the world. A strong alliance of global citizens who possess a sound humanistic philosophy will transform the world.

The development of the people constitutes the foundation and framework for human progress.

Rapid globalization is rendering geographical differences virtually meaningless and making the world one.

But external globalization has brought with it serious social ills in the form of chaos, stagnation, and the deterioration of indigenous cultural values.

Ours is a movement that aspires for internal globalization — a transformation that begins from within human beings and then develops a vast network of such inner-motivated people.

Let us put down strong roots of

faith deep in our lives as we continue to seek to realize our limitless human potential — not from without but from within. And let us sow the seeds of peace in one heart after another, thereby creating a rich blossoming of peace in the 21st century.

I am absolutely convinced that the unceasing efforts, day and night, you are making toward this end have infinitely profound significance for the future history of humankind.

At this decisive juncture, as we lay the important foundation for the third millennium, let us continue to encourage and support one another and advance toward peace and the happiness of all people.

— With my sincere prayers for the happiness, vigorous endeavors and long lives of all my precious fellow SGI members in 128 countries around the world.

*Daisaku Ikeda*

*January 1, 1999*

## SGI-USA General Director's NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

# The 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY IS ALMOST HERE

I wish all of you, my dear SGI-USA members, a very Happy New Year. I extend my best wishes to everyone as we begin 1999 — The Year of Victory in the Community for the New Century, together with SGI President Ikeda, who is in great health and high spirits. Because of our united efforts, I feel we made progress in all aspects of our American kosen-rufu movement last year.

I deeply appreciate all of your efforts, especially toward the success of last year's November commemorative meetings. These meetings produced breakthroughs and benefits in members' lives everywhere. What's more, our collective efforts allowed us to accomplish record-breaking participation by our members and friends in these gatherings celebrating the spirit of Nov. 18. Thank you very much!

Nichiren Daishonin states in the "New Year's Goshō," "A person who celebrates this day will gain virtue and be loved by all, just as the moon becomes full gradually, moving from west to east, and the sun shines more brightly traveling from east to west" (*The Major Writings of*

*Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 271).

I sincerely hope that all of you will increase your good fortune and be victorious in every endeavor throughout this year.

The Year of Victory in the Community means to produce actual proof in our daily lives and win the trust of those around us. President Ikeda recently said: "Chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo earnestly, with strong determination, provides the impetus to transform fundamentally our state of life. By breaking through our limits and obstacles with chanting and courageous action, we gain access to a higher state of life.

"Nam-myoho-renge-kyo extends across the entire universe. The Daishonin's writings say that 'when we attain Buddhahood ... our life pervades the entire universe both physically and spiritually' (MW-1, 65). The Daishonin's Buddhism enables us to transform ourselves and develop an expansive state of life that encompasses the entire universe" (Nov. 20, 1998, *World Tribune*, p. 4).

Kosen-rufu can only be achieved by practicing in the midst of our daily circumstances and sharing this great Buddhism with new people — by expanding

the circle of those working to accomplish their human revolution. Sharing Buddhism with others is a great, compassionate gift.

The 21st century is finally at hand and I feel that the SGI-USA is ready for it! Let's continue our advancement of American kosen-rufu with renewed energy — always with unity first, respecting and encouraging each

other. Then I am certain that no matter what, we will win in all our endeavors. Please give my best regards to your family and friends. I am praying for your great health and prosperity. Once again, thank you so much and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,  
*Fred M. Zaitzu*



Fred M. Zaitzu,  
SGI-USA General Director



Nationwide representatives of the Central Executive Conference at the Los Angeles Friendship Center, Dec. 5, 1998.

## THE SGI'S 3 GOALS FOR 1999

To support the 1999 SGI theme, the Year of Victory in the Community for the New Century, the organization has introduced three goals:

- 1** For SGI members to win in our daily lives. By earnestly applying our faith to the real difficulties we face every day — and taking action about them — we will achieve breakthroughs and win in our daily lives.
- 2** For SGI members to develop trust and friendship in our communities. We'll conduct activities that appeal to people in our communities and that impart Buddhist principles, thus creating many new relationships.
- 3** To continue to fight the injustice that obstructs the advancement of kosen-rufu. We'll promote an understanding and awareness of the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood's distortions of this Buddhism, among friends both in and outside the SGI.

# the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

a novelized history of the soka gakkai

## 'FRESH GROWTH'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 17-18

*In Los Angeles, Shin'ichi Yamamoto encourages the husbands of the women leading the fledgling American organization — both the husbands who are practicing Buddhism and those not practicing (yet).*

By DAISAKU IKEDA  
SGI PRESIDENT

In the United States, it was not uncommon for women's division members' husbands, who did not practice, to drive their wives to and from Soka Gakkai meetings. Often, after their wives went into the meetings, the husbands would wait around outside until the meeting ended.

Although Tetsuya Haga regularly brought his wife to meetings, he was opposed to her practice and would often do things to obstruct it — like hide her altar. In the course of transporting his wife to meetings, he became friends with another "chauffeur husband," Tad Fujikawa. It was through Fujikawa that he ultimately decided to take faith.

At first the two would pass the time until their wives' meetings ended by standing around and criticizing the Soka Gakkai, complaining about their wives' religion. But then, in May 1962, Fujikawa accompanied his wife on the second U.S. group pilgrimage to the head temple in Japan. He went along not out of his own desire, but simply because his wife asked him to. By the time he returned to America, his thinking had changed completely.

In Japan, Fujikawa attended the 24th Headquarters General Meeting and other Gakkai activities. After hearing firsthand the guidance of President Shin'ichi Yamamoto and seeing for himself the reality of the Soka Gakkai, he was profoundly moved and decided to begin practicing himself.

Fujikawa applied himself to introducing others to Buddhism, too. And the first person he talked to was Haga, his friend from outside the meetings. Haga was startled by the change he saw in Fujikawa.

Also, before that, while continuing to oppose his wife's practice, he was involved in a car accident. This set him thinking that perhaps he ought to try chanting.

Once he finally took faith, Haga experienced striking personal growth. And now he was a candidate to head the St. Louis District. Fujikawa, meanwhile, was proposed as the Boyle Heights District leader.

At the leadership interviews, Shin'ichi asked everyone about their work and other relevant details, and confirmed whether they thought they could fulfill their responsibility as Soka Gakkai leaders. All the candidates had a strong sense of commitment toward carrying out leadership duties and dedicating their lives to kosen-rufu.

When Los Angeles Chapter was formed, even Akio Ishibashi and Kiyoko Kuwano, the chapter leader and chapter women's division leader, initially expressed reluctance to accept their appointments. Now, all those who came for interviews burned with the determination to give it their best.

Shin'ichi sensed from this that the members in the United States had made great strides in faith.

Just as the interviews were drawing to a close, a man entered the room through the kitchen door.

"Mr. Kuwano, is that right?" Shin'ichi asked.

"Yes, it's my husband Burt," Kiyoko Kuwano answered for him. "He's come home for lunch."

Burt, a second-generation Japanese American born in Hawaii, managed a grocery store. He was not a Soka Gakkai member, and Shin'ichi had

heard that he was rather annoyed by his wife's practice.

"I see," Shin'ichi said. "How do you do? Thank you for everything." He bowed deeply to Mr. Kuwano, who had sat down next to his wife. "My name is Shin'ichi Yamamoto, president of the Soka Gakkai," he said. "I deeply appreciate your letting us use your house as a meeting place. Also, as a chapter women's division leader, your wife has been busy every day with activities on our organization's behalf. Since this would not be possible without your understanding and cooperation, I am very grateful to you."

Somewhat caught off guard by the respectful tone of Shin'ichi's greeting, Burt sat up straight, looking a bit flustered.

The two began talking. Sensing that Burt was worried that he might be pressured to take faith, Shin'ichi said: "There's no need for you to practice, if you don't want to. Since you are cooperating with and supporting your wife, who is so wholeheartedly exerting herself in this faith, it is the same as if you were practicing yourself. You and your entire family will be protected and will prosper as a result of the good fortune and benefit you are accumulating."

When he heard these words, a smile appeared on Burt's face. He seemed to relax. Shin'ichi then noticed the four boys watching them from the bedroom door, the Kuwano children. "Please come over," he said, gesturing to them. At this, the children came forward, smiling shyly. The eldest was 14 or 15 and the youngest about 6.

"I wish I could give you some kind of gift," he said. "But I didn't bring anything with me today. So let me give you

some pocket money instead." Shin'ichi then took out his wallet and handed each of them a dollar bill, saying, "Thank you for always looking after the house when your mother is out."

Knowing that these children were the protagonists of the future, he wanted to encourage them with all his heart. "Please study hard," he told them.

As he was leaving, Shin'ichi said warmly, reaching out to shake Burt's hand: "Let's become friends. I look forward to seeing you again."

Burt smiled, firmly grasping Shin'ichi's hand. Less than a year later, Burt joined the Soka Gakkai.

*To be continued*

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

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## EXPERIENCE

Last July, Dan Durett went on an all-expense-paid trip to attend the African American Summit in Harare, Zimbabwe. He met Nelson Mandela and connected with SGI members, who called him Shumba Nhema, or Black Lion. 'Let me say that this experience is just a snapshot from the photo album of happiness I have been able to create for myself, then for my family, friends and members,' he says.

By DAN DURETT  
Washington, D.C.

When I was introduced to this practice of Buddhism, I was struggling with an aching need to find a new direction in my life.

I had already accomplished the seemingly impossible. I was the first offspring of my grandparents to graduate from college with a liberal arts degree (from Harpur College, SUNY Binghamton.) I continued on and received a master's degree in history from Atlanta University (with a 3.85 grade point average). Lastly, I worked on my doctorate at Emory University in Atlanta and completed two years of a rigorous interdisciplinary course in urban studies, African American history and city planning (with a 4.0 grade point average).

I was on a roll, working on a pioneering land use dissertation when my life's train changed tracks. While researching my dissertation, I was called to the National Park Service to work as an historian. I had wanted to be an historian since childhood and I had made it!

Despite this success, for the next few years there was a vast emptiness within me. These feelings were not new but always hidden and never expressed. I recall one day when I was about 13 years old, while my siblings and friends were outdoors playing, I was in the bathroom staring at myself in the mirror. Who are you? I asked my image. What do you want to be and why are you here? What is the meaning of your life?

As a Star Trek devotee, I often felt great despair when I realized that even a request to Scotty to just "beam me up" would go unanswered because he would

not be able to find me. Talk about "lost in space."

Prior to September 1988, my knowledge about Buddhism was very limited. I knew only that it was an Asian religious philosophy and that there were numerous books about Zen Buddhism and motorcycles. Since I didn't have a car at that time, when I was asked to go to a Buddhist meeting, I thought why not — maybe I'd at least get one of those motorcycles.

As I entered the apartment where the meeting was being held, I heard the strangest sounds. A rumbling, mumbling sound. I quickly thought back to my earlier days and contemplated that perhaps Scotty did beam me back! I was immediately struck by the warm greetings people gave me, their tremendously bright smiles and, yes, their apparent happiness.

The senior leader that evening was Guy McCloskey. During the question-and-answer period following the sutra recitation, I men-

## 'Shumba Nhema'

tioned to him that while chanting my thoughts wandered and even moved toward negative images of altercations with people. His response surprised me. He stated that he had similar thoughts when he chanted and would even sometimes get the urge to "knock the socks off" of someone. He noted, however, that while our minds may wander when chanting, it is important to continue and our focus will eventually return to Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

I struggled for several months trying to gain an understanding of this new faith, learn to recite the sutra and participate in activities. A key in my understanding and sustaining my new faith was the central point that we practice Buddhism to become happier and contribute positively to society. To quote Joan Rivers, when I began practicing I was happy — but I wasn't HAPPY. I wanted to be but it seemed so difficult. My senior leaders said I should hang in there and chant. So I continued chanting. But things only got worse.

I found myself unemployed and living in an apartment where, when the lights went out, the real residents would scurry about. I was miserable, sleeping on the floor, wondering how to get food and how to pay rent. I received guidance to continue chanting no matter what and to continue my Buddhist activities. I was also en-



Dan Durett

couraged to read a letter written by Nichiren Daishonin called "Upholding Faith in this Gohonzon." A passage reads: "When one embraces this mandala, all Buddhas and gods will gather around him, accompanying him like a shadow and protect him day and night, as warriors guard their ruler, as parents love their children, as fish rely on water, as trees and plants crave rain, or as birds depend on trees. You should trust in it with all your heart" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 177).

In 1990, I decided to leave Bal-

interview for a position as Director of Environmental Education Programs, for the United Negro College Fund. The starting salary was \$60,000. I chanted, received guidance and chanted some more. During the interview, I was asked about my salary expectation. I stepped forward like a Buddhist lion and roared for \$80,000. We agreed on \$60,000, but I kept my financial goal. And because of my faith, practice and study, my salary soared to \$85,000. I state my salary not to impress you, but to encourage you. If I can do it, you can as well. I was at UNCF for three years. Then four months ago, I became president of the first African American environmental think tank — Danhiko International.

I would like to take just another moment to tell you of one of the benefits I received last July. It was an all-expense-paid trip to attend the African American Summit in Harare, Zimbabwe. Highlights included first flying to London, going to South Africa

the door, I recalled my first meeting, that familiar rumbling, mumbling sound. Except this time I was home in the motherland, chanting with my African brothers and sisters. I am happy to report that the members there have strong faith and are champions at introducing others to this Buddhism. One of the members gave me a nickname — Shumba Nhema, which means black lion. They also asked me to convey a few thoughts to you in their native language of Shona.

First, they want to build *danhiko*, a bridge between Zimbabwe members and members here. Sounds like *kosen-rufu* to me. Second, I was asked to say, *pamberi ne* chanting, which means forward with chanting. Sounds like practice to me. Third, they are working with the spirit of *Kubatana*. Sounds like *many in body, one in mind* to me. And lastly, they are practicing this Buddhism to accomplish *kufara*. Sounds like happiness to me.

In closing, let me say that this experience is just a snapshot from the photo album of happiness I have been able to create for myself, then for my family, friends and members. On Feb. 14, 1994, at a men's division meeting, SGI-USA General Director Fred M. Zaitzu gave the following response to a question I asked about human revolution: "Polish your life, and achieve your human revolution. When you really appreciate your life, then you know you're doing your human revolution. Accomplish this through faith, practice and study to build your commitment to *kosen-rufu*."

My determination is to continue chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo no matter what, to show victory in my life, to seek out senior leaders' and President Ikeda's guidance and to take care of my members. In Shona, I say, *Tatenda!* (Thank you so very much.)

and meeting Nelson Mandela, all before the Summit. At the reception for our delegation, Mandela walked up to me with his hand stretched out and said, "You Americans are so tall." The room was full of ambassadors and other heads of state. Yet I was the first person in the room of nearly 300 people to receive his greeting. I left the reception with a greater appreciation for *kosen-rufu*: every individual taking responsibility for securing his/her own peace and happiness and helping others do the same.

I left Johannesburg and went to Harare for the Summit. While there I was able to connect with a member from New York. I went to a meeting and as I approached

timore and return to Washington. One of my leaders, the late Mrs. Sullivan, would always tell me that if I would focus on taking care of the members, everything else in my life would work out. This was not easy, but I was determined. I am now a men's division vice district leader.

After an extended period of chronic unemployment, I secured a job with the Committee for the National Institute for the Environment. The salary was only about \$17,000 per year, but it enabled me to get my own apartment and to eat better than I had been. In September of 1990, I read an issue of the *Seikyo Times* (now *Living Buddhism*), which focused on "Healing the Environment: The Environmental Problem and Buddhism." In the main article, SGI President Ikeda states: "The Universe itself has imparted to humanity the mission of protecting the complex ecological system and of contributing the creation of value within the Earth's biosphere. Consequently, if a sense of this lofty mission orients all our scientific technology, social systems, politics and economics, we will discover the truly human — in the best sense of the word — approach to solving our environmental problems."

I found my mission in President Ikeda's guidance! I would work to improve the environment.

Soon thereafter, I was asked to



Photos by KATHRYN AIKEN

## EXPERIENCE

After the earthquake that rocked Kobe, Japan, in 1995, construction worker Felix Ortiz traveled there from Los Angeles to help build temporary housing for families left homeless by the disaster. That's where he met his future wife and was introduced to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, which he started to practice a few years later. Now, because of his Buddhist practice, he says, 'I have a different perspective of life and feel as if I can overcome any hardships that come my way.'

By FELIX ORTIZ  
Glendale, Calif.

I have been practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism for nine months and have been a member of the SGI-USA for six months.

I have been in the construction field for more than 18 years and am proud to say that I have worked on projects like the Spruce Goose Dome in Long Beach, Jurassic Park at Universal Studios, Disneyland's Tomorrowland and many other great public entertainment projects.

On Jan. 17, 1995, Kobe, Japan, experienced a great earthquake. In March of that year, I received a phone call from a foreman asking if I would be willing to go to Kobe to help build temporary housing for many families left homeless. Without a second thought, I accepted.

Once in Japan, we started work immediately the next morning. A total of 67 Americans participated in this emergency project. We worked 12 to 18 hours a day, seven days a week, rain or shine, to meet the deadline of 300 units of temporary housing in 30 days.

Don't ask me how, but we also managed to make time to go into town for a beer or just to take a little walk. This is when I met a beautiful lady named Hideko. Crazy as it may sound, it was like love at first sight. It happens to some people and works out for some, like us.

Not knowing any Japanese, I used a dictionary to communicate with her. I remember she would point out the words *love*, *happy* and *pray*. I understood the words *love* and *happy*, but didn't quite understand when she pointed at the word *pray* — a word I would later come to understand.

Two weeks into April, 300 units were completed only one week over schedule. Not bad.

The time came to say goodbye to everyone in Japan, including Hideko. Saying goodbye to this lady was the toughest moment I had to deal with. I assured her I would see her again. In May, I went back to Japan and brought Hideko here to visit Los Angeles for about three weeks. I had never been married, and at my age — 35 at the time — I thought, "Why not?" I asked her to marry me, and on June 2, we became husband and wife.

This is the time she introduced me to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. I just wanted her to be happy and meet people, so I would take her to meetings in the Los Angeles area. While everybody chanted I would read a magazine such as *Modern Steel Construction*. After two years of taking her to meetings, I stopped taking magazines and started paying attention. I started reading the *World Tribune* during this time, which gave me a better understanding of the practice. Sometimes I would find myself chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo along with the group but to myself back in the corner of the room.

In February 1998, I decided to chant for about 10 minutes every day during my showers so my wife wouldn't see or hear me. During this time, we had lots of rain because of El Niño. Due to safety reasons, we weren't allowed to work in the rain with power tools. No work meant no pay. I found myself low on income and debts rising.

As I continued chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, I started to notice some benefits. My wife's immigration was suddenly approved when just the week before I was told that our

# Building a Happy Life



Felix Ortiz and his wife, Hideko

waiting time would be three months to three years.

Another benefit was that I was approached by a person at a construction site who asked me if I would be willing to be in a TV commercial as a construction worker. I said, "Sure."

At first they said I was going to get five dollars an hour but if my face appeared in the commercial, I would be upgraded to principle performer. Guess what? My face appeared and I was paid a little over a thousand dollars for six hours' work — enough to make up what I didn't earn during the time I was off.

I started to chant together with my wife at home until I felt enough courage to chant at meetings. On May 3, I became a member of the SGI-USA. I remember on this day, one member who had not seen me in a while walked up to where I was sitting and, for the first time, saw me chanting. I looked up at her and saw tears in her eyes, and I felt the happiness and joy she was feeling so strongly that I wanted to cry. Whatever she was feeling, I was feeling it, too!

As my wife and I continued to practice together, our lives started to take a positive direction. I, in particular, was experiencing a transformation within myself. People would look at me differently — or was it me who was seeing things differently? Some of my friends who had not seen me for a while said: "Felix, you look different. What is it?" I realized right there that it was the workings of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

My wife's long-cherished desire to open a small business soon became a reality. On June

2, our third wedding anniversary, we had our grand opening of Tsubaki Japanese restaurant in downtown Los Angeles in the heart of Little Tokyo. The first two months were great. Then in the third month we started to see sales drop. We laid off all employees to keep costs down. I left my job in construction to help my wife and try to save the restaurant.

From construction work to kitchen work, I had to learn Japanese cooking from sushi rolls to tempura to dishwashing.

Sales continued to drop with no sign of improving. We were just keeping our heads above water. My wife said that there was no other way but to chant to the Gohonzon. I recognized that I had softened on my practice because of the long hours and efforts I was putting into the business.

I read an article in the *World Tribune* from a member, Lloyd Fischel of Pacific Palisades, Calif. He had gone through almost the same financial experience I was going through. It made me understand what my karma is. I have made a lot of money over the years, but I also lost a lot. I lacked the wisdom to manage my money and make wise decisions. I would buy a house at a bargain price and make money, but when I sold it I lost money. I would buy cars, trade them in and lose money. I was like a backward stock investor, buying high and selling low.

District leaders as well as other members said, "Don't worry, things will turn out all right." I chanted in front of the Gohonzon and asked for the highest wisdom. I came to a point where I felt that money wasn't my concern anymore — rather, happiness of my wife and myself was most important. I realized that we had no "life" in the restaurant — we were just there.

After careful discussions we decided to close the restaurant on Oct. 30, and file for bank-

ruptcy. Not an easy task. One member stopped by that day and gave us a copy from SGI President Ikeda's *Daily Guidance*, volume 4, dated Oct. 30. He says, "Celebrating a new departure of dear fellow members, I would like to give three guidelines; they are brightness, vitality and a never-retreating spirit."

I can't express in words how happy I was seeing my wife go back to the way she was before we had the restaurant: happy.

On the Monday after we closed the restaurant, I drove over to the company I used to work for. The whole way there, I was thinking, "There are only two months left in the year, and I don't think they will hire me."

When I walked in the office, the woman in charge looked at me and said: "Felix, how are you? You look different. What is it?"

I said, "I don't know, it must be the haircut!" I told her I was looking for a job.

She said, "If you're willing to take a drug test and physical exam today, we'll put you to work in the next few days." I was hired back as a deputy building inspector.

This experience has caused internal changes and given me the wisdom to grow stronger in my faith. I have a different perspective of life and feel as if I can overcome any hardships that come my way. Through Buddhist practice, chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, I have the power to change my negative karma by turning it around to make it work for me. That's my benefit!

In closing, I would like to quote a paragraph from *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, from a letter titled "Happiness in this World." It states: "Never let life's hardships disturb you. After all, no one can avoid problems, not even saints or sages ... continue chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, no matter what happens. Then you will experience boundless joy from the Law. Strengthen your faith more than ever" (MW-1, 161).

# BUDDHISTS IN THE COMMUNITY

In Honolulu, Joanne Tachibana supports the city, the United Nations and is a founding member of the Dr. Sun Yatsen Foundation. 'For me, the Buddhist maxim of practice for oneself and for others translates into public service,' Joanne says. 'It means to make the place where I live, work and play better.'



Joanne Tachibana



Honolulu City Council



Japan's Consul General Kinshichiro Amae, keynote speaker for the UNA-Hawaii in 1996.



Congresswoman Patsy Mink at the UNA-Hawaii's 1998 congressional forum on international affairs.

By MARGIE HALL  
Managing Editor

At the Honolulu City Clerk's Office, where she works as a Council Committee aide, Joanne Tachibana was honored as the department's 1997 Employee of the Year, recognizing her work for the council and her efforts in serving her community. Joanne's volunteer work began nearly two decades ago with Hawaii Literacy, Inc., where she tutored adult learners and later joined its board — and continues to serve.

Joanne is also president of the United Nations Association, Hawaii Division. The UNA-USA is a force for change with the 175 nationwide community-based chapters and its 145 affiliate national organizations dedicated to building public support for constructive U.S. leadership for a more effective United Nations.

"SGI President Ikeda's unflinching resolve to support the United Nations, despite its flaws, influenced my decision to become involved with the lay support organization," Joanne says. "The United Nations is the only true global forum for international conflict resolution," she continues, "and its organ agencies serve the world community in many ways, such as the World Health Organization and United Nations International Children's Education Fund."

As Hawaii Division president, Joanne is working hard to raise community awareness of the United Nations. Due to Hawaii's isolation in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, thousands of miles from its closest neighbors, it is a formidable task to raise international issues as a viable concern — especially when many of Hawaii's citizens are burdened by day-to-day economic woes.

Despite these seemingly adverse circumstances, Joanne has directed the

UNA-USA for the past two years and has successfully reached out to U.N. affiliate organizations (NGOs) to form collaborative sponsorships for community programs.

Nineteen-ninety-eight was the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was the focus of the UNA's activities throughout the year. In support of this, Joanne worked diligently to coordinate a celebration held last October at the governor's mansion. The program was attended by the state attorney general and included a celebration of women's creative spirit through the healing arts of dance, music and drama.

Joanne is continually working to bring fresh programs to the community. And to perpetuate the work of the UNA-USA Hawaii, she is fostering student representation in the organization.

She is also a founding member of the Dr. Sun Yatsen Foundation board. Its mission is to educate the local and international community about Dr. Sun's Hawaii ties and Hawaii's contributions to the founding of modern China. An electronic library has already been created depicting the life of Dr. Sun and the foundation is working on plans for a memorial park in his honor.

Joanne's work at City Hall and her involvement in these varied organizations has broadened her perspective and established friendships across a wide spectrum of the community, not only on Oahu but worldwide. As a Buddhist, it is with great joy that she shares her ideals and enthusiasm at her workplace, within the SGI — which she joined 25 years ago — and in her volunteer work in the community. She is delighted to help create a humanistic 21st century.

"For me, the Buddhist maxim of practice for oneself and for others translates into public service," Joanne says. "It means to make the place where I live, work and play better." ❧

**a force  
for Change**

## EXPERIENCE

## a Mind-

*'It took the word "cancer" to help my parents drop their judgment of me as a Buddhist and as a lesbian,' Amy Stone says. She was able to overcome cancer and get married in a Buddhist ceremony with the love and support of her family. 'Our wedding was an amazing change of heart,' she says, 'And a mind-opening experience for all of us.'*

By AMY STONE  
Venice, Calif.

In 1984, I started practicing Buddhism for a multitude of reasons. Here are some of them: I was looking for something to break out of a six-month depression; I was searching for a deeper spiritual base; I was excited by the idea that a pacifist religious lay organization based on Buddhism could be the key to world peace; I would do anything to help my acting career; I figured I had nothing to lose.

I practiced hard — I never missed gongyo for eight years, chanted hours of daimoku daily, and participated in activities morning, noon and night. All of these things have made me a very fortunate person. Since 1990 or so, I've practiced with more balance, more forgiveness and more harmoniously with myself and my environment, and I have been consistently devoted to furthering my understanding of this Buddhism.

In 1994, I had major surgery to remove a fibroid tumor from my uterus. This is actually a fairly common ailment among women, not always dealt with by surgery. I tried to avoid surgery in every possible way. One reason was that my health insurance waived coverage on any medical care connected with my fibroid because it was a pre-existing condition.

Also, I felt the growth was a result of my emotional angst at breaking up with a fiancé of three years, and I tried to cure it holistically. The funny thing was that every method I tried, the practitioners suggested surgery, which is unusual for acupunc-

turists and energy healers to do.

Meanwhile, I met Jill Proctor and we started a relationship. It was at her urging that I went to see a doctor who immediately suggested surgery. And strangely, by this time, with President and Hillary Clinton hard at work trying to change health care, my insurance coverage was forced to drop the waivers to treat me, and my surgery would be covered. I considered this a benefit.

Meanwhile, my parents were having a hard time with the idea of me in a relationship with a woman; they would have been happy to avoid ever discussing it or dealing with it.

But, because of my parents' concern for my well-being, they came to Los Angeles to be with me during the surgery. They were thereby forced to meet Jill for the first time at the hospital at 5:00 a.m. when they took me into the operating room. The circumstances forced my parents to be amicable to Jill.

My surgery was successful. Doctors removed the fibroid, which 99.9 percent of the time is a non-cancerous benign tumor of muscle tissue. Plus, my parents and Jill got to see how great one another are by the way everyone showed such concern for me.

But it was discovered that the fibroid was cancerous.

You might not think of a cancerous fibroid as a benefit, but if I had not had the surgery, the doctors would never have found the cancer until it was too late. It was a leiomyosarcoma. I was told eight days after the first operation that I would need a second major surgery in six days to remove my uterus or that I would die.

Honestly, my first thought was whether I would die. After a second, I knew that I wouldn't. Too easy to die, I thought. I hadn't even begun my mission — I was going through this experience for some other reason or purpose, I realized.

My parents were at the airport on their way home when I found out about the cancer. After telling them I had cancer, they decided to get on their plane, go home and return in a few days to help me out.

When they landed in Washington, D.C., after what they say was the longest, hardest plane flight they ever made, they

called to tell me that they didn't care what lifestyle choices I had made — they just wanted me to be happy.

It took the word *cancer* to help my parents drop their judgment of me as a Buddhist and as a lesbian, and to replace their judgment with concern for my happiness, above all. This conversation was why I had to have cancer in the first place. This may be the biggest benefit of all. My deep prayer had always been for them to accept me and not judge me. I can't think of any way that would have happened in this lifetime if it hadn't been for cancer.

I was 100 percent healthy after my final surgery, with no cancer cells anywhere. I had the best doctor. Insurance covered most of the \$40,000 surgery cost. Through this experience, I also saw who my true friends were.

Plus, I saw my parents at their best. Jill stayed by my side and nursed me back to health. My parents and Jill had a solid month of seeing each other every day and taking care of me together. They formed a strong, deep bond of friendship and respect.

The next "big" experience was Jill's and my wedding on Oct. 5, 1996.

Jill and I decided that we wanted to get married and we wanted a Buddhist wedding. What did that mean exactly? Well, we asked ourselves what was important to us: a public declaration of love and commitment; vows to each other in front of family and friends; no negativity toward us just because we were two women; a celebration; some wedding trappings (white dresses, walking down the aisle, having an officiant, making vows, drinking sake); chanting daimoku; being in front of the large Gohonzon at the Santa Monica Community Center.

Although a year before, the SGI organization had no policy for same-sex ceremonies, there had been a push by the members to allow the community centers to be used for these ceremonies. By the time Jill and I decided to have this wedding we were fortunate to be able to use the community center.

Initially, both sets of parents (in particular, our mothers) were against us getting married. No one wanted to hear the words



Amy's and Jill's mothers, Marlene Stone and Ena Proctor.

wedding or marriage associated with lesbians. But Jill and I happen to love those words and we have attached meaning to them that transcends a heterosexual connotation. So, we knew that we would pay for everything ourselves and that perhaps our family members wouldn't be there.

My mother is a strong influence on all aspects of my family. Because she was against the wedding, no one else in my family would commit to coming.

After chanting to really not judge my mother for her choice, I was able to say sincerely that I love her and I know she loves me and that it was OK with me if she or any family members didn't come to our wedding. If there were any negative feelings about our marriage, we didn't want them to come.

That was a turning point. My mother then said that she felt she should come but that she had a problem with condoning my Buddhism. It wasn't Jill, it was Buddhism that she had a problem with, and so did Dad. So I suggested that they skip the ceremony and just come for the reception after the ceremony and she decided that was the answer to her dilemma. By listening, really hearing her problem, I could help her come to a place where she would be comfortable and happy.

So, not only did my parents come, but that was when the word went out that it was OK for other family members to come. And because my mom left the decision to attend the ceremony to each individual instead of guiding people away, every other family member attended the ceremony and, for the first

time, watched us chant to the Gohonzon.

And to top it off, my parents paid for a rehearsal dinner, where they met Jill's parents for the first time. They also paid for our reception, and Jill's parents joined in and paid for our honeymoon. We honestly did not expect a cent from either side.

The funny thing is, my mother and Jill's mother are not only on speaking terms, but they truly like each other. Four months after the wedding, her parents, my parents, Jill and I went to San Francisco together and through Napa Valley to get to know one another and eat great food and drink wine together.

So, our wedding was an amazing change of heart, and a mind-opening experience for all of us.

This practice has opened my life to new dimensions that I never imagined. I have far surpassed my original reasons for chanting, and now I practice because I believe I can be absolutely happy — and because I believe that world peace is possible. I have achieved this confidence through my practice of Buddhism and my participation in faith activities. I also feel responsible to create an organization that represents my intentions and one with which I am proud to associate. ☸

NOTE: Currently, U.S. law does not allow same-sex marriage. SGI-USA ministers of ceremonies perform same-sex commitment ceremonies.

## Opening EXPERIENCE

**BUDDHISTS IN THE COMMUNITY**

*Hisako Tompkins challenged herself to learn English and to learn to read after a lifetime of illiteracy. 'This whole experience is like a dream to me — as if a new world has opened up for me,' Hisako says. She was chosen as Outstanding Student by the Morongo Basin Coalition for Adult Literacy. In addition, she received the prestigious award of Outstanding Student by the California Literacy program.*

By GINA JONES  
Los Angeles #4 Region Bureau Chief

Driven by her mission to share her Buddhist practice with others after a lifetime of being completely illiterate both in her native Japanese as well as English, Hisako Tompkins has at last found a voice. Years ago, she began hearing people say negative things about the SGI organization and about SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, yet felt helpless to reply to any of these disparaging comments. Important people in her life, including her own mother back in Japan, encouraged her to learn to read so that she could contribute to her community, show actual proof of the

**I WILL REPLY**

power of this practice, and explain about her organization and her mentor to others. Though Hisako was raised in a family that practiced Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, she herself never practiced until she moved to the United States with her husband some 20 years ago. "I was not an active part of the organization until I came to the United States," she says. "And here I thought, I am away from the Soka Gakkai and Japan. Here nobody will know me." However, she soon met members and began practicing with the SGI-USA. "Actually it was the Japanese women in the SGI who taught me how to read and write in Japanese," she explains. "They taught me how to do gongyo and how to practice correctly. I was completely illiterate, even in my own language, up until then." Hisako had been unable to complete an education in Japan, instead taking on the responsibilities of caring for her brothers and sisters so her mother could go to work. But after 20 years living in the United States, Hisako realized that she needed to learn English. She began participating in the Adult Literacy program where she lives, and joined the Sophia Group, a study group for SGI-USA women's division members. She took a copy of *The New Human Revolution*, the group's study material, with her to tutoring sessions. She would listen and learn as her teacher read aloud to her from the book. Excitedly she realized that she was learning to read while simultaneously sharing this great Buddhism with her teacher. Slowly Hisako's reading improved. Her

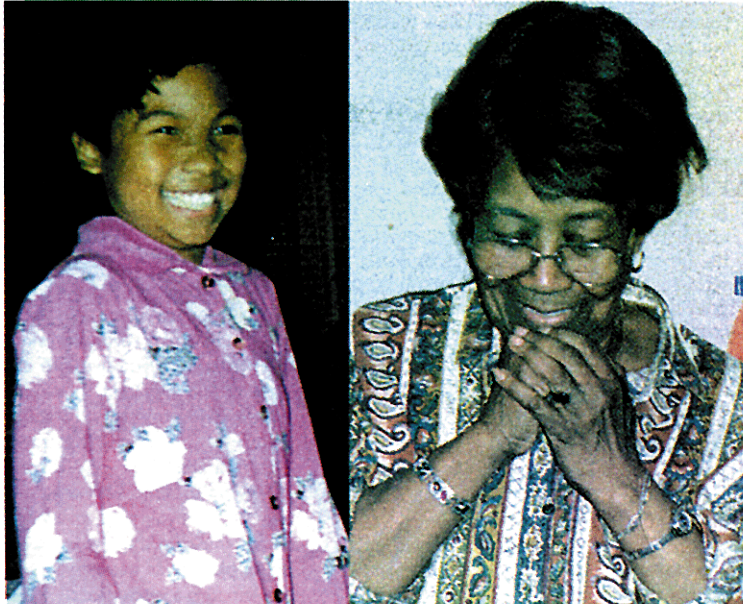
tutor became like a mother and a best friend to her. She encouraged Hisako to keep going, even when she wasn't sure she could do it. Hisako began to see in a very concrete way that a student's accomplishments show the greatness of the teacher. She feels that she has begun to understand what it is to reply to her mentor, President Ikeda. "Without being able to study, I could not tell anyone how great President Ikeda is," she says. "I had no idea what was being written about him nor how to explain the truth. I said to myself, 'Someday.' Now I can read and I can share my ideas with other people." Hisako's experience in the Adult Literacy program was written about in several of her local newspapers. Her story has also appeared in a Twenty-nine Palms, Calif., community magazine (*The Sun Runner*, September 1998). Hisako was chosen as Outstanding Student by the Morongo Basin Coalition for Adult Literacy. In addition, she received the prestigious award of Outstanding Student by the California Literacy program. Currently, she is studying for her citizenship test with the help of her tutor. "This whole experience is like a dream to me — as if a new world has opened up for me," Hisako says. "My husband is very proud of me." He started practicing this Buddhism in the midst of Hisako's struggle to become literate. He watched as she brought home assignments both from school and the Sophia Group. He and their teenage son read them together with Hisako. He be-



Hisako Tompkins (r) and teacher, Beverly Eccleston.

came moved by her persistence, no matter how difficult things got. Soon he began reciting the sutra and attending monthly meetings at their SGI-USA community center. She challenged her life for the sake of her practice, her faith. Her husband observed and decided to take faith as well. He was touched when, for the first time in their 25 years of marriage, Hisako began to write him love letters. It was as if they were newlyweds again. Without the sense of mission and courage she has found through her practice, she feels certain she never would have begun, let alone finished this difficult undertaking. Says Hisako: "I'll never forget what a struggle it was. President Ikeda inspired me to keep going. I know he has faced many difficulties, many challenges. My problems are so small compared to his. I knew I could not give up." She plans on continuing her education. "Still I am learning. I will keep on going," she says. "The more you learn, the more you have to offer." ❖

**HARLEM CHAPTER NEW YORK**



**NOV. 18 DISCUSSION MEETINGS**

Harlem Chapter celebrated Nov. 18 with three great meetings. All three presented a Buddhist skit to teach members and guests about our great practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. One skit covered the ten worlds with people being caught between the six lower worlds and the four noble worlds. Another skit was a modern version of the Buddhist story about the gem in the robe. In the third skit, several members were stuck in an elevator.

When a woman became panicky, everyone focused on helping her, until she felt OK. The skit showed how there are many personalities within the SGI-USA, but that we can achieve anything if we are of one mind. At each meeting, Harlem Chapter Women's Division Leader Ruthmarie Stowe encouraged the guests. "We wanted to introduce you to the Daishonin's Buddhism, as we celebrate being fortunate in having Nam-myoho-enge-kyo in our lives." ❖



## DISTRICT EXPERIENCE — RAVENSWOOD DISTRICT, CHICAGO

By basing themselves on Nichiren Daishonin's teachings and SGI President Ikeda's guidance, Ravenswood District members strive to make 'the happiest district in the world.'

By ANTHONY D. DAVIS  
Chicago



Upon becoming the district leader of Ravenswood District over a year ago, I really struggled with what my responsibility was to the members. How could I help the district grow and help members practice joyfully with pride in being members of the SGI? I was greatly concerned because I had encountered a few members who were deeply confused about the priesthood issue, the role of leaders in the SGI and many of the fundamental teachings of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

In October 1997, I prayed very specifically to the Gohonzon for the means to have the happiest district in the world. A few days after I began praying in this way, I opened the Oct. 24, 1997, issue of the *World Tribune* while riding the L (train) in Chicago. I began reading SGI President Ikeda's speech titled "The Spirit of Selfless Devotion." The speech struck me in a very profound way. To me, it contained all of the answers to the question, "What do I need to do specifically to start building the happiest district in the world?"

The speech directly addressed what it really takes for the district to grow: total commitment, discarding selfishness, mastering one's mind, the correct attitude of leaders, how leaders should pray for members and support them, how to nurture future leaders, what obstacles to expect as the district grows, how to build a district strongly connected with the local community and the path of mentor and disciple. This one speech served as the basis of incredible motivation and an even deeper determination to give my best to support the district.

I chanted two hours of daimoku each day, basing my prayer on exactly the things that President Ikeda mentioned in his speech. For example, he says: "Leaders should be second to none when it comes to prayer. Day and night, I am praying wholeheartedly for all of you — for your happiness and prosperity, for your lives to be free of accidents, and for you to succeed in your efforts to spread the Daishonin's teaching and advance kosen-rufu. Leaders who do not pray for their fellow members are leaders in name only."

My appreciation and concern for all of the members in the district steadily grew deeper as I started to visit them, talk with them and chant with them. I found myself really concerned about the details of each

# HOW TO GROW a DISTRICT

member's life, struggles and dreams. Many members began making even greater strides in sharing Buddhism with others, and we started enjoying more and more guests at our meetings.

In a very natural way, my deeper appreciation for the members sparked a great desire to give everyone the opportunity to contribute and take leadership in the district. We initiated monthly study meetings along with our monthly discussion meetings. We decided to use *Learning From the Goshō: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin* as our study material. All of the members began taking turns every month leading gongyo and facilitating the study meeting by giving a presentation using visual aids, music, poetry and other sources.

Discussion groups focusing on questions/suggestions developed by the facilitator would follow the study presentation. It was wonderful to hear that so many people had derived greater confidence in their daily lives from facilitating the meetings. Many began focusing on improving their own personal practice of gongyo through experiencing what it is like to lead the district in gongyo.

Eventually, district coordinators were appointed for each of the following areas: study (Chris Sarber); publications (Greg Sarber); new members (Anne-Marie Akin), and the priesthood issue (Amy Lusk). It is impossible for me to describe how awed I was by the spirit of self-motivation and dynamic input of all of the coordinators.

Throughout this period, I constantly referred to President Ikeda's words regarding nurturing future leaders: "We cannot hope to succeed in our goals unless we actively strive to find, gather and nurture able members and widen our network of dedicated individuals around the world. If we just surround ourselves with flatterers, or people we can feel superior to, nothing will come of our efforts. We will simply find ourselves tumbling rapidly down the descending slope of defeat. Great leaders keep at their sides people who are strong, talented and able to constructively voice contrary opinions."

We succeeded in having members appointed to district leadership positions. We now have a district leader (me), vice district leader (Rick Geldmyer), women's division district leader (Anita Brick), vice women's division district leader (Ellen Williamson), men's division district leader (Rob Stormont), vice men's division district leader (Greg Sarber), young women's division district leader (Virginia Schneider) and young men's division district leader (Terry LaMarre).


With incredible vigor, all of the district leaders and coordinators initiated a campaign to visit those members for whom they were responsible. It was clear that the support and encouragement of individual members had improved dramatically. All possible means were used to accomplish this — telephone calls, letters, e-mails and faxes — in addition to personal visits. I also continually encouraged the newly appointed leaders to always base their own encouragement on Nichiren Daishonin's teachings and President Ikeda's guidance, not to confuse these things with their own personal opinions and biases, which may cause suffering or misunderstanding in our district.

On Friday, Oct. 2, we held our first district leaders/coordinators meeting. At this meeting, I provided copies of President Ikeda's speech "The Spirit of Selfless Devotion," which I consider the



"Ravenswood District Leaders Manual." I asked that all of the leaders and coordinators make it a part of their lives, reading it as much as possible. I knew that if we could do this, we would succeed in everything we tried, and we would be on the direct path to having the happiest district in the world.

On Sunday, Nov. 22, we held a spectacular Nov. 18 commemorative meeting! The members of the youth division in our district planned the meeting in its entirety. They made great efforts toward its success: skit rehearsals, preparing written material (postcards, daimoku goal cards, etc.), and participating in extended chanting sessions. We have made great strides in supporting and developing the youth division.

Toward next year — the Year of Victory in the Community for the New Century — we have decided to join the Ravenswood Community Council, a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to improving the Ravenswood community. We look forward to greater things, and we are one step closer to becoming the happiest district in the world! 

## THE SPIRIT OF SELFLESS DEVOTION


Excerpts from SGI President Ikeda's speech, which appeared in the Oct. 24, 1997, issue of the *World Tribune*.

• The mentality of one getting others to do the hard work while sitting back and taking it easy — that is bureaucratism at its worst; that is not faith. The spirit of taking on the hard work oneself — that is faith, that is humanism.... We have no place among our leadership for those who cunningly manipulate others and put them to work, while neither making strenuous effort nor taking risks themselves. Such individuals are not practitioners of Buddhism.

• Leaders are making a big mistake if they think they can treat members as subordinates. In Buddhism, there is no such thing as a boss-follower relationship. It is the leaders' job to serve and support the members — not the other way around... Before the uncompromising law of cause and effect, distinctions of leader and member simply do not exist.

• There is nothing tragic or pathetic about selfless devotion. What it essentially means is to discard egoism and selfishness. Some people are quick to complain about the organization or

about their fellow members. But true Buddhist practice is never egoistic. Our commitment should be such that even if forced to go to prison for our beliefs, we would do so without complaint. This is because we are the ultimate and prime beneficiaries of our practice. All our efforts in the sphere of faith bring us closer to attaining Buddhahood. In contrast, when we base ourselves on egoism, we erase and pull the plug on our benefit.

• I want each of you to rise to the challenge of revolutionizing the area where you live into an ideal community and to do so with the determination to start from where you are right now. This means building a good SGI organization in your local area — and building it yourself with loving, painstaking care, the way an artist pours his or her heart and soul into creating a work of art. 

**PROPAGATION AND SELF-REFORMATION**

*'New Year's Goshō'*

Nichiren Daishonin wrote this letter to the wife of Lord Omosu on Jan. 5 in acknowledgement of offerings he had received from her at the beginning of the year — precisely what year remains a mystery, though. In this letter, the Daishonin praises her genuine expression of faith.

I have received a hundred *mushimochi* cakes and a basket of fruit. New Year's Day marks the first day, the first month, the beginning of the year and the start of spring. A person who celebrates this day will gain virtue and be loved by all, just as the moon becomes full gradually, moving from west to east, and the sun shines more brightly traveling from east to west.

First of all, as to the question of where exactly hell and the Buddha exist, one sutra states that hell exists underground and another sutra says that the Buddha is in the west. However, closer examination reveals that both exist in our five-foot body. The reason I think so is that hell is in the heart of a man who inwardly despises his father and disregards his mother, just like the lotus seed, which contains both flower and fruit at the same time. In the same way, the Buddha dwells inside our hearts. For example, flint can produce fire and gems possess value in themselves. We common mortals can see neither our own eyebrows, which are so close, nor heaven

in the distance. Likewise, we do not see that the Buddha exists in our own hearts. You may question how is it that the Buddha can reside within us when our bodies, originating from our parents' sperm and blood, are the source of the three poisons and the seat of carnal desires. But repeated consideration shows the validity of my claim. The pure lotus flower blooms out of the muddy pond, the fragrant sandalwood grows from the soil, the graceful cherry blossoms come forth from trees, the beautiful Yang Kuei-fei was born of a maidservant, and the moon rises from behind the mountains to shed light on them. Misfortune comes from one's mouth and ruins him, but fortune comes from one's mind and makes him worthy of respect.

The sincerity of making offerings to the Lotus Sutra at the beginning of the New Year is like flowers blooming from trees, a lotus unfolding in a pond, sandalwood blossoming on the Snow Mountains, or the moon beginning to rise. Japan, in becoming an enemy of the Lotus Sutra, has now invited misfortune from a thousand miles afar, whereas those who believe in the Lotus Sutra will gather fortune from ten thousand miles afar. The shadow is cast by the body, and just as the shadow follows the body, misfortune will befall the country whose people are hostile to the Lotus Sutra. The believers in the Lotus Sutra, on the other hand, are like the sandalwood endowed with fragrance. I will write you again.

Nichiren  
*The fifth day of the first month*

The practice of the Lotus Sutra is *shakubuku*, the refutation of the provisional doctrines. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 101)

By TED MORINO  
SGI-USA Study Department  
Senior Advisor

Nichiren Daishonin quotes this passage from T'ien-t'ai's *Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra* in "On Practicing the Buddha's Teachings" to show the personal and social benefit of carrying out the practice of *shakubuku* — refuting the provisional (shallowness) and revealing the truth (profoundity). Through T'ien-t'ai's words, the Daishonin also teaches us that the spirit of the Lotus Sutra is to clearly point out shallowness to others, thus helping them awaken to the Law or Buddhahood that exists in the depths of their lives.

The SGI is a movement of propagation of the Law based on discarding shallow philosophy and illuminating the truth that moves people's lives toward permanent revitalization, reformation and fulfillment. A bodhisattva lives such propagation. In Buddhism, one who propagates the teachings in this way is defined as an emissary of the Buddha. An emissary is a fully empowered representative, and emissaries of the Buddha can be called such because they are living based upon and grounded in their innate Buddhahood.

SGI President Ikeda writes of propagation enabling "others to give up their attachments to mistaken views, causing them to entertain doubts about

**GEMS**  
FROM NICHIREN  
DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS

their shallow way of living. It is a noble act through which we teach others a true way of life and show them the eternal, correct course to a happy existence. There is no greater or more deeply compassionate practice for human beings."

While the act of propagation within the SGI-USA has been traditionally referred to as *shakubuku*, the term is actually a strong one. It implies breaking the hold that inferior ideologies have held over people, causing them untold misery. As we are not a nation with a long tradition of practicing provisional forms of Buddhism, in general, propagation in this country has been to introduce Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism without asking people to relinquish their already-held personal philosophies.

To enable others to begin the beneficial practice of the Daishonin's Buddhism and sever themselves from the chains of confusion resulting from an incorrect perspective of life, requires that we tap important qualities within ourselves, such as compassion, courage, perseverance, wisdom, composure and sensitivity. Each quality is an aspect of our Buddhahood within. Therefore, sharing this Buddhism with another directly affects the blossoming of our humanity. Propagation carried out in this manner then is a great good for the "giver" as well as the receiver.

A step, therefore, toward establishing the lifestyle of absolute happiness can be simply to ask ourselves, "Whom shall I next introduce to a happier life

based on an understanding and practice of the Daishonin's teachings?"

In the "Rissho Ankoku Ron," Nichiren Daishonin discusses the importance of reforming the tenets we hold in our hearts. He stresses the need to achieve a major inner breakthrough by recognizing the supreme Law — and our finest individual traits — in our deepest inner realm. Since we each are born into a particular cultural and educational context, however, the various circumstances and shallow perspectives of our context can contribute to our being unaware that our true potential has been buried.

The act of propagation, therefore, also can be the process by which we refute our own inner shallowness and limitations. In one sense, the purpose of Buddhist practice is to regain the "lost" self that has been buried within us. Tapping our inherent Buddhahood is expressed in the Lotus Sutra's "Life Span" chapter as "Since I attained Buddhahood."

The continual striving to reveal the deeper, stronger and purer self from within us and helping others do the same is the purpose of Buddhist propagation.

Thus President Ikeda wrote in his poem "The Sun of Jiyu Over a New Land":

*My friends,  
Please realize that you  
already possess  
The solution to this quandary.  
First you must break the hard  
shell of the lesser self.  
This you must absolutely do.  
Then direct your lucid gaze  
Toward your friends, fellow  
members.*

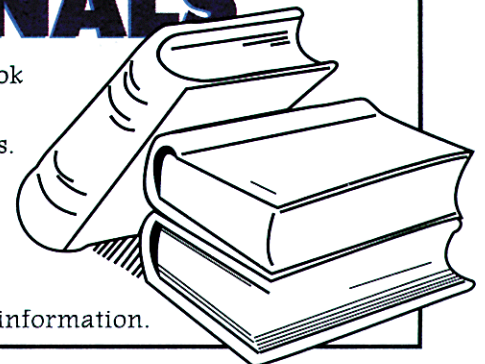
Three in a series

**EDITORIAL**  
**DESIGN**  
**MARKETING**  
**PROMOTION**  
**ACQUISITIONS**  
**AGENTS**  
**INDEXERS**

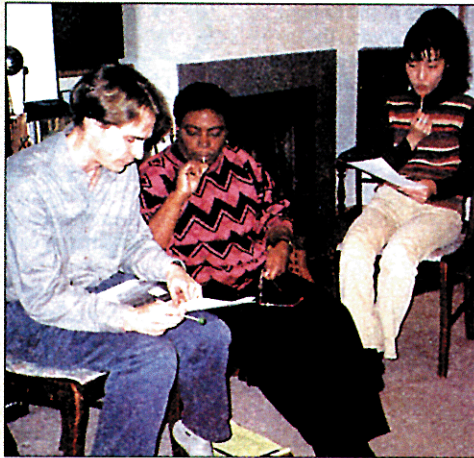
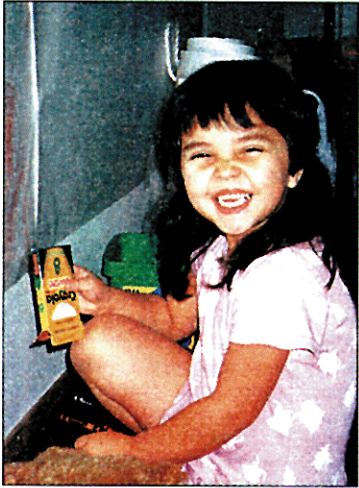
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# NOV. 18 DISCUSSION MEETINGS



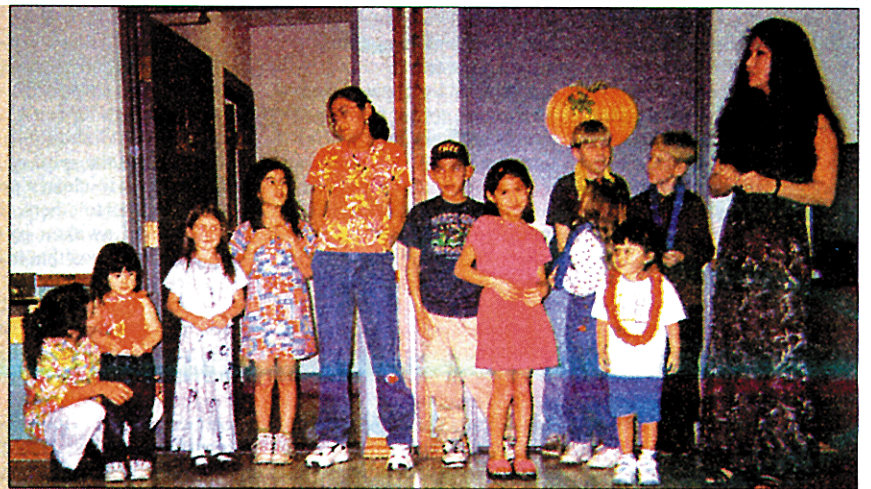
### DELRIDGE DISTRICT, Seattle

Delridge District's theme for its commemorative meeting was "The Spirit of Appreciation — Every Day Is Thanksgiving." In preparation, chanting sessions were held on Mondays and Thursdays. People chanted for the meeting to be their most successful activity yet. Fifty-three people, including 15 guests, wound up participating in the meeting! There were experiences, a drum/dance performance and an ethnic dance. A pot luck of everyone's favorite food followed. — AKEMI FUJIMOTO and CHRIS CONLEY



### UTC/LA JOLLA DISTRICT, California

In preparation for their meeting, UTC/La Jolla District members encouraged themselves to have fun, get more people involved and allow their creativity to flow. One-third of the 29 people who attended were guests. A highlight of the evening was a skit on the ten worlds created by the youth. — LILY CHAI



### THE APPLETON GROUP, Wisconsin

The Appleton Group met in the community room of a senior housing facility, and all the residents were invited to enjoy the district's Hawaiian luau. One guest said that it was the first time anyone had invited the residents to such a function. Members came from as far away as North Carolina. (Above) Children sing a song of welcome for the more than 80 people who attended. — MICHAEL EINSPIJER, SIMA ROBINSON and PAT TUCK



### LIONVILLE DISTRICT, Philadelphia

The roaring lion spirit of the new Lionville District began at the start of 1998 as a result of the neighborhood reorganization of the Philadelphia Region. (Above) Boys and girls sing "Building a Global Family" at the general meeting. — JACALYN and JENNIFER NUMAGAMI



### WORLDWIDE PLAZA CHAPTER, New York

Worldwide Plaza Chapter held its general meeting at the New York Culture Center with 140 people attending, 30 of whom were guests. The Boys and Girls Group started off with a song, followed by experiences and a detailed explanation of Nov. 18. Cultural presentations included a trio performing an upbeat Brazilian dance and one member singing an original number, "City Lights," accompanying himself on piano. A newly formed chapter chorus sang "The Power of One." Afterward, everyone partied to the sounds of a six-piece band. — PAULA (Jo Jo) TAYLOR



# YOUTH

## Words to the Wise

If one considers the power of the Lotus Sutra, he will find perpetual youth and eternal life before his eyes. ("Reply to Kyo'o," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 120)

From SGI President Daisaku Ikeda:

Youth must not be afraid to make mistakes. Their hearts aflame with a sense of justice, youth should never fail to seize the moment, to stand up just as Nichiren Daishonin states: "I ask that my disciples be the lion king's cubs, so as not to be mocked by a pack of foxes." (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1589)

The time of youth is a succession of worries — but do not avoid hardship. Youth's only treasure is having the heart to take full responsibility and challenge yourself with a cheerful spirit. The Greek poet Aeschylus once sang, "Suffering is the only way to learn." And a Japanese novelist once wrote, "Hardship, if accepted fully, makes a jewel out of a man."

I ask each of you to not succumb to your weaknesses. Please win in your daily life and surmount your challenges at school or work, thus creating your own record of life, victorious and free of regret. (Aug. 29, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 4)

I want you, the youth division members, to challenge yourselves to read the Daishonin's writings a little each day, even just one or two lines. (July 11, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 13)

You, the youth division members, are still young. You can chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo to your heart's content and accumulate unlimited good fortune. This is truly a wonderful thing. You are tremendously fortunate. (July 11, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 14)

Youth do not depend on anyone. Nor do they hang on someone else's coattails. "I will open the way myself. I will advance kosen-rufu. I will see to it that the SGI is victorious" — this is the spirit of youth and the attitude of true successors who love and cherish the SGI. (Nov. 7, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 8)

You must not waste your invaluable youth in aimless pursuits. You must live your lives with all your might, to the fullest. You must not allow even a single blank page to appear in the diary of your youth. (*A Conversation With Youth*, p. 85)

I call to the youth division: Rise up! Take responsibility! I want all of you to create a momentous history and accumulate good fortune during your youth that will last a whole lifetime. From now into the coming century, please strive to build a bridge of golden, unceasing triumph, to open a great path so that all who follow in your wake can advance with confidence and courage. (Dec. 26, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 8)

*Surrounded by a forest of towering giants  
Bid farewell to a tragic spirit  
Allow your life to shine  
With a spirit of joy and good cheer  
Live out your youth  
With all of your might!*  
(Aug. 1, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 9)

I hope that the youth division members will treat their seniors in faith, who have fought hard and valiantly for many long years, with the highest respect and endeavor to learn from them. (Aug. 22, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 13)

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**TRIBUNE**

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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.

## New Year's GREETINGS

This past year has been a year of personal victory for me in all aspects of my life. It is with great joy and expectations that I look forward to the new year. In 1999, I am determined to respond to SGI President Ikeda's guidance with effort and commitment. I pray that all of the members of SGI-USA are healthy, happy, wise and prosperous in 1999.

Thomas Ultican,  
Willow Glenn District

To my old friends in Boston, I'm doing what you know I chanted about for so long. To my new friends in Japan, Iwate is a totally new frontier for American SGI members. It is my pleasure to be the first and only foreign member here. I pray more will come, so people in Iwate don't think all SGI-USA members are as strange as I.

John Thiel,  
Kuzumaki-cho,  
Iwate-ken, Japan

Greetings to my family and friends in Phoenix, Ariz. Although I miss you all so much and wish that Bill, Kimberly and I could be there with you, I know that I must fulfill my mission for kosen-rufu here in Tacoma, Wash. We'll return to Phoenix someday.

Cheryl Hogganamp,  
Tacoma, Wash.

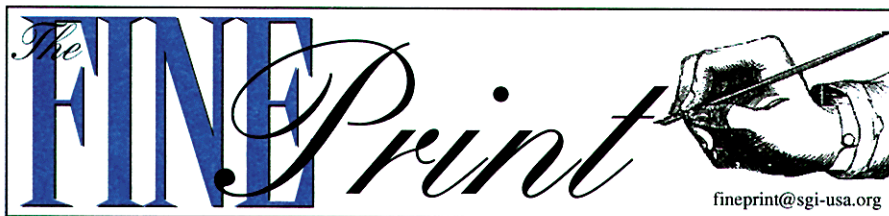
1999 Determination: To continue to show actual proof through chanting — by having wisdom to change poison into medicine and fearing nothing in caring for members.

Paulette Barmore,  
Freeport District,  
Long Island, N.Y.

I'd like to wish all the members in Chicago a very Happy New Year. I truly miss everyone. Especially Penda Benson-Davis. Thank you, for the eye-opener letter you wrote to me a few years ago. It helped me to continue to do human revolution. Everyone, I am doing great in Phoenix. My e-mail address is hanks.leonnyta@mayo.edu. Enjoy and "keepa chanting!!"

Leonnyta Hanks,  
Phoenix

Greetings and warmest regards to SGI members everywhere! The next millennium is rushing toward us like a freight train out of control! Now is the time for great introspection. Are we moving toward achieving our goals? Are we praying relentlessly, with our very essence, to uncover the



fineprint@sgi-usa.org

mission that can be uniquely only ours to fulfill? Taking action is the key! Only by uncovering and fulfilling our mission can we show the kind of actual proof that ultimately will determine the victory or defeat in our lives. Unsure about what kind of action to take? I recently came upon the following quote. Its wisdom runs so deep, I feel compelled to share it, for I have determined to live my life by its recommendations.

"Do not wait for great strength before setting out, for immobility will weaken you further. Do not wait to see clearly before starting out; one has to walk toward the light. When you take the first step, accomplish that little tiny act, the necessity of which may be apparent only to you, you will be astonished to feel that the effort, rather than exhausting your strength, has doubled it — and that you already see more clearly what you have to do next." (Attributed to Philippe Vernier)

Howard Sklar,  
Aurora, Colo.

I'd like to extend a heartfelt "Thank You" to Bernie Bessey who introduced me to this wonderful practice and the world of the Gakkai 23 years ago this coming August. Bernie, if you're reading this, please e-mail or call: dasj507@aol.com or (520) 624-3329. Happy New Year to all!

Dan Summers,  
Tucson, Ariz.

Hello and Happy New Year to all my friends in Chicago, Santa Barbara, L.A., Alaska and elsewhere. I'm living in Hong Kong now. Feel free to write or e-mail. Robert "Skip" Williams, Unit D 5/F, Sun Glow Bldg, 12 Kennedy Town Praya, Kennedy Town, Hong Kong. E-mail address: kare\_not@compuserve.com

I've never been happier to get the *World Tribune* as I am now. It keeps me in touch and on track.

Robert "Skip" Williams,  
Hong Kong

I would like to thank Kevin Ap-land, Greg Durance, Bob Williams, Linda Wright, Debbie Langley, Tamara Turner, Sachiko Waller, Gretchen Casler, Mina Calbazana and Tara Kabir for en-

abling me to continue to chant for the last 27 years. Happy New Year to the Charlottesville District.

Joe Cecil McCloskey

To all my Rainbow District friends in Corpus Christi, Texas: Although I won't be with you this New Year's, have a wonderful New Year's gongyo. I will chant for you, reflect on the past year and look to the future. Make strong determinations and reach your goals! I will be thinking of you from San Francisco. Victory to the people!

Jolie Nowell and family,  
San Francisco

Auguri Mamma per un anno incredibile! Insieme con Papa hai battuto il cancro!! Vi auguro un altro anno pieno di gioia e salute. Continiamo a vincere con la fede!! Ti voglio tanto bene.

Auguri pure a Papa, Sabrina e Scott!! Baccioni e abbracci,  
Ulisse,  
Chicago

Thank you for this opportunity to declare my determination! I will be a bright, shining star — all of who I am. I will believe in myself and fight for my dreams no matter how impossible they may seem. I will break through again as an actress, bringing more joy, laughter and wisdom to the world than ever before.

Cathryn de Prume,  
Los Angeles

Greetings and thanks to Will Johnson for introducing me to this Buddhism almost 15 years ago in San Jose. Also, thanks to all the great leaders and wonderful training I received there, especially from Sumi Conners and Hatsuko Shields. I am determined to be and raise capable leaders for the future.

Marge Forster-Kinder,  
Las Vegas

I gave birth to my first baby in December 1998. This year I'll chant more sincerely to wish for my child's happiness. I am sure that I can overcome any obstacle by chanting from the bottom of my heart.

Noriko Matsumoto,  
Torrance, Calif.

I thought I knew what happiness was until I was introduced to Bud-

dhist practice by a very compassionate and sincere district leader. My goal is to try with all my heart to do the same for others to become happy in this lifetime.

Micaela A. Clarke,  
Pemberton, N.J.

Happy New Year to all the members I practiced with in the many different states across the U.S. I lived in before I finally settled here in New Port Richie, Fla. I appreciate all your efforts in consistently encouraging me in my practice. I will never forget you. I owe you a debt of gratitude. My determination for 1999 is to continue to work on my karma by basing myself on consistent daimoku to the Gohonzon; to employ only the strategy of the Lotus Sutra throughout my life and to help others do the same here in New Port Richie, with Kumiko Rosa and her husband, Raymond. Thank you very much!

Angela Passaro,  
New Port Richie, Fla.

A message from the youth division of Albany, New York.... (Note: <...> means "lion.") Watch out for the "Kids That Chant" (K.T.C.s, formerly the K.I.B.s) the Albany New York youth division will be on fire for 1999. Bryant <...> Sasha <...> Ashley <...> Rashad <...> LaBron <...> Dana <...> Kazo <...> Gerald <...> Maya <...> Martina <...> Lloyd <...> Deion <...> Sarah <...> Rashida <...> and we are <...> growing in numbers and in faith every day. Watch Out Now! Thank you sssssooooooooooooo much.

Bryant Williams <...>  
Albany, N.Y.

Happy New Year to all *World Tribune* readers and SGI-USA members from the *World Tribune* staff! Thank you for sharing your thoughts and experiences with us over the past year. In 1999, we're determined to make the paper better than ever. We hope to be an indispensable part of your Buddhist practice and a publication you look forward to reading. Thank you again for all your prayers and support. Your voice matters!

Best wishes from Margie,  
Jeff, Don and Lisa J.  
Santa Monica, Calif.

To my daughter Angie (age 5): Good shivers you have given me! The first time you called me Mommy. When you said your full name with a SMILE. The first time you spelled your last name. The first time you chanted Nam-myoho-rence-kyo by yourself. The first time you sat with me to chant. The first time you asked me to play with you. Your first gymnastics recital. This is just the beginning of many firsts. I know there will be more shivers to come. But right now I want you to know how much I really do love you.

Love, your mommy

My happiest day was when we were officially adopted together as a family on June 10, 1998. 1999 will be more shivers and more adventures.

Phyllis Martin

To the wonderful members of Sooner District, East Oklahoma City Chapter: Our daughter, Amanda Perez, moved to Oklahoma in July and you have welcomed her, encouraged her and helped her to stand up in her practice and her new life. Thank you so much and we hope to meet you one of these days.

Charles and Mary Louise Rivera,  
New York

Here goes; 1999! This is the year I will: Finish writing my book, be happily married, and be fit and healthy.

Lynette Yetter,  
Los Angeles

Happy New Year! To all friends far and near. I wish to thank *World Tribune* for bringing SGI President Ikeda's word to us. From the land of enchantment, New Mexico, USA.

Bill, Susan, Alex,  
Setasha Sizemore family  
wmsize@highfiber.com

"ACHIEVING VICTORY IN OUR LIVES" — HAPPY 1999 from the members of Carbondale, Ill., Victory District: Glenn, Karin, April, Hideo, Vaughnda, Dorothy Skyes Mason, Rick, Pierre, Chuck, Cookie, Phyllis, Masako, Yasmeen, Kayoko, Centrella, Janice, Jun, DeAnna and Eric Victory District, Carbondale, Ill.

Thank you for helping me to grow deeper in faith another year with you all! Let's vow to work creatively in every activity and support our district leaders without fail. And share brighter victories in our community with each other joyfully in 1999.

Mysti Butler

Let's share a beautiful harmony of Nichiren Daishonin's Bud-

dism in each of our communities in 1999.

Let's determine deeply to dedicate ourselves for kosen-rufu.... Who will take responsibility for kosen-rufu? Who will lead the district for kosen-rufu? Who will show the actual proof for kosen-rufu? I will.

*Shin'ichi Ikeda,  
Pittsburgh, Pa.*

This is my New Year's Determination by — Rochelle K. Melamed: "A Happy Face Poem" (dedicated to my two wonderful adult daughters who taught me that it's OK to have fun and to enjoy at any age!) Eeny, meany, sauc-a-liny / Ouh, ah, ab-o-liny / Hotsy, kotchy / Liberacy, I love you. / Take a peach, / Take a plum, / Take a stick of bubble gum. / Give a kiss, / Give a hug, / Smile at the beautiful ladybug. / Save your pennies, / Amass great wealth, / Take good care of your precious health. / Read a book, / Sing a song, / With all your neighbors get along. / Travel far, / Travel wide, / For great wisdom look inside. / Chant for her, / Chant for him, / Make lasting peace more than a whim. / While some may laugh. / And others may boo, / I fight hard for kosen-rufu. / Prayer and hope, / Care and woe, / The answer lives in Nam-myoho-enge-kyo!

*Rochelle K. Melamed*

To My Dear Friends in Washington, D.C., and Fort Worth, Texas: Happy New Year wishes and deep appreciation to my D.C. friends who helped me start this practice; to my dear friend Farzad in L.A.; and to my new SGI family in Fort Worth (thanks, Judy, for hosting our meetings and Hitomi for the constant encouragement!)

*Geoffrey Eichhorn,  
Sundance District,  
Fort Worth, Texas*

My wife and I would like to say hello and thank you to all the SGI-USA members in South Carolina (Sumter District) and the Korean members in the Baltimore Headquarters area. These members were very instrumental in helping us grow as SGI members and provided us with so much help and guidance. We wish you all a very happy holiday and look forward to a successful kosen-rufu campaign for the New Year!

*Sincerely,  
Jessica (Chong Hui) and  
Bob Wilkie,  
Nation Group, World District,  
Okinawa, Japan*

Greetings from the Ford family in Kansas City, Mo. John and Barbara just celebrated 25 years of marriage and our beautiful daughters, Patricia and Lisa, round out our foursome. Would like to say hello to all our friends in Alabama, D.C., L.A., Southwest and Midwest. Happy New Year! Don't worry, have fun!

Birdie, Elaine, Tracey and Shelley (BETS) bet their lives on Nam-myoho-enge-kyo in the new millennium, determined to sink deep their roots of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism into their communities (Bremerton, Wash., Fresno, Calif., and Berkeley, Calif.)

A New Year's message I want to share with the universe. The renowned teacher Kwame Nkrumah sums it up best: "We have before us not only an opportunity, but an historic duty. It is in our hands to join our strength, taking sustenance from our diversity, honoring our rich and varied traditions and culture, but acting together for the protection and benefit of us all." Thank you!

*Shirley McLaurine, Chicago*

Greetings from Schuylkill West Chapter in the Philadelphia Region! My 1999 goals are: In the SGI, fulfill my responsibilities, do my best to serve the great leaders and members of Cedar Gardens, West Brook and University Park districts; to establish kosen-rufu in my home; win in my daily life. (Buddhism and menopause — perfect together.) Thank you for the great publications during the entire 17 years of my practice!

*Sharon E. Wellons-Bonsu,  
Glenside, Pa.*

ALOHA to all the members of East Honolulu Area and SGI-USA! Thank you for all your efforts in 1998. Happy New Year and let's have a victorious 1999!!!

Friends from *kuon ganjo*,  
*Gary Ono, Emiko Takemoto,  
Randy Makizuru,  
Helen Hamadon,  
Oahu, Hawaii*

My goal is to become a great artist who creates art that touches the soul. As I chant, I pray that I will contribute to worldwide kosen-rufu through my art and with my life. Best Wishes to All.

*Susan Douglass Moody*

Happy New Year from Anthony to Jim, Juli, A.J., Julieanne Asbille, Reg ("Wombat") Shaw, and all of my friends in Iowa! To T. Darryl, Olivia, Jennifer, Donna Polk, Anne Perusek, Karen Yossef and all of my

friends in Cleveland! Joel & Stacy Zarzuela and family! To my sponsor, Karyn Harvey — "It still works!"

Holiday laughter, holiday cheer, happy holiday greetings to members everywhere. Victorious days in '99, may your benefits grow and your lives shine.

*Kitty Thompson,  
Gateway Chapter,  
Chicago*

To all my friends in SGI-USA, including the San Francisco Bay area, Orange County and all over Southern California, I send my most sincere wishes for a happy and wonderful New Year's and a great 1999, upwards and onwards to the 21st century! With all my utmost sincerity,

*Patricia Woolman,  
Alhambra, Calif.*

## CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Chicago area member, Anita Brick! She is featured in a new book called *Angels in the Workplace*. Her story, of being crushed by an elevator on 2/16/90 and using her Buddhist practice to transform her professional life, is found in the chapter on courage. The publisher even included the words Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. Way to go, Anita. Thanks for showing actual proof.

Brisbane District women's division leader, Karen Christen, has just been named the top salesperson in the entire country of a major trucking company! You are truly an inspiration and definite proof of this practice. CONGRATULATIONS!!

*Brisbane District Members, Calif.*

## MILESTONES

To Karen Fitzpatrick in Parachute, Colo.: K stands for *kourage* (spelled phonetically); A is for *artist* who shines brilliantly; R is for the *roots* you put down with such ease; E is for the *education* you've sought without cease; N stands for *never* begrudging your life... You're a fabulous sister, leader and wife! Love to Richard and Jenny, too.

*Lynn*

Mr. Yoshioka was the caretaker of the Malibu Training Center for 17 years. He passed away on Nov. 27, 1998. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude toward him. He was always the behind-the-scenes person in Malibu. He was so

humble and friendly. He never made you feel that you were just someone attending an activity at the training center regardless of your leadership position.

I had not seen Mr. Yoshioka since I graduated from the young women's division in 1993. I have only spoken to his daughter once since then. I would think about him every so often, especially when SGI President Ikeda came to L.A. I would think what kind of preparation Mr. Yoshioka would have to make for the activities at the training center. I will miss him very much...and so will many L.A. and national leaders who have gotten to know him. My condolence to the family, especially Keiko, his daughter.

*Sincerely,  
Karen Roach,  
San Pedro, Calif.*

Roger Riecker, a member of the SGI-USA Oregon Area, passed away Oct. 17, 1998, of a short illness at the age of 47. As well as a dedicated junior high school teacher, Roger was an active member of the organization, having practiced Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism for over 10 years. He was a member of the Gajokai Soka Group and stage crew. He was the Oregon Area Art Crew chief, and he tended the garden at the Portland Community Center. He was much loved and will be missed. We wish him great good fortune in his next life.

Thank you for the Nov. 20 article about George M. Williams and his wife being honored upon his retirement. I have been wondering what he has been doing and am glad to hear that he has been honored. Nice to hear about him.

*Grace Anderson,  
Hollywood, Calif.*

Thank you, Mr. Zaitzu, for honoring Mr. Williams. It was richly deserved and long overdue. No doubt Mr. Williams was and continues to be a remarkable SGI leader.

I, for one, am grateful to Mr. Williams for all the training I received and the encouragement he gave me!! Mr. Williams set the standard for the youth division throughout the United States. In addition, he brought style and class that made everything he did reflect what you can achieve when you practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. No wonder I stuck around. Thank you, Mr. Williams.

*Bill Manheim,  
Los Angeles*

Congratulations and thank you to Mr. Ted Fujioka, who celebrated his retirement from the SGI-USA staff on Dec. 7 after 27 years of employment. Mr. Fujioka has been a bright light in the lives of so many people. His humility, broad-mindedness, sincerity, deep faith, understanding, wisdom and compassion have been and will continue to be appreciated by those who know him.

*Thank you, Mr. Fujioka, for a job well done! (There are no parameters on the future.)*

## LOST AND FOUND

I'm a new SGI member — and I am Polish. I believe I can't be the only Polish SGI member in Southern California. I need to meet other Polish members to share experiences and encourage one another in our practice. Please call or write me. Margaret Wysocka-Harnett, 8329 Alameda St. #6, Downey, CA 90242; (562) 923-5517

I am hoping to find Lisa Ramos and her daughter, Misty. We practiced together while they lived in Honolulu, Hawaii. They moved to Ohio, and I lost track of them. If anyone knows where they are, Please e-mail me at: gfurtado@netvigator.com.

*Thank you*

Do you still practice in New York City? I hope to find Lanese Lensey, Lyndell Granderson and Edith Webb. Wendy Shure, 4 Midland Gardens, apt. 5K, Bronxville, NY 10708

I am seeking a copy of the *Daily Guidance* by SGI President Ikeda that is now out of print. Please contact Lisa Wilder at (212) 229-7414 or P.O. Box 7236, New York, NY 10116.

We are looking for members in central/eastern Oregon, especially Grant and Wheeler counties including Burns, Unity, Baker City, Ukiah and throughout eastern Oregon. We moved to the John Day area this past summer, and would like to practice with other members in our area. Please call or write Roy L. "Skip" and Betsy Bondurant, P.O. Box 611, Mt. Vernon, OR 97865; (541) 932-2771. A special Hi! and thank you for the help and encouragement to our friends over these many years in Hawaii, Florida, Georgia and Washington. We are still "going for broke" for kosen-rufu.

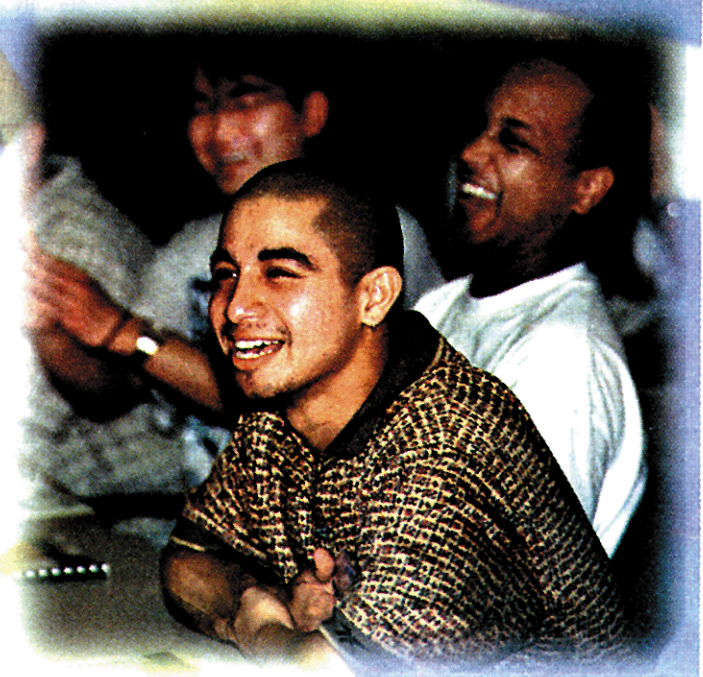
# WARM NEW YEAR'S WISHES

*from Florida!*

THE STAFF OF THE SGI-  
USA FLORIDA NATURE  
AND CULTURE CENTER  
THANK YOU FOR ALL  
YOUR SUPPORT AND LOOK  
FORWARD TO SEEING YOU  
IN THE NEW YEAR.



The FNCC staff (l-r): Mike Kubota, John Metzger, Richard Kawai, Ben Oehlerking and Harry Sakurai.



## Theme conferences scheduled for 1999 include:

- 1 Happiness in This World
- 2 Study of the Lotus Sutra
- 3 Enhancing Our Relationships Through Buddhism
- 4 Understanding and Sharing Buddhism in Modern America

Please contact your regional office for details.