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JANUARY 15, 1999

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S POEMS

Poems Dedicated to All Members

On his birthday on Jan. 2, SGI President Ikeda composed three poems in appreciation for the tireless efforts for kosen-rufu by fellow members around the world.

Greeting the snow-capped peak

Of Mount Fuji

On my birthday

* * *

Our magnificent Soka

Radiant

In the sunlight

* * *

Our dazzling Soka

Brilliant

As the majestic morning sun

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



SGI President Daisaku Ikeda and his wife, Kaneko.

Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA 90401 and at additional mailing offices
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: SGI-USA Subscribers, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-1427

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Price: \$2.00

BUDDHIST BASICS

Like a House on Fire

By LISA JONES
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

There once was a very rich man, who lived in a gigantic old house with lots of children.

It was a nice enough house, but the wiring and the plumbing had problems and, well, the place was falling apart.

One day, a fire broke out and tore through the rafters. The rich man, standing outside, was horrified to see that his children were still inside.

"Fire!" he shouted. "Get out!"

But the kids wouldn't listen. They were having fun, playing, paying no heed to their father's cries and the ever-thickening smoke.

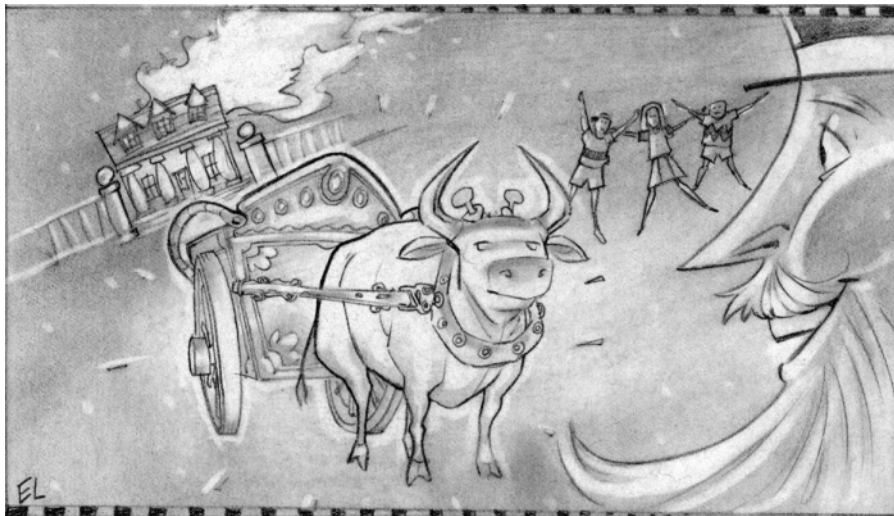
So the rich man tried a different tactic: "I have some rare and wonderful things for you!" he exclaimed. "Come see the fine carts I have — one pulled by a sheep, one by a deer and one by an ox. Come out and I'll give them to you...."

The promise of new, cool stuff got the children's attention. They charged out of the burning house. "Please give us the carts!" they clamored.

"I love all of my children equally," the rich man said. "And my wealth is immeasurable. I cannot give you inferior vehicles." So instead he gave them each a cart decorated with seven kinds of precious gems and pulled by a great white ox — a gift far finer than the ones originally promised.

In this story, the burning house represents this world. The children represent the people of the world so absorbed in their "play" and attached to the pursuit of immediate reward that they cannot perceive the eternity of life nor the workings of cause and effect. As a result, they suffer.

The rich man represents the Buddha, who strives to save



people from the flames of suffering by using various means to awaken them to life's ultimate reality. The three carts represent the vehicles of Learning, Realization and Bodhisattva, teachings by which Shakyamuni

Buddha led believers to understand the Lotus Sutra.

The great white ox cart represents the supreme vehicle of Buddhahood or the Lotus Sutra itself. In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, the supreme vehicle

is the Gohonzon, and chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to it carries all people to enlightenment.

Five in a series

—Illustration by Ed Lee

Words of Compassion, Words of Reason

By JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

I am fully aware that if I do not speak out, I will be lacking in compassion. ("The Opening of the Eyes," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 238)

I'm going to end this series with this quote from "The Opening of the Eyes," one of Nichiren Daishonin's five major writings. When the Daishonin says, "I am fully aware that if I do not speak out [against incorrect teachings], I will be lacking in compassion," he shows us that his intolerance of religious injustice, the strong stance he took against the erroneous religions of his day, was actually his great compassion.

He spoke up only to save people from misery.

The Daishonin wrote "The Opening of the Eyes" in 1272 during his Sado Exile. In it, he identifies himself as the

original Buddha, the Buddha who protects all people from all religious confusion — the Buddha who has more compassion for the people than anyone else.

Essentially, practicing Buddhism correctly means to practice with this same heart of the Buddha.

Members often ask me, "What can I do about the temple issue?" If I say, "Speak out," they sometimes say that they don't know anyone in the temple to talk to.

Coming from a compassionate place, though, it's important that each of us find an appropriate way to discuss this topic with guests to our meetings, with people joining the organization, with fellow members, with friends, with family members — with everyone. After all, to understand the temple issue means to understand what constitutes the humanistic and courageous practice of the Daishonin's Buddhism, in contrast to rigid and authoritarian formality.

Unless the temple issue is discussed, it will remain a vague theory, or a piece

of old news, for many. Articles about it in the *World Tribune* and pamphlets on the issue don't mean much if all the information doesn't inspire conversations, real exchange.

Whether we have wholeheartedly engaged someone in a discussion of this issue may be a deciding factor in that person's faith, practice and life in the future. And, more than that, it's each of us. SGI President Ikeda came to trust the Daishonin's teachings because he found President Toda completely trustworthy. In that sense, people's trust of the SGI depends on each of us becoming fully trustworthy.

Whether people decide to side with the temple or the SGI depends entirely on what kind of people we are, on what kind of an organization we can create.

The basic point of "Stands To Reason" has been that the SGI's response to the temple issue — its decision to speak out against the priesthood's dishonest intentions, to make the temple issue an

issue — has been, from beginning to end, entirely compassionate and reasonable. It has been entirely in accord with the Daishonin's teachings and his maxim that "Buddhism is reason" (MW-3, 238).

The Daishonin calls for us to turn toward reason in all things: in how we live, in how we spend our time, in how we practice faith, in how we take responsibility for our lives and this world. And he so clearly, so painstakingly explains exactly why we must face persecution as Buddhists, exactly what the nature of this persecution is, and exactly how we should deal with it: with words of compassion, with words of reason. By speaking out about it.

Although the temple issue is not over yet — and although it's been going on much longer than many of us originally thought that it would — reason will win out in the temple issue; the SGI will win. The true, compassionate teachings of Buddhism will triumph over Nikken's distorted teachings, which pretend to be Buddhism.

If Buddhism is powerful, which it is, and we are practicing it correctly, then this only stands to reason..

This concludes "Stands To Reason."

The Daishonin calls for us to turn toward reason in all things: in how we live, in how we spend our time, in how we practice faith.

SGI PRESIDENT'S NEW YEAR'S SPEECH

Ceaseless Struggle for Good Is the Spirit of the Daishonin's Buddhism

President Ikeda gave the following speech at the New Year's Gongyo Meeting held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Tokyo, on Jan. 2, 1999.

This gongyo meeting, which the Buddhist gods have joined us in celebrating, is indeed an auspicious omen for what lies ahead. Bright, lively New Year's gatherings similar to this one are being held across the country. In terms of size and the enthusiasm of its members, the Soka Gakkai is, in name and reality, the foremost religious organization in Japan.

Every day I am praying for kosen-rufu and for the good health, longevity, prosperity and success of all of you. This is all I wish for. I believe that this is the fundamental responsibility and mission of a leader of kosen-rufu. Everything else is of secondary importance. I hope that you may understand my spirit in this regard and carry it on.

A well-known Japanese business leader visited the Soka Gakkai Headquarters yesterday to convey his New Year's greetings. He made a number of remarks that I would briefly like to share with you.

To paraphrase, he said: "This year's going to be another tough one. Some analysts have remarked that in earlier times a situation like we have today could easily spark a coup d'état. There's no one we can count on to get us out of this mess.... In such an environment, I believe, the presence of the Soka Gakkai is extremely important for Japan. The Soka Gakkai has the capacity to absorb all the energy of social discontent and channel it in a positive direction.... I fear that we are entering an extremely trying period. What is required of our leaders in government and other spheres of society right now is 'philosophical depth.' That is why the Soka Gakkai is so important."

A deadlocked Japan. A resurgence of nationalism that oppresses and exploits the people. Many perceptive individuals voice deep concern that Japan is heading in a very dangerous direction, alienating itself increasingly from the rest of the world. Thinking people clearly recognize that a deeply humanistic philosophy and actions based on such a philosophy are the only means by which we can surmount this crisis. And they hold great expectations for the SGI movement, which is energetically dedicated to liberating the power of the people and creating value.

I have introduced the remarks of this particular business leader to show how highly our endeavors are being appraised today by people in society.

A leader must have humanity, a spirit of caring. To think of others rather than be obsessed with self — that is Buddhism. A genuine leader is one who humbly helps and guides others with utmost dedication, warmly supporting and protecting them throughout. Haughty, insolent leaders do not deserve to be called leaders. I am now fostering a new wave of caring leaders for the 21st century.

Twenty years ago, in 1979, I visited India, known in the Daishonin's time as the "Land of the Moon." I still remember vividly to this day the breathtaking beauty of the full moon illuminating the immortal Ganges. It was on the anniversary of my mentor Josei Toda's birth, Feb. 11.

Today, there will also be a full moon over Japan.

Two decades ago, an unsavory alliance of treacherous ex-Gakkai members, scheming priests and hypocritical political leaders attacked our organization. They sought to take over the Soka Gakkai, wishing to control and use it for their own self-serving ends, and to get rid of me, who stood in their way.

I am a disciple who has directly inherited the legacy of Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda, our first and second presidents. I have a responsibility to protect the pure organization of the SGI. I fought alone in the storm. I fought with-

out ceasing to this day. This year will mark the 20th anniversary of the day I saw that spectacular full moon over the Ganges.

India's largest and most prestigious institute of higher learning, the University of Delhi, has informed me of its decision to present me with an honorary doctorate. Since I am your representative, this is an honor bestowed upon all of you. I believe it is a tribute to your achievements and one proof of the "westward transmission of Buddhism" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 588), which the Daishonin predicted in the Gosho "Remonstrations with Bodhisattva Hachiman."

The conferral of honorary doctorates and honorary professorships from universities throughout Asia, including China and Korea [through which Buddhism was originally transmitted from India to Japan], and the rest of the world, corresponds to the testimony of Many Treasures (Taho) Buddha [who bore witness to the truth of Shakyamuni's teachings in the Lotus Sutra].

Civilization Depends on Triumphant Over Evil

The Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin is an active, engaged Buddhism — in which its practitioners are constantly engaged in the struggle of good against evil.

There is a famous passage in the Lotus Sutra in which Shakyamuni states: "After I have passed into extinction, in the last five hundred year period you must spread it [my teaching] abroad widely throughout Jambudvīpa [the entire world] and never allow it to be cut off, nor must you allow evil devils, the devils' people, heavenly beings, dragons, yakshas or kumbhanda demons to seize the advantage" (LS23, 288).

It is a command to widely propagate the Buddha's teachings, ensuring that it is never lost, and to give no opening for devilish functions to enter and wreak mischief.

According to Arnold Toynbee, the great British historian, civilization develops and flourishes only when people respond to the challenge of evil by fighting and triumphing over it. Being defeated by evil only means ruin.

Buddhism is a battle of good against evil. It is because of our ongoing victories in that battle that the SGI has achieved the phenomenal growth it has today. If we lose our fighting spirit, then we are no longer practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism.

The widespread propagation of the Mystic Law is the wish and decree of the original Buddha, Nichiren Daishonin.

A scholar of religion outside Japan remarked, "In the entire realm of Buddhism, only the SGI is carrying out the task of widespread propagation."

In contrast, those who embellish religion with authority, who exploit religion for personal gain and milk it for profit are nothing other than "robbers of the Law." Though

SGI President's Message for New Year's Gongyo Meetings

To my most respected and esteemed friends, fellow members of the SGI throughout the world, Happy New Year and congratulations on the commencement of this significant year, which we have resolved to make the start of the 21st century! I hope you are greeting today in high spirits, filled with hope and courage.

In the Gosho, Nichiren Daishonin states: "The moon moves from west to east; this is a sign that the Buddhism of India, the land of the moon, will spread toward the east. The sun rises in the east; this is an omen that the Buddhism of Japan, the land of the sun, will return to India" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 589). The Daishonin also declares: "It is certain that widespread propagation (of the Law) will eventually be achieved throughout the entire world" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 816).

We of the SGI have made a reality of the Daishonin's predictions — both of the westward transmission of Buddhism and the worldwide propagation of the Mystic Law — right down to the letter. Had it not been for the SGI, his words would have been made a lie.

As members of this great organization of justice that has inherited the Buddha's will and decree, you are working selflessly to spread the Mystic Law across the globe. You are most certainly Bodhisattvas of the Earth who have volunteered to be born here in this world and this time. You are infinitely noble and precious children of the Buddha.

As a result of your tireless efforts, the SGI movement has now spread to 128 countries and territories, growing from a tiny trickle into a mighty river irrigating and enriching the land. I wish to express my deepest respect for your unceasing hard work and energetic efforts.

Not only are you accumulating immeasurable good fortune and benefit, but your achievements will shine brightly in the annals of Buddhism. I am confident that all Buddhas throughout time and space will praise you, and that, as protective functions of the universe, they will guard you, your children and all of your descendants into eternity.

In the Gosho "Repaying Debts of Gratitude," the Daishonin proclaims, "If Nichiren's compassion is truly great and encompassing, Nam-myoho-enge-kyo will spread for ten thousand years and more, for all eternity..." (MW-4, 272). There is no need for us to be impatient or proceed with unnecessary haste. The most important thing is that we put down roots in society and make valuable contributions to our communities and countries as outstanding citizens.

Please advance joyfully and harmoniously, solidly united in spirit and purpose. Let us each give a powerful performance in our respective roles, as we act out the epic, real-life drama of kosen-rufu in this world.

I am always praying earnestly that you, my dear friends throughout the world, will enjoy good health and long, fulfilling lives and shine as millionaires of happiness. My very best to you all!

Daisaku Ikeda, SGI President
January 1, 1999

things may appear to go well for such people for a time, in the end, as the Gosho teaches, they inevitably wind up in truly pitiful circumstances. The workings of the Buddhist law of cause and effect are incredibly strict.

The SGI alone is the noble organization that has inherited and is carrying out the Buddha's will and decree. I hope all of you will be proud of this fact. There is no way that you who are working so hard for kosen-rufu will not be protected by the Buddhist gods and by all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas throughout time and space — the protective functions of the universe.

May all of you have a fabulous year! May it be a year of good health and much happiness. With these wishes for you for the coming year, I conclude my remarks. ㊦

Chorus Has Encouraged Audiences for Nine Years



The America Rainbow Chorus presents its year-end concert 'Colors of the Rainbow 2' at the Los Angeles Friendship Center, Dec. 6, 1998.

The voice does the Buddha's work in many ways. I have used mine to sing with the America Rainbow Chorus for more than a year now. SGI President Ikeda gave us this name in 1990, and since 1991, the chorus has sung for SGI-USA members all over Southern California, and for public events such as the United Nations celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights last year.

This is a highly talented, committed and gutsy family of people with whom I have

joined for the purpose of inspiring people through music. Its beautiful unity and diversity is also a reflection of the SGI-USA organization.

I have always thought that music is essential for the health of the spirit. And this really works both ways! I pray that our performances bring some joy to the people we sing for and that they leave feeling happy and hopeful. I know I always do! I think of it as a deeply fulfilling exchange of energy.

Last year I was sick on the eve of the L.A. Marathon where we performed. It wasn't a contagious illness, so in the end I dragged up to my place in the back row just as we began. The runners and the crowd appreciated our singing, and it proved to be the perfect medicine for me.

Regret sets in now when I have to miss rehearsal or a performance and I want to return to this activity ASAP!

— DON SANDERS

Linus Pauling Virtual Tour

You may have missed visiting the "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" exhibition in San Francisco, but now you can *virtually* visit it. A virtual tour has been completed and added to the official exhibition Web site, www.paulingexhibit.org. While the virtual tour uses text and images from the exhibition, it's designed for an optimal Web experience and doesn't simply duplicate the actual exhibition space. It also explains the story behind the creation of the exhibition, co-sponsored by the SGI.

PERSPECTIVE

By DEBORAH GOODWIN
LOS ANGELES

Each of us is poised like runners, at the starting gate of a new year — January 1999 — ready to launch into the challenges ahead.

We have goals, determinations and the ebullient feeling that "this year will be different — better!" We have all the ammunition we've stored up over the past year to fuel our vision for what is to come and the lives we desire to lead. In this way we are experiencing freedom. The freedom to change and dream big. The freedom to visualize our futures as brighter, sharper, more consistent than they have been in the past. The freedom to transform discord into harmony. Defeat into victory. Bondage to old beliefs, ideas and behaviors into broad new vistas of thought and action.

This freedom we are experiencing is absolute, an inalienable right, just as our Constitution declares it to be. In addition, we are "free" to experience this every day, moment to moment. Deeply

Set Yourself Free!

grasping this truth causes us to feel joyful, confident and move on behalf of others spontaneously, because it's all we can do to contain this powerful sense of freedom — we want to share it. We feel compelled to share it, because freedom of this nature has no limit, it spills out of our lives seeking out other people and places where it can flourish. This freedom has an overwhelming electrical charge to it. It doesn't need to be justified or quantified. When we engage in the practice of freeing ourselves, we are simultaneously taking responsibility for the happiness of the world in which we find ourselves. We are exercising our ultimate right as human beings.

In America, we consider our freedom to be an inalienable right. Our Constitution proclaims it and our practice of democracy affirms this truth to be "self-evident." Yet, as we arrive in the 21st century, our notions of freedom are being tested at every level. Some contend that America has often misinterpreted the word *freedom* to mean "license." That we have misused and even abused our freedoms to such an extent that the very beliefs upon which this country was founded have become a poor par-

ody of their original intent. These contentions are mirrored in the ongoing impeachment proceedings against our current President and the rising furor that decries our military agenda in Iraq, along with our perceived failure to address the grotesque escalation of hate crimes, such as the recent murder of a Laramie, Wyo., youth. Our freedom of speech and religion, our right to bear arms and our mandate of free enterprise have all come under scrutiny as we search to define the code by which we live. There are many factions and as many dissenting voices when it comes to the definition of freedom. All agree we must have it — few agree on how much freedom, for whom and for what purpose.

As members of the SGI, we are ordinary people who have freely chosen to embrace our mission as world citizens in all our varied shapes and forms. With all our diverse backgrounds, educations, power and influence, we are simultaneously of one body and one mind. How remarkable! "Those who are capable of embracing the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law relinquish their claim to the pure land and out of pity for living beings are born here. Know that


persons such as these freely choose where they will be born, and choose to be born in this evil world so that they may broadly expound the unsurpassed Law" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 163).

Almost 2,000 years later, Nichiren Daishonin echoes this statement: "Two thousand years of propagating Buddhism during the Former and Middle Days of the Law are inferior to an hour of propagation in this, the Latter Day of the Law. This is in no way because of Nichiren's wisdom, but simply because the time makes it so" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 4, pp. 272-73). We are practicing in this time, this age, and at the beginning of a colossal transition into a new millennium.

Nichiren Daishonin's state of mind defines absolute freedom and provides us with irrefutable proof that our freedom does not depend on circumstances outside ourselves. As we pursue our practice, deepen our faith and unfetter our minds and hearts from our doubts, fears and disillusion, we stand to inherit this same state of mind. In "The Opening of the Eyes," Nichiren concludes on an exultant note: "For what I have done, I have been condemned to exile, but it is a small suffering to

undergo in this present life and not worth lamenting. In future lives I will enjoy immense happiness, a thought that gives me great joy" (*Learning From the Goshu*, p. 70).

Our freedom is not defined by our race, sexual orientation, income, education, or any other measure we have devised as a society to imprison ourselves. Nor is it defined by the rights bestowed on us by others. Our freedom remains in our own hands. Resides in our own hearts, can be reached in an instant, attained in a moment — the moment that we choose to free ourselves. Conceiving of the idea to free ourselves is frightening, it carries all the trepidation of a dark cellar or a sudden fall. The word free may indeed set our hearts pounding — in fear, not exhilaration.

Our practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism does not egoistically aspire to a world where everyone is free to "do as they please," but instead, strives to create an authentic experience of personal freedom that offers the key to freedom for all. In terms of cause and effect, setting ourselves free becomes the most courageous act of compassion we can undertake. "We hold these truths to be self-evident," and if we translate "self-evident" to mean "existing within ourselves," then it is clear that we must be the ones to set ourselves free. 

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

a novelized history of the soka gakkai

'FRESH GROWTH'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 21-22

Shin'ichi Yamamoto encourages study exam participants in Los Angeles to 'strive to put into practice what you have learned through these exams, even if just a word or a phrase.' While they take their tests, Shin'ichi plays basketball with the participants' children.

By **DAISAKU IKEDA**
SGI PRESIDENT

C hikako Hayashida took her responsibilities very seriously. And being serious about something means staking one's life on it. Such resolute commitment allows us to give voice to what we sincerely believe and know to be right. We thus open others' closed hearts and strike a common chord of friendship and understanding with them.

Hayashida's earnestness is precisely what had made it possible for the U.S. young women's division to grow so rapidly. Just one individual standing up with a sense of purpose and taking action creates an impetus that spreads like a wave to others and thus gives rise to a powerful momentum in the development of kosen-rufu.

The postwar history of the Soka Gakkai, too, began with Josei Toda standing up alone to rebuild the organization. The times may change, but this principle will always remain the same.

Through sincere daily efforts, Hayashida had successfully built the YWD into a solid force of 21 members. Her face radiated vitality and cheerfulness.

To teach people about Buddhism, to lead them to awaken faith in Nichiren Daishonin's teaching, we must care deeply about their lives, share their pain and sufferings as our own and pray wholeheartedly for their happiness. And when they embrace faith and overcome their problems as a result, it is our great fortune to share in their joy and their experiencing the benefit gained from Buddhist practice.

Through this process, we deepen our own under-

standing of the power of the Daishonin's Buddhism and come to develop indomitable faith. Soka Gakkai activities, in other words, are a driving force for our personal growth and for elevating our life-state.

That afternoon, Study Department examinations, both entrance level and promotional, were held for Los Angeles Chapter members at two locations — one in Los Angeles and one in San Diego. A total of 250 people took the exams, which were all oral exams.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto went to the Los Angeles exam site — a Japanese language school — to offer words of encouragement to the examinees.

"Thank you very much for taking the trouble to come here and challenge this exam," he said. "Some of you must be wondering why we have to study such difficult Buddhist theory, when surely it's simply enough to chant and receive benefit. Please bear in mind, however, that while correct faith does bring tremendous benefit, it is also fraught with obstacles and difficulties. Unless you have a solid grounding in study, you'll start to have doubts when problems arise."

"When oppression by the military authorities led to the arrests of Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda during World War II," he went on, "all of their fellow Gakkai leaders abandoned their faith. The reason was that those leaders had not studied and understood the principles of this Buddhism.

"But when we study the Daishonin's teachings thoroughly," he explained, "we know why obstacles and persecution accompany correct faith and understand how we can attain Buddhahood in this lifetime. Similarly, when talking to others about Buddhism, we can explain why the Daishonin's teaching is great and elucidate what constitutes a correct religion in a clear, logical and convincing manner. That is why the Daishonin stresses that practice must go hand in hand with study. He urges: 'Exert yourself in the two ways of practice and study. Without practice and study, there can be no Buddhism' (*The*

Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 95).

After explaining the importance of studying Buddhist theory in a way that all could understand, Shin'ichi said: "The exams we have in the Gakkai are to encourage you in your study of Buddhism. The main point is that you not only strengthen your determination to continue studying the Daishonin's teachings throughout your life but strive to put into practice what you have learned through these exams, even if just a word or a phrase. Your goal is not simply to pass a test but to become winners in faith, victors in happiness.

"By the way, I'm not going to be directly involved in administering your exams today," he said. "If I were, I know I'd be such a pushover that I'd end up passing you all. Vice General Director Jujo and the other Study Department professors here are of the opinion that, since an exam is a very serious and exacting affair, it's better that I'm not one of the examiners!"

The examinees laughed. Their expressions, previously tense with pre-test anxiety, completely transformed.

Shin'ichi continued: "Many of you have brought your children along today, so while you're taking the exam, I'm going to play with them. Please go into the exam without worrying about a thing and confidently show the examiners the knowledge you have gained through your day-to-day study of Buddhism."

Shin'ichi's words warmed their hearts.

Taking an exam was a nerve-racking experience for most people. Shin'ichi wanted to ease their tension. It is a leader's responsibility to constantly consider how to let everyone bring forth their greatest strength and potential. A genuine leader is sensitive to others' feelings — someone who, if people are nervous, helps them relax; if people are anxious, puts them at ease; someone who gives people confidence, hope, courage and energy. Shin'ichi wanted to

convey this spirit to Nagayasu Masaki and the other U.S. Gakkai leaders.

Shin'ichi went to the playground and began playing basketball with the children. When the ball came to him, one of the boys quickly stole it away. The boy dribbled the ball skillfully, but after a while he stopped running and turned around — at that instant, Shin'ichi regained possession.

"Caught you off guard!" he said playfully. "Even if you get the ball, if you don't stay alert it'll be taken from you again. The side that keeps playing with the most spirit and energy wins."

While he was talking, another boy stole the ball from him. The sight of Shin'ichi playing with the children brought warm smiles to the members' faces and helped them feel closer to their president.

The examinees seemed relaxed and at ease as they took their exams, all of them doing their best in answering the questions.

To be continued

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

World TRIBUNE The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

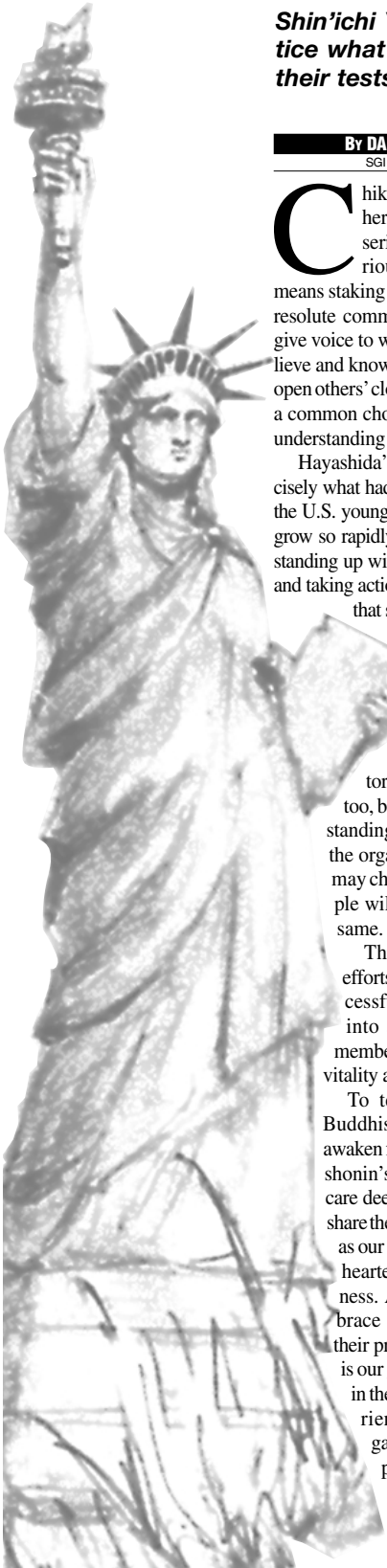
(ISSN 0049-8165)

The *World Tribune* (692-720) is published weekly by the SGI-USA, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-1427; (310) 260-8900; FAX (310) 260-8910; E-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org Subscriptions Office: (800) 835-4558; FAX (310) 260-8970; E-mail: SGIUSUBS@aol.com

Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA, and at additional mailing offices. Return To: SGI-USA Subscriptions, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-1427

Subscription Rates (subject to state taxes) \$15 for Three Months; \$28 for Six Months; \$50 for One Year; \$85 for Two Years; \$110 for Three Years.

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When One Person Takes a Stand

In part 2 of his December Headquarters Leaders Meeting speech, the SGI president talks about U.S. Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin. She courageously opposed war and proved that "when a person earnestly committed to a cause takes a stand, he or she can manifest the strength of two, three, 10 or even 100 people."

Jeannette Rankin, the first woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, also voted against the United States' entry into World War I. But on that occasion, she had been one of 50 Congress members who had done so.

This time, voting against entry into the Pacific War, she was the sole dissenting vote.

She had no allies in the House for her decision. The press clamored for war, and Rankin's constituents threatened not to reelect her if she wouldn't support the war motion. But she refused to break her resolve.

She declared that although one could physically kill others, one could not kill their thought and ideology. Killing people is completely opposed to life and denies the possibility of rich, blossoming growth, she believed.

Rankin was an intelligent woman. She knew very well that a certain segment of politicians and businessmen would profit handsomely from the war. There are countless examples of the keen intellect of women penetrating right to the heart of the matter.

In June 1941, before the House, she submitted for the

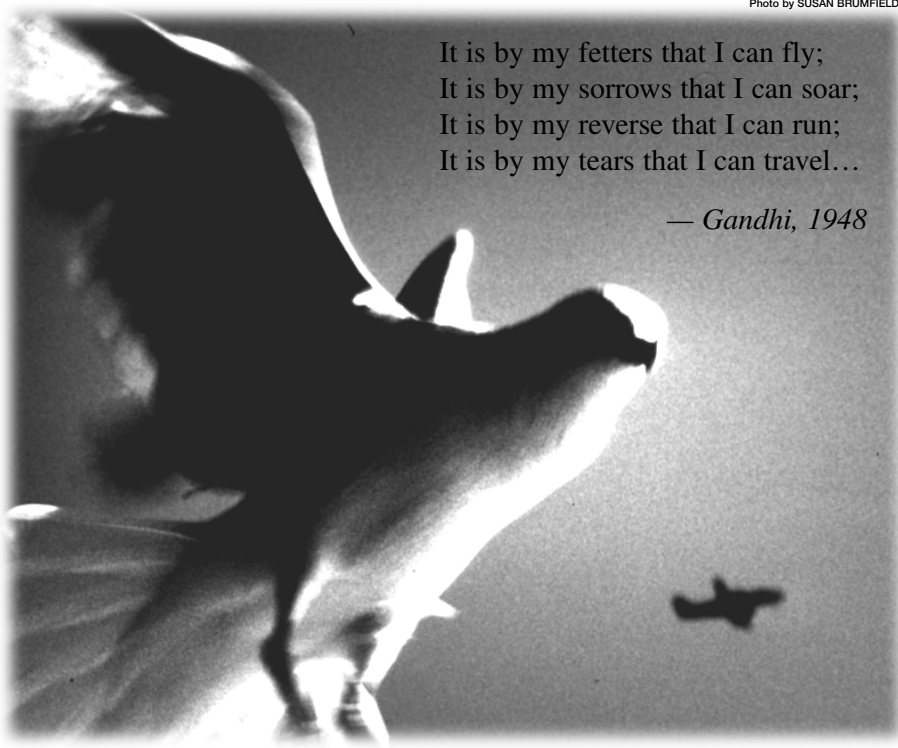


Photo by SUSAN BRUMFIELD

It is by my fetters that I can fly;
It is by my sorrows that I can soar;
It is by my reverse that I can run;
It is by my tears that I can travel...

— Gandhi, 1948

congressional record a national defense creed that struck a powerful chord with her own deepest convictions. The eight-point creed reads in part: "I believe in national defense against those who use patriotism as a cloak in order to reap profits from the present tragic world suffering.... I believe in national defense against political demagogues and all vested interests which tamper in any way with those rights of freedom of speech, press, and assemblage as guaranteed by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights."

But in the war climate, Rankin's pacifist stance was condemned. She was criticized and ridiculed relentlessly, and viewed with cold, judgmental eyes. Yet she continued on her way undeterred. She continued with pride, strength and dignity. Her story reminds me of the valiant struggles for justice by our women's division members.

And what sustained Rankin throughout this solitary struggle? Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence and moral resistance to injustice.

Philosophy is what powers and sustains one's struggle. Principles are what support one's unwavering commitment to justice and prevent one from

being swayed by morally wrong or destructive currents.

Drawn to Gandhi's pacifism, Rankin visited India several times after World War II. Gandhi, unfortunately, was killed before she could meet him — a fact that she greatly lamented. But she did meet with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

Leaders must search out the forgotten who stand up for justice — this fairness is the basic requirement of a leader.

For a long time after World War II, Rankin was all but forgotten by the public. There was one person, though, who gave this courageous woman her due. It was John F. Kennedy.

In 1958, the future U.S. president, who regarded courage as the highest virtue, wrote an article titled "Three Women of Courage" in *McCall's* magazine. And the first story he chronicled in the piece was Rankin's.

It is the mission of leaders to search out and applaud those who stand on the side of justice, those who are worthy of our

greatest respect and admiration. Fairness is the basic requirement of a leader.

In this respect, Kennedy was right on the mark. By contrast, someone obsessed with personal gain and preoccupied with praise or blame, someone who judges people based on emotion or a biased viewpoint, cannot be expected to lead society in the right direction.

Incidentally, a short time after I became Soka Gakkai president in 1960, President Kennedy conveyed to me his wish that we meet. But before anything could be actualized, he, like Gandhi, was assassinated.

To hold on to your ideals is to stay forever young.

Rankin continued to campaign against war until her death at 92. She remained a staunch, committed pacifist throughout her life — a life of tumultuous struggle.

In 1968, only a few years before her death, Rankin led a march of 10,000 women in protest of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. She was putting Gandhi's teaching of nonviolent

resistance into practice.

The renowned U.S. consumer advocate Ralph Nader saw this spirited crusader as "a future-directed person, tireless in the pursuit of her ends." He wrote in her praise, "If aging is the erosion of one's ideals, then Jeannette Rankin is young forever."

To be tireless in the pursuit of our ends — this is the SGI.

To be future-oriented — this is the Mystic Law.

From the present to the future. From now to tomorrow. Let's always advance with our focus on the present and the future.

Our body and spirit wither away when we have no ideals and no sense of purpose. But those who always fight for a cause, who always strive for an ideal, are forever young. Their minds are alert; they are full of vitality.

This is all the more true of those who uphold the Mystic Law, which is unaging and undying. Faith is the foundation for developing a youthful inner glow. No amount of makeup or cosmetics can compare to what faith can do. Our Buddhist practice enables us to become beautiful from within, cleansing and purifying our lives.

So let's always advance with young, vigorous hearts toward realizing a world of peace and human triumph.

The great drama of human revolution always starts with one person.

Today, a bronze statue of Rankin stands in the U.S. Capitol Building, where she was once greeted with such hostility and derision. On the statue's base is the inscription, "I cannot vote for war." How simple this declaration is, yet how profound, how immortal!

At a time when none of her male colleagues in Congress supported peace, one lone woman, Jeannette Rankin, stuck to her pacifist convictions.

It all comes down to one person taking a courageous stand. The great drama of human revolution always begins with one person.

SPEECH, FROM PAGE 6

This is the truth that President Toda demonstrated with his life and the creed by which Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the Soka Gakkai's founding president, lived and died. Taking a stand is an act of supreme moral right. When a person earnestly committed to a cause takes a stand, he or she can manifest the strength of two, three, 10 or even 100 people.

Women are much stronger than men, as far as moral strength goes.

Gandhi observed: "Women are clearly weaker than men when it comes to purely brute strength, but when it comes to moral strength, women are infinitely stronger than their male counterparts. If nonviolence is indeed a doctrine that should be upheld by humanity, then we will find women steadily taking over the role of shapers of the future."

Women can't compete with men in terms of physical strength — some of the men here might heartily disagree with that statement, thinking, "It's the exact opposite at our house!"

All joking aside, Gandhi asserts that women are definitely superior in terms of moral and spiritual strength, both of which are nonviolent in nature. I agree with him. Compared to men, who tend to shirk hard work and sometimes can be less than truthful, women are generally out and about, taking action steadily, day in and day out.

Our women's division members are doing the real work in advancing the kosen-rufu movement. They are working quietly, diligently, their efforts often going unnoticed. How praiseworthy they are! No men's division leader can hold a candle to them.

You, the women's division members, are creating a new world of nonviolence and humanism. I applaud the fact that, just as Gandhi foresaw, women — and certainly, none more than you, the women of the SGI — are now indeed shaping the future. I hope that you will be just as courageous as Jeannette Rankin in voicing a resounding "No!" should men try to embark on any erroneous course, whether it be at home, in the or-

ganization or in society.

Every time that Gandhi was imprisoned, his spirit soared higher.

1998 marks the 50th anniversary of Gandhi's martyrdom. Three months before he died, he wrote the following lines of verse, which may be considered his last spiritual declaration:

It is by my fetters that I can fly;

It is by my sorrows that I can soar;

It is by my reverse that I can run;

It is by my tears that I can travel....

These lines contain profound meaning. They strike a chord with the Buddhist teaching that earthly desires and sufferings lead to enlightenment.

Gandhi was imprisoned countless times. But each time, his spirit soared higher. He strove to reach an ever-higher summit of spiritual attainment.

What's the meaning of our lives if we just watch television all the time?

Dr. N. Radhakrishnan says: "If everything always goes smoothly, people grow lazy. You, the members of the SGI, have braved many trials and tribulations. That is why you endure. Undergoing various tests and challenges is proof that you are growing and becoming even stronger. This is a law of the natural world."

People who suffer great hardships grow and develop as a result. Those who avoid difficulties by dint of clever maneuvering bring about their own downfall.

And the higher the positions such people rise to, the more immoderate their personal tastes and desires become. The more selfish and decadent they grow. Their lives lead ultimately to defeat.



Jeannette Rankin became the first woman elected to the House of Representatives in 1916 as a Montana Republican. Defeated in a reelection bid because of her anti-war policies, she found her way back to Congress in 1940, then cast the sole dissenting vote against the U.S. declaration of war against Japan.

The truly great strive with all their might — like people who propagate Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, who brave criticism and harassment, who work to the point of exhaustion for the people's happiness. Despite the present hardships that they face, such people will definitely win in the end.

The Daishonin tells us that "one should regard meeting obstacles as true peace and comfort" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 750). Without encountering difficulties, we cannot strengthen or develop ourselves; we cannot forge a life-condition of true peace and comfort.

In all things, stimulus gives rise to growth. If we splash our face with cold water when we wake in the morning, it quickly dispels our sleepiness. When we venture into the wind and cold, it braces us and gets our circulation going.

What is the meaning of our lives if we just sit around mindlessly watching television all the time, devoid of stimulus, failing to challenge ourselves? We can't expect to feel any real joy.

When we lead busy lives, it's only natural that we want to have some time to ourselves occasionally. Watching television, I feel, is actually more enjoyable when we just watch a little bit in the snatches of free time we find in a busy schedule.

In any event, what's important is to challenge trials and confront hardships head-on. To overcome them one by one. This is the true path of human beings. It is the path of Buddhism, the path of victors. Having the strength to surmount all obstacles constitutes true peace and comfort.

Japan and many other parts of the world continue to be plagued by a serious economic recession. The news is full of gloom and doom with little to brighten or relieve the darkness. Everything is gray, bleak. People's desolation and despair is at a crisis point.

And no solution is in sight.

Therefore, let us of the SGI illuminate and brighten the world with sun-like brilliance. As the Daishonin states, "Employ the strategy of the Lotus Sutra before any other" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 246). There is no greater strategy than the Lotus Sutra's.

Let's prove this! Let's win!

Attacks by decadent priests figure into a standard formula of human society.

Dr. Radhakrishnan says something very important: that Gandhi's struggle was a continuation of Shakyamuni's struggle; Gandhi was conducting a political experiment based on the Buddha's message.

Gandhi and Shakyamuni are connected on a profound level.

Dr. Radhakrishnan says that Gandhi gives a "modern interpretation to Shakyamuni's teachings." Similarly, the SGI is now giving a modern interpretation to, and putting into practice, the teachings of the Daishonin, who revealed the essence of Shakyamuni's highest teaching, the Lotus Sutra. This is one of the reasons why our organization is great.

Gandhi proclaims Buddhism a human-centered, humanistic religion. Gandhi was not a Buddhist; he was a member of the Hindu faith. His cultural background and life were rooted in Hindu tradition and religion. Nevertheless, he unstintingly praises Buddhism as a religion centered on the human being. He once even said, "India has fallen not because it accepted Shakyamuni's teaching, but because it failed to live up to it."

Gandhi also mentions the significance of Shakyamuni being persecuted by the decadent priests of the established Brahman order, lamenting that "the priest has ever sacrificed the prophet." Corrupt priests, driven by self-interest, invariably attack and seek to do away with leaders who possess a fresh, vital, dynamic spirit. This is a standard formula in human society. The actions of the Nikken sect priests bear this out.

Gandhi and Hitler are exact opposites

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 11

鍛鍊信心

維護正義

池田SGI會長

第二十七屆本部幹部會於十月二十二日在東京八王子市的東京牧口紀念會館舉行，席上宣布了把明年(一九九九年)定名為「新世紀、地城勝利之年」。與會者包括池田SGI會長與秋谷會長、全國和海外代表，以下是在會中長篇講話的內容。

我思想鬆弛地跟各位傾談一下，我時常都在考慮，要以令大家感到輕鬆舒暢的方式來講話。若是開會時也精神緊張的話，大家便不可憐。

學會完全無須拘泥形式，要自然、自由一點，這就是我們人本主義的世界。

世界各地頒授給我的名譽博士學位、名譽教授稱號，現時有五百五十五個。剛收到了報告，說連同已決定者在內，已增至七十一個。

因為我是一代表一各位領獎，在此謹向大家報告。這跟各位獲獎具有同樣的意義。

對談的回憶

今天十月二十二日是湯因比(Archibald N. S. Inge)博士的忌辰。他在一九七五年逝世，享年八十六歲。

博士與我在七二年和翌年進行對談，前後共十次。博士也衷心為這對談感到高興。

每天從早上到黃昏，認真地互相傾談。到了下午茶時間，秘書便輕輕把茶點捧來給我們，與博士夫婦一同親切地渡過的美好時光，令我懷念。

對邪惡不能「大公無私」

湯因比對不能「大公無私」的問題，其中有一次，他說話時聲音特別激昂。那是談到「希特勒屠殺猶太民族」這個話題的時候。

希特勒叱吒風雲時，湯因比博士在英國的「皇家國際問題研究所」執筆撰寫有關國際問題的論文。

什麼宗教會開創新文明？

博士曾與我討論「產生、支持新文明的未來宗教」會是怎樣的宗教。

他說：「未來的宗教必須能給人類力量來對抗、克服如今嚴重威脅人類生存的諸惡。最強大的邪惡也是最古老的：貪欲、這和生命一樣古老，以及戰爭和社會的不公正，它們和文明一樣古老。」

這就是博士期待的宗教。要與惡決戰！絕對不可跟惡妥協，要擊敗惡！

歷史學家以公正的眼光來看我。創價學會弘揚的是最正確、人類最需要的「二十一世紀的世界宗教」。

湯因比博士曾引用古羅馬詩人盧克萊修(Lucretius)的說話：「觀人宜於臨危之時。處於逆境之際，方可認清其為人。因為，在那種時候才會吐露出心底真言，揭開面具，顯露原形。」

如今已接近二十一世紀，在這個動蕩的過渡期，「真偽」正受到篩選。我們要確定沒有壞人留在組織裡，因為日蓮大聖人也曾強調，惡徒不可留，惡友不可交。

佛與魔的鬥爭

湯因比博士也這樣說：「每一個人的靈魂都是善與惡不斷鬥爭的精神戰場。一善與惡鬥爭的戰場就是人的心。這個見解與佛法的教義不謀而合。佛法闡釋的就是永恆的佛與魔之爭。所以必須戰勝，被魔擊敗就不是真正的信仰，信仰的目的是爭取勝利。」

「難能可貴」。在當時男尊女卑的時代，大聖人主張「不分男女」(一諸法實相抄)，「男女平等」。

智利共和國的艾爾文(A. Paravicino)

艾爾文氏被說成有透視能力的魔性，嘆息道：不幸的是，權力這東西，必然導致傲慢、墮落和權威主義。

我們初次見面是在東京(一九九二年十一月)。當時雖是匆匆一聚，但彼此的信念共鳴，談到了希望一同出版對談錄。

日文版《太平洋的旭日》已經出版，有些地方或許稱為「新書」，但前總統發了許多心機創作的書。

「民主主義的信念」：政治家必須持「為大眾服務」的精神。政治家應該為民眾服務，而不是讓民眾侍候。

權力的墮落

前總統也說：「權力應該用來使眾人向善，而不是使人趨惡」。權力只不過是行善的「手段」、「工具」。

權力一旦變成目的，所有的理想都會被拋棄。

當權者處處受人恭維，只聽到順耳的奉承話。除非，身邊有直言不諱的人，往往會迷失自己，沉迷於榮耀的錯覺中。

為民眾服務

假使政治家為人缺乏謙虛和堅強的人格，在獲得要職時，便很可能忽視、忘掉本來的理想，甚至連解決的信念也動搖起來。

因此，領導人很需要提升人格的「某些要素」。在世界上，擁有信仰

「唯有民眾變成賢明」

那如何是好？前總統的結論是：「正如您(池田SGI)會長所說一樣，民眾本身必須變得賢明，每個人都要積極關心，並參與關係著個人的事情。」

起來！要監視權力！揭發邪惡！不可顧慮！前總統視自身著這個信念與軍事政權對抗，成功地恢復民主政治。

人民監視政治家，提出要求、陳述和反映意見，就是民主主義。甚麼也不讓人民說，就是獨裁政治。

讓我們勇往直前地走在這「民主主義的正道」上吧！

站在受苦的人身邊

周恩來總理曾說：「階級出身對個人影響很大，從這一點說，是很重要的。但更重要的是看他站在甚麼立場上。是站在人民群眾一邊，還是站在壓迫人民群眾的一邊。」

在日本，有些人在乎他人家世如何，那個地方出身，哪裡的學校畢業這些事情。出身如何跟人的價值完全無關。

周總理和夫人鄧穎超女士始終堅決地站在民眾一邊，站在受苦的人身邊，這就是他們偉大之處。

勇於發表自己的意見

蒙受冤屈罪名！沒有比這更令人氣憤、痛苦的事情。

有一次，鄧穎超女士這樣鼓勵一位被控冤罪、陷於苦難深淵的女性：「忍受這個罪惡，堅持真理，經過這一個鬥爭你也會更堅強。以後遇到問題，還要勇於發表自己的意見，保持這種精神是可貴的。經過這場鬥爭，你無論在思想意識上或身體上都經受了鍛鍊和考驗。(文獻下頁)」

Leadership Appointments



Ronnie Smith
SGI-USA
Vice General Director



Marion Wheeler
SGI-USA
Vice Young Women's Leader



Eric Hauber
SGI-USA
Culture Department Director



Eugene Hirahara
SGI-USA
Study Department Leader

SGI-USA Culture Department

Culture Department Senior Advisors — Gerry Hall, Masao Yokota
Culture Department Director — Eric Hauber
Culture Department Assistant Director — Greg Martin
Academic Division Director — Gail Thomas
Arts Division Assistant Director — Kay Yoshikawa

SGI-USA Study Department

Study Department Senior Advisors — Ted Morino, Greg Martin,
Richard Yoshimachi
Study Department Leader — Eugene Hirahara
Vice Study Department Leaders — Jeff Kriger, Margie Hall,
Shin Yatomi, Yoshi Nagaoka

Zone Leaders

(Zone leaders are national-level leaders responsible for specific geographic regions.)

There are eight zones that encompass 26 regions nationwide.

Southern Zone — Atlanta; Florida regions
Northeastern Zone — New England; New York West; New York East; New Jersey;
Brooklyn/Queens/Long Island regions
Mid-Atlantic Zone — Philadelphia; Washington, D.C. regions
Western Zone — Rocky Mountain; Texas regions
Pacific Zone — Hawaii #1; Hawaii #2 regions
Central Zone — Chicago #1; Chicago #2; Chicago #3; Midwest regions
Northwestern Zone — Pacific Northwest; San Francisco #1; San Francisco #2 regions
Southern California Zone — Los Angeles #1; L.A. Coastal; Los Angeles;
Los Angeles #4; Orange County; San Diego regions

Southern Zone

Sheilah Edwards
Women's Leader

Cliff Sawyer
Men's Leader

Northeastern Zone

Patricia Kasahara
Women's Leader

Tariq Hasan
Men's Leader

Mid-Atlantic Zone

Carmela Menchaca
Women's Leader

Bill Aiken
Men's Leader

Western Zone

Rita Risom
Women's Leader

Brian Matsuo
Men's Leader

Pacific Zone

Nora Padayhag
Women's Leader

Bert Kawamoto
Men's Leader

Central Zone

Kazue Elliot
Women's Leader

Guy McCloskey
Men's Leader

Northwestern Zone

Kazue Zaitzu
Women's Leader

Richard Yoshimachi
Men's Leader

Southern California Zone

Naomi Sasaki
Women's Leader

Daniel Nagashima
Men's Leader

Note: There will be youth division zone leadership appointments in the future.

EDITORIAL

DESIGN

MARKETING

PROMOTION

ACQUISITIONS

AGENTS

INDEXERS

Publishing Industry PROFESSIONALS

SGI-USA Publications is planning several new book projects for 1999 and beyond, and we are seeking professionals to help on a project-by-project basis. If you have experience in any of these areas and are interested in helping with exciting new projects, please send a description of your background or contact Dave McNeill at 310-260-8934 or dmcneill@sgi-usa.org for more information.



ALSO, CHILDREN'S BOOK AUTHORS & ILLUSTRATORS.

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Thanks

Thanks for such an encouraging New Year's issue. The experiences are heartfelt and moving. I could feel the determination of the members to share their joy in faith. I really enjoy the colorful pages as well as the quality paper. I knew there must be times when you feel unappreciated but I, for one, after 12 years of practice, still eagerly look for the next *World Tribune* in the mail box. I also feel that you are responding quickly and effectively to members' suggestions on how to improve our organ paper. I see the paper is constantly trying to improve. If it isn't prohibitive, it would be great to see a lot of color pictures and graphics in upcoming issues.

Thanks again. Best wishes to all for a healthy, prosperous 1999.

— MARC COPELL
Flushing, N.Y.

Dumbing Down

I saw the new *World Tribune*. It looks like a glorified super-

market flyer peppered with a smattering of psychedelia. It presents SGI-USA as an organization with "something to sell" rather than the avant-garde of a profound and hopeful philosophy to carry us into the next century and beyond. In my opinion this new format caters to the low mentality of a country too far on its way to dumbing down....

— JULIAN SEMILIAN,
Winston-Salem, N.C.

Proud of This Buddhism

I am so proud of this Buddhist religion. What has really impressed me are the experiences I have read in the *World Tribune* and heard at the various meetings at the New York Culture Center over the past three to four months.

In the past months, I have heard an experience about a woman who although she was Buddhist wanted to sing in a Christian choir. She finally got her wish and is extremely happy. I've heard an experience on how Christmas songs

can still be sung during that holiday season by those of us who practice this Buddhism (without feeling guilty or slanderous). I also heard an experience of a male member who chanted for a great relationship with another male. This determination was also realized through this practice.

Finally, I read in the *World Tribune* about a woman who not only wanted a meaningful relationship with another woman, but they had a Buddhist commitment ceremony at their community center. Where else in the world can members of a religious organization accomplish these bold determinations? Thank you so much.

— WALTER FORDE,
Linden Hills, N.Y.

Not In-Group Terms

In the Dec. 18 & 25, 1998, *World Tribune* "Mailbox" section, Cesare Civetta writes, "Why not just agree to make an effort to break the habit of

using Japanese words?" My question to Cesare is "What do I chant instead of Nam-myoho-rence-kyo?"

I do not consider the words *gongyo*, *shakubuku*, *kosen-rufu*, *daimoku* and the like as in-group terms used to exclude discussion meeting guests from the conversation. As a matter of fact, they will most probably be defined in future American dictionaries as have many other foreign words and phrases, like *déjà vu*, that are in common usage in the USA.

The aforementioned words will come into common usage as we (SGI-USA) continue to do *shakubuku*, work for *kosen-rufu*, observe *gongyo* and chant abundant *daimoku*.

Some time in the future, I intend to tell my great-great-grandchildren that I was SHAKUBUKUED in 1973. If they do not know what I mean, I will tell them to look it up in the dictionary.

— J. JACK TRASS, JR.
Gary, Ind.

Letters printed here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the SGI-USA or the World Tribune. In the "Mailbox," we will publish members' comments, suggestions and questions as they pertain to the World Tribune. Because of volume, not all letters can be printed, but they are all read. All letters are subject to condensation. Please include signature, mailing address and telephone number. Pseudonyms and initials will not be used. Send letters to "Mailbox," World Tribune, 606 Wilshire Boulevard, P.O. Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-1427; or e-mail at wt@sgi-usa.org.

Correction

In our Dec. 18 & 25, 1998, issue, the photograph on page 8 was incorrectly attributed. Sandra Eliot took the photo. We apologize for the mistake.

SPEECH, FROM PAGE 7

Gandhi strove to implement government based on Shakyamuni's spirit. Dr. Radhakrishnan explains that Gandhi includes politics without principles among his list of seven sins.

The others are wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity and worship without sacrifice.

Gandhi regards a political system devoid of religion as dead. What happens when people with no deep knowledge of the human heart, no profound view of society, the world or universe, gain political power? They become self-serving politicians. They only pay lip service to working for the people. And this is not a living political system, Gandhi declares.

Many political leaders exploit religion for political ends, and many religious leaders exploit politics for religious ends. But Gandhi falls into neither

category.

Religion and politics are naturally of two quite separate dimensions. Based on that premise, Gandhi believes it vital to make full use of the insights and teachings of religion in politics. Otherwise, politics, given the corrupting nature of power, sacrifices the people and bring the nation to ruin.

Gandhi says: "Politics bereft of religion is the noose that will hang the nation. In all cases, politics should follow the path of truth taught by religion. On the other hand, religion that abhors politics does not even deserve to be called religion."

Indeed, politics devoid of religion brings ruin upon a nation. And if a religion is genuinely committed to people's happiness, it will be involved and engaged in society and politics.

It is clear, in light of Gandhi's words, that the Soka Gakkai is advancing on the correct path.

Someone who says the exact opposite of Gandhi was Hitler. The dictator declared that religion should not meddle in pol-

itics and took measures to silence any opposition. As a result, Germany marched headlong down the path of nationalism.

It was the same with Japanese nationalism leading up to World War II. Religious leaders who criticized the government were thrown into prison. This was the case with Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda — the former dying behind bars. Both were victims of Japanese nationalism!

Dr. Radhakrishnan cites the words of the 18th-century English lexicographer and author Dr. Samuel Johnson: "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." Today, the insidious forces of nationalism, forces which seek to oppress freedom, are steadily resurfacing.

The path of Gandhi or the path of Hitler? Which is correct? There is, of course, only one right answer, don't you think?

In *The Adventures of Don Quixote*, the Spanish writer Cervantes writes, "Ingratitude is the daughter of pride." And a philosopher observes that

treachery is the evil manifestation of envy and vanity.

Let's forge ahead resolutely, laughing off schemers and fools. In "The Opening of the Eyes," the Daishonin writes, "To be praised by fools — that is the greatest shame" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], p. 188). Mr. Makiguchi also insists that "to be despised by fools is the greatest honor." And Mr. Toda declares, "For a person of wisdom, to be praised by fools is the greatest disgrace, whereas to be praised by the great sage [the Daishonin] is the greatest honor in life."

Let's make this our creed.

The late Madame Deng Yingchao, wife of Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, said, "As long as there is breath in my body, I will not stop fighting."

Let's win in 1999 with a unity as solid as gold.

Let's succeed in each of our challenges for *kosen-rufu* in 1999 with a unity as solid as gold. Let's

advance in a spirit of warm friendship and cooperation.

Let others say what they will. All that matters is that we receive the applause and praise of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas throughout the 10 directions — just as the Daishonin promised.

Buddhism, after all, is the realm of the eternal. It's as vast as the universe itself.

Let's continue to astound those who would slander the Law and malign our great movement. Let's astound them by achieving victory in all areas in the proud SGI tradition!

I conclude my speech today by expressing my deepest gratitude and shouting "Viva SGI members!"

Thank you again. Happy New Year!

This concludes SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 29th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Dec. 8, 1998. Part 1 appeared in last week's issue.

DIALOGUE, UNITY AND BASICS

PHOTOS BY GREGORY NAKASUJI

of Faith Stressed



SGI General Director Eiichi Wada talks with members following an afternoon New Year's Gongyo meeting at the Los Angeles Friendship Center.

SGI General Director Eiichi Wada visited Southern California, Nevada and Central America in December 1998 and welcomed the new year, meeting with SGI-USA members in the greater Los Angeles area. The following are some highlights of his guidance.

• On the subject of expanding our network of trust and friendship in the community: This is the Year of Victory in the Community. In what way are each of us thinking of contributing to our communities? Unless we speak up, unless we listen to others, we can never know the hearts of those in the community in which we live. Through dialogue we can open others' hearts. You don't need to be eloquent. Sincerity is most important. Your natural sense of respect for others gives rise to dialogue. Saying hello, extending warm greetings to our neighbors and just showing our care for other people around us — through these simple actions and through developing our character as human beings, we can gain trust and expand our circle of friendship in the community.

• In *The New Human Revolution*, SGI President Ikeda says that visiting fellow members at home and offering personal encouragement are most important. Although inconspicuous, these efforts to nurture the roots of faith in people will naturally and eventually blossom. These two actions are the source of all other activities for kosen-rufu.

• Propagation is not simply getting someone to join the SGI and receive the Gohonzon. Once a person becomes a member, then the real work begins — encouraging and nurturing him or her in faith.

• In terms of organization, where there is dialogue, unity is created. There can be no unity without dialogue. Dialogue is a means to create unity. And unity is a source of benefit and joy.

• When we experience hardships at home or at work, we have to go back to the basics of faith, practice and study. Praying with confidence in the Gohonzon, we can tap wisdom and courage with which to confront and overcome our challenges. To become happy, we need to show victory in our daily lives. In this way we can prove the power of our practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

• Since the beginning of the Soka Gakkai, the cornerstone of the organization has been the chapter men's and women's division leaders. The Soka Gakkai started with only six chapters. Candidates for leadership were interviewed by President Toda and were appointed based on their character. Things have changed since then, but not the qualifications for leadership.

• As leaders, do you know which of the members in your chapter are chanting and participating in activities? Do you know which members are not? These are the people on whom you should focus your efforts. Help them to attend meetings, to study and to talk about the greatness of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. This is how you can achieve the development of kosen-rufu in your chapter.

• Leadership positions in the SGI are positions of responsibility. Leaders should always be watchful about what they say to others. Even one word said with great sincerity and concern can

courage others for the rest of their lives. Even one word said without regard for others, uttered carelessly, can wound their hearts forever.

• To the men's and women's division members: Support the youth so they can become capable. Protect them so they can do activities freely. Please also support the Boys and Girls Group and Junior High and High School division members. When they enjoy activities, the future of kosen-rufu is secure.

• To the youth division members: Please respect the efforts of the pioneer members. Without them we would not have what we have today. Express appreciation for your seniors. Never look down on them. Never be-

come so arrogant as to instruct them. Of course, youth must stand up against injustice.

• Everyone should value and respect the opinions of the women's division. Please don't get caught up in petty differences. There are lots of ways to eat a piece of cake. But the point is to get the cake into your stomach and not argue over whose method of eating is better. Remember that all of you are sincerely practicing as disciples of President Ikeda. Regardless of our different approaches, let's support and respect one another.

• Please continue to stand up against any negative influences and protect our fellow SGI members by educating one another about the temple issue.



Mr. Wada addresses members at their morning New Year's Gongyo meeting held at The Grand at Willow Street Centre in Long Beach, Calif.